

**How to Cite:**

Olimat, K. N., & AL-Jamal, D. A. H. (2022). The interference of the native-speaking language in the English writing performance of Jordanian Universities students: An error analysis study. *International Journal of Health Sciences*, 6(S2), 5765–5774.  
<https://doi.org/10.53730/ijhs.v6nS2.6359>

## **The interference of the native-speaking language in the English writing performance of Jordanian Universities students: An error analysis study**

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**Abstract**---This study aims to investigate the errors that students made in writing test in a private university in Jordan and mainly focuses on inter-lingual errors. This research has adopted qualitative methodology and analytical approach which involves the assessment of facts, evaluation of information and critical thinking to examine the data from the targeted respondents and get outcomes. Descriptive and inferential analysis tool were used in the study to provide meaningful and significant interpretation of the data gathered from the writing tasks, which helped to describe, summarize, and illuminate the data meaningfully and obtain more powerful analyses. Therefore, inferential statistics in this study were used to get conclusions and inferences. The materials that are used in this study consist of 100 compositions test written by a group of Students ranging from 18 to 21 years from Zarqa University selected using a random sampling process, given forty-five minutes to accomplish a writing task between 200 to 250 words. Then, it collected from the participants for analysis. This study attempts to explore the major sources of errors occurred in the writing of EFL students. All errors committed by the participants were analyzed and classified into different categories and sources. Inter-lingual error were found in the students text, its appearance was less than a half from all cases (246 Cases= 24.77%). From this finding, it was highly suggested that students be exposed more seriously to the target language, the highest case in the inter-lingual source error were found in the mother tongue interference i.e. 118 cases or around 12 % of all cases. The subcategories of inter-lingual errors, it shows that an important number of errors are caused by

inter-lingual errors. Learners tend to commit more errors in the Lexico-semantic aspect (111 cases = 11.18 %).Based on the findings, numerous recommendations were made to assist instructors and teachers in general in their attempts to overcome the challenges of writing essays in the English language. This study suggests that future research be conducted in this field to gain a better understanding of the effect of inter lingual factors on the cohesion of written composition in an EFL context. It is also suggested that language instructors provide continuous corrective feedback during the teaching and learning process, and learners be more active in seeking exposure to the correct form of the target language.

**Keywords**---error, error analysis, inter-lingual, writing, native-speaking language.

## **Introduction**

"Language learning is not a set of easy steps that can be programmed in a quick do-it-yourself kit", it's rather a great challenge with a complex process in which learners make various types of linguistic errors (Brown, 2000 p.1). One of these challenges is the linguistic errors in EFL learners' essays. Analyzing writing errors may echo learners' needs. Further, allocating them among relevant research may help EFL writers to create a well-organized and accessible essay.

Foreign language learners' errors may be caused by misrecognizing the target language linguistic elements and/or by their mother tongue interference. For example in the case of Arab learners' writing, their mother tongue includes significant differences from English that mirrors their instructional needs which both belong to two different language families (Germanic vs. Semitic) (Hélot& Young, 2005). Errors might occur when foreign language learners negatively transfer some linguistic elements from their mother tongue to the target language or from the poor acquiring of the linguistic elements of the target language (Selinker & Gass, 2008).

The term "error" is defined as a ' systematic deviation' by many scholars. Specifically, Norrish (1987) defined errors as a systematic deviation when a learner has not learned something. Cunninworth and Tomlinson (1987) introduced an error as systematic deviations from the language standards that are being learned. Corder (1967) defined an error as a deviation from the grammar of a native speaker that reflects the inter-language of the learner.

Analyzing errors can be helpful. As such, error analysis was firstly established by Corder (1967) who stated that errors are the result of low-quality performance. Error analysis (EA) is a tool for studying second language analysis, and it is one of the best types of linguistic studies (Darus & Subramaniam, 2009) Error analysis is defined by Brown (2000) as the process of observing, analyzing, and categorizing the deviations of the second language rules and then investigating the systems managed by the learner.

