

Syntactic Error Analysis on Oral Classroom Discourse

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Abstract

Purpose: This qualitative research shed light on the syntactic errors frequently made by Grade 11 students in speaking. This research also explored and understood the probable linguistic reasons for these occurrences. The results of this study were intended for English teachers to obtain a deeper understanding of the existence and significance of errors in language learning.

Methodology: This study is a qualitative research design using the Error Analysis approach. Twelve participants from three different private schools in the Davao Region were purposefully chosen. The following data collection techniques, namely observation, interview, and documentation were utilized. Error Analysis was carried out in four successive stages; a collection of a sample of learner language, identification of errors, description of errors, and explanation of errors.

Findings: Results showed that among the syntactic errors committed by the participants in classroom discourse were omission, addition, selection, and ordering. Results further revealed that the causes of syntactic errors were intralingual, as the common cause of errors, and interlingual. Furthermore, the FGD results showed that there were other reasons for committing errors like fear to commit errors and lack of confidence, which impede the students in their speaking performance.

Significance: As gleaned from the results of this qualitative study, English teachers are encouraged to focus on correcting high frequency and general errors rather than correcting every syntactic error committed by the students. Secondly, English teachers might consider pedagogical reforms in teaching speaking. Lastly, English teachers must mitigate anxiety while improving students' oral proficiency.

Keywords: English, Error Analysis, Syntactic Errors, Senior High School, General Academic Strand, Qualitative Research, Philippines

Introduction

Mistakes are some of the many inevitable things in life. From learning to teaching, making mistakes is certainly part of the process. As a learner, it is frightening to commit mistakes in class, especially when called by the teacher. As an educator, it is alarming to hear or read the students' works with many errors; struggling to communicate effectively using the English language inside the classroom. They are hesitant to participate for the fear that they might commit mistakes and they may be laughed at or be embarrassed in class.

In the past, teacher's perceived errors as grave mistakes; miscues which are unacceptable and punishable. At present, Ciesielkiewicz and Márquez argued that errors in language learning are a potential avenue for students to expediently learn the language [1]. Linguistic researches have been conducted to alleviate the struggles of students in successful language use, specifically in developing grammatical competence. In particular, a considerable number of recent

investigations focused on Error Analysis (EA) worldwide because of errors found in student's speaking performance specifically. Cahyanti conducted a study on Grade 11 students speaking in Sambungmacan Sragen, Indonesia, which revealed 1087 cases of local errors, morphological and syntactical errors, and 86 cases of global errors [2]. It was also uncovered that the factors causing errors made by the respondents are the interlingual transfer or brought about by the interference of the mother tongue and intralingual transfer or negative transference in the target language, which is English. Another analogous research conducted by Wibowo in Salatiga, Indonesia yielded that English department students usually commit grammatical errors in speaking during oral presentations [3]. Most of the respondents have errors in noun pluralization and in the use of pronouns. In addition, the respondents also have difficulties in analyzing types of tense.

The Philippines has maintained its spot in the top 15 in the Global English Proficiency Index. In Asia, the Philippines ranked 3rd with high proficiency next to Malaysia and Singapore (English Proficiency Index, 2017). In contrast, these countries use English as a

foreign language, unlike the Philippines where English is its second language. Filipino researchers have also looked into accounting the common errors Filipino learners encounter in speaking English [4]. Castro conducted an analysis of errors of college students in the Philippines which ascertained that prepositional error is one major grammar error observed in both students' speech and writing. Another study in the Philippines by Beltran examined the grammatical errors of Technology student teachers' utterance structure [5]. The study unveiled that most of the total grammatical errors recognized were misinformation and omission. Whereas, addition and ordering of elements were uncovered less frequent. The native language structures of the respondents influenced their production of the spoken discourse of the English language as L2 resulting in errors in their utterance structure.

