

**An Intra-Lingual Analysis of Speaking Grammatical Errors
Committed by First Year EFL Students at Omar Al-Mukhtar
University**

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Abstract:

The purpose of this study is to investigate intralingual errors made by Libyan EFL students in their speaking activities at Omar Al-Mukhtar University using Dulay's surface strategy taxonomy by focusing on "omission, addition, misformation, and misordering.". The researchers hope that this study suggests some beneficial strategies and solutions to overcome those errors. The error analysis method will be implemented by conducting data collection tools such as surveys and semi-structured interviews to collect the data. The data were gathered via a survey questionnaire and an interview. The sample for this study consisted of five English department students at Omar Al-Mukhtar University. The study revealed that students committed four different types of grammatical errors: omission, misformation, disorder, and addition. The findings of this study showed that nineteen errors occurred; omission was the most dominant error produced by participants, with a percentage of 43%. It is followed by misformation with total cases of 21%, addition with total cases of 26%, and misordering with total cases of 10%.

Key words:

Errors, error analysis, interlingual errors, intralingual errors, EFL, Libyan EFL learners, Dulay's surface strategy taxonomy.

ملخص الدراسة

الغرض من هذه الدراسة هو التحقيق في الأخطاء اللغوية التي ارتكبتها طلاب ليبيا عند استخدامهم للغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية في أنشطتهم الخطابية في جامعة عمر المختار باستخدام " استراتيجيات دولاي للتصنيف " من خلال التركيز على "الحذف والإضافة والخطأ في ارسال المعنى وسوء الترتيب". ويأمل الباحثون أن تقترح هذه الدراسة بعض الاستراتيجيات والحلول المفيدة للتغلب على تلك الأخطاء. سيتم تنفيذ طريقة تحليل الأخطاء من خلال إجراء أدوات جمع البيانات مثل الدراسات الاستقصائية والمقابلات شبه المنظمة لجمع البيانات. تم جمع البيانات من خلال استبيان ومقابلة. تكونت عينة هذه الدراسة من 5 طلاب قسم اللغة الإنجليزية في جامعة عمر المختار. كشفت الدراسة أن الطلاب ارتكبوا أربعة أنواع مختلفة من الأخطاء النحوية: الحذف ، والخطأ في ارسال المعنى ، وسوء الترتيب ، والإضافة. أظهرت نتائج هذه الدراسة حدوث تسعة عشر خطأ ، والحذف هو الخطأ الأكثر شيوعاً الذي أنتجه المشاركون بنسبة 43%. يليه الخطأ في ارسال المعنى بإجمالي الحالات 21% ، والإضافة بإجمالي الحالات 26% ، والأخير كان سوء الترتيب بإجمالي الحالات 10%.

الكلمات الرئيسية:

الأخطاء ، تحليل الأخطاء ، الأخطاء بين اللغات ، الأخطاء داخل اللغة ، اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية ، الليبيون متعلمي اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية ، استراتيجيات دولاي للتصنيفية.

Introduction:

The background of this study is rooted in the increasing significance of English language proficiency for individuals in Libya as they engage in global communication and educational pursuits. As English is a crucial international language, foreign language learners in Libya face the challenges of acquiring and using the language effectively, particularly in speaking activities. Understanding the specific grammatical errors made by the learners during spoken interactions is essential in the teaching process for refining English language instructions and addressing the unique linguistic challenges faced in this context.

To analyze grammatical faults in English in Libya, mistakes produced during speaking activities are assessed. This intralingual analysis focuses on errors within the target language itself, identifying patterns and common issues to improve their speaking skills.

The problem addressed in this study is the prevalence of grammatical errors made by EFL learners in Libya during speaking activities, which hinder their language learning and communication skills in this diverse and dynamic linguistic environment. These errors can affect the learners ability to use the language in the most appropriate way. Libyan students make many types of errors that are caused and result from their way of learning the language and their own individual skills in using and dealing with the different grammatical rules. The primary purpose of this study is to dig deeper into these students' language learning experiences and the various educational backgrounds that lead them to commit such errors.

