



P-ISSN 2355-2794  
E-ISSN 2461-0275

## Frequent Linguistic Errors in the Writing of Yemeni EFL Arabic-Speaking Learners

Ali Mohammed Saleh Al-Hamzi<sup>\*1,2</sup>

Mangatur Nababan<sup>1</sup>

Riyadi Santosa<sup>1</sup>

Djarmika<sup>1</sup>

Sumarlam<sup>1</sup>

Henry Yustanto<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Department of Descriptive Linguistics, Faculty of Cultural Sciences, Universitas Sebelas Maret, Surakarta 57126, INDONESIA

<sup>2</sup>Department of English, Faculty of Education, Sana'a University, Sana'a, PO Box 1247, YEMEN

### Abstract

*The Yemeni EFL learners are prone to share their knowledge and views regarding what and how to say. The constraints of combining this expertise have hampered learners' writing success. Those obstacles can cause learners to make errors. Error Analysis (EA) and Surface Strategy Taxonomy (SST) were used to analyze learners' linguistic errors. Error causes were also investigated. This research used a qualitative process style to use a case study approach. Ellis' five-step EA procedure was followed to analyze essay data each comprising 100-350 words or more written by 20 Yemeni EFL eighth semester Arabic-speaking learners at the Department of Education, Sana'a University, Yemen. They were purposely selected as research subjects. It was noticed that omission was the most common error detected in the learners' writings. Overall, this form of error accounted for 58.71% of 118 cases out of 201 cases. The learners' common error categories were the number marker, verb-tenses articles, prepositions, subject-verb agreements, and pronouns. This was preceded by addition (20.39%), incorrect formation (15.92%), and word order (4.97%). Intralingual transfer turned out to be the key reason that caused*

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\* Corresponding author, email: [ali.m.s\\_2022@student.uns.ac.id](mailto:ali.m.s_2022@student.uns.ac.id)

**Citation in APA style:** Al-Hamzi, A. M. S. Nababan, M., Santosa, R., Djarmika, Sumarlam, & Yustanto, H. (2023). Frequent linguistic errors in the writing of Yemeni EFL Arabic-speaking learners. *Studies in English Language and Education*, 10(1), 350-368.

Received March 25, 2022; August 27, 2022; Accepted December 1, 2022; Published Online January 31, 2023

<https://doi.org/10.24815/siele.v10i1.26022>

*the errors in the learners' writing. Any of the interlinguistic comparisons was the cause behind the errors. In terms of verb conjugation component, inflectional morpheme, and auxiliary verb abandonment, Arabic and English have different formal definitions. Interlingual transfer and learning context also caused errors. To prevent errors from fossilizing, language instructors should provide continual corrective feedback, and learners should pursue the correct target language form.*

**Keywords:** EFL Arabic-speaking learners' writing, error analysis, grammatical errors, linguistic errors.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The contrastive existence of both the English and Arabic languages contributes to an apparent grammatical inconsistency in the English language that is challenging for EFL (English as a Foreign Language) Arabic-speaking learners seeking to gain mastery of its formal frameworks. Given this linguistic challenge, learners might be more prone to making errors when writing. Hamzah (2012) argued that distinct linguistic characteristics, such as sentence structure and varied grammatical rules of the learner's native language, are contrasted to those of the target language. In other words, EFL learners find it challenging to explain their ideas of developing a comprehensible and understandable writing pattern in the target language. Polat (2018) further found that composing a sentence in their native tongue is simpler than composing one of the different language functions.

Error is a considerable divergence from the adult grammar of a native speaker (Brown, 2016). While this is real, errors significantly affect foreign language teaching. Accuracy during the learning process is almost challenging to prevent. If learners make errors, it is because they lack an understanding of the foreign language rules. There is no way to make up for errors created when studying a language, not even by the instructor or the content, and not by the learners. People cannot learn a language without making errors (Imaniar, 2018).

Many attempted to construct the building block for error category classifications. Dulay et al. (1982) supplied a taxonomy of error recognition for EFL learners that identifies linguistic errors. Additionally, there are several leading factors to errors, such as overgeneralization, first language interference, and language transfer (intralingual transfer and interlingual transfer) (Carrió-Pastor & Mestre-Mestre, 2014; Jeptarus & Ngene, 2016; Zulfikar, 2020). Moreover, one of Richards' (1971) three potential causes of error can be identified as interlingual, intralingual, or developmental errors. To ascertain the extent of an error, a more comprehensive error evaluation procedure can be used to help learners rebound from it.

According to Ellis (1989), EA results frequently reflect the linguistic errors made by L2 learners as they develop. Although the learner's language dynamics were identified through error review, this does not necessarily indicate where the learner's progress was detected (Jeptarus & Ngene, 2016). Second, it provides a solid foundation for L2 learners' psycho-linguistic errors. Although an error may be associated with a specific grammatical error form, no single error is held accountable for the entirety and development of the language learning phase. In other words,

today's quandary will not be tomorrow's or yesterday's issue. Furthermore, the error demonstrates how learners simplify their foreign language study. Ellis (2003) also proposed understanding the learner's language output in order to relate it to the 'accurate' target language. Each error will be given a grammatical definition due to this comparison.

