An Application of the Language Transfer in the Analysis of Errors of University-Level Students' Paragraphs in an EFL Situation.

The Case Study of the Second Year Students of English at Mohamed Kheider University of Biskra.

A Dissertation Submitted to the Department of Foreign Languages in Partial

Fulfillment for the Requirements of the Master Degree in Sciences of Languages

Submitted by: **Supervised by:**

 BELAID Khadidja   **Mr. TURQUI Barkat.**

Board of Examiners:

Mr. TURQUI Barkat   **University of Biskra**

Ms. ZERIGUI Naima   **University of Biskra**

Ms. HBIRAT Sara   **University of Biskra**

Mrs. LADJALI Djamila   **University of Biskra**

Academic year 2016/2017

Dedication

I would like to dedicate this work to my beloved parents Said and Rahima and to my sister Karima, and special thanks to my sister Zehor, who has been with me through this entire dissertation,

I would like to thank also my brothers Youghourta and Ibrahim, and my beautiful niece Sarah Rahma.

And finally, I would like to thank my friends Soraya, Rokaya, Imene, and Fatima for being there for me.

Acknowledgements

All thanks goes to Allah who gave me the strength to finish this work. First of all, I would like to express deep gratitude to my teacher and my supervisor Mr. Turqui Barkat who has been a good help in every step in this dissertation, and he has been very patient with me. Besides, his guidance and advice were very helpful throughout the writing of this research paper.

I would also like to thank all the members of the jury Ms. Zerigui Naima, and Ms. Hbirat Sara for taking time to read and examine this research paper. And special thanks go to Mrs. Ladjali Djamila for offering help.

I am also grateful to all my family who has been supportive and encouraging, and my friends who participated in this dissertation. Also, I would like to thank my foreign friends Americans and Chilean, for their help and support.

Abstract

Most learners of English as a foreign language face many difficulties concerning writing paragraphs without making any grammatical errors. Usually, these errors are related to mother tongue interference. The objective of this current study aims at shedding light on language transfer phenomenon and its probable impact on second year students' errors at the department of English at Biskra University. For the purpose of achieving these objectives, we have adapted a descriptive method. We have used these three tools in the process; an interview has been conducted with five written expression teachers of English at Biskra University to ask them about mother tongue interference and students' level in writing. Also, a questionnaire has been administered to eighty students to know their opinion on their most common errors. Moreover, Forty-one paragraphs were collected and analysed, in order to detect the most common errors and its possible causes. The obtained results indicate that students make different types of grammatical errors because of their mother tongue interference. Indeed, the outcomes confirm this hypothesis, which is despite their relative proficiency in the foreign language, students still continues to make errors; we also advance that mother tongue interference enhances the negative transfer and consequently causes errors. Lastly, we have suggested some recommendations for both teachers and students.

List of Abbreviations

EFL: English as Foreign Language

EA: Error Analysis

CA: Contrastive Analysis

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Chapter Three: Field Work

General Introduction

Introduction

Learning a foreign language is usually considered very difficult. In fact, most learners face various difficulties in language learning, such as grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation. As a consequence, students make a lot of errors in their production of the target language. Therefore, linguists and scholars such as S. Pit Corder and Odlin became more interested throughout these last decades; they did a lot of research and investigation on the errors committed by EFL learners to find out their possible causes and sources and how to improve language learning process. Most linguists found out that the difference of language systems and structures of the native language and the target language is the main source of students' errors; because students unconsciously use their native language as a reference in learning and applying the target language grammar rules.

This phenomenon is called language transfer; it represents a major source of foreign language learners' errors. It consists of applying knowledge from learners' native languages onthe target language. Scholars categorize this kind of interference in two aspects: first the positive transfer is when the native language can facilitate the development of foreign language skills. The second is the negative transfer, which is actually when errors are made referring to first language and they do not correspond to the rules of the foreign language acquisition.

The main aim of this study is to shed light on language transfer as a phenomenon and how it should be considered in the study in the language learning process. Moreover, this study investigates and analyse the most common and regular grammatical errors made by second year EFL students. In addition to suggest what are the possible causes and sources of students' errors, and provide teachers with the help which they need in order to improve their students' level and skills.

1. Statement of the Problem

In the course of learning a foreign language, Learners may face many challenges and difficulties; these difficulties usually concern the lack of understanding of the grammatical rules, and mostly related to mother tongue interference. Students tend to count on their native language in order to develop their level. Therefore, most of the students make errors concerning language interference in their writing, speaking, and reading. Even though they are university level students, teachers admit that EFL students' written production is still weak.

In order to investigate to what extent the learners' first language has an influence on foreign language development. This research emphasizes on second year students written production because the most errors occur clearly in their paragraphs and essays. Therefore, we can find the types of errors, the sources and causes through the analysis of their work; we can also suggest help to students and teachers in order to improve students' English level.

2. Significance of the study

The importance of this study is determined by how teaching and learning English at University of Biskra is important. Therefore, we attempt to emphasize two issues: the first is to assist English teachers to identify the sources of students' grammatical errors. By identifying second year students' most common errors and find out their causes, and also suggest convenient solutions. The second issue is to help second year LMD students avoid making errors in their writing. It is important that students should be aware of their writing problem and what are the kinds of errors they make the most.

3. Research Question

Throughout this work we seek to answer the following questions:

1. What are the main sources of errors made by EFL learners?
2. Do learners of English as a foreign language transfer some linguistic element from standard Arabic into English?

3. What are the most influential types of language transfer?

4. Aims of the Study

This study aims to

1. To shed light on language transfer as a phenomenon that should be considered in the study of the foreign language learning process.

2. To state the possible sources of errors, and to determine whether learners of English influenced by the Arabic language.

3. To assist teachers and help students in the learning and teaching process.

5. Hypotheses

1. First, we hypothesize that despite their relative proficiency in the foreign language; students still continue to make errors.

2. Second, we advance whether mother tongue interference enhances the negative transfer and whether it causes students' errors.

6. Methodology

The choice of the method is determined by the nature of the problem. Therefore, the research intends to use a descriptive method. This study's main focus is the analysis of students' paragraphs in order to discover most common errors and suggests their sources and causes. Moreover, we conducted an interview with English teachers at the English department Biskra University. The last tool is students' questionnaire to know their opinion of their most common errors and what they think of it. The use of these three tools is to get detailed insight into this subject.

6.1. Sample and Population

Pride and Ferrell (2014) state "a population or a 'universe' includes all the elements, units or individuals of interest to researchers for a specific study" (p. 96). According to the administration of the second year students are 465 in total of the academic year 2016/2017. Our selected sample consists of forty two 42 students in the analysis of paragraphs and eighty 80 students for the students' questionnaire; the sample was chosen randomly because it is a more reliable method. Also we interviewed five written expression teachers at the department of English.

6.2. Research Tools

This study is based on three main research tools which are:

The first tool is structured interview for written expression teachers in the English department at Biskra University. In order to get further information of language interference as well as the teachers' point of view on their students' level, and the possible causes of students' errors. The findings might be a great help for our study.

The second tool is the student's questionnaire; it presents the students' understanding of their mother tongue interference and awareness of sources of errors.

The third tool is to analyse errors of written production of second year students at Mohamed Kheider Biskra University. This helps to find the most common errors and their main sources.

7. The Limitation of the Study

This research paper is limited to second year of English at Biskra University. We have decided not to involve all the levels because of time fetters and also because students are more exposed to the writing process. We will just study grammatical error for two reasons: first they are traceable and easy to identify, second reason is because the data of grammatical errors is available.

8. **Structure of the study**

This study will be divided into three main chapters. Chapter one and chapter two will constitute the literature review for readers to get the full understanding of the subject. The third chapter is devoted to the practical parts; it includes the data analysis of the students' paragraphs, teachers' interview, and students' questionnaire.

Chapter one consists of the background of EA and CA. We will display their definitions, types as well as error analysis' sources. The second chapter is devoted to transfer theory, its definition, types, and the variables affecting language transfer. The final chapter, which is the fieldwork; it deals with data gathering, analysing, and interpreting all the findings of error analysis, teachers' interview, and students' questionnaire.

9. **Literature Review**

This field of study which deals with language transfer and error analysis have been already studied by numerous of researchers and scholars and their findings are highly relevant to this study.

S Pit Corder (1967) suggested that learners' errors contribute in indicating how learners process foreign language new information; indeed, making errors can be helpful to the researcher to know how much learners have learnt, and how much still to learn. Moreover, Gass & Selinker (1992) stated that error analysis is considered as a tool that investigates the sources of errors of foreign language learners and analyses them, in order to facilitate the learning process. Jack Richard in his book error analysis (1974) proposes seven sources of language errors of transfer such as interlingual interference, sociolinguistic, situation modality, age, succession of appropriative systems and universal hierarchy of difficulty. He states that languages may share aspects of grammar and these may allow positive transfer, and negative transfer is the use of native language rules that leads to an error.

Contrastive analysis is another systematic study between languages; Krzeszowski (1990) defines contrastive linguistics as more related to the explanation of the similarities and differences in language rather than using a comparative analysis genetically or typologically. Wardhaugh (1970) classifies Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis in strong and weak versions. The strong version is a way of predicting procedure of the difficulty and problems of second language learning, whereas, the weak version requires explaining the errors and diagnosing errors and the reason behind the occurrence of errors.

Odlin (1989) devoted his book to language transfer and its aspects and he defines it as follows "Transfer is the influence resulting from similarities and differences between the target language and any other language that has been previously acquired" (p. 27). He rethinks a question that many language teachers have posed: what is the extent of the influence a learner's native language in foreign language acquisition? He also studies how linguistics can influence the learning of grammar, vocabulary and punctuation.

Susan Gass and Selinker (1992) attempt to investigate the native language influence on the process of second language learning and its relation to interlanguage, they devote a considerable part to the historical of language transfer since Contrastive Analysis framework to its current position within Universal Grammar.

All these findings confirm that language transfer has relation to making errors when acquiring new language due to differences and similarities of grammatical rules.

Chapter One: The Background of Error Analysis and Contrastive Analysis

Section One: Error Analysis

Introduction

The Foreign language learning process is incomplete without any detailed and in-depth analysis of the target language and the learners' errors and the principal objective is to know the reasons and the causes of the errors. Therefore, linguists, teachers, and psychologist, all came together seeking to find the most suitable and effective technique to teach and learn a foreign language as soon as possible. Their foundation led to the emergence of two approaches of language analysis. At first was a CA in the 1940s and 1950s; this approach is mainly based on predicting the source of learners' errors and finding the similarities and differences between languages, hence to ease the pedagogical process for the learner and teacher. This approach was criticized after a period of time for the difficulty of predicting errors. Subsequently the emergence of errors analysis was the convenient alternative in the late 1960s and 1970s; this approach is based on the theories of first and second language acquisition and the similarities between them. In addition, to find out the sources of learners' errors so they would know how to address the problem students' face while learning a new language. These two approaches aim at investigating and analysing language to find the possible ways to help students learn without any obstacles.

1.1. Historical Development of Error Analysis

In earlier years, there has been an increasing research interest in the analysis of errors that learners make while learning a foreign language. In fact, Ellis & Barkhuizen (2005) mention that EA has already existed before all the known methods for analysing language. Indeed, it was traced back to the 18th Century; though at that period, it was referred to as the

study of 'bad language'. In this approach of learners' error analysis, it focuses on the learner's knowledge of rules and the correct way to use it as reflected in the works of Howard's Good English Guide (as cited in Ellis & Barkhuizen, 2005)

Many studies in this area have been conducted through the years, focusing on foreign language learning and material preparation concerning school. They emphasized common errors of learners, and there are many important studies about the various types of errors. Some dictionaries were designed to be of great help for teachers to gain knowledge about common and most repeated errors of learners. Even though these dictionaries were presented as a guide, they had some drawbacks; because they lack variation in the way of identifying errors; in fact, errors are not expected to be the same in different countries and cultures. Afterwards, errors were more considered as a method in the late 60's and early 70's in the works of one of the pioneers of EA S. Pit Corder, who published a series of articles explaining its importance.

Ellis & Barkhuizen (2005) claim that error analysis has not disappeared in the late 70's, but instead it was given another view. For example, Taylor argues that "what constitutes significant error is not strictly quantifiable' but a rather qualitative approach to examining errors based on 'the interpretative traditions of humanistic discipline" (as cited in Ellis & Barkhuizen 2005, p. 53). This new view of EA has not been always the preferred approach; however, it continues to be used as a method since no other tool is available.

In the late sixties error analysis was studied by many scholars. It was a substitute to CA; because at this period contrastive analysis was questioned by critics concerning its main objectives; in particular, how to predict and explain the foreign learning problems, and also it could not explain some of the causes of the errors. Scholars become more aware of the idea that this approach prevents foreign learners from being certain of their knowledge. In addition, the fact that CA looks only to learners' native language and the target language, whereas EA

provided a methodology for investigating how to learn a language, and that led to the emergence of EA.

Before this period, behaviorism has influenced error analysis. According to this school, most errors that are made by the learners are due to the interference of learners' first language rules. These errors were not tolerated and were considered as imperfections of the teaching methodology and that they needed to be eliminated. Another view of errors was that they were essential in the learning process; learners can't help but make errors. But these errors were not given the importance of identification of its real sources. Yet, the approach of Universal Grammar proposed by Chomsky (2002) represented another view that all human beings have an innate capacity of learning any language rule. This point of view led many language teachers to move gradually away from the behaviouristic language learning. Corder suggested that when learning a new language, learners of second and foreign languages tend to use techniques and strategies which are the same as the learners of the first language use during the process of first language acquisition (Richards, 1974).

1.2. Error Analysis Definition

Corder (1967) defined error analysis as the study and analysis of errors that can be found in the learners' writing and speaking product; these errors often acknowledged and exposed by the teachers. Furthermore, Gass & Selinker (1992) stated that error analysis is considered as a type of linguistic analysis that investigates the sources of errors of foreign language learners and analyses them.

Error analysis was also defined by Brown (1980, p. 166) as "… the processes to observe, analyse, and classify the deviations of the rules of the second language and then to reveal the systems operated by learner" (as cited in Hasyim, 2002, p. 43). This process of collecting information about the difficulties and the errors that learners face is very helpful to

the teaching process. Errors were qualified by Gass & Selinker (1992, p. 102) as 'red flags'; in fact, they are seen as signs that learners are having some kind of trouble with foreign language rules, and also as evidence of the learners' knowledge of the language. Researchers put focus on errors because they are a great help for them to know the main problem that learners face in acquiring a foreign language. Corder (1967) claims that the method of learning a second language or first language might be the same, but we cannot deny that there is some kind of distinction between the two. As far as second language learning is concerned learners' understanding of learning is comparing between his first language and the target language and examining if the same rules are applied. These hypotheses are best regarded as a way for learners to find the right system to learn S. Pit Corder (1967) stated that "… it will be evident that the position taken here is that the learner's possession of his native language is facilitative and that errors are not to be regarded as signs of inhibition, but simply as evidence of his strategies of learning" (p. 27)

The importance of errors in language learning was first presented by S. Pit Corder he came up with different thoughts in his famous article entitled "The Significance of Learner Errors" (1967). He suggested that learners' errors contribute in indicating how learners process foreign language new information; indeed, making errors can be helpful to the researcher to know how much learners have learnt, and how much still to learn. According to Corder the significance of learners' errors can be shown in three different ways. First, for teachers, to know about the learners' progression and therefore to know how much remains to be learned. Secondly, for researchers, the occurrence of errors can provide evidence of how language is learned. Thirdly, is for learners, to know the source of their difficulties, and that is helpful to test their thought about how to learn a foreign language and its rules.

1.2.1. Errors and Mistakes

Brown (2000) stated that making mistakes is essential in learning a second or foreign language, and the feedback of their mistakes will help learners to acquire more information. Whereas, Corder (1967) points out that learner regularly makes errors when learning a new language. Furthermore, Brown (2000) states that even adults do make errors in their own native language as a result of many factors such as fatigue or some kind of mental state such as to be happy, angry, sad, and so forth. Making these errors doesn't reflect the lack of knowledge of their own language; actually, they know the correct from when they make an error because they correct it on the spot without any help. Likewise, second and foreigner language learners are expected to make errors; however, the difference is that they can't always correct their own errors due to the lack of knowledge of the new language. The difference between the native and foreign language errors is that the errors in the former are referred to as just mistakes or as Brown (2000, p. 217) refers to it as 'slip' made by people unconsciously. This kind of slips and imperfections of the native learners' production also appears in foreign language learners' production of speech. Mistakes are self corrected, whereas errors are not.

Researchers cannot always make a difference between errors and mistakes. Corder (1967) claims that the learner in some occasion uses the correct form of utterance, but that does not always mean that he is acquiring the language, but rather it means that he uses a phrase or a correct usage of tense just by imitating the teacher. Such behaviour was referred to as 'language-like behaviour' by Spolsky (as cited in Corder 1967), in fact, they may be using the correct form because they had learned the new rule; we deduce that they can notice a difference between a mistake and error depend on the contextual situation.

1.3. **Error Analysis Objectives**

According to Corder (1967), error analysis has two objects: one theoretical and another applied. The theoretical object serves to supply further information about the process of learning when learners are studying a foreign language and help the psycholinguistic to understand the complexity of learning. The applied object puts focus on instructive purposes. It is directed to prepare materials and methodologies for finding solutions to those problems that are displayed by the theoretical analysis of the errors. Analysing errors will identify the nature of the difficulties and problems faced by second language learners, and this helps teachers to make changes in their way of teaching and to check their teaching materials. Corder (1973, p.265) points out that:

> Errors provide feedback; they tell the teacher something about the effectiveness of his teaching
> materials and his teaching techniques, and show him what parts of the syllabus he has been
> following have been adequately learned or taught and need further attention. They enable him
> to decide whether he can move on to the next item on the syllabus or whether he must devote
> more time to the item he has been working on.

This quote confirms that errors are just an element that could mark students' progress; therefore, teachers should not be worried. In classrooms, especially at the level of classroom communication experience the analysis of the teachers of learners' errors, will provide them with the proper generalization of the learner priorities and needs; therefore, error analysis would help in the teaching learning process (Richards & Sampson, 1974). Moreover, Mitchell and Myles (2004) to support the previous view, they claim that errors if analysed could reveal the students second language development system that could help teachers.

1.4. **Models for Error Analysis**

Corder (1967) suggested a model for error analysis which included three stages: data collection, description and explanation. Ellis (1994) provided clear ways of how to identify and analyse learners' errors. The first step is the selection and identification of data of the learner language and the second step is a description of the errors. The following step, after giving a grammatical analysis of each error is the explanation and evaluation of errors. Moreover, Gass and Selinker (1992) identified six steps in conducting an error analysis: collecting data, identifying errors, classifying errors, quantifying errors, analysing sources of errors, and remediating for errors. In addition, Corder (1967) suggested five steps as follows: collecting data, identifying errors, describing errors, explaining errors, and evaluating error.

1.4.1. **Collection of a Sample of Learner Language**

The first important step one in EA is the collecting of a sample of learner language that the researcher needs in his analysis. Ellis (1994) has identified the size of sample in three types. These types are: massive, specific and incidental samples. In this first step, the researcher has to be aware of his research, and the main objective of this stage is selecting a proper collection system (Yit Sim, 2010). First the massive sample involves collecting a large number of learners in order to have assembled of list of errors that needed to be analysed. This type is considered to be time and effort consuming for the researcher to undertake. Second the specific sample consists of normally smaller number of learners and clearly the sample will use one model of language users. Finally, the incidental sample uses only one model of language use for each learner. These two latter types are more common to be used among researchers in order to avoid the difficult task of processing, organizing and evaluating.

