



# An evaluation of the mistakes made by native Arabic speakers in their writing assignments of academic Turkish course

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## Abstract

In teaching Turkish language as a foreign language, the purpose is to enable the target audience, who have diverse purposes for learning the language, coming from a variety of cultures and languages, to reach such a level that they could understand whatever they listen and read and they could express their feelings, thoughts and dreams verbally as well as in writing. However, students graduating from the Turkish Language Teaching, Application and Research Centers face difficulties in using the academic language during their undergraduate and graduate studies. For this, 100-hour Academic Turkish Program is developed by Gazi University and Presidency for Turks Abroad and Related Communities. Research data is composed of 230 papers containing written expressions made in the beginning and the final evaluations of 115 Arabic speaking students. For the purpose of the initial evaluation at the beginning of the program, the students are asked to write down their feelings and thoughts on the given subject. The papers are evaluated on the basis of the written expression assessment scale prepared by the experts of the subject areas. The research data are analysed with SPSS. Content analysis was made with frequency and percentage statistics. With this study, the problems in academic writing experienced by students whose native language is Arabic and who want to obtain undergraduate and graduate education in Turkey, are identified and suggestions are presented for the solution of the problems faced by these students.

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## 1. Introduction

In learning a foreign language, writing skill comes after listening, speaking and reading skills. The person who learns a foreign language first hears, then speaks, and

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then learns to read and write. While speaking and listening skills take place without any education, reading and writing are skills that one gains through education. Researchers define writing skills in different ways: according to Demirel, writing is to express thoughts, emotions and events in a written format (Demirel, 2004, p. 102).

According to Sever, writing means describing our feelings, thoughts, the things that we design and experience in writing (Sever, 2004, p. 24). Some researchers have defined writing as “written expression”: “Written expression is the beautiful and effective reflection, on paper through language, of the emotions, thoughts and dreams, wishes and desires, of the things that are known and seen, read and heard.” (Calp, 2005, p. 225).

Academic writing, which is the advanced form of written expression, is to express thoughts in a comprehensive and systematic way at international level by making use of the research data obtained about a subject. In other words, academic language is defined by word groups, grammar rules, discourse strategies, advanced thinking processes, hard-to-understand ideas and abstract concepts (Zwiers, 2014).

Therefore, academic writing is the area of studies where academic information is handled and presented at an international level. Academic writing education entails a deliberate change in behavior in the desired direction to ensure that the students acquire adequate academic writing skills (Altunkaya & Ayrancı, 2020, p. 90). As Murray and Thow (2014) stated academic writing is a deliberate act; and therefore, it is rather a behavior.

Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment (CEFR, 2013) includes these acquisitions in the C2 level for writing skill:

- Finds information, ideas and comments from texts requiring expertise in the field and expresses his/her thoughts on the subject both in written and verbal forms.
- Uses the language effectively and flexibly in social and professional correspondence, education and training.
- Creates well-structured and inter-linked texts using various partitioning and linking possibilities appropriately.
- Writes about a subject matter on scientific grounds and counter grounds, having a position for or against a certain opinion.
- Writes without any writing error.
- Could summarize information obtained from different written and verbal sources, she/he can express the justifications and explanations in a connected narrative.
- Writes articles that describe a situation in a well-structured way and enable the reader to distinguish important points.

- Writes scientific papers or presentations containing daily usage of words, local sayings and foreign terms.
- He/she can write project text on a given subject, write down the project process and outputs clearly and understandably.

