Iraqi EFLUniversity Students' Errors in Written English Sentences:Errors Analysis

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أخطاء طلبة الجامعة العراقيين الدارسين اللغة الانكليزية كلغة اجنبية في الجمل الانكليزية المكتوبة: تحليل اخطاء

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الملخص:

هدفت هذه الدراسة إلى اكتشاف أخطاء الجملة الإنكليزية المكتوبة لطلاب الجامعة العراقيين الدارسين اللغة الإنكليزية كلغة أجنبية في قسم اللغة الإنكليزية / كلية التربية الأساسية ، جامعة بابل لاستكشاف أصول الأخطاء. تم تسليط الضوء بشكل أساسي على مستوى الجمل على أساس أن الباحث تعامل مع الأخطاء الموجودة في بنية جمل الطلاب والتي يمكن أن تسبب سوء فهم لقراء هذه الجمل. طُلب من 25 طالبًا من المرحلة الثالثة كتابة مقال قصير لا يزيد عن 150 كلمة عن هواياتهم. اعتمادًا على النتائج ، كانت الأخطاء الاكثر شيوعا هي الأحرف الكبيرة وعلامات الترقيم و الاجزاءو توافق الفعل مع الفاعل وترتيب الكلمات والتوتر. كانت الأخطاء بين اللغتين و الاخطاء داخل اللغة هي الأسباب الأساسية للأخطاء.

الكلمات المفتاحية: اخطاء, طلبة الجامعة العراقيين, الجملة الانكليزية , تحليل الاخطاء

Abstract

This study aimed to discover the errors of written English sentence of Iraqi EFL university students in the Dept. of English/College of Basic Education, University of Babylon to scout the origins of the errors. It shed the light fundamentally on sentences level on the grounds that the researcher dealt with that errors in Iraqi EFL students' sentence structure which can cause a misunderstand by the readers of these sentences. 25 Iraqi EFL third stage students were requested to write a short essay of no more than 150 words about their hobbies. Depending on the outcomes , the most as often as possible submitted errors were capitalization ,punctuation ,fragments, subject-verb agreement, word order and tense . Interlingual errors, intralingual errors were the basic reasons of the errors.

Keywords: Errors, Iraqi EFL students, English sentence , errors analysis

1- Introduction

English as foreign language in Iraq has influenced numerous fields of life of the Iraqi students. They need to know and learn English language. So to accomplish that, they are urged by the Iraqi government to learn English from primary school up to the university.

English language teaching covers the four skills of English language i.e listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Richard and Renandya (2002: 303) state that writing is the most difficult skill for second language and foreign language learners. EFL (English as a Foreign Language) students have to do lots of efforts/practices to write correctly in English and it is usual to find errors in their written text. Limited knowledge of the grammatical rules and the less using of the language in everyday life conversation or interaction make EFL students feel that writing in English is more difficult than writing in their first language. Because of the limited knowledge, the EFL students often make errors in their pieces of writings.

1.1 The Problem

James (1998 cited in Napitupulu, 2017: 72) stated that, Error Analysis (EA) is concerned with the analyses of the errors made by second language (L2) learners by comparing the learners'acquired norms with the target language norms andexplaining the identified errors .Richards& Schmidt (2002:201) defined error analysis (EA) as "a technique for identifying, classifying and systematicallyinterpreting the unacceptable forms of a language in theproduction

data of someone learning either a second orforeign language". According to Corder (1967:163), errors made by learners are beneficial to teachers, learners, as well as researchers. For teachers, errors are sign of learners' improvement of the language learning. Teachers can use it in order to help them to improve learners' writing ability. For learners, errors can be used as evidences of their language learning. Finally, errors give evidence to researchers on how learners learn and acquire the language.To help these learners, Corder (1967:164) confirmed that the analysis of errors appeared in learners' writing can be very useful.

The researcher, as an instructor teaching students to write accurately in English, found that English sentences composed by Iraqi EFL students had numerous kinds of errors, for example, wrong word choice, subject-verb disagreement, misspelling, wrong utilization of tenses and punctuation marks. Therefore, the researcher aims to analyze errors of English sentences composed by Iraqi EFL students. The study sheds the light on sentences because they are the small reasonable units of language structures which students can form for their viable compositions.

1.2 Aim of Study

The essential aim of this study is to discover the kinds of errors made by Iraqi EFL students at university level in their composed work. To be more exact, the study attempts to discover responds to for the accompanying questions:

1-What are the most widely recognized errors that Iraqi EFL students make in their works?

2-What are the sources of these errors?

