

## A Linguistic Inquiry into English Writing Errors among Third-Year Students of English at Batna2 University: Types, Frequencies, and Pedagogical Implications

**GHODBANE Nacira**<sup>1</sup>

University Batna 2 / Algeria  
n.ghodbane@univ-batna2.dz

**ROUAGHE Fouzia**<sup>2</sup>

f.rouaghe@univ-setif2.dz

University Setif 2 / Algeria

**BEHERA Santosh Kumar**<sup>3</sup>

Kazi Nazrul University / India  
Santosh.behera@knu.ac.in

**Received:** 07/08/2025,

**Accepted:** 16/10/2025,

**Published:** 22/12/2025

---

**Abstract:** Writing in English remains one of the most demanding skills for learners of English as a foreign language (EFL), particularly in contexts where Arabic is the primary language of instruction. Despite extended exposure to English throughout their studies, many Algerian university students continue to struggle with grammatical accuracy and writing mechanics. The present study examined the types and frequencies of writing errors produced by third-year EFL students at Batna 2 University to identify major problem areas and inform pedagogical practice. Drawing on Corder's (1967) error analysis framework and Chanquoy's (2001) taxonomy, 80 examination essays were analysed, yielding 1,170 errors classified at the sentence and word levels. Quantitative procedures, including a chi-square test, were applied to determine significant differences between error categories. The most frequent errors involved punctuation (20%), spelling (18.2%), and prepositions (16.2%), whereas pronoun errors (5.2%) were least common. Statistical analysis revealed no significant difference between sentence-level and word-level errors, indicating that learners experience parallel difficulties in grammatical structure and surface mechanics. These findings suggest that both interlingual interference from Arabic and intralingual overgeneralisation contribute to persistent inaccuracies. The study underscores the need for balanced, process-oriented writing instruction that combines explicit grammar teaching, contrastive analysis, and iterative feedback to enhance EFL learners' writing proficiency and academic communication skills.

**Keywords:** Error analysis, EFL writing, grammatical accuracy, interlingual interference, pedagogy

**Résumé :** Cette étude examine les types et les fréquences des erreurs d'écriture dans les essais rédigés par des étudiants en troisième année d'anglais langue étrangère (ALE) à l'Université de Batna 2, en Algérie. Malgré une exposition prolongée à l'enseignement de l'anglais, de nombreux apprenants continuent de rencontrer des difficultés importantes dans la production d'écrits corrects. La recherche a analysé 1 170 erreurs issues d'un échantillon raisonné de 80 copies d'examen, en s'appuyant sur le cadre de l'analyse des erreurs de Corder (1967) et la taxonomie de Chanquoy (2001). Les erreurs ont été classées en deux catégories : au niveau de la phrase et au niveau du mot. Les erreurs les plus fréquentes étaient la ponctuation (20 %), l'orthographe (18,2 %) et les prépositions (16,2 %). Un test du chi carré n'a révélé aucune différence statistiquement significative entre la fréquence des erreurs au niveau de la phrase et celles au niveau du mot, ce qui confirme la deuxième hypothèse (H2). L'analyse a également confirmé la première hypothèse (H1), car la variété et la fréquence des erreurs ont mis en évidence la diversité des domaines dans lesquels les étudiants rencontrent des difficultés. Ces résultats soulignent l'importance d'un enseignement équilibré ciblant à la fois les structures grammaticales et les mécanismes de l'écriture. En examinant les schémas d'erreurs des étudiants, cette étude fournit des pistes concrètes pour les enseignants d'anglais, les concepteurs de programmes et les responsables de l'évaluation. Les conclusions appuient la mise en œuvre d'une pédagogie de l'écriture fondée sur le processus, d'un enseignement grammatical ciblé et de stratégies de rétroaction structurée. En fin de compte, cette recherche contribue à une meilleure compréhension des difficultés courantes en production écrite chez les étudiants universitaires ALE et plaide en faveur d'approches pédagogiques visant à améliorer la clarté, la cohérence et la maîtrise globale de l'écriture en anglais académique.

**Mots-clés :** Analyse des erreurs, Rédaction d'essais, Types d'erreurs, Fréquence des erreurs, Maîtrise de l'écriture.

## **Introduction**

English plays a central role in global communication, cutting across fields like science, education, politics, tourism, and business. In Algeria, it is taught from middle school through university, following national education policy. Despite this sustained exposure, learning English as a foreign language remains challenging for many learners, particularly in mastering writing. As Mackey (1967) notes, previous language experience often interferes with learning a new system, especially when the linguistic structures differ significantly. Writing, among all language skills, tends to be the most complex, requiring accuracy, coherence, and a solid grasp of grammar and vocabulary. Brown (1993) describes writing as a communicative act that helps individuals express and share ideas,

while Nancy (1970) highlights the importance of planning, content selection, and organization.

Even students who can speak fluently often find writing difficult. As Scott and Ytreberg (1990) explain, structuring thoughts clearly in writing can be overwhelming, particularly for young or developing learners. This difficulty is evident among English students at Batna 2 University, where writing remains a persistent weakness despite years of instruction. Similar issues have been observed in earlier stages of language instruction, where the underrepresentation of target and international cultures in EFL textbooks may limit students' broader communicative and intercultural competencies (Rouaghe & Bouguebs, 2023).

Corder (1967) emphasises that learner errors are meaningful; they reveal the learner's stage in the language acquisition process and help guide both teaching and research. When analysed carefully, such errors offer insight into the strategies learners use and the challenges they encounter. Several scholars (e.g., Corder, 1967; James, 1998; Nonkokhetkong, 2013; Hinnon, 2014; Rattanadilok Na Phuket & Othman, 2015) support the use of Error Analysis (EA) as a method to diagnose and reduce student writing problems. Presada and Badea (2014), for example, demonstrate that EA helps identify underlying causes in student translations, improving clarity and reducing repeated mistakes. Similarly, Zafar (2016) finds measurable improvement in students' writing after using EA in a targeted remedial programme.

Despite exposure to English instruction, many students at Batna 2 still struggle with written communication. Nunan (2001) describes writing as the most demanding language skill, especially for non-native speakers. This is clear in students' essays, where problems range from structural issues to unclear expression. Often, students prioritize speaking skills and overlook grammar and writing strategies such as planning and revision. While they may produce acceptable sentences or paragraphs, their longer texts are often disorganised and error-prone, making their intended meaning difficult to interpret.

This study examines the types and frequency of writing errors made by third-year students at Batna 2 University, utilising eighty (80) archived exam essays as the dataset. It aims to identify and analyse common errors, to explore the reasons behind these errors, to categorize the error types, to assess their frequency, and to propose strategies that can support writing development. Accordingly, the research is guided by six core questions: (1) What causes students' writing difficulties? (2) To what extent do they understand the writing process? (3) What are the most and least frequent errors? (4) What factors contribute to these issues? And what strategies and implications can help improve the situation?

The study is built on two hypotheses:

H1: Third-year students exhibit varying types and frequencies of writing errors that reflect distinct challenges in sentence-level and word-level proficiency.

H2: There is no statistically significant difference in the overall frequency between sentence-level and word-level errors.

## **1. Literature Review**

### **1.1 Writing**

Writing is one of the most essential yet challenging skills in language learning. Unlike speaking, it doesn't develop naturally and requires structured teaching and active cognitive engagement. Effective writing involves a series of stages such as planning, drafting, revising, and editing, and depends on mastery of grammar, organization, and mechanics (Zamel, 1983; Harmer, 2004). Students often struggle with common errors related to punctuation, tense, articles, pronouns, capitalization, spelling, subject-verb agreement, and prepositions, especially when structural differences exist between their native language and English. Understanding and teaching writing not only reinforces language learning but also develops learners' ability to communicate ideas clearly. Several approaches; like the product, process, genre, and free-writing methods have been used to teach writing, each offering unique benefits in guiding learners toward better writing outcomes.

