

An Investigation on the Iraqi Students' Use of Quantifiers in Their Writing

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Article Info	Abstract
Article History Received: March 21, 2020 Accepted: June 22, 2020 DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.20851069 Keywords : Quantifier, Error Analysis, Descriptive Writing	<i>The English quantifier is one of the biggest challenges for L2 learners, especially for the Iraqi learners whose native language has different parameter. Thus, the current study aimed to find out the pattern of grammatical errors regarding the use of quantifiers in the written discourse of Iraqi EFL learners in Kufa, Iraq. Through adopting convenience sampling, the researcher collected the data from 20 (10 male and 10 female) Iraqi university students. They were at the third level of university ranging from 21 to 25 years old. The main source of the study was a descriptive essay written by the participants. The descriptive essays on the topic were chosen as a data collection source because it was related to the participants' interest and background, so it could motivate and enable them to write comfortably. A T-unit analysis, and a study analysis framework adapted from Dulay, Burt and Krashan (1982), Na-ngam's (2005) error taxonomy and Richard's (1971) error categories were used to analyze the data. The frequency and percentage of the committed errors were calculated. In addition, the committed errors by the male and female were calculated separately and compared via independent samples t-test. Overall, 352 (100%) instances of errors related to quantifiers were spotted. The analysis of the data revealed that quantifier errors were basically related morphological errors (71 instances, 28%), misusing the negative and interrogative forms of quantifiers (65 instances, 22%), articles misuse (59 instances, 14%), confusing count and non-count quantifiers (56 instances, 13%), verb use (53 instances, 12%), and quantifier prepositions (48 instances, 11%). Furthermore, the analysis of the data revealed that there is no significant difference between males and females regarding the frequency of quantifier related errors. It was concluded that negative transfer from participants' mother tongue had a defining role in the high frequency of errors. The findings have implications for teachers and material designers.</i>

Introduction

One very important aspect of proficiency has been EFL learners' writing ability (Atai&Fatahi-Majd, 2014). According to experts and educators in the field of second language writing development, writing is considered a complex and interactive process that involves many aspects (Hyland, 2012). Moreover, Canale and Swain (as cited in Hyland 2003) maintained that to produce an effective composition, competence in various areas of knowledge, namely grammatical competence and discourse competence (the competence in genre and rhetorical pattern) is needed. Moreover, linguistics competence (the competence in utilizing acceptable language in several contexts) and strategic competence (the competence in using numerous communicative ways) are necessary for successful writing in L2.

It is believed that teaching writing skills appears to be neglected in main stream educational system of the countries in which English language is learned as a foreign language. The first issue to be resolved is thus to figure out what features of written English learners most need to master. Brown (2001) believes that idiomatic language, decreased forms, performance factors, redundancy clusters, delivery rate, cohesion, and coherence of the writing characteristics that relate to this skill's difficulty. Lazarton (2001) also believes that written English is challenging since it is mostly achieved through interaction with the readers who are absent. This requires considering some variables such as familiarity with the readers' characteristics, thinking about one's own contribution, making the contribution and supervising its impact, etc

Hojati and Afghar (2016) maintained that "writing skills are under the influence of a number of linguistic and non-linguistic factors such as grammar, vocabulary, pragmatic variables, affective factors, and so forth, which, when combined, compound the problems of writing skills" (p.113). EFL students thus need not only adequate vocabulary skills, but also grammar knowledge due attention to accuracy in order to manage meaningful communication. Shumin (1997) considers writing as a demanding skill for EFL learners, as they need not grammar and semantic skills, as well as socially important language knowledge that can be influenced by the

cognitive, social and emotional factors of EFL learners. For example, Gebhard (1996) suggests that writing is associated with the choice of word, use of grammar, syntax, mechanics and organization of ideas into a coherent and cohesive form. As a specific aspect of grammar, the English quantifier is one of the biggest challenges for L2 learners, especially for the Iraqi learners whose native language has a different parameter.

Jawad (2005) states that choosing the correct quantifier is somewhat not easy, especially on the part of learners of English language as a foreign tongue because of the close similarity of many indefinite quantifiers. Consequently, foreign learners fall in one of two frequent misuses: either neglect using them or choose the wrong quantifier. Therefore, the present study was set out to explore how Iraqi EFL learners use English quantifiers in their writing.

