



The Grammar Gap: Mapping Common Errors in Omani EFL Descriptive Essays

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EFL learners at the university foundation level in Oman face persistent challenges, and identifying common errors can enhance teaching strategies and improve students' writing proficiency. This study aimed to identify and explain the predominant grammatical and mechanical errors found in descriptive writing produced by Foundation Programme students at the University of Buraimi. The study used a quantitative method. Descriptive paragraph scripts produced by 28 EFL students during the FENG002 (Foundation English II) Midterm exam provided the basis for data collection. Errors were classified as spelling, verb tense, singular-plural forms, subject-verb agreement, articles, sentence fragments, word order, prepositions, demonstratives, irregular verbs, and capitalization. Frequency and percentages for each error type were documented. The findings suggest that spelling errors were the most frequent, followed by the verb tense and the subject-action agreement errors. These difficulties are attributed to English orthography, origin language interference and linguistic differences between Arabic and English. The predominance of spelling and grammar errors highlights the need for innovative instructional approaches tailored to Foundation-level learners' needs. Instructors should include self-revision strategies, critical reading methods and various error correction methods. Error visualization techniques, improvement activities and preventive strategies should be explored to increase writing accuracy through future research.

Keywords: descriptive writing, error analysis, EFL learners, grammatical errors, quantitative-method analysis

INTRODUCTION

Writing is widely recognized as one of the most demanding language skills to master, particularly in academic contexts. It involves complex cognitive processes and the integration of multiple sub-skills such as grammar, vocabulary, syntax, coherence, and organization (Jelodar & Farvardin, 2019; Ravand et al., 2024; Yusuf & Yusuf, 2019).

Citation: Bataineh, A. M., & Sabiri, K. A. (2025). The grammar gap: Mapping common errors in Omani EFL descriptive essays. *International Journal of Instruction*, 18(4), 319-334.

Academic writing, as Flowerdew (2019) emphasize, is essential for developing critical thinking, constructing knowledge, and engaging with disciplinary discourse. For EFL learners, mastering these components is crucial yet highly challenging.

The difficulty of writing in English is compounded for non-native speakers due to structural differences between their first language and English. Dobbs, & Leider (2025) note that writing is particularly complex because it requires mastery over grammar, lexis, cohesion, and logical progression. Learners often struggle with these sub-skills, leading to lower academic performance and reduced confidence in communication (Halali et al., 2022). These issues extend beyond academic settings, as poor writing skills can hinder workplace communication and professional success (Gerald & Joseph, 2024).

Non-native speakers often face challenges related to the structural features of English. English orthographic irregularities, punctuation conventions, and syntactic rules are frequently cited obstacles. These problems often manifest in students' written texts as sentence fragments, disordered word sequences, and poor cohesion. Eby (2022) highlights that understanding and applying the conventions of academic writing, including citation styles and logical structure, remains particularly difficult for many EFL students. Moreover, Maria (2022) points out that L2 learners struggle with expressing complex ideas clearly and coherently, which affects both fluency and precision.

A recurring theme in the literature is the prevalence of specific grammatical errors among EFL learners. Kojima and Popiel (2023) identify frequent misuse of definite and indefinite articles, while Guessoum et al. (2022) report widespread problems with prepositions, which impact fluency and coherence. Verb tense inconsistencies are another common issue, as they disrupt logical flow and clarity (Rustipa et al., 2023). Additionally, Lia Putri et al., (2024) note difficulties with capitalization, and frequent spelling errors, often caused by interlingual interference.

While numerous studies document common writing errors among EFL learners globally, there remains a lack of focused research on Omani Foundation Programme students' grammatical challenges, particularly in descriptive writing. Most literature outlines problems generally without tying them to specific instructional contexts. This study addresses that gap by investigating the grammatical errors found in descriptive texts produced by Foundation-level students at the University of Buraimi, aiming to inform more targeted pedagogical interventions.

The present study sought to answer the following questions:

1. What are the predominant grammatical and mechanical error types exhibited by Level 2 Foundation students at the University of Buraimi in their English descriptive writing?
2. How frequently does each identified error type occur in the students' written descriptive paragraphs?
3. What are the likely linguistic or cognitive sources contributing to these grammatical and mechanical errors?

