

A Case Study of Morphological Errors Made by the Cambodian Child in First Language Acquisition

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ABSTRACT

Morphology, the study of word formation and structure, plays a crucial role in first language acquisition as infants and young children learn the morphological rules and patterns of their native language, occasionally making morphological errors during this process. This study aims to identify, classify, and determine the cause of morphological errors made by a Cambodian child in first language acquisition at the age of two and a half years old. This study was based on Corder (1973), Brown. (2014), Muthanna (2014) category of error analysis models as omission, substitution, addition and others. The Cambodian child was selected after two and a half years old to be representative among Cambodian children with a moderate standard of living. The data collection was analyzed qualitatively and quantitatively using numbers and descriptive statistics and presented in frequency table and percentage according to the surface structure taxonomy. This study found four types of morphological errors made by a Cambodian kid in first language acquisition at the age of two-and-a-half years old. There were omissions (16.67%), additions (13.33%), reduplications (36.67%), and substitutions (33.33%). In contrast, the cause of errors is when children delete the part of a word that should exist and add, repeat, and substitute the part of a word from/into speech. The study emphasizes the pivotal role of parents in supporting their child's language development by focusing on linguistic aspects and suggests that schools should incorporate dedicated morphology courses to enhance language acquisition, with teachers equipped to guide children effectively in understanding language intricacies, especially in mother tongue acquisition.

KEYWORDS

Morphology, Error, First language, Language acquisition, Error analysis, Cambodian child.

INTRODUCTION

Humans possess a remarkable and sophisticated innate mechanism from birth known as the Language Acquisition Device (LAD). This inherent ability enables humans to acquire language naturally and effortlessly from infancy, making it almost inevitable for them to develop the capacity for speech. As a result, this is called the process of language acquisition in humans, which is automatic and unintentional. Language acquisition is the process by which children achieve fluent control of their native language (Vashney, 2003, cited in Hutauruk, 2015, p. 51) to create the perception and understanding of the speech of others. Children have enough ability to produce speech if they know the rules derived from childhood (Ratnaningsih, 2017, p. 09).

Similarly, Saleh Al-Hazi, Wayan Sartini, Sallam Al-Shrgabi, and Nasser Al-Maamarit (2021, p. 20) define language acquisition as the process that occurs in the child's brain in which his/her mother tongue is required. Children learn a language not because they are subjected to a similar conditioning process but because they possess an innate capacity to acquire a language as a normal maturational process (Hutauruk, 2015, p. 51). Thus, the

language processing in the child's brain, how they control their native language, is the process of acquiring the first language or native language, which is generally called first language acquisition.

First language acquisition (L1 acquisition) is the process of acquiring a native language by children from birth (H. Tavakoli, 2012, p. 131). According to David Crystal (2008), First language acquisition (Child language acquisition (CLA)) is the designated term for research focused on how children learn their native language (David Crystal, 2008, p. 08). However, L1 acquisition involves developing various linguistic or structural language skills, including phonology, morphology, syntax, and semantics. As children grow, they progress through distinct stages of language development. During these stages, they often produce errors that impact their current language system understanding. So, analyzing these errors can provide valuable insights into the underlying mechanisms of language acquisition in children's language development.

On the other hand, first language acquisition is a complex and dynamic process wherein young children learn the grammatical structures and rules (morphology) of their native language. Morphology, the study of word forms and how they are formed (T. Rahman, 2010, p. 02), plays a crucial role in language development since childhood. While several studies have explored language acquisition in different contexts, there needs to be more research specifically focused on the morphological errors made by Cambodian children during the early stages of language acquisition. So, in this study, we focus on the study of morphological errors made by a Cambodian child in first language acquisition at the age of two-and-a-half years old. Cambodian, also known as Khmer, is an Austroasiatic language spoken by over 16 million people (Ieu Koeus, 1967) in Cambodia and belongs to the Mon-Khmer language family (Wikipedia, 2023); it has a rich and complex morphological system, including various affixes, infixes, prefixes, reduplication patterns, and others. In contrast, the errors we examine within word formation are called morphological errors (Ramadan, 2015, cited in S. Mahmood, 2020, p. 931). Morphological errors are formed or created (S. et al., 2016, p. 94) when a child or learner has a misconception about the meaning and function of morphemes and morphological rules and their exception (Salehramadan, 2015, p. 41).

This study aims to investigate and analyze the morphological errors made by a Cambodian child in first language acquisition at the age of two and a half years old. By thoroughly assessing a child's language development, we propose to find out how to identify and classify the nature and patterns of morphological errors and the cause of morphological errors that occur in first language acquisition while the child is acquiring their native language. The study's main objectives are to understand how children acquire the language and provide a better understanding of the difficulties Cambodian children commit while acquiring their first language.

