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Cross-linguistic Influence in Structural Errors in EFL Writing: A Case Study of M1 Learners at the University of Amar Thelidji, Laghouat

A Dissertation Submitted to the Department of English in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements for Master Degree in English Language Teaching.

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Dedication

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Abstract

This research examines the structural errors observed in M1 EFL learners' writings at the University of Amar Thelidji in Laghouat, with special emphasis on the learners' first language influence, Standard Arabic, on their written production. This study aims at identifying the common structural deviations, including grammatical and syntactic errors, and studying their possible sources. A corpus-based design was implemented to collect and analyse learners' essays besides Rod Ellis' (2008) framework. In addition, two analytical procedures were also applied to ensure systematic and comprehensible findings. These procedures are contrastive analysis and error analysis. Eleven categories were identified, including six grammatical, such as subject-verb agreement, article use and verb formation. Besides, five syntactic categories, such as word order, question order and parallel structure issues. The findings revealed that the majority of errors stemmed from intralingual factors such as overgeneralisation and incomplete rule application. Interlingual errors, on the other hand, were primarily observed in article use, verb formation and prepositional use; these errors often appear due to negative transfer between Standard Arabic and English. Thus, intralingual errors were more frequent than interlingual errors. The results of this study are important for English language teaching, especially for Arabic-speaking learners. It highlights the importance of teaching contrastive grammar that is targeted for Arab EFL learners to increase their awareness of the structural differences between Standard Arabic and English.

Key words: cross-linguistic influence, contrastive analysis hypothesis, error analysis, Arab EFL learners, structural errors.

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List of Abbreviations

- **CA:** Contrastive Analysis.
- **CAH:** Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis.
- **CLI:** Cross-Linguistic Influence.
- **EA:** Error Analysis.
- **EFL:** English as a Foreign Language.
- **L1:** First Language.
- **L2:** Second Language.
- **L3:** Third Language.
- **M1:** Master One.
- **M2:** Master Two.
- **MT:** Mother Tongue.
- **SLA:** Second Language Acquisition.
- **SL:** Source Language.

1. General Introduction

In second language acquisition research, cross-linguistic influence is considered a well-documented phenomenon. It refers to the influence of learners' first language on the learning and use of another foreign language. This influence could be observed in learners' production; in particular, when the structures of both languages differ (negative transfer). EFL learners can still fall under this transfer, leading them to commit various deviations, including structural errors, such as word order issues, tense formation, and question order issues.

Structural errors are significant in second language learning because they impact sentence construction and grammatical accuracy in learners' production, which are crucial elements in learners' writing proficiency. These errors may result from interlingual transfer, as they can result from intralingual transfer. This study is supported by two significant theories: contrastive analysis hypotheses and error analysis; these two frameworks help in understanding the nature and possible causes of these errors besides uncovering the difficulties of learning. While existing research has examined structural errors in L1 transfer. Researchers have paid less attention to how Standard Arabic may influence the occurrence of structural errors in English writing. Consequently, this study seeks to fill the gap by identifying the common structural errors in EFL learners' written production and figuring out the possible sources of these errors with special regard to Standard Arabic transfer.

Statement of the Problem

Among Master 1 EFL learners, structural errors remain constant challenges in English writing, while previous studies have addressed general grammatical and syntactic difficulties faced by Arab EFL learners. However, fewer studies focused on the influence of Arabic syntactic patterns in shaping structural errors in English writing. This limited scope leaves a gap in identifying the most common structural errors in English written production and in understanding the role of Standard Arabic influence in contributing to these errors.

The Aims of the Study

This study aims to examine the structural errors found in the written production of Master 1 EFL learners, with particular focus on cross-linguistic influence from Standard Arabic. It also aims at identifying the common structural errors, including syntactic and grammatical errors made by Master 1 EFL learners. Besides, determining the main causes of these errors and how far they can be caused due to the learners' mother tongue.

Significance of the Study

This study is significant due to its contributions to the overall understanding of cross-linguistic influence and error analysis by investigating the structural errors in English writing. Even though careful attention is provided to L1 interference of Arab EFL learners, the results also shed light on the impact of the intralingual transfer, such as overgeneralisation and developmental processes. Besides, this study is important in pedagogy because the findings may help researchers, teachers and curriculum designers to treat the causes of structural errors. This research also could raise EFL learners' awareness of the various sources of their errors to ensure accurate language use.

Research Questions

Based on the study aims, the following research questions and hypotheses were formulated together regarding the cross-linguistic influence of learners' mother tongue, Standard Arabic, on the structural errors identified in learners' essays.

- 1.** What are the most frequent structural errors in Master 1 EFL learners' written production?
- 2.** What are the main causes of structural errors?
- 3.** To what extent is L1 interference a contributing factor?

H1: M1 EFL are expected to commit a high frequency of structural errors in their writing.

H2: A high number of structural errors are expected to be the result of L1 transfer, Standard Arabic.

H3: It is assumed that L1 interference is likely to be the dominant source of these structural errors compared to other sources.

Literature Review

Many learners encounter several difficulties concerning learning a foreign language. Especially bilinguals (learners who speak two different languages), where they struggle due to the interference of their mother tongue on the target language. Usually it is referred to as negative transfer. Many previous studies examined the interference phenomenon regarding learners' mother tongue and its influence on learners' second language performance. Al-Hajailan (2020) studied the syntactic analysis of Arabic interference in written English. This study was applied to Saudi female college students. It investigates the interference of Arabic in learning English as a foreign language in the written production. The results revealed that the correct noun phrases were more frequent than incorrect ones. It also revealed that the interlanguage errors that resulted from the interference of the mother tongue were more common than the intralanguage errors. These errors were more shown in articles, pronouns, nouns, and prepositions. She came to conclusion that the causes of these errors were the structural differences between Arabic and English.

Likewise, Park et al. (2023) studied the role of Korean syntax in sentence structure and affixation errors in Indonesian: a case study on negative transfer. This study aims at analysing the syntactic and morphological structures produced by Korean learners of Indonesian, emphasising word order issues, passive sentence structure, affixation and subject omission errors. This research reveals the dominant errors were the result of negative transfer due to the transfer of Korean grammatical structure to Indonesian, leading to errors.

Similarly, Alfaifi and Saleem (2024) examined the negative transfer from Hijazi Arabic on Saudi EFL learners' syntactic accuracy and proficiency development. aiming at examining the role of the negative transfer from Arabic with emphasis on the syntactic constructions. The results unravel that Saudi EFL learners transferred the Hijazi Arabic structures to English, which led them to produce errors in word order, article omission, tense and copula use. They concluded that L1 influence does not only affect the interlanguage of the learners but also results in a delay in their proficiency level.

Although many studies have examined grammatical and syntactic errors among Arab EFL learners, few have provided a focused analysis of structural errors as a unified category. Additionally, there is limited research on advanced-level learners at the Master 1 level in Algeria, a group expected to have high proficiency but still commit such errors. Moreover, the combined application of Rod Ellis's (2008) error analysis framework with contrastive analysis between Standard Arabic and English remains underutilised in this context. This study seeks to address these gaps by identifying the most frequent structural errors, analysing their causes, and evaluating the extent of L1 influence on advanced learners' writing.

Research Methods

A corpus-based qualitative approach was employed to examine the structural errors found in the written production of M1 EFL learners and to explore the underlying causes, particularly those related to first language (L1) interference. The data consisted of pre-existing exam essays, which were analysed through armchair research to identify and categorise grammatical and syntactic errors. While the core of the study remains qualitative, basic quantitative elements were integrated to report the frequency of each error type. These numerical insights were used to support and reinforce the qualitative interpretation, offering a clearer picture of the most recurrent structural issues. This corpus-based approach is highly suited to the aims of the study, which focus on identifying, interpreting, and explaining learners' structural errors in academic writing.

Structure of the Dissertation

This current study consists of three main chapters, two theoretical and one empirical. The first chapter covers the historical background of CAH with its strong and weak versions in addition to its criticism. Moreover, this chapter discusses the interference phenomena. Not only that, this chapter also includes transfer phenomena with its definition and types. Then it is concluded by the explanation of the umbrella term cross-linguistic influence. Meanwhile, the second chapter addresses EA approach, explaining EA's process, the rationale behind EA, mistakes vs errors, types of errors, and methods of error analysis. It is concluded by stating briefly the limitations of error analysis. Furthermore, the last chapter covers the research

approach, corpus description, the methodology used while analysing the essays, data collection tools, discussion and findings, and lastly, limitations of the study.

Chapter One:
Theoretical perspectives on Learners' Errors:
Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis.

1. Introduction

Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis (hereinafter CAH) emerged as a significant model during the mid-20th century. It focuses on identifying and explaining learners' difficulties in second language acquisition. It was rooted in structural linguistics and behavioural psychology. This hypothesis saw language learning as a habit formation and that L1 negative transfer would lead to errors in second language acquisition. Scholars like Lado argued that the differences could provide good insights for the prediction of errors. Thus, researchers started to develop a systematic approach in order to identify the similarities and differences between the two linguistic systems. This chapter begins with a historical overview of CAH, highlighting its emergence and its basic approaches, including the strong version, which assumes that language errors can be predicted with reference to L1 transfer, in addition to the weak version that acknowledges other factors' contribution. These approaches are followed by the criticism of CAH, particularly its reliance on structural comparisons between the languages and neglecting the intralingual interference. Moreover, this chapter addresses interference, the transfer theory and its types in addition to the notion cross-linguistic influence. This laid the foundation for error analysis as a counter theory for CAH.

2. Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis

Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis is traced back to the 1960s' when the two commanding paradigms of language study were structural linguistics and behavioural psychology. CAH is rooted in structural linguistics as it was originated by Bloomfield in 1933, later expanded by Fries in 1945, and subsequently refined by Lado in 1957. Structuralism viewed language as a system governed by rules and patterns divided into sub-systems, organised hierarchically into phonology, morphology, and syntax. With reference to these rules, the language could be studied, described, and compared with other languages. However, structuralism paid little attention to vocabulary, semantics, and pragmatics. Structuralists favoured focusing more on measurable and systematic aspects of language and neglected the aspects that are considered too complex or hard to be fixed with rules. As stated by Bloomfield (1933, p. 140), "The statement of meanings is therefore the weak point in language study and will remain so until human knowledge advances very far beyond its present state." Bloomfield had described meaning as "the weak point" since it is the most challenging part in

learning a language. Meaning is usually based on context, personal backgrounds, and interpretation of words, unlike sounds or grammar, which follow a finite structure. For example, the phrase “make-up” can have different meanings based on context, such as referring to cosmetics, compensation for missed events, or even creation of something fictional.

In the 1940s', structuralism influenced language teaching, particularly at the University of Michigan. Charles Fries and his colleagues developed a bottom-up analytical atomistic approach that deconstructed the language into smaller units such as sounds and word structures. This bottom-up approach starts with phonology, then morphology and syntax while vocabulary was taught minimally since structuralists believed that learning sounds and sentence structures was more challenging. Despite the fact that structuralism followed a systematic approach and logical order in comparing languages in order to help teachers to identify weak areas for learners, it was criticised due to the neglect of vocabulary, semantics, and pragmatics, which are crucial in language learning. In view of that, it is worthwhile noting that “In learning a new language, . . . the chief problem is not at first that of learning vocabulary items. It is, first, the mastery of the sound system . . . it is, second, the mastery of the features of arrangements that constitute the structure of the language” (Fries, 1945, p. 3).

