

Linguistic Diversity in Oman: Analyzing the Influence of Gender and Local Omani Languages on Arabic Writing Proficiency Among Omani Students

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Received: December 14, 2024

Accepted: May 5, 2025

Online Published: June 27, 2025

doi:10.5430/jct.v14n3p32

URL: <https://doi.org/10.5430/jct.v14n3p32>

Abstract

The Sultanate of Oman presents a unique case, given its rich linguistic community, primarily composed of several local languages distinct from Arabic, which people acquire first. However, limited studies have explored the effect of local Omani languages and gender on linguistic errors in writing in Arabic as a second language by Omani undergraduate students at one of the public universities in the Sultanate of Oman. Therefore, this study aims to analyze linguistic errors in writing in Arabic as a second language by Omani undergraduates. A qualitative research design was employed in analyzing the writings of 20 students: 10 male and 10 female students. Two taxonomies were utilized to comprehensively describe all grammatical errors and their types. The findings revealed gender similarities in terms of committing most of the errors in the three top categories: spelling, linguistic structures, and syntax. However, the variations in error types highlight gender differences in linguistic errors, with male students primarily making addition errors, whereas female students primarily make deletion errors. Furthermore, it was found that writing in Arabic as a second language can be influenced by certain local Omani languages. In other words, students whose L1 is similar to Arabic made fewer mistakes compared to those whose L1 differs from Arabic, thus implying the positive transfer of L1. These results suggest the significance of gender and local languages in acquiring and learning a second language, which could be employed pedagogically in varied contexts.

Keywords: local Omani languages, gender, writing, Arabic, second language, Omani students

1. Introduction

For both non-native speakers (NNS) and native speakers (NS), writing proficiency is the biggest obstacle since it requires skilled writers who understand every facet of a second or foreign language, including syntax, vocabulary, organisation, purpose, content, and mechanics (Nuruzzaman et al., 2018). Because learners need to convey ideas in readable writing, writing in a foreign language is more complex and challenging (Richards & Renandya, 2002; Alsamadani, 2010). For learners who are exposed to separate linguistic systems, both types of interferences (positive interference and negative interference) may exist. In this regard, the interference of the mother tongue with English writing as a foreign language (EFL) has been the subject of numerous studies (Mudhsh & Laskar, 2021; Cedar, 2004; Jomaa, 2021; Ridha, 2012; Sawalmeh, 2013; Al-Zoubi & Abu-Eid, 2014). According to Wardhuagh (1970), a claim raised in the past implies that the best teaching materials are based on the contrast between two competing linguistic systems. This claim is associated with Contrastive Analysis Theory (CAT). In the field of comparative linguistics, the contrastive analysis hypothesis focuses on comparing two or more languages to ascertain their similarities or differences, either for theoretical or non-analytical applications (TAJAREH, 2015). However, recent advances in linguistic theories have led to the rejection of this hypothesis (Wardhuagh, 1970).

Unlike all other Arab countries, Oman has several local languages, whereby Arabic is considered the second language. However, studies that have focused on mistakes in Arabic in Arab countries are limited specifically in the Sultanate of Oman, whereby people in this country acquire one of the local Omani languages before the Arabic language, which is both acquired and learned at schools later on. Further, discussing mistakes in L2 writing cannot

be conducted without exploring the possible effect of gender since several studies have shown the possible influence of gender on writing skills (Camarata & Woodcock, 2006; Reynolds, Scheiber, Hajovsky, Schwartz, & Kaufman, 2015; Scheiber, Reynolds, Hajovsky, & Kaufman, 2015; Jomaa & Derşevi, 2022). Therefore, the purpose of this study is to explore grammatical errors, identify their types, and present possible explanations for variations and similarities considering two main aspects, namely the possible effect of gender and local Omani languages on writing in Arabic as a second language.

1.1 Literature Review

This section has two main subsections related to the content of this study. The first subsection addresses the local Omani languages and language transfer, whereas the second subsection tackles gender differences and the conflicting results of previous studies.

