

**Investigating the Impact of Gender on the
Egyptian EFL Freshmen's Writing
Errors: A Case Study**

By:

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Abstract

The study attempted to generally describe the trouble spots of some Egyptian EFL freshmen when writing in English. It specifically determined the differences between male and female Egyptian EFL freshmen when writing in English. Two groups of Egyptian freshmen were formed with five students each based on their gender. Participants were asked to write a 100-word paragraph on one of the suggested topics. Frequency analysis, percentage and mean scores were used to compute the errors. The results showed various types of writing errors among the Egyptian EFL freshmen. The female participants had largely less frequency, percentage and mean score of writing errors as compared to their male counterparts.

Introduction

The ability to write properly and effectively among EFL/ESL learners is primarily a cognitive-dominated process that entails training those learners to lessen and avoid the influence of their mother tongues on their writing output. Being a productive skill, writing complexity arises from the mental processes which EFL/ESL learners go through to generate ideas, find the exact words that help them convey the meaning, and write well-formed sentences in English. In such processes, EFL/ESL learners may make errors that affect the properness and effectiveness of their

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writing. Therefore, L2 learners' errors should be identified, described and accounted for. In this context, Richards (1974), Taylor (1975) and Brown (1980) introduced various types of errors. Richards, for instance, stated the intralingual errors of EFL/ESL learners when using prepositions and articles (e.g. suffer with instead of from; fight with instead of against; book of Hardy instead of by Hardy). The errors involving articles include omission of both definite and indefinite articles. In addition, Taylor defined certain overgeneralization errors like redundant auxiliary insertions, auxiliary substitution, incorrect forms of main verb following an auxiliary, verb tense errors and verb number errors. Furthermore, Brown determined certain sources of EFL/ESL learners' errors. Such sources include interlingual transfer, intralingual transfer and context of learning. Although the first two sources might be viewed as confusing terms as both are related to language negative transfer, they can be easily distinguished. Whereas the former is related to the L1 negative transfer, the latter is mainly related to L2 negative transfer when ESL learners tend to generalize the L2 rules (e.g. she goed instead of went). The third source is more pertinent to L2 classroom, EFL teachers and EFL learning and teaching materials. In this sense, the present study differs from that of Al-Buainain (2006) as the results interpretation is not only restricted to the differences between Arabic, as the participants' mother tongue, and English as their target language. Instead, the study intended to explore the errors source that emanates from the target language overgeneralization rules.

Keywords: Egyptian EFL freshmen, gender, types of errors, teaching implications

Problem statement:

This study examined the ability of some Egyptian freshmen to write proper English in general and the difference between male and female Egyptian freshmen in particular. In other words, it generally sought to identify the errors which EFL Egyptian freshmen made while writing in English and specifically determined the errors of both male and female freshmen. The study tried to answer the following questions:

1. What are the types of errors which both male and female Egyptian EFL freshmen generally made while writing in English?
2. What are the sources of their writing errors?
3. What are the differences between male and female Egyptian EFL freshmen when writing in English?

Aim of the study

The study generally aimed to describe the types of errors that Egyptian EFL freshmen made when asked to write in English. It particularly aimed to determine the differences between male and female Egyptian EFL freshmen when writing in English.

Significance of the study

This study is significant since it attempted to sort out and identify the types of errors which Egyptian EFL freshmen generally made while writing in English. The identification of such potential errors is useful to those in charge of devising English curricula and learning materials at different educational school levels. In addition, the specific determination of differences between male and female Egyptian EFL freshmen is helpful to EFL teachers

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who can adopt various teaching approaches and methods to handle such differences.

Limitations of the study

The study was limited to the first-year students enrolled at the Department of Languages and Translation in the academic year 2013-2014. It handled their writing errors when they were asked to write an English paragraph. Therefore, the findings of the study did not only bear implications for the academic writing teaching at the participants' higher learning institute, but also for the teaching of English as a foreign language at the Egyptian schools stages where the remedial treatment should start.

