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The Importance of Error Analysis in The Learners' Writing skill

The case of first year English students at Biskra University

Dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the
Master Degree in Science of Language.

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Dedication

To my sympathetic father and thoughtful mother whose love always strengthens my will.

To my lovely sisters and brothers.

To my little lovely nephews TASSNIM and ADAM CHAHIN

To all the members of my family MEZRAG.

To all my friends with whom I shared the university life with its lights and shadows.

To my closet friends: MADJID, WAHID, and ROUCHDI

To my idol HAMIDI MOHAMED ADIB

To all my teachers.

May Allah bless you all.

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Abstract

The idea that error analysis could and should take place in the classroom became more and more popular especially in second or foreign language classroom. Today, many researchers claim that through classroom interaction knowledge can be constructed and skills can be developed. Teachers' roles and responsibilities were changed in the direction of facilitators of the learning and teaching processes. In this context, learners are supposed to be given opportunities to use the language naturally other than only memorizing dialogues and pattern practices. The present work aims at showing that error analysis can be a best pedagogical strategy to develop not only the learners' writing skill, but also to foster their capacity to generate new language. This study is based on a questionnaire administered to the first year LMD students to get information about the impact of error analysis on developing the learners' writing skill. The analysis of the questionnaire showed that learners consider error analysis as an important pedagogical strategy in enhancing and mastering the skill of writing.

List of Abbreviations

EA: Error Analysis

CA: Contrastive Analysis

EFL: English as a Foreign Language

L2: Second Language

L1: First Language

N: Number

Q: Question

TL: Target Language

TEFL: Teaching English as a Foreign Language

%: Percentage

LMD: License, Master, Doctorate

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1- General Introduction:

Error analysis is a type of linguistic analysis that focuses on the errors learners make. It consists of a comparison between the errors made in the Target Language (TL) and that TL itself. Pit Corder is the “Father” of Error Analysis. It was with his article entitled “The significance of learner errors” (1967) that EA took a new turn. Errors used to be “flaws” that needed to be eliminated. Corder presented a completely different point of view. He argued that those errors are “important in and of themselves.” For learners themselves, errors are essential, since the making of errors can be regarded as a device the learner uses in order to learn.

In 1994, Gass&Selinker defined errors as “red flags” that provide evidence of the learner’s knowledge of the second language. Researchers are interested in errors because they are believed to contain valuable information on the strategies that people use to acquire a language (Richards, 1974; Taylor, 1975; Dulay and Burt, 1974).

Moreover, according to Richards and Sampson (1974, p. 15), “At the level of pragmatic classroom experience, error analysis will continue to provide one means by which the teacher assesses learning and teaching and determines priorities for future effort.” According to Corder (1974), error analysis has two objects: one theoretical and another applied. The theoretical object serves to “clarify what and how a learner learns when he studies a

second language.” And the applied object serves to enable the learner “to learn more efficiently by exploiting our knowledge of his dialect for pedagogical purposes.”

The investigation of errors can be at the same time diagnostic and prognostic. It is diagnostic because it can tell us the learner's state of the language (Corder, 1967) at a given point during the learning process and prognostic because it can tell course organizers to reorient language learning materials on the basis of the learners' current problems.

Through the present research, we aim at describing and investigating the grammatical errors in writing made by students of English. Thus our main aim is to describe the possible causes of the errors. Also we may suggest solutions to this problem could help the first year LMD students at Biskra University activate their writing skill.

Our investigation aims at solving the following research questions:

R.Q-1. What kind of grammatical errors are faced by the first year students of the English department at Biskra University?

R.Q-2. What are the possible causes of those errors?

R.Q-3. What is the suitable Solution to avoid those errors?

So, we hypothesize that:

- Interlingual and Intralingual errors occur as a result of the learners' use of elements of the Target language

In order to test our hypothesis, to obtain the information required from our subjects and to reach the objectives of our study, we will be using a main tool: a questionnaire designed for First year English students, chosen randomly.

The present dissertation consists of three main chapters. Chapter One represents the literature review of writing skill and error analysis; the main focus of this chapter is on their main types, aspects and principles. Chapter Two is devoted to error analysis its definition, types, models, importance, aspects of learners difficulties. The last chapter concerns the analysis of the collected data by means of the students' questionnaire.

People tend to acquire spoken language easier than the writing language. This is because people first know the spoken before they know the written one and a human child always speaks a language first before he is familiar with the writing system of his language.

The explanation above does not imply that writing or written language is less important than the spoken one. The more cultivated and more technologically advanced a man is the more he involved in a written form of a language. It means that writing also plays an important role in a modern society. Writing language is getting more and more essential today. It should be mastered in order to be literate. But, Algerian freshmen students of Biskra University commonly have only little enthusiasm for their writing tasks. Every time they have writing tasks, they feel it is difficult to do. But, they should have strong foundation for their writing skill before entering a higher level of education. So, it is essential for them to master this skill. In composing a good writing, we should notice some aspects.

Grammar is one important aspect that should be mastered in order to make a well structured writing. But, writing in different language is not always as easy as writing in our own language since there are some different rules in the writing systems and these differences sometimes make us make errors. That is why; we choose to analyze the grammatical errors in writing. This study primarily deals with

the students' English grammar mastery, specifically in writing. Therefore, the main reasons for choosing this topic are the differences between Arabic and English, and the students' difficulties in writing.

We intend to use the descriptive method as an approach to acquire and gather data for this thesis. Moreover, we plan to derive information from any material relevant to their field of interest which is a new and a fresh area in department as far as they are concerned.

Chapter One

The literature review on error analysis

Chapter one: the literature review on error analysis

1. The significance of making errors in EFL context:

It has been accepted that errors play an important role in the learning process. To language learners, language learning is not so much a question of acquiring a set of automatic habits, but rather a process of discovering the underlying rules, categories and systems of choice in the language by some sort of processing by the learner of the data of the language presented to him by the teacher (Corder, 1973). In order for this discovery to take place, learners have to go through several stages and processes. One of the most important factors included in almost all the stages and processes of language learning is error making.

Dulay and Burt (1974) stated that error making is expected and that it would appear necessary and essential to language learning. In fact, it is a clear sign to show language learner actually develop and internalize the rules of the language. While the errors a learner makes provide no direct measure of his knowledge of the language, it is probably the most important source of information about the nature of his knowledge. From the analysis of the learner's errors, teachers are able to assume the nature of his knowledge at that point in his learning and discover what he still has to learn. By describing and classifying his errors, teachers may build up a picture of the features of the language which cause him learning problems. A learner's errors, therefore, are significant to the teacher, in that they tell him if he undertakes a systematic analysis, how far towards the goal the learner has progressed and, consequently, what remains for him to learn (Corder, 1981).

On the other hand, learner's errors provide to researchers evidence of how language is learnt and acquired, what strategies or procedures the learner employ in his discovery of the language. In fact, errors are essential to the learner himself and it

is a method the learner uses to test his hypotheses about the nature of the language he is learning.

In fact, Teachers can gain much benefit from error analysis and description because errors provide them with feedback on the effectiveness of their teaching materials and their teaching techniques. In addition, errors enable teachers to decide whether they can move on to the next item they have been teaching and they provide the information for designing an improved syllabus or a plan of improved teaching. Therefore, errors made by students are major elements in the feedback system of the process of language teaching and learning. It is on the basis of the information the teacher gets from errors that he modifies his teaching procedures or materials, the rapidity of the progress, and the amount of practice that he plans at any point of time.

In view of this, Corder claims that teachers should be able not only to discover and describe errors linguistically but also understand the psychological reasons for their occurrence. He also claims that for teacher, being aware of the diagnosis and correction skills for errors is fundamental as it might help them understand why and how they can interfere to help their students.

2. Grammar as a basic of error analysis

The earliest known evidence for grammar teaching dates to the early second millennium B.C. in Babylon, where scribes learned to write Sumerian and Akkadian, and to translate between the two, with the help of tablets that systematized the word formation rules (Gragg, 1994).

There is a great deal more evidence for grammar teaching from the end of the first millennium B.C. in classical Greece and in the world influenced by it, including Rome (Howatt, 1994). This is when the term *grammatike* came into use, first for the

understanding of letters (Greek grammata), and only later for what we call grammar (Robins, 1967, p. 13); the terminology reveals the close connection between the study of grammar and the teaching of writing.

This was the start of the tradition of grammar teaching that persisted in Europe and the Near East through the next two millennia, and which was exported too much of the rest of the world. In contrast, the grammatical tradition that started at about the same time (350 B.C.) in India was linked to religion rather than to the teaching of writing (Kiparsky, 1994). Here we focus on the European tradition of grammar teaching at school.

Grammar teaching was a central part of the school curriculum through the middle Ages and beyond. At first, grammar supported the learning of Latin (as a second language), but later it was applied to the national languages such as English. In many countries, this tradition has continued uninterrupted to the present; this seems to be true, in general, of Eastern Europe and the Romance-speaking world. Like any other school subject, grammar needs rebirth from the academic world, even if only through higher-level teaching of Latin or other ancient languages (including Old English); indeed, in at least some countries academic grammarians have seen schools as important users of their ideas.

In contrast, grammatical theorizing never had a serious place in the universities of England, and even in language learning it was in serious decline by the early 20th century, so there was no renewal, and teachers could only repeat what they themselves had learned at school. This is almost certainly one of the main reasons why grammar teaching disappeared from most schools in England from about 1930 to 1980, though it has now returned thanks to the National Literacy Strategy (Hudson and Walmsley, unpublished). School-level grammar teaching died at about the same

time in other parts of the English-speaking world, and it is hard to predict future developments.

3. Writing and error analysis

There is no particular definition about writing stated by an author or a linguist. L. Strauss in J. Hartley, et al (1962, p. 66) stated that “writing might, that is to say, be regarded as a form of artificial memory, whose development should be accompanied by a deeper knowledge of the past and, therefore, by a greater ability to organize the present and the future.” In fact, there are some acts of writing which can be used as the basis for conceiving the meaning of writing. Those acts of writing are in line with the development of learning to write through which a student should pass. Writing involves more than just producing words and sentences.

To be able to produce a piece of writing, we should be able to write a connected series of words and sentences which are grammatically and logically linked, so that the purpose we have in our mind will suit the intended readers.

In this way, it is meant that the style of language used in a piece of writing designed for people living in the village, for example should be different from the one designed for educated people such as students, teachers, doctors, professors, etc. Therefore, in presenting a piece of discourse we should consider the correctness of form, the appropriateness of style, and the unity of topic (Harmer, 2004, p 2).

Whereas discourse, as explained by Candlin (1997, p13) is a means of talking and writing about and acting upon worlds, a means which both constructs and is constructed by benefit of social practices within these worlds, and in so doing both reproduces and constructs afresh particular social-discursive practices, constrained or encouraged by more macro movements in the overarching social formation.

Writing should be done with the understanding from the past time in order to inform and express what had happened. It should be well-organized in order to be understandable for the readers (Harmer, 2004, p 3). Just like speaking, writing is a way of communicating a message with an intended audience. It is a means of expressing thoughts, ideas, and feelings. By writing we may flow out a burden occupying our mind offer our ideas and concepts to others, and share our knowledge and experiences.

However, different from writing, much of our speaking is spontaneous, noncomplex, and linked to the particular situation at hand. Speech is brief. It lasts not longer than the moment of speaking. It is gone as soon as it is uttered. In some cases, especially in informal situations, a speaker pays a little attention to the conventions of speaking such as the composition of talk, the organization, development, and the articulation. However, it does not reduce the comprehensibility of the speech delivered by the speaker to the audience.

Writing is more than just public communication; it is also a way of thinking. Writing involves a range of writer's consciousness. When we sit down, holding a pen and facing a piece of paper ready to write, apparently we are engaging in more than just one act of consciousness, such as the contents of thoughts, the style of thoughts, the organization of thoughts, the purpose of thought, and so on. These acts lead us to create a good and careful thinking which is strongly needed when we want to produce a good writing.

Writing as one of the four language skills, in real world contexts, is not a solitary enterprise, it is a social act. It is not an activity in its own right but one which serves the other skills. So, writing has a relation with grammar, reading, listening, and speaking.

Most students find foreign language writing is difficult; they will rarely need to write in adult life, so they will decrease the amount of writing. Rivers as quoted by Swarbick (1994, p 142) describes five stages of development which students need to go through in acquiring competence in writing, i.e.: copying, reproduction, recombination, guided writing, and free writing. We should also consider the writing process. It is influenced by the content and the medium of the writing. The processes are planning, drafting, editing, and final draft (Harmer, 2004, p 4-6). They are the steps if we want to compose a good writing. Before writing, we should plan what we are going to write about and the purposes of the writing. After that, we can start to write.

