

## Applying Error Analysis To Enhance Academic Vietnamese Writing Skills For Foreign Learners

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### ABSTRACT

The study focuses on applying Error Analysis (EA) to improve academic Vietnamese writing skills for international students. From a survey of 120 writings by 85 students from five countries, the authors recorded 487 errors in four main groups: grammar (38.81%), vocabulary (29.16%), syntax (19.92%), and academic style (12.11%). The main cause was language transfer from the mother tongue (53.8%), followed by intralingual errors such as overgeneralization and simplification (28.34%), and a lack of academic knowledge or avoidance strategies (17.86%). The results indicate that errors are not random phenomena but systematic, reflecting the formation of learners' "interlanguage." On this basis, the study proposes teaching solutions: strengthening practice on nouns–classifiers and word order, expanding academic vocabulary, training text organization skills and objective style, while using feedback based on error analysis. For educational institutions, the study recommends developing a database of typical errors and supplementary academic writing courses integrating language–thinking–culture.

**Keywords:** *Academic Vietnamese Writing; Error Analysis; Interlanguage; International Students..*

### 1. INTRODUCTION:

In the context of globalization and international integration, language plays a key role in facilitating cultural exchange, academic communication, and research collaboration. Vietnam, with its increasingly elevated position on the international stage, has attracted a growing number of international students to study and conduct research. In addition to exploring culture and society, learning Vietnamese has become an urgent need, both to serve the purpose of daily communication and to meet academic requirements at the undergraduate and postgraduate levels. Among language skills, academic writing holds a particularly important place as it is a tool for expressing thought, conveying scientific arguments, and contributing to affirming learners' academic competence in higher education (Hyland, 2019; Weigle, 2002).

Writing academic Vietnamese is not an easy task for international students. Learners often encounter many difficulties in grammar, vocabulary, syntax, and expression style. Errors not only reduce the quality of the text but also hinder the transmission of ideas, leading to limitations in academic integration (Nam, 2004; Ngan, 2019; Ngu, 2022). Meanwhile, the basic requirements of an academic Vietnamese text are grammatical accuracy, standard word usage, coherence in sentence structure, logical reasoning, and an objective, scientific style. A lack in any of these aspects negatively affects the effectiveness of the text as well as the learner's study process.

Worldwide, Error Analysis (EA) has been studied and applied quite early, stemming from Corder's (1967) view on "the significance of errors" in foreign language

learning. Errors are not simply mistakes to be eliminated, but also reflect the developmental stage of interlanguage and provide important data for teachers to understand learners' mechanisms of receiving, processing, and producing language (Brown, 1994; Ellis, 1994; Khansir, 2013). From that perspective, error analysis helps instructors identify causes, predict difficulties, and design appropriate teaching activities. On this basis, EA is not only descriptive but also an effective tool for improving the quality of foreign language teaching and learning (Amjad, Tahir, & Bano, 2021; Ferris, 1999).

In the context of teaching and learning Vietnamese as a foreign language, most existing works stop at identifying and describing common errors of foreign learners. For example, Nguyen Thien Nam (2004) pointed out errors in word classes in the process of learning Vietnamese, while Du Ngoc Ngan (2019) focused on grammatical errors, and Duong Thi Ngu (2022) analyzed noun errors of Lao students. However, these studies mainly lean toward listing and describing, without fully exploiting EA as a tool to find causes, explain learning characteristics, and propose systematic teaching solutions to improve academic writing skills. In other words, there is a significant research gap between "error description" and "error analysis application" to improve academic Vietnamese writing skills.

Based on this reality, this study focuses on applying EA in analyzing academic Vietnamese writings of international students. First, the study identifies and classifies common typical errors, including grammatical errors, lexical errors, syntactic errors, and academic style errors. Next, it analyzes the causes of these errors, which may stem from native language interference (Bhela, 1999;

Chan, 2004), lack of knowledge of grammar and academic vocabulary, or limitations in reasoning and text organization. Finally, based on collected data, the study proposes pedagogical solutions to improve the quality of teaching and learning academic Vietnamese writing for foreign learners.

The research objectives are specifically defined as follows:

Identify and classify typical errors in academic Vietnamese writing by international students.

Analyze the causes of these errors based on the EA theoretical framework.

Propose teaching and learning solutions to improve academic Vietnamese writing skills.

