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Interlingual Error Analysis in the Writing of Tamil-Speaking College Students

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ABSTRACT

Writing is one of the most challenging language skills for students to master. Because of the structural differences between languages, interference from the pupils' mother tongue can cause problems when writing in English. The current study attempts to investigate how the first language's influence can hinder language acquisition, particularly in terms of writing skills. This research explores this issue deeper by looking at how the Tamil language, in particular, influences Tamil speakers' English essay writing. The respondents are chosen from the intermediate proficiency group. Intermediate proficiency suggests a score of B to C in their form five Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia (SPM). The lexical, morphological, semantic, and syntactical aspects of 42 writing samples from college students will be examined for this study. Errors will be identified, categorised, and evaluated in the writings. The findings will highlight the primary errors in the students' works: omission, overinclusion, misselection, misordering, and blends or direct translations of Tamil. While we must comprehend why and how mother tongue interference impacts their writing, it is critical to address these difficulties to reduce errors as they go to higher levels of writing. The study's findings will recommend students notice the distinctions between their first language (L1) and the English language, as well as learn to understand the languages' distinctive features and structures to compose communicative and proper sentences.

Keywords: College Students; Interlingual Errors; Mother Tongue Interference; Second Language; Writing

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1. Introduction

The way native English speakers and second language learners write in English differs significantly because second language learners frequently rely on their native language (L1) patterns to make coherent responses when writing in the second language (L2)^[1]. Applied linguistics studies have investigated students' errors in English as a second or foreign language to provide information to instructors, scholars, and students^[2-5]. The essay content's consistency, context, and rhetorical qualities are impacted by mother tongue intervention, punctuation and spelling issues, misapplication of essay construction norms, and syntactic and morphological defects.

In the present students find it challenging to get used to the learning environment when shifting from a school learning culture to a university learning culture^[6]. In addition, students don't adhere to the academic writing standards required to write well in an academic discipline. Undergraduates are observed referring to their first language system and employing direct translation to build English language patterns when writing in English^[7].

Grammatical errors in college students' English writing vary from lexical to syntactic, and intralingual, and inter-lingual errors^[8]. In contrast, intralingual errors are mutual interference between the grammatical elements in the target language. Interlingual errors are caused mainly by mother tongue intervention, which affects all aspects of the language: phonological, morphological, lexical, and syntactic. Intralingual or developmental errors are caused by simplification, overgeneralization, hypercorrection, poor instruction, fossilisation, evasion, insufficient learning, and hypothesised erroneous notions^[2].

2. Literature Review

In 1969, Selinker invented the word 'interlanguage,' In 1972, he expanded and reframed the framework by distinguishing systematic and non-systematic variability^[9]. They all pertain to the uniqueness of second language learners' utterances. The goal of re-framing is to relate to the inner linguistic system of second language learners, known as 'interim grammar.' Although reference^[9] be-

lieve they require entirely different theoretical approaches to the character of second language learning to make diverse predictions, Ellis^[10] claims that the character of a second language meets identical development. According to Gass and Selinker^[9], language learners do not automatically transfer from one language to another. Instead, there is a distinct stage of stabilization and fossilization when language learners do not continuously 'approximate' the elements until they are indistinguishable from the native language to the target language.

2.1. Interlingual Research

Interlanguage is a noun with linguistic connotations. Selinker^[11] defined interlanguage as "a separate linguistic system based on the observable output that comes from a learner's attempted production of a target language (TL) norm." Despite learners' attempts to adhere to L2 linguistic rules, students' portrayal shows the uniqueness of the L1 of the learner's language. Furthermore, categorising interlingual errors according to the linguistic system is helpful in research as different linguistic systems imply neither in a first language (L1) nor L2.

Tarone^[12] paraphrased Selinker's assertion that "Interlanguage is seen as a separate linguistic system, clearly distinct from both the learner's native language (NL) and the target language (TL) being taught, but related to both via interlingual identifications in the learner's perception," as follows: She argues that the linguistic system of the learner's native language (NL) and target language (TL) encompasses not just phonology, morphology, and syntax, but also the lexical, pragmatic, and discourse levels of interlanguage communication. Taka^[13], on the other hand, appears to restrict the learner's native language (NL) and the target language (TL) system to grammar.