In short, Writing is a vital but difficult language skill, requiring clarity, structure, and correct grammar. Learners often struggle due to differences from their native language and lack of writing practise. Common issues include errors with articles, pronouns, tenses, and punctuation. Teaching writing helps develop language skills, and analysing errors can guide better instruction.

### **1.2 Error Analysis**

Writing in a foreign language is challenging, and learners naturally make errors along the way. Error Analysis (EA) helps teachers identify and understand these mistakes so they can better support students and improve teaching methods. EA involves collecting samples of learner language, spotting errors, describing and classifying them, and figuring out their causes. Errors often come from three main sources: interference from the learner's native language, overgeneralizing rules from the new language, and confusing or poorly designed teaching materials. Understanding these helps teachers recognise common difficulties learners face. Making errors is actually a vital part of learning. Errors show how learners are testing and internalizing language rules. By studying errors, teachers can see what students have learned, what they struggle with, and how to adjust

lessons accordingly. It's important to distinguish errors from mistakes: errors reflect gaps in a learner's knowledge, while mistakes are occasional slips that learners usually notice and fix. Errors reveal the learner's underlying competence and provide valuable insight into their progress. Finally, errors are classified mainly as interlingual (caused by native language transfer) or intralingual (caused by problems within the target language system itself, like overgeneralization or incorrect rule use). This classification helps in designing effective teaching strategies.

### **1.3 Writing and Error Analysis**

Writing is a complex skill that demands cognitive effort, planning, and linguistic control, making it especially challenging for second or foreign language learners (Harris & Cunningham, 1994; Murcia & Olshtain, 2000; Ingels, 2006). To enhance learners' writing abilities, it's essential to understand the nature of their difficulties (Hammad, 2012). One useful tool for this is Error Analysis (EA), which helps identify patterns in learners' mistakes and sheds light on how they process the target language (Zawahreh, 2012). Originating in the 1960s, Corder (1967) categorized EA into two branches: theoretical, which explores how language is acquired, and applied, which supports teaching by using learners' errors to guide instruction.

### **1.4 Previous Studies**

Several studies have explored the writing errors made by students learning English as a second or foreign language. Simbwa (1987) found that male university students in Uganda most often struggled with prepositions, pronouns, and tenses, while females mostly had issues with prepositions. Salebi (2004) observed that Saudi students frequently made subject-verb agreement errors, often due to the influence of Arabic and difficulties with English rules. Similarly, Zawaherh (2012) reported that Jordanian tenth-graders often failed to match subjects and verbs correctly, again influenced by their native language. At Jazan University, Hafiz et al. (2018) noted common syntactic errors like missing verbs, article misuse, and preposition confusion, largely due to limited practise and native language interference. Khansir (2013) concluded that both ESL and EFL students make similar writing errors, while Zafar (2016) demonstrated that targeted instruction, particularly on verb tenses, can lead to noticeable improvements in writing accuracy.

## **2. Method and Procedures**

The method used in this study is shaped by the topic, hypotheses, research questions, data type, objectives, and sample. Cohen et al. (2007, p. 44) define methods as the range of approaches used in educational research to collect data for

inference and interpretation. This study employs a mixed-methods descriptive content analysis approach to examine writing errors in 80 archived exam copies of third-year students at the Department of English, Batna 2 University. This method enables us to classify, interpret, and understand the types and frequency of errors found in authentic writing essays, allowing us to analyse student essays by coding recurring language issues, such as grammar, structure, and punctuation. As Burns and Grove (2001, p. 248) explain, descriptive research helps identify problems in current practise to improve outcomes. This method captures real-life challenges and helps suggest strategies for enhancing writing instruction. A clear research strategy is also essential. Biggam (2008, p. 82) defines a strategy as the plan guiding how a study will be carried out.

### **2.1 Population / Sample / Sampling Technique**

The population of this study involves (283) third-year students from the Department of English at Batna 2 University. Following Mouton's (1996, p. 132) definition of a sample as a subset selected to provide insight into a larger group, a purposive sample of (80) students is chosen based on their below-average performance in the second-term ESP writing exam. The sample includes both male and female students, aged between 20 and 30, offering a focused yet diverse group for analysing common writing errors.

### **2.2 Data Collection and Analysis Procedures**

A purposive sample of 80 exam scripts from underperforming students was selected from a total of 283, written during the 2023–2024 academic year by students in the Department of English at Batna 2 University. These scripts, retrieved from the department's archives, served as the primary data source for the study. "Selection of a corpus of texts of a specific module. Using authentic texts increases motivation...."(Belkhenchir, 2024). The selection was based on the relevance of the content to the research objectives and facilitated by the accessibility of the materials. The students had been administered a writing exam in the second semester of the ESP module, where they were required to complete an essay within 90 minutes in response to the following prompt: "Discuss the importance or lesser importance of the four language skills in relation to General English (GE) and English for Specific Purposes (ESP), along with the four conditional probabilities (IF4)." These written responses provided a valuable corpus for identifying, classifying, and analyzing common writing errors. The analysis of the exam written essays is derived from an eclectic error analysis method in which we selected the most beneficial aspects of each method, such as Corder's (1967) method on error analysis. This method has three steps: (1)

collection of sample errors, (2) identification of errors, and (3) description of errors. In addition to Chanquoy's (2001) classification of writing errors. These errors include the following: (1) spelling errors, (2) grammatical errors, and (3) punctuation errors.

**3. Results and Discussion**

Table 1 illustrates the distribution of error types across 1,170 instances. Punctuation, spelling, and prepositions emerge as the most problematic areas, which aligns with interference from L1 (Arabic) and developmental issues in L2 acquisition. To provide deeper insight, error means and standard deviations were calculated across the scripts. These descriptive statistics supported the results of inferential tests.

Following the completion of the study design and data collection procedures, this section is dedicated to analysing and interpreting the data in relation to the research questions. The analysis presented here represents the practical component of the research, employing quantitative and qualitative methods to examine the data collected. The findings are organised according to the study's primary aims: (1) identifying the categories of errors made by the students, (2) illustrating the most frequent errors with specific examples, and (3) providing corrections for these errors through practical examples. Through detailed error analysis, eight major types of mistakes were identified in the written English essays of third-year students. These errors were categorized into two main levels: sentence-level errors, which included issues with punctuation, subject-verb agreement, capitalization, and verb tense; and word-level errors, which encompassed misuse of articles, pronouns, spelling mistakes, and incorrect use of prepositions. The frequency, percentage, and ranking of each error type are presented in Table 1 below.

**Table 01: Errors at the Sentence and Word Levels**

|                                | Types of errors        | <i>Fr.</i> | %    | Rank |
|--------------------------------|------------------------|------------|------|------|
| Errors at the Sentential Level | Punctuation            | 235        | 20   | 1    |
|                                | Subject-verb agreement | 137        | 11,7 | 5    |
|                                | Verb tense             | 90         | 07,6 | 7    |
|                                | Capitalization         | 143        | 12,2 | 4    |
| Errors at the Word Level       | Pronouns               | 61         | 05,2 | 8    |
|                                | Articles               | 100        | 08,5 | 6    |
|                                | Spelling               | 214        | 18,2 | 2    |
|                                | Prepositions           | 190        | 16,2 | 3    |

|  |       |      |     |  |
|--|-------|------|-----|--|
|  | Total | 1170 | 100 |  |
|--|-------|------|-----|--|

As shown in Table 1, the total number of errors identified in the English essays of third-year English students amounts to 1,170, which are classified into two main categories: errors at the sentential level and errors at the word level. This section presents a detailed quantitative analysis of these errors, followed by an interpretation of their implications in relation to the research objectives.

