



Interferencia morfosintáctica en composiciones escritas en inglés como lengua extranjera

Morphosyntactic Interference in EFL Written Compositions

Interferência morfosintáctica em composições escritas em inglês como língua estrangeira

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Resumen

La interferencia morfosintáctica impacta significativamente en la adquisición del inglés como lengua extranjera (EFL), presentando desafíos en las habilidades de escritura de los estudiantes. Este estudio busca examinar la prevalencia y los tipos de errores morfosintácticos en las composiciones escritas y traducciones de texto de estudiantes de EFL, identificando patrones por género y sus implicaciones pedagógicas. La investigación utiliza un enfoque de métodos mixtos con una muestra de 28 estudiantes de primer nivel (14 hombres, 14 mujeres) del programa de Pedagogía de Lenguas Nacionales y Extranjeras de la Universidad Técnica de Cotopaxi, Extensión Pujilí. Los hallazgos revelan patrones de error distintos por género. Los errores de concordancia entre sujeto y verbo dominan las tareas de escritura para ambos géneros (14% en hombres, 13% en mujeres). Sin embargo, los errores de sustitución (14% mujeres vs. 7% hombres) y las omisiones (7% mujeres vs. 4% hombres) son más comunes en las mujeres. En los ejercicios de traducción, prevalecen los errores de sustitución, con un porcentaje mayor en mujeres (16% vs. 13% hombres). El estudio concluye que los patrones de errores morfosintácticos difieren por género, destacando la necesidad de estrategias de enseñanza específicas por género en la instrucción de EFL. Además, la influencia persistente del español como lengua materna subraya la importancia del análisis contrastivo en la enseñanza. Se recomienda un enfoque pedagógico adaptado para abordar efectivamente los desafíos específicos de género y mejorar los resultados de aprendizaje de EFL.

Palabras Clave: interferencia morfosintáctica; EFL; composición escrita; análisis de errores; diferencias de género; enseñanza de idiomas.

Abstract

Morphosyntactic interference significantly impacts the acquisition of English as a foreign language (EFL), presenting challenges in students' writing skills. This study seeks to examine the prevalence and types of morphosyntactic errors in EFL students' written compositions and text translations, identifying patterns by genre and their pedagogical implications. The research uses a mixed methods approach with a sample of 28 first-level students (14 men, 14 women) from the National and Foreign Languages Pedagogy program at the Technical University of Cotopaxi, Pujilí Extension. Hallazgos reveal distinct error patterns by gender. Subject-verb agreement errors dominate writing tasks for both genders (14% in men, 13% in women). However, substitution

errors (14% women vs. 7% men) and omissions (7% women vs. 4% men) are more common among women. In translation exercises, substitution errors prevail, with a higher percentage among women (16% vs. 13% men). The study concludes that morphosyntactic error patterns differ by gender, highlighting the need for gender-specific teaching strategies in EFL instruction. Furthermore, the persistent influence of Spanish as a mother tongue highlights the importance of contrastive analysis in teaching. An adapted pedagogical approach is recommended to effectively address gender-specific challenges and improve EFL learning outcomes.

Keywords: morphosyntactic interference; EFL; written composition; error analysis; gender differences; language teaching.

Resumo

A interferência morfossintética tem um impacto significativo na aquisição do inglês como língua estrangeira (EFL), apresentando desafios nas competências de escrita dos alunos. Este estudo procura pesquisar a prevalência e os tipos de erros morfossintéticos nas composições de textos e traduções dos estudantes de EFL, identificando os utilizadores por género e as suas implicações pedagógicas. A pesquisa utiliza um enfoque de métodos mistos com uma amostra de 28 estudantes de primeiro nível (14 homens, 14 mulheres) do programa de Pedagogia de Línguas Nacionais e Estrangeiras da Universidade Técnica de Cotopaxi, Extensão Pujilí. Os profetas revelam padrões de erro distintos por género. Os erros de concordância entre assunto e verbo dominam as tarefas de escrita para ambos os géneros (14% nos homens, 13% nas mulheres). No entanto, os erros de substituição (14% mulheres vs. 7% homens) e as omissões (7% mulheres vs. 4% homens) são mais comuns nas mulheres. Nos exercícios de tradução prevalecem os erros de substituição, com uma maior percentagem nas mulheres (16% vs. 13% nos homens). O estudo conclui que os padrões de erros morfossintéticos diferem por género, destacando a necessidade de estratégias de ensino específicas por género na instrução de EFL. Além disso, a influência persistente do espanhol como língua materna sublinha a importância da análise contrastiva no ensino. Recomenda-se um enfoque pedagógico adequado para abordar eficazmente os desafios específicos do género e melhorar os resultados da aprendizagem de EFL.

Palabras Clave: interferência morfosintáctica; Inglês como língua estrangeira; composição escrita; análise de erros; diferenças de género; ensino de línguas.

Introduction

The study of morphosyntactic errors embedded within students' written compositions is an area of extensive attention in language acquisition, writing quality, and language proficiency (Ridha, 2020). Given the linguistic differences between speakers whose mother tongue is other than English, syntactic and morphological errors arise, particularly in those where English is their foreign language (Cordero & Martin, 2020). In this way, Smith (2022) stated that writing, "as a direct mode of participation in the classes, facilitates the communication of messages between the authors of the materials and the students, and enables them to express their ideas effectively" (p. 142). However, acquiring effective written communication skills in a foreign language results in a challenging and difficult process for Spanish-speaking students. Scholars, as Johnson and Lee (2021) remark that "the accuracy of morphosyntax is one of the main pillars of writing competence" (p. 56). This assertion highlights the compelling need to identify and correct morphosyntactic mistakes in written assignments to raise the overall level of writing proficiency.

