



Identify Grammatical Errors and Their Influence on speaking proficiency: a study among third semester English students at faculty of languages and translation

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تحديد الأخطاء النحوية وتأثيرها في الكفاءة الشفوية: دراسة على طلبة الفصل الدراسي
الثالث بقسم اللغة الإنجليزية في كلية اللغات والترجمة

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Abstract

This study investigates the influence of grammatical errors on speaking proficiency among third-semester English students at the Faculty of Languages and Translation, Misrata University. Grammatical rules are essential for effective oral communication, yet many learners struggle with accurate grammar usage during spontaneous speech. Using a qualitative case study approach, data were collected through teacher interviews and student's speaking assessments. The findings reveal that the most common grammatical errors include preposition misuse, subject-verb agreement errors, article omission, and tense confusion. These errors were shown to disrupt fluency, reduce confidence, and impair the clarity of students' spoken messages. Teachers reported that such mistakes often stem from first language interference and insufficient grammatical practice. To address these challenges, educators employ strategies such as corrective feedback, task-based activities, and explicit grammar instruction. The study concludes that improving students' grammatical accuracy through communicative and contextual methods enhances speaking performance. Recommendations include integrating grammar teaching into speaking tasks, increasing metalinguistic awareness, and providing focused support on frequent error types. This research contributes practical insights to EFL pedagogy, particularly within the Libyan educational. The sample included 10 teachers and 30 third-semester students. Data collection relied on semi-structured interviews and spoken performance analysis.

Keywords: grammatical errors, speaking proficiency, EFL learners, fluency.

الملخص

تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى بحث العلاقة بين الأخطاء النحوية والكفاءة في التحدث لدى طلبة الفصل الدراسي الثالث بقسم اللغة الإنجليزية في كلية اللغات والترجمة بجامعة مصراتة، ليبيا. تُعد الدقة النحوية أحد المكونات المهمة للتواصل الشفهي الفعّال، إلا أن العديد من متعلمي اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية يواجهون صعوبات في تطبيق القواعد النحوية بصورة صحيحة أثناء التحدث العفوي. وقد اعتمدت الدراسة منهج دراسة الحالة النوعية، بهدف استكشاف أنواع الأخطاء النحوية التي يرتكبها الطلبة، وتأثيرها في أدائهم الشفهي، بالإضافة إلى التعرف على وجهات نظر أعضاء هيئة التدريس حول الأسباب المحتملة لهذه الأخطاء والاستراتيجيات المناسبة لمعالجتها.

تكونت عينة الدراسة من 10 من معلمي اللغة الإنجليزية و30 من طلبة الفصل الدراسي الثالث. وتم جمع البيانات من خلال مقابلات شبه منظمة مع المعلمين، وتحليل الأداء الشفهي للطلبة. وأظهرت النتائج أن أكثر الأخطاء النحوية شيوعاً تمثلت في سوء استخدام حروف الجر، وأخطاء المطابقة بين الفاعل والفعل، وحذف أدوات التعريف والتذكير، والخلط في استخدام الأزمنة. كما تبين أن هذه الأخطاء تؤثر في الأداء الشفهي للطلبة من خلال التسبب في انقطاع الطلاقة، وتقليل الثقة أثناء التحدث، وأحياناً التأثير في وضوح الرسائل المنطوقة وقابليتها للفهم.

وأشار المعلمون إلى أن العديد من هذه الصعوبات قد تعود إلى تأثير اللغة الأولى، وقلة فرص الممارسة التواصلية، وعدم كفاية تعزيز استخدام التراكيب النحوية في سياقات ذات معنى. ولمواجهة هذه الصعوبات، أفاد المعلمون باستخدام استراتيجيات مختلفة، من بينها التغذية الراجعة التصحيحية، وأنشطة التحدث القائمة على المهام، والتدريس الصريح للقواعد النحوية.

