
**A LINGUISTIC ANALYSIS OF ERRORS IN LEARNERS' COMPOSITIONS: THE
CASE OF ARBA MINCH UNIVERSITY STUDENTS**

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ABSTRACT: *This study reports the dominant linguistic errors that occur in the written productions of Arba Minch University (hereafter AMU) students. It examines the nature of the errors that AMU students commit in expressing their ideas in writing. A sample of paragraphs was collected for two years from students ranging from freshmen to graduating level. The sampled compositions were then coded, described, and explained using error analysis method. Both quantitative and qualitative analyses showed that almost all components of the English language (such as orthography, morphology, syntax, mechanics, and semantics) in learners' compositions have been affected by the errors. On the basis of surface structures affected by the errors, the following kinds of errors have been identified: addition of an auxiliary (*I was read by gass light), omission of a verb (Sex before marriage ^ many disadvantages), misformation in word class (riskable for risky) and misordering of major constituents in utterances (*I joined in 2003 Arba minch university). The study identified two causes which triggered learners' errors: intralingual and interlingual. However, the majority of the errors attributed to intralingual causes which mainly resulted from the lack of full mastery on the basics of the English language.*

Key words: Error, Error Analysis, Error Taxonomy, Intralingual, Interlingual, Linguistic Component

INTRODUCTION

Writing is a very important part of students' university study. During their stay at a university, students are expected to write answers on exams using paragraphs and complete essays as well. They are also required to carry out various written activities, such as field and/or lab reports, senior essays or final year projects. When these students do their expected written productions, they face a variety of problems. One of such problems is committing linguistic errors which adversely affect the structure of their sentences and the idea they want to communicate.

Learners' errors of course give insight to the teacher about the learners' difficulty in their learning and therefore they are considered indispensable in learning teaching process. This fact is also evidenced by Brown (2007). He stated that making mistakes [errors in writing] is a natural process of learning and must be considered as part of cognition. Thus learners' errors must be studied systematically and appropriately analyzed in order to give effective remedial. Analyzing learners' errors, in general, has two fold advantages: Firstly, it gives a good understanding of the nature and types of errors so as to devise appropriate ways to avoid them (pedagogical advantage); Secondly, it provides an insight about the process of second language acquisition, for the study of learners' errors is part of the systematic study of the learners' language (Theoretical advantage), (Corder,

1981). These two significances of error analysis, therefore, are absolutely essential to make well-founded proposals for the development and improvement of the materials and techniques of language teaching in general and writing skills teaching in particular.

To enable students avoid these errors and construct grammatically well-formed and meaningful sentences, our responsibility is to systematically study such errors and bring to the attention of material developers and curriculum designers as Lightbown and Spada (2006) have indicated. Thus, the major purpose of this paper is to study the nature, type and magnitude of the errors that AMU students commit when they write paragraphs and to provide a means of avoiding those errors. On top of this, the study addresses the following specific objectives: identifying, describing, and categorizing the errors that learners commit in their respective compositions, comparing the frequency of the errors in the six colleges of AMU, and identifying the possible sources of the errors.

THEORETICAL UNDERPINNING

Studying Learners' Errors and Its Significances

Language learning, like any other human learning, entails the making of mistakes or errors. Among the Amharic speakers there is a proverb which reads: *ke säw s̄ht̄t̄ ke bret z̄gät* lit. 'Man errs as steel rusts'. English has also a rough equivalent to this proverb, that is, 'To err is human, to forgive divine'. When people learn a second language, they cannot instantly develop a native-like control over the target language. Instead, language learning is a gradual process of internalizing the rules of the target language (hereafter TL) and in such process people can't acquire the TL without making errors (incorrect forms). These errors are then regarded positively, as evidence that show learners are testing hypotheses about the linguistic system of the TL. This is why Corder (1981) expresses the learners' system can be described linguistically and the researcher can discover the learners' transitional competence, and this system can be accessed through the learners' errors. Applied linguists, such as Corder (1967), Selinker (1972), etc. recognized the fact that L2 learners construct a mental grammar of the target language—and this manifests itself in errors. Ellis (1997) also asserts that the L2 acquisition analysis or description in general focuses on learners' errors owing to the following three reasons: (a) Errors are prominent features of learners' language and they strike the important question such as 'why do learners make errors?' ;(b) Errors inform teachers about the nature of learners' difficulties; (c) Errors help learners, especially when they are able to correct their errors by themselves. Hence, linguists and language teachers came up with different approaches and techniques for the study of learners' errors and ways of improving them. The following is a discussion of the dominant approaches employed in studying learners' errors.

Approaches to the Study of Learners' Errors

The two most commonly discussed and used approaches in the existing SLA literature for the study of learners' errors are contrastive analysis and error analysis.

Contrastive analysis

Contrastive analysis (hereafter CA) is a technique for comparing the learners' mother tongue and the target language. According to CA, errors occur as a result of interference (when learners transfer native language habits into the L2), and such interference takes place whenever there is a

difference between native mother tongue and the target language. So success in second or foreign language learning involves mastering the differences between L1 and L2 (Brown, 1980). However, CA has been severely criticized for the following reasons. Firstly, it assumes that error derives exclusively from first language interference. Nevertheless, it has been found repeatedly that the combination of interlingual and intralingual factors gives rise to errors in learning a second language. The contrast between two systems is not the only factor involved in second language learning. Richards (1974:182) showed that "...many errors, however, derive from the strategies employed by the learner in language acquisition and from the mutual interference of items within the target language". Secondly, CA is successful in predicting phonological difficulties. Studies confirmed that L1 influence is apparent particularly in phonology; for instance, Dulay et al. (1982:96) revealed, "present research results suggest that the major impact the first language has on second language acquisition may have to do with accent, not with grammar or syntax". The other limitation is that CA does not give attention to what is happening in the mind of the learner; it only focuses on analyzing the surface level of languages.

Error Analysis

Error analysis (hereafter EA) is a model for the study of second language learners' errors. Richards & Schmidt (2002) defined EA as a technique for identifying, classifying and systematically interpreting the unacceptable forms of a language in the production data of someone learning either a second or foreign language. Such systematic analysis of errors eventually provides useful insights about the system operating in the learners' mind and reveals the learners' knowledge about the grammatical systems of the target language. By identifying what is exactly lacking in the learners' competence, EA brings the problem areas to the attention of teachers, syllabus designers and textbook writers, and suggests remedial action to overcome the mismatch between knowledge of the learner and the demands of the situation.

Error analysis procedures

EA is usually operated on the production data of language learners (compositions, speeches, etc.), and any EA activity entails the following procedures (Ellis, 1985).

- Defining a corpus of language
- Identifying errors in the corpus
- Classifying the errors
- Explaining the errors

Defining a corpus of language: The first step in EA involves collecting and defining a set of utterances produced by L2 learners.

Error identification: Ellis (1997) claims that comparing the sentences learners produce with what the normal or 'correct' sentences in the target language, which correspond with them enable us to identify errors. This process involves "...a comparison between what the learner has produced and what a native speaker counterpart would produce in the same context" (Ellis & Barkhuizen, 2005, p.58). Errors are those sentences which are ill-formed grammatically or well-formed grammatically but inappropriate for a particular context. This is to say that superficial well-formedness only does not make a sentence error-free; it also needs to be appropriate in the

communication context. After identifying the erroneous utterance, it will be possible to compare the reconstruction with the original erroneous utterance and then we can describe the differences in terms of the grammar of the target language.

Describing errors

The description procedure involves specifying how the forms produced by the learner differ from those produced by the learner's native speaker counterparts in the same context. The most useful and commonly used taxonomies for error descriptions are linguistic taxonomy, surface structure taxonomy, communicative effect taxonomy, and comparative analysis taxonomy. The following discussion of error description taxonomies is based on the presentation given in (Dulay et al., 1982: 150-163).

i) Linguistic taxonomy

This classification of learner errors is on the basis of the linguistic component or item (phonology/orthography, grammar, semantics, lexicon, and discourse) that is affected by an error. This taxonomy improves teaching since it uses well-established grammatical categories which are utilized to organize language lessons in textbooks and workbooks.

ii) Surface structure taxonomy

This taxonomy works on mechanisms in which surface forms are modified or altered in erroneous utterances. There are four main ways in which learners alter target forms.