Understanding Cambodian children's specific morphological errors in their first language acquisition can significantly impact language teaching and intervention programs. It can help educators and researchers design targeted approaches to support language learning in young learners, leading to more effective language acquisition strategies and improved language proficiency among Cambodian children. Furthermore, the findings from this study may contribute to the broader field of first language acquisition and cross-linguistic studies, providing valuable insights into the universality and variability of language development across different linguistic communities.

1.1 First and Second Language Acquisition The terms 'first language acquisition' and second 'language learning' refer to acquiring or learning the native language or target language. It is crucial and beneficial to differentiate between them in this context, particularly when considering the distinction between "acquisition" and "learning." First language acquisition is the natural and effortless process of learning one's native or mother tongue language (first language) during early childhood. Children acquire their first language through exposure to the language spoken by their parents, family members, and their surrounding community. This process occurs during the critical period, the optimal time for language learning, while second language acquisition (SLA) involves learning a language other than one's native language. This learning process typically occurs in formal or informal settings, where individuals are exposed to a new language through instruction, immersion programs, or language learning materials (Rigorozni Prace, 2012, p.23).

According to K. Johnson & H. Johnson (1999), first language acquisition displays several standard features, including rapid progress, systematic stages of development, exposure to language in a natural context with corrections, rewards, or reinforcement, and a generally unavoidable and successful process for most children. There are two main perspectives to explain these characteristics: the nativist perspective and the interactionist perspective. In comparison, second language acquisition shares some similarities with first language acquisition,

such as the presence of systematic stages of development in both processes. It differs in that correction, reward, and reinforcement do not directly impact L2 learners as they do in L1 acquisition. Additionally, L2 learners often develop knowledge beyond the input they have been exposed to, similar to first language learners. There are at least two significant explanatory approaches to understanding L2 acquisition: the nativist and cognitivist perspectives. (K. Johnson & H. Johnson, 1999, p. 129)

Similarly, Corder (1967) observed that learning a second language (L2) begins after the completion of the maturational process. In the case of first language acquisition, infants begin with no overt language behaviour. In contrast, the behaviour and motivation of L2 learners differ significantly from those learning their first language. Upon closer examination, it becomes apparent that this difference in behaviour and motivation only occasionally sheds light on the underlying processes involved in learning the first and second languages. Additionally, while there are observable dissimilarities in how individuals' approach L1 and L2 learning, it only sometimes provides clear insights into the fundamental mechanisms of language acquisition in both contexts (S.P. Corder, 1967, p. 163).

Likewise, in language growth in children, acquisition refers to the process or outcome of learning specific aspects of a language and the language as a whole. When studying first language acquisition (L1 acquisition), researchers explore the stages, strategies, and criteria involved in children's acquisition of their native language. Some theorists distinguish between acquisition (learning linguistic rules) and development (using rules in various linguistic and social contexts). On the other hand, others consider these two aspects of language learning closely related and use the terms interchangeably. Acquisition is also used when learning a foreign or second language (L2 acquisition). It differs from L1 acquisition as it involves a teaching context where learners receive assistance and guidance in acquiring the language. In this context, the focus is on directing the speaker's performance and helping them gain proficiency in the new language, which is called learning. (Devid Crystal, 2008, p. 08).

1.2 Mistakes and Errors

In language learning or acquisition, "mistake" and "error" refer to different linguistic inaccuracies or deviations from the target language. It is essential and valuable to distinguish between them here. Mistakes refer to performance errors due to slips or temporary breakdowns in language usage. These errors do not indicate a lack of language competence but rather a momentary lapse. Proficient language users can often recognize and correct their own mistakes. At the same time, errors in language learning are deviations from the grammar and rules of the target language. These errors reflect the learner's competence level, not mere slips or temporary lapses. (D. Brown, 2014, p. 249).

Similarly, R. Prace (2012) states that memory lapses and various psychological factors cause mistakes. They happen accidentally and, as such, are not systemic and are not part of interlanguage. Errors are systemic signs of incomplete knowledge, not just a mere slip of the tongue (R. Prace, 2012, p. 64).

According to Corder (1967, p.10-11), mistakes in language learning are not significant in acquiring a language. Distinguishing between mistakes and errors poses a challenge and requires a more sophisticated analysis of errors (Harvey-Thompson, Adam et al. (2018). Errors, in any case, hold significance in three ways. Firstly, errors provide valuable information to the teacher regarding the learner's progress toward the learning goal. By systematically analyzing errors, the teacher can assess what areas the learner still needs to work on. Secondly, errors serve as evidence for researchers studying language acquisition. They provide insights into how language is learned and the strategies or processes employed by learners in their language discovery. Lastly, errors are indispensable for the learner. Making errors is a mechanism the learner uses to learn. It allows the learner to test their hypotheses about the language they are acquiring.