With these perturbing realities, I am unnerved and challenged. I am unnerved because it seems that our students are still in much need of help to become effective and efficient speakers of the English language. In addition, I am challenged by these facts for the reason that they gave me the urge as an educator to be more innovative and deliver quality teaching at all times. With some studies on error analysis among junior high school and college students as aforementioned above, I opted to look into Grade 11 students using the same model for analysis. Further, instead of focusing on quantitative research of syntactic errors in writing, which is, already frequent among EA studies, this research utilized the qualitative research method to identify the syntactic errors committed to speaking English inside the classroom. Whereas the Philippine educational system is voyaging a new path in basic education, it is just equitable that researchers deflect their concentration into bringing about studies understanding the senior high school learners. By aiding them to explicate their struggles, English teachers will be empowered to further remodel their instruction in response to the needs and demands of the students and of the global community.

Purpose of the Study

This qualitative research shed light on the syntactic errors frequently made by Grade 11 students in speaking. Not only this, but also this research also explored and understood the probable linguistic reasons for these occurrences. The results of this study were intended for English teachers to obtain a deeper understanding of the existence and significance of errors in language learning. With this, they may settle upon more suitable ways of teaching English to help advance learners' language competence. For English students, this research hopefully will open their eyes on the common errors they commit when speaking the language, recognize the causes of their errors, and will gain insights from their entire experience.

Methodology

Research Design

This study is a qualitative research design utilizing the Error Analysis method by Corder [6]. He wrote that learner's errors, then, provide evidence of the system of the language that he is using (i.e. has learned) at a particular point in the course. In analyzing the data, EA was carried out in four successive stages [7]. These stages are as follows: a collection of a sample of learner language, recognition of errors, description of errors, and explanation of errors. First, I collected a well-defined sample of learner language so that clear statements could be made regarding the kinds of errors the learners produced and under what conditions. In this study, the medium is the oral language produced by the learners, while the genre refers

to the classroom discourse, which transpired inside the classroom during their ENG 1S – Oral Communication class and the level of the participants specifically limits to Grade 11 students enrolled in the General Academic Strand. Second, the syntactic errors committed by the participants in their oral classroom discourse were identified. This was done by observing three times, equivalent to a total of three hours, in their ENG 1S class. Third, the syntactic errors were classified according to the four categories of errors, namely error of omission, error of addition, error of selection, and error of ordering. Consequently, per category of error was analyzed to come up with subcategories depending on what particular elements of the English language were omitted, added, miss elected, or disordered. As Khansir said, such a description of learners' errors is a requirement for a sound explication of errors [8]. Lastly, I attempted to establish the processes responsible for L2 acquisition. Moreover, there were two possible causes of errors scrutinized in this study, namely intralingual and interlingual errors.

Research Participants

The research was conducted in a private school with three different branches in the Davao Region. The participants were twelve Grade 11 General Academic Strand students whose level of proficiency in their Grade 10 English was Approaching Proficiency with the equivalent numerical value of 80 – 84% [9].

Data Collection

To gather the requisite data, the following data collection techniques, namely observation, interview, and documentation were utilized. The participants were observed in their English 1S – Oral Communication class three times with the researcher as a non-participant observer. Next, they underwent a focus group discussion and answered questions from the validated interview guide in relation to the objectives of this research. The documents utilized in this study were the transcribed classroom discourses of the participants in their ENG 1S – Oral Communication subject.

Trustworthiness of the Study

To establish the trustworthiness of the study, I ensured qualitative validity by observing Lincoln and Guba's criteria, namely credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability [10]. To ensure credibility, I made sure that all the data gathered during the classroom observation and interviews were documented, recorded, and transcribed accurately. During the FGD, I gave them copies of the transcribed oral discourse for them to read, check, and verify the accuracy of the information gathered. To address transferability, comprehensive descriptive data were collected by conducting a focus group discussion with eleven Grade 11 students. Moreover, a comparison of the results to other contexts or researches was executed. This could lead to the development of detailed descriptions to know if it could fit with other possible contexts. To guarantee dependability, the Error Analysis model of Corder grounds the processes of identifying, describing, and explaining errors [11]. Stability of data was achieved through an audit trail. The school principals, English teachers, Grade 11 students, and thesis adviser were all aware of the activities I have done along the process of collecting, analyzing, and interpreting my data. Moreover, all transcripts and audio recordings in the observation and FGD are all stored in case of audit and retrieval. To address confirmability, I scrutinized pieces of evidence from sources to create themes through data triangulation [12]. In this research, transcribed interviews during the focus group discussion, along with observational field notes