A) Addition errors: such errors refer to the presence of an element or a form which must not appear in a well-formed utterance. Addition errors are sub-categorized into: regularization i.e applying rules used to produce the regular ones to those exceptions to the rules; double-marking, a kind of addition error in which one feature is marked at two levels; simple additions are those which are neither regularizations nor double-markings.

B) Omission errors: the absence of an item that must appear in a well-formed utterance.

C) Misordering errors: caused by incorrect placement of a morpheme or group of morphemes in a given utterance.

D) Misformation errors: refer to the use of a wrong form of a morpheme or a structure in an utterance. Three types of misformation errors are commonly found in learners' errors.

i) Regularization: a regular marker is used for an irregular one.

ii) Archi-forms: the selection of one member of a class of forms to represent others in the class.

iii) Alternative forms: free alternation of various members of a class with each other.

The surface structure taxonomy discussed above has a pedagogic advantage, especially by helping teachers to show learners how their productions deviate from target language norms. In this study to analyze the learners' errors with optimum description I employed a combination of the two error describing models (linguistic & surface structure). The communicative effect taxonomy will be employed only to determine the 'gravity' of the learners' errors. Based on their gravity, errors can be either 'local' (errors that affect only a single constituent in the sentence and do not deter communication) or 'global' (significantly hinder communication since they violate the overall structure of a sentence).

Explaining errors

Muriel (2006) emphasized the idea that accounting for why an error was made is the most important step in any attempt to understand the process of second language acquisition and to improve the way a second language is learned (pedagogical purpose). Generally, researchers of second language learning have identified two sources of errors: interlingual and intralingual factors. Interlingual transfer is seen as a process in which learners use their knowledge of the first language in learning a second language, whereas intralingual errors—unlike to interlingual errors—have to do with faulty rule learning of the target language. Richards (1974:174) says “... intralingual errors are those which reflect the general characteristics of rule learning, such as faulty generalization, incomplete application of rules, and failure to learn conditions under which rules apply”. Researches proved that most learners’ errors, contrary to what behaviorists believed, were intralingual, Dulay and Burt (quoted in Ellis & Barkhuizen, 2005).

METHODOLOGY

Participants

This is a corpus based study in which the linguistic (written) productions of AMU students were collected and analyzed. A sample of paragraphs was collected for two years from students who took the courses Communicative English Skills and Basic Writing Skills, and the subjects range from freshmen to graduating level.

Sampling Design

Since the population of the study is relatively large, it is almost impossible to study the paragraphs written by 7,910 pupils, for it consumes a lot of time, money, and energy. Systematic random sampling method was employed, proportionately, and 600 compositions were made the subjects of this study.

Procedures: Data Collection And Analysis

All of the sampled learners were administered a writing activity that was concerned with paragraph writing. Areas of topics were given to them to produce their own composition using 150 words. The writing activity was administered in the participants’ respective classrooms by data collectors under the observance of the researcher. The general procedure of the analysis began with identifying well-formed and ill-formed sentences; this was done using theories of general linguistics, good dictionaries and English grammar books. The various errors were then identified, counted, described and classified based on their nature, and origin.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

This section presents a comparative discussion of error frequencies in the compositions of the six college students of AMU. These are College of Agriculture, College of Health Sciences, Arba Minch Institute of Technology, College of Social Sciences & Humanities, College of Business & Economics, and College of Natural & Computational Sciences. Here after these are referred as CA, CHS, AMIT, CSSH, CBE and CNS respectively.

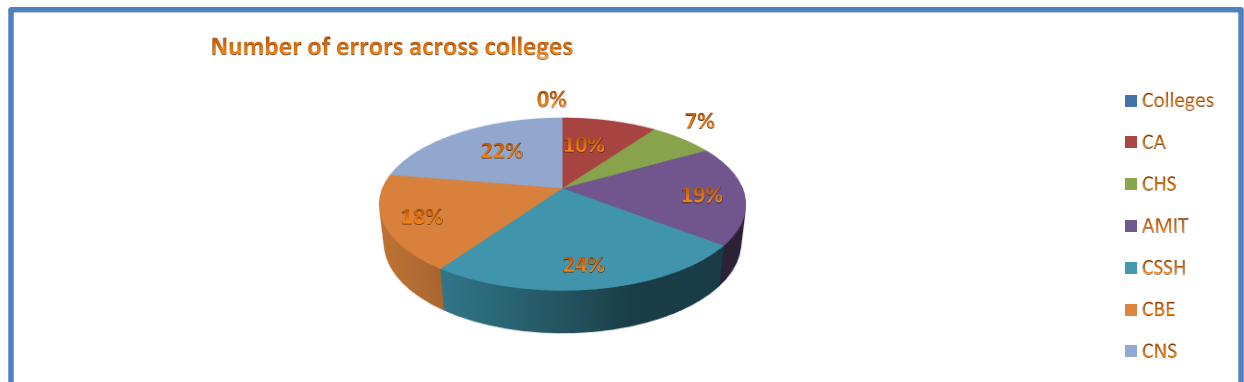


Figure1. Proportion of errors of various kinds in the six colleges

This paper partly describes the errors in terms of the linguistic components affected by the error—thus—we have spelling error, morphological error, syntactic error, and mechanics error. The following table presents the frequency of these errors in the six colleges.

Table1. Numbers and percentages of errors per linguistic components across the six colleges

College s	Linguistic components affected by the errors				Total no of errors
	Spelling	Morphology	Syntax	Mechanics	
CA	132 (23%)	167 (29%)	165 (29%)	103 (18%)	567
CHS	115 (30%)	185 (48%)	102 (26%)	165 (43%)	388
AMIT	290 (27%)	265 (25%)	289 (27%)	190 (18%)	1,055
CSSH	404 (29%)	265 (19%)	318 (23%)	178 (12%)	1,379
CBE	296 (29%)	277 (27%)	265 (26%)	248 (24%)	1,017
CNS	414 (33%)	398 (31%)	332 (26%)	220 (17%)	1,269

In addition to the above mentioned linguistic components, a category of unintelligible utterances is created. Because they contain multiple errors and/or they are covert errors, the meanings of such utterances cannot be discerned. Unintelligible utterances showed the following percentages in the respective colleges: CHS 7% (27), CSSH 5% (74), CBE 4% (39), CNS 3% (38) and AMIT 2% (22). The bar graph below shows the error types based on the linguistic component affected and the frequency of those errors in the six colleges.

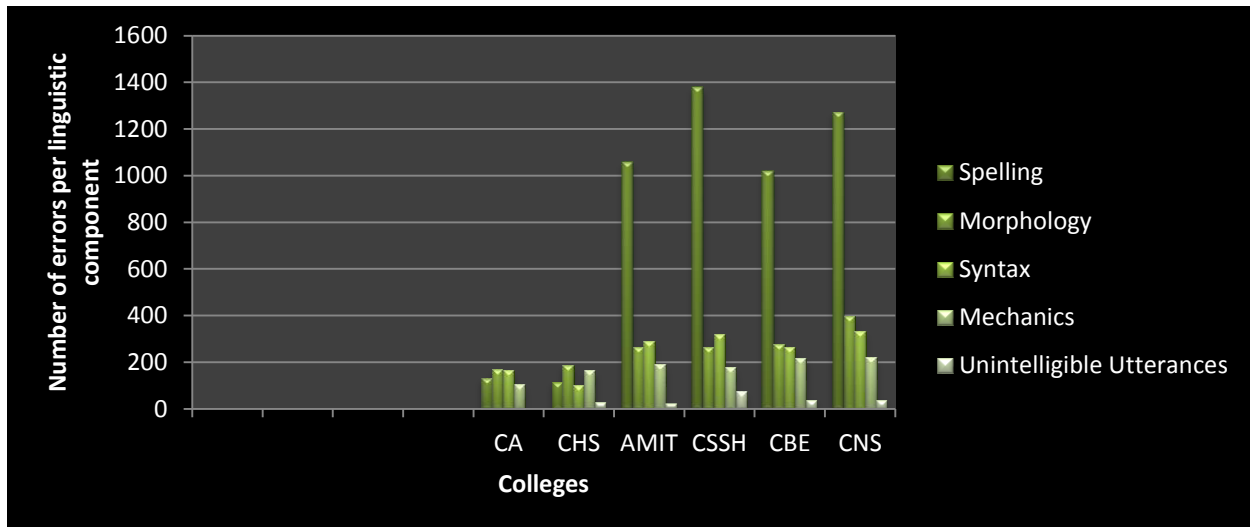


Figure 2. The frequency of errors per linguistic components & college

Addition Errors

Errors of addition which are identified from the analysis of learners' data are categorized into simple addition error, double-marking and regularization errors.