-Literature review

Empirical background on error analysis of Libyan EFL learners:

Arabic-speaking EFL learners often face grammatical inconsistencies in the English language due to the contrastive existence of both languages. This leads to errors in speaking, as students may not know the rules of the foreign language. Errors made during language learning cannot be undone, and they can result from borrowing patterns from the mother tongue, over-generalization, or expressing meanings using already known words and grammar.

Speech is often the most preferred skill for EFL learners to assess their language proficiency. However, a lack of general knowledge, lack of speaking practice, effective filters, and grammar practice can cause speaking problems. Researchers use the error analysis approach to identify difficulties and errors in speaking by

foreign language learners, providing a verifiable explanation of language acquisition and helping identify the source of these errors.

Research has shown that errors can be classified into three types: interlingual interference, intralingual errors, and developmental errors. Studies have found that interlingual or transfer errors are more common than intralingual or developmental errors, as students use their mother tongue habits, rules, and patterns in the foreign language. Teachers should understand what grammar is difficult for EFL learners and incorporate these errors into their teaching.

In the Jordanian context, studies have found that mother tongue interference is the major source of committing errors, as students use proper prepositions if they are used in their mother tongue but select improper prepositions if equivalents are not used. Teachers should provide context where fluent and accurate language use should be modelled for learners. Overall, understanding the reasons behind errors and the ways in which EFL learners deviate from native-speaker-like proficiency is crucial for effective language learning.

Types of errors "error sources":

Richards (1971) identified three types of errors in language learning: interlingual interference, systematic intralingual errors, and context-related learning errors. Interlingual errors are caused by the learner's native language structure and are influenced by their foreign language learning process. Intralingual and developmental errors occur during learning the target language, such as faulty comprehension of rules, incomplete application of rules, and failure to learn the conditions under which rules apply. Intralingual errors include overgeneralization, ignorance of rule restrictions, incomplete application of rules, and false concepts hypothesised. Developmental errors are often associated with the learner's limited knowledge of the target language.

Methodology

1-Research design:

In error analysis research, a mixed method (both quantitative and qualitative) is implemented. As Seliger and Shohamy (1990) argue, descriptive research requires a combination of methodologies to define naturally occurring phenomena without experimental manipulation. The researchers will then investigate students' grammatical errors by gathering data using a survey questionnaire and an oral,

semi-structured interview that will be recored to be analysed by following Corder's error analysis procedure, which mainly consists of four steps:

- collecting samples of learners languages.
- Identifying errors.
- Describing and then classifying errors.
- Explaining the causes of these errors.

2: Setting and participants: This study was conducted at Omar Al-Mukhtar University, Faculty of Languages, located in Albeida, Libya, during the academic year 2023-2024. The target population is 5 students. A sample of 5 students voluntarily took part in this study. All participants ranged in age between 18 and 20 years and were native speakers of Arabic. They have been learning English since Grade 5, typically at the age of 10.

3. Data collection method:

Corder's procedure offers a comprehensive framework for systematically analysing and understanding language errors, providing valuable insights for language educators and researchers in the field of foreign language acquisition. His procedures for error analysis typically consist of four steps. These include the collection of samples, identification of errors, description of errors, and then classification and explanation of errors. The study involved collecting samples using Hoa et al. (2022), survey questionnaire and oral interviews. The researchers collected data on learners' grammatical errors, including verb tense, subject-verb agreement, and pronoun usage. The data was then analyzed in written form to ensure objectivity. Errors were identified systematically by comparing the learner's language to the target language's grammar and verb tense usage. The items were sorted appropriately. A detailed description of each error was provided, including linguistic features, and the context. The researchers also explored the reasons behind errors, including factors such as omission, addition, or misformation, misunderstanding of English tense rules. These factors were observed.

