

## CHAPTER FIVE

### PRESENTATION, DESCRIPTION AND DISCUSSION OF DATA

#### 5.0 Introduction:

This chapter reveals the data of the study showing the errors committed by students in each category. The previous chapter showed the methodology adopted in this research, in addition, after accounting for identification and classification of the errors made are presented in graphs and figures, as well as tables highlighting statistics of this study. Also, the chapter presents the data providing analysis of the errors committed by students.

Some of the techniques used for presenting the data are:

1. Raw scores: the researcher calculated the errors made by the students.
2. Percentage: this is the computation of each error made and the total number of errors committed, as explained previously.

Furthermore, this chapter addresses the errors that the data presents in detail, as well as showing the total number of errors committed in the area investigated. Ample examples of errors are provided for analysis, and explanations are provided for the sources of errors and the reconstruction of errors made.

In addition, a description of the errors made by students and their reconstructions are fixed as appendices for easy reference, i.e., *appendix B*, and *C* respectively.

#### 5.1 Classification of Errors

The errors in this study are classified into five categories, namely:

1. Tense form errors.
2. Disagreement errors.

3. Verb-noun misplacement errors.
4. Verb to be errors.
5. Verb negation errors.

As mentioned earlier, this is linguistics' classification, according to learner production, that is to say the errors determined the categories. Although, the classification of errors in this study are not fixed because the errors determined the category. Also, these classifications are not without their troubles because error classification, in general, is not an easy, or straightforward matter, particularly in the verb area, Haja (1991:311) states, "With regards to the (verb phrase), for example, verbal errors do not fall into error categories neatly." However, with regards to tense errors, the matter of classification of these errors is not easy, let alone the disagreement errors, this is a more tangled area because the errors depend, to a large extend, on the usage of pronouns, whether those pronouns are detached independent pronouns Damaa'ir munfaSilah ضمائر منفصلة, or attached suffixed pronouns Damaa'ir mut-taSilah ضمائر متصلة. That is why, sometimes it is very difficult to decide which category the error should be assigned. Consider the following examples:

1. نحن دائما يساعد الفقراء من مالنا
2. نحن يعيشون في نفس القرية
3. عندما انتهى الدروس

In the first sentence "naHnu daa'imaN yusaai'idu alfuqaraa'min maalinaa" (We use: 'He help' needy people from our money.) There is no concordance between the separated pronoun نحن (we) and the imperfect verb يساعد (to help).

Therefore, in order to reconstruct this sentence, one needs to reform the verb to the plural form نساعد (we help). However, this error is classified under disagreement errors (number). In the second sentence, "naHnu ya'ishwun fiy nafsi alqryh" (We 'they live' in the same village). Although there is an agreement between the independent pronoun نحن (We) and the imperfect verb يعيشون (they live) in number, but there is no concord in person, observe (we) and (they) this is why this error is classified under person error.

In the third example, "'indamaa `intahae alddurws" (When the lessons finished...), in this example, the learner omitted the letter ت 'taa' which denotes the feminine gender; therefore, the error in this sentence is classified under gender error. However, considering the third example as an error is according to what is taught in العربية للناشئين series 'the text book.'

Another reason for the difficulty of error classification appears from the distinction between grammatical words and lexical words that have been proposed by Quirk (1968), Hence, applying this distinction to the errors will cause difficulty. In his study Elhibir (1976:74) explains: "Errors related to verbs, nouns and adjectives, become grammatical errors only when these lexical words express grammatical meaning." Therefore, the errors may occur in the root of the word, that is to say "content words", in the function, or the structure of the word, i.e., grammatical, or "empty word." Consider the following sentence الطالبات اتصلن إلى المدرسة (aT-Taalibaatu `itaSalna `ilea `almdrasah) (female students 'contact' to the school). The verb used in this sentence should be وصلن (arrived), instead of اتصلن (contact) and the sentence after

reconstruction is “The female students arrived to the school.” Accordingly, in the classification of this error, one could classify this error as a lexical. The learner used the wrong form of the root, or a tense error, in which the learner had misused the rules governing the sequences of tenses in the original context. Subsequently, this study is concerned with verb inflection for tense, meanwhile, the previous error was counted as a tense error.

Matter (1978) is of the opinion that there is difficulty in classifying verb usage, “In actual verb-forms, the component grammatical meanings are often not so separable as one might think, in a particular tense, mood and aspect are often inextricably entwined.”

Notably, difficulty in classification generates possibility in reconstruction, Haja (1991:311) is also of this opinion. Haja elaborates, “Differences in plausible reconstruction would lead to differences in error categorization.” The table (5.1) below displays some erroneous sentences classified and corrected in various manners.

**Table 5.1**

*Possibility of Error Classification*

Erroneous structure	Possible classification	Plausible reconstruction
ودعا الله أن يحفظني	Past instead of present Disagreements in (person)	ودعوت أو وأدعو الله أن يحفظني
إذا كان أشعر بالتعب	Verb to be (kaana) addition Present instead of past	إذا كنت أو إذا شعرت

The table above shows that an error can be classified according to its reconstruction, and the reconstructing of an error can occur in different ways.

Therefore, looking at the first erroneous structure 'wa da'aa 'allaha 'an yaHfaZaniy', "He prays for Allah to protect me", there is no tense form sequence, and no agreement in person either. Accordingly, in order to reconstruct this sentence one has to correct the tense and the person, or persons. As a result, there are two different plausible reconstructions, classified in two different ways, as shown in the Table 5.1. Likewise, the error has been labeled as the past instead of the present, or disagreement in person. The error was counted once only, either as tense form error, or disagreement error, even though both of the reconstructions are grammatically accepted.

In the second structure, ('idhaa kaana 'ash'uru bilta'abi) "If I feel exhausted" the learner added the verb "to be" (كان), i.e., an addition of (kaana) error, one could say the learner used the third person كان (He was) in the place of the first person كنت (I was). The correction of the sentence requires either omission of the verb to be, or to reform the tense to be in the past form. One can cite numerous examples, which attest to this observation, note the following structure: إذا ارتفعت البضائع الناس في ماليزيا يخطط، ('idhaa 'irtafa't 'albaDaa'i' 'an-naas fy Malaysia yukhaTT, (If goods become expensive people in Malaysia 'will' plan). The error in this structure could be seen as the lack of concord in number between the grammatical subject الناس (plural) and the verb يخطط (singular). On the other hand, this error could also be classified under future tense because of the omission of the prefixed س from the imperfect يخطط (to plan).

The examples given show that an error can be described in different ways, although it refers to the same erroneous structure.

## 5.2 Statistical Analysis:

This section shows the statistic analysis of this study. The analysis of the statistics is discussed under three headings;

1. General statistical data.
2. Frequency of errors in the investigated area.
3. Mann-Whitney U test in gender differences.

However, the last heading is discussed under subjects' errors heading.

### 5.2.1 General Statistical Data

This section shows the data gathered from samples in this study with twenty students who participated in the study, four (4) males and (16) females. The table below, shows the mean, median, standard deviation, minimum, and maximum of the subjects.

**Table 5.2**

*Statistical data (all subjects)*

N		20
Mean		50.20
Median		52.50
Std. Deviation		11.99
Minimum		19
Maximum		67

### 5.2.2 Frequency of Errors in the Investigated Area

A total of 1062 errors were identified in the area investigated in this study. Though the errors in this study have been classified in five categories, viz. tense errors, disagreement errors, verb- noun misplacement errors, verb to be errors, and verb negation errors. In addition, errors after being subcategorized showed fourteen categories, see Table 5.2, Figure 5.1 and 5.2 which show the number of errors committed in the area investigated and their percentages.

