**Chapter 3**

**Types of errors at the sentence level**

For many years, second language teachers who sought to prevent errors committed by language learners from occurring considered them as something undesirable (Touchie, 1986). However, in the twentieth century, this perspective started to change, looking at errors positively as a natural phenomenon in the process of second/ foreign language acquisition and learning. The new perspective of errors considers them as an index of development in the process of learning a language and a valuable witness identify student difficulties" (Ilani, 2016, p. 8).

Since then, they are seen as part of the language learner's journey and a device that can assist in the learning process since they provide evidence of the learner’s level in the target language (Gass and Selinker, 1984). According to Abisamra (2003), errors also contain valuable information on the learning strategies the learners employ in the process of second language learning. Corder (1967, 1971) distinguishes between mistakes and errors claiming that the former is a slip of a tongue that could be self-corrected. However, the latter is systematic, occur repeatedly and the learner is not aware of them. Hence, only the teacher or researcher would locate them (Gass & Selinker, 1994). Other researchers like Dulay and Burt (1974) also distinguish between local and global errors, claiming that local errors do not hinder communication and understanding the meaning of an utterance. In contrast, global errors are more serious since they interfere with communication and disrupt the meaning of utterances. While local errors include noun and verb inflections, and the use of articles, prepositions, and auxiliaries, global errors involve wrong word order in a sentence. Errors committed by language learners cover all language components: the phonological, the morphological, the lexical, and the syntactic.

Researchers in the field of applied linguistics usually distinguish between two types of errors: performance errors and competence errors. The former are not serious errors, and the latter are more serious. While performance errors made by learners when they are tired or hurried. With little efforts, language learners can overcome such type of errors. However, competence errors reflect inadequate learning which needs more than paying conscious attention to correct them. In this context, Gefen (1979) distinguished between mistakes and errors considering the former as lapses in performance and the latter because of inadequate competence. Richards and Schmidt (2002) add that second language learners make mistakes when they speak or write because of lack of attention, fatigue and carelessness. In this respect, with little attention from the second language learners, these mistakes can be self-corrected. In contrast, Richards and Schmidt (2002) add that in the context of second or foreign language, an error is the use of a linguistic item either a word or grammatical item in writing is regarded as incomplete or faulty a fluent or native speaker of a language; thus, it cannot be self-corrected.

Corder (1971) identify errors as overt and covert, which helps in analyzing learners’ utterances for idiosyncrasies. While the former are ungrammatical and superficially “ill-formed”, the latter are grammatically acceptable, superficially “well-formed”, but they do not convey the meaning that learners intended to deliver (p. 155). Lennon (1991) suggests classifying errors in two categories: domain and extent. While domain refers to dimensions of errors in the linguistic unit, from phoneme to discourse, extent refers to “the rank of linguistic unit that would have be deleted, replaced, supplied or reordered in order to repair a sentence (Brown, 2007, p. 263). He also claims that this distinction helps in operatizing Corder’s overt-covert distinction, providing analysis of an error that could be analyzed in the two dimensions: domain and extent. For example, the error “a scissors” falls in the two categories; while the phrase is an example of the domain, the indefinite article is the extent.

Brown (2007) provided subcategories to these two types of errors that cover four language components: phonology or orthography, semantic, grammar and discourse, mentioning that it is not easy to decide the right level of errors since some errors could be syntactic or lexical. According to Brown (2007), phonological errors refer to errors regarding the sound such as mispronunciations and misspellings, and orthography refers to errors in the written systems of the language like punctuation and typographic, that result from illegible handwriting. While semantic errors relate to the meaning of utterances and sentences including vocabulary, errors of grammar relate to syntactically acceptable or inacceptable syntactically errors including morphology. Discourse errors include two categories: pragmatic and receptive. Pragmatic errors occur when learners fail to express their meaning in the second or foreign language. Receptive errors refer to misunderstanding a meaning.

The term “Surface Structure Texts” (SST) refers to the ways surface structures are altered (Dulay, Burt and Krashen (1982) who describe them into four categories: a) omission, b) addition, c) misformation, and d) misordering. James (1998) adds blending as a fifth category. Omission occurs when a learner leaves off necessary items that must appear in a well-performed utterance like morphemes and inflections in nouns and verbs, the article, auxiliary verbs, and prepositions. In contrast, addition refers to the existence of items that should not appear in grammatical forms. While the third category, misformation, relates to the use of the wrong form of a structure of a morpheme, the fourth, disordering, refers to placing morphemes incorrectly in utterances like (He *is all the time* late .all the time is misordered.). Blending occurs when writers combine two grammatical alternatives to produce an ungrammatical blend.

Brown also classified language errors into four categories: addition, omission, substitution, and ordering. Addition occurs when the language user adds a language item such as a verb to be or auxiliary inappropriately. Adding the auxiliary *do* in the following interrogative sentence is an example of addition: “*Does John can sing*?” An example of omission appears in the utterance of “I went to movie”, where the definite article is omitted. “I lost my *road”* instead of “I lost my *way*” is as an illustration of substitution. The wrong word *road* in this context replaced the right word choice, *way*. Ordering errors refer to unacceptable word order as the following sentence, “I to the store went”. The writer reversed the word order of English from subject-verb-object to subject-object verb, placing the verb at the end of the sentence.

The inappropriate omission or addition of an article was the second error category. Omission of indefinite and definite articles occurs when ordering or ranking nouns and superlatives and when making generalizations about certain topics. Inappropriate addition happens when generalizing about countable and uncountable nouns in the texts. Run-on sentences and sentence fragments were also common in addition to problems in word choice and punctuation. In their attempts to connect ideas, the students' writing reflected confusion in using coordination and subordination since they are not distinguished in Arabic. Word formation is another source of confusion among students, especially morphologic derivations. Unlike Arabic, English lacks of a uniform system of adding derivations to roots. For example, In Arabic, when two people met, the morpheme “a-ا” is added to the stem verb “met-اجتمعا”. Similarly, the morpheme “"وا is added to the stem verb if more than two people participated in the meeting. Moreover, common sentence structure and errors in mechanic existed. Regarding mechanics, capitalization was mostly omitted, and excessive use of commas prevailed, ignoring other types of punctuation that do not exist in Arabic.

Many research studies were conducted in different parts of the world aiming at exploring the causes of errors in EFL writers, which revealed similar results. For example, Napitupulu (2017) analyzed the writing of 75-second year Indonesian university students from the Department of English Literature who studied grammar at the first semester at the university and several years in high school; despite that, they committed many errors. For data collection, the students were required to write a letter with a maximum of 90 words to a property agent expressing their desire of a specific they would like to purchase. The linguistic errors were analyzed and categorized as the following: grammatical, syntactic, substance (punctuation, spelling and capitalization), and lexical errors. The findings show that students committed 42.4% of grammatical errors, 26.7% of syntactic errors, 17.9% of substance errors, 13% of lexical errors. Based on that analysis, the researcher concluded that first language interference (interlingual) is the first main cause of committing errors by Indonesian students committed. Developmental interference (intralanguage) rank the second. Since students choose to rely on their mother tongue in expressing their ideas, they end up using improper word choices, wrong sentence structures besides committing errors in in punctuation, articles, subject-verb agreement, spelling, capitalization and fragment.

Similarly, Sermsook et. al (2017) conducted research with the purposes of diagnosing the language errors in a writing of English major students in a Thai university and indicating the sources of the errors. The results showed that the most frequently committed errors were punctuation, articles, subject-verb agreement, spelling, capitalization, and fragment, respectively. Four reasons were explored: Interlingual interference, intralingual interference, limited knowledge of English grammar and vocabulary, and carelessness of the students. Another study conducted by Na Phuket and Othman (2015) explored the major sources of errors and their types in the writing of EFL Thai students. The results revealed that interlangauge (native language interference) followed by intralinguale are the mostly frequent types of errors, which included word choice, verb tense, preposition, and comma.

In the last twenty years, investigating errors committed by Arab learners of writing in English has increased steadily. For example, Hourani (2008) conducted a study to explore the common types of grammatical errors made by Emirati secondary male students in their English essay writing. The most common and salient grammatical errors which were found in the 105 students essays included: passivization (65), verb tense and form (22%), subject-verb agreement (25%), word order (11%), prepositions (15%), articles (10%), plurality (8%) and auxiliaries (3%). Data analysis revealed that the UAE students make different types of grammatical errors, and most of these errors were due to intralingual transfer, which were more frequent than interlingual ones.

Almahameed Al-Shaihkli (2017) investigated salient syntactic and semantic errors made by Jordanian English foreign language learners as writing in English. Thirty Jordanian English foreign language learners participated in the study. They were required to write a composition of no more than one hundred and fifty words on a selected topic. The essays were collected and analyzed statistically. Syntactic as well as semantic errors were made by the participants which were attributed mainly to first language interference (interlanguage) and to developmental interference (intralingual). The syntactic errors included eleven types of errors: verb-tense, agreement, auxiliary, conjunctions, word order, resumptive pronouns, null-subject, double-subject, superlative, comparative and possessive pronouns. Verb tense errors were the most frequent amongst syntactic errors with 33%. In addition, results displayed two types of semantic errors: errors at sentence level and errors at word level. The latter outstripped the former, scoring respectively 82% and 18%. Moreover, comparative errors and errors in possessive pronouns were the least. The results made authors to conclude that knowledge of Jordanian learners of English syntax and semantics is still insufficient.

Another research conducted by Ababneh (2017), 50 female Saudi students in their fourth year of study at the University of Tabuk were required to write one page choosing one topic from the following three topics: effects of social media on Saudi social life, Saudi marriage customs, and Saudi economy. The errors were analyzed, classified into four categories: grammatical, syntactic, substance (spelling, capitalization and punctuation) and lexical types and counted. Findings reveal that most of the frequent errors were grammatical, mainly tenses, singular/plural and articles followed by syntax (subject-verb agreement), and substance (spelling). They also show that topic title has not any significant variation of the frequency of committed errors. The researcher attributes the sources of errors to the lack of practice in English language in terms of conversation and reading besides first language interference.

