

Error Analysis of the Written English Essays by Libyan EFL Learners: Case study of Alasmarya University EFL students

Ahmed Abdussalam Abied¹ Abdulla Ali² Mustafa M. Ashfello³

1&3 Department of English, Faculty of Arts and Sciences, Kasr Khair. Elmergib University, Libya.

2 Department of English, Faculty of Human Sciences, Alasmarya University, Libya.

1 ahmed.eabaid@yahoo.com

2 abdo.alackary@asmarya.edu.ly

3 mmashfello@elmergib.edu.ly

ملخص البحث

في مجال تدريس اللغة، افترض علماء السلوك أن نقل المعرفة باللغة الأولى إلى اللغة الهدف هو المسؤول عن الأخطاء التي يرتكبها المتعلمون أثناء تعلم اللغة الأجنبية. نتيجة لذلك، تم إجراء تحليل مقارنة لمعرفة الاختلافات والتشابهات بين اللغات للتعويض بالصعوبات المتوقعة لتعلم اللغة الهدف. ومع ذلك، أظهر أن نقل المعرفة لا يمكن أن يكون السبب الوحيد لارتكاب الأخطاء، وهذا أدى إلى التساؤل عما إذا كانت فرضية التحليل المقارن ستكون صحيحة أم لا. أدت صحة فرضية التحليل المقارن إلى مفهوم التداخل بين اللغتين والتداخل في اللغة الهدف (الأجنبية). تدعي النظرية أن هناك نظاما موجودا في مكان ما بين اللغة الأم واللغة الهدف التي بصدد تعليمها أو تعلمها من قبل المتعلمين. تم تطبيق هذا البحث من أجل معرفة مصادر الأخطاء التي يرتكبها الطلاب الجامعيون أثناء تعلمهم للغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية من خلال تحليل مقالاتهم المكتوبة.

ABSTRACT

In the field of language teaching, behaviorists assumed that the transfer of routines of the first language into the target language was responsible for the errors made by the learners while learning a foreign language. As a consequence, contrastive analysis was conducted to find out differences and similarities between languages to predict the expected difficulties of learning the target language. However, showed that language transfer could not be the only reason for committing errors, this led to questioning whether the contrastive analysis hypothesis would be valid or not. This validity of the contrastive analysis hypothesis led to the concept of 'Interlanguage'. The theory claims that there is a system existed somewhere between the language of the mother tongue and the target one to be taught or learned by the learners. This research is designed in order to provide insights into the Libyan (Arabic-English) Interlingual and Intralingual error sources by analyzing their written essays.

Keywords: *Intralingual, Interlingual, Error, Essay, Slips, Validity.*

I. Introduction:

In the field of learning the foreign language (FL) or second language (L2) is comprehensive and have been a fertile field for researchers. The results of the recent studies show that different theories have been used to understand the process of FL acquisition. Among these theories, the most predominant ones are formerly Contrastive Analysis (CA) and later Error Analysis (EA). EA principally is one of the theories of (FL) or (L2) learning that has received much attention from researchers.

Error analysis has been widely used by many linguists and language teachers to deal with the learners' errors as the most appropriate tool in dealing with learners' language errors and to find the sources of errors.

Writing is a very important means for everybody to express his or her emotions and feeling, to arrange their daily life routine and to communicate with others. Furthermore, writing is nowadays used as a means of psychotherapy, particularly as 'creative writing'. As for language learning, writing is considered as the most important skill. It is used as a means of instruction. Via writing, students can receive their knowledge and display it. Also, it plays an important role in the mental processes such as internalizing, organizing, consolidating and enhancing knowledge. Ulijn and Strother (1995) declared that writing in general, is concerned to be one of the active or productive skills of language usage. From a broader perspective, writing is a thinking tool. It is a tool for language development, for critical thinking and, mentoring, for learning in all disciplines.

II. Objective of the study:

The aim of the study is to investigate the most frequently committed errors in the university level students' written essays in the English departments at Faculty of Human Sciences, Alasmarya University in Libya. the researcher proposes that exploring the real causes of the students' errors in this respect will lead to logical suggestions, solutions and recommendations which may lead to improve the students' level of proficiency as well as the lecturers to find out suitable strategies to redeem these obstacles and find practical solutions.

