ERROR PATTERNS IN THE ACADEMIC WRITING OF ARAB ESL STUDENTS: A DATA-DRIVEN PERSPECTIVE

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Abstract:

This study is an attempt to examine common errors in Arab ESL students' writings. While some researchers and pedagogues believe that learners' first language (L1) has a positive impact on learning a second language L2, others believe that L1 is the main cause of most writing errors, which hinders a smooth L2 learning process. This qualitative study aims to identify and analyze Arab ESL students' academic writing errors and determine their origins. To hypothesize, L1, traditionally, is believed to exercise a good deal of influence on how well students write in their target language. However, many ESL researchers argue that not all ESL students' writing errors are due to reliance on their L1, and in fact, some mistakes are found to be caused by students' natural development of learning a second language or by a lack of adequate knowledge of language rules and patterns. The findings of this study reveal that learners' L1 interference accounts for most writing errors, and a smaller portion is attributed to learners' intra-lingual challenges. Some recurring error patterns are found to affect prepositions, word order, article systems, subject-verb agreement, clauses, and sentence structure.

Keywords: ESL, error analysis, Arabic language, L2 writing errors, L1 interference

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الملخص:

تهدف هذه الدراسة النوعية إلى تحليل الأخطاء الشائعة في كتابات الطلاب العرب المتعلّمين للغة الإنجليزية كلغة ثانية. يرى بعض الباحثين أن اللغة الأم تؤثر بشكل إيجابي على تعلم اللغة الثانية ولكن يعتقد آخرون أن اللغة الأم هي السبب الرئيسي لمعظم أخطاء الكتابة، مما يعيق سير عملية تعلم اللغة الثانية بسلاسة. تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى تحديد وتحليل أخطاء الكتابة الأكاديمية لدى الطلاب العرب المتعلمين للغة الإنجليزية وتحديد مصدر هذه الأخطاء. وتفترض الدراسة أن اللغة الأم، تقليديًا، تُعد ذات تأثير كبير على جودة كتابة الطلاب في اللغة الهدف. ومع ذلك نجد ان العديد من الباحثين في مجال اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة ثانية يدعون بأن جل الأخطاء الكتابية ليست ناتجة عن الاعتماد على اللغة الأم، إذ أن بعض الأخطاء تحدث نتيجة للتطور الطبيعي لتعلم اللغة الثانية أو بسبب نقص في معرفة قواعد اللغة وتراكيبها. وتُظهر نتائج هذه الدراسة أن التدخل اللغوي الناتج عن اللغة الأم يشكل اغلب الأخطاء الكتابية، بينما يُعزى جزء أقل منها إلى التحديات داخل اللغة الهدف نفسها (العوامل داخل اللغوية). وقد تكررت أنماط معينة من الأخطاء في استخدام حروف الجر، وترتيب الكلمات، وأنظمة أدوات التعريف والتنكير، والتطابق بين الفاعل والفعل، والجمل الفرعية، وتركيب الجملة.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الإنجليزية كلغة ثانية، تحليل الأخطاء، اللغة العربية، أخطاء الكتابة في اللغة الثانية، تأثير اللغة الام

1. Introduction

On the part of ESL students, learning a second language is usually not a small learning journey. It usually takes a significant period of time before a person reaches a comfortable level of proficiency. Learners go through a long process of learning, which is sometimes affected by what linguists call: first language (L1) interference. Understanding the types of writing errors and challenges that Arab ESL students encounter is essential for effective grasp of successful remedial work. A great deal of studies on errors in Arab ESL students' writing conclude that these errors affect language use, including articles, verb tense, prepositions, pronouns, word order, and relative clauses (Abu Rass, 2015; Murad, 2015; Ridha, 2012; Sabbah, 2016). This causes incoherence in students' writing, and therefore, leads to comprehension breakdowns. An extensive body of analysis has been conducted to account for the causes and origins of such errors and what strategies instructors can employ to better teach and aid students to perform better in using these forms (Abu Rass, 2015; Chan, 2004; Murad, 2015; Richards, 2015).