Dulay et al. (1982) indicated four distinct methods to define when explaining language categorization errors. They are linguistic category taxonomy, surface technique taxonomy, comparative taxonomy, and communicative taxonomy. Tizazu (2014) and Widyaruli (2016) stressed that linguistic taxonomy that includes the description of terms and their associations with one another deals with classifying the defiance created by a language learner using linguistic components or a particular element of the linguistic component (phonology, syntax, grammar, semantics, lexicon, and discourse). Meanwhile, the surface structure taxonomy concentrates on how language structures are modified, thereby exposing surface-level errors in an utterance (Maniam & Rajagopal, 2016). Kafipour and Khojasteh (2012) emphasized that surface structure taxonomy addresses errors by focusing on the distinction between the altered structures of the target language utterances generated by an L2 learner and other forms of language constructions. For instance, errors created by the children native to English are used as comparative data when grading Italian EFL learners. According to Irawansyah (2017), communicative taxonomy is the final grouping. When the input is obtained, it impacts the reader or listener. Errors are distinguished depending on whether or not it impedes contact or causes miscommunicates.

Since this study's scope analyses learners' surface technique errors, it is narrowed down to this specific error. The essence of the surface strategy taxonomy stresses surface structure alterations (Dulay et al., 1982). Insights can be gained through the learner's cognitive process using a surface strategy as word order errors, omissions, and additions are common (Alhaisoni et al., 2017). Furthermore, because the Arabic language consists of different tenses and special uses of its linguistic category, which covers the grammatical structures of the language, it is a good chance to see the reasons for Yemeni EFL learners' errors while producing English. These systemic differences can include a glimpse into how Yemeni learners interpret English's linguistic structure and whether or not these differences can impede their English language learning process.

Based on the preceding context, most previous studies concentrated on error types. Few studies addressed the root causes of errors, and even fewer attempted to elaborate. Even less research has been conducted to determine the exact causes of the errors between English and Arabic. This is why the research is worthwhile and to disseminate the study's findings. The current study aims to identify the types of linguistic errors made by Yemeni university-level EFL Arabic-speaking learners, explain the source of the errors, and elaborate on the nature of the error sources at the level of the interlanguage comparison between English and systematic Arabic structures.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

This section discusses the foreign language learners' error and types of errors in writing.

## **2.1 Language Learners' Errors**

Error is a deviation from native speaker adult grammar, reflecting the learner's interlanguage competence (Mursalina, 2018). The fact that learners make errors and that these errors can be observed, analyzed, and classified to reveal something about the learner's system led to a surge in error analysis.

Errors analysis is a type of linguistic analysis that identifies and describes a language learner's error. Guzmán-Muñoz (2020) stated that language learners make many errors and cannot learn without committing errors. Learners learn the correct answer by making errors, which can motivate learning. It is realized that learners' errors are a form of learning. Nearly all learners make errors when learning English because it is hard to separate errors. Errors are deviations from the truth that affects understanding and distribution. The teacher should not see them as failures but as signs of learning. If a teacher tries to prevent a learner's errors, they never learn what they do not know.

In this case, linguists differentiate between a learner's error and a mistake. According to Karim et al. (2018), a mistake refers to language system failures caused by carelessness, memory lapses, and physical condition. The error refers to learners' inability to use the system correctly.

## **2.2 Types of Errors in Writing**

Several scholars attempted to thematize the distinct types of errors in various kinds of learners' writing (Liu & Xu, 2013; Phuket & Othman, 2015; Tasci & Aksu Ataç, 2018), while others focused on looking into the triggers of errors in learners' writing (Heydari & Bagheri, 2012; Watcharapunyawong & Usaha, 2013; Zheng & Park, 2013). Hamzah (2012) also concentrated on the general taxonomy of errors. He noticed that of the fifteen types of taxonomy errors, the learners were vulnerable to committing errors in six categories: verb category, word choice, plurality, spelling, preposition, and article. There are also more, many of which deal with subject-verb agreement, pronouns, relative clauses, possessives, copulas, and mechanics. In addition, Zawahreh (2012) analyzed the errors that 350 tenth-grade learners produced in 63 Jordanian secondary schools and noticed that for the morphology type of errors, consensus between the topic and the key verb was generally absent in the learners' written texts. Zawahreh (2012) offered an in-depth analysis and concluded that the errors arose from intrusion in the first and in-between languages. The study of Pandarangga (2014) also discovered that learners often omit verb agreement by using the simple present tense in the third singular pronouns. When the participant attempted to invent a modern language structure that contrasted with his natural language, errors resulted. He was persuaded that the subject resisted processing the target language's good rules out of a lack of incentive.