***3.1 Syntactic errors***

Syntactic errors include morphology and wrong word formation as well as errors of omission, misuse, or addition in the plural besides verb tenses, subject verb agreement, modal auxiliary, relative clauses, fragments (run on sentences- incomplete sentences) use of articles, prepositions, noun modifiers (The girls/ These girl…) and countable and non-countable nouns. The error category of verbs was the least performed. The verb system in English and Arabic is a complicated segment of the grammar. Examples of errors included use of verbs or omission of verb to do. In addition, Smith (2001) provided many examples of errors that Arabic learners of English commonly commit, which include mistakes in consonant clusters, word order, questions and negatives, auxiliaries, pronouns, time, tense and aspect, modal verbs, articles, etc. Regarding articles, he stated that ‘the indefinite article causes the most obvious problems as it is commonly omitted with singular and plural countable (p. 205). Ababneh (2017) adds that syntactic examples of errors include the following categories: word order, subject-verb agreement, and the use of the resumptive pronoun in English relative clauses, which is illustrated in the following sentence: The boy *that* I saw him is called Ali. This example indicates that Arab learners of English overgeneralize the resumptive pronoun in English using *that* for human beings instead of *who.*

Ahamed (2016) mentions other four sources of Arab students' lack of writing abilities: a. the tendency of using run on sentences, b. Arabish, c. writing punctuation, and d. organization. Arab students tend to translate Arabic into English, and when they do that, they sometimes use words that cause misunderstanding and confusion. "For example, a sentence like “Flu infection spreads by peace with hand” is grammatically correct but meaningless. The student means “Flue infection is caused by greetings and handshakes" (p. 193). Since the words, greetings and peace are of the same meaning in Arabic, the student wrote one instead of the other. Punctuation poses another difficulty to Arab learners of English language learners because in contrary to English Arabic has few limitations in the use of commas and periods. For instance, Arab students rarely use the semi-colon, and the exclamation marks in their writings

Abushihab (2014) investigated the grammatical mistakes committed by twenty second-year students at the Department of English Language learning English as a foreign language in Gazi University of Turkey, where they were required to write about the difficulties they face while learning English. The found grammatical errors were classified into five categories: errors in tenses, in the use of prepositions, in the use of articles, in the use of active and passive, and morphological errors. The results show that the participants made 179 grammatical errors of which 27 errors are in tenses, 50 errors in the use of prepositions,52 errors in the use of articles, 17 errors in the use of passive and active voice and 33 were morphological errors.

Alhaysony (2012) examined specifically the use of articles in the writing of 100 first-year Saudi female EFL students at the Department of English in the University of Hai’l in their use articles, based on the Surface Structure Taxonomies (SST) of errors, asking them to write about topics related to their life and culture choosing from given six different descriptive topics.   
The findings revealed that while omission errors, mainly the omission of the indefinite article “a” were the most frequent, substitutions were the least frequent. However, the omission of the indefinite article “an” was the least frequent error. The additions of the definite article “the” were the most frequent, which author attributes to the fact that the definite article “the” is commonly used in Arabic than in English. Alhaysony (2012) concludes that since the article system in English grammar is complex, claiming that even most advanced learners find difficulty in mastering it. Celce-Murcia and Larsen-Freeman (as cited in Al-Mohanna, 2014) attribute the problematic use of the article system partially to the correspondence of countable and uncountable nouns in the native and target languages, giving examples of both noun classifications. For instance, the words “furniture” and “equipment” are uncountable in both Arabic and English; however, “chalk” and “information” are countable in Arabic and uncountable in English. This mismatch may add to the complexity of the article system since learners have to learn it and other noun distinctions. Smith (2001) indicated many types of errors committed by Arab learners including articles, mentioning that “the indefinite article causes the most obvious problems as it is commonly omitted with singular and plural and plural countable nouns” (p. 205). The difficulty stems from the nonexistence of the indefinite article in Arabic, and the range of the definite article is different from English. Smith provided the following examples of the indefinite article omission by Arab learners of English: \**This is book. (for This is a book). \*He was soldier. \*There are a books. \*This is a rice.*

Following Smith’s discussion, the definite article exists in Arabic as a prefix (al). Similar to English, it is used to refer back to indefinite nouns that had been mentioned before and for unique references such as *the sun or on the floor*. He refers the problem of using the definite article to interference from Arabic generative construction as the following: John’s book (in English) Book John (in Arabic). In addition, Arab students tend to use the definite article where it is not used English like the following: *in bed, at dawn, on* *Thursday and for breakfast; \*At the sunset we made the camp. \*What would you like for the breakfast the* *Sunday?*

Bataineh and Bataineh (2005) identified and classified errors in the use of indefinite articles among Jordanian undergraduate EFL students, claiming that only the deletion of the indefinite article could be attributed to L1 interference. The study conducted by Almahameed and Al-Shaikhli (2017) investigates syntactic Jordanian EFL learners when writing a composition. The results show that learners committed eleven types of errors, which included verb-tense, agreement, auxiliary, conjunctions, word order, resumptive pronouns, null-subject, double-subject, superlative, comparative and possessive pronouns. 33% of the errors were verb tense, which were the most frequent ones. . Tense.

Al-Mohanna (2014) analyzed the compositions of four EFL groups Saudi-university levels, freshmen, sophomore, junior and senior. It aimed to identify the types of errors committed by Saudi students in the use of definite/indefinite articles. The findings suggest that the majority of errors made by the four groups are developmental that could be classified as overgeneralization and simplification. In addition, except two types of errors, which are the omission of the indefinite article “a, an” and the substitution of the definite article “the)” for the indefinite article “a, an or Ø”, all errors are not influenced by the subjects’ native language. Developmental errors such as overgeneralization and simplification of the English article system have been found the reason for committing the majority of errors. The results also reveal that there were significant differences in their performance in terms of using one item to another. In addition, the researcher concluded that the subjects’ errors decreased and their performance improved as they progressed.

Similar results were obtained by Gaibani (2015) who identified the types of errors committed by non-majoring Libyan undergraduate students at Omar AlMukhtar University. The results showed that the major sources of errors are intra-language, which means that they are a result of the lack of the learners’ knowledge about the target language besides the common learning processes like overgeneralization and simplification of the English article system. In addition, the learners' inter-language system, native language transfer, found to be responsible for the deletion of the indefinite article only. The researcher concluded that students’ level of English is a detrimental factor. In other words, if students lack competences in English and with weak skills are more likely to make errors in comparison to those who demonstrate competence in English language and have good skills.

Smith (2001) conducted another research study, which aimed to explore errors that Arabic learners of English might commit. He mentioned many types of errors including mistakes in consonant clusters, word order, questions and negatives, auxiliaries, pronouns, time, tense and aspect, modal verbs, articles, etc.

Al-Buainain (2007) also conducted a research study at Qatar University addressing the problems students have in their performance in the writing courses and mentioned different categories of errors committed by her Arab students such as inconsistency in the use of verb tenses, omissions, additions and other types that appear in the table below. Her data derived from 40 exam scripts of the 40 female Arab students who were majoring in English and attended the first writing course. The researcher used error analysis as a technique to analyze the students’ writing. Such analysis revealed a number of common errors that were classified to ten categories that include the researchers’ explanations.

#### Table 1 Al-Buainain’s (2007) classification

|  |  |  |
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| **Types** | **Samples** | **Explanations** |
| **Continuous Versus Simple Present Verb Tenses** | *\*They always shouting and open my room*.  *\* the good students are knowing the disadvantages*. | The students face a difficulty distinguishing the meanings of these tenses and knowing when to use the continuous and simple present tenses. |
| **Present/Past Perfect Versus Simple Present/past Verb Tense** | *\*I was very disappointed of what I have seen there and very annoyed of what I have found.*  *\*I have read an ad in the “Gulf Times” which has published.* | The following samples of errors show difficulty in understanding the notion of a frame of time. |
| **Omission/Addition of verb to be** | *\*So it is cost money.*  *I interested.* | The writers of the following sentences didn’t notice the importance of including a verb after the subject. It seems that they don’t realize the difference between Arabic sentences that has two types, sentences with verbs and others without verbs, and English ones which are described as subject-verb-object or complement, which means that verbs are part of the sentence structure. While it is acceptable in Arabic to have some sentences without a verb, this is not acceptable at all in English. |
| **Lack of Subject/Verb Agreement (Omission of 3rd person singular)** | *\*Their markets and shopping centres has ….*  *\*It give you ….* | These errors may occur due to simplification strategy and overgeneralization of the target Language rules. |
| **Modal Auxiliaries** | *\*Also the teachers were not enough experienced because they cannot control the students in the class.*  *\*In each group there was more than 20 students that you can not heard what the teacher said.*  *\*It’s might get problems.* | Some students had a difficulty forming verb phrases containing modal auxiliaries and choosing the correct modal auxiliaries that match their meaning |
| **Relative Clauses** | *\*I went to London where my friends live in.*  *\*I’m writing to complain about your school which I were there before 2 months ago.* | ESL students had difficulty constructing adjective clauses correctly. |
| **Articles** | *\*I think studying abroad is good thing.*  *\*In the fact […].*  *\*There was old woman and she was ill and weak.*  *\*When you study in such good well-known country with the high level of good education, you will be well qualified person.*  *\*We have good university in Qatar.* | The following samples show that the students had a difficulty deciding if a definite article is needed for a noun in a particular context. They also overuse the definite article “the”.  This showed that the students still hadn’t fully understand the concepts of definiteness and indefiniteness since the use of the definite article in Arabic differs from that of English. |
| **Fragments** | *\*May be see the young people so he want to be like them.*  *\*Although there are many advantages.*  *\*He couldn’t tell his daughter but after studying with himself.*  *\*I spend my time dreaming to study abroad in England or America but no longer.*  *\*When I arrived at school.*  *Most of the teachers here are qualified and such a wonderful* | These fragments show that the learners still are not fully aware of the need for writing complex sentences that constitute from an independent clause and a dependent clause. When they provide a cause, they do not mention the effect. |
| **Noun Modifiers** | \**This professors are helpful.*  *\*The beautifuls sunsets make Laguanda happy.* ***(This is the original spelling taken from the student’s Exam paper)***  *\*Other example of the disadvantages is the bad influence on one’s character.*  *\*The meals weren’t a healthy one.* | Some students did not always know that demonstrative adjectives must agree with nouns and that adjectives do not agree with plural nouns. |
| **Countable (Regualr and Irregular)/ Uncountable Nouns** | *\*The teacher gave me an advice.*  *\*Beside mens who study out there are a lot of girls or womens who study out.*  *\*There are many peoples who travel […]* | These samples of errors show that some students could not distinguish when nouns are countable and which are not and used the singular instead of the plural. They also overgeneralized the use of the plural in some cases. In addition, some errors of irregular plural might be a result to a lack of knowledge of the rule. |
| **Prepositions** | *\*Should be to the one who has expereince on his life.*  *\*[…] without knowing anything for the country.*  *\*[ …] to know the character of the people and how to react with them.*  *\*I saw your ad at the newspaper.*  *\*It also gives us more experience at our life.* | Most of the errors were due to the students’ lack of knowledge of the English prepositional system. |

Ridha (2012) examined English writing samples of 80 3rd year EFL Iraqi college students and categorized the errors as it follows: grammatical, lexical/ semantic, mechanics, and word order types of errors, believing that understanding linguistic differences between Arabic, the students' L1, and English, the target language, may help the learners to reduce interference from their first language. The participants were required to write an essay choosing on one of the three following different topics that each one belonged to a another genre: women rights as a sample of an argumentative essay, an orphan story as an example of a narrative essay, and the qualities of a good neighbor for a descriptive essay. The essays were ranged from one and a half to two single spaced pages in length. The classification of the interligual errors in this study included the following: grammatical errors, the mechanical errors, semantic/ lexical errors, and word order. The grammatical errors were analyzed at both word and sentence levels in relative to tense, singular /plural markers, prepositions, articles and pronouns. More than two thirds of the 1767 number of errors were interlingual, which their number was 1255 and were categorized as the following: 517 grammatical, 308 semantic/ lexical errors , 337 mechanical errors, mainly spelling, and 93 word order errors. Some of Ridah’s results overlap with Al-Bunain’s. To avoid including repeated data, the ones that had been mentioned by Al-Bunain are not included here.

