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**The Effects of The EFL Learners' Mother Tongue
Interference on their Writing in English : An Error
Analysis Study**

A Case Study of Third Year LMD Students of English at Biskra University

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

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Dedication

I thank Allah, the Almighty, for everything

To my beloved mother 'SID Malika' who motivated and encouraged me all the way long. Her support and constant love have sustained me throughout my life. Thank you for your never-ending love, Sacrifice, devotion and your energy. Without my mom I would not be the person i am today. All the merit return to you mom. She is the most courageous woman I ever knew, I love you mom thank you for everything. This work is dedicated to you.

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Abstract

The aim of this research is to shed some light on the first language interference issue, as well as identify and analyze some of the most recurrent and common errors made by third-year students of English Language at the Department of Foreign Languages at Biskra University. In this respect, the focus is mainly on L1 transfer and the errors resulting from it when writing in English. It is hypothesized that Third-year students' mother tongue interference affects their writing compositions and that they commit many types of errors when writing because of L1 transfer (interference). To confirm this hypothesis, The research method adopted for this piece of work a questionnaire that is administered to six (06) teachers of written expression in the English division at Biskra University to ask them about the main causes and the different types of errors committed by third year EFL students. Moreover, thirty-two (32) paragraphs were collected for an error analysis written by third year students ; as well as are analyzed to expose the main common errors types. The results obtained have shown that third year EFL students commit different types of errors which are mainly due to their mother tongue (Arabic) interference. On the light of these results, the earlier stated hypothesis is successfully confirmed in that students' low achievement in writing is because of mother tongue interference. On the basis of the results obtained, some implications and recommendations have been proposed to help students overcome their difficulties in order to improve their writing skill, and others to help teachers in their way of teaching the writing skill.

List of Abbreviations

L1: Mother Tongue , Native Language or First Language (Arabic in this Study).

L2: Second Language, or Foreign Language (English in this Study).

TG : Target Language

IL : Interlanguage

EA : Error Analysis

CA : Contrastive Analysis

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Introduction

Since Learning a foreign language is considered as a very complex process , there has been a growing body of research investigating errors committed by EFL learners. Because the difference between the two languages (a foreign language and a native language) makes the learner face a great difficulty in learning and applying foreign language rules. Mother tongue interference (also known as language transfer) refers to speakers or writers applying knowledge from their native language to a second or foreign language. Learning a new language is not a simple task to accomplish easily because when we learn a new language , many interesting horizons of knowledge arise. The first language interference is one of them . It is commonly believed that the first language (L1) has an effect on the second language (L2) or foreign language especially when it comes to writing which is considered to be the most difficult skill to master. In recent years, there has been increasing interest in studies related to writing because such skill is very important in academic studies and outside academic institutions . Having students to produce an organized, neat and error-free piece of writing has always been the life long dream and the ambition of all EFL teachers because they are the ones who suffer from such a problem ;which is the mother tongue interference,and the most important part of their task is to teach their students how to think and to use a foreign language as its native users do. The influence of the native language is clearly shown in the written form which is the basic (main) technique , a foreign language teacher uses in testing the proficiency of his/her students.

On the light of this introduction the main aim of this study is to show ; through error analysis, the , the interference of the mother-tongue, Arabic, in the English writings of third year LMD students, also to explore the common grammatical errors in their writing production , in order to check whether or not they are influenced by their mother tongue (Arabic) when they write in English or there are other reasons that make EFL learners commit these errors. In this study Arabic is native or primary language and English is the target language. Before proceeding further, the definition of some key terms of this research paper will provide better understanding of the topic in hand.

1-“The additional language is called a second language L2; even though it may actually be the third, fourth, or tenth to be acquired” (Troike, 2006:2). For this reason, the term second language

and foreign language are used interchangeably throughout this research and both of them refer to English in this case.

2- the native language is also called the first language, language one, or the mother tongue (Troike, 2006 :4). For this reason, all these terms are used as synonymous terms and they refer to Arabic in this study.

3- Language interference occurs when a speaker or a writer applies knowledge of his/her native language to a second language. Language interference is also known as language transfer, linguistic interference, L1 inference and crossmeaning (The Free Dictionary by Farlex).

Statement of the Problem

During the learning process of a foreign language, learners face many difficulties with its learning. Most of the time, those difficulties on foreign language acquisition or learning are strongly related to native language interference. Many students count on the use of their mother tongue while they try to improve their skills using the foreign language, and for that reason most of them always have mother tongue interference when trying to master the four macro skills: writing, reading, speaking and listening. Students at the Department of English at Biskra University are not an exception. This research emphasizes the writing skill to determine the level of interference of students' mother tongue in their English writings. This is due to the fact that most of them struggle with errors when they write in English. It is commonly believed that the best way to test or to see to what extent do EFL learners depend on their native language is to ask them to write or to speak . consequently , we can find out ; through analyzing their speech or writing ,if they make errors in foreign language or not. It has been noticed that not only first and second year students of english at Biskra University who make these errors ; but also third year students . This is considered as unacceptable and a very serious problem ;since third year LMD students of English have been already taught the main grammatical rules in the first and second year .therefore ; they are expected to use them correctly in their writings . During the process of the research, the main purpose of the investigation is to try to analyze and identify errors, and specially try to give significant proposals to help students to become skillful English writers by diagnosing the causes and sources of errors .

Significance of the Study

Learning a language is always a difficult thing especially when it comes to learning a second language (L2) for it reflects the complexity of learning a language which is the other tongue rather than the mother tongue of a person. It is an admitted fact that English has emerged as an International Language of the world and many nations of the world are striving for learning it as a second language. Many EFL learners struggle a lot when their teachers ask them to speak or write in that foreign language and because they are not skillful in foreign language , they try to use their mother tongue to express their thoughts which may lead them to commit many errors. For that reason , This study is very important for teachers to help the students predict their errors before making them. This study will help to explore the main reasons or causes behind these committed errors .i.e. if these errors are because of the mother tongue interference or there are other reasons . this will help also to identify the common types of errors that are made by the learners in their written productions . Conducting such a study may help the EFL teachers to become more familiar with the concept of language interference.

Aim of the Study

The present study deals with the learners' mother tongue interference in their written products with the purpose:

- 1- identifying the main reasons behind committing errors in EFL learners' writings .
- 2- Exploring the common types of errors made by EFL learners at biskra university in their written work .

Research Questions

The aims of this study will be investigated through the following research questions:

1. Is mother tongue interference the major cause for errors in the English writings of third year LMD students?
2. What are the most common types of grammatical errors in students writings?
3. Does mother tongue interference affect students' writings negatively ?

Hypothesis

In this study, the researcher tries to find answers for the questions raised. For this purpose, the researcher formulates the following hypothesis:

The low achievement of the EFL learners' writing performance is due to the interference of their mother tongue which leads them to make serious errors in their written productions .

Research Methodology

This study is an error analysis study which focuses on the students' errors. The current study employs a mixed method design which includes both quantitative and qualitative research methods. Such a method integrates both approaches to provide a much more detailed and comprehensive picture of that which is being investigated. This present study will be done through a descriptive work in which it tries to verify whether the students' errors are due to the mother tongue interference .

Sample Design

Population

Burns and Grove (1993 : 779) states that a population is defined as all elements (individuals, objects and events) that meet the sample criteria for inclusion in a study. According to the administration's statistics, the study population is consisted of 370 third year LMD students of the academic year 2015 / 2016 . Mouton (1996 : 132) defines a sample as elements selected with the intention of finding out something about the total population from which they are taken. To select the participants of the present study, a simple random sampling method was used because it is regarded as one of the most reliable methods to obtain a representative sample. This type of methods usually involves less time and expense (Gay and Airasian, 2003 cited in Al-khresheh, 2010). For this , this study will be carried out with two groups out of ten which means that the sample approximately consists of 74 third year students of English at Biskra University . These third year students are selected ,because they have normally reached a proficiency level and master the English language .

Research Tools

Concerning data collection, this study was based on two main research tools which are a questionnaire and the analysis of the written products (short paragraphs) that are produced by third year LMD students of English at Biskra University. The questionnaire is devoted to the teachers of written expression of English at Biskra University. The questionnaire will help the researcher to figure out the reasons of making these errors and their common types . Since this study is an error analysis study, the researcher will analyze the written products (short paragraphs) of students. The analysis of students' productions exposes the common errors made by 3rd year EFL learners.

Structure of the Dissertation

The present research will be basically divided into three main chapters. Chapters one and two will be devoted to the theoretical parts to lay a good grounding for readers to fully understand the core or the objective of this study. The third chapter concerns the empirical or the practical part which includes the data analysis of the students' short paragraphs and teachers' questionnaires.

The first chapter is divided into two main sections. The first section is about first language interference and theories about language transfer. The second section deals with error analysis and some related approaches. The second chapter is devoted to the writing skill, its nature, its definitions, its importance and its relationship with other language skills including speaking and reading. Finally , the third chapter the third chapter is purely concerned with analyzing and interpreting data gathered from both the analysis of student's short paragraphs and teachers' questionnaire. This chapter ends with a set of recommendations which may help in easing the problems faced by the learners.

Limitations of the Study

This study is limited to third year EFL students at Biskra University. It focuses on analyzing short paragraphs written by third year students.

Chapter One

Introduction

In these days, learning a foreign language has been a growing need in the empire of the globalization, but since learners express themselves best in their mother tongue, that calls for a special effort because they face different challenges that result in errors with the interference of mother tongue with the foreign language learning. When learning English as a foreign language, it seems to be usual that most of the time students use their first language in order to try to reach an effective communication in the second one, which makes learners follow and accommodate the same grammatical patterns in both languages. Hence, the importance of that influence in the learning process has been a relevant issue for a long time. The main object of this section is to try to clarify the concepts of mother tongue , second language , foreign language and language transfer or /and interference .

This chapter will be divided into two sections ; the first section presents some key concepts of mother tongue ,second language and language transfer. It also provides information about interlanguage theory and its origins, types and theories of transfer . The second section highlights the notion of error analysis ; which is the main procedure that this study is based on , the origins, classification , sources , significance of errors . In addition to constrictive analysis and its drawbacks. Lastly, the chapter is closed with other possible factors that maybe responsible for causing errors in the process of learning a second language.

Section one : Concepts of Mother Tongue , Second Language and Language

Transfer

1.1. Mother Tongue , Second Language and Foreign Language

According to Ashworth (1992), mother tongue or native language is the language which the person acquires in early years and which normally becomes her/his natural instrument of thought and communication. An online article, entitled '*Mother Tongue*', defines mother tongue (first language, native language or vernacular) as the language a person learns first and correspondingly the person is called a native speaker of the

language . The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language (Skiba, 2000) defines mother tongue as one's native language ; the language learned by children and passed from one generation to the next ; it is received by birth or from ancestors. However, First language (L1), mother tongue and native language will be used as synonymous in this study. On the other hand, Ashworth (1992) states that the second language is a language acquired by a person in addition to her mother tongue. A similar definition of second language is given by the American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language mentioned above as the language you learn and adopt after learning yours.

According to an online article entitled '*Foreign Language*' a foreign language is a language not spoken by the indigenous people of a certain place. It is also a language not spoken in the native country of the person . Some of the authors discussed in this work the use of the terms second language and foreign language interchangeably. Therefore, this study adopts the following definitions presented by Richards, C. John Platt and H. Platt (1992 :54) :

Foreign language is a language which is not a native language in a country. A foreign language is usually studied either for communication with foreigners who speak the language, or for reading printed materials in the language" and "native language (usually the language which a person acquires in early childhood because it is spoken in the family and/or it is the language of the country where he or she is living. The native language is often the first language the child acquires [...]

1.2. Foreign Language and Mother Tongue Transfer

It is a popular belief that foreign language is strongly influenced by the learner's first language (L1). It is also popular belief that the role of the L1 is a negative one. That is, the L1 gets in the way or interferes with the learning of foreign language (FL) such that features of the L1 are transferred into the FL (Ellis, 1999) , which means that in popular opinion the L1 interferes with the learning of the new language . On the one hand the popular belief is given support:

Taking a psychological point of view, we can say there is never peaceful co-existence between two language systems in the learner, but rather constant warfare, and that warfare is not limited to the moment of

cognition, but continues during the period of storing newly learnt ideas in memory. (Marton, cited in Ellis 1999, p.150).

On the other hand, the popular belief is rejected and the impact of the L1, if not denied totally, is at least minimized:

[...] Our data on FL acquisition of syntactic structures in a natural environment suggest that interference does not constitute a major strategy in this area...it seems necessary to me to abandon the notion of interference as a natural and inevitable phenomenon in FL learning. (Felix cited in Ellis 1999 :107).

Krashen (ibid) rejects the view that the first language interferes with FL. Rather, he sees the use of the first language as a performance strategy. The learner falls back on his first language using his first language when he lacks a rule in the FL. He initiates an utterance using his first language (instead of 'acquired' FL knowledge) and then substitute FL lexical items, also making small repairs to the resulting string by means of the Monitor.

1.3. Interlanguage

According to Cook (2008 : 13) 'one view of L2 learning sees crucial elements as the transfer of aspects of the L1 language to the L2 . In other words , L1 assists students when the language components of the L2 are similar . Selinker (1972) sees interlanguage as a temporary grammar which L2 learners invent for themselves . In Selinker's opinion , interlanguage is a sign that students do not understand the rules of the L2. Interlanguage is not the 'language' learners have been taught but their independent language that they use because of gaps in mastering the target language .

1.3.1. Interlanguage Theory

1.3.1.1 . The Origins Of Interlanguage Theory

The term interlanguage came to prominence in 1972 in Selinker's paper of the same name. Stern states that the concept of interlanguage was suggested by Selinker in order to draw attention to the possibility that the learner's language can be regarded as a distinct

language variety or system with its own particular characteristics and rules (1983, p.125). Ellis (1995) has reviewed the origins of interlanguage theory and notes, that there are two distinct views of Second Language Acquisition (SLA). One view, put forward by a mentalist or psycholinguistic is that the theories of language acquisition claim that the learners acquire L2 in much the same way as they acquire L1 and that is because of an inbuilt faculty for language acquisition. The other view is based on the concept of SLA with environmental factors and L1 interference acquisition. The psycholinguistic view is largely based on Chomsky's (1959) concept of Universal Grammar which asserts that people are born with innate linguistic principles, comprising the initial state which controlled the form of the sentences of any given language could take. (Ellis, 1995).

This is a theory which helps us shift from a right/wrong approach to English, without losing sight of accuracy. Its chief proponent is Larry Selinker. Before this theory, it was believed that second language errors were made due to interference from the speaker's first language. Of course, these types of errors do occur and are easy to trace. But Selinker tried to find out a way to explain that the errors some learners make which have nothing to do with their foreign language and are made across the board of languages. This is when Selinker devised the 'Interlanguage continuum'. Ever since, the Interlanguage has become a major tool of SLA research and theory. While learning a SL, the learners build up a system for themselves, known by various names, which are different in some ways from their first language and second language systems.

However, the most widely used terminology is that suggested by Selinker (1972,1992). He calls this, as Interlanguage, to emphasize the structurally intermediate status of the learners' language system between learner's mother tongue and his target language. Studying Interlanguage could help us to understand the learners' problems better and try to help learners, so that they achieve competence. Based on this theory, interlanguage is defined as 'psychological structure latent in the brain that is activated when one attempts to learn a new language. For that reason, Selinker (1992) proposed the theory of Interlanguage (IL). This term is used to refer to both the internal system that a learner has constructed an IL at a single point in time and the series of inter connected systems that characterize the learners progress over time (Interlanguage continuum) (Ellis, 1997 : 33).

The theory of IL was the first major attempt to explain the process of SLA. It was one of the few theories of that time which did not contradict the critical period hypothesis. It

was also important as many other theories were developed out of it. To explain the process of the SLA better, the IL asks three important questions:

-Firstly, it asks what processes are involved and are responsible for IL construction?

-Secondly, it addresses a question on the nature of IL continuum.

- Thirdly, it asks for an explanation as to why most learners do not achieve the full L2 competence. (Ellis,1994).

The idea of IL is founded on the assumption that an L2 learner, at any particular moment in his learning sequence, is using a language system which is neither L1, nor L2. It is a third language, with its own grammar, its own lexicon and so on. The rules used by the learners are unlikely to be found in his mother tongue or in the target language.

1.4. Language Transfer

According to Ellis (1999) ,the process of using knowledge of the first language in learning a second language is called negative transfer. Ormrod (1990) has a different point of view. He agrees that transfer is a part of everyday life: individuals encounter new situations and draw on their previously acquired knowledge and skills to deal with them. In fact, transfer is an essential component of human functioning, so it becomes positive transfer. For the purpose of this work transfer will be considered the same as interference. Interference may be viewed as the transference of elements of one language to another (Berthold cited in Ormrod, 1990).

The idea that interference from the first language is the major obstacle to foreign language learning was dominant in applied linguistics from the 1940s through the late 1960s. Here is a classic statement of the position:

The basic problem of the foreign language learning arise not out of any essential difficulty in the features of the new language themselves, but primarily out of the special “set” created by the foreign language habits . (Labo cited in Ellis, 1999 : 124).

Language transfer refers to speakers or writers applying knowledge of their native language to a second language. It is the effect of one language on the learning of another.

The learner uses his own first language as a resource. This used to be looked upon as a mistake/error, but it is now recognized that all learners fall back on the mother tongue. Sometimes, rules and structures of first language can be transferred for production of second language. Transfer is seen by Cook (2008 :71) as the treatment by learners of the L2 knowledge as equivalent to the knowledge of the L1 and it occurs at different levels such as the transfer of phonological, morphological ,grammatical ,lexical and semantic elements of the native language to the target language. Lopez (2008) defines language transfer as an attribute of learning a second language and it happens because of the interaction with the mother tongue .In this instance , learners produce forms that are not a consequence of interference with their mother tongue but because of their exposure to the target language or what scholars like Corder (1974) and Selinker (1972) call the sciolinguistic situation .

1.5. Types Of Tansfer

Theorists distinguish two main types of transfer : positive and negative transfer. We are going to make a small relationship between them .

1.5.1. Positive vs Negative Transfer

When learning in one situation facilitates learning or performance in another situation, we say that *positive transfer* has occurred. For example learning basic mathematics procedures should facilitate one's ability to balance a checkbook. Learning principles of reinforcement should improve a teacher's ability to modify student behavior. On the other hand, when something learned in one situation hinders one's ability to learn or perform in a second situation, then *negative transfer* has occurred. The negative transfer is also known as 'language interference'. Saville-Troike (2006 : 200) defines language interference as the inappropriate influence of an L1 structure or rule on L2 use . However , the term 'language interference' and 'negative transfer' will be used interchangeably in this study . Transfer should not be viewed as always being negative . Positive transfer occurs when the prior knowledge benefits the learning task ; that is to say , when the previous rule or item of the L2 is correctly applied to present the subject matter . Beardsmore (1964) suggests that the difficulties of L2 learner experiences with the phonology, vocabulary and grammar of L2 are due to the interference of habits from the L1 . Hence , the relationship between the two

languages must be considered if teachers want to diagnose and remedy L1 interference on L2 .

Studies on L2 learning have shown that L1 has interfering effects on the L2 .S.Pit Corder (1975) states that L1 interference is a noticeable source of errors among L2 learners. The problem with linguists is that they often view L2 learning as an exclusively involving overcoming the effects of L1 .But in some cases L1 is negatively transferred ; and , thus linguists say interference has occurred .

1 .6. Theories Of Transfer

Ormrod's book entitled '*Human Learning –Theories, Principles, and Educational Applications*'(1990) presents the most influential theories about transfer before twentieth-century. Here is a brief overview of some theories concerning transfer .

1. 6.1. An Early Behaviorist Theory

Thorndike's Identical Elements: Edward Thorndik (cited in Ormrod 1990) proposed a theory of transfer that emphasized specific transfer: transfer occurs only to the extent that the original and transfer tasks have identical elements. In a later study, Thorndike examined the interrelationships of high school students' academic achievement in different curricular areas. Achievement in one subject matter appeared to facilitate students' achievement in another only when there was some commonality between the two subject matters.

1 .6.2. A Later Behaviorist Perspective

Similarity of Stimuli and Response: Since Thorndike's work, behaviorist views of transfer have focused on how transfer is affected by stimulus and response characteristics in the original and transfer situations. In general, principles of transfer which have emerged from behaviorist literature (Osgood, cited in Ormrod, 1990) include the following:

- When stimuli and responses are similar in the two situations, maximal positive transfer will occur.
- When stimuli are different and responses are similar, some positive transfer will occur.

- When stimuli are similar and responses are different, negative transfer will occur.

As an example of this last point, Ormrod remembered when he was a high school student when his class schedule included second-period Latin and third-period French. The word for “and” is spelled the same in both languages, but ‘et’ in French and Latin is pronounced very differently (/et/ in Latin /ay/ in French), hence meeting the conditions for negative transfer (similar stimuli, different responses). On several occasions he uttered the word “et” in French class, he was severely disapproved by his teacher (Ormrod, 1990).

1.6.3. Human Information Processing Theory

Cognitive psychologists - Brooks cited in Ormrod (1990) are now beginning to develop their own views of how and when transfer occurs. A currently prominent view of transfer is this one, relevant information and skills are transferred to a new situation only when they are retrieved from short-term memory within the context of that new situation. Given the low probability that any particular piece of information will be retrieved, as well as the limited capacity of short-term memory, many potentially relevant pieces of information may very well not be transferred in situations in which they would be helpful. The presence or absence of retrieval cues in the transfer situation determines what relevant information, if any, is retrieved from long-term memory. A new situation is more likely to call to mind previously learned information if the situation and the relevant information are closely associated in memory. This will happen, for instance, if the new situation was previously anticipated when the new information was stored, so that the situation and information relevant to it were stored in association with each other.

1.6.4. Current Views on General Transfer

Current views concerning general transfer are somewhere in between. General transfer is not as common as specific transfer (Gray cited in Ormrod, 1990), but learning occurring at one time can facilitate learning at another time if, in the process, the individual learns how to learn

1.7. Factors Affecting Transfer

There are some factors that affect and relate to the occurrence of transfer which are :

- **The more thoroughly something is learned, the more likely it is to be transferred to a new situation:** there is often a trade-off between instructional time and transfer; the more quickly a topic is covered, the less likely it is to be transferred (Cormier 1987; Ellis, 1999; Gick & Holyoak, 1987). The implications of this finding for educational practice are clear in which students should demonstrate thorough mastery of material if they will be expected to apply that information in future situations.

- **Numerous and varied examples and opportunities for practice increase the extent to which information and skills will be applied in new situations:** Individuals are more likely to transfer something they have learned if they have encountered a wide of examples and practice situations (Cormier 1987 cited in Ormrod, 1990). Individuals trained in this fashion store what they have learned in association with many different contexts and will therefore be more likely to retrieve information when they again encounter one of those contexts.

