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**Investigating The Influence of The Mother Tongue (Arabic) on
EFL Learners' Writing: An Analysis Study of Grammatical Errors.**

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

Dissertation submitted to the department of foreign languages in partial requirement for fulfillment of Master degree in English language: Sciences of language

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Dedication

I dedicate this work to:

The sun that lights my life “My mother”

My beloved father

*My beloved four sisters who provided me with the
comfortable environment to finish this work,*

My future life partner “M” who was always beside me.

Every person has prayed for my success.

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Abstract

Producing error-free essays is the ultimate aim of EFL writing teachers. However, third year EFL students at Biskra university commit a significant number of grammatical errors in their essays. The main purpose of this study is to see whether there is a relationship between students' mother tongue (Arabic) and the grammatical errors they make in their essays. To achieve this purpose, a questionnaire was administered to ten (10) teachers in the English division at Biskra University to ask them about the main causes and the different types of grammatical errors committed by third year EFL students. Moreover, seventy-two (72) essays written by third year students were analyzed to expose the main grammatical errors types. The data that was gathered from both teachers' questionnaire and essays analysis revealed that third year EFL students commit different types of grammatical errors and the main reason for them is their mother tongue (Arabic) interference. Furthermore, it has been noticed that third year students rely mainly on their mother tongue (Arabic) compared to English when it comes to write.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

EFL: English as a foreign language.

L1: mother tongue, or first language (Arabic in this study).

L2: Second language, or foreign language (English in this study).

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GENERAL

INTRODUCTION

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

Introduction

Learning a foreign language is considered as a very complex process because it is different from a learner's native language. 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. Here, it is believed that the learner try to use his mother tongue in learning a foreign language. However, speaking and writing ways differ from one language to another. That is why, applying first language rules to learn foreign language ones may make students commit different errors in their foreign language speaking or writing activities. As the case in this research which investigates the Arabic influence on English writing which could have many negative effects on students' writing. Writing is an essential skill that should be developed among all EFL learners because it is very important especially for academic studies and researches.

This research explores the grammatical errors that third year EFL students commit in their writing in English. Investigating whether their mother tongue (Arabic) is the main reason for their grammatical errors or there are other reasons which should be taken into consideration too.

Note:

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, p.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, p.4). For this reason, all these terms are used as synonymous terms and they refer to Arabic in this study.

3-This study deals with written Arabic and not spoken one because this study is concerned with the writing skill.

1-Statement of the Problem

The best way for investigating the level of achievement of foreign language learners is to ask them to speak or write in that language, and to see to what extent do they rely on their mother tongue knowledge in learning that foreign/ second language . This investigation can be realized through analyzing their speech or writing and finding out if they commit errors in that language. It has been noticed that EFL learners make grammatical errors in their writing activities in English. As the case in Biskra University in which not only first or second year students of English who do these grammatical errors; but also third year students. This is considered as a serious problem because third year LMD students have already been taught the main grammatical rules of English in first and second year. Therefore, they are supposed to use them correctly in their writing. That is why, it is considered as unacceptable to commit these grammatical errors. This research investigates the interlingual and the intralingual reasons that lead to making grammatical errors and that is done through an error analysis study.

2-Significance of the Study

Learning a foreign or a second language is a complex process which needs a long time to make the learner skillful in that language. Learners go through different

developmental stages to be fluent and accurate in a foreign language. At the first stages, they try to apply the main rules of their native language in learning that foreign language. The application of first language rules may make foreign language learners commit errors when they speak or write. These errors may affect their production negatively. For that reason, it is significant to conduct a research to investigate the main reasons that make EFL learners commit grammatical errors. Moreover, it is important to know the main types of grammatical errors that EFL learners do in their writing. Investigating and analyzing the common errors of EFL learners in writing is very essential to know the weaknesses of students. Knowing the most serious grammatical errors made by EFL learners makes the teachers give more attention to them and take them into account for enhancing the writing skill of EFL students at Biskra University.

3-Aim of the Study

The main concerns of this study are:

- Investigating the main reasons behind making grammatical errors in writing committed by third year EFL learners at Biskra University.
- Identifying, describing, and classifying the common grammatical errors that EFL learners make in their writing.

4-Research Questions

- Does EFL learners' mother tongue (Arabic) influence their writing negatively?
- What are the reasons that make EFL learners commit grammatical errors when writing ?
- What are the main categories of grammatical errors made by EFL learners?
- To what extent do these grammatical errors affect EFL learners writing?

5-Hypothesis

If EFL learners are influenced by their mother tongue (Arabic) background and transfer its rules to write in English, they will commit a number of errors in their writing.

6-Research Methodology

This study is an error analysis study. It is based on the descriptive method in which both qualitative and quantitative approaches were used when gathering data. The researcher used the descriptive method because of time constraints. This method was of great help to finish the work in the available time.

Sample Design

The present work deals with third year LMD students of English at Biskra University as the whole population. According to the administration's statistics, this population is composed of 351 students. Because of time constraints, this study was carried out with 20% of the whole population. This sample approximately consists of 70 students who were selected randomly.

Research Tools

This study was based on two main research tools which are a questionnaire and the analysis of the written products (essays /paragraphs) that are produced by third year LMD students of English at Biskra University. The questionnaire was devoted to the teachers of grammar and written expression in the English division of Biskra University. Using the questionnaire helped the researcher to figure out the reasons of

making grammatical errors and the common types of them. Since this study is an error analysis study, the researcher analyzed the written products (essays/ paragraphs) of students. The analysis of students' essays exposed the common grammatical errors made by 3rd year EFL learners.

Research Design

This study is composed of two main parts which are the theoretical part and the practical one. The theoretical part is divided into two chapters. The first chapter presents approaches to language transfer studies. The second chapter deals with some issues related to writing in general and second language writing in particular. Furthermore, the practical part contains two chapters. The first chapter presents the data gathered from the teachers' questionnaire and its analysis. On the other hand, in the second chapter, the researcher presents the analysis of students essays which were collected from classroom practices.

7-Limitations of the Study

This study is limited to third year EFL students at Biskra University. It focuses on analyzing 72 essays written by third year students. Moreover, only the grammatical errors in the essays were taken into consideration.

CHAPTER ONE:

APPROACHES TO

LANGUAGE TRANSFER

STUDIES

Chapter One: Approaches to Language Transfer

Studies.

1-0 Introduction

The process of teaching and learning a foreign language is considered to be the most difficult task for both teachers and learners. It requires the knowledge of the different strategies that should be used by the teacher in order to make his learners achieve competency and proficiency in the target language. On the other hand, it necessitates an intensive practice of the foreign language rules on the part of the learner. Practicing the target language rules helps the learner develop his productive skills (speaking/writing) and become an effective foreign language learner.

However, in learning a foreign language, learners find a difficulty to learn and apply rules of some aspects of the language especially the rules that are related to the grammatical aspect. These difficulties are represented in a number of grammatical errors which mainly occur in their writing. Furthermore, these difficulties are said to be the result of divergences that exist between learner's mother tongue and the target language. Many studies have shown that when learners feel unable to apply the appropriate grammatical rules of the target language in their speech or writing, they usually tend to return to their native language rules. This is what has been called language transfer or mother tongue interference which is believed to be the main cause of foreign language learners' grammatical errors.

As the case of Arab learners who face a great difficulty in learning English as a foreign language. This difficulty is related to the noticeable difference between the linguistic systems of Arabic and English. It has been noticed that when Arab EFL learners face a problem in using a grammatical rule in their writing in English, they

prefer to go back to their previous knowledge of Arabic and apply it in their writing. The transfer of Arabic knowledge into English writing leads EFL learners to commit a number of grammatical errors which are the concern of this study.

The issue of language transfer has been studied by two main approaches which are contrastive analysis approach and error analysis one. That is why, this chapter illustrates the definition of each approach and its related areas. At the first level, this chapter explores language transfer as it was seen by contrastive analysis approach in addition to some differences between Arabic and English grammatical rules. At the second level, this chapter deals with error analysis approach with all the points that have relation to error analysis since it is the concern of this study. In other words, this chapter focuses on finding out the reasons of foreign language learners' errors and explaining the different procedures that should be followed by second language teachers and researchers when dealing with these errors. Therefore, the following point is contrastive analysis approach.

1.1. Contrastive Analysis Approach

Contrastive analysis is an approach related to second language acquisition studies. It appeared during the 1940's and 1960's, and it was influenced by structuralism and behaviourism. Contrastive analysis approach was firstly introduced by Charles Fries and then by Robert Lado. These two scholars are considered the pioneers in the field of language transfer which is based on contrastive analysis studies. This approach deals mainly with language transfer which is the next point.

1-1-1- Contrastive Analysis and Language Transfer

Contrastive analysis involves prediction and explanation of learners' problems based on comparing the similarities and the differences between the mother tongue and

the target language (Troike, 2006, p.34). According to Richard and Sampson (1974, p.6) and Ellis (1994, p. 47), contrastive analysis predicts learners' errors by comparing the linguistic systems of both the mother tongue and the target language. The main goal of contrastive analysis as it was stated by Troike (ibid) is to "increase efficiency in L2 teaching and testing". Furthermore, comparing two languages could be efficient for L2 teaching materials as Al-Sibai (2004, p. 2) who claimed that "when similarities and differences between an L1 and an L2 were taken into account, pedagogy could be more effective and useful".

Contrastive analysis focuses on interlingual errors. Contrastive analysis hypothesis states that errors occur when learners transfer first language habits into second language ones. It also maintains that interference takes place whenever there is a difference between native language and target language (Maicusi et al., 2000, p.169). That is why they defined contrastive analysis as the knowledge of difficulties resulting from the difference between first language structures and target language ones which permits the development of efficient strategies to face error (ibid, p.170).

As it was mentioned before, similarities and differences between the native language and the foreign language are the concern of contrastive analysis as Lado (1957) who explained that the task of learning a second language can be very successful when the two languages (L1 and L2) are similar however, it can be difficult or unsuccessful if they are different (cited in Al-Sibai, 2004, p. 3). Moreover Lado (1957) stated that "elements that are similar to learner's native language will be simpler for him and those elements that are different will be difficult" (quoted in Alam-Khan, 2011, p. 107). Concerning the issue of similarity and difference among languages, Odlin (1989) provided an example that Arab learners would omit the form of the verb "be" when they

speak in English because it is unavailable in Arabic. However, Spanish learners do not omit it because Spanish has similar grammatical structure.

Many researchers have proposed similar ways on how contrastive analysis works such as Lock (1996) who introduced four levels when dealing with language analysis which are: phonology, lexis grammar, and semantics. Grammar is also divided into word order, structure of words, and parts of speech (cited in Al-Hassan, 2013, 258). On the other hand, Troike (2006,p.35) proposed similar idea of that of Lock however, he noted that lexis and discourse should receive little attention. Another framework for contrastive analysis was proposed by James (1998) in which he divided contrastive analysis into three phases: (1) division of language into three smaller units: phonology, lexis and grammar. (2) the use of linguistic descriptive categories: use, structure, class, and system. (3) A contrastive analysis uses description arrived at the same model of language (Cited in Al-Hassan, 2013,p. 257).

1-1-2. Some Grammatical Differences between Arabic and English

Grammar is considered as an important aspect of any language. Foreign language learners should develop a strong base of the target language grammar in order to use it appropriately in their writing. However, Arab EFL learners generally face problems in learning most of English grammar aspects. Thus, it is necessary to clarify some grammatical differences between Arabic and English

1-1-2-a. Prepositions

Prepositions are considered to be the most difficult among Arab EFL learners because of cross-linguistic differences between Arabic and English prepositional system (“Contrastive Analysis”). Prepositions pose a great difficulty for EFL learners because English have various prepositions that have the same function. For example, the

prepositions “in”, “at”, and “on” indicate place with some difference in usage (Diab, 1996,p.76). As a consequence, when students are confused which preposition to use in certain cases, they usually try to translate it into Arabic and put its Arabic equivalence when writing in English. That is why, learners may use “in” instead of “at” and “for” instead of “to”, etc (Al-Hassan, 2013,p. 259). According to Scott and Tucker (1974, p.85) “an Arabic preposition may be translated by several English prepositions while an English usage may have several Arabic translations” (quoted in Diab, 1996,p.76).

1-1-2-b.Articles

English has tow main kinds of articles; the definite article “the”, and the indefinite articles “a”, and “an”. However, Arabic has one kind of articles which is the definite article “Al” that is similar to “the” in English. According to Diab (1996,p.74), in English, abstract words such as ideas, attributes, or qualities that belong to everybody or everything, are used without the definite article “ The”. However, in Arabic, such abstract words are used with the definite article “Al” that is equivalent to “The”. Hence, the misuse of article errors occur in Arabic learners’ writing in English. For instance, students write as an example, the friendship instead of friendship. On the other hand, Kinneavy and Warriner (1983, p.607) claimed that when abstract words are preceded by the article “the” in English, they become specific i.e., they indicate a possession of a certain person, group, or an object. The way of expressing this possession is by a phrase starting with “of”, “to”, or “for”. For example, you should study the culture of English. In contrast, Arabic does not use an article before abstract terms when they refer to the possession of a specific person or object (cited in Diab, 1996,p.75).

