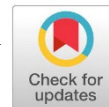


Research Article

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Syntactic Errors in Prepositional Phrases Made by English Major Students in Written Composition at Omar Al-Mukhtar University



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Abstract: This study investigates the syntactic errors in prepositional phrases made by fourth-year English department students at Omar Al-Mukhtar University in written compositions. To promote the effective use of prepositional phrases, participants were tasked with writing a description of their ideal weekend. The collected data was analyzed using the Surface Structure Taxonomy (SST) to categorize the types of syntactic errors. Additionally, the sources of these errors were examined through the lens of interlanguage theory. The findings revealed that misformation errors were the most prevalent, accounting for 50% (18 instances) of the total errors identified. Omission errors followed closely, representing 36.11% (13 instances), while addition errors constituted 13.89% (5 instances). Notably, misordering errors were absent, recorded at 0%. These results highlight the challenges faced by students in mastering prepositional phrases, underscoring the need for targeted instructional strategies to enhance their grammatical proficiency.

Keywords: Prepositions, Prepositional phrases, Syntax, Errors, Interlanguage theory, Surface Structure Taxonomy (SST).

الأخطاء النحوية في العبارات الجريّة التي ارتكبها طلاب اللغة الإنجليزية في الكتابة في جامعة عمر المختار

المستخلص: تتناول هذه الدراسة الأخطاء النحوية في كتابة العبارات الجريّة التي يرتكبها طلاب السنة الرابعة في قسم اللغة الإنجليزية بكلية اللغات بجامعة عمر المختار. ومن أجل تعزيز الاستخدام الصحيح للعبارات الجريّة، كُلف المشاركون بكتابة وصفٍ لعطلتهم المثالية، ثمّ خلّلت البيانات المُجمعة باستخدام تصنيف السطح (Surface Structure Taxonomy) لتصنيف أنواع الأخطاء النحوية، إضافةً إلى فحص مصادير هذه الأخطاء من خلال نظرية اللغة المتداخلة. كشفت النتائج أنّ أخطاء التشكيل كانت الأكثر شيوعاً، حيث شكّلت 50% (18 حالة) من إجمالي الأخطاء المُحدّدة، تلتها أخطاء الحذف التي مثّلت 36.11% (13 حالة)، بينما شكّلت أخطاء الإضافة 13.89% (5 حالات)، ويجدر بالذكر أنّ أخطاء الترتيب لم تُسجّل، حيث كانت 0%. تُبرز هذه النتائج التحدّيات التي يواجهها الطّالِب في إتقان العبارات الجريّة، ما يجعل الحاجة ملحّة إلى استحداث استراتيجيات تعليمية موجهة لتعزيز كفاءتهم النحوية.

الكلمات المفتاحية: حُرُوف الجر، العبارات الجرية، النحو، أخطاء، نظرية اللغة المتداخلة، تصنيف التركيب السطحي.

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1. Introduction

Proficiency in using prepositional phrases is essential for English major students, particularly those at an advanced level of their studies. Prepositional phrases play a significant role in shaping sentence structure and meaning, directly influencing the clarity and effectiveness of written communication (Celce-Murcia & Larsen-Freeman, 1999). Unfortunately, many students encounter difficulties in correctly using these phrases, leading to errors that can render their writing unclear and ineffective (Huang, 2014).

This research aims to investigate the syntactic errors in prepositional phrases present in the written compositions of fourth-year English major students at Omar Al-Mukhtar University. By conducting a thorough analysis, this study will identify the types and frequency of these errors, thereby shedding light on the specific challenges students face in developing their syntactic skills. Understanding these challenges is crucial for designing targeted interventions that can enhance the accuracy and precision of students' writing.

The findings from this research will not only contribute to the existing body of knowledge on language acquisition but also provide practical strategies for educators to support students in overcoming these common obstacles in their writing proficiency.

1.1 Objectives of The Study

Identify and Categorize Syntactic Errors

To systematically identify and categorize the most prevalent syntactic errors in prepositional phrases made by fourth-year English Department students at Omar Al-Mukhtar University. This will provide a comprehensive understanding of the specific challenges these students face in their writing.

Investigate Influencing Factors

To explore the factors influencing the occurrence of syntactic errors in prepositional phrases among fourth-year students. This investigation will consider aspects such as language transfer, educational background, and instructional methods, aiming to uncover the underlying reasons for these errors.

1.2 Research Questions

This study is guided by the following research questions:

What are the most common syntactic errors in prepositional phrases made by fourth-year English Department students at Omar Al-Mukhtar University in their written compositions?

