

# **CHAPTER ONE**

## **Introduction**

### **1.1 Background**

One of the most important fields in English language learning is Error Analysis (EA) it is not a new approach. The learner's errors have long been interested for second and foreign language researchers. Error Analysis is one of the major topics in the field of second language acquisition research. In my on point of view, Language learning is a process in which, learners benefits from mistakes by obtaining feedback to make new attempts that successfully leads them to achieve desired goals. In fact, errors provide the most valuable data for the teacher to measure the extent of success or failure in both learning and teaching, and they enable her /him to adjust her /his teaching accordingly.

Moreover, the field of second language (L2) learning is broad and has been a fertile field for researchers. Error analysis in particular is one of the aspects of L2 learning processes that have received much attention from researchers, (Kasanga, 2006:65-89).The collection of errors is not a simple task. The mistakes made by a specific group of students must be systematically collected, analysed and categorized, otherwise the collection will be a mere counting of the errors made by the learners.

Error is a deviation from accepted rules of a language made by a learner of a second language. Such errors result from the learner's lack of knowledge of correct rules of the target language. Errors are an integral part of language learning, Akbar (2012). Some learners of English as a second language are unaware of the existence of the particular system or rule in English language, so thatthey committed mistakes and they do not know that they are doing them. The basic task of error analysis is to

describe how learning occurs by examining the learner's output and this includes his/her correct and incorrect sentences or words. There are two major approaches to the study of learner's errors, namely contrastive analysis and error analysis. Error analysis cannot be studied properly without touching upon the notion of contrastive analysis. Contrastive analysis and error analysis have been commonly recognized as branches of Applied Linguistic Science, Corder (1978). Therefore, this research is aim to identify some errors that committed by English language learner in SUST at English department in order to highlight the error types and the frequency their repletion. There are several ways of thinking about errors in writing. For example, in light of what we, as linguists, know about second language acquisition and what we know about how texts, context and the writing process interact with one another students" writing in L2generally contains varying degrees of grammatical and rhetorical errors. As Myles (2002:10) argues "depending on proficiency level, the more content-rich and creative the text, the greater the possibility there is for errors at the morpho-syntactic level. "These kinds of errors are especially common among L2 writers who do not have enough language skills to express what they want to say in a comprehensible way. The current study analyses the English L2 language errors in the writing of Sudanese students.

## **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

Based on the researcher in teaching English language at university level , the researcher observing that some students are unable to construct well-formed English sentences. Particularly they made a subject verb agreement error for example: my brothergo to the cinema at least once a week. In addition to that they make tense error,I have gone to Paris last year with my family.In addition to spelling mistakes: The education in

scoole moreover, they make errors in preposition :by working in cities ; and they make wrong choice of word, the sun falls at night and rises again in the morning.

### **1.3 Objectives**

**This study aims to:**

1. Investigate students' inability to construct a well formed English sentence.
2. Identify types of learners' errors in writing skills.
3. Establish the causes of error production in order to improve students' writing skills.

### **1.4 Significances of the study**

1. Error analysis enables the teachers of an overall knowledge about the students' errors. Foreign language.
- 2 Errors can tell the teacher how far towards the goal.
- 3 Errors are indispensable to the learners themselves, for we can regard the making of mistakes as a device the learner employs in order to learn.
- 4 Some errors need to be handled; otherwise, they will become fossilized.

### **1.5 Research questions**

**The study attempts to provide answers to the following questions:**

1. What are the most common language errors made by English language learners at university level, second year?
2. How frequent do these errors occur in their construction of English sentences?

## **1.6 Research hypothesis**

1. The most common errors made by the university students relates to
  - a. S-v agreement.
  - b. Spelling
  - c. Tense errors
  - d. Preposition
2. Certain types of errors occur at very high rate

## **1.7 Limitations of the study**

**This study will be limits as following:**

- a. errors that relate mainly to the construction of sentence.
- b. It will be limits to second year university students in (SUST)
- c. It will be limit with academic year(2015-2016)

## **1.8Definitions of terms**

ESL - English as a Second Language

EFL - English as a Foreign Language

L2 - Second Language

L1 - First Language

EA - Error Analysis

ELT - English Language Teaching

SLA - Second Language Acquisition

## 2.1 Introduction

Error Analysis is one of the most influential theories of second language acquisition. It is concerned with the analysis of the errors committed by L2 learners by comparing the learners' acquired norms with the target language norms and explaining the identified errors. Error Analysis in language teaching and learning is the study of the unacceptable forms produced by someone learning a language, especially a foreign language. According to James (2001, p. 62), EA refers to "the study of linguistic ignorance, the investigation of what people do not know and how they attempt to cope with their ignorance".

Another definition of error analysis is given by Brown (as cited in Ridha, 2012, p. 26). He defined error analysis as "the process to observe, analyse, and classify the deviations of the rules of the second languages and then to reveal the systems operated by learner".

Corder (1967) views errors as valuable information for three beneficiaries: for teachers, it clues them on the progress of the students; for researchers, it provides evidence as to how language is acquired or learned; for learners themselves, it gives them resources in order to learn. Brown (2000, p. 224) states that there are two main sources of errors, namely, interlingual errors and intralingual errors. Interlingual (Interference) Errors are those errors that are traceable to first language interference. These errors are attributable to negative interlingual transfer. The term "interlingual" was first introduced by Selinker (1972). He used this term to refer to the systematic knowledge of an L2 which is independent of both the learner's L1 and the target language (AbiSamra, 2003, p. 5). According to Kavaliauskiene (2009, p. 4), transfer of errors may occur because the learners lack the necessary information in the

second language or the attentional capacity to activate the appropriate second language routine.

Transfer is of two kinds: positive and negative. The transfer may prove to be justified because the structure of the two languages is similar – this case is called 'positive transfer' or 'facilitation', or it may prove unjustified because the structure of the two languages are different – that case is called 'negative transfer' or 'interference' (Wilkins, 1972, p. 199).

As far as the intralingual errors are concerned, they result from faulty or partial learning of the target language rather than language transfer (Keshavarz, 2003, p. 62; Fang and Jiang, 2007, p. 11). Richards (1972) cites four main types of Intralingual errors, namely: (1) overgeneralization, (2) ignorance of rule restrictions, (3) incomplete application of rules, and (4) false concepts hypothesized. Later he identifies six sources of errors: (1) interference, (2) overgeneralization, (3) performance errors, (4) markers of transitional competence, (5) strategies of communication and assimilation, and (6) teacher-induced errors.

Stenson (1974) states three main reasons for errors, namely, (1) incomplete acquisition of the target grammar, (2) exigencies of the learning/teaching situation, and (3) errors due to normal problems of language performance.

Committing errors is one of the most unavoidable things in the world. Students, in the process of learning language, profit from the errors that they make by obtaining feedback to make new attempts that successively approximate their desired objectives. Weireesh (1991) views learners' errors to be of particular importance because making errors is a device learners' use in order to learn. According to him, EA is a valuable aid to identify and explain difficulties faced by learners. He goes on to say that

EA serves as a reliable feedback to design a remedial teaching method. Candling (2001, p. 69) states that L2 learner's errors are potentially important for the understanding of the processes of Second Language Acquisition.