1-1-2-c.Adjectives

In Arabic, adjectives agree in number with the nouns they modify. However, the situation is different in English in which adjectives do not show agreement in number with the nouns they modify except for some adjectives such as “this-these” and “that-those”. As a result, Arab EFL learners make errors in the use of adjectives in their writing (Diab, 1996,p.74).

1-1-2-d.Word Order

Word order differs from one language to another. As stated by kinneavy and Warriner (1993,p.606) that in Arabic, for example, adjectives and adverbs follow the nouns or the verbs they modify. However, in English, they precede them (cited in Diab, 1996,p. 80). This difference in word order rules makes Arab EFL learners commit errors such as: there are four tasks easy instead of there are four easy tasks.

1-1-2-e.Singular vs. Plural Forms

The form of English words alone does not help the learners to distinguish between singular and plural forms. Some words in English have the same form either singular or plural, whereas there are some words which are singular in nature but they end with “s” of plural form. This complexity in number lead EFL learners to return to Arabic translation to determine whether a word in English is singular or plural. As an example: the word “statistics” which is a plural word in Arabic and a singular word ends with the plural form s in English. Consequently, students are confused with such forms and use them incorrectly (Diab, 1996,p.77).

1-1-2-f.Capitalization and Punctuation

There is no capitalization in Arabic alphabet therefore, EFL students tend not to use capital letters in their writing in English. In addition to capitalization, punctuation

conversions differ from Arabic to English. As a result, students commit errors in punctuation (Al-Hassan, 2013,p.260).

1-1-2-g.Coordination

Diab (1996, p.81) illustrated that in English, commas are used to separate items in a series with the use of the conjunction “and” just before the last word. In contrast, in Arabic, the conjunction “wa” which is equivalent to and precedes each item in a series. Accordingly, EFL students use the conjunction “and” with each item in a series, so, they will commit errors of misuse of connectors. The following example explains this kind of errors: I like football and basketball and swimming instead of I like football, basketball, and swimming.

These differences between Arabic and English result in a number of grammatical errors. The following points talk about different issues concerning errors and the way that teachers should deal with them.

1-2.Error Analysis Approach

The main concern of this approach is second language learners’ errors. It focuses on types and reasons of these errors with the clarification of the different procedures that should be followed in error analysis.

1-2-1.Definition of Errors

Many definitions are given to the word “error”. According to Corder (1967), errors are systematic and they result from learners’ lack of second language knowledge (cited in Troike, 2006,p.39). Ellis (1997,p.17) defined errors as gaps in a learner’s knowledge. He assumed that they occur because the learner does not know what is correct. In his book “Introducing Applied Linguistics”, Corder (1973,p.283) wrote that “errors are a result of partial knowledge because the teaching-learning process extends over time”.

This definition means that the learner can not process all the information at once because the learning process needs too much time to be covered. Furthermore, teachers could not provide their learners with all the information they need at a limited number of sessions.

Another definition of error is given by Corder (1981,p.10) in which he stated that errors are systematic and they enable the teachers or the researchers to assess the learners' knowledge of the language at a given point during the learning process. Norish (1987, p.7) defined errors as "a systematic deviation when a learner has not learnt something and consistently gets it wrong "(quoted in Ridha, 2010,p.25). According to Gass and Selinker (1994), errors are "red flags" that provide evidence of the learner's knowledge of the foreign language (cited in Al-Hassan, 2013,p.258).

However, it is important to distinguish between the term error and mistake. Many scholars have defined the term mistake in different terms however, all the definitions have the same meaning. According to Corder (1967), a mistake refers to a performance error that it could be a random guess or a slip. It is considered as a failure to correctly use what has been learnt (cited in Ridha, 2010, p.25). Another definition for mistake is put in The Dictionary of Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics (1992) in which it is stated that a learner makes mistakes when writing or speaking because of different factors such as lack of attention, tiredness, carelessness, etc. Thus, learners can correct their mistakes themselves when attention is called (cited in Ridha, 2010,p.25). Similarly, James (1998) defined a mistake which can be self corrected while an error can not (cited in Al-Hassan, 2013,p.256). According to Ellis (1997,p.17), mistakes are related to a learner's performance; they occur because the learner is unable to perform a known system.

According to Ellis(1997,p.17),there are two ways to distinguish between learners' errors and learners' mistakes. The first way is to check the consistency of learner's performance. If he sometimes uses the correct form and sometimes the wrong one, it is a mistake. On the other hand, if he always uses the form incorrectly, it is an error. The second way is asking the learner to try to correct his own deviant utterances. When the learner is unable to, the deviations are errors. However, when he is able and successful, the deviant utterances are mistakes.

However, according to Corder (1981,p.10), the task of determining what is a learner's mistake and what is a learner's error is very difficult. It needs a much more sophisticated study and analysis to be realized.

1-1-2.Positive and Negative Opinions about “Error”

There are tow different opinions concerning an error. Some researchers and theories have negative attitude towards errors while others have a positive one. As Maicusi, et al.,(2000, p.168) who maintained that the error has always been regarded as something negative that must be avoided in the second language teaching-learning process. They also added that an error was considered as a sign of inadequacy of the teaching techniques. It has long been thought that an error indicates failure and it prevents the progress of the learning process. This idea has been supported mainly by behaviourism. According to Maicusi et al., (ibid,p.169), the behaviourists considered an error as an obstacle to language learning. They also viewed it as an indicator of ineffective teaching.

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 Jain (in Richard, 1974,p.189) who 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,p. 38-39). The same idea was provided by Ellis (1997,p.15) in that he claimed that "it is possible that making errors may actually help learners to learn when they self-correct the errors they make." Moreover, Corder (1973,p.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,p.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.

1-2-3.Definition of Error Analysis

Error analysis has spread in the 1960's and 1970's. It is mainly associated with S. Pit Corder (1967) ("second Language Acquisition",n.d.). It came to replace contrastive analysis approach. Error analysis has been defined by Corder (1973, p.275) as a

comparative process in which the utterances in the learner's mother tongue are compared with those in the target language. So, it is considered as a specific case of contrastive analysis. Another definition is given to error analysis in which Troike (2006, p.37) stated that error analysis is an approach to the study of second language acquisition which focuses on the creative ability of learners to construct language. Its main concern also is the learners' errors in second language learning. Brown (1980, p.160) defined error analysis as "the process to observe, analyze, and classify the deviations of the rules of the second language then to reveal the systems operated by a learner" (quoted in Ridha, 2010,p.26).

Error analysis concerns error treatment in language teaching and it deals only with learner's productive skills (speaking and writing) and not with learner's receptive skills (listening and reading) ("Second Language Acquisition",n.d.,). It can also be defined, as Corder (1974) claimed, as a type of linguistic analysis that focuses on the errors made in the target language by L2 learners (cited in Alam Khan, 2011,p.105). Corder (1981,p.14) also maintained that error analysis is related to the investigation of the language of second language learners.

1-2-4.Reasons for Errors

In error analysis study, it is necessary to determine the reasons behind learners' errors. According to a number of studies that have been done on this issue, there are two main reasons for learners' errors which are:

1-2-4-a.Interlingual (interference) Errors

Those errors are termed "interlingual" because they are a result of language interference. Interlingual means between languages. Interlingual transfer is considered as a main reason for second language learners' errors. Dictionary of Language Teaching

and Applied Linguistics (1992) defines interlingual errors as a result of language transfer which is caused by the learner's mother tongue (Erdogan, 2005). According to Corder (1981,p.87), the term interlanguage was introduced by the linguist Larry Selinker (1969) and it refers to a linguistic system which is independent of the learner's mother tongue and of the second language. He also regarded interlanguage system as the product of a psycholinguistic process of interaction between the linguistic system of the mother tongue and of the target language. Richard and Sampson (1974,p. 5) assumed that language transfer is the first factor that influences second language learners' system. It is considered as a major reason for learners' errors in second language learning .

Moreover, Ellis (1997,p.51) stated that "L1 transfer refers to the influence that the learner's L1 exerts over the acquisition of an L2". Language transfer mainly occurs when learners try to apply rules from what they have learnt in their first language into the second language ("Second Language Acquisition",n.d.). Selinker (1972) claimed that transfer and the acquisition of the syntactic knowledge of a second language are two interrelated processes because the learner applies L1 rules to construct L2 utterances (cited in Kormos, 2006,p.100). That means that the grammar in interlanguage system that the learner creates is determined by his previous acquired knowledge and its sophistication (Corder, 1981,p.74).

Transfer is of two kinds: positive and negative. Troike (2006,p.35) explained that positive transfer is also called facilitating and it happens when the two languages (the mother tongue and the target language) contain the same structure for example, the plural morpheme "s" in both Spanish and English. According to Odlin (1989,p. 27), transfer results from similarities and differences between any language that has been previously acquired and the target language. He also stated that the native language

influence can be helpful if there are few differences between the two languages. Accordingly, he claimed that “native speakers of Spanish have a tremendous advantages over native speakers of Arabic in the acquisition of vocabulary” (ibid,p. 26). In this quotation, Odlin explained the similarity between Spanish and English vocabulary which could be of great help for Spanish learners of English and vice versa. However, the huge difference between Arabic and English vocabulary will make the task of learning the foreign language more difficult.

The second kind of transfer is the negative transfer (interference) which is defined by Lado (1964, cited in Alam Khan, 2011,p.106) and by Corder (1971, cited in Al-Hassan) as “the negative influence of the mother tongue (L1) on the performance of the target language learner”. Language interference, according to Troike (2006,p.35), is the inappropriate use of first language structures in learning a second language.

Many researchers consider that the difference between the mother tongue and the target language is the main cause of interference as it was stated by Ellis (1994,p. 47) that “interference was believed to take place whenever the habits of the native language differed from those of the target language”.

1-2-4-b.Intralingual Errors

Intralingual means within language. Intralingual errors are also named developmental errors and they refer to incomplete learning or overgeneralization of the target language rules (Troike, 2006,p. 39). According to Richard and Sampson (1974, p.6), “intralingual interference refers to items produced by the learner which reflect not the structure of the mother tongue but generalization based on partial exposure to the target language”. He added that developmental errors illustrate the attempts of the learner to build up hypotheses about the foreign language he is learning from his limited

experience of it. Similarly, Ellis (1997,p.19) maintained that “some errors seem to be universal, reflecting learners’ attempts to make the task of learning and using the L₂ simpler”. Furthermore. Richard (1974,p. 174) explained that intralingual errors involve many types and causes which are:

1-2-4-b-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”.

1-2-4-b-2.Ignorence of Rule Restrictions

It means that the failure to consider the restrictions that govern an existing structure. In other words, the application of rules to inappropriate contexts (Richard, 1974, p.175).

1-2-4-6-3.Incomplete Application of Rules

According to Richard (1974,p.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”.

1-2-4-b-4.False Concepts Hypothesized

Some developmental errors derive from faulty comprehension of the target language rules. This kind of errors occur because of poor selection and gradation of teaching items (Richard, 1974, p.178).

Distinguishing between interlingual and intralingual errors is the concern of contrastive analysis, since it requires comparative knowledge of first language and second language (Troike, 2006,p. 39). However, Ellis (1994, p.59) asserted that the task of distinguishing transfer errors from developmental errors is not an easy task, and even more difficult to distinguish the different types of developmental errors.

1-2-5.Classification of Errors

Error analysts have classified errors differently. According to Corder (1973, p.277), errors can be classified into four main categories: omission of some required element; addition of some unnecessary or incorrect element; selection of an incorrect element, and misordering of elements. He also added that within each category the linguistic levels are considered: orthographical, phonological, syntactical, and lexico-semantic. There are also some errors which can be classified according to the degree to which they interfere with communication. These errors as stated by Ellis (1997, p.20), are termed “global” and “local” errors. Global errors make the receiver (hearer or reader) unable to understand the message because the whole structure of the sentence is wrong. On the other hand, local errors affect only a single element in the sentence therefore, they do not prevent the message to be understood.

Moreover, errors can be classified into “overt” and “covert” errors as classified by Corder (1971). Overt errors are obvious even out of context, whereas covert errors are evident only in context (cited in Maicusi et al., 2000,p. 170). There is another classification which is closely related to the previous one and in which “domain” and “extent” are the two groups of errors. “Domain is the breadth of the context which the analyst must examine; however, extent is the breadth of the utterance which must be changed in order to fix the error” (“Second Language Acquisition”, n.d.).