Psychologically, B. F. Skinner's stimulus-response learning theory provided a foundation for CAH. Behaviourists viewed the learning process as a habit formation, which means learning occurs when the stimulus (linguistic input) is repeated with a response (reaction to the stimulus); this repetition builds a link between the stimulus and response, which forms habits. This view saw that learning a language is not about thinking and understanding; it is more about practice, repetition, and reinforcement, which aligns perfectly with the saying “practice makes perfect.” CAH emphasises how habits of the mother tongue influence the learning of the second language, which results in either positive transfer (when L1 and L2 habits converge) or negative transfer (when they diverge). For example, Arabic-speaking learners might mispronounce the sound /p/ as /b / since Standard Arabic does not have the sound /p/ in its phonetics. As a result, learners may pronounce the word “pen” as \ben\. In order to correct these habits, behaviourists sought to use drills and exercises repeatedly to reinforce the correct use to help learners adjust these habits with accurate ones. Furthermore, CAH provides a systematic way to predict these areas of

difficulties so the teachers can design ideal exercises that can strengthen habit formation.

Another assumption that founded CAH is “transfer theory”. In learning, transfer occurs when features acquired from the mother tongue transmit to the second language. Corder (1974, p.158) had defined the term transfer as “carrying over the habits of his mother tongue into the second language.” Positive transfer occurs when the structure is similar and appropriate in both languages, facilitating the language acquisition and use. For example, in Spanish, speakers add the morpheme “s” at the end of a noun to indicate plural, such as “lenguajes” to “languages,” which aligns perfectly with English pluralisation. However, negative transfer appears when the structural differences between the languages result in errors. For instance, “lenguajes modernas” to “moderns languages” Saville-Troike and Barto (2017), because in Spanish the adjectives must agree in number and gender with the noun, they add a plural “s” to a modifier to indicate number agreement. These differences in the grammatical rules may lead to errors in second language learning.

Based on this foundation, CAH is defined as the systematic structured comparison between two languages, it aims at predicting and examining learners' issues in order to identify the similarities and differences between L1 and L2. CAH was formulated by Lado in his book *Linguistics Across Cultures* (1957). He claimed that "those elements which are similar to [the learner's] native language will be simple for him, and those elements that are different will be difficult." (p. 01) Put otherwise, if a learner's mother tongue shares similar features with the target language, it is going to ease the learning. For instance, English and French both have overt indefinite articles. CAH would, thus, expect French learners of English not to struggle with learning the indefinite articles. On the other hand, French has gender agreement morphemes that apply on adjectives; it is therefore expected for English learner of French, not having this feature in their language, to find this morphosyntactic property very challenging.

3. Methods of CAH

Whitman (1970) broke the contrastive analysis down into four main procedures to provide a systematic comparison between L1 and L2 languages aiming at predicting the areas of difficulty in language learning. The first step involves

writing a formal linguistic description of L1 and L2, focusing on aspects such as phonology, morphology and syntax. The second step discusses selecting specific linguistic forms from these descriptions for contrasts, specifically those likely to cause difficulties for learners, like sound systems and grammatical structures, such as comparing the plural formation of English “books” to Arabic “كتب”, since they differ significantly. The third step entails contrasting these forms to identify the similarities and differences, which facilitate or hinder the learning. Finally, the fourth step focuses on predicting the level of difficulty learners may face based on these contrasts, providing valuable insights for language teaching, course design and material development.

4. The Strong Version

The strong version is a significant concept for language learning and teaching. This version of CAH a priori assumes that it can predict learners' errors or difficulties by comparing the learner's mother tongue and the target language. It suggests that analysing the two languages before the learning takes place can help identify the potential errors. The strong version believes that if there are any differences between the two languages, learners will find difficulties when learning the second language. For instance, if the two languages differ in their structure formation, which means if this feature is present in the mother tongue and absent in the target language, learners will struggle learning it. As maintained by Lado (1957, p. 07) “The plan of the book rests on the assumption that we can predict and describe the patterns that will cause difficulty in learning and those that will not cause difficulty, by comparing systematically the language and culture to be learned with the native language and culture of the student.” That is to say, by comparing systematically between the learner's native language and the target language, the educators will be able to predict the learning difficulties that may encounter the learners. This predictive approach of CAH was used in early language teaching in developing curriculum and methodologies for teaching; it was seen as a tool that directly addresses the problems. For example, Standard Arabic syntax does not have the auxiliary “do” when forming questions; as a result, EFL learners might struggle to form questions, so instead of saying “Do you like watermelon?” they say “You like watermelon?”

Despite the importance of this version in anticipating the errors, it was criticised for its unrealistic expectations since it claims that linguists have access to a complete, perfect linguistic theory that explains all the aspects of language, including syntax, phonology, and semantics. Because there are no universal grammar rules that fully explain all the aspects of the language, this version was unrealistic in its expectations. As stated by Wardhaugh (1970, p. 125), “This strong version of the contrastive analysis hypothesis suggests that it makes demands of linguistic theory, and, therefore, of linguists, that they are in no position to meet. At the very least this version demands of linguists that they have available a set of linguistic universals formulated within a comprehensive linguistic theory which deals adequately with syntax, semantics, and phonology.” The strong version of CAH assures that it predicts all the learning difficulties by focusing solely on linguistics, neglecting the other factors such as psychology, interactions, or personal learning styles. Wardhaugh (1970) critiques the strong version as impractical for language learning, he describes it as a pseudo-procedure_ refers to an analytical method that appears systematic; however, it lacks empirical validity _ since the strong version assumes that it conducts contrastive analysis and anticipates language learning errors without verifying and examining with actual learners, neglecting the importance of the empirical validity of the data in understanding language learning. As a result, the strong version of CAH was criticised for being impractical and reliant on idealising the linguistic theory that does not really capture the full picture of the complexities of language learning. He argues that language learning is influenced by several factors, not only the structural issues between the languages. So the reliance on these comparisons without putting the empirical side into consideration makes the strong version of CAH impractical and unrealistic for the authenticity of the language learning. This led to the shift to the weak version of CAH due to its focus on the need for empirical research in understanding the cause of learners' errors.

5. The Weak Version

The weak version, or posteriori, of CAH claims that the comparison of the mother tongue and the target language should explain learners' complexities in second language learning by observing learners' errors rather than predicting them. Richards (1974, p. 61) states that “the weak claim of contrastive analysis is that of accounting for learner behaviour.” That is to say, the weak version of contrastive analysis

suggests that instead of predicting the learners' errors, they should be explained and analysed. The weak version assumes that it relies on the data of actual learners (linguistic interference) as primary evidence to identify the errors. The posteriori of CAH uses an eclectic approach where it includes various insights from different linguistic theories instead of focusing on a rigid linguistic theory. Wardhaugh (1970) provided an example of Stockwell and Bowen, who worked on "The Sound of English and Spanish," emphasising that their analysis was broken down from various linguistic approaches, including structural, paradigmatic, and generative-transformational. Wardhaugh (1970, p. 127) said, "The linguistic theory they use is actually extremely eclectic and contains insights from generative-transformational, structural, and paradigmatic grammars; nowhere in the texts is there an obvious attempt to predict errors using an over-riding contrastive theory of any power." Which means that the weak version relies on different theoretical perspectives to explain observed errors.

Despite its practicality, it was criticised by many linguists who saw that it fails to explain the errors of second language acquisition since some errors may appear as a result of learning developmental stage (developmental errors) rather than direct interference (Wardhaugh, 1970). Moreover, generative linguists claim that all languages share similar structures, making contrastive analysis unnecessary (Wardhaugh, 1970). Furthermore, the variations of learners have an important role since learners have different challenges when acquiring L2; that is why it is hard to generalise the outcomes of one group of learners to another. Even though the weak version is less demanding and more practical than the strong version, it is seen as a tool of error analysis rather than a predictive tool for language learning.

6. Criticism of CAH

The contrastive analysis hypothesis was heavily influenced by the behaviourists in the mid-20th century. Behaviorism saw language learning as a process of habit formation when the old habits replaced the new ones through repetition, reinforcement, and drills. However, due to the emergence of the generative cognitive theories in the 1960s, which highlighted that language learning is essentially an active, rule-governed cognitive process, not just a process of habit formation Gass and Selinker (2008). Furthermore, Noam Chomsky (1959) criticised B.F. Skinner's

stimulus-response learning theory and proposed Language Acquisition Device and Universal Grammar; he argued that learning is not about contrasting habits through stimulus-response mechanisms but a more complex process that is guided by innate linguistic structures (as cited in Gass and Selinker, 2008).

One of the most promising features of CAH was its proponents' claim that they could predict errors in second language acquisition based on the differences between the source and the target languages. However, many empirical studies demonstrated that a lot of errors were not the result of the interference of first language, but rather development errors in nature similar to the errors that appear due to first language acquisition Gass and Selinker (2008), According to Dually and Burt (1974), who claimed that only 3% of errors were due to the interference of L1, they argued that the errors are the results of natural learning as part of the learning process due to the lack of knowledge. For example, Dusková (1984) conducted research on Czech learners of English and Russian; she found out that some Czech learners of English transferred morphological rules to English; however, they did not transfer these rules to Russian despite sharing the same L1, which indicates that even if they share the same first language, they may still make different mistakes while learning the target language (as cited in Mhamdi, 2022). Another assumption suggests that comparing the differences between the two languages, can help predict learners' errors, which means predicting the difficulties of L2. However, Lennon (2008) critiques this assumption by stating that the difficulties could be influenced by several factors, such as psychological aspects and other extralinguistic factors that cannot be predicted only by using linguistic structure comparisons. Furthermore, some linguistic features that are perceived as difficult may result in fewer errors because learners will pay more attention to mastering these difficulties. In contrast, simple aspects of language may lead to more errors since learners underestimate their complexity "careless mistakes"(Lennon, 2008) (as cited in Mhamdi, 2022). Another criticism against CAH was the assumption that the linguistic differences usually result in interference. However, interference can explain only some errors made by L2 learners. According to James (1980, p. 146), "There are, of course, purely quantitative limitations on the number of learners errors that CA's can predict, limitation stemming from the fact that not all errors are the result of L1 interference, i.e. interlingual errors. Other major source of errors ... are of a 'non-contrastive' origin." He highlighted a significant

limitation that CAH could not predict all learners' errors; besides that, not all the errors are the result of L1 interference referred to "as interlingual errors;" thus, some errors are the result of other external factors unrelated to L1 interference referred to as "non-contrastive errors," such as intralingual and developmental errors. Richards (1974) claimed that developmental errors do not occur due to learners' first language, but because of intralinguistic factors, He states (1974, p. 173), "Rather than reflecting the learner's inability to separate two languages, intralingual and developmental errors reflect the learner's competence at a particular stage, and illustrate some of the general characteristics of language acquisition." Put otherwise, he suggests that intralingual and developmental errors are not signs of learners' inability to differentiate between the two languages but reflect learners' developmental stage and demonstrate the language learning process. Ultimately, CAH provided valuable insights that helped studying a second language; it had a significant role in L2 research. However, its limitations become evident over time which led to its decline as it gradually lost its dominance due to the shift to more comprehensive theories.

