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Faculty of Letters and Languages

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Submitted and Defended by:

**Aida Belmehdi**

On:

**The Influence of EFL Learners' Standard Arabic Interference on their**

**Written Production: An Error Analysis Study on the Use of Articles**

**(a, an, the)**

Case Study of Third Year LMD English Students at Biskra University

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**Board of Examiners:**

**Dr. TRIKI Manel**

**MCB Biskra University**

**Chairperson**

**Mrs Messaouda**

**MAA Biskra University**

**Supervisor**

**BENDAHME**

**Dr. TURQUI Barket**

**MCB Biskra University**

**Examiner**

**Academic year 2019/2020**

## **Dedication**

*This work is dedicated to:*

*To my beloved grandmothers may Allah have mercy on them.*

*To my father and mother for their prayers, love and supports.*

*To my dear sisters and brother.*

*To my aunt Fatima and her husband Mabrouk for their constant love and support.*

*To my little nieces Meriem and Ghania.*

*To my dear friends with whom I shared the university life Bouzenag Chayma, Salhi Hadja Fatima, Belmehdi Romaiassa, Attafi Safia and Atrous Asma.*

*To my best friend's mother Saib Layla for her motivational words and love.*

*To all my relatives, family members, friends and teachers.*

*May Allah bless you all.*

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## **Abstract**

The current research aims to investigate the cause behind EFL learners' errors on using English Articles (the, a, an) in their written production, as well as developing their writings by overcoming these errors. The focus was mainly on standard Arabic transfer, therefore, it was hypothesized that third year EFL learners at university of Mohamed Khider Biskra misuse English Articles due to the interference of their standard Arabic. In order to check this, a test and questionnaire were administered to third year LMD students, whom were chosen based on the assumption of their mastering the grammar rules and the academic writing. The results showed that learners committed some errors during answering the tasks which are mainly due to standard Arabic transfer. And to confirm the test results, the questionnaire was given to 35 students in English division to ask them about the difficulties on using English Articles, the similarities and differences between standard Arabic and English Articles rules and the main causes that lead them to make errors when using English Articles in their writings. The results obtained have shown that students have some difficulties with English Articles rules. Moreover, they sometimes translate Articles to Arabic before using them; which affect their writings and lead them to make more errors.

## **List of Abbreviations**

**CA:** Contrastive Analysis

**CAH:** Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis

**EA:** Error Analysis

**EFL:** English Foreign Language

**i.e:** it means

**L1:** First Language, Native Language

**L2:** Second Language, Foreign Language

**SLA:** Second Language Acquisition

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## **General Introduction**

### **1. Background of the Research**

Language is an important tool for communication, through it, people can understand each other which facilitate the social life for them. However, the process of acquire a foreign language is not an easy task, thus, it requires many efforts and steps to master language by its grammar, vocabulary and spelling. Scholars in SLA have provided many analysis and approaches to simplify the learning process and make less errors in using foreign language. The main two approaches were contrastive analysis and error analysis. Contrastive analysis (CA) is systematic comparison of two languages, furthermore it sought to use formal distinction between the learners' first and second language to predict errors. Also it believed that language transfer is the only source of error; learners do make errors due to their mother tongue transfer, where they apply rules from their mother tongue in target language. Error analysis (EA) was a reaction to contrastive analysis and its concept about learners' errors. Error analysis states that language transfer is not only the source of error and attempted to highlightes another errors that contrastive analysis overlooked.

### **2. Statement of the Problem**

Writing skill is one of the productive skills in language learning it is less spontaneous but more permanent since it takes much time and concentrated practice. Making students produce a neat, organaised and error free piece of writing is the desire of EFL teachers who face numerous problems committed by learners that interrupt their EFL learning. . One of these problems is "Interference" which is regarded as the most common error committed by learners. It refers to the speakers or writers applying knowledge from their mother tongue to a second language or a foreign language. It occurs when the rules of L2 and L1 of the learner are conflicted with each other. Therefore, the difference between the two languages leads

learners to encounter significant difficulties in learning and applying foreign languages rules; especially when it comes to the writing process.

### **3. Aims of the study**

The main aim of this study is to develop students' writing skill and make them overcome mother tongue interference in their use of English articles.

The main objectives are:

- To highlight the impact of Arabic language on the writing skill in English.
- To identify the errors learners make in the use of English Articles in writing
- To determine the reliance of EFL learners at Biskra University on their L1 knowledge when using English Articles.

### **4. Research Questions**

- Why do learners use English Articles incorrectly in their written production?
- Why do EFL learners depend on negative transfer?
- Does mother tongue effect negatively EFL learners' written production?

### **5. Research Hypothesis**

Third year EFL learners at the university of Mohamed Khider Biskra misuse English Articles due to the interference of their standard Arabic.

### **6. Research Methodology**

The choice of the method has been determined by the nature of the study. This work adopted the descriptive method because it can determine the facts about the actual situation and thereby to clarify whether the misuse of articles is due to mother tongue transfer or is dictated by other factors.

## **6.1. Population and Sampling**

The population in this research is ten groups of Third year LMD students at English division at Mohamed Khider University for the academic year 2019/2020. Our sample includes 35 students who were randomly chosen from the whole population. The motive behind level selection is because we believe that third years students have an adequate level in writing as well as an acceptable level of proficiency since they have been already taught the essential grammatical structures and academic writing.

## **6.2. Data Gathering Tools**

In this study, we have relied on the use of a questionnaire to third year LMD students and a test in order to shed light on the students' problems regarding the misuse of articles when they write. Most importantly, we have used the questionnaire and the test in attempt to know the reasons behind this problem that we have previously assumed to be due to mother tongue transfer.

## **7. Structures of Dissertation**

The research is mainly divided into three chapters. The first two chapters will be devoted to tackle the theoretical data of the topic whereas the third chapter reports informations of the field work. The two theoretical chapters review literature on the main variables and each chapter consists of two sections. The first chapter tackles contrastive analysis (CA) and Error analysis (EA); section one in this chapter focuses CA and EA definition while section two discusses sources, classification and models of EA. The second chapter of the dissertation comprises also of two sections. The first section speaks about language transfer, and the second one highlights the use of English articles. The third chapter includes the field work where the data collection tools and procedures are presented alongside with the analysis and the interpretation of the results.

# **Chapter One: Contrastive Analysis and Error Analysis**

## **Introduction**

Learning English language has been the interest of people who want to progress in their studies or professional issues .However, this learning process requires time and efforts in order to develop the language skills (communication competence or written competence). Teachers attempt to facilitate the learning process by bringing and developing new tools of teaching and learning, but still the difficulties exist during the learning process.Many researchers in the field of education attempted to explain the causes behind learners in difficulties in learning second language ,thus, many explanations have been provided among them CA and EA.

Contrastive analysis and error analysis has a deep interrelationship and effect in the field of foreign language teaching and learning. Contrastive analysis (CA) investigates learners' errors in the field of SLA in which two languages were systematically compared. Error analysis emerged as reaction to CA and claims that mother tongue transfer is not the only source of learners' error. Error analysis brings to light many other sources which occur in the target language itself. Contrastive analysis and error analysis are a controversial subject in SLA, that every scholar has his point of view about both of them.

### **1.1.1 Contrastive Analysis (CA)**

#### **1.1.1.1 Definition of CA**

Contrastive analysis was a method pioneered in 1950s by Robert Lado in his book *Linguistics across Cultures* with the goal of examining similarities and differences between two languages to identify problem area for language learners. Contrastive analysis was widely utilized in the field of second language during the 1960s and mid 1970s, as a technique for clarifying why some features of a target language were difficult to acquire than others. As



indicated by the behaviorist theories, language learning was an issue of habit formation and this could be reinforced or impeded by existing habits. Thus, the problem in mastering a second language (L2) rules and structures relied upon the distinction between the students' mother language (L1) and the language they were intended to learn.

Keshavarz (2011) defines contrastive analysis in his book as “the systematic study of a pair of language in order to indentify their structural differences and similarities usually for translation and teaching purposes ” (p. 5). CA is a technique that compares features of L1 and L2 in order to determine the similarties and differences. Furthermore, it seeks toshed light on common points or differences between two languages thinkingly that if there is no familiar characteristics between the two languages, learners might have difficulties in learning target language.

Rutipa(2011) states that the goal of contarstive analysis is to make foreign language teaching more effective and to find out the contrast between two languages based on the assumption that foreign langauge learning is related to mother tongue. Accordingly, similarities would facilitate learning while differences would leads to problems. These problems can be predicted and considered in curriculum .Unfortunately, CA was unable to predict the majority of errors which ulimately lead to many criticisms.

### **1.1.1.2 Contrastive Analysis Criticism**

The contrastive analysis hypothesis asserted that all the errors made in learning the L2 could be ascribed to interference by the L1. However, this case could not be supported by observational proof that was amassed in the mid-and late 1970s. It was before long called attention to that numerous mistakes anticipated by CA were mysteriously not seen in students' language .Even more confusingly, some errors were made by students regardless of their L1.

CA could not foresee all learning difficulties, however was surely helpful in the review clarification of mistakes.

Different studies on second language learning proved that the first language habits are not alone responsible for all the mistakes a learner makes in second language. One of these studies was an empirical study undertaken by Randal Whitman and Kenneth Jackson (1972) (cited in Littlewood, 1984 as cited in Saidnazulfiqar, 2011). It used four different contrastive analyses of English and Japanese, in order to predict the errors that would be made by Japanese learners of English. They compared these predictions with the errors actually made by the learners in a series of tests. Their conclusion was that contrastive analysis was of little use in predicting the items which proved difficult in their tests.

Contrastive analysis was criticized for overemphasizing the role of interference as a source of errors, which is only one of them. In addition, the difficulties predicted by CA do not appear in the actual learner performance and the errors that occur in learners' performance are not predicted by CA. The errors made by learners are not always related to language, learners use overgeneralization of L2 rules for instance.

### **1.1.2 Error Analysis (EA)**

#### **1.1.2.1 Definition of Error Analysis**

Error analysis which was found by S.P. Corder (1967) as an alternative theory to contrastive analysis claims that rather than predicting learners' difficulties. These difficulties should be observed through a systematic study of learners' errors. According to Khanshir (2012, p. 1029) Error analysis is "a type of linguistic analysis that focuses on the errors learners make. It consists of a comparison between the errors made in target language and that

target language itself''. Error analysis is, thus, a technique to explain or interpret the errors made by SL/FL learners.

Crystal (1987) states that error analysis is a technique of identifying, classifying and systematically interpreting inappropriate forms produced by second language learners through any rules and principles theorized by the linguists.

According to James (1998) ‘‘error analysis is not branch of linguistic theory but of applied linguistics’’. Applied linguistics is a field that studies problems related to language and its learning and teaching. Error analysis is important to applied linguistic because it provides a deep insights for understanding the process of language learning. . Unlike contrastive analysis, Error analysis does not limit learners’ error to their mother tongue but associated them with both interlingual and intralingual error. Keshavrz (2012) states that the main focus of EA is put on the evidence that learners’ errors provide an understanding of the underlying process of second language acquisition.the prediction of the error help in the progression of the learning process, when the teachers can know their learners’ error; they will be able to solve or their gaps in the target language. Error analysis help teacher in understanding new techniques by giving feedback on the error made by learners.

Keshavrz (2012) claims aslo that using error analysis as ‘‘primary pedagogical tool’’ (p .59) was based on three arguments. The first argument is that error analysis does not attribute only source of errors to mother tongue; it brings to lights many other types of errors made by learners in second language. The second arguments error analysis provides proved problems not hypothetical which are effient in making pedagogical strategies design. The third argument maintains that error analysis is not confronted with complex theoretical problem.

Keshavarz (2003 as cited in Jabeen, 2015) indicates two branches of error analysis, namely; theoretical analysis of errors and applied error analysis. The former attempts to find the problems in language learning and examining the underlying structures that work in the process of language learning. And the later deals with designing material and remedial material for those problems that are spotted by the theoretical analysis to solve them.

Sridhar (1976) proposes set goals to applied error analysis:

- Determining how target language items are presented in textbook or classroom.
- Deciding the required emphasis, explanation and practice to certain items in the target language.
- Designing a remedial lessons, courses and practices.
- Selecting items for testing the learners' proficiency.

Corder (1973 as cited in James, 1998) states that there are four “order of application” of applied linguistics, and James (1998) emphasizes in two orders, describing language and comparing languages. Describing language, which is describing second language situation. This process of describing requires three “codes” for language to be described. First “language teaching calls for the description of language to be learnt” (James, 1998, p.3); it is describing the language that learners attempt to learn. Moreover determining its criteria and even learners' goals for paving the way to learning process to be more effective. The second code is “the learners' version of target language”; teachers' correction of what learners produce whether right or wrong, they required to describe learners' version in target language. The last code is the learners' mother tongue or L1. The native language of the learners should be described also.

Error analysis was criticized for “avoidance phenomena” (Schachter, 1974 as cited in Khansir, 2012). It means that learners avoid what is difficult; they overlook using certain

structures because they may get wrong .Hence; error analysis fails to dignose students errors due to this aviodance.