during the non-participant observation, and documents authored by the participants themselves were analyzed.

Ethical Considerations

To set ethical guidelines that aided me in alleviating tensions and uncertainties, the following are identified predominant ethical principles in administering qualitative research [13, 14]. In this study, the principle of autonomy was followed by properly informing the participants of the purposes, procedures, potential risks, and potential benefits in taking part in this study. This was formally done by handing over to them the informed consent form. This means that the participants were neither over-informed nor under-informed regarding the study. Further, this research adhered to the principle of beneficence. As the researcher, I am fully responsible for protecting the identity of the participants through the utilization of pen names. Confidentiality of the information gained during the observation and shared in the FGD was ensured. Furthermore, as part of the study protocol, the manuscript was submitted to the UIC Research Ethics Committee to check that the ethical considerations stipulated above are carefully observed to protect the rights and ensure the safety of the participants.

Results and Discussion

This study unfolded the syntactic errors committed by Grade 11 GAS students in their oral classroom discourse, the causes of their errors, and insights to be shared with the academe.

Syntactic Errors in Oral Classroom Discourse

The first objective of this qualitative research is to identify the syntactic errors committed by Grade 11 GAS students through error analysis. There are three sequential processes of error analysis: Recognition, Description, and Explanation. The research findings revealed that the participants committed all four categories of errors proposed by Corder, namely the error of omission, the error of addition, the error of selection, and error of ordering [6].

Table 1 presents the omission errors of Grade 11 students in oral classroom discourse. The error of omission is committed when some elements are left out that should actually be present [15]. In the description stage, it was found out that several categories of this error were present, namely omission of auxiliaries, prepositions, pronouns, and determiners.

Table 1: Omission Errors in Oral Classroom Discourse

Syntactic Errors	Transcribed Data
Omission of Auxiliaries	...When someone talking, you must listen to for you to have an feedback...Example, hurt your feelings that you listen something (S1).
Omission of Prepositions	For me ma'am, a good relationship like for my family ma'am, helping to each other and the start to communicate with other people...Like in school ma'am, if you starting school no friends ma'am so ma-realize na after few days nay maka ila sa imo (S3).
Omission of Pronouns	Example hurt your feelings that you listen something (S5).
Omission of Determiners	For me ma'am, I will give an example. Just as if you are a stranger... for me... like, first day of school ma'am, like a student's... (S6)

According to Danurwindo, the limited knowledge on the correct English structure causes a greater possibility of omission errors [16]. He added that because of the students' limited knowledge, they tend to lose the structure and neglect the right one. In the description stage, it was found out that several categories of this error were present. The same results emerged in the error analysis conducted by Faisal among Arab students wherein the respondents committed the omission of auxiliaries as the most recurrent error, followed by the omission of prepositions, and omission of determiners or articles [17]. However, it was not revealed in his study that an omission in the use of pronouns was made.

Table 2 presents the syntactic errors committed by the participants in their oral classroom discourse in terms of selection errors. The error of selection is committed when a wrong form is selected in place of the right one [16, 18, 19]. In this study, several errors were found such as misformation of verbs, pronouns, prepositions, determiners, and adverbs.