2. The Method

Burns and Grove (1993:779) state that a population is defined as all elements (individuals, objects and events) that meet the sample criteria for inclusion in a study. This study showsthe data which identified and analyzed errors in Iraqi EFL students' writings.

2.1 Data Collection Procedure

This study seeks to find the sorts of errors made by 25 Iraqi EFL third stage college students (as a representative sample) in their English writings. They were asked to compose an essay from around 150 words about their hobbies. The offered time to achieve this task was an hour. The entirety of the 25 pieces of the students' written work were set apart by the researcher. Each sentence was checked word by word. Every error was recorded by its sort in an individual error record form.

3.Results and Discussion

The outcomes and discussion of the study are appeared in concurrence with the two research questions proposed previously.

3.1 Errors RepeatedlyFound in English Sentences Written by Iraqi EFL Students

Analyzing errors found in English sentences composed by Iraqi EFL students prompts six sorts of errors. These errors are: tenses, , subject-verb agreement, fragments, word order, punctuation, and capitalization. The table underneath shows types, recurrence, and rate.

Types of Errors	Frequency	Percentage
Tense	21	4.16
Subject-verb agreement	66	13.09
Fragment	70	13.88
Word order	54	10.71
Punctuation	107	21.23
Capitalization	186	36.90
Total	504	100

From Table 1, it is noticed that capitalization comes first as the most error type (36.90%). The remaining errors types are punctuation (21.23%), fragments (13.88%), subject-verb agreement (13.09%), word order (10.71%), and tense (4.16%), respectively.

3.1.1 Capitalization

Depending upon the information and the analysis, capitalization is the most perpetrated errors (36.90%).

Example 1: I visited turkey (I visited Turkey)
Example 2: all nations are decent (All nations)

From the above two examples, it may be clarified that the reason for the errors is the obstruction of the Arabic language since it does not have capital letters case. Likewise, the participants have deficient information on the English principle in that the first letter of specific nouns (nations names) and the first letter of a sentence must be capitalized. These two reasons caused these errors.

3.1.2 Punctuation Marks

Punctuation marks are the second most as often as possible submitted errors(21.23%). Omission and addition are the primary two classes as indicated by their features concerning this kind of errors. Punctuation marks which gave an impression of being the most problematic are comma (,) and period (.). An intense dissection indicated that the various uses of these two punctuation marks among Arabic and English are the reasons for the errors. An obvious clarification can be seen from the accompanying examples.

Example 3: I wish to see Iran Kuwait and Saudi Arabia . (Iran, Kuwiat…)
Example 4: When I was in Lebanon I visited many places. (when I was in Lebanon, I visited… .)

In the above sentences, a comma was eliminated. In these two situations, it tends to be clarified that commas are not used in counting names or a subordinate clause in an Arabic sentence, instead "and" is used in counting names or a subordinate clause in an Arabic sentence so the writers with their inadequate information on English may apply the Arabic principle when they wrote these two English sentences.

Example 5: I visited many places in Lebanon
(I visited many places in Lebanon.)

In Example 3, there is no period. This error can be clarified that the participant do not have the information on using the period(.).

Example 6: We rented a flat with three rooms, three bathrooms. (We rented a flat with three rooms and three bathrooms.)

The sentence in Example 6 demonstrated the addition of a comma when it isn't required. The writer may wrongly allude to the rule of English when composing this sentence. As a matter of fact, for this situation 'and' is needed to make a complete sentence.

3.1.3 Fragments

This kind of errors comes thirdly (13.88%). The errors appear because there is no subject. The errors happened because of the Arabic language interference, since the nominal sentence(which does not have a verb) is found in Arabic language . The accompanying examples can delineate the issue.

Example 7: I tired. (I was tired.)

The sentence in Example 7 has no verb in light of the fact that the writer actually translated an Arabic sentence, (أنا متعب) (Ana muta'ab) into English. Another case of a fragment is appeared in the example beneath.

Example 8: Our teacher is extremely kind. Makes everybody like her. (She makes everybody like her). The second sentence contains no subject which is likewise brought about by the strict interpretation of Arabic into English.

As in Example 8, the fragment should be the sentence which continues from the first sentence. In Arabic, the subject of the subsequent sentence can be eliminated without leading to any errors, however in English, the eliminating of a subject produces an imperfect sentence, and may flop to pass on the full meaning.

3.1.4Subject-verb Agreement

The subject-action word understanding mistakes are the fourth position (13.09%)which found in the members' works.

The accompanying examples clarify the students' perplexity about the principles of the subject-verb agreement.

Example 9: I reads Arabic novels. (I read Arabic novels.)

Example 10: My father speak in Arabic and English. (My father speaks Arabic and English.)