1.4.2. **Identification of Errors**

After the step of collecting data, the errors have to be identified. Therefore, the researcher has to arrange some kind of procedure to recognize errors. Indeed, this step depends on four vital questions. The first question is to decide what target language should be used to base the study on. The second question is related to Corder's (1973) distinctions between errors from mistakes. An error is made when the learner lacks knowledge of the new language while a mistake or slip is failure of learners to perform to their competence in the target language. The learner knows the correct form, but slips are due to nervousness or tiredness. For example, Algerian learners of English make meaningless mistakes such as the use of 'her' to refer to male during conversation, even though they know the correct form and they do correct it immediately.

The third question is about whether the error is overt or covert as Corder (1971) put it. The former is easy to identify because we can clearly see it is the incorrect form (Ahmed are unhappy) and the latter occurs in utterances that the form is noticeably correct but pragmatically odd (Why are you going?). The fourth question focuses on deviations. There are two kinds of deviation: correctness and appropriateness. The difference between them is very simple: the first is a deviation of the rules of the language usage (I is hungry) the incorrect use of tenses, and the other is a deviation of the language use such as asking strangers (why are you single?). Error analysis pays more attention to 'breaches of the code' and tried to avoid 'misuse of the code' as stated by Corder (1971, p. 124) but in recent years the focus is more on the latter.

1.4.3. Description of Errors

The description of learner errors deals more with the comparison of the learner's own production of a language and the utterances of the target language. Researchers should distinguish between description and explanation of errors and also pay more attention to

surface features and observation of errors. Dulay, Burt and Krashen (1982) propose that there are two descriptive taxonomies of errors: linguistic categories and surface strategy. Linguistic categories are associated with a traditional EA which is directed to school material for instance text books and syllabus. On the other hand, surface strategy taxonomy highlights the ways in which errors can be classified into categories. Corder (1973) proposed four major categories: omissions, additions, misinformations and finally misorderings.

1.4.4. Explanation of Errors

Additionally, the researcher has to explain the errors. Explaining errors deals with finding out the sources of errors and the reason behind it. Richards (1974) established three sources. First, interference occurs when first language knowledge contributes in the target language learning. This contribution may be positive and it is called transfer and it might be negative and it is termed interference. Second, intralingual errors occur when learners make mistakes in the target language itself, such as generalization, incomplete application of rules. Third developmental errors occur when learners have no experience and previous knowledge of the target language.

In some cases it is difficult to identify some sources of errors, and errors seem to have many origins. Developmental errors are mostly produced by children acquiring their native language. For example, many learners will produce "the cat eat it" instead of "the cat ate it ", the omission of the past tense is not due to interference because they found it in the speech production of children learning English as their first language. And they also occur in adult production, when the adult is learning a new language but they have no background information yet.

Interference errors occur when the native language influences learners' production of the target language; for instance, "I have sleep" produced by learner whose native language is

French or Spanish. Dulay & Burt (1974) classify this kind of errors as ambiguous errors which might be interference or developmental. Unfortunately, it is hardly impossible, at the present time, to decide which source is present in such cases.

1.4.5. Evaluating Errors

Error evaluation is the final step. It was established in the late 1970s and in the 1980s in order to improve language learning and teaching. In these studies, assessments were based on three categories: comprehensibility, seriousness and naturalness of the grammar and the lexis. In the evaluation process, teachers and researchers have to acknowledge that there are two types of errors: global and local. The Global error affects overall sentence organization, for example, 'my house I love' whereas the local error affects single elements in a sentence, for example, 'I can give you an pencil' (Ellis, 1994).

The evaluation of learner error poses a great number of problems. It is not clear what criteria judges have used when asked to assess the categories of an error. Indeed, error evaluation is influenced by the context in which the errors occurred.

1.5. Classifications and Types of Errors

Linguists distinguished various types of errors and they are as follows:

1.5.1. Competence Errors and Performance Errors:

Corder (1976) for instance, points out two types of errors. Competence means knowledge of language, knowledge of its rules, vocabulary, and all components of the language. These errors are more serious, they reflect insufficient learning. In other words, they are mistakes made by second language learners when they lack the knowledge of grammatical rules and the correct form of the speech. Language learners must have competence as Corder (1973) puts it "… sense of being able to recognize and produce grammatical sentences in a language and

recognize the meaning relation between them." (p. 92). However, errors of performance are errors that are made by learners when they are exhausted or at hurry, usually this type of errors are not that serious because the learner can overcome this by practice. Indeed, performance errors are made by learners when they already have an idea about the correct form in their minds but they still make mistakes.

1.5.2. Global and Local Errors

On the other hand, linguists like Burt and Kiparsky (1974) (as cited in Touchie, 1986) categorize errors into two types: global and local errors. Local errors are more of "linguistic error" (Hedrickson, 1976, p. 5) concerns the structure of the sentence –verbs, nouns, prepositions, and auxiliaries. These errors do not prevent the flow of communication and comprehending. However, global errors are termed as "communicative errors" or "hinder communication" as stated by (Dulay, Burt, & Krashen 1982, p. 191) as it interferes with the understanding of the speech, so it is more serious than local errors. These errors make second language learners misinterpret a speech either oral or written, or they get confused with message in the context. It involves the wrong order in a sentence. Hendrickson mentioned that local and global errors can be classified into five subcategories which are lexicons, syntax, morphology, orthography and phonology. Usually learners misapply these linguistic forms and structures in their product of speech.

1.5.3. Overtly Erroneous and Covertly Erroneous

Corder (1981) made the distinction between two types of errors in sentences overtly and covertly erroneous. The former are superficially erroneous ones, which means the sentence expose the error while the latter are apparently acceptable ones, which means the sentence seems perfectly acceptable syntactically, but they are inappropriate in some way.

1.6. Sources and Causes of Errors

Language learners' errors have been identified by many scholars. One of these scholars is Richards (1971) who singles out four main sources: overgeneralization, ignorance of rules restriction, incomplete application of rules, and false concept hypothesized. Selinker (1972) suggests five sources of errors: language transfer, transfer of training, strategies of second language learning, strategies of second language communication, and overgeneralization of target language linguistic material (in Richards, 1974). In his collaboration with Sampson (1974) they established seven factors of errors:

1- Language transfer: this was considered to be a major source but not the only source. Sentences and learners' speech in the target language may interfere with the mother tongue.

2- Intralingual interference: refers to the items produced by learners in reference to their mother tongue language structure and also to the generalization based on partial exposure to the target language.

3- Sociolinguistic situation: different settings for language learning may affect second language learning and learners' motivation.

4- Modality: modality of exposure to the TL and modality of production.

5- Age: learning capacities vary with age.

6- Successions of approximative systems: since the circumstances of language learning vary from a person to another, so does the acquisition of new lexical, phonological, and syntactic items.

7- Universal hierarchy of difficulty: this factor has received little attention in the literature of 2nd language acquisition. It is concerned with the inherent difficulty for man of certain phonological, syntactic, or semantic items or structures. Some forms may be inherently difficult to learn no matter what the background of the learner.

On the other hand, Brown (2000) distinguishes four sources of errors:

1- Interlingual Transfer: Brown states that interlingual transfer is the most significant source of learners' errors, especially the early stages of learning because learners may be easily affected by their native language and its linguistic system that they rely on.

2- Intralingual Transfer: is the source of errors that are extended beyond interlingual errors in learning second language. And also stated that overgeneralization is a representation of the negative interlingual transfer. He gave an example of this source "does John can sing?" and "he goed", teachers cannot always detect that this is an interlingual error only by attentive observation.

3- Context of Learning: This is what Richards (1974) call a 'false concept'. It refers to the setting where language learning takes place and it includes classrooms, teachers, and school materials. All these can cause misunderstanding from learners, faulty presentation of structure or a word in text books, misleading explanation by tutors, improperly contextualized patterns.

4- Communication strategies: The last language learning source of errors is related to learning styles. Often when learners are trying to communicate their goal is to get their message across, these techniques such as word coinage, circumlocution, false cognates, and prefabricated patterns can be all source of errors.

Section Tow: Contrastive Analysis

1.7. **The Notion of Contrastive Analysis**

In the 17th Century grammarians argued that native language grammar do not only facilitate learning a foreign language but also interfere with it. However, the word 'contrast' with its relation to language learning did not appear until the end of the 18th Century when

James Pickbourn (1789) first used it "I thought it would be useful to contrast the English verb with a verb in another language" (as cited in Krzeszowski, 1990, p. 2). This is when scholars began to compare different languages in detailed manner in order to ascertain if there is any resemblance between them. In the 19th Century comparison of languages had become popular and many scholars have the intention to find the relation of common and shared genetic background of a whole group of languages and also to find out the various characteristics they share. This area of study of linguistics is called "typological linguistics" (Krzeszowski, 1990, p. 9). Contrastive analysis was established in the behaviouristic and structuralist approaches. It claims that the difficulty that learners face is due to the interference of the first language system with the second language system, so the linguist would take a detailed analysis of the two languages to be able to predict these difficulties. It emerged and was more practiced in the 1950s and 1960s as an application of behaviourist psychology and structural linguistics, to language teaching as discussed in Lado (1957). Contrastive analysis means to compare two or more languages phonetically, morphologically, syntactically, or lexically in order to facilitate language learning and teaching (Abushihab, 2012). The contrastive analysis hypothesis was the dominant approach in language learning and teaching until the 1970s. It was popular at that period because foreign language pedagogy needed improvement. Since learners' errors were strongly influenced by their native language, CA attempts to predict the errors by identifying the linguistic differences between their native language and target language.

1.8. **Definitions of Contrastive Analysis**

Svetlana Kurtes (2005) classifies Contrastive Analysis, as a branch of General Linguistics and a principle of Applied Linguistics. Saville-Troike (2006) states that contrastive Analysis is a way to deal with the investigation of second language acquisition. This investigation includes explaining and clarifying learners' issues in light of the correlation of the first

language and second language to find out similarities and differences. Another view of CA is suggested by Krzeszowski (1990), who defines contrastive linguistics as more related to the explanation of the similarities and differences in language rather than using a comparative analysis genetically or typologically. Fisiak (1981) argues that these two approaches typological and contrastive have different aims, but they both study language in a comparative way. He also added "subdiscipline of linguistics concerned with the comparison of two or more languages or subsystems of languages in order to determine both the differences and similarities between them" (p. 1), it is important to determine the differences and similarities between languages. The term contrastive linguistics had many names throughout the years such as "dialinguistic analysis, analytical confrontation" (Nemser 1971, p. 15), "interlingual comparison" (Filipovic 1975, p. 6), and "descriptive comparison" (Catford 1968, p. 159) (as cited in Svetlana Kurtes, 2005, p. 265).

Dulay and Burt (1974) in their paper "You Can't Learn without Goofing" gave another definition to contrastive analysis hypothesis. They claim that when a child starts to learn a new language he will refer to his native language grammar and structure, and if there are similarities his production of language will be mostly correct, but if his first language and second language differ "he will goof" (p. 96) and make more mistakes. Besides, they further explain that when children hear second language, they make generalizations based on the structure of their native language similar to the generalization children make when learning their first language. Accordingly, Robert Lado (1957) states "individuals tend to transfer the forms and meanings and distribution of forms and meanings of their native language and culture to the foreign language and culture." (p. 2) (As cited in Qiujuan, 2006).

This was first clearly stated by Robert Lado in his book *Linguistics across Cultures*, as he claims that "in the comparison between native and foreign language lies the key to ease or difficulty in foreign language learning."(As cited in Malmkjær, 2010, p. 98) The idea

presented here is that the more the native language is close to the target language the easier it would become. If there is a different learner will face problems such as word order, pronunciation, and other grammar rules, and the more difficult the target language will become. Therefore, this led to one of the most known model offered by Stockwell, Brown, and Martin (1965) called "hierarchy of difficulty" (as cited in Brown, 2000, p. 209). In this process, the teacher or linguist predicts the level of difficulty the target language can reach. For grammatical structures of the second language, Stockwell and his partners build up a hierarchy of difficulty that involved sixteen levels, and after that Clifford Partor (1967) constructed it into six categories which were put in order from easy to difficult (cited in Brown, 2000):

Level 0: Transfer. No difference or contrast is present the second language which it makes it easy when learning a language, the learner can refer to his native language without any negative interference.

Level 1: Coalescence: Implies that two items in the native language that become one item in the target language, the learner must be aware of this difference.

Level 2: Underdifferentiation. The absence of one item in the target language and it is present in the native language.

Level 3: Reinterpretation: A new shape or structure that is given to an item in the foreign language that exists differently in the native language.

Level 4: Overdifferentiation: New existing items in the target language that the learner must know about and learn.

Level 5: Split. One item in the native language becomes two or more in the foreign language, and the learner must make the distinction.

Consequently, we can notice that the high frequency of negative interference is in the fifth level, which learners make the most errors, while the positive transfer is located in the level zero (Brown, 2000).

1.9. Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis

According to Wardhaugh (1970), Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis exists in strong and weak versions, the strong one arising from evidence from the availability of some kind of metatheory of CA and the weak from evidence from language interference.

1.9.1. The Strong Version

The strong version is claimed to be a predicting procedure of the difficulty and problems of second language learning. Wardhaugh denotes that it is unrealistic and impracticable even though it is one of the most important aspects of writing. There is some statement that supports this version, such as Lado's (1975) (as cited in Wardhaugh, 1970)

> The plan of the book rests on the assumption that we can predict and describe the patterns that will cause difficulty in learning, and those that will not cause difficulty, by comparing systematically the language and culture to be learned with the native language and culture of the student. (p. vii)

The statement refers to the possibility of comparison of two language systems, grammar, phonology, and lexicon. The results of comparison predict the difficulties that second or foreign language learners will face. Consequently, teachers can provide convenient teaching material. Wardhaugh also confirms that the strong version demands the availability of linguistic system within the comprehensive linguistic theory that deals with syntax, semantics, and phonology. Furthermore, it requires that linguists have a theory of contrastive linguistics in order to produce the correct set of contrast between two languages. The linguists must

establish the contrastive study based on what is recorded in the grammar and use it without any knowledge of the speakers himself.

1.9.2. The weak version

Wardhaugh (1970) proposed the weak version following the numerous critics of the strong version. He states that "… it requires of the linguist that only he uses the best linguistic knowledge available to him in order to account for observed difficulties in second language learning"(p. 7). The weak version does not require predicting rather than explaining. The weak version requires explaining the errors and diagnosing errors and the reason behind the occurrence of errors. The weak version is limited to the linguistic interference of the native language and its significance in order to explain similarities and differences. Brown (2008) stated that nowadays it is referred to as Cross Linguistic Influence.

1.10. Contrastive analysis objectives

Contrastive analysis is a very useful tool, as it can be applied in many fields of inquiry. CA contributes to different areas as it is explained in the Encyclopedic Dictionary of Applied Linguistics, because it studies the possible relations between languages. In the field of comparative linguistics it is used to create taxonomies and in translation theory, it investigates the problems that might face the translator of the two languages. In addition, in language teaching it has been more influential through CA hypothesis (Johnson & Johnson, 1989). Some examples of how can contrastive analyses help teacher by applying it in teaching languages as it listed in (Ummhy, 2012, para. 10)

1. Design teaching and learning materials (methodology)
2. Engage learner in activities to be a good user of target language. (classroom activities)
3. Evaluate text books.

4. Pay attention to the structure of the texts beyond sentence level
5. Pay attention to conversation in its regular pattern in different situations
6. Pay attention to complex areas like intonation
7. Pay attention to different underlying rules which differ from culture to culture

Conclusion

In this chapter, we have analysed the relationship of foreign language learning, teaching and error analysis and CA. As a matter of fact, after the Second World War many linguists, psychologist, and tutors proposed some possible answers to foreign language learning difficulties. Therefore, some progress has been made since the different studies were complementary. In fact, EA and CA share the same goals; namely, understanding and explaining the native and the target languages with the view of making the foreign language learning and teaching process more efficient.

Chapter Two: Transfer Theory

Introduction

In this chapter, we will analyse the issue of language transfer and its influence in the process of acquiring a second or foreign language. Scholars and linguist such as Odlin, Brown, and Richards first show their interest in language classification, language changes, and development, rather than the pedagogical processes. However, during the last decades, their research had more focus on language transfer and its importance. In the field of language acquisition, linguists found out that the significance of language transfer is in its facilitative effect, which originates from the similarities that two languages share. This is called a positive transfer, i.e. when transfer without any errors occurs. There is also another type called negative transfer, it is when learners make errors as a consequence of the differences between languages. Other types of transfer are avoidance and over-use, the former is when learners do not produce certain difficult linguistic features. The latter is a result of avoidance because learners tend to over-use some linguistic features to avoid the difficult ones. Moreover, the other element we discuss is the various variables that lead learners produce errors that affect their written production.

2.1. A Brief Overview on Language Transfer

Foreign language learning is affected and influenced by the learners' mother tongue. This is generally referred to as language transfer (Crystal, 2008; Tavakoli, 2012). This concept of language influence on another language was introduced first in the 1950s in the field of second language acquisition. For decades language transfer has been an important element in this domain. It was strongly influenced by behaviourism and structuralism at that

period (Gass, 2000; Yi, 2012). The work of Robert Lado (1957) that was influenced by Feris (1945) (as cited in Meriläinen, 2010) and the bilingual study by Weinreich (1968), in which he "… announced the idea that language users tend to transfer the forms and meanings of their native language when attempting to produce and understand a foreign language" (Meriläinen, 2010, p. 8). The issue of transfer is not really a new one, as it is mentioned in the work of Jarvis and Pavlenk (2008). It has been discussed and studied way back to the ancient Greek works of philosophers; they refer to transfer in a negative way. While learning a new language learners tend to "mixed languages" and making "bad Greek" that is spoken by foreigners (Jarvis & Pavlenk, 2008, p. 1).

Language transfer in that era was often seen as the most important factor in second language acquisition theories and also in language teaching. In 1960's, language transfer was less important because at that period learners' errors were more seen as "the creative construction process" which is defined as the existence of universal cognitive mechanisms that enables learners to make generalization and discover the structures and systems of the target language based on their needs (Dulay & Burt, 1957 as cited in Verner & Faltis, 2013, p. 9). Odlin (1989) states that until the late 1960s language transfer impact became the most important in the learning process. There were two major claims are in the challenging transfer. The first claim of American scholars is the existence of cross-linguistic differences that make foreign language learning different from learning the native language. The second claim is that difficulties of second language acquisition can be known through CA.

Contrastive analysis hypothesis as it has been discussed in chapter one is the process of investigating the linguistic similarities or differences between the learners' first language and the second language (Gass & Selinker 1992; Mitchell & Myles, 2004; Wardhaugh; 1970). Its purpose is to help teachers and language learners avoid making common errors, and it was

criticized for not predicting the learners' exact errors and the differences between languages (Odlin, 1989).

In the late1970s, Smith (1979) focuses on language transfer and its influence on second language learning, he claims that language transfer was not that important in the view of behaviourism. One of the reasons Burt and Dulay (1983) provided is because errors are hard to be traced from the first language transfer; therefore it was hard to make sure there was language transfer. On the other hand cognitivism gave transfer its importance and made it is more influential claiming that learners do make use of their native language knowledge and apply it to the target language they are learning (Ervin-Tripp, 1974).

After Contrastive Analysis, researchers such as S. Pit Corder (1967), Selinker (1972) shifted to Error Analysis and Interlanguage Hypothesis. Interlanguage refers to the linguistic system that the learners make in the process of acquiring and learning a foreign language (Crystal, 2008; Selinker, 1972). From these studies, language transfer became more acknowledged. In the 1980s, linguist such as Gass & Selinker (1992) and Odlin (1989) gave a different and a broad definition of language transfer that will be discussed in the next section. Faerch (1987) argues that language transfer is not questioned about its existence and importance in Second Language Acquisition, but rather it's questioned on its conditions; how the transfer appears and also its procedures in second language learning and use. He states "we would like to know where learners transfer what, how much, why, and how" (1987, p. 2).

2.2. Language Transfer Definition and Terminology

In the Hadumod Bussmann Routledge Dictionary (1996) transfer in linguistics is defined as "the transfers of linguistic features of the mother tongue onto the foreign language" (p. 1212-1213). It is also the generalization of the learners' knowledge about their native language that can help them learn the target language (Lui, 2001).