#### Table 2- Ridah’s (2012) classification of errors

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| **Types and categories of errors** | **Samples** | **Negative transfer** |
| **Grammatical**:   1. **tenses** 2. **articles**   c. **pronouns**     1. **prepositions**   e. **singular & plural** | *\*They talking highly.*  \**The money is very important*  *\*After three years of marriage ,have been facing pressure from their family.*  *\*they were living from a small farm.*  \* *others stars were shining* | All of these mistakes stem from negative transfer.  Since there is no equivalent in Arabic to auxiliary verbs, such an error appears in their writing.  The definite article “al”, which is equivalent to “the” in English, is commonly used in Arabic. |
| **Word order**   1. **Subject/verb order** 2. **Adjective/ noun order** 3. **Possessive adjective/ noun order** | \**was the accident a disaster*  *\* I read many books difficult*  \**she leave the room of her flowers.* | Since it is acceptable in Arabic to start the sentence with a verb, such an error is committed.  Adjectives precede nouns in Arabic; therefore, some transfer the adjective-noun order in Arabic into English.  This error is a result of transferring the order of possessive adjectives and nouns in Arabic, which is the opposite order to English. |

Similar results appear in the compiled data of the error analysis of my students in writing courses for first year Arabic speaking students in the last 23 years, who were majoring in EFL. For data analysis in this section, the template of Abi Samara (2003) is adopted since it is comprehensive and includes all syntactic and semantic problems.

***3.1.1 Verb tenses***

All the following sentences are taken from the compiled data of first year students. In the first category, the students showed a lack of consistency in terms of verb tenses. It is not uncommon among Arabic speaking learners of English to narrate a personal experience writing about an event happened in the past using the past tense and vice versa. While the first verb in the first two sentences is in the past, the second verb is in the present. However, the third sentence started with a verb in the present tense and continued in the past simple.

**Table 3- Samples of my students’ verb errors**

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| **Sources of errors** | **Examples** |
| **Present simple: Omission the ‘s’** | Every person in his crisis ***need*** help from others. ***(needs)***  I think that everybody ***need*** your help as you need ***there*** help. |
| **Past simple versus simple present verb tenses** | 1. I was the person who ***take*** the first bite and it was the worst cake I had ever eaten. **(*took*)** 2. For example, when I had a bad day at work, no one ***notice*** me, but she does. ***(noticed)*** 3. I hardly ***hold*** myself and luckily I didn’t laugh because our boss was furious. ***(held)*** 4. As always happens when two or more attitudes ***contradict***, a huge competition occurred in the teaching field between online courses and orthodox methods. ***(contradicted)*** 5. I ***try*** everything to change him ***but for nothing***. So please if anyone knows a solution for this problem let me know. ***(tried)*** 6. I have three goals that I want to achieve when ***I'm*** older. ***(will be)*** 7. The white uniform, that gave me a feeling that I am able to help other. ***(fit me well)*** |
| **Present/Past Perfect Versus Simple Present/past Verb Tense** | 1. Her kindness is so special that I ***never met*** someone like her before. ***(have never met)*** 2. Students who are deciding to learn abroad in countries such as: Ukraine, Italy, and Germany have many consequences which ***prevents*** them to study inland. ***(prevent)*** 3. My aunt Dina is the most forgetful***that I ever know****.* ***(have ever known)*** 4. Recently, smoking has increased among teenagers, which ***lead*** to negative effects on their life. ***(leads)*** |

* + 1. ***Omission of verb to be and verbs***

In the first two examples, the writers not only didn’t use the verb to be “is” as it is required and to be placed after the subject. In the third sentence, the verb took place should have followed the first noun phrase that functions as the subject of the sentence. Similarly, the fourth example lacks the verb to be and the relative clause (that). The verb to be should come after the noun phrase (another example) which is also the subject of the sentence. In addition, the relative clause that links between the two subjects in the sentence. Examples (5), (6) and (7) lack not only the verb to be, but also the complement that provides information about the subject. The following examples indicate first language interference because there are two types of sentences in Arabic; one type includes a verb and another does not. Therefore, it is acceptable in Arabic to have a sentence without a verb.

**Table 4- Students’ samples of omission of verb to be and verbs**

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| **Source of errors** | **Examples** |
| **Omission of verb to be and verbs** | 1. Mahmoud now studying in Canada***(is)*** 2. For example, meat usually colored and flavored with preservatives*.* ***(is)*** 3. Another annoying behavior***,*** last month I went to grocery shopping. ***(took place)*** 4. Another example, my sister is a social person. (***Another example is that***) 5. For example, learning new words and phrases I need for bringing my English into a higher level.***(is and a complement)*** 6. Second, being aware of everything new.***(is and a complement)*** 7. Last, expressing your opinion. ***(is and a complement)*** 8. For example, headache, back pain, neck pain, and poor vision. (***The sentence lacks a verb and a*** ***compliment.)*** 9. Although everything in their city is modern such as clothes, houses market, but ***they*** still different. |

***3.1.3 Subject-verb agreement (Omission of 3rd person singular)***

The following three sentences are examples of the lack of subject-verb-agreement, where the subject is singular and the verb tense is present. In this case, the verb should end with “s”, “es” or “ies”. The students here omitted the “s” at the end of the verb. Interlingual and intralingual interference could be the causes for such errors. Since there is no inflections of verbs, the students do not see the importance of adding the “s” to the verbs when the pronoun is singular. They could be also considered as developmental errors.

**Table 5- Samples of students’ errors of subject-verb agreement**

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| **Source of errors** | **Examples** |
| **Lack of subject- verb agreement** | 1. For example, for somehow she ***succeed*** to send her car at the same month for three times to the garage. ***(succeeds)*** 2. Although her being a hard worker, she always end of quitting her job. ***(ends)*** 3. Although the government ***think*** this is the best solution for preventing this disease outbreak it is definitely won't work due to the rising morbidity every time that we emerge from the curfew. ***(thinks)*** 4. Last reason is, while it’s obvious that cell phones ***is*** great emergency,   ***communications device*** installing GPS locators, will lead you to direction and places. ***(are; communication devices)***   1. The third one, is that the cell phones work on vibrations which ***disrupts*** brain cells throughout the days. ***(disturb)*** 2. No one ***like*** someone who is miserable except for other people who want to be miserable. ***(likes)*** 3. Watching the news with the motion pictures ***engage*** us more than reading newspapers. ***(engages)*** 4. She is an example for all the students ***who attends*** college to learn and grow. ***(who attend)*** |

***3.1.4 .Auxiliary verbs***

The following samples of errors show that Arab students have difficulties in using the auxiliary forms of English. The first example shows that they haven’t acquired the use of auxiliary verbs in negative past simple sentences, where the stem verb should follow the negated form of the auxiliary. Similar to errors in categories mentioned above, first language interference could be the reason for using auxiliary verbs wrongly. Auxiliary verbs do not exist in Arabic.

**Table 5- Samples of students’ errors in using auxiliary verbs**

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| --- | --- |
| **Source of errors** | **Examples** |
| **Auxiliary verbs** | 1. When I got the exam, the material that I ***didn’t learned******for*** wasn’t included. ***(didn’t learn)*** 2. We can find televisions these days almost in every home, and ***it has*** many advantages. ***(they have)*** 3. The computer is the most necessary thing that must be in every home. ***It's have*** a lot of advantages, however, it also has disadvantages. ***(has)*** 4. Students who **are deciding** to learn abroad in countries such as: Ukraine, Italy ,and Germany have many ***consequences*** which ***prevents*** them to study ***inland***. **(decide)** 5. ***In T***he beginning, I ***didn’t choice*** this course the secretary put me in it, but I expect many things. ***(At the; didn’t choose)*** 6. Studies have shown that people who have a personal weapon with a permit ***are use*** it as a threat when a criminal assaults them. **(*use)*** 7. English grammar rules ***are full of*** exceptions.   ***(have many***)   1. Moreover, ***it's increases*** our words vocabulary. ***(increases)*** 2. For example, drinking energizers like XL-Blue, etc***.. are cause*** damage health for the people. ***(cause)*** |

***3.1.5. Modal Auxiliaries***

Instead of including a stem verb after the modal auxiliary can, shall, may and will and their forms in the past, could, should, might and would, the writers used the verbs with suffixes indicating the past tense time in the first example and the present tense time in the second adding the suffix “s” to indicate the first person singular. Similarly, students’ errors of modal auxiliaries could be attributed to interlangual and intralingual interference since Arabic language has no modal auxiliaries. The fourth sample could be considered as a developmental error since the learner overgeneralized using “have” instead of “has”.

**Table 6- Samples of students’ errors of modal auxiliaries**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Source of errors** | **Examples** |
| **Modal Auxiliaries** | 1. I ***can considered*** him of one of my family. ***(can consider)*** 2. Teaching assistant can relieves*.* ***(can relieve)*** 3. ***It's have*** a lot of advantages, however, it also has disadvantages. ***(It has)*** 4. In the first day I see Sereen at class, she said that ***she have*** a BA degree in Philosophy. ***(she has)*** 5. I wish ***to will not think*** about it anymore. ***(not to*** ***think)*** 6. I ***will mentioned*** some of them. ***(will mention)*** |

***3.1.6 Relative Clauses***

The following samples show that Arab students seem to transfer the use of the relative pronoun “that” in their writing in English. In Arabic, the relative pronoun “الذي”, which is used for males and “التي” for females and the plural forms for both are equivalent to the relative pronoun “that” in English. Regarding the relative pronouns, there is no distinction between human and non-human beings in Arabic, which is in contrast to English. Conversely, the relative pronoun “who” which should be used for humans is used for non-humans. This sentence includes also the following types of errors: subject-verb agreement, incomplete sentence, inappropriate use of commas, and capitalization. First, there is no match between the plural noun of the word countries, which is the subject for the relative clause that starts with who, and the auxiliary verb in the relative clause that is used in the singular form (has), where the auxiliary “have” should have been used here. Second, it is not a complete sentence since it includes only the dependent clause, leaving the reader to wonder about the complete thought of the sentence. Third, the comma that it is placed after “although” is not in the right place. Fourth, capitalizing the initial of the word countries is not correct.

**Table 6- Samples of students’ errors of relative clauses**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Source of errors** | **Examples** |
| **Relative clauses** | 1. My aunt Dina is the most forgetful***that I ever know****.* ***(who I have ever known)*** 2. Although***,*** ***C***ountries in the west ***who has*** a very strong education in collages and universities, and schools too. 3. Third, only Jewish experts and professionals write the exam, there are not any Arabic experts ***that*** check how much that exam match Arab students. ***(who)*** 4. I believe exams can be replaced by other alternative ways ***whom*** effects are much better. ***(whose)*** 5. No one like someone who is miserable except for other people who want to be miserable. |

* + 1. ***Articles***

Using articles is problematic for Arab learners since they do not exist in Arabic. Therefore, it is common to add the articles “a” and “an” where it is not necessary. It seems that those who commit these errors do not fully comprehend the logic behind having an article before a singular noun. They also insert it before plural nouns, which is not required. Some also are confused between using “a” and “an” despite learning the rules when they are at school, which is illustrated in the third sentence. Some also tend to omit the article as example four.

