Most Common English Linguistic Errors in Writing Medical Reports in Jordanian Hospitals for Tourists (Case study: Ma'an Governmental Hospital)

Mheel Al Smaihyeen

Department of English Language and Literature, School of Languages, the University of Jordan, Aqaba, Jordan, Email: mheel.alhwetat84@gmail.com

Emran ALmomni

Department of Hotel Management, School of Tourism and Hotel Management, the University of Jordan, Aqaba, Jordan

Raed Al-Ramahi

Department of English Language and Literature, School of Languages, the University of Jordan, Aqaba, Jordan

Mheel Maleh Al Smaihyeen

Department of English Language and Literature
The University of Jordan, Aqaba, Jordan

Manar Abu Darwish

Department of English Language and Literature, School of Languages, the University of Jordan, Aqaba, Jordan

Tamadur Al-Shamayleh

Department of English Language and Literature, School of Languages, the University of Jordan, Aqaba, Jordan

Abstract

Writing is one of the most complicated skills to be mastered because it requires great amount of vocabulary and grammar. Some people who are not specialized in English, such as doctors, make many linguistic errors and mistakes in writing non-computerized medical reports. The aim of this study is to identify some of the linguistic errors and mistakes in writing medical reports for tourists and the reasons for these errors and mistakes. A qualitative approach was adopted to analyze linguistic errors and mistakes in writing medical reports using explanatory and exploratory mixed-method design. The quantitative approach was done through a descriptive manual analysis model. The data-collecting instrument selected ten samples of doctor's errors and mistakes in M'aan governmental hospital. The study was carried out by analyzing the linguistic errors and mistakes in medical reports, and it ends with the discussions of the main causes of these errors and mistakes. The key findings of the study revealed that there are many linguistic errors in medical reports, such as lexical and grammatical errors. Some errors in writing medical reports lead to a misunderstanding of the medical report and this may lead to a wrong diagnosis of the patient's condition sometimes. Some of the most important reasons for these errors are the doctors' lack of knowledge of English grammar, as well as the impact of the mother tongue on their English. This study is considered one of the most important studies because it is related to an important aspect of daily life, which is writing medical reports. Therefore, when writing medical reports, grammatical errors must be avoided, which contributes toproducing clear and intelligible reports.

Keywords: Linguistic Errors, Mother Tongue, Mistake, Medical Report

essentially a tool of communication among the members of society. Also, it helps to grow wisdom and knowledge. The most important function of language is to share

Introduction

Language has an essential role in all activities of human life, and it is

i.   The most common types of English linguistic errors in writing medical reports in Jordanian hospitals for tourists.

ii.   Identify the main reasons for these errors.

Questions of the Study

The study seeks to answer the following questions:

i.   What are the most common types of English linguistic errors in writing medical reports in Jordanian hospitals for tourists?

ii.   What are the main reasons forthese errors?

Significance of the Study

The researchers noticed that many studies in the field of errors in writing medical reports have been done through the quantitative method. Some researchers have used linguistic interpretation to decide the root cause of the errors made by non-native speakers of English. The aim of the current paper is to study the types of linguistic errors while writing medical reports in Jordanian hospitals as well as the reasons for the errors. Additionally, it will pave the way to new researchin the future.

Methodology and Data Collection

This is a descriptive study which aimed to elaborate and describe language transfers that occur in writing of medical students.

This study is a descriptive study that aims to identifythe errors inEnglish that occur in the writing of medical doctors. In this study, the researchers collected ten samples of medical reports from Ma'an Governmental Hospital. Medical reports were collected from sick tourists visiting Ma'an Governmental Hospital for treatment from 2020 to 2022. After that, the collected samples were analyzed tocategorize the most important mistakes that doctors commit in writing medical reports and to identify the most important reasons that lead doctors to make such mistakes. The researchers used the qualitative method in analyzingthe data. The researchers used exploratory and the common experience of human beings. Non-native speakers of a language may commit linguistic errors in their speaking or writing in a second or foreign language. Errors are two types: performance errors and competence errors. Performance errors are kinds of errors made by non-native speakers of a language when they are tired or hurried. Usually, this kind of error is not serious and can be controlled with little effort by non-native speakers of a language. On the other hand, competence errors are more serious than performance errors because competence errors indicate inadequate learning. In this term, it is essential to differentiate between mistakes, which are lapses in performance, and errors that indicate inadequate competence. Linguistic errors are grammar, syntax, lexis, semantics, and substance. Firstly, grammatical errors may include one or more of the following (articles, prepositions, reported speech, singular/plural, relative clauses, adjectives, irregular verbs, tenses, and possessive cases). Secondly, syntactic errors may include (word order, coordination, nouns and pronouns, and sentence structure). Thirdly, phonological errors occur especially in producing sounds. Regarding lexis, it is concerned with word choice. Finally, semantics and substance are concerned with mechanics: punctuation, capitalization, and spelling. Richards (1971) distinguishes three sources of error. Interference error results from mother-tongue interference, also intralingual error reflects incorrect generalization of the rules within a target language. Lastly, developmental errors occur when non-native speakers hypothesize about the target language based on their limited knowledge.

