

An Analysis of Lexical Errors of Korean Language Learners: Some American College Learners' Case

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There has been a huge amount of research on errors of language learners. However, most of them have focused on syntactic errors and those about lexical errors are not found easily despite the importance of lexical learning for the language learners. The case is even rarer for Korean language. In line with this background, this study was designed to find out what the actual features of lexical errors made by some American college learners of Korean language. These beginner-intermediate level learners showed a variety of features of lexical errors. Detailed explanations and discussion on the finding are followed. It concludes with some implications and some suggestions for the future research.

Key Words: Korean language, error analysis, lexical errors, non-heritage learners, college language learner

1 Introduction

These are just a few of the countless examples of where a wrong lexical choice would not only sound odd but would lead to the production of “funny” utterances not easily comprehensible.

- A Korean asked if his American English female teacher is single, ‘Are you a virgin?’
- A man wanted to impress someone with a more sophisticated vocabulary so, he said, ‘You are ignorant of it’ instead of ‘You don’t know it’.

No matter what method is employed, learners’ errors will always be there. Some errors are intriguing and some are downright frustrating (of course, the above cases are embarrassing and frustrating). The problem of difficulty in the second language (L2) learning has long attracted the interest of researchers. In one way or another, teachers, linguists, and psychologists

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have attempted to predict and find the causes of learning difficulties. It is a common experience that languages are difficult to learn. But what it is that constitutes “difficulty” is still a baffling problem. Little is known of the learning mechanisms, especially in the realm of L2 learning. What actually takes place in the learner’s mind is by and large a mystery (Tran-Thi-Chau, 1991).

Forced to cope with the problem of difficulty in L2 learning without adequate knowledge of the learning mechanisms, researchers have had recourse to the output of those learning processes that have, as their most observable manifestations, the errors made by the learner. To diagnose difficulties, errors are systematically collected, analyzed, and categorized. This approach, commonly known as Error Analysis (EA), is based on the assumption that the frequency of errors is proportional to the degree of learning difficulty. EA has been one of the major disciplines in the field of second language acquisition (SLA) research since the 1960s. Even after EA was superseded by Performance Analysis (PA) in the 1980s, the significance and usefulness of EA in language pedagogy have never been downgraded (Wang, 1997).

However, these days, language learner errors are looked in a different angle. The issue has moved from ‘what are they?’ to ‘how to fix them?’ and ‘does it work?’ People have more interest in correcting language learners. Especially recast is the one form of interactional feedback that has been studied by a number of researchers (Song, 2009). All these efforts seem to have been made to balance between fluency and accuracy. Including some descriptive studies of recasts (Doughty, 1994; Lyster, 1998; Lyster & Ranta, 1997; Panova & Lyster, 2002) there have been tons of studies that have been conducted especially in the classroom context. However, they are almost about the learners of English or some learners of Spanish. It is really hard to find those of learners of Korean. In reality, what kind of errors Korean learners frequently make are not defined yet because not much research has been done. Linguistic errors can’t be clearly defined but should have some kind of rough definitions at least.

Most of error analyses rely on structural errors. Lexical errors have almost been excluded. In this paper, one of rarely explored languages, Korean, is discussed in terms of lexical errors which has also been missed by ‘error analysts’ even in other languages. Some categorical definitions of lexical errors, not wholly about Korean language, are found in a few studies (Duskova, 1991; Ree, 1994; Wang, 1997; Zughoul, 1991).

By applying these definitions, some notable lexical error patterns of learners of Korean language are categorized. Written homework collected from a group of students of an American university, who were taking intermediate Korean language class, is sorted and analyzed. Through this research we can have a chance to look at the actual features of language

errors learners of Korean language make and may apply or use them as a good case of reference for Korean teaching practitioners.

2 Background of Study

When learners learn a second or foreign language, they naturally go through a so-called interlanguage stage (Selinker, 1972), which is a sort of transitional stage between the learner's native language and target language. Even though errors are frustrating, researchers mostly consider such errors developmental because they seem to be the evidence of the learners' attempts to acquire language based upon their hypotheses about the language they are learning (Ree, 1994). Selinker refers to this system of such trial and error hypotheses as interlanguage. Most errors are made in this developmental stage of the learning process.