Olasehinde (2002) also argues that it is inevitable that learners make errors. He also suggested that errors are unavoidable and a necessary part of the learning curve. Sercombe (2000) explains that EA serves three purposes. Firstly, to find out the level of language proficiency the learner has reached. Secondly, to obtain information about common difficulties in language learning, and thirdly, to find out how people learn a language. Vahdatinejad (2008) maintains that error analyses can be used to determine what a learner still needs to be taught. It provides the necessary information about what is lacking in the learner's competence. He also makes a distinction between errors and lapses (simple mistakes). According to him, lapses are produced even by native speakers, and can be corrected by themselves. They call for on the spot correction rather than remediation, which is needed for errors.

Mitchell and Myles (as cited in Keshavarz, 2003) claims that errors, if studied, could reveal a developing system of the student's L2 language and this system is dynamic and open to changes and resetting of parameters. This view is supported by Stark's (2001, p. 19) study, who also explained that teachers need to view students' errors positively and should not regard them as the learners' failure to grasp the rules and structures but rather should view the errors as process of learning. He subscribes to the view that errors are normal and inevitable features of learning. He adds that errors are essential condition of learning.

In the past few years, there has been a large and growing amount of literature on error analysis. In a recent study conducted by Sarfraz (2011) to examine the errors made by 50 undergraduate Pakistani students in

written essays, he found that the overwhelming majority of errors the students made resulted from learners' interlanguage process and some errors resulted from mother tongue interference.

Darus and Subramaniam (2009), using Corder's (1967) model on error analysis, examined errors in a corpus of 72 essays written by 72 Malay students. They found that students' errors were of six types, viz., in singular/plural form, verb tense, word choice, preposition, subject-verb agreement and word order.

AbiSamra (2003), in his article entitled "An analysis of errors in Arabic speakers' English writing", collected samples of written work from 10 students in grade 9. He classified the writing errors into five categories, namely, grammatical (prepositions, articles, adjectives, etc.); syntactic (coordination, sentence structure, word order, etc.); lexical (word choice); semantic and substance (punctuation, capitalization, and spelling); and discourse errors. The results revealed that one third of the students' errors were transfer errors from the native language, and the highest numbers of errors were in the categories of semantics and vocabulary. The rest of the errors (64.1%) were errors of over-application of the target language, the highest numbers of errors being found in substance (mainly spelling), syntax and grammar.

In addition, Ridha (2012) examined English writing samples of 80 EFL college students and then categorized the errors according to the following taxonomy: grammatical, lexical/ semantic, mechanics, and word order types of errors. The results showed that most of the students' errors can be due to L1 transfer. Furthermore, she found that most of the learners rely on their mother tongue in expressing their ideas. She added that although the rating processes showed that the participants' essays included different types of errors, the grammatical errors and the mechanical errors were the most serious and frequent ones.



## **2.2 Second Language Learning**

The participants of this study are Second Language learners of English (ESL). In this regards ESL learning becomes crucial aspect of this study. Richards and Schmidt (2002:472) refer to the term second language (L2) as any language learned after one has learnt one's native language. According to Krashen (1981:1), adults develop language competence in two different ways: language acquisition and language learning. Language learning and language acquisition differ in various respects. Krashen describes language acquisitions as follows:

Language acquisition is a subconscious process not unlike the way a child learns language. Language acquirers are not consciously aware of the grammatical rules of the language, but rather develop a feel for correctness. In non-technical language, acquisition is picking-up a language (Krashen, 1981:2).

This means the learner acquires language naturally by immersion. The SLA process differs from the first language acquisition in most cases. Apart from the situations in which a child is raised by parents using two different languages on an everyday basis, or in a country in which there are two languages in common use, the most usual situation is learning L2 not from infancy, but at school, or even later. This is a similar situation in Sudan. Most of L2 learners start learning the English L2 at school level, while they have already become fluent in their L1 from home. To find out learning strategies which learners use in L2 learning and identify difficulties they encounter, error analysis has to be carried out (Richards & Schmidt, 2002:184). Hakuta (1981:1) explains that language acquisition research can be described as the search for an appropriate level of description of the learner's system of rules. The very circumstances of language acquisition and L2 learning are different,

because the already acquired language, which is L1, can have an impact on the process of L2 learning.

Language learning, on the other hand, according to Krashen (1981:2) is the conscious learning of a language, knowing the rules, being aware of them, and being able to talk about them. In the same vein Brown (2002:278) defines language learning as a conscious process in which “learners attend to form, figure out rules, and are generally aware of their own process.” Krashen's (1994:53) theory of language learning consists of five main hypotheses: the acquisition-learning hypothesis, the natural order hypothesis, the monitor hypothesis, the affective filter hypothesis and the input hypothesis. These theories are discussed below:

### **2.2.1 The Acquisition-Learning hypothesis:**

According to Ellis (1986:390-417), this is the essential component to Krashen's (1981) theory. Krashen (1994:53) identifies two independent systems of L2 performance: “the acquired system” or “acquisition” and “the learned system” or “learning”. For this hypothesis, the term “learning” relates specifically to language and refers to the ways in which “children develop first language competence” (Krashen, 1994:53). According to Richard-Amato (1996:42), the acquisition aspect of this hypothesis is subconscious, while the learning portion is a conscious effort by the learner. This means language acquisition occurs subconsciously (Krashen, 1994:58) while participating in natural conversations or communications where the focus is on meaning. Richard-Amato (1996:42) further clarifies that the learning of a language occurs separately where grammar, vocabulary, and other rules about the target language are explicitly taught. The focus in the aspect of learning is not on the content or meaning of the conversation, but rather on the structure of the language.

### **2.2.2 The Natural Order Hypothesis:**

This hypothesis states that the acquisition of grammatical structures proceeds in a predictable order. For a given language, some grammatical structures tend to be acquired early, others late, regardless of the first language of a speaker (Krashen & Terrell, 1983:28). However, this does not mean that grammar should be taught in this natural order of acquisition. According to Krashen (1994:53), natural order patterns of second language acquisition do not follow those of the first language acquisition patterns. However, the L2 acquisition patterns of a child are very similar to the L2 learning patterns of an adult. According to this theory, the errors made by Sudanese L1Arabic speakers could be attributed to the fact that since they are not English native speakers, they have not yet acquired the necessary grammatical structures. However, Krashen (1994:53) points out that the existence of the natural order does not imply that we should teach second languages according to this order.

### **2.2.3The Monitor Hypothesis:**

This hypothesis proposes that there is a “monitor” which functions to help a learner to filter his/her language. The learner uses the monitor to apply rules to the already learned knowledge, such as which verb tense to use or which form of speech to use. Krashen (as cited in Lightbown and Spada, 1995:27) explains that in order to use a monitor well, three factors must be met:

- (1) **Time:** The learner must have sufficient time in order to think about and use conscious rules effectively. Taking time to think about rules may disrupt the communication;
- (2) **Focus on form:** The learner has to focus on forms, the correctness of forms. He may be more concerned with what he is saying but not how he is saying it; and

(3) **Knowledge of the rules:** The learner has to know the rules. For example in the present study, the subjects need time to use the monitor hypothesis to comprehend the task and identify the time of the event so that he or she can decide on the appropriate tense, type of vocabulary and register to use, in order to respond appropriately to the tasks given. Through this process the knowledge of the rule is demonstrated.

