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Grammatical Error Analysis in the Academic Writing of English Language First-Year College Students

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to investigate the written discourse of college students in Iraq and identify the frequent grammatical errors they make. A mixed-methods design was adopted for the investigation. A non-random convenience sample was used. Quantitative data from 110 compositions written by first-year university students in the Department of English, College of Education for Humanities, University of Anbar, were collected following their admission for the academic year 2023–2024. An interview was also conducted in order to triangulate the data. James' grammar error framework and Corder's error analysis model were used to analyze the compositions. Besides, Brown's taxonomy was employed to categorize the various types of errors. The findings revealed that the most frequent errors committed in the compositions under investigation were the use of verb tenses, articles, and prepositions and this represent a major area of difficulty for the students. They also showed that the addition and omission types of errors were frequently common in the performance of students under study when writing their compositions. The study infers that interlanguage was the primary source of these errors. Pedagogically, the findings of this paper imply the necessity of explicit grammar instruction and the focused error feedback to improve the students' performance when writing their compositions. In particular, these

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targeted interventions can significantly enhance students' academic writing skills, equipping them with greater accuracy and confidence in producing coherent and well-structured texts.

1. Introduction

The method of acquiring linguistic competence through composition has consistently been regarded as a persistent challenge for a significant number of students, particularly those acquiring English as a second language or learners from diverse linguistic backgrounds[1] English variants—notably British and American English—are considered standard models in many countries worldwide. Theoretical research in second language acquisition has shown that many grammatical difficulties stem from structural mismatches between learners' first and target languages. In the case of Iraqi EFL learners, Arabic and English differ significantly in several core grammatical areas. For instance, Arabic lacks an equivalent article system to English, resulting in frequent omission or overuse of "a", "an", or "the". Additionally, Arabic verbs follow a root-pattern morphology and tend not to mark tense through auxiliary verbs, unlike English, which contributes to tense-related mistakes such as "He go yesterday" instead of "He went yesterday". Word order also varies: while English follows a strict Subject-Verb-Object pattern, Arabic permits more flexibility, leading to errors in sentence structure and subject-verb agreement. These systemic contrasts contribute to both interlanguage errors—rooted in negative L1 transfer—and intralanguage errors, where learners overgeneralize L2 rules due to developmental gaps. Acknowledging these theoretical differences provides a crucial foundation for understanding the kinds of errors Iraqi students are likely to make.

The preference for a particular variety has often been determined by historical factors, especially colonial influence from either the United States or the United Kingdom[2]. Minor grammatical inaccuracies can frequently undermine the intended meaning of a communicative act[3]. When such errors persist, misunderstandings may arise, which subsequently lead to delays in comprehension and frustration on the part of the sender, who struggles to convey the intended message effectively to the recipient[4]. Consequently, questions are raised regarding the pedagogical effectiveness of instructors. While the coherence and comprehensibility of written discourse should arguably take precedence over strict grammatical accuracy, there remains a pressing need to address syntactic complexity, especially given English's global function as a medium of communication in nearly all domains[5]. Accordingly, the ability to use English in an appropriate and socially acceptable manner has become a significant competitive advantage in both academic and professional contexts[6,7].

Various Arab scholars, in the context of foreign language teaching, have directed their attention to the linguistic errors made by students across diverse learning environments. In the process of learning English, Arab learners encounter a range of challenges, which have been the subject of multiple studies[8]. For example, Rababah argued that Arab learners of English encounter difficulties in both speaking and writing[9]. Rababah investigated these difficulties by identifying the common types of errors associated with both language production and usage[10]. In this regard, Corder asserted that error analysis constitutes a critical component in understanding the language learning process[11]. This is because errors offer insight into learners' linguistic development and provide indicators of the learning strategies employed in the acquisition process[12].

A solid command of a language's grammar is one of the foundational elements of effective writing. Despite the long-standing emphasis on communication skills (CS) in the national curriculum, many individuals—especially those in communities where graduates enter the workforce immediately after graduation—report that numerous graduates struggle to communicate effectively in either spoken or written English. This suggests that the instructional goals related to communication skills have not been fully realized. The majority of students, both before and after graduation, continue to exhibit limited communicative competence in English as a second language (L2), as previously argued. Moreover, some scholars maintain that non-native English speakers face considerably greater challenges in succeeding academically at the tertiary level in English-speaking coun-

tries, even when they have studied English and academic writing both in their home countries and abroad. Therefore, this issue constitutes a significant challenge not only for students studying domestically but also for those pursuing education internationally.

