



# Exploring EFL learners' Linguistic Error and/or Mistakes: Causes, and Correction Techniques

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## Abstract

This study investigates the most common linguistic errors and/or mistakes made by learners of English as a Foreign Language (EFL). It first explains the significance of the distinction between 'errors' and 'mistakes' as the distinction plays an instrumental role in treating and correcting them differently. It also highlights the causes behind errors and/or mistakes and proposes various correction techniques to address them. The study illustrates how intralingual and interlingual transfer factors are causes behind grammatical, lexical, pronunciation, and spelling errors and/or mistakes. In addition, the study aims at testing three hypotheses that have been put forward. It was concluded that there are no indications that grammar mistakes and errors are the categories that are most made due to 'interlingual factors'. Also, it was shown that correction techniques need to be tailored according to the classroom settings because there are different elements involved. The study concludes that providing students with mnemonics can capacitate the students to develop their own ones. Furthermore, common causes of errors and mistakes elaborated in the study entail simplification, inadequate learning, overgeneralization, hypercorrection, and over-ambitious status, while the correction techniques used and presented were reformulation, echoing, hinting, reactive teaching, and metalinguistic feedback. Samples of errors and/or mistakes had been collected and thoroughly studied from classes of Kurdish learners of English Language at elementary levels of English Language courses from the Language and Translation Centre of University of Salahaddin.

**Keywords:** errors, mistakes, correction techniques, mnemonics, interlingual and intralingual transfer.

## 1. Theoretical Background

### 1.1 Introduction

Making errors and mistakes is a typical part of learning a second language (L2). The slow and intricate process of learning a second language advances the learner through numerous levels. At all levels, mistakes happen often but are actively avoided by students. Language acquisition has frequently been compared to abilities like swimming, tennis, and horseback riding when discussing learners' flaws and failures. These comparisons are commonly made since developing these talents requires working on a range of activities that require making costly mistakes, receiving constructive criticism, profiting from mistakes, and finally avoiding them.

This paper's goal is to give examples of the many errors and mistakes that EFL students make, along with possible explanations. It will also outline various strategies used in English language classes to resolve errors and mistakes as useful resources for teachers to use in their classrooms. In the introduction, the terms "errors" and "mistakes" are defined and their differences are shown. Then, different errors are divided into four categories: grammatical, lexical, pronunciation, and spelling errors. Each type of mistake or error is described, along with the accompanying causes. Finally, a number of remedial techniques that I used as a teacher to handle specific issues and errors independently are presented.



## 1.2 Literature Review

It is possible to clearly differentiate between errors and mistakes. According to Brown (2007, p. 257), a mistake is "a performance fault that is either a random guess or a "slip" in that it is a failure to utilize a known system correctly." Learners commonly err when using L2 despite having a sufficient comprehension of the relevant rules. The difficult circumstances the students are in, whether they are hurried, anxious, or weary; or due to things like weariness and memory problems; can be connected to these errors (Richards, 1971). A linguistic mistake, however, is defined as "an instance of unintentionally aberrant language that is not self-correctible by its author" (James, 1998, p. 78). When learners lack sufficient knowledge of how to produce a particular linguistic output, errors are made. Additionally, Harmer (2007) refers to "attempts," which happen when a learner tries to produce L2 output but is unsure of how to do it.

This distinction is crucial because treating and resolving mistakes and errors requires various techniques (Johnson, 1988). Particularly, during error repair, a rule that the learner is unfamiliar with should be illustrated, whereas during error correction, a rule that the learner is already familiar with should not be illustrated. As a result, when a student is imprecise, it is critical for a language teacher to differentiate between errors and mistakes. James (1998) highlights that while students can self-correct their errors, they are unable to make the errors themselves right. Brown (2007) does point out that if self-correction doesn't happen, it's still difficult to tell the difference between an error and a mistake. The answer would be to look at the frequency of the mistakes, and if "the learner's speech consistently reveals such utterances," it might be assumed that it was a mistake (Brown, 2007, p. 258).

Brown (2007) divided the causes of mistakes and errors into three groups. The first, interlingual transfer, discusses how the learner's L1 (first language) influences learning a second language and starts in the early stages of learning a second language. The second, called intralingual transfer, arises directly from the target language and takes into account the L2's difficulty or an oversimplification of L2's prior knowledge. The last place where flaws and errors can be found is in the learning context, which includes instructional strategies, resources, and teaching scenarios. Some inaccuracies that arise from inadequate teaching and instructor instructions are referred to as "induced errors" or false concepts (Richards, 1971) or 'induced error' (Touchie, 1986).

### 1.2.1 Grammatical Errors and Mistakes

Grammatical mistakes account for a sizable portion of the errors and mistakes made by EFL students. The two main obstacles are being aware of the similarities and differences between L1 and L2 regularities, as well as having the ability to absorb and comprehend L2 rules. An example of this type of grammatical error or gaffe is the use of the improper grammatical tense. For illustration, a learner might say:

1. *It rains* where *It has been raining* is required.