The inappropriate excessive use of the definite article “the” poses another challenge for Arab learners of English because it exists in Arabic. It is called ال-تعريف. Etymologically, a proper noun is more likely to be definite in Arabic, specifically if it is an Arabic origin. In addition, it is used as a literal translation like The United Kingdom"المملكة المتحدة" The United States الولايات المتحدة, as well as the other names starting with “The United”, “The Union” UE الإمارات المتحدة, UN الأمم المتحدة. Similarly, the “Al” is added to ancient Arabized names of old known countries such as Al-Hind (India) and Al-Seen (China). In a generative construction, the second word is usually definite, but the first one is never definite. Nahr Al-Urdun, the Jordanian river, is an example of that. Because of these differences, the definite article “the” is used excessively and inappropriately among Arab writers in English.

Table 7- Samples of students’ errors of articles

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Source of errors** | Examples |
| **Articles** | 1. Being able to learn at this course will give us the opportunities to learn how to write ***a good paragraphs***. Next, after I graduate with my degree, I want to get a job as soon as possible and rent myself a nice apartment near a good libraries where all the great learning clubs and cafes in order to be more socialize with my friends and new people. ***(good libraries)*** 2. She had ***a sad stages*** in her life. ***(a sad stages)*** 3. Another ***generations (generation)*** 4. ***an***successful English teacher ***(a)*** 5. My friend is **irresponsible** girl*,* ***(an******irresponsible)*** 6. Wasim impressed me as a kind and ***a*** funny guy. ***(a)*** |

***3.1.8 Fragments***

Fragments are incomplete sentences that lack one of the critical components of the sentence: a subject, a verb, and a complete thought. In fact, they are commonly used among Arab students since it is acceptable not to have a verb in a sentence. There are two types of sentences in Arabic: with verbs and without verbs. Therefore, Arab students are more likely to transfer the structure of Arabic sentences in their writing in English ignoring the use of verbs especially after the first noun phrase, which is the subject of the sentence. In addition, considering audience seems to be a problem among Arab students who assume that readers figure out the meaning of the sentence without providing them enough details. The missing verb in the sentence and the lack of a logical connection between the first sentence and the second one make the sentence a fragment, which poses a difficulty for the reader to understand what happened in October 1925. The second example is a typical Arab sentence that is composed of a series of clauses and connected by commas. The writer connected between the two clauses by placing a comma, which makes it sound awkward and strange. The third clause lacks the subject and the verb to be.

Table 8-Samples of students errors of fragments

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Source of errors** | **Examples** |
| **An incomplete thought** | 1. For instance, ***the war of a stray dog, in October 1925*** , a Greek soldier was shot after allegedly crossing the border into Bulgaria for chasing his runaway dog. ***(erupted in October, 1925 when…)*** 2. *My advice is don’t trust* ***irresponsible person*** *he will put you in trouble****,*** *and better to do what you want by yourself. (****an irresponsible person because he may put you in trouble, and it is better to do what you want by yourself****)* |
| **A lack of a verb** | 1. Another example ***,*** my mom was traveling for work ***so*** we didn’t have food to eat ***,*** I don’t know how to cook , but thanks to my father he tried cooking ***And*** fed us. ***(Another example took place when my mom was travelling for work; we didn’t have food to eat. I don’t know how to cook, but thanks to my father who tried cooking to feed us.)*** |
| **A lack of a complete thought** | 1. Because***,*** the admissions process in foreign countries is easier. (***Because the admissions process in foreign countries is easier, many students prefer to study abroad.*** 2. Since English is an international language. ***(, it is important to learn it.)*** |
| **A lack of a verb and a** **complete thought** | 1. For example, manipulating their smooth voice tone, using flashcards to make it easier for us, and ***reinforce*** us each lesson with a candy bar. ***(reinforcing; were successful strategies to make us actively participate in class.)*** |
| **A lack of a verb and a complement** | 1. For example***,*** for the students who are old, work, or who live far away from universities. ***(…, it would be more convenient to take online courses.)*** |
| **A lack of a verb, a subject and a complete thought** | 1. So***,*** to improve my analytical thinking and writing skills… ***(I should practice writing academic texts.)*** |
| **A lack of verbs and independent clauses** | 1. Besides to speak automatically without thinking and to improve my accent. ***( I have to practice speaking with native speakers.)*** 2. Because almost everything is going to be new for you. ***(, I expect not to adjust quickly moving to a new town.)*** |

The third sentence lacks a verb after the noun phrase (another example). In addition, the use of the comma to combine the two first sentences in this fragment is inappropriate, which makes it a run-on sentence. To end the sentence, a full stop should replace the comma. In addition, the use of “And” instead of the infinitive “to” is not acceptable. Capitalizing the initial of “and” indicates that Arab students still are not fully aware of the rules of capitalization. It could be also explained as a matter of carelessness.

The fragment sentence is not a complete thought since it has only a dependent clause, which should be followed by an independent clause. The inappropriate use of commas interrupts the flow of the sentence. The incomplete thought includes only the subject of the sentence that consists of three phrases. It lacks a verb and a complement. In addition, it lacks parallelism because the writer uses two gerunds in the first two phrases and an infinitive in the third phrase.

To complete the thoughts in the two fragment sentences, there is a need to add verbs and compliments besides adding a comma after “for example” and replacing the full stop after the word “universities” by a comma in the first sentence and adding a comma after the transition word “also” in the second one. In sample “7”, the fragment sentence not only lacks a verb, but also a subject and a complete thought. Similarly, the last two fragments that include only dependent clauses lack verbs and independent clauses.

* + 1. ***Noun modifiers and irregular uncountable nouns***

**Table 9- Samples of students’ errors of noun modifiers and irregular uncountable nouns**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Countable (Regular)/ Uncountable Nouns** | 1. Despite the fact**,** *that* ***a lot of***parents opposed the idea.***(many)*** 2. One might say that there are many advantages of mobile phones, but you will find downsides too and there are ***a lot***. ***(many)*** 3. In recent years the Internet entered our lives in one way or another and became necessary for simplifying needs and social lives, but with all the many benefits, it has brought ***a lot of*** negatives. ***(many)*** 4. I love watching movies, Especially, English movies, because ***this movies*** are awesome. ***(these movies)*** 5. Due to ***this activities*** they spend less time with their family members an schools work. |
| **Countable irregular/ Uncountable Nouns** | 1. I don't consider this as a smart way to examine the student's understanding of the material, because of the limitation on the time it cause ***a pressure*** on students, causing ***a tension for him***. ***(pressure; causing them to be tense)*** |

* + 1. ***Prepositions***

**Table 10- samples of students’ errors of prepositions**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Inappropriate prepositions** | 1. We traveled to Germany yesterday ***with*** summer school. 2. I always advise her to take care of her serious problem ***by drugs*.** She really needs. ***(of drugs)*** 3. Israa saw me. She came quickly, took the biggest bag and helped me carrying it. ***(in carrying)*** 4. …. who you can’t ***trust******on*** her. ***(trust)*** 5. Television is a major part ***in*** our life, and it offers so many benefits. ***(of)*** 6. I always wanted to an English teacher ***in this time*** I am a first year student ***in*** Beit Berl College, ***in*** English major. ***(at; at; majoring in English)*** 7. I believe that watching movies really benefits us ***with*** many aspects of our lives. ***(in)*** 8. Watching movies has a lot of positive benefits ***on*** our life and mind, that's not matter what movie's *genrar* is drama, horror or tragedy. ***(in)*** |
| **Lack of prepositions** | 1. She gave my mother, her savings in order to ***pay*** the course. ***(pay*** ***for)*** 2. We can ***find televisions*** these days almost in every home, and ***it*** has many advantages. |

These errors may occur due to simplification strategy and overgeneralization of the target Language rules.

***3.1.11 Wrong Word Order***

Wrong word order refers to “the incorrect placement of words in the utterance” (p. 21). According to Hevney (2013), English learners commit errors in ordering the words in the sentences, placing different parts of speech incorrectly.

***Table 11- Samples of students’ errors of word order***

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Wrong word order (The verb preceded the subject.)** | 1. ***In this war were killed*** ***about 13000 to 25000 people. (About 13,000 to 25,000 people were killed in this war.)*** 2. For example, drinking energizers like XL-Blue, etc***..*** arecause ***damage*** ***health*** for the people. ***(health damage)*** 3. According to the ***researching that happened*** that this drinking caused diseases to the body. ***(current research)*** 4. Next, after I graduate with my degree, I want to get a job as soon as possible and rent myself a nice apartment near a good libraries where all the great learning clubs and cafes in order to be ***more*** ***socialize*** with my friends and new people. ***(socialize more)*** 5. After high school Besn worked ***for two years different jobs***. ***(different jobs***   ***two years)*** |
| **Repeating the subject** | 1. GrandPa Ahamad , ***he*** past away 3 years ago I was 21 years old. ***(he)*** 2. Ayham ***he*** is my first and last love. ***(he)*** |

***3.1.12 Errors of comparative and superlative***

Larenas, Jimenes, Astorga & Yanez (2020) included other categories such as comparative and superlative adjectives, word order and conjunctions. To compare between two items or objects in English, a gradable adjective for comparative or superlative degree is used in two ways: adding inflections of “er” and “est” to the base form or preceding the adjective by more and most.

#### Table 12- Samples of students’ errors of comparative and superlative

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Comparative and superlative** | 1. I have to work ***harder*** on my confidence. ***(hard)*** 2. The ***worse*** thing is the low salary. ***(worst)*** |

***3.1.13 Conjunctions errors***

Conjunctions are linking words that link between words, phrases and independent clauses (Dunham and Summers, 1993; Chaer and Freeman, 1998). The seven coordinating conjunctions are for, and, nor, but, or, yet and so, which join together nouns, phrases and independent clauses and have the acronym “FANBOYS”. The conjunction “for” indicates reason just like because, “and” adds one thing to another, “nor” presents an alternative negative idea to a previously stated negative idea, “but” shows contrast, or presents an alternative or a choice, yet introduces a contrasting idea that follows the preceding idea logically and so indicates effect, result of consequence.

#### Table 12-Samples of students’ errors of conjunctions

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Conjunctions | The pupils enjoyed and liked my activities***, also the teacher***. ***(,and the*** ***teacher enjoyed my lesson too)*** |

***3.1.13 Modifiers***

#### Table 13- Samples of students’ errors of modifiers

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Excessive use of “the” as a modifier** | 1. ***The*** exams are a very good way to evaluate one person. 2. Furthermore, the knowledge fields in the exam are very limited, while ***the*** success in ***the*** academic studies can be from creativity, investment and the ability to analyze. |

* 1. **Semantic Errors**

Lennon (1991) defines semantic errors as “a linguistic form or combination of forms which, in the same context and under similar conditions of production, would, in all likelihood, not be produced by the speakers’ native speaker counterparts” (p. 182). They refer to "the meaning of words and sentences and to the rules or constraints by which the meanings of sentences are built from the meanings of words" (Allan, 2009**,** p.972).