So far, the aforementioned studies have demonstrated a strong positive correlation between students' academic performance and their grammatical and writing proficiency. Even after receiving instruction in technical fields such as computer science, it is widely believed that many university students remain unable to communicate effectively in English, either orally or in writing. This persists despite the training they have received. Through an analysis of the prevailing grammatical errors found in the written discourse of Iraqi learners, this study aimed to adopt a systematic approach to addressing this issue.

The significance of this study lies in its potential to provide valuable insight into the strategies employed by Iraqi university students in acquiring English writing skills. By identifying the syntactic errors made during written composition, the researcher can better understand these strategies. Moreover, the errors identified in this study can function as diagnostic tools, enabling the identification of core grammatical challenges that Iraqi students encounter in their writing. This, in turn, would allow these error patterns to become focal points for instructional intervention in English language education for Iraqi learners. Additionally, from a pedagogical perspective, this study will equip English language instructors in Iraq with information about the linguistic difficulties learners face at various stages of their second language acquisition process. This information can inform the design of appropriate curricula and the development of targeted instructional materials.

In light of this, the present study posed the following research question: What are the most frequent types of grammatical errors in the English writing of Iraqi students, and to what extent are these errors attributable to interlanguage and intralanguage sources?

2. Literature Review

The literature review likely includes research on writing challenges among students learning English as a second or foreign language, with a particular emphasis on studies pertaining to Iraqi students. In this sense, a significant study was conducted by Nasser[13] to examine the challenges that Iraqi students of English as a foreign language encounter when composing papers. He investigated the factors that influence writing proficiency, such as language transfer, interference, and levels of proficiency. It would have been beneficial for the review to include and discuss the role that instruction and feedback play in addressing writing challenges and improving writing abilities among students of English as a foreign language. Data were collected through a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods, including analysis of written compositions from Iraqi EFL students and semi-structured interviews to explore the contextual and instructional factors affecting their writing. The study likely utilized a sample of Iraqi college students, with compositions analyzed for linguistic and rhetorical features. The qualitative data from interviews provided insights into students' perceptions of their writing challenges, while quantitative analysis may have included error frequency counts or proficiency assessments. The study drew on theoretical frameworks related to language transfer and second language acquisition to contextualize the findings. The findings revealed that Iraqi EFL students face significant challenges in writing due to language transfer from Arabic, which affects syntactic structures and lexical choices. Interference from the native language was identified as a primary factor contributing to errors in sentence structure and cohesion.

Another important study was made by Mohammed and Abdalhussein[14], in which they explored the grammatical errors committed by Iraqi postgraduate students in their academic writing. The study reviewed prior research on error analysis in ESL/EFL contexts to provide a theoretical foundation. In this regard, they discussed various theories and models of error analysis, as well as prior research that examined grammatical issues in academic writing and the importance of addressing these errors for language learning and instruction. More specifically, they focused on Iraqi students who were enrolled at UKM (Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia). For the purpose of providing background material and contextualizing their work, the authors most likely reviewed past research on error analysis, particularly in the context of English as a Second Language (Henceforth ESL) or English as Foreign Language (Henceforth EFL) learners. The study adopted a mixed-methods design, utilizing Corder's error

analysis model[11] and James' framework of grammatical errors[15] to systematically identify and categorize errors. The sample consisted of 15 Iraqi postgraduate students from the Faculty of Information, whose written academic texts were collected and analyzed. Additionally, semi-structured interviews were conducted for triangulation to gain deeper insights into the causes of errors. The analysis also incorporated Brown's taxonomy[16] to classify error types, focusing on grammatical issues such as verb tense, agreement, and prepositions. The analysis revealed that Iraqi postgraduate students committed frequent grammatical errors, with the most prevalent issues occurring in the use of prepositions, verb tenses, and articles. The findings indicated that these errors were largely attributable to native language interference (Arabic) and limited exposure to academic writing conventions in English.