Section two : Contrastive Analysis And Error Analysis

1.8. Contrastive Analysis (CA)

Contrastive Analysis is the process by which the mother tongue and the target language are compared in order to identify the differences and the similarities between them. This process is designed to predict the areas of difficulties the learner of the target language generally faces. The assumption is that the similarities will facilitate learning while the differences will cause difficulties in learning L2 (Lado, 1957). Contrastive Analysis was first developed by Fries (1945). With the publication of Lado's book *Linguistics Across Cultures* in 1957, it emerged as a theory of pedagogical significance in the field of second language teaching. CA is based on the behaviorist theory of learning in psycholinguistics and the structural approach to linguistics. The advocates of CA state:

The most efficient materials are those that are based upon a scientific description of the language to be learned, carefully compared with a parallel description of the native language of the learner. (Fries, 1945: 9)

We assume that the student who comes in contact with foreign language will find some features of it quite easy and others extremely difficult. Those elements that are similar to his native language will be simple for him and those elements that are different will be difficult. (Lado, 1957:2)

CA is defined as the description of a native language and the target language and a comparison of these descriptions, which results in various statements about similarities and differences between the two languages (Fries 1945). CA can be utilized to aid in second language acquisition. Lee (1968) anchored this assumption in five basic suppositions, some of which are questionable in regard to their application in the fields of theoretical and applied linguistics. The five premises are as follows:

1. The major reason, perhaps the only reason, for errors made in the target language by the students is interference (where the two languages are different) caused by the native language.
2. The differences between the two languages bring about this interference.
3. A direct correlation exists between the degree of difference and the degree of difficulty involved.
4. By contrasting two languages to discover those areas of greatest difference, prediction of areas, which will cause the students the most difficulty, is possible.
5. The students are to be taught the differences between the two languages because the similarities are already known to them but the differences involve a simple transference from the native language to the target language. (Lee ,1968 : 106)

The CA was first developed by Charles Fries (1945) as an integral part of the modern methodology of foreign language teaching. Fries (1945) was explicit about the implications of the approach of CA and claimed that “the most effective materials are those that are based upon a scientific description of the language learned, carefully compared with a parallel description of the native language of the learner” (Fries,1972: 9). Lado, another ardent supporter of this approach, (i.e, *Linguistics Across Cultures*) (1957: 9) says:

The plan of the book rests on the assumption that we can predict and describe the patterns that will cause difficulty in learning and those that will not cause difficulty, by

comparing systematically the language and culture to be learned with the native language and culture of the student

Claims like those of Fries' and Lado were reinforced by informal observations of learner's systematic errors which seemed to reflect the structure of their native language. Though most of the errors were phonological in nature, others clearly occurred at the syntactic and morphological levels. From this, it appeared that difficulties of foreign language learners could be predicted from the differences evident in the structures of the two languages. It was this comparative approach which came to be known as Contrastive Analysis. Horn (1980:205) defines CA as "one in which the similarities and differences between two (or more) languages at a particular level are explicated in the context of a chosen theoretical framework". In this connection, Verma and N, Krishnaswamy (1989) claim that when a learner starts learning a second language, there is a 'clash' between the system of the first language and that of the second and when one language system becomes more or less a habit, the learning of a second language becomes rather difficult.

Powell, (1980) argues that the basic concept behind CA was that a structural 'picture' of any one language could be constructed which might then be used in the direct comparison with the structural 'picture' of another language. Through a process of 'mapping' one system onto another, similarities and differences could be identified. Identifying the differences would lead to a better understanding of the potential problems that a learner of the particular L2 would face. However, Corder (1973:30) who is one of the most prominent opponents of CA, states that 'We must nevertheless assume that taken over- all, the time needed to learn second language reflects the degree of differences there is between it and the mother tongue'.

Fries (1945), Lado (1957), Mackey (1965), Duskova (1969), James (1980), and others maintain that second language learners not only have difficulties in learning and using the target language due to mother tongue interference but also have difficulties in performing in the target language due to their inter language system fossilization.

The above mentioned authors do not make any direct claim in their studies as to what position they take in terms of either strong or weak versions of the CA hypothesis. Although this is inferential, Lado (1957) and Fries (1945) take a strong position when they maintain that by comparing and contrasting two languages, one will be able to predict specifically where second language learners will have learning difficulties. Lado (1957),

Stockwell (*et.al*, 1965), Duskova (1969), Selinker (1979) and Ferguson (1968), maintain that contrastive analysis studies performed during the 1950s and 1960s attribute all sorts of difficulties encountered by second language learners to mother tongue interference.

Ferguson (1968) has a strong faith in CA not only as a pedagogic tool but as an important tool for linguistic studies. His view of contrastive analysis lies in his broad universalistic view of language. He maintains that CA is fundamental for performing linguistic studies in order to attempt to discover the deeper relationships that languages share and not just the superficial similarities. (Ferguson, 1968: 234). Fries (1945: 9) gives a very strong statement about the CA hypothesis and it was he who firmly established contrastive linguistic analysis as an integral component of the methodology of foreign language teaching.

1.9. Drawbacks of Contrastive Analysis

In spite of the initial enthusiasm shown for CA, its value has been questioned by several scholars working in applied linguistics. Upsher (1962:123) does not feel that CA is the ideal approach in language learning. He states ,’Here in lays a dilemma, a logical inconsistency in the contrastive analysis hypothesis. As the student begins to learn the new language, his linguistic habit structure changes, and it is this altered habit structure which will determine the amount and locus of negative transfer in subsequent learning. After any small increment of learning, the student is no longer the pure native speaker assumed by the contrastive analysis of the native and target languages. All of what he has learned will have facilitation or interference effects upon what has not yet been taught’.

Gradman (1973) points out that CA is only able to predict some of the errors students will make, not all of the errors. If CA was a solid approach, it would be capable of predicting all or any errors which would be made and avoid the predictions of any errors which actually are not made. This clearly is not the case. Interference is not enough; the problem of poor teaching, false analogy, and poor materials must also be taken into consideration. Another criticism made by Hamp (1968) who suggests that it is a mistake to pretend that CA is a physical science and is able to predict totally the errors that will be made as well as the exact reason for them being made. If the errors are committed, it is possible to look for the causes, but it is not possible to say with absolute certainty which ones will occur and when they will occur.

1.10. Error Analysis (EA)

The CA may be helpful if it is combined and used with another approach such as Error Analysis (EA). This approach has been psychologically oriented towards an explanation of second language acquisition (Corder, 1967, 1974; Richards, 1992). The EA has been considered as a replacement or supplement to CA. Schumann and Stenson (1974) have pointed out that many linguists adopted EA because of the inadequacy of CA in accounting for the learner's errors. After realizing that CA did not provide sufficiently acceptable explanation for the errors made by the students. The term "Error Analysis" is used to describe the errors generated by learners or speakers of a second foreign language. The purpose of this analysis is to identify the common difficulties a learner faces in learning a language, the strategies used by him and the causes of the errors that occur. It is believed that errors committed by learners reflect the universal learning strategies. Richards *et.al* (1985: 96) state that Error Analysis is the study of errors made by the second and foreign language learners. It may be carried out in order to find out:

1. How well someone knows a language
2. How a person learns a language.

Error Analysis used to obtain information or common difficulties in language learning, as an aid in teaching or in the preparation of teaching materials. This definition stresses the function of Error Analysis. Another concept of Error Analysis is given by Brown (1980:166). He defined it as the process to observe, analyze and classify the deviations of the rules of the second language and then to reveal the systems operated by learners. According to Crystal (1987 :67) "Error Analysis is a technique for identifying, classifying and systematically interpreting the unacceptable forms produced by someone learning a foreign language, using any of the principles and procedures provided by linguistics". The three definitions classify that Error Analysis is an activity to identify, classify and interpret or describe the errors made by someone in speaking or in writing and it is carried out to obtain information on common difficulties faced by the speaker or writer. It was developed during 1960s and 1970s after the pioneering work by S. Corder (1967). He suggested that a better understanding of language learning would come from a systematic investigation of learners' errors. He argued that it would help us in various ways to understand the natural sequence in learning L2. Error Analysis is also linked to

inter-language. It is based on the analysis of the speech or writing of the learners after collecting and identifying their "errors," classifying the data and explaining their reasons. According to S. Pit Corder (ibid : 24): "a learner's error is significant in that he provides evidence how language is required.

As mentioned earlier, Error Analysis was established in the 1960's by Stephen Pit Corder and his colleagues as an alternative to contrastive analysis. It showed that contrastive analysis was unable to predict great majority of errors, although its more valuable aspects have been the focus on language transfer. One of the key findings of Error Analysis has been that many learner errors are produced by learners mainly due to inference. It emphasized the significance of errors in learners' influence system which may be carried out directly for pedagogic purposes. However, with the publication of Corder's influential paper, '*The Significance of the Learner's Errors*' in 1967, Error Analysis emerged as a theory and method of importance to both language pedagogy and the study of language learning. Richards (1971:12), states "the field of error analysis may be defined as dealing with the differences between the way people learning a language speak, and the way adult native speakers of the language use the language". Error Analysis, demonstrates that learner errors were not only because of the learner's native language but also because they reflected some universal learning strategies, It deals with the learner's performance in terms of the cognitive processes they make use of its recognizing or coding the input partially as a residue from the target language.

Therefore, a primary focus of Error Analysis is on the evidence that learner's errors provide with an understanding of the underlying process of second language acquisition. Keshavaras (1997) suggests that the field of Error Analysis can be divided into two branches : the theoretical analysis of errors and applied analysis of errors .

Theoretical analysis of errors concerns primarily the process and strategies of language learning and its similarities with first language acquisition. In other words, it tries to investigate what is going on in the minds of language learners. Secondly, it tries to decode the strategies of learners such as over-generalization and simplification, and thirdly, to go to a conclusion that looks at the universals of language learning process. The theoretical aspect of the use of Error Analysis, as Corder (1973) claims, is the job of applied linguists who understand what is happening when the learners learn the language. The application of a scientific discipline to the solution of practical problems provides feedback to a theory. The application provides confirmation or rejection of a theory. The psycholinguists claim

that the nature of the mother tongue facilitates or makes difficult the learning of certain aspects of second language. According to CA, by comparing the two languages, certain features of L2 are identified as different from those of the mother tongue, which are predicted to be difficult for the learners. Thus, the psycholinguistic theory of “transfer” may be confirmed or rejected through the study of errors, which is part of an ‘experiment.’

Applied Error Analysis, on the other hand, is concerned with the organization of remedial courses, and designing of appropriate materials and teaching strategies based on the findings of theoretical Error Analysis. According to Sridhar (1976:258-281) the goals of Applied Error Analysis are:

1. Determining the sequence of the presentation of target language items in textbooks and classroom, with the difficult items following the easier ones.
2. Deciding the relative degree of emphasis, explanation, and practice required in putting across various items in the target language.
3. Devising remedial lessons and exercises; and finally.
4. Selecting items for testing the learner’s proficiency.

Whereas CA looked at only the learner’s native language and the target language (i.e. fully- formed languages), EA provided a methodology for investigating learner’s language.

For this reason, EA constitutes an appropriate starting point for the study of the learner’s language and L2 acquisition. According to Ellis, EA constituted the first serious attempt to investigate learners of language in order to discover how learners acquire L2. It helped, therefore to support the claims made by Dulay and Burt (1980) and others, regarding the ‘creativity’ of much learner language. Corder (1975) claims that errors are important in three ways ; they show the teacher a student’s progress which serves as diagnostic tool , they show the researcher how language is acquired and the strategies the learner uses ; and lastly , they show the learners how they can learn from their mistakes .However , native language interference is regarded as nonsystematic and is loaded with L1 mistakes. When a student commits such an error , it is therefore important that the teacher should not only give students answers , but also allow the students to discover and correct the errors.

1.10.1. Definition of Error

Various definitions of error have been presented by experts. Basically they convey the same idea; the difference lies only in the ways they formulate them. Norrish (1983/1987) defines errors as ‘ a systematic deviation, when a learner has not learnt and consistently gets it wrong ‘. Another definition is given by Cunningsworth (1987).He says that ‘ errors are systematic deviations from the norms of the language being learned’. Thus it is clear from these two definitions that the key word is "systematic deviation" which can be interpreted as the deviation which happens repeatedly. The presence of errors indicates the student’s inability to use appropriate grammatical structures, semantic items and other linguistic units. It typically happens while one is acquiring another language at a particular stage of learning, and its eradication lies in the development of control over language elements. At first, especially in the fifties and early sixties, errors were looked upon as evils which hindered the learning process and which had to be eradicated. From the sixties to the seventies, however, there was gradual but definite change in the attitude of language teaching specialists towards errors. The current view suggests that errors should not be looked upon as problems to be overcome, but rather as normal and inheritable, strategies that a language learner uses and should be used to highlight what needs to be learnt.

Researchers have reached the conclusion that errors are an essential part of the learning process, that they show evidence of a system and are not random as is generally believed. With the change in attitude towards error, the emphasis of error analysis also underwent modification. Until the sixties; the main focus of the analysis was on the actual error that is the ‘product’. Now the emphasis has shifted from the product to the processes behind it. This shift from ‘product’to‘processes is significant. An error is not always something that can be easily spotted. It can vary in magnitude or nature. It can cover a phoneme, a morpheme, a word, a phrase, a clause, a sentence or even a paragraph.

1.10.2. The Origin of Error

One of the significant reasons for doing error analysis (EA) is to whether there are errors to be corrected or not . According to Lott (1983 :23) , the origin of errors can be traced back to the mother tongue .This view is also held by Skiba (1997) , who defines errors as native language interference in the target language . In addition , he defines interference as ‘ the transfer of elements of one language into learning of another.’errors

develop automatically as languages are acquired and learnt. Researchers like Krashen (2003) claim that language ability is developed in two independent ways . Firstly , language acquisition is a subconscious process and occurs in a natural non-threatening environment. Generally, language errors in the natural setting are not immediately corrected as they might be in formal academic environments. Secondly ,language learning occurs at school in an academic setting .Unlike language acquisition , this type of language learning is conscious .Errors often occur in this type of language learning because rules and grammar are what learning is all about .This view suggests that errors are originated when humans started learning languages .The source of errors could be interlanguage which Richards (1971) defines as mistakes that foreign language learners make because of the effect of their mother tongue.

1.11. Mistakes Vs Errors

Before studying errors , it is necessary to make a distinction between the two terms "errors" and "mistakes". Corder defines mistakes as ‘a performance error that is either random guess or a slip in that it is a failure to utilize a known system correctly’.while error refers to ‘a noticeable deviation from the adult grammar of a native speaker reflects the competence of the learner ‘.Corder makes a distinction between errors (in competence) and mistakes (in performance).for him , mistakes are not significant for the process of language learning .Ellis (1997) supports Corder in this regard by adding that errors reflect gaps in learners’ knowledge and they occur because the learner does not know what is correct.Mistakes reflect occasional lapses in performance and they occur because the learner is unable to perform what they know. Another distinction between "error" and "mistake" has been put in the Dictionary of Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics(1992) and by Richards, and Schmidt(2002), it is mentioned that ‘ a learner makes mistakes when writing or speaking because of lack of attention, fatigue , carelessness, or some other aspects of performance.Thus ,mistakes can be self corrected when attention is called’ . Whereas , an error is defined as ‘the use of linguistic item in a way that a fluent or native speaker of the language regards it as showing faulty or incomplete learning’. In other words , it occurs because of the learner’ inability to know what is correct. For that reason , in this study the focus will be on learners' errors not mistakes.

1.12. Classification Of Errors

Errors have been classified and identified in different ways . Brown (2000:220) in his analysis of Corder' model states that any sentence uttered by the learner and subsequently transcribed can be analyzed for idiosyncrasies. For him, language errors are classified either being “ **overt**” or “ **covert**”. Overt errors are defined as those errors that are completely ungrammatical at the sentence level, whereas covert errors are utterances that are grammatically well-formed at the sentence level , but are not interpretable within the context . Burt and Kiparsky (1974:73 in Lengo, 1995:24) distinguish between **global** and **local** errors .A global error is one which involves " the overall structure of a sentence" and a local error is one which effects "a particular constituent". Erdogan (2005:264) clarifies that " global errors hinder communication". They prevent the message from being comprehended .On the other hand , local errors do not prevent the message from being understood because there is usually some minor violation of one segment of a sentence that allows the hearer to guess the intended meaning .

Errors may also be viewed as two related dimensions: **domain** and **extent**. This suggestion is put by Lennon (1991 :82), and they are defined as the following: "domain is the rank of linguistic unit from phoneme to discourse that must be taken as context in order for the error to be understood", and "extent is the rank of linguistic unit that would have to be deleted , replaced , supplied or reordered in order to repair the sentence" (in Brown , 2000: 224). This classification is similar to that one which is put by Corder (1973) and had been mentioned above.

1.13. Sources Of Errors

To analyze students' errors , it is necessary to determine the sources of errors . As mentioned by Brown (2000:224), there are two main sources of errors which are : **interlingual** and **intralingual**.

1.13.1. Interlingual (Interference) Errors

Errors found to be traceable to first language interference are termed "interlingual" or" transfer errors".. Those errors are attributable to negative interlingual transfer. The term

"interlingual " was firstly introduced by Selinker (1972). He used this term to refer to the systematic knowledge of an L2 which is independent of both the learner's L1 and the target language (Abi Samra, 2003:5). While the term "transfer" , which is derived from the Latin word "transfere", means "to bear" , "to carry" or "to print" a copy from one surface to another (Webster 's third new world international dictionary , 1986). It is also defined (ibid) as " a generalization of learned responses from one type of situation to another " .

According to Kavaliauskiene (2009: 4), transfer of errors may occur because the learners lack the necessary information in the second language or the attentional capacity to activate the appropriate second language routine. Transfer is of two kinds: positive and negative (as it is mentioned before) . The transfer may prove to be justified because the structure of the two languages is similar , this case is called 'positive transfer' or 'facilitation', or it may prove unjustified because the structure of the two languages are different , that case is called ' negative transfer' or 'interference' (Wilkins, 1972:199). The primary focus of this study is to analyze the students' errors that are attributed to first language interference . Interlingual errors may occur at different levels such as transfer of phonology , morphological , grammatical and lexical –semantic elements of the native language into the target language. *The Dictionary of Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics* (1992) defines inter-lingual errors as being the result of language transfer, which is caused by the learner's first language. However , **E A** regarded this type of errors as signs that the learners is internalizing and investigating the system of the new language.

1.13.2. Intralingual (Developmental) Errors

These errors are caused by the target language (TL) itself. Apart from resorting to L1 transfer, the learners make such mistakes due to the ignorance of an item in TL. According to Richards (1974:6) 'Intra-lingual errors' are "items produced by the learner which reflect not the structure of mother tongue but generalization based on partial exposure to the target language. The second language, in this case, tries to derive the rules based on the data to which he has been exposed, and develops hypotheses that correspond neither to the mother tongue nor to the target language. .Erdogan (2005: 266) adds " intralingual errors occur as a result of learners ' attempt to build up concepts and hypotheses about the target language from their limited experience with it". These errors are common in the speech of second

language learners and they are often analyzed to see what sorts of strategies are being used by the learners. Intralingual errors include some subcategories of errors which are :

1.13.2.1-Overgeneralization: Overgeneralization refers to the instances where the learner creates a deviant structure of his knowledge of other structures in the target language. It may occur when the learner try to reduce the difficulties he faces in applying the rules of the foreign language. Ellis (1997, p.19) claimed that learners overgeneralize forms that they find easy to learn and process for example, the use of “ed” in past tense forms even for irregular verb such as “eated” instead of “ate”.

1.13.2.2- Ignorance of Rule Restriction: It is closely related to the generalization, of deviant structure is failure to observe the restriction of existing structure, that is, the application of rules with reference to the context where they do not apply. For example ‘The man who I saw him’ and ‘I made him to do it’ violates the restriction on subjects in sentence structure with ‘who’ and ignores restrictions on the distribution ‘make.’ This is again a type of generalization of transfer, since the learner is making use of previously acquired rule in a new situation. (Richard, 1974 :175).

1.13.2.3- Incomplete Application Of Rules: According to Richard (1974 :177), incomplete application of rules refers to “occurrence of structures whose deviancy represents the degree of development of the rules required to produce acceptable utterances”. An example of incomplete application of rules can be seen in the use of interrogative sentence. The use of question may also be unrelated to the skills it is meant to establish. For example :

Teacher’s question

-What does he want to do?

Student’s response

-He have to do write the address

1.13.2.4-False Concept hypothesized: False concepts hypothesized are something due to poor gradation of teaching items. The form ‘was’ for example, may be interpreted and understood by the learner as the marker of the past tense like in “one day it was happened”. (Richard, 1974 :178).

1.14. Models (Procedures) For Error Analysis

Error Analysis Procedure has been developed by S.P Corder back in the year 1974 . It is considered as a 5 staged procedures that involves several stages which are :

1.14.1. Identification of Errors

According to Ellis (1997 : 15), the first step in the analysis of learners' errors is to identify them. To identify errors, is necessary to compare learners' sentences with the correct forms in the target language. However, identifying the exact errors that learners make is considered as a difficult step. In error identification, there should be a distinction between learners' errors and learners' mistakes as it was clarified before. The identification of errors is significant because once identified , language learners can , with the help of their teachers correct their errors until they have sufficient knowledge of the rules of L2.

1.14.2. Description of Errors

Troike (2006 : 39) and Ellis (1997 : 18) maintained that after identifying all the errors made by learners, the next step is to describe and classify them into types. Errors can be described as related to language levels (phonology, morphology, syntax), to general linguistic categories (passive sentences, negative constructions, word order, etc), or to specific linguistic elements (articles, verbs, propositions, ...). Ellis (1994 : 54) assumed that description of errors is similar to identifying them by comparing the learners' utterances with the reconstruction of those utterances in the target language.

1 .14.3. Explanation of Errors

The main step in error analysis procedures, after identifying and describing learners' errors, is that explaining the reasons that make those errors occur. It was mentioned before that there are two main reasons for learners' errors which are interlingual and intralingual reasons. Interlingual refers to negative transfer of the rules of learners' mother tongue to the target language rules. On the other hand, intralingual reasons include over - generalization, ignorance of rule restrictions, and incomplete application of rules.

According to Ellis (1994,p. 57), “this stage is the most important for SLA research as it involves an attempt to establish the process responsible for L2 acquisition”.

1.14.4. Evaluation of Errors

According to Ellis (1997 :19), since the purpose of error analysis is to help learners learn a foreign language, it is necessary to evaluate errors .Some errors are considered to be more serious than others because they may totally affect what some one says. Evaluating errors means that teachers should give more attention to errors that appear to be serious and affect communication, and less attention to the others which have little effect on learners’ learning an L2.

1.14.5. Error Correction

Error analysis is interested in the way teachers deal with students’ errors and the importance of error correction among both teachers and learners. According to Maicusi et al., (2000 :172), when the teacher finds an error, he tends to correct it automatically and he considers the students’ hesitation as a request for help. However, a delay in the correction on the part of the teacher would make students have the opportunity of selfcorrection. The teacher’s role is to make his learners aware of their errors and become able to correct themselves. Moreover, learners should discover the cause of their errors to avoid repeating them. On the other hand, when the teacher usually corrects his learners’ errors, he will make them dependent on correction by others and will prevent them of developing autonomous learning. According to Erdogan(2005), the technique of error correction is not simply showing the students the correct form and presenting it through a set of exercises and activities. On the contrary, the teacher should know the reason behind his learners’ errors to provide them with the appropriate remedy.