Table 2: Selection Errors in Oral Classroom Discourse

Syntactic Errors	Transcribed Data
Misformation of Determiners	...When someone talking, you must listen to for you to have an feedback... (S11)
Misformation of Verbs	...So, when able to, when a person is a good listener and a person is a good talker, he made a good relationship. (S8)
Misformation of Adverbs	...I will improve my studies to found a good job so I can provide the needs of my family in the future... (S12)
Misformation of Pronouns	The intrapersonal communication, because we need to practice talking to yourself in front of the mirror so that you will not be ashamed to stand in front of others. (S9)
Misformation of Prepositions	Reader's theaters is look like a theater but we need to act what the character we are assigned of... (S10)

Analogous to the occurrence of selection error in terms of the use of verbs is the research conducted by Hidayati among Indonesian ESL learners [20]. In fact, it revealed that it was the majority of their errors particularly dealing with passive forms and infinitive forms. Another category emerged was the misformation of prepositions. The results are comparable with the study of Park and Zheng wherein the misformation of prepositions came second among 31 identified categories of selection errors [19]. As for the misformation of pronouns found in this study, this was also supported by their results however; it came out as a rare occurrence. Lastly, in an error analysis conducted by Liu and Xu, they found out similar results in terms of misformation of determiners [21]. They spotted 72 errors in the use of articles *a*, *an*, *the* and other determiners before a noun.

Table 3 presents the syntactic errors committed by the participants in their oral classroom discourse in terms of addition errors. The error of addition is committed when an element is present though it should not be there. There are three types of addition, which are double marking, regularization, and simple addition [18,22].

Table 3: Addition Errors in Oral Classroom Discourse

Syntactic Errors	Transcribed Data
Simple Addition	For me ma'am, I will give an example. Just as you are, a stranger, for me, like, first day of school ma'am, like a student is... (S13)
	For me ma'am, a good relationship like for my family ma'am, helping to each other and the start to communicate with other people na how to be a friends someone... (S14)
Double Marking	... What is my mood in our house can bring outside so when I am in out of my mood, so I get easily angered with them even if they have no mistake. (S15)

In this study, the participants committed addition errors in terms of simple addition by including singular articles prior to plural nouns. This is much the same as the study of Safrida when Indonesian EFL learners used unnecessary articles in speaking English [23]. Following this, addition errors in terms of double marking were also found. Double marking is an error in which a concept is expressed twice when the language requires its expression only once [18, 22].

Table 4 presents the syntactic errors committed by the participants in their oral classroom discourse in terms of ordering errors. The error of ordering is committed when the items presented are selected correctly but placed in the wrong order or incorrect placement of a morpheme or group of morphemes in an utterance [18]. Nevertheless, the participants committed this kind of error rarely.

Table 4: Ordering Errors in Oral Classroom Discourse

Syntactic Errors	Transcribed Data
Misplacement of Prepositional Phrases	... like, first day of school ma'am, like a students. When you now have a friend, new friends, or <i>kaila or ano ingana yung ano</i> . In a first of school, in a student, when she or he enter the classroom with unknown person... (S17)
Misplacement of Adverb	I remember only is he asked me what I do if I speak in place more people listen. (S16)

This phenomenon is similar to the results of Beltran [5]. In Example 16, the word "only" which functions as an adverb in this sentence is misplaced. In another case, Example 17 wrongly sequenced the words his sentence forming fragments and prepositional phrases. Although there were only two cases for this category of error, it does not mean that the other students have mastered the correct ordering of morphemes but this could mean that they are grammatically competent when it comes to avoiding errors of ordering. In the same way, this supports the claim of Abbasi and Karimian that most non-native speakers of English, in this case, Filipino learners, commit interlingual errors often because of the mother tongue influence [24].

Causes of Syntactic Errors in Oral Classroom Discourse

There are two major viewpoints to distinguish the causes of syntactic errors: intralingual and interlingual errors. Intralingual errors are errors due to the language being learned and are errors caused by the mutual interference between the items in the target language. On the flip side, interlingual errors occur due to learners' habits such as

patterns, systems, or rules, which prevent them from acquiring the patterns and rules of the second language.