**3.1 Sentential-Level Errors**

The most frequently occurring errors at the sentence level were related to punctuation, accounting for 235 instances (20%), making it the most prevalent error overall. This was followed by capitalization (143 errors; 12.2%), subject–verb agreement (137 errors; 11.7%), and verb tense (90 errors; 7.6%). The dominance of punctuation errors suggests a considerable gap in learners’ understanding of written discourse mechanics.

Punctuation, as a fundamental aspect of written expression, serves to structure sentences and clarify meaning. As McCaskill (1990, p. 56) notes, "punctuation is placed in essays to make meaning clear and to make reading easier." Similarly, Kane (2000, p. 379) asserts that "all punctuation exists, basically, to help readers understand what you wish to say." In the context of this study, the high incidence of punctuation errors indicates that learners often struggle to manage intonation, rhythm, and clarity in writing, which are naturally handled through stress and intonation in speech. According to Harmer (2004, p. 148), punctuation consists of twelve distinct marks, including the capital letter, full stop, comma, question mark, exclamation mark, colon, semicolon, hyphen, quotation marks, brackets, dash, and apostrophe. Within the essays analysed, the most frequent punctuation problems involved commas and full stops. These errors typically fell into two main categories: omission (e.g., failing to insert commas where needed) and addition (e.g., placing unnecessary punctuation marks). Such misuse not only interrupts the natural flow of a text but can significantly impair comprehension and coherence, affecting the overall quality of the written product.

**3.2 Word-Level Errors**

At the word level, spelling errors were the most common, with 214 instances (18.2%), followed closely by preposition errors (190 errors; 16.2%). Articles were misused in 100 cases (8.5%), and pronoun-related issues accounted for 61 errors (5.2%), making them the least frequent.

Spelling difficulties may reflect students’ limited exposure to written English and overreliance on phonological strategies, particularly in the absence of explicit orthographic instruction. Prepositions, on the other hand, often pose

difficulties for non-native speakers due to their idiomatic use and context-dependent meanings, which do not always transfer directly from the learners' first language. Article misuse is another well-documented challenge for EFL learners, especially those whose native languages lack equivalent structures.

The data indicate that errors at the sentential level slightly outnumber those at the word level, comprising 51.9% of all errors compared to 48.1%. However, both levels display considerable deficiencies, pointing to a need for balanced instruction that targets both grammatical structures and mechanical accuracy. The least frequent errors were in pronoun use (5.2%), suggesting a relatively better understanding in this area compared to others.

The classification of errors into types, frequency, and rank (see Table 1) offers valuable insights for curriculum designers and educators. Most notably, the predominance of punctuation, spelling, and preposition errors suggests that learners would benefit from increased focus on the mechanics of writing through explicit instruction and targeted practise.

Furthermore, these findings support previous claims that writing is not simply a matter of translating spoken language into written form. As Widdowson (2001) and Harmer (2007a) emphasise, writing is a distinct, cognitively demanding process that requires mastery of a wide range of sub-skills, including grammatical precision, structural coherence, and appropriate use of conventions. Thus, the prevalence of these errors reinforces the view that writing instruction must be process-oriented, emphasising drafting, revising, and continuous feedback, as recommended by Hedge (2000) and Zamel (1992).

**3.3 Analysis of Students' Writing Errors (Exam Copies)**

In this section, we aim to classify, identify, and correct the most common writing errors, providing explanations for each. The analysis is based on the ranking of error frequency as presented in Table 1, rather than their categorization at the sentence or word level. To conduct this analysis, we examined 80 exam papers from an ESP (English for Specific Purposes) module, in which students are required to produce an essay as part of their official written examination. The collected errors are well displayed and explained in this section.

**Table 2. Punctuation Errors ( 20% R 1)**

| Error Classification                         | Error Identification                                                 | Error Correction                                                      | Explanation                                                           |
|----------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Missing Comma (Non-defining relative clause) | Listening is an essential learning skill which is probably the least | Listening is an essential learning skill, which is probably the least | The clause “which is probably the least stressed” is non-defining and |

**A Linguistic Inquiry into English Writing Errors among Third-Year Students of English at Batna2 University: Types, Frequencies, and Pedagogical Implications**

|                                                          |                                                                                                                       |                                                                                                                          |                                                                                                                                          |
|----------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                                                          | stressed one.                                                                                                         | stressed.                                                                                                                | needs to be set off with a comma.                                                                                                        |
| Comma Misuse (Before coordinating conjunction)           | ... and play the role of the helper to require the nedded skill                                                       | ..., and play the role of the helper to require the needed skill.                                                        | A comma is added before the coordinating conjunction “and” because it links two independent clauses. Also, “nedded” is a spelling error. |
| Missing Commas (Introductory word + non-defining clause) | Finally learning English which is a foreign language is a necessity.                                                  | Finally, learning English, which is a foreign language, is a necessity.                                                  | A comma is needed after “Finally” (introductory adverb) and before/after the non-defining clause.                                        |
| Missing Colon and Commas (in a list)                     | It goes throught main steps mrchanical one meaningful one and free oral productive part                               | It goes through three main steps: mechanical one, meaningful one, and a free oral productive part.                       | A colon is needed to introduce the list, and commas separate the listed elements.                                                        |
| Missing Commas (in a list of gerunds)                    | Teaching listening in an oral comprehension is the skill of listening understanding responding in an appropriate way. | Teaching listening in oral comprehension is the skill of listening, understanding, and responding in an appropriate way. | Commas are required to separate items in a list of actions (gerunds).                                                                    |
| Missing Comma (Non-defining)                             | As a result of listening skills which consider                                                                        | As a result of listening skills, which consider                                                                          | A comma is needed before the non-defining relative                                                                                       |

| clause)                                                       | speech utterances                                                                          | speech utterances                                                                          | clause starting with “which.”                                                                                               |
|---------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Spelling Error<br>(Not punctuation)                           | Additionally, when we go throught ....                                                     | Additionally, when we go through....                                                       | This is a spelling error (“throught” → “through”). No punctuation issue is present here.                                    |
| Missing Commas<br>(Introductory phrase + non-defining clause) | First of all we have the listening skills which are considered as a very important skills. | First of all, we have our listening skills, which are considered as very important skills. | Comma after “First of all” and before the non-defining clause improves clarity. “our” also replaces the awkward repetition. |
| Missing Commas<br>(Introductory phrase + non-defining clause) | Next we have reading skills which also have big importance                                 | Next, we have reading skills, which also have a big importance.                            | A comma is required after “Next” and before “which” (non-defining clause). Also, article “a” is added.                      |

Table 2 presents a set of punctuation errors made by third-year university students, highlighting issues with sentence structure, clarity, and overall writing fluency. Each entry includes the incorrect version, the corrected version, and its punctuation category.

The punctuation errors observed in these writing samples reflect broader issues in the students’ academic writing development. Most notably, these errors reveal a limited understanding of how punctuation affects meaning, organization, and readability.

Students frequently omit commas in non-defining relative clauses, for example, “*Listening is an essential learning skill which is probably the least stressed*”, where the clause “*which is probably the least stressed*” adds extra information and should be preceded by a comma. The absence of such punctuation confuses essential and non-essential information, weakening sentence clarity.

There is also a consistent neglect of introductory comma usage. Phrases like “*First of all*”, “*Next*”, and “*Finally*” require a comma to set them apart and guide the reader through the argument logically. These are key academic discourse markers, and when used without punctuation, the writing feels abrupt and disjointed.