In recent decades, the related literature has witnessed the emergence of theories that aimed at comprehending the kinds of challenges that language learners encounter through conducting research in linguistic analysis to better deal with ESL students' writing difficulties. Research in this area has given great attention to analyzing data from students' writing productions in hopes of providing a thorough description, and therefore, allowing language teaching practitioners and curriculum developers to devise and generate remedial learning materials for ESL learners. Different theories and hypotheses have emerged since the 1960s and 70s. A very common approach is Error Analysis (EA), which aims at investigating the nature of learners' writing mistakes and accounting for their causes. Another useful approach is termed Contrastive Analysis (CA).

Brown (2014) explained that *"EA is the process in which deviations from the rules of the second language are observed, analyzed, and classified in order to reveal the system operated by the learner"* (Qtd. in Abu Rass, 2015). On the other hand, Wardhaugh (1970) claimed that the major goal of conducting CA is to conduct a thorough comparison of different

aspects of a language including its syntax, lexicon, grammar, and phonology, against similar aspects of a second or target language so that researchers and teachers can make predictions of potential areas that are likely to cause learning difficulties. Therefore, one of the ultimate goals of applying CA is to devise learning materials that can facilitate the acquisition of a second language. Those who advocate CA procedures argue that errors occur due to learners' L1 interference.

The study at hand is concerned with identifying and analyzing Arab ESL academic writing errors. The purpose is to find out the origins of these errors; whether they originate from L1 influence (first language interference errors) or whether they are merely a product of L2 development of students' proficiency or what is labeled: intra-lingual errors. In addition, our study aims at identifying the most effective theory that explains the nature and origins of students' errors.

2. Background

Despite the work of some ESL researchers who claim that L1 has a facilitative role in language learning (Brooks-Lewis, 2009; Mart, 2013), a significant body of scholarship holds a different view (Brown, 2020; Smith, 2018; Richards, 2015). These two poles of opinion debated the extent to which learners' first language is a factor in L2 proficiency. In their article, Bernard and Lo (1985) claimed that the theory of L1 interference is weak when used to explain ESL students' writing difficulties. They analyze Chinese ESL students' writing, comparing it to a study previously conducted by Kaplan (1988), who reported that every culture has specific rhetorical schemes and writing norms. He concludes that errors found in Chinese students' writing are due to the cultural and rhetorical differences between Chinese and English. According to Kaplan (1988), deviation from the English writing norms may be caused by students' L1 interference or what has been termed "*negative transfer*" due to relying on one's first language writing style. He argued that English and Chinese have different composition norms and styles. On the other hand, Bernard and Lo (1985) stressed the weaknesses of L1 interference theory, which is a basis for CA, noting that extensive research on second language acquisition found a slight influence of L1 on L2 on learners' grammar.

Bernard and Lo (1985) disagreed with Kaplan's argument that L1 influence is the main source of error, but they also argued that L1 interference could lead to some L2 writing errors. They compared Chinese and English speakers' compositions and found that many of the writing difficulties detected in Chinese students' works significantly resemble those found in English native speakers' writings. In their study, they noted that Chinese students' writing errors and organization problems are not very different from those of other ESL learners. Their analysis of students' composition revealed many parallels with the way prose is done in English. For example, every essay should follow the traditional elements of academic writing. Furthermore, they claim that they found more similarities between English and Chinese writings, which, according to them, are part of the shared knowledge of discourse structure in academic writing.

Similarly, Lightbown and Spada (2013) also maintained that there is no critical interference from learners' L1, but still admitted that some ESL students' mistakes are due to their resort to their mother tongue. Instead, in *How Languages are Learned*, they reported that mistakes in ESL students' writings are due to a natural development of their performance, not due to the interference of their first language. Most errors, according to these two researchers, occur because of learners' ongoing progress of acquiring a foreign language and its rules and structure, and not only through looking at the impact of negative transfer from their L1. They stated that mistakes committed by ESL learners are remarkably similar to those committed by children learning their first language, which disproves the L1 interference theory. Besides, similar mistakes are found in ESL writings of learners who have different mother tongues. According to Lightbown and Spada (2013), this presents evidence that errors are not simply due to transfer, but they can be explained through looking at more subtle reasons and features of second language acquisition and learners' L2 proficiency development.