Review Of the Related Literature2.

The Nature of Writing

Among the four language skills (i.e., listening, speaking, reading and writing), writing can be considered as especially important because writing is one of the most important tools for communication especially in regards to business, professional, and academic communication. By writing, people communicate an array of messages to various readers. Similarly, in language education, writing is regarded as not only a thinking process but also a tool for language learners to express their thoughts and feelings (Chiu, 2006). In other words, by writing, learners can communicate a diversity of messages to various readers. In the modern world, such communication is extremely important whether the interaction takes the form of paper-and-pencil writing or online writing because it is through writing that people can communicate a variety of messages to a close or distant, known or unknown reader or readers.

Thus, viewing that writing is an act of communication, the ability to express ideas fluently, accurately and coherently in writing in native language (L1) or second or foreign language (L2) should be emphasized and cultivated (Olshtain, 2001). Indeed, to prepare students for the ability to compose, during the last 50 years, some pedagogical approaches to the teaching of L1/L2 writing emerged, each representing a different view of the nature of writing. In addition, the emergence of these approaches also reflects the major writing development in the L1/L2 contexts. Several of these teaching approaches will be briefly addressed below regarding its theory and pedagogy.

Writing Approaches

First, from the early 20th century into the 1960s, the instruction of writing focused mostly on the features of written text. Early composition pedagogy, the product-based approach, is defined by its emphasis on the end result of the writing process, such as an essay, a paper, a letter, etc. In addition, the pedagogical focus of this approach is on form, the text itself. At the beginning, this approach emphasizes the view of writing as sentence level structure. Therefore, the production of well-formed sentences is stressed.

A writing task that reflects this view and is mostly used at this time is the controlled composition. The teacher employs the controlled composition to teach writing will focus on formal accuracy and strive to avoid errors. Then, as the awareness that there is a need for writers to produce extended written texts appears, the awareness extends the focus on linguistic structures/grammatical sentences to the level of paragraph. The result of the realization led to the emergence of the paragraph pattern approach, which emphasizes the importance of organization at the above-sentence level that is the discourse level.

Both the controlled composition and the paragraph pattern approach typify the paradigm of the product-based approach. The product approach reflects traditional teacher-centered approach to teach writing. In this traditional writing classroom, the teacher assigns a writing task, whether a controlled composition or the task on arranging sentences into paragraph, and evaluates the end results (Ferris & Hedgcock, 2005). In the late 1970s and the 1980s, the interest had begun to shift from texture features to the process of writing itself, paved the way for the process approach. The process approach emphasizes the act of writing itself and the product, the written text, is the secondary concern.

This approach also views writing as a recursive and generative process during which ideas are discovered and meaning are made. In other words, during the process of writing, writers need to plan, draft, read, revise and edit their texts. Hence, this approach emphasizes the revising process and audience awareness. Moreover, different from the product-based approach which focuses on form and the end result, the process-based approach focuses on the person, that is the writer, as well as the process, that is the strategies used. In the process-based approach classroom, it is suggested that instructors need to provide and maintain an environment which is like a positive, encouraging and collaborative workshop. Therefore, in this environment, the skill for communicating with others purposefully and meaningfully is important and necessary for writers.

Furthermore, the instructor also needs to provide sufficient time and minimal interference which would allow students to work through their composing process so as to assist students to develop strategies for getting started, drafting, revising and editing. Consequently, from the process perspective, writing is not only a recursive, complex and creative process, but also a social activity, aiming at interaction and communication with others (Ferris & Hedgcock, 2005; Silva & Matsuda, 2002). Dissatisfaction with the process approach, due to the belief

that writers need to compose texts for academic or professional readers with particular expertise, the emphasis in composition instruction are shifted from the writer-centered approaches to the reader-based approaches and content-based models, in particular English for academic purpose (EAP) and English for specific purpose (ESP) courses. In the writing classroom focusing on reader and content, instructors still can use the writer-driven and process-oriented procedures such as prewriting, revision, collaboration and peer review. Yet, the more different principle is the emphasis of discipline-specific rhetorical forms. Accordingly, based on this view, writing instruction will center more on identifying, practicing, and reproducing the features of written texts aiming for particular audiences (Ferris & Hedgcock, 2005). These pedagogical approaches are based on different views of the nature of writing, though they stress different aspects of writing, the relationship between them are not necessarily mutually exclusive. For example, they can be used in the same course. The instructor assigns some types of assignment emphasizing audience, fluency in writing, and planning and revising, as well as some other assignments focusing more on noticing the linguistic aspect of the language and controlling over the mechanics of the language (Ferris & Hedgcock, 2005; Kitao & Saeki, 1992).