There is a general consensus in the SLA (Second Language Acquisition) field that the transfer from the learner's native language, especially negative transfer due to a big linguistic distance between the two languages, is responsible for the learner's errors. The larger the distance between the learner's L1 and L2 is, the more likely he/she will make errors. It is well known that Korean and English are very different in many respects, not only syntactically but also culturally and pragmatically as well. Such differences can be the main source of many of the learner's errors. Particularly, learning words and using them appropriately in context have much to do with cultural and pragmatic issues. Nevertheless, teaching and learning vocabulary have not been given serious consideration in classroom instruction due to time limits and other restrictions (e.g. teacher's view of teaching vocabulary, method etc.) (Wang, 1997). Neither has been in the field of research (Llach, 2011). The lack of research is due to the fact that teachers have been under "the influence of the tenets of audiolingualism where lexis is relegated to secondary status in comparison to phonology and syntax" (Zughoul, 1991).

EA can be done not only with pronunciation, lexicon, and grammar but also with sociolinguistic and pragmatic errors. However, due to the heavy influence of theoretical linguistics which has been dominating linguistics in general for a long time, research on grammatical errors far outnumber research on other types of errors (Ree, 1994; Wang, 1997; Zughoul, 1991). In addition, lack of systematicity of the lexicon and complexities in lexicon organization may account for the little research devoted to lexical errors (Llach, 2011). Among a number of reasons that can be attributed to this phenomenon, the major one is the difficulty and complexity of analyzing lexical errors. That is, lexical errors are much more diverse in their forms than grammatical errors, and the distinction between acceptable versus unacceptable as opposed to grammatical versus ungrammatical is not as clear-cut (Wang, 1997).

If we assume that the fundamental goal of learning a language is communicating with native speakers, the most difficult problem for learners in actual interactional situations is vocabulary rather than pronunciation, grammar knowledge or the ability to compose sentences. This is particularly true for learners at an intermediate or higher level as they have already attained basic grammar knowledge. Our personal experience of teaching English and Korean in the U.S. and Korea for years makes us believe that learners struggle to improve their vocabulary after they learn the basic pronunciation and grammatical structure of the target language. Therefore, understanding the types, causes, and nature of lexical errors learners make is important and meaningful for more effective and efficient teaching.

Many studies have been conducted under the theoretical framework of error analysis. Most of these studies dealt with English as the target language, and yet vary in the learner's native languages (e.g., Czech, French, Indian, Iranian, Arabic, etc.) and in the type of errors analyzed (e.g. grammatical, lexical, pronunciation, etc.). However, to date, there are very few studies which analyze errors made by American learners of Korean. In spite of an increasing demand of Korean studies in America, the field is plagued by the usual logistical problems such as a lack of textbooks, teachers, teacher training, dictionaries, and teaching aids (Ree, 1994). Another reason is that Korean is frequently overlooked in favor of Chinese and Japanese. Consequently, despite the rising interest in the language, the study of Korean acquisition has not fully bloomed. However, scholars and teachers have been awakened and are trying to get out of this dilemma.

3 Study

3.1 Research questions

The study proposed here is an attempt to add to the study of Korean acquisition. The purpose of the study is to analyze lexical errors made by American learners of Korean language at the intermediate level. Three questions will be analyzed. First, what are the lexical error types that American learners of Korean make in composition? Second, what are the sources of those errors? Third, what are the implications of the findings and how can they be applied in an actual classroom?

3.2 Participants and data

Eighty essays written by sixteen intermediate learners of Korean language at a university in the south eastern part of U.S. were analyzed. Learners are all enrolled in a second-year Korean language class at the time of writing the essays. All of them were in freshmen or sophomore year. Heritage students,

in other words Korean-Americans, were excluded from this group. Eleven were female and five were male. They were asked to write five daily journals. There were no specific topics. Each journal was assigned to the learners every three weeks as a homework assignment. The teacher showed an example of daily journals. As they did homework, they were advised to have as much time as they want, and use anything that can help their writing, such as a dictionary. The errors made in relaxed circumstances were considered more valid. And it was expected that even with the use of a dictionary, they still would make errors.

3.3 Data analysis

The most important question in the process of analyzing errors is the question of what should be considered an error. In previous research, generally, errors have been defined as forms or expressions that are deviant from normal forms, and therefore, are not acceptable to native speakers (McCretton & Rider, 1993). However, "no two previous studies on lexical errors have adopted the same error typology." (Kallkvist, 1998, p. 82). Although the investigator's subjectivity can be a possible pitfall with this definition, the present study adopted this definition in its analysis mainly for the sake of comparability with other studies. A number of clarifications with respect to the process of analysis were in order.

