

**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 : Lê Anh Trung**

**Giảng viên hướng dẫn: TS. Trần Thị Ngọc Liên**

**HẢI PHÒNG 2022**

**MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING  
HAI PHONG MANAGEMENT AND TECHNOLOGY  
UNIVERSITY**

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**A STUDY OF COMMON WRITING MISTAKES MADE BY  
SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN HAIPHONG CITY**

**UNIVERSITY GRADUATION THESIS  
MAJOR: THE ENGLISH LINGUISTIC**

**Class : NA2001**  
**Student : Le Anh Trung**  
**Supervisor : Dr. Tran Thi Ngoc Lien**

**HAI PHONG 2022**

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# NHIỆM VỤ ĐỀ TÀI TỐT NGHIỆP

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**Ngành:** NGÔN NGỮ ANH

**Tên đề tài:** A study of common writing mistakes made by secondary school students in Hai Phong city.

# 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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## 2. Các tài liệu, số liệu cần thiết

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## 3. Địa điểm thực tập tốt nghiệp

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## CÁN BỘ HƯỚNG DẪN ĐỀ TÀI TỐT NGHIỆP

**Người hướng dẫn thứ nhất:**

**Họ và tên:** Trần Thị Ngọc Liên.....

**Học hàm, học vị:** Tiến sĩ .....

**Cơ quan công tác:** Trường Đại học Quản lý và Công nghệ Hải Phòng.....

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Đã giao nhiệm vụ

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*TS. Trần Thị Ngọc Liên*

*Hải Phòng, ngày tháng năm 2022*

**TRƯỞNG KHOA**

# CỘNG HÒA XÃ HỘI CHỦ NGHĨA VIỆT NAM

**Độc lập - Tự do - Hạnh phúc**

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## PHIẾU NHẬN XÉT CỦA GIÁO VIÊN CHĂM PHẢN BIỆN

Họ và tên giảng viên: .....

Đơn vị công tác: .....

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Đề tài tốt nghiệp: .....

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### Phản nhận xét của giáo viên chăm phản biện

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### 1. Những mặt còn hạn chế

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### 2. Ý kiến của giảng viên chăm phản biện

Được bảo vệ  Không được bảo vệ  Điểm phản biện

*Hải Phòng, ngày ... tháng ... năm .....*

**Giảng viên chăm phản biện**

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Student

*Lê Anh Trung*

# **PART I: INTRODUCTION**

## **1. Rationale**

English is the most commonly used language among foreign language speakers, particularly in the context of globalization and integration. Among four English skills, namely speaking, listening, reading and writing, the last one is considered as a difficult skill requiring much energy and practice for almost second language learners if they aim to master it. To achieve the target of communication, writers are expected not only to write coherently and cohesively, but also perform the rules of grammar and syntax. Hence, writing is considered as the most complex and difficult skill to master.

In the writing process, it sounds undeniable that writing in a foreign language cannot be separated from making errors. In Vietnam, it can be seen that Vietnamese learners commit a great number of errors, especially in grammar when they write in English regardless of their level (Bui Thi Tram, 2010). Students often confront with difficulties in using tenses, articles, sentence structures and so on (Nguy Van Thuy, 2010; Nguyen Thi Duyen, 2011). However, they seem to pay inadequate attention to grammatical error correction in writing English, which might affect their writing seriously next times.

With an advanced level of English, especially in writing where it needs to be formal because students have to use it for learning, communicating, and working in the future, not only at school. For secondary school students, because they have not been fully oriented on study methods, mistakes are inevitable.

The topic “A study of common writing mistakes made by secondary school students in Haiphong city” helps point out the difficulties on writing skills of secondary school students, thereby giving some suggestions to help improve students’ abilities. The other side of the coin is that not only secondary school students but also other students can refer to enhance writing efficiency.

## **2. Aim of the study**

The research aims at:

A. Identify the common grammatical and lexical mistakes encountered by students at secondary schools in Haiphong.

B. Suggest some solutions to help overcome the common grammatical and lexical mistakes encountered by students at secondary schools in Haiphong.

## **3. Research questions**

The following are two research questions of this study:

A. What are the most common mistakes that secondary school students tend to make when writing in English?

B. What are solutions to help students avoid some mistakes and solve their problems?

## **4. Methods of the study**

There are many mistakes in English that secondary school students encounter when writing. Grammar and vocabulary are ranked as the main and difficult aspects, and spelling errors must be mentioned. However, due to the limited knowledge and time in this article, I could not find a deep understanding of each of these issues. But I will say the most general way possible about the definition and the common mistakes in writing. I hope this study would be a useful material for every student who concerns about this issue and help to get rid of those problems.

## **5. Design of the study**

The research work has three main parts, namely: Introduction, Development and Conclusion. The part “Development” consists three chapters.

### **Chapter I: Introduction**

In this chapter, rationale, aims, methods, scope and design of the study were provided to introduce and to become the basis for next chapters. The theoretical basis of errors will be presented in part two.

## **Chapter II: Literature review**

It includes two sections. Section one is the definition and some features of academic in general. The second section studies about secondary school students' attitudes in writing English and some common causes that students suffer in writing paragraphs.

## **Chapter III: Methodology**

This chapter mainly shows the survey which focuses on the methods used to gather and analyze data and describes the current situation of secondary school students in Haiphong city.

## **Chapter IV: Data analysis, findings and suggested solutions**

In this chapter, I analyzed the survey results on errors in English writing. Thereby finding out the problems that students face in the process of improving their English writing skills. Finally, provide optimal solutions to help students correct errors and improve in the future.

## **CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **1. Definition of academic writing**

Academic writing is writing which communicates ideas, information and research to the wider academic community. It can be divided into two types: student academic writing, which is used as a form of assessment at university, as well as at schools as preparation for university study; and expert academic writing, which is writing that is intended for publication in an academic journal or book. Both types of academic writing (student and expert) are expected to adhere to the same standards, which can be difficult for students to master. The characteristics of academic writing which together distinguish it from other forms of writing are that it is: structured, evidenced, critical, balanced, precise, objective and formal.

### **1.1 Characteristic features**

#### **1.1.1 Structured**

Academic writing should have a clear structure. The structure will often derive from the genre of writing. For example, a report will have an introduction (including the aim or aims), a method section, a discussion section and so on, while an essay will have an introduction (including a thesis statement), clear body paragraphs with topic sentences, and a conclusion. The writing should be coherent, with logical progression throughout, and cohesive, with the different parts of the writing clearly connected. Careful planning before writing is essential to ensure that the final product will be well structured, with a clear focus and logical progression of ideas.

#### **1.1.2 Evidenced**

Opinions and arguments in academic writing should be supported by evidence. Often the writing will be based on information from experts in the field, and as such, it will be important to reference the information appropriately, for example via the use of in-text citations and a reference section.

### **1.1.3 Critical**

Academic writing does more than just describe. As an academic writer, you should not simply accept everything you read as fact. You need to analyze and evaluate the information you are writing about, in other words make judgements about it, before you decide whether and how to integrate it into your own writing. This is known as critical writing. Critical writing requires a great deal of research in order for the writer to develop a deep enough understanding of the topic to be truly critical about it.

### **1.1.4 Balanced**

Academic writing should be balanced. This means giving consideration to all sides of the issue and avoiding bias. As noted above, all research, evidence and arguments can be challenged, and it is important for the academic writer to show their stance on a particular topic, in other words how strong their claims are. This can be done using *hedges*, for example phrases such as *the evidence suggests...* or *this could be caused by...*, or *boosters*, that is, phrases such as *clearly* or *the research indicates*.

### **1.1.5 Precise**

Academic writing should use clear and precise language to ensure the reader understands the meaning. This includes the use of technical (i.e., subject-specific) vocabulary, which should be used when it conveys the meaning more precisely than a similar non-technical term. Sometimes such technical vocabulary may need defining, though only if the term is not commonly used by others in the same discipline and will therefore not be readily understood by the reader.