Simple Addition Errors

3rd person singular-s

The very basic agreement rule of the English language states that 3rd person singular-s is added to a verb when the subject is 3rd person (He, She or It). However, as the following data reveal, the 3rd person singular-s is added to verbs where the subjects are in first and second person (I, and you). In doing so the learners might have overgeneralized the rule, which only works to 3rd persons, to other persons i.e first person and second person. In the last example (c) below the addition of -s to the infinitive form is erroneous because an infinitive always begins with *to* and followed by the bare form of a verb since it doesn't inflict either for number or tense.

Linguistic Item Added	Examples*
3 rd person singular-s	(a) I <i>belives</i> that sex befor marriage is good. (b) ...because you <i>hops</i> to marry for future. (c) ...their so many struggle <i>to adapts</i> this things...

Verbs

English uses a compound verb to mark grammatical information, such as passive, progressive, perfective, future, interrogation, negation (in statements), etc. In the sentences given below, however, the auxiliary verbs are used, but they convey none of the above functions. For instance, in the sentence *if there is sex before marriage there is may be unsafe abortion*, the occurrence of the verb to “be”, *is*, with the modal verb *may* is wrong primarily and secondly it adds nothing to the meaning of the sentence. If that is the case, it is fairly possible to state that the learners use them out of sheer ignorance of the functions of these auxiliary verbs particularly when they appear in conjugation with main verbs as the following data reveal. Compounded to the problem is when the main verb is in perfective form and becomes passive as in the sentence, *I am studied in AMU*, in which the learner ended up making a funny error. See also the following examples.

Auxiliary verbs Added	Examples*
<i>are</i>	The people <u>are</u> facilitate to other obstacle.
<i>was</i>	I <u>was</u> argue that sex before marriage is not necessary for adult
<i>peoples.</i>	
<i>am</i>	I <u>am</u> dis agree by sex before marriage are un important.
<i>have</i>	There is no <u>have</u> good life in ARBAMinch universty
<i>may</i>	If one person or any person do sex before married, may be the pregnant <u>may</u> occur.

Articles

As far as the English grammar is concerned the articles “a” and “an” have the same function, that is, marking indefiniteness in nouns, whereas “the” shows definiteness. Sometimes these articles pose problems on learners. Consider the following sentences to see how article errors occur. In the first sentence, the indefinite article “a” is wrongly placed before a plural noun *numerious impacts*. The very simple reason is the articles ‘a/an’ cannot be used with plural nouns for ‘a/an’ means ‘one’.

Description of the error	Examples*
a before uncountable noun	It's not need to have <u>a sex</u> before marriage as my opinoun so I disagree.
a before a proper noun	life in Arbaminch is comparatively other compase like <u>A smara</u> unifersity is bater one due to...
the before determiner	My life is begin like all of the world persons from <u>the</u> my mother.

The problems with the use of the article 'the' are down to the learners' failure to notice the collocation rules in English. In English we don't use the article "the" with other determiners, such as 'my' as in *My life is begin like all of the world persons from the my mother.*

Tense markers

In English tense is marked on verbs, but as we can see below the adjective *ill* is marked for past and becomes **illed*. On the other hand, under (b) the infinitive marker "to" appeared with a tensed verb (*to divorced*), which is wrong for an infinitive almost always begins with "to" and followed by the simple form of a verb (without tense marker), that is, *to divorce* rather than **to divorced*. In sentence (c) the progressive marker *-ing* is not required since it disturbs the tense parallelism in the two clauses joined by the subordinate conjunction "when".

Past morpheme	Examples*
-ed instead of Ø	a) and she is <u>illed</u> mentally...
-ed instead of Ø	b) They will go <u>to divorced</u> after marriage.
-ing instead of Ø	c) When you <u>chewing</u> chat you are not like eat the other time.

Adjectivization

In the sentence given below, the word bright 'filled with light' is an adjective in itself. Adding an adjectivizing suffix '-ful' makes the adjective meaning to be expressed twice, which is redundancy.

*My childhood life was not [^] brightful as others.

Case markers

English marks possession or ownership by adding an apostrophe and an -s to singular nouns as in John's book and for plural nouns by adding only apostrophe (without-s). In the two sentences below (a) & (b) the possession marker is added to the nouns year (*year's*) and youth (*youth's*), but the contexts don't require the marking of possession. The bare forms (*year* and *youth*) instead are grammatically sound.

Description of possession addition	Examples*
possession used instead of Ø	a) I was born in Addis in 1982 E.C after one <u>year's</u> I was went to my grandfather.
possession used instead of Ø	b) At that time the <u>youth's</u> ^expose to sexual risk like un wanted pregnancy.

Pronouns

We use pronouns in place of a noun or a noun phrase when we mention a person or a thing for the second time so that we can avoid unnecessary repetition. Under utterances (a), (b) & (c) below, the pronouns *it*, *they*, and *he* refer back to noun phrases *sex before marriage* and *all chewrs* or *smokers* and the noun *grandfather* respectively, but all the sentences do not necessitate the mentioning of the noun phrases—thus—the use of the pronouns *it*, *they* and *he* is a mere redundancy. Again, in (d) the additions of the object pronoun *them* with (preposition *of*) is unnecessary and disruptive as well.

- a)*Sex before marriage According to my opinion it is meangless.
 b)*almost all chewrs or smokers they assume their feeling only.
 c)*I was born in Addis in 1982 E.C after 1 year's I was enjoy to my grand father that *he* was live in rural
 d)*AMU is more beautifull univarsity b/c of them their some things obtanted like banan, papay mango

Words

As the following table shows the utterances entail words which are deemed surplus for the requirements of a well formed sentence. Nouns (*necessity & needs*), adverbs (*up to still now*), verbs (*returned & back*), etc. are used together in a context where only one can do the work. For instance, in the sentence *before one years ago my studying style is the exam is approach but this not result full studying*, both *before* and *ago* have exactly the same meaning i.e 'denoting past'. Consider also the utterances in the following table. When learners are unaware of the fact that a preceding word contains the meaning of the subsequent word

Linguistic items redundant	Examples*
October & month	I came to AMU October month in 2003 on saturday.
returned & back	The memory of my child hood is good i want to <u>returned back</u> .
necessity & needs	...to fulfill Basic <u>Necessity Needs</u> like food...
so & too	it <u>so too</u> much the bad preid in the memory of my life.
up to & still now	First of all I'm to inter this campus 2000 E.C and <u>up to still now</u>
manner.	AMU is very very essential comfortable to me in different

consequence & effect	Sex is not necessary for life when some one before he marriage because the <u>quancequance effect</u> of it is so diffecalt.
practice & make	if some one want to <u>practice make</u> a sex befor marriage He/she will get many negative effects.

(i.e when the two are synonyms), they commit such kinds of errors. These are needless repetitions where the same thing is expressed twice.

Plural markers

The plural marking morpheme –s is used for singular nouns as the following examples show. The underlined nouns from sentence (a) to (c) must be in their singular forms, but the learners changed them into plural, thus, the utterances become erroneous in terms of number, at least. For instance, the noun *ideas* in (a) refer back to sex or sex before marriage, which is a singular noun—hence—error in number.

- (a) *The sex before marrige, I disagree this ideas.
 (b) *befor one years ageo I was sikn.
 (c) *since we are youngs we should enjoy our self.

The last one (c) is a little bit different from the rest discussed above. Adding –s/–es for changing something singular into plural is the feature of only nouns. As sentence (c) illustrates, young, which is an adjective, has erroneously be given a noun quality and its plural becomes **youngs*.