With this approach, the study not only contributes to supplementing theoretical and practical foundations for the field of teaching Vietnamese as a foreign language but also has high applicability in improving teaching quality at higher education institutions in Vietnam. At the same time, the study helps clarify the role of EA as both a research and teaching tool in second language contexts, affirming that identifying and analyzing errors is not intended to “exclude” learners from language norms but rather to support them in moving closer to the required academic language competence (Mitchell, Myles, & Marsden, 2019).

In the trend of international integration, improving academic Vietnamese writing skills of foreign learners is an important and urgent task. Error analysis serves as a bridge between applied linguistics theory and teaching practice, helping to address the existing gap of previous studies while opening new prospects for training international students in the Vietnamese academic environment.

## 2. Theoretical Framework

### 2.1. Error Analysis Theory and Its Relevance to Second Language Acquisition

Error Analysis (EA) emerged in the late 1960s, marking an important shift in applied linguistics research. The pioneering work of Corder (1967) asserted that learners’ errors should not be seen as “mistakes to be eliminated” but as “positive signs” reflecting the developmental process of interlanguage. According to him, error analysis not only helps identify the difficulties learners are facing but also provides important data for adjusting teaching methods. Before that, Contrastive Analysis mainly emphasized the differences between the native language and the target language to predict errors, but this revealed limitations since many learner errors did not directly originate from native language interference (Dai & Shu, 1994). EA therefore became a scientific tool for describing, classifying, and explaining errors in foreign language learning.

According to Ellis (1994), the process of error analysis includes four steps: (i) collecting learners’ language data, (ii) identifying and classifying errors, (iii) explaining the causes, and (iv) evaluating pedagogical significance. Brown (1994) also emphasized that error analysis provides a “window” into learners’ linguistic thinking and

helps teachers adjust teaching activities to better match learners’ needs and stages of language development. Later studies continued to expand the EA theoretical framework, for example Khansir (2013) highlighted the role of errors in shaping learning strategies, while Al-Khresheh (2016) systematized EA theory in multilingual contexts and confirmed its application value in both teaching and research.

A particularly important point of EA is the concept of “interlanguage” developed by Selinker (1972, cited in Ellis, 1994). Interlanguage is not a random language system but a rule-governed system reflecting learners’ efforts to construct a language close to the target language. The errors appearing in international students’ academic Vietnamese writing are clear evidence of the existence of interlanguage. For example, using the wrong word class or incorrect word order is not simply a sign of “lack of knowledge,” but also reflects the formation of an interlanguage system, in which grammar rules of the native language may intermingle with temporary hypotheses learners construct about Vietnamese grammar.

Ferris (1999, 2002) argued that analyzing writing errors has particular significance in classroom contexts because writing errors are often systematic and highly repetitive. When learners do not receive appropriate feedback, these errors can easily become “habitual mistakes.” Conversely, if instructors apply EA to provide timely feedback, learners will have the opportunity to restructure their interlanguage and move closer to academic language norms. In recent research, Amjad et al. (2021) emphasized that applying EA techniques in teaching academic essay writing helps learners significantly improve their writing ability in grammar, vocabulary, and reasoning.

In the context of teaching Vietnamese to foreigners, EA has a double value. On the one hand, it helps accurately identify common errors of international students such as errors in word classes, word order, or colloquial expressions (Nguyen Thien Nam, 2004; Du Ngoc Ngan, 2019). On the other hand, EA provides scientific grounds to explain why these errors occur – whether they result from native language interference (Bhela, 1999; Chan, 2004), lack of exposure to academic language, or limitations in text organization skills. Thanks to this, teachers do not stop at merely “pointing out errors” but can design learning activities to address root causes.

EA theory thus offers a solid methodological framework for studying errors in international students’ academic Vietnamese writing. Instead of viewing errors as barriers, EA affirms that errors are evidence of language development and valuable data for improving teaching methods. Therefore, applying EA in this study not only contributes to academic knowledge but also has high practical value in training international students in Vietnam.

### 2.2. The Role of Errors in Foreign Language Learning

In applied linguistics research, the concept of errors has undergone many important changes. Before the 1960s, errors were often regarded as “obstacles” in foreign language learning, which needed to be eliminated through continuous correction. However, with the advent of Error Analysis (EA), Corder (1967) asserted that errors have

positive significance, reflecting learners' developmental stages and providing valuable data for studying interlanguage. Since then, many scholars have emphasized the central role of errors in promoting foreign language learning and teaching (Brown, 1994; Ellis, 1994).