The claim that there is a critical influence of students' first language led to the theory of CA, which sought to explore and analyze the degree of L1 influence on ESL learners. Chan (2004) supported Kaplan's view of the negative role of L1. She carried out a study in which she presented evidence of language negative transfer. This study was based on data collected from ESL students in China belonging to various levels of proficiency. The research focused on five common types of errors: a) adverb placement, b) misuse of the verb *to be,* c) incorrect relative clause use, d) verb usage, and e) adverb placement. The findings indicated that a great number of Chinese ESL students first think in Chinese and then try to write their ideas in English, which results in writing productions showing sentence structures similar to their native language.

This emphasis on CA was heavily criticized by Schachter and Celce-Murcia (1977) in their introduction to *Some Reservations Concerning Error Analysis*. They stated that CA theory lost all its merits, and it was time to investigate a new and better method to analyze ESL writing errors. However, CA researchers argued that if the target and origin languages are compared and analyzed at different levels can generate a basis for predicting potential challenges and difficulties.

Lightbown and Spada (2013) further explained the intertwined nature of L1 and L2. Their view here is somehow softened towards CA. In one of their interpretations, they showed that the more similarities there are between the source and target languages, the more advantages and ease learners will have in acquiring that target language. Therefore, if students resort to their L1 patterns and norms, it could help them reach a better outcome in the L2 learning process. However, both researchers claimed that the opposite view is also true; the more difficulties there are between the source and target languages, the more difficulties students will have. Accordingly, the L2 learning success relatively depends on its relationship with L1, especially their similarities and differences.

This view was very popular until the mid-seventies when scholars began discussing CA's extensive weaknesses. Schachter (1974) believed that CA focuses too much on predicting what mistakes and difficulties learners may face in their process of

learning the target language, instead of actually focusing on what learners actually achieve to do. Opponents of CA conclude that many errors are not a result of first language interference; thus, they cannot be predicted through carrying out a contrastive analysis. The problem, according to them, lies in the strategies used by learners and the interference of items in the target language itself. Opponents of CA call for another type of analysis of students' errors in writing. The new methodology is named Error Analysis and implemented to investigate students' errors after they are made, not before, as in CA. EA focuses on the types of errors recurring in students' writing and tries to reach an interpretation and understanding of why such errors pose difficulty for students.

The popular perspective held by EA is that a significant number of errors are estimated to be due to the implications of learning different aspects of the target language. Such errors are referred to as *developmental errors* that learners tend to make in the process of learning a target language. Darus and Ching (2009) examined 70 essays from a selected public school in Malaysia. The students' first language is Chinese. They report that the types of writing errors found lead to both L1 interference and developmental causes. This second type of error might be caused by "*inadequate learning, difficulties inherent in the target language itself, confused thinking or lack of contrast of both languages*" (p.4). In their conclusion, they stated that both L1 negative transfer and incomprehension of L2 rules and patterns were causes of the writing errors they examined. In a study by Anderson and Souto (2005), they showed that Spanish students in their writings of English had a good deal of errors in using English articles *a/an*, and much fewer errors in using the article *the*, which in turn is not of much importance due to tis isolation method in analyzing these articles. They stated that a deeper analysis of data, including all those instances in which students used articles correctly, is useful. Therefore, it led to more mistakes in article usage of *a/an*, and fewer errors in using the article *the*. The researchers claimed that such errors may not have been detected if there were no analysis of students' writings.

The second main weakness of EA is the identification of points of difficulty in the target language. Since EA follows the frequency of errors in a piece of writing, it would not be able to account for errors that are not very frequent or just not committed. According to Schachter and Celce-Murcia (1977), Chinese and Japanese ESL students' compositions as evidence of this shortage. Jacquelyn Schachter studies errors in the use of relative clauses and ends up finding that Chinese and Japanese students have difficulty incorporating them in their writings, and therefore, tend to avoid the use of relative clauses since they don't have their equivalents in their L1. The Arabs, however, made significant use of relative clauses, but they made many mistakes forming them. The Arabic language does have two different forms of relative clauses, but their use is quite different from that of English.

The dichotomy between EA and CA provides L2 professionals with a wide range of background knowledge on the way to classify and deal with L2 learners' writing difficulties. On the part of ESL teachers of students with various L1 backgrounds, it is vital to pay attention to the pitfalls of EA. On the other hand, if anything is to be learned

from the rise and fall of CA is that one single view of the language learning process will not be able to account for all the writing problems which exist in ESL students' compositions. If ESL or EFL teachers are to reach an understanding of ESL learners' writing errors, they should make use of both CA and EA techniques. The different studies above show this necessity.