Agustiani (2019) elaborates further, stating that while morphology treats word formation, syntax governs how these words are put together to form phrases, clauses, or sentences, which are bigger units. Once the words are singled out, syntax prescribes rules by which they can be combined into coherent structures, for example, well-structured paragraphs or discourses are supposed to be conditional on how well the aforementioned words concoct together (Blumstein, 2022). Brown (2019) discusses the complex relationship that could deem fit notation between syntax and Morphology therefore functions on the lexical units that construct sub-lexical order from combinations of roots and affixation, while syntax, over these fully inflected words, produces phrases and sentence structures. In this way, Garcia (2019) stated that "morphosyntactic correctness *must be* really incorporated into academic achievements" (p. 28), as it is a fundamental aspect of how knowledge is communicated and evaluated in scholarly contexts. This method of instruction increases students' language production, writing development, and thinking and reasoning processes (Ramadan & Jember, 2024). Garcia (2019) argues that mastering morphosyntactic precision enables learners to engage in cognitive processes like analyzing text structures, synthesizing information, and constructing accurate arguments, which enhance learners' effectiveness in academic work and school activities.

Within academic writing, a well-structured language is crafted through the presence of extensive vocabulary, word formation, and sentence structures that are persuasive for better comprehension

(Müngen, 2023). Nonetheless, L1 interference is a hidden element in the writing instruction process that influences the development of writing skills and writing quality as well. Such a claim is supported by Diha (2022), who points out that "When learners attempt to construct words and sentences in a foreign language, their mother tongue may have an impact." (p. 4). And, as a result, it can also lead to linguistic interference errors, such as the literal translation or the inappropriate application of grammatical rules (Galkina & Radyuk, 2019). That is, An excess of inappropriate vocabulary and structure can make a text hard to understand, leading to reader fatigue (Müngen, 2023).

Research over the past two decades has provided valuable insights into analyzing the inappropriate sentence structures and morphosyntactic errors in English texts produced in diverse linguistic contexts (Galkina & Radyuk, 2019; Khatter, 2019); Smith, 2022). For example, Khatter (2019) explored essay writing errors among 40 third-year female students in the Department of English. The author identified word form, punctuation, spelling, prepositions, articles, and verb tenses as common mistakes caused by interlingual and intralingual transfer between the first language (L1) and the second language (L2). Conversely, Ramzan et al (2023) examined the written subject-verb compositions of 10 non-native English-speaking ESL students and found that omission errors were the most frequent, followed by misformation, addition, and misordering errors. Another study conducted by Al-Sharafi (2023) investigating morphosyntactic written errors in 20 participants, identified that syntactic and morphological errors are distributed in omission, addition, misformation, and disordering errors. Finally, Resueno and De Leon (2023), these errors are due to both interlingual interference (the transfer of morphological, grammatical, and lexico-semantic elements) and intralingual interference (such as addition, omission, lack of awareness of rule restrictions, overgeneralization, and incorrect analogies).

The studies of Bonilla (2023) and Cordero and Martin (2020) offer a roadmap to understand the nature of writing errors made by students learning English as a foreign language. Bonilla (2023), for example, identified 33 error patterns in grammatical, stylistic, and lexical categories. The author noted that while errors like capitalization and superlatives decreased with student progress, issues with word form and word order remained persistent. Similarly, Badilla and Núñez (2020) analyzing lexical errors specifically in the written production of 56 EFL students, found that most of the errors were semantic. Both studies are aligned with those of Vázquez-Cano; González, and Sáez-López (2019), who discovered that 71.3% of errors were based on the lack of knowledge of spelling rules

or incorrect use of language. By contrast, Diaz et al (2020) found out that the most errors in the grammatical dimension of writing are connected to interlingual (L1 interference) and intralingual (overgeneralization of L2 rules) factors. Similarly, Murtiana (2019) observed that interlingual errors involved morphological, lexical, syntactic selection, and misordering, while intralingual errors mainly consisted of omissions and additions related to word formation and syntax. The author concluded that L1 interference led to more writing errors than learners' incomplete L2 rule applications.

Unlike the extensive research carried out worldwide, the literature review reports few studies developed in Ecuador on writing errors in L2 or EFL students. In this context, Soto et al. (2020) found that the most common errors among 25 Ecuadorian university students were due to negative transfer from their native language and poor lexical and grammatical knowledge. Quezada et al. (2021), meanwhile, analyzing punctuation, observed that comma misuse was the most frequent error in writing. Similarly, Daquilema and Arias (2024) identified mechanical and grammatical errors, such as punctuation, spelling, capitalization, and sentence stress, which they believed could be reduced through greater interaction with English writing instructions. Based on the limited research, this study examines the incidence and types of morphosyntactic errors in the written composition text and translation exercises of EFL students in Ecuador, aiming to identify gender-specific patterns. Thus, the study is guided by the following research questions: What are the most frequent morphosyntactic errors in texts written by EFL learners? Are there any differences in the frequency of morpho-syntactic errors between women and men? If so, what are they?

Methodology

This research applied a quantitative and qualitative methods that describe aspects investigated in this article. The current study builds on Abuhamda et al (2021) considers qualitative procedures to identify consistent patterns following ideas and knowledge, along with quantitative approaches to quantify the issue through numerical data for descriptive statistical analysis. Qualitative-quantitative analysis was considered to be the most appropriate for this study, focusing on examining the morphosyntactic errors are influenced by the first language and calculating the frequency of morphological error in the writing compositions produced by Ecuadorian students majoring in English. Two primary instruments were utilized for this research: (1) a writing assignment and (2) translation exercises.

