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## Types of Pragmalinguistic Errors in the Essays of University EFL Learners

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### Abstract

Even though learners may pay much attention to the grammar rules and vocabulary of an L2, a communication breakdown can sometimes occur. The reason for such breakdown is that L2 learners usually focus on grammar rules, lexis, syntax, and semantics ignoring pragmatic knowledge which is of no less importance and which may lead to a miscommunication when lacked. This research aims at investigating the types of pragmalinguistic errors (a sub-category of pragmatics) in the writings of EFL learners. This paper also provides illustrative examples for the misunderstanding -caused by pragmalinguistic errors- which may occur, inadvertently, due to conveying unintended/wrong meaning to the reader. In this respect, 92 essays written by EFL learners in a private university in Cairo were analyzed for the aforementioned purposes. The errors were checked against four English native speakers for reliability purposes. The findings reveal that the types of pragmalinguistic errors found were Erroneous Construction of Sentences, Arabic Construction of Sentences and Lexical Errors. The findings also reveal that pragmalinguistic errors were detected in the writings of EFL advanced-level learners as well as intermediate-level learners. Also, possible alternatives are provided for the detected errors.

*Keywords:* Pragmatics, Pragmalinguistics, Pragmalinguistic Errors, Pragmalinguistic Transfer, Erroneous Construction of Sentences, L1 Influence, L1 Transfer.

## **Introduction**

Acquiring a second language is a main concern for EFL learners. Second language (L2) learners try to enhance their L2 proficiency levels by mainly acquiring the vocabulary and grammatical rules of a language. In a like manner, the academic books usually emphasize teaching the vocabulary and grammar rules of a language through the four skills reading, listening, writing, and, occasionally, speaking. Nonetheless, there has been a trend since the 80's to enforce teaching the appropriateness of L2 use in a way that conforms to the surrounding context; in other words, to enforce teaching pragmatics; yet, this trend has not been widely generalized. Subsequently, learners' language proficiency is occasionally affected due to lack of pragmatic knowledge.

### **1.1. Pragmatics and Language Proficiency**

Errors in students' writings may be attributed to various factors such as lack of grammatical competence, lack of syntactic or semantic knowledge; pragmatic errors are also considered one of the various factors which may result in non-target-like forms and, further, may lead to miscommunication. Pragmatics, as Yule (1996) states, is more concerned with what the speaker/writer means rather than what the words themselves mean. In light of this, pragmatic competence is essential for students to enable them to produce target-like forms, to convey their intended meaning and minimize risks of misunderstanding their intentions by the hearer/reader. Thus, language proficiency does not only entail learning the grammatical rules and vocabulary of a second language, but also learners need to acquire pragmatic knowledge for a proper acquisition and production of a second language.

Surprisingly even advanced learners may produce inappropriate L2 due to the lack of pragmatic competence even though they master the grammar and vocabulary of a second language. In this vein, Thomas (1983) points out that a learner's linguistic ability is a combination of grammatical competence and pragmatic competence which refers to using language in an effective way so as to have the ability to produce proper meaning and understand language in context. Similarly, Leech (1983, p.4) asserts that "Grammar (the abstract formal system of language) and pragmatics (the principles of language use) are complementary domains within linguistics. Likewise, Nikula (1996) states that language proficiency depends on using the grammar rules of a language along with pragmatic knowledge to communicate the intended meaning. Nikula, further, introduces the term "pragmatic proficiency" and defines it as the ability to use language in an appropriate manner that conforms to social context as well as the ability to use language in a correct way regarding the grammar rules and the vocabulary of a language. Furthermore, Cenoz (2007) asserts that learning a

second language does not only involve learning linguistic elements of the language but also learning how to use such linguistic elements to convey the intended meaning and avoid inappropriateness.

### **1.2. Pragmatics: Pragmalinguistics and Sociopragmatics**

Pragmatics has been defined in various ways in the literature; it has been defined from a cultural perspective as well as from a linguistic perspective. Pragmatics has generally been described as the study of the comprehension and production of peoples' "linguistic action in context" (Kasper & Blum-Kulka, 1993, p. 3). Pragmatics is also the interpretation of the intended meaning of people in a certain context (Yule, 1996, p. 3). Pragmatics is both culture-specific and language-specific; it is culture-specific when cultural/societal norms are of concern whereas it is language-specific when the linguistic formulae across languages are of concern. Accordingly, pragmatics is divided by Thomas (1983) into pragmalinguistics and sociopragmatics. Pragmalinguistics refers to the linguistic resources available in a language from which a speaker may choose to form a speech act and is concerned with the relation between pragmatics and other linguistic fields of the language, especially grammar. Whereas, sociopragmatics is concerned with using such forms appropriately according to different social norms such as social distance, power, status, politeness and direct/indirect strategies. The difference between Sociopragmatics and pragmalinguistics is further illustrated by Kasper (1992, p. 210) who states that a sociopragmatic decision for an apology, for example, would consider the norms of the society and whether such norms impose the need for an apology or, further, for an account for the offence occurred. However, a pragmalinguistic decision is to choose the phrasing or the semantic formula of a speech act of which the apology could be uttered.

### **1.3. Investigations of Pragmatics in the Literature**

Pragmatics has been investigated cross-culturally rather than cross-linguistically, and the term cross-cultural pragmatics has been widely prevailing in the literature. Out of the many subfields of pragmatics (i.e. speech act theory, politeness theory, pragmatic routines, presuppositions, implicatures, deixis), speech act theory and politeness have been investigated the most. In other words, pragmatics has been investigated from a social/cultural perspective rather than a linguistic perspective. That is, the majority of studies have given much more attention to sociopragmatics rather than to pragmalinguistics. On the one hand, researches such as Blum-Kulka (1983), Takahashi & Beebe (1987), Trosborg (1987), Nelson, Al-Batal & Echols (1996), Pinto (2005), Byon (2004), Chang (2011), Lee (2011), and Naiditch (2011), following Austin (1962) and Searle (1969), focused in their investigations on speech act theory across cultures (a theory which is mainly concerned with the illocutionary force mapped onto a speech act). On the other hand, researches such as House & Kasper (1981), Hüllen, Lörcher & Schulze (1987), Beebe

and Takahashi (1989), Holmes (1992), Chen, Ye & Zhang (1995), and Wannaruk (2008), Chang (2009), Li (2010), following Brown & Levinson (1987), focused in their investigations on politeness theory across cultures (a theory which is mainly concerned with face-threatening acts). However, unlike researchers in the aforementioned areas, only rare studies such as Eisenstein and Bodman (1993) dealt with the pragmalinguistic end / semantic formula used in producing a target-like form to convey the intended meaning of the speaker.

#### **1.4. Pragmalinguistics in the Scope of this Study**

Pragmalinguistics, unfortunately, has rarely been investigated in the literature; even though some studies such as House & Kasper (1981), Blum-Kulka & Olshtain (1984), House (1984), Blum-Kulka & Olshtain (1986), Takahashi (2005), House & Kasper (1987), and Bergman & Kasper (1993) investigated pragmalinguistics, they merely dealt with non-native speakers' use of mitigation devices and modifiers in performing target-like-form speech acts taking into consideration the native's social norms (status, power, directness/indirectness and politeness).

Even though very rare studies such as (Eisenstein & Bodman, 1993) and (Muir, 2011) have investigated pragmalinguistic formulae of L2 learners' production, the majority of the literature focused on either speech act theory or politeness theory ignoring other pragmatic formulas. In contrast, in this study I am focusing on other pragmalinguistic errors that may produce ambiguous meaning and/or may cause confusion to the reader. Over and above, the majority of the literature focused on spoken language in the investigation of pragmatics ignoring writing (except for Muir's, 2011 who is considered to be the only researcher, to the researcher's best knowledge, who investigated pragmalinguistic failure in the writings of EFL learners). Nevertheless, pragmatics is not only restricted to spoken language and should be given more attention in writing as well.

#### **1.5. Statement of Problem**

Students often make errors in their L2 production whether speaking or writing; some of the errors are grammatical, which are the major concern of instructors, while a number of the errors are pragmalinguistic errors which are usually ignored as stated above. It is worth noting that, unlike grammatical errors, pragmalinguistic errors hinder the communication process and result in students' failure to convey their intended meaning to the hearer or reader. The researcher noticed that students at the university level, despite their intermediate/advanced level of proficiency, often make such errors in their writings.

