

## A CORPUS-BASED ANALYSIS OF LEARNERS' SPELLING AND MORPHO-SYNTACTIC WRITING ERRORS AND MISTAKES. A CASE STUDY OF SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN BRAZZAVILLE (CONGO)

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**Abstract :** This research work aimed at identifying and analyzing errors and mistakes that Congolese EFL learners commit in their written productions with regard to spelling and morpho-syntax aspects. We carried out the investigation in two senior secondary schools: Réconciliation and Kintélé, located in Brazzaville. To obtain reliable results, the EFL learners' copies from grade 3 of these two schools were used as data collection. Besides, we used the descriptive analytical method and Corder's errors analysis theory (EA) to identify and analyze the types of errors and mistakes made in writing. The results show that EFL learners mostly make interlingual errors (interference between French and English) at the level of selection (morphological and grammatical errors) and of syntax (misordering of words). To enhance EFL learners' writing skills, we suggest some strategies and techniques teachers should use during writing instruction.

**Key words:** Corpus-based analysis, EFL learners, Spelling and morpho-syntactic errors and mistakes, Writing.

## ANALYSE PAR CORPUS DES FAUTES MORPHOSYNTAXIQUES D'ORTHOGRAPHE ET D'ÉCRITURE DES APPRENANTS. CAS DES LYCÉES DE BRAZZAVILLE

**Résumé :** Ce travail de recherche porte sur l'identification et l'analyse des erreurs et fautes commises par les apprenants de la langue anglaise en rédaction. Notre enquête a été menée auprès des apprenants des classes de terminales des séries littéraires des lycées de la Réconciliation et de Kintélé à Brazzaville. Notre étude étant de nature descriptive et analytique, nous nous servons des copies des apprenants pour la collecte des données. En sus, nous avons appliqué le modèle d'analyse d'erreurs que propose Corder pour identifier et analyser les types d'erreurs que les apprenants commettent en écrit. Les résultats ont révélé que les apprenants de la langue anglaise commettent beaucoup plus d'erreurs d'interférences linguistiques (entre le Français et l'anglais), particulièrement au niveau de la sélection (erreurs morphologiques et grammaticales) et de la syntaxe (non-respect de l'ordre de mots dans une phrase). Afin d'améliorer les performances des apprenants en écrit, nous avons suggéré aux enseignants quelques stratégies et techniques d'enseignement de la rédaction

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## Introduction

In the context of learning a foreign language, errors and mistakes are naturally part of learners' gradual movement towards the development of communicative competence. So, a teacher should use effective strategies and techniques when dealing with errors or mistakes in order to help learners use accurately the target language. Correcting errors and mistakes is a form of teachers' feedback to learners' misuse of the language. It aims at improving learners' oral and written expression.

In the Republic of Congo, English language is taught as a subject from secondary schools to university. Writing is a productive skill, which a learner should master for academic performances. Though learners spend seven (7) years learning English language, they still have poor performances in writing at the end of their secondary school training. Thus, this research study has two main objectives: the general and the specific objectives.

The general objective is to investigate the most common and prevailing errors and mistakes in EFL learners' writing composition from senior secondary schools.

The specific objectives are:

1. To describe the types of errors and mistakes learners most frequently make in their written productions and account for their causes;
2. To suggest some effective techniques and strategies to help learners improve their writing skills.

Therefore, the main question underlying this study is stated as follows: Which subject matters do learners have problems with? Our secondary questions are as follows: 1)- What types of errors and mistakes do learners make? 2) What are the causes of these errors and mistakes? To the above questions, we offer the following hypotheses: The main hypothesis is that learners should have problems with grammar, vocabulary, morphology and syntax. The subsidiary hypotheses are stated as follows: among learners' errors and mistakes should be the misuse of grammar notions, misspelling of words, slips and language interference. 2)- the causes of learners' errors and mistakes might be the lack of knowledge and the non-assimilation of the grammar, vocabulary and morpho-syntactic structures.