4-Instruments of Data Collection:

This study used two research methods: a survey questionnaire and an oral, semi-structured interview. The survey questionnaire asked about students' preferences and interests in English education, including demographics, reasons for studying English, and resources used. It also asked about daily language usage, preferred communication mediums, and grammatical challenges. The researchers also sought feedback on students' preferred teaching methods and feedback preferences.

The second method was an oral, semi-structured interview conducted at the university campus. The interviews focused on students' experiences, opinions, and narrated events, focusing on verb tense usage, subject-verb agreement, articles, and common word order mistakes. The survey was administered in class to five students, with the aim of enhancing proper grammar usage. The data will be analyzed using descriptive statistics. The semi-structured oral interview was recorded and transcribed into written paragraphs for further analysis. Both methods were used to gather valuable insights into students' English language learning experiences.

Research questions:

1-To what extent do Omar university students commit errors with respect to simple sentence structure? Interview answer abstract

2-What are the dominant types of errors committed by Omar Al-mukhtar University?

Data Analysis:

• **Taxonomy:** The researchers followed the error analysis procedures using the surface strategy taxonomy by Dulay et. al. (1982) to analyse the data, which were categorised into *omission, addition, misordering, and misformation*.

These four procedures were used to find out the most frequently committed errors, and this may help discover the sources and triggers of the errors **in the oral interview**.

The surface structure taxonomy identifies four types of errors in language learning: omission, addition, misordering, and misformation. Omission errors involve learners omitting necessary components, while addition involves regulating exceptions. Misordering errors involve incorrect placement of morphemes in utterances, while misformation involves using improper forms of words or structures. Researchers face challenges in identifying errors due to learners' avoiding language or overapplying rules. Therefore, researchers should encourage students to speak regardless of performance to identify their sources.

Findings and discussions:

1-Survey Questionnaire:

As the questionnaire was designed to assess the perspectives of five EFL students toward language and language grammatical rules starting with asking about age and gender.

Q1: choose your age:

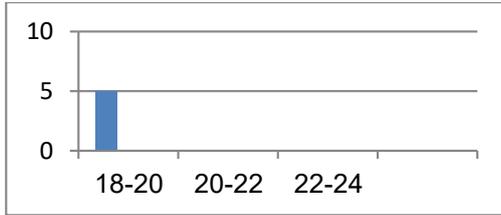


Figure 1 the participants age

As shown in figure 1 ,the participants' age was all ranging from (18-20), while only one student age is between (20-23).

Q2 - choose your gender:

Figure 2 shows the participants gender distribution. 3 males and 2 females.

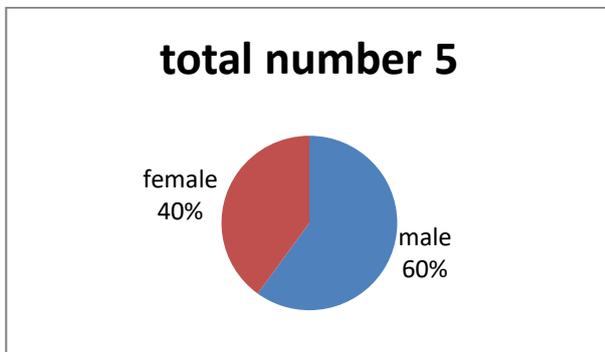


figure 2 Participants gender distribution

Q3 -What influenced your decision to study English at the university level?

Q 4-What resources do you primarily use to learn English? (select all that apply)

The following question was what influenced their decision to study English at the university level: three students chose personal interests, student '5' chose that he has career goals, and student '3' stated that they have other reasons that influenced their decisions, mentioning them as (*I want to make my dad happy*). Next, they were asked about the resources they primarily use to learn English. Student '2' mentioned that they take language courses and classes to learn English. On the other hand, three students have chosen other sources with answers, like (*interaction with people-youtube*) and student '4' selected all resources that apply to him, which were textbooks, online courses, and language classes.