Literature Review

Many researchers examined the writing errors of EFL non Arab and Arab learners of English (e.g. Myles 2002; Al-Buainain 2006; Barrett and Chen 2011; Alhaysony 2012; Ridha 2012). Other researchers conducted studies on the same errors of non-Arab EFL learners or the relationship between gender and such errors (e.g. Chen 1996; Kamari, Gorjian, Pazhakh 2012; Boroomand, Abusaeedi and Asghar 2013).

Myles (2002) investigated the social and cognitive factors that lead to errors in the writings of ESL learners. The social factors include motivations, attitudes and goals of learning. Meanwhile, Myles adopted Anderson's (1985) model of language production to explain the cognitive process of L2 writing. As to the social factors, Myles found that the writing errors become more apparent whenever (1) ESL learners were not motivated to learning English in order whether to integrate themselves with the English native speakers or to attain instrumental ends. (2) They have negative attitudes towards learning English. (3)

Absence of learning goals. (4) There is a large cultural distance between the first and second languages. As to the cognitive process of L2 writing, ESL learners usually go through three mental stages in order to produce their written texts, namely construction, transformation and execution. At the first stage, ESL learners construct their ideas and work out what they would write. At the second stage, they try to make use of the English grammar in order to transform their ideas into a written message. At the third stage, they execute their message in a text form. Furthermore, Myles emphasized that ESL learners' proficiency levels and the development of their linguistic competence help reduce their writing errors.

Al-Buainain (2006) examined how accurate were 40 Qatari female EFL learners in English writing. The participants were only female as there were no male students enrolled at the Department of Foreign languages, Qatar University. Written data were collected through two techniques. First, a 200-250 word letter writing technique and second a 350-400 word essay technique. Students were allowed two hours to finish the two tasks. The researcher found that her students' writings were marked with high frequency of errors. Those errors ranged from ungrammatical sentence structures; misuse of vocabulary; wrong use of punctuations; spelling errors; and lack of the ability to write cohesively. Al-Buainain attributed her participants' inability to use the English tenses properly to the Arabic language negative transfer into their written texts. Furthermore, the differences between English and Arabic definite and indefinite articles hamper the participants' ability to properly employ them in their

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English written texts. Similarly, the syntactic differences between both languages highly affect the Qatari female EFL learners to write proper English.

Barrett and Chen (2011) examined the ability of 30 Taiwanese EFL higher-education learners to acquire and use the English definite and indefinite articles which do not exist among the grammar rules of their mother tongue. The study aimed to determine why Taiwanese EFL learners made errors when using the English articles whenever they are asked to write academically. Data for the purpose of this study were naturally collected through a writing task known as 'the Academic Writing Textual Analysis' (Barrett and Chen, 2011:1). The researchers found that their participants were confused when to use definite or indefinite articles; their errors were based on substituting the use of 'the' and 'a' in different instances.

Similarly, Alhaysony (2012) restricted her study to explain the reasons behind English articles misuse by 100 Saudi female EFL learners at the Department of English, Ha'il University. Participants wrote a 150-300 word essay on one of the suggested topics. The results showed high frequency of misusing the English articles among the Saudi female EFL learners with the English articles omission had the highest frequency of errors while their substitution had the lowest frequency of errors. Alhaysony found that Arabic negative transfer accounted for more than half of the participants' errors (57%). Meanwhile, the other errors were attributed in the researcher's analysis to intralingual sources.

Ridha (2012) accounted the writing errors of 80 Iraqi EFL learners enrolled at the Department of English, Faculty of Education, Basrah University. Participants were asked to write a essay on one of the suggested narrative,

argumentative or descriptive essays. Participants were not aware of the purpose of the study. Similarly to Al-Buainain's results and almost similarly to those of Alhaysony, Ridha attributed the errors of her investigated sample to the Arabic language interference into the English written output. Consequently, Ridha blamed the Iraqi EFL writing errors to the syntactic differences between the Arabic and English languages.