Krashen (in Lightbown&Spada, 1995:27) also asserts that the use of the Monitor varies among different people. There are those who use it all of the time and are classified as “over-users”. There are also learners who either have not learned how to use the monitor or choose to not use it and they are identified as “under-users”.

#### **2.2.4The Affective Filter Hypothesis:**

This is based on the theory of an affective filter, which states that successful L2 acquisition depends on the learner's feelings, motivation and attitudes. This implies that it is easier for a learner to acquire a language when he or she is not tense, angry, anxious or bored. According to Dulay and Burt (1977, as cited in Baker, 1996:251-273) the Affective Filter Hypothesis describes the degree to which a person learns in a formal or an informal situation.

The three hypotheses enhance insight into second language learning. Moreover, theories about SLA have highlighted the nature of errors language learners make, but are unaware of. As Nunan (2001:87-92) argues:

It is of the utmost importance that students understand that committing errors while learning a language is a natural part of the language learning process, and that fact applies to each and every language learner, irrespective of their age, gender or intelligence.

Nunan implies that even the most successful language learners commit errors while learning a language, and improve with time through

considerable effort, when they eventually commit occasional errors. Therefore, if language learners are encouraged in this way, they can be hopeful and have confidence to continue and pursue their language learning. Krashen (1981:6-7) also states that when language learners are focused on communication and not form, errors made by adults second language learners are quite similar to errors made by children learning English as a second language.

### **2.2.5 The Input Hypothesis:**

There are three key elements to this hypothesis. The first key element is the Input Hypothesis which claims that language is acquired, not learned. A learner understands a message or receives comprehensible input that has arrangements or structures just a bit ahead of his or her current level of acquired competence. The Input Hypothesis poses the concept represented by  $i+1$ ; where the  $i$  represents the “distance between actual language development” and  $i+1$  represents “the potential language development” (Richard-Amato, 1996:42).

The second key element is that speech should be allowed to emerge on its own. There is usually a silent period and “... speech will come when the acquirer feels ready. The readiness state arrives at different times for different people” (Krashen, 1994:55). It should not be taught directly and a period of grammatically incorrect speech is typical. The silent period may be the time during which learners build up competence by means of active listening through input. Krashen (1994) asserts that this idea helps minimise the feeling of uneasiness many learners have when they are asked to speak in the target language right away before they have built up adequate competence through comprehensible input. When they are forced to talk early they tend to fall back on their first language (Krashen, 1987). Second language learners need a silent period to internalize the input properly.

I believe that this is how all people learn because learning does not occur in a vacuum. I believe that when learning takes place, there is always an influencing factor, such as a guidebook, a teacher, a peer, or an instruction sheet present. If a student is presented with information that is not the slightest bit comprehensible and no assistance for understanding is provided, chances are that the student will struggle and likely give up.

For instance, in the case of the present study participants, I have witnessed students giving up responding to the task because they could not understand it, perhaps because the input was not comprehensible and the appropriate assistance was not offered at the crucial time of need. As Krashen (1994:57) states that every person is at a different  $i+1$  state. The challenge for this study is how to focus on each student's individual level and how to best meet his/her own  $i+1$  needs.

The third key element of the Input Hypothesis is that, the input should not deliberately contain grammatically programmed structures. "If input is understood, and there is enough of it,  $i+1$  is automatically provided" (Krashen, 1994:57). Therefore, language teachers do not need to deliberately teach the text structure along the natural order.

## **2.3 Error analysis**

- (1) This section defines the two terms: error and error analysis. It also discusses benefits and challenges of error analysis. The distinction between an error and a mistake is also discussed.

### **2.3.1 What is error analysis?**

Richards and Schmidt (2002:184) define error analysis as "the study and analysis of the errors made by second language learners". EA compares "learner English" with English (L2) itself and judges how learners are "ignorant" (James, 1998:304) about the grammatical and semantic rules

of the target language. According to Hasyim (2002:43) error analysis may be carried out in order to:

- (a) find out how well someone knows a language,
- (b) find out how a person learns a language, and
- (c) obtain information on common difficulties in language learning, as an aid in teaching or in the preparation of teaching materials.

Another view of error analysis is given by Brown (1980, cited by Hasyim, 2002:43), when he defines error analysis as the process of observing, analysing, and classifying the deviations of the rules of the second language and then to reveal the systems operated by a learner. Similarly, Crystal (as cited by Hasyim, 2002:43) proposes that error analysis is a technique for identifying, classifying and systematically interpreting the unacceptable forms produced by someone learning a foreign language.

### **2.3.2 What constitutes an error?**

Richards and Schmidt (2002:184) define an error as the use of language in a way which a fluent or native speaker of the language regards as faulty or incomplete learning. An error refers to a systematic error of competence, both covert and overt, that deviates from the norms of the target language (Eun-pyo, 2002:1). Ellis (1996:710) and Brown (2002:220) differentiate between covert and overt errors. They define covert errors to be grammatically correct but not interpretable within the context of communication, whereas overt errors refer to the obviously ungrammatical utterances.

- (1) Norrish (1987:7) defines an error as a systematic deviation when a learner has not learnt something and consistently gets it wrong. Cunningsworth (1987:87) concurs and

### **2.3.3 Definition of error Analysis**

‘Errors’ is an important key word in this study, which tends to be used interchangeably with ‘slips’ and ‘mistakes’. It is crucial to define ‘errors’, at the very beginning, and distinguish ‘errors’ from ‘slips’ and ‘mistakes’. “Errors are the flawed side of learner speech or writing” is a simple definition given by Dulay et al. (1982:138). Ghadessy (1980: 96) distinguishes ‘errors’ as “deviations which reveal the underlying knowledge of language to-date” from ‘slips’ and ‘mistakes’, which are “product of chance circumstances”. On a similar note, Brown (2000: 217) also insists that “mistakes must be carefully distinguished from errors of a second language learner”. He defines an error as “a noticeable deviation from the adult grammar of a native speaker” which also reflects the competence of the learner. He continues to explain that “a mistake refers to a performance error that is either a random guess or a ‘slip’, in that it is a failure to utilize a known system correctly” and “mistakes, when attention is called to them, can be self-corrected”. Errors, on the other hand, often indicate the learner’s competence in the target language and they are ‘evidence’ which can reflect the learner’s language proficiency. “The fact that learners do make errors, and that these errors can be observed, analysed, and classified to reveal something of the system operating within the learner, led to a surge of study of learner’s error, called error analysis” (ibid.: 218). This is the next topic of discussion in the following sections.

### **2.3.4 Goals and definitions of Error Analysis**

Error Analysis is a theory replacing the Contrastive Analysis, which was abandoned by linguists and teachers due to its ineffectiveness and unreliability. EA also belongs to applied linguistics but it has no interest in explaining the process of L2 acquisition. It is rather “a



methodology for dealing with data" "(Cook 1993: 2 cited in James 1998: 7).

At the very beginning of his *Errors in Language Learning and Use*, Carl James defines Error Analysis as "the process of determining the incidence, nature, causes and consequences of unsuccessful language" (James 1998: 1). Later he goes on explaining that EA "involves first independently or 'objectively' describing the learners' IL ... and the TL itself, followed by a comparison of the two, so as to locate mismatches" (1998: 5).