Touchie (1986) asserts that the intralingual aspect of simplification is what causes these mistakes and errors. She gives an example to illustrate how students usually opt for straightforward phrases over complex ones in order to "lighten their linguistic load" (ibid: 78). Another example of a grammatical error is the following sentence, which was composed by a Persian learner of English and contains a number of wrong grammatical elements:

2. \*I am going to university at 8 o'clock every day. (Keshavarz, 2010, p. 59)

According to Keshavarz (2010, p. 59), the interference of the language's grammatical components is the reason of this mistake because the two tenses in Persian have "one single syntactic representation." Thus, learners employ the two tenses interchangeably and thereby make errors. In relation to the influence of the students' L1 on the process of learning L2, word to word translations can also tempt learners to make errors and/or mistakes. Kurdish learners, for example, tend to say 'before three weeks' instead of 'three weeks ago' in an



attempt to directly translate the exact Kurdish Language expression for 'before three weeks', for example:

3. *They arrived before three weeks.*

Using the wrong preposition is another type of grammatical error and/or mistake. Some learners do not differentiate between two prepositions, for example:

4. *Throwing the ball to somebody and throwing the ball at somebody.*

Such errors could be caused by a failure to comprehend the rules for utilizing specific prepositions. However, interlanguage problems could also be at fault for these errors. For instance, in Italian, the preposition for both to and at is the same. Adverbs can be positioned between the verb and the direct object in French, as in the example below, therefore French learners learning English frequently place them incorrectly:

5. *Mary kissed passionately John* (Ellis, 2006, p. 89).

There are several ways to fix such grammatical issues and mistakes. First, point out the error; if the student is unable to correct it on their own, explain the rule. Reformulation is one technique to do this (Thornbury, 1999). The instructor reformats the incorrect sentence to make it correct. As an illustration, the teacher might advise the Persian language student as follows:

6. *You mean you go to university.*

Reformulating can be accomplished by utilizing intonation to emphasize the incorrect phrase. In the case of the student learning French, the instructor might say:

7. *You mean, Mary kissed John PASSIONATELY.*

Another approach is reactive teaching. The teacher makes a mistake or an error to highlight something. To distinguish between the two expressions, the teacher can state, "When we want someone to catch the ball, we say throw to, but when we want to hit someone, we say throw at." Another technique for error or mistake correction is the use of metalinguistic feedback (Brown, 2007). Here, the instructor highlights the error by bringing up its category:

8. Student: I *finish* it yesterday.

Teacher: Yes, but remember the verb form for past tense.

Student: Yes, I *finished* it yesterday.

There is a more recent study conducted by Mohammed and Sulaiman in (2019) on the Kurdish university students grammatical, mistakes, errors, and misuses. The researcher found out that in the grammar test, the students had the most difficulty with prepositions and the least difficulty with pronouns. Another finding of the study was that in their essays, the majority of the students made errors and/or mistakes that involved articles, while coordinators were the subject of the fewest errors. What could have been added to this study was that is there any classification for the words that the prepositions are used with, and the students make most of their prepositional mistakes with this or these word classes. Another aspect could have been better looked into was the possibility of having a correlation or interrelation between the prepositional mistakes to the article ones.

### 1.2.2 Lexical Errors and Mistakes

Lexical errors are the most prevalent type of errors in the English language (James, 1998, p. 143). It might be difficult to learn new terms because there are so many different factors to consider. Furthermore, unlike grammar, a language's lexis cannot be categorized according to rules (ibid: 1998). One type of lexical error and mistake is using the improper collocation, as in:

9. *\*large decision, \*murder time, \*great problem.*

These collocational errors can be attributed to intralingual and interlingual factors. There may be an intralingual component to the learner's overgeneralization, in which the learner assumes the placement of one particular word in a natural combination and applies it with other words. A learner may interpret the word "make" to mean "make a mistake," "make an appointment,"



or "\*create damage," for example. It is vital for learners to change their hypotheses in order to prevent making such errors and mistakes since "[d]eviant collocations formed by the learner are often an indicator of an incorrect or faulty hypothesis" (Walker, 2008, p. 77).

On the other side, collocation errors could result from interlingual effects. As James (1998, p. 152) explains, German learners are instructed to pronounce "high age" and "high quantity" since the word hoch (high) collocates with "summe" (amount), "risiko," and "alter" (age). The sole English-language collocation from these words is "substantial risk," nonetheless. Due to his ignorance of the L2 word's collocational behavior, the learner in this situation creates a collocation using his L1.

Convergent and divergent incongruency, as described by Laufer (1991), is another sort of lexical error. When two words in L1 are equivalent to one word in L2, it is said to be convergent, and when the opposite is true, it is said to be divergent. This fact causes the learner to utilize the terms incorrectly when using the correct word in between the two words. An illustration would be as follows:

10. *tongue* and *language* by Finnish learners because *kieli* is used for both English words (Odlin, 1989, p. 79).

According to research by Duškova (1969), out of 223 lexical mistakes made by Czech students, 54 were due to words that are semantically dissimilar in the Czech and English languages. Fortunately, there are effective ways to correct these mistakes and errors. The first step is to expose the error, which is best done by repeatedly (Harmer, 2007). When you echo, your intonation is off, and you say the wrong thing, like "\*MAKE HARM!! or language!!" (Where tongue is required). By including "You aim to do damage, don't you?" or "Do you mean tongue, I presume?," you can also use reformulation. The teacher must concentrate on describing the correct forms if the item has not yet been corrected on their own. A rule explanation must be given to show why the collocation and term were ruled incorrect.