III. Research Questions:

The aim of this study is to find answers to the following research questions:

- 1-What type of errors do the University EFL students commit?
- 2- Is the frequency of interlingual errors higher than intralingual errors?

IV. LITERATURE REVIEW:**1. Errors**

Making errors is a natural thing in the world as it is obviously attached to the human being in the process of learning languages, either native or foreign/ L2 languages. Errors indicate that the learner struggles to achieve improvement in his learning. The definition of this word varies from one prospective to another; when a child learning his/her first language (L1), adult native speaker, second language learners; they all make errors which have different names according to the group committing the error. The native speaker's error is

called "slip of the tongue", the child's one is known as "transitional forms" whereas the second language learners (L2) error is considered "unwanted forms". George (1972, p 8). It is an unplanned mistake in writing or speaking as mentioned by Crystal, (2008, p173).

In the second language teaching or learning process, the error has always been regarded as something negative which must be avoided. As a consequence, teachers have always adopted a repressive attitude towards it. On one hand, it was considered to be a symbol of inadequacy of the teaching techniques and on the other hand it was seen as a natural result of the fact that since by nature we cannot avoid making errors, we should accept the reality and try to deal with them. Fortunately, little by little the error has been seen from a different point of view being made obvious that we can learn from our mistakes.

Corder, (1967, p. 152) states that errors are visible proof that learning is taking place. He has emphasized that errors, if studied systematically, can provide significant insights into how a language is actually learned by a foreigner. He also agrees that studying students' errors of usage has immediate practical application for language teachers. In his view, errors provide feedback; they tell the teachers something about the effectiveness of their teaching.

According to Ancker, (2000), making mistakes or errors is a natural process of learning and must be considered as part of cognition. Weireesh, (1991, p. 113) considers learners' errors to be of particular importance since making errors is a device that learners use in order to learn.

Thus, Corder (1967, p. 166) Separates errors from mistakes. he suggests that, error happens when the learner does not have adequate L2 knowledge whereas the mistake occurs when the learner attempts to use language unsuccessfully such as laps of memory. Furthermore, Brown (2007, p. 218) states a necessity of distinguishing errors from mistakes by the L2 learner: Mistakes must be carefully distinguished from errors of a second language learner, idiosyncrasies in the language of the learner that are direct manifestations of a system within which a learner is operating at the time. An error, a noticeable deviation from the adult grammar of a native speaker, reflects the competence of the learners of English who ask ' Does John can sing?' are in likelihood reflecting a competence level in which all verbs require a pre-posed *do* auxiliary for question formation. As such, it is an error, most likely not a mistake, and an error that reveals a portion of the learner's competence in the target language". (Brown, 2007, p. 258).

It is not easy to distinct error from mistake. Linguists usually rely on the learner's ability to have self-correction, in such cases, it is identified as a mistake; otherwise it is an error, if such self- correction does not exist, however, the frequency of the ill-formed language items can be used as a criterion. Also, James (1998, p. 57) claims that errors cannot be corrected by the learner while mistakes can be self-corrected.

Some authors (e.g. Ellis, 1996) have tried to make a clear distinction between "error" and "mistake". As Ellis (ibid) defines errors as a deviation in the language of the learner which happens as a consequent of lack of knowledge of the correct rule, whereas, "mistake" is defined as a deviation in the language of the learner resulting from learners' faulty performance of their competence. It reflects the problems encounters the learning process.

According to Edge, (1989) as cited in (James 1998: 80-81) uses the term **mistake** as a cover term for all the wrong instances which foreign language learners produce and he divides mistakes into three categories:

The term **mistake** is used by Edge, (1989) as a general term for all errors committed by the learners of foreign languages thus he divides mistakes into three categories:

Slips according to edge, (ibid) slips happen as a result of carelessness or because of some processing problems. In this occasion, if the learners given a chance to correct it they usually success in doing so themselves.

Errors, as Edge defines it, are wrong forms that the learners are not able to correct them even if the errors were declared to them.

Attempts Edge, (1989) declares that attempts refer to almost "incomprehensible", and the learner obviously do not know how to use the right form. (James 1998: 81). In this incident learners usually tend to utilize their compensative strategies of communication.

