**THE BASIC GRAMMAR PROBLEMS FACED BY ARAB (LIBYAN) STUDENTS IN ENGLISH COMPOSITION**



a Thesis

in a Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for Master’s Degree in English

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**CHAPTER I**

**INTRODUCTION**

Recently, English has played an important role in our lives. Although people have an increasing interest in learning English, many EFL students struggle while learning it. Writing is the most challenging part for Arab learners. It is a difficult skill even for native speakers, but it is even more difficult for non-native speakers. This difficulty might be related to the interference between the native language and the target language. In writing, many points must be balanced, such as grammatical and non-grammatical aspects. therefore, teachers concentrate only on teaching grammar and punctuation as they are the most basic categories. What makes Arab students weak in writing is that the Arab world suffers from being abstracted and product-oriented. Arab students always commit mistakes in their writings, and these errors can cause serious difficulties.

**1.1 Background of the Study**

English language is being as the language of communication more and more with the progress of time. Writing is an important skill among communicative skills. As writing is becoming more important with the new technology for its use in communicative purpose, it is important to give the writing skill more attention for improving it among English language learners. This study deals with writing among Libyan academic students in Diponegoro University. How students learn it, what difficulties do they face in writing, and how to come over these difficulties.

In this study, the researcher is trying to find out the difficulties in order to come out with some solutions and recommendations (in case, difficulties are found), which may help in improving the writing skill in the academic level. As English is used as a foreign language in the Arab world (Libya), therefore, students may suffer from difficulties in using English in general and especially in writing. As the formal English is the one taught in the institution in which there must be no way to mistake, the students may suffer from the mother tongue influence and the cultural differences which may be the main causes of these difficulties encountered by the students.

The mother tongue infeluences such as the linguistic differences. i.e the grammatical differences between the two languages. Under the heading (grammatical differences ) one can talk about the sentence order differences, the gender in language, the placement of the adjectives and adverbs, the prepositions and the different usage, the subject verb agreement, etc.

On the other hand , there are some cultural differences between English and Arabic which may cause a difficulty for the students in their writings. For instance, in Arabic, it is concentrated on the form more than the content, whereas in English the content is given the main focus. Therefore, the Arabic Libyan students concentrate on the form more than the content.

In this research, the writing competence of the students will be tested in order for finding out the difficulties faced by the Libyan students in the academic level in Diponegoro University.

Arab learners of English face many problems in the communicaticve skills of English (writing and speaking). As writing is an important skill for language production , it is very important for the students to be skillful in this competence. Therefore, it is crusial to know what difficulty the students have in writing English in order to come out with some solutions and recommendations to avoid them.

Some other reasons that affect Arab’s writing in English are structure, grammar, and spelling. Arabic structure is different from English. Most common errors are in subject-verb agreement, verb tense and form, singular and plural, word form and sentence structure. Arab students struggle with English because their English foundation is fragile. Even after students gain high levels of education, they struggle with writing. Although many teachers seek students who are able to write English passages that are grammatically correct with accurate punctuation and good organization; students fail to achieve these goals at times.

Moreover, EFL learners need more time than native speakers to finish in class writing exams. It is naturally true that Arab students have difficulties communicating their thoughts through writing easily. When they write, they think in Arabic and use Arabic structure and grammar. Language transformation is considered the most critical problem. When students are weak in English, they use Arabic expressions to convey their ideas.

This study is aimed at investigating writing problems among EFL Arab students, finding out the cause for these problems, and suggesting solutions to such problems. Such problems are very important to know for EFL teachers. Teachers must know how their students perceive writing differences in both first and second languages. The students will be tested by two ways. The first way is through a writing test in which the writing competence of the students will be examined. The second one is through a questionnaire in which the students write about their areas of weaknesses. After that, the observer would make a distinction between the two groups, and would find out in which areas they committed more mistakes.

Recently, English has played an important role in our lives. Although people have an increasing interest in learning English, many EFL students struggle while learning it. Writing is the most challenging part for Arab learners. It is a difficult skill even for native speakers, but it is even more difficult for non-native speakers. This difficulty might be related to the interference between the native language and the target language. In writing, many points must be balanced, such as organization, writing purpose, audience, glossary, and capitalization. However, teachers concentrate only on teaching grammar and punctuation; they do not concentrate on how topics are developed or how to organize ideas. What makes Arab students weak in writing is that the Arab world suffers from being abstracted and product-oriented. Arab students always commit mistakes in their writings, and these errors can cause serious difficulties. These mistakes are classified into two parts, they are either:

1. Linguistic errors
2. Non-linguistic errors

Linguistic errors are those mistakes in the linguistic part of a language such as syntactic aspects, semantic aspects. These errors are mostly caused because of the simple knowledge of the foreign language and also because of the diiferences between the two languages in the linguistic part. As the two languages are completely different from each other, the EFL (Libyan Arab) students got many difficulties in this part starting with the spelling of the words (in Arabic , the words are written as they are pronounced, unlike English in which each word has its own spelling which is different from the pronunciation of the word). Ending with the complicated aspects of the English linguistic features.

The non-linguistic errors are caused because of the little knowledge of the target language culture and the cltural differences between the two societies using different language. For instance, in Arabic language, it is focusing on the form more than the content, whereas in English the content is the most part concenterated on. So when it comes to EFL students, they focus on the grammatical part forgetting the meaning of their sentences. This is also one of the major problems faced by Arab learners of English language.

Due to various reasons, EFL students, especially Arabs, encounter difficulties in writing in English. For example, cultural difference is one of the most critical problems that affect Arab students’ writing. Every culture and language has unique rhetorical conventions to the other. For example, English writing is direct while Arabic writing tends to be less direct. Arabic writers always open up a topic and keep turning around the point, whereas English writing is always clear and direct.

English language is being under focus in the Arab world in the last few years and as it is being studied in the schools from the very beginner stages. Writing is one of the most crusial skills in learning a language. In addition to this, written English is the main language used in exchanging knowledge. Therefore, in this study, the main focus is on the problems in writing English encountered by the English as a foreign language students. By finding such problems and areas of weaknesses, recommendations and solutions can be given in order to help the students to come over these problems.

From another perspective, this study can help the teachers handle with the problems of writing faced by their students. According to the areas of weaknesses, they can have their teaching method accordingly.

In order to help the students to be proffesional in writing English, the problems must be explored and checked. This research will find out these problems in both linguistic and non-linguistic part, but the main focus will be given to the linguistic part.

**1.2 Problem Statement**

This research aims at highlighting, investigating and finding out some solution of the problems encountered by Arab Libyan students in writing English

Research Questions:

1. What are the grammar problems faced by the Arab Libyan academic students in Diponegoro University level at in relation to writing skills?
2. What are the causes of the grammar problems in writing English among the Arab Libyan students in Diponegoro University in academic level?
3. How to overcome the grammar problems in writing faced by Arab Libyan students in Diponegoro University in academic level?

**1.3 The Objectives of the Study**

The main objectives of the current study are:

* to highlight the writing problems of Libyan academic students in Diponegoro University.
* to investigate the causes of the writing problems of Libyan academic students in Diponegoro Uuniversity
* to suggest some solutions to solve the writing problems of Libyan academic students in Diponegoro University.

**1.4 Scope of the Study**

This study concentrates on the communicative competence (writing skill). The research will measure the writing abilities of Libyan academic students in Diponegoro University in order to find out the difficulties that they encounter in writing in the target language (English). Moreover, it investigates either these difficulties are the result of the mother tongue influence or the cultural difference or both**.**

According to the results, this research will bring out some solutions of the difficulties faced by the students**.**

This study will focus on the writing competence. It also focuses on the enhancing of the writing skill among academic students. By exploring the problems and the areas of weaknesses, the study will make some suggestions that may help in developing the writing skill.

**1.5 Significance of the Study**

The study is hoped to be beneficial and effective to the readers and to be useful for both students and teachers throughout the recommendation it may come out with

For students:

It is hoped that this research will bring out the problems or difficulties of the students in writing. According to these problems and difficulties, the research will come out with the recommendation that may help the students in improving the areas of weaknesses.

The students will pay more attention to these difficulties and the writing skill will be improved accordingly as they follow the recommendations.

For teachers:

The teachers are the effective part of the teaching-learning process, so if the teacher got aware of the areas of weaknesses where the students have difficulties, he or she will pay more attention to those areas and will try more and more to improve those areas which makes the exploration of those problems and difficulties of the students in writing an important study which helps the teacher to improve the level of his or her students.

The recommendation will have some solution which and instructions that the teacher may follow to improve the level of his or her students.

For the schools:

This study may help the schools to find out some procedures and instructions for the students to come up with their level in writing. For example, the schools will provide the students with more work in this skill.

If this study found out that the students got many areas of weaknesses and problems in this skill, therefore, the schools may focus on the writing skill more and more.

Also the government :

According to this study , the government has to take some procedures for developing the writing skill among the students from the very begnning stages. In case that this study comes out with the result that the writing competence must be given more attention, the government may ask the teachers to give more attention to this skill.

**1.6 Organization of the Study**

This study deals with the grammar problems faced by Arab Libyan students in English composition. It is divided into five chapters. Each part deals with some aspects as follows:

Chapter I gives some information about English as an internatinal language all over the world. Also, it highlights the writing skill and the difficulties that may face the learners as foreign language learners by giving some information about the differences between the mother tongue (Arabic) and the target language (English).

Moreover, in this chapter, the problem statement is stated as research questions. This study has three research questions. Also the objectives of this study is stated in this chapter, the scope of the study and the significance of the study as well.

Chapter II deals with the literature review and the related studies. It gives a brief idea about the previous studies on the same topic. And the sults they found out. In addition to this, it talks about the underlying theories of the study.

Chapter III deals with the research method of the study. In this chapter, the researcher tends to explain about the research design, sample of the study, instrument, procedures, population of the study, and techniques of collecting data.

Chapter IV deals with the data analysis, findings and discussion. By analyzing the data, the research can come out with the findings and by analyzing the findings, the researcher caomes out with the results of the study. Also, in this chapter, the research questions will be answered and the objectives of the study will be achieved.

Chapter V is the conclusion of the research. It deals with the summary of the whole research in which the researcher gives a breif summary about the results of the study and the answers of the research questions. It also give some recommendation and suggestion for the learners to improve their writing skill and to give more attention to the areas of weaknesses.