### **1.1.6 Objective**

Academic writing is objective. In other words, the emphasis is placed on the arguments and information, rather than on the writer. As a result, academic writing tends to use nouns and noun phrases more than verbs and adverbs. It also tends to use more passive structures, rather than active voice, for example *The water was heated* rather than *I heated the water*.

### **1.1.7 Audience**

“Audience” means the people who will read your paper. Some academic writing, such as a term paper or a thesis, is written for an instructor or a committee of professors. More commonly, a paper is written for colleagues in your field, other people who study some of the same things you do. Sometimes academic writing is addressed to an audience outside your field, as when you write a grant proposal that will be read by an interdisciplinary committee. In every case, thinking about who will read the paper changes what you write and how you write it.

Ask yourself some questions about your audience. Who will read this paper? How much do they already know about the topic, and what do you need to tell them? Why will your audience read what you write, and can you make them want to keep reading? How are they likely to react to what you are saying? For example, are you expanding an ongoing body of research, filling in a known gap in current understanding, or challenging accepted ideas? Also, what style of writing is your audience used to? Are there accepted patterns for you to follow, or a general tone that writing in your field follows? The answers to each of these questions will affect both the content and the form of your writing.

### **1.1.8 Purpose**

“Purpose” means why you are writing, and what effect you hope to have. The most common purpose in academic writing is to *explain* some idea or research finding and to *persuade* readers that your explanation or theory is the correct one. In doing so, you may need to *describe* an object, place, or activity. Sometimes you might write to *narrate* set of events, in the manner of a story. In every case, you need to choose the supporting information – such as examples, illustrations, statistics, quotations or the like – that best achieve your purpose.

### **1.1.9 Tone**

“Tone” is a vaguer term. It describes the feeling of your writing: how formal or informal it is, how much your own experiences come through versus how objective you need to be, or whether you have a particular attitude or position toward your subject. Audience and purpose have a large effect on tone. Most academic writing is formal and usually objective in tone, though in some



fields – especially in the humanities and some social sciences – subjectivity is valued.

### **1.1.10 Formal**

Finally, academic writing is more formal than everyday writing. It tends to use longer words and more complex sentences, while avoiding contractions and colloquial or informal words or expressions that might be common in spoken English. There are words and collocations which are used in academic writing more frequently than in non-academic writing, and researchers have developed lists of these words and phrases to help students of academic English, such as the Academic Word List, the Academic Vocabulary List, and the Academic Collocation List.

## **2. Errors**

### **2.1 Grammatical errors**

#### **2.1.1 Definition of grammar**

In linguistics, grammar (from Ancient Greek γραμματική) is the set of structural rules governing the composition of clauses, phrases and words in a natural language. The term also refers to the study of such rules and this field includes phonology, morphology and syntax, often complemented by phonetics, semantics and pragmatics.

#### **2.1.2 Grammatical errors with verbs**

##### **2.1.2.1 Verb form:** An incorrect form of the verb has been used.

Eg:

- Error: Have you ever been to Canada before.
- Correction: Have you ever been to Canada before?

##### **2.1.2.2 Verb tense:** An incorrect verb tense has been used.

Eg:

- Error: She was to Paris before.
- Correction: She has been to Paris before.

**2.1.2.3 Subject – Verb agreement:** The verb does not agree with the subject.

Eg:

- Error: I were afraid of dogs when I were a kid.
- Correction: I was afraid of dogs when I was a kid.

**2.1.3 Grammatical errors with other parts of speech**

**2.1.3.1 Possessive noun:** Missing possessive noun where they belong.

Eg:

- Error: We are having a party at Nam house.
- Correction: We are having a party at Nam's house.

**2.1.3.2 Pronoun:** The wrong pronoun has been used or the reference is not clear.

Eg:

- Error: When my friends came to my house, his brought lots of books.
- Correction: When my friends came to my house, they brought lots of books.

**2.1.3.3 Adjective / Adverb:** An adjective form has been used instead of an adverb or vice versa.

Eg:

- Error: My mother cooks very good.
- Correction: My mother cooks very well.

**2.1.3.4 Demonstrative adjective:** The wrong demonstrative adjective was used.

Eg:

- Error: Those type of clothes is very popular in this country.
- Correction: This type of clothes is very popular in this country.

**2.1.3.5 Preposition:** The wrong preposition has been used.

Eg:

- Error: She is good in Maths.
- Correction: She is good at Maths.

**2.1.3.6 Article:** Leave the articles out when they are expected.

Eg:

- Error: Nearly half million people entered the country.
- Correction: Nearly half a million people entered the country.

**2.1.4 Grammatical errors with sentence structure**

**2.1.4.1 Comparative:** The comparative form is not correct

Eg:

- Error: My cousin is more smarter than I am.
- Correction: My cousin is smarter than I am.

**2.1.4.2 Parallelism:** In a series of elements, these are not presented in a parallel form.

Eg:

- Error: She enjoys listening to music, to play guitar, and take care of her pets.
- Correction: She enjoys listening to music, playing guitar, and taking care of her pets.

**2.1.4.3 Run-on sentences:** A common writing mistake caused by using inappropriate punctuation at the end of a sentence

Eg:

- Error: This suspense is terrible, I hope it will last.
- Correction: This suspense is terrible. I hope it will last.

**2.1.4.4 Overgeneralization:** The application of a grammatical rule in cases where it doesn't apply.

Eg:

- Error: I meeted him three years ago.
- Correction: I met him three years ago.

**2.1.4.5 Negative transfer:** Use the expression and understanding way of mother tongue to replace the way of foreign language.

Eg:

- Error: I remember you so many.
- Correction: I miss you so much.

**2.1.4.6 Subject omission:** The subject is missing in the sentence

Eg:

- Error: She visited the doctor because had a terrible headache.
- Correction: She visited the doctor because she had a terrible headache.

**2.1.4.7 Word order:** Put words in the wrong order, the result is a confusing, unclear, and an incorrect sentence.

Eg:

- Error: two brothers and two sisters have I at home.
- Correction: I have two brothers and two sisters at home.

## **2.2 Lexical errors**

### **2.2.1. Definition of lexis**

Lexis is a term in linguistics referring to the vocabulary of a language. Lexis is a Greek term meaning "word" or "speech." The adjective is lexical. The study of lexis and the lexicon, or collection of words in a language, is called lexicology. The process of adding words and word patterns to the lexicon of a language is called lexicalization. In grammar, the distinction between syntax and morphology is, by tradition, lexically based. In recent decades, however, this distinction has been disputed by research in lexicogrammar: lexis and grammar are now generally perceived as interdependent.

### **2.2.2. Lexical errors classification**

#### **2.2.2.1. Stylistic errors**

- Definition: Stylistics can be by and large described as the study of the style of language usage in different contexts, either linguistic or situational.
- Error: Last quarter was a difficult one. The new line didn't move well. This quarter is starting to show a boost in sales.

- Correction: Last quarter was a difficult one, and the new line didn't move well; but this quarter is starting to show a boost in sales.

#### **2.2.2.2. Synonyms errors**

- Definition: Two words are synonymous if they have similar meanings and are often used interchangeably. But look a little closer at common synonyms, and you'll realize that the two words aren't always 100% the same and interchangeable.

Eg:

- Satisfaction - pleasure, happiness, joy, enjoyment, etc....
- Provide - give, offer, supply, deliver, etc....

#### **2.2.2.3. Collocation errors**

- Definition: Collocation is a familiar grouping of words, especially words that habitually appear together and thereby convey meaning by association.

Eg:

- The gangsters live by dirty money.

The “dirty money” indicates money obtained unlawfully or immorally.

- She had a love affair with her boss for 3 years.

“Love affair” means a romantic or sexual relationship between two people; especially, one that is outside marriage.

#### **2.2.2.4. Wrong use of word form:**

- Definition: the root of the word is correct, but the form of the word (eg: number or case of noun or pronoun) is incorrect or nonexistent in the target language

Eg:

- Error: I have made a decide that I will study abroad.
- Correction: I have made a decision that I will study abroad.