Classification of errors is regarded as an important task for the learning process as pointed out by Ellis (1997,p. 18) that classifying errors in such ways (mentioned before) helps teachers and researchers to diagnose the problems of learners at each stage of their development and to identify the different changes in errors that occur over time. In analyzing students' errors ,there are a set of procedures to be followed. These procedures are discussed in the following points.

1-2-6.Error Analysis Procedures

The procedures for analyzing learners' errors include, as stated by Ellis (1994, 1997), many steps which are: identification, description, explanation, and evaluation of errors.

1-2-6-a.Identification of Errors

According to Ellis (1997,p. 15), the first step in the analysis of learners' errors is to identify them. To identify errors, it 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.

1-2-6-b.Description of Errors

Troike (2006,p. 39) and Ellis (1997,p. 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,p. 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.

1-2-6-c.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 overgeneralization, 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".

1-2-6-d.Evaluation of Errors

According to Ellis (1997,p.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.

1-2-7.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, p.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 self-correction.

The teacher's role is to make his learners aware of their errors and become able to correct them 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).

Conclusion

As a conclusion to this chapter, language transfer has been a central issue in many fields of study especially in applied linguistics and second language acquisition. It came as a main idea in language teaching and learning by contrastive analysis approach that was appeared in the 1940's and the 1950's. The concern of this approach is to clarify the similarities and the differences between a native language and a foreign language because it is believed that language transfer results either from the similarity between

L1 and L2 or from the difference between the two. In other words, transfer could be positive or negative . Negative transfer (interference), according to contrastive analysis approach, affects the second language learning process negatively because it is the result of the difference between the linguistic structures of a first language and a second language. The grammatical differences between Arabic as a mother tongue and English as a foreign language reveal that Arab EFL learners in general commit a number of grammatical errors especially in writing activities due to these differences.

Concerning error analysis approach, errors have two main reasons which could be interlingual and intralingual. Furthermore, to analyze learners' errors, error analysis approach proposes a set of procedures to be followed either by teachers or researchers to make the analysis more organized. Error analysis also insists on the importance of error correction because it could be very helpful for learners learning a foreign language if they correct their errors themselves. Since this study interests in learners' errors when writing, the next chapter will be devoted to talk about the importance of this skill.

**CHAPTER TWO:
DIFFERENT WRITING
ISSUES**

Chapter two : Different Writing Issues

2-0 Introduction

Writing is seen as a difficult skill to master especially if people are supposed to write in a foreign language rather than their native language. It is a complex process that demands considerable effort and practice on the learner's part to develop writing proficiency in foreign language learning. It is believed that writing forms a huge problem mainly for second language learners because it needs specific bases to be followed those which may be totally different from those that are used in first language writing.

This chapter presents different issues which are related to writing in general. Writing issues in this chapter include definition of writing, the main approaches to teaching writing, and reasons for teaching writing. It deals also with the characteristics of effective writing, teacher's roles in helping students to become good writers, and the different types of writing which should be processed by learners in and outside the class. Furthermore, it presents particularly second language writing issues including some historical information with the differences that exist between L1 and L2 writing and how should the teacher provide feedback to his L2 learners.

Definition of Writing

Writing in general is defined as a group of letters and symbols connected together to form a piece of communication (Collins, 2003). This definition does not give to writing its real meaning because it considers writing just as a matter of writing down a sum of symbols that are addressed to be read. According to Byrne, "writing is clearly much more than the production of graphic symbols just as speech is more than the production

of sounds” (1988,p.1).Furthermore, white and Ardnt (1991,p.3) maintained that writing is a complex process that requires effort and time.

Writing ability is not acquired but it is learned in formal settings (school) or transmitted through culture. Writing skills should be practiced and learned through experience (Myles, 2002,p.1). In addition to what has been said, writing is considered as a social phenomenon and it is often associated with people’s roles in a society. Hayes (1996,p.5) stated that:

Writing is also social because it is a social artifact and is carried out in a social setting. What we write, how we write, and who we write to is shaped by social convention and by our history of social interaction ...The genres in which we write were invented by other writers and the phrases we write often reflect phrases earlier writers have written. (quoted in weigle,2002,p.19).

This quotation explains that writing is mainly related to the social conventions which govern the different social relationships among people. Therefore, each person should learn how to write to be an effective member of a society. According to Tribble “to be deprived of the opportunity to learn to write is ... to be excluded from a wide range of social roles, including those which the majority of people in industrialized societies associate with power and prestige”. (quoted in Harmer, 2004,p.3).

Writing Approaches

There is a number of different approaches to the practice of writing.

The Product Approach

This approach is concerned with ‘ the aim of the task’ and with ‘the end product’ (Harmer, 2001, p.257). In other words, it focuses on the final result of a piece of writing rather than the process that it goes through. According to White (1988),this approach interests in three main points which are: grammar structures, content, and vocabulary.

Therefore, it can be said that it concentrates on the linguistic aspect of the language. Furthermore, the writer's goal in this approach is to be skillful in the use of grammatical and lexical systems of the language.

The Genre Approach

This approach is concerned with writing variations according to the social context in which a written work is produced. According to Harmer (2007, p.258), in this approach, students are given texts to study and analyze then they are asked to produce a piece of writing similar to the one that was studied. This approach consists of three important stages which are as Cope and Kalantzis (1993, p.11) 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) assumed that this approach is suitable for ESP students but it is also useful for general English students.

The Creative Approach

This approach encourages students to write imaginative writing which includes stories, poems, plays, etc. However, students may consider imaginative writing very difficult because they have no ideas to include in such writing activity (Harmer, 2007, p.259).

The Cooperative Approach

The cooperative approach encourages the cooperative work among students. According to Harmer (2007, p.260), in this approach, teachers ask their students to form groups. Each group produces one piece of writing. This approach is considered very important because, as Hedge (2005, p.14) affirmed, collaborative writing among students generates discussion between them which helps weak writers to benefit from good ones. Furthermore, Harmer (2004, p.73) illustrated that collaborative writing could be very effective for students because it enables them to learn from each other and exchange knowledge and ideas. He also added that cooperative writing improves the students' knowledge of drafting, reflecting, and revising of a piece of writing to produce a good one (ibid, p.12). This approach helps the teacher to give feedback effectively because he deals with a small group of students and not with each student separately (Harmer, 2007, P.260).

The Process Approach

For many years, the writing product was the focus of the teaching of writing more than the writing process (Harmer, 2004, p.11). The process approach came as a reaction of the view that writing is just a matter of product. According to Matsuda (n. d. in Kroll, 2003, p.21), writing as a process was introduced to L2 studies by Vivian Zamel (1976) who argued that the process writing could be beneficial to second language writers. This approach is considered very essential for learners. Harmer (2004, p.86) affirmed that without going through the different steps of the writing process approach (planning, drafting, and editing), students will not be good writers.

The writing process has many steps that should be followed by students to produce an effective piece of writing. According to Hedge (2005, p.12), writing

activities should follow some steps of planning, organizing, composing, and revising that reflect the writing process.

Planning

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, p.4). According to Hedge (2005, p.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 is writing for. Therefore, Harmer (ibid, p.11) explained that before asking students to write, the teacher should make them think about their purpose and audience through the planning stage. He asserted that “effective writers usually have a purpose in mind and construct their writing with a view to achieving that purpose” (ibid, p.39).

Drafting

According to Harmer (2004, p.5), the writer may produce many drafts until he reaches the final piece of writing. The drafting stage as Hedge (2005, p.53) considered it, is an important step in which the writer is concerned with what he is going to write and how to achieve that successfully.

Editing

After drafting and redrafting, editing is the next step in which the writer checks his writing in terms of relevance of ideas and grammar correctness (Harmer, 2004, p.5). The editing activity enables the writer to make the final readjustments that make a piece of writing ready for the reader (Hedge, 2005, p.54).

To produce a good written work, students should focus on both the meaning and the structure of a text. According to Hedge (2005, p.117), good writers focus on meaning and organization of ideas. They go through different steps of rethink, replan, revise, review, and evaluate their pieces of writing until they become ready for editing because, according to Matsuda (n. d.,in kroll, 2003, p.21), the process-based approach takes into account the organization of a written work as well as its meaning.

Reasons for Writing

There are many reasons for getting students to write both in and outside the classroom. Hedge (2005, p.9) has asked many English teachers from around the world about the reasons for asking students to write in and outside the classroom. There answers are as the following:

- For pedagogic purposes, helping learners learn the system of the language.
- For assessment purposes, evaluating learners' progress and proficiency.
- For real purposes, to see students' needs to reach their goal of learning.
- For humanistic purposes, developing learners' self-experience.
- For classroom management purposes, to make students calm when they start writing.
- For acquisitional purposes, making students learn more about the language in a conscious way.
- For educational purposes, developing intellectual thinking, self-esteem, and self-confidence.

Furthermore, teachers usually ask their students to write because they know very well that writing as an activity requires time which could be very essential for them to think about their ideas and their organization appropriately more than speaking

activities. According to Harmer(1998, p.112), “writing gives students more thinking time than they get when they attempt spontaneous conversation. This allows them more opportunity for language processing”.

Benefits of Writing

Learning to write has many benefits for learners. That is why, Harmer (2004, p.31) stated that English teaching always includes the writing skill as an essential part of the program. Moreover, Hedge (2005, p.10) maintained that writing in the English language is undertaken to facilitate learning and it allows students to check their progress by receiving feedback from the teacher. Harmer (ibid) asserted that writing could be very helpful for the students to develop their language by making them able to find solutions to the difficulties that arise in their minds when they write. As Withrow pointed out that students should be allowed to work out the solution on their own, and the teacher should avoid cutting the discussion by telling them the answer very quickly (1987, p.5). In addition to this, writing gives an indication on the students’ progress in English and it provides teachers with opportunities for diagnosing students’ problems (Hedge, 2005, p.12).

Purposes of learning to write differ from one student to another. According to Weigle (2002, p.4), for the majority of students, learning to write is needed to participate in different social aspects beyond school while others learn to write just because they will need it in their future carriers. She also added that writing is considered as an essential tool for learning especially at the university level and not only as a communication system (ibid, p.5). The importance of writing differs from a situation to another. In this context, Harmer (2004, p.31) confirmed that in some teaching situations, writing is considered as an important skill just like the other skills;

however, in other situations, writing is seen important as a tool for learning. In other words, writing in itself is not important for students but it is important in terms of developing their knowledge of grammar and vocabulary. Moreover, he explained that writing can be used as a reinforcement of what has been taught recently. For example, making students write to use certain learned grammatical rules (ibid, p.32).

There are two major purposes of writing which are according to Harmer (1998, p.112), 'writing for learning' and 'writing for writing'. 'Writing for learning' is a kind of writing that allows students to practise previous studied rules. For example, teachers may ask their students to use such learned grammatical rule to produce a piece of writing. This kind of writing activities gives reinforcement to students. So, it can be said that in 'writing for learning', the main concern is the language in itself. On the other hand, 'writing for writing' is designed to develop students' skills to become good writers. Its main objective is to make students able to write about various topics and kinds of writing. 'Writing for writing' activities focus on many things such as: language use, text construction, layout, style, and effectiveness of a written work.

Compared to the speaking skill, writing has more benefits as Hedge (2005, p.12) argued that "writing is easier to revise than speech because it is permanent and available". According to Harmer (1998, p.112), writing is effective for students because it enables them to think about what they are going to say rather than they do in speaking activities. In other words, "when writing, students frequently have more time to think than they do in oral activities" (Harmer, 2004, p.31).

Effective Writing

Every person has the ability to learn to write as he/she has the ability to speak. However, not all people could be expert writers because the writing task requires a

difficult and 'labor-intensive' process to be fulfilled (Weigle, 2002, p.31). Effective writing is not something easy because, according to Hedge (2005, p.7), it requires things which are developing ideas in an organized way, making the meaning clear without ambiguities, using the appropriate grammatical devices, and choosing vocabulary very carefully.

It is necessary also for students to master the structure of a language as Matsuda (n. d., in Kroll, 2003, p.17) who illustrated that when students master the structure and sounds of a language, they become able to write in that language. Moreover, Collins and Gentner (1980, p.62) maintained that the four structural levels in writing should be followed by the learner to produce a good piece of writing. These four structural levels are word structure, sentence structure, paragraph structure, and over all text structure.

Assessing Students' Writing

Any piece of writing students produce gives an indication on their level at each stage of their learning. According to Weigle (2002, p.5), good writing indicates that students have mastered the cognitive skills they need for university education. On the contrary, poor writing expresses that students lack the necessary skills that make them succeed in their learning.