3. Research Objectives

The objective of this study is:

- To identify and understand common patterns of writing errors made by Arab ESL students in their writings.

3.1 Research Questions

The research questions of this study are:

- What are the most common errors in Arab ESL students' academic writing?
- What are the cause and origin of these errors?

4. Research Design

The study at hand adopts a descriptive design, with a focus on identifying and analyzing common Arab ESL students' writing errors. Our study is qualitative in nature and tries to investigate and describe errors in written compositions. All the data in this study were collected from the electronic archive of the English Language Institute (ELI) in Springfield, Missouri. The ELI is a language school annexed to MSU and offers five levels of study in which students attend courses of different English language core skills, such as reading, listening, speaking, and writing. The participants' L1 is Arabic, and they are all from Saudi Arabia. Their age ranged from 18 to 22 years old.

4.1 Data Collection

The 10 compositions analyzed here are written by high intermediate students at the two most advanced levels, respectively, the fourth and the fifth. The writings revolve around common topics, such as personal experience, opinion essays, future goals, past events, etc.

4.2 Data Analysis and Procedure

First, the writing errors in these essays are analyzed and then classified into different categories. The error analysis approach is implemented for systematic classification and evaluation of students' errors. The researcher made use of a checklist to facilitate the categorization of errors and any recurring patterns in students' compositions, as well as assessing their frequency. Including this instrument allows for consistency in categorizing and identifying errors. The error analysis approach guidelines were followed to identify, analyze, and assess students' common writing errors.

5. Results

After identifying and categorizing students' common writing errors, the researchers initiated the analysis of the findings. Some of the common errors that were categorized concern sentence structure, word order, subject-verb agreement, articles, auxiliary use, and prepositions. Table 1 below shows a breakdown of learners' errors. The most common ones affect article usage and prepositions.

Table 1: Categories of Arab ESL learners' writing errors

Types of errors	Subtypes	Percentage (%)
Language use	Subject-verb agreement	13
	Article system	24
	Prepositions	19
	Auxiliary	12
Syntactic	Word order	11
Mechanics	Punctuation and capitalization	12
	Spelling	9

The errors are classified into three main categories, including language use, syntax, and mechanics. Table 1 shows that most errors occur in language use (68%). The current analysis will focus on illustrating two of the most common and recurring errors in language use: articles and prepositions.

Arab ESL students' most frequent writing errors are those of article usage and prepositions. First, in Arabic, article usage shares similar features with the English article system. Yet, it is found to be quite varied. The Arabic article system depicts a binary system, either defined or undefined, while in English, there are three aspects, including definite, indefinite, or no article. In Arabic, the definite marker is /al/ and dropping the latter marks the indefiniteness. Arab ESL students tend to overuse English definite articles. For example, student K produced this sentence: *On Monday, I go to the gym*. If one considers Arabic grammar, it would be clear where such errors originate, because in Arabic, after prepositions, nouns tend to take a definite article /al/.

A. Articles

The total number of errors in articles in this category is (75) as illustrated in Table 2 below. Generally, the misuse of articles is the most common type of error found in Arab ESL students' essays (49.5 %).

Table 2: Errors of Articles

Type of errors	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Article misuse	37	49.5
Adding *the*	9	12
Dropping *a / an*	17	22.5
Dropping *the*	6	8
Adding *a / an*	6	8
Total	**75**	**100**

The article system in English includes indefinite and definite articles, and their use is heavily governed by the nouns that precede. Definite articles are included when one refers to something specific, and indefinite articles are used with a generic reference. (Celce-Murcia & Larsen-Freeman, 1999; Murphy, 2012). In contrast, in Arabic, there is one definite article /al/ and it is used with specific reference. Therefore, article usage has different uses in Arabic and English. For example, in English, one would say: *I am a teacher*, inserting an indefinite article before the word *doctor*, whereas in Arabic, there is no need for any articles. Its equivalent in Arabic is as follows: " انا استاذ", which is respectively transcribed as "ana ustath"; no articles are used. The confusion between generic and specific reference is found to account for a big chunk of students' errors. Therefore, in many compositions, learners used definite articles in positions which required an indefinite form. For example:

1) Media is protected by number of <u>the</u> regulations.