Interlanguage is defined by Yule^[14] as "a system of L2 learners with certain characteristics of the L1 and L2, as well as some characteristics that are independent of the L1 and L2." Yule describes the language of the L2 learner as a "contemporary hybrid system with rules borrowed from L1." Interlanguage as the mental internalisation of grammar by L2 learners, and as a "natural language system that may be described in terms of linguistic rules and

principles” Yule^[14]. Given the definitions of interlanguage (IL) presented here, it seems reasonable to adopt Tarone’s^[12] interpretation of the term due to its clarity and breadth; an L2 learner’s language cannot be limited to grammar because communication may never be possible through the production of grammatical utterances alone. Other terms, such as approximative systems and distinctive dialects^[15], have been used to describe the language of L2 learners, but Selinker’s concept of L1 has remained the most popular. According to Sridhar^[16], this popularity originates from the term’s usefulness for expressing characteristics of the L2 learner’s language in terms of its instability (development), fluctuation (between L1 and L2 systems), and rule-governed tendency, notwithstanding its inadequacies in communication.

Brown^[17] categorised errors according to four factors: interference or interlingual transfer, intralingual transfer, learning environment, and communication strategies. Interlingual errors are explained by Brown^[17] as negative impacts of the native language. Negative transfers in the target language are known as intralingual mistakes. Generalization mistakes are a type of generalisation error. The fourth error is the lack of linguistic forms for second language learners. According to Carl^[18], pupils create four types of errors: interlingual, intralingual, communication strategy, and deceptive errors. Schacheter and Celce-Murcia^[19] state that intralingual and developmental roles are comparable. There are just two fundamental types of errors: interlingual and intralingual. Hence, they summed up their findings. Furthermore, Dulay and Burt^[20] divided errors into three categories: developmental, interference, and characteristic errors, which included both interlingual and intralingual errors. Karra^[21] stated that according to Stenson^[22], elicited errors were another type of error among second language learners. Elicited errors result from wrong instructions in the target language.

An interlingual study was conducted by Maniam and Kesevan^[23] on error analysis among Tamil speakers. The respondents were from Selangor, and the students were from the standard 5 English class. The research approached both qualitative and quantitative methods. He used research instruments such as questionnaires, interviews, and the analysis of samples from the students’

exercise books. A hundred students completed the survey, and the interview was conducted with five students and one English instructor, whereas the exercise book samples were collected from 96 selected students. The syntactic impact of the L1 grammar employed by Tamil school children in their regular free second-language writing, especially English, was identified in this study. The questionnaire results from this study showed that before they began writing in English, students from Tamil schools thought and visualized items in their mother tongue. Because there were significant differences between the Tamil language’s syntactic order and the English language’s syntactic order, this interpretation and thought led to syntactic disorder in second-language writing.

Kalaiselvan^[24] conducted another study on the impact of the mother tongue among Tamil-speaking students. In his research, he investigated the influence of Tamil on English students in Indian government art and science schools. He claimed the impact of the mother tongue on each part of the translation process in the following elements: acoustics, phonetics, sequential recognition, phonological level, lexical access, and transfer and processing text. He stated that if a child has a more vulnerable capacity for translation into his mother tongue, it reflects the low acquisition level of the second language. Therefore, the current study would like to analyse the interlingual errors in students writing.

2.2. Linguistics Taxonomy Error Research

Linguists have always been attempting to describe the types of errors that language learners make, and that is the best way to start with, as it helps the applied linguists identify where the problem lies Anefnaf^[25].

2.2.1. Lexical Error Research

Malarvizhi et al.^[26], in their research on lexical mistake analysis, stated that the Tamil language is the predominant communicative language of the participants. In this research, participants claim that communicating their ideas or feelings in their mother tongue or first language is easier and faster than in second or other languages. The outcomes of this study demonstrate that code-mixing (Ta-

mil, English, and Malay) was most frequently employed in communication by individuals. 117 Tamil, English, and Malay comments used mixed codes, approximately 49% of 240 students. The results have shown that these students use specific differences in their English statements. Furthermore, most English comments contain Tamil addressing terms such as ‘dehy,’ ‘dei,’ and ‘da.’