Besides, Rass (2015) shed light on the interlingual and intralingual transfer impact on Arab EFL written development. It was claimed that verbs were the predominant error form in student literature. Double-stimulating the native and target language structures occurred in the learner's cognitive domain, notwithstanding their desire to generate the target language structure, culminating in the interlingual transfer.

In addition to the above, Alhaysony (2012) performed an in-depth survey of 100 first-year female Arabic-speaking learners at the University of Ha'il, Saudi Arabia,

including an analysis of their written samples. During the study, learners made errors, with omission errors among the most prominent. This research has a mixed outcome since the errors found were both intralingual and interlingual transfer. Brown's (2000) analysis showed that errors that influenced only one language overtook errors that affected two languages. In short, Brown (2000) concluded that overgeneralizing the target language might lead to errors in learning English.

Chen (2004) published a report on 710 Hong Kong Chinese ESL learners in Hong Kong. Of the five common types of errors found, there are five. The conclusions from this research is that English learners always use the syntactic transfer they acquired from Chinese. That is why it triggered the run-on sentence and numerous other errors. Studies are performed in a comparable environment for this study. Such as Huang (2001), who analyzed the grammatical errors made by 46 English majors at a Taiwanese university. This study shows that the top six common errors are nouns, prepositions, spelling, verbs, and articles. These errors were attributable to overgeneralization, neglect of rule limitations, simplification, and L1 negative transfer. Huang (2006) used a web-based writing program to examine 34 Taiwanese English majors' errors. It was found that 55% of errors in that study were usage-related where EFL learners need to concentrate on subject-verb. Mechanics, grammar, and style errors were identified to be transferred from EFL learners' first language (Huang, 2006).

### **3. METHODS**

This study used a qualitative method design to describe the data (Silverman, 2020) and a case study approach to expand and improve the already known evidence (Stake, 2010). Furthermore, language transfer and surface strategy taxonomy were also investigated in the research.

#### **3.1 Participants**

This study selected 20 Yemeni EFL eighth semester Arabic-speaking learners at the Department of Education, Sana'a University, Yemen, as participants. This represents the features of standardized purposeful sampling since it pertains to the age, culture, and profession of the chosen applicants as learners. It is also focused on considering that they have learned a variety of English grammar topics in previous semesters (Etikan et al., 2016).

#### **3.2 Data Collection**

The study data were obtained from the documentation gained from the learners' test results during the Advanced Writing subject. The test was performed to obtain appropriate data on the learners' errors. The learners' composition test each contained 100-350 words or more. The subject outlined a list of questions/statements as a framework for learners to write down their thoughts under the theme "The Value of Education". This was done to minimize the variance on the targeted subject to simplify and ease the process of finding the error pattern and its origins. Such simplification

was applied to decide how learners translate and write their words from the native language into the target language.

### 3.3 Data Analysis

For error analysis (EA), Ellis (1994)'s five-step method was used. The first three steps of EA examine error classification (Tizazu, 2014). First, language samples are collected from learners responding to the same task. The second step was identifying errors in learner samples (essays) deviated from the target language. To do this, samples were compared to the 'correct' L2 sentence. The third step was to classify errors using Dulay et al.'s (1982) surface strategy taxonomy.

As a result of error classification, participants' error descriptions were utilized as a baseline to explain the reasons behind their occurrences. These errors were analyzed based on language transfer and learning context (Brown, 2000; Cook, 2016; Mestre-Mestre & Carrió Pastor, 2012). Mestre-Mestre and Carrió Pastor (2012) proposed a grid model adaptation for error coding.

In estimating the number of errors and the frequency of errors, the mathematical estimation to demonstrate the error percentage is used (Sudijono, 2018):

$$P = \frac{F}{N} \times 100\%$$

Where:

P is the percentage of errors

F is the frequency of errors

N is the total number of samples

## 4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### 4.1 Types of Errors

The omissions arise when EFL learners made errors and had trouble handling them. As can be seen in Table 1, taken as a whole, there are 201 instances of EFL learners' errors in their written activities. The average blunder is contained in omission, comprising 58.71% of 118 cases. In this regard, grammatical morphemes dominated with 81 cases compared to 37 content morphemes. This is accompanied by additional error types with 41 cases, which is 20.39%. Under this error, the three types are double labeling, regularization, and simple addition, which shared the same error scores in 14.117, and 10 cases, respectively. The error of incorrect formations explicitly shadows with 15.92% out of 100% in 32 instances, 29 of which come into the alternating form group, and the other three are classified as archi-forms. Meanwhile, misorderings are the last, with the least error cases at 4.97 %, accounting for 10 out of 201 errors in the EFL learners' writings.