Reishaan's study[17] focused on the written work of advanced Iraqi students of EFL. During the course of the literature review, it is highly focused on the tense usage in ESL/EFL contexts, with particular emphasis on studies related to Iraqi learners. The methodology likely involved collecting writing samples from advanced EFL learners, possibly at the university level. The study may also have incorporated classroom observations or teacher interviews to assess pedagogical practices. Reishaan examined the typical errors and challenges that EFL learners face in acquiring tense usage. In this sense, the study emphasized instructional methods and strategies used for teaching and learning tenses, applying theoretical frameworks related to tense acquisition and second language development. The findings indicated that advanced Iraqi EFL students struggled with accurate tense usage, particularly in maintaining consistency across complex sentence structures. Common errors included incorrect application of past, present, and future tenses, often influenced by Arabic's different tense system. The study identified that these challenges stemmed from both linguistic interference and gaps in instructional approaches. Reishaan emphasized the critical role of explicit tense instruction and practice in improving students' written communication. The results suggested that targeted pedagogical strategies, such as contextualized exercises and feedback on tense usage, could significantly enhance learners' ability to use tenses accurately in academic writing.

Al-Shujairi and Tan[18] investigated the grammatical errors committed by Iraqi EFL students' writing. They examined studies addressing the impact of grammatical errors on academic performance and language proficiency, as well as strategies for error correction and language instruction. The study collected 112 compositions from Iraqi pre-university students through convenience sampling. These compositions were analyzed using Corder's error analysis model[11] and James' framework[15] to identify and categorize grammatical errors. For triangulation, semi-structured interviews were conducted with a subset of students to explore the causes of errors and their perceptions of writing challenges. Brown's taxonomy[16] was employed to classify error types, focusing on issues such as verb tenses, articles, and prepositions. The study reviewed prior research on grammatical errors in ESL/EFL writing to contextualize the findings, with a particular focus on the impact of errors on academic performance and language proficiency. The analysis revealed that Iraqi high school students exhibited significant challenges with grammatical accuracy, particularly in the use of verb tenses, articles, and prepositions. These errors were attributed to native language interference and limited exposure to English academic writing conventions. The interviews highlighted students' lack of confidence in writing and insufficient instructional focus on error correction as contributing factors. The study found that grammatical errors negatively impacted academic performance and overall language proficiency, emphasizing the need for targeted error correction strategies.

Khalaf and Fadhil[19] focused on identifying and categorizing errors in the written discourse of Iraqi EFL learners and proposed potential correction strategies. In their study, 20 essays written by third-year students from the Department of English at the University of Anbar were analyzed to identify these errors. The methodology involved a detailed error analysis based on established frameworks, likely including Corder's error analysis model[11], to categorize errors into lexical, syntactic, and other types. The study focused on identifying the sources of errors, particularly the influence of native language interference and challenges inherent in learning English as a second language. The analysis was contextualized with a review of prior research on error analysis and second language writing challenges, emphasizing strategies for error correction and language instruction. The analysis of the written discourse revealed that the errors stemmed from

the challenges of learning English as a second language and from native language interference. The most notable finding of the study is that Iraqi EFL learners committed more lexical and syntactic errors than other types of errors with frequent issues in word choice, sentence structure, and agreement. These errors were primarily attributed to interference from Arabic and the complexities of English syntactic rules. The study highlighted that challenges in learning English as a second language, such as limited vocabulary and unfamiliarity with English sentence patterns, significantly contributed to these errors.

All in all, despite a great deal of studies has been conducted to investigate strong positive correlation between students' academic performance and their grammatical and writing proficiency, little may be said on the grammatical errors committed by Iraqi undergraduate university students, namely, those of the first stage. To fill this gap, the present study was conducted.

3. Methods

A mixed-method research design was adopted in this study. Quantitative data were collected through a written test to identify the most common types of grammatical errors in university students' writing using frequency counts. To complement this, qualitative data were gathered through interviews, and an error analysis was conducted to explore the underlying factors contributing to the occurrence of these errors.

3.1. Sampling

The sample for this exploration comprised 110 distinct compositions written by first-year university students from the Department of English, College of Education for Humanities, University of Anbar, located in Ramadi City, Anbar Governorate, Iraq. A total of 11,550 words was included in the entire dataset. On average, each composition contains 109 words. Over the course of 12 years of formal education, the students have been studying English as a foreign language. This study did not consider aspects such as gender or age, although the participants were between 20 and 25 years old. The financial status, linguistic background, and educational experience of the participants are largely comparable.