### **1.1.2.2 Significance of Learners' Errors**

Learners' errors have been subjects of debate in the linguistic field.They are significant because they provide evidence to the system of the language.They are unaviodable in the learning process; they, however, help in the progression of the target language courses. They also guide teacher in devising the courses for the learners and give them insight to use new techniques and methods depending in their learners' error. Corder (1981, p.10-11), here, views that learners are significant in three different ways:

First to the teacher, in that they tell him, if he undertakes a systematic analysis, how far towards the goal the learner has progressed and, consequently, what remains for him to learn. Second, they provide to the researcher evidence of how language is learnt or acquired what strategies and procedures the learners is employing in his descovery of the language. Thirdly, they are indispenable to the learner himself .....

### **1.1.2.3 Comparison between EA and CA**

Khansir and Hozhabri (2014) compared error analysis with contrastive analysis and identidy that error analysis considers that the errors learners make do not only resulted from the interference of mother tongue, but also it takes into consideration the universal strategies among learners with different native languages. Contrastive analysis, on the other hand, followed the behaviorist approach and limited the causes of errors am to the native language interferences while using the second language.

Khansir (2012) also makes a comparison between error analysis and contrastive analysis in some points. First he claims that contrastive analysis starts with indicating similarities and differences between two languages and predicts the errors that occur only due to mother tongue transfer, whereas error analysis is concerned with error in second language learning and studies them in the broader framework of their sources and significance. In another word, contrastive analysis studies interlingual errors and error analysis studies intralingual error besides interlingual. EA unlike CA provides data actual verified problems and evidence for a much more complex view of the learning process.

#### **1.1.2.4 Error vs Mistake**

According to Brown, in order to analyze a learner language, it is important to understand the distinction between errors and mistakes. A mistake refers to a performance error that is either a random guess or a slip, seeing as a failure to use a known system correctly. Mistakes can happen in both native and second language and are the result of some sort of temporary breakdown, hesitations, slip of the tongue, random ungrammaticalities, or imperfection in the process of producing speech and can be recognized and corrected by native speakers. However, errors are idiosyncrasies in the language of the learner. They are actually deviation from adult grammar of a native speaker. It shows the competence of the learner. Then mistakes are referred to performance errors in which the learner knows the system but fails to use it while errors are the result of one's systematic competence. It means that the learner's system is incorrect (Brown, 1993, p.205). Mistakes refer to error resulted by fatigue, lack of attention that both native speaker and second language learner make and student can selfcorrect, whereas errors are a lack of an underlying competence; occur when student has an incomplete knowledge of target language and can not selfcorrect.

Keshavarz (2008 as cited in UKessays) also noted that there is a distinction between errors and mistakes

Errors are rule governed, systematic in nature, internally principled and free from arbitrariness. They show learner's underlying knowledge of the target language that is his transitional competence. In contrast to errors, mistakes are random deviations and unrelated to any system. They are related to performance of the learner and might occur in the speech and writing like slip of the tongue, slip of the ear, slip of the pen, and false start.

Errors reflect learners' underlying knowledge of the target language that learners can not take selfcorrect action because of his incomplete competence to the acquired language .However , mistakes are related to performance of the learnerthat can occur in speaking and writing due to slips of tongue , lack of concentration ....etc can be corrected by learner himself.

### **1.2.3 Sources and Causes of Errors**

#### **1.2.3.1 Interlingual Errors**

Contrastive analysis has already established that the major cause of error in learners' performance is interference of learners' mother tongue .That is, learners make transfer of elements from their mother tongue in their performance in target language .Langauge transfer can be positive or negative; it is positive when the structure of L1 and L2 are the same which facilitate the learning process and results in a correct production of the target language. It is negative when different structres of both languages interfere with the learning of target.

Lado (1964) refers to interference as “the negative influence of the mother tongue (L1) on the performance of the target language (L2)” i. e. it is the transfer of the linguistic features

between languages. Interference was a debatable issue therefore it was studied in the two mentioned theories of analysis.

Another researcher Al-Khresheh (2010) claims that interlingual errors are committed as result to literal translation.

- 1) Transfer errors refer to error that caused by interference from mother tongue . A learner who has incomplete knowledge of the target language rules ; he will use the same rules as he obtained in his mother tongue
- 2) Mother tongue interference ; errors are produced in the learners' attempt to discover the structure of the target language rather than transferring models of their first language
- 3) Literal translation refers to errors resulted from learners translation of his first language sentences or idiomatic expression into the target language word by word

### **1.2.3.2 Intralingual Errors**

Negative transfer from mother tongue is not the only source of error; learners may still make errors in the target language structure and rules. According to Richard (1974), intralingual errors contain four categories of errors: overgeneralization, ignorance of rule restriction, incomplete application of rules and false concept hypothesized or semantic errors.

## **2.1 Overgeneralization**

Overgeneralization occurs when learners apply a certain rule in language learning process to all cases when there are different rules to be applied. It was defined by Ellis (1994, p.59) as



errors which “arise when the learner creates a deviate structure on the basis of other structure in the target language”. The learner overgeneralizes certain rule that he recently acquired from the target language to be used to all situation. For instance, when the learner learns the past form in the English language is made by adding “ed” to the verb, he is more likely to apply this rule the irregukar verbs as well andwrites « gived » instead of « gave ».

Richard (1974) states that there are two reasons of overgeneralization errors. First, learners’ create one deviant structure in place of two regular structures .such as “He will comes” instad of “He will come”, there is an over form of a structure verb come becomes comes. Second reason is the result of L2 learners’ attmpts to decrease or reduce their linguistict burden (as cited in Al-Khresheh, 2016).

## **1.2 Ignorance of Rule Restriction**

This kind of errors is closely related to overgeneralization where the learners fail to obey or observe the restriction of certain structures. According to Richard (1974), ignorance of rule restriction is the unability to keep the limits of the present formation, particularly administering rules to inappropriate situation. For example misordering the sentence structure or put a language structure in an inappropriate place such as who put with things in stead of person.

## **2.3 Incomplete Application of the Rule**

Incomplete application of errors refers to errors that occur when learners fail to develop a complete structure of target language. Richard (1974) points out that L2 learners attempt to apply certain rules and continue to construct deviant forms in order to ease their learning.The

good example of this kind of errors is question formation ; learners usually disorder question structure , such as when they say “you like the house?” instead of “do you like the house?”.

## **2.4 False Concept Hypothesized**

This type of error is resulted from incorrect understanding of some rules, i.e learners fail to comprehend a distinction in the target language items, and they start to form hypotheses about L2 rules. For example learners think that “is” is the marker of present, so they produce “he is talk”. Al-Tammi (2006:44) identifies that false concept hypothesized is a result of “poor gradation of teaching items”.

### **1.2.4 Classification of Errors**

In Dulay, Burt, Krashen, Ellis and Barkhuizen (2005, p.61 as cited in Limengka and Kuntjara (n.d)); four categories were proposed to explain how sentences deviate from the correct forms because the learners change the surface structure. Those categories are:

#### **4.1 Addition**

It is the existence of an unwanted items in sentences, because the overuse of certain grammatical rules by the learners. These unwanted items do not appear in a well-formed utterance, for example, he didn't to come instead of he didn't come. Dulay, Brut and Khrashen (as cited in James, 1998) suggest three subtypes of addition. First, regularization and irregularization; the former means the ignorance of exception, overlook that some verbs may change when it is conjugated in past, like “buy” it is bought not buyed. The latter occurs when “productive process” such as affixation is not applied. Second subtype is double marking which is defined by James as “failure to delete certain items which are required in

some linguistic constructions but not others ” (p, 107). Double marking is adding items that is needed in some situation but others not such as “he doesn’t knows ”. Third subtype is simple addition which is all addition not describable as double marking or regularization.

## **4.2 Omission**

It is the absence of certain items that must be found in sentences, this usually happens in the early stages in second language acquisition. Example: my sister very pretty instead of my sister is very pretty. James (1998, p .106) makes a clear distinction between omission and ellipsis; he defines the former as “the elements which are allowed by the grammar” and the latter as a “ungrammatical” which affect the learning process of the target language.

## **4.3 Misformation**

It is the use of a wrong form of certain morphemes or structures .Eg: Me don’t like (correction is I don’t like).Again Dulay et al (2005) assign three subtypes of misformation (James, 1998). Misselection is the first subtype of misformation, which means the selection of one element of forms to represent the other elements. Like using That to represent others (those / these/ this) the learners here misselect by using one elements in all situations.Second subtypes is regularization wchich is aslo subtype in addition as have been mentioned before.The last subtype is alternating forms.

## **4.4 Misordering**

It is the incorrect placement of certain morphemes. Eg: she fights all the time her brother (the correction is she fights her brother all the time). Dulay et al (2005) see that misordering is resulted from word for word translation of native language .Indeed, the two laguages have

different rules and structures; so, learners by translating word for word may fall in misordering of the sentence structure.

## **4.5 Blends**

It occurs when two or more morphemes that have the same function appear in a sentence. Eg: the only one thing I want (correction the only thing I want). James (1998) states that the situation where the learners are undecided about two targets that he has in mind, the type of error is called blends.

These classifications of error that was explained by Dulay et al (2005) indicate the four categories of errors that learners make in attempting to form a sentence in target language.

### **1.2.5 Steps of Error Analysis**

Corder (1974 as cited in Alberto, 2007) proposes five steps in error analysis research, which are:

- Collection of a sample of learner language: Alberto (2007) states that the first point in error analysis is the collection of a sample of learner language. 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. There are three type of sampling :
- The first type is massive sampling which is concerned with collecting a several samples of language that is used from a larg number of learners for compiling a comprehensive list of learners, representative of the entire population. A specific sample contains one sample of language used, collected from a limited number of

learners. The last type is the incidental sample uses only one sample of language provided to a single learner.

- Identification of errors: Once a corpus of learner language has been collected, the errors have to be identified. Therefore, it is necessary to know how to identify them. Indeed, the identification of errors depends on showing the differences between "errors" and "mistakes or slips". An error is made when the deviation arises as a result of lack of knowledge while a mistake or slip occurs when learners fail to perform to their competence in the target language. Normally, a mistake or slip is immediately corrected by the learner. Also to identify the learner's errors, interpretation of learner's utterance is necessary. Alberto (2007) proposes two kind of interpretation "overt and covert. The former is easy to identify because there is a clear deviation in form (She selled her car) and the latter occurs in utterances that are syntactically and semantically well-formed but pragmatically odd (Where do you go?)" .the errors are identified when there is a clear distinguish between mistake and error and the utterance of the learners is well- comprehended.
- Discription of error: The description of learner errors involves a comparison of the learner's idiosyncratic utterances with a reconstruction of those utterances in the target language. Corder (1973 as cited in Alkhresheh, 2016) classifies FL learners' errors in terms of differences between their utterance and reconstructed version.
- Explanation of errors: the explanation of errors is the investigation of how and why learners commit error, misuse or ignore certain rules of target language.
- Evaluation of errors Error evaluation studies proliferated in the late 1970s and in the 1980s. In these studies, judgments were based on three basic categories: comprehensibility, seriousness and naturalness of the grammar and the lexis (Alberto, 2007).

## **Conclusion**

As conclusion to this chapter, contrastive analysis and error analysis were the centers of concern in SLA field. Contrastive analysis failed to predict a great majority of errors due to its limitation of the errors' source which is mother tongue transfer and neglect the errors that occur in the target language. Error analysis reacted to this approach by setting a group of sources, and even gives classification to errors and steps. Additionally, it sheds the light on the significance of learners' errors and how they contribute in development of the learning process. However, the errors help the teacher to evaluate his way of teaching and use a new techniques. EA also proposed a set of procedures to be followed by teacher or researcher to analyze learners' errors. To conclude, SLA approaches like contrastive analysis and error analysis; they help in teaching and learning target language.

## **Chapter Two: Language Transfer and English Articles**

### **Introduction**

Students face numerous types of problems when learning a second language, which can disrupt the learning process, such as language transfer. The subject of language transfer has been a focus of SLA interest for decades. Historically contrastive analysis was the approach that asserted language transfer as the essential source of error. Language transfer takes place when learners adopt the rules of mother tongue to deal with target language situation due to unfamiliarity with new acquired rules of the target language ; it was a controversial topic that scholars attempted to studied and develop tools to decrease problems that learners encounter due to it.

#### **2.1.1 Language Transfer**

Interference means that learners interfere rules of their first language within the language they tend to acquire. Lado (1964) refers to interference as “the negative influence of the mother tongue (L1) on the performance of the target language (L2)” i. e. it is the transfer of the linguistic features between languages. Language transfer is the impact of the existence knowledge and skills of learners on the new acquired knowledge and skills during the learning process.

Language transfer is divided into two types:

Positive transfer which occurs when the rules of L1 and L2 are the same and it does not affect the learning process. It facilitates the learning process for the learners. Negative transfer is also known as language interference where the rules of

L1 and L2 interfere with each other during the learning process; Saville-Troike (2006:200) defines language interference as the inappropriate impact of L1 rules on L2 use.

