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*An Analysis of Written Grammatical Errors in EFL learners' Paragraphs:  
A Case Study of Fourth Year Learners at Mohamed Tahar Kaddouri Middle School  
Biskra*

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment for the Requirements of the Master Degree in  
Sciences of Languages

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## DIDICATION

*I dedicate my work*

*To my beloved mother Saída and my dear father Abdelhamid, source of happiness and success in life.  
May ALLAH bless them.*

*To my brother and my sisters: Aymen, Majda, Amira,  
Nardjes and Merina.*

*Thank you my dear family especially my mother who  
tolerated me and my shortcomings through my entire  
life and my education, Thank you for your  
unconditional love and support.*

*To all my dearest friends: Imane, Souhila and Assia.*

*To all my classmates and my work colleagues.*

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## **ABSTRACT**

The current study aimed to shed light on the most common written grammatical errors in the English paragraphs belonging to Algerian Middle school pupils of fourth year level, in addition to the investigation of the possible causes behind their grammatical errors. To achieve this purpose, the error analysis method has been applied on a sample of 42 paragraphs written by Fourth year pupils studying at Mohamed Tahar Kaddouri Middle School Biskra. All of the grammatical errors in the paragraphs were identified and classified into various sub-categories and eventually analyzed. To reinforce the analysis findings, a semi-structured interview has been conducted with their 2 English teachers in order to explore their views about the written errors in grammar of these pupils along with their propositions as suitable solutions for the improvement of their learners' writings. The results of both the analysis and the interview indicate that the most common errors committed by the participants were Verb tenses and form and that the possible causes of the grammatical errors are interlingual and intralingual transfer. This work is composed of three main chapters: The first chapter deals with Errors and Error Analysis in EFL. The second one concerns writing and grammatical errors in EFL. The third part refers to the field work in which the information from the samples and the interview is collected and analyzed. These identified errors and their possible causes provide beneficial key points to focus on for EFL syllabus designers as well as English teachers in designing and implementing an effective curriculum for teaching and learning of English as a Foreign language.

### **List of Abbreviations:**

**CBA:** Competency-Based Approach

**EA:** Error Analysis

**EE:** Error Evaluation

**EFL:** English as a Foreign Language

**L1:** Mother Tongue/ First Language

**L2:** Second language

**MT:** Mother Tongue

**NL:** Native Language

**SLA:** Second Language Acquisition

**TBA:** Task- Based Approach

**TBI:** Task-Based Instruction

**TL:** Target Language

**USA:** United States of America

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## **Background of the study:**

### **General Introduction:**

Writing is one of the most important skills that learners must develop to be competent in the foreign language they want to acquire. In his book 'An Introduction to Applied Linguistics', Davies states that "writing a coherent text longer than a sentence is one of the hardest of all the skills that schools set out to teach" (98). Learners struggle with many difficulties to express their ideas and knowledge through written sentences and paragraphs. Among these difficulties which determine the appropriateness of form and meaning of the written message is the mastery of grammatical rules. Hence, in the process of learning a new language, it is certain that EFL learners would make erroneous expressions especially grammatical errors.

As Li's longitudinal study (from 1981 to 1990) on Chinese learners in USA high school levels investigated the effect of the integration of English grammar instruction and communicative language use in general as well as the efficient English writing in particular, this American study indicated that EFL writing errors particularly in grammar which are natural features of language learning have become a supporting tunnel for reinforcing the acquisition of efficient writing (Alatis 73).

EFL learners in Algerian schools, like others around the world, are facing problems in grammar through the EFL learning process which requires more attention and investigation on this area of Second language acquisition. Corder in his book 'Introducing Applied Linguistics' points out that error analysis is mainly a explanatory as well as descriptive procedure that aims to clarify how errors occur and explain the psychological learners' strategies causing these errors in the learning process (275-277). Thus, error analysis (EA) is the most suitable tool to understand better the problems encountered by EFL learners in writing production and in the development of their learning process.

The main aim of this study is to shed light on the most frequent grammatical errors in the English writings of Algerian Middle school learners of fourth year level, in addition to the investigation of the possible reasons and causes behind their grammatical errors, in the interest of improving these prominent linguistic areas in which these pupils face problems. In other words, these identified errors and their possible causes provide beneficial key points to focus on for EFL syllabus designers as well as English teachers in

designing and implementing an effective curriculum for teaching and learning of English as a Foreign language.

### **Statement of the Problem :**

During the learning process of a foreign language, learners meet many difficulties in learning stages. Those difficulties are usually located in the understanding and the application of grammatical rules which determine the appropriateness of the foreign language production .They are whether related to native language interference or connected to the development of the target language itself within the learners. Despite of the great efforts applied in the Algerian Middle schools to teach English, teachers often complain that the pupils of fourth year level encounter weaknesses in writing skill particularly in grammar. That is these pupils are still making grammatical errors in their paragraphs in the process of developing the TL knowledge although they have been already taught the main grammatical rules in the three previous years in the sessions of English language .so, they are expected to use them correctly at a considerable extent in their paragraphs.

This research is very important for both teachers and syllabus designers of EFL at the middle school level because it assists them in designing a more efficient curriculum by exploring of both the most common written grammatical errors that the pupils make and their possible causes. To provide valid answers about these problems, the researcher used the Error Analysis method as an effective way to improve writing skill and reinforced the analysis findings with the English teachers interview results.

### **Significance of the Study :**

The significance of this study is influenced by the need to research and to give more importance to teaching and learning English in Algerian Middle schools .This research emphasizes one of the most prominent problems faced by learners of all levels in developing their EFL writing skill. This study tries to identify the EFL Middle school learners' common grammatical errors, suggest their main causes, and explore the EFL teachers' views about their pupils' written errors in grammar along with propositions as suitable resolutions concerning the advancement of their learners' writings. The findings of the present study will help bring in valuable information from the classrooms reality .That

is analyzing the pupils' grammatical competence in writing and displaying the EFL teachers' opinions about their pupils' English writing level at Biskra's middle schools in order to suggest convenient solutions . Thus, bridging the gap between the practice and theory in EFL classrooms.

### **Aim of the Study :**

The main concerns of this study are:

- First, to point out the common and shared errors in grammar by fourth year EFL middle school learners in their paragraphs and investigating the main reasons behind these errors.
- Secondly, to explore the teachers views about the written errors of EFL middle school learners in grammar and their suggestions to develop their learners writing.

### **Research Questions :**

This analysis study aims to find answers to the following research questions:

1. What are the most common written grammatical errors made by fourth year EFL middle school learners?
2. What are the possible causes of these errors?

### **Research Methodology:**

The present research is a descriptive and exploratory attempt at investigating grammatical errors in English paragraphs written by fourth year middle school pupils in Biskra and examining EFL Middle school teachers' opinions about the pupils' grammatical errors in writing and what they advise on ways to improve their learners writing skill. In this study, error analysis research is used in order to analyze the fourth year EFL learners writing samples to identify their common grammatical errors as well as investigating their probable causes. Moreover, an interview was conducted with the EFL teachers in middle school to gather information about how they teach grammar and writing practices, and what they think are the shared types of grammatical errors made by their pupils in writing and their causes. The use of these two tools provides a more comprehensive insight on the

subject of the investigation. It is important to point out that this dissertation references and in-text citations are written according to MLA Style following the 7<sup>th</sup> edition version of the MLA guide (Trimmer ‘A Guide to MLA Documentation’).

### **Sample Design:**

#### **Population:**

The population of the study consists of the fourth year pupils of middle school and their English teachers at Mohamed Tahar Kaddouri Middle school Biskra.

#### **Teachers’ Sample**

Our sample consists of 2 teachers of English language from the whole population of 4 teachers , because they have 20 years of experience in teaching English and they are currently teaching fourth year level in Mohamed Tahar Kaddouri Middle school at Biskra.

Those 2 teachers are well aware about their pupils’ grammatical errors in writing and they can be reliable representatives to obtain full information that serves our investigation.

#### **Pupils’ Sample**

Our pupils’ sample is composed of 42 pupils who are chosen randomly from a population of about 85 of fourth year pupils of the academic year 2015-2016.

They have been chosen as participants because their teacher complain about the considerable number of grammatical errors in their writing since they are EFL beginners

### **Research Tools :**

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

The error analysis of the written paragraphs produced by fourth year Mohamed Tahar Kaddouri Middle school EFL learners at Biskra, which helps the researcher to figure out the common grammatical errors and the reasons of making these errors.

The conducted interview with the teachers of English language at Mohamed Tahar Kaddouri Middle school Biskra . Using the interview assists the researcher in finding out the teachers’ point of view about their learners’ grammatical errors in writing and the possible causes of these errors, which would support the researcher’s findings of the pupils’ samples analysis.

### **Structure of the study :**

This study is composed of three chapters .The first two chapters constitute the literature review. The first chapter is about the Errors and Error analysis . The second chapter talks about writing and grammatical errors in EFL. Then, the practical part is represented in the third chapter, which contains the analysis of both the pupils' paragraphs that were collected from classroom practices, and the data gathered from the teachers' interview.

### **Limitations of the Study :**

This study is limited to fourth year EFL learners and the English teachers at Mohamed Tahar Kaddouri middle school Biskra. This research dealt with a limited number of both pupils and linguistic aspects involved in writing due to the limitations of space and time. The limited number of the participants that might not enhance the generalizability of the findings.



**Chapter One :**  
**Errors and Error Analysis**  
**in EFL**

## **1.1.Introduction:**

Learner's error in Second language acquisition studies remains a critical issue in teaching foreign languages. Over the previous decades, many researchers carried out various investigations in order to define, identify, and categorize errors and determine the most effective methods to correct them. However, despite these efforts, learners still make errors in the target language they have been learning. The main goals of teaching English as a Foreign Language have been consistently focusing on the learners' ability to produce the TL appropriately and correctly. In this first chapter, we dealt with errors and error analysis in EFL by clarifying the distinction between mistake and error, and explaining the significance of errors, their types and sources (causes) and then, by describing error analysis and its procedures including the identification, the description and the explanation of errors along with error correction and its methods .

## **1.2.Mistakes Vs Errors:**

Since the publication of "The significance of learners' errors" article by Corder in 1967, a new concept of error in language learning has emerged in which the understanding and role of errors took on a different orientation .Whereas the conventional view of behaviorism sees the errors negatively as a product of imperfect learning and that they must be eliminated, Corder believes that errors are "important in and of themselves" (Gass and Selinker 102) .That is , these errors are clues revealing that the learning process is taking place and they depict the transition and development of a latent orderly system within the learner.

According to Argondizzo, Corder distinguishes between systematic and non systematic errors. The errors that are the result of lack of acquisition are the systematic errors , while the non systematic ones also called mistakes are the errors resulted from lack of learning(53) .

Corder explains that mistakes are not indications of deformity in the linguistic knowledge but rather they are random incorrect and accidental productions of language performance such as slips of the tongue or the pen. They happen usually because of memory lapses, tiredness, or strong emotions as anxiety, for when these mistakes occur, the learner is immediately aware of them and can correct them('Error Analysis and Interlanguage' 10).

On the other hand, errors cannot be self-corrected, because, as stated by Brown, they are conspicuous anomalies resulted from the learner's systematic competence level which is not yet developed to reach language proficiency of adult native

speakers('Principles of Language Teaching and Learning' 258). As simply defined by Larsen -Freeman and Long an error is a systematic deviation made by learners who have not yet mastered the rules of the L2 (129). Cohen asserts that these series of successive transitional dialects of second language acquisition, which are named by Nemser as approximative systems, by Corder as transitional competence and also by Selinker as interlanguage, are the main area of interest for linguists as well as teachers in order to understand how the second language learning process is proceeding and how its system is developing within the learner (107) .

Larsen -Freeman and Long explain that “the concept of interlanguage (IL) might better be understood if it is thought of as a continuum between the L1 and L2 along which all learners traverse. At any point along the continuum, the learners' language is systematic, i.e. rule-governed, and common to all learners, any difference being explicable by differences in their learning experience.” (131).

With regard to this distinction between errors and mistakes , Corder assures that it is difficult to determine what is a learner's mistake and what a learner's error is which needs more complex investigation and deep examination of errors in the interest of getting reliable samples that represent the state of the learner's language system .( “The Significance of Learners' Errors ”25)

### **1.3. Significance of Learner's Errors :**

As reported by Corder, there have been two schools of thought in respect of learners' errors in methodology studies. The first school focuses on the principle that a perfect teaching method is identified by the absence of errors in the learners' language, whereas the manifestation of errors is purely the result of the inadequacy of the teaching techniques. However, the second school emphasizes that errors are inevitable and will always occur in spite of the teachers' best efforts , as a consequence, teaching techniques should deal with errors subsequent to their occurrence ('Error Analysis and Interlanguage' 5-6).

The first school attempts to predict the errors by investigating the difficulties of learners in the system of the Second language by comparing it to their mother tongue system, then, “intensively drilling those aspects [difficulties] of L2 that comprise new habit is emphasized”. (Dulay and Burt 99-109) .But, according to Dulay and Burt in Richards (105) , many inquiries find that more than half of the learners' errors have no relation with L1 structure . Even more particularly, the learning process itself is the source of other

errors. These findings lead to the necessity to study and investigate these errors and their causes, and also to the rejection of habit theory and affirming that language learning is an active and creative process.

Thanks to the contribution of many linguists and educationalists such as : Dulay and Burt, Nemser, Selinker, Jain, Corder and finally Richards, the research in Second language errors of learners has clearly known a new dimension. Particularly, as mentioned by Corder ('Error Analysis and Interlanguage' 6) by shifting the emphasis away from a preoccupation with teaching towards a study of learning, their works are established on the notion that errors are representatives and proof of the degree of the learner's linguistic evolution in the Target Language learning process.

Corder explains that learner's errors provide evidence of the learned system of language at a specific part of the course even if he/she is applying some system that is not yet the right system of the TL. So learners errors are significant to the teacher, on the grounds that their analysis supply teachers with the necessary information about how distant the progress of their learners knowledge from the teaching objectives and what still to be taught. Through the description and classification of learners' errors, teachers can develop a perception of the language features which cause learning problems. Secondly , the examination of errors supports the researcher with evidence of the phases that a learner passes through in language learning process, and the strategies or procedures the learner is using in his discovery of the language ('Error Analysis and Interlanguage' 10-11). Finally, errors are necessary for the learner with the consideration that making of errors is a learning tool for him to use. In other words, "It is a way the learner has of testing his hypotheses about the nature of the language he is learning."(Corder 'Error Analysis and Interlanguage' 11). Thus, errors' making is a strategy applied by children to acquire their mother tongue as well as by learners to master a second language.

#### **1.4.Types of Errors:**

Different types of errors have been divided by Brown ('Principles of Language Teaching and Learning 262-263) into four major categories. The first category incorporates the errors that occur on the linguistic levels, as explained by Dulay, Burt and Krashen (146-147), in this category errors are distinguished according to either or both the language component or the particular constituent of the language component the error affects .The linguistic components refer to lexis and semantics (vocabulary and meaning), phonology (pronunciation), syntax or morphology(grammar), and discourse (style or

pragmatics). Language constituents are the elements that form each language component, in this case syntax is a language component and clauses, pronouns, verbs, adjectives are among its constituents.

Brown argues that lexical and semantic errors are errors in words or expressions which are the result of literal translation from MT of EFL learners such as the direct translation from Spanish in “He put an exam to the class” instead of “He administered an exam to the class”, or from assumed equivalence in meaning and faulty comprehension of distinctions both in the TL, like in the following sentences: “The well done of our country is our responsibility” instead of “the welfare of our country...” or “the clock now is ten” instead of “the time now is ten”. Moreover, Phonological errors are those which come from mispronunciation and lack of distinction between phonemes. For example, the EFL learners confusion between “P and B” or “sh and ch” phonemes as in “bollution and putterfly” instead of “pollution and butterfly” or “sheap and choes” instead of “cheap and shoes. Furthermore, Grammatical errors are errors in Syntax and morphology; as stated by Steinbach morphological errors are the result of non acceptable word formation within the given TL sentence pattern like in “beriched” instead of “enriched” and syntactic errors are due to non acceptable sentence formation within the given TL pattern such as errors in word order, subject-verb agreement, and the use of pronouns in English (‘Principles of Language Teaching and Learning’ 251).

For example “I wonder where are you going” instead of “I wonder where you are going”. Finally, Pragmatic errors reflect failure in recognition and use of language functions such as warning, request and greeting in TL discourse which consequently violate the socio-cultural conventions of the TL community (Rodrigues 311). The speaker for example the situation is warning, and the interlocutor is using advice.

The second category is named by Dulay, Burt and Krashen (150) as surface strategy taxonomy and by Corder (‘Error Analysis and Interlanguage’ 36) as the superficial classification of errors. It displays the ways the surface structures are changed in erroneous sentences which are four principal ways: omission, addition, substitution or selection, and ordering.

Firstly, errors in omission are the result of the absence of some element that should exist in a correct sentence such as the omission of “is” in “the girl very beautiful”. Secondly, errors in addition include the presence of an element that must not exist in a well formed sentence like in “We didn’t came yesterday”. Thirdly, errors in substitution also called misinformation or selection errors refer to the use of the wrong form of the

morpheme or the structure instead of the correct one like in “Do they be happy?”. Finally, errors in ordering occur when the elements presented in a sentence are correct but wrongly sequenced and inappropriately ordered as in “ what he is doing?”. (Corder ‘Error Analysis and Interlanguage’36; Ellis and Barkhuizen 61, Ellis ‘The Study of Second Language Acquisition’56).

Another category mentioned by Brown which comprises the distinction between errors according to their degree of interference with the comprehensibility of a text or a speech (Ferris 35). These errors are divided into global and local errors (‘Principles of Language Teaching and Learning’ 263).

Brown states that global errors hamper communication and cause its failure in the way they impede the learner from understanding some important aspects of the message like in “ It’s great hurry around ” which is difficult to interpret. However, local errors do not hurdle the message from being understood, generally by reason of the existence of few breaches and breakings of rules in one of sentence segments which makes it easier for the reader /hearer to speculate and deduce the intended meaning of the message. Such as “three sister” is a local error in “ My three sister are older than me” (‘Principles of Language Teaching and Learning’ 263).

According to Brown, the final error category includes the binary “domain and extent” as two connected dimensions of error. Domain is the arrangement or the ordering of linguistic unit from phoneme to discourse which should be considered as context for the error to be clear, on the other hand, extent is the arrangement or the ordering of linguistic unit that would have to be omitted, alternated, supplied or rearranged to fix the sentence(‘Principles of Language Teaching and Learning’ 263). This category is parallel with Corder’s overt and covert errors categorization (21). Overt errors are superficially ill formed and ungrammatical utterances at sentence level and covert errors are superficially well-formed and grammatical utterances at sentence level but not interpretable within the normal context of the target language communication.. For example, “I’m fine, thanks.” is a correct sentence but it is a covert error, when it is the answer to the question “How old are you?”

### **1.5. Sources of errors (causes) :**

For a complete analysis of erroneous production of EFL learners, the researcher must determine the sources of these errors which were called by (Norrish 21-33) as ‘causes of error’ in order to understand the learners’ cognitive and affective processes in relation

with the development of the Foreign Language system . As stated by Brown there are four main sources of errors ('Principles of Language Teaching and Learning' 265):

### **1.5.1. Interlingual Transfer:**

During the beginning of second language learning process, the learners rely on the only previous linguistic system of their native language in producing the target language because they are not yet familiar with its system (TL). Consequently, errors may occur from the interference of the MT and the transfer of some of its elements into learners utterances while speaking or writing the TL. As defined by Gass and Selinker: "Interlingual errors are those which can be attributed to the NL (i.e., they involve cross-linguistic comparisons)" (103). According to Richards and Sampson, the interlingual transfer is the initial factor that influences second language learners' system (105). It is considered as one of the main reasons for learners' errors in TL learning as reported in Dulay and Burt many research findings found that one third of the errors are derived from L1 interference (105).

It is necessary to note that transfer has two parts: negative and positive. Saville-Troike asserts that the negative transfer, which is explained above as interference, refers to the inappropriate use of L1 structure in L2 production. However, the positive transfer is rather facilitating because it occurs when the transferred L1 structure is similar to L2 structure which makes the first appropriate in L2 production, as an illustration, the plural morpheme "s" is used in both Spanish and English in "lenguajes and languages" (35).