Studying university students' writing mistakes is therefore vital for several reasons. Examining writing errors and their frequency can enable college students to grasp their writing challenges. This study may also highlight students' most frequent mechanical, lexical, semantic, and grammatical errors. This information can help to strengthen learning, feedback, and teaching tactics. One of the most crucial in language development, error analysis helps students improve their writing. Therefore, educators can provide teaching resources to enable students to address writing issues and fix errors, hence preserving a good learning environment. Examining college students' writing mistakes helps to highlight their problems and offer customized corrective instructional strategies to raise their writing.

Literature Review

Common Errors in Writing

There are often writing mistakes noted in written works produced by ESL/EFL students. According to Shah (2023), writing error refers to any error in the use of punctuation, grammar, spelling or choice of words that hinders comprehension of the whole paper. Moreover, it is imperative to note that there are different causes of mistakes in academic writing and that a given work can be impaired and lose its validity due to mishaps. Writing mistakes mostly involve grammatical mistakes such as spelling, use of punctuations, and even wrong use of certain words (Shah, 2023). These errors can be potentially misleading to the reader and hinder the straightforward flow of the text. Other errors that may be made in the process directly refer to organization, formatting, and structure of the paper; these mistakes can significantly diminish coherence of the paper and its efficacy (Adi et al., 2024). Therefore, it is crucial to differentiate high-quality academic writing by acknowledging and correcting these lapses (Anh et al., 2022).

Additionally, it is noteworthy to mention that Dulay et al. (1982) proposed four distinct categories for errors: Interactional meaning, grammatical classification, supernatant plan, (subtractions, insertions, distortions and rearrangements), as well as oscillatory comparison. Four categories of errors are classified according to the surface strategy taxonomy: theme: omission, addition, misinformation and misordering error types (Yaqin, 2024). Based on Sharoff's (2005) definition of linguistic category taxonomy, a slightly changed version of the taxonomy is employed in this study to categorise the written errors that the students performed.

Error Analysis

There are two main areas that can be studied in Writing: error analysis which may help in determining the kind of mistake made by the students and the causes of the mistake. Some of the participants in the research using quantitative approach have used frequency to determine errors most made by students (Lee et al., 2024). Furthermore, it can also be noted that error analysis has been conducted in other fields of study which involves the simple future tense (Rohmiyati & Fatoni, 2024). It can also be applied for the identification of general phenomenon that learners experience in speaking or writing English sentences that include errors (Altabaa & Zulkifli, 2024). In general, it is evident

that error analysis is very effective in helping teach the L2 writing to university level learners in cases of writing mistakes. Analyzing the types and causes of mistakes that students can make, teachers can come up with effective strategies to help learners improve quality of their writing and produce less erroneous and more meaningful works.

Studies on Error Analysis

Researchers from different parts of the world have conducted many studies regarding the writing mistakes made by students. Kadiatmaja's (2021) was qualitative research aimed at determining errors made by sixteen ESP II students in their use of the passive voice writing. Four categories of errors were examined in the writings of students by Kadiatmaja (2021): Common errors included omissions, insertions, distortions, and rearrangements. According to the findings of the research, four operations were most often omitted by students out of which omission was most often made by 51. 06%, second most often was addition with a percentage of 31. 96% among the students. On the other hand, misordering was the least observed mistake by the students at 10. 64% while misformation attracted 6. 38%. This study focuses exclusively on passive voice errors; it does not investigate a more extensive spectrum of grammatical or mechanical faults in general descriptive writing, particularly outside ESP settings or in Arabic-speaking populations. Another study related to error analysis carried out by Fitria (2020). She used quantitative method of research to assess the compositions of students based on presentation, punctuation, grammar and orthography. That is why the aim of the study was to establish what kind of mistake was most common, as seen in the simple future tense compositions of the students. The research results indicated that students frequently committed grammatical errors in the following categories: The findings of the study were also consistent with the analysis of the Slavic sample, and they included nouns (21 data accounting to 36. 64%), determiners and articles (2,3. 51%), pronouns (1,1. 75 %), prepositions (15 data accounting for 26. 32%) and verbs (18 data accounting for 31. 58 %). Moreover, the study showed that the most common type of the grammatical mistakes made by students was the mistakes that relates to nouns. On the assessments of the study, the pupils ranked punctuation on the second place as it came second to grammar with spelling taking the third place. Lacking research on error patterns in different writing genres like descriptive writing, the study narrows its focus to one tense—simple future. It also ignores potential causes of mistake including first-language interference.

