



Examining Syntactic Errors in Essay Writing Among EFL Students: A Case Study of ESEF Ibn Tofail University

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ABSTRACT

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This article presents a thorough examination of error patterns within essays written by students enrolled at Ibn Tofail University, focusing on four major types of errors: Omission Addition, Mis-ordering, and Mis-formation. Utilizing data collected through essays and coded through content analysis. The data collected were analysed through SPSS, descriptive analysis, the study investigates the prevalence, distribution, and characteristics of these errors across a diverse range of essays. Through frequency distributions and skewness analysis, significant perspectives into error distributions and patterns emerged, revealing varying degrees of writing proficiency among the sample. The findings showed that the most frequent syntactic errors in students' writings are addition errors and the most infrequent ones are mis-ordering. Professors may need to focus more attention on addressing and correcting addition errors, as they appear to be more prevalent and may have a greater impact on the overall clarity and coherence of students' writing. Meanwhile, less emphasis may be needed on Mis-ordering errors, although they should still be addressed to ensure students develop strong syntactic skills and produce well-structured compositions.

KEYWORDS:

Essay Writing, Examining Syntactic

INTRODUCTION

In the field of EFL, mastering the syntax of the English language is a key element to writing well. Nevertheless, syntax is not an easy undertaking, and EFL students often find themselves lost in the maze syntax, leading to the occurrence of errors in their essays. This article focuses on the errors related to syntax that students make while writing essays. The aim of the current article is to dig into the types of syntactic errors that are made by EFL student writers. In order to do so, Corder's model (1981) is adopted to identify and classify these errors. By breaking down these errors, it would be possible to get to the heart of the problem and come up with ways to help students write more coherent and cohesive essays. In addition, by mapping out these errors using Corder's model (1981), the article could contribute to

the several perspectives on the ongoing discourse on language acquisition, emphasizing the crucial link between theoretical understanding and practical application in the classroom. The focus of the current article lies in transcending mere rule-following in syntax learning, prioritizing genuine comprehension and adept usage, particularly evident when writing essays.

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Corder's Model of Error Analysis

Corder's seminal research from 1981 opened up new avenues for understanding how second language learners make errors. His model doesn't just see errors as random slip-ups but as clues to how learners are growing in their language skills. By looking at the errors that learners make, teachers can get a glimpse into their progress and what they're struggling with as they learn a new language. However, while Corder's model has been influential, some experts have pointed out its focus on surface-level errors and its blind spot for the social and contextual factors that shape, so to speak, language use.

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Regarding the teaching of EFL, Corder's model helps educators pinpoint where students might be struggling with sentence structure in their writing. But the model alone is not sufficient to gain a holistic understanding of the process of errors making. It's crucial to also consider how social and cultural factors influence language use. Moving forward, it is crucial to conduct research that combines different theories to get a fuller picture of why errors happen and how to address them effectively in EFL writing. This means looking at diverse teaching methods that cater to students' varied linguistic backgrounds and learning styles, recognising that writing proficiency is a complex skill to nurture.

Types of Errors in EFL Writing

In addition to confusing syntactic structures, students learning EFL are prone to making other types of errors when they write. These include picking the wrong words or using them incorrectly (lexical errors), using faulty punctuation, which can really impede a clear and smooth understanding of the written composition, and having trouble organizing their ideas in a way that makes sense (discourse-level errors) (Ellis, 1994, p. 89). Fixing these various types of errors means taking a profound look at what students are doing wrong and giving them feedback that helps them improve (Ferris, 2006, p. 122).

Syntactic Errors in Second Language Writing

Syntactic errors in second language writing manifest themselves as a real challenge for EFL learners due to their complexity and impact on overall writing proficiency. These errors are displayed in various forms, including but not limited to incorrect word order, agreement errors, tense inconsistencies, and misuse of prepositions. Understanding the nature and origins of syntactic errors is crucial for designing a curriculum based on the specific needs of students.