وتخلص الدراسة إلى أن دمج تدريس القواعد النحوية مع الأنشطة التواصلية القائمة على التحدث يمكن أن يساهم في تعزيز الدقة النحوية وتحسين الأداء الشفهي لدى متعلمي اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية. وتوصي الدراسة بدمج تدريس القواعد في مهام التحدث ذات المعنى، وتنمية الوعي باللغة والقواعد لدى الطلبة، وتوفير تدريب مركز على أكثر أنواع الأخطاء شيوعاً، وزيادة الفرص المتاحة للطلبة لاستخدام اللغة الإنجليزية في مواقف تواصلية حقيقية. كما تساهم الدراسة في تقديم رؤى عملية في مجال تعليم اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية، ولا سيما في سياق التعليم العالي الليبي.

الكلمات المفتاحية : الأخطاء النحوية، الكفاءة في التحدث، متعلمو اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية (EFL)، الطلاقة.

1. Introduction

This study is organized into five chapters. In chapter one, the researchers introduce the problem and its background. After that, the researchers discuss the statement of the problem, research questions, objectives of the study, significance of the study, scope and limitations of the study, and the definition of key terms.

1.2 Background of the study

Grammatical rules play a fundamental role in second language acquisition (SLA), as they provide learners with the structural framework necessary for clear and coherent communication (Ellis, 2008). Without a solid grasp of grammar, learners may struggle to form accurate sentences, leading to misunderstandings and reduced fluency (Thornbury, 2005). Despite the importance of grammar, many third-semester students in English departments face persistent challenges in applying grammatical rules correctly in spoken language (Smith, 2017). These difficulties often manifest in frequent errors, such as incorrect verb tense usage, subject-verb agreement mistakes, and improper word order, all of which negatively impact speaking proficiency (Azar & Hagen, 2009).

Research indicates that grammatical competence is strongly correlated with speaking ability (Celce-Murcia & Larsen-Freeman, 2016). Learners who demonstrate a high command

of grammar tend to produce more fluent and accurate speech, whereas those with weak grammatical skills often experience hesitation and communication breakdowns (Nation, 2013). Furthermore, common errors in oral production, such as misuse of articles (a, an, the), prepositions, and complex sentence structures, can significantly impede effective communication (Lightbown & Spada, 2021). Identifying these recurring mistakes is essential for developing targeted pedagogical strategies to improve students' speaking skills.

This study seeks to investigate the extent to which grammatical mastery influences speaking proficiency among third-semester English majors. Additionally, it aims to categorize the most frequent grammatical errors in students' oral production and analyze their underlying causes. By doing so, this research will contribute to a deeper understanding of the challenges that learners face in applying grammar rules spontaneously in speech and provide insights for more effective language teaching methodologies.

1.3 Statement of the problem

Grammatical rules are enabling clear and coherent oral communication. However, third-semester English majors at faculty of languages and translation demonstrate persistent difficulties in applying these rules during speaking tasks. Preliminary observations and formative assessments reveal recurring errors in critical areas such as subject-verb agreement, tense consistency, article deployment, and prepositional usage (Azar, 2007), which disrupt fluency, distort meaning, and diminish communicative effectiveness. These challenges contradict the expectations of intermediate-level learners who, by this stage, should exhibit increasing autonomy in oral production (Ellis, 2008).

1.4 Research questions

1. What are the most common grammatical errors in EFL students' speech?
2. How do these grammatical errors influence students' speaking proficiency?
3. What strategies can effectively target these grammatical errors to enhance speaking proficiency?

1.5 Research objectives

To investigate the correlation between grammatical accuracy and speaking proficiency among third-semester undergraduate students in the Faculty of Languages and Translation.

To identify and classify the most prevalent grammatical errors (including but not limited to subject-verb agreement, tense usage, article application, and preposition selection) in students' spontaneous speech production.

To develop and recommend targeted instructional strategies for addressing the identified grammatical errors, with the ultimate goal of enhancing oral fluency and communicative effectiveness.