#### **1.6. Aim and Significance of the Research**

The aim of this research is to identify the types of pragmalinguistic errors made by university students in their essays, to categorize the errors

and to examine the difference of pragmalinguistic frequency between different levels of language proficiency. Since most teaching material and approaches only focus on lexis, syntax, semantics and other fields of an L2 ignoring pragmatic and pragmalinguistic knowledge, the significance of this research lies in attempting to reveal the miscommunication that may occur due to pragmalinguistic errors which may confuse the reader or, further, may impede comprehension. Hence, this research highlights the importance of acquiring pragmalinguistic knowledge for producing appropriate target-language forms and for conveying the intended meaning of a writer.

### **1.7. Research Question**

The present study attempted to find answers to the following question:

- 1- What types of pragmalinguistic errors do Egyptian EFL learners make in their writings?

## **Review of Literature and Related Studies**

### **2.1. Pragmalinguistic Failure**

Thomas (1983) points out that pragmalinguistic failure may stem from pragmalinguistic transfer which is considered the main cause of miscommunication. Pragmalinguistic failure, according to Thomas (1983), may stem from the transfer of: 1) Speech act strategies from one language to another. 2) Mother tongue semantically/syntactically equivalent structures to the target language (p. 101)

#### **2.1.1. Transfer of Speech Act Strategies**

Some conventionalized formulas have specific acts in a language, yet, may not have the same act in another language; for example, '*Can you X?*' in British English is a conventionalized request rather than asking about one's ability to do X. So, '*Can you close the window?*' is realized as a request in British English to close the window rather than an ability question of asking about the hearer's ability to close the window. In contrast, other languages such as French and Russian do not have such conventionalized requests, and hence, such languages would treat the aforementioned example as an ability question rather than an act of request (Thomas, 1983). Thomas, further, reports on a situation in an English classroom where the English teacher asked a Russian student '*Would you like to read?*' to which the student responded '*No, I wouldn't*'.

#### **2.1.2. Transfer of Mother Tongue Semantically/Syntactically Equivalent Structures**

Like speech acts, some semantically/syntactically equivalent structures may function in one language differently than the other.

##### **2.1.2.1. The Transfer of Semantically Equivalent Structures**

Semantically equivalent structures are structures that have the same meaning, yet, differ in their linguistic realizations and in their functions. For example, Davis (1987) reports that the Arabic "*/hamdullah/ praise to God*"

and the English “*thank God*” are semantically equivalent; however, they function differently. The Arabic */hamdullah/* can be used as a response for asking for one’s health, an indication of finishing a meal, or a declination of a food offer (as well as other offers). On the other hand, the English ‘*thank God*’ cannot be used to have the same function in the previous situations (Davis, 1987, pp. 82-83).

### **2.1.2.2. The Transfer of Syntactically Equivalent Structures**

Syntactically equivalent structures are structures that have the same syntax in different languages, yet, differ in their meaning and in their functions. For example, the syntactic phrase ‘*thank you*’ is used to accept an offer in English; however, it is used to refuse one in Malay (Richards & Sukwiwat, 1983, p. 116). Another example is the syntactic structure ‘*I’ll take care of it*’ which, unlike its use in English to indicate acceptance, is used in Japanese to indicate a polite refusal. Takahashi & Beebe (1987) report a situation where Mr. Sato, the late prime minister of Japan, in 1974, was asked by President Nixon, the president of USA, if he would agree to a certain policy regarding the export of fabrics to the U.S. Mr. Sato’s answer ‘*Zenshoshimasu*’ was literally translated to President Nixon as ‘*I’ll take care of it*’ which is considered a polite way for refusal in Japan and which does not achieve the same function in English. As a consequence to such a misunderstanding and such a pragmalinguistic failure, President Nixon, according to his misinterpretation of the situation, got angry that the Japanese did not fulfill their promises (p. 133).

### **2.1.3. Semantically/Syntactically Non-equivalent Structures**

Pragmalinguistic failure may also occur when transferring semantically/syntactically non-equivalent structures of one language to another. That is, a certain linguistic structure may be used in one language, yet, in another language may be entirely lacking. For example, Blum-Kulka (1983) points out that in the English language, tag questions are used as a mitigating device to soften the force of a message. ‘*You’ll do it, won’t you*’, for instance, in English is softer than ‘*you’ll do it*’; however, in Hebrew, there are no tag questions. Thus, the aforementioned message becomes vague for a Hebrew hearer. Similarly, a clear example of this point is given by Davis (1987) as a fixed formula in one language does not necessarily have an equivalent formula in the target language. For example, Davis reports that in Moroccan Arabic, the formula */la bas flik/* ‘*no harm on you*’ which is used to wish someone a speedy recovery from a disease has no such semantic formula in English; instead, another formula is needed to convey a meaning as close and as appropriate in English as it is in Moroccan Arabic. In this case, the English formula ‘*hope you get well soon*’, even though is considered as the closest equivalent, is not considered as an accurate equivalent to the previously mentioned */la bas flik/* because

*/la bas flik/* is usually used in spoken genres, however, *'hope you get well soon'* is usually used in written genres (letters) only (Davis, 1987, p. 80). It is, further, well noticed that the aforementioned case is not only restricted to Moroccan Arabic, it also applies to all Arabic dialects.

#### 2.1.3.1. Pragmatic Failure of Lexical Devices

It is worth noting here that a lexical device could have a certain meaning in one language, yet, act differently in another. In this respect, Kasper and Blum-Kulka (1993), point out that learners may know a lexical item or sentence structure, yet, use it inappropriately and fail to convey the intended meaning. The word "sorry" in Japanese, for example, is used to express gratitude unlike its use in the English language; that is of apology. Eisenstein and Bodman (1993) report an example of such a case when a Japanese employee who was offered a raise in his job to which he responded with *'I'm sorry, I will try harder in the future.'* The Japanese employee's reply "sorry" was to express his deep gratitude. In expressing gratitude, the Japanese people would use "sorry" simply because thank you -in the Japanese language- is not sincere enough. Hence, transferring L1 properties into L2 may be bewildering for the native speaker.

#### 2.1.4. Erroneous Pragmalinguistic Structures

Non-native speakers, in addition to transferring a formula from an L1 to an L2, may also erroneously construct a structure due to pragmalinguistic failure. In their article "I very appreciate", Eisenstein and Bodman (1993) investigated pragmalinguistic failure in the speech act of gratitude to compare between native and non-native responses. A questionnaire which contains 25 items was developed and administered to informants from different nationalities. Their responses were rated as *'native-like'*, *'acceptable'*, *'not acceptable'*, *'problematic'*, *'not comprehensible'* and *'resistant'*. Eisenstein and Bodman attributed *'problematic'* and *'not comprehensible'* responses to pragmalinguistic failure. *'Problematic responses'* included examples such as *'thank you for the party. I don't like to leave here. But we'd better work separately and meet again.'*, *'thank you very much. Very appreciate.'*, *'thank you. Sound is good.'* and *'thank you very much. I'll return it as fast as I possible'*. *'Not comprehensible'*, include examples such as *'I will never forget a gat a full'* and *'the next tie it will be for me'* (p. 175).

#### 2.1.5. Pragmalinguistics in Writing

Pragmalinguistics -as mentioned previously in the introduction section- has been investigated in speaking more extensively than in writing. Over and above, the sources of investigating pragmalinguistics in writing are quite rare. To reiterate, there is a dearth of studies, to the researcher's best knowledge, conducted to identify pragmalinguistic errors in writing. The importance of investigating pragmalinguistics in writing lies in teaching learners to avoid using inappropriate sentence constructions or lexical devices according to the context; such inappropriate use may have a

different meaning than the intended one, confuse the reader or cause ambiguity.

Muir (2011, p. 256) investigated pragmalinguistic failure in the writings of junior high school EFL learners whose first language is Chinese and have been studying English for more than 6 years. He collected 34 essays with different prompts. He found that pragmalinguistic errors were found frequently in their writing; it was, further, found that the most prominent cause for pragmalinguistic failure was transfer from the first language, Chinese, to the English language. Muir, further, attributed such pragmalinguistic failure to the students' lack of linguistic proficiency which plays "an unignorable role" in producing a native-like language. The data collected was analyzed and the pragmalinguistic errors were categorized into *verbose appositions*, *combination of two subordinate clauses*, *Misunderstandings of words*, *Chinese construction of sentences*, *Independent subordinate clauses*, and *the omission of relative pronouns*.

