Exploring the factors leading to errors in EFL writings the case of Ibn tofail university students

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Abstract

The article delves into the intricate origins of errors in second language writing. Drawing upon an extensive dataset derived from questionnaires and quantitatively analysed, this study meticulously identifies crucial factors contributing to syntactic errors among second language learners. The findings, from the questionnaires filled in by 134 students at Ibn Tofail University, showed that linguistic interference stemming from the mother tongue is a common factor that leads to errors in writing. Overgeneralization of second language rules, insufficient exposure to the target language, and individual variations among learners are also common factors leading to the occurrence of errors. The implications of our findings underscore the need for targeted instructional strategies that effectively address common errors and enhance the second language acquisition process.

Keywords: *Interlanguge, errors, Second Language acquisition , English as a foreign Language, Overgeneralisation.*

Introduction

The acquisition of a second language (L2) is a multifaceted process influenced by cognitive, social, and individual factors. Among the myriad challenges faced by language learners, **writing errors** emerge as a critical impediment to achieving fluency and comprehension. Understanding the **origins and characteristics** of these errors is pivotal for the development of effective teaching methodologies.

In this article, we investigate the **predominant factors leading to errors** with a specific focus on **syntactic errors** committed by L2 learners. Employing a **quantitative approach by collecting data** from learners' questionnaires. Our objective is twofold: first, to **identify the factors leading to error patterns** systematically, and second, to propose **practical strategies** for educators to address these issues within educational settings.

By shedding light on the intricacies of L2 errors, our findings are poised to contribute significantly to the broader field of applied linguistics. Ultimately, this research aims to enhance L2 learning outcomes by providing educators with actionable insights into error mitigation.

Review of the literature

The proficiency in writing in a second or foreign language is often a challenging benchmark for language learners to achieve, particularly in academic settings. Writing errors in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) not only hinder communication but also reflect the deeper interlingual and intralingual intricacies faced by learners. For Moroccan students, who generally learn English as a third language after Arabic and French, the task is compounded by specific linguistic, educational, and cultural layers. This literature review aims to delineate the array of factors influencing EFL writing errors among students at Ibn Tofail University, grounding the discussion in a robust academic framework.

Research into writing errors spans several decades, with foundational work by Corder (1967) who introduced the distinction between errors and mistakes in language learning, emphasizing the role of errors as indicators of a learner's progress (Corder, 1967, p. 165). This perspective was later expanded by Selinker (1972) through the concept of 'Interlanguage', which describes the transitional linguistic system that learners develop when acquiring a new language (Selinker, 1972, p. 209). These theories underline the importance of error analysis in understanding the learning process, a framework that this review will apply to the specific context of Moroccan EFL learners.

The focus on Moroccan learners is particularly pertinent given the linguistic landscape of Morocco, where students' prior exposure to multiple languages might influence their English language acquisition. The review will explore how these multilingual dynamics intersect with educational practices at Ibn Tofail University, aiming to offer insights that are both locally grounded and theoretically informed.

By examining the specifics of error occurrences and their sources among Moroccan EFL students, this literature review sets the stage for identifying targeted pedagogical strategies that can enhance the effectiveness of English language teaching and learning in this unique context. The subsequent sections will delve into the theoretical frameworks that support this analysis, review pertinent studies, and discuss the specific environmental and educational factors at Ibn Tofail University that could influence EFL writing proficiency.

This introduction establishes the scope and intent of the literature review, providing a clear pathway into the detailed exploration of related theories and studies. The structured approach ensures that each element of the review is aimed at unraveling the complex nature of language learning errors, setting a solid foundation for the comprehensive analysis that follows.

Theoretical Framework

The analysis of errors in language learning is deeply rooted in several linguistic theories that provide a basis for understanding the processes by which language learners acquire a new language and the nature of the errors they make. This section reviews the key theoretical frameworks that are pertinent to the study of errors in EFL writing among Moroccan students.

Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis (CAH)

Originally formulated by Lado (1957), the Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis posits that many of the errors made by language learners can be predicted and explained by the differences between the learners' first language (L1) and the target language (TL). According to Lado, "those elements that are similar to the learners' native language will be simple for them to learn, and those elements that are different will be difficult" (Lado, 1957, p. 72). This theory has significant implications for Moroccan EFL learners, whose L1 is typically Arabic, a language that differs substantially from English in syntax, morphology, and script.

Interlanguage Theory

Developed further by Selinker (1972), Interlanguage Theory expands on the idea that learners develop an independent linguistic system, termed 'interlanguage,' during the process of language acquisition. This system is dynamic and continually evolving as learners are exposed to more of the L2. Selinker emphasizes that "the learner's interlanguage is a system of rules that has been abstracted from the linguistic input" (Selinker, 1972, p. 213). For Moroccan students, this interlanguage would be influenced not only by Arabic but also by French, given Morocco's bilingual heritage.

Error Analysis

Building on the insights from CAH and Interlanguage, Error Analysis became prominent through the work of Corder (1967). He argued that errors are significant in that they provide insight into the language learning process and should be systematically studied to improve language teaching (Corder, 1967, p. 167). Error Analysis involves identifying, categorizing, and systematically analyzing the errors made by learners to understand how they learn.

The Role of Transfer

The concept of transfer involves how learners apply knowledge from their L1 and other previously acquired languages to their L2. Odlin (1989) discusses transfer in depth, noting that "transfer can affect any aspect of language learning and use, from syntax and phonology to discourse and pragmatics" (Odlin, 1989, p. 27). This is particularly relevant for Moroccan learners who might apply grammatical structures and vocabulary from both Arabic and French to English, resulting in unique error patterns.

These theoretical perspectives provide a robust framework for analysing the errors in EFL writing encountered by Moroccan students. By applying these theories, the subsequent sections of the literature review will explore specific studies and contextual factors that shed light on the nature and sources of these errors. This approach not only aligns the review with scholarly standards but also sets a comprehensive backdrop for the empirical investigation conducted in this study.

Causes of errors

In their study, Al-Mahrooqi and Tuzlukova emphasized the impact of limited exposure to authentic academic discourse as a major cause of errors. They argued that students' insufficient exposure to academic writing genres, such as research papers and essays, hinders their ability to understand and apply appropriate rhetorical conventions and language structures (Al-Mahrooqi & Tuzlukova, 2016, p. 82).

This lack of exposure can lead to challenges in organizing ideas effectively, integrating sources, and using discipline-specific vocabulary. Moreover, Al-Mahrooqi and Tuzlukova highlighted the influence of sentence structure on error occurrence. They found that students often struggle with sentence-level issues, such as sentence fragments, run-on sentences, and subject-verb agreement errors (2016, p. 82). These difficulties may stem from limited knowledge of English grammar rules and the application of sentence patterns in an academic context.

Additionally, they identified limited vocabulary knowledge as a contributing factor to errors in writing. They observed that students often rely on basic vocabulary and encounter challenges in using precise and sophisticated language to express their ideas accurately (Al-Mahrooqi & Tuzlukova, 2016, p. 82). Insufficient vocabulary repertoire can result in lexical errors, inappropriate word choice, and lack of precision in conveying intended meanings.

By shedding light on these causes, Al-Mahrooqi and Tuzlukova's research provides valuable insights into the specific challenges faced by Omani students in their academic writing. Their findings underline the importance of addressing these factors through targeted instructional interventions and exposure to authentic academic materials to enhance students' writing proficiency.

In another work, Al-Qahtani emphasized the influence of the Arabic language and its interference in the writing process of Saudi students. He stated, "One of the main causes of errors in students' writing is the influence of their first language, Arabic, on their second language, English (Al-Qahtani, 2015, p. 52)". This interference often leads to grammatical errors, vocabulary misuse, and sentence structure issues. Furthermore, Al-Qahtani highlighted the limited writing experience of Saudi students as a significant cause of errors. He stated, "Students in Saudi Arabia do not have sufficient exposure to writing practice, as the emphasis in English classes is primarily on reading and listening skills" (Al-Qahtani, 2015, p. 52). This lack of writing opportunities and practice hinders students' ability to develop their writing skills effectively. Moreover, Al-Qahtani pointed out the role of feedback from teachers as a contributing factor to errors in students' writing. He found that students often receive limited or ineffective feedback on their written work, stating, "Teachers in Saudi Arabia tend to focus more on content and ignore grammatical errors in students' writing" (Al-Qahtani, 2015, p. 52). Inadequate feedback prevents students from recognizing and correcting their errors, thus perpetuating their occurrence.