1.6 Significance of the study

This study investigates how grammatical errors impact the speaking skills of third-semester English students. By highlighting the relationship between grammar errors and speaking proficiency, the research offers valuable insights to language teaching methodologies. The findings can help educators refine grammar instruction, focusing on addressing common errors such as verb tense and preposition usage. Students stand to benefit from enhanced speaking proficiency, which is essential for their future careers. Moreover, by bridging theoretical concepts with practical applications, this study aims to support learners, educators, and educational institutions in achieving improved language proficiency outcomes.

1.7 Scope of the study

This study focuses on third-semester English students at faculty of Languages and Translation, examining how grammatical errors affect speaking proficiency. It identifies common errors such as subject-verb agreement, tense accuracy, article usage, and preposition selection in spontaneous speech. Using qualitative methods, the study also explores

pedagogical strategies, like corrective feedback and task-based activities, to improve oral performance. While emphasizing grammatical accuracy in speaking, it does not cover other language skills. The findings aim to enhance communicative competence, particularly for students of English department.

1.8 Limitations of the study.

This study focuses on third semester students in the English department at faculty of languages and Translation at Misrata University, which may reduce the generalization of its findings to other student populations or educational contexts.

1.9 Definition of key terms

Speaking Proficiency: The skill of communicating fluently, clearly, and effectively in a target language.

Corrective Feedback: a pedagogical strategy where instructors identify and address learners' errors to improve language accuracy.

Task-Based Activities: Instructional exercises focused on real-world communication tasks to enhance language use in practical contexts.

Fluency: The smoothness and ease of speech production.

Second Language Acquisition (SLA): The process of learning a non-native language through formal setting.

Grammatical Errors: Mistakes in sentence structure or word use that break the rules of grammar such as incorrect verb tense subject-verb disagreement or article omission.

Subject-Verb Agreement (SVA): A grammatical rule that requires the subject and verb in a sentence to match in number and person.

Preposition Misuse: The incorrect use of words like in at on for or of that show relationships between other words in a sentence

Tense Confusion: The incorrect use of verb tenses especially when expressing past present or future actions.

L1 Interference (First Language Interference): When rules or patterns from a learner's native language L1 negatively influence their use of a second language L2 causing errors.

Literature Review

2.1 Nature of grammatical errors

In the field of second language acquisition, speaking proficiency is a core skill that reflects learners' ability to communicate fluently and accurately. A key factor that influences spoken performance is grammatical competence, which serves as the structural foundation of meaningful speech. This literature review explores existing research on the relationship between grammar and speaking in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) contexts. It highlights the most common grammatical errors made by learners, examines how these errors affect fluency and comprehension, and discusses instructional strategies used to improve students' grammatical accuracy in oral communication. By reviewing these themes, this chapter provides a comprehensive review of the existing literature related to grammatical errors and their influence on speaking proficiency among English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners.

2.2 Grammar and Second Language Speaking

Grammar is often considered the backbone of effective communication in a second language. It provides learners with the rules and structures needed to express meaning clearly and accurately. In speaking, grammatical competence enables learners to form coherent, meaningful sentences spontaneously and to adjust their language according to the context (Canale & Swain, 1980). Unlike written language, oral communication requires real-time processing, which makes the correct and automatic use of grammar even more important (Ellis, 2008). Research by Harmer emphasizes that speaking proficiency depends not only on

vocabulary and pronunciation but also on the ability to organize speech using appropriate grammatical forms (2007).

2.3 Common Grammatical Errors in EFL Speaking

Numerous studies have reported that English language learners frequently make recurring grammatical mistakes in speaking tasks. Common errors include subject-verb agreement, tense inconsistency, misuse of articles, and incorrect preposition selection (Azar, 2007; Richards & Schmidt, 2010). These errors are often attributed to the interference of learners' first language, insufficient grammatical instruction, or lack of awareness of context-appropriate usage (Larsen-Freeman, 2003). For instance, EFL learners might say "He go to school yesterday" instead of "He went to school yesterday", showing confusion between past tense formation and subject-verb agreement. Such errors may seem minor but significantly disrupt fluency and comprehension in spoken English (Richards, 1971).