What factors contribute to these syntactic errors in prepositional phrases, and how do these factors vary among fourth-year English Department students at Omar Al-Mukhtar University?

1.3 Significance of the Study

This study is valuable in both theoretical and practical aspects of language education. It contributes significantly to applied linguistics by systematically analyzing syntactic errors in prepositional phrases among fourth-year English Department students. This focus enhances our understanding of the complexities of mastering English syntax, particularly for non-native speakers. Insights from the research illuminate the cognitive challenges learners face, which can refine pedagogical approaches to better meet student needs.

Practically, the findings inform teaching methodologies and curriculum development by providing empirical data on specific challenges students encounter. This allows educators to design targeted teaching strategies and curricular materials that enhance instructional effectiveness. Bitchener & Knipe (2008) emphasize the importance of aligning teaching practices with students' needs, and this

research aids in developing professional training programs for educators to improve their teaching of syntactic structures.

Additionally, the study aims to improve students' syntactic skills, especially in using prepositional phrases, which are crucial for clarity in written communication. As noted by Brown (2007) enhanced syntactic skills boost students' confidence and positively affect their attitudes toward learning English.

In summary, this research bridges the gap between theory and practice, providing actionable insights for educators and benefiting students, ultimately creating a comprehensive framework for improving language education outcomes.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

This study examines the syntactic errors in prepositional phrases made by 4th year students in the English department at Omar Al-Mukhtar University. Prepositional phrases are vital for expressing spatial, temporal, and semantic relationships, and mastering them is crucial for students transitioning to postgraduate studies or the workforce. Understanding the specific types of errors these students make can inform English language teaching and curriculum development, allowing educators to create targeted interventions to enhance writing proficiency. Analyzing these errors in academic essays can reveal broader challenges faced by English language learners in producing cohesive and grammatically accurate writing. Ultimately, the findings aim to contribute to research on English language acquisition and to develop more effective instructional strategies tailored to the needs of non-native English speakers.

2.2 Definitions and Key Features of Prepositional Phrases

Syntax: Syntax is the set of rules, principles, and processes that govern the structure of sentences in a given language, specifically how words and phrases are arranged to create meaningful expressions (Radford, 1997).

Phrase: A phrase is a group of words that work together as a single unit within a sentence but does not contain both a subject and a verb. Phrases can function in various roles, such as noun phrases, verb phrases, or prepositional phrases (Biber et al., 1999).

Prepositional Phrase: A prepositional phrase consists of a preposition followed by its object, which can be a noun, pronoun, or noun phrase. It functions to provide additional information about other elements in the sentence, such as location, time, or manner (Greenbaum & Quirk, 1990).

The Surface Structure Taxonomy (SST): The Surface Structure Taxonomy is a framework for categorizing language errors based on observable syntactic features. It classifies errors into four main types: omission, addition, misformation, and misordering, enabling a structured approach to error analysis in language learning (Dulay, Burt, & Krashen, 1982).

The Interlanguage Theory: The Interlanguage Theory posits that language learners develop an intermediate linguistic system that is influenced by their native language and the target language. This theory emphasizes the systematic nature of errors made by learners, which can be attributed to both intralingual and interlingual factors (Selinker, 1972).

2.3 The basic structure of a prepositional phrase is as follows:

Preposition + Noun/Pronoun (+ Modifiers)

For example, in the sentence "The book is on the table," the prepositional phrase is "on the table," where "on" is the preposition and "the table" is the object of the preposition.

2.4 Some key features of prepositional phrases include:

Prepositional phrases are essential in English syntax, enhancing both sentence structure and meaning. They serve various functions, including as adverbials, which provide context for verbs (e.g., "She ran to the store" answers "where"), and as adjectival, which modify nouns (e.g., "The book on the table is mine"). Additionally, they can act as noun modifiers within larger structures (Greenbaum et al., 1990).

Semantically, prepositions convey relationships such as location ("in the room"), time ("at 5 o'clock"), direction ("to the park"), and possession ("of the author"), enriching communication by allowing for precise meanings. Their complexity ranges from simple phrases like "after dinner" to more intricate constructions, as seen in "under the old oak tree in the park," which adds multiple layers of detail (Biber et al., 1999).

Flexibility is another hallmark of prepositional phrases, allowing for varied placement within sentences. This adaptability enables emphasis and stylistic variation, such as moving a phrase to the beginning for effect ("In the park, they played soccer") or keeping it at the end ("They played soccer in the park") (Huddleston & Pullum, 2002).