### **1.5.2. Intralingual Transfer:**

Many studies (Dulay and Burt 105; Brown 'Principles of Language Teaching and Learning' 264-265) found that at initial stages of learning a second language, there is a great deal of L2 errors of learners which are derived from the influence of L1 structures (Interlingual Transfer). However, when the learners are beginning to learn gradually the structures of L2 , the majority of L2 errors which are manifested in learners' production are caused by the incorrect use of L2 rules which is called as 'interlingual transfer'. Thus, intralingual errors are those that are due to the language being learned and they reflect the mechanism of the universal learning strategies which are common to all learners regardless to their NL. (Gass and Selinker 103; Ellis and Barkhuizen 65). In other words, intralingual errors are considered developmental errors and often represent incomplete learning of L2 rules or overgeneralization of them ( Saville-Troike 39)

According to Richards, Intralingual Transfer involves the items produced by the learner which do not indicate the structure of MT, but generalizations based on limited

exposure to the TL. After the analysis of English errors made by various speakers of different unrelated languages, Richards conclusion comprises that error types subcategories are common to all these speakers as they develop their understanding of the English structures. Similar to first language learners, the second language learner attempts to infer the rules behind the data to which he/she has been previously exposed to, and may build up hypotheses that do not correlate with both the native language and the target language. For instance, throughout learning Russian, English subjects sometimes used a regular word order disparate from both Russian and English (6).

Researchers (Ellis 'The Study of Second Language Acquisition' 59; Ellis and Barkhuizen 65-66; Touchie 78-79) subdivide intralingual transfer causes to the following:

#### **1.5.2.1. Overgeneralization:**

It refers to the use of one form or structure in one situation by the FL learner and from this previous experience in TL, he/she extends its application incorrectly to other situations of TL. For example, many learners tend to omit the third person singular 's' under the heavy pressure of all other endless forms as in 'He go'. Usually, overgeneralization comprises formulating one deviant construction from two or more regular constructions such as: 'He can sings' formed from 'He can sing' and 'He sings'. In general, learners resort to use overgeneralization as a strategy to reduce their linguistic burden. (Ellis 'The Study of Second Language Acquisition' 59)

#### **1.5.2.2. Incomplete Application of Rules:**

Ellis states that it occurs when the learner fails to fully develop a structure with the appropriate rule of the TL. An example of incomplete application of rules can be demonstrated in question forms. EFL Learners usually form a question in the TL by adding the question word but they miss the correct word order such as: using the declarative word order in 'You like to sing' instead of using the correct interrogative order in 'Do you like to sing?' ('The Study of Second Language Acquisition' 59)

#### **1.5.2.3. False concepts hypothesized:**

They arise when the learners formulate erroneous hypotheses derived from incorrect understanding of distinctions in the target language. For example, some learners wrongly consider 'is' as the marker of the present tense, as in: 'He is talk to the teacher'. Equivalently, they consider 'was' as the past tense marker, as in: 'It was happened last night' (Ellis and Barkhuizen 65).



#### **1.5.2.4. Ignorance of Rule Restriction:**

It refers to the EFL learners failure to recognize restrictions of existing structures in the TL which would result the application of rules to situations where they do not apply. As an illustration, the wrong application of the pattern of verbs taking infinitival complements like: 'He asked/wanted/invited me to go' in 'He made me to rest' due to the ignorance of restrictions of this pattern utilization (Ellis and Barkhuizen 66).

#### **1.5.2.5. Fossilization:**

According to Ellis, the learners' grammar are apt to fossilize, when they stop developing their TL competence; as a consequence, they do not reach the grammar proficiency of native speakers. The production of errors representing development of early stages is typical of fossilized learners('Second Language Acquisition' 34).

A part of errors, particularly errors in pronunciation, remain for long periods and become difficult to get rid of. As an Example of fossilized errors, Arab EFL learners are the lack of distinction between two sounds 'p' and 'b' in English.

#### **1.5.2.6. Faulty Teaching:**

As explained by Ellis in his book 'The Study of Second Language Acquisition, Teacher-Induced errors occur when learners are led to make errors by nature of instruction (by the teacher, teaching materials, or the order of presentation) they have received. In other words, the way that the teacher gives explanations, definitions and examples and also prepares practices may mislead the learners in understanding the TL structures. In EFL grammar, for instance, the wrong use of 'any' in the negative form instead of using 'none' may be a result of the defective instructional explanation of this grammatical structure. Sometimes even teachers are influenced by their pupils' errors in the course of long duration instruction (60).

#### **1.5.3. Context of learning :**

Brown, in 'Principles of Language Teaching and Learning', asserts that context of learning is a main source of errors despite that it overlaps with both types of transfer. He distinguishes two kinds of context: the formal context which refers to classroom learning in schools under the guidance of the teacher and teaching materials, and the informal social context that implies inductive and untutored learning of the TL in its social environment (266).

He explains also that in an instructional context of SLA, learners' errors are the results of learners' incorrect hypotheses about the language and their inadequate

comprehension of its linguistic structures, which both probably are caused by the teacher's inaccurate explanation of a form ,or the incorrect presentation of a structure in a teaching material , or even by the mechanical memorization of a pattern. For example many learners are confused between 'point at' and 'point out' because of the closeness of the two vocabulary items . Classroom context may be characterized occasionally by the learners' inappropriate use of formal expressions of TL which is due to their (learners) attempt to employ what they read in scholarly books (266).

However, when the foreign language learning occurs naturally and informally in a sociolinguistic context of the TL, various dialects acquisition through unguided learning may lead to many learners' errors in the TL production. Like the case of a Japanese immigrant who moved to a US American city close to the Mexican borders, produced a mixture of Mexican American English and Standard English and Japanese accent also. He may use his Spanish Mexican dialect and make errors in communication with his teachers instead of using Standard English which is inappropriate (Brown 'Principles of Language Teaching and Learning'266).

#### **1.5.4.Communication strategies :**

A communication strategy in language learning is defined by Richards and Schmidt as "a way used to express a meaning in a second or foreign language, by a learner who has a limited command of the language". Due to the learners' limited knowledge of the TL, they usually use different communication strategies to deliver the meaning of their message as appropriate as possible. Avoidance may be one of these strategies. Learners avoid using a difficult word or structure by using more simpler and familiar structure which may evoke errors to be made. As an illustration, an EFL learner may avoid using relative clause when he is not sure about its rules and use two simple sentences instead as follows : " That's my building. I live there." Replacing "That's the building where I live." The use of paraphrasing, word coinage, circumlocution and other communication strategies that characterize the interlanguage of language learners can all be sources and causes of error (89).

#### **1.6. Error Analysis and its Procedures:**

In the late sixties, thanks to the popularity of Chomsky's theory of generative grammar, applied linguistics studies have known a shift to a more cognitive approach to SLA investigation. In 1967, Corder disputed the traditional notion that errors are completely random and fully explained in relation to the learner's L1; He believes that

errors are indications of the learners' trials to interpret an underlying rule governed system. Hence, they (errors) are evidence that the development of TL learners' grammar is taking place, even if it did not reach native-like proficiency. This increasing interest in learners' errors led to the emergence of error analysis approach (Jordan 204).

Error analysis (EA) comprises a set of procedures for identifying, describing and explaining learner errors. It is the study of the errors that occur in learners' speech or writing. Error Evaluation (EE) is a set of procedures for assessing corresponding seriousness of learners' errors. (Ellis and Barkhuizen 51)

This remedial work (EE) could be prepared depending on the types and repetitiveness of the errors. Error Analysis gained its importance from the comparison it synthesized between the errors the L2 learners made in producing the TL, and the TL system itself. So EA was primarily a tool and its main objective was pedagogical. However, this goal of helping to promote the effectiveness of the teaching methodology has been extended to other fields included in SLA research (Jordan 205).

In Ellis' 'The Study of Second Language Acquisition', Corder suggests the following steps in EA research (48):

#### **1.6.1. Collecting a sample of learner language:**

To conduct an EA investigation, the linguist or teacher should first choose the samples of learner's language and how to collect them for the analysis procedures. There are three types of EA according to the size of the sample. A large sample refers to gathering various samples of language production from a considerable number of learners for the purpose of assembling an inclusive record of errors, that represents the total population. A distinct sample comprises one sample of language production gathered from restricted number of learners. Whereas a coincidental sample refers to one sample of language production made by one lone learner. the majority of EA studies usually apply the distinct and coincidental sample rather the large sample because this latter's inconveniency. The disparity in learners' capacities, learning styles and strategies and background knowledge and other individual factors generated the need to collect well defined samples to have the appropriate reliability to operate the research. (Ellis' 'The Study of Second Language Acquisition' 49)

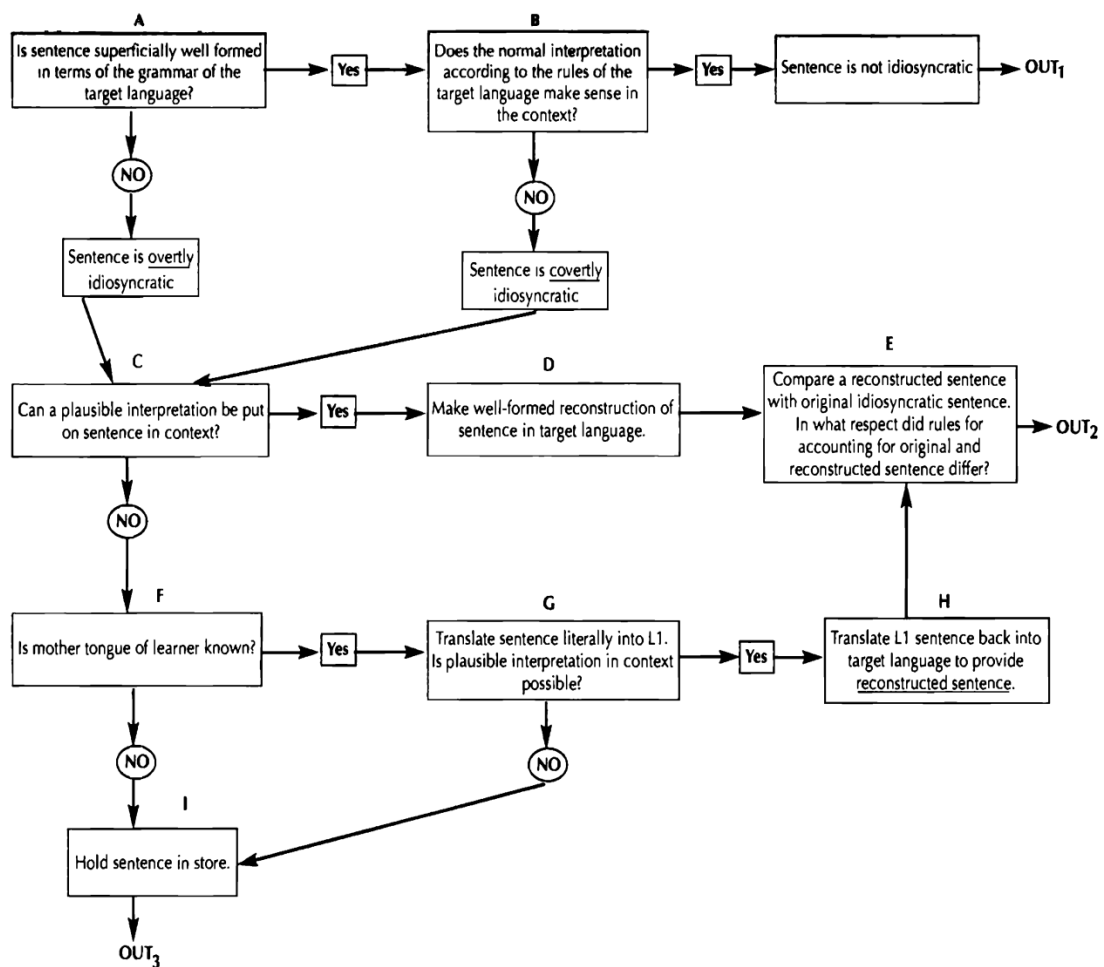
According to Saville-Troike, most samples of learner language used in EA involve information gathered from many learners who are answering to the equivalent task or test. Other studies employ samples from some learners that are gathered over a period of

time which may take from weeks to years to find out the arrangements of change in the occurrence of errors including extensive exposure to L2 and competency (39).

### **1.6.2. Identifying Errors:**

When the corpus of learners' language has been collected, the next step is to identify the errors in this corpus. First the distinction between error and mistake should be formed. As previously mentioned in the first part of this chapter, the systematic errors in competence caused by the lack of L2 knowledge are the target of EA investigation, not the accidental mistakes made in performance due to non concentration or fatigue. (Ellis' *The Study of Second Language Acquisition*'51)

In this step, the distinction between overt and covert errors should be also made. Overtly erroneous constructions are obviously ungrammatical at the sentence level. However, covertly errors in constructions are grammatically well-formed at the sentence level, yet it is not comprehensible at the discourse level in the situation of communication. Corder's model displayed in figure 1.1. reveals that if a plausible understanding can be made of the sentence in the situation of covert and overt errors, so a reconstruction of the sentence in the TL should be done in order to compare the reconstruction with the original idiosyncratic sentence and therefore to describe the differences between them both, if the analyst is familiar with native language of the learner, the model shows that the translation into L1 may be an implication of L1 interference as a probable source of errors. Sometimes the researcher can not analyze the idiosyncratic sentence because there is no reasonable interpretation of it (Out3). We can apply this model to the following example: Does Julie can dance? A- No, B- Yes, C- Can Julie dance?, E- Original sentence contains pre-posed 'do' auxiliary applicable to most verbs, but not to modal auxiliaries (Out2) (Brown *'Principles of Language Teaching and Learning'* 260-262).



**Figure1.1.: Corder’s Procedure for identifying errors in second language learner production data (Brown ‘Principles of Language Teaching and Learning’ 261).**

### 1.6.3. Description of the Error:

To describe the idiosyncratic sentences of learners appropriately, the researcher needs to take consideration of the surface properties of the learners’ utterances. The simplest type of descriptive classification is the one based on the linguistic categories (Ellis ‘The Study of Second Language Acquisition’ 54).

According to Saville-Troike, errors are usually categorized according to their language level (phonological, morphological, syntactic, semantic, etc), their linguistic category ( for example: auxiliary, passive sentence, negative constructions), or more specific linguistic elements ( for example: articles, preposition, verb forms) (39).

Ellis asserts that there is another way to identify the various manners in which the learners’ idiosyncratic sentences diverge from the reconstructed sentences in the TL .such

classifications as the one that includes omission ( errors by omitting an item which is necessary for the sentence to be grammatical) , misinformation (errors by replacing one grammatical structure in the place of another inappropriately), misordering (errors by putting the sentence in a wrong order), and addition (errors by adding an item to the sentence which is grammatically inappropriate) (‘Second Language Acquisition’18) .

Laurell in Huang draws the combination of the two previous taxonomies of interlanguage errors in the following table(25):

Grammatical subsystem	Sample error	Description	Category
Morphology	He was call. Why didn't you came to work?	Omission Addition	Developmental: past participle form not acquired Developmental: double marking of past tense
Syntax	What this is?	Misordering	Developmental: misordering of the verb
Phonology	Man is eborubing. (evolving)	Substitution and addition (/b/ is substituted for /v/, /r/ is for /l/; /u/ is added)	Interlingual: phonological interference from Japanese
Semantics	She is a sensible person.	Substitution (sensible for sensitive)	Interlingual: French lexical interference (French sensible =English sensitive)

**Table1.1. Laurell’s taxonomy of interlanguage errors (Huang 25).**

#### **1.6.4.Explanation of Errors:**

The explanation of learner’s error is mainly done to determine the source that caused this error. This EA step is the most important for SLA research since it represents an attempt to set up the possible processes responsible for L2 acquisition. (Ellis ‘The Study of Second Language Acquisition’57)

Saville-Troiike explains that there are two most likely causes of L2 errors which are interlingual factors resulting from L1 transfer and its negative interference, and interlingual factors which are traceable to the target language itself because of the misunderstanding or overgeneralization of L2 rules. The distinction between interlingual

and intralingual errors imply the comparison between L1 and L2 structures in order to find out the L1 transfer indication in learners produced structures of TL(39).

Ellis adds that some errors are considered universal demonstrating the learners' trials to experience the learning of L2 and use it in a simple way. EFL Learners generally make errors of omission in the articles 'a' and 'the' and the 's' of the plural . they also overgeneralize the rules that are easy for them to understand and process . both omission and overgeneralization are not related to L1 influence but to the L2 influence on the TL production of learners('Second Language Acquisition' 19).

### **1.7.Error Evaluation and Correction:**

While the previous EA steps of description and explanation of errors implied observing and investigating errors from the learner's perspective, Error Evaluation refers to the examination of the effect that errors have on the person addressed. This effect can be measured whether according to the addressee's understanding of the meaning of the learner's utterance, or conforming to the addressee's affective response to the errors. (Ellis 'The Study of Second Language Acquisition' 63)

From a pedagogical aspect, in order to realize the EA main purpose of helping learners acquire the TL, there is a necessity to evaluate errors. According to Ellis it is primordial to focus the error evaluation on more serious errors that interfere with the intelligibility and clearness of the learner's production of TL. Teachers should concentrate their error correction on these. He asserts that global errors which defy the whole structure of a sentence are very difficult to be understood, like in: 'The policeman was in this corner whistle...' because of the wrong structure of this example, it is hard to comprehend the intended meaning of the sentence. However, local errors do not interfere with understanding of the sentence meaning, but rather affects a single item in the sentence structure which makes it easy to be processed(Ellis 'Second Language Acquisition' 19-20). This study is focusing on the written error correction of EFL learners writing. According to Ferris there are contradictory views among SLA researchers in terms of whether error correction represented in teacher's feedback and formal grammar instruction, can support learners to ameliorate their L2 writing accuracy over time (20). Truscott in Chandler believes that all forms of error treatment for L2 learners' written production are not only ineffective but potentially harmful and should be abandoned (267).

Truscott argues that researchers have neglected the side effects of grammar correction on L2 writing namely its negative influence on students' attitudes, or its time and energy consuming issues in writing classes (328).

However, Ferris points out that despite the disparities in error type, individual students, and teacher feedback strategies, learners have been broadly producing more accurate and appropriate revisions of L2 as a reaction to their teachers' error correction. She supports her statement by demonstrating several studies in classroom research (Frantzen and Rissel's (1987), Fathman and Whalley's (1990), and Ferris's (1997)) that found evidence of the effectiveness of grammar correction on L2 writing and its positive influence on learners' successful changes to a more appropriate and accurate writing production of the TL(26).

As reported by Ferris, many teachers and scholars with the assumption that error correction is beneficial to learners and converge their interest primarily on attempting to single out the most efficient mechanisms and strategies in responding to error (error correction). Hence, multiple investigations of error correction examine the outcomes of various methods of feedback on learner's accuracy, rather than comparing the writings of learners that do not get any error feedback with those who do (29).

### **1.7.1. Methods of Written Error Correction:**

Hendrickson asserts that in spite of the various applied research on second language learning to supply more knowledge on error correction in foreign language teaching, teachers should continue applying and testing different feedback strategies in their classrooms. Due to the diversity in teaching and learning styles and objectives, it is more helpful to use varied strategies and methods of error correction than to apply a single method (220).

Ferris distinguishes two common approaches to error correction. The unfocused (comprehensive) feedback is designed for distinct error types or patterns and correction of the overall problems detected in the written production without a subjective bias. In this case, some studies implement feedback on a different number of error categories decided in advance, like: articles or prepositions. These categories are used differently from a small restricted number of two or three types of errors into five to seven broadly drawn categories such as verbs, noun endings, or sentence structure to a broad range of as many as 15 categories. Additionally, the focused (selective) feedback refers to selecting the learners' most repeated error patterns in TL writing production, and providing systematic



feedback (and supplementary instruction) on those error patterns, and tracking students' progress over time (30).

Hendrickson notes that the comprehensive error correction as a more time consuming approach would aggravate teachers' as well as learners' frustration, Particularly, when teachers are tired of the repetitious correction of similar errors of the same learner for a long duration, just as the learners when they are embarrassed and disappointed after seeing the set of marginal correction comments and crosses on their writing copies. On the other hand , a selective approach to error correction, designed to the learner's internal level of linguistic development, might be beneficial to learners in both cognitive and affective terms (216) .

Ferris further asserts that even if a comprehensive approach to error feedback is relatively unfocused and broad, may be more suitable for the learners' long term objectives in Foreign language acquisition better than a focused and selective approach (31).

