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The impact of native language interference on EFL students' spelling mistakes

**A Case Study of Third Year Students of English at
Mohamed Kheider University of Biskra, Algeria.**

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the Master's Degree in Science of the Language

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Dedication

In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful

I dedicate this work to my parents who were the source of encouragements and inspiration to me throughout my life.

Special thanks to my father who taught me that the best way of getting knowledge is by struggling to obtain such information.

It is also dedicated to my mother who always finds ways to create a suitable atmosphere that makes me study.

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Abstract

The aim of this research is to investigate the impact of native language interference on spelling errors made by EFL learners at university of Mohamed Kheider Biskra, this research was conducted to find out the problems which face third year students. Writing is one of the most challenging tasks for foreign language learners because many students find it difficult to produce an adequate piece of writing, for many reasons such as the influence of native language on the writing compositions. The EFL students' written productions were analysed using error analysis as a method to find the most frequent errors that the students make on a sample of five essays written by third year LMD students. All the errors were classified into errors of omission, addition, selection, and ordering, to support the analysis of the findings, questionnaires were given to teachers of written expression to explore their views about the errors made by EFL student and the possible reasons behind it. The results from both teachers' questionnaire and students' essays reveal that most of the common errors committed by students were writing mechanism, grammar, and vocabulary.

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List of Acronyms

EFL	English as a Foreign Language
MT	Mother Tongue
TL	Target Language
CAH	Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis
EA	Error Analysis
L1	First Language
L2	Second Language

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General introduction

Writing is one of the most important skills that every learner should be competent on, it is used to communicate with the entire world using just symbols and letters and it is considered as one of the important ways of expressing thoughts, feelings, and knowledge. Although writing is an important task in a foreign language, it is considered to be one of the most challenging and complex tasks for language learners which need special attention and effort. Due to this complexity, learners find difficulty in writing because they lack the competence of being able to use the criteria of a good writing effectively such as the mechanics of writing, vocabulary...etc., moreover, there are many approaches that are concerned with teaching the writing skills like the process approach, the product approach, and the genre-based approach, it depends on the teacher to select the suitable one to use inside the class which may help the students on developing their writing skill.

Learning a foreign language is considered as a tough task because it is different from the students' mother tongue, they struggle with many difficulties to express themselves clearly through written texts (i.e. paragraphs, essays). On this situation, learners use their native language to learn the target language which may result in positive and negative transfer, borrowing and code switching because learners cannot find the exact words they are looking for, thus, they refers to L1 to meet their needs in L2 settings and it is common in multilingual societies that they use many languages at the same time.

Many linguists such as S.P. Corder and Richards who have been interested in studying the errors committed by second language learners. They come up with the idea of analysing the errors made by EFL learners which is called Error Analysis that deals with the analysis of the learning process with special emphasis on learners' errors, besides, as Richards pointed that there are sources of errors which are classified into interlingual and intralingual errors. On this study, spelling errors are the most errors committed by third year LMD students at University of Biskra which is considered as a real problem that prevent the students from reaching the proficiency level on writing skills in specific and on the other skills in general.

1. Statement of the Problem

Students face many difficulties when they write, although most of the third year students of English have a long time studying the module of written expression, they still produce inaccurate compositions, they fail on this task because of many reasons especially in mechanics of writing, and the influence of their mother tongue on the target language. This study will analyse the reasons behind errors made by third year students of English language at university of Mohammed Khider, and try to find out why students commit such errors and attempt to find ways to be as a recommendation for future learners of English to use in order to get rid of this issues related to writing skill.

2. Research Questions

This study aims to answer the following main question:

- ❖ What are the most common errors among third year LMD students?
- ❖ Does mother tongue interference affect students' writings negatively?

3. Research Hypothesis

- We hypothesise that the more EFL students are influenced by their mother tongue, the more they will fail in writing essays.
- We hypothesise that the lack of practice of writing is the major problem that hinders the process of writing.

4. Aims of the Study:

Through this research, we will analyze and investigate the process that learners pass through while producing a piece of writing, and the way that they write their paragraphs, and to classify the errors made by learners into four categories: omission, addition, selection, and ordering.

5. Significance of the study

Learning a foreign language is considered as a difficult task especially when it comes to writing on the second language because it is one of the challenging processes that proves the level of EFL learners. Many learners became confused when it comes to writing

because they are not skilful in the target language, they try to use their native language to express their thoughts which lead to make many errors.

This study will try to make an overview of writing and how to write better in the target language, moreover, it will explore the main reasons behind these committed errors, for instance, if these errors are because of L1 transfer or other reasons. By doing this research, we may help the EFL learners to become more familiar with the principles that make an effective piece of writing, and reasons of language transfer.

Chapter one
Review of
Literature

Chapter One: Reviewing Literature

Introduction

In Algerian context, English is taught as a foreign language (EFL) in which students are exposed to master the four skills (reading, writing, listening, and speaking). Teaching the writing skill is one of the challenging areas that every learner seek to develop in order to be a skilful writer, one of the major problem that faces EFL students in writing is the influence of mother tongue (MT) on target language (TL). The learners' errors have been the interest of second and foreign language researchers who were examining the kind of errors made by second language learners, starting from language transfer to contrastive analysis hypothesis (CAH) and error analysis (EA).

1.1. Definition of the writing skill

Writing is a way of communication that writers use to interact with the world through letters and symbols which express their feelings and ideas, it is a way of representing language in visual form. Writing systems use sets of symbols to represent the sounds of speech, and may also have symbols for such things as punctuation and numerals. Although all languages of the world are different in terms of the form of writing .i.e. symbols, letters, etc., they convey one message whether to convince, or just giving information on a specific topic to audience.

Oxford Companion to English Language (1992, 1131) stated that the etymology of the word writing From Old English is *writan* to write, engrave, and draw, it is a general skill regarded as a social necessity (*Writing is part of everybody's education*) or a minority art form, occupation, hobby, and/or obsession. Writing varies from one to another according to their needs and wants whether it is for pleasure, to get promotion in job, or for academic purposes.

1.2. Criteria of a good writing

1.2.1. Mechanism:

Writing mechanism (or mechanics of writing) are the main criteria that every writer should know and be aware not to make mistakes on it, S. Kane (2000) explained that “In composition, mechanics refers to the appearance of words to how they are spelled or arranged on paper...” The most significant mechanics of writing competency are spelling and punctuation which are critical in the process of writing that every writer should master them in order to be an effective writer.

1.2.1.1. Spelling:

Spelling is considered as one of the problems that face EFL learners while attempting to be better in accuracy, Cambridge dictionary and grammar states that “words in English are not always spelled as they are pronounced. Spelling in English follows some basic rules and the majority of English words (75%) follow these rules, there are rules to be followed with intensive practice to avoid spelling mistakes”. Moreover, (Harmer 2007, 47) pointed that “ the best way of helping students to learn how to spell is to have them read as much as possible..” by using this way students can remember how a word is spelled according to the image on their mind.

Brown and Hood (1993) explained that if you find a word you are not convinced whether it is right or wrong, or if you find a word you recognise it as wrong, this strategy is very helpful:

- ❖ Make yourself write the word quickly. The correct spelling may come to you automatically.
- ❖ Write it a few different ways to see which one looks right.(28)

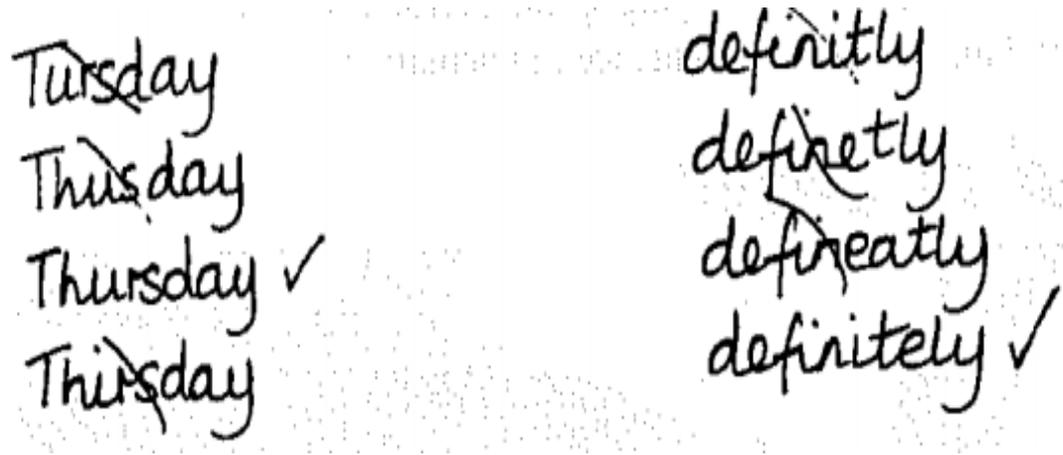


Figure 1 strategy to avoid spelling mistake by Brown and Hood (1993, 28)

From the example suggested above by Brown and Hood (1993, 28), if you are not sure how to write a word and you have many hypotheses in your mind which are confusing you, try to use their strategy in this example by writing your hypothesis on a piece of paper and omit the erroneous word till you find the correct one.

