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**AN ANALYSIS OF INTRALINGUAL WRITING STYLE ERRORS IN OPINION  
ESSAYS COMMITTED BY VIETNAMESE LEARNERS OF ENGLISH IN  
VIETNAM**

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**ABSTRACT**

This paper analyzes the intralingual writing style errors in 145 opinion IELTS-formatted essays on the topic of environment pollution under various task types, committed by two Vietnamese classes of second year major English at Nguyen Tat Thanh University, Ho Chi Minh city, Vietnam. The findings show that the subjects of the study made different kinds of intralingual error, which involved immature writing, waffle, confusion, formulaic writing due to the student's lack of grammatical and lexical knowledge in English. From these findings, some implementations related to the students' motivation in learning Writing, the teachers' essay writing teaching method, their attitudes of writing style error correction, the University's sources of Writing materials and English language scientific workshops have been put forward.

**Keywords:** Analysis, Intralingual Writing Style Errors, Opinion Essays, Vietnamese Learners, English.

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**1. INTRODUCTION**

IELTS opinion essay is a challenging type of writing that has attracted the attention of many Vietnamese learners of English in Vietnam. In this essay, they have to give their opinions in at least 250 words within 40 minutes on a particular issue in the field of environment, education, culture, ... Accordingly, to help students do this kind of IELTS - oriented writing well, it has been included in the Intermediate Writing curriculum for second-year English major students at Nguyen Tat Thanh University, Ho Chi Minh city, Vietnam. However, learners of English in Vietnam in general and those majoring in English at this university in particular have faced difficulties and committed various kinds of intralingual writing style errors such as *understatement, confusion, waffle, immature writing*, ... in their argumentative essays. This may result from the students' lack of English knowledge of vocabulary and grammar.

In fact, there is hardly research into analyzing intralingual writing style errors in an IELTS-oriented opinion essay, committed by Vietnamese learners of English. As a result, the author of the paper has deployed this study and then put forward some implications to help Vietnamese learners of English minimize errors, write their essays better and be confident when doing their IELTS argumentative writing.

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## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW & THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

### 2.1. Literature Review

In Vietnam, there have been many related studies on intralingual writing errors made by Vietnamese learners of English as a foreign language. Le (2015) explored the collocational errors at the sentence level in 200 writings of 200 words to 250 words written in class, about various topics, which had been selected from the textbooks of Solution Intermediate and FCE (First Certificate in English). These writings were of varied genres like film review, comments on a favorite music webpage, funny stories, a letter or an essay giving viewpoints on a topic by the second-year English major students at the University of Foreign Languages, the University of Danang, Vietnam. As a result, the writings were too divided in terms of topics and genres.

Studying the common errors in 100 English writings of the first-year and the second-year students specializing in Commercial English, the University of Commerce, Hanoi, Vietnam; Pham (2017) pointed out that these students made errors related to verb form, noun number, tense, writing structure. However, the research sample population is not big enough and the subjects are too varied.

Phi (2020), who studied on the cohesion and coherence of 25 English paragraphs in a 60-minute test done by the first-year non-English major students, showed that the coherence of many paragraphs was not ensured due to the students' wrong use of references and conjunctions. The problem is that the sample population is still limited and such grammatical cohesion errors like ellipsis, substitution, and lexical cohesion errors have not been analyzed though they have occurred with low frequency.

In their study on the writing difficulties of 90 English major second-year students at Tay Do University in Hanoi, Vietnam; Dang, Chau, Tra (2020) found that these students often met with the problems of vocabulary, grammar, cohesion, structure of the essay as well as critical thinking in writing the essay. Nonetheless, some questionnaires and interviewed questions in the research were completed reluctantly, which does not ensure its qualitative and quantitative approach.

Hoang, Nguyen (2022), in their research into common errors in English coordinating conjunctions in 100 essays on diverse topics, committed by 50 non-English -major students at different levels at a university in Hanoi, showed that many of these students made errors related to grammatical structure, vocabulary, conjunction and especially the coordinators. Yet, the researched students' English level is not levelled, which could affect the validity of the research.

In their study on Thu Dau Mot University's 3<sup>rd</sup> year English major students' cohesion errors, made in 20 midterm-test essays on a certain topic (with at least 250 words, within 40 minutes), Ho and Huynh (2023) indicated that most of the subjects committed writing errors due to their interference of Vietnamese writing rules into the English essay. This had rooted from their lack of knowledge of grammar and vocabulary in English. Although the qualitative and quantitative approach have been utilized, the reliability of the study is not ensured because of the limited sample population.