Most of research studies on the comparative effectiveness of the various written error correction in learners writings are dominated by the examination whether explicit or (direct) forms of feedback are more efficient than implicit (indirect) types (Bitchener and Ferris 64).

#### **1.7.1.1.Explicit (direct) Written Error Correction:**

It has been defined as that method which provides forms of explicit correction of linguistic structure near or on top of the linguistic error and frequently includes erasing irrelevant words, phrases or morphemes, inserting missing grammatical items (word, phrase, or morpheme) and/or supplying the correct form or structure directly. Currently, written meta-linguistic explanation (to provide grammatical rules and examples of their correct use) has been incorporated and, occasionally, oral form-focused instruction as well (Bitchener and Ferris 65).

If learners are reexamining or editing their copies after being corrected by the teacher, they are expected simply to reproduce the teacher's recommended corrections in their written works (Ferris 31-32).

Hendrickson confirms what was previously mentioned in his following quotation:

Direct correction treatments not only indicate the presence or location of errors in a sentence, but also provide clues or tips on how students can correct their own errors. I use direct treatments whenever I assume that students will not be able to correct certain errors if I merely identified them; I have found that providing this additional, more specific feedback often leads students to provide solutions to their errors (218).

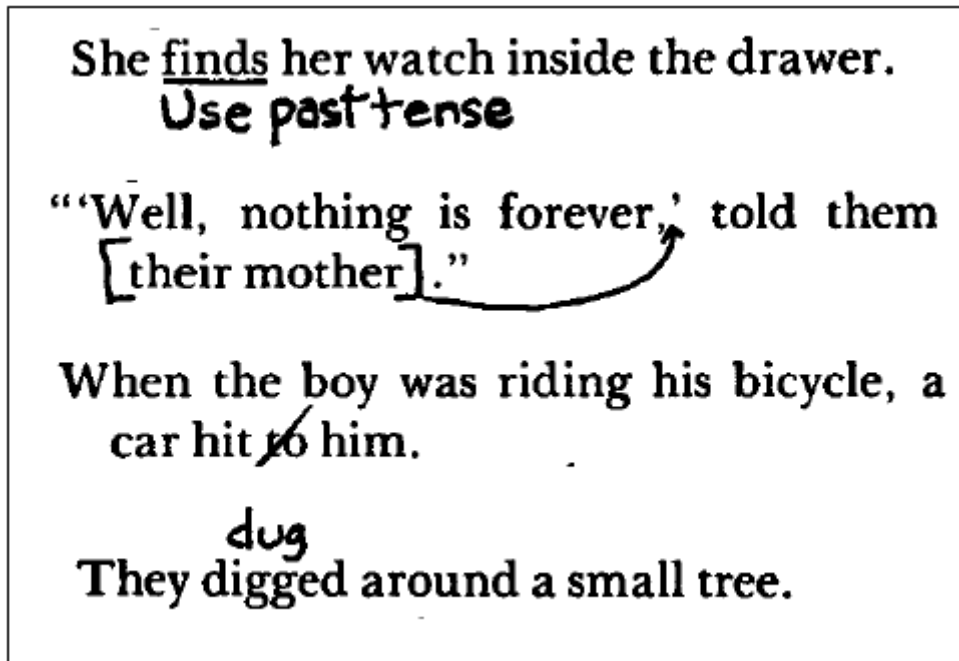


Figure 1.2. : Example of Explicit (direct) Error Correction. (Hendrickson 218-219)

#### 1.7.1.2. Implicit (indirect) Written Error Correction:

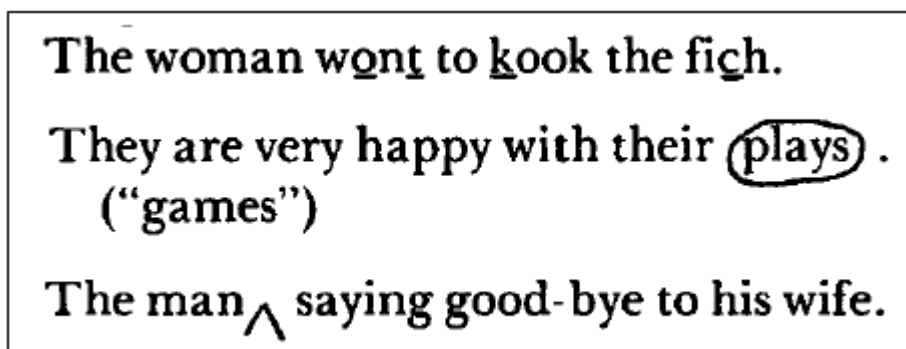
Indirect feedback refers to the method used by the teacher that indicates implicitly an error has been produced in writing through marking it and leaving it to the learner to solve the problem and correct it. The indirect feedback is generally more beneficial to learners because it engages the learner in more cognitive reflection, and problem-solving processing (Ferris 32). In other words, indirect correction treatments are applied when the students are able to discover an acceptable solution for a particular error by reconsidering the error itself or by using the appropriate self-correction references (Hendrickson 218).

The implicit error correction can be used in two modes whether by registering on the margin the quantity of errors in each line or by circling or underlining the detected errors. It may also include the provision of a code to represent the category of error (Bitchener and Ferris 65).

Ferris argues that many studies supplied evidence that indirect error correction is equally beneficial as the direct error correction, yet students still prefer the direct treatment strategies to employ them in their revisions of writing (32).

Teachers must be aware of and explore a more broad collection of error correction strategies. For example, un-coded error correction that hints to learners the location of their errors, could be used with competent learners, urging them to locate and correct errors.

Moreover, teachers could use direct feedback for errors that could be handled in self-correction like: vocabulary and syntax errors, and use this strategy with less competent learners (Lee 301).



**Figure 1.3. : Example of Implicit (Indirect) Error Correction (Hendrickson 218).**

### **1.7.2. Error Correction Codes:**

According to Ellis, the most common Metalinguistic Corrective Feedback is the use of error codes. These codes refer to the abbreviated labels for different kinds of errors which can be placed over the location of the error in the text or in the margin. When the error code is positioned in the margin, the precise location of the error may or may not be exhibited which requires from the learner to first locate the error and then work out the correction (figure.1.5.). On the other hand, when the correction code is situated on the error location, the learner must figure out the necessary correction from the provided clue (figure1.4.). The prominent problem in error codes is how delicate and detailed the categories should be. For instance, teachers wonder whether they should use a single category for articles or separate categories for definite and indefinite articles. The majority of the error codes used in research and language teaching practices apply broad categories. Though, there have been numerous studies that compared using error codes with other types of written Corrective Feedback (Lalande, Robb et al, Ferris, Ferris and Roberts ) but the overall findings have very limited evidence to prove that error codes help learners to be more accurate over time in their writing and it would also seem that they are no more effective than other types of error correction techniques in helping learners to self-editing(“A Typology of Written Corrective Feedback Types” 100-101).

Corpuz explains that the use of error correction codes as another implicit written error correction, consists of employing symbols such as: ‘[ ]’ for missing words or ‘( )’ for

added words, and abbreviations like: ‘SIV’ for ‘Subject Verb Agreement’ or ‘pl/sing’ for ‘plural/singular’ to notify the L2 learner about the location and kind of error(34) .

Bitchener and Ferris emphasize that teachers should ensure that any corrections made are legible and clear and that any correction codes are used consistently and clearly explained to the learners (152). Besides, teachers should maintain communication, where possible, with their learners’ tutors by providing error code keys so that the tutor can understand the larger classroom context. Thus, that these correction codes should be unified between them (157).

The following example demonstrates some of other correction codes used by teachers:

<i>AGR</i>	<i>PRO</i>
Everyone <u>have</u> been a liar once in <u>their</u> life. People who lie intentionally to	
	<i>COM</i>
harm others are bad <u>people and</u> their lies are harmful too. However, there are lies	
	<i>WC</i>
that are <u>done</u> with good intention. So, there are times that lies are appropriate. A lie	
	<i>VF</i>
is either a good or bad one <u>base</u> upon the liar’s intention. Only one person can really tell whether a lie is intended to harm or do good.	
<b>KEY to Error Codes:</b>	
AGR = Subject-verb Agreement	
PRO = Pronoun Reference	
COM = Comma	
WC = Word Choice	
VF = Verb Form	

**Figure 1.4.: Example 1 of Error Correction Codes (Bitchener and Ferris 168).**

Art. x 3; WW	A dog stole bone from butcher. He escaped with having bone.
Prep.; art.	When the dog was going through bridge over the river he
Art.	found dog in the river.

(Pre= preposition; ww = wrong word; art = article)

**Figure 1.5.: Example 2 of Error Correction Codes (Ellis “A Typology of Written Corrective Feedback Types” 101).**

## **1.8.Conclusion:**

This chapter was mainly aimed to explain the main concepts of errors and error analysis procedures according to Teaching EFL studies. The researcher commenced the chapter by the distinction of mistakes and errors and then, moved to the explication of the significance, types, sources (causes) of errors. In addition, the chapter also introduced errors analysis as a investigation tool and brought out its procedures in details containing the identification, the description, and explanation of errors as well as the error correction operation and its different methods. To make the study more specific and aimed to one point, elements related to writing as a prominent EFL skill and grammar as one of its main components are going to be explored in the next chapter.

**Chapter Two:**  
**Writing and Grammatical**  
**Errors in EFL**

## **2.1.Introduction:**

Writing skill and grammatical competence are both interrelated basic elements of mastering any foreign language .In the course of second language acquisition research, many studies try to find out the influence that grammatical competence has on the writing skill in learning the English language especially investigating the different types of grammatical errors and their causes. This chapter addresses the two language elements writing and grammar .It consists the definition of writing skill and explanation of its main component among them grammar .This latter is also defined and its main teaching methods are explained. Furthermore, grammar and writing under CBA approach are also clarified for the sake of this research which deals with EFL learners under CBA approach. Moreover, the main types of grammatical errors in EFL writing and their influence on it are both explicated.

## **2.2. Definition of the Writing Skill:**

According to Zamel, the act of writing as complex as a meaning making, purposeful, evolving, recursive, dialogic, tentative, fluid, exploratory process (463).

The writing skill seems to be the hardest of the skills, even for native speakers of a language, because it requires not only the knowledge of graphic patterns of speech, but the development of ideas and to be able to reflect it in a structured way. Just as Byrne asserts “... writing is clearly much more than the production of graphic symbols ... The symbols have to be arranged according to certain conventions to form words, and words have to be arranged to form sentences ...” (13).

The writing system is defined by Coulmas as well, as a set of visible or tactile signs used to represent units of language in a systematic way, with the purpose of recording messages which can be retrieved by everyone who knows the language in question and the rules by virtue of which its units are encoded in the writing system (560).

The act of writing is less spontaneous and more permanent in comparison with speaking for the lack of information, since there is no interaction writer and the audience. “For this reason the conventions of writing tend to be less flexible than those of conversation, and the language which is used tends to be standardised” (Broughton,et al. 116).

Omaggio Hadley considers writing as a continuum of activities that range from the more mechanical or formal aspects of writing down on the one end to the more complex act of composing on the other end. According to her, writing requires composing,

which implies the ability either to tell or retell pieces of information in the form of narratives or description, or to transform information into new texts, as in expository or argumentative writing (291).

Furthermore, in Brindley’s Teaching English, Cox states: “Written language serves many purposes both for individuals and for society as a whole, and is not limited to the communication of information. For the individual author, writing can have cognitive functions in clarifying and supporting thought... Such writing is essentially private. At the level of whole societies, written language serves the functions of record keeping and of storing both information and literary works” (151).

Writing necessitates mental processing in order to encode messages which carry the writer’s thoughts for communication needs. For this it must activate the passive knowledge of structure and vocabulary which have been developed in listening and reading skills. In this sense, the proficiency of writing skill requires from students a more complete control of the elements of language.

### 2.3. Components of Writing:

According to Raimes’s diagram displayed below in figure (2.1.), the writer should take into account many points and deal with them in order to produce a composition. These points are the features that determine the success of shaping a good writing (6).

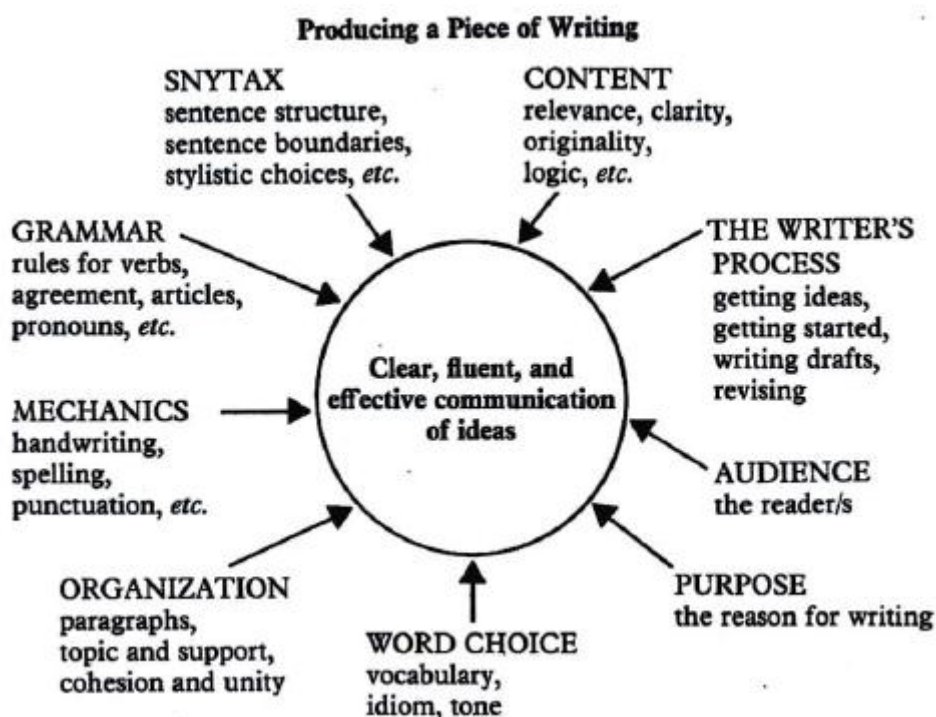
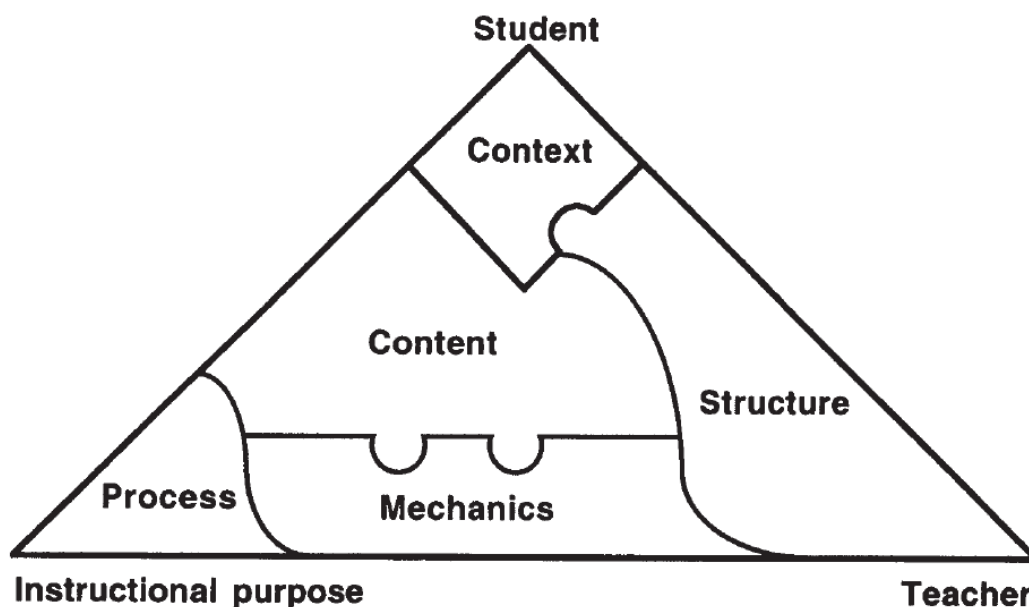


Figure 2.1: Producing a Piece of Writing (Raimes 6).



Correspondently, Bratcher and Ryan indicate that to grade writing in ESL classroom, teachers should depict the required objectives for the students writing which are: context, content, structure, mechanics and process. Even if these objectives are dealt with separately, they are closely interrelated and impact one another. For example, purpose often determines audience and audience often determines grammatical, or mechanical, choices (19). Hence, these objectives would serve as pieces of the writing puzzle portrayed in the following figure (2.2.):



**Fig. 2.2. The Pieces of the Writing Puzzle ( Bratcher and Ryan 20).**

However, it is necessary to mention that grammar have been dealt with as a separate component from the mechanics of writing in this study because of its considerable importance in language writing supported by Raimes previous diagram (figure 2.1.).

### **2.3.1. Context:**

Bratcher and Ryan define context as the situation that creates and controls writing: reader, purpose, and writer’s stance or style (20).

They explain that the reader for a student’s writing may be a parent, a teacher, a friend, or simply the student himself or herself. The shape and the style of the composition are determined by the audience intended for. In other words, the reader influences tremendously the manner how the writing will be handled. For instance, when writing a message to a friend, the writer may neglect many aspects of formal language such as spelling, grammatical rules, this casual note can even be written on scratch paper in pencil or crayon. In contrast, the same writer needs to give importance to accuracy and neatness

in language structure while passing an official test to meet the requirements of the teachers as the audience. Moreover, the purpose for which the writer is writing will impose certain decisions about the writing. That is a student who is writing a letter to a parent asking for money to take on a field trip will need more explanation and details to state whereas he/she would be more brief in writing a letter thanking the parent for the money after the trip is over. The remaining part of the context of the writing that controls decision making is the stance or style of the writer, his or her voice in relationship to the audience and/or the content of the writing(20).

Kane distinguishes two types of style. On one hand, style on its broadest sense is the total choices of words and expressions arranged by the writer. The suitability of these choices are determined by their appropriateness to the writer's purpose. On the other hand, though style could be used as a term to praise a writer's style, it could designate more narrowly a distinct manner exclusive to an individual or trait of a group or profession such as "Hemingway's style," or "an academic style". In writing, style is not absolute, but it is rather flexible and unique to each writer, however, there is some ideal manner of writing at which all of us should aim respecting the essence of writing without overuse of embellishment (11-12).

### **2.3.2. Content:**

Content involves the circumstantial data, perception and thoughts that the writer employs in producing a piece of writing. That is what Kubota mentioned in Silva and Matsuda as effective supporting details and counter opinions (195).

Bratcher and Ryan assert that the content includes main idea articulation, use of details, and completeness of communication about ideas and/or events being discussed in the writing. Content concerns should not be ignored even at beginners' level in writing.

They explain that main idea is an advanced thinking skill which would require complicated synthesis of details. Even if it seems intuitive to adults, teaching students to express the purpose or theme of their writing is sometimes intricate to understand. So Students need to practice more in finding and expressing main ideas. Indeed, some learners may describe the details extensively of a trip they were gone to, but may neglect to mention the purpose of the trip, or they may write a letter to the judges of a competition arguing that should win because their presentation is the "best" without giving enough details and arguments to support their claim. Students also frequently need help in making

their writing complete, for example, young learners often believe that other people (especially adults) can read their minds, thus eliminating the necessity for explanation (21).

### **2.3.3. Structure:**

Bratcher and Ryan define the term structure as the organization of a piece of writing: how the parts of writing (sentences, paragraphs, chapters) convey meaning by their order. The well structured writing should be well organized, logically sequenced, and cohesive and its ideas clearly stated and supported (24). According to Brown the appropriate organization of a composition includes effectiveness of introduction, logical sequence of ideas and conclusion, all of them appropriate in length ('Teaching by Principles' 357).

As reported by Bratcher and Ryan, many different structures in writing which vary according to their genre. Chronological order, order of importance, comparison and contrast, and newspaper editorial are all examples of common structures. For instance, short fiction and personal narratives generally make use of chronological structures. Poetry often follows particular patterns based on rhyme or shape or word structures. Essays usually follow a main idea-supporting information structure, while the informative essays depend more heavily on logical arguments, the persuasive essays depend more heavily on emotional arguments. At beginners' level, writers begin to learn that organization is important to help readers understand their content. As they work, these young writers begin to learn to use some of the more common structures found in writing. These structures make writing easier for them such as story maps, and genre guidelines which help them focus and organize what they want to say (24-26) .