7. Interference

Interference refers to the influence of one language or variety on the use or learning of another language, meaning that elements from the learners' first language affect the use of their second language. According to Weinreich (1953, p.1) "Those instances of deviation from the norms of either language which occur in the speech of bilinguals as a result of their familiarity with more than one language, i.e. as a result of language contact, will be referred to as INTERFERENCE phenomena." put another way, interference occurs when bilinguals or multilinguals unconsciously apply other elements or features from a language such as grammar and pronunciation to the second language due to language contact; this deviation often leads to errors in the second language; as stated by Lott (1983, p.256) "interference is defined as errors in the learners' use of the foreign language that can be traced back to the mother tongue." For example, according to Gass and Selinker (2008), a native speaker of English produced the sentence "Il veut moi de dire français à il," when he intended to say "He wants me to speak French to him." However, in English, the sentence structure follows (want + object + infinitive) "He wants me to speak," while French follows the subjunctive clause (il veut que + subject + verb). So instead of saying "il veut que je lui parle français," the learner committed an error by reverting to his

mother tongue when producing the sentence in French. Additionally, the use of "moi" instead of "je" and "il" instead of "lui" indicates that the learner translated directly from his mother tongue since French pronouns function differently than those of English.

8. Language Transfer

Language transfer is a linguistic phenomena that demonstrates when a speaker's first language interferes with the second language learning and use. Lado (1957, p. 2) states, "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." In other words, learners of a foreign language tend to rely on their first language and culture to understand and perform in other languages. Crystal (1992, p. 393) also defined transfer as "The influence of linguistic features of one language upon another, in such contexts as bilingualism and language learning; also called transference," this process also referred to as transference, it is the impact of linguistic elements of the first language on the target language, particularly in bilingualisms and language learning contexts. It occurs in two main ways. Productively, when speakers depend on their first language meanings and forms to speak or interact in the second language. Receptively, when learners apply their first language structures and meanings to comprehend the foreign language and its culture. This transfer can be a proactive where the first language affects the second language acquisition or a retroactive where the elements from the second language affect the native language. which can facilitate or hinder the learning process, which leads to either positive or negative outcomes.

8.1 Positive Transfer

Positive transfer occurs when prior knowledge of the mother tongue interferes with second language learning, leading to facilitation in the learning process. Saville-Troike and Barto (2017, p. 19) define positive transfer as “when an L1 structure or rule is used in an L2 utterance and that use is appropriate or ‘correct’ in the L2,” which means that learners transfer vocabularies, pronunciation, and grammatical patterns from their L1 and apply them in their writing and speaking of the second

language, and that use will fit naturally in the target language, which means that these linguistic features are already learnt and do not have to be learnt again. Saville-Troike and Barto (2017) provided an example in their book *Introducing Second Language Acquisition* in both Spanish and English, the word “exterior” means outside; it holds the same meaning and spelling although the pronunciation differs. This similarity between the languages will lead Spanish EFL learners to easily recognise the word and use it correctly; which will facilitate the vocabulary acquisition since the transfer is applied correctly and does not lead to any confusion or errors. (Baghirova, 2021, "Introduction" section, para. 3) said “ The closer the two languages are to each other, the more positive the transfer is possible to be noticed,” put otherwise, due to some shared linguistic features across languages, learners may find it easier to acquire the aspects of the target language that are shared among the two languages. This transfer can be seen through pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary and sentence structure.

8.2 Negative Transfer (Interference)

Negative transfer, also known as “interference” Callies (2015); it refers to the effect of the first language forms on the second language, leading to errors in second language use/production. According to Crystal (1992), negative transfer takes place when the patterns of the first language result in errors in the foreign language. Saville-Troike and Barto (2017, p. 19) defined negative transfer as “when an L1 structure or rule is used in an L2 utterance and that use is inappropriate and considered an ‘error.’” In other words, negative transfer happens when learners apply the structures of the native language to the target language, usually these structures do not align with those of the target language. As a result, they are considered incorrect in the second language due to the differences between the transferred linguistic features among the two languages. In English, to form a question, the learner needs to invert the subject and the auxiliary. Unlike Spanish, which keeps the same word order of a declarative sentence and depends on punctuation and intonation to produce a question. As the example provided by Gass and Selinker (2008) in Spanish, the sentence “¿Come bien el niño?” (eats well the baby) may be produced wrongly by Spanish EFL learners as “Eats well the baby?” instead of “Does the baby eat well?” since the word order structure in Spanish is not appropriate in English demonstrating negative transfer.

9. Cross-linguistic Influence

While previous sections have examined CAH, interference, and transfer in relation to linguistic interactions, they are best understood as a part of cross-linguistic influence (CLI); it is crucial to note that these notions fall under a broader linguistic framework that is known as cross-linguistic influence. It is a concept that accounts for how various linguistic systems affect each other in multilingual contexts.

Sharwood Smith and Kellerman (1986, p. 01) defined cross-linguistic influence as “the interplay between earlier and later acquired languages.” The definition sheds light on the relationship between learners’ mother tongue and any other additional acquired language. It suggests that the previously acquired language can affect the learning and production of the new language, either facilitating or interfering with the language use, which results in either successful language transfer or errors. The term “interplay” suggests that the influence is bidirectional, which means a continuous process where prior knowledge interacts with the new linguistic input, influencing language understanding and use. Another definition that highlights the specific directions of influence is provided by Gass and Selinker (2008, p. 516) “Any language influence from the L1 to the L2, from one IL (interlanguage) to another or from the L2 back to the L1.” The definition demonstrates that transfer does not appear only when L1 affects L2 but also includes the influence of L2 on L1 (reverse transfer) and even the interlanguage influences, which refer to a transitional linguistic stage that can affect the language acquisition. Forsyth (2014) discussed that CLI does not solely refer to the interactions between L1 and L2 transfer; it covers a range of linguistic interactions, including borrowing, avoidance, and language transfer from L2 to L3. This framework shows how the multilinguals’ language processing could be complicated, in which previously learnt languages continue shaping language learning and usage of the new languages. More research was conducted to explain the idea of multilingualism, aiming at investigating how learners operate multilingual systems and enrich their multilingual competence. Jessner (2006) highlighted that experienced multilingual learners actively utilised their linguistic resources from L1 and L2 to assist the production of a third language, particularly when languages share typological similarities. This means that multilingual learners do not depend only on their first language, but rather on all the linguistic resources they acknowledge to

maintain the language being learnt, indicating a strong and high level of cross-linguistic awareness in learning and usage of a language.

10. Conclusion

Contrastive analysis hypothesis played a significant role in second language learning. Despite the fact that it was heavily criticised due to its assumption that it can predict learners' errors based on the differences between the first language and the target language, particularly its strong version, we can not neglect its importance as it provided a great foundation for language transfer and the influence of the two linguistic systems on the performance of learners. As the limitations of CAH became even more apparent, scholars shifted the focus into more empirical approaches, such as error analysis. Although CAH had several limitations, it contributed to the development of the second language learning research.

Chapter Two:
Theoretical perspectives on Learners'
Errors: Error Analysis

1. Introduction

Based on the theoretical development of the previous chapter, error analysis is seen as an empirical and applied procedure to analyse learners' production. Instead of viewing errors as failure and the result of the first language influence, error analysis views learners' errors as evidence of the cognitive development, intralingual and interlingual processes. Error analysis offers a systematic approach that helps explain and analyse the nature, source and patterns of learners' errors. This chapter expands to explain error analysis as a more comprehensive approach for describing errors in second language acquisition, as it highlights the distinction between mistakes and errors besides its types. The last section of this chapter will highlight the method of error analysis by Ellis 2008, including its five main steps: collection of a sample of learner language, identification, description, explanation, and evaluation of errors. This chapter concludes with a limitation of error analysis, highlighting that its analytical features can be constrained due to avoidance behaviours, thus providing valuable insights in language learning and teaching.

2. Error Analysis

Second language acquisition research has gone through various shifts, particularly in the role of errors in language learning. In the mid-20th century, CAH emerged under the influence of behaviourism, which viewed errors as negative habits due to the interference of learners' mother tongue. On the other hand, as cognitive approaches to language learning emerged, errors came to be seen as evidence for internal learning processes, not merely mistakes. This shift led to the emergence of error analysis as a more comprehensive approach for understanding learners' errors.

Saville-Troike and Barto (2017) explained that a significant shift from behaviourism to mentalism in language acquisition was observed, primarily influenced by Noam Chomsky's (1957, 1965, as cited in Saville-Troike & Barto, 2017) transformational generative grammar, which played a significant role in changing how errors in second language learning are perceived. Instead of focusing on surface-level patterns, linguists started investigating the underlying rules that govern language production. Chomsky suggested that languages have finite essential transformational rules, leading speakers to produce infinite grammatical structures.

This challenged behaviourism that views learning as imitation and memorisation. This emphasised that language acquisition is a cognitive process where learners build and modify rules. Under this influence, Saville-Troike and Barto (2017) stated that the research of first language acquisition has shifted the focus towards viewing children as creative participants instead of passive recipients of linguistic input, examining their speech as a structured system instead of a deficient version of adult language (Miller, 1964; McNeil, 1966, as cited in Saville-Troike & Barto, 2017). This idea also influenced the field of second language acquisition, especially in understanding whether L1 and L2 acquisition follow the same path. This shift is closely tied to error analysis since it supports the notion that errors are not merely mistakes but rather proves that learners are actively constructing rules through internal rule formation. By studying these errors, researchers will gain insights into the cognitive processes and their pre-language learning, reinforcing the idea that language acquisition is governed by mental rules instead of habit formation.

Error analysis was established in the 1960s by Stephen Pit Corder and his colleagues as a counter theory to CAH, which assumes that it can predict learners' errors based on L1 transfer. However, it failed to account for sources of errors. Unlike CAH, error analysis examines actual learners' errors and provides a more comprehensive approach. According to Baghdadi (2021), EA challenged CAH for its assumptions that L2 errors are only caused by interlingual interference. However, error analysis claimed that errors can also be the result of L2 transfer and intralingual errors, which can arise due to some factors such as developmental processes, overgeneralisation, and incomplete rule application. Nevertheless, CAH remains relevant to EA since it still considers interlingual errors as a major source of errors in SLA. That is why CAH is considered a foundation of error analysis.

The dominant publication establishing EA was Corder's (1967) article *The Significance of Learner's Errors*. Corder highlights that errors should not be received as bad habits that must be eradicated, but rather as valuable insights in the learning process. He claims that errors help learners to develop their language system and strategies they use while acquiring the second language. On this basis, errors are perceived as a reflection of learners productivity with the SL and not merely the consequence of L1 transfer. James (1998, p, 01) defined error analysis as "the process

of determining the incidence, nature, causes, and consequences of unsuccessful language.” He highlights error analysis’ systematic approach for studying learners’ errors, offering perceptions into learners’ language development instead of seeing them as a sign of failure. Incidence refers to the frequency of errors, enabling teachers and educators to identify the difficulties faced by learners. Meanwhile, nature includes classifying errors into linguistic categories such as phonology and morphology. Causes may stem from interlingual and intralingual interference or developmental stages in language learning. Finally, by analysing the consequences of errors, it will reveal their effect on the language and communication, which may lead to global, local errors or fossilisation. According to Schaumann and Stenson (1976, p. 4), “The task of EA is to explain and analyze why one aspect of the target grammar has not been adequately acquired whilst a second is learnt without difficulty.” They emphasise that error analysis is not just about understanding why some aspects of the target language are more challenging; some grammatical structures are perceived easily while others are more difficult, leading to errors. Therefore, the EA’s role is to investigate the causes of these errors for this inconsistency. Corder (1973) mentioned that Error Analysis has two major objectives. Theoretical and practical (applied.)