**Table 5.3**  
*Frequency of Errors in Investigated Area*

No	Category of error	No of errors	Percentage of errors
1	Agreement (gender)	95	8.94
2	Agreement (number)	82	7.72
3	Agreement (person)	74	6.96
4	Verb to be / kaana addition	41	3.86
5	Verb to be / kaana omission	53	4.99
6	Noun instead of verb (N // V)	63	5.93
7	Past instead of present (TNS1)	416	39.17
8	Present instead of past (TNS2)	48	4.51
9	Past instead of future (TNS3)	05	0.47
10	Present instead of future (TNS4)	18	1.69
11	Future instead of past (TNS5)	01	0.09
12	Future instead of present (TNS6)	70	6.59
13	Verb negation (V-NEG)	26	2.44
14	Verb instead of noun (V // N)	70	6.59
	Total	1062	100

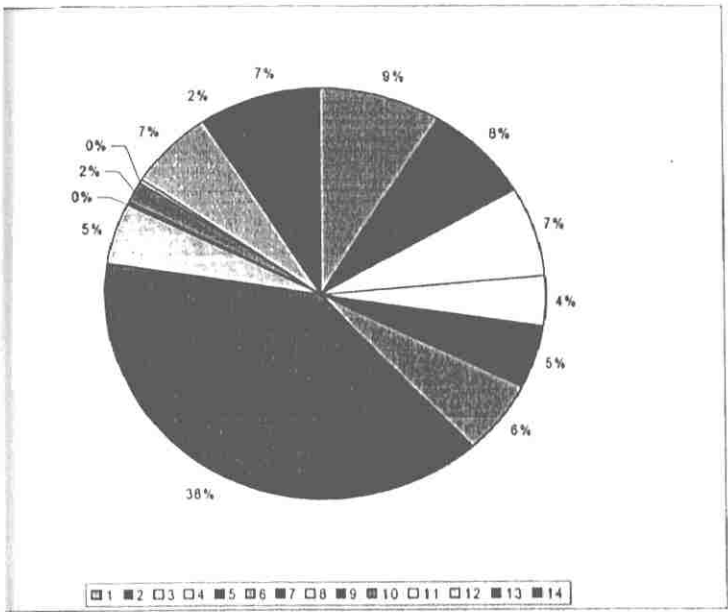


Figure 5.1

*Errors in the 14 areas investigated*

The pie chart above explains the fourteen categories of errors.

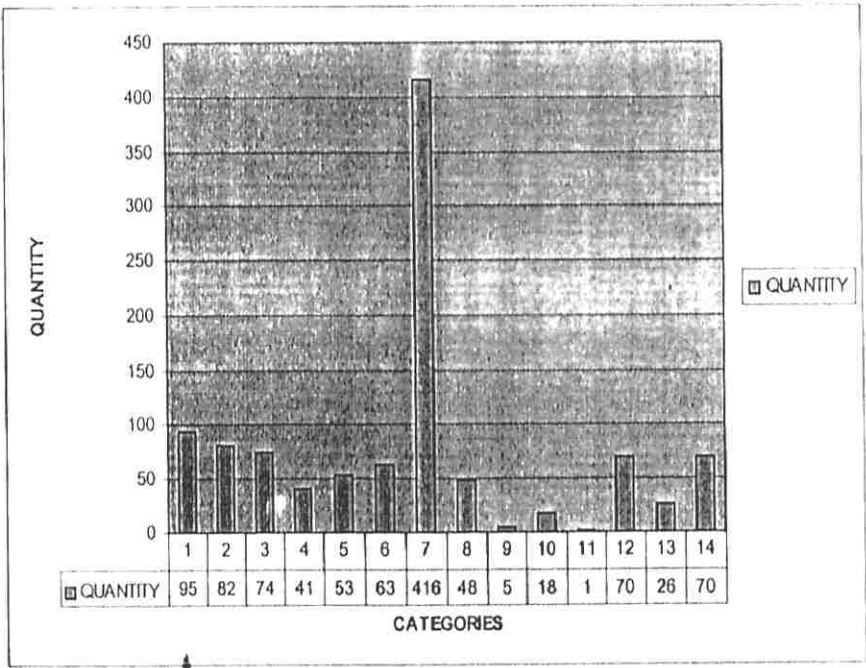


Figure 5.2 A Display of the 14 Error Categories and number of errors



Though the categories in this study are fourteen, it is noticeable that errors of the future, instead of the past and the past instead of the future, do not account for a high percentage. However, the researcher made the classification based on the linguistics data provided in addition to composition topics.

The most difficult construction shown in the table on the previous page is the usage of the past instead of the present; tense one (TNS1). This type of error occurred 416 times, a percentage of (39.17 %) from the total errors committed in the study. Incidentally, this is the most problematic and difficult area for Malay learners of the Arabic language. The most acceptable explanation for the frequency of this type of error is: the Arabic language has three forms of verbs , أمر , مضارع , ماضي these verbs form three tense forms (past, present, future). The original form of these verbs is the الماضي (maaDy) form. The Malay learners of Arabic language adhere to the original form الفعل الماضي and this maybe due to the teaching procedure that they learn using the past tense without its inflection for the present tense and the future tense. Also, the table shows the second type of frequently made error, agreement (gender). Students use the feminine subject with the masculine verb and vice versa. The total errors committed were (95), a percentage of (8.94 %). Gender errors attributed to the inherent difficulty of the target language because learners, in general, face difficulty in gender agreement. In addition, the influence of the mother tongue is another reason because the verb, in BM, is not inflected for gender. Moreover, insufficient mastery of syntax is another source of this phenomenon.

The least problematic area shown by the table is the usage of the future tense instead of the past tense, i.e., students do not use the future tense incorrectly. To explain why this is not a problem, it is almost certainly due to avoidance. The Malay learners of

Arabic tend to avoid using the future tense, and this is also ascribed to the insufficient mastery of syntax, and even less exposure to the target language.

### 5.3 Subjects' Errors

The analysis of the student's errors shows some differences in the performances of male and female students. However, the table below, and the figures, shows the errors committed by each student in this study four males and sixteen female students. The table delineates subject number, gender, total numbers of errors and percentages.

**Table 5.4** *Subjects' Errors*

Subjects	Gender	Total of errors	Percentage %
1	F	56	5.58
2	F	45	4.48
3	F	67	6.67
4	F	54	5.38
5	F	42	4.18
6	F	40	3.98
7	F	64	6.37
8	F	62	6.18
9	F	45	4.48
10	F	50	4.98
11	M	19	1.89
12	M	57	5.68
13	F	53	5.28
14	F	59	5.88
15	F	52	5.18
16	M	34	3.39
17	F	64	6.37
18	F	60	5.98
19	M	41	4.08
20	F	40	3.98

The errors committed by each student are shown on table 5.4. The table also shows subjects number: 11, 12, 16, and 19 are male students, whereas, the rest of the subjects were female.

The same data is also explained by the figure 5.3 below:

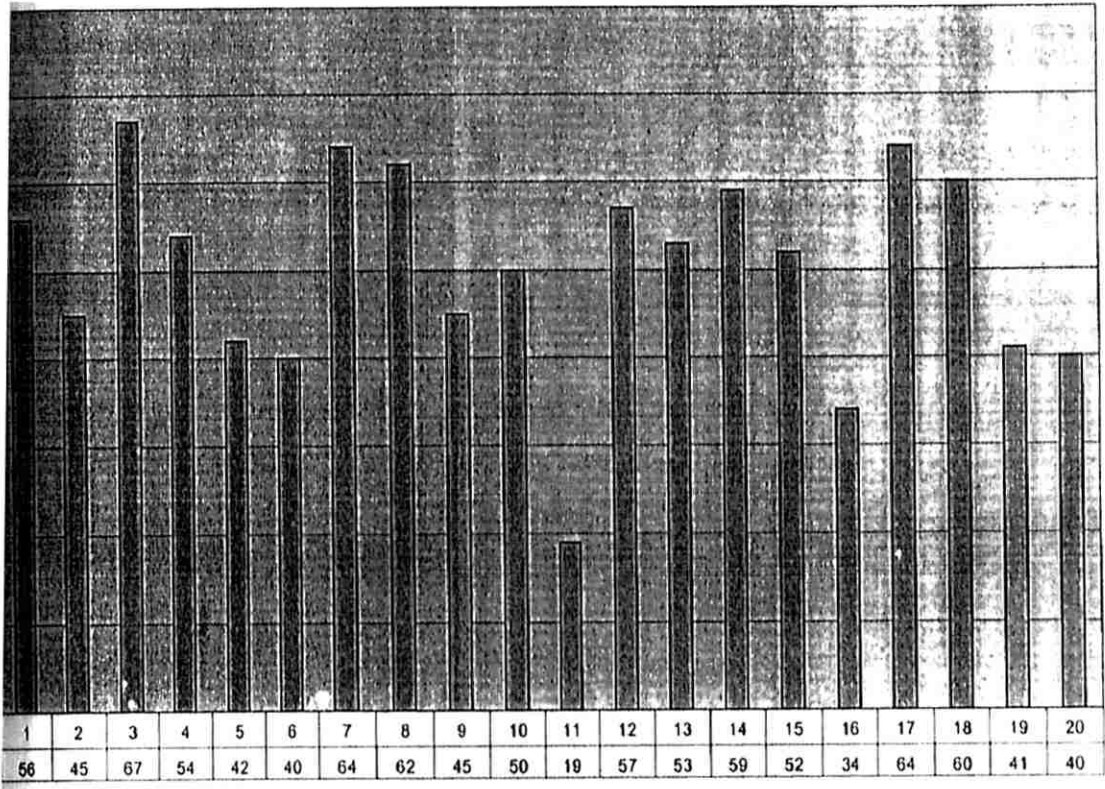


Figure 5.3 A Display Of Subjects Errors

Figure 5.3 depicts subjects that committed the most frequently made errors: subject number: (3), (7) and (17) and these were female students. The figure also shows: subjects that committed the least errors: subjects number:(11), (16), and (6) and (20). Subjects number: (11) and (16) are male students, whereas, subject number (6) and (20) are female students.

### 5.3.1 Mann-Whitney U Test in Gender Differences:

In order to show the differences between males and females performance in terms of committing errors, and to answer the question of whether the gender has an effect on the errors committed, the research conducted the Mann-Whitney U test, as shown below:

#### 5.3.1 (a) Mann-Whitney U:

Table 5.5  
*Ranks*

	GENDER	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks
ERROR	Male	4	5.50	22.00
	Female	16	11.75	188.00
	Total	20		

Table 5.6  
*Test Statistics*

	ERROR
Mann-Whitney U	12.000
Wilcoxon W	22.000
Z	-1.892
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.058
Exact Sig. [2*(1-tailed Sig.)]	.064

- a. Not corrected for ties.
- b. Grouping Variable: GENDER

Table 5.4 shows the ranks involved in the Mann-Whitney U test, and table 5.5 shows the statistical results of the test. According to the Mann-Whitney test, there is no

significance difference between males and females in errors committed by the study's samples (P. value = 0.058).

#### **5.4 Discussions of the Errors**

This section of the study discusses the errors committed by the students in each topic. The topics in this study have been designed to examine tense usage in various forms, in order to give a distinct picture of Malaysian students difficulties in learning the Arabic verb. Therefore, the composition topics cover tense usage, the past tense, the present tense and the future tense, as well as the inflection of the tense for person, number and gender are considered.

The examination of errors in this study are as follows:

- a. Presents a topic and assigned the topic to its tense,
- b. Explains what areas of this topic to investigate,
- c. Shows the errors in detail, made in each category, i.e., the fourteen categories,
- d. Presents the data in tabulation form showing:
  1. What is the most serious error made by the students in each topic?
  2. What is the least serious error?
  3. Errors not made by students in certain topics,
- e. Justification of the occurrence of errors in each category.

The tables show error categories in abbreviated forms, as well as the occurrence of each categorized error and its percentage.

#### 5.4.1 Topic 1: Write About Your Education, Starting From Primary School Up To Today:

Besides looking into past tense usage, this topic examines the usage of the first person "I", as well as the singular number i.e., the usage of the attached pronoun to the imperfect verb.

**Table 5.7**  
*Past Tens, First Person, and Singular*

ERRORS	TOTAL	PERCENTAGE
AGR(G)	11	13.75
AGR(N)	1	1.25
AGR(P)	13	16.25
KAANA AD	4	5
KAANA OM	25	31.25
N//V	1	1.25
TNS1	15	18.75
TNS2	9	11.25
TNS3	0	0
TNS4	0	0
TNS5	0	0
TNS6	0	0
V-NEG	0	0
V//N	1	1.25
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>100</b>

The table shows the most serious error, the omission of the verb to be, "kaana OM".

The number of errors is 25, a percentage of 31.25 % from the total of errors committed in this area. These errors are most probably attributed to insufficient mastery of the Arabic syntax, for instance, students find it quite difficult to use sentences like: كان يكتب رسالة (kaana yaktubu risaalataN) "He was writing a letter,"

to indicate the past tense because the verb form يكتب *yaktubu* "Write" to the student shows the present tense. The least serious errors committed by students in this topic are:

- a. Errors in number agreement. "AGR (N)"
- b. Noun instead of verb, "N//V"
- c. Verb instead of noun "V//N"

The errors in number are not frequent because this topic is designed to examine the usage of the first person, and most probably the students did not find difficulty in this.

The errors not made by students in this topic are:

- a. The past instead of the future "TNS3"
- b. The present instead of the future "TNS4"
- c. The future instead of the past "TNS5"
- d. The future instead of the present, "TNS6"
- e. Verb negation "V-NEG"

The reason why these errors are not found here is because this is not an investigated area. The topic has been designed to examine the past tense and its inflection for the first person.

#### **5.4.2 Topic 2: Write About a Dear Friend Who Left With His Family To Live In Another City**

The topic aims at examining the problems confronted by Malaysian students in using the third person (he/she) with the past tense, with regards to number. The singular unit is the focus of this topic. In addition, table 5.8 identifies the most frequently made errors, the least frequent made errors, and the errors not found.

**Table 5.8**  
*Past Tense, Third Person, and Singular*

ERRORS	TOTAL	PERCENTAGE
AGR(G)	20	8.33
AGR(N)	8	3.33
AGR(P)	5	2.08
KAANA AD	3	1.25
KAANA OM	8	3.33
N//V	9	3.75
TNS1	135	56.25
TNS2	17	7.08
TNS3	2	0.83
TNS4	5	2.08
TNS5	0	0.00
TNS6	8	3.33
V-NEG	4	1.67
V//N	16	6.67
TOTAL	240	100

The most serious error found in this category is tense one (TNS1), using the past instead of the present tense. The occurrence of errors found is 135, a percentage of 56.25. The least serious error found is tense three (TNS3), using the past tense instead of the future, and errors that were not found is in tense five (TNS5), using the future instead of the past. Errors not found and errors that are less serious could be attributed to the fact that this topic is examining the usage of the past tense, not the use of the future tense. Students committed many errors in tense one (TNS1), this is possibly due to the confusion occurring in formulations past tense sentences. For example, in order to say: كان يسكن معي (kaana yaskunu ma'yi) "He used to live with me,) the student says: كان سكن معي (kaana sakana ma'yi), "He was stayed with me" using the



past tense form, whereas the present tense form should be used with the verb to be (kaana) to express the past tense. On the other hand, when students made mistakes **كان يسكن أو كان يكتب** it does not mean that they do not understand how to use the past tense. This shows that students are not familiar with the structure of **كان (past) + فعل (present)**.

#### 5.4.3 Topic 3: My Childhood:

The learners are supposed to write about their friends and had to use the third person inflected for plurals, i.e., the pronoun "they", besides the past tense. Namely, this topic is examining the usage of the past tense, and the inflection of the past form for the third person, as well as number (plural). Nevertheless, it is apparent the first three sections have been designed to investigate the usage of the past tense, along with its inflections for person, number, and gender. Table 5.9 shows the most frequent errors, the least frequent, and errors that are not found in this area.

**Table 5.9**  
*Past Tense, Third Person, and Plural*

ERRORS	TOTAL	PERCENTAGE
AGR(G)	9	5.23
AGR(N)	4	2.33
AGR(P)	19	11.05
KAANA AD	4	2.33
KAANA OM	6	3.49
N//V	2	1.16
TNS1	125	72.67
TNS2	1	0.58
TNS3	0	0.00
TNS4	0	0.00
TNS5	0	0.00
TNS6	0	0.00
V-NEG	1	0.58
V//N	1	0.58
TOTAL	172	100

As the table above shows, the most frequent error is tense form one (TNS1); the quantity of errors, 125, making a percentage of 72.67. The least amount of errors are found in:

- a. The present instead of the past "TNS2"
- b. Verb negation, "V-NEG"
- c. The verb instead of the noun "V//N"

Errors that are not found:

- a. The present instead of the future "TNS4"
- b. The past instead of the future and "TNS3"

- c. The future instead of the present "TNS6"

To explain, the frequency of errors in tense form one (using the past instead of present), one could say, the same as in previous category, insufficient mastery of syntax, less exposure to the target language, and inadequate knowledge of Arabic grammar. Alternately, errors that are less frequent and errors that are not found, these types of errors could be attributed to the fact, that these errors are not related to the area investigated.