### **2.1.2 Interlanguage Theory**

The contrastive analysis hypothesis (CAH) concentrated on L1's effect on the new L2 system and highlighted the similarities and differences between L1 and L2. The interlanguage theory, which is a reaction to the CAH, mainly views second language learning as an inventive process of developing a system in which the learner purposefully tests hypotheses about the target language from a number of possible sources of knowledge (Brown, 1980)

The term 'interlanguage' was first used by Selinker in 1969 in reference to "the interim grammars constructed by second-language learners in their way to the target language" (McLaughlin 1987, p. 60).

According to Selinker, interlanguage is a separate linguistic system which results from the attempted development of the target language standard by the learner (McLaughlin 1987). McLaughlin (1987, p. 61) also expresses Selinker's conviction that interlanguage was "the product of five central cognitive processes involved in second-language learning": language transfer (mother tongue transfer); transfer of training, which means some features transferred from the training process. Strategies of second-language learning, i.e. an approach to the material taught. Strategies of second-language communication, which are those ways learners use to communicate with L2 speakers. And the last cognitive process is overgeneralization of the target language linguistic material.

Selinker also claimed that the development of interlanguage differs from the development of the first language due to the likelihood of fossilization in the second language



Fossilization can basically be defined as the state when the interlanguage of a learner no longer develops, regardless of how long the learner is exposed to the target language.

Corder defines interlanguage as “a system that has a structurally intermediate status between the native and target language”. In his opinion, every L2 learner creates an interlanguage which is unique to this individual and he called this phenomenon ‘idiosyncratic dialect’ (Brown 1980, p. 163). He emphasized the importance of errors as a source of information and asserted that “the presence of error in the output of a learner was indication that the learner organized the knowledge at a particular point in time available to him.

### **2.1.3 Factors that affect Language Transfer**

Aisong Yi in his article (2012) determines six factors that affect language transfer.

- Linguistic factors: in this factor Yi speaks about two significant terms. Linguistic distance; the linguistic differences between L1 and L2 which create difficulties in the acquisition of L2. Second term is the language universal (markedness) , Ellis(1994 as cited in Yi, 2012) suggests that the transferability of different features depends of their degree of markedness , which according to him means the idea that some linguistic structure are special or less natural or less basic than other.
- Psycholinguistic factors: Kellerman is among the first to address the psychological aspect of L1 transfer, he demonstrate that native speaker intuition about semantic space can be used to predict transferability.
- Sociolinguistic factors: it is necessary to take into consideration both internal and external norms that learners need to conform in various contexts.
- Social-psychological factors: Kasper and Faerch (1987 as cited in Yi ,2012) have proposed three social-psychological factors which lead L2 speaker not to produce as correct a variety of their IL(intermediate language) as possible in given situation. The

first is group solidarity which is resulted from divergent behaviour because of a desire to distance oneself from one's interlocutor; it focuses in individual's social-psychological features which differ from one another. The second is foreigner role that is meant to protect speakers from being judged on the basis of the native speaker norms and expectation. The third is marking origin which is defined by Yi as "it occurs when commodities originating in one culture are being transposed to different cultures" (2013, p.2374). This types of socio-psychological factors that leads to language transfer occurs when values or norms that is originated in one culture is reversed to a different cultures.

- Individual difference in term of personality: individuals possess different personalities and this difference may increase or decrease the transfer.
- Developmental factors: In these factors Yi (2012) mentions some scholars' points of view about in which stage transfer occurs, Corder (1978) claims that negative transfer is more evident at the beginning stages whereas Ellis (1994) says that errors that are influenced by L1 come out at later stages of development.

#### **2.2.4 Definition and Types of English Articles**

An article is a word used to modify a noun, which is a person, place, object, or idea. Technically, an article is an adjective, which is any word that modifies a noun. Usually adjectives modify nouns through description, but articles are used instead to point out or refer to nouns (What Are Articles in English Grammar? - Definition, Use & Examples, n .d)

There are two different types of articles that we use in writing and conversation to point out or refer to a noun or group of nouns: definite and indefinite articles.

- Definite article "The" is used to refer to a specific or particular member of a group

- Indefinite articles “a” and “an” which are used to refer to a non-specific member of a group.

### **2.2.5 The usage of English Articles**

English Articles have certain rules in their usage that they are determined in Beckwith's article (2011). We use a or an with singular countable nouns when the listener or reader will not know which person or thing the speaker is talking about. However we use “the” when the listener or reader will know which person or thing the speaker is talking about.

A common noun in the singular number always requires an article before it. But a plural common noun does not require an article always. A plural common noun can have the article ‘the’ if we want to particularise that noun.

The choice between the two indefinite articles – a & an – is determined by sound. Words beginning with consonant sounds proceed ‘a’ and words beginning with vowel sounds proceed ‘an’. There are some special cases also.

‘The’ is used to indicate a particular person(s) or thing(s) in the case of common nouns. Proper nouns generally do not take an article. Using ‘the’ with geographical nouns generally depends on the size and plurality of the things those nouns refer to. ‘The’ is generally used everywhere except some cases (Rules of using Articles with Examples .n.d).

### **5.1 The usage of the Definite Article “the”**

The term "the" is one of the most frequent words in English. Nouns in English are followed by the definite article when the speaker believes that the listener already knows what he is referring to. The speaker may believe this for many different reasons, some of which are listed below (Resources for learning English)

- **When to use “the”**

-Use “the” to refer to something which has already been mentioned.

Eg: There is position available in my team. The position will involve some international travel.

-Use “the” when you assume there is just one of something in that place, even if it has not been mentioned before. Eg: My father enjoyed the book you gave him.

-Use “the” to refer to people or objects that are unique. Eg: The sun, the moon, the world, the sky.....etc.

-Use “the” before superlatives and ordinal numbers. Eg: This is the highest building in New York.

-Use “the” with adjectives, to refer to a whole group of people. Eg: The French enjoy the cheese.

-Use “the” with decades. Eg: This is a painting from the 1820’s.

-Use “the” with clauses introduced by “only”. Eg: This is the only day we have sunshine all the week.

-Use “the” with names of geographical areas, rivers, mountain ranges, groups of islands, canals, and oceans. Eg: The Nile, the Atlantic, the Rocky mountains .....etc.

-Use “the” with countries that include the words "republic", "kingdom", or "states" in their names. Eg: the United Kingdom, the Republic of Ireland, the United States .....etc.

-Use “the” with newspaper names. Eg: the New York Times.

-Use “the” with the names of famous buildings, works of art, museums, or monuments. Eg: the Eiffel Tower, the Mona Lisa ..... Etc.

-Use “the” with the names of hotels & restaurants, unless these are named after a person. Eg: we ate at the Golden Lion.

-Use “the” with the names of families, but not with the names of individuals. Eg : the Smiths.

- **When not to use “the”**

- Do not use “the” with names of countries (except for the special cases above). Eg : Germany, France, Italy.....etc.

- Do not use “the” with the names of languages. Eg: English, Arabic, French.....etc.

-Do not use “the” with the names of meals. Eg: Lunch, breakfast.....etc.

-Do not use“the” with people's names. Ahmed, John .....etc.

- Do not use“the” after the’s possessive case. Eg: His brother’s car was stolen.

- Do not use“the” with professions. Eg: medicine, engineering.....etc.

- Do not use“the” with years. Eg: 1948, 1960

- Do not use“the” with uncountable nouns. Eg: rice, sugar, butter, water.....etc.

- Do not use“the” with most names of towns, streets, stations, airports the names of individual mountains, lakes and islands.Eg: can you direct me to Bond street ?

## **5.2 The Usage of the Indefinite Articles “a & an”**

We use “a” before a consonant sound. Eg : cat, car, book .....etc. It is the consonant sound which is important, not the spelling. Eg : “University” begins with a vowel letter, but it is a consonant sound. So we use “a” .And we use “an” before vowel sound.Eg : office, animal .....etc. It is the vowel sound which is important, not the spelling. Eg : “hour” begins with a consonant letter, but it is a vowel sound. So we use “an” (Indefinite Articles “a” and “an”. n.d).

The indefinite article is used to refer to something for the first time or to refer to a particular member of a group or class. Some use cases and examples are given below (Resources for learning English).

- **When to use “a & an”**

- Use “a & an” to refer to something for the first time. Eg: Would you like a drink?
- Use “a & an” with nationalities and religions in the singular. Eg: an Englishman, a Catholic.
- Use “a & an” with the names of days of the week when not referring to any particular day. Eg: Could come over a Saturday sometimes?
- Use “a & an” with singular nouns after the words 'what' and 'such'. Eg: what a shame!
- Use “a & an” referring to a single object or person, or a single unit of measure. Eg: I need a kilogram of sugar (one kilogram of sugar).

- **When not to use “a & an”**

- Indefinite articles should not be practiced twice for the same noun in the same sentence.

Eg : Wrong – Alex is a cricketer and a hero.

Correct – Alex is *a* cricketer and hero.

- Indefinite article a and an should not be used before the name of meals.

Eg : Wrong – Charles was present at a lunch.

Correct – Charles was present at lunch.

- A or An should not be used before material noun (objects like steel, toy etc.).

Eg : Wrong – It is a rubber so it can not be broken easily.

Correct – It is rubber so it can not be broken easily.

But we must use Indefinite article before a countable expression.

Wrong – Bring bottle of milk.

Correct – Bring a bottle of milk.

-No use of article is there after what kind of and what sort of.

Eg : Wrong – What type of a girl she is.

Correct – What type of girl she is.

- Some nouns are uncountable so we should not use indefinite article or number before them.

For Example : Furniture, Stationery, Poetry, Damage, Luggage, Postage, Traffic, Offspring, Information, Advice, Abuse, Telephone (5 Omission Rules for Indefinite Articles.n.d)

## 2.2.6 The Usage of Standard Arabic Articles

The definite article in Arabic is formed by adding the prefix “al” to the noun, “al” is equal to “the” in English and it should be connected to the noun. Examples: the boy = al walad الولد, the girl = al bent, البنت the house = al bait.البيت

The definite article “al, ال” is not all the time pronounced as “al”, the “al” would be pronounced as “a” instead of “al” if it precedes one of the following letters: (t - ت , th- ث , d - د , dh- ذ , r- ر , z- ز , s- س , sh- ش , s- ص , d-ض , t - ط , z-ظ , n- ن )

This process is called assimilation. An easy way to make the pronunciation easier, just like the way English does with the indefinite article “a” (a book, but an eagle).

The sky = assamaa السماء (instead of alsamaa) because sky =samaa سماء starts with a (s س which is part of the letters above).

The moon = alqamar القمر , since the letter q ق is not in the list above we can always use the full “al” with it(Speak-learn Arabic).

Ibnulyemen إِبْنُ الْيَمَنِ (2017) states that

The Noun الاسم alism in Arabic, any noun that is derived from the verb, can be either Indefinite نَكْرَةٌ nakirah or Definite مَعْرِفَةٌ ma‘rifah. The Indefinite النَّكْرَةُ an-nakirah is almost always changeable to Definite following to two morphological rules. Not every Definite, however, is changeable to Indefinite. That is, there are certain nouns that exist only in the Definite form, i.e. not back-formed to Indefinite.

The definite article is prefixed to a noun to make it definite. This definite article is اَلْ, and it is the same for both masculine, feminine and plural. However, a noun is indefinite by the absence of the definite\_article; there is no indefinite article in Arabic as in English. So, there is no equivalent for “a”.

A very important rule in Arabic is المضاف والمضاف إليه Al-mudhaf wa-al-mudhaf ilaihu. This is used to denote the passive like in the book of the man is translated as كتاب الرجلِ kitaab ar-radjuli. According to the Arabic grammarians, book is made definite by the man so it doesn't need a definite article (Arabic Article.n.d).



## **Conclusion**

As conclusion to this chapter, language transfer is one of the debatable subjects in SLA, which occurs when learners apply rules from their mother tongue in English. Thus, it affects their writings either in negative way, when the rules of L1 and L2 interfere with each other. Or in positive way, when the rules of the two languages are the same, which simplify the learning process for them. Language transfer can be affected also by some features like linguistic features. Furthermore, this chapter highlights English articles (the, a, an) which is a word used to modify a noun, the usage of every article and the usage of standard Arabic articles, in order to display the differences between the two languages and how the transfer occurs as a result of carelessness to these differences on the use of English Articles.

## **Chapter Three: The Field Work**

### **Introduction**

This chapter represents the fieldwork of our dissertation. It endeavours to present a clear account of the research methodology including the population, the tools of investigation as well as data analysis and discussion. In this chapter, we aim to investigate the cause behind EFL learners' misuse of English articles in their written production. We have hypothesised that EFL learners misuse English articles due to their mother tongue transfer.

### **1. Research Design**

#### **1.1. Research Method**

The choice of the method has been determined by the nature of the study. This work adopted the descriptive method because it can determine the facts about the actual situation and thereby to clarify whether the misuse of articles is due to mother tongue transfer or is dictated by other factors.