We may produce a number of writing (draft) and editing in order to get the good writing – that is the final draft. Writing involves some activities before, when we write, and after writing. The activities before we write include exploring ideas which could be building vocabulary, interviewing someone, discussion, etc.; and organizing ideas which could be ordering information in a paragraph, writing topic sentences, limiting information, using a time sequence, making an idea map, categorizing and making outline, summarizing ideas, writing titles, etc.

When we write we should develop cohesion and style which includes connecting ideas, adding details, selecting the correct verb tense, selecting the correct tense, and writing the first draft. This is not the end of writing. After we write the first draft we should edit and revise it. It could be the content, form, organization, cohesion and style, and grammar. In order to produce a good writing we should write more than just one draft. A good writing could be the fourth or fifth draft or even more.

4. Error vs. mistake:

This section summarizes the theoretical distinction between 'errors' and 'mistakes' made by students in the classroom. For purposes of clarification, we begin by noting that 'errors' arise because the correct form or use of a target item is not part of a speaker or writer's competence, whereas mistakes arise (for reasons of fatigue, stress, lack of concentration, etc.) even though the correct form or use is a part of the user's competence. Some would argue that second language learners could not possibly make 'mistakes' until their L2 competence is at such an advanced level that they can be labeled "Near Native Speakers". It would seem that the argument may hold well for beginner learners but not for intermediate to advanced learners. It is very likely that intermediate to advanced L2 learners will tend to make mistakes at the local level (Burt and Kiparsky's, 1972) or at the morpho-syntactic level under new or difficult operating conditions at hand.

4.1. Errors

Errors are systematic and may give valuable insight into language acquisition because they are goofs in the learner's underlying competence. (Scovel 2001) When native speakers make mistakes, they can identify and correct them immediately because they have almost full knowledge of the linguistic structure of their mother tongue. Non-native speakers, L2 learners not only make mistakes, they also commit errors and as they have only an incomplete knowledge of the target language, they are not always able to correct the errors that they make. Thus the learners' errors reflect a lack of underlying competence in the language that they are learning.

4.2. Mistakes

Mistakes are inaccuracies in linguistic production either in our native language (L1) or in the foreign language (L2) that are caused by memory lapses, physical states and conditions such as fatigue, inattention, or strong emotion. Mistakes are mainly slips of the tongue or lapses, even native people make mistakes in speech and writing. Mistakes are not systematic; they occur accidentally, the learner is immediately aware of them and can correct them.

5. Lapses and attempts

Edge (1989) distinguishes between lapses and attempts from the point of view of learners and teachers, defining lapses as mistakes that the teacher thinks the student could self-correct. When the students want to express their meaning but they make a mistake because they have not yet learned the necessary language structure, their mistakes can be called attempts.

6. Performance versus competence

Mistakes are miscues in performance. The term 'performance' was introduced by Chomsky (1965) and he meant the overt production of language as either speech or writing. He contrasted it with 'competence', the native speaker's perfect knowledge. Competence is the knowledge of what is grammatically correct; performance is what occurs in practice. Chomsky regarded performance as the faulty representation of competence caused by psychological restrictions. Mistakes reveal nothing about the underlying competence.

7. Models for Error Analysis:

Corder (1967, 1974) identified a model for error analysis which included three Stages:

1. Data collection: Recognition of idiosyncrasy

2. Description: Accounting for idiosyncratic dialect
3. Explanation (the ultimate object of error analysis).

Brown (1994, p 207-211) and Ellis (1995, p 51-52) elaborated on this model. (1997, p 15-20) Ellis and Hubbard et al. (1996, p 135-141) gave practical advice and provided clear examples of how to identify and analyze learners' errors. The initial step requires the selection of a corpus of language followed by the identification of errors. The errors are then classified. The next step, after giving a grammatical analysis of each error, demands an explanation of different types of errors. Prove their ability in writing especially in writing recounted English composition.

8. Ways of analysis: Error Analysis versus Contrastive Analysis:

Error analysis, offering a different view to contrastive analysis, has its value in the classroom research. Whereas contrastive analysis, which may be at least predictive at the syntactic level and at the early stages of language learning (Brown, 1994), allows for prediction of the difficulties involved in acquiring a second language (Richards, 1974), error analysis emphasizing "the significance of errors on learners interlanguage system" (Brown, 1994, p 204) "may be carried out for pedagogic purposes" (Ellis, 1995; & Richards *et. al.*, 1993, p 127). According to Corder (1974), error analysis has two objects: one theoretical and another applied. The theoretical object serves to elucidate what and how a learner learns when he studies a second language. And the applied object serves to enable the learner to learn more efficiently by exploiting the knowledge of his dialect for pedagogical purposes.

9. Teaching-induced errors

According to Corder (1974) errors can be encouraged by the teaching method, as well. Teaching-induced errors result from different aspects of the teaching process itself that the learners are exposed to: the classroom situation, the used material, the

teacher's language use, the teaching method. They are difficult to identify. They may be due to the fact that the teaching material is not appropriate to the class, or there are some deficiencies in the teaching methodology. The teacher can also induce errors by using overgeneralization or simplification in an attempt to help the learners understand the new material. It is important to identify the causes of errors and mistakes, because this knowledge may help the teacher to decide how to respond.

Errors of interference and overgeneralization provide a key to learners current' understanding of the language system and may provide the teacher with evidence on which to base decisions about what to teach explicitly.

10. Types of errors:

According to the above mentioned causes of errors we can distinguish between two groups of errors: interlingual/transfer errors, which are due to the interference of the learners' mother tongue, and intralingual/developmental errors, which are due to the new language learned.

Errors can be grouped according to their significance and treatment, as well. Krashen (1982) speaks about three kinds of errors, which he considers the most relevant errors that are to be dealt with: global errors, are the most frequent errors. Global errors, which make communication impossible because they disable the comprehension of the communicative message, are necessary to be corrected. Stigmatized errors (use of taboo words, socially unacceptable words or violent language) are to be treated immediately. The group of the most frequently occurring errors includes errors which are to be corrected no matter which group they belong to.

Bárdos (2000) groups the written errors on the basis of their gravity: Qualitative errors are errors that are so serious they impede communication or distort the

information transferred. Quantitative errors are errors (misspelled words, misused structures, synonyms, style) that do not affect communication. However, if any of these quantitative errors disfigure the meaning they may become qualitative errors.

11. Error correction:

Correction is a form of feedback given to learners on their use of the language. All teachers would agree that correcting the errors that the students make when they speak or write is one of the most difficult tasks in language teaching. There are so many issues the teacher has to consider: whether it is an error or a mistake, at what stages the teacher should correct, how much correction should be made, how the student can be corrected without being de-motivated that is why the teacher's point out when something has gone wrong and see whether the student can correct himself, then, to find out if what the student say or write is just a mistake, or it is global or local.

However, the technique of correction is not simply presenting the data repeatedly and going through the same set of drills and exercises to produce the state of over learning. On the contrary, it requires that the teacher understand the source of the errors so that he can provide appropriate mixture, which will resolve the learner's problems and allow him to discover the relevant rules. Thus, the source of the error is an important clue for the teacher to decide on the sort of treatment. Harmer (1998) suggests three steps to be followed by the teacher when errors occur. The teacher first listens to the students, then identifies the problem, and puts it right in the most efficient way. Corder (1973) states that knowledge of being wrong is only a starting point. Skill in correction seems to lie in determining the necessary data to present to the learner and what statements, descriptive or comparative, to make about it.

Since no teacher has time to deal with all the errors of the students, a system of correction should be established for the correct the errors according their nature and significance. In such a system, priority should be given to errors which may affect communication and cause misunderstanding. If a teacher knows about all these items, he can direct himself accordingly. For example, Brown (2000) suggests that local errors as in the following example usually need not be corrected as the message is clear and correction might interrupt a learner in the flow of productive communication:

* I gave **shea** present.

On the other hand, global errors need to be treated in some way since the message is not comprehended clearly:

* Daddy my car happy tomorrow buy.

Errors in pluralization, use of articles, tenses, etc. are less important than errors regarding word order, the choice of placement and appropriate connectors in terms of the clarity of the sentence. Therefore, it is implied that priority in error correction should be given to global errors in order to develop the students' communication skills. The knowledge of error analysis enables the teacher to monitor the students' errors in this frame and take precautions where needed.

12. How to correct errors?

Since errors are expected in a language learning process, an English composition teacher has to confront numerous errors in his students' writings, and therefore, the teacher must have on hand a way to deal with errors.

12.1. Indirect methods:

Language teachers usually have the responsibility of correcting students' errors. It is not necessary or advisable that all the correction should come from the teacher.

Language teachers should not control the entire correction. If the teacher has students discover the error on their own, a lot of hard work would be avoided.

Correction should also come from other sources than the student himself and the teacher; the other members of the group can help to correct errors. Such an approach might also improve students' ability to recognize errors, and then help them to prevent errors in some way. But, using other members of the group to correct errors has to be carefully handled by the teacher so that no member in the group would pass some errors. Otherwise, this approach can be very harmful to the student whose composition is being discussed.

12.2. Direct method: Teacher correction

Whenever the student cannot understand indirect corrections, direct method should be used. Often, semantic errors must be corrected in the most direct way possible, because the semantic range of 2 words in 2 languages may have no analogue or only partly match. The procedure of returning papers to students without charting the error types over time had made impossible precise analysis of student problems.

Several researchers recommend that teachers record each student's errors on diagnostic charts in order to reveal the linguistic features that are causing the student's learning problems. Hendrickson (1978) said that error charts are helpful not only for analytical purposes, but also for developing individualized teaching materials, and for establishing a system of error correction priorities. To insure that a student profits from teacher correction, the teacher may select several errors for each student that must be eliminated from consequent compositions. Instead, the teacher may ask the student to write several sentences based on the corrected sentence patterns or on the corrected grammar points.

13. Teachers' attitude towards errors:

Teachers are often afraid of their students' making errors. They feel that students might repeat their mistakes and so they must make sure that everything they say is correct. This attitude goes back to the belief of the behaviorist's model of learning, which maintains that the language can be learnt by repeating correct forms until they become natural that is why repeating incorrect forms is harmful.

It is now widely agreed that language is not learnt this way: it is a system of rules that the learner has to acquire, that trying out language and making errors are natural and unavoidable parts of this process. Doff (1993) stated that learners are applying rules from their own first languages and they are applying rules which they have internalized but they are in some way intermediate between their native languages (L1) and the target language (L2). This attitude is wrong and the teachers should see these errors as useful for them in many ways, these errors can tell the teachers how far is the development of learner and what remains for him to learn. Following the learners progress the teachers can come out with new strategies to improve the learning process.

14. Students' attitudes towards errors:

Teachers and students have different attitudes toward errors and error correction. Teachers, as Pit Corder put it, are more concerned with how to deal with errors than with what causes them. Some of them think "if we were to achieve a perfect teaching method the errors would never be committed in the first place, and that therefore the occurrence of errors is merely a sign of the present inadequacy of our teaching techniques" (Corder, 1967, p 60). Therefore, such teachers try every means to prevent their students from making errors by constant correction which they believe, would help students recognize their errors and not repeat them.

On the other hand, some other teachers believe that the learning of the foreign language may be discouraged by the teacher who insists upon correction and grammatical accuracy. They also believe that continuous correction can raise learners' level of anxiety, and that this impedes learning (Krashen, 1982). Like teachers, it is not surprising to see that some students like to be corrected every now and then by their teachers because they believe that frequent correction would improve the language they are learning. Cathcart and Olsen (1979) show that students want their oral errors to be corrected. In a study on EL2 student writers, Leki (1991) likewise finds that 100 per cent of these students wanted all their written errors corrected. On the other hand, some students find continuous correction very annoying, distracting and discouraging. They do not mind being corrected if the error is really apparent but they hate it whenever they make it. They do not like being corrected whenever they are speaking and some of them would even stop participating in the classroom interaction just because they do not want to be corrected.

Due to these different attitudes, both teachers and students should adopt a reasonable approach to handle the error-correction problem effectively and appropriately in order to adapt to their preferences in learning and teaching.

Chapter two

Error Analysis' models and taxonomies

Chapter Two: Error Analysis' models and Taxonomies

Introduction

In recent years, there has been a growing research interest in the analysis of errors adults make while learning a second language. The study and analysis of the errors made by second language learners (i.e. Error Analysis or EA), either in their speech or writing or both has been brought under consideration by many educators, EFL

teachers, linguists, and researchers throughout the world. In fact, learners' errors have been the subject of controversy for a long time.