Errors are seen as signs of the process of constructing language knowledge. According to Ellis (1994), foreign language learners do not acquire the target language passively but actively build temporary hypotheses about the language system. These hypotheses manifest through incorrect structures in their speech and writing. Therefore, errors are not merely "deficiencies" but also evidence of linguistic thinking. For instance, when international students write a Vietnamese sentence following the typical subject–verb–object order of English, this shows they are applying the hypothesis that Vietnamese has a syntactic structure similar to English. Although wrong, this hypothesis helps learners form comparative awareness and gradually adjust when given feedback.

Errors are an important data source for teachers to adjust teaching activities. Ferris (1999, 2002) emphasized that in writing classes, errors are often repetitive and systematic. If carefully analyzed, they allow teachers to identify common learner weaknesses and thus design more focused and effective teaching content. Hyland (2019) also pointed out that feedback based on error analysis helps learners understand the causes of mistakes and restructure knowledge, rather than just memorizing correct forms passively.

Errors reflect the influence of the native language in foreign language learning. Many studies have shown that language transfer is the main cause of errors. Bhela (1999) asserted that native language interference is inevitable, and such errors provide clear evidence for the existence of transfer. Chan (2004) analyzed the syntactic errors of Chinese learners of English and showed how they applied native language structures to the target language. In the context of learning Vietnamese, international students' errors in word order, word classes, or sentence structures also reflect the strong influence of their source language systems (Nguyen Thien Nam, 2004; Du Ngoc Ngan, 2019).

Errors play a role in shaping learning strategies. Khansir (2013) noted that errors make learners more aware of the gap between interlanguage and the target language, thereby developing strategies for correction, reference, and self-adjustment. From a psycholinguistic perspective, Brown (1994) considered errors as "traces of experimentation," showing that learners are applying known rules to explore new ones. This process of "trial and error" is a natural learning mechanism, similar to how children acquire their mother tongue.

In academic writing instruction, the role of errors becomes even more evident. Weigle (2002) asserted that writing assessment must take into account learners' error systems, as these reflect not only linguistic proficiency but also logical thinking and scientific reasoning ability. Errors such as lack of coherence, use of colloquial language, or lack of objectivity are not only issues of grammar or vocabulary but also relate to characteristics of academic

style. Therefore, error analysis not only improves linguistic form but also enhances learners' academic thinking ability.

For teaching Vietnamese to international students, considering errors as an inevitable part of the learning process is extremely important. If teachers only view errors as "mistakes to be eliminated," learners may feel pressure, lose confidence, and become limited in experimenting with new language. Conversely, if errors are exploited as a teaching resource, learners have the opportunity to recognize their own progress and are guided on how to adjust toward academic language norms. Therefore, applying EA to identify, classify, and analyze errors in academic Vietnamese writing can be considered a strategic step to improve the training quality of international students in Vietnam.

Errors play a central role in foreign language learning: they both reflect the formation of interlanguage, provide valuable data for teaching, and foster the development of learning strategies and academic competence. Correctly perceiving the role of errors will help teachers and learners approach the teaching–learning of academic Vietnamese writing in a more scientific, practical, and effective manner.

### 2.3. Characteristics of Academic Vietnamese Writing

Academic writing is a specific type of discourse that reflects high requirements for accuracy, coherence, and objectivity in presenting scientific knowledge. For Vietnamese, academic writing not only inherits the common norms of global academic writing (Weigle, 2002; Hyland, 2019) but also bears its own characteristics linked to grammar structure, vocabulary system, and expression style of this language. Understanding the characteristics of academic Vietnamese writing is a prerequisite for assessing and analyzing international students' errors and then proposing appropriate teaching solutions.

Grammatical accuracy is the foremost requirement in academic Vietnamese writing. Unlike spoken language, which allows flexibility and abbreviation, academic texts require sentences to have full syntactic components, correct word order, and compliance with standard grammatical rules. Nguyen Thien Nam (2004) pointed out that international students often make mistakes in using word classes (nouns, verbs, adjectives), especially when the Vietnamese system of word classes has many differences compared to Indo-European languages. Du Ngoc Ngan (2019) added that errors in word order in complex sentences or phrases are common obstacles, reducing the clarity and accuracy of texts. Therefore, mastering Vietnamese grammar structures is a necessary condition for producing standard academic texts.