Conjunction

Two linkers, which have similar grammatical function, are used where only one is enough as shown from sentence (a) to (f). To exemplify this, in sentence (a) *another & also* show ‘addition’, in (b) *like & as* show ‘addition’, in (c) *due to & to* both mean ‘intention or reason’ and in (d) *and & as well as* again show ‘addition’, in (e) *such & like* show ‘example’ and in (f) *also & too* show ‘addition’.

Conjunctions Added	*Examples
another & also	a) <u>another</u> effect of sex before marge is <u>also</u> health problem.
like & as	b) Simply students have been milling and Grinding with out any assumption <u>like as</u> hittler.
due to & to	c) it can decrease our income <u>due to to</u> get the chat we lost the birr.
and & as well as	d) During my stay, I learned different things from my friends, classimates, teachers <u>and as well</u> as from other books.
also & too	f) If He very love her <u>also she too as well</u> .

The learners don't seem aware of the fact that these conjunctions perform more or less similar grammatical functions within each of the sentences they appeared in particular and in the English language system in general. It also indicates an instance of failure on the part of the learners about when and how to use conjunctions in English.

Double-Marking Errors

Words

Both content and grammatical morphemes are added in learners' sentences. Consider the addition case in this sentence: *Sex before marriage is It causes in d/t cases unsafe pregnancy d/t types of deses (በሽታዎች): un planing family*. The added item is a transfer from L1 (Amharic). The mixing of the Amharic word በሽታዎች (*diseases*) in the English sentence (particularly with the English word [*diseases*]), shows one feature (meaning) is expressed by two languages—thus—double-marking.

Tense

Double-marking can also occur in tense. For example, in the sentence **If any individual didn't made sex before marriage according to me well*, 'pastness' is marked at two levels i.e at the auxiliary verb (didn't) and at the main verb (made). The English grammar, however, allows marking 'pastness' only on the auxiliary verb when a sentence contains both an auxiliary and a main verb as in the above erroneous utterance.

Case

Sometimes genitive case (possessive case) is marked twice (on two words) within a sentence. Let's consider this utterance *...because of the compus's [campus's] people behavior's and other problems I hate this university*. The learner in writing this sentence is concerned with the behavior of the campus people, so there is no reason to mark possession on the noun behavior.

Negation

Writers deliberately use double negative to express a positive meaning as the two negatives cancel out with each other. If they are used correctly, double negatives are effective in creating variety in sentence construction. Learners of L2, however, use double negation unintentionally so that they end up expressing the opposite of what they meant. In sentence (a) below negation is marked in the indefinite pronoun *nobody* and the quantifier (determiner), *no*. The meaning of the sentence is people forget the time of childhood. But from the context it is understood that the writer wanted to say no person forgets [his/her] time of childhood. The error might have occurred due to the learner's failure to notice the indefinite pronoun *nobody* has a negative sense.

- (a) *I think no body will not forget the time of childhood.
- (b) *Totaly the stimulate don't un nescary.

Similarly, in the second sentence (b), as it was extracted from the context, the writer wanted to convey the meaning [stimulants] are unnecessary (for university students). However, he/she

already negated the auxiliary verb and the adjective so that the learner ended up expressing the opposite of what he meant.

Regularization Errors

Pluralization

In the table below the plural marking morpheme–s is added to the nouns advice and information. As a result, we have advices and informations which are grammatically ill-formed, for advice and information are uncountable nouns and therefore can't take the pluralizer–s. They instead form their respective plurals in a peculiar fashion, that is, by adding an independent morpheme like some or a piece (of). This error occurs when learners apply rules used to produce the regular ones (adding–s) to those exceptions to the rules. By doing so, a learner regularizes the irregulars. See the utterances in which these nouns occurred.

*the teacher gave advices to students but not listen.

*I get informations from senior students.

Tense

Though English predominantly marks 'pastness' by adding the suffix –d, or –ed, there are verbs that do not abide by this general rule. In the two sentences presented below the learners erroneously constructed past tenses for the verbs *hurt*, and *hit* as **hurted* and **hited* respectively. The verbs *hurt* and *hit* belong to the irregular category of verbs in terms of past tense formation as they don't take either –d, or –ed. The base forms *hurt* and *hit* themselves serve as past and past participle with no addition of past (participle) marker (s). The addition of past marking morphemes (–d, &–ed) to these verbs indicates the learners' failure to realize the very specific rules /patterns of past formation for the so called irregular verbs in English. On top of that it reveals the learner's strategy in attempting to apply the general rule for exceptional cases, that is, using the already available linguistic resources and applying for new contexts.

(a) *I feel bad when she is hurted.

(b) *when i was child i hited one boy and go to my village...

Concord

Within a sentence a subject and a verb must agree in number. This means, a singular subject takes a singular verb, whereas a plural subject requires a plural verb. This rule has some exceptions, however. Unable to observe these exceptions, leads to agreement error. In the following two sentences a concord error occurred because the 3rd person singular marker–s is added to the main verbs *go* and *think*, while the two verbs are preceded by the future marking auxiliary *will* and the modal auxiliary *may* respectively. In such situations the 3rd person singular marker –s is not employed though the subject is 3rd person singular i.e *she*.

*She will goes to many psychological crises...

*She may thinks as if she is pregnant.

Article

*After joining to the AMU, I join to college of chamo.

The above utterance has employed ‘*the*’ before the proper noun *AMU*. We do not normally use definite article ‘*the*’ with proper nouns such as the names of universities. Of course, in English we use ‘*the*’ when we refer to names of geographical areas (*the* Middle East), names of deserts (*the* Sahara), names composed of common nouns and proper nouns (*the* New York city), and so on. However, this definite article ‘*the*’ cannot be used with proper nouns, such as names of academic subjects (English), names of countries (Ethiopia), names of universities (Arba Minch University), etc. When learners do not fully master the rules of using articles with its exceptions, the above kind of problem occurs.

Omission Errors

In this study omissions in both content morphemes (nouns, verbs, adjectives, etc.) and grammatical morphemes (articles, prepositions, auxiliary verbs, inflections, etc.) are observed though the degree and frequency varies.

Grammatical morphemes

This section presents a discussion of how various kinds of grammatical morphemes are omitted in learners’ utterances and their impact on the grammaticality of sentences.

Number marker

In the following sentences the absence of a pluralizer on nouns such as *impact* and *problem* affects the grammatical category known as number.

*The negative impact of chat and cigarete are damaging teeth.

*There are many problem in AMU.

3rd person singular –s

In the utterances given below the subjects are *Smoking cigarette* and *It*. To keep these subjects and the verbs agree in number, there must be 3rd person singular –s at the end of the verbs. However, the learners left off the –s from the verbs *bring* and *increase*; as a result, the concord (subject-verb agreement) in the given sentences is violated.

*Smoking cigarette also bring diseese.

*It increase motivation.

Case (Genitive)

Genitive case answers an important question within a sentence by telling or signifying the owner of a thing, or an object. An apostrophe is used to show ownership, and it must be put after the owner in English. Failing to use possessive case within a sentence when it is required will leave such an important question of ownership unanswered. The underlined nouns in the following sentences don’t have apostrophe so that they don’t show the intended possession.

*So my family attitude towards education is low.

*The persons life is goes to very bad ways.

Preposition

Prepositions are grammatical morphemes which occur before nouns or pronouns and connect them with other words within a sentence. Prepositions, therefore, have relational functions and they reveal relations, such as position, time, direction, and so on. A sentence doesn't show such relations when prepositions are omitted or misused within a sentence. The following utterances display the kinds of prepositions omitted, such as *into* (direction), *with* (accompanied by), *for* (gain or acquire) and *of* (indicate apposition or identity).

*The first time I entered ^ the compound I felt like...

*Generally there are so money problems ^ sex before marriage.

*Every individual have need ^ sex

*As we know the chewing ^ chat has a great importance...

Article

In the following sentences learners omitted articles before nouns so that the sentences don't show definiteness (the) and indefiniteness (a). Consider article omission errors below.