Additionally, students struggle with punctuation in lists and sequences, particularly the use of commas between multiple actions or elements. For example, in the phrase “*listening, understanding, responding,*” the lack of commas makes it unclear whether it is one compound idea or three separate steps. This problem is compounded when there is also a missing **colon** before a list, as seen in “*It goes through three main steps: mechanical, one meaningful one...*”

The presence of these errors suggests that while students may be attempting complex sentence structures, they lack the punctuation knowledge needed to make them effective. These are not isolated grammar mistakes; they point to a larger disconnect between form and function in writing. The punctuation errors presented in Table 2 are more than surface-level mistakes—they are windows into students’ struggles with written expression. These issues highlight the need for explicit teaching of punctuation rules, more reading exposure, and a shift toward process-based writing instruction that includes drafting, revising, and editing. By addressing these areas, educators can help students write more clearly, cohesively, and confidently.

Table 3. Spelling Errors (18% R 2)

| Error Identification                       | Error Correction                           | Explanation                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
|--------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| ESP doesn’t give emportance to the writing | ESP doesn’t give importance to the writing | The word "emportance" is a misspelling of "importance." This is a common spelling error where a similar-sounding word or incorrect letter is used. The correction replaces the incorrect spelling with the correct word. |

| Error Identification                           | Error Correction                               | Explanation                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
|------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Developped writing skills                      | Developed writing skills                       | The word "Developped" is incorrectly spelled with an extra "p." The correct past tense form is "Developed," which has only one "p" after "develop."                                                                                  |
| The importance of this skill is more effective | The importance of this skill is more effective | The word "skil" is missing an "l" at the end. Correct spelling is "skill." This corrects the error and ensures the sentence is meaningful and accurate.                                                                              |
| Pocess mesage                                  | Process message                                | Both "Pocess" and "mesage" are misspelled. The correct forms are "Process" and "message," respectively. These are basic spelling corrections to standard English words.                                                              |
| Is the dificalt skill to develop               | Is the difficult skill to develop              | The word "dificalt" is misspelled; the correct word is "difficult." Additionally, the sentence is missing a subject, but since it's a fragment, it could be understood as part of a larger sentence. Correction focuses on spelling. |
| Meangful oral word                             | Meaningful oral word                           | The word "Meangful" is misspelled. Correct spelling is "Meaningful." This corrects a common typo by adjusting the misplaced letters.                                                                                                 |

| Error Identification                  | Error Correction                       | Explanation                                                                                                         |
|---------------------------------------|----------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Stage of teaching speeking skil       | Stage of teaching speaking skill       | Two words are misspelled: "speeking" should be "speaking" and "skil" should be "skill." Both corrected for clarity. |
| The defference                        | The difference                         | The word "defference" is misspelled; the correct spelling is "difference."                                          |
| To their degree of importens          | To their degree of importance          | The word "importens" is misspelled; the correct form is "importance."                                               |
| Is not the saim in ESP                | Is not the same in ESP                 | The word "saim" is misspelled; correct spelling is "same."                                                          |
| The proceces of developing the skills | The processes of developing the skills | The word "proceces" is misspelled; correct spelling is "processes."                                                 |

Table 3 highlights the most frequent spelling mistakes made by third-year students, including common errors in important words like "importance," "skill," "process," and "difference." Many of these mistakes are phonetic in nature, where students write words as they sound rather than using the correct spelling, reflecting a typical challenge for language students. Spelling errors also arise from the incorrect use of letters, such as substituting one letter for another (e.g., writing "difficalt" instead of "difficult"), adding unnecessary letters, or omitting essential ones (e.g., "process message"). In addition to spelling, some examples reveal sentence fragments and grammatical weaknesses that, while less critical than spelling errors, still affect clarity.

These errors collectively reduce the professionalism and effectiveness of the writing and can alter meaning or impair communication, making correction vital for better comprehension. The root causes, as shown in Table 3 and supported by earlier research (e.g., Zawaherh, 2012), include students' limited English vocabulary, poor command of spelling rules, and occasional negligence. To address these issues, focused spelling drills, improved proofreading habits, and the integration of grammar instruction are essential. Ultimately, Table 3 underscores the need to balance the oral focus with strong written language skills, especially spelling, to foster students' overall language development.

**Table 04: Preposition Errors (16.2% R 3)**

| Error Identification                                                      | Error Correction                                                           | Explanation                                                                                                                                        |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Teaching english to foreign people can be described as a complex process. | Teaching English for foreign people can be described as a complex process. | "For" is used to indicate the target audience or beneficiary, while "to" suggests direction. In this context, "for" is correct to express purpose. |
| It depends in the needs of students.                                      | It depends on the needs of the students.                                   | The correct collocation is "depends on," meaning "is influenced by." "Depends in" is ungrammatical.                                                |
| In the other hand                                                         | On the other hand                                                          | The fixed idiomatic phrase is "on the other hand," used to introduce a contrast. "In" is incorrect here.                                           |
| In this level                                                             | At this level                                                              | "At" is the correct preposition when referring to levels, stages, or points in a process or scale.                                                 |
| Writing skills represent importance at the following cases                | Writing skills represent importance in the following cases                 | "In" is used to indicate specific cases or situations. "At" does not collocate naturally with "cases."                                             |

The study's findings are consistent with those of Hafizet et al. (2018), who conducted research at Jazan University in Saudi Arabia. The third-highest error in the current study is the respondents' frequent misuse of prepositions in their study. One of the reasons why students struggle to use prepositions effectively is that they are not familiar with the rules of prepositions and are confused by the diverse roles of prepositions.

The analysis of Table 4 reveals that the primary area of difficulty lies in the incorrect use of prepositions, particularly in fixed expressions and collocations. Most errors result from substituting the correct preposition with one that does not naturally fit the context, such as using "in" instead of "on" in the

phrase "depends on" or "in the other hand" instead of the correct idiom "on the other hand." These mistakes often stem from first-language interference or a lack of familiarity with standard English usage. One notable issue in the table is the first example, where the suggested correction, changing "Teaching English to foreign people" to "Teaching English for foreign people," is inaccurate.

The original phrasing is grammatically correct and idiomatic, while the correction introduces an awkward and less natural expression. This highlights the importance of careful and accurate error correction, ensuring that feedback provided to learners does not inadvertently reinforce incorrect usage. Overall, the table underscores the need for focused instruction on prepositional usage within collocations and idiomatic expressions.

**Table 05: Capitalization Errors (12.2% R 4)**

| Error Identification                                             | Error Correction                                              | Explanation                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
|------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| English                                                          | English                                                       | Correct as is. "English" is a proper noun referring to a language and must always be capitalized.                                                                                                                              |
| all the students have the ability of mastering english language. | All the students have the ability to master English language. | "All" should be capitalized at the beginning of the sentence. "English" must be capitalized. Also, "ability of mastering" is better expressed as "ability to master," and "English language" should include the article "the." |
| indeed , we need to all skills in our life.                      | Indeed, we need all skills in our lives.                      | "Indeed" starts the sentence and must be capitalized. Remove the space before the comma. "To all skills" is incorrect; it should be "all skills," and "life" is better expressed in the plural form "lives" for generality.    |
| ... . it has important role                                      | ... It has an important role.                                 | The pronoun "It" begins a new sentence and must be capitalized. Also, the article "an" is needed before "important role." The ellipsis should not be followed by both a space and a period.                                    |

| Error Identification                                                                                        | Error Correction                                                                                          | Explanation                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Teaching English for foreign people.                                                                        | Teaching English to foreign people.                                                                       | "English" should be capitalized. Also, "to foreign people" is more natural than "for foreign people."                                                                                                                                          |
| and the good using of intonation. Also, this skill helps developing the good understanding of the language. | And the effective use of intonation. Also, this skill helps develop a good understanding of the language. | "And" and "Also" begin new sentences and must be capitalized. "The good using" is ungrammatical—"effective use" is more natural. "Helps developing" should be "helps develop." Use "a good understanding" instead of "the good understanding." |
| In specific domain. according to the need of the learner.                                                   | In a specific domain. According to the needs of the learner.                                              | "According" begins a new sentence and must be capitalized. Add "a" before "specific domain" for grammatical correctness. "Need" should be plural—"needs"—to match general usage.                                                               |

Capitalization plays a crucial role in ensuring clarity of meaning in writing, whereas the absence or misuse of capitalization can significantly alter the intended message. For example, consider the phrases "The White House" and "the white house" (Capitalization Rules in Writing, 2014). Although both contain the same words, the use of capitalization in the first phrase completely changes its meaning. "The White House" refers to the official residence of the President of the United States, while "the white house" simply denotes any white house.