There is one difference which distinguishes EA from the CA and this is the importance of the mother tongue: when doing EA the mother tongue does not enter the picture at all and therefore has no importance. In the CA, as I have explained earlier, the mother tongue is of vital importance. However, this does not mean that EA is not comparative. It is, because it describes errors on the basis of comparing of the learners' interlanguage with the target language. It actually builds on the Interlanguage theory, but the distinction between them is that the IL theory remains wholly descriptive and avoids comparison (James 1998: 6). At the same time EA acknowledges L1 transfer as one of the sources of errors, which makes it related to the CAH.

James (1998: 62-63) also refers to Error Analysis as the study of linguistic ignorance which investigates "what people do not know and how they attempt to cope with their ignorance". The fact that learners find ways how to cope with their ignorance makes a connection between EA and learner strategies, which we divide into learning strategies and communication strategies.

Corder suggests that Error Analysis can be distinguished from ‘performance analysis’ in that sense that “performance analysis is the study of the whole performance data from individual learners, whereas the term EA is reserved for the study of erroneous utterances produced by groups of learners” (Corder 1975: 207 cited in James 1998: 3).

### **2.3.5 Emergence of error analysis**

Error Analysis (EA) emerged as the next paradigm to replace Contrastive Analysis (CA). CA was based on a structural approach to analyze the interference of the first language system with the second language system. The dominant belief in CA during the 40’s and 50’s was that a statement of the similarities and differences between various languages was enough to deal with the problem of teaching these languages (Ghadessy, 1980). In CA, the errors made by learners are predicted by identifying the linguistic differences between their first language (L1) and the target language (TL).

Interference was believed to be the main cause of error production when the learner transferred native language ‘habits’ into the TL. Upholding this belief, CA is deeply rooted in behaviourism and structuralism. The outcome of this is the behaviourist theory of language which sits upon the belief that language is essentially a set of habits, whereby in the process of learning new habits, the old ones will interfere. This is called the ‘mother tongue interference’ (Norrish, 1983: 22). Therefore, in language classrooms, the old habits must be drilled out and the new set of responses must be learnt.

By the early 1970s, the reliability of CA was challenged. According to James (1998: 4), “many of the predictions of TL learning difficulty formulated on the basis of CA turned out to be either uninformative or

inaccurate”. There were information on errors which teachers already know, there were errors which were predicted but did not materialize in the learners’ language, and there were occurrences of errors which were not predicted in CA. Consequently, CA gave way to EA, which provided a methodology for investigating learner language and an appropriate starting point for the study of learner language (Ellis, 1994). The procedures involved in EA research will be discussed in the next subsection.

### **2.3.6The Importance of Learners’ Errors**

The most important and innovatory feature of EA is that it is quite error-friendly, meaning that errors are not seen as something negative or pathological anymore, but as Corder claims, “a learner’s errors ... are significant in [that] they provide to the researcher evidence of how language is learned or acquired, what strategies or procedures the learner is employing in the discovery of the language” (Corder 1967: 167 cited in Brown 1980: 164).

At the very beginning of *Errors in Language Learning and Use* James stresses the uniqueness of human errors: “Error is likewise unique to humans, who are not only sapiens and loquens, but also homo errans” (1998: 1). He supports the idea of the importance of learners' errors by claiming that “the learners’ errors are a register of their current perspective on the TL” (1998: 7).

James (1998: 12) gives Corder's five crucial points, originally published in Corder’s seminar paper titled ‘The significance of learners’ errors’:

1. L1 acquisition and L2 learning are parallel processes, they are ruled by the same mechanisms, procedures and strategies. Learning a L2 is probably facilitated by the knowledge of the L1.
2. Errors reflect the learners' inbuilt syllabus or what they have taken in, but not what the teachers have put into them. So there is a difference between 'input' and 'intake'.
3. Errors show that both learners of L1 and L2 develop an independent language system - a 'transitional competence'.
4. The terms 'error' and 'mistake' shouldn't be used interchangeably.
5. Errors are important because they (a) tell the teacher what he or she should teach, (b) are a source of information for the researcher about how the learning proceeds, and (c) allow the learners to test their L2 hypotheses.

### **2.3.7 The Criticism of Error Analysis**

James paraphrases Corder's argument that "it is not deemed legitimate ... to compare the child's or the FL learner's ID [idiosyncratic dialect] to the dialect of adults or of native speakers respectively" (James, 1998: 16). The reason is that "the child or the FL learner are neither deliberately nor pathologically deviant in their language, so it would be wrong to refer to their repertoires as erroneous" James (1998: 16). Bell also criticizes EA by calling it "a recent pseudoprocedure in applied linguistics" (Bell 1974: 35 cited in James 1998: 17). In his opinion, the EA data are of only poor statistical inference, errors are usually interpreted subjectively and it lacks predicative power (James 1998: 17). Schechter criticizes that EA does not take into consideration the strategy of avoidance, i.e. that learners tend to avoid certain language items which they are not sure about, and so they

don't make errors in the areas where they would be expected to make them (James 1998: 18).

More criticism comes from Dulay et al. (1982: 141-143) who point to the fact that EA confuses explanatory and descriptive aspects, in other words the process and the product; and also that error categories lack precision and specificity.

However, despite all the criticism EA remains the most widespread practice, because it has proven to be the most effective approach to L2 learners' errors.

### **2.3.8 Mistake and Error**

Brown (1993: 205) differentiates between mistakes and errors. A mistake refers to a performance error that is either a random guess or slip in that it is a failure to utilize a known system correctly. All people make mistakes, in both native and second language situations. Native speakers are normally capable of recognizing and correcting such mistakes, which are not the result of a deficiency in competence but the result of some sort of breakdown in the process of production. Corder in Larsen (1992) claims that a mistake is a random performance slip caused by fatigue, excitement, etc. and therefore can be readily self-corrected.

An error is a noticeable deviation, reflecting the competence of the learner. It is a systematic deviation made by the learner who has not yet mastered the rules of the target language. The learner cannot self-correct an error because it is a product reflective of his or her current stage of L2 development, or underlying competence (Larsen, 1992: 59).

Brown (1980: 165) insists that "it is crucial to make a distinction between mistakes and errors" because they are "technically two very different phenomena".

The concept of intentionality plays an essential role when defining an error since “an error arises only when there was no intention to commit one” (James, 1998: 77). So an erroneous utterance is that which was made unintentionally, whereas when there is an intention to produce a deviant utterance, we simply call it deviance. A good example of a language deviance is an advertising jingle (James 1998: 77).

The basic distinction between a mistake and an error is also based on the concept of corrigibility. If the learner is able to self-correct after using an incorrect expression or utterance, we are talking about a mistake. On the other hand, when the learner produces an unintentionally deviant utterance and is not able to self-correct, he or she committed an error (James 1998: 78).

Corder (1967 1971 in James, 1998: 78) associates the **error** vs. **mistake** distinction to the issue of competence vs. performance. In this way, errors are seen as failures of competence and mistakes as failures of performance. Corder argues that „mistakes are of no significance to the process of language learning since they do not reflect a defect in our knowledge” and “they can occur in L1 as well as L2” (Corder 1967: 166-167 cited in James 1998: 78-79). On the other hand, errors “are of significance; they do reflect knowledge; they are not self-correctable; and only learners of an L2 make them” (James 1998: 79).

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

- **Slips** occur, according to Edge, as a consequence of processing problems or carelessness. The learner is usually able to self-correct if he or she has a chance to do so.