Pragmalinguistic errors may hence stem from: transfer of a speech act (Thomas, 1983), transfer of semantically/syntactically equivalent structures (Thomas, 1983), transfer of semantically/syntactically non-equivalent structures (Blum-Kulka, 1983), construction of erroneous structures (Eisenstein & Bodman, 1993), inappropriate use of a lexical devices (Kasper and Blum-Kulka, 1993). Thus, pragmalinguistic failure in writing could, be defined as the failure to convey the intended meaning of the writer by producing ambiguous, confusing or incomprehensible sentences due to misuse/ill-formation/L1 transfer of sentence constructions or lexical devices.

### **Methodology**

#### **3.1. The Research Design**

The researcher used a qualitative/descriptive analysis which was used to identify pragmalinguistic errors of 92 written essays by intermediate- and advanced-level students, to explain the inappropriateness and misunderstanding which such pragmalinguistic errors resulted in, and to provide alternative target-like forms for the pragmalinguistic errors detected.

#### **3.2. The Sample**

A total of 92 freshmen and junior English learners who were studying English as a foreign language in a private university in Cairo, Egypt in 2014 participated in this study; 44 of the students were intermediate-level students (ILS); whereas the other 48 students were advanced-level students (ALS). All students were placed in intermediate- or advanced-level classes according to their placement test scores.

#### **3.3. Data**

### 3.3.1. Data Collection

Individually written argumentative essays were collected from 92 intermediate- and advanced-level students in both the spring and winter semesters of the Academic Skills course. Both ILS and ALS were given prompts to write their individual argumentative essays on. The intermediate-level students' (ILS) prompt was '*Is it morally acceptable to experiment on animals to develop products and medicines that benefit human beings?*' While the advanced-level students' (ALS) prompt was '*Should the internet be used in the classroom?*' The students were instructed to write a five-paragraph essay in class in a one-hour time limit.

### 3.3.2. Data Assessment

The data were assessed according to the following two criteria:

- The taxonomy explained in Table 1 below.
- Four native English speakers who were asked to rate the appropriateness of errors via Google forms via [https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1imByIqh9u-UTF72\\_RZCr-YvE9oKrG8rnsY\\_tblgenjs/viewform](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1imByIqh9u-UTF72_RZCr-YvE9oKrG8rnsY_tblgenjs/viewform) and [https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1ibJABwd2rmWyHhdV9FrF9CbxFxdNr\\_Qe8w0nv5h7P1U/viewform](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1ibJABwd2rmWyHhdV9FrF9CbxFxdNr_Qe8w0nv5h7P1U/viewform) . The researcher sought the opinion of Native Speakers' of different nationalities in order to account for different varieties of English and discrepancies that may exist between some of the dialects.

### 3.3.3. Procedures of Data Analysis

The data were categorized -on basis of the results of a pilot study- to *Erroneous Construction of Sentences*, *Arabic Construction of Sentences* and *Lexical Errors* which in turn was divided into *Literal Translation Errors*, *Multiple-Meaning Word Errors*, *Near Synonym Errors* and *Lexical Collocation Errors*. The categories' names were adopted from various studies except for *Erroneous Construction of Sentences* which was developed based on the nature of certain errors observed by the researcher. The rest of the categories' names were adopted as follows: *Arabic Construction of Sentences* was named after Muir's 'Chinese construction of sentences' (2011, pp. 256-258). *Lexical Errors* was a modification of Muir's 'misunderstanding of words' (2011, p. 256) and were, moreover, sub-divided into the following sub-categories: *Literal Translation Errors*, *Multiple-Meaning Word Errors* which were adopted from Chebchoub (2006, p. 7), *Near Synonym Errors* which was adopted from Shalaby, Yahya & El-Komi (2009, p. 79), and *Lexical Collocation Errors* which were adopted from Mohammed (2005, p. 5). The categories are further summarized, defined and exemplified in the following taxonomy (table 3.2):

Table 1

*Types of Pragmalinguistic Errors Taxonomy*

Category	Definition	Example
<b>1. Erroneous Construction of Sentences</b>	A wrong target language sentence construction albeit following its syntactic and semantic rules. Further, they are not influenced by the student's native language constructions.	using animals in experiments is not acceptable because it is a humanless behavior and <u>disturb the environment</u>
<b>2. Arabic Construction of Sentences</b>	A sentence construction which is a non-target-like form construction and which is influenced by the students' native language (colloquial/standard Arabic) <sup>1</sup> .	Habitats are made on a large scale to protect such animals and make sure that they are <u>far away from extinction.</u>
<b>3. Lexical Errors</b>	Are subcategorized hereunder:	
<b>3.1 Literal Translation Errors</b>	A word used in the target language that is literally translated from the student's native language (colloquial/standard Arabic).	Doing experiments on animals is acceptable for learning only and not <u>joking.</u>
<b>3.2 Multiple-Meaning Word Errors</b>	A native language (Arabic) word corresponds to two distinct meanings or more in the target language (English) and, subsequently used in two different contexts; However, a student misuses one of the English equivalents for this Arabic word in the context of the other.	Using animals make applying products on human beings much more safe. We can expect the side effects of the products and <u>cure them.</u>

Category	Definition	Example
<b>3.3 Near Synonym Errors</b>	A target language word that is close in meaning to another target language word is inappropriately used by a student instead of the other one.	Experimenting on animals may kill them and thus will extinct them, which <u>in result</u> will destroy the food chain
<b>3.4 Lexical Collocation Errors</b>	i. An inappropriate word choice where the use of a word (noun) does not collocate with the range of words (i.e. verb/adjective) allowed for it in the English language.	Researchers have done all over the world to examine a product, drug or medicine for <u>killing a disease</u> .

### 3.4. Procedures

To answer the research question ‘*What types of pragmalinguistic errors do Egyptian EFL learners make in their writings?*’, the researcher analyzed the 92 essays to identify pragmalinguistic errors (displayed and discussed in the section below) and categorized them according to the Data Analysis criteria mentioned above.

### Data Analysis, Results and Discussion

#### 4.1. Results and Discussion of Pragmalinguistic Errors

The aim of the study was to identify the types of pragmalinguistic errors students make in their writings. Accordingly, both ILS and ALS were given prompts to write argumentative essays on which allowed the researcher to investigate for the pragmalinguistic errors in their writings. Based on four native speakers’ ratings, if a student’s production is judged by at least one of the raters to be a non-target like form or judged to pose a level of confusion, it is considered a pragmalinguistic error<sup>2</sup>. an inter-rater reliability was established to confirm the reliability of the categorization of the errors as well as to confirm the inappropriateness of the responses. The rater who was chosen to perform the inter-rater reliability was chosen based on her bilingual nature in order to meet the necessary requirements to categorize L1 transfer errors. The rater was familiarized with the objectives of the study as well as the analysis and categories of the data; the researcher calibrated the analysis with the rater in several sessions to ensure understanding of the categories and consistency of the analysis. On the one hand, an agreement of 95.65% was reached with regards to categorizing the errors; on the other hand, an agreement of 87.34% was reached with regards to verifying the errors. Even though the inappropriateness of the remaining errors which constituted 12.65% of the overall errors were not confirmed by

the inter-rater, they were verified by other native speakers as stated above; accordingly, they were listed and analyzed hereunder. The errors are first summarized in tables according to the categories explained in Data Analysis above and each table is followed by a discussion of the errors.

#### 4.2. Results of pragmalinguistic errors in the writings of ILS

The following tables show the pragmalinguistic errors which occurred in the writings of intermediate-level students (ILS) who were given a prompt to respond to; the prompt was “Is it morally acceptable to experiment on animals to develop products and medicines that benefit human beings?”. Forty four essays were collected from students and analyzed. The analysis yielded the following results which were categorized into six types of pragmalinguistic errors discussed below.

##### 4.2.1. Erroneous Construction of Sentences in the Writings of ILS

Table 2 shows *Erroneous Construction of Sentences* errors in which ILS students produce non-target-like sentence constructions that fail to convey the intended meaning of the writer and confuse the reader. Such sentences are wrongly constructed albeit following the syntactic and semantic rules of the target language. Even though some of these errors may be explicable, to an extent, their intended meaning is highly doubtful. Furthermore, some of the errors could be interpreted differently by different readers while other errors could not be comprehended at all.

