



## Investigating Morphological Errors in Iraqi EFL University Students' Written Performance

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### Abstract

This study is dedicated to investigate and detect the frequency and nature of morphological errors in the writing of EFL students at Iraqi universities. By analyzing data from 100 participants, 66 morphological errors have been identified. It has been found that the most common issues involved the omission of plural markers and the verb inflections. These findings emphasize significant gaps in students' understanding and application of grammatical rules of word formation and agreement. The current study draws attention to the need for targeted grammar instruction,

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enhanced practice exercises, and effective feedback procedures to improve the morphological accuracy. Thus, It is suggested that curricular developers need to focus on the integration of these elements into EFL education to enhance writing proficiency and clarity. The current research contributes to the field of EFL education in Iraq by providing practical insights and recommendations for improving language instruction and student achievements.

**Keywords:** The Morphological Errors, EFL in Iraqi Universities, Grammar, Inflection, Derivation, Word Formation, Plural Markers, Writing Accuracy.

## التحقيق في الأخطاء الصرفية في الأداء الكتابي لطلاب اللغة الإنكليزية كلغة أجنبية في الجامعات العراقية

### ملخص البحث:

تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى التحقيق واكتشاف تكرار وطبيعة الأخطاء الصرفية في كتابة طلاب اللغة الإنكليزية كلغة أجنبية في الجامعات العراقية. من خلال تحليل البيانات من 100 مشارك، حددت الدراسة 66 خطأ صرفياً. ووجدت الدراسة أن المشاكل الأكثر شيوعاً تتعلق بحذف علامات الجمع وتصريف الأفعال. تؤكد هذه النتائج على وجود فجوات كبيرة في فهم الطلاب وتطبيقهم للقواعد النحوية لتكوين الكلمات والاتفاق. تسلط الدراسة الضوء على الحاجة إلى تعليم موجه للقواعد، وتعزيز التمارين العملية، وإجراءات التغذية الراجعة الفعالة لتحسين الدقة الصرفية. كما يُقترح أن يركز مطورو المناهج على دمج هذه العناصر في تعليم اللغة الإنكليزية كلغة أجنبية لتحسين مهارات الكتابة والوضوح. تساهم هذه الدراسة في مجال تعليم اللغة الإنكليزية كلغة أجنبية في العراق من خلال تقديم رؤى عملية وتوصيات لتحسين تعليم اللغة وإنجازات الطلاب.

**الكلمات المفتاحية:** الأخطاء الصرفية، اللغة الإنكليزية كلغة أجنبية في الجامعات العراقية، القواعد النحوية، التصريف، الاشتقاق، تكوين الكلمات، علامات الجمع، دقة الكتابة.

## **1. Introduction**

### **1.1 Background and Significance**

The English language proficiency is one of the most significant areas of interest in both linguistics and applied linguistics. Most researchers and educators in these fields have extensively studied the acquisition, the teaching, and the assessment of English language skills in order to improve various methodologies and understand the underlying processes that are involved in learning English as a second or foreign language. One of the most important areas of interest in both linguistics and applied linguistics is the area related to writing skills. Writing proficiency is, thus, critical for effective communication, academic success, and professional development. Many researchers focus on understanding the processes that are involved in writing, developing effective teaching methodologies, and creating assessment tools that serve to evaluate writing skills. This area includes many various aspects, including grammar, coherence, cohesion, style, and also the ability to adapt writing for different purposes and audiences. A crucial method for better understanding and improving writing skills is through the process of error analysis. Error analysis includes systematically examining errors made by learners to identify the patterns and the underlying issues in their writing. By means of analyzing these errors, educators and researchers can gain insights into the common difficulties which are faced by learners, the interlanguage development process, and the influence of native language structures on second language writing. This process can then be used to inform teaching strategies and develop targeted instructional materials, and provide focused feedback to help learners

improve their writing skills. Furthermore, EFL (English as a Foreign Language) students often encounter several challenges when they are on the way to mastering English morphology, which can significantly impact their written performance. Morphological errors can obscure meaning and reduce the clarity of written communication, making it difficult for readers to understand the intended message. In academic and professional settings, morphological errors can of course negatively impact the perceived credibility and professionalism of the writer's work especially if the writer is studying EFL to become a teacher of this language. Therefore, this study is dedicated to shed light on the morphological errors that impact the quality of written texts of Iraqi EFL university students.