Silalahi et al.,^[27] this study aims to identify flaws in scientific texts translated from English into Indonesian. This study employs the qualitative method and a content analysis strategy. The findings revealed that (1) most students utilised a semantic translation technique, particularly modulation while translating scientific materials and at least used the unique structural addition procedures, (2) lexical errors, of which the majority of students made formal ones in word choice, and the least (3) morphological errors, of which the majority of students make mistakes in the affixation field of improper use of affixation, and the least of which are affixations that are not broken, (4) syntactic errors, which were found in the translation of scientific texts in the fields, phrases, clauses, and sentences.

2.2.2. Morphology Error Research

Murakami and Alexopoulou^[28] looked back at morpheme studies to see if the long-held notion of a universal sequence of acquisition was true. The researchers studied six English grammatical morphemes in the L2 acquisition made by learners from seven L1 classes through five levels of competence. The data was taken from the Cambridge Learner Corpus, which has approximately 10,000 written examination scripts. The study discovered a considerable influence of L1 on the absolute precision of morphemes and their acquisition order, casting doubt on the widely held belief that L2 morphemes are acquired in a universal order. Furthermore, the study discovered that L1 had morpheme-specific effects, with morphemes being more vulnerable to L1’s influence when encoding language-specific notions. Abdul Rahuman^[29] conducted another study on the errors produced by Tamil-speaking students at the South East University of Sri Lanka when using the present simple tense in English. This focuses on the errors of morpheme ‘s’ and the inter-language grammar effects on the third-person singular present tense agreement. The results

show that it is difficult for Tamil-speaking English learners to use English. Phonological similarity, omission, incorrect suffix, and substitution are the most frequent errors detected in their usage. However, such situations are often limited to students who come to universities.

Another investigation by Emmanuel^[30] was carried out in Owo Local Government Area of Ondo State using the Senior Secondary School students of some chosen secondary schools. The Owo dialect is an indigenous language often used outside the classroom for communication. The method for data collection was the written composition of the students’ utterances. Categories of interference, phonological interference, morphological interference, semantic interference, and syntactic interference emerged from the results of the data analysis. In this work, morphological interlingual errors will be analysed in terms of derivational and inflectional morphemes.

2.2.3. Semantic Error Research

Shormani et al.^[31] stated that semantic mistakes in second language acquisition (SLA) were a fascinating and challenging topic of study that still had plenty of room for further examination. Very little research has focused on the semantic errors made by SL learners, despite many inquiries into lexical errors. As a result, this study intends to not only classify the semantic errors made by Arab learners of English but also to look into their potential L1 and L2 causes. Thirty essays from English-majoring third-year students at Yemeni University were examined. Additionally, we have used a thorough mistake taxonomy based on James’^[32] and Al-Shormani’s^[33]. This study identified three significant types of semantic errors: lexical, collocational, and lexicogrammatical. Depending on the faults found, each category was subdivided into other categories. In our investigation, 1388 semantic mistakes were found. It was discovered that the category for missing letters had the most errors—251, or 18.08%—while the category for choosing the wrong prefix had the fewest—only 12, or (0.68%). Formal misselection ranks lowest on the difficulty scale, whereas formal misformations are the most challenging. Also, it has been discovered that L1 sources include applying Arabic linguistic principles to English and physically transferring ideas, words, and phrases from

L1, Arabic, into L2, or English. Nevertheless, false notions about English, a lack of understanding of the English semantic system, and uncertainty over English vocabulary are all L2 origins.

Abdul Rahuman^[29] investigated the impact of the mother tongue on learning English as a second language and related difficulties among Tamil-speaking students. The sample comprises forty first-year students from the Faculty of Arts at the South Eastern University of Sri Lanka. Muslim and Tamil pupils from the Eastern Province are included. According to the survey, there were sentences of mistakes with a Tamil impact. For example, “Minsaram poay wittathu” it means “There is a power outage”, is one of the sentences in the set. Students’ responses to the preceding sentence, “There is a power outage”, contain a wide range of semantic mistakes typically influenced by their native tongue.