To analyze students' errors, it is necessary to determine the sources of errors. According to Selinker (1972), there are five categories of sources of errors. They are overgeneralization, transfer of training, language transfer, second language learning strategies, and communication strategies. Errors have been classified by (Khuwaileh & Al-Shoumali, 2001) into two categories: the inter and intralingual errors. Those two elements refer to the negative influence of both the speaker's native language and the target language itself.

As two influences over English language writing essays were identified (ChittimaKaweera, 2013), one of these influences is established by the mother tongue language is referred to as the inter-lingual error. The second influence results from acquiring the target language; it is called the intra-lingual error. The inter-lingual error is one of the most critical factors which result from negative transference from the first language. Erdogan (2005) voiced that intra-lingual errors occur when the learners try to form concepts and hypotheses about the target language without having an experience with it.

Inter-lingual errors have negative influences of the first language on the performance of the target or second language (Lado, 1964). The shortage of the necessary information in the second language is the main reason for the transfer, as there are two kinds of transfer: positive and negative (Wilkins, 1972). Inter-lingual errors are committed by: firstly, transfer error, these are caused by interference from the mother tongue; secondly, mother tongue interference. The third type is the literal translation; when the learner translates first language words into the target language word by word (Al-Khresheh, 2010).

In Jordan, it is acknowledged that university students have many difficulties in writing in the English language. For example, Al-bakri (1998), Rababah (2003), and Al- Khresheh (2010) stated that the influence of the mother tongue is clearly shown in the written forms of students, which in turn, affects their proficiency level in writing. In this case, the analysis of errors and understanding their sources are necessary. Accordingly, the present study focuses on various types of errors made by university students. Specifically, these errors will be classified; then, the sources of errors will be explained in term of inter -lingual interference.

Additionally, based on recommendations put forward by Al-Ta'ani (1986), Lim (1990), Al-bakri (1998), Bacha (2002), (Bataneh, 2005), and Aziz (2020), EFL learners face many difficulties in writing and the Jordanian learners who are of no exception of these difficulties. It is hoped that this study that investigates the types of inter -lingual errors committed by EFL learners at the university level will shed some light on the problems they face.

The main aim of this study is To identify the types of inter-lingual errors committed by the Jordanian EFL. This study is helpful for EFL instructors. It would provide them with further insights that can be used for further significance and enhance their teaching methods. It is hoped that the findings of this study will enable the instructors to provide more constructive feedback to their learners rather than merely providing comments on whether the written work is good or not. Also, it helps them identify the most common errors which occur due to the inter-lingual errors. In addition, it would help textbook writers by providing

suggestions on the kind of writing activities to be utilized. In this regard, the findings of this study can contribute significantly to fill in research gap.

### **Question of the Study**

In order to achieve the objective of the study, the following question is addressed: What are the most common inter-language errors made by university students in their essays?

### **Review of the related literature**

After reviewing educational research, the researcher collected studies relevant to this study.

A cross-sectional analysis of the primary syntactic errors found in compositions performed by sixty Jordanian English language learners was done by Bataineh (1993). To collect data, error analysis was a major approach used in the research. In order to compare the frequency of errors and form conclusions regarding the reasons for these errors, the study examined the errors that these students made when using articles, prepositions, verbs, tense, and concord. She observed that students at each level struggled with the same five mistake types but with varying degrees of difficulty. Furthermore, inter-lingual interference was cited for the bulk of the mistakes. Many errors were also discovered to be the consequence of "inter-lingual interference". "It was also concluded that teachers should concentrate on specific grammatical issues rather than presenting English grammar as a whole. These issues should be addressed intelligently in the English curriculums of Jordanian schools and institutions.

Rababa (2001) examined communication problems which face Arab students who learn English as a foreign language. The sample of the study was 106 students enrolled at Yarmouk University. The tool of the study was the TOEFL test. The study shown that Jordanian governmental schools and universities use teaching methods which lack of practicing the target language in the classroom. Also, the findings of the study shown that the use of Arabic language in teaching English language causes inter-language of Arabic in learning English language.