Errors should be corrected according to their effect on students’ productions. Therefore, some errors need to be corrected more than others such as global errors need to be corrected more than local errors because the former type affects communication while the latter one does not (Erdogan, 2005). In written works, the teacher should put marks that indicate the error and make the students try to find the correct form themselves instead of giving them the correct one directly. The teacher can put some

symbols to show the kind of the error such as “sp” for a spelling mistake, “rw” for the sentences that should be rewritten, etc (Erdogan, 2005) .

1 .15. Positive and Negative Opinions about ‘Error’

The issue of whether to consider an error as a negative or a positive attitude, has divided the researchers’ opinions and theories into two different sides. Maicusi, et al.,(2000 : p168) stated that an error indicates failure and prevents the progress of learning process that’s why it must be avoided in the language teaching-learning process. This idea has been supported mainly by behaviourism in which they considered an error as an obstacle to language learning.

As opposed to the behaviouristic approach, the mentalist one affirmed that errors have a great importance and without them there is no progress. These ideas are based on Chomesky’s thoughts in which he confirmed that a human being does not learn mechanically but he has a mental access of knowledge through try and error. There are also a number of scholars who consider errors as something positive for the learning process. As Richard (1974 :189) stated that second language learners’ errors are significant for the acquisition of a second language. He also maintained that knowing learners’ errors helps in the planning of courses and syllabuses.

Furthermore, errors, according to Corder, provide information about the strategies and procedures a learner is using in his second language development. He also believed that making errors is part of the learning process itself (cited in Troike 2006 : 38-39). The same idea was provided by Ellis (1997 :15) in that he claimed that “it is possible that making errors may actually help learners to learn when they selfcorrect the errors they make.” Moreover, Corder (1973 : 293) assumed that “errors are evidence about the nature of the process and of the rules and categories used by the learner at a certain stage in the course”. He also proposed in his book “Error Analysis and Interlanguage” (1981 : 11), three ways in which learners’ errors are significant. First, they are significant to the teacher because they tell him how far his learners have progressed and what they still need to learn. Second, they provide to the researcher evidence of how second language learners learn or acquire that language. Thirdly, they are important for the learner himself because making errors is considered as a way used by the learner to test his hypothesis about the language he is

learning. He also claimed that errors are a strategy employed by both children acquiring their mother tongue and by adults learning a second language.

1.16. Significance Of Error Analysis

Corder (1967:161-170) discusses the significance of errors for improving teaching and learning processes. He claims that errors can be significant to the learner, the teacher and the researcher :

A learner's errors are significant in three different ways.

- **For the teacher** : Errors show a student's progress . they assist teachers to advise proper strategies which learners find productive in language learning. Errors allow teachers to pinpoint areas of English where learners go wrong for various reasons . In this way , the teacher will know which of their learners' native language system is interfering with the learning of English. Moreover , errors permit the teacher to diagnose learning problems in individual learners .
- **the researcher** : errors show how a language is acquired , and the strategies the learner uses . The researcher may consequently be helpful in developing teaching materials for dealing with errors .
- **For the learner** : learners can learn from their errors (Richards , Plott And Platt1992) .The correction of these errors helps learners to acquire the correct forms of the target Language.

The other important significance of E A , as proposed by (Carroll 1955,in Corder) is that the learner should find the correct linguistic form by searching for it. Teachers of language are aware of the constant errors that learners make and they can use those errors as tools for learning . Brown (1993 : 219) submits that one of the keys to successful learning is the feedback that a learner receives from others. Spada (2006 : 134) suggests in this regard that the feedback which learners receive should not be punitive but rather corrective. He found that learners incorporate corrective feedback in their subsequent production of the L2 and the level of errors decreases with practice.An important part of feedback is what is termed 'cognitive feedback' . Cognitive feedback is a type of feedback that avoids too many negative comments from the teacher.Accordingly, teacher's main task is to provide enough green lights to encourage communication. Also what teacher

should avoid is punitive reinforcement or correction that is seen by learners as dehumanizing (Rustipa 2010).

1.17. The Role of the Linguistics Environment

Errors can also be traced to other factors as well. External conditions influence the rate of learning if they do not affect the learning process itself. If a learner with a rural background gets a favourable environment, he excels in his studies. There is no doubt that ‘LAD’ i.e. language acquisition device, or ‘the innate capacity’ is essential to acquire a language but if a good comfortable learning environment is provided then this capacity will show better results. It is often seen that when two learners are placed in identical conditions, they show different levels of achievement. Research shows that there are certain factors responsible for causing errors in the course of learning second language such as :

1.17.1. Motivation

There are various factors that can be added in a profile of a successful second language learner. motivation can be defined as ‘the desire to achieve or to do something in life’. If his/her desire is not immediate or for practical purpose, it will be reflected in his level of motivation and the amount of hard work that he puts in to fulfill his dream of acquiring proficiency in a second language. A well motivated learner will try his best to master the language in the best possible way in contrast to those who are less interested in language learning. Motivation plays an important role in second language learning rather than in first language because as far as second language is concerned, there is no pressure on the speaker as the daily communicative requirements are fulfilled through the use of first language.

When no such pressure or motivation exists, achievement level is low. A language learning situation is one that provides support, encouragement and motivation to the learners to use whatever second language skills they have acquired. Two types of motivation have been suggested for second language acquisition: ‘integrative and instrumental’. The distinction is essentially based on what functions the second language learner envisions for the acquired language. There is also a willingness to take on all the subtle aspects of their language or even their style of speech. On the other hand, the

instrumental motivation has been defined as basically ‘utilitarian’, a language is acquired as a ‘linguistic tool’, not as an instrument for ‘cultural integration’ (Kachru, 1983: 151). In the case of instrumental motivation, the learner masters the language quickly. The learner with instrumental motivation learns the language to pass an examination, to get a job, for communication purposes, for higher studies, or simply because it is a part of the college curriculum. In contrast, ‘integrative motivation’ has a social purpose.

1.17.2. Age

A lot of research has been carried out in this respect. The common hypothesis is that with increasing age there is a decreasing capacity for language learning. The evidence that children can learn second language better than adults comes from neurophysiology. As Stern argued that ‘the brain of a young child is much more receptive to the development of speech mechanism than the adults’ (1987: 362). It has been observed that after the critical period of language-acquisition has passed, it becomes very difficult to acquire another language fully (Yule, 2006:164). Some suggest that adults achieve great expertise in the written language but not in spoken language. They can be successful in some features of second language, such as vocabulary and grammar and can concentrate more than children. On the other hand, children acquire better pronunciation and show better results in accent too. It is observed that despite an ideal acquisition situation, very few adults can be seen achieving native-like proficiency in using second language. The brain loses its flexibility with age.

Conclusion

To conclude, this chapter has shown that transfer is the process of applying what has been learned in one situation to one’s learning or performance in another situation. In addition, it has presented several theories of transfer that have been proposed by different views. We have reviewed the basic theories which are related to second language learning namely Contrastive Analysis, Error Analysis and Interlanguage that constitute three main active fields of research in applied linguistics. These three theories are seen by many scholars as evolutionary phases of understanding and explaining the learners’ performance in the target language because, for them, the language errors are inevitable especially in a setting where English is not the first language. This chapter combines two approaches, namely, contrastive analysis a priori and error analysis a posteriori with the common

objectives of gaining insights into the nature of language learning in relation to learning English as a second / foreign language.

Chapter Two

Introduction

Learning to write is increasingly becoming a necessity in life, no matter what career one will embrace. Writing is a communication tool that translates thoughts into language, and pedagogically speaking, it is the means by which learners' achievements are generally examined. The aim is to gain an overall understanding of what is meant by "WRITE", and how to learn and develop this skill. Writing has been neglected in teaching English as a foreign language (TEFL) for many years and remained, for most of its history, a minor occupation. This is in part because almost all human beings grow up speaking their L1 and sometimes their second language (L2), or foreign language (FL); therefore, writing has to be learned. In this respect, to write, to learn how to write correctly and to be an effective writer are the most important objectives for both teachers and learners, especially at university. Students' poor performances in writing have become the core problem which needs an urgent remedy. And we can not identify the main factors behind students' poor achievement in writing by investigating some theoretical issues its definition , its nature, its approaches as well as its connection with the other skills. In addition to some features of an effective writing and writing problems. Finally, it is worth shedding light on its importance in language learning.

2.1. The Nature of Writing

Writing is a way of communication that uses graphic symbols; that is, we combine letters that represent our sounds when we speak. These letters are combined to form words, and words are also combined to form sentences and so on. "The act of forming these symbols: making marks on a flat surface of some kind." Byrne (1991: 01). Whereas, Crystal (2006: 257) specifies that: "writing is a way of communicating which uses a system of visual marks made on some kind of surface. For Bloomfield: "Writing is not language, but merely a way of recording language by means of visible marks." (Bloomfield; cited in Crystal 1994: 178).

Of course, the meaning of writing does not stop on the boundaries of graphic symbols or visual marks, nevertheless, these symbols have to be arranged according to certain conventions and rules to form words, and from these words we form sentences until we

produce what we call a text that really communicates a message and expresses our thoughts .In addition, writing needs conscious and mental effort because it is a process where we have to consider various aspects such as: punctuation, structure of sentences and choice of words simultaneously. Rivers and Temperley (1979 :263) point out:

To write so that one is really communicating a message isolated in place and time, is an art that requires consciously directed effort and deliberate choice in language.

Richards'(1990) viewpoint is that the nature and significance of writing has often been underestimated in language teaching, and in foreign language teaching, writing has often been synonymous with teaching grammar and sentence structure. Furthermore, in terms of complexity and difficulty many surveys proved that language production is difficult. Harmer (2007b, p. 251) points out that “there are a number of reasons why students find language production difficult”. Writing and learning to write has always been one of the most complex language skills. Nunan (1989 : 12) agreed that ‘ it is easier to learn to speak than to write no matter if it is a first or second language’.

A similar point is stated, for instance, by Grabe and Kaplan (1996) who said that ‘probably half of the world’s population does not know how to write adequately and effectively’ (p.87). Concerning its difficulty as a productive skill, Tribble (1997) claims that “writing is a difficult skill to acquire” (p. 65). This complexity resides in the stages of the process we go through when writing, the lack of knowledge in the subject matter, etc. Moreover, it can be related to psychological, linguistic, and cognitive factors; this applies to writing in L1or L2. Besides its complexity, its difficulty, and its importance, writing is a dynamic process which allows writers to work with words and ideas no matter if these ideas are right or wrong. This idea is supported by Zamel (1992, p. 473) who describes writing as a “meaning-making, purposeful, evolving, recursive, dialogic, tentative, fluid, exploratory process”. More importantly, writing is a process of discovery .i.e. a way to help learners to learn or to discover how to compose a piece of writing. Grabe and Kaplan (1996, p. 6) think of writing as a “technology”, i.e., a set of skills which must be practised and learned through practice. On the other hand, Bell and Burnaby (1984, as cited in Nunan, 1989, p. 23) have a similar point to Tribble (1997). They point out that:

Writing is a very complex cognitive activity in which writers must show control over content, format, sentence, structure, vocabulary, punctuation, spelling and letter formation, i.e., control at the sentence level. Besides, writers must be able to structure and integrate information cohesively and coherently within paragraphs and texts.

Another thing which is very important in the nature of writing is that we write for a reader. So, there is another actor implicated in the whole process. That is we translate our thoughts into written language as a channel of communication with a reader who is absent and is sometimes not known. To this end, we are obliged to be clearer when we write than when we speak. Moreover, we have to make sure that what has been written will be understood by the reader without any further help from us. In addition, in writing there are no interchanging participants, and it is almost impossible to measure the effect of the message or the text on the reader because no interaction and no immediate feedback are possible.

According to White and Arndt (1991), "writing is also a problem-solving activity developing in progress" (p.11). This means that writing doesn't come naturally or automatically, but through cognitive efforts, training, instruction and practice. Even if it is a problem-solving, writing involves processes such as generating ideas, a voice to write, planning, goal-setting, monitoring and evaluating what is to be written and what has been written as well as the right language used by the writer. The nature of writing can be determined according to language transfer, i.e., to what extent L1 can affect students' written productions in English. Another opposite viewpoint is held by Blanchard and Root (2004, p.1) who argue that "it is like driving a car. If you have ever driven in another country, you know that some of the rules of the road may be different. Just as the rules for driving differ from country to another, the conventions for writing may change from language to another". This means that writing conventions differ from one language to another. In any ways, not everyone is a naturally gifted writer. Writing is a skill that can be learned, practiced, and mastered.

Also, the nature of writing can be linked to the nature of writers themselves such as students or people in general. And sometimes students are protective of their thoughts and; therefore, they prefer to keep them hidden in their minds, and many great ideas and observations are never born because their creators will not express them. Accordingly for those writers "writing is nothing more than thought on paper" (Stark 2005, p. 8). That is why he said to these students and people that one of the things to love about writing is that:

Writing is a process. The first time you write a draft, it doesn't matter if your writing comes out wrong or sounds stupid to you because you can change it as often as you want. You can go over it until you are completely satisfied or until you need to shift gears. You can show your draft to your friend or family and get a response before you ever make it public. (Stark, 2005 : 9)

Stark (2005) adds that we should not put pressure on ourselves by thinking that we are going to write a perfect first draft. No one can sit down and write polished reports, letters, essays, paragraphs without changing (or revising) them at least slightly.

2.2. What is Writing ?

In its simplest form, writing may be just using graphic symbols or reproducing in written form something which has been heard or read. Writing becomes more complicated when it involves producing meaningful segments to carry a message in the language. Accordingly, Widdowson (2001) states that "writing is the use of visual medium to manifest the graphological and grammatical system of the language. That is to say, writing in one sense is the production of sentences as instances of usages". Another definition is given by Crystal (1999 : 214) who stated that "writing is not a merely mechanical task, a simple matter of putting speech down on paper. It is an exploration in the use of the graphic potential of a language -a creative process- an act of discovery".

Writing is a form of expression and communication which enables learners to communicate ideas, feelings, and different attitudes in a written mode. Writing can be an individual, a personnel, and social endeavor. As it is reported by Miller (2001, as cited in Richards & Renanya,2003 : 25) "even though the writing production is an expression of one's individuality and personality, it is important to remember that writing is also a social

endeavor, a way of communicating with people”. Being an expression and a social endeavor, Pincas (1992) goes on to claim that “writing is a system of graphic symbols, i.e., letters or combinations of letters which relate to the sounds we produce while speaking” (p.125).However , writing is not making a lengthy list of words, as inventories of items of a shopping list."Although this shopping list may not seem to provide an example of sophisticated writing, it tells us something about the writing process” (Harmer, 2007 : 4).That is why he defines writing as follows:

Writing is a process-that is, the stages the writer goes through in order to produce something in its final form. This process may, of course, be affected by the content of the writing, the type of writing, and the medium it is written in . . . this process has four main elements: planning, drafting, editing, and final draft. (Harmer, 2007 : 4)

Writing can not be achieved if there is no coherence between the words or the sentences which are arranged in a particular order and linked together in certain ways and above all, holding a meaning. Furthermore, writing is a whole process which goes through different steps. It is not merely limited to express thoughts via written symbols, but also a tool of learning as it is reported by Kate and Guy (2003 : 1480) “writing is a process of exploring one’s thoughts and learning from the act of writing itself from what thoughts are”. Being the most difficult and complex skill to be mastered by EFL students, Numan (1989 : 36) points out that “writing is an extremely complex, cognitive activity for all which the writer is required to demonstrate control of a number of variables simultaneously”. This means that, at the sentence level, the writer has to take into consideration many features such as content, sentence structure, vocabulary, punctuation and spelling. Beyond this level, i.e., the sentence, he must be able to integrate information into coherent paragraphs and/or essays. In addition to its complexity, it takes time and a lot of training to be mastered, i.e., only after years of training and practice at schools and universities few students, not all of them, are able to write correctly. In this respect, Hedge (2000) has completely investigated this issue and came with a conclusion “all the time spent in communicative activities, adults devote 45% of their energies to listening, 30% to speaking, 16% to reading, and 9% to writing” (Hedge, 2000 : 305) . That is why the majority of students feel stress which prevents them from conveying the desired message.

Accordingly, it is reported by Brookes and Grundy (2009) that "it must be worth asking precisely what is difficult about writing and, especially, about writing in a second language" (p.11). Also writing is viewed as a powerful tool as it is stated in this quotation "although writing is not this explosive, it is one of the humankind's powerful tool. But they are sometimes confused about the source of its power"(Mc Arthur, Graham, & Fitzgerald, 2008 :1).

2.3. Writing and Other Language Skills

2.3.1. Differences between Writing and Speaking

Even if writing and speaking are productive skills, they are so different. writing is the most difficult skill; that is why our focus is on it. Consequently, O'Grady et al. (1996 : 591) argue that:

Speaking and writing are different in both origin and practice spoken language is acquired without specific formal instruction, whereas writing must be taught and learnt through deliberate effort . . . there are many people who are unable to write. While spoken language comes naturally to human beings, writing does not.

Raimes (1994 : 14) shares the same viewpoint and argues that we learn to speak our first language without any instruction, while most people are taught how to write in their L1, given the complexity writing represents for them. In contrast, speech and writing are considered by Robins (2000 : 95) as "two modes of linguistic communication". However, Rings (1992 : 21) states that "spoken discourse not only utilizes different phonology morphology ,syntax, lexicon ,and speech among other elements, but also a different textual interactional structure from that found in formal written discourse" . Hence, speech and writing are different ways of using language. Understanding the difference between them is an important part of the teaching of writing.

A similar point comes from Brown and Yule (1983 : 28) who state that a major difference between spoken and written language is that "the elaborated and dense pack of

information at the structure and the text level in written language , i.e., the use of heavy grammar structures, connectors , syntax,etc., whereas spoken language is more simple and therefore less elaborated”. However, Halliday (1985, as cited in Numan, 1989 : 25) agrees but disagrees with Brown and Yule (1983) only to some extent that is speech is also structured and complex, but its complexity lies in the way clauses are put together, while written language is complex at the sentence level. Then, we must say that writing is still characterized by its complexity at the clause level. What is certain, though, as Raimes (1994) claims, speaking is spontaneous and unplanned, whereas writing is planned and requires people to take time when producing it. But, we can say, like writing, speaking for EFL student especially at university , can be acquired through learning where the students have to master the oral/spoken form of a language such as intonation, stress, pitch, connected speech ,etc. That is why both Phonetics and Oral Expression are introduced in “English Licence Program”. By doing so, EFL students will speak and listen correctly, of course, not like native speakers.

Other differences include the level of “formality”, i.e., “writing is formal and compact, while speaking is more informal, repetitive and uses phrases such as ‘you see’, ‘What I mean’, etc.” (Raimes, 1994 : 35). Besides, speech is more simple in terms of connectors such as “and” and “but” which tend to be used more frequently; whereas in writing sentences, they are more complex when using connectors and subordinators. And the problem becomes more complex when students come to punctuation and capitalization.

Another view is held by Harris (1993 : 3) who states that “there are three ways of looking at the differences between speech and writing which are situation, grammatical choices, and lexical density”. He meant by the first way, situation, that speakers may drop or elide word-final phonemes or morphemes, and this can be interpreted by the listeners as conventional speech where correctness is not important. But this is not the case with written language which must be well- structured and polished. Some of essential differences between writing and speaking in relation to situation are summarized in the following table :

Speakers	Writers
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Can refer to people, objects, and so on in the shared environment by pointing with gestures or by using pointing words. 2. Can check whether they are being understood by looking at the speaker's expression, by asking, or by being directly prompted. 3. In conversations (including telephone conversations) speakers are encouraged by listener's markers, such as "mm" and in live conversations and gestures. 4. Can backtrack and fill in information that may have been omitted precise sequence is not a prerequisite effective communication. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Do not share an immediate environment with their readers and have to make explicit references to people and objects. 2. Have no means of knowing once the text is finished whether the readers will understand the message they need to anticipate potential misunderstandings and appropriate levels of shared knowledge. 3. Have to find ways of motivating themselves to continue creating a text. 4. Have to plan in order to achieve both a sequence and a selection that will lead to effective communication.

Table 1.1. Differences between Speech and Writing (Harris, 1993 : 4)

The second way is grammatical choices; Harris (1993) meant that the main organizing unit of the spoken text is not the sentence; it consists of clauses of equal status or near equal status chained together in sequence. He goes on to summarize the difference between the grammatical structure of speech and writing as “speech, typically, consists of chains of coordinated, weakly subordinated and adjoined clauses, while writing , by contrast, is marked by full subordination and embedding ” (Harris, 1993 : 4). According to Halliday (1989, as cited in Harris, 1993 :8), lexical density (the third way) means vocabulary that is needed in writing; it is divided into two major classes: content words and structure words. By lexical density, he is referring to the proportion of structure words to content words in a text. He demonstrates that writing has a higher ratio of content words to structure words than speech, i.e., information is more densely packed into writing than into speech. Moreover, speech is naturally acquired, but writing is formally taught, as pointed by Ur (1991 : 161) “Most people acquire the spoken language (at least their own mother tongue) intuitively, whereas the written form is in most cases deliberately taught and learned”.

Hyland (2003 : 49) argues that "speech is more highly contextualized, depends far more on a shared situation". This view is similar to that mentioned before by Harris (1993) which is related to situation.

Harmer (2007) has his own ways at looking to the differences between speech and writing, especially in terms of their forms and in the processes that writers and speakers go through to produce language. These ways are concerned with: First, time and space, 'spoken communication operates in the here-and-now world of immediate interaction; writing transcends time and space' (Harmer, 2007 :7). Second, it is concerned with participants, i.e., we choose our words with more or less care on the basis of who these co-participants are? Third, he goes on to add the notion of process, and claims that "one of the most obvious differences between writing and speaking has to do with the processes that writers and speakers go through" (Harmer, 2007 : 8). Fourth, organization and language are another Harmer's ways in differentiating between the two modes. Accordingly, he claims that "the most noticeable dissimilarities between speech and writing are the level of correctness and the issue of well formedness.

The fifth way is concerned with signs and symbols where Harmer (2007) claims that both writing and speaking have their own signs , symbols , and devices to make communication more effective .Thus writing has fewer signs and symbols than speech . Finally, the sixth way is concerned with the product where he argues the following 'if we consider a face-to-face conversation to be a work in progress, writing usually turns up as finished product ' (Harmer, 2007 :11). All what is said above is summarized by Finegan (1994 :120) who argues that there are four main differences between writing and speaking:

- 1- Speaking has such channels as intonation, voice pitch, and gestures to convey information, whereas writing has only words and syntax.
- 2- Writing requires more time than speaking in terms of planning.
- 3- Speakers and addresses are often face-to-face while writers and readers are not.
- 4- Speaking tends to rely on the context of the interaction more than writing.

2.3.2. Connection Between Writing and Reading

Writing and reading are two of the most essential academic and life skills which have a very close relationship. When students read extensively, they become better writers, in that reading provides prior knowledge, ideas and information that help students reach their language, deepen and widen their ideas and content...etc. It is argued by Hyland (2003) that “writing, together with reading, is a central aspect of literacy” (p.53). This means that to be a literate person, it is both to be able to read and write. Thomas (1976) claims that: “a significant relationship existed between writing achievement and the amount and variety of reading experiences.” (Thomas: 1976; cited in Flippo and Caverly 2000: 15) In addition, Celce-Muria (2001: 224-5) argues:

At the very least, readings provide models of what English language texts look like, and even if not used for the purpose of imitation, they provide input that helps students develop awareness of English language prose style.