**Table 1.** The frequency of different types of errors in each classification.

| Error classifications | Number of cases | Percentage (%) |
|-----------------------|-----------------|----------------|
| Omissions             | 118             | 58.71%         |
| Contentive morphemes  | 37              |                |

Table 1 continued...

|                         |     |        |
|-------------------------|-----|--------|
| Grammatical morphemes   | 81  |        |
| Additions               | 41  | 20.39% |
| Double marking          | 14  |        |
| Regularizations         | 17  |        |
| Simple additions        | 10  |        |
| Incorrect formations    | 32  | 15.92% |
| Archi-forms errors      | 3   |        |
| Alternating forms       | 29  |        |
| Misorderings            | 10  | 4.97%  |
| Misplacement of objects | 4   |        |
| Misplacement of adverbs | 6   |        |
| Total of Errors         | 201 | 100%   |

#### 4.1.1 The omissions

Ellis (1997) stated that omission is the removal of a word or grammatical element needed in an expression related to grammar. Tizazu (2014) also indicated that omission errors generally appear where a mandatory element is omitted within an ‘obligatory context’ sentence. Some items were frequently missing in specific circumstances, showing the most common reason for the omission. They are pronouns, verb tense, number markers, prepositions, subject-verb concord, and articles (Tizazu, 2014). The omission types of errors account for 58.71% of the total, with 118 cases out of 201 falling into this category. Most come in verb-tense errors (28 cases) since the EFL learners forgot the concordance aspects, neglected to note the auxiliary verbs, or ignored the presence of the main verbs, which is evident in the number of markers (39 cases). For instance, learners failed to synchronize the quantifiers with the following nouns. The second most apparent error is the wrong article choice, scoring in 18 instances.

Meanwhile, for 12 and 13 instances, all prepositions and subject-verb agreements have the same count. The pronoun causes the lowest number of errors in this classification, with just eight cases. Table 2 provides explanations of omission errors.

**Table 2.** Frequency of omission error types.

| Omissions             | EFL learners' errors                                | Corrections proposed  | No.             |
|-----------------------|---|---|-----------------|
| Grammatical Morphemes | 1. ....<br>it <b>help</b> people gain knowledge.    | 1. ....<br>it <b>helps</b> people gain knowledge              | 81              |
|                       | 2. ....<br>there is some <b>strategy</b>            | 2. ....<br>there are some <b>strategies</b>                   |                 |
|                       | 3. ....<br>many <b>locality</b>                     | 3. ....<br>many <b>localities</b>                             |                 |
| Contentive Morphemes  | 4. ....<br>Which ^ necessary for everyone           | 4. ....<br>which <b>is</b> necessary for everyone             | 37              |
|                       | 5. ....<br>education ^ significant part in our life | 5. ....<br>education <b>is</b> a significant part of our life |                 |
| Total                 |   |   | 118<br>(58.71%) |

Omission error definition concerns a small piece of knowledge in a word that, if overlooked, might change the word's meaning and classification (Ellis & Barkhuizen, 2005). The lack of –s marker verb agreement at the end of a verb marking the 3rd person singular or the –s number marker morpheme were accounted for most of the cases found in the learners' writing within this category.

In this respect, a concordance of subject-verb harmony is the grammatical norm for the 3rd person singular. In other words, there must be an –s marker at the end of the verb in the third person singular. The statement is incorrect if this rule is broken, as shown in (1). The sentence's subject is the word 'it'. On the other hand, the morpheme –s for the verb 'help' was left out.

When it comes to number marker consensus, most learners fail when it comes to quantifiers instead of the element of concordance. As a consequence, the statement is grammatically wrong. The grammatical rule of number is affected in sentence (2) by the absence of a plural marker which must be attached to the noun 'strategy'. The word 'many' indicates many entities concerned, rendering it a plural marker in contraction. 'Many strategies' is the right expression. The same instances of number markers occur in sentence (3). Quantifiers are used to speak about the same noun's quantities, numbers, and degrees. 'Many' is used with a plural countable noun, such as 'many tales', while 'much' is used with a singular, uncountable noun, such as 'much worry'.

Meanwhile, the next section of the omission error classification discusses the composition and usage of verbs, in which an incomplete may deduce coherent sentences or create incorrect ones. Multiple situations occur where learners overlook or ignore the vital function of helping verbs in corrections. This slight defect leads to a grammatical misunderstanding in English. The participants attempted to create a relative closure, a non-restrictive clause. A clause can be left out without modifying a sentence's original context. Thus, leaving the terms would not alter the context of the sentence. However, the sentence's unfinished implementation in (4), the helping verb, produces an ungrammatical utterance.

Not only do they fail to use the helping verb in a subordinate clause, but there are also situations when learners often missed the implication of their vacancy in a dependent clause. Sentence (5) omits the linking verb 'is'. Its absence disconnects the topic and terms. Unlike the auxiliary and main verbs, there are no ongoing actions or occurrences with other situation(s).