Husada (2007) studied the types and causes of errors made by Indonesian students of English when studying the concord. Students' interlingual (their mother tongue) and intralingual (their learning tactics) interference would focus on the errors. The statistics were all acquired from Satya Wacana Christian University, Indonesia. Fifteen students took part in the study. The study followed Corder's data gathering and analysis (1974, in Ellis & Barkhuizen, 2005). The findings suggest that intralingual errors were far more critical than interlingual errors in the development of concord. They also reinforced the idea in the field of SLA that learners' acquisition of a foreign language is determined by the nature of the language they are learning, rather than by the contrast between their first and target languages.

Al-Shayban (2012) examined the types of writing errors of Saudi students who learn English as a foreign language. The participants of the study were 100 male

Saudi university students. The instrument of the study was a written test (writing essays). The result of the study revealed that most of the errors were omitting Verb (be) in the present and past tenses. The result also shows that the interlanguage of the Arabic language is the main cause of the errors.

Phetdannuea and Ngonkum (2016) examined two types of errors: interlingual and intralingual errors that occur in the writing of English major students at KhonKaen University. The participants were 25 second-year English major students from KhonKaen University's Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences. The writing assignment was utilized as the instrument in this study. The errors indicated that most pupils made interlingual errors, followed by intralingual errors. Students' essays exhibited all four forms of intralingual errors: overgeneralization, ignorance of rule constraints, insufficient application of rules, and erroneous ideas hypothesis. The two most often occurring errors made by students were the insufficient application of rules and ignorance of rule constraints, implying that while students have grasped English grammar, they have not mastered the full linguistic understanding. Additionally, the data indicated the minor errors that disrupt communication. Al-Hassan (2013) examined the effects of the Arabic language in writing essays of Jordanian students at Petra University. The participants were ten students of English language. The instrument of the study was a written test (essay writing). The study's findings showed that one-third of the errors were due to the interlanguage of the first language whereas, most of the errors were due to the overuse of English grammar rules.

(Ngangbam, 2016) studied grammatical errors of Arab students who learn English as a foreign language at Mu'tah University. The study aimed to discover the reasons behind the students' grammatical errors and learn about the most repeated writing errors. The participants were 60 native Arabic-speaking students. The tool of the study was a written test (writing composition). The study's findings revealed that the most important reasons for the errors are interlanguage and lack of knowledge of foreign language (English) grammar.

Murtiana (2019) examined the frequency of interlingual and intralingual faults made by EFL students in their compositions. In Banjarmasin, South Kalimantan, Indonesia, researchers researched a government-run Islamic university. Students pursuing a degree in English Education were the subjects of the study. Error Analysis (EA) is a theory developed by Corder to examine students' compositions. Interlingual mistakes were more common than intralingual errors in the 38 compositions tested. Morphological, lexical, syntactic, and misordering were all examples of interlingual mistakes. Intralingual mistakes were also seen in word structure and syntax, with omissions and additions. According to this study, first language interference produced more mistakes in writing than learners' inability to master second language rules. It is recommended that language teachers offer continual corrective feedback during the teaching and learning process and that students be more active in seeking exposure to the correct form of the target language.

## Method

This study used a random sampling process. The corpus was generated by the 100 students from Zarqa University in Jordan whereby each student was required to write an essay between 200 to 250 words. The selection of the participants was motivated by the fact that they are candidate to hold their bachelor's degree. All the participants selected for the study are bilingual students (English and Arabic speakers). Participants generally come from different cities in Jordan. The population represents almost all the existing socio-economic classes such as low, middle, and high classes in the country. They are similar in age, ranging from 18 to 21 years. They are also homogenous with regard to nationality, native language (Arabic), language proficiency and educational background. Writing tasks completed by the students were collected. The researcher scrutinized the way they respond to the tasks in order to identify the Inter -lingual writing errors of EFL students in Jordanian Universities.

The selection of the written task material for the sample group was based on the following criteria: content of the topic must be contemporary, interesting and within the respondents' realm of knowledge and experience. The topic must be practical enough to meet respondents' interest where the level of difficulty of the testing materials is appropriate enough that permits accessibility to the different writing abilities and skills of the respondents

Descriptive and inferential analysis tool were used in the study to provide meaningful and significant interpretation of the data gathered from the writing tasks. The descriptive analysis helped to describe, summarize, and illuminate the data meaningfully, because if the researcher simply presented the raw data, it would be difficult to understand what the data depicted. In contrast to descriptive statistics, inferential statistics tool allow the researcher to obtain more powerful analyses. Therefore, the conclusions and inferences were made by using inferential statistics in this study.