These writing approaches emerging from different time not merely reflect the writing development in the first and second language contexts but also disclose that writing, however, must be taught (Kitao & Saeki, 1992). In other words, both L1 and L2 writers need to learn to write in order to master this language skill. As stated above, writing is an extremely complex activity, and is, thus, considered the most difficult of the four basic language skills to master (Kitao & Saeki, 1992). In the following section, the complexity of the language skill will be accounted for again through the discussion of its cognitive, affective and social aspects. Then an instructional method to help writers, particularly L2 writers, to master writing skills will be proposed based on the discussion of the three aspects.

Method

3.1. Overview

Through this chapter, an attempt has been made to describe the steps taken for carrying out the current study. The present study examined the grammatical errors related to quantifiers in the English written discourse of Iraqi university students who are less proficient in English. This chapter elaborates on the research method and procedures that are employed to achieve the ultimate goal of the study. Then, the chapter aimed to provide an outline of the instruments and design of the study, the procedures of implementing the study, data collection procedures, the participants, and data analysis procedures. This chapter consists of five sections: The first section is related to the design of the research. The second section describes the participants in which there is some information about the sampling procedure and nature of the participants. The third section is related to applied instruments for the purpose of data collection. The fourth section explains data collection procedures and the final section is about the procedures and steps taken to analyze the obtained data of the research.

3.2. Research Design

The design of the current study was quantitative and descriptive in nature. To gather the required data, the written essays of the students were analyzed in order to find out the common grammatical errors related to the use of quantifiers in written discourse. Some variables including the participants' L1, gender, age, proficiency level, and the target type of grammatical errors (quantifiers) were controlled or moderated to enhance the external validity of the study.

3.3. Participants

In this study, the researcher collected the data from 20 (10 male and 10 female) Iraqi university students. They were at the third level of university ranging from 21 to 25 years old. Due to the importance of accessibility criteria for subject selection, convenience sampling was conducted. Therefore, for this investigation, the data collection from the participants was performed through convenience sampling method. All of the participants were Iraqi native speakers.

3.4. Instruments

Three research instruments were used in this study, a descriptive essay, a T-unit analysis, and a study analysis framework adapted from Dulay, Burt and Krashan (1982), Na-ngam's (2005) error taxonomy and Richards' (1971) error categories:

The T-unit was used as a data analysis instrument to analyze sentences in students' written essays; its usage was to determine the sentences whether they consisted of a single unit of the sentence or more, and to identify those units whether they were a dependent clause or an independent clause.

Na-ngam's (2005) error taxonomy was also employed to identify grammatical errors into different types. It consisted of 23 types of grammatical errors: incomplete sentences (fragments and omissions), run-on sentences, comparison, word order, there-be, tenses, voices, agreements, infinitives and gerunds, nouns, verbs, adverbs, adjectives, pronouns, modals and auxiliaries, possessive's, conjunctions, prepositions, articles, punctuations, capitalization and spelling.

Richards' (1971) error categories were manipulated and modified to match the purpose of this study. It originally consisted of ten types: omission of quantifiers, incorrect use of quantifiers, number errors (singular vs plural modifiers), compound/ complex sentence structure, word order, "there" structure, fragment, run-on sentence, and

word-by-word translation. Since this study aimed at investigating quantifier errors and L1 interference errors, the above frameworks were then combined. However, there were six types of L1 interference errors in Richards' error categories that overlapped with some of the error types in Na-ngam's error taxonomy.

According to T-unit analysis, moreover, there were two types of errors in the merged framework that could not be considered as grammatical errors, and they needed to be eliminated from the framework; they were capitalization errors and spelling errors. Therefore,

the study analysis framework, consisted of 26 types of errors ; they were incomplete sentences (fragments and omissions), run-on sentences, comparison, word order, there-be, tenses, voices, agreements, infinitives, gerunds, nouns, verbs, adverbs, adjectives, pronouns, modals, auxiliaries, possessive's, conjunctions, prepositions, articles, punctuations, incorrect verb construction (serial verb construction), compound/ complex sentence, word by word translation and others (errors that were too complicated to be grouped or had unknown sources).