In a similar vein, Kassim and Ali highlighted the influence of first-language interference as a major cause of errors in students' writing. They noted, "One of the main causes of errors is the influence of the student's first language, Malay, on their second language, English" (Kassim & Ali, 2018, p. 107). This interference often leads to errors in sentence structure, verb tense, and word order. Furthermore, they emphasized the role of inadequate language proficiency in contributing to errors. They stated, "Students with low English proficiency tend to make more errors in their writing due to their limited knowledge of English grammar and vocabulary" (Kassim & Ali, 2018, p. 108). Insufficient language skills can result in errors related to grammar, vocabulary choice, and sentence coherence. Moreover, they identified the lack of exposure to authentic English texts as a contributing factor to errors in students' writing. They stated, "Limited exposure to authentic academic materials hinders students' ability to develop proper writing conventions and language use in an academic context" (Kassim & Ali, 2018, p. 108). This lack of exposure can lead to challenges in understanding academic discourse and applying appropriate writing conventions.

These insights from Kassim and Ali's study highlight the significant influence of first language interference, inadequate language proficiency, and limited exposure to authentic English texts as causes of errors in Malaysian students' academic writing. Addressing these factors through targeted language instruction, increased exposure to authentic materials, and language proficiency development can contribute to improved writing skills.

Factors Leading to Writing Errors

Writing errors in second language acquisition can arise from a myriad of sources, significantly influencing the linguistic development of learners. Gaining a comprehensive understanding of these factors is imperative for educators and researchers to tailor effective strategies. The following factors contribute to the occurrence of errors:

Language Transfer and Interference: One prominent source of errors is language transfer, where learners bring elements from their native language into the target language. This can include grammatical structures, vocabulary, and pronunciation patterns. Such interference can result in errors in the target language (Odlin, 1989; Ringbom, 1987).

Overgeneralization: Overgeneralization occurs when learners apply a language rule or pattern to situations where it doesn't appropriately apply. This tendency to extend a rule beyond its valid context can lead to errors as learners navigate diverse language scenarios (Ellis, 1994; Lightbown & Spada, 1999).

L1-L2 Differences: Discrepancies between the native language (L1) and the target language (L2) can present challenges for learners. Differences in sentence structure, grammatical rules, or lexical choices may lead to errors as learners strive to align with the norms of the target language (Corder, 1981, Kleinmann, 1977).

Limited Exposure to the Target Language: Exposure plays a crucial role in language acquisition. Limited opportunities to hear, read, and use the target language in meaningful contexts can hinder language development, contributing to errors in language production (Schmidt, 1990, Gass & Selinker, 2008).

Developmental Stages: Language acquisition is a dynamic process with distinct stages. Errors may occur in the early stages as learners simplify or approximate the target language. Later stages may involve errors in more complex linguistic structures as learners progress in their language development (Dulay & Burt, 1974, Krashen, 1982).

Individual Learner Differences: Learners bring unique characteristics to the language learning process. Motivation, cognitive abilities, learning strategies, and prior language learning experiences can significantly influence the patterns and types of

errors individual learners exhibit (Brown, 2007, Larsen-Freeman, 2000).

It is crucial to recognize that errors are not mere obstacles but integral components of the language learning process. They provide valuable insights for both educators and learners, guiding instructional interventions and fostering a deeper understanding of the intricate journey of language development.

Methodology

Research Objective: To investigate the factors that contribute to the occurrence of syntactic errors in the essays of Ibn Tofail University students.

Statement of the research problem: The article seeks to identify the factors influencing syntactic errors in the English essays of Ibn Tofail University students, an issue critical to both linguistic and educational disciplines. Given the fact that these students are non-native English speakers, the study hypothesizes that the prevalence of syntactic errors can be attributed to three main factors: the level of first language interference, the pedagogical methods employed in teaching English, and the extent of students' exposure to English. Understanding these influences is vital for developing more effective teaching strategies and improving students' academic performance in English compositions. This study not only addresses a specific academic challenge but also contributes to broader educational practices by potentially enhancing English language teaching and learning at the university level.