Amnuai (2020) had forty abstracts written by Thai undergraduates analyzed to identify the different types of writing errors. Identifications in sentence, word, and mechanics levels were conducted on the abstracts. It was found in the study that students most frequently committed errors in the choice of words in writing an abstract. Moreover, the findings of the research showed that quotation marks, singular and plural forms, prepositions, and sentence structure were also commonly observed. The study emphasizes only on abstract writing and Thai students, which restricts generalizability to other academic writing kinds and cultural/linguistic groups including Arabic-speaking students in Oman. It is also worth mentioning here that Ozkayran and Yilmaz (2020) conducted a qualitative research analysis by analyzing the writings of 57

preparatory class students at a state university in Turkey in the academic year 2017-2018 and used qualitative methods for this very purpose. To collect the data of the research, document analysis was used. Then, Surface Strategy Taxonomy was used to analyze the data gathered. According to the findings of the research, students' total number of errors was 381 on 57 test sheets: misformation (192), omission (113), addition (65), and misordering (11) (Ozkayran & Yılmaz, 2020). The results also revealed that the sequence of most frequent writing errors committed by students is misinformation, omission, and addition respectively. Although it efficiently classifies errors, it ignores root reasons and does not apply results to students from other language backgrounds, including Arabic-speaking EFL students. Also, Purnomo et al., (2024) has conducted research on the most frequent type of errors and their sources that occur in the writings of thirty tenth-grade students by employing the descriptive analysis method and error analysis. According to the researchers, the students committed many writing errors. Some of the writing errors the students made pertained to verb tenses, word order, orthography, omission, addition, capitalization, word selection, definite and indefinite articles, word form, and singular-to-plural transitions. The most frequent writing error committed by the students involved verb tenses. This study focuses on school-level students in Indonesia; it does not look at higher education settings or explore the linguistic causes of errors.

The study "Linguistic interference in the writing production of learners of English as Foreign Language" by Macías Lóor et al., (2025) aimed at exploring the major sources, types, and level of linguistic level of errors in EFL students' writing. The present research focused on the examination of narrative essays written by university students. Major error categories committed by the students are word choice, verb tense, preposition, and comma. They further argued that majority of the errors in English language classes is related to find words and this is greatly influenced by their 1st language when writing a text in English. The results show that "the most frequent errors are due to four main categories: false collocations, false cognates, invented words and literal translation. In conclusion, mistakes made by EFL learners are great indicators of the progress of students' language learning". Apart from that, Muniruzzaman, & Afrin (2024) also conducted a research of writing errors made by students in Bangladesh. The study focused on two issues: the problems that Bangladeshi undergraduates in English studies face when developing academic writing skills, and how to develop L2 English writing skills. This study included six students learning English at various Bangladeshi universities and three English professors who taught at the tertiary level. For undergraduates, data gathering tools included composition writing samples on a specific topic, as well as a semi-structured interview schedule for teachers. The results revealed that poor grammatical competence and brainstorming skills, insufficient vocabulary, insufficient knowledge of mechanics and writing style, and mother tongue interference were the most common barriers that Bangladeshi undergraduates of English studies encountered when writing in English.

In a similar vein, Ameer Hamza et al., (2024) investigated the common grammatical errors of undergraduate students in their written writings, with a focus on sentence structure. The study analyzed essays authored by 30 students in the BS English Linguistics program at Islamia University of Bahawalpur to identify reoccurring issues

in verb tense, syntax, spelling, prepositions, and article usage. The study took a qualitative approach, employing content analysis to classify errors based on grammatical categories. The findings showed that errors in tense agreement, noun-verb relationships, and sentence cohesiveness were common, owing to variables such as overgeneralization, first language interference, and a limited vocabulary.