2) He was <u>the</u> professional player in the past.

The second common error is found in using definite articles with abstract nouns. In English, mass and abstract nouns take no articles (zero article). Whereas in Arabic, these two types of nouns require a definite article. For example, student J wrote:

3) <u>The</u> love and the cooperative work in their house are the most important things.

Thus, this type of error is heavily committed and usually takes some time before students finally master it. As for indefinite articles, omission was the next type that raised a learning difficulty for Arab students (22.5 %).

4) Everyone has specific role. (Dropping of indefinite article *a*).

In sentences 3 and 4, the indefinite article "*a/an*" is omitted. Such errors are also due to first language interference because indefinite articles do not exist in Arabic. However, there are some errors that may be caused by learning difficulties of a foreign language, which in this case is English. These students do not master the rules and uses of the articles *the, a, and an*. Also, when referring to places of assembly, for example (mosque, home, university, market, etc.), it is observed that some Arab ESL students tend to overuse the definite article *the*.

B. Prepositions

Grammatically, prepositions show connections between two elements. In English, prepositions reveal different functions, including time, destination, recipient/target, cause/purpose, etc. In *The Grammar Book* (1999), the authors describe different functions and usages of prepositions. For example, the preposition *at* can have multiple meanings:

(at six o'clock= time), (good at guessing = area), (at work = state), and (laugh at = cause), among other functions (Celce-Murcia and Larsen-Freeman, 1999). This variety of meanings expressed by a small word as *at* makes it intriguingly difficult for non-native speakers to learn the various uses of prepositions. Sometimes, even long after ESL learners have achieved a high level of proficiency in English, they still struggle with learning and using prepositions correctly.

Prepositions constitute one of the most problematic areas for Arab ESL students. In most essays, students added or misused prepositions. Table 3 indicates that misusing prepositions accounts for the majority of errors (58.5 %) of the total number of errors in preposition usage (53), which are summarized as follows:

Table 3: Errors of prepositions

Type of errors	Frequency	Percentage
Dropping prepositions	4	8 %
Adding prepositions	18	33.5 %
Misusing prepositions	31	58.5 %
Total	**53**	**100 %**

The analysis of students' writing showed extensive faulty usage of prepositions, followed by errors of addition (33.5 %). One common difficulty that Arab students have is in placing prepositions *from* instead of *of* and *at* instead of *in*, for example. The following are some illustrative examples:

a. Errors of misuse
- *From* instead of *of*:

    1) Some experts proved that smoking contributes to cancer after thirty years old <u>from</u> smoking.

    2) One may imagine why so many people die because <u>from</u> conflicts.

Such errors are attributed to learners' L1 interference. In the Arabic language, the preposition *from*, is tends to be inserted in the above contexts.

- *At* instead of *in*:

    1) <u>At</u> the winter, the city becomes very cold.

    2) <u>At</u> the summer many people come visit the town.

In sentences 3-4, L1 interference is not the origin or cause of the above errors. If learners resorted to their mother language, they would not have such confusion between

at and *in*, because Arabic has the exact counterpart of *in* and if used both sentences will be correct. Such errors can be attributed to overgeneralizing of rules of English grammar, especially when students have to express different relationships and meanings.

b. Errors of Addition

The addition of prepositions indicates that some of them are used in positions where they are not needed. The analysis of the data showed that (33.5 %) were added. These errors reveal that both students' mother tongue and influence from the target language are two potential causes of such errors. Here are some illustrative examples:

- Addition of *of:*

1) Genetic testing has the ability to treat <u>of</u> diseases.

2) I achieved good grades, considering <u>of </u>all the difficulty I faced.

The error in the above examples can be attributed to target language interference or simply students' developing knowledge of English. Similarly, Arabic does not need a preposition in such a context.

- Addition of *from*:

  The following are illustrative examples:

- After you finish <u>*from*</u> learning.

- Ta'ef is near <u>from</u> Mecca to the south.

The errors in the above examples 3-4 are attributed to L1 interference. The preposition *from* in the above sentences is a literal translation of its equivalent preposition in Arabic '*min' or from*.