### **2.3.4. The Writing Process:**

Generally, The process of writing, in addition as being simply putting words on paper, has three steps: thinking about it, doing it, and doing it again (and again and again, as often as time will allow and patience will endure) (Kane 17).

Clark asserts in her book 'Concepts in Composition' that it was prominent during the early days of the process movement that the writing process consisted a series of sequence, discrete stages sometimes called " planning, drafting , and revising" although they are often referred to recently as "prewriting , writing and rewriting" . This model was based on the idea that writing is a reflection of what already has been formulated in the mind of the writer and, suggested that writing can occur only after the main ideas are in place. According to this model, the writer's discovery and creativity is used on how to say

the ideas that have been discovered, not in discovering and selecting those ideas which implies that the writing process is developed in linear order (7).

However, Zamel's studies point out that writing in one's native language is considerably like composing in a foreign language follows a non-linear, exploratory, and generative process whereby writers discover and reformulate their ideas as they attempt to approximate meaning (165).

Thus, writers write moving back and forth between the prewriting, writing, and revision stages as the text emerges (Clark 8), which lead to divide the writing process into the following stages:

#### **2.3.4.1. Prewriting:**

Prewriting is the initial stage of writing in which the writer start by jotting down ideas related to the subject of writing that helps gathering thoughts and choosing a direction before creating the first draft. As it is referred by Hedge as a planning stage includes inviting ideas and suggestions for content, and making decisions on such issues as length, theme, etc (32). She adds that the skilled writer should firstly be aware of both the purpose and the audience of the composition, namely a writing context in order to explore possible content and planning outlines (52-53).

Bratcher and Ryan note that prewriting happens before a rough draft ever occurs. It includes brainstorming, discussions, drawing, dramatization, listening, reading, observing, researching, selecting a topic, and identifying the context of the writing. Most theorists agree that well over 50 percent of writing time is devoted to some form of prewriting (28).

Brown also supposes that prewriting stage encourages the generation of ideas which would necessitate reading extensively about the topic, skimming and scanning relevant passages, using the techniques of brainstorming, listing and clustering, discussing a topic, a question, or probes, and applying free-writing ('Principles by Teaching' 348).

All these previous techniques and strategies are adopted to organize thoughts as a warming up and preparation for the next stage of drafting.

#### **2.3.4.2. Drafting:**

In drafting stage, the writer creates a preliminary version of his/her writing and a first attempt to visualize this composition according to the ideas and information already gathered in the prewriting stage. During this phase, the writer composes freely without giving importance to mechanics, just keeping focused on content.

“Drafting begins when pencil hits paper and sentences begin to be composed. It includes freewriting, reading what has been written, and deciding what to do next” (Bratcher and Ryan 29).

As reported by Kane A draft is an early version of a piece of writing which is mostly not composed in an appropriate manner as a the first try. We must write and rewrite. These initial efforts called drafts are the better way to get a successful final version. Drafting is similar to free writing in keeping writing without worrying about superficial mistakes since it is not the end product; it is rather tentative and imperfect. Inasmuch as that writing becomes impossible in trying to do it one polished sentence at a time, since much effort and time would be lost looking for perfection. The main purpose of this stage is to develop ideas and to work out a structure, not pursuing minor goals as proper spelling, conventional punctuation. These would be handled later in revising stage(34).

#### **2.3.4.3. Revising:**

Revising occurs when a writer rereads a draft for ideas, to alter it whether by adding or omitting expressions or words in order to make it better (Bratcher and Ryan 29). “Revising might take place while you are drafting or after you have finished a draft.” (Brown and Hood 20). Content and structure concerns are addressed in the revising stage, most often with the help of peer readers or the writer him/herself as a reviser becomes a reader expecting perfection, though in both stages, there is creativity, revision is more thoughtful and critical than Drafting (Bratcher and Ryan 29; Kane 34). To revise effectively, the writer needs to read slowly and attentively to discover the lapses and mistakes in meaning and grammar. Reading aloud the draft is an effective technique (but not in all occasions) that gives the opportunity to the writer to review his/her work with objectivity which successful revision requires. Moreover, hearing the articulation of writing would contribute by detecting awkwardness in sentence structure or repetition of expressions that the eyes failed to see (Kane 34).

#### **2.3.4.4. Proofreading:**

Proofreading aims attention at random mistakes. Even if the work has been revised in the previous stage, sometimes because of computer error, slips of the pen, fatigue, carelessness, or oversight, it is important to go through the paper one last time to catch these random mistakes. It involves checking for grammatical, spelling, and

mechanical errors, which may include problems with verb tense, subject-verb agreement, parallel structure, sentence completion, alternate spellings, capitalization, and punctuation.

This stage is considered by Bratcher and Ryan as editing .It” focuses on sentence structure, word choice, and usage and mechanics. Most often it includes both attempts at self-editing and the help of an outside editor. Once editing is complete, the student generally rewrites and proofreads the final draft for mistakes in copying” (29).

#### **2.3.4.5. Publishing:**

The main aim of this stage is preparing a piece of writing so that it can be read, understood, and enjoyed by the public. Brown that after proofreading the writer should rewrite the final draft and go over it carefully to see if the language is correct and the message seem complete and understandable in order to submit or publish it(‘ Teaching by Principles’ 354).

According to Bratcher and Ryan, Publishing stage eventualizes sharing the final draft. There are many different ways that the teacher can provide to publish student work: by displaying it on a bulletin board, by entering it in a contest, by sending it home to parents, , by reading it to the whole class from an author’s chair, etc (29).

Kane described the final copy as it should always be neat and legible, to point it out the margins should be kept of an inch or more to make the writing well arranged. If the written work is typed, the writer should be careful of typing mistakes but if he/she using handwriting, he/she should take time to write legibly; at least the writing is expected to be readable (55) .

#### **2.3.5. Mechanics:**

The mechanics of writing are critical components of learning to write. Kane explains that in composition ‘mechanics’ refers to the appearance of words, to how they are spelled or arranged on paper. The fact that the first word of a paragraph is usually indented, for example, is a matter of mechanics. These rules gathered under the scope or writing mechanics are the result of centuries of experience in order to make writing more consistent and clear in an efficient way (15).

The most significant mechanics of writing competency are: handwriting ,spelling punctuation.

### **2.3.5.1. Handwriting:**

Although the majority of nowadays written documents are typed on computer keyboard using word processing software, handwriting is still necessary in situations such as in writing notes, memos, and journals, and it is sometimes even compulsory like in passing official exams and filling application forms (Harmer 'How to Teach Writing' 44; Harmer 'Practice of English Language Teaching' 323).

Handwriting can be challenging for ESL learners especially for those who are brought up in Asian and Arabic backgrounds. The disparities between their native languages script and the roman cursive lettering present a number of problems.

Harmer indicates some areas of complication for non native speakers in shaping English letters. The size of individual letters in a word or a text may be a problem if the capitals and non-capital equivalents are used wrongly. Besides, many students whose L1 is written from right to left, the opposite direction of western script, would face predicament of perception and necessitate different position for arm in writing L2 ('How to Teach Writing' 44-45).

### **2.3.5.2. Spelling:**

English spelling is irregular which makes it difficult for ESL learners to master. The English language is lacking spelling sound correspondence since it has many words that has the same sounds but are spelt differently like in *threw* and *through* which are pronounced as /θru:/ and other words that has the same spelling but are pronounced differently as in *through* and *trough* /trʌf/. As Harmer stated that Learners of English need to be aware about how we use different spellings to distinguish between homophones. Pairs of words that sound identical –like *sun* and *son*, *sew* and *so* but are immediately differentiated in writing ('How to Teach Writing' 46).

Despite that English spelling is complex, it has usually clear rules with some specific exceptions. For instance the 'gh' at the end of words is silent but this rule is broken by words like 'enough'. There are other facilitators for ESL learners to make English easy for them to read. As an illustration, word roots are always recognizable even after adding prefixes and suffixes. It is easy to perceive the connection between 'sing' and 'singing', or between 'believe' and 'disbelieve' or 'misbelieve' (Harmer 'How to Teach Writing' 46).

### **2.3.5.3 - Punctuation:**

Kane believes that punctuation is a mixture of absolute rules, general conventions, and individual options signaling the grammatical or logical structure of the sentence. These rules and conventions are agreed upon for the purpose of helping readers to understand what was written (379-380).

Nevertheless, many learners tend to consider punctuation as something that can be done mechanically and as an additional part of the writing system. Because even if the conventions governing the use of punctuation like comma, semi-colon and dash which are sufficiently well established, they are not standardized and there is great variation both in how they are used and the extent to which they are used (Byrne 16).

As illustrated by Harmer Such differences in punctuation conventions among communities are easily seen in the different punctuation rules for the quotation of direct speech which different languages use, or the way in which many writers use commas instead of or as much as full stops, although comma overuse is frowned on by many English-language writers and editors ('Practice of English Language Teaching' 325).

### **2.3.6. Grammar:**

ESL students who wish to be proficient performers of language, whether in spoken or in written forms, would generally need help in understanding and grasp the aspects of grammatical manifestations and variations. Dykes in her book 'Grammar for Everyone' states that some people may have received no grammar instruction at all; others may have been offered it in a random fashion, concealing its true function. The truth is that Grammar provides a whole cohesive system concerning the formation and transmission of language for appropriate use. So it is necessary for teachers and students to investigate and understand more about grammar (4).

#### **2.3.6.1. Definition of grammar:**

Williams in Clark's Concepts in Composition asserts that although grammar is a central concern in writing classes, teachers training in the subject does not receive much efforts. Moreover, our understanding of what constitutes grammar is clouded by the fact that there are various definitions of grammar. Some people define grammar as the "eight parts of speech" which are the words we use for labeling language, such a noun, verb, and preposition. Others define it as how we use words in sentences, such as subject and object. However, linguists define grammar as syntax, or the order of words in the natural sentences we construct (269).



According to Thornbury, all language in use can be analyzed at these four levels known as language forms: text, sentence, word and sound. The study of grammar consists, in part, looking at the way these forms are arranged and patterned (1).

In other words , Grammar is conventionally seen as the study of the syntax and morphology of sentences. That is, it is the investigation of both the way words are chained together in a particular order as well as what kind of words that fit into any one link in the chain. For example the order of the subject and verb is different in a question from in an affirmative statement (Thornbury 2).

To put it simply, Grammar describes how we combine, organize, and change words and parts of words to make meaning and how we use rules for this description.

#### **2.3.6.2. Teaching grammar:**

As a return to the interest in grammar instruction in current language syllabuses, the communicative teaching approach involves the generalization of grammatical terms, and stressed the function that language performs in context. Teachers have to know this new role of grammar in their teaching methodology.

Most teachers have their own favorite grammar teaching activities and will often use these for their students to learn a particular structure of grammar. However, it is more useful and effective for teachers to be familiar with various ways to teach grammar to provide their learners with more opportunities to practice language forms and engage them in effective tasks as well.

#### **2.2.6.2.1. Grammar under the Competency –Based Approach:**

Hedge asserts that in a communicative and fluency oriented environment, ESL instruction is conducted without conscious focus on language forms. This methodology which presented grammatical items in a controlled sequence certainly led to put grammar in a position of low priority. learners' accurate production of the English language leading to the implication of grammar-based knowledge and grammar-based practice as part of classroom methodology. In addition, this methodology takes into consideration the issue of usefulness of focused and unfocused activities according to the different learners' style and strategies. The attempts to integrate grammar teaching into a communicative methodology are displayed in the forms that teaching should take. And these imply the choice of

grammatical structures to present kinds of grammatical description to use in context, and the use of an inductive or a deductive approach according to the difficulty, the role of practice, and forms of practice that are appropriate for different types of learner. It is important to hold in mind, the strong relationship between grammar and vocabulary has become a key concern in current linguistic thinking and has implications for the design of materials (143-145).

Competency-Based approach to teaching EFL is established on functional and interactional principles of language. It aims to teach language in connection with social contexts and situations in which it is used. CBA focuses on language as a medium of communication to achieve specific goals and purposes; consequently, it is employed as a language teaching model that covers particular needs and handles different roles of the learners in various real life situations. Accordingly, the language skills they need can be properly foreseen and deduced. For this reason, syllabus competencies and teaching learning units can be prepared and organized through predicting the possible structures and vocabulary that learners could face in real world cases.(Richards and Rodgers 143).

Armstrong in Chelli and Khouni explains that competence as a completely human quality has been condensed to competencies which are a series of distinct activities possessed by individuals, the essential skills, knowledge and understanding to function and behave effectively (93).

Besides, he further asserts that competency is about the behaviors in which the person is competent but competence refers to areas of work at which the individual behaves competently (161).

As a functional approach, CBA emphasizes the semantic and communicative perspective rather than solely the grammatical characteristics of language which would entail a designation and arrangement of language teaching content based on categories of meaning and function instead of elements of structure and grammar (Richards and Rodgers24).

As reported by Bekkar, the Algerian ministry of education is putting into practice a newly approach named Competency Based Approach which is closely linked with the Task Based Approach (TBA) (3). In fact, TBA reinforces the principle that grammar and other dimensions of communicative language use can be developed by engaging learners in tasks that require them to focus on language form as well as language use (Richards 89).

As stated by Scott-Conley in the Guide to the Curriculum for MS4:

“The Algerian English Framework is a comprehensive, general description of the expected level of attainment of each of the competences for each grade level and across grade levels...The aim is for Algerian pupils to become independent users of English by the end of the seven years of English instruction.”

In CBA, grammar is considered one of the sub-competencies that compose the linguistic competence of the foreign language .This latter is developed and instructed to EFL learners in CBA curriculum along with the other five key and basis competences: autonomous, interactive, social, strategic and pragmatic competences.(Chelli “The Competency-Based Approach in Algeria” 9-10)

According to Benadla, CBA is designed to ameliorate EFL teaching through making the learners able to communicate together with using their linguistic knowledge dynamically. From their first year of the middle school education, Learners are disciplined and schooled to interact in oral and written form. According to CBA fundamentals, They must skillfully manage language functions where the used linguistic forms are contextualized, integrated and interpreted implicitly in EFL teaching courses. , they are subjected to oral presentations as well as written texts in which they discover diverse functions and various linguistic forms which they would reproduce afterwards. They take their own decisions in learning so that they should manage how to learn. They are exposed to other cultures and are trained to tolerate them as a main characteristic of globalization. The English syllabus for the middle school four years aims at achieving linguistic, methodological and cultural objectives (160).

#### **2.3.6.2.2.Methods to teach grammar:**

With the influence of technological knowledge explosion on school and classroom activities, the learner is no longer capable of understanding and remembering everything which lead to focus on understanding rather than memorizing in preparing syllabuses. In current teaching practice, teachers use inductive and deductive approaches in order to achieve the previous goal (Stoep and Louw 227).

##### **2.3.6.2.2.1. The deductive method:**

Learners usually apply rules they already know to understand the meaning of what they hear or formulate of what they want to say. This would lead to the inappropriate application other more complex rules such as the misuse of inverted interrogative word order, like in:-Can you tell me where is the station? Or -She doesn't know where are they.

Many adults report the need to have the language system laid out explicitly with rules from which they can work deductively (Hedge ‘Teaching and Learning in the Language Classroom’ 147).

As defined by Thornbury a deductive approach starts with the presentation of a rule and is followed by examples in which the rule is applied (29).

The deductive or rule-driven approach has been criticized for being associated with the Grammar-Translation method because this latter used the mother tongue in ESL classes. However it is possible to incorporate deductive method in ESL teaching without translation in classroom. In fact many students use grammar practice books that adopt deductive approach with all their explanation and exercises (Thornbury 30).

Teachers tend to use deductive teaching method because some language items are better given than discovered, especially in case of exceptions and arbitrary rules. The deductive approach has a quicker pace because already established insights are implemented but it is criticized for relying on learners memorization of rules rather than understanding them. (Stoep and Louw 228-229)

The deductive approach still has its own advantages and disadvantages as shown in Table 1.1 below suggested by Widodo (127):

Advantages	1. The deductive approach goes straightforwardly to the point and can, therefore, be time-saving.
	2. A number of rule aspects (for example, form) can be more simply and clearly explained than elicited from examples
	3. A number of direct practice/application examples are immediately given.
	4. The deductive approach respects the intelligence and maturity of many adult learners in particular and acknowledges the role of cognitive processes in language acquisition.
	5. It confirms many learners’ expectations about classroom learning particularly for those who have an analytical style.
Disadvantages	1. Beginning the lesson with a grammar presentation may be off-putting for some learners, especially younger ones.
	2. Younger learners may not be able to understand the concepts or encounter grammar terminology given.
	3. Grammar explanation encourages a teacher-fronted, transmission-style classroom, so it will hinder learner involvement and interaction immediately.
	4. The explanation is seldom as memorable as other forms of presentation (for example, demonstration).
	5. The deductive approach encourages the belief that learning a language is simply a case of knowing the rule.

**TABLE 1.1 Advantages and disadvantages of the deductive approach to teaching Grammar**

#### **2.3.6.2.2.2. The inductive method:**

According to Hedge, learners are able to learn inductively through using their acquired knowledge of English with their prior knowledge of first and any other languages, to formulate hypotheses, test these out, and gradually restructure and refine their grammatical knowledge (158).

Thornbury defines the inductive approach as the approach that starts with some examples from which the rule is inferred (29).

In other words the inductive (rule-discovery) method, without access to the rule, the learner observes instances and from them he/she derives an understanding of the rule . Besides, with practice, this rule becomes automatically used by the learner (Thornbury49).

In a lesson situation , this approach manifests itself when a teacher together with learners investigate and analyze a particular example , then finally ,reduce it to and synthesize its characteristics into a general conclusion or rule. It encourages the learners to formulate the findings and discover them by themselves.This method is better used in accordance with the suitable nature of contents and convenient level of learner's readiness. That is when a learner has not yet developed a considerable level of abstract thinking, teaching rules is more effective if conclusions are drawn from an example or number of examples (Stoep and Louw 227-228).

The inductive method is by its nature a slower approach, but a beginner experiences greater security in inductive teaching ,because his/her learning activities depart from the concrete illustrations surrounding him/her and guarantees better understanding. For this , the inductive approach is usually used to introduce new themes in classroom tasks. (Stoep and Louw 229).

Widodo summarized advantages and disadvantages of the inductive approach in the following table (1.2) below (128):

Advantages	1. Learners are trained to be familiar with the rule discovery; this could enhance learning autonomy and self-reliance.
	2. Learners' greater degree of cognitive depth is "exploited".
	3. The learners are more active in the learning process, rather than being simply passive recipients. In this activity, they will be motivated.
	4. The approach involves learners' pattern-recognition and problem-solving abilities in which particular learners are interested in this challenge.
	5. If the problem-solving activity is done collaboratively, learners get an opportunity for extra language practice.
Disadvantages	1. The approach is time and energy-consuming as it leads learners to have the appropriate concept of the rule.
	2. The concepts given implicitly may lead the learners to have the wrong concepts of the rule taught.
	3. The approach can place emphasis on teachers in planning a lesson.
	4. It encourages the teacher to design data or materials taught carefully and systematically.
	5. The approach may frustrate the learners with their personal learning style, or their past learning experience (or both) would prefer simply to be told the rule.

**TABLE 1.2 Advantages and disadvantages of the inductive approach to teaching grammar**

#### **2.4. Writing under the Competency –based Approach:**

Chelli, in her dissertation about 'The Effects of the Competency-Based Approach on Learner's Writing Achievement', asserts that the CBA is established upon the progression of competencies that include different language skills and abilities to enable the EFL learners to efficient in real life tasks. Among these competencies, writing is regarded as a means of communication, and is developed through various stages. That is, in order to master the writing skill, the learner must develop not only the linguistic competence as it was previously believed by traditional orientations, but also the social and strategic competences to be surely practical and proficient in EFL (99).

In the Guide to the Curriculum for MS4, Scott-Conley explains:

"The program is therefore always centered on the students and the development of their capacities in order for them to acquire, in the most effective way possible, competency in English. Competencies are linked to their in-school and out of school needs. Students learn to speak, listen to, read, write and re-use what they have learned in new situations. These skills are taught in an integrated way, since in real-life that is how they are used".