## **1.2 Value of the Study**

Understanding and addressing morphological errors can help improve overall language proficiency. By identifying specific areas where students struggle, educators can tailor their instruction to target these weaknesses, thereby enhancing students' command of English morphology. According to Corder (1982), students' errors are significant in three ways; for the teacher to better understand how far the learner has gone, for the researcher as evidence of how language is learned and acquired and thirdly for the learner as a device that facilitates his learning (p. 10-11). Furthermore, by investigating these errors, educators can help students produce more accurate and understandable written texts, which is crucial for effective communication in both academic and professional settings. In addition to that, For EFL students, mastery of English morphology is

often necessary for success in academic writing. Morphological accuracy is linked to the ability to construct coherent and well-structured essays, reports, and research papers. Investigating and addressing morphological errors can therefore help supporting students' academic performance and achievement. Furthermore, analyzing morphological errors allows educators to provide and implement more precise and also effective feedback. Moreover, knowing the common errors students make can aid teachers to design targeted correction strategies and exercises that address these specific issues resulting into facilitating more effective learning and improvement.

### **1.3 Objectives of the Study**

This research aims to:

#### **1. Identify Common Morphological Errors:**

This objective is meant to systematically identify and classify the types of morphological errors that are most frequently committed by Iraqi EFL students in their written performance. It includes errors related to verb tense, word forms (e.g., pluralization) and some other errors related to word formation processes.

#### **2. Analyze Frequency and Patterns:**

The research also aims to identify any recurring patterns or trends in the examples of errors that are observed.

#### **3. Describe the Nature of Morphological Errors:**

The research at hand also aims to conduct a qualitative analysis to describe the nature of the morphological errors in details. This objective involves discussing the types of errors and any recurring themes or patterns that come from the students' written work.

#### 4. Provide Insights for Instructional Strategies:

The current research also aims to provide some insights into the implications of these morphological errors for EFL instruction in Iraqi universities.

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1 Overview of Research

A number of studies have been conducted to identify, analyze and discuss morphological errors in written texts in various places and across different populations. Many of these studies have analyzed the frequency of different morphological errors, revealing that certain errors are more prevalent than others. For example, verb tense errors and noun pluralization errors are frequently observed in EFL writing. The patterns in the errors often correlated with the students' native language interference and the complexity of English morphological rules.

Ramadan (2015) conducted a study to identify, classify, describe and find out the causes of the morphological errors made by the fourth-year university students studying in the English department in Jordan. After analyzing the errors in students' essays, his study showed that the students' competence in English morphology was poor and that the errors were caused as a result of some factors such as the inconsistency in English, misapplication of rules, overgeneralization and interference.

Yakub and Hossain (2018) sought to analyze morphological errors by conducting a study on 50 tertiary level students who study at University of Business, Agriculture and Technology. Following Corder's (1974) model, it has been observed that learners have made 1452 morphological

errors, which include omissions, additions, misinformation, and disordering. These errors are primarily attributed to both Interlingual and Intralingual factors.

Adha and Dania (2021) implemented a study which aimed to identify morphological errors related to word formation in essays written by students. The study focused on derivation and inflection as the types of word formation observed in the students' writing. Using a descriptive qualitative approach, the research involved 23 fourth-semester students from the English Department at Universitas Putra Indonesia. Data were collected through a writing test. The findings revealed that students made morphological errors in both derivation and inflection; there were 10 errors in derivation and 83 errors in inflection.

## **2.2 Theoretical Framework**

### **Morphology**

Morphology is defined in numerous different ways in theoretical frameworks. Huddleston and Pullum (2002) indicate that grammar is comprised of two main components: syntax and morphology. Syntax focuses on the ways in which words are combined to form phrases, clauses, and sentences, whereas morphology pertains to the formation of words (p. 10).

Carter and McCarthy (2006) argue that words are fundamental units that bridge the grammar and vocabulary of a language. They possess internal structures that define their grammatical (e.g., plural, past tense) and lexical identities. Grammar is typically divided into syntax, which studies sentence structure, and **morphology**, which examines “the internal structure of words”. Words are

composed of morphemes, the smallest units of meaning, with some words consisting of a single morpheme and others comprising multiple morphemes. However, Quirk, Greenbaum, Leech, and Svartvik (1972) use the term 'grammar' to encompass both syntax and the inflections of morphology. They include both syntax and the inflections because they are essential components of grammatical analysis.

Booij (2007) defines it as a subdiscipline of linguistics that deals with the systematic relationship in form and meaning between words that undergo morphological processes. This definition emphasizes the study of how words are formed and how they relate to one another through the processes of affixation, compounding, and other morphological phenomena. He also suggests that words may have internal constituent structure. For example, the word "walking" can be divided into the constituents "walk" and "-ing." Thus, morphology also addresses the internal constituent structure of words (p. 4).