This paper comprises the review of the related literature, research methodology, major findings, discussion, suggestions and conclusion.

### 1. Review of the related literature

Dealing with learners' errors and mistakes in teaching process is a burning issue among researchers. We came across some works dealing with mistakes and errors in the process of EFL teaching and learning.

#### 1.1. *Errors and mistakes in the teaching and learning process*

Dealing with errors and mistakes in the teaching and learning process, researchers offer different viewpoints. According to James (1998, p.78):

If the learner is inclined and able to correct a fault in his or her output, it is assumed that the form he or she selected was not the one he or she intended,

and we shall say that the fault is a mistake. If, on the other hand, the learner is unable or in any way disinclined to make the correction, we assume that the form the learner used was the one intended, and that is an error.

Otherwise, mistake is a failure to utilize a known language system correctly. It may result from a lack of attention when speaking or writing, yet can be corrected when attention is called; whereas error is a systematic deviation made by a learner who has yet grasped the use of the target language rules. However, Corder (1973) goes further. He distinguishes between “lapses,” “mistakes” and “errors.” According to him:

Errors are divided into two categories: first is the performance category which consists of “lapses” and mistakes; and the second is the competence category which consists of “errors.” The term lapses refer to any slips of tongue, false starts, confusion of structures.

Then, Corder mentions that errors differ from lapses and mistakes in the sense that they are the breaches of the language code. In other words, errors offend the grammatical rules of the target language and result in ungrammatical and unacceptable utterances.

Speaking of the significance of error, Corder (1973, p.265) indicates that:

‘Errors are significant in three different ways. Firstly, they show teachers how far towards the goal the learners have advanced and consequently, what remains for them to learn. And added: Errors provide feedback; they tell the teacher something about the effectiveness of his teaching materials and his teaching techniques.

In the same connection, Ringbom (1987, p.69) wrote:

Learners' errors are, in fact, very important because they provide insight into how far a learner has progressed in acquiring a language and show how much more the learner needs to learn. Secondly, errors provide to the researchers evidence of how language is learnt or acquired, what strategies or procedures the learners are employing in their discovery of the language. Thirdly, they are indispensable to the learners themselves as a device they use to improve their speaking and writing.

However, Carter (1997, p.35) argues that:

Knowing more about how grammar works is to understand more about how grammar is used and misused”. There is a need for students to recognize the significance of errors, which occur in their writing, to fully grasp and understand the nature of the errors made. This requires English language teachers to be better equipped, more sensitive and aware of the difficulties students face with regard to grammar. In other words, it is a way learners have for testing their hypotheses about the nature of the language they are learning.

From the above researchers' viewpoints, one can understand that there is a difference between error and mistake. An error is a systematic deviation that a learner makes when he does not have knowledge of the correct rule of the target language. It shows

a lack of language competence and it reflects a learner's current stage of L2 development. Therefore, a learner can hardly self-correct an error. Whereas a mistake is the lack of performance attention, carelessness. A learner can self-correct it when a mistake is pointed out.

### **1.2. Error taxonomies**

In his study on study on learners' errors, Richards (1971) showed the different types of learners' errors related to production and distribution of verbs groups, prepositions, articles, and the use of questions. Based on this, he distinguished three sources of errors:

1. Interference errors: they result from the fact of using elements from one language while speaking or writing another. Speaking of English learning, Hamer (2002, p.99) argues: "where L1 and English come into contact each other there are often confusions which provoke errors in a learner's use of English". This can be at the level of sounds, grammar and words usage, namely when there are similarities;
2. Intralingual errors: they reflect general characteristics of the learning rules such as faulty generalization, incomplete application of rules and failure to learn conditions under which rules apply. These errors are influenced by the native languages, which interfere with target language language;
3. Developmental errors: errors occurring when learners attempt to build up hypotheses about the target language based on limited experiences.