Additionally, Corder (1967) proposed that mistakes can be classified into two types: performance mistakes and errors. Performance mistakes refer to errors made at the performance level, which can be attributed to factors such as lack of attention, fatigue, carelessness, or physical limitations. These mistakes could be more regular and consistent. In contrast, errors are committed at the competence level, indicating a lack of complete knowledge or understanding of language rules. These errors result from linguistic reasons and are consistent and regular. A mistake generally refers to a deviation from the norm in any language. The cause behind the production of the deviated language form determines the distinction between mistakes and errors. It is considered a mistake if a learner produces a shifted form for non-linguistic reasons.

Nevertheless, if the learner makes a deviated form of language due to a lack of linguistic knowledge, it is

categorized as an error. In comparison, mistakes occur when factors such as lack of attention, fatigue, heavy drinking, carelessness, or physical defects influence language production. They are not directly related to linguistic knowledge or understanding. Errors arise from incomplete knowledge of the rules of language. It is considered an error when learners produce a deviated form because they need linguistic knowledge or understanding. Corder (1974, p. 123), native speakers of any language perceive errors as occurring at the competence level, indicating a lack of linguistic knowledge. At the same time, mistakes are associated with the performance level. Linguistic reasons characterize errors, such as an incomplete understanding of language rules. Furthermore, it is observed that errors tend to be regular and consistent. Errors occur frequently because learners are unable to correct themselves. Unlike mistakes, which may arise from temporary factors like attention lapses, errors persist due to a lack of knowledge or knowledge of the language.

1.3 Types of Errors

According to Corder (1973), errors are classified into two levels: at the superficial level, which ranks into subcategories such as omission (dropping necessary items), addition (including unnecessary elements), substitution (using one piece instead of another), and disordering (breaking the proper order) and at the deeper level can be made the sub-types such as orthographic, phonological, morphological, syntactic, and pragmatic (Corder (1973: 277).

Likewise, D. Brown. (2014:251-252) classified the errors into four main categories, namely, overt and covert error (ungrammatical and grammatically correct), global and local error (form and context), the error of addition, omission, substitution, and permutation, and levels and domain of language which sub-type errors into phonology, orthography, lexicon, grammar, or discourse. In addition, errors can also be categorized into three main types of errors: overgeneralization (occurring when learners apply a grammatical structure from one context to another where it does not belong), ignorance of rule restrictions (happening when learners produce incorrect output by not fully applying a language rule or making mistakes in its application) and false concepts hypothesized (arising due to a lack of linguistic knowledge during language learning) (Richart, 1971 cited in Malaki, 2020, p. 332).

Similarly, errors made by language learners are categorized into two types: performance errors (occurring when learners make mistakes due to external factors, such as being tired or in a hurry) and competence errors (temporary and do not necessarily indicate a lack of language proficiency). So, these learner errors can encompass various language components, including phonological, morphological, lexical, and syntactic aspects, pronunciation and sounds (phonological), word formation and inflections (morphological), vocabulary (linguistic), and grammar and sentence structure (syntactic). (H. Y. Touchie, 1986, p. 76-77).

Furthermore, Muthanna (2014) classified the errors into three main categories: phonological substitutions (subcategories: perseveration, feature substitutions, anticipation, metathesis, and sound change errors), lexical selection errors (subcategories: lexical selection errors, blends, malapropism, classical, morpheme stranding, spoonerism, substitution, exchange, addition, and word exchange errors) and morphological errors (subclasses: morpheme-exchange errors, deletion, omission, and shift) (Muthanna,2014: p. 54, cited in Clark & Clark 1977). Likewise, Trevor A. Harley (December 2006) offered two main parts in the classification of errors like spoonerism, where the initial consonants of words are exchanged, and malapropism.

Literature Review

This paper will comprehensively review numerous applied linguistic and linguistic research studies. This review will mainly focus on first-language and second-language acquisition of morphological errors made by learners in different contexts. The primary goal is to discuss and delve into the significant findings obtained from these studies. E. Serat and M. Aparici (2001) studied morphological errors in early language acquisition by children from Catalan and Spanish backgrounds. The data included video recordings of ten children, each lasting around 60 minutes. The researchers discovered that the most common morphological errors made during first language acquisition were related to verb agreement and tense.

Likewise, F. Z. El Malaki (2020) conducted a study on the impact of morphological errors on ESL engineering students' writing in second language learning. Moroccan EFL learners commonly commit morphological errors, such as overgeneralizing regular past tense rules, rule misuse, and interference from their native language. Additionally, S. Mahmood, M. Sanaullah Aolakh, and A. Mujtaba (2020) also examined the morphological errors in the written texts committed by high school Pakistani ESL Students (second language acquisition). The results

revealed that the ESL student faces morphological errors in the case of inflectional morphology, especially in nouns, verbs, and prepositions. Further error findings were committed on omission, substitution, and permutation. Likeness, S. Basirah Zaid, R. Ab. Rashid, N. Jijidiana Azmi, & S. Sarah Yusri (2016) studied morphological errors in young ESL learning writing. The dataset consisted of written texts from 34 students. The result points out that students face difficulties and misconceptions of the rules and concepts of morphology in their writing, and the main cause of errors is intralingual factors, where students overgeneralize grammar rules from their native language into the second language.