From the behaviourist point of view, it is the carrying over of learner behaviour from a situation to another habit formation; in other words, the learners' habit of carrying over the native language knowledge into the foreign or second language (Richards & Schmidt, 2010). Corder (1971) describes it as the phenomenon that "… the carrying over the habits of mother tongue into the second language" (p. 41) and called it interference. He argues that using the term "transfer" or "interference" might be dangerous, in a way that it may limit thinking of the learner in some topics. It is rather used just in some situation when a scholar or researcher is explaining these theories (1971). He also claims that if the native language systems are similar to the target language one the learning process could be easier, but if the patterns are different it could be difficult and may lead to errors and result with negative transfer. Ellis (1997) also agrees with the behaviouristic view that first language influences second language acquisition, and this transfer may or may not facilitate the learning process; depending on how languages are identical such as French and English or Arabic and English.

The term interference is noted as a result of language contact and the impact on each other when learning a second or foreign language (Weinreich, 1968). In particular, the impact on the structures of the dominant language, the learners' native language or it might even be his second language effect the foreign language. Besides, Odin (1989) states that interference equals negative transfer which is the errors learners make as a consequence of the differences between the first and second languages.

In the late 1970's, the term transfer has its criticism as suggested before by Corder, therefore some suggestions has been made such as "Mother Tongue Influence" (Corder, 1992) "Crosslinguistic Influence" (kellerman, 2001) and Jarvis & Pavlov (2008). The only criticism of this term is it avoids association with behaviourism (Richards & Schmidt, 2010), another term is " Language Mixing" (Selinker 1972; Kellerman, 1983), "Linguistic Interference" (schatcher& Rutherford, 1979, Jarvis& pavelanka 1987), and "Language Transfer"

(Selinker,1972; Odlin, 1989), In more recent works, it has been referred to "The Role of Mother Tongue" and "Native Language Influence" (Master 1987; Jarvis, 2000).

Odlin in his important work "Language Transfer: Cross-linguistic influence in language learning" (1989) proposes a definition "Transfer is the influence resulting from similarities and differences between the target language and any other language that has been previously (and perhaps imperfectly) acquired" (p, 27). He argues that transfer is not a result of habit formation, and he also adds argues that interference only refers to negative transfer, so it cannot be pertinent to transfer since it can be negative as well as positive transfer. Gass (1988) defines it as follows "in general, what is meant is the use of prior linguistic information in non-native language context" (p, 385); While Jarvis & Pavlenko (2008) define it "the influence of a person's knowledge of one language on that person's knowledge or use of another language." This knowledge might match the help with gaining more information, or might result in making confusion that causes errors.

2.3. Types of Transfer

Ellis (1994) states clearly the different types of transfer as follows "Transfer is to be seen as general cover term for a number of different kinds of influence from languages other than the second language. The study of transfer involves the study of errors (negative transfer), facilitation (positive transfer), avoidance of target language forms, and their overuse" (p. 141).

2.3.1. Negative Transfer

Negative transfer appears when the phenomenon of interference occurs in a speech (Corder, 1979). Negative transfer is also referred to as errors (Ellis, 1994). He illustrates with some statistics that transfer only appears when the two language

structures are very different such as English and Chinese, whereas when there are some similarities errors are less apparent. Weinreich (1953) explains the negative transfer by comparing it to positive transfer:

> When a process of second language learning takes place, those linguistic phenomena which are similar in form, meaning and distribution are regarded as facilitating the process, and the transfer is seen as positive, if they are dissimilar, the transfer is considered negative and acquisition is viewed as distorted because the two structures differ. The phenomenon involved in these difficulties was called interference. (p. 1) (as cited in Alsharafi, 2013, p. 5)

He asserts that dissimilarities will result in negative transfer (errors), and he called it interference.

2.3.2. Positive transfer

Sadeq Alsharafi (2013) in his research states that "transfer of a skill X which facilitates the learning or has a positive influence on the command of a skill Y because of similarities between both skills" (p. 4). Corder (1981) and Ellis (1994) refer to it as "facilitation" which is the prior knowledge of the native language that would facilitate the process of learning a target language. Ellis explains that evidence of positive transfer (facilitation) is not only apparent with the absence of any certain errors, instead it is to examine to what extent the errors are decreased in the learning process. This is the opposite of the behaviourist view on positive transfer.

Gass (1979) illustrates how transfer can be facilitated; she did an investigation on 17 advanced adult learners, who were divided into two groups. Group one of Persian and Arabic learners according to the first language allowance of pronoun retention; group two of French and Italian learners. She also based her study data on structural aspect relative clauses. Gass

notices that group one whose their languages did not resemble to English made a lot of errors concerning pronoun retention, while the second group made noticeably less errors concerning sentence joining tasks. However, she also found out that not all types of relative clause were affected by facilitative transfer. These results led Gass to claim that there are other factors and evidence of the transfer.

Another investigation concerned Spanish learners of English as support of this positive transfer they were given a test in which they should guess the meaning of English words they know nothing about. Their result was good with the words that had the same spelling; however, their answers were incorrect when words were different from their native language. Ramon Torrijos illustrates with the following example:

English words	Students' answers
Public	Público
Telephone	Teléfono
Important	Importante
Idea	Idea
Electricity	Electricidad
Insect	Insecto
Emergency	Emergencia
Law	……..
Dizzy	……..
Land	……..
Scream	…….. (2009, p. 152)

2.3.3. Avoidance

Learners tend to avoid using linguistic structures that are difficult or the ones which are not similar to their native language structures (Ellis, 1994). This is a kind of learners' strategy to avoid some structures, they try not to use or talk about concepts in the target structures that are not known to them. Avoidance is mentioned implicitly when Duskova (1996) claims that "the lower frequency of an error need not necessarily mean that the point in question is less difficult" (p. 15). In his study, the results show only few errors which he doubted that and he claims that "simply that the point itself occurred only in some (not in all) papers" (p. 15), in other words learners are trying to avoid some difficult structures. On the other hand, Schacher (1974) explained avoidance explicitly. She found that Chinese and Japanese students made fewer errors in English relative clause than Arabic and Persian students did (as cited in Kleinmann, 1977). At first, she thought that the Japanese and Chinese did not find any difficulties with relative clauses, but with detailed observation Schacher found out that they did not produce enough clauses compared to Arab and Persian student production, accordingly, she concluded that learners were avoiding certain structures. Ellis (1994) states that identifying avoidance is not an easy task, because students are not always aware or they do not know that they use avoidance strategy.

Kellerman (1992) distinguishes three types of avoidance: (1) avoidance occurs when learners known that they have a problem and they tend to avoid the right form or structures in the target language. (2) Avoidance arises when the learner knows the right structure, but it is difficult in a spontaneous situation, and (3) avoidance occurs when learns refuse or feel ignorant if they use the correct structure of the target language, ignorant of their own norms and behaviours (as cited in Ellis, 1994).

2.3.4. Over-use

Over-use or over-indulgence implies that certain grammatical structures in second language acquisition can be overused in a specific situation as a result of interlingual process such as overgeneralization (Levenston, 1971 as cited in in Ellis, 1994). Overgeneralization is the extensive use of some grammatical rules of a linguistic item; expressions repeated or use one utterance to refer to all other items. For example, learners refer to 'ball' to represent all rounded things (Longman, 2010). Learners prefer some grammatical structures than others, which this result of avoidance of some difficult structure.

Over-use is a result of first language influence, as a consequence of avoidance or underproduction of some difficult structures. It can be detected by comparing groups with different languages. Ellis (2015) claims that text enhancement can lead to over-use of the target forms. It is also the production of learners when they feel more comfortable, and they use some forms or structures of the target language because they can rely on it and they know it is the correct form (Ringbom, 1998). Mah (2009) defines it as the failure of student observation of the target language rules; they make the wrong assumption of the correctness of expressions and their use.

2.4. Variables Affecting Language Transfer

Language transfer can be affected by various factors. Selinker and Lakshmanan (1992) state that " when two or more SLA factors work in tandem, there is a greater chance of stabilization of interlanguage forms leading to possible fossilization" (p. 198). They assert that if two languages are similar, there are frequently factors that affect language transfer. Fossilization is the occurrence of incorrect linguistic features and structures, these features become a permanent part of the learner production of speech (Richards, & Schmidt, 2010).

According to Shirin Murphy (2003) these factors can be classified into two groups: learner-based variables, and language-based variable.

2.4.1.   Learner-Based variables

2.4.1.1. Proficiency

Proficiency is the most important factor that determines language transfer (Murphy, 2003). Odlin (1989) asserts that language transfer is more likely to occur if the learner has a low level of proficiency in the target language, and by proficiency we mean the learners' ability or skills. Moreover, most learners adopt transfer as a strategy to fill the gap when they lack the accurate linguistic feature of the second language.

The relation between second language proficiency and language transfer is that learners' first language is still highly active due to its higher frequency and proficiency (Pouliss & Bongaerts, 1994). Odlin (1989) points out that this correlation between low second language proficiency and transfer is most of times negative, while positive transfer such as cognate vocabulary use occurs at a high level of proficiency. On the other hand, Jarvis (2000) indicates that regardless of the direction of the relation of proficiency, it is clear that proficiency has a strong effect on language transfer.

2.4.1.2. Amount of Target Language Exposure and Use

This factor deals with both age and proficiency (Murphy, 2003). The learners' amount of exposure to the aspect of second language can strongly affect the occurrence of positive or negative transfer; this assumption leads to the deduction "The younger the better" is not always true (Odlin, 1989). More exposure to the target language linguistics features will affect the transfer, which will be less important and it's the same for third language acquisition (Murphy, 2003). Learners who are exposed and use the target language, or they live in the

target language environment are more likely to produce accurate language, and have a higher proficiency in a second language.

2.4.1.3. Language Mode

Language mode was first introduced by François Gorsjean (1998) who defines it as "… the state of activation of the bilinguals languages and language processing mechanisms at a given point in time" (p. 3). He claims that language mode is one of the factors that can affect language transfer, language mixing, code-switching. Murphy (2003) explains that this variable is contentiously ranging from monolingual i.e. using a single language to bilingual, which is using or speaking two languages at the same time. Richards and Schmidt (2010) states when the speaker uses one language the other is not fully activated especially if the learner is using his native language. But if the learner uses the second language the two languages will be activated at the time, because the base language or the native language governs language processing. In the monolingual mode, the other language is rarely activated so there will be no code switching or lexical borrowing whereas in the bilingual mode the second or foreign language is highly activated, and this causes code-switching and lexical borrowing (Murphy, 2003). It is also the same case with trilinguals whose native language is always activated while the other two languages depend on how the speaker is advanced and his proficiency in these two languages (Gorsjean, 2001). Fuller (1999) concluded that the native language can be easily deactivated, whereas in the second language it can be a little difficult for the learner to deactivate while learning a third language.

2.4.1.4. Linguistic Awareness

Linguistic awareness is an important variable in language learning and performance it is mostly related to background language (Murphy, 2003). It is based on learners' knowledge

and what they understand about the foreign language, culture, and society. This awareness is not limited to linguistic structures, but also phonology, pragmatics, sociolinguistic knowledge; and this is how cross-linguistic influence can occur. The frequency of language transfer occurrence depends on the learners' ability and knowledge; and whether they can notice the differences and the similarities of linguistic features of the native and target language (Murphy, 2003).

Cook's (1992) "multi-competence" implies that the learner's linguistic competence such as flexibility and creativity toward a new language and culture will increase linguistic awareness. He also asserts that errors such as codes-witching and transfer are not seen as a learner's failure but the opposite; they are evidence of their awareness of the other language and its linguistic structures and it also indicates the learner's flexibility. If learners use the foreign language and are exposed to its environment more frequently in their daily life, this will reduce the negative transfer and increase awareness of the linguistic features of the target language (Mägiste, 1984).

2.4.1.5. Age

Language transfer affects children as well as adult. But adults are more likely to draw from their first language than children do (Murphy, 2003). Selinker and Lakshmanan (1993) argue that children do not rely on their native language, but they learn the second language with similar process they do with first language; consequently, their native language cannot influence their learning. Odlin (1989) points out that age variable may differ in children's acquisition from adult acquisition. This implies that, children were good and able to control pitch and phonology, whereas, adult were better at segmental contrast.

Additionally, Cenoze (2001) claims that age have no effect on language acquisition. He explain that both older and younger students show instance language transfer.

2.4.1.6. Educational Background

Odlin (1989) believes that educational background and literacy are variables in positive language transfer. Learners' with high level of language skills –reading, writing, listening, and speaking – in their native language would be a great help for learning a second language. He also argues that this variable causes transfer of training, i.e. the influence that arises in the way a student is taught, more than it causes language transfer.

Learners with low level of educational background will show more language transfer, because it requires an advanced level or at least background knowledge of the target language.

2.4.1.7. Context

Murphy (2003) point out that context is neither learner-based nor language-based. Yet it is a very important variable that affects language transfer, he includes it in this category because it is flexible to modification that can change it. He defines context as follows "It can be considered from a sociolinguistic perspective as determined by a mono- vs. bilingual community, from a pragmatic perspective as a level of formality, or from an empirical perspective as a task-related production"(p. 13).

Language transfer appearance depends on the context, especially if it is a bilingual one. Kellerman (1977) believes that some of subjects of context are transferable and others are not, such as idioms (as cited in Odlin, 1989). However, Odlin (1989) claims that metaphors and figurative of speech are more transferable in a bilingual context.

In second language acquisition the significance of context is usually related to the extent of the formality of text and task. A learner in a formal setting is obliged to produce formal speech which can cause language transfer (Grosjean, 2001). Task related activities such as interviews or story, differ in their degree of influence of language transfer. Kellerman (1995) explains that the 'interview' is often spontaneous and formal at the same time, which shows

more language transfer, while in storytelling, it is not very formal and free from any linguistic constraints; it allows the speaker to focus on the level of proficiency.

Learning a foreign or third language is also influenced by context and its formality. Dewaele (2001) suggests that both second and foreign languages show language transfer and language mixing in informal situations. He further explains that in formal situations learners make lexical errors, whereas in informal situation they tend to mix utterances.

2.4.2   Language-Based Variables

2.4.2.1. Language Typology

Language typology is also one of the most significant variables that determine language transfer. Typology is the classification of language into types (Richards, & Schmidt, 2010). It is also the analysis, comparison, and classification of language according to similarities and differences of structures, features, and forms. Language contact highlights the significance of typological similarities and congruent structures between two languages (Weinreich, 1968). These typological similarities have an important role in identifying typological closeness and distance (Gass, 1992; Odlin, 1989).

The relation between language transfer and language typology is to know to what extent the target language is close to the native language and how it influences language transfer (Cenoze, 2001). If the languages are typologically distant, for example Arabic and English, here learners are expected to transfer more from their native language, while if learners' native language is French the transfer is less frequent. Because English and French are close languages and they share a number of linguistic similarities (Cenoze, 2001).

2.4.2.2. Frequency

Larson-Freeman (1976) claims that the frequency of certain linguistic items or features, which occurs in the native language indicates a possible influence of transfer to the target

language. However, infrequent linguistic items in the native language will result with less appearance of a transfer. Poulisse and Bongaert (1994) explain that learning a second language while the first language is highly frequent can cause transfer, because the first language is highly activated. They further explain that the level of frequently is not only a consequence of first language activation, but also is affected by proficiency and exposure of the second language. This implies that high frequency of first language and low proficiency and exposure to second language may lead to transfer.

2.4.2.3. Word Class

This language-based variable is more closely related to some linguistic factors of control and attention (Murphy, 2003). Language transfer is affected by content and function words. Faerch and Kasper (1986) point out that the learner may use the strategy of gap filling which often seems as intentional. Function words (also known as structural class) such as: determiners, qualifiers, prepositions, are small and closed classes, and usually are unintentional transfer of highly frequent lexical items of the first language (as cited in Murphy, 2001). Content words which are known as form class such as: verbs, nouns, adjectives, adverbs, are seen as less frequent to transfer; at least less than structural class (Kolln, & Funk, 2001). Usually, learners put more focus on content words because they are more important, this leads to the ignorance of function words which causes the transfer.

2.4.2.4. Morphological Transfer

Linguists believe that free morphemes are more transferable than bound morphemes (Anderson, 1983; Weinreich, 1968). Bound forms are linguistic features that cannot stand on their own such as affixes, or combining forms (Richards, & Schmidt, 2010). Poulisse and Bongaert (1994) state that the target language acts as a matrix language during the process of learning a second language; matrix language is the first and second language bound together. Jarvis and Odlin (2000) believe that bound morphemes are not transferable; thus, they

conclude that morphological forms are facilitative and they do not necessarily transfer negatively.

Murphy (2003) argues that even bound morphemes can be transferred but it is rare especially during second language acquisition. Whereas, learning third or foreign language, it could be more frequent, Dewaele (1989) calls this "lexical invention" and he defines it as "very complex IL (interlanguage) forms that could share lexical, morphological, and phonological characteristics from all the languages known to the speaker" (as cited in Murphy, 2003, p. 17). De Angelis and Selinker (2001) define interlanguage transfer as the effect of non-native language on another language and; then, they suggest subtypes for interlanguage which are lexical interlanguage and morphological interlanguage. They state that morphological interlanguage transfer refers to "the production of interlanguage forms in which a free or bound non-target morpheme is mixed with a different free or bound morpheme to form an approximated target language word" (p. 43). They also assert that the high language activation of stems or bound morphemes in language to another language system will lead to transfer. Murphy (2003) concluded that with all these studies on language acquisition the function words and bound morphemes are less influenced with language transfer than the content words.

Conclusion

In this chapter we have tried to provide a general overview of language transfer, types, and the variables that affect learners' production. We can acknowledge that language transfer is important in second language learning and teaching, because it is beneficial to students. Indeed, the notion of the language transfer types, for instance, helps the teacher know that when students avoid any linguistic features he should act accordingly and put more focus on these difficult parts. Moreover, knowing the different variables that affect language transfer would certainly positively influence students' performance.

Chapter Three: Field Work

Introduction

This study deals with the phenomenon of transfer theory and its application in the analysis of errors of second year students at Biskra University. Since the main objective of this research is to know the sources of these errors and to look for possible causes for these errors. Therefore, in this chapter, we attempt to analyse and identify second year students' paragraphs in search for any errors; following the procedure of collecting and identifying data, describing and then analysing and explaining the findings. And then we used another tool which is teachers' interview; the researcher designed an interview for written expression teachers of the English department. This interview is for purposes to know their opinion on students' errors and their strategies to avoid them. The third tool is students' questionnaire in order to know their opinion on their written production and their common errors.

3.1. Teachers' interview

To collect data, we used the structured interview or also called standardized interview. This method is important because the questions will be always an easy way to collect and compare the data we gathered (Trueman, 2016). Interviewing within the educational field is a feasible and effective method. The researcher will have some preset questions and is more Interested of the interviewee has to offer with his knowledge about this topic.

3.1.1. The Sample

The researcher interviewed only teachers of written expression, to gather information concerning learners' grammatical errors and the reason behind them; and also what the teachers' strategies to avoid those errors.

Structured interview was constructed by the researcher and administered to five written expression teachers at Mohamed Kheider Biskra University. Aims at gathering data and to ask questions to experienced teachers about teaching written expression and what makes learners make errors; moreover, if students make transfer from their native language especially at the university-level.

3.1.2. Description and of the Interview

This interview includes open-ended questions, for the purpose of gathering data for this research. The interview is divided into three sections the first section includes questions that concerns faculty and general information such as the teachers' degree of education and for how many years they have been teaching written expression.

The second section includes four questions concerning students' written production and teaching writing skills in university level students. Teachers were asked their conception of the meaning of written expression, also about the writing approach they use the most while teaching and they were given alternative answers to choose from. And they were asked to justify their answers.