First, words used inappropriately in context were identified by the definition above, and then those words were classified by error types and the frequency of error occurrence was counted. In the process of identifying errors, misspellings were ignored unless the misspellings cause differences in meaning. Second, grammatical errors were completely excluded as this study focuses on lexical errors, and lexical errors identified were restricted to words which are not used appropriately. Third, when the same error was made repeatedly in the same writing, it will be counted only once. Then the sources of errors were analyzed.

There has been a distinction between form-oriented and content-oriented lexical errors (Hemchua & Schmitt, 2006; James, 1998; Mutta, 1999; Zimmermann, 1987). The scholars have their own categories with plausible reasons. This study didn't reflect this distinction but integrated some of their ideas into the lexical error categories built up for this study.

Here are some categorizations based on previous error analysis studies (Duskova, 1991; James, 1998; Ree, 1994; Wang, 1997; Zughoul, 1991). Students' lexical errors found in this study fall under those categories as shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Lexical Error Categories¹

No.	Categories	Descriptions
1	Assumed Synonymity	Use synonyms interchangeably though they may not interchangeable (e.g. long vs. tall)
2	Collocation or Idiomaticity	Wrong choice of collocation or idiomatic expression (e.g. grow knowledge)
3	Inappropriate Honorifics	Misuse of honorifics (e.g. use honorifics for a dog)
4	Level of Diction or Verbosity	Use fancy words to look impressive (e.g. It is 'exorbitant' (= expensive))
5	Lexical Shift	Code switching (e.g. Watasiwa busy tesu)
6	Literal Translation	Misunderstanding of expressions (e.g. Break your leg)
7	Overuse	Overuse of some term (e.g. too many 'good's)
8	Paraphrase or Circumlocution	Use other words one knows when the proper word can't be retrieved
9	Redundancy	Use words with the parts having redundant meaning (e.g. U.S. country)
10	Similar Forms	Misuse of words because of their similar outer features (e.g. veterinarian vs. vegetarian)
11	Simplification	Simplified use of words without specific and essential functional parts (e.g. use 'dish' without 'doing')

4 Results

4.1 Overall findings

According to Table 2, it turned out that around 705 (69%) of sentences out of 1,038 sentences were error-ridden. Since there were more than one error in some sentences, the total number of errors was 749.

Table 2. Overall Findings

Total Sentences	Sentences with Errors	Total Errors
1,028 (100%)	705 (69%)	749

As it is briefly reported in Table 3, the errors falling under *Collocation or Idiomaticity* account for 15.6% of total errors, which is the biggest portion. The second biggest category is *Assumed Synonymity* (12.7%). *Overuse* takes

¹ These categories are listed alphabetically.

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the third place (11.8%) but its size of portion was not much smaller than that of *Assumed Synonymity*. Except for *Similar Forms* which comes very last (3.7%), the rest of categories are lined up with not much percentile difference (*Literal Translation*: 9.5%, *Inappropriate Honorifics*: 8.4%, *Paraphrase or Circumlocution*: 8.1%, *Redundancy*: 7.9%, *Simplification*: 7.7%, *Level of Diction or Verbosity*: 7.5%, *Lexical Shift*: 7.1%, respectively). More detailed explanation is followed.

Table 3. The Number of Lexical Errors per Categories and Percentages

No.	Categories	No. of Errors	%
1	Collocation or Idiomaticity	117	15.6
2	Assumed Synonymity	95	12.7
3	Overuse	88	11.8
4	Literal Translation	71	9.5
5	Inappropriate Honorifics	63	8.4
6	Paraphrase or Circumlocution	61	8.1
7	Redundancy	59	7.9
8	Simplification	58	7.7
9	Level of Diction or Verbosity	56	7.5
10	Lexical Shift	53	7.1
11	Similar Forms	28	3.7
	Total	749	100

4.2 Examples of errors found² and discussion

A variety of lexical errors were found. Not every one of cases is discussed in this section. Some representative cases are introduced, discussed and interpreted. When it is necessary, some notes are added to each table.