In the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment, Companion Volume with New Descriptors (2018: 173), under the heading of Written Assessment Grid the writing assessment criteria for C2 are given as shown:

Table 1: Written assessment grid

Overall	Range	Coherence	Accuracy	Description	Argument
Can write clear, highly accurate and smoothly flowing complex texts in an appropriate and effective personal style conveying finer shades of meaning.	Shows great flexibility in formulating ideas in differing linguistic forms to convey finer shades of meaning precisely, to give emphasis and to eliminate ambiguity. Also has a good command of idiomatic expressions and colloquialisms.	Can create coherent and cohesive texts making full and appropriate use of a variety of organizational patterns and a wide range of connectors and other cohesive devices.	Maintains consistent and highly accurate grammatical control of even the most complex language forms. Errors are rare and concern rarely used forms.	Can write clear, smoothly flowing and fully engrossing stories and descriptions of experience in a style appropriate to the genre adopted.	Can produce clear, smoothly flowing, complex reports, articles and essays, which present a case or give critical appreciation of proposals or literary works.  Can provide an appropriate and effective logical structure, which helps the reader to find significant points.

However, students who have graduated from Turkish Learning, Application and Research Centers have difficulty in using academic language during their undergraduate and postgraduate education despite having advanced Turkish certificate. This is due to the fact that writing covers a long process and there are many factors that affect the writing process.

### 1.1. Literature Review

Process-oriented writing skills, unlike speaking skills, allow writing mistakes to be seen. While language mistakes made during speech will be considered usual, mistakes

made in writing are easily noticed (Demirel, 2016, p. 117). However, these mistakes can help improve the development of the skill when they are pointed out and corrected. Error analysis reveals the systematic mistakes of students such as quizzes do and offers solutions to them. Therefore, mistakes are things that are made continuously and systematically. Error analysis, based on the data obtained from students, seeks to determine areas of learning where students have difficulty. In other words, error analysis obtains its data from approved, real problems that are not based on assumptions. The mistakes made by students offer helpful tips for the improvement of teaching instruments and techniques (Akçay, 2016, p. 104).

One of the most important factors that cause the increase of number of mistakes in writing skills, is the tendency of the student, in the process of learning the target language, to transfer the cultural patterns and meanings in his/her own language and culture (Altunbay, 2019, p. 196). This transfer takes place both during the verbal expression as the producer and during the listening to and understanding the target language from native speakers of that language (Bölükbaş, 2011, p. 1358). Negative transfers during the comparison of native language and target language will cause mistakes (Nation, 2001).

As stated by Richards (1974, p. 145), there are two sources of mistakes that students make while learning the target language:

1. Interlingual/transfer errors: Rules and structures of the native language of the student make it difficult for him/her to understand the rules and structure in the target language. This will cause negative transfer of meaning.

2. Intralingual/developmental errors: These are mistakes that are made independently of the native language. These result from the generalization of some rules in the target language, which will lead the student to develop new rules.

According to Richards (1974, p. 176-178), intra-language developmental mistakes can be categorized under groups of over-generalization, not knowing the rule limitations, insufficient application of the rules, and development of erroneous concepts.

Predicting the mistakes that the students will make, by analyzing the target language and developing a method would reduce the number of mistakes. However, according to Wardhaugh (1970, p. 124), since it is not going to be possible to predict all the mistakes, it is not possible to reduce the number of mistakes in every area.

Students might find it more difficult to learn writing skills in a foreign language compared to other skills. There are various reasons for that. The inability to use body language, emphasis and intonation, eye contact among others in writing, which help convey the meaning, the fact that the target language (such as Arabic language) has a different alphabet than that of the target language (native language), that writing skills

are not very developed even in native language, are among these causes (Doğru, 2018, p. 90-91).

It is stated in CEFR 2013 that, if the users/learners of language do not use their proficiencies correctly, there might be mistakes in the use of language. “Proficiency mistakes resemble a made-up language with simplified and deformed components of the target language” (MoNE; 2013, p. 154):

- a. Proficiency and language command mistakes are proofs that it was not learned.
- b. Proficiency and language command mistakes are proofs of an unproductive lesson.
- c. Proficiency and language command mistakes are proofs that language learners wish to communicate despite the risk.
- d. Proficiency mistakes are the inevitable and temporary products of the “artificial language” that the language-learner developed; language command mistakes are inevitable even in native speakers.