The next classification that the researcher would like to discuss is that of Hammerly (1991 in James 1998). According to him, "the status of learner deviance must be determined in terms of the classroom" (James 1998: 81). Hammerly parts the learners' deviations in the classroom context into **distortions** and **faults**.

He defines distortions as "unavoidable and necessary, occur even with known TL forms, and should be ignored by the teacher" (James 1998: 81). Furthermore, He makes a distinguish between the distortions of the learners and the distortions of mismanagement. The learners' distortions take place when the language items are taught sufficiently, understood clearly and practiced sufficiently, while, mismanagement distortions occur because of the inadequacy in teaching the items and practicing them in questions. (Hammerly1991, p. 85)

The second category is faults, which occurs when the learners try to express or convey ideas that need a usage of structures that they have not learnt or taught. (Hammerly 1991: 72 cited in James 1998: 82). Also, he makes a distinction between the learners' faults and the faults of mismanagement, the first one is due to overextension of the learners without the assistance of the teacher. whereas, the second one occurs when the teacher neglects the learners' overextension.

In recent times, error analysis has been taken into consideration in many aspects. A big number of researchers deals with the questions of error analysis and its role inside language learning classrooms, such as, Edge, (1989); Bada, (2001); Darus – Subramanian, (2011); Abushihab, (2014); Al-Buainain, (2011); Ananda – Gani – Sahardin, (2014); Hanafi, (2015); Hatch, (2017); Heydari – Bagheri, (2012); Hopkinson, (2007); Rattanadilok Na Phuket, P., & Othman, N. B. (2015); Presada – Badea, (2014); Richards, (2015); Thomas, (2014); Jobeen – Kazemian – Shahbaz, (2013); Hussain – Hanif – Asif – Rehman, (2013); Sukasame - Kantho – Narrot, (2014); Murssi, A, (2015); Sawalmeh, (2013) and others. Furthermore, the issue of error analysis in the written language skill, they concentrated on its description, causes, influences and sources. Thus, they have shown the results, suggest a number of recommendations for further studies, even they have proposed some implications for syllabus designers of EFL/ESL, and offering teaching techniques and strategies that would

decline the amount of problems in the future. Here there are some of them, have been studied by many scholars, for instance, Al-Buainain, (2011); Phuket, P., & Othman, N. B. (2015); Abushihab, (2014); Sawalmeh, (2013); Jobeen – Kazemian–Shahbaz, (2015).

1.1. Error Analysis

Error analysis was influenced highly by the behavioristic theory followers in learning languages. This theory considered that the interference of the learners' first language rules as the most causer of errors. Thus, it pretended that language learning is a set of habits formed and once these habits of one language formed, they resist the other rules of the foreign language to be learned. the Contrastive analysis was constructed to understand the errors that the learners has committed considering the rules of both languages in terms of their similarities. This takes place when there are similarities between the TL and the MT this is what is so-called positive transfer, whereas, if there were differences between the two languages this type of transfer is called negative transfer. (Ellis, 1995; Norrish, 1983; Şanal, 2007; Gass&Selinker, 2008; Kazemian & Hashemi, 2014). On the other hand, the contrastive analysis might not describe all errors' causes and then it came to understood that the process is not as simple as it was shown by contrastive analysis, although there are enormous crucial processes that are working beyond the language learning. Language learning is very difficult and complex phenomenon that demands much handling and the analyzing of errors is the basis of linguistic analysis.

Subsequently, Chomsky's nativist theory enlightened the new way of studying errors and analyzing them as well as the language learning. Depending on the theory, language learning is not dealing with it as a process of habit formation any more. Besides that, there is a universal grammar and the ability to learn a language rules is owned by every learner. In this theory many cognitive processes are supposed to be engaged in language learning.

1.2. Sources of Learners' Errors

The knowledge of the error resource is a good for both the teacher and the learner. Harner (2007, p :96) says that students learn more about their Target language when they realize the source of their errors. Brown (2007;263) claims that before the learner acquires the TL system, the L1 linguistic system is the only way that leads the learners to draw (interlingual errors). Whereas Richards (1970 :2-3) claims that other errors can be noticed while acquiring L2 which do not reflect the L1; for example: *did he ated, what you are doing*. These errors may be called interlingual and the definition of the developmental errors is a type of errors that indicate the learner's overwhelming knowledge at specific points and situations in some of language acquisition characteristics.