#### *4.1.2 The addition errors*

Lennon (1991) explains that deletion errors are when the learner eliminates the parts/parts needed for expressions to be ungrammatical. In contrast to omission, addition is defined by Dulay et al. (1982) as an object that must not be present in well-formed utterances. It could happen for many purposes, and they are: inserting in the sentence a needless lexicon that hinders the expected context, pluralization where it does not ask for, double pronouns, and tense. The last aspect is partly due to the discrepancy element between the subject and the verb or the helping verbs. Overall, 41 instances out of 201 cases are classified as addition error forms, representing 20.33% of overall error figures.

A count of 6 instances in the learners' writing inserted insignificant terms. The most popular errors result is from incorrect timing (29 cases). It may be induced by using two categories of tense markers in a sentence, such as modal and past-participle,



confusion between an auxiliary verb and the subject, or incomplete rule of application that affects the basic tense concordance function. Meanwhile, four cases and two cases adopt pluralization and pronouns. Table 3 contains further error instances from the data.

**Table 3.** The frequency of error types in addition errors.

| Additions        | EFL learners' errors  | Corrections proposed                                       | No.            |
|------------------|---|--|----------------|
| Double Marking   | 1. ....<br>we cannot imagined a life<br>without education   | 1. ....<br>we cannot imagine a life<br>without education   | 14             |
|                  | 2. ....<br>people they need to study                        | 2. ....<br>people need to study                            |                |
| Regularization   | 3. ....<br>education have a significant<br>part in our life | 3. ....<br>education has a significant<br>part in our life | 17             |
|                  | 4. ....<br>people gain some respects...<br>...              | 4. ....<br>people gain some respect...<br>...              |                |
| Simple Additions | 5. ....<br>the some knowledge....                           | 5. ....<br>some knowledge....                              | 10             |
|                  | 6. ....<br>people can be more<br>civilized.....             | 6. ....<br>people can be more<br>civilized.....            |                |
| Total            |   |  | 41<br>(20.39%) |

In most cases, in the addition type, errors are contained in the accounted tense writings of learners. The reasons, as discussed above, may be for different reasons. In subject-verb agreement, they particularly have difficulties. It is proven by adding in a sentence two tense markers, each on the same level or two tense types.

Consider sentence (1) using two tense markers levels in a sentence. It is made of the modal 'can'. Unlike other verbs, it does not change its form; neither an infinitive nor a participle (past/present), and the verb following a modal auxiliary must appear in the basic form (infinitive). Since the word 'imagined' came after the modal 'can', no extra tense conjugation is required.

Sentence (2) is an example of how learners simultaneously duplicate a sentence by adding two pronouns or subjects. Simply because of using two subjects in one sentence without using a comma (,) or conjunction, such as 'or' and 'and'. Contrary to tense, learners perform only a relatively limited amount of additional complexity in the pronoun aspects. They tend to incorporate an extra tense marker, normally resulting in a difference between an auxiliary verb and the subject.

The subject of sentence (3) is a singular noun ('education'), so 'has' is the required auxiliary verb in the third-person singular conjugation. This deviation from the standard application of the quantifier rule and number agreements caused learners' own set of problems.

An exception to the quantifier rule can be seen in sentence (4). Since 'respect' is used to denote both singular and plural in this sentence, the morpheme -s should not be attached to the end of the expression, even though it is preceded by a quantifier ('some').

In sentence (5) of context-dependent, the writer was attempting to inform the readers about several additional applications in knowledge. Many EFL learners'

addition errors are due to simple insertion, adding a redundant feature, or a term that has no connection to the utterance. So, ‘some’ is the correct form to be used in this sentence.

Afterward, in sentence (6), the learners added ‘to’ after the modal verb ‘can’. The modal verb is separated from the bare infinitive ‘be’ by this kind of addition. When these two words are combined, incorrect grammatical utterances result in incorrect English collocation.

#### 4.1.3 Incorrect formations

Incorrect formations address misuse of morpheme structure. Archi-forms and alternating forms are two kinds of defects found in the learners’ writing. The former deals with using one class member to represent those of the same class as the product of the failure to discriminate (Dulay et al., 1982; Tizazu, 2014). In the meantime, the latter insists on misusing words in an utterance. Overall, 32 of 201 instances are classified as error forms, representing 15.92% of the total errors (see Table 4). Except for three cases that occur in the archi-forms group, all 29 cases are classified as alternating types. Table 4 shows some error illustrations.