In addition, Nguyen & Phan (2024) examined various errors and mistakes in writing a paragraph. They recommended certain ways to help students improve their English writing skills. The study sponsored by 41 freshmen enrolled in Tay Do University's English class, used a questionnaire, a pretest, and a posttest. The respondents were required to compose two pre-test and post-test paragraphs. In addition, a questionnaire was administered. The results showed several writing challenges (vocabulary, ideas, and grammar).

METHOD

Research Design

The study aims to find and document the incidence and types of errors in writing among the Foundation students at the University of Buraimi. Therefore, the paper uses a quantitative approach to answer the questions set under the scope. Quantitative research involves a structured approach towards gathering and processing numerical data to achieve meaning through identifying a pattern, prediction of events, causation analysis, and drawing conclusions that could be generalized to more extensive populations (Bhandari, 2022). Besides, this approach is widely used in natural and social sciences to draw conclusions from various phenomena and hence constitutes an indispensable tool in many complex case studies. Quantitative research allows for the collection of massive amounts of data, adherence to standardized procedures for data collection, and the application of statistical methods to analyze the data. Thus, it provides opportunities for generalizations of findings and drawing conclusions on large populations (Bhandari, 2022).

Research Participants

It was comprised of fifty-two participants, forty females, and twelve male students, all of whom were currently studying at the University of Buraimi. Each of them had successfully passed the Level 1 English Foundation course. These students are from various programs running at the University of Buraimi. For example, nursing, engineering, optometry, logistics, and business administration.

Research Instrument

For answering these research questions, the major source of data was the written work from 28 students at the University of Buraimi. Explicitly, in the Midterm for Foundation English II, students were asked to write a short descriptive paragraph about "my ideal job." Then the writings were collected and analyzed.

Data Collection

The task required 28 students to write a descriptive paragraph, within the word limit of 120 to 150 words, describing what they perceive is 'an ideal job'. This is a small corpus

made up of paragraphs written by 28 students currently taking FENG002 - Foundation English II. This course in language is a core subject for all students studying in the Foundation Program at the University of Buraimi.

Data Analysis

Chanquoy's (2001) model categorizes written language errors; thus, the researcher examined students' writing errors. The four main errors in this model are: All types of errors are misspellings, grammatical errors, verb tense discrepancies, and punctuation issues. Chanquoy's model was selected because its thorough, yet succinct categorization fits with the errors of academic EFL students. Chanquoy's approach is focused, pedagogically relevant, and best for examining student writing in educational settings. Its clarity and teaching relevance make it suitable for identifying and correcting writing errors in basic academic courses. The data collection in this study was done utilizing a quantitative method. Researchers examined descriptive paragraph scripts produced by 28 Omani EFL students enrolled in the Foundation English II (FENG002) course at the University of Buraimi. Examined for certain grammatical and mechanical problems, these scripts were collected during the students' midterm exam. Every noted mistake fell under categories including spelling, verb tense, subject-verb agreement, and others. To track recurring patterns of inaccuracy in student writing, the frequency and percentage of each error type were calculated.

FINDINGS & DISCUSSION

Specific categories of problems analyzed included word order, singular-plural, demonstratives, article usage, irregular verbs, spelling, prepositions, verb tense, subject-verb agreement, sentence fragments, and capitalization. The descriptive analysis was done of the 28 paragraphs written by Foundation students attending the University of Buraimi. Table 1: The occurrence and proportion of these errors as seen from the written paragraphs of the students are listed below. Items listed in the table are arranged in a descending order, with the highest frequencies listed first and the lowest frequencies placed last.

Table 1
Error type, frequency, and percentage

No.	Type of Error	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Spelling	225	48.38%
2.	Capitalization	45	9.67%
3.	Sentence Fragments	43	9.24%
4.	Subject-Verb Agreement	40	8.60%
5.	Articles	38	8.17%
6.	Verb Tense	24	5.16%
7.	Singular-Plural	18	3.87%
8.	Prepositions	18	3.87%
9.	Word Order	9	1.93%
10.	Demonstratives	5	1.07%
11.	Irregular Verbs	0	0%
	Total	465	100%

Spelling

The following results of the current study point out that spelling errors are the most committed by the students, amounting to a cumulative total of 225 errors, taking up about 48.38% of all the detected errors. Read further in Table 1 for more information. Some of the misspelled words are given here: "easly" instead of "easily"; "heath" rather than health; "jop" rather than job; "mony" rather than money; "beccous" instead of because; "fastter" instead of faster; "madeacin" instead of medicine; "devalop" instead of develop; "experiens" instead of experience; and "dependted" instead of depended.

