Use, Errors, and Self-Perceptions of Thai EFL Learners with Conditional Sentences

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Abstract

Conditional sentences are difficult for EFL students to understand because of their complexity in both form and function. By analyzing the performances and opinions among EFL learners, the pedagogical contribution may be beneficial for both EFL students and teachers. The use, errors, and perceptions of Thai EFL students regarding conditional sentences were explored in this study. Instruments of the study included a chapter test, writing assignments, and an online survey. Data were analyzied by means of Google Form and AntConc software. The results of the test revealed that the participants performed best on the zero conditional type, while the first conditionals were used the most in their writing. Findings of the error analysis revealed that some difficulties in the use of tense were widely occurring such as using present progressive instead of present simple tense on the if-clause for zero type. Following that, the participants believed that the second conditionals were the most difficult, while the zero conditionals were the easiest.

Keywords: conditional sentences, use, errors, self-perceptions, Thai EFL learners

1. Introduction

1.1 Introducing the Problem

Required for constructing correct sentences, grammar is a crucial component in resolving problems or difficulties in understanding the English language, particularly when errors arise (Watson, 2006). This is also true when conditional clauses are used. Conditional sentences in English are an important grammatical characteristic that should be considered, especially by EFL students. Understanding its forms and functions is a critical component of users' performance (Tuan, 2012). That is because they help express things that may happen in the present or future. As a result, there are numerous reasons why a study of conditional sentence usage and errors should be conducted. Firstly, conditionals have long been regarded as a tough area of English for both teachers and students, according to experts and researchers (Celce-Murcia and Larsen-Freeman, 1999; Rdaat & Gardner, 2017; Hammadi, 2019). For some EFL learners, it can be perplexing and difficult at times (Hammadi, 2019). The second reason is that English conditionals are regarded as complicated on both cognitive and linguistic field. And they can transmit a variety of meanings through various forms (Celce-Murcia & Larsen-Freeman, 1999; Rdaat & Gardner, 2017). Another issue that EFL students may have with conditionals is that the structure is made up of two clauses (condition and result). Before being able to correctly build conditional sentences, learners must first comprehend some grammatical elements such as tense and aspect, modal verbs, and negation. According to the stated reasons related to the importance of a study of the use and errors of conditional sentence, the current study aims to investigate the use of conditional sentences, analyze conditional sentence errors, and survey opinions on the difficulty of conditional sentences among Thai EFL students in order to provide some useful suggestions on conditional sentence usage and errors for EFL learners.

1.2 Literature Review

1.2.1 The Definition of Conditional Sentences

Conditional sentences have numerous definitions. To begin, conditional sentences are those that present factual implications or hypothetical situations and their consequences (Saragi, 2016). Another definition is that the conditional sentences are those that are usually used to discuss the relationship between events and their consequences (Breiger & Sweeney, 2011). Furthermore, conditional sentences are used to describe an action and its outcomes (Coutlee et al., 2013). The study's final definition of conditional sentences is that they are sentences

that discuss a possible scenario that may or may not be true and describe what happens in that scenario (Kai, 2011). In this study, the conditional sentences are used to present the condition that has a chance to occur in the present and the future with its results.

1.2.2 Types of Conditional Sentences

Many scholars have defined the types of conditional sentences in different ways. To begin, Taylor (1997), as cited by Jacobsen (2018), classified conditional forms as factual, hypothetical, or counter-factual. Second, conditional sentences are classified as either real or unreal (Yule, 2017; Bland, 2003; Hewings, 2013; Wu, 2012). When the real conditional is divided into those that reveal some type of factual relationship and those that present a predictive relationship, the unreal conditionals are used to express extremely unlikely or hypothetical situations, as well as situations that are assumed to be contrary to known facts or counterfactual (Zhang, 2005). The conditional sentences were then classified by Declerck and Reed (2001) as actualization conditionals, inferential conditionals, and implicative conditionals. Furthermore, Ko (2013) classified conditionals as either present generic (factual), future predictive (close to factual), present counterfactual, past counterfactual, or mixed-time reference (counterfactual mixed). According to the types mentioned above, the conditional sentences are mainly classified based on their functions, forms, and tense patterns.

1.2.3 Functions of Conditional Sentences from Grammar Books

The functions of conditional sentences (only types 0, 1, and 2 are considered in this study) from some grammar books (Rogers et al., 2014; Herring, 2016; Folse et al., 2013; Macfarlane, 2013; Bland, 2003; Brieger & Sweeney, 2011; Yule, 2017) are shown below.