Crystal (2008) defines morphology as “the branch of grammar which studies the structure or forms of words, primarily through the use of the morpheme construct. It is traditionally distinguished from syntax, which deals with the rules governing the combination of words in sentences. It is generally divided into two fields: the study of inflections (inflectional morphology) and of word-formation (lexical or derivational morphology)” (p. 314).

It is worth referring here to the interaction between syntax and morphology. Katamba (1993) best describes it as a dependency relationship in that the form of a word can be



influenced by the syntactic construction in which it is used. For example, the verb "walk" has several forms, such as "walk," "walks," and "walked." The choice of a specific form of this verb in a given context depends on the syntactic structure in which it is used (p. 13).

### **Word-Formation Processes**

Word formation is the basic area of investigation in morphology and it is defined by Crystal (2008) as “the term refers to the whole process of morphological variation in the constitution of words, i.e. including the two main divisions of inflection (word variations signalling grammatical relationships) and derivation (word variations signalling lexical relationships)” (p. 523).

Word formation is the process by which new words are created or existing words are modified in a language. Katamba (1993) states that affix morphemes can be categorized into two primary functional types: derivational morphemes and inflectional morphemes. This categorization acknowledges the two main word-building processes: derivation and inflection. Inflectional and derivational morphemes form words in different ways. Derivational morphemes create new words either by altering the meaning of the base, such as "*kind*" versus "*unkind*" and "*obey*" versus "*disobey*" (where the meanings are opposite), or by changing the word class of the base, as in adding "*-ly*" to the adjectives "*kind*" and "*simple*" to form the adverbs "*kindly*" and "*simply*." Generally, an adverb can be derived by adding the suffix "*-ly*" to an adjectival base (p. 47).

Booij (2005) elucidates the difference between inflection and derivation in morphology. Inflection generates various

forms of the same lexeme, whereas derivation produces new lexemes. Although this distinction is generally functional, it is not always distinct. Inflection is usually syntactically relevant, mandatory, and organized into paradigms. In contrast, derivation can alter a word's syntactic category and is optional (pp. 114-115).

### **Error Analysis**

Corder's (1982) indicates that error analysis is seen as a branch of applied linguistics that serves both theoretical and practical functions. Theoretically, it involves investigating the language learning process by describing a learner's knowledge of the target language at various stages of their learning journey and relating this to the instruction they have received. Practically, error analysis guides the remedial actions needed to address and correct errors, thereby improving the learning outcomes for both learners and teachers (p. 45). Furthermore, Brown (2001) claims that "many student errors in speech and writing performance are grammatical". In his later work, Brown (2007) points out to the significance of error analysis by highlighting the fact that "learners do make errors. These errors can be observed, analyzed, and classified or reveal something of the system operating within the learner" (p. 259). He also asserts that the initial stage in the analysis process involves pinpointing and description the errors (p. 260).

## **3. Methodology**

### **3.1 Research Design**

This study employs a mixed-method approach, integrating quantitative and qualitative analyses to investigate morphological errors in the written performance of Iraqi

EFL learners. Quantitative analysis involves the systematic identification and statistical quantification of morphological errors within a corpus of student writings, aiming to determine the most frequent error types. Additionally, qualitative analysis will be conducted to provide a detailed description of these errors, examining their characteristics and contextual nuances. The objective is to comprehensively characterize the nature of morphological errors and identify prevalent patterns to enhance understanding and inform targeted pedagogical interventions.

The data to be analyzed consists of assignment papers collected from second-year students in the Department of English, College of Education, University of Mosul. A total of 100 papers were gathered, comprising essays on a limited selection of topics, primarily focusing on food preparation, football, vacations, and travel. The majority of students opted to write about the preparation of various dishes. The essays were collected as part of a regular coursework assignment, and the topics were chosen to reflect students' interests and writing abilities within the scope of their studies.