1.2.1.2. Punctuation

Punctuation is considered as something which organises the writing and makes it clear by showing to the reader where the sentences start and finish, besides, they make the writing easier to understand by using them correctly. Cambridge dictionary and grammar stated that “In speaking, we use pauses and the pitch of the voice to make what we say clear. Punctuation plays a similar role in writing, making it easier to read.” Furthermore, it is a way which facilitates the piece of writing to the reader by certain rules to be followed like capital letters, coma, full stop, etc. If the punctuation criteria are not used correctly, this may let the reader having difficulty to understand the text given (Harmer 2007). Moreover, (Seely 2005, 226) mentioned that “It is important to stress that the so-called “rules” of punctuation are simply conventions – agreed ways of separating a text into sections that the readers eye and brain can assimilate...” this conventions are made to organise the text and simplify the reading tasks.

1.2.2. Organization

One of the main criteria that makes a piece of writing a well-organized one is that the writer uses his way of creativity to produce an effective piece of writing that has the principles of a good writing, for example, coherence, grammar, and vocabulary.

Bailey (2011,77) declared that “well-structured paragraphs help the reader understand the topic more easily by dividing up the arguments into convenient sections...” The organization of the piece of writing is one of the essential criteria that helps the learner on the reading process by dividing the paragraphs into its components .i.e., introduction, development, and conclusion.

S. Kane (2000, 67) pointed that the writer uses two ways which are often used together to make his writing organized, for instance, signposts—words and interparagraph transitions

Signposts are words placed on the beginning of a sentence that indicates the topic and the general plan dealing with the topic discussed. Besides, they are transitional words that shows the readers the movement between ideas such as first step..., secondly..., thirdly...etc., he claimed that “...The lack of signals may confuse readers who fail to recognize when the writer passes from one reason to another...” this may let the reader having difficulties on the reading process by making him puzzled about the organization of the topic discussed on the author’s writing.

Interparagraph transitions are words which represents linking the paragraph to the previous ideas, S. Kane described this by “...Transitions act like railroad switches, smoothing and easing the turn from one track to another...” The transition signals the relationship between the new information and the previous one, these words are important to make the piece of writing organized which are categorized into four main aspects: The Repetitive Transition, The Question-and-Answer Transition, The Summarizing Transition, and Logical Transitions.

1.2.3. Language Use

One of the principles of a good writing is using language appropriately, it is important to think about what you are going to write in your paper because the writer should consider certain steps to be followed to make his writing sounds more strong such as clarity.

Academic writing needs to be clear enough for the readers to help them get the ideas easily. Murray and Hughes (2008) emphasised the importance of clarity basic component in facilitating a piece of writing to be readable and accessible. According to them, achieving clarity is to write clear, avoiding long sentences that misdirect the reader and produce short sentences directly to the point, relevant, and not ambiguous.

In order to achieve clarity in writing, according to Starkey (2004, p. 12-9), the learner should:

- Eliminate ambiguity: the learner ought to abstain from utilizing ambiguous words or expressions that have more than one interpretation in order to not mislead readers and confuse them.
- Powerful, precise adjectives and adverbs: by using powerful, precise adjectives and adverbs in order to make the learner's writing clear and help him to convey his message. For example, really tired can be replaced by exhausted.
- Be concise: this means getting right to the point without unnecessary repetition of words and complex vocabulary. According to (Starkey, 2004: 15) states that "There are two equally important approaches to more concise writing: eliminating unnecessary words and phrases, and using the active (as opposed to passive) voice whenever possible."

1.2.4. Vocabulary

Vocabulary is the core of any language, without it, we cannot use the language effectively, by using vocabulary, we can make the writing composition looks more powerful and more impressive because it is the tool that every writer looks for to enhance the way of writing. Sometimes, we chose words unconsciously until we find ourselves not using the right word for the precise meaning (Seely 2004, 185).

Vocabulary is acquired and learnt by using an intensive work to be able to express yourself clearly without having any problem on the four skills i.e., speaking, writing, listening, and reading. According to S. Kane (2000) he stated the following on his book entitled "The Oxford Essential Guide to Writing"

A good dictionary is a key to extending your knowledge of words. Try to keep one handy as you read. When you come upon a word you don't know, pause and look it up. If you can't stop or have no dictionary nearby, make a check in the margin (assuming the book is your own) or write the word on a piece of paper. Without such a reminder you will

probably only remember that there was some word you intended to look up which now you can't recall.

Following the strategy suggested by S. Kane, dictionaries are the best way to improve vocabulary by checking for the vague and ambiguous words on a specific dictionary which may help to increase the number of vocabulary or even spelling or grammatical mistakes.

1.3. Writing problems

EFL students face many difficulties while attempting to learn the second language, writing problems can be challenging for them. Students may experience complications in writing for a variety of reasons such as dyslexia and dysgraphia. The Institute for Neuro - Physiological Psychology (INPP) defined dyslexia as “a disorder in children who, despite conventional classroom experience, fail to attain the language skills of reading, writing and spelling, commensurate with their intellectual abilities.”

Delaney (2013) stated in an article on OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS that dyslexia is an information processing difficulty, primarily affecting reading, spelling and writing. In English, students have problems with phonological processing (linking sounds to words), visual processing (seeing words and letters) and working memory (remembering what has just been said).

Another problem explained by Marcia Eckerd which is Dysgraphia, she declared that it is a learning disability that results in difficulty with written expression. Children with dysgraphia are able to express themselves fluently orally, but they cannot transfer their ideas to the page because they find writing arduous, they may avoid doing it.

1.4. Approaches to Teaching Writing

There are different approaches to the skill of writing which can help the learners to be more creative, however, each approach focuses on a specific area whether it is on the product approach, the process approach, or the genre-based approach. It is up to the teacher who decides which approach that suits his needs inside the classroom.

1.4.1. The Product Approach

Richards and Rodgers (2001) explain that teachers who show this kind of approach have an interest in the final product and measure it against criteria of vocabulary use, grammatical use, and mechanical consideration like writing mechanism, content and organisation. Moreover, Pincas (1982a) declared that “Learning to write has four stages: familiarization; controlled writing; guided writing; and free writing. The familiarization stage aims to make learners aware of certain features of a particular text. In the controlled and guided writing sections, the learners practise the skills with increasing freedom until they are ready for the free writing section, when they ‘use the writing skill as part of a genuine activity such as a letter, story or essay’ ... ”.

Richards and Rodgers (2001) argued that teachers who use this kind of approaches are mainly interested in the final product of students’ compositions, this approach deals mainly with the language accuracy which is the core of this approach and they paid more attention to the surface structure of language rather than its meaning.

1.4.2. The Process Approach

The process approach came at the end of the 1960s as a reaction to the weaknesses of the product approach, the process approach, as its name suggests, focuses on the process that is used while doing the process of writing including generating ideas and deciding which ideas are relevant to the message.

Writing goes through different steps from the preparation to publishing the piece of writing, by using these steps, the writer will organise and produce an efficient writing.