In this study, it was found out that the majority of the errors were caused by intralingual interference. The errors were also classified according to the four factors of intralingual errors, namely overgeneralization, ignorance of rule restrictions, false analogy, and faulty categorization [25]. Table 5 presents the syntactic errors committed by the participants in their oral classroom discourse caused by intralingual errors.

Table 5: Intralingual Errors in Oral Classroom Discourse

Causes of Syntactic Errors	Transcribed Data
Overgeneralization	Example 7: My performance task for this semester is extemporaneous and memorization.
Ignorance of Rule Restrictions	Example 14: For me ma'am, a good relationship like for my family ma'am, helping to each other and the start to communicate with other people na how to be a friends someone...
False Analogy	Example 10: Reader's theaters is look like a theater but we need to act what the character we are assigned of.
Faulty Categorization	Example 2: We just practiced how to pronounce the words clearly and to express our emotions of what the character we act.

Overgeneralization happens when a learner deviates the structure in the target language due to his/her experience in the first language. In this situation, Student E committed the error of selection in terms of noun and verb use as seen in Example 7. According to Tomokova, aside from the students assuming that they have already mastered the grammar rules, which caused them to commit an error, their teachers could also have possibly induced the error of overgeneralization through giving misleading information. This happens when teachers say that 3rd person singular always takes an -s ending and then introduces the verb can.

Another factor of intralingual error is the ignorance of rule restrictions [17]. Faisal also considers this as ignorance of the language structure. In this case, the learner fails to observe the restrictions of the existing structures. Specifically, Student B committed the error of addition as shown in Example 14. Although he knows that an article must be placed before the noun it modifies, he failed to be aware and apply the restriction, which is not to place a singular article before a plural noun. Comparing with the results in the study of Rini among Indonesian students, it revealed that the most dominant source of error is the ignorance of rule restrictions. However, this cause of syntactic errors is not frequent in this study [26].

The third factor of intralingual errors is a false analogy or false concept hypothesized. This simply means that faulty understanding of the structure of the target language leads to false conceptualization [27]. Taking the case of Student K who committed the error of selection as shown in Example 10. The student used the preposition "of" in place of "to". This error could be attributed to the student's wrong hypothesis about the rules governing the use of prepositions, which is again in relation to Keshavarz that false analogy appears to be the main reason of errors in the misuse of prepositions and articles [28].

The last factor of intralingual errors is faulty categorization. This error may occur when the student fails to apply the rules completely [27]. As a case in point, Example 2 is an illustration of error of omission. The verb phrase should be in the present progressive tense since the verb indicates a continuing action. This instance of categorizing English verbs into incorrect classes is not an isolated case but is also similar to the result of another error analysis study conducted by Faisal [18].

Table 6 presents the themes and core ideas on intralingual errors in oral classroom discourse from the focus group discussion. The participants were asked as to the intralingual interferences they experienced in using the English language. Out from the interview, the following themes emerged lack of content knowledge, lack of language practice, and lack of confidence.

Table 6: Themes and Core Ideas on Intralingual Errors in Oral Classroom Discourse from Focus Group Discussion

Major Themes	Frequency of Responses	Core Ideas
Lack of Content Knowledge	General	Lack of knowledge of English grammar
	Variant	Lack of interest in learning English
	Variant	Lack of time to study English
	Variant	Confused how to apply Grammar rules correctly
Lack of Language Practice	General	Lack of opportunities to speak in English
	Variant	English teacher is not desirable
	Variant	Prefer writing than speaking English
	Variant	Lack of interest to speak English in class
Lack of Confidence	General	Experience mental block when called to speak
	General	Get nervous when called to speak

To begin with, lack of content knowledge refers to concepts and principles taught and learned in a particular subject. Surprisingly, this is a general response from the participants and these students in their 11th grade still do not master the rules of English grammar. This phenomenon is actually supported by Richards wherein he identified “strategy of communication and assimilation” as one of the causes of intralingual errors [29]. That is errors are a corollary from the attempt to communicate in the target language without entirely acquiring the grammatical form essential to accomplish it. In addition, Taher, Garza, and Wu found out in their respective studies on error analysis that the respondents did not have comprehensive knowledge of the target language that leads them to make errors [30,31].

