

**BỘ GIÁO DỤC VÀ ĐÀO TẠO
TRƯỜNG ĐẠI HỌC QUẢN LÝ VÀ CÔNG NGHỆ HẢI PHÒNG**



KHÓA LUẬN TỐT NGHIỆP

NGÀNH: NGÔN NGỮ ANH

Sinh viên : Phạm Khánh Giang

HẢI PHÒNG – 2025

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**A STUDY ON COMMON GRAMMATICAL
MISTAKES IN PROBLEM-SOLUTION ESSAYS
WRITTEN BY SECOND-YEAR ENGLISH MAJORS
AT HPU AND PROPOSED SOLUTIONS**

**KHÓA LUẬN TỐT NGHIỆP ĐẠI HỌC HỆ CHÍNH QUY
NGÀNH: NGÔN NGỮ ANH**

Sinh viên : Phạm Khánh Giang

Giảng viên hướng dẫn: Th.s Nguyễn Thị Thu Hương

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Tên đề tài: A Study On Common Grammatical Mistakes In Problem-Solution Essays Written By Second-Year English Majors At HPU And Proposed Solutions

NHIỆM VỤ ĐỀ TÀI

1. Nội dung và các yêu cầu cần giải quyết trong nhiệm vụ đề tài tốt nghiệp

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CÁN BỘ HƯỚNG DẪN ĐỀ TÀI TỐT NGHIỆP

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Nội dung hướng dẫn: A Study On Common Grammatical Mistakes In
Problem-Solution Essays Written By Second-Year English Majors At HPU
And Proposed Solutions

Đề tài tốt nghiệp được giao ngày tháng năm 2025

Yêu cầu phải hoàn thành xong trước ngày tháng năm 2025

Đã nhận nhiệm vụ ĐTTN

Sinh viên

Đã giao nhiệm vụ ĐTTN

Giảng viên hướng dẫn

Hải Phòng, ngày tháng năm 2025

XÁC NHẬN CỦA KHOA

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

First of all, I would also like to express my deep gratitude to all the lecturers of the English Faculty at Haiphong University of Management and Technology for their invaluable support and guidance. Over the past four years, they have equipped me with essential knowledge and skills, fostering my passion for the English language and its practical applications. Their engaging lessons and real-world insights have prepared me for this research endeavor.

Secondly, I sincerely thank my supervisor, Ms. Nguyen Thi Thu Huong, M.A., for her exceptional guidance and support throughout this thesis. Her feedback and encouragement have deepened my understanding and significantly enhanced my research skills, enabling me to complete this thesis.

Thirdly, I am equally indebted to my classmates for their suggestions and encouragements in the process of my study.

Last but not least, my particular thanks are given to my parents for their encouragement and support which played an important role in my graduation paper.

Hai Phong, May 9th 2025

Student

Pham Khanh Giang

PART ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1. Rationale

Writing is a fundamental skill for language learners, serving as a bridge to express ideas, solve problems, and communicate effectively. Among various essay types, problem-solving essays hold a special place in language education, requiring students to identify issues and propose clear, logical solutions-an exercise that sharpens both linguistic and analytical abilities. For English majors, mastering this genre is crucial, yet it demands a strong command of grammar to ensure precision and credibility.

At Haiphong University of Management and Technology (HPU), second-year English majors are introduced to problem-solution essay writing as part of their curriculum. However, my initial observations and conversations with peers and instructors reveal a recurring challenge: grammatical mistakes often decrease the quality of their work. These errors, ranging from incorrect verb tenses to faulty sentence structures, hinder the clarity of their arguments and reduce the overall impact of their essays. While writing difficulties have been widely studied, research focusing specifically on grammatical errors in problem-solution essays remains limited, leaving a gap in understanding and addressing this issue. Motivated by this, the researcher embarked on this study to explore the common grammatical mistakes made by second-year English majors at HPU in their problem-solving essays and to suggest practical solutions. By shedding light on these errors and their causes, this research seeks to enhance student's writing proficiency and provide educators with strategies to support their learning more effectively.

1.2. Aims of the study

Through this study, the researcher aims at:

- Identify the most common grammatical mistakes students frequently commit in their Problem-Solution essays.

- Suggest some solutions to strengthen and improve the grammatical accuracy of students' Problem-Solution essay writing.

1.3. Scope of the study

Essay writing encompasses a vast and intricate scope, necessitating thorough and prolonged consideration by researchers. However, due to constraints in time and knowledge, the researcher cannot explore every dimension of this subject. This study specifically focuses on analyzing grammatical mistakes in Problem-solving essays written by second-year English majors at Haiphong University of Management and Technology.

1.4. Research Questions

This study focuses on exploring the following key questions:

- Which grammatical errors are most frequently made in problem-solution essays by second-year English majors at HPU?
- What practical solutions can be proposed to minimize these errors?

1.5. Method of the Study

To explore common grammatical mistakes in problem-solution essays by second-year English majors at HPU and propose solutions, this study uses quantitative methods and contrastive analysis. It involves:

- Consulting with the supervisor for guidance and feedback. Surveying second-year HPU students to collect data through:
 - + Questionnaires: Design a list of questions, including open-ended ones, to gather essential information for the report.
 - + Surveys and interviews: Approaching participants via multiple channels and conducting interviews using a prepared question list.
 - + Fifty essays written by the second- year English majors are collected for analyzing their grammatical errors.

1.6. Design of the study

The study is divided into three main parts; in which the second is the most important part.

- Part I presents the theoretical background related to the problem–solution essay, which serves as the basis for analyzing grammatical errors in students’ writing. It begins by providing a clear definition and structure of the problem–solution essay, a common genre in academic writing. Next, it outlines types of problem–solution essays. Finally, the chapter discusses the organization and writing process of this essay type.

- Part II is the development that includes three small chapters:

Firstly is literature review chapter which focuses on presenting the argument with its definition, components and classification; and giving the theoretical background of an problem–solution essay through the thesis statement and argumentation as well as the errors in essay writing.

Secondly is chapter of methodology. In which, the researcher is going to draw up very clearly procedures for a study starting from participants, data collection instrument to procedures of data collection and data analysis.

Lastly, in the results and discussion chapter, a list of errors. From then, there will be suggested solutions to minimize these errors.

- Part III is the conclusion which include main findings, the limitations of the thesis and suggestions for further research.

PART TWO: DEVELOPMENT

CHAPTER 1: LITERATURE REVIEW

1.1. Theoretical backgrounds of academic writing

1.1.1 The definition of academic writing

Academic writing is a formal mode of communication used by scholars, including students and academics, to create texts for a scholarly audience. It aims to demonstrate understanding, critical thinking, and research skills, typically assessed through assignments like essays or exam questions.

Van Geyte (2013) defines academic writing as "writing which is done by scholars (for other scholars to read. It can take many forms: journal articles, textbooks, dissertations, group project reports, etc. Although students are increasingly being asked to write different types of academic text, the essay still remains the most popular type of assignment". This emphasizes its scholarly audience, diverse formats, and the prominence of essays. Murray (2012) describes it as "a process of constructing clear, coherent, and well-supported arguments within the conventions of a specific academic discipline" , highlighting critical engagement with sources, logical arguments, and disciplinary norms for clarity and knowledge production. Van Geyte (2013) focuses on the purpose, audience, and essay-centric nature of academic writing, while Murray (2012) underscores the construction of disciplined, evidence-based arguments. Both portray academic writing as a structured, scholarly process that advances knowledge through clear, formal communication.