In error analysis, the pronunciation, writing skills, vocabulary, morphology, sentence structure, language use, and social-cultural content of the written products of students should be examined and assessed. The important thing in error analysis is for the student to understand the mistake correctly and to offer a solution suggestion. If we misjudge the mistake of the student, this will lead to another mistake. In error analysis, it is imperative that the correction of the mistake is offered to the student as a feedback. This way, the student will see his/her mistake and seek to correct it. On the other hand, it is important to intervene at the right time (Yılmaz, 2019, p. 7).

The purpose of this study is to determine the mistakes of the foreign students whose native language is Arabic, while learning the target language Turkey and to develop solution suggestions and methods for those mistakes. To this end, 100-course academic Turkish lessons were given for 16 weeks within the scope of the European Languages Teaching Common Framework Programme held under the auspices of the Directorate for the Expat-Turks and Related Communities of Gazi University. During the course, the students used the Academic Turkish (Writing) book published by Gazi University (Gazi TÖMER, 2017). The purpose of the programme is ensuring that students use language efficiently and flexibly in their social and professional correspondences, in their schools, and to enable them to find the views and opinions in expert-level texts in their areas and to help them express their thoughts verbally and in writing. For this, the mistakes in the written expressions of the students were determined and grouped through error analysis and efforts were made to eliminate those mistakes during the programme.

## *1.2. Research questions*

The purpose of this study is to determine the problems in the language use of students who are native Arabic speakers wish to learn Turkish and attend undergraduate and postgraduate studies in Turkey. The study particularly focuses on their social and professional correspondences and the process of their education. The study also aims to provide solutions for those problems. Accordingly, we searched for answers for the following questions with this study:

1. What are the most common mistakes made by Arabic students learning Academic Turkish as they express their opinions in writing?
2. Are the causes of these errors due to the grammatical structure of Arabic and Turkish? Are these errors caused by the influence of Arabic?

## 2. Method

In this research, document analysis method is used. This method was applied in the process of obtaining and interpreting the data within the qualitative research model. Document analysis can be defined as the systematic handling of both printed and web-based information and documents. (Bowen, 2009, p. 27). Turkish written expression skills were evaluated according to the error analysis approach.

### 2.1. Sample Participants

The study group consists of 115 foreign students whose native language is Arabic and who have studied at the Gazi University during 2017-2018 academic year. These students studied at the Turkish Learning, Research and Education Center of Gazi University and took the academic Turkish lessons with Presidency for Turks Abroad and Related Communities scholarship.

Table 2. Descriptive Characteristics of the Students

Gender	N	%
Female	47	40.9
Male	68	59.1
Total	115	100

### 2.2. Instrument(s)

During the lessons, through texts prepared for Social Sciences, Natural Sciences and Health-Care, 115 Arabic-speaking students were observed with regards to their skills of taking notes, preparing presentations, and reading and writing academic texts such as

articles, declarations and doctorate theses. To this end, 230 pre-assessment and final assessment papers of 115 Arabic speaking students were examined.

### 2.3. Data analysis

230 texts, which make up the pre-assessment and final assessment of the students, were analyzed through error analysis and the mistakes were grouped under the heading of phonetic, morphologic and syntax and the codings were expressed as numbers and frequencies. Furthermore, the wrong sentences written by the students were presented in the Findings section in order to support the reliability of the study. In the evaluation of the data, SPSS 20 (Statistical Packages for Social Science) package program was used. For analysis, frequency, percentage and average statistical techniques were used.

## 3. Results

### 3.1. Descriptive results of grammar analysis

Mistakes under sounds and vowel harmony, case suffixes, possessive case and relative clauses, plural suffixes, subject and possessive suffix harmony, gerund, voice and syntax groups are shown in Table 3.