Students made the wrong word choice to transfer the information. The influence of the mother tongue was also evident in other sentences in English translated from Tamil. The terms power, electricity, and current are all used interchangeably. The terms ‘power cut’ and ‘electric cut’ are interchangeable in common parlance. It would be prevalent if the word ‘there is’ is associated with ‘power cut’ or ‘electric cut’. Unfortunately, the word ‘electric’ is an adjective, and it is incorrectly paired with the phrase ‘cut.’ So, this phrase also includes several definitions. Electricity is the student’s intended term. The words, ‘power’ and ‘electric’ start with the verb ‘cut’ and appear to be order orders. They attempted to provide the complete translation using a simple combination of noun and verb words. Still, they could not understand what was expected in English, as they appeared in Tamil. As a result, the faults are due to the Tamil mother tongue’s influence.

2.2.4. Syntax Error Research

Mitaib and Hasan^[34] investigated the faults produced by Arab students in English writing in Israel. These students were given an English essay to write. There were four men and eighteen women among the 22 students. The errors category includes subject-verb agreement, word order, copula, auxiliary omission, and verb tense. The findings of this study show that L1 interference is to blame for

Arab EFL learners’ structural faults in their written output.

Intervention or shifting from the native to the target language may be perceived as “a matter of habit” or a negative transfer when there are discrepancies between the L1 and L2.

Unlike Erdocia and Laka^[35], who evaluated Basque native speakers similarly, this study examined Basque native speakers differently. Unlike OVS orders, which are non-canonical in Spanish and Basque, SVO orders are canonical. The findings reveal that L1 traits influence L2 processing in highly proficient and early-acquired bilingual groups. Furthermore, the data show that when processing SVO-OVS word order sentences, L2-Basque speakers rely on their L1-Spanish. Research suggests that the processing of second languages (L2) is influenced by proficiency, age of acquisition (AoA), and the distinctions between L1 and L2 grammar. These results show that L2 processing is influenced by L1 grammar, even for early and highly adept bilinguals.

3. Methodology

This section contains the results of the sequential exploratory design methodology study conducted to answer the research questions:

Research Question 1: What patterns of mother tongue influence do Tamil-speaking ESL college students experience in their English language writing performance?

Research Question 2: What is the tendency of the interlingual errors in the pre-test writing of Tamil-speaking ESL college students? How could the errors be described in terms of the parameters of linguistic strategy taxonomy and surface strategy taxonomy?

Firstly, the patterns of mother tongue influence that Tamil-speaking ESL college students experience in their English language writing were obtained from an exploratory open-ended pre-survey, which was answered by 42 respondents from three different colleges, which are Metropoint College, MSU College, and College UNITAR. The researcher applied an exploratory analysis method and a thematic analysis method to identify, analyze and report the patterns of mother tongue influence. Secondly, the Contrastive Analysis Model developed by Robert Lado

^[36], and proposed by Ellis ^[10] was used to analyse data approaches to conducting an error analysis. The students were asked to write an essay of 350 words on “The most embarrassing moment of my life” during their Elective English lesson. The researcher identified the tendency of the interlingual errors in writing test of Tamil-speaking ESL college students and presented the data using a descriptive analysis by categorizing the errors in terms of the parameters of surface strategy taxonomy and linguistic strategy taxonomy.

4. Findings and Discussion

4.1. Patterns of Mother Tongue Influence That Tamil-Speaking ESL College Students Experience in Their English Language Writing-Performance

4.1.1. Vocabulary-Inappropriate Word Choice

The first pattern of mother tongue influence in vocabulary, is the students’ inappropriate word choice. Generally, it is about Tamil-speaking students’ difficulties with words and spelling.

Students at Tamil schools who have a limited vocabulary in English often use direct translation to get English words and phrases; occasionally, they even use Malay, the official language. When writing English sentences, these techniques frequently result in poor word choice and phrase construction. Lack of vocabulary knowledge causes ESL learners to use the same words repetitively in their writing, and it hinders their creativity. Therefore, the ESL learners could not give voice to their thoughts because they lacked an adequate vocabulary to be used in their writing.