Normative use of vocabulary is another important feature of academic writing. Vietnamese has a diverse lexicon, in which many words are colloquial or literary, unsuitable for scientific texts. Thus, Vietnamese academic style often prioritizes words with general, objective meanings, avoiding personal expression. Weigle (2002) argued that academic vocabulary is the foundation for developing scientific thinking in writing. In the context of teaching Vietnamese, vocabulary issues become more complex as



international students often translate directly from their native language, leading to inappropriate or non-standard word usage (Duong Thi Ngu, 2022). Therefore, training academic Vietnamese vocabulary is a key factor in improving writing quality.

In addition, the semantic and grammatical nuances of near-synonymous verbs such as chú ý, đề ý, and lưu ý have been carefully examined by Nguyen Van Pho (2013), underscoring the complexity of selecting context-appropriate academic vocabulary.

Coherence and logic in text structure are indispensable requirements of academic writing. Hyland (2019) emphasized that an academic text not only needs correct grammar and vocabulary but also requires tight organization at the levels of sentences, paragraphs, and the whole text. In Vietnamese, cohesive devices such as connectors, repetition, substitution, contrast, along with paragraph structures following reasoning order (argument–evidence–conclusion) are important tools to ensure coherence. However, many international students are not proficient in these cohesive devices, resulting in lengthy but fragmented texts lacking idea connection (Du Ngoc Ngan, 2019). This reduces persuasiveness and academic quality. Regarding cohesion and the expression of identity relationships within sentences, Nguyen Van Pho (2014) analyzed the particle “cùng” as a marker of identity, providing additional insight for teaching subtle connective devices in academic Vietnamese writing.

Objective and scientific style is a prominent feature of academic Vietnamese writing. Scientific texts usually avoid using first-person pronouns or subjective emotional expressions, instead opting for neutral expression based on evidence and logical reasoning. Ferris (2002) and Hyland (2019) both pointed out that academic style plays a decisive role in distinguishing scientific texts from other types of writing. In the Vietnamese context, maintaining objectivity is also linked to the choice of formal vocabulary, complete sentence structures, and orderly development of arguments. However, many international students tend to use colloquial expressions or repeat simple structures, making texts less formal and scientific (Nguyen Thien Nam, 2004).

Cultural–linguistic factors also strongly influence the characteristics of academic Vietnamese writing. Ho (2011) argued that teaching and learning Vietnamese is not purely a linguistic activity but also involves absorbing the cultural norms and ways of thinking of Vietnamese society. For example, the development of arguments in Vietnamese academic writing often emphasizes tight reasoning, specific evidence, while avoiding absolute assertions, instead using mitigating expressions to maintain objectivity. Due to cultural differences, international students often find it difficult to grasp these implicit rules, leading to errors in reasoning and text organization.

Academic Vietnamese writing thus has fundamental characteristics: grammatical accuracy, normative vocabulary, coherence and logic in structure, objectivity in style, and connection with cultural–linguistic features. Understanding these characteristics not only helps teachers and learners set specific training goals but also

provides the basis for applying error analysis to improve teaching and learning academic Vietnamese writing for international students.

## 2.4. Previous Studies

International research on error analysis in academic writing has demonstrated the important role of EA in improving language competence. Ferris (1999, 2002) focused on the impact of error correction feedback in writing classes, asserting that analyzing and addressing errors helps learners improve accuracy. Weigle (2002) and Hyland (2019) expanded the theoretical framework of academic writing, emphasizing the combination of error analysis and reasoning training.

In the Vietnamese context, Nguyen Thien Nam (2004) identified errors in word classes, Du Ngoc Ngan (2019) studied grammatical errors, and Duong Thi Ngu (2022) focused on noun errors of Lao students. However, these studies are mainly descriptive and have not applied EA as a systematic tool to identify causes and propose teaching solutions. This gap is the basis for the current research.

Research on the Vietnamese classifier system also shows that it remains a major challenge for learners of Vietnamese as a foreign language. For instance, Le Thi Minh Hang (2015) analyzed the use of Vietnamese unit nouns in language teaching and proposed practical training steps, complementing Nguyen Thien Nam’s (2004) findings on foreigners’ frequent omission or misuse of classifiers.