Another question is about teachers' opinion on their students' level of written expression. The last question in this section is about teachers' criteria of evaluation. Which means how they correct and analyze their students' essays and paragraphs, and what is the most aspect they take into account.

The third section includes seven questions concerning students' errors and teachers' strategies to avoid them. Teachers were asked about their opinion of the most common errors that foreign language students make. With their experience of teaching English, they were asked about what they think the reasons behind students' errors in their written production. Another question is if teachers believe that students' native language affect their writing, if

their answer is yes they were asked to explain. The next question concerns the fact that knowing the source of students' errors helps facilitate the process of correcting and analyzing; And also, if teachers point out students' errors if students were transferring from their native language.

In addition, teachers were asked about their strategies to avoid students make the interference of their first language. The last question is about the teachers' suggestions and recommendations about students' errors and how to improve their writing.

3.1.3. Analysis and Interpretation of the interview

Section one

Q1: what degree do you have?

Teacher one: A PhD Degree

Teacher two: A Magister degree

Teacher three: A Magister degree

Teacher four: A Magister degree

Teacher five: A Magister degree

The results show that four of the teachers have Magister and only one has a doctorate degree, this means the majority of teachers have a high level of education. Therefore, their answers should be reliable.

Q2: How long have you been teaching written expression?

Teacher one: 5 years

Teacher two: 13 years

Teacher three: 8 years

Teacher four: 3 years

Teacher five: 3 years

Second question is about the years they have been teaching written expression the results show that most of teachers have been teaching at least for five years, and some of them have been teaching for less than five years. This signifies that teachers have enough experience have more knowledge in this field.

Section Two: about the written production

Q3: what does good writing mean?

Teacher one: good writing means a combination of good content, accurate language and coherent ideas. Creativity is a bonus, if the writer is creative that would be much better

Teacher two: good style, express their ideas in a coherent way, avoid passive voice, and keep sentences relatively short and good content.

Teacher three: coherence, cohesion, good vocabulary, good style.

Teacher four: I believe good writing is a good grammar, a good use of mechanics, good style, content, and creativity.

Teacher five: good content shows that student is a good writer such as having interesting topics to talk about, creativity and using rich details

Generally answers were divided between good language, good grammar use, good style and content. Teachers believe that, good writing is good language use, accurate

language, and coherent ideas and also he added that creativity is a bonus. He explains that if the writer, which in this case is the student, is creative that could be much better. Another teacher has the same opinion and the same understanding of what writing means; she says "I believe good writing is a good grammar, a good use of mechanics" and then added "good style, content, and creativity." This indicates that students should check their punctuation, avoid the passive voice, and be precise and concise. Moreover, they should know the correct arrangement of words and sentences, because if the phrase is not well formed it will affect the style.

Overall, what we understand of their answers, that most teachers agree on that good writing is good language use coherent ideas good grammar, good vocabulary, and also good style. Furthermore, if the student is creative it will be beneficial to their work, and have interesting ideas. We also interpret that students should have good style and avoid making many errors or making bad English; students need to improve their writing skills.

Q4: which writing approach you use the most? Please justify your answer.

Teacher one: Process approach, to go through all the steps of writing such as brainstorming, planning and so no. but mostly it depends on the task.

Teacher two: Process approach, it depends on students level, they need to know all the steps of writing.

Teacher three: Process approach, it depends according to students. Mostly, I'm flexible.

Teacher four: Eclectic approach, because it groups different characteristics from different approaches.

Teacher five: Product Approach and Process Approach. I use the model approach, I give them a sample and they follow the same steps, but mostly it depends on the task.

When teachers are asked about what approaches they use. Their answers were different from each other; most of them explain their choice to use one of the approaches is due to the situation or the context of their lesson and the level of their students.

Three of the interviewee had the same answer which is the most approach they use is the Process Approach. In order to go through all the stages of writing, and make sure that students are aware of it. One teacher said that he uses the product approach in which he gives them the model and they follow it. And he added that in other cases he uses the process approach. Another teacher said that he is mostly flexible, and it depends on the students. One teacher said that she uses the eclectic approach she explained, it combines approaches, "it groups different characteristics from different approaches" to meet the students needs and her aims of the lesson.

According to teachers the most used and effective writing approaches are the process and the product approach, but they also assert that it depend on the tasks and students' level. We interpret that these approaches are a way to encourage students to communicate their ideas and make them clear, as well as facilitate the teaching process.

Q5: what do you think of students' level in written expression?

Teacher one: students are weak writers; the reason why the students are weak is because they make grammatical mistakes, spelling mistakes, coherent, cohesion, and no logical order. I think their level is still elementary level because they cannot explain their ideas properly.

Teacher two: weak (below the average), they make a lot of mistakes and they mix ideas.

Teacher three: their level is average, even though students make mistakes but they also write decent paragraphs.

Teacher four: good, bad, catastrophic.

Teacher five: weak level.

Most teachers agree on one answer, which is the students' level is very weak. One teacher said the reason why they are weak is because they make grammatical mistakes, spelling mistakes, coherent and cohesion, no logical order. And then he added they still write elementary level because they cannot explain the ideas properly. Students make these mistakes, and referring to ideas in Arabic is probably due to the mother tongue interference which does not fit in English.

Another teacher answers as follows students' level is very weak even below the average. He explains that at this university level students should at least mastered the grammatical rules, vocabulary… but most of them do make a lot of mistakes, and they mix ideas. Most of these problems are easy to fix, it just needs practice. Another teacher thinks that student level is average they make mistakes but they do also write decent paragraphs and they follow the writing rules. One teacher said that his students' level is sometimes is good, sometimes bad, and sometimes catastrophic. On the whole, most teachers agree that students' level is average or weak; therefore, students need to practice more and revise their lessons in order to improve their writing, they need to be more exposed to the language and pay attention to all aspects of the foreign language.

Q6: While correcting and analyzing students' product what is the most important aspect you take into account (criteria of evaluation)?

Teacher one: the correctness of the language, I often check if they made fewer grammar mistakes, and sentence structure, and also if students write good English.

Teacher two: Content, language use, mechanics, grammar rules.

Teacher three: I always check word order, spelling mistakes, content

Teacher four: structure, grammatical mistakes, vocabulary, and good English

Teacher five: I would like to correct paper that is flawless of mistakes, I do not like apostrophe's errors and misuse of adjectives and adverbs.

Teachers had different views on the most important aspect they take into account when they are correcting their students' written production.

Each teacher has his own way some of them put focus on content and language use, and the correctness of language. Another teacher said that he focuses on language as well, he said " I would like to correct paper that is flawless" he explains that he does not like a paragraph lack of apostrophes, the 's' of plural words, misuse of adjectives and adverbs. We interpret that students should balance between correct grammars with good content, not just good ideas and style.

One teacher also said that she focuses on content, grammar and mechanics of writing. After they check language correctness, word order, grammar, they check the development of ideas and coherent. On the whole, most teachers focus on the correctness of the language, we interpret that students must focus more on the grammar rules and their style of writing in order to avoid the Arabic language structure.

Q7: What are the most common errors that foreign language students make?

Teacher one: the sentence errors like fragment, grammatical errors like subject verb agreement, for example they say 'it take' instead of 'it takes' and the last thing is punctuation sometimes they forget to put full stop and capitalization.

Teacher two: in grammar, pronouns, sentence structure (word order), word choice…etc.

Teacher three: most students face a lot of problems considering syntax, semantics, punctuation and tenses.

Teacher four: grammatical mistakes, structure, negative influence of mother tongue, vocabulary background storage

Teacher five: grammar rules, students are unable to write a correct sentence without making grammatical mistakes.

When teachers were asked about the most common mistakes EFL students make, their answers vary from teacher to the other. One teacher said he thinks most errors are grammar rules; students are very weak in applying the accurate grammar rules in their essays and paragraphs. This means that students also confuse the use of pronouns almost all the time, prepositions, word order and many other grammatical types, students need to be aware of all the rules.

Another teacher notices that the subject verb agreement is one of the most common errors among students, for example, they say 'it take' instead of 'it takes'. And also punctuation, they make a lot of fragment and comma splice errors; sometimes they forget to put a full stop, this indicate that most students do not know the difference between a comma and semicolon. We interpret that this causes them to make a lot of errors. However, most

teachers agree on the most common error is grammar and sentence structures, such as, word order, word choice, and tenses. This indicate that teachers should put focus on theses aspects of the language while giving their lessons of writing, grammar, and give the right instruction for their students.

Q8: In view of your experience, what do you think the reason that causes students' errors in writing?

Teacher one: lack of practice, checking bilingual dictionaries as well as teachers' feedback is very important in order to improve students' level.

Teacher two: first language interference, problems related to the wrong learning of the foreign language itself.

Teacher three: lack of reading, lack of attention during courses, carelessness, and immaturity.

Teacher four: first cause is lack of reading, second is lack of practice, and third cause is feedback.

Teacher five: lack of practice is the main reason of their weak level of writing. And also mother tongue interference.

Four teachers believe that lack of practice is the main reason of students' errors. One teacher thinks the first reason that causes errors is first language interference and problems related to wrong learning, how students take the wrong information of the foreign language, they think it is correct. Another teacher added also teachers' feedback. this indicate that students need to practice more and with the feedback of the teacher students will be aware of their errors therefore next time they have a task they would make fewer errors. If teachers do not give feedback students will not progress and improve.

Another teacher says that students' problems are they check bilingual dictionaries. This explains that most of the time they misuse it or they do not know how to get the right word making errors related to their native language. We interpret that, because students are not exposed enough to the language, as consequence, they always have ideas in Arabic and they translate them very poorly.

Q9: Do you think students' native language affect their writing?

Teacher one: yes, for sure. Structure of sentences and the meaning is typically Arabic just written in English language such as word order errors. And also redundancy for example, they use synonyms like 'huge and large' in the same sentence, in English one adjective is enough.

Teacher two: yes, it does. First language habits affect the learning of foreign language because of translation, overgeneralization…etc.

Teacher three: Ultimately, direct translation of the material.

Teacher four: yes, most students think in Arabic while writing

Teacher five: yes,

All the interviewees' answers yes to this question, and then they explain how it affects their writing. One teacher explains that first language habits transfer to their foreign language writing and it even affect their learning. We interpret that, because students lack the knowledge of the target language, this leads to translating from their native language, and when the languages do not have similar structures it causes a lot of errors.

Another teacher explains that most students make word order errors because they use Arabic sentence structure but written in English, which is different from English structure. He

added Arabic language characteristics such as redundancy in their native language are totally normal, but when they do that in English it is incorrect. For example, they use synonyms like 'huge and large' in the same sentence, in English one adjective is enough. This indicates that students do not know the differences between their native language and the target language.

All teachers agree that students think in Arabic due to lack of foreign language knowledge and exposure, another element that affects their level is direct translation of the material. From these answers we deduce that students really do not comprehend all the grammatical rules they have been taught, therefore they need to pay attention to the courses and practice more.

Q10: Does knowing the source of students' errors help and facilitate your correction and analysis?

Teacher one: I hope sometimes I know what the cause is; it could be due to mother tongue, but it is not the lion share. It could be due to the lack of linguistic competence.

Teacher two: yes, because when we know the source we can find a treatment and hence we can eradicate it.

Teacher three: yes, it does. But without students' responsiveness to the instructions, it is in vain.

Teacher four: yes, it does help. Not knowing the sources would make it difficult to teach

Teacher five: yes, it helps

One of the teachers says yes it does help, because when we know the source of errors we can find the treatment and what the learner needs, and hence we can eradicate it. Another

despondence was not very sure if it does help because most of the time teachers do not really know the students' source of errors; he says "sometimes I ask myself from where these mistakes are coming from." We interpret that not knowing the source of errors is for sure a barrier to the learning process. In addition, because students have a lot of problems teachers cannot even know the sources.

Q11: Do you point out to students' errors if they were transferred from their mother tongue?

Teacher one: during class, I ask students to read their paragraphs and make them realizes that what they wrote is not purely English; And often students admit that they did think of the ideas in Arabic first and then wrote in English. This latter the teacher is not very common, but it exists.

Teacher two: yes, because this will help them to avoid depending on translation and go to depend on target language (English) rules.

Teacher three: mostly during class I point out for students to be aware of their interference errors.

Teacher four: mostly, but not always.

Teacher five: I do point out students errors especially on their papers because it is clearer and easier to identify.

Most interviewed teachers answered 'yes' they do. Some teachers point out students' interference errors all the time. One teacher explains why teachers should tell students' errors because "this will help them to avoid depending on translation and go depend on target language (English) rules." This indicates that pointing out students transfer errors is important to facilitate the learning process for them.

Another teacher said that he would mention students' errors because they need to be aware of the type errors they make the most, especially if it is transfer from their mother tongue. We interpret that, these errors are difficult to notice sometimes, so students need to be informed. Often students admit that they did think of the ideas in Arabic first and then wrote in English. This latter the teacher is not very common, but it exists. Another teacher said he point out to students when they use bilingual dictionaries, because it is mostly the first reason that made them make these errors, they depend on their mother tongue.

We interpret that even though most teachers point out students' interference errors. Students still make these kinds of errors therefore; we deduce that they should read articles, books, and documents. They must practice more of the target language.

Q12: What do you do to make students avoid first language interference?

Teacher one: I point out their errors, they need immediate feedback. I suggest a strategy I do not personally use, but i wish if it is more common, which is teaching them idiomatic expressions, collocation, they need more lessons of the actual aspect of the language.

Teacher two: I try to make them practice much and provide effective timely, clear and corrective feedback.

Teacher three: we use the first language in the classroom, I advise them to read more often, at least once a week.

Teacher four: I advise them to read native material, and think in English.

Teacher five: students need to read more of the English language so I advise them to do so.

Each teacher has his own strategy to try improving students' writing. One teacher said that practice is the only effective strategy for students and also provide them with clear corrective feedback

One teacher's strategy is to avoid using first language in class and he advises his students to read more of the target language. They all agree that students need to read more and think In English as much as they can, because they think it is the only way students can improve their writing, when they are accustomed to the language. We interpret that most teachers advise their students to read more of the target language, in order to familiar with it and its structure. Students also need more lessons of the actual aspect of the language, in order for the learners would have language background.

Q13: Do you have any further suggestions?

Teacher one: for mother tongue interference I advise teachers to ask their students to read more documents in English to get familiar with different structures and style of the language, reading frequently students get accustomed

Teacher two: (no answer)

Teacher three: I advise students who want to improve their writing to practice as much as they can, practice writing paragraphs at least once a week, and read English books articles and so on.

Teacher four: (no answer)

Teacher five: (no answer)

Teachers suggest that learners need to read more documents in English in order to get familiar with different structures and different styles of the target language. Students need to

read frequently like each week or each month, so they get accustomed by time, they will try to write something similar to what they read. Another suggestion is practice writing and reading at the same time, writing one paragraph each day or week or at least start writing paragraphs, and then by time try writing essays. Students if applied this technique by the end of the school year they would be improving with writing, style, creativity, grammar, and spelling.

3.2. Students' Questionnaire:

3.2.1. The sample of the study:

This questionnaire was administered to 80 students. This sample was chosen randomly among 465 second year students population at Mohamed Kheider University of Biskra. We selected this sample of this level in order to collect data about the application of language transfer in the process of language learning, since the issue of making errors is almost shared with all EFL learners, the data of this sample will be helpful.

3.2.2. Description of the Sample:

This questionnaire consists of thirteen (13) organized in logical ways. Ten (10) questions are closed ended, they have to choose 'yes' or 'no' or pick the appropriate answer from a multiple choice question, and the other three are open ended questions.

The first two questions are designed in order to know about the students' background information; Mostly to know their age and gender. After these two questions there are two main sections. Section one consists of six (6) questions about written expression and teachers' feedback and section two concerns the issue of errors and grammatical rules importance in foreign language learning and teaching, it consists of seven (7) questions.

Section one (Q1-Q6)

Students were asked about how they consider their level in written expression; and whether they find written expression course interesting or no. also we seek to know their opinion of making errors if they think it is a sign of positive progress or a sign of negative progress. Another question was about if the teachers provide feedback concerning the transfer from their native language, and whether they find it helpful or no. they were asked also to put in order the most writing features they focus on while writing, they were given four choices to choose from: style, content, vocabulary, and grammar rules.

Section two (Q7-Q13)

In this section second year students were asked about different questions relating to errors and interference of their mother tongue and the importance of grammatical rules to know if language transfer affect their writing production. We seek to know if students notice when they make errors and when they notice do they correct them or avoid them. In addition, we seek to know if the students know the difference between errors and mistakes. Another open ended question is about the importance of learning grammar rules and if it helps with written expression.

In addition, they were asked a multiple-choice question on the most frequent errors they make, such as punctuation, tenses, interference, and grammar. The researcher gave a definition of interference for students in order to answer the questions sincerely. Another question is to know if they notice interference errors when they make them and how frequently they do notice, and whether they agree or disagree that errors help student learn English better. The last question was about the elements that they think causes them to make errors.

3.2.3. Analysis of the Results:

Background Information:

- **Age**

Age	Participants	Percentage
17-20	15	18.25%
21-30	65	81.75%
Total	**80**	**100%**

Table 01: Students' Age

From the table and the figure we can notice that the age range from 21-30 are the majority and have the highest percentage with (81.75%) and the rest are minority with a percentage of (18.25%).
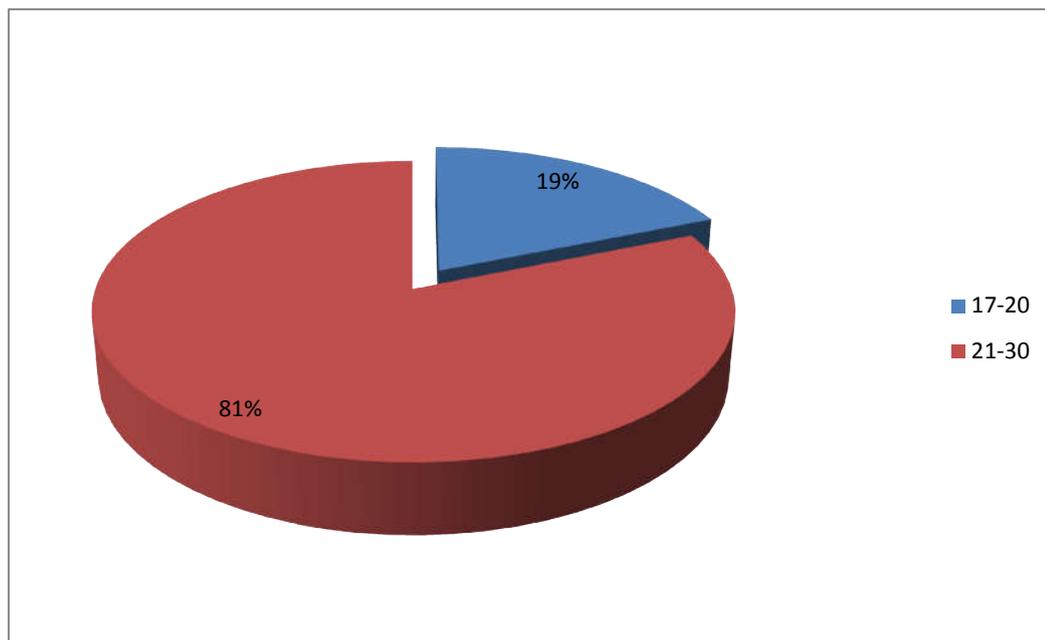
Figure 01: Students' Age

- **Gender**

Gender	Participants	Percentage
Female	69	86.25%
Male	11	13.75%
Total	**80**	**100%**

Table 02: Students' Gender

The results show that female participants overcome male participants. Only 11 (13.75%) male students have answered the questions, females are six times that number by 69 (86.25%) female students who have participated.
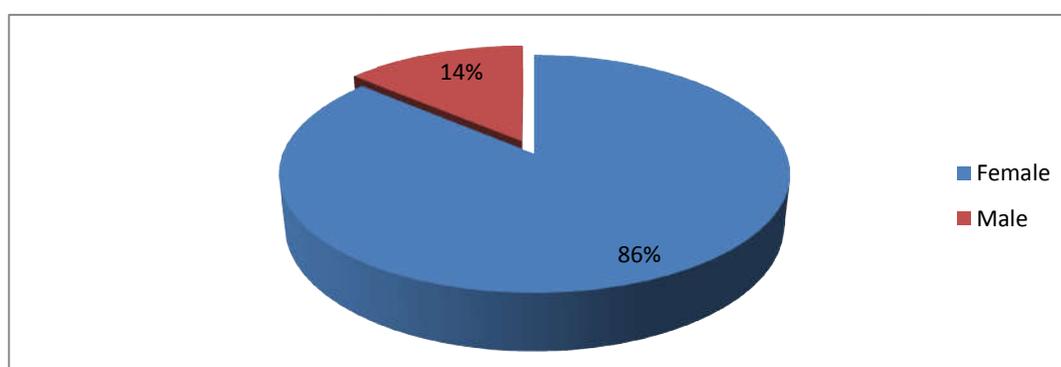
Figure 02: Students' Gender

Section one:

Question 1: What do you think about your level in written expression?