In these circumstances, findings revealed that for pre-survey question 15 and 16 (Appendix 1), “Do you find difficulties when writing in English?” 10 students stated that they have difficulties with words, vocabulary and spelling. Six students mentioned that they are really struggling to find perfect words when writing in English.

Yothega expresses difficulty in finding the right words, for example, “It’s difficult to change some words in English” and another student Viki added, feeling a struggle

with vocabulary, and a lack of confidence in using certain words for example, “Words are the medium through which humans express and communicate ideas. I sometimes struggle with words”.

4.1.2. Literal Translation-Direct Translation from Mother Tongue

The second highest comments is from the pattern of translation. Findings also revealed that the literal translation among the learners as one of the patterns of mother tongue influence do Tamil-speaking ESL college students experience in their English language writing.

Eleven students collectively provide insights into the individual’s language usage, translation processes, and challenges when writing in English. Uga said “I usually create the sentences in my mother tongue then translate it to English” and Thivya stated, “I can translate the words for English in my mind. I can write well the ideas as some ideas can get in my mother tongue”. These statements allude to a translation process where the individual creates sentences or ideas in their mother tongue and then translates them into English. This implies a reliance on linguistic bridges created through translation.

Two more students recommend that they use their native tongue as a source of inspiration for their English writing. Leshma remarked, “I use mother tongue to translate the vocabulary that I want to use in my writing,” whereas Thiru noted, “I use mother tongue too much because I can get more ideas to write essay in English.” This suggests that the mother tongue acts as a storehouse of ideas or as a source of inspiration.

“Complex thoughts are translated from mother tongue,” observed Vinisha. Her comment highlights the difficulty of translating sophisticated ideas from one’s mother tongue into English, suggesting possible difficulties. “Easy to make people understand and be familiar,” Raj continued. He says speaking in one’s mother tongue could make conversation and understanding easier. It suggests that the person is more at ease communicating ideas and guaranteeing understanding in their mother tongue.

4.1.3. Syntactic-Incorrect Sentence Structure

The third pattern is syntactic, which is the difficulty

in sentence structure. From the pre-survey question “Do you find difficulties when writing in English?” students admit that they have syntactic difficulties. SOV, which is a Tamil sentence structure is actually in their minds and they could not transfer it to SVO, which is an English sentence structure.

“Feel afraid to be rejected ideas and thoughts from the lecturer” was another point made by Sylvester. His comment also suggests that he fears having a lecturer reject his ideas and opinions. This worry could be connected to worries about grades, reviews, or comments. A great desire for approval or validation from others can exist, particularly in an academic environment where evaluations and comments are important factors. A person may feel under pressure in an academic setting, when they believe their ideas are open to criticism or rejection, or when they are afraid of being rejected by a lecturer.

People who work in academic or professional settings where their work is reviewed and critiqued frequently express similar feelings. Getting over these fears frequently entails gaining self-assurance, asking for helpful criticism, and accepting that growth and learning are inevitable.

Based on the pre-survey question on the level of difficulties that students were facing in English writing, six students indicated that they were struggling at the sentence and paragraph level. These statements collectively convey challenges related to sentence structure, word order, and overall proficiency in English writing. “I have trouble with sentence structure and word order,” said Pavitra in her response. Her statement draws attention to a particular difficulty she has in structuring sentences and word order in a grammatically sound way. “English writing style and sentence arrangement are really difficult,” Puuja added. This assertion expands the challenge to include the entire English writing style, implying a more extensive battle than just one or two sentences.

“I find it difficult to express a few phrases into paragraphs,” Puvaneswary continued. Her remark highlights the difficulty in moving from expressing individual ideas to creating cohesive paragraphs, implying issues with coherence and order. “I find it difficult to write the entire essay because I couldn’t construct sentences,” said Navina. Her statement highlights a particular difficulty in produc-

ing complete essays, implying that the difficulty also lies in overseeing the general organization and flow of a longer work of writing.

4.1.4. Overgeneralization-Apply the Mother Tongue Grammar Rule Inappropriately

Overgeneralization is the fourth pattern of mother tongue influence. English L2 learners’ insufficient knowledge of grammatical rules and concepts pertaining to the parts of speech in English contributes to their inability to write well in English.