According to Lien , T.T.N. (2010), academic writing, as the name implies, is the kind of writing that you are required to do in college or university. It differs from other kinds of writing (personal, literal, journalistic, business, etc.,) in several way. Its differences can be explained in part by its special audience, tone and purpose.

1.1.2. Academic writing process

Lien (2010) proposes a six-step process to craft focused, well-structured paragraphs:

- **Analyzing the Assignment:** Examine the task's instructions, objectives, and expectations to align the writing with its purpose.
- **Brainstorming:** Generate ideas freely using listing, mind mapping, or freewriting, deferring evaluation to foster creativity.
- **Organizing Ideas:** Formulate a topic sentence, discard irrelevant ideas, and create an outline with supporting points for coherence.
- **Drafting:** Transform the outline into a paragraph, focusing on content clarity over grammar or punctuation.
- **Revising and Editing:** Revise for organization, unity, and coherence; edit for grammar, spelling, and word choice to polish the text (Lien, 2010).
- **Finalizing the Draft:** Produce a polished draft adhering to academic standards, ready for submission.

Murray (2012) outlines a three-stage strategy to enhance clarity and structure in academic writing:

- **Planning:** Identify the purpose, audience, and scope, selecting key arguments and evidence for focus.
- **Writing:** Create a draft by organizing ideas around a clear thesis, using topic sentences and integrating sources.
- **Revising:** Review the draft to improve clarity, coherence, and flow, refining arguments and ensuring disciplinary alignment.

Both authors provide valuable models to tackle academic writing challenges like lack of focus, weak organization, and unclear arguments. The first offers a detailed, sequential guide for crafting paragraphs, ideal for students needing structure. The second emphasizes strategic planning and iterative refinement, promoting clarity and coherence.

1.1.3. Problems in academic writing

Academic writing demands precision and adherence to formal conventions, yet writers often face challenges that compromise clarity and professionalism. These include sentence structure errors, lexical inaccuracies, grammatical mistakes, cohesion and coherence issues, and organizational shortcomings, as discussed below with reference to established literature.

Sentence structure issues: Poor sentence structure, such as run-on sentences or fragments, leads to ambiguity and disrupts readability. Swales and Feak (2012) note that novice writers often struggle with complex syntax, resulting in unclear or overly lengthy sentences. Non-native speakers may face additional difficulties with clause coordination and modifier placement.

Lexical problems: Inappropriate word choices undermine academic tone. Hyland (2006) highlights that writers frequently misuse synonyms or rely on informal vocabulary, failing to employ discipline-specific terms accurately. Non-native speakers may also struggle with collocations, producing unnatural phrasing.

Grammatical errors: Grammatical inaccuracies, including verb tense errors, subject-verb disagreement, and article misuse, reduce text credibility. Biber et al. (1999) emphasize that such errors are common in academic writing, particularly among learners unfamiliar with English grammatical conventions.

Cohesion and coherence issues: weak cohesion and coherence hinder logical flow. Halliday and Hasan (1976) explain that inadequate use of cohesive devices, such as transitions or referencing, causes abrupt topic shifts or unclear connections between ideas, making texts difficult to follow.

Organizational problems: disorganized texts confuse readers due to illogical sequencing or missing structural elements like thesis statements. Swales and Feak (2012) stress that adherence to genre-specific structures, such as IMRAD, is crucial for coherent academic writing.

In conclusion, addressing these challenges sentence structure, lexical, grammatical, cohesion, and organizational issues, is vital for producing clear and professional academic texts. Awareness of these problems, as outlined in key literature, enhances writing quality.

1.2. Theoretical backgrounds of problem-solution essays

1.2.1 Definition of problem-solution Essays

Problem-solution essays are a common and highly practical genre in academic writing, particularly in English as a Second Language and composition courses. These essays are designed to examine a specific issue by first identifying a problem and then proposing one or more viable solutions. However, modern perspectives on this essay type-especially those informed by cognitive research in writing-offers a more nuanced definition that views writing not simply as a rhetorical product but as a goal-directed problem-solving process (Flower & Hayes, 1977).

According to Flower and Hayes, writing-particularly academic and expository writing-should be conceptualized as a form of cognitive problem-solving. In this view, a writer does not merely follow a set structure but must identify a rhetorical problem, set goals, generate ideas, and revise plans in response to evolving understanding and reader expectations. This recursive, rather than linear, process positions the writer as an active problem-solver, navigating between content, purpose, and audience. The ability to propose effective solutions is deeply tied to how well the problem is framed and understood in the first place (Flower & Hayes, 1977).

Similarly, Berkenkotter (1982) emphasizes that expert writers approach writing tasks with a rich arsenal of strategies that guide them through idea generation, organization, and reader awareness. Unlike novice writers who rely heavily on trial and error, experienced writers employ structured strategies to conceptualize, explore, and solve rhetorical problems. These strategies may

include brainstorming, free writing, audience analysis, and visual mapping of ideas, all of which aim to foster deeper understanding and more effective communication.

From this perspective, a problem-solving essay is not just an exercise in identifying issues and listing solutions, but rather a dynamic intellectual activity in which the writer continuously sets, refines, and achieves rhetorical goals. The quality of such essays depends not only on the logic of the proposed solutions but also on the writer's ability to present those solutions persuasively, and in a way that resonates with the intended audience.

In summary, problem-solving essays serve both as a tool for organizing ideas and as a method for solving rhetorical challenges through writing. They require critical thinking, strategic planning, and an awareness of the audience, making them an ideal medium for developing academic literacy and problem-solving competence in university-level learners.

1.2.2. Organization of problem-solution essays

The section Organization of problem-solution essays is cited from Essay Writing: A Generic Approach by Tran Thi Ngoc Lien (HPU). This part of the book introduces structural patterns: Simple Problem-Solution Pattern, Alternative Problem-Solving Pattern, Step-by-Step Problem-Solving Pattern Introduction, and Point-by-Point Problem-Solving Pattern.

Simple Problem-Solution Pattern

Introduction

Body 1: The problem(s)

Body 2: solution(s)

Conclusion

Alternative Problem-Solving Pattern

Introduction

The problem: Identify and demonstrate its existence (background paragraph)
Evaluation of alternative solution 1; why it is not feasible + evidence
Evaluation of alternative solution 2; why it is not feasible + evidence
Evaluation of alternative solution 3; why it is not feasible + evidence and
answering possible objections
Implementation plan; evidence
Conclusion: summary, call to action

Step-by-Step Problem-Solving Pattern Introduction

Introduction

The problem: Identify and demonstrate its existence (background paragraph)
Recommended solution and reason why the solution is necessary and
feasible

Plan for implementation: Step 1

Plan for implementation: Step 2

Plan for implementation: Step 3

Conclusion: call to action

Point-by-Point Problem-Solving Pattern

Introduction

The overall problem: identify and demonstrate its existence

One part of the problem, its solution, evidence to support the solution, and
refutation of possible objections

Second part of the problem, its solution, evidence refutation of possible
objections

Third part of the problem, its solution, evidence to support the solution, and
refutation of possible objections

Conclusion, implementation, call to action

1.2.3. Characteristics of problem-solution essays

Problem-solution essays are a distinct genre in academic writing, particularly relevant in language education, where they serve as a tool for students to articulate issues and propose solutions. Several scholars have defined and characterized this essay type, emphasizing its structure and purpose in educational contexts.