3.2. Data Collection

Using written test, the students under investigation were asked to write a composition on assigned topics of Christmas such as: *An Interesting Journey*, and *Professional Achievement*. For ethical clearance, a consent letter was submitted to head of the department of English as well as the students to get permission and collect data. After receiving permission, the students were asked to sit for the test and write a composition of not more than 120 words and to finish during 1 hour. A total of 110 essays were collected from Iraqi first-year university students in the Department of English, College of Education for Humanities, University of Anbar, located in Ramadi City, Anbar Governorate, Iraq. The topics of compositions are primarily descriptive.

For analysis, the researchers compiled all compositions into a single Microsoft Word document[20]. In addition, interviews were conducted to collect supplementary data. Interviews were held with seven selected participants to determine whether they transferred grammatical structures from their first language when writing in the target language. Indirect questions were used during the interviews to elicit spontaneous responses from the participants.

Example 1: It was a really exhausting trip. You have this sentence in your writing. Specifically, what were you attempting to say? Or, what did you mean when you said this?

Example 2: He wants to purchase a vehicle. Do you believe the verb "want" needs an extra "s"? If so, why?

3.3. Analytical Framework

To identify the syntactic errors committed by students in their compositions, the framework of grammatical categories developed by James[15] was employed. The nine categories James used to classify errors were as follows: prepositions, articles, singular/plural forms, adjectives, irregular verbs, tenses, concord, active/passive voice, and the possessive case. Before commencing the analysis of the data, the researchers conducted a pilot study on ten samples of the compositions written by the students. As a result, it was found that students made errors in the majority of the syntactic categories included in James' framework. However, there was no use of the passive voice in the students' written compositions. This may be due to the descriptive nature

of the content they were asked to produce. In light of this, the passive voice category was excluded from the adopted framework. The linguistic categories analyzed in this study are listed below in **Table 1**.

Table 1. James' Framework [15] of Grammatical Categories.

Grammatical Errors	Example
Preposition	(Wrong) I am excited for go to the beach on Saturday (Correct) I am excited to go to the beach on Saturday
Article	(Wrong) I am excited for visit the beach on Saturday (Correct) I am excited to visit the beach on Saturday
Singular/Plural	(Wrong)I am excited to visits the beach on Saturday (Correct)I am excited to visit the beach on Saturday
Adjectives	(Wrong) I am excited to go to the beautiful beach on Saturday. (Correct) I am excited to go to the sandy beach on Saturday
Irregular Verbs	(Wrong) I am excited to goed to the beach on Saturday (Correct) I am excited to go to the beach on Saturday
Tenses	(Wrong) I am excited to went to the beach on Saturday (Correct)I am excited to go to the beach on Saturday.
Concord	(Wrong) I am excited to go to the beachs on Saturday. (Correct) I am excited to go to the beach on Saturday.
Possessive Case	(Wrong) I am excited to visit my friend's house on Saturday (Correct) I am excited to visit my friend's house on Saturday.

3.4. Data Analysis

It ought to be noted that much of the work on error analysis has been conducted within the classroom context. There is no doubt that instructional remediation was the intended outcome. In the present study, a framework was employed to examine grammatical deficiencies. According to James' model, the process of conducting an error analysis consists of five fundamental steps: collecting the data, identifying the errors, classifying the errors, evaluating the errors, and analyzing their sources.

To begin, each student's paper was examined according to the eight grammatical categories previously discussed. Despite the limitations of the coding system, the researchers were able to identify recurring errors in the students' writing by marking them with specific symbols. For example, the letter t represents errors in tense, while the letter c indicates issues with subject-verb agreement. Subsequently, the errors identified in the students' papers were classified according to the characteristics of each specific error. The next step was to determine the frequency of each grammatical category, as well as the proportion represented by each category.

4. Results

The information given in **Table 2** and **Figure 1** illustrate the frequency and proportion of grammatical mistakes in students' composition papers across different categories. Articles stood out as the most common category among these errors, accounting for 18.1% of all errors found. This indicates that using articles correctly in writing is a significant area of difficulty for Iraqi first-year university students. Prepositions and irregular verbs each accounted for 13.6% of the errors, closely behind, indicating challenges with prepositional use and irregular verb forms. The percentage of errors in concord and singular/plural, and possessive case errors were 12.7%, 10%, and 10.9%, respectively. These numbers indicate difficulties in preserving subject-verb agreement and verb consistency. Less commonly, errors involving adjectives and tenses were found to be 9.09% and 10.9%, respectively. The aforementioned data emphasizes the intricate and varied grammatical difficulties encountered by Iraqi students in their scholarly writing, underscoring the necessity of focused teaching and assistance in these domains to augment their language competence and communication aptitude.