## **CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY**

### **3.1 Research design**

This is a mixed method study which uses both quantitative and qualitative approaches. The quantitative research method helps the author to collect experimental data, modeling and analyzing data while the qualitative research aims to gather an in-depth understanding of human behavior and the reasons that influence it. Qualitative methods investigate the why and how in decision making.

### **3.2 Research questions**

To obtain the above stated purposes, the study needs to answer the following question:

*“What are common vocabulary problems encountered by secondary school students in Haiphong city in their English writing?”*

### **3.3 Research participants**

#### **3.3.1 The researcher**

The study is implemented by Le Anh Trung, a fourth-year student of NA2001, English Department, Haiphong Management and Technology University.

#### **3.3.2 The subjects**

The subjects are the secondary school students in Haiphong city. With the aim of completing the research, the researcher will need a group of participants called the population of the study. In this study, students in secondary schools will be the population. Most students have been learning English for quite a long time and English is one of three compulsory subjects to pass the entrance exam to high school, but in general their level of English proficiency is kind of low. They cannot fully understand lessons if teachers only speak English in the class.

According to Ary et al. (2010), to have a sample for research, we choose a small part or a portion of that population. Sample is always smaller than population. In period of taking sample, we select about 10 or 15 percent of the

total population to save time and make it easy convenient for participants to answer. Moreover, in selecting the sample, the researcher uses random method when choosing sample.

The researcher selected 70 students randomly. They are requested to complete a survey questionnaire. A large of number of them had learnt English for at least 3 to 4 years (3 to 4 years at secondary school). However, their English backgrounds are quite similar because of being influence of curriculum of English for secondary schools' students, they did not have many chances to practice four English skills especially writing skill.

### **3.4 Data collection instruments**

As the purpose of the study is to explore which writing errors can affect students within the context of one particular secondary school in Hai Phong, the study is exploratory in nature. Thus, two major instruments that were used to gather the data for the study are questionnaire and classroom observations. The data obtained were analyzed with qualitative method. All the participants were questioned first, and then observed.

#### **3.4.1. The survey questionnaire**

This question contains two sections:

**I. Section 1** involves instructions in the questionnaire and asked about every respondent's general personal information including the gender and how many years they have learned English. The questions in this part were in the form of checklist items.

**II. Section 2** aims at finding out which effects impact on four English writing skill of students.

This survey questionnaire is designed to find out your attitude and awareness toward importance of writing in English as well as some common mistakes that you have to face when writing paragraphs in class. Your answers will be collected and used for my research with title: "A study of common writing mistakes made by secondary school students in Haiphong city". Thank you for

your cooperation in completing my survey questionnaire.

### 3.4.2. Students' Writing Papers

In addition to the survey questionnaire, data are collected from students; writing paper.

Each week, students are assigned a writing task and this is given based on the topic given in each lesson.

Students' writing papers will be corrected and marked.

Marking criteria will be based on Cambridge

|                                  |  |
|----------------------------------|--|
| <b>Content</b>                   | ✓ The candidate answered the task. They done what they were asked to do.   |
|                                  | ✗ The candidate did not include everything they were asked to. They have written something irrelevant.   |
| <b>Communicative Achievement</b> | ✓ The writing is appropriate for the task. The candidate used a style which is appropriate for the specific communicative context.   |
|                                  | ✓ The writing is appropriate for the target reader.  |
| <b>Organisation</b>              | ✗ They have written in a way that is not suitable – for example, using a very formal style in an email to a friend or ending an article with 'Love'.   |
|                                  | ✓ The writing is put together well. It is logical and ordered.   |
| <b>Language</b>                  | ✗ It is difficult for the reader to follow. It uses elements of organisation which are not appropriate for the genre, like beginning an email with a title or starting every sentence in an article on a new line instead of using paragraphs. |
|                                  | ✓ There is a good range of vocabulary and grammar. They are used accurately.   |
|                                  | ✗ Check the mistakes. How serious are they? Do the mistakes make it difficult for the reader to understand?  |

#### *Cambridge English writing assessment: Guide for teachers*

In addition to marking, the mistakes identified will be classified into grammatical and lexical mistakes.

After that the researcher will work out how frequent these mistakes are made and informal interviews are conducted to justify why they made these types of mistakes

### 3.5 Data analysis procedures

A qualitative method was used to analyze the collected data. To start with, all responses from students' questionnaires were synthesized and classified to answer the research questions. The data from the observations were examined to



give a more precise description of the psychological effects impact on students' learning process by measuring their actions during the English class.

### **3.6 Summary**

This chapter has presented in some detail the methodological framework of the study including the research questions and questionnaires used as tools for collecting data, the participants of the study, and the process of data collection applied to seek the answers to the two research questions. It also consists of class observation to record students' performance during carrying out the study. In the next chapter, there will be a presentation of the findings of the study and a discussion of the research questions raised in this study.

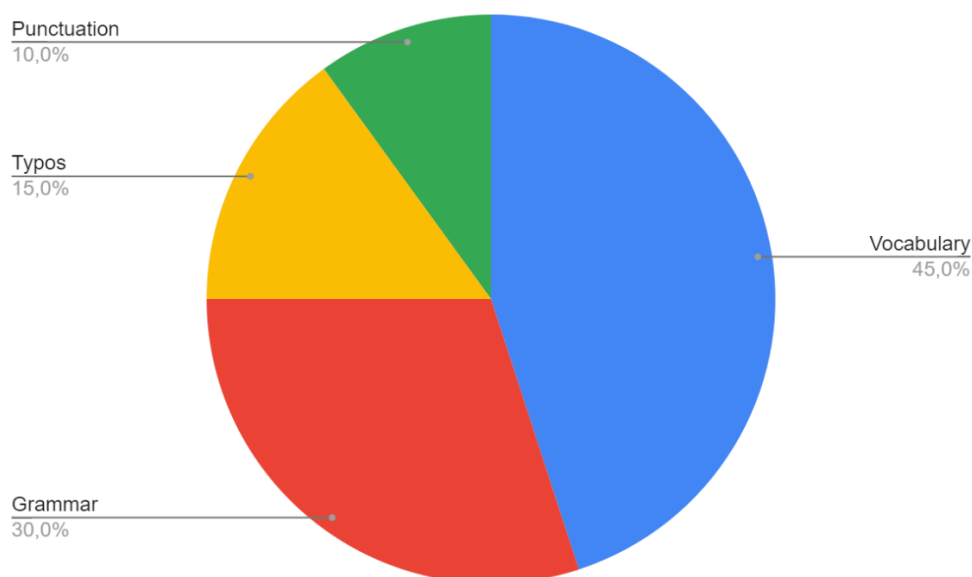
## CHAPTER IV: DATA ANALYSIS, FINDINGS AND SUGGESTED SOLUTIONS

### 4.1 Data analysis

All related data used to analyze this study were collected from 70 students from some secondary schools in Haiphong city. All questions will be related to common mistakes in their writing paragraphs such as grammar, vocabulary, punctuation, typos, etc.