**CHAPTER II**

**LITERATURE REVIEW**

**2.1 Previous Studies**

Learning English is not easy for Arab learners. They always encounter problems in writing. Many researchers state clearly this fact (Abdul Haq, 1982; Harison, Prator & Tucker, 1975; Abbad, 1988; Wahba, 1998). All of these researchers examined Arab students writing in English, and they found that Arab students have problems in writing. Arab students learn English in their home countries where the native language is Arabic. They learn English through formal instruction. Most students do not have an opportunity to interact in English.

In Jordan, many studies have been conducted to investigate syntactical, phonological, and lexical errors made by Jordanian school learners. Abdul Haq (1982:1) mentioned that “One of the linguistic areas in which students in the secondary cycle commit errors is in the writing skills.” He adds “there are general outcries about the continuous deterioration of the standards of English proficiency of students among school teachers, university instructors and all who are concerned with English language teaching.” Zughoul (1984:4) supported Abdul Haq’s view and finds that “Jordanian EFL students commit serious lexical errors while communicating in English.” Lexical errors are considered a hard problem to overcome for Arab learners.

Because of formal instruction by Arab language teachers, many Arab learners find difficulties in acquiring English (Rabab’ah, 2003). She also adds that due to limited natural exposure to English, Arab students face difficulties acquiring English. On the other hand, Hisham (2008) mentioned that Arab students face problems in grammar, referencing and glossary. Of course, these problems affect students’ writing. Their writing seems weak and wordy.

Kambal (1980) studied a Sudanese group, and he analyzed the errors made by them in their written compositions. His study was about the major syntactic errors made by these students in the verb phrase and the noun phrase. Moreover, he reported that the three errors made in the verb phrase are verb formation, tense, and subject-verb agreement. Most Arab students make errors in tenses. Kambal discussed these errors in tense. He categorized these errors into five categories: tense sequence, tense substitution, deletion, tense marker, and confusion of perfect tenses. The findings of his study revealed that students use incorrect forms of the verb *to be* and randomly use the third personal singular. In addition, Zoughoul and Husain (1985) claimed that the lack of lexical variety, subordination, and students’ heavy reliance on redundancy are the main problems learners’ have in their writing.

In writing, Arab students suffer from word loss. It is a phenomenon most international students have. It is defined as certain words that might have been forgotten over time. Many words are very difficult to recognize, even if they are in context. Weltens et al. claim that forgetting words is completely different from weakness in getting the meaning as a whole when a context is given. Many psychologists emphasize that forgetting happens because of the mixture between two different languages or as a result of memory decay (Al-Hazemi). Furthermore, Chohen found that “the lexicon of his two trilingual children L2 or L3 vocabulary became weak as a L1 word utterances interfered with L2 words.” Chohen (1986) believes that if there is a large effort in learning and memorizing vocabulary, it will not be very easy to forget it in the forgetting process. There was a study made by Al-Hazemi on sixty Arabic officers in the Saudi armed forces ranking from Lieutenants to Majors. They were taught both general and military English words in their curriculum. In this study, the researcher used forty words as material for this study. Twenty of the words are used in everyday situations and the other twenty are taught only in academic fields. All of these words were taught to those officers from 2-12 years ago. The test was multiple choice, and it did not affect their careers. The purpose of this study was to show whether not using vocabulary had caused a loss of English words. The results showed that each group knew only 50% of the total words. Otherwise, they forgot the other twenty words. The length of the period did not make any difference. Hence, we can say that word loss is another problem that weakens Arabs’ writing. Their writing lacks academic vocabulary.

Some researchers studied the problems that Arab students face in their writing; Mukattash (1983) claims that these errors are divided into two types: First, most university students make errors in pronunciation, spelling, morphology and syntax. Second, they are unable to express themselves efficiently when dealing either with academic topics, or every day topics. He also adds that students’ main problems come from the truth that Arab students cannot use English appropriately.

Suleiman (1983:129) claims that the most obvious problems that affect Arab students at the university level are related to the insufficient mastery of four language skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Many researchers support Suleiman’s claim. Zughouls (1987) mentions that English institutes should offer better language training. However, teaching English in the Arab world lacks good foundations. Teachers use traditional methods, and their teaching is abstracted. Halimah (1991) claims that teachers focus only on the final result and its linguistic features. The major weakness in teaching writing is related to the limited practice and use of the language (Kharma, 1985). He mentioned that guided writing is practiced as a composition task, which contributes negatively to students’ writing. He also adds that composition is not prepared systematically or naturally. In addition to the focus on the level of sentence or teaching EFL writing to the Arab world, obvious teacher-centeredness has a negative impact on learners’ writing development (Liggett, 1983). Another study has been conducted by Al-hazmi (1998; 2007) to find out if EFL learners have problems in expressing their ideas appropriately and formulating important thoughts. Al-sharah (1996) surveyed 210 Jordanian EFL students in writing; he reported that students lack important strategies in their writing such as outlining thoughts on paper or collaborating as a group.

However, recent research since 1980’s has shown that writing methodology supported the writing process approach (Krapels, 1991). Moreover, Asiri (2003:41) claims that modern methodologies in teaching writing in classroom emphasize co-operative learning between teachers and students, and assures that students should be given more opportunities to express themselves, and think seriously. Leki (1994) mentioned in her discussion about writing in a foreign language that “… now students are writing about what they are interested in and know about, but most especially, what they really want to communicate to someone else, what they really want a reader to know…. For the most part, writing is easiest to do and is likely to have the highest quality when the writer is committed intellectually to expressing something meaningful through writing.” Moreover, Leki (1994) claims that “it is the one language skill where the language students has… complete control over the ornery, slippery new linguistic code. This finding of control can be very invigorating and satisfying.”

Now a day in Arab world, the aim of curriculum development in EFL writing becomes more important than before. The main goals are to give students the feeling of control; a self of personal achievement; an opportunity to think critically. Not only this but also to initiate learning, and to help students express themselves meaningful through writing (Al-hazmi, 2002). It has been known that due to various serious teaching problems in the Arab world such as: traditional teaching methodology, teacher centered approach, and text-book oriented, students have difficulties express themselves appropriately and freely in writing. Hanley (1995) argues that critical thinking derives from both cognitive and metacognitive procedures. He mentioned that the cognitive skill goes in long process. It deals with information and data, which are isolated, then programmed, incorporated, organized, transformed, stored and retrieved. On the other hand, metacognitive skills deal with monitoring and controlled mental processes and various knowledge states (King 1995: 16). It involve conscious, designed, informed, deliberate control of *how* to thinkand *what* to think in order to achieve writing progress.

To help EFL learners overcome problems such as deep-level of thinking, critical reflection and problem solving must take place in social vacuum. Bernstin (1995: 23) claims that any theory of problem solving or critical thinking “must be grounded in a more socially based view of knowledge and cognition.” Vygotsky (1978:86) mentioned that true learning occurs between the actual development level (determined by independent problem solving and thinking), and the level of potential development (determined by cognitive functioning). Cognitive and metacognitive skills take action in consort with the affective, emotional, and the human dimensions (Al-Arishi, 1994 and Al-Arishi and Tarvin 1991). The empathic understanding in classroom is very important. It is necessary that the teacher has the ability to understand each student’s reaction, and has a sensitive consciousness of how to process education. If the teachers do so then “the likelihood that significant learning will take place is increased.” Wade (1995) argues that writing is an essential factor in critical thinking instruction, because it promotes self-reflection. Moreover, she thinks that writing is a natural process, and it leads to active learning. Writing helps students reflect their understanding, and communicate their ideas about what they know, what they are doing, what struggles they encounter, and how they practice their learning (White and McGovern 1994).

In addition to all of the previous writing problems, Language interference is one of the main problems that is committed by Arab students when they transfer their native language to the target language. Due to the literal translation from Arabic to English, Arab speakers mainly face problems in their writing. The fundamental reason for that is Arab students find themselves unable to arrange their ideas in English as they could in Arabic because of the different rules of the two languages. Obviously, there are lexical differences between the two languages, for example *since many years ago* would be better if it was written as *many years ago* (Swan 2004) the first sentence would be more likely to use by Arabic than the second. Such problems impact the writing style negatively. However, the interference problem might have an important and positive role in learning a new language. For example students sometimes find similarities between Arabic and English in some respects; therefore, learners will not commit mistakes while transferring from Arabic to English.

Corder and Newser point out to two kinds of errors that might be made by L2 learners either intentionally or not. They found that it is easier to distinguish errors of performance than errors of competence. They define errors of performance as errors that occur because of inattention of not only the learners but also the native speakers. Whereas errors of competence are concerning the rules of the language and the “interlanguage” will be the normal result for it (to Huxley 68). Interlanguage might have a positive effect, for example learners of English believe that the past tense of *argue* is *argued* because they have already learned the past of *like* is *liked*. However that is not always correct, there are other kinds of verbs which have different rule for instance it is not correct to attach (*–ed)* past tense to irregular verbs like *go* = *goed* (Huxley 68). The English grammatical rules are absolutely different from Arabic’s one. Therefore, Arabic learners naturally face interference problem at the beginning of their learning.

Many studies have been made on Arabic learners. Researchers study the Alphabet and find out that Arabic alphabet writing system is completely different from the English alphabet. Arabic letters are running from right to left, and there are no upper case or lower case. These differences make the alphabet learning process hard, and make them commit lots of spelling mistakes. Swan states that the typical problems are related to misreading letters with “mirror” shapes, e.g. *p* and *q*; *d* and *b.* Moreover, eye movement makes students misread letters within words by right to left eye movements, e.g. *form* for *from*, *‘twon* ‘for *town*. These errors occur in the writing of Arab students. Also the most usually seen with capital letters (often omitted), with the letters *o, a, t, d, g*, and the cursive linking of almost any letters. Many adult Arab students tend to print in English rather than attempt to write in cursive script.

Spelling from another hand is considered one of the factors that affect Arab students’ writing. They always commit mistakes while spelling some vocabulary. In spite of the fact that 85% of English words have a regular spelling, there are complex exceptions (Thompson- Panos). Many Arabic speakers show vowels in written English; for instance, some of them write *M-U-H-A-M-A-D* whereas others write it as *M-O-H-A-M-M-A-D* andThese “variations point to an obvious conclusion: the system for representing vowels in two languages lack close corresponds.