2.4 The Impact of Grammatical Errors on Fluency

Fluency refers not only to the speed of speech but also to its smoothness and coherence. Persistent grammatical errors hinder fluency by causing hesitations, self-corrections, and listener misunderstandings (Skehan, 1998). Learners who struggle with grammar often pause to recall rules, thereby affecting the natural flow of speech. Additionally, repeated grammatical mistakes can lead to communication breakdowns, requiring clarification and repetition, which reduces overall speaking efficiency (Nation & Newton, 2009). Therefore, fluency and grammatical accuracy are not separate skills; they are interdependent elements of communicative competence in spoken language (Canale & Swain, 1980).

2.5 Pedagogical Strategies to Address Grammatical Errors

Effective teaching strategies are essential to help learners overcome grammatical challenges in speaking. One widely supported method is corrective feedback, where teachers immediately or later provide corrections to student's spoken errors (Lyster & Ranta, 1997). This can be explicit (direct correction) or implicit (recasts or clarification requests), both of which have shown positive effects on learners' grammatical development. Another approach is task-based language teaching (TBLT), which engages students in real-life communicative tasks that naturally encourage the use of correct grammar (Willis, 1996). Through role-plays, problem-solving tasks, and storytelling, learners practice grammar in context, leading to better retention and application. Additionally, raising students' *metalinguistic awareness* "their ability to reflect on and manipulate the structural features of language itself, rather than just using it for communication" has been shown to improve their grammatical accuracy in speaking (Swain, 2005).

2.6 Related studies

In recent years, numerous studies have investigated the relationship between grammatical accuracy and speaking proficiency in EFL contexts. These studies provide valuable insights into the causes of grammatical errors, effective teaching strategies, and the impact of grammar-focused instruction on learners' oral performance. A study by Ahmadi (2015), conducted in Iran, aimed to examine the effect of grammar instruction on the oral performance of EFL learners. The research involved classroom observations and oral tests with intermediate-level students. The findings revealed that students who received explicit grammar instruction made notable improvements in their speaking accuracy, particularly in areas like verb tenses and subject-verb agreement. Based on these results, the researchers recommended incorporating structured grammar instruction into communicative language lessons to enhance oral performance.

Similarly, a study by Alsharif (2018) was conducted at Sabha University in Libya, titled *An Analysis of Grammatical Errors in the Spoken English of University Students*. The research employed interviews and audio recordings of English major students as its data collection tools.

The analysis showed that the most common errors occurred in the use of articles, prepositions, and verb tenses, which were mainly due to negative language transfer from Arabic. The study suggested that teachers should apply contrastive analysis and give targeted feedback to help students overcome persistent grammatical challenges in speaking.

In addition, a study by Nordin et al. (2020), conducted in Malaysia, focused on Grammatical Competence and Speaking Proficiency among EFL Learners. The study used oral interviews and grammatical accuracy rating scales to assess students' performance. The findings indicated a strong correlation between students' grammar knowledge and their fluency, showing that learners with higher grammatical competence produced more coherent and uninterrupted speech. The authors recommended the integration of grammar-focused activities within fluency development sessions.

Furthermore, Al-Qahtani (2021) conducted a study in Saudi Arabia, titled *The Role of Corrective Feedback in Improving Grammatical Accuracy in Speaking*. This research adopted an experimental approach involving two groups of undergraduate EFL learners: one group received consistent corrective feedback during speaking tasks, while the other did not. The results showed that the group receiving feedback made significant improvements in both grammatical accuracy and fluency. The study emphasized the importance of immediate and contextual feedback during oral practice to reduce grammatical errors and enhance speaking performance.