### 1.2.3 Pronunciation Errors and Mistakes

It's possible that EFL students mispronounce English words on purpose or accidentally. A learner may speak a word incorrectly the first time they hear it, which would be a mistake. Slips of the tongue are readily corrected. Such errors are typically made when a language learner is speaking a word aloud that is challenging to pronounce in the early stages of language learning.

Phonological mistakes and errors can be caused by intralingual and interlingual variables. The L1 and L2's various sound systems are the most prevalent element. Because the initial phoneme does not exist in Arabic, Arabic speakers who are learning to speak English struggle with the phoneme /p/ and instead create /b/. For park and people, they would say /bark/ and /bi:bl/, respectively. The student has trouble because of the strange phoneme. Touchie (1986) contends that these pronunciation problems, known as mispronunciations, can also be caused by intralingual variables, such as the teacher's excessive efforts to correct the students' phonological errors (a practice known as hypercorrection). When a /b/ is necessary, hypercorrected students may always create a /p/, so they would pronounce /ped/ and /poy/ instead of "bed" and "boy," respectively. Additionally, many Swahili language learners fail to distinguish between the phonemes /l/ and /r/ since they are similar in different dialects of the language (Farsi, 1966). In any case, other phonological components, such as syllabus frameworks, may be just as challenging for English language learners as individual phonemes. Keshavarz (2010, p. 39) adds that Persian speakers of English typically pronounce nouns like street and school as /estri:t/ and /esku:l/ since initial consonant clusters are not permitted in Persian.



Another intralingual factor that might affect pronunciation is how words are spelled. Learners of the English language typically pronounce terms like /blud/blood, /nis/nice, or /pa:lm/palm as they are written. Another element that is directly related to spelling pronunciation is the fact that numerous English language letters, such as the k in know, the h in honest, the p in psychology, and the l in calm, are written but not pronounced. In some cases, words from the English language are also transliterated into other languages, however the pronunciation is not the same as the native pronunciation of those languages. Students sometimes mispronounce these transliterated terms as a result. Several examples of the words that are transliterated from English Language into Kurdish Language can be seen in:

11. 'fashion' \*/'fæʃ.i:ən/, 'modern' \*/'mɒdrn/, 'journalist' \*/'dʒɒ.næ.lɪst/.

One way to indicate pronunciation correction is to say it out loud (Brown, 2007). When a student uses the word "blind," the teacher can clearly correct them by adding, "It is not\*/blind/." You meant to type bland. Additionally, by surprise-repeating it, the teacher might show students how to pronounce something incorrectly. After highlighting the key part of the pronunciation, the teacher can give the proper pronunciation; the learner can then repeat it and practice it. Sometimes it's funny to correct pronunciation faults. The teacher can inform a student that they do not need to bark in order to park their car. The student who says "sink" without giving it much consideration can be told that you do not need to sink and that you are not the Titanic. To avoid offending or being unpleasant, these jokes must be used with utmost caution. They can assist the learner in remembering them and avert further errors. The use of particular hand gestures, like as finger snapping, can also be used to spot and correct students' pronunciation problems.

#### 1.2.4 Spelling Errors and Mistakes

Another mistake and error is incorrect spelling. A spelling mistake might be deemed to occur when a term is misspelled frequently and consistently, but it can also happen occasionally. The context of learning might be a source of incorrect spelling. When stressed out or hurrying through a test, learners are more likely to make spelling errors. Furthermore, students may produce additional misspelled words as a result of a teacher's neglect of spelling correction. Spelling mistakes may also result from intralingual variations. Since English is not a pure language and each letter does not always correspond to a single sound as it does in some other languages, there are no subtle spelling rules in English. This is an illustration of that. Many English words become likely candidates for spelling errors because of the English word form. The two main reasons for a group of undergraduate learners' spelling errors, according to Ibrahim (1978, pp. 208–210), were "the non-phonetic structure of English spelling [and] the inconsistent and arbitrary nature of English word derivation." The weak vowel //, which can be represented by a variety of vowel letters and results in mistakes like these in spelling, is the best example of how non-phonetic English is:

12. \*a<sup>u</sup>ther, \*g<sup>a</sup>thar, \*h<sup>u</sup>sbund, \*w<sup>r</sup>itar.

There are other errors in English derivation system. For instance, equal changes to equal, gay changes to gaily, but day does not change to \*dayly, speak changes to pronunciation, and enemy changes to \*enemity (Ibrahim, 1978). Another intralingual factor that contributes to incorrect spellings is homophones, which are words with similar sounds but different spellings and meanings. Examples of homophones are read and reed, beat and beet, and see and sea.

On the other side, a learner's L1 occasionally has a detrimental impact on how well they spell in their L2. Arabic learners who struggle with English spelling transmit their L1 word form system into the L2 spelling process, according to Saigh and Schmitt's (2012) research. As a result of processing English's long and short vowels similarly to how they manage Arabic vowels, the students' spelling in English worsened.



Before they can be corrected, spelling mistakes and other errors must first be identified. Hints can be used to "activate rules they [students] [can] [can] already know" (Harmer, 2007, p. 144). The teacher could repeat spelling to get the student to check it again. Such metalanguage needs to be introduced to the students beforehand in order to be effective. When a student neglects to correct their own grammar and other errors, the teacher must pinpoint the problem. This must include any guidelines and rules that can help a student refrain from making the same spelling mistake again.