In summary, among the 26 types of grammatical errors, there were 10 types which were also considered as L1 interference errors. However, after this framework was tried out, four more types of L1 interference errors were added to the researcher's framework as they could be found in Iraqi students' written work. These four extra types of L1 interference errors were sub-types under some of the 26 types of grammatical errors. For more clarity, the four extra types of L1 interference errors were: 1) misuse of quantifiers (a sub-type of tenses), 2) noun-quantifier agreement (a sub-type of agreement), 3) omission of modifier (because in Arabic sometimes nouns signify numbers), and 4) omission of some punctuation marks (comma/ period/ question mark) (a sub-type of punctuation). Therefore, the adapted framework included 14 types of L1 interference errors. The interlingual sources are those caused by negative transfer or interference from the learners' mother tongue, while the intralingual sources are those caused by interference within the target language itself (Dulay et al. 1982).

3.5. Procedures

The following procedures were followed in the present study:

3.5.1. Piloting

One of the most important parts of the research was "piloting" because it was possible to detect the unforeseeable minute points and problems with the instruments of the main study, and in this way it prevented. Regarding this point, the researcher designed a pilot study. The most important purpose was to allocate the time limit, and find out the weaknesses of the research instruments to be eradicated in their final versions. In the pilot study, the participants had similar characteristics of the participants in the main study.

3.5.2. Main Study

Prior to conducting the research, a brief introductory session was held for the participants. In this session, the researcher explained different aspects of the study to ensure that all of the participants fully understand that the result of the study would be used just for the research purpose. The researcher collected the data from Iraqi university students at Kufa University in Najaf. Participants were asked if they were willing to participate in the study or not. Then, the researcher asked the student to write an essay about the problems that they faced when they were learning English language as a second language. After that the researcher collected the data in order to analyze them and to identify the errors made. In brief, the following procedures were conducted to analyze the data:

1. Detecting quantifier errors to find out whether a sentence was erroneous or deviant from the norms.
2. Describing Errors was to clarify how they deviate from the acceptable norms of writing.
3. Classifying errors include grouping similar errors together into larger groups.
4. Explaining errors was to determine the sources/causes of errors.
5. Quantifying errors was made to determine the frequency of each type of error.
6. Drawing conclusions and implications as the final step was to examine the inadequacies.

3.6. Data analysis

In this study, all errors of Iraqi students in written English language were classified into different types. The frequency and percentage of the committed errors were calculated. In addition, the committed errors by the male and female were calculated separately and compared via independent samples t-test.

Result

4.1. Overview

This chapter includes the analyses of the data obtained through the SPSS (version, 22). In the analysis of the data, descriptive statistics and appropriate statistical analyses were conducted to address the research questions.

4.2. Data Analysis

4.2.1 RQ1: what are the most common quantifier errors in the written discourse of Iraqi EFL learners?

The written compositions of 20 Iraqi university students were analyzed and clarified based on different types of errors as shown in Table 4.1. The corpus of the study was primarily analyzed for the frequency of errors related to the use of quantifiers. Overall, 352 quantifier errors were found in both groups of male and female learners. To

In the first session the teacher taught two of pages

في الجلسة الأولى قام المدرس بتدريس صفتين

There was a lot from the old and the young people

كان هناك الكثير من كبار السن والشباب

In addition, the committed errors by the male and female were calculated separately and compared via independent samples t-test. Table 4.2 illustrates the results.

Table 4.2.

Independent sample t-test for Iraqi male and female groups

Levene's Test for Equality of Variances				t-test for Equality of Means						
F	Sig.	t	df	Sig.(-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Difference	Error	95% Interval		Confidence of the
								Difference	Lower	
Equal variances assumed	2.58	.111	19	1.436	.154	1.233		.859	-.46	2.93
Equal variances not assumed				1.436	.154	1.233		.859	-.46	2.93

As shown in Table 4.3, due to the fact that Levene's Test result is not significant ($p > 0.05$) the *equal variances assumed* was considered. In t-test for equality of means, since $p < 0.154$ is more than the significance level $\alpha = 0.05$, and therefore, it was concluded that the means two groups was not significantly different.