The following are the steps of the writing process:

1.4.2.1. Pre-writing

This is the first step that every writer do before starting to write, it is the warming up stage for the writer to set the goals, plans, intentions, etc. according to Steve Peha, he explained the pre-writing step as “...a time that you can use to experiment, to jot down a few quick ideas, to try out something new without having to try very hard, to take a little time to gather your thoughts and choose a direction before you start drafting”

On this stage, writers use two methods that are important to begin the writing process which are: free writing and brainstorming.

Free writing refers to the process of writing everything that come to the mind about the chosen topic, on the free writing, mistakes are not considered to be edited because you just write what you have in mind.

Brainstorming refers to writing the ideas in the centre of the paper and draw a diagram and jot the ideas in an organised way that make it easier to write.

1.4.2.2. Drafting

On this stage, the writer puts his thought and ideas into paragraphs that allow the reader to understand his message. The process of drafting a piece of writing begins with the analysis of the pre-writing that the author must use it to determine what he has to do for such piece.

Brown and Hood (1993, 14) stated that “The drafting stage is where you really begin writing. The most important thing here is to get words onto paper. It is not the time to worry about spelling, grammar, punctuation or the best wording.”

In this unit, we will ^{concentrate} focus on the part (?) the first draft only. This is where you ^{really} actually begin writing, after some preparation (notes, brainstorming).

? The most important thing at this stage is to get words onto the paper. ^{It} This is not the time to worry about things like grammar, spelling, punctuation etc. ---

Figure 2 drafting process by Brown and Hood (1993)

1.4.2.3. Revising

During this stage, you need to revise your work, for instance, you may remove whole sections, rewrite some paragraphs or maybe you add other information; also checking for errors such as spelling, punctuation. Moreover, it is considered as the rearrangement of sections that have been writing before.

Brown and Hood (1993, 20) stated that “the revising stage is where you check that:

- ✓ You have said what you wanted to say.
- ✓ You have said it in a clear and appropriate way.

S. Peha points that the word “revision” literally means “to see again.” Which is a difficult task that involves four various things you frequently have to do all at the same time: [1] Adding things; [2] Moving things; [3] Cutting things; and [4] Leaving things alone. Revising occurs during the time of drafting or after you have done with the whole drafting process.

1.4.2.4. Proof-reading

This is the final step of editing process, According to Cambridge dictionary, it is defined as “the act of finding and correcting mistakes in copies of printed texts before the final copies are printed” the main focus of this step is checking for errors like misspelled words, mistakes in grammar and punctuation.

Bailey (2011, 93) stated that proof-reading stands for checking your work for minor errors which can make it harder for the reader to know exactly what you want to say. An example of this as follow:

More recently, the correct usage of this 560-pixel cut-off point as simply the line to keep critical information and navigation above, has been more widely adopted, allowing for further content to cascade down the page in the manner that the onscreen medium delivers best.

Looking back now, and indeed as mentioned before, this element of legacy issues seems to consume more time and demand more consideration than perhaps it should. What it does well, however, is begin to illustrate quite clearly that there are many design issues surrounding the variable and cascading onscreen environment, specifically when approached from the perspective of a fixed and completely

versions of a site or service, each stripped tailored in a way that suits the portal / device used. Others however argue this is tantamount to intentional and enforced restricted access pushing users to an m.mobile domain or when they actually want to go to the main

With delivery of iPad 2, more Android tablets and the Google notebook all set for public release, the jury is still out over solution.

One thing that is sure however, is that designers and developers will be expected and adopt the standard when it's agreed

Figure 3 proofreading process BY JOEL FRIEDLANDER ON JULY 26, 2011

On this example, proof-readers try to analyse the writing composition in order to correct and to find the incorrect form i.e., added, omitted, ordered, and selected words which are not used correctly.

1.4.2.5. Publishing

S. Peha stated that publishing is “preparing a piece of writing so that it can be read, understood, and enjoyed by the public.” (19) It is considered as the final stage of the writing process where the writer prepares his document to be published and distributed to the audience, whether via internet or books. The Internet has introduced new ways for writers to publish their own documents electronically which make it easier for readers to read everywhere just by browsing the World Wide Web (W.W.W) and visiting websites of publishers such as universities press and authors’ main website, blog, or e-journal; the reader can take with him many e-books unlike the old one which you can just take one or two books that may be heavier to carry out.

Harmer (2004) pointed that the process approach has disadvantages that may have consequences on students achievement, for instance, it makes students focusing on the process of writing that takes time to do it like the pre-writing which includes brainstorming, also it takes time to do the drafting process, after that comes the editing whether you change or add some ideas. (326)

1.4.3. The genre-based approach

It would be better to define the term “Genre” before discussing it as an approach. According to Swales (1990, p. 53 as cited in Tribble, 1996, p. 49) defined genre as “A genre comprises a class of communication events, the members of which share some set of communicative purposes. These purposes are recognized by the expert member of the parent discourse community and thereby constitute the rationale for the genre “.

Swales' definition of the genre offers the fundamental thought that there are certain conventions or rules which are for the most part connected with the writer's motivation; i.e. it determines the language utilized as a part of writing, the selection of words, expressions and structures. For example, personal letters tell us about private stories, police reports describe what happened, letters look for jobs and so on.

2. Cross-linguistic influence

Language transfer (also known as L1 interference, linguistic influence, and cross linguistic influence) it is the influence of learner's native language on the second language. This term was coined by Robert Lado who was the student of the linguist Charles Fries who initiated the study of contrastive linguistics in 1945 that helped Lado after more than 10 years to write his famous book “linguistic across culture” (1957) where he focused on the comparison of culture and language systems .i.e. phonology, grammar, and vocabulary.

Fries (1957) described the aim and goal of this book declaring that:

He has during the last ten years produced a variety of tests thus built upon a careful systematic comparison of the descriptive structural analyses of two languages — the native language of a group of students and the foreign language these students were striving to master. His comparisons demanded more and more complete descriptions, including not only the narrowly linguistic features but a wide selection of the social-cultural features in which the languages operated.

When language learners are in contact with other learners or with native speakers, in this situation they may or may not show some kind of language mixing, one of these characteristics are: positive and negative transfer, borrowing, and code switching. Odlin (1997, 6)

Positive transfer refers to the situation when a learner transfer words from his mother tongue which are similar like in Spanish and English words (publico, public), Positive transfer entails that the mother tongue and the second language (L2) have similar structure, the acquisition and learning of the second language will be easier for learners because of the similarities do exist in L1 and L2.

However, Interference or negative transfer are the terms used for the negative influence of the learner's mother tongue when he or she is speaking or writing English. Below are three examples of the interference problems that German learners of English might have when trying to convey their thoughts correctly in English.

German: Ich sage es ihm, wenn ich ihn sehe.

<i>Interference:</i>	I tell him when I see him. ✘
<i>Correct:</i>	I'll tell him when I see him.
<i>German:</i>	Ich lebe hier seit 1998.
<i>Interference:</i>	I live here since 1998. ✘
<i>Correct:</i>	I have been living here since 1998.
<i>German:</i>	Was meinst du?
<i>Interference:</i>	What do you mean? ✘
<i>Correct:</i>	What do you think?

Figure 4 language interference by Paul Shoebottom (1996-2017) Frankfurt International School (FIS)

Borrowing is defined as “a word or phrase which has been taken from one language and used in another language. (Longman dictionary of language and linguistics 2010, 60) Also, it is considered as the inability of finding the correct word so learner refers to L1 to meet their needs in L2 situation. The English language has many words borrowed from other languages, for instance, the Arabic language has (alcohol, algebra, arsenal,

assassin...etc.), also from the Turkish language (baklava, bashaw, yogurt...etc.), and French like (captain, jury, stage, croissant...etc.) besides, the Spanish words are widely used in USA such as names of its cities “Colorado, Florida” and other words (plaza, armada, cargo...etc.), without forgetting the German language that’s the base of the English language with words like (Hamster, rucksack, kindergarten...etc.).

Code switching is the ability to use many languages at the same time between interlocutors like the sender uses one or two languages and the receiver does the same process by replying in other languages, this kind of language use is very common in multilingual societies.