### **3.2 Research Questions**

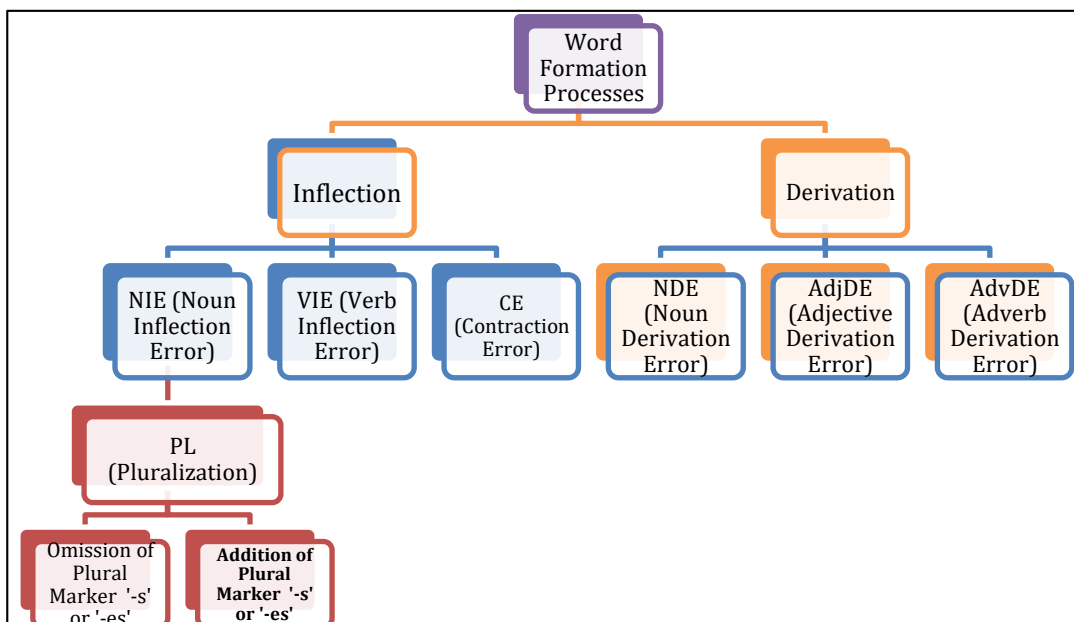
The following questions guide the focus and analysis of the research:

1. What are the most common types of morphological errors made by Iraqi EFL university students in their written performance?
2. What patterns and trends can be observed in the morphological errors made by these students?

3. What insights can be drawn from the qualitative analysis of the morphological errors regarding their nature and characteristics?

### 3.3 Data Analysis

The collected data will be quantitatively analyzed to statistically determine the total number of morphological errors identified in the participants' essays. The quantitative analysis will also reveal the most frequently committed and recurrent types of these errors. The adopted framework will be based on the principal word formation processes: inflection and derivation. Each of these processes contributes to the formation of various word forms that are governed by syntactic structures and contexts. Errors are recognized as such when these word forms do not conform to the expected syntactic and morphological rules. The following morphological error classification diagram illustrates this framework:



The codes in the diagram will be used to code the errors in the process of analysis.

The qualitative analysis that will be conducted in present research will shed light on the nature of these morphological errors. It aims to offer a detailed understanding of their characteristics and relevant contexts. This analysis will provide insights into the complexities of morphological learning for EFL students by examining the specific instances and variations of errors. Additionally, the qualitative findings will be instrumental and fruitful in developing pedagogical implications, helping educators design targeted strategies to address these errors effectively. Furthermore, it will provide some theoretical support that strengthen our understanding of morphological error patterns in foreign language acquisition.

#### **4. Results and Discussion**

This section of the research presents the quantitative analysis and statistics of the morphological errors that were identified in the written performance of Iraqi EFL university students. The data were collected from a sample of 100 student essays and were analyzed to identify the types, frequencies, and patterns of morphological errors.

The analysis of the data reveals the identification of 66 morphological errors across the 100 essays. The errors were categorized and classified into 7 distinct types, including pluralization errors (PL); omission and addition of plural ‘-s/-es’, verb inflection errors (VIE), contraction errors (CE), noun derivation errors (NDE), adjective derivation errors (AdjDE) and adverb derivation errors (AdvDE).

The table below presents the frequency of each type of morphological error

Error Type		Frequency	Percentage
Pluralization errors (PL)	Omission of plural marker ‘-s’ or ‘-es’	35	53.03%
	Addition of plural marker ‘-s’ or ‘-es’	6	9.09%
Verb inflection errors (VIE)		9	13.64%
Contraction errors (CE)		3	4.55%
Noun derivation errors (NDE)		9	13.64%
Adjective derivation error (AdjDE)		1	1.52%
Adverb derivation error (AdvDE).		3	4.55%
<b>Total number of errors</b>		66	
Total number of participants		100	
Number of participants who made errors		40	40%
Number of participants who did not make errors		60	60%

The percentages above show the distribution of each type of morphological error relative to the total number of errors observed. The quantitative analysis of the morphological errors made by Iraqi EFL university students in their written performance revealed the following key findings:

### 1. Distribution of Morphological Errors:

- The most common type of error was the omission of the plural marker ‘-s’ or ‘-es’, accounting for 53.03% of all errors.

- Verb inflection errors (VIE) and noun derivation errors (NDE) were also prevalent, each constituting 13.64% of the total errors.
- Addition of the plural marker ‘-s’ or ‘-es’ made up 9.09% of the errors.
- Contraction errors (CE) and adverb derivation errors (AdvDE) were each responsible for 4.55% of the errors.
- Adjective derivation errors (AdjDE) were the least common, accounting for 1.52% of the errors.