Research Participants

The criteria that ensure that the selected group aligns with the study objectives of analyzing writing errors influenced by the participants' native language are the following: (a) *Enrollment in the specified program*, participants must be enrolled in the Pedagogy of National and Foreign Languages career at the Technical University of Cotopaxi, Pujilí Extension. (b) *Academic level*, they should be first-level (beginner) students within the program. (c) *Limited English exposure*, learners must have minimal prior exposure to the English language to ensure their learning stage aligns with the study's focus on language acquisition. (d) *Gender Balance*, the group should include an equal number of male and female participants (14 of each) to maintain gender representation, in total 28 students. And, (e) *Academic period*, participants must be enrolled during the academic period from April to August 2024. The selection criterion was strategic, as it increased the probability of identifying errors in their writing attributable to the influence of their mother tongue.

Data Collection Instruments

Descriptive Composition

The initial instrument utilized in this study was derived from a writing designed for the first semester of pre-basic English A1.3 level. Participants were tasked with writing a descriptive composition text centered on the theme of "*A friend's description*." Specifically, they might incorporate details about their friend's personal information as age, nationality, occupation, physical attributes, personality traits, hobbies, and typical attire. It was administered face-to-face to prevent students from using any translation tool. The researchers provided participants with printed sheets on a specific topic, ensuring anonymity by not collecting personal information. This method was designed to give participants more freedom in their writing, reducing concerns about judgment or academic consequences.

Translation Exercises

The researchers created the second tool specifically for the participants, considering their linguistic origins and the subjects they studied in their English classes. The instrument was a translation task with twenty "*Spanish phrases*" designed to elicit specific types of errors, requiring participants to translate the sentences fully into English. This instrument, as in the previous one, was also applied

face to face in an approximate time of 40 minutes. In addition, it was constantly monitored so that the participants of this research did not use aids or tools such as dictionaries or electronic devices.

Data Analysis Technique

The study utilized error analysis as the primary analytical framework. This approach, originally developed by Corder (1967), facilitates the systematic examination of learner errors to determine patterns and underlying causes taking into account five-step model, such as (1) collection of a sample of learner language, (2) identification of errors, (3) description of errors, (4) explanation of errors, and (5) evaluation of errors (Fitria, 2020).

Results and Discussion

Results

Qualitative Phase

A number of morpho-syntactic mistakes in the participants' written English output were identified through the review and analysis of the descriptive compositions and translation exercises. These errors were ascribed to the mother language interference L1 (Spanish). The main findings are presented below:

Word Order and Omission Errors. Data in Table 1 shows examples of errors in sentence structures in both male and female students. Examples illustrate how linguistic items out of order affect the quality and comprehension of sentences. It can be also seen that errors vary greatly between omission and incorrect re-arrangement of words. Also, it presents examples of sentences in which students omit key elements, such as prepositions, pronouns, and auxiliaries. Mistakes made by male and female students were compared, looking at how omitting words can affect the grammar and meaning of the sentence.

Table 01: *Word Order and Omission Errors Made by the Students*

<i>Female's Word Order Errors Samples</i>	<i>Corrections</i>
1. s it small and colorful.	1. It is small and colorful.
2. he is a funny person, confident, honest and emphatic.	2. She is a funny, confident, honest, and empathic person.

3. er is hair long.	3. Her hair is long.
4. not at classes Saul and Evelyn.	4. Saul and Evelyn don't attend classes.
5. hey are wears the jeans in class.	5. Everyone in the class is wearing jeans.
6. y cousin is teacher the French.	6. My cousin is an French teacher.
<i>Male's Word Order Errors</i>	
<i>Samples</i>	
1. My friends play video games usually.	<i>Corrections</i> 1. My friends usually play video games.
2. s favorite color black.	2. His favorite color is black.
3. e wears shirt formal.	3. He wears formal shirts.
4. am my sister went to vacations.	4. My sister and I are on vacation.
5. he people young not soon.	5. Young people don't want to have children.
6. he enters your bedrooms father.	6. She enters her father's bedroom.

Omission Errors Made by the Students

<i>Female's Omission Errors</i>	
<i>Samples</i>	<i>Corrections</i>
1. He is tall and large haircut.	1. He is tall and has a large haircut.
2. She is student	2. She is a student
3. She wear is pants, blouse, snikers, and scarf.	3. She wears pants, a blouse, sneakers, and a scarf.
4. My sister, I on vacations.	4. My sister and I are on vacation.
5. You want three tres in the yard.	5. You want to plant three trees in the yard.
6. My cousin is french teacher.	6. My.cousin is a French teacher.
<i>Male's Omission Errors</i>	
<i>Samples</i>	
1. He is good person	<i>Corrections</i> 1. He.is.a.good.person.
2.Usually.wear.t-shirt,.blue.jeans,.coat,.and.black.hat.	2. He usually wears a t-shirt, blue jeans, a coat, and a black hat.
3. it is a studen the University	3. He is a student at the university
4. Anderson and Daniel wait for sister go the school.	4. Anderson and Daniel wait for their sister to go to school.
5. Young people don't want have children.	5. Young people don't want to have children.
6. She door your father.	6. She enters her father's bedroom.

Note: The table shows examples made by males and females. The researchers select the most relevant for the analysis.