## 3. Research Methodology

### 3.1 Methods

Qualitative: Error analysis in academic writing (essays, reports, writing assignments) of international students.

Quantitative: Statistical analysis of frequency and prevalence of each type of error (grammar, vocabulary, syntax, style).

### 3.2 Survey subjects

The survey subjects were international students from South Korea, Japan, France, Laos, China, and Thailand, studying Vietnamese as a foreign language.

### 3.3 Survey objectives

Determine the prevalence of errors in academic Vietnamese writing.

Clarify the causes of errors based on EA theory.

Propose appropriate teaching solutions to improve the quality of academic writing.

## 4. Research Findings and Discussion

### 4.1. Errors in Academic Vietnamese Writing through Previous Studies

**Table 1. Classification of Grammatical Errors in the Study by Du Ngoc Ngan (2019)**

Error type	Number of errors	Percentage (%)	Example	Main cause

Word/ phrase order	108	38.29	“Tôi học tiếng Việt mới” (→ correct : “Tôi mới học tiếng Việt”)	Transfer from native language (Japanese, Korean – SOV); overgeneraliz ation of Vietnamese word order
Word combinat ion	76	26.95	“Tôi mua một sách” (→ correct : “Tôi mua một quyển sách”)	Lack of classifiers, influence of native language structure; simplificatio n in writing
Connecto rs (conjunct ions, prepositi ons)	56	19.85	“Anh ấy học và làm việc nhưng ở Hà Nội” (→ incorre ct connec tor)	Confusion of functions; teaching influence; language transfer
Punctuati on	42	14.9	Senten ce separa tion, using comma s instead of periods	Influence of spoken language, lack of standardizat ion in writing

(Source: Du Ngoc Ngan (2019))

The study by Du Ngoc Ngan (2019) showed that word order and word combination were the two error groups accounting for more than 65% of total errors. These are systematic errors that appeared in most academic writings of international students. The results clearly reflect the influence of typological differences between Vietnamese and learners’ native languages (especially SOV languages). At the same time, overgeneralization and communication strategies (for example, omitting classifiers to express more quickly) also contributed to the errors. These findings confirm that training in word order

and noun phrase structures should be considered priorities in teaching academic Vietnamese writing.

**Table 2. Classification of Classifier Errors in the Study by Nguyen Thien Nam (2004)**

Error type	Num ber of error s	Percent age (%)	Exam ple	Main cause
Missin g classifi er	67	33	“Bên bờ hồ có những liễu” (→ correc t: “Bên bờ hồ có những cây liễu”)	Overgeneraliz ation: extending cases where classifiers are unnecessary
Redund ant classifi er	51	25.1	“Một cái con mèo” (→ correc t: “Một con mèo”)	Native language transfer; confusion in categorization
Incorre ct classifi er	85	41.9	“Một chiếc chó” (→ correc t: “Một con chó”)	Confusion in classifier system; simplification as a communicatio n strategy
<b>Total</b>	<b>203</b>	<b>100</b>		

(Source: Nguyen Thien Nam (2004))

The results of Nguyen Thien Nam (2004) showed that classifiers are the biggest obstacle in writing academic Vietnamese. Among more than 200 errors analyzed, incorrect classifier use accounted for nearly 42%, followed by missing classifiers. This shows that international learners not only omit classifiers when necessary but also use them incorrectly in context, directly affecting the accuracy and formality of academic texts. The main causes are overgeneralization (applying the rule “nouns do not require classifiers” to all cases) and native language transfer from languages without classifier categories.

Comparing the two studies, both Du Ngoc Ngan (2019) and Nguyen Thien Nam (2004) indicated that noun phrase

structures and syntactic order are the focus of Vietnamese writing errors among international students. While Du Ngoc Ngan emphasized word order and word combination errors, Nguyen Thien Nam focused on the classifier system. A common point is that these errors are highly repetitive, showing that they are not random mistakes but reflect interlanguage characteristics.

From the perspective of Error Analysis (EA), the two studies provide important evidence to identify: (i) typical error types that need teaching priority; (ii) diverse error mechanisms (interlingual and intralingual); (iii) the need to design a database of typical errors to serve academic writing training. This is the basis for the present study to apply EA not only to describe errors but also to build specific pedagogical solutions.