Generally, as Keshavarz (1999, p. 11) stated, "There have been two major approaches to the study of learners' errors, namely Contrastive Analysis and Error Analysis." He further discussed that, "Error Analysis emerged on account of the shortcomings of Contrastive Analysis which was the favored way of describing learners' language in the 1950s and 1960s"

The process involved in CA is the comparison of learners' mother tongue and the target language. Based on the similarities or differences between two languages, predictions were made on errors that learners would be likely or disposed to make as a result (Kim, 2001). CA arose from a critical view of the audio-lingual method, pointing out that only with scientific and detailed description of L2 can language teaching be successful (Fries, 1949). However, as Kim (2001) explained, by early 1970s, CA lost its favor because of the inaccurate or uninformative predictions of learner errors; errors did not occur where predicted, but instead errors showed up where CA had not predicted.

More serious criticism was raised on account of its adopted views from structuralism in linguistics and behaviorism in psychology. Being questioned about the reliability of the CA research, it yielded to Error Analysis in 1970.

Unlike CA which tries to describe differences and similarities of L1 and L2, James (1998 cited in Kim, 2001) stated that, EA attempts to describe learners' interlanguage (i.e. learners' version of the target language) independently and objectively. He believed that the most distinct feature of EA is that the mother tongue is not supposed to be mentioned for comparison. Hence, the studies in EA have for the most part dealt with linguistic aspects of learners' errors. In fact, identifying and describing the origin

of the learners' errors is now an activity that has received much attention during the last three decades. Such an analysis may lead one to understand the types of significant cohesive errors associated and the origin of such errors.

1. Error Analysis

Writing is a complex process even in the first language. Undoubtedly, it is more complicated to write in a foreign language. Consequently, lots of researchers have intended to identify the common errors EFL students make in writing the second language. Of course, a better understanding of the errors and the origin of such errors in the process of EFL writing will help teachers know students' difficulties in learning that language. Moreover, it will aid in the adoption of appropriate teaching strategies to help EFL students learn better.

Therefore, EA can be considered as a fundamental tool in language teaching in order to reorganize teacher's point of view and readdress his/her methodology for fixing and fulfilling the students' gaps (Londono Vasquez, 2007). In other words, as Corder (1967) defined, EA is a procedure used by both researchers and teachers which involves collecting theory and practice in language studies samples of learner language, identifying the errors in the sample, describing these errors, classifying them according to their nature and causes, and evaluating their seriousness.

The purpose of Error Analysis is, in fact, to find " what the learner knows and does not know" and to " ultimately enable the teacher to supply him not just with the information that his hypothesis is wrong, but also, importantly, with the right sort of information or data for him to form a more adequate concept of a rule in the target language" (Corder, 1974, p 170).

2. Error Taxonomies:

Perhaps, one of the first and most important studies conducted in the field of Error Analysis was the one done by Richards (1971). His study involved learners from different language background (Japanese, Chinese, Burmese, French, Czech, Polish, Tagalog, Maori, Maltese, and Indian and West African Languages) and showed the different types of errors relating to production and distribution of verb groups, prepositions, articles, and the use of questions. Based on this, he distinguished three sources of errors:

2.1. Interference errors: errors resulting from the use of elements from one language while speaking/writing another,

2.2. Intralingual errors: errors reflecting general characteristics of the rule learning such as faulty generalization, incomplete application of rules and failure to learn conditions under which rules apply, and

2.3. Developmental errors: errors occurring when learners attempt to build up hypothesis about the target language on the basis of limited experiences.

According to Richards (1971), intralingual errors are also subdivided to the following categories:

1. *Overgeneralization errors:* the learner creates a deviant structure on the basis of other structures in the target language (e.g. "He can sings" where English allows "He can sing" and "He sings").

2. *Ignorance of rule restrictions:* the learner applies rules to context where they are not applicable (e.g. He made me to go rest" through extension of the pattern "He asked/wanted me to go").

3. *Incomplete application of rules:* the learner fails to use a fully developed structure (e.g. "You like to sing?" in place of "Do you like to sing?")

4. *False hypothesis*: the learners do not fully understand a distinction in the target language (e.g. the use of "was" as a marker of past tense in "One day it was happened").

However, as Schachter and Celce-Murcia (1977) pointed out, the distinction between intralingual and developmental errors is rather fuzzy in their term. As a result, Richards (1974) classified errors, according to their causes, into two categories later on. The two categories are as follows:

1. *Interlingual errors*: these errors are caused by mother tongue interference.
2. *Intralingual and developmental errors*: this kind of errors occurs during the learning process of the second language at a stage when the learners have not really acquired the knowledge. In addition, errors are also caused by the difficulty or the problem of language itself.

Elsewhere, some experts believed that the distinction between intralingual and interlingual errors is not always clear-cut as it may sound. They also claimed that it is obviously more difficult to identify different types of intralingual errors that Richards (1971) described. In order to deal with this problem, Dulay and Burt (1974) classified learners' errors into three broad categories:

1. *Developmental errors*: those are similar to L1 acquisition
2. *Interference errors*: errors that reflect the structure of the L1
3. *Unique errors*: errors that are neither developmental nor interference

Stenson (1974 cited in Karra, 2006) proposed another category, that of induced errors, which resulted from incorrect instruction of the language.

Brown (1980 cited in Hasyim, 2002) further classified sources of errors into the following categories:

1. *Interference transfer*: that is the negative influence of the mother tongue of learner,

2. *Intralingual transfer*: that is the negative transfer of items within the target language. In other words, the incorrect generalization of the rules within the target language,

3. *Context of learning*: this overlaps both types of transfer. For example, the classroom with the teacher and its materials in the case of school learning or the social situation in the case of untutored second language learning. In a classroom context, the teacher or the textbook can lead the learner to make wrong generalization about the language.

4. *Communication strategies*: it is obvious that communication strategy is the conscious employment of verbal mechanisms for communicating an idea when linguistic forms are not available to the learner for some reasons.

There are five main communication strategies, namely:

1. Avoidance,
2. Prefabricated patterns,
3. Cognitive and personality style,
4. Appeal to authority,

5. Languageswitches (Brown, 1980 cited in Hasyim, 2002).

Later, James (1998), in his study, showed the different types of learners' errors relating to omission, over inclusion, miss election (use wrong words not wrong forms), disordering, blends (blending arises when two alternative grammatical forms are combined to produce an ungrammatical blend.)Based on this, he stated that there are four causes of errors.

1. *Interlingual errors* (Mother-tongue influence): these kinds of errors are influenced by the native languages which interfere with target language learning,

2. *Intralingual errors*: these types of errors are caused by the target language itself like: false analogy, misanalysis (learners form a wrong hypothesis), incomplete rule application (this is the converse of overgeneralization or one might call it under generalization as the learners do not use all the rules), Exploiting redundancy (this error occurs by carrying considerable redundancy. This is shown throughout the system in the form of unnecessary morphology and double signaling), Overlooking co-occurrence restrictions (this error is caused by overlooking the exceptional rules), Hypercorrection or monitor overuse (this results from the learners' over cautious and strict observance of the rules), Overgeneralization or system-simplification (this error is caused by the misuse of words or grammatical rules),

3. *Communication strategy-based errors*: which are subdivided into the holistic strategies or approximation and analytic strategies or circumlocution, and

4. *Induced Errors*: these errors are the result of being misled by the way in which the teachers give definitions, examples, explanations and arrange practice opportunities.

In other words, the errors are caused mostly by the teaching and learning process as follows: Materials-induced errors, Teacher-talk induced errors, Exercise-based induced errors, Errors induced by pedagogical priorities, Look-up errors.

In fact, most researchers have been contented with a general distinction between transfer errors and intralingual errors Richards (1971).besides, sub-categorization of intralingual errors is not unproblematic but should be credited for providing operational procedures for establishing which errors are intralingual (Ellis, 1994).

Finally, by using Richards' distinction of learners' errors — interlingual and intralingual — as a basis of analysis, different researches done in this respect will be reviewed in the following two sections.

3. Studies done on interlingual causes:

Indeed, efforts have been made to identify and describe learners' errors. Among them, various researchers have concentrated on those errors which demonstrate the influence of one's native language to second language acquisition.

To investigate the relationship between students' L1 and EFL writing, Ying (1987) examined 120 Taiwanese EFL students' compositions and sorted errors on the basis of three criteria of overgeneralization, simplification, and language transfer. A total of 1250 errors were detected in the 120 compositions, among which 78.9% of the errors were a result of language transfer, 13.6% of the errors were overgeneralization of the target language, and 7.5% were forms of simplification.

In addition, Kim (1989 cited in Lee, 2001) conducted Error Analysis with two-hundred 10th grade Korean EFL learners using their English translation of Korean sentences. She identified 1122 errors in which transfer errors resulting from L1 structure were higher (24%) than overgeneralization errors (23%). Furthermore, she identified the 1122 detected errors in terms of six domains and subdivided them into 22 linguistic categories. Her findings revealed that errors in articles were most common (354) and that there were only 8 errors in word order and 2 in voice.

Likewise, Jiang (1995) analyzed Taiwanese EFL learners' errors in English prepositions and found that a great number of errors derived from language transfer. The researcher stated that compared to English speakers, Mandarin speakers use fewer prepositions for more concepts, therefore increasing difficulties in learning English prepositions.

In addition, some researchers employed Error Analysis to examine the error types in Taiwanese EFL students' English writings. For example, Horney (1998 cited in Chen, 2006) investigated compositions written by 80 Taiwanese EFL students. The results revealed that errors in the use of articles had the highest error percentage (11%). Both errors in the use of prepositions and errors in the use of verbs had the same error rate of 9% and were considered the second highest error percentage. By contrasting Mandarin and English, the researcher confirmed that L1 related errors were the largest proportion of the total errors.

Along the same lines, Liu, Sung, and Chien (1998) also concluded that the less English proficiency learners possess, the more L1 interference was found in their English writings. In the study of Liu *et al.* (1998), the authors applied a think-aloud method to detect how Taiwanese EFL students generated notes in the process of writing in English. The findings showed that beginning EFL learners relied on their L1 to retrieve words more than advanced EFL learners did.

In another study analyzing the errors made by Taiwanese EFL college students, Chen (1998) reported that most Taiwanese students have difficulties in the use of English tenses due to the absence of verb conjugation in Mandarin. Since Mandarin is not an inflected language, Fang (1999) highlighted the teaching of English verb tenses to prevent Taiwanese EFL students from misusing English tenses due to linguistic difference. Another grammatical error that is frequently found in

Taiwanese EFL students' compositions is the misuse of English articles. Chen (2000) considered that English articles could be one of the most difficult grammatical parts for Taiwanese EFL students as there is not an equivalent syntactical device to the English article system. Master (1988) further indicated that beginning level EFL learners tend to be more interfered by such a linguistic difference between Mandarin and English.

Likewise, Hsin (2003 cited in Chen, 2006) scrutinized the run-on sentences in Taiwanese EFL students' writings and identified the possible causes using Error Analysis. He observed that English is a subject-prominent language, in which a subject in a sentence is always required. In contrast to subject-oriented structure, Mandarin tends to be a topic-comment language. Of course, such a linguistic difference between Mandarin and English creates learning difficulties for Taiwanese EFL learners and results in errors in their EFL writings.

In addition to the previous studies conducted in this respect, Lee's (2001) research also revealed that learners' errors are mostly resulted from L1 transfer. His study was to identify and classify errors by analyzing medical students' writing, especially their formal and informal letters. Twenty-five sophomore medical students in a class of 35 were the participants of his study. They were given six topics to write about throughout the semester. Finally, the study revealed that approximately one fourth of errors (26%) of these subjects resulted from L1 transfer. Other major errors involved in wrong words (16%), prepositions (15%), and articles (14%).

Finally, Zhang (2007) shared the same concern expressed so far when stated, "it is not surprising at all that EFL learners including Chinese university students make errors in spoken and written English because language transfer or the incorporation of patterns from the native language into the target language is a

common source of errors among learners of a second or foreign language" (p 4). He also deemed it necessary to point out that English and Chinese belong to different language families. English is classified as an Indo-European language; whereas, Chinese is of the Sino-Tibetan family (Fromkin& Rodman, 1998 cited in Zhang, 2007). Therefore, the two languages have much more differences than similarities.

As a whole, the findings from the participants' translations analysis were in line with the idea that native language interference is surely the most immediately noticeable source of error (Brown, 1994) from the translation of native language to the target one.

4. Studies done on intralingual causes

At the outset, it was believed that most language errors were caused by the transformation from one language to another. Thus, in making decisions regarding the focus for foreign language teaching, instructors and teachers had taken into consideration errors that appear to result from the influence of their students' first language. Later, they observed evidence from language acquisition research suggesting that for some language features, "learners of different L1 backgrounds may face similar types of challenges" (Collins, 2007, p 295).