Trinh (2024), in her analysis of the common errors in 300 English paragraphs written by the second-year English major students at Thu Dau Mot University in Vietnam, indicated that these students frequently committed 4 types of errors: morphological, lexical, syntactic and writing technique influenced by their Vietnamese mother tongue. Besides, they are lacking the critical thinking skill leading to the subjective writing style in their argument. Despite the large sample population, the research is restricted to analyzing errors in a paragraph rather than in the whole essay with many paragraphs.

Apart from the above in Vietnam, there have been a lot of related studies in other countries in the world. Khatter (2019) carried out an analysis of the most common errors in 120 English writings written within one hour per day in class by 40 third-year English major female Arabic students of the same age, Majmaah University, Majmaah city, Arab. These writings, which were limited to 2 to 4 pages, were of such genres as telling stories, describing and comparing. The results showed that grammar errors were the most common, followed by spelling and lexical ones. The main reason was students' lack of knowledge of English and had imposed the Arabic knowledge on their English writings. Another reason was that teachers put too much attention to the grammatical structure and disregarded other linguistic elements like vocabulary, spelling, cohesion and coherence in deploying idea in the writing. However, the analysis is not deep enough as the study examined three various genres of writing.

Isma, Rasmin và Samsudin (2023) studied writing errors of 100 students including 42 males and 58 females who came from 3 universities in Indonesia. These writings of 250 words to 300 words were the writing tests within 60 minutes on a certain topic. Students in this research often made lexical, grammatical and spelling errors. Despite the variety of subjects and data, this lack of consensus has made the error analysis and writing skill assessment of these students less reliable.

Halim A. và Halim, N. M. (2024) analyzed the errors in the 60-minute writing (of 2 to 3 paragraphs) under different genres namely narrating, describing, arguing, explaining of 196 students from 4 English Literature classes from Negeri Makassar and Islam Makassar Universities, Indonesia. Like Khatter (2019)'s, Isma, Rasmin và Samsudin (2023)'s, this research revealed that almost all the subjects made errors of grammar, vocabulary resulted from the interference with the learners' mother tongue. Nonetheless, because of the lack of homogeneity in the writing genres, it is difficult to evaluate the authentic writing ability of the learners through the error analysis.

From that reality, it could be seen that there have been gaps in the study of intralingual errors in opinion essays committed by Vietnamese learners of English in Vietnam in general and those majoring in English at Nguyen Tat Thanh University, Ho Chi Minh city, Vietnam in particular. As a result; in this paper, various kinds of intralingual writing style errors in this type of essay on the same topic, committed by the students of same level of education, with the suitable representative sample population, are described to find out the reasons, from which some solutions are put forward to help Vietnamese learners of English write opinion essays better and do their IELTS argumentative writing task more effectively.

## **2.2. Theoretical Background**

### **2.2.1. Writing Style**

Writing style is the way writers express their ideas, viewpoints in their own way involving their nuance (formal, informal, ironical, satirical), grammatical structure (simple sentence, complex sentence, compound sentence, compound complex sentence), language use (written, spoken), rhetorical device (exclamation, metaphor, metonymy, simile). Each type and genre of writing (fiction, non-fiction, academic, journalist ...) has its own rules the writer has to follow. (ChatGPT)

### **2.2.2. Writing Style Features in an Opinion Essay**

The language in an opinion essay is academic without rhetorical questions, exclamations, waffles, extreme opinions but with tentative words/phrases to avoid imposition on readers... Besides, the vocabulary is formal and polite without abbreviation, slang, spoken style... (Gabi,2002)

### 2.2.3. *Writing Style Errors in an Opinion Essay in English*

Errors reveal the blank in the knowledge of learners and their impeach in certain rules (Ellis, 1997). Writing style errors in an opinion essay occurs when the writing does not satisfy the features of an opinion essay writing style.

### 2.2.4. *Types of Intralingual Writing Style Errors*

Errors occur when students learning language in general and English in particular may involve their shortage of knowledge in that language or *intralingual* errors. In fact, learners are likely to make grammatical, lexical, semantic ... errors in their English writings. According to Gabi (2002), this type of error could be:

- a. Understatement: The students understate the case in terms of number, frequency or range.

(2.1) Nuclear energy is likely to be a *possible* solution to our energy needs.