Hyland (2007) defines a problem-solution essay as a rhetorical pattern that “presents a problem, analyzes its causes or effects, and proposes one or more solutions, often with an evaluation of their feasibility.” He emphasizes that this structure encourages critical thinking and persuasive writing, essential skills for students in language learning environments. The essay typically follows a clear organizational pattern: an introduction to the problem, a discussion of its significance, proposed solutions, and a conclusion.

Similarly, Swales and Feak (2012) describe problem-solution essays as texts that “require writers to identify a specific issue, provide evidence of its impact, and suggest actionable solutions, often tailored to a particular audience.” They highlight the importance of audience awareness in these essays, noting that in educational settings, students must adapt their tone and vocabulary to suit teachers or peers, fostering linguistic precision and adaptability.

Oshima and Hogue (2006) characterize problem-solution essays as a form of expository writing that “demands clarity in presenting the problem and logical reasoning in justifying solutions.” They stress that such essays are particularly valuable in language education because they require students to synthesize information, use cohesive devices, and maintain coherence, all of which enhance language proficiency.

In contrast, Reid (2000) focuses on the pragmatic aspect, defining problem-solution essays as “a practical tool for students to engage with real-world issues, requiring them to balance descriptive and argumentative

elements.” She notes that these essays are especially effective in ESL (English as a Second Language) classrooms, where they help students develop both linguistic and analytical skills by addressing issues relevant to their lives or communities.

To summarize, problem-solution essays are characterized by their structured approach to identifying and addressing issues, requiring critical thinking, audience awareness, and linguistic clarity. In language education, these essays serve as a platform for students to practice advanced writing skills, guided by a clear rhetorical framework that integrates problem analysis with solution-oriented discourse.

1.2.4. Problems in problem-solution essays

Problem-solution essays are a cornerstone in educational settings, fostering students’ critical thinking and academic writing skills by requiring them to identify issues, analyze their implications, and propose viable solutions. However, students often face significant obstacles that undermine the effectiveness of these essays. Drawing on insights from researchers in academic writing, this section examines six key problems in problem-solution essays.

Lack of evidence or research: Zemach and Rumisek (2008) identify the lack of evidence or research as a critical problem in problem-solution essays. Students frequently propose solutions without supporting them with credible data, empirical studies, or authoritative references, relying instead on personal opinions. This absence of evidential support weakens the essay’s academic rigor, resulting in arguments that lack persuasiveness and scholarly credibility, thus diminishing the essay’s overall impact.

Sentence structure: Swales and Feak (2012) highlight poor sentence structure as a significant issue in problem-solution essays. Students often produce sentences that are either overly simplistic or excessively complex, leading to ambiguity and reduced clarity. Such structural deficiencies hinder effective

communication, as readers struggle to follow the intended argumentation, thereby compromising the essay's readability and quality.

Grammatical errors: Oshima and Hogue (2006) note that grammatical errors are prevalent in problem-solution essays, with common mistakes including inconsistent verb tenses, subject-verb agreement issues, and incorrect article usage. These inaccuracies detract from the essay's professionalism and intelligibility, obscuring the intended meaning and eroding the writer's credibility, which weakens the essay's argumentative strength.

Inadequate problem definition: Hyland (2006) emphasizes inadequate problem definition as a major flaw in problem-solution essays. Students often present problems that are vague, overly broad, or lack sufficient contextualization to demonstrate their significance. This deficiency creates a weak foundation, making it challenging to develop relevant and targeted solutions, thus reducing the essay's focus and effectiveness.

Lack of solution feasibility: Bitchener (2010) points out that a lack of solution feasibility is a common problem in problem-solution essays. Students frequently propose solutions that are impractical, overly idealistic, or disconnected from real-world constraints, such as resource limitations or contextual realities. Such proposals fail to convince readers of their applicability, undermining the essay's persuasiveness and overall impact.

Poor cohesion and coherence: Nunan (2004) identifies poor cohesion and coherence as a significant problem in problem-solution essays. Students often struggle to organize ideas logically or use appropriate linking devices, resulting in texts that appear disjointed or difficult to follow. This lack of logical flow obscures the connection between the problem and its solutions, reducing the essay's clarity and argumentative strength.

The problems in problem-solution essays—lack of evidence or research, poor sentence structure, grammatical errors, inadequate problem definition, lack

of solution feasibility, and poor cohesion and coherence—reflect the complexities of academic writing. These issues highlight the need for targeted strategies to enhance students' proficiency in this genre. By addressing these problems, students can produce more coherent, persuasive, and academically rigorous problem-solution essays, thereby strengthening their critical thinking and communicative abilities.

1.3. Theoretical backgrounds of grammatical errors

1.3.1. Definition of grammatical errors

Grammatical errors are deviations from the standard rules of a language's grammar, resulting in structures that are incorrect, ambiguous, or unclear, thereby hindering effective communication. These errors occur when speakers or writers fail to adhere to syntactic, morphological, or agreement rules, leading to misinterpretations or reduced credibility in written or spoken discourse. Scholars and linguists have provided varied yet complementary perspectives on what constitutes grammatical errors, emphasizing their impact on language accuracy and comprehension.

Bethany (2023) defines grammatical errors as "mistakes in standard grammar usage," encompassing errors in parts of speech, word order, subject-verb agreement, and verb tense consistency. For instance, reversing subject and verb order, such as "Gave Susan a speech this morning" instead of "Susan gave a speech this morning," is a common word order error that disrupts sentence clarity.

In contrast, Bryant et al. (2023) adopts a broader view, stating that grammatical errors include not only syntactic issues, such as missing prepositions or mismatched subject-verb agreement, but also orthographic errors (e.g., misspellings) and semantic errors (e.g., inappropriate word choices). Their research on grammatical error correction underscores that errors like "The cat

are sleeping" (subject-verb disagreement) or "I seen the movie" (incorrect verb form) are prevalent and require automated systems for detection and correction.

1.3.2. Types of grammatical errors

Grammatical errors in academic writing can undermine clarity, credibility, and coherence. These errors typically arise from incorrect application of grammatical rules and can be categorized into several distinct types. Understanding these categories is essential for linguistic analysis and improving writing quality. Below are the primary types of grammatical errors, organized logically from broad syntactic issues to specific morphological and lexical concerns.

*** Sentence structure errors:** These errors occur when the arrangement of words or clauses violates syntactic rules, leading to unclear or incorrect sentences. These errors include:

- **Run-on Sentences and Comma Splices:** Run-on sentences occur when two or more independent clauses are joined without proper punctuation or conjunctions (e.g., The study was conclusive it proved the hypothesis). A comma splice is a specific type where independent clauses are incorrectly joined by a comma (e.g., The study was conclusive, it proved the hypothesis). According to Hacker (2019), these errors confuse readers by failing to signal clause boundaries.
- **Sentence Fragments:** Fragments are incomplete sentences lacking a subject, verb, or complete thought. Strunk and White (2014) emphasize that fragments disrupt the flow of academic writing and must be corrected by attaching them to a complete sentence or revising them into independent clauses.
- **Faulty Parallelism:** This occurs when elements in a series or paired structures lack consistent grammatical form. Parallelism errors violate the expectation of symmetry in academic prose, as noted in A Writer's Reference (Hacker, 2019).