#### 4.2. Survey Results on the Current Situation

To capture the current situation of international students' academic Vietnamese writing, the study collected 120 academic writings (including essays, course reports, and writing assignments) from 85 students from six countries, with the largest group from South Korea, followed by Japan and France, Laos, and a smaller number from China and Thailand. From this data, the research team recorded 487 errors in four main categories: grammar (including classifier, preposition, and conjunction errors), vocabulary (word choice, word combination, and non-standard word use), syntax (word order, sentence structure, and sentence cohesion errors), and academic style (lack of objectivity, use of colloquial language, or lack of logical coherence). The statistics showed that grammatical errors accounted for the highest proportion, reflecting fundamental difficulties in mastering the Vietnamese language system. These errors were not random but systematic, often recurring in many writings by the same learner, consistent with the interlanguage concept in EA theory (Ellis, 1994).

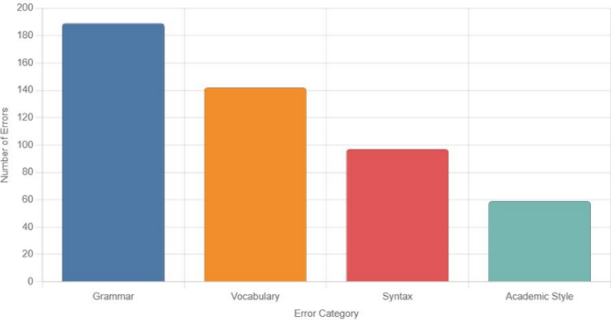
**Table 3. Classification of Errors by Main Group in Academic Vietnamese Writing**

Error group	Number of errors	Percentage (%)	Example	Main cause (based on EA)
Grammar	189	38.81	“Một cái sách hay” (→ correct : “Một quyển sách hay”) – incorrect classifier	Native language transfer (interlingual); overgeneralization of Vietnamese classifier rules
Vocabulary	142	29.16	“Tôi nghiên	Lack of academic

			cứu vấn đề lớn” (→ correct : “Tôi nghiên cứu vấn đề quan trọng”) – incorrect word choice	vocabulary; influence of direct translation from native language
Syntax	97	19.92	“Vì vậy tôi nghĩ là tốt” (→ correct : “Vì vậy, tôi cho rằng điều đó là tốt”) – lack of sentence cohesion	Simplification; confusion in word order due to native language influence
Academic style	59	12.11	“Tôi thích ý kiến này lắm” (→ correct : “Ý kiến này có giá trị đáng kể”) – colloquial language use	Lack of awareness of objective style; avoidance strategy
<b>Total</b>	<b>487</b>	<b>100</b>		

(Source: Survey data collected by the authors)

The chart below illustrates the number of errors and the percentage of each error group, clarifying the distribution of error types in academic Vietnamese writing by international students.



**Chart 1. Distribution of Errors in Academic Vietnamese Writing**

(Source: Survey data collected by the authors)

Table 3 shows that grammatical errors are the most common (189 errors, 38.81%), mainly due to typological differences between Vietnamese and learners’ native languages (such as Korean or Chinese, which do not have a complex classifier system). Vocabulary errors ranked second (29.16%), reflecting limitations in accessing standard academic vocabulary, often resulting in texts lacking scientific quality. Syntax and style errors accounted for lower proportions but still significantly affected the coherence and objectivity of writing. According to the EA theoretical framework, most errors stem from two main mechanisms: language transfer (interlingual) and internal strategies such as simplification or overgeneralization (Corder, 1967; Brown, 1994). For example, Korean students often make syntactic errors due to applying the subject–object–verb order of their native language, while Lao students tend to omit classifiers due to influence from similar but simpler linguistic structures.

To further clarify causes, the study analyzed errors based on EA sources, including interlingual transfer, intralingual errors (such as overgeneralization or simplification), and other factors (such as lack of academic exposure or avoidance strategies). The results are presented in Table 4.

