

A Frequency Analysis of Errors in Written English Tenses by University Yemeni Learners

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1. Abstract

This study analyzes errors of tenses found in 150 learners' final written scripts at the third level in the Department of English, Faculty of Education at Sana'a University. This study aimed to identify, analyze, and determine the frequencies and statistically significant differences of tense categories. It also discusses the most common tenses caused by learners' mother tongue and provides possible explanations through error examples taken from the data. A mixed-method was employed in this study.

The findings of this study revealed the overall frequency of tense errors, 215 errors. There were two main categories, namely ill-formed tense, 36 errors (16.74%), and misuse of tense errors 179 (83.26%). In ill-formed tense errors, there were two types, past participle incorrect, 31 errors (86.11%), and simple past tense incorrect, 5 errors (13.89%). In misuse of tenses, there were five types of misuse of tense errors; simple present tense, 154 errors (86.03%), for simple past tense with 14 errors (7.82%), for the present perfect tense, 6 (3.35%), for present continuous tense, 4 (2.23%) and misuse of other tenses for future tense 0. (56%).

Syntactically, the study showed statistically significant differences in tenses. However, in tense types, P-value varies statistically. Regarding statistically significant differences of tense errors based on gender, this study showed no statistically significant differences. This

study revealed that tenses are still a problematic issue in (EFL) English Foreign Language writing. Undergraduates in Yemen still do not master the English tenses. Thus, it is recommended to teach tenses intensively to enhance the students' linguistic knowledge in tenses.

Keywords: Tense, University, Frequency, EFL (English Foreign Language), EA (Error Analysis)

1.1. Introduction

This study is in the field of Applied Linguistics, from which EA is a branch. Kazemian, B., Jabeen, A., & Mustafai, M. (2015) defined Applied Linguistics as a field attempting to deal with the difficulties related to language learning. It provides an in-depth insight into the understanding of the process of language learning. Regarding EA, James C. (1998) defined EA as "the process of determining the incidence, nature, causes, and consequences of unsuccessful language" (p.1). According to (Richards, J. 1971, 1974; James, C. 1998; Norrish, J. 1983; Ellis, R. 1995; Ziahosseiny, S. 1999; Keshavarz, M. 2003, 2006; Darus, S. 2009), analysis of the error gives a clear insight into the language learning process. Many researchers and linguists have already identified the learners' errors in ELT at a wide length since the 1960s (Corder, S. 1967; Richards, J. 1970; Corder, S. 1981; Dulay, H. Burt, M. & Krashen, S. 1982; Taylor, G. 1986; Ellis, R. 1989).

Such type of analysis was done in other second and foreign English -speaking countries to identify, analyze, and classify specific errors made by English students (Turtulla S. & Lopar, E . 2018). In a study carried out by (Mitra, B. & Omid O. 2017), many researchers mentioned that EA is an analysis of a specific part of the language based on identifying errors and showing their number of frequencies in Writing and other English language skills. All studies mentioned in this study "have targeted patterns in the frequency of errors" (p.104). Like Corder, S. (1967); Norrish, J. (1983, p. 7), defined "an error" as a systemic deviation which occurs when a student has not learned something, and he/she is repeatedly getting it wrong (cited in Sompong, M. 2014, p.114).

This happens with Yemeni university learners when they write in English; they commit errors in tenses and other types of errors. In this study, errors in tenses found in learners' final written exams were analyzed. The significance of this study lies in analyzing the tenses university learners frequently commit in their writings and determining the

obtained results statistically. This study is significant because it discusses the most common errors caused by learners' native language. It also analyzes tense errors based on genders that have not been done before, particularly in Yemen in the same setting and conditions. Achieving these goals will be beneficial for the students, teachers, researchers, policymakers; etc. This study may contribute to learners improving their level of English tenses by realizing their repeated errors. Therefore, they may overcome their challenge. To language teachers, it may contribute to discovering the weakness of their students. Therefore, they can teach their learner what they lack and improve their English writing skills.

This study aims at analyzing errors in tenses found in 150 learners' final written scripts in the Advanced Writing subject in the third level in the Department of English, Faculty of Education at Sana'a University, during three academic years (2015- 2016, 2016-2017, 2017 - 2018). The aims of this study were to determine the frequencies of tenses with reference to their statistically significant differences and based on genders. It also discusses the most common tenses caused by learners' mother tongue and provides possible explanations through error examples taken from the data.

2.1. Literature review of the study

This study is limited to the analysis of tense errors; therefore, the review is about the available literature related reviewed studies in EA that discusses learners' errors in a second or foreign language where tenses were analyzed.