Table 3. The number of students' faults in pre-assessment and final assessment writings

	Sounds and vowel harmony	Case suffixes	Possessive case and relative clauses	Plural suffixes	Subject and possessive suffix harmony	Gerunds	Voice	Syntax
Preliminary assessment	97	194	148	39	29	75	115	107
Final assessment	56	143	92	37	27	65	38	50
<b>Total</b>	153	337	240	76	56	140	153	157

Table 3 shows that students made the most mistakes in the preliminary assessment in the use of case suffixes (194). This was followed by positive case and relative clauses with 148 mistakes. The least mistakes were made in the use of subject and possessive suffixes (29). In the final assessment, the mistakes made in case suffixes and positive case and relative clauses went down. Students made 150 and 38 mistakes in the preliminary and final assessments, respectively. This shows that academic Turkish course helped the students with their writing skills.

Table 4. Results of descriptive statistics for the students who made mistakes in their writing-related preliminary and final assessments

Assessments	Sounds and vowel harmony		Case suffixes		Possessive case and relative clauses		Plurality suffixes		Subject and possessive suffix harmony		Gerunds		Voice		Syntax	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Pre.	48	41.8	73	63.4	61	53.1	30	26.1	22	19.2	39	34	52	45.3	43	37.4
Final	32	27.9	58	50.5	54	47	25	21.7	17	14.8	36	31.3	26	22.6	32	27
Total	115	100	115	100	115	100	115	100	115	100	115	100	115	100	115	100

Table 4 shows the numbers and percentage of students that made mistakes in the writing assignments as a part of the year preliminary and final assessments. 73 out of 115 students (%6, 3.4) made the most mistakes in the use of case suffixes. In the final assessment 58 students made the most mistakes in the case suffixes (50.5%). As can be seen in Table 4, 61 students (53.1%) made the most mistakes in the preliminary assessment in the subject and possessive suffixes. 54 students (47%) made the most mistakes in this area in the final assessment.



Table 5. Descriptive statistical results regarding the mistakes made by the students in writing assignments in preliminary and final assessments

	Preliminary assessment			Final assessment		
	Lowest	Highest	X̄	Lowest	Highest	X̄
<b>Sounds and vowel harmony</b>	0	82	1.43	0	46	0.80
<b>Case suffixes</b>	0	33	0.57	0	31	0.54
<b>Possessive case and relative clauses</b>	0	173	3.01	0	128	2.23
<b>Plural suffixes</b>	0	33	0.57	0	31	0.54
<b>Subject and possessive suffix harmony</b>	0	25	0.43	0	21	0.37
<b>Gerunds</b>	0	65	1.13	0	55	0.96
<b>Voices</b>	0	100	1.74	0	35	0.61
<b>Syntax</b>	0	44	0.77	0	84	1.46

Table 5 shows that students make the most mistakes in possessive case and relative clauses. The student with the least number of mistakes in the preliminary assessment made 1 mistake and the student with the highest number of mistakes made 173 mistakes. The average number of mistakes made by students in writing assignments during preliminary assessment is 3.01 in the field of possessive case and relative clauses.

This shows that on an average, students make three mistakes in any subject. It was determined that the student with the least number of mistakes in possessive case and relative clauses made zero mistakes and the student with the highest number of mistakes, made 128 mistakes. The average number of mistakes made by students in possessive case and relative clauses is determined to be 2.23, which shows that an average student makes 2 mistakes in this area.

### 3.2. Examples for the error analyses of grammar mistakes

Under the heading of grammar mistakes, sounds, vowel harmony, case suffixes, possessive case and relative clauses, plural suffixes, subject and possessive suffix harmony, voice and syntax were evaluated. Some of the grammar mistakes determined in the writing assignments of students were as follows:

#### 3.2.1. Sounds and harmony

All the ecology in the world will fall, the seaside will rise. (*Dünyadaki bütün ekoloji düşecek, deniz kenerleri yükselecek.*)

People can broadcast vedio and habar. (*İnsanlar vedio ve habar yayınabilir.*)

There are some vocal (sound) differences between Turkish and Arabic languages. Some sounds that exist in Arabic do not exist in Turkish. In some cases, the sounds that exist in both languages could be read and written in a different way in Arabic language. In writing these sounds in Turkish, Arab students are affected by their experience in their native language and hence they could transfer this effect into Turkish language in a negative manner. In the examples given above, the errors are made due to the sound differences existing between Turkish and Arabic.