#### 4.1.1 Students' attitudes in writing paragraphs.

*Question 1: In writing paragraphs, what mistakes do you tend to make?*



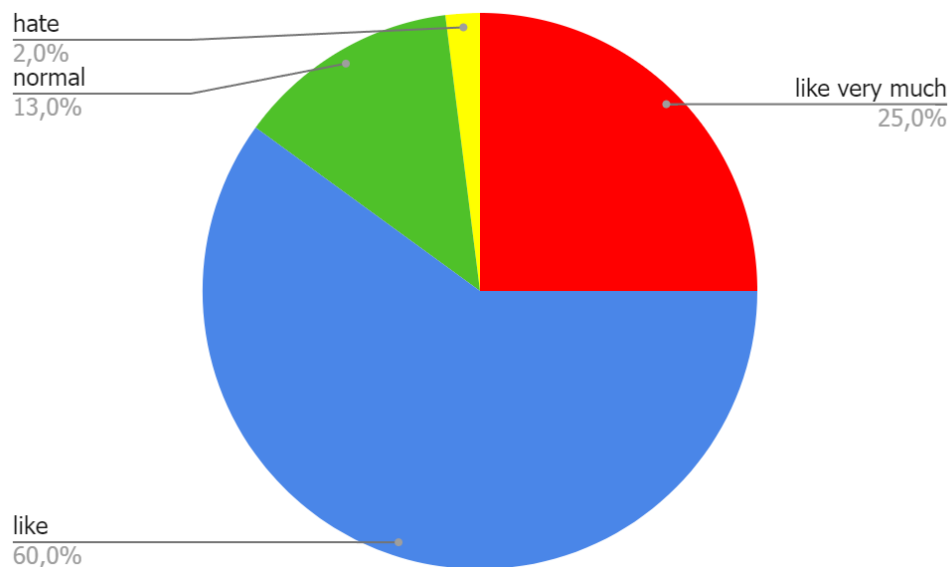
*Figure 1: common mistakes*

The purpose of this question is to find out the most common mistakes students make in writing. The results shown in the chart show the fact that most students make mistakes in vocabulary, accounting for 45%. It is followed by grammar, accounting for 30%. This proves that the number of students often make mistakes in grammar and vocabulary in writing. As for typos (15%) and punctuation (10%), the students should not worry.

## 4.1.2 Vocabulary problems.

### 4.1.2.1 Students' interest in vocabulary

*Question 2: How do you like learning vocabulary?*

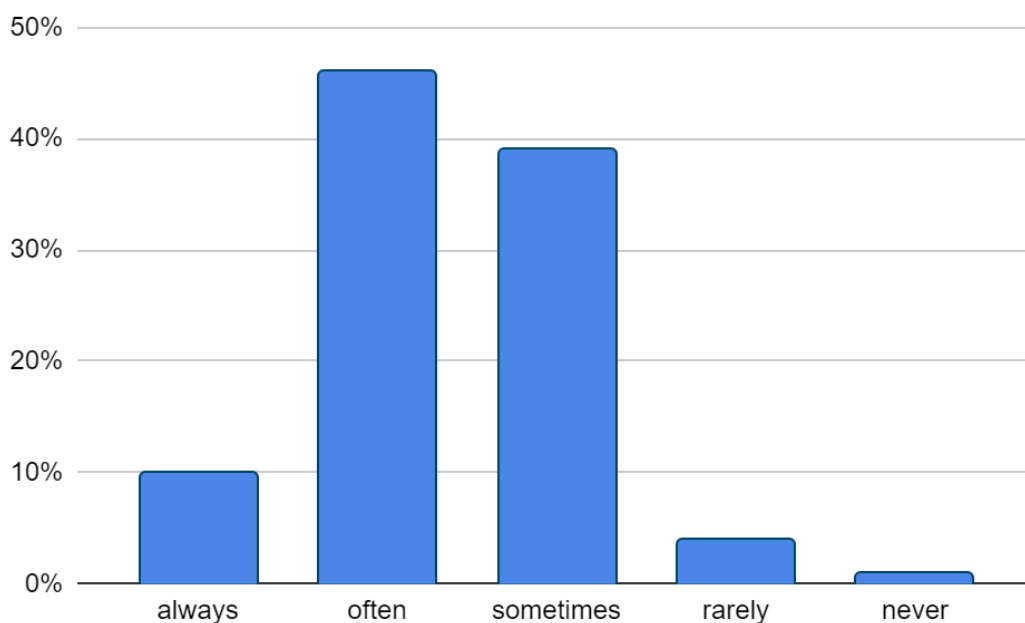


*Figure 2: Student's interest in vocabulary*

As can be seen from figure 2, most secondary school students like vocabulary and it comprises 60% of total. There are 25% of students like it very much and 13% of them feel that vocabulary is normal and just only 2 % of them hate it. Many students are interested in English vocabulary and it is a good result.

#### 4.1.2.2 Students' frequency of making vocabulary mistakes.

*Question 3: How often do you make vocabulary mistakes when writing English in class?*

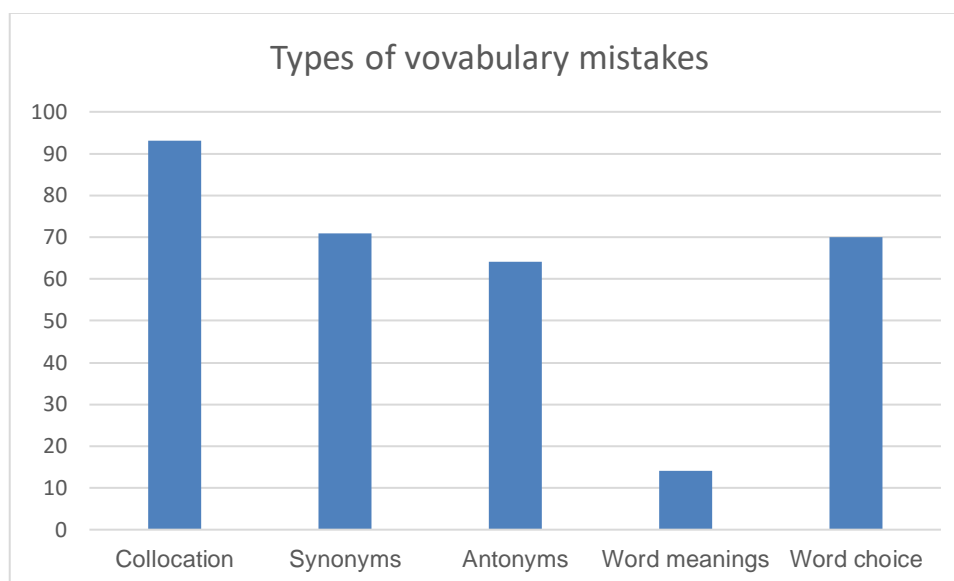


*Figure 3: Students' frequency of making vocabulary mistakes*

From figure 3, it is clear that secondary school students often encounter vocabulary mistakes when writing English in class. As mentioned above, because knowledge and experience about vocabulary of secondary school students are limited and they seem not to concentrate on practicing vocabulary when learning at school. Therefore, they tend to make more mistakes when writing English. Most of them (46%) often face vocabulary mistakes and there are 39% of them who sometimes get problems with vocabulary and 10% of students who always do that. Meanwhile, just 4% of students rarely avoid vocabulary mistakes and only 1% of them never face up to any problems.

### 4.1.2.3 Types of vocabulary mistakes

*Question 4: What types of vocabulary mistakes do you often make?*



*Figure 4: Types of vocabulary mistakes*

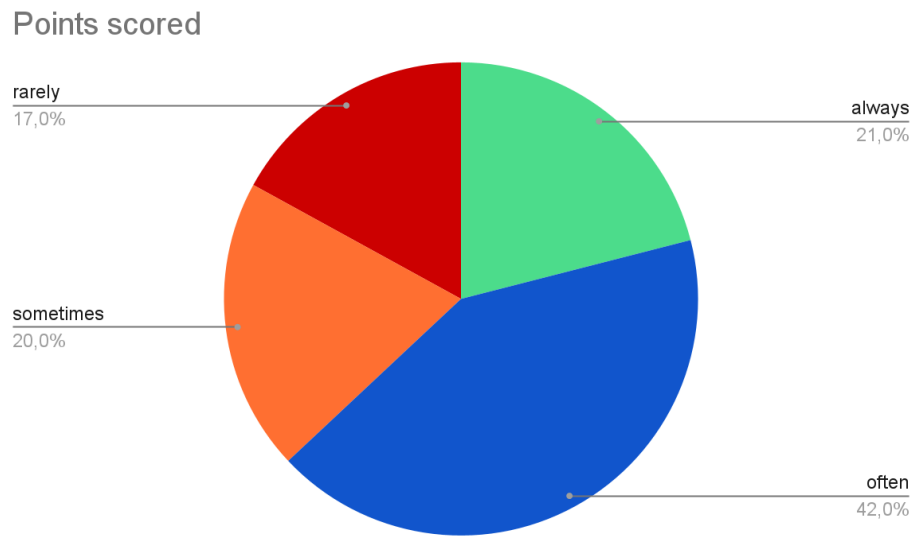
From the data collected, collocation is the most problematic one because as many as 90% of the surveyed participants got this. The second most popular mistakes are working with synonyms and the third most popular is word choice. Understanding antonymous words accounts for a large percentage of the participants with 65%.