Theoretically, error analysis aims to understand what learners acquire and how they process language during the L2 learning phase. By examining learners’ errors in order to determine the patterns and systematic processes, researchers can determine whether the errors are the result of L1 influence (interlingual errors) or the structure of the second language itself (intralingual errors). This analysis helps evaluate the validity of existing language learning theories, such as transfer, offering insights into the process of second language acquisition, particularly the mental processes involved in the language learning and the gradual construction of the linguistic knowledge over time.

Practically, error analysis focuses on developing language learning and teaching. It aims to help second language learners to utilise their existing linguistic knowledge to acquire effectively the target language . Through studying learners' errors, teachers can identify learners' common issues and adjust their teaching strategies to fit students' needs, which makes error analysis a valuable tool in education since it helps the teachers to design more effective course materials, develop error correction

techniques, and create strategies that help learners acquire the language easily. Ultimately, this objective seeks to improve the effectiveness of language learning by analysing the errors and using them as a guide for improvement.

3. Rationale for Error Analysis

The research beyond error analysis stands for its importance in the fields of linguistic research and language teaching. Pedagogically, EA includes understanding learners' errors through a systematic approach, which leads to the development of the effectiveness of teaching techniques. Rather than perceiving errors as obstacles or challenges, EA views them as valuable and important insights for their interlanguage and developmental process. As Corder (1974, p. 170) explains, "The purpose of EA is to find what the learner knows and does not know... [and] enable the teacher to supply him not just with the information, but also, most importantly, with the right sort of information or data for him to form a more adequate concept of a rule in the target language." This emphasises the role of error analysis in forming instructional methodologies by identifying learners' difficulties and informing appropriate interventions. Theoretically, error analysis is justified as a tool to comprehend the acquisition of a second language. Through error analysis, scholars could gain insights into how learners observe and mentally process the linguistic rules of the TL, test hypotheses, and check whether the learners are developing their interlanguage or not. Corder (1981) underlined that the way researchers study errors is methodologically comparable to first language acquisition research and that errors are normal and inevitable steps of first language learning. He notes that, in his seminal paper (1967, p. 167), "a learner's errors are significant in that they provide to the researcher evidence of how language is learnt or acquired and what strategies or procedures the learner is employing in the discovery of language." That is why error analysis is not only about identifying errors but also about understanding the learning process of the second language itself. Error analysis plays an essential role in second language acquisition research, leading to validating theories while offering practical gains for language teaching.

4. Mistakes VS Errors

In the field of second language acquisition, understanding the difference between mistakes and errors is crucial and helps teachers and researchers evaluate the progress of learners, describe learners' difficulties, and develop effective teaching techniques. According to Corder (1981), for teachers, errors are important since they determine learners' ongoing stage in learning a language, the same thing for researchers and learners, errors are essential due to the insights and strategies they serve in language acquisition processes. Recognising these differences would help better assess the competence and performance of learners (Chomsky, 1965).

A mistake is an unsystematic performance error that appears due to slips of the tongue, memory lapses, fatigue, or some external conditions (Corder, 1981; Rustipa, 2011). Mistakes can be committed by both native and second-language speakers. And, importantly, they are self-corrected once noticed by speakers (Corder, 1981; Gass & Selinker, 2008). On the other hand, an error is a systematic deviation from the target language that reflects learner's incomplete competence _knowledge of the language_ (Corder, 1981; Rustipa, 2011). Unlike mistakes, errors are not self-corrected due to learner's ignorance of certain rules and their unawareness of the incorrect usage. According to Gass & Selinker (2008), errors are viewed as red flags providing insights into a learner's interlanguage.

The primary distinction that lies between errors and mistakes is their cause, predictability and correctability. Errors arise from competence gaps and are systematic. Which means that learners are likely to repeat the errors until they acquire the correct form. Mistakes, however, stem from performance issues and are unsystematic, meaning they appear occasionally and are likely to be corrected after recognising them. Chomsky (1965) provided a distinction between competence and performance, which established the theoretical foundation for this classification. A learner's competence refers to their internalised linguistic knowledge of rules, whereas performance refers to the actual usage of the knowledge. That is why mistakes appear in performance and do not reflect learners' competence, while errors indicate gaps in competence. Moreover, Richards (2002) stated that mistakes are temporary lapses in speech and writing; meanwhile, errors continue to occur over time and reflect

learners' transitional grammar, this idea aligns perfectly with Corder's (1981) concept of "transitional competence", which states that errors demonstrate valuable evidence of learners' developmental knowledge of the target language.

5. Summary Table

Features	Errors	Mistakes
Cause	Competence gap (lack of knowledge)	Performance problems (tiredness, hurrying)
Nature	Systematic (repeated and predictable)	Unsystematic (random)
Correctability	Not self-corrected (learner is unaware)	Self-corrected (learner recognises the mistake)
Significance in SLA	Indicates interlanguage development	Occasionally slip (they do not have any significance)

Recognising these differences would help teachers to tailor their feedback that would enable learners to focus on correcting errors while recognising that temporary mistakes are normal as part of language use.

6. Types of Errors

To understand more the nature of learners' errors, three well-established taxonomies were referred to as a theoretical foundation for the error analysis. Comparative, cognitive and surface structure taxonomies models provide distinct yet complementary perspectives that help in comprehending learners' errors.

6.1 Comparative Analysis Taxonomy

Comparative Analysis Taxonomy classifies errors according to their relation to the learners' first and second languages. Corder (1975) and James (1998) identified two major sources of errors: **interlingual** and **intralingual** errors. Interlingual errors are the result of the learners' mother tongue interference. James (1998) claimed that when learners do not know how to express their thoughts in the target language, they refer to their mother tongue to fill the gap. A study was conducted by Mohammad

(2005), he found out that serious interlingual errors were made by EFL learners due to their reliance on their L1. Another study by Al Kinany et al. (2022) explored the Arab EFL learners' perceptions of English phonemes. They have found that learners naturally and automatically associated the target language sounds with the phonetic categories of their mother tongue. This illustrates that learners depend heavily on their mother tongue when they encounter difficulties in the target language.

On the other hand, intralingual errors arise from the structure of the target language itself due to several factors, such as overgeneralisation or incomplete rule application. Richards (2014) refers to these errors as developmental errors that occur due to the lack of knowledge of L2 and the misapplication of the second language rules. Usually, intralingual errors occur when learners are naturally acquiring the target language. Heydari and Bagheri (2012) say that learners at the early stages tend to make interlingual errors; however, as they progress, they commit intralingual errors more because their familiarity with the target language increases, which means that they are developing and internalising the rules of the target language. Richards (2014, p. 206) states, "The learner creates a deviant structure based on his experience of other structures of the target language." In other words, the learner produces new structures of the target language based on the rules encountered earlier during the learning process due to overgeneralisation or misinterpretation of the TL structures.

6.2 Cognitive Processes Taxonomy

Learners' errors can also be attributed to cognitive processes, which reflect the way learners internalise the second language rules. Many researchers claim that errors stem from cognitive processes employed during second language learning, including, overgeneralisation, incomplete application of rules, false concept hypotheses, and ignorance of rule restrictions.

6.2.1 Overgeneralisation

Overgeneralisation is one of the main cognitive processes that lead to errors in language production. It occurs when learners apply the rules of the target language too generally in situations when the rules are not applicable. According to Richards et al. (2002), overgeneralisation errors are caused as a result of the extension of the target

language rules in wrong contexts. Ellis (1997, p. 19) stated that “learners convert to overgeneralisation because they find it easy to learn.” This means that learners rely on overgeneralisation because it facilitates the learning by allowing learners to employ familiar rules in new situations. Berko (1958) conducted a well-known experiment called “the wug test”; this test was applied on children to test their ability to apply pluralisation rules to form unfamiliar words. After showing the children a picture of a made-up creature, they were supposed to come up with the plural of the word “wug”, which is “wugs”. Generally, every young child was able to get this correctly, which means that children were not only memorising the words and copying them; instead, they understood pluralisation rules, and they were able to internalise these rules and apply them to new words (as cited in Gass & Selinker, 2008). Gass and Selinker (2008) further explained that often children apply the rules too broadly and might say words like “*mices*” instead of “mice” without recognising that the word “mice” is already plural. These types of deviations are called **overgeneralisation errors**.

6.2.2 Incomplete Application of Rules

Incomplete rule application is a type of error that occurs when the learner fails to apply the full grammatical rules correctly, leading to inaccurate and incorrect structure. While learners may have some knowledge of the rules, they prioritise communication over accurate grammatical sentences. Richard (1970) states, “Motivation to achieve communication may exceed motivation to produce grammatically correct sentences.” Meaning that, when the communication is conveyed through simple and basic sentence structures, learners may feel that there is no need to master complex grammatical rules. Thus, the motivation to communicate effectively is more important than forming correct complex grammatical sentences. An example of incomplete rule application is demonstrated by Richards (1970); he argues that learners commit errors when forming questions since they usually simplify complex sentences, leading them to produce incomplete rule application errors. Learners may omit important grammatical elements or apply the rules partially. He further explained this by providing examples such as asking the learners several questions to help them produce more complex sentences in L2. The teacher asks the learner, “Will they be soon ready?” And the answer provided by the learners is, “Yes,

they soon be ready” (Richards, 1970). This demonstrates structural deviations and shows that the learner does not fully internalise the rules yet, but prioritises effective communication over grammatical accuracy.

6.2.3 Ignorance of Rule Restrictions

Ignorance of rule restriction is an intralingual error that occurs when learners are aware of the rules and their application but ignore their restrictions, leading to misuse of grammatical rules. According to Richards (1970), some learners' errors are classified under ignorance of rule restriction, in which the rules are applied in contexts where they are not supposed to be used. He mentions that learners often associate the grammatical features they have already internalised with incorrect contexts. For instance, a learner produced the sentence “The sparrow is a small bird.” He was asked to put this sentence into the plural form. However, he failed by producing the sentence “*The sparrows are the small birds*” (Richards, 1970). The learner, by drawing an analogy from the first sentence, failed to form the correct plural structure because, in English, general statements like “The sparrows are small birds” do not usually use the definite article “the”. This example demonstrated the ability of learners to produce familiar grammatical sentences through analogy but without taking into account the limitations and restrictions of rules, leading to structural errors.

6.2.4 False Concepts Hypothesised

False concepts hypothesised refers to deviations that occur when learners form false assumptions on certain grammatical rules, usually because of misunderstanding of the input, poor teaching or misinterpretation of the meaning or the usage of the language. Richard (1970, p. 14) “There is a class of developmental errors which derive from faulty comprehension of distinctions in the target language. These are sometimes due to poor gradation of teaching items.” In other words, learners may misinterpret certain structures within the target language. This misinterpretation sometimes can be the result of faulty instruction or exposure to the language. For example, a student may produce the sentence “*He is speaks French*” due to the assumption that the rule of simple present follows (is + verb), leading to confusion between simple present and present continuous (Richard, 1970). Another example that demonstrates false concept hypotheses is the sentence “*This is a too big house.*” The

learner in this case uses “too” interchangeably with “very”. This shows that there is a misunderstanding of the different functions of the two intensifiers. The learner appears to have constructed a false hypothesis, which is the interchangeable use of the two intensifiers (Richard, 1970). This error illustrates that learners are constructing hypotheses about the target language depending on limited input or their interpretation of the language itself.