## 2. Frequency of Errors:

- The total number of morphological errors identified was 66.
- Errors related to pluralization (both omission and addition of plural markers) were the most frequent, comprising 62.12% of the total errors.

The data indicate that the most common types of morphological errors are those related to pluralization, specifically the omission of plural markers (‘-s’ or ‘-es’), which alone accounted for over half of the errors observed. This suggests a significant challenge for students in correctly applying pluralization rules. Verb inflection and noun derivation errors are also common, indicating difficulties with verb tense forms and the use of derivational morphemes. The relatively lower frequencies of contraction and derivation errors in adjectives and adverbs suggest that these areas, while problematic, are less frequently encountered than pluralization and verb inflection issues.

It can be seen that out of the 100 participants, 40 students have committed morphological errors in their written performance, while 60 did not produce errors. This finding

indicates that a significant portion of the students struggles with morphological aspects of English and, by looking at the table, we can see that the students particularly struggled with issues such as pluralization and verb inflection. Nevertheless, the fact that 60% of the participants did not produce errors suggests that the majority have a good grasp of these morphological rules. In conclusion, the findings highlight the variability in proficiency levels among the students, pointing to the need for targeted strategies and programs to support those who are facing any difficulties related to morphology.

### 5. Discussion

Section 5 in this research is devoted to presenting the error samples along with their corrections. Furthermore, it provides illustrations to shed light on the nature and characteristics of these errors in their contextual occurrences. The investigation aims to offer insights on the specific types of morphological errors made by Iraqi EFL university students and the contexts in which they occur. The erroneous forms will be highlighted using bold text style in the examples.

Participant 1		
Error Eexample	Correct Form	Error Category
“It <b>save</b> a lot of time”	saves	VIE
“It makes people <b>thirstly</b> ”	thirsty	AdjDE

The first detected error shown above in the table shows that the student failed to adhere to subject-verb agreement. This failure resulted in the erroneous form ‘*it save*’ instead of the correct one ‘*it saves.*’



In the next instance “*It makes people **thirstly***”, the student incorrectly derived the adjective ‘*thirsty*’ from the noun ‘*thirst*’. The correct transformation should have involved adding the suffix ‘-y’ to form the adjective, which means ‘having a need to drink.’ However, the student seems to have mistakenly applied a rule more appropriate for generating adverbs and therefore produced the incorrect form ‘*thirstly*.’

Participant 2		
Error Eexample	Correct Form	Error Category
“... the food that <b>originate</b> in the ...”	originates	VIE

Participant 3		
Error Eexample	Correct Form	Error Category
“six <b>cup</b> of water”	cups	PL (Omission)
“two <b>tablespoon</b> of oil”	tablespoons	PL (Omission)
“prepare the sauce by <b>heat</b> the oil”	heating	VIE
“till <b>become</b> soft”	becomes	VIE

The aforementioned example, given by participant (3), shows that the student wrote “*prepare the sauce by **heat** the oil,*” which reveals an incorrect verb form usage. The correct form is expected to be “*prepare the sauce by **heating** the oil,*” adhering to the rule that after a preposition like ‘*by*’, the gerund form of the verb is required. Whereas the student has obviously incorrectly used the base form ‘*heat*’ instead of

the gerund form ‘*heating.*’ As a result, this error proves a common issue with verb forms following prepositions. Thus, this indicates a need for further instruction on the use of gerunds in English.

Participant 4		
Error Example	Correct Form	Error Category
“consists of 11 players in <b>additional</b> to...”	addition	NDE
“... young people and even <b>adult</b> ”	adults	PL (Omission)
“... they <b>offers</b> serve food...”	offer	VIE

The example above, given by student (4), shows that participant (4) wrote “*consists of 11 players in additional to...*”. The given sentence demonstrates misuse of the phrase ‘*in additional to.*’ Whereas, the correct phrase ought to be “*consists of 11 players in addition to...*,” in order to indicate something extra or supplementary. Clearly, the participant has erroneously used ‘*additional,*’ an adjective, instead of the noun ‘*addition.*’ In conclusion, this error highlights a common difficulty with the correct use of fixed phrases and prepositions and this fact leads to a need for further instruction on fixed expressions and proper word forms in English.

Participant 5		
Error Example	Correct Form	Error Category
“After that, <b>its</b> the time to put...”	It’s	CE

Participant 5 wrote “After that, *its* the time to put...” The student is using ‘*its*’ instead of ‘*it’s*’ in a context where ‘*it’s*’ is the correct choice. This type of error is called Contraction Error and coded as (CE) and it is relevant to morphological errors. This erroneous form involves the incorrect use of a contraction versus a possessive pronoun and highlights a struggle in contraction and abbreviation.