Understanding the structure and features of prepositional phrases is crucial for identifying syntactic errors. Educators can develop targeted teaching strategies, such as exercises focusing on proper usage and exploration of semantic roles, to improve students' writing proficiency and communicative effectiveness. This foundational knowledge is vital for navigating the complexities of English syntax, fostering greater confidence in language use.

2.5 Interlanguage Theory

Interlanguage theory is a vital framework for understanding second language acquisition (SLA). As learners engage with a new language, they create a unique linguistic system, or interlanguage, which reflects their evolving understanding and communication skills. This dynamic system blends influences from their first language (L1) and experiences with the target language (L2) (Selinker, 1972).

Interlanguage is not static; it evolves through systematic errors that provide insights into learners' cognitive processes. For example, overgeneralizing grammatical rules from L1 to L2 can lead to characteristic errors, revealing how learners navigate the new linguistic environment. These errors serve as diagnostic tools for educators.

In addition, intralanguage refers to the internalized understanding that learners develop independently of their L1, based on their exposure to L2. This leads to unique error patterns resulting from attempts to generalize observed rules (Dulay et al., 1982). For instance, using "mouses" instead of "mice" illustrates a learner's engagement with L2 rules.

Examining both interlanguage and intralanguage offers insights into the challenges learners face, especially with grammatical structures like prepositional phrases. Understanding interlanguage nuances allows educators to tailor strategies to address learners' specific needs, facilitating more effective language learning.

Additionally, interlanguage theory highlights that each learner's path to proficiency is unique, influenced by factors such as learning styles and exposure to the language. This variability necessitates flexible teaching approaches that accommodate diverse learning trajectories.

In summary, interlanguage theory provides a comprehensive view of SLA complexities. By exploring the interplay of interlanguage and intralanguage, educators and researchers can better understand language learning processes, leading to improved instructional strategies and outcomes for learners.

Examples of Interlanguage Errors of Prepositional Phrases

L1 Transfer Errors:

Error: "I will meet you in the weekend."

Explanation: A learner whose L1 (e.g., Arabic) uses "in" with "weekend" may incorrectly apply this structure in English. The correct usage is "on the weekend," highlighting how L1 influences the learner's interlanguage (Huang, 2014).

Overgeneralization:

Error: "She is interested for music."

Explanation: In this case, the learner incorrectly uses "for" instead of "in." This reflects an overgeneralization of preposition usage, as they may have learned to use "for" in contexts indicating purpose (e.g., "I went for a walk") (Yasuda, 2015).

Misapplication of Prepositional Structures:

Error: "He traveled to Paris in the summer."

Explanation: While "in the summer" is correct, a learner might mistakenly say "on the summer," confusing the prepositional patterns. This error shows that the learner's interlanguage is still developing; they may not have fully internalized the specific prepositional contexts used in English (Dulay et al., 1982).

Interlanguage theory provides a valuable framework for understanding the errors made by second language learners, particularly in the context of prepositional phrases. By analyzing these errors, educators can gain insights into the learners' internalized rules and the influence of their first language. Understanding the distinction between interlanguage and intralanguage further enriches this analysis, as it highlights the different sources of errors—whether they stem from L1 interference or from the learners' own evolving understanding of the target language. This theoretical framework can inform instructional strategies aimed at addressing specific challenges in language acquisition, ultimately supporting learners in achieving greater proficiency in the target language.

2.6 Error Analysis

A central theoretical framework for this study is error analysis, a key methodology in second language acquisition (SLA) research. This approach systematically investigates errors made by language learners, providing insights into the complexities of language acquisition. Unlike earlier methods like contrastive analysis, which predicted errors based on language differences, error analysis focuses on actual learner output (Ellis, 1994; James, 1998), emphasizing the learner's perspective.

According to James (1998), error analysis aims to identify and describe errors, explain their causes, and evaluate their pedagogical implications. This process reveals learners' strategies and their inter-language development (Ellis & Barkhuizen, 2005), which is essential for tailoring effective instructional methods.

A key distinction in error analysis is between "errors," which indicate systematic gaps in knowledge, and "mistakes," which are occasional lapses that learners can self-correct (James, 1998; Corder, 1967). This differentiation informs the interpretation of learner output and guides pedagogical interventions.

Common error patterns include omission, addition, misformation, and misordering ((Dulay et al., 1982; James, 1998). These patterns reflect specific challenges learners face, influenced by factors such as L1 interference, overgeneralization of rules, and simplification (Richards, 1971; Ellis, 2008).

Error analysis has been applied to various linguistic domains, including syntax, with studies focusing on specific grammatical structures, such as Dušková (1969) on verb forms.