### 3.2.2. Case suffixes

It was seen that students had difficulty in determining which verb should be followed by which case suffix.

They know to investigate them. (*Bunları araştırmaya bilirler.*)

They do it easily by pressing a button. (*Bir dumeyi basıp kolayca yaparlar.*)

There is a celebration every month in my country. (*Ülkemde her ayden bir kutlama vardır.*)

Some things to Turkey are better than us. (*Bazı şeyler Türkiye'ye bizimden iyi.*)

I think it is necessary to make a city planning without harming the natural beauty. (*Bence bunun için doğal güzellikleri zarar vermeden bir şehir planlaması yapması gerekmektedir.*)

We never looked or used social media. (*Hiçbir kere sosyal medyayı bakmadık yada kullanmadık.*)

In Arabic, the order of the verb sentence is as follows: verb + subject + object. Objects can be translated into Turkish language in the position of the names with the appropriate suffixes depending on the situation. Based on this mechanism, Arab students translate a given Arabic sentence into Turkish in different ways. The errors in the examples are committed due to the fact that students do not know which case suffix they should use given the grammatical position of the words in Turkish. For instance, in the fourth example, the students use the suffix “-e (eng. to)” instead of the suffix “-de (eng. at or in)” for the word “Türkiye”. This happens because the student uses case suffixes in Turkish taking into account their usage in Arabic Language. In this sentence as the answer to the question of “where?” Türkiye is used in the position of object. It has the same position in Arabic. However, the students misuse the -e suffix there. This is also the case in other examples.

### 3.2.3. Possessive case and relative clauses

Nowadays people in big city life have many negative natural effects. (*Günümüzde insanlar hayatı büyük şehirde birçok olumsuz doğalsal etkileri vardır.*)

I am a Syrian student. (*Suriyeli öğrencisiyim.*)

Most of the mistakes result from the confusion regarding definite and indefinite noun phrases. The failure to use the necessary defining and defined suffixes, or excessive use of suffixes are common. In some sentences, possessive suffixes were not written. In adjective clauses, mistakes were made in the order of adjectives.

Possessive case and relative clauses in Arabic have the opposite syntax of those in the Turkish Language. In Arabic, the adjectival construction is composed of the adjective (qualifying) and the qualified noun or phrase. The adjective always comes after the qualified noun. This sequence is just in the opposite order in Turkish language.

In a similar way, the genitive construction in Arabic language is composed of two parts: the defined noun and the genitival. The defined noun is always written in the first place of the construction. This sequence is the opposite of Turkish. This difference between two languages causes errors in the translation of the words by Arab students, thus having a negative effect on their sentences in Turkish.

#### 3.2.4. Plural suffixes

The mistakes made in the use of plural suffixes are usually seen in adjective clauses with numbers or indefinite adjectives.

There are many organizations. (*Çok örgütler var.*)

The planning of each state center should pay attention to the things in the denial. (*Her devlet kent merkezlerinin planlaması ykardaki şeylere dikket etmelidirler.*)

Social effects are reduced and several holidays are celebrated. (*Sosyal etkiler azalıp birkaç bayramlar kutlanır.*)

Plural words have some special patterns in Arabic language. Plural words can be used alone in these patterns as well as with some prefixes that come before them. These prefixes are brought according to the requirement of the meaning; such as many (كثير) few (بضعة), some (بعض). In the Turkish sentences used with these prefixes, Arab students are influenced by this rule and write the name that follows in plural form.