Based on the semi-structured pre-interview, for question number 4, which asked ‘Are there particular English grammar rules or conventions that you find challenging due to the influence of your mother tongue?’ Loshini replied:

“Yes, some English grammar rules or conventions pose challenges due to the influence of my mother tongue, Tamil. For instance, the distinction between certain verb tenses or the use of articles can be challenging. Prepositions and their usage in English also require careful consideration, as Tamil may have different ways of expressing similar relationships between words. Continuous practice, grammar study, and feedback from language experts are essential to overcome these challenges and improve my adherence to English grammar conventions.”

Loshini acknowledges that certain English grammar rules or conventions present difficulties for her because of the influence of Tamil. This shows that she is cognizant of the distinctions between the two languages as well as the particular areas in which she struggles. Overall, Loshini’s reaction shows self-awareness, tenacity, and a readiness to actively participate in language acquisition in order to get past the difficulties caused by the disparities in grammar rules between Tamil and English.

Secondly, for question number 5 from the semi-structured pre-interview ‘Are there specific grammatical structures or sentence patterns influenced by Tamil that you find recurring in your English writing?’ Kathiravan commented:

“Yes, there are certain grammatical structures and sentence patterns influenced by Tamil that tend to recur in my English writing. For example, the way concepts

are expressed in Tamil might have an impact on the usage of passive voice and sentence forms. I try hard to write in English that adheres to accepted grammatical norms because I am aware of these inclinations.” Kathiravan admits that several of the phrase structures and grammatical constructions he uses in his English work are influenced by Tamil. This indicates that he is conscious of how his original tongue affects the way he uses the English language. In general, Kathiravan’s comment demonstrates a thoughtful approach to language learning, in which he actively seeks to counteract the effects of his mother tongue on his English writing while also acknowledging the influence of these influences on his writing. This leads to an improvement in his command of English grammar and sentence structure.

4.2. Tendency of the Interlingual Errors in the Writing Test of Tamil-Speaking ESL College Students? How Could the Errors Be Described in Terms of the Parameters of Linguistic Strategy Taxonomy and Surface Strategy Taxonomy?

The linguistic errors categorised into lexical, morphological, semantical, and syntactical and further analysed using surface strategy taxonomy. Collins’^[37] theory

was used to categorize the mistakes made by the students in their writing assessments in surface strategy taxonomy. The errors, included omission, overinclusion, misselection, misordering, and blending.

4.2.1. Syntactical

The examples given show typical interlingual mistakes that Tamil-speaking students made in English writing test. There is a problem of subject-verb agreement in sentence “When we was walking,” where the wrong verb form “was” is used in place of “were.” Example 2, “Went to a shop asked for ice cream,” combines two independent sentences without the necessary conjunctions or punctuation, making it grammatically incorrect. The next example, “Knocked on the waiter who was serving our dishes to us,” has unnecessary prepositional phrases “to us.” In example 4, “We study in a same school till higher secondary,” the blend of “in a same school” supposed to be “at the same school” results in a syntactical error. A more appropriate construction would be “We study at the same school until higher secondary.” As the auxiliary verb “has” should come before the subject “he” to construct a grammatically correct question, the word order in sentence 1, “I asked him how long has he been there,” is improper. It would be more suitable to write “I asked him how long he has been there.” (See **Table 1**).

Table 1. Syntactical Errors.

Error Classification	Identification of Errors	Corrections and Explanation of Rule
Misselection	When we was (verb agreement) walking	Subject-Verb Agreement Were
Omission	Went to a shop asked for ice cream	Conjunction - combines two independent sentences without the necessary conjunctions or punctuation Went to a shop and asked for ice cream
Overinclusion	Knocked on the waiter who was serving our dishes to us	Prepositional phrases - has unnecessary prepositional phrases
Blends	We study in a same school till higher secondary	- We study at the same school until higher secondary
Misordering	I asked him how long has he been there	Auxiliary verb - I asked him how long he has been there