Moreover, both reading and writing are essential tools to build the forms and functions of language. That is, students need to clearly understand the functions of the two modes, to develop their level in the learned language. Writing and reading are two complementary and similar processes, in that they include similar cognitive processes that are involved in making meaning. Both writing and reading involve generating ideas, planning, drafting, and revising and so on. In their composing reading model Tierney and Pearson (1983 :151) claim that:

Reading and Writing involve similar, shared, linguistic, and cognitive elements. As readers read and writers compose, both plan, draft, align, revise, and monitor as they read and write.

Let's consider revising which is a cognitive process that has an important role in both the writing and the reading skills just as the other cognitive processes have. Revising helps the reader understand the author's text by pausing, thinking, reflecting...etc on what he /she is reading. For the writer, revising helps detect mistakes, clarify meaning,

re-evaluate choices of words and structures...etc. According to Eisterhold (1991, as cited in Sadek, 2007 : 202), “reading in the writing classroom is understood as the appropriate input for acquisition of the writing skills, because it is generally assumed that reading progress will somehow function as primary models from which writing skill can be learned or at least be inferred”. In other words, reading can be an important and an appropriate input to acquire the writing skill. In language correlation studies between reading and writing relationship, Eisterhold (1991, as cited in Sadek, 2007 : 233) concludes that:

1. There are correlations between reading achievement and writing abilities, i.e. better writers tend to be better readers.
2. There are correlations between writing quality and reading experience as reported through questionnaires, i.e., better writers read more than poorer writers.
3. There are correlations between reading ability and measures of syntactic complexity of writing, i.e., better readers tend to produce more syntactically natural writing than poorer readers.

This view is already mentioned before by Stotsky (1983, as cited in Kroll, 1997 : 81-88) who suggests completely the same idea ‘better writers tend to be better readers, . . . better writers tend to read more than poorer writers . . . , and better readers tend to produce more syntactically natural writing than poorer readers’. If we should link this view with third year students’ low achievement in writing productions, it may be suggested that the source of the problem or error is the lack of reading among university students that lead to this poor writing production. Furthermore, there are many other connections between reading and writing, some are simple and others are complex. For instance, readers use writing to help them process what they read. And as writers, we are always reading. In addition to reading what others have written, we also read our own work, over and over, for correction. In this respect, Harris (1993) suggests five interesting relationships which seem more significant to teachers:

- Reading and writing are personal and social activities that are used in order to communicate. Writers need a response to what they write; readers need to respond to what they read and get responses to their analysis of the text.
- Reading and writing are reciprocal. Writers can learn much about writing by reading; readers can learn much about reading by writing.

- Reading and writing are interdependent. Readers cannot read if writers do not write. Likewise, writers cannot write if readers do not read.
- Reading and writing are parallel .Both have purpose, depend on the background knowledge, and focus on the construction of meaning.
- Reading and writing help discover the world around us. As writers write, they need to read. And as readers read, they often need to write. (Harris 1993 : 94)

Finally, Manzo and Manzo (1995 : 113) describe the relationships between reading and writing as an interrelated treatment; they call this connection the "Two- way relationship between reading and writing" as it is illustrated in the following table :

Reading to write	Writing to read
1-Reading increases the knowledge individuals have to write about. 2-Reading instills knowledge of linguistic pattern and form. 3-Reading builds vocabulary and familiarity with writer craft	1-Understanding of subjects, making subsequent reading easier. 2-Writing helps one to read like a writer, hence, sparking insights into writer mechanism and enhancing comprehension. 3-Revision in writing or making changes at various point in the process, involves many of the same high-order thinking strategies involved in critical reading.

Table 1.2. Reading and Writing Connection (Manzo & Manzo, 1995 :113)

Accordingly, providing students with well-written models of many styles and genres in any topic (Linguistics, Literature, Civilisation, etc.) will enlarge the resources they use when they write. Moreover, teachers should place students into the writers' roles and encourage them to read like a writer, in order to help them better write.

2.4. Second Language Writing

4.1- Differences Between L1 And L2 Writing

‘All of us who have tried to write something in a second language ... sense that the process of writing in an L2 is startlingly different from writing in our L1’ (Raimes, 1985, cited in Silva et al., in Kroll, 2003 : 93). This quotation states clearly that there is a great difference between writing in a second language and in one’s own native language. According to Hedge (2005 : 7), foreign language learners are usually confused with the conventions of writing in their first language into English. Furthermore, Hyland and Hyland (2006 : 4) maintain that EFL Students lack self-confidence in their L2 writing, as opposed to L1 writers who have self-confidence when they write in their native language. Weigle (2002 :36) explains that the limited knowledge of the second language that second language learners have impede their writing because they concentrate on language rather than content. According to (Silva 1993, cited in Weigle, 2002 :36), writing in a second language is more constrained, more difficult, and less effective than first language writing. He also added that “second language writers plan less, revise for content less, and write less fluently and accurately than first language writers” (ibid). That is why, Weigle affirms that second language writers are not fluent and quick as native speakers (2002 : 37).

Foreign language students may not give importance to revise and edit a piece of writing as students who believe that their future success depends on the ability to master the conventions of English writing (Ferris, n.d. in Kroll, 2003 :126). Here, Ferris compares learners who learn English just as an additional language which is not very necessary for their future with learners of English as their mother tongue and whose future achievements depend mainly on it. According to Myles (2002:1), the composing act may create many problems for second language students especially when they write in academic situations. He also added that writing in a foreign language presents a great challenge to foreign language learners especially if they are asked to write a piece of writing because it requires more knowledge of a foreign language.

2.5. Writing Approaches

2.5.1. The Product Approach

Broadly speaking, a product approach, as the title indicates, is concerned with the final result of the writing process. In other words, it focuses on the final result of a piece of writing rather than the process that it goes through. When adapting such an approach to

writing, one main interest is accuracy. According to the product approach accuracy will be achieved by imitating model texts. So, the first students' task is to be familiarized with the conventions of writing that they take from model texts. In that, there is a close relationship between the model based approach which is about teaching how to produce a text by imitating another and the product approach. In fact, both approaches are final drafts, but the model comes at the beginning and the product comes at the end. White (1988: 7) puts it this way

Not only does the model come first in the teaching sequence, it also shows a finished text. In other words, the focus right from the start is on the product, which is, of course, someone else's writing. What the model does not demonstrate is how the original writer arrived at that particular product. In other words, it gives no indication of process.

This approach that encourages students to imitate model texts can be outlined in the following way:

Stage one: Students read the model text and highlighted the specific features of genre in this text. For example, if studying essay organization, students' attention will be directed towards the way the essay in the model text is organized; how paragraphs are distributed, linkers used to connect these paragraphs, the thesis statement, indentations and all the techniques that help in the organization of an ideal essay.

Stage two: In the second stage, students have a controlled practice of the highlighted features, usually in isolation. So, following the example in the first stage, students here asked to make practice on linkers between paragraphs, writing introductions, stating thesis statements, writing conclusions and so on.

Stage three: This is a very important stage, where students are asked to arrange paragraphs in order to get a coherent essay (introduction, body paragraphs, and conclusion). Teachers who use this approach give more attention to the organization of ideas rather than ideas themselves.

Stage four: In the last stage students are given a topic and requested to develop an essay in the same way as the model text.

2.5.2. The Genre Approach

The genre approach not only focuses on form and textual conventions, but more importantly on the social context of that text and every component of the text that contributes to the fulfillment of that process. “The central belief here is that we don’t just write, we write something to achieve some purposes: it is a way of getting something done.” Richards (2003:18). This perspective views genre as a typified social action that responds to a recurring situation. That is when one writes a letter, a story, a request and so on, he/she has to follow certain social conventions for the organization of his/her message, so that the reader recognizes his/her purpose. In other words, the structure, the content, the style ...etc has to be socially recognized and shaped according to the expectation of the reader. According to Richards (*ibid*) “these abstract, socially recognised ways of using language for particular purposes are called genres.” Another explicit description of the genre approach is proposed by Swales (1990) who defines genre as:

A genre comprises a class of communicative events, the members of which share some set of communicative purposes. These purposes are recognised by the expert members of the parent discourse community, and thereby constitute the rationale for genre. This rationale shapes the schematic structure of the discourse and influence constrains Choice of content and style.

This approach consists of three important stages which as Cope and Kalantzis (1993 :11) have noted:

Modelling: teachers give their students models of texts that they are supposed to produce others similar to them.

Construction: in this stage, both teachers and students think about the construction of the new text depending on the knowledge taken from the model text.

Independent construction: here, the students are supposed to write their own production using the information extracted from the model text. Harmer (*ibid*) assumes that this approach is suitable for ESP students but it is also useful for general English students.

2. 5.3. The Process Approach

As a reaction to the product approach comes what is called the process approach which has a noticeable effect on the teaching of writing worldwide. The process approach stresses the creativity of the individual writer and sees writing as a highly complex activity. Thus, the focus shifts from the final product itself to the different stages that the writer goes through in order to create this product. The process approach emphasizes that writing is an activity that is composed of a variety of activities, and that these different activities are typically recursive. The teacher in the process approach becomes a facilitator.

This approach is considered very essential for learners. Harmer (2004:86) affirms that without going through the different steps of the writing process approach (planning, drafting, revising and editing), students will not be good writers. For that reason, students should follow these steps in order to produce an effective piece of writing. According to Hedge (2005 :12), writing activities should follow some steps of planning, organizing, composing, and revising that reflect the writing process.

2. 5.3.1. planning : planning is the crucial stage in the composing process, where the writer generates and explores ideas and information about the topic he/she decides to write about. Good writers usually plan what they are going to write. However, the ways of planning are different from one writer to another. Some writers tend to plan even the detailed information, while others plan only the mainpoints of their writing. Moreover, for some writers, having a plan in the head is enough (Harmer, 2004 :4). According to Hedge (2005 :52), this stage is also called the pre-writing stage in which the skilled writer think about the purpose of this writing and the reader that he/she is writing for. Therefore, Harmer (ibid :11) explains that before asking students to write, the teacher should make them think about their purpose and audience through the planning stage. He asserts that “effective writers usually have a purpose in mind and construct their writing with a view to achieving that purpose” (ibid : 39). The mostly used prewriting strategies in the academic setting are brainstorming and free writing. Brainstorming is a way to gather information and come up with ideas. Its main principle is to let the writer's ideas flow without judging them. First, the writer generates ideas and then he/she can come back to them and omit the ones that he/she thinks irrelevant. Like brainstorming, free writing is a strategy where the writer lets his/her sentences flow freely without thinking whether the ideas are appropriate or the grammar is correct. The writer just starts writing quickly and tries not to stop. When

he/she finishes free writing, the writer reads what he/she has written and checks the most interesting facts or ideas to use later on.

2.5.3.2. Drafting : Drafting is the second stage of the writing process, where the writer gets down his/her ideas and thoughts based upon the prewriting strategy that he/she has used. At the drafting stage, the writer begins to determine what to include and exclude as well as make initial decisions about how ideas will be organized. So, in this stage the emphasis is on content and meaning rather than mechanics and conventions. Moreover, drafting is a series of strategies used to organize and develop a sustained piece of writing. Beginning to draft is always a difficult task, where the writer feels frustrated as a result of his/her production of false starts and mistakes at different levels. In this context, Pickett et. al. (2001: 146) claim that writing the first draft is a hard task even for knowledgeable writers.

2.5.3.3. Revising : Revising is a procedure for improving a work in progress; it is a series of strategies designed to rethink, reexamine and reevaluate the choices that have created a piece of writing (add, omit, correct, order, change in syntax, sentence structure and organization). According to Mather and Jaffe (1899: 507), students at the revising stage concentrate on the clarity of their message by reorganizing their ideas and providing their text with more effective vocabulary.

2.5.3.4. Editing : Editing is the next step in which the writer checks his writing in terms of relevance of ideas and grammar correctness (Harmer, 2004:5). The editing activity enables the writer to make the final readjustments that make a piece of writing ready for the reader (Hedge, 2005 :54). When editing, the writer has to make sure that he/she has used all the right words and proofread his/her text to find mistakes in grammar, capitalization, punctuation and so on. By ‘getting the content right’, Hedge means revision whereas the rest is editing. In the editing stage, the writer can use different strategies such as proofreading, editing checklists as COPS which stand for: **C:** capitalization, **O:** organization, **P:** punctuation/ paragraphs, **S:** sentences/spelling.

2.6. Writing as an Important Skill

Learning a foreign language entails learning to write it. many foreign students are proficient in coping with the writing system. Only a minority feels compelled to use it in some formal situations because it is a difficult skill to acquire. “Writing provides an importance mean to personal self-expression” (Mc Arthur, et al. 2008 : 1). Its importance lies in its power as it is reported by Mc Arthur, et al. (2008 : 11) ‘The power of writing is so strong that writing about one’s feelings and experiences can be beneficial psychologically and physiologically because it can reduce depression, lower blood pressure, and boost the immune system’. In this respect, we should not neglect the importance of the writing skill in Teaching/learning English as a foreign language because it expresses social relationships which exist due to the individuals’ creation via discourse, but these relationships are not only discourse. According to Hyland (2003 : 69), ‘writing is one of the main ways that we create a coherent social reality through engaging with others’. Also, the practice of writing can provide different learning styles especially for those who find it difficult to learn through the oral skill, for such students writing is likely an aid to retention. It means that students feel more secure and relaxed in writing at distance rather than feeling compelled to deal with immediate communication through oral practice. However, some learners of English do not agree with the importance assigned to the writing skill pointed out by Doff (1995) who said that:

If we think only of long-term needs, writing is probably the least important of the four skills for many students, they are more likely to need to listen to, read and speak English than to write it. Their need for writing is most likely to be for study purposes and also as an examination skill. (p.148)

In the school setting, writing plays many roles: It is a skill that draws on the use of strategies such as planning, evaluating, and revising text to accomplish a variety of goals, such as writing a report or expressing an opinion with the support of evidence. This role can be characterized as ‘learning to write’. Moreover, writing is a means to extend and deepen students’ knowledge; it acts as a tool for learning subject matter. This role is called ‘writing to learn’.

In fact, the roles of learning to write and writing to learn are interdependent. For this reason, it is recommended that language teachers use content-area texts to teach the reading and writing the skills and that content-area teachers provide instruction and

practice in discipline-specific reading and writing. Using writing tasks to learn content offers students opportunities to expand their abilities; to strengthen the planning, evaluating, and revising process; and to practice grammar, spelling, punctuation, modes of argumentation, and technical writing. In short, if students are to learn, they must write (Graham & Perin, 2007: 23).

2.6.1. Motivation to Write in English

Language learning is affected by social , cognitive factors and the learner's personality in general . Accordingly , when the question refers to the student's personality , other facts such as motivation , attitudes and behaviours are implied (Melouk , 1991 :89). It is already known that ,through language , learners actively construct their vision of the world, including value systems , beliefs and attitudes (Harris 1993 :10). In addition , showing interest to learn or communicate with the foreign language is generally underlined by motivation.Richards (in Robinett and Schachter , 1989 : 202) claims that : ' motivation to achieve communication may exceed motivation to produce grammatically correct sentences.' Motivation towards the act of writing itself exists once the learners have an interest to communicate . At the same time , it denotes that a lack or absence of motivation may lead to unsuccessful aquisition of the writing skill. If foreign language learners are motivated to integrate the foreign language knowledge , they will develop a higher level of proficiency and their positive attitudes can have a positive effect in their written production. It is proposed that students' attitudes towards learning writing may constitute the first step of motivation in order to become a good writer in English .

In short , in order to achieve a good English written product, learners need the knowledge of the foreign language system (grammar), they need to read in English , they need to practice frequent linguistic activities to train themselves in writing.However , all these cannot lead towards success unless the learners show an interest /desire to become skilled writers.without the learner's motivation, these potential factors , wich are collaborators in any successful writing , may not work to help him/her to master writing.

2.7. Features of Effective Writing

Academic writing can be characterized as the construction and development of techniques taught in universities such as organizing and generating students' ideas and critical thinking, and developing vocabulary and grammatical syntax. Additionally, students in English writing classes should receive more exposure to those features which offer strong vocabulary, good sentence structures, and the organization of paragraphs based on punctuation marks and conjunctions. It is necessary for teachers to identify and emphasize the process of academic writing for students. Thus, teachers need to establish and encourage students' attitudes towards the basic elements of academic writing such as definition, strategies, and difficulties. Moreover, effective writing focuses mainly on the topic and has an organizational patterns that enables the reader to follow the flow of ideas because it contains a beginning, middle, and an end , also it uses transitional devices. Moreover, effective writing contains supporting ideas that are developed through the use of details, examples, and a mature words choice and has variation in sentence structure.

Furthermore, focus, organization, support and elaboration, style, and conventions are features through which teachers can help students become more effective writers and make their own job easier. Those features are defined by many researchers as follows: **1. Focus:** is the topic/subject established by the writer in response to the writing task. The writer must clearly establish a focus as he/she fulfills the assignment. This is means that if the reader is confused about the subject matter, the writer has not effectively established a focus. If the reader is engaged and not confused, the writer probably has been effective in establishing a focus.(Speck and Jones1998)

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2.7.2. Organization: is the progression, relatedness, and completeness of ideas through the development of elements forming an effective beginning, middle, and end.

2.7.3. Support and Elaboration: is the extension and development of the topic/subject. The writer provides sufficient elaboration to present the ideas and/or events clearly.

2.7.4. Style: is the control of language that is appropriate to the purpose, audience, and context of the writing task. The writer's style is evident through word choice and sentence fluency. Also it can be added that the skillful use of precise and purposeful vocabulary enhances the effectiveness of the composition through the use of appropriate words, phrases and descriptions that engage the audience.

2.7.5. Conventions: conventions involve correctness in sentence formation, usage, and mechanics. The writer has control of grammatical conventions that are appropriate to the writing task.

These features not only provide teachers with a more objective set of criteria for assessing writing, they also provide students with a framework for reading and improving their own writing. (Brown, 1991)

2.8. Skilled Writers Vs Unskilled Writers

There is a great difference between good and poor writers concerning the way of organizing thoughts and transmitting them to the reader. According to Weigle (2002 :22), expert writers plan and revise their writing more than novice writers do. They are also interested in the content and the organization of their work. Effective writers take into account their audience. Similarly, Hedge (2005 :22) maintained that skilled writers focus on the comprehensibility of their work for readers; however, less skilled writers do not take into consideration their readers. The writer should make the message of his writing clear for the reader through the organization of ideas and the elimination of ambiguities. According to Murry and Hughes (2008:86), making a piece of writing clear is essential because it helps the reader read and understand a piece of writing very easily.

2.8.1. The Role Of Extensive Writing

It is believed that extensive writing helps learners to be effective writers. According to Harmer (2004 :39), learning to write could be very effective if learners have the chance to write for real audience. In other words, when students have 'out of class activities' that demand writing; this encourages them to practise writing more and more because 'the more students write, the better and more fluent they become as writers' (ibid :127).

Therefore, teachers should not ask their students to write only in tests and exams; however, they should give them extensive writing practices outside the classroom to make them good writers.

2.9. Writing Problems

Writing in a second or foreign language seems to be the most difficult language skill for language learners to acquire in academic contexts. It is a complicated process which involves a number of cognitive and metacognitive activities, for instance; brainstorming, planning, outlining, organizing, drafting, and revising. "Differences in the language structures, the manner of expressing thoughts, writing styles and other culturally varying factors greatly affect the writing of foreign language learners." (Benson and Heidish, 1995).

Moreover, Hadifield (1992) notes three areas of difficulty for the learner in relation to the productive skill of writing. First, the writer cannot consult the reader, for the audience is not immediately present as in the case with speaking. Second, learners suffer from linguistic difficulty in that language used in speech is not the same as writing. In some cases it is simpler-like a shopping list, in others it is more elaborate and formal like in an academic report. The difficulty is more evident for E.F.L learners who are unaware of the discourse patterns inherent in particular types of writing. The last difficulty is cognitive, this relates to the ability to organize ideas on the paper.

2.9.1. Causes of Writing Problems

- Al-Khsawneh (2010) indicated that the students identified that the teaching method and the environment are the main causes of their weaknesses in English. Their Weak qualification in English is either related to the lack of student motivation, or the teacher's interest. Moreover, many learners use their mother tongue because of the isolated culture.
- English language learners have limited vocabulary. Therefore, students end up repeating the same words which hinder creativity. Students could not give voice to their thoughts because they lack the adequate stock of vocabulary.

- English language learners do not use invented spelling and their written texts are restricted to words which they know.
- The present tense is the only tense used in their writing.
- The students' writing is difficult to understand because of the ill-structured sentences in composition.
- Students are unwilling to share their work with other students and they do not get the suitable feedback.
- When the learners read their writing aloud, they could not distinguish whether what they read or write is right or wrong. (kakul agha et.al 2002)

Moreover, many teachers indicated that students' first language affects learning the target language. This is why students make certain mistakes and repeat them. Because writing and learning how to write has been always one of the most complex and difficult skill to master, teaching Writing is not an easy task since this skill needs a comprehensible knowledge of grammar. Furthermore, teaching writing is often about teaching grammar which has always been an important issue in second and foreign language learning and teaching. The focus on grammar in teaching writing is very important in that there are grammatical structures that need to be taught in the context of particular methods of development for different topics. Raimes (1981) describes it in the following way: 'Certain methods of development require certain structures, e.g., a comparison_ contrast task will make the use of comparative and superlative forms necessary, likewise in chronological narration, past tenses and in spatial order, prepositions of place will be used.' p.5).

2.9.1.1. Lack of Reading

As mentioned before in this chapter, reading is a useful tool to improve students' writing for it is the study of what is written. Some reports by Krachen (1984, as cited in Harmer 2006 : 224) compared classes that did more reading than writing allowing the conclusion that the reading group showed more progress than the writing ones in the writing test. That is, even if the two skills are separated, for reading is a passive activity while writing is a productive one, they are nonetheless complementary and can be closely developed. Byrne (1991) argued 'reading, of course, can be the goal in itself and in any case is likely to be a more important one than writing, but the two skills can and should be developed in close collaboration'. (p.22) .In this respect, many surveys are done to confirm

the existence of the relationship between reading and writing. Furthermore, reading in the classroom is understood as the appropriate input for the acquisition of writing skills for it is generally assumed that reading passages will somehow function as primary models for which writing can be learned or at least inferred. That is why Raimes (1994) emphasized the use of reading technique when teaching writing to the students because "readings can do far more in the teachings of writing than simply provide subject matter for discussion and for comprehension topics" (p.60). This means that, when the students read, they engage actively with the new language and culture, in our case it is English which they have little occasion to speak or hear spoken face to face. She goes on to claim that 'the more our students read, the more they become familiar with the vocabulary, idiom, sentence patterns, organizational flow, and cultural assumptions of native speakers of the language' (Raimes, 1994 : 66). In other words, reading is a pre-condition for writing because it plays an important role in its development. One can not improve writing if he does not read frequently.