4.2.1 Collocation and idiomaticity

“You shall know a word by the company it keeps” (Palmer, 1976, p. 94). It is true that collocation may be viewed as a part of the meaning of a word. Another researcher even said that the wrong choice of collocation is directly related to native language transfer (Zughoul, 1991). The learners in this research did show a variety of errors in choosing appropriate collocations, which makes this category be on the top of the list. Notable examples are explained in Table 4.

² Some English translations don't seem to be erroneous but when they are used in Korean their meanings become awkward. And actual examples of Korean words introduced here are in generic root forms.

Table 4. Examples of Errors and Explanation (Collocation and Idiomaticity)

Error Examples	Explanations
1. <u>Make</u> money; <u>Make</u> bed	'Make' means 'manufacture' in Korean.
2. <u>Wear</u> a skirt; <u>Wear</u> a necklace; <u>Wear</u> a ring; <u>Wear</u> a cap	'Wear' is used in different words depending on what you wear in Korean
3. <u>Go</u> to college	'Go' has another meaning 'attend' when it is the case, the word meaning 'attend' should be used in Korean.
4. Bleeding <u>stop</u> (something)	'Stop' should be used as an intransitive verb but it was used as a transitive verb a lot.
5. <u>Quit</u> smoking	'Quit' should be 'Cut' in Korean when talking about 'quit smoking'
6. <u>Have</u> a dream	It should be 'dream a dream' when it refers to 'dream' you have when you sleep.

Many students failed to find correct words for 'make', 'wear' in sentences. It is because those words are used very differently with different words in each occasion. In the phrase #1 'make money' means 'manufacture money' in Korean. You have to say 'earn money' to convey correct meaning. In the phrase #2 'wear' has a variety of usages. In English just one word 'wear' can cover many different occasions, but it is not the case for Korean language. When you use 'wear' with clothes, such as a skirt, pants, shirts, and suits etc., the generic meaning of 'wear' is applied, however, when you 'wear' a ring, socks, shoes, or cap, 'wear' should be replaced by other specific words. Even if you still use 'wear' with them, the meaning can be understood, but it would sound awkward. For example, 'wear a ring' should mean 'fit a ring'; 'wear a cap' should mean 'put a cap on (head).' For the students it must have been really hard to distinguish all these different usages of one word. In the phrase #3 'go' case is the same one. If you are enrolled in and go to a college regularly, you have to say 'attend a college' instead of just 'go.'

In the phrase #4 is the case that the student fail to use a verb as an intransitive. '멈추다 (*mumchuda*)' should have been used, but the student used 'stop' as a transitive, which is '막다 (*makda*).' This verb needs an object word after it, which makes the sentence sensible. 'Quit' in the phrase #5 is relatively used generally with one meaning '그만하다 (*keumanhada*),' 'stop doing something' in Korean, but when it comes with 'smoking' or kinds of 'drug,' you have to say 'cut (끊다/*kkeuntta*).'

In the phrase #6, both 'have a dream' and 'dream a dream' are correct collocations, but their usages are different. When the noun 'dream' refers to future goal or so, you may use 'have' meaning 'possess,' but you strictly have to use the verb 'dream' with the noun 'dream' when it refers to the 'dream' you have during your actual sleep.

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No wonder the students were very much confused and made a lot of errors to get it right.

4.2.2 Assumed synonymy

The students used Korean synonyms interchangeably, though they may not be interchangeable. For example, as it is in the sentence #1 of Table 5, ‘cold’ (춥다/*chuptta*), as in “The weather is cold,” and ‘cold’ (차갑다/*chagapta*), as in “The water is cold,” are different in Korean, even though they both refers to low temperature.

In the sentence #2, when you say “I’m hot” it should be ‘덥다 (*dubbtta*)’ not ‘뜨겁다 (*tteuguptta*).’ Both words have no problem in describing ‘hot’ weather or temperature, but ‘덥다 (*dubbtta*)’ is most appropriate in describing how human feels about temperature or weather. ‘Long’ and ‘short’ in the sentences of #3 are also used differently when human is involved with them. ‘길다 (*gilda*)’ and ‘짧다 (*cyalltta*)’ are used for describing the length of something. For human’s height you have to say ‘크다 (*keuda*)’ and ‘작다 (*jakda*).’ Since these are identical in forms with the adjectives describing the size, there is always a specific noun phrase (noun+particle) referring to human’s height, ‘키가 (*kiga*)’ comes before them. So “그는 키가 크다” (*kuenun kiga keuda/* his height is tall.) and “그는 키가 작다” (*keunun kiga jakda/* his height is short.) are the right expressions.