#### **1.2. Population and Sampling**

The population in this research is ten groups of Third year LMD students at English division at Mohamed Khider University for the academic year 2019/2020. Our sample includes 35 students who were randomly chosen from the whole population. The motive behind level selection is because we believe that third years students have an adequate level in writing as well as an acceptable level of proficiency since they have been already taught the essential grammatical structures and academic writing.

#### **1.3. Data Gathering Tools**

In this study, we have relied on the use of a questionnaire to third year LMD students, a test and a corpus analysis of their writing in order to shed light on the students' problems

regarding the misuse of articles when they write. Most importantly, we have used the questionnaire and the test in attempt to know the reasons behind this problem that we have previously assumed to be due to mother tongue transfer.

## **2. Limitation of Study**

The study faced some problems that affected its fulfilments and its results. The most important one is the case of corona virus that led to close all the universities, libraries, cybercafe shops.....etc. Due to this case, we could not do the corpus analysis of the research, and we could not get more participants for answering the test (only 15 students). Also lack of books and the internet connection; all these problems affected the accomplishment and the validity of the research.

## **3. Description of the Test**

The test was organized to third-year LMD students. It is composed of two tasks. The first task consists of eight sentences where the students are asked to fill the gaps with the right Article. The second task is a kind of paragraph with 12 gaps that students are requested to fill it with the right Article. The aim behind using the test is to see whether EFL learners depend on their standard Arabic in answering the tasks or not.

## **4. Analysis of the Test**

### **Task 1:**

**Sentence 1: Excuse me, where is (the) swimming pool of the hotel?**

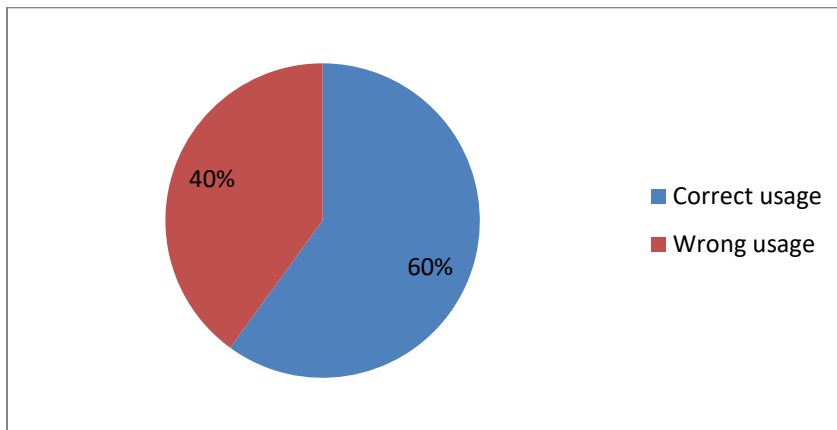
Articles	The	A	An	Total
Students' answer	9	5	1	15

Percentage	60%	33.33%	6.66%	100%
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**Table 1: The Usage of English Articles in the First Sentence.**

Sentence 1	Correct usage	Wrong usage	Total
Students' answer	9	6	15
Percentage	60%	40%	100%

**Table 2: Correct vs Wrong Usage of Articles in the First Sentence.**



**Figure 1 : Correct vs Wrong Usage of Articles in the First Sentence.**

60% of the students answered with the correct Article “the”, yet 40% inserted the wrong answer (a, an), and this is due to interference of the standard Arabic which is translated to “masbah elfondok” without using “the”.

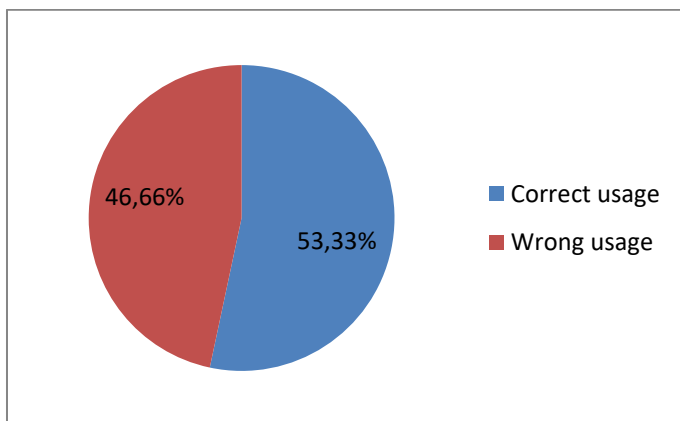
**Sentence 2: My mother bought (an) umbrella yesterday.**

Articles	The	A	An	Total
Students' answer	1	6	8	15
Percentage	6.66%	40%	53.33%	100%

**Table 3: The Usage of English Articles in the Second Sentence.**

Sentence 2	Correct usage	Wrong usage	Total
Students' answer	8	7	15
Percentage	53.33%	46.66%	100%

**Table 4: Correct vs Wrong Usage of Articles in the Second Sentence.**



**Figure 2 : Correct vs Wrong Usage of Articles in the Second Sentence.**

In the second sentence 53.33% of the students used the correct usage (An), because the word “umbrella” start with vowel .However, 46.66% of the students answered wrong and instead of “an” and they used “a”. Students still get confused on the usage of A and An.

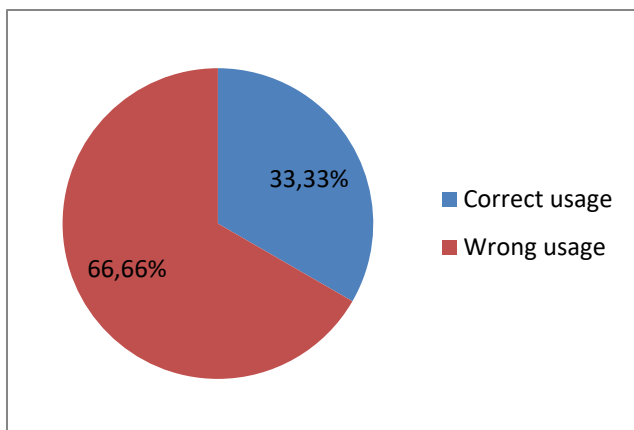
**Sentence 3: I would like to have (a) hundered dollars.**

Articles	The	A	An	Total
Students' answer	0	5	10	15
Percentage	0%	33.33%	66.66%	100%

**Table 5: The Usage of English Articles in the Third Sentence.**

Sentence 3	Correct usage	Wrong usage	Total
Number	5	10	15
Percentage	33.33%	66.66%	100%

**Table 6: Correct vs Wrong Usage of Articles in the Third Sentence.**



**Figure 3 : Correct vs Wrong Usage of Articles in the Third Sentence.**

In the third sentence, only 5 students responded with the correct answer (a). In contrast, 66.66% of the students used the wrong Article (an); this is due to the confusion on the usage A and An. Which indicates the majority of the students do not know that A and An follow the sound not the letter (if H was silent, we use an).

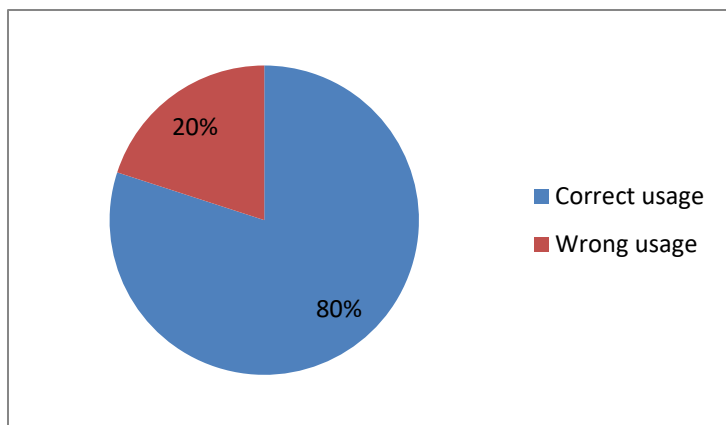
**Sentence 4: The last time I was in London I went on a boat on (the) Thames.**

Articles	The	A	An	Total
Students' answer	12	3	0	15
Percentage	80%	20%	0%	100%

**Table 7: The Usage of English Articles in the Fourth Sentence.**

Sentence 4	Correct usage	Wrong usage	Total
Students' answer	12	3	15
Percentage	80%	20%	100%

**Table 8: Correct vs Wrong Usage of Articles in the Fourth Sentence.**



**Figure 4 : Correct vs Wrong Usage of Articles in the Fourth Sentence.**

In the fourth sentence, 80% of the students inserted with the correct Article “the” since it is used also in standard Arabic “al” with the noun of the rivers (positive transfer). However, 20% of them used the wrong Article.

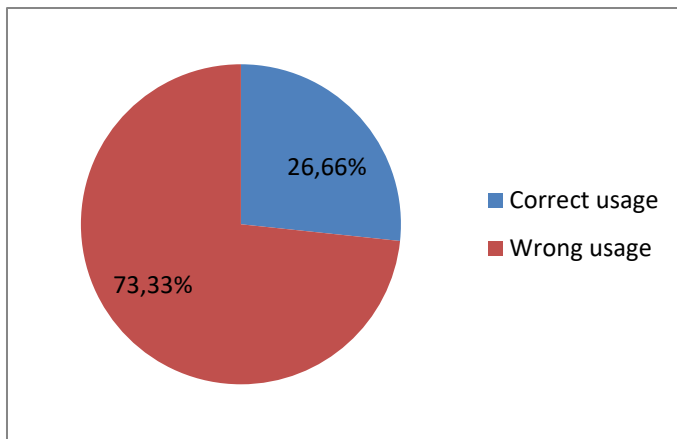
**Sentence 5: I went to (the) central bank.**

Articles	The	A	An	Total
Students’ answer	4	11	0	15
Percentage	26.66%	73.33%	0%	100%

**Table 9: The Usage of English Articles in the Fifth Sentence.**

Sentence 5	Correct usage	Wrong usage	Total
Students’ answer	4	11	15
Percentage	26.66%	73.33%	100%

**Table 10: Correct vs Wrong Usage of Articles in the Fifth Sentence.**



**Figure 5 : Correct vs Wrong Usage of Articles in the Fifth Sentence.**

In this sentence only 4 students gave the correct answer. Yet, 73.33% of them gave the wrong answer. As result , it is clear that students do not know the rule of using definite article with adjective “central” that describe a specific noun like “bank”.

**Sentence 6: He goes to (a) university in California.**

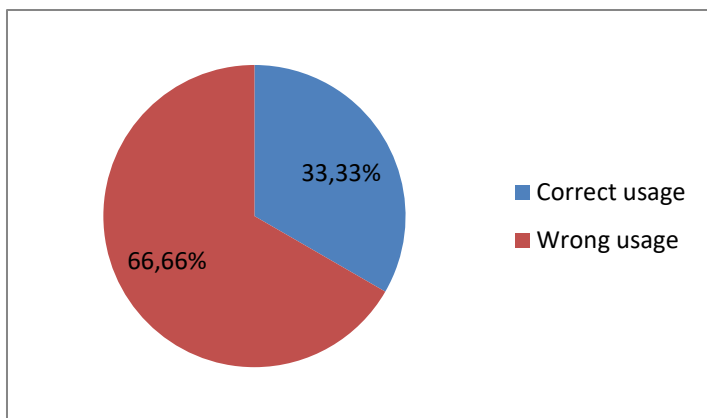
Articles	The	A	An	Total
Students' answer	3	2	10	15
Percentage	20%	13.33%	66.66%	100%

**Table 11: The Usage of English Articles in the Sixth Sentence.**

Sentence 6	Correct usage	Wrong usage	Total
Students' answer	2	13	15
Percentage	33.33%	66.66%	100%

**Table 12: Correct vs Wrong Usage of Articles in the Sixth Sentence.**





**Figure 6 : Correct vs Wrong Usage of Articles in the Sixth Sentence.**

In the sixth sentence; only 2 students (33.33%) put the correct article. Whereas, 13 students (66.66%) put the wrong Article (an) which indicates that students still get confused on using A and An.

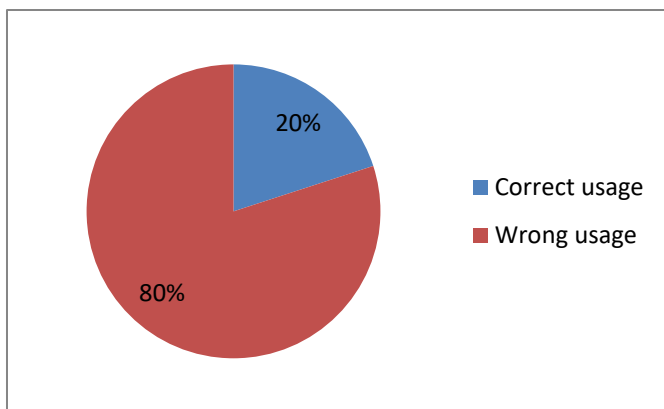
**Sentence 7: I'll pick you up at (the) train station.**

Articles	The	A	An	Total
Students' answer	3	12	0	15
Percentage	20%	80%	0%	100%

**Table 13: The Usage of English Articles in the Seventh Sentence.**

Sentence 7	Correct usage	Wrong usage	Total
Students' answer	3	12	15
Percentage	20%	80%	100%

**Table 14: Correct vs Wrong Usage of Articles in the Seventh Sentence.**



**Figure 7 : Correct vs Wrong Usage of Articles in the Seventh Sentence.**

In this sentence only 3 students (20%) gave the correct answer. Yet, 12 students responded with the wrong answer ; and this due to the negative transfer of the standard Arabic while using English Articles, in standard Arabic translated like « mahatat elkitar » without using Arabic definite Article “al”. This shows the occurrence of the negative transfer during the task.