Furthermore, there is a number of criteria that should be followed to evaluate a student's writing as it is stated clearly in this quotation that "writing ability must be assessed by more than one piece of writing, more than one genre, written on different occasions, for different audience, and responded to and evaluated by multiple readers as part of a substantial and sustained writing process ("CCCC Statement"). Here appears the role of the teacher as Hedge (2005, p.11) expressed that teachers should create opportunities for students to practice various forms and functions of writing to produce

effective written texts. However, writing in different ways and for different purposes does not just involve using different vocabulary. It is about the way of organizing ideas into sentences and paragraphs to make the reader able to get the meaning of that piece of writing (Crème & Lea, 2008, p.26).

Poor vs. Good 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, p.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, p.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, p.86), making a piece of writing clear is essential because it helps the reader read and understand a piece of writing very easily.

The Role of Extensive Writing

It is believed that extensive writing helps learners to be effective writers. According to Harmer (2004, p.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, p.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.

The Communicative Act of Writing

Effective writing is also characterized by the process of communication in which the writer and the reader could communicate the written message effectively. Therefore, students should know that a piece of writing is also a piece of communication. For this reason, knowing the reader is considered very essential as Hedge (2005, p.11) stated that knowing the reader makes the writer able to know what and how to write. Furthermore, she claimed that “successful writing depends on more than the ability to produce clear, correct sentences. There should be activities that help students to produce whole pieces of communication” (ibid, p.10). Writing as an effective piece of communication depends mainly on the audience to whom this piece of communication is written. That is why, students should be trained to write for different audience. According to Hedge (ibid, p.11), teachers should vary the audience when asking students to write to make them able to write effectively and appropriately for different communication purposes. Moreover, “classroom writing activities should reflect the ultimate goal of enabling students to write whole texts which form connected, contextualized, and appropriate pieces of communication” (ibid, p.10).

In addition to what has been said, effective writing is reached if learners’ needs are taken into consideration. Harmer (1998, p.112) pointed out that there should be a balance between the writing task that students are asked to do and their ages, levels, learning styles, and interests.

Teacher's Roles

The teacher has many roles before, during, and after the writing activity that students are engaged in.

Providing Students with Enough Information

The teacher should make his students aware of the different writing demands and features. They should provide their students with all what they need to start a writing activity. They should give them the detailed information that is related to the topic, lay out of the text, and the language used (Harmer, 2004, p.41,63). In the same line, Hedge (2005, p.55) maintained that teachers should help their EFL learners with the linguistic form and organization of the text because these conventions differ from one language to another.

Helping Student to Get Ideas

Many students may not find ideas when they are asked to write especially in creative writing tasks. They usually respond with “we have nothing to say”. In this situation, the teacher can help them to get ideas to complete their tasks in the appropriate time (Harmer, 2004, p.41). According to Hedge (2005, p.55), teachers can play a significant role in helping students to generate ideas. This can be done by exposing them to texts, pictures, interviews, etc.

Knowing Students' Needs

Writing tasks and activities should be chosen very carefully to meet students' needs. They should be suitable for each student's level. This is done when teachers know which kind of writing students prefer and enjoy. Therefore, teachers should take

students' differences into consideration (Harmer, 2004, p.62). Furthermore in helping students to get ideas for their writing tasks, teachers should concentrate on each student's needs and learning styles. Harmer (ibid) reinforced this idea by stating that teachers may help students to get ideas to complete their writing activities by making them listen to music (auditory input), see pictures (visual input), or write on the board (kinaesthetic input).

pondering to and Evaluating Students' Work

In the classroom writing, the teacher should be always available to support his students and to help them face the difficulties they find when they write at each writing step (Harmer, 2004, p.42). Before the students produce their final drafts, the teacher may respond to the content and construction of the previous drafts to suggest some adjustments if necessary. Moreover, at the final step in which students produce their final writing product, the teacher should evaluate their work to tell them the weak and the strong points of their work (ibid).

Furthermore, the way that teachers design writing activities for their learners and how they correct their work depend on the type of writing they are engaged in (Harmer, 1998, p.112). The feedback students receive from their teachers and their classmates is the most significant element in their successful development as writers (Ferris, n.d., in Kroll, 2003, p.119).

Building the Writing Habit

When teachers have the habit of writing and they enjoy it, their students will be positively affected by them (Hedge, 2005, p.15). According to Harmer (2004, p.61), teachers should help students to build the writing habit by making them feel confident

when they are asked to write. This involves choosing appropriate activities and providing them with all the information they need. Many studies also have shown that when students are exposed to writing extensively, they will develop a writing habit. To reinforce this idea, Hedge (ibid) focused on that teachers should encourage their students to write outside the classroom such as ‘personal’ and ‘non-assessed’ writing activities. Extensive writing is significant for students because it gives them opportunities to develop their competence and confidence.

Types of Writing

There are different types of writing which are identified by Hedge (2005, p.86-87) as follows:

Personal Writing: it is a kind of writing that includes journals, dairies, etc. This kind of writing appears most of the time in first language writing but it could be motivating for students in English language classroom (Hedge, 2005, p.86).

Study Writing: it is a writing type that is used for academic and educational purposes. It appears in writing essays, reviews, and making notes, summaries, etc. This type is also called ‘academic writing’ which is defined by Oshima and Hogue (2007, p.3) as that “academic writing is the kind of writing used in high school and college classes”. They also added that this type of writing is different from both creative and personal writing. Academic writing is formal (slangs and contractions are not used); however, creative and personal writing are informal so, ‘slangs and colloquial language’ are used (ibid). This kind of writing is considered the most difficult and complex task because it needs too much knowledge and practice as Myles (2002, p.1) explained that “academic writing requires conscious effort and practice in composing, developing, and analyzing ideas”.

Public Writing: it is a type of writing needed for organizations and institutions. It is used as writing letters of application, complaint, or enquiry (Hedge, 2005, p.86).

Creative Writing: it is type of writing found mainly in first language education classes and it is rarely found in second language classes. It is represented in writing poems, stories, etc (Hedge, 2005, p.86).

Social Writing: is a kind of writing that establishes social relationships among friends and families. It can be seen in forms of letters, e-mails, invitations, etc. This type of writing could be very effective for EFL learners because it gives them the chance to learn the appropriate ‘formats and formulae’ (Hedge, 2005, p.87).

Institutional Writing: This type of writing has relation with professional roles such as writing reports, agendas, etc. Each profession has its own language; as a result, there are different types of texts under this writing type (Hedge, 2005, p.87).

The table below summarises these types of writing:

Personal writing	Public writing	Creative Writing
diaries	letters of	poems
journals	--enquiry	stories
shopping lists	--complaint	rhymes
reminders for oneself	--request	drama
packing lists	form filling	songs
recipes	applications(for memberships)	autobiography

Social Writing	Study Writing	Institutional Writing
letters	making notes while reading	agendas posters
invitations	taking notes from lectures	minutes instructions
notes	making a card index	memoranda speeches
--of condolence	summaries	reports applications
--of thanks	synopses	reviews curriculumvitae
--of congratulations	reviews	contracts specifications
emails	report of	business letters note-
telephone messages	--experiments	making
instructions	--workshops	public notices (doctors
to	--visits	advertisements and other
friends	essays	emails professionals)
to family	bibliographies	

Table 2-1: Types of writing

(Hedge, 2005, p.87)

2-8 Second Language writing

Second language writing is a sub-discipline of second language acquisition studies . It has particular characteristics that makes it different from first language writing. Therefore, the following points explore some historical insights concerning second language writing , some differences between L1 and L2 , and the way of providing feedback to L2 learners.

2-8-1 Historical Insights

The audio-lingual approach was the dominant approach in the mid twentieth century. For this reason, writing was totally neglected in that era from second language studies

(Matsuda, n.d.,in Kroll, 2003, p.16). He also explained that “priority was given to spoken language because writing was defined merely as an orthographic representation of speech and because letter writing was considered to be the highest literacy need for most people” (ibid). According to Hedge (2005, p.8), writing has been neglected from the teaching of English language for some years. It is just recently second language writing issues have been included in the design of writing activities. In other words, Matsuda (n.d., in kroll, 2003, p.18) stated that writing issues were divided into L1 and L2 components, and L2 writing issues were recent in Second Language studies and they appeared mainly in the area of Teaching English as a second language (TESL). Moreover, the teaching of writing was not a significant part of the preparation of ESL and EFL teachers at least until the late 1950’s. Furthermore, teaching writing for second language learners became a central issue at the Conference on College Composition and Communication (CCCC) that was established in 1949 (ibid).

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, p.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, p.7), English as a foreign language learners are usually confused with the conventions of writing in their first language and English. Furthermore, Hyland and Hyland (2006, p.4) maintained 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, p.36) explained 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, p.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 affirmed that second language writers are not fluent and quick as native speaker ones (2002, p.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, p.126). Here, Ferris compared 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, p.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 an essay because it requires more knowledge of a foreign language than paragraph writing does (ibid).

roviding Feedback in L2 Writing

L1 writing is different from L2 writing in the composing processes (planning, transcribing, and revising) and the written text features (fluency, accuracy, quality, and structure). These differences exist mainly for writers who have low level of L2 proficiency and who rely on their L1 to write in L2 (Archibald, n.d.). According to Myles (2002, p.1), second language students should have the proficiency in language use, writing strategies, techniques, and skills to become better writers.

To evaluate second language writing, different aspects should be taken into consideration such as topic development, organizations, grammar, word choice, etc. Furthermore, it is important to give students many writing topics and let them choose one among them to test their writing proficiency and not their cultural knowledge of the topic (“CCCC Statement”). EFL teachers of writing should assess the prior knowledge and experience of their students and explain for them the ways that they are going to respond to their writing activities (Ferris, n.d., in Kroll, 2003, p.126). Moreover, Ferris asserted that teachers of second language writing should be ‘straightforward’, ‘concrete’, and ‘fairly directive’ in their feedback to L2 writers (ibid, p.124).

Conclusion

As a conclusion, it can be said that the writing skill is the most complex and difficult skill among the other skills (speaking, listening, and reading). The learner in the writing skill should be knowledgeable about its approaches and types to be an effective writer. This is mainly the role of the teacher in which he should provide his students with the necessary information and give them the constructive criticism to produce a good piece of writing. 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 first language writing. Moreover, the student should apply and practise second language writing intensively to be a skillful writer.

**CHAPTER THREE:
TEACHERS'
QUESTIONNAIRE:
ANALYSIS AND
DISCUSSION**

Chapter Three : Teachers' Questionnaire :Analysis and Discussion

Introduction :

As mentioned before, the purpose of this study is to expose the grammatical errors in third year students' writing and to investigate the main reasons for these grammatical errors paying more attention to mother tongue (L1) interference. Moreover, this study aims to find solutions for this problem. To illustrate the mentioned purposes, the researcher designed a questionnaire for written expression and grammar teachers at the English department of Biskra University. The purpose was asking them about their opinions and suggestions concerning this issue. In addition to the description and the administration of the questionnaire that will be shown in this chapter, the findings and the results will be carefully analyzed and discussed to reach the mentioned objectives.

Description of the Questionnaire

The questionnaire consists of ten (10) questions which are devoted to grammar and written expression teachers at the English department of Biskra University. The ten questions are composed of seven closed-ended questions which are number (1,2,4,5,6,7, and 10) and three open-ended questions which are (3,8, and 9). The first question investigates whether third year students make many grammatical errors in their writing or not. The second question is given to know the main grammatical errors types that third year EFL students commit in their writing in English. Questions number three, four, and five are designed to discover the main causes that make grammatical errors occur in third year students' writing and the importance of knowing these causes for

teachers. Moreover, the purpose of the questions number six and seven (a-b) is to explore the importance of errors correction among teachers and whether they involve their students in the correction with the extent to which third year students are able to correct their errors. Question number eight investigates the way that grammatical errors affect third year students' writing. Question number nine (9) asks teachers to suggest some solutions or strategies to make students avoid grammatical errors when writing. The last question is done to see teachers' agreement or disagreement with the suggestion that third year students should have extra grammar lessons.

Administration of the Questionnaire

The questionnaire was given to ten teachers in English department at Biskra University who mainly teach grammar and written expression. The teachers were very cooperative and they have answered all the questions in short period of time.

Analysis of the Questionnaire

To make the analysis and discussion of results more organized, question three, four, and five are grouped together under the title 'causes of grammatical errors'. Moreover, question six and seven (a-b) are entitled 'the importance of error correction'.

Question 01: Do third year students make a lot of grammatical errors in their writing?

Option	yes	No
Percentage	80%	20%

Yes: Third year students make a lot of errors in their writing.

No: Third year students do not make a lot of errors in their writing.