* **Subject-Verb agreement errors**

Subject-verb agreement errors arise when the subject and verb do not match in number or person (e.g., *The data is analyzed* instead of *The data are analyzed*). Murphy (2019) explains that these errors are common when subjects are complex, such as collective nouns, indefinite pronouns, or subjects separated from verbs by phrases. In academic writing, agreement errors can obscure meaning and signal carelessness, particularly in technical fields where precision is paramount.

* **Verb Tense and Form Errors:** Incorrect use of verb tense or form can distort the temporal context of a sentence. Common errors include:

- **Inconsistent Tense:** Shifting tenses inappropriately within a sentence or paragraph. Hacker (2019) advises maintaining consistent tense unless a shift is logically justified.
- **Incorrect verb forms:** Using incorrect forms, such as irregular verb conjugations or improper use of infinitives and gerunds. Murphy (2019) highlights that such errors are frequent in academic writing by non-native speakers.

* **Pronoun Errors:** Pronoun errors disrupt clarity by creating ambiguity or violating grammatical rules. These include:

- **Pronoun-Antecedent Agreement:** A pronoun must agree with its antecedent in number, gender, and person (e.g., *Each student submitted their paper* is incorrect in formal writing, where *his* or *her* is preferred). Hacker (2019) notes that singular indefinite pronouns are a common source of this error.
- **Ambiguous or Unclear Reference:** When a pronoun's antecedent is unclear (e.g., *John told Mark he was late*, where "he" could refer to either), the sentence becomes ambiguous. Strunk and White (2014) stress the importance of clear pronoun reference in maintaining coherence.

- **Incorrect Case:** Using the wrong pronoun case, such as Me went to the library instead of I went to the library, is less common in academic writing but still occurs in informal drafts (Murphy, 2019).

* **Modifier Errors**

Modifiers (adjectives, adverbs, or phrases) must be placed correctly to avoid confusion. Errors include:

- **Misplaced modifiers:** When a modifier is placed too far from the word it modifies. Hacker (2019) emphasizes that misplaced modifiers can distort the writer's intent.
- **Dangling modifiers:** These occur when a modifier lacks a clear subject to modify. Strunk and White (2014) recommend revising such sentences to ensure the subject is explicit.

* **Punctuation errors:** While punctuation is often considered a stylistic concern, it is closely tied to grammar in academic writing. Common errors include:

- **Incorrect comma usage:** Omitting necessary commas or adding unnecessary ones. Hacker (2019) provides detailed rules for comma placement to avoid such errors.
- **Semicolon and Colon Misuse:** Using semicolons to join unrelated clauses or colons without introducing a list or explanation. Murphy (2019) notes that semicolon errors are frequent in academic essays due to their nuanced rules.

* **Article and preposition errors**

Errors in articles (a, an, the) and prepositions (in, on, at) are common, especially among non-native speakers. For example, omitting an article (Student conducted research instead of The student conducted research) or using an incorrect preposition (She is interested on linguistics instead of in linguistics) can disrupt readability. Murphy (2019) explains that these errors stem from

differences in native language structures and require careful attention in academic writing.

*** Morphological errors**

Morphological errors involve incorrect word forms, such as:

- Incorrect pluralization or possessives: Errors like *childs* instead of *children* or *researcher's data* instead of *researchers' data* violate standard morphology (Murphy, 2019).
- Confused homophones: Using *there* instead of *their* or *affect* instead of *effect* is a frequent error that undermines academic credibility (Hacker, 2019).

In short, grammatical errors in academic writing can be systematically categorized into sentence structure, agreement, verb usage, pronoun issues, modifiers, punctuation, articles/prepositions, and morphological mistakes. Each type has specific implications for clarity and professionalism, making their identification and correction critical in linguistic studies. By addressing these errors, writers can enhance the precision and coherence of their academic essays, aligning with the standards outlined in authoritative grammar texts.

1.3.3. Causes of grammatical errors

*** Lack of linguistic knowledge**

One of the primary causes of grammatical errors is a limited understanding of the target language's grammatical rules. According to Swales and Feak (2012) in *Academic Writing for Graduate Students*, many non-native English speakers struggle with complex syntactic structures, such as subject-verb agreement, tense consistency, and article usage, due to incomplete mastery of English grammar. For instance, learners may incorrectly use singular verbs with plural subjects because they have not fully internalized the rules governing countability and agreement. Even native speakers may make errors if they lack formal

training in grammar, as informal spoken English often deviates from standard written conventions (Hyland, 2006, English for Academic Purposes).

*** Interference from the first language**

For non-native speakers, interference from their first language (L1) significantly contributes to grammatical errors. As Bitchener (2010) notes in Writing an Applied Linguistics Thesis or Dissertation, L1 grammatical structures can influence the production of English sentences, leading to errors in word order, prepositions, or verb forms. For example, speakers of languages without articles, such as Vietnamese or Chinese, may omit “a” or “the” in English sentences. Similarly, languages with different tense systems may lead to errors in verb conjugation, such as using the present tense for past events. This phenomenon, known as negative transfer, highlights the challenges of applying L1 knowledge to a second language (Hyland, 2006).

*** Cognitive overload during writing**

The cognitive demands of academic writing can also lead to grammatical errors. As Bailey (2018) explains in Academic Writing: A Handbook for International Students, composing an academic essay requires simultaneous attention to content, organization, vocabulary, and grammar. This multitasking can overwhelm writers, causing them to prioritize ideas over linguistic accuracy. For instance, a writer focused on articulating a complex argument may neglect to check for subject-verb agreement or proper clause subordination, resulting in errors like run-on sentences or fragments. Novice writers, in particular, may struggle to balance these competing demands, leading to a higher frequency of grammatical inaccuracies (Swales & Feak, 2012).

*** Insufficient editing and proofreading practices**

A lack of thorough editing and proofreading is another significant cause of grammatical errors. Murray and Moore (2006) in The Handbook of Academic Writing emphasize that many writers fail to allocate sufficient time to revise

their drafts, often submitting work with avoidable mistakes. Common errors, such as misplaced commas, incorrect pronoun references, or inconsistent verb tenses, can be corrected through careful review.

Grammatical errors in academic writing stem from a combination of linguistic, cognitive, and procedural factors. Limited grammatical knowledge and L1 interference pose significant challenges, particularly for non-native speakers, while cognitive overload and inadequate editing practices affect both native and non-native writers. By addressing these causes through targeted instruction, practice, and revision strategies, writers can enhance the grammatical accuracy of their academic essays, thereby improving the overall quality of their work.

CHAPTER 2: METHODOLOGY

2.1. Sample and sampling

In this study, the sample consisted of 25 second-year students majoring in English from class NA2701 at Haiphong University of Management and Technology during the 2024-2025 academic year. These participants were selected through purposive sampling to ensure they had adequate experience in English academic writing, with a specific focus on the problem-s essay format, which was central to the research objectives.