From the informal interviews, students said that they do not know how to collocate words especially the collocation between verbs and nouns. This is possibly because of the negative transference from their mother tongue. For example, instead of using “do yoga”, they use “play yoga” in their writing as they think “yoga” is a kind of sport.

The least challenging vocabulary problem is words meanings. They said that they do not often encounter this because now they can get support from their teachers or they can look up word meanings in the dictionary or from the reliable websites.

To justify why student make such vocabulary problems, the research had made an effort to work out how often students made mistakes with synonyms, a common lexical mistakes they encountered according to the survey.

*Question 5: How often do you use synonyms in English paragraphs?*



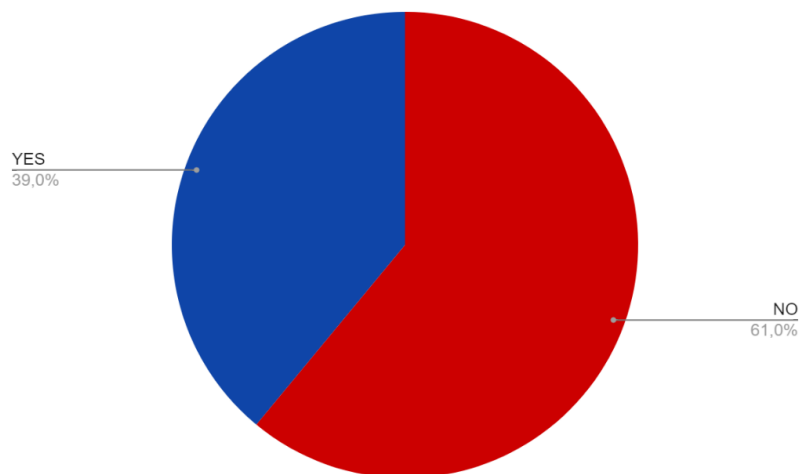
*Figure 5: The frequency in using more than two types of synonyms in English paragraphs*

Generally, 41% of them indicate that they often use synonyms in English paragraphs. Some about 20% of them always use synonyms in writing. In addition, they are happy to say that synonyms help their paragraphs value better. Only 15% rarely use synonyms in English paragraphs, and 5% never use synonyms. They said that they only determined to grammar and vocabulary much.

### **4.1.3 Grammatical problems.**

#### **4.1.3.1 Students' interest in grammar**

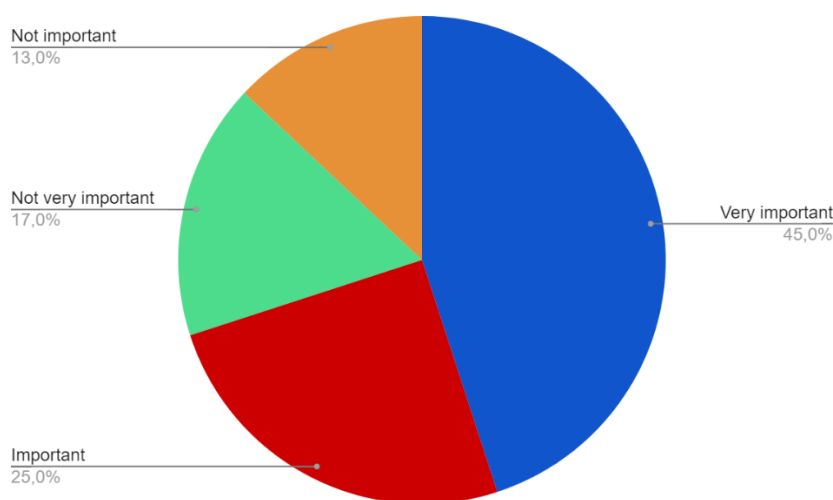
*Question 6: Do you like learning English grammar?*



*Figure 6: Students' interest in English grammar*

Through secondary school students, we can see that more than 60% of them dislike studying grammar. During the interview, many students thought that learning grammar was very difficult. They always get tired of grammar lessons. Therefore, this is one of the most common reasons for mistakes in grammar. Contrary to them, other people like to study grammar accounting for 39%. They said that good grammar is the foundation of accuracy in foreign language learning, especially writing skills because many learners write English without paying attention to the grammatical structure used incorrectly.

*Question 7: How important is grammar in English writing skill?*

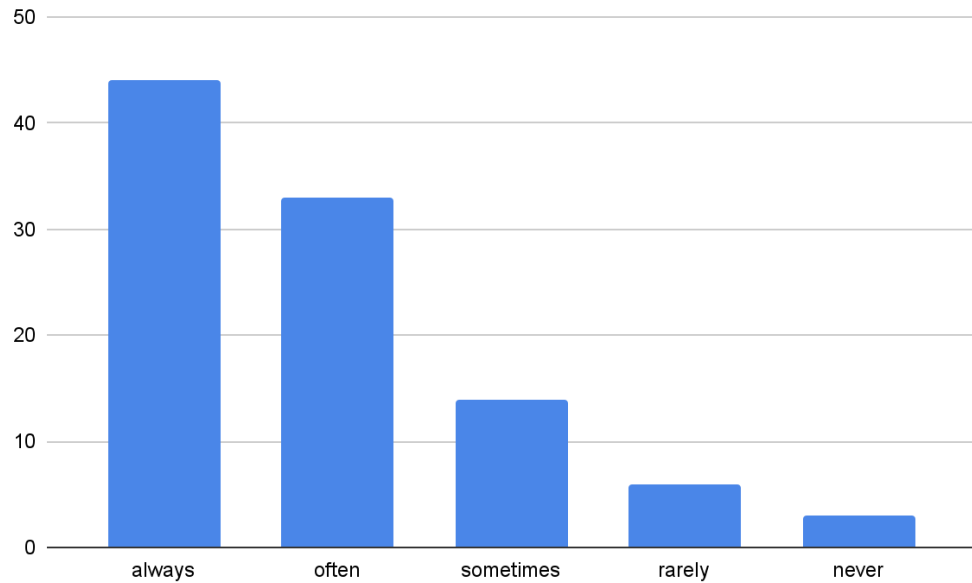


*Figure 7: The important of grammar in writing skill*

With the high rate of 45% of students saying that grammar plays a very important role in writing skill, 25% agree that grammar is important. That's why both students and teachers should pay much more attention to this matter. Without having perfect grammar, we still can write, but not accurately. We cannot write well enough as we have poor knowledge on grammar. Teaching grammar is an essential stage in teaching language and the teacher who knows a lot about grammar is more effective in his/her work, but students learn their mother tongue when they are children without knowing its grammar. Therefore, we should create a positive language that the learners may have the chance to practice what they have learned practically.