- **Q5-On average, how many hours a day do you use English?**
- **Q6 -In what situations or contexts do you primarily use English on campus?**
- **Q7-How do you usually communicate in English?**
- **Q 8-Do you participate in any English-speaking clubs or activities on campus?**

Moving to the next section, where the responses showed that three students use language for 3 to 4 hours daily, student '1' said that they use language from 1 to 2 hours, and student '2' is using language less than one hour per day. The next question has clearly splits the reponses into two sides, three students assert that the situations they primeraly use language at is when they are socializing, and two students stated that they have other contexts where they use language with only one student mentioning the situation which is (online games). The next question was their preffered medium to use to communicate in English, both writing and speaking were three students choice, two students opposed them with one chosing writing and the other chosing speaking. Four students' answer was yes they participate in English clubs or activities, and student '1' said no, he doesn't participate in any activities.

- **Q 9-What subjects or topics do you feel more confident discussing in English?**
- **Q 10-Are there specific verb tenses that you find challenging?**
- **Q 11-In a casual conversation , have you find yourself arranging the words in your head before saying them?**
- **Q 12-How do you actively work on expanding your academic vocabulary and improving article usage?**

The following question shed the light on topics that stuednts feel most confident discussing in English, which four students mentioned that they frequently engage in conversation in English and student '1' said he occasionally engages in conversation. In addition, the researchers asked about if there is a specific tenses they find challenging , future tense was the choice of two students, the other three have different answers: all tenses, both past and future, present. Furthermore, 'yes' was the answer of four students on the question ' *have you find yourself arranging the words in your head before saying them?* ' , while student '3' said no they don't do that. Question twelve showed that two students speak more in order to expand their vocabularies, where as student '1' chose using vocabulary apps, student '4' chose reading more, and student '5' chose other sources (*watching movies and Netflix shows*).

Q 13-What methods or resources do you use to learn and practice English grammar, particularly in relation to your university studies?

Q 14-How do you prefer to receive feedback on your spoken English, especially in an academic setting?

This section is targeting grammar and grammar practising by asking about the methods and resources used by the students to assist their learning, three students in the next question responded by choosing online resources, student '3' chose by language exchanging, and student '5' chose other methods without specifying one in particular. In the following question, the researchers asked the students about how do they prefer to receive feedback in an academic setting, student '1' said they prefer direct correction, three students chose group feedback, and student '4' chose other ways without indicating a specific one.

- Q 15- Is there anything else you would like to share regarding your experiences with spoken English and grammar in your first year at university?

Lastly, students were asked to provide any more information regarding their experience with spoken English and grammar, two students declared that they don't have anything to add, student '2' reported that (*learning English grammar is fun up to now*), student '4' said that (*they need to practice their spoken English and grammar more*), while student '5' left the section blank.

2-Oral, semi-structured interview:

The researchers conducted a semi-structured oral interview using Hoa et al. (2022) design to understand EFL learners' language learning experiences, preferences, and challenges. The interview focused on past tense usage, preferences, and present tense usage. The researchers also asked about students' difficulties in English communication and resources for improvement. A self-assessment section was included to encourage participants to reflect on their responses.

Discussion:

The result of the oral interview was analysed based on the theory of errors proposed by Dulay et al. (1982 in Ellis and Barkhuizen, 2005), Surface Strategy Taxonomy.