Research question: What are the enabling factors of syntactic errors in the essays of Ibn Tofail University students?

Research hypothesis: The occurrence of syntactic errors in the EFL compositions of Ibn Tofail University students is influenced by the level of L1 interference, the language teaching methods employed, and the extent of exposure to English language input. The hypothesis posits that the frequency and nature of syntactic errors in EFL compositions are influenced by several interrelated factors. The hypothesis is complex and plausible. L1 interference, where structures from the students' native language affect their English syntax, often results in errors due to the differing grammatical rules between the languages.

Research design

In this research, a quantitative design was employed to investigate the factors influencing syntactic errors in the EFL compositions of students at Ibn Tofail University. Quantitative research is effective for examining the relationship between variables through statistical analysis, providing objective and measurable evidence (Creswell, 2014, p. 155). Data were collected from a representative sample of student compositions, and syntactic errors were meticulously identified and categorized. Statistical analysis was conducted using SPSS, a powerful tool for managing and analysing data, which facilitates the application of various statistical tests to determine the significance and strength of relationships between variables (Pallant, 2020, p. 101). This approach allowed for a comprehensive examination of how L1 interference, language teaching methods, and exposure to English input influence syntactic accuracy, ensuring that the findings are both reliable and generalizable (Bryman, 2016, p. 45).

Sampling

Population sampling is the process of selecting a subset of individuals from a larger population to participate in a study. The purpose of sampling is to draw conclusions about the entire population without having to survey every member, which is often impractical due to time, cost, and logistical constraints. Sampling aims to ensure that the selected subset is representative of the overall population, allowing for generalization of the results (Creswell, 2014, p. 158). Various sampling methods exist, including random, stratified, and purposive sampling, each with its own strengths and appropriate contexts for use (Bryman, 2016, p. 172).

The rationale for choosing purposive sampling in this thesis is grounded in the study's specific focus on syntactic errors in the EFL compositions of Ibn Tofail University students. Given the research objective, it is essential to select participants who are directly relevant to the study's context. Purposive sampling allows for the deliberate selection of students enrolled in EFL courses, ensuring that the sample accurately represents the target population (Palinkas et al., 2015, p. 534). This method improves the study's validity by focusing on individuals who are experiencing the phenomena under investigation, thereby providing more pertinent and insightful data on the factors influencing syntactic errors. Additionally, purposive sampling is efficient in terms of time and resources, as it concentrates efforts on the most relevant subset of the population, facilitating a more in-depth analysis of the specific issues at hand (Creswell, 2014, p. 159).

Research approach

The deductive approach is a research method that begins with a theoretical framework or hypothesis and then designs a research strategy to test this hypothesis with empirical data. This approach follows a top-down logic, moving from the general to the specific, where researchers start with a theory or existing knowledge, formulate hypotheses based on that theory, and then collect and analyse data to confirm or refute the hypotheses (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2019, p. 152). The deductive approach is particularly useful in quantitative research, as it allows for the application of statistical methods to test theoretical assumptions and draw conclusions about the relationships between variables (Bryman, 2016, p. 22).

The rationale behind choosing a deductive approach for this thesis lies in its suitability for testing the specified hypotheses about the factors influencing syntactic errors in the EFL compositions of Ibn Tofail University students. The deductive approach is advantageous because it allows for a structured and systematic investigation, starting from established theories on language acquisition and syntactic errors and progressing to empirical testing (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2019, p. 153). This approach ensures that the research is grounded in a solid theoretical foundation, which enhances the validity and reliability of the findings. Additionally, the deductive approach is well-aligned with the quantitative design of the study. It facilitates the use of statistical analysis through tools like SPSS, enabling the researcher to objectively measure and analyse the relationships between L1 interference, teaching methods, exposure to English input, and syntactic errors (Bryman, 2016, p. 23). By following a deductive approach, the study can provide clear, evidence-based conclusions about the impact of these factors, contributing valuable insights to the field of EFL education. This methodical and theory-driven approach also enhances the generalizability of the results, making them applicable to similar educational contexts.