Lexical errors refer to mistakes at word level (Hernández, 2011) and are an evidence of vocabulary acquisition process (Llach, 2007). In comparison to other areas in writing in English by second/ foreign language learners like grammar, research on lexical errors is scarce (Hemchua & Schmitt, 2006; Shalaby, Yahya, & El-Komi, 2009; Zughoul (1991). In addition, the used categories of errors in some previous studies have addressed only a limited number of lexical error categories. Analyzing lexical errors helps in assessing whether learners have acquired adequate vocabulary to ensure their success in using the language for academic purposes since vocabulary is the most important factor for English language learners’ academic success (Saville-Troike, 1984). It will also encourage writing instructors to employ strategies and techniques to foster learners’ acquisition of relevant English lexis.

A number of studies have been carried out on lexical errors committed by English learners, which show that interlanguage interference that is carried out through direct translation from the first language is the main category of lexical errors Naba’h (2011) Llach (2013) and Shalaby, Yahya, & El-Komi (2009). In contrast, Hemchua & Schmitt (2006) found that L1 transfer was not the major source of errors. Studies on lexical errors have been conducted on ESL / EFL learners from various language backgrounds. Among the studies that have been undertaken in this area, Hemchua & Schmitt (2006) analyzed the lexical errors produced by 20 third year undergraduate Thai students, who were asked to write an argumentative composition of about 300 – 350 words. The analysis revealed that ‘near synonyms’ type was mostly committed, followed by ‘preposition partners’ and ‘suffixes’. In addition, the students had more difficulty with semantics than the forms of words. Regarding the sources of errors, L2 intrinsic difficulty was more prevailing than the first language (L1) transfer.

Ander & Yildirim (2010) in the analysis of their students’ essays identified other seven types of common errors such as wrong word choice, literal translation, omission or incompletion, misspelling, redundancy, collocation and word formation. The study conducted by Almahameed & Al-Shaikhli (2017) revealed that two types of semantic errors were made; errors at sentence level and errors at word level. While the percentage of the former is 82%, the latter is 18%. The following three examples represent errors at word level.

1. *\*The bathroom* ***becomes*** *on the left of house.*
2. \* He **reached** me to the house.
3. \*That day was so ***tired***.

The word *becomes* in the first example is used inappropriately instead of located or found on the left. In the second example, the verb *reached* is erroneously used instead of picking up or giving a ride. Similarly, the adjective *tired* is mistakenly used. Adjectives that end with the suffix ed in English describe a feeling while those that end with “ing” describe a situation. Therefore, in this context it should be tiring, not tired. The following example includes many errors. *\* I could not found my class at the first*. Regarding semantics, the verb found was used instead of find and at the first in place of at first. The researchers conclude that learners misused English words and translated literally from Arabic, their native language, indicating them as main sources of errors.

Ababneh (207) claims that students produce lexical errors when they translate directly from their native language or use the wrong lexical items in English. This lexical example, “This is the *home* that my father built”, is a result of direct translation, using the word home instead of house. The *clock* is now ten is another example of a lexical error that happens when the learner uses the wrong lexical item.

Al-Shormani & Al-Sohbani (2012) examined Arab learners’ semantic errors in English including their classification and possible L1 and L2 sources. They analyzed 30 essays written by Yemeni University third-level students majoring in English. The classification of the semantic errors identified in this study included three broad categories: lexical, collocation and lexicogrammatical, and each one of these categories included categories and subcategories depending on the errors identified. The researchers identified 1388 semantic errors. Results show omission of letters category scores the highest number of errors, (251) 18.08%. In contrast, misselection of a prefix category is the lowest where only (12), (0.68%) errors were committed. In terms of sources of errors, findings reveal that translating from L1 and applying linguistic rules of L1 to L2. The subjects of this research tend to translate concepts, words and phrases literally from Arabic as their L1 into English and to apply Arabic linguistic rules to English. The researchers conclude that Arabic learners of English have false concepts about English, demonstrate insufficient knowledge of English semantic system and are confused about English vocabulary.

Table 1- Al-Shormani & Al-sohbani’s (2012) classification of semantic errors

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Categories of errors |  |
| A wrong word choice | It means using a wrong lexical item instead of the correct one, which makes sentence illogical. |
| Literal translation | It happens when the second language learner translates directly from his/her first language without knowing the meaning in the target language. |
| Omission or incompletion | Errors of omission or incompletion are detected especially when a lexical item should be present is omitted, or when a lexical item should be complete is incomplete, which makes the sentence makes partial or no sense. |
| Misspelling | This category refers to spelling errors that violate the orthographic conventions of English. |
| Redundancy | Repeating or paraphrasing unnecessarily a lexical item in the sentence is the redundancy category. |
| Collocation | When a lexical item used in a sentence does not collocate with another part of the sentence, it is a collocation error. It also sounds unnatural or inappropriate. |
| Word formation | Errors of this category consist of lexical items of wrong form of a word like using different instead of difference. |

The following table, which is adopted from the research article of Ander and Yildirim (2010) provides examples of each category and explanations to these errors.

Table 2- Ander and Yildirim’s (2010) classification of semantic errors

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **A wrong word choice** | If students want good friends, they should follow the *upstairs* ways. *(above)* |
| **Literal translation** | Many Turkish students *live* this problem. *(have)* |
| **Omission/ incompletion** | Secondly, students should *help from* their teachers about English reading skills. *(…ask for/seek…)* |
| **Misspelling** | The most important solution for *improwing* English listening skills is *ablosutely* following… (improving – absolutely) |
| **Redundancy** | Listening skill is *more* difficult for Turkish students. They don’t *have make* a practice. |
| **Collocation** | During their school lives students *can be* in certain difficulties*.* (face/experience/encounter) |
| **Word formation** | Students have different *thinks,* ideas and ideals*.* (thoughts) |

Basir, Abdullah, & Zaiyadi (2015) adopted the categories mentioned by Ander & Yildirim (2010) for analyzing their students’ lexical errors and detected seventy-seven (77) ones. The three (3) major categories of lexical errors are wrong word choice with 41.56 percent, omission/incompletion with 20.78 percent and misspelling with 15.58 percent. On the other hand, redundancy, word formation and collocation were less common with 6.49 percent, 5.19 percent and 2.60 percent respectively. The researchers explain these results as indications to students’ weaknesses in using English vocabulary adequately expressing themselves accurately in academic writing, which made their essays difficult to be comprehended. Despite that, the researchers feel that the EAP learners had used their problem-solving ability to address their inadequate vocabulary problem in answering the guided essay-writing question.

As in other parts of the world, researching lexical errors among Arabic speakers who learn English is scarce. In the twentieth century, specifically in the 1990s, two researchers Sheshsha (1993) and Al-Jabri (1998) conducted research studies to examine the types of errors produced by Saudi students. The former investigated the lexical errors made by 48 Saudi university student-writers majoring in English, and the latter analyzed the lexical errors in the written English of a 110 Saudi, female, college freshman students. While Sheshsha (1993) classified the errors in five categories: confusion of words with formal similarities, confusion of words with similar meaning, inappropriate collocation, literal translation, and divergence, Al-Jabri (1998) employed only two types: intra-language (developmental) and interlanguage (first language interference) following Sheshasha’s last two categories: literal translation, and divergence.

The results of Sheshsha’s study show that inappropriate collocation errors were the most common (38.71%) while literal translation errors were the second most common (23.65%). Data analysis also revealed that errors resulting from the confusion of words with similar meaning were the least frequent (11.29%). Sheshsha concludes that intra-lingual errors, which are also called developmental and their source is related to the target language are more commonly committed than inter-lingual errors, which result from first language interference. Similar to Sheshasha’s findings, Al-Jabri also reported that intra-lingual errors were more frequent than inter-lingual errors. She also added that “most categories of lexical errors are caused by interference between lexical items in the same language or between the two languages” (Al-Jabri, 1998, p.iii), acknowledging that the categories of lexical errors are neither exclusive nor discrete.

Mahmoud (2005) analyzed Arab EFL learners’ lexical errors, focusing on collocation errors. Data analysis showed that 420 collocations were found in 42 essays written by Arabic-speaking university students majoring in English. About two thirds of these collocations (64%) were incorrect and 80% of these were lexical collocations as opposed to grammatical ones. He also found that 61% of the incorrect combinations resulted from negative transfer from Arabic.

The findings of different research on the lexical errors in the writings of Arab students were not consistent. While some researchers found developmental errors to be more prevalent, others reported that L1 transfer errors were more common and vice versa. The majority of these researchers have mainly used a limited taxonomy, or focused on a particular aspect of lexical errors.

Other studies examined the abilities of EFL Arab learners using appropriate vocabulary right choice. For example, Daoud (1998) studied the role of exchange strategies in improving Arab EFL learners’ writing skills and in changing their attitude towards the target language culture. The subjects of the study were Syrian ESP medical students at Damascus University, who were required to exchange essays with American counterparts. Specifically, the subjects were required to write about ‘their personalities, lives, and culture or dealt with issues of international concern’ (p.391), emphasizing the need of including topic sentences and supporting details. The results showed that the subjects lacked the ability of providing appropriate vocabulary and expressions. In addition, some of them were found to be ‘aggressive in addressing their American counterparts’ (p. 397 despite the fact that the researcher’s messaged that good writers should find their way to people hearts and minds in order to convince them supporting their claims by specific details and examples.

Shalaby, Yahya, & El-Komi (2009) examined the types of lexical errors and their prevalence among female Saudi students who were studying English as part of the requirements of the preparatory year at Taibah University in Al-Madinah Al-Munawarrah, Saudi Arabia. Data analysis of the 96 writing samples show that these writers produced 718 lexical errors. The highest percentage of errors were under the wrong choice of a suffix, which occurred 128 times (17.83%). Direct translation from L1 was the second frequency of errors occurring 113 times (15.74%). In addition, semantic lexical errors occurred more than formal ones. The percentage of the former was 60.45% and the latter 39.55%.

To analyze the lexical errors of their subjects, Shalaby, Yahya, & El-Komi (2009) adopted a taxonomy of errors which is based on the taxonomy of James (1981) who classified the lexical errors under two main categories: formal and semantic. Formal errors are sub-divided into three main categories: formal misselection, misformations and spelling errors. The formal misselection category contains three subcategories: misselection of suffixes, misselection of prefixes and false friends. The misformations category consists of two subcategories: Borrowing and coinage. The spelling errors category only includes three subcategories: Impeding comprehension, inappropriate meaning and transfer.

Semantic errors included four categories: confusion of sense relations, collocation, connotation, and stylistic errors (James, 1998). The confusion of sense relations category includes the following subcategories: 1. using a superony for a hyponym, 2. a hyponym for a superonym, 3. inappropriate co-hyponyms, and 4. wrong near synonyms (James, 1998). The confusion of binary terms category was borrowed from Zughoul’s (1991) taxonomy and 2 other categories, inappropriate meaning and distortion of meaning errors.