Ghafor (2016, p. 44) in a study on the spelling mistakes and/or errors of the Kurdish university learners of English realized that most of the times the students misspell words not because they do not actually know the correct spelling, but because of being careless, and being in hurry and stressful like during exam times. Another result of this study was most of the times the spelling mistakes and/or error seem to be performance problem rather than competence one. what is absent in this study is lack of paying attention to separating and cauterizing the spelling mistakes and/or error as in most of his examples show that the mistake is in the vowel letter rather than the consonant ones. It is also not mentioned why the learners misspell vowel letter more than the consonant what vowel letter are the challenging ones, why and how can this be solved and addressed.

### 1.3 The Research Problems

The research questions this paper explored are the following:

- Which types of 'errors' and 'mistakes' of Kurdish learners of English Language at the are most caused by 'interlingual factors'?
- To what extent, do the correction techniques need to be tailored based on the distinction between 'errors' and 'mistakes' and the context of the class?
- To what extent, can mnemonics be effective to capacitate the students to develop their own mnemonics?

### 1.4 The Research Hypothesis

Based on the research questions mentioned above, the hypothesis formulated for this study are the following:

- It is hypothesized that grammar errors and mistakes are the types that are most caused by interlingual factors.
- Correction techniques need to be tailored to differentiate 'errors' from 'mistakes' and based on the context of the class.
- Presenting mnemonics in the class build the capacity of the student to develop their own ones to grasp various linguistic aspects.

### 1.5 Data Collection and Procedure

Regarding the data collection, the samples of errors and mistakes of this paper were collected from 5 classes of 122 Kurdish male and female learners of English Language. The students were all at the elementary level of English Language proficiency attending a six-week language course at the Language and Translation Centre of University of Salahaddin. The students were all at the postgraduate stage with various educational backgrounds, such as Economy and Business Administration, Kurdish Language, Arabic Language, Sociology, Fine Arts, and Islamic Studies.

More than one tool is used to diversify the study and further credit and strengthen the findings and conclusions of the study. The main tool was class observation show naturalness and normality of the errors and mistake. Another main tool was exam targeted papers to realize what they have learned and how they have progressed through the course.



Then, in the theoretical application, various correction modalities are employed to deal with the errors and mistakes as the study deals with different but quite inextricable and supplementary aspects of language learning as one package, namely, grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, and spelling. The reasons for designing the study in this way is that when a vocabulary, for example, is taught, the word, language unit itself, the spelling of the word, the pronunciation and using it in a grammatical sentence have all to be dealt with concomitantly. The same thing is true for teaching a grammatical tense or aspect, whenever a grammatical rule or structure is explained, it means the used lexical items, the spellings, the pronunciation and even the spelling are being dealt with spontaneously. After that, the reaction of the students was observed on the correction techniques used to address the error and mistakes. These reactions were examined to know how required level of tailoring the techniques that would be used in the successive classes. Then, the very basic mnemonics produced and presented by the students were mentioned and discussed to measure their ability in developing their own mnemonics. Some mnemonics were simultaneously presented by the students, and others were presented after direct questions of how a mnemonic can be developed in specific situations.

Concerning the method adopted, the study uses a qualitative method and the quantitative side, the frequencies and the rates of the study have not been considered as part of this study, but the whole weight given to the later one as this can match the study needs best. The collected samples were analyzed manually to determine the types of the errors and mistakes regarding the grammatical, lexical, and spelling ones, but for the pronunciation ones, it was verbally practiced in the class. Then, the samples were separated and discussed under their respective types.

## 2. Data Analysis and Discussions

### 2.1 Collected Errors and/Mistakes and Correction Techniques

This section provides an account of the incidents of errors and mistakes made by elementary level students. It also reports the correction techniques that are used, and other techniques that could have been used in such situations.

#### 2.1.2 Correcting a Wrong Grammatical Tense

Sometimes students use the wrong grammatical tense and are unable to convey their meaning. As an illustration of improper grammatical usage, the elementary level students employed the simple present tense when the present continuous tense was required. These events could be errors or mistakes. If there is a mistake, it can be corrected by switching the learner's example to the right tense and emphasizing the problematic part of it. This approach was successful because it prevented the student from losing sight of the message they were attempting to express. But drawing attention to the mistake and stressing the incorrect part will always make the student aware of the difference. This is due to the possibility that the learner won't distinguish between their original assertion and the one that has been reformulated. Stress may also be visible in the instructor's facial expressions. The following stressing element was employed as a consequence when the following error was made as a result:

13. Student: \*He sings at this moment.

Teacher: You mean, he *IS SINGING* at this moment.

Student: Yes, he is singing at this moment.

Teacher: Excellent! Go on.

Another way to handle this may have been to inquire about anything with the postgraduate students by using language like, "Right now? Why is it so? The student is given the chance to reformulate and self-correct the error after being made aware of the flaw or mistake that has been made. If the wrong use of a grammatical tense is an error, a clarification question should be followed by an explanation of why the present continuous should be used (i.e., the learner



is unable to correct themselves). It is preferable to present examples to guarantee that the student comprehends the grammar concept (For instance, we use the present continuous to say that something is happening as we speak; in this case, he IS SINGING, not he sings.) The student will next have to say the statement again, this time including the correct sentence. In this instance, it is essential to change the corrections technique in order to distinguish between a mistake and an error (in which case the rule needs to be clarified) (that would need a request for a self-correction by the student).