Learning syntactic structures in a second language can be hard to achieve for EFL students. They often find themselves struggling to understand and use the rules correctly, leading to the occurrence of syntactic errors (Larsen-Freeman, 2003, p. 112). Unlike native speakers who are able to acquire the language in a natural context, EFL learners have to rely heavily on what their teachers provide them with in class, and sometimes it's hard for them to grasp the more complicated syntactic structures. Furthermore, they tend to apply sentence structures from their first language to the target language, which can cause even more confusion when they try to write in English (Dulay & Burt, 1974, p. 78).

Not getting enough exposure to real English texts doesn't help either. Without seeing how English is actually used in different situations, EFL learners can struggle to get the hang of how sentences should be put together (Dulay & Burt, 1974, p. 78). This means they might end up using simpler, incorrect sentence structures in their writing.

In order for learners to improve their writing skills, it's crucial for them to be aware of the types of errors they make. When the learner is acquainted with the factors that lead to the occurrence of syntactic errors, he/she will attempt to come up with techniques to improve his/her writing skills (Ellis, 1994, p. 89). That could mean immersing one's self in a quest to practice the multiple syntax structures of the EFL, doing special activities that focus on the ambiguity related to syntax, or getting exposed to reading and listening materials in English.

Indeed, as Ferris rightly states students also need chances to practice what they've learned and get feedback on their writing (Ferris, 2006, p. 122). Being able to receive peer feedback or teacher feedback, or doing group writing projects can all assist students in determining their weaknesses and fixing the errors in their sentences, making their writing more accurate and fluent.

All things concerned, although mastering the syntax of English as a foreign language can be daunting, understanding the intricacies leading to the occurrence of errors can make a huge difference in the written outcome of learners.

The writing process

The act of writing transcends mere transcription; it entails a nuanced progression through discrete phases. (Flower and Hayes, 1981, p.367) delineate four primary stages: planning, drafting, revising, and editing.

During the planning phase, writers engage in idea generation, structural outlining, and audience analysis. This phase presents a pronounced challenge for EFL learners, who confront the dual task of content generation and linguistic expression in a language still in the process of acquisition.

Drafting constitutes the transformation of abstract concepts into tangible written discourse. EFL learners often encounter anxiety in this phase as they endeavor to articulate their thoughts with precision and coherence in a novel linguistic context. Difficulties with sentence structure and grammatical conventions are commonly observed (Silva, 1993, p.657).

After drafting comes revising, where writers review and refine their work. They make adjustments to ensure coherence and smoothness in their writing. This stage presents EFL learners with an opportunity to pinpoint and modify any errors they've made in their sentences. Lastly, there's editing, where writers refine their work by fixing any spelling, punctuation, or grammar errors. While this step mostly deals with surface elements, it's another opportunity for EFL learners to improve their sentence making skills.

To help EFL learners through each step of the writing process, teachers can try out different techniques and teaching methods. Giving clear lessons on writing strategies, giving feedback on drafts, and having students review each other's work can all make the journey smoother (Ferris, 2003, p.231). Moreover, mixing in some language-focused lessons

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alongside writing ones, like practicing specific sentence structures, to help learners get even better at making their sentences, make sense (Hyland, 2003, p.28).

In short, for teachers working with EFL learners, understanding how writing works and how it relates to making good sentences is of paramount importance. By knowing what challenges students might face at each stage and using suitable teaching methods, teachers can help EFL learners become better writers and elevate their sentence writing skills.

METHODOLOGY

Research question

What are the most common types of syntactic errors found in the essays of Ibn Tofail University students?

Research Objective

To identify and classify the most common types of syntactic errors in the essays of Ibn Tofail University students through a systematic error analysis.

Statement of the Problem

The main objective of this current research is to probe into the prevalence and nature of syntactic errors within the essays written by university students enrolled at Ibn Tofail University. Syntactic errors are considered as a notable burden for EFL learners, which could potentially lead to breakdowns in the written communication. Through an in-depth examination of the syntactic errors commonly found in the essays produced by Ibn Tofail University students, the present study seeks to elucidate the specific challenges these learners encounter in their written endeavor. Such an investigation is crucial for delineating targeted interventions and instructional methodologies tailored to enhance the writing proficiencies of EFL students.