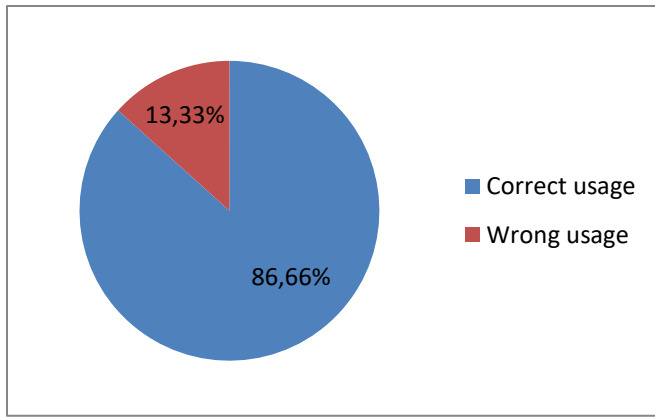
**Sentence 8: I do not understand (the) of the song.**

Articles	The	A	An	Total
Students' answer	13	2	0	15
Percentage	86.66%	13.33%	0%	100%

**Table 15: The Usage of English Articles in the Eighth Sentence.**

Sentence 8	Correct usage	Wrong usage	Total
Students' answer	13	20	15
Percentage	86.66%	13.33%	100%

**Table 16: Correct vs Wrong Usage of Articles in the Eighth Sentence.**



**Figure 8 : Correct vs Wrong Usage of Articles in the Eighth Sentence.**

In the eighth sentence, 13 students (86.66%) inserted with the correct Article “the” since it has the same use in standard Arabic “al” with a specific or particular thing (positive transfer). However, 2 students (13.33%) used the wrong Article.

## **Task 2:**

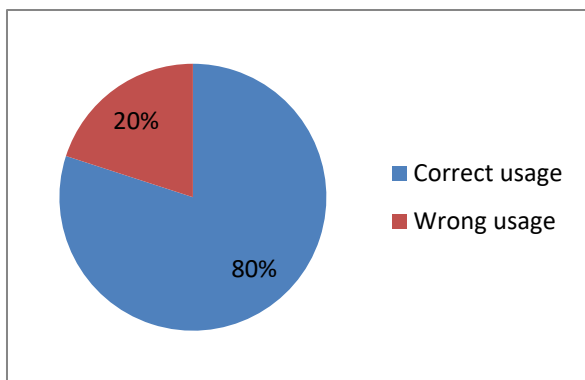
### **Gap 1: Ms Parrot (the) most famous lady detective**

Articles	The	A	An	Total
Students' answer	12	3	0	15
Percentage	80%	20%	0%	100%

**Table 17: The Usage of English Articles in the First Gap.**

Gap 1	Correct usage	Wrong usage	Total
Students' answer	12	3	15
Percentage	80%	20%	100%

**Table 18: Correct vs Wrong Usage of Articles in the First Gap.**



**Figure 9 : Correct vs Wrong Usage of Articles in the First Gap.**

In the first gap in the paragraph, 12 students (80%) answered with correct Article, since there is superlative adjective in the sentence. However, only 3 students (20%) answered with wrong Article. The result indicates that students know the rule of using “the” with superlative form or they transferred positively the rule to their mother tongue; since it has the same rule as English “el aktar chohra”.

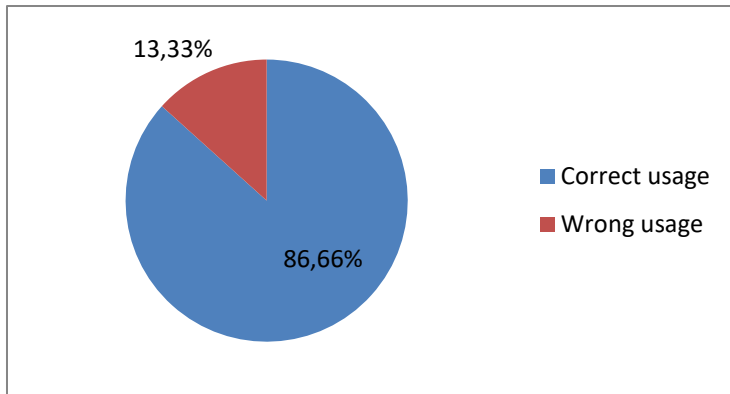
**Gap 2: of (the) twenty-first century**

Articles	The	A	An	Total
Students' answer	13	2	0	15
Percentage	86.66%	13.33%	0%	100%

**Table 19: The Usage of English Articles in the Second Gap.**

Gap 2	Correct usage	Wrong usage	Total
Students' answer	13	2	15
Percentage	86.66%	13.33%	100%

**Table 20: Correct vs Wrong Usage of Articles in the Second Gap.**



**Figure 10 : Correct vs Wrong Usage of Articles in the Second Gap.**

In the second gap, 13 students (86.66%) responded with correct article; and only 2 students (13.33%) inserted with wrong article. This result shows that students know the rule of putting definite article when there is centuries. Or due to the positive transfer that they make when the rules of the two languages are the same “elkaran elwahid waleshrine”.

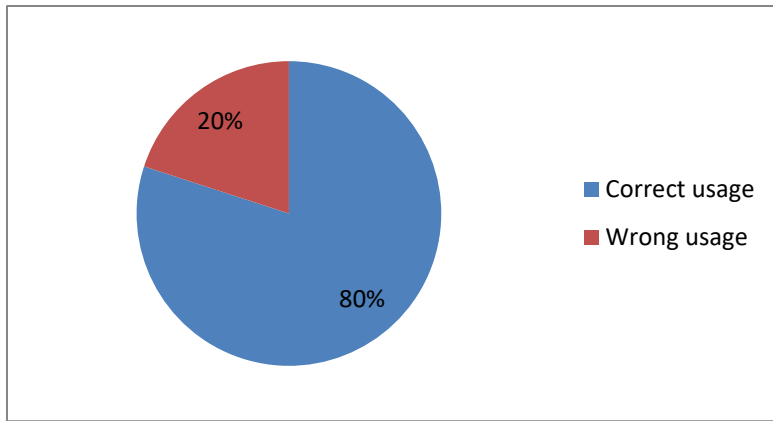
**Gap 3: was born in (the) United Kingdom**

Articles	The	A	An	Total
Students' answer	12	1	2	15
Percentage	80%	6.66%	13.33%	100%

**Table 21: The Usage of English Articles in the Third Gap.**

Gap 3	Correct usage	Wrong usage	Total
Students' answer	12	3	15
Percentage	80%	20%	100%

**Table 22: Correct vs Wrong Usage of Articles in the Third Gap.**



**Figure 11 : Correct vs Wrong Usage of Articles in the Third Gap.**

In the third gap, 12 students (80%) inserted with the correct article .Yet, only 3 students (20%) inserted with wrong article. The results show that the majority of the students know the rule of using “the” with countries that include the words "republic", "kingdom", or "states" in their names.

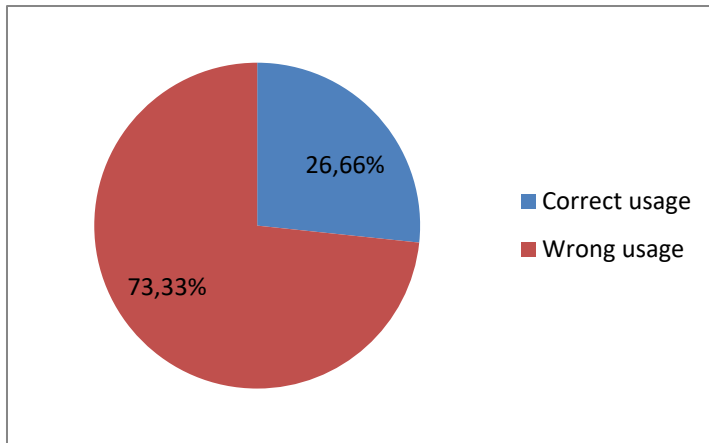
**Gap 4: in (the) 1960s .Since then, she has been to many countries.**

Articles	The	A	An	Total
Students’ answer	4	11	0	15
Percentage	26.66%	73.33%	0%	100%

**Table 23: The Usage of English Articles in the Fourth Gap.**

Gap 4	Correct usage	Wrong usage	Total
Students’ answer	4	11	15
Percentage	26.66%	73.33%	100%

**Table 24: Correct vs Wrong Usage of Articles in the Fourth Gap.**



**Figure 12 : Correct vs Wrong Usage of Articles in the Fourth Gap.**

In the fourth gap, only 4 students (26.66%) answered with the correct article. Whereas, 11 students (73.33%) responded with the wrong article. As result, it is clear that student do not know the rule of using “the” with decades.

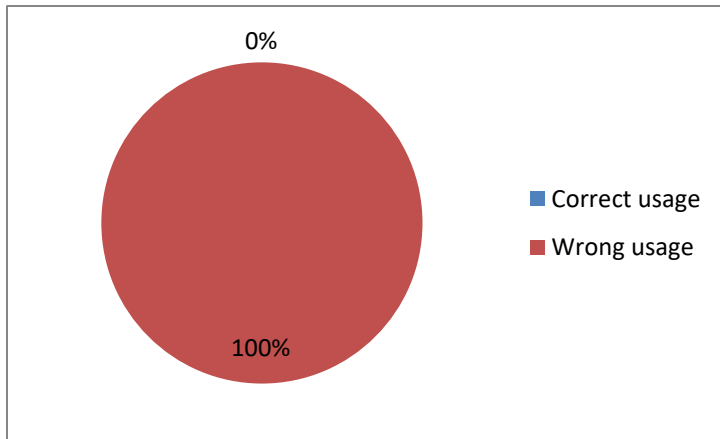
**Gap 5: She speaks / English, French and Portuguese.**

Articles	The	A	An	Zero article	Total
Students’ answer	13	1	1	0	15
Percentage	86.66%	6.66%	6.66%	0%	100%

**Table 25: The Usage of English Articles in the Fifth Gap.**

Gap 5	Correct usage	Wrong usage	Total
Students’ answer	0	15	15
Percentage	0%	100%	100%

**Table 26: Correct vs Wrong Usage of Articles in the Fifth Gap.**



**Figure 13 : Correct vs Wrong Usage of Articles in the Fifth Gap.**

In the fifth gap, all the participants (100%) got the wrong answer .Thus, this due to students transferred the rule of English articles to their mother tongue. in standard Arabic, they do use definite article with the languages “elingliziya”; but in English, they do not. The result indicates the occurrence of mother tongue transfer during the task.

**Gap 6 : She plays (the) violin**

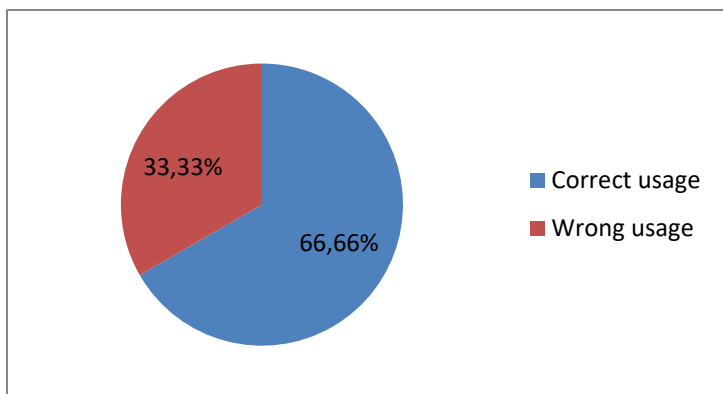
Articles	The	A	An	Total
Students' answer	10	5	0	15
Percentage	66.66%	33.33%	0%	100%

**Table 27: The Usage of English Articles in the Sixth Gap.**

Gap 6	Correct usage	Wrong usage	Total
Students' answer	10	5	15
Percentage	66.66%	33.33%	100%

**Table 28: Correct vs Wrong Usage of Articles in the Sixth Gap.**





**Figure 14 : Correct vs Wrong Usage of Articles in the Sixth Gap.**

In the sixth gap, 10 students (66.66%) gave the correct answer. And 5 students (33.33%) got the wrong answer. The outcomes demonstrate the majority of the students know that the definite article “the” is used when there is a music instrument (violin). Also because it has the same use in standard Arabic “taazif ala alnay” (positive transfer).