Participant 6		
Error Example	Correct Form	Error Category
“...in <b>additional</b> to the team...”	addition	NDE

Participant 7		
Error Example	Correct Form	Error Category
“... put some <b>slice</b> of peroni meat...”	slices	PL (Omission)

Participant 8		
Error Example	Correct Form	Error Category
“six <b>cup</b> of water”	Cups	PL (Omission)
“Two <b>tablespoon</b> cumin seed”	tablespoons	PL (Omission)
“Two <b>tablespoon</b> of oil”	tablespoons	PL (Omission)

Participant 9		
Error Example	Correct Form	Error Category
“cut small the fruits. You should cut into small <b>part</b> ...”	parts	PL (Omission)

In the example given by participant (9), an error was found in the student's writing “*cut small the fruits. You should cut into small **part**...*” The erroneous form ‘*part*’ demonstrates a misuse of noun form in pluralization (PL) and affects cohesion across sentences. As long as the student has mentioned ‘*fruits*’ earlier in the previous sentence, which is plural, the noun ‘*part*’ is expected to be in its plural form ‘*parts*’ in order to maintain anaphoric relationship, grammatical consistency and cohesion. Therefore, the correct is “*You should cut into small **parts**.*” This error illustrates the importance of maintaining agreement between words in cross-sentence and anaphoric contexts to ensure cohesion in writing. Moreover, the detection of this error indicates a need for further instruction on the proper use of word forms in English in inter-sentential contexts and the importance of cohesive links between sentences.

Participant 10		
Error Example	Correct Form	Error Category
“... someone resilient, determined and <b>constanty</b> striving...”	constantly	AdvDE

The table above presents the morphological error committed by participant 10. The student has written “*someone resilient, determined and **constanty** striving.*” It shows a misspelling and an incorrect morphological transformation.

The erroneous word “*constanty*” should be replaced by “*constantly*” which is an adverb that is formed from the adjective “*constant.*” This detected error disrupts the sentence’s grammatical accuracy and fluency. This analysis underscores a need for reinforcing rules on forming adverbs from adjectives and ensuring proper spelling in order to enhance the clarity and correctness of student writing.

Participant 11		
Error Example	Correct Form	Error Category
“... It’s made up by different <b>way</b> . But my favourite one is the one with cheese...”	ways	PL (Omission)

Participant 12		
Error Example	Correct Form	Error Category
“ 2 <b>cup</b> of flour”	cups	PL (Omission)

Participant 13		
Error Example	Correct Form	Error Category
“... and can <b>reflecting</b> the vast spectrum...”	reflect	VIE
“spicies”	spices	NDE

The example above indicates that the student has produced the phrase “... and can **reflecting** the vast spectrum...”. This example demonstrates a misuse of the modal verb ‘can’

followed by an incorrect verb form ‘*reflecting.*’ The correct statement would be “... *and can reflect the vast spectrum...*,” complying with the rule that after a modal verb, the base form of the verb is used. Nevertheless, the student seems to have mistakenly used the present participle ‘*reflecting*’ instead of the base form ‘*reflect.*’

The other erroneous form involves incorrect derivation of the noun ‘*spices*’ which is the intended form. The erroneous form ‘*spicies*’ introduce an unnecessary and incorrect ‘-ies’ ending which is typically used to pluralize nouns ending in ‘y’ (e.g., ‘*city*’ becomes ‘*cities.*’ This error apparently stems from a misunderstanding of the stem word ‘*spicy*’ instead of ‘*spice.*’ Therefore, the student might have incorrectly pluralized ‘*spicy*’ as ‘*spicies.*’

Participant 14		
Error Example	Correct Form	Error Category
“... this stage <b>including</b> ...”	includes	VIE
“... including booking flights, <b>accommodative</b> and ...”	accommodation	NDE

In the above detected error, the student wrote “... *this stage including* ...,” which demonstrates a misuse of verb forms in a clause. The correct form had to be “... *this stage includes* ...,” conforming to the rule that states that the verb should be in its proper form to agree with the subject ‘*this stage*’ rather than a participle form which could either be used in a present continuous tense or past continuous. Since there is no clue that it is past or present continuous; there is not any form verb ‘to be’ preceding ‘*including*’ and since the context calls for a present simple tense, then the correct form is ought to

be ‘*includes*’. The student has wrongly used the present participle ‘*including*’ instead of the simple present form ‘*includes*.’ This error highlights a common issue with subject-verb agreement and the appropriate use of verb forms, indicating a need for further instruction on constructing grammatically correct clauses in English.