1.2 Local Omani Languages

Oman's rich history as a hub for migration and trade on the Arabian Peninsula is reflected in the linguistic diversity of the country. Although Arabic is the official language of Oman, people in Oman speak several varied languages since the country is linguistically diverse. One example of such a multilingual and diversified population is found in the southern of the Sultanate of Oman, in the Dhofar governorate. A visitor to Dhofar can notice the phenomenon of code-switching among people, whereby they speak to each other using one of the local languages, and they switch back to Arabic when the addressee is not familiar with this local language. Ten surviving languages that have been spoken in Oman are included (Eberhard et al., 2023), such as Harsusi, Hobyót, Mehri, Bathari, Dhofari spoken Arabic (herein Dhofari Arabic), and Shehri, which is also referred to as Jibbali. These languages are referred to as Modern South Arabian languages and are members of the Afro-Asiatic language family. All of these languages—aside from the Dhofari Arabic—are at risk of extinction, but their levels of vitality vary. For instance, there are no first language (L1) users in Bathari, fewer than 10,000 L1 users in Harsusi and Hobyót, and between 10,000 and 1 million L1 users in Mehri and Shehri (Jibbali). A declining proportion of youngsters speak Jibbali/Shehri as their first language. It should be mentioned that none of these languages have writing systems and they are exclusively spoken (Alkathiri & Mudhsh, 2024; Balhaf et al., 2024).

Apart from the languages spoken by the native population, Arabic and English are also widely spoken by people who live in the Dhofar governorate. However, in the Omani context, the majority of research concentrates on the outcomes of educational reforms or the application of English as a medium of instruction (Denman & Al-Mahrooqi, 2019; Tuzlukova et al., 2023). Further, limited studies have addressed Oman's linguistic diversity and the potential effects that the inclusion and diversity may have on pedagogical practices like writing in Arabic. This initiated the motivation of the researchers in this study and formed the rationale for conducting such research.

1.3 Language Transfer (Positive and Negative)

Several studies have focused on the disparities in writing abilities across gender (Reilly et al., 2019; Reynolds et al., 2015). Therefore, this study explores the linguistic errors made by male and female Omani students in Arabic as a second language, following the proposal of Reilly et al. (2019) to pinpoint the specific nature of gender differences in writing. Language differences may cause difficulties when learning a second language, especially when it comes to learners' conceptions of experience, because they tend to assume that there are no differences between languages (Alonso, 2002). For example, Subandowo (2017) contends that because English and the students' mother tongues have different phonemes, the influence of the mother tongue on pronunciation is very strong. This result was proven among Turkish students who learn English as a second language (Jomaa, 2021). Similarly, Jomaa and Bidin (2017) found that when Arab doctorate students write their Ph.D. theses in English, the disparities between Arabic and English in terms of vocabulary, pronunciation, syntax, and writing systems negatively impact them.

Additional research was conducted by Hourani (2008), Al-Shujairi and Tan (2017), and Derrick et al. (2018), which demonstrated that intralingual errors predominate among forms of grammar. Further, research on EFL students studying Arabic has illustrated that the primary cause of grammatical errors is interlanguage interference from the native tongue (Al-Shujairi & Tan, 2017; Al-Zoubi & Abu-Eid, 2014; Mudhsh et al., 2023). However, because there is not much long-term research on this subject, the current study investigates the grammatical errors and the types of errors made by Omani students while writing in Arabic as a second language.

1.4 Gender Differences

Many sociolinguistics studies have followed Lakoff's (1973, 1975) hypothesis, according to which women's speech differs from men's. Further, numerous studies on potential differences in cognitive ability between male and female students have been carried out in recent decades (Stumpf, 1995; Wai, Cacchio, Putallaz, & Makel, 2010; Siochrú,

2018). On one hand, some theorists have argued against the existence of any significant gender-related language distinctions (Bradley, 1981; Weatherall, 2002). Hyde's (2005) gender similarities hypothesis (GSH), which holds that men and women "are similar on most, but not all, psychological variables," lends credence to this theory. In other words, boys and girls, as well as men and women, are more alike than different (p. 581).

According to this theory, most gender differences are negligible. On the other hand, the majority of studies indicate that there are no gender differences in general intelligence (Halpern, 2000), as well as gender differences are evident in specific cognitive capacities (Voyer, Voyer, & Bryden, 1995) and languages (Miller & Halpern, 2014). Accordingly, increasing research has shown that writing skills differ between men and women (Camarata & Woodcock, 2006; Reynolds, Scheiber, Hajovsky, Schwartz, & Kaufman, 2015; Scheiber, Reynolds, Hajovsky, & Kaufman, 2015; Jomaa & Derşevi, 2022). For instance, several studies have found that although women's speech lacked assertion, it did contain qualifiers, intensifiers, hedges, and other language devices that lessen the impact of forceful statements and affirmations (Lakoff, 1975).