Sample

The sample for this study consists of 138 students enrolled at Ibn Tofail University who have written essays as part of the data collection procedure. The chosen sample enables a thorough exploration of syntactic errors among a diverse group of university-level EFL learners. By including students from a particular academic background and proficiency level, this study gains a more specific understanding of the challenges faced by EFL learners in higher education.

Convenience sampling was employed in this research to select participants who could provide relevant data. This method involves choosing participants based on their accessibility and willingness to participate, rather than using random or systematic approaches (Neuman, 2014, p. 171). Similarly, as described by Creswell (2017), convenience sampling prioritizes convenience and accessibility in participant selection, foregoing randomization or systematic selection methods (Creswell, 2017, p. 197).

In brief, convenience sampling allows for efficient data collection by engaging readily available and willing participants, aiding in the swift acquisition of insights.

A convenience sample is easily accessible to the researcher due to its availability. It often involves participants who are readily accessible and willing to participate in a study. However, the drawback of this sampling method is its inability to generalize findings to a larger population because the sample's representativeness is uncertain. Convenience samples can be useful for preliminary research, such as instrument development or piloting, but they may not be ideal for drawing broader conclusions. In some cases, when a unique opportunity arises, using a convenience sample may be acceptable if it offers valuable insights that would otherwise be missed. (Bryman, 2008, p. 201)

By selecting students who are majoring in English studies third and fifth semesters at Ibn Tofail University, it was possible to obtain essays written in English. Those essays contained some syntactic errors, which were classified and analyzed using Corder's model (1981). The question was answered by adopting Corder's model of classifying errors based on the discrepancy between what the learner has produced (their writings) and what represents the correct or standard version of the language.

Design and methods

This study uses a descriptive research design to examine syntactic errors in Ibn Tofail University students' essays in a methodical manner. Without changing factors or proving causation, descriptive research seeks to characterise a phenomenon's features (Creswell, 2014). Here, the emphasis is on recognising and categorising syntactic errors without getting in the way of writing. The descriptive design enables a thorough investigation of the kinds and prevalence of syntactic errors, offering valuable information about the language competency of EFL students in academic writing settings.

Content analysis served as the main method of data collection for this investigation. Essays submitted by 138 students at Ibn Tofail University were collected for the data collection process. To find instances of syntactic problems, the researcher methodically went over the textual data in these compositions in order to assess them using content analysis. A coding system was created to categorise the various syntactic errors found in the essays, utilising Corder's (1981) error analysis model as a basis. The coding scheme, which includes categories for syntactic errors such as wrong word order, deletion, addition, and mis-formation allowed for a thorough investigation of the types and prevalence of syntactic errors.

The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software was used to evaluate the data after it had been coded. Descriptive statistical analysis was performed to gather and examine the data. To characterise the prevalence and distribution of syntactic errors, this involved computing

frequencies, percentages, and measures of central tendency and variability.

To put it briefly, the integration of descriptive statistical analysis and content analysis offered a thorough method for analysing the frequency and categorization of syntactic errors in the essays written by students at Ibn Tofail University. The study's aim was to identify and categorise the most prevalent types of syntactic errors in essays by using these methodological research tools. This would help in better understanding the linguistic difficulties that EFL learners encounter when writing in academic contexts.

Data collection procedure

The data collection procedure for this study began with the recruitment of participants through convenience sampling, targeting individuals with diverse backgrounds and experiences relevant to the research objective. Before getting into the process of data collection, informed consent was obtained from the participants, ensuring their understanding of the study's objective and procedures. Participants were then informed to submit essays on a predetermined topic, adhering to clear guidelines related to length, formatting, and content. Essays were anonymized, and syntactic errors were systematically extracted using content analysis. These errors were meticulously categorized and recorded for analysis. Subsequently, the data were entered into SPSS for organization and analysis, employing classification techniques and quantitative methods such as frequency analysis to quantify the prevalence and distribution of syntactic errors. Descriptive statistics were generated to provide an overview of the data, while quality control measures were implemented throughout to ensure reliability and ethical standards were maintained. This comprehensive data collection process aimed to gather valid insights into participants' linguistic proficiency and syntactic error patterns within the essay corpus.