Besides, Yulia Rahmatika, S. Pd (2021) investigated the morphological errors made by students of SMP Negeri Batanghari in writing recount text. Based on this study, the researcher found four types of errors: omission errors, addition errors, misformation errors, and misordering errors. In the same way, Silvina Montrul (2011) studies morphological errors in Spanish second language learners and heritage speaking. The result revealed that the postpuberty second language learner often omits or uses the wrong affix in nominal and verbal inflection in speaking rather than writing. On the other hand, morphological variability is also a feature of heritage speakers who were exposed to family language naturally in early childhood but failed to acquire age-appropriate linguistic competence.

Similarly, J. K. Kabbellow, D. N. Rwito, and A. Matere (2015) examine the morphological errors in secondary students writing texts by finding how these errors affect the quality of learner writing. In this research, the result found that morphological errors affect learners' quality of writing because they used present tenses the most where the past tense should have been used. In addition, they often added past tense markers to an infinite. In contrast, they face challenges with affixation, prefixation, and wrong plural formation in their writing.

Prior research has primarily focused on identifying morphological errors in language acquisition, encompassing both written and spoken contexts. However, it is worth noting that there has been limited investigation into morphological errors, specifically in children's first language acquisition. To fill this gap in the literature, the present study aims to examine and elucidate the morphological errors encountered by the Cambodian child in first language acquisition at the age of two and a half years old.

2.1 Objective of the study

The Objective of studying a case of morphological errors made by a Cambodian child in first language acquisition at the age of two and half years old is to investigate and analyze the errors committed by the Cambodian child while acquiring their mother tongue in the early childhood of language development. The study aims to identify and classify the patterns and causes of morphological errors that occur in the child's speech and to gain insights into the stages of language development in Cambodian children. Precisely, the study may aim to achieve the following objectives:

- To examine the morphological errors made by the Cambodian child in first language acquisition at the age of two and a half years old.
- To identify and classify the types and frequency of morphological errors the Cambodian child made in first language acquisition at the age of two and a half years old.
- To determine the cause of morphological errors made by the Cambodian child in first language acquisition at the age of two and a half years old.
- To better understand how children acquire morphological rules in their first language and reduce the morphological errors among Cambodian children developing their first language at the age of two and a half years old.

2.2 Research questions

Indeed, there is a refined version of the logical questions that reflect the significance of the study more clearly:

1. What morphological errors does the Cambodian child make in the first language acquisition at two and a half years old?
2. What are the types and frequency of morphological errors the Cambodian child makes in first language acquisition during language development at the age of two and a half years old?
3. What are the factors causing the morphological errors committed by the Cambodian child in first language acquisition during language development at the age of two and a half years old?

3. Methodology

The research focuses on investigating morphological errors made by the Cambodian child in first language acquisition during the early stages of language development at the age of two and a half years old. This case study aims to gain insights into the developmental stages of morphological accuracy in the child's language acquisition journey.

3.1 Research Design

This study utilizes the mixed-methods case study design, incorporating both qualitative and quantitative approaches. In the qualitative phase, the focus lies on conducting an in-depth exploration of the morphological errors demonstrated by the Cambodian child in first language acquisition during the early stages of language development at the age of two and a half years old. Concurrently, quantitative methods are employed to translate collected data into numerical representations. The integration of these approaches aims to properly provide a comprehensive understanding of the child's linguistic development, especially the morphological development.

3.2 Participant

The central participant in this study is the Cambodian child. He lives in Phnom Penh, Cambodia country. He is two and a half years old. His nationality is Cambodian, and the official language is Khmer. The participant was chosen after he was at the age of two and a half years old and had not attended school. The participant was selected as a typical example of other children representing Cambodian children from the sameness of family living situation, especially Cambodian children who live in the city from the age of two-and-a-half years old. The participant of this study grew up in a family that maintains a moderate standard of living, and the parents did not have the opportunity for formal education during their childhood. Nowadays, they work for a garment factory in Cambodia. Because of their jobs at a garment factory, the parents are busy all day, causing the child to care for various family members like the grandmother, uncles, older sister, and other relatives. Under these caregivers, the child spends his days playing with a mobile phone most of the time and rarely speaks with people around him. As a result, these factors exactly affect the child's language exposure and the environment for learning during the first language development.