Besides, Richards (1971, pp.171-181) mentions four categories of intralingual errors among which are: 1)-overgeneralization; 2)- ignorance of rules restrictions; 3)-incomplete application of rules; 4)- False concepts hypothesized. According to him, the first category, overgeneralization refers to the application of grammatical and morphological rules in cases where they do not apply. For instance, the learners' own way to make rules of the second language because of their incapability to differentiate between L1 and L2 rules. Saidan (2011, p.185) defines overgeneralization as: "the phenomenon when one overextends one rule to cover instances to which that rule does not apply". The second, the ignorance of rules restrictions, concerns the faulty structures because of the learner's ignorance of rules restrictions; for example the use of rules out of their context. The third, the incomplete application of rules, occurs when a learner fails to build and develop a complete structure in the target language. The fourth, false concepts hypothesized, refers to the learner's failure to understand the taught rules.

## **2. Research methodology**

The present paper uses a descriptive analytical method, which attempts to describe and quantify learners' errors and mistakes for statistical analysis.

During the second term of the school year 2021-2022, we conducted an investigation on learners' writing mistakes and errors in two senior secondary school Réconciliation and Kintélé, both located in Brazzaville. The target population consists of EFL learners from grade 3.

### **2.1. Participants**

We randomly selected one hundred and fifty (150) learners from grade 3, seventy-five (75) per school. Their official language is French (L1) and English is a foreign language L2. We organized a test on writing composition for both schools, with a limited number of participants in each class, twenty-five per class.

### **2.2. Instruments for collecting data**

To obtain genuine data for this research study, we used a writing composition test. We instructed participants to write an essay of no more than three hundred words on the topic entitled: "describe the Christmas feast in your family."

A total of one hundred and fifty (150) learners' copies were collected. Learners from both schools were submitted to the same assignment.

### **2.3. Validity of the test**

To ensure the reliability of the writing test content, we submitted the content to all teachers from EFL departments of the two schools so that they check the nature of the question and the practicality of the test. The test took place on February 10, 2022.

### **2.4. Data collection and analysis**

The main samples for the research were the copies of writing composition collected from learners from grade 3 of the two schools of our choice. We gathered learners' written works and analyzed them to identify the kinds of errors and mistakes resulted from the two different linguistic systems of L1 and L2. We coded, classified and quantitatively counted them to find what types of errors and mistakes the participants frequently made. We used Corder's (1974) stages of error analysis which consist of: (1) collection of a sample; (2) identification of errors; (3) description of errors; (4) explanation of errors and (5) evaluation of errors. Besides, we used Corder's (1967) taxonomy model; which includes grammatical, lexical, semantic, and mechanical errors. The focus in this study was the analysis of interlingual and intralingual errors through EA (errors analysis).

## **3. Major findings and discussion**

### **3.1. Major findings**

Based on Corder's errors analysis (EA) theory, we categorized findings into four major areas of errors: omission, addition, selection, and misordering. Besides, we proposed the following legend to explicit the tables below: L: learner; Q1: Réconciliation; Q2: Kintélé.

#### **3.1.1. Omission Errors**

Omission errors identified in the learners' compositions included morphological, grammatical and to syntactical omission. Overall, from fifty (50)

sample paragraphs, we identified twenty-seven (27) morphological omissions, twenty (20) grammar omissions and fifteen (15) lexical omissions. The table below is an illustration of errors in omission extracted from the students' paragraphs.