Table 2

#### *Erroneous Construction of Sentences in the Writings of ILS*

##### **Erroneous Construction of Sentences**

1. Some other people believe that using animals in experiments is not acceptable because it is a humanless behavior and disturb the environment
2. With the developing and progress of human beings, many changes exist in life and many researches and experiments are done to change the concept of their life
3. With the developing and progress of human beings, many changes exist in life and many researches and experiments are done to change the concept of their life
4. If animal testing continues to be imagine a nature disorder to occur soon
5. If we stopped using animals in experiments human beings will be in a serious dangerous and health process will stop
6. Habitats are made on a large scale to protect such animals and make sure that they are far away from extinction
7. Researchers have done all over the world to examine a product, drug or medicine for killing a disease

### Erroneous Construction of Sentences

8. Scientists will look after the animals which should be used in experiments and create for them a suitable climate to give us many ancestors
9. In my side if people don't use animals in the scientific side, they will lose a lot
10. I warn people, if these experiments are stopped, a great hole will be formed in medicine development wall
11. Instead of removing the animal from its environment, scientists can experiment on the animal in its normal environment
12. People can give the animals vacation to protect them from diseases

It is notable that such *Erroneous Construction of Sentences* errors are not influenced by the students' native language; moreover, the whole construction has to be rephrased in order to be corrected and to be comprehensible. For example, in error number 1, **Some other people believe that using animals in experiments is not acceptable because it is a humanless behavior and disturb the environment**, the use of '*disturb the environment*' is unclear; it might mean that *using animals in experiments is as inhumane to the environment as it is inhumane to the animals*, it might mean that *testing on animals may lead to an ecological imbalance*, or it might bear a third meaning the student was unable to convey. In error number 2, **With the developing and progress of human beings, many changes exist in life and many researches and experiments are done to change the concept of their life**, on the one hand, the student might have intended to mean that *the development and progress of human beings influence the development of different life fields*. On the other hand, the clause '*many changes exist in life*' may not be related to the previous phrase '*with the developing and progress of human beings*' at all. Consequently, by mentioning the '*progress of human beings*', it was not clarified if such progress referred to *a mental progress/development of humans themselves (i.e. biological systems)* or referred to *progress conducted by humans in different fields of life*. Moreover, it is unclear what '*changes*' the student referred to; these changes may have referred to *the challenges of life that humans face* or may have referred to *the severe consequences to humans' development in life fields*. Hence, the construction of '*challenges exist in life*' is very confusing.

In error number 3, **With the developing and progress of human beings, many changes exist in life and many researches and experiments are done to change the concept of their life**, the use of '*change the concept of their life*' is ambiguous. That is, it might mean to change *people's mentalities and the way they think*, it might mean to change *their behaviors*, or it might refer to *having positive effects on their lives*. After all,

the phrase remains incomprehensible. In error number 4, **If animal testing continues to be imagine a nature disorder to occur soon**, '*a nature disorder to occur*' might mean that *there is a natural disaster that will prevail/take place* or it might mean that *testing on animals may cause ecological imbalance*. In error number 5, **If we stopped using animals in experiments human beings will be in a serious dangerous and health process will stop**, '*health process will stop*' might mean that *people's health will deteriorate* or might mean that *the medical development will cease*. In error number 6, **Habitats are made on a large scale to protect such animals and make sure that they are far away from extinction**, the researcher found difficulties to provide a suggested meaning for '*habitats are made on a large scale*' due to the fact that the sentence construction used is entirely incomprehensible.

In error number 7, **Researchers have done all over the world to examine a product, drug or medicine for killing a disease**, the construction '*researchers have done all over the world*' is ambiguous as it might mean that *researchers, all over the world, have exerted efforts to examine a product* or it might mean that *researchers have developed new ways to examine a product*. In error number 8, **Scientists will look after the animals which should be used in experiments and create for them a suitable climate to give us many ancestors**, '*give us many ancestors*' is inexplicable; however, the student may have meant that *scientists will provide suitable conditions for the animals which will allow them and will give them a chance to reproduce*, or may have meant that *scientists will take good care of animals in the experiments, will protect them from any consequences and, hence, will protect them from extinction; consequently, this will preserve them and their offspring*. In error number 9, **In my side if people don't use animals in the scientific side, they will lose a lot**, '*in my side*' is quite confusing because even though it may possibly mean *in my point of view*, following it by '*the scientific side*' towards the end of the first half of the sentence, makes it more confusing.

In error number 10, **I warn people, if these experiments are stopped, a great hole will be formed in medicine development wall**, by using '*a great hole will be formed in medicine development wall*' the student might have meant that *the development of medicine will be by far hindered*; however, such meaning is not fairly conveyed by using the above construction. Even though the whole sentence is not Arabic-like form, its first half '*a great hole will be formed*' may be a reflection to the Arabic form /hajihsal fagwa kbi:ra/ that is usually used in Arabic to refer to a negative aspect of a certain object, topic, or development. In error number 11, **Instead of removing the animal from its environment, scientists can experiment on the animal in its normal environment** '*removing the*

*animal from its environment*’ might mean *depriving animals from their freedom and their wild life*. Another possible meaning is *putting animals in artificial conditions*, especially as it is followed by *‘scientists can experiment on the animals in its normal environment’*. In error number 12, **People can give the animals vacation to protect them from diseases**, the student used the clause *‘give the animals vacation’* in an attempt to convey that *it is possible for scientists to cease the experiment and give a chance for animals to rehabilitate before continuing the experiment*.

#### 4.2.2. Arabic Construction of Sentences in the Writings of ILS

Table 3 shows *Arabic Construction of Sentence* errors the students of ILS make in which they are influenced by their native language (standard Arabic or colloquial Arabic) in writing the English sentence constructions. Accordingly, such constructions cause difficulties for a reader, particularly to a native speaker reader, to comprehend; probably a bilingual speaker who acquires both Arabic and English would be able to understand such constructions.

Table 3

#### *Arabic Construction of Sentences in the Writings of ILS*

##### **Arabic Construction of Sentences**

1. Extinction will remove some species of animals from the surface of earth
2. People will treat these animals badly forgetting that animals have rights and that all religions advised people to respect animals. So this may lead to unbalance between animals and environment
3. Country’s economy can benefit from animal testing
4. Habitats are made on a large scale to protect such animals and make sure that they are far away from extinction
5. If the experiment do not successful, the animal may be die and if it still be alive, it will lose a big part of its health
6. Animals are under the use of humans humans who build the life so they are more important than animals and anything could be done in order to develop the right medicine
7. Animals are under the use of humans humans who build the life so they are more important than animals and anything could be done in order to develop the right medicine
8. If we choose specific animals to make experiments on it, the number of it will reduce and we do not find it again
9. Putting animals in danger of extinction and become a story, or unexisted creatures that are only exist in books only due to the massive amount of experiments that exist on their species is not completely true
10. Scientists take care of every step on the experiment
11. Since the early dawn of civilization, man has progressed gradually, and come to realize how his existence will cease to continue if it wasn’t for the animals that share the ecosystem with them

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**Arabic Construction of Sentences**

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12. It is argued that this will teach children the mean of violence because nowadays a lot of children watch the scientific channels, they will think that it is acceptable to kill animals whenever he/she wants
  13. In my side if people don't use animals in the scientific side, they will lose a lot
  14. If countries do not use animals in experiments, that would be a great late in developing medicine
- 

In *Arabic construction of Sentences* errors, a sentence must be rephrased in order to become English-like form and in order to be comprehensible. For example, in error number 1, **Extinction will remove some species of animals from the surface of earth**, the sentence construction might possibly mean that *extinction is a result to the reduction of the number of species on earth*. Yet, the student used 'remove some species' followed by 'surface of earth' influenced by the Arabic language in which a speaker uses the phrase 'remove from the surface of earth' /jʃelhum min ʃala wiʃ ʔilʔarḍ/, to indicate the end of someone/something, especially in threatening situations. In error number 2, **People will treat these animals badly forgetting that animals have rights and that all religions advised people to respect animals. So this may lead to unbalance between animals and environment**, the student was influenced by the Arabic construction 'this may lead to unbalance between animals and environment' /sajuʔadi: liʃadam tawazun bajna elhajawanat wilbi:ʔa/ to convey that *it may lead to ecological imbalance*. In error number 3, **Country's economy can benefit from animal testing**, the student might have meant by 'economy can benefit from animal testing' that *animal testing may have a positive impact on the country's economy*. However, in using 'economy can benefit', the student treated economy as a living organism that can benefit which is a transfer from the Arabic language such as in /ʔiqtiʃad ʔaldawla sawfa jastafi:d/.