6.3 Surface Structure Taxonomy

Surface Structure Taxonomy is a framework that categorises learners' errors based on the way they manipulate the surface structure of a language. It was first introduced by Dulay, Burt, and Krashen (1982) in their book *Language Two*. This model classifies the errors according to the observable surface-level modifications that appear in the learners' performance of the target language. This taxonomy does not aim to understand the reasons behind these errors but rather how these errors systematically appear in learners' production (Dulay, Burt & Krashen, 1982). These errors particularly impact the surface structure of the sentences. They can be categorised into four main categories: omission, addition, misformation, and misordering.

Starting with **omission** errors, they occur when learners exclude required grammatical elements from the sentence. According to James (1998), omission is leaving out necessary components that are required to form a complete, correct utterance. An example is provided by Suhono (2016); to explain the omission error, “*They can search the material that Ø given from teachers in the school.*” In this situation, the learner omitted the auxiliary to be (are) from the passive sentence, which results in an ungrammatical utterance. This error falls under the omission type due to the lack of required grammatical components.

Furthermore, **addition** errors refer to the insertion of unnecessary elements that lead to ungrammatical sentences. James (1998) mentions that addition errors are characterised by the supplementation of certain grammatical elements that should not be present in a well-formed sentence. To present an addition error, an example was provided by Al-Hajailan (2020): “*This solution can really help the teenager to understand (the) real life.*” The learner added unnecessary definite article “the”

when he refers to teenagers in general. This example fits perfectly with the addition type of errors because the learner added linguistic components that do not belong to the sentence.

In addition, **misformation** errors refer to the incorrect usage of forms of words, such as wrong tense, suffixes or structure formation . According to James (1998), misformation errors are marked by the employment of the wrong form, structure, or morpheme. Suhono (2016) provided several examples that illustrate misformation errors, such as, “*The lecturer absolutely have some programs of teaching of the class.*” And “*Although it have more comprehensive source.*” Learners in these cases used the wrong form of the verb “have” instead of “has”. These errors represent learners' difficulty in forming the verbs correctly in addition to their struggle in applying the subject-verb agreement rules.

Lastly, misordering errors refer to the disorder of the sentence elements, where learners put these elements in inappropriate and illogical order. Suhono (2016) mentions that this kind of errors occur systematically through the learners' first and second languages, even in their pre-acquired knowledge. This suggests that these errors may be the result of cross-linguistic influence or developmental errors. Al-Hajailan (2020) provides an example that explains misordering issues. “*They have to put **system strong** for example who's used the phone during the work is need to punishment.*” In this case, the learner placed the adjective “strong” before the noun “system”. Thus, leading to the incorrect noun phrase “system strong” rather than “strong system”. This error demonstrates the inability of the learner to structure the sentence properly, probably due to insufficient knowledge of the grammatical rules.

7. Method of Error Analysis

Error analysis is a key method in second language acquisition, as it focuses on identifying, explaining, and describing learners' errors. The method of error analysis was introduced by Corder in 1967 and expanded later by Ellis in 2008. Ellis's (2008) framework has been selected since it provides a more comprehensive and thorough approach for analysing errors. It consists of five main steps of error analysis, including collecting a sample of learner language,

identification of errors, description of errors, explanation of errors, and lastly, evaluation of errors. The following section will discuss each point in detail.

7.1 Collection of a Sample of Learner Language

This step is crucial as it involves gathering samples of the learner's language in order to identify and analyse errors. Ellis (2008) highlighted that learners' samples can be collected from different sources, including spoken or written data. Researchers can collect samples from learners' assignments, exams, or essays. The collected samples should reflect genuine learners' gaps in L2 competence rather than temporary mistakes. There are various ways to collect data. Some researchers use structured tests or tasks to identify or extract specific linguistic features, facilitating the analysis of particular errors. On the other hand, other researchers may rely on naturalistic data where the data are collected and observed as they are in casual speech or writing. In some cases, researchers may collect data over time so they can check the development of learners' errors as they progress. Others may focus on analysing errors from different learners at a specific proficiency level to identify common patterns in the learner language use (Ellis, 2008).

7.2 Identification of Errors

The second step is identifying learners' errors, which involves identifying the deviated errors from the rules of the target language. At this step, it is crucial to differentiate between errors and mistakes. Corder (1967) made a key difference ; mistakes are unsystematic occasional lapses that affect the performance of the learner due to some external factors. On the other hand, errors are systematic and occur due to the lack of competence in the SL. For instance, "She play guitar" is an incorrect sentence since there is no match between the third person singular and the verb; the teacher identifies the error as "play" instead of "plays". So differentiating between errors and mistakes ensures an accurate and well-structured analysis that focuses on learners' difficulties rather than temporary lapses in performance.

7.3 Description of Errors

Description of errors involves classifying errors to determine their nature. According to Saville-Troike and Barto (2017), errors can be classified according to different linguistic levels – phonology, morphology and lexicon – in addition to general linguistic categories such as negation construction, passive sentences or auxiliary systems; furthermore, they can be classified as articles, propositions and verbs for more detailed linguistic elements. For example, the sentence above, “She play guitar”, is a grammatical error under subject-verb agreement; another example could be “I am drinking waters” this error is classified as a lexical error due to the misuse of the plural form of the uncountable nouns. By categorising errors, researchers will be able to organise errors systematically and identify difficulties and patterns in learners’ languages.

7.4 Explanation of Errors

This step aims at understanding the causes behind the errors made by the learners of SL. There are two fundamental factors that contribute to making errors, according to Saville-Troike and Barto (2017); the first factor is the interlingual influence. These kinds of errors often appeared due to negative transfer of the learners’ first language. For example, the error in the previous sentence, “She play guitar”, may be the result of the influence of learners’ mother tongue if the first language does not have subject-verb agreement rules. In contrast, intralingual errors appear due to the influence of the language itself; they occur usually because of overgeneralisation or incomplete rule application. Such as the common example “ Ahmmed goed to his house”, the learner here applied the past tense rule without considering the irregular form of verbs; as a result, instead of saying “went”, he said “goed”, which demonstrates the overgeneralisation of rules.

7.5 Evaluation of Errors

This step is crucial for learners. It involves assessing the impact of errors on communication and social interactions. Saville-Troike and Barto (2017, p. 42) said, “This step involves analysis of what effect the error has on whomever is being addressed: e.g., how "serious" it is or to what extent it affects intelligibility or social

acceptability (such as qualifying for a job)", which means that the error is evaluated depending on the "seriousness" of errors, whether the errors are severe and cause misunderstanding (global errors) or minor errors that do not affect communication in the target language (local errors). Another effect is intelligibility, which appears when errors are causing difficulty for listeners to understand or if errors have deviated significantly from the intended meaning. Besides acceptability, sometimes in certain contexts, errors might be understood inappropriately. For instance, if a learner uses an informal word in a formal context, even if it conveys the intended meaning, it is still considered an inappropriate word and makes a negative impression.

Error analysis is a fundamental tool in understanding the difficulties of language learners, as it provides a systematic analysis that helps researchers and teachers to design specific teaching strategies and provide effective feedback in order to support learners' progress. However, despite its advantages, it has some limitations. Error analysis fails to account for avoidance behaviour, when learners avoid using difficult or unfamiliar terminology or rules from L2 to prevent making errors, which is referred to as avoidance phenomena (Schachter, 1974). Thus, it prevents L2 learners from attaining mastery of complex language structures. As a result, researchers may not identify certain linguistic challenges due to the non-production of errors. Although its limitations, error analysis remains a valuable tool in applied linguistics, providing significant pedagogical insights, particularly in analysing learners' difficulties and improving language instruction.

8. Conclusion

Error analysis is a critical innovation in second language acquisition research. Unlike previous theories such as CAH, EA offers a more learner-centred approach that changed the way researchers and educators perceive the output of learners through redefining the errors as signs of progress. Its systematic approach enables a detailed understanding of the interlanguage and cognitive processes in language learning. Despite the fact that error analysis offers great insights in research and continues to inform language learning and pedagogy, it has some limitations, such as the inability to account for avoidance behaviour. In spite of that, EA's

contributions remain foundational to the current approaches of understanding second language acquisition.

Chapter Three: Research Methodology.

1. Introduction

This chapter covers the methodological framework used to investigate the structural errors found in M1 EFL learners and their potential causes. It starts with the research approach that follows a corpus-based design, proceeded by the description of the corpus of the study. After that, the researcher explains the method used to analyse the errors in Rod Ellis' (2008) framework, followed by data collection tools. Later, the chapter offers a detailed discussion on the results from the error analysis, proceeded by a summary of the findings, and lastly, the chapter concludes by stating the limitations of the study.

2. Research Approach

This study adopts a corpus-based research methodology, which is widely employed in applied linguistics and English for Academic Purposes (EAP) to analyse authentic language use. The research is based on a small, specialised learner corpus consisting of argumentative essays written by Master 1 EFL students at the University of Amar Telidji in Laghouat. Corpus-based analysis allows for the empirical investigation of linguistic patterns, offering systematic insights into recurring structural errors in learners' writing. As Flowerdew (2002) explains, corpus-based approaches have significantly influenced the development of pedagogical materials, especially in EAP contexts, by enabling researchers and educators to explore real language data in context. The use of learner corpora has increasingly become a valuable method for identifying common grammatical, syntactic, and lexicogrammatical issues that learners face. In this study, student essays were collected from first-semester examinations and compiled into a corpus. The analysis involved identifying and categorising structural errors, which were then quantified to determine their frequency. The study focuses particularly on errors that reflect cross-linguistic influence from Standard Arabic to English. This methodology offers qualitative data on the type of the errors as well as quantitative data about their occurrence. The corpus methodology is particularly well-suited to this kind of research, since it uses naturally occurring written texts and does not require direct contact with the participants. Moreover, it allows the researcher to have extensive textual analysis while being subject to academic objectivity and moral rules.

3. Corpus Description

This study targeted Master 1 (M1) students at the Department of English at the University of Amar Telidji in Laghouat. At this level, essay writing is very important, and students are well aware of the appropriate construction of essays. Thus, their writings are suitable for studying structural errors. A purposive sampling method was applied to select participants.

Twenty essay papers were collected from M1 students. Inevitably, two essays were excluded from the analysis—one because of the learner's handwriting issues that made the process of error analysis not possible, and the other due to the lack of coherence and consistency; the writing appeared more as a list without a proper structure rather than an organised essay.

Therefore, the final sample consisted of 18 essays that suited the purpose of the analysis. The study was conducted in the field of English as a foreign language learning, where essay writing is crucial in the M1 programme.

During the process of collecting the data, ethical considerations were strictly taken into account. Before collecting the essays, a formal request was granted from the English department to obtain students' essays. The data collected was rigorously preserved with the highest consideration of participants' privacy and ethics.

4. Data Collection Tools

The primary data collection tool used in this research was a collection of pre-existing essays. Eighteen exam papers of first-year Master 1 EFL learners literature and civilisation major were purposely selected from the English Department at Amar Telidji University in Laghouat. These essays were originally official exam sheets; yet, they provided authentic and natural material for the study.

Before conducting the full analysis, a pilot study was carried out on six papers that were randomly selected from the available corpus. The purpose of this process was to determine whether the sample was suitable, to test the feasibility of the process (error analysis), and to assess whether the data would be valuable for examining

cross-linguistic influence. The findings of the pilot study were reviewed with the research supervisor, and with his approval, the researcher proceeded with the full analysis. The Department of English authorised the use of the essays for research purposes. Ethical considerations were also observed throughout the process.