Table 1. Some functions of conditional sentences from grammar books

Book name	Type 0	Type 1	Type 2
openMind Level 2 (Rogers et al., 2014)	To talk about things that are usually true	To talk about things that can happen	To talk about situations that are unreal in the present or future
Complete English grammar rules (Herring, 2016)	To talk about something that is always or generally true	To talk about something that is a probable future result of a condition	To talk about a hypothetical situation that can't happen or is unlikely to happen
Clear Grammar 4 (Folse et al., 2013)	To talk about factual	To talk about certainty, prediction for the future	To give some advice, suggestion, warning for the future
English Practice Grammar (Macfarlane, 2013)	To express things which always happen	To talk about a probable future action or condition	To express unreal situations that are either not possible or not probable
Grammar Sense 3 (Bland, 2003)	To express results that the speaker is certain of, kinds of routines, habits, facts, general truth	To express possible result, predictions with varying degrees of certainty, promises	To express different degrees of certainty, ask for permission, give advice or opinion, express imaginary situations
Business Grammar & Practice (Brieger & Sweeney, 2011)	To indicate that the consequence always follows the event	To see the consequence as a remote possibility	To recognize that the consequence is an impossibility, i.e., can't be fulfilled
Oxford Practice Grammar (Yule, 2017)	To express rules, habits, and correlations e.g., scientific observations	To describe possibilities, express plans and predictions	To describe imaginary or fictional situations, express willingness to do something, despite lack of ability

1.2.4 Forms of Conditional Sentence

The following are general forms of conditional sentences. However, only type zero, first, and second would be investigated in the present study.

Table 2. Forms of conditional sentences

Type	Conditional	Result
Zero	If + present simple,	Present simple
First	If + present simple,	Modal verb (present or past) + infinitive
Second	If + past simple,	Modal verb (past form) + infinitive
Third	If + past perfect,	Modal verb (past form) + have + past participle

1.2.5 Tense Patterns of Conditional Sentences (Wu, 2012)

The patterns of the tense of conditional sentences are another issue to be considered. That is because the learners can notice and classify the different types of the type, form, and meaning of each pattern. They are shown below.

Table 3. Tense patterns of conditional sentences

Type	Form	Meaning
Present real conditional	If+present simple, present simple	If I have time, I study English.
Past real conditional	If+past simple, past simple	Sometimes I had time.
Future real conditional	If+present simple, will+V.1	I don't know if I will have time or not
Present unreal conditional	If+past simple, would/might/could+V.1	I don't have time.
Past unreal conditional	If+past perfect, would have+V.3	I didn't have time.
Future unreal conditional	If+past simple, would+V.1	I won't have time.

1.2.6 Previous Studies on the Use of Conditional Sentences

Many scholars have studied the use of conditional sentences from various perspectives. To begin, by focusing on acquisition, Ko (2013) investigated the acquisition of conditional sentences by L2 English students with two different L1. The results suggested that if-conditionals with lower hypotheticality are acquired before than those with higher hypotheticaliy by L2 learners and hierarchies of input frequencies best explain the acquisition order of if-conditionals. And, although there were no differences in the acquisition order of if-conditionals between the two groups of learners with different L1 background, the influence of L1 was also found in the analysis of non-target forms produced by learner participants. Second, Rdaat and Gardner (2017) investigated the use of conditional sentences by Arab students of English in semantic and syntactic situations by focusing on both semantic and syntactic aspects. According to the findings, the use of type three conditionals and modality are the most difficult issues for students to understand and apply. Finally, Nur (2017) examined the aspects of conditional sentences that cause difficulties for EFL learners. The result revealed that there was no fixed hierarchical order of difficulty among conditional sentences under investigation. Moreover, it appeared that the students did not have any problem comprehending all the three types, but they had problems in producing grammatically correct conditional sentences. The second aspect analyzed was the positive and negative conditional sentences. The investigation showed that the negative conditional sentences caused significantly more problems to the learners (i.e., affected both their receptive and productive skill) than the positive ones. The third aspect under investigation was the involvement of the first and/or the second person. The finding showed that the presence of the first and/or the second person in the conditional sentences could significantly promote learners' receptive and productive skill. The fourth aspect was the position of the if clause, be it in the initial or the final position. The result showed that the position of the if clause did not significantly affect learners' receptive and productive skill. The last aspect under study was the location of the information, be it in the main clause or in the if clause. The result showed that the conditional sentence was significantly easier to comprehend when information was in the main clause than when it was in the if clause.