In error number 4, **Habitats are made on a large scale to protect such animals and make sure that they are far away from extinction**, by using 'far away from extinction', the student was influenced by the Arabic /baʃi:dan ʃan/ which could be used to refer to keeping something or someone safe like in /baʃi:dan ʃan ʔalʔinqiraḍ/ and /baʃi:dan ʃan ʔilmafakil/; instead, the student should have used *animals will be safe from extinction* or *humans should protect animals to forestall extinction*. In error number 5, **If the experiment do not successful, the animal may be die and if it still be alive, it will lose a big part of its health**, the student used 'it will lose a big part of its health' influenced by the Arabic /jixsar sihituh/ in order to indicate that *animals' health will deteriorate*. In error number 6, **Animals are under the use of humans humans who build the life so they**

are more important than animals and anything could be done in order to develop the right medicine by using 'animals are under the use of humans', the student mixed between the two Arabic phrases /musaxar/ *subjected to use* and /taħt amruhum/ *under their command* in a trial to mean that *animals are of a less value than humans and should be at their service or under their command*. In error number 7, **Animals are under the use of humans humans who build the life so they are more important than animals and anything could be done in order to develop the right medicine**, the student tried to convey the importance of humans' role in life and the fact that they develop the universe by saying 'humans who build life'. In doing so, the student was influenced by some Arabic constructions such as /jibni: ħajah/, /bunat ?ilħajah/ or /bunat ?almostaqbal/. In error number 8, **If we choose specific animals to make experiments on it, the number of it will reduce and we do not find it again**, the student used 'we do not find it again' influenced by the Arabic /miġ hanla?i:hum tani:/ which could be used in Arabic to imply the loss of someone/something. In such a case the student was trying to convey that *animals will become extinct*.

In error number 9, **Putting animals in danger of extinction and become a story, or unexisted creatures that are only exist in books only due to the massive amount of experiments that exist on their species is not completely true**, the student wrote 'animals will become a story' influenced by Arabic expressions such as /jus<sup>ʕ</sup>biħ ħkaja/, /jib?u qis<sup>ʕ</sup>a ?adi:ma/ or /xabar kan/ which are used in Arabic to refer to something that has long been gone, non-existent or has *become history*. In error number 10, **Scientists take care of every step on the experiment**, by using 'scientists take care of every step', the student was influenced by the Arabic /jaxdu balhum min/ which could be used in Arabic in situations like *to take care of someone* or, in contrast to English, could be used in Arabic to convey the meaning of *pay close attention to*. In the aforementioned context the student confused between the two Arabic constructions and transferred the Arabic construction *take care of* in an attempt to convey the meaning of *pay attention to*; the student intended to say that *scientists should pay close attention to every step of the experiment*. In error number 11, **Since the early dawn of civilization, man has progressed gradually, and come to realize how his existence will cease to continue if it wasn't for the animals that share the ecosystem with them**, the student used 'cease to continue' influenced by the Arabic /jatawaqqaf ʕan ?al?istimrarija/ to mean that *animals' existence will halt*. In error number 12, **It is argued that this will teach children the mean of violence because nowadays a lot of children watch the scientific channels, they will think that it is acceptable to kill animals whenever he/she wants**, the student used the phrase 'the mean of violence' influenced by the Arabic /ħajʕalimhum maʕna ?ilʕunf/ to convey that *children will be taught the way to be violent*. In error number 13, **In my side if people don't use animals in the scientific side,**

**they will lose a lot**, the student wrote '*people will lose a lot*' influenced by the Arabic /ʔinnas hajixsaru ktir/ by which the student intended to convey that *people will face a lot of consequences*. In number 14, **If countries do not use animals in experiments, that would be a great late in developing medicine**, the student used the phrase '*a great late in developing medicine*' influenced by the Arabic /taʔaxxor kabi:r fi: ʔaltaqadam ʔaltʔibi:/ in an attempt to convey that *medicine development will be hindered*.

#### 4.2.3. Lexical Errors in the Writings of ILS

In lexical errors, students usually misuse a lexical item and place it in an inappropriate context failing to convey their intended meaning. Misuse of a lexical item is due to different reasons such as L1 *Literal Translation*, misunderstanding of *Multiple-Meaning Words*, confusion between two *Near Synonyms*, or using an inappropriate *Lexical Collocations*.

##### 4.2.3.1. Literal Translation Errors in the Writings of ILS

Table 4 shows *Literal Translation Errors* in which students transfer a lexical item from their L1 (Arabic) to their target language (English) which results in wrong use of the lexical item and which fails to convey the student's intended meaning in the English context.

Table 4

#### *Literal Translation Errors in the Writings of ILS*

##### **Literal Translation Errors**

1. Animals are under the use of humans humans who build the life so they are more important than animals and anything could be done in order to develop the right medicine
2. Doing experiments on animals is acceptable for learning only and not joking
3. Animal testing can help treat the rare diseases and then have a healthy life
4. If animal testing continues to be imagine a nature disorder to occur soon
5. New medicines are wanted to defeat some new and dangerous deceases
6. Human's life is too expensive, do not waste it by experimenting medicine on them
7. In my side if people don't use animals in the scientific side, they will lose a lot
8. We gain from doing that experiments as: testing drugs before being published in pharmacies without being tested and knowing the side effects of this drug
9. It's claimed that doing experiments on animals may hardly effect animal health with dangerous disease which may lead at the end of animal death
10. People should never do experiments on rare animals to avoid the fact of absents of some kinds of animals, as well as government should hardly punish people who harm the animals with their experiments

In error number 1, **Animals are under the use of humans humans who build the life so they are more important than animals and anything could be done in order to develop the right medicine**, the student transferred the Arabic /s'ah/ which could be used in Arabic in many situations to refer, for instance, to something right, correct, suitable, or effective. The student used one of its Arabic usages here (right) instead of the other (effective); the student intended to say *develop the effective medicine*. In error number 2, **Doing experiments on animals is acceptable for learning only and not joking**, the student wanted to convey that doing experiments on animals is acceptable if they are done for noble purpose such as learning rather than *immoral/trivial* purposes; instead, the student used the word '*joking*' /hiza:r/ in an attempt to convey *immoral/trivial purposes* as /hiza:r/ could be used in Arabic to refer to an unserious talk, action or situation. In error number 3, **Animal testing can help treat the rare diseases and then have a healthy life**, the student should have used the word *hence* instead of the word '*then*' which is literally transferred from the Arabic /ʔatta:li:/ and which is used in Arabic to mean *then* or to mean *hence* if it is attached to the phoneme /b/ as in /bitta:li:/. In error number 4, **If animal testing continues to be imagine a nature disorder to occur soon**, the student tried to warn the reader to *expect* the disorders that may occur because of animal testing; instead, the student used the word '*imagine*' /taxajal/ which, unlike English, could be used in Arabic to convey expectation in addition to referring to imagination.

In error number 5, **New medicines are wanted to defeat some new and dangerous deceases**, the student used the word '*defeat*' /nihzim/, which is literally used in Arabic to refer to diseases, instead of *conquer* or *beat* which are the appropriate word to be used in English to refer to diseases. In error number 6, **Human's life is too expensive, do not waste it by experimenting medicine on them**, the student intended to mean by '*human's life is too expensive*' /yalja/ that humans' lives are valuable; yet, the student inappropriately transferred the word /yalja/ which literally means *expensive*, and which could also be used informally in Arabic to refer to someone/something as *valuable*, to the above mentioned English context. In error number 7, **In my side if people don't use animals in the scientific side, they will lose a lot**, the student used the word '*side*' /ʔalnaħija/, which is usually used in Arabic in contexts like /ʔalnaħija ʔalttibbija/ or /ʔalnaħija ʔalʔuxra/, in an attempt to mean *field* when referring to the scientific field. In error number 8, **We gain from doing that experiments as: testing drugs before being published in pharmacies without being tested and knowing the side effects of this drug**, the student used the word '*gain*' /niksab/ to mean *benefit*. It is worth noting here that the use of the word '*gain*' is highly confusing because, in this context, it is a transitive verb, yet, is used in this context without an object like /niksab/ can be used in Arabic without an object.

Errors number 9 and 10 (made by two different students), which are referred to as *faux-amis* in Chebchoub (2006), are errors which result in a total opposite meaning than the intended one and which are a direct transfer from L1. In error number 9, **It's claimed that doing experiments on animals may hardly effect animal health with dangerous disease which may lead at the end of animal death**, the student used the word '*hardly*' to mean *extremely, highly or greatly*. Yet, by using of the word '*hardly*', the student conveyed the total opposite meaning of the intended one. In error number 10, **People should never do experiments on rare animals to avoid the fact of absents of some kinds of animals, as well as government should hardly punish people who harm the animals with their experiments**, the student used the word '*hardly*' instead of *severely* and, repeatedly, such use led to the opposite meaning of the intended one.