However, these claims make sense by considering the homogenous societal background experienced by the students. More specifically, the findings of Sholihah, Ifawati, Sari, and Fatmawati (2024) correspond with the previous studies, which reported no significant difference between male and female students even in different education levels, such as higher education (Gheith & Aljaberi, 2015; Hashempour et al., 2015; Misu & Masi, 2017), and secondary school level (Garzón et al., 2020; Jaleel & Premachandran, 2016; Nunaki et al., 2019). According to Sholihah, Ifawati, Sari, and Fatmawati (2024), no significant difference in metacognitive knowledge and regulation exists between male and female students, but it can be seen that female students seem to have higher metacognitive awareness (Jomaa, Attamimi, & Alghafri, 2025) compared to males in both knowledge and regulation. This, somehow, was proven significantly different by previous researchers. For instance, Panda (2017) revealed that girls are significantly better than boys in metacognitive knowledge but not in metacognitive regulation. Regarding writing, conflicting results existed, for instance, according to Jomaa and Derşevi (2022), male and female Turkish students alike made the most grammatical errors in concord (subject-verb agreement) when writing in English. However, concerning the most common linguistic errors made when writing in Arabic as a foreign language, the results indicated variations among them. To demonstrate, vowel errors accounted for the largest percentage of errors made by Turkish male students, whereas semantic errors were more common among Turkish female students. These conflicting results raise questions that need to be addressed in this study:

- 1- What are the grammatical errors made by Omani students in writing in Arabic?
- 2- What are the types of grammatical errors made by Omani students in Arabic?
- 3- To what extent does age affect the grammatical errors of Omani students in Arabic?
- 4- To what extent does the first language (local Omani languages) affect the grammatical errors of Omani students in writing in Arabic?

2. Method

The purpose of the current study is to qualitatively explore writing in Arabic as a second language to classify and categorise grammatical errors committed by Omani students, as well as to pinpoint the origins of these errors depending on two possible factors: gender and local Omani languages. The analysis is based on the Error Analysis Theory, utilising Selinker's (1992) procedure, which entails five steps for analysing grammatical mistakes: data collection, error detection, classification, quantification, and source analysis. Additionally, the framework developed by Jomaa and Derşevi (2022) based on James (1998) and Corder (1967) was used in this study to detect grammatical errors. Prepositions, articles, singular/plural, adjectives, irregular verb tenses, concord, passive/active, and possessive cases were the nine categories in which James categorised errors. To incorporate all language errors, multiple categories (syntax, syntax: linguistic structures, semantics, male/female use of nouns) were added to the modified version that was utilised in the current investigation.

The linguistic errors were identified, analysed, and coded by hand analysis. The data were quantified to generalise the study's findings and attribute specific features to either male or female students. Further, the potential influences of either gender, mother tongue, or both, were employed to highlight potential similarities and/or differences between male and female students as well as the impact of local Omani languages.

To ensure that the results are not affected by other possible factors, certain criteria were followed in choosing the participants, whereby a purposeful sampling was followed in this qualitative study to select 20 essays by 20 Omani students—10 male students and 10 female students. These are Omani students who were enrolled in one of the public

universities in the Sultanate of Oman. Besides, based on the suggestions of the students' lecturer, who is familiar with their L1 background, only students whose first language is one of the local Omani languages were included in the sampling. Further, the participants' ages were also considered, whereby only students whose ages ranged from 22 to 25 years old were selected to avoid any possible influence of older students.

3. Results

The results are divided into two subsections to address the four research questions: errors in Arabic based on gender and errors in Arabic based on local Omani languages.

3.1 Errors in Arabic Based on Gender

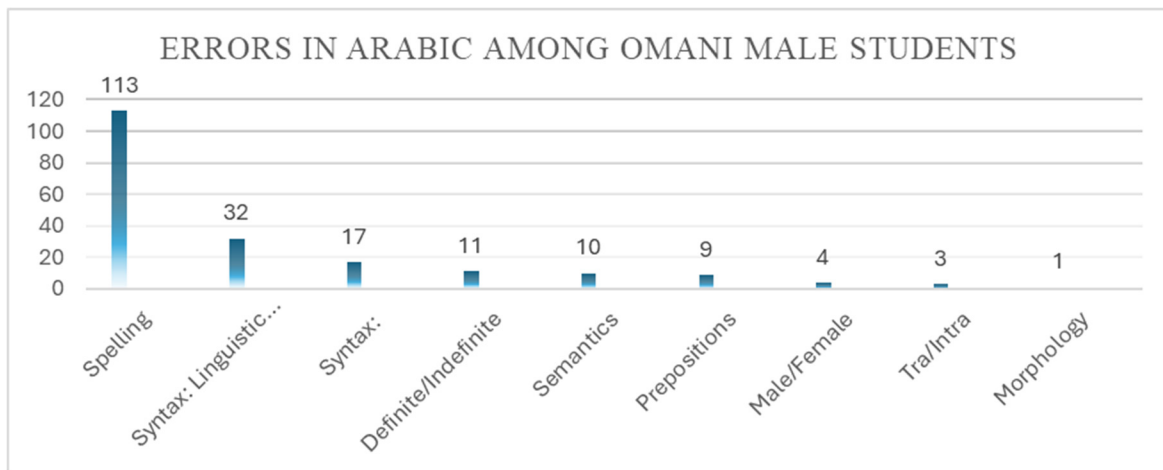


Figure 1. Errors in Arabic Based on Gender (male)