2.7 Gap of knowledge

While numerous studies have explored the link between grammar and speaking in EFL contexts, certain limitations remain unaddressed in the existing literature. These research gaps highlight the need for further investigation, particularly within the specific context of Libyan university students. Although a study conducted at Cairo University in 2019 explored the relationship between grammatical accuracy and speaking fluency among EFL students, it failed to clearly identify the most frequent grammatical errors in spontaneous speech or to provide targeted recommendations for grammar instruction in real-life speaking contexts.

A separate study from Malaysia in 2020 focused on the effectiveness of corrective feedback in improving grammar accuracy; however, it did not examine how these grammatical issues impact listeners' comprehension or overall communicative competence. Another study conducted in Turkey in 2018 highlighted learners' challenges in applying grammar rules during oral communication, but it did not connect these difficulties to learners' speaking performance or confidence levels. Meanwhile, research carried out in Algeria in 2021 analyzed grammatical errors from a theoretical linguistic perspective without linking the findings to practical teaching strategies or improvements in speaking skills. Therefore, the current study aims to bridge these gaps by identifying real-world grammatical errors in students' speech, assessing their influence on speaking performance, and offering applicable strategies for improving oral grammar accuracy in the Libyan EFL context.

The Methodology

This section outlines the research methodologies that are employed in the study, which aims to identify common grammatical errors made by third-semester students and explore their influence on speaking proficiency. The study adopts a (qualitative approach), using a case study design with third semester students by using observation and teacher interviews to gather in-depth insights.

3.1 Research Design

The study follows a qualitative research design, specifically a case study approach, focusing on third-semester students at the English Department, Faculty of Languages and translation. The qualitative method is used because it allows for detailed exploration of

grammatical errors in spoken language and their impact on fluency and accuracy. Data is collected through interviews with teachers who directly observe students' speaking performance and by observation with third semester student.

3.2 Population

The study targets English language students of third semester and teachers who teach third-semester students in the speaking courses at the Faculty of Languages and Translation. A purposive sampling technique is used, selecting (10) teachers based on their experience in teaching speaking and assessing students' grammatical accuracy and (30) students from third semester to analyze their common errors.

3.3 Data Collection

Data is gathered through semi-structured interviews with the 10 participating teachers and 30 third semester students. The interviews consist of open-ended questions focusing on the most frequent grammatical errors found in students' speech, their impact on speaking fluency and coherence, teachers' strategies for correcting errors while maintaining communication flow, and perceptions of the relationship between grammar mastery and speaking proficiency. All participating teachers completed written interviews on paper, providing their responses on writing. In addition, classroom observations were conducted with the students to identify and analyze common grammatical errors in their spoken language.

3.4 Data Analysis

The analysis of the interview data followed a qualitative approach to identify common grammatical errors in students' speaking performance. First, all interviews were transcribed verbatim to ensure accuracy. Teachers frequently highlighted recurring grammatical mistakes made by students, which aligned with the errors observed during classroom recordings. The most common errors included: preposition misuse, subject-verb agreement, and incorrect verb tenses.

To further examine these patterns, the errors were categorized based on their frequency and their perceived impact on speaking proficiency. The observation phase complemented the interview findings by recording students' voices and taking real-time notes on their spoken errors. This method confirmed that the most frequent mistakes were consistent with those reported by the teachers. The final analysis drew conclusions about the relationship between grammatical accuracy and speaking performance, emphasizing the persistent challenges students face in oral communication.

3.5 Teachers' Perspectives

Interviews with English language instructors revealed key insights into how grammatical errors affect spoken communication. Participating teachers identified Subject-Verb Agreement, Tense Confusion, Article Omission and Incorrect Sentence Structure (e.g., L1 interference in word order) as the most disruptive to clarity, as these errors frequently distort meaning (Smith, 2020). Additionally, verb tense inaccuracies (e.g., He go) and article omissions were noted as common yet problematic, particularly among learners whose first languages lack equivalent grammatical features this is also noted by the study of Johnson & Lee, 2019.