(Gabi, 2002, p. 58)

- b. Confusion: Some students may produce mixed or confused signals by using the modifiers inappropriately.

(2.2) The *major* problem in modern cities *might* be air pollution.

(Gabi, 2002, p. 58)

- c. Waffle: Lack of ideas is apt to result in this type of error. The writer either tries to fill up the paper with empty, meaningless expressions, or the repetition of ideas, or both.

(2.3) Usually *people in the world have their own habits of eating and each and every culture has its own customs about food.*

(Gabi, 2002, p. 59)

d. Formulaic and Thoughtless Writing: Many students appear to learn a basic structure and a few basic expressions such as *nowadays, firstly, secondly, thirdly, in conclusion...* and then attempt to apply these to every essay. This could produce some strange style of writing.

(2.4) *Nowadays* sports are likely to be common throughout the world.

(Gabi, 2002, p. 59-60)

e. Immature Writing: Lack of vocabulary and limited knowledge of grammar are the other causes of bad writing style. In such a case, some students simply use vocabulary incorrectly, and become incomprehensible, but more commonly students are likely to write in a much simpler style than is suitable for English academic writing style.

(2.5) Many people are worried about the environment. They think people should do something to make it better. *For example*, instead of using fossil fuels they can use the sun's heat to make electricity.

(Gabi, 2002, p. 60)

*f. Compound or Integrated Errors:* Two or many of the above types of intralingual writing style errors are possible to appear simultaneously in an opinion English essay due to various reasons. They are described and discussed in part 4 of the paper.

**2.2.5. Error analysis:** Corder (1981) and Richards (1992) defined it as: "The study and analysis of the errors made by foreign language learners by the comparison between learners' interlanguage (learners' version of the target language) and target language forms to identify strategies learners use in language learning; to identify the cause of learners' errors; and to obtain information on common difficulties in language learning, as an aid to teaching or in the preparation of teaching materials".

### 3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

#### 3.1. Data Collecting Instruments and Research Subjects

The research instruments were 95 IELTS-oriented opinion essay final-term tests done by 95 Vietnamese students of English major, in their 2<sup>nd</sup>-year from 2 intermediate writing classes (51 out of 58 for class 1, and 44 out of 50 for class 2) at Nguyen Tat Thanh University, Ho Chi Minh city, Vietnam. These students had learnt essay writing for 45 periods with the two main textbooks: *Longman Academic Writing Series 3: Paragraphs to Essays* and *Longman Academic Writing Series 4: Essays* (Oshima & Hogue, 2016). They wrote their essays within 40 minutes with at least 250 words on the same major topic of *environment pollution*.

#### 3.2. Sampling

The representative sample size in each class was chosen by the following Yamane (1967)'s formula:

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

Where n= corrected sample size, N = population size, and e = Margin of Error (MoE), e = 0.05 based on the research condition.

In this case, the corrected sample sizes for class 1 and 2 respectively are:

$$n1 = \frac{58}{1+58(0.05)^2} = 50.65 \# 51 ; n2 = \frac{50}{1+50(0.05)^2} = 44.44 \# 44$$

Out of 51 representative sample essays of the first class, 25 ones were about the topic of *Innovation – pollution solution* and 26 on *Rising air pollution – cause & effect* with the following respectively different writing task types:

- Do you believe that innovation (new inventions or technologies) can help solve pollution problems? Why or why not?  
Write an essay with at least 250 words within 40 minutes.
- In many urban areas, the rise in air pollution is becoming a significant concern. What are the main causes of this increase, and what effects does it have on the environment and public health?  
Write an essay with at least 250 words within 40 minutes.

In addition, among 44 opinion essays of the second class, 22 ones were about *Innovation – pollution solution* and 22 on *Rising air pollution – cause & effect*.

In this way, there is just an insignificant gap in the number of essays to be analyzed for writing style errors made by different groups of students in each class or in different classes dealing with the same or different writing task. This could ensure the objectivity of the research findings.

### 4. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This part describes different kinds of intralingual writing style errors committed in the opinion essays by the two Intermediate Writing classes under investigation to find out the causes.

#### 4.1. Intralingual Errors – Class 1

- \* *Topic: Innovation – pollution solution (Group 1)*
- \* *Writing task: Do you believe that innovation (new inventions or technologies) can help solve pollution problems? Why or why not?*

Table 4.1 shows that among 1492 % of intralingual errors in 25 students' essays on this topic, *Immature Writing* made up the highest number and percentage (N = 297 # F = 1188%).