Richards (1971) first challenged the belief that learners' errors were the result of L1 transference. He, in his aforementioned research argued:

"Many of the learners' errors came from the strategies that they use in language acquisition and the reciprocal interference of the target language items. Error Analysis would allow teachers to figure out what areas should be focused on and what kind of attention is need in an L2 classroom. So, the language teachers can be better able to develop curriculum and select materials that can facilitate L2 learning processes"(p 208).

Elsewhere, Kim (1987) identified a total of 2455 errors in the English compositions of 12th grade Korean EFL learners. The findings showed that errors in BE and auxiliaries were the most common (419), followed by errors in prepositions (287) and that intralingual errors arose more than transfer errors.

Kim (1988) investigated errors in English verbs with reference to tense, mood, and voice. The 120 subjects were the 11th grade Korean EFL learners who were asked to translate 42 Korean sentences into English. The results revealed that errors in mood were most frequent (903) followed by errors in voice (885) and tense (720), among the total of 2508. With regard to the sources of errors, overgeneralization (65%) occurred the most while L1 transfer (22%) and simplification (13%) occurred the least.

Kim (2001) conducted another study in this respect. Indeed, the purpose of his study was to analyze errors in college students' writing samples to examine L1 interference phenomenon. He pointed out that, "it is widely believed that theory and practice in language studies Korean learners of English often show incorrect use of English expressions due to their L1 interference" (p. 159). He continued that, "despite such a prevalent belief, the sources of learners' errors and L1 interference were not clearly identified" (p. 160). In order to examine the sources and the nature of learners' errors, he collected 30 writing samples from college freshman students who were registered for TOEIC class. Most of the learners' errors were in the areas of verbs (be + V for V, be omission, -s omission, incorrect use of present perfect), prepositions (incorrect use of prepositions, redundant prepositions), articles (omission of *a*, incorrect use of *a*, omission of *the*, *the* instead of zero), plural/singular agreement, adjectives, conjunctions (incorrect use of conjunctions, stranded/redundant conjunctions). Then, errors were classified into two categories of intralingual and

interlingual. Finally, the results showed that most of learners' errors were intralingual and only a few cases can be attributed to L1 interference, which lends support the assumption that L2 learners follow similar developmental patterns to those found in children's L1 acquisition. Thus, it may follow from what he found that learners' errors are not just deviant forms that should be corrected but they reflect creative process of seeking systematic rules of target language.

Moreover, Bataineh (2005) claimed, "unlike earlier Error Analyses, native language transfer is found to play a role which is at best minimal" (p. 56). Of course, his study exclusively aimed at identifying the kinds of errors Jordanian first, second, third, and fourth year university EFL students made in the use of the indefinite article. The nine types of errors were as follows:

- (1) Deletion of the indefinite article,
- (2) Writing *a* as part of the noun/adjective following it,
- (3) Substitution of the indefinite for the definite article,
- (4) Substitution of the definite for the indefinite article,
- (5) Substitution of *a* for *an*,
- (6) Use of the indefinite article with unmarked plurals,
- (7) Use of the indefinite article with marked plurals,
- (8) Use of the indefinite article with uncountable nouns, and
- (9) Use of the indefinite article with adjectives.

Finally, the analysis revealed that all errors, except one, were independent of the learner's native language and the only type of error which could be traced back to the influence of Arabic, among other sources, was the deletion of the indefinite article.

Sattayatham and Honsa (2007), in their study, focused on Error Analysis of first year medical students from the four medical schools at Mahidol University. A total of 44% of enrolled students participated in their study (about 237). They were asked to translate sentences from Thai into English. The data collected from the sentence-level translation were analyzed to find the most frequent errors of these medical students by using the distribution of frequency. The top-ten errors of the participants were as follows:

- (1) Order of adjectives,
- (2) There is/are,
- (3) subject-verb agreement,
- (4) direct/indirect object,
- (5) Verbs of feeling,
- (6) Past tense,
- (7) Present perfect,
- (8) reported speech,
- (9) Passive voice, and
- (10) Question tag.

Finally, the researchers concluded that the errors made by the students were both from the intralanguage and interlanguage interference. This is while the errors caused by mother tongue interference were in a small proportion. In this respect, the next few studies deals mostly with the research done on intralingual causes of errors committed by Iranian EFL learners. Ghadessy (1980) conducted one of such studies. He also shared the same concern expressed in the overseas studies when he discussed the results of Error Analysis of 100 English compositions written by Iranian university students. The results showed that mistakes were not primarily due to

inference from the native language, but to developmental errors, similar to errors made in first language acquisition.

Furthermore, Javidan (1980), in his study, tried to investigate the sources of errors made and the difficulty order followed by adult Iranian students in their learning of certain grammatical structures of English. The general difficulty order found in his study was in many ways similar to the orders reported in other L2 studies for adult ESL learners indicating that adults follow a natural and similar sequence in learning the grammatical structures of English and also that the structural difficulty order might be universal for all adults learning a second or foreign language. Three proficiency levels of students participated in his study and the results of the error analysis showed that in each proficiency group (elementary, intermediate, and advanced) the subjects' reliance on developmental strategy was greater than on the strategy of native language transfer.

Furthermore, the findings of this study, while providing strong support for the claim that interference from the mother tongue is not the only source of errors adult L2 learners make, but rather a large number of errors made by these learners can be explained due to interference from the target language, indicate that in addition to these two major sources of errors, other factors such as teaching and testing materials and techniques, type of language exposures available to the learner, transfer from a third or more languages known by the learner, and so on, should also be evaluated as the causes of errors in L2 learning.

Hence, it follows from the reported studies in the previous part that some researchers and authorities of the field have considered intralingual causes as the common source of EFL learners' errors. Of course, quite a number of researchers have found that L2 learners at the beginning level produce a large number of interlingual

errors. They also observed that as these learners progress in acquiring the norms of the target language, more and more intralingual errors are manifested (Brown, 1994 & Littlewood, 1995 cited in Lee, 2001).

Conclusion

Considering reported studies makes the growing research interest in the analysis of errors more obvious. In recent years, there have been a growing number of studies in the area of Error Analysis. The underlying objections of most of these studies were to identify and classify errors and thus help teachers know the problematic areas of EFL learners at different levels of instruction in order to help students learn better. Based on the studies reviewed on EA, it is obvious that there are two opposite views toward the sources of errors committed by EFL learners. Both of these two views have been advocated by different researchers and there is enough empirical evidence for each to be true.

In connection to the significance of second language learners' errors both in learning and teaching, TEFL educators and researchers interested in seeking the truth should re-conduct research in order to adopt appropriate teaching strategies to help EFL students learn better.

Chapter

Three

Data description and analysis

Chapter Three: data description and analysis

Introduction

The present research is about eliciting student's opinion about the importance of error analysis in the writing skill for EFL learners. Since the learners are the main variable of this study. Their views and opinions are very crucial to test the stated hypothesis, and the most appropriate tool to investigate that is through addressing a questionnaire to learners. The students' questionnaire aims at finding out whether the learners give importance and a value to the errors that happen inside the classroom in activating their writing skill through the feedback system of the process of language teaching and learning with their classmates or teachers.

1. The Students' Questionnaire

1.1. The Sample

The forty (40) students who responded to the questionnaire were chosen among the total number of the first year LMD students' population (495) at the University of Biskra. The selection of such sample was based on the consideration that first year LMD students are not advanced learners and do not experienced the concept of error analysis with their teachers in the previous years –secondary school years- so, their teachers focus more on student's errors at this level since they are considered as freshman learners. Moreover, those students are supposed to graduate after two years and therefore if they happen to teach in the future they will accordingly know about the importance of error analysis in building knowledge and developing both the writing and the speaking skills.

1.2. Description of the Questionnaire

This questionnaire consists of fourteen (14) questions which are arranged in a logical way. They are either closed questions requiring from the students to choose „yes“ or „no“ answers, or to pick up the appropriate answer from a number of choices.

Questions (a) to (c) are devoted to students' background information; these latter are asked to specify their gender, their age, and their level of study in the English department. Then there are two main sections of questions. Section one contains six (6) questions which are generally about writing skill and grammar whereas section two involves eight (8) questions which talk about errors and its significance in the English language teaching and learning process.

In question (1) students are asked how many times a week do they write in class. In question (2) students are supposed to answer whether errors in writing mean to them progress or fail.

Question (3) is put to know how many times teachers help the students when they make an error in the classroom. And in question (4) they are also asked whether they should master the grammatical rules of the target language before writing a task. Moreover, in question (5) students are asked if the continuous correction by the teachers can raise learners level of anxiety or the contrary.

Question (6) is designed to generate information about writing in English whether it is complicated or easy. In the Question (7) students are asked about the avoidance and the correctness of an error whenever they find it.

Question (8) is devoted to know whether the students recognize the difference between the error and the mistake. And in question (9) they are asked which errors they make most of time; interference, globalization, or simplification.

Question (10) is put to know whether they agree or not that error making is a stage like the other stages of language learning.

In the question (11) the students are asked to choose whether they agree or disagree that the errors provide a significance by which the teacher assesses the learners.

The question (12) investigates the opinions of the students about the errors in learning the English language, if they are important or not.

Furthermore, the question (13) is devoted to know if the students never feel anxious, sometimes, or always feel it when they make an error in the L2.

The last and the important question (14) is put to know whether the errors made by learners are major elements in the feedback system of the process of language teaching and learning.

1.3. Analysis of the Results

Item one: Students' Gender

A- Specify your gender

a- Female

b- Male

Option	Number	Percentage %
A	30	70
B	10	30
Total	40	100

Table 1: Students' Gender

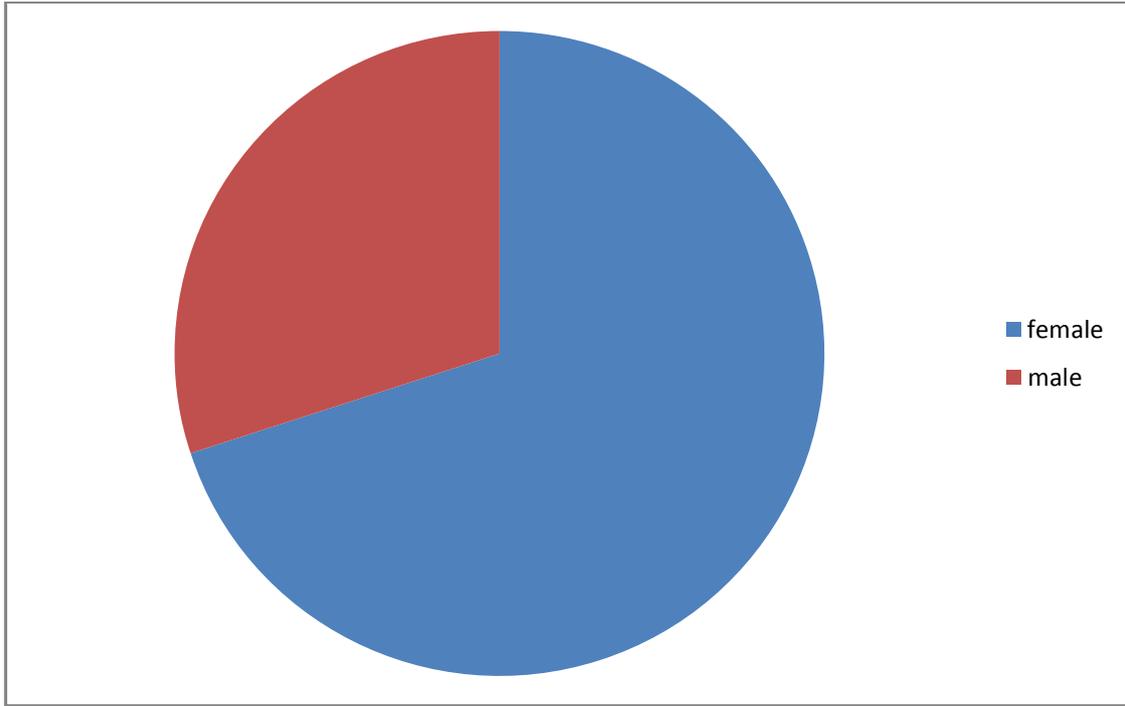


Figure 1: Students' Gender

As shown in the table, females (30) are about three times the number of males (10).