In the first example, it is seen that the student uses "-ler", the suffix for plural together with the word “many” in the same sentence. The most important reason for this is the influence of the Arabic language. When this construction is done in Arabic, a plural word is used after the word meaning “many”. Therefore, the student applies the same rule in Turkish.

In the second example, we see the effect of the Arabic syntax on the sentence. Because there is a rule in Arabic: a sentence that starts plural form continues with plural. However, under the influence of the Arabic language, the student uses the verb in plural form. Hence, there is subject-verb mismatch here.

### 3.2.5. Subject and possessive suffix harmony

Life evolves, communities grow and turn into industrial societies. (*Hayat gelişiyor, topluluklar büyüyor ve endüstriyel toplumlara çeviriyor.*)

With their new technology, the doctor is performing surgery. (*Yeni teknolojiyle doctor ameliyat yapıyorlar.*)

In Arabic, the noun-sentence begins with a noun. The verb that comes after the noun in the noun-clause must be compatible with the noun in terms of number and gender. In the verb sentence that starts with the verb, the verb at the beginning must only be compatible with the subject in terms of the gender. Therefore, if the subject in the noun sentence is singular, the verb must be singular; if the subject is plural, the subject should be plural. There is no such requirement in the verb sentence. Students whose native language is Arabic are affected by this rule and they make errors while writing such sentences in Turkish. For example, in a sentence whose subject is singular, the student writes the verb in plural form or vice versa, or a singular subject is accompanied by a singular verb without discriminating between active-passive forms.

When the examples given above are examined, we see errors regarding incompatibility between subject and the personal suffix. This can also be called subject-verb harmony.

### 3.2.6. Gerunds

The students are observed to be having difficulty in making sentences by using gerunds, especially with “-mA” and “-dIk”, “diye” and also in reported speech.

It is difficult to live in Syria. (*Suriye yaşıp durumu zor.*)

Normally living in New York is human and living in California is very different. (*Normalde Yeni York’de yaşamak insan ve Kaliforniya yaşamak insan çok farklıdır.*)

Although nature has the ability to protect itself with minor changes... (*Doğa küçük değişikliklerle kendini koruyabilmek özelliğe sahip olduğu rağmen...*)

They are the most damaged young people. (*En çok zararlanan gençlerdir.*)

In Arabic language, as for the voice of the sentence, structures such as infinitives and participles are used instead of verbs. These structures sometimes could mean the present continuous tense and sometimes simple present tense.

In the first example, no mistake was made due to syntax, and a mistake was made due to the fact that the gerundial structure in Turkish language was not well known. In the second example, instead of the gerund noun, the student preferred to use the infinite, which is a verbal structure. It can be said that an error originating from the knowledge of Arabic was made here. This is the case because, if this sentence were to be established in Arabic, “yaşamak” (living) here would be used in the present tense and as a conjunctive

structure, meaning a verbal adjective. Most likely, the student wanted to transfer the same rule to the Turkish sentence based on this idea.

### 3.2.7. Voice

When the mistakes are examined, it was seen that active-passive voices were confused, causative suffixes were not used properly.

The media is like ocean, diving into it needs to know swimming. (*Medya ukyanus gibi, onu içinde dalmak yüzme bilmeyi gerekiyor.*)

I think it is necessary to make a city planning without harming the natural beauty. (*Bence bunun için doğal güzellikleri zarar vermeden bir şehir planlaması yapması gerekmektedir.*)

In Turkish and Arabic, passive verb is the one that has no Subject. In Arabic, the passive verbs are produced by changing the vowel points (ötre, fetha, esre) of “mazi”, “müzari” and “sahih” verbs. However, in Turkish, the verb is derived by adding the suffixes -l (il) -n (in) to its roots. When the active sentence in Arabic and Turkish is turned into passive, the agent (subject) is dropped, it is replaced by a false agent (the so-called subject), and the verb is made passive. The passive verbs in Arabic could be derived only from transitive verbs. It is possible to derive them from transitive and intransitive verbs in Turkish. Arab students either do not remove the subject while writing the verb in passive form in Turkish, or they do just the opposite and drop the object and keep the verb as active. This causes a significant meaning shift in the sentence.