Bustomi, A. (2009) analyzed students' errors in descriptive Writing. In this study, tense verb errors were analyzed, occupying the second common errors found in this study. The main causes of errors were shown due to students' lack of Grammar and generalization. Inter-lingual transfer and other causes were shown in this study. Abeywickrama, R. (2010) carried a study on analyzing the Sinhala university learners' English written errors. The outcomes of this study showed that students' English written errors in Sinhala were mainly due to their native language. AL- Buainain, H. (2011) made a study on "*Researching Types and Causes of Errors in Arabic Speakers' Writings.*" The finding of this study showed that there were many types of errors that learners made in their Writing, including tenses where there was a replacement of one tense for another. Errors of tenses were found as continuous vs. simple present verb tenses, disagreement between subject/verb, omission of the verb to be (omission of third-person singular), and modal auxiliaries. This study revealed two primary sources of interlinguas and intra lingual interferences that the former interferences were due to learners' mother tongue, and the latter interferences were due to the difficulty of the target language (L2). The findings of this study suggested some recommendations for students and teachers. Puspitasari, D. (2013) examined the grammatical writing errors committed by learners in the second semester. The findings of this research showed that the total errors committed in learners' English written essays. This study showed the frequency errors in the

failure to attach –s, wrong attachment –s, the omission of –ed, the substitution of simple non-past. Other errors were in the simple verb used instead of –ing, the substitution of the progressive for the simple past, disagreement of subject and tenses, disagreement of the subject and verb person, etc. For the same students in the same University but in a different academic year, Alfiyani, M. (2013) analyzed grammatical writing errors where a mixed-method was conducted. This study showed four types of errors, omission, misformation, addition, and disordering. Causes were due to developmental, ambiguous, inter lingual, and unique errors. Al-Khairi, M. (2013) studied “*Saudi English-Major Undergraduates’ Academic Writing Problems.*” The study showed that students were weak in their academic writings and committed many error types. It was recommended that teachers needed to pay serious attention to those repeated errors while teaching academic writing at the University. It was also advised that those learners should practice more and write paragraphs and in the form of essays.

Klopfenstein, P. (2017) examined “*Tense and Aspect Constructions among Arabic LI Learners of English*”. This study showed students committed many errors related to tenses. The most errors were in simple present verbs, followed by simple past verbs, present progressive verbs, etc. Al Zoubi, M. (2018) examined “*The Significance of Error Analysis in Written Production.*” It aimed at identifying the significance of EA and the types of errors found in students’ final examinations in the written production. It was shown that identification of errors was significant to shed light on the difficulties encountered by students and help the teachers in providing feedback to their students. Moreover, he described the need for an instant awareness to assist the learners in becoming more proficient with writing skills. Turtulla, S. & Lopar, E. (2018) conducted a study on identifying the frequent EFL errors in Writings of Kosovar Freshmen. This research showed that learners made errors in tenses, including other error types. Prepositions and present simple tense structures were found the most commonly committed errors followed by errors in past simple negative structure and inappropriate use of present simple questions.

Most of these reviewed studies have been done recently, focusing on specific errors, including tenses. However, there is no much attention paid to analyze tenses extensively, statistically having more than one academic year and based on gender as well as addressing learners’ mother tongue interference, especially in Yemen. To analyze tenses statistically, the researcher analyzed data taken from three academic years of third-year university learners’ English written essays.

3.1. Research Questions of the study

- 1) How do often tense errors occur in third university learners' English written essays?

- 2) What are the types of tense categories found in the study?
- 3) Are there statistically significant differences in tense errors and based on gender?
- 4) How does L1 affect the English tenses that occur in third university learners' English written essays?

4.1. Hypotheses of the study

This study assumes no statistically significant differences *in 1- (H_01) tense errors, 2- (H_02), and errors based on gender.*

5.1. Methodology of the study

This section is about the methodology conducted in this study; therefore, how the samples were selected and data analyzed were the subtitles of this section.

- **Samples of the Study**

The samples of this study were 150 English written essays randomly selected from the first semester of third-year Yemeni university level during three academic years in the English Department, Faculty of Education, at Sana'a University. R-software was used for the distribution of samples. These samples used for analysis were selected out of the entire population, 417 scripts (65 males and 352 females). Fifty scripts were selected from males and females, 40 from females, and 10 from males from each academic year. Therefore, there were 150 English written essay samples randomly selected from three academic years.

- **The Procedure of the Study**

As mentioned earlier, the instrument for data collection was final English written essays. A mixed-method was employed in this study, quantitatively to quantify errors and examine their statistically significant differences and qualitatively to discuss errors caused by learners' mother tongue interference. The qualitative research method (the content analysis research method) was employed to discuss errors caused by the interference of learners' native language. In the analysis of data, the researcher followed Ellis, R. (1994)'s stages where there were four consecutive stages, collection of a sample of learner language, identification of errors, description of errors, and explanation of errors. After such data were collected, the required samples for analysis were randomly selected using R software. Then, the researcher first read all the samples, identified errors related to tenses. Finally, the researcher described and explained the errors to determine the frequency for each tense error type. The obtained results of the analysis were analyzed statistically using Excel software and SPSS Statistical Package for the Social Sciences.

6.1. Validity and Reliability of the study

Before analyzing learners' final English written examination, the researchers consulted many experts about the reliability of data. This type of data leads to increasing the validity of this study because learners when they write their exams, they do their best to pass and gain high marks. Therefore, such an instrument was used for analysis to pose the real errors authentically. Another point leads to increasing the validity and reliability of this study was that these data were analyzed with reference to two proposed frameworks (Politzer, R. &Ramires, A. 1973) and (N a-Ngam's 2005) to elaborate key concepts of tense types.