**Table 1. Learners' omission errors**

Error category	Illustrations	Corrections
Morphological omission	L2-Q1 : we put on new <u>g</u> aments L10-Q1: my cousin enjoyed the <u>p</u> aty L5-Q2: we receive many <u>g</u> ests. L15-Q2: ther <u>e</u> was good music	L2-Q1: we put on new garments L10-Q1: my cousin enjoyed the party L5-Q2: we received many guests L15-Q2: there was some good music
Grammar omission: - Past tense - Gerund - Possessive form - Present perfect	L8-Q1 : my aunt not like to eat fish that day. L17-Q1: talk about Christmas day, I can say. L12-Q2: my friend <u>s</u> brother danced much. L20-Q2: Mum has becom joyful	L8-Q1: my aunt did not like to eat fish that day. L17-Q1: talking about Christmas day, I can say. L12-Q2: my friend's brother danced much L20-Q2: Mum has become joyful
lexical omission (word omission errors) - Article - Verb - Preposition	L13-Q1: my sister is student L11-Q1: the purpose of eating in family was to members know one another very well. L3-Q2: It was opportunity me to meet my cousins L7-Q2: he was drunk and could not go home	L13-Q1: my sister is a student L11-Q1: the purpose of eating in family was to make members know one another very well. L3-Q2: It was an opportunity for me to meet my cousins. L7-Q2: he was drunk and could not go back home

The above table displays the morphological, grammatical and syntactical omission errors learners made in their writing compositions. The morphological omission occurs when a learner leaves out a or some letter(s) within a word. Learners from the two schools omitted letters within words. Learners from Réconciliation school (Q1) omitted the " r " within the words garment (L2) and party (L10). Whereas, learners from Kintélé school ( Q2) omitted the letter "u" within " guest" (L5) and " e" in the expression of quantity "there was" (L15). Regarding grammar omission, it concerns the restriction of a rule. For instance, learners from Réconciliation school (Q 1)

respectively omitted the past auxiliary “ did” in the sentence *my aunt did not like to eat fish too much* ( L8) and “ ing” in the use of gerund in the sentence *talking about Christmas day, I can say* ( L17). However, two learners from Kintélé (Q2) have respectively problem with the possessive form and the present perfect tense, they left out ‘s and e in the following sentences: *my friendu brother danced much* (L12), instead of *my friend’s brother*. And, *Mum has becomu joyful* (L20), instead of *Mum has become joyful*. As far as lexical omission is concerned, learners from the two schools omitted articles, verbs, and prepositions as follows: 1-) Article: *my sister is student* (L13-Q1), instead of *my sister is a student*;

2-) Verb: *the purpose of eating in family was to members know one another very well* (L11-Q1), instead of *the purpose of eating in family was to **make** members know one another very well*;

3-) Preposition: *it was opportunity me to meet my cousins* (L3-Q2), instead of *it was an opportunity **for** me to meet my cousins*.

### 3.1.2. Learners’ addition errors

In contrast to omission, addition is the category of errors in which unnecessary forms, letters and words are added to the sentence construction. In the learners’ papers, we identified nineteen (19) morphological addition and twenty-five (25) syntactical addition, and twelve (12) grammar addition as one can see in the following table. Normally, learners should avoid such errors.

**Table 2. Some Examples of Addition Error**

Error category	Illustrations	Corrections
Morphological addition - Morpheme - “ S”	L16-Q1 : everybody <u>es</u> love pop music. L45-Q1: we listened to good mus <u>ics</u> L10-Q2: our father bought some bread <u>s</u> L2-Q2: Mom <u>cooked</u> much rice <u>s</u>	L16-Q1: everybody loves pop music. L45-Q1: we listened to good music. L10-Q2: our father bought some bread. L2-Q2: Mom cooked much rice.
Syntactical addition - Article - Superlative	L8-Q1 : aunt Mary went <u>to</u> shopping with my sister. L20-Q1: I ran <u>to</u> home when I saw my father coming with fruits. L4-Q2: my uncle was the most happy at the feast L9-Q2: André, my cousin, likes eating much <u>most</u> chicken	L8-Q1: aunt Mary went shopping with my sister. L20-Q1: I ran home when I saw my father coming with fruits. L4-Q2: my uncle was the happiest at the feast. L9-Q2: André, my cousin, likes eating much more chicken.

