Common English writing problems

1. Don’t overuse *play.* Children play with toys. Adults or college students don’t *play* with their friends. They *hang out* or *socialize* or *get together*, depending on the proper context. Adults *do,* however, *play* certain sports: basketball, baseball, soccer, etc. But while we play tennis, we do not play skiing or bowling. You need to learn about what goes with play on a case-by-case basis.
2. *Neighbors* and *Neighborhoods* are two very different things.
3. *Hardly* usually needs a friend.

“When I meet my friends, we *hardly* get together at my hometown.”

Sometimes it works with a verb (hardly working – I could hardly recognize …), but when used in a phrase as a modifier, it should be combined with an endpoint, especially in written English: “hardly ever,” “hardly any.”

1. Don’t use Korean words unnecessarily when writing in English (*Gyobomoongo)*, and never use them without explaining what they mean. ALWAYS ITALICIZE non-English words in English writing*: songpyeon, bibimbap, kimbap.*
2. Watch out for *could.* Don’t use it unless it’s necessary.
3. “Because of my mother’s efforts, I **could** be awakened to Korean earlier than other children.” “I **could** be friendly with books that way.” “While reading lots of books at home, I **could** learn different types of good sentences naturally.”

None of the above statements make clear whether the writer actually *did* anything. Just because he/she *could* doesn’t mean he/she *did.*

1. Be consistent, not creative with spelling Korean words/names. Use the standard spellings, use a standard reference of some kind or compare spellings with a web search (English language search engine).

Hankook University of Foreign Studies, Dae-Jeon, Dongdaemoon, Choosuk, Cheon Ahn.

1. “Quotations, quotations, quotations.”

Stop it!

“Stop it!”

*Stop it!*

And if you do have a reason to use quotes, “Use double quotes,” Bahk-Halberg suggests.

1. Confusing Parallel constructions – which way are we going?

“Usually I watch outside, listen to music and sleep in the train. But this time, I realized the discomfort of not sitting on the chair. even it was a little bit uncomfortable I met others during my trip,

One idea in one direction is usually better for comprehension, but if you need to combine more ideas in one sentence, make the connections clear with parallel structures. It usually helps to break ideas up into more than one sentence. Don’t combine more than two ideas in the same sentence until you become an expert. Cut sentences shorter.

My suggestion:

Usually, I relax and look at the scenery as I ride the train, listening to music, though I sometimes take a nap. This time, even though it was a bit uncomfortable, I met a lot of interesting people on my trip. Still, I certainly realized how uncomfortable it was to ride a long distance on the train without a seat.

Misused and dictionary words cause problems sometimes:

“ \_\_\_\_ is a successful person who all peoples like and admire. He **obtains** others’ hearts. He touches them. He has **effection** to others.”

“These days, many **perspectives** are required to be successful. Among those **perspectives**, some people think hard working is the most important aspect to success. …”

“To be successful in work, it is **prior** to work hard and ….”

“… in order to succeed, you need to have an attitude of becoming a real hard worker rather than to be a kind, **benign** person.”

“**Intimacy** is the most important character to English teacher. Then which person is a **intimate** teacher? ,,,”