Another wrong use of grammatical tense by the students was the use of *past simple* instead of *present perfect*. This can be attributed to the fact that there are no tenses call ‘*present perfect*’ in Kurdish Language (as opposed to the *past perfect tense* which is existing in Kurdish Language). Thus, it was relatively more challenging to explain *present perfect tense* than explaining other tenses such as *simple present* and *simple past tenses*. An example of the error in one of the classes is as below:

14. \*I received 10 phone call so far today. (Instead of) I have received 10 phone calls so far today.

Another type of grammatical errors and mistakes was using uncountable nouns as countable ones, or vice versa, since the countable and uncountable nouns are considered otherwise in Kurdish Language, such as *bread* and *money*, used as countable nouns by the students, while using *olives* and *grapes* as uncountable nouns. In these situations, special attention was given to these words to raise the awareness of the students of how their L1 and L2 work differently when it comes to this grammatical feature. The attention given included providing mnemonics to remember these special cases of distinction between the two languages.

**Table 1** shows selected grammatical errors and/or mistakes made by the students.

#	Using wrong Grammatical Tenses and Structures	
1	*I am study English.	Wrong verb
2	*We are can swim today.	Wrong verb combination
3	*He always is happy.	Wrong position of time phrase
4	*I arrived before three hours.	.... three hours ago.
5	*These are my books over there!	Those are my books over there!
6	*I saw her on yesterday.	Wrong use of preposition
7	*He sings at this moment.	Wrong use of preposition
8	*We didn’t played football.	Wrong use of verb form (didn’t play)
9	*This road is more wider ...	Redundancy (wider)
10	*I have lost my keys two hours ago.	Specifying time with Pr. Perfect
11	*When I arrived, my brother left the party.	Overambition (using Simple Past and Past Perfect tense in one sentence)
12	... *how many breads? *how much olives?	Wrong countable and uncountable nouns
13	*We used a few coffee...	Wrong use of quantifiers
14	... *my cousins’s ...	Wrong use of possessive (’s)
15	*I received 10 emails so far today.	Wrong use of correct grammatical tense. Correct form is <i>I have received 10 phone calls so far today.</i>





### 2.1.3 Correcting a Strange Collocation

Unusual collocations might be a mistake or error. For instance, if a learner said *\*powerful tea* in the class, as a first step, the student was asked to repeat the collocation in order to draw out the incorrectness: *Can you say that again?* Using facial expressions, nonverbal cues, and voice tone. Asking about the collocate that is formed is another approach that might have been employed.: *What kind of tea? How was the tea?*

Wrong collocations were also stressed: *\*Do a mistake?* When the learner was able to correct the strange collocation, it was discovered that it was a mistake. Because it was an error, allowing the learner to recast is sufficient and efficient in these circumstances. On the other hand, some students might not know the appropriate collocation to use in place of the incorrect one, indicating a mistake that needs more explanation. This extra explanation was provided for some examples of collocation errors in the class, such as:

15. *\*great problems, \*make homework, and \*drive bicycle*

Some strange collocations can be conveyed literally by conjuring up a scene in your head with gestures, or you can draw a quick illustration to show how bizarre they are. For instance, a student said the following:

16. *The wall was garnished with pictures*, then he was asked: *Was there food on the wall?* and a wall was depicted as having food on it.

The rationale for using food as an example followed. It has been established that the word garnish is used to describe the decorating of food, whereas the word adorned with is more applicable for pictures. Such a tactic should be handled with the utmost tact to avoid any kind of mockery or humiliation. The two collocations were tied to the incident when they were used in this way, making them very memorable.

Such a technique should be handled extremely sensitively to avoid any type of mocking or humiliation. However, settling previous norms of tolerance to error and mistake correction can add more to the efficiency of the techniques employed. It was observed that different correction techniques need to be at hand for the purpose of choosing the best one by the teacher. Also, tailoring the technique is another important factor as observed, for example, the last step of correcting the (*garnish with* and *adorned with*) collocational errors was best comprehended when followed more examples of words that collocate with *garnished with* and *adorned with*. For example:

17. Please *garnish* the dish *with* parsley before serving.

18. Her hair was *adorned with* white flowers.

**Table 2** shows the collocational errors and/or mistakes made by the students.

#	Production of Strange Collocations	
1	<i>*Powerful tea</i>	Strong tea
2	<i>*Begin the engine</i>	Start the engine
3	<i>*Great problem</i>	Big problem
4	<i>*Do a mistake</i>	Make a mistake
5	<i>*Do a phone call</i>	Make a phone call
6	<i>*Make homework</i>	Do homework
7	<i>*Drive your bicycle</i>	Ride your bicycle



### 2.1.4 Correcting a Mispronounced Word

A learner that mispronounces a word should first be notified that s/he has mispronounced it. The teacher can do this by **echoing** (Brown, 2007) the pronunciation with the aid of an interrogative intonation and facial expressions, such as; \*/kni:l/?! for *kneel*, or it can be done by stressing the wrong syllabus, as in; \*/prənɑʊnsi'eɪf/?! for *pronunciation*, stressing /əʊ/. Echoing was used for these two examples in the class; however, it was observed that a slight modification is required on some occasions. In other words, more energy was needed to be exerted to notify the student(s) of the mispronunciation.