### 4.1.3.2 Students' frequency of making grammatical mistakes

*Question 8: How often do you make grammatical mistakes when writing English in class?*



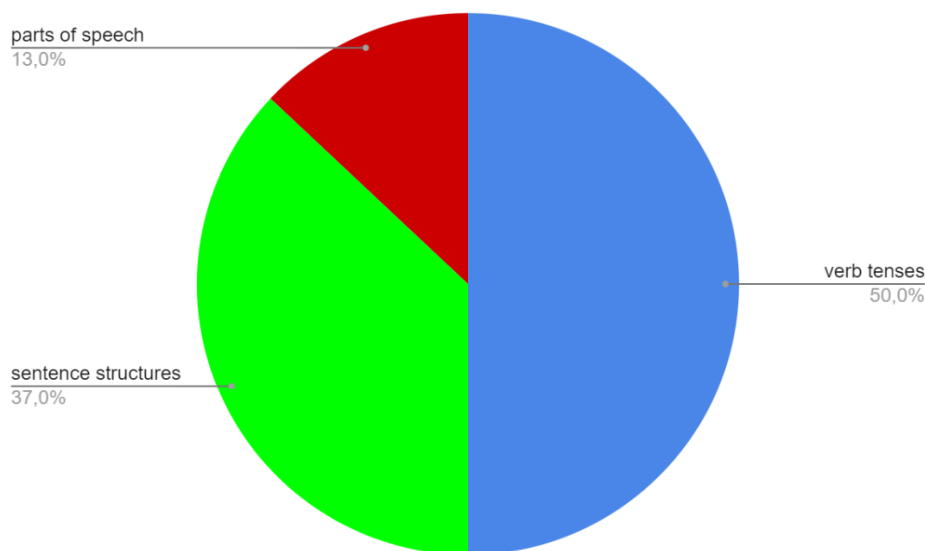
*Figure 8: Students' frequency of making vocabulary mistakes*

As we see in chart 8, the percentage of students who make grammar mistakes when writing English accounts for the majority, namely 44%. Meanwhile, the percentage of students who frequently make mistakes is 33% and 14% of students make mistakes occasionally. Only a small percentage of students rarely make grammar mistakes and the remaining 3% never make mistakes. As can be seen, learning grammar at school is much but not really effective. Specifically, students do not know how to apply theory properly and in accordance with the context of task requirements.



### 4.1.3.3 Types of grammatical problems

*Question 9: Which type of grammatical problems do you often encounter?*



*Figure 9: Types of grammatical problems that students often encounter*

Based on the chart above, we can easily see that the percentage of students with wrong verb tenses when writing English accounts for half of the chart. This is the biggest challenge to the surveyed students. This problem is followed by 37% of children having difficulty with sentence structures. The remaining 17% are part of speech problems.

According to the informal interviews with the students, they said they were afraid of verb tenses because some are very much the same. For example, they cannot distinguish between the use of present perfect and present perfect continuous. Or sometimes they may make mistakes when using past simple as they do not remember the irregular form of verbs in past tense.

Another concern of the students is sentence structure. They believe that they often translate Vietnamese into English and this might lead to the wrong use of structures.

## **4.2 Suggested solutions to improve the students' writing**

### **4.2.1 Mastering basic knowledge of grammar**

When learning any new skill, the old adage "practice makes perfect" really does hold true, especially when it comes to understanding and applying proper English grammar skills; however, improper practice makes for an improper performance, so it's important for English learners to fully grasp grammar rules and exceptions before practicing usage themselves.

Grammar is a subject that stresses many students out, as it can be quite confusing and complicated. However, correct grammar is important for your writing and success, both as a student and as a future employee. It is thus crucial to know some simple methods to improve your grammar skills.

We should not underestimate the importance of English grammar. Learners should learn from simple to complex knowledge carefully. Whenever you are not sure how to use a grammar content, you should review it in the grammar book or look it up in the dictionary to be able to use it correctly.

### **4.2.2 Reading books and newspapers**

Reading may be the number one way you can improve your grammar skills. When you read, you reinforce correct grammar in your mind. It can be particularly helpful to read out loud, as the combination of seeing, saying, and hearing assists in solidifying what you have learned. In addition to improving your grammar, reading will help with all aspects of your writing, from sentence fluency to increased vocabulary.

In your free time, you should create a habit of reading books and newspapers. An effective way to read is to read carefully and deeply, underline interesting and special structures, and if necessary, take notes carefully. Not only that, you should also regularly practice the content learned in the form of sentences. With this way of learning, you will consolidate your grammar knowledge, learn how to express like a native, and give up the habit of translating each word.

### **4.2.3 Get a grammar manual**

It is useful to have a thorough reference book nearby that you can consult when writing. This way, any time a grammatical question arises, you can

quickly refer to the manual to obtain the answer. There are many high-quality grammar and writing guidebooks on the market. Speak to a librarian or writing instructor for recommendations.

#### **4.2.4 Structure**

Grammar and spelling keep your writing consistent and legible, but structure ensures the big ideas get across to the reader.

In many cases, forming an **outline** will help solidify structure. An outline can clarify what you're hoping to convey in each section, enable you to visualize the flow of your piece, and surface parts that require more research or thought.

Structure might look different depending on what you're writing. An essay typically has an introduction, body paragraphs, and a conclusion. A fiction piece might follow the six-stage plot structure: exposition, rising action, climax, falling action, resolution, and denouement. Choose what's best for your purposes.

#### **4.2.5 Translation**

This is a great way because we learn new words, structures and expressions in our essay in English.

#### **4.2.6 Error checking**

Learners should create this habit for themselves. Whether putting a single sentence or writing an essay, we should take a moment to read it again. At that time, some unintentional grammatical or vocabulary errors will be discovered.

#### **4.2.7 Write in English with another person**

Always try to write in English to another person such as write a letter or chat. It will boost your confidence plus also help you in analyzing your mistakes where you are wrong. Because only writing is going to improve your grammar.

#### **4.2.8 Get feedback**

Whether you're writing paragraphs or essays, asking for feedback is a great way to see how somebody besides yourself will interpret your text. Have an idea of what you'd like your proofreader to focus on—the structure, conclusion, the persuasiveness of an argument, or otherwise. Approach a trusted friend, family

member, coworker, or instructor. As a student, your school might also have a writing resource center you can reach out to.

You might also consider forming a writing group or joining a writing class. Find writing courses online, at your local community college, or at independent writing workshops in your city.

Here below are some types of English grammar exercises that students and teachers can use to help their students practice

### ***I-Exercises of tenses in English.***

- 1/ I've got a computer, but I ..... (not/use) it much.
- 2/ After Larry ..... (to see) the film on TV, he decided to buy the book.
- 3/ Have you got an umbrella? It ..... (start) to rain.
- 4/ We couldn't afford to keep our car, so we ..... (sell) it.
- 5/ I ... (meet) Tom and Jane at the airport a few weeks ago. They ... (go) to Paris and I ..... (go) to Rome. We ... (have) a chat while we ... (wait) for our flights.
- 6/ I'd better have a shower. I (not/have)..... one since Thursday.
- 7/ Before you came, she..... (go) to school.
- 8/ For several years, his ambition..... (be) to be a pilot.
- 9/ Mike..... (phone) one hour ago.
- 10/ Our teacher usually.... (give) us many exercises.

### ***II-Exercises about conditional sentences.***

- 1/ If you (find) \_\_\_\_\_ a skeleton in the cellar, don't mention it to anyone.
- 2/ If I \_\_\_\_\_ (have) the same problem you had as a child, I might not have succeeded in life as well as you have.
- 3/ I (not buy) \_\_\_\_\_ things on the installment system if I were you.
- 4/ If he worked more slowly, he \_\_\_\_\_ (not make) so many mistakes.
- 5/ If the weather \_\_\_\_\_ (not change), we will reach the top of the mountain.

### ***III- Exercises about passive sentences.***

- 1/ My father waters this flower every morning.

→ \_\_\_\_\_

2 The manager didn't phone the secretary this morning.

→ \_\_\_\_\_

3/ He has broken his nose in a football match.

→ \_\_\_\_\_

4/ Have you sent the Christmas cards to your family?

→ \_\_\_\_\_

5/ They find that the job is not suitable for a girl like her.

→ \_\_\_\_\_

***IV-Exercises: Fill in the words in brackets as adjective or adverb***

1, The bus driver was \_\_\_\_\_ injured. (serious)

2, Kevin is \_\_\_\_\_ clever. (extreme)

3, This hamburger tastes \_\_\_\_\_. (awful)

4, Be \_\_\_\_\_ with this glass of milk. It's hot. (careful)

5, Robin looks \_\_\_\_\_. What's the matter with him? (sad)

6, Jack is \_\_\_\_\_ upset about losing his keys. (terrible)

7, This steak smells \_\_\_\_\_. (good)

8, Our basketball team played \_\_\_\_\_ last Friday. (bad)

9, Don't speak so \_\_\_\_\_. I can't understand you. (fast)

10, Maria \_\_\_\_\_ opened her present. (slow)

***V- Exercises: Ask for the underlined part. Write the complete English question into the gap.***

1, John is writing a letter.

