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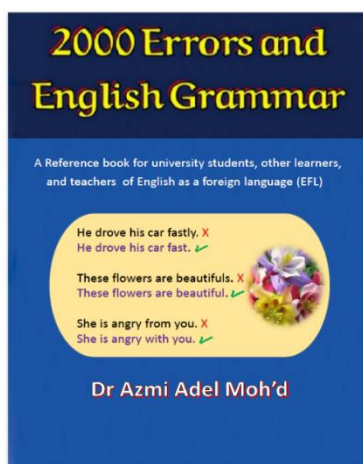
“2000 Errors and English Grammar”: Data Sources, Aims, and Fields of the Book plus Causes and Types of Errors

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Bio-profile:

Dr. Azmi Adel Moh’d, PhD in Teaching English as a Foreign Language, Applied Linguistics, from the University of Bucharest in 1995. He taught English at Amman College for Engineering Technology (1984–1999), Al-Balqa' Applied University. He was an assistant professor of the English language and literature at AI-Quds College, (1999- 2002) in Amman. He was an assistant professor of English at the Faculty of Arts, and the Faculty of Educational Sciences, Jerash Private University, (2004 – 2009) in Jordan. He taught different subjects including CALL (Computer Assisted Language Learning), Grammar, Literature, Semantics, History of the English Language, Methods of Teaching English, Translation, and English for Special Purposes. He was an assistant professor of English and a supervisor at the College of Languages and Translation, Al-Imam Muhammad Ibn Saud Islamic University, (2009 – 2018) in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. He taught Listening and Speaking, Advanced Writing and Reading, Grammar, and CALL. He published four research papers in America, Australia, Egypt, and Saudi Arabia (*for the Research Center*). He was the supervisor (advisor) of 15 MA students and a committee member of 130 MA students during nine years of teaching EFL in Riyadh. He has published a book about university students’ errors and English grammar. Now he is free to write English books.

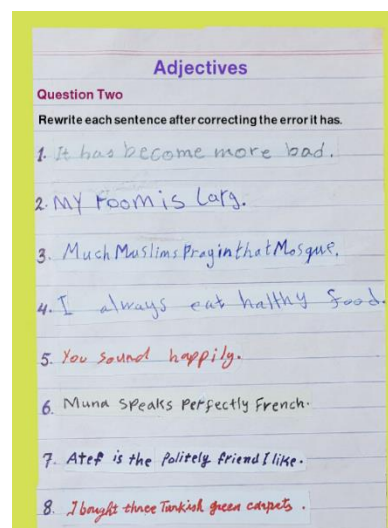
Introduction



Error correction can be used as one of the strategies in learning a foreign language. In learning English as a foreign language (EFL), teachers' correction of errors can provide university students and other learners with useful feedback. Students should have a chance for learning by doing and sharing in pair work or group work because "*practice makes perfect.*"

When we were elementary and preparatory school pupils in the fifties and sixties, some teachers of EFL used to attribute students' errors to laziness and carelessness. Making errors or even mistakes such as slips of the tongue was like a sin deserving a kind of punishment.

However, there were other professional teachers who divided their classes into competitive interactive groups. They used teaching aids and body language during their interesting English lessons.



Data Sources

The sources of data were university students' errors collected by the author himself from their tests of grammar and writing (essays) during the last four years of teaching English as a foreign language (EFL) at Amman College for Engineering Technology, "Al-Balqa' Applied University" and two years at Al-Quds College in Amman the capital city of Jordan. He also collected another quantity of his students' test papers during teaching English for five years (2004 – 2009) at "Jerash Private University" in Jordan.

The university students included some students coming from other Arab countries.

Moreover, he did the same task during a period of nine years of teaching English (2009 – 2018) at the College of Languages and Translation, College of Preparatory Year Programs and other colleges at “Al-Imam Muhammed Ibn Saud Islamic University” in Riyadh the capital city of Saudi Arabia. Besides, some other common errors that have been observed and collected throughout years of teaching are also included in this book.

Aims of the book

The main aims for preparing this book are the following:

First, it is designed to meet some needs of university students and other learners of English as a foreign language. They can use the book on their own.