#### 5.4.4 Topic 4: Describe a Typical Day When You Study From Morning Till Evening.

This topic is designed to examine the usage of the present tense; besides using the first person, as well as the first person inflected for plural, i.e., the usage of "we".

Table 5.10  
*Present tense, first person, and plural*

ERRORS	TOTAL	PERCENTAGE
AGR(G)	2	2.13
AGR(N)	2	2.13
AGR(P)	6	6.38
KAANA AD	8	8.51
KAANA OM	0	0.00
N//V	19	20.21
TNS1	22	23.40
TNS2	0	0.00
TNS3	0	0.00
TNS4	0	0.00
TNS5	0	0.00
TNS6	19	20.21
V-NEG	7	7.45
OV//N	9	9.57
TOTAL	94	100

The most serious errors made by students in this category, as the table above shows are:

- a. The past instead of the present "TNS1",
- b. The noun instead of the verb "N//V"

For the first type of the errors, students found difficulty in using the correct tense, so the errors are attributed to the inherent difficulty of the target language. Especially, if one bears in mind that, students should use the verb to be كان in addition, to the present tense الفعل المضارع in this topic. As for the second type of errors made in this topic, maybe it is reasonable to attribute this to the insufficient mastery of syntax because learners mixed the action words, "verbs", with the nouns.

The least serious errors found in this table are:

- a. The disagreement in number "AGR (N)"
- b. The disagreement in gender "AGR (G)"

The disagreement errors are usually attributed to the inherent difficulty of the target language. Students managed to commit fewer errors here. This is probably due to the fact that number and gender were clear-cut in this topic, i.e., there was no confusion, for both male and female students.

Errors not found in the table are:

- a. The present instead of the past "TNS2"
- b. The past instead of the future "TNS3"
- c. The present instead of the future "TNS4"
- d. The future instead of the past "TNS5"
- e. The verb "to be" omission "Kaana OM"

The acceptable justification for no errors made in these categories, is the avoidance strategy used by the students, in addition, most of these errors did not fall in the area investigated by the above mentioned topic.

#### **5.4.5 Topic 5: Write About a Person, Who is Living That You Admire.**

The same as the previous topic this topic examines the use of the present tense *الفعل المضارع* showing the students' ability to use the present tense with its inflection for the third person (he/she). Hence, the area of investigations of this topic is as follows:

- a. Tense: present
- b. Person: third person
- c. Number: singular

The table 5.11 (on the next page) shows the most frequent errors, the least serious errors, in addition, errors not found in the area investigated.

**Table 5.11:***Present Tense, Third Person, and Singular*

ERRORS	TOTAL	PERCENTAGE
AGR(G)	11	11.83
AGR(N)	2	2.15
AGR(P)	2	2.15
KAANA AD	10	10.75
KAANA OM	11	11.83
N//V	11	11.83
TNS1	18	19.35
TNS2	2	2.15
TNS3	0	0.00
TNS4	0	0.00
TNS5	0	0.00
TNS6	12	12.90
V-NEG	5	5.38
V//N	9	9.68
TOTAL	93	100

The most serious error, shown by the table above, is tense form one (TNS1) "the past instead of the present." Students fail to use the correct tense; they fail in using the original form of the verb and this is why they used the past tense, due to the inherent difficulty of the target language. The disagreement of errors in number, disagreement of errors in person, and tense two (TNS2) errors' the present instead of the past, forms the least frequent errors.

However, errors not found in the table are:

- The past instead of the future "TNS3"
- The present instead of the future and "TNS4"
- The future instead of the past "TNS5"

These errors were not found in this topic because they were not related to the area investigated.

#### 5.4.6 Topic6: Ramadhan is the Month of Fasting and Worship, Write About Fasting in Malaysia and How Malaysian Observe Fasting During This Month:

This is the last topic which examines the usage of the present tense, with the inflection of this tense for the third person "they". The area investigated is the present tense, third person (they), and (plural) in number. The table below shows the errors committed in the area investigated.

**Table 5.12:**  
*Present Tense, Third Person "they", and Plurals*

ERRORS	TOTAL	PERCENTAGE
AGR(G)	4	2.53
AGR(N)	29	18.35
AGR(P)	6	3.80
KAANA AD	9	5.70
KAANA OM	0	0.00
N//V	7	4.43
TNS1	78	49.37
TNS2	0	0.00
TNS3	0	0.00
TNS4	0	0.00
TNS5	0	0.00
TNS6	3	1.90
V-NEG	1	0.63
V//N	21	13.29
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>158</b>	<b>100</b>

The most serious error shown in this table is tense form one (the past instead of the present), occurring 78 times, a percentage of 49.37. Explanations of this frequency, may be the students are not familiar to with future tense usage, so they misuse the

original form of the verb which forms the **first tense**, tense form one. The least serious error shown by the table is the negation of the verb. This could be attributed to the avoidance strategy used by the learners because Malay learners of the Arabic language find difficult to negate the verb correctly. Errors not shown by the table are:

- a. Verb "to be" omission "KAANA OM"
- b. The present instead of the past "TNS2"
- c. The past instead of the future "TNS3"
- d. The present instead of the future "TNS4"
- e. The future instead of the past "TNS5"

These errors were not found in the table because of not being in the area investigated.

#### **5.4.7 Topic 7: How Are You Going To Spend the Coming Holidays?**

This topic focuses on the use of the future tense, besides inflection of this tense for the first person "I". The area investigated here is the future tense. Furthermore, the topic also aims to investigate the inflection of the verb for the first person, along with the inflection for the singular number. Table 5.13 on the next page shows the errors committed in the area investigated.



**Table 5.13:**  
*Future Tense, First Person (I), and Singular*

ERRORS	TOTAL	PERCENTAGE
AGR(G)	6	7.14
AGR(N)	8	9.52
AGR(P)	14	16.67
KAANA AD	2	2.38
KAANA OM	2	2.38
N//V	5	5.95
TNS1	6	7.14
TNS2	4	4.76
TNS3	1	1.19
TNS4	9	10.71
TNS5	0	0.00
TNS6	22	26.19
V-NEG	1	1.19
V//N	4	4.76
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>84</b>	<b>100</b>

The table above shows the difficulty index of the most serious error committed by the students is tense form six (TNS6), using the future instead of the present. This shows the difficulty of this tense for Malay learners, causing students to use this tense inappropriately. The least serious error shown by the table is tense three (the past instead of the future), and the negation of the verb. Students used the avoidance strategy, in order to avoid these types of structures. The categories that are not found and shown by the table are: (tense five errors) the future instead of the past due to the avoidance strategy.

**5.4.8 Topic 8: What Your Friend Should Do, When He Comes To Visit Malaysia In September (during the Commonwealth Games):**

This is the second topic in examining the usage of the future tense with inflection for the third person "he/she". The area investigated is the future tense, the third person, and the first person singular. The table below shows the errors committed in the area.

**Table 5.14:**  
*Future Tense, Third Person (he/ she), and Singular*

ERRORS	TOTAL	PERCENTAGE
AGR(G)	3	6.38
AGR(N)	1	2.13
AGR(P)	7	14.89
KAANA AD	0	0.00
KAANA OM	0	0.00
N//V	2	4.26
TNS1	10	21.28
TNS2	14	29.79
TNS3	0	0.00
TNS4	2	4.26
TNS5	0	0.00
TNS6	6	12.77
V-NEG	2	4.26
V//N	0	0.00
TOTAL	47	100

The most serious errors shown by the table are: tense two (the present instead of the past), occurrence of errors 14, totaling a percentage of (29.79). These types of errors show that students are not familiar with verb tense usage. Therefore, there is no stability in using Arabic verb tenses for Malay learners of Arabic. The least serious error found in the table is the error in number agreement, attributed to the fact that the

examined number here is the singular, which may not have caused difficulty for the students. Errors, not shown by the table are:

- a. Verb "to be" omission "Kaana OM"
- b. Verb "to be" addition "Kaana AD"
- c. The past instead of the future "TNS3"
- d. The future instead of the past "TNS5"
- e. The verb instead of the noun "V//N"

These errors were not found in the table because of having no direct relation to the future tense, except for (d) "the future instead of the past", possibly attributed to the avoidance strategy.