The results obtained were validated in many ways as firstly, the researcher quantified the results many times manually, and then utilized Excel Software and finally SPSS to show the validity and reliability of the selected samples, see tables. 3:1

Table. 3:1) Reliability of the selected samples of the study

Year		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
2016	Valid Male	10	20.0	20.0	20.0
	Female	40	80.0	80.0	100.0
	Total	50	100.0	100.0	
2017	Valid Male	10	20.0	20.0	20.0
	Female	40	80.0	80.0	100.0
	Total	50	100.0	100.0	
2018	Valid Male	10	20.0	20.0	20.0
	Female	40	80.0	80.0	100.0
	Total	50	100.0	100.0	

This table shows the number of samples selected and analyzed based on gender (males and females learners). There were fifty students' written essays selected from each academic year resulting in 150 samples. From each academic year, 10 samples were selected, indicating 20%, and forty samples were selected from females indicating 80%.

7.1. Analysis of data and discussion

This part is to analyze tenses based on their frequency, percentage, and statistically significant difference that have been represented below.

7.1. 1. Frequency analysis of tense errors

This part is to analyze tenses based on their frequency and percentage. Let us start with the frequency of tense errors.

Figure.7: 1.1 The overall Frequency of Errors in Tenses

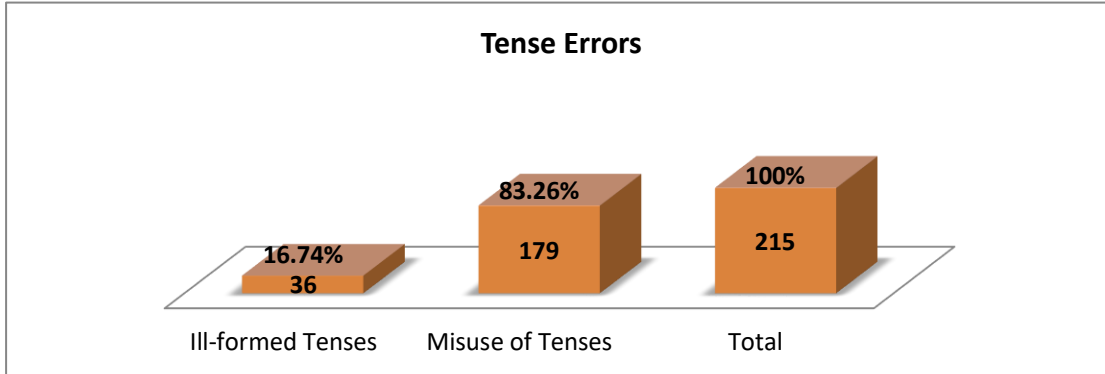
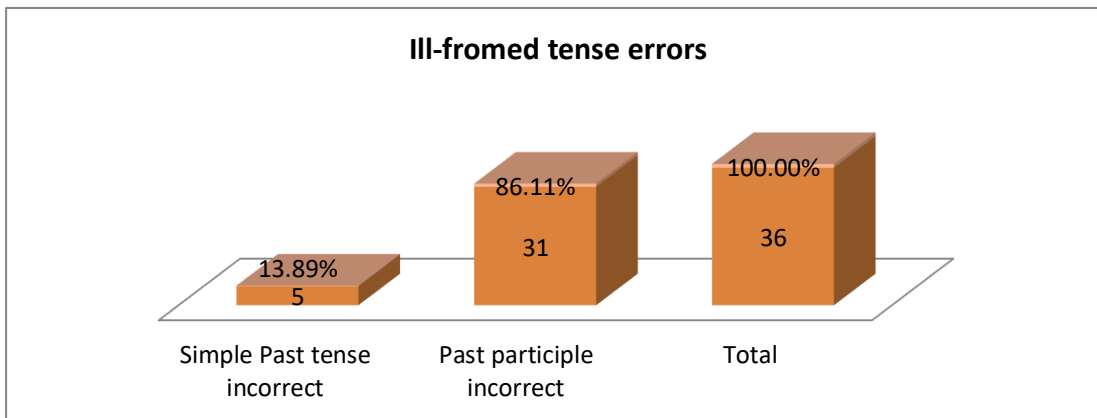


Figure 7: 1 shows the total frequency of tense errors, 215. It also represents the total frequency and the percentage of tense types found in the study based on their high frequency, where ill-formed tense errors were 36 (16.74%) and misuse tense errors were 179 (83.26%).

For more details, see figures 7:2 and 7:3, wherein figure. 7:2, there is the frequency of ill-formed errors, and the frequency of misuse of tenses is shown in figure.7:3.

Figure .7: 2 The overall Frequency of Ill- Formed Tense Errors



In figure. 7:2 shows the overall frequency of ill-formed tense errors, 36 where there are two types of ill-formed tense errors Simple Past tense incorrect, 5 errors (13.89%) occupied the second high of frequency of errors and Past participle incorrect, 31 errors (86.11%) which occupied the highest frequency of errors.

