Abstract

Learning English becomes more and more important nowadays since we know English is one of the international languages, which can be used to communicate around the world. In Yemen, English is learned / taught as a foreign language. Learning a language is sometimes difficult since the target language (English) has different elements compared to the native language (Arabic). These differences sometimes cause students to make errors when speaking or writing it.

This study aimed to investigate the students’ interlanguage in grammar. There will be syntactic errors, relevant to interlingual / intralingual interference committed by Yemeni university students. The purpose of the study was to find out the types of errors Yemeni university students commit in their writing and the source of errors that influenced during their writing.

The appropriate literatures on error analysis were completely reviewed in the second chapter. Both Contrastive and error analyses were employed to analyse the erroneous sentences and phrases that were extracted from the students’ compositions. The subjects participating in this study were 200 Yemeni students. To conduct this study, 200 compositions written by the students of English were used for the analysis. All the errors were identified, classified and explained in terms of their types, and in terms of the source of interference i.e. interlingual and intralingual. The grammatical errors were classified into
eight types such as addition of unnecessary elements, omission of necessary elements, fragmentation sentences, selection of appropriate word, structure of sentence, simplification in using the verb form, word order and subject-verb agreement. Under the addition of unnecessary elements and omission of necessary elements, the errors were mostly in the use of articles, in the use of modal verb, in the use of linking verbs.

From the result of the chapter four, it can be concluded that the Yemeni university students made 831 grammatical errors. Based on the statistical analysis of the data, it was found that the greatest number of error types was on omission errors. The amount of this type of error was 31.5%. The second major type of error was on the structure of sentence and the amount of this was 23.2%. It was then followed by the error on subject-verb agreement with 13.2%. The fourth major type of error was addition error with 12.5%. 7.6% of errors were found on selection of word, 5.4% on simplification, 5.2% on word order and 1.3% on sentence fragment.

In addition, it can be concluded that the causes of errors were interlingual and intralingual interference. There were 24.5% of errors caused by interlingual interference (mother tongue interference) and 75.5% of errors caused by intralingual interference (overgeneralization and developmental errors).

An analysis of the errors suggests that students commit more errors due to the development of the target language (intralingual interference) and less errors due to the mother tongue of the learners (interlingual interference)
These findings indicated that the students’ competence to write grammatically correct sentences in English was quite low. Therefore, more practice should be given on improving the students’ skill in writing grammatically correct sentences.