This proportion indicates the frequently repeated errors of this type in a sentence, a paragraph and the whole essay related to vocabulary, grammar problems.

(4.1) In *conclusion* (*clonsion*), technologies can help solve pollution by machines, by robots.

In this case, the student may have mistaken the word *clonsion* for *conclusion* due to the time pressure or/and the essay writing task.

(4.2) Firstly, new inventions *are* (*is*) more environmentally friendly and *help*(*s*) combat climate change. This is because *buses* and *trains produce*(*s*) fewer *emissions*.

In the two sentences in (4.2), there were multiple English grammatical errors due to the lack of agreement in the form of verbs and the subject. Besides, there were 3 grammatical errors attributed to the missing of the suffix *-s*, *-es* after the countable English nouns *train*, *bus*, *emission* to indicate the plural generic meaning.

The second most common error was *Waffle* (N = 44 # F = 176%). Many students may not have had ideas to write with this essay topic and they had to beat about the bush and repeat their ideas, which could make their writing hard to understand and monotonous.

(4.3) The first thing, a large part of our lakes are polluted with trash and plastic bags made out of nylon while the current solution is just collected and throw them into trash dumps but there are researches that discover a new type of bacteria that eat nylon if they can thoroughly research these bacteria, we can invent or make a new chemical that helps these bacteria eat away trash faster.

The error that occurred as much frequently was *Formulaic and Thoughtless Writing* (N = 26 # F = 104%). This may have resulted from many students' routine of learning just a few basic words, expressions (like *nowadays*) and applying them to all essays regardless of their meaning. The word *nowadays* is redundant because the verb *developing* is used in present continuous tense with the implied meaning *nowadays* or *at the present time*.

(4.4) (*Nowadays*), technologies are more and more developing.

Less common was *Confusion* (N= 5 # F = 20%). This error occurred as the students used the inappropriate mixed modifiers, which made the ideas contradictory.

(4.5) In conclusion, *air pollution does matter effectively*.

The adverb *effectively* with a positive meaning could not be used with the verb phrase *does matter* and *air pollution* with bad meaning. Instead, (4.5) should be corrected as:

In conclusion, *air pollution does really concern*.

There was only one error of *Understatement* (N = 1 # F = 4%) maybe because the student had not grasped the usage of such modal English auxiliary verbs as: *can*, *could*, *may*, *might*, *shall*, *should*, *will*, *would*, to express their attitude towards an issue in the essay. For instance, *may* (with low degree of certainty) could be replaced by *could* with higher degree of certainty and more persuading for readers.

(4.6) In conclusion, new inventions *could* (*may*) offer convenience.

**Table 4.1. Intralingual Errors**

Class	Class 1 (51 essays)				Class 2 (44 essays)			
	Group 1 (25 essays)		Group 2 (26 essays)		Group 1 (22 essays)		Group 2 (22 essays)	
Topics	Innovation – pollution solution		Rising air pollution – Cause & effect		Innovation – pollution solution		Rising Air Pollution – Cause & effect	
Types of Errors	N	F (%)	N	F (%)	N	F (%)	N	F (%)
Understatement	1	4	0	0	1	4.5	0	0
Confusion	5	20	9	34.6	7	31.8	16	72.7
Waffle	44	176	30	115.4	41	186.3	46	209.1
Formulaic and Thoughtless Writing	26	104	26	100	34	154.5	15	68.2
Immature Writing	297	1188	384	1477	294	1336.3	429	1950
Total	373	1492	449	1727	377	1713.4	506	2300

- *Topic: Rising air pollution – cause & effect (Group 2)*
- *Writing task: In many urban areas, the rise in air pollution is becoming a significant concern. What are the main causes of this increase, and what effects does it have on the environment and public health?*

In addition, it could be seen from table 4.1 that out of 1727 % intralingual errors committed in 26 students' essays on this topic in group 2 of class 1, up to N = 384 # F = 1477 *Immature Writing* errors occurred. This finding has shown that this subtype of intralingual errors was the most frequently committed and repeated in the essay despite the change in the writing task for the different groups of students in the same class.

(4.7) To address the *problem (issue)* of air pollution, it is essential *to (of)* adopt sustainable practices and reduce human reliance *on (of)* fossil fuels.