Therefore, considering the first research question of the study, the analysis of the data indicated that applying the negative form of quantifiers and morphological errors were the most frequent quantifier errors in the writing of Iraqi EFL learners.

4.2.2 RQ2: What is the role of their L1 structure in the production of errors

The results of this study revealed that interlingual errors committed by the Arab learners with respect to simple sentence structure word order may be due to the influence of their L1. More importantly, the errors could be ascribed to the interference from the two structural varieties of their L1 (i.e. Standard Arabic (SA) and Non-standard Arabic (NSA) structures). In other words, these errors could either be attributed to the influence of SA structures or NSA structures. The findings revealed that the participants' errors resulting from the influence of SA were more than those due to NSA influence. In addition, it can be assumed that interlingual errors with respect to simple sentence structure word order were caused as a result of word-for-word translation (literal translation) from Arabic, namely SA and NSA structures. In this case, the learners linked the English sentence words with Arabic structures. This type of errors reflected the learners' inability to think in English. Spontaneously, they utilized their first language (L1) as a crutch to understand English. Some Arabic structures of word order are different from those of English. Briefly, the basic English sentence structure is the simple sentence, with one clause representing the structure SVO (Subject-Verb-Object). In comparison, Arabic has two varieties which are SA and NSA (colloquial Arabic). Each variety of these has different word order structures. As pointed out earlier, the VSO is the basic word order for SA whilst OVS and VOS are structures of NSA. (Abisamra, 2003). Thus, the interlingual errors with regard to simple sentence structure that were committed by Arabic participants in the current study were mainly due to the transfer of L1 habits. The findings also indicated that the learners were very much influenced by their L1 knowledge in understanding the English sentences. In addition, the study also showed that they have not mastered the English basic SVO structure in simple sentences. The results of the study also indicate that there is influence from both varieties of Arabic, standard as well as non-standard Arabic, with the former being much stronger.

4.2.3 RQ3: What are the different types of quantifiers in Iraqi EFL students' writings?

Further analysis of the data results revealed that there are six types of quantifier related errors in the participants' writings. These errors were basically related to Verb use, quantifier prepositions, articles misuse, confusing count and non-count quantifiers, misusing the negative and interrogative forms of quantifiers, and morphological errors. The written compositions of 20 Iraqi university students were analyzed and clarified based on different types of errors as shown in Table 4.3.

Table 4.3.

<i>The adapted framework for the current study</i>					
Verb	Quantifier Preposition	Articles	Amount/number	Negative form	Morphological Errors
Subject-verb disagreement	Omission of proposition	Omission of "the" or "a/an"	Using count and non-count quantifiers interchangeably	Misuse of "no" and "any"	Omission of plural ending "s"
Using uncountable quantifiers with plural form of verb	Addition Of proposition	Addition of "the" or "a/an"	Comparative and superlative forma of quantifiers	Misuse of quantifiers in negative and interrogative sentences	Misuse of plural errors and addition of the plural ending "s"
Using countable quantifiers with singular form of verb	Misuse of proposition	Misuse of "the" and "a/an"	Using plural quantifiers when singular ones are needed	Misuse of little/a little; few/a few	Using singular quantifiers with
	Omission of "of"	Addition of "a/an"		Omission of the Quantifier	Incorrect use of comparative adjectives

4.2.4 RQ4: What is the frequency type of quantifiers?

The third research question was concerned with the frequency of each quantifier error. These errors, based on the frequency of them are explained here. As it was maintained above, morphological error was the most frequent error type in the corpus of this study. There were 71 instances (28%) of this type of error. In this type of error, the participants had added or omitted a morpheme from the quantifier. The second frequent quantifier error was related tousing quantifiers in the negative or interrogative form. In this type of error, the learners seemed to use 'any' and 'no' interchangeably, without considering the negative or the interrogative sense of the sentences. There were 65 instances (22%) of this type of error in the

Participants' writings. The third frequent quantifier error was related to misusing, adding, or deleting the articles which are used with quantifiers. There were 59 instances (14%) of this type of error in the participants' writings.