Boroomand, Abusaeedi and Ashgar (2013) examined the written errors made by 50 female and 50 male Iranian EFL learners. They found that male learners made fewer errors (45%) compared to their female counterparts (49.8%). On the contrary, Chen (1996) reported that female Taiwanese learners highly outperformed (28.5%) their male counterparts (71.5%) in English business writing. Similar results in favour of female learners were reported by Larsen-Freeman and Long (1991); Oxford, Young, Ito and Sumrall (1993); Salem (2006). Chiu (2008) and Dingwall (1998) explained that females' better performance than males is attributed to cognitive reasons that help them organize and use language function in a better way than males do. In addition, Kamari, Gorjian, Pazhakh (2012) examined the errors made by 30 male and 30 females Iranian learners in two writing tasks: opinion writing essay and descriptive writing essay. They reported mixed results in the sense that both male and female learners exchanged supremacy in the two tasks. Whereas male learners were distinguished in first task with fewer errors, their errors were more than their female counter parts in the second task.

Methodology:

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Data collection and participants:

The present study relied mainly on eliciting written data for the purpose of analyzing them to investigate the early mentioned research questions. Data were collected from ten freshmen (five males and five females) at the Languages and Translation Department, Higher Institute for Specific Studies, Giza. The ten participants were divided into two groups (A and B) based on their gender with five freshmen in each group. Whereas group A represents the female participants, group B comprises the male participants. The participants were asked to write a paragraph of 100 words on one of the suggested topics. The participants should meet the requirements of the Ministry of Higher Education, which stipulates a certain score at the English examination of the General Secondary Schools Certificate, in order to join this department. The participants were also selected as they represent the outcome of English language teaching process at the Egyptian secondary school stage.

Data analysis

The analysis of data relied on two sources of errors, namely (1) interlingual transfer, and (2) intralingual transfer. Statistically, the percentage score of each participant's errors was calculated; the number of errors divided by the total number of words in each paragraph multiplied by a hundred. The frequency analysis of the participants' errors was conducted as well. The statistical techniques of percentage score and frequency analysis were used in similar studies like those of Barrett and Chen (2011); Alhaysony (2012); and Ridha (2012). The performance of each participant within each group was analyzed separately (Tables no. 1 and 2). Then, the male

and female Egyptian freshmen's performance was compared as their mean scores were calculated based on the equation that the sum of the scores is divided by the number of scores (Dornyei, 2002) (Table no. 3). In other words, the mean score for each group was calculated by dividing the total number of frequent errors by 5 (i.e. the number of participants in each group).

Analysis and discussion of errors made by Group A participants (female freshmen):

Participant 1:

1. "The internet is very important way". That is, indefinite article omission 'a' before the noun phrase 'very important way'. It is an interlingual transfer; it is a transliteration of the Arabic sentence 'Waseela hama gidan'.
2. "The internet is very important way to connection with all the people in the world".
 - a. Wrong use of a noun 'connection' to function as a verb. That is, she replaced 'to connection' for 'to connect'. An interlingual transfer based on transliteration of the Arabic noun 'LL-rabet' not the infinitive 'yarbut'.
 - b. Definite article redundant use 'the' in 'all the people of the world' instead of 'all people of the world'. It is an interlingual transfer attributed to the transliteration of the Arabic sentence 'kul el-naas'.
3. "We can communcate with us".
 - a. Wrong use of a pronoun. For example, she used 'with us' instead of 'with each other'. It is an intralingual transfer based on overgeneralizing the rule of object pronoun 'us'.