In this example, the shortage of lexical and grammatical knowledge in English has resulted in the students' wrong use of nouns and even prepositions when writing an essay. The word *issue* should have been replaced by *problem* (normally having bad meaning) to be properly combined with *air pollution*. Besides, preposition *to* should have been used to substitute *of* after the adjective *essential* and preposition *on* for *of* behind the noun *reliance*.

Like group 1 writing about *Innovation – pollution solution*, a lot of students in group 2 of this class when writing about *Rising air pollution – cause & effect* made errors of *Waffle* (N = 30 # F = 115.4%). Let us have a look at the following example where the repetition of ideas happened between one sentence in a body paragraph and the one in the conclusion. This may have made the reader feel the writing was poor of ideas.

(4.8) Finally, people need *reduce air pollution*. Do not *rubbish everywhere* and limit smoke.

In conclusion, carbon dioxide and *rubbish everywhere* are the main causes of this increased *air pollution*.

Moreover, all students in this group 2 had committed *Formulaic and Thoughtless Writing* (N = 26 # F = 100%). Apart from such clichés as *nowadays, each and every one, at the end of the day, last but not least, without a doubt, as we know*, causing opinion essay writing style errors; like the students in group 1, those in this group usually used the preposition phrase *for*

*example* to give examples in their essays. However, they should have used the synonym *for instance* to avoid the formulaic writing style.

(4.9) *For instance (example)*, wastes from vehicles, factories, chemicals, raw materials, etc.

Furthermore, as those in group 1, some students in this group 2 committed the error of *Confusion* (N = 9 # F = 34.6%) because of the shortage of the discourse knowledge to ensure the cohesion and coherence in ideas and this made the reader hard to grasp the content of the essay.

(4.10) Secondly, deforestation and *poor (improved)* waste management *contribute to environment degradation*.

For instance, cutting down forests, natural habitat *and (while)* the accumulation of plastic wastes in oceans endanger life.

In the topic sentence and the supporting sentence in (4.10), the modifying adjective *improved* should have been substituted by *poor* in relation to the negative meaning of *environment degradation* and the subordinating conjunction *while* by the coordinator *and* to add the factor that could imperil life. In this way, students could avoid the contradiction in ideas in their opinion essays.

There was no *Understatement* error when students in this group wrote about this topic (N = 0 # F = 0%), which was nearly the same as what happened in group 1 writing essays on *Innovation – pollution solution* (N = 1 # F = 4%).

## 4.2. Intralingual Errors – Class 2

\* *Topic: Innovation – pollution solution (Group 1)*

\* *Writing task: Do you believe that innovation (new inventions or technologies) can help solve pollution problems? Why or why not?*

Table 4.1 reveals that the total frequency of errors made by the students of the first group in class 2 was much higher (F = 1713.4%) than that by the students of the first group in class 1 (F = 1492%) when they both wrote about the same topic.

Of all, *Immature Writing* errors of the students in class 2 (F = 1336.3 %) overwhelmed those in class 1 (F = 1188%). Let us take the case of a supporting sentence right after a topic sentence of a paragraph in an essay.

(4.11) People can use smart phones to learn about pollutions *thoroughly (clearly)* and help them *(do)* not *throwing* their garbage into the river or people *could (will)* organize several activities *like cleaning* wastes in *polluted* land.

In this illustrating example, the countable concrete noun *phone* should have been used in plural to indicate the genericity, the adverb *thoroughly* instead of *clearly*, the auxiliary verb *do* deleted after verb *help*, the suffix *-ing* added to verb *throw* following the particle *not*, the defective auxiliary verb *will* replaced by *could* to express a tentative suggestion, *-e* added to *lik* to make the full form of verb *like*, the suffix *-ing* added to verb *clean* to form a gerund after the preposition *like*, *-d* added to *pollute* to form a passive adjective modifying the noun *land*.

Also, the frequency of *Waffle* errors made by the students of the first group in this class when writing about the same topic of *Innovation – pollution solution* was higher (F = 186.3 %) than that of the first group in class 1 (F = 176%).

(4.12) *Pollution problem due to following us.*

The above meaningless-sound sentence in the essay could be revised as:

The pollution problem *is due to us.*

What's more, *Formulaic and Thoughtless Writing errors* of the first group in this class occurred with considerably higher frequency (F = 154.5%) than those of the first group in class

1 (F = 104%) when students wrote essays on the same topic. Let us take the case of the supporting sentence for the topic sentence in a body paragraph of an opinion essay.

(4.13) *Nowadays*, new technologies are more and more comfortable for the users. *For example*, the new smartphone has radio, note, games or music on it and the users do not need to buy many things for their entertainment, they just buy one thing.