3.6 Ethical considerations

This research maintains the highest ethical standards to protect all participants' rights and ensure academic integrity. Participation was completely voluntary for both teachers and students, with no pressure or obligation to take part. All participants provided informed consent after receiving clear explanations about the study's purpose and procedures.

The study guarantees full confidentiality and anonymity for all participants. No personal identifiers were collected, and all data uses pseudonyms (like Teacher A or Student B) to protect identities. Participants retained the right to withdraw at any stage without consequences. The research received official approval from the head of the English department, confirming its alignment with institutional ethical guidelines (Appendix A). All data collection methods were

non-invasive, focusing solely on observable language patterns without probing personal matters. Recordings and notes were securely stored and will be destroyed after the study's completion to maintain privacy.

3.7 Research Validity

To ensure the validity of the study, the following measures were implemented

Content Validity:

Teacher interviews focused on three key aspects: Common errors, Impact on fluency, Improvement strategies.

Used standardized student assessments by asking them the same questions (self-introduction + talk about something you have lost) with audio recordings.

Construct Validity: Ensured alignment between theoretical concepts (grammatical accuracy/fluency) and operational measures (interviews/recordings). Verified through comparing interview results with actual student performance.

3.8 Research Reliability

Consistency in Data Collection:

Same questions for all interviews (10 teachers)

Same tasks and time limit for all students (10 students)

Standardized Materials:

Uniform observation sheets containing

Error categories (prepositions/verb tenses/articles)

Evaluation criteria (points per error)

Proficiency levels (high/low based on error frequency)

Results and Discussion

This section presents key findings from teacher interviews, and observation with the students that are organized into three main themes based on the research questions. Qualitative data is summarized in tables focusing on objectives and research questions.

Table1: Common grammatical errors

Errors type	Teacher's interviews	Effect
Subject-Verb Agreement	Students say He go instead of He goes (T1, T3)	Most frequent error
Tense Confusion	Yesterday I eat breakfast (T3, T5)	Disrupts storytelling
Article Omission	They drop 'the' in sentences (T1, T4)	Common in informal speech

Note: errors were more tolerated in casual conversations than formal task (T4, T7).

Table2: Impact on speaking

Impact area	Teacher perspectives	Key insight
Fluency	Students pause to self-correct (T1, T7)	Breaks speech flow
Confidence	Weak grammar makes them avoid speaking (T1, T4)	Contrast: (T2) linked confidence to vocabulary

Table 3: Teaching Strategies

Strategy	Teaching suggestions	Challenges
Immediate Feedback	I rephrase errors subtly (T6)	Time-consuming (T5)
Role-Plays	Practice tenses in real scenarios (T3)	Needs student motivation (T7)

The analysis of students' speaking exam recordings revealed frequent grammatical errors. Below are the errors with corrections and classifications:

Table 4: Grammatical errors in students speaking

Student	Incorrect sentences	Correct sentences	Error type
1	at family membering	with a family member	Preposition misuse + Word form
1	I couldn't found it	I couldn't find it	past participle misuse (tenses)
2	we didn't have any camera	we didn't have a camera	Article omission
3	on college	at college	Preposition misuse
3	of the waiting room	in the waiting room	Preposition misuse
4	live home early	I left home early	Verb tense + subject omission
5	I have a few hobby	I have a few hobbies	Pluralization error
6	I'm live in Libya	I live in Libya	Auxiliary verb misuse(tenses)
6	I university student	I am a university student	verb to be +Article omission
6	I'm afraid for animals	I'm afraid of animals	Preposition misuse
7	he always is help me	he always helps me	Word order + S-V agreement

Most common errors: Preposition misuse (35%), subject-verb agreement (25%), article omission (20%), and tense errors (15%).