3.3 Data collection This study utilizes the observation method, divided into two distinct approaches: direct and indirect. The direct involves firsthand monitoring of the child's interactions in various settings, including the home, playground, and other environments. This strategy seeks to capture the organic and unscripted use of language as it naturally occurs. In contrast, the indirect entails gathering information through interviews with the child's parents, caregivers, older sister and persons around him. These interviews certainly provide valuable insights into the child's linguistic environment, exposure, and the overall dynamics of his language acquisition process. In addition, a direct procedure was conducted from September 2022 to December 2022, resulting in seven voice recordings and five instances of note-taking; an indirect procedure was carried out both before and after the direct approach phase, referred to as pre-observation and post-observation. However, the direct approach involves audio recording and note-taking techniques for recording and documentation purposes. These techniques interactions are transcribed into a written format using the IPA alphabet. This thorough procedure allows us to thoroughly examine the gathered data, making it easier to pinpoint any morphological errors in the child's language development.

3.4 Data analysis

In analyzing the data as scientific evidence for answering the research questions to identify and classify and find out the causes of morphological errors made by the Cambodian kid in first language acquisition at the age of two-and-a-half-years-old, the author will be analyzed in line with Corder (1973), Brown. (2014), Muthanna (2014) category of error analysis models which are, based on Corder & Brown, omission (dropping necessary items), addition (including unnecessary elements), substitution (using one piece instead of another), and disordering (breaking the proper order) and morphological errors, based on Muthanna, are morpheme-exchange errors, deletion, omission, and others). Then, the researcher used the surface strategy taxonomy to analyze and identify morphological errors in first language acquisition. As a result, the data was categorized into four error groups, then analyzed and described using percentages.

4. Findings and Results

In this section, we divide the study of morphological errors made by the Cambodian child in the first language acquisition at the age of two-and-a-half years old into the types of morphological errors, errors of omission, errors of addition, errors of reduplication, and errors of substitution. The following are studies of morphological errors made by a Cambodian kid at the age of two and a half years old.

4.1 Morphological errors

Morphology is the study of morphemes, the smallest significant unit of grammar. Morphemes are divided into two types: bound morphemes (derivational and inflectional), which cannot be uttered alone with meaning and free morphemes, which can be uttered alone with sense (S. Ramadan, 2015, p.25). In comparison, morphological errors are errors committed or formed when grammar's morphological aspect is tainted or misinformed (Basirah et al. Rashid, Jijidiana Azmi, and Sarah Yusri, 2016, p. 94). Additionally, morphology is a part of grammar that deals with the analysis of word structure (Trask, 1996, p.228), and it relates to how words are combined and how they fit together (Basirah et al. Rashid, Jijidiana Azmi and Sarah Yusri, 2016, p. 94). When first or second-language acquisitions wrongly apply these rules, they face morphological errors, even though they have prior knowledge of the rules. The following are the studies of types of morphological errors made by the Cambodian child in first language acquisition at the age of two-and-a-half years old

Table1
Types of morphological errors made by a Cambodian child

Morphological errors	Frequency of errors	Percentages of errors
Errors of omission	5	16.67%
Errors of Addition	4	13.33%
Errors of reduplication	11	36.67%
Errors of substitution	10	33.33%
Total	30	100%

Table 1 above indicates that a Cambodian child often encounters morphological errors in their first language acquisition at age two and a half. These errors encompass errors of omission, errors of addition, errors of reduplication, and errors of substitution. The statistical outcomes presented in the table illustrate the following proportions: The errors of omission occur 5 times, accounting for 16.67% of instances. The errors of addition happened 4 times, representing 13.33% of cases. The errors of reduplication are observed 11 times, constituting 36.67% of occurrences. The errors of substitution occur 10 times, making up 33.33% of instances. Upon analyzing the data, it becomes evident that the errors of reduplication exhibit the highest frequency of occurrence at 36.67%, while the errors of omission are the least frequent errors at 16.67%. Conversely, the errors of addition demonstrate a lower frequency (13.33%) than other errors in the child language development of first language acquisition at the age of two and a half years old. So, based on the data analysis, the total number of morphological errors made by the Cambodian kid at the age of two-and-a-half years old is 30.

4.2 Errors of Omission

Errors of omission refer to a mistake or failure that occurs when something important is left out or neglected, resulting in an incomplete or inaccurate representation or action from the speech. A. W. Rundassa (2021) defines errors of omission as a deviation in the usage that arises when learners leave out words or part of words (A. et al., 2021, p. 111). In the context of first language acquisition, errors of omission explain the errors or mistakes committed by the child when acquiring their native language. Specifically, it occurs when a linguistic element, such as a word, phrase, or grammatical structure, is not used or produced by the child, even though it would be expected based on their developmental stage and exposure to the language. The following are examples of errors of omission made by the Cambodian child in first language acquisition at the age of two and a half years old.