Grammar addition	L12Q1: she cans dance	L12Q1: she can dance
- Modal verbs: third person singular	L18Q1: my friend shoulds bring his bicycle	L18Q1: my friend should bring his bicycle
- Personal pronoun	L14Q2 : our elder brother he lives abroad	L14Q2 my elder brother lives abroad
- Phrasal verb	L28Q2: Mum was agreed with my little brother	L28Q2: I was agreed with my little brother

In the above table shows the most obvious errors in morphological and syntactical additions. Learners from the two schools made morphological addition errors. They unnecessarily added “es”, “s” in words as though they were in plural. For instance, L16-Q1 wrote “*everybodyes*.” He might think that “*everybody*” should be in plural as it refers to a number of people. But “*everybody*” is an indefinite pronoun and is always singular. However, other learners added the letter “s” in words “*music<sub>s</sub>*” (L45-Q1), “*bread<sub>s</sub>*” (L10-Q2) and “*rice<sub>s</sub>*” (L2-Q2). Whereas, these are uncountable nouns, that is, they cannot be counted or measured. So, they do not take “s” in plural.

As With regards to syntactical addition, learners (L8 and L20) from Réconciliation school (Q1) improperly added the preposition “to” in the phrasal verbs “*go shopping*” and “*go home*”. Learner (L8) wrote: *Aunt Mary went to shopping with my sister*, instead of *Aunt Mary went shopping with my sister*. Learner (L20) wrote: *I ran to home when I saw my father coming with fruits*, instead of *I ran home when I saw my father coming with fruits*. However, learners (L4 and L9) from Kintélé school added the superlative “most” before the short adjective “happy” (L4) and the adverb “much” (L9). They lack knowledge on the use of superiority.

Concerning the grammatical addition, learners from Réconciliation school (Q1) have problems conjugating modal verbs. For instance, L12(Q1) wrote: *She cans dance* and L18 (Q1) wrote: *My friend should bring his bicycle*. They confuse the ordinary verbs and the modal ones. Then, they put “s” at the third person singular. Normally, the modal verbs do not take “s” at the verb person singular. They should write: *She can dance; my friend should bring his bicycle*. Whereas, learners from Kintélé school (Q2) have respectively problems with personal pronouns and phrasal verbs. L14(Q2) wrote : *Our elder brother he lives abroad* and L28(Q2) wrote.: *Mum was agreed with my little brother*. The correct sentences are: *Our brother lives abroad* and *Mum agreed with my little sister*. We can understand that learners lack the master of the target language structures.

### 3.1.3. The Selection of Errors

The highest number of errors that EFL learners made in their writing was in morphological/lexical selection or word choice with a total of forty-five (45) errors. Besides, they made twenty-eight (28) errors on grammar selection (applying good rules). The following table displays the examples of errors in selection.



**Table 3. Some Examples of Selection Error**

Error category	Illustrations	Corrections
Morphological/ lexical selection	L15-Q1: : we caught rubbers. L6-Q1: I invited my Gabonese classmate to came and test our food. L19-Q2: people did not want to live the place because of drink L11-Q2: my elder sister was absent, she lives aboard	L15-Q1: we caught robbers L6-Q1: I invited my Gabonese friend to come and taste our food. L19-Q2: people did not want to leave the place because of drink. L11-Q2: my elder sister was absent, she lives abroad.
Grammar selection error - Present perfect of motion verbs - Personal pronoun - There is/are/was/were	L21-Q1: my brother in law <u>was</u> arrived early L13-Q2: my father and me were delighted. L14-Q2: there had many people.	L21-Q1: my brother in law had arrived early. L13-Q2: father and I were delighted. L14-Q2: There were many people

Concerning morphological/ lexical selection, learners applied the wrong word choice, which led to misunderstanding of the meaning of the sentence. For instance, L15-Q1 confused “rubbers” and “robbers”; L6-Q1 “test” and “taste”; L19-Q2 “live” and “leave”; L13-Q2 “aboard” and “abroad”. It may be that learners confused the spelling with how the word sounds.