Moreover, many other language aspects affect Arab learners. Sentence structure of English language for instance is different from Arab language structure. In Arabic sentence, the verb is placed first, followed by the subject. Whereas English sentence structure places the noun first. Such sentence structures can cause some challenges to Arab learners. Additionally, in Arabic language, verb *to be* doesn’t exist in it; hence, Arab students automatically omit these copula (am, is, are). They tend to use such sentences: \**He teacher, \*He going to school.* This of course makes their writing lacks grammatical foundations.

Arab learners also encounter problems in choosing the correct verb tense form. For example, in reported speech, Arab students tend to use the original tense form of speech, not the past tense. Such sentences are used by Arabs’ when they report a speech: *\*She said told me I am (for she was) going to Mexico*. Additionally, present simple tense does exist in Arabic, but students have problems in grasping and using the function and form of modal verbs. They add regular verb endings to the modals and use the auxiliaries with them. In their writing you will notice such sentences: \**Does he* ***can*** *do that? Yes, he can****s*** *do that.* Also*,* Arab students overuse *that* clause. They tend to write such clause: \**I can that I help you.*

There are other grammatical problems that Arab students struggle within their writing. For example, both Gerund and infinitive do not exist in Arabic. For such reasons, Arab learners not only have problems in making accurate choice between gerund and infinitive, but also essential problems of form and concept. All of these grammatical affect Arab students writing. If they lack such knowledge, their writing will be very weak.

This research is made to find out what problems do Arab learners face in their writing. Many learners make trivial errors just because of their weak English background, or because if the interference between Arabic and English. Teachers from the other side must know Arab students’ flaws. This of course helps them understand why students commit such mistakes. Moreover, when the teacher knows the reason behind such error, s/he can treat these errors and help students avoid future errors.

**2.2 Underlying theory**

**2.2.1 General Perspective on the Importance of Writing Skill**

Bjork and Raisanen (1997: 8) argue: ‘We highlight the importance of writing in all university curricula not only because of its immediate practical application, i.e. as an isolated skill or ability, but because we believe that, seen from a broader perspective, writing is a thinking tool. It is a tool for language development, for critical thinking and, extension, for learning in all disciplines’. This is a line of thought that we shall develop. Ulijn and Strother (1995:153) state that speaking and writing are generally considered to be the active or productive skills of language usage. While there is no room in this research to deal with other studies (e.g. Leki, 1991; Purves, 1988), it is enough to say that these studies enhance the point of interrelatedness or association between the errors of L1 (language one) and L2 (language two) with no restriction to Arabic, English or any other languages.

**2.2.2 Writing Skill in EFL Arab Context**

The faulty usage of the syntactic elements, e.g. verbs, prepositions, articles, relative clauses, etc., affects negatively the whole theme and schema of the writing process. Therefore, developing learners’ writing skills in L2 has been of concern for some time in Arab tertiary education. Students studying in institutions of higher learning in the medium of English, which is not their native language, have been found to face serious problems mainly in writing, making them unable to cope with the institution’s literacy expectations (Kharma and Hajjaj, 1997; Khalil, 2000; Bacha, 2002; Rababah, 2003). In Arab universities, English writing is significant in students’ academic course of study as research work depends on it. It is needed for taking notes, describing objects or devices and writing essays, answering written questions, writing their compositions, writing experimental reports, etc. Further, the process of writing, specifically writing through a practical research task, also helps to develop the students’ cognitive skills in acquiring the necessary strategies, such as analysing results of a research task, inferring from the significant differences observed in comparing means, frequencies, etc., synthesizing different ideas or styles when writing, and so forth, instrumental in the learning process (Bacha2002:164). For these reasons, writing has always been an essential aspect of the curriculum of English as a major, and for academic purposes. The English writing is also a fundamental aim of teaching English in Arab institutions of higher education because English language is the medium of instruction in these institutions, (Al-Khuwaileh and Shoumali, 2000).

**2.2.3 Difficulties Faced by Libyan Arab Students**

The differences between Arabic and English languages and cultures affects on the acquisition of English language by Libyan Arab students. As writing considered the most complicated skill among the four skills, students face many difficulties in writing English. The cultural differences and the linguistic differences becomes a hurdle for students in their writing. The cultural differences leads to the change in one’s writing in order to achieve the purpose of writing which is conveying the ideas and meaning to the readers, Whereas the linguistic differences are considered as the main obstacle encountered by Arab students especially Libyans. These linguistic differences confuse the student in writing.

The linguistic variation of the two languages in syntax leads to problems in writing. For instance, the variation of the sentence structure and order in Arabic is ( V+S+O), where as in English is (S+V+O). Thus, it is noticed that the main mistakes in the Arab Libyan students in the linguistic features.

In the field of writing it is important for the student to pay attention to the variations between the two languages in order to avoid such problems.

**2.2.4 About Writing**

Writing is a creative process, where one discovers oneself. It is a process of reaching out for one’s thoughts and discovering them. It is a communication process that transmits ideas precisely and effectively. Linguists consider writing as a communicative skill by which scholars convey their knowledge to the next generation. Writing is not only linking letters to make words and words to make sentences; it is a hard skill to be acquired as it needs a mastery of the language.

Of the four skills of English language (listening, speaking, reading and writing), writing is considered as the most complicated and difficult skill that can not be acquired instantly. It requires an active command of vocabulary, grammar patterns and sentence structures. It demands the mastery of conventions of writing like spelling and punctuation even more important is the high degree of organization, which is essential to achieve coherence.

**2.2.5 Teaching Writing**

Most students think that writing is only making words to form sentences and that is it. Writing is a difficult skill in which one needs to be resourceful of the words of the language and the syntax (grammatical features) of the language and the morphological features of the words. It is not only to take the pen and write some sentences, but it is to be sure about the topic one is writing about and to develop this topic into sentences, paragraphs. One must know the features of a good writing and a student must be taught the skills of food writing (the linguistic and non linguistic). The linguistic features containing spelling, grammar, punctuation, while the non-linguistic features are the unity, coherence, the level one is writing to, the cultural difference if writing in another language.

To write is to know about the topic one wants to write about, to develop the ideas in smooth way, to convey the meaning properly as well as to construct writing precisely.

Most students do not know the purpose of their writing and also do not differentiate between formal and informal writing. One must know exactly what (s) he wants to write about, to have a clear cut idea about his\her topic. Moreover, they can not build their sentences properly to serve the smooth construction of any writing from the topic sentence till the conclusion. This is one of the main problem that face Arab Libyan students in writing English.

There are some hints which every writer must keep in mind:

1. Think before you write.

Clear writing starts with and depends on clear thinking. The deep thinking about one’s topic and his or her readers make clear writing. Thinking about the message trying to convey and to whom it must be conveyed, what ideas must be covered before engaging in writing leads to good writing.

The main points a writer have to think about before writing are:

1. What message to be conveyed ( the topic)
2. To whom one is writing ( who will read your writing )
3. How to convey your message easily and properly ( do not use complicated way)
4. Why one is writing ( the objective of one’s writing)
5. Focus on the reader.

One has to consider his or her readers. (s) He must consider their level, what they already know about the topic and what one has to explain.

1. The knowledge of the writing construction.

One has to know how to construct his or her writing. Either he is writing a paragraph or an essay or a book, etc...

1. The techniques of writing.

A writing piece is preferred to be as simple as possible as it is conducted to ordinary people, unless it is conducted in literature. Unnecessary information must be avoided.

1. The unity and coherence in ideas.

A writing piece must be coherent and the ideas are arranged in a specific way to serve the unity of one’s ideas.

These points are considered by the writers in order to guarantee a successful work.

**2.2.6 Effective Writing**

Effective Writing is writing which has a logical flow of ideas and is cohesive. This means it holds together well because there are links between sentences and paragraphs. Writing which is cohesive works as a unified whole and is easy to follow because it uses language effectively to maintain a focus and to keep the reader 'on track'

Effective writing “…requires a number of things: a high degree of organization in the development of ideas and information; a high degree of accuracy so that there is no ambiguity of meaning; the use of complex grammatical devices for focus and emphasis; and a careful choice of vocabulary, grammatical patterns, and sentence structures” (Hedge 1988: 5).

Additionally, effective writing is also focused on the topic and does not contain extraneous or loosely related information. The range of issues writers need to address can be summarized as follows:

**GRAMMAR** Rules for verbs, agreement, articles, pronouns, etc.

**SYNTAX** Sentence structure. Sentence boundaries Stylistic choices

**CONTENT** Relevance, clarity, originality, logic, etc.

**MECHANICS** Handwriting, spelling, punctuation, etc.

**Clear, fluent and effective communication of ideas**

**WRITER’S PROCESS** Getting ideas, getting started, writing drafts, revising

**ORGANISATION** Paragraphs, topic and support, cohesion & unity

**AUDIENCE**

The reader/s

**WORD CHOICE** Vocabulary, idiom, tone

**PURPOSE** The reason for writing



*Figure 1: Aspects of writing (based on Raimes 1983: 6)*

**2.2.7 Writing skill in EFL Arab Context**

The faulty usage of the syntactic elements, e.g. verbs, prepositions, articles, relative clauses, etc., affects negatively the whole theme and schema of the writing process. Therefore, developing learners’ writing skills in L2 has been of concern for some time in Arab tertiary education. Students studying in institutions of higher learning in the medium of English, which is not their native language, have been found to face serious problems mainly in writing, making them unable to cope with the institution’s literacy expectations (Kharma and Hajjaj, 1997; Khalil, 2000; Bacha, 2002; Rababah, 2003). In Arab universities, English writing is significant in students’ academic course of study as research work depends on it. It is needed for taking notes, describing objects or devices and writing essays, answering written questions, writing their compositions, writing experimental reports, etc. Further, the process of writing, specifically writing through a practical research task, also helps to develop the students’ cognitive skills in acquiring the necessary strategies, such as analyzing results of a research task, inferring from the significant differences observed in comparing means, frequencies, etc., synthesizing different ideas or styles when writing, and so forth, instrumental in the learning process (Bacha2002:164). For these reasons, writing has always been an essential aspect of the curriculum of English as a major, and for academic purposes. The English writing is also a fundamental aim of teaching English in Arab institutions of higher education because English language is the medium of instruction in these institutions, (Al-Khuwaileh and Shoumali, 2000).

**2.2.8 Comparing English and Arabic Writing Systems**

A brief comparison here of English and Arabic writing systems is included as this may be relevant to understanding the difficulties Libyan Arab learners have in written English.