1.3. Why Error Analysis is Done

Error Analysis is very useful since it gives a clear indication and it reveals that, the learning is happening. If errors studied systematically, can provide important insights about how language is actually learned by non-natives. The analysis of errors is useful since it reveals to the teacher and the curriculum designer the main points that lead the learners to commit errors. Also, it helps in designing practical remedial exercises. Thus, they provide evidence that the process of learning is in progressive mode. Corder (1967). States that, if

the study of errors is systematical and logical, leads to a significant vision about the actual process of learning languages by non-natives. Also, in his point of view, error analysis provides feedback; they inform the teachers whether their teaching has affected the students' learning or not. Weireesh, (ibid.) says EA is a priceless set of actions made to recognize and clarify the complexity faced by language learners. He adds that EA works as a reliable feedback to design a remedial teaching method. this assures that the difficulty of errors may happen when they are found out, as well when the teachers try to find a remedial process.

Sercombe, (2000) explains that EA is useful in three ways: The first one, it explores to the extent do the learners learned the target language. The Second one, to be informed about the common difficulties faced the learners while learning languages. And the third way, to know how people acquire languages. From this declaration, it can be summarized that errors should be studied and be dealt with as a positive thing for both teachers and learners.

EA as one of the most dominant theories of SLA has been defined by many scholars. Crystal (1999, p. 62) defines EA as the study of not well-formed items of language produced by learners in which it includes classifications and interpretations of errors systematically. furthermore, EA is described by Ellis and Barkhuizen (2005, p. 51-52) as "EA is made of a set of actions for discovering, investigating and explaining the errors of learners. EA is the study of the errors of the learners either in their writings or speeches. Corder(1967, p.167) indicates that language learners utter a correct sentence that it cannot be said that it is the repetition of what they have already heard. once they say a sentence that is not exactly as same as TL it can be assumed that the learner has mastered the TL language patterns and rules. Also, using EA gives notion about identifying strategies that are used by the learners in learning languages, trying to reach to the reason behind committing errors, and get information about common difficulties in language learning as a procedure for teaching or in the preparation of teaching materials and aids. (Richards and Schmidt, 2010, p. 184 and Richards, Platt and Platt, 1992, p. 127).

Vahdatinejad, (2008) declares that the analysis of errors can be used as tool to decide what is still needed for the learners' to be taught. It reveals the essential and significant information about the learners' competence lacks. Thus, he distinguishes the errors from lapses (mistakes). From Vahdatinejad's (ibid) point of view, mistakes are made even by the speakers of the language as a native, where these mistakes can be self-corrected. Whereas, a remedial procedures and corrections are demanded while dealing with errors. EA makes a comparison within the target language itself. (Zawahreh,2012: 281 and Swalmeh, 2013: 13).

Two reasons were given by Yang (2010:266) to study the learner errors in TL. The first one, is a TL oriented. The other one is that the learner's mother tongue and the target language are co-dialect of the same language. In dealing with language learning, Corder (1981) says "we are interested in the relation of what have been taught so far with the learner's knowledge at that some point." (Corder, 1981, p. 57). Errors are distinguished by comparing the erroneous utterances with the correct ones in L2 in relation to what the learner wants to express. This is what Corder made clear "we can regard the reconstructed utterances as translations of the learner's utterances into the target language" (Corder, 1981:37).

EA is realized by the linguists as one of the modern theories that enhance language learning process among the non-native learners. There are some objectives of EA that can

be taken into consideration in the real environment of teaching and learning mentioned by Keshavarz, (1999:11)

- 1 Determining the areas where the remedial teaching is necessary.
- 2 Designing more reliable tests.
- 3 Textbooks could be designed from the least to the most problematic language areas this act leads to improve the teaching methodology as the problems volume increases from easier to the more difficult.
- 4 Deciding the expected time for each item to be taught and understood by the learners.

1.4.Steps for Error Analysis

As mentioned by Ellis, (1994, p. 48). EA is done by carrying out four stages consecutively. The four consecutive stages are: (1) "collection of samples of the language learners, (2) identification of errors, (3) description of errors, and (4) explanation of errors".