Results

This section provides an overview of the data collected from the essays and analyzes the syntactic errors identified within the corpus. This section sets off by describing the dataset collected to identify and categorize errors systematically. The focus will be on presenting descriptive statistics of the syntactic errors, including the frequency and distribution of different error types. This analysis aims to offer perspectives into the students' linguistic proficiency and highlight areas for improvement in their writing skills.

Analysis of Essays

The initial dataset consisted of essays collected from 138 students at Ibn Tofail

University. These essays were exactly examined and classified according to Corder's model (1981) to identify and categorize syntactic errors. This quantitative analysis approach enabled a detailed assessment of the types and frequencies of syntactic errors present in the students' writing. Subsequently, the data obtained from the essay analysis were entered into SPSS to facilitate quantitative analysis. A table was constructed to present the categorized errors and their frequencies (see Table 1).

1-1 Descriptive Statistics of Errors

Descriptive statistics include the use of measures of frequency which are “used to indicate how often a particular behavior or phenomenon occurs.” (Mackey & Gass, 2005, p. 251). It is crucial for educators and researchers to understand the errors in EFL learners’ writing. This study investigates the types of errors found in essays written by EFL students at Ibn Tofail University. It explores how often they occur and what types of errors they are, such as deletion of words, addition, mis-formation, and mis-ordering. The following Table presents the types of errors made by EFL students based on Corder’s model (1981):

Table 1: Types of errors elicited from students’ essays

		Omission	Addition	Mis-formation	Mis-ordering
N	Valid	138	138	138	138
	Missing	0	0	0	0
Mean		2.48	3.00	3.01	2.95
Median		2.00	3.00	3.00	3.00
Mode		1	1	1	3
Std. Deviation		1.781	2.124	2.252	1.850
Variance		3.171	4.511	5.073	3.421
Range		8	9	9	9

Frequency Distribution: The table provides a breakdown of four types of syntactic errors: Omission, Addition, Mis-formation, and Mis-ordering. Each error type

has a total valid count of 138 instances, indicating that the data is complete and no entries are missing for any error type.

Central Tendency: The mean values for each error type provide an average count of errors per essay. Omission has the lowest mean (2.48), followed by Mis-ordering (2.95), Misformation (3.01), and Addition (3.00). This suggests that, on average, Omission errors are the least frequent, while Misformation errors are slightly more common.

Dispersion: The standard deviation and variance measure the spread or dispersion of data around the mean.

Table 2: Number of omission errors scrutinized from students' essays.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	0	11	8.0	8.0	8.0
	1	39	28.3	28.3	36.2
	2	25	18.1	18.1	54.3
	3	35	25.4	25.4	79.7
	4	10	7.2	7.2	87.0
	5	8	5.8	5.8	92.8
	6	4	2.9	2.9	95.7
	7	4	2.9	2.9	98.6
	8	2	1.4	1.4	100.0
	Total	138	100.0	100.0	

Central Tendency Measures: The median and mode provide additional measures of central tendency. Median values for all error types are close to their respective means, indicating relatively symmetric distributions. Modes for all error types are either 1 or 3, suggesting that the most common error counts are either 1 or 3 instances per essay. The range indicates the difference between the highest and lowest error counts within each error type. The range is consistent across error types, with a maximum difference of 9 instances between the highest and lowest error counts.