Options	Participants	Percentage
Weak	11	13.75%
Average	58	72.5%
Excellent	11	13.75%
Total	**80**	**100%**

Table 03: Students' Level in Written Expression

This question attempts to indicate what students think about their level of written expression. Most of the students consider their level is average 58 out of 80 with the percentage of (72.5%). The rest is divided equally between weak and excellent levels 11 students believe that their level is weak and the other 11 students believe it is excellent with a percentage of (13.75%).
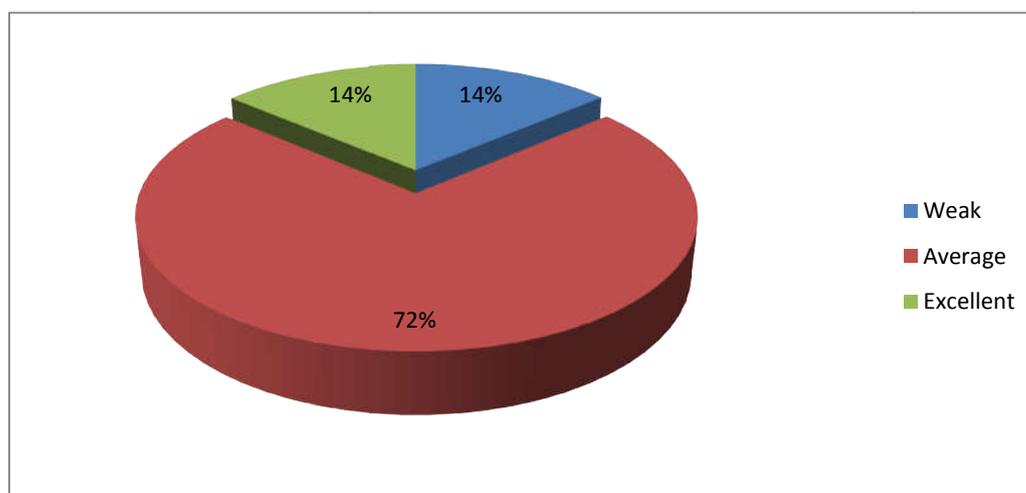

Figure 03: Students' Level in Written Expression

Question 2: Is the written expression course interesting?

Options	Participants	Percentage
Yes	72	90%
No	8	10%
Total	**80**	**100%**

Table 04: Students' attitude toward Written Expression

As it shown on the table above, most second year students find written expression course very interesting 90% of them answered 'yes', While the other 10% of them do not find it interesting.
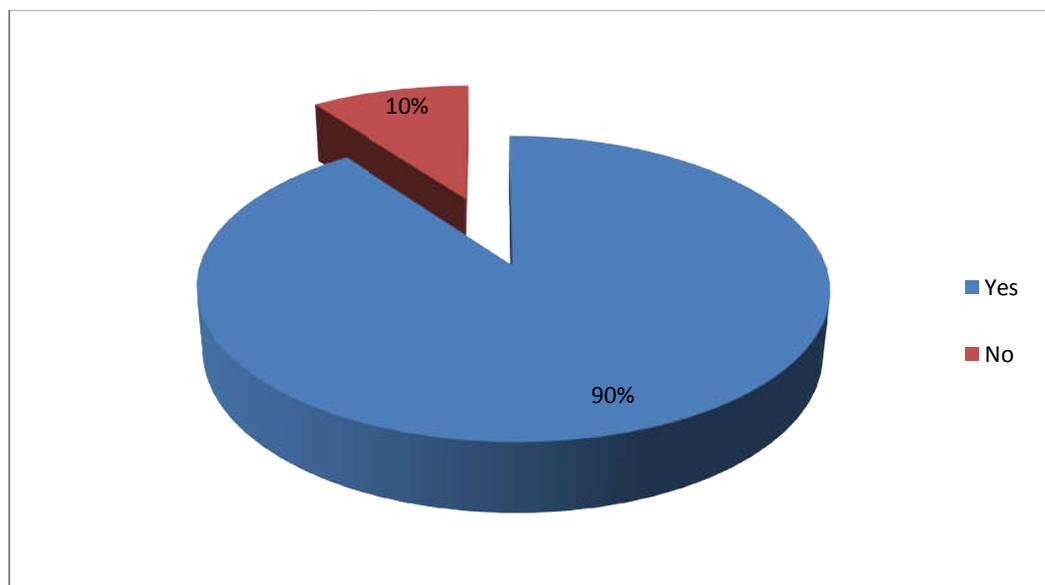
Figure 04: Students' attitude toward Written Expression

Question 3: When you first make an error do you think it is an indicator of:

Options	Participants	Percentage
A positive Progress	57	71.25%
A negative progress	23	28.75
Total	**80**	**100%**

Table 05: Students' attitude toward making Errors

When students were asked about their opinion of errors and whether they find errors a sign of positive progress or negative progress. 28.75% think it is a sign of failure, the other 71.25% think it is a sign of progress.
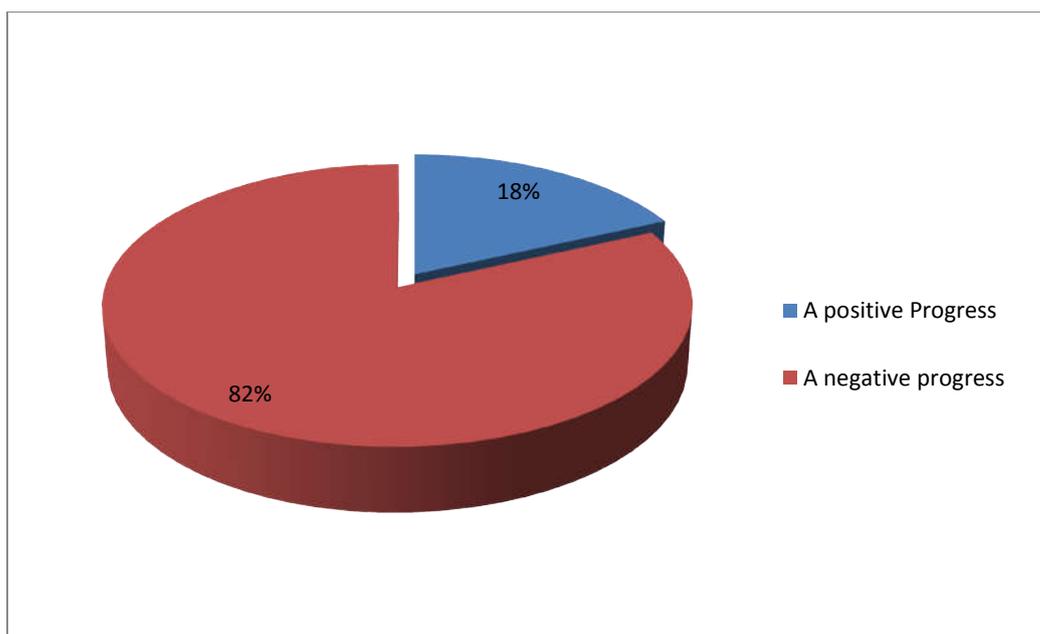
Figure 05: Students' attitude toward making Errors

Question 4: Does the teacher provide feedback concerning the transfer from your

native language?

Options	Participants	Percentage
Always	7	8.75%
Sometimes	69	86.25%
Never	6	5%
Total	**80**	**100%**

Table 06: The teacher feedback concerning the language transfer

The results show that 69 of the students think that teachers sometimes provide feedback concerning the transfer from their native language. Other group of students 7 (8.75%) answered that teachers always provide feedback. And others believe they never do (5%).
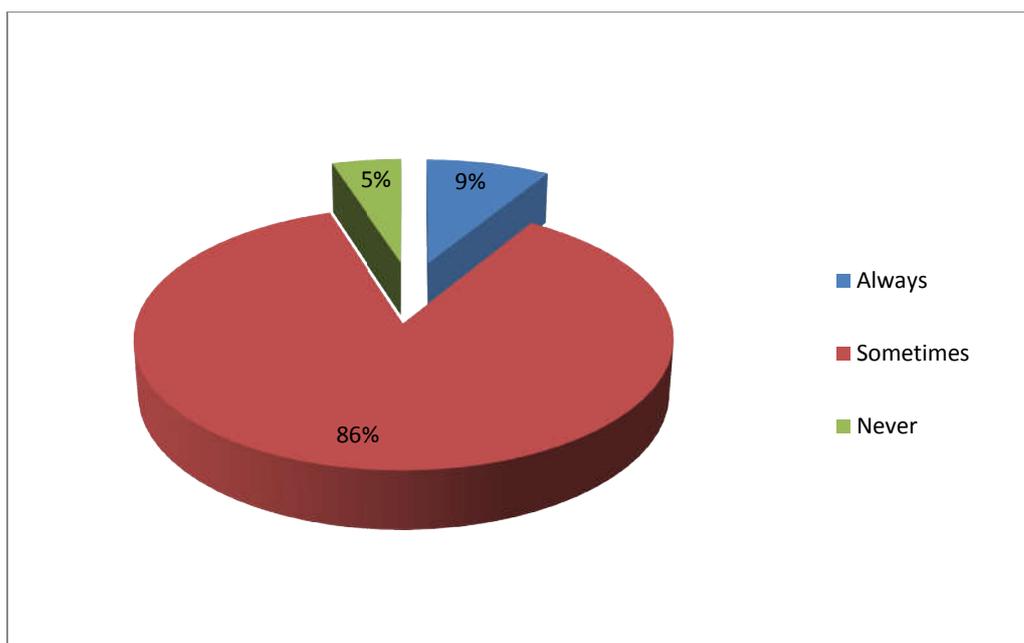
Figure 06: The teacher feedback concerning the language transfer

Question 5: Put in order what you focus on while writing:

Options	Participants	Percentage
Grammar rule	34	42.5%
Content	19	23.75%
Style	11	13.75%
Vocabulary	16	20%
Total	**80**	**100%**

Table 07: Most important elements students focus on while writing

As we can see on the table 07 and the figure 07 (42.5%) of students chose first grammar rules as what they focus on while writing. In second place, 19 out of 80 admitted that content is what they focus on; vocabulary came in the third place with percentage of (20%). In the last place of what students focus on first is style with percentage of (13.75%).
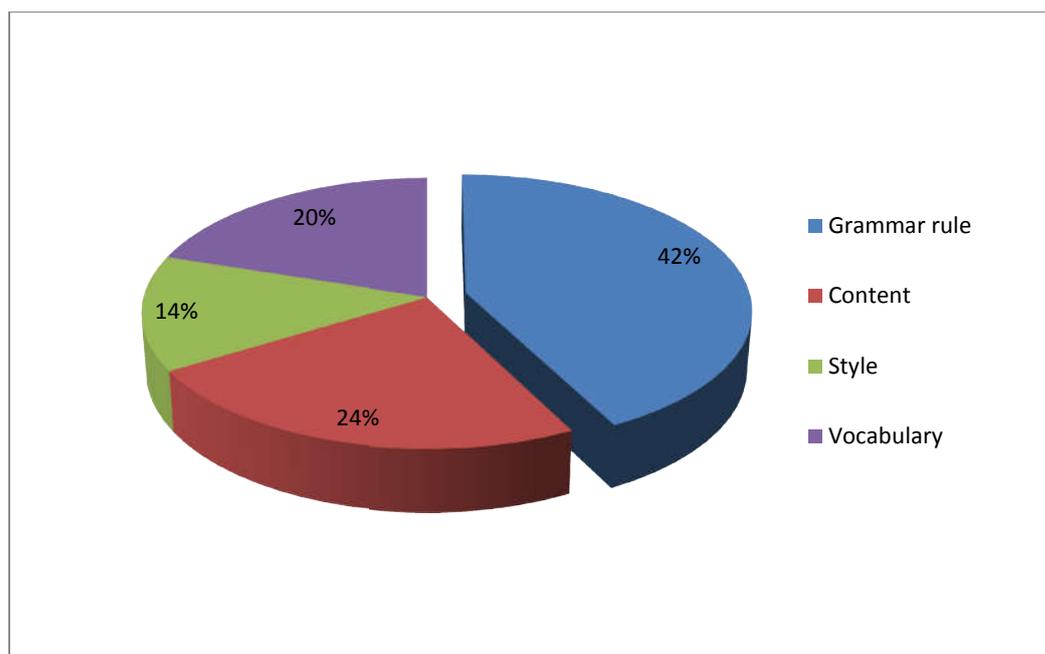
Figure 07: Most important elements students focus on while writing

Question 6: Do you find the teachers' feedback helpful?

Options	Participants	Percentage
Yes	80	100%
No	0	0%
Total	**80**	**100%**

Table 08: Teachers' feedback

When students were asked about teachers' feedback all of the 80 participants answered 'yes' that they find it helpful, teachers feedback help them improve their writing and make fewer errors.
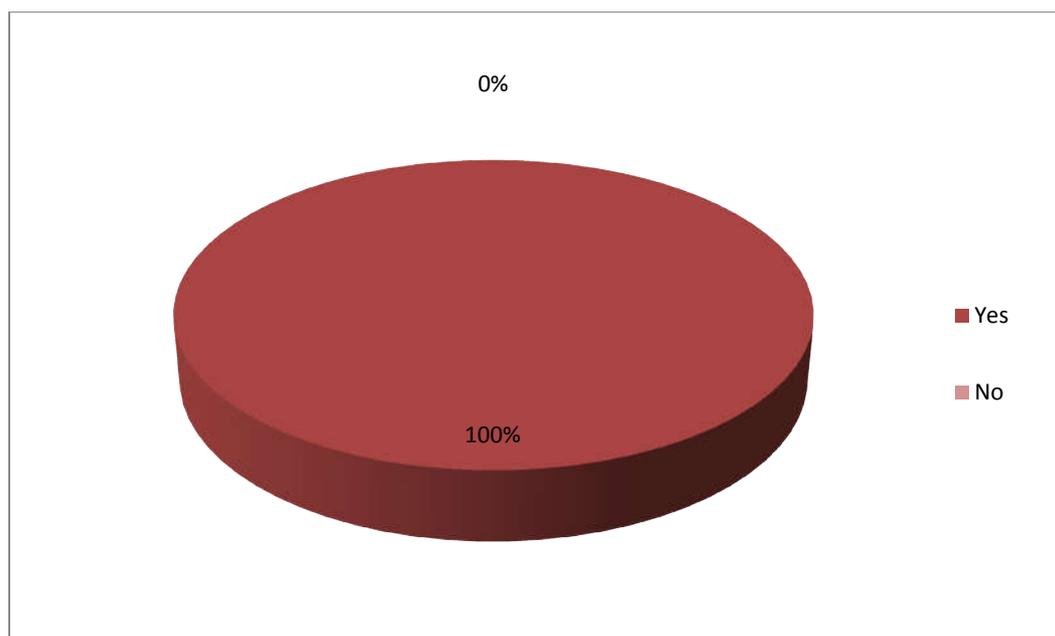
Figure 08: teachers' feedback

Section Two:

Question 7: When you notice errors in your work you:

Options	Participants	Percentage
Correct them	76	95%
Avoid them	4	5%
Total	**80**	**100%**

Table 09: Students' attitude toward correcting and avoiding errors

The vast majority of students admit that they do correct errors when they recognize them with percentage of (95%), and the other (5%) group answered that they avoid them.
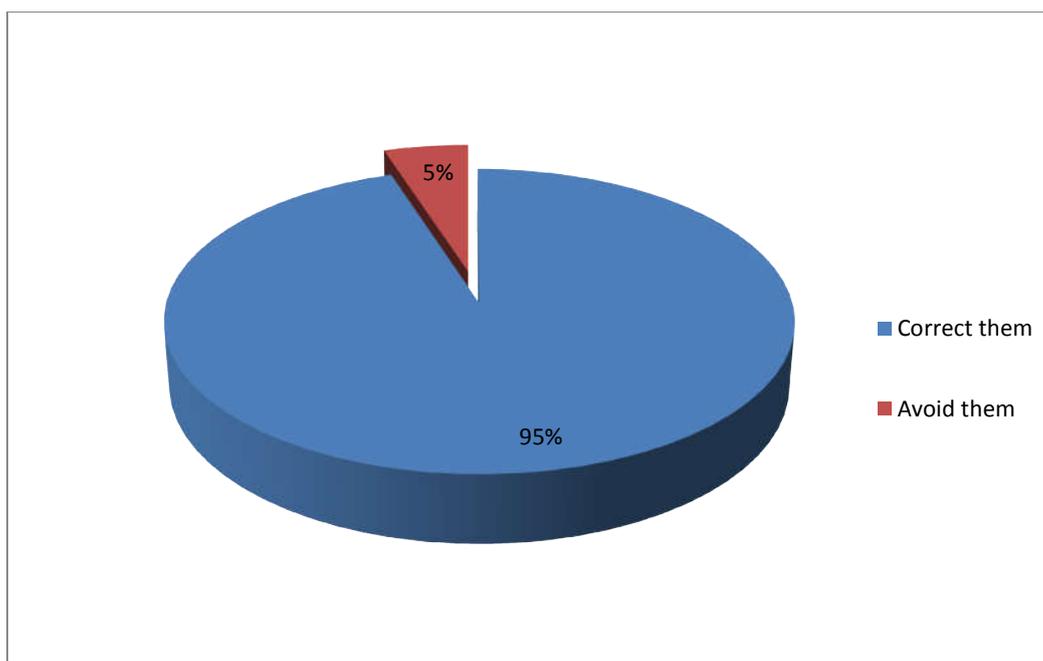
Figure 09: Students' attitude toward correcting and avoiding errors

Question 8: Do you know the difference between errors and mistakes?