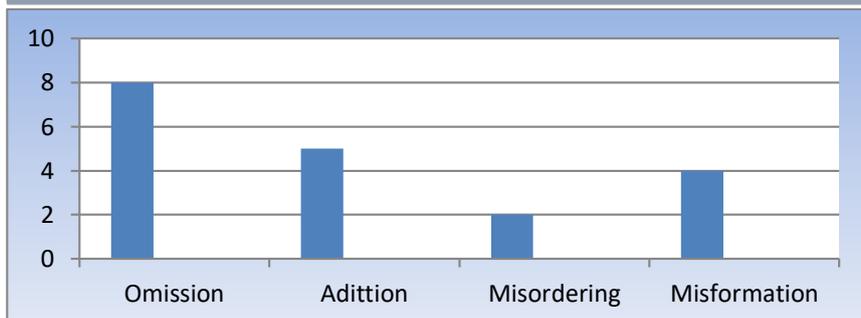


Figure 2. . Types of Errors on EFL Students' speaking practice

As seen in Figure 2, the omission error was the most dominant occurred in students' speaking practice, with 8-time occurrences, then followed by addition with 5-time occurrences, next misformation with 4-time occurrences, and the last followed by misordering with 2-time occurrences. After collecting and analyzing the data, the authors found there were 19 errors made by EFL students on their speaking practice. Table 1 below shows the details of the type of error, number, and percentage.

Table 1 the frequency of errors

Error Category	Number	Percentage
Omission	8	43%
Addition	5	26%
Misordering	2	10%
Misformation	4	21%
Total Error	19	

Based on Table 1, 43 % from 8 data belongs to omission errors as the most committed error. The second most committed errors uttered by EFL students is addition with 26.26% total cases. The findings also show 4 misformation errors, with 21.03 % total cases. The last, misformation errors occur 2 times out of 19 cases, 10%.

The omission errors :

The omission errors are frequently appeared in this study. Omission errors usually occur when the linguistic item required in the sentence is omitted, e.g., the university is nice place. Here the article “a” is omitted , which is required for the correct construction of the sentence (Jabeen et al., 2015). So, there are 8 omission errors found on EFL students’ speaking practice. Table 2 will present the details.

Table 2 omission errors

	<i>Student's utterance</i>	<i>Alternative correction</i>
<i>Omission errors</i>	I made a lot of mistake	I made a lot of mistakes
	I not remember	I do not remember
	I go it	I go to it
<i>Total (%)</i>	43%	

Based on the data findings, the omission errors were most dominant uttered by the participants. As seen in the first sample, the EFL student stated “*a lot of mistake*” without the morpheme “s.” The word “mistake” is a countable noun, so it requires to add the morpheme “-s/-es” to show the plural nouns. Then followed by the second example “*I not remember*”, the EFL student omit the auxiliary verb “do” in this utterances when she was expressing her inability to remember a certain incident in her life. And lastly, “*I go it*”, which is the correct construction is by adding the preposition “to” after verb “go”, because verb “go” followed by to plus the infinitive of the verb.

The addition errors:

Addition errors are grammatical errors which are caused by the presence of a form or an element that must not appear in a well-formed utterance (Tizazu, 2014). Data analysis reveals that 5 out of 19 cases are categorized as addition errors.

Table 3 the addition errors

	<i>Student's utterance</i>	<i>Alternative correction</i>
<i>Addition errors</i>	I love it is very much	I love it very much
	The first time when I started	The first time I started
	Online courses they are so helpful	Online courses are so helpful
<i>Total (%)</i>	26%	

In Table 3, the authors explained the addition errors in detail. The first addition error was the utterance “*I love it is very much.*”, whereas after the pronoun “it” it should not be followed by an auxiliary verb, it is not required to add the verb 'is' anymore after it. Then the second sample is “*the first time when I started*”, the relative pronoun “when” is not required in this case. The last example of this sample in the Table 3 above is “*online courses they are so helpful.*”, this student added the pronoun 'they' which is not required in this utterances.

The misordering errors

The misordering errors are caused by incorrect placement of a morpheme or group of morphemes in a given utterance. Essentially, there are only two cases categorized as misordering errors. The following table will explain in the detail the findings on misordering error. Misordering errors is the least occurred in this study.

Table 4 the misordering errors

	<i>Student's utterance</i>	<i>Alternative correction</i>
<i>misordering errors</i>	History I find boaring	I find History boaring
	The day died grandmother	The day grandmother died
<i>Total (%)</i>	10%	

As seen in Table 4, the first sample is misordering of the noun of the subject 'History', and the second sample is misordering of the noun, "died my grandmother." it should be a noun followed by a verb, not the opposite.