1. ***Similarities***

Both English and Arabic have letters not symbols or characters. In both languages letters can be represented in different fonts (e.g. Times New Roman or Arial for English, *Kufi* or *Thuluth* for Arabic). In addition, some common punctuation marks are used in both languages (e.g. comma, colon, semi colon, full stop, question mark).

1. ***Differences***

There are a number of differences between English and Arabic writing:

* The direction of the writing system: Arabic is right to left, while English is left to right.
* The sets of letters: there are many differences in the sets of letters which make up the English and Arabic alphabet. For example, there are no capitals

in Arabic – as Sassoon (1995: 25) points out, “the concept of two sets of letters, capitals and small, is by no means universal”.

* Separate letters or joined letters: in Arabic, letters are almost always joined; in English this is not the case.
* Syntax: there are also several syntactic differences between the two languages which will influence Omani learners’ writing in English (e.g. the rules for positioning adjectives are not the same).
* Spelling is different from one language to the other e.g. in English each word has its own written form however it is pronounced , whilst in Arabic each word is written as it is pronounced.

**2.2.9 CA (contrastive analysis)**

This refers to the comparison of the linguistic systems of two languages, for example the sound system or the grammatical system. It was developed and practiced in the 1950s and 1960s, as an application of structural linguistics to language teaching. It is based on the following assumptions:

a. The main difficulties in learning a new language are caused by interference from the first language.

b. These difficulties can be predicted by CA.

c. Teaching materials can make use of CA to reduce the effect of interference (Richards et al. 1992: 83).

**2.2.10 Communicative Purpose**

It is the result that the writer hopes to achieve in writing a text. This may be a general purpose such as ‘to entertain’ or may be very specific, for example to make sure that X mount of money is transferred from my bank account to a service provider’s bank account by a particular date (Trible, 1996: 158).

* **Communicative Failure**

In this study, this term is used to mean that the writer has not been able to convey his communicative purpose because in the process of writing s/he has made (a) grammatical error(s) leading to the failure in communication.

* **Communicative Competence**

It refers to the ability not only to apply the grammatical rules of a language in order to form grammatically correct sentences but also to know when and where to use these sentences and to whom. Communicative competence includes:

* 1. knowledge of the grammar and vocabulary of the language.
  2. knowledge of conversational rules.
  3. knowing how to use and respond to different types of speech acts.
  4. knowing how to use language appropriately (Richards et al. 1992: 65-6).

**2.2.11 Categories of Grammatical Errors**

They are features of grammar which are not used correctly from the view point of standard usage and covering both syntax and morphology.

* **Grammatical Competence**

It refers to the knowledge of a finite system of rules that enables an ideal language user in a homogenous speech community to generate and understand an infinite variety of sentences. Chomsky sought to describe the underlying grammatical system (competence), rather than what speakers say or understand someone else to say (performance) (Chomsky, 1965). In this study this term refers to the grammatical knowledge that learners show in the proficiency test.

* **Grammatical Errors**

They include errors of morphology, handling word structure such as singular –s, plural –s, -ed, and –ing, and errors of syntax, handling structures larger than the word, namely hrase, clause, and sentence (James, 1998: 154-6).

**2.2.12 Error**

This term refers to the use of a linguistic item (a word, a grammatical item, a speech act, etc.) in a way a native speaker regards as showing faulty or incomplete learning. It happens due to the incomplete knowledge of the learner (Richards et al. 1992: 127). 24.

* **Error Analysis**

The study and analysis of the ERRORS made by L2 learner is called EA, which is carried out in order to:

a. identify strategies learners use in LL.

b. try to identify the cause of learner errors.

c. obtain information on common difficulties in LL (Richards et al. 1992: 127).

**2.2.13 Interlingual and Intralingual Errors**

Interlingual/Transfer errors: those attributed to the native language (NL). There are interlingual errors when the learner’s L1 habits (patterns, systems or rules) interfere or prevent him/her, to some extent, from acquiring the patterns and rules of the second language (Corder, 1971). Interference (negative transfer) is the negative influence of the mother language (L1) on the performance of the target language learner (L2) (Lado, 1964). It is 'those instances of deviation from the norms of either language which occur in the speech of bilinguals as a result of their familiarity with more than one language' (Weinreich, 1953, p.1).

Error analysis emphasizes “the significance of errors in learners’ interlanguage system” (Brown 1994, p. 204). The term interlanguage, introduced by Selinker (1972), refers to the systematic knowledge of an L2 which is independent of both the learner’s L1 and the target language. Nemser (1974, p. 55) referred to it as the Approximate System, and Corder (1967) as the Idiosyncratic Dialect or Transitional Competence.

Intralingual/Developmental errors: those due to the language being learned (TL), independent of the native language. According to Richards (1970) they are “items produced by the learner which reflect not the structure of the mother tongue, but generalizations based on partial exposure to the target language. The learner, in this case, tries to “derive the rules behind the data to which he/she has been exposed, and may develop hypotheses that correspond neither to the mother tongue nor to the target language” (Richards, 1970, p. 6).

**CHAPTER III**

**RESEARCH METHOD**

**3.1 Research Design**

It is a descriptive research used to investigate about the grammatical problems faced by Arab students in writing English. It makes use of mixed method (quantitative and quaitative). In analyzing the data simple statistics will be used and the findings will be descriped to come out with the proper solutions.

**3.2 Subjects**

They are Arab Libyan learners of English as a foreign language who are intermediate level. I will focus my search on some of Arab Libyan academic students in Diponegoro University level whose age is between 25-30 years. As they are being taught English naturally in the university by teaching the main four skills which are speaking and writing (productive skills) and reading and listening (receptive skills).

**3.3 Instruments**

The participants will be examined through a test in writing tasks and guided writing. And also, the research will apply a questionnaire for the participants to get percise results about the causes of writing problems in Arab Libyan students writings.

The test will be applied in order to see the points of weaknesses and where mainly the students make mistakes. The test will measure most of the linguistic aspects especially the grammatical ones.

The questionnaire will provide the research with the attitudes of the students towards learning English and their problems in writing. These attitudes show the cause of the students problems in writing that they think of as a negative factor affects their writings.

**3.4 Procedure**

Each participant should write a test and questionnaire individually. The test and the questionnaire will test the the students competence in writing skill. This of course could help the observer to notice which participant commits most writing mistakes, and what kind of errors they commit.

**3.5 Population of the Study**

This study will apply a test and a questionnaire on the Libyan Arab students studying in Diponegoro University in Semarang, Indonesia. The participants study in different specialization, but all of them are studying in the master progrm. All of the samples are academic student and they study using English language.

In indonesia, there are more than one hundred Libyan students, but only those who study in Diponegoro University will be the participants of this research.

The samples are from different measures in the academic level (master degree) of their study. Therefore, it is expected that they have the same level in English language, althouhg, they study in different measures.

All of the participants are males. This is because that all the Libyan students studying in Diponegoro University are of male gender.

The study programs of the sample:

Accounting : ten students

Public health : three students

Applied linguistics : four students

Engineering : ten students

Invironment : tow students

Pathology science : two students

Immunology science:one student

Thirty two students will be the samples of this study. All of them study in postgraduate programe in UNDIP (Diponegoro University).

**3.6 Techniques of Collecting Data**

This research will make use of two methods of collecting data which are a questionnaire and a test. Throughout these two ways, it is expected to get the needed data for this study,

By the questionnaire, the participants attitudes about their mistakes and what kind of mistakes or problems in writing English they think that they have.

The test will provide the study with the real problems that the students suffer from in writing English. It will examine their skills in writing. Also, it wil focus on the linguistc aspects of English which are different from their mother tongue.

This research is a qualitative and quantitative study. It will focus on the types of problems and the causes of them as well as the areas of weaknesses that students suffer of. Also, it will focus on the errors in writing. How much errors a student makes in his writing. As more mistakes a student makes as low level of writing skill (s)he has got.

**3.7** **Techniques of Analyzing Data**

The data is collected through two instuments which are a questionnaire and a test. This data will be described as the research is a descriptive one. It will be described through contrastive analysis, error analysis and interlanguage and intralanguage errors. Simple statistics will be used to count the percentage of the errore committed by the participants. Each category of the grammatical errors will be classified into sub-categories and each one will be described as a problem which has a cause and needs to be solved.

**CHAPTER IV**

**DATA ANALYSIS, FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

In this study, the instruments were applied are a questionnaire and a test as well. These two instruments were applied to collect the data required in this study. Each instrument was used for a specific purpose that may help the study to come out with the results needed. The data collected will be analyzed contrastively i.e. the students performance will be measured and the errors will be counted taking in consideration the differences between the two languages. The answered papers will be observed to highlight the problems that face the learners in writing English and the caused behind them.

**4.1. The first instrument**

The questionnaire was applied to know the students attitude towards their mastering of English language and to know the causes behind and problem they face in their writings of English. It was distributed to the participants that were selected randomly. The participants were some of the Libyan students studying in Diponegoro University in Semarang, Indonesia. The population of the study is about 32 students who study in different master programs. All of them are academic students engaging the postgraduate program for getting the master degree. The participants were selected randomly by lottery from different study programs. The study programs of the students were discussed before in chapter three under the heading population of the study.

The questionnaire was distributed on 20 students out of 32 students studying in Diponegoro students. The participants who were selected randomly were as follows:

* Accounting: six students
* Public health: two students
* Engineering: eight students
* Pathology and immunology: two students
* Environment: two students

The first part of the questionnaire has the heading beliefs which investigate about the participants beliefs about the learning of the foreign language (English). It provides the study with some information about the participants’ beliefs about learning English which may effect on their learning process. This part of the questionnaire investigates about the beliefs of the students regarding the following:

* the ability to learn independently
* whether the participants thought they needed a teacher
* how they rated English as a language to learn and their own ability as language learners
* whether English required a lot of effort to learn
* Whether or not they believed it was necessary to live in an English-speaking country to know English.
* Whether the practice with native speakers is the way to be professional.