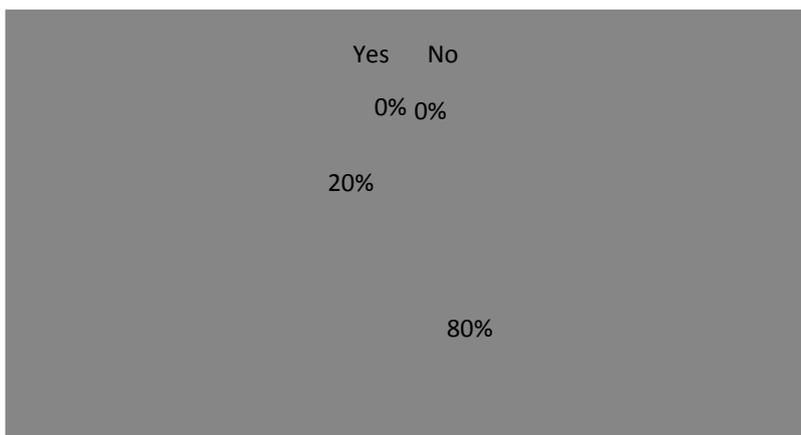


Table3-1;Figure 3-1 teachers' attitudes towards the amount of errors committed by third year students.

Concerning this question, eight of the teachers (80%) have answered positively. They confirmed that there is a number of grammatical errors in third year EFL students' writing. However, only two teachers (20%) have answered negatively; assuming that third year students do not commit a lot of grammatical errors in their writing in English.

Question 02: What kind of errors do they make?

Error type	Number of teachers	Percentage
Misuse of prepositions	07	70%
Misuse of articles	08	80%
Misuse of adjectives	06	60%
Word-order errors	10	100%
Wrong use of tenses	09	90%
Misuse of connectors	05	50%
Wrong use of singular and plural forms	08	80%

3-2 Type of errors

According to the teachers' answers, third year students have many problems concerning English grammar. All of the teachers (100%) agree that word-order errors is the main type of students' errors because English word order system is different from the Arabic one.90% of the teachers have mentioned that students make errors in the use of tenses because of the complexity of English tenses in comparison with Arabic tenses. In addition to word order and tenses errors, 80% of the teachers have noticed that third year EFL students have serious problems in the use of articles and singular and plural forms. Moreover, 70% of them believed that students do not master the use of prepositions in their writing in English and they often mix up Arabic prepositions with English ones. The misuse of adjectives is also one of the types of errors that third year EFL students commit because 60% of the teachers have considered that students do not use adjectives appropriately when writing. Only 50 % of the teachers saw that students commit other types of errors such as subject-verb agreement, misuse of adverbs, modals, reported speech, and spelling mistakes.

Question 03,4, and 5: Causes of errors

Question 03: In your point of view, what is/are the cause (s) of these grammatical errors?

In the answer of this question, teachers have proposed many causes of grammatical errors in third year students' writing. These causes are arranged in the table below according to their occurrence in teachers' answers.

Cause	Frequency	Percentage
-No revision	01	10%
-Lack of cooperation between grammar and written expression lessons	01	10%
-The unimportance of grammar in students' view	02	20%

-Lack of grammatical rules acquisition	02	20%
-Insufficient time allotted to grammar and written expression courses	03	30%
-Overgeneralization of rules	04	40%
-Lack of reading	06	60%
-L1 interference	06	60%

Table3-3 Causes of errors

Question 04: Do you think that these grammatical errors are because of their mother tongue (Arabic) interference?

Option	Yes	No
Percentage	70%	30%

Yes: The mother tongue (Arabic) interference is the main reason for students' grammatical errors.

No: The mother tongue (Arabic) interference is not the main reason for students' grammatical errors.

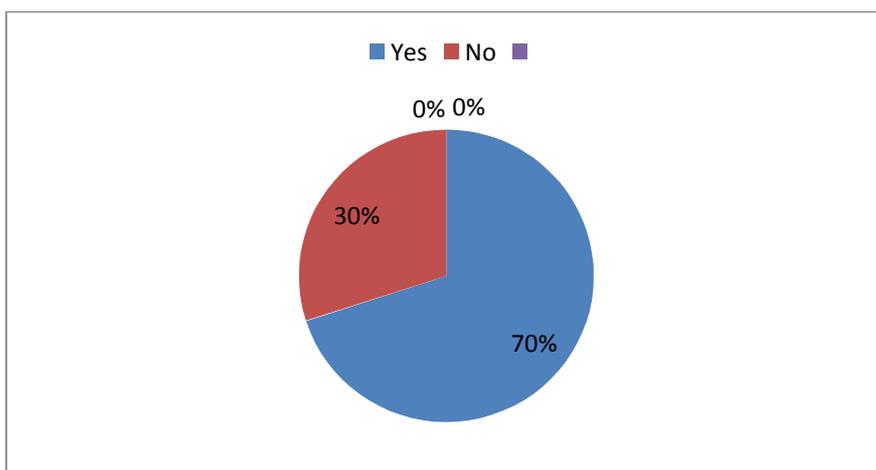


Table3-4;Figure 3-2 teachers' attitudes towards Arabic as a main reason for students' errors.

Question 05: Do you think that knowing the reasons behind these errors will make the teaching process easier for you?

Option	Yes	No
Percentage	100%	00%

Yes: knowing the reason behind students' errors makes the teaching process easier for teachers.

No: knowing the reason behind students' errors do not makes the teaching process easier for teachers.

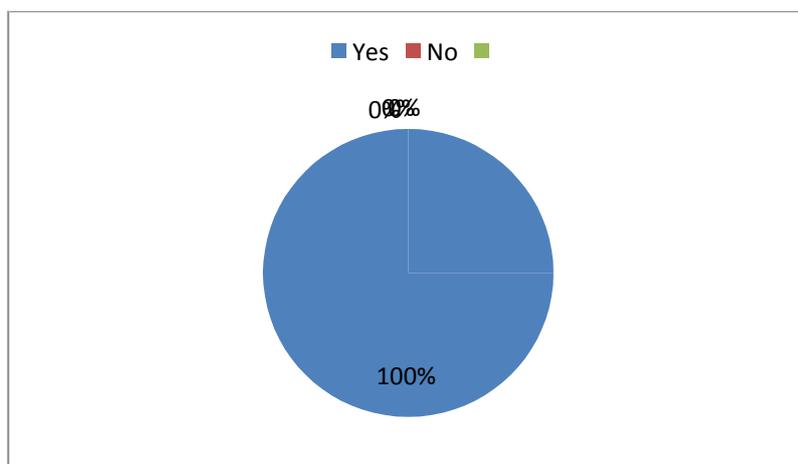


Table3-5;Figure 3-3 teachers' attitudes towards knowing the reason behind students' errors.

The table above (question 03) shows that there are different causes for third year students' grammatical errors according to teachers' answers. Some causes are considered less important than others since few teachers mentioned them in their answers. These causes include 'no revision' and 'lack of cooperation between grammar and written expression lessons' which occurred only with 10% in teachers' answers.

They also include ‘the unimportance of grammar in students’ view’ and ‘lack of grammatical rules acquisition’ that occurred only with 20% of teachers’ answers. Other causes are considered more important than the previous ones. These causes contain ‘insufficient time allotted to grammar and written expression courses’ (30%) and ‘overgeneralization of rules’ (40%). Furthermore, there are two other causes which constitute 60% of teachers’ answers; therefore, they are considered the most important ones. These two causes are ‘lack of reading’ and ‘L1 interference’. Moreover, the answer of the question number four (4) illustrates that L1 interference is the main cause for third year EFL students’ grammatical errors because 70% of the teachers answered positively and only 30% of them answered negatively. Concerning question number five (5), all the teachers have answered positively and all of them believe that knowing the reasons behind students’ grammatical errors will help them to provide the appropriate remedy and it will make the teaching process easier for them.

Question 06, 07 (a-b): The importance of error correction

Question 06: Do you give much importance to error correction?

Option	Yes	No
Percentage	70%	30%

Yes: teachers’ give importance to error correction.

No: teachers do not give importance to error correction.

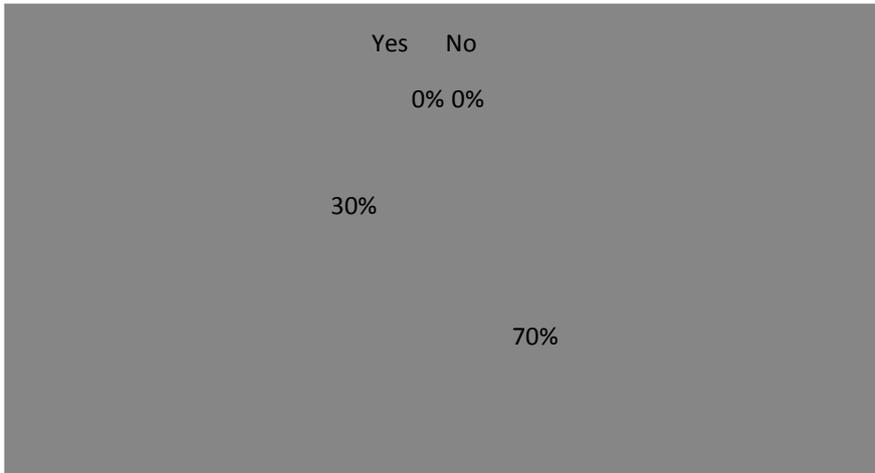


Table3-6,Figure 3-4 teachers' attitudes towards the importance of error correction.

Question 07-a: Do you ask you third year students to correct their errors themselves?

Option	Yes	No
Percentage	80%	20%

Yes: teachers ask their students to correct their errors themselves.

No: teachers do not ask their students to correct their errors themselves.

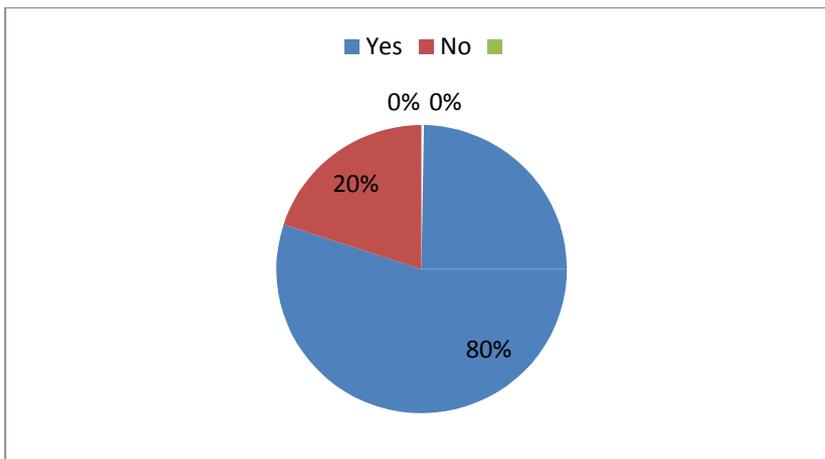


Table3-7:Figure 3-5 teachers' view to correcting errors by students.

Question 07-b: If your answer is yes, how often do you find them able to do so?

The answer of the 80% of teachers who have answered positively about question (7-a) are shown in the table below:

Option	Always	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
Percentage	00%	62,5%	37,5%	00%

Always: students are always able to correct their errors.

Sometimes: students are sometimes able to correct their errors.

Rarely: students are rarely able to correct their errors.

Never: students are never able to correct their errors.

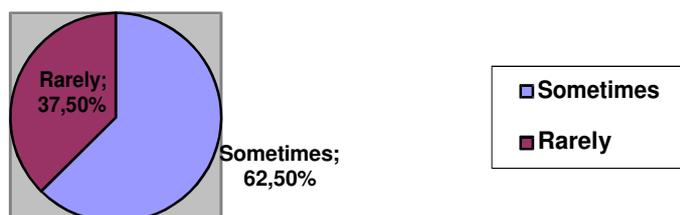


Table3-8:Figure 3-6.The frequency of students' ability in correcting their grammatical errors.

Concerning the importance of error correction, 70% of the answers were positive. This means that most of teachers give importance to error correction because it helps learners to improve their language learning. On the other hand, 30% of teachers do not consider error correction as an important step for learning. Most of the teachers who have answered positively to question (6) have answered positively too to question (7-a)

in which 80% of them stated that they ask their students to correct their errors themselves. They believe that error correction by students enables them not to repeat them again. However, 20% of them do not ask their students to correct their errors themselves; maybe because of the large number of students in each class. 50% of the answers to the question (7-b) reveal that students are sometimes able to correct their errors while 30% of the answers express that they are rarely able to do so. These results show that third year students find some difficulty to correct their errors themselves because in some cases they do not even know the exact rule.

Question 08: In your opinion, how can these grammatical errors affect third year students' writing?

Many answers are given to the effect of grammatical errors on third year students' writing. All of the teachers agree that grammatical errors have negative effects on students' writing. They maintain that these grammatical errors impede communication because they prevent them to transmit their written messages effectively. In other words, students can not express themselves properly. Moreover, these errors mislead and confuse the reader, thus students will be perceived as poor writers. Furthermore , grammatical errors affect students' writing very much because with too many grammatical errors, students' writing become less accurate and meaning less clear. Hence, content and organization are not enough because the form (language) is also important. Some teachers also added that grammatical errors give bad impression on students' level; therefore, they get bad marks in their exams.