The misformation errors:

Misformation error is distinguished by the use of the wrong form of the morpheme or structure. Table 5 provide more detail explanation.

Table 5 the misformation errors

	<i>Student's utterance</i>	<i>Alternative correction</i>
<i>misformation errors</i>	I studied on a public school	I studied in a public school
	We will go to three years ago	We went to three years ago
	They was so big	They were so big
<i>Total (%)</i>	21%	

Based on the results, the characteristic of this error usually in a form of word misused as seen in Table 5. The first sample showed that the EFL student used the preposition 'on' in the sentence "I studied on a public school" even though the meaning is obvious, using the preposition 'in' will be more grammatically and semantically correct. The next misformation sample is "the Pyramids we will go to" it should be "we went to", it is the correct way to talk about their journey to the pyramids three years ago, the student used the verb 'will' which is used to talk about the future followed by the verb go. And lastly, the student used auxiliary "was" instead of 'were' to talk about the Pyramids.

Conclusion:

This study examined grammatical errors during EFL students' speaking practice. This study involved first-year students at Omar Al-Mukhtar University. The authors used audio recordings of EFL students' interactions to analyse their data. Dulay et al. (1982) and Tizazu (2014) identified four types of defects in surface structure: addition, omission, misformation, and misordering. Based on the data analysis and discussion, it was obvious that omission errors are mainly uttered by the participants; 8 out of 19 errors were omission errors, which were the most frequently committed error by EFL students (43%). This is followed by addition

(26%), misformation (21%), and misordering (10%).

By analysing these errors, the teacher can identify the students' drawbacks when learning English and therefore identify the common errors.

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Appendix:

Questionnaire:

Section 1: Background Information

- Q 1-Demographics : -Age العمر

- 20-18
- 23-20
- 26-24
- +27

- Q 2- Gender : -جنسك

- Male
- Female

- Q3 -What influenced your decision to study English at the university level?

- ما الذي أثر في قرارك لكي تدرس اللغة الإنجليزية في المرحلة الجامعية؟

- اهتمام شخصي Personal interest
- متطلبات دراسي Academic requirements
- لتحقيق أهداف مهنية Career goals
- *-اهداف أخرى.....:Other (please specify):.....

- Q 4-What resources do you primarily use to learn English? (select all that apply)

-ما هي المصادر التي تستخدمها لتعلم اللغة الإنجليزية؟-

-Textbooks كُتب دراسية

-Online courses 1 دروس عن طريق الإنترنت

-Language learning Apps تطبيقات لتعلم اللغة الإنجليزي ة

- Language courses and classes -دروس و تقويات

-Others (please specify).....أخرى.....

- Q5-On average, how many hours a day do you use English?

- كم ساعة تقريبا تستعمل اللغة في يومك ؟
- Less than 1 hour أقل من ساعة ○ 2-1hours
- 4-3hours or more

- Q6 -In what situations or contexts do you primarily use English on campus?

- ما هي المواقف و الأحاديث التي تستعمل فيها اللغة؟

- الصفوف Classes
- الحياة الاجتماعية Socializing
- اشياء أخرى:.....

- Q7-How do you usually communicate in English? كيف تتواصل عادة باللغة

- الإنجليزية؟

- Speaking بالمحادثة
- Writing بالكتابة
- Both

- Q 8-Do you participate in any English-speaking clubs or activities on campus?

- هل تشارك في أي أندية أو أنشطة تتعلق باللغة الإنجليزية في الحرم الجامعي؟

- Yes
- No

- Q 9-What subjects or topics do you feel more confident discussing in English?

- ما الأمور أو المواضيع التي تشعر بالثقة في مناقشتها باللغة الإنجليزية؟

- Academic subjects - مواضيع أكاديمية ○ Social topics - مواضيع اجتماعية
- Both كلاهما

- Q 10-Are there specific verb tenses that you find challenging?