After echoing, the student's ability to speak the word correctly on the second try will show that a pronunciation fault took place. If the teacher ignores the echoing, which implies that the pronunciation was poor, they will have to put forth more effort. In these cases, the first thing I did was to serve as an example by repeating the term out loud numerous times. The term was then said, and whenever possible, it was followed by an explanation.

In the above instances, an explanation was provided that *K* is not pronounced when it is followed by *N* as in *knife* and *know*, so *kneel* is pronounced /ni:l/. For the second example, I did present a mnemonic that the verb '*pronounce*' is /prə'nɑʊns/, and when it is changed into a noun, the diphthong /əʊ/ changes to /ʌ/ as in '*luck*' and '*cup*'. Thus, it is pronounced /prənʌnsi'eɪf/, stressing /ʌ/. The last step utilized in the class was to have the students practice the word with the correct pronunciation. Having the learner practicing will show whether the student has any difficulty saying it right because some students may find different sounds hard to utter.

It should be mentioned that as part of this study, these examples were practiced orally in the class to observe the errors and mistakes.

**Table 3** shows the pronunciation errors and/or mistakes made with their correct ones.

#	Mispronunciation of Words	
1	Because	/br'kəz/
2	World	/wɜ:ld/
3	Cheerful	/'tʃiə.fəl/
4	Pronunciation	/prə.nʌn.si'eɪ.fən/
5	History	/'hɪs.tər.i/
6	Leisure	/'leɜ.ər/
7	Kneel	/ni:l/
8	Desert	/'dez.ət/
9	Fashionable	/'fæʃ.ən.ə.bəl/
10	Journalist	/'dʒɜ:.nə.list/
11	Russian	/'rʌʃ.ən/
12	Correct	/kə'rekt/

A special consideration that needs to be taken is the fact that practicing correct pronunciations of words should involve several students, and not only the specific student that made the pronunciation errors.

### 2.1.5 Correcting a Misspelled Word

Normally, the correction process of a misspelled word started by drawing the attention of the students to the incorrectness in the class. Some phrases like these did help: *Can you find what is wrong with it? Would you check again, please?* Another way used for correcting a misspelled word was giving the student a facial expression which indicates that something is going wrong. This allowed me as a teacher to examine the students' ability to elicit the incorrect spelling themselves. The successful attempt to self-correct by the students was followed by an exclamation of encouragement, such as *Exactly! Excellent!*



However, it was considered a mistake because the student was unable to identify the wrong spelling. In this instance, I spoke the right spelling with the letters separated but added a pause, a halt, or a hum for the incorrect or missing letter (s). In this case, letters can also be formed with fingers to reveal the error:

\*plumer        P - L - U - M - - E - R  
 \*decieve      D - E - C - - - V - E  
 \*laogh        L - A - - G - H  
 \*babyes        B - A - B - - E - S

The separated letters prompted the student to guess the missing letter, yet more importantly it elicited the wrong part of the spelling. Next, I showed the missing or the wrong letter(s) and explained whether it is/they are pronounced or not and how. When possible, I included spelling rules and guidelines and mnemonics such as: *b* is not pronounced in *plumber*; *i* before *e* except after *c* when it gives the sound /i:/; when *s* is added to a noun ending with a *y* that is preceded by a consonant, it is changed to *i+es*, like *babies*; and it is *ugh* that yields the sound /f/ in *laugh* and other words like *tough* and *rough*. Then, I requested the students to pronounce the word a couple of times, and I rewrote it correctly.

It should be mentioned that mnemonics were very much welcomed by the students to avoid spelling mistakes. The famous mnemonic '*i* before *e* except after *c* when it gives sound /i:/' was shown with examples such as *deceive*, *receive*, opposed to *believe* and *friend*. It was observed that at later stages that the presented mnemonics played a very good role in having the students memorizing correct spellings and encouraging the students to develop their own ones. A basic example was given by a student on producing the correct spelling of the word '*committee*'. She mentioned that '*I keep reminding myself that there are three double letters in the word committee: (mm), (tt), and (ee)*'. The piece of information rang a bell once the student writes the word, and consequently she avoids making the spelling mistake.

Other mnemonics were brought up by the students in relation to other various aspects in the class. For instance, as student clarified that he differentiates the meaning of '*optimism*' from '*pessimism*' by visualizing *optimism* as *op (or) open* which indicates *bright* and a *positive thinking*. Thus, *pessimism* gives the opposite meaning.