#### **5.4.9 Topic 9: What Would People In Malaysia Do If Prices Increased:**

This is the last topic in the future tense, besides being the last section of the study. It was planned to examine the future tense with inflection for "they". Therefore, the area investigated here is the future tense, the third person, and the plural. At the closing stage, these topics have been designed to examine Arabic tenses shown by the Arabic verb. The examination has been designed to cover all types of inflection could happen to the verb in conveying the tenses. Gender, person, and number of these features have been examined also because they are very close to the verb forms. Hence, they can't be separated from the verb itself. However, verb negation is another feature of the verb, which has been looked at in this study.

Other types of language features have been dealt with in this study are the verb "to be" omissions, the verb "to be" additions, using the verb instead of the noun and vice versa. The relation of these features to the tense is to a certain extent, obvious.

The table below explains the errors committed in the last topic of this study.

**Table 5.15**  
*Future Tense, Third Person, and Plural*

ERRORS	TOTAL	PERCENTAGE
AGR(G)	29	30.85
AGR(N)	27	28.72
AGR(P)	2	2.13
KAANA AD	1	1.06
KAANA OM	1	1.06
N//V	7	7.45
TNS1	7	7.45
TNS2	1	1.06
TNS3	2	2.13
TNS4	2	2.13
TNS5	1	1.06
TNS6	0	0.00
V-NEG	5	5.32
V//N	9	9.57
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>94</b>	<b>100</b>

The most serious error committed by students in this table is the gender error; gender usage is a difficult area to master for Malay learners of Arabic language, so the inherent difficulty of the target language is the cause for these types of errors. The least serious errors shown by the table are:

- a. Verb "to be" addition "Kaana AD"
- b. Verb "to be" omission "Kaana OM"
- c. The present instead of the past "TNS2"
- d. The future instead of the present "TNS6"

Tense six (the future instead of the present) is the error that is not found in the table. The students managed not to confuse the usage of the present tense with the use of the future tense in this topic.

## 5.5 Description of Errors

This section provides a description and an analysis of the errors in the study, examples are given for each category for discussion and the subjects' original sentences are retained. Sometimes, only part of the sentence will be demonstrated and the other portion of the sentence is retained, if it is sufficient to elaborate the error. The examples, cited from the students' task, may contain errors other than the ones under discussion. On one hand, the focus is on the errors under discussion only. On the other hand, some examples may appear to be correct, when taken out of the context, but they are not, especially in the explanation of tense analysis. The section reports on tense usage, verb negation, the verb "to be", omissions, additions, using the verb instead of the noun, using the noun instead of the verb and agreement errors, i.e., gender, person, and number errors. Each type of error classified is represented by a number of errors for more explanation. Five examples, for each type of errors are discussed, amounting to seventy examples of errors. The erroneous sentences are followed by interpretation and transliteration. English translation is provided, literal translations for the Arabic examples, are literal translations, therefore the sentences may not read as standard English. The errors are underlined, the correct form is provided in brackets, and the English translation is between inverted commas. In addition, all the errors committed by the subjects of this study are placed in appendix (B) "description of the errors".

### 5.5.1 Tense Usage

#### 5.5.1 (a) The Past Instead of the Present: (الماضي بدلا عن المضارع)

1.1 أحيانا دعوتهم إلى البيت (أدعوهم) 'aHyaanaN da'awutuhum 'ilae 'al-bayti ('aad-'uhum)

"Sometimes I invite them to my house"

1.2 أتعلم منه حتى دخل وقت العصر (يدخل) 'ata'allamu min- Hattae dakhala waq-tu 'al-'aS-ri ' (yad-khulu)

"I learn from him till asar prayer time"

1.3 أراجع إلى البيت وعندما وصلت (أصل) 'ar-ji'u 'ilae 'albay-ti wa'in-damaa waSal-tu (asilu)

"I return home when I arrived."

1.4 وبعد أن ذهبت إلى المدرسة (أذهب) wa ba'-da 'an dhahabtu 'ilae 'almaddrasahati ('adh-habu)

"After I go to school..."

1.5 كل يوم أعدت ألأم المائدة اللذيذة (تعد) kullu yaw-miN 'a'addat- 'al'umu 'al-ma'idati elladhiyidhahati (tu'iddu)

"Every day the mother prepare the delicious food."

1.6 هذه الأفكار لا يمكن أن نسيت في حياتي (أنسى) hadhi 'alaf-kaaru laa yum-kinu 'an- nassiy-tu fy Hayaatiy ('an-sae)

« These ideas I will not forget them »

A total of 416 (39.17%) errors were committed in this classification. The examples show that the learners do not know how the sequence of the tense is used. When the sentences are in the present tense, the learners insert the past form. One could say that the Malay learners of the Arabic language rely on the past tense to a

large extent, maybe because this is the first form they learn.

### 5.5.1 (b) The Present Instead of the Past (المضارع بدلا عن الماضي)

2.1 1940 يولد في سنة (ولد)

yuw-ladu fy sanat 1940 ( wulida)

" He borne in 1940"

2.2 (شعرت) ونلعب كرة القدم إذا تشعر بالتعب نذهب إلى الصلاة

wa nal-'abu kurat 'al-qadami 'idhaa tash-'uru bilta'abi tadh-habu 'ilae alSalaah  
( sha'ar-tu)

« We play football to gather, when we feel tired we go for prayers. »

2.3 (نزل) فيه يزل القرآن الكريم

fiy-hi yan-zilu 'alqur'aanu 'al-kariymu (nazala)

« In this month Alqra'n revealed »

2.4 (درسن) إني مشتاقة إلى صديقاتي اللاتي يدرسن في مدرسة واحدة

'inaniy mushtaaqhtuN 'ilae Sadiqaatiy 'al-la'i yadrusna fy madrasah waaHidah  
( daras-na)

« I'm in longing for my friends who study with me in the school. »

2.5 (ذهبت) لو أذهب هناك سأغتسل في النهر

law- 'dh-habu hunaaka sa'-ghtasilu fy 'an-nah-ri (dhahabtu)

"If I go there I will swim in the river. "

There were 48 errors involved in the present instead of the past classification, and these errors could be attributed to mother tongue interference owing to the absence of the tense. The students, surely are not attentive to tense sequences.

### 5.5.1 (c) The Past Instead of the Future (الماضي بدلا عن المستقبل)

3.1 إن والدي اشترى لوازم الحياة هناك (سيشترى)

'inna waalidiy 'ish-tarae lawaazim 'ul-Hayaah hunaaka (sayash-tariy)

"My father will buy the life needs."

3.2 عندما ارتفعت أسعار البضائع خرج الناس الى المدينة (سيخرج)

'in-damaa 'irtafa'at- 'as-'aaru 'al-baDaa'i'i kharaja 'an-naasu 'ilae 'al-madiynah  
(sayakh-ruju)

(People will come out if the price become high.)

3.3 إذا امتنع الناس عن شراء البضائع كان ذلك نجاحا عظيما (سيكون)

'idhaa 'imtana'a 'an-naasu 'an shiraa'i 'albaDaa'i'i kaana dhaalika najaaHaN  
'aZiymaN (sayakuwnu)

(If people did not buy the goods, they will success.)

3.4 وفي يوم الثلاثاء ذهبا إلى بيت جدي (سندهب)

wa fy yaw-mi 'ath-thulaathaa' dhahabnaa 'ilae bay-ti jaddiy (sanathhabu)

(On Tuesday we will go to my grandfather house)

3.5 لماذا تبكي يا أحمد؟ قال أحمد انتقلت إلى مدينة جوهر (سأنتقل)

limaadhaa tabkiy yaa 'aHmadu? qaala 'aHmadu 'intaqalatu 'ilae madiynah juwhur  
(sa'antaqilu)

(Why are you crying Ahmed? Ahmed reply: because I will move to Johor.)