Based on Figure 1, it can be noticed that male Omani students have a challenge mainly in spelling, syntax: linguistic structures, syntax, and semantics, whereas prepositions, male/female nouns, transitive and intransitive verbs, and morphology have a lower frequency of errors. Some letters in Arabic are associated with pronunciations, whereby some letters are only pronounced without being written, and vice versa. This could lead to an increasing number of errors related to spelling. Another issue is related to the letter “ء”, which is so problematic for even native speakers of Arabic. It is a glottal sound that is not found in the majority of languages; therefore, speakers of other languages find difficulty in distinguishing between the subtypes of this letter; it is pronounced at the beginning of words, which is equivalent to ‘the’ in English. For instance, ‘bait=house’ and ‘albait= the house’, when producing ‘al’, it seems that ‘ء’ does exist in pronunciation, but in writing, it does not.

As for syntax, unlike other languages like English, the Arabic language is known for its syntactic complexities; therefore, it occupies the second category in terms of frequency of errors. The syntactic differences between Omani local languages and Arabic could lead to such syntactic errors as illustrated in Figure 1.

Regarding definite and indefinite, the Arabic language follows two ways: either to add ‘al’ to a noun to become definite or to add the indefinite noun to a definite one. However, not all nouns can be defined in this way since some are originally definite and do not need the definite article. Students’ failure to identify definite methods in Arabic or the possible effect of their mother tongue could result in making such mistakes.

Making mistakes in semantics is also common among Omani male students since the Arabic language is a productive language; varied words with different meanings and class categories can be derived from the same root. The word ‘katab’ is an example, whereby ‘maktab’ and ‘maktabah’ are derived from the same root, but they refer semantically to varied meanings and class categories.

Below is a detailed explanation of the varied errors, and an example extracted from students’ writing is given for each.

Spelling

Errors in spelling occupied the highest frequencies among Omani male students while writing in Standard Arabic.

This error could be the result of the teaching method at schools, students' feeling that spelling is not important since it does not lead to a big difference in meanings, lots of rules related to spelling, and the difficulty in differentiating between forms of the sound that are associated with writing and spelling.

e.g.

- wrong: الأسم

-Right: الاسم

Syntax: Linguistic Structures

Errors related to syntax and linguistic structures are the result of limited practice in writing in Standard Arabic, whereby the Omani male students report that they have never written a complete paragraph since they finished high school.

e.g.

- wrong: متحدثون اللغات

-Right: متحدثو اللغات

Syntax is considered one of the most difficult aspects for native and non-native speakers of Arabic, whereby each word has its syntax that is associated with both morphological change and pronunciation differences based on its position in the syntactic linguistic structures. Further, some students reported that these linguistic errors could be attributed to the teaching methods at schools and a lack of need to learn the Arabic language since English is the medium of instruction at the university for teaching varied educational programs.

e.g.

- wrong: يسئل عليهم أمور

-Right: يسئل عليهم أموراً

Definite/Indefinite

Errors in using definite and indefinite nouns are associated with students' weak style in writing, and limited exposure to reading and writing in Standard Arabic, continuously.

e.g.

- wrong: تحدث باللغة العربية

-Right: التحدث باللغة العربية

Semantics

The Arabic language is a productive language that can generate lots of other words with varied meanings and syntactic categories using both derivational and inflectional morphemes. This could be the main reason for making mistakes in semantics.

e.g.

- wrong: يمكنه الاستطلاع على شروحات

-Right: يمكنه الاطلاع على شروحات

Prepositions

Omani male students are not exposed to the Arabic language a lot at the university since English is employed as the medium of instruction. Besides, Omani male students do not read Arabic texts a lot. These two reasons could lead to making errors in using prepositions.

e.g.

- wrong: يقوم البرنامج بكل ذكاء استخراج

-Right: يقوم البرنامج بكل ذكاء باستخراج

Male/Female

In Standard Arabic, there are male nouns and female ones. This includes even numbers, and when using numbers as premodifiers for nouns, students should follow certain rules. For instance, numbers from 3 to 9 disagree with the noun as a head. That is, when the noun is female, the number is male, and vice versa. Another reason for this

difficulty could be attributed to writing long sentences, and this is a feature of the Arabic language. In other words, Arabic is reader-responsible, whereby the writer can write using complex structures and long sentences. As a result of using long sentences, Omani male students are not able to identify the referent and the references of the pronouns, and this leads to errors in the male/female use of nouns.

e.g.