Description of omitted articles	Examples*
a before a common noun (sing.)	when I was ^ child I always went to school.
a before class noun defined by adjective	AMU is^ bad universty.
the before a particularized noun	My life in AMU in ^ past Third (3 rd) year...
the before superlative	Chamo campus ^ best from other AMU campus.

Pronoun

The utterances provided below lack pronouns of different kinds, such as subject pronoun (I), relative pronoun, object pronoun, reflexive pronoun, and again subject pronouns (I and he/she) respectively. Obviously, the omission of such grammatical categories adversely affects the meanings of each of the sentences below.

Description of omitted pronouns	Examples*
Ø instead of I	^ <u>class follow</u> then reiding hand out & exercise book.
Ø instead of which/that	But there are many things ^ not ful filled in the AMU.
Ø instead of me	They didn't tell ^ any information how to use the university properly.
Ø instead of ourselves	We up to restrict ^ from this chewing chat and smoking cigarate.
Ø instead of I	What ^ am trying to say is that...

Comparisons (of adjectives)

In English we can compare a noun with another using either as...as or than within a sentence. The subsequent sentences seem to be vague because they lost the two different forms of comparison i.e *as* and *than* respectively.

*My childhood life was not ^ brightfull as others.

*AMU is more beautifull univarsity ^ ^ b/c of them their things abtanted like banan, papay mango soon.

Tense

Description of tense omission	Examples*
Ø instead of past on the verb use of	When i was a child hood i <u>use</u> to play with clay doing a lot of materials or jawlaries.
Ø instead of past on the verb join	I <u>join</u> in AMU in 2003 E.C.

Content morphemes**Verb**

Verbs omitted	Examples*
i) Main verb have knows...	If the individual ^ sex with partner before marriage he/she
got has	But after two weeks she ^ better for illness by the will of God. Sex before marriage ^ many disadvantages.

The missing of major constituents, such as verbs in a sentence hinders communication (Dulay et al, 182) because such omissions belong to global errors, which interfere with communication (cf local errors). Since the function of auxiliary verbs is to add grammatical content to information expressed by a main verb, their omission doesn't deter communication. Auxiliary verbs entail "be", "do", "have" in one hand and will, shall, can, could, may, might, must, ought to, etc. on the other hand. Observe the following instances of auxiliary omission in learners' sentences.

Omitted verbs	Examples*
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Auxiliaries

am	But now I ^enjoing even if something become unconfort.
do	I ^ not agree or disagree sex before marriage.
will	If girl do sex before marriage and have a child she ^ ignored by society.
are	Femal students ^ attacked by different diseases.
was	I ^ born in Northern Gonder specifically...
should /must	...and the government and the society ^ avoid it.

In the utterances given below linking verbs *is*, *are*, *have*, and *were* are left out; therefore, there is no connection between the subjects and the predicates in each of the following sentences.

Omission of verbs	Example*
iii) Linking verb	
is	Life in AMU ^ nice.
are	most people ^ drug addicted.
have	A lot of impact ^ chewing chat and smoking cigarette.
were	When I was came here in this campus many many things ^ new for me.

Misformation Errors**Verbs (Types)**

What follows is a discussion of misuse of verbs. It presents misformation errors in verb types with examples and descriptions of the errors.

Error Description	Examples *
A) Verb to “be” for verb to “do”	
is instead of do	People that chewing chat <u>is</u> not work...
are instead of do	but my parents <u>are</u> not agree.
am instead do	I <u>am</u> not agree ^ sex befor marriage.
B) Verb to “be” for verb “have”	
are instead of have	chat and smoking cigarete <u>are</u> impact on health of people.
was instead of had	When I share my friends experience she <u>was</u> a boy friend and
sex	with him before marriage after this she is pregnant.
is instead of has	before marriage sex <u>is</u> mony disadvantages.

C) Verb to “have” for verb to “do”

have instead of do

I have not smoking, drinkig alcoh.**D) Verb to “do” for verb to “be”**

do instead of are

Totally the stemulante don't un nescary.**E) Verb to “have” for verb to “be”**

has instead of is

Sex before marriage has not important.**F) Modal Verb for verb to “be”**should instead of is
marriage.There for, No one should expected to make sex be fore

can instead of are

I'am not satisfied with some lectures that can expected and selected to be the best for that course.**G) Verb to “be” for linking verb**is instead of become
and sexWhen I share my friends experience she was a boy friend
with him before marriage after this she is pregnant.**H) Verb to “be” for “modal”**is instead of should
it is notChat and smoking cigarate is Avoid in out of the country
necessary goods**Tense**

One situation where a tense error occurs is when a writer uses a verb form that doesn't clearly indicate when an action or condition is completed (i.e present, past or future). Besides, incorrect sequence of tenses within a sentence and incorrect tense with irregular verbs can lead to error in tense. Observe a summary of the most common tense errors identified in this study.

Error description**Examples***

i) s/ present instead of s/past

I come to this campus in 2001. E.C

ii) past perfect for present perfect

I had never seen boring area like AMU.iii) present perfect for past perfect
I wasSince I have been noticed that my college gona be AMU,
expecting something smart and beautiful things but when I

came...

iv) s/ past instead of s/present

In religion of protestant is sex befor marriage were forbidden.

v) s/present instead of s/future

I hope that for the future my mind is creative, creative.vi) present perfect for s/present
usedSex befor marriage it has exposed to money disses wether
or not used condoms.

vii) s/present for present perfect I enjoy in AMU since 2005 E.C.

Regularization Errors

These refer errors which occur when learners extend regular grammatical patterns to those irregular items. Observe the past forms for the verbs *catch*, *fly* and *arise* in the following learners' utterances.

- (1) *Health problem in fresh man I catched by malaria.
- (2) *They Flyed to diFFerent places to get femle.
- (3) *in the firsh time so meney factor was reached such as the grade was boring due to some factors (climatic & understanding) of how the test is arised.

Interestingly, learners have added regular past marker (-ed) on the irregular verbs *catch*, *fly*, and *arise*—thus—ill-formed past forms **catched*, **flyed*, and **arised* occurred. These verbs are exceptions to the general rule of past formation in English and they use different mechanisms, such as vowel modification, consonantal modification or mixed modification to mark 'pastness'. Thus, the correct past forms for the above verbs are *caught* (mixed modification), *flew* (vowel modification) and *arose* (vowel modification) respectively.

Concord

Singular verb for plural subject

Error description	Examples*
is instead of are	
a) when a sentence begins with adverb	<u>Therie</u> is diferent languges and diFFerent rligins in AMU.
b) when a subject is compound	<u>Chewing chat and smoking cigarette</u> is a bad habit.
c) when a relative pronoun precedes verb	Individuals <u>who</u> is chewing chat and smoking cigarete...
does instead of do	They <u>does</u> not think about their speaking ability.

Plural verb for singular subject

Error description	Examples*
are instead of is	chat <u>are</u> one of the major economic plants in Ethiopia.
have instead of has	Sex before marrige <u>have</u> different un-wanted effect.
do instead of does	my Religion <u>do</u> not support engaging in sexual intercourse.
are instead of is	Life in AMU <u>are</u> very deficult.

Plural marking**Independent morphemes**

Error description	Examples*
a) a lots of instead of a lot/lots of	When is addicted He needs <u>a lots of</u> money to satisfy his needs.
b) many instead of much with uncountable noun	In this school or university so many knowlege are developed.
c) these instead of this	These campus is not confort to me.
d) this instead of these	Because of this problems I am not seccessful.

Misformation of lexical items

The lexical misforamtions identified in this study are broadly divided into content-oriented errors and form-oriented errors.

Content-oriented errors**Confusion of sense relations**

Sense relations in words sometimes give rise to semantic confusion, which eventually leads to lexical error. Consider the following lexical errors caused by semantic confusion.

Error description	Examples*
memorize instead of remember more than	There is nothing that makes me sensetional and passionate <u>memorizing</u> my child hood life.
patient instead of disease/sickness <u>patient</u>	So before marriage sex is disagree that means it is coming to or luck of health.