The sentences under #4 show another example of assumed anonymity. ‘Work’ is used differently in certain expressions. When you go to work, ‘work’ is ‘회사’ (*Hoesal/* company) rather than ‘일’ (*il/* work). You have to say “I go to company” and “I return from company.” When ‘work’ is not personally referred, it is ‘job’ which is ‘work place’ (일자리/ *Iljari*) in Korean language. So one kind of translation of ‘work,’ ‘일 (*il*)’ is not enough to describe every ‘work’ in different contexts.

In each case presented here in this category, it is easily predicted that learners are easily confused in using physically different words to show the same meaning in different context of sentences.

Table 5. Examples of Errors and Explanation (Assumed Synonymy)

Error Examples	Explanations
1. Water is <u>cold</u> .	In this sentence ‘cold’ was used as it is used referring to weather.
2. I’m <u>hot</u> .	When you refer to people feeling temperature, a certain ‘hot’ sounds awkward.
3. He is <u>long</u> ; He is <u>short</u>	‘long’ or ‘short’ should used differently in describing human’s height.
4. Go to <u>work</u> ; Return from <u>work</u> ; Not many <u>works</u>	‘Work’ here should be replaced other words. but the students used the same word.

4.2.3 Overuse

A major source of wrong lexical choice reported by some studies (McCretton & Rider, 1993; Zoughoul, 1991) on EFL/ESL learners is the overuse of four particular lexical items: good, bad, big, and small. Similar patterns among Korean learners were found as indicated in Table 6. ‘좋은’ (*joeun/* good) and ‘나쁜’ (*nappeun/* bad) especially were the most frequent words used in adjectival phrases (e.g. 좋은/나쁜 사람(*joeun/nappeun saram*): good/bad person, 좋은/나쁜 차 (*joeun/nappeun cha*): good/bad car, 좋은/나쁜 개(*joeun/nappeun gae*): good/bad dog, 좋은/나쁜 음식 (*joeun/nappeun eumsik*): good/bad food, etc.). Their generic root forms are ‘좋다 (*jotta*)’ and ‘나쁘다 (*nappeuda*).’ This form is usually used when the description comes at the end of the sentence like the sentences under #2.

There is no erroneous sentence in this category, but ‘too frequent’ use of these easy adjectives might hinder the learners in making efforts to find better words for their sentences. Strictly, these are not errors but not positive at all.

Table 6. Examples of Errors and Explanation (Overuse)

Error Examples	Explanations
1. Our school is <u>good</u> . Today is a <u>good/bad</u> day. It was <u>good/bad</u> .	Not regarded as totally wrong but overuse of ‘good’ and ‘bad’ may make the sentences too monotonous and hinder using other words.
2. The movie was <u>good/bad</u> . Not doing homework is <u>not good</u> .	

4.2.4 Literal translation

As it is shown in Table 7, this category includes errors where the choice is an equivalent for an English word or an expression on the literal level, but does not convey the meaning intended in the target language. This kind of error is found even among advanced level learners.

The learner in the sentence #1 made a very funny mistake. This idiomatic expression can’t be correctly translated if it is treated literally. “Kick the bucket”, “chips on shoulders”, “pop the question” and “take a rain check”, etc. are the same examples. The sentences #2, #3, and #4 are not the same cases but their literal translations don’t make sense much. The only solution for the learners is to get used to those expressions.

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Table 7. Examples of Errors and Explanation (Literal Translation)

Error Examples	Explanations
1. My friend said <u>break your leg</u> .	It should be translated as 'good luck'
2. I can't... <u>something came up</u> .	The students mean that physically something really comes up in the air.
3. I <u>work out</u> everyday at gym.	It is not 'workout' but 'working outside.'
4. I was <u>full</u> .	The word 'stomach being full' should be used.

4.2.5 Inappropriate honorifics

Honorifics must be one of the toughest things for the learners to master. It is not surprising to see a significant number of errors of inappropriate honorifics use. In Table 8, the sentences under #1 are all misused honorifics because they are honoring the subject doers of the sentences, who are not supposed to be honored. Your roommate, yourself, and your cars are not the ones you have to honor since they are not superior or senior by age or social status.