- wrong: ثلاث شهور

-Right: ثلاثة شهور

Transitive/Intransitive

Some students write in a hurry and do not review what they have written. In addition, there is no specific rule that clarifies when to use each type of verb, thus Omani students use these two types of verbs interchangeably.

e.g.

- wrong: لا يقدر الاستغناء

-Right: لا يقدر على الاستغناء

Morphology

Errors in morphology are due to the negative effect of the local dialects and languages practised by Omani people. In other words, students write Standard Arabic in a way that is similar to the spoken dialect of Arabic.

e.g.

- wrong: أن يوجد لك مقال

-Right: أن يجد لك مقالا

In Figure 2, errors produced by Omani female students are quantified to compare the different types of errors as well as show any similarities or differences with the errors made by Omani male students.

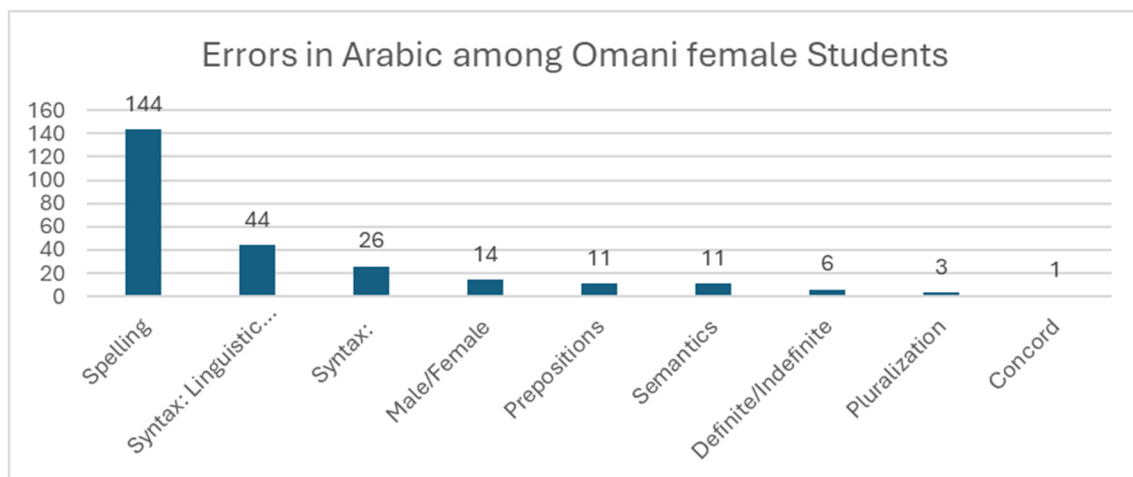


Figure 2. Errors in Arabic by Female Omani Students

As Figure 2 shows, female Omani students are challenged by linguistic and grammatical problems represented by spelling, syntax: linguistic structures, syntax, male/female, prepositions, and semantics, which had the highest frequencies of errors with 144, 44, 26, 14, 11, 11, respectively. On the other hand, definite/indefinite, pluralisation, and concord have the lowest frequency of errors made by Omani female students. As mentioned earlier, spelling could be associated with linguistic issues of syntax and pronunciation. In other words, when a student is not fully aware of syntax, she will make mistakes in spelling. As for pronunciation, vowels in Arabic are limited to three sounds in writing, but pronunciation is totally different, whereby speakers tend to use movements at the top, bottom, front, or end of words, which correspond to the varied syntactic positions of each word. For instance, “Kataba” and “Kutiba” are the same word in writing, but in pronunciations, they are different and denote active “kataba” and passive “kutiba”.

By looking at Figures 1 and 2, it can be seen that male and female students have a similarity in making mistakes in Arabic as a second language. In other words, spelling, syntax: linguistic structures, and syntax represent the highest number of mistakes. This may be associated with the teaching and learning methods followed by teachers and students at schools. On the other hand, a variation exists in making mistakes related to definite/indefinite, prepositions, and male/female nouns. This could be attributed to gender differences in acquiring second languages. Besides, learning and acquiring behaviour and habits followed by each gender could lead to such deviations. Table 1 shows some examples of errors made by Omani female students.