Overall, error analysis provides a robust framework for investigating syntactic errors in prepositional phrases among language learners. By identifying and explaining these errors, this study aims to enhance research on error analysis and learner language development, informing instructional practices to better support learners with complex syntactic structures.

2.7 Surface Structure Taxonomy (SST)

A key framework that will be employed in the analysis of syntactic errors in this thesis is the Surface Structure Taxonomy (SST) developed by Carl James (1998) as part of his comprehensive work on error analysis. The SST provides a systematic taxonomy for classifying the surface-level forms of errors made by language learners.

According to James (1998), the SST categorizes errors into four main types:

Omission errors: The omission of a required linguistic item, such as a missing preposition or article.

Addition errors: The inclusion of an unnecessary linguistic item, such as the use of an extra preposition or article.

Misformation errors: The use of an incorrect form of a linguistic item, such as the wrong preposition or article.

Misordering errors: The incorrect placement of a linguistic item within the sentence, such as a preposition appearing in the wrong position.

Using the SST framework, this study will identify and analyze the syntactic errors related to prepositional phrases made by language learners. This taxonomic approach will clarify the types of errors and their distribution in the data.

The SST application will not only categorize errors but also help explain their sources and cognitive processes. For instance, omission errors may reveal gaps in linguistic knowledge, while addition or misformation errors could indicate overgeneralization of language rules or first language interference.

Integrating the SST into the error analysis will provide insights into prepositional phrase errors among participants, leading to more targeted and effective pedagogical strategies for addressing these challenges in second language instruction.

2.8 Surface Structure Taxonomy of Prepositional Phrase Errors:

Omission Errors:

Definition: The complete omission of a preposition within the prepositional phrase.

Example: "I arrived the library" instead of "I arrived at the library".

Addition Errors:

Definition: The unnecessary inclusion of a preposition within the prepositional phrase.

Example: "We arrived here tonight" instead of "We arrived in here tonight".

Misformation Errors:

Definition: The incorrect selection or form of the preposition within the prepositional phrase.

Examples: "I am interested for the topic" instead of "I am interested in the topic".

Misordering Errors:

Definition: The incorrect placement or arrangement of the elements within the prepositional phrase.

Example: "We leave home about at 7 o'clock" instead of "We leave home at about 7 o'clock" instead of.

3. Methodology

3.1 Error Classification:

By applying interlanguage theory, we can categorize the errors observed in the students' written samples. Errors may arise from L1 influence, where learners apply familiar structures from Arabic to English, leading to systematic mistakes. Additionally, developmental errors may occur as students attempt to generalize rules they have encountered. This classification not only aids in pinpointing the sources of errors but also provides a structured approach for analyzing the data quantitatively.

3.2 Participants

Population

The target population for this study consists of fourth-year English Department students at Omar Al-Mukhtar University. This group was selected due to their advanced proficiency in the English language, as they have undergone several years of study focusing on language acquisition, literature, and translation. Engaging with this population allows for an insightful examination of the syntactic challenges they encounter as they prepare for professional and academic pursuits (Creswell, 2014).

Sample Size

The sample size for this study includes 20 essays written by 20 different participants. This sample size is deemed sufficient for providing a detailed analysis while ensuring that the data collected is rich and varied. A sample of this size allows for the identification of common error patterns in the use of prepositional phrases without overwhelming the analysis process (Bitchener et al., 2008).

Selection Criteria

The selection of participants was based on random sampling, as all fourth-year English students at Omar Al-Mukhtar University were invited to participate in the study. Random sampling is an effective method for ensuring that the sample is representative of the population, minimizing selection bias and enhancing the generalizability of the findings (Flick, 2018). Given that there are 20 students in the cohort, each student's essay was included to create a comprehensive dataset for analysis.

3.3 Writing Task

For the data collection phase of this study, students were asked to write an essay describing their ideal weekend. This task was designed to elicit a variety of prepositional phrases, allowing for a rich analysis of syntactic errors. The essay prompt encouraged creativity while also requiring students to reflect on their language skills, particularly in the use of English syntax (Raimes, 1983).

Instructions

Students were provided with clear instructions emphasizing the necessity of incorporating prepositional phrases to vividly portray the locations, activities, and details of their ideal weekend. This guidance was intended to help students focus on the syntactic structures being studied, ensuring that their writing would yield relevant data for error analysis (Hyland, 2003). By explicitly directing students to use prepositional phrases, the research aimed to facilitate a context where language use could be effectively observed and analyzed.