1.4.1. Collection of samples of the language learners

The way of collecting data differs from one researcher to another. In regard to this stage, there is a group of important factors that influences the learners' errors. Ellis (1994, p. 49) affirms that these factors are crucial in "collecting a well-defined sample of learners' language which a clear statement can be conducted in regard to what kind of errors the learners commit and under what condition". The following Table summarizes these factors.

Table 1: Factors to Consider when Collecting Samples of Learner Language (Ellis, 1994, p. 49).

Factors	Description
A. language	
Medium	Learner production can be oral or written
Genre	Learner production may take the form of a conversation, a lecture, an essay, etc.
Content	The topic the learner is communicating about.
B. Learner	
Level	Elementary intermediate, or advanced.
Mother Tongue	The learner's L1
Language learning experience	This may be classroom or naturalistic or mixture of the two.

1.4.2. Identification of Errors

There are specific procedures and ways used to diagnose whether a deviant is an error or a mistake. The first step is checking the stability of the L2 learners' performance. If the learner uses the correct form of a certain structure or rule sometimes and after that he uses it

wrongly, then it is diagnosed as a mistake at the same time this deviant can be corrected by the learner without any help. However, if he/she uses the rule in a wrong way always, then it is diagnosed as an error. The second step is done by asking the TL/ L2 learners to correct their deviants. If they are able to correct them successfully. Here the deviant would be considered as a mistake otherwise, it is an error. Identifying errors differ from explaining them. Corder (1981) states a common model for errors identification in the TL/FL learners' utterances. In his model "every sentence is regarded as idiosyncratic until shown to be otherwise." (Corder, 1981, p. 21). This model supplies an acceptable distinction between what is so-called 'overt' and 'covert' errors. The over idiosyncratic errors occur when a sentence is not well-formed in terms of the rules of the TL. while the covert idiosyncratic errors are found when a sentence is a well-formed superficially but it does not lead to the meaning wanted by the learner.

Corder (1978, p. 56) points out that "the interpretation of the utterances of the learners is essential to identify the error's nature and presence". The author's intention of indicating the necessity of the learners' utterances interpretation, could be taken into consideration. Which it could lead to the main difference between ' what a learner wants to say' and 'what a learner has said'. Furthermore, Corder in this model, proves that the usage of the literal translation by the FL learners can give a signal of committing errors because of the interference from the MT.

It is fundamental to identify FL/L2 learners' errors to determine which item is considered erroneous. Ellis (1994), Brown (2000), and Corder (1981) (cited in Al-Tamimi (2006, p. 39) "consider any deviation from what a native speaker would produce, as an error". For that reason, an error can be any choice, by the language learners, which deviants from its appropriate application, as would be expected from a typical, knowledgeable, native-speaker of the language being learnt;

1.4.3. Description of Errors

This stage follows the identification stage. There is no any description occurs unless it follows an identification of the errors. The description is a precious demand to get a logical explanation of the learners' errors. In particular, when a description of errors takes place it serves three main purposes. These purposes are; The first purpose that it is essential for counting the errors of the learners. The second one; It would be an innate and natural to show everything that is not fixed, to prove the instinct of the individuals. The third purpose is to group the errors into categories and sub-categories so it helps in improving L2 errors taxonomy. Corder (1973) adds a practical classification of FL learners' errors in terms of the differences between the reconstructed version and the utterances of the learners. depending on that, the four classification categories of some elements are shown: selection, addition, omission or misordering. From Ellis (1997), point of view, omission takes place when the language learner leaves a necessary utterance's item out of the constructed sentence. as in, there is car in the garage. The article 'a' which should be added to the word 'car' is left out of this sentence. Selecting an inappropriate or incorrect element, this is what is so called selection category. Addition which refers to the act of adding unnecessary elements. Whereas, Misordering can be done when the learners misplace the item or put it in the wrong place.

Ellis (1997) declares that "classifying errors in these ways can help us to diagnose learners' learning problems at any stage of their development and to plot how changes in error patterns occur over time." (Ellis, 1997, p. 23). It is clear that when a researcher or teacher diagnoses the errors' category, he would reach to a distinctive point of view about his learners' progression in the learning process also, the category of the erroneous field gives a clear vision about the flaw of the teaching strategy or even the curriculum ineffectiveness.