Secondly, the lack of language practice came next as another general response from the participants. As what behaviorists purported, learning a language, whether mother tongue or foreign, is a matter of habit formation. In fact, Garza and Wu concluded in their study that lack of fluency input could lead student’s error from L1 to the target language [31]. Khansir proposed that students should be remedied with overwhelming correct forms [8]. This intensive approach to

teaching language is attained by the use of an extensive drill or over teaching. In spite of this, teachers should still be vigilant for possible induced errors. Particularly, exercise-based induced errors are committed when students make errors while doing language exercises [32].

Finally, lack of confidence came out as the third theme. Lack of confidence may result in students becoming very anxious, nervous, hesitant to share opinions, and incapable to utter a comprehensive meaningful sentence in class [33]. According to Krashen’s affective filter hypothesis, learners with high motivation, self-confidence, and a good self-image, and with a low level of anxiety are likely to succeed in second language acquisition [34]. In contrast, learners with low motivation, little self-confidence and with a high level of anxiety hold high filters and eventually become unsuccessful. In Hong Kong, students are shy and unwilling to speak English in class even though their teachers force them [35]. In another case, Indian EFL learners lack confidence, which has been found as one of the greatest barriers that mostly affects their oral performance [36].

Table 7 presents the syntactic errors committed by the participants caused by interlingual errors. Interlingual errors, also called interference, language transfer, or cross-linguistic interference, are caused by mother tongue interference [37]. Interlingual errors were explained according to the three identified variables, namely transfer error, substitution error, and transfer of structure.

Table 7: Interlingual Errors in Oral Classroom Discourse

Causes of Syntactic Errors	Transcribed Data
Transfer Error	Student A: Intrapersonal, like self-talking ma’am, you are talking to yourself. Example asking yourself what will you do next. Yung interpersonal... talking with someone.
Substitution Error	Student C: Environmental noise ma’am. Example ma’am, I am reporting and outside I see other people or student’s maingay sila ma’am and Ankara-distract sila.
Substitution Error	Student G: My performance task is all about impromptu speech and based on my research impromptu speech is speech using...wala ko naka research ma’am ba.
Transfer of Structure	Student J: I remember only is he asked me what I do if I speak in place more people listen. Memorized speech.

First, a possible explanation of interlingual errors is the transfer error. Transfer errors are caused by interference from mother tongue. Moreover, a student who has not known the rules of target language will use the same rules as he obtained in his native language [27]. A good illustration of this hypothesis is the error of omission. Student A omitted the word “is” as a helping verb to complete the verb phrase “is talking”. This finding is analogous to several error analysis studies conducted around the globe. According to Ridha, most of the errors committed by EFL learners are due to L1 transfer and they heavily depend on their mother tongue when they express their ideas [38]. Conversely, the study of Taher among Swedish JHS students revealed that transfer error was the second dominating factor for students’ errors [30]. However, the error was found not among verbs and verb phrases but in the use of prepositions and articles. It could

be inferred that the difference is due to the varied mother tongues, in this case, Filipino and Swedish, as the basis for the analysis.

Another possible cause of interlingual errors is the transfer of structure. As per Alonso, most of the interlingual errors are due to the transfer of structure [39]. An example of this is evident in Example 16 when Student J committed the error of ordering. What Student J did was a word for word translation of the mother tongue surface structure of his answer. In fact, this phenomenon is heavily supported by Dulay and emphasized that this occurs both in the written and spoken language [40]. Nevertheless, in this study, transfer of structure came out as a rare cause for students' syntactic errors, which is parallel to the study of Projo [33].