Figure.7: 3 The overall Frequency of Misuse of Tense Errors

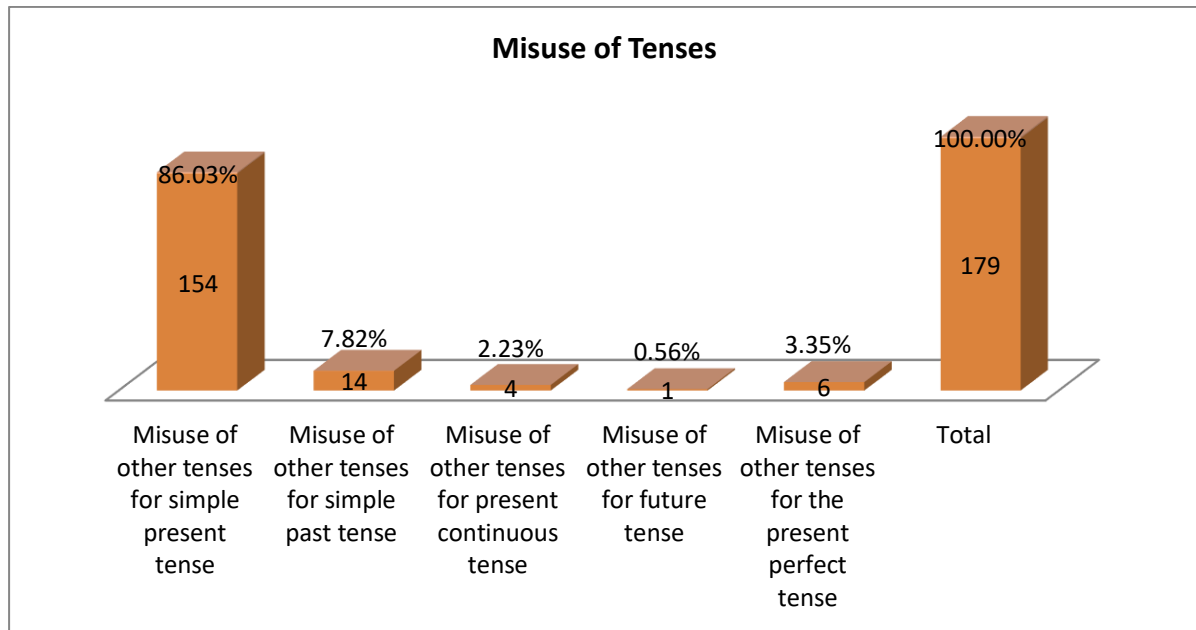


Figure.7:3 shows the overall frequency of misuse tense errors, 179 where there are five types of misuse of tense errors; misuse of other tenses for simple present tense, 154 errors (86.03%) occupied the highest frequency of errors, followed by misuse of other tenses for simple past tense with 14 errors (7.82%). The other three misuse of tense errors with lower errors were in misuse of other tenses for the present perfect tense, misuse of other tenses for present continuous tense, misuse of other tenses for future tense 6, 4, and 1 (3.35%, 2.23%, and 0.56%) perceptively.

It is worth mentioning that in some of these misuse tense error types, there are also sub-types of tense errors, as in misuse of other tenses for simple present tense.

Figure.7: 4 The overall Frequency of Errors in Misuse of other Tenses for Simple Present Tense

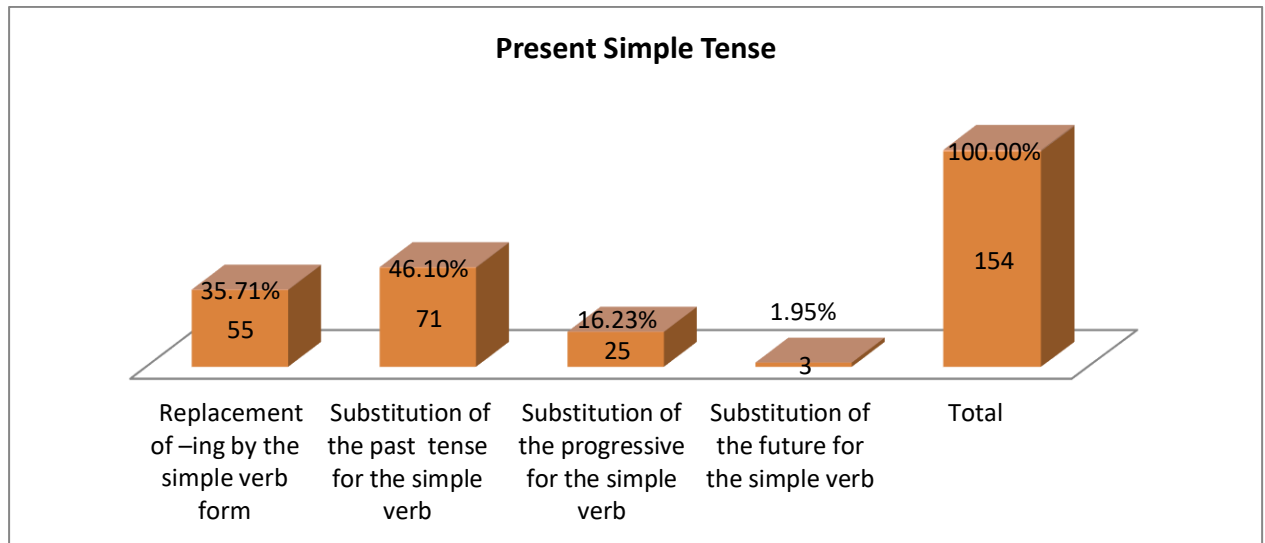


Figure.7: 4 shows the overall frequency of errors in misuse of other tenses for simple present tense where it is shown that substitution of the past tense for the simple verb occupied the highest frequency of errors 71 (46.10%) followed by replacement of -ing by the simple verb form with fewer errors 55 (35.71). The Other two types with the fewest errors were the substitution of the progressive for the simple verb and substitution of the future for the simple verb 25 and 3 (16.23% & 1.95%) perceptively.