Item two: Students' age

B- Specify your age

a - 17-20

b - 21-27

Option	Number	Percentage %
a	27	67.5
b	13	32.5
Total	40	100

Table 2: Students' age

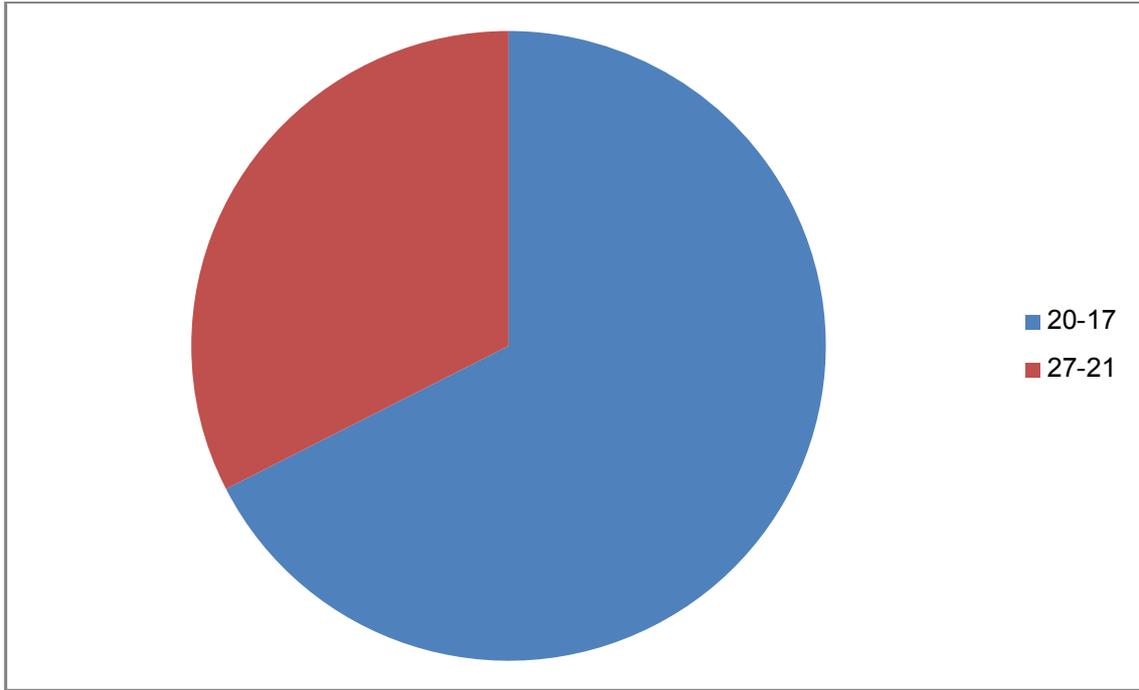


Figure 2: Students' age

We can notice that the highest percentage of students (67.5%) are under the 20 years old, And the rest (32.5%) they are upper than 21 years old.

1-how many times a week do you write in class?

Item three: students' writing frequency

a-all the week

b-twice

c- once

Option	Number	Percentage %
a	04	10
b	12	30
c	24	60
total	40	100

Table:students' writing frequency

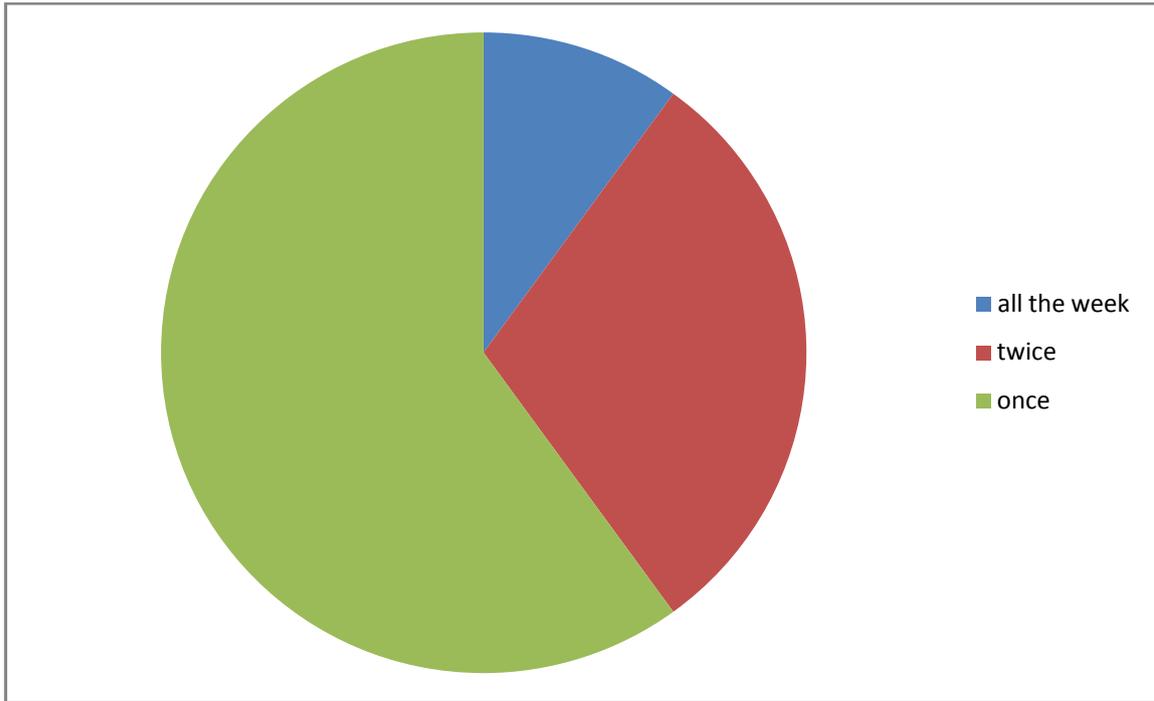


Figure 3: students' writing frequency

Table (3) shows that (10%) of the students do not write all the whole week with their teacher of written expression. However, (30%) say that they do write twice a week with their teachers, and (60%) claim that they write just once a week.

2-what does error in writing mean to you?

Item four: students' perspectives on errors

a- progress

b- Fail

Option	number	Percentage %
A	32	80
B	08	20
Total	40	100

Table 4: Item four: students' perspectives on errors

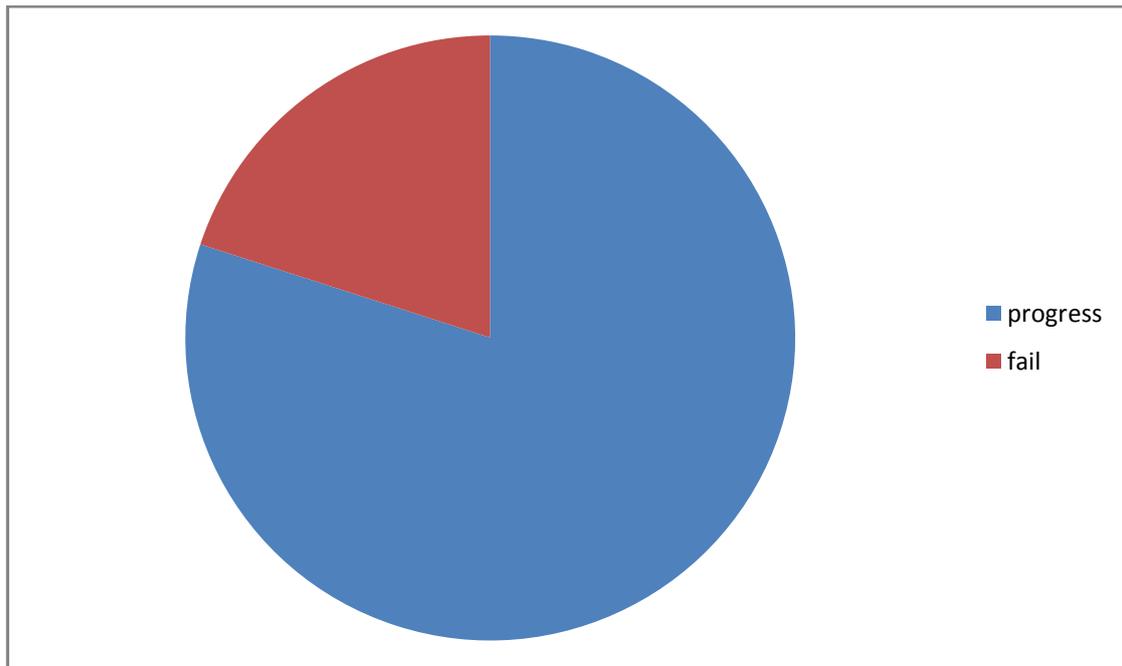


Figure 4: Item four: students' perspectives on errors

The results obtained denote that (80%) students state that errors are a sign of progress for them. On the other hand (20%) students say that errors are point of week and fail.

Item five: helpfulness of the teacher

3- Does your teacher help you when you make an error?

a- Always

b- Sometimes

c- Never

Option	number	Percentage
a	16	40
b	20	50
c	04	10
total	40	100

Table 5: helpfulness of the teacher

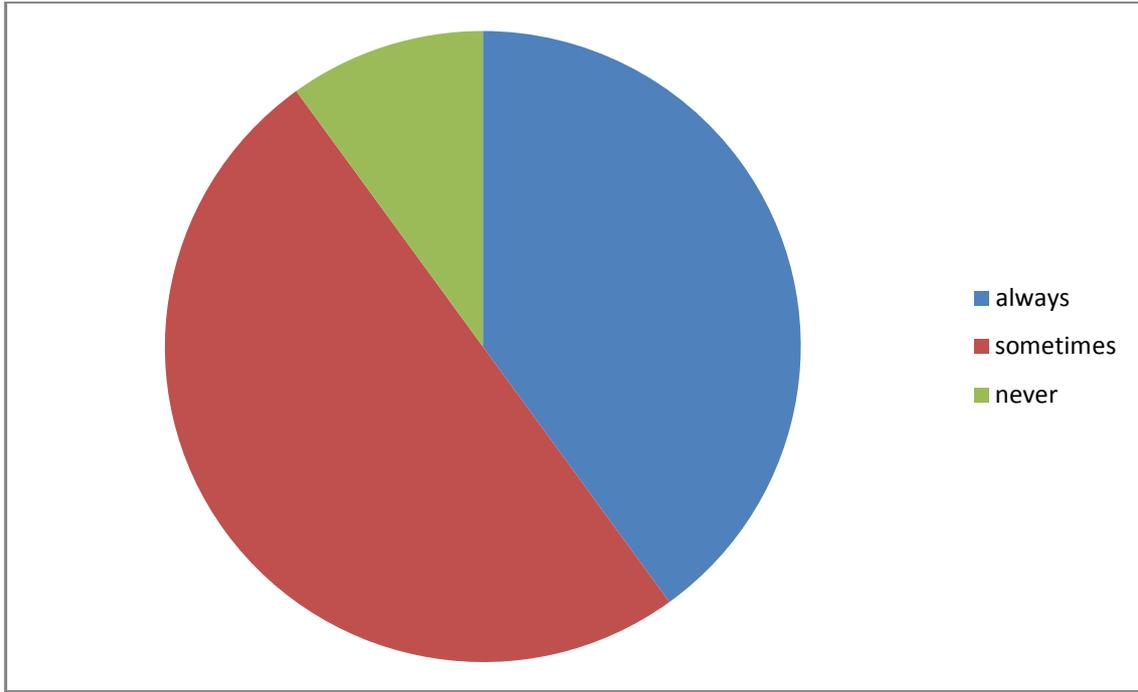


Figure 5: helpfulness of the teacher

Half of the students (50%) state that they are sometimes gets corrected by their teachers, and those who say always are (40%) students. Other (10%) students state that teachers never correct them when they make an error.