1.2.7 Previous Studies on the Errors of Conditional Sentences

Many scholars have investigated the errors made by EFL learners when using conditional sentences. Kristina et al. (2020) identified and clarified the types of errors, as well as the factors that contribute to errors in the use of conditional sentences. According to the errors classified by Dulay et al., the omission is the most common finding, followed by addition, misformation, and misordering (1982). Furthermore, the discovered error factors

are primarily intralingual, such as incomplete knowledge of verb forms, incomplete application of rules, and false concept hypothesis. Kustianah and Wibowo (2020) investigated student mistakes in using conditional sentences and included all cases in conditional sentences. The findings also revealed that the errors are caused by carelessness, the use of a first language, translation, the learning facility (e.g., textbook, method of teaching), and the students themselves. Finally, the participants' error types were additional, misordering, substitution, and omission. Katip and Gampper (2016) investigated the error analysis of conditional sentence usage among Thai high school students. The findings revealed that most participants misapplied the subject-verb agreement in Factual Conditional; the present simple tense in Future Predictive in conjunction with Present Counterfactual; and the future simple tense in Past Counterfactual.

1.2.8 Previous Studies on the Opinions toward the Use of Conditional Sentences

Tuan (2012) investigated the difficulties that EFL students faced while learning English conditional structures in Vietnam. The findings revealed that students' grammar knowledge is still an issue that must be addressed. And L1 had a significant impact on their acquisition of English conditional structures.

According to the previous studies, there are few papers that have been investigated on the use and errors of conditional sentences among EFL learners. This is the reason why the current study could be conducted for exploring the answers to the followed research questions.

1.3 Research Questions

The following questions will be explored from this study.

1) How are the conditional sentences used among Thai EFL learners?

2) What are the errors of using conditional sentences among Thai EFL learners?

3) What are the perceptions toward the use of conditional sentences among Thai EFL learners?

2. Method

2.1 Participants

Classified by their English score from the Ordinary National Educational Test (ONET) submitting to the university, the study's participants are 386 Thai university first year students who enrolled in the academic year 2021 in a fundamental English course called "English for University Life." Randomly selected, they are non-English majors who must complete the required English courses.

2.2 Instruments

The following instruments were used in the current study: a chapter test (gap-filling), a writing assignment, and an online survey. The following is a detailed explanation of all three instruments.

First, the chapter test is designed to assess comprehension of conditional sentences of types 0, 1, and 2 based on the course book content. It means that the learners were not introduced to type 3. This is the reason why the present study focused on the use and error of types 0, 1, and 2. The test contains six items for each type that are designed to assess learners' comprehension of both conditional and result clauses. The following are the test questions:

For Zero Conditional

1) I like pizzas when they ………. lots of mushrooms.

2) Let me know if you ………. any questions?

3) Ice melts when you ………. it in your hand.

4) I feel happy when you ………. here.

5) When students ………. hard, they do well at school.

6) If I ………. a mistake, I say sorry.

For First Conditional

7) We ………. out if we don't find anything in the fridge.

8) If I miss the flight, I ………. arrive home on time.

9) If I ………. this dress, I won't have much money left.

10) If my mom ………. I can't go out, I'll be really upset.

11) Your parents won't be happy if you ………. your exam.

12) If Messi ………., Barcelona won't win the game.

For Second Conditional

13) If I ………. a lot of money, I ………. a new house.

14) Where ………. you ………. if you won the lottery?

15) I'm sure Sophie would help us if we ………. her.

16) What would you say if I ……… you I was leaving?

17) If I ………. you, I would split up with him.

18) If I ………. a million dollars, I'd buy a big house in the country.

Second, the writing assignment is given to let students practice the use of the conditional. The students are instructed to write a paragraph about their favourite tourist attractions using at least two conditional sentences (type zero, first or second). The length is approximately one A4 page.

Finally, an online survey was distributed to investigate students' perceptions of difficulty toward conditional sentences. There are only two basic questions asked to determine which type is the most difficult and which is the easiest to understand, along with some reasons to back up their answers.

2.3 Data Collection Procedures

Stage 1: Chapter test

After lecturing, practicing, and reviewing the chapter, the learners were given the chapter test. It is presented in the form of a gap-filling exercise. The test takers had an hour to complete 40 online items, including grammar and vocabulary.