The participants had completed a minimum of three semesters of English language coursework, encompassing grammar, writing skills from sentences to essay composition. This academic background made them an appropriate sample for investigating linguistic features in Problem-Solution essays, such as grammatical accuracy. Using purposive sampling ensured a homogeneous group in terms of educational context, which helped control for external variables and enhanced the reliability of the study's findings.

2.2. Instruments

To achieve the research objectives, two data collection instruments were employed: a survey questionnaire and problem-solution essays written by sophomores. These tools were selected for their effectiveness, aligning with the mixed-methods approach of the study.

The first instrument involved analyzing problem - solution essays to identify grammatical errors. The researcher contacted the lecturer responsible for the second-year writing curriculum of class NA2701 at Haiphong University of Management and Technology to obtain the essays. Essays were randomly selected for detailed analysis of grammatical mistakes. This process enabled a comprehensive examination of error patterns, providing critical data for identifying prevalent issues and formulating effective solutions.

The second instrument was a structured questionnaire developed to collect qualitative data on students' perceptions of their writing challenges and the causes of their grammatical errors.

2.3. Data collection

The data collection for this study was conducted in April 2025. Before data collection, the researcher connected with lecturers responsible for the second-year writing curriculum of class NA2701. The lecturer approved the research proposal, ensuring a smooth and effective data collection process. The process involved two instruments:

Questionnaire distribution: One week after the essay writing task, the survey questionnaire was administered to the same participants during their break time. The researcher provided clear instructions and allowed 15 minutes for the students to complete the questionnaire. Participation was voluntary, and students were assured that their responses would remain confidential and would be used solely for research purposes. They were encouraged to provide honest answers, which was critical to the study's success.

Essay collection process: The researcher contacted lecturers responsible for the second-year writing curriculum of class NA2701 for problem-solution essays. These essays were analyzed to identify common grammatical errors. These essays were subsequently analyzed to identify common grammatical errors.

2.4. Data analysis

The collected essays were digitized to facilitate error identification. Grammatical errors were manually identified and categorized using a framework adapted from previous studies, focusing on errors in Verb tenses, Determiners, Agreement, Prepositions, Pronouns, Possessive and attributive, Word Order, Incomplete structures, Negative constructions, Parallel structures, and Conjunction. For the questionnaire, quantitative data from closed-ended questions were analyzed using descriptive statistics (e.g., percentages, means) with Microsoft Excel, while qualitative responses from open-ended questions were coded thematically to identify common patterns and insights.

CHAPTER 3: RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

3.1. Data analysis and results

3.1.1 Data analysis and result from the survey questionnaire

The study surveyed 25 students from Class NA2701, including 22 female students (88%) and 3 male students (12%). The predominance of female participants may reflect the class's demographic composition and could influence the types of errors observed in their English language performance. To further understand the participants' background, their age distribution was also examined. The majority, 23 students (92%), are 20 years old, while 1 student (4%) is 22 years old, and 1 student (4%) is 23 years old. This concentration of 20-year-old students suggests they are at a similar academic stage, potentially affecting their English proficiency and error patterns.

In addition to age, the duration of their English language study provides further insight into their linguistic experience. The students' experience in learning English varies, reflecting differences in when they began studying the language. Among the 25 students, 8 students (32%) have studied English for 13 years, 6 students (24%) for 12 years, 5 students (20%) for 14 years, and 4 students (16%) for 10 years. Additionally, 1 student (4%) studied for 5 years, and 1 student (4%) studied for 9 years. Table below presents this distribution

Years of Learning English	Number of Participants	Percentage
5 years	1	4%
9 years	1	4%
10 years	4	16%
12 years	6	24%
13 years	8	32%
14 years	5	20%

Table 1: Students' time in learning English

In addition to demographic data, the researcher also collected information regarding students' perceptions of academic writing and the frequency with which they encounter grammatical errors in their problem-solution essays. These questions aim to shed light on students' awareness of the importance of writing skills as well as their real-life struggles with grammar during academic tasks. Regarding the perceived importance of academic writing, 14 out of 25 students (56%) rated it as very important, and 11 students (44%) considered it important. Notably, no student marked it as not important, which indicates a unanimous recognition of the value of academic writing among the participants. This shared view may contribute positively to their motivation to improve grammatical accuracy.

When asked how often they encounter grammatical errors in their problem-solution essays, the responses varied. 20% admitted they always face grammatical issues, while 44% said they often do. Additionally, the rest reported that they sometimes encounter errors. Notably, no participants selected rarely or never, meaning 100% of the respondents acknowledged facing grammatical problems to some extent. This suggests that despite understanding the importance of academic writing, students still struggle significantly with grammar.

*** Grammatical errors in problem-solution essays**

Types of grammatical errors	Number of students making errors	Percentage %
1. Verb tenses	18	72%
2. Determiners	16	64%
3. Agreement	10	40%
4. Prepositions	14	56%
5. Pronouns	8	32%

Types of grammatical errors	Number of students making errors	Percentage %
6. Possessive and attributive	7	28%
7. Word Order	12	48%
8. Incomplete structures	13	53%
9. Negative constructions	4	16 %
10. Parallel structures	3	12 %
11. Conjunctions	9	36 %

Chart 2: Grammatical errors in problem-solution essays

The table titled grammatical errors in problem-solution essays presents the frequency of eleven common types of grammatical errors made by students. This analysis explores the implications of these findings and what they reveal about students' difficulties in English academic writing.

The most frequent error type was verb tense, made by 18 out of 25 students (72%). This high percentage indicates that students find it challenging to use correct verb forms when shifting between present, past, and future tenses. In problem-solution essays, the task requires students to describe current issues and propose actions, often involving multiple tenses. Errors in this area may result from interference from students' native languages or an incomplete understanding of English verb systems.

The second most common issue was determiner usage, with 16 students (64%) making mistakes. Articles (a, an, the) and other determiners are often overlooked in ESL instruction despite their frequency in academic writing. Many students either omit necessary articles or use incorrect ones, affecting the grammaticality and clarity of their writing. These mistakes are particularly common among learners whose first language does not use articles.

Prepositions ranked third, with 14 students (56%) making errors. Prepositional usage in English is complex, often determined by idiomatic or collocational rules rather than logic. Students frequently substitute incorrect prepositions or omit them entirely, such as using “interested on” instead of “interested in.” These errors suggest that more attention should be given to preposition collocations in vocabulary instruction.

Incomplete sentence structures were found in the writing of 13 students (53%). This includes sentence fragments, missing subjects or verbs, and incomplete clauses. Such errors severely disrupt the meaning and coherence of an essay. They are especially problematic in academic writing, where clarity and full sentence construction are expected. These mistakes may indicate a limited understanding of sentence boundaries or an overreliance on spoken language patterns.

Errors in word order were present in 12 essays (48%). English follows a relatively strict word order compared to many other languages, especially in questions, negatives, and adverb placement. Common mistakes included misplaced adverbs or auxiliary verbs, leading to confusion. For example, “They not understand the issue” should be “They do not understand the issue.” These errors can make writing appear awkward or unclear.

Subject-verb agreement issues affected 10 students (40%). Errors typically involve mismatched singular or plural forms, especially in complex noun phrases. This suggests that students may understand basic subject-verb rules but struggle when sentences become more complex.

Other less frequent but still notable error types include conjunctions (36%), pronouns (32%), possessive and attributive forms (28%), negative constructions (16%), and parallel structures (12%). Though these appear less often, they still impact the quality of writing, particularly in sentence flow and coherence.