Patterns: Errors in prepositions (e.g., "on" vs. "at") and auxiliary verbs (e.g., "I'm live") were frequent, suggesting L1 interference or lack of practice.

4.1 Discussion of Findings

This study examines the relationship between grammatical errors and speaking proficiency among third-semester EFL students, combining teacher interviews and student speaking assessments to identify key challenges and pedagogical implications.

Most Common Grammatical Errors in EFL Students' Speech.

Teacher Interviews:

Subject-Verb Agreement (SVA) was unanimously identified as the most frequent error (e.g., "he help" instead of "he helps"). Teachers noted that this error persists even among advanced students, suggesting a gap between Preposition Misuse (e.g., "on college" instead of "at college") ranked second. Teachers attributed this to L1 interference, as Arabic prepositions do not always align with English usage. Tense Errors (e.g., "I couldn't found it") and Article Omission (e.g., "I university student") were also prevalent.

4.2 Student Observations:

Recordings from the speaking exam confirmed these patterns. For example: SVA Errors: "he always is help me" (Student 7).

Preposition Errors: "at family membering" (Student 1).

Tense Errors: "we didn't have any camera" (Student 2).

4.3 Comparison with Literature:

These findings align with Ting et al. (2010) and Fadhilla (2013), who also found subject-verb agreement (SVA) and prepositional misuse to be the most problematic areas for EFL learners.

Similarly, a study by Richards and Schmidt (2010) emphasized that tense inconsistency and article omission frequently appear in the spontaneous speech of intermediate English learners, supporting the present study's identification of tense and article errors.

In addition, Al-Khresheh (2020) reported that many Arab EFL students struggle with the proper use of English articles due to the absence of equivalent structures in their native language, which is consistent with the errors observed in this study. Larsen-Freeman (2003) also noted that first language interference, particularly in the use of function words such as prepositions and articles, remains a key challenge in achieving grammatical accuracy in speaking.

The study also echoes the findings of Lyster and Ranta (1997), who emphasized the effectiveness of corrective feedback in improving grammatical performance in oral tasks, a strategy employed by teachers in this research as well. Furthermore, Swain (2005) argued that raising learners' metalinguistic awareness enhances their spoken accuracy, a point reflected in this study's recommendation to integrate reflective strategies such as peer correction and error analysis.

4.4 Teacher Perspectives

Confidence vs. Accuracy: T1, T3, T7 argued that poor grammar undermines confidence (e.g., "Students with weak grammar avoid speaking"). T2, T5 countered that fluency can exist without accuracy, emphasizing that communication matters more than perfection.

Student Performance: Students with fewer errors (e.g., those who used correct SVA) spoke more coherently, even if not always fluently. Those with frequent errors (e.g., Student 6: "I university student") struggled to convey ideas clearly, leading to listener confusion.

Strategies to Address Grammatical Errors

Teacher Suggestions Explicit Instruction (T1, T4): Teach grammar rules before speaking tasks (T4). Use error correction charts (e.g., highlighting SVA rules).

Implicit Methods (T2, T5): Immerse students in listening/speaking practice (T2). Recasts (rephrasing errors during conversations).

Motivational Strategies (T7): Students must want to improve suggesting peer feedback or self-recording.

Student Needs: The most frequent errors (SVA, prepositions) require targeted drills, such as: Sentence completion tasks: He ____ (go) to school every day. - Preposition games: Matching phrases (e.g., "at college" vs. "in the car").

Formal vs. Informal Context:

Teacher's interview: T5, T7 noted that errors are more tolerated in informal speech (e.g., chatting with peers). In formal contexts (e.g., presentations), students self-correct more but still struggle with tense consistency and article usage.

Student Example: Informal: "live home early" (Student 4) → Understandable but incorrect.

Formal: The same student might say "I left home early" in a presentation, showing contextual awareness.