3.6 وعندما توجد مشكلة سألنا والدينا (سنسأل)

wa 'indamaa tuwjadu mush-kilah sa'alnaa waalidiyyinaa (sanas-'alu)

(We will ask our parents if we have a problem.)

The use of the future tense is rarely used by Malay learners of Arabic. One could say the learners are not cognizant of the function of this verb, and maybe they are



deprived of exposure. The study shows that only 23 errors were committed in this category in the use of the "present instead of future". The plausible reason for this phenomenon is avoidance. The Malay learners of Arabic avoided using the future tense, although instructions were given to write using the future tense.

#### 5.5.1 (d) The Present Instead of the Future (المضارع بدلا عن المستقبل)

4.1 إنه مع أسرته أن ينتقل إلى المدينة بعيدة (سينتقل)

'inahu ma'a 'usratih 'an- yantaqil 'ilae 'al-madinah ba'iydah (sayan-taqilu)

(He will move with his family to far city.)

4.2 وهو شجعي و قال أنا أرسل إليك الرسالة (سأرسل)

wa huwa shaja'aniy wa qaala 'anaa 'ur-silu 'ilay-ka elrisalah (sa'arsilu)

(He encourage me to write a letter for you.)

4.3 الأشياء التي أشتري من السوق (سأشتري)

'al'ashyaa' 'allatiy 'ashtariy min 'as-suwq (sa'ashtariy)

(The goods that I will buy from the market.)

4.4 سيخططون إذا ارتفعت الأسعار الناس ... يخططون (سيخططون)

'idhaa 'irtafa'at- el'as-'aaru elnaas ... yukhaTiTuwn (sayukhaTiTuwn)

(People will plan, if the goods become expensive.)

4.5 وهناك يوفر النقود لشراء بعض آلات المطبخ (سيوفر)

wa hunaaka yuwafiru elnuquwda lishiraa'i ba'-Di ~aalaati elmaT-bakhi

(sayuwafiru)

(They will save some money to buy kitchen tools.)

As mentioned earlier, the present tense in the Arabic language can be used to express the future by using the prefix سوف, or if the verb is placed after the word سوف 'sawfa'.

The study recorded some violations of this grammar rule. The learners were supposed to apply the future tense, or in other words they were asked to use سوف and سوف.

#### 5.5.1 (e) The Future Instead of the Past (المستقبل بدلا عن الماضي)

5.1 إذا سترفع أسعار البضائع (ارتفعت)

'idhaa satarfa'u 'as'aaru 'al-baDaa'i'i ('irta'at)

(When the price come up.)

This classification verifies what the study has already demonstrated, the difficulty of using the future tense. However, this is the only example found in the study. It also indicates insufficient mastery of syntax by Malay learners of the Arabic language. This type of error is difficult to explain and it seems to be a mistake in performance, or a true blunder.

#### 5.5.1 (f) The Future Instead of the Present (المستقبل بدلا عن المضارع)

6.1 سأذهب إلى هناك بالطائرة و عندما سأصل (أصل)

sa'adhabu 'ilae hunaaka bielTaa'irah wa 'indamaa sa'aSilu ('aSolu)

(I will go there by plane ... when I arrived.)

6.2 يمكن سأزور حديقة الحيوان (أن أزور)

yumkinu s'azuwru Hadiyqahata 'al-Hayawaani (an azura)

(Maybe I will visit zoo...)

6.3 سأرجع إلى البيت مرة أخرى عندما سأجد العطلة (أجد)

sa'arji'u 'ilae elbayti marrahatN 'ukhrae 'indamaa sa'ajidu el'uTlah ('ajidu)

(I will return home in holiday)

6.4 ... قبل سأذهب هناك ..... (أن أذهب)

...qablu sa'a dhhabu hunaaka. ... ('an adh-haba)

(...Before I go there...)

6.5 و هناك أفكر سأذهب إلى النهر (أن أذهب)

wa hunaaka 'ufakkiru sa'adhabu 'ilae 'an-nahri ('an 'adh-haba)

(...There I will think to go to the river...)

The number of errors committed here is 70 (6.59%). This is an abundant number in the use of tenses. The errors highlight the problem of using the future- time in reference to the Arabic language. The question of how to choose between the use of the present tense, without the prefix *س*, and without the word سوف, is persistent for the Malay learners of Arabic.

### 5.5.2 Verb Negation (نفي الفعل)

7.1 لم نسيت كل الواجب المنزلي (ما نسيت, أو لم أنسى)

lam- nasiytu kulla 'al-waajibi elmanziliy (maa nasiytu, 'aw lam- 'ansae)

(I didn't forget the home- work.)

7.2 ...إذا كان ليس أجد المعلم .. (إذا لم أجد)

'idhaa kaana laysa 'ajidiu 'al-mu'alim ('idhaa lam- 'ajidu)

7.3 عندما ليس عرفت الدروس (لأعرف)

'indamaa laysa 'araftu 'ad-duruws- (laa 'a'-rifu)

(...When I don't know the lessons.)

7.4 و أسأل عندما لم أعلم

(لا أعلم)

wa 'as'alu 'indamaa lam 'a'lam-

(laa 'a'lamu)

(I will ask if I don't know.)

7.5 هو لم يتكلم عندما يتعلم

(لا يتكلم)

huwa lam yatakallam 'indamaa yata'alamu (laa yatakallamu)

(...While he is learning he will not talk.)

The negation of the verb has a **strong** relation with verb moods, being related to tense shifting. The Malay learners of Arabic experienced difficulties in verb negation. To explain these difficulties the previous examples will demonstrate. In Arabic, لم (lam) is used to deny a statement giving form of the past perfect, see Nadawi: (1979). Therefore, the plausible reconstruction of the first sentence is to replace the erroneous sentence: ما نسيت "I didn't forget" with the perfect verb, or لم أنسى, (I didn't forget) with the imperfect verb. But, there is no place for لم with the perfect tense because it changes, or it shifts the tense back to the past as stated before. Moreover, verb negation is difficult, especially with the present form الفعل المضارع. The following sentences show examples of the difficulty:

لم يكتب, lam- yaktub, (He didn't write) the tense is in the past. ما يكتب, maa yaktubu,

(He is not writing) the tense is in the present. لن يكتب, lan yaktuba (He will not write)

the present is in the future. Therefore, verb negation is not an untroubled activity, this is why Malay learners find difficulties in its use.

### 5.5.3 Addition of the Verb To Be (زيادة كان)

8.1 (هو أمي وأمي كريمة) الإنسان الذي اعجب به هو أمي وتكون أمي كريمة

'al'inaan 'all-dhiy 'u'jabu bihi huwa 'ummy wa takuwnu 'ummy kariymah  
(huwa 'ummy wa 'ummy kariymah)

(The person whom I admire is my mother. She is generous.)

8.2 (إذا توجد) إذا كان توجد مشكلة عنده يسأل

'idhaa kaana tuwjadu mushkilah 'indahu yas'alu ('dhaa tuwjadu)

(If he had a problem he used to ask.)

8.3 (الجنة تحت...) كان الجنة تحت أقدام الأمهات

kaana 'al-jannahtu taHta 'aqdaami 'al-'ummahaat ('aljannatu taHta)

(Paradise under mothers feet's.)

8.4 (أمي عندها...) كانت أمي عندها مهارة في الطبخ

kaanat 'ummy 'indahaa mahaarah fy 'aT-Tabkhi ('ummy 'indahaa)

(My mother is skilled in cooking.)

8.5 (في السوق توجد...) وكان في السوق توجد كثير من المأكولات

wa kaana fy elsuwqi tuwjadu kathiyr min 'al-m'kuwlaati

(fy 'as-suwqi tuwjadu...)

(In the market there is a lot of fast food.)

### 5.5.4 Omission of the Verb To Be (حذف كان)

In this part the symbol (#) refer to the omission of the verb to be.

9.1 (كان) عندما # عمري سبع عشرة سنة

'indamaa # 'umuriy sab'u 'asharah sanah (kaana)

(When I was seventeen years old.)

9.2 # ذهبت إلى المدرسة ماشيا (كنت, أذهب)

#dhahabtu 'ilae 'al-madrasah maashiyaN (kuntu 'adh-habu)  
(I used to walk to school.)