The fourth frequent quantifier error was related to confusing the count and non-count quantifiers. In this type of error, the learners were using non-count quantifiers (e.g. much) for count nouns (e.g. books) and vice versa. There were 56 instances (13%) of this type of error in the participants' writings. The fifth frequent quantifier error was related to incorrect verb forms. There were 53 instances (12%) of this type of error in the participants' writings. Finally, the least frequent type of error was omission or addition of a proposition to the quantifier. Among the existing quantifier errors, this error was mainly observed in the use of quantifiers like: a lot of, lots of, as much as, etc. in which the quantifier contains a proposition. The learners tended to omit the proposition. There were 48 instances (11%) of this type of error in the participants' writings. Some further instances of quantifier errors, along with the explanations, are presented below.

e.g. (1)

..... Follow in my father's many footsteps. (على خطى أبي)

Prepositions of quantifiers pose a great difficulty for an ESL learner since there are various prepositions in English that have the same function. As a result, when students are not sure which preposition to use with a certain quantifier, they often compare that sentence with its Arabic equivalence, giving a literal translation of that Arabic preposition in English. However, according to Scott and Tucker, (1974), "prepositions seldom have a one to one correspondence between English and Arabic. An Arabic preposition may be translated by several English prepositions while an English usage may have several Arabic translations" (p. 85).

e.g. (2)

Evil is ▼ force that can enter a person's soul and conquer it. (الشرّ قوّة) => Omission of the article in Arabic

When all the evil comes (عندما يأتي الشرّ) => use of article between 'noun' and 'quantifier' in Arabic

In English, abstract words referring to ideas, attributes, or qualities are used without the article 'the' to refer to that idea or attribute, etc. which belongs to everybody or everything. In Arabic, however, such abstract words are preceded by a definite article equivalent to 'the' in English. Hence, errors pertaining to the misuse of the article 'the' occur (Diab, 1996).

e.g. (3)

....., what's my one destiny? (أتساءل ما هو مصيري)

Calling the all kids to come. (مناداة الأولاد الآخرين)

"In Arabic, adjectives agree in number with the nouns they modify. As a result, agreement errors of this type occur in the English writings of Lebanese students" (Diab, 1996).

e.g. (4)

For, those not to hate me they need to respect me so much and a lot realize how much I love them and how hard I work for them. (Repetition of "wa")

"In English, items in a series are separated by commas, and the coordinate conjunction 'and' is used just before the last word. On the other hand, in Arabic, each item in a series is preceded by the conjunction 'wa' which is equivalent to 'and'" (Diab, 1996).

e.g. (5)

I have learned the one lesson in my life that is you should never ever give up ((تعلّمت درساً في حياتي ، وهو ...))

What I want to be? (ما أريد أن أكون ؟)

In Arabic, personal pronouns are often added to verbs.

e.g. (6)

Semantic Errors: (Literal translation)

When I secure some job my goal is to become partner and have a quarter office. (عندما أوّمن عملاً)

e.g. (7)

Substance (Mechanics + Spelling):

Punctuation

However, ▼ evil has its many shape and form. (لكنّ الشرّ...)

It is known to be, that a person would be more appreciated, and treated better ▼ if he were a much educated individual than a failure. (من المعروف أنّ...)

e.g. (8)

Capitalization (No capital letters in Arabic). The first letter of the quantifier was not capitalized something else, last but not least, united states, Next I transfer to Wall Street. Arab Lack of capitalization in the Arabic alphabet and very different punctuation conventions. No distinction is made between upper and lower case (Sofer&Raimes, 2002).

4.2.5 RQ5: What are the sources of such errors?

The second research question found out the sources of grammatical errors of the use of quantifiers in the written discourse of Iraqi EFL learners. To this end, the gathered data were analyzed. It was found that the two main sources of the quantifier errors in the written discourse of Iraqi EFL learners included interlingual interference, intralingual interference, limited knowledge of English quantifiers, and carelessness.