It is worth mentioning that there are other types of misuses of tenses that appeared with lower frequencies. They are not significant as errors in the misuse of other tenses for future tense, the misuse of other tenses for perfect tense covering three types found in the data, the substitution of the simple verb for perfect, the substitution of the simple past verb for perfect and the substitution of the future tense for perfect tense. Therefore, they have not been discussed here.

7.1. 2. Statistically Analysis of tense errors

This part is about the statistically significant differences intense errors found in the study. Let us start with the statistically significant differences of tense errors during three academic years; see tables. 7:1 and 7:2) below:

Table. 7:1) ANOVA Test for all scores of tense errors

ANOVA

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
A- Misuse of tenses	25.013	2	12.507	4.100	.018
Between Groups	448.380	147	3.050		
Within Groups	473.393	149			
Total					

B- ill-formed	Between Groups	1.480	2	.740	2.181	.117
	Within Groups	49.880	147	.339		
	Total	51.360	149			
Tenses	Between Groups	37.373	2	18.687	4.928	.008
	Within Groups	557.460	147	3.792		
	Total	594.833	149			

Table .7:1 showed that there were statistically significant differences intense errors. The P-value ($P = .008$ less than $.05$). Therefore, the hypothesis (H_01) is rejected. This statistically significant difference happens in one of the sub-types of tenses, misuse of tenses, the P-value ($P = .018$ less than $.05$). Therefore, the hypothesis of the misuse of tenses (H_01a) is rejected. However, in the ill-formed tenses, the P-value ($P = .117$ greater than $.05$). There were no statistically significant differences; therefore, the hypothesis (H_01b) is accepted.

Tense categories were analyzed based on gender. For the results of the statistically significant differences of tense errors based on gender, see tables. 7:3 below:

Table .7:3) Independent Samples Test for all scores of tense errors based on gender
Group Statistics

Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	T	Sig	
Ill-formed	Male	30	.20	.664	.121	-.416	.678
	Female	120	.25	.569	.052		
Misuse of tenses	Male	30	1.03	1.474	.269	-.548	.584
	Female	120	1.23	1.855	.169		
3-Tenses	Male	30	1.23	1.832	.335	-.612	.542
	Female	120	1.48	2.042	.186		

Tables .7:3 showed the statistically significant results of tense errors based on gender. The results in this table reveal that there is no significant difference between genders. In the tenses, the mean score of males tense errors is ($M = 1.23$), with a standard deviation of (1.832), and the mean score of females is ($M = 1.48$) with a standard deviation of (2.042). The results of the T-test-.612 are not significant, with a P-value of .542 ($p < 0.05$). Therefore, the H_03 formulated in the study is accepted. This statistically significant difference happened with the ill-formed and misuse of tenses where a P-value ($p < 0.05$). Therefore, the H_03a and H_03b formulated in the study are accepted. The scores show a slight difference in the scores of both genders; however, this difference among the groups was found not statistically significant ($p < 0.05$). Therefore, the null hypothesis is accepted.

7.1.3. Interlingual errors in tenses

Here, we discuss the observed Interlingual tense errors found in the learners' essays. The attribution of such error may occur because of learners' native tongue interferences in the case of using one tense instead of another. The literature reported cases where Arab learners who study English misuse tenses and use the tense in inappropriate tense. They failed to use the tense in its appropriate tense form. Noor, H.(1996) stated that some learners use the continuous aspect (-ing) of certain verbs instead of the present simple tense. Other researchers (El-Badarin, M.1983; Mukattash, L.1986) reported that EFL learners failed in using the continuous and used instead of the non-continuous. Asfoor, A.(1978), Kambal, A. (1980), El-Badarin, M. (1983)Mukattash, L. (1986) stated that EFL learners replace non-perfective to perfective or avoid using it at all, for example, "*He did not come until now,*" (quid. in Noor, H. 1996, p. 1443) (Al-Bouq, A. 1988) the system of time sense of both Arabic and English are dissimilar. Mukattash, L. (1978) stated that Arab learners face difficulties in using continuous tense and perfect tense. (Noor, H. 1996) stated that Arabic learners are not restricted in their choice of verbs. Learners in English cannot switch from one tense to another, and if tense is switched, this would be considered a deviation. However, learners in Arabic can switch from one tense to another, and that can be considered in a well-formed sentence, while in English, it cannot be considered in a correct sentence structure. She ended with the conclusion that a learner tends to transfer Arabic freedom choice into English. The error might have been committed because of confusion in using tenses appropriately.