- **Errors** refer, in Edge's opinion, to “wrong forms that the pupil could not correct even if their wrongness were to be pointed out” but it is still evident what the learner wanted to say (James 1998: 80).
- **Attempts**, Edge's last category, are “almost incomprehensible, and the learner obviously has no idea how to use the right form” (James 1998: 81). In this situation learners usually employ their compensatory communication strategies.

The next classification I would like to discuss is that of Hammerly (1991 in James 1998). For him, “the status of learner deviance must be determined in terms of the classroom” (James 1998: 81). Hammerly divides deviances which learners make in the classroom context into **distortions** and **faults**.

Distortions are, in his opinion, “unavoidable and necessary, occur even with known TL forms, and should be ignored by the teacher” (James 1998: 81). He further distinguishes between learner distortions and mismanagement distortions and this distinction is based on the fact whether or not the item has been taught in the class. Learner distortions appear when the item has been “adequately taught ... clearly understood and sufficiently practiced” (Hammerly 1991: 85 cited in James 1998: 81), whereas mismanagement distortions are consequences of inadequate teaching and practice of the item in question.

Hammerly's second category, faults, appear when the learners “attempt to express freely ideas that require the use of structures they haven't yet learnt” (Hammerly 1991: 72 cited in James 1998: 82). He again distinguishes between learner faults and mismanagement faults, the former being consequences of learners' overextension without being

encouraged by the teacher, and the latter appear when the teacher connives with the students' overextension.

As we can see, Hammerly's view is quite extreme and he has been criticized for his constant search for someone to blame, either the learners or the teacher. On the other hand, Edge's ideology is completely different because he "applauds learners who ... keep trying and taking risk rather than playing safe or avoiding error" (James 1998: 82).

The most recent classification of deviances is that of James (1998: 83-84):

- **Slips** refer to lapses of the tongue or pen and the author is able to spot and correct them. The discipline which is engaged in studying them is called lapsology.
- **Mistakes** can be corrected by their author only "if their deviance is pointed out to him or her" (James 1998: 83). James further divides them into first-order mistakes, when simple indication of the deviance is enough to enable self-correction, and second-order mistakes, when more information about the nature of the deviance is needed to enable self-correction.
- **Errors** occur when the learner is unable to self-correct until further relevant input is provided, i.e. some more learning has to take place.
- **Solecisms** are defined by James as "breaches of the rules of correctness as laid down by purists and usually taught in schools" (1998: 83). A good example is split infinitives.



### 2.3.9 Procedures of Error Analysis

Error analysis involves four stages (James 1998):

The first stage is when errors are identified or detected and therefore James (1998: 91) terms it **error detection**. It is, actually, spotting of the error itself. First we collect a set of utterances produced by a L2 learner. A sentence is usually taken as a basic unit of analysis and then the informant, a native speaker or the analyst himself, points out the suspicious or potentially erroneous utterances and decide if the utterance in question is really erroneous or not. However, this may not be so easy since there are many factors involved. It is easier, for instance, to spot someone else's error than one's own, or to find the error in written language than in spoken (James 1998: 91-100).

The following stage is called **error location** and it is when the informant locates the error. James argues that some errors are difficult to locate because they can be diffused throughout the sentence or the whole text and appear only after the whole text is carefully examined (1998: 92-93). Burt and Kiparsky call such deviances global errors (opposite to local errors): “the sentence does not simply contain an error: it is erroneous or flawed as a sentence” (James 1998: 93).

The third stage is **error description**. It is obvious that a learner's language has to be described in terms of some language system. The Interlanguage hypothesis would suggest that the “learner language is a language in its own right and should therefore be described *sui generis* rather than in terms of the target” (James 1998: 94). If we take Corder's idea of idiosyncratic dialect, which is the learner's version of the target language, we can compare it to the native speaker's code since both the codes are considered dialects of the same language and therefore “should be describable in terms of the same grammar” (James 1998: 94). Another

reason why a learner's language should be described in terms of the TL is because EA is, by its nature, TL-oriented (James 1998: 95).

James (1998: 95-96) also argues that the grammar used for the description must be comprehensive, simple, self-explanatory, easily learnable and user-friendly. For these reasons, he rejects scientific and pedagogic grammars and recommends descriptive grammars, particularly Crystal's (1982) Grammar Assessment Remediation and Sampling Procedure (also known as GRARSP). There are, in James's opinion three main purposes of the description stage: (1) to make the errors explicit, (2) it is indispensable for counting errors, and (3) it is a basis for creating categories since it reveals which errors are different or the same (James 1998: 96-97).

And finally, the last step in EA is **error classification** or categorization (James 1998: 97). We can categorize errors into dictionaries or taxonomies. Since the whole chapter 5 will deal with various error taxonomies, in this section I will concentrate on dictionaries only. Dictionaries of errors are organized alphabetically and contain both lexical and grammatical information.

A good example of up-to-date dictionaries of errors is Turton's (1995) ABC of Common Grammatical Errors, which includes not only grammatical errors, but lexical as well. Another one is that of Alexander (1994), based on his own database of over 5,000 items collected during his ELT career. Interestingly, one of the categories in Alexander's dictionary is that of errors caused by L1 interference with L2 English (James 1998: 97-101).

Dictionaries of 'false friends' represent another kind of dictionaries. They are, according to James (1998: 101), "relevant to

learners of a specific L2 who speak a particular mother tongue". For Czech learners of L2 English there is Sparling's English or Czenglish (1991) which contains the most common false friends and other items that usually cause troubles for L1 Czech learners.

### 2.3.10 Sources of Error

Identifying sources of errors can be, in fact, considered a part of error classification. Error Analysis is innovatory in respect to the CAH in the sense that it examines errors attributable to all possible sources, not just negative L1 transfer (Brown, 1980: 166).

Among the most frequent sources of errors Brown counts (1) interlingual transfer, (2) intralingual transfer, (3) context of learning, and (4) various communication strategies the learners use. James (1998: 178-179) similarly classifies errors according to their source into four diagnosis-based categories with the difference that he terms category (3) induced errors.

(1) **Interlingual transfer**, i.e. mother-tongue influence, causes interlingual errors. They are very frequent at the initial stages of L2 learning since the L1 is the only language system the learner knows and can draw on and therefore negative transfer takes place (Brown 1980: 173). Brown also argues that when one is learning L3, L4 etc., transfer takes place from all the previously learnt languages but the degree of transfer is variable (1980: 173).

(2) **Intralingual negative transfer** or interference is the source of intralingual errors (Brown 1980: 173-174). Brown gives only overgeneralization as a representation of negative interlingual transfer, but James (1980: 185-187) goes into more details. He refers to

intralingual errors as learning-strategy based errors and lists 7 types of them:

- False analogy arises when the learner incorrectly thinks that a new item behaves like another item already known to him or her. For example the learner already knows that dogs is plural from dog, so he or she thinks that \*sheeps is plural from sheep.
- Misanalysis means that the learner has formed an unfounded hypothesis in the L2 and is putting it in practice. James (1980: 185) gives as an example the situation when the learner assumes that \*its can be used as a pluralized form of it.
- Incomplete rule application happens when the learner doesn't apply all the rules necessary to apply in a particular situation. In fact, it is the converse of overgeneralization.
- Exploiting redundancy appears because there is a lot of redundancy in every language, e.g. unnecessary morphology, and intelligent learners try to avoid those items which they find redundant to make their learning and communication easier. The opposite of exploiting redundancy is overlaboration which is usually observable in more advanced learners.
- Overlooking cooccurrence restrictions means that the learner doesn't know that certain words go together with certain complements, prepositions etc. An example given by James (1998: 186) is when the learner ignores that the verb to enjoy is followed by gerund and not bare infinitive.
- Hypercorrection, as James argues (1998: 186), “results from the learners over-monitoring their L2 output”.
- Overgeneralization means that the learner uses one member of a set of forms also in situations when the other members must be used.