Stage 2: Writing assignment

The writing assignment is a paragraph about the learner's favorite tourist attraction. This task's special instruction is that students include at least two conditional sentences (type zero, one, or two) in the task. The deadline for this task was set at about a week so that the students would have enough time to create their stories while also reviewing conditional sentences in all of their forms and functions so that they could use the correct type in their writing.

Stage 3: Online survey

This section was created to honestly survey the learners' feelings about conditional sentences. There are two basic questions that ask the learners which type is the most difficult and which is the easiest. It was made available online due to the Covid-19 pandemic. And the students must complete the online interview within a week of its release.

2.4 Data Analysis

Stage 1: Chapter test

The data obtained from the chapter test was descriptively analyzed by the function that generates the test score of the Google Form to show the correct and false answers, as well as their percentage of finding, and was presented through Google Form, which is a survey administration software that can create a quiz and survey. The primary data obtained from the software was then manually generated to investigate the usage and errors among Thai EFL learners when they did a test of conditional sentences.

Stage 2: Writing assignment

After collecting all participants' writing assignments (paragraph writing), the conditional sentences were chosen from each assignment using AntConc software and a manual check to collect only the conditional sentences that appeared on the tasks. The stated conditional sentences were then divided into three types: zero, first, and second. Finally, the generated data was examined for usage and errors made by the students.

Stage 3: Online survey

The online survey data was analyzed qualitatively by counting all comments from learners in order to present the genuine data obtained from all participants. The obtained online survey data was then transcribed, coded, and categorized to determine the learners' usage.

3. Results

3.1 The Use of Conditional Sentences among Thai EFL Students

3.1.1 Results from the Chapter Test

Table 4. The percentage of correct answers from the chapter test

The percentage of correct answers (N=386)							
Type	**Item 1**	**Item 2**	**Item 3**	**Item 4**	**Item 5**	**Item 6**	**Average**
Zero	72.8%	83.2%	91.7%	56%	76.2%	75.1%	75.8%
First	67.4%	63.7%	75.1%	58.8%	70.7%	76.4%	68.68%
Second	73.1%	56.2%	55.2%	67.4%	69.4%	60.4%	63.61%

Table 4 shows the percentage of correct answers discovered during the chapter test. Based on the results of the conditional sentence chapter test (gap-filling), Thai EFL learners' ability to use conditional sentences (types 0, 1, and 2) was that type 0 > type 1 > type 2. It implied that the participants in this study can use conditionals effectively in real situations (type 0), possible situations (type 1), and unreal situations (type 2), respectively.

3.1.2 Results from the Writing Assignment (N=147)

Table 5. Results from the writing assignment

Type	Number of usage	Functions of conditional use
Zero	56	to talk about a general truth, to recommend, to give some information or to inform something, use imperative to issue a suggestion or command, to suggest or advise, to share an opinion, to express feeling, to instruct, to promise
First	90	to show that the result is likely to happen, to show ability, to suggest, to recommend, to give an opinion, to inform, to show intention, to tell the truth
Second	1	to assume

According to Table 5, the most common functions for using type zero and type one were to inform, to recommend, to share, or to give an opinion, to discuss the truth, to suggest, or to advise. Thai EFL students, on the other hand, used each type for various functions. They used type zero, for example, to issue a command, express their feelings, instruct, and promise. Then they used type one to demonstrate that the conditional sentence's result was likely to occur, as well as to demonstrate ability and intention. Finally, they used type two to assume.

3.2 The Errors of Using Conditional Sentences among Thai EFL Students

3.2.1 Results from the Chapter Test

Table 6. The most incorrect answers from all six items of the zero conditional

Item	Answer incorrectly by using……...	Found in	Percentage
1	Past simple tense	If-clause	16.1%
2	Past simple tense	If-clause	6.2%
3	Future simple tense	If-clause	8.3%
4	Past simple tense	If-clause	26.4%
5	Past simple tense	If-clause	11.7%
6	Past simple tense	If-clause	15%

Table 6 showed that Thai EFL students used past simple instead of present simple on the if-clause in type zero. It implied that understanding tense patterns is important in using the correct conditional sentences.