According to Azzouz, A. (2013), errors that occurred in misusing of tenses are due to learners' mother tongue because, in Arabic, there is no distinction between actions completed in tenses. For example, there is no connection between the past and the present tenses. In Arabic, the present tense can function as the present continuous tense in English as in *Abdul eats dinner now, present perfect as in *We learn English for six months already and future tense as in *When you come back tomorrow? Therefore, this causes serious interference errors and leads learners to fail to use tenses properly. In this regard(Ali, N. 2007; Aoun, E; Benmamoun, A. & Chueiri, L. 2010)stated that "Arab learners of English could not produce progressive and perfect tenses so easily. They use simple present instead."(quid. in Mahmoud, S., Alja, S., & Hasan, S. 2017, P.35 and in Sabbah,S. 2015,p. 277).

In our study, it was found that learners misuse using tense in away they use or substitute one tense instead of another inappropriately. There are misuses of verb tenses, in which learners have difficulties in choosing the suitable verb form. Thus, errors were found under the interlingual misuse of tenses. For example, there were observed interlingual errors found in the learners' essays in the misuse of other tenses for simple present, simple past, and continuous tenses. Based on the results of the frequency analysis, there is five misuse of tense sub-categories from which there were three observed common types. These three common main types could be discussed with a deviant structure to be taken as evidence from the data

to demonstrate errors observed in the misuse of tenses. Let us start with the use of misuse of other tenses for simple present tense.

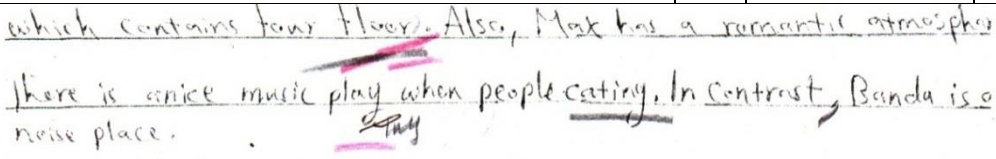
1.Observed Errors in the Misuse of other tenses for Simple Present tense

In this sub-category, there were four types found in the data. This kind of error could be represented by an example that demonstrated the errors in the misuse of other tenses for the simple present tense sub-category.

- **Observed Errors in Replacement of –ing by the Simple Verb Form**

In the misuse of other tenses for simple present tense sub-category, here, we discussed the observed errors found in the learners' essays in the replacement of –ing by the simple verb form; see an example that demonstrates errors in the in replacement of –ing by the simple verb form.

Table 1: Errors Observed in the Replacement of –ing by the Simple Verb Form

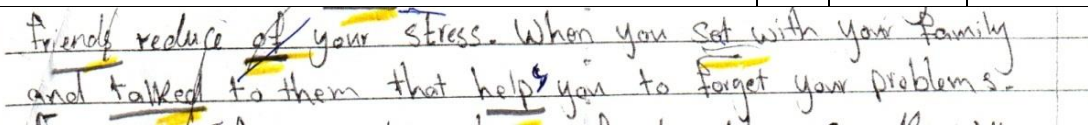
3.2. Misuse of tenses	No	Selected Sample	Gender	Year
3.b.1. Simple present: Misuse of other tenses for simple present tense				
Replacement of –ing by the simple verb form:	18	58	Female	2016
			Incorrect:A)	
There is a nice music play when people eating.				

This table shows an example error in using the tense sub-category, known as the replacement of –ing by the simple verb form. In this sample, there is a misuse of tenses between the progressive tense and simple present tense, where the simple verb is replaced. This misuse contains an error in the replacement of verbs caused by a substitution of verb error. If a learner uses a subject followed by 'is, am or are' as an example, he/she is expected to use a verb with an 'ing' marker. Thus, this incorrect sentence needs to be attached with 'ing' after the verb 'play.' Therefore, the incorrect sentence mentioned above, in A in the example, should be: "There is nice music being playing while people are eating."

- **Observed Errors in Substitution of Past Tense for Simple Verb**

Here, we discuss the observed errors in the substitution of the past tense for the simple verb; see an example in the table.1: 2.

Table 1: 2 Errors Observed in the Substitution of the Past Tense for the Simple Verb

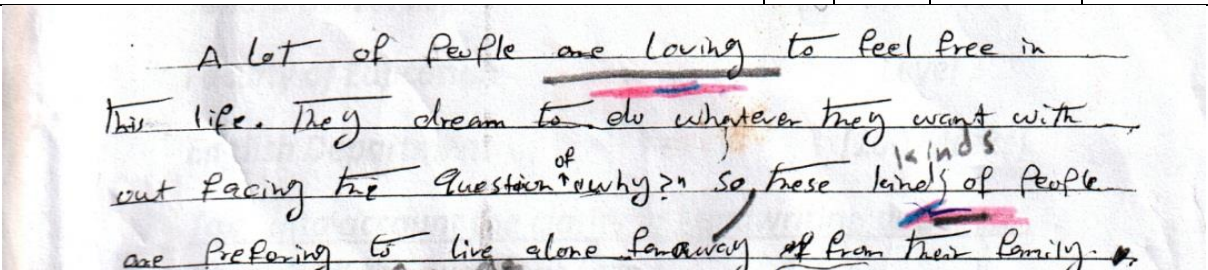
- Substitution of the past tense for the simple verb:	No	Sample	Gender	Year
	9	123	Female	2018
 <p>Incorrect: A) When you sat with your family and talked to them that help you to forget your problem.</p>				