9.3 فلما كان # عمري ستة جلست للامتحان

falammaa # 'umuriy sitah jalastu lil' imtiHaani (falammma kaana)  
(When I was six years old I sat to the exam.)

9.4 كل صباح # ذهبت مع صديقي (كنت أذهب, أذهب)

kullu SabaaH # dhahabtu ma'a Sadiyqi (kuntu 'adh-habu, 'adh-habu)  
(Every morning I go with my friend.)

9.5 (كانت تعمل في) وقبل أن تعمل في المعهد # تعمل في.....

wa qablu 'an- ta'mala fy 'al-ma'had # ta'malu fy... (kaanat ta'malu fy)  
(Before she work in the institute she used to work in... )

9.6 وأخذت أفكر كيف # حياتي دون أمي (ستكون)

wa 'akhadhtu 'ufakiru kayfa # Hayaatiy duwna 'ummiy (satakuwnu)  
(I start thinking, how my mother life will become.)

The total errors of the verb (to be) usage, in addition of the verb and omission were 94, producing a percentage of 8.85%. This is also a problematic area for Malay learners of Arabic language. Mother tongue interference besides insufficient mastery of the syntax are the main reasons.

#### 5.5.5 The Noun Instead of the Verb (الاسم بدلا عن الفعل)

10.1 لأنني واجب أن أذهب إلى الفصل (يجب)

l'ananiy waajib 'an 'adh-haba 'ilae 'al-faSli (yajibu)  
(Because I must go to the class.)

- 10.2 واغتسل وأتوضأ وصلاة الفجر (أصلى)  
 wa 'aghtasilu wa 'atawaD'a wa Salaat (wa 'uSaly)  
 (I take bath and ablution and I pray...)
- 10.3 ثم أداء صلاة الظهر (أؤدى)  
 thumma 'adaa' Salaat 'aZ-Zuhri ('u'addiy)  
 (...Then, I perform Zuhri prayer..)
- 10.4 و في التاسعة أقرأ الكتب ومراجعة الدرس (أراجع)  
 wa fy 'al-taasi'ah 'aqra'u elkutuba wa muraaja'ah 'aldars ('uraaji'u)  
 (At nine o'clock I read some books, and I revise my lessons.)
- 10.5 المعلم في المدرسة تعارن مع الطلاب (يتعارن)  
 'almu'alim fy 'al-madrasah ta'aawan ma'a 'aT-Tulaabi (yata'aawanu)  
 (The teacher in school helps the students.)

#### 5.5.6 The Verb Instead of the Noun (الفعل بدلاً عن الاسم)

- 11.1 في المدن يحب الناس يشترى الإططار (شراء)  
 fy 'al-muduni yuHibu 'an-naasu yashtariy 'al-'ifTaara (shiraa')  
 (In the cities people like to buy the food.)
- 11.2 وبعد انتهى صلاة التراويح (إنهاء)  
 wa ba'da 'intahae Salaat 'at-taraawiHi ('intihaa')  
 (...After taraawiyh prayer...)
- 11.3 ...من طلع الفجر حتى دخل المغرب (طلوع, دخول)  
 ...min Tala'a 'al-fajri Hatae dakhala 'almaghrib (Tuluw'i, dukhuwli)  
 (...From dawn till evening..)
- 11.4 ...يمكن التغلب على ارتفعت أسعار البضائع (ارتفاع)  
 ...yumkin 'at-taghalub 'alae 'irtafa'at 'as'aar 'al-baDaa'i'i ('irtifaa'i)  
 (It is possible to overcome the increase of the prices.)
- 11.5 ...لأداء صلاة المغرب وقرأ بعض الآيات (قراءة)  
 ...li'adaa'i Salaati 'almaghrib wa qara'a ba'Da 'al-'aayaati (qiraa'ati)

(...To perform maghrib prayer and recite some verses.)

#### 5.5.7 Agreement Errors (gender) (أخطاء التطابق في الجنس)

12.1 جاءت صديقي الى منزلي (صديقي، جاء)  
jaa'at Sadiyqiyy 'ilae manzily (Sadiyqatiy, jaa'a)  
(My friend "female" came.)

12.2 ذهب اسرنا (ذهبت)  
dhahaba 'usratuhaa (dhahabat)

(...her family went back/ has gone)

12.3 كان أمه وأمي ... (كانت)  
kaana 'ummmuhu wa 'ummiy ... (kaanat)  
(Her mother and my mother...)

12.4 اهتم الحكومة هذه المشكلة (اهتمت)  
'ihtamma 'alHukuwmah bihaadhihi 'almushkilah ('ihtammat)  
(The government considers this problem...)

12.5 الآن في ماليزيا يوجد المشاكل (توجد)  
'al-aan fy maaliyzyaa yuwjadu 'almashaakil (tuwjadu)  
(There are some problems now in Malaysia.)

#### 5.5.8 Agreement Errors (numbers) (أخطاء التطابق في العدد)

13.1 كل الناس يستقبله بالسعادة (يستقبلونه)  
kullu 'an-naasi yastaqbiluh bi'as-sa'aadah (yastaqbiluwnah)  
(All people welcome ramadhan with happiness.)

13.2 لأنهم مشغولون ولا يمكن أن يطبخ (يطبخوا)  
la'anahum mashghuwlwana wa laa yumkin 'an- yaTbukha (yaTbukhuwaa)  
(...Because they are busy, they can't cook...)

13.3 ثم ننتظر في المسجد لسمع كلام (لنسمع)  
thumma nantaZiru fy 'almasjidi liyasma'a kalaami... (linasma'a)



(Then we wait in mosque to listen to the speech.)

13.4 وفي الصباح ذهبوا المسلمون بنشاط (ذهب)

wa fy `aS-Sabaahi dhahabuw `almuslimuwna binashaTiN (dhahaba)

(In morning Muslims go to their work ..)

13.5 الناس يذهبون الى السوق سريعا ليشتري (ليشتروا)

`an-naasu yadh-habuwna `ilae `as-suwqi sariy'aN liyashtariy...

(liyashtaruwaa)

(People go to market to buy...)

#### 5.5.9 Agreement Errors (person) أخطاء التوافق في الضمير

14.1 سأذهب إلى الفندق ليشاهد مدينة الرياض (لأشاهد)

sa`adh-habu `ilae `alfunduqi liyushaahid madiynah `ar-riyaaD (li`ushaahida)

(I will go to the hotel to watch Riyadh city.)

14.2 سأسمع صوت الطيور يغنون (تغني)

sa`asma`u Sawta `aT-Tuyuwri yughanuwna (tughaniy)

(I will listen to the birds singing.)

14.3 وحملنا المأكولات لأننا أردنا... (نريد)

wa Hamallnaa `alma`kuwlaati li`ananaa `uriydu... (nuriydu)

(We took with us fast food because we want to...)

14.4 أريد أن يكون إنسان ناجح (أكون)

`uriydu `an- yakuwna `insaanaaajiH ('akuwna)

(I want to be successful person.)

14.5 انطلقنا أول الفجر ويعودون عند غروب الشمس (نعود)

`inTalaqnaa `awal `alfajri wa ya`uwduwna `inda ghuruwb `sh-shamsi (na`uwdu)

(We move morning, and we come back evening...)

The previous categorizations are systematic errors, usually made in the area of subject- verb agreement besides in subject –predicate (nominal agreement with the verb). Arabic verbs are inflected for gender, number, and person, while BM verbs are not inflected for these. The Arabic verb has two-gender categories, the masculine, and the feminine. As for number and person, the situation is different. The Arabic verb can be singular, dual and plural, whereas, the BM verbs do not exercise these numbers. Therefore, these differences make the task for the Malay students troublesome. Furthermore, changes in these aspects are interrelated, Awwad (1983:258) states “The Arabic noun for a fish, a tree, an egg, a banana, a nut, and a bullet are feminine in the singular and can be used as countable nouns in the plural. If used as collective nouns, their gender changes from the feminine to masculine.” To explain the above-mentioned, statement observe the following examples:

1.a هذه سمكة (feminine + singular),

1.b هذه سمكات (feminine + plural ‘countable noun’),

1.c هذا سمك (masculine + collective noun).