The errors observed in Table 5 can be attributed primarily to first language interference, particularly from Arabic, which does not employ capitalization rules. Additionally, students demonstrated insufficient knowledge of English conventions, such as capitalizing the first letter of proper nouns and the beginning of sentences. These two factors contributed significantly to the capitalization errors. Supporting this, Salebi (2014) found similar results, reporting that (18.75%) of capitalization errors were due to interference from the Arabic language.

**Table 06: Subject Verb Agreement Errors (11.7% R 5)**

**A Linguistic Inquiry into English Writing Errors among Third-Year Students of English at Batna2 University: Types, Frequencies, and Pedagogical Implications**

---

| Error Identification                                             | Error Correction                                                  | Explanation                                                                      |
|------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| It help students to express their likes and dislikes.            | It helps students to express their likes and dislikes.            | "It" is singular, so the verb must also be singular: "helps."                    |
| In order to master a language, the learner need the four skills. | In order to master a language, the learner needs the four skills. | "The learner" is singular, so the verb should be "needs."                        |
| Reading and writing is less important.                           | Reading and writing are less important.                           | "Reading and writing" is a compound (plural) subject, so the verb must be "are." |
| It distinguish sound, associate meaning with sound.              | It distinguishes sound, associates meaning with sound.            | "It" is singular; all verbs must match: "distinguishes" and "associates."        |
| In ESP teachers should has language and knowledge...             | In ESP, teachers should have language and knowledge...            | After "should," the base form of the verb is required: "have," not "has."        |
| Speaking are based on the results of listening skills.           | Speaking is based on the results of listening skills.             | "Speaking" is an uncountable/singular noun, so the verb must be "is."            |
| ESP is about tools that is used to communicate.                  | ESP is about tools that are used to communicate.                  | "Tools" is plural, so the relative clause must use "are" instead of "is."        |
| General English differ from ESP.                                 | General English differs from ESP.                                 | "General English" is singular; the verb should be "differs."                     |

| Error Identification                     | Error Correction                               | Explanation                                                                                                           |
|------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| It require the need analysis of learner. | It requires the needs analysis of the learner. | "It" is singular, so the verb must be "requires." Also, "needs analysis" and "the learner" are grammatically correct. |
| Speaking skills is...                    | Speaking skills are...                         | "Speaking skills" is plural, so the verb should be "are."                                                             |
| If you has a good listening...           | If you have good listening...                  | "You" takes "have" (not "has"), and "a good listening" is incorrect; "good listening" is uncountable.                 |
| It require fluent teachers.              | It requires fluent teachers.                   | "It" is singular, so the verb must be "requires."                                                                     |

Subject-verb agreement is a persistent grammatical challenge for many English language learners, as supported by several previous studies. Norhalima (2016) found that students often struggle to construct sentences with correct subject-verb agreement, particularly when using auxiliary verbs such as *have* and *has*, or forms of *to be* like *is*, *am*, and *are*. Common errors include mismatches between singular subjects and plural verbs (e.g., *she have a friend*) and plural subjects with singular verbs (e.g., *they has a friend*). Similarly, Salebi (2004) reported that subject-verb agreement errors accounted for (44.3%) of all grammatical mistakes in students' writing. These findings suggest that such errors stem mainly from two causes: interference from Arabic—where subject-verb agreement rules differ significantly—and the inherent complexity of English grammatical structures.

This pattern is further confirmed by the data in Table 6, which highlights frequent subject-verb agreement errors among students. The most common mistakes involve incorrect verb forms with singular or plural subjects, such as "*It help*" instead of "*It helps*" or "*They has*" instead of "*They have*." Students also frequently misuse auxiliary verbs, for example, "*should has*" instead of "*should have*." Other errors arise when words separate the subject from the verb, when dealing with compound subjects (e.g., "*Reading and writing is*" instead of

*“Reading and writing are”*), or in relative clauses where verb agreement is overlooked (e.g., *“tools that is used”* instead of *“tools that are used”*).

The data shows that subject-verb agreement was the fifth most common error type, comprising 11.7% of all errors, with 137 instances identified. Although not the most frequent error, its consistent appearance indicates a meaningful barrier to grammatical accuracy and overall writing quality. To address this issue, English instruction should focus more explicitly on subject-verb agreement through direct grammar teaching, targeted error correction, and contrastive analysis with students' first language, particularly Arabic. Frequent contextual practise in both speaking and writing can also help students internalize the correct patterns. With consistent reinforcement, students can improve their grammatical precision and enhance the clarity and fluency of their written English.

**Table 07: Articles Errors (8.5% R6)**

| Error Identification                                                | Error Correction                                                     | Explanation                                                                                                                                                                        |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| To use the target language in a appropriate way                     | To use the target language in an appropriate way                     | "An" is used before words that begin with a vowel sound, such as "appropriate."                                                                                                    |
| It is ability to produce coherent words                             | It is the ability to produce coherent words                          | The definite article "the" is needed before "ability" to specify a known or general concept.                                                                                       |
| Listening, speaking, reading and writing are four skills            | Listening, speaking, reading, and writing are the four skills        | The article "the" is used to indicate that these are the specific four language skills. A comma is also added before "and" for clarity (Oxford comma).                             |
| Such a skills have its important role in teaching learning process. | Such skills have an important role in the teaching-learning process. | "Such" is followed directly by plural nouns without "a." "An" is needed before "important." Also, the phrase "teaching-learning" is hyphenated, and the article "the" is added for |

| Error Identification                             | Error Correction                                     | Explanation                                                                                             |
|--------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                                                  |                                                      | clarity.                                                                                                |
| We have reading skills which are very important. | We have the reading skills which are very important. | The article "the" is needed to specify a known or previously mentioned set of skills.                   |
| Data acquired in target language.                | Data acquired in the target language.                | The definite article "the" is required before "target language" as it refers to a specific language.    |
| Speaking is most complex skill.                  | Speaking is the most complex skill.                  | Use "the" before superlative adjectives like "most complex."                                            |
| Specific domain                                  | A specific domain                                    | The indefinite article "a" is needed before a singular countable noun not previously specified.         |
| According to need learner                        | According to the needs of the learner                | The correct form includes the article "the" and adds "of the" for grammatical completeness and clarity. |

Third-year students often exhibited confusion in their use of English articles—a, an, the, and the zero article (no article). Their mistakes generally fell into two main categories: omission and addition of articles.