This table shows an example error in the substitution of the past tense for the simple verb. A learner used the simple past verb forms 'sat' and 'talked' instead of the simple present verb forms 'sit and talk.' the past verb forms 'sat' and 'talked' needed to be changed to simple verb forms 'sit and talk.' Therefore, this wrong sentence mentioned above has the following as the correct form; "When you sit with your family and talk to them, it helps you to forget your problems."

- **Observed Errors in the Substitution of Progressive for Simple Present Tense**

Here, we discuss the observed errors in the substitution of the progressive for the simple verb; see an example in table. 2:2.

Table.2:2 Errors Observed in the Substitution of the Progressive for the Simple Verb

- Substitution of the progressive for the simple verb:	1	15	Male	2016
 <p>Incorrect: A) They dream to do whatever they want without facing the question of "why" so these kind of people are preferring to live alone far away from their family.</p>				

This table shows an example error in the substitution of the progressive verb for the simple present tense. As shown in the example, the progressive tense is used for the simple verb, which caused a substitution of verb error. The learner's use of the progressive verb form 'preferring' instead of the simple present verb form 'prefer' is incorrect. The progressive verb form 'preferring' needs to be changed to the simple verb form 'prefer.' The progressive marker 'ing' should not be attached to the verb form 'prefer.' The incorrect sentence mentioned above should be corrected to the following: "They dream of doing whatever they want without facing the question of "why." Some people prefer to live alone far away from their family."

• **Observed Errors in the Substitution of the Future for the Simple Verb**

Here, we discussed the observed errors in the substitution of the future for the simple verb; see an example in table. 3:2.

Table.3: 2 Errors Observed in the Substitution of the Future for the Simple Verb

- Substitution of the future for the simple verb	39	87	Female	2018
<p>Incorrect: A) In addition, a lot of people get headach, and worried, tired because this events that will happen everyday, so you should don't see this events in the television.</p>				

This table shows an example error in the substitution of the future verb for the simple present tense. As shown in the example, the future tense is used for the simple verb, which caused a substitution of verb error. A learner used the future verb form 'will happen every day' instead of the simple present verb form 'happen every day.' The future marker 'will' should not be attached to the verb form 'happen.' Therefore, this wrong sentence mentioned above should be in this correct sentence as, "A lot of people get a headache, and are worried and tired because these events happen every day and these events are not televised."

2. **Observed Errors in the Misuse of other Tenses for Simple Past Tense**

Here, we discuss the observed tense errors in the misuse of other tenses for the simple past tense sub-category. In this type of tense, there is one common type found in the data, replacement of the past tense by the present verb.

Table.4:2 Errors Observed in the Substitution of the Simple Tense for the Past Verb

3.b.2. Simple past: Misuse of other tenses for simple past tense				
- Substitution of the simple tense for the past verb:	13	70	Female	2017
<p>Incorrect: A) They gave them secret and they save it.</p>				

This table shows an example error in using in the substitution of the simple present verb for the past tense. As shown in the sample, the substitution of the simple tense for the past verb causes a substitution of verb error. A learner used the present verb form 'save' instead of

the past verb form 'saved.' In this ill-formed sentence, the verb form 'saved' should not be replaced by the present verb form 'save.' Therefore, this wrong sentence mentioned above in A, should be written as: "They gave away their secrets, and saved them."

3. Observed Errors in the Misuse of other tenses for Progressive Tense

Here, we discuss the observed tense errors in the misuse of other tenses for progressive tense sub-categories. In the use of misuse of other tenses for progressive tense, there is one common type found in the data, the substitution of the simple verb for progressive.

Table.5:2 Errors Observed in the Substitution of the Simple Verb for Progressive

3.b.3. Present continuous: Misuse of other tenses for present continuous tense	26	35	Female	2018
- Substitution of the simple verb for progressive:				
<p>The image shows a handwritten student error. The text is: "We can learn it to controlling the stress. For example, when we have a problem in our life, we will be suffer from this problem, but if we be patient the problem is not suffer in our health and no stress, so we can learn to controll stress by patient." There are several corrections and annotations in blue and yellow. "controlling" is underlined in blue. "be suffer" has "be" circled in blue. "suffer" is underlined in blue. "be patient" has "be" underlined in blue. "is not suffer" has "is not" underlined in blue. "controll" is underlined in blue. "by patient" has "being" written above "patient" in blue. "controll" is underlined in blue.</p>				
<p>Incorrect: A) For example, when we have a problem in our life, we will be suffer from this problem.</p>				

This table shows an example error in the substitution of the simple verb for progressive. As shown in the sample example, the replacement of the progressive tense by the present verb form caused a substitution of verb error. A learner used the present verb form 'suffer' preceded by the future marker 'will and be,' which makes any verb comes after in the form of the progressive verb form as 'suffering.' Grammatically, If a learner uses a subject or subject clause where there is 'will be as an example, he/she is expected to use after 'will be' a progressive future verb with an 'ing' marker. Thus, the verb form 'suffer' after the helping verb 'be' should be replaced by the progressive verb form 'suffering.' Or it is also possible to remove 'be' after the future marker; will' and write the verb 'suffer' in the form of the infinitive. In this incorrect sentence, the simple verb forms' suffer 'needs to be attached with a progressive marker' ing.' Therefore, the incorrect sentence mentioned above should be written as: "we will be suffering on account of this problem." or we will suffer on account of this problem.