This usually leads to overuse of one form and underuse of the others. Well known candidates for overgeneralization are pairs as other/another, much/many, some/any etc. (James 1998: 187) - the learner uses one of them instead of distinguishing between them and using each in the appropriate situation. Overgeneralization of language rules is also common, e.g. \*Does she can dance? reflects that the learner overgeneralizes the use of auxiliary verbs in questions.

(3) **Context of learning** refers to the setting where a language is learnt, e.g. a classroom or a social situation, and also to the teacher and materials used in the lessons. All these factors can cause induced errors (Brown 1980: 174). As Brown explains, “students often make errors because a misleading explanation from the teacher, faulty presentation of a structure or word in a textbook, or even because of a pattern that was rote memorized in a drill but not properly contextualized”. James (1998: 191-200) divides induced errors into the following subcategories:

- materials-induced errors
- teacher-talk induced errors
- exercise-based induced errors
- errors induced by pedagogical priorities
- look-up errors

I don't think it is necessary to discuss them further because the nature of these errors is evident from their names. However, I will supply an example Last time when I \*have been there ... (SK speaker) in which the incorrect application of present perfect probably reflects deficient explanation of the use of present perfect on the part of the teacher.

(4) **Communication strategies** are consciously used by the learners to get a message across to the hearer. They can involve both

verbal and non-verbal communication mechanisms (Brown 1980: 178). We distinguish among the following communication strategies:

- Avoidance arises when a learner consciously avoids certain language item because he feels uncertain about it and prefers avoiding to committing an error. There are several kinds of avoidance, e.g. syntactic, lexical, phonological or topic avoidance (Brown 1980: 178-179).
- Prefabricated patterns are memorized phrases or sentences, as in 'tourist survival' language or a pocket bilingual phrasebook, and the learner who memorized them usually doesn't understand the components of the phrase (Brown 1980: 180). However, their advantage is, as Hakuta (1976: 333 cited in Brown 1980: 179) notes, that they "enable learners to express functions which they are yet unable to construct from their linguistic system, simply storing them in a sense like large lexical items".
- Cognitive and personality styles can also cause errors. For instance, Brown (1980: 180) suggests that "a person with high self-esteem may be willing to risk more errors, in the interest of communication, since he does not feel as threatened by committing errors as a person with low self-esteem".
- Appeal to authority is a strategy when the learner, because of his uncertainty about some structure, directly asks a native speaker, a teacher or looks up the structure in a bilingual dictionary (Brown 1980: 180).
- Language switch is applied by the learner when all the other strategies have failed to help him or her. So the learner uses his or her native language to get the message across, regardless of the fact that the hearer may not know the native language (Brown 1980)

## **2.4 Review of Previous studies**

Some research studies have been conducted on language learning in Africa in general such as Kachru (1982); Makoni (1993); Dakubu (1997); and Kasanga (2006). According to Dakubu (1997:2) there is a complex chemistry that takes place when several languages come into contact, as well as the competition that is associated with the struggle for status and prestige. In the Cameroonian context is between French (the dominant language) and English Language. Dakubu (1997:2) concludes by noting that “although one cannot deny that English has had a measure of influence on the indigenous languages, the latter have had a much greater influence on English learning. This has, therefore, produced an English Language that is distinctively Cameroonian in flavour”. In examining whether the Zimbabwean English is a type of a New English, Makoni (1993:97-107) comes to the conclusion that it is not a new type of English “because it has not been localised following the criteria [of] stability, native speaker norms and degree of compactness within the speech community” like what has happened in Nigerian and Ghanaian English. Kasanga (2006) also argues on the South African language issue that “... the pragmatics of the varieties of South African English

In their study of Spanish and German English second language speakers, Llach, Fontecha, and Espinosa (2005:1-19) investigated the quantitative and qualitative differences in the production of lexical errors in the English written performance by young Spanish and German learners of English. One crucial aspect highlighted in Llach et al.'s (2005:1-19) study is the issue of length of the written work. They indicate that the lexical error production per composition was significantly higher for German participants. German compositions were less than half so long as Spanish ones. This implies that German compositions have a higher lexical error

density, which means they contain a higher proportion of lexical errors than the essays of the Spanish learners. This point is worth considering, to ensure that the length of all the written work in my study is approximately the same.

In addition, Llach et al.'s (2005) analysis of a close procedure and reading comprehension test yielded very similar results for both language groups regarding their linguistic competence in EFL. In light of these results both mother tongue groups were ascribed to the same proficiency level in English. Since it is not clear in Llach et al.'s (2005:1-19) findings, why German learners produced more lexical errors than their Spanish counterparts, further research needs to be conducted on this aspect.

Ilomaki (2005:1-96) also conducted a cross-sectional study with particular reference to Finnish-speaking and English-speaking learners of German. The researcher used learners' written output to analyse learner errors and identify reasons why different errors may have occurred. Ilomaki (2005:12) concludes that learners do not necessarily make the same errors in written and oral production, due to different processing conditions and learners with one native language do not necessarily make the same errors as learners with different native language. The study also reveals that adult learners' errors result from cross-linguistic influence, that is, when one language influences another through borrowing, interference and language transfer. Ilomaki (2005:12) argues that the age factor is not necessarily a decisive factor in second language

Eun-pyo (2002:1-9) conducted an error analysis study on Korean medical students' writing. The subjects in the study were 35 second year



premedical students who took English Writing in the third semester of their two-year English curriculum. The primary purpose of the study was to analyse what errors intermediate to advanced level learners, at a medical college, make in their writing by reviewing their formal and informal letters. Since these learners were considered relatively of advanced level according to their scores of the Test of English for International Communication (TOEIC), the results were also compared with other results of basic level learners from a previous study. The number of errors and length of students' writing were analysed to see if they correlated with their official test scores. The subjects' writing was evaluated and the sentences with errors were recorded to identify the types and frequency of errors. The study revealed that approximately one fourth of errors (26%) resulted from L1 transfer. Other major errors identified were wrong words (16%), prepositions (15%) and articles (14%).

Eun-pyo's (2002:1-9) study is relevant to the present investigation, since both studies evaluate students' long written pieces and identify the types and frequency of errors made. The distinction lies in the fact that Eun-pyo's (2002:1) study focuses on students who scored high marks in the TOEIC test that they wrote at tertiary level, while the present study focuses on all levels of Grade 12 students' performance during their

commonly referred to as Black South African English (BSAE) have been shaped, over time, by educated bilinguals, through transfer of features from African languages” (p.1).