Time Allocation

Students were allocated 45 minutes to complete their essays. This timeframe was deemed sufficient for students to organize their thoughts, write coherently, and incorporate the required syntactic elements. The time limit also helped to maintain a controlled setting, allowing for a focused examination of their writing processes (Creswell, 2014).

Environment

The essays were written in a classroom environment under the direct observation of the researcher. This setting allowed the researcher to monitor the writing process while ensuring that students remained focused on their task. Observing the students in their natural learning environment provided additional context for analyzing the data and understanding any potential influences on their writing (Bitchener et al., 2008).

Data Analysis

Transcription

The first step in the data analysis process involves the transcription of the written samples. Each essay will be carefully transcribed to ensure that all content is accurately captured for subsequent analysis. This step is crucial for maintaining the integrity of the data and allows for a detailed examination of each participant's writing. The transcription process will focus on preserving the original wording and structure of the essays, facilitating a thorough review of syntactic errors related to prepositional phrases (Creswell, 2014).

3.4 Identification and Categorization of Errors

Once the essays have been transcribed, the next phase involves the identification and categorization of syntactic errors using the Surface Structure Taxonomy (SST) developed by (Dulay et al., 1982).

This taxonomy provides a systematic framework for classifying errors based on their surface forms, including omissions, additions, misformation, and misordering. By applying SST, the researcher can effectively categorize errors related to prepositional phrases, yielding a structured overview of the types of mistakes made by students. This method not only enhances the clarity of the analysis but also allows for the identification of common patterns across the sample (Ellis, 2008).

4. Research Findings

The analysis of syntactic errors in prepositional phrases produced by fourth-year English Department students at Omar Al-Mukhtar University yielded important insights into the challenges these students face in their written compositions. A total of **36 errors** were identified across the 20 written samples focused on the theme of an "Ideal Weekend." The errors were categorized into four distinct types: omission, addition, misformation, and misordering. The following statistics summarize the findings: see table 1

Table 1 summarizes the overall distribution of errors identified in the participants' written compositions.

Error Type	Count
Omission	13
Addition	5
Misformation	18
Misordering	0
Total Errors	36

4.1 Classification of Errors

The errors were further classified into interlanguage and intralanguage categories, providing deeper insights into their origins:

Interlanguage Errors: 10

Intralanguage Errors: 26

In language acquisition, errors made by learners can be classified into two main categories: interlanguage errors and intralanguage errors. Understanding these error types is crucial for educators and learners alike, as it helps identify areas that require focused attention and improvement. See table 3

Interlanguage Errors (10)

Interlanguage errors occur when learners apply rules and structures from their first language (L1) to the target language (L2). These errors often arise due to:

Direct Translation: Learners may translate phrases or idioms directly from their native language, leading to incorrect usage in the target language.

L1 Influence: Structural differences between languages can cause confusion. For instance, if a student's native language has a different word order, they might produce sentences that sound unnatural in the target language.

Intralinguage Errors (26)

Intralinguage errors, on the other hand, arise from the learner's developing understanding of the target language itself. These errors occur as learners attempt to apply grammatical rules they have learned but misunderstand or overgeneralize them. The dominance of intralinguage errors (26 out of 36 total errors) highlights several key reasons:

Overgeneralization: Learners might apply a grammatical rule too broadly. For example, In Arabic, it is common to use a preposition similar to "in" when expressing proficiency or skill in an activity (e.g., "هو جيد في لعب كرة القدم" translates to "He is good in playing football"). This structure may lead Arabic-speaking students to incorrectly apply the same preposition in English.

Incomplete Knowledge: As students progress, they may not fully grasp all aspects of grammar, leading to errors in tense, preposition use, or article usage.

Developmental Processes: Language acquisition is a complex process, and learners often experiment with language. This experimentation can lead to errors as they test out new structures.

Lack of Contextual Understanding: Learners may know the rules but struggle to apply them appropriately in context, leading to errors that reflect a misunderstanding of usage rather than a direct influence from their first language.

Cognitive Load: As learners juggle multiple aspects of language (grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation), they may make mistakes due to the cognitive demands of processing and using a new language.

Table 2 summarizes the classification of errors for each participant, distinguishing between interlanguage and intralinguage errors. This classification provides a deeper understanding of the sources of the errors made by the participants in their written compositions.