On the other hand, Bader indicates that with reference to their narrow knowledge and restricted control of EFL language, novice learners need to be introduced to the writing skill in a suitable manner that subsequently supports an effective communication of thoughts and opinions using the written mode (54). She believes that implementing CBA in Teaching EFL at Algerian Middle school, particularly, teaching the writing skill includes these five principles:

**a-** In Algerian middle schools, writing is used for learning and communication. Writing for communication is tremendously affected by the principles of communicative approaches to language teaching, and the purpose accomplishing an EFL communicative competence. The following main points need to be focused on as far as writing in its communicative orientation is involved. Under the Competency-based Approach, pupils recognize that writing includes a subject, an audience and a purpose. They write to convey a message, and teachers presume an audience other than themselves, such as: other peers, friends, and parents. The importance of writing can be reinforced if it is used for learning all the language skills. This can be the case of 4AM pupils where writing strengthens the knowledge that has been in listening, speaking and reading tasks. Therefore, writing is should not be taught on its own but employed to learn and practice the English language(55).

**b-**In current Middle school classes using the CBA , Writing is instructed through both product and process approaches. The product approach focuses on the final result of writing in which the learner is involved in activities of imitation, copying, and transformation of examples of correct language texts., while the process approach is attentive to the process of writing itself; So it emphasizes the stages learners go through in order to produce a final product. The advantages of the product approach are shown through its focus on form and emphasis on sentence structure and grammar, which provides a useful training for written exams. However, the process approach increases pupils' awareness about the writing stages they need to experience to reach the final output. It also recognizes that writing is non – linear process that enables the writer to move backward, at any stage of the writing process. Middle school pupils follow these three stages: the preparation phase which involves choosing an interesting and challenging topic whether by the teacher or pupils, determining the timescale and objectives of the project , and also the establishing the evaluation criteria. All these tasks should be done by pupils with the help of the teacher as a knowledge holder, facilitator, and even a co-learner. Then, the second stage is the realization phase which consists of data gathering, planning,

drafting and revising. Eventually, The last stage is the presentation phase that includes the presentation of the final product before an audience assessing responses are anticipated from peers and teachers. The blend of both product and process approaches is evident in the project work, because the final product shares the same importance with the process pupils perform(56-57).

**c-**In CBA implementation writing competence is built up within Middle school pupils through two competences: to understand a written text and to produce a simple written message. To interpret authentic written texts, pupils need to demonstrate their comprehension through an oral or written reformulation of different types of authentic documents. This exposure to the written text would supply pupils with examples of how language is organized, how words are linked to shape intelligible paragraphs that serve a specific purpose. Furthermore, pupils are sometimes asked to respond in writing to those examples in producing simple paragraphs. Ultimately, pupils are supposed to convey their ideas in a logical and chronological way with taking into consideration syntax, orthography and punctuation, to produce relevant and coherent writing. Pupils would gradually rely less on their teacher's guidance(57).

**d-** Teachers and pupils play important roles in teaching and learning writing through CBA. Algerian Middle School pupils, as beginners, perform writing tasks in English sessions within a controlled –to- free framework. The teacher fully controls some activities such as copying; other activities are semi – controlled, like: information transfer or application from one mode to another. In Others, teachers grant more freedom to learners as in games, problem solving or drama. Types of tasks used in the textbook supports this controlled –to- free groundwork. At the start of each file, Pupils write under the supervision of the teacher and, gradually attain the project work where they have more freedom in writing including in choosing of words, structures, and personal opinions. The entire tasks accomplished in the file are a preparation for the realization of the project. At the same time, teachers have to help pupils with providing the needed vocabulary, structures and strategies in order to finish their projects(57-58).

**e-** Evaluation of writing under the CBA takes into consideration specific standards to be accepted. These standards include that the written product should have related ideas and relevant with the topic , it should respect the coherence and cohesion of the text, as well as the appropriate shape of presentation and textual organization. The product should be original and its information must be authentic. Writing evaluation can be applied by comparing between the various writings of each learner (59).



## **2.5. Grammatical Errors:**

Though a skill in its own right, grammar can also be regarded as a necessary “master” skill that enables competence to develop in the areas of listening, speaking, reading, and writing. When grammar is incorrect or misunderstood in any of these areas, especially written production, communication may be disrupted. (Savage et al. 2)

According to many studies (Bardovi-Harlig and Dornei in Gass and Makey; James in Agustin Liach) ascertain that even if the grammatical competence is generally the first step of learning a Foreign language for learners and it usually exceeds other competences because it is the basic competence needed to begin communicating in the TL, yet the grammatical errors in EFL learner’s production seem to be predominant comparing with other types of errors.

According to Hourani’s study of Emerati EFL secondary school learners in writing , the main types of grammatical errors are:

### **2.5.1. Subject-Verb Agreement Errors:**

Subject-Verb Agreement represents a great problem for EFL learners only in the present tense where the third person singular forms are different from other conjugation forms in the same tense. EFL learners tend to simplify and leave off altogether the third person singular conjugation form such as: ‘ He live in Seattle’. Instead of ‘lives’. Or they just overgeneralize this inflection by using it in agreement with subjects of inappropriate person or/and number like in: ‘They goes to Stanford ’instead of ‘go’ Sometimes, they overuse it because they may interpret the ‘s’ ending as a marker of plural ( Celce-Murcia and Larsen-Freeman 36) .

The most common type of error made by students in Hourani’s study of grammatical errors of Emerati EFL secondary school learners is subject-verb agreement. In this case the subject and the verb phrase in the English sentence should agree in number and person. Since learners still commit subject-verb agreement errors, it means they have a problem in understanding this rule. Some examples of these errors are:

‘The people thinks those smoke cigarettes are adult’ instead of ‘think’, because ‘People’ is a plural subject does not agree with singular verb. And these are examples of verbs that do not agree with the number of the subject: ‘It encourage smokers to smoke’ instead of ‘encourages’ ; ‘The more dangerous results is gum infection’ instead of ‘are ‘(30-31).

### **2.5.2. Verb-Tense and Form Errors:**

English tenses rules have generally modal auxiliary and/or a tense marker according to the type of aspect (e.g. simple or perfect or continuous) and the type of sentence (e.g. affirmative or negative) . Since these rules which are not similar to other languages verb tenses and tense systems are language-specific, the majority of EFL learners face a great difficulty in learning and applying these English tenses rules.

For this reason, teachers should explain well to their learners about the meaning as well as the uses of each tense from the sentence level especially for EFL beginners (Celce-Murcia and Larsen-Freeman 61).

Hourani found in his study of Emerati EFL learners errors that the use of English verbs was a major learning difficulty for all Arab learners. According to him, the main reason for this difficulty is the incomprehensibility of grammar rules.

Among his examples of these errors are: ‘ Some people said that they smoking’ instead of ‘say.....smoke’ Which is a confusion between the use of simple past and simple present ‘ Many people didn't smoked’ instead of ‘smoke’

The student over-generalizing the affirmative past tense rule to the use of negative past tense. Most Arab EFL students have difficulties in the use of English verbs due to the absence of verb conjugation in Arabic (29-30).

### **2.5.3. Prepositions Errors:**

According to Celce-Murcia and Larsen-Freeman, Prepositions pose a distressing problem for EFL learners and considered as noticeably frequent in their production of TL because it is one of the most difficult aspects of the English language. This difficulty is reflected by varied factors in comparison with L1. Due to the various prepositions in English that have the same function, native languages of EFL learners ,that have prepositions in their system, usually have many alternative English prepositions for each (250).

For example, when Arabic EFL learners are doubtful about which preposition to use in a specific sentence, they usually compare that sentence with its Arabic equivalent, or they just literally translate the Arabic preposition into English even if there is no need fo a preposition in English. Like in: I would like to follow in my father's footsteps. ( على خطى ) instead of ‘...to follow my father's ...’(Abi Samra16).

Additionally, Hourani found that Errors in the use of prepositions made by Emerati EFL secondary school learners were ranked third after verb tense; Most of these errors were caused by interference from Arabic. English prepositions, therefore, are a

particular area of difficulty for Arab learners, which make these errors mainly interlingual errors. For instance: '... To help smokers quit smoking, go to a walk...' instead of 'for' ; ' Diseases can be caused of smoking.' Instead of 'by' ; ' Many people die from smoking.' Instead of 'of' ; ' run everyday in the sea.' Instead of 'by'

Another possible explanation for the occurrence of the errors above is ignorance of rule restrictions. Emirati learners tend to make analogy of what they have learnt and apply it in new situations (32).

#### **2.5.4. Word Order Errors:**

According to Penston, Subject-verb-object is logical to English native speakers but it is generally not the word order of Foreign language learners. The teacher should give more time for mental re-formulation and familiarization with the new order and provide various rich input (easy listening and reading tasks) especially at beginners' level, before expecting correct production (2).

Dulay, Burt and Krashen explain that word order errors can be influenced whether from interlingual (L1) transfer or intralingual (L2) transfer. In the former case, price found that his welsh subjects did not produce English word order in their production , instead they reflected their Welsh structures (179).

On the other hand, the latter case, Hourani found that the majority of Emirati secondary school students committed intralingual errors reflecting wrong English word order like in: ' How we can stop smoking?' Instead of ' can we' as an overgeneralization of the affirmative form order and apply it to the produced question sentence. However, they made also interlingual errors too using their mother tongue in producing the sentences, for example, in the Arabic word order, the adjective follows the noun whereas in English the adjective precedes the noun like in: 'Smoking is a habit bad' Instead of 'a bad habit'(31).

#### **2.5.5. Plurality Errors:**

Shuang explains that a countable noun is always used in the singular or plural in English. If plural, it should inflect, typically by adding a suffix '-s'. If singular, it must co-occur with at least one determiner (e.g. a student, the student, this student, the first student, my first student) (31).

According to his study findings that all the written pronoun errors in plurality are the disagreements between pronouns and nouns rather than pronouns and pronouns, and he distinguishes two kinds of plurality errors in pronouns. First, errors using plural pronouns when the singular forms are expected like in: 'And if the child with the smoking grows,

then they could not do well in...'. the second type refers to errors in using singular pronouns when the plural forms are expected such as: 'Smoking does a great damage in the health of smokers and people around him'(57).

Hourani, in his analysis of grammatical errors of Emirati EFL learners, gives many examples of errors in plurality such as: ' smoking can cause many disease like cancer...' instead of 'many diseases' or ' they should do some hobby.' Instead of 'some hobbies'. He explains that learners may not realize that determiners such as 'some' and 'many' require plural nouns and the lack of training and understanding of the rule is the main reason for such errors to occur. He asserts that Arab students in general and Emirati students in particular confuse between regular and irregular plural nouns especially when it comes to the case of mixing between countable and uncountable nouns like in: ' Many child are smoking now' instead of 'children' or ' ...with all this advices ....' Instead of 'pieces of advice'. He argues that many studies (Jain ,and Tan ) have attributed morphological errors like the above to over-generalization and a simplification strategy on the learners'(34).

According to Al-Buainain, many EFL learners do not always know the rule that demonstrative adjectives must agree with nouns and that adjectives do not agree with plural nouns such as : 'This professors are helpful.' Instead of ' These'  
And ' The beautifuls sunsets make Laguanda happy.'instead of 'beautiful'(' Students' Writing Errors In EFL: A Case Study" 9).

#### **2.5.6. Auxiliaries Errors:**

According to Celce-Murcia and Larsen-Freeman, interlingual source of errors may be the learners' native language. Many languages do not have the modal auxiliaries; in those which do not regular verbs or adverbs are used to perform the functions of modal auxiliaries have in English. A learner who has a language that does not have the alternative of modals would consider them wrongly as verbs. The interlingual transfer can be a source of EFL learner in auxiliaries too. For example the overgeneralization of adding 's' in the third person singular to the verb is applied on modals like in : 'He cans dance.' (80-81).

According to Hourani, in errors of auxiliaries like 'First of all smoking is have a nicotine' instead of "... smoking has nicotine ... ," the learners display confusion in the use of English auxiliaries, because the Emirati learners have no frame of reference, and therefore there is a possibility that the absence of such auxiliaries in Arabic is indirectly responsible for Emirati learners' errors (35).

### **2.5.7. Articles Errors:**

Generally, EFL learners find the use of the different English articles (definite 'the', indefinite 'a' or 'an', and zero 'Ø') very problematic and tricky. It is quite difficult even for children learning English as a first language. Articles are believed to be a source of difficulty for learners and teachers of English as a second/foreign language, especially for those whose native languages do not have articles or do have articles or article-like morphemes which are used in ways that differ from English articles, for example, many other languages than English do not have the case of zero article such as the example of Arabic EFL learners, for instance in saying: 'the beauty is the truth' instead of 'Beauty is truth' (Celce-Murcia and Larsen-Freeman 171).

According to Hourani, article use is another frequent problem in students texts. For example, these problems can be the misuse of the article "a" before words with vowel sounds: ' if you smoke cigarettes, it cost you a expensive money.' instead of 'an expensive' .This is an intralingual error, particularly, the over-generalization of the use 'a' of rule and ignoring the rule of using 'an' before a word that begins with a vowel. Additionally, learners may do errors in omission of articles: like 'one of major problems' instead of 'the major problems' because they simply may not know when the rule when to use them and when not (33).

He explains that the L1 which, in this case, is Arabic may have negative influence on the learners production of English as L2. While the Arabic system manifests a two parts distinction between the defined and the undefined, the English system shows a three parts distinction. The Arabic defined (marked by the definite article /al/) and the undefined (marked by the absence of /al/) correspond to the English defined (marked by the definite article **the**) and the undefined (marked by the indefinite articles **a (n)** and **zero**). This can be a probable cause for the learners errors in English articles which classify them as interlingual errors (33).

### **2.5.8. Pronouns Errors:**

According to Richards and Schmidt in 'the Longman Dictionary of Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics', the English pronoun is defined as a word which may replace a noun or noun phrase (e.g. English: it, them, she). There are many types of pronouns: personal pronouns, possessive, demonstrative, interrogative pronoun, reflexive pronoun, indefinite pronoun, relative clause (468).

As reported by Cowan, EFL learners face many problems with learning English pronouns. These problems are generally resulted from the differences and similarities between the pronoun system of the learners' native languages and that of English. The types that EFL learners' errors usually make in English pronouns are: selecting incorrect pronouns, inserting unnecessary pronouns, misidentifying antecedents and omitting obligatory pronouns (283).

Ridha, in her study to EFL Iraqi college students major writing difficulties, asserts that the misusing of many pronouns can be attributed to the negative transfer of L1. The reason behind such errors is that it is possible to use a verb with its embedded pronoun without having recourse to an isolated pronoun (independent) in Arabic. In L1, personal pronouns are often added to verbs like in: 'After three years of marriage, have been facing pressure from their family'. She found in her study some English pronoun errors such as "he/she" confusions and Object pronouns as well. Object pronouns cause some sort of confusion since the word or morpheme may represent both an object pronoun and a possessive adjective like in (his/him, her/her, their/ them, your/you). These errors are not related to L1; so, they are due to the incomplete knowledge or misunderstanding of L2 rules (36).

## **2.6. The Influence of Grammatical Errors on Writing:**

James in Agustin Liach claims that some formal or grammatical errors may affect intelligibility more than others, particularly in specific contexts. This implies that some form-related errors may affect communicative success, whether in writing or speaking the target language, more than other errors in some contexts, and, thus, will have a higher unfavorable contribution to the evaluations of essay quality (111).

Weaver argues that since errors are a natural and inevitable part of language learning process, whether they are caused by native language interference or by the learning strategies in using the target language (e.g. overgeneralization, incomplete rule restriction), the same thing can be said about errors in the process of becoming an accomplished writer, even if these grammatical errors, either careless or conscious ones, need to be rectified with regard to an appropriate final draft (62). She explains that during the process of writing, the writer often rereads and revises what he wrote as a first draft looking for grammatical errors and irrelevant parts to alter them for more appropriate language and grammar, sometimes the writer would reserve this revision for the final proofreading (83).

So, when writers cannot produce essentially error-free writing especially in grammar, they are seen either as incompetent or as having no regard for readers. Neither judgment is preferable. For that reason, teachers properly devote a great extent of effort and time in instruction and school to produce competent, if not good, writers (Williams25).

## **2.7. Conclusion:**

To sum up, in this chapter, we have clarified the concept of writing through various definitions, presenting its main components especially grammar and explaining writing under the CBA approach. We have also explained grammar in EFL in details that consists a set of different definitions of grammar and explanation the role of grammar under the CBA approach as well as detailed clarifications of inductive and deductive methods to teaching grammar. Finally, we cited the main types of grammatical errors made by EFL learners in writing and their influence on it. As a whole, we can say that this chapter is focusing on both writing and the grammar as a pair, since writing skill and grammar knowledge are definitely core aspects of EFL competence, mainly the grammatical errors types and their influence on writing.

**Chapter Three:**  
**Data Collection and**  
**Discussion of the Findings**



### **3.1.Introduction:**

Since the eventual purposes of this study is to inquire into the common written grammatical errors made by Fourth year pupils of Mohamed Tahar Kaddouri Middle School in their English paragraphs at Biskra as a phenomenon that should be considered in learning English as a foreign language and also to look for the possible causes of these errors . these purposes would be dealt with in this chapter in two parts the first part includes the analysis of the written paragraphs of these pupils following the procedure of error analysis method : collection of data, identification and description, analysis of error categories and then the summary of the findings however, the second part is consisted of the teachers' interviews which it is in turn composed of the description of the sample and the interview sections and the summary of results and findings in the teachers' interviews . based on the fact of the number of errors which appeared in their written productions, this chapter serves as an empirical evidence to prove that the problem exists, and that these difficulties are due to the native language interference (Arabic), or to intralingual interference. It is necessary to point out that this study investigated both perspectives of the pupils and the teachers in order to have a better insight on the context of English learning and teaching the pair grammar and writing in Algerian middle schools.

### **3.2. The Analysis of the learners' sample:**

The analysis of the pupils' sample would take the three following steps:

#### **3.2.1.Description of the sample:**

For the error data collection and selection of language corpus , following the guidelines stated by Ellis ('The Study of Second Language Acquisition' 51-52), a sample of written work was collected from **42 learners**. Those learners are in Fourth year Middle school at Mohamed Tahar Kaddouri Biskra. They have been studying English since first year Middle school , and have been taught English mainly by teachers that have experience of more than 20 years. Moreover, the great majority of these learners are all of the same age (14 years) and they speak Arabic at home with their parents and at school with their friends they mainly use English in the session dedicated for this foreign language at school.

The written sample is consisted of those learners' copies of the third and last test of English language collected from the situation of integration part which is the section devoted to written expression in Middle school curriculum.. They were asked to write a

paragraph about the biography of a famous personality (a leader, a writer ,or a poet) whether dead or alive by taking into consideration the following points: Date and Place of birth, job, nationality, what did he/she do in his/her life, and date of death. It is important to mention that they practiced this kind of task before as homework.

This section intends to show the results which aim to give answers to the both research questions: 1.What are the most common written grammatical errors made by Algerian fourth year EFL middle school learners?

2. What are the possible causes of these errors?

### **3.2.2. Error Analysis of sample:**

As a first step (Error Identification & Categorization procedure), we developed, based on the literature (Corder ‘Error Analysis and Interlanguage’ ; Ellis‘ The Study of Second Language Acquisition’; Dulay, Burt and Krashen; Brown ‘Principles of Language Teaching and Learning’; Hourani) a linguistic categorization for Error Analysis including the following grammatical sub-categories: (Subject-verb Agreement, Verb-Tense and Form, prepositions, word order, plurality, auxiliaries, articles and pronouns) . The paragraphs were analyzed and the errors were classified as well by the researcher. It is important to mention that one of the two teachers of English of Fourth Year Middle school at Mohamed Tahar Kaddouri helped and guided this operation.