#### 4.2.3.2. Multiple-Meaning Word Errors in the Writings of ILS

Table 5 shows *Multiple-Meaning Word Errors* in which students are confused between two target-language words which have two distinct meanings and usages in the English language, yet, they have the same equivalent and could be used interchangeably in the Arabic language. Accordingly, a student confuses between the two words and may use one of them in a context that requires the use of the other.

Table 5

#### *Multiple-Meaning Word Errors in the Writings of ILS*

##### **Multiple-Meaning Word Errors**

1. Using animals make applying products on human beings much more safe. We can expect the side effects of the products and cure them
2. Using animals make applying products on human beings much more safe. We can expect the side effects of the products and cure them
3. Studies proved that animal testing and humans agree only 5-25% of the time
4. Doing experiments on animals is a very vital idea. The importance of this is to avoid publishing of diseases and develop new medicines
5. We gain from doing that experiments as: testing drugs before being published in pharmacies without being tested and knowing the side effects of this drug

In error number 1, **Using animals make applying products on human beings much more safe. We can expect the side effects of the products and cure them**, the student confused between *expect* and *predict* since both of them could be replaced by the same Arabic word /natawaqaʕ/ which could be used in either contexts of *predict* or *expect* like in /natawaqaʕ ʔalʔaθar ʔalganibija/ or /natawaqaʕ hdu:θ ʔamran ma/, respectively. However, in this English context which talks about the anticipated side

effects of the products, the student should have used *predict* instead of 'expect'. In error number 2, **Using animals make applying products on human beings much more safe. We can expect the side effects of the products and cure them**, the student used 'cure' to refer to the side effects of the products -or more specifically to refer to the problems caused by the products- influenced by the Arabic /nʕalig/. It is worth noting that the Arabic word /nʕalig/ could be used in Arabic to refer to diseases as in /nʕalig ʔalʔamraqʕ/ or could be used to refer to a certain problem as in /nʕalig ʔalmoʕkila/. However, in this context, the student confused between the two usages and used 'cure' inappropriately; instead, he/she should have used the word *avoid* to refer to the side effects and problems caused by the products.

In error number 3, **Studies proved that animal testing and humans agree only 5-25% of the time**, the student used the word 'agree' influenced by the Arabic /juwafiq/ which could either mean *agree* as in /juwafiq ʕala ʔʕalab/ or could mean *match* as in /juwafiq ʔalmuwasafat/. Hence, the student should have used the word *match* instead of 'agree' in order to convey that *the genes of humans and animals match*. Moreover, this sentence is much more confusing and could even have a totally different meaning as it was interpreted differently by one of the Native Speakers as follows: *if the test is proved to be successful on animals, not necessarily will it be successful on humans nor will it yield the same results*. Thus, this sentence poses a great difficulty in comprehending due to L1 influence and inappropriate usage of its words. In error number 4, **Doing experiments on animals is a very vital idea. The importance of this is to avoid publishing of diseases and develop new medicines**, the student confused the word 'publish' with the word *spread* due to the fact that both of them can be replaced in Arabic with the word /junʕur/ as in /junʕur ʔalxabar/ and /junʕur ʔalʔamraqʕ/, respectively. Hence, the student should have used the word *spread* to refer to diseases. In error number 5, **We gain from doing that experiments as: testing drugs before being published in pharmacies without being tested and knowing the side effects of this drug**, also, being influenced and confused by different usages of the Arabic word /junʕur/ which could, further, informally be used to refer to distributing something as in /junʕur ʔildawa fi: ʔilsʕajdalijat/, the student used 'published'; instead, the student should have used the word *distribute* to convey that *drugs should be tested before being available in the pharmacies*.

#### 4.2.3.3. Near Synonym Errors in the Writings of ILS

Table 6 shows *Near Synonym Errors* in which students confuse between two near synonyms in the English Language and use one in the context of its near synonym.

Table 6  
*Near Synonym Errors in the Writings of ILS*

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**Near Synonym Errors**

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1. Those who are against experiment they must be eating animals meat so their opinion is very week and unthinkable
  2. Experimenting on animals may kill them and thus will extinct them, which in result will destroy the food chain
  3. Examining medicines on animals may let the human detect the bad side effect of the medicine without wasting human beings' life
  4. Putting animals in danger of extinction and become a story, or unexisted creatures that are only exist in books only due to the massive amount of experiments that exist on their species is not completely true
  5. Some people look that doing experiments on animals is very harmful because it may lead animals to die or make any harm to them but others look it's very important and useful
- 

In error number 1, **Those who are against experiment they must be eating animals meat so their opinion is very week and unthinkable**, the student referred to an opinion by being '*unthinkable*' instead of *uninformed*. In error number 2, **Experimenting on animals may kill them and thus will extinct them, which in result will destroy the food chain**, the student used '*in result*' to mean *in turn*. In error number 3, **Examining medicines on animals may let the human detect the bad side effect of the medicine without wasting human beings' life**, the student used '*examining*' medicine in an attempt to mean *testing*. In error number 4, **Putting animals in danger of extinction and become a story, or unexisted creatures that are only exist in books only due to the massive amount of experiments that exist on their species is not completely true**, the student used the word '*correct*' in an attempt to convey the meaning of *right*. In error number 5, **Some people look that doing experiments on animals is very harmful because it may lead animals to die or make any harm to them but others look it's very important and useful**, the student used the word '*look*' instead of *see* which was intended to convey the meaning of *believe*.

**4.2.3.4. Lexical Collocation Errors in the Writings of ILS**

Table 7 shows *Lexical Collocation Errors* in which students choose a word, uninfluenced by L1, which does not collocate to the nearby words in the context and must be changed to conform to the context. Such *Lexical Collocation Errors* may even lead to a high distortion of meaning such as examples 1-4. Moreover, some lexical collocations, such as examples 7-8, are not due to choice of words but due to their use in an inappropriate

context.

Table 7

*Lexical Collocation Errors in the Writings of ILS*

**Lexical Collocation Errors**

1. Animal testing can help treat the rare diseases and then have a healthy life
2. Some diseases are spreaded rapidly and cause lots of infections and using animals to test some ways of treatments in this times help a lot to save the lifes and protect a lot of suffering
3. Within the past decade, lots of new viruses appeared
4. It is argued that testing products on animals will not guarantee the good quality of the product; one product could have good effects on animals and causes lots of problems to human beings and it forms a danger on human life
5. Animals are not similar to human in many things. Some medicine may satisfy and are good for animals but on human won't satisfy on their body
6. Researchers have done all over the world to examine a product, drug or medicine for killing a disease
7. Examining medicines on animals may let the human detect the bad side effect of the medicine without wasting human beings' life
8. Human's life is too expensive, do not waste it by experimenting medicine on them

In error number 1, **Animal testing can help treat the rare diseases and then have a healthy life**, the student used 'treat' instead of *cure* to refer to diseases. In error number 2, **Some diseases are spreaded rapidly and cause lots of infections and using animals to test some ways of treatments in this times help a lot to save the lifes and protect a lot of suffering**, the student used the word 'protect' in an attempt to mean *spare* people's suffering.

In error number 3, **Within the past decade, lots of new viruses appeared**, the word *emerged* should have been used instead of 'appeared'. In error number 4, **It is argued that testing products on animals will not guarantee the good quality of the product; one product could have good effects on animals and causes lots of problems to human beings and it forms a danger on human life**, the student used the word 'form' to refer to danger; instead, the student could have used *pose* a danger. In error number 5, **Animals are not similar to human in many things. Some medicine may satisfy and are good for animals but on human won't satisfy on their body**, the student used the word 'satisfy' instead of *effective* in an attempt to say that *some medicines may be effective for animals, yet, ineffective for humans*. In error number 6, **Researchers have done all over**

the world to examine a product, drug or medicine for killing a disease, the student used the word 'kill' to refer to diseases; however, the words *beat* or *conquer* should be used instead.

Errors 7 and 8 are contextual errors which are linguistically correct, yet, contextually incorrect. In other words, the two words used in each error may collocate and could be used, yet, in a different context other than this one to convey a total different meaning than the intended one here. In error number 7, **Examining medicines on animals may let the human detect the bad side effect of the medicine without wasting human beings' life**, the student should have used the word *endanger* instead of 'wasting' to convey that *medicine needs to be tested to make sure that its side effects do not endanger humans' lives*. Instead, the student used the word 'waste' to refer to humans' lives. In error number 8, **Human's life is too expensive, do not waste it by experimenting medicine on them**, the student used the word 'waste' instead of *endanger* to refer to human lives which *should not be endangered by experimenting medicine on*.