4.2.2. Morphological

Tamil-speaking students in English writing tests made the omission error of morphological markers, which is the omission of derivational morphemes. Examples of derivational morpheme errors are such as omission

of “ly” in the words “complete” and “extraordinary”. The next category is ‘overinclusion. The words such as “somethings”, “homeworks”, “by any chances”, “normal schooling” “onwards”, “cutting” and “grade ones to grades eights” have an extra plural marker on the word. where the plural marker “-s” is erroneously added to. “homework”

is already a non-count noun, there is no need for the plural marker. These mistakes point to a propensity for excessive use of morphological markers, which may have been influenced by Tamil grammar's structure. The last example in from the category of misselection. The plural marker "women" is misspelled or misselected ("one police women") rather than the proper singular form "woman," indi-

cating a lack of grasp of English pluralization conventions. The phrase "three of the man" also uses the incorrect singular form "man" rather than the plural "men." The phrase "this memories" in sentence three is pluralized incorrectly; "memories" should be used in the singular form "memory." These mistakes imply a lack of knowledge on the proper morphological forms for plural nouns. (See **Table 2**).

Table 2. Morphological Errors.

Error Classification	Identification of Errors	Corrections and Explanation of Rule
Omission	-Complete different face – -Felt extraordinary angry –	Suffix (Derivational) completely different face felt extraordinarily angry
Overinclusion	Somethings Home works By any chances Normal schooling From that day onwards The same hair cutting Ranging from grade ones to grades eights	Something Home work By any chance Normal school From that day onward The same hair cut Ranging from grade one to grade eight
Misselection	One police women Three of the man This memories	Woman Three men This memory

4.2.3. Lexical

In lexical elements, students made the mistake of using the wrong preposition. "Onto" in place of "into" in example 1. The sentence "I got onto the car" should actually write as "I got into the car," as the preposition has been misselected. The examples highlight interlingual mistakes that Tamil-speaking students made, namely in the area of lexical omission. These mistakes show times when the students were trying to express themselves in English and unintentionally replaced or left out words from their native Tamil language. Similarly, for the next example "during" in place of "in" in example 2. These mistakes most likely result from Tamil and English using prepositions differently. The words "suprised" instead of "surprised," "pra-tising" instead of "practising," and "no enough" instead

of "not enough" are a few examples of how Tamil words and phrases are transferred based on the sounds into English by Tamil-speaking students. For the next category, the phrase "coming up" in the sentence "Next coming up would be Ella to perform," might be a direct translation from Tamil, where a phrase of a similar nature might be used informally. Furthermore, the use of "most naughtiest" displays a redundancy arising from literal translation as "most" and "naughtiest" have superlative connotations on their own. The examples show typical interlingual mistakes made by Tamil-speaking students in English writing assessments, which fall under the heading of lexical item misordering. Spelling words incorrectly by letter order is a common mistake. Examples of such misspellings are "gorcery" in place of "grocery" in sentence 1 and "deisgn" in place of "design". (See **Table 3**).

Table 3. Lexical Errors.

Error Classification	Identification of Errors	Corrections and Explanation of Rule
Misselection	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. I got onto Prep. the car 2. It was during Prep. 2016 3. My life was on Prep. 2022 4. During Prep. the age of 10 5. From Prep. that day onward 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. into 2. in 3. my life in 2022 4. at the age of ten 5. on that day onward Preposition (preposition doesn't fit the context)
Omission	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. suprised 2. pratising 3. no enough 4. shif 5. paniced 	- Surprised - practising - not enough - shift - panicked (Sound transfer)
Overinclusion	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 1. Next coming up would be Ella to perform 2. 2. As per usual 3. 3. My most second embarrassment 4. 4. Most naughtiest 	- Next would be - As usual - The next embarrassing moment Naughtiest (Direct translation/ literal translation)
Misordering	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Gorcery Deisgn 4. Dispionted 	grocery design Disappointed (Spelling)

4.2.4. Semantical

“No everyone feels disgusted” in the first example probably refers to “not everyone” or “no one” which is a misselection of the semantic error. Next, the verb “became” and the noun “circle” are combined in example 2, “became a circle,” suggesting an attempt to describe someone or something turning into a circle or forming one, but the phrase is unclear and inconsistent, which shows that it blends semantically. For the overinclusion, category the

examples “already running halfway,” and “after a 15 minutes later” are among the others that break the flow and coherence of sentences. The preposition “have” or “got” before “stomach pain” is missing from sentence under omission. The last example, “faster went,” has the adverb “faster” positioned incorrectly, which throws off the normal word order. To express the intended idea of increased speed, “went faster” would be a more appropriate construction. (See **Table 4**).