Question 09: what are the solutions or strategies you can suggest to avoid grammatical errors when writing?

Teachers have proposed different solutions and strategies for students to avoid making grammatical errors when writing. One of the main solutions they suggest is reading because the more students read the more they acquire the language. Students must read a lot to be familiar with English sentence structure. Furthermore, some teachers suggest that reading skills should be introduced in university courses. Writing also has been proposed as an effective strategy to avoid grammatical errors. Students should write not only when they are asked to write but also as a habit of writing. One of the teachers wrote that the proverb says if you want to write, write! Through writing, students discover their errors and then they correct them. Teachers also believe that more training (homework, exercises) with more guidance and feedback help students develop their knowledge of the language.

Question 10: Third year students should be taught grammar lessons intensively .Please state if you:

1-Strongly agree 2-

Agree

3- Neither agree nor disagree 4-

Disagree

5-Strongly disagree

-To avoid rewriting the choices, their numbers are used in the table below:

Option	1	2	3	4	5
Percentage	20%	30%	10%	40%	00%

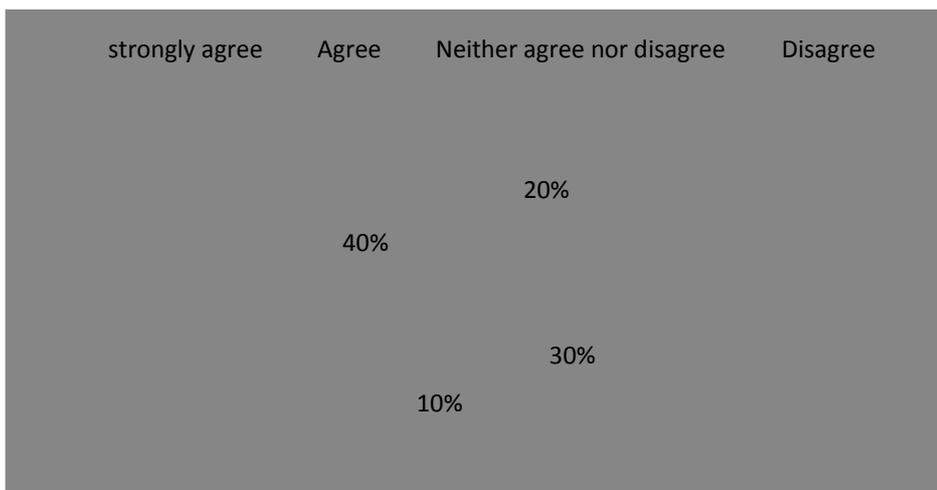


Table3-9;Figure 3-7 teachers' attitudes towards adding grammar lessons to third year students

The table and the figure show that teachers have different opinions concerning the intensive grammar lessons that third year EFL students should have. 10% of them have neutral opinions about this suggestion while others (40%) have negative opinions (disagree). They assumed that third year students should discover their weaknesses themselves and try to strengthen them through autonomous learning and self-development. On the contrary, 50% of teachers (20% strongly agree and 30% agree) thought that it is necessary to add grammar lessons for third year students because first and second year grammar lessons are not enough and students should be exposed to English grammar for a third year.

3-4 Summary of the Findings

The teachers' questionnaire showed that third year students commit a lot of grammatical errors in third writing. According to the teachers' answers, the grammatical errors are of different types such as preposition, article, tense, word order errors, etc. They have also proposed many reasons for students' grammatical errors especially lack of reading and the mother tongue (Arabic) interference which constituted 60% of the

teachers' answers. Moreover, 70% of the teachers consider the mother tongue (Arabic) interference as a main reason for the grammatical errors that occur in students' writing. In addition to that, all of the teachers (100%) believe that knowing the reasons behind students' grammatical errors makes the teaching process easier and helps them in providing the appropriate remedy.

Concerning the importance of error correction, most of the teachers (70%) give a great importance to error correction and most of them also ask their students to correct their errors themselves. However, the students are not always able to correct their errors because they are sometimes do not even know the correct rule.

The grammatical errors in students' writing have many negative effects on students' writing. They could prevent a piece of writing to be understood by the reader. Moreover, the students could be received as poor writers; here the teacher gives them weak scores in their tests and exams. To avoid these grammatical errors, teachers have suggested many solutions in their answers. They mainly focused on reading different English works which make the students familiar with English grammar and vocabulary. Furthermore, encouraging students to write in English helps them avoid making grammatical errors because the more they write, the more they become able to apply English grammatical rules correctly in their writing.

The teachers' answers concerning the intensive grammar lessons were different. 40% of them disagree and see that third year students should develop their English grammatical knowledge themselves. On the other hand, 50% of them consider it as an important step because the two previous years in which they were exposed to English grammar are not sufficient.

Conclusion:

The obtained results show that third year EFL students commit a number of grammatical errors in their writing. These errors are of different types especially errors in the use of tenses and word order. According to teachers' answers, there are many reasons for these grammatical errors. The main ones are lack of reading, overgeneralization of rules, and mother tongue (L1) interference. Furthermore, the results reveal that error correction is given a great importance from teachers because they consider self-correction as an important strategy for learning. They also believe that grammatical errors affect students' writing in different negative ways; mainly in terms of preventing communication i.e., written messages to be comprehended by readers. They also affect students in getting weak scores in their exams. Reading a lot is the main solution that teachers suggest to avoid grammatical errors beside too much training (homework, exercises). In addition to what has been said, some teachers agree that third year EFL students are supposed to have more grammar lessons, while others consider it as a needless step.

CHAPTER FOUR:
STUDENTS' ESSAYS:
ANALYSIS AND
DISCUSSION

Chapter Four: Students' Essays: Analysis and Discussion.

4-0 Introduction

The ultimate aim of this research is to investigate the influence of the mother tongue (Arabic) on third year EFL learners' writing at Biskra University. For this reason, the aim of the researcher was asking third year students to write an essay about some suggested topics. However, because of the long program which they should complete, written expression teachers refused to give the researcher some time to ask third year students to write an essay about the suggested topics. Instead, they accepted to give the researcher the essays which were written by third year students as a practice inside the classroom and as homework.

The essays were about different topics which are:

- Competitive swimming, an ideal sport for kids.
- Why do students cheat in exams?
- What are the negative or the positive effects of internet on young teenagers?
- Why learning English is important nowadays?
- What are the negative effects of smoking?
- Does participation in sport keep teenagers out of troubles?
- Man and woman relationship before marriage.

Since the purpose of this study is analyzing the grammatical errors only that occur in third year students' essays and these topics have no effect on the results, the researcher relied on these essays.

As it was mentioned before, only 20% of the population is the focus of the study. That is why, seventy-two (72) essays were randomly collected and carefully analyzed to find out the grammatical errors that third year EFL students commit in their writing as an evidence of the mother tongue (Arabic) interference. The analysis of third year students' essays reveals that they make a significant number of grammatical errors of different types. These grammatical errors were found to be the result of both interlingual and intralingual reasons.

Results and Discussion

Type of grammatical errors	Frequency	Percentage
Articles	118	26,88%
Subject-verb agreement	103	23,46%
Capitalization	81	18,45%
Singular/Plural forms	38	8,66%
Prepositions	30	6,83%
Verb tense and form	21	4,78%
Word order	15	3,42%
Omission of "to be"	14	3,19%
Auxiliaries	11	2,5%
Coordination	08	1,82%
Total	439	100%

Table4-1 Total number of third year students' grammatical errors

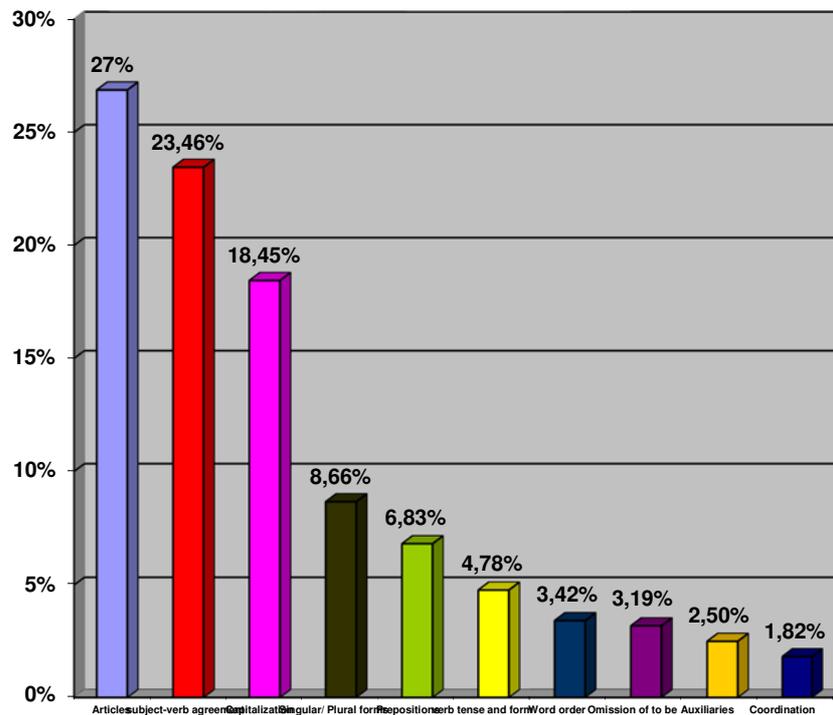


Figure4-1 : types of grammatical errors

It was found that third year students committed many grammatical errors in English writing. The total number of these grammatical is 439 errors counted in seventy- two (72) essays. These grammatical errors include different types which are errors of articles, subject-verb agreement, singular/plural forms, prepositions, verb tense and form, word order, capitalization, omission of the verb “to be”, auxiliaries, and coordination. Errors in the use of articles were ranked the first type of errors that third year students committed in their essays with 118 errors (26, 88%) out of the total number. The second type is subject-verb agreement which occurred in students’ writing with 103 errors (23, 46%). Furthermore, capitalization errors were also a noticeable type with 81 error (18, 45%). The use of singular or plural forms is another problem for third year students because it appeared with 8, 66% (38 errors) in their writing. The

number of proposition errors that were found in students' essays is 30 errors which constitutes 6, 83%. Moreover, verb tense and form were ranked number six because they are 21 error with 4, 78% out of the whole percentage of grammatical errors. Word order and omission of the verb "to be" approximately appeared with the same percentage which is 3, 42% for word order errors (15 errors) and 3,19% for errors of omission of the verb "to be" (14 errors). There are also two types of errors which occurred in third year students' writing with low percentage that is 2,5% for auxiliaries and 1,82% for coordination errors. The analysis and discussion of each type of grammatical errors are shown in this chapter. Moreover, examples of each type of errors are given with the correction to illustrate the types of grammatical errors.

Article Errors

The misuse of articles was found to be the most grammatical error type in third year students' writing. It constitutes 26, 88% of the entire percentage of grammatical errors. This type of errors is divided into two sub-categories which are omission and addition of articles. The addition of the definite article "the" appeared with 89 errors (75, 43%) out of the total number of article errors while the omission of the indefinite articles "a" and "an" appeared with 29 errors (24, 57%). 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. They added the definite article "the" where it is not appropriate; however, they omitted the indefinite articles "a" and "an" where they are appropriate. They used the definite article "the" with abstract nouns (examples 1,2,3,4 and 5) and before the names of countries (example 6). However, they did not use the indefinite articles "a" and "an" before the nouns which need them (examples 9,10,11,12, and 13).

Examples: (addition of the article “the”)

1-The marriage must be built on ...

-Marriage must be built on ...

2-Man and woman relationship is forbidden before the marriage.

- Man and woman relationship is forbidden before marriage.

3-The food is necessary for ...

-Food is necessary for ...

4- ... due to its benefits for the health.

- ... due to its benefits for health.

5- ... is very important in the life.

- ... is very important in life.

6- Swimming is a famous sport in the U.S.A.

- Swimming is a famous sport in U.S.A.

7- The swimming is the best sport

- Swimming is the best sport

8- The competitive swimming provides many benefits

- Competitive swimming provides many benefits.

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

9- Competitive swimming is important skill.

- Competitive swimming is an important skill.

10- Swimming is sport which has ...

- Swimming is a sport which has ...

11- There is belief which says ...

- There is a belief which says ...

12- Language is part of ...

- Language is a part of ...

13- They can find information in easy way.

- They can find information in an easy way.

Subject-verb agreement errors

Subject-verb agreement errors were ranked the second type after article errors. They constitute 23, 46% of the whole number of grammatical errors. 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 (examples 1, 2, and 3) and omit it when the subject is singular examples (4, 5, 6 ,7 , and 8). 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-Yong teenagers spends most of their time using the internet.