#### 4.3. Results of Pragmalinguistic Errors in the Writings of ALS

The following tables show the pragmalinguistic errors made in the writings of advanced-level students who were given the prompt "Should the internet be used in the classroom?" to write accordingly. Forty eight essays were collected from students which revealed the following results; the results were categorized into the following six types of pragmalinguistic errors shown hereunder.

##### 4.3.1. Erroneous Construction of Sentences in the Writings of ALS

Table 8 shows *Erroneous Construction of Sentences* errors in which, as mentioned previously, students produce non-target-like sentence constructions that fail to convey the intended meaning of the writer.

Table 8

#### *Erroneous Construction of Sentences in the Writings of ALS*

##### **Erroneous Construction of Sentences**

1. Isolating students from internet support while in exams or when they do not need to search or study on the internet, and planting morals in students to not be distracted and focus
2. I personally believe that internet should be allowed in classrooms as it benefit a big cause as teaching and for students to deal with internet for upcoming careers

It is notable that such *Erroneous Construction of Sentences* errors are not influenced by the students' native language. For example, in error number 1, **Isolating students from internet support while in exams or when they do not need to search or study on the internet, and planting morals in students to not be distracted and focus**, even though the student

might have intend to say that *internet accessibility will be restricted during the exam's time*, such an interpretation is, however, doubtful particularly that the sentence is incomplete. In error number 2, **I personally believe that internet should be allowed in classrooms as it benefit a big cause as teaching and for students to deal with internet for upcoming careers**, the student might have meant by '*it benefit a big cause*' that *internet serves a noble purpose*; yet, it remains unclear.

#### 4.3.2. Arabic Construction of Sentences in the Writings of ALS

Table 9 shows *Arabic Construction of Sentence* errors in which, as mentioned previously, the students are influenced by their native language (standard Arabic or colloquial Arabic) in writing the English sentence constructions. Accordingly, such constructions pose comprehension difficulties to a reader, particularly to a native speaker reader.

Table 9

*Arabic Construction of Sentences in the Writings of ALS*

#### Arabic Construction of Sentences

1. Some people claimed that the internet may hinder students from thinking by their own minds
2. Others think that internet could make students devalue knowledge convinced by the "Easy come, Easy go" principle, saying that internet makes students not feel the effort to get information, which could make them feel that this knowledge is not that rare or important
3. I personally see that it can be proven by contradiction that running after information will not teach students how important knowledge is
4. Teachers must plant the idea of how important knowledge is whether it came easily or difficulty, this will make them better people in general.
5. Not applying to this students will not be able to study nor concentrate and will lose the true meanings of education
6. Internet is the symbol of the modern world
7. Students take enough time to try and understand on their own, they do not "work their brains" enough
8. Maybe the teacher said something wrong, so the student would point that out
9. Students are not left alone in classes they will be always under the eyes of their teachers
10. People argue that the internet helped them pass their exams and not only break some high scores
11. Isolating students from internet support while in exams or when they do not need to search or study on the internet, and planting morals in students to not be distracted and focus

In *Arabic construction of Sentences* errors, a sentence must be rephrased in order to become English-like form and in order to be meaningful. For example, in error number 1 **Some people claimed that the internet may**

**hinder students from thinking by their own minds**, the student intended to say that *using the internet may negatively affect some of the students and hinder them from developing independent thinking and problem-solving skills*. However, the student used ‘*thinking by their own minds*’ influenced by the colloquial Arabic expression /jifakaru: bimuxuhum/ in an attempt to convey the aforementioned meaning. In error number 2, **Others think that internet could make students devalue knowledge convinced by the “Easy come, Easy go” principle, saying that internet makes students not feel the effort to get information, which could make them feel that this knowledge is not that rare or important**, the student was influenced by the Arabic /mif hajhis bilmaghu:d/ and transferred it to ‘*not feel the effort to get information*’ whereas he/she intended to convey that *internet use may lead students to be unappreciative and unaware of the great efforts exerted to obtain information*. In error number 3, **I personally see that it can be proven by contradiction that running after information will not teach students how important knowledge is**, the student used ‘*running after information*’ influenced by the Arabic /jigri: wara ?ilma?lu:mat/ in an attempt to convey the meaning of *seeking information*. Anecdotally, /jigri: wara/ is usually used in Arabic to indicate exerting effort in seeking something. In error number 4, **Teachers must plant the idea of how important knowledge is whether it came easily or difficulty, this will make them better people in general.**, the student was influenced by the Arabic /jizra? fekra/ in an attempt to say *teachers must emphasize the importance of knowledge or imprint this concept on students’ minds*.

In error number 5, **Not applying to this students will not be able to study nor concentrate and will lose the true meanings of education**, by using ‘*lose the true meaning of education*’, the student intended to convey the meaning of *they will not be learning efficiently*. Yet, he/she used the literal Arabic structure /jiq?aja? ?ilma?na ?ilha?i:?: lilta?li:m/. In error number 6, **Internet is the symbol of the modern world**, the student used ‘*the symbol of the modern world*’ which is a transfer from the Arabic /ramz ?il?asr ?ilhadi:0/ to indicate that internet is *a sign of times*. In error number 7, **Students take enough time to try and understand on their own, they do not “work their brains” enough**, the student wanted to convey that *students do not exert enough effort*, yet, he/she used the phrase ‘*work their brains*’ transferred from the Arabic /ji?ayalu muxuhum/. In error number 7, **Maybe the teacher said something wrong, so the student would point that out**, the student used the informal Arabic construction ‘*Maybe ..., so, ...*’ as in /**jimkin** ?ilmudaris ji?u:l ?aga yalaq? **fattalib** ju?i:r ?liha/ instead of the if conditional structure *if the teacher said something wrong, the student would point that out*. In error number 8, **Students are not left alone in classes they will be always under the eyes of their teachers**, the student

used 'under the eyes of their teachers' influenced by the Arabic /taħt ʕin ʔilmudarisi:n/ in an attempt to mean that *students will be monitored by their teachers*. In error number 10, **People argue that the internet helped them pass their exams and not only break some high scores**, the student used 'break some high scores' influenced by the Arabic /jiksar ʔilraqam ʔilqiasi:/ to mean *obtain better scores or surpass others by having a higher score*. In error number 11, **Isolating students from internet support while in exams or when they do not need to search or study on the internet, and planting morals in students to not be distracted and focus**, even though the whole sentence is very confusing and is not easily interpreted due to the fact that the sentence is incomplete and includes another *Erroneous Construction of Sentences* error, the student, by using 'planting morals in students' was influenced by the Arabic /jiyris ʔilqijam/ in an attempt to mean *instill morals in students*.

#### 4.3.3. Lexical Errors in the Writings of ALS

In lexical errors, as aforementioned, students usually misuse a lexical item placing it in an inappropriate context. Misuse of a lexical item is due to different reasons such as L1 *Literal Translation*, misunderstanding of *Multiple-Meaning Words*, confusion between two *Near Synonyms*, or use of an inappropriate *Lexical Collocation*.

##### 4.3.3.1. Literal Translation Errors in the Writings of ALS

Table 10 shows *Literal Translation Errors* in which, as indicated previously, students transfer a lexical item from their L1 (Arabic) to their target language (English) which results in wrong use of the lexical item and which fails to convey the student's intended meaning in the English context.

Table 10

*Literal Translation Errors in the Writings of ALS*

#### Literal Translation Errors

1. It's easier for them to search for information and solutions on the internet rather than to think of them

In error number 1, **It's easier for them to search for information and solutions on the internet rather than to think of them**, the student used the word 'think' /jiffakkar/, which could be used in Arabic to refer to *thinking over a problem* as in /jiffakkar fi: ħal li moʔkila/, in an attempt to convey the meaning of *brainstorming for information* in order to develop solutions.

##### 4.3.3.2. Multiple-Meaning Word Errors in the Writings of ALS

Table 11 shows *Multiple-Meaning Word* errors in which students are confused between two target-language words which have two distinct meanings and usages in the English language, yet, they have the same equivalent and could be used interchangeably in the Arabic language. Accordingly, a student confuses between the two words and may use one of them in a context that requires the use of the other.