Table 4. Semantical Errors.

Error Classification	Identification of Errors	Corrections and Explanation of Rule
Misselection	No everyone feel disgusted	one
Blends	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. beauty girl 2. became a circle 3. very unhelp 4. three of the man 5. shoting 6. me and my two brothers , me and my friends, me and my family 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. beautiful girl 2. unclear 3. unhelpful 4. improper construction 5. shoot/shooting 6. my two brothers and I/ my friends and I/ my family and I
Overinclusion	Already running half way After a 15 minutes later	Already half way 15 minutes later
Omission	I suddenly stomach pain	I suddenly got stomach pain
Misordering	Faster went	adverb positioned incorrectly

5. Conclusion

In conclusion, the patterns of mother tongue influence observed among Tamil-speaking ESL college students in their English writing encompass a range of challenges, including vocabulary errors, translation errors, sentence errors, and grammatical errors. These influences stem from the inherent differences between Tamil and English language, leading to unique linguistic nuances and structures that students navigate as they strive to express themselves proficiently in English.

Firstly, vocabulary errors often arise due to differences in lexical choices and nuances between Tamil and English. Students may encounter difficulties in selecting appropriate English equivalents for Tamil words or phrases, leading to inaccuracies or awkwardness in their writing.

Secondly, translation errors emerge as students attempt to directly translate idiomatic expressions or grammatical structures from Tamil to English. This process can result in mistranslations, misunderstandings, or the loss of intended meanings, reflecting the challenges of bridging linguistic gaps between the two languages.

Thirdly, sentence errors may occur as students grapple with differences in sentence structure, syntax, and word order between Tamil and English. These errors may manifest in fragmented sentences, awkward phrasing, or syntactic ambiguities, hindering clarity and coherence in their writing.

Finally, grammatical errors represent a common challenge for Tamil-speaking ESL students, as they navigate the complexities of English grammar rules and conventions. Differences in verb tenses, articles, prepositions, and sentence constructions between Tamil and English contribute to errors in agreement, tense consistency, and overall grammatical accuracy.

Despite these challenges, Tamil-speaking ESL college students demonstrate resilience, adaptability, and a commitment to improving their English writing skills. Through continuous practice, exposure to English-language materials, and guidance from language instructors, students can overcome the patterns of mother tongue influence and enhance their proficiency in English writing. By recognizing and addressing vocabulary, translation,

sentence, and grammatical errors, students can refine their language abilities and write effectively across linguistic boundaries.

In summary, the frequency of interlingual errors in Tamil-speaking students' English pre-writing test highlights the necessity of focused interventions to address particular language difficulties. Prioritizing strategies that address syntax, morphology, and lexical usage will help students become more proficient writers overall.

Author Contributions

M.S. played a comprehensive role in this study, contributing significantly across various stages of the research process. She was responsible for conceptualizing the study, including developing the research idea and formulating the primary question. She designed the methodology, carefully planning and structuring the study's approach while writing code and creating tools essential for data analysis and experiments. Margaret ensured the validity of the results by verifying outcomes and confirming the appropriateness of the methods used. She performed the formal analysis and interpreted the data, in addition to conducting the investigation, which involved executing experiments, gathering data, and managing the research process. Furthermore, she provided the necessary resources, including materials and reagents, and curated the data to ensure it was well-organized and accessible. Margaret authored the original draft of the article and subsequently contributed to its review and editing, enhancing the clarity and quality of the final manuscript. She also created visual representations, such as figures, diagrams, and charts, to effectively communicate the findings. N.A.S. contributed significantly to the study through her roles in writing, visualization, and supervision. She was actively involved in reviewing and editing the manuscript, providing critical feedback and making revisions to improve the overall quality of the writing. Additionally, she created visual representations, including figures, diagrams, and charts, to effectively present the data and findings. As a supervisor, she offered guidance and oversight throughout the research process, ensuring the study's objectives were met and maintaining its academic rigor.

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Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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