In the case of omission, students frequently left out necessary articles, which resulted in grammatically incomplete or awkward sentences. For instance, in the sentence “Speaking is most complex skill,” the correct form should be “Speaking is the most complex skill.” Here, the definite article “the” is required before a superlative adjective like “most complex.” Another example is “According to need learner,” which should be corrected to “According to the need of the learner.” In this case, the omission of the article “the” and the preposition “of” disrupts the sentence’s structure and clarity. Such errors are likely influenced

by first language interference, specifically from Arabic, which does not use articles in the same way English does. As a result, students may transfer the grammatical rules of Arabic to English, leading to the consistent exclusion of articles.

On the other hand, some errors fall under the category of addition, where students insert articles where none are needed. For example, in the phrase “such a skills,” the article “a” is incorrectly added before a plural noun. The correct form is “such skills.” This type of error reflects a misunderstanding of English article rules and likely stems from intralingual interference—that is, confusion within the target language itself. In this case, students might overgeneralize the rule that “a” precedes a noun, without considering whether the noun is countable or plural.

Overall, students' misuse of articles is influenced by their native language (interlingual interference) and by confusion with English grammar rules (intralingual interference). These errors suggest the need for more focused instruction and practise on article usage, especially in contrast to the students' first language, to help them develop more accurate and natural-sounding English.

**Table 08: Verb Tense Errors (07.6% R7)**

| Error Identification                                                           | Error Correction                                           | Explanation                                                                                                                                                              |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| English for specific purposes was English for specific purposes is a a subset. | English for Specific Purposes is a subset.                 | The verb was indicates past tense, but the sentence refers to a general fact or definition, so the present tense “is” is appropriate. Redundant words were also removed. |
| It usually refered to the teaching of of English language.                     | It usually refers to the teaching of the English language. | The verb refers should be in present tense to match the time marker usually. Also, of of is a repetition and the is needed before English language.                      |

| Error Identification                                                                                                   | Error Correction                                                                                                  | Explanation                                                                                                                                                                      |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| We couldn't denied the importance of the stages because it is more effectively achieved by speaking than by listening. | We can't deny the importance of the stages because it is more effectively achieved by speaking than by listening. | The modal couldn't should be can't to match the present context. Also, the base verb deny must follow the modal verb.                                                            |
| The degree of importance can varries from one to another.                                                              | The degree of importance can vary from one to another.                                                            | The base verb vary is used after can. The word varries is a misspelling.                                                                                                         |
| Writing is to move from abstract to reality. It was the process of coding. The writer took feedback.                   | Writing is to move from abstract to reality. It is the process of coding. The writer takes feedback.              | The shift from present to past tense is unnecessary. All actions describe a general or habitual process, so the present tense should be used throughout.                         |
| It saving time for both teacher and learner.                                                                           | It saves time for both teacher and learner.                                                                       | The correct verb form here is saves (present simple) to agree with the singular subject It. Saving is a present participle and cannot function as the main verb in this context. |

The errors identified in Table 8 can largely be attributed to the common challenges students face when learning a foreign language. One of the key reasons behind these mistakes is the influence of the students' first language, Arabic, which shapes their logic, sentence structure, and overall approach to writing. Many students tend to think in Arabic while attempting to write in English, which leads to direct translation and grammatical interference. In addition to this cross-linguistic influence, students often overgeneralize newly learned rules. As they process new information in the second language, they may mistakenly apply one rule to many situations without recognising exceptions, resulting in intralingual errors.

## A Linguistic Inquiry into English Writing Errors among Third-Year Students of English at Batna2 University: Types, Frequencies, and Pedagogical Implications

These findings highlight the importance of recognising both interlingual (mother tongue influence) and intralingual (overgeneralization within the target language) sources of error. Teachers need to be aware of these two dimensions in order to better support students and address recurring mistakes effectively. Similar conclusions were drawn by Hafiz et al. (2018) in their study at Jazan University in Saudi Arabia, where students exhibited comparable difficulties related to both native language interference and internal rule formation in English. This suggests that a deeper understanding of how students acquire and internalize grammar is crucial in designing effective teaching strategies.

**Table 09: Pronoun Errors (05.2% R8)**

| Error Identification                                                                          | Error Correction                                                                                | Explanation                                                                                                                                                             |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| For communication methodology which emphasizes it's learning process.                         | For communication methodology which emphasizes its learning process.                            | It's is a contraction of it is, while its is the correct possessive form. Here, its is used to indicate possession (the learning process belonging to the methodology). |
| Express they feelings easily and not be ashamed.                                              | Express their feelings easily and not be ashamed.                                               | The subject pronoun they is incorrectly used instead of the possessive adjective their, which is needed to describe feelings.                                           |
| Students can develop the keenness of learning, and hear the native language from his teacher. | Students can develop the keenness of learning, and hear the native language from their teacher. | The singular pronoun his does not agree with the plural noun students. The correct plural possessive pronoun their should be used.                                      |
| To talk about their.                                                                          | To talk about them.                                                                             | Their is a possessive adjective and must modify a noun (e.g., their experiences). Since no noun follows it, the correct object pronoun them is required.                |

After analysing the students' exam copies, a total of 61 pronoun-related errors were identified. Drawing on the taxonomy proposed by Dulay, et al. (1982), these errors were classified according to surface strategy taxonomy, which includes four categories: omission, addition, misinformation, and misordering.

Among these categories, the most frequently observed type of error is misinformation. This suggests that students often struggle with selecting the correct form of personal pronouns in context. For example, many students confused subject and object pronouns, incorrectly substituting she for her, we for us, he for his, or they for them.

These findings are consistent with previous studies. Firdausi (2014) reports that misinformation is the most common type of pronoun error among students, accounting for a striking 95.8% of all mistakes in her study. She notes that students often could not distinguish between different pronoun classes (e.g., subject vs. object pronouns). Similarly, Wijayanto (2008) finds that misinformation is the dominant error in his study as well, appearing in 11 sentences. In light of these results, the current research further explored the underlying causes of these errors, drawing on Brown's (2000) classification of error sources:

Misinformation errors may be attributed to interlingual transfer, where learners apply structures from their native language (Arabic, in this case) to the target language. This cross-linguistic influence can lead to the misuse of English pronoun forms.

Omission errors often result from intralingual transfer, where students rely on incomplete or partially acquired rules of the second language. This leads them to omit essential elements, such as pronouns that should appear in the sentence.

Additional errors may stem from learners' communication strategies, particularly when they overcompensate to convey meaning clearly. This reflects their learning style and individual strategies for overcoming gaps in knowledge (Brown, 2000, p. 277). In short, the study highlights that pronoun misinformation is a significant challenge for EFL learners, and it emphasises the need for targeted instruction and corrective feedback on pronoun use, particularly in distinguishing subject, object, and possessive forms.

### 3.3.1 Comparison of Sentence-Level and Word-Level Writing Errors

To examine whether there is a statistically significant difference between sentence-level and word-level writing errors, a Chi-square test is conducted. The total number of errors analysed is 1170, which are categorized as follows:

**Table 10: Categorization of Errors**

| Error Type     | Frequency (Observed)       |
|----------------|----------------------------|
| Sentence-Level | 235 + 137 + 90 + 143 = 605 |

| Error Type | Frequency (Observed)       |
|------------|----------------------------|
| Word-Level | 61 + 100 + 214 + 190 = 565 |
| Total      | 1170                       |

3.3.2 Chi-square Test Results

A Chi-square test is applied to compare the observed frequencies with expected frequencies, assuming equal distribution:

The outcome of the Chi-square test confirms the second hypothesis (H2), as the calculated value ( $\chi^2 = 1.37$ ) was below the critical threshold (3.84). This indicates no statistically significant difference between sentence-level and word-level errors. Hence, H2 is confirmed. Conversely, the first hypothesis (H1), which predicted variance in error types and frequencies, is also upheld by the data, as the distribution across error types (e.g., punctuation, spelling, prepositions) reveals significant variation, validating the assumption that learners encounter diverse challenges at both levels of writing.