Example 1

1 MR EDER: **du bekommst do e fätze ... je sais pas dans quelle graisse**
you get some sort of scraps ... in goodness knows what sort of fat
2 **... avec quoi: avec de de de was weiss denn de teiffel**
... with what: with the the the the devil knows what
3 **noh geh i anne un! putz diss ding**
then I have to go and clean the thing up
4 **parce que lorsque tu as un morceau de viande im ... im teller**
because when you have a piece of meat on ... on your plate
5 **un noochher hesch eso gschnuddels un muesch abschniede diss**
ganze ding gell.
and then you find you have a sort of mess and you have to cut the
whole thing off you see
6 **oder e so hoch fett uf'm ding ... diss haw i halt schliesslich a nitt**
gere gell?
or fat this high on top of it ... I really don't like that at all you see
(Gardner-Chloros, 1991:124)

Figure 5 code switching by Gardner- Chloros(1991, 124)

According to Gardener- Chloros who stated that “... Code switching refers to the use of several languages or dialects in the same conversation or sentence by bilingual people...” Nowadays, among multilingual communities, people who speak a mixed

language of English and Spanish is called Spanglish, English and French is Frenglish or Franglais and so on.

2.1. The effect of first language on writing in English as a second language

Many researchers have emphasised the need for EFL students to think and write in the target language as much as they can, when it comes to writing compositions about different topics students in this case may use the L1 and translate it into L2 which may cause language structure to be incorrect. As Arapoff (1967) suggested that "...students should avoid topics related to first-hand experience because they may translate from the first language into English..." Moreover, a study by Cumming (1987) he claimed in his report that ESL writers tend to use their first language to develop ideas unlike skilful writers who not just generate ideas but also verify appropriate word choice.

2.2. Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis

The main focus of contrastive analysis hypothesis (CAH) is to describe the differences and similarities between two or more languages, as (Selinker 2008, 96) Stated that "... contrastive analysis is a way of comparing languages in order to determine potential errors for the ultimate purpose of isolating what needs to be learned and what does not need to be learned in second language learning situation..." linguist were doing the comparison to analyze the difficulties that learners may face in L2 learning, if the two languages are similar there will be no difficulties in the learning process, where they are different the learning difficulties are to be expected.

The strong version of the contrastive analysis hypothesis is associated with Charles Fries and Robert Lado. It predicts that second language learners will have difficulty with aspects (structures, or vocabulary) which differ from their first language, however, there will be no problems with aspects which are similar in their first language.

Individuals tend to transfer the forms and meanings, and the distribution of forms and meanings of their native language and culture to the foreign language and culture - both productively when attempting to speak the language and to act in the culture, and receptively when attempting to grasp and understand the language and the culture as practiced by natives. . . . [It assumes] that the student who comes in contact with a foreign language will find some features of it quite easy and others extremely difficult. Those elements that are similar to his native language will be simple for him, and those elements that are different will be difficult.

(Lado, 1957)

2.2.1. History of CAH

During the period 1940s and 1960s researchers conducted contrastive analyses (or as it was known in that time as comparative linguistics) a systematic way by comparing two languages and they were motivated by the idea that enables them to identify points of similarity and difference between L1 and L2. The researchers made some assumptions which came into a decision that the main difficulties in learning a new language/ target language (TL) are caused by the interference of the native language (NL). This interference is called the L1 interference. Contrastive analysis (CA) can predict these difficulties which a learner faces in learning the TL.

2.2.2. Criticism of CAH

Contrastive Analysis was criticised by the proponents of error analysis, they have argued that Contrastive Analysis focus on differences between L1 and L2 and ignore factors which may affect the second language learner's performance such as his learning and communication strategies, training- procedures, overgeneralization, etc.

Fisiak (1981, 7) mentioned that "the value and importance of Contrastive Analysis lies in its ability to indicate potential areas of interference and errors. Not all errors are the result of interference. Psychological and pedagogical, as well as other extra linguistic factors contribute to the formation of errors" Contrastive Analysis failed to fulfil the need for analysing and describing learners' error in 1970 and as a consequence, replaced by other explanations of learning difficulties such as error analysis and interlanguage.

2.3. Error analysis

Error analysis deals with errors made by second language learners who are not proficient yet to produce correct utterances, unlike near native and native speakers who can produce correct and accurate language. As Ellis (2009, 51) pointed that error analysis consists of a set of procedures for identifying, describing, and explaining learner errors.

Error analysis (EA) came to fulfil the need that contrastive analysis hypothesis (CAH) did not achieve, the focus of CAH was to predict the errors made by learners unlike EA which is sought to discover the errors made by second language learners.

Making errors is the most natural thing in the world and it is an evident that the learner is doing the process of acquiring and learning new things, many experts have defined the term error, according to Lennon (1991) an error is "a linguistic form or

combination of forms which in the same context and under similar conditions of production would, in all likelihood, not be produced by the speakers' native speakers counterparts". In the second language teaching and learning process, the error is regarded as something negative and must be avoided.

Mother Did Billy have his egg cut up for him at breakfast?
Child Yes, I showed him.
Mother You what?
Child I showed him.
Mother You showed him?
Child I seed him.
Mother Ah, you saw him.
Child Yes, I saw him.

Figure 6 study of child language acquisition by S.P. Corder (1982, 11)

In this dialogue, the child goes through the process of trial and error by trying to find the correct word that expresses his needs for the current situation which by the end the child finds the suitable word after testing some hypothesis. According to S.P. Corder (1982, 11) he mentioned that the child test three hypothesis and they are:

- 1- Subject- verb agreement in the past tense
- 2- The meaning of show and see and how to differentiate between the .i.e., choosing the exact word in the right place.
- 3- The form of the irregular past tense of see.

2.3.1. Error Vs. mistake

In order to analyse the production made by learners, we need to distinguish between error and mistake. Although error and mistake both refer to something wrong, there is a difference between them on their usage.

The main difference between error and mistake is that error is considered to be more formal, according to Longman dictionary of language teaching and applied linguistics (2010, 201) defines it as “the use of a linguistic item (e.g. a word, a grammatical item, a speech act, etc.) in a way which a fluent or native speaker of the language regards as showing faulty or incomplete learning.” When learners commit errors in language learning, this means that the learners does not know the rule or to better say he/she lacks the knowledge in the process of learning the first or second language because they do not know that they are doing something wrong.

However, mistake refers to the situation where the learner has the required knowledge to perform a specific task but he/ she makes the mistakes consciously. (Brown 2000, 217) “All people make mistakes, in both native and second language situations. Native speakers are normally capable of recognising and correcting such “lapses” or mistakes, which are not the results of a deficiency in competence but the results of some sort of temporary breakdown or imperfection in the process of producing speech.” Learners often fall into carelessness or lack of attention which is resulted in a mistake, and they may be able to identify and correct their own mistakes.

2.3.2. Sources of errors

The analysis of errors has been regarded as a central aspect in the study of learner’s errors. Researchers believe that when we identify the sources of errors, the learning process will be easier whether for learners or teachers.

We can classify the sources of errors into two elements which are subdivided into two main parts:

2.3.2.1. Interlingual Errors

It refers to the situation when a learner transfer first language (L1) system into second language (L2) because he/ she is not familiar with it. (Selinker 2008, 103) stated that “Interlingual errors are those which can be attributed to the NL (i.e., they involve cross-linguistic comparisons)...” thus, interlingual errors occurs only in native language

(NL). Also, Brown (2000, 224) declared that "... In these early stages, before the system of second language is familiar, the native language is the only previous linguistic system upon which the learner can draw..." without L1, learners cannot acquire and learn the second language or additional languages because they use the L1 or L2 systems to proceed on the learning of subsequent languages.

2.3.2.2. Intralingual Errors

It is a kind of errors that happens in the target language (TL), as Richards 1970 explained that intralingual refers to "...the items produced by the learner which reflect not the structure of the mother tongue, but generalization based on partial exposure to the target language." (6). Also, he noted that there are subcategories of error types and is classified as follow:

2.3.2.2.1. Overgeneralization

Jakobovits defines generalization or transfer as "the use of previously available strategies in new situations... In second language learning... some these strategies will prove helpful in organizing the facts about the second language, but others, perhaps due to superficial similarities, will be misleading and applicable" Cited in Richards (1973 , 174).