→ \_\_\_\_\_ ?

2, She walks home from school.

→ \_\_\_\_\_ ?

3, The children are sitting in the garden.

→ \_\_\_\_\_ ?

4, Peter runs with his dog on Sundays.

→ \_\_\_\_\_ ?

5, My rabbit has a cage in the garden.

→ \_\_\_\_\_ ?

6, They go to work by bus.

→ \_\_\_\_\_ ?

7, David likes cats because they are nice.

→ \_\_\_\_\_ ?

8, Jenny isn't sleeping late today.

→ \_\_\_\_\_ ?

9, We are going to the cinema.

→ \_\_\_\_\_ ?

10, I'm leaving now.

→ \_\_\_\_\_ ?

### **4.3 Solution to lexical errors.**

#### **4.3.1 Read every day**

Once you're out of school, word drills and assigned reading become things of the past. While these were tools for building your vocabulary repertoire while you were young, it doesn't mean you should abandon reading. Try to read a well-written and edited essay, magazine article, book or news article every day. Nonfiction and technical books will quickly teach you new ways to think and speak with words you may be unfamiliar with, but any type of reading will help you along.

Another obvious benefit of reading for students is that reading improves your knowledge of writing structure. You can easily pick up structure rules simply by paying attention to what you are reading. Whether you are writing a paragraph, an essay, or an academic research paper, reading a lot of works in a similar format can help you to become more familiar with the basic structure for that particular type of writing.

Reading more can help to improve your writing by improving your vocabulary, grammar, and writing structure skills. The act of reading can also help you to incorporate new writing styles into your work and give you fresh perspectives that can be used in your writing.

#### **4.3.2 Learn Roots**

Learn the roots of words. Most words in the English language are built from a common root, prefix, and suffix, usually with an origin in the Greek or Latin

language. Once you learn a root, you'll begin to understand more words that use the same root. For example, -duc- (Latin root word) means to lead or to make, such as in the words produce or deduce.

### **4.3.3 Learn new words every day**

To improve your vocabulary quickly, make an effort to learn at least one new word every single day. There are plenty of ways to do this, such as a Word of the Day calendar or email list, or simply picking a word from a thesaurus or dictionary.

Set a realistic target daily and stick to it. Start with one word a day, and gradually increase it to two to five words a day. Ask yourself, what is the maximum amount of time that I can devote to learning the language? Can I stick to my target if I allot twenty minutes every day? What's important is that you make it a habit to learn English daily. And remember, fifteen minutes a day will bring better results than half an hour once a week or so.

Keep all the things you've learned in one place. When we say vocabulary notebook, we don't simply mean it as a notebook—if you prefer to use an app on your smartphone, feel free to do so. The important thing is that you develop a system of recording new words you've learned since this allows you to go through the words and review them once in a couple of weeks.

### **4.3.4 Look up Words You Don't Know**

How often do you come across words that are unfamiliar as you read? Don't just gloss over them; take the time to look them up, and if you don't have the time right then, write them down and look them up later.

### **4.3.5 Diversify Your Reading List**

If you tend to read the same sort of things day in and day out, you may not be exposing yourself to a wide enough range of vocabulary. Diversify the topics you read to include natural science, Shakespeare, contemporary literature, politics, history, philosophy or any other topics you think you may enjoy.

### 4.3.6 Try Word Board Games

There are plenty of word games on the market designed to improve vocabulary and language skills without being a bore. Some of these games you may have played as a child, so it's time to break them out again and get to "work". If you have a friend who could also use some help — or someone with a great vocabulary you think will challenge you — invite them over for a game night.

#### \*English lexical exercises:

Exercises1: Look at the picture and guess the name:



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Exercises2: Look at the phonetic guess word

-Topic: Colours

1, gri:n → \_\_\_\_\_

2, gəʊld → \_\_\_\_\_

3, blu: → \_\_\_\_\_

4, blæk → \_\_\_\_\_

5, 'brʌndʒ → \_\_\_\_\_

6, braʊn → \_\_\_\_\_

7, 'jeləʊ → \_\_\_\_\_

8, greɪ → \_\_\_\_\_

9, 'pɜ:pəl → \_\_\_\_\_

10, wait → \_\_\_\_\_

-Topic: In the house:

1, flɔ: → \_\_\_\_\_

2, 'bɑ:θru:m → \_\_\_\_\_

3, 'kɪtʃɪn → \_\_\_\_\_

4, 'selə → \_\_\_\_\_

5, ,ʌp'steəz → \_\_\_\_\_

6, 'si:lɪŋ → \_\_\_\_\_

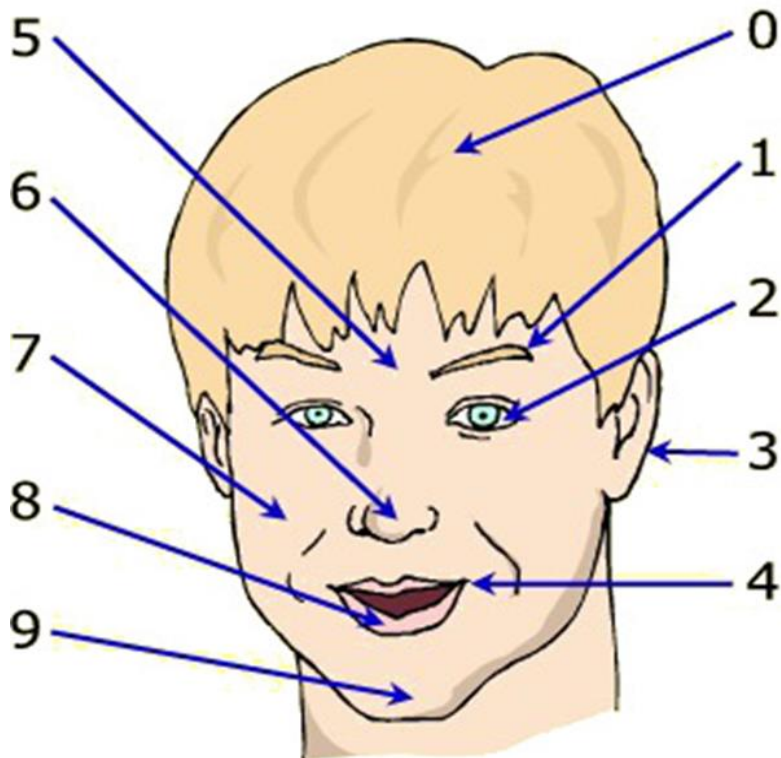
7, 'tʃɪmni → \_\_\_\_\_

8, ru:f → \_\_\_\_\_

9, steəz → \_\_\_\_\_

10, 'ætɪk → \_\_\_\_\_

Exercises3 : Point out the parts of the face



1, \_\_\_\_\_

2, \_\_\_\_\_

3, \_\_\_\_\_

4, \_\_\_\_\_

5, \_\_\_\_\_

6, \_\_\_\_\_

7, \_\_\_\_\_

8, \_\_\_\_\_

9, \_\_\_\_\_

10, \_\_\_\_\_

## **CHAPTER V: CONCLUSION**

This chapter will present a summary of the major findings, limitations of the study and some suggestions for further studies.

### **5.1 Summary of the study**

To reach what the author aims at this study, the study is divided into five chapters with their own purposes. The first chapter introduces overview of study. The second chapter briefly covers the theories relating to the study. The third chapter presents the research methodology and author's findings and discussions of the approach to teaching and learning techniques in English writing through the questionnaire and interviews. This chapter also helps the author find the answers for two research questions stated in the introduction. The fourth chapter are some recommendations and suggestions to improve techniques of learning and defeat the grammatical and lexical errors on secondary school students.