Table2
Example of the errors of omission made by a Cambodian child

Error	Reason	Example	Meaning
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Errors of Omission	of Leaving or missing some elements of linguistics should exist	Incorrect: ca:	Yes
		Correct: cah	
		Incorrect: ma:	Mother
		Correct: ma?	
		Incorrect: bac tes	Not
		Correct: m3n bac tes	
Incorrect: na:ke:	Who		
Correct: n3na:ke:			

In table 2, errors are committed in the first and second examples when a Cambodian child at the age of two-and-a-half years old omits the importance of final linguistic elements or final parts of a word that should exist in the speech. As the example above, the child says 'ca.' instead of 'cah' (which translates to 'yes' in English) and 'ma:' for 'ma?' (meaning 'mother'). Conversely, errors occur in the fourth and fifth when the child deletes the most necessary initial linguistic elements or the initial segments of a word that should also exist in the speech. For instance, the child consistently says 'bac tes' instead of 'm3n bac tes' (which translates to 'not...really' in English) and similarly 'na:ke:' for 'n3na:ke:' (meaning 'who'). So, we see that the kid omits the final part of a word (morpheme), such as -h and -ʔ, and the initial part of linguistic structure, like m3n- and n3- at the age of the early stages of language development by simplifying their language use or analogy with another morphological system which they adopted. Based on what child produce, these are factors that cause a child or children to commit morphological errors in their first language acquisition during the two-and-a-half-year-old. Generally, in the early stages of first language acquisition, children often simplify their speech by leaving out specific linguistic elements, especially those that are less analogous or more challenging to articulate. When their linguistic and morphological abilities progress, they gradually learn to incorporate the missing linguistic components and naturally adhere to their language is more intricate morphological patterns or rules.

4.3 Errors of Addition

In contrast, the error of addition refers to adding some linguistic elements that should not exist (P. Kusumawardhani, 2013, p. 67) to a word, phrase, or sentence into speech or word's structures. In first language acquisition, errors of addition are a linguistic phenomenon where a child adds extra-linguistic elements to a word. So, this is considered a developmental error that children make as they learn to produce language in the early stages of language development. The following are errors of addition made by a Cambodian kid in first language acquisition at the age of two and a half years old.

Table3
Example of the errors of addition made by a Cambodian child

Error	Reason	Example	Meaning
Error of addition	Adding some elements of linguistics should not exist or have	Incorrect: ʔa:p Pu:	Uncle
		Correct: Pu:	
		Incorrect: ce:teh	No
		Incorrect: teh	
		Incorrect: p3:p pu:	Uncle
		Correct: pu:	

In table 3, errors are faced when a Cambodian child at the age of two-and-a-half-year-old adds unnecessary linguistic elements to a word into their language skills during the first language acquisition at the early stages of language development. For instance, instead of simply saying "Pu:." (which translates to "uncle" in English), the child says "ʔa:p Pu:." Similarly, for the word "pu:," the child says "p3:p pu:." Thus, the Cambodian kid at the age of two-and-a-half-year-old always extra unnecessary linguistic elements such as "ʔa:p", "ce:", and "p3:" before the necessary linguistic

material of words like "pu:" and "teh" in language usage. Based on what the child says, these are factors that cause a child or children at the age of two-and-a-half years to face morphological errors during the early stages of language development.

Similarly, these examples reveal a common occurrence in early language development where children incorporate redundant elements into their speech. These errors are expected in the initial stages of language acquisition as children endeavour to generalize rules and patterns from the language they are exposed to. As they gain more exposure to accurate language usage, they tend to gradually correct these errors and adopt the appropriate ones. This process is a natural and anticipated part of language acquisition. It underscores how children actively learn and internalize the rules governing their native language. Over time, with increased linguistic input and practice, children will refine their language skills and align their speech more closely with the established linguistic norms. This progression exemplifies the dynamic nature of language acquisition and illustrates how children learn to navigate the intricacies of their native language.

4.4 Errors of Reduplication

In first language acquisition, the error of reduplication refers to children's mistakes when applying unnecessary morphology language usage reduplication patterns. These errors are expected during the early stages of language development and provide insights into how children learn the rules and patterns of their native language. The following are examples of errors of reduplication made by the Cambodian child in first language acquisition at the age of two and a half years old.

Table4
Example of the errors of reduplication made by a Cambodian child

Error	Reason	Example	Meaning
Error of reduplication	Repeating some elements of linguistics again and again	Incorrect: pa: pa: pa:	Father
		Correct: pa:	
		Incorrect: ɲamɲamɲam	Eat
		Correct: ɲam	
		Incorrect: mɜmmɜmmɜm	Drink
		Correct: mɜm	

In table 4, Errors occur when a Cambodian child at the age of two-and-a-half years old repetitively uses linguistic elements during the first language development. For example, instead of saying "pa:" (which translates to "father" in English), the child says "pa: pa: pa:." Similarly, for the word "ɲam" (meaning "eat" in English), the child says "ɲamɲamɲam," and for "mɜm" (translated as "drink"), the child says "mɜmmɜmmɜm." So, we see that the child repeats unnecessary linguistic material such as "pa: pa:", "ɲamɲam" and "mɜmmɜm" after necessary linguistic material into speech. Based on what the child says, these are factors that cause a child or children at the age of two-and-a-half years old to commit morphological errors in first language acquisition at the early stages of language development, especially their native language development.