In the above example, the noun *patient* ‘a person receiving or to receive medical treatment’ and the other noun *disease* ‘a disorder of structure or function in a human or animal’ are semantically related in the sense that one is the possessor (patient) and the other is the possessed (disease). The learners, having got confused by such meronymic sense relations, chose *patient* instead of *disease/sickness*—thus—lexical misselection.

Wrong word choice

This occurs when a writer chooses a totally wrong word and such selection of an incorrect word for a particular situation causes misunderstanding. The following is a summary of wrong word choice with relevant examples from learners' data.

Descriptions of misselection	Examples*
contain instead of leads	Sexual intercourse <u>contain</u> many deaseses HIV Adis or another dises.
become for leads/causes	It [sex before marriage] <u>become</u> HIV Adis, cheBT & ABalazer dississ.
forwarded for ordered	Allah <u>forwarded</u> as to protect ourself towards this un necessary
this habits	harmonious for
dangerous	Chewing of chat and smoking cigarette is very <u>harmonious</u> for human being and It's not available.
enjoy instead of join	I <u>enjoy</u> the university in 2003.

Wrong collocation

This, according to James (1988), is a result from the association of two words which in native usage considered inappropriate. Wrong collocations tend to affect fluency and sometimes disrupt communication. Look at the following examples of wrong collocation usage.

Description of wrongly collocated words	Examples*
bring instead of serve	The quality of food to <u>bring</u> for the students is also bad.
cutting for quitting/stopping	I just left the cafeteria by <u>cutting</u> my eating process.
drinks for takes	She is Illeded mentaly and she <u>drinks</u> druges and she dies.
un important for sexually transmitted	Sex before marriage <u>exist</u> un important deaseses.
take instead of have	One person loves girls and He should <u>take</u> a sexual intercourse
harassment for sexual intercourse	I dis agree with having <u>sexual harasment</u> before marriage.

In the above data, interestingly, two different words (take and harassment) are wrongly collocated with the word sex or sexual intercourse. The English term sexual intercourse, however, usually co-occurs with the verbs engage in, have or indulge in.

Errors of word formation

This error occurs when writers employ the wrong form of a word in their compositions.

i) Error in syntactic class

Description of the errors	Examples*
Adverb instead of Adjective	HIV Aids is a <u>dangerously</u> disease.
Adjective instead of Adverb	sex befor marriage lead to <u>sexual</u> transmted disease.
Verb instead of Noun	in all A.M.U <u>lectures</u> are Bastrd.
Noun instead of Verb	It leads students not to success in their education.
Adverb instead of Verb	life in Arbaminch is comparatively other compase like A smera uniferisty is bater one due to...
Noun instead of Adverb	When one girle perform sex with out marrage she is damage by <u>cycology</u> ...
Noun instead of Adjective	The teachers is not <u>punctuality</u> .
Adjective instead of Noun	in generally sex before marriaige have no <u>importants</u> .
Verb instead of Adjective	the living standard of people become <u>unsatisfied</u> in future
Adverb instead of Adjective	as students sex before marriage is not <u>well</u> .

ii) Using non-existent or wrong L2 (English) forms

<u>Error description</u>	<u>Examples*</u>
failerity for falilure	the <u>failerity</u> of English language the result of this...
challenge full for challenging	My life in AMU was very challenge full.
riskable for risky	The other Impact of chewing chat and smoking cigarette is
the	person are unable to rissts any disease, he /she simle exposable and <u>riskable</u> .
worsely for worse	Because of peer pressure I <u>worsely</u> affected.
fastely for fast	i haven't ability to <u>fastely</u> cominct...
healtfull for healthy	if you don't smoke you be <u>healtfull</u> person.
knowlegy for knowledgeable	Lectures are very bast and <u>knowlegy</u> .

iii) Borrowing from L1 (Amharic)

<u>words from L1 (Amharic)</u>	<u>Examples*</u>
ማስጠላት	a) the life in AMU could be <u>ማስጠላት</u> from children life and the preparatory life.
በግ ተራ	b) I want to <u>በግ ተራ</u> to get some girls.
ገንዳ	c) I go to Swimying <u>ገንዳ</u> with my friend.
ዐባላዘር	d) it lead to Hiv and other <u>ዐባላዘር</u> disease.

Amharic words are mixed with the English utterances as shown from (a) to (d). In sentence (a) the Amharic word, ማስጠላት *mast'älat* which has the sense 'something disgusting', substituted the

English word sickening or abhorrent. Similarly, በግ ተራ *bäg tära* lit. ‘Sheep line/queue’ is preferably an informal term used among university students to refer to a place where boys and girls meet with their sweethearts. Another word borrowed from Amharic is ገንዳ *gända* which means trough or font, but the learner actually wanted to say pool as in swimming pool. Finally, በባላዘር *abaläzär* still an Amharic word, appeared in utterance (d) replacing the English word genitals. Such errors are interlingual because these lexical items don’t exist in English lexicon and obviously are based on the learners’ L1 (Amharic) vocabulary. It is a common phenomenon among bilinguals to mix codes to satisfy temporary need in linguistic resources.

iv) Code switching and using transliteration

Switching from English to a mother tongue, especially to Amharic and the vice versa is observed in students’ compositions. Code-switching occurs both intrasententially and intersententially. And the following composition is written dominantly in Amharic except the introductory phrase, which is written in English.

(1) *Life in arba minch ጥሩ ጎንም መጥፎ ጎንም ዐለዉ:: ጥሩ ጎን የምለዉ ሃገሩ በጣም ቢሞቅም ለኑሮ በጣም ይስማማል:: ምክንያቱም ፍራፍሬ ና ዐትክልት ስለሚገኙ ነዉ መጥፎ ጎን የምለዉ ዐንዳንዱ ለሚከሰትቱ ችግሮች ዐሉ: ለምሳሌ ከሰለት ሰዐት በኋላ ከተማ ዉስጥ ማንኛዉም ሰዉ መራመድ ዐይችልም ብዙ ችግሮች ይደርሳሉ: በተለይም በሴት ዕህቶቻችን ላይ ስለዚህ ነዉ::

The learner began the sentence below (2) in English (In Arba minch university) and immediately switched to transliteration and then mixed a shortened form of an English word, B/c.

(2) *In Arba minch university ENE yasalefkut Hiwot Betam Tiru Ena Bizu Ye Bahri

Lit. In Arba Minch university ‘I’ ‘passed’ ‘life’ ‘very’ ‘good’ ‘and’ ‘many’ ‘of’ ‘behavior’ LEWTE AleGN B/c metiFOwn Tiche Tiruwn Eyeyazhu EskaHun Dires Alehu. ‘change’ ‘have-1S’ ‘of bad’ ‘abandoned’ ‘of good’ ‘hold-1S’ ‘until now’ ‘exist-1S’ Literally, ‘In Arba Minch University I spent life very good and I have many behavioral change because bad abandoned good take until I exist’, which generally means ‘In AMU I had a very good life and I showed immense behavioral changes. I still exist because I take the positives and abandon the bad ones. This utterance is unintelligible, especially to those readers who don’t use Amharic for the sentence entails transliteration in which the characters of the Amharic language are put in their equivalent English characters.

v) Coinage

The items (*iutinitlet*, *curwell*, and *cut of*) don’t entirely exist in the English language lexicon in both the forms and the senses they occurred in the learners’ utterances below.

Coined items

Examples*

iutinitlet	Sex before marriage dis agree because they are many or <u>iutinitlet</u> dis
advantage	
curwell	Even some people may be <u>curwell</u> or separated by this sex before marriage

cut of Sex before marriage is not necessary. The reason of cut of the acadamical knowlidge.
 chicologist I want to adivise female and other chicologist that they have to do sex.

Interestingly, the last one i.e *chicologist* is a coinage of a learner from the informal English word *chick* ‘young woman’ and thus *chicologist* ‘a person who regularly goes with women’. However, the learner misunderstood the style of the word, that is, the word *chick* is used in informal contexts.