Authors: The Researchers

Analysis of word order errors reveals distinctive patterns among male and female pupils. Thus, female students tend to have more complex errors, particularly in verbal structures (e.g., *"They are wears the jeans in class"*) and in the construction of noun sentences (e.g., *"My cousin is teacher the French"*). In contrast, male students show a tendency for more basic errors in word order, especially in adverb position (e.g., *"My friends play video games usually"*) and predicative constructions (e.g., *"Is favorite color black"*). Both groups demonstrate interference from their native language, as evidenced in structures such as *"She enters your bedrooms father"* (masculine) and *"Her is hair long"* (feminine).

Concerning omission mistakes, there are notable divergences between gender groups. Thus, female students show a predominant tendency to omit indefinite articles (e.g., *"She is student"*) and auxiliary verbal elements (e.g., *"My sister, I on vacations"*). Male students, meanwhile, exhibit a propensity to omit definite and indefinite articles (e.g., *"He is good person"*), as well as prepositions in specific contexts (e.g., *"Anderson and Daniel wait for sister go the school"*). Both groups demonstrate similar difficulties in omitting elements in complex verbal constructions, as evidenced in *"Young people don't want have children"* (masculine) along with *"I want three trees in the yard"* (feminine), where the preposition *"to"* is omitted.

Addition and Substitution Errors. A comparison of how men and women tend to add unnecessary or erroneous words in sentences is shown in Table 2 below. Sentences displayed here illustrate the impact that these constructions make on the fluency and clarity of written expression. Focusing on the context of the sentence, Table 2 documents errors wherein students replace words with incorrect ones. The sentences below show that there is a trend in the inappropriate use of synonyms or words with similar meanings. Such a tendency, for better comprehension, is classified into gender such as female and male groups.

Table 02: *Addition and Substitution Errors Made by the Students*

<i>Errors of Addition Female's</i>	
<i>Samples</i>	<i>Corrections</i>
1. Her favorite hobby is the dancing.	1. Her favorite hobby is dancing
2. Her play the videogames.	2. She plays video games
3. My friend like color is black.	3. My friend likes the color black
4. They young people not want's have children.	4. Young people do not want to have children.
5. She is the bedroom his your brother.	5. She enters her brother's bedroom.
6. The German is a language.	6. German is a difficult language to learn.
<i>Errors of Addition Male's</i>	

Samples

1. He's shy sometimes but the most of the time he is very funny.
2. He is a intelligent
3. Juan's is dedication to programming and gaming is matched only by his friendly demeanor.
4. She. enters to her brother's room.
5. The German is a language.
6. I'm haven married to Axel.

Corrections

1. He's shy sometimes, but most of the time, he is very funny
2. He is intelligent
3. Juan's dedication to programming and gaming is matched only by his friendly demeanor
4. She enters her brother's bedroom
5. German is a difficult language to learn.
6. I'm married to Axel.

*Substitution Errors Made by the Students**Female's Substitution Errors**Samples*

1. Your singer favorite is Danna Paola
2. Her usually wear white sneakers
3. She is very extrovert and angry
4. Is two posters on flood
5. I'm married with Axel.
6. My friend have 24 years old and She's pregnant.

Corrections

1. Her favorite singer is Danna Paola
2. She usually wears white sneakers
3. She is very extroverted and angry
4. There are two pictures on the wall.
5. I'm married to Axel.
6. My friend is 24 years old and pregnant

*Male's Substitution Errors**Samples*

1. He doesn't like to play
2. Me and my friend usually like playing soccer or basketball together
3. She has 18 years old, Her nationality is ecuadorian, her job is nurse
4. Paul has a really complicated life.
5. She carries a beautiful blue jacket.
6. What did you going?

Corrections

1. She doesn't like to play
2. My friend and I usually like playing soccer or basketball together
3. She is 18 years old, her nationality is Ecuadorian, her job is a nurse
4. Paul has a very complicated live.
5. She wears a beautiful blue jacket.
6. What is Felipe doing?

Note: The table shows examples made by males and females. The researchers select the most relevant for the analysis.

Authors: The Researchers

Regarding addition errors, the data above reveals distinctive patterns between genders. Female students demonstrate a tendency to add unnecessarily defined articles, particularly in abstract or general contexts (e.g., "*Her favorite hobby is the dancing*", "*The french is a language*"). The superfluous addition of possessive pronouns (e.g., "*She is the bedroom his your brother*") is also observed. In contrast, male students exhibit a propensity to add incorrect indefinite articles, especially before adjectives (e.g., "*He is an intelligent*"), and show difficulties with unnecessary addition of prepositions (e.g., "*She enters to her brother's room*"). Both females and males present cases of redundant addition in complex verbal structures, as in the sentence, "*They young people not want's have children*" (feminine) and "*I'm haven married do Axel*" (masculine).

In the analysis of substitution errors, significant divergences are observed between the error patterns produced by male and female students. Accordingly, female students show a predominant tendency to misuse possessive pronouns (e.g., "Your singer favorite is Danna Paola" instead of "Her favorite singer") and adverbs (e.g., "Her usually wear white sneakers" instead of "She usually wears"). Errors are also observed in the choice of prepositions (e.g., "I'm married with Axel" instead of "to Axel"). By contrast, male students exhibit a high frequency of mis-substitution of personal pronouns (e.g., "He doesn't like to play" instead of "She"), and demonstrate difficulties with intensifiers (e.g., "Paul has a really complicated life" instead of "very"). Both groups indicate confusion in verb substitution, as in "She carries a beautiful blue jacket" (masculine) rather than "wears".