In any case the two skills go hand-in-hand, and one can not function without manipulating the second. We often read to get the information we need to include in our writing. However, this ideal way to improve students' writing is totally neglected among our third year students. All of them agreed that the lack of reading is the main factor behind their poor performance and achievements in writing.

2.9.1.2 Influence of First Language on Writing in English

In addition to the lack of both reading and interest in writing, students face another obstacle that hinders their abilities to write correctly. Generally, foreign language teachers emphasise the need for EFL writers to think and write as far as possible in English. Friedlander (1997) reported, "writers do any of their work in their first language" (p.109). It means that this way of writing will inhibit acquisition of English due to transfer of structures and vocabulary from first language in an incorrect way. In other words, Writing is a skill that can be learned, practiced, and mastered but it remains the most difficult skill to be mastered even for native speakers. This fact is supported by Numan (1989) who pointed out that "writing is an extremely complex, cognitive activity for all which the writer is required to demonstrate control of a number of variables simultaneously". Also Brooks and Grundy (2009) investigated this issue claiming that "It must be worth asking

precisely what is difficult about writing and, especially, about writing in a second language” (p.10).

Furthermore, in terms of complexity and difficulty many surveys proved that language production is difficult. ‘There are a number of reasons why students find language production difficult’ (Harmer, 2006 : 251). Writing and learning to write has always been one of the most complex language skills. Nunan (1989) agreed that ‘it is easier to learn to speak than to write no matter if it is a first or second language’ (p.12).

Grabe and Kaplan (1996 : 87) said that ‘probably half of the world’s population does not know how to write adequately and effectively.’ Concerning its difficulty as a productive skill, Tribble (1997:65) claimed that ‘writing is a difficult skill to acquire’. This complexity resides in the stages of the process we go through when writing, the lack of knowledge in the subject matter, etc.

Conclusion

In conclusion to this chapter, it can be said that learning to write is gaining grounds in importance, it is a skill that allows integration in social roles. Nevertheless, it is the least easy skill to acquire in comparison to other skills. Writing cannot be acquired but through formal instruction, that is why teachers need consider seriously the way they introduce this skill to learners. Teachers can guide learners through some stages of development, or they can select among the different orientations, the teaching of writing takes the one that suits best their learners’ needs, and objectives. Whatever approach is adopted, product, process, or genre, teachers have to respond to learners’ writing. This response can be an assessment, a feedback, or a correction. Furthermore, writing in a foreign language is seen as a challenging task for many foreign language learners. It requires the learner to be aware of the conventions that govern foreign language writing which are totally different from those which characterize his/her first language writing. Moreover, the student should apply and practise second language writing intensively to be a skillful writer.

Chapter Three

Introduction

The current study deals with the phenomenon of native language interference as a cause of the common errors made by third year students of English at Biskra University. Since the ultimate objective of this research is to analyze and identify them. Then this study aims to find solutions to this issue and improve students' writings. This chapter serves as an empirical evidence to prove that the problem of native language interference exist, and to corroborate or refute the hypothesis that the low achievement of students' writing performance is due to the native language interference (Arabic). In order to achieve the mentioned purposes of the study , the researcher designs a questionnaire for teachers of written expression at the English department of Biskra University. The purpose is asking them about their opinions and suggestions concerning this issue. These opinions are well presented in the teachers' questionnaire.

3.1. Data collection

3.1.1. Questionnaire Population

The population of teachers for this study equals 17 teachers, all of them teach written expression at the English Department of Biskra University.

3.1.2. Questionnaire Sample

Polit (2001 : 235) states that:

Sampling involves selecting a group of people, events; behaviors or other elements with which to conduct a study. When elements are persons, they are known as subjects . . . selected from the delineated target population in a way that the individuals in the sample represent as nearly as possible. Hence, The sample of teachers for this study equals 6 teachers who teach written expression for third year.

3.2. The Aim of the Questionnaire

The questionnaire can be defined as an instrument that can serve as a means of collecting a considerable amount of data with a minimum of time and effort. Questionnaires as pointed out by Anderson (1990 : 207), "Allow the gathering of reliable and valid data, relatively, in a short time". It is a tool which includes a number of questions

that require a complete answer or selecting one among the existing answers as it is reported by Brown (2001 : 6) who claims that “Questionnaires are any written instruments that present respondents with a series of questions or statements to which they are to react either by writing out their answers or selecting from among existing answer”. The researcher designs a questionnaire for the reason that it has many advantages ; it requires less time less effort, energy, and financial resources. By administering a questionnaire to a group of people, one can collect a huge amount of information in less than an hour. Furthermore, if the questionnaire is well constructed, processing the data can also be fast and relatively straightforward, especially by using some modern computer software. Other advantages are summarized by Beiske (2003 :16) in the following points:

- The majority of people are familiar with questionnaires, and know how to complete them.
- The respondents’ opinions are not influenced by the researcher’s point of views
- The respondents can fill the questionnaire at their own place.
- Questionnaires are easy to analyze.

3.3.Questionnaire design

The questionnaire consists of close and open questions: The former is a restricted type which includes questions or statements where the respondents should select one or more choices such as “Yes” or “No”. They are easy and quick to fill in; however, they usually take a longer time to devise than needed for open questions, which are easier to design, but difficult to analyze and anticipate the range of responses i.e. it requires from the respondents to justify their answers.(Wallace, 2000 :135)

3.4. Piloting

Concerning piloting, Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2005 : 260) State ‘a pilot has several functions, principally to increase the reliability, validity and practicability of the questionnaire’. Therefore, before administering the questionnaires, the researcher has piloted them by following certain guidelines :

- Are the instructions clear and easy to follow?
- Are the questions clear and relevant to the topic conducted?
- How long does the questionnaire take to complete? (Wallace, 2000 :133)

The aim of piloting the questionnaire is that: Questionnaire should be piloted to see whether they work as planned ; even if we are going to distribute only a small number of questionnaire , it might be worth pilot them out on one or two people beforehand. (Wallace, 2000 : 132) The teachers' questionnaires (preliminary and ordinary) have been piloted with 2 teachers and no change in the formulation happened.

3.5. Administration of the Questionnaire

The questionnaire has been given to six teachers in the English department at Biskra University who mainly teach written expression. The teachers have been very cooperative and they have answered all the questions in a short period of time.

3.6. Description of Teachers' Questionnaire

This questionnaire is a whole of 18 items which are divided in two sections. It contains a variety of types of questions i.e. a mixture of close-ended questions ; which are represented in numbers (3,5,6,7,9,10,13,14,15,16,17,18), and open-ended questions which are (1,2,4,8,11,12,). The first section is made up of 12 items . It aims to shed light on the writing skill relying on the teachers' experience.

Section One : The Writing Skill (Q1- Q12)

This section seeks for the teachers' opinions about students' level of writing i.e., is it satisfactory or not (Q1, Q8) and if the out-numbered classes affect their levels in writing. Then question (Q3) seeks to understand what good writing is? Question (Q4) designs to see whether teachers exploit reading techniques in teaching the writing skill. After that, our informants are asked about the allotted time to teaching and/or practicing writing (Q5,). Question (Q6) is designed to see which approach is used to teach writing? With respect to the stages of the one has been chosen. Question (Q7) is designed whether or not teachers give assignments to their students. Questions (Q9,Q10,Q11) are designed to determine the difficulties students encounter when writing in English by asking our informants whether or not their students find difficulties and make errors of different types in writing in

English. Finally, Question (Q12) the teachers are asked about the problems they face when teaching the writing skill.

Section Two : Errors as a Result of L1 Interference (Q13- Q18)

The last section includes 7 questions which are related to students' errors ; if they make errors in their writings or not (Q13) ; and if they do, what are the common types of errors they make (Q14). Question (Q15) is devoted to ask our respondents what is the main cause that leads our students to make such errors repeatedly. Questions (Q16,Q17,) are designed to see whether teachers give more importance to error correction or not and how many times they correct them in addition to their preferred way of correction.i.e. by whom they want the errors to be corrected. Finally, (Q18) is designed to give more freedom and space to our respondents where they can add any information or comments that best fits our study.

1- Analysis of Teachers' Questionnaire

1.1- Section One : The Writing Skill

1- Do your learners achieve a satisfactory level in mastering the writing skill ?

options	subjects	percentage
Yes	03	50%
No	03	50%
Total	06	100%

Table 3.1. Students' Achievement in Writing (Third Year)

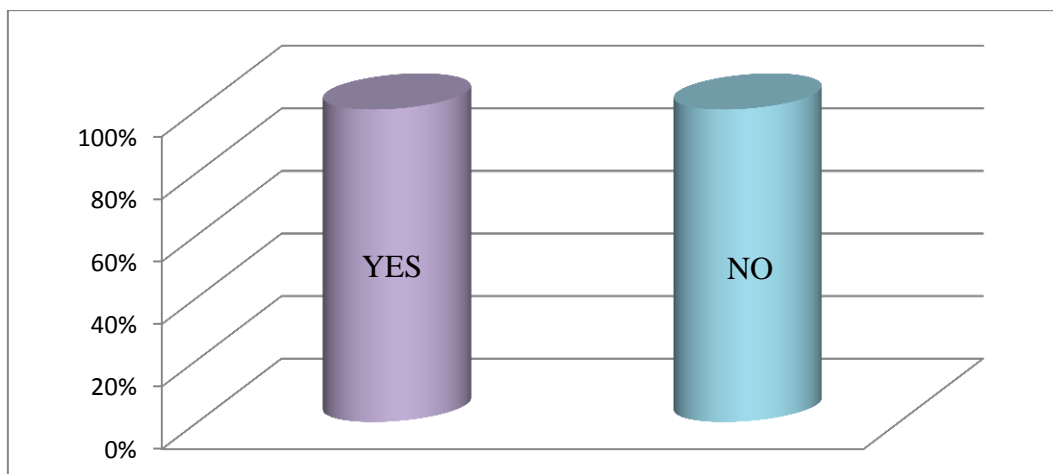


Diagram 3. 1. Students' Achievement in Writing (Third Year)

The data in Table 1 show that half of the respondents (50 %) seem not satisfied with their students' level of writing. But, we cannot ignore the fact that written expression teachers often rely on their experiences, by adding elements that fit students' needs or omitting what can obstruct students' performances, rather than applying the official syllabus as far as third year students are concerned.

-Whatever your answer, please explain.

This dissatisfaction, according to our informants, is due to the following reasons:

- 1- "It is partly because of deficiencies in the basics of English (grammar, vocabulary) and partly due to insufficient practice in writing and the number of students in each group".
- 2- "Students are disinterested in reading; therefore, the product is weak" .i.e. Lack of practice and motivation
- 3- "Not much time allotted to practice writing".
- 4- "Students don't apply what they have learnt".
- 5- "Students still don't respect the different norms and writing techniques".
- 6- "Students don't read enough; don't write well".

This means that the writing skill demands other aspects to be integrated such as motivation, practice, time, small groups in order to achieve a satisfactory level in writing.

2- Do out-numbered classes affect the learners' written performances ?

options	subjects	Percentage
Yes	06	100%
No	00	0%
Total	06	100%

Table 3.2. Effects of Out-numbered Classes on Learners' Written performances

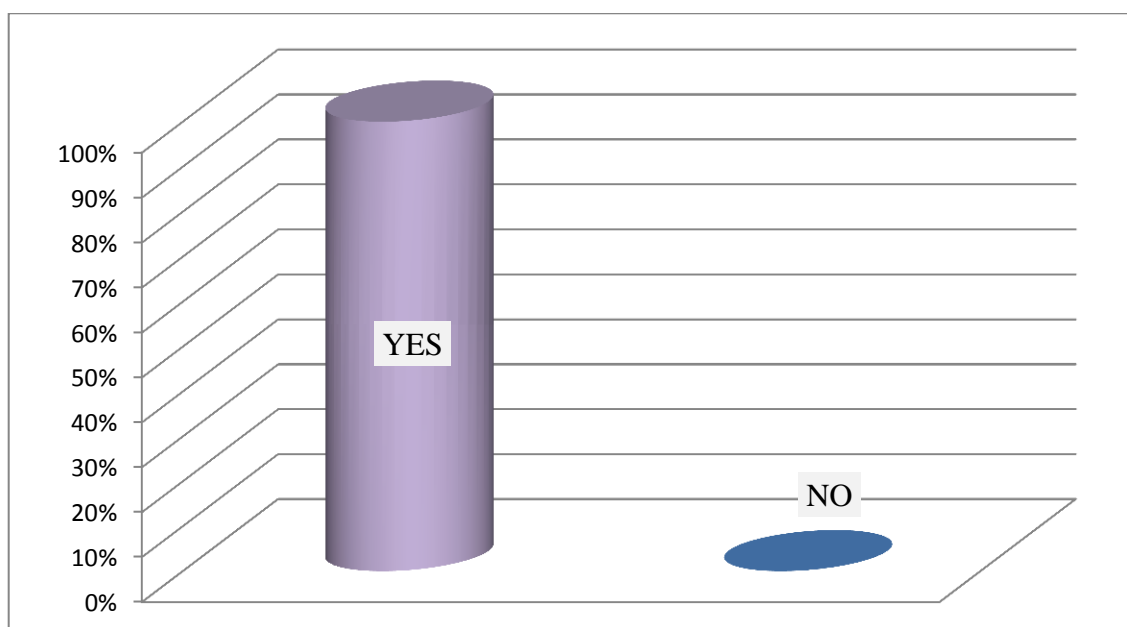


Diagram 3. 2. Effects of Out-numbered Classes on Learners' Written performances

All the respondents (100%) declare that out- numbered classes affect the learners' written performances. In this respect, out-numbered classes are another factor that hinder student to write well. As it is pointed by Harmer "In big classes, it is difficult for the teacher to make contact with the student at the back and it is difficult for the student to ask for and receive immediate attention . . ." (2007 : 128).

-Whatever your answer, please explain how?

They argue that the working conditions are very important parameters that should be taken into consideration in the teaching/learning process. They go on to claim that a class of more than (50) learners is not a place where good teaching/learning process can occur. Teachers make, instead of teaching, great efforts and much energy to calm down the learners and behave correctly, i.e., sometimes teachers spend more than 20 minutes just to calm down the class. We can say that this problem is mainly linked to the administration whose role to reduce the students' group and prepare a good atmosphere where the teaching of writing will happen. Hence teachers' tasks are to teach not think about solutions to this problem.

3- Good writing means : (you can tick more than one box).

Options	Subjects	Percentage
a. Correct Grammar	00	0%
b. Good Ideas	00	0%
c. Specific Vocabulary	00	0%
d. Spelling/ Punctuation	00	0%
e. Clarity, coherence, and Cohesion	00	0%
f. All of them	06	100%
g. Others	00	0%
Total	06	100%

Table 3.3. Teachers' Opinions about What is Good Writing

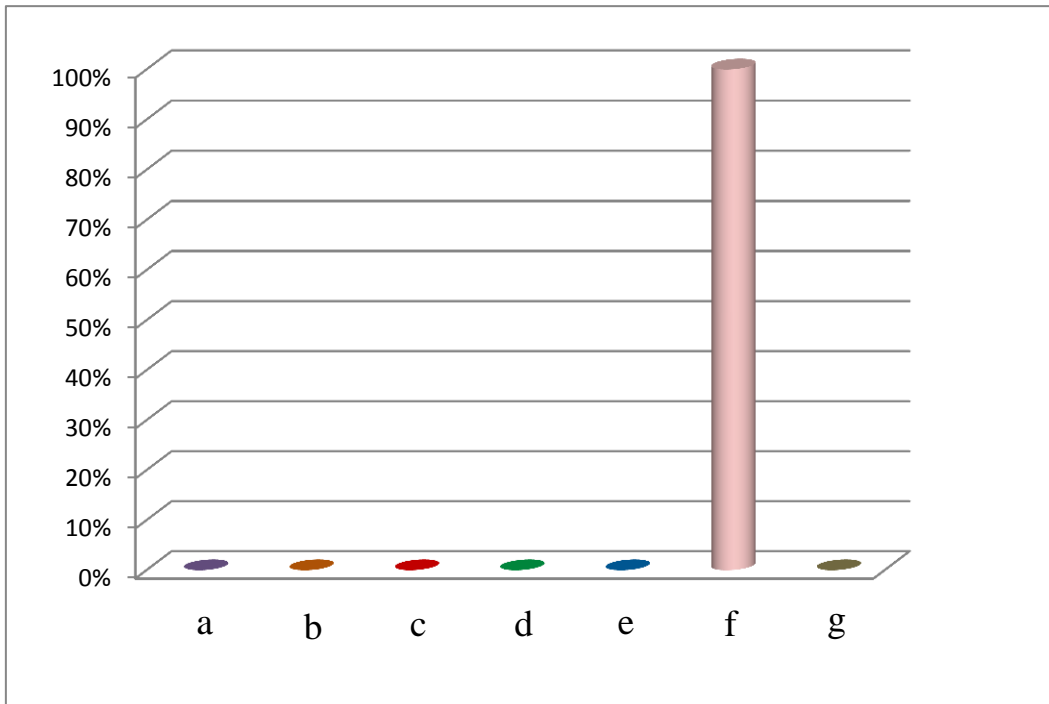


Diagram 3.3. Teachers’ Opinions about What is Good Writing

All of teachers (100%) opt and agree on the answer **f**. That is they admit that good writing means correct grammar, good ideas, specific vocabulary, spelling, punctuation, clarity, coherence, and cohesion. According to them, all these aspects integrate to constitute a good piece of writing.i.e. These aspects can not work separately; they must be integrated.

4- Do you exploit reading techniques in teaching the writing skills?

Options	Subjects	Percentage
Yes	00	0%
No	06	100%
Total	06	100%

Table 3. 4. The Use of Reading Technique in Teaching the Writing Skill

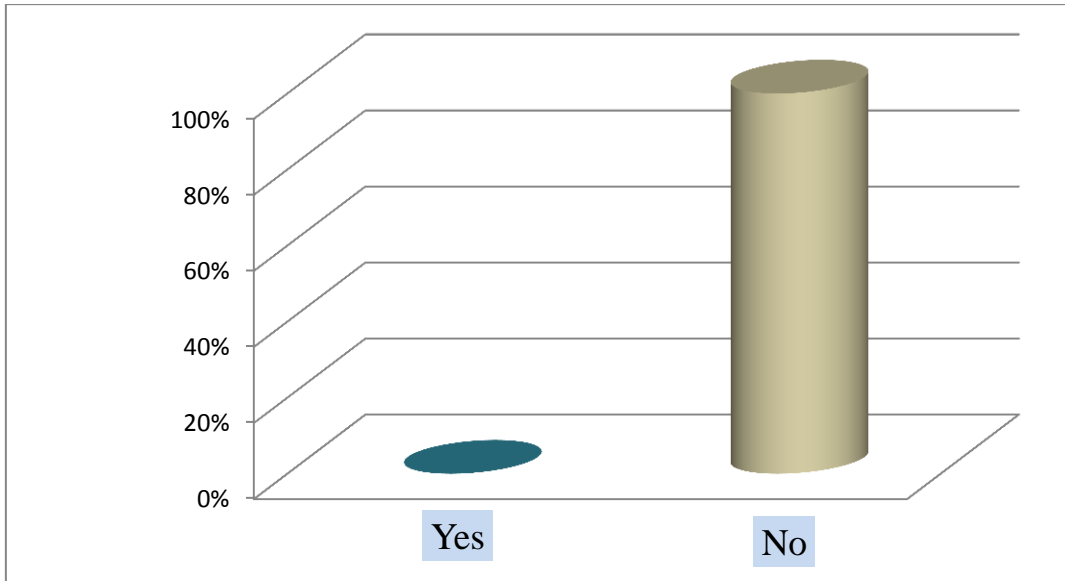


Diagram 3.4. Use of Reading Technique in Teaching the Writing Skill

The findings, in Table 4, reveal that all the respondents (100%) affirm that they do not use or integrate the reading techniques in teaching the writing skill. And that's because ; for them, the time allocated for written expression is without doubt insufficient for integrating another skill.

5- The time allocated to written expression is:

Options	Subjects	Percentage
a. Very Sufficient	00	00%
b. Sufficient	00	00%
c. Insufficient	06	100%
Total	06	100%

Table 5. Allocated Time to Written Expression

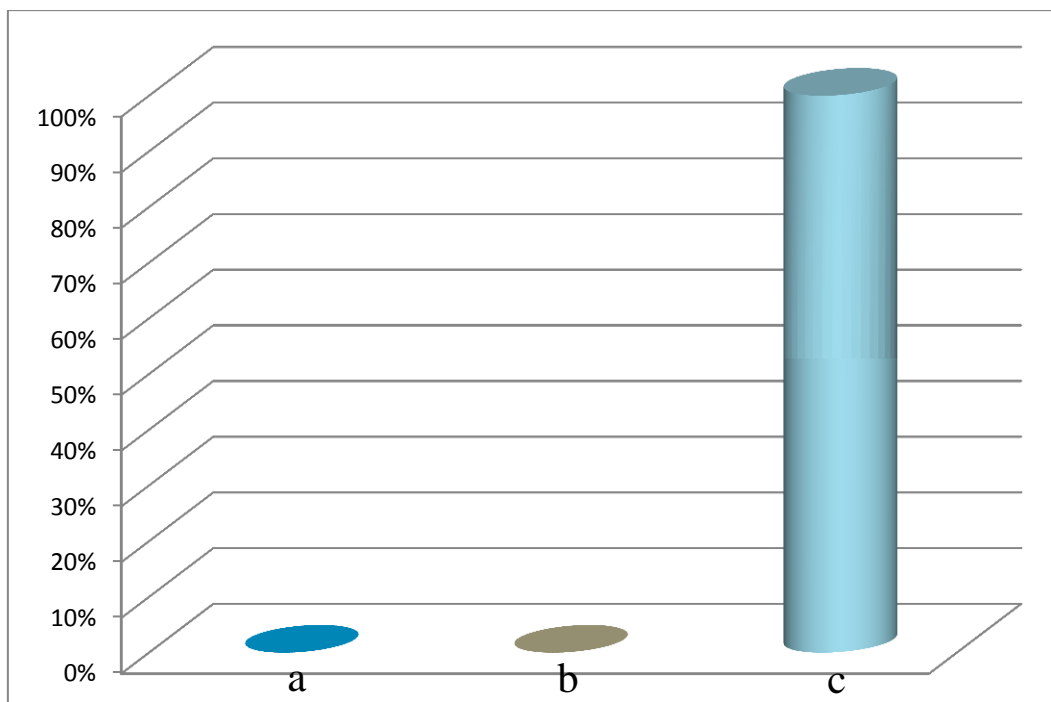


Diagram 3. 5. Allocated Time to Written Expression

It is clear that all the teachers (100%) select the negative answer. All of them believe that the time is not sufficient to practice writing in class.

6- Which approach do you use to teach writing?