Zughoul (1991), who analyzed lexical errors committed by a sample of 128 Jordanian students at Yarmouk University, argues that a detailed typology of EFL college student writers can be helpful in giving “a better understanding of interlanguage and insights into the strategies employed by language learners for lexical choice” (p.46). He claims that most EFL students’ semantic errors are due to L1 transfer, which result from direct translation of word, phrase and or sentence from the learners' native language in to English. His findings show that assumed synonymity is the most common type of word choice errors committed by his subjects (23.5% of the total number of errors). He states that “first language interference is a major variable in lexical choice as it takes forms of assumed synonymity, derivativeness, literal translation, and idiomaticity” (p.56).

Zughoul in his analysis established a detailed typology of errors, its definition, sources, and implications to language acquisition/learning, aiming to provide better insights into the language learners’ employed strategies for choosing lexical items and using the following 13 categories of error types.

Table 3- Zughoul’s (1991) classification of semantic errors

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Error type** | **Explanation** | Example |
| **1. Assumed synonymity** | There are no real synonyms in one language. | They leave their town in order to obtain a***career****. (job)\** |
| **2. Literal translation** | Choosing an equivalent for an Arabic word or an expression on the literal level, but does not convey the meaning intended in the target language. | Jam going to talk about how to make***grape papers****. (vine leaves)* |
| 3**. Derivativeness** | Applying derivation in the same way it works in Arabic to English | Mansaf is the***national cook*** in Jordan*. (dish)* |
| **4. Collocation** | The habitual juxtaposition of a particular word with another word or words | Life is***sweet***in the city*.* |
| **5. Similar forms** | Choosing a word that is similar to the intended one | People are unable to work and earn***efficient***money*. (sufficient)* |
| 6. **Message translation** | The production of the learner on the sentence level is a word for word translation from Arabic into English. | My room reflects **the relax** on myself*.* ***(****My room is comfortable.)* |
| 7**. Idiomacity** | Coming up with an idiomatic expression in the target language from his native language | *I* ***sleep***at 11 o'clock*. (go to bed)* |
| **8. Influence of Arabic Style** | Using opposite synonym of written Arabic conjoined by the article *aw,* which means or, and or *wa*, which means and | My house is***placed***in abeautiful area. *located* |
| **9. Circumlocutions** | Providing a paraphrase to convey the intended meaning when the learner cannot think of the appropriate word to use in a certain context. | Smoking cigarettes has a bad effect especially on***a lady who is carrying an infant.*** *(Being pregnant)* |
| **10. Verbosity** | Trying to impress readers by using big sounding words inappropriately | Every one of the participants***vanished****.* ***(left)*** |
| **11. Analogy** | In the choice of lexical items, the learner coins new verbs, nouns, adjectives, and other parts of speech along the lines of existing paradigms. | The circulation of***watchers*** depends on the kind of program*.* ***(viewers)*** |
| **12. Binary terms** | Words that generally exhibit the reversal of a relationship between items | I returned the books *I* ***lent***fromthe library.***(borrowed)*** |
| **13. Overuse of some lexical terms** | Overusing of the four particular lexical superordinate items good, bad big, and small | *good knowledge, good meaning, good stay, good rules, good civilization, good nationality, and good language* |

***3.1.1 Confusion of sense relations***

Using a superonym for a hyponym means using a general term where there is a need to use a specific one, where the meaning will be underspecified. Using the word equipment as instead of appliances as in the following sentence: *We have modern* *equipment* *in our house*. The following example is an illustration for using a hyponymy for a superonym: *The colonels "officers" live in the castle.* An example of using inappropriate co-hyponyms appears in the following sentence: *I think the city has good communication "transportation" "public transport" such as a lot of buses.* According to Palmer (1976) as cited in Jassim (2016) it is almost impossible to find two words that have the same exact meaning. According to Nilsen (1975) (as cited in Jassim, 2016), “a difference in meaning among synonyms may be a geographical distribution, in styles or register, in collocation, in connotation, and possibly some other ways” (p. 165). This sentence, which is cited from Schmitt, 2006, pp. 10-11) is an example of that: \**She is excellent* (brilliant).

The category confusion of binary terms refers to lexical items that have oppositional relations according to Palmer (1976) (as cited in Jassim, 2016), which usually show the reversal of a relationship between items rather than oppositeness in meaning. Examples of binary include “antonyms as in big and small, complementary relations as male- female and directional relations as in come and go” (Jassim, 2016, p. 165). Al-Shormanil and AlSohbanil (2012) provided an example about this confusion between the words *look* and *feel* as binary terms as it appears in this sentence: “\* *I look (feel) happy and \*He feels (looks) happy* (p. 1)”. Translation from L1 occurs as result of direct translation of word, phrase and or sentence from the learners' native language in to English. Semantic errors also included the subcategory of confusion of sense relations, which is a replacement of the term “claque” to translation from L1 (James, 1998). The findings of studies conducted by Zaghoul (1991) and Andre (2014), calque was the second most frequent lexical errors that occurred in the students’ writings. While in Zaghoul's study it accounted to 11.08% from the total number of errors, in Andre's it was 19.14 . James (1998) affirms that calque is the result of literal translation due to the influence of first language. Andre (2014) provided two examples of calque, the first is at the word level and the second at the phrase level: "walking along Malioboro street makes me happy (berjalan – jalan sepanjang jalan Malioboro membuat saya senang). Literal translation from L1 on the phrase level. For instance, beauty in harmony with the people warm and friendly (keindahan dalam keselarasan dengan orangnya yang hangat dan ramah)" (p. 7). Andre explained this error as misplacing the position between the words ‘warm’, ‘friendly’ and ‘people’. Besides, this student may not know that adjectives precede nouns in English.

***3.1.2 Collocation errors***

Collocation is a frequent use of a word or phrase that is used together with another word or phrase, which seems natural and correct for native speakers (Jassim, 2016). According to Channell (1981), translation from Arabic into English and the dependence on monolingual dictionaries that provide one word synonym without including explanations or examples can be the reasons for the wrong choice of collocation. James (1998) as cited in Jassim (2016) mentions the following three degrees of the inappropriate collocation: “l. Semantically determined word selection (for example, The city is grown) developed( ). 2. Statistically weighted preferences (for example, An army has suffered big loses< heavy losses is preferred>)." \* 3. Arbitrary combinations and irreversible binomials (for example, hike- hitch( hitch-hikes) (p.166).” EFL learners are incompetent in collocation knowledge as many studies have improved that.

***2.3 Stylistic error***

The stylistic errors have the following three subcategories: Verbosity, misuse of compounds and circumlocution (Zughoul, 1991). To cover all areas of semantic errors and to allow dual or even multi classification for any error, the classification of lexical errors used in this section is adopted from these different sources such as Hemchua and Schmitt’s (2006) and Zughoul (1991). It means that an error could be classified as both developmental and first language interference at the same time. While the first four categories were suggested by Hemchua and Schmitt's (2006) study, the confusion of binary terms category was adopted from Zughoul's (1991) classification. Other two categories, inappropriate meaning and distortion of meaning, were borrowed from Al-Shormani and Al-Sohbani (2012) .

Most researchers classify lexical errors as L1 transfer as a separate category, which may include 2 or 3 subcategories as the case of Hemchua and Schmitt (2006) who included three subcategories: borrowing from L1, coinage based on L1, and direct translation from L1.

“Incorrect suffixation or suffix error is one of the sub-classes in formal misselection that consists of synforms” (Hemchua & Schmitt, 2006, p. 19). Misselections of prefixes and suffixes among Arabic speaking students are witnessed (Al-Shormani & Al-Sohbani, 2012). According to Hemchua & Schmitt (2006), synform is categorized into two types: a) the same word class with similar form (for instance, we can play an educator game), and b) the inappropriate use of a particular word class (for instance, traditional musical instruments performed is being held).

Al-Shormani & Al-Sohbani (2012) conducted a study to examine Arab students’ semantic errors in English, specifically Yemeni students, aiming not only to classify them but also to investigate their sources in L1 and L2. They analyzed thirty essays written by Yemeni University third-level students  
majoring in English, employing a comprehensive error taxonomy. According to the data of this study, 58 out of 81 suffix errors that occurred in the students’ writings due to the confusion of the same word class with similar form, while 23 errors attributed to the misselection of a particular word class. This finding suggests that the students have a more serious problem in selecting the correct word class, which owing similar forms rather than the proper use of derivative forms in words.

The researchers provided the following examples in page 123 that exemplify such errors.

Table 4- Al-Shormani & Al-Sohbani’s (2012) classification of suffixation errors

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Prefixes** | (1)\*I am nonhappy in my study. | Instead of adding the prefix *un*, the learner used the prefix *non*. |
|  | (2)\*Don’t talk with him. He is unsane. | The learner used the prefix *un* instead of *in*. |
|  | (3)\*This verb is unregular so you must keep it by heart. | Instead of adding the prefix *ir*, the learner chose to add *un*. |
|  | (4)\*We should inlarge our minds and not marry young. | The student used *in* instead of *en*. |
|  | (5)\*This question is disclear for me. | The learner failed to choose the appropriate prefix *un*. Instead, s/he used the prefix *dis* wrongly. |

To classify my students’ semantic errors, the categories were borrowed from different sources such as Al-Shormani & Al-Sohbani (2012), Yildirim (2010) and Zughoul (1991).