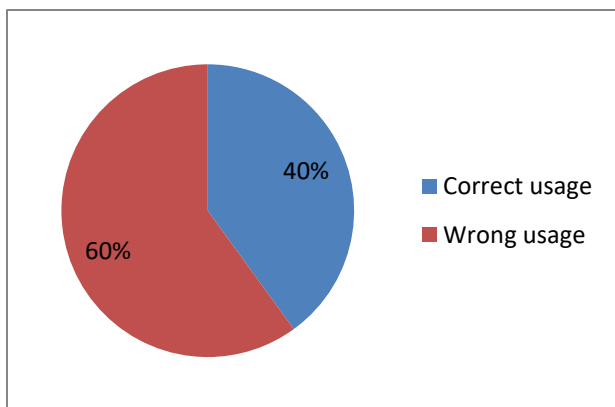
**Gap 7: and sometimes practises up to five times (a) day.**

Articles	The	A	An	Total
Students' answer	9	6	0	15
Percentage	60%	40%	0%	100%

**Table 29: The Usage of English Articles in the Seventh Gap.**

Gap 7	Correct usage	Wrong usage	Total
Students' answer	6	9	15
Percentage	40%	60%	100%

**Table 30: Correct vs Wrong Usage of Articles in the Seventh Gap.**



**Figure 15 : Correct vs Wrong Usage of Articles in the Seventh Gap.**

In the seventh gap, more than a half of the students (60%) got the wrong answer. Yet, 6 students (40%) responded with the correct article. Thus, this is due to students transferring the rule of English articles to their mother tongue. In English, “a” is used to indicate singular form (one day). However, in standard Arabic; they say “5 marat fi elyawm”. The result indicates the occurrence of mother tongue transfer during the task.

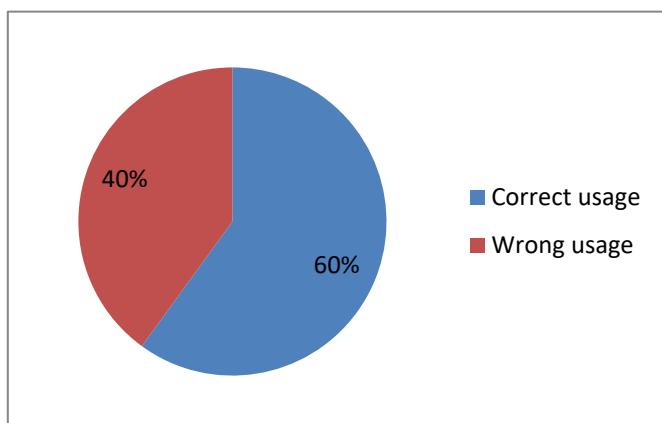
**Gap 8: in one breathe on (the) recorder.**

Articles	The	A	An	Total
Students' answer	9	6	0	15
Percentage	60%	40%	0%	100%

**Table 31: The Usage of English Articles in the Eighth Gap.**

Gap 8	Correct usage	Wrong usage	Total
Students' answer	9	6	15
Percentage	60%	40%	100%

**Table 32: Correct vs Wrong Usage of Articles in the Eighth Gap.**



**Figure 16 : Correct vs Wrong Usage of Articles in the Eighth Gap.**

In the eighth gap, 9 students (60%) gave correct answer .However, 6 students (40%) inserted with the wrong article. The results show that more than a half of the students used the definite article; because they assume there is just one of something in that place, even if it has not been mentioned before, during the task.

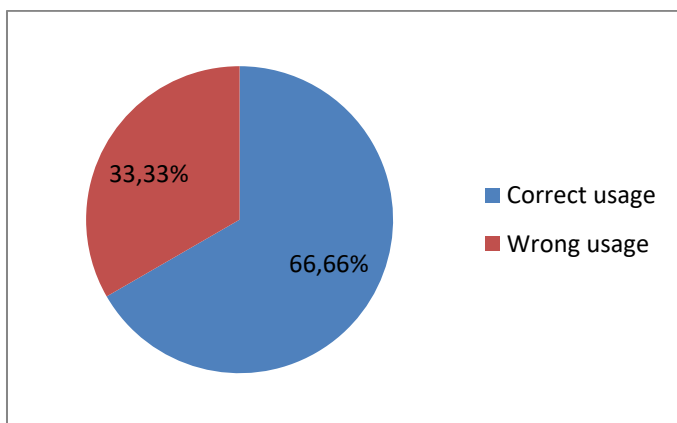
**Gap 9: She has been (a) detective for thirty years**

Articles	The	A	An	Total
Students' answer	5	10	0	15
Percentage	33.33%	66.66%	0	100%

**Table 33: The Usage of English Articles in the Ninth Gap.**

Gap 9	Correct usage	Wrong usage	Total
Students' answer	10	5	15
Percentage	66.66%	33.33%	100%

**Table 34: Correct vs Wrong Usage of Articles in theNinth Gap.**



**Figure 17 : Correct vs Wrong Usage of Articles in the Ninth Gap.**

In the ninth gap, 10 students (66.66%) got the correct article “a”. Whereas, 5 students (33.33%) responded with the wrong article. These results indicate that the majority of students applied the rule of using indefinite article when there is a job “detective”. Or they transferred positively the rule, since it has the same use in standard Arabic (positive transfer).

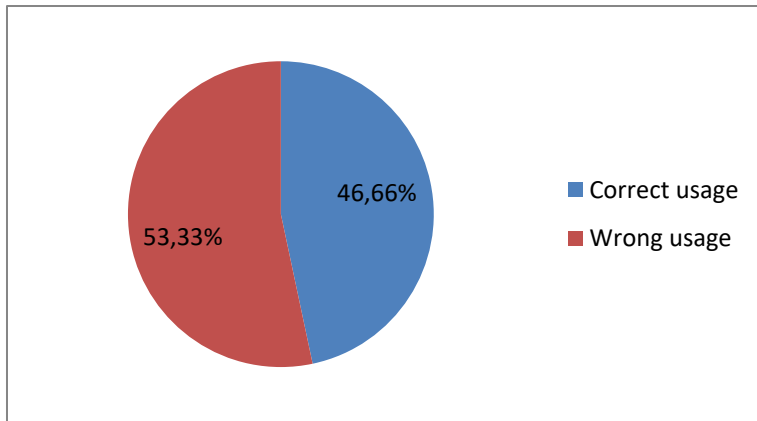
**Gap 10: and claims that although many people think being (a) detective**

Articles	The	A	An	Total
Students' answer	8	7	0	15
Percentage	53.33%	46.66%	0%	100%

**Table 35: The Usage of English Articles in the 10th Gap.**

Gap 10	Correct usage	Wrong usage	Total
Students' answer	7	8	15
Percentage	46.66%	53.33%	100%

**Table 36: Correct vs Wrong Usage of Articles in the 10th Gap.**



**Figure 18 : Correct vs Wrong Usage of Articles in the 10th Gap.**

In the tenth gap, the results were almost equal as 53.33% gave wrong answer, while 46.66% responded with correct article. The results display that students got confused when the word “detective” was mentioned for the second time (no language transfer was occurred)

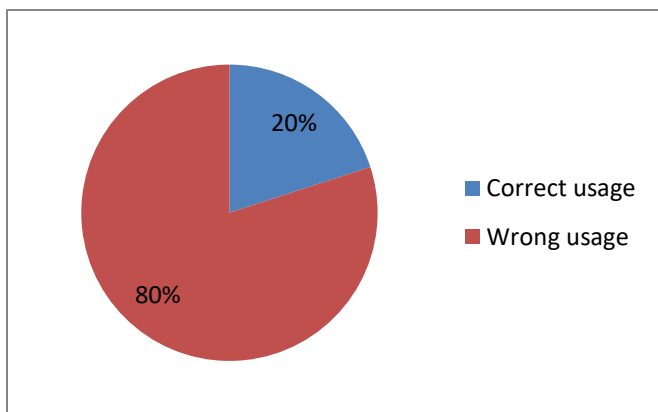
**Gap 11: (a) detective is someone who solve mysteries**

Articles	The	A	An	Total
Students’ answer	12	3	0	15
Percentage	80%	20%	0%	100%

**Table 37: The Usage of English Articles in the 11th Gap.**

Gap 11	Correct usage	Wrong usage	Total
Students’ answer	3	12	15
Percentage	20%	80%	100%

**Table 38: Correct vs Wrong Usage of Articles in the 11th Gap.**



**Figure 19 : Correct vs Wrong Usage of Articles in the 11th Gap.**

In the 11<sup>th</sup> gap, the majority of the students (80%) responded with the wrong article. Yet, only 3 students (20%) gave the correct answer. This indicates the occurrence of language transfer; students transferred negatively the rule of English articles to their standard Arabic. Which is translated “almohakik howa chakhes”, where the definite article is used unlike in the English sentence.

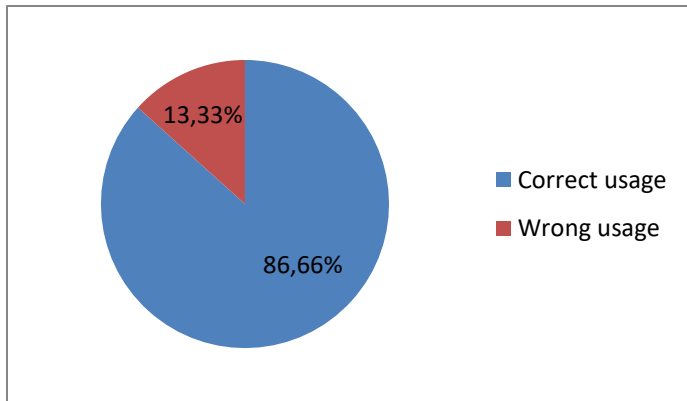
**Gap 12: and (the) people who contact Ms Parrot have some very unusual problems.**

Articles	The	A	An	Total
Students' answer	13	2	0	15
Percentage	86.66%	13.33%	0%	100%

**Table 39: The Usage of English Articles in the 12th Gap.**

Gap 12	Correct usage	Wrong usage	Total
Students' answer	13	2	15
Percentage	86.66%	13.33%	100%

**Table 40: Correct vs Wrong Usage of Articles in the 12th Gap.**



**Figure 20 : Correct vs Wrong Usage of Articles in the 12th Gap.**

In the 12<sup>th</sup> gap, more than a half of the participants (86.66%) inserted with the correct article “the”; since it has the same use in standard Arabic. And only 3 students (13.33%) got the wrong article. The results indicate the occurrence of the positive transfer.

### **5. Discussion of Test’s Result:**

The outcomes indicate that students transferred negatively from standard Arabic when both languages used different articles; they apply standard Arabic rules when using English Articles. This due to the lack of mastering the rules of English Articles. And they transferred positively from Arabic when the English articles had the same equivalent in standard Arabic. Which facilitate learning process for them and make the task easier.

The result obtained from the test aslo revealed that the language transfer is not the only source of errors during answering the two tasks. Students make errors when they are confused about indefinite articles rules. Specailly when the word starts with “U” or “H”. Also when they do not know the rule even in Arabic, here, they can not transfer. Students still confused and do not master the English Articles rules ,thus , they make errors by transfer from standard Arabic or by making error in target language itself.

## 6. Questionnaire Description

The questionnaire was administrated to third year LMD students. It consists of (12) questions ranging from general information about the students to more specific questions about the problems encountered when writing and using articles. The questions are either closed questions requiring the students “yes” or “no” answers, or to pick up the appropriate answer from a number of choices or open questions requiring them to give their own answers and justify them.

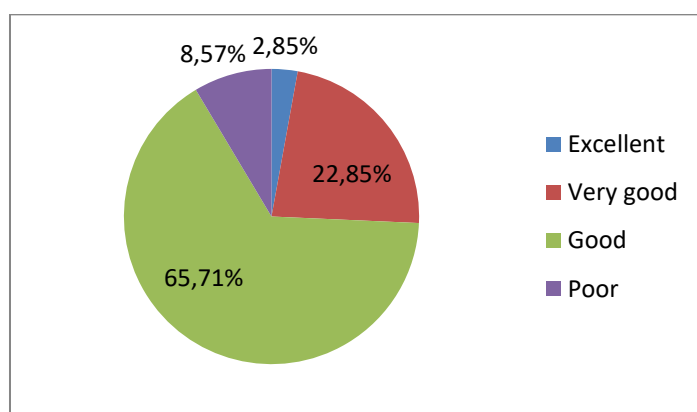
## 7. Analysis of Students' Questionnaire

### Section One: General Information

#### Question 1: How do you evaluate your level in English?

Options	Excellent	Very good	Good	Poor
Students' Answers	1	8	23	3
Percentage	2.85%	22.85%	65.71%	8.57%

**Table41: Student's Level in English.**



**Figure 21 : Student's Level in English.**

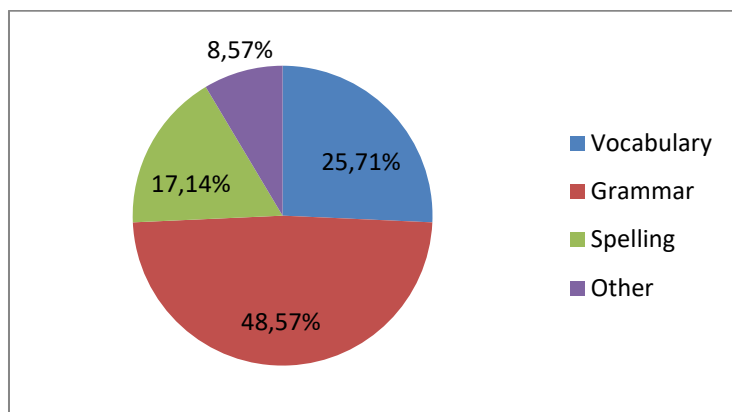


This question is to investigate students' level in English. As the table and the relative figure show that the majority of students 23 (65.71%) of students claimed that their level in English is good. . 8 (22.85 %) students stated that their level is very good and only 3 (8.57 %) students considered their level to be poor. In contrast, only one student (2.85%) considers his level to be excellent .The result indicates that the majority of students have a good level in English. Based on this result, we assume that their written productions are good.