Bokamba (in Kachru, 1982:28) argues that “... the very obvious deviations from Standard English ... may suggest that the speaker was translating directly from his/[her] mother tongue.” He identifies the following deviations in syntax in Nigerian, Ghanaian and Kenyan English's:

- ✓ Omission of function words;
- ✓ Semantic extension of certain lexical items from African languages to cover various meanings and functions in English;
- ✓ Occurrence of certain redundancies, including pluralisation of mass nouns;
- ✓ Retention of anaphoric pronouns in non-subject relativisation;
- ✓ Use of affirmative to yes/no questions;
- ✓ Unusual word order in adjectival phrases containing demonstrative or possessive pronouns; and
- ✓ Omission of the element “more” in comparative constructions (Bokamba in Kachru, 1982:28).

## **2.5 Summary**

This chapter provided the basic theoretical about language acquisition and it focused more precisely on errors analysis their types, resources and goals. It also reviewed some related previous studies.

## **Chapter Three**

### **Methodology**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

This chapter outlines the methodology and research design. It includes research methodology used in this study and gives information about the population and the sample. It also describes the data collection instruments and procedures. Finally, it describes the validity and reliability of the instruments and gives information about the data analysis.

#### **3.2 The Methodology**

This study is descriptive in nature. In order to investigate the type and frequency of errors made by participants, this study adopts a quantitative approach. Quantitative methods are research techniques that are used to gather quantitative data - information dealing with numbers and anything that is measurable (Nunan, 2001:87-92). In other words quantitative methods are a systematic process in which numerical data are controlled and measured to address the accumulation of facts and then utilized to obtain information about the world. This study found a quantitative research design to be appropriate for this study because it is statistically reliable and allow results to be analyzed and compared with similar studies. The quantitative methods allow us to summarize [vast] sources of information and facilitate comparisons across categories and over time. The aim of this study is only to identify errors, their type and frequency. Qualitative approach will not be ideal as this study does not focus on the reason why errors occur.

### **3.3 Population and Sampling**

The study population consisted of all students in Sudan University of Science and Technology at English Department. Mouton 1(1996, p. 132) defines a sample as elements selected with the intention of finding out something about the total population from which they are taken. The sample included in this study consists of 40 female and male undergraduates second year English Language Department students' of the academic year 2015/2016. To select the participants of the present study, random sampling method was used because it is regarded as one of the most reliable methods to obtain a representative sample. The participants, selected for the purpose of this study, are between 20 and 22 years of age. All of them were Arabic native speakers. They live in an exclusively Arabic-speaking community. Like all Sudanese students, the ones who participated in this study had experienced approximately the same number of 6 years of education through the primary and the secondary education system. All the participants are homogeneous in terms of their linguistic, educational, and socioeconomic background.

### **3.4 Instrument**

A Test

The instrument used for error analysis was the English written essays produced by the subjects of the study.

### **3.5 Data Collection Procedure**

All of the 40 participants were required to write an essay on the same topic. They were asked to write not less than 150 words within a period of one hour. The students did not know that their writings are going to be under investigation.

### **3.5.1 Reliability**

Polit and Hungler (1993, p. 445) refer to reliability as the degree of consistency with which an instrument measures the attribute it is designed to measure. The researcher used a test device to measure the reliability of the instrument.

### **3.4.2 Validity**

To ensure the face and content of the study instrument, the method of trustee's validity was employed. a panel of judges consisting of two academic college instructors were asked to evaluate the given topics. They approved that topics were taken from materials appropriate to students' standard and suit their ages, and that the rubric set was very clear.

### **3.6Procedures for Data Analysis**

The analysis of written essays will be derived from 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.

Errors types	No of errors	%

## CHAPTER FOUR

### Data Analysis, Results and Discussions

#### 4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents and analyses the data collected through the test. The results will be used to provide answers to the research questions

#### 4.2 Data Analysis

As shown in Table 4.0 the 40 compositions on the same topic by different individuals yielded 200 errors. That is, an average, each paper contained five errors.

Table 4.0 identify the type and code , numbers and percentages of errors

Type of error	Errors code	Number of error	Percentage
Spelling	SP	73	36.5%
Subject verb agreements	SV	44	22%
Preposition	Pre	38	19%
Verb tense	VT	45	22.5%

Some error types were common (for example, spelling, verb tense, subject and verb agreements, preposition and the. This indicates errors are not evenly distributed across the error-type spectrum; rather, certain error types appear to be particularly problematic.

### 4.2.1 Spelling

Spelling means the act or process of writing words by using the letters conventionally accepted for their formation.

*Table 4.1 shows the Analysis of spelling errors. Some errors were repeated*

Error Classification	Error Identification
Spelling (sp)	1. People <u>cant</u> enjoy their life
	2. They <u>dont</u> have hospitals
	3. There are good <u>hospitale</u> in cities.
	4. There are many <u>trips</u> in the village.
	5. We <u>takle</u> about advantages.
	6. <u>Vilge</u> is very good place
	7. There are good <u>vactory</u> in cities.
	8. All services are <u>avible</u> in cities.
	9. City is <u>butiful</u> than <u>vilige</u> .
	10. Cities are <u>crouded</u>
	11. City is <u>nise</u> place.
	12. There are <u>sobermarket</u> in city.
	13. The <u>wather</u> is good in <u>vilige</u>
	14. The air <u>blusion</u> in cities
	15. People of all <u>ege</u> find work in cities
	16. <u>Scool</u> is good in cities.
	17. There are <u>dingrouscram</u> in city like killing.
	18. Life in city is <u>confotale</u> .
	19. There is <u>anamploument</u> problem in villige

	20. <u>Serfice</u> in hpspital is <u>bleasant</u>
	21. The advantages of cities you can find many services such as <u>helthy</u> .
	22. The city was very crowded <u>becouse</u> we found many cars.

Table 4.1 above illustrates examples of errors identified in the participants' written work and defines each error type indicated.

According to the error types displayed in the Tables 4.1 above, there are similar spelling errors that are found in the compositions such as: words where an apostrophe is supposed to be used, for example: *don't*, *can't* and *it's*. Some students encountered problems when using words or contractions containing an apostrophe. The omission of the apostrophe made the spelling of the words wrong by either giving a different meaning such as: "its" instead of "it's" or forming a meaningless word that does not exist as part of speech such as "dont" instead of "don't".

The other words that appeared to be problematic by almost all participants were: crowded, village, because, beautiful, there. Words such as, "because" and village, crouded instead of "crowded", "vilige", instead of "village" or "becouse", "caus" or "coz" instead of "because", "butiful" instead of "beautiful", "confourtbol" instead of "comfortable", nise instead of nice. Wether instead of "weather" was misspelled by most participants. This shows that students struggle very much with the spellings of these words and end up producing many different spelling errors in their struggle of getting correct spellings of these words.



All of all, the highest error rates in this study occurred within the error category of spelling, 73 errors were detected in participant's compositions which represent 36.5 percentage. So that, spelling errors occurred as highest frequency among other errors.

#### 4.2.2 Verb Tense

Errors of wrong tense or wrong verb occur when a learner uses the wrong verb tense in a certain sentence. The results of this study reveal that the participants were not aware of applying the correct tense to the verb in the sentences

*Table 4.2 shows the analysis of verb tense errors.*

Error Classification	Error Identification
Verb tense (VT)	1. In cities we <u>were found</u> many services.
	2. Life in <u>cities it have many</u> good sides.
	3.Life in <u>cities it's good</u> .
	4. <u>citiescan't</u> save.
	5. <u>schools was build</u> for better ways.
	6. The <u>cities was</u> very crowd.
	7. <u>it's make</u> you live good life.
	5 <u>I reading</u> in Sudan University.
	9. <u>it have</u> many services.
	10 They were <u>suppose to</u> have good service in cities
	11 <u>Theydoesn't</u> need to work hard.