In terms of interlingual interference, the findings showed that it was the major source causing the most errors. This can be attributed to the fact that the students always thought in their first language when they produced written English sentences. In addition, interlingual interference was also considered as another cause of errors found in Arab EFL learners' writing discourse. However, some Arabic linguistic rules which were similar to those of English could help Arab EFL learners learn English better. It can be concluded that pointing out both differences and similarities between the students' first language and the target language should be considered in the writing classes. In fact, intralingual interference is the learners' confusion of using the target language. Their knowledge of the target language is incomplete, so they combined the knowledge of Arabic with that of English. Limited English grammatical knowledge was another crucial source of the participants' errors. According to Weigle (2002), very limited knowledge of English grammar leads the writers to commit errors. The analysis of data verified that Arabic EFL students' knowledge of English quantifiers needed to be improved. In fact, the learners' grammar knowledge of English was inadequate to use quantifiers in writing. The EFL learners with the deficiency of that knowledge tended to make more errors when writing in the target language. Finally, though carelessness seemed to be the source of the least errors, it would not be ignored. Raising EFL writers' awareness of the disadvantage of carelessness might help reduce errors in their writing. Some EFL learners are cognizant of the underlying grammatical rules and structure; however, they do not pay attention to such rules whenever they start writing. Here, some of the examples of the committed errors by the participants are illustrated.

Discussion

The current study was set to investigate the common grammatical errors related to the use of quantifiers among Iraqi male and female EFL learners in the written discourse. The findings revealed that the common grammatical errors of quantifiers consisted of morphological errors, verbs and quantifier agreement, articles, amount/number, verb, and preposition, respectively. In addition, there was no difference between the male and female Iraqi EFL learners in terms of the quantifier errors in written discourse. The findings can be attributed to the fact that interference from L1 and inadequate components of L2 are the main source of errors. These results are argued to be very essential in learning the target language since the sources of errors within the context of this study were identified so that remedial teaching design can be easily prepared depend on these results generated.

Furthermore, it investigated the sources of grammatical errors related to quantifiers in the written discourse of Iraqi EFL learners. It was found that two main sources of the grammatical errors in the written discourse of Iraqi EFL learners included interlingual interference, intralingual interference, limited knowledge of English grammar, and carelessness.

Additionally, the present study explored the role of their L1 structure in the production of errors. The findings showed that errors which were related to the use of quantifiers in the written discourse were mostly related to simple sentence structure word order due to the influence of their L1. In fact, the errors were ascribed to the interference from the two structural varieties of their L1 (i.e. Standard Arabic (SA) and Non-standard Arabic (NSA) structures).

The findings of the current study are in line with previous findings such as Zawahreh et al. (2012), Abushihab et al. (2011), and NawarDiab (2014). They all found that the most frequent types of errors included prepositions, morphological errors, articles, verbs, active and passive and verbs. In addition, the transfer of Arabic linguistics structure affects the writing of Arab learners during learning English.

Corder (1986) maintains that the term error should refer to the systematic errors of the learner from which we are able to reconstruct his knowledge of the language to date, i.e., his transitional competence. He uses the term systematic to identify errors, and asserts that the difference between systematic and non-systematic has an important significance. Non-systematic refers to performance of the L2 learner due to random guess, memory lapses, physical conditions, slip of tongue/pen etc. He also asserts that performance errors are mistakes, adventitious and not serious, because students themselves can correct them when their attention is drawn to them. On the contrary, errors are of importance and the learner would not normally be able to correct them as s/he has an incomplete knowledge of the TL structure involved. Also errors are systematic reflect the competence of L2 learner. They refer to idiosyncrasies in the interlanguage of the learner, which are direct manifestations of a system within which a learner is operating at the time. Errors are significant, persistent, and, in consequence, serious; their treatment requiring careful analysis to discover their cause. In other words, it occurs because the learner does not know what is correct, and thus it cannot be self-corrected. Ellis (1994) stated that any deviation from the TL norms may reflect either an error in competence or mistake in performance. Ellis added that when you ask the learner to correct a mistake and he does not know what is correct, and thus it cannot be self-corrected, it is an error. Similarly, Bose (2002) says that competence errors are caused by the application of the rules of the TL wrongly and the performance errors are the result of mistakes in language use and they occur as false starts, corrections, or slips of the tongue.

Conclusion

Interest in the teaching of English as a global language has been growing throughout the Arab world, and most Arab governments began to introduce the teaching of English as compulsory subject into the school curriculum.