Item six: knowing grammar rules before writing

4-you should master the grammatical rules of the target language before writing a task?

a- agree

b- Disagree

Option	number	Percentages
A	34	85
B	06	15
Total	40	100

Table 6: knowing grammar rules before writing

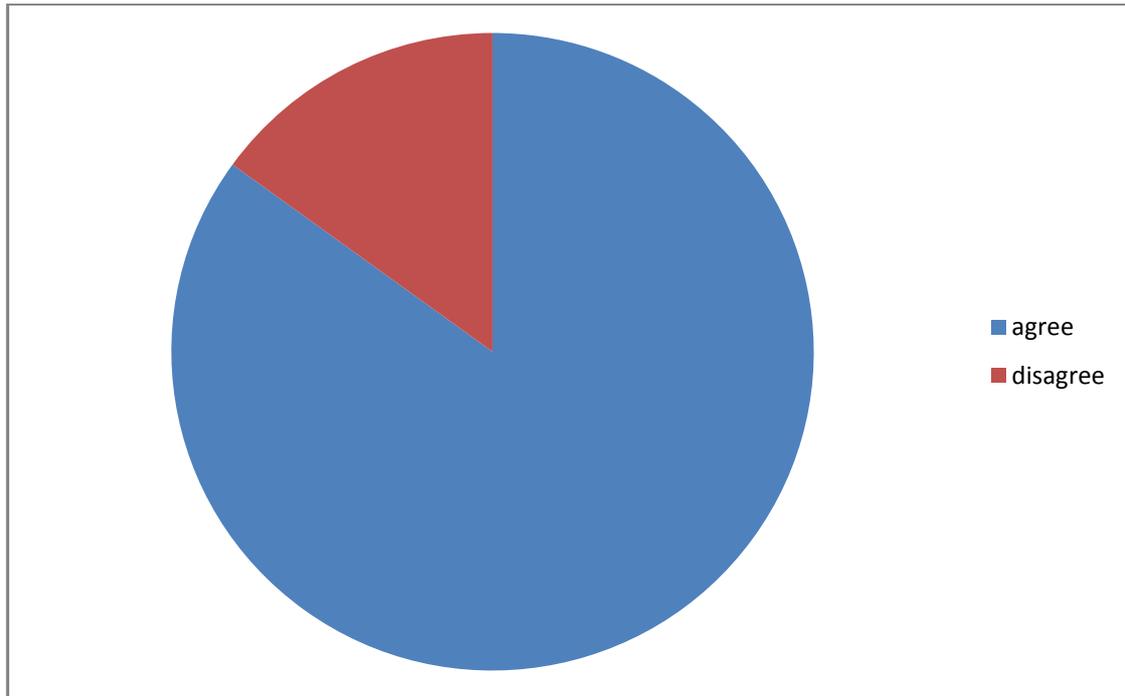


Figure 6: knowing grammar rules before writing

It is obvious from the table above that most of the students (85%) agree that they must know the grammar rules before writing. However (15%) say disagree.

Item seven: the continuous correctness and the level of anxiety

5-do you believe that the continuous correct in the part of the teacher can raise learner's level of anxiety?

a- yes

b- No

Option	number	Percentages
a	16	40
b	24	60
total	40	100

Table 7: the continuous correctness and the level of anxiety

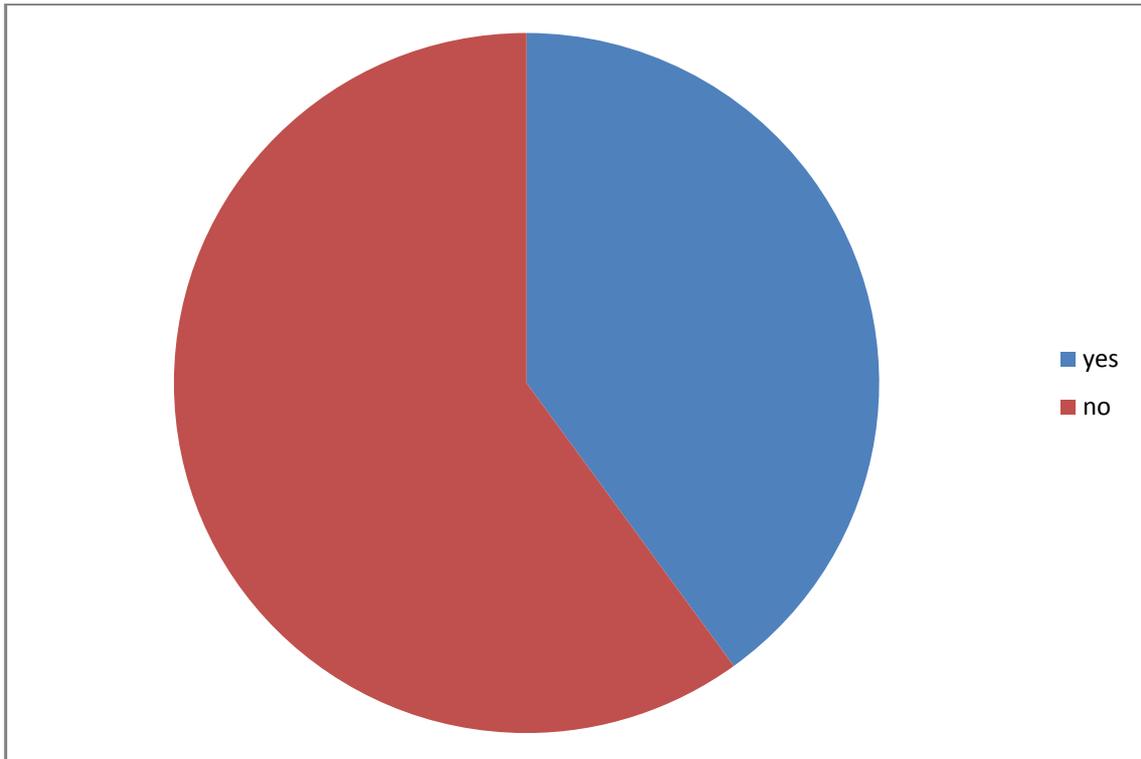


Figure 7: the continuous correctness and the level of anxiety

The table above shows that (60%) students say that they do not feel anxious when the teachers correct them. The other (40%) students state that they always feel anxious when the teachers correct them.

Item eight: degree of difficulty in writing in English

6-writing in English is it?

a- easy

b- Complicated

Option	number	percentages'
a	09	22.5
b	31	87.5
total	40	100

Table 8: degree of difficulty in writing in English

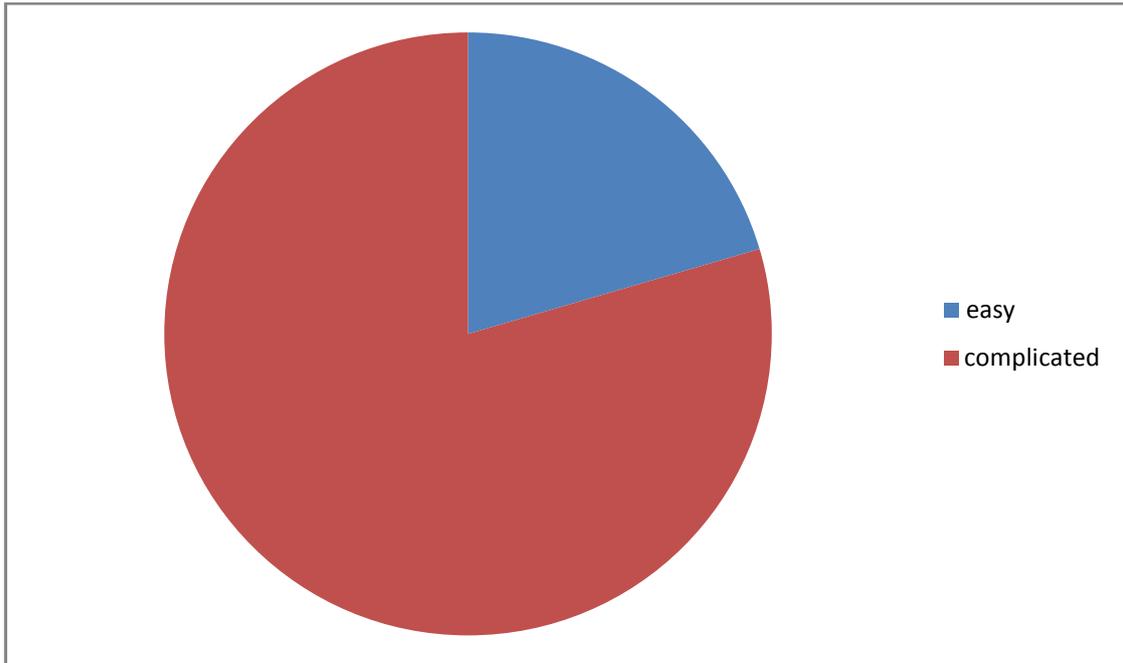


Figure 8: degree of difficulty in writing in English

Regarding students' answers, (87.5%) say that they find difficulty in writing in English, while (22.5%) students state that they write easily.

Item nine: The Students' avoidance and correctness of an error

7- When you find an error you:

- a- Correct it
- b- Avoid it

option	number	Percentages
a	30	80
b	10	20
total	40	100

Table 9: The Students' avoidance and correctness of an error

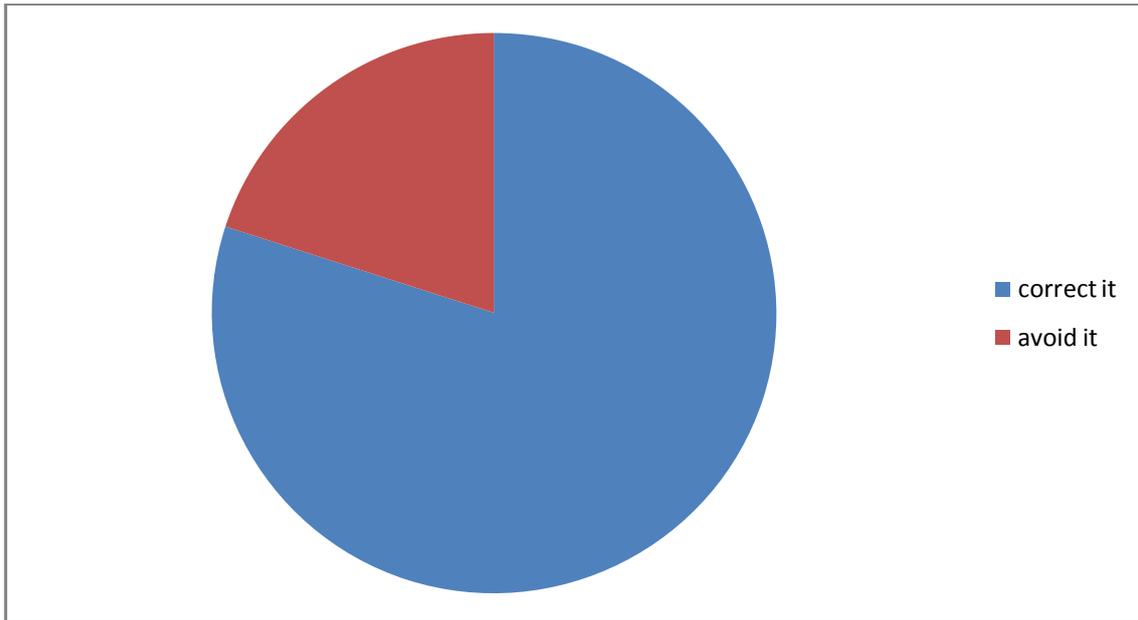


Figure9: The Students' avoidance and correctness of an error

As shown in the table above, (80%) of the respondents correct the error whenever they find it, while (20%) of them avoid it.

Item ten: the difference between error and mistake

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

a- yes

b- No

option	number	Percentages
a	03	7.5
b	37	92.5
total	40	100

Table 10: the difference between error and mistake

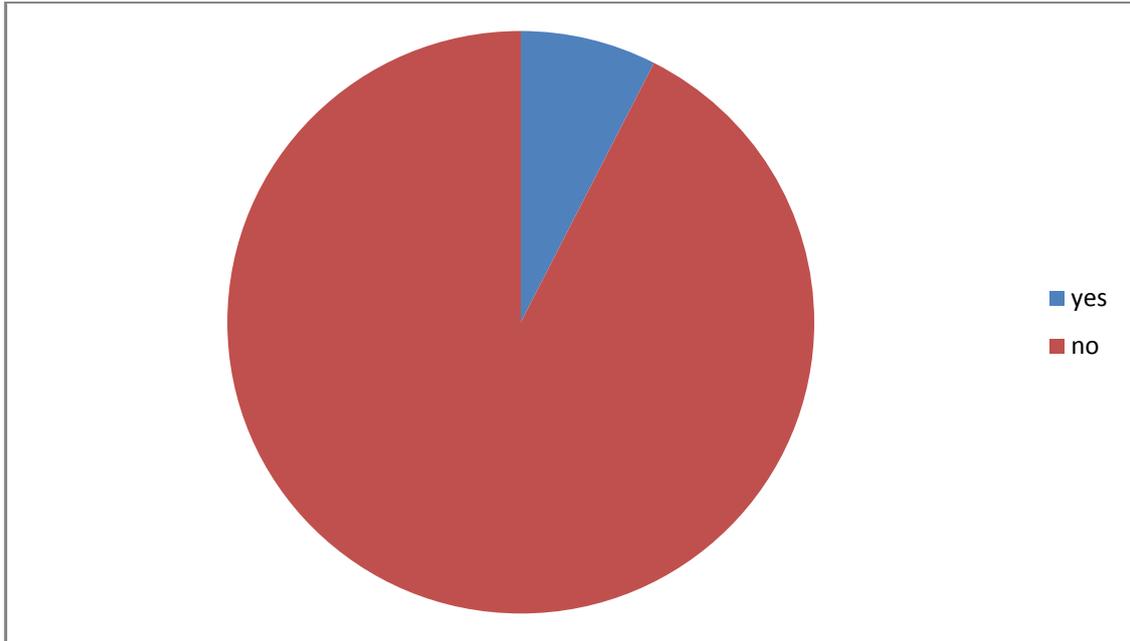


Figure 10: the difference between error and mistake

The table indicates that (37) respondents (92.5%) do not know the difference between error and mistake. The remaining (3) respondents (7.5%) do know the difference.