A further explanation of the occurrence of interlingual errors is the substitution error. Substitution errors are carried out because of the incomplete knowledge of vocabulary, which makes students replace the unknown English word with its Filipino counterpart. Several responses during the observation were identified to have been caused by substitution error such as the responses of Student C and Student G. Likewise, the study conducted by Taher among Swedish JHS students was noted to have committed grammatical errors due to substitution error [30]. In fact, they specifically substituted prepositions, definite articles, and indefinite articles. Furthermore, Mungungu conducted another similar study wherein it revealed the participants also made substitution errors in using English tenses, articles, and prepositions [41].

Table 8 presents the themes and core ideas on interlingual errors in oral classroom discourse from the focus group discussion. From the focus group discussion, the following themes were developed, namely literal translation tendency, lack of English foundation, and differences in language structure.

Table 8: Themes and Core Ideas on Interlingual Errors in Oral Classroom Discourse from Focus Group Discussion

Major Themes	Frequency of Responses	Core Ideas
Literal Translation Tendencies	General	Translate ideas from Filipino to English
	General	Translate questions from Filipino to English
Lack of English Foundation	General	More knowledge of Filipino grammar
	Variant	Filipino is easier to understand
	Variant	More confident to use Filipino
Differences in Language Structure	General	Diverse in terms of language structure
	Typical	Confused between Filipino and English grammar rules

Literal translation tendency is the general response brought out by the participants during the interview. This means that most of the students' interlingual errors are caused by translating the language word for word. Even so, students often use a phrase instead of a complete sentence. This circumstance is similar to the result of error analysis studies by Projo and Garza and Wu [31, 33]. Particularly, Chinese EFL learners experienced difficulty in comprehending the meaning of the words in English because many nouns were

translated from Chinese.

The second theme that emerged from the FGD was lack of English foundation. This means that they have poor, incomplete or lacking knowledge of the target language particularly ignorance of rule restrictions. This case is similar to the result of error analysis studies written by Huang, Lasaten, and Khansir [42-45]. Lasaten suggested that language teachers need to encourage and expose their students to various reading materials to improve their language skills [43]. In addition, Sari suggested that teachers can help address this problem by giving clear and understandable corrective feedback and remedial teaching program to the students [27].

Lastly, the theme "differences in language structure" refers to both Filipino and English languages. According to Nzama, language transfer involves pronunciation, word order and grammars, semantic transfer, transfer in writing, pragmatic transfer, and culture transfer [46]. In this study, the focus is on the language transfer of word order and grammar. There are actually two perspectives in this matter. One is the positive language transfer and the other one is negative language transfer. What the participants experienced was negative language transfer because the L1 hindered the learning of the target language.

The same is true with the result of the error analysis studies conducted by Nzama, Garza, and Wu [31, 46].

Insights Generated from the Study to be shared to the Academe

Table 9 presents the insights generated from the study to be shared with the academe from the focus group discussion. According to the 12 Grade 11 students, the following are the insights from their experiences while speaking English in class: mental block, fear of error, and student personality.

Table 9: Insights Generated from the Study to be shared to the Academe

Major Themes	Frequency of Responses	Core Ideas
Mental Block	General	Mental block
	General	Unprepared to answer questions
	Typical	Uncertain what to do
	Typical	Too many ideas
	Typical	Dedicate more time in learning English
	Typical	Need to improve vocabulary for better understanding
	Typical	Question is hard to understand
	Variant	Be more aggressive in learning English
	Variant	Strive more to be knowledgeable
	Variant	Seldom study English
Fear of Errors	General	Afraid to make mistakes
	General	Bullying
	General	Humiliation
	Typical	Uncertain of the answer

	Typical	Uncertain of the correct pronunciation
	Variant	Neglect to participate in class
	Variant	Protecting reputation
	Variant	Judgmental classmates
Student Personality	General	Nervous
	Typical	Shy
	Typical	Lack of confidence
	Variant	Feeling anxious being looked at by others
	Variant	Stage fright

Mental block came as the most recurrent difficulty that the participants experienced. In an article written by Racoma, public speaking came as the number 1 phobia. Even how much people prepare to speak, some still suddenly cannot utter a word. He mentioned that lack of confidence is the main reason why people experience mental block. Another probable reason is the fear to be rejected or humiliated. In fact, Hashemi confirmed that learners in the English language feel stress, nervous or anxious while learning to speak English. Mental block is an affective filter that prevents the language from entering and being assimilated into the students' minds. Therefore, the more relaxed students are, the easier it will be for them to acquire English [34].