Second, it is intended to provide correction of real university students’ errors and common errors based on observation. In addition, providing notes about causes of errors, clear and simple examples, and correct rules can offer additional helpful feedback to both students and other learners so as to avoid possible errors.

Lastly, it is intended to be used by teachers of EFL as another reference supporting the grammar textbooks used in class. They can select any appropriate subject material that can be helpful and useful to their students.

Fields of the Book

This book consists of ten chapters about the following English fields:

1. Adjectives, 2. Adverbs, 3. Articles, 4. Nouns, 5. Prepositions, 6. Pronouns, 7. Verbs, 8. Pronunciation, 9. Punctuation Marks, and 10. Spelling. Each chapter contains **a section of 200 errors** about its field (topic) followed directly by their correction, and they are almost accompanied by helpful notes or rules mainly based on standard formal English.

The first seven chapters, the grammar parts, have another **Grammar section** including a definition or an explanation of their topics plus examples and rules. Then, each chapter ends with two questions: a multiple-choice question consisting of 14 items, and the other one includes 10 real erroneous items selected from the university students’ grammar and writing examination papers. In addition, there are typical answers to the two questions for providing feedback. The eighth part (pronunciation) is only based on speaking, listening, observation, and transcription. The ninth part is “punctuation marks”. The last part (spelling) is related to the skill of writing.

Causes of Students' Errors in English

The word “**errors**” is used by the author to refer to the wrong uses of grammar due to the following factors:

1. Lack of knowledge of grammatical rules and exceptions

This lack of knowledge leads students or learners of EFL to make some errors. For example, some students make an error when they spell a verb as writting instead of **writing** or writen instead of **written**. Here are the verbs in sentences:

- I am writting a simple sentence. **X** (“Writting” is a wrong verb.)
I am writing a simple sentence. **✓** (“Writing” is a correct verb.)
- Sami has writen a letter. **X** (“Writen” is a wrong verb.)
Sami has **written** a letter. **✓** (“Written” is a correct verb.)

Other students who know that the words **kept**, **rent**, and **sent** are pronounced as /kept/, /rent/, and /sent/, make errors because of a lack of knowledge of another rule. They pronounce the word **debt** as /debt/ instead of /det/ because they don't know that “b” is silent in the word **debt**. They may not know that “b” is also silent in these words: **bomb**, **climb**, **comb**, **crumb**, **dumb**, **lamb**, **limb**, **numb**, **plumb**, **thumb**, and **tomb**.

One of the grammatical well-known rules by a lot of students is that the adjective “**many**” is followed by a plural countable noun such as saying:

“**many people**, **many girls**, **many books**, and **many animals**”. The same students have a lack of knowledge that “**many**” can be followed by a/an plus a singular noun such as saying: “**many a man**, **many a girl**, **many an engineer**, and **many an animal**”. This exceptional use is more formal but less common. When we say **many a woman**, we mean **many women**.

In English, the “e” letter at the end of most words is silent such as **date**, **skate**, **hate**, **gone**, **done**, **write**, and **white**. There are exceptional words of French origin ending with a spoken “e” letter such as **recipe** and **fiancé**. They are pronounced as follows:

- Recipe /'resəpi/
- Fiance /fi'ɒnsɪ/ (British)
/fi:ɑ:n'sɪ/ (American)

We can use the adverb “**very**” before an adjective such as saying:

- This garden is very beautiful. **✓**

We shouldn't use very before a noun as saying:

- This man is a very plumber. **X**

However, we can have a correct exceptional case where **very** is followed by a noun for emphasis. Example:

- You are the **very plumber** we need. **✓**

2. Overgeneralization of rules

Overgeneralization of rules takes place when students or learners of EFL apply a regular rule to a word that should be changed irregularly.

An example of overgeneralization is using the regular rule of adding *ed* to irregular verbs as using *lended* instead of *lent*.

- I lended Hani some money. **X**
I **lent** Hani some money. ✓ (**“Lent” is the correct simple past of “lend”.**)

Another example is adding *s* or *es* to irregular singular nouns.