Brown (2000) cited in (Erdogan, 2005) mentions that "An error may vary in magnitude. It is possible to include a phoneme, a morpheme, a word, a sentence or even a paragraph. according to this fact, thus errors can be viewed either globally or locally." (Erdogan, 2005, p. 264) makes a distinguish between the global errors and the local ones. The author signifies that the global errors might obstacle the communication process because it prevents the receivers from getting the intended message or meaning. Contrary, the local errors might not stop the receiver from comprehending the intended meaning or message in the communication the only thing it might lead to is a slight breach in one part of the sentence which lead the listener to correct it.

1.4.4. Explanation of Errors

The crucial goal of EA theory is to explain errors. because of that, this stage is dealt with as the most significant stage in analyzing errors. just to reach to a successful remedial measure, Sanal (2007) states that it is important for the analyst to take into consideration the mechanisms that trigger every kind of the learners' errors.

The illustration of the nature of every error is a needed matter in SLA. Ellis and Barkhuizen (2005, p. 62) announce that "explaining errors includes determining their sources in order to indicate the reason behind its submission". The explanation stage is defined by Ellis (1994, p. 57) as "involves an attempt to establish the processes responsible for L2 acquisition". Thus Ellis, (ibid) gives explanation to the psycholinguistic sources of the learners' target language errors nature by dividing them into two classifications; performance and competence errors.

1.5.The Interlingual

The Interlanguage (IL) hypothesis was proposed by Larry Slinker 1972. From that time, another view given to deal with L2 acquisition in a way that neglected the behaviouristic principles (Lightbown and Spada, 2006:80, Brown, 2000:2015, 2007:256, Keshavarz, 2006:9, 2011:72, Saville-Troike, 2006:40.). Slinker (1974, p.35) explains IL As a " linguistic system based on the observable output which results from a learner's attempted production of a TL norm".

Selinker (1992) (Cited in Agha, 2007:29) theorizes that while attempting to learn a second language, there is a structure in the brain called the " latent psychological structure" which is activated. Interlanguage means that the system of the learner does not relate to L1 nor L2, nevertheless, has agent of both languages. In other words, interlanguage is a kind of language that locates between L1 and L2 with a combination of features between both of them.

1.6.Intralingual Errors

The second category of errors is consisted of intralingual errors and developmental ones. These errors may happen as a result of inadequate learning, difficulties inherited while learning the target language, using inappropriate methods of teaching or confused thinking. (Ho, 1973). Brown (1994: 225) says in a research; that the interlingual transfer errors category, predominance the learners' amount of errors during the first stages of learning languages. later, the intralingual errors gradually occurred, when the learners got more and more exposure and acquire parts of the new language's systems. Richards (1971:198) gives a definition to Intralingual errors as a type of errors "which reflect the general characteristics of rule learning, such as faulty generalization, incomplete application of rules and failure to learn conditions for rule application, the learner attempting to build up hypothesis about English from his limited experience of it in the classroom or textbook." Richards (1971). European Journal of Social Sciences – Volume 10, Number 2 (2009)

1.7.Related Studies

Referring to some previous studies conducted on learners' errors and analyzing them in different setting is a crucial thing that assures the importance of such studies to the learners, syllabus designers, and teacher as well. the researcher reviewed some related studies selectively.

J. Kerr (1970) conducted a study on Greek learners of English language as a foreign language writing. by analyzing the most frequent errors. The study revealed that the most frequent type of errors was the interlingual errors followed by the students' carelessness.

James Handrickson (1979) conducted a research in error analysis and its correction at Ohio State University on adult ESL intermediate level learners. The study showed that most communicative errors were because of insufficient lexical knowledge, serious misuse of pronouns and prepositions or serious misspellings. while errors in writing were due to the inappropriate lexical choice, word misordering, preposition misuse and omission.

Seah (1980) Made a research about the Chinese learners of English as a second language (ESL) and made an analysis in the interlanguage between the students' L1 and L2. the study revealed that the intralingual errors and the interlingual errors were the sources of the errors committed by the subjects.

Obeidat, H. A. (1986) study investigated the semantic and the syntactic errors in the written composition of Arab EFL learners. It was found that students made interlingual errors in determiners and preposition usage, and verb and preposition idioms. They commit interlingual errors in proverbs and idioms. Also, they made some of lexical interference. Intralingual errors were committed. In addition, the author emphasizes that some errors such as third person singular -s deletion are resulted from the universal grammar.