Regarding to the errors in the sentences, you may easily infer that the sentences under #2 have no problem since the subject doer of each sentence is qualified to be honored. But the problem falls under honorific verbs used. They are not honoring the subject doers but the objects. Korean honorifics are divided into two kinds: one is honoring the subject doer; the other is honoring the object. It is very confusing for the learners of Korean language.

Table 8. Examples of Errors and Explanation (Inappropriate Honorifics)

1. My roommate <u>*went</u> to bed early. I <u>*ate</u> lunch with mike. There <u>*are</u> two cars at my house.	Those who are not superior to me by age or social status should not be 'honored' The same is true with things.
2. Doctor <u>*asked</u> me a question. My father <u>*gave</u> me a present.	Some verbs honor the objects not doers.

*These are all honorifics (there is no way to write honorifics in English.).

4.2.6 Paraphrase or circumlocution

When learners cannot think of the proper word to use in a certain context, they may provide a paraphrase in order to convey the intended meaning. Table 9 shows some good examples. When they want to say 'poor people' as it is in the sentence #1, they would say 'people who don't have money.' The sentence #2 is a typical way of circumlocution when people have hard time to come up with the right words for their sentences. Meanings of some hard words referring to specialized professions, such as veterinarian, pediatrician,

astrologist and so on, tend to be conveyed through paraphrasing or circumlocution.

The learners seemed to have some hard time to come up with proper terms in describing some general situations like in the sentence #3. The meaning is perfectly conveyed, but the sentence sounds a bit funny. The student wanted to talk about his short trip to a certain place. He tried to say he drove on a high way. The word ‘high way’ is not much difficult word to come up with but he took another way to explain it. It is very hard to regard these four examples in Table 9 found among students’ journals as errors because they make sense. However, strictly speaking, they are errors since there are more appropriate alternatives available.

Table 9. Examples of Errors and Explanation (Paraphrase or Circumlocution)

Error Examples	Explanations
1. Those who <u>don't have money</u>	Meaning ‘poor’
2. My father is <u>fixing people's teeth</u> .	Meaning ‘my father is a dentist.’
3. <u>A baby is in my sister's stomach</u> .	Meaning ‘my sister is pregnant.’
4. I drove there through <u>fast way</u> .	Meaning ‘highway’

4.2.7 Redundancy

As shown in Table 10, some learners made some errors like ‘미국 나라’ (*mikook nara/* the U.S. country). They might have made this redundancy error because they knew ‘국(*kook*)’ means country and the U.S. is ‘미국 (*mikook*)’ in Korean. They must haven’t recognized the sameness of those two ‘국 (*kook*)’s. ‘Male human/ female human’ (여자 사람/ 남자 사람, *yeoja saram/namja saram*) of the phrase #2 has the similar problem. In the words ‘남자 (*namja*)’ and ‘여자 (*yeoja*)’, ‘남 (*nam*)’ and ‘여 (*yeo*)’ each means ‘male’ and ‘female,’ while ‘자 (*ja*)’ means ‘human.’ ‘사람 (*saram*)’ is also another word for ‘human.’ When referring to male and female, Korean people say either ‘남’ and ‘여’ or ‘남자 (*namja*)’ and ‘여자 (*yeoja*).’ The learners may have tried to make their sentences clearer by using another word ‘사람 (*saram*)’ meaning ‘human.’

Table 10. Examples of Errors and Explanation (Redundancy)

Error Examples	Explanations
1. <u>U.S. country</u>	#1-3 redundancy cases are due to learners’
2. <u>Male human/ female human</u>	efforts to make meaning of sentences clearer.
3. <u>Word a lying word/ a bad word</u>	

A Korean phrase ‘거짓말 하다’ (*keojitmal hada/* do lying) is enough for ‘telling a lie’ as it is seen in the phrases under #3, so many nouns become

verbs with ‘하다’ (*hada*/ do). The learner paid too much attention to ‘telling’ in ‘telling a lie.’

4.2.8 Simplification

We have to be specific every time with verbs in writing Korean. Table 11 shows some examples. The English word ‘milk’ can be a noun and also a verb, but Korean has two different words depending on sentences. One example is ‘우유’ (*uyou*/ milk: noun) vs. ‘우유 짜기’ (*uyou cyagi*/ milk squeezing: verb). In the case of the sentence #1, ‘milk’ is used as ‘put/pour milk in.’ Something should be added after making a noun into a verb.