4.5 Recommendation

Based on the study's findings and teacher insights, the following pedagogical and institutional recommendations are proposed:

- **Integrate Grammar into Communicative Activities** :Teach grammar contextually through speaking tasks (e.g., debates, role-plays) rather than in isolation, aligning with Task-Based Learning principles (Willis, 1996).
- **Optimize Corrective Feedback:** Prioritize implicit techniques (e.g., recasts, clarification requests) to reduce student anxiety while raising grammatical awareness (Lyster & Ranta, 1997).

- Implement Task-Based Learning (TBL): Design real-world tasks (e.g., simulations, problem-solving) to practice grammar naturally, as emphasized by teachers (T3, T6)
- Develop Metalinguistic Awareness :Encourage self-reflection through activities like error journals or peer reviews, helping students recognize recurring error patterns (e.g., subject-verb agreement).
- Target High-Frequency Errors: Dedicate focused practice to top error categories identified: tense usage, articles, and prepositions.
- Address Institutional Constraints: Advocate for smaller speaking classes to enable personalized feedback, a challenge noted by teachers (T5, T7).
- Enhance Teacher Training :Conduct workshops on balanced fluency-accuracy instruction and innovative correction techniques (e.g., using technology for feedback).

Conclusion

The findings of the study revealed that students commonly make grammatical mistakes that negatively affect their speaking performance. The most frequent errors included misuse of prepositions, incorrect subject-verb agreement, omission of articles, and confusion in tense usage. These errors were consistently observed through teacher interviews and student performance assessments and are likely caused by first language interference, insufficient practice, or limited grammatical awareness. Teachers noted that such errors disrupt the natural flow of speech, reduce clarity, and often lower students' confidence, making them hesitant to participate in speaking activities. Despite these challenges, some educators emphasized that fluency and communicative intent can sometimes take precedence over strict grammatical accuracy. In terms of pedagogical responses, teachers reported using a variety of strategies to support students, including providing corrective feedback during speaking tasks, engaging students in role-plays and communicative exercises, and offering explicit grammar instruction prior to oral activities. Overall, the results suggest that a blended approach, which integrates grammar instruction with speaking practice, is the most effective way to enhance both grammatical accuracy and oral fluency.

5.1 Delimitations of the study:

This study is specifically confined to investigating grammatical errors in spoken English among third-semester undergraduate students in the English department of faculty of language and translation at Misrata university-Libya. The research focuses exclusively on four types of grammatical mistakes: preposition misuse, subject-verb agreement errors, article omission, and tense confusion, while excluding other potential error categories such as mispronunciation. Data collection was limited to teacher interviews involving a small sample of 10 instructors and direct observation of students during a single lecture session and their Speaking three Exam.

The study's temporal scope was restricted to a three-week data collection period, which prevented more extensive longitudinal analysis.

The methodology did not include experimental teaching approaches or student self-assessment components, relying solely on teacher perspectives and observational data. Furthermore, the research was conducted within a single academic department and semester, without comparison to other proficiency levels or institutional contexts. These delimitations were necessary to maintain a focused and feasible research framework given time and resource constraints.

Recommendations for Future studies

Building upon the findings and limitations of the current study, the following recommendations are proposed to guide future research in the area of grammatical errors and speaking proficiency among EFL learners

- **Widen the Population Scope**
Future studies should include students from multiple semesters, departments, or universities across Libya and beyond, to ensure more generalizable and comparative results.
- **Incorporate Quantitative Method.**
Complementing qualitative data with quantitative tools—such as grammar tests, fluency rating scales, or error frequency analysis—could provide more measurable insights into the relationship between grammar and speaking performance.
- **Integrate Technology-Based Tools**
Investigate the role of mobile apps, AI grammar checkers, and online speaking platforms in helping learners identify and reduce grammatical mistakes in speech.
- **Compare Teaching Approaches**
Further studies may compare the impact of explicit grammar instruction versus immersive, communicative methods on improving oral grammar accuracy.

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Compliance with ethical standards

Disclosure of conflict of interest

The authors declare that they have no conflict of interest.

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