V. Methodology

1. Research Design

Quantitative methodology was used in this investigation by means of the collection and analysis of information given by the written assignments that are written in English language to get common errors among the Libyan university level faculty of Human Sciences,

students. Primarily, the aim of this study was to analyse the errors in written essays of English department students. Also, this study was conducted to answer the following research questions:

- 1-What type of errors do the University EFL students commit?
- 2- Is the frequency of interlingual errors higher than intralingual errors?

2. Research Setting

The context chosen to undertake the fieldwork was Libya. Libya is located in North Africa. The participants were students of English department, Faculty of human sciences a state university. It is a university in Libya and is located in Zliten It was founded in 1995 as a of university.

It provides undergraduate and Graduate study. This faculty was chosen to conduct this research because it has not been chosen as a study case before

3. Participants

This study was conducted on a sample of 40 students of English Department at the Faculty, during the academic year 2020/2021. The participants were selected randomly from different classes of the department. The sample included females only.

It is important to declare that ten (5) samples were excluded. Since they consisted of only one paragraph or two for the most. And this will be mentioned in the following chapters, because of that the researcher tend to mention the number of the reliable collected and analyzed samples.

The participants consist of females, ranging between 17 and 23 years in age. They have completed 12 years of education, 6 years in preparatory level followed by 3 years in primary level and 3 years in high school.

4. Data Analysis

The data collected through the writings that checked and analyzed by the researcher. To answer the research questions; (a) every essay errors were identified according to their linguistic categories whether, they were; morphology, lexicon and syntax. (b) each error was classified according to its main category and sub-category. (c) the number and percentage of each main and sub-categories were calculated. (d) the number and percentage of interlingual and intralingual errors were calculated.

5. Description of Errors

The description of the errors is based on linguistics. The written essays' errors have been analysed according to syntax, morphology and lexicon. It concerns with the frequency of errors as well as their sources.

6. Explanation of the errors

It is a linguistic activity; to describe errors; and it is a psycholinguistics activity when researchers explain errors. (Corder, 1974, Cited in Keshavarz, 2006, p :35-39). Hence, the present study is focused on the types and the frequency of errors and the hidden reason behind committing them by the subjected students.

7. Classification of errors into Error types

In this study, eighty (40) written essays were analyzed. Errors were classified according to their types depending on their linguistic classification. In the categorization, lexical, syntactic and morphological errors were identified.

The total number of errors committed by the students was four hundred and thirty (430) errors in forty (40) essays. As the researchers declared that the emphasis of this study are the types and sources of errors only, other errors such as; those related to semantics and orthography and other components of language errors were not taken into consideration. The three categorizations of language errors analyzed reached four hundred and thirty errors are classified as follows:

Table 1. The number and percentages of lexical, syntactic and morphological errors.

Error type	Number of errors	Percentages
Morphology	228	52.90%
Syntax	168	39.18%
Lexical	34	7.90%
Total	430	100%

as shown in this table 2, the total number of the errors is four hundred and thirty (430). The table illustrates the number of morphological errors which have the highest frequency and more than half of the errors committed two hundred and twenty-eight (228). And reached a total amount of errors (52.90%). The syntax errors reached one hundred and sixty-eight errors (168) of the whole number, and its percentage is 39.18%. The least amount of error categories detected was the lexical ones which is thirty-four errors (34). The percentage is (7.90%) out of the total amount.

This Bar graph shows the errors above.