Table 11. Examples of Errors and Explanation (Simplification)

Error Examples	Explanations
1. I <u>milk</u> the coffee	Noun can't be a verb alone.
2. I <u>did a lawn</u> and <u>fallen leaves</u> . I <u>did dishes</u> .	‘Do’ is used a lot with nouns as verbs. So ‘do’ is used even when other verbs are needed.

As it is mentioned just above, ‘하다(*hada*)’ is very useful in changing nouns into verbs. Some students were well aware of this fact and did make some sentences like the ones under #2. They wrote ‘잔디하고 낙엽하다’ (*jandihago nakyup hada*/ do a lawn and fallen leaves) instead of ‘잔디 깎기와 낙엽 치우기 하다’ (*jandi kkakgiwa nakyup chiugi hada*/ mow a lawn and rake leaves). ‘Do a lawn and fallen leaves’ doesn’t sound too bad in English, but it is very funny and awkward. ‘하다 (*hada*)’ doesn’t always work with nouns. Some nouns have their own verb derivations. For ‘do dishes’ Korean has an independent word which doesn’t look like ‘접시’ (*jubsi*/ dish) at all. It is no wonder that the students easily get confused with this feature of Korean language.

4.2.9 Level of diction or verbosity

This category, presented in Table 12, stems from the tendency of learners to incorporate long, big sounding or sophisticated words into their composition, being under the myth that the inclusion of such words makes a piece of writing more impressive and literary. Some students seem to have followed this tendency.

As it is in the sentence #1, when they had to say “조용하다” (*joyonghada*/quiet), they said “고요하다” (*koyohada*/silent). “고요하다 (*koyohada*)” should be used when you describe the atmosphere or mood. The sentence #2 ‘실종 (*siljong*)’ is used for ‘missing,’ which sounds too serious. You can just say ‘my place’ rather than ‘my residence’ when you say where you live. In the sentence #3, even in English the word ‘residence’ seems to be

somewhat big for simply informing your living place. The word ‘거주지’ (*keujuji*/ residence) is often found in some official documents. The same explanation applies to the sentence #4.

Table 12. Examples of Errors and Explanation(Level of Diction or Verbosity)

Error Examples	Explanations
1. My boyfriend is <u>silent</u> person.	‘Silent’ in Korean sounds fancier than ‘quiet.’
2. My favorite pants are <u>missing</u> .	‘Missing’ here sounds like ‘missing in action.’
3. My <u>residence</u> is near downtown.	Not wrong but ‘place’ fits better.
4. My roommate and I had a <u>debate</u> on what to eat for dinner.	‘Debate’ is too big for this sentence.

4.2.10 Lexical shift

Code-switching occurs a lot, especially inter-sentential code-switching, such as ‘superman 은 (*eun*: subject particle) 너무 (*neumu*: too) super 하다 (*hada*: is).’ The learners’ first language (L1) shows up in their L2 writing as a form of lexical shift, code-switching, a lot.

In Table 13, the sentence #1 shows an example that the learners were not able to find the right word for ‘even’ in Korea. It is not surprising because ‘even’ is not an independent word at all. It comes with other words. The sentence #2 seems the case that a word like ‘Thanksgiving’ is almost considered a proper noun. Korean translation doesn’t sound natural for this word.

Code-switching often comes in inter-sentential forms, but some intra-sentential forms were also found. The sentence #3 is an interesting example. Each whole sentence in Korean and English comes one by one. The underlined part must have been too hard for the learners to translate into Korean.

Table 13. Examples of Errors and Explanation (Lexical Shift)

Error Examples	Explanations
1. I didn’t <u>*even</u> think about that.	The students might have not been able to find right words for the words.
2. My grandparents are coming to our <u>*Thanksgiving</u> dinner.	‘Thanksgiving’ is almost considered a proper noun.
3. He seems special to me now. <u>*I’ve never felt this way before.</u>	Each whole sentence in Korean and English come one by one.

* All underlined parts were written English. The rest of sentences were all written Korean.

4.2.11 Similar forms

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Some Korean words have similar features (it is also usual in other languages). For instance, learners may use 'strange' (이상하다/ *isanghada*) in a sentence in which 'ideal' (이상적이다/ *isangjukida*) has to be used as it is in the sentence #1. It is the 'quite versus quiet' case in English. Some more examples were found.