**Table 4. Classification of Errors by Cause Based on EA Framework**

Cause of error	Number of errors	Percentage (%)	Example	Main related error groups
Interlingual transfer (native language)	262	53.8	“Tôi có một ý kiến hay lắm” (applying expressive style from Thai)	Grammar, syntax, academic style
Intralingual errors (overgeneralization, simplification)	138	28.34	“Học tiếng Việt khó” (simplification)	Vocabulary, syntax

simplification)			ation, missing full sentence components)	
Lack of academic knowledge or avoidance strategies	87	17.86	“Vấn đề này là quan trọng” (avoiding complex structures, lacking logical evidence)	Academic style, vocabulary
Total	487	100		

(Source: Survey data collected by the authors)

Analysis from Table 4 shows that native language transfer is the main cause (262 errors, 53.80%), particularly for students from countries with languages close to Vietnamese, such as Laos, leading to false generalization (e.g., omitting classifiers assuming Vietnamese is as flexible as their native language). For students from South Korea, Japan, and France, errors often relate to grammatical structures and word order differences compared to Vietnamese. Intralingual errors accounted for 28.34%, reflecting the stage of interlanguage development where learners test Vietnamese rules but apply them incorrectly (Selinker, 1972). Other factors such as lack of exposure to academic texts accounted for 17.86%, often seen in students new to university-level study. These findings not only confirm the research objectives of identifying and classifying errors but also provide the basis for analyzing causes according to EA, thereby proposing solutions such as increased comparative exercises, personalized feedback, and practice in writing academic topics to reduce systematic errors and improve academic Vietnamese writing skills for international students.

4.3. Related Studies on Specific Learner Groups

Building on the error patterns observed in this survey, particularly the dominance of interlingual transfer among Korean, Japanese, Chinese, and Thai learners, insights from recent studies on these groups further illuminate the challenges and strategies in Vietnamese language acquisition. For instance, Dao Dich Muc and Nguyen Thi Anh Thu (2018) examined L1 Korean vocalic transfer in L2 Vietnamese monophthong production, highlighting how phonological interference from Korean can extend to written forms, such as misspellings or awkward phrasing in academic texts due to perceived sound similarities. This aligns with our findings on grammatical and syntactic errors, suggesting that transfer effects are multifaceted, impacting not just pronunciation but also writing accuracy. For Korean learners in particular, Nguyen Huynh Lam and Lee Na Yeong (2018) highlighted typical difficulties in producing Vietnamese imperative sentences, illustrating how native-language structures strongly influence Vietnamese expression.



The growing interest in Vietnamese among Korean learners, as discussed by Kang (2018), is driven by economic ties and cultural exchanges, which may explain the larger representation of Korean students in our sample. However, this motivation often leads to overgeneralization in academic writing, as learners prioritize communicative fluency over precision. Similarly, Khamkhien (2006) compared language learning strategies of Thai and Vietnamese university students, revealing that Thai learners frequently employ simplification and avoidance tactics—mirroring the 17.86% of errors in our study attributed to such strategies—which can manifest in less coherent academic styles when learning Vietnamese.

From a pedagogical perspective, Ngo Nhu Binh and Tran Bac Hoai (2001) proposed a Vietnamese language learning framework that emphasizes structured progression from basic to academic proficiency, which could be adapted to address the intralingual errors (28.34%) identified here, such as overgeneralization in vocabulary and syntax. For Japanese learners, チャン,ホアンナム (2021) shared lessons from designing online courses for Vietnamese language and culture, noting that incorporating cultural elements reduces transfer errors by fostering comparative awareness, a strategy that could enhance our recommended feedback mechanisms.

Finally, Yeh, Ho, and Chen (2015) explored Vietnamese as a heritage language in Taiwan, where learners of Chinese descent face similar interlingual challenges, including vocabulary mismatches due to cultural-linguistic overlaps. This resonates with the errors from Chinese students in our survey, underscoring the need for tailored vocabulary expansion in academic contexts. Integrating these insights reinforces the EA approach by highlighting group-specific interventions, such as targeted exercises for Korean phonological-writing links or strategy training for Thai learners, to bridge the gap between interlanguage and target academic norms.

#### 4.4. Discussion

The survey results show that errors in international students' academic Vietnamese writing are not isolated but systematic, repetitive, and clearly reflect the characteristics of interlanguage. This aligns with the views of Corder (1967) and Ellis (1994) that errors are an inevitable sign of second language learning and provide important data for teachers to adjust teaching activities.