II) Formal lexical errors

The term ‘synform’ refers to lexical forms which show similarity in their phonological and graphic systems Laufer (1988). Such forms are sources of lexical errors as they cause lexical confusion, which eventually lead learners to choose a wrong lexical item. In this study the following lexical errors are found to be motivated by ‘synformic confusions’ such as the suffix type, the affix type, the vowel-based type and the consonant-based type.

a) The suffix type: those lexical forms having the same root but different suffixes

Error description	Examples*
confidentially for confidently thing	I can say that <u>confidentially</u> I have learned so many
oppose for opposite	I have not relation ships with <u>oppose</u> sex (females).
continuum for continuity	other words, there is not <u>continuum</u> of love eache other.

b) The prefix type: those lexical forms having the same root, but different prefixes

disencourage for discourage the	So the gov’t strategic policy necessary to <u>disencourage</u> people who need to sex intercourse before marriage.
---------------------------------	--

c) The consonant-based type

Item description	Examples*
scarce for scar	Although we get a moment of satisfaction the <u>scarce</u> is not avoid through our life.
whether for weather	Sex before marriage it has exposed to money disses <u>whether</u> used or not used condoms.
hole for whole high.	on the economic growth of a country and a nation as a <u>hole</u> is
on for own	it have its <u>on</u> problem.
become for come of	this activity is very bad or un necessary for the human being b/c humans are <u>become</u> in this world to do other things.

luck for lack	So before marriage sex is disagree that means it is coming to patient <u>luck</u> of health
tank for thank	I <u>tank</u> God to my success.

d) The vowel-based type

Error description	Examples*
lake for lack	<u>lake</u> of quality to late servis and so on.
adopt for adapt	I was afried but after some day I <u>adopt</u> and not afried.
went for want	I <u>went</u> to underline the command of God...
vary for very	chat & smoking cigarate is <u>vary</u> danger.
many for money	We pay a lot of <u>many</u> more than the income.
compass for campus	Living in the <u>compass</u> is needs a great deal of patience.
way for why	that's <u>way</u> I don't like amu.
inter for enter	I <u>intered</u> in Arbaminch universty in 2003.
post for passed	While I <u>post</u> to 2 nd year, I am also have a fell confidence
lakes for lacks	There are <u>lakes</u> of electricicty and other necessary facility

Grammatical morphemes**A) Error due to phonological resemblance**

The following errors in grammatical morphemes are motivated by phonological similarity; hence, we have vowel-based type, and consonant-based types as illustrated below.

The vowel-based type	Examples*
➤ their instead of there	<u>Their</u> is also another dis advantage to chewing chat.
➤ there instead of their	most of the students not happy with there life in AMU.
➤ may instead of my	...because <u>may</u> family are not educated.
➤ an- instead of un-	It was <u>anblevable</u> for all students.
The consonant-based type	Examples*
➤ as instead of us	Even if God ordered <u>as</u> not doing sex before marrage...
➤ once instead of one's	Sex before marriage not good for <u>once</u> health.

B) PrepositionTable 2. **Preposition misformations**

Descriptions of misformations	*Examples of substitution errors
to instead of for	I would like to thanks my God <i>to</i> make me successful
for instead of from	But after two weeks she recover <i>for</i> her ill ness by the will of God.
of instead of for	The condition of air is difficult of spritual life.
for instead of with (on)	am completly dis agree for sex before marriage because....
about instead of of	We take care about premarital sex/sex before marriage.
in instead of to	when I am going in my home I am a New grill.
on instead of in	Mister believe <u>on</u> the idea of sex befor marriage.
within instead of with	any kind of relation within opposite sex before marrige not good.
under instead of on	I depend under God.
in out of for from	Chat and smoking cigarate is Avoid in out of the country .
towards instead of from	Allah forwarded as to protect our self toward this an necessary habits.

C) Article

Article misformations	Examples*
the instead of a in mentioning a thing for the first time	So <u>the</u> gov't strategic policy ^necessary to disencourage the people who need to sex intercourse before marriage.
a instead of the with uncountable noun cooking & a noun used for the second time (food)	My friends invited me to prepare food as I begin <u>a food</u> , the fire already damage.

D) Comparative forms

In utterance (1) below a learner seems comparing the serving of food in Arba Minch University with other universities. When we compare one person (thing) with several other persons (things), we use superlatives, but the learner has used first degree i.e *good* (instead of *best*). The other problem of this sentence is the presence of the phrase *rather than*, which is used to contrast two things or situations, not in comparing one thing with several others. Sentence (2) mixes aspects of comparative and superlative degrees. Firstly, the

(1) *Since Its fooding condition, fruits kaffe also is rather good other than other universites.

(2) *My memory of child hood life is much funiest i remembered when I was a child

superlative form of the word fun i.e funniest is provided. The learner, however, failed to supply other lives that can be compared against childhood life, as in childhood life is the nicest of all. The learner also employed the modifier 'much', which English allows to be used with comparative degrees, not with the superlative.

Misordering

Misplacement of verbs

In most English sentence construction, the subject precedes the verb. The following example, however, reversed the order of a modal verb and a subject.

(1) *...mainly after a time may he become dependent and isolate from society.

The modal verb *may* must not precede the subject *he* because the utterance is neither a question, nor a sentence expressing wish (as in *May God bless you*). The sentence rather is a declarative one which expresses possibility. The modal verb occupies the first position when there is verb conjugation in a given sentence as in the above sentence (*may & become*). Yet, the modal verb *may*, appeared before the subject *he*, not before the main verb *become* and this placement has triggered the error.

(2) *The teachers is not punctuality and more hand out give for the student.

In a sentence when there are objects (direct and indirect) still the verb precedes the objects. In the above utterance the direct object *more handout* comes before the verb *give*—hence word order error. The order must follow this pattern: Subject-Verb-Direct object-Indirect object.

Misplacement of objects

(1) *By the way *AMU* I like so much ^

In this particular sentence the object or the thing liked (*AMU*) must appear after the verb *like* (S-V-O pattern) and the utterance will have the following order: By the way I like *AMU* so much.

(2)*...it was gave food to eat and drink for water.

The things given according to the above sentence are food and water and these two are direct objects. The food and the water are given to be eaten and drunk respectively, so to eat and for drink constitute indirect objects. The place of the direct object and the indirect object is reversed in the phrase drink for water. Based on the above discussion it must be *water for drink*. And the whole structure will be: *It was given food to eat and water for (a) drink*. This misordering (and repetition of to eat and for drink) might have caused by an L1 (in this case, Amharic) influence.

In Amharic it's common to say: *yä mibälla mōgōb ōna yä miṭāṭṭa wuha tāsätä*

lit. 'of (can be) eaten' 'food' 'and' 'of (can be) drunk' 'water' 'be given'

Generally, it means it was given food to be eaten (to eat) and water for drink. This seems to be the result of a word for word translation of the items and their order from Amharic to English.

Misplacement of adverbs

(1) *during the Night always I goes to church.

In English word order, adverbs of frequency are put before the main verb. In the above sentence the adverb *always* is wrongly placed before the subject. To correct this, we need to move the adverb *always* and put it in between the subject I and the main verb go(es). And the sentence will look: *During the night, I always go to church* or *I always go to church during the night*.

(2) *I joined in 2003 Arba minch university.

Supplying a time adverb (in 2003) after a verb like utterance (2) above is erroneous. The time adverb must come either at the very beginning or at the end of a sentence. Hence, the time adverb (in 2003) must be placed either before the subject (I) or after the object (Arba minch university). The utterance then will look like this: I joined Arba minch university *in 2003*, or *In 2003* I joined Arba minch university.

Misordering in question formation

(1) *I don't know what is the reason of them.

In English we form questions by reversing the order of the subject and the verb from S-V-O to V-S-O. This means the verb precedes the subject, but this reversing of the order of the subject and the verb doesn't work in embedded question formation. An embedded question is a question that forms a clause within a sentence (a statement or a question), which begins with phrases such as Do you know where...? Or I wonder why, etc. When we reverse the verb (is) and the subject (the reason) in utterance (1), we get the correct embedded question, which is: *I don't know what their reason is*.

Wrong placement of modifiers

Prepositional phrases

(1) *When it gets dark we used to return to our home with our cattles.