### **5.2 Limitations of the study**

Although the study has certain strong points such as collection methods, namely interviews, survey questionnaires for students, due to limited time, lack of sources, the researcher's ability and other unexpected factors, it is obvious that the study has got a number of short-comings. There are several points that I have desired to mention before getting to work on my research. Nonetheless, I have to leave them behind due to the scope and limited time of the research. Secondly, due to the limitation of scope of the study, the researchers only focus on the secondary school students. Therefore, the result of the study cannot be generalized. Besides, the researcher could not cover all the aspects of difficulties. In addition, the techniques suggested in this research are selected from different reliable but limited sources. In spite of the mentioned limitations, I hope that this exploratory research will contribute to the better situation of teaching and learning English, an essential language nowadays.

### **5.3 Suggestions for further study**

Because of the limitation, this study could not cover all of aspects of the study. Besides, the study only focuses on difficulties for only students in

Haiphong city in order to help them improve their writing result. Moreover, for the further studies, to get better results, the researchers should invite more participants and the data collection method. Together with using survey questionnaires and interviews, observation is also necessary to get more persuasive conclusions.

All in all, despite the study can avoid to the limitation, the research has been completed under the guiding of the supervisor and self-effort. Any comments and criticism will be highly appreciated for better further study.

#### **5.4 Recommendations**

Originating from the study findings together with my teaching experience, the following recommendations should be made:

First and foremost, teachers should acknowledge their impacts on students especially secondary school students. The findings of this study suggested that those actions could be treated effectively in several situations in classrooms such as encourage student, setting goals, having funny ways of lecture.

Since teachers had to use more techniques in teaching English skills and grammar lessons, it is recommended that they choose tasks that are appropriate to the learners' proficiency level, inform students about the importance of mental health in classroom. It was apparent that the researcher collected data only from only one sample class, hence the researcher did not endeavor to accumulate data from other classes. Future studies may focus on a comparative analysis. Moreover, it is highly recommended that further study should be conducted with more different tools to make the evaluation and recognition more accurate and comprehensive.

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- [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Errors\\_in\\_early\\_word\\_use](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Errors_in_early_word_use)
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- [https://www.grammar-monster.com/lessons/commas\\_run-on\\_error.htm#:~:text=What%20Is%20a%20Run%2DOn,writing%20another%20closely%20related%20sentence.](https://www.grammar-monster.com/lessons/commas_run-on_error.htm#:~:text=What%20Is%20a%20Run%2DOn,writing%20another%20closely%20related%20sentence.)
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B: Like

C: Normal

D: Hate

**4) What types of grammatical mistakes do you often make?**

**Please put a tick on the box:**

|        | Collocation | Synonyms | Antonyms | Word meanings | Word choice |
|--------|-------------|----------|----------|---------------|-------------|
| Number |             |          |          |               |             |
| %      |             |          |          |               |             |

**5) Do you like learning English grammar?**

A: Yes

B: No

**6) How important is grammar in English writing skill?**

A: Very important

B: Important

C: Not very important

D: Not important

**7) What is the attention of English synonyms students when they write English?**

A: Very attentive

B: Attentive

C: Not very attentive

D: Not attentive

**8) How often do you use synonyms in English paragraphs?**

A: Always

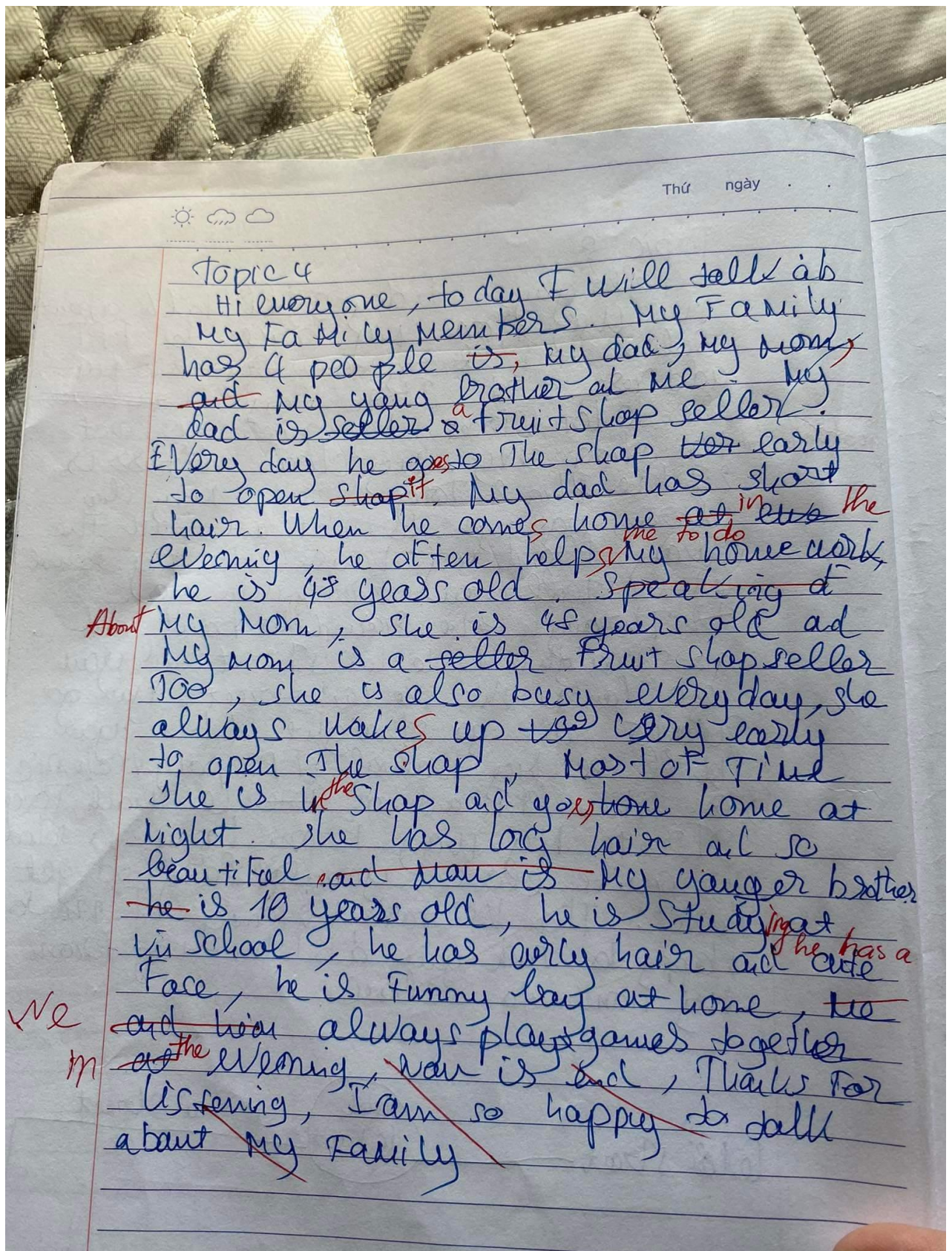
B: Often

C: Sometimes

D: Rarely



## APPENDIX 2: A STUDENT'S WRITING JOURNAL





ND KT 45P

- ôn tập lại All vocab u1-5

- phân biệt a US an

- học các câu hỏi giao tiếp ở u-5

Unit 5: confirm that you're on time

Topic 1: 113 words

Hello, my name is Hung. I'm a student of FPT polytechnic. Today I will talk about my dream. When I was a child, I had a dream job <sup>is</sup> CEO <sup>of a</sup> company. <sup>because</sup> ~~as~~ I think it is very cool, if I am a CEO, I will have a lot of money and I can buy more super cars, the person <sup>who</sup> inspired me is Tommy Shelby, he is <sup>the</sup> a character in a film named Peaky Blinders, he is CEO of a to Shelby company, I very like <sup>this</sup> him ~~style~~ and I want to be a famous CEO. because if ~~have~~ I <sup>were</sup> the richest, I can help <sup>the</sup> poor people and help my family. ~~That~~ ~~every one~~ ~~to~~ ~~listening~~, I'm so happy to talk my dream.

Thank you very much for your cooperation!