Options	Subjects	Percentage
a. Product Approach	00	00%
b. Process Approach	01	10%
c. Both	05	90%
d. Others	00	00%
Total	06	100%

Table 3.6. Approaches Used to Teach Writing

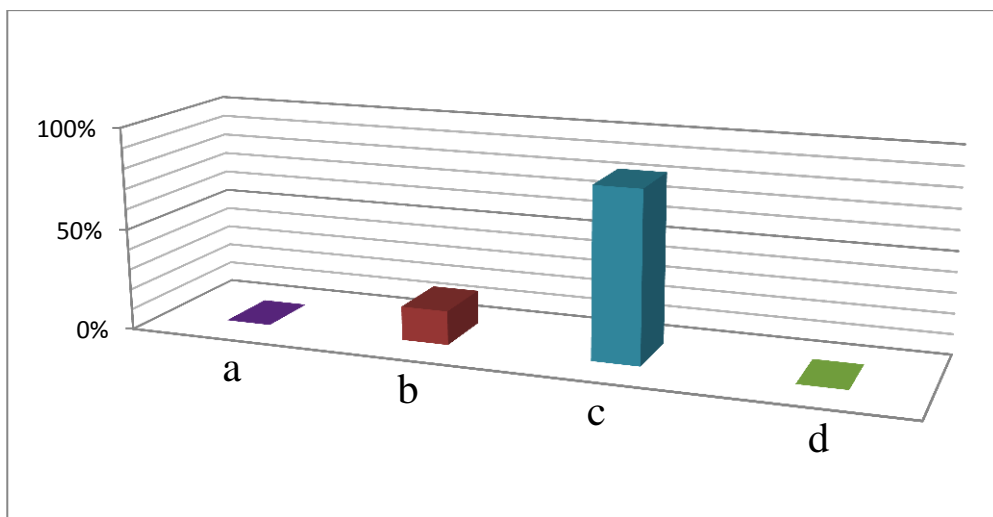


Diagram 3.6. Approaches Used to Teach Writing

To teach the writing skill, various approaches are used: the process and the product approaches. Their use either separately or combined depends on the teaching conditions, situations and needs. Accordingly, the analysis of the results reveals that the majority of the respondents (86.66%) favor the use of both approaches. However, one teacher claims the use of the product approach since students are usually judged according to their final product in exams. This idea is supported by Furneaux (1999) who claimed that “writing is ultimately judged by content not process ...” (p. 65).

7- Do you give assignments to your students?

Options	Subjects	Percentage
Yes	06	100%
No	00	00%
Total	06	100%

Table 3.7. Assignments Frequency

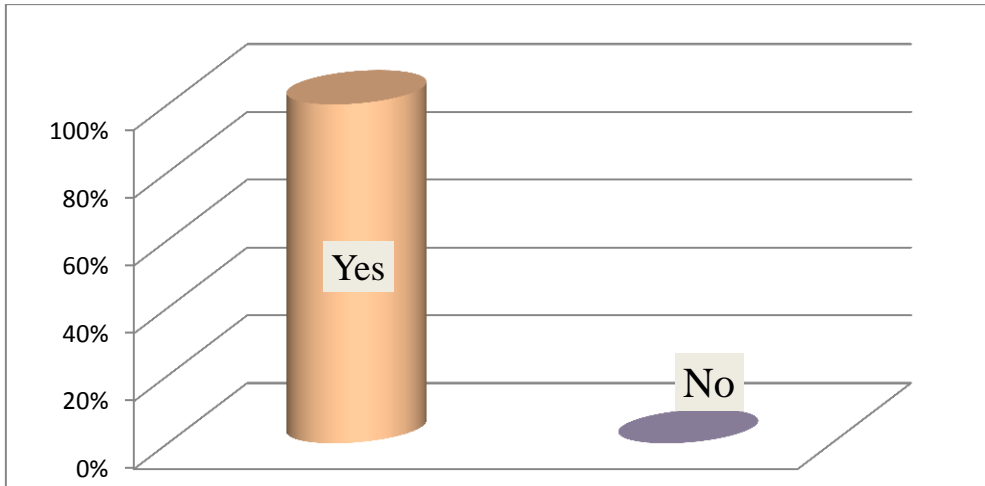


Diagram 7. Assignments Frequency

Table 7 displays that all the teachers (100%) affirm that they give assignments to their students. Giving assignments frequently will help improve students' levels of writing. i.e. students should build the habit of practicing writing if they want to become better writers.

8- What are the most common writing problems you noticed in your students' writings?

Options	Subjects	Percentage
a. Grammar errors	00	00%
b. Interference of the mother tongue	00	00%
c. Poor content/ideas	00	00%
d. Poor vocabulary	00	00%
e. Poor organization of ideas	00	00%
f. Mechanics	00	00%
g. All of them	05	83%
h. a+b+d+f	01	17%
Total	06	100%

Table 3.8. Reasons behind Students' Writing Problems

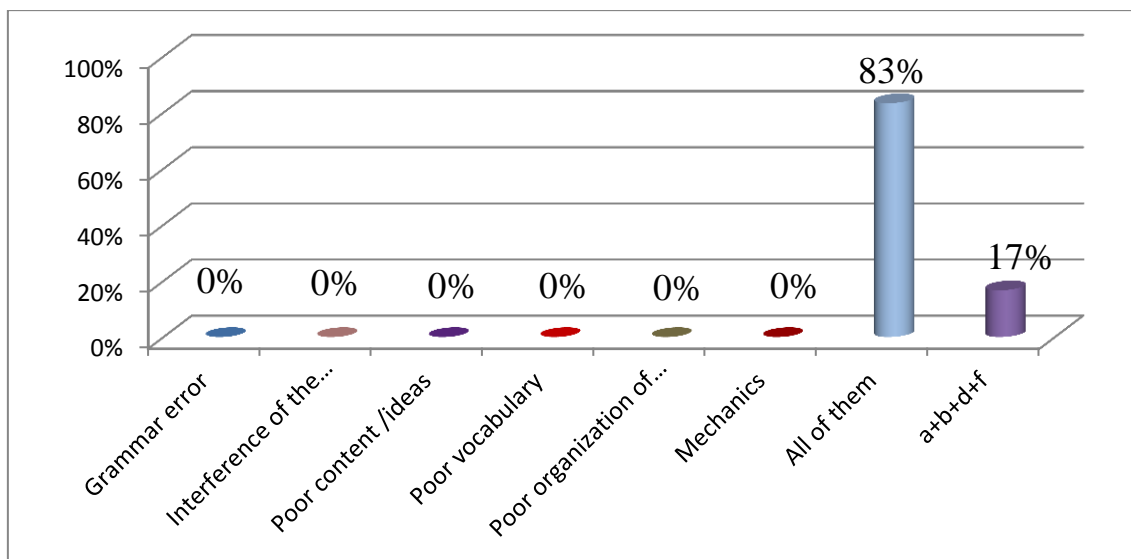


Diagram 3.8. Reasons behind Students' Writing Problems

The table above shows that the majority of teachers(90) report that all the reasons mentioned above are the most common writing problems they have noticed in their students' writings. Whereas, one teacher claims that the most common reasons he/she has noticed in his/ her students' productions are namely: Grammar errors, Interference of the mother tongue, Poor vocabulary and Mechanics. Thus, those four aspects are shared by all the respondents. In other words, these aspects have great impact on students' improvement concerning the writing skill. For that reason, the mentioned aspects should be taken into consideration from students' part when writing and from teachers' part when teaching the writing skill and evaluating their students productions.

9- Do your students make errors of different types in their compositions?

Options	Subjects	Percentage
Yes	06	100%
No	00	00%
Total	06	100%

Table 3.9. Teachers' View about if Students make Errors of Different Types in their Compositions

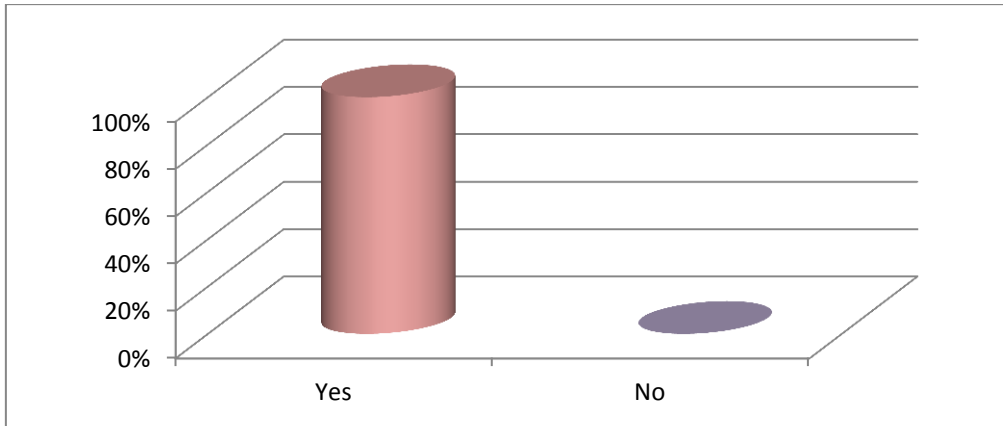


Diagram 3.9. Teachers' View about if Students make Errors of Different Types in their Compositions

All the respondents confirm that their students make different types of errors in their compositions.

10- Do you provide your students with feedback concerning their errors?

Options	Subjects	Percentage
Yes	06	100%
No	00	00%
Total	06	100%

Table 3.10. Teachers' Responses about Providing Feedback Concerning Students' Errors

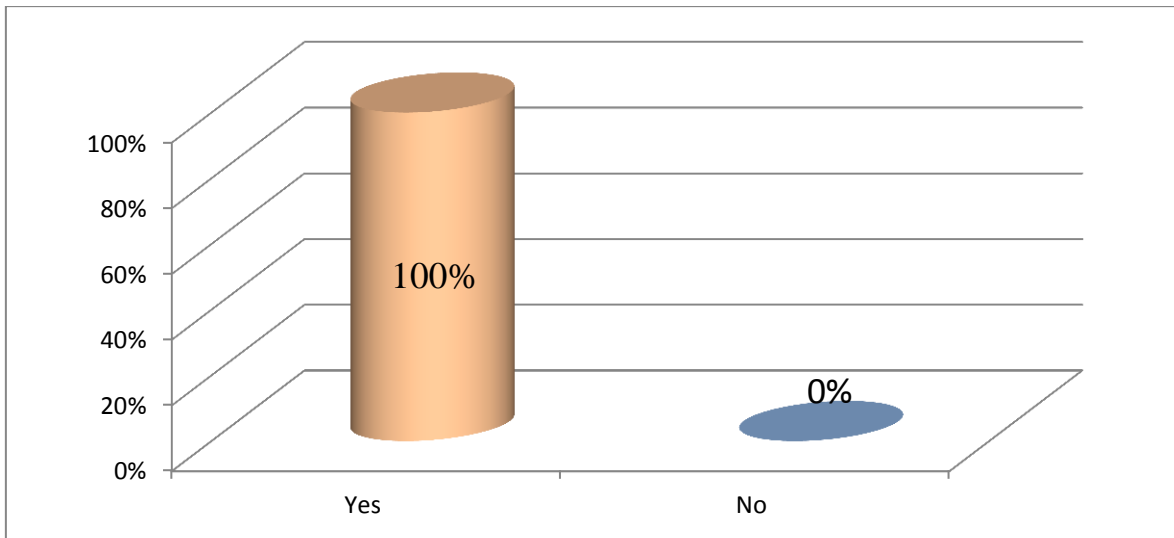


Diagram 3.10. Teachers' Responses about Providing Feedback Concerning Students' Errors

-If 'yes', how they react?

All of the teachers (100%) answer positively, they believe that providing students with feedback is necessary and very helpful. For them, feedback makes students aware of their errors and the degree of correctness of their language. Also all the respondents have noticed that a large number of students show much interest and have a positive attitude towards receiving feedback. Most of them even express the need to improve their language and try to avoid the occurrence of their errors. But , there are other students who reject feedback and blame the teachers by being the responsible for their poor writing performances. In one hand, the teacher should be very careful while providing students with feedback in order not to frustrate them . In the other hand students need to change their perceptions about their teachers and practice because it can help them to write better.

11- What problems do you face in teaching writing skill ?

Teachers	Types of problems	percentage
06 Teachers out of 06	Time and practice	38%
06 Teachers out of 06	Out-numbered classes	38%
04 Teachers out of 06	Vocabulary and interest	25%
Total	03	100%

Table 3.11. Teachers' Problems in Teaching the Writing Skill

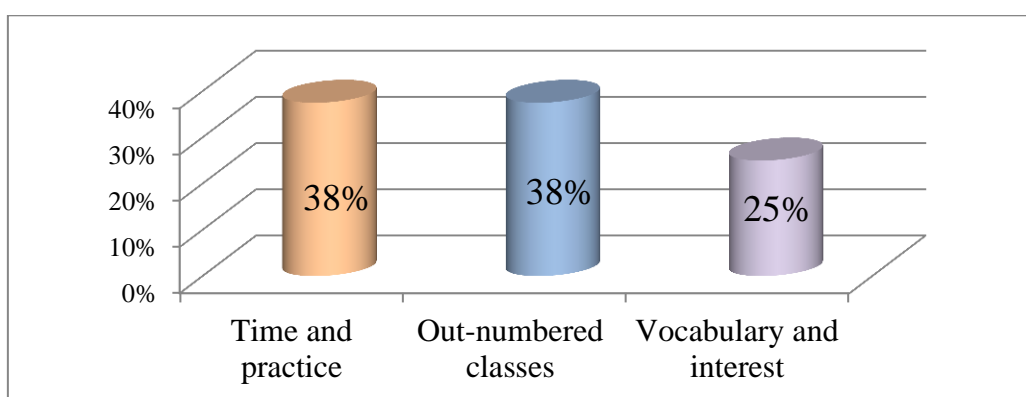


Diagram 3.11. Teachers' Problems in Teaching the Writing Skill

The purpose of asking this question is that we want to know if there are other problems that hamper the teachers of written expression besides to the known ones. Indeed, we have received a number of responses and explanations. What is noticed is that all the respondents talk about the same problems. And all these problems equally affect the process of teaching and learning written expression. As far as time and practice are concerned, 38% of the teachers think that it is insufficient for them to carry out the job successfully. They prove to be insufficient to practice the writing skill in the class.i.e. the time allotted to written expression does not allow the teachers to practice what have been taught to their students. Concerning out-numbered classes (38%), it is the major problem that faces our teachers as an obstacle for achieving their goals as far as teaching writing is concerned. They also refer to the problem to devote time and effort equally to each learner.

Moreover, our respondents (25%) add vocabulary and interest as two real problems. Our learners' repertoire (lexicon) is very poor and limited. Thus, in order not to give their copies empty, they feel obliged to translate what they think in 'Arabic'. Lack of interest is another difficulty teachers face reporting that students write without any purpose in mind (but not for all of them).

1.2. Section Two : Errors as a Result of L1 Interference

12- Do third year students make a lot of errors in their writings ?

Options	Subjects	Percentage
Yes	06	100%
No	00	00%
Total	06	100%

Table 3.12. Students' Errors in their Writings

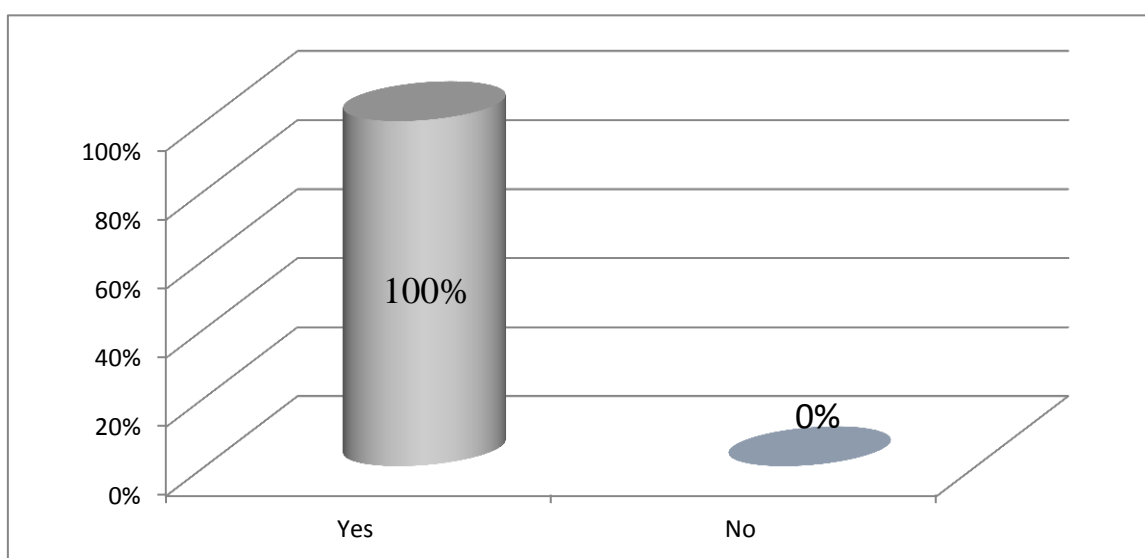


Diagram 3.12. Students' Errors in their Writings

Concerning this question, all the teachers (100%) answer positively, confirming that most third year students make numerous errors in their writings. This constitutes a real problem for a large number of students, unable to produce an organized, neat and error-free piece of writing.

13- What types of errors do they make?

Options	Subjects	Percentage
a. In morphology	00	0%
b. Wrong use of tenses	02	20%
c. In models	00	0%
d. Misuse of articles	00	0%
e. Misuse of prepositions	00	0%
f. Word-order errors	02	20%
g. Misuse of connectors	02	20%
h. All of them	04	40%
Total	10	100%

Table 3.13. Types of Students'errors

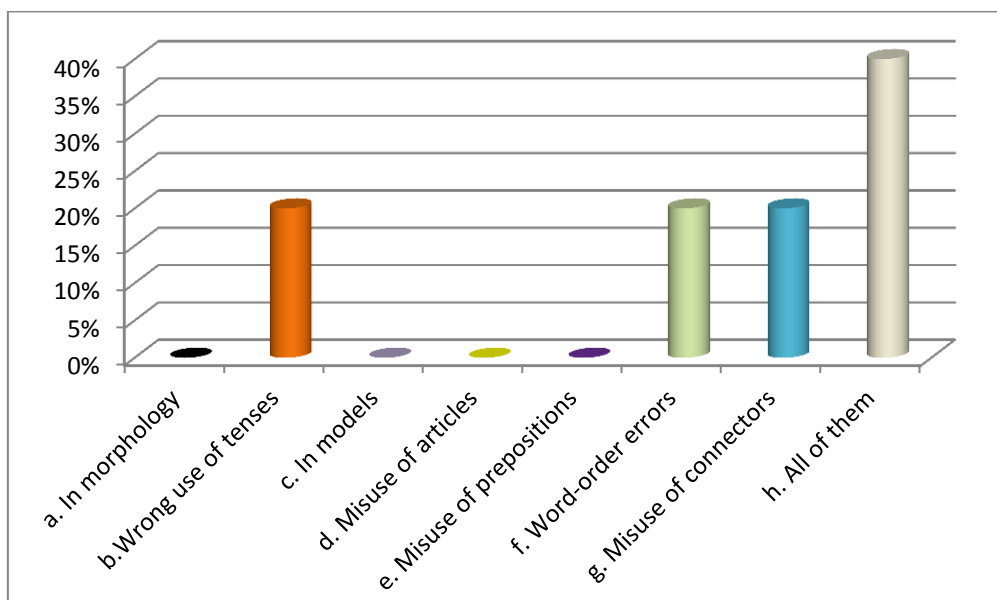


Diagram 3.13. Types of Students'errors

The teachers' answers show that students do find difficulty in different areas concerning grammar. 40% of them said that students make errors in all grammar aspects mentioned above. The other two teachers answers are varied between grammar aspect each one selects the appropriate answer according to his/ her experience. 20% of them report that most of their students make errors in tense ; and this is because the tense system is complex in English and also different from that of Arabic, and the word-order errors (20%). This later may be because they believing that this is due to the native language interference since the order of the different items in the sentence in these previously learned languages is not the same.

14- Do you think that these errors are recurrent because of:

Options	Subjects	Percentage
a. L1 interference	06	33%
b. Lack of reading	06	33%
c. Lack of motivation	00	0%
d. Lack of practice	06	33%
e. Others	00	0%
Total	06	100%

Table 3.14. Reasons of Making Errors

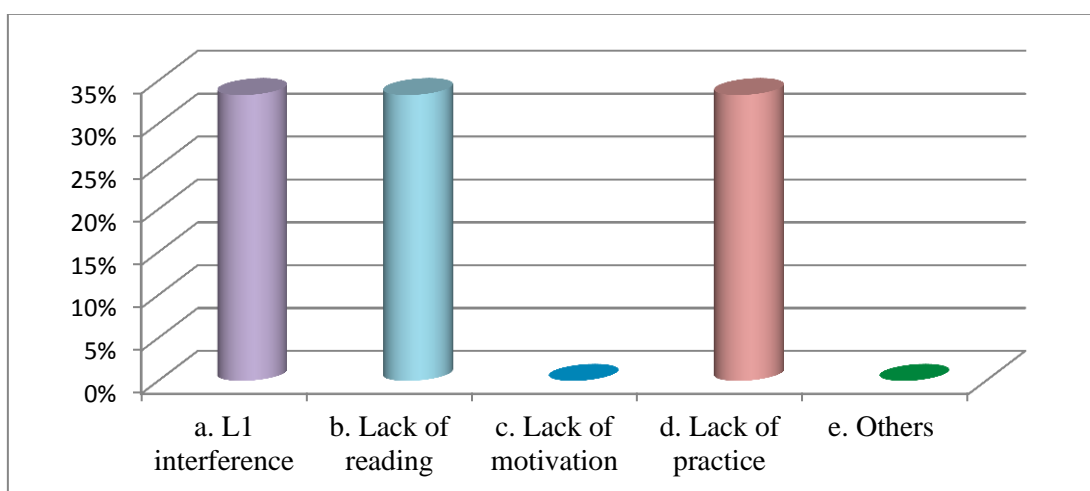


Diagram 3.14. Reasons of Making Errors

All teachers (100%) agree on the same answer that the main causes of such a large number of errors made by students are due to their L1 interference , lack of reading and lack of practice. This may be because many grammatical aspects are not taught when teachers focus on the ones given in exams. In addition, they are more concerned with the completion of the syllabus. Finally, lack of motivation comes with a percentage of 0%.

15- Do you give much importance to error correction?