Error Classification Student's Numbers	Interlanguage Errors	Intralinguage Errors
Student #1	3	4
Student #2	2	1
Student #3	2	5
Student #4	0	1
Student #5	0	0
Student #6	1	1
Student #7	0	2
Student #8	0	0
Student #9	0	2
Student #10	0	1
Student #11	1	0
Student #12	0	0
Student #13	1	0
Student #14	0	0
Student #15	0	3

Student #16	0	1
Student #17	0	1
Student #18	0	1
Student #19	0	1
Student #20	0	2
Total	10	26

4.2 Analysis of Errors

The Data Analysis section presents a comprehensive examination of the syntactic errors identified in the written compositions of fourth-year English Department students at Omar Al-Mukhtar University. By categorizing these errors into omission, addition, misformation, and misordering types, this section aims to elucidate the specific errors made by the participants in mastering prepositional phrases and overall sentence structure in English.

Each error type is defined and illustrated with examples drawn from the participants' writings, providing a clear understanding of the nature and frequency of these mistakes. Additionally, the analysis incorporates insights from interlanguage theory to explore the underlying causes of these errors, particularly the influence of the students' first language on their English usage.

The implications of these findings for language proficiency will also be discussed, highlighting how targeted instructional strategies can address the common pitfalls identified in the analysis. Through this detailed examination, the Data Analysis section aims to contribute to a better understanding of the students' language learning processes and inform effective teaching practices.

Omission Errors

Omission errors were observed with a total of 13 instances among participants. These errors occur when participants neglect to include necessary prepositions in their sentences, such as writing, "I spend time my family" instead of "I spend time with my family." This indicates that students may struggle to recognize the importance of prepositions for establishing relationships between nouns and other elements in a sentence, which is essential for clarity (Celce-Murcia et al., 1999). Although not the most frequent error type, the presence of omission errors highlights a gap in understanding the syntactic requirements of English, potentially leading to ambiguity in communication (Ellis, 2008). See table 3

Table 3 summarizes the omission errors made by the participants

ERROR	CORRECTION
Go the trip	Go <i>on</i> a trip
Go the Egypt	Go <i>to</i> Egypt
Or the Turkey	Or go <i>to</i> Turkey
In front sea	In front <i>of</i> the sea
Go to beach	Go <i>to the</i> beach
Go to garden	Go <i>to the</i> garden
In evening	<i>In the</i> evening
Go to garden	Go <i>to the</i> garden

On telephone	<i>On the telephone</i>
With fishing rod	<i>With a fishing rod</i>
In the middle of night	<i>In the middle of the night</i>
Of great weekend	<i>Of a great weekend</i>
Go the market	<i>Go to the market</i>

A prepositional phrase that was uttered by one of the participants is "That's my idea of great weekend", this phrase contains an omission error due to the absence of the article "a." The correct form should be "That's my idea of **a** great weekend." This error can be analyzed from multiple perspectives to provide a comprehensive understanding.

Error Type: Omission

Omission errors occur when necessary grammatical elements, such as articles, are left out, leading to ambiguity. For instance, omitting the article "a" before "great weekend" results in the awkward phrase "my idea of great weekend," which does not conform to standard English usage.

Grammatical Structure

In English, singular countable nouns require an article for clarity. The phrase "great weekend" is incomplete without "a," which indicates any instance of a great weekend rather than a general concept.

L1 Influence and Interlanguage Theory

The student's first language (L1), Arabic, may influence this error, as Arabic has different rules regarding article usage. This transfer of linguistic structures can lead to omissions when students construct sentences in English, reflecting challenges in second language acquisition (Selinker, 1972).

Implications for Clarity and Proficiency

Omission errors can hinder clarity and understanding, making communication confusing. Frequent omissions indicate gaps in a student's grasp of English grammar, particularly concerning articles. A solid command of articles is crucial for effective communication, and targeted instruction can enhance students' language proficiency and writing skills (Ellis, 2008; Celce-Murcia et al., 1999). Addressing these gaps is essential for improving overall language competence.

Addition Errors

A total of 5 addition errors were identified, occurring when students include unnecessary prepositions or elements in their sentences. For example, a student might say, "I go to for dinner" instead of "I go for dinner." Although less frequent than omission errors, addition errors indicate a misunderstanding of prepositional use, often stemming from overgeneralization based on the students' first language (L1), where certain phrases may require additional prepositions not needed in English (Selinker, 1972). This overgeneralization complicates the language learning process (Ellis, 2008). See table 4

Table 4 summarizes the addition errors made by the participants

ERROR	CORRECTION
Go to the Benghazi	Go to Benghazi
Make to our	Make our
To bring some clothes from	To bring some clothes

Go to the Benghazi	Go to Benghazi
Make to our	Make our
To bring some clothes from	To bring some clothes

Once <i>in</i> a month	Once a month
Going <i>to the</i> work	Going to work

The phrase "Go to the Benghazi" contains an **intralanguage error** made by one of the participants, specifically the incorrect inclusion of the definite article "the" before the proper noun "Benghazi." The correct expression should be "Go to Benghazi," as city names typically do not require an article.