Statement of the Problem

Physicians who are non-native speakers of English commit some linguistic errors in writing medical reports in hospitals while diagnosingthemedical conditionsof tourists. This study, therefore, identifies the main linguistic errors that encounter physicians in Jordanian hospitals while writing medical reports.

Objectives of the Study

The current study aims to achieve the following objectives:

paragraph if you do not have many vocabularies (Brown, 2007). Byrne (1993) points out that any learner may face some problems in writing, such as linguistic problems, cognitive problems, and psychological problems. The linguistic problem refers to the coherence and the choices of sentence structure so that the text can be produced and be interpreted by the readers. Cognitive problems are integrated with the assumption that learning writing is a process of instruction. Psychological problems show writing as a single activity without the possibility of interaction or the benefit of feedback.

explanatory methods while analyzing the errors. Exploratory was used to explore the main errors in the medical reports, and explanatory was used to explain the main reasons for those errors.

Literature Review
Learning to write using a second language is considered problematic because writing in general and in English in particular leads to many problems. These problems includethe errors pertaining to the use of languageand the high influence of the mother tongue on the written language (Tuan, 2010). Writing depends on other skills, so you cannot write a good
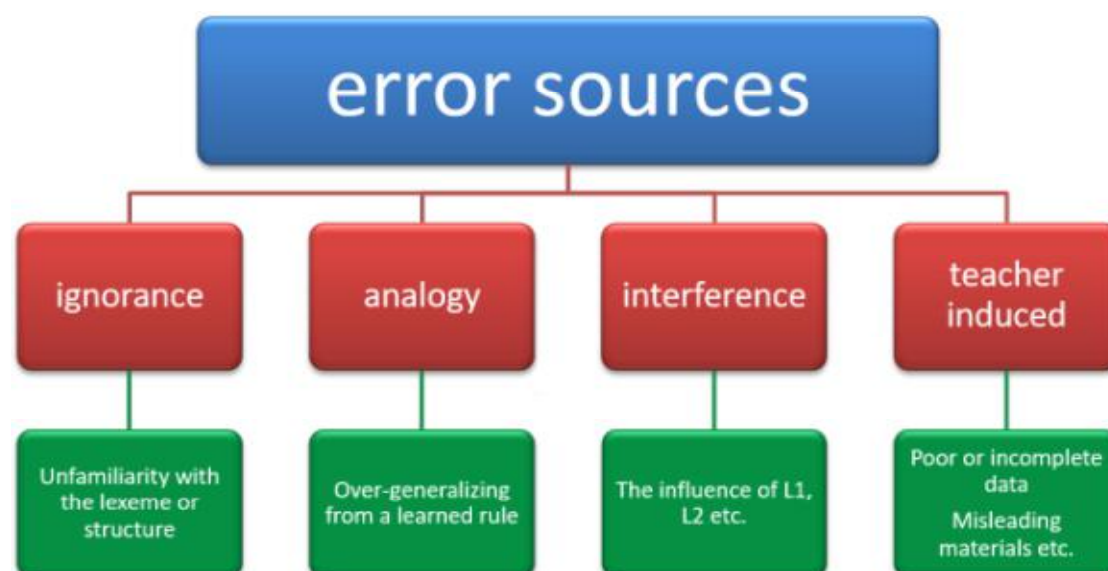

Figure 1: *Error Analysis and Interlanguage (*Corder, 1981)

the mother language in terms of culture and other aspects. Producing a well-written text is extremely difficult for all language learners and even native speakers. Greenville (2001) proposes a set of writing processes that a learner of a language or a native speaker of a language can use when writing to obtain ideas or information in a competitive and sound manner using brainstorming, freewriting, or other means.