Overall, the data shows that grammatical errors in student essays are not limited to one or two categories but are spread across a wide range of grammatical features. This suggests that grammar instruction should not be isolated or rule-based but integrated into actual writing practice.

In the survey, to identify these problems, all students (100%) relied on instructor feedback to identify grammatical mistakes in their problem-solution essays, highlighting the essential role of teacher support. Grammar-checking software was used by 60% of students, showing growing dependence on digital tools. Meanwhile, 48% of students reported proofreading their own essays, suggesting some level of learner autonomy but also indicating a lack of full confidence in self-correction. These findings suggest that while students value teacher input, more emphasis is needed on developing independent editing skills and better training in the effective use of grammar-checking tools for long-term improvement.

Ways to identify grammatical errors	Number of students making errors	Percentage %
By proofreading the essay myself	12	48%
Through feedback from instructors	25	100%
By using grammar-checking software	15	60%
Others	0	0%

Chart 3: ways to identify grammatical errors

*** Reasons for grammatical errors**

The results shows that there are some reasons that lead to those grammar mistakes. They are lack of grammar knowledge, lack of practice, no proofreading, little attention into their ideas that they forget about grammar. Out of the mistakes, lack of grammar knowledge is the most common.

* Learning methods

Regarding students' preferred learning methods when working on problem-solution essays in writing classes, the responses showed a clear preference for collaborative approaches. Out of 25 students, 48% (12 students) preferred working in groups of 4-5 students, making it the most favored method. Meanwhile, 28% (7 students) chose working in pairs, and 24% (6 students) preferred working individually. These findings suggest that a majority of students value the benefits of teamwork, possibly due to the opportunities for peer feedback and shared ideas, which may help them address their grammatical challenges more effectively.

* Students' preferences to reduce grammatical errors

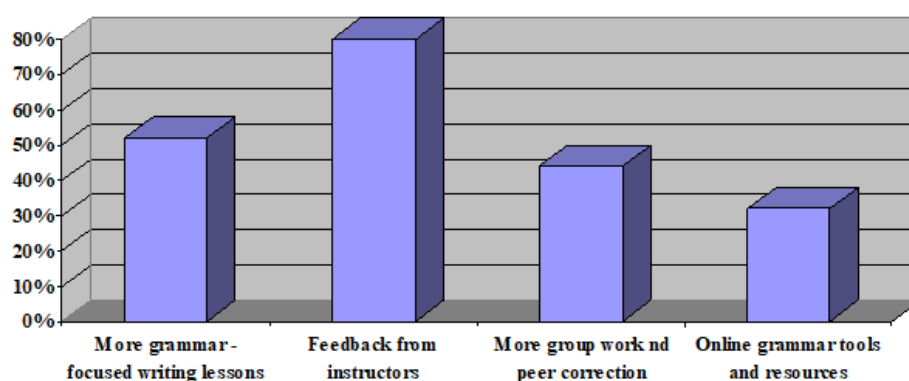


Chart 4: Students' preferences to reduce grammatical errors

The majority of students (80%) believed that feedback from instructors would be the most effective solution for reducing grammatical mistakes, highlighting the value of teacher input. 52% of students supported more grammar-focused writing lessons, indicating a need for direct instruction that links grammar with writing practice. 44% preferred group work and peer correction, suggesting a collaborative learning environment can help reinforce grammar awareness. Meanwhile, 32% found online grammar tools and resources helpful, reflecting a growing reliance on digital support. Overall, students favored a combination of teacher guidance, structured lessons, and interactive methods to improve grammatical accuracy.

*** Teaching methods to minimize errors**

Teaching methods	Number of Students	Percentage (%)
Guide your writing and revise grammar	17	68%
Give various pre-writing activities related to grammar	11	44%
Provide a lot of grammar homework before writing	10	40%
Others	1	4%

Chart 5: Teaching methods to minimize errors

According to the results, the majority of students (68%) preferred their teachers to provide pre-writing grammar activities, indicating a strong desire to reinforce grammar knowledge before starting writing tasks. 44% of students wanted more grammar homework, suggesting they recognize the need for extra practice outside class. Meanwhile, 40% requested that teachers guide their writing and revise grammar, showing appreciation for in-process support. Only 4% selected “Others,” possibly indicating personal strategies or preferences. These responses suggest that students value both preparation and ongoing support, and benefit most when grammar is directly linked to their writing process.

In short, it can be seen that HPU second-year English majored students have faced with a number of grammatical errors. Thus, it is important to have ways to avoid them so that problem-solution essays will be better.

3.1.2. Grammatical mistakes in problem-solution essays

*** Common grammatical errors in problem-solution essays written by HPU English majored sophomores**

With the four following topics and thirty problem-solution essays written by students were analysed to find out common grammatical mistakes.

Topic 1: young people today are not as fit as they were in the past. What can governments do to deal with this issue?

Topic 2: global warming is one of the biggest threats to our environment. What solutions are there to this problem

Topic 3: air travel causes a variety of problems in the world and we should find alternative means of transport. Describe some of the problems caused by air travel and suggest some solutions.

Topic 4: people living in large cities today deal with a variety of issues in their everyday lives. What are these problems? Should governments encourage them to relocate to smaller regional towns?

Types of errors made in the problem-solution essays

Types of grammatical errors	Number of students making errors	Percentage %
1. Verb tenses	20	66.7%
2. Determiners	19	63.3%
3. Agreement	15	50%
4. Prepositions	14	46.7 %
5. Pronouns	7	23.3 %
6. Possessive and attributive	9	30%

Types of grammatical errors	Number of students making errors	Percentage %
7. Word Order	18	60%
8. Incomplete structures	16	53.3 %
9. Negative constructions	9	30%
10. Parallel structures	9	30%
11. Conjunction	15	50%

*Chart 6: Grammatical errors in problem-solution essays written by HPU
Englissh – majored sophomores*

3.1.2.1. Verb tenses

It is the most common errors in students' essays. There are some examples of it. For example, a student might write: *"Young people do not exercise much like they did in the past."* This sentence awkwardly combines the present simple ("do not exercise") with the past simple ("did") in a way that lacks fluency. A better version is: *"Young people do not exercise as much as they used to in the past."* This correction introduces "used to" for past habitual actions, which provides a smoother and more grammatically accurate comparison.

Another example is: *"Scientists warns that the Earth is getting hotter for many years."* There are two issues here: incorrect subject-verb agreement ("scientists warns" instead of "warn") and inappropriate use of present continuous with the phrase "for many years." The corrected sentence is: *"Scientists warn that the Earth has been getting hotter for many years."* This version correctly uses the present perfect continuous to express a situation that began in the past and continues to the present.

Students sometimes mix tenses when describing trends over time. Consider the example: *"In the past decades, air travel increased rapidly and still increases now."* This sentence uses the past simple ("increased") with the present simple ("increases"), which is inconsistent for describing a continuous trend. A more appropriate version would be: *"Over the past decades, air travel has increased rapidly and is still increasing today."* This correction uses the present perfect to show the trend's duration and the present continuous to indicate that it is ongoing.

3.1.2.2. Determiners

It is the second common error in the writings, at 63.3%.