Descriptive Statistics of factors leading to errors

To investigate the factors contributing to the occurrence of syntactic errors, questionnaires were administered to 134 student participants. The questionnaire responses were coded and entered into SPSS for quantitative analysis, then classified them into two major categories: **a- Multiple choice questions b- dichotomous questions.**

Using SPSS, Pearson's correlation coefficient was employed to examine the relationships between different variables and syntactic error occurrence. This statistical technique allowed for the exploration of potential correlations between various factors and the frequency of syntactic errors in the essays as shown in Figure 1.

The following Figure represents 9 items among 13 that aim to highlight some factors leading to errors.

A breakdown of English usage frequency responses from the questionnaire survey.
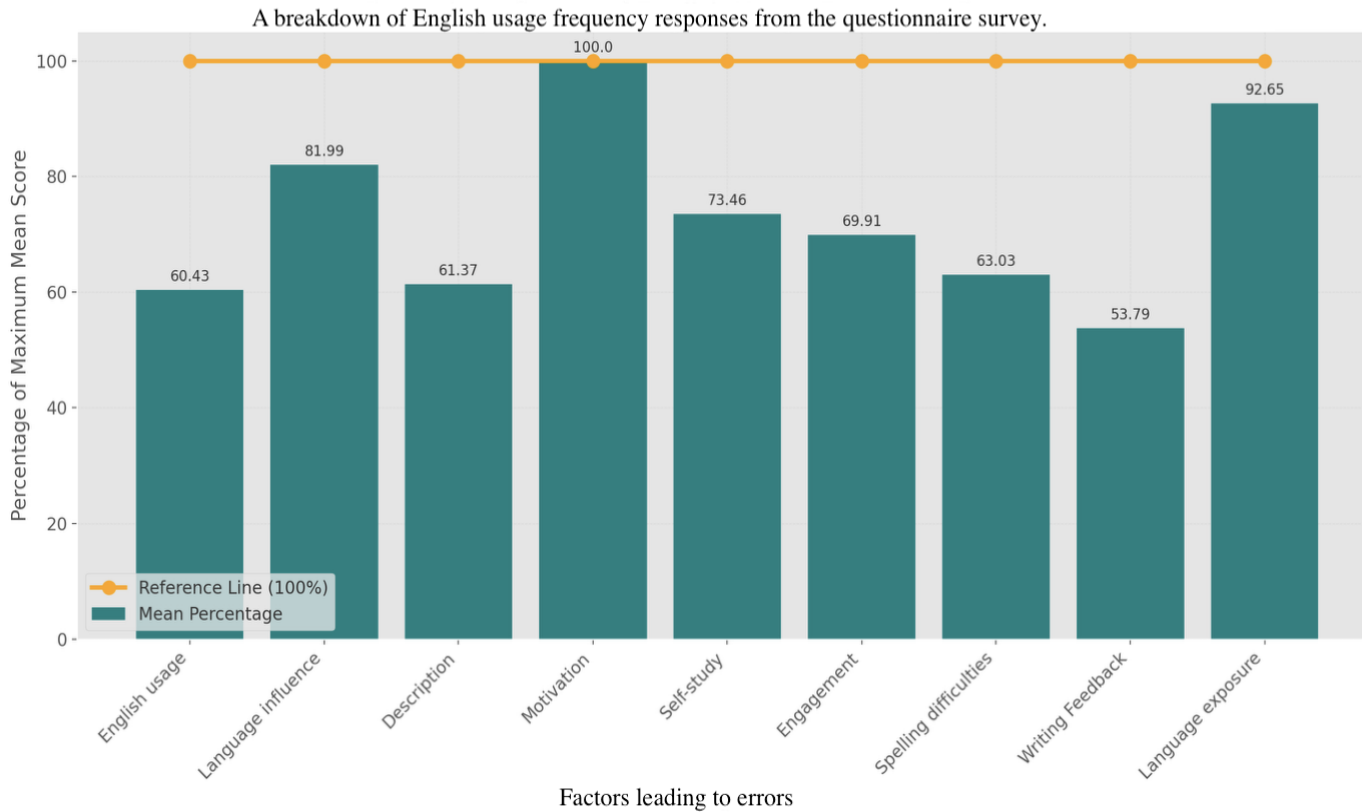
Multiple-choice questions

Table 1. (Q. 1): How frequently do you have opportunities to use English outside of academic setting?