In misuse of tenses, the ill-formed sample examples above have shown that there is an error in the substitution of one tense instead of another caused by an interlingual misuse of tenses. Therefore, a learner does not know which tense to use due to L1 interference. It is

worth mentioning that there are other types of misuses of tenses; however, they are not significant. Therefore, they are not discussed in this session. The observed errors found in the learners' essays with lower frequencies were in the misuse of other tenses for future tense, the misuse of other tenses for perfect tense covering three types found in the data, the substitution of the simple verb for perfect, the substitution of the simple past verb for perfect and the substitution of the future tense for perfect tense.

9.1. Findings

- The study revealed the overall frequency of tense errors in learners' Final English written exams, 215 errors.
- This study showed that two main types of tense errors, misuse of tenses that was the most frequent type 179 (83.26%) where there were five types of misuse of tense errors; misuse of other tenses for simple present tense, 154 errors (86.03%) occupied the highest frequency of errors, followed by simple past tense with 14 errors (7.82%). The other three misuse of tense errors with lower errors were in misuse of other tenses for the present perfect tense, present continuous tense, and for future tense 6, 4, and 1 (3.35%, 2.23%, and 0.56%) perceptively.
- The other second high of frequency was ill-formed tenses, 36 errors (16.74%) where there were two types, past participle incorrect, 31 errors (86.11%), followed by simple past tense incorrect, 5 errors (13.89%).
- The study showed statistically significant differences in tenses ($p > 0.05$). However, in one tense category, ill-formed tenses, there were no statistically significant differences; therefore, (H_01b) is accepted..
- In regard to the statistically significant differences in tenses based on gender, there were no statistically significant differences ($p < 0.05$).
- Learners' mother tongue (Arabic) plays a role in producing errors in tenses. In this regard, there were observed interlingual common types in misuse of tense sub-categories caused by learners' mother tongue. Observed errors in the misuse of other tenses for simple present tense where there were four types found in the data, observed errors in replacement of -ing by the simple verb form, substitution of past tense for simple verb, the substitution of progressive for simple present tense and the substitution of the future for the simple verb. Other common misuse tense errors were found the misuse of other tenses for the simple past tense in replacement of the past tense by the present verb and errors in observed interlingual errors in the misuse of other tenses for progressive tense.
- This study revealed that tenses are still a problematic issue in EFL writing. Based on the frequency of errors found in the data, students still have difficulty using tenses properly when they write. They still do not master the English tenses.

10.1. Suggestions

In using tenses found in learners' English essays; there are some suggestions to the students and English teachers that can be recognized below.

A learner has to be aware and cautious to distinguish among tenses through applying their rules properly. It was found that learners do commit errors in some tenses more than others and misuse them to use one tense instead of another. Since this study revealed that tenses are still a problematic issue and showed statistically significant differences in some tenses, learners have to keep practicing them whenever they write in English.

In this regard, teachers have to give their students extensive lessons, assignments and write more essays focusing on using tenses. While correcting their learners' errors in tenses, they have to score and mark any tense error to let students understand that there are errors in tenses given a particular focus. If there is time, teachers should pay more attention and plan to arrange a time to provide more lessons for teaching tenses and explain all the rules of tenses to make their learners aware of using such rules in every single written essay. This study indicates that learners might not be exposed to using tenses in their right usage. Therefore, teachers have to be aware and pay more attention to teach all tenses and make their students distinguish between them. Thus, these will raise students' awareness of using tenses appropriately while writing.

11.1. Conclusion

This study presented valuable results based on the frequency and the statistically significant differences of tense errors made by third-year university learners in the final examination of written essays. It revealed the overall frequency of tense errors, 215 errors where misuse of tenses was the most frequent type 179 (83.26%), followed by ill-formed tenses, 36 errors (16.74%). This study showed five types of misuse of tense errors (misuse of other tenses for simple present tense, past tense, present perfect tense, present continuous tense, and future tense). And two ill-formed tenses (simple present and simple past tenses). The study showed statistically significant differences in tenses ($p > 0.05$). However, in the statistically significant differences of tenses based on gender, there were no statistically significant differences. This study has shown that Yemeni third-year EFL Learners still have problems using tenses. Tenses are still a problematic issue in EFL English Foreign Language writing. Therefore, teachers have to pay much effort to help the students to achieve the desired level of proficiency in using tenses.

Abbreviation

SPSS: Statistical Package for the Social Sciences **EA** : Error Analysis

EFL : English Foreign Language **L1** : Native Language

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