## Reliability

For the reliability of this process, 100 written work exam selected and reviewed independently by the researcher and a two colleague who works as an English teacher, Rater1 holds a PhD degree in Linguistics, Rater2 holds a PhD in English teaching methods. The inter-rater reliability between them was 92% which was statistically acceptable for this study.

## Result and Discussion

The question of the study reads as: *What are the most common inter-language errors made by university students in their essays?* To answer this question, the researcher qualitative methodology. Errors divided into categories and the percentages were calculated, the result from the analytical data was as follow:-

sources of errors	categories of Errors			Total
inter-lingual	Transfer Error	Mother tongue Interference	Literal Translation	

	72	118	56	246
Percentage	7.25%	11.89%	5.63%	24.77%

Table 1: Inter-lingual errors sources categories Percentage.

The students' errors in inter-lingual were influenced by the use of Mother tongue Interference basically..To begin, the mother tongue interference was determined to be the most common inter-lingual source mistake, accounting for 118 occurrences, or around 12% of all cases. Due to the interference of their first language element, the learners made errors in inter-lingual.

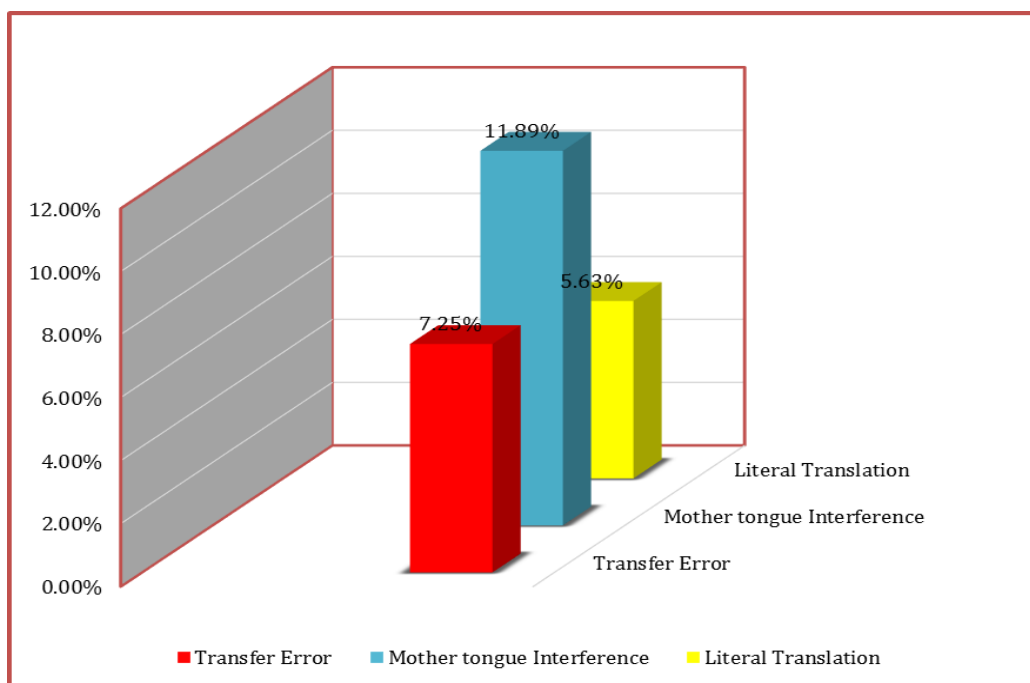


Figure1:Inter-lingual errors sources categories Percentage.  
Subcategories of Inter-lingual Errors

INTERLINGUAL ERRORS	Cases	Percentage
transfer of phonological elements (mispronounce)	47	4.73%
transfer grammatical elements	61	6.14%
transfer of lexical-semantic elements	111	11.18%
morphological addition	11	1.11%
morphological omission	16	1.61%

Table 2: Subcategories of inter-lingual errors.