Interlanguage Theory Perspective

From the perspective of interlanguage theory, this error reflects the learner's developing understanding of English grammar rather than direct influence from their first language (L1). The participant may be applying a general rule about article usage without recognizing the exceptions that apply to proper nouns like city names. This demonstrates a common challenge in language acquisition where learners often overapply grammatical rules as they refine their language skills. Addressing these errors through targeted instruction can enhance grammatical accuracy in English.

Misformation Errors

Misformation errors were the most prevalent, with 18 instances identified. These errors occur when students use incorrect prepositions or forms, such as saying, "I am on home" instead of "I am at home." This suggests that students face significant challenges in mastering English prepositions. The high frequency of misformation errors highlights the need for targeted instruction on prepositional phrases, as these mistakes can greatly affect the clarity and accuracy of students' writing (Celce-Murcia et al., 1999) See table 5

Table 5 summarizes the misformation errors made by the participants

ERROR	CORRECTION
Go <i>to</i> the trip	Go <i>on</i> a trip
<i>In</i> the weekend	<i>On</i> the weekend
<i>Down over</i> the street	<i>Down</i> the street/ <i>Over</i> the street
Look <i>to</i> people	Look <i>at</i> people
<i>At</i> Sunday	<i>On</i> Sunday
For an example	<i>For</i> example/ <i>as an</i> example
<i>At</i> my grandparents' house	<i>To</i> my grandparents' house
<i>At</i> the week	<i>In</i> the week
<i>At</i> a rainy day	<i>On</i> a rainy day
<i>In</i> that day	<i>At</i> that day
<i>In</i> the weekend	<i>On</i> the weekend
Obsessed <i>in</i> animals	Obsessed <i>with</i> animals
Who stands <i>on</i> the door	Who stands <i>by</i> the door
<i>In</i> the weekend	<i>On</i> the weekend
<i>In</i> weekends	<i>On</i> weekends
<i>On</i> my home	<i>At</i> my home

<i>On my home</i>	<i>At my home</i>
<i>On this mood</i>	<i>In this mood</i>

The phrase "in the weekend" contains an interlanguage error made by one of the participants, specifically the incorrect use of the preposition "in" instead of the correct preposition "on." The appropriate expression should be "on the weekend," as English typically uses "on" for specific days or periods.

Interlanguage Theory Perspective

From the perspective of interlanguage theory, this error reflects the learner's developing understanding of English grammar and is influenced by their first language, Arabic. In Arabic, the equivalent expression may not adhere to the same prepositional rules as in English, leading to confusion. The participant might be applying a general rule about prepositions without fully recognizing the specific context required for temporal expressions in English. This error exemplifies a common challenge in language acquisition, where learners often overapply grammatical rules derived from their native language as they refine their English skills.

Addressing these errors through targeted instruction that emphasizes the nuances of prepositional usage can significantly enhance grammatical accuracy in English, allowing learners to better navigate the complexities of the language.

Misordering Errors

Notably, there were no misordering errors identified in the samples. This absence suggests that the students generally have a solid grasp of the syntactic structure of English sentences, at least in terms of word order. It may indicate that while they struggle with specific prepositions, their overall understanding of how to construct sentences correctly is relatively strong (Ellis, 2008).

Table 6 summarizes the overall errors made by each participant in their written compositions