As far as the grammar selection is concerned, learners failed to appropriately use the present perfect tense of motion verbs, the personal pronouns and there is/was. For example, L21-Q1 has problem with the past perfect of motion verbs. He used the French structure. Then, he wrote: my brother in law was arrived early. However, in English, we use the auxiliary “have” for the present and the past perfect tenses of motion verbs. Therefore, the correct sentence is: *My brother in law had arrived or arrived early*. L13-Q2 misused the personal pronouns within a sentence. He wrote: *My father and me were delighted*. He should write: *My father and I were delighted*. However, L14-Q2 confused French and English. Instead of writing: *There were many people*, he wrote: *There had many people*. One can notice the interference of learners’ official language (French). In fact, the target language differs from the official one ( L1).

### 3.1.3. Misordering

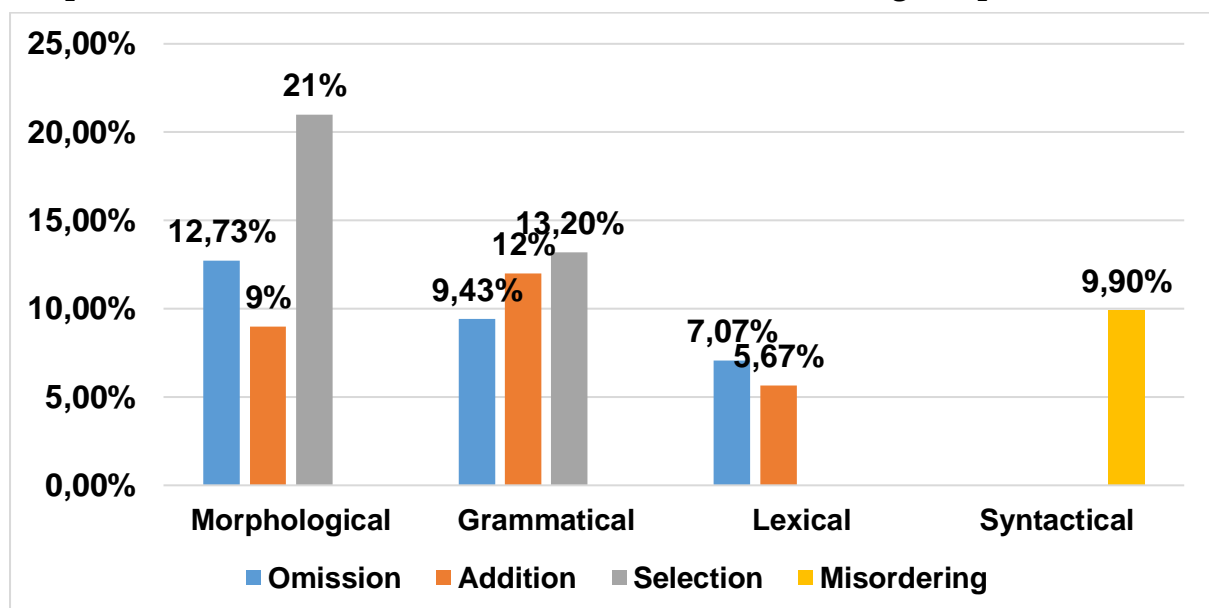
Misordering was the least category of errors learners made in their writing composition. We identified twenty-one (21) syntactical errors.

**Table 4. Some examples of Misordering**

Error category	Illustrations	Corrections
Syntactical Misordering/ misorder words	L5-Q1: my father received my guests kindly.	L5-Q1: my father kindly received my guests
	L26-Q1: I preferred mangoes ripe for dessert.	L26-Q1: I preferred ripe mangoes for dessert.
	L16-Q2: my aunt who organized the Christmas feast is a <u>child second</u> of her father.	L16-Q2: my aunt who organized the Christmas feast is a second child of her father.
	L27-Q2: my father made a speech good.	L27-Q2: my father made a good speech.