The underlined prepositional phrase (with our cattles) logically modifies the subject (we). However, due to the misplacement of the two, it seems to the reader that with our cattles is referring to our home, which is wrong because the noun home doesn't have the capacity to be accompanied by cattles. To avoid such confusion, the subject (we) and the modifier (with our cattles) must be placed as closely as possible. With this and other modification, the sentence reads: *When it gets dark, we, with our cattle, used to return to our home*.

Wrong placement of not

Look at the wrong placement of the element *not* in the following utterances:

- (1) *You do haven't free time in university.
- (2) *But I say not life in AMU is fine.
- (3) *I do have not relation ships with opose sex (female).

The very obvious function of *not* in a sentence is negating a verb. To do so, *not* has to come after the verb, and when there is a verb conjugation in a sentence *not* comes following the auxiliary verb. In the above sentences, however, *not* comes after the verbs *have*, *say* and another *have* respectively. To correct these *not* must be placed after the auxiliary verbs *do*, *is* and *do* respectively because all of the above sentences contain verb conjugation.

The above rule which discusses the placement of *not* in a sentence has one exception, that is, when there is infinitive *to*, *not* comes before it. A learner who failed to realize this exception produced the following sentence:

- (4) *But now a days it is accepted as shame to do not make sex with friends before marage.

In this case the negation marker *not* must come preceding the infinitive *to*. Hence, the corrected version looks: But now a days, it is accepted as a shame not to do sex with friends before marriage. A more corrected one is: *But now a days, not to do sex with friends before marriage is considered a shame.*

Misplacement of items/constituents in a structure

A) Passive voice instead of active

- (1) *A person who chewing 'chat' and smoking cigarette will be lost money.

Technically speaking the agent (a person) has taken the place of the recipient of the action (money). This is why the sentence gives a strange sense i.e it is the person who is going to be lost. Logically, it is rather the money which is going to be lost by the person in spending it for chat and cigarette. Reversing the places of money and a person and making additional adjustments on the above sentence, we find this: *A person who chews 'chat' and smokes cigarette will lose his or her money.*

- (2) *I am hardly studied, so my result is good.

The meaning of this sentence is very funny in the sense that it shows as if the writer of the sentence were studied. Compounded to the problem is, instead of *hard*, *hardly* (which means scarcely) is used and it distorted the meaning of the sentence entirely. Corrected based on the above explanations, the utterance looks: *I studied hard, so my result is good.*

- (3) *I was read by gass light.

Similarly, this ill-formed passive sentence tells us as if the subject, I, (a human being) were read (probably by books), but a more logical sense would be expressed through this structure: *I read*

(books) by *gaslight* or *the books were read by gaslight*. As I said earlier, failure to know what constitutes an actor, action and acted upon motivates such kinds of errors.

B) Active instead of Passive

(1) *chewing chat in some part of Ethiopia sees as a culture e.g harar

The meaning of this sentence requires a passive structure than an active voice. To do this an auxiliary verb (is) must be inserted and the tense of the main verb (sees) must be changed into past participle form (i.e seen). And here is the passive one: *Chewing chat in some parts of Ethiopia is seen as a culture; for example, in Harar.*

C) Cleft formation

*It is not Accepted by God sex befor marrage.

In the above utterance the element *sex before marriage* is a constituent for it moves around as a unit under the following grammatical processes: question formation, topicalization and cleft formation. The utterance above basically is a cleft-sentence (a sentence which gives extra emphasis to a word/phrase) though it is erroneously constructed. The very simplified formula to construct a cleft-sentence is: It + Be + X + Subordinate clause, where 'X' represents the emphasized item. The more extended version, however, is: It + Be (+ Not and /or Adverb) + Emphasized word/phrase + that (who) clause. The learner put, the constituent (the emphasized phrase) i.e *sex before marriage*, at the wrong slot (at the end) but it must come after the be verb *is*. There is also omission of the relative pronoun *that* and another be (*is*). When we correct all these things, the sentence looks: *It is sex before marriage that is not accepted by God.*

IMPLICATIONS TO RESEARCH AND PRACTICES

The findings of the study are significant to the following bodies. Firstly, it has a paramount importance to English language teachers as they get informed about the nature of learners' difficulties so that they can frame their teaching on the basis of learners' difficulties and requirements. Secondly, such analysis helps learners themselves since it brings the errors in to their attention with appropriate ways of rectifying them. The project also provides data driven insight to curriculum designers and material developers for revising course syllabuses and for the preparation of materials respectively. To sum up, it contributes to our understanding of second language learning in general and improves the existing second language learning and teaching process.

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary and Conclusion

A hybrid of quantitative and qualitative methods has been employed to analyze aspects of learners' errors. The core components of the English language (morphology and syntax) are hugely affected by the errors in the learners' compositions though the degree varies. The analysis showed that morphological errors are the most pervasive in learners' written productions. The other notoriously

difficult area for learners is the right ordering of words to produce well-formed utterances (syntax). Errors in core grammar of a language negatively affect both the forms and meanings of utterances. Such errors are observed in all the sampled students of AMU though they are acute in CNS, CSSH, AMIT & CBE.

Omission of items that must appear in a well-formed utterance is the most persistent error type followed by addition errors. Although grammatical morphemes are more frequently omitted, a significant amount of content morphemes (nouns, verbs, clauses, etc), which influence the meanings of utterances, has also been omitted. The most disruptive of the misformation errors is using erroneous lexical items which is manifested in selecting a totally wrong word, wrong collocation, wrong syntactic category, wrong word forms, borrowing, coinage, and code-mixing. Almost all of these lexical misformations distort the meanings that learners intended to convey in their compositions. Besides, errors in word order are manifested in misplacement of verbs, objects, adverbs, and modifiers in one hand and using passive constructions for active or vice versa and wrong cleft sentence formation on the other hand.

This paper is an indicative of learners' errors are systematic and regular in the sense that their addition, omission, misformation and misordering of grammatical items reveal that learners are employing some strategies, such as overgeneralization, undergeneralization, or incomplete application of rules in learning the different aspects of the English language.

The interplay of intralingual and interlingual factors triggered learners' errors. The majority of the errors in this study are attributed to intralingual factors i.e not having a full mastery of the English language. L1 induced errors, which are restricted only to the direct translation of Amharic words and sentences into the target language (English), borrowing, code-mixing and switching, have also been sorted out.

RECOMMENDATIONS

On the basis of the data analysis, conclusion and the problems observed, I would like to make the following recommendations:

1. I strongly recommend teachers of English writing to seriously consider the inclusion of explicit lexical instruction, which is directed at the expansion, consolidation and elaboration of the learners' lexicons, in teaching writing skills. As it is shown in this analysis and by other studies, such as Hughes and Lascarato (1982); Gas and Selinker (2009), lexical errors are considered to be the most disruptive and damaging errors in (written) communication as they affect the meaning of the message.

2. All of the colleges in AMU (with particular emphasis to CNS, CSSH, AMIT and CBE) should seriously consider the acute linguistic problems observed in their students' compositions. One way of improving this is that content course teachers in these colleges should not focus only on subject matter correctness in evaluating the students' written productions, but also on the linguistic accuracy in expressing the subject matters. The common view among some teachers which reads: "No matter as long as the student kills (handles) the subject matter" is now a myth because as

Ferris (2002) has shown a lack of accuracy in forms can obscure ideas since form and content are strongly connected.

3. Learners should be catered with reading materials that interest them. This provides them the opportunity to develop their various skills of the English language (spelling, pronunciation, vocabulary knowledge, etc) since reading and language proficiency are strongly connected. This means the more thoroughly a learner knows a word (through exposure to reading), the more likely he/she is to recognize it, spell it, define it and use it appropriately in writing and speech.

FUTURE RESEARCH

The present study is restricted to linguistically analyzing learners' errors which are particularly pertinent to the core grammar of the English language. Other aspects of English composition, such as spelling, mechanics (punctuation and capitalization), and organization of ideas are not dealt in this paper. Besides, the expertise views of teachers on learners' difficulties and ways of tackling them as well as the opinions of learners themselves were not considered. Future research on learners' written productions, therefore, should consider the aforementioned aspects of the English language and its dimensions to come up with a more detailed and comprehensive finding that enlightens our understanding of learners' difficulties, which eventually enables us to design appropriate ways of improving second language learning and teaching.

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