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- b. Wrong spelling of the verb 'communicaite' instead of 'communicate', which she spelt based on its way of pronunciation. In this error, the participant wrote 'communicaite' based on the way she used to pronounce it which is highly influenced by the Arabic rules in writing. Thus, it is attributed to interlingual transfer.
4. "Without the internet we feel so bad".
 - a. Comma omission after a prepositional phrase. This error is attributed to the influence of L1 writing rules which usually do not place a comma in such a sentence. Thus, it is based on interlingual transfer.
5. "and we can use the internet in deffirent ways like reading, searching about something, playing and taking information".
 - a. Capitalization error as she used 'and' instead of 'And' in the beginning of the sentence.
 - b. Spelling error of the adjective 'deffirent' instead of 'different'.
 - c. Wrong use of a preposition. That is, she replaced 'searching about' for 'searching for'. The error is based on interlingual transfer.
 - d. Redundant use of 'and'. Instead, she could write "We can use the internet..". This error reflects the dominance of the mother-tongue negative transfer on the participant's writing skills.

She made ten writing errors and her writing errors percentage is 10%.

Participant 2:

1. "I went to the cinema to watch a movie his name (First Love)".

- a. Wrong use of a possessive pronoun. That is, 'his' instead of 'its'. It is a clear indication of L1 negative transfer influence of L2 writing production.
 - b. A vocabulary wrong use as she replaced 'name' for 'title' in a clear strong reflection of the Arabic language negative transfer. That is, while writing in English, she used to think in Arabic and then transliterate her thought into English; coping the English equivalents of the same Arabic words.
2. "My favourite movie is a romantic film, I went..".
 - a. Punctuation wrong use. That is, instead of using a full stop to mark the end of the first sentence, she used a comma. It is based on interlingual transfer.

The number of her writing errors is three and her writing errors percentage is 3%.

Participant 3:

1. "once upon a time I decided to go to a movie entitled First Love".
 - a. Capitalization error. That is, 'once' instead of 'Once'.
 - b. Comma-omission after an adverbial phrase 'once upon a time'. It is an interlingual transfer-based error.
2. "during the first three minutes of the film I see five brutal murders"
 - a. Capitalization error. That is, 'during' instead of 'During' in the beginning of the sentence. It was related to interlingual transfer.
 - b. Wrong use of the present simple instead of the past simple. That is, 'see' instead of 'saw'. It was based on intralingual transfer.

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- c. Comma omission after the subordinate clause 'during the first three minutes of the film'. It was based on interlingual transfer.

The number of her writing errors is five and her writing errors percentage is 5%.

She made 5 errors and her writing error percentage is 5%.

Participant 4:

1. "I go to a movie entitled by First Love, I sat in the theatre expecting too young people, beautiful scenery and romantic music and instead of, during the first three minute of the film, I saw five brutal murder and terror.. and I Disappointed and I go to the maneger asking to my money".
 - a. Wrong use of the present simple instead of the past simple such as 'go' instead of 'went'. It is based on overgeneralizing the use of verb 'go' regardless of the tense. It is based on intralingual transfer.
 - b. Wrong use of vocabulary. That is, 'too young people' instead of 'two young people'. It is based on intralingual transfer.
 - c. Spelling error like 'maneger' instead of 'manager'.
 - d. Lack of the plural form as in 'five murder' instead of 'five murders'. It was related to intralingual transfer.
 - e. Unnecessary capitalization 'Disappointed' instead of 'disappointed'. It is based on intralingual transfer. That is, overgeneralization of the English capitalization rules.
 - f. Wrong use of a preposition. That is, 'asking to my money' instead of 'asking for my money'. A wrong overgeneralization of using the English preposition 'to'. It is based on intralingual transfer.

The total frequency of her writing errors is 6 with the percentage of 6%.

Participant 5:

1. "I decided to went cinema".
 - a. Wrong use of the past simple instead of the infinitive form. That is, 'went' instead of 'go'. A wrong overgeneralization of using the past form 'went'.
 - b. Definite article deletion. That is, 'cinema' instead of 'the cinema'.
2. "I saw five brutal murders, uspeakable violens and terror". It is attributed to L1 negative transfer; it is based on interlingual transfer.
 - a. Spelling errors as in 'uspeakable violens' instead of 'unspeakable violence'.

The total frequency of her writing errors is 3 with the percentage of 3%.