Many Arab students notice spelling mistakes when writing in English. A lot of studies, to be honest, have pointed out that these challenges are caused by discrepancies in the English orthographic system, the influence of native language on Arabic and English languages, and fundamental differences between the two languages. Spelling mistakes which are shared by the Arabs learning the English language include spelling silent letters, silent "e" ending, consonant doubling, and vowels in general (Shah, 2023; Craiker, 2022). The spelling mistakes also occur due to various reasons; some of them have to do with pronunciation challenges resulting in spelling errors, and other reasons include variation in writing systems regarding Arabic and English language (Shah, 2023).

Capitalization

In the present study, the total occurrences of students' errors were 45 in number; this accounted for 9.67% of the total occurrences. See Table 1 above: Among misspelled words were the following: "i" for "I," "ideal" for "ideal," "gu" for "go," "when" for "When," "my" for "My," and "start" for "start." Most students committed mistakes when writing the first-person pronoun "I" by using small i, which was a very common capitalization error.

Previous findings, which explored the mistakes of Arab learners, concur with the current study (Abed-Rabbo, 2021). According to the same researcher, the impact of Arabic on capitalization issues in English by Arab students is immense. In English, words that come at the beginning of phrases, all proper nouns, and names of cities are not capitalized since the concept of capitalization does not exist in Arabic language. Also, because Arabic language does not provide with the difference between capital and lower-case letters, in English, some letters might be capitalized haphazardly. Due to the intrinsic properties of each system, more capitalization errors occur in Arabic and in English. The studies noted that among the steps being assumed to improve the writing of the Arab learners of the language is correcting these errors.

Sentence Fragments

The paragraphs composed by twenty-eight Foundation students include fragments of sentences. A sentence fragment is an incomplete sentence devoid of the grammatical structure required to operate as a unified unit of thought. It lacks a subject, verb, or coherent thought, rendering it incapable of functioning independently as a sentence. This can include a word, phrase, or clause that, despite possessing the intonation of a sentence in speech, lacks the complete grammatical structure of a sentence. The analysis

of data from student writings showed that the students used sentence fragments. The frequency of using sentence fragments among students was 43, with a percentage of 9.24%. Some examples of sentence fragments are: "Job diversity important in our life," "The job important for people," and "The nursing good job."

Arab students frequently produce fragments of sentences in English for a variety of reasons. The influence of the Arabic language is one factor. Shah (2023) argues that Arab writers frequently use sentence fragments because English and Arabic have distinct sentence structures, which can cause learners to employ their native language habits and produce sentence fragments in English. Additionally, according to Craiker (2022), Arab writers often resort to using too many sentence fragments due to their limited proficiency in English. It is possible that some Arab students struggle with English grammar and sentence structure, which causes them to use incomplete sentences.

Subject-Verb Agreement

The paragraphs of the 28 students enrolled in the Foundation programme at the University of Buraimi had several occasions when the errors related to subject-verb agreement occurred. The current study has mentioned 40 such errors which contribute to 8.60% of the overall errors found specifically relating to the subject-verb agreement. These are examples of errors concerning the subject-verb agreement: "Teachers is" properly should be "Teachers are", then "The teaching job have" should be replaced by "The teaching job has", and instead of "This skill are" it should be "This skill is."

There are several reasons Arab students usually fail in the subject-verb agreement errors when they write English. Guessoum et al., (2022) argued that a student who employs their native linguistic habits towards English will be liable to making subject-verb agreement errors as a direct result of the effect from Arabic, which has dissimilar sentence structures. Another reason why students commit errors in subject-verb agreement is their inability to be well-indexed when it comes to English grammar and structure. In both writing and speaking, learners may encounter errors in subject-verb agreement due to the differences in word order between Arabic and English, with the latter necessitating adherence to this grammatical rule. Finally, the majority of EFL learners have difficulties with subject-verb agreement especially for Arabic students (Nguyen & Phan, 2024).