In the above example, there were up to 2 errors of *Formulaic and Thoughtless Writing*, indicated by the formulaic words *nowadays* and the phrase *for example*, which brought the reader the feeling that the students were lacking the vocabulary repertoire to diversify their ways of expressing ideas.

More errors of *Confusion* were also made by students in this class 2 (F = 31.8%) than in class 1 (F = 20%).

(4.14) Many *problems* are *caused* by *human*. However, human beings have got a *loving heart* with their new inventions or technologies which could help solve environmental pollution.

The words *problems*, *caused*, *human* in the first sentence made the reader find the meaning of the following sentence with the noun phrase *a loving heart* unrelated and confused.

*Understatement* errors in this class 2 (N = 1 # F = 4.5 %) occurred with the number and frequency similar with that in class 1 (N = 1 # F = 4%) when writing about the same topic and writing task.

(4.15) Inventors have created *many/a lot of (some)* vehicles using electricity that do not use fossil fuel to operate.

In (4.15), the understating word *some* instead of *many* or *a lot of* made the argument of the writer less convincing and far from reality when there have been various means of green transport by electric bicycles, motorbikes, cars, and even the future trains, airplanes operated by solar energy to help diminish the wastes into the environment.

\* It could be seen that in most of cases, the number of intralingual errors committed by the students in class 2 was higher than that in class 1 for the essay on *Innovation – pollution solution*. Learning Writing with the same Intermediate Writing textbook, with the same theoretical and practical learning time length at the same University, doing the same writing task within the same time allowance, but with different teachers; students in class 1 made fewer intralingual writing style errors. This may be attributed to the teacher's teaching method, or the students' learning motivation. For the rooted cause of the problem, let us analyze the intralingual writing style errors made by the students of group 2 in class 2 compared to those by the students of group 2 in class 1 writing essays about the same topic and doing the same writing task.

- *Topic: Rising air pollution – cause & effect (Group 2)*
- *Writing task: In many urban areas, the rise in air pollution is becoming a significant concern. What are the main causes of this increase, and what effects does it have on the environment and public health?*

Table 4.1 reflects that with nearly the same number of essays (26 essays of group 2 in class 1, 22 essays of group 2 in class 2), the total number and frequency of students' essay intralingual errors in class 2 was much higher (N = 506 # F = 2300) than that in class 1 (N = 449 # F = 1727%) for the same essay topic of *Rising air pollution – cause & effect*. Noticeably, *Immature Writing errors* of group 2 in this class were much more frequently committed (N = 429 # F = 1950%) than those of group 2 in class 1 (N = 384 # F = 1477%) for the same topic as mentioned above and the same essay writing task. Let us consider the first two sentences of an introductory paragraph in an opinion essay with many grammatical errors relating to the students' limited knowledge of English as a foreign language.

(4.16) In several areas, air pollution has become a significant concern. The increase(*ing*) *in (of)* air pollution results from various human activities.

In this instance, the noun *increase* should have been used after the article *the* instead of the gerund *increasing* to form a noun phrase, the preposition *in* for *of* after the noun *increase*, the verb *results* used in the third singular person subject in present tense to agree with the singular complex noun phrase *the increase in air pollution* to be suitable for the English grammatical rule.

Like group 1 and group 2 in class 1 writing about the same major topic of environment pollution but different writing tasks, those students in group 1 and group 2 in this class 2 when writing about this topic with the same writing tasks as in class 1 made errors of *Waffles* as the second most common of all other kinds of intralingual errors. Yet, this error type occurrence of the students in this class (N = 46 # F = 209.1%) nearly doubled that in class 1 (N = 30 # F = 115.4%).

(4.17) Excessive use of *fertilizers and pesticides* is also a cause of air pollution. It increases acid rain which *damages crops, soil and water*. For example, overuse of *chemicals* in agriculture may create several *negative effects* which make the *processes* become harder.

In the above example, the order of the topic sentence and the supporting sentence of the paragraph was inverted, which made the idea overlapped illogically, the word *treatment* should have been used for *processes* to ensure the clarity of meaning as revised below from the general (*chemicals, air pollution*) to the particular (*fertilizers and pesticides, acid rain, damages crops, soil and water*):

The overuse of *chemicals* in agriculture may create several negative effects on *air pollution*. For example, the excessive use of *fertilizers and pesticides* increases *acid rain* which *damages crops, soil and water* and makes the *treatment (processes)* become harder.