Table no.1: Frequency and percentage of female participants' written errors

%	F	Participants
10	10	Participant 1
3	3	Participant 2
5	5	Participant 3
6	6	Participant 4
3	3	Participant 5
	27	Total frequency

The female participants' total frequency of errors is 27. Their errors frequency ranged between 3 (as their lowest score of errors frequency and 10 as their highest score of errors frequency. The female participants' mean score of errors is 5.4.

Analysis and discussion of errors made by Group B participants (Male freshmen):

Participant 6

1. The participant did not observe the capitalization proper rule, e.g. the words 'going' and 'Reading' in "going to library to Reading some books". The error of beginning the sentence with a small letter is based on interlingual transfer, whereas unnecessary capitalization of 'Reading' reflects overgeneralization of English capitalization rules. Thus, the error of 'Reading' is based on intralingual transfer.
2. Deletion of the definite article 'the' before the word 'library' in the previous example. It is based on intralingual transfer.
3. Wrong use of noun to function as a verb as 'Reading' instead of 'read' in the same example. It is based on interlingual transfer as in 'to connection'.
4. Insertion of 'be' before the main verb, e.g. "Reading is make us know newest more and more". It is based on intralingual transfer. That is, overgeneralization of using verb 'to be'.
5. Definite article omission before the superlative (i.e. newest instead of the newest) in the previous example. This error is attributed to intralingual transfer.
6. "I love his style in writing and his idea, he make me always feel enjoy when I read his poetry". The participant replaced singular form 'idea' for the plural one 'ideas'. It is attributed to the overgeneralization use of the word 'idea' (i.e. intralingual transfer). He deleted the third singular person '-s' in 'he make me'. He used the verb enjoy instead of 'enjoyed' as an adjective. This is

an indication of the L1 negative transfer. That is, it is based on interlingual transfer.

7. "its make me learn new thing like be strong, be honest". He used 'its' instead of it (i.e. wrong use of possessive pronoun); 'make' (i.e. deletion of third singular -s); 'thing' instead of 'things' (i.e. overgeneralization of the form 'its' and thing').
8. "in the end The reading is very important thing in our life". That is, redundant use of article 'the' in 'The reading' and omission of an indefinite article 'a' in 'very important thing'. This error is based on interlingual transfer.

He made 13 writing errors and his percentage score of errors is 13%.

Participant 7

1. "I went to the mosque. I saw my cousin after we pray".
 - a. Wrong use of the tense form (i.e. the present simple 'pray' instead of the past perfect tense 'had prayed'). It is based on interlingual transfer.
2. "we went to played football".
 - a. Wrong use of the verb form (i.e. the past simple 'played' instead of the infinitive 'play'). Overgeneralization of the past tense.
 - b. Lack of capitalization (i.e. 'we' instead of 'We'). It is based on interlingual transfer.
3. "I visited my relatives on evining".
 - a. Wrong use of the preposition 'on' instead of 'in'.
 - b. Wrong spelling (i.e. 'evining' instead of 'evening').

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- c. Definite article deletion 'the'. That is, 'evining' instead of 'the evening'.
 4. "I met my friends and go to park".
 - a. Wrong use of the present simple tense 'go' instead of the past simple tense 'went'. Overgeneralization of the verb 'go'.
 - b. Wrong use of the past simple tense 'met' instead of the past perfect tense 'had met'. Overgeneralization of the past tense from 'met'.
 - c. Definite Article omission 'the'. That is, 'park' instead of 'the park'. It is based on intralingual transfer.
 5. "We saw brutal murders in street".
 - a. Definite article omission (i.e. 'street' instead of 'the street'). It was related to intralingual transfer.
 6. "The scene was very terror, but day was enjoyable something".
 - a. A grammatical error (i.e. the use of a noun instead of an adjective). It was related to intralingual transfer.
 - b. Definite article omission 'but day' instead 'the day'. It was related to intralingual transfer.
 - c. A structural error (i.e. the redundant use of 'something' as the phrase 'enjoyable something' is considered as a clear indication of the L1 negative transfer into the L2 sentence structure.
- His percentage of writing errors is 13%.