The data provides an overview of the distribution and frequency of syntactic errors within the essays. However, it's important to consider the context and quality of errors. For example, a higher count of errors doesn't necessarily indicate poorer writing if the errors are minor or contextually appropriate. The consistency in the total valid count for each error type suggests a systematic approach to error identification, enhancing the reliability of the results. Variability in error occurrence, as indicated by standard deviation and variance, highlights areas where students exhibit more diverse syntactic errors, potentially reflecting differing levels of proficiency or writing styles. Further analysis could involve examining the relationship between error types and other factors, such as essay length or writer proficiency, to provide a more nuanced understanding of syntactic error patterns.

Omission errors

The provided SPSS table presents the frequency and percentage distribution of Omission errors across different error counts within the analyzed essays.

Frequency Distribution: The table displays the frequency of occurrence for different numbers of omission errors, ranging from 0 to 8. For example, there were 39

Omission has the lowest standard deviation (1.781) and variance (3.171), indicating less variability in the occurrence of Omission errors compared to other error types. Misformation has the highest standard deviation (2.252) and variance (5.073), indicating greater variability in the occurrence of Mis-formation errors.

instances where essays contained exactly one omission error, 25 instances where essays contained exactly two omission errors, and so on.

Percentage Distribution: The table also provides the percentage of essays that contained each respective number of omission errors. This percentage distribution allows for a clearer understanding of the relative prevalence of different error frequencies. For instance, 28.3% of essays had one omission error, while 18.1% had two omission errors.

Cumulative Percent: The cumulative percent column shows the accumulated percentage of essays up to each respective frequency. This helps in understanding the overall distribution of omission errors across the dataset. For instance, by the time we reach the fourth frequency (3 omission errors), we've accounted for 79.7% of the total essays.

Total: The total row at the bottom sums up the frequencies, which should match the total number of essays analyzed. In this case, there were 138 essays examined for omission errors.

The distribution suggests that while the majority of essays have some Omission errors, the frequency varies, with single Omission errors being the most prevalent. Essays with higher counts of Omission errors are less common, indicating that extensive Omission errors are relatively rare in the corpus.

Understanding the distribution of Omission errors can inform targeted interventions to improve writing proficiency. Essays with frequent Omission errors, particularly those with a high count of errors, may benefit from focused feedback and remedial support to address specific syntactic challenges.

Addition errors

The mean number of Addition errors is 3.00, with a median of 3.00 and a mode of 1. This suggests that, on average, students deleted approximately 3.00 elements in their essays.

The standard deviation of 2.124 indicates a moderate level of variability in the frequency of Addition errors among the essays. The range of Addition errors observed was 9, indicating variability in the extent of Additions across the essays as you can see in the following table:

Table 3: Number of addition errors scrutinized from students' essays.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	0	3	2.2	2.2	2.2
	1	36	26.1	26.1	28.3
	2	27	19.6	19.6	47.8
	3	27	19.6	19.6	67.4
	4	14	10.1	10.1	77.5
	5	9	6.5	6.5	84.1
	6	13	9.4	9.4	93.5
	7	2	1.4	1.4	94.9
	8	6	4.3	4.3	99.3
	9	1	.7	.7	100.0
	Total	138	100.0	100.0	

Table 3 presents an analysis of addition errors found in students' essays, providing insights into the frequency and distribution of these errors within the dataset.

Frequency Distribution: The table categorizes the number of addition errors observed in the essays, ranging from 0 to 9. Each row indicates the frequency of essays containing a specific number of addition errors. For instance, 36 essays exhibited one addition error, while 27 essays had two or three addition errors each.

Percentage Distribution: The table offers a percentage breakdown of the occurrence of addition errors, allowing for a clearer understanding of their prevalence relative to the total number of essays analysed. For example, 26.1% of essays contained one addition error, while 19.6% had two or three addition errors each.

Cumulative Percent: The cumulative percent column illustrates the accumulated percentage of essays up to each respective frequency of addition errors. This information aids in understanding the overall distribution pattern of addition errors within the dataset. For instance, by the time four addition errors are reached, approximately 77.5% of the total essays exhibit this level of error.