**Table 4.** The frequency of error types in incorrect formation errors.

| <b>Incorrect formations</b> | <b>EFL learners’ errors</b>         | <b>Corrections proposed</b>          | <b>No.</b>     |
|-----------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|----------------|
| Alternating Forms           | 1. ....strategies may be made....   | 1. ....strategies should be made.... | 29             |
|                             | 2. .... on the 20th century .....   | 2. .... in the 20th century .....    |                |
| Archi-Forms                 | 3. ....in fridays ....              | 3. ....on Fridays ....               | 3              |
|                             | 4. ....life could be disastrous.... | 4. ....life can be disastrous....    |                |
|                             | 5. ....these view.....              | ...<br>5. ....these views.....       |                |
| Total                       |                                     |                                      | 32<br>(15.92%) |

The alternating mode category of error that focuses on misusing words in an utterance is called misformation. Since the participants are EFL learners, preventing errors about a suitable lexicon option is impossible because English is not their first language, and therefore, errors are likely to occur (Agustinasari et al., 2022; Mashoor & Abdullah, 2020). One is for an exemption, and the other situations come under the criteria of what forms of fitting words to use in sentences. Learners faced this aspect’s burden when they made some errors. In terms of grammatical errors, learners encounter some difficulties due to incorrect use of time prepositions such as between ‘at’, ‘on’, and ‘in’. Sentence (2) uses ‘on’ for portions of the day, months, seasons, years, decades, and centuries. However, EFL learners use ‘in’ or ‘at’ in their writing exercises. Similar conditions prevailed while using ‘on’ or ‘at’. EFL learners also absorb an erroneous ‘on’ preposition in sentence (3), usually used for days, including weekdays, times, special events, and holidays.

Besides prepositions, the effort by EFL learners to produce sentences dependent on the unsuitable option of the term often happens inside the modal range. Both ‘can’

and ‘could’ can be used to convey possibility (sentence (4)), but the certainty and connotation vary slightly. It may indicate that something is probable but not definite, while it can be used to create general conclusions on what can be executed. Although sentence (1) is true, the error arose primarily due to word choice. ‘May’ is used to refer to situations that can happen. However, ‘should’ denotes things that should or must happen.

A curious consequence of incorrect archi-form forming (sentence (5)) comes to light because only three learners seem to have an issue with it. This standard discusses the reliability of learners in using one class member to portray those in the same class as a function of their failure to distinguish it. In this situation, EFL learners still use the same demonstrative ‘these’ when associated with plural or singular nouns.

#### 4.1.4 Misordering errors

The last form of surface taxonomy error is called misorderings. These forms of errors relate to the incorrect positioning of morphemes in utterances (Dulay et al., 1982; Tizazu, 2014). That may be adverb misplacements, subject misplacements, etc. This classification has only ten instances, representing 4.97% of all cases. Both groups tend to share the same number of defects, four for object misplacement and six for adverb misplacement. Table 5 provides instances of misorderings. The number of errors detected is only 10, and it can be perceived that learners seldom have trouble with these kinds of errors.

**Table 5.** The frequency of error types in misordering errors.

| Misorderings            | EFL learners’ errors   | Corrections proposed  | No.           |
|-------------------------|--|---|---------------|
| Misplacement of Objects | 1. ....people can knowledge gain....                         | 1. ....people can gain <b>knowledge</b> ....                        | 4             |
| Misplacement of Adverbs | 2. ....the average of education usually is not the same..... | 2. ....the average of education is not <b>usually</b> the same..... | 6             |
| Total                   |  |   | 10<br>(4.97%) |

Incorrect placements in an utterance of a morpheme or a set of morphemes are misorder errors. Looking at both sentences above (Table 5), they have incorrect object placement (‘knowledge’) and an adverb of frequency (‘usually’). Grammatically, the object must follow the verb, and the frequency adverb must come after ‘to be’. The EFL learners in this study ignored this grammatical rule when writing. In such a case, they rendered written errors, the word-for-word translation of native language surface structure.

## 4.2 Sources of Errors

The key explanation for the cause of the error is the intralingual transfer, as seen in Table 6, which shows 220 cases, more than half of the cases (72.36%). The second highest frequency of learner error causes is interlingual transfer. The total number of interlingual transfer cases contained in the essays were 56, around 18.42% number of errors. Meanwhile, interference from the learners’ language is not the sole cause of errors.

**Table 6.** Rate of frequency on the error source.

| Criterion             | Classifications            | Case       | No. (%)     |
|-----------------------|----------------------------|------------|-------------|
| Interlingual Transfer | Transfer of the Structures | 56 (100%)  | 56 (18.42%) |
| Intralingual Transfer | Omissions                  | 118 (100%) | 220(72.36%) |
|                       | Additions                  | 41 (100%)  |             |
|                       | Incorrect Formations       | 32 (100%)  |             |
|                       | Misorderings               | 10 (100%)  |             |
|                       | Incomplete Rule            | 19 (100%)  |             |
|                       | Applications               |            |             |
| Context of Learning   | Generalizations            | 25 (100%)  | 28(9.21%)   |
|                       | Simplifications            | 3 (100%)   |             |
| Total                 |                            | 304 (100%) |             |

Learners can make errors in the target language as they do not know it very well and have trouble using it. Richards (2015) noted that intralingual interference refers to things created by learners that represent not the structure of the mother tongue but generalization based on partial target-language exposure. Brown (2000) observed that the predominance of interlingual transfer marks the early phases of language learning, but after the learners have started to absorb parts of the new system, more and more generalization in the target language is manifested.