Like class 1 writing essays on the same topic with class 2, the students in class 2 when writing about the topic *Rising air pollution – cause & effect* committed *Confusion* errors as the third common compared to the fourth common in class 1. The gap was conspicuous when the number of *Confusion* errors made by the students of group 2 in class 2 roughly doubled (N = 16 # F = 72.7%) that of group 2 in class 1 (N = 9 # F = 34.6%).

\* It could be seen that the external factors such as the teaching method and behavior of teachers, the reference sources, and even the internal one or motivation of the learners could have resulted in the students' intralingual errors in their opinion essays.

Let us consider the following concluding paragraph in which the way the writer summed up the essay idea may have confused the essay reader.

(4.18) In conclusion, *air pollution* not only causes *negative effects* on the environment but also *on human health*. To solve this problem, people *need to use less private (public) transport*.

The verbal phrase *need to use less private transport* is confusing as in reality, people have been stimulated to use public other than private transport to reduce air pollution in the world. As a result, the word *public* should have been replaced by *private*.

Furthermore, *Formulaic and Thoughtless Writing* error appeared least frequently in the essays of group 2 in class 2 (N = 15 # F = 68.2%) compared to that in those of group 2 in class 1 (N = 26 # F = 100%) writing about the same topic and dealing with the same writing task, even to group 1 in class 2 (N = 34 # F = 154.5%) writing about a different topic with a different writing task.

Let us consider the opening sentence in an introduction of an essay beginning with the word *nowadays* as an error of this kind. This word should have been substituted by the synonymous phrase *in the present time* to avoid boredom to the readers.

(4.19) *In the present time (Nowadays)*, many people use too much public transport to move on the road.

Like group 2 in class 1, the error of *Understatement* did not occur for group 2 in class 2 when the students wrote essays on *Rising air pollution – cause & effect* (N = 0 # F = 0%).

Table 4.1 also reveals that with the same number of 22 opinion essays of each group 1 and 2 in class 2 there was a significant gap in the number and frequency of intralingual errors committed. Specifically, group 2 in class 2 made a higher total number of errors (N = 506 # F = 2300 %) than that of group 2 in class 1 (N = 377 # F = 1713.4%), out of which the number of *Immature Writing* errors of group 2 in class 2 was remarkably higher (N = 429 # F = 1950%) than that of group 1 in this class (N = 294 # F = 1336.3%), *Waffle* error occurrence of group 2 also outweighed (N = 46 # F = 209.1%) that of group 1 (N = 41 # F = 186.3%), *Confusion* error number of group 2 more than doubled (N = 16 # F = 72.7 %) compared to that of group 1 (N = 7 # F = 31.8%), *Understatement* error number of group 1 (N = 1 # F = 4.5%) and group 2 (N = 0 # F = 0%) was nearly the same. Only *Formulaic and Thoughtless Writing* error number of group 1 more than doubled (N = 34 # F = 154.5%) that of group 2 (N = 15 # F = 68.2%).

\* It could be seen that under the same university, with the same teacher of Intermediate Writing and the same teaching method and attitude, with the same major writing topic on the environment pollution; however, in most cases the number of intralingual writing style errors in the opinion essays of the students in group 2 of class 2 was higher than that of those in group 1 of this class. These results have shown that the students' learning attitude and motivation had a great influence on the effectiveness of learning the Intermediate Writing module indicated via the error committing level in the students' essays.

Regretfully, all the essays on different or the same writing task in the 2 classes under investigation filled with two or more of the above writing style intralingual errors which was related to the lack of English knowledge. Let us analyze the following examples with various intralingual types of errors or integrated intralingual errors, in the introduction paragraph of an opinion essay on *Rising air pollution – cause & effect* of one of the two classes under examination.

(4.20) *Nowadays*, air pollution in many urban areas is the biggest concern facing (*to*) the world. This problem increases<sub>2</sub> significantly<sub>ly</sub> day by day. That affects<sub>2</sub> (*to*) all things in the world. There are *many* (*some*) reasons causing<sub>ing</sub>(*e*) this serious(*ly*) problem.