Articles

The paragraph writings of the students revealed misplaced and missing articles. The frequency of article misuse among students was 38, with a percentage of 8.17%. Some examples of definite and indefinite article misuse are: "My dream work is working in health section as a nursing," "You must choose a right job," and "I am social person." This observation is also consistent with previous research findings on English article errors. Previous research has shown that Arab writers make errors using definite and indefinite article articles in English (Kojima & Popiel, 2023).

Verb Tense

The analysis of data from student writings revealed that the participants made verb tense errors. The frequency of verb-tense errors among students was 24, accounting for

5.16% of the total errors. Some examples of verb tense errors include: "My dream job since childhood is nursing," "When I am a student ten years ago," and "When I was a child, I hope to be a nurse." This observation aligns with previous research findings on verb tense misuse in EFL writing (Rustipa et al., 2023). However, it is surprising that verb tense errors were not among the most frequent, despite well-documented struggles of Arab learners with tense consistency. This contradiction is neither statistically explained nor pedagogically unpacked in the current findings. One possible explanation is that students avoided complex tense forms due to lack of confidence, especially since the writing prompt focused on present-oriented topics like future careers. Without deeper statistical comparison or triangulation with learners' oral output or grammar test scores, it is difficult to determine whether the low error count reflects actual competence or strategic avoidance. In my experience as an English lecturer, Arab students frequently struggle with verb tenses, which suggests that the issue may be underrepresented in surface-level writing tasks alone.

Singular-Plural

The data analysis of the student writing showed errors made by participants in singular-plural forms (S-P) in English. Of these, 18 students (3.75 percent) erred by incorrectly combining singular and plural forms of noun. Instances of singular-plural form errors include: five day ago, ten hour a day and working twenty hour weekly. These results are consistent with previous research focusing on singular-plural form errors in academic writing (Amnuai, 2020). Also surprising is that there are two entries for singular and plural forms of errors students make. Arab students never mix up singular-plural forms, for I am an English professor.

Prepositions

Analysis of the corpus data found that students committed inaccurate uses of English preposition in their writing. Prepositions' errors, visited to those mean 18 which is amounting over more than a half of percent (3.75%) from the total accurately counted number. Examples of erroneous preposition usage include: "Five day ago," "Ten hour a day," and "Working twenty hour weekly.". These results confirmed the findings of earlier research on errors in singular-plural forms in academic writing at university level (Guessoum et al., 2022;). Moreover, the students' grammatical mishandling of prepositions was not supposed to top their list. As an English instructor, I have observed that Arab students frequently make numerous errors in their utilisation of prepositions in the English language. The intralingual transfer between English and Arabic is one factor. The usage of prepositions in Arabic typically differs from that in English.

Word Order

The results of the text analysis conducted on student productions reveal that learners have issues with word order in English, as can be seen from data extracted. The students made word order errors, which were 1.93 per cent and nine of all the characteristics kinds of mistake that was recognized among them as being deductible. Word order errors: E.g., "That job you can help people," and "The salary nursing job is. The findings of this study can be interpreted in the line with previous studies which have

dealt with word order errors prevalent at the university writing level (Guessoum et al., 2022).

Demonstratives

Data analysis of student writing revealed that participants made errors when using English demonstratives. The students made 5-word order errors, or 1.07% of the time. Some examples of demonstratives errors are: "These job are good," and "That reasons are". Previous research on word order errors in university level writings (Shah, 2023) has found similar results, which supports the study findings. According to these research, Arab learners frequently encounter difficulties when attempting to use demonstratives because of the inherent differences between Arabic and English syntax. Many studies have pointed to Arabic or second language English as the cause of mistakes made by Arab English language learners, suggesting that their first language may be influencing their second language acquisition.