Gotti (2003) notes that a non-native speaker makes many mistakes when writing in a second or in a foreign language. Gotti (2003) also shows that these mistakes, especially when writingin scientific fields, have a clear

Corder (1981) clarifies that errors occur for many reasons. (i) Ignorance: when learners have not learned forms and meanings before, and they just try to produce language. (ii) Overgeneralizing the rules: Learners over-extend rules that they had learned previously. For example, if the learners learned to add –ed to change the tense to past and past participle. (iii) Influence of the mother tongue: First, language has a great influence on learners of second and foreign language. This influence maybe on semantics, syntax, and pronunciation.

While communicating using a second language, making mistakes is a natural thing, especially if a language differs from

This current study includes ten examplescollected from different departments in Ma'an Governmental Hospital. Each example includes a mistake or an error. The researchers find the error or the mistake, and then indicate the type of the error.The researchers, moreover, try to find the reasonsfor committing such errors or mistakes.

Example (1)
"Pain from two days."

Example (2)
"When the patient arrive to hospital he was unconscious"

Example (3)
"She suffer from severe pain two days before."

Example (4)
"Patient suffers from acute inflammation of the reproductive system, laboratory examinations and blood tests should done"

Example (5)
"There a tumor in the head, and the surgeon should be consulted to perform the necessary procedure."

Example (6)
"Initial laboratory tests indicate that the patient have meningitis. Therefore, the patient must be quarantined to prevent the spread of infection to other patients."

Example (7)
"Symptoms of bacterium in the stomach. These symptom from 3 days."

Example (8)
"The patient suffers from neurological spasms and according to the patient's pathology. He suffers from a nervous spasm since he was five years old."

Example (9)
"The patient has poor vision due to the high sugar associated with chronic diabetes, who led to an imbalance in cornea of the eyes."

Example (10)

impact on the content of the text, and this may be annoying and not attractive to reading those texts. In medical reports, linguistic errors are sometimes considered a barrier to understanding the content of the medical reports. Doctors and health staff resort to writing the medical report in English because English is considered the language of this age, and a lingua franca. It is used in tourism, medicine, technology, and other areas of life, and sometimes there are no terms for some medical terms in the motherlanguage of doctors and staffs.Being a doctor or one of the health personnel does not mean that you speak the correct medical language, especially English. In fact, doctors and other health staff in hospitals make many mistakes in the use of language when writing reports and prescriptions for their patients and even in their oral conversations with their patients. There are many forms of these errors, but the most common are direct translation from language to language, grammatical and morphological errors, and spelling errors.

Cooper (2006) states that staffs in hospitals do not have linguistic and cultural competence in using English language in their work. Being a doctor or health professional does not mean that you are good at writing or speaking the correct medical language. In fact, these people make several linguistic errors when writing medical reports or while talking to their patients. The spelling errorsand theeffect of the mother tongue are among the most important problems that doctors encounter while writing medical reports.
One of the most important studies in this field verifies that medical errors sometimes result from language barriers between patients and doctors. When a doctor writesa medical report with some linguistic mistakes and errors to another doctor in another hospital, the doctor who receives the patient may commit a medical error because of misunderstanding the report that includes several grammatical, morphological, and spelling mistakes (Quan, 2010).

Data Analysis and Findings

grammar, for example, the doctor may not know that the third person "s" must be used with the verb if the subject is singular and ends with certain sounds. On the other hand, it may be simply that the reason for such an error is that the doctor inadvertently has not added "s" to the verb. In example (3), a doctor has a problem in the agreement between subject and verb, a doctor does not use "s" with the verb as in example (2). The doctor has used "before" which is incorrect; he/she should use "ago". Accordingly, theseerrors reflect the effect of the source language. In example (4), a doctor does not use "be" after "should" and he/she has used "done" after "should". This morpho-syntactic error may occur because the doctor focuses on the message, and this error could occur because the doctor may be in a hurry and there are large number of patients waiting for him/her. Example (5) does not have a verb. It is a fragment because it lacks a subject. It is a compound sentence, which should have two subjects, and two verbs.Each sentence should express a complete thought. Among the reasons, for such errors are the following (i) Doctors focus on communicating the information in a correct manner, and so many doctors do not care if their use of language conforms to the rules of language or not. (ii) Doctors focus on using medical terms, not sentences, in writing prescriptions and medical reports before medical reports and prescriptions have been computerized. In examples (6, 7), the doctor has used a plural auxiliary "have" with a singular noun "patient".Also, the doctor does not use a plural noun after "these", instead he/she has used a singular noun "symptom". The doctor mismatches the number (singular or plural) of the verb with the number of the subject of the sentence. In example (8), the doctor has a problem with using tense. He/she has used "he suffers" which expresses habitual activity or a routine. In this example, using simple present tense is incorrect, and the correct tense in the example is present progressive tense. In Arabic, there are only three tenses, but in English, there are twelve tenses. Thus, differences in the tenses between the two languages lead to errors when writing or

"The patient has not eat for three days, and he has pale skin, and he needs hospital admission to undergo medical examinations to confirm his condition."