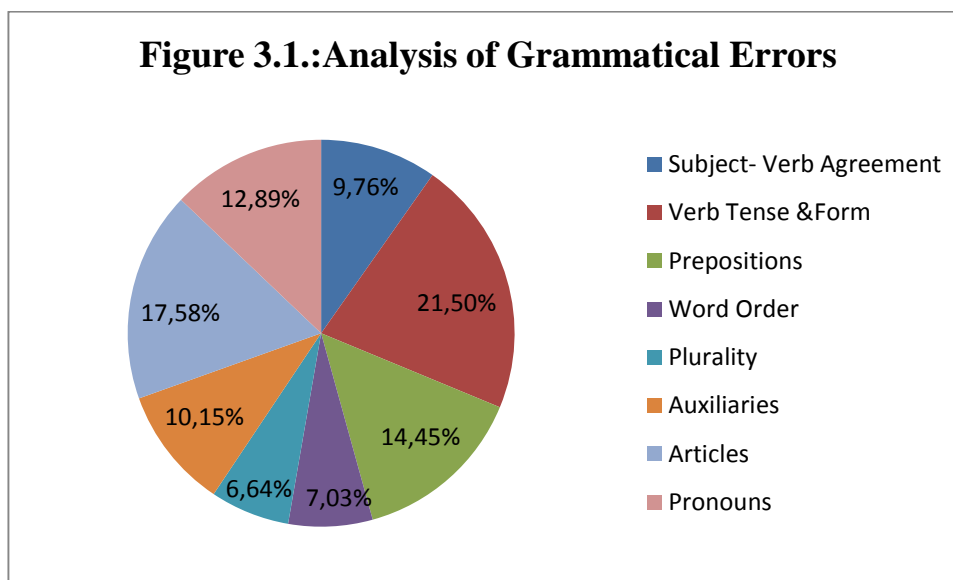
The researcher has detected 256 errors in English compositions written by 42 Algerian EFL learners of Fourth Year Middle school level (See table 3.1.). These errors were tabulated according to the times of frequency and percentage. The types of grammatical errors that were analyzed for this study were limited to 8 types.

Results obtained from this study revealed that the Fourth Year Middle school learners committed many errors in their EFL writing when producing their paragraphs. These errors are summarized in the table 3.1. below:

Type of grammatical Error	Frequency	Percentage
Subject-verb agreement	25	9,76%
Verb tense and form	55	21,50%
Prepositions	37	14,45%
Word order	18	7,03%
Plurality	17	6,64%
Auxiliaries	26	10,15%
Articles	45	17,58%
Pronouns	33	12,89%
<b>Total</b>	<b>256</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Table 3.1.: Types of grammatical Errors in Learners' writing.**

The results show that the most common grammatical errors that EFL learners made were in Verb tense and Form (21,50 %), Articles (17.58%), and prepositions (14,45 %), followed by pronouns (12,89 %), auxiliaries (10,15 %), Subject Verb Agreement (9,76%) and then, Word order ( 7.03% ) and Plurality ( 6.64%). These results are graphically represented in Figure 3.1.:



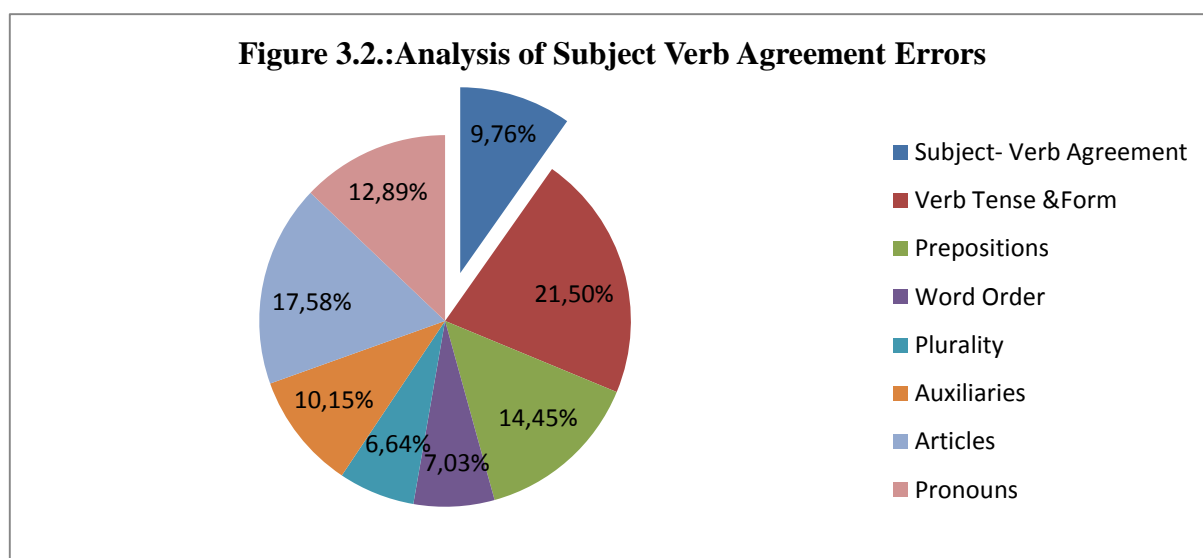
### 3.2.3. Results and discussion:

In this section of this chapter, each type of error will receive a detailed analysis by displaying the learners examples and explaining the possible causes of these errors according to the literature (Brown 'Principles of Language Teaching and Learning'; Ellis

‘The Study of Second Language Acquisition’, Abisamra; Hourani) . Most of the data analysis of each sub-category was organized using the following description categories: First, omission which is considered as the absence of an item that must appear in a well-formed utterance. Second, substitution which refers to the use of the wrong preposition where another preposition should be used and finally, addition that is denominated as the presence of an item that must not appear in a well-formed utterance.

### Subject-Verb Agreement Errors:

Though, various errors were recorded in the Subject Verb Agreement sub-category with a total of ‘25’ errors, it is ranked in the sixth place with the percentage of (9,76%) . This type of errors is still a problematic area for the Fourth year middle school learners. So they do have a difficulty in understanding and applying the rule which states that the subject and the verb phrase in the English sentences should agree in number and person, even though it is the same rule for Arabic language.



Among the main examples of errors in Subject-Verb Agreement:

- The omission of the third person singular inflection in the present simple like in:

-’He love the god.’ Instead of ‘ loves’;

- ‘He write ...’ instead of ‘ writes’;

- ‘He ask him...’ instead of ‘asks’;
- ‘He act in films.’ Instead of ‘acts’;
- ‘ my god please him’ instead of ‘pleases’;
- ‘ The first film start in my favorite...’ instead of ‘starts’.

This repeated error which represents the majority of this errors’ type, happened probably because the learners did not understood the rule of adding the verb inflection ‘s’ of the third person singular in the simple present tense, so, by the influence of the simple present general rule in L2 English, they overgeneralized it on this case .This implies that these kind of errors are intralingual.

- The substitution of ‘was’ with ‘were’ in :

- ‘Her family were very poor.’ Instead of ‘was’

This error occurred because the learner misunderstood the nature of the word ‘family’ as a plural noun .He/she most likely overgeneralized the simple past inflection of to be of plural nouns on the word ‘family’ which makes this error of an intralingual source by the incorrect application of English L2 rules.

- The substitution of ‘are’ with ‘is’ in :

- ‘Her works is very nice.’ Instead of ‘are’.

Here the learner did not apply the rule of subject verb agreement probably whether because he/she did not understood the rule that the verb should follow the subject in gender and number or he/she thought mistakenly that the verb follows the singular pronoun ‘her’, or because he/she did not have the complete knowledge of ‘to be’ inflection rules which resulted the overgeneralization of the inflection ‘is’ in the incorrect use. Since, in all these cases, the learner was influenced by the L2 English rules, these errors are apparently intralingual errors.

- The substitution of ‘is’ with ‘are’ and vice versa after ‘there’ in:

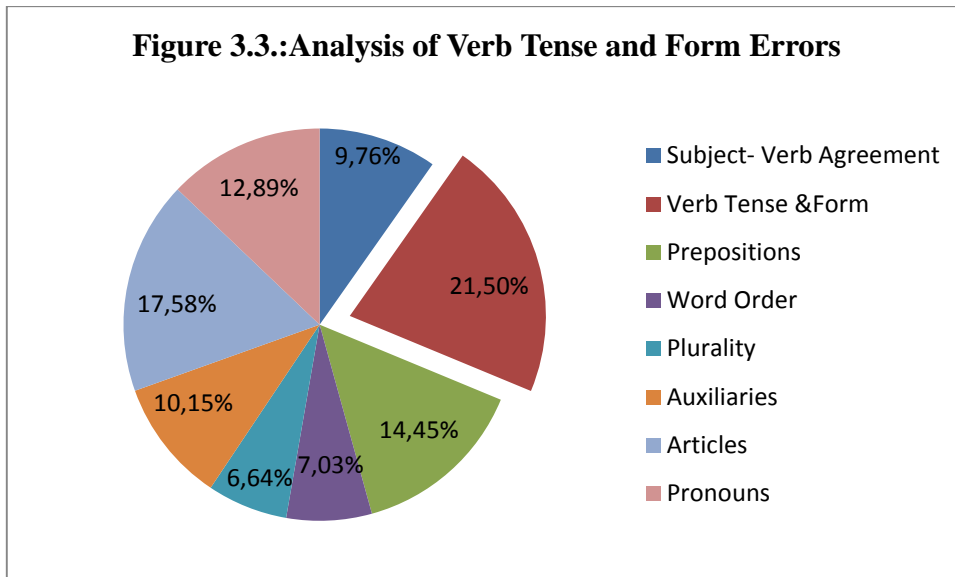
- ‘ The Algerian people ...because there are a woman...’ instead of ‘there is’;
- ‘There is many leaders...’ instead of ‘there are’.

According to Celce-Murcia and Larsen Freeman, the non-referential 'there' is a signal that the logical subject has been postponed. Thus, in formal usage, the subject verb agreement is determined by the noun phrase following the verb i.e. by the logical subject of the sentence. EFL learners frequently fail in applying this English rule. Even educated native speakers have the curious phenomena whereby they perceive the non-referential 'there' as a singular subject (286-287). In the first example, the pupil seems to have the false hypothesized concept that the subject should always come first before the verb and that there is no exception to this rule. Hence he/she chose the subject of the preceding sentence for the verb to follow. However, in the second example, the other pupil considered the non-referential 'there' as a singular subject. That is because he/she did not know that the L2 English subject verb agreement rule exception of non referential 'there'. Both errors are intralingual errors.

### **Verb Tenses and Form Errors:**

In this study, Verb Tenses and Form Errors took the lead with the highest rates of errors by the number of 55 errors and 21,50% percentage. This finding may explain that the use of English verbs is a main learning difficulty for all Arab learners since the English language system is so different from the Arabic native language system especially in conjugation. The tenses most commonly misused were the simple past tense and present simple. The errors of verb tenses show that the Fourth year middle school pupils still find a difficulty in when and how to use the tense and the form of the verb even if they have been studying and practicing them since their first year at their middle school. It can be justified by the incomprehensibility of the correct form and use and usage of the verb tenses. The teachers who participated in answering the interview mentioned that the incomprehensibility of grammar rules especially Verb tense and form in English language is always responsible for their pupils' difficulty in the English writing skill. As a result both sources of information, the findings' highest rates of errors and teachers interviews, provide a positive answer to the first research question that the Verb tense and Form errors are the most common grammatical errors done by Fourth middle school learners in their paragraphs.

**Figure 3.3.:Analysis of Verb Tense and Form Errors**



The main errors in Verb Tense and Form sub-category are the following:

- The omission of past participle mark ‘ed’ in:

-‘He had succeed in his life’ instead of ‘succeeded’;

In this example the learner possibly did not recognize that the ‘ed’ at the end of the verb ‘succeed’ is a part of the verb root that it is a past participle. This confusion can be made by any learner with any native language even for those who are English natives. so this error is plausibly a result of intralingual transfer of L2 structures.

- The omission of the ‘ed’ simple past mark in:

-‘He study for three years’ instead of ‘studied’;

-‘He live and died for us.’ Instead of ‘lived’

-‘He reform the Arab world’ instead of ‘reformed’;

-‘He go to France’ instead of ‘went’;

-‘ He protect Algeria from the French people.’ Instead of ‘protected’ .

-‘He compose the nation of Algeria.’ Instead of ‘composed’

-‘He defend for the Algerian rights...’ instead of ‘defended’

In these examples the learners were supposed to talk about biographies of famous persons mentioning their achievements and past events happened to them in their lives. So

these paragraphs generally should be written in the simple past tense as they had been taught in the English session, yet they have done errors in this tense whether because they did not understand this rule or because they do not master the inflection of simple past tense of these verbs which in both cases they are influenced by the false concepts hypothesized about the L2 English rules or the overgeneralization of them incorrectly. So the cause of these errors is certainly intralingual.

- The addition of ‘ed’ as a past simple mark incorrectly to the verb like in :

-‘Now, she prepared a new film...’ instead of ‘Now she prepares an new film.’

-‘He lived now’ instead of ‘He lives now.’

In these two sentences, the verb tense and form error is represented in the wrong use of ‘simple past’ in correspondence with the adverb of time ‘now’ in the same sentence while the latter refers to ‘the simple present tense’. This kind of error is attributable to previous explanation that these learners studied a special session about writing a biography which is mostly written in the past simple. So they had formulated the false hypothesis that there is no exception to that even if there are descriptions of present events. This overgeneralization of an incorrect English rule makes these errors intralingual.

- ‘She becamed a popular writer.’ Instead of ‘ became’;

- ‘She writed many books.’ Instead of ‘wrote’

In these two examples, the pupils used the ‘ed’ as the simple past mark for regular verbs rule to the irregular verbs ‘to become’ or ‘to write’. These errors occurred as an overgeneralization of this English rule on these two verbs, and it is probably because the EFL pupils misunderstood this English rule or they do not know the exceptions of these irregular verbs rule which make these inaccuracies intralingual errors caused by the negative influence of L2 English rules on the EFL pupils’ written production.

- The addition of the wrong inflection to verbs in:

-‘He dieth in 1984.’ Instead of ‘died.’

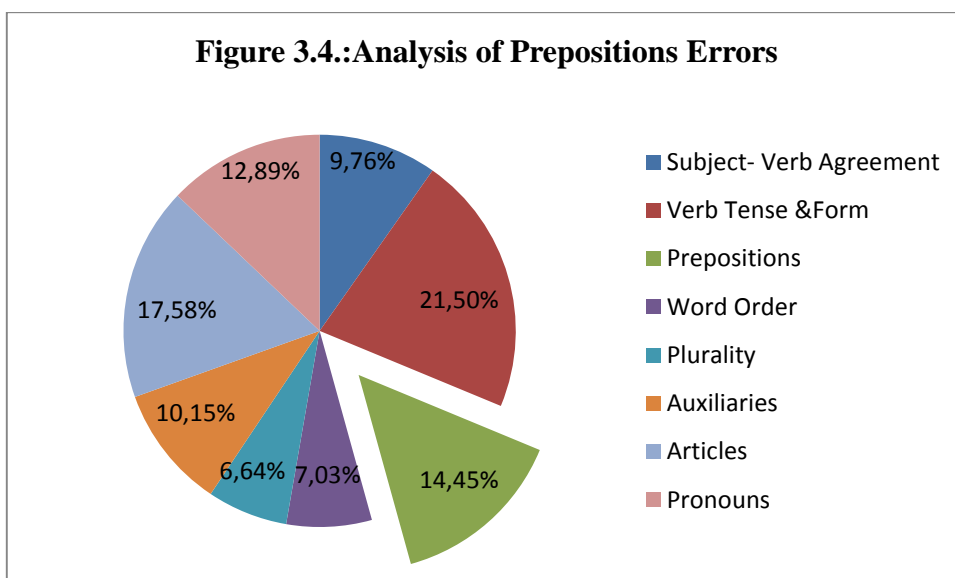
The learner gave the incorrect inflection of the simple past tense to the verb ‘to die’ possibly because he/she was influenced by the composition of the noun of this verb ‘death’



which ends with 'th'. So the pupil overgeneralized the ending of the noun on the verb in the past simple which is an intralingual error.

### Prepositions Errors:

Errors in the use of prepositions were ranked third after Verb tense and form and then Articles; they constitute 14.45% of the total rate of errors with the number of 37 errors. The majority of this sub-category of errors was caused by interference from Arabic. Diab, in her research, asserts that prepositions pose a great difficulty for the EFL Arabic learners since there are various prepositions in English that have the same function. like the prepositions 'in', 'at' and 'on' in which usually indicate place with subtle differences in usage For that reason the EFL learners are usually unaware of the distinction between them. As a result, when learners are not sure which preposition to use in a certain sentence, they often compare that sentence with its Arabic equivalence, giving a literal translation of that Arabic preposition in English. However, as mentioned before, Arabic prepositions rarely have only one alternative in English .As a result, an Arabic preposition may be translated by several English prepositions while an English usage may have several Arabic translations(76).



The main examples of this sub-category are the following:

- The omission of the prepositions like in:

-‘...the programme national Algerian T.V.’ instead of ‘...the programme of national Algerian T.V.’;

- ‘The name his day ...’ instead of ‘The name of his day’;

-‘He studied in the university oran’ instead of ‘ the university of oran’

In all these sentences the learners made the same error of omitting the preposition ‘of’ between two nouns. The cause of this error is most possibly the interference of Arabic language structures translated literally to English because in the Arabic transcription of these sentences there is no need for prepositions between those nouns. Therefore, these errors are interlingual.

- The substitution of prepositions like in :

-‘He used it at animals’ instead of ‘on’;

-‘He died in January 18<sup>th</sup>, 1955.’ Instead of ‘on’;

-‘He died on 1959.’ Instead of ‘He died in 1959.’

-‘ He decided to come back for Algeria.’ instead of ‘ to come back to Algeria.’;

-‘books of relax...’ instead of ‘books about relax...’

-‘She used to help the Algerian people from the French ...’ instead of ‘to help the Algerian people against the French...’

This errors’ type of prepositions is the most committed by Fourth Year Middle school learners in this sub-category. In the first five examples, the learners tend to use one preposition instead of another that is close in meaning but is different in usage however it is not the case of the last example, the preposition ‘from’ is totally different from the preposition ‘against’ which has no other explanation but that the learner had translated literally the desired expression from Arabic into English (‘from’ stands ‘من’) in order to write it. For the other examples, they can be caused by the Arabic native language influence because, in each sentence, both the incorrect and right prepositions have the same equivalent in Arabic , but another possible explanation for the occurrence of these errors above is the ignorance of rule restrictions in L2 English especially for those preposition for dates (‘on’) and years(‘in’).

- The substitution of the preposition ‘for’ with the conjunction ‘as’ in :

-‘He went as haj’ instead of ‘He went for haj’

In this example, it is likely that the pupil thought that the conjunction ‘as’ acts like a preposition which is a common misunderstanding among EFL learners because conjunctions like prepositions, they connect one word or group of words to another ( N. De-Vincentis Hayes and G. De-Vincentis Hayes 52). So it is a false concept hypothesized by the learner about the English structure ‘as’ which makes it an intralingual error.

- The addition of prepositions like in:

-‘He defended of his country...’ instead of ‘He defended his country’.

-‘She stoped of the education’. Instead of ‘She stopped the education.’

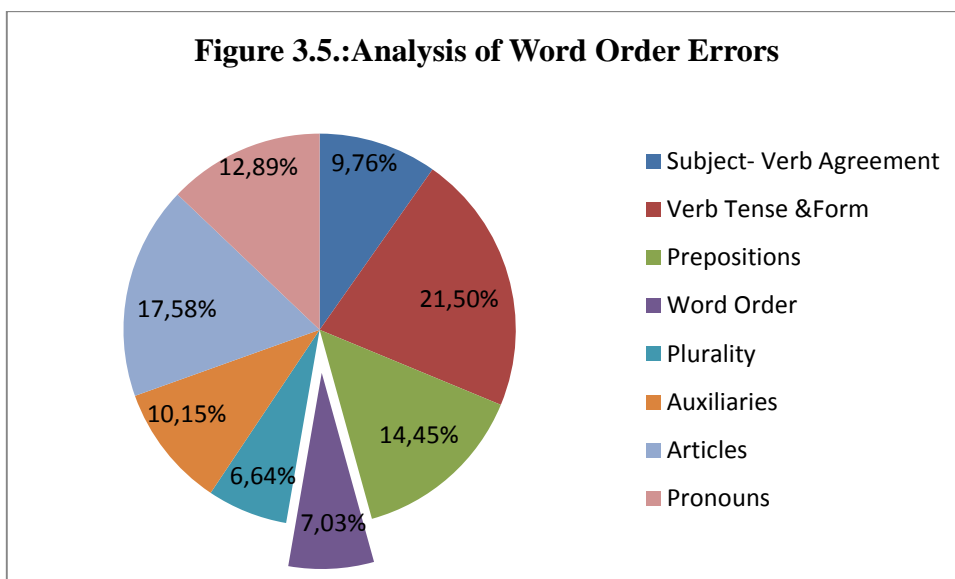
The addition of the preposition ‘of’ in the first sentence is due to the negative influence of the Arabic language on English production because this sentence is similar to the literal Arabic version which classifies this error as interlingual.