A student wrote: *"Governments should build public parks in urban areas to promote outdoor activities. Young people can use these spaces for jogging or playing sports. This encourages a more active lifestyle."* The grammatical error: "Public parks" lacks the determiner "the," which is necessary because the noun phrase is specific (parks built in urban areas). Specific nouns require determiners in academic writing for clarity. The correct one is *"Governments should build the public parks in urban areas to promote outdoor activities"*. Young people can use these spaces for jogging or playing sports. This encourages a more active lifestyle.

Another example is: *"There are many air travels that are damaging the environment."* The noun "air travel" is uncountable in this context, so it cannot be pluralized. Instead, use "air trips" or "flights" when referring to multiple instances.

3.1.2.3 Agreement

Half of the essays have the kind of grammatical mistakes. This percentage points to a recurring issue with aligning subjects, verbs, and pronouns.

"The effects of global warming is becoming more serious every year." is the wrong sentence. The right one is *"The effects of global warming are becoming*

more serious every year.” The reason is that the subject "effects" is plural, so the verb should be "are" instead of "is."

“ *The lack of green spaces and recreational facilities make life stressful.*” The subject here is "The lack," which is singular, even though it's followed by a plural object. Thus, it has to be “ *The lack of green spaces and recreational facilities makes life stressful.*”

3.1.2.4. Prepositions

Preposition errors formed 46.7% of the overall mistakes, reflecting a prominent challenge for the students. This significant share suggests frequent misuse or omission of prepositions, as highlighted in the examples below

In recent years, young people have become less active on their daily lives compared to those in the past. Governments should take action for improving public health, such as investing on sports facilities and promoting physical education programs.

The correct sentences is: *Governments should take action **to improve** public health, such as investing **in** sports facilities and promoting physical education programs.*

Another example is:

*People living in big cities often suffer from traffic congestion, high cost **for** living, and lack of green spaces. Governments should consider offering incentives to people who move **at** rural towns.*

Correct: *People living in big cities often suffer from traffic congestion, high cost **of** living, and lack of green spaces. Governments should consider offering incentives to people who move **to** rural towns.*

3.1.2.5 Pronouns

This kind of the error accounts for just more than 20% so that pronoun is not a typical grammatical error. In one essay, a student wrote: *When a teenager*

*stops exercising regularly, it can negatively affect **their** mental health.* The correct sentence: *When a teenager stops exercising regularly, it can negatively affect **his or her** mental health.* The explanation is that “a teenager” is singular noun so that his or her is right.

In the sentence “*Every country must reduce **their** carbon emissions if **they** want to fight climate change.*” “Their” and “they” have to be replaced by “its” and “it” to become: *Every country must reduce **its** carbon emissions if **it** wants to fight climate change.*

3.1.2.6. Possessive and attributive

Possessive and attributive errors accounted for 30% of the mistakes, revealing a moderate frequency in the essays. This share suggests that students occasionally faced challenges with possessive forms and attributive adjectives, as seen in the examples below.

Example 1:

*The government should take action to improve its **citizen's** fitness programs.*

Correction: *The government should take action to improve its **citizens'** fitness programs.*

Example 2:

*The air travel **industry** environmental impact has been widely discussed in its reports.*

Correction: *The air travel **industry's** environmental impact has been widely discussed in its reports.*

3.12.7. Word Order

Word order is the third common grammatical error.

Example 1:

Many people still do not understand the seriousness of global warming, despite the media has reported about it extensively.

Correction: *Many people still do not understand the seriousness of global warming, despite the fact that the media has reported about it extensively.*

Example 2:

People living in large cities often deal with the challenges of high living costs, such as rent and transportation, with air pollution and noise.

Correction: *People living in large cities often deal with challenges such as high living costs, rent, transportation, air pollution, and noise.*

3.1.2.8.. Incomplete Structures

This error made up 53.3% so it is typical errors considered by students more in writing problem-solution essays.

Example 1:

Although many young people have access to fitness centers.

Correction: *Although many young people have access to fitness centers, they rarely make use of them.*

"Although" introduces a dependent clause. A complete sentence must include both a dependent and an independent clause.

Example 2:

Reducing carbon emissions across all sectors to mitigate global warming.

Correction: *Reducing carbon emissions across all sectors is essential to mitigate global warming.*

Explanation: "Reducing carbon emissions" is a gerund phrase; to form a full sentence, you need a verb ("is").

Example 3:

Finding alternative modes of transport necessary to reduce pollution caused by air travel.

Correction: *Finding alternative modes of transport is necessary to reduce pollution caused by air travel.*

Explanation: The original is just a noun phrase, without a main verb.

3.1.2.9. Negative constructions

Negative construction errors appeared in 30% of the cases, making them less common among the error types. This lower frequency indicates that students were generally more adept at handling negation, though issues still arose, as seen in the examples below.

Example 1:

Young people do not do enough physical activity either at school or at home

Correction: *Young people do not do enough physical activity either at school or at home.*

Explanation: Using "*neither...nor*" with a negative verb (*don't*) creates a double negative, which is grammatically incorrect. Replace with "*either...or*."

Example 2:

Governments haven't done anything to solve the climate crisis.

Correction: *Governments haven't done anything to solve the climate crisis.*

Explanation: "*Haven't done nothing*" is incorrect — it's a double negative. Replace "*nothing*" with "*anything*."

3.1.2.10. Parallel structures

Parallel structure errors had the same percentage as the negative structures. This low percentage suggests that students were generally more successful in maintaining consistency in lists and series, as demonstrated in the examples below.

Example 1:

To stay healthy, young people should eat well, exercising regularly, and sleep enough.

Correction: *To stay healthy, young people should eat well, exercise regularly, and sleep enough.*

Explanation: In a series, all verbs must follow the same grammatical form. Here, *eat*, *exercise*, and *sleep* are all base forms to keep the structure parallel.

Example 2:

People in cities face traffic jams, noise, and they lack of green spaces.

Correction: *People in cities face traffic jams, noise, and a lack of green spaces.*

Explanation: The third item (*they lack green spaces*) is a full clause, while the first two are nouns. Rewrite it as a noun phrase for consistency

3.1.2.11. Conjunction

Conjunction errors accounted for 50% of the writings, indicating a moderate issue in linking ideas effectively. This percentage reflects a recurring challenge in using conjunctions to connect clauses, as illustrated in the examples below.

Example 1:

Young people are inactive, despite they have access to many sports facilities.

Correction: *Young people are inactive, although they have access to many sports facilities.*

Explanation: “**Despite**” must be followed by a **noun** or **gerund**, not a clause. Use “**although**” to connect two clauses.

Example 2:

*The city is crowded and polluted, so people don't like living there, **but** they stay.*

*Correction: The city is crowded and polluted, so people do not like living there, **yet** they stay.*

Explanation: “**But**” connects the last clause poorly here. Use “**yet**” to express an unexpected contrast.

In short, in thirty problem-solution essays the most common errors are verb tenses, determiners, word order, incomplete structures, disagreement and conjunctions.

3.2. Suggested solutions

3.2.1. For students

Based on the analysis of grammatical errors among 20 students, the most frequent mistakes occurred . To improve accuracy and coherence in writing problem-solution essays, students should consider the following strategies:

- Doing more grammar exercises on a regular basis: Regular practice with grammar exercises is crucial for reinforcing key concepts and improving overall writing skills. By working on grammar consistently, students can identify and address areas of weakness, such as verb tenses, prepositions, and subject-verb agreement. This will gradually help build confidence and accuracy in academic writing.