- We saw some deers in the zoo. **X**
We saw some deer in the zoo. ✓
(**“Deer” can be used as singular or plural in English.**)

3. Influence of the mother tongue (L1)

- These flowers are beautifuls. **X** (**“Beautiful” has no plural form in English.**)
These flowers are **beautiful**. ✓
(**“Beautiful” is used with singular and plural nouns in English.**)
Note that the adjective in the Arabic language has different forms: singular, dual, plural, masculine and feminine. Therefore, the above error “beautifuls” can be attributed to the influence of L1.

Another example indicating the influence of the mother tongue are the following:

- Died my uncle. **X** (The error is attributed to the influence of L1.)
My uncle **died**. ✓ (**Rule: Subject + an intransitive past verb**)
Note that you can start in Arabic by using “**the past verb + the subject**” or “**the subject + the past verb**”.
- One more example indicates the influence of L1 when there is a word having the meaning of two different words in English. For example, the word زوج (*Zawj*) means **pair** and also **husband**. Choosing the wrong word leads to a funny grammatical error.
- He bought a husband of shoes. **X**
He bought a **pair** of shoes. ✓

Differences between British English and American English Pronunciation

University students should be aware of the differences between British English and American English. When they write an essay, they should be consistent. They should avoid using the same words differently. For example, students who write the words: “*colour* and *travelled*” in a paragraph in an essay, shouldn’t write the same two words as “*color* and *traveled*” in another paragraph in the same essay. Here are some differences between **British** English and **American** English:

Pronunciation

1. **Advertisement** /əd'vɜ:tɪsmənt/ (Br.)
/ˌædvər'taɪzmənt/ (Am.)
2. **Advantage** /əd'vɑ:ntɪdʒ/ (Br.)
/əd'væntɪdʒ/ (Am.)
3. **Processor** /'prəʊsesə(r)/ (Br.)
/'prɑ:sesər/ (Am.)

Spelling

1. travelled (Br.)
traveled (Am.)
2. programme (Br.)
program (Am.)
3. colour (Br.)
color (Am.)

Punctuation Marks

- I bought a shirt, a blouse, and a hat. (Br.)
- I bought a shirt, a blouse and a hat. (Am.)
- Dear Mr Thomson: (Br.)
- Dear Mr. Thomson: (Am.)
- He said, “I like apples”. (Br.)
- He said, “I like apples.” (Am.)

Types of Errors

The book contains the following types of errors:

1. Addition of wrong words, letters, or punctuation marks
 - Salma she is tired. **X** (It is wrong to add the pronoun “she”.)
Salma is tired. **✓**

- There are three mens. **X** (It's wrong to add "s" to the noun "men".)
There are three **men**. ✓ (**A correct plural noun**)
2. Omission of words, letters or punctuation marks
- Ali knows to swim in the sea. **X**
Ali knows **how** to swim in the sea. ✓
 - You ought get up early. **X**
You ought to get up early. ✓
Rule: (Subject + ought + to-infinitive)
Note: It is correct to say: You should get up early. ✓
3. Misuse of words
- He often loses his keys. **X** ("Loose" is the opposite adjective of *free*.)
He often **loses** his keys. ✓ (**"Loses" is the opposite verb of finds.**)
 - There are much pupils in the yard. **X**
There are **many** pupils in the yard. ✓
 - My trousers is blue. **X**
My trousers **are** blue. ✓ (**A plural subject + are**)
(**We use are after the plural noun trousers in English.**)
 - Maher was very angry. He shouted to her. **X**
Maher was very angry. He **shouted at** her. ✓
(**"Shout at" is used when the speaker is angry with someone.**)
 - I shouted on him, but nobody answered. **X**
I **shouted to** him, but nobody answered. ✓
(**"Shout to" is used to make someone hear you.**)
4. A wrong place of words
- It is a cotton white new shirt. **X**
It is a **new white cotton** shirt. ✓ (**A correct order of adjectives**)
(**The correct order is about "how old + what colour + what material".**)
 - He swims always in the same pool. **X**
He **always swims** in the same pool. ✓
Rule: (Subject + always + ordinary verb)
 - Bader's father went to school as a visitor. **X**
Bader's father went **to the school** as a visitor. ✓
(**When we speak about a visitor, we say "goes to the school".**)
 - Bader goes to the school by bus. **X**
Bader goes **to school** by bus. ✓
(**When we speak about a student, we say "goes to school"**)

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