The table presents data on the frequency of English usage outside the academic setting among respondents. It shows that the most common response is "Occasionally," with 43 respondents, representing 31.9% of the total. Following this, "Often" is the next most frequent response, with 42 respondents, accounting for 31.1%. "Rarely" was chosen by 16 respondents, making up 11.9% of the total. Only one respondent selected "Always," constituting 0.7%. Lastly, "Very often" was chosen by 33 respondents, representing 24.4% of the total. The "Valid Percent" column provides the percentage of respondents for each category, excluding missing or invalid responses, while the "Cumulative Percent" column shows the cumulative percentage up to each response category. In total, 134 valid responses were recorded, with the percentages summing up to 100% in both the "Percent" and "Valid Percent" columns, indicating completeness of data.

Table 2. (Q. 2): to what extent does your native language influence your writing in English?

Variable		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Completely	3	2.2	2.2	2.2
	Moderately	41	30.4	30.4	32.6
	Significantly	11	8.1	8.1	40.7
	Slightly	52	38.5	38.5	79.3
	Not at all	28	20.7	20.7	100.0
	Total	134	100.0	100.0	

The table illustrates responses regarding the influence of language on respondents. Among the options provided, "Slightly" was the most common response, selected by 52 respondents, constituting 38.5% of the total. This was followed by "Moderately," with 41 respondents choosing this option, representing 30.4%. "Significantly" was chosen by 11 respondents, accounting for 8.1%. Meanwhile, "Completely" was

selected by only 3 respondents, making up 2.2% of the total, and "Not at all" was chosen by 28 respondents, representing 20.7%. The "Valid Percent" column indicates the percentage of respondents for each category, excluding any missing or invalid responses, while the "Cumulative Percent" column demonstrates the cumulative percentage up to each response category. In total, 134 valid responses were recorded, with the percentages summing up to 100% in both the "Percent" and "Valid Percent" columns, ensuring data completeness.

Table 3. (Q. 3): How would you describe your motivation to improve your English writing skills?

Variable		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Moderately motivated	35	25.9	25.9	25.9
	Motivated	2	1.5	1.5	27.4
	Highly motivated	89	65.9	65.9	93.3
	Not motivated	1	.7	.7	94.1
	Slightly motivated	8	5.9	5.9	100.0
	Total	134	100.0	100.0	

The table outlines respondents' motivations, categorizing them into several options. Among the responses, "Highly motivated" was the most prevalent, with 89 respondents, constituting 65.9% of the total. This was followed by "moderately motivated," selected by 35 respondents, representing 25.9%. Additionally, "Slightly motivated" was chosen by 8 respondents, making up 5.9%. "Yes" was selected by 2 respondents, accounting for 1.5%, while only 1 respondent indicated being "Not motivated," constituting 0.7%. The "Valid Percent" column excludes any missing or invalid responses, providing a clearer representation of the distribution of valid responses. The "Cumulative Percent" column demonstrates the cumulative percentage up to each response category. In total, 134 valid responses were recorded, with the percentages summing up to 100% in both the "Percent" and "Valid Percent" columns, ensuring data completeness.

Table 4: Q4: Do you actively engage in self-study or additional English language activities outside of your regular course work?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No	23	17.2	17.2	17.2
	Yes, frequently	35	26.1	26.1	43.3
	Yes, occasionally	76	56.7	56.7	100.0
	Total	134	100.0	100.0	

The table outlines responses from students regarding their participation in a specific activity. A minority, representing 17.2% of respondents, stated that they do not engage in the activity. In contrast, the majority of students, comprising 56.7%, reported participating occasionally, while a substantial portion, accounting for 26.1%, indicated frequent engagement. This distribution indicates that while a significant number of students partake in the activity occasionally, a notable proportion is also actively involved in it on a frequent basis. Overall, the data suggests varying levels of participation among students, with a majority either occasionally participating or doing so frequently, while a smaller fraction opts out entirely.