- هل هناك أزمنة فعل معينة تجدها صعبة؟

- Present مضارع
- Past ماضي
- Future مستقبل
- All الجميع

- Q 11-In a casual conversation , have you find yourself arranging the words in your head before saying them?

- في المحادثات اليومية، هل تقوم بترتيب الكلمات في رأسك قبل قولها؟

- Yes No

- Q 12-How do you actively work on expanding your academic vocabulary and improving article usage?

- كيف تعمل بنشاط على توسيع مفرداتك الأكاديمية وتحسين استخدام المقالات؟

- Reading more Speaking more Using vocabulary apps
- Other (please specify):.....

Q 13-What methods or resources do you use to learn and practice English grammar, particularly in relation to your university studies?

- ما هي الطرق أو الموارد التي تستخدمها لتعلم وممارسة قواعد اللغة الإنجليزية، خاصة فيما يتعلق بدراساتك الجامعية؟

- Grammar textbooks كتب قواعد
- Online resources موارد عن طريق الإنترنت
- Language exchange تبادل اللغة
- Other (please specify):.....

Q 14-How do you prefer to receive feedback on your spoken English, especially in an academic setting?

- كيف تفضل أن تتلقى ردود الفعل على لغتك الإنجليزية المنطوقة، خاصة في سياق أكاديمي؟

- تصحيح مباشر Direct correction
- تصحيح الأخطاء مع المجموعة Group feedback
- Other (please specify):.....
- لم استعمل أي من المذكور Have not used any of the above.

Additional Comments

- Q 15- Is there anything else you would like to share regarding your experiences with spoken English and grammar in your first year at university?

- هل هناك أي شيء آخر تود أن تشاركه فيما يتعلق بتجاربك مع اللغة الإنجليزية وقواعد اللغة في أول سنة لك في الجامعة؟

.....

Oral Interview

- 1- Tell me about your educational background and language learning experiences?
- تحدث عن حياتك العلمية و تجاربك في تعلم اللغة الإنجليزية؟
- 2- Can you tell me about a memorable event from your past?
- هل يمكن أن تخبرني عن حدث لا يمكنك أن تنساه من ماضيك؟
- 3- Describe a place you have visited recently?
- قم بوصف المكان الذي قمت بزيارته مؤخراً؟
- 4- What is your favourite subject, and why?
- ماهي مادتك المفضلة. و لماذا؟
- 5- What's your favorite type of music, and why?
- ما نوع الموسيقى المفضل لديك. و لماذا؟
- 6- Discuss your favorite English-language movie or book?
- ناقش الفيلم أو الكتاب المفضل لديك باللغة الإنجليزية؟
- 7- Describe a situation where you had to communicate in English to achieve a goal?
- صف موقفًا كان عليك فيه التواصل باللغة الإنجليزية لتحقيق هدف ما؟
- 8- what do you usually do during your typical morning routine?
- ما الذي تفعله عادة خلال صباحك؟
- 9- What do you usually do in your free time?
- ماذا تقوم عادة في أوقات فراغك؟
- 10- Talk about your ambitious for the next five years?
- تحدث عن طموحك للخمس سنوات القادمة؟
- 11- What are the challenges you face when communicating in English?
- ماهي الصعوبات التي تواجهها عند التحدث باللغة الإنجليزية؟
- 12- What are the sources you use to improve your English?
- ما الموارد التي تستخدمها لتحسين مستواك في اللغة الإنجليزية؟
- 13- After reviewing your responses, please identify any grammatical errors you have noticed. If you have not identify any errors, you may leave this section blank?
- بعد مراجعة ردودك، قم بتصحيح أي أخطاء نحوية لاحظتها في إجاباتك.
إذا لم تقم بتحديد أية أخطاء، فيمكنك ترك هذا السؤال فارغاً؟