On the other hand, these instances showcase the child's tendency to engage in reduplication, a natural aspect of language development. These errors of reduplication in the child's speech are a fundamental part of language acquisition. They provide valuable insights into the child's cognitive processes as they grapple with the intricate morphological rules of their native language. Children experiment with language structures and test patterns through these errors, gradually refining their linguistic abilities. On the other hand, this phenomenon is not unique to the specific language being studied; instead, it is a universal aspect of language development. As children grow and gain more exposure to their native language, they become more adept at navigating the complexities of linguistic rules, especially the complexities of morphological rules, and the frequency of these reduplication errors tends to diminish. Researchers often analyze these errors to comprehend better the stages of language acquisition and the underlying mechanisms children employ as they construct their understanding of their language's structure.

4.5 Errors of Substitution

In first language acquisition, errors of substitution likely refer to an error where a child substitutes linguistic elements for another in a word while learning or using their native language. This error can occur as children acquire the complex rules of how these linguistic materials combine to form addresses in language processing. The following are examples of substitution errors made by the Cambodian child in first language acquisition at the age of two and a half years old.

Table 5
Example of the errors of substitution made by a Cambodian child

Error	Reason	Example	Meaning
		Incorrect: ʔa:p ca:	
		Correct: ʔahca:	Good
		Incorrect: ca:p pi:	
		Correct: dɔp pi:	Number 12
Error of substitution	One segment or element of linguistics replaced by an intruder	Incorrect: choon	
		Correct: soon	Number zero
		Incorrect: ʔoʔkon	
		Correct: ʔɔ:kɔn	Thank
		Incorrect: sa:pu:	
		Correct: sɔphəi	Book

In table 5, Errors are faced when a Cambodian child at the age of two-and-a-half years old replaces or substitutes the linguistic elements with intruder elements to a word in the initial stages of their first language acquisition. For example, instead of saying "dɔp pi:" (which translates to "twelve" in English), a child might say "ca:p pi:." Similarly, for the word "soon" (meaning "zero" in English), the child might say "choon." Additionally, when encountering the word "sɔphəi" (meaning "book"), the child might produce "sa:pu:." Therefore, we see that the Cambodian child at the age of two-and-a-half-year-old change or substitute the initial word 'dɔp pi' to 'ca:p pi:', "soon" to choon and "sɔphəi" to "sa:pu:" by shift 'dɔ', 'soʔ', and "sɔ" to "ca:", "choʔ" and "sa:" in a word into speech. Based on what the child says, these factors cause the child or children to face morphological errors in first language acquisition at the age of two-and-a-half years. These substitution instances are a natural and expected part of a child's language development journey. They indicate the child's active interaction with the intricate rules of their language. Over time, as the child continues to be exposed to more language input and their cognitive abilities mature, these substitution errors typically decrease. As a result, the child gradually hones their understanding of the language's morphological rules and refines their linguistic capabilities.

5. Discussions

The result of this study shows that a two-and-a-half-year-old Cambodian kid made some morphological errors in the early stage of language acquisition while acquiring their mother tongue. The errors of reduplication were the most common errors that occurred in the child's language development. There were 11, equal to 36.67 % of the total errors, and this is considered too many because the frequency and percentage of it is higher than other errors committed by the Cambodian child at the age of two-and-a-half years old. This study found the cause of errors of reduplication when the child repeated the unnecessary linguistic elements to the same word repeatedly in the language usage. Moreover, we saw that a kid always reduplicated the final word while learning a first language, while the initial word did not. Suppose we count the number of reduplications in this study. In that case, we found that a two-and-a-half-year-old child can repeat the unnecessary linguistic material at least two or three times simultaneously. On the other hand, these errors occur because the child faces the difficulty of the complex morphological system of their native language during language development. Moreover, the child lacks awareness of the morphological rules, which is why child simplify their speech by analogy with another morphological system that they are familiar with or have already adopted.

Similarly, errors of substitution were the second most common errors made by a Cambodian kid in first language

acquisition at the age of two-and-a-half years old. There were 10, equal to 33.33% of the total errors, and this is considered second dominant because the frequency and percentage are not much different from the errors of reduplication above. In addition, the result showed the cause of errors when the child changed or substituted the necessary linguistic element for unnecessary linguistic materials to create a new word form. This study also found that the child changed essential linguistic features called phonemes to extreme linguistic elements only from the initial word. Still, if the word has two syllables, this error occurs in the first syllable of a word. In addition, we did not find this error at the end of words or syllables at all. In other words, this error occurred because the child committed the difficulty of their native language rules, especially grammatical and phonological rules. So, that is the reason child simplify their language usage by analogy with rules they have already learnt or acquired.