Participant 8

1. "First me and my friends met and we decided to go to watch a movie then".
 - a. Comma-omission after introductory word (i.e. interlingual transfer).

- b. Wrong use of a pronoun. That is, 'me' instead of 'I'.
 - c. It is an ill-formed sentence reveals a clumsy structure resulting from the influence of the Arabic negative transfer on the English writing skills.
2. it was on November "
- a. Capitalization error/ that is 'it' instead of 'It" (i.e. interlingual transfer).
 - b. Wrong use of a preposition. That is, 'on' instead of 'in' (i.e. overgeneralization of the preposition 'on').
3. "i saw ..., i disappointed..., i ask my friends to leave".
- a. Spelling errors of the pronoun 'I' (i.e. overgeneralization of using the small letter 'i').
 - b. Copula deletion in "i disappointed' instead of 'I was disappointed' (i.e. the error is based on interlingual transfer).
 - c. Tense confusion. He replaced the present simple 'ask' for the past simple 'asked' (i.e. overgeneralization of the present tense form 'ask').
4. "It was Hot that day anyway we went to cinema".
- a. Unnecessary capitalization (i.e. Hot instead of hot). That is, overgeneralization of the English capitalization rules.
 - b. Definite article omission (i.e. cinema instead of the cinema).
 - c. Comma omission after the first sentence (i.e. interlingual transfer).
 - d. Wrong use of conjunction that indicates contrast (however was replaced by anyway).

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He made 12 writing errors and his percentage score of errors is 12%.

Participant 9:

1. "I'm keen to watching a romantic movie one day I decided to go to a movie title First Love. Sat in the theater expecting to young people scenery and romantic music instead during the three minute of the film I watch five murders... I feeled disappointed".
 - a. Wrong use of contraction form (i.e. I'm instead of I am) in academic writing. It is based on overgeneralization use of the form 'I'm'.
 - b. Lack of punctuation marks. The respondent did not use any of them at all.
 - c. Grammatical error of using the past simple instead of the gerund (i.e. sat instead of sitting). That is, overgeneralization of using the past simple tense.
 - d. Spelling error (i.e. to young people instead of two young people). It is based on overgeneralization use of 'to'.
 - e. Wrong use of a preposition (i.e. keen to instead of keen on). It is based on overgeneralization use of the preposition 'to'.
 - f. Wrong use of vocabulary (i.e. title instead of entitled). The respondent mistakenly used the noun 'title' instead of 'entitled'. It is based on overgeneralization use of the noun 'title'.
 - g. Ill-forms of sentence structure which indicate the persistent influence of the mother tongue negative transfer of the respondent's writing skills.
 - h. Wrong form of past simple tense (feeled instead of felt). It is an intralingual error based on the

overgeneralization of '-ed' ending formation of past simple.

He made 8 writing errors and his percentage score of errors is 8%.

Participant 10:

1. "It plays a vital role in our life. It provides us a many useful things".
 - a. A preposition omission (i.e. with) after the object pronoun 'us'. This error is based on poor knowledge of English grammar rules.
 - b. Indefinite article redundant use (i.e. a many instead of many).
 - c. Spelling error (i.e. usuful instead of useful). It is based on interlingual transfer.
2. "It plays very important role in our life".
 - a. Indefinite article omission (i.e. 'very important role' instead of 'a very important role'). It is based on interlingual transfer.
3. "It has a vital role and many things".
 - a. Words repetition like (vital role, important role, many things) reveals poor vocabulary. It was related to intralingual transfer
4. "We must us encourage it's because it provides a many things".
 - a. Ill-formed sentence (i.e. 'us encourage' instead of 'encourage us'). The participant failed to obey the proper word order of subject, verb and object. On the contrary, he replaced the object before the verb. It is

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based on interlingual transfer as the participant transliterated 'yagib alyan' into English.