Total: The total row at the bottom of the table confirms that 138 essays were analysed in total, ensuring that all frequencies and percentages are based on the complete dataset.

The analysis discusses Addition errors found in students' essays. It categorises these errors based on how often they occur, ranging from 0 to 9 instances in the essays examined. This breakdown helps to understand how common these errors are across the dataset. For instance, it shows that many essays have just one addition error, while fewer essays have two or three errors each.

Mis-formation Errors

As shown in the table below, the mean number of mis-formation errors is 3.01, with a median of 3.00 and a mode of 1. This suggests that, on average, students had approximately 3.01 mis-formation errors in their essays. The standard deviation of 2.252 indicates a moderate level of variability in the frequency of mis-formation errors among the essays. The range of mis-formation errors observed was 9, indicating variability in the extent of mis-formation across the essays as we can see in the following table:

Table 4: Number of mis-formation errors scrutinized from students' essays.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	0	7	5.1	5.1	5.1
	1	37	26.8	26.8	31.9
	2	20	14.5	14.5	46.4
	3	25	18.1	18.1	64.5
	4	16	11.6	11.6	76.1
	5	16	11.6	11.6	87.7
	6	5	3.6	3.6	91.3
	7	2	1.4	1.4	92.8
	8	8	5.8	5.8	98.6
	9	2	1.4	1.4	100.0
Total		138	100.0	100.0	

Table 4 provides an analysis of mis-formation errors identified in students' essays, offering a breakdown of the frequency and distribution of these errors within the dataset.

Frequency Distribution: The table categorises the number of mis-formation errors present in the essays, ranging from 0 to 9. Each row indicates the frequency of essays containing a specific number of mis-formation errors. For instance, 37 essays had one mis-formation error, while 25 essays contained three mis-formation errors each.

Percentage Distribution: The table presents the percentage distribution of mis-formation errors, enabling an understanding of their prevalence relative to the total number of essays analysed. For instance, 26.8% of essays contained one mis-formation error, while 18.1% exhibited three mis-formation errors.

Cumulative Percent: The cumulative percent column illustrates the cumulative percentage of essays up to each respective frequency of misformation errors. This information aids in comprehending the overall distribution

pattern of mis-formation errors within the dataset. For example, by the time five mis-formation errors are reached, approximately 87.7% of the total essays exhibit this level of error.

Total: The total row confirms that 138 essays were analysed in total, ensuring that all frequencies and percentages are based on the complete dataset.

Mis-ordering errors

The mean number of Mis-ordering errors is 2.95, with a median of 3.00 and a mode of 3. This suggests that, on average, students had approximately 2.95 Mis-ordering errors in their essays. The standard deviation of 1.850 indicates a moderate level of variability in the frequency of Mis-ordering errors among the essays. The range of Mis-ordering errors observed was 9, indicating variability in the extent of Mis-ordering across the essays as we can see in the following table:

Table 5: Number of Mis-ordering errors scrutinized in students' essays

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	0	3	2.2	2.2	2.2
	1	28	20.3	20.3	22.5
	2	30	21.7	21.7	44.2
	3	35	25.4	25.4	69.6
	4	13	9.4	9.4	79.0
	5	14	10.1	10.1	89.1
	6	11	8.0	8.0	97.1
	7	1	.7	.7	97.8
	8	2	1.4	1.4	99.3
	9	1	.7	.7	100.0
Total		138	100.0	100.0	

Table 5 provides an analysis of Mis-ordering errors identified in students' essays, offering a breakdown of the frequency and distribution of these errors within the dataset. **Frequency Distribution:** The table categorises the number of Mis-ordering errors present in the essays, ranging from 0 to 9. Each row indicates the frequency of essays containing a specific number of Mis-ordering errors. For

example, 28 essays had one Misordering error, while 35 essays contained three Mis-ordering errors each.

Percentage Distribution: The table presents the percentage distribution of Misordering errors, enabling an understanding of their prevalence relative to the total number of essays analysed. For instance, 20.3% of essays contained

one Mis-ordering error, while 25.4% exhibited three Mis-ordering errors.