Options	Subjects	Percentage
Yes	06	100%
No	00	00%
Total	06	100%

Table 3.15. The Importance of Error Correction

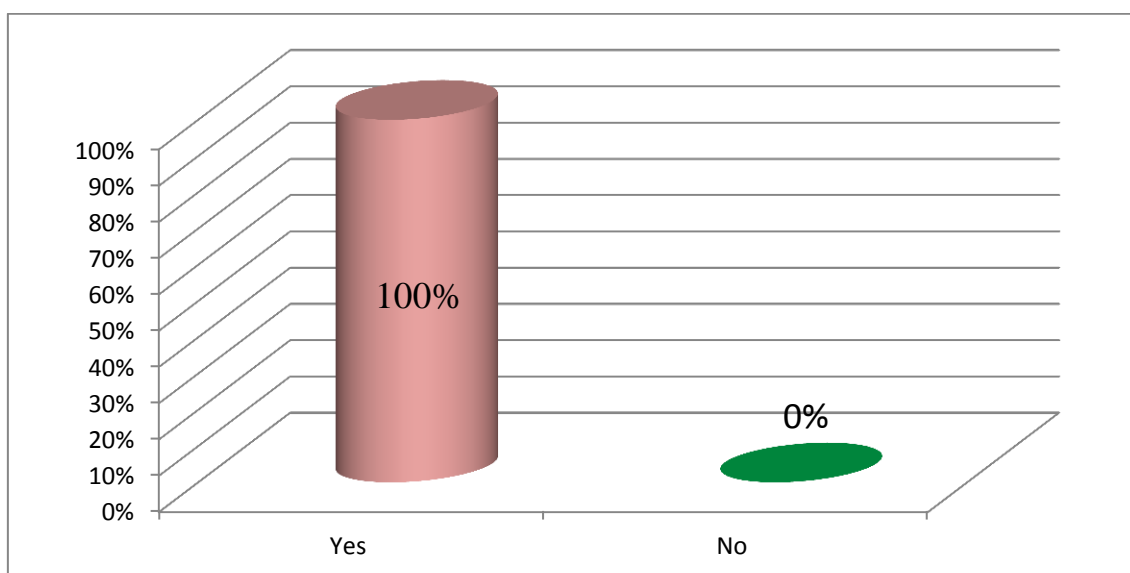


Diagram 3.15. The Importance of Error Correction

Obviously all of the teachers 100% give much importance to error correction.

16- How often do you correct them ?

Options	Subjects	Percentage
a. Always	03	50%
b. Often	03	50%
c. Rarely	00	0%
d. Never	00	0%
Total	06	100%

Table 3.16. Error Correction

Concerning error correction, 50% of teachers select answer **a** .i.e. they always correct their students' assignments. While the other 50% goes to answer **b** which means that teachers often correct the assignments .i.e. this is mainly due to time allocated to the session and completing the syllabus .

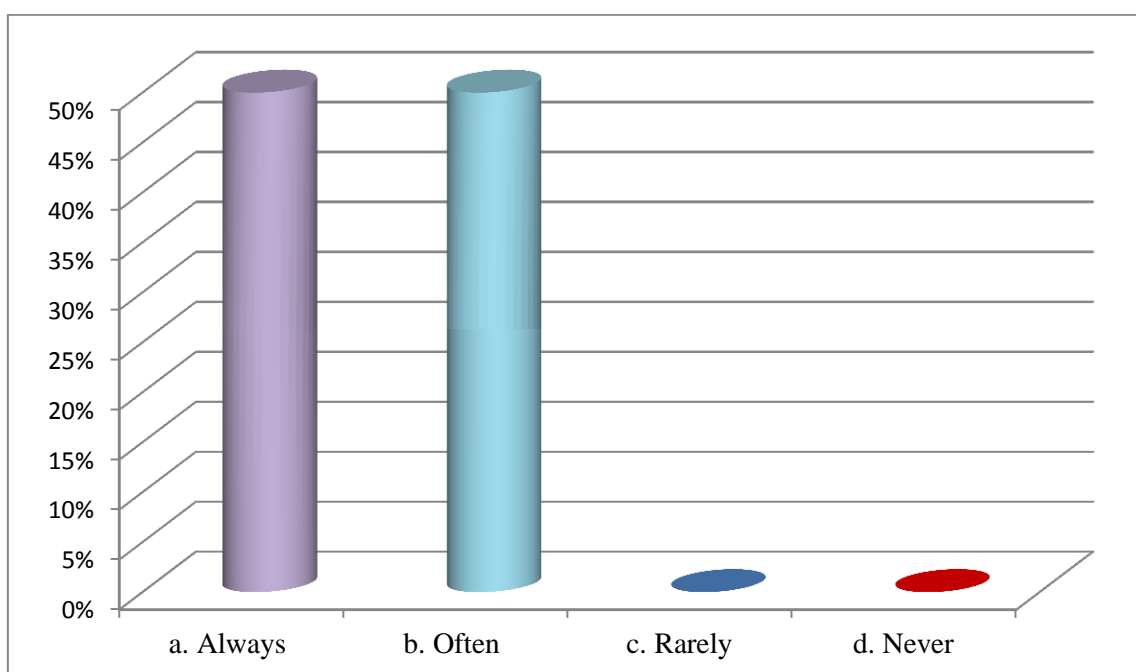


Diagram 3.16. Error Correction

17- Do you prefer the errors to be correct by:

Options	Subjects	Percentage
a. The learner himself/herself	06	43%
b. His/her classmate	02	14%
c. The teacher	06	43%
Total	06	100%

Table 3.17. Teachers' Attitude about who should correct error

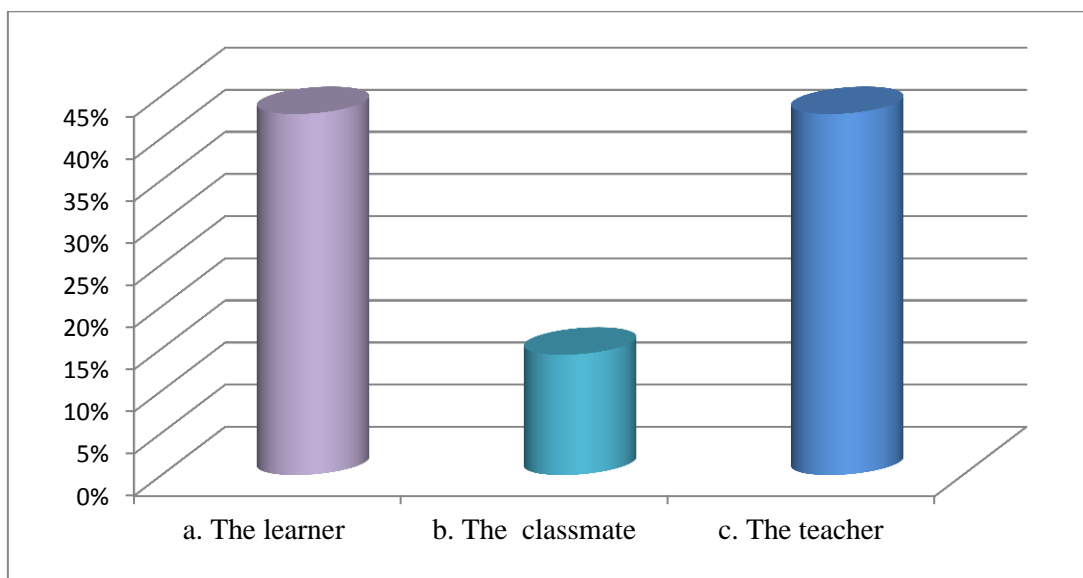


Diagram 3.17. Teachers' Attitude about who should correct error

43% of teachers prefer learners' errors to be corrected by learners' themselves (43%) because self correction would help them internalizes the correct rule, this would improve their writing skill. Some teachers prefer errors to be corrected collectively by learners and their classmate (14%) . But students, generally refuse to be corrected by their classmates. Another (43%) given to the fact that error should be corrected in a collective way between learners and their teachers .Thus, the teacher should develop a good knowledge of his/her students and at the same time try to make them comfortable and

believe that error correction is done for the sake of improving their language, and not in order to show their weaknesses.

18-Please, feel free to add any comments or suggestions.

This question is meant to give the informants freedom to add any comments that may foster and serve our investigation. All respondents (06) share the same ideas about the importance of the writing skill. Hence, they report that writing is very essential to be taught, and ignoring it means ignoring its contribution towards the development of the other language skills. Students should be aware of the fact that writing is a combination of different elements such as mastery of grammar, rich vocabulary, mastery of writing techniques and conventions. In addition, students should be strategic readers because good readers will be good writers. As it is reported by Eisterhold (1993, as cited in Sadek, 2007: 202):

There are correlations between reading achievement and writing ability: Better writers tend to be better readers. There are correlations between writing quality and reading experience: Better writers read more than poorer writers. The complexity in writing: Better readers tend to produce more syntactically mature writing than poorer readers are correlations between reading ability and measures of syntactic

Discussion of the teachers' questionnaire results

From the analysis and interpretation of the teachers' questionnaire, the results reveal many facts about the writing skill as the most complex and difficult skill. Our conclusion is that all teachers of written expression are not satisfied by their students' levels of writing. They assume that practice and reading are the appropriate inputs that foster their students to produce a free-error piece of writing. Both teachers and students face many difficulties in doing their tasks. Concerning the students, the findings reveal that the majority of the teachers assume that the effects L1 (Arabic interference), lack of practice and lack of reading result in students' poor performance in writing. This means that when the beginning is wrong what comes after will be wrong too.

In teaching written expression, the majority of teachers used the two approaches: The product and the process ones which are associated with the use of the reading technique to support their teaching; however, the use of reading techniques only does not foster students' writing. That is why the teachers' task is to motivate and encourage students to

read outside the classroom, since time allotted to written expression is not sufficient. Furthermore, when asked about the types of errors that students make when writing, all of teachers (100%) believe that one of the main causes of such a large number of errors made by students is due to their L1 interference,lack of practice and lack of reading.

However, the findings indicate also that it is possible to remedy or at least minimize these difficulties in writing. This can happen only if the teachers adapt an appropriate approach ,technique , good strategies and providing students with feedback can prevent making lots of errors .Moreover , Teaching written expression should be a collaborative task, i.e., involving teachers of all modules.

2- Students' short paragraphs : Analysis and Discussion

Since the ultimate aim of this research is to investigate the effect of the mother tongue (Arabic) on third year EFL learners' writing at Biskra University. The researcher tends to confirm the results recorded in the analysis of the teachers' questionnaire by collecting randomly 32 samples (short paragraphs) of third- year students of English at Biskra University during the academic year 2016-2017. Students have been given different topics to write about as a writing task inside the classroom . These topics are about : Is a working woman a good mother ?, kinds of students, Basic ethical principles to be a teacher.

The analysis of third year students' short paragraphs reveals that they make a significant number of errors of different types when they write. This section intends to show the results which aim to give an answer to the third research question: **What are the most common and recurrent errors made by third- year students at Biskra University in their writings ?** The obtained results are presented, classified and tabulated.

Results and Discussion

Type of error	Frequency	Percentage
Subject-verb agreement	87	21%
Prepositions	81	20%
Articles	59	14%
Word order	53	13%
Singular/Plural forms	48	12%
Verb tense and form	39	9%
Auxiliaries	27	9%
Capitalization	19	5%
Total	413	100%

Table 3.18. Types of Students' Errors

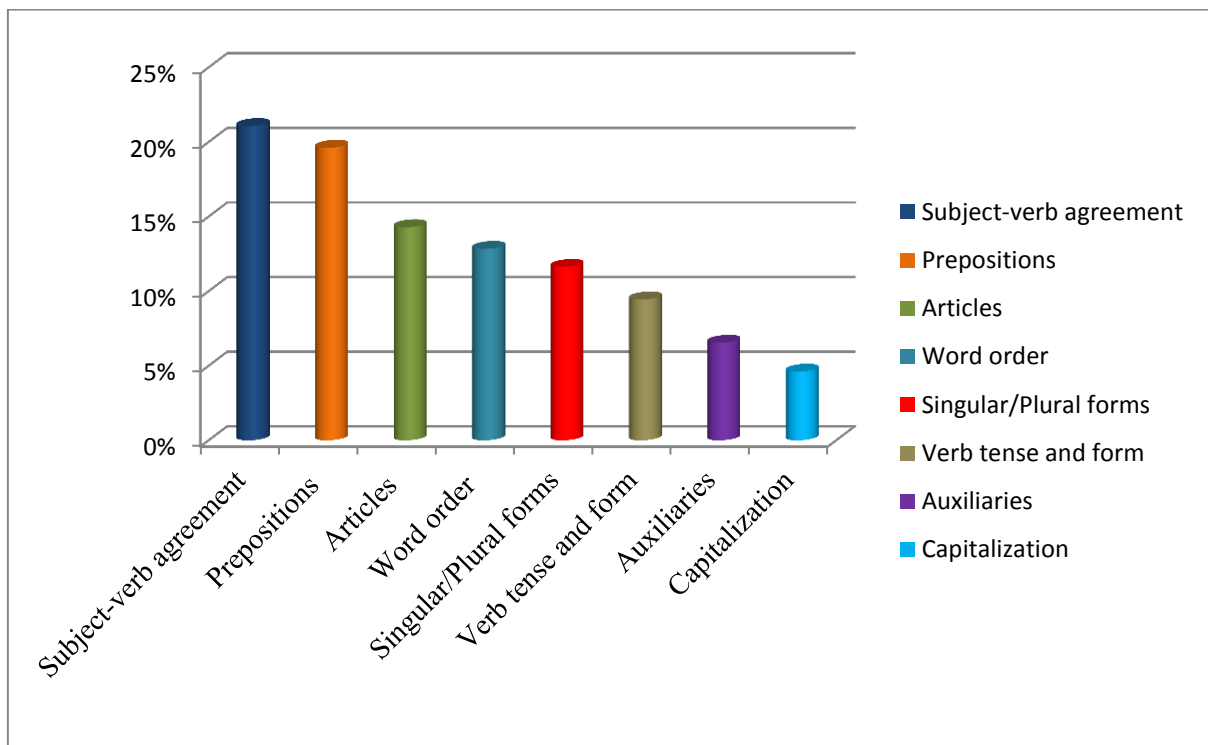


Diagram 3.18. Total Number of Third Year Students' Errors

When analyzing the students' short paragraphs, many errors are found of different types . The total number of these errors is 413 errors counted in thirty- two (32) short paragraphs. These errors include different types which are errors of, subject-verb agreement, prepositions, articles , word order, singular/plural forms, singular/plural ,verb tense and form, auxiliaries and capitalization.

The data presented in the table show that errors in subject-verb and prepositions are the most dominant errors that students commit with a percentage of 21 % and 20% . This is because the English prepositions are difficult to Arabic students. In the second place comes errors in articles 14%, then error in word-order with a percentage of 13% . Singular/Plural forms in the third position with a percentage of 12%. For Errors in verb tense and form and auxiliaries are presented with the same percentage of 9% . Finally, errors in capitalization come with the lowest percentage of 5% . The analysis and discussion of each type of errors are shown in this section. Moreover, examples of each type of errors are given with the correction to illustrate the types of these committed errors.

Types of errors

Subject-verb agreement Errors

Subject-verb agreement errors are ranked the first type of errors. They constitute, 21% of the whole number of errors. In this case the subject and the verb phrase in the English sentence should agree in number and person. Third year students most of the time do not know exactly when to add “s” of singular. They usually add the “s” of third person singular when the subject is plural and omit it when the subject is singular. These errors in subject-verb agreement are possibly because of overgeneralization of rules. Third year students are confused with “s” of plural and “s” of third person singular; therefore, they tend to add “s” to the verb when the subject is plural (they) and omit the “s” when the subject is singular (he, she, it). This kind of errors is not due to interlingual transfer because the verb in Arabic should agree with its subject.

Examples:

- 1- Working mother have a lot responsibility espacially in her job.
- Working mother has a lot responsibility espacially in her job.
- 2-Obese children has to loose their weight by practicing sport every day.
- Obese children have to loose their weight by practicing sport every day.

- 3-.....student who work hard get good marks.
 -.....student who works hard gets good marks.
 4-.....teacher should know their students.
 -.....teacher should know her students.

Preposition Errors

According to the table above, prepositions pose a great difficulty for students. they constitute (20%) of the total rate of errors. students usually find themselves unable to choose the appropriate preposition because of the big number of prepositions that have the same function in English, like the prepositions “in”, “at” and “on”. therefore, they often refer to Arabic, giving a literal translation to that preposition. However, this is not always a successful way and it leads to numerous errors. This may be mainly explained in terms of interference of Arabic.

Examples:

- 1-Work helps the working mother in get money .
 -Work helps the working mother to get money .
 2-Parents should advise their obese children by practice sport.
 - Parents should advise their obese children to practice sport.
 3- Lazy students do not support about themselves infront the teacher.
 - Lazy students do not support themselves infront the teacher.

Article Errors

The misuse of articles was found to be the most grammatical error type in third year students’ writing. It constitutes 14% of the entire percentage of errors. The main reason that led to the occurrence of this type of errors is the mother tongue (Arabic) interference because students are confused with the use of definite and indefinite articles. The Arabic article system is similar to that of English in meaning, however, form is highly varied. 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**, **an** or/and **zero**).

Examples: (addition of the article “the”)

1-the process of the giving knowledge to the learners.....they do not have when it comes to the teaching.

-..... the process of giving knowledge to the learners..... they do not have when it comes to teaching.

2-child’s health is very valuable in the life.

-..... child’s health is very valuable in life.

3-not all the students are the same,they differ from the one to another.

-.....not all the students are the same,they differ from one to another.

4-A working mother is the basic column in the family because of the her role in education and society.

- A working mother is the basic column in the family because of her role in education and society.

Examples: (omission of the articles “a”, “an”)

1- Working mother is important responsibility.

- Working mother is an important responsibility.

2- There are two kinds of students : active student and lazy student.

- There are two kinds of students : an active student and a lazy student.

3- Nowadays, obese child considers big problem.

- Nowadays,an obese child considers a big problem.

Word-Order Errors

Once again, there is evidence of transfer in the study related to word order. This is because the order of the different constituents of the sentence in the NL and the TL is different. These errors constitute 13% (53 errors) of the total number of errors in this study. The following examples show that third year students are still influenced by Arabic word order system. They tend to make the adjective follow the noun according to Arabic word order system; however, the adjective should precede the noun in English. Therefore, this kind of errors occurs in third year students’ writing mainly because of Arabic interference.

Examples:

- 1-.....many principles there are to be teacher.
-.....there are many principles to be teacher.
- 2- Mother working is big responsible.
- Working mother is big responsible.
- 3-.....in order to have good marks ,they have to hard work.
-.....in order to have good marks ,they have to har work hard.

Singular/Plural Form Errors

Marking singular and plural forms is considered one of the main difficulties that third year students face in their writing in English. This kind of errors is repeated more than forty-eight (48) times in students' short paragraphs i.e., it constitutes 12% of all errors. It is found that third year students omit the "s" of plural even when the sentence contains words such as many, some, all, these, or those which represent the plural and they add it with words such as every,each, etc as it is shown in the examples. The misuse of the "s" of plural may be explained by two main reasons,first the incomprehensibility of the rules and second by interlingual transfer (mother tongue influence). Some words such as "homework" and "information" which are uncountable in English but they are countable in Arabic are written with the "s" of plural in third year students' written productions .

Examples:

- 1-.....because working mother has many responsibility.
-.....because working mother has many responsibilities.
- 2-.....teachers help students to get informations.
-.....teachers help students to get information.
- 3-.....lazy students do not bring their homeworks.
-.....lazy students do not bring their homework
- 4-Obesity has many dangerous effect on the health of the child.
-Obesity has many dangerous effects on the health of the child.

Verb Tense And Form Errors

Using the appropriate verb tense and form form the most troublesome area for third year students. They have made 39 errors (9%) in their short paragraphs. These errors in verb tense and form occur because of the complexity of English tenses comparing to Arabic ones. In Some cases when students want to express the present, they usually put the present form of the verb to be + the intended verb conjugate at the present . In other cases instead of using the infinitive form of the verb after “can” and “will”, they use the present or past participle of the verb. Furthermore, they tend to conjugate the verb after “to” of the infinitive . They also mix between the past continuous and the simple past. It is clear that third year students have not comprehended the rules of verb tense and form in English. Therefore, this kind of errors is not due to interlingual reasons but it is due to intralingual ones.

Examples:

1-.....it help the child to loose weight.

-.....it helps the child to loose weight.

2 Working mother can develops many skill.

-Working mother can develop many skill.

3-active students can helping lazy ones in revising the lessons.

-active students can help lazy ones in revising the lessons.

4-.....because teacher is builds student’s personality.

-.....because teacher builds student’s personality.

Auxiliary Errors

The students display confusion in the use of English auxiliaries. The misuse of auxiliaries occurs with a low percentage compared to the other previous types of errors that is 9% (27 errors). Students commit errors in producing negative and interrogative sentences .These errors appear in students’ writings because of the absence of auxiliaries such as do, be, and have in Arabic. So, interlingual transfer is the responsible for this kind of errors.

Examples:

1- ...,does she a good working mother ?

- ...,is she a good working mother ?

2-.....they are not revise their lessons.

-.....they do not revise their lessons.

3-.....teachers have not accept students who have not respect them in the class.

-.....teachers do not accept students who do not respect them in the class.

4-.....it deos not possible to loose extra weight.

-.....it is not possible to loose extra weight.

Capitalization Errors

The results of this study have shown that most of third year students do not write capital letters at the beginning of a sentence and even when a sentence is the beginning of a new paragraph. This kind of errors represents a low percentage 5% (19 errors) of all the errors. There is one explanation for this kind of errors which is the native language (Arabic) interference. As opposed to English, Arabic does not contain capital letters; thus, third year EFL students are still influenced by their mother tongue (Arabic) and tend not to use capital letters in English writing.

Examples :

1-active students are model for lazy students.

- Active students are model for lazy students.

2-ethical principles are necessary for each teacher.

- Ethical principles are necessary for each teacher.

3-A mother is a school. preparing her is like preparing a good nation.

--A mother is a school. Preparing her is like preparing a good nation.

4-we know that obesity in childhood increases the risk of becoming an obese child.also develop other complications in child's personality.

-We know that obesity in childhood increases the risk of becoming an obese child. Also develop other complications in child's personality.

Causes of Third Year Students' Errors

According to the obtained results, students' errors are caused by two main reasons which are interlingual (Arabic) transfer and intralingual transfer.

Errors Caused by Interlingual Transfer

Type of error	Frequency	Percentage
Verb tense and form	63	24%
Articles	48	18%
Singular/Plural forms	44	16%
Subject-verb agreement	36	13%
Word order	25	9%
Auxiliaries	19	7%
Prepositions	17	6%
Capitalization	15	6%
Total	267	100%

Table 3.19. Total Number of Interlingual Errors

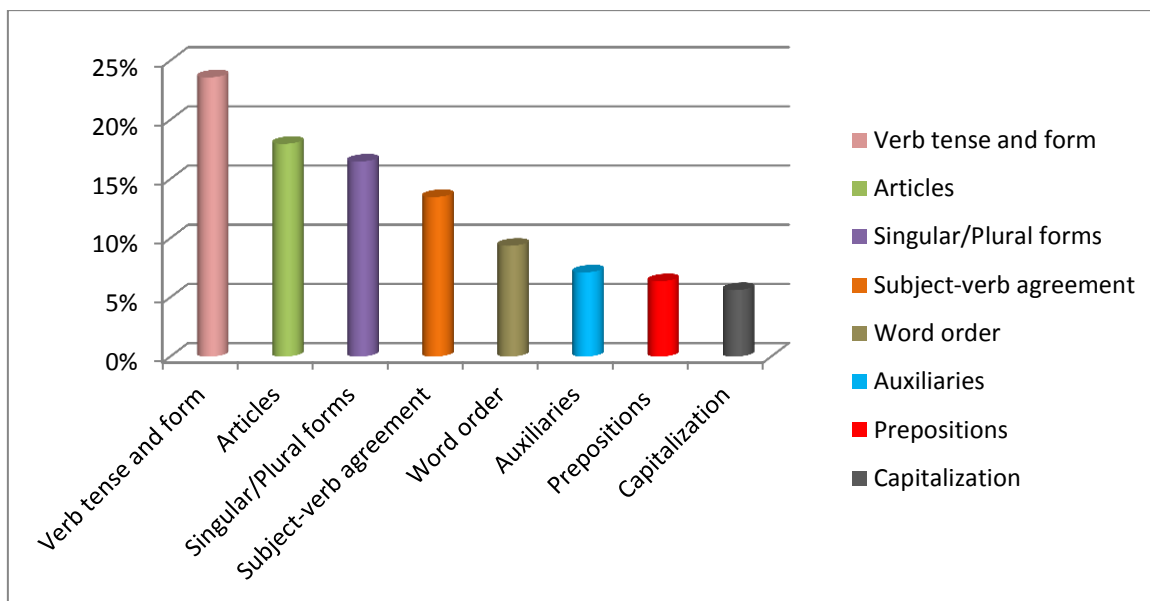


Diagram 3.19. Errors Caused by Interlingual Transfer.