- b. Spelling error of 'becase' instead of 'because'. This error is attributed to the way in which the participant used to pronounce that word. In this case, the participant applied his L1 rules to spell the word while writing it.
 - c. Redundant use of the indefinite article 'a many things' instead of 'many things'.
5. "We must us work hard".
- a. Redundant use of the pronoun 'us'. This error reveals to a great extent how this participant is overwhelmingly influenced by the Arabic grammar rules. It affirms how L1 negative transfer can impede the L2 sentence structure acquisition. It also indicates the way which most Egyptian EFL learners adopt while writing in English. That is, they tend to translate from the mother tongue into English. This error entails doing further research on how EFL learners comprehend L2 words and acquire sentence structure.
6. "However is being stand behind and solve all problems".
- a. It is a nonsense sentence that indicates confusion on the participant's part in acquiring the target language sentence structure.

He made 12 writing errors and his percentage score of errors is 12%.

Table no.2: Frequency and percentage of male participants' written errors

%	F	Participants
13	13	Participant 6
13	13	Participant 7
12	12	Participant 8
8	8	Participant 9
12	12	Participant 10
	58	Total frequency

The male participants' total frequency of errors is 58. Their errors frequency ranged between 8 as their lowest score of errors frequency and 13 as their highest score of errors frequency. The male participants' mean score of errors is 11.6.

Table 3 indicated that female participants made fewer errors (5.4) as compared to their male counterparts (11.6). This proved that female participants highly outperformed the male participants in observing the proper ways of using the English grammar rules while writing as their total error frequency was (27) compared to the males' total error frequency (58).

Table no. 3 comparing the total frequency, mean score and the highest and lowest scores of writing errors among male and female participants

Lowest score	Highest score	Mean score	Total frequency	Gender
8	13	11.6	58	Male
3	10	5.4	27	Female

Teaching Implications

The identification of the Egyptian EFL learners' writing errors helps devise certain learning materials that handle and give remedy for such errors. It is the role of the

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English curricula planners to provide various materials that help Egyptian EFL learners avoid making and repeating such errors. Certainly, those materials should vary according to the learning stage of the targeted Egyptian EFL learners from the primary through secondary school stages. They should also observe the sequence of acquiring English rules among ESL learners as described by Cook (2008) which contradicts Krashen's (1982) claim that it is not necessary to make the L2 grammatical acquisition in a sequential order because that can lead to harmful results. This sequence includes 'plural -s', 'progressive -ing', 'copula forms of be', auxiliary forms of be', 'definite and indefinite articles', 'irregular past tense', 'third person-s' and 'possessive 's'. In addition, Egyptian EFL learners should be trained not to apply the Arabic rule of spelling the word while writing it in order to insure its correct spelling form. The researcher suggests a remedial treatment for the EFL Egyptian learners' errors when writing English. The researcher suggests the inclusion of a series of a never-always list within the English textbooks being taught for all school stages. The suggested list can be either published at the end of the textbook or on the back cover page. Such a list helps make the EFL learners conscious of the potential errors that they may make when writing in English. Therefore, they will never make such errors as long as they have become aware of them. The list should consist of two columns: column 1 (never write/use) and column 2 (always write/use). Whereas column 1 includes the common possible errors, column 2 comprises the corrections for such errors. Below is a model for the suggested never-always list.

Table no. 4 A model for the suggested never-always list

Always (write/use)	Never (write/use)
Felt, went, cut, bought	Feeled, goed, cuted, buyed
He likes English	He like English
We must	Must us
England, Egypt, London	england, egypt, london
The cinema, the park, the street	Cinema, park, street
A book by Hardy	A book of Hardy
To (go, play)	To (went, played)
Communicate, different, because, useful	Communicaite, deffirent, becasse, usuful
Reading is a very important thing	The reading is very important thing
Two young people	To young people
Keen on, search for, asked for his money	Keen to, search about, asked to his money
In the evening	On evining
Many	A many
Its title	His title (referring to a movie)
He makes me	He make me
First, I and my friends	First me and my friends
The newest	Newest
The internet is a very important way to communicate with all people in the world	The internet is very important way to connection with all the people in the world

Suggestions for further research

Various studies can be carried out to investigate the following topics:

- Social factors contributing to the writing errors of the Egyptian EFL learners. They include, among others, motivation and attitudes towards learning English.
- Elements of the context of learning which include the EFL teachers' training and teaching methods to be applied in the classrooms.
- Potential errors of the Egyptian EFL learners when speaking English.