Item eleven: common errors

9-which error you make mostly?

b- Globalization

a- interference

c- Simplification

option	number	Percentages
a	20	50
b	12	30
c	08	20
total	40	100

Table 11: common errors

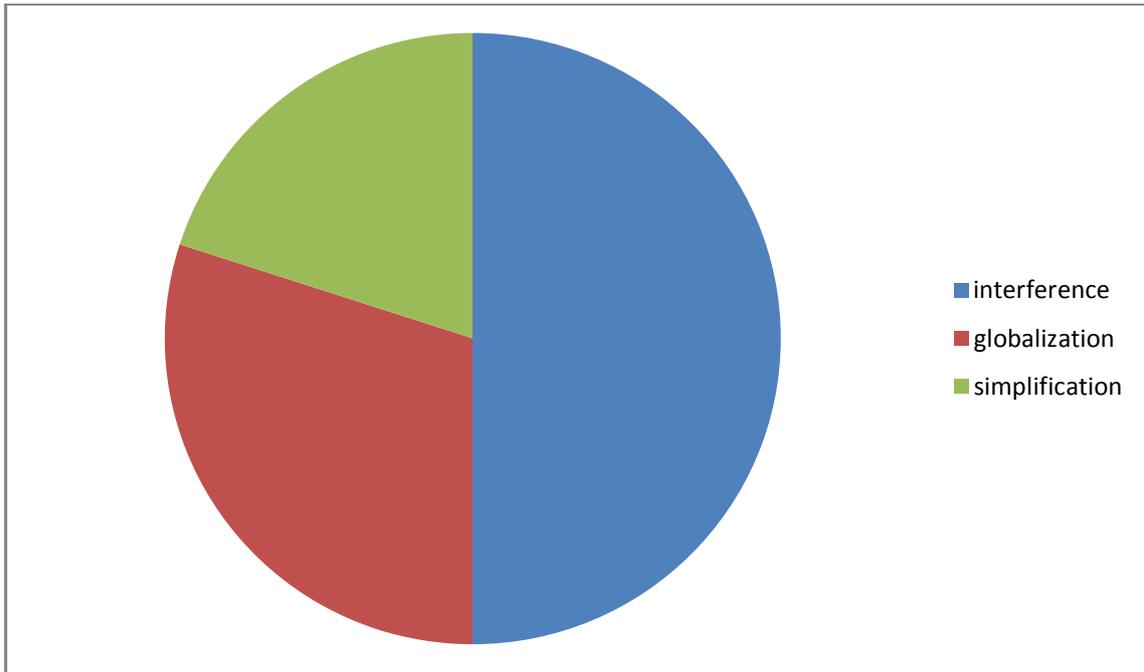


Figure 11:common errors

The answer tabulated above reveals that while (20%) of the students make simplification errors. More than half (50%) state that most of the time they make interference errors. The remaining (10%) of the students used to make globalization errors.

10-error making is stage like all the stages of language learning?

Item twelve: student' agreement on:errors are stage of language learning

a- agree

b- Strongly agree

c- Disagree

option	number	Percentages
a	14	35
b	23	57.5
c	03	7.5
total	40	100

Table 12: student' agreement on: errors are stage of language learning

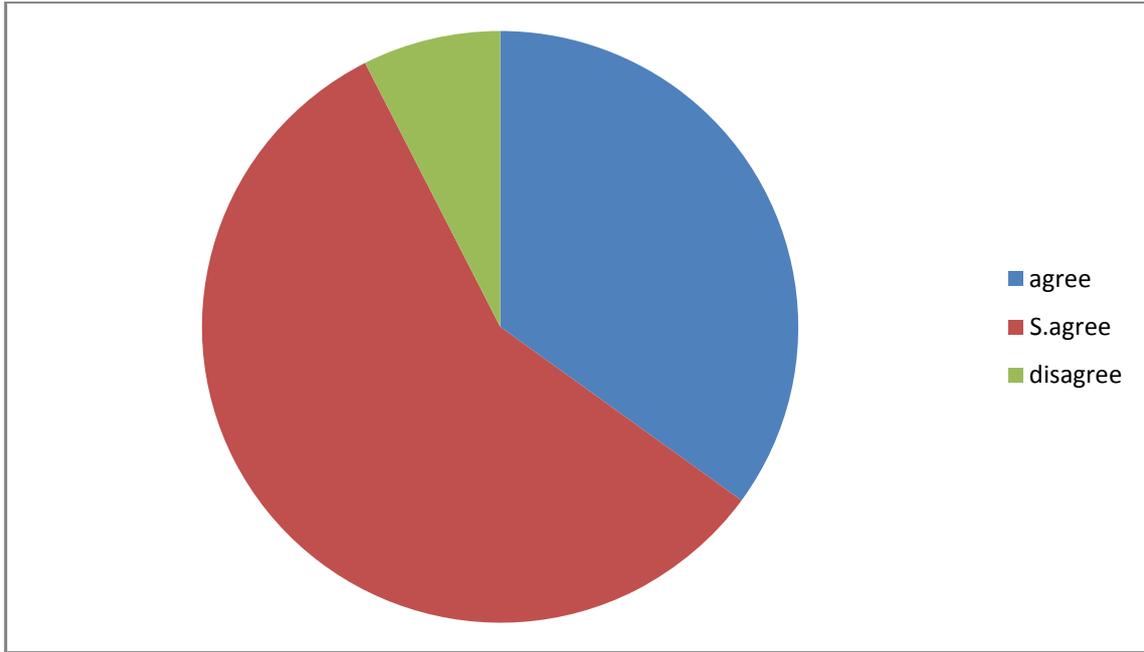


Figure 12: student' agreement on: errors are stage of language learning

We can notice that the highest percentage of students (57.5%) claims that they strongly agree that errors are one stage of learning. Others (35%) show that they agree. And (7.5%) of the students say disagree.

Item thirteen:the significance of errors in the teacher assessments

11-the errors provide significance by which the teacher assesses the learners?

- a- agree
- b- Strongly agree
- c- Disagree

option	number	Percentages
a	18	45
b	22	55
c	00	00
total	40	100

Table 13: the significance of errors in the teacher assessments

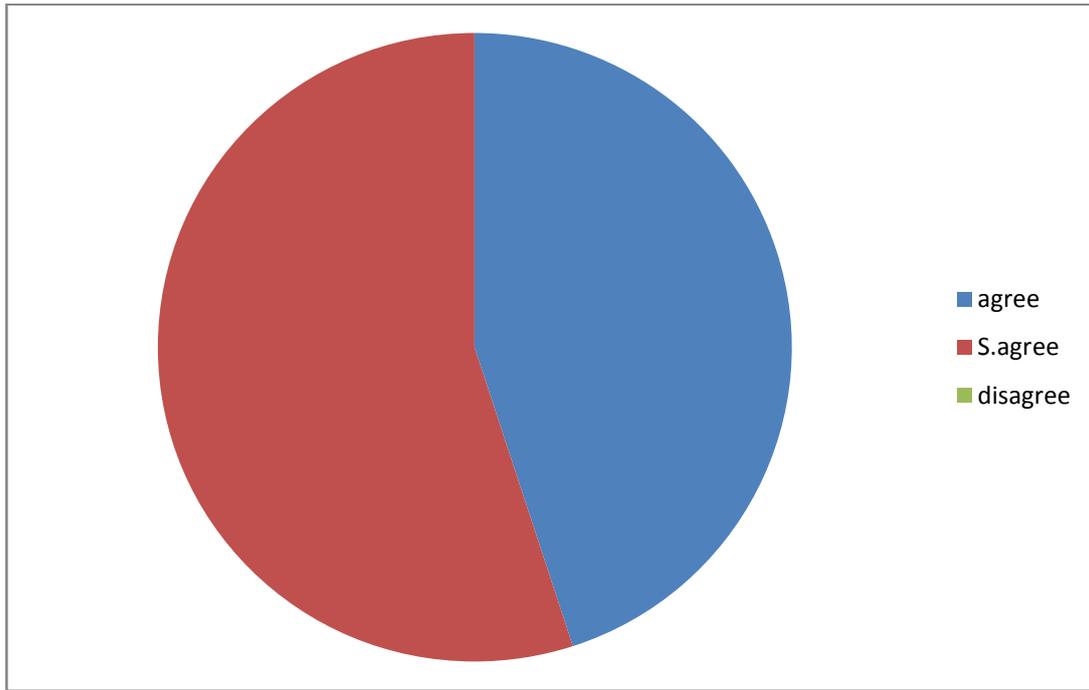


Figure 13: the significance of errors in the teacher assessments

The common shared reaction between the majority of students (55%) and (45%) is that they strongly agree that errors are important for the teacher assessment. Whereas (00) of the students state that they disagree.

Item fourteen: errors as a Help to learn the English language

12-do you think that errors are important to learn the English language?

a- Yes

b- No

option	number	Percentages
a	37	92.5
b	03	7.5
total	40	100

Table 14: errors as a Help to learn the English language

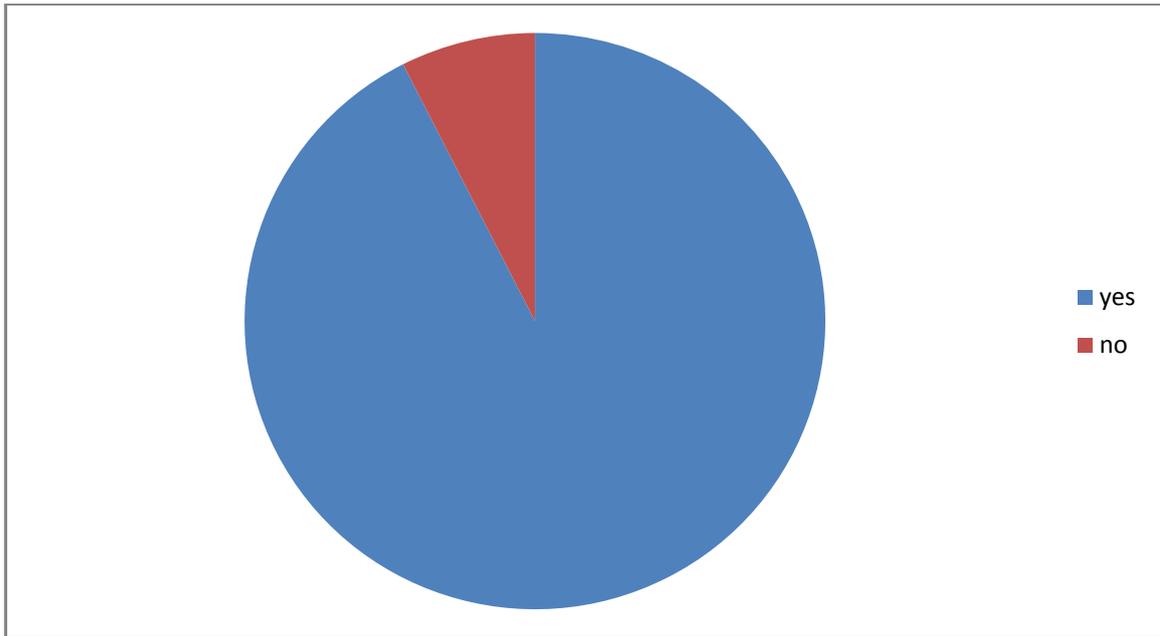


Figure 14: errors as a Help to learn the English language

As Table (14) shows, (92.5%) of the respondents find that making errors are important and may lead them to learn the English language, however, (7.5%) of students say „no“

(28) Students explained that their errors are reduced when they regularly corrected.

13- Errors made by learners are major elements in the feedback system of the process of language teaching and learning.