Subject-verb Agreement and Plurality Errors. Table 3 presents examples of subject-verb agreement errors in male and female student sentences. The table highlights how the lack of agreement affects the correct grammatical structure of the sentence. Also, Table 3 below presents examples of pluralization errors made by students, showing how those errors vary between female and male groups. The sentences listed in the table illustrate frequent cases of omission of plurals, incorrect pluralization of irregular nouns, and confusion in the use of countable and uncountable nouns.

Table 03: Subject-verb Agreement and Plurality Errors made by the Students

<i>Female's Subject-verb Agreement Errors</i>	
<i>Samples</i>	<i>Corrections</i>
1.- She live in Salcedo	1.- She lives in Salcedo
2.- Pamela love eat a chocolate, pasta and poteiros	2.- Pamela loves eating chocolate, pasta, and potatoes
3. He like walk in the morning	3.- He likes walking in the morning
4. Alejandra like the wolfs and the rats	4.- Alejandra hates wolves and mice.
5.- Saul and Evelyn absents the classes.	5.- Saul and Evely don't attend classes.
<i>Male's Subject-verb Agreement Errors</i>	
<i>Samples</i>	<i>Corrections</i>
1.- He usually wear oversize clothes	1.- He usually wears oversized clothes
2.- Hes favorite movies is spiderman, rapidos y furiosos, the mongue	2.- Her favorite movies are Spider-Man, Rápidos y Furiosos, and The Mongoose.
3.- He have a pencil, he have a car	3.- He has a pencil, he has a car
4.- Saul and Evelyn doesn't to class.	4.- Saul and Evelyn don't attend classes.
5.- There is 2 flyers on the wall.	5.- There are 2 flyers on the wall
<i>Sample of Plurality Errors Made by the Students</i>	
<i>Female's Plurality Errors</i>	
<i>Samples</i>	<i>Corrections</i>

1.- Her hobbi is dance, read, sing, make-up and physical exercise	1.- Her hobbies are dancing, reading, singing, make-up, and physical exercise.
2.- Geovanny loves a play video games, talk with people for the other country and play too.	2.- Geovanny loves to play video games, talk with people from other countries, and also play
3.- He use a different aplications for this hobbies	3. He uses different applications for these hobbies
4.- You wanna three tree in the yard.	4. You want to plant three trees in the yard.
5.- Alejandra the wolfs and the mouse.	5.- Alejandra hates wolves and mice
6.- You sheat two doing your homeworks	6.- You have to do your homework

*Male's Plurality Errors**Samples*

- 1.- The like in vacations a ocean in the day hot
- 2.- He wears shirt formal
- 3.- My favorite movies is the spiderman-3
- 4.- My sister and I are on vacations
- 5.- You want to plants three tree in the yard.
- 6.- Young people don't want to have childrens.

Corrections

- 1.- They like the ocean during hot days on vacations
- 2.- He wears formal shirts
- 3.- My favorite movie is Spiderman-3
- 4.- My sister and I are on vacation.
- 5.- You want to plant three trees in the yard.
- 6.- Young people don't want to have children.

Note: The table shows examples made by males and females. The researchers select the most relevant for the analysis.

Authors: The Researchers

The analysis of subject-verb agreement errors reveals similar patterns with some distinctions between male and female students. Female students tend to frequently omit the *-s* present tense in the third person singular (e.g., "*She live in Salcedo*", "*Pamela love eat a chocolate*"). Errors are also observed in more complex constructions such as "*All in the class are use jeans*", where agreement is confused with collective subjects. Male students exhibit a similar propensity to omit the *-s* in the third person singular (e.g., "*He usually wear oversize clothes*"), but they show instances of hypercorrection, adding *-s* incorrectly (e.g., "*Saul and Evelyn doesn't to class*"). Regarding the analysis of plurality errors, distinctive patterns were observed between gender groups. Thus, the female group demonstrated a tendency to make mistakes in the formation of irregular plurals (e.g., "*She the wolfs and the mouse*" instead of "*wolves*" and "*mice*") and in number agreement in complex noun phrases (e.g., "*Her hobbi is dance, read, sing*" instead of "*hobbies are*"). Difficulties were also observed in distinguishing between countable and uncountable nouns (e.g., "*You want to plants three tree in the yard*"). Male students, meanwhile, exhibit a propensity to make errors in both regular and irregular plurals (e.g., "*Young people don't want to have childrens*"), as well as number agreement in verb phrases (e.g., "*My favorite movies is the spiderman-3*"). Both gender groups showed confusion in both singular and plural forms in certain contexts, as in "*My brother and I are on vacations*" (masculine).

Mechanics Errors. Table 4 lists examples of errors in the mechanics of writing, such as incorrect capitalization, and punctuation. The frequency and type of mistakes made by male and female participants were compared, highlighting the areas where both groups tend to make more errors.

Table 04: Sample of Mechanics Errors Made by the Students

<i>Female's Mechanic Errors</i>	
<i>Samples</i>	<i>Corrections</i>
1. She usually uses boots and snickers	1. She usually wears boots and sneakers
2. She wears blak blouses	2. She wears black blouses
3. Paul has a compliketed life	3. Paul has a very complicated life.
4. I'm mirrer you Axel.	4. I'm married to Axel.
5. There are three pictures in the hall.	5. There are three pictures on the wall.
<i>Male's Mechanic Errors</i>	
<i>Samples</i>	<i>Corrections</i>
1. His hobbi is play football and cooking for his sisters	1. His hobby is playing football and cooking for his sisters
2. My favorite sport is play fotbal soccer and basquet ball	2. My favorite sports are playing football and basketball
3. My.brother.is.chef. He.works.in.a.hotel.Monday.of friday, His.work.is.difficult. He.wants.to.buy.a.big.car blue.	3. My brother is a chef. He works in a hotel from Monday to Friday. His work is difficult. He wants to buy a big blue car.
4. I love talk in english. Learn languages is important. I want meet new people and travel around the world	4. I love to speak English. It is important to learn languages. I want to meet new people and travel around the world.
5. Paul have a very complicate live.	5. Paul has a very complicated life.