Table 1: Beliefs

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Beliefs** | **Agree** | **Neutr** | **Disagre** |
| I can easily find ways to practice English by myself | 55% | 30% | 15% |
| I expect a teacher to be responsible for telling me what and how much to study and evaluating what I have learned | 45% | 30% | 25% |
| I consider myself to be a good language learner (ie: I can pick up languages easily) | 70% | 25% | 5% |
| English is an easy language to learn | 80% | 20% | -- |
| It takes a lot of effort to become good at English | 40% | 35% | 25% |
| You can’t really know English unless you live and/or study in an English-speaking country | 50% | 20% | 30% |
| The real practice of using the target language is the key to be professional | 45% | 25% | 30% |

Most respondents (80%) agreed that English was an easy language to learn, and two -thirds considered themselves to be good language learners. Over half (55%) stated they could easily find ways to practise English by themselves, while just under half (45%) agreed they expected *a teacher to be responsible for telling me what and how much to study and evaluating how much I have learned*. Fifty percent agreed that *you can’t really know English unless you live and/or study in an English -speaking country*, but 30% disagreed with this statement. Concerning the effort required to learn English, 40% thought it took a lot of effort to become good at English, while 35% were uncommitted and 25% disagreed. 45% agreed that the key of mastering English is through practising it where as 30%disagrred. It is impossible to make any generalizations about the beliefs, other than that, in this group as a whole, there seems to be a general agreement that English is an easy language to learn. However there is less agreement about the amount of effort required to learn it, or the need to live in an English-speaking country to know English.

The second part of the questionnaire investigates about the ways that students do to improve their English when they finished the required courses. It also inquires about some of the some aspects in English and Arabic if they think that they effect on their learning of English.

This part starts with the inquiry about the ways that the students used to improve English in the past and present. Seventy five percent of the participants said that they do not use the self access center or library to improve their English in the present whereas the rest said that they always and sometimes used them for improving their English (10% always, 15% sometimes). In the second statement of the inquiry about managing English was about the usage of ILC or SAC in the past, the result more or tests the same. More than the half of the respondents (65%) said that they never used it while the rest said that the used them to improve their English.

The majority of the participants said that they use internet to improve their English and watching Tv and movies in English as well. 50% used internet to practise English with their friends also they said that they used English among their friends in the classes of English. On the other hand, the majority of the participants do not read magazines and newspaper in English, about 60% while the 20% percent said that they sometimes read books to improve their English, and the rest are always using these aids to improve their English.

Table 2 : Method used to learn English

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Method Used** | **Always or often** | **Sometimes** | **Rarely or never** |
|  I improve my English by myself by studying in an independent learning centre (ILC), self-access centre (SAC) or library in my university. | 10% | 15% | 75% |
|  I don’t use the ILC, SAC or library now to improve my English, but I have used this method in the past. | 10% | 25% | 65% |
|  I improve my English by practising with my friends.  If yes, how do you practise?\* | 50% | 30% | 20% |
|  I use the internet to improve my English. If yes, how do you use it?\* | 70% | 20% | 10% |
|  I watch TV/movies in English. | 75% | 15% | 10% |
|  I read books, magazines, newspapers (that are not related directly to my studies) to improve my English. | 20% | 20% | 60% |

65% of the participants agreed that their mother tongue always influence their writing especially the grammatical differences. Moreover, the majority of them agreed that they always or sometimes translate their ideas from the mother tongue into English. Just 15% who said that they don’t translate their ideas. The participants added that the influence of the mother tongue is negative because of the differences between the two languages. Only one said that it effects positively because he said that it is easier to learn the language when you compare it to your mother tongue.

70% of the respondents consider semantics is a weakness area of their learning and about half said that they have a problem n dealing with the multi-meaning words.

Table 3 : Difficulties Realization

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Difficulties Realization | Agree | Neutral | Disagree |
| Does your mother tongue influence your writing in English\*  If yes, how (negative or positive)? | 65% | 25% | 10% |
| Do you try to translate your ideas when you write in English? | 70% | 15% | 15% |
| Does your culture affects your writing in English? | 40% | 20% | 40% |
| Do the differences between English and Arabic grammar causes problems for you in writing? | 65% | 35% | ------ |
| Do the multi-meaning words of English make your writing difficult? | 50% | 5% | 45% |
| Are the semantic differences a weakness area of your writing? | 70% | 10% | 20^ |
| The various usage of preposition is confusing me. | 55% | 10% | 35% |

In the next part of the realization of writing competence, the participants were asked to answer wit yes or no , either they have some difficulties in writing tasks or not. the first statement was inquiring about whether the participants have problem in spelling or not. Most of the participants who said yes that they have problem said that the reason behind that is the differences between the way a word is pronounced and the way it is written. Unlike the Arabic system of writing which is the same as a word is pronounced, it is written. They also gave the same reason when they were asked about the subject and verb agreement and the capitalization. The majority said that it is not found in Arabic, so they face problem in understanding it.

More than half of the participants said that they can not use appropriate words as well as they face a problem in the sentence order. The reasons behind those two problems are:

* The multi-meaning of the English words
* The lack of vocabulary
* The mother tongue influence

The majority of the respondents have problem in the English tenses specially the perfect tenses, passive voice and verb to be usage. They said that their teachers did not give them more attention. Some others said that the perfect tenses are not available in their mother tongue (Arabic), so they do not know the usage of these tenses. Moreover, they said that the irregular verbs confuse them as a verb is changed according to the tense it is used with.

**4.2. The Second Instrument**

To answer the research questions, a proficiency test composing of two parts. The first part is made of multiple choice questions and tests six categories. 55 multiple choice questions and the capitalization question has been designed and administered by the researcher to test the subjects’ ability to understand and use the below mentioned categories correctly. In addition to this, the second part of the test asks the respondents to write a paragraph about some topics. In this part the respondents are asked for free writing and guided writing as well.

**4.2.1 English Language Writing Test**

The first part of the proficiency test includes the following items:

* Spelling (10 questions)
* Singular and plural (10 questions)
* Tenses (10 questions)
* Prepositions (20 questions)
* Punctuation (5 questions)
* Capitalization (applying on a paragraph)

Through the second part of the test, the researcher will check all of these categories in the respondents written paragraphs that they were asked to write In addition to some other categories like the choosing of the appropriate words, irrelevant information, subject verb agreement, etc.

**4.2.2 Results and Discussion**

20 students who learn English as a foreign language, who study in Diponegoro University in different study programs were chosen as the subjects for this study. They were asked to write about three different topics and answer a writing test. The written data were analyzed by the researcher in terms of identifying and classifying of the grammatical errors which were found in spelling, singular and plural, tenses, prepositions, articles, active and passive voice, verbs, word order, capitalization and punctuation, and morphological errors. A total of 345 grammatical errors were found.

As stated above, they were classified into 10 major linguistic categories. Table I is given in order to show the number and percentages of these errors as shown below:

**Table 4 :** The number and percentages of errors

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | **The number of errors** | **The percentages of errors** |
| Tenses  prepositions  Articles  Active and passive voice  Verbs  Spelling  Capitalization and punctuation  Singular and plural  Word order  Morphological errors | 75  90  75  30  70  45  36  30  43  85 | 12.96%  15.54%  12.96%  5.18%  12.09%  7.77%  6.21%  5.18%  7.42%  14.69% |
| **Total** | **579** | **100%** |

**4.2.3 A Detailed Classification of Errors**

The errors, which are stated above into grammatical categories, were classified in a more detailed way. The errors committed in the compositions of the students will be presented as follows:

**A. Tenses**

The number of errors in tenses is 75 which comprises 7.2% of the total errors. These errors are divided into sub-categories as stated in the table below:

**Table 5 :** Errors of tenses

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Types of errors** | **Number** |
| Simple past instead of present perfect  Simple present instead of present prefect  Simple past instead of simple present  Present progressive instead of simple present  Past perfect instead of simple past | 18  20  10  15  12 |
| **Total** | **75** |

This category is the lowest number of errors among the linguistic categories employed in this study. This minority of the errors in this category is due to the students who do not use various types of tenses in their writing. Another reason for the minority of the errors in this category is the certain rules about the usage of tenses and the subjects do not make so many errors because they have learnt these rules. Some of these errors are below:

1. I never went to that country. (Simple past instead of present perfect)

2. I never see like this kind of cigarette. (simple present instead of present perfect)

A possible reason for such errors may be the lack of equivalent of present perfect tense in Arabic. Accordingly, the subjects tend to translate literally from Arabic and use simple past or simple present which are the nearest equivalent of the present perfect. Unlike English, the particle /qad/ plus the perfect verb like /gadara/" left" is used to render the perfect tense in Arabic as follows:

/Laqad gadara abi ila london/

This is equivalent to perfect tense in English: My father has left to London.

The subjects of the study also tend to substitute the simple past for the simple present as follows:

3. I hoped that all of us give up smoking

Such errors may be due to interference because, unlike Arabic, English requires a sequence of tenses but Arabic is not as the following example: /qala 'inna-hu sayu gadiru gaden

He said that he would leave the next day

It is noticed from the example stated above that the verb /qaala/ is in the past tense but the main verb /sayu gadiru/ is in the future tense.

Another example is the use of present continuous instead of simple present as follows:

4. I am understanding why smoking is harmful.

Such example may be due to wrong overgeneralization. Some English verbs are considered as non-continuous verbs. Arab learners tend to overgeneralize wrongly the progressive to all types of verbs.

In another sentence, the subject uses wrongly past perfect tense instead of the simple past:

5. He had given up smoking last year.

**B. Prepositions**

This category constitutes the most problematic area for the subjects. Most of the subjects omitted or misused some prepositions. This category is the one that includes number of errors which are 90 in total. They are summarized as follows.

**Table 6 :** Errors of prepositions

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Type of errors** | **Number** |
| Omission of prepositions  Addition of prepositions  Misuse of prepositions | 50  15  25 |
| **Total** | **90** |

Prepositions express a relation between two entities. English prepositions have different functions, so it is not easy for Arab learners to learn to use prepositions correctly. As it is seen in table

3, the most common errors in this category is omission of prepositions. Some examples of this category are as follows:

1. I am waiting (-----) him.(omission of the preposition)

The English verb “wait” is followed by the preposition “for” while the Arab equivalent is not. The error committed above is due to over- literal translation from Arabic language.

Another most common errors in preposition category is the misuse of the prepositions. Most of the preposition misuse errors are considered as a result of interference from Arabic as follows:

2. He laughed from me because I was smoking.

3. From the other hand, smoking harms our hearts.

The preposition “from” is used wrongly in sentences 2 and 3. The preposition “from” meaning /min/ in Arabic replaces the English preposition “at” and “on” consecutively. Such errors are due to literal translation from Arabic.