The above table displays the syntactical misordering in the learners' composition. In fact, learners (L5 and L26) from Réconciliation school (Q1) respectively misplaced the adverb and the adjective on their papers. L5 confused the place of the short adverb "kindly" which should come before "received". Therefore, the correct sentence is : *My father kindly received my guests*. Whereas, L26, confused the right place of the adjective that completes the object in a sentence: "*ripe mangoes*" instead of "*mangoes ripe*". This implicitly shows the French interference in the learner's writing. However, learners (L16 and 27) from Kintélé school (Q2) confused the position of adjectives in their sentences. Normally, the adjective come before the object: "*a second child*" instead of "*a child second*" and "*good speech*" instead of "*speech good*". The less number of misordering errors occurrence implied that the participants of this study have acquired the rules of word order at a considerable level. Overall, selection is the highest occurrence of errors, while misordering was the lowest occurrence. The misordering changes the sense of sentences; therefore learners should avoid such errors. The following tables summarizes the number of errors found in learners' writing composition.

**Graph n°1: Errors and mistakes identified in learners' writing composition**



The above graphic revealed that many learners made selection errors (34.20%: Morphological 21%, Grammar 13.20%). They have problem selecting appropriate words and grammatical structures. Undoubtedly, this shows that learners need much more writing activities to improve their productions. The next section attempts to discuss the errors from interlingual and intralingual perspectives.

### 3.2. Discussion

In this section, we propose to examine sources of learners' errors and mistakes from interlingual and intralingual aspects.

#### 3.2.1. Sources of errors and mistakes

We classified the sources of errors in two categories: interlingual and intralingual sources.

Interlingual errors are regarded as a transfer of grammatical rules and syntactical order from L1 (French) to L2 (English). However, intralingual errors result from overgeneralization and incomplete application of language rules and faulty categorization.

##### 3.2.1.1. Interlingual errors or language interferences

The analysis of errors showed that the majority of EFL learners' written production are highly affected by the first language (French) at the level of selection, particularly in morphology (21%), grammar (13.20%) and of misordering mainly in syntax (9.90%). In fact, Learners transferred L1 grammatical and syntactical structures to L2 in their production. They might lack mastery of L1 syntactical and grammar structures. Therefore, they applied the acquired patterns and rules of L1 to their L2 production. So, interlingual errors are not regarded as the result of old habit, but rather as a sign that the learner is in the process of internalizing the new system of the target language. In this study, interlingual errors concern the selection and the syntactical misordering. Otherwise, the interlingual errors concern the wrong spellings and order of words within a sentence.

##### 3.2.1.2. Intralingual errors

In contrast to interlingual errors, which originates from L1 interference, the source of intralingual errors lies in the target language itself. In the process of acquisition, L2 learners have either insufficient command of language structures or false interpretation of distinctions in some grammatical rules. In other words, learners are still in the developmental stage of acquiring L2. Then, intralingual errors encompass these aspects: overgeneralization, ignorance of rule, restrictions, incomplete application of rules, and false concept of hypothesis of some grammatical rules. In this study, intralingual concern omission and addition. It can be argued that omission might results from learners' simplification and lack of knowledge of correct language forms. Otherwise, when learners omitted particular morpheme or suffix in

word formation. These following words in learners' productions are illustrative: *garments*, *gests* instead of *garment and guest*; *my friendd brother* instead of *my friend's brother* (see table n°1). Whereas addition error results from overgeneralization of rules as in the sentence: she cans dance (see table n°3). The learner overgeneralizes the rule that in the present tense a verb takes 's' at the third person singular. However, this rule only applies to regular and irregular verbs and not to modal verbs.