Options	Participants	Percentage
Yes	23	28.33%
No	57	71.66%
Total	**80**	**100%**

Table 10: Students awareness the difference between errors and mistakes

From the table 10, we can notice that (71.66%) chose the answer 'no' which is they don't know the differences between errors and mistakes. The others 23 participants claim that they know the differences.
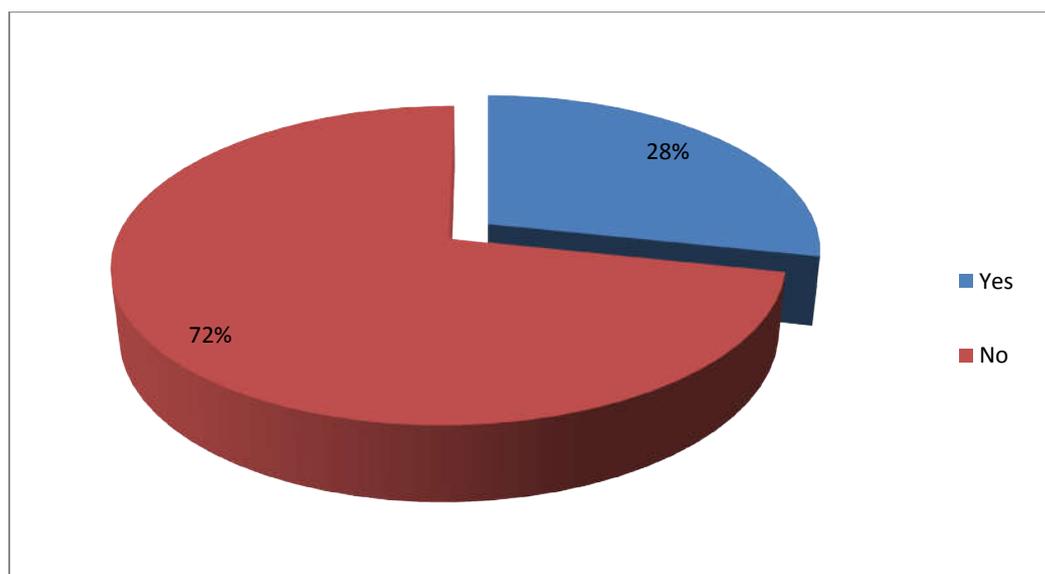
Figure 10: Students awareness of the difference between errors and mistakes

Question 9: Does learning grammar rules help with written expression?

Options	Participants	Percentage
Yes	71	88.33%
No	9	11.66%
Total	**80**	**100%**

Table 11: The importance of grammar rules

  More than half students 71, think that grammar rules do help them with their writing skills. While 11.66% of students answered 'no' it does not help.
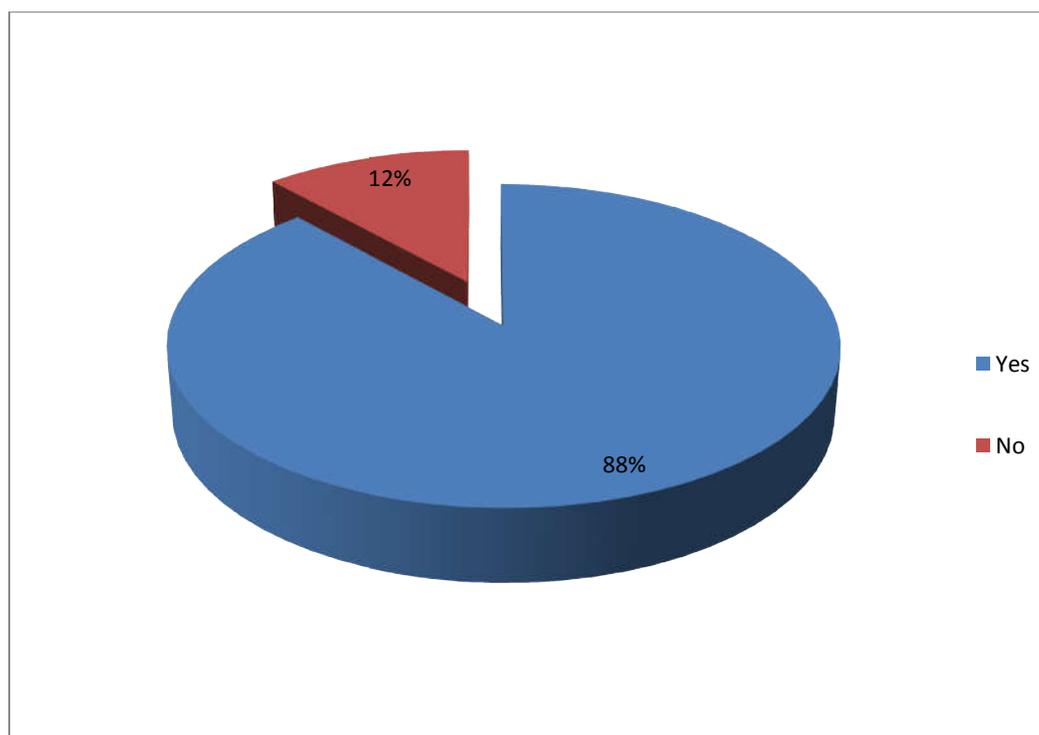
Figure 11: Importance of grammar rules

Question 10: Classify these elements based on the most frequent errors you make:

Options	Participants	Percentage
Punctuation	24	30%
Interference	16	20%
Tenses	20	25%
Grammar	20	25%
Total	**80**	**100%**

Table 12: Most frequent errors students make

Students were asked to classify most frequent errors they believe they make the most. The results were very close range from 30%-20%, 30% of students thought that punctuation is the most frequent. Another 16 (20%) believe it is tenses; interference and grammar have the same percentage which is 25% for each.
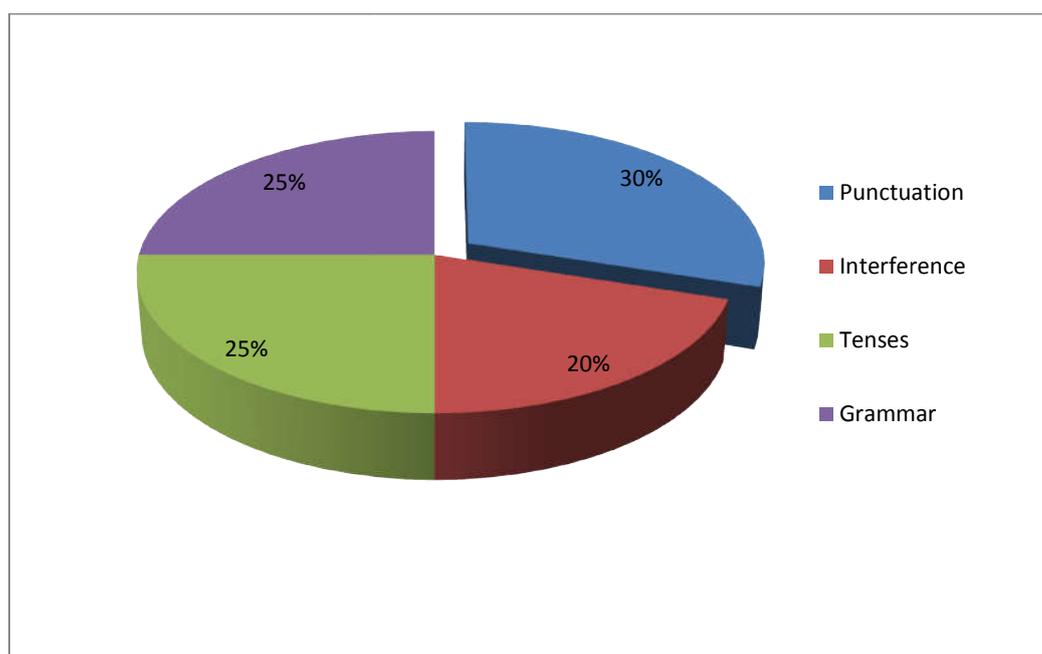
Figure 12: most frequent errors students' makes

Question 11: Do you notice when you make interference errors?

Options	Participants	Percentage
Always	14	18%
Sometimes	62	77%
Never	4	5%
Total	**80**	**100%**

Table 13: Students' attitude toward interference errors

The table 13 shows that most students believe that they notice interference (77%) answered sometime and (18%) answered always, and only (5%) of students answered never.
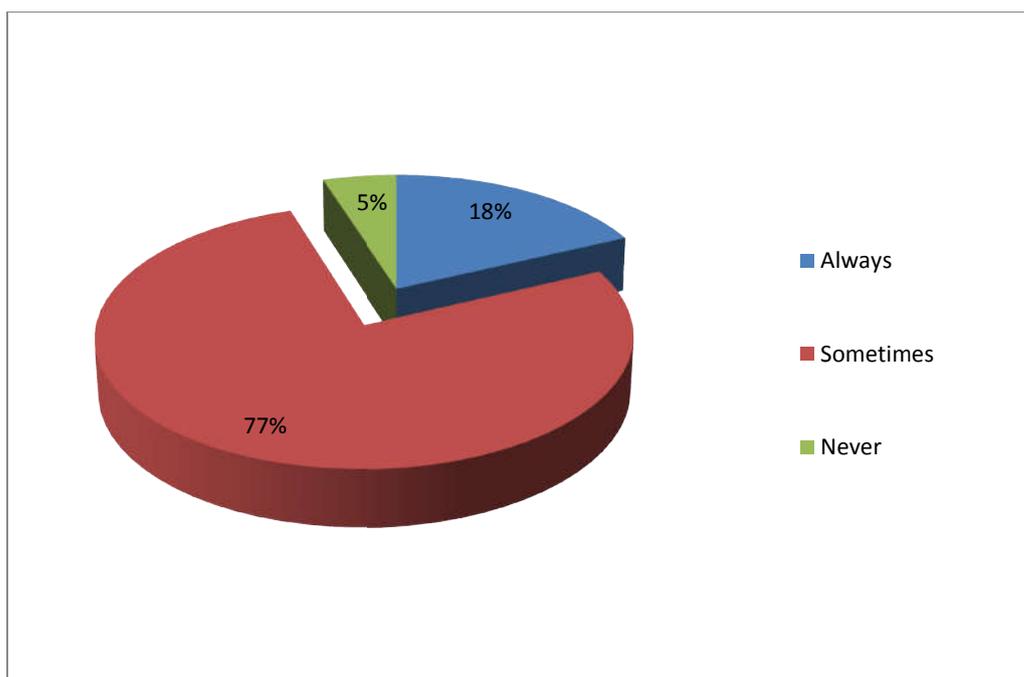
Figure 13: Students' attitude toward interference errors

Question 12: Do errors help you learn English?

Options	Participants	Percentage
Agree	8	10%
Disagree	72	90%
Total	**80**	**100%**

Table 14: Students' attitude toward helpfulness of errors

The vast majority of students 90% of students agree that making errors does help learning English and minority 10% of the students disagree and believe that errors do not help learning.
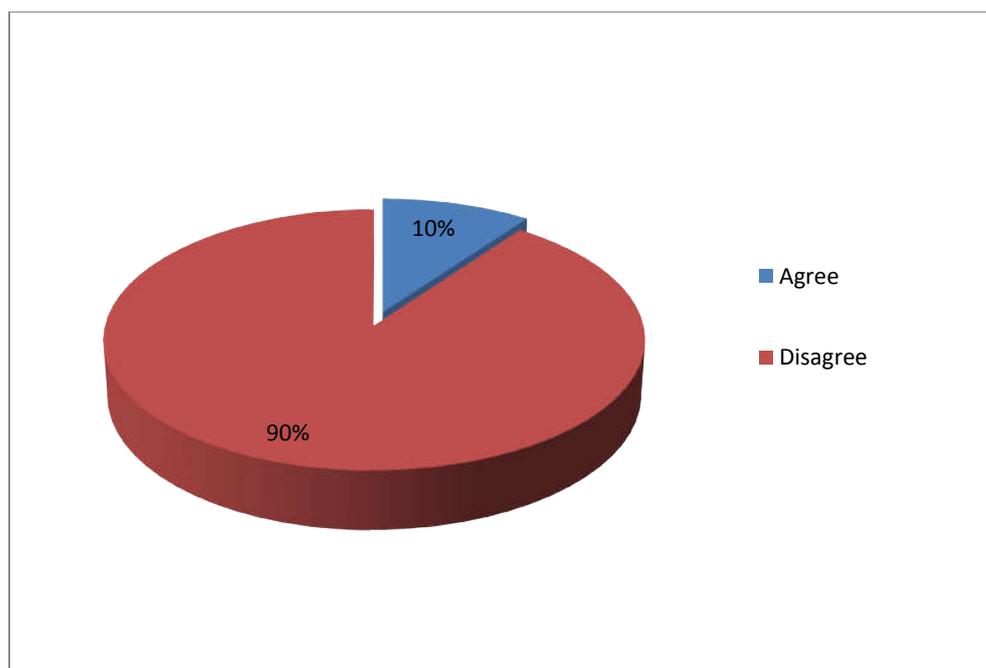
Figure 14: students' attitude toward helpfulness of errors

Question 13: In your opinion, what are the elements causes errors?

Options	Participants	Percentage
Lack of practice	47	58.75%
Difficult grammar	7	8.75%
Ignorance of the FL grammar rules	15	18.75%
Influence of the native lanuage	11	13.75%
Total	**80**	**100%**

Table 15: The elements that causes errors

When students were asked about the elements that may causes errors more than half students (58.75%) thought that lack of practice is the main cause, the least element they chose is difficult grammar (8.75%), the other groups of students selected ignorance of the FL grammar rules in second place18.75 and influence in third place (13.75%).
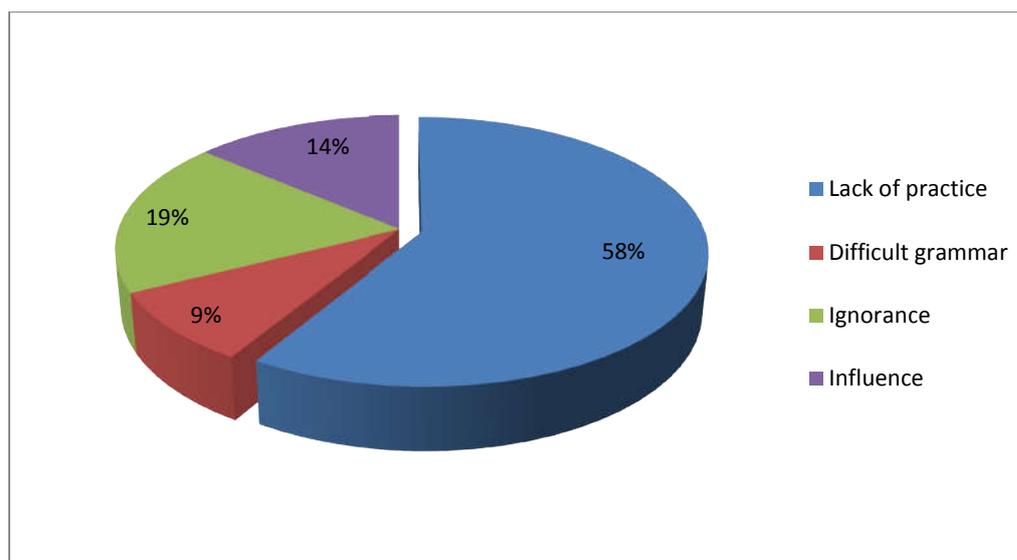
Figure 15: the elements that causes errors

3.2.4. Interpretation of the Results:

First of all, we notice that most students who participated are females 96 (86%) they overcome male students (13.75%). This may be explained as follows, those females are more interested in languages especially English, whereas, males choose different fields SUCH AS mathematics, science, and physics. Age results show that most of them are (21-30) (65%) this shows that English is their first specialty and that they are more interested. In addition, most students believe that their level is average (72%) this indicates that students' data are more reliable to our study (Q1). Question (2) shows that (90%) of students are interested in the written expression courses, which show that students are willing to learn and improve their level, this should motivate teachers.

Based on what students answer to (Q3) 57 out of 80 state that making errors is an indicator of positive progress. This means that errors are sign of improvement of their writing skills; therefore, students should not feel that they are failing when they make errors. Whereas the other 23 of students believe errors are a sign of negative progress. Moreover student when were asked if teachers provide feedback concerning transfer from their native language (86%)

of students state that the teachers sometimes provide feedback. This result indicates that teachers are raising students' awareness toward errors that came from transfer (Q4).

Additionally, while writing (42.5%) of students focus first on grammar rules, content and vocabulary came in second place with (23.75%), and (20%). In the fourth place and the least element students' focus on is style (13.75%). This results show that students are more interested in grammar rules, which might also indicate that grammar rules are most difficult for them to apply in their writing, in addition, content and vocabulary are important to student in order to express their ideas clearly (Q5). The whole population answered 'yes' to the question (6) whether they find teachers' feedback helpful or not, which shows that the teachers' importance and role for the students is to improve their writing skills and their English, also to show them their mistakes and encourage them when they answer good.

In question 7 (95%) of students admitted that they correct their errors when they notice them. These results demonstrate that students are interested in learning and are aware that they make errors which are a sign of improvement and correcting errors will definitely helps learning. While small amount of students (5%) admit that they avoid correcting errors.

Moreover, when students were asked about the different between errors and mistakes the vast majority (72%) of students claim that they do know the different, but when they gave their own explanation most of them had the wrong perception of mistakes and errors. Their answer was "errors concern grammar rules while mistakes in social behavior." No one of the students who claim they know the answer got it right. Teachers should pay attention to this and teach student about the difference between errors and mistakes (Q8). Majority of students (88.33%) believe that learning grammar rules help with written expression and improve their writing skills, and the minority (11.66%) of students did not think it would help. Their

explanation was to know grammar rules make them avoid making errors (Q9). These results indicate that students find grammatical rules very important to write more correctly.

When the students were asked to classify the most frequent error they answered punctuation with percentage of (30%). In the second place with the most frequent error are interference and grammar each has the same percentage (25%) in the last place is tenses with (20%). The results of all the answers are very close; which means that students are aware of the most frequent errors. Therefore, this might be the first step to solve all the students' problem of writing or even learning the language (Q10).

Furthermore, (46%) of students answer that sometimes they notice interference of mother tongue; while, 18% of students state that they notice it always. This indicates that more than half of the participants are aware of the interference errors; this could help to avoid them or correct them. But students still make a lot of errors, which it means that students need more than just to be aware (Q11). Concerning question (12) the vast majority of students (90%) agree that errors do help learning English, and the other (10%) disagree. We interpret that student should not be anxious toward making errors. The last question was about the element that causes students' errors. (58%) of answers chose lack of practice, in the second place is the ignorance of the foreign language grammar rules (18.75%), in the third and fourth place are interference of mother tongue (13.75%) and difficult grammar rules (8.75%). These results show that knowing what causes students' errors is important because students can try to avoid it and improve their weaknesses and practice more.

3.3. The Analysis of Learners' Paragraph Sample

3.3.1. Description of the Paragraph Sample

To collect error data of a language corpus, we follow Ellis (1997) and Gass and Selinker (1992) protocols (models) which is to choose the sample of written work. In this case is the students' written production. We have chosen randomly the sample of second year students of the English University - level at Mohamed Kheider Biskra. During the academic year 2016/2017 we took the sample of one class of forty-one (41) short paragraphs.

This sample consists of learners copies of written expression. The topic was about how to reduce child and youth suicide, and other activity which is written homework, they were asked to write a comparison and contrast short paragraphs comparing between two things, people, or places, students chose topics according to the topics given to them.

The analysis of students' short paragraphs shows that students do make a serious number of errors of different causes and types. This section intends to show the results which aim to give answers to research questions:

1. What are the main sources of errors made by EFL learners?
2. Do learners of English as a foreign language transfer some linguistic element from standard Arabic into English?
3. What are the most influential types of language transfer?

3.3.2. Error analysis of the sample

After collecting the sample, the following step is error identification and categorization of errors. The paragraphs were analysed and the errors were classified by the researcher, with the help of one of the written expression teachers of Mohammad Kheider Biskra University.