Findings and Discussion

The findings of the present study are different from other studies that dealt with the linguistic errors and mistakes in writing medical reports in Jordanian hospitals. The findings of the study are clear as they answer the questions of the study. The first question of the study identifies the main linguistic errors and mistakes in (10) samples from Ma'an's Hospital. The second question is concerned with the main reasons for linguistic errors and mistakes in medical reports.

The findings of this study show that there are many grammatical errors in writing non-computerized medical reports. These include grammatical, morphological, and spelling errors, and there are errors in the use of the language. These errors may be due to the impact of the mother tongue on the target language, or perhaps these errors result from the doctors' lack of knowledge of English grammar. Accordingly, their focus is mainly on communicating the information using medical terms recognized among doctors.

In examples (1-10), there are several errors and mistakes. In example (1), a doctor has written: "pain from two days." It has an error in using the preposition "from". This kind of error reflects the mother tongue effect. The source of the error in this example is mother interference. This example evidences the influence of Arabic on the target language. The doctor has used literal translation, whereas in example (2) a doctor has a problem in using the tense "arrive" and separating the clauses. The doctor does not use third person singular "s" with the verb "arrive" which is preceded by a singular subject. In addition, he/she does not use commas to separate the clauses. This type of linguistic error may occur because doctors may not have complete knowledge of some English

auxiliary verb "has". Perhaps the doctor has been only interested in communicating the message, neglecting the rules that he/she has considered that issue as an unimportant in this case.

Errors and mistakes in examples (1-10) are classified according to their types into several divisions.

speaking in the target language. Example (9) shows the incorrect use of relative pronouns. In English "who" is used with people, and it is used to replace subject pronouns, such as I, he, she, we, they, and you. On the other hand, in Arabic only one form for the relative pronouns can be used with people and things.Finally, in example (10), the doctor has not usedthe past participle of the verb "eat" after the

Table 1: The Main Types of Errors and Mistakes

Syntactic error	Morphological error	Lexical error
Examples (2,3) are errors in word order, subject-verb agreement, and the use of the presumptive pronoun in English relative clauses produced by Arab ESL learners	Example (7) is an error in omitting plural suffix –s in the wordsymptom. Demonstrative pronoun "these" should be followed be by plural, but in example "7" the doctor does not add –s.	Example (1) involves inappropriate direct translation from the learner's first language or the use of wrong lexical items in the second language.

According to this study, many types of errors, such as syntactic, morphological, and lexical errors occur because of lacking knowledge of some rules of the target language. In addition, doctors commit some of these errors due to the interference of the mother tongue. Lexical errors also were found due to the direct translation from the source to target language. Errors in syntax and in morphology are variant kinds, for example, errors in agreement, articles, prepositions, plural nouns, word order, coordination, and pronouns. These errors occur because of the large grammatical differences between Arabic and English. This study is considered one of the most important studies because it addresses a very important topic. The reason for the importance of this topic is that these errors may have a real impact on the patient. For example, the medical report may be misunderstood due to some grammatical errors in writing the report. Sometimes due to a linguistic error, such as a spelling mistake,a patient may be medically mistreated.

There may be other grammatical errors committed when writing medical reports. It may be pragmatic errors sometimes. This study aims to cover some of these errors and some of the reasons for those errors.In Table (1), asyntactic error is an error in the use of language that includes the organization of meaningless words and phrases. In brief, syntax informs you how a sentence is formulated and structured, which can easily be misunderstood. In addition, errors in morphology are made when the morphological aspect of grammar is being tainted, or misinformed. Finally, lexical errors are the incorrect use of some lexical items in a specific context,such as the influence of the ambiguityamong words, having formal or semantic similarity thatinvolves the first language ortarget languageimpact (Llach, 2005).

Conclusion
The study aimed to identify the most problematic issues in writings medical reports. Arabic interference was found in many aspects of Arab learner's writing.

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