The conceivable clarification for Example 9 is the wrong uses of rules. The writer may believe that ' I ' is one person which is singular, so he/she includeds after the verb. Conversely, the writer of Example 10 might be impacted by the first language.

3.1.5 Word Order

The fifth position is word request (%10.71). The members' examples show their breaking point information about the word request in English. The accompanying examples clarify that.

Example 10: I so much like the Arabic sonnets. (I like the Arabic sonnets to such an extent.)

Example 11: I observe regularly Hindi films.(I frequently watch Hindi motion pictures.)

Example 12: I rode cautiously my bicycle.(I rode my bicycle cautiously.)

The above examples mirror that the members utilize the Arabic language rules when they compose the English sentences. As in Arabic the referenced examples are adequate.

3.1.6 Tense

With (4.16%), tense mistakes are the least ones which the members made. This mirrors the members have the inadequate information to pick the fitting tense for their compositions. The accompanying examples show the members' strained mistakes.

Example 13: Last summer occasion, we go to UAE. (The previous summer occasion, we went to UAE.)

Example 14: Yesterday we ate inexpensive food and drink cold cola.(Yesterday we ate cheap food and drank cold cola.)

4. Sources of the Errors

The following shows the opinions of some scholars about the sources of errors:

Richards (1974: 31), concluded that the two main sources of errors were interlingual errors and intralingual errors. The first one refers to errors of learners who wrongly use the rules of their first language when they write sentences of the target language. The second errors are resultedduringthe process of learning the target language by the learners. James (1998:179) stated that there were four sources of errors which are interlingual errors, intralingual errors, communication strategy-based errors, and induced errors.

Brown (1987:177) on the other hand, classifies errors into four main factors: interlingual transfer, intralingual transfer, context of learning, and communication strategies.

In a brief the information gained from the participants' writing samples revealed four major sources of the errors as follows:

4.1Interlingual Errors

In this type, errors are caused by mother tongue interference as stated by Richards (1971:205) where interlingual errors are the errors caused by the interference of the native language. These errors are the results of the learners' application of the native language elements in their spoken or written performances of the target language. In most cases, it is inevitable to learn a foreign language solely without depending on some linguistic features of thelanguage which has already acquired. Ellis (2008:350) alsostates that at any rate, the interference can occur in variousareas of linguistics components including phonology,morphology, grammar, syntax, lexis and semantics.

4.2 Intralingual Errors

These errors are referred to the errors that occur because of the ineffective traits of learning such as faulty application of rules and unawareness of the restrictions of rules (Richards,1971:206). The intralingual errors, therefore, are irrelevant to the native language interference, but led by the

target language itself. In the language learning process, these errors normally occur when the learners have acquired insufficient knowledge (Kaweera, 2013:13).

4.3 Limited Knowledge of English Grammar and Vocabulary

Limited knowledge of English grammar and vocabulary is another crucial source of the participants' errors. Very limited knowledge of English grammar and vocabulary leads the writers to commit errors Weigle(2002 cited in Sermsook,2017:108). The participants writings samples confirm that Iraqi EFL students' knowledge of Englishgrammar and vocabulary need to be improved. The participants answers of the study showed that their grammar andvocabulary knowledge of English was inadequate to make a good piece of writing. From the researcher's pointof view, to successfully help EFL learners write better in English, complete grammar and vocabularyknowledge of the target language is absolutely needed since a writer with the deficiency of that knowledge tendsto make more errors when writing in the target language.

4.4 Carelessness

According to the data obtained from the study, though carelessness seemed to be the source of the least errors, it cannot be overlooked. Raising EFL writers' awareness of the disadvantage of carelessness may help reduce errors in their writing.The findings of this study found that interlingual interference and intralingual interference are the two sources of errors found in EFL learners' pieces of writing.In addition, the present study would like to draw attention to other sources that may lead to serious errors. Very limited knowledge of English grammar and vocabulary as well as learners' carelessness is other sources that cannot be underestimated. EFL learners' awareness of the two mentioned sources should be raised in order to reduce any unexpected errors.

5. Conclusion

This study planned for analyzing errors made by Iraqi EFL students when they wrote pieces of writing in English, and to look for the sources that lead to the errors. The results indicated that the students made various kinds of errors because of four sources: interlingual interference, intralingual inference, confined awareness on English language structure and vocabulary, and their indifference. From these outcomes, confined awareness on the target language might be the significant source prompting different sources since having exceptionally restricted information on English, the students went to depend on their first language. This can bring about errors that could cause written miscommunication. As well as, the outcomes of the study demonstrated that the greater part of EFL students will in general do errors in capitalization, punctuation, fragment, subject-word agreement, word order, and tense.

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