Note: The table shows examples made by males and females. The researchers select the most relevant for the analysis.

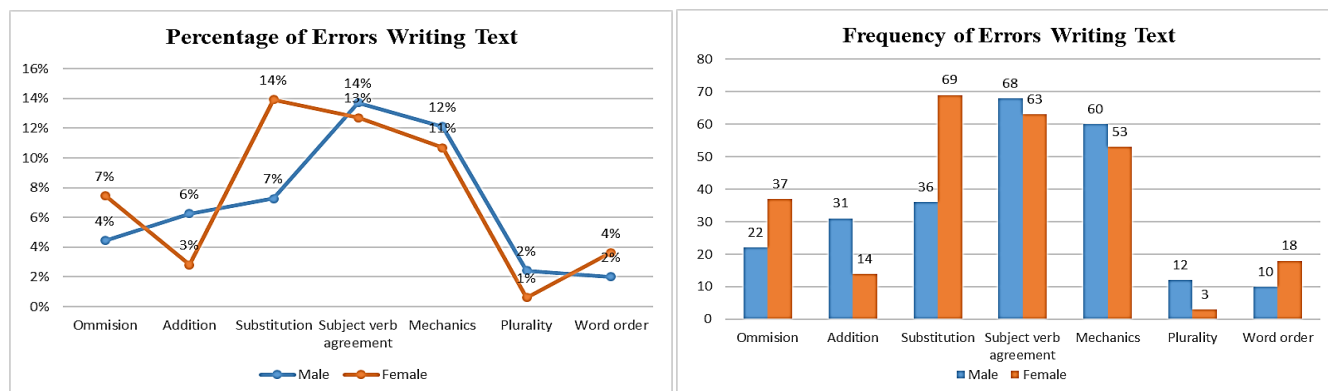
Authors: The Researchers

An analysis of mechanical errors informed similar patterns with some differences between male and female students. Female students tend to misspell specific words, especially those with similar sounds in Spanish (e.g., "snickers" instead of "sneakers", "blak" instead of "black"). On the other hand, male students exhibit a propensity to make spelling mistakes in common words (e.g., "fotbal," "basquetball") and show difficulties with punctuation marks and capitalization. Both groups demonstrate problems with the spelling of words that contain sounds not present in Spanish (e.g., "compliketed" for "complicated" in feminine, "complicate" for "complicated" in masculine).

Quantitative Phase

Writing Text. The errors made in the writing of texts by male and female students are classified into seven main morphosyntactic categories. Figure 1 shows both the frequency of occurrence (amount of mistakes) and the proportion of the overall errors made in each group. The purpose of this analysis is to compare the numerical differences in the types of errors commonly produced between the two genders, female and male.

Figure 01: Percentage and Frequency of Errors Male vs Female Writing Text



Note: The researchers create this figure in Excel to show the results in Quantitative way.

Authors: The Researchers

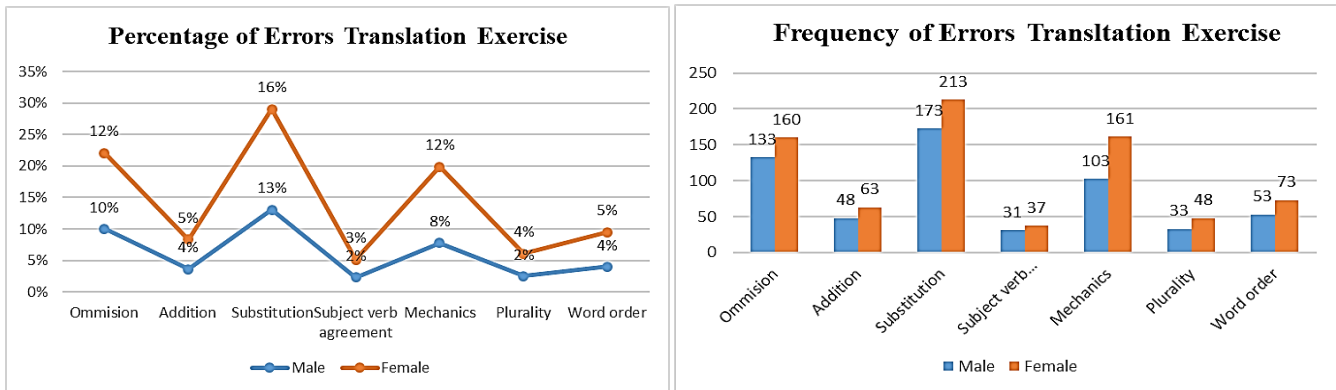
Research findings showed that subject-verb agreement errors are the most frequent in both men and women, with 68 errors (14%) for men and 63 errors (13%) for women. However, women tend to make more errors of omission with 37 errors (7%), and of substitution with 69 errors (4%), while men inform a greater number of errors in mechanics with 60 errors (12%), and also in substitution, although to a lesser extent, with 36 errors (7%). Data reveals that women made a total of 257 errors (52%) compared to men, who made 239 errors (48%). Results informed that women made 18 more errors, representing an additional 4% compared to men.