**Question 2: When writing a paragraph or essay, you pay attention more to vocabulary, grammar, spelling or others?**

Options	Vocabulary	Grammar	Spelling	Other
Students' Answers	9	17	6	3
Percentage	25.71%	48.57%	17.14%	8.57%

**Table 42: Students' Difficulties in Writing.**



**Figure 22 : Students' Difficulties in Writing.**

The third question aims to know where students find more difficulties when writing. As shown in the table and the figure above 17 (48.57%) students declared that they pay more attention to grammar which is considered as an effortful task for them, 9 (25.71%) students found a difficulty when choosing the right vocabulary for their piece of writing. While only 6

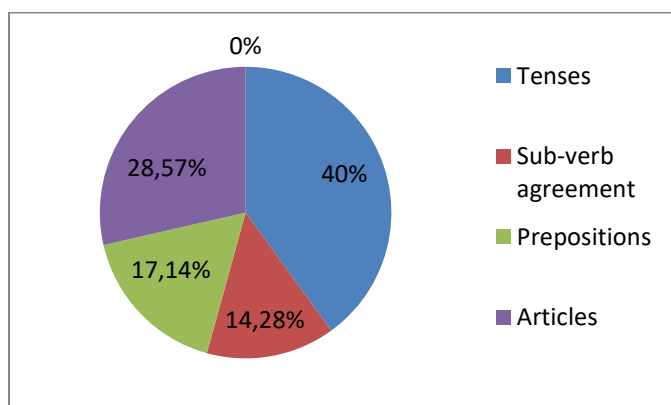
(17.14%) students regarded spelling the words correctly as the hardest task that requires them to be more focussed. . However, only 3 (8.57%) students came up with other difficulties such as order of ideas, coherence, details and style. As result, it is clear that students find more difficulties in grammar including tenses, subject-verb agreement, preposition, articles .....Etc. These aspects, according to the learners need more concentration and efforts.

## Section two: English Articles and language transfer

**Question 3: In grammar session, which lesson do you consider hard to understand or practise in writing?**

Options	Tenses	Sub-verb agreement	Prepositions	Articles	Other
Students	14	5	6	10	0
Percentage	40%	14.28%	17.14%	28.57%	0%

**Table 43 : Students' Difficulties in Grammar Session.**



**Figure 23 : Students' Difficulties in Grammar Session.**

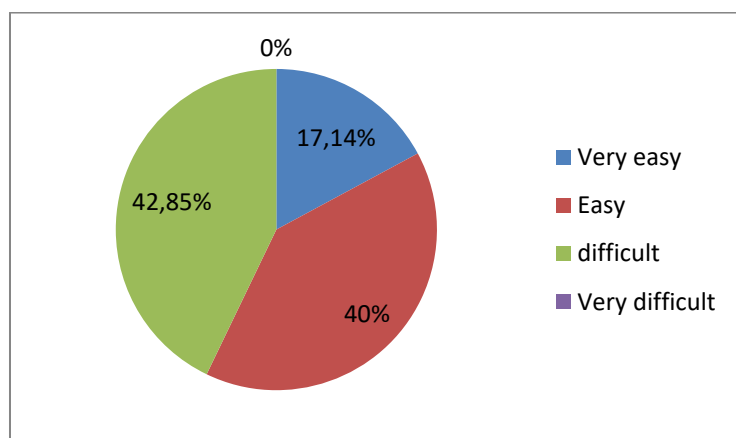
This question aims to inquire which lesson or task is hard to understand or practise by students in writing. According to the data represented above, most of the students (40%) claim that the lesson of “Tenses” is a hard task for them. , 10 students (28.57%) answered that the lesson of “Articles” is more difficult to understand and practise in writing. On the

other hand, 6 students (17.14%) responded by considering “Preposition” the hardest task while 5 students (14.28%) agreed to have problems with sub-verb agreements. These findings indicate that Tenses and Articles are the most difficult tasks for the students.

**Question 4: do you consider the English Articles rules difficult to understand and use?**

Options	Very easy	Easy	Difficult	Very difficult
Students’ answers	6	14	15	0
Percentage	17.14%	40%	42.85%	0%

**Table 44: Students ' Opinions about the Difficulty of the English Articles Rules.**



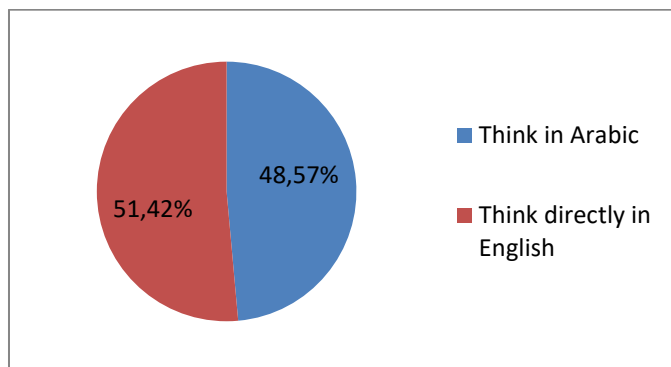
**Figure 24 : Students ' Opinions about the Difficulty of the English Articles Rules.**

This question is to know students’ opinions about the difficulty of the English articles rules. The data presented above demonstrate that 15 students (42.85%) found that the rules are difficult while 14 students (40%) answered by easy ; However, only 6 students (17.14%) responded by very easy , and no one (0%) considered these rules as very difficult in use . The data outcomes display that the majority of students have a difficulty in understanding and using English Articles rules which may be reflected in their written production.

**Question 5: When using Articles in your writing, do you relate them to Arabic or you use them based on their use in English Language?**

Options	Think in Arabic	Think directly in English
Students' answer	17	18
Percentage	48.57%	51.42%

**Table 45: The Use of English Articles.**



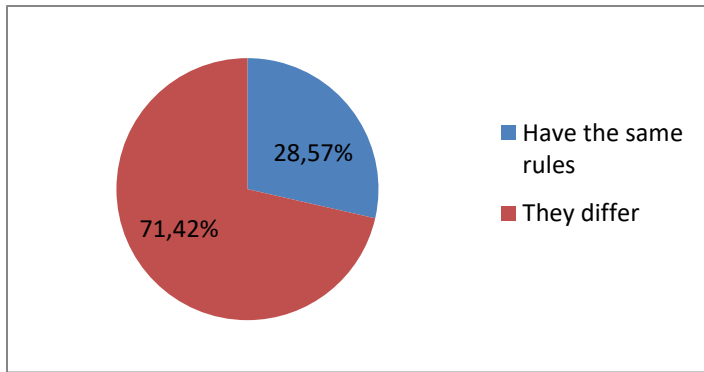
**Figure 25 : The Use of English Articles.**

The question attempts to examine whether students use English articles in the same way standard Arabic articles are used or use them based on their rules in English. The students' answers were nearly equal as 18 students (51.42%) asserted that they think directly in English, while 17 students (48.57%) stated that they think in Arabic first and depend on their mother tongue ( standard Arabic) when using English Articles.

**Question 6: Do you think that English and Arabic Articles have the same rules or they differ?**

Options	Have the same rules	They differ
Students' answer	10	25
Percentage	28.57%	71.42%

**Table 46: The Rules of English and Arabic Articles.**



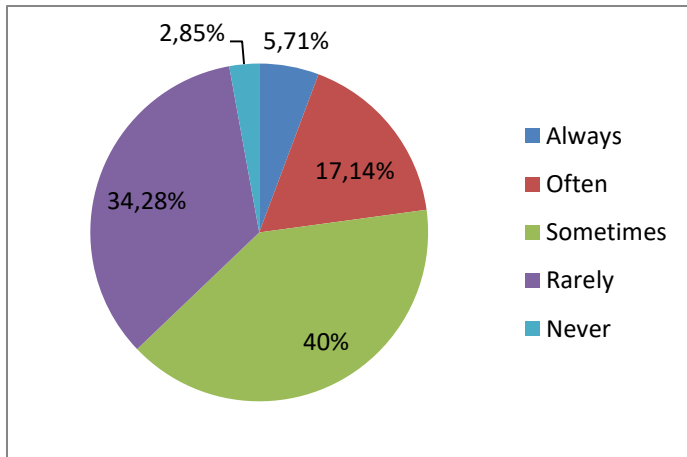
**Figure 26 : The Rules of English and Arabic Articles.**

This question is intended to discover students' ideas about English and Arabic Articles rules. According to the data introduced above; 25 of students (71.42%) claimed that English and standard Arabic articles rules differ from each other. However, only 10 (28.57%) students thought that standard Arabic and English articles have the same rules. This indicates that EFL learners are mostly aware of the difference between standard Arabic and English regarding the use of articles despite the existence of some similarities.

**Question 7: How often do you translate Articles in Arabic before using them?**

Options	Always	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
Students	2	6	14	12	1
Percentage	5.71%	17.14%	40%	34.28%	2.85%

**Table 47: Students' Translation of Articles to Arabic.**



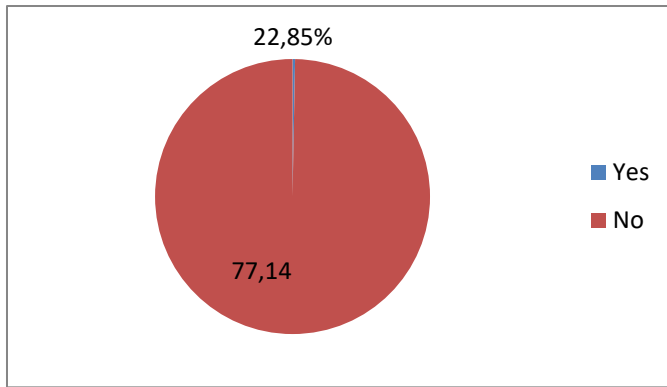
**Figure 27 : Students' Translation of Articles to Arabic.**

The question studies whether students translate English articles to Arabic when using them in an English context or not. The majority of students 14 (40 %) answered by sometimes while 12 (34.28%) of them said that they rarely translate to standard Arabic. 6 students (17.14%) stated that they often do that whereas 2 students (5.71%) answered with always. Only one student (2.85%) claimed to never translate to standard Arabic and use articles depending on their rules in English. The findings indicate that more than a half of the students rely on their background knowledge of standard Arabic articles in using English ones and this leads them to use a word by word translation. In most of the times, this translation results in a misuse of articles in the English language which can be clearly detected in the learners' written productions. In other words, learners misuse of English articles maybe due to their Mother tongue transfer.

**Question 8: Does your teacher use Arabic when he explains English articles rules?**

Options	Yes	No
Students' answer	8	27
Percentage	22.85%	77.14

**Table 48: Teacher Use of Arabic as a Mean of Explanation.**



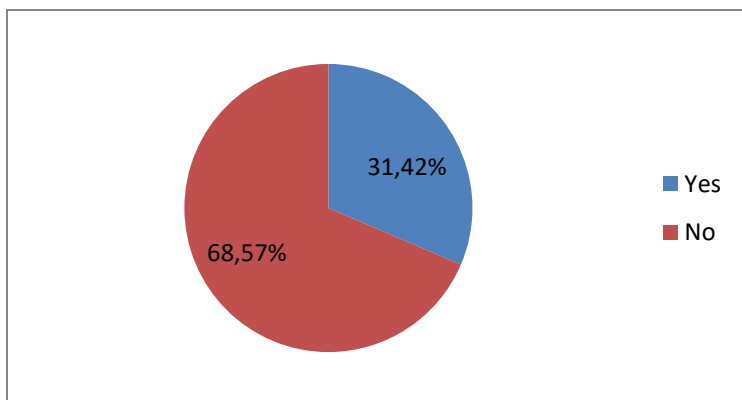
**Figure 28 : Teacher Use of Arabic as a Mean of Explanation.**

The question is asked to know if the teachers use standard Arabic while explaining English articles rules or whether they make comparisons between English and standard Arabic. The aim behind this question is to know whether the students have been influenced by the teachers' Arabic explanation or not. 27 students (77.14%) of students answered with no while the rest 8 students (22.85%) responded with yes. This demonstrates that the majority of the teachers do not use standard Arabic as mean of explanation to simplify English articles rules which means that the students are not influenced by their teachers' explanation.