Table 2. Frequency of Grammatical Error Analysis.

Categories of Grammatical Errors	Frequency	Percentage
Preposition	15	13.6
Article	20	18.1
Singular/Plural	11	10
Adjectives	10	9.09

Table 2. *Cont.*

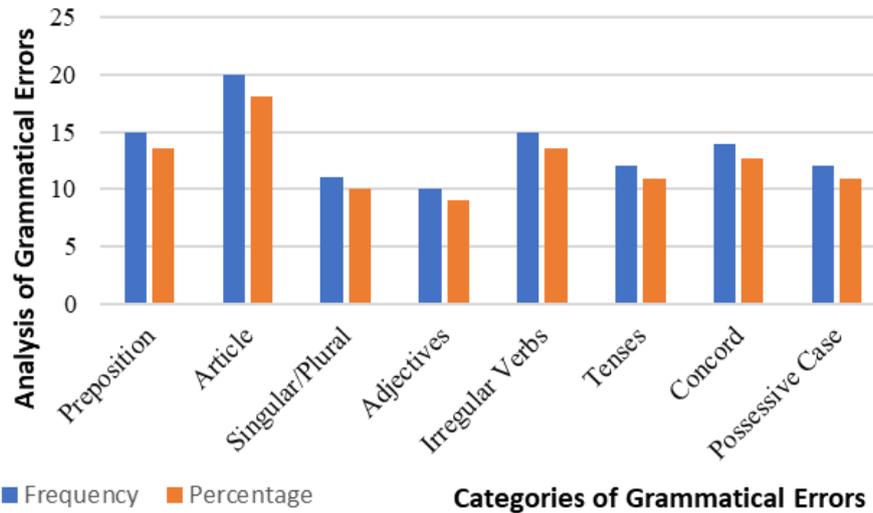| Categories of Grammatical Errors	Frequency	Percentage
Irregular Verbs	15	13.6
Tenses	12	10.9
Concord	14	12.7
Possessive Case	12	10.9

Figure 1. A Graphical Presentation on Frequency and Percentage of Grammatical Errors Analysis.

5. Discussion

5.1. Types of Errors

The following data in **Table 3** and **Figure 2** illustrate how frequently different types of errors occur in students' writing across various grammatical categories. With 65 and 45 instances, respectively, the categories of Concord and Article exhibited the highest frequency of omission errors, indicating significant gaps in these areas. Regarding addition errors, which involve the inclusion of elements that should not have been added, there were 55 and 51 instances of Irregular Verbs and Tenses, respectively. These categories also exhibited numerous false friends or non-target items. Substitution errors, in which one element replaces another, were observed 22 times in the Preposition category and 48 times in the Possessive Case category. Lastly, permutation errors, which involve the rearrangement of elements, were found 55 times in the Preposition category and 49 times in the Singular/Plural category. This information can be valuable in identifying specific areas where students may require more focused instruction and support, based on the types of grammatical errors they frequently make. This is in line with Al-Shujairi and Tan[18] whose findings showed students' inaccurate use grammatical accuracy, particularly in the use of verb tenses, articles, and prepositions. This might be attributed to the students' lack of confidence in writing and insufficient instructional focus on error correction as contributing factors. The authors advocated for enhanced language instruction focusing on error correction and explicit teaching of grammatical rules to improve writing proficiency. The study underscored the importance of addressing tense-related errors to improve overall writing proficiency.

Table 3. Error Type Distribution.