-Yong teenagers spend most of their time using the internet. 2-

Those people wants to ...

-Those people want to ... 3-

They thinks that ...

-They think that ...

4-It confirm that ...

-It confirms that ...

5-The way she dress, talk, and walk

-The way she dresses, talks, and walks

6-Swimming build muscular strength

-Swimming builds

7-Our religion refuse such behavior

-Our religion refuses such behavior

8-Internet help us in many things.

-Internet helps us in many things.

Capitalization errors

The results of this study have shown that most of third year students did not write capital letters at the beginning of a sentence and even when a sentence is the beginning of new paragraph. This kind of errors represents 18, 45% (81 error) of all the grammatical 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. Some examples are given below:

Examples:

1-competitive swimming is an ideal activity for young people.

-Competitive swimming is an ideal activity for young people.

2-... .this also shows that ...

-... .This also shows that

3-according to my experience, ...

-According to my experience... 4-

it is a good exercise.

-It is a good exercise.

5-generally, we can say that ...

-Generally, we can say that ...

ingular/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 was repeated thirty-eight (38) times in students' essays i.e., it constitutes 8, 66% of all the grammatical errors. It was found that third year students omitted the "s" of plural even when the sentence contains words such as many, some, all, these, or those which represent the plural (examples 1,2,3 and 4) and they added it with words such as every, each, etc as it is shown in the examples 5 and 6. The misuse of the "s" of plural in the previous cases may be explained by the incomprehensibility the rules. In other words, students have not perfectly comprehended the rules of plurality in English. The errors of singular/plural forms which are caused by incomprehensibility of rules constitute 68, 42% of the 38 errors of singular/plural forms. However, there is another reason for this kind of errors which is interlingual transfer (mother tongue influence). Some words such as "homework" and "information" which are uncountable in English but they are countable in Arabic were written with the "s" of plural in third year students' essays (examples 7,8, and 9). These errors constitute 31, 58 out of the whole percentage of singular/plural form errors.

Examples:

1-There are many kind

-There are many kinds 2-

I refuse these idea

-I refuse these ideas

3-It has a lot of advantage

-It has a lot of advantages

4-We discover many thing ...

-We discover many things ...

5-Success is the goal of every students

-Success is the goal of every student

6-Learning English is important for each countries

-Learning English is important for each country. 7-

Students do not do their homeworks.

-Students do not do their homework.

8-They use internet to search for informations.

-They use internet to search for information.

9-Swimming promotes cooperations among team members.

-Swimming promotes cooperation among team members.

position Errors

The analysis of third year students' essays has shown that they find a difficulty in the use of prepositions. Preposition errors were counted to thirty (30) errors (6, 83%) among 439 grammatical errors. As it was stated in chapter one that English has many prepositions which have the same function. Some of the prepositions have their equivalents in Arabic while others do not. That is why, in some cases, students are confused which preposition to use. Therefore, they go back to Arabic to see which

preposition suits this or that case. The difference between Arabic and English prepositional systems makes learners commit errors in the use of prepositions. The following examples illustrate clearly what has been said.

Examples:

1-They use to search about information.

-They use to search for information.

2-It helps us at get different information

-It helps us to get different information

3-They can not defend about themselves

-They can not defend themselves

4-They are not satisfied by what they did.

-They are not satisfied with what they did. 5-

Doctors advise people by practice sport.

-Doctors advise people to practice sport.

b tense and form errors

Using the appropriate verb tense and form is a problem for third year students. They have made 21 error (4, 78%) in their essays. These errors in verb tense and form occurred because of the complexity of English tenses in comparison to Arabic tenses. Some cases show that when students want to express the present, they usually put the present form of the verb to be +the intended verb conjugates at the present (examples 1, 2, and 3). In other cases (examples 4, 5,6 and 7), 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 (examples 8 and 9). They also mix between the past continuous and the simple past (example 10). 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 is builds

-It builds

2-This is prevents people...

-This prevents people...

3-It is promotes cooperation among team numbers

-It promotes cooperation among team numbers

4-They can meeting each other.

-They can meet each other.

5-He can visiting other countries.

-He can visit other countries. 6-

Sport can reflected...

-Sport can reflect...

7-The body will taking good results.

-The body will take good results.

8-...to keeps people out of daily pressure.

-...to keep people out of daily pressure. 9-

To talks about two main things.

-To talk about two main things.

10-He was enjoying work with me.

-He enjoyed work with me.

Word Order Errors

The analysis third year students' essays reveals that they still have a problem in word order. Word order errors constitute 3,42% (15 error) of the grammatical errors in this study. The two examples below show that third year students are still influenced by Arabic word order system. They tend to make the adjective follows the noun according to Arabic word order system; however, the adjective should precede the noun in English. Therefore, this kind of errors occurred in third year students' writing mainly because of Arabic interference.

Examples:

1-Using internet is considered as a habit bad.

-Using internet is considered as a bad habit. 2-

It organizes the operation breathing.

-It organizes the breathing operation.

Omission of the Verb “to be” Errors:

Omission of the verb “to be” errors occurred in students’ writing with 14 errors (3,19%). Some students omitted the verb “to be” when they write in English because they do not have such verb in Arabic. Thus, the only explanation of this type of errors is the mother tongue (Arabic) interference because the absence of this verb in Arabic leads students to omit it when they write in English. Here are some examples of this kind of errors.

Examples:

1-It used by business men.

-It is used by business men. 2-

It much easier than...

-It is much easier than...

3-Swimming good for memory.

-Swimming is good for memory.

4-Swimming less dangerous than...

-Swimming is less dangerous than...

5-The last point which represented in...

-The last point which is represented in...

Auxiliary Errors

There is another difficulty for third year students which is the use of auxiliaries in an appropriate way. The misuse of auxiliaries occurred with a low percentage compared to the other grammatical errors types that is 2,5% (11 error). Students committed errors in producing negative sentences (examples 1 and 2) and interrogative sentences (examples 3 and 4). These errors appeared in students' essays because of the absence of auxiliaries such as do, does, and did in Arabic. So, interlingual transfer is the responsible for this kind of errors.

Examples:

1-They are not use the internet for a long time.

-They do not use the internet for a long time.

2-It is not happen.

-It does not happen.

3-Are they participate in sport?

-Do they participate in sport?

4-Is smoking affect the human body?

-Does smoking affect the human body?

Coordination Errors

The last type of grammatical errors that has the lower percentage (1, 82%, 8 errors) is coordination errors. It has been said in chapter one that in English, commas are used to separate items in a series. However, third year students used "and" and "or"

to link each item in a series with the other. This can be caused by Arabic transfer since “wa” in Arabic that is equivalent to “and” in English is used before each item in a series. The following two examples show this type of errors.

Examples:

1-This language could be French or Spanish or English.

-This language could be French, Spanish, or English.

2-Some people believe that honesty and faith and tolerance are...

-Some people believe that honesty, faith, and tolerance are...

Causes of third year students’ grammatical errors

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

Errors caused by interlingual transfer

Type of grammatical errors	Frequency	Percentage
Articles	118	40,83%
Subject-verb agreement	00	00%
capitalization	81	28,03%
Singular/Plural forms	12	4,15%
prepositions	30	10,38%
Verb tense and form	00	00%
Word order	15	5,21%

Omission of “to be”	14	4,84%
Auxiliaries	11	3,80%
coordination	08	2,76%
total	289	100%

Table 4-2 Total number of interlingual errors

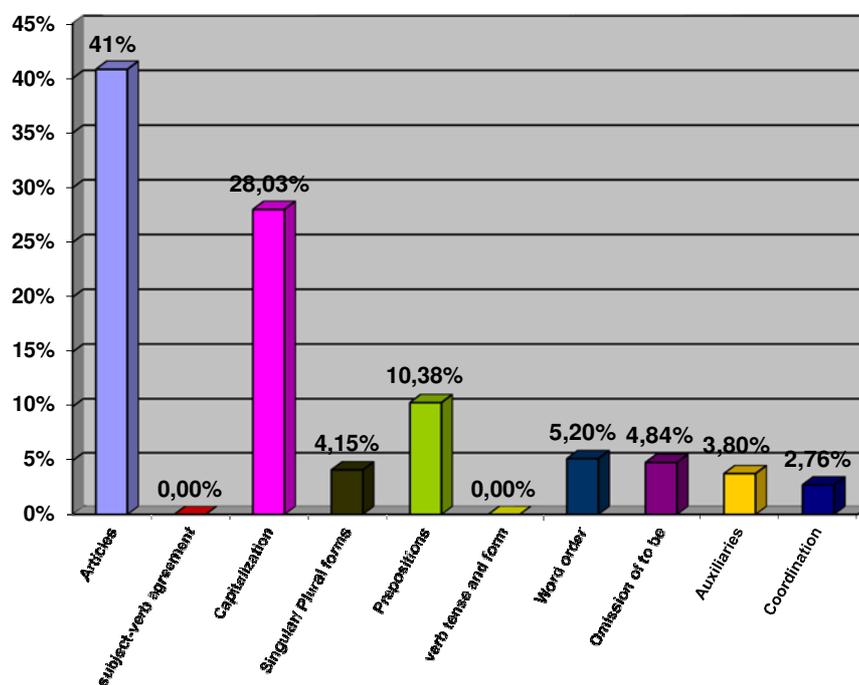


Figure 4-2: errors caused by interlingual transfer.

According to the table 4-2 and the figure 4-2, errors caused by interlingual transfer are 289 errors of the total number of grammatical errors. The high percentage is 40,83% which represents article errors. Errors of capitalization are 81 error with 28,03%. Preposition errors are 30 error which constitute 10,38% out of the total number of errors caused by interlingual transfer. Errors counted in word order are 15 error (5,2%). Moreover, errors in the use of singular/plural forms are nearly the same with errors of omission of the verb “to be”; the former type constitutes 4,15% while the latter constitutes 4,84%. Errors of coordination and auxiliaries form the lowest percentages. Auxiliary errors form 3,8% whereas coordination errors form 2,76% of the total number. However, there are no errors in subject-verb agreement and verb tense and form.

Errors caused by intralingual transfer

Type of grammatical errors	Frequency	Percentage
Articles	00	00%
Subject-verb agreement	103	68,66%
capitalization	00	00%
Singular/Plural forms	26	17,34%
prepositions	00	00%
Verb tense and form	21	14%
Word order	00	00%
Omission of “to be”	00	00%
Auxiliaries	00	00%
coordination	00	00%
total	150	100%

Table 4-3 Total number of intralingual errors.

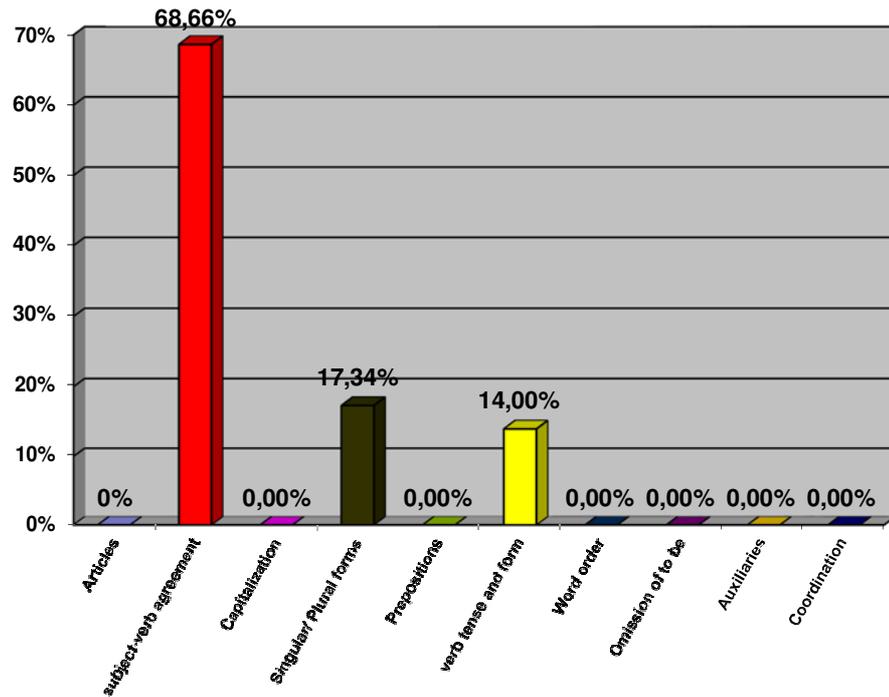


Figure 4-3: errors caused by intralingual transfer.

The table 4-3 and the figure 4-3 show that errors caused by intralingual transfer are 150 errors out of all the grammatical categories which are subject-verb agreement, verb tense and form, and singular/plural forms. The high percentage which is 68, 66% (103 errors) was counted to subject-verb agreement errors. Verb tense and form errors constitute 14% (21 error) while errors in the use of singular/plural forms constitute 17,34%. The other types of grammatical errors which include articles, prepositions, capitalization, auxiliaries, word order, omission of “to be”, and coordination do not occur under the errors caused by intralingual transfer.