**Question 9: Are you with the use standard Arabic as a mean of instruction during grammar session?**

Options	Yes	No
Students	11	24
Percentage	31.42%	68.57%

**Table 49: Students' Opinion about Using Arabic as a Mean of Instruction.**



**Figure 29 : Students’ Opinion about Using Arabic as a Mean of Instruction.**

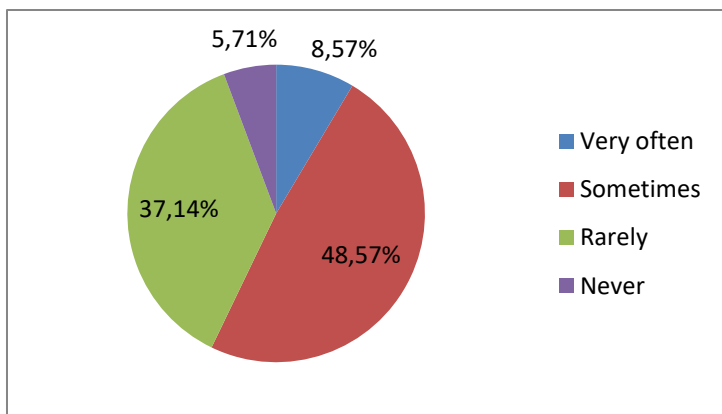
This question is raised to check students’ opinions towards using standard Arabic as a mean of instruction during grammar session. As the data presented above show, more than a half of students (24 students) disagreed with using standard Arabic as an instruction tool during grammar session. The rest (11 students) agreed that using standard Arabic in explaining Grammar lessons helps them understand better. The results, however, show that most of the respondents were against the use of standard Arabic in as a means of instruction or explanation in Grammar session.

**Question 10: How often do you make errors in using Articles when you write?**

Options	Very often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
Students’ answer	3	17	13	2
Percentage	8.57%	48.57%	37.14%	5.71%

**Table 50: Students’ Errors Commitment on the Use of Articles.**





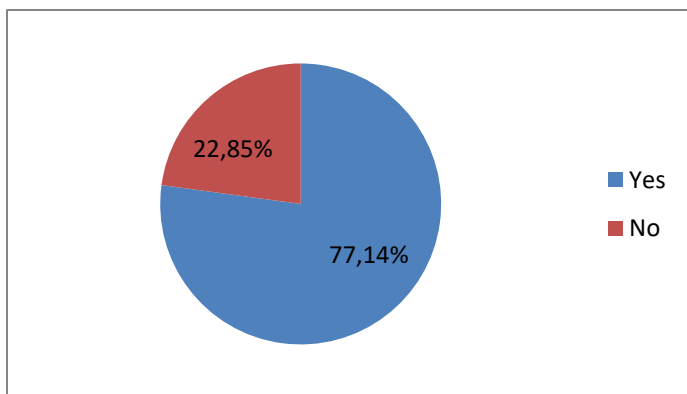
**Figure 30 : Students' Errors Commitment on the Use of Articles.**

The question aims to show how often students make errors when using English Articles in their writings. 17 students (48.57%) claimed that they sometimes make errors while utilizing English Articles in their written production. Moreover, 13 students (37.14%) said that they rarely make errors; and 3 students (8.57%) answered with very often. The rest (2 students) responded with never. Thus, the majority of the students of third year claimed that they sometimes make errors when using English Articles in their writing.

**Question 11: Does that affect your writings?**

Options	Yes	No
Students' answer	27	8
percentage	77.14%	22.85%

**Table 51: The Impact of Errors in Students' Writing.**



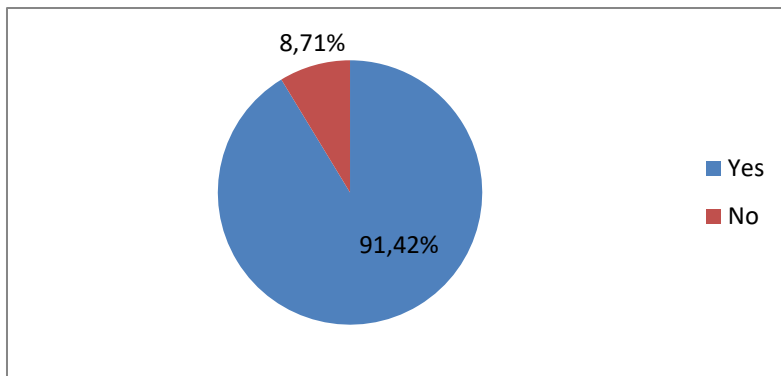
**Figure 31 : The Impact of Errors in Students' Writing.**

The question asked to investigate whether students' errors affect their writing or not .27 students (77.14%) answered with yes, while the rest (22.85%) said that does not affect their writing. The findings indicate that more than a half of the students claims that the errors, they make, have an impact on their written production.

**Question 12: Do you think that the errors committed by the learners when using English Articles are mainly due to mother tongue transfer (standard Arabic)?**

Options	Yes	No
Students	32	3
Percentage	91.42%	8.71%

**Table 52: The Effect of Transfer on the use of English Articles.**



**Figure 32 : The Impact of Errors in Students' Writing.**

The question aims to know students' opinions about whether the errors committed by learners on the use of Articles are due to mother tongue transfer or not. 32 students (91.42%) agreed on that mother tongue transfer is the reason behind English Articles errors; because they depend on their standard Arabic while using English Articles on their writing .And only 3 students (8.71%%) disagreed on that. The findings show that almost all the students find themselves affected by their mother tongue when using English Articles in their written production.

## **8. Discusion of Students' Questionnaire Result:**

The students' questionnaire analysis has revealed numerous results. From the students ' responses it was determined that students when writing a paragraph or essay; they pay attention more to grammar rather than vocabulary and spelling. Therefore, it is more effortful for them paying attention to tenses, preposition, Articles.....etc. Also they consider the lessons of tenses and articles are hard to understand and practise in writing than other lessons.

In the English Articles questions, which is the focus of this study, was observed that the majority of the EFL learners find difficulties in understanding English Articles rules. Additionally, some students have stated that they do think in Arabic before using English

Articles in their writings regardless to the differences between the two languages. Which lead them to make more errors and affect the organization of their piece of writing.

The analysis of last question which aims to investigate students' opinions about whether the errors committed by learners on the use of Articles are due to standard Arabic transfer or not. The results obtained have shown that students agreed on that standard Arabic transfer is the reason behind English Articles errors. Therefore; they depend on their standard Arabic while using English Articles which affect their writing; and lead them to produce a paragraph or essay full of English Articles errors.

## **Conclusion**

To conclude, the analysis of the result from the collected data has shown that third year EFL learners at university of Biskra have serious problems with English Articles rules. The results obtained from the test demonstrated that students do rely on their standard Arabic when using English Articles. Either negatively when two languages have different rules, or positively when they have the same equivalent. Also language transfer was not the only source of errors; the confusion in using indefinite articles and lack of knowledge about usage of English Articles were also a source of learners' errors. Questionnaire results have confirmed test's results. Students misuse them in their writings due to mother tongue transfer. Students tend to transfer when they do not know the rules, and they try to use English Articles depending on their standard Arabic. This affects their writing negatively and leads them to make more errors.

## General Conclusion

The research was conducted to shed the light on the subject of language transfer, precisely on its impact on the use of English Articles (the, a, an) in the written production. With aim of investigating the cause behind learners' errors and developing learners' writings.

The present work consists three chapters, two theoretical chapters highlights definitions of some concepts related to the research topic. The first chapter tackles the two main approaches of language teaching and learning, contrastive analysis and error analysis; the chapter highlights its definitions, criticism and comparison between them. Additionally, a section conductes sources, classification and steps of erros. The second chapter highlights language transfer and English articles. The first section was devoted to language transfer, its definition, its types and factors that affect transfer. Also a section tackled Arabic Articles usage and differences between English and Arabic Articles; in order to know similairities and differences between the two languages. And how the language transfer occurs when the learnres overlook these differences; and how it facilitates grasping the rules when they have the same rules (English & standard Arabic). The third chapter represents the field work of this study; it focuses on the testing the hypothesis and giving reliability to the research study. Two research tools were used for collecting data, a test and a questionnaire.

The test was given to 15 students of third year LMD at MK University. The results of the test infact have confirmed that the misuse of English Articles is due to standard Arabic transfer. Third year students were denpeding on their mother tongue in answering the tasks; the analysis aslo revealed that language transfer was not the only sources of errors, students do make errors due to confusion on the usage of indefinite Articles (a, an). Thus, learners tend to transfer positively or negatively English Articles when they do not know the rules or do not

master them well. The second data gathering tool is the questionnaire which was administered to Third year LMD to confirm the test's results. It has revealed that students face some difficulties with English Articles rules, and they do rely on their Arabic knowledge to write a paragraph in English which affect their writing negatively. To conclude, the result obtained from this research asserts that the previously mentioned hypothesis is completely accepted. Hence, language transfer affect students' writings while using English Articles and this mainly due to their lack of understanding and mastering the basics of English Articles Rules.

## **Recommendation**

In order to overcome learner's errors when using English Articles and develop their writing, the study presents some recommendation as following:

- A requirement of an extensive teaching for English Articles rules since students do not master them well.
- Teachers should encourage students whom make errors to correct them selves, in order to recognize their errors and understand the rules more.
- Teachers should find a new method which is attractive and beneficial for students to overcome language transfer.
- Students must focus more on English Articles rules and try to learn from their errors to enhance their writing skills.

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# Appendices

## Appendix A

### Students' Test

#### Task 1: Fill the gaps with a, an or the in the following sentences

1. Excuse me. Where is ..... swimming pool of the hotel?
2. My mother bought .....umbrella yesterday
3. I would like to have..... Hundered dollars
4. The last time i was in London I went on a boat on ...Thames.
5. I went to ..... Central bank.
6. He goes to..... university in California.
7. I will pick you up at ..... train station.
8. I don't understand..... words of this song.

#### Task 3: Complete the following paragraph with the right article.

Ms Parrot ...1..... most famous lady detective of ...2.....twenty-first century, was born in...3.... United kingdom in ...4.....1960s .Since then, she has been to many countries. She speak .....5..... English, French and Portuguese. She plays...6... violin, and sometimes practises up to five times ...7.... day. She is also theonly person in the world to have performed Tchaikovsky's 1812 overture (a long peice of music) in one breath on ...8.... recorder. She has been ...9..... detective for thirty years and claims that although many people think being ...10... detective is a piece of cake , detective generally work very hard and it is not all fun and games. ...11.....detective is someone who solve mysteries, and ...12... people who contact Ms Parrot have some very unusual problems.

**Thank you for your cooperation**

## **Appendix B**

### **Students' Questionnaire**

Dear students,

This questionnaire is a part of a research work carried out at the division of English at Mohamed Khider University in the preparation of a master dissertation. You are kindly invited to contribute in our study by taking time to answer the following questions through which we aim at investigating the influence of learners' mother-tongue interference on their writings, particularly, their misuse of English articles (a, an, the). Hence, we would be grateful if you could provide us with clear answers which will be anonymously treated and exclusively used within this research framework.

**Thank in advance for your time and collaboration**

**Please, tick on the answer that describes you best:**

**1) How do you evaluate your level in English?**

-Excellent

-Very good

-Good

- Poor

**2) When writing a paragraph or essay, you pay attention more to:**

-vocabulary

- grammar

-spelling

-Other .....

**3) In grammar session, which lesson do you consider hard to understand or to practise in writing**

-Tenses

-Subject-verb agreement

-preposition

- Articles

-Other.....

**4) Do you consider “English Articles” rules difficult to use or understand**

-Very easy

-Easy

-Difficult

-Very difficult

If the answer is “difficult” or “very difficult” why?

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

**5) When using Articles in your writing, do you relate them to Arabic or you use them based on their use in English language?**

-Think in Arabic first

-Think directly in English

**6) Do you think that English and Arabic Articles have the same rules or they differ?**

- They have the same rules

- They differ

If your answer is “they have the same rules”, explain how?

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

**7) How often do you translate Articles in Arabic before using them**

- Always
- often
- Sometimes
- Rarely
- Never

**8) Does your teacher use Arabic when he is explaining “English Articles” rules ?**

- Yes
- No

**9) Are you with using Arabic as a mean of instruction during “English Articles”session ?**

- Yes
- No

If yes, why ?

.....

.....

.....

.....

**10) How often do you make errors in using “Articles” when you write?**

- Very often
- Sometimes
- Rarely

- Never

**11) Does that affect your writing?**

- Yes

- No

**12) Do you think that the errors committed by learners when using “English Articles” are mainly due to mother tongue transfer?**

- Yes

- No

**Thank you for your cooperation**