Table 7. The most incorrect answers from all six items of the first conditional

Item	Answer incorrectly by using……....	Found in	Percentage
1	Present simple tense	Result clause	20.7%
2	Present simple tense	Result clause	17.1%
3	Past simple tense	If-clause	13.5%
4	Subject + Verb agreement	If-clause	32.4%
5	Past simple tense	If-clause	18.1%
6	Past simple tense	If-clause	17.9%

According to Table 7, the errors in the result clause were that Thai EFL learners used present simple tense instead of the correct form (modal verb + V.1), whereas in the if-clause there was use of past simple tense instead of present simple tense and misused of subject-verb agreement. The findings suggested that knowledge of tense patterns is important in using correct conditional sentences. In addition, Table 8 shows the most incorrect answers from the second conditional.

Table 8. The most incorrect answers from all six items of the second conditional

Item	Answer incorrectly by using……....	Found in	Percentage
1	Future simple tense	Result clause	16.8%
2	Present simple tense	Result clause	16.1%
3	Present simple tense	If-clause	34.5%
4	Present simple tense	If-clause	17.6%
5	*was* instead of *were*	If-clause	21.2%
6	Present simple tense	If-clause	27.5%

According to Table 8, the learners used present simple instead of past simple in the if-clause, whereas in the result clause, future simple tense and present simple tense were used instead of the past form of the modal verbs plus V.1. It implied that understanding tense patterns is important in using the correct conditional sentences.

3.2.2 Results from the Writing Assignment

Table 9. Errors found on using type zero

Error	Example
Use present progressive on the if-clause	When my family *is going* to a movie theatre, I will be happy.
Use "full stop" to separate the two clauses	For example, if you have a final exam. You will……
Use past simple instead of present simple on the if-clause	When I *exercised*, I *didn't* have to go out.
Omit verb on the if-clause	*When the spring*, the scent of flowers is evident.
Add up "modal verb"	When I *have to* go far away from home and come back here it's always the same.
Use V.ing instead of V.1	If you *going* to trip to Samutprakan is Afternoon Bangpu, ……..
Omit subject on the result clause	When I tried *just sit on the beach sip the Coca-Cola and chill*

The errors found in this section were misformation (used present progressive on the if-clause, put "full stop" to separate the two clauses, used past simple instead of present simple on the if-clause, and used V.ing instead of V.1), omission (omit verb on the if-clause, and omit subject on the result clause), and addition (add up "modal verb").

Table 10. Errors found on using the first conditional

Error	Example
Use "be going to" on the if-clause	If you are going for a run or *going to sit* and enjoy the view. You will have to go to Koh Loy.
Add "modal verb" on the if-clause	If I *could* go there again, I will take a picture form there.
Add "future continuous tense"	If there is no Covid-19 epidemic *I'll be meeting* my friends over there next month.
Use "present perfect" on the if-clause	You will definitely like it if you *have been* there.
Use "will" on the if-clause	Samut Prakarn Province is beautiful have developed gradually *if you will* tourism is not disappointment.
Use full stop to separate the clauses	If you have a final exam or a college entrance exam. You will go to make a wish or make a vow to pass the exam before the day of the test.
Add "to" after modal verb on the result clause	In Thailand, if we think of a city with beautiful old temples, beautiful place and beautiful culture. We *might to* think of the city that used to be the capital of Thailand.
Use V.ing instead of V.1	If you *starving* you must it here.
Use Present progressive instead of V.1	If you *are thinking* going to Buriram. I recommend you must eat Meatball in Buriram.
Omit V.to be on the if-clause	If I *(am)* bored, I will go to Dreamworld.
Use "that" to separate clauses instead of comma	If you want to get around *that* you can take a golf cart or rent a bicycle to see the view and the place.
Use "when" instead of "if"	Hopefully, when the new train lines open, it will ease the problem.

According to Dulay et al. (1982), the errors found in this section were misformation (used "be going to" on the if-clause, used "present perfect" on the if-clause, used "will" on the if-clause, used full stop to separate the clauses, used V.ing instead of V.1, used Present progressive instead of V.1, used "that" to separate clauses instead of a comma, and used "when" instead of "if"), addition (added "modal verb" on the if-clause, added "future continuous tense", and added "to" after modal verb on the result clause), and omission (omitted V.to be on the if-clause).