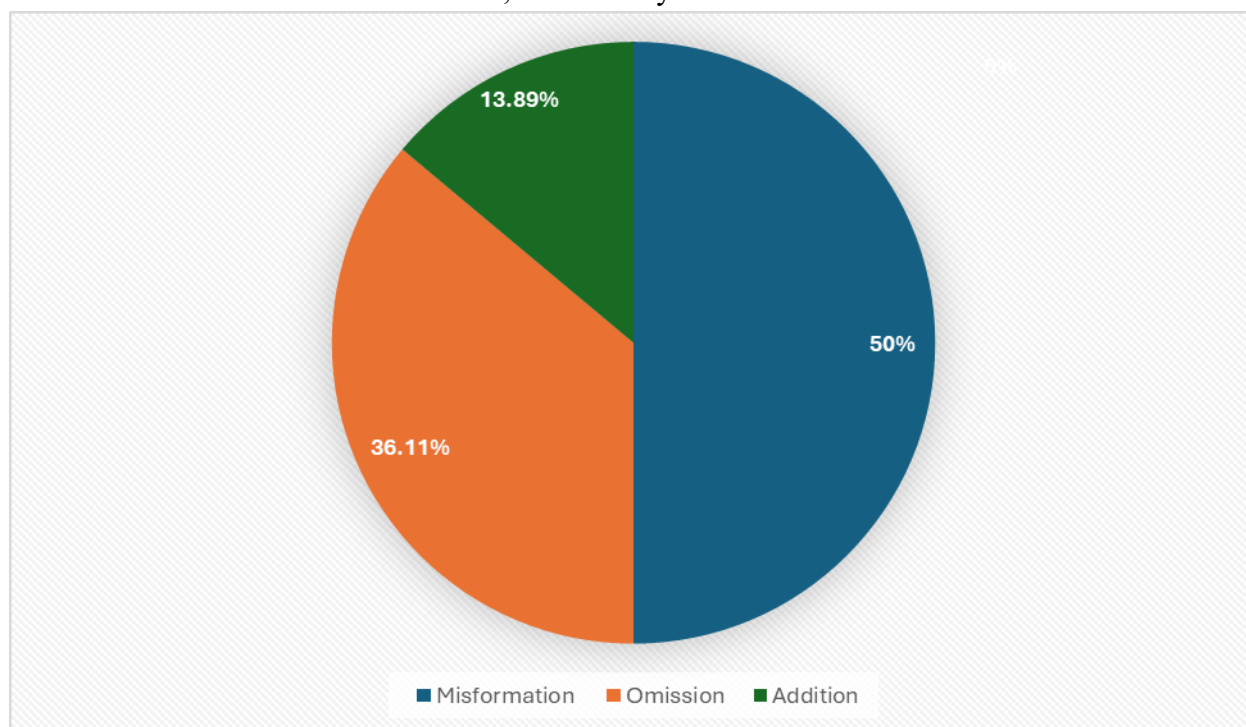
Error Type	Omission	Addition	Misformation	Misordering
Student Number				
Student #1	3	2	2	0
Student #2	0	2	1	0
Student #3	5	0	2	0
Student #4	1	0	0	0
Student #5	0	0	0	0
Student #6	1	0	1	0
Student #7	0	0	2	0
Student #8	0	0	0	0
Student #9	1	0	1	0
Student #10	0	0	1	0
Student #11	0	1	0	0

Student #12	0	0	0	0
Student #13	1	0	0	0
Student #14	0	0	0	0
Student #15	0	0	3	0
Student #16	0	0	1	0
Student #17	1	0	0	0
Student #18	0	0	1	0
Student #19	0	0	1	0
Student #20	0	0	2	0
Total	13	5	18	0

4.3 Summary of Finding

The analysis of errors reveals that misformation errors are the most prevalent, comprising 50% of total errors. Omission errors follow at 36.11%, indicating a significant challenge in recognizing necessary grammatical elements. Addition errors account for 13.89%, highlighting occasional misunderstandings of prepositional use. Notably, there were no misordering errors identified in this assessment. This distribution underscores the need for targeted instruction, particularly in mastering prepositional usage and grammatical structures in English. See chart 1

As shown in Chart 1, the percentages of errors made by all participants highlight the prevalence of misformation errors, followed by omission and addition errors.



4.4 Conclusion

This study reveals significant findings regarding the types and prevalence of errors made by language learners, with misinformation errors being the most frequent, followed by omission and addition errors. These results highlight the challenges learners face in mastering English grammar, particularly in using prepositional phrases, which are crucial for effective communication. The prominence of these errors suggests learners struggle with both the rules and nuances of prepositional usage.

The research provides valuable insights for language education, helping educators refine their instructional strategies by addressing specific error types. For instance, focusing on misinformation errors may necessitate explicit instruction on prepositions through targeted exercises, ultimately improving grammatical accuracy and overall proficiency.

Additionally, understanding syntactic errors is vital for developing effective pedagogical methods, as these errors reveal cognitive processes in language learning. This knowledge empowers learners to apply grammatical rules more confidently in their speech and writing.

The study also underscores the need for ongoing research in language acquisition and error analysis to continuously inform teaching practices. A collaborative approach among educators, researchers, and curriculum developers is advocated to create comprehensive resources that meet diverse learner needs.

In conclusion, the findings call for educators to enhance their teaching methods based on the identified challenges, fostering a deeper understanding of grammar and improving communication skills among students. Ongoing inquiry into language learning processes is essential to ensure educational practices remain effective and relevant.

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