5. Method of Error Analysis

Error analysis is an important approach in second language acquisition. This method offers a more comprehensive approach for learners' errors. Thus, it is broadly applied for analysing learners' language. This method is suited for the current study because it provides a systematic analysis for understanding the nature of errors and the difficulties faced by the learners. This approach allows the researchers to identify, categorise and describe the errors, besides understanding their underlying causes. Consequently, this framework is specifically well-suited to present the current study, which aims at analysing the structural errors in M1 EFL learners.

Rod Ellis' framework consists of five main steps, including collecting a sample of learner language, identifying, describing, explaining, and evaluating errors. The process starts with the collection of learners' language; Ellis (2008) states that the data could be collected through spoken or written production; the collected data should reflect the genuine learners' gaps in L2 competence. Applying this process to the current study, the data were collected from M1 EFL Learners majoring in literature and civilisation at Amar Telidji University in Laghouat. The dataset consists of pre-existing exam essays that were authentic and appropriate sources of learners' language. Some limitations were encountered during the process of collecting the data, including poor handwriting and inconsistent forms of essays. However, a sufficient and appropriate number of authentic samples were attained. After reviewing the essays twice to ensure accuracy, 110 structural errors were identified and categorised into 11 different categories under two main types of grammatical and syntactic errors. This corpus forms the basis for the following steps of Ellis' (2008) framework, including identification, description, explanation and evaluation of the structural errors.

The following step is identification of learners' errors. It involves differentiating between mistakes and errors. Corder (1967) distinguished between mistakes and

errors by characterising them with different features, such as performance mistakes and competence mistakes (errors). An example from the current study is the sentence *“by raising the questions that needs to be discovered.”* It contains a subject-verb agreement error since the subject “questions” is plural. Thus, the verb should be plural “need”, but the learner wrongly used the singular form, creating an error. Another example from the data collected is *“a social goals”*; the learner in this sentence misused the article “a” with the plural noun “goals”. These grammatical errors demonstrate the underlying learners’ gaps in competence, rather than performance mistakes.

After that, the description of errors, in this stage, the errors are classified depending on their linguistic nature, such as phonological, morphological or syntactic types; furthermore, they could also be classified into more detailed linguistic elements, such as articles, propositions and verbs (Saville-Trioke and Barto, 2017). For instance, one of the major errors that are observed in the data is the use of sentence fragments, the sentence *“We have highlighted the social and cultural and political dimensions of language,”* fails to account for a complete sentence structure and thought. Another example found in the corpus is run-on sentences; the following sentence falls under the run-on sentences category: *“First of all, the meaning is conveyed through among things said by analysts such gestures and the tone, also through your language, people can understand your intention or what you want to convey, also the context plays a crucial role.”* This sentence includes many independent clauses that are not joined properly either through commas or conjunctions, leading to errors and confusion for the reader.

The next stage is the explanation of learners' errors. This step helps researchers to determine the potential causes behind the errors, including intralingual factors, such as overgeneralisation and developmental processes, or interlingual errors derived from the learners’ mother tongue. An example of interlingual errors from the corpus is the sentence *“a theoretical frameworks”*, this error is an article misuse; it is likely caused by the influence of the learner’s mother tongue since in Arabic there is no direct equivalent for the indefinite articles “a/an”. Consequently, learners may struggle to select the proper article in English. On the other hand, intralingual errors were also observed during the study. For instance, the sentence *“Analysts discovered several*

facts about . . .” reflects a tense formation error. In English, general truths and commonly accepted information are delivered through the simple present “discover” or the present perfect “has discovered”. That is why the use of the simple past “*discovered*” is inappropriate in this case. This error is likely caused due to overgeneralisation of past tenses or misunderstanding of the functions of the different tenses in English.

The last step is the evaluation of errors. This step considers the seriousness of errors, whether they are severe and cause misunderstanding for the readers (*global errors*) or minor and do not affect the meaning of the sentence (*local errors*). A clear example of global error could be *"At the end this one the approaches repealing individuals in the social relationships achieving such goal in relation between individuals in the social deals between human beings is all the measures of reaching or achieving the social goals recommended in our daily life."* This sentence represents word order issues; it has severe order issues and unclear phrasing, resulting in misunderstanding and failure to deliver any message. Thus, it is classified as a global error. However, the sentence *"How can power manifest discourse?"* contains a prepositional error where the learner omitted the preposition “in” , which leads to an ungrammatical sentence. Usually, these types of errors are considered local errors because they are less serious and do not block the meaning of the sentence.

6. Discussion

This section demonstrates the analysis of structural errors found in Master 1 essays. This discussion follows Rod Ellis’s (2008) five-step model. However, it highlights only the last four steps: identification, description, explanation, and evaluation of errors, since the first step—collection of a sample of learner language—was discussed earlier in the previous sections.

Based on the linguistic nature of errors, they are categorised into grammatical and syntactic types. From each of the eleven error categories, one error is selected to represent the category and to be analysed in details. The contrastive analysis process is applied between Standard Arabic and English to predict the possible sources of errors, primarily interlingual influence. The frequency of each error category is

provided in order to examine the occurrence of errors and their implications in pedagogy.

6.1 Structural Errors

Structural errors are deviations that affect the syntactic structure of the sentence. According to Collier (2019) “Structure errors are also known as syntactic errors or errors with syntax. Structure errors are errors with natural language, grammar language patterns, or knowledge of the English language.” These deviations may stem from lack of declarative knowledge or from their first language structure. Structural errors include both grammatical and syntactic errors.

6.1.1 Grammatical Errors

Grammatical errors represent the incorrect use of rules by the learners, such as articles, prepositions and tense formation. These errors may be the result of interlingual transfer between the languages or developmental factors. This section will illustrate the grammatical errors via Rod Ellis’s (2008) error analysis framework

6.1.1.1 Subject-Verb Agreement Errors

Subject-verb agreement (SVA) was the most frequent error, with 32 occurrences; the following example represents the subject-verb agreement category.

Error Category	Error	Correction	Frequency	Possible Sources	Surface structure type
SVA	<i>“Discourse analysis discuss how language effects the society”</i>	Discourse analysis discusses how language affects society.	32	Intralingual transfer	Misformation

This table represents the error SVA with the highest frequency in this analysis, which indicates the confusion of the learners regarding SVA usage.

6.1.1.1.1 Identification of Errors

“Discourse analysis discuss how language effects society.” This sentence contains an SVA error. The verb “discuss” is used incorrectly with the third person singular “discourse analysis”.

6.1.1.1.2 Description of Errors

In English, in the present tense, when the subject is the third person singular, it is required to add the suffix “s” at the end of verbs. Thus, the verb “discuss” in the sentence *“discourse analysis discuss how language effects the society”* is wrongly used. So, the correct verb should be “discusses” since the noun phrase “discourse analysis” is singular. This is a misformation error since the learner fails to form the verb correctly and to apply the rule of the third person singular.

6.1.1.1.3 Explanation of errors

Despite that learners are possibly familiar with the rule of SVA, the occurrence of the error repeatedly suggests that learners did not internalise the rule completely, which indicates developmental errors that occur when learners acquire the declarative knowledge of the rule; however, it did not arrive yet at the procedural knowledge where they apply the rule automatically and appropriately in their written production. The issue lies in the inability to apply the rule accurately, not in the ignorance of the SVA rule.

6.1.1.1.4 Evaluation of Errors

This high occurrence of SVA (32 times) might be due to the fossilisation of errors. Despite the fact that the sentence remains understandable (local error), the frequent errors in SVA can still affect the grammatical correctness of writing.

6.1.1.2 Article Errors

Article errors (AE) appeared throughout the essays 15 times, which indicates that for some learners there is a problem concerning article use. The following example demonstrates the article error category.

Error Type	Error	Correction	Frequency	Possible Source	Surface structure type
AE	“A <i>theoretical frameworks</i> ”	A theoretical framework.	15	Interlingual transfer.	Misformation

This table represents article error issues regarding the use of articles.

6.1.1.2.1 Identification of Errors

The sentence “*A theoretical frameworks*” has an article error. The plural word “ frameworks” is used with the singular indefinite article “a”, which indicates an article mismatch.

6.1.1.2.2 Description of Errors

The indefinite article “a” is used only before countable nouns to indicate the singular form. That is why the sentence “*a theoretical frameworks*” is incorrect grammatically. This is a misformation error because there is no correct usage of the morphological combination. In other words, incorrect use of the article with plural nouns.

6.1.1.2.3 Explanation of Errors (through CAH)

Standard Arabic has the definite article “ال”, but there is no equivalent indefinite article “an/a” in Arabic. As a result, this type of error appears as an interlingual transfer between Standard Arabic and English, since their systems differ in forming singular and plural noun phrases (article functions). Consequently, EFL learners may find it difficult to construct a proper sentence with the right articles, particularly when the nouns are preceded by adjectives.

For example:

In Arabic, the phrase “A theoretical framework” is translated as “إطار نظري” in singular form. However, in plural form it is “إطارات نظرية”. Thus, there is no

equivalent for the indefinite article “a/an”, but it is clear and understood via the omission of “ال”.

6.1.1.2.4 Evaluation of Errors

Although this type of error may affect the clarity and formality of the sentence, the message remains understandable, which indicates that it is a local error. Thus, M1 learners must take seriously these errors and make efforts to correct them.

6.1.1.3 Verb Formation

These errors refer to the incomplete or incorrect use of verbs; usually, they are the result of interlingual interference or developmental processes. The following table will demonstrate the VF category.

Error Type	Error	Correction	Frequency	Possible Source	Surface structure type
VF	<i>“He reacts with message which transmitted”</i>	He reacts to a message which is transmitted.	15	Interlingual transfer.	Omission

This table represents a VF error with its correction, frequency and possible source.

6.1.1.3.1 Identification of Errors

The sentence *“He reacts with message which transmitted”* includes two errors: a verb formation error when the learner omitted the auxiliary “is” from the relative clause and an article error.

6.1.1.3.2 Description of Errors

In order to form the present simple passive in a relative clause, it requires an auxiliary “to be in the present tense”; in this case, the verb “transmitted” needs an auxiliary verb “is” This deviation is considered as an omission error since an

essential grammatical element “is” is omitted from the sentence, which leads to an ungrammatical utterance.

6.1.1.3.3 Explanation of Errors

This error is likely caused by the negative transfer from the Standard Arabic.

In Arabic, the error would be:

يتفاعل مع رسالة نُقِلَتْ

In Standard Arabic, there are no auxiliary verbs such as is, are, was, or were when forming a passive voice sentence. Instead, internal vowel changes appear to indicate passive voice. For instance, "نُقِلَ" and "نُفِلَ". As a result, EFL learners might unconsciously transfer the passive voice structure of their native language and apply it to English, resulting in errors like “message which transmitted” instead of “a message which is transmitted”. This indicates interlingual transfer between Arabic and English.

6.1.1.3.4 Evaluation of Errors

This type of error impacts learners’ performance, including their grammatical accuracy and flow. It is a local error because the meaning is still understood. However, it affects the clarity and accuracy of the sentence.

6.1.1.4 Prepositional Errors

Prepositional errors (PE) were found in learners’ corpora. These errors appear due to omission and misuse of prepositions. Particularly, when learners depend on literal translation from their mother tongue.