The results are represented in the following table and figure

Types of Grammatical Error	Frequency	Percentage
Verb-Tense and Form	55	26.20 %
Word Order	17	8.09 %
Prepositions	35	16.66%
Subject Verb Agreement	16	7.61 %
Plurality	10	4.76 %
Articles	18	8.57 %
Capitalization	31	14.76%
Pronouns	13	6.19 %
Auxiliary	15	7.14 %
Total	210	100 %

Table 16: Analysis of Grammatical Error

The data presented in table 16 show the most common errors as follows: in the first place with the most repeated errors is verb-tense and forms with a percentage of (26.20%), and then followed by errors of prepositions in the second place with 35 times repeated errors (16.66%), students still confuse the use and function of a preposition. In third place are errors in capitalization (14.76%) after that, in the fourth place are articles errors (8.57 %). word order errors come in the fifth place with a percentage of (8.09 %), in the sixth place is Subject verb agreement errors of 16 times repeated errors which is (7.61%) percentage, in the seventh and eighth place are errors of auxiliary with a percentage of (7.14%, 15 error) and pronouns errors with a percentage of (6.19 %). In the last place is plurality with least errors of 10 with percentage of (4.76%).
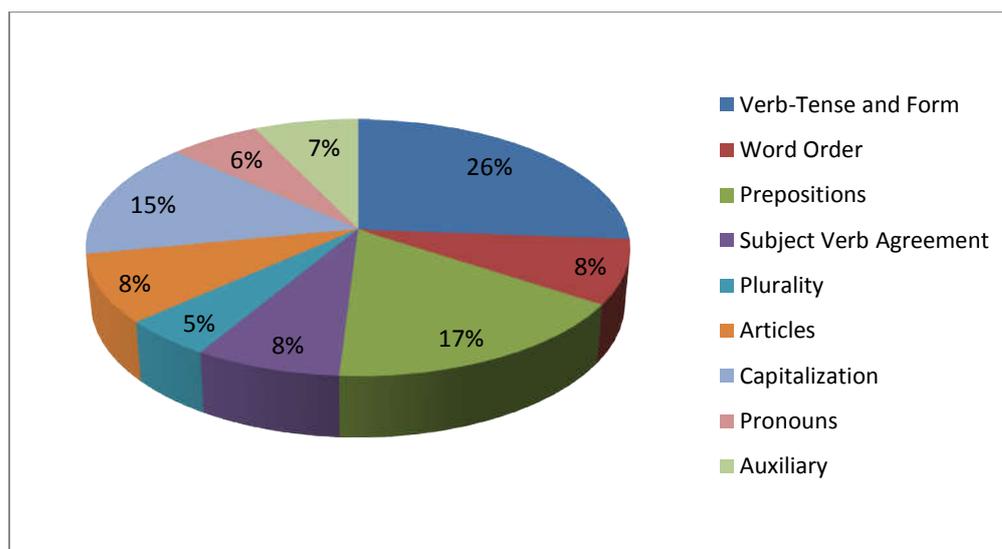
Figure 16: Analysis of grammatical errors

3.3.3.   Discussion of Sample Results

In this section of this chapter, the analysis and the discussion of each type of errors will be shown by displaying examples and explaining the possible sources and causes of these errors.

3.3.3.1. Types of Errors

Verb-tense and Form Errors

Students make many errors even though they have been studying English since secondary school. Verb-tense and form errors rank in the first place with the most common errors repeated 55 times in second year students' short paragraphs with (26.20 %) percentage. These results show that learners find verb tenses and form very complex and difficult compared to their native language (Arabic) tenses. One given reason is that the English language system differs from the Arabic language system; learners most common verb tense and form misuse were simple past tense and present simple.

Students tend to avoid the present perfect form in their paragraphs instead they overuse the simple past and this leads to make errors. One possible explanation is that present perfect

form has no equal form in the Arabic language linguistic system. And also they tend to use the gerund (ing) form instead of the past participle, in the passive voice form (to be + past participle), in addition they tend to use the gerund form instead of the infinitive form. It is obvious that second year students have not fully mastered the grammatical rules of verb tense and form in the target language.
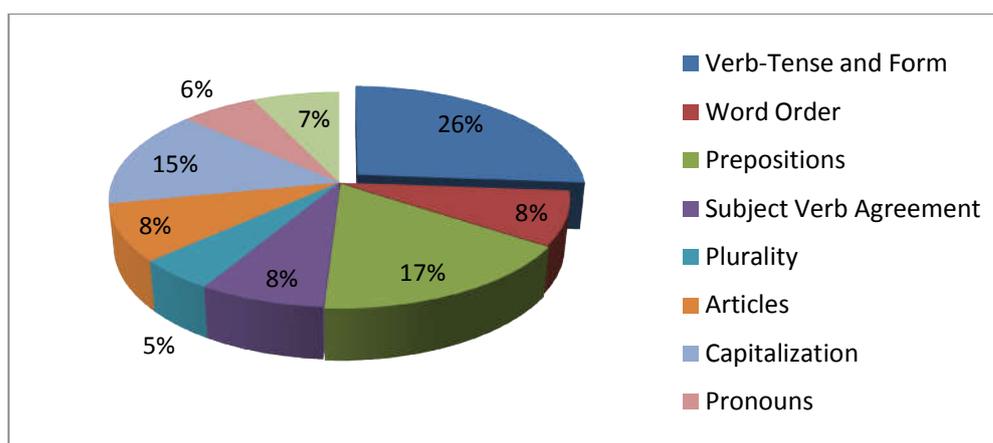
Figure 17: Analysis of Verb-tense and Form Errors

Examples: students' errors and its correct form

1) For example we organized a religious T.V. show…

   _ For example we have organized a religious T.V. show…

2) … Then we collected some people.

   _… Then we have gathered some people.

3) … People who are disappointing from life.

   _… people who are disappointed from life.

4) Suicide rates have been increased.

   _ Suicide rates have been increasing.

5) Suicide rates are being increased.

   _ Suicide rates have been increasing.

Word Order Errors

Another common error that students frequently make as consequence of transfer is word order in fifth place with percentage of (8.09 %). Students' native language Arabic and target language English are different in word order system and that leads make errors.

In Arabic adjectives usually follow the noun they modify. We can notice that second year students are still influenced by their native language word order system. The same with adverbs in English they come before the adjectives or another adverb, which is the opposite in the Arabic language. As a result word order errors occur in the students' paragraphs because of Arabic interference.
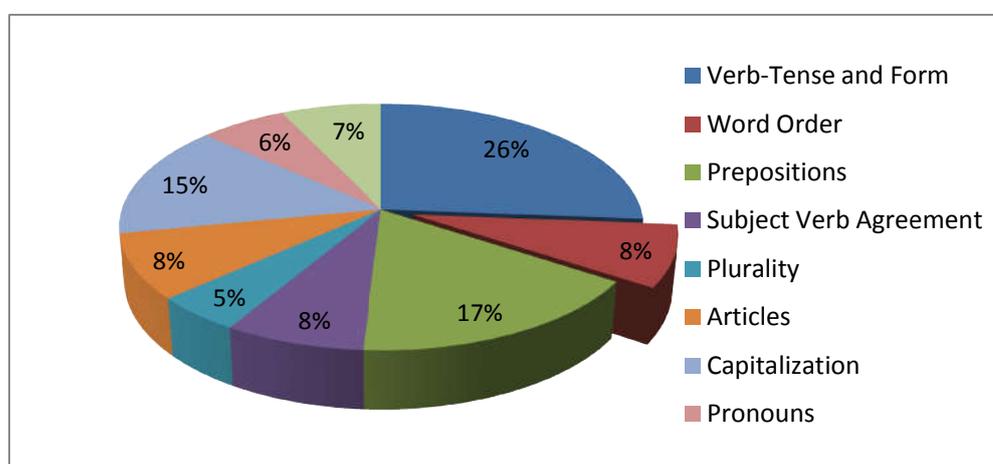
Figure 18: Analysis of Word Order Errors

Examples

1) Remember that Allah waiting from you the best.

   _ Remember that Allah is waiting the best from you.

2) Suicide is a social dangerous.

   _ Suicide is a dangerous social.

3) It's only on him and no others can disturb.

   _It's only on him and others cannot disturb.

4) Suicide is a state of negative mental.

_ Suicide is a negative mental state.

5) Give the money to him.

_Give him the money.

Preposition Errors

The misuse of preposition was found to be one of the most common errors of the second year students' paragraphs coming in the second place after verb tense and form with percentage of (16.66%). Most students confuse the use of preposition especially because most of the prepositions have the same function. For example, the prepositions 'in', 'at', and 'on' all of them indicate place and time, with a slight difference, which make it difficult for student to notice it. Therefore they will try to find its equivalent in their native language, but it is rare to find similarities between English and Arabic prepositions. This can be explained as interference of Arabic.
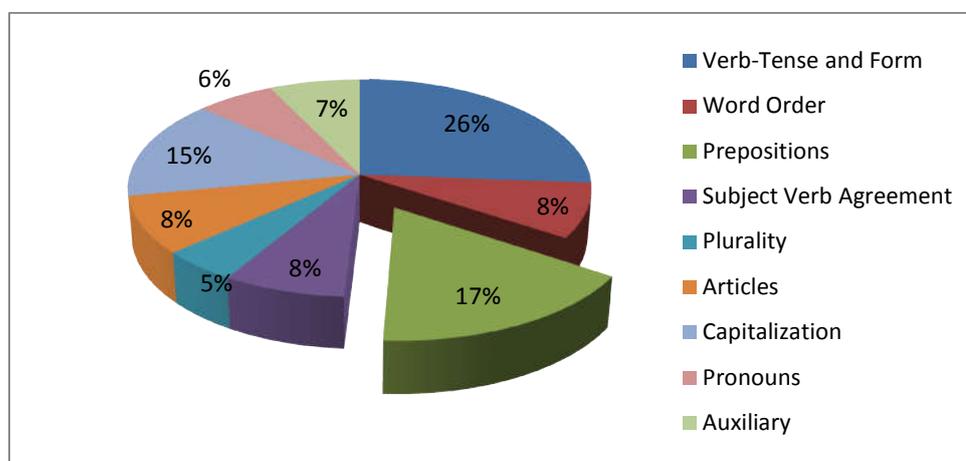
Figure 19: Analysis of Preposition Errors

Examples:

1)   At the same time make them afraid from Allah.

_ At the same time make them afraid of Allah.

2) Parents should be aware that their conflicts do affect on their kid's mentality.

_ Parents should be aware that their conflicts do <u>affect their</u> kid's mentality.

3) Her family disagree her marriage.

_ Her family disagrees <u>with</u> her marriage.

4) Another marriage difference in the weather between our two cities is…

_ Another marriage difference <u>between</u> our two cities weather is…

5) Made them aware from it.

6) _ Made them aware <u>of</u> it.

Subject Verb Agreement

Students do not make many errors of subject verb agreement in their paragraphs with the percentage of (7.61 %). Second year students usually confuse how to use the's' of the third person singular. Moreover, Most of the time they do not know when to add the 's' of the first person plural when the subject is plural or the subject is singular. These errors have one possible cause is overgeneralization use of rules. They overgeneralize the rule of adding the 's' to the third person and they generalize it to the first person plural use.
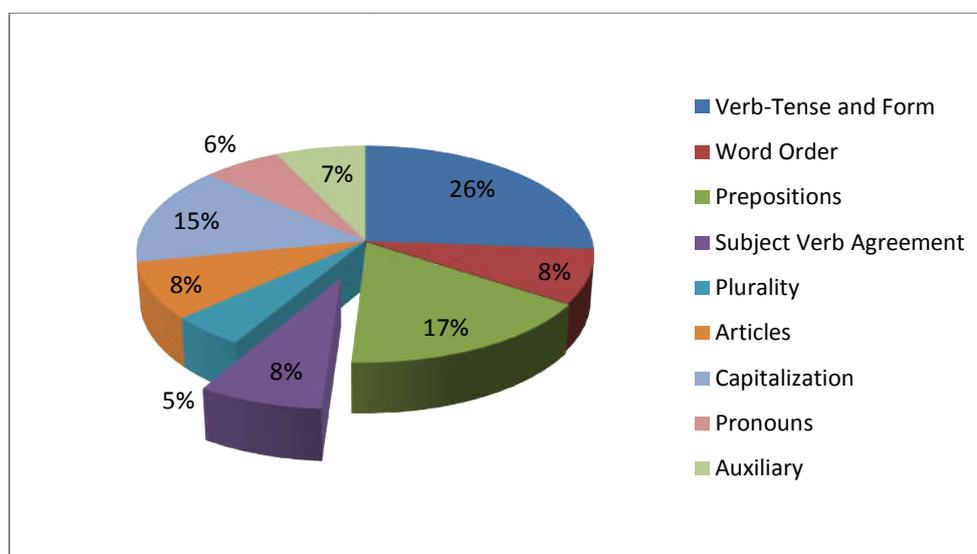
Figure 20: Analysis of Subject Verb Agreement

Examples

1) We are adult.

_ We are <u>adult</u>s.

2) She find.

_she <u>find</u>s.

3) You should makes.

_you should <u>make.</u>

4) The mothers was not pushed aside

_ The mothers <u>were</u> not pushed aside

Plurality errors

The results of this study have shown that most second year students make mistakes of plural. It is not very frequent as the other types of grammatical errors ranked in the last place (ninth place) with percentage of (4.76%). We found that students usually misuse the 's' of plural; sometimes they add the 's' even when it is not plural, and other times they omit the 's' when it is necessary to add. These plural errors can be explained as follows, students are influenced by their native language because they have difficulty understanding the grammatical rules. And also they over-generalize the rules.
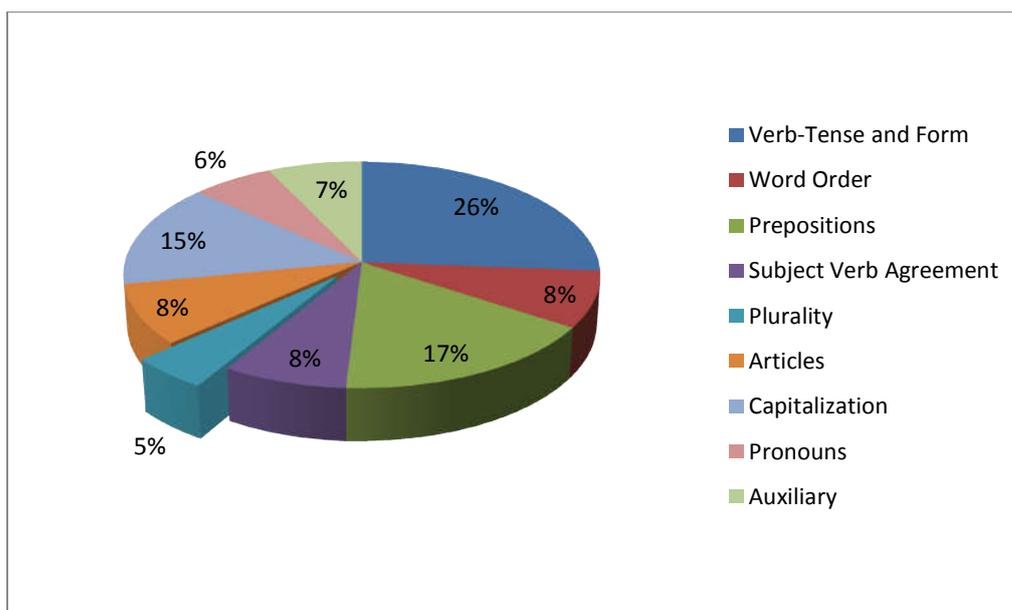
Figure 21: Analysis of Plurality errors

Examples:

1) The city and the village both place…

   _The city and the village both places…

2) The traditions of making foods, the religions, beliefs…

   _The traditions of making food, religions, beliefs…

3) Science evolves from relative truths.

   _ Science evolves from relative truth.

4) In the present many houses are in a modern shapes.

   _ In the present many houses are in a modern shape.

Article Errors:

Students' most common errors in their paragraphs are articles ranking in the fourth place after prepositions. It constitutes about (8.57%) of the percentage of students' errors. Learners find articles difficult to differentiate between the use of definite 'the' and indefinite articles 'a' and 'an'. The source of such errors might be the extent of differences between the

English articles system and the Arabic articles system. Therefore, learners mother tongue interference in their paragraph writing. Arabic article system is different because in the Arabic language there is only definite articles 'al' which is slightly similar in function with English articles 'the', this leads to positive transfer, but the indefinite articles of English 'a' 'an' and zero 'Ø' has no equivalent in Arabic language, this leads to negative transfer.
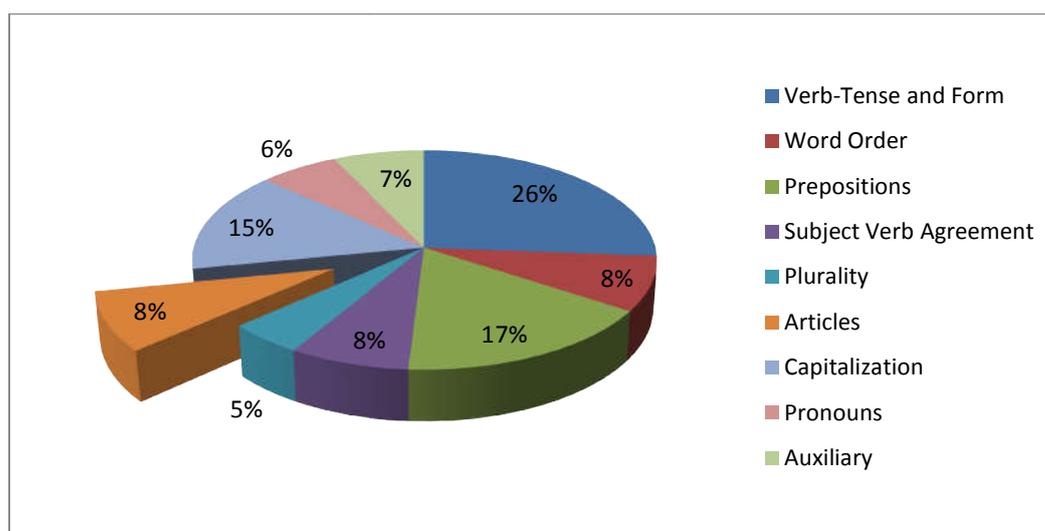
Figure 22: Analysis of Article Errors

Examples

1) Reducing suicide is responsibility of all society.

_ Reducing suicide is the responsibility of all society.

2) Although these main differences the both comments.

_ Although these main differences both comments.

3) Suicide and religious both have a many differences.

_ Suicide and religious both have many differences.

4) It has a huge number of population while village.

_ It has a huge number of the population, while in the village.

5) In the present many houses are in the modern shape.

_ In the present many houses are in a modern shape.

Capitalization Errors

Capitalization comes in third place with the most common errors among students with percentage of (14.76%). Most students do not capitalize letters at the beginning of a sentence or at the beginning of a new paragraph. We can explain this type of error as the interference of students' native language (Arabic). In the language Arabic there is no capitalization or capital letters. While in the target language (English) it is the opposite. Therefore second year EFL students are still influenced by their native language they do not capitalize their letters.
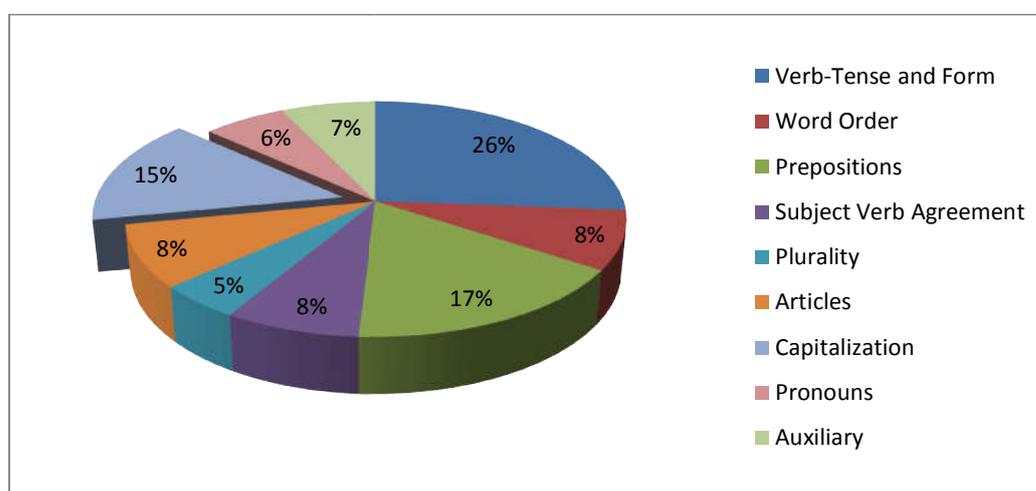
Figure 23: Analysis of Capitalization Errors

Examples

1. …Allah, Then we collected some people.