Besides, this study also identified five instances of errors of omission, accounting for approximately 16.67%, made by a Cambodian child during the process of first language acquisition at the age of two-and-a-half years old. These errors occur when the child fails to include a word's necessary linguistic features or parts. Notably, the errors of omission observed in this study indicated that the Cambodian child tends to omit both the final pieces of words and the initial words. Specifically, there were two instances of omission at the end of words and three cases at the beginning of words. Although Table 1 provides some examples, it only covers some topics of morphological errors. In summary, these errors of omission were found to be present across various contexts within words, occurring both at the beginning and end of words. These errors also can be attributed to the challenges children face when dealing with the intricacies of their native language rules, particularly in terms of morphological complexities, during language acquisition.

Furthermore, the study revealed instances of errors of addition made by a two-and-a-half-year-old Cambodian child during the process of first language acquisition. Specifically, four cases of such errors accounted for approximately 13.33% of the total errors observed. However, this percentage was considered relatively low compared to the study's frequency and rate of other errors. Also, the study consistently identified the underlying cause of these errors. They occurred when the child added unnecessary linguistic elements to words or parts of words. For example, the Cambodian child would include extra, non-essential elements before the intended words. Notably, this pattern was not observed at the end of words or syllables in the early stages of language development at the age of a two-and-a-half-year-old Cambodian child.

Conversely, no instances of this particular error type were found at the end of words or syllables during the initial phases of language development. These errors arise from the child's attempt to apply specific morphological rules they had become familiar with during language development. In essence, the child was analogizing complex morphological rules in a way that led to the erroneous additions, possibly due to their growing understanding of language structures.

Several recommendations can be made to address or mitigate the challenges and errors encountered by two-and-a-half-year-old children from uneducated families during the early stages of language development. Parents, in particular, should play a pivotal role in supporting their child's language progress, particularly in grasping linguistic rules encompassing phonology, morphology, syntax, and semantics. The family environment significantly contributes to the occurrence of morphological errors during a child's language-learning phase. Therefore, parents should focus more on their child's language acquisition process. They can achieve this by focusing on critical linguistic aspects and rules while interacting with their child.

Furthermore, school programs and educators also wield substantial influence over a child's language development and their tendency to make morphological errors. Schools and teachers are essential in providing guidance and correcting mistakes children encounter as they navigate the complexities of their native language. Schools should consider incorporating additional courses dedicated to fundamental morphology principles to enhance this process. This would provide students with a stronger foundation in understanding language structure. Simultaneously, teachers should amplify their emphasis on morphological rules, equipping them with the necessary knowledge and strategies to guide children through the intricacies of language learning effectively. In summary, a collaborative effort between parents, schools, and teachers is essential to address and minimize the morphological errors experienced by young children from less educated backgrounds. Enhancing parental involvement, modifying school programs, and empowering educators can create a more conducive environment for children to master the intricate language rules during their formative years.

6. Conclusions

The case study of morphological errors made by the Cambodian child in first language acquisition sought to identify the morphological errors, types and frequencies of morphological errors, and the cause of morphological error committed by the two-and-a-half-year-old Cambodian child. The data analysis about morphological errors demonstrated that the Cambodian child at the age of two-and-a-half years old committed four types of morphological errors in his language acquisition. There are errors of omission, errors of addition, errors of reduplication, and errors of substitution.

Additionally, the errors of omission have 5 (16.67%), the errors of addition have 4 (13.33%), the errors of reduplication have 11 (36.67%), and the errors of substitution have 10 (33.33%). Upon analyzing the data, it becomes evident that the errors of reduplication exhibit the highest frequency of occurrence at 36.67%, while the error of omission is the least frequent error at 16.67%. Moreover, the errors of addition demonstrate a lower frequency (13.33%) than other types of morphological errors during child language development in first language acquisition.

On the other hand, this study found that the cause of errors occurred when the child deleted essential linguistic materials that should exist from their speech, added, substituted and repeated unnecessary linguistic elements that should not exist from their vocabulary.

Acknowledging the limitation of this study, I certainly hope and believe that further studies regarding morphological errors made by Cambodian children in first language acquisition or their native language development during the early stages of childhood by comparing errors analysis between uneducated families and educated families. The study should be conducted by examining the analysis of morphological errors, the cause of morphological errors, and comparing morphological errors to determine the errors made by Cambodian children in their first language acquisition. The data can be collected through questionnaires and interviews with language users by future researchers to build upon these results.

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Appendix: List of abbreviation of words used in this study

- CLA = Child language acquisition
LAD = Language Acquisition Device
L1 = First language
L2 = Second language
SLA = Second language acquisition