Interlingual vs. Intralingual transfer errors

These results show that there are two main reasons for third year students’ grammatical errors in English writing which are interlingual transfer (Arabic interference) and intralingual transfer (overgeneralization, complexity, and incomprehensibility of rules). However, errors caused by mother tongue interference

constitute the high percentage that is 65, 83% than errors caused by intralingual transfer which constitute 34,17% out of the total number of grammatical errors.

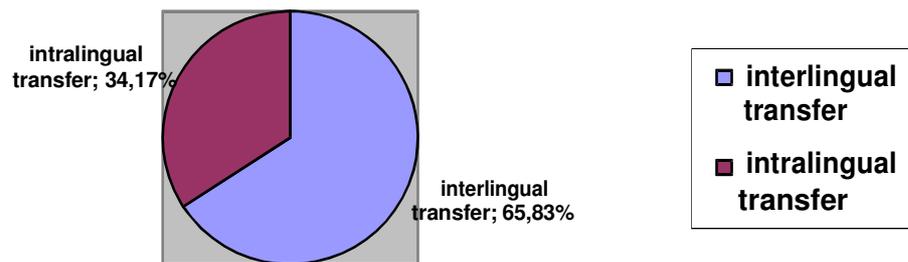


Figure4-4: interlingual vs. intralingual transfer errors.

4-4 Summary of the findings

The analysis of students' essays revealed that third year students commit many grammatical errors in their writing. These grammatical errors are categorized into ten (10) categories with different percentages. These categories are: articles (26,88%), subject-verb agreement (23,46%), capitalization (18,45%), singular/ plural forms (8,66%), prepositions (6,83%), verb tense and form (4,78%), word order (3,42%), omission of to be (3,19%), auxiliaries (2,5%), and coordination (1,82%).

According to these results, some errors' types occur more than others in students' essays especially article, subject-verb agreement, and capitalization errors which constitute the high percentages. Furthermore, the results found explained that the

grammatical errors in students' essays were caused by two significant reasons which are Arabic interference and intralingual transfer (overgeneralization, complexity, and incomprehensibility of rules). However, the grammatical errors which were the result of Arabic interference constitute 289 errors with 65,83% while the grammatical errors that were caused by intralingual transfer are counted to 150 errors with 34,17% of the total number of students' grammatical errors that are 439 errors.

From what has been said, it is clear that the mother tongue (Arabic) interference is the main cause of third year students' grammatical errors.

Conclusion

The analysis of students' essays proves that third year students have many difficulties concerning the grammatical aspect of English language. They have made a number of grammatical errors of different types in their writing. According to the results found, the grammatical errors committed by third year students in their essays are caused by two main reasons which are interlingual transfer (Arabic interference) and intralingual transfer (overgeneralization, incomprehensibility, and complexity of rules). However, most of the grammatical errors are caused by interlingual transfer because students rely mainly on their native language (Arabic) to write in English.

IMPLICATIONS and RECOMMENDATIONS

The findings of this study suggest some implications for both students and teachers. Teachers should consider error analysis as an effective way to diagnose students' problems in foreign language learning. Errors provide feedback to teachers about the ways and the methods they are using in their teaching of the foreign language. Therefore, teachers may rely on error analysis as an effective strategy to know the weaknesses of their students and to give them the appropriate remedy. Moreover, teachers should encourage their students to practise writing activities as much as possible because the more they write the more they become familiar with English writing conventions and the more they could be able to apply English grammatical rules in their writing. In addition to writing, students should be encouraged to read different works in English language because reading a lot enables them to be familiar with English vocabulary and with the correct use of English rules that good writers employ in their written products. Furthermore, in teaching grammar for first and second year students, teachers should highlight the grammatical differences that exist between English and Arabic to make students aware of these differences and not to mix up the use of them. In addition to that, it is suggested that third year EFL students at Biskra university should be taught extra grammar lessons more and more.

The analysis of students' essays revealed that they do not commit grammatical errors only in their writing but also lexical errors which could be a very interesting research project in the future.

GENERAL CONCLUSION

The aims of this research were to check whether the students' mother tongue (Arabic) influence their writing or not and to identify and categorize the types of grammatical errors made by third year EFL students in their essays and the main reasons for them. According to the data gathered, third year EFL learners at Biskra university commit a number of grammatical errors of different types. The types of grammatical errors found in third year students' essays belong to ten (10) categories which are: articles, subject-verb agreement, prepositions, singular/plural forms, verb tense and form, omission of the verb "to be", word order, auxiliaries, capitalization, and coordination. It has been found that there are two main reasons for these errors which are intralingual reasons (over generalizations, incomprehensibility, and complexity of rules) and interlingual reasons (Arabic interference). However, the results obtained have shown that most of the previous errors were caused by the negative interference (Arabic transfer) because when students find difficulty to apply English grammatical rules in their writing, they usually go back to Arabic grammatical rules. As a result of Arabic transfer, students fall in committing such grammatical errors.

The grammatical errors that were found in students' essays affect negatively their writing because they prevent the message to be comprehended by the reader. Moreover, they give a bad impression on the student's level either to the teacher or other readers. Therefore, the student will be received as a poor writer and he will get weak scores in tests and exams.

According to what has been said, all the research questions in this study were answered and the hypothesis which states that "if EFL learners are influenced by their mother tongue (Arabic) background and transfer its rules to write in English, they will

commit a number of grammatical errors in their writing” can be accepted because the analysis of students’ essays revealed that the main reason for students’ grammatical errors is the mother tongue (Arabic) influence.

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ملخص:

نأ ينتج الطلبة أعمال إنشاءة خالدة من الأخطاء هو الهدف الرئسي لأساتذة التعبير الكتابي اللغة الإنجليزية لغة أجنبية. إلا أن طلبة السنة الثالثة لغة إنجليزية لغة أجنبية يرتكبونو عائد من الأخطاء النحوية في أعمالهم الإنشاءة. لذلك فإن هذه الدراسة تهفد إلى الاحث عما اذا ان هناك علاقة بين لغة الطلبة الأم (العرة) ولأخطاء النحوية التي يرتكبونها في تاتهم. للوصول إلى هاذ الهدف تم تزوع استمثر لعشتر أساتذة لغة إنجليزية بجامعة سدر. وذلك للاحث عن أهم أسباب ومختلا أنطو الأخطاء النحوية المرتكة من قبل طلبة السنة الثالثة لغة إنجليزية أجنبية. بالإضافة إلى ذلك تم تحليل اثنان وسعين (72) عمم إنشائي تب فرط الطلبة. ذلك لإيجاد أهم أنطو أخطائهم النحوية. النتائج المتحصم عليها لغة من

سذو من الاستمثر المقدمة للأساتذة وأ من تحليل الأعمال الإنشاءة للطلبة تثبت نأ طلبة السنة الثالثة لغة إنجليزية لغة أجنبية يرتكبونو أخطاء نحوية مختلفة اولسبب الرئسي في ذلك هو تدخم اللغة الأم (العرة). وقد لوحظ أيضا نأ طلبة السنة الثالثة لغة إنجليزية لغة أجنبية عتمنود أساسا على لغتهم الأم (العرة) مقارنة الإنجليزية عندما يتعل الأمر الكتابة.

APPENDIX 01:

TEACHERS'

QUESTIONNAIRE

Teachers 'Questionnaire

Dear teachers,

This is a questionnaire designed for the purpose of collecting data for a research aiming at investigating the main reasons behind third year EFL students' errors when writing in English . For that purpose, you are kindly requested to fill in this questionnaire either by ticking the appropriate box or by making full statements.

Thank you in advance for your cooperation.

1-Do third- year students make a lot of grammatical errors in their writing?

Yes

No

2- What kind of errors do they make?

- Misuse of prepositions.
- Misuse of articles.
- Misuse of adjectives.
- Word-order errors.
- Wrong use of tenses.
- Misuse of connectors
- Wrong use of singular and plural forms.
- Others:.....
.....
.....
.....

.....
.....

3- In your point of view, what is / are the cause (s) of these grammatical errors?

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

4- Do you think that these grammatical errors are because of their mother tongue (Arabic) interference?

Yes No

5- Do you think that knowing the reasons behind these errors will make the teaching process easier for you?

Yes No

6- Do you give much importance to error correction?

Yes No

7- a-Do you ask your third year students to correct their errors themselves?

Yes No

b-If your answer is “yes”, how often do you find them able to do so?

-Always - Sometimes -Rarely - Never

8- In your opinion , how can these grammatical errors affect third year students' writing?

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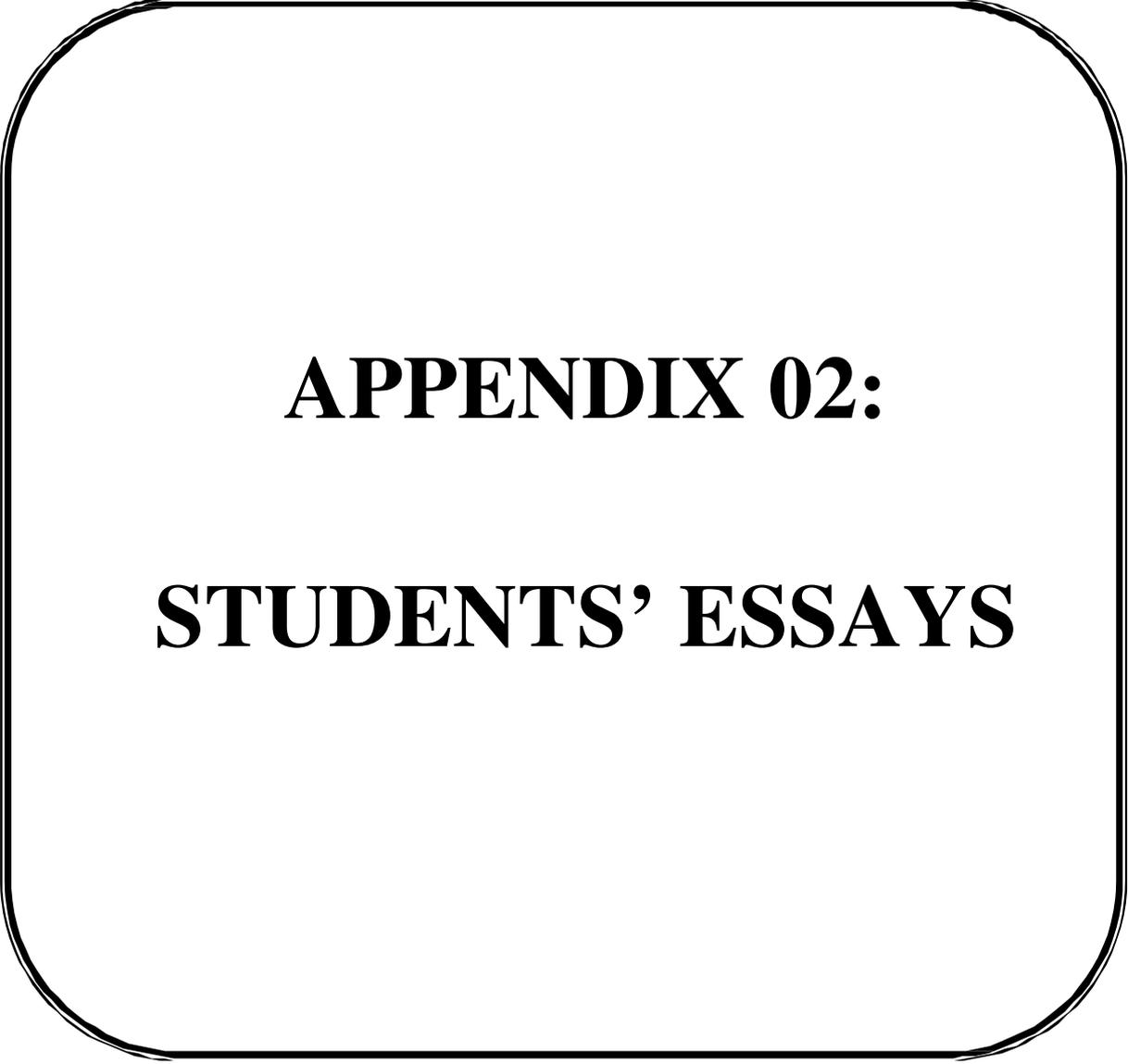
9- What are the solutions or strategies you can suggest to avoid grammatical errors when writing?

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10- Third year students should be taught grammar lessons intnesively. Please state if you:

- Strongly agree
- agree
- neither agree nor disagree
- disagree
- Strongly disagree

Thank you.



APPENDIX 02:

STUDENTS' ESSAYS