Overgeneralization is the application of grammatical rules in cases where it doesn't apply, for instance, using regular verbs instead of irregular verbs.

Richards (1973, 174) pointed out that students often omit third person -s, thus, this form will be generalized for all persons, an example of this as follow:

8. *verb stem for stem + s*

He alway talk a lot
He come from India
She speak German as well

Figure 7 Errors in the Production of Verb Groups by Richards (1973, 183)

For children who have English as first language, usually at a certain level overgeneralize verbs like regular verbs ending in “ed”, for example, walked, and opened, and apply it to all verbs in past tense (goed, flied) until they found that there are categories in the process of conjugating verbs such as regular and irregular verbs. The same things happen to second or foreign language learners who overgeneralize within the target language, for instance, “john doesn’t can study” in this case the do auxiliary must be replaced before the verbs. (Brown 2000, 96)

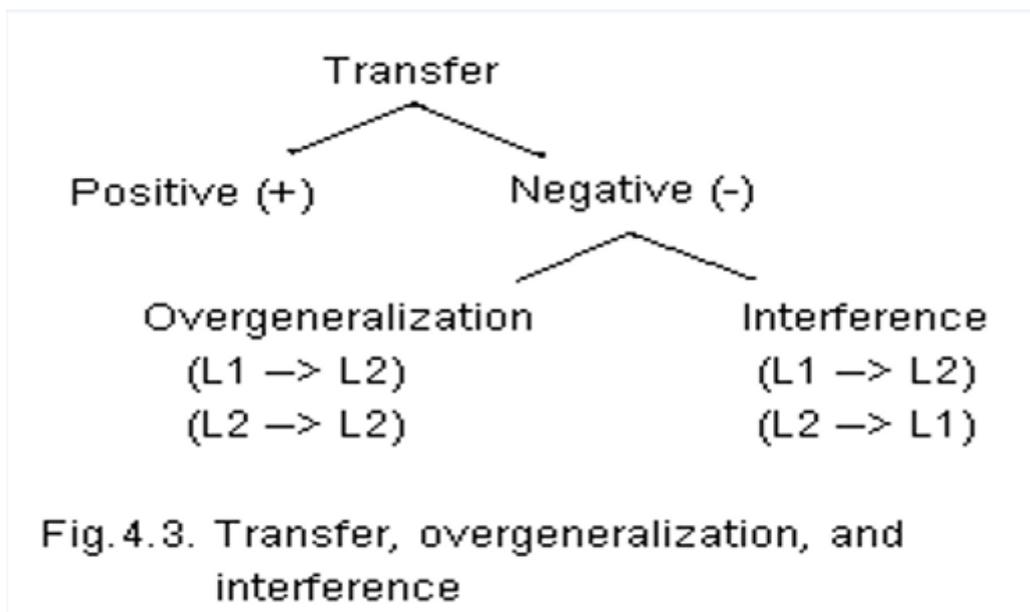


Figure 8 transfer, overgeneralization, and interference

2.3.2.2.2. Ignorance of rule restriction

As Richards (1974) pointed out that is “the application of rules to context where they do not apply” (175). Thus, it is a kind of error which is closely related to overgeneralization, in this case, they apply a rule in a situation where it is not necessary to use. For example, ‘that is the man who I saw him’ here the student does not know that it is impossible to mention the relative pronoun with another pronoun.

2.3.2.2.3. Incomplete application of rules

Under this category, learners may use statement for a question by adding the question mark (?). An example of this incomplete application of rules can be seen in question forms, for instance, he drives the car? According to Richards (1974, 177) incomplete application of rules refers to “...occurrence of structures whose deviancy represents the degree of development of the rules required to produce acceptable

utterances... A statement form may be used as a question, one of the transformations in a series may be omitted, or a question word may simply be added to the statement form..."

2.3.2.2.4. False concepts hypothesized

Refers to the situation where a learner get confused and cannot differentiate between some verbs and adverbs such as: go and come, bring and take, too and very, etc., also they may use the present tense instead of the present continuous tense. This might be caused by learners not paying attention to the difference between items. Richards (1974, 178) said that "... There is a class of developmental errors which derive from the faulty comprehension of distinctions in the target language. These are sometimes due to the poor gradation of teaching items."

Conclusion

To sum up, in this chapter, we have defined the writing skill through various definitions, presenting the process of writing, and we have explained the criteria of a good writing which is the core of any writing. Moreover, we have clarified the main problems that face EFL students in terms of writing, also I have explained the approaches of writing.

Language transfer was the main field of study for many researchers and linguists in 1940's and 1950's with the emergence of contrastive analysis by C. Fries which the main concern of CAH is to find similarities and differences between native language (NL) and target language (TL). Later on, the work of Fries helped R. Lado to write his famous book 'Linguistic Across Culture' he focused on culture and the language systems by making a comparison of two languages. Moreover, I have explained the effect of the first language on writing in English as a second language.

After that came Error Analysis to describe the language learners unlike CAH which only predict errors made by foreign language learners, also, we have explained the difference between error and mistake, and the sources of errors such as interlanguage and intralngual errors (which has subcategories as explained earlier in this chapter).

Chapter two
Data Collection &
Data Analysis

Chapter two: interpretation and analysis of data

Introduction

The main purpose of this study is to analyse the students' errors and also to look for reasons behind the errors made by EFL learners. This chapter divided into three parts: The first part is concerned with research methodology and detailed description of the sample and the instruments. The second part analysis the data of research instruments which is composed of teachers' questionnaire and students' essays, moreover, this part also included recommendation that may help students to overcome the problem of poor writing and making mistakes so that they become effective while writing English compositions. Finally, the last part is devoted to the discussion of the results finding.

1. Research methods

The current research adopts the descriptive method and attempt to identify, categorize and analyse EFL students' errors in English persuasive essays in order to find out the sources of these errors and possible ways to correct these errors.

1.1. Sample

For the error data to be collected, a sample of written essays was collected from five students of third year LMD at University of Mohamed Kheider Biskra, these students were chosen randomly from one of the third year classes. They have been studied English for 9 years starting by the middle school where they dealt with the basics of the English language for instance, verb tenses, nouns, articles, modals, conjunction. Besides, they tried to have an insight into the ways of writing short paragraphs in the final year. When they moved on to high school, the focus was on the direct speech, active and passive voice and so on, moreover, they have been introduced to ways of writing an effective paragraphs such as the content, the organization. At university level, they studied on first year the parts of speech, and basic elements of writing like mechanism. Second year, they focused more on the criteria of a good writing and how to avoid redundancy and ambiguity while writing, for instance, run on sentences, fragments, conjunction and so on. For third year level, they practice essays writing and how to use cohesive devices and the ways of making the piece of writing coherently.

1.2. Instruments

In order to explore the students' errors in writing, a questionnaire were administered to teachers of written expression in order to have an overview of the different types of errors committed by EFL students and the reasons behind it. Moreover, we have collected five samples of the third year students' essays, we analysed these essays and we classified the errors into errors of omission, addition, selection, and ordering.

2. Teachers' questionnaire

2.1. Description of the questionnaire

A total number of eight copies of questionnaire were given to teachers of written expression at university of Mohamed Kheider, Biskra, only 7 questionnaires were given back. The aim of this questionnaire is to shed light on the errors committed by EFL learners' and the ways of dealing with it according to the teachers of written expression.

The questionnaire consists of 11 questions divided into two sections, most of the questions are close-ended: teachers were asked to tick one of the box (es) as shown in the questionnaire, also there open-ended questions where teachers were asked to provide explanation and their points of view about the topic discussed (check the questionnaire on the appendix).

The first section consists of three questions on the background information about the teachers of written expression; Q1 and Q2 are about gender and the degree level, and Q3 is about the years of teaching at Mohamed Kheider University i.e., their experience in the English language teaching and written expression in particular.