3.3 The Perceptions toward the Use of Conditional Sentences among Thai EFL Students

The third goal of this study is to poll participants on the difficulty of conditional sentences. The results from 21 Thai ELF learners who volunteered to share their ideas were as follows:

3.3.1 In Your Opinion, Which Type is the Most Difficult to Understand

First, according to the interviewees, the second conditional was the most difficult to understand (76.2 percent). The reasons why the second conditional was the most difficult to understand informed by the interviewees were the complexity of its form and function, lacking basic knowledge, facing difficulty of using the past form of verbs, and facing difficulty of using modal verbs, respectively. Second, referring to those who informed that the zero conditional was the most difficult type (14.3 percent) for them, their informed reasons were that they were confused about its usage (whether it should be type zero or type one), and they had a problem with its function. Finally, the participants informed that the first conditional was the least difficult conditional sentence (9.5 percent). The main reason for its difficulty was that they misunderstood its application (whether it should be type zero or type one).

3.3.2 In Your Opinion, Which Type is the Easiest to Understand

Firstly, type zero was the easiest for Thai EFL students to understand (71.4 percent). The main reasons given by the participants were that both form and function were simple; it was not complicated; they did not need to change the tense of the verb; they were not confused with its form; it was simple to remember; and simple to understand. Second, for different reasons, the first and second conditionals were reported at the same percentile

(14.3 percent). The main reason for supporting type one's ease was that it is not difficult due to its structure, whereas the main reason for supporting type two's ease was that it was simple to understand due to its function.

4. Discussion

4.1 Authentic Use vs Perception

According to the use of conditional sentences among Thai EFL learners in the current study, the results revealed that they had a better ability in using type zero rather than type first and type second. This result was in line with their perception of the easiest conditional type. There are many comments that support this outcome. Firstly, they stated that the form and function of zero conditionals were simple so that it was easy to understand. Another comment was that the learner needed not to worry about tense shifting when using zero conditionals. However, the test score implied that the second conditional was reported as the most problematic for the learners. This is in line with learners' perceptions. The core comments for declaring this type the most difficult were that its form and function were complicated to understand; they had limited knowledge in using the past form of the verbs; and they had a problem in using modal verbs.

4.2 Authentic Use vs Teaching Materials

Focusing on zero conditionals, the common function between authentic use from the students and those that appeared in the grammar books was that zero-conditional was used to talk about the truth. However, in the authentic use, the students used this type to recommend, to inform, to suggest or command, to express an opinion, to express feelings, and to promise.

In first conditionals, the common function between authentic use from the learners and those that found in grammar books was that the first conditional was used to talk about things that could happen. In contrast, in real usage, the students used this type to show ability, to suggest, to recommend, to give an opinion, to inform, to show intention, and even to tell the truth.

For second conditions, the only common function between authentic use from the students and those that appeared in grammar books was that second conditional was used to assume.

4.3 Error Analysis

The main problem found from the error analysis was that the students had difficulty in tense shifting. Referring to Tables 6, 7, and 8, it appears that they are confused in using tense on both if-clause and result-clause.

5. Conclusion

Because conditional sentences or if-clause sentences can be difficult for some EFL students, the current study investigated the usage, errors, and self-perception of Thai EFL students in order to recognize some useful update information on the stated issue. The participants were given a chapter test, writing assignment, and an online survey to answer the research questions. The findings revealed that: 1) when taking the test, participants performed better in using the zero conditional than the first and second conditionals. 2) When given writing assignments, they demonstrated a greater ability to use the first conditional than the zero and second conditionals. 3) Each type contained some clausal errors. The main cause of errors in the zero conditional was that participants used past simple tense instead of present simple tense in the conditional clause. The causes of the errors in the first conditional were that they used present simple tense instead of modal verb + V.1 in the result clause, whereas the main error in the second conditional was that they used past simple tense instead of present simple tense, as well as misusing subject-verb agreement. In the if-clause in the second conditional, the past simple tense was replaced by the present simple tense, as was the future simple tense. 4) In writing tasks, errors were made in two types of conditional. In the first conditional, the most common type of error was misformation, followed by omission and addition. However, the error of misordering was not discovered. In the second conditional, the most common errors were misformation, followed by addition and omission. However, the error of misordering has not been discovered. Furthermore, the students in the current study rarely used the second conditional when completing writing assignments. 5) The perception of the difficulty of using conditional sentences is that 5.1) the second conditional is the most difficult, followed by the zero and first conditionals. The participants reported that they struggled with the complexity of its forms and functions; they lacked grammatical knowledge; they struggled with using past forms of verbs; they struggled with using modal verbs; and they confused the usage. 5.2) the zero conditional was reported to be the easiest type, followed by the first and second conditionals for a variety of reasons, including the ease of each type's forms and functions, the lack of the need to change the pattern of the verbs, the lack of confusion with its forms, and the ease of each type's forms and functions.

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