Figure 1 (above) illustrates the errors in omission, addition, substitution, subject-verb agreement, mechanics, plurality, and word order made by male and female students. Further analysis revealed that females have the tendency to omit grammatical items more frequently compared to the unnecessary or incorrect elements added in the texts of men. Substitution and subject-agreement with 14% of incidence were the highest errors produced by males and females. Plurality was the lowest error in both groups, with 2% for males and 1% for females. These results suggest that both

genders face challenges in the construction of sentences, showing difficulties in understanding morpho-syntactic principles.

Translation Exercises. Data in figure 2 (above) shows the morpho-syntactic errors found in sentences written by males and females when translating sentences into the target language from the source language.

Figure 02: Percentage and Frequency of Errors Male vs Female Translation Exercise



Note: The researchers create this figure in Excel to show the results in Quantitative way.

Authors: The Researchers

Regarding the translation exercises, results revealed that the most challenging and frequent error category in both groups was substitution, with 213 errors (16%) for women and 173 errors (13%) for men. A further analysis related to mechanics (161 errors, 12%) and omission (160 errors, 12%) was reported to be more common in females than males, who made 103 errors (8%) in mechanics and 133 errors (10%) in omission, respectively. The overall analysis reveals that women made a total of 755 errors (57%), while men made 574 errors (43%), which implied that women have 181 more errors compared to men. These results suggest that women tend to make more errors in several areas, but, in particular, in substitution, mechanics, and omission.

Women omitted grammatical items and frequently added unnecessary or incorrect elements in texts more often than men. This difference advised that females, to some extent, may face greater difficulties when selecting appropriate words or grammatical structures. Findings also showed that both males and females reported high percentages of errors in subject-verb agreement. This suggests that students are not aware of or have a vague knowledge of subject-verb agreement, therefore constructive learning activities that address such difficulty are a must. Males are reported

to have 12% of mechanical errors, while females have 8%. The 4% difference is significant, reflecting that both, females and males, face similar challenges in areas such as punctuation and spelling, although further analysis revealed that males had more difficulty in these areas. The percentages of Plurality errors are the lowest ones in both groups, 2% for males and 4% for females. Errors in word order are more frequent among females (5%), which could indicate difficulties in sentence structure.

Discussion

The results of this study discover some morphosyntactic errors in students majoring in English. Qualitative and quantitative findings are contrasted with previous studies to describe, in some cases, the influence of Spanish on grammatical accuracy and how this manifests differently between genders.

Word Order Errors

The word order errors found in this research reflect Spanish interference, which is observed in sentences such as “*They are wears the jeans in class*” and “*My friends play video games usually.*” Female students presented 5% errors in this category, while male students showed 4%. The two errors are connected to the overgeneralization of rules, confusion between tenses, literal translation, and L1 interference. Female students tend to make more complex errors in verbal and nominal structures, implying misuse of verb tense and subject-verb agreement, and incorrect placement of the adverbs. This finding aligns with the studies of Khatter (2019), who observed problems in English word arrangement due to cross-linguistic influence. In addition, Ramzan et al. (2023) and Al-Sharafi (2023) also reported word order errors attributable to the transfer of structures from L1 to L2. These research findings underscore the need for pedagogical strategies that help learners understand the syntactic differences between Spanish and English, particularly, explicit instruction on verb forms, tenses, and the use of adverbs. Thus, students clearly learn the contrast, for instance, between simple and continuous grammatical forms

Omission and Addition Errors

Omission and addition errors were also frequent. Female students presented errors such as (1) “*She is student*”, omitting indefinite articles, as ‘*a or an*’. It is because in English, singular countable

nouns require a determiner such as an article whereas in Spanish, articles can sometimes be omitted when indicating a profession or status. Thus, a Spanish speaker might omit "a/an/the" because it is not necessary in the equivalent Spanish construction, leading to a direct, word-for-word translation. (2) "*Her is hair long*", omitting subject pronouns. In English, subject pronouns must be used as the subject of a sentence. "*Her*" is a possessive pronoun, which here is used to show possession, not to serve as the subject and, consequently, a word order error appears. As in Spanish verb conjugations indicate the subject, a Spanish speaker might omit subject pronouns in English. Spanish often places adjectives after the noun they modify, which might influence a Spanish speaker to transfer this order incorrectly into English. Male students omitted prepositions and articles in sentences such as "*Anderson and Daniel wait for sister go the school*". English requires a determiner to clarify possession "*their*" when referring to a singular noun like "*sister*". In English, verbs like "*go*" are followed by prepositions "*to*" indicate direction or purpose. Such ungrammatical issues are because in Spanish, possessive pronouns are often omitted when the possession is clear from context. The Spanish language does not always require "a" (to) in the same contexts as English.

These errors reflect patterns similar to those observed by Resueno and De Leon (2023), who attribute these errors to both interlingual and intralingual interference. Likewise, Díaz et al. (2020) and Murtiana (2019) highlighted how rule overgeneralization in L2 leads to omission and addition errors in English learning. The examples above reflect common issues in second language acquisition, highlighting the influence of the learner's native language on the use of English. By understanding these errors, teachers can guide learners to recognize and practice the correct use of articles, subject pronouns, which emphasize the omission and additional errors in English.