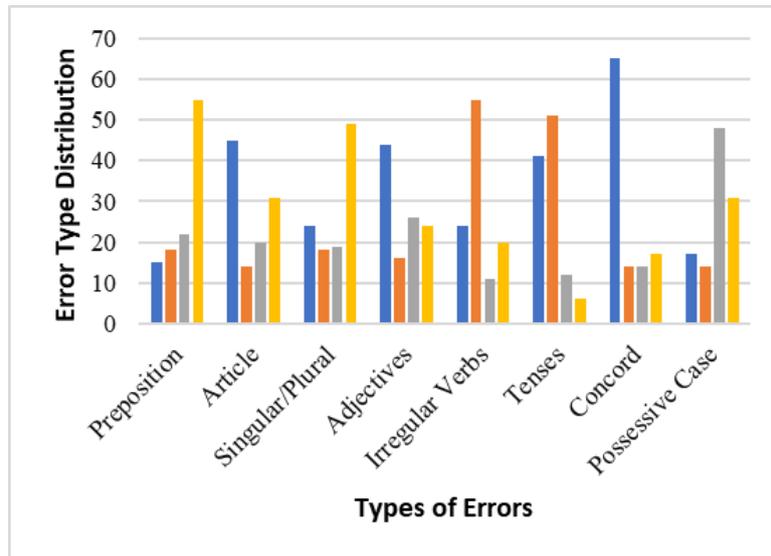| Types of Errors	Preposition	Article	Singular/Plural	Adjectives	Irregular Verbs	Tenses	Concord	Possessive Case
Omission	15	45	24	44	24	41	65	17
Addition	18	14	18	16	55	51	14	14
Substitution	22	20	19	26	11	12	14	48
Permutation	55	31	49	24	20	6	17	31

Figure 2. A Graphical Presentation on Frequency of Error Type Distribution.

5.2. Interlanguage Errors

Table 4 and **Figure 3** present the distribution of inter-language errors made by the students across various grammatical categories. The errors are summarized in terms of both the number of occurrences and their respective percentages in the total error count. The most frequent error category is related to tenses, accounting for 20% of all errors. Irregular verbs follow closely, with 16.3%. Articles and prepositions also represent significant portions of the errors, contributing 15.4% and 13.6%, respectively. The singular/plural category shows a relatively lower percentage at 8.18%. Other categories, such as adjectives, possessive case, and concord, account for 11.8%, 10%, and 4.54% of the errors, respectively. This is in consistent with Nasser[13], who indicated that Iraqi EFL students frequently committed various types of grammatical errors in their writing. This may be due to language transfer from Arabic, which affects syntactic structures and lexical choices. In this regard, the most factors contributing to errors in sentence structure and cohesion is interference from the native language. In this sense, the authors proposed that explicit grammar instruction, combined with regular feedback, could help mitigate these issues and improve students' writing abilities.

For instance, in the case of tense errors, many students wrote sentences like "Yesterday, he go to school", where the verb "go" was used instead of the past tense "went". This reflects negative transfer from Arabic, where past time reference is often marked through context or temporal adverbs rather than verb inflection. Similarly, the omission of articles such as "a" and "the" (e.g., writing "I bought car" instead of "I bought a car") stems from the fact that Arabic lacks a definite/indefinite article contrast comparable to English. In the case of prepositions, learners often used Arabic-influenced structures such as "married with" instead of "married to" due to direct translation from Arabic collocations. These examples demonstrate how differences between Arabic and English grammatical systems—particularly in verb morphology, article usage, and prepositional patterns—lead to recurring interlanguage errors among Iraqi EFL students.

Table 4. Interlanguage Errors.

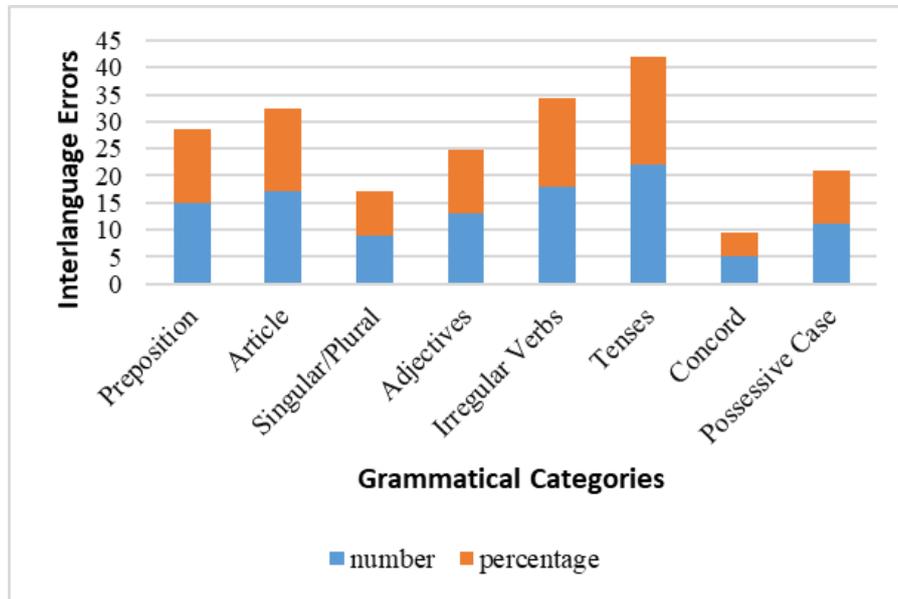| Grammatical Categories	Number	Percentage
Preposition	15	13.6
Article	17	15.4
Singular/Plural	09	8.18
Adjectives	13	11.8
Irregular Verbs	18	16.3
Tenses	22	20
Concord	05	4.54
Possessive Case	11	10