This section consists of eight questions related to theoretical part of this research. The first question is about the level of students in the module of written expression by classifying them from bad to very good, the second question is whether third year students commit errors or not while doing a piece of writing, the third question consists of the types of errors that third year students make, the fourth question is about teachers feed-back towards their students whether is given or not, the fifth question is asking the teachers about the area they tend to focus on more in the module of written expression, the sixth question aimed at exploring the type of writing that students find difficulties at, the seventh question sought to identify the elements that make the piece of writing perfect and complete in terms of grammar, vocabulary...etc., the eighth question dealt with the

problems that faces teachers of written expression in classroom setting, the ninth question of this section explored in a scale (strongly agree → strongly disagree) if the students' spelling errors differ from one to another or not and telling us their points of view, the tenth question determine whether the image of words help students avoiding spelling mistakes or not in a scale by just ticking the right box from strongly agree to strongly disagree and stating their opinion if they agree or not, the eleventh question is devoted to add any suggestions or opinions that are relevant to this dissertation.

3. Results of the questionnaire

Section one: General Information

1. Gender

1. Male
2. Female

Gender	Male	Female
N	3	5
%	37.5%	62.5%

Table 1: Gender.

The questionnaires were given to 3 males and 5 females teachers of written expression who are teaching or used to teach this module, the number of female teachers (62.5%) of this module exceed the number of male teachers (37.5%)

2/ Degree Level

- a. Licence
- b. Master/ Magister
- c. doctorate

Degree	Licence	Master/Magister	Doctorate
N	0	6	2
%	0%	75%	25%

Table 1 Degree Level

The table N° 2 shows that from 8 teachers participate in the questionnaire, no one hold Licence (0%) and the percentage for Master / Magister degree is (75%), only two teachers (25%) hold a PhD (doctorate) degree.

As a result, we can say that the level of teachers enable them to help their students on improving the writing skills in specific and the proficiency level in general.

3. Work Experience

Number of years

Years	1 – 10	11- 20	21-30
N	1	4	2
%	14.3%	57.1%	28.6%

Table 2 Work Experience

We can deduce from the table n°3 that the majority of teachers have taught the English language for a long period of time, some of them have taught less than 10 years and others more than 20 years which means they gained so much experience that may enable them to excel on the domain of teaching English language and especially the written expression module. This experience allow the teachers to help the learners improving their proficiency level and to be competent on the English language without the fear of making mistakes

Section two: Teachers' experience with students' errors

1. Is your students' level in writing expression:

a. Bad

b. Average

- c. Good
- d. Very good

Level	Choices	%
Bad	0	0%
Average	6	85.71%
Good	1	14.29%
Very good	0	0%

Table 3 Students' level on written expression

From the analysis of the table above, we can say that the majority of teachers agreed that their students' level on written expression is on the average level except some students who have a good level on writing skills. We presuppose that the level of students in writing the English language is on the average because of many reasons such as the influence of mother tongue, lack of vocabulary...etc.,

2. Do third year students make many errors in their writing?

- a. Yes
- b. No

Option	Numbers	%
Yes	7	100%
No	0	0%
Total	7	100%

Table 4 Teachers view about errors made by students

This question is about whether the students make errors while writing or not, we find that all the students (100%) commit errors in writing because the English language is neither their first nor second language which means in this situation they may face many difficulties because of the lack of exposure and interaction with other learners or users of the target language that may hinder the process of learning a third language.

3. What kind of errors do students make while writing?

- a. grammatical errors
- b. interference of mother tongue
- c. Poor vocabulary
- d. Mechanics
- e. Other.....

Options	Number	%
A	6	27.27%
B	4	18.18%
C	5	22.73%
D	6	27.27%
E	1	4.55%
Total	22	100%

Table 5: The types of errors that students make

We notice from the table N°6 above that some teachers agreed that the majority of students have the same kind of errors which are: (grammatical errors, interference of mother tongue, Poor vocabulary, mechanics), while others argued that students have

problems only on (grammatical errors and mechanics), whereas some teachers added another kind of errors like coherence, cohesion, lack of ideas, and organization.

4. Do you provide your students with feed-back?

- a. Yes
- b. No

Options	Numbers	%
Yes	7	100%
No	0	0%
Total	7	100%

Table 6: Teachers' feedback

The majority of teachers provide students with feedback because it is one of the most important things that students need to be motivated inside the classroom, teachers' feedback allow students to discover their errors and mistakes and try to correct them with the help of the teacher who acts as a guider inside the class.

5. In the process of teaching the writing skill, do you focus on?

- a. Handwriting
- b. Grammar
- c. Vocabulary
- d. Mechanics
- e. Content
- f. Other.....

Options	Numbers	%
A	4	13%
B	7	23.3%
C	5	17%
d	7	23.3%
E	7	23.3%
Total	30	100%

Table 7: The criteria that teachers focus on

According to the results shown above, each teacher has his own view on teaching the English language that may improve their learners' writing skills. Four of them focus on all the aspects, others focus on some aspects such as grammar, vocabulary, mechanics, and content. These criteria are used to enhance the students' writing skill through an intensive work done inside the classroom or by the students themselves in order to excel in the work given to them whether to write paragraphs or long essays.

6. Do your students find difficulties while writing:

a. Paragraph

b. Essay

Options	Numbers	%
Paragraph	4	40%
Essay	6	60%

Table 8: Students' difficulties on writing

As a result from the table above, we assume that students find difficulties in writing paragraphs and essays. Using the analysis of this question, teachers said that

students make few mistakes and errors on paragraph writing because its shorter than essay in the essence that students are asked to write short paragraph where they do not find themselves having difficulties in writing essays. However, teachers said that most of the students find difficulties in essay writing because the length of paragraphs are longer, thus, students commit many mistakes and errors on essay writing which is longer and takes time to do it.

7. For a piece of writing to be good it must contain :

- a. Correct grammar
- b. Specific vocabulary
- c. Spelling/ punctuation
- d. coherence and cohesion
- e. All of them
- f. Other.....

Aspects	Correct grammar	Specific vocabulary	Spelling/ punctuation	coherence and cohesion	All of them
Number	0	0	0	0	7
%	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%

Table 9: Criteria of good writing

All of the teachers agreed on answer “e” (100%), they agreed that in order to be a good writer you have to include the following criteria: correct grammar, specific, vocabulary, spelling/punctuation, coherence and cohesion. For teachers, these aspects are used interchangeably if one aspect is missing this may make problem on writing, one of the teachers commented by saying writing is deeply linked to reading which is important to develop students literacy.

8. What kind of problems do you face in teaching writing expression?

.....
Most of the teachers have difficulties in teaching the module of written expression for many reasons such as:

- ✓ Large classes are the main problem, one of these teachers commented by saying that large classes do not allow him to provide students with frequent feedback.
- ✓ Students do not care about feedback.
- ✓ Some students ignore the teacher's feedback, so they keep repeating the same errors.
- ✓ It is tiring and time consuming for teachers to correct papers and give appropriate feedback.
- ✓ Time allotted to written expression is not enough.
- ✓ Lack of practice.
- ✓ Lack of knowledge so they find themselves in short of giving information.
- ✓ Lack of background knowledge generated from other skills impact on writing.
- ✓ Lack of vocabulary and mother tongue interference which influences a bit their style.
- ✓ Students' poor language proficiency.

If we consider explanation of the problems proposed by teachers, we can say that teaching the module of written expression is not an easy task because there are many reasons that may hinder the process of teaching, some of these problems are due to classroom settings, others because of students' lack of something such as practice, knowledge...etc.

9. Spelling errors differ from one to another

Strongly agree

Agree

Disagree

Strongly disagree

Whether you agree or not, tell us your point of view

.....

Aspects	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Number	5	2	0	0
%	71%	29%	0	0

Table 10: Spelling differences from one to another

Based on the assumption from the answers of the question above, we assume that most of the teachers (71%) are strongly agree that students' spelling error differ from one to another, whereas only two teachers (29%) agree.

Whether you agree or not tell us your opinion

Some teachers noted by saying that it depends on learners' language proficiency level and their contact with that written aspects of this language. Other teachers mentioned that learners forget a letter or misplace one vowel by another and sometimes they use the way they speak or chat, besides, there are words that are pronounced the same in another language i.e. French but are not spelled the same. Another teacher wrote that errors are a symptom of lack of something (practice).