Substitution and Subject Verb Agreement Errors

Substitution and Subject-verb agreement errors were common in both genders. Female students showed errors such as (1) "*Your singer favorite is Danna Paola*" instead of "*Her favorite singer is ...*". This error is likely due to L1 interference from Spanish, where adjectives often follow nouns. (2) "*Her usually wear white sneakers*" instead of "*She usually wears ...*". English requires an -s ending for third-person singular subjects in the present simple tense. Spanish does not have different forms for subject and object pronouns like "*ella*" for "*she*" and "*her*", which cause overgeneralization of English grammar rules. Male students made errors in substituting personal

pronouns and intensifiers, as in “*He (Paul) doesn't like to play*” instead of “*She*”. These errors often reflect L1 interference (Spanish) and challenges with English word order, subject-verb agreement, and intensifier usage. The misuse of intensifiers could be possibly due to a direct translation from Spanish intensifiers. Both genders had a 14% incidence of subject-verb agreement errors. This finding is similar to the studies of Bonilla (2023), who observed that errors in pronoun use and grammatical agreement persist among English language learners. Also, this result is in line with those of Cordero and Martin (2020), who also identified similar errors in the written production of EFL students. These results suggest the need for specific instruction to improve accuracy to avoid confusing subject and object pronouns and use appropriate intensifiers.

Pluralization and Mechanics Errors

Pluralization errors were frequent in sentences such as “*She the mouse and the wolves*” instead of “*mice*” and “*wolves*,” observed mainly in female learners, while male learners presented errors in the use of regular and irregular plurals, as in “*Young people don't want to have childrens*.” This tendency is due to L1 Influence since Spanish learners may struggle with irregular plurals like “*mice*” and spelling changes in plurals like “*wolves*,” as these concepts don't exist in Spanish language. Plurals in Spanish are formed by simply adding *-s* or *-es*. This error was observed mainly in female learners, which might indicate differences in exposure to or practice with less common irregular plural forms in the input they receive. On the other hand, Spanish male learners tend to overgeneralize rules as they might think in terms of adding *-s* to all nouns for plurals. Male learners making this error may suggest a developmental pattern or differences in processing regular versus irregular plural forms.

The frequency of these errors was 2% in males and 1% in females, which coincides with the observations of Soto et al. (2020) and Quezada et al. (2021), who relate these errors to a lack of understanding of English grammar and a negative transfer from Spanish. As for mechanical errors, such as spelling and punctuation, they were observed in 12% of male students and 8% of female students, showing a tendency in both groups to make errors in capitalization and spelling, similar to the findings of Daquilema and Arias (2024) and Galkina and Radyuk (2019). These results suggest that pedagogical strategies focused on lexico-grammatical differences between Spanish and English are needed to reduce these errors.

The results of this study highlight the importance of adapting educational strategies to gender-specific error patterns. For example, given that females tend to make more omission errors, it would be useful to implement activities focused on the use of articles and auxiliaries, while males could benefit from additional exercises in mechanics and pluralization. These gender differences, also observed in studies such as those of Al-Sharafi (2023) and Soto et al. (2020), suggest that personalized approaches to L2 instruction could improve grammatical accuracy in English language learners.

The qualitative and quantitative results of this study confirm and extend the existing literature on morphosyntactic errors in learning English as L2. By highlighting interference and gender differences influence error patterns, these findings suggest key areas for future research and pedagogical interventions. Based on an approach adapted to the needs of each group and instruction in the areas with the highest incidence of error, it is possible to develop more effective teaching strategies adjusted to similar educational contexts that focus on recognizing and correctly forming irregular plurals.

Conclusions

This research significantly advances EFL teaching by identifying and analyzing gender-specific morphosyntactic errors, such as addition, omission, word order, plurality, mechanics, subject-verb agreement, and substitution in Ecuadorian university students' writing compositions. Thus, research findings reveal distinctive patterns: while subject-verb agreement errors dominated writing tasks in men (14%), translation exercises showed higher rates of substitution errors in women (16%), demonstrating gender-specific learning challenges that had not been documented before in the Ecuadorian EFL context.

The principal scientific contribution of the current research is the identification of clear gender-based differences in morphosyntactic error production, challenging previous assumptions about uniform learning processes in EFL contexts. New knowledge has been developed as a result of this study. of how gender-based diversity influences language learning patterns, particularly in Spanish-speaking EFL environments. The study successfully demonstrated that female and male students exhibit distinct error patterns. Accordingly, females showed greater tendencies in substitution and omission errors during translation tasks, while males struggled more with mechanical aspects and word order. This finding provides insightful ideas about gender-based differences, acknowledges

the comprehension of the critical role of gender in acquisition of a second language, and opens new avenues for pedagogical intervention.

Another significant contribution is establishing a clear relationship between L1 interference and gender-specific error patterns, a connection not previously explored in Ecuadorian EFL research. The study successfully mapped how Spanish language structures influence English writing differently across genders. This achievement directly addresses our research objective of identifying L1 interference patterns and their relationship to gender-specific learning challenges. These findings not only meet the main goal of the study but go beyond them, offering new perspectives about the function of gender in learning a language and providing concrete bases for enhancing the teaching of English as a foreign language in Ecuador.

While we recognize the limitations of the study such as the application in only one educational institution, applying it only at lower levels such as pre-basic English A1, and choosing from a small sample of participants. However, these results mark a substantial advancement in our knowledge of the difficulties involved in learning a second language. In Spanish-speaking contexts, particularly considering the specific learning patterns and needs of each gender. Further research in this field should focus on: (1) conducting longitudinal studies to assess the effectiveness of proposed instructional approaches, (2) examining the relationship between proficiency levels and error patterns, (3) analyzing how different teaching methodologies influence error reduction, and (4) exploring the role of sociolinguistic factors in morphosyntactic error production.

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