Item fifteen: errors are major element in the teaching-learning process

a- yes

b- No

option	number	Percentages
a	36	90
b	04	10
total	40	100

Table 15: errors are major element in the teaching-learning process

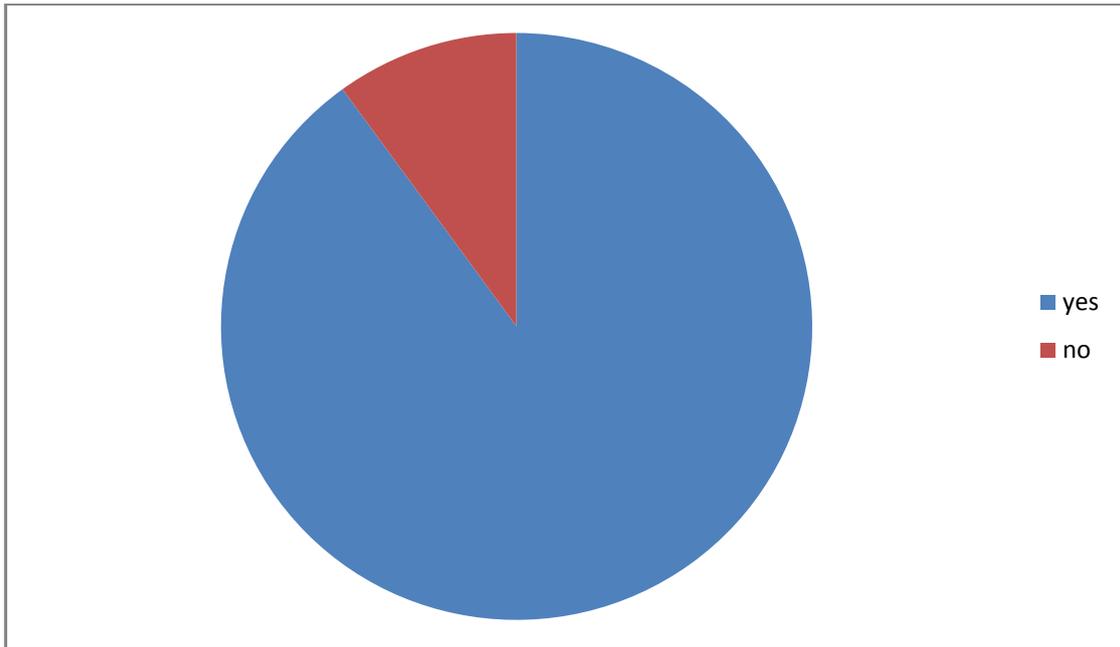


Figure 15: errors are major element in the teaching-learning process

One can notice from the results shown that (90%) of the students do believe that errors are a corner stone in the teaching-learning process. The remaining percentage (10%) of the students says that they do not think so.

14-do you feel anxious when you make errors in the L2?

Item sixteen: learners' degree of anxiety

a- always

b- Sometimesc- Never

option	number	Percentages
a	00	00
b	18	45
c	22	55
total	40	100

Table 16: learners' degree of anxiety

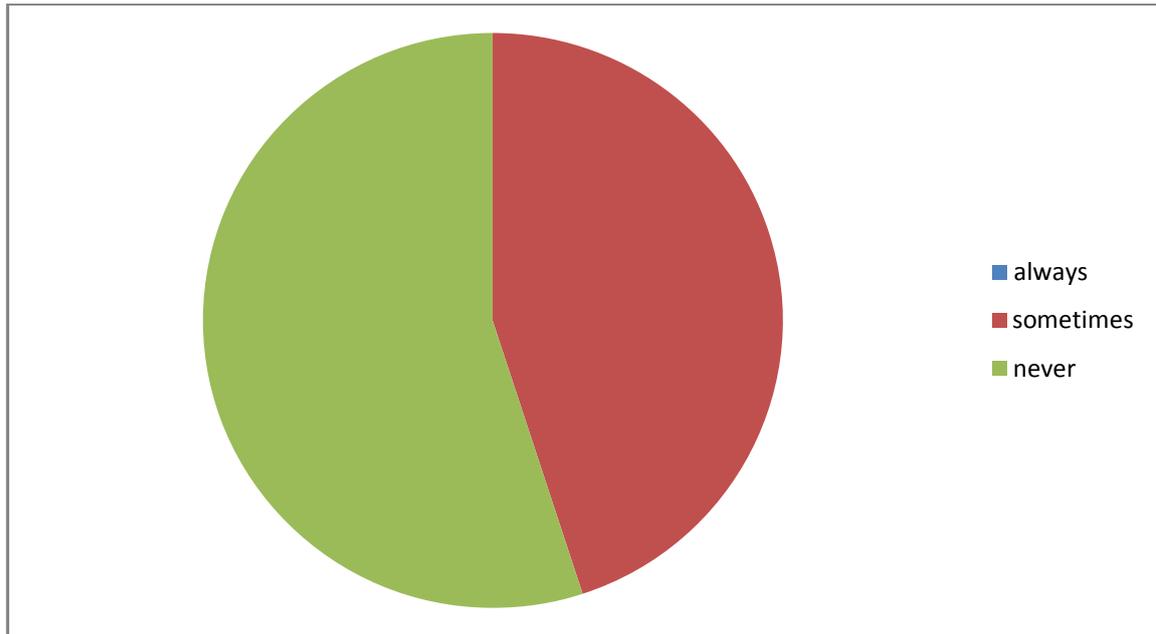


Figure 16: learners' degree of anxiety

From the results above we can see that (45%) of the students feel anxious when they make an error in the L2, while (55%) do not feel anxious.

1.4. Interpretation of the Results

First of all, the chosen sample in this study reveals that females (70%) are dominant over males (30%), this may be due to the fact that females are more interested to study foreign languages and English language particularly than males who often choose to carry on scientific studies. The current level of the students also allows us to rely on them in investigating this study since first year students of English make errors much more than the other levels.

Writing in classroom could be more successful if the learners write at least twice a week with their teachers. However, most of the students (26) state that they used to write just once a week with their teacher of written Expression (Q1) and this may be due to the allocation of time of both of them; some teachers do not have time even to complete their lessons.

Teachers then, need to know that their students should write in and outside the classroom to master the writing skill. To say teacher's amount of writing should be less than of the learners, Learners must be given practices to activate their writing skill. On the basis of the students previous answers, especially to Q2, (32) of them state that when they make an error this mean that their writing skill is in progress. Errors than can be a progressive signal for good writing, whereas for (08) of them it is a fail.

Moreover, the majority of learners (16 “a” +20 “b”) in Q3 confess that their teachers correct them when they make an error. This also indicates that the teacher has a great role and an impact on his student's performance in classroom as well as in writing. A low percentage (4) state that their teacher does not help them in correcting their errors, which means that few teachers do not complete their duty to provide comprehensible input that is suitable to their students.

The comprehensible and the correct input is essential because it is at the core of any writing activity, and students are usually in need to them from their teacher since the latter is considered as the only source in the classroom. A considerable percentage of students (34) in Q4 state that they agree that they should master the grammatical rules of the target language before writing a task. This is an indication that the learners find that mastering grammar rules is the best and the only way to write freely without errors since the learners do not write always in English, as it is shown in the answers of Q5. Students' main reason behind the believe of the students that the continuous correctness of the teacher can raise their level of anxiety is they feel shy and inferiors in front of their classmates whenever their teacher correct them because too much interruption for correcting the errors will affect the

students fluency and sometimes they take decision not to participate again. Many students (24) seem to be aware that the continuous correctness will help them.

In the Q6, the vast majority of the learners (31) wish to master the writing skill; this is due to the fact that writing in English language is considered as a complicated task. While (09) students find it easy. So, in the classroom or even outside the classroom the students are supposed to read and write much more.

A small percentage of students (08) in Q7 state that they prefer to avoid error whenever they find it, whereas (32) students when face an error they try to correct it, this judgment indicates that correcting the errors all the time in classroom will help the students in enhancing their writing skill.

Moreover, (37) of the students in Q8 claim that they do not know the difference between errors and mistakes, while just (3) of them know the difference. The teacher could help them to reduce this confusion because it is so important for them to know the difference.

From the previous answers of the learners in Q9, (20) students state that they mostly find themselves make the interference errors and that is true because generally first year students get influenced by their native language when using the target language. Other students (12) make globalization errors which mean they generate the rules. The rest (08) make the simplification error because it is so easy for them.

All these errors are normal since they are needed to learn the English language. This is why in the Q10 the majority of students (22, 18) claim that error making is a stage like all the stages of language learning as well as in the Q 11 almost all the students think that errors are significant and has great importance in the English language learning. Furthermore, in the previous answers in the Q12 all the students agree that the errors provide significance by which the teacher assesses the

learners because we think that errors can be the only suggestion for the assessment of the students' levels. Concerning the Q13 (36) students indicate that errors made by learners are major elements in the feedback system of the process of language teaching and learning because receiving feedback from the teacher is the essential part in learning. Whereas Others (3 students) do not agree, and this may be due to the fact that they are very often corrected by their teachers. In the last Q14 (18) of learners state that they feel sometimes anxious when they make an error in L2 this reveals to the fact that they may fear from the teacher or their classmates when asking questions. On the other hand (22) of them say that they do not feel anxious and less inhibited this could be if they have a strong self-confidence or the teacher is making them comfortable when asking questions.

Conclusion

The present study reveals that learners know about errors making, they consider that promoting it can have a positive impact on learners writing capacities. It primarily gives the opportunity to receive comprehensible and correct input and feedback. So, through a regular interaction with teachers of grammar and written expression, learners can try new hypothesis about how English works and then increase their English writing capacities.

General Conclusion

Enhancing the writing skill of foreign or second language learners is a difficult task. It requires some experience and regular practice to produce the language accurately and encode the intended messages of other writers. The best way to do that –according to many teachers- is to encourage the learners whom make errors inside the classroom, since learners do not use L2 frequently outside the classroom.

The current study focuses on the learner's production opportunities given by the teachers to acquire the characteristics of effective second language writers. This is confirmed by the results obtained from the analysis of data gathered from first year LMD students' questionnaire. So, the ultimate aim of this study is to show whether it is possible to develop the writing skill of learners through error analysis. We have shown that during regular correction from the teachers, learners can reduce their writing mistakes, produce new grammatical forms and words, thus strengthening their language ability. Moreover, they can test their hypothesis about language forms and receive immediate feedback from the teachers or other learners on whether or not their predictions are correct.

The analysis of students' questionnaire showed that the learners are really given chances to use the language with errors through engaging in writing which prevent them merely from reading passively other writings. Even if there are some problems which learners still have as inhibition because of shyness, anxiety, and stress in addition to some other difficulties. However, the analysis showed that such problems can be reduced progressively or disappear completely.

Learners showed a considerable awareness about the impact of error analysis on developing the learners writing skill through teachers' provision of comprehensible and correct input which help learners to understand and use the language accurately

and then use it appropriately. Moreover, receiving corrective feedback especially the explicit one where learners can recognize their linguistic errors or mistakes. The analysis also revealed that learners must be forced to correct their errors in order to master the art of writing which is difficult, since learners who keep always shy and fear of making errors in the classroom will feel at a loss for words when they find themselves in future writings situations.

Finally our hypothesis can be accepted, but we leave it open for further researches.

Recommendations

- Teachers should encourage the learners whom make errors inside the classroom, since learners do not use L2 frequently outside the classroom.
- The learners should consider error analysis as an important pedagogical strategy in enhancing and mastering the skill of writing.
- Learners should have strong foundation for their writing skill before entering a higher level of education. So, it is essential for them to master this skill.
- As future teachers, students must know about the importance of error analysis in building knowledge and developing both the writing and the speaking skills.
- learners must be forced to correct their errors in order to master the art of writing which is difficult, since learners who keep always shy and fear of making errors in the classroom will feel at a loss for words when they find themselves in future writings situations.

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Appendix

The Students' Questionnaire

A sample of questionnaire as a tool of data gathering for our dissertation

Dear students,

We are preparing a research on the importance of error analysis in the learners writing skill. We would be grateful if you could answer these questions to help us in our research. Please, use a cross (×) to indicate your chosen option, and specify your answer when needed.

Gender: male female

Age: 17-20 21-27

Level: 1st year students of English

Questions

Section one:

1- How many times a week does you write in class?

All the week twice once

2- What do errors in writing mean to you?

Progress fail

3- Does your teacher help you when you make an error?

Always sometimes never

4- You should master the grammatical rules of the T.L before writing a task? Agree

disagree

5- Do you believe that the continuous correct can raise learner's level of anxiety?

Yes no

6- Writing in English is it?

Complicated easy

Section tow

7- When you find an error you:

Avoid it correct it

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

Yes no

9- Which errors you make mostly

- Interference (influence of one's native language to target language)

- Globalization (of rules)

- Simplification

10- Error making is a stage like all the stages of language learning?

Agree strongly agree disagree

11- The errors provide significant by which the teacher assesses the learners

Agree strongly agree disagree

12- Do you think that errors are important to learn the English language?

Yes no

13- Errors made by learners are major elements in the feedback system of the process of language teaching and learning

Yes no

14- Do you feel anxious when you make error in the L2?

Always sometimes never