The next instance shows the other detected error where the student wrote “... *including booking flights, accommodative and ...*,” which demonstrates an incorrect word choice and derivational formation of ‘*accommodation*’ rather than the adjective “*accommodative*.” This detected erroneous form highlights a common issue with word choice and the proper use of nouns and adjectives, indicating a need for further instruction on vocabulary and the correct forms of words in specific contexts.

Participant 15		
Error Example	Correct Form	Error Category
“... put the water in a cooking <b>pots</b> ”	pot	PL (addition)
“... on the water which <b>it’s</b> temp is ...”	its	CE
“... and wait 30 <b>minute</b> ”	minutes	PL (Omission)

In the table above, 3 types of errors can be detected where the student wrote “*put the water in a cooking pots*,” which shows misuse of the noun form ‘*pots*’, affecting the grammatical agreement and specificity. The noun “*pots*” is meant to be singular to match the article ‘*a*’. Therefore, the correct form should be ‘*put the water in a cooking pot*.’ This

first error establishes the need for clarity in the use of singular and plural forms and the correct application of modifiers to ensure grammatical accuracy and coherence in writing. Additionally, it indicates a need for further instruction on the proper use of articles and noun forms.

Participant 16		
Error Example	Correct Form	Error Category
“... for 10 <b>min.</b> ”	mins.	PL (Omission)

Participant 17		
Error Example	Correct Form	Error Category
“ 3 <b>tablespoon</b> of powdered milk”	tablespoons	PL (Omission)

Participant 18		
Error Example	Correct Form	Error Category
“two <b>cup</b> unsweetened cocoa powder”	cups	PL (Omission)
“two <b>teaspoon</b> baking powder”	teaspoons	PL (Omission)
“two <b>teaspoon</b> salt”	teaspoons	PL (Omission)
“Two <b>cup</b> vegetable oil”	cups	PL (Omission)



Participant 19		
Error Example	Correct Form	Error Category
“two <b>tablespoon</b> of vanilla”	tablespoons	PL (Omission)
“Then, we add two <b>tablespoon</b> of vanilla”	tablespoons	PL (Omission)

Participant 20		
Error Example	Correct Form	Error Category
“... have many <b>religious</b> in this country”	religions	NDE

Participant 21		
Error Example	Correct Form	Error Category
“... we visited several <b>place</b> ”	places	PL (Omission)

Participant 22		
Error Example	Correct Form	Error Category
“... prepare the <b>fruit</b> such as ...”	fruits	PL (Omission)
“... papaya and <b>grape</b> ”	grapes	PL (Omission)
“... cut into small <b>part</b> ”	parts	PL (Omission)

Participant 23		
Error Example	Correct Form	Error Category
“... then add the <b>onion</b> ”	onions	PL (Omission)
“two <b>tablespoon</b> of cooking oil”	tablespoons	PL (Omission)
“two <b>onion</b> ”	onions	PL (Omission)

As for participant 23, the error in “... *then add the **onion***” is in his choice of a singular noun ‘*onion*’ instead of the correct plural form ‘*onions*’ because the student has earlier specified in the ingredients section that ‘*two onions*’ will be used, it’s implied, then, that multiple onions will be added, so using the plural form ‘*onions*’ is appropriate.

Participant 24		
Error Example	Correct Form	Error Category
“three <b>tablespoon</b> coca”	tablespoons	PL (Omission)

Participant 25		
Error Example	Correct Form	Error Category
“... in simple way to <b>highlights</b> your features”	highlight	VIE

The analysis of the text produced by participant 25 has shown a verb form error. The verb “*highlights*” should be in its base form “*highlight*” to correctly follow the infinitive

phrase ‘to.’ That is why the correct form is required to be ‘*in a simple way to **highlight** your features.*’ As a result, this error points out the importance of using the correct verb form in infinitive constructions to maintain grammatical accuracy. Besides, it shows a demand for further instruction on verb forms in English syntax.

Participant 26		
Error Example	Correct Form	Error Category
“one <b>cups</b> of milk”	cup	PL (addition)
“one <b>tablespoons</b> of orange juice”	tablespoon	PL (addition)
“half <b>cups</b> vegetable oil”	a cup	PL (addition)

Participant 27		
Error Example	Correct Form	Error Category
“ <b>Firsty</b> , ....”	Firstly	AdvDE

In the previous example, the student wrote “*Firsty, ...*,” which is a misspelling and incorrect word formation of adverb. The correct word was meant to be “*Firstly*,” as it is the proper adverbial form used to introduce the first point in a list or a sequence of instructions. This example signals the need for accurate spelling and word choice in formal writing. What’s more, it suggests the necessity for further instruction on commonly used adverbs and their correct spelling.