**Table 4** shows selected spelling errors and/or mistakes.

#	Writing incorrectly Spelled Words (selected incorrect spellings)	
1	*plumer	Plumber
2	*decieve	Deceive
3	*freind	Friend
4	*laogh	Laugh
5	*babyes	Babies
6	*bysicle	Bicycle
7	*dilisious	Delicious
8	*commite	Committee
9	*muzision	Musician
10	*Relyable	Reliable
11	*Atmosfia	Atmosphere
12	*fraitening	Frightening



## 2.2 Correcting a Grammatical Error of an Over-Ambitious Student

Overly ambitious students make grammatical errors when they try to speak without knowing the correct linguistic etiquette. These are referred to as "attempts," as they show the students' prior knowledge (Harmer, 2007). As may be seen in the example below, a student once attempted to employ the third conditional:

19. *\*If she had known he is there, she will leave the party.*

It would be good to dismiss these attempts because they are above the student's ability. Furthermore, it would deter students of that caliber from attempting novel structures in the future. Last but not least, these changes would unnecessarily accelerate the students' learning and take their attention away from the instructional components of their current level. It would, however, teach valuable lessons for forthcoming classes or levels.

## 2.3 Correcting an Inappropriate Word

The use of an improper word may or may not be recognized by a student. Looks of confusion and intonation-based repeating of the term can both be useful indicators of a mistake. This often works effectively when the teacher and the class are acquainted with one another. The error is obvious if the learner then provides the right alternative term. The learner should be reminded that the second phrase is formal and more appropriate at the same time to make it obvious that there is a difference between the words, as illustrated in the following sequence by a classmate:

20. Student: He asked her to *piss off* and let him alone.

Teacher: to what?! *Piss off!!*

Student: I mean to *go away*.

Teacher: yes, that's more appropriate.

Some students, however, were not aware that certain words in certain contexts had a restricted register. In these instances, justifications were given after the formal substitute word was used. The aim was to make the kids aware that there are formal and informal languages, just as there are formal and informal clothing. The kids in the elementary grades were instructed that the word choices they make should be based on the context of the scenario. But I first made an effort to encourage the kids to look up the formal word on their own or with my assistance. The following illustrates one of the brief conversations with a student.:

21. Student: His haircut is *cool*.

Teacher: Sorry, how is it? can you explain?

Student: *Cool*.

Teacher: What does that mean? Do you think it is an appropriate word?

Student: I mean nice and *cool*...

Teacher: Isn't it more formal to say *attractive* or *fashionable*; is that what you mean?

Student: Yes, I mean *attractive*.

## Conclusion

This study has concluded that there are many types of errors and mistakes produced by EFL learners. One of the main conclusions was clarification the difference between "mistakes" and "errors." While errors reflect a learner's failure to obey L2 rules, mistakes reflect a learner's incomplete comprehension of those rules. Meanwhile, mistakes cannot be addressed by the student, faults may. Therefore, they require distinct treatment. Then, errors and mistakes were divided into four categories: grammatical, lexical, pronunciational, and spelling. Examples of each kind of error and mistake were given, along with some possible causes.

This study also reached the conclusion that the methods that teachers employ to correct these kinds of mistakes and inaccuracies. These strategies initially try to highlight how inaccurate the learner's output is. Students are then given the option to remedy their mistakes on their own; if this doesn't work, the teacher must go over the pertinent guidelines and have the



students put them into practice. Another part of this conclusion was the different techniques that I used in correcting some specific errors and mistakes students that were made during English Language classes. The correction techniques need to be tailored according to the setting of the class. Different elements need to be considered when using correction techniques such as the tolerance atmosphere set in advance in the class, individual student's tolerance to the modality of the techniques used, students' age, and reaction of the students to the technique if/when further clarifications and/or examples are needed.

The last but not the least conclusion was that the thoroughly studied errors and mistakes did not show that grammar is the most type of error and mistake made by the Kurdish students because of interlingual factors. These factors were found as a source for errors and mistakes relatively equally with all the mentioned types. It can be suggested that future targeted empirical studies can result in showing more insights on the influence of the 'interlingual factors' on the frequency and type of errors and mistakes made by Kurdish learners of English Language. In addition, it was concluded that mnemonics not only played an instrumental role in retrieving information to avoid errors and mistakes, but mnemonics assisted some students to develop and use their own mnemonics. Although the few examples yielded by the students, upon request, were very basic, they remain to be good indications towards strengthening learners' autonomy in the process of learning.

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## لیکۆلینەوه له هەڵە زمانەوانیە نەزانراو و/یا نەهەڵە زمانەوانیە زانراوەکانی فیرخووانی زمانی ئینگلیزی وەک زمانی بیانی: هۆکارەکان و تەکنیکەکانی راستکردنەوه