At present, in most Arab countries, all students who finish the public secondary school education must have had at least eight years of instruction in English as a school subject (Mahmoud, 2002). So, because of the widespread use of English as a second language, the subject of language teaching in general and teaching English as a foreign or second language in particular, has become the focus of attention of many Arab researchers (Al-Khatib, 2000). Language is a very important means of communication among human beings. One can communicate his or her desires, ideas, emotions, beliefs or feelings to another as they share the common code that makes up the language. Nobody denies that there are several other means of communication used by human beings, e.g., miming gestures, short-hand, flags, sirens, nods, Braille alphabet, etc. But all these means of communication are extremely limited or they too, in turn, depend upon language. They are not as flexible, comprehensive, perfect and extensive as language is. Language learning process is actually a process of trial and pitfall, in which a learner forms a hypothesis, and later proves it, abort it or adjust it, based on his knowledge of the target language. In the speech or writing of a second/foreign language, pitfall is the use of a linguistic item (e.g., a word, grammatical item, speech act, etc.) in a way which a fluent or native speaker of the language regards as showing faulty or After a systematic exposure of learners to a body of knowledge in English, the teacher, essentially, will want to know the performance or the learning outcome of students. He does this by exposing learners to a corresponding body of tests. Language tests help to elicit from language learners the extent to which the taught skills have been mastered. Language testing is, therefore, the systematic process of getting information from learners regarding their levels of acquisition of certain skills (Alderson, 1981; Carroll, 1981).

The results of this study revealed that interlingual errors committed by the Arab learners with respect to simple sentence structure word order may be due to the influence of their L1. More importantly, the errors could be ascribed to the interference from the two structural varieties of their L1 (i.e. Standard Arabic (SA) and Non-standard Arabic (NSA) structures). In other words, these errors could either be attributed to the influence of SA structures or NSA structures. incomplete (Richards, 2002).

The findings revealed that the participants' errors resulting from the influence of SA were more than those due to NSA influence. In addition, it can be assumed that interlingual errors with respect to simple sentence structure word order were caused as a result of word-for-word translation (literal translation) from Arabic, namely SA and NSA structures. In this case, the learners linked the English sentence words with Arabic structures. This type of errors reflected the learners' inability to think in English. Spontaneously, they utilized their first language (L1) as a crutch to understand English. Some Arabic structures of word order are different from those of English. Briefly, the Basic English sentence structure is the simple sentence, with one clause representing the structure SVO (Subject-Verb-Object).

In comparison, Arabic has two varieties which are SA and NSA (colloquial Arabic). Each variety of these has different word order structures. As pointed out earlier, the VSO is the basic word order for SA whilst OVS and VOS are structures of NSA. (Abisamra, 2003). Thus, the interlingual errors with regard to simple sentence structure that were committed by Arabic participants in the current study were mainly due to the transfer of L1 habits.

The findings also indicated that the learners were very much influenced by their L1 knowledge in understanding the English sentences. In addition, the study also showed that they have not mastered the English basic SVO structure in simple sentences. The results of the study also indicate that there is influence from both varieties of Arabic, standard as well as non-standard Arabic, with the former being much stronger.

It was found that the two main types of the quantifier errors in the written discourse of Iraqi EFL learners included *interlingual interference*, intralingual interference, limited knowledge of English quantifiers, and carelessness. In terms of interlingual interference, the findings showed that it was the major source causing the most errors. This can be attributed to the fact that the students always thought in their first language when they produced written English sentences. In addition, interlingual interference was also considered as another cause of errors found in Arab EFL learners' writing discourse. However, some Arabic linguistic rules which were similar to those of English could help Arab EFL learners learn English better. It can be concluded that pointing out both differences and similarities between the students' first language and the target language should be considered in the writing classes. In fact, intralingual interference is the learners' confusion of using the target language. Their knowledge of the target language is incomplete, so they combined the knowledge of Arabic with that of English.

Limited English grammatical knowledge was another crucial source of the participants' errors. According to Weigle (2002), very limited knowledge of English grammar leads the writers to commit errors. The analysis of data verified that Arabic EFL students' knowledge of English quantifiers needed to be improved. In fact, the learners' grammar knowledge of English was inadequate to use quantifiers in writing. The EFL learners with the deficiency of that knowledge tended to make more errors when writing in the target language.

Finally, though carelessness seemed to be the source of the least errors, it would not be ignored. Raising EFL writers' awareness of the disadvantage of carelessness might help reduce errors in their writing. Some EFL learners are cognizant of the underlying grammatical rules and structure; however, they do not pay attention to such rules whenever they start writing.

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