10. Knowing the image of the word helps the learner to avoid spelling mistakes

Strongly agree

Agree

Disagree

Strongly disagree

Whether you agree or not, tell us your point of view

.....

Aspects	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Number	3	4	0	0
%	43%	57%	0	0

Table 11: Avoiding spelling mistakes

By analyzing the result from the data bellow, we can deduce that some teachers strongly agree, while others only agree; they explained this by :

- You have the image of a word from reading
- It is the graphic presentation of the word. It is very necessary for avoiding the problems of spelling mistakes.
- You need also to know the meaning and lexical structure (affix, suffix, and prefix) besides its grammatical functions (verb, noun).
- Knowing the image will help a lot but this depends on the students' learning strategy.
- Students visualize letters and how they are combined to form words, so they keep it in mind to use it properly in their written production.

- One of the teachers added that it is not enough, learners have to practice the writing skill. On her opinion this way of dealing with spelling mistakes is not sufficient and students should practice a lot to master the skill of writing because it needs an intensive work to be a skillful writer.

4. Students' Essay Analysis

Omission

Case One	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ "... on this life has own dreams..." ➤ "... so that I would able to get..." ➤ "...my dream is college is my second step..." ➤ "...achieve currently a student in university..." ➤ "Belive" ➤ "... and I study my love branch is English..." ➤ "... I wish succeed..." ➤ "... because is last year..." ➤ "...what keep me going..."
Case Two	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ "... are question.." ➤ "... who suffering..." ➤ "... an successful..."
Case Three	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ "... I know is impossible..."
Case Four	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ "... which push me and give me power..." ➤ "...which makes us dream to achieve them..." ➤

Examples

Nature of the error	Example
✓ Believe	• Belive
✓ Are questions	• Are question
✓ Because it is the last year	• Because is last year

Some sentences have missing words and letters by removing pronouns, verbs, spelling mistakes... etc.Errors like "belive" are misspelled by omitting the letter "e" where

students think that this word is written as it is perceived, errors like “are question” are often generalized by EFL students which they think it’s the same with singular and plural. Finally, the omission of the pronoun “it” and the definite article “the” which makes the sentence looks ambiguous.

Addition

Case One	➤ “...an unknown...”
Case Two	➤ “...a lot of time of thinking...” ➤ “... I always I want to be a teacher...” ➤ “... I would to be able...”
Case Three	➤ “...dreams are like a drawing a map...”
Case Four	➤ “... they will not stopp me...”

Through the analysis of the essays, we found that some students added letters or pronouns which make the sentences grammatical incorrect in number of 6 errors have been found as additional mistakes.

Examples

Nature of the error	Example
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ “...dreams are like drawing a map...” ➤ “... they will not stop me...” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ “...dreams are like a drawing a map...” ➤ “...They will not stopp me...”

The main reason that led to this type of errors is their native language interference because learners get confused with the use of articles. Errors like the first one is repetition of the indefinite article which makes the sentence looks awkward, and the second one is a spelling mistake “stopp” which is incorrect, sometimes students misspell words because of many reasons such the lack of practice that makes them having difficulties when writing such compositions.

Selection

Case One	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ "... I study my love branch is English..." ➤ "... I have dreams for all something beautiful..." ➤ "I wish succeed in this year"
Case Two	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ "... of course all this I want to occur..." ➤ "I want to publish a association"
Case Three	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ "... I believe that successful is depend on..."
Case Four	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ "... to discover the strange custom..."

By analyzing the students' essays, we found that they have wrongly chosen words by writing the wrong word on the wrong place which makes the piece of writing grammatical wrong.

Examples

Nature of the error	Example
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ "... I believe that success depends on..." ✓ "... to discover the foreign custom..." 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "... I believe that successful is depend on..." • "... to discover the strange custom..."

Through the analysis of the examples above, we can say that students sometimes get confused with finding the right word that suits their needs on the topic discussed sometimes instead of using a noun they use an adjective like the examples above. This issues is related to students' lack of reading which enable them enrich their vocabulary and broaden their view and imagination while writing.

Ordering

Case One	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ "I'm personally trying to..."
----------	---

Examples

Nature of the error	Example
➤ “Personally, I’m trying to...”	➤ “I’m personally trying to...”

Students are still influenced by their native language “Arabic” word order, from the example above, students translate from their mother tongue to the target language which result on transfer from L1 to L2, sometime both language are different which results on negative transfer, and sometimes they are similar where students do not encounter any difficulties because of the similarities found between L1 and L2.

5. Discussion of the results

This study attempts to identify and analyse the common errors made by third year students in their written productions. The current study came up with the following results. The analysis of the teachers’ questionnaire shows that the majority of teachers have a long time experience on teaching the English language some of them have magister degree and other have PhD degree. On the second section, teachers pointed that the majority of students have an average level on writing skills and most of them commit errors on writing because of many reasons such as the interference of mother tongue, poor vocabulary...etc., besides, the majority of students find difficulties on essays writing unlike paragraphs which is shorter and it does not have many errors. Also teachers declare that most of the difficulties of teaching written expression come from large classes that does not allow teachers to give feedback frequently, time allotted is not sufficient to this module, and also the lack of vocabulary and mother tongue interference are one of the problems that hinder the process of teaching the module of writing expression. Moreover, teachers argued that students have the image of the words from reading and it is necessary to have the graphic image to avoid spelling mistakes. Furthermore, this study analysis the essays of third year students in order to investigate the errors made by these students. The results shows that most of EFL students commit errors on spelling, word order, the use of articles and pronouns. According the findings of the study, some errors’ type occur more than others in students writing because as teachers pointed that it depends on the students’ proficiency level.

Conclusion

The analysis of teachers' questionnaire and students' essay reveals that students have difficulties when writing a given task, this confirms to the hypotheses that say " the more EFL students are influenced by their mother tongue, the more they will fail in writing essays" and " the lack of practice of writing is the major problem that hinder the process of writing". Thus, the writing skill is a difficult activity which requires much time and practice to master it very well, after three years at university, students still have problems on writing such as grammar, writing mechanics, and vocabulary.

The results show that the majority of students face some difficulties on writing because of many reasons, for instance, the lack of practice, the influence of mother tongue, poor vocabulary.

Recommendations

It is obvious that the teaching of written expression is a hard task where teachers should take into account many factors which may develop the students writing skills. In the light of the findings, the present study suggests some recommendations:

- ❖ Teachers should encouraged their students to think in the target language when writing because if they think in their mother tongue, there will be two distinct aspects, the first one is negative transfer, teachers should be aware that their students' native language is Arabic which is not the same as English in terms of word order, the selection of the right words...etc., this may lead the students to do inadequate and ineffective writing. However, teachers should encourage their students to use positive transfer that lead to do an effective and coherent writing without problems because of the similarities found on the L1 and L2.
- ❖ Students should read as much as they can in order to be acquainted with the English language so they will not have any problems on writing mechanism, vocabulary, and grammar...etc.
- ❖ Teachers need to find ways to improve their students writing skills and they should advise them that the more they read, the more they will be effective writers, and to motivate them by choosing topics they like rather that some topics which are boring that may let them unproductive.
- ❖ Teachers should find the suitable approach (es) for their students in order to overcome the problems of writing production.
- ❖ Teachers should create the appropriate atmosphere for their students to give them frequent feedback because it is important on dealing with students' problems on the four skills and in writing in specific to get rid of its complication, also allow the students to express themselves by discussing certain topics, the role of the teacher here is to assess and correct his students' errors.

General conclusion

On this research, we started by theoretical part which is composed of two parts. The first one is concerned with the writing skill, its definition and criteria of a good writing that every writer seek to improve in order to write an effective piece of writing without having problems on writing mechanism and other criteria such as organization, vocabulary and so on. Furthermore, we have dealt with writing problems that face EFL students on writing like dyslexia and dysgraphia; also, we have dealt with writing approaches used by teachers to enhance the level of writing of their learners. The second part is devoted to cross linguistic influence which is the influence of learners' native language on the target language, it is divided on positive and negative transfer, borrowing and code switching. Moreover, this study dealt with the effect of L1 on L2 writing, and contrastive analysis which is aimed on the description of the differences and similarities found between two or more languages, it is associated with the work of some linguists during the last century. Next, error analysis sought to discover the errors made by foreign language learner, and the distinction made between error and mistake. Besides, we have explained the sources of errors that is composed of interlingual and intralingual errors.