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### پوختە

ئەم توێژینەوهیە هەڵدەستیت بە وردبوونەوه له باوترین ئەو هەڵە نەزانراو (Error) و هەڵە زانراو (Mistake) زمانەوانیەتی که له لایەن فیرخووانی زمانی ئینگلیزی وەک زمانی بیگانه ئەنجام دەدرێن، یەكەمجار ئەم توێژینەوهیە گرنگی جیاوازی نیوان هەردوو جۆری هەڵە (زانراو و نەزانراو) روودەكاتەوه لەبەر ئەوهی ئەم جیاوازیە رۆلێکی گەوره دەبینیت له مامەڵەکردن و راستکردنەوهی ئەو هەڵانە بە شیوهی جیاواز، دواتر هۆکارەکانی ئەو هەڵانە پیشاندراون و هەندیک تەکنیکی راستکردنەوه خراونەتەرپوو. ئەم توێژینەوهیە ئەوه دەرەخات که فاکتەری زمانی ناوهکی و دەرەکی هەن، که هۆکاری سەرەکی بۆ هەڵە ریزمانی و وشەسازی و شیوهی دەپڕینی وشە و حوڤە کردن، هەروەها ئەم توێژینەوهیە ئامانجی ئەوهیە که سێ گریمانە که خراونەتەرپوو بخاتە ژێر سەرنجەوه، بەم پێش، بەو ئامانجە گەیشتین که هیچ ئامازەیهک نین که هەڵە زانراو و نەزانراوی ریزمانی زۆرتیرین ئەو هەڵانە بن که بەهۆی 'فارکتەری دەرەکیهوه' روودەن، هەروەها بەو ئامانجەش گەیشتین که پتویستە تەکنیکەکانی راستکردنەوهی هەڵەکان بگۆنچیندێن بەپێی که شوههواي پۆلهکه چونکه چەندین رەگەزی کاریگەر هەن لەم بابەتەدا، توێژینەوهکه ئەمەش دەرەخات که بەکارهێنانی نیمۆنیکس (تەکنیکی بەهێزکەری یادەوهی) بۆ قوتابیهکان و دەکات قوتابیهکان خۆیان توانستی ئەوه بەدەستبێنن که پەرە بە نیمۆنیکسی خۆیان بدەن، دواتر، هەندیک له هۆکارەکانی ئەنجامدانی هەڵەکان روونکراونەتەوه وەک بریتین له 'سادەکردن'، 'فیربونی ناتەواو'، 'زیاده گشتانن'، 'زۆر راستکردنەوه'، 'زیاده پڕۆیی له پڕوابهخۆبون'، له کاتیکدا تەکنیکەکانی راستکردنەوه که بەکارهێنراون و پیشاندراون بریتین له 'دوو باره دارشتنەوه'، 'دەنگدانەوه'، 'ئامازەدان'، 'وانه وتەوهی کاردانەوهی'، 'فیدباکی میتازمانەوانی'. نمونهی زیندووی هەڵەکان له چەندین وانە کۆمهلیک فیرخووانی کورد که فیرخووانی زمانی ئینگلیزین وه له ئاستی سەرەتایین له چەند خولکی سەنتەری زمان و وەرگێڕانی زانکۆی سەلاحەدین کۆکراونەتەوه.

**وشە سەرەکیەکان:** هەڵە نەزانراو، هەڵە زانراو، تەکنیکەکانی راستکردنەوه، نیمۆنیکس (تەکنیکی بەهێزکەری یادەوهی)، فاکتەری زمانی ناوهکی و دەرەکی.

## استکشاف الأخطاء اللغوية الغير المعروفة و/أو الأخطاء اللغوية المعروفة لدى متعلمي اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية: الأسباب، وتقنيات التصحيح

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### ملخص

تبحث هذه الدراسة في الأخطاء اللغوية الغير المعروفة و/أو الأخطاء اللغوية المعروفة الأكثر شيوعاً التي يرتكبها متعلمي اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية (EFL). يشرح أولاً أهمية التمييز بين "الأخطاء المعروفة" و "الأخطاء الغير معروفة" حيث يلعب التمييز دوراً أساسياً في معالجتها وتصحيحها بشكل مختلف، كما يسلط الضوء على الأسباب الكامنة وراء "الأخطاء المعروفة" و/أو "الأخطاء الغير المعروفة" ويقترح تقنيات تصحيح مختلفة لمعالجتها، توضح الدراسة كيف أن عوامل التحويل بين اللغات داخل اللغات هي الأسباب الكامنة وراء الأخطاء المعروفة و الغير معروفة القواعدية والمعجمية والنطق والإملائية، بالإضافة إلى ذلك، تهدف الدراسة إلى اختبار ثلاث فرضيات تم طرحها، وتم الاستنتاج أنه لا توجد مؤشرات على أن الأخطاء القواعدية هي الفئات الأكثر شيوعاً بسبب "العوامل داخل اللغات"، أيضاً، تم التوضيح أن تقنيات التصحيح تحتاج إلى أن تكون مصممة وفقاً لإعدادات الفصل الدراسي نظراً لوجود عناصر مختلفة متضمنة، خلصت الدراسة إلى أن تزويد الطلاب بفتون الإستذكار يمكن أن يهيئ الطلاب لتطوير مهاراتهم الخاصة، علاوة على ذلك، تستلزم الأسباب الشائعة للأخطاء المعروفة و الأخطاء الغير معروفة في الدراسة التبسيط، وعدم كفاية التعلم، والتعميم المفرط، والتصحيح المفرط والحالة المفرطة في الطموح، بينما كانت تقنيات التصحيح المستخدمة والمقدمة هي إعادة الصياغة وترديد الصدى، والتلميح، والتدريس التفاعلي والتغذية الراجعة اللغوية، تم جمع عينات من الأخطاء المعروفة و/أو الأخطاء الغير معروفة بدقة من خلال دروس لمتعلمين أكراد للغة الإنجليزية في المستويات الابتدائية لدورات اللغة الإنجليزية من مركز اللغات والترجمة بجامعة صلاح الدين.

**الكلمات الأساسية:** الأخطاء الغير المعروفة، الأخطاء المعروفة، تقنيات التصحيح، فن الإستذكار، النقل بين اللغات داخل اللغات.