According to the table -2 and the diagram-2, errors caused by interlingual transfer are 267 errors of the total number of errors. The high percentage is 24% which represents verb tense and form errors. Errors of articles are 48 errors with 18%. Singular/plural forms errors are 44 errors which constitute 16% out of the total number of errors caused by interlingual transfer. Errors counted in subject-verb agreement and word order are the the same number of errors 36 errors (13%). Moreover, errors in the use of axiliaries constitute 7 %. Whereas errors in the use of prepositions and capitalization are presented with the lowest and same percentage of 6 % .

Errors Caused by Intralingual Transfer

Type of Error	Frequency	Percentage
Subject-verb agreement	43	45%
Prepositions	00	0%
Articles	00	0%
Word order	03	3%
Singular/Plural forms	23	24%
Verb tense and form	25	26%
Auxiliaries	02	2%
Capitalization	00	0%
Total	96	100%

Table 3.20. Total Number of Intralingual Errors.

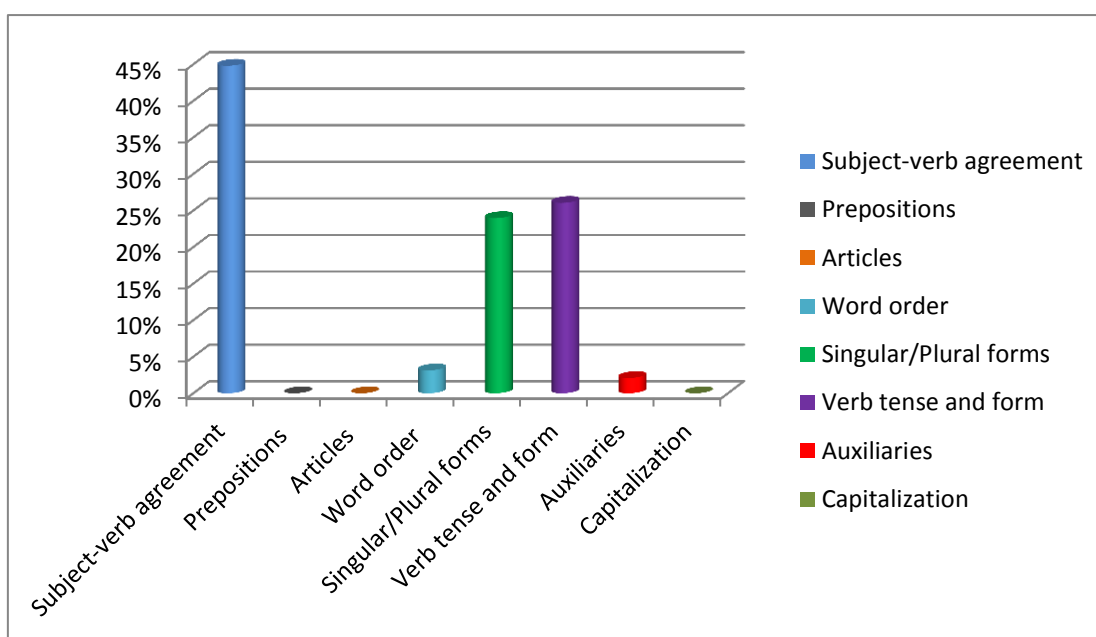


Diagram 3.20. Errors caused by Intralingual Transfer.

Table -3 and diagram-3 show that errors caused by intralingual transfer are 96 errors out of all the categories which are subject-verb agreement, verb tense and form, singular/plural forms, prepositions, articles, capitalization, word order and auxiliaries. The high percentage which is 45% (43 errors) is counted to subject-verb agreement errors. Verb tense and form errors constitute 26% (25 errors) while errors in the use of singular/plural forms constitute 24%. The other types of errors which include articles, prepositions, capitalization, auxiliaries and word order are represented with the most lowest percentage than the previous errors.

Interlingual vs. Intralingual Transfer Errors

These results show that there are two main reasons for third year students' errors in English writing which are interlingual transfer (Arabic interference) and intralingual transfer. However, errors caused by mother tongue interference constitute the high number percentage that is 74% than errors caused by intralingual transfer which constitute 26% out of the total number of errors.

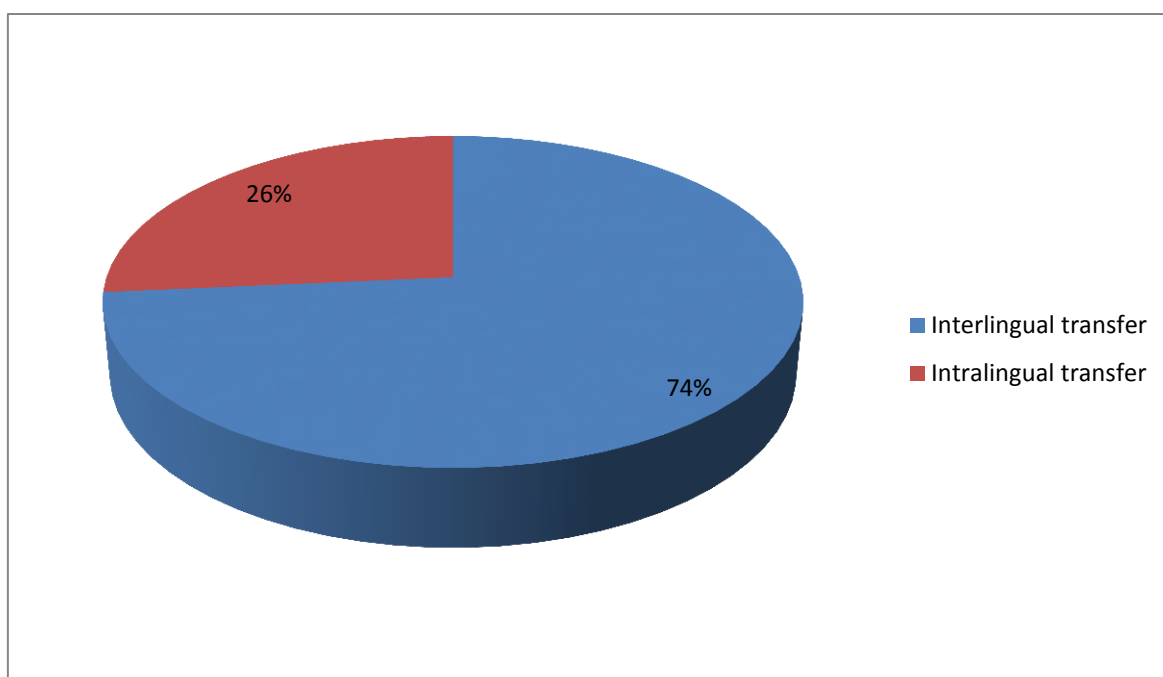


Diagram 3.21. Interlingual vs. Intralingual Transfer Errors.

Summary of The Findings

This study attempts to identify and analyze the common errors made by third year students in their written productions. The current study came up with the following results. Most of the students make a significant number of errors including different types of them. According to the previous results, some errors' types occur more than others in students' short paragraphs especially article, subject-verb agreement, and capitalization errors which constitute the high percentages. based on the obtained results, interlingual and intralingual errors are both responsible for students' errors. Furthermore, interlingual errors are presented with 267 while the errors that are caused by intralingual transfer are counted to 96 errors .

From what has been explained and analyzed, it is clear that students' mother tongue (Arabic) interference is the main cause (reason) of their errors as well as their low achievement in writing .

Conclusion

This third chapter confirms that third-year students commit a number of errors in different areas in their writings. According to the results found, these errors are caused by two main reasons which are interlingual errors, which constitute a high percentage ; and intralingual errors. most of the errors that are attributed to intralingual reasons are due to the lack of practice of certain English structures as in the case of tenses plural....ect. Moreover, it is very important to draw students' attention to the difference between Arabic structure and English structure where the errors are recurrent. Finally, students need to practice more the English rules in order to internalize them and to be able to use them correctly whenever they are asked to write in English.

Implications and Recommendations

PEDAGOGICAL IMPLICATIONS

The present conducted study attempted to shed the light on the effect of EFL learners' mother tongue interference in their writing in English . The results obtained from this research have strongly confirmed that student's writing errors can be strongly related to mother tongue interference , which in turn confirms the current research's hypothesis. On the basis of these findings, this study have suggested some implications which are of significance to EFL teachers as follows:

Implications for EFL teachers:

- 1.** The study of the students' errors helps teachers identify the problematic areas of headline language at different levels of instruction. Teachers should consider error analysis as an effective way to diagnose students' problems in foreign language learning as it is stated by Fallahi's (1991 :25), "error analysis is a clue for the teacher to pinpoint the learning problems which can hardly be predicted by contrastive analysis".
- 2.** Errors provide feedback to teachers about the effectiveness of their teaching techniques and show them what parts of the syllabus they have been following have been inadequately learned or taught and need further attention. Moreover , teachers should increase the number of assignments for the sake of which the students would have to do a lot of writing during their free time.
- 3.** If teachers implement Team Work in class and get the students to work in groups on their projects, students will have the chance to practice together to develop their writing skill, they will also have the chance to speak English with each other instead of Arabic. Besides, they would, hopefully, correct each other's errors. As for the writing rules and conventions, these need to be 'enforced' by encouraging students to read several works in English.
- 4.** Students should also be encouraged to write in class, at home, in their journals. Through such an understanding between teachers and students, it is hoped that the students will be able to overcome their test anxiety and, in turn, reduce their errors.
- 5.** It should be known to teachers that error analysis has been employed to draw a picture of the learners' learning strategies and never meant to eliminate or even reduce the students' errors. Rather, it intends to help teachers adjust their teaching methods and understand their students' learning strategies.

6. Errors, regardless of the teaching methods employed in the classroom, are there and will stay as long as foreign language teaching is practiced. Therefore, teachers should not be so worried about them.
7. On the other hand, teachers can draw their students' attention to the differences between their native language and foreign languages. In this case, second or foreign language learners' sensitivity and awareness of these differences will be raised, and that might help students reduce their interference errors.
8. There is no doubt that the native language plays an important role in learning and using another language, especially in foreign-language learning situations where the learners' exposure to the target language is confined to a few hours per week of classroom instruction.
9. When teaching writing, therefore, we must look for ways to help students learn how to express themselves clearly and how to organize their ideas logically. We must show them how to make their writing vivid and interesting .It has to be tidy, correct, and well formed.

Recommendations :

In order to improve EFL students' writing performance in English, the current study presents the following recommendations :

- Having discovered that mother tongue interference contributes or influences students ' performance in writing at Biskra University where English should be used as a medium of communication within and outside the classroom. students should endeavour to improve their writing proficiency level of the language.
- Teachers should cultivate a positive perception towards the use of English at University. They should be role models to the students and encourage them to speak or write in English.
- Teachers should come up with teaching methods that are interactive to ensure that students are given an opportunity to interact with each other in English so that students can have good communication skills.
- It is recommended that the education policy makers should be aware of this issue that hinder our future EFL students to become professional writers by questing to find solution to this problem through cooperative efforts, including language academies, universities, linguists, university professors, translators, and the instructors of English

language. In addition, the instructors can motivate the EFL learners to be aware of their errors, how their L1 interferes with their production of the L2, and the differences between their L1 and English. This would sharpen their awareness of the fact that they cannot apply what is in their L1 to the L2. Consequently, it would help them avoid or at least reduce the amount of their L1 interference on the L2 learning.

- Good reading habit and library study should also be developed in the students. They should be encouraged to approach reading with alertness and critical mind. They should develop taste for books which are significant in the achievement of good result in English language .
- Teacher feedback should be carried out more often and any error made should be corrected by the teacher without any intimidation as it will enhance a proper evaluation of learners' performance or progress in English language.

General Conclusion

The current conducted research highlights the effect of EFL learners' mother tongue interference in their writing in English. It aims at identifying and analyzing the common type of errors made in students' English short paragraphs and the main source of these errors. As a result, a number of different types of errors are found in their English short paragraphs. These errors are limited to eight major errors: subject-verb agreement, prepositions, articles, word order, singular/plural forms, verb tense and form, auxiliaries and capitalization. After analyzing the errors, it has been found out that the students' errors are due to two main reasons: Interlingual and intralingual reasons. Consequently, in this study it is hypothesized based on the assumption that students' low achievement in writing is due to mother tongue interference.

The present work, consists of three chapters. Where, the first and second chapters are devoted to the theoretical part which is purely descriptive, reviewing related literature. Whereas, the third chapter is concerned with the practical part. In order to test the hypothesis and give validity and reliability into this descriptive study, two types of research tools are used; administrating teachers' questionnaire and analyzing students' written productions. The first chapter then, consists of two sections. The first section presents definitions of concepts about mother tongue, second language and language transfer. The second section is about the two main approaches which are contrastive analysis and error analysis. The second chapter, discusses some valuable theoretical issues about the writing skill, its nature, its definition, its approaches and so forth. However, the third chapter deals with the analysis and interpretation of the data gathered from teachers questionnaire and students' written compositions. Hence, the results obtained confirms and asserts the aforementioned hypothesis that the low achievement in students' writing performance is due to mother tongue interference. From the obtained result, the first question which states: Is mother tongue interference the major cause for errors in the English writings of third year LMD students, is answered and the hypothesis is totally accepted. Consequently, this interference does affect students' writings negatively in terms of their weak grasp of the basic tenets of English structures especially the writing conventions (mechanics, vocabulary...etc).

It can thus be concluded that third year students still have a long way to go in writing satisfactory written production in English. As a matter of fact, It is the responsibility of both syllabus designers and teachers of English to cater for the students' writing skills.

Universities and schools syllabi should include more free and controlled writing exercises that would help improve students writing abilities. On the other hand teachers should vary their teaching methods in order to facilitate and enable their students to write competently. Because errors in students writing can be minimized if modern techniques in teaching writing were adopted. However, EFL teachers and researchers can not ignore error analysis as an important tool by which they can learn more about the psycholinguistic processes involved in the learning of a foreign language. The findings of this study prove that EFL students depend much more on their mother tongue when they want to express their ideas and thoughts but they do not know how to write them in English . this latter, leads students to use interlingual strategies ; which is in this case is Arabic, to facilitate learning. Such strategies help in case of perceived linguistic similarities and lead to problems in case of differences.

Above all, this conducted research is not useful only for students in helping them improving their writing skill by knowing the main reason behind these committed errors, rather; it helps teachers as well in their understanding of the importance of errors and the sources of errors . Because a full knowledge of the causes of errors enables the teacher to work out a more effective teaching strategy to deal with them and finally to decide how serious the error is to have a remedial work. However, this study deals with a limited number of the linguistic aspects involved in writing due to the limitations of time. Clearly, there is a great deal of work to be done in this area in the future.

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APPENDIX I

Teacher's Questionnaire

Dear Teachers,

This dissertation deals with some factors that hinder students' achievement in writing. The data collected will be used for the sole purpose of my research in the effect of the EFL learners' mother tongue on their writings. Hence, the aim is to identify and analyze them. Then, we will suggest ways that may help solve this problem and improve students' writing. This questionnaire is administered to teachers of written expression. Answering it would be of great help.

Thank you for cooperation

Miss. SID Lamia

Please tick (✓) the corresponding box or give a complete answer.

Section One: The Writing Skill

1- Do your learners achieve a satisfactory level in mastering the writing skill ?

- a. Yes
- b. No

- Whatever your answer, please explain.

.....

.....

.....

.....

2- Do out-numbered classes affect the learners' written performances?

a. Yes

b. No

- Whatever your answer, please explain how.

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

3- Good writing means:

(you can tick more than one box)

a. Correct Grammar

b. Good Ideas

c. Specific Vocabulary

d. Spelling/ Punctuation

e. Clarity, coherence, and cohesion

f. All of them

g. Others, please specify.....

.....
.....

4- Do you exploit reading techniques in teaching the writing skill?

a. Yes

b. No

- If 'Yes', please explain how.....

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

5- The time allocated to written expression is:

- a. Very Sufficient
- b. Sufficient
- c. Insufficient

6- Which approach do you use to teach writing?

- a. The product approach
- b. The process approach
- c. Both

d. Others, please specify.....
.....
.....

7- Do you give assignments to your students?

- a. Yes
- b. No

8- What are the most common writing problems you notice in your students' writings?

- a. Grammar errors
- b. Interference of the mother tongue
- c. Poor content/ ideas
- d. Poor vocabulary
- e. Poor organization of ideas
- f. Mechanics

9- Do your students make errors of different types in their compositions?

- a. Yes
- b. No

10- Do you provide your students with feedback concerning their errors?

- a. Yes
- b. No

- If 'Yes' , how they react?

.....

.....

.....

11- What problems do you face in teaching writing skill?

.....

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Section Two: Students' Errors As A Result Of L1 Interference

1. Do third year students make a lot of errors in in their writings?

- a. Yes
- b. No

2- What type of errors do they make?

- a. In morphology
- b. Wrong use of tenses
- c. In models
- d. Misuse of articles
- e. Misuse of prepositions
- f. Word-order errors
- g. Misuse of connectors
- h. All of them

3- Do you think that these errors are recurrent because of :

a. L1 interference

b. Lack of reading

c. Lack of motivation

d. Lack of practice

e. Others

.....

.....

.....

4- Do you give much importance to error correction?

a. Yes

b. No

5- How often do you correct them?

a. Always

b. Often

c. Rarely

d. Never

6- Do you prefer the errors to be correct by :

a. The learner himself/ herself

b. His/ her classmate

c. The teacher

7- Please, feel free to add any comments or suggestions.

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THANK YOU

APPENDIX II

**SAMPLES OF STUDENTS'
SHORT PARAGRAPHS**

We know that obesity in childhood increases the risk of becoming an obese adult, and developing all the complications that can go with adult obesity. overweight kids tend to have low self esteem if his/her classmates called him/her "FAT" This can reduce your child to tears, the steps that should any parents use to overcome this issue is: talk gently to your child about the problem in a low-key way, you can explain that he needs to exercise every day so his body burnt up the energy (food) he eats, then offer him some ideas such as going to the playground and play some sports or go to the gym and do some workout to burn some calories at least three times a week, let him know that being active is something good for his health and let him know that being fitnes protect him from dangerous diseases, expose him to funny classes such as dance class to make he exercise much more effective and funny.

Best paragraph ever

I need + + A ok Taty!!

Your faithful them

obese children:

The world has become suffering of this phenomenon that is obesity of children so the children became so ill because they think that ~~they~~ they do so fat so they can live normal like the other children and obese children face a lot of issues which is he became lonely so he's friends will not be he's friends anymore so he start to eat a lot like chocolate and pizza and he's friends start to make fun of him because he's so fat so the only way to encourage the obese child to look weight is to talking to him that he need to take care of himself and practicing sports every day it helps him to look weight

G7, 07

18-03-2016

. HOME Work.

Active student and lazy student:

There are two kinds of student. The first kind is the active student. He works so hard ~~to~~ ~~to~~ ~~like~~ he likes to do homework and extra exercises because he is so active and motivated. He is so organized in his life. He likes to search about any new information that helps him be able to any challenge that face him. He wants to be the first in everything and he likes to do everything in order because he's organized. He doesn't like to be failure. He just keep succeeding while the other kind of student which is the lazy student. He likes to depend on others to do his homework or other activities. He doesn't want to go to class. He just want to waste time on ~~playing~~ playing games with his friends and he doesn't mind if he success or fail in his exam.

21-04-2016

: Home work :

principles of good teachers:

Teaching means giving knowledge to the learners to benefit from them so it must consist of having a good teacher who will take the responsibility to guide them. The teacher should have a certain qualities to be a good one which are: he must be very intelligent and organized in reading student's mind to help him understand their needs. He should have a good background of information to help him in his career, he should do a entertainment class for the students so he can bring out the best of them so they can be very creative.

24-04-2016

Home Work.

principles of a good Teacher

The Teacher is the controller of the class his responsibility is giving knowledge to the learner so the main principles that the Teacher must have is: the ability to control the class, a good teacher know his students very well so he can simply control them during class, he must be mastered the module that he will taught and he must have a lot of information and knowledge about the subject matter, he should be a very good listener listener so he can listen to the students express their thoughts and ideas and he will help them when they do mistakes he will be sure to correct them without punish them

full name :

24/04/16

Mother is the center of the house. She has to be strong to work outside the house. Working mother have a lot of responsibility in her job. Working mother must work because work helps the working mother in get money most important a working mother is the basic of society and it is important responsibility. Working mother can help her family by a money. so the question is a mother does she a good working mother? there is who are with and who is against.

الملخص

الهدف من هذه الدراسة هو تسليط الضوء على ظاهرة تدخل لغة الأم بالاضافة الى تحليل بعض الأخطاء الأكثر شيوعا و تكرارا التي يرتكبها طلبة السنة الثالثة في قسم اللغة الانجليزية بجامعة محمد خيضر- بسكرة. وفي هذا الصدد يتم التركيز بشكل رئيسي على تأثير اللغة الأولى عند الكتابة باللغة الانجليزية. هذا البحث يقترح فرضية أن لغة الأم لهؤلاء الطلبة هي السبب في تحصيلهم المنخفض في الكتابة و أنهم بذلك يرتكبون العديد من الأخطاء اللغوية بأنواع عدة. و لتحقيق هذا الغرض قامت الباحثة بجمع 32 عينة كتابية ل 74 طالب من طلاب اللغة الانجليزية من أجل التحليل ، بالإضافة الى استبياناه موجهة ل 6 أساتذة التعبير الكتابي و الذي يشكل مصدر للمعلومات بخصوص اراء و وجهات نظرهم. و قد أظهرت نتائج هذه الدراسة أن طلاب السنة الثالثة يقترفون أنواع مختلفة من الأخطاء التي هي أساسا بسبب لغتهم الأم(العربية) . على ضوء هذه النتائج يتم تأكيد على فرضية المعلنة سابقا بأن التحصيل المنخفض لطلبة السنة الثالثة في الكتابة هي بسبب لغة الأم لهؤلاء الطلبة . الى جانب النتائج المتحصل عليها ، لقد أقرحت بعض التوصيات لمساعدة الطلاب على التغلب على الصعوبات التي يواجهونها من أجل تحسين مهاراتهم في الكتابة و غيرها لمساعدة الأساتذة في طرق تعليمهم مهارة الكتابة .