Carrió-Pastor and Mestre-Mestre (2014) also stressed the observable fact that intralingual transfer is deemed normal when the second language learners attempt to extract the rules from the target language data to which they were introduced. In other terms, they are learning processes. During this time, they begin to establish hypotheses that may lead to their mother tongue, neither their native language nor the L2. If learners begin to absorb parts of a new structure, an increasingly intralingual transfer occurs (Brown, 2000). As this process continues, learners begin to devise new utterances dependent on the knowledge they experience (Brown, 2000) before actually being capable of constructing ‘true’ sentences. This explanation is based on the fact that learners have considerable difficulties in coping with the complexities of English grammar rules compared to, for example, spelling or vocabulary (Ciesielkiewicz & Marquez, 2015).

The second highest frequency of learner error causes is interlingual transfer. Interference, language transfer, and cross-linguistic interference are often called inter-linguistic errors. Such errors arise when the learner’s rules, systems, or patterns interfere with or prevent them, to some degree, from acquiring second-language rules and patterns (Burhansyah, 2019; Corder, 1981; Yule, 2020). Lado (1964) and Fromkin et al. (2018) stated that interference (negative transfer) is the mother tongue (L1) effect on target language performance (L2). Chelli (2014) characterized interlingual errors as the product of language transfer induced by first-language learners. Richards (2015) indicated that if foreign language learners create errors in the target language through the influence of their mother tongue, it is considered interlingual. As reported by Brown (2000), most of the errors of second language learners derive mainly from the learner’s belief that second language types are identical to the native language. This means that the EFL learners’ native language at this stage plays a limited role in writing in the target language, although it cannot be forgotten (Bataneh, 2005). Take into account that, firstly, Yemeni EFL learners have studied the language since their youth, and, secondly, the interlingual transfer takes second place after the intralingual transfer. The former attempts to demonstrate that the learners have been used to the

new language system for a number of years, that they are comfortable with it, and that they have been learning it for some time.

This leads to the second argument, which reminds us that the learners are currently developing and manipulating the data of their target language. In brief, the learners' errors are mostly the result of how learners use these data to "correctly design" L2 rather than interfere. This frequency and accuracy rate of intralingual transfer was deduced by [Can \(2018\)](#) as the basis that interlingual transfer infrequently occurred during the advanced stage of learning. [Rostami Abusaeedi and Boroomand \(2015\)](#) share this viewpoint, claiming that learners' errors are caused mainly by incomplete learning of the target language (intralingual transfer). This supports the idea that EFL learners prefer to think and compose an utterance in their native language before delivering it in the target language ([Sermsook et al., 2017](#)).

#### 4.2.1 *Interlingual transfer*

##### a. *Literal translation*

Taking into consideration the errors of Arabic language interference, the most common errors of interlingual translation are the literal translation of Arabic words into English. The first noteworthy trend in literal translation standards is an exact syntactic equivalence concerned with lexical interference. [Al-Khresheh \(2010\)](#) stressed that literal translation errors occur because learners convert word-by-word their first-language sentences or idiomatic expressions into the target language. According to [Richards \(2015\)](#), transferring errors cause interlingual errors. [Touchie \(1986\)](#) and [Shiva and Navidinia \(2021\)](#) proposed that interlingual errors are primarily caused by mother-tongue interference. [Dailidénaitè and Volyneec \(2013\)](#) indicated that lexical interference is normal, though difficult, trend in written development and causes more damage than accurate translation when translating one's native languages into target languages.

##### b. *Substitution in prepositions*

Preposition errors accounted for omission and addition in the data analysis. There are some cases where prepositions are used outside these two classifications ([Phuket & Othman, 2015](#)). Prepositions are utilized in many languages, despite linguistic variations. The same preposition might have different meanings in various languages. These perception differences in both languages allow learners to interpret the translation as they did in their L1, therefore, the substitution. [Alshammari \(2017\)](#) assumed that the obstacles to comprehending proper application were attributable to one's language and dialect variations. [Hermet and Désilets \(2009\)](#) agreed that preposition errors occur primarily due to misunderstandings in the second language. For example, frequently use a preposition such as 'in' in situations where it should be 'at'.

#### 4.2.2 *Intralingual transfer*

Unlike interlingual errors, which are caused by input from the first language, intralingual errors are caused by the target language. L2 learners either have inadequate

knowledge of language constructs or a faulty understanding of certain grammatical principles during the acquisition period (Al-Khresheh, 2016; Fareed et al., 2016). In other words, learners are still developing to acquire L2. This study found interlingual errors in omission, incorrect formations, misorderings, incomplete rules, applications, and addition. It may be argued that omission can result from the simplification of learners and lack of awareness of proper language forms, while additions can result from the overgeneralization of rules (Farooq, 1998). As learners lacked specific morphemes or suffixes in word formation, they either overlooked or ignored the rules in word formations – (as in ‘three styles’ and ‘several season ago’) or in phrase structures ‘it is new book’, and ‘they more than friend to me’. However, this error can also be caused by interlingual influences since there is no plural mode in the learners’ L1 by adding ‘-s’ or ‘-es’ at the end of nouns, and ‘to be’ is not found.