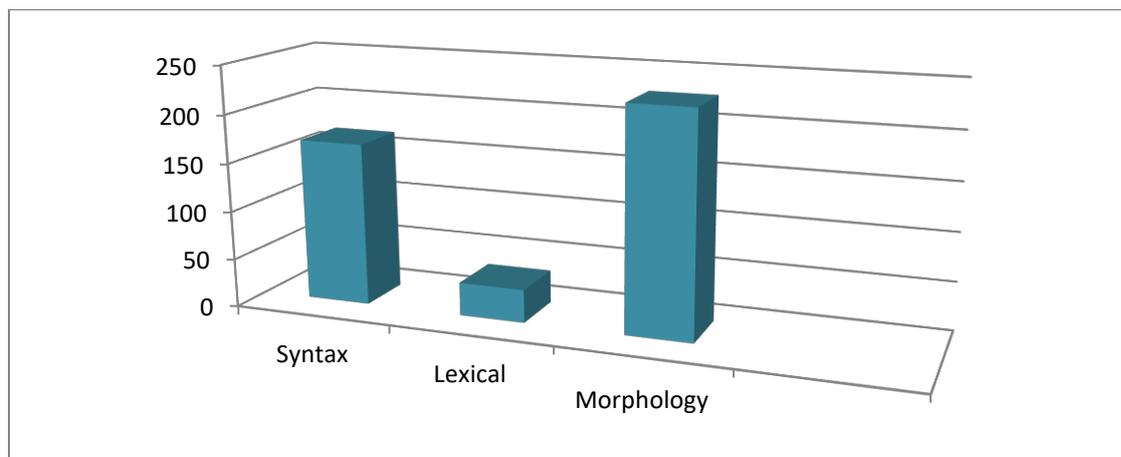


Figure 1. Number of Error Types

The bar chart number 1 indicates that the highest record of errors which is the morphology gives 2.90% more than half of the errors committed.

The second bar chart shows the syntactic errors with a percentage of 39.18%. The least percentage of errors committed was the lexical with 7.90%.

8. The percentages and Numbers of Interlingual and Intralingual Errors

The amount of the interlingual errors in this study was one hundred and fifteen (115) out of four hundred and thirty (430) errors found. which is 26.74% of the total errors' percentages, whereas, the occurrence of intralingual errors reached three hundred and fifteen (315) errors, which is 73.25% of the whole percentage of errors.

The following chart shows the number of interlingual and intralingual errors

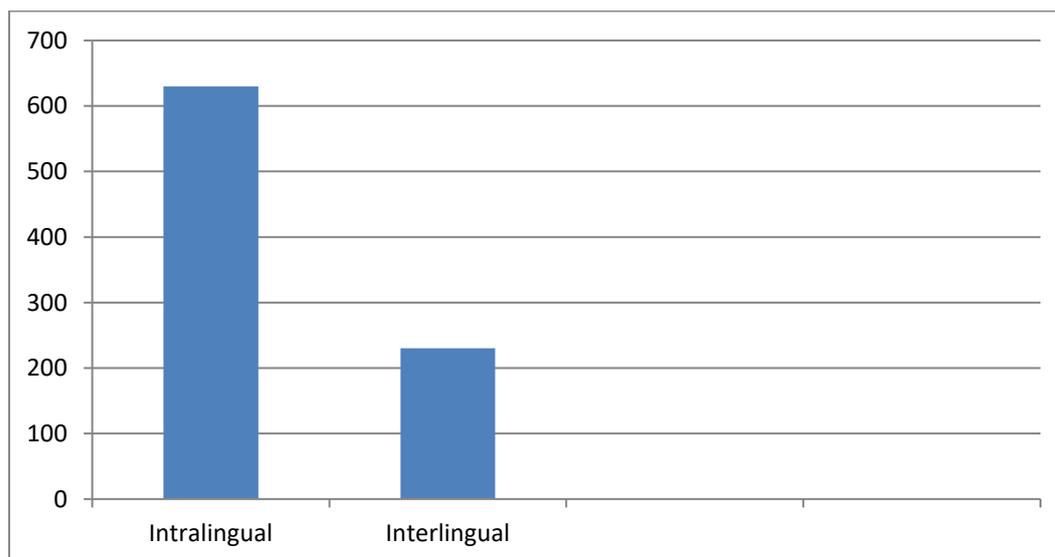


Figure 2. Interlingual and Intralingual Errors

Conclusion

The current study was done in order to distinguish, identify, and classify the errors that occurs in a frequent manner in the written essays of the Libyan EFL university level students, at faculty of human sciences, Alasmarya university. It is a matter of necessity to identify errors in writing skill to help learners as well as to help the teachers and syllabus designers to get to a practical and sophisticated techniques and strategies in which declines the amount of errors rates. The data were analyzed according to the three main linguistic areas which are Syntax, Morphology, and Lexicon.

The findings revealed that the knowledge of the English language rules is required for an understandable and well-written piece of essays as well as it will widen their comprehensive limits of knowledge about the English language. According to this study, the learners' deficiency in TL seems to be the major source which obstructs the students' effectiveness in writing English essays.

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