The second theme that emerged from the FGD is the fear of errors. In the experience of the students, they fear to make errors while speaking in public. This is true in the study conducted by Kurman, Yoshihara-Tanaka, and Elkoshi [47]. For this reason, students are found to be very motivated to evade failure even if it means that they will also keep themselves away from success. Brown dubbed this phenomenon as Fear of Negative Evaluation [48]. He said that FNE could hamper learning in various ways. Because of this, students will avoid situations where they will be negative evaluation, which is also equivalent to avoiding learning. On top of that, Awaludin, Karim and Rafek suggested that teachers should be vigilant of the affective factors that might affect language learning especially the fear in evaluations. Likewise, students should also do their part in finding their personal ways to overcome fear such as preparing more before coming to English class since evaluations are inevitable in language learning.

The last general response taken from the participants is their personality. Student personality has been highlighted by many language anxiety studies. Spielberg presented three perspectives on anxieties, which are as follows: trait anxiety, state anxiety, and situation-specific anxiety. According to him, anxieties are ascribed to the general personality of the person and his/her behavior in different circumstances. In addition, he discovered that Trait Anxiety reflects the likelihood of a person to react with nervousness across any threatening situation. Most anxieties are experienced during test situations or during activities that spotlight the language learner in front of others. This is described as a personality trait rather than a feeling due to the specific situation [49]. The same feeling is true among Japanese EFL students because they are shy and self-conscious to speak English in public [50-53].

Conclusion

As I have gleaned from the results of this qualitative study, I came up with three significant suggestions for English teachers like me. First, English teachers must focus on correcting high frequency and general errors rather than correcting every syntactic error committed by the students. High-frequency errors are those, which occur more often than other syntactic errors in speaking. On the other hand, general errors are those syntactic errors committed by a large percentage of the students. As it was revealed earlier, fear of negative evaluation has been one of the many reasons why students are reluctant to speak in English. It is either they have experienced it or they witnessed their classmates struggle in class because they cannot satisfy their teacher with their English proficiency. However, I am not saying that teachers should stop giving corrections, rather we should select when and what to correct. I believe that focusing more on these two kinds of errors will have a more visible change and progress in the speaking ability of the students.

Secondly, English teachers might consider pedagogical reforms in teaching speaking. Upon reflecting on my findings, I was challenged as an English teacher to go an extra mile for my students. As what Silver and Bloom have always emphasized that not one student is alike; they have their own share of intelligence and they have unique ways of learning. Therefore, there is no singular strategy in teaching speaking that will cure all their syntactic errors. However, I am a firm believer of the idea that meaningful learning is more effective than rote learning. Instead of letting students memorize grammar rules like little parrots, English teachers should help them associate their new knowledge to what they already know.

Lastly, English teachers must mitigate anxiety while improving students' oral proficiency. Let us make effective use of our legitimate power as persons in authority inside the classroom to ensure a positive learning environment. As the respondents testified, they had negative experiences with their classmates in their English class. However, I believe that not only students but also teachers should be mindful of what they say and do. In other words, teachers' reactions inside the classroom might contribute to the increase or decrease of their students' confidence. Sometimes, we take more notice on how students treat each other but overlook how we treat them. I think teachers today should heed the errors and not the mistakes, be armed to help alleviate students' struggles, and be forbearing to walk side by side with them in their journey towards oral proficiency.

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