The data in Table 6 indicate that omission was the source of most errors that occurred during the intralingual transfer. It typically centers on eliminating auxiliary verbs (Al-Khresheh, 2016) and modifying how a verb is employed in the present and the past tense. Consequently, learners frequently leave off the third-person marker found at the end of the verb, both in the past (with the suffix –ed) and in the present (with the suffix –s). The unending form can be generalized for use by any individual. Overgeneralization is possible, given that Arabic is very dissimilar to English in terms of the grammatical component represented by the inflectional morpheme aspect.

**She** opens the book => **I** open the book => **They** open the book

The reality is that the Arabic language does not have a conjugation verb, at least not in the same way that the English language does. Under this definition, any structure deviation incidence represents some degree of growth. For instance, using passive voice in English. Many EFL learners struggle with this English grammatical aspect. Often the transformation from active to passive requires two entirely different features. Other times, only in nuisance for any little elements that learners unintentionally missed or inserted it in the sentence. This implementation pattern may have arisen from inadequate and poor knowledge of the target language and carelessness (Sermsook et al., 2017). Heydari and Bagheri (2012) indicated that this additional element symbolizes a situation in which a grammatical scheme is unsuccessfully implemented. Simply put, learners do not use a completely defined structure in their sentences. Owing to this difficulty, learners are more likely to stop using passive voice in their productions.

#### *4.2.3 Context of learning*

A sequence appearing concurrently is generalization. Learners prefer to practice one-rule definition by extending one linguistic system to the other structures used in the same class group. Take, for instance, subject-verb agreement and number markers. Learners ignore the tense marker –s singular at the end of the verb. This faulty comprehension of distinction and the ability to go beyond the information (Cook, 2016) represent a change in how to utilize a verb in the present and past. Learners also seem to omit the third-person marker at the end of the verb in the past (–ed) and present (–s). The endless form is generalized for all. It may be identified with

overgeneralization, as the Arabic language contrasts English in terms of its grammatical components in the aspect of inflectional morphemes.

Mahmoud (2000) emphasized that EFL Arabic-speaking learners apply overgeneralization rules in their learning process. Learners draw the linguistic system of their mother tongue to help them formulate an L2 sentence based on their L1 guidelines. The dominance of the linguistic structure of the mother tongue as the fundamental feature of interlingual transfer is unquestionably inevitable, particularly as learners' exposure to the target language is restricted only in the formal sense of classroom instruction. Not to mention the fact that the learning process is only available for a few hours per week.

## 5. CONCLUSION

Yemeni EFL learners were likely to omit items or elements to be included in the standard English structure. Sometimes, the dynamic number marker discrepancy follows in dealing with singular/plural nouns/verbs number of the agreement. In part, it can be correlated with overgeneralization, as the Arabic language differs from English despite its grammatical component in the aspect of inflectional morphemes and the fact that the Arabic language has no conjugation verb like English.

In accordance with the cause of errors, intralingual transfer was the key reason to the Yemeni EFL learners. The verdict of normality on this view was observed and judged based on the fact that the learners struggle to construct correct sentences in the target language and resulted in errors. The majority of intralingual transfer was caused by omission. The learners generally strived with using English tenses due to the difference in verb conjugation in Arabic and English. Moreover, there were instances where the grammatical system was unsuccessfully enforced, which sometimes occurred while the learners were working with passive voice in which the rule's ambiguity bonded to the output inaccuracy. Consequently, they aimed to avoid writing in this structured style.

Literal translation and replaced preposition use were widely justified as the factors behind the interlingual transition. The Yemeni EFL learners also translated Arabic words into English word by word and this act commended the structure of transferring the linguistic scheme of their mother tongue to English utterances. In addition, literal translation usually resulted from preposition substitution. It happened when a preposition was used for literal translation and form transfer, regardless of how it was appropriately used in the target language.

Meanwhile, in the learning sense, the Yemeni EFL learners attempted to generalize and extend one linguistic system to all other structures that contain, for example, the absence of the tense marker –s at the end of the verb for the 3rd person singular. In this case, the researchers suggest that teachers solve the problem by giving explicit and implicit corrective feedback and remedial teaching. To minimize errors, the study implicates that a longitudinal study on the composition of EFL Arabic-speaking Yemeni EFL learners should be carried out using a mixed method that includes looking at the learners' writing strategies and classroom activities. Action research in the classroom where a certain treatment can also be given to help learners improve their writing skills and make fewer errors.

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