The least common errors in this category is the addition of prepositions as follows:

4. when he returned to home, he smoked heavily.

In sentence 4, the preposition “to” is an extra added item that does not fit the standard English. Such errors are due to interference because the equivalent Arabic sentence comprises “ila” which means “to”. The subjects attempt to translate word from word from Arabic.

**C. Articles**

Another problematic area for the Arabic learners learning English as a foreign language is the use of

articles. Nearly twenty two percent of the total errors are in this category. The number of errors is 75 as stated in table 7:

**Table 7:** Errors of Articles

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Type of errors** | **Number** |
| Omission of “the”  Addition of “the**”**  Omission of a / an  Addition of a / an  Misuse of articles | 17  5  30  7  16 |
| **Total** | **75** |

English has definite and indefinite articles. The use of articles depends on the noun premodified by the article. Definite article is used with specific reference. The indefinite article with generic reference is used with a singular countable noun when the reference represents the whole class. Arabic has only a definite article called “ the L of definition”. Accordingly, the articles are not used similarly in Arabic as in English. For example, “I am a student.”, the English indefinite article “a” is used before the student. However, this is not the case in Arabic. The sentence is formed as " " “'ana talib”. There is also a great difference between the two languages in terms of the definite article “the” as stated in the following example: / al-halibu mufidun liljami' /

(Milk is good for all). we can conclude from the example stated above that mass and abstract nouns take a zero article in English whereas the equivalents in Arabic take the definite article “ ”. Thus, the Arab learners may produce so many errors of articles. Some other examples are as follows:

1. Smoking is a bad habit in---- world. (omission of “the” definite article)

In sentence 1, the definite article “the” is omitted. Such errors are due to simplification because the Arab learners have tendency towards simplification which is mostly considered as a simplification strategy.

2. I like to smoke in the home. (addition of the definite article “the”)

Such errors are due to L1 interference in the form of addition because the definite article ( ) "the" is used before home in Arabic as ! (the home), so the Arab learners use it wrongly. This type of errors also indicates ignorance of rule restrictions on the part of the learners.

3. After ---- month of not smoking, I got lost (omission of indefinite article "a")

4. Within a half an hour, my friend smoked more than four cigarettes (addition of indefinite article “a”).

Such errors may be due to interference because indefinite articles are not used in Arabic.

5. My friend is starting (the) college in October (misuse of the definite article “the”)

Such errors are due to difficult nature of the foreign language. The learner does not know the rules of definite article “the” with places of assembly such as (church, school, college, market, home, bed, etc.). When these places are visited and used fore their primary purposes, the definite article “the” is used, but if they are visited and used not for their primary purposes , the definite article “the” is not used such as the following example:

I go to the market to see my friend there. But

I go to market for shopping.

**D. Active and Passive Voice**

This category comprises 8.69% of the total errors. The total number is 30. Both English and Arabic have active and passive with different constructions. English passive construction uses auxiliaries and word order change. Arabic passive construction is a matter of vowel change without changing the order of the words in a sentence. Such differences may cause errors that are due to interference.

These errors are divided into sub-categories as stated in the table below:

**Table 8 :** Errors of Passive And Active

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Type of errors** | **Number** |
| Passive auxiliary Be omission  Passive with intransitive verb Be addition  Preposition confusion | 17  7  6 |
| **Total** | **30** |

Below are some samples of such errors:

* + 1. I ---- shocked by the results (passive auxiliary Be omission)
    2. They were decided to give up smoking (passive with intransitive verb /Be addition)
    3. The heart disease is caused from smoking (preposition confusion)

The Arab learners tend to omit the passive auxiliary (Be) because of non-presence in Arabic passive construction. Arabic also differs from English passive in which we can passivize only transitive verbs. In Arabic we can make passive from intransitive as well as from transitive. Accordingly, Arabic learners may produce wrongly such sentences:

I was stood in front of the house.

Which is equivalent to Arabic passive construction:

/ w’uqifa amamu al bayt/

**E. Verbs**

The number of errors in verbs is 40 which comprises 11.59% of the total errors. These errors are divided into sub- categories as stated in the table below:

**Table 9 :** Errors of Verbs

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Types of errors** | **Number of errors** |
| Omission of the verb “Be”  Addition of the verb “Be”  Misuse of the verb “Be”  Omission of other verbs  Misuse of other verbs | 15  20  14  11  10 |
| **Total** | **70** |

The most erroneous area in this category are the use of the verb “Be”. Both omission and addition of verb “Be” are found as the following example:

* + 1. when a smoker---- smoking heavily he hurts other people. (Be omission).
    2. The idea of giving up smoking can be happen and this idea is not a dream (Be addition)

The omission of the verb “Be” in sentence I is due to L1 interference because similar structures in Arabic lack the verb “Be”. In sentence 2, “Be” verb is an extra added item. The erroneous structure of this sentence shows wrong overgeneralization in the form of addition. The learners apply the English passive construction wrongly in this sentence which has intransitive verb.

Another type of errors is the misuse of the verb “Be” as the following example: The teacher says it is essential that smokers are given a special attention. Such errors are due to difficult nature of language. The learners do not know the construction of the subjunctive form. If “that clause” is used after certain words (adjectives, verbs, nouns), the bare infinitive will be used. If “that clause” is used after words that do not take the subjunctive form, the regular form of the verb must be used. The Arab learners over generalize the second rule wrongly. The learner has to use “Be” (bare infinitive) in place of “are” in the sentence stated above.

Another possible reason for the errors relating to “Be” is probably that distinction in the use of verb “Be” in Arabic and English. The translation of a sentence with the verb “Be” in English may seem to have no verb in Arabic. When the learners translate the sentence into English without applying the rules of English, the result may be erroneous. The other errors in this category are not so common and their possible reason is carelessness.

**f . Spelling Problems**

The system of joining the letters to form a word is called spelling. Spelling system differs from one language to another language. The letters also differs from one language to another for example Arabic letters are different from English which are different from Russian.

Arabic language has got 28 letters which considered as phonemes as well, whereas, English has got 26 letters. Ten of Arabic letters do not exist in the English language. In Arabic language, the words are written as they are pronounced, whilst in English every word has got its own spelling which is different from the phonemic transcription of the word. This is the main influence of the mother tongue that affects the spelling of Arab students learning English.

As known to all literate Arab that the words are being written according to their pronunciation, thus, the Arab learners tries to write words in English according to their pronunciation. This is because of their ignorance that English letters has nothing to do with the pronunciation and they are completely different from the phonemes of English.

English language has got 26 letters. There are five vowel letters which are (a, e, i, o and u), and twenty one are consonant letters which are (b, c, d, f, g, h, j, k, l, m, n, p, q, r, s, t, u, v, w, x, y and z). These letters are joined together to make the written form of the words. Whereas, English has got forty four phoneme (phoneme is the minimum unit in English sounds) divided into two groups. The first group is vowel sounds which are divided also in to two groups (short and long vowels). The second group is the consonant sound which consists of twenty four sounds. These sounds are used in the phonetics to make a special phonetic transcription for each word in English. The differences in writing between the two languages cause a problem for Arab students learning English. These differences affect their writing negatively.

In these data, the researcher found out that the students have got two types of errors which are:

1. The addition and the omission of some letters
2. The word is spelled completely wrong depending on the pronunciation.

These are the most repeated errors by the majority of the participants. The students mostly depend on the word pronunciation in spelling the words especially those words which they are not familiar with.

**1. The Addition and the Omission of Some Letters**

There are some words in English which ends with the vowel letter (e). The letter (e) in the final position usually got omitted by the students because it does not affect the pronunciation of the word when it comes n the final position. As an impact of the mother tongue, the students got used to write what they pronounce, so they just write what they pronounce.

Here are some of the participants errors in their writing test:

Writ write(omission of e)

investigat investigate(omission of e)

prepar prepare(omission of e)

solv solve (omission of e)

absolut absolute(omission of e)

appl apple (omission of e)

learne learn (addition of e)

greate great (addition of e)

In some other cases, there are words with silent letters, so the students always omit the silent letter. For example:

com comp

enviroment environment

colum column

**2. The Word Is Spelled Completely Wrong Depending on the Pronunciation.**

Thereare some words which the students do not know their spelling form, so they just try to guess the spelling form through the pronunciation of the word which is a feature of Arabic language but it can not be applied in English.

In these cases, the spelling of the word is usually wrong. Here are some examples made by the participants:

Parafrase paraphrase

campain campaign

forin foreign

These are the most errors that have been observer in the participants writings which are mostly done because of the mother tongue influence and the lack of the knowledge about the target language.

**g. Punctuation and Capitalization**

Arabic language has no capitalization and its punctuation conventions are very different from the English language. “It has no distinction between the upper case and the lower case.”

The students face problem while writing because they often forget to begin a sentence with a capital letter. They even get confused while writing their names, and those of cities, countries and books etc. They lose marks owing to this difficulty and take a considerable time in getting used to capitalization.

Another most common problem with Arab students is the use of commas and conjunctions, which are totally different in Arabic and English languages. “In English, items in a series are separated by commas and the co-ordinate conjunction ‘and’ is used just before the last word”. In Arabic each item in a series is precede by the conjunction ‘wa’(و) which is equivalent to ‘and’.

1. **Word Order**

Classical Arabic tends to prefer the word order VSO (verb before subject) rather than SVO (subject before verb). However, the word order is fairly flexible, since words are tagged by case endings, whereas SVO is more common in spoken Arabic. The word order errors constitute 7.42%of the total number of the errors.

In many cases, the learner may transfer the Arabic word order during their writing, asillustrated in the following examples:

1-\* English is language international.

2-\*He is learning grammar English.

3-\*You like reading story English.

4-\* I want to be teacher English excellent.

5-\* I speak always English inside the class.

The above sentences show different kinds of word order. The first one is in the noun phrase where the order of noun phrase in Arabic language follows this order: N + adj but the order of the noun phrase in English is different. The adjective word must be before the noun, not after. So, the Yemeni students make many errors in this type because they have influenced by their mother tongue.

The second word order which is shown in the above sentence is the position of adverb. The correct order of adverb must be before main verb.

\* I speak always English inside the class.

I always speak English inside the class.

1. **Singular and Plural**

In this area of study, the participants did not make many mistakes. The singular and plural constitute 5.18 % . This minority of mistakes was because the Arabic language has plural and singular but most of participants made mistakes in the irregular nouns like (ox to oxen).