The opposite may occur as mentioned by Awwad, (1983:258) “Also observe that sometimes the reverse happens, i.e., a singular noun with the masculine marking receives a feminine gender marking in the plural, eventhough the plural nouns are countable,” for example, the Arabic word ‘qiTaar’ قطار (a train), receives the masculine gender marking in the singular as in: ‘hadhaa qiTaar’ هذا قطار (This is a train), substituting the feminine marking in the plural as in: ‘hadhihi qiTaaraat’ هذه قطارات (These are trains). Although, these are not all the impediments faced by Malay

student's usage of subject-verb agreement, they are enough to make one realize the difficulty the Malay learners of Arabic language have in mastering the subject- verb agreement system. Awwad (1983:258) explains that the "Arabic verb (AV) must always agree in gender with its logical, and/or, grammatical subject regardless of which comes first in the sentence," as in 1.a كتب الطالب الدرس (Wrote- the student- the lesson) 1.b الطالب كتب الدرس (The student wrote the lesson) if we consider 1.b as a verbal sentence. Yet, the Arabic verb, whether it is in the present, past or future, must also agree with the subject in number, even if the subject comes first in the nominal sentence. Again these inflections are complicated for the Malay students, and one may trace these errors to the inherent difficulties of the target language.

## **5.6 Results of the Interview:**

As mentioned earlier, the interview used a secondary tool for eliciting data from the subjects of the study. Hence, the results of the interview were used to support the findings from the written task. Incidentally, it was discovered that all the students found difficulty in understanding what people say in the Arabic language. With regards to the sources of errors, all the students readily admitted that mother tongue interference is the main source in causing errors; the following are the detailed results of the interview:

### **5.6.1 Difficulties in Tense Usage and Language Skills:**

All the students (20/20) found difficulties in tense usage, and this difficulty varied from one tense to another, however, the written task is clear in explaining this difficulty. In addition, almost all the students faced difficulties in Arabic language

skills. These difficulties varied from one student to another. The following sections detail these difficulties.

#### **5.6.1 (a) Listening Skill:**

The problems that the students encountered in the listening were:

- a. Unfamiliarity with new words.
- b. The speed of the speech; difficulty in listening properly, if the teacher spoke at native speaker tempo.
- c. The students found it baffling to understand when the teacher used native speaker slang.
- d. Infrequently used words. Students admitted that because they did not practice the words regularly, they could not recognize words, when they heard them.

However, the students themselves thought that these errors occurred because they were not exposed to the listening skill frequently.

#### **5.6.1 (b) Speaking Skills:**

With regards to the speaking skill, the problems the students encountered were:

- a. Choosing the appropriate words, in the suitable context.
- b. Lack of vocabulary.
- c. Inability to use the verbs correctly, especially the tenses.
- d. Thinking carefully, before speaking.
- e. Difficulty in arranging the sentences properly.

### **5.6.1 (c) Reading Skills:**

The students' responses regarding difficulty in reading were:

1. The signs of the Arabic vowels were not indicated in the text.
2. Students' poor mastery of grammar. Most of the written texts in Arabic do not use vowel signs. Hence, the students are not able to read correctly.
3. Students found difficulty in guessing the meaning of the words from the context.
4. Students faced problems in using an Arabic dictionary.
5. The length of the text caused problems in understanding.

### **5.6.1 (d) Writing Skills:**

Students encountered difficulties in writing. The interview shows that:

1. They did not know how to use the tenses correctly. They found it difficult to use one tense, or shift to another when necessary.
2. They found difficulty in arranging words in a sentence.
3. They found difficulty in linking sentences.
4. They found difficulty in using suitable words in the proper context.
5. They found difficulty in referring pronouns to nouns.

The students arranged the language skills according to levels of difficulty. They are as follows:

1. Speaking
2. Writing
3. Listening
4. Reading

A few, (5) felt that writing was more difficult, and (5) thought that speaking was most difficult. Most of the students (17) thought that reading was the easiest skill.

#### **5.6.2 Sources of Errors:**

In responding to this part of the interview, 20 students clarified that the errors they committed could be attributed to the following:

##### **5.6.2 (a) Mother Tongue Interference:**

This maybe the main reason in committing errors. Most of the students (19 out of 20) had the same opinion about mother tongue interference in their learning.

##### **5.6.2 (b) Second Language Interference:**

The researcher assumed that knowledge of the English language might interfere in learning the Arabic language causing errors. However, the students did not agree with this statement.

##### **5.6.2 (c) Inherent Difficulty of the Target Language:**

Approximately, all of the students (19) agreed that the Arabic language is a arduous therefore experiencing complications in learning. Many of these difficulties could be attributed to the complexities of the target language.

##### **5.6.2 (d) Insufficient Mastery in Syntax:**

This is considered one of the main sources in causing students' errors. Students (16) attributed their errors to this source. They stated they were not familiar with Arabic grammar and felt that Arabic grammar was complicated. Mistakenly, some students

attributed their lack of Arabic grammar mastery to teacher non-usage of Arabic in the classroom.

#### **5.6.2 (d) Lack of Exposure to the Target Language:**

Many students attributed their errors to their lack of exposure to the Arabic language, as a result, their command of the Arabic vocabulary was poor and they were not able to practice the language. The following points show the lack of exposure to the Arabic language:

1. It was ascertained that all of the students (20) did not use the Arabic language outside the classroom in response to the interview question "Do you use the Arabic language outside the Arabic class?"
2. All of the students (20) admitted not reading books, magazines, or newspapers in the Arabic language.
3. Most of the students (18) stated lack of communicate with Arabic teachers outside of the classroom in Arabic.
4. All of the students (20) admitted not listening to Arabic radio programmes.

#### **5.6.2 (e) Other Sources:**

Other sources mentioned by students in the interview:

6. Difficulty of Arabic grammar.
7. Carelessness.
8. Insufficient hours of Arabic grammar.

The following table summarizes students' responses in the interview, and summarises the sources of the errors. Students' response can be determined by the opinions, all,

most or, some.

**Table 5.16** *Student' response to the interview*

<b>The source</b>	<b>Responses</b>
Mother tongue interference	19
Second language learnt	1
Insufficient mastery of syntax	16
Inherent difficulty of the target language	19
Lack of exposure to the target language	19

The table shows that:

1. Nineteen (19) students traced their errors to mother tongue interference.
2. Only one student thought that second language learning might be the cause of errors.
3. Most of the students (16) considered insufficient mastery of syntax as the main source in committing errors.
4. Approximately all of the students (19) attributed their errors to the inherent difficulty of the target language.
5. All of the students (20) agreed that the lack of exposure to the target language was the main source of errors.
6. Students varied in their responses to the question (what are some other sources of errors,)
  - a. Four (4) students ascribed their errors to carelessness.
  - b. Twelve (12) of the students accredited their errors to the challenges of



Arabic grammar.

- c. Insufficient hours of learning Arabic grammar accounted for four (4) of the students' response.

### **5.7 Summary of the Causes of Errors:**

Establishing the possible causes of errors is a very important stage, Broughton et al (1978:137) says " ...as a full knowledge of the cause of an error enables the teacher to work out a more effective teaching strategy to deal with it." The main reasons for errors in this study were given earlier, however, as stated by Broughton et al (1978:137) "The learner brings with him one source of error: his mother tongue." Therefore, one can rule out the following sources of errors:

1. Inherent difficulty of the target language.
2. Lack of motivation in learning the Arabic language.
3. Insufficient mastery of Arabic syntax.
4. Inadequate exposure to the target language (Arabic language).
5. Interference of the mother tongue (B M).
6. Students' carelessness.
7. Frequent curriculum changes i.e., (Arabic text-books).

Each of these causes has been discussed earlier in this chapter. However, these causes can be summarized in four categories, Broughton et al, state three: (1978:137) "Poor materials, bad teaching, errors from learning process, and mother tongue interference." And fourth, the inherent difficulty of the target language.

### **5.8 Reconstruction of Errors:**

Besides, the discussion and description of the errors, as elaborated in the previous section, this study provides an intensive construction of the errors committed by the students in the area investigated. Appendix (B), and (C), respectively shows these errors for this purpose. Appendix (B) shows a description of the errors, appendix (C) shows a reconstruction of errors. These appendices are useful as a guide for syllabus design.