Figure 3. Graphical Presentation of Frequency and Percentage of Interlanguage Errors.

5.3. Intralanguage Errors

The intralanguage errors made by the students in their writing, as presented in **Table 5**, are distributed across different grammatical categories. Among these categories, the most frequent error is related to verb tense and form, constituting 16.3% of all errors. The first and second most common types of errors, related to tenses and irregular verbs, account for 20% and 15%, respectively. This suggests that students need to improve their understanding of how to use irregular verbs correctly. Verbs and tenses are among the most challenging concepts that students are expected to master. The next category includes adjectives and articles, which represent 15.4% and 11.8% of errors, respectively. In particular, prepositions were found to be the most challenging, comprising 13.6% of the total errors, followed by articles and conjunctions. Errors in the use of possessive case and prepositions account for 10%, 13.6%, and 6%, respectively. The frequency of singular/plural and concord errors is relatively low, at 8.18% and 4.54%, respectively. In total, these students committed 54% of their mistakes in these categories, suggesting that they may not need to focus as heavily on these aspects.

Table 5. Intralanguage Errors.

Grammatical Categories	Number	Percentage
Preposition	21	19.9
Article	15	13.6
Singular/Plural	10	9.09
Adjectives	09	8.18
Irregular Verbs	11	10.0
Tenses	08	7.27
Concord	14	12.7
Possessive Case	22	20

These intralanguage errors appear to result primarily from incomplete rule learning, rule overgeneralization, and confusion between similar structures in English grammar. For example, students often wrote forms such as "goed" instead of "went", showing overgeneralization of the regular past tense rule (-ed) to irregular verbs. Similarly, misuse of articles such as "a" before uncountable nouns (e.g., "a water") indicates confusion over article usage rules rather than L1 transfer. Another common example is the construction of adjective-noun phrases like "a red beautiful dress", where students incorrectly follow L1 word order logic or misunderstand the typical adjective sequencing in English. These

patterns reflect developmental errors that emerge as learners internalize the grammatical rules of English but apply them in inconsistent or erroneous ways.

These findings align with the results of Karimi et al.[1], who reported that verb-related errors are often among the most difficult for Iraqi EFL students due to syntactic contrasts with Arabic and overgeneralization tendencies. Similarly, Ali emphasized that article misuse and preposition errors are recurrent among Kurdish postgraduate students and are linked to interlanguage development rather than purely L1 transfer[3]. This is in line with Mohammed and Abdalhussein's study[14] which illustrates that the most type of grammatical errors committed by Iraqi students is in the use of verb tense and form, which is, in turn, largely attributable to native language interference (Arabic) and limited exposure to academic writing conventions in English. In this regard, interviews suggested that students' lack of familiarity with English academic discourse and limited feedback opportunities contributed to persistent errors. The findings underscored the importance of addressing grammatical errors to enhance academic writing quality among Iraqi EFL learners. Thus, the study proposed targeted correction strategies, including vocabulary-building exercises and explicit instruction in syntactic structures, to address these issues. This emphasizes the importance of tailored instructional approaches to mitigate lexical and syntactic errors and improve the overall quality of written discourse among Iraqi EFL learners. Therefore, it can be concluded that students face some grammatical challenges. To address this, teachers should encourage students to develop their language and writing skills. Furthermore, educators should strive to motivate all students, regardless of their personality or learning style, in a fair and unbiased manner to support their development[21] (**Figure 4**).
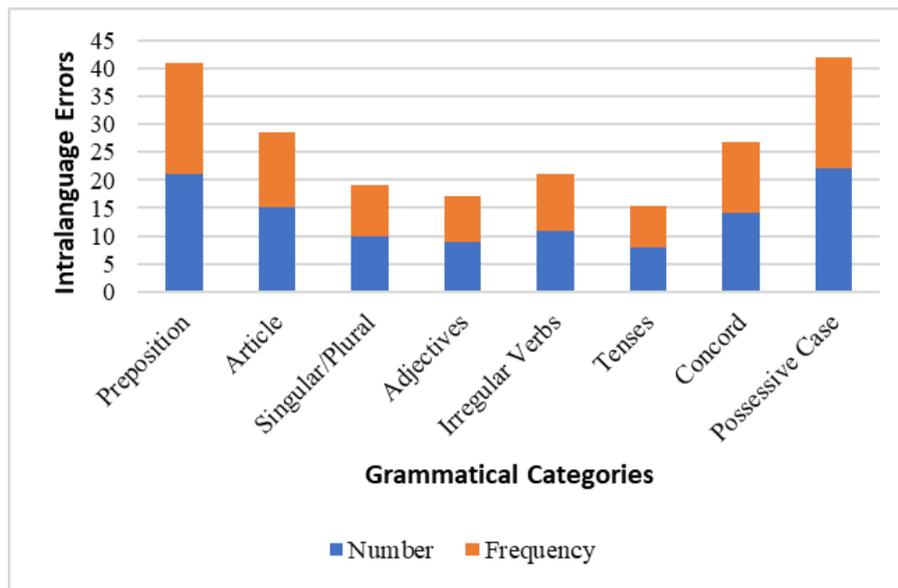