In this example, there were up to 9 intralingual errors involving the students' shortage of English knowledge of vocabulary and grammar. They were the wrong use of the cliché *nowadays* revealing the thoughtless and formulaic writing style, the preposition *to* after the transitive verb *face*, the verb *increase* in the simple present tense in the third-singular person missing the suffix *-s* to agree with the third-singular person subject *this problem*, the adjective *significant* instead of the adverb *significantly* after the verb *increases*, the verb *affect* in the simple present tense lacking the suffix *-s* after the third singular person subject *that*, the preposition *to* after the transitive verb *affects*, the use of the understatement *some* other than *many* to persuade the reader with the increasing reason number, the lack of *-ing* suffix behind the verb *cause* to form the present participle phrase *causing* in the sentence with the finite verb *are* in the simple present tense and the error of using the adverb *seriously* for the modifying adjective *serious* ahead of the noun *problem*.

\* It is noticeably that some Intralingual Writing Style errors appeared with very high number and proportion in all two classes under investigation. These errors respectively ranged

from the most common to the less common: Immature Writing error, Waffles, Formulaic and Thoughtless Writing errors. These subtypes of errors not only occurred singly but also in combination.

## 5. CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

### 5.1. Conclusion

Overall, all essays of the second-year undergraduate students in the two Intermediate Writing classes under investigation have encompassed the integrated intralingual writing style errors with various subtypes in their English opinion essays though they have to deal with the same or different writing tasks under the same or different topics within the same time allowance of 40 minutes, learn in the same or different classes of Writing with the same or different Writing lecturer at the same university. This echoes that the pivotal cause of the intralingual writing style errors may be their humble learning motivation apart from such other causes as the reference resource, the university academic workshop, the lecturers' teaching method and their attitude. These goes against those findings of Nguyen (2019)' study on motivation in learning non-English major of many undergraduate students in their first and second year at The Vietnam National University – University of Engineering and Technology in Vietnam that the second-year students had higher learning motivation than those first-year ones for they had had more time learning in the university environment. This may have resulted from the fact that those students in Nguyen Tat Thanh University were the English major ones who had had to learn too many more specialized subjects in English at the second-year phase, especially Writing essays – one of the more difficult productive language skills than those non-specialized English in Nguyen (2019)' study.

From these roots of the problem, some solutions could be put forward to help Vietnamese students of English in general and those of major English at Nguyen Tat Thanh University in particular minimize and even avoid writing style errors in their opinion English essays.

### 5.2. Implications

#### 5.2.1. *Learner's learning motivation*

To avoid the intralingual writing style errors in English essays due to the lack of English knowledge, students should have a high motivation from the beginning of the Writing course, enhance the self-learning responsibility, set the short-term and long-term goal for the course, set up the specific learning plan and self-monitor, assess their progress in their Writing learning. In addition, they should consult their Writing lecturers for the effective self-learning methods. This was confirmed by Saito, Dewaele, và Hanzawa (2017)'s study of the role of language learning motivation of the first-year undergraduate Japanese students that there was an inevitable link between learners' motivation and their progress in language learning.

#### 5.2.2. *Lecturers' teaching method and error correcting attitude*

The teacher of essay writing should base on the course goal to introduce and orient the students how they could self-learn this subject, guide them the way to search for the additional source of writing material and effectively deal with the information on essay writing under their teachers' supervision and assistance. What's more, teachers could combine teaching argumentative reading with opinion essay writing so that students could learn the way how to arrange their arguments into an opinion essay, how to use vocabulary, grammar and cohesive devices in an essay in English to improve their English writing style and avoid committing writing style errors.

As for error correction attitude, teachers had better be open-minded with their students when making corrections on the writing style errors in their opinion essays so that students will not be afraid and be willing to receive the error analysis from their teachers to make progress in their essay writing. This has been confirmed in Ngo (2024)'s research into EFL university teachers' emotion regulation strategies in the classroom in Vietnam.

Regarding the strategies of correcting intralingual writing style errors in the essay, the teacher should focus on analyzing the intralingual errors many students commit. These errors should be classified and codified specifically to help students be able to recognize them when analyzed to assist them in self-learning and to stimulate them to improve their English essay writing style.

### 5.2.3. University material source and academic workshop activities

The university library had better frequently update, complement various sources of specialized and referential English books in the open software source on the Writing skill especially for the Intermediate level so that teachers and students could utilize them more conveniently to modify the teaching and learning method of this subject in order to help students minimize or even avoid committing intralingual writing style errors in their English opinion essays.

In conclusion, the above implications could help students of English as a foreign language in general and those Vietnamese specialized in English at Nguyen Tat Thanh University in particular write their opinion essays better, even avoid intralingual errors and they would be more confident doing their Ielts argumentative writing test.

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