Table 11

*Multiple-meaning Word Errors in the Writings of ALS***Multiple-Meaning Word Errors**

1. I believe that we should exploit the advantages of using internet in the classroom
2. Students could not open banned websites or surf the social media as the internet will be restricted for special websites specially the scientific ones

In error number 1, **I believe that we should exploit the advantages of using internet in the classroom**, the student used the word '*exploit*' /jastayil/ to refer to '*the advantages*' in an attempt to convey the meaning of *benefit from using internet in classrooms*. However, /jastayil/ could have a negative connotation to mean exploit something/someone immorally for a personal benefit as in /jastayil faxs<sup>s</sup>/ or /jastayil nifu:zuh/. Additionally, unlike English, /jastayil/ could have a positive connotation in Arabic and could be used to mean benefit from something as in /jastayil ?ilwaqt/; the latter meaning which carries a negative connotation was the one transferred to the above English context which required a positive one. In error number 2, **Students could not open banned websites or surf the social media as the internet will be restricted for special websites specially the scientific ones**, the student confused between '*special*' and *specific* which both could mean /xa:s<sup>s</sup>/ in Arabic as in /?ardq<sup>s</sup> xa:s<sup>s</sup>/ *a special offer* or /muhima xas<sup>s</sup>a/ *a specific task*. In this context, the student should have used *specific* to refer to particular or certain websites.

**4.3.3.3. Near Synonym Errors in the Writings of ALS**

Table 12 shows *Near Synonym Errors* in which students confuse between two near synonyms in the English Language and use one in the context of its near synonym.

Table 12

*Near Synonym Errors in the Writings of ALS***Near Synonym Errors**

1. Isolating students from internet support while in exams or when they do not need to search or study on the internet, and planting morals in students to not be distracted and focus
2. If internet is not allowed in schools, it will affect students' academic performance negatively and cause in a less developed society
3. The browser used will sort the results of the search depending on how many people viewed and agreed on this information

4. Many problems may occur because of using the internet in classroom as not all students know how to use it well, so it cannot be from the classrooms principles

In error number 1, **Isolating students from internet support while in exams or when they do not need to search or study on the internet, and planting morals in students to not be distracted and focus**, the student used 'while' instead of *during*. In error number 2, **If internet is not allowed in schools, it will affect students' academic performance negatively and cause in a less developed society**, the student used 'cause in' instead of *result in* or *lead to*. In error number 3, **The browser used will sort the results of the search depending on how many people viewed and agreed on this information**, the student used the verb 'agree' instead of *approve*. In error number 4, **Many problems may occur because of using the internet in classroom as not all students know how to use it well, so it cannot be from the classrooms principles**, the student used the word 'principles' instead of *regulations*.

#### 4.3.3.4. Lexical Collocation Errors in the Writings of ALS

Table 13 shows *Lexical Collocation Errors* in which students use an inappropriate word choice, uninfluenced by L1, which does not collocate to the nearby words in the context and must be changed to conform to the context. Moreover, some collocation errors (examples 3-5) are contextual ones which could be correctly collocated, yet, in a different context.

Table 13

#### *Lexical Collocation Errors in the Writings of ALS*

##### **Lexical Collocation Errors**

1. An occurrence of a debate was located in connecting internet with education
2. It help students without internet skills as to know how to adjust with technology
3. Not applying to this students will not be able to study nor concentrate and will lose the true meanings of education
4. An occurrence of a debate was located in connecting internet with education
5. Students could use the internet in harmful way as they can cheat while having an exam if they are already use the internet to get information

Like ILS, ALS produced *Lexical Collocation Errors* of which some resulted in a distortion of meaning; errors number 1 and 2 in the above table are *Lexical Collocation Errors* which are caused by wrong word choice and which lead to a distortion of meaning. For example, in error number 1, **An occurrence of a debate was located in connecting internet with education**, the student used the word 'locate' to refer to a *debate* instead of a word like *raised*. In error number 2, **It help students without internet skills as to know how to adjust with technology**, the student used 'adjust',

which does not appropriately collocate with the word *students*, rather than *cope with*.

Like some *Lexical Collocation Errors* of ILS, Errors 3, 4 and 5 are linguistically correct, yet, contextually incorrect. As mentioned previously, they may be used in a different context to convey a totally different meaning than the intended one here. In error number 3, **Not applying to this students will not be able to study nor concentrate and will lose the true meanings of education**, even though the transitive verb *apply* could be used with a human subject like *students*, the sentence should have had a different structure (subj. + V. + obj.) as in *Judges apply a law* or *graduates apply for a job*. Over and above, the student, in this context, meant to use abiding by instead of '*applying*'. In error number 4, **An occurrence of a debate was located in connecting internet with education**, the student used '*connecting*' which refers to internet and could collocate with it in other contexts; however, in this context it was inappropriately used to mean *integrating internet in education*. In error number 5, **Students could use the internet in harmful way as they can cheat while having an exam if they are already use the internet to get information**, the student used the word '*harmful*' which, in this context, cannot refer to the use of internet; alternatively, the student should have used either the word *inappropriate* or the phrase *non-teaching purposes*.

### Conclusion

The aim of this study was to investigate the types of pragmalinguistic errors made by EFL learners in writing, illustrate the intended meaning of the learners' productions and provide alternatives for their pragmalinguistic errors. Data were collected from both intermediate-level students and advanced-level students of a private university in Cairo, Egypt. A total of 92 essays were collected from both groups who were given a prompt to which they responded in a written essay. Further, the essays were analyzed for the types of pragmalinguistic errors produced which revealed six types of errors: *Erroneous Construction of Sentences, Arabic Construction of Sentences, Literal Translation Errors, Multiple-Meaning Word Errors, Near Synonym Errors and Lexical Collocation Errors*.

It is noted that both intermediate- and advanced-level students commit the same type of errors irrespective of their different levels of proficiency. Hence, developing pragmalinguistic competence seems to be vital, in particular, for precluding first language transfer and construction of sentences. Moreover, being pragmalinguistically competent is essential for effective L2 use and there are several implications in this regard. Firstly, students should study new vocabulary within their contexts and practice as many examples as possible with the different meanings and functions of various words and in different contexts. Furthermore, teachers should

incorporate teaching collocations and word connotations to L2 curricula since the beginning of their L2 learning stages to enable them to differentiate between the different usages of lexical items. Secondly, curricula developers must integrate pragmalinguistic knowledge into L2 curricula, particularly in early learning stages, in order to enable students to be as proficient L2 learners as possible. Thirdly, with the help of programmers, linguists should provide a program which could help an L2 learner to search for L1 formulae equivalents in an L2; such a program could also provide the different equivalents to L1 lexical items in different contexts.

For future recommendations, it is recommended that researchers investigate, in detail, L1 effects in producing pragmalinguistic mistakes and investigate the reasons behind such a transfer. Also, studies should be conducted in this field to investigate the various ways by which pragmalinguistic errors could be avoided. It is also suggested that researchers develop a pragmalinguistic-teaching program and apply it in pre-post and longitudinal experimental studies to investigate its effect on enhancing the students' knowledge of pragmalinguistics and, specifically, on enhancing their writing style.

#### المستخلص

#### أنواع الأخطاء اللغوية في المقالات من المتعلمين جامعة EFL

نرمين حسني إبراهيم

يعتمد تعلم لغة أجنبية ثانية - بالأخص في جمهورية مصر العربية - على بعض مجالات اللغة كالنحو ومفردات اللغة وبناء الجملة وغيرها من المجالات التي تضمن الكفاءة اللغوية على الرغم من أن الكفاءة اللغوية فحسب ليست بكافية لتحقيق التواصل. هذا ويتم إهمال علم استخدام اللغة الذي يعد محورا رئيسيا لتحقيق التواصل وهو علم حديث يوضح كيفية وأهمية استخدام اللغة في مواضعها، فقد تكون الجملة صحيحة ولكنها تحمل معنى مختلفا عن المرغوب في التعبير عنه نظرا لعدم مراعاة السياق أو مواضع الاستخدام في هذه اللغة. من هنا يأتي هذا البحث في إطار توضيح أهمية علم استخدام اللغة والذي إذا تم تجاهله قد يؤثر تأثيرا سلبيا على التواصل اللغوي. هذا وقد تم تحليل 92 مقالا لدارسي اللغة الإنجليزية بالتعليم الجامعي لمعرفة مدى إفتقارهم لعلم التداول. هذا وقد تبين أن كلا من الطلبة ذي المستوى المتوسط والرفيع سواء يفترون الأخطاء التالية: تكوين جمل خاطئة وتكوين جمل عربية وأخطاء على مستوى الكلمة والتي تنقسم إلى ترجمة حرفية وكلمات متعددة المعنى وكلمات متقاربة المعنى وارتصاف الكلمة.

الكلمات المفتاحية: علم التداول، الأخطاء التداولية، تأثير اللغة الأم، تكوين جملة خاطئة.

<sup>2</sup> The errors may include some other grammatical and spelling mistakes which were intentionally uncorrected and which do not lead to any confusion or misunderstanding.

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