Table 1. Examples of Errors by Omani Female Students

No	Grammatical errors	Examples	incorrect/correct
1	Spelling	المستخدمه المستخدمة	Incorrect Correct
2	Syntax: Linguistic Structures	أمتلك العديد من المهارات وأبرزها أمتلك العديد من المهارات أبرزها	Incorrect Correct
3	Syntax	سنلاحظ فرق شاسع سنلاحظ فرقا شاسعا	Incorrect Correct
4	Male/Female	الذكاء الاصطناعي أحد اهم التطورات في المجتمع لقدرتها الذكاء الاصطناعي أحد اهم التطورات في المجتمع لقدرته	Incorrect Correct
5	Prepositions	أثناء انتظار طعامنا في أثناء انتظار طعامنا	Incorrect Correct
6	Definite/Indefinite	على مستوى الجامعي على المستوى الجامعي	Incorrect Correct
7	Concord	لما أصبحت التكنولوجيا والذكاء الاصطناعي جزء من حياتنا لما أصبح التكنولوجيا والذكاء الاصطناعي جزءا من حياتنا	Incorrect Correct
8	Pluralisation	المدرء المديرون	Incorrect Correct

Figure 3 below focuses on the types of errors among Omani students. Types of errors according to previous studies include addition, deletion, substitution, misordering, and other errors that do not have a specific classification. As for addition type, students add a linguistic item that is not necessary to the linguistic structure, whereas deletion is exactly the opposite. In substitution, instead of using the correct linguistic structures, students replace them with incorrect ones. As for misordering, the main issue lies in putting some linguistic items in the wrong syntactic positions. However, some errors may exist due to varied types; therefore, they are classified under other types of errors.

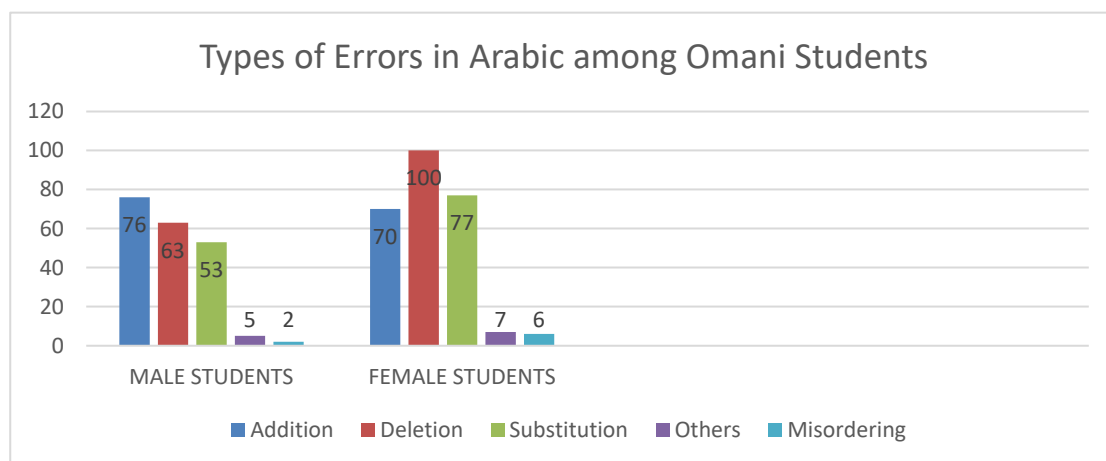


Figure 3. Types of Errors in Arabic by Omani Local Language Speakers

As Figure 3 shows, a difference exists between male and female students in terms of types of errors. On one hand, addition is the major type of error for male students, followed by deletion and substitution. On the other hand, deletion forms the main type of error for female students, followed by substitution, and then addition. This difference could be attributed to the varied strategies in acquiring the Arabic language followed by male and female Omani students in the Sultanate of Oman. Another factor for this variation could be associated with the possible influence of the first language, since Oman has a rich linguistic background represented by several local languages spoken by Omani people in different regions. The similarities or differences between these local languages and the Arabic language may result in either more mistakes or easier acquisition of the second language. At the same time, a similarity exists between male and female students, whereby both misordering and other types of errors represent the lowest types of errors among Omani male and female students. Table 2 shows some examples of the types of errors by male and female Omani students.

Table 2. Examples of Types of Errors Among Omani Students

No	Source of errors	Examples	incorrect/correct
1	Addition	يشغل مساحة وذلك لما له يشغل مساحة لما له	Incorrect Correct
2	Deletion	رقم المدني الرقم المدني	Incorrect Correct
3	substitution	أصبح عائق أصبح عائقا	Incorrect Correct
4	misordering	أيضا يستطيع الطالب ويستطيع الطالب أيضا	Incorrect Correct

These subsections explain types of errors based on the possible influence of L1 of Omani students on writing in Standard Arabic as a second language.

