

DEDICATION

To the soul of my mother

*I dedicate this work also to my father, my sisters and my
brother Ibrahiem.*

My son and daughter , Ahmad and Sura.

*A very special dedication is to my dear husband Dr. Habeeb
Al Ani.*

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Abstract

It is widely known that the errors encountered by students in learning, play an important role in the study of language acquisition in general and in examining their performance in foreign languages in particular.

This study is an attempt to investigate and identify the grammatical types of English language errors in writing English essays written by Omani university students at Nizwa University and to find out the possible causes and the sources as to why these errors occur.

The study investigated errors of 100 essays which were gathered from Omani University freshmen enrolled in the “Foundation Program” during the second semester of February, 2014. They enrolled in the College of (Arts and Sciences), College of (Engineering & Architecture), College of (Economics, Management & Information Systems) and the College of (Pharmacy and Nursing).

The results of this study have almost confirmed the hypotheses on which it was based.

The conclusion is that there are different problems these students face, which impede their proficiency in the target language.

Hence , some recommendations are suggested.

Abstract

(Arabic Version)

مستخلص

انه من المعروف عامة على ان الاخطاء التي يرتكبها الطلاب عند التعلم تلعب دورا مهما في دراسة اكتساب اللغة عامة . وفي اختيار الاداء في اللغات الاجنبية خاصة

لقد كانت هذه الدراسة محاولة للكشف عن اداء طلاب جامعة نزوى في البرنامج التاسيسي في كلية العلوم والاداب ' كلية الاقتصاد والادارة ونظم المعلومات ' كلية الهندسة والعمارة وكلية الصيدلة والتمريض . واهتمت الدراسة باشكاليات واخطاء هؤلاء الطلاب في النحو اثناء عملية تعلم اللغة الانكليزية كلغة اجنبية

لقد اعتمدت هذه الدراسة على كتابة المقالة كآلية مجدية . لجمع البيانات واسنباط النتائج . وكما يبدو فان نتائج الدراسة قد اثبتت الافتراضات التي يقوم عليها البحث . وقد خلصت الى اهم المصاعب التي تواجه هؤلاء الطلاب وتعوق حذقهم التام باللغة الهدف . لذا فقد اقترحت الدراسة بعض التوصيات لكي تساعد على ايجاد بعض الحلول

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List of Abbreviations

CA	Contrastive Analysis
CAH	Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis
EA	Error Analysis
EFL	English as a Foreign Language
FL	Foreign Language
IL	Interlanguage
L2	Second Language
MT	Mother Tongue
NL	Native Language
SLA	Second Language Acquisition
TL	Target Language
Vs.	Versus

Definitions of Terms

Approximative System: It is defined as in Nemser(1974:55) to mean a deviant linguistic system actually employed by the learner attempting to utilize the target language.

Communicative Strategy: It is a way used to express a meaning in a second or foreign language by a learner who has a restricted mastery of the language. (Richards,1985:48).

Contrastive Analysis: It focuses only on the linguistic differences and similarities in order to predict the learning difficulties. In a more simplistic way, when two languages are similar, positive transfer is likely to occur, whereas when there are some differences between two languages interference occurs.

Error Analysis: By error analysis is meant the study and analysis of language learners to find out how well someone learns a language and to obtain information on the problematic areas of language in the preparation of teaching materials (Richards,1985:96).

Fossilization: Fossilization is a mechanism by which linguistic features of the learner's L1 tend to be kept in the IL relative to a particular TL regardless of the age of the learner or amount of instruction and practice (Selinker, 1972).

Frequency: We mean by frequency the number of occurrences of an error in the data.

Grapheme: A minimally distinctive graphic symbol used to represent a language unit in a writing system. The letters of an alphabet are graphemes when used to represent the phonemes of a language.

Inetrlanguage: According to Selinker (1972) interlanguage is a temporary grammar which is systematic and composed of rules which are a product of five main cognitive processes, that is, overgeneralisation, transfer of training, language transfer, strategies of second language learning and strategies of second language communication.

Interlingual: This term refers to the errors resulting from mother tongue interference.

Intralingual: This term refers to the errors resulting from factors other than mother tongue interference, e.g., overgeneralization, simplification,...etc.

Language Transfer: It is the effect of one language on the learning of another.

Morpheme: It is the smallest meaningful unit in a language, e.g., both **cat** and **s** in **cats** are morphemes.

Negative Transfer: It occurs when the structure of the students' mother tongue inhibits the acquisition of the target language because the two structures are not similar.

Orthography: It is the presentation of the sounds of a language by means of written or printed symbols.

Overgeneralization: It is meant by overgeneralization the items produced by the learner which reflect not the structure of the mother tongue, but generalizations based on partial exposure to the target language.

Phoneme: It is a significant contrastive unit in the phonological system of a language.

Phonics: It is a way of reading in which children are taught the relationship of symbols to sounds.

Positive Transfer: It occurs when an item or a structure of the students' mother tongue (Arabic language) facilitates the acquisition of the new language(English) because the two structures are similar or the two items have the same function.

Target Language(TL): It is the language learned as a second or foreign language.

Transfer: It is the process of using the meaning and structure of the mother tongue instead of the meaning and the structure of the target language while acquiring a new language.

Writing: It is the graphic representation of a language, often called the fourth language skill.