- 1. Expected Frequency (per group) =  $1170 \div 2 = 585$
- 2. Observed Frequencies: Sentence-Level = 605, Word-Level = 565
- 3. Chi-square value ( $\chi^2$ ) = 1.37
- 4. Degrees of freedom ( $df$ ) = 1
- 5. Critical value at  $p = 0.05 = 3.84$

Since  $\chi^2 (1.37) < 3.84$ , the difference between the two groups is *not statistically significant*. This suggests that both sentence-level and word-level errors occur with similar overall frequency, even though individual types of errors may vary.

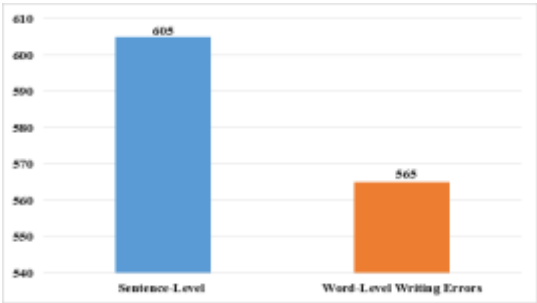


Figure 1. Comparison of Sentence-Level and Word-Level Writing Errors

The general distribution of writing errors in two primary categories, sentence-level and word-level, is shown in Figure 1. Although there are slightly more sentence-level errors (n=605) than word-level ones (n=565), a Chi-square test indicates that this difference is not statistically significant ( $\chi^2 = 1.37$ ,  $p >$

0.05), which confirms the stated hypothesis number H<sub>2</sub>. The overall distribution between the two groups did not differ sufficiently to imply a significant difference, even though punctuation problems are the most common and pronoun errors the least. This demonstrates how crucial it is to address both sentence-level and word-level problems equally in teaching writing because both greatly exacerbate students' writing difficulties.

## **Conclusion**

This research set out to explore and categorize the most common grammatical errors found in the written work of EFL students, with a particular focus on both sentence-level and word-level difficulties. An analysis of 1,170 errors revealed that sentence-level issues were the most frequent, with punctuation errors making up the largest portion (20%). These were followed by spelling mistakes (18.2%) and incorrect use of prepositions (16.2%), underscoring persistent challenges related to sentence construction and lexical choice.

On the other hand, errors involving pronouns were less frequent, accounting for just 5.2% of the total and ranking eighth among the identified error types. Nonetheless, the presence of such mistakes points to ongoing difficulties in grasping essential grammatical concepts—often influenced by interference from the students' first language, Arabic. Other significant issues included errors in capitalization (12.2%) and subject-verb agreement (11.7%), both of which reflect a lack of mastery over basic writing conventions.

The patterns identified in the study suggest that both interlingual factors—such as the influence of learners' native language—and intralingual factors, like overgeneralization or incomplete rule acquisition, play a key role in the occurrence of these errors. To address these challenges, writing instruction should prioritize areas with high error rates, especially punctuation, spelling, and prepositions.

Incorporating strategies such as contextual grammar practice, peer review, and clear explanations of rules can help students internalize correct structures and reduce recurring mistakes. By examining the nature and origin of common writing errors, this study offers practical insights that can guide teachers and curriculum planners in creating more effective learning experiences. Ultimately, by focusing on the most impactful errors, educators can better support students in developing greater accuracy, fluency, and confidence in academic writing.

## **Implications**

The findings of this study carry several important pedagogical implications for English language teaching, particularly in EFL contexts where students share a common first language, such as Arabic.

**1. Prioritising High-Frequency Errors in Instruction**

The high frequency of punctuation (20%), spelling (18.2%), and preposition errors (16.2%) indicates that these areas should receive greater emphasis in writing instruction. Teachers should incorporate targeted lessons and exercises that address the specific punctuation rules and spelling patterns that students most frequently misuse. Prepositions, often influenced by direct translation from Arabic, require contrastive teaching approaches to clarify differences in usage between English and Arabic.

**2. Reinforcing Sentence-Level Grammar**

Errors in capitalization (12.2%) and subject-verb agreement (11.7%) suggest that many students have not fully mastered basic sentence structure rules. These errors are fundamental to clear communication and should be corrected through structured grammar instruction, frequent feedback, and editing practise.

**3. Addressing Interference from the First Language**

The data confirms that several types of errors—particularly with pronouns (5.2%) and articles (8.5%)—can be attributed to L1 interference. Since Arabic lacks certain grammatical features of English, such as articles and some pronoun distinctions, learners need explicit instruction that compares and contrasts English structures with those of Arabic. Raising awareness of such differences can help minimize transfer-related errors.

**4. Encouraging Process Writing and Feedback Loops**

Given the range of errors, a process approach to writing, where students plan, draft, revise, and receive feedback, can be beneficial. Peer review and teacher feedback sessions can draw attention to recurrent mistakes and reinforce correct usage over time.

**5. Curriculum and Materials Development**

The error analysis offers insights for curriculum designers to tailor materials and assessment tools. Grammar and writing textbooks can be supplemented with localized content that focuses on the most problematic areas identified in this study. Diagnostic writing tasks at the start of academic terms can help instructors identify learners' weaknesses early on.

**6. Teacher Training and Professional Development**

Teachers should be trained to recognise the common error patterns among Arabic-speaking learners and to apply effective remedial strategies. Professional development workshops can include sessions on error analysis, feedback techniques, and the use of contrastive analysis in teaching grammar.

## **References**

- Akhtar, S., Sohail, W., & Rizwan, M. (2017). An analysis of prepositions (idiomatic phrases, prepositional phrases, and zero prepositions). *Global Journal of Human–Social Science*, 17(3) , 28–98.
- Al-Ghabra, I. M., & Najim, A. S. (2019). Analyzing errors committed in paragraph writing by undergraduates. *Journal of Language Teaching and Research*, 10(2), 264–270.
- Arapoff, N. (1970). *Writing through understanding*. Holt, Rinehart & Winston.
- Babayigit, S., & Stainthorp, R. (2010). Component processes of early reading, spelling, and narrative writing skills in Turkish: A longitudinal study. *Reading and Writing*, 23(5), 539–568.
- Bataineh, R. F. (2005). Jordanian undergraduates' EFL errors in the use of the indefinite articles. *Asian EFL Journal*, 7(4), pp.57-79.
- Belkhenchir, K. (2004, December 31). Using computational tools to analyse scientific discourse: Identifying shared frame of reference to design a syllabus. *Passerelle: Algerian Journal*, 1(1), 85–90.
- Brown, A. (1993). *Helping children to write*. Paul Chapman Publishing Ltd.
- Brown, D. H. (2000). *Principles of language learning and teaching* (4th ed.). Pearson Education, Inc.