Error Type	Error	Correction	Frequency	Possible Source	Surface structure type

PE	<i>“Language is indicatif to gender, class, ethnicity; therefore, culture.”</i>	Language is indicative of gender, class, ethnicity and culture.	06	Interlingual transfer.	Misformation
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This table represent an example of a prepositional error category, which is likely caused due to interlingual transfer.

6.1.1.4.1 Identification of Errors

There is a problem in this sentence. “Language is indicatif to gender, class and ethnicity; therefore, culture.” The first issue is that the learner misuses the preposition “to” with “indicative”. The second issue is that the learner transfers the word “indicatif” from French.

6.1.1.4.2 Description of Errors

The proper preposition of the adjective “indicative” is “of” not “to”. That is why the correct sentence is *“Language is indicative of gender, class, ethnicity and culture.”* This error is considered a misformation because the learner did not select the appropriate preposition for the adjective “indicative”.

6.1.1.4.3 Explanation of Errors

Prepositional error is possibly caused by the transfer from Standard Arabic to English because many learners tend to refer to their mother tongue to construct a sentence in the target language, which leads learners to overlap the prepositions from Standard Arabic to English.

6.1.1.4.4 Evaluation of Errors

This type of error may reduce accuracy and grammar and affect semantics. Especially in academic writings. Despite the fact that the sentence is comprehensive

(local error), learners are still expected to reduce prepositional errors for better performance.

6.1.1.5 Tense Formation Errors

Tense formation TF errors appear when learners use incorrect verb tense, leading to confusion in the timing of actions, which includes improper tense choice.

Error Type	Error	Correction	Frequency	Possible Source	Surface structure type
TF	<i>“Even if it looked similar.”</i>	Even if it looks similar.	03	Intralingual transfer	Misformation

This table demonstrates an example of tense formation errors, which is likely caused due to intralingual transfer.

6.1.1.5.1 Identification of Errors

In English, when talking about present-time situations and general truth, we use the simple present. However, in this sentence, *“even if it looked similar”*, the learner incorrectly used the past tense to form the sentence, which resulted in an error in tense formation.

6.1.1.5.2 Description of Errors

The word “looks” is more suitable in this context since it is required to conjugate the verb in simple present tense in conditional clauses that convey general truth or present situations. The learner did not select the appropriate verb tense, where he used the past tense instead of the present tense, leading to misformation error.

6.1.1.5.3 Explanation of Errors

This error is likely the result of intralingual transfer; it might occur due to overgeneralisation or developmental processes of the language regarding the construction of if-clauses. Thus, learners can make this kind of error due to incomplete mastery of the rule, particularly in complex sentences.

6.1.1.5.4 Evaluation of Errors

Although tense formation errors can blur meaning and affect the grammatical and logical flow of sentences, they are considered local errors because readers can still grasp the meaning behind learners' writing. Thus, they must pay careful attention to this kind of error, specifically in complex sentences and conditionals.

6.1.1.6 Relative Pronoun Errors

These errors occur when there is an omission or misuse of relative pronouns such as who, whom, that or which. These pronouns are crucial to join the dependent clauses to nouns and clarify meaning.

Error Type	Error	Correction	Frequency	Possible Souce	Surface structure type
RP	<i>"The listener is the one listen to the speaker"</i>	The listener is the one who listens to the speaker.	02	Intralingual transfer (developmental errors)	Omission

This table shows an error concerning the omission of the relative pronoun "who", which affected the clarity of the sentence.

6.1.1.6.1 Identification of Errors

The sentence "*The listener is the one listen to the speaker*" includes a grammatical error, which is the omission of the relative pronoun "who".

6.1.1.6.2 Description of Errors

In order to link ideas and sentences together in relative clauses, learners need to include the appropriate relative pronouns. In this case the learner omitted an essential relative pronoun “who”, which caused an omission error in the sentence.

6.1.1.6.3 Explanation of Errors

This error can be explained through intralingual transfer. Learners might receive relative clauses as complex sentences; thus, they tend to simplify these sentences by omitting the relative pronouns, which indicates a developmental error.

6.1.1.6.4 Evaluation of Errors

Despite that this error affects grammar and sentence structure, it is safe to say that it did not block the meaning of the sentence; thus, it is a local error since the reader can understand the meaning behind what is written. However, the appropriate use of relative clauses will improve academic writing and reduce errors.

6.1.2 Syntactic Errors

Syntactic errors are the deviations from the grammatical norms that define the structure into coherent and correct sentences. These errors usually affect the flow and meaning of the sentences.

6.1.2.1 Word Order Issues

Word order issues appear when learners misplace the components of the sentence such as: subjects, verbs and adjectives, which leads to an error in the syntactic order, leading to confusion and disruption.

Error Type	Error	Correction	Frequency	Possible Source	Surface structure type

WOI	<i>“Highlight of how is the utilization of language into dining social objectives.”</i>	Highlighting how language is used to achieve social objectives.	11	Intralingual transfer	Misordering
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This table represents an error of the WOI category, which affected the clarity and meaning of the sentence.

6.1.2.1.1 Identification of Errors

The sentence *“Highlight of how is the utilization of language into dining social objectives.”* has word order issues and awkward phrasing. Especially in which the ideas are structured.

6.1.2.1.2 Description of Errors

In English, the sentence structure follows a specific word order subject + predicate + object. This sentence *“Highlight of how is the utilization of language into dining social objectives.”* creates a confusion and awkward order. It is considered as a misordering error because the words are not arranged logically, leading to ungrammatical sequence.

6.1.2.1.3 Explanation of Errors

These kind of errors are likely caused due to intralingual processes, when learners are still developing their declarative knowledge of the rules concerning the structure of the sentences. Besides that learners may find it difficult to construct complex sentences and phrases such as noun and prepositional phrases. Leading to word order issues.

6.1.2.1.4 Evaluation of Errors

This word order error will hinder reading and understanding of the learners' written production, which weakens the sentence's logical flow and formality. Thus, it can be seen as a global error.

6.1.2.2 Question Order Issues

Question order errors appear when learners arrange subjects, main verbs and auxiliaries incorrectly in interrogative sentences.

Error Type	Error	Correction	Frequency	Possible source	Surface structure type
QO	<i>“What way discourse analysis can help or can be used in psychology?”</i>	In what way can discourse analysis help or be used in psychology?	05	Intralingual transfer.	Misordering

This table illustrates questions order issues, where this error affected the clarity of the question.

6.1.2.2.1 Identification of Errors

The question *“What way discourse analysis can help or can be used in psychology?”* contains an error concerning the arrangement of interrogative sentence elements. Particularly, WH questions.

6.1.2.2.2 Description of Error

In WH questions, the auxiliary verbs must come before the subject. In this case, there is no inversion between the modal auxiliary verb “can” and the subject “discourse analysis”. Thus, it appears as a statement more than a proper WH

question. It is seen as a misordering error since the components of the question are not arranged properly, affecting the interrogative sentence structure.

6.1.2.2.3 Explanation of Errors

This error likely resulted from intralingual errors, when learners overgeneralise sentences structure when forming questions, leading them to forget to invert the subject with the auxiliary verb.

6.1.2.2.4 Evaluation of Errors

This error can cause confusion and awkward phrasing in academic writing. Question order errors are considered as local errors because even if the structure is disordered, the meaning is still conveyed.

6.1.2.3 Run-On Sentences

Run-on sentences occur when learners link two or more independent clauses together without a proper separation, leading to inappropriate grammar and reducing the clarity of the sentence.

Error Type	Error	Correction	Frequency	Possible Source	Surface structure type
ROS	<i>“Discourse analysis is the study of how we use language in different situation, it looks at how words and sentences can mean different thinks depending on where and how they are used.”</i>	“Discourse analysis is the study of how we use language in different situations. It looks at how words and sentences can mean different things, depending on where and how they are used.”	11	Intalingual transfer.	Addition

This table demonstrates an example of a run-on sentence, when two independent clauses are joined improperly, causing issues in sentence structure.

6.1.2.3.1 Identification of Errors

In this example, there are two independent clauses: *“Discourse analysis . . .”* and *“It looks at how language . . .”*. The learner joined these clauses with a comma instead of separating these them with a full stop.

6.1.2.3.2 Description of Errors

In English grammar, the independent clauses are joined with a semicolon, a full stop or a coordinator. A comma is not adequate in this case. This error could be classified as an addition error because the comma has joined two independent clauses improperly. Though it is more seen as a faulty sentence boundary since the sentence *“Discourse analysis is the study of how we use language in different situation, it looks at how words and sentences can mean different thinks depending on where and how they are used.”* did not respect the rules of complete sentences in English.

6.1.2.3.3 Explanation of Errors

This is probably an intralingual error, usually due to developmental processes of these rules. Learners may overlook the importance of proper punctuation, leading to misunderstanding and confusion in their writing.

6.1.2.3.4 Evaluation of Errors

Run-on sentences are considered global errors because they affect the meaning and the clarity of the sentences, which makes them hard to read.

6.1.2.4 Sentence Fragments

Fragmentation appears when learners omit the subject or the predicate. Fragments are incomplete sentences that lack a complete thought.

Error Type	Error	Correction	Frequency	Possible Source	Surface structure type
SF	<i>“means when someone is talking”</i>	It means when someone is talking.	08	Intralingual transfer	Omission

This table shows an example of a sentence fragment that lacks a subject, which reduces the meaning of the sentence.

6.1.2.4.1 Identification of Errors

The sentence *“means when someone is talking”* is an incomplete sentence that excludes an important component, which is the subject.

6.1.2.4.2 Description of Errors

In English, complete sentences must include a proper subject and predicate. In this case, the subject is omitted, omission error, causing an error in the syntactic order and semantics of the sentence.

6.1.2.4.3 Explanation of Errors

Fragment sentences are likely caused by intralingual transfer; these errors reflect the developmental processes of learners when constructing the independent clauses. Learners usually fail to use the proper structure of the complete sentence “subject + predicate,” leading to wrong sentence structure and misunderstanding. Generally these deviations are considered global errors since they affect the intended meaning and make it harder for the reader to grasp the message.

6.1.2.5 Parallel Structure

Parallelism is when words, phrases and clauses that are similar in meaning and function have to be grammatically and structurally similar too.

Error Type	Error	Correction	Frequency	Possible Source	Surface structure type
PS	<i>“positive and negative approach”</i>	Positive and negative approaches.	02	Inrational transfer	Misformation

This table illustrates parallel structure error that affected the grammatical balance of the sentence.

6.1.2.5.1 Identification of Errors

The sentence *“positive and negative approach”* contains an error concerning the balance and the meaning of the sentence.

6.1.2.5.2 Description of Errors

In this case, there are two adjectives (positive and negative) that describe one singular noun (approach), which causes misunderstanding and confusion for the reader; does the learner mean that there is only one approach that is both negative and positive at the same time, or is there an error and he meant two approaches that are positive and negative? That is why it is a misformation error because the learner misformed the structure of the sentence by applying two modifiers to one singular noun.

6.1.2.5.3 Explanation of Error

Parallelism probably resulted from intralingual transfer; learners may not be aware of the importance of the parallel structure when listing items or coordinating them. Thus, it is likely the result of overgeneralising the simple sentence structure and neglecting other grammatical patterns.