3.2 Errors based on L1 Omani Local Languages

Based on Table 3, it seems that spelling has the highest number of errors due to the possible variations and differences between Arabic and Omani local languages. Syntax errors: linguistic structures occupied the second category in terms of frequency by speakers of local Omani languages, and this category is followed by syntax in general. These three categories represent the highest frequencies of errors among all speakers of the three Omani local languages. In the fourth rank are semantics and definite/indefinite use based on the Jebbali/Shehri local language. In contrast, semantics used by male/female come in the fourth and fifth ranks, respectively. This shows the variations in making errors based on the speakers of each of the Omani local languages.

Table 3. Effect of Omani Local Languages on Grammatical Errors of Omani Students

Local Omani Languages	No. of students	Tra/intra	Male/female	Definite/indefinite	spelling	semantics	concord	Syntax: tenses	syntax	Morphology:	Syntax: linguistic structures	prepositions	pluralization
Jebbali/Shehri	11	0	10	12	145	12	1	0	24	0	43	11	1
Dhofari	8	0	7	5	104	9	0	0	17	0	30	6	2
Hadari Arabic													
Dhofari Bedoui	1	0	1	0	8	0	0	0	2	1	3	0	0

As Table 3 and Figure 4 illustrate, Omani students whose mother tongue is Shehri/Jibbali have the highest number of mistakes in all errors and types of errors excluding pluralization as an error and addition as a type of errors. This could be linked to the possible differences between Jebbali/Shehri as an Omani local language and the Arabic language, thus resulting in an L1 negative transfer. The highest number of errors was found in pluralization as a

grammatical error and addition as a source of errors among students whose mother tongue is Dhofari Hadari Arabic. In contrast, other categories and types of errors came next following the Jebbali/Shehri Omani local language.

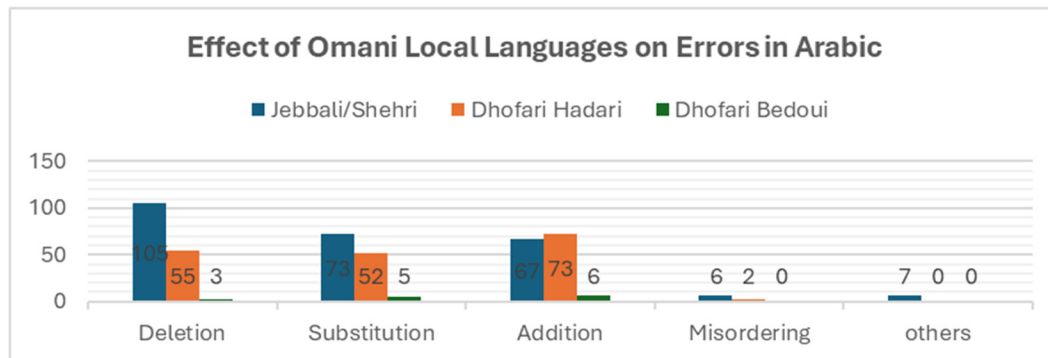


Figure 4. Effect of Omani Local Languages on Types of Errors

4. Discussion

This qualitative study focused on analysing errors made by Omani students in writing in Arabic as a second language. 20 Omani students were included in this study: 10 male and 10 female students studying at one of the public universities in Oman. A modified taxonomy developed by Jomaa and Derşevi (2022) based on James (1998) and Corder (1967) was utilised in this study to present comprehensive analyses of all errors and types of errors made by Omani students in writing in Arabic as a second language. Two important factors, namely L1 represented by Omani local languages and gender, were considered to justify the possible similarities and/or differences in errors and types of errors among the students.

Concerning gender, overall, a similarity existed among male and female Omani studies, particularly in making the highest mistakes in three linguistic aspects, specifically spelling, syntax: linguistic structures, and syntax. This similarity between male and female students is in line with the results related to Turkish students who learn English as a second language, whereby concord (subject-verb agreement) was found to be at the top of errors (Jomaa & Derşevi, 2022). The results of this study partially agree with Hyde's (2005) gender similarities hypothesis (GSH). However, variations existed in other linguistic aspects, such as male/female nouns, definite/indefinite, semantics, and prepositions. These conflicting results show that gender is a significant factor when studying cases associated with language learning. The variation and differences between male and female students were also proved by exploring types of errors. In other words, the main type of error in the writings of Omani male students is addition, followed by deletion, and then substitution, whereas the main type of error in female students' writing is deletion, followed by substitution, and then addition. This variation also existed among Turkish students who learned Arabic as a second language. For instance, replacing vowels by other letters in writing and committing mistakes in definite/indefinite use formed the top errors for Turkish male students, whereas semantics and replacing consonants by other letters were found to be the highest errors among Turkish female students (Jomaa & Derşevi, 2022).