**Table 4- Samples of students’ semantic errors**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Misformations- Coinage** | These principles ***are needed for*** ***emblements*** in a foreign language class. (***being implemented)*** |
| **General term for specific one** | 1. Violence in schools is a ***hazardous*** common phenomenon nowadays. ***(dangerous)*** 2. The first reason is that without exams, teachers would not be able to find the ***flaws*** of students whether they understand the material well or not. ***(mistakes)*** |
| **General term for specific one** | 1. Violence in schools is a ***hazardous*** common phenomenon nowadays. ***(dangerous)*** 2. The first reason is that without exams, teachers would not be able to find the ***flaws*** of students whether they understand the material well or not. ***(mistakes)*** |
| Overly specific term | 1. It's a retroactive life that depends on hunting and fishing as their ***eating source***. ***(main diet)*** |
| Near synonyms | 1. It is a ***tiny*** device, which enables us holding it every way. (***a small advice***) 2. Drinking too much of coffee affects the person's body negatively for several reasons. People need to drink coffee in their daily life because it makes them more ***watchful*** and focused. ***(alert)*** |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | 1. Another example, is that the required articles our lecturer sent to us by moodle ***the first*** of the year, helped us improving our reading skills. ***(at the beginning)*** 2. Another example, this course demanding to pring article every week. After that we ***solve the question about it***. ***(answer the question)*** |
| **Inappropriate co-hyponyms** | 1. For example, when they wanted to show the gap between ***ages***. ***(generations)*** |
| **Claque/Translation from L1** | 1. There are three goals that I would like to ***reach*** in my life. ***(achieve)*** 2. Second, after ***I take my certificate in English***, ***I want to take a trip, travel around to see different countries, to explore my world that I didn’t see yet***, to experience new things and to live inspiring adventures. *(****I graduate from the English Department; I would like to explore the world visiting some countries)*** 3. I love the college atmosphere because I meet my classmates and my teachers in education that is a ***beautiful*** thing that makes me happy. ***(good)*** 4. Firstly, she ***gives*** ***my family her*** good manners and ***hope***. ***(raises my family with good manners, giving us hope all the time)*** 5. She is ***the light that lit my life***. ***(a good influence on me)*** 6. She states that journals should be exchanged secretly and with **fake** **names. (pseudonyms)** 7. However, today I have learned all these important ***rules and information. (techniques)*** 8. The most important reason is ***that all the world today uses the computer*** because all the programs that it contains. ***(computers are*** ***used all over the world)*** 9. Second, there are some disadvantages that cannot be ignored, the easy access to information via the Internet this made the students lazy ***of their duties of school*** since they are able to download information without exploring their topic of research. 10. Last reason is, while it’s obvious that cell phones is great emergency,   communications device installing GPS locators, will lead you to direction and places. ***(The last reason is the use of cell phones during emergency. In addition, installing GPS in cell phones is essential to help drivers find home addresses and locations of places.)*** |
| **Binary terms** | 1. My main goal is to build a farm with a beautiful garden which ***reminds*** ***in my grandfather*** the past times of my grandfather, ***and that what make life more optimistic and full of happiness***. (***to remember the past times of; achieving that goal will make me happy and optimistic***)   2. I wish to ***come back*** there. ***(go back)*** |
| **Inappropriate meaning** | 1. The strange thing is that most of these accidents didn't occur while the person ***dialing the phone***. ***(was calling)*** 2. ***Increasing*** my writing skills to an academic level, by attending this course I will gain so many benefits. ***(improving)*** 3. I ***took*** the decision of becoming an English teacher aiming to improve the level of English education as ***I possibly*** can regardless of the criticism that I receive for taking this path. ***(made; possible as I can)*** 4. Secondly, after the ***departure of*** the Coronavirus pandemic, I want to start on my dream work as a swimming coach to train young children with love and pleasure. ***(disappearance)*** 5. She ***lost*** the bus. (***missed)*** 6. I hope that this ***fabulous*** course stays as we used to have. ***(good)*** 7. For example, ***dedicating*** time for reading all types of texts in order to make students more aware of language and vocabulary and, to give students writing tasks as well which, in turn, will expose them more to the language and enable them, as a result, to function better in it. ***(allocating)*** 8. Motivation can be described as the learner's **outlook** and attitude. ***(point*** ***of view)*** 9. To concentrate and to ***give*** attention on teaching and practicing the new words that are needed to use by learners is more suitable than only understanding meaning. *(****pay attention)*** 10. Feelings of ***competency***, self-determination and joy in completing tasks (achievement motivation) are a personality ***variable*** which is known to characterize the intrinsically motivated learner. ***(competence; feature)*** 11. First, some ***said*** that Psychometric test isn't good ***classification*** tool because that isn't able to predict the chances of success at university and certainly doesn’t reflect intelligence or ability or IQ, but check specific skills that can be acquired by training and practice. (***argued; diagnostic)*** |
| **Distortion of meaning** | 1. It was horrible for me to see all the ***misplaced*** teachers who didn’t suit this career and the expected performance level, and after one major experience with an English teacher who made me dislike English lessons. ***(unqualified)*** 2. The popularity of cell phones all over the world has simply ***exploded***. ***(sharply increased)*** 3. To give another example, student can evaluate himself through the exam: It's called ***self Esteem***. ***(self-evaluation)*** |
| Collocation | 1. A ***massive*** difference in my writing ***(big)*** 2. As a teacher, taking the responsibility to my hands would be running a test ***once in a while*** to make sure that the material has been ***gone over*** at least once. ***(occasionally; reviewed)*** |
| Connotation | 1. He is a ***shining*** leader. ***(prominent)*** |

**3.2 Substance errors (capitalization, punctuation, and spelling)**

Substance errors refer to capitalization and punctuation source. The main sources for such errors are interlanguage and intralanguage (Ababneh, 2017; Almahameed Al-Shaihkli, 2017; Sermsook, et. al, 2017; Napitupulu, 2017). It is acceptable to write run on sentences in Arabic. Sentences are written with no punctuation marks, which is not accepted in English (Ahamed, 2016).

**Table 1-….classification of mechanic’s errors**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Mechanic**   1. Capitalization 2. Punctuation 3. Spelling | \**John adams….*  *Overuse of commas*  \**The head master in the combany* | They don’t realize the importance of capitalizing the initial of proper nouns, which is not used in Arabic.  Transferring the stylistics of Arabic….  There is no equivalent to “p” in Arabic. Therefore, Arab students tend to overuse the sound “b”. |

***3.3.1 Capitalization***

Another common mistake among Arab college students, especially beginners, is writing initials of proper names in small letters as well as the personal pronoun “I”. For example, not a small number of students don’t capitalize the initials of their first and last names as well as names of cities and countries. Despite repeating the importance of capitalizing the initials of proper names and the personal pronoun “I”, it takes a lot of time for them to do so. In addition, some tend to capitalize initials in the middle of the sentence when it is not required. The following sentences show the inappropriate use of initial capitalization, which appears in bold.

**Table 2- Samples of students’ errors of capitalization**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Capitalizing initials when it is not required** | 1. Second, swimming improves my mood ***S****uch* as it makes me enjoy. 2. artificial ***S****weeteners* 3. Also*.* ***T****hey* use it as it was from the Arabic language 4. For instance,***M****any* professionals and working-class people want to receivehigher education*,* ***B****ut* they can’t because of their family responsibilities or lack of money. 5. ***f***irst of all there is no reason not to want to be happy. ***(F)*** |
| **Not capitalizing initials when it is required** | 1. ***f****ashion* contributes in enhancing self-expression*.* ***(F)*** 2. Victoria is my Jewish friend , I met her when I was working in ***herzliya*** last year. ***(H)*** 3. Yafa married, she has a little cute boy his name ***h***amodi , ***h***amodi has a shiny brown eyes and curly hair so cute too. ***(H; H)*** 4. The first time when I met ***m***ark was about one year ago in writing class. ***(M)*** |

***3.3.2 Punctuation***

Punctuation poses another difficulty to Arab learners of English language learners because (Ababneh, 2017; Ahamed, 2016) in contrary to English Arabic has few limitations in the use of commas and periods (Ahamed, 2016). For instance, Arab students rarely use the semi-colon, and the exclamation marks in their writings (Ahamed, 2016)**.** They also tend not to use any punctuation like the following example: *Your family but also others***,** and they use commas instead of periods as in the following example**:** in real world, In the home; (Ababneh, 2016).

Many researchers including myself found that Arab students use commas inappropriately, excessively, transferring the stylistics of Arabic, and overgeneralizing the rules for using commas. It is not also rare to insert a comma after the subject like the example in the first sentence or the verb in the second sentence.

**Table 3- Samples of students’ errors of punctuation**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Placing a comma after the subject** | 1. Another instance***,*** is that this virus is not just a normal virus***,*** it will torture you before it kills you or give the immunity to it and keep you safe from others. ***(Another instance is not just a normal virus.*** ***It will torture you before it kills you or give the immunity to it and keep you safe from others.)*** 2. His hobbies are**,** to play basket ***B***all, ***and*** to work with youth boys and help them that’s why he also decided to study youth at risk. ***(His hobbies are to play basketball, to work with youth boys and help them. That’s why he decided to study youth at risk.)*** |
| **Overgeneralization: placing a comma between the two parts of the subject** | 1. *I really feel that I was so lucky lately****, and*** *wish to continue like that.* ***(I really feel that I was lucky******lately and wish to continue like that.)*** 2. *Boyka jumped over my neighbour fence,* ***and*** *stepped over my neighbour garden and pissed all over the grass.* ***(Boyka jumped over my neighbour’s fence, stepped over my neighbour’s garden, and pissed all over the grass.)*** |
| **L1 transfer:**  **Separating between clauses by a comma** | 1. Nevertheless, these government policy of curfew didn't work in Israel ***,*** there are still a large number of sick people who are hospitalized and many dead people from this terrible disease - Corona. ***(Nevertheless, these governmental policies of curfew didn't work in Israel. There are still a large number of sick people who are hospitalized and many dead people from this terrible disease – Corona).*** 2. Another example happened two years ago***,*** there was an association that collected donations, clothes, and food for orphans. (***Another example happened two years ago. There was an association that collected donations, clothes, and food for orphans.) (Another example happened*** 3. ***Two years ago when an association collected donations, clothes, and food for orphans.)*** |
| **L1 transfer:**  **Using a comma to separate between clauses** | 1. She is a kind person***,*** in any time I need her she always be by my side.   ***(She is a kind person. In any time I need her, she is always by my side.)*** |

Overgeneralization appears in sentences number 3 and 4 where the writer inserts a comma to list things in a series without considering the fact there is only one verb in this sentence and the comma is not needed before “and”. In other words, they feel the need of separating between the two verb phrases that belong to the same subject by a comma as it appears in the following two sentences.

In other cases, the writers link between two independent sentences by using a comma, transferring punctuation rules from their first language since it is acceptable to separate between clauses by using a comma. Also, they tend to replace the full stop at the end of the sentence by a comma. Besides that, example 6 shows carelessness in using a comma to separate between the dependent clause and the independent clause.

***3.2.3 Spelling errors***

Since English and Arabic linguistic and orthographic systems differ, Arab learners of English encounter difficulties mastering the orthographic system in English. The misspelled words included silent letters, vowels having different sounds, and different letters having one sound (Al-Khatib, 2017). In addition, the relationship between orthography and the sound system of Arabic as a phonemic language is more consistent than in English (Al-Busaidi & Al-Saqqaf, 2015).

Al-Busaidi & Al-Saqqaf (2015) reviewed some research studies concerning spelling and pronunciation errors among Arab students and provided a summary of these errors that appears below.

“1) /eə/ as in <there> becomes /ei/ as in <they>.  
2) confusion of some pairs of vowel sounds, as in /i/ vs. /e/.  
3) vowel length (short vs. long sounds).  
4) word stress. Students may not know that word stress can change pronunciation (e.g. divide vs. division).  
5) inserting vowels initially or between consonants in syllable-initial positions, e.g. *stop* > \*/əstɒp/ or \*/sətɒp/.  
6) intrusive vowels in syllable-final positions, as the /ə/ in \*/desək/ instead of /desk/ <desk>” (p. 185).

In addition, Touchie (1986) provided examples of errors committed by Arab ESL learners that represent the three areas. For example, it is very common among Arab ESL learners to replace the phoneme /p/ with the phoneme /b/. Therefore, they might say and write *pird* and *brison*, for example, instead of bird and prison. The production of such errors as *womans*, *sheeps*, and *furnitures* is an example of morphological errors.