Grammatical errors accounted for the highest proportion (38.81%), especially focusing on classifiers and noun phrase structures. This result is consistent with the findings of Nguyen Thien Nam (2004) and Du Ngoc Ngan (2019), indicating that classifiers and syntactic order continue to be major “bottlenecks” for international students. The main cause stems from typological differences and native language interference (interlingual transfer). This is clear evidence of the strong influence of language transfer, particularly among learners whose native language systems are significantly different from Vietnamese.

Vocabulary errors (29.16%) reflect limitations in academic vocabulary and the tendency to translate

directly from the native language. Students' writings often contain non-standard or colloquial word usage, reducing scientific quality. Compared to grammatical errors, vocabulary errors have received less attention in previous studies, but the current findings show that this is a prominent issue requiring more focus in teaching academic writing.

Syntax and academic style errors accounted for smaller proportions but significantly impacted coherence and objectivity – core characteristics of academic writing (Hyland, 2019). These errors often stem from internal strategies (intralingual errors) such as simplifying structures or avoiding complex forms. This proves that beyond language factors, reasoning and scientific thinking skills also contribute to errors.

Compared with previous studies, this survey expands the scope of analysis by showing the relationship between error types and error causes according to the EA framework. While previous studies mainly remained descriptive (Nguyen Thien Nam, 2004; Du Ngoc Ngan, 2019), this study demonstrates that more than 53% of errors result from language transfer, nearly 30% are intralingual, and nearly 18% relate to lack of academic knowledge. This affirms EA's value not only in classifying errors but also in explaining error formation mechanisms, thereby orienting teaching solutions.

A noteworthy point is the existence of faulty learning strategies such as overgeneralization or overuse of colloquial expressions to simplify. This is consistent with Brown (1994) and Khansir (2013) who noted that errors result from experimentation and hypothesis adjustment. Thus, instead of viewing errors as failures, they should be seen as evidence of learner progress and exploited to design more effective teaching activities.

The research results confirm: (i) international students' academic writing errors are systematic, not random; (ii) error mechanisms are diverse, with language transfer playing the main role; (iii) error analysis through EA helps clarify the relationship between error–cause–solution. This is an important basis for building teaching strategies for academic Vietnamese writing for international students, aiming to develop both linguistic competence and academic thinking competence.

#### 5. Conclusion and Recommendations

##### 5.1. Conclusion

The study applied Error Analysis (EA) theory to examine and analyze 487 errors in academic Vietnamese writing by 85 international students. The results showed:

Grammatical errors (38.81%) were the most common, especially in classifiers and noun phrase structures. This is the biggest “bottleneck” in the process of acquiring and applying academic Vietnamese.

Vocabulary errors (29.16%) were mainly due to a lack of academic vocabulary and the habit of directly translating from the native language, which made texts non-standard and less scientific.

Syntactic errors (19.92%) and academic style errors (12.11%), although lower in proportion, directly affected



coherence and objectivity – core features of academic writing.

Regarding causes, native language transfer accounted for more than half (53.80%), followed by intralingual errors from overgeneralization or simplification (28.34%), and lack of academic knowledge or avoidance strategies (17.86%).

From these results, the study confirms that international students' errors are not random phenomena but systematic, reflecting the formation of interlanguage. Identifying and analyzing errors through EA not only helps describe phenomena but also contributes to explaining error mechanisms, thereby forming the basis for proposing effective teaching solutions.

## 5.2. Recommendations

For teachers:

Strengthen teaching on classifiers and noun phrase structures, considering them the core focus of academic writing training.

Design comparative exercises to help students recognize differences between Vietnamese and their native languages, limiting negative transfer.

Use feedback based on error analysis, not only pointing out specific errors but also explaining causes, so that students can adjust interlanguage knowledge.

For learners:

Actively build academic vocabulary through reading scientific materials, while avoiding mechanical translation from their native language.

Practice writing on academic topics with regular guidance and feedback from teachers, paying attention to coherence and objective style.

Actively apply self-monitoring strategies, such as recording typical personal errors, comparing with standard texts, and learning from experience.

For institutions:

Develop a database of typical errors in academic Vietnamese writing by international students as a reference resource for teaching.

Organize supplementary courses on academic writing skills integrating language–thinking–culture to support students' comprehensive access.

Encourage interdisciplinary research on EA, combining linguistics, education, and technology to develop automatic error detection tools.

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