It can be said that the mistakes made in relation to the voice stems from the differences of syntax in Arabic and Turkish. This difference of voice between the two languages causes the mistake done by the student.

### 3.2.7. Syntax

Social media is good for people, and good media for distance. (*Sosyal medya insanlar için iyi ilişkiler ve uzaktan ilişkiler için iyi bir medya.*)

It could be the Internet or anything. (*O İnternet olabilir ya her şey.*)

In this case, the question that may come up is this: (*Bu durumda, gelebilir soru bu:*)

There are differences between Turkish and Arabic because they belong to different language groups. This causes the presence of contrasts in terms of syntax in sentence establishment, differences of sentence elements in terms of both their positions and functions.

In the sentence which is written as “Social media is good for people, and good media for distance.” (*Sosyal medya insanlar için iyi ilişkiler ve uzaktan ilişkiler için iyi bir medya.*), it is meant to express the following: “Social media is a good tool for people to

establish remote and good relationships.” (*Sosyal medya, insanların uzaktan ve iyi ilişkiler kurması için iyi bir araçtır.*). The Arabic index of this sentence is as follows (from right to left);

insanların uzaktan ve iyi ilişkiler kurması için	iyi bir araçtır	Sosyal medya
(for people to establish good and remote relationships)	(is a good tool)	(social media)
3	2	1

The sentence provided has the following order:

insanlar için iyi ilişkiler ve uzaktan ilişkiler için	iyi bir medya	Sosyal medya
(for good relationships and remote relationships for people)	(a good media)	(social media)
3	2	1

The sentence where the verb is at the end, like in the Arabic, could be written as follows:

iyi bir medya	insanlar için iyi ilişkiler ve uzaktan ilişkiler için	Sosyal medya
(a good media)	(for good relationships and remote relationships for people)	(social media)
3	2	1

Again, the different places of Arabic noun and adjective clauses in comparison to Turkish constitute one of the main reasons for mistakes committed in writing. For example; although the adjective comes after the noun in Arabic adjective clauses in Arabic, it is the opposite in Turkish;

Phrase in Turkish: “beyaz araba” in Arabic (from right to left ): (السيارة البيضاء)

1	2	2	1
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The situation is same in case of possessive case. Therefore, the Arab student writes this sentence as provided above under the influence of his/her knowledge of Arabic language. Again, there are differences in the structure of the sentence. In the verb sentence, the verb comes at the beginning and the subject and object follow come after it.

2	1	3	1	2	3
جاء الرجل إلى البيت	Adam	eve	geldi.	(The man came to house.)	

Taking into account the order, the Arab student could write this sentence as follows: “Geldi adam eve” (Came man to house)

#### 4. Discussion

The assessments show that the foreign students taking academic Turkish classes made the most mistakes in case suffixes and in subordinative conjunctions. This is due to the unique structure of the two different languages and how they affect the learning of the

other language. As native Arabic students learn Turkish, they consciously or unconsciously transfer from their native languages and try to adapt Turkish to the Arabic structure.

Kara (2010, p. 688), in his study conducted to establish the basic mistakes made by foreign students trying to learn Turkish, concluded that students coming from the Middle East -either of Turkish or Arabic origin-, have more reading and writing problems compared to other foreign students. He believes that this is mostly due to the change of alphabet and the fact that vowels are not written in the Arabic alphabet. Bölükbaş (2011), in his study titled “Evaluation of Turkish writing and speaking skills of Arabic students”, explains that Arabic students made the most mistakes in writing skills (54.58%) and that 62.2% of those mistakes resulted from negative transfer. He also showed that the grammar mistakes made by the students came second with 16.39%. 52.5% of those mistakes are developmental errors. It was also established that 55.1% of the syntax mistakes and 60.3% of the vocabulary mistakes resulted from negative transfer from their native languages.