The sentences in Table 14 show some typical examples of learners' errors and their explanations. These errors would be made by young Korean native speakers. Especially the sentence #4 is very confusing even for some adult Korean speakers, too.

Table 14. Examples of Errors and Explanation (Similar Forms)

Error Examples	*Explanations
1. My <u>strange</u> goal is to be a lawyer.	Strange=이상하다(<i>isanghada</i>) vs. Ideal=이상적이다(<i>isangjukida</i>)
2. Your party <u>enjoyed</u> .	Enjoyed=즐기다(<i>jeulgida</i>) vs. (be) enjoyable=즐겁다(<i>jeulgupda</i>)
4. I <u>gave a birth</u> to a flu.	Gave a birth=낳다(<i>natta</i>) vs. Got better=낫다 (<i>natda</i>)
5. I <u>blow</u> a song.	Blow=불다 (<i>bulda</i>) vs. Sing (a song)=부르다(<i>breuda</i>)

* These show how the students were confused between similar forms of words.

5 Conclusion

According to Zughoul (1991), who investigated Arabic ESL students' errors in their English writing, interference is not only in lexical shift, but also in other forms of errors. He added that the most obvious form of mother tongue interference is synonymity. But, some different results came from this research. It is found that the most frequent errors were under the category of 'Collocation.' 'Assumed Syonymity' took the second place and the third place was taken by 'Overuse' of some terms.

Now some questions based on the findings can be raised: why do learners repeat the same errors (based on my experience as an ESL learner)?; why are some errors more likely to occur than others? What the practitioners particularly really concerned about must be what these findings tell us about classroom teaching; how teachers can help learners prevent or minimize errors; and how teachers can incorporate these findings into material development.

Linguistically speaking, this research proves that L1 interference may be a major factor in lexical choice among Korean learners. What is the optimal solution for that? Frankly speaking, the amount of data from sixteen students might be considered not enough to get reliable results. However, at least this study shows a case of some actual features of errors made by

learners of Korean language. Lower level and higher level students would show something different features of errors. That could be the good point to be looked at in the future research with more data.

For now, based on the results of this study and the traditional lack of interest in the lexicon field, we just can say that more attention should be paid to vocabulary teaching in the classroom. Teachers need to give more specific instruction of vocabulary along with an appropriate context. The success and effectiveness of vocabulary instruction can be greatly influenced by how teachers define and present target words.

The potential contribution of this study to the field is simple. The results of error analysis inform researchers of what stages the learners go through in the process of learning and what strategies they use. In addition, they show that errors are important in that they are necessary tools with which learners themselves test their hypotheses. In other words, learners' errors are very important by-products that learners produce during the interlanguage stage, especially lexical errors. So this lexical error analysis study would be a good addition. We do not think it will have a major impact, but we expect this study to be appreciated as another attempt to make this always-overlooked-language be on the surface and to be available to everybody who has an interest in SLA (Second Language Acquisition) or FLA (Foreign Language Acquisition).

We need to look at a couple of more points. Usually Korean language learners in the classroom are divided into two groups; non-Korean heritage students and Korean heritage students. Non-heritage learners are usually limited to classroom instruction while heritage learners have relatively more chances to be exposed to Korean because of their Korean family background. Usually, heritage learners demonstrate a high level of spoken fluency at the expense of accuracy, whereas non-heritage learners are usually more balanced. Even though this is not considered in this study to find out 'pure' errors from the learners with no Korean background, a difference in errors between two groups of students is expected. In-depth future research about this matter will be worthy.

Features of learners' errors are not just only things to look at but something behind it should be investigated. It would be interesting to take a look at learners' social relationship with Korean speakers. Because Korean is very different from English, you need to be more motivated in learning it. Many American learners of Korean languages, even non-heritage learners, have some personal connections with Korean speakers. They are girlfriends, boyfriends, sometimes wives, husbands, penpals or influential people in their lives. The impact from verbal interaction with those people may play a great role in the learners' learning. They may have gotten huge influence from Korean pop culture, too. That could be another good aspect to be considered.

As mentioned in the literature review above, the distinction between categories of lexical errors is not crystal clear, and it is hard to say some

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errors are really errors because it is a matter of whether you accept them or not. But as more studies are conducted, clearer distinctions would be developed.

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