Table 5. (Q. 5): Have you ever encountered difficulties in spelling English words correctly?

Variable		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Frequently	15	11.1	11.1	11.1
	Never	6	4.4	4.4	15.6
	Occasionally	65	48.1	48.1	63.7
	Rarely	49	36.3	36.3	100.0
	Total	134	100.0	100.0	

The table illustrates responses related to spelling difficulties, categorized into several options. The most common response among participants was "Occasionally," selected by 65 respondents, constituting 48.1% of the total. Following this, "Rarely" was chosen by 49 respondents, representing 36.3%. Additionally, 15 respondents indicated facing spelling difficulties "Frequently," making up 11.1%, while only 6 respondents reported facing them "Never," accounting for 4.4%. The "Valid Percent" column excludes any missing or invalid responses, providing a clearer representation of the distribution of valid responses. The "Cumulative Percent" column demonstrates the cumulative percentage up to each response category. In total, 134 valid responses were recorded, with the percentages summing up to 100% in both the "Percent" and "Valid Percent" columns, ensuring data completeness.

Table 6. (Q. 6): How would you rate your exposure to English language input outside of academic settings?

	Variable	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Extensive	25	18.5	18.5	18.5
	Limited	23	17.0	17.0	35.6
	Moderate	66	48.9	48.9	84.4
	Very extensive	14	10.4	10.4	94.8
	Very limited	7	5.2	5.2	100.0
	Total	134	100.0	100.0	

The table outlines responses concerning language exposure, categorized into different levels. The majority of respondents reported having a "Moderate" level of language exposure, with 66 participants, constituting 48.9% of the total. This was followed by 25 respondents indicating "Extensive" exposure, representing 18.5%. Additionally, 23 respondents reported "Limited" exposure (17.0%), while 14 respondents reported "Very extensive" exposure (10.4%). Seven respondents reported "Very limited" exposure, making up 5.2% of the total. The "Valid Percent" column excludes any missing or invalid responses, providing a more accurate portrayal of the distribution of valid responses. The "Cumulative Percent" column displays the cumulative percentage up to each response category. In total, 134 valid responses were recorded, with the percentages summing up to 100% in both the "Percent" and "Valid Percent" columns, ensuring data completeness.

Table 7. (Q. 7): Do you believe that the learning materials provided in your English courses adequately address common writing errors?

	Variable	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Agree	50	37.0	37.0	37.0
	Disagree	15	11.1	11.1	48.1
	Neutral	54	40.0	40.0	88.1
	Strongly agree	14	10.4	10.4	98.5
	Strongly disagree	2	1.5	1.5	100.0
	Total	134	100.0	100.0	

The table illustrates responses regarding learning materials, categorized into different levels of agreement. The majority of participants, constituting 37.0%, agreed with the effectiveness or adequacy of the learning materials provided. Following this, 40.0% of respondents indicated a neutral stance on the matter. In contrast, 11.1% of participants disagreed with the suitability of the learning materials. A smaller percentage, 10.4%, strongly agreed with the effectiveness or adequacy of the materials, while only 1.5% strongly disagreed. The "Valid Percent" column excludes any missing or invalid responses, providing a more accurate depiction of the distribution of valid responses. The "Cumulative Percent" column displays the cumulative percentage up to each response category. In total, 134 valid responses were recorded, with the percentages summing up to 100% in both the "Percent" and "Valid Percent" columns, ensuring data completeness.

Table 8. (Q. 8): How often do you consult grammar and writing resources. "E.g, Grammar books, online guides" when working on your essay.