Table 2 clarify the subcategories of inter-lingual errors, it shows that an important number of errors are caused by interl-ingual errors. Learners tend to commit more errors in the Lexico-semantic aspect (111 cases = 11.18 %). Learners' mother tongue played a great influence in meaning and word choice, grammatical and word choice transfers take place with a great influence during

this process, Figure 4.4 also shows subcategories of interlingual errors percentage which is so clear visually through colored column.

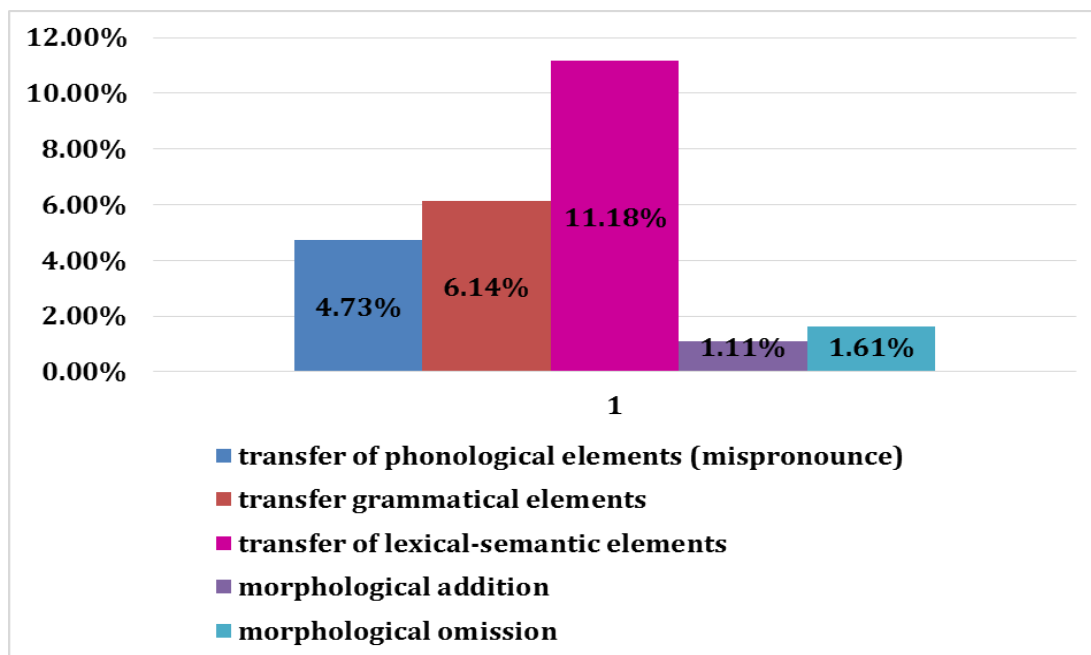


Figure 2: Subcategories of inter-lingual Errors percentage

The results showed that the inter-language errors were derived into: transfer error, mother tongue interference, and literal translation. The highest case in the inter-lingual source error were found in the mother tongue interference i.e. 118 cases or around 12 % of all cases. It was highly suggested that students be exposed more seriously to the target language, the highest case in the inter-lingual source error were found in the mother tongue interference i.e. 118 cases or around 12 % of all cases. The subcategories of inter-lingual errors, it shows that an important number of errors are caused by inter-lingual errors. Learners tend to commit more errors in the Lexico-semantic aspect (111 cases = 11.18 %).

### Recommendations

There are several possibilities for further investigation into Inter lingual Writing Errors. These are some recommendations for further research based on the findings of this study.

1. First and foremost, this study is confined to Jordanian bachelor students at ZU; relatively few studies have been conducted on Jordanian students at other universities or levels of education. More study should be done on Jordanian postgraduate students to compare the outcomes of these research topics, particularly on causes and consequences, according to the researcher.
2. The researcher suggests that further study be done on the ways that students employ to overcome their writing weaknesses. A comparison of the

tactics used by students and the strategies that professors believe students should adopt. Furthermore, the instructor can remedy the situation by providing explicit and implicit corrective feedback and remedial education to the learners.

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