   _ …Allah, then we collected some people.

2. …very fast. they also

   _…very fast. They also

3. in the end, reducing suicide is a responsibility of all society.

   _ In the end, reducing suicide is a responsibility of all society.

4. …his home town <u>chicago</u> or my own home town Miami.

_…his home town Chicago or my own home town Miami.

Pronouns

In this research the percentage of errors of pronouns is (6.19 %, 13 errors) in the eighth place. Second year students face many problems with this category of grammar. One of the reasons is that students confuse the various types of pronouns and its use. They often remove personal pronouns and other vice versa, when it is not supposed to be added. And also they confuse relative pronouns use and functions. In addition there are pronouns which are close in pronunciation and that causes students to make errors. Generally when students get confused or find difficulty they ignore the English rules and they use their mother tongue grammatical rules. But because the Arabic pronouns system is different from English pronoun system, students often make negative transfer.
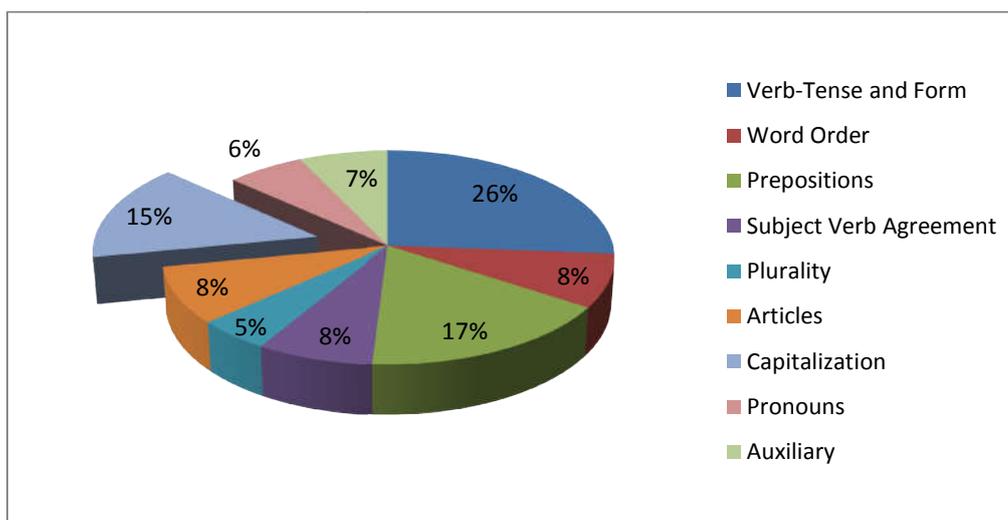
Figure 24: Analysis of Pronouns

Examples

1) Because think that his parent hate he.

_ Because <u>he</u> thinks that his parent hate <u>him.</u>

2) … 70% of there suicide is because they don't have job.

   _… 70% of <u>their</u> suicide is because they don't have job.

3) He thinks to kill his self.

   _He thinks to kill <u>himself</u>.

4) Because they are the ones that are most commonly known.

   _Because they are the ones <u>who</u> are most commonly known.

Auxiliary Errors

Students show confusion when it comes to the use of English auxiliary. This type was repeated 15 times in the students' paragraphs with the percentage of (7.14 %). Most of the time students do not know when to use English auxiliaries such as 'do', 'have', and 'be', the reason behind students' errors is because simply these auxiliaries do not exist in the Arabic language. These errors occur because of intralingual transfer, which is the negative influence of the target language itself.

Examples

1) This big problem have a solution.

   _this big problem <u>has</u> a solution.

2) The beginning when we looking generally for suicide.

   _ The beginning when we <u>are</u> looking generally for suicide.

3) People born equally.

   _people <u>are</u> born equally

4) And they not have much time and money.

   _and they <u>do</u> not have much time and money.
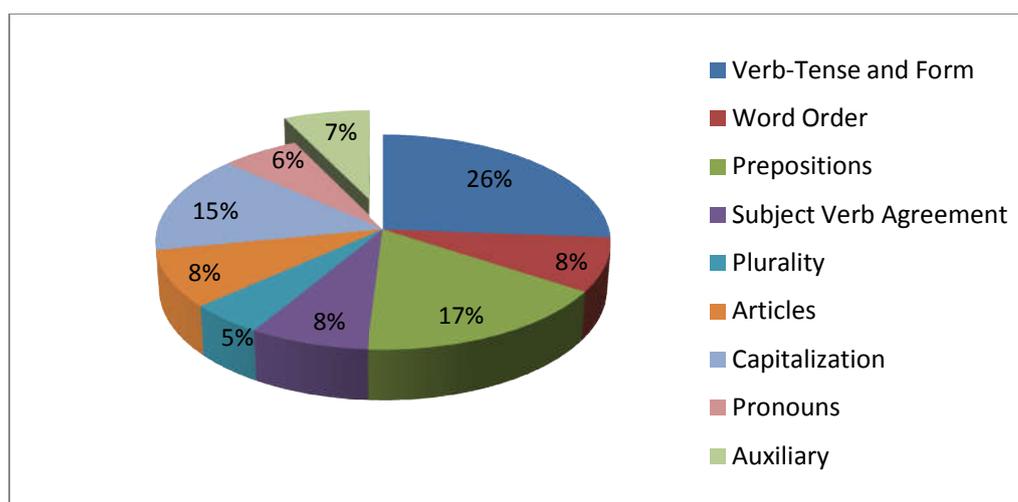
Figure 25: Analysis of Auxiliary Errors

3.3.4. Summary of the Findings

The main objective of this study is to analyse and identify the most common errors in English written production of second year students at Mohamed Kheider Biskra University. In addition, to find out the possible sources of these errors and whether language transfer is an important factor of foreign language learning process.

Analysing students' short paragraphs, we found the following results. According to what we found, most common that constitutes highest percentage errors are verbs tense and form, prepositions, capitalization, articles, and word order, there are others but they are less frequent. Based on the literature and these results, interlingual and intralingual transfer are the main sources of the grammatical errors, regarding the explanation of the grammatical errors we can notice that the cause of errors is mostly Intralingual transfer. Students do make errors as consequence of the interference of their mother tongue, but it is obvious that intralingual is more frequent.

Conclusion

This last chapter confirms that second year students do transfer from their native language. In addition they do make transfer errors in their writings. It can be referred to intralingual reasons; because most students overgeneralize and overuse some English rules. These types of error occur due to lack of practice and also the difference between Arabic and English structures. On that account, teachers should always explain these differences to their students in order for them to be more aware. Also, they should put more emphasis on the most repeated error such as tenses and prepositions… etc. Finally, students should practice more writing and reading in order to improve their English and have fewer errors.

Recommendation

This research aims to shed light on language transfer and its importance in the study of the foreign language learning process. The obtained results from this study confirm that students make a lot of interference errors in their writings. In order to improve students' writing skills and to avoid transfer from their mother tongue we present the following recommendations:

Students' recommendations

1. Knowing that mother tongue interference is one of the sources of student's errors, we recommend for students to read more the foreign language articles, documents, and books in order to be accustomed to the language

2. Students are recommended also to use English as a mean of communication inside and outside the classroom with their classmates. In addition, they are advised to listen to audio recordings and watch videotapes of the foreign language.

3. Students should be aware of all the differences between the native language and the target language structure systems such as verb tense, word order, preposition, subject verb agreement, in order to avoid mother tongue interference.

Teachers' recommendations

1. Students' grammar errors can be a great help for teachers. It indicates students' weaknesses and identifies their problematic areas. Teachers are recommended to consider the strategy of error analysis because it is very effective to investigate the students' difficulties and needs.

2. Teachers should be a guide and role model to their students and presents academic English in the classroom. Moreover, they should use strategies to interact with their students such as asking interesting questions, and employ group discussion in the classroom in order to speak more the foreign language.

3. It is recommended from teachers to give more assignments of writing and encourage students to write and practice more at home. As consequence, it reduces their anxiety of writing in tests and exams and reduces students' errors. In addition, students would be more accustomed to the foreign language,

4. Teachers should provide instant feedback of the students' errors during class and in their paper, as well as give them proper evaluation in order to make students understand what they did wrong and make progress in English skills.

General conclusion

Through this research we tried to give importance to language transfer and its influence on students' written production in English. This study aims at identifying and analysing most common language transfer errors in the second year students' paragraphs.

This research paper begins with the literature review of the works of linguists and scholars. Their works are related to foreign language teaching concerning EA and CA. These two aspects share the same goal which is the understanding and explaining the native language and the target language and how they can help in applied linguistics and pedagogy. The second chapter deals with the general overview of language transfer's definition, types, and variables affecting learners' production. Language transfer can be very beneficial to teachers and students when teachers are aware of all the transfer types and variables', therefore they can provide the right need to their students.

The third chapter deals with the analysis and the interpretation of the data gathered from error analysis of the paragraphs, teachers' interview, and students' questionnaire. The results of the gathered data confirm that students of second year transfer from their native language. Consequently, they make transfer errors in their written production, this confirms the hypothesis we suggested. Which is, despite of the students' relative proficiency in the foreign language, they will continue to make errors and also mother tongue interference influences native language transfer. The obtained results show that most common grammatical errors of second year student are: verb-tense and form, prepositions, capitalization, word order, subject verb agreement, pronouns, plurality, auxiliary, and articles. We concluded that the reason behind all these errors is intralingual, because most students overuse and overgenarlize English rules.

Hence, we can conclude that second year student still need to improve their English skills. The amount of errors in all types of grammar show that students do not really comprehend

what they have been taught, they need to practice a lot. Thus, students will be more exposed to the foreign language. Teachers also should be aware of these types of errors and when students refer to their mother tongue, in this way teachers can implement the necessary plan convenient to this problem. Moreover, syllabus designers should be aware of mother tongue interference in order to provide them with adequate activities and lessons for students needs.

On the whole, this research paper is helpful to both students and teachers; for students to improve their English skills and avoid transfer errors, as well as English teachers because it helps with awareness and understanding of these errors. Therefore, they will adapt the most effective strategies to help their students. However, this research only dealt with limited number of students and linguistic aspects due to time limit. Definitely, this area of study needs more investigation in the future.

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Appendices

APPENDIX 1

Student's Questionnaire

Dear students,

The main objective of the following questionnaire is to know the students' opinion about the application of transfer theory in the analysis of errors in third year students' writing production. We would be grateful if you could answer the questions below in order to help us in our research. Please use (×) to choose the right answer, or specify your answer if necessary. Thank you in advance.

Gender: Male ☐   Female ☐

Age: 17 – 20 ☐   21 – 30 ☐

Section One:

1. What do you think about your level in written expression?

   Weak ☐   Average ☐   Excellent ☐

2. Is the written expression course interesting?

   Yes   No

3. When you first make an error do you think it is an indicator of:

   A positive Progress ☐   A negative progress ☐

4. Does the teacher provide feedback concerning the transfer from your native language?

Always ☐   Sometimes ☐   Never ☐

5. Put in order what you focus on while writing:

Grammar rules ☐   Style ☐

Content ☐   Vocabulary ☐

6. Do you find the teachers' feedback helpful?

Yes ☐   No ☐

Section Two

7. When you notice errors in your work you:

Correct them ☐   Avoid them ☐

8. Do you know the difference between errors and mistakes?

Yes ☐   No ☐

If yes, please explain:

…………………………………………………………………………………………………
…………………………………………………………………………………………………
…………………………………………………………………………………………………
………………………

9. Do learning grammar rules help with written expression?

Yes ☐   No ☐

If yes, please explain:

………………………………………………………………………………………………

………………………………………………………………………………………………

………………………………………………………………………………………………

………………

10. Classify these elements based on the most frequent errors you make:

Punctuation ☐   Interference ☐

Tenses ☐   Grammar ☐

*Interference is the use of native language rules that leads to errors in the target

language.

11. Do you notice when you make interference errors?

Always ☐   Sometimes ☐   Never ☐

12. Do errors help you learn English?

Agree ☐   Disagree ☐

13. In your opinion, What are the element cause errors?

Lack of practice ☐   Ignorance of the FL grammar rules ☐

Difficult grammar rules ☐   Influence of the native language ☐

APPENDIX 2

Teachers' Interview

Dear teacher,

You are kindly invited to answer the questions for this interview. Your contribution will help with this research, thank you very much in advance.

Section One: General Information (Facultative)

1. What degree you have?

……………………………………………………………………………………….

2. How long have you been teaching written expression?

………………………………………………………………………………………

Section Two: About Written Production

3. What does good writing mean?

………………………………………………………………………………………………

………………………………………………………………………………………………

………………………………………………………………………………………..

4. Which writing approach you use the most? Please justify your answer.

   a. The Controlled-to-free Approach.

   b. The Free-Writing Approach.

   c. The Power Writing Approach.

   d. The Process Approach.

   e. The Genre Approach.

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……………………………………………………………………

5. What do you think of students' level in written expression?

……

………………………………………………………………………………………………….

6. While correcting and analyzing student's product what is the most important
    aspect you take into account (criteria of evaluation)?

……

……

……

Section Three: Students' Errors

7. What are the most common errors that foreign language students make?

……

……

……

8. In view of your experience what do you think the reasons that cause students'
    errors in writing?

……

……

9. Do you think students' native language affect their writing?

……...

• If yes, please explain.

………………………………………………………………………………………

………………………………………………………………………………………

……………………………………………………………………………………….

10. Does knowing the source of students' errors help and facilitate your correction

and analysis?

…………………………………………………………………………………………..

11. Do you point out to students' errors if they were transferred from their mother

tongue?

…………………………………………………………………………………………

………………………………………………………………..

12. What do you do to avoid first language interference?

…………………………………………………………………………………………

…………………………………………………………………………………………

………………………………………………………………….

13. Do you have any further suggestions?

…………………………………………………………………………………………

………………………………………………………………………………………...

....

APPENDIX 3

Students' short paragraphs

Suicide is a social dangerous and spread phenomena *on* which has increased recently raised between children and youth. It reflects many hard results behind the death and we must fight it to save many people's life. First, we should knowledge people about its results and make them aware from it and that by watching T.V programes which talk about this crime. Second, we have to show them how to avoid the suicidial thinking thinking and that to think positively, and that bad things do not stay forever, we can't forget that Islam is totally against this crime, suicidial ones goes to hell. Next, sad people should go to psychologists to help them, also speaking with some one who we loves or doing sports makes us more relaxed and comfortable. Finally, our lives doesn't deserve to kill it no matter what happens, so we have to love it and save it.

A lot of youth think that suicide is the best solution to end their problems and they choose it consciously considering that they will feel relaxed after doing such a crime, and because of the increase of this social phenomen we are attempting to do our best to change those horrible thoughts from their minds. For example we organized a religious Typhon to make them aware that suicide is quite haram: i.e. the one who commit suicide is going to hell, and at the same time make them afraide from Allah, then we collected some people who are disappointing from life and we try to help them and give them some peace of advice we told them that life doesn't worth to give such a big importance because all of us are going to die so why you suicide try to be happy optimist life actually needs people like you to be well builed well prospereous At least think of your parents they are waiting from you something good, great to be proud of you. After that we adviced them to see the good side of life and forget the bad one and try to

Child and youth suicide is a phenomena which started mentioned in our society. this kind of phenomenon has many and many causes, for example: the family problemes as a divorce, if the child don't get a good marks in the excams he or she fined suicide as the last solution .... etc.

to make child and youth suicide rates be reduced the first step is teach our children about the results of this phenomen and say to them that is haram. Nesct for the parents which they have problems must put thier children outside because the child can't accept if his parents divorced. As last step, we obliged to reduce this kind of suicide by fineding solutions.

Activity 2: write a comparison and contrast paragraph comparing between two things or people or places.

wrong!!

There are many beaches ~~that~~ attract the people in the summer which have a big vogue in America such as Florida and california beaches at first Florida beaches are very different to california beaches.

Beaches in the california have laggen ~~waves~~ due to the stronger ?? tidal action of the pacific Ocean. also, the sea drops away into deep water more quicker. that is a short walk and the swimmer has to start swimming to stay above the water. contrasting in Florida. the water is more warmer and calmer because the Atlantic ocean produce less wave action. contrary to california. the Florida beaches slope gently into the water.

A swimmer can walk farther before having to swim. the water also has life in it. a sharks. while a swimmer can encounter sharks in shallow water in both Florida and california. it happens oftener in Florida.

repetition

Similar like california beaches, Florida beaches have beautiful white sand which is perfect for sunbathing and sand castles. However, watch out for cars who lying on Florida beaches, where as cars are not permitted on several Florida Beaches. On the one hand, the sunrise is beautiful on florida beach. the sunset is beautiful on a california beach

not clear!!

Activity 2: write a comparison and contrast paragraph comparing between two things or people or places.

There are two distinctive tendencies in the history of Literature — classic and Romantic. In the history of english Literature the Elizabethan period may be called the First Romantic period dominated by Marlow, Shakespear and others, while in the later of eighteenth century, whose prominent poets were wordsworth, cohridge, scott Shelly was dominated by the romantic tendency and hence it's called the romantic period.

Classicism characterized by it's belief in reason, emphasion on the civilized, modern and sophisticated modes of life, interst in urban society, preoccupation with human nature, interst in scientifique method. On the other hand; Romanticism characterized by it's celebration of nature, beauty and imagination, emphasion on emotion and individualism; inclusion of supernatural, Idealism of woman, children and rurle life. Of course in those two periods many writers reaches the top in literature; for example; in classicism the famous writers that appeared in that period is: william shakespear, Seus per, Marlow whereas in Romantic period the most Known writers are: Jane Austen, Emily Broten william Black ...etc

Activity 2: write a comparison and contrast paragraph comparing between two things or people or places.

Social and Academic Languages

There is a difference between social and academic language. Social language involves chatting with friends hanging out and talking.

Academic language is more formal such as writting a business letter or interviewing for a job. sometimes the teacher uses academic language When he teaches a class, In comparison to social language, teachers may use their lunch time to chat with friends and colleagues. Students really like to use social language such as communicating on Facebook, Edmodo, VP and texting, students use academic language When they are in the classroom because it is more serious. there are similarities between academic and social language but more differences. As a conclusion When I'm with my friends I use social language In contrast When I'm in the classroom I'm more serious and I use academic language.

الملخص

معظم المتعلمين اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية يواجهون العديد من الصعوبات المتعلقة بكتابة الفقرات أو المقالات دون ارتكاب أي أخطاء نحوية. وعادة ما ترتبط هذه الأخطاء بتداخل اللغة الأم. تهدف هذه الدراسة الحالية إلى تسليط الضوء على ظاهرة نقل اللغة وتأثيرها المحتمل على أخطاء طلاب السنة الثانية في قسم اللغة الإنجليزية بجامعة بسكرة وبالإضافة إلى ذلك فإنها تهدف إلى تحديد ما إذا كان المتعلمين اللغة الإنجليزية يتأثرون باللغة الأم (العربية). ولتحقيق هذه الأهداف قمنا باستعمال طريقة وصفية. وقد استخدمنا هذه الأدوات الثلاثة في هذه العملية أجريت مقابلة مع خمسة اساتذة تعبير الكتابي من اللغة الإنجليزية في جامعة بسكرة ليطلب منهم رأيهم عن تدخل اللغة الأم ومستوى الطلاب في الكتابة. أيضا وقد أدار الاستبيان إلى ثمانين طالبا لمعرفة رأيهم حول الأخطاء الأكثر شيوعا وعلاوة على ذلك تم جمع 42 فقرة وتحليلها من أجل الكشف عن الأخطاء الأكثر شيوعا وأسبابه المحتملة. وتشير النتائج التي تم الحصول عليها إلى أن الطلاب يصنعون أنواعا مختلفة من الأخطاء النحوية بسبب تدخل لغتهم الأم. النتائج تؤكد هذه الفرضية. وأخيرا اقترحنا بعض التوصيات لكل من المعلمين والطلاب.