6.1.2.5.4 Evaluation of Errors

Although the error makes the sentence structure awkward and incorrect, the message remains understood. Thus, it is considered a local error, besides that, even if it makes the reader pause to think and the phrase unclear, the general message of the sentence is still conveyed through contextual clues.

7. Summary Table

This table summarises all the structural errors seen in this analysis, including grammatical and syntactic errors.

Category \ Structural errors	Error Type	Error	Correction	Frequency	Possible Source of Errors	Surface Structure Type
Grammatical Errors	SVA	<i>“Discourse analysis discuss how language effects the society”</i>	Discourse analysis discusses how language affects society.	32	Intralingual transfer.	Misformation
	AE	<i>“A theoretical frameworks”</i>	A theoretical framework.	15	Interlingual transfer.	Misformation
	VF	<i>“He reacts with message which transmitted”</i>	He reacts with a message which is transmitted.	15	Interlingual transfer.	Omission
	PE	<i>“Language is indicatif to gender, class, ethnicity; therefore, culture.”</i>	Language is indicative of gender, class, ethnicity and culture.	06	Interlingual transfer.	Misformation
	TF	<i>“Even if it looked similar.”</i>	Even if it looks similar.	03	Intralingual transfer.	Misformation

	RP	<i>"The listener is the one listen to the speaker"</i>	The listener is the one who listens to the speaker.	02	Intralingual transfer.	Omission
Syntactic Errors	WOI	<i>"Highlight of how is the utilization of language into dining social objectives."</i>	Highlighting how language is used to achieve social objectives.	11	Intralingual transfer.	Misordering
	QO	<i>"What way discourse analysis can help or can be used in psychology?"</i>	In what way can discourse analysis help or be used in psychology?	05	Intralingual transfer.	Misordering
	ROS	<i>"Discourse analysis is the study of how we use language in different situation, it looks at how words and sentences can mean different thinks depending on where and how they are used."</i>	"Discourse analysis is the study of how we use language in different situations. It looks at how words and sentences can mean different things, depending on where and how they are used."	11	Intralingual transfer.	Addition
	SF	<i>"means when someone is talking"</i>	It means when someone is talking.	08	Intralingual transfer.	Omission

	PS	<i>“positive and negative approach”</i>	Positive and negative approaches.	02	Intralingual transfer.	Misformation
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This table provides an overview of the total 110 structural errors that were found in the analysis of learners’ writing. With the highest frequency of SVA being 32 and the lowest frequency of PS being 02.

8. Findings

This section will present the findings of the research, emphasising the common errors found in the error analysis. The first category is grammatical errors; it includes errors such as subject-verb agreement (SVA), article errors (AE), verb formation (VF), prepositional errors (PE), tense formation (TF), and relative pronoun errors (RP). The other category is syntactic errors, which includes word order issues (WOI), question order issues (QO), sentence fragments (SF), run-ons (ROS) and parallel structure (PS). These errors were systematically analysed through Rod Ellis’ framework (2008); each error is analysed and interpreted in terms of their potential source and frequency.

In order to further linguistically categorise the structural errors, representative examples were selected to further examine them. These examination was applied through the surface structure taxonomy by Dually, Burt and Krashen (1982), who classified the errors into four main types: omission, addition, misformation and misordering. Because of the time constraints, not every error was classified according to this taxonomy, except for the representative examples that were chosen for illustrative purposes. It is crucial to note that these examples do not represent the whole categories but rather how these errors may manifest depending on the surface structure taxonomy. Out of the 11 representative examples, five were misformation errors, including : (subject-verb agreement, article error, prepositional errors, tense formation and parallel structure), three were omissions (verb formation, relative pronoun errors and sentence fragments), two were misordering (word order issues and question order issues), and lastly, one was an addition error (run-on sentence). This classification provides a deeper understanding of the challenges faced by learners.

Among all the errors and the grammatical errors, SVA is the most frequent error that occurred 32 times, followed by AE and VF, which occurred 15 times; thereafter, PE with 06 occurrences, TF with 03 and finally, RP with 02 occurrences. With regard to syntactic errors, ROS and WOI were the most recurrent errors that appeared 11 times, followed by sentence fragments with 08 occurrences, then QO was repeated 05 times and lastly, PS 02 times.

The errors in this study were classified according to the distinction between local and global errors that was provided by Dually, Burt and Krashen (1982); based on their framework, global errors are the deviations that affect sentence structure and disrupt the intended message or meaning of the sentence. Meanwhile, local errors are the errors that only impact small parts of the sentence without affecting the general meaning. In this research, only three out of 11 categories were classified as global errors. These errors are word-order issues, run-on sentences and sentence fragments due to their significant effect on sentence structure and meaning. Usually, these types of errors cause difficulty for the reader to grasp the intended meaning and hinder the reading process. On the other hand, the remaining categories fall under local errors, which are subject-verb agreement, article errors, tense formation, verb formation, prepositional errors, relative pronoun errors, question order errors and parallel structure. Generally, these types of errors influence only some elements of the sentence without changing the overall meaning.

Notably, sources of errors were not readily identifiable; that is why they were left to the researcher's initiative and judgment. Sources of errors were classified into two interlingual and intralingual transfer. The research revealed that many errors were caused by intralingual transfer, generally due to overgeneralisation of certain rules to others or the developmental process of learners' language. These errors were SVA, TF, RP, WOI, QO, ROS, SF and PS. On the other hand, only three errors stemmed from interlingual transfer. These errors were AE, VF and PE. Often, learners borrow some structures from their first language and transfer them to English; this may lead to interlingual errors if the structures do not align (negative transfer).

To contextualise the findings of this research, three studies were reviewed. Dually and Burt (1974) claimed that only 3% of errors were caused by interlingual interference; they argued that the majority of the errors are the outcome of natural

learning due to the lack of knowledge as part of the learning process. Moreover, Moe Myint (2020) conducted a study across four academic years; the study reveals that most of the errors appeared due to intralingual causes such as overgeneralisation, simplification, developmental issues and avoidance. Meanwhile, interlingual errors were less frequent. These two studies align with the current study, which found that intralingual transfer is the primary cause of errors. In contrast, Al-Hajailan (2020) found that most of the errors were caused by interlanguage interference. These errors appeared as articles, pronouns, nouns and prepositions. She concluded that the sources of errors were the structural differences between the two languages (Arabic and English). This divergence can be due to the differences in the sample, proficiency levels or teaching techniques. The inclusion of these studies can provide a fuller picture of how learners' errors manifest in various contexts.

9. Limitations of the Method

Different limitations were encountered while conducting this research, despite the efforts put to ensure validity and reliability. These limitations include procedural and methodological limitations.

9.1 Procedural Limitations

Procedural limitations refer to the weaknesses and problems in the research design or the process of collecting data that affect the way the research was carried out. These limitations were:

- **Handwriting issues:** some of learners' essays were hard to read due to illegible handwriting, making the error analysis process harder.
- **Limited copies:** the insufficient copies for the analysis affected the corpus size and reduced the findings of the research.
- **Inconsistent format:** not all of the copies were in the form of an essay. Some of them were more like lists and unstructured paragraphs. Leading to difficulties in analysing the errors.
- **Lack of adequate material:** some of the essays did not contain enough material because of deficient paragraphs or the essays did not cover well the topic, which resulted in reducing the depth of the analysis.

- **Time constraints:** due to limited time, it was not possible to analyse deeply all the errors or to include a larger sample.
- **Incomplete categorisation of errors using the surface structure taxonomy:** because of the size of the data and the limited time, not all the errors were categorised within the surface structure taxonomy. This might affect the quality and thoroughness of the research.

9.2 Methodological Limitations

Methodological limitations refer to the difficulties and issues in method, corpus size and research approach that were chosen for conducting the study. These limitations may impact the accuracy and validity of the research. The limitations in this study included:

- **The distinction between errors and mistakes:** it was not possible to distinguish between errors and mistakes due to lack of direct interactions between the researcher and the sample. That is why all the deviations from the norms were considered as errors.
- **Sources of errors:** the sources of errors were not readily identifiable; as a result, the categorisation of errors into interlingual and intralingual sources was based on the researcher's interpretation and judgements.
- **Lack of total feedback:** the data in this research was written essays; the written data in this research prevented the researcher from interactional feedback. This kind of negotiation would help the researcher to identify whether these deviations are errors or just performance, temporary mistakes.

10. Conclusion

This chapter sets the foundation for the empirical stage of the research through the explanation and description of the methodological choices applied throughout the study. The research ensured a more comprehensive analysis by employing the a corpus-based design that integrated qualitative and quantitative approaches. Besides, the inclusion of Rod Ellis' (2008) framework ensured a systematic analysis of the structural errors. In addition to the discussion and findings of the data that contributed to the understanding of the structural errors and their sources among M1 EFL learners.

Meanwhile, the limitations of the study emphasise the obstacles faced by the researcher, areas for improvement and planning research.

General Conclusion

1. General Conclusion

The current study seeks to explore the structural errors produced by M1 EFL learners in their written production. It also strives to identify the main causes behind these errors and to what extent learners' first language contributes to their occurrence.

The error analysis process of learners' scripts revealed 110 structural errors under two categories, grammatical and syntactic errors, divided into 11 sub-categories, including six types under grammatical errors (subject-verb agreement, article errors, verb formation, prepositional errors, tense formation and relative pronoun errors) and five under syntactic errors (word order issues, question order issues, run-on sentences, sentence fragments and parallel structure). The analysis was conducted through Rod Ellis' framework (2008). Eleven representatives were selected to represent the categories these examples were classified according to Dulay, Burt and Krashen (1982) into omission, addition, misformation and misordering.

The results revealed that most structural errors were classified under misformation, proceeded in order by omission, misordering and addition. Despite the absence of learners' input, the analysis of sources of errors proved that intralingual transfer was the most prevalent factor in the occurrence of these errors, probably due to overgeneralisation or developmental processes of learners' interlanguage, including subject-verb agreement, tense formation, relative pronoun errors, word order issues, question order issues, run-on sentences, sentence fragments and parallel structure. Conversely, interlingual transfer was a less contributing factor, influencing only three categories (article errors, verb formation and prepositional errors). This indicates that interlingual influence had a minimal effect on learners' errors; nevertheless, it still impacts learners' production. Moreover, the study also grouped the errors into global and local errors to identify the severity of errors. This process unravelled that only three out of 11 categories significantly affected the meaning and were categorised as global errors including word order issues, sentence fragments and run-on sentences. The remaining errors were classified under local errors.

The results demonstrated detailed and comprehensible answers to the research questions. The first research question that aimed to identify the frequency of structural errors revealed a total of 11 categories, including six grammatical and five syntactic,

which confirmed the first hypothesis that anticipated a high frequency of structural errors in M1 EFL learners' written production.

Meanwhile, the second and third questions that sought to determine the causes behind the structural errors and the extent to which L1 is a contributing factor revealed that the majority of structural errors stemmed from intralingual factors, such as overgeneralisation, incomplete rule application, and developmental processes. In contrast, few errors were attributable to interlingual transfer from the learners' mother tongue, Standard Arabic. These results partially validated the second and third hypotheses that predicted a high number of structural errors would occur due to L1 transfer, with proposing that L1 interference was likely to be the dominant source of these errors. Meanwhile, Standard Arabic influence was not prevalent. It still contributed to the occurrence of certain errors. As a result, despite the existence of cross-linguistic influence, it had a more limited role than expected, highlighting the complex nature of error sources in second language writing production.

While conducting the study, several limitations were encountered