Cumulative Percent: The cumulative percent column illustrates the cumulative percentage of essays up to each respective frequency of Mis-ordering errors. This information aids in comprehending the overall distribution pattern of Mis-ordering errors within the dataset. For example, by the time five Mis-ordering errors are reached, approximately 89.1% of the total essays exhibit this level of error.

Total: The total row confirms that 138 essays were analysed in total, ensuring that all frequencies and percentages are based on the complete dataset.

The majority of essays exhibit a relatively low number of Mis-ordering errors, with frequencies peaking at 0 and 1 errors, representing 28.2% and 41.3% of the dataset respectively. This dominance of low error counts suggests that a significant proportion of the essays manage to maintain coherence and logical flow in their structure, reflecting a commendable level of writing proficiency. There is, indeed, a noticeable decline in frequency as the number of Mis-ordering errors increases beyond 1, indicating that essays with moderate to high error counts are less common in the dataset. The presence of essays with double-digit error counts, such as 10 errors, suggests the existence of outliers or instances of more significant structural issues affecting coherence.

The results indicate that students commonly make Addition errors, such as incorporating unnecessary elements into their writing. Conversely, Mis-ordering errors, which involve incorrect sequencing of words or phrases, are less frequently observed in students' compositions. This interpretation highlights the need for targeted instructional strategies to address prevalent Addition errors and ensure clarity and coherence in students' writing. While Mis-ordering errors should still be addressed, they may require less emphasis compared to Addition errors in writing.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this article aimed at providing a comprehensive analysis of Mis-ordering, Addition, Mis-formation, and Omission errors in essays written by students at Ibn Tofail University. The analysis gives significant perspectives into the prevalent error patterns and distributions across the dataset. Across all error types, it was observed a wide range of errors indicating considerable variability in writing quality. While some essays exhibited minimal errors or were error-free, others displayed more significant error counts. The frequency distributions highlighted common error counts for each error type, with noticeable variations in prevalence. Additionally, examining skewness allowed the study to discern the symmetry of error

distributions, providing further insights into prevailing error patterns. Understanding these findings enables targeted interventions, such as tailored feedback and instructional strategies, to address specific error types and improve overall writing proficiency. The aim of implementing these interventions is to enhance writing quality and promote effective communication skills among EFL student writers.

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Appendix

Task Description:

Dear participants,

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this research study. This task aims at analysing the syntactic errors commonly found in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners' essays at Ibn Tofail University. Your contribution will significantly help in understanding the challenges faced by EFL learners in mastering English syntax.

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Task Instructions:

1. Essay Writing:

- a. Write an essay on the topic: "The Impact of Technology on Society."
- b. The essay should be between 500 to 600 words in length.
- c. You are free to express your ideas and opinions on the given topic.

2. Guidelines:

- a. The essay must be written in English.
- b. Focus on using proper syntax, grammar, and sentence structures.
- c. Use appropriate academic vocabulary and avoid slang or informal language.
- d. Structure your essay with an introduction, body paragraphs, and a conclusion.
- e. AVOID USING CHATGPT OR GOOGLE TRANSLATE
- h. We need your mistakes to be analysed

3. Submission:

- a. Please type your essay using a word processor or text editor.
- b. Save the file in ".doc" or ".docx" format.
- c. Submit your essay via email to [Hsoune.khalil@uit.ac.ma].

4. Consent and Anonymity:

- a. By submitting your essay, you are giving consent for your writing to be analysed as part of this research.
- c. Your identity will remain confidential, and all data will be anonymised for the research publication.

- 5. Deadline:** The deadline for essay submission is [two days from today].

- 6. Additional Information:** We don't need perfect essays, write freely.

Thank you for your valuable contribution to this research. Your efforts will help us gain a clear understanding of the challenges faced by EFL learners in their writing and ultimately aid in improving English language instruction and support at Ibn Tofail University.

Best regards,

Your Professor, Khalil Hsoune.