Biçer (2017, p. 41-58) in his study sought to determine the effect of the native language of Syrian students as they learned Turkish and showed that the native language of the students caused negative transfers in grammar and pronunciation of Turkish. In another study conducted with Turkish freshmen in Arabic simultaneous translation courses in order to determine the systematic mistakes made by them (Yılmaz, 2019), it was determined that the holistic mistakes of the students resulted from not complying with the structure of the language system (45%), 25% of the mistakes resulted from lack of morphological information, and 30% resulted from problems with grammar. With regards to the partial mistakes, 38.7% resulted from problems with grammar, 5.4% resulted from not knowing the rules properly, 7.2 due to insufficient application of the rules, 10.8% from spelling, 11.7% from lack of morphological information and 5.4% resulted from the transfer of the native language to the target language. In other words, the differences of systems in two languages make it more difficult to learn the other language and sometimes make it more complex.

This study determines the mistakes made most in writing by Turkish-learning Arabic students. It was concluded that the main reason behind these mistakes is the negative transfer between the native language and the target language.

## **5. Conclusions**

Arabic and Turkish belong to different language families. Therefore, spelling mistakes are common due to these different alphabets. At the same time the grammar structure of these two languages are different. While Arabic students are learning Turkish, their perception of Turkish as a grammatically different structure from their mother tongue prevents negative transmission. Therefore, teachers and the writer of textbooks can play

a great role in the reduction of grammar mistakes. According to the results of this study, considering that the mistakes of the students regarding syntax and vocabulary results from the negative transfer from their native languages, in order to minimize these mistakes a comparative analysis of both languages can be done where the similar and different features of these two languages are shown. Then teaching instruments can be prepared accordingly.

When proficiency and fluency mistakes are revealed, it is important that;

- a. teachers immediately correct all proficiency and fluency mistakes,
- b. language learners correct each other regularly so that the mistakes are minimized,
- c. all mistakes are noted to be corrected later provided that this doesn't prevent communication (for example by separating the development of format related correctness from the development of fluent speaking),
- d. mistakes are not only corrected but also analyzed and explained,
- e. occasional mistakes are ignored but systematic mistakes should be eliminated,
- f. mistakes preventing communication should be immediately corrected,
- g. mistakes are considered as a part of the transition process and they should not be paid too much attention.

A1-C1 Turkish learning period for new for foreign student should be increased and at the end of this period, academic Turkish lessons should be made mandatory for those students that are going to take postgraduate lessons. The most important needs of students at this level must be determined and curriculum must be determined accordingly.

Error analysis offers many benefits for the scientific world and this method contributes to linguistic studies. However, it is also true that error analysis can also help teachers in many areas from observation to teaching techniques, and feedbacks. One of the benefits of error analysis for the teachers is that teachers can understand the type of mistakes by this way. They also help the students because as the mistakes are corrected the students can understand how they should do it instead. Mistakes are important in helping the students understand what is right and also in shaping their learning strategies. The analysis of those mistakes is important and beneficial for students, teachers and researchers (Çerçi et al., 2016, p. 698).

In addition to the analysis of student mistakes, it is also important when and how the mistakes should be corrected. The most controversial subject about this is if the mistake should be immediately corrected or should be delayed. For communication purposes the delayed correction of the mistake is preferred. However, pronunciation mistakes should be immediately corrected because the corrections made later will not help students remember it. Also the general atmosphere in the classroom is important in determining if



mistakes should be corrected. The decision of the teacher and the feedback of the students are also important in this regard.

## 6. Ethics Committee Approval

The authors confirm that this study has been done at Gazi University Turkish Language Learning Research and Application Center and ethical approval was obtained from Gazi University TÖMER (Approval Date: 23/06/2020 and Number 302).

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