	Variable	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	never	12	9.0	9.0	9.0
	occasionally	51	38.1	38.1	47.0
	often	34	25.4	25.4	72.4
	rarely	23	17.2	17.2	89.6
	very often	14	10.4	10.4	100.0
	Total	134	100.0	100.0	

The provided table presents data on respondents' engagement with a specific variable, indicating the frequency with which they interact with it. A minority of respondents, constituting 9.0%, reported never engaging with the variable. In contrast, the majority of participants, representing 38.1%, reported occasional involvement, suggesting sporadic interaction with the variable. Furthermore, a significant portion, comprising 25.4%, indicated frequent engagement, implying that the variable plays a regular role in their activities. Additionally, 17.2% reported rare interaction with the variable, indicating infrequent but occasional engagement. A smaller fraction, accounting for 10.4% of respondents, reported very frequent engagement with the variable, suggesting a consistent and high level of involvement. This data reveals a varied pattern of

engagement among respondents, highlighting differing levels of importance and frequency associated with the variable among the surveyed population.

Dichotomous questions

		Students'L1	Vocabulary Disparities	Word Order Errors	Grammar Challenges
N	Valid	134	134	134	134
	Missing	0	0	0	0
Mean		1.05	1.56	1.55	1.65
Median		1.00	2.00	2.00	2.00
Mode		1	2	2	2
Std. Deviation		.223	.513	.499	.479
Variance		.050	.263	.249	.229
Range		1	2	1	1

Table 16. (Q. 9): What is your native language (L1)?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Darija	127	94.8	94.8	94.8
	Tamazight	7	5.2	5.2	100.0
	Total	134	100.0	100.0	

The table illustrates responses regarding the participants' native languages (Students' L1). The majority of respondents, comprising 94.8%, reported Darija as their native language. In contrast, a smaller proportion, 5.2%, identified Tamazight as their native language. The "Valid Percent" column excludes any missing or invalid responses, offering a precise representation of the distribution of valid responses. The "Cumulative Percent" column showcases the cumulative percentage up to each response category. In total, 134 valid responses were recorded, with the percentages summing up to 100% in both the "Percent" and "Valid Percent" columns, ensuring data completeness.

Table 17. (Q. 10): Do vocabulary differences between your native language and English affect your writing?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	60	44.8	44.8	44.8
	No	74	55.2	55.2	100.0
	Total	134	100.0	100.0	

The table presents responses regarding vocabulary disparities among participants. Approximately 44.8% of respondents acknowledged experiencing vocabulary disparities, while the remaining 55.2% reported no such disparities. The "Valid Percent" column excludes any missing or invalid responses, providing an accurate representation of the distribution of valid responses. The "Cumulative Percent" column indicates the cumulative percentage up to each response category. In total, 134 valid responses were recorded, with the percentages summing up to 100% in both the "Percent" and "Valid Percent" columns, ensuring data completeness.

Table 18. (Q. 12): Have you faced challenges in applying English grammar rules when writing essays?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No	47	35.1	35.1	35.1
	Yes	87	64.9	64.9	100.0
	Total	134	100.0	100.0	

The table illustrates responses regarding grammar challenges reported by participants. A significant majority, comprising 64.9% of respondents, acknowledged experiencing grammar challenges. In contrast, 35.1% reported no such challenges. The "Valid Percent" column excludes any missing or invalid responses, providing an accurate depiction of the distribution of valid responses. The "Cumulative Percent" column indicates the cumulative percentage up to each response category. In total, 134 valid responses were recorded, with the percentages summing up to 100% in both the "Percent" and "Valid Percent" columns, ensuring data completeness.

Conclusion

The purpose of this article is to provide a comprehensive analysis of the various factors that contribute to writing errors among EFL students at Ibn Tofail University. It aims to shed light on the significant impact of limited exposure to English outside the academic setting, native language interference, varying levels of motivation, and engagement in additional language activities on students' writing proficiency. Furthermore, the study reveals prevalent challenges in spelling, grammar application, and vocabulary usage, which are exacerbated by inadequate exposure to English outside academic settings. Moreover, the document highlights the mixed opinions on the adequacy of learning materials, suggesting a need for more targeted instructional strategies. The findings underscore the importance of tailored teaching methodologies to address these issues, thereby enhancing students' writing skills and overall academic success. According to experts in academic writing, which includes the writing of research reports, papers, and theses, writing effectively in an academic context is both useful and complex. The development of effective writing skills requires time and practice.

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