Participant 28		
Error Example	Correct Form	Error Category
“... add a small <b>amounted</b> ...”	amount	NDE

Participant 29		
Error Example	Correct Form	Error Category
“cream together 3 <b>cup</b> of ...”	cups	PL (omission)

Participant 30		
Error Example	Correct Form	Error Category
“... never fails to evoke a sense of culinary <b>satisfied</b> and warmth”	satisfaction	NDE

Participant 31		
Error Example	Correct Form	Error Category
“cut the <b>vegetable</b> into slices”	vegetables	PL (Omission)

Participant 32		
Error Example	Correct Form	Error Category
“... the rice and pepper and <b>vegetable</b> together...”	vegetables	PL (Omission)

Participant 33		
Error Example	Correct Form	Error Category
“... I told my family my <b>feel</b> about this experience”	feeling	NDE
“I doing this...”	do	VIE

Participant 34		
Error Example	Correct Form	Error Category
“... wait until <b>its</b> boiling”	it’s	CE

Participant 35		
Error Example	Correct Form	Error Category
“two <b>tablespoon</b> of salt”	tablespoons	PL (Omission)

Participant 36		
Error Example	Correct Form	Error Category
“2 <b>teaspoon</b> olive oil”	teaspoons	PL (Omission)

Participant 37		
Error Example	Correct Form	Error Category
“... put some of <b>slice</b> of peroni meat...”	slices	PL (Omission)

Participant 38		
Error Example	Correct Form	Error Category
“... that requires precision, <b>creativng</b> and...”	creativity	NDE
“... allow the <b>cakes</b> to cool...”	cake	PL (addition)

Participant 39		
Error Example	Correct Form	Error Category
“two <b>tablespoon</b> of butter”	tablespoons	PL (Omission)
“... add one <b>tablespoons</b> of vanilla”	tablespoon	PL (addition)

Participant 40		
Error Example	Correct Form	Error Category
“ <b>secondlly</b> ...”	secondly	AdvDE
“... put some <b>slice</b> of peroni meat”	slices	PL (Omission)

The last detected errors committed by participant (40) show two types of morphological errors. In the first one, the student wrote “*secondlly*...,” instead of ‘secondly’ which reflects a miss-application of the adverb generation rule and overgeneralization. The student is likely to have overgeneralized the rule for forming adverbs by adding “-ly” to words that do not follow this pattern, leading to the incorrect form “*secondlly*” instead of “secondly.” This error highlights the need to teach the specific rules for forming

adverbs, as well as to address overgeneralization of grammatical rules. Likewise, Further instruction on the proper formation of adverbs and recognizing exceptions to general rules may help correct this mistake.

## 6. Implications

The present study has revealed that 40 out of 100 Iraqi university EFL students has committed frequent morphological errors, notably in the omission of plural markers and verb inflections. This observation underlines a need for targeted grammar instruction and curriculum adjustments. Educators are advised to focus on specific morphological rules, while curricular developers need to concentrate on integrating exercises that address these errors. Policymakers are also encouraged to support teacher training and the adoption of effective teaching resources so as to enhance morphological accuracy in EFL education.

## 7. Recommendations

1. **Targeted Instruction in Grammar:** One strategy to consider includes: developing and implementing grammar modules that target placement of the plural marker and verb inflections that commonly appear as errors in English EFL writing. These modules should include a well-structured explanation, examples, and practice activities that are tailored for EFL learners in Iraqi universities.
2. **Enhanced Practice Activities:** Another strategy is to include activities that allow for creating and practicing the formation and usage of nouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs, among other grammatical structures. Activities could be created, such as fill-in-the-blank,

sentence correction, and contextual writing activities, that help students practice using morphological structures correctly.

- 3. Error Analysis and Feedback Mechanisms:** To help students reflect on and gain insight from their errors, one should incorporate periodic error analyses into the classroom. Detailed feedback can be given to students after reviewing their work and their morphological errors. They could receive glaring examples for homework or for review in the classroom via peer review, automated feedback tools, one-on-one meetings, or by sharing concise lessons.
- 4. Promote Proofreading Practices:** Assist students in becoming proficient proofreaders by encouraging them to proofread for morphology errors. Strategies like self-checking, checklists, and peer review can help improve their attention to detail and catch errors through questioning.

## **8. Conclusion**

After analyzing data, it has been found that morphological errors of plural marker and verb inflections are highly prevalent in the writing of EFL students in Iraqi universities. Implications of these findings for EFL instruction are discussed, which means that instructional interventions that focus on teaching particular areas of grammar need to be considered for inclusion in the English language curriculum. This study has implications for English language teachers and EFL curriculum in Iraq, which include that both English language teachers and policymakers should not only work



on their grammatical accuracy but also on the variety of item writings in their English language writing.

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