#### 4. Suggestions

To minimize learners' errors and mistakes, teachers need to be aware of the linguistic system differences between the official language (French) and the target language (English); so that they can enlighten learners through various tasks and activities about such contrast.

##### 4.1. *Typical activities to avoid inter and intralingual errors and mistakes*

It is important to give learners more reading activities. In fact, text and journal reading help to master words formation, spelling, and the context of use. This may make learners familiarize themselves with the correct usage of Standard English and avoid morphological and lexical confusions; otherwise interferences between the official language (French) and the target language (English). Besides, teachers ought to teach learners at lower stages the mechanics of writing and focus more on grammar and morpho-syntactic structures. Most of grammatical, lexical and morpho-syntactical errors and mistakes result from the fact that many learners lack the mastery of the target language structure. To reinforce the instructions, teachers can suggest a few error analysis tasks and objective tests that would help learners be more accurate in writing. Then, they should give more drills linked to writing such as blank filling, scramble sentences, paragraphs writing and essays.

These are some techniques to correct learners' written productions:

##### 4.1.1. *Self-correction for mistakes*

Being that a mistake is a slip or a failure to use a known language system correctly, a teacher should proceed as follows:

- Underline inappropriate language, mistakes, on learners' copies using a specific colour;
- Use codes in the margin to identify types of mistakes, for instance *Lex* for lexical mistakes; *Gr* for grammar mistakes; *Syn* for syntactic mistakes.
- Ask learners to identify the type of mistakes on their own copies and make self-correction since they are supposed to have knowledge of the right spelling or structure. They will remember it better. Self-correction raises learners awareness about their mistakes, allowing them to correct the mistakes themselves. In so doing, it helps learners become responsible for their learning.

#### 4.1.2. Peers correction for errors

Since errors are applied for notions or structures, which a learner has no knowledge of; a teacher can use peers correction, as a learner cannot self-correct. Then, he should:

- Alternatively put crosses in the margin for the number of errors in each line of a copy
- Set up pairs or groups work and give each group copies to identify errors and make corrections if possible. This encourages cooperation between learners in the learning process. The peers-correction must be applied tactfully to avoid frustrations.

Peers correction enhances learners' cooperation, interaction and involvement in class activities.

#### 4.1.3. Teacher' correction

If no one can correct errors and the teacher realizes that all learners have no knowledge of the points (notion, structure, words) and he has not yet taught these properly. He can explain the problematic items of language and give practical drills on the points. The objective is to develop learners' writing accuracy.

#### 4.1.4. Implications for syllabus designers:

Errors are significant to syllabus designers. They help to pinpoint what items are important to be included in the syllabus and what items are likely redundant and should be excluded. Therefore, the analysis of errors help to identify learners' linguistic difficulties and needs at a particular stage of language learning.

## Conclusion

This paper analyzes the types of errors and mistakes EFL learners make in their written productions. Our hypotheses were as follows: 1) - among the learners' errors and mistakes figure highly the misuse of grammar notions, misspelling of words, slips and language interferences. 2) - The causes of learners' errors and mistakes are the results of lack of knowledge and limited awareness of some grammar, vocabulary and morpho-syntactic structures and lack of sufficient writing activities in class.

It results from the writing test that most of EFL learners make errors and mistakes in vocabulary, grammar, morphology and syntax. These errors and mistakes can be classified in two categories: The interlingual and the intralingual. However, the majority of EFL learners make interlingual errors and mistakes because of a lack of command of L2 (English) structure. They use the acquired patterns and rules of L1 (French) in their L2 (English) production. To minimize learners' errors and mistakes, the responsibilities lie on teachers and syllabus designers. Teachers should control learners' writing skills accuracy through errors analysis tests. This helps teachers identify the types and the categories of errors and mistakes their learners commit.

Therefore, they can give more instructions on problematic items and practical drills for learners' best assimilation of structures. For syllabus designers, the errors and mistakes analysis allow them to identify items to include in the syllabus.

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