	<u>12 Cities have found</u> problem
	13 <u>the people was</u> good.
	14. People who live in <u>village</u> <u>were began</u> moving to cities

Table 4.2 above shows examples of wrong verb forms that appeared in the compositions of the students in this study. The participants in this study seemed not to have a clear understanding of when to use the two tenses, Present Tense and Past Tense, as illustrated in sentences 1, 6, 11 and 13 the students seemed to concentrate more on content that they want to put across than on the appropriate language that they should use to express their message. Students who made this type of error do not understand or are not cautious about the crucial function of a verb in a sentence and how carefully a verb tense should be chosen to convey the precise meaning.

To sum up, Inappropriate use of tenses is the second highest error category in this study.

#### **4.2.3. Subject/Verb Agreement**

Subjects and verbs must agree with one another in number (singular or plural). Thus, if a subject (the person or thing doing the action) is singular, its verb (the word representing the action) must also be singular; if a subject is plural, its verb must also be plural.

*Table 4.3 show the analysis of subject and verb agreement errors*

Error Classification	Error Identification
<b>Subject/Verb Agreement(SV)</b>	1. Cities has <u>many</u> factory.
	2. The <u>bookes</u> is available in city.
	3. <u>Life</u> in cities <u>are</u> very nise.
	4. <u>Life</u> in cities <u>are</u> very confortale .
	5. The <u>disadvantagesis</u> many
	6. <u>Citiesis</u> crowded
	7. The <u>streetsis</u> dangerous.
	8. <u>Peopleis</u> very crowded
	9. City has <u>severalservice</u>
	10. <u>Oneproblems</u> of city is pollution.
	11. There <u>ismany</u> crime in cities.
	12. <u>Citiesprovides</u> more services.
	13. <u>Manyplace</u> in cities are good.
	14. <u>Citiesis</u> the beautiful place
	15. <u>Many thingsis</u> very expensive
	16. We have <u>many</u> service in cities
	17. <u>Acities</u> are very beautiful

	18. <u>Thisdays</u> is nice
	19. <u>Carsis</u> dangerous.
	20. <u>Villageare</u> better than cities

Table 4.3 above shows examples of inconsistency of subjects and verbs forms that appeared in the compositions of the students in this study. The participants in this study seemed not to have a clear understanding of when to use the singular, and plural, as illustrated in sentences 1 "many factory" the word many that appeared to be problematic by almost all participants it always goes with plural and never be use with singular, while all participants used it with singular." As in sentence 11 "many crime" sentence 16 "many service "and also sentence 13 "Many place, other example as in 14. "Cities is very expensive" the subject is plural while the verb is singular. In this study also the subject and verb agreement is one of the confusing areas to the students. So that, teachers need to focus on this area as same as spelling and tense. Misuse of singular and plural is the third highest error category in this study.

#### 4.2.4 Prepositions

A preposition is a word that shows the relationship between a noun or pronoun and other words in a sentence. It links nouns, pronouns and phrases to other words in a sentence. The word or phrase that the preposition introduces is called the object of the preposition. A preposition usually indicates the temporal, spatial or logical relationship of its object to the rest of the sentence.

Table 4.4 shows the analysis of preposition errors

Error Classification	Error Identification
<b>Prepositions</b>	1. There is people enough <u>of</u> any age
	2. <u>On</u> addition to that
	3. Cities <u>consiston</u> people from different places
	4. People <u>on</u> the <u>city</u> is good
	5. People live <u>forcities</u> .
	6. The <u>weather</u> is better <u>into</u> village.
	7. The people <u>comein</u> cities
	8. <u>On</u> the <u>village</u> there is no services.
	9. They <u>travelon</u> bus from village to city.

A preposition is a type of a word or group of words often placed before nouns, pronouns or gerunds to link them grammatically to other words. Prepositions may express meanings such as direction (*for example from home*), place (*for example in the car*)

There are some words that should always be used with certain prepositions to form phrases that express specific meanings. If we look at Sentence 2 in Table 4.4 above (on addition to that) the preposition on was incorrectly used. The word *addition* is always used with the preposition "in". If we look at Sentence 9 in Table 4.4 above.travel on bus. The preposition on was incorrectly used .the word travel used the preposition by if we used bus or car. If we look at Sentence 3 in Table 4.4 above (the city consist on people from different places) the preposition on was incorrectly used. The word *consist* is always used with the preposition "of".

To conclude, wrong use of prepositions is the less rate error category in this study

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **Conclusions, Recommendations and suggestions**

#### **5.1 Introduction**

This chapter will draw the threads of the study together by answering the research questions and verifying the hypotheses. Data from chapter four will be accumulated under each question and check the hypotheses.

#### **5.2 Results**

The question and hypotheses will be paired and data that relate to them will be assembled in order to answer the question and check the hypotheses

##### **5.2.1 Question and Hypotheses one**

**Q1** What are the most common language errors made by English language learners at university level?

**H1** The most common errors made by the university students relates to

1. s-v agreement.
2. Spelling
3. Verb Tense errors
4. Preposition

The answer to question one comes from the test. The data collected from this section was summarized in table (4.1 to 4.4.)Which shows that the most common errors made by the students were spelling , subject verb agreement, verb tense and preposition and this means that the most common errors made by the students related to the:

- a. s-v agreement.

- b. Spelling
- c. Verb Tense errors
- d. Preposition So, the first question is answered and the first hypothesis is accepted

**Q2** How frequent do these errors occur in their construction of English sentences?

**H2** Certain types of errors occur at very high rate

The answer to question two comes from the test. The data collected from this section was summarized in table (4. 0) which shows that spelling errors occur at very high rate 73 errors were made by students represent 36.5 percentage .The second highest rate was ,verb tense 45 errors were made by subjects of the study which represent 22.5% . The third rate is subject and verb agreements which represent 22% while preposition is last rate among other errors. So, the second question is answered and the second hypothesis is accepted.

**To sumup**,all questions have been answered positively and all hypotheses have been verified by data from test.

## **Conclusion**

This study has given an account of the main errors made by Sudanese learners at Sudan University of Science and Technology, College of Education, English Department, second year in their written work. Based on the discussion of the findings and the examples given, it could be concluded that the participants in this study committed four common errors, spelling, verb tense, subject/verb agreement, and prepositions.



### **5.3 Recommendations**

Based on the above, the research offers the following recommendations

1. Teachers should take care and focus on learner's errors and correct them.
2. Learner's errors should be teacher's focal point and source of learning and teaching process.

### **5.4 Suggestions for further research**

Throughout this study, the researcher has noticed that the following areas need to be researched

1. Investigate the errors made by undergraduate students their causes and effects.
2. The effectiveness of error analysis and teaching strategies.

### **5.5 Summary**

This chapter presented the conclusions and recommendations of the study. The conclusions provided answers to the research questions and verified the hypotheses. Also recommendations were offered and suggestion for further research were proposed

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