Figure 4. Graphical Presentation of Frequency and Percentage of Intralanguage Errors.

6. Conclusions

From the mistakes committed by Iraqi university students in their academic writing, it is evident that much work remains to be done in the areas of article usage, irregular verbs, and tenses. Therefore, it can be concluded that the text under analysis reveals several important issues. These mistakes require careful attention to ensure that each student is provided with individual learning opportunities for language and writing development. The study also suggests that the role of the first language and language interference in learners' writing achievement, as well as the need to consider their linguistic background and feedback, significantly impact their writing performance. This is consistent with Sabti et al.[22], who claimed that difficulties faced by Iraqi EFL students in writing may be attributed to various factors, including EFL writing instruction, negative feedback, L1 interference, and psychological factors such as anxiety, loss of motivation, and lack of self-confidence. In this context, if educators can identify the most frequent mistakes and the contexts in which

they occur, it may be possible to address these issues and encourage students to write more in academic settings among Iraqis. In this regard, the present study highlights the importance of targeted instruction and feedback in mitigating these challenges, suggesting that explicit teaching of writing strategies and corrective feedback could enhance writing proficiency. The results underscored the need for pedagogical interventions that address language-specific transfer issues and promote awareness of academic writing conventions among Iraqi EFL learners. As noted by Hameed[2], addressing these core grammatical challenges through guided instruction and positive reinforcement can have a measurable impact on students' writing fluency and confidence. Put differently, the significant impact of these errors on the clarity and quality of academic writing emphasizes the need for targeted instructional strategies to address grammatical inaccuracies. The results suggested that targeted pedagogical strategies, such as contextualized exercises and feedback on tense usage, could significantly enhance learners' ability to use tenses accurately in academic writing. Thus, this study contributes to the current discourse on language proficiency in academic contexts and provides teaching implications that could enhance students' grammar. Further studies could explore other factors affecting student writing and the impact of interventions aimed at addressing the problems outlined above.

Author Contributions

Conceptualization, M.F.A.A.R. and H.Y.T.; methodology, S.R.G.; software, M.F.A.A.R.; validation, H.G., S.R.G. and H.Y.T.; formal analysis, H.Y.T.; investigation, H.G.; resources, M.F.A.A.R.; data curation, H.G.; writing—original draft preparation, M.F.A.A.R.; writing—review and editing, H.G.; visualization, S.R.G.; supervision, H.Y.T.; project administration, H.G. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

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Institutional Review Board Statement

The study was conducted in accordance with the Declaration of Helsinki and was approved by the Institutional Review Board of the University of Anbar.

Informed Consent Statement

This study was reviewed and approved by the University of Anbar Research Ethics Committee. All participants provided informed consent prior to participation, and their anonymity and confidentiality were ensured in accordance with the Declaration of Helsinki (2013).

Data Availability Statement

The study was conducted at the University of Anbar, and due to privacy concerns, the data are not publicly available.

Acknowledgments

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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