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- Specific studies can investigate the writing errors of the Egyptian EFL learners who are studying English for specific purposes such as business, tourism, hotel...etc.

Conclusion

As to the first question of the study regarding the types of errors made by both male and female Egyptian EFL learners, the study found that most of errors made by female Egyptian freshmen were concentrated on indefinite article omission; wrong use of a noun to act as an infinitive; definite article redundant use; wrong use of a pronoun; wrong spelling; comma omission; overlooking capitalization in the beginning of the sentence; wrong preposition 'search about' instead of 'search for'; redundant use of 'and'; wrong use of vocabulary 'name' instead of 'title'; wrong use of tenses; wrong use of 'too young people' instead of 'two young people'; Lack of the plural form; unnecessary capitalization; wrong preposition 'ask to my money' instead of 'ask for my money'. In addition, the male participants shared the same writing errors made by their female counterparts and added other types of errors. For instances, 'must us'; copula deletion in "i disappointed" instead of 'I was disappointed'; ill-forms of sentence; insertion of 'be' before the main verb; Wrong use of contraction form 'I'm' instead of 'I am'; words repetition.

As to the second question of the study about the sources of errors made by male and female Egyptian EFL freshmen, the researcher accounted for the indefinite article omission by the first female participant based on the interlingual negative transfer; as the participant transliterated the Arabic sentence 'Waseela hama gidan' into English as 'very

important way' omitting the indefinite article 'a' which does not exist in the Arabic sentence. This finding contradicts Richards' classification (1974) of definite article omission as an intralingual transfer, but it affirms the first stage of the three mental stages described by Myles (2002) and is similar to those reported by Al-Buainain (2006), Alhaysony (2012) and Ridha (2012). Similarly, the source of definite article redundant use was attributed to interlingual transfer based on transliteration from Arabic. The study affirmed that the wrong use of a pronoun was attributed to intralingual transfer. This finding resembles those of Richards (1974). However, the study accounted for wrong spelling on the basis of L1 language negative transfer and classified that error as related to interlingual transfer as the participants applied the Arabic way of spelling the word while writing it which is not applicable to English. Comma omission and redundant use of 'and' are attributed to L1 negative transfer. Although wrong preposition is generally classified as an error attributed to intralingual transfer, the researcher found that 'search about' was a transliteration of the Arabic equivalent 'yabhth aan'. Therefore, wrong preposition was related to interlingual transfer. Furthermore, the use of 'name' instead of 'title' in describing the movie title was essentially attributed to interlingual transfer due to transliteration of the Arabic equivalent 'Ismuh'. The study affirmed that wrong use of tenses was mainly related to interlingual transfer similar to the findings of Richards (1974). The wrong use of 'too' instead of 'two', lack of plural form, unnecessary capitalization, 'ask to'

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instead of 'ask for' were mainly based on an intralingual transfer. As to 'must us', copula deletion, and ill-forms of sentence structure, they were traced to the influence of L1 negative transfer. Insertion of 'be' before the main verb, 'I'm' instead of 'I am', and words repetition were mainly related to intralingual transfer.

As to the third question of the study related to the differences between the errors made by male and female Egyptian EFL freshmen, female Egyptian EFL freshmen highly outperformed their male counterparts in making fewer errors while writing in English according to their frequencies, percentages and mean scores. This finding resembles those reported by Larsen-Freeman and Long (1991); Oxford, Young, Ito and Sumrall (1993); Chen (1996), Dingwall (1998), Salem (2006) and Chiu (2008) and contradicts those reported by Boroomand, Abusaeedi and Ashgar (2013).

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