4. Discussion

The analysis overall reveals that Arab ESL writing errors are negatively influenced by their L1. This fact supports the CA, which states that ESL students' first language plays a major role in their writing difficulties. However, not all the errors illustrated in this study are attributed to L1 interference. For example, when students used the preposition *at* instead of *in* or when they added the preposition *of* where it was not needed. Obviously, these types of errors are simply due to conflicting variables in the target language or because ESL learners still do not master the correct uses and rules of these forms yet.

Similar studies reported similar issues with the usage of *prepositions* (Qasim, 2013; Ridha, 2012; Smith, 2020).

In terms of errors in article usage, students are found to overuse the definite article *the* in positions where it is required in the Arabic language. As for prepositions, Arab students often used the correct prepositions where equivalents are used in their first language, but they selected the wrong prepositions if the equivalent in their language is not available or is very different from that of the target language. Similar research studies that targeted Arab learners' error analysis illustrated the habit of overusing English definite articles (Abu Rass, 2015; El garras et al, 2025, Ridha, 2012; Shukri, 2014)

Errors in the use of prepositions and articles are prominent among Arab ESL students even at high levels of English proficiency. While overgeneralization and transfer errors compose the vast majority of errors, errors due to students developing proficiency and inadequate understanding only constitute a small fraction of the total errors analyzed in this study. This leads to the conclusion that CA has gained ground over EA theory, at least with respect to this study. However, what this shows is that we are in need of both of these approaches to better understand learners' writing errors. These findings indicate that teachers and researchers in the ESL field need to use a combination of both CA and EA techniques in their analysis of ESL students' errors.

The previous section, under *Background*, dealt with theoretical implications and debate on the extent L1 impacts L2 learning and whether CA or ER is more effective in understanding ESL students' writing errors. According to James (1998), the notion of language transfer was considered an important element in the field of language learning theories. In a review study, Ellis (2006) investigated the validity and accuracy of the position originally adopted by Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis advocates. He conducted a review of several papers in second language acquisition studies and collected evidence that L2 students face real challenges emanating from their first language. Indeed, a number of studies on article system acquisition report that L1 transfer is a key variable in students' writing difficulties, and that L1 interference is at least worthy of investigation (Chambers, 2003; Crompton, 2011; Kesmez, 2015; Peter, 2011).

ESL/EFL teachers should be familiar with findings of error analysis research and acquire a basic understanding of their students' L1 or at least gain a minimum understanding of its syntax and grammar, because these are important steps to understand some of the origins of the language learners' writing errors. Without any knowledge of research in this field, it would be challenging to successfully deal with students' learning difficulties.

5. Conclusion

This study's main goal was to examine common problematic writing issues in Arab ESL learners' academic writing. A key finding hereof is that students' first language interference accounted for most errors. The results that were reported above show that Arab ESL students master some of the basic structures and rules of the English language.

However, their writing errors reveal that they still face some difficulties. This could be because of heavy reliance on their first language. These shortcomings and defects may also be due to a lack of sufficient regular writing practice.

Some of the recurring error patterns include those of article usage, prepositions, subject-verb agreement, auxiliary omission, clauses, word order, etc. These errors are caused by differences in learners' L1 and target language or due to intra-lingual issues. This investigation is not only to shed light on learners' recurring writing errors but also to help language teaching practitioners identify weak or challenging learning areas.

Analyzing ESL students' errors would enable language instructors and language acquisition experts to have a clear perception of where learners encounter learning difficulties. Both approaches of CA and EA offer a lot to course designers and text developers to plan materials which can target learners' writing difficulties and offer remedial exercises for common errors. Teachers are required to keep in touch with academic research in error analysis to use new teaching approaches and incorporate teaching materials that have the potential to help ESL students. Richard et al. (1992) reported that research on ESL students' writing errors is conducted for two purposes. First, understanding the origin or cause of ESL students' common errors. The second is to use these causes and difficulties as a source to develop appropriate teaching remedial materials (qtd. in Abushihab, 2011). In the domain of ESL instruction, errors are inevitable, and they are a natural part of language learning and teaching. Identifying and analyzing these errors are important steps to provide better feedback and effective error correction strategies. In addition, developers of assessment materials can develop and construct activities and tasks in accordance with the most common errors in order to facilitate and remedy students' writing. This paper's focus was to identify and analyze the most common errors committed by Arab ESL students. Future research projects could investigate different recurring errors made by Arab ESL learners in a larger-scale study.

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Conflicts of Interest Statement
The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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