In the research conducted by Ababneh (2017), findings show different types of mistakes including spelling. The researcher included the following mistakes *Jolessy; advais; contry; withe; caulture; spicialy*; *pepole; becose; watsup; somone; neihboor*, attributing them to lack of practice in English language in terms of conversation and reading besides first language interference.

Al-Khatib (2017) analyzed writing samples of 470 high school final year students in public schools, aiming at determining the ability of the students to write successfully and to be prepared for writing academic texts at the university level. Two graders corrected these samples and marked different types of errors such phonemic orthographic errors, grammatical errors, in addition to structural and organizational errors. Grammatical errors concerned verb tense, subject-verb agreement, word choice, preposition, singular and plural forms, and word order. Tense errors included tense sequence, tense substitution, tense marker, deletion and substitution. In addition, the students tended to use double tenses similar to the Arabic phrase that has *Kana*, which means, "it was", and present tense verb. Moreover, there was also confusion in using the perfect tense, mainly the present perfect, which does not exist in Arabic. Errors in using tenses also included misuses of present and past simples, a tense form after modals, and use of nouns instead of infinitives. For example, this type of confusion included using the simple present instead of future, simple past instead of simple present, simple past instead of infinitive, simple past insteadof gerund after preposition, simple past instead of present perfect, simple past instead of future feature and instances of misuse in subject and verb agreement.Al-Khatib added phonemic orthographic inaccuracies, grammatical mistakes

Khatter (2019) conducted a study to identify and analyze the most common essay writing errors among Saudi female learners at the departments of English, Majmaa'h University, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, who were majoring in English and in their third year of study, who were required to write about two to four pages using the narrative, descriptive, and compare/contrast organization. The findings revealed that the most committed errors were: punctuation errors followed by spelling errors, preposition errors, article errors, wrong verb tense, wrong word form respectively. The findings suggested that writing in English as a foreign language is quite challenging for students**.** The researcher conclude that Interlingual and intralingual transfer was found to be the source of most common errors.

Qaddumi & Walweel (2018) examined the most common errors among university Palestinian students at Al Istiqlal University in Jericho, Palestine, selecting 22 (12 males and 10 females) students randomly from the modern languages department to take a standardized test in writing in English, examining their compositions’ content, organization, mechanics, language use, and vocabulary. Results show that spelling the words correctly is the major problem among these students (14% of the total number of errors). Semantics comes next (11%) and followed by language (10.3%) and vocabulary (9.2%).

In addition, Al-Busaidi & Al-Saqqaf (2015) investigated the problems that 94 Omani Arab university learners face in spelling English vowels who attended an intensive program at Sultan Qaboos University, which consisted of six proficiency levels. The focus of the research study was on vowels in monosyllabic words since English vowels pose a challenge for Arab learners since Arabic and English languages differ in the number of vowels as well as in the spelling and pronunciation patterns. The aim was to examine the students’ knowledge of spelling these basic words and avoid the influence of stress and intonation in multi-syllable words. Vowels appear to be more problematic and irregular than consonants. The perceptible mismatch between phonemes and graphemes might be the reason. A written spelling test and a dictation test were used for data collection. The study investigated 19 vowel sounds and their 47 letter realizations in monosyllabic words. The distribution of sounds included three groups: 6 short vowel sounds, 5 long vowel sounds, and 8 diphthongs. Results showed that the students demonstrated different abilities in spelling short vowel sounds depending on the realization. For example, the students were more able to spell the sound **/**i**/** when it was realized as <**y**> than <**i**>, and more than 80% of the students were able to spell the morpheme <**y**>. Regarding the sound /e/, it seems that the morpheme “ea” was the easiest for the students (83%) followed by <e> (75%), <ie> (65%) and finally <ai> (63%). However, the sound /**æ/** as it is expressed in the morpheme (<a>): cat seems to be the easiest. The authors attributed that it is the only realization for the sound /æ/, which is commonly used in Arabic. Findings also showed thatthe students were more able to spell the sound /u/ when it was realized as <**oo**> in a word like “full” than <**u**> in the word “book” (98% versus 65%). Similarly, the students succeeded in spelling the sound the /ʌ/ when it is realized as <u> like the word “but” more than <o> in “son” (85% versus 70% respectively), which was attributed to the frequent use of the sound /ʌ/ appears more as <u>than <o>(e.g. fun, sun, run, hut, cut, but, nut). The sound **/ə/** and its morpheme realization (<a>) as in the word “about” was spelled correctly by about 80% of the students. Comparing the students’ ability across the use of the six short vowel sounds, results showed spelling the sound /æ/ was the easiest and the /i/was the hardest. Regarding diphthongs, the results showed that the sound /ɔi/ (as in boy) is easiest, while the sound /eə/ (as in bear and hair) is the most difficult. It could be concluded that students found short vowel sounds easier than long sounds and diphthongs, which were equal in difficulty. These findings could be explained to the fewer realizations of short vowels.

Spelling problems are probably the most frequent category of lexical errors in EFL learners’ writings (Bouvy, 2000; Fernández, 1997). These are violations of the orthographic conventions of English. The lack of congruence between spelling and pronunciation so characteristic of the English language is mostly responsible for these difficulties. EFL learners face the problem of having to cope with the complicated English encoding system in which one sound, especially vowel sounds, can be rendered in multiple ways, i.e. through different letters, and vice versa where one letter can be pronounced in different ways. Double letters, silent letters, or triphthongs also cause problems for learners. Thus, we nd the following misspellings as an example: beautifull, verday, ritting, inteligent for beautiful, birthday, writing, and intelligent, respectively. A particular type of spelling error arises as the result of what is called phonetic spelling, i.e. writing the words the way they are pronounced. Thus, we nd the following examples that illustrate this phenomenon: Reichel for Rachel, keik for cake, spik for speak, braun for brown, or saebyet for subject.

In these two examples, graph phonic similarity causes the misspelling the word techniques.

It means that the shapes and the of two words are almost the same.

**Table 4- Samples of students’ spelling errors**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Impeding comprehension** | 1. After I met Yotam’s family, I was very happy and impressed of the new relationship we ***belt*** together. ***( built; developed)*** 2. Then I met Noor in the high school we had knew each other ***bitter*** and we make a strong relationship. ***(better)*** |
| **Inappropriate meaning** | 3. When I asked him why his father is forcing him to take the ***wresting*** class, he told me that ***he wants to make a man out of him***. ***(wrestling)***  ***(he wants me to be a responsible disciplined man)***  4. The end of the film is ***hopeful***. ***(spreading hope)***  5. However, if you like watching TV, I advise you ***to reduce*** ***it*** as much as you can. ***(to watch it less)***  6. We can find televisions these days almost in every ***home***, and ithas many advantages. ***(house)***  7. Another example, is that the required articles our lecturer sent to us by moodle ***the first*** of the year, helped us improving our reading skills. ***(at the*** ***beginning)*** |
| **Carelessness** | 1. We can use it with more than one way as a result of the ***tichniques*** it has. ***(techniques)*** 2. He ***laughted***, ate and ***wispered***. ***(laughed; whispered)*** 3. To have the chance to be ***proffissional (professional)*** 4. Another example, this course demanding to ***pring*** article every week. After that we solve the question about it. ***(bring)*** 5. Watching movies has a lot of positive benefits on our life and mind, that's not matter what movie's ***genrar*** is drama, horror or tragedy. ***(genre)***   GrandPa Ahamad , he ***past*** away 3 years ago I was 21 years old. ***(passed)*** |

* 1. **Stylistic errors**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Verbosity** | 1. Smartphones are one of the most ***prevalence*** devices these days, and at the same time it is becoming an addiction that affects teenagers negatively. ***(common)*** 2. Second, travelling has the power to make one ***manufacture***a whole new character, a better ***version*** of himself. ***(develop; image)*** 3. It's a ***retroactive life*** that depends on hunting and fishing as their eatingsource. ***(traditional way of life)*** 4. Second, providing students with cultural ***enrichment*** is another example. ***(background)*** 5. To sum up, I would like to emphasize the importance of watching movies and also of avoiding those that might ***mislead us. (affect us negatively)*** 6. The most important reason is that anyone in this world is ***ambitious*** for having peace. ***(looking forward)*** |
| **Circumlocutions** | 1. I'am attending this course***to get my writings in English better. (improve)*** 2. Also, we were in ***the organization group of our class***, and I was his secrets’ keeper. ***(the class committee)*** 3. I study at Beit Berl Academic College, and this is my first year, but in the meantime I am trying to find a job that fits ***my studying according to my limited time***. (***my schedule)*** |
| **Misuse of compounds** | 1. First of all, because it shows us a different ***manner of style*** ***of life*** from a different culture. ***(life style)*** |
| **Redundancy** | 1. ***will and determination*** 2. Doctors turn to be a ***basic and cardinal*** element in saving patients' lives. 3. The pupils ***enjoyed and liked*** my activities, also the teacher. 4. Emotions, vulnerability and personal issues are ***contested and debated*** issues among scholars and researchers who study education, its methodology and its connection to the child. ***(controversial)*** 5. First, the ***marvelous and refreshing*** weather that enables me to get out of the house and visit or hang out with my friends. ***(good)*** 6. ***Exams*** are useful. Besides, ***it*** contains ***a lot of*** advantages. 7. I have a lot of goals that I'm looking forward to achieve, but these are my main ones. 8. Hopefully I will fulfill ***it*** someday. ***(them)*** 9. Due to ***this activities*** they spend less time with their family members an schools work. 10. Yafa married, she has a little cute boy his name hamodi , hamodi has ***a shiny brown eyes*** and curly hair so cute too. |

###### Conclusion

This chapter focuses mainly on errors at the sentence level, considering them as a natural phenomenon and even looking at them positively since they help language instructors understand the reasons behind committing them. It starts with differentiating between mistakes and errors. While mistakes are a slip of a tongue that could be easily self-corrected, errors are systematic that are repeated because the learner is not aware of them. In addition, it discusses local and global errors. The former usually do not obstruct communication and understanding the meaning of the word; however, the latter interfere with communication and disrupt the meaning of the words. Examples of both types are provided too. For example, local errors include noun and verb inflections, and the use of articles, prepositions, and auxiliaries, and global errors involve wrong word order in a sentence.

Errors at the sentence level are syntactic, semantic and mechanic. Different researchers classified them and identified their sources. Syntactic errors include grammatical as well as phonological and morphological errors. Semantic errors relate to meaning and occur at the sentence level as well as the word level, specifically word formation and affixation. They are classified in three categories: lexical, collocation and lexicogrammatical. Each category has subcategories, depending on the errors identified. The third type of errors is mechanic, which includes capitalization, spelling and punctuation.

For classifying my students’ errors in this chapter, I adopted the classifications of errors by different researchers such as Abi Samara (2003), Al-Shormani & Al-Sohbani (2012), James (1998) and Krashen (1982). Classifying and analyzing the errors indicate the reasons behind committing such types of errors. Interlingual interference, which refers to first language interference of learners is the main reason. Intralingual interference, which includes developmental errors of the target language is the second reason that is followed by limited knowledge of English grammar and vocabulary, and carelessness of the students.

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