The second part of this dissertation is devoted to the practical part which is in turn divided into the description and analysis of teachers' questionnaire and students' essay analysis. The results obtained from the questionnaire and students' essays help us in presenting some recommendation.

Thus, we conclude that EFL learners still have a long way to develop their writing skills through an intensive work in order to be able of producing a good writing production. Learners must be warned on the errors they make during the assignment inside the classroom and the problems of language transfer between Arabic, English, and even French.

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Appendices

12. Do third year students make many errors in their writing?

c. Yes

d. No

13. What kind of errors do students make while writing?

f. grammatical errors

g. interference of mother tongue

h. Poor vocabulary

i. Mechanics

j. Other.....

4. Do you provide your students with feed-back?

c. Yes

d. No

5. In the process of teaching the writing skill, do you focus on?

g. Handwriting

h. Grammar

i. Vocabulary

j. Mechanics

k. Content

l. Other.....

6. Do your students find difficulties while writing:

c. Paragraph

d. Essay

7. For a piece of writing to be good it must contain :

- Correct grammar
- Specific vocabulary
- Spelling/ punctuation
- coherence and cohesion
- All of them
- Other.....

8. What kind of problems do you face in teaching writing expression?

.....

.....

.....

.....

9. Spelling errors differ from one to another

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

Whether you agree or not, tell us your point of view

.....

.....

.....

10. Knowing the image of the word helps the learner to avoid spelling mistakes

Strongly agree

Agree

Disagree

Strongly disagree

Whether you agree or not, tell us your point of view

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

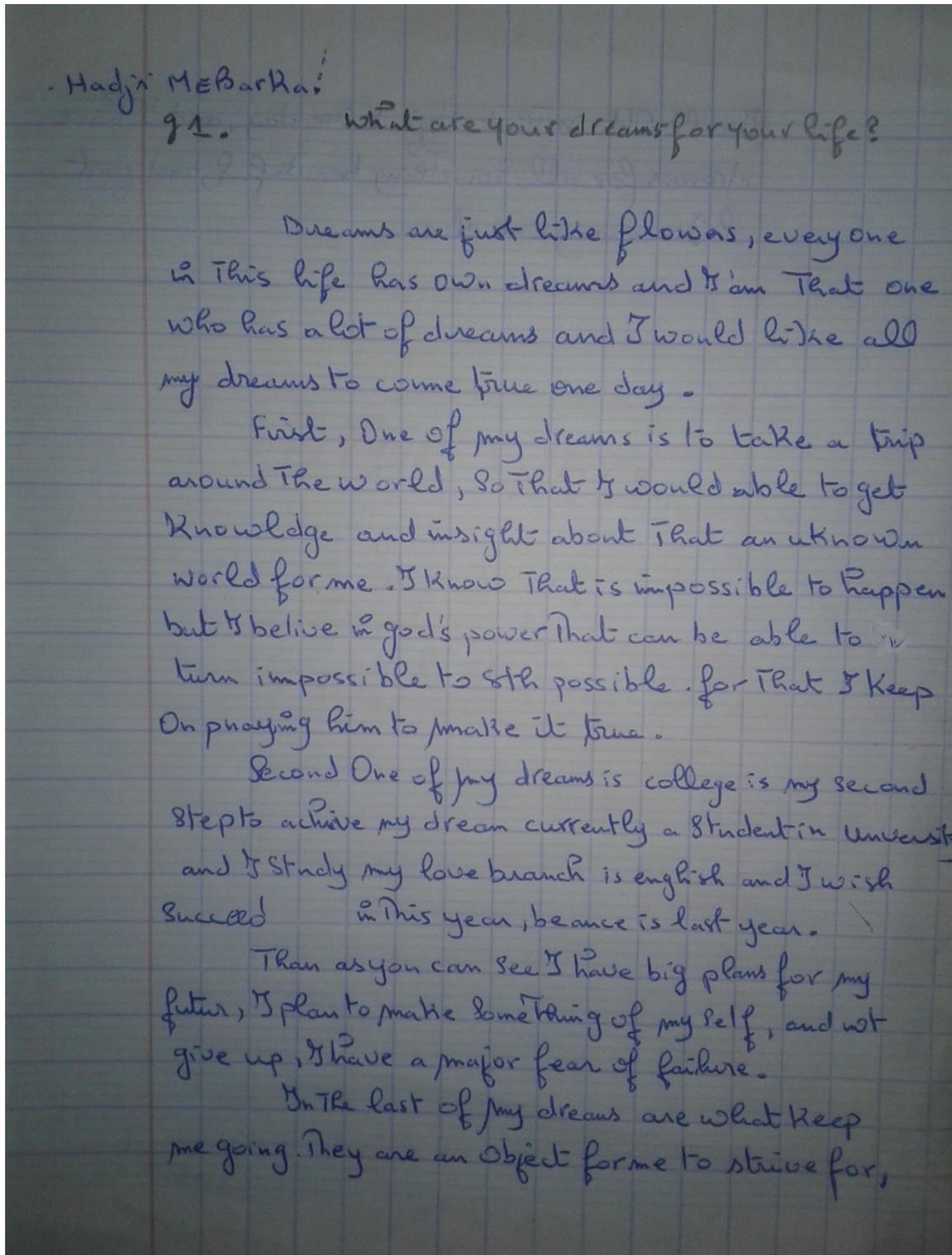
11. Please, add any suggestions you may see relevant to this dissertation

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

Thank you for your collaboration

Appendix n°2

Students Essay Analysis



Family name: Bentayeb

Name: Sarah

Group: 01

us

out

A narrative essay about my childhood dream

As a child I have always had many dreams in my life. A doctor, a lawyer, a journalist were my first answers whenever I was asked by my parents about what I am going to become in the future. I was very ambitious and eager to be successful in order to fulfill these dreams in my life. Now, I have realized that I can not always have what I want in life as it can become too complex and complicated. When we grow older we realize that not everything is that easy.

One of them included starting a career in the domain of journalism. When I was at the age of 12, I set my mind to be a journalist and it was my only concern to achieve this dream and nothing else. I had been always watching TV shows, reading newspapers' articles in order to have an idea of how the work of my dream job is done.

Then I started planning of how to expand in my future career in a way of having a TV channel of my own which was supposed to be the first channel ever in my hometown. I suggested to my family that after taking my Baccalauréat Diploma I would like to enroll in the college of press and media.

My family had completely disagreed with me. They were against the idea that I would engage in such a career. My father said

المخلص

يهدف هذا البحث الى التعرف على الازخطاء التي ارتكبها طلاب اللغة الاجنبية (اللغة الانجليزية) في جامعة محمد خيضر بسكرة, و قد اجري هذا البحث لمعرفة المشاكل التي تواجه طلاب السنة الثالثة عند كتابة المقالات. تعتبر الكتابة واحدة من اكثر المهام تحديا لمتعلم اللغة الاجنبية لان الكثير من الطلاب يجدون صعوبة في كتابة نص خالي من الازخطاء, تم تحليل مقالات الطلاب من خلال استعمال تحليل الازخطاء كطريقة للعثور على الازخطاء الاكثر شيوعا لدى الطلاب عن طريق اخذ عينة تتكون من اربع مقالات كتبها طلاب السنة الثالثة. تم تصنيف جميع الازخطاء الى الازهمال, الازضافة, الاختيار, و الترتيب, لدعم النتائج, قدمنا استبيان لاساتذة التعبير الكتابي لمعرفة وجهات نظرهم حول الازخطاء التي يقوم بها طلابهم. نتائج الاستبيان و تحليل المقالات تكشف على ان معظم الازخطاء الشائعة التي يرتكبها الطلاب هي النحو, المفردات و تاثير اللغة الام على اللغة الاجنبية