The errors of singular and plural are illustrated below:

**1. Irregular Nouns:**

There are English irregular nouns that have different form when they are in plural forms. This confused the participants. Some of the participants just add ‘s’ or ‘es’ to the word. Below are some of the students errors:

Ox oxes or oxs

woman womans

wife wifes

**2. Uncountable Nouns:**

One of the students’ errors is that they do not concentrate on the noun if it is countable or uncountable. The following are some of the participants’ errors:

bread breads

tomato tomatoes

These errors are usually made because of the differences between the two languages (Arabic and English). Also, in some cases the participants seem to just know the rules of making plural but they do not know about the exceptions such as the words like ( sheep) they make it plural by adding ( s, es ).

1. **Morphological Errors**

This category constitutes 14.69% of the total errors and the number of errors is 85. The following table indicates the classification of the morphological errors:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Types of errors** | **Number of errors** |
| Omission of plural ending “s”  Misuse and addition of the plural ending “s” Misuse of possessive “s”  Incorrect use of comparative adjectives  Wrong word form | 12  15  7  10  40 |
| **Total** | **85** |

**Table 10 :** Morphological errors

The table indicates that the most problematic sub-category is wrong word form such as nouns instead of verbs or adjectives instead of adverbs. The learners do not build the adequate competence of the foreign language. They do not have sufficient knowledge of the forms of these words. Some samples of this sub-category are as follows:

1. We live good without smoking (adjective in place of adverb)

2. We live in Jordan culture. (Noun in place of adjective)

3. I am please. (Bare infinitive in place of past participle)

4. Giving lectures about the harmful of smoking is a good idea for make mokers give up smoking. (Base infinitive instead of gerund) Some other errors in this category are as follows:

5. One of the most important benefit (lack of plurality)

6. Another benefits is saving money (addition of the plural ending “s”)

7. It’s importance leads to decrease diseases.(it’s instead of its)

8. Students's ideas are very good. (Misuse of possessive “s”)

9. This benefit is ---- important than others. (Incorrect use of comparative adjective)

**4.3 Discussion**

In this study, which investigates about the problems faced by Libyan students learning English language in writing tasks, the researcher found out ten types of errors made by the subjects of this study who are the students in Diponegoro University, Semarang Indonesia. These errors were of two types (grammatical and morphological errors).

**4.3.1 The Errors**

Regarding the grammatical errors, they are classified into nine types as follows:

1. **Tenses**

This type of problem faces the Arab students mostly in all the different stages of learning English which is because of the differences between the tenses in Arabic and English. In English, there are twelve tenses which are not all found in Arabic which confuse the learner. For example, in Arabic, there is no perfect tense which is found in English language. The Arab learners mostly have problem in dealing with this tense (when to use it, how to use it, etc.).

Most of the learners use the past tense instead of the present perfect tense. Moreover, they do not use the past perfect tense. This is the mother tongue impact on the learning of English. Also, it might be caused by the learning attempt to translate their ideas from one language to another. The comparison of the new learnt language to the mother tongue causes such types of problems.

The less given attention to this part and the method adopted of teaching grammar ( grammar translation method) may be the cause of such problem.

1. **Articles**

In Arabic, there is only one article which is equivalent to the definite article ‘the’ in English, whereas the indefinite articles ‘a’ and ‘an’ in English do not have any counterpart in Arabic. For this reason, Arab students are very likely to make grammatical mistakes in this area when they come to write in English. In addition to this, the use of the definite article in Arabic is not the same as in English. Arabic uses the definite article with abstract nouns even if they are used in general sense, while English does not use the definite article ‘the’ with abstract nouns unless they are specified.

Some of the Arab learners use the articles in English indiscriminately without taking into consideration the fact that there are differences between the rules of the two languages. For example, in Arabic, they use the definite articles with the names of the religions whereas in English there is no article with these names.

However, it seems that some Arab learners apply the Arabic rules when they are writing in English or they think in Arabic and then translate their ideas from Arabic into English literally.

1. **Prepositions**

Prepositions are another grammatical category that presents an enormous challenge not only to Arab students learning English as a foreign language but also to all English learners. Because Arabic and English belong to two different families, it is axiomatic that they do not have the same prepositions; nor do they use them in the same way. So that, the learners face difficulties in using the proper preposition in the proper position.

1. **Verbs**

Verb is the main part of any sentence, and a sentence can not stand without a verb. The most difficulties that is faced by the learners is verb to be. The learners always make errors in this part. They add, omit, or misuse verb to be. The reason behind this problem could be the fact that Arabic sentences, unlike English ones, can occur without verbs. Besides, there is no counterpart in Arabic to ‘be’ when it is used as a main verb in the present tense in the sentence.

1. **Passive and Active Voice**

In both languages, there are active and passive voice but in different ways. Learners face difficulties in dealing with the passive voice as they can not find out the object. In English, a sentence can be without object and the similarity between the complement and the object confuses the learner. In some cases the learners make passive voice for a sentence without an object.

This problem of kind of error is caused by the less attention given to this area of study. It can be handled easily if the learners got the rules of making passive from active voice sentence.

1. **Spelling Problems**

Arabic language has got 28 letters which considered as phonemes as well, whereas, English has got 26 letters. Ten of Arabic letters do not exist in the English language. In Arabic language, the words are written as they are pronounced, whilst in English every word has got its own spelling which is different from the phonemic transcription of the word. This is the main influence of the mother tongue that affects the spelling of Arab students learning English.

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1. **Punctuation and Capitalization**

The punctuation and capitalization systems are two areas that Arab students have problems dealing with them. The learners have problems in dealing with the capitalization system. This problem could be seen in the learners’ writings. This is because the Arabic language system has not got capital and small letters. Besides, it has not got any noun that has special case which must be capitalized as it can be seen in English. This stands as an obstacle for the Arab learners in writing English. It can be seen in the learners writing that they start a paragraph with a small letter or write a name with small letter. The cause might not only be the learners ignorance of the rules, but also might be that the learners got used to have no capital letter for special words in their native language.

On the other hand, there in both languages punctuation system, but it is different from Arabic to English. In English, the punctuation can change the meaning of a sentence as we can see in this example:

Kill him not, save him.

We can see from the example above that the place of the comma can change the meaning of the sentence. Unlike Arabic, the punctuation system is not given that attention as it can not affect the meaning of the sentences. It is mostly used to guide the reader where he\she must stop or where he must have a pause.

1. **Word Order**

The word order in Arabic and English is slightly different. In Arabic, we can find that the word order in a sentence is ‘verb + subject + object’ (it is not the matter with all sentences) whereas in English is ‘subject + verb + complement’. These differences in the positions of the verb and the subject confuse the learners. So it is usually to find an Arabic student learning English starting a sentence with the verb not the subject. This is one of the common errors that Arabic learners of English usually have. This is caused by the overlapping between the native language and the foreign language (English).

1. **Singular and Plural**

In this area, the learners do not commit a lot of errors. The only confusion that encountered by Arab learners is the irregular words. Exceptional words like those which do not have plural form or those which have irregular form in the plural form confuse the learners. Mostly those words which have plural form in Arabic but they do not have in English. Just like the word ‘sheep’ which has plural form in Arabic but there is no plural form for the word ‘sheep’ in English. Therefore, it is common to find Arab learners writing a plural form for the word ‘sheep’ as ‘sheeps’. But this area have the less errors made.

This minority of errors could be due to the two languages have the plural system. This is what helps the students to not having many errors in this part unlike the other parts.

1. **Morphological Errors**

English and Arabic belong to two different language families. While Arabic is a member of the Semitic language family, English belongs to the Indo-European language family. Consequently, it is not surprising that Arab students of English as a foreign language encounter difficulty in learning English in general due to the interference of the Arabic language.

Errors in the learner's use of the foreign language that can be traced back to the mother tongue interference is the negative influence of the mother language on the performance of the target language learner.

These are the most common errors that is figured out in the participants writings. These errors are mostly caused by the influence of the mother tongue.

**4.3.2The Causes of the Grammatical Problems in Writing**

In this study, the main cause that has been noticed through the participants writings was the mother tongue influence which affects negatively on the learners writing competence. Most of the learners apply the grammatical rules of Aabic on English unconciously. So, one may write a sentence starts with a verb followed by the subject like an Arabic sentence.

Moreover, most of the participants said that they watch TV to improve their English. Therefore, they can improve their speaking skill but not the writing skill. The learners can improve the writing skill through reading and practising writing more and more. The ways that student use to improve their writing competence are only those which may improve the speaking competence like internet, TV, radio, movies. Most participants agreed that English is an easy language to learn and the practice is the only key to be professional. They do not go to libraries to read books and do not read magazines or newspapers which help to improve the writing skill.

**4.3.3 The Solutions Suggested to Overcome These Problems**

Throughout this study, it is found out that the main cause in the grammar problems faced by Arab learners in English composition is the mother tongue inflence, which affects passively on the learners’ writing competence. Te interfernce between the grammatical rules of the two languages confuses the learners. Therefore , to overcome these problems, the foreign language must be tought naturaly. Therefore, the learners will not be cnfused by the differences between the grammar of the two languages.

The learners must recognize the common errors and they must pay more attention to those problems. In addition to this, the teachers ought to pay attention to the common problems in writing and give more concentration and ask the learners to write and use English in different situation. e.g. the teacher ask the students to write a paragraph using all the tenses of English, and then he\she corret the learner’s work and check which tense is the most uncorrectly used by the learners. Then , the teacher concentrate more on this area.

**Chapter V**

**Conclusion, Recommendations and Suggestions**

**5.1 Conclusion**

This study aims at investigating the writing errors that is committed by Libyan Arab students in the academic level in Diponegoro University. This study shows that the most weak area in writing English by Arab learners of English as a foreign language was in the grammatical aspects. Learners have difficulties in dealing with the grammar of the target language (English).

Most of the errors committed by the participants were in prepositions as a result of the slight difference between the two languages. The difference of the number of prepositions and the different usage of them were the only causes behind that.

It is found out that the mother tongue effects negatively the learners acquisition of the foreign language. The study found out that the mother tongue effects on different aspects of acquiring the grammar of the foreign language. Both Arabic and English are tense languages but the absence of some tenses of English in Arabic does not help the students to master the tenses of English. For example; the perfect tense is found in English but it does not exist in Arabic. Therefore, the learners face difficulties in using this tense and usually make errors in using it.