- Proofreading carefully before submitting: Proofreading is an essential step to ensure that your writing is error-free. After completing your essay, take the time to review it for common mistakes such as incorrect verb tenses, missing articles, or word order errors. It is useful to read your essay aloud or ask

someone else to review it, as this can help catch mistakes that you may not notice on your own.

- Focusing more on grammar while writing: While writing, students should be mindful of their grammar and sentence structure to avoid errors in real-time. Instead of rushing through the writing process, take a moment to think about grammar, ensuring that verb tenses are correct and ideas are clearly connected. This habit can lead to better quality writing and fewer mistakes in the final draft.

- Asking for more feedback from instructors if students do not understand any grammatical phenomena: If students encounter difficulties with specific grammatical rules or concepts, it is important to seek clarification from their instructors immediately. Asking for instant feedback allows students to correct misunderstandings while the information is still fresh in their minds. This proactive approach not only prevents the reinforcement of incorrect grammar but also supports deeper learning of complex structures.

In terms of linguistics problems, there are:

- Students should shift between past, present, and future tenses unnecessarily. When writing problem-solution essays, it is advisable to use the present simple tense to describe current problems and the modal verbs for proposed solutions.
- Articles such as *a*, *an*, *the*, and *quantifiers* like *some*, *many*, *few* are frequently misused, so students should pay close attention to whether a noun is countable, uncountable, or specific.
- Every sentence must have a subject and a verb, so learners should be careful when starting with subordinating conjunctions like *because*, *although*, *since* to ensure they make complete the correct sentences. It is important to make sure that singular subjects take singular verbs, and plural subjects take plural verbs, especially in complex or long sentences.
- It is suggested to use conjunctions like *because*, *although*, *whereas*, *so*, and *and* appropriately by practicing more exercises on conjunctions.

- Prepositions like in, on, at, for, of, to are often used incorrectly so when in doubt, undergraduates need to look up collocations or practice through example sentences.

3.2.2. For teachers

It is evident that grammar mistakes require more focus compared to other types of errors. As a result, educators should be more mindful of these common issues and assist students in avoiding them by:

- Organizing students into pairs or groups to improve their essay-writing skills.
- Providing thorough guidance during the essay writing process.
- Encouraging peer correction before teachers check and correct errors.
- Assigning more writing exercises that focus on grammar to help students practice.
- Raising students' awareness about the significance of grammar in writing, which can increase their intrinsic motivation to learn grammar.
- Implementing more engaging, adaptable, and appropriate teaching methods for writing.
- Varying writing activities in the classroom, both for the pre-writing and post-writing stages.

PART III: CONCLUSION

3.1. Findings

In a study of thirty problem-solution essays, the most common grammatical errors identified were related to verb tenses, determiners, word order, incomplete sentence structures, subject-verb agreement, and conjunctions. Verb tense errors were the most frequent, with many students struggling to correctly shift between present, past, and future tenses. Determiner mistakes, such as the misuse or omission of articles, were also prevalent. Other errors included improper word order, incomplete sentences lacking key components, and mismatched subject-verb agreement. Additionally, conjunctions were often misused, affecting sentence flow and coherence. These findings highlight the need for comprehensive grammar instruction in writing practices.

3.2. Limitations

Despite the researcher's efforts to conduct this study with diligence, certain limitations remain. Firstly, the number of reference materials accessed was limited, as the researcher faced challenges in finding comprehensive sources on grammatical errors specific to problem-solution essays, which restricted the depth of the literature review. Secondly, the sample size was small, and the essay analysis was conducted by a limited number of reviewers, potentially overlooking some errors. Additionally, due to the study scope, the analysis focused solely on individual grammatical errors within sentences. These constraints suggest that further research is needed to overcome these shortcomings and provide a more thorough understanding of grammatical challenges in academic writing.

3.3. Suggestions for further studies

While this study has provided valuable insights, there are opportunities for further research to expand on its findings. Future studies should explore not only grammatical errors within individual sentences but also issues related to the

overall coherence and logical flow between paragraphs in problem-solution essays. Additionally, increasing the number of participants and incorporating a wider range of reference materials would enhance the reliability and depth of the research. Expanding the scope to include students from different academic years or institutions could also provide a more comprehensive understanding of grammatical challenges across various contexts, contributing to more effective strategies for improving academic writing skills among English majors.

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APPENDIX 1
SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE
(for students)

This survey questionnaire is designed for the research titled "A Study on Common Grammatical Mistakes in Problem-Solution Essays Written by Second-Year English Majors at HPU and Proposed Solutions." Your assistance in responding to the following items is highly valued. All information provided will be used exclusively for academic research purposes.

Thank you sincerely for your valuable contribution to this study. Please mark with a check (✓) or number the boxes or write the answer where necessary.

I. Personal information:

* Your gender:

☐ Male

☐ Female

* Your age:.....

* How long have you been learning English:.....year(s)

II. Your opinion on writing Problem-Solution Essays

1. What do you think of the importance of academic writing?

☐ Very important

☐ Important

☐ Not important

2. How often do you encounter grammatical errors in your Problem-Solution essays?

☐ Never

☐ Rarely

☐ Sometimes

☐

Often

☐

Always

3. Which of the following grammatical aspects do you find most challenging in writing Problem-Solution essays? (*Tick (v) as many as it may apply*)

☐

Verb tenses

☐

Determiners

☐

Agreement

☐

Prepositions

☐

Pronouns

☐

Possessive and attributive

☐

Word Order

☐

Incomplete structures

☐

Negative constructions

☐

Parallel structures

☐

Conjunction

4. How do you usually identify grammatical mistakes in your Problem-Solution essays?

☐

By proofreading the essay myself

☐

Through feedback from instructors

☐

By using grammar-checking software

☐

Others

5. What do you think is the primary reason for grammatical errors in your Problem-Solution essays?

.....

6. Which learning method do you prefer when working on Problem-Solution essays in writing classes?

- ☐ Working individually
- ☐ Working in pairs
- ☐ Working in groups (4-5 students)

7. What solutions do you think would help you most in reducing grammatical mistakes in your writing? (*Tick (v) as many as it may apply*)

- ☐ More grammar-focused writing lessons
- ☐ Feedback from instructors
- ☐ More group work and peer correction
- ☐ Online grammar tools and resources

8. What would you like your teacher to do to help you avoid grammatical mistakes before writing? (*Tick (v) as many as it may apply*)

- ☐ Give various pre- writing activities related to grammar
- ☐ Provide a lot of homework of grammar before writing lessons
- ☐ Guide your writing and revise grammar
- ☐ Others:

APPENDIX 2

WRITING TOPICS

Topic 1: young people today are not as fit as they were in the past. What can governments do to deal with this issue?

Topic 2: global warming is one of the biggest threats to our environment. What solutions are there to these problems?

Topic 3: air travel causes a variety of problems in the world and we should find alternative means of transport. Describe some of the problems caused by air travel and suggest some solutions.

Topic 4: people living in large cities today deal with a variety of issues in their everyday lives. What are these problems? Should governments encourage them to relocate to smaller regional towns?