### **Word Order Errors:**

The grammatical errors in word order that learners commit in English are mainly a result of transfer especially for beginners. In this study, the word order errors is ranked pre-final with the total of 18 errors and the percentage of 7,03%.

According to al buainain, the structure of Arabic sentences is divided into three main types. Firstly, the nominal sentence which begins with a noun (i.e. SVO). Secondly, in contrast, the verbal sentence that starts with a verb: VSO. Finally, the Equational sentence which is composed of a subject and a predicate with no verb (6). However, as reported by Celce-Murcia and Larsen-Freeman, the English language follows the SVO word order pattern(9). The disparities between these two languages in word order system are generally the areas that represent the difficulties for Arab learner to produce English. In this study, the main difficulty for Algerian fourth year middle school learners was in the third type of Arabic sentence. In other words, as stated by Diab, adjectives usually precede the nouns they modify in the English language. However, in Arabic, they generally follow

them (80). As a result, this Arabic grammatical rule leads the Algerian Fourth Year Middle school pupils to make many errors in this sub-category.



The main instances of this sub-category of error are the following:

-‘Ahlem Mosteghanemi was a writer Algerian famous’ instead of ‘ a famous Algerian writer’;

-‘...an actor comedian.’ Instead of ‘ a comedian actor’;

-‘ ...the best musician Arabic.’ Instead of ‘...the best Arabic musician.’;

-‘Moufdi Zakaria is a poet Algerian.’ Instead of ‘ an Algerian poet’.

In all these examples it is obvious that the learners took the adjectives word order of the Arabic language and applied it on English probably by translating the sentence literally from their Arabic native language directly without taking into consideration the English adjectives word order convention . So these lapses which represent the majority of this Word order type of faults are interlingual errors originated from the negative influence of Arabic as the L1 .

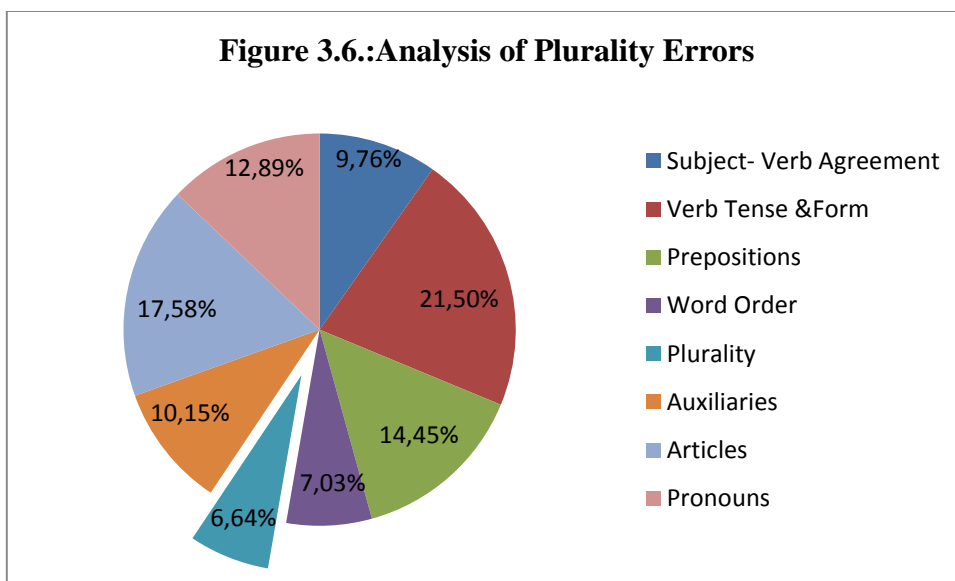
-‘He studied in Algeria Koran.’ Instead of ‘He studied Koran in Algeria.’

The learner committed an error in ordering the elements of this sentence by putting incorrectly the prepositional indirect object before the direct nominal object. In

Arabic as well as in English, the direct object comes before the prepositional indirect object so the learner formed a false hypothesis about the English word order and applied it on this sentence which makes it an intralingual error.

### Plurality Errors:

In this research, the percentage of errors in plurality is relatively low compared to other types of grammatical errors and it is ranked last (eighth place) with the percentage of (6,64%). 17 errors were counted in the paragraphs. The general mark of the plural in English is the 's' on the ending of the noun but there are some exceptions to this rule, those of the irregular nouns and those of the uncountable nouns which do not have a plural at all. Most EFL learners face problems in these exceptions of the English plural general rule.



The main examples of this type of errors are the following:

- The substitution of ‘man’ with its plural ‘men’

-‘He was a great men’, ‘He was a men of wisdom...’, ‘He was the men who worked...’ instead of ‘man’.

These are examples of different learners who incorrectly wrote the word ‘men’ as singular. That happened possibly because the pupils did not understand that the word

'men' is the result of rule application of irregular plural on the word 'man' and they lack the knowledge of this rule, so, they overgeneralized the L2 English structure wrongly and used it as singular. These errors are surely intralingual.

- The omission of the ending 's' of plural like in:

- 'He wrote 90 book.' Instead of ' books'

- 'He was the poet of the Algerian.' Instead of ' the Algerians' .

- 'From those personality...' instead of 'personalities'

Al Buainain states that in her study learners used the singular instead of the plural may be to simplify their linguistic task ('Researching Types and Causes of Errors in Arabic Speakers writing' 205). Fourth Year middle school pupils also overgeneralized the use of the singular structure on the plural countable nouns which it is perhaps a strategy to simplify rules that they are not sure about. As a consequence they are intralingual errors.

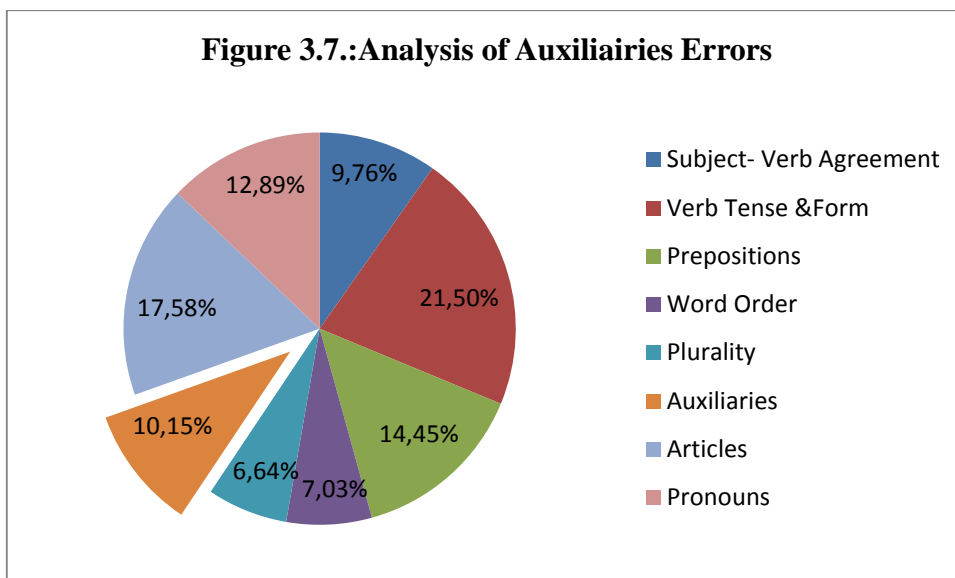
- The addition of ending 's' incorrectly like in:

- 'She learned musics' instead of ' music' which is an uncountable noun.

The learner, in this sentence, added the ending 's' of plural to the uncountable noun 'music' falsely. This error happened probably due to the lack of training or incomprehensibility of the plural rules resulting the mixing between countable and uncountable nouns. This means that in order to simplify things, learners often sub-categorize certain uncountable nouns as countable nouns. As a result, these errors are intralingual.

### **Auxiliaries Errors:**

The wrong use of to be , to have , and to do, whether as auxiliaries or as verbs ,ranked in the fifth place with the percentage of 10,15% and 28 errors of the errors' totality .



The main examples of this sub-category are:

- The omission of the auxiliary ‘to be’ at cases in which it acts as a verb like in:
  - ‘ At the age of 41, he married.’ Instead of ‘he was married.’;
  - ‘He born in Algeria’. Instead of ‘He was born’;
  - ‘He dead in 1947’ instead of ‘He was dead...’;
  - ‘He dead on April 16<sup>th</sup>,1940.’ Instead of ‘He was dead...’;
  - ‘ He alive ‘ instead of ‘ He is alive’;
  - ‘the Algerian people so happy...’ instead of ‘ are so happy...’;
  - ‘His nationality Algerian’. Instead of ‘His nationality is Algerian’.

In these examples, the learners wrote the adjectives without the auxiliary ‘to be’ before them seemingly because they are considering the adjectives as verbs themselves especially those which look the same as verbs in simple past tense like ‘married’ and ‘dead’. So if pupils did not understand the distinction between the adjectives and verbs in these previous examples it makes these errors intralingual ; or they deal with adjectives in English like they deal with them in Arabic where the adjectives always come after a noun without any word between them for this latter reason and also because that Arabic has no alternative for the auxiliary ‘to be’(according to Diab in her study of Lebanese learners’ errors in English (81)), these errors are interlingual.

- The omission of to do in:

-‘He not killed the French...’ instead of ‘did not kill’;

-‘She died not.’ Instead of ‘She did not die’.

In these examples, the learners omitted the auxiliary ‘to do’, as a consequence of the Arabic negative influence since it has no alternative of the English auxiliary system . so the learners probably translated literally these sentences from their Arabic native language which makes these errors interlingual.

- The substitution of ‘had’ with ‘was’:

‘He was succeeded ...’ instead of ‘ He had succeeded...’

As reported by BaSaeed in her study of Teaching English Language Grammar To Arab Young Learners, The Arab learners experience difficulties when trying to understand and comprehend the correct function and usage of the auxiliaries to be, to have, and to do, since there are no counterparts in Arabic. As these auxiliaries greatly influence English grammar, they are a challenge for most Arab learners. Further, the perfect and continuous tenses are completely new for Arab learners and these can become troublesome since they have no equivalent in Arabic. That makes Arabic language an indirect cause to these errors of the learners’ confusion between ‘to have’ and ‘to be’

- The addition of auxiliary ‘to be’ in:

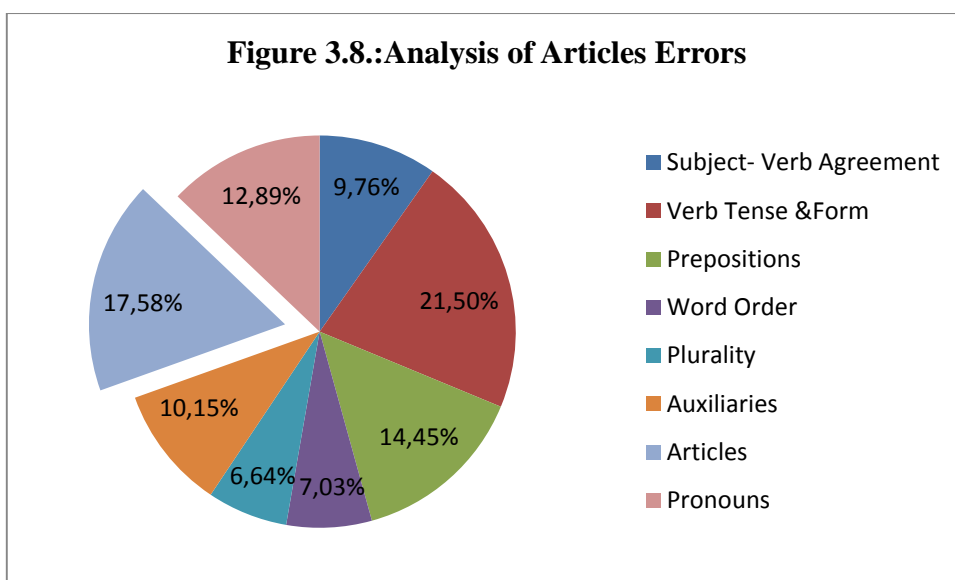
-‘He was studied and learning koran’ instead of ‘he studied’

In this example, the pupil perhaps added this auxiliary before the verb ‘studied’ because he was influenced by the gerund ‘learning’ and the rule of the past continuous, knowing that there is no alternative whether for this auxiliary of this tense in Arabic ,here also, the learner was indirectly affected by the negative transfer of Arabic as L1. Nonetheless, it is important to mention that this error could be the result of a false hypothesis on the auxiliaries and the continuous tense which makes the L2 English as a possible source to this error too.



## Articles Errors:

According to Al-Buainain in her study of writing EFL errors of Arabic learners, although articles are among the most frequently occurring morphemes, they are among the last elements of syntax to be acquired by Arabs. Mastering their usage correlates with high proficiency in other language skills(6). In this study, the errors in English articles is rated second after Verb Tense and Form with 17.58% and 45 errors.



The main examples of this kind of error are as follows:

- The omission of article ‘a’ like in:

-‘She was very intelligent girl’ instead of ‘She was a very intelligent girl’;

-‘She is beautiful musician’ instead of ‘She is a beautiful musician’;

-‘He was big personality’ instead of ‘ He was a big personality’.

In these examples, the learners did not use the indefinite articles in these sentences following the Arabic system style because Arabic language does not employ an indefinite article system. Therefore, the pupils transfer the rule from Arabic and apply it to English, which led them to make this kind of errors. This would make these latter interlingual errors.

- The omission of article ‘the’ in:

-‘He was president of Algeria’ instead He was the president of Algeria.’

-‘...in world of medicine’ instead of ‘ in the world of medicine.’

The pupils failed in using the definite article ‘the’ in those sentences possibly because in Arabic language in order to make indefinite nouns definite the writer should add whether the ‘al’ prefix that comes before the word or by another definite noun that comes after this Indefinite noun, correspondingly, the pupil applied the Arabic rule to help him figure out what to write in English which makes it an interlingual error caused by the interference of L1 Arabic language.

- The substitution of articles such as in:

-‘El Fiki was the writer.’ Instead of ‘a’.

-‘ Mofdi Zakaria was the poet.’ instead of ‘was a poet’.

-‘Didouch Mourad is an famous personality’ instead of the article ‘a’

In the two first examples, the learners did not recognize the article ‘the’ as the definite article which should not be used for unspecific words and mentioned for the first time. This explains the learners’ incomplete understanding of the English rule of definite and indefinite articles. Moreover, in the third example the learner misused the ‘an’ article which normally comes only after vowels as a substitution of the article ‘a’ with the incorrect article ‘an’ .The probable cause of the errors in all these examples is that the learners overgeneralized the incorrect rules of using the articles ‘an’ and ‘the’ as results of the incomplete information about the English article system rules or the incorrect understanding them. Consequently, in both cases these errors are caused by the intralingual transfer of English.

- The addition of articles in:

-‘He defended the Algeria from the France’

-‘ ...in the life.’ ; ‘...of the death.’ Instead of the (Ø) zero article

-‘...with a peace, tolerance and love.’ Instead of ‘...with peace...’

In the first example both Algeria and France are countries and according to the English grammatical rule, the zero article is applied on the words who refer to names of countries. Beside that, in the three remaining examples, the words ‘life’, ‘death’ and are

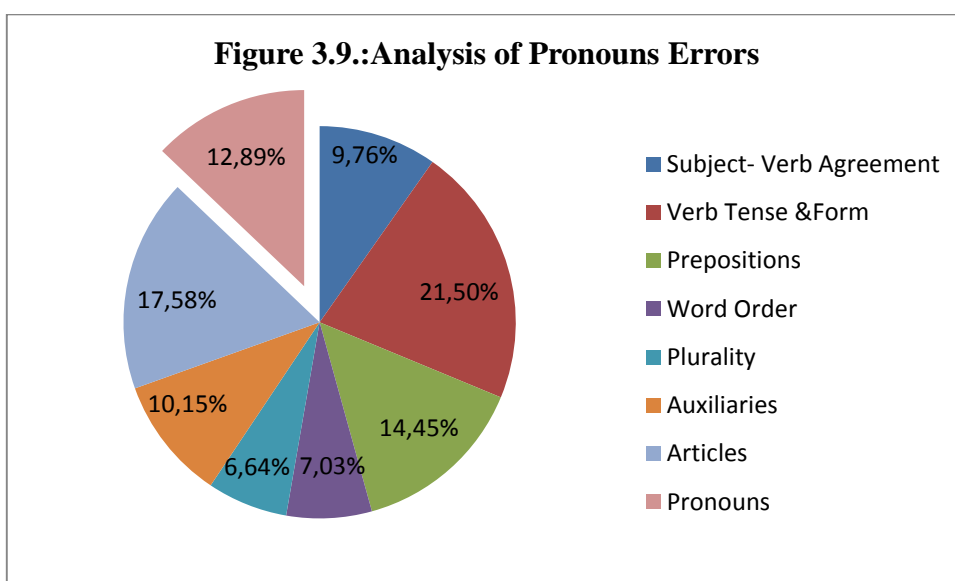
general words in these sentences and ‘peace’ is an uncountable noun. The English rule which states that When we are discussing things in general , we normally use the zero article with plural and uncountable nouns and also after prepositions. In these cases, The pupils are surely not aware of these exceptions of the zero article rule so they overgeneralize, using the rule of the definite and the indefinite articles ‘the’ and ‘a’ structures which makes these errors interlingual caused by the incorrect application of L2 English rules.

or in: - ‘Ben Mhidi was an Algerian.’ Instead of ‘was Algerian.’

The learner incorrectly added the article ‘an’ before the nationality adjective because he/she assumably overgeneralized the rule of using this article before the adjective when it is followed by a noun on this situation. So he/she was likely influenced by the intralingual transfer of L2 English.

### **Pronouns Errors:**

The errors in the different English pronouns are ranked fourth with the percentage of 12.89% and 33 errors of all errors. Fourth Year middle school learners encountered many problems with this sub-category mainly due to their great number and various types and that there are those which are really close in spelling and pronunciation causing a confusion between them.



The main examples of these errors are :

- The omission of pronouns like in:

-‘ Then, came back to Constantine...’ instead of ‘ he came back...’;

The subject pronoun ‘he’ is omitted in this sentence perhaps because in Arabic it exists the case of the invisible subject and the verb stands alone with the object or the indirect object. So, this sentence is the literal translation of the Arabic version of it and these errors are most likely interlingual errors.

-‘Mofdi Zakaria ...date of death is in 1972’ instead of ‘his’

In this example the learner fail to use the possessive pronoun possibly because of the lack of knowledge about these English structures so to simplify the task for him/herself they did not use the possessive pronoun which makes it an intralingual error.

- The substitution of pronouns like in:

-‘an angel came to his called “jibril”.....’ instead of ‘him’;

-‘He taught they Islam.’ Instead of the object pronoun ‘them’.

In the first sentence, the learner confused between the object pronoun ‘him’ with the possessive pronoun ‘his’ while another pupil confused between the subject personal pronoun ‘they’ with the object personal pronoun ‘them’ probably because these pronouns resemble to each other which is an effect of L2 English structures on learners( intralingual error).

Or in -‘ ... many leaders which changed the history...’ instead of ‘ who’

In this sentence, the pupil replaced the relative pronoun referring to people ‘who’ with the relative pronoun indicating things and animals ‘which’ . This learner confusion cause he/she did not the understood the distinction rule of these pronouns as a consequence the learner overgeneralized the use of pronoun ‘which’ wrongly on humans so this is an intralingual errors.

- The substitution of the masculine pronoun ‘his’ with the feminine pronoun ‘her’ in:

-‘Ibn Badis ....Her nationality is Algerian.’ Instead of ‘his’,

Or in -‘He was killed for her country and her nationality is Algerian’.

Probably these learners still do not make the distinction between the masculine and feminine pronouns because of lack of knowledge of this rule so they are influenced by the English L2 structures and these learners are using them incorrectly. Thus, they are intralingual.

-‘His from America.’ Instead of ‘he is’

The EFL learners’ confusion between the pronoun ‘his’ with the expression the contraction of ‘he is’ → ‘he’s’ happened apparently because both structures sound alike in pronunciation and very approximate in writing too and as Algerian Fourth Year middle school learners are beginners, they are likely to make such intralingual error.