There are so many grammatical aspects which are affected negatively by the mother tongue. These are as follows:

Articles errors which is a result of the absence of the indefinite articles in Arabic and the different usage of the definite article in Arabic and English

Verbs and active and passive voice are one of the difficulties that is encountered by the Libyan Arab learners as this study brought out. These errors are caused by the impact of Arabic structure of active and passive voice and the usage of verbs which is different from English. For example; some sentences can stand without a verb in Arabic but it can not in English.

English and Arabic belong to two different language families. While Arabic is a member of the Semitic language family, English belongs to the Indo-European language family. They have different alphabet and writing systems. As a result, the learners face some difficulties in spelling, punctuation, capitalization (which does not exist in Arabic), and some morphological problems.

This study investigated about three questions which are ( what, why and how):

* + 1. What are the problems faced by the Arab Libyan academic students in Diponegoro University level at in relation to writing skills?
    2. What are the causes of the writing problems among the Arab Libyan students in Diponegoro University in academic level?
    3. How to overcome the writing problems faced by Arab Libyan students in Diponegoro University in academic level?

These questions have been answered and the objectives of the study which are highlighting the difficulties and find some solutions and suggestions in case the difficulties found was attended.

**5.2 Recommendations**

In this study, the researcher found out many errors that Arab students usually commit. These mistakes needs more given attention in order to be overcome. The researcher recommends the following for the students and the teachers to follow the following steps:

It is recommended for students that they should try:

1. To use English language for communicative purpose more and more.
2. Not to translate their ideas from one language to another.
3. To think in English and write them even though it is a bit difficult in the beginning.
4. To read more, by that they can improve their writings.
5. Not to compare between the English grammar and the mother tongue grammar which always confuses the learners.

**5.3 Suggestions**

The research suggests that the teachers must apply a natural method by using English in the classes and give more attention to the communicative skills especially writing to improve the students communicative skill. To improve this skill, the teachers ought to ask their students to think and write in English and give more attention to the areas of weaknesses that were found in this study. The grammar must be given more attention and the teachers ought to teach grammar in the writing forms.

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**Appendix**

**Writing test**

**Academic students in Diponegoro University**

**Name: .................................... ..... time: two hours**

**Study program:......................... age: ..................**

1. **English spelling.**

**undeline the right spelling for each word.**

1. A) questionnaire  b) questionaire  c) questionnairre
2. A) definate  b) defenate  c) definite
3. A) Where is it?  b) Were is it?  c) Wear is it?
4. A) highly responcible b) highly responsible  c) highly responsable
5. A) a complementary drink  b) a complimentary drink  c) a complementory drink
6. A) He critisised the plan  b) He critisissed the plan  c) He criticised the plan
7. A) open-ended catagories  b) open-ended catigories  c) open-ended categories
8. A) liberal tendancy  b) liberal tendensy  c) liberal tendency
9. A) the principal of gravity  b) the principle of gravity  c) the prinsipal of gravity
10. A) It's their  problem  b) It's there problem  c) It's they’re  problem
11. **Singular and plural**

**Change these nouns to plural form**

1. Dish ......................
2. Ox ......................
3. Kilo ......................
4. Knife ......................
5. Wolf ......................
6. Sheep ......................
7. Woman . ....................
8. Navy ......................
9. Sugar ......................
10. Bread ......................
11. **Tenses**

**Fill the space with the correct option**

1. I --------- to the bakery yesterday.

Go , goes , went , going

1. He is ........ now.

comes, come , came, coming

1. I -------- a letter.

am, is, are , been.

1. She -------- him.

love, loves, loving, loved.

1. He --------- football tomorrow.

Plays , play , will play , played.

1. I am ..........to music.

Hearing , listen , hear , listening.

1. I --------- the contract with Liverpool in the next few days.

sign , signed , will sign , signing.

1. The car --------- in japan.

Make, making , made , was made.

1. The house ---------------- now.

Build, is building , built , is being built .

1. It is cloudy, it --------- rain .

Is going to, will, does, have.

1. **Prepositions :**

**Fill the space with the correct option**

1. They are looking at the side ---- the street.

----, in , of , on .

1. she sat ---- the table to eat lunch.

----, on , at , to.

1. I sleep ---- bed. on , at , in ,----.
2. They like to go ---- Amman. in , at , to , on
3. I came back ----- home.

in , ---- , to , at .

6- We went to Jericho ---- car.

---- , in , by , on .

1. The plane is flying ---- the sky .

on , in , at , into .

1. . People go on journeys ---- the Dead Sea.

on , at , to , in.

1. . I help my father ----- work.

in , on , at , into.

1. . We bought two kilos ---- meat.

of, with, ---- , in .

1. . The people go to work ---- merrily.

-----, with , in .

1. . I shall help people and be kind ---- them.

of , with , to on .

1. . We were interested ---- it.

on , with , in , at.

1. . I went ---- home happily.

at , in , ---- , to.

1. . I spent my times ---- home.

to, at , in -----.

1. . I saw a football match ---- the TV

at , on , in , to.

1. . I am ---- the third preparatory class.

on , at , to , in .

1. I played tennis ---- the garden.

to , at , in , on.

1. I must stay at the university ---- eight years.

----, in , for , to.

1. ---- my last holiday , I went to visit my sister in U.S,A.

for , in , on , at.

1. I live ---- my father and mother.

in , with , ----, to

1. **Capitalization**

**In this passage, find out the letters that must be capital and correct them .**

in a little house in spain lives a girl called amanda. she has two sisters, lisa and sally, and one brother called fred.

amanda lives in barcelona in spain, which is in europe. she has a pen pal called brian who lives in england. she likes to write to brian so she can practice her english. brian does not know very much spanish, but he is learning a few words. amanda would like to go visit brian in london when she is older. most of all she would like to visit new york.

amanda has a small dog called pete. he is a dachshund. when she takes pete to the park she likes to throw him a ball.

there is a famous park in barcelona called park guell. the park has houses that look like they come from the hansel and gretel story. amanda and pete like it very much.

1. **Punctuation**

**Put the proper punctuation mark in the given sentence**

1. Save him not kill him
2. June was mostly fine however July was rainy.
3. What do you think of going home this afternoon
4. Its your bussiness
5. Today is March 14th 2011

**Write about yourself throughout your life stages ( childhood, youth, manhood )**

**Note : not less than 200 words.**

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**Write about your specialization in master degree . not less than 200 words**

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**Choose a topic and write about .**

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Questionnaire

difficulties faced EFL learners (Libyan Arab) in writing English

Name: ………………………….

Study program: ………………………..

Age: …………………………..

Hometown: ……………………………………..

Duration from when you started learning English:

…………………………………………

As a questionnaire is an instrument of collecting data to conduct a research, so this questionnaire is conducted to observe the difficulties that Arab Libyan students face in writing English and their attitudes about their writing level compared to their academic degree.

I hopefully looking forward to find out these difficulties in writing English in order to come out with some recommendations and solutions , but this can’t be attained without your help. I hope you all write it sincerely in order to come out with fine results that will help the next generation to avoid sch problems in writing english

Note : \*Open-ended question with different responses.

**Give your opinion about the following :**

1. I can easily find ways to practice English by myself
2. Agree b) neutral c) disagree
3. I expect a teacher to be responsible for telling me what and how much to study and evaluating what I have learned
4. Agree b) neutral c) disagree
5. I consider myself to be a good language learner (ie: I can pick up languages easily)
6. Agree b) neutral c) disagree
7. English is an easy language to learn

a) Agree b) neutral c) disagree

1. It takes a lot of effort to become good at English

a) Agree b) neutral c) disagree

1. You can’t really know English unless you live and/or study in an English-speaking country
2. Agree b) neutral c) disagree
3. The real practice of using the target language is the key to be professional
4. Agree b) neutral c) disagree

I improve my English by myself by studying in an independent learning centre (ILC), self-access centre (SAC) or library in my university.

1. Always b) sometimes c) rarely or never

I don’t use the ILC, SAC or library now to improve my English, but I have used this method in the past.

1. Always b) sometimes c) rarely or never

I improve my English by practicing with my friends.

1. Always b) sometimes c) rarely or never

If yes, how do you practice?\*

I use the internet to improve my English. If yes, how

do you use it?\*

1. Always b) sometimes c) rarely or never

I watch TV/movies in English.

1. Always b) sometimes c) rarely or never

I read books, magazines, newspapers (that are not related directly to my studies) to improve my English.

1. Always b) sometimes c) rarely or never

Does your mother tongue influence your writing in English\*

1. Agree b) neutral c) disagree
2. It influences it positively (how)\*
3. It influences it negatively (how)\*

Do you try to translate your ideas when you write in English?

1. Agree b) neutral c) disagree

Does your culture affects your writing in English?

1. Agree b) neutral c) disagree

Do the differences between English and Arabic grammar causes problems for you in writing?

1. Agree b) neutral c) disagree

Do the multi-meaning words of English make your writing difficult?

1. Agree b) neutral c) disagree

Are the semantic differences a weakness area of your writing?

1. Agree b) neutral c) disagree

The various usage of preposition is confusing me.

1. Agree b) neutral c) disagree

There are many prepositions in English unlike Arabic that is why I made many mistakes in using preposition.

1. Agree b) neutral c) disagree

I do not know how to use punctuation

1. Agree b) neutral c) disagree

English punctuation uses are not like Arabic ones, so it makes me confused.

1. Agree b) neutral c) disagree

The spelling of the words is difficult

1. Agree b) neutral c) disagree

I have a problem in spelling

1. Yes b) no

If yes , why?

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I have a problem in punctuation

1. Yes b) no

If yes , why?

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I have a problem in capitalization

1. Yes b) no

If yes , why?

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I have a problem in sentence order

1. Yes b) no

If yes , why?

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I have a problem in tenses

1. Yes b) no

If yes , why?

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I have problem in subject verb agreement

1. Yes b) no

If yes , why?

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I cant use approperiate words

1. Yes b) no

If yes , why?

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Which of the following do you think are common problem to you in writing. Put them in order , start with the most common to the less common.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Spelling |  |
| Singular and plural |  |
| Vocabulary , wrong word usage |  |
| Verb tense |  |
| Words order |  |
| Subject verb aggreement |  |
| Punctuation including capitalization |  |
| Irrelevant information |  |
| Meaning not clear |  |
| Missing words |  |

How do you deal with these problems?

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