Irregular Verbs

The present study found no recorded errors in students' use of irregular verbs. However, this absence is unlikely to indicate mastery; rather, it may reflect avoidance. Students appeared to deliberately limit their use of irregular verbs in their writing, possibly due to uncertainty about correct forms or fear of making spelling mistakes. For instance, only a few irregular verbs such as was spent and saw were used, suggesting a cautious and restricted approach. The writing task, which asked students to describe their dream job or career, may have encouraged the use of present tense and thus reduced the need for complex past forms. Nonetheless, the overall pattern implies that learners may lack confidence in employing irregular verb forms, choosing instead to construct simpler sentences with regular verbs or present-tense structures. This strategic avoidance, while minimizing errors, also limits grammatical range and richness of expression. It is essential to consider that the students' language level, combined with their preference for safer linguistic choices, may contribute to the sparse use of irregular verbs rather than a true understanding of them (Shah, 2023).

IMPLICATION

The 48.38% incidence of spelling mistakes highlights a clear need for concentrated orthographic teaching. Particularly for students impacted by Arabic orthography, educational strategies such as gamified spelling exercises and visual word mapping offer efficient solutions that improve spelling retention. Errors in capitalization (9.67%), mostly caused by L1 interference in the lack of capitalization rules, call for contrastive analysis assignments and focused teaching of English punctuation guidelines. Common among the participants, phrase fragments and subject-verb agreement problems suggest the need of organized sentence-building exercises and grammar-oriented writing seminars. Moreover, the existence of error kinds including article misuse and prepositional misunderstanding, linked to both interlingual and intralingual influences, emphasizes the need of contextualized grammar training above isolated rule teaching. Each pedagogical recommendation, therefore, stems directly from observed linguistic challenges, ensuring that instructional strategies are data-driven, learner-responsive, and pragmatically aligned with the linguistic realities of Omani EFL students.

CONCLUSION

This study aims to identify the errors of descriptive writing made by students in Foundation Programme. They found that “[the students] made a lot of errors reading word order, spelling mistakes, capitalization etc... even though they should not be around [any more], because subject-verb agreement is clear. The recorded information includes counts and percentages for these errors. Furthermore, the study revealed that spelling was also found to be a high rate of mistakes made by participants. The results of this study reinforce the findings of other studies in the same field at more levels. Results are similar to those of previous studies, which have shown that text correctness (spelling and capitalization as well word order) was better than in sentence fragments falsely accepted. Various factors can lead to the abundance of writing errors, including intra-language or interlanguage interference, the nature of writing feedback, traditional teaching learning approach, and writing on topics that are not closely related to the majors of Foundation Programme students. Another major factor contributing to students’ disinterest in the learning of English writing is poor language proficiency and the differences in the writing pattern of L1 and L2 writing. Afterward, the findings of the study suggest several recommendations to resolve the problem of university-level non-native English learners who make writing errors

LIMITATIONS

One limitation of this study is its relatively small sample size, as it analyzed writing from only 28 EFL students, which cannot provide a fully representative picture of the wider population of Omani EFL learners. Additionally, the study depends only on examination-based writing samples, which cannot accurately reflect the overall writing abilities of students in more natural or less pressurized contexts. Special attention to quantitative error frequency also limits insight into errors or underlying causes of students’ thought processes. Extending the functioning to include qualitative analysis or learner interviews can provide a more comprehensive understanding of grammatical impurities.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following innovative suggestions are directions for future research on academic writing errors that may be conducted at the university level:

1. Gamification: Introducing interactivity or game play into the learning process, where students can identify and fix their spelling mistakes in games/interactive activities so that they are entertained.
2. Multimodal Feedback: Exploring the possibility of providing multimodal feedback (eg audio / video) to educate students more extensively, and effectively about their written work.
3. The efficacy of collaborative writing endeavours, including peer review groups and group writing projects, in facilitating students’ recognition and rectification of writing errors shall be investigated.

4. Cultural and Linguistic Diversity: Examining the impact of cultural and linguistic diversity on writing errors among university-level learners and exploring strategies to address these issues.
5. Writing Analytics: Constructing writing analytics tools capable of autonomously identifying and evaluating writing errors, thereby furnishing students with immediate feedback and recommendations for enhancement.
6. The efficacy of writing centres in assisting students to recognise and rectify writing errors will be investigated, and approaches will be devised to enhance the centres' usability and efficacy.

Researchers can develop new techniques and strategies to assist university-level students in avoiding writing errors and enhancing their writing abilities by investigating these innovative suggestions.

Conflict of Interests: There are no financial or non-financial interests that are directly or indirectly related to the work submitted for publication.

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