- Addition of pronouns like in:

-‘Fatima she didn’t study’ instead of ‘Fatima didn’t study...’

or ‘Ibn Badis he was born ...’ instead of ‘Ibn Badis was born...’

The possible reasons for this kind of pronouns’ error , that the learners consider falsely that the first noun in both examples ‘fatima’ and ‘ Ibn Badis’ are not the subject just like titles because these errors occurred at the very beginning of the paragraphs, or from the repetition of the following structure (the pronoun + verb + direct object or indirect object ) in classroom practices, hence, they overgeneralized it on this case . this is an intralingual error.

#### **3.2.4. Summary of the findings:**

The main purpose of the study was to explore and analyze the grammatical errors in English paragraphs of the Fourth Year pupils at Mohamed Tahar Kaddouri Middle school and to find out the most common grammatical errors and also the main reasons behind their continuous occurrence and to help teachers to minimize their learners’ of committing such types of errors.

To illustrate the responses to these issues, the researcher analyzed the written paragraphs of these pupils according to the procedure of error analysis method. After setting the categories, the researcher chose, based on the literature, the errors were explained in grammatical terms, and deeply examined to find their sources, This detailed analysis provided the answers to the two research questions.

The findings and the results of the study revealed that the most common and repeated grammatical errors in the pupils written paragraphs are the Verb Tense and Form category and the sources of these errors that are mainly Interlingual and Intralingual . Based on the findings, it was found that the majority of the explanations of the grammatical errors that the most frequent cause of these errors is the intralingual transfer. However, we can say that Algerian Fourth Year middle school do commit errors because of Arabic L1 transfer, however, their largest number of errors is due to intralingual reasons.

Though, the research questions of this study were answered a semi structured interview was conducted by the researcher in order to consult the fourth year teachers perspective not only about to answer the research questions and to reinforce the previous findings of the analysis but also to ask them about the teaching of grammar and writing and about the importance of both competences in English as a Foreign language in Algeria and about the error correction methods used by them .for this reason, the responses of the 2 English teachers in the interview were collected and analyzed in the second part of this chapter.

### **3.3. The Teachers' interview:**

According to Corpuz, conducting a semi-structured interview implies the researcher asking open ended questions and recording the responses in order to obtain in-depth, meaningful, and important information from a participant in the study .Moreover, interviews are guided conversation , rather than rigidity .one of the advantages of an interview is that it allows the researcher to focus directly on the research issue.another advantage of interviews is that they provid meaningful insight to supply perceived casual inferences towards a specific phenomenon (55-56).

By using semi- structured interviews , teachers beliefs mainly regarding the written grammatical errors in the paragraphs of Fourth Year Middle school pupils and their

possible causes and generally concerning the teaching of English writing and grammar in Algeria and their used error correction methods and then what they recommend for the improvement of teaching English as a Foreign Language in Algerian middle schools.

### **3.3.1.The Sample:**

Semi structured interview was prepared by the researcher and conducted with the 2 teachers of English that are teaching Fourth Year at Mohamed Tahar Kaddouri Middle school in Biskra in order to obtain qualitative data with respect to research questions and other supplementary information about the context of teaching English in general and teaching English writing skill and grammar competence in particular in Algerian middle schools.

### **3.3.2.Description of the interview**

The interview was conducted with the teachers separately. It includes open ended questions as well as close ended questions in order to get the data needed for the research about the teachers perspectives. This interview is divided into three section.

The first section involve personal information about the teacher's degree of education and the number of years that they have been working as teachers of English and then they were asked about their opinion concerning the fourth year pupils general level in English language.

The second section includes questions about teaching writing skill and grammar in EFL middle school classes. The teachers were asked about their opinion regarding the Fourth level middle school program and also about the importance of teaching EFL writing in relation to other skills and teaching grammar for the pupils' improvement in writing as well as the teaching methods they are using in teaching grammar by giving them two choices: the deductive (rule- driven ) grammar method and the inductive ( rule-discovery) grammar method and asked about their choices reasons.

Section three on the other hand, is about the research questions namely the grammatical errors in EFL writing .this section is consisted of five questions. Firstly, the first question provide information about the main focus area of teachers when they are correcting the written paragraphs of their pupils whether it is grammar, vocabulary, content, spelling and punctuation with the explanation of their choices. Secondly, the second question is the first research question. In other words, teachers were asked about the most common errors that their pupils commit in their writing tasks by giving them the following options: SV Agreement, Verb Tense and Form, prepositions, word order, plurality, auxiliaries, articles and pronouns along with the explanation of their selections.

Thirdly, the third question is about the second research question concerning the possible causes of the pupils' grammatical errors. To answer this question they were given two alternatives: the influence of the mother tongue (Arabic) and the influence of some English structures on the appropriate English production, and both choices were explained by examples like: writing the adjectives after the noun as an illustration to Arabic L1 Transfer and overgeneralizing the 'ed' on irregular verbs in the past simple as an instance for English L2 transfer. Fourthly, the fourth question is about which method the teacher use in error correction of writing tasks whether explicit (direct) error correction or implicit (indirect) error correction and the explanation of choices is required. Finally, the fifth and last question is about the suggestions and recommendation the teachers can give about the improvement of both grammar and writing level of Fourth year middle school pupils.

### **3.3.3. Analysis and results of Teachers' interview:**

In order to get a clearer picture about the written grammatical errors and their probable causes that Algerian Fourth Year middle school pupils commit after analyzing them in the first part of this chapter, it is necessary and beneficial to have an insight about their English teachers' perspectives.

In section one analysis and results, the 2 interviewed teachers are experienced with more than 20 years recognized the positive effect of focusing on teachers one with a license and an UTE institute diploma. Both teachers think that the time devoted for teaching English of (three hours and a half) to the Fourth year level at middle school is not sufficient for the pupils to improve their knowledge about this foreign language. One of the two teachers thinks that the pupils' level is relatively low with their inability to read and understand a text and produce a paragraph comparing with the level of previous fundamental system of education pupils, while the other teacher believes that her pupils are able to do these tasks quite decently.

For section two analysis and results, both teachers approved of the importance of the writing skill in teaching learning English process in comparison with the other skills because it enables pupils informally to communicate in English in social networks and formally to progress in their future education. Again both teachers complained about the timing size devoted to English for Fourth Year especially for writing practices and exercises. The pair recognized that focusing on grammar teaching would have a positive influence on their learners' developing writing skill. The two interviewed teacher agreed



upon using generally the inductive method in teaching grammar and exceptionally the deductive method each method for its convenient tasks and structures.

In section three analysis and results, both teachers recognized that they focus on grammar aspect while correcting the written paragraphs of their pupils. Moreover, the two of these teachers are in unison about the verb tense and form errors that are the most common grammatical errors they find in their pupils writing and also their views were similar that the negative influence of Arabic as the mother tongue and English language structures on pupils' English production both as main causes of their pupils' errors. However, they had different opinions about the error correction methods; the first teacher uses the implicit and indirect error correction method because she thinks that pupils should be trained to be autonomous especially in correcting their errors by themselves in contrast the second teacher argues that it is necessary to use the explicit direct method of error correction because they are not yet able to detect and correct themselves without the help of the teacher. Here is what the two teachers suggested and indicated regarding solutions for the improvement of their pupils' writing first they both agreed upon adding more hours to the time sizing of English sessions in order to have more time for writing activities and grammar practices and also reducing the length of the syllabus of the fourth year by preparing it from the first year gradually from simple to complex to more complex without forgetting to diminish the number of the pupils per class to 25 pp max.

#### **3.3.4. Summary of the Teachers' interview results and findings:**

To sum up, interviewing both teachers of English teaching Fourth year level at middle school , the researcher may deduce that to focus on teaching both grammar and writing is very important for the improvement of pupils' level in English, however, the time assigned for teaching English sessions is considerably low in comparison with the size of the program and complexity of the structures introduced in each lesson which makes it hard for teachers to practice with their pupils sufficiently and appropriately on grammar rules as well as the writing skill .

The most important outcome of this interview is that the responses of both teachers confirmed the findings of the written paragraphs. in other words , the two teachers reaction to the research questions is similar to what the researcher found out about the grammatical errors of their pupils writings which reinforces the fact that Verb tense and form are the most common written grammatical errors of fourth year level pupils and negative influence of both the mother tongue and English structures are the possible causes

responsible for those errors. The disparity in teaching strategies of error correction may have an effect on pupils' autonomy in improving themselves in writing.

### **3.4.Conclusion:**

This third chapter confirmed that Fourth-year pupils commit more errors in Verb tense and form than in other sub categories of grammar errors, and also that they can be attributed to intralingual reasons which most of them are due to overgeneralization and sometimes to false concepts because of lack of practice of certain structures as in the case of tense errors. and others to the mother tongue (Arabic) influence. Consequently, it is needed to draw the attention on the difference between Arabic and English in the areas where the errors due to negative transfer are repeated. Besides, pupils need to be exposed more to the necessary grammatical structures, in other words, they need more practice in order to internalize them and to be able to use them in their writing.

## **General Conclusion:**

The current study aimed at identifying, describing, categorizing, and examining the types of grammatical errors made in the Fourth Year Middle School learners' English paragraphs and investigating the possible causes of these errors.

The research begins with an overview of literature about error analysis procedure and errors types and causes in general and then particularly focus on writing skill components and EFL grammar and writing teaching context according to CBA, all together with the different grammatical errors in EFL writing. In order to develop valid answers to the questions of this exploratory and descriptive study, two types of research instruments were used; The error analysis method was applied on Fourth year middle school pupil's paragraphs to analyze their written grammatical errors and identify the probable sources of these errors and a semi structured interview was conducted with two EFL teachers teaching these pupils at Mohamed Tahar Kaddouri Middle school in order to reinforce the previous findings of the error analysis.

As a consequence, different written grammatical errors were found in these paragraphs. These errors were restricted to eight prominent errors: subject-verb agreement, verb tense and form, prepositions, word order, plurality, auxiliaries, articles, and pronouns. Subsequently, the analysis of these errors has been carried out and eventually, results have disclosed that a large proportion of the grammatical errors belong to Verb tense and form category, and that the pupils make grammatical errors due to two main causes: Interlingual and intralingual transfer. Both interviewed teachers confirmed the findings of the analysis and provided qualitative data about the context of teaching English in general as well as EFL writing and grammar in particular at Algerian middle schools.

Hence, it can be concluded that Fourth year Middle school pupils' still have a long way to arrive at writing acceptable paragraphs in English. The number of 256 written errors shows that these pupils clearly face problems in grasping the primary principles of English grammar which affects directly their writing skill and production. Nevertheless, Teachers should then be more aware of these types of errors and provide the necessary follow up work to check the problem areas and their causes. EFL teachers and researchers should recognize error analysis as a valuable tool by which they gain more information about the EFL psycholinguistic learning processes. Specifically, it is the responsibility of both syllabus designers and teachers of English to sustain the pupils' improvement in writing skill including grammatical competence. The syllabus designers should prepare

and shape the EFL program and textbooks of middle school levels together with the fourth year in logical order and conformity with the time sizing allotted to English teaching and the differences in psychological and cognitive abilities of pupils. On the other hand, middle school teachers should vary and adjust their teaching strategies according to the difficulty of the instructed items and the distribution of the program as well as to the pupils' personal disparities. At a higher level, the education policy makers in Algeria should give more importance to English as a Foreign language especially EFL teaching for beginners' in Algerian schools in order to give a better opportunity for syllabus designers, teachers, as well as pupils to implement and proceed the EFL teaching learning process optimally. This study dealt with a limited number of both pupils and linguistic aspects involved in writing due to the limitations of brief time and large population. Clearly, this area of study needs to be investigated more in the future.

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## APPENDECES

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# Appendix 1. : Pupils' Paragraphs

## **Appendix 2.**

### **Interview with teachers:**

#### **Section one: General information**

##### ***1- What is the highest academic degree you have in English?***

**T1.** I started teaching English with the institute 'UTE' diploma of English teacher like most of the teachers in the eighties but five years ago I finished my four years studies of English at the university and I got my License diploma of the classical system.

**T2.** I am teaching English with my English teacher diploma of 'UTE' institute.

##### ***2- How long have you been working as a teacher?***

**T1.** I have been teaching in middle schools for 29 years.

**T2.** I have been teaching English for 22 years.

##### ***3- How many hours do you teach Fourth year level per week? and do you think that is sufficient for your pupils' improvement in EFL?***

**T1.** According to the schedule submitted by the ministry of education, the fourth year level has generally 3 hours of English sessions and an hour for group work. And Of course, it is not sufficient in comparison with the length of the syllabus which does not allow us to do more practice tasks with the pupils.

**T2.** The schedule of Fourth year middle school is consisted of 3 hours of official sessions and one TD hour, both are devoted to English language teaching. This time sizing is not sufficient for the pupils' improvement because of the lengthiness of the program and lack of practice, since we teach too many structures in one session , we can not afford to practice all these structures in this little duration.

##### ***4- What do you think of the general level of your pupils? Explain.***

**T1.** At the general level, that is the level of my fourth year pupils is acceptable because the majority of them are able to read a text and do the tasks of comprehension and also produce a short paragraph.

**T2.** In my opinion, the general level of Fourth year pupils is not satisfactory because they are not capable of reading and understanding a text as well as forming an acceptable paragraph in comparison with the previous fundamental system of neuvième. Pupils who have been taught under this latter , they were quite autonomous in their learning tasks .

#### **Section two: EFL Writing and Grammar in Algerian middle schools**

##### ***1- Do you think teaching writing is as important as teaching other skills?***

**T1.** Yes, it is similarly important, sometimes even more necessary, since pupils need this skill in expressing themselves and their opinions via technological means of communication

especially the internet i.e. social networks like facebook and what'sup . Besides they need this skill in their future education and examinations such as BEM exam.

**T2.** It is very important for Fourth year pupils to learn the EFL writing skill because it is a kind of an evaluation means for other skills and it is more essentially a preparation for them to be able to pass official exams like BEM and continuing their secondary studies.

***2- What do you think about the teaching of writing in the program of English in the Algerian Middle Schools?***

**T1.** I think that the timing of English language of 3 hours and a half for every fourth year pupil is insufficient to deal with the writing skill and its mechanics of spelling and punctuation in an appropriate way and also there is not enough time to practice and correct the writing tasks.

**T2.** The problem in the program is that there is no gradual logical order and harmony in teaching new English structures with the short time devoted to this operation. So, writing tasks are no exception to this problem.

***3- Is focusing on teaching grammar enough to improve your pupils' writing level in English?***

**T1.** Of course it is important to focus on teaching grammar at beginners' level, since, it is a general truth that to have an acceptable understanding and knowledge of English grammar makes one able to write clearly and convey ideas appropriately.

**T2.** Of course, it is important because learners cannot understand and use the English language without having an appropriate knowledge of English grammar rules. Grammar is like a vehicle for them to produce the language.

***4- What teaching method are you implementing in your classes? And why?***

- a-** Deductive (rule-driven) grammar method or
- b-** Inductive (rule-discovery) grammar method or
- c-** Both

**T1.** I generally use the inductive grammar method by displaying examples for pupils and then letting them discover the rules by themselves and I sometimes use the deductive method when needed especially for teaching exceptions of grammar rules or there is too much variations in the rule such as adverbs of manners.

**T2.** Usually, I use the inductive grammar method, but sometimes, when I feel that my pupils would not understand the difficult grammar structures I am obliged to give the rule directly ( the deductive method).

**Section three: Grammatical errors in EFL writing.**

**1- When you correct the pupil's errors in writing which aspect do you focus on most?**

- a- Grammar
- b- Vocabulary
- c- Content
- d- Spelling and punctuation

**T1.** I focus mainly on grammar and the other linguistic elements depending on what has been covered previously in the sessions.

**T2.** I focus on grammar in the correction of paragraphs but I give importance to vocabulary and content and I try to be tolerant with spelling and punctuation errors.

**2- When you correct the pupils' writing papers, which grammatical errors your pupils' commit more?**

- a- *Subject verb agreement*
- b- *Verb tense and form*
- c- *Prepositions*
- d- *Word order*
- e- *Plurality*
- f- *Auxiliaries*
- g- *Articles*
- h- *Pronouns*

**T1.** According to my observations to the errors committed by my pupils of fourth year, the Verb tense and form and articles are the most difficult areas for them and also sometimes subject verb agreement can be hard for them.

**T2.** I think that the pupils of fourth year commit more errors in Verb tense and form and prepositions as well as in word order.

**3- According to you, what are the causes of your pupils' written errors in grammar?**

- a- *The influence of their mother tongue (Arabic language) like: putting the adjectives after the nouns instead of the opposite.*
- b- *The influence of English structures on others in producing English. Like using the 'ed' past simple rule on irregular verbs.*

**T1.** I think both Arabic as the native language and English as the foreign language they are still learning, form a great influence on my pupils errors since they reflect what knowledge they have from both on writing and speaking English.

**T2.** The two languages are main causes of the pupils errors because they are making sense of English only through what they know previously whether from Arabic or from English itself.

**4- Which method do you use in correcting your pupils' writing? Explain.**

**a- Explicit (direct) error correction method.**

**b- Implicit (indirect) error correction method.**

**T1.** I use the indirect method of error correction by teaching at the beginning of each year the error correction codes so that our pupils would be able to understand them and know their errors nature, because they have to be autonomous and correct their errors by themselves.

**T2.** I personally use the direct error correction method because I think that the pupils capacity did not yet reach the level to know the error and correct it by themselves so to ensure that they know the appropriate answers I correct them directly and explicitly.

**5- What do you suggest as solutions to improve the pupils' in EFL grammar and writing in Algerian middle schools?**

**T1.** As a teacher of English, direct changes should be made by increasing the time sizing of English sessions into ( 4 to 5 hours per week) in order to get more time for practicing writing skill as well as grammar rules and at the same time, reducing the length of the program as well as decreasing the number of the pupils' in the class to (max of 25 pupil per class).

**T2.** In order to improve the pupils level of English writing and more specifically in grammar, we have to add more time into the official sessions of English at the middle school so we can have enough time allotted to the classroom writing activities and grammar structures tasks. Moreover, we have to simplify the program from the first year by dividing the syllabus of English gradually from simple to complex to more complex and adding a specially remedial work session to reinforce the appropriate practices of writing and speaking of the foreign language and in all these changes we should take into consideration the pupils' level, age, and thinking as well as physical abilities.



## تمهيد

الدراسة الحالية تهدف إلى تسليط الضوء على الأخطاء النحوية المكتوبة من طرف تلاميذ المدارس المتوسطة في مستوى السنة الرابعة بالإضافة إلى التحقيق في الأسباب المحتملة وراء أخطائهم النحوية . ولتحقيق هذا الغرض، تم تطبيق أسلوب تحليل الأخطاء على عينة من 42 فقرة مكتوبة من قبل تلاميذ السنة الرابعة الذين يدرسون في متوسطة محمد الطاهر قدوري ببسكرة . و قد تم تحديد كافة الأخطاء النحوية في الفقرات و تصنيفها إلى عدة فئات فرعية و في النهاية تم تحليلها. لتعزيز نتائج التحليل ، أجريت مقابلة شبه منظمة مع أستاذتين يدرسان اللغة الانجليزية لهؤلاء التلاميذ من أجل اكتشاف وجهات نظرهم حول الأخطاء النحوية لتلاميذهما مع مقترحاتهم لحلول مناسبة لتحسين كتابة المتعلمين. تظهر نتائج كلا من التحليل و المقابلة أن الأخطاء النحوية الأكثر شيوعا المرتكبة من طرف المشتركين هي أزمنة الأفعال و شكلها و أن الأسباب الممكنة لهذه الأخطاء هي النقل بين اللغة الأم و اللغة المراد تعلمها و النقل من اللغة المراد تعلمها نفسها. يتكون هذا العمل من ثلاثة فصول : الفصل الأول يحتوي على الأخطاء و طريقة تحليل الأخطاء . الثاني يتعلق بالأخطاء الخاصة بالكتابة و النحو في اللغة الانجليزية . أما بالنسبة للجزء الثالث فهو يتطرق إلى الطريقة العملية أين تجمع كل من العينة والمقابلة و تحلل. توفر هذه الأخطاء المتعرف عليها و أسبابها الممكنة نقاط مفيدة للتركيز عليها من طرف مخطوطو البرنامج التعليمي للغة الإنجليزية و كذلك الأساتذة في تصميم و تنفيذ منهاج دراسة فعال لعملية التعليم و العملية في اللغة الانجليزية كلغة أجنبية.