## **A Linguistic Inquiry into English Writing Errors among Third-Year Students of English at Batna2 University: Types, Frequencies, and Pedagogical Implications**

---

- Burns, N., & Grove, S. K. (2001). *The practice of nursing research: Conduct, critique, and utilization* (4th ed.). W. B. Saunders Company.
- Byrne, D. (1996). *Teaching writing skills*. Longman.
- Capitalization rules in writing. (2014, November 15). *Study.com*. Retrieved January 20, 2020, from <https://study.com/academy/lesson/capitalizationrules-in-writing.html>
- Catford, C. J., Palmer, D. J., Lekawatana, P., Wichawut, C., Scovel, T., & Spencer, S. (1974). A contrastive study of English and Thai. *ERIC*. Retrieved July 30, 2010, from <http://www.eric.ed.gov/PDFS/ED105775.pdf>
- Celce-Murcia, M., & Larsen-Freeman, D. (1999). *The grammar book: An ESL teacher's course*. Heinle & Heinle.
- Cohen, L., Manion, L., & Morrison, K. (2007). *Research methods in education*. Routledge.
- Corder, S. P. (1967). The significance of learners' errors. *International Review of Applied Linguistics in Language Teaching*, 5(4), 161–170. <https://doi.org/10.1515/iral.1967.5.1-4.161>
- Corder, S. P. (1974). *Error analysis: Perspectives on second language acquisition*. Longman.
- Corder, S. P. (1981). *Error analysis and interlanguage*. Oxford University Press.
- Danesi, M. (2006). *Basic American grammar and usage*. Barron's Educational Series.
- Dulay, C., & Burt, M. (1974). Error and strategies in child second language acquisition. *TESOL Quarterly*, 8(2), 129–138.
- Dulay, H., Burt, M., & Krashen, S. D. (1982). *Language two*. Oxford University Press.

Eckersley, C. E., & Eckersley, J. M. (1960). *A comprehensive English grammar for foreign students*. Longman.

Ellis, R. (1996). *The study of second language acquisition*, Oxford University Press. Farmer, M., Yesher, S., Zemelman, S., & Richmond, E. (1985). *Composition and grammar: Steps in the writing process*. Laidlaw Brothers.

Hafiz, M. S., Omar, A. M. A., & Sher, K. U. R. (2018). Analysis of syntactic errors in English writing: A case study of Jazan University preparatory year students. *Journal of Education and Practice*, 9(11), 76–84.

Hammad, A. E. (2012). Teaching and learning English reading in Gaza prep schools: A descriptive study (PhD diss.). Cairo University, Egypt.

Harmer, J. (1998). *How to teach English: An introduction to the practice of English language teaching*. Pearson Education.

Harmer, J. (2004). *How to teach writing*. Pearson Education.

Harmer, J. (2007). *How to teach English: An introduction to the practice of English language teaching*. Pearson Education.

Harris, G. J., & Cunningham, H. D. (1994). *The Simon & Schuster guide to writing*. Prentice Hall.

Hubbard, P., et al. (1983). *A training course for TEFL*. Oxford University Press.

Ingels, M. (2006). *Legal communicative skills*. ACCO.

James, C. (1998). *Errors in language learning and use: Exploring error analysis*. Routledge.

Johnson, A. P. (2008). *Teaching reading and writing: A guidebook for tutoring and remediating students*. Rowman & Littlefield Education.

Kane, T. S. (2000). *The Oxford Essential Guide to Writing*. Berkley Publishing Group.

Keene, L. M., & Adams, H. K. (2002). *Easy Access: The reference handbook for writers* (3rd ed.). McGraw-Hill.

- Khansir, A. A. (2013). Error analysis and second language writing. *Theory and Practice in Language Studies*, 3(2), 363–370.  
<https://doi.org/10.4304/tpls.3.2.363-370>
- Klammer, P. T., & Schulz, R. M. (1992). *Analyzing English Grammar*. Allyn & Bacon.
- Kolln, M. (1994). *Understanding English Grammar* (4th ed.). Macmillan.
- Leech, G., & Svartvik, J. (1975). *A communicative grammar of English*. Longman.
- Lorincz, K., & Gordon, R. (2012). Difficulties in learning prepositions and possible solutions. *Linguistics Portfolios*, 1(14), 1–14.
- Mackey, W. F. (1967). *Language teaching analysis*. Indiana University Press.
- Manuel, B., & Medel, P. (1976). *A practical guide to methodology of research and thesis writing*. GIC Enterprises & Company Inc.
- McCaskill, M. K., et al. (1990). *Grammar, punctuation, and capitalization: A handbook for technical writers and editors*. NASA Reference Publication 1100.
- Murcia, M., & Olshtain, E. (2000). *Discourse and context in language teaching: A guide for language teachers*. Cambridge University Press.
- Nelson, G. (2001). *English: An essential grammar*. Routledge.
- Nonkukhetkhong, K. (2013, April). Grammatical error analysis of first-year English majors, Udon Thani Rajabhat University. Paper presented at the Asian Conference on Language, Osaka, Japan.
- Norhalimah, N. (2016). *The subject-verb agreement in writing at the eighth graders of MTs An-Nur Palangka Raya* (Doctoral dissertation, IAIN Palangka Raya, Indonesia).

- Nunan, D. (2001). Second language acquisition. In R. Carter & D. Nunan (Eds.), *The Cambridge guide to teaching English to speakers of other languages* (pp. 87–92). Cambridge University Press.
- Orlove, P. (2004). *Wordsmith: A guide to college writing*. Pearson Education.
- Parahoo, K. (1997). *Nursing research: Principles, process, and issues*. Macmillan.
- Presada, D., & Badea, M. (2014). The effectiveness of error analysis in translation classes: A pilot study. *Porta Linguarum*, 22, 49–55.
- Purpura, J. (2004). *Assessing grammar*. Cambridge University Press.
- Quirk, R. (1985). *A comprehensive grammar of the English language*. Longman.
- Rattanadilok Na Phuket, P., & Othman, N. B. (2015). Understanding EFL students' errors in writing. *Journal of Education and Practice*, 6(32), 99–106.
- Richards, J. C., & Schmidt, R. (2002). *Dictionary of language teaching and applied linguistics*. Pearson Education.
- Rivers, W. M. (1968). *Teaching foreign language skills*. University of Chicago Press.
- Riyanto, S., Emila, & Neila, N. H. (2008). *A handbook of English grammar*. Pustaka Pelajar.
- Robson, C. (1973). *Experimental design and statistics in psychology*. Penguin.
- Rosenthal, J., & Ehri, L. C. (2010). Pronouncing new words aloud during silent reading enhances fifth graders' memory for vocabulary words and their spellings. *Reading and Writing: An Interdisciplinary Journal*, 24(1), 921–950.
- Rouaghe, F., & Bouguebs, R. (2023). The Cultural Content Represented in the Middle School EFL Course: Target, international, and source. *Altralang Journal*, 5(1), 377–397.

- Salebi, M. Y. (2004). Saudi college students' perception of their errors in written English. *Scientific Journal of King Faisal*, 5, 209–228.
- Scott, W., & Ytreberg, L. H. (1990). *Teaching English to children*. Longman.
- Simbwa, E. (1987). Investigating writing errors among university students in Uganda. *International Journal of Applied Sciences*, 6(2), 45–60.
- Singh, Y. K. (2006). *Fundamentals of research methodology and statistics*. New Age International.
- Sparks, P. S. (2006). *Commonsense grammar and style: English for professionals*. Westview Press.
- Starkey, L. (2004). *How to write great essays*. Learning Express.
- Straus, J. (2014). *The blue book of grammar and punctuation*. Jossey-Bass.
- Warriner, E. J., & Graham, L. S. (1977). *Warriner's English grammar and composition*. Harcourt Brace Jovanovich.
- Watson, J. (1995). *Collins COBUILD student's grammar: Self-study edition with answers*. HarperCollins.
- White, R., & Arndt, V. (1991). *Process writing*. Longman.
- Yule, G. (1998). *Explaining English grammar*. Oxford University Press.
- Zafar, A. (2016). Error analysis: A tool to improve English skills of undergraduate students. *Procedia – Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 217, 697–705. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2016.02.122>
- Zawahreh, F. (2012). Applied error analysis of written production of English essays of tenth grade students in Ajloun schools, Jordan. *International Journal of Learning and Development*, 2(2), 16–35.