Concerning the effect of L1 represented by Omani local languages on writing in Arabic, a clear variation existed, whereby students whose mother tongue is Jebbali/Shehri made higher mistakes in writing compared with other students whose mother tongue is Dhofari Hadari Arabic and Dhofari Bedoui. This result confirms the proposals initiated by previous studies, whereby languages that are similar lead to positive transfer, whereas languages that vary lead to negative transfer.

A person's first language (L1) can significantly influence the second language (L2) in various ways, including both learning and usage. For instance, elements of the first language, such as syntax, phonology, and morphology, often transfer to the second language. This can lead to both positive and negative transfer. The grammatical rules of L1 often shape how learners apply rules in L2. For example, learners might incorrectly apply L1 grammar rules to L2, such as using the wrong tense, syntax, or prepositions. The strategies and habits developed while acquiring L1 can influence L2 acquisition. If L1 acquisition involved rote memorization, a learner might apply similar strategies to L2, thereby potentially affecting the overall language learning approach. L1 carries cultural nuances and perspectives that can affect how learners approach and understand L2. In other words, cultural norms and idiomatic expressions in L1 might influence how learners interpret and use language in L2. Further, the cognitive strategies used in L1 can

influence how learners process and produce L2. Understanding these influences can help educators design more effective language learning strategies and support learners in overcoming challenges related to their first language.

Pedagogically, errors are significant for three reasons, according to Corder (1967). First, teachers find errors effective and helpful as they provide insights into the student's proficiency in the target language, their areas of weakness, and the language they still need to learn. Second, these mistakes provide researchers with insights into the language learning process and the strategies used by SL/FL learners. Third, since mistakes are regarded as helpful markers of learning progress, they are crucial for SL/FL learners. In this regard, Hourani (2008) asserts that to comprehend how grammar is utilised or misused, it is critical to understand how it is applied. Moreover, according to Dulay (1982), mistakes made by SL/FL learners can reveal important details regarding the methods they employ to pick up a new language. Therefore, making mistakes when learning a new language is essential. Further, the results may have practical implications for teaching and studying English at universities.

5. Conclusions

The findings of this study can inform teachers on the nature of errors made by Omani students, thus enabling them to devise appropriate intervention strategies to address the problem and improve their writing skills in Arabic. Besides, the findings have important implications for Arabic teaching and learning, highlighting the need for language educators to dedicate time and effort towards improving Omani students' writing skills and language proficiency. Finding grammatical mistakes in languages also offers several key benefits. First, it enhances communication. In other words, giving feedback on grammatical errors contributes to the clarity and readability of messages. This minimizes misconceptions and misinterpretations and is essential in both verbal and written communication. Second, it improves learning Arabic as a second language since identifying and correcting mistakes makes it easier for Omani students to comprehend and assimilate grammar principles. This strengthens their command of the Arabic language and raises their level of competency. Third, using correct grammar in professional contexts is frequently linked to attention to detail and authenticity. Fourth, identifying mistakes in Arabic aids in the continuous development of the Arabic language by enabling linguists and educators to comprehend frequent problems and create more effective teaching strategies and materials. Additionally, identifying and correcting errors requires the application of critical thinking and problem-solving techniques. It encourages meticulous examination and focus on details, which are advantageous in a variety of cognitive tasks. Furthermore, being aware of such errors aids in Omani students' avoidance in the future. Through the identification of error patterns, students can enhance their language proficiency and prevent themselves from making the same mistakes repeatedly. Culturally, grammatical errors can occasionally result in cultural misunderstandings in bilingual settings. Correcting these errors promotes improved respect and communication across cultural boundaries. In general, identifying and correcting grammatical errors is critical to successful professional communication, language acquisition, and learning. Despite the possible effectiveness of these results, this study is limited to only 20 Omani students: 10 male students and 10 female students who acquire Arabic as a second language after acquiring their Omani local languages as their mother tongue. Therefore, future research should involve speakers of other Omani local languages to present further details on how L1 affects L2 in varied contexts. Further, other studies could explore the metacognitive awareness of Arabic language learners in different contexts and populations and investigate the relationship between metacognitive awareness and language learning achievement.

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Acknowledgments

Not applicable

Authors contributions

All authors made an equal contribution to the development and planning of the study.

Funding

Not applicable

Competing interests

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

Informed consent

Obtained.

Ethics approval

The Publication Ethics Committee of the Sciedu Press.

The journal's policies adhere to the Core Practices established by the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE).

Provenance and peer review

Not commissioned; externally double-blind peer reviewed.

Data availability statement

The data that support the findings of this study are available on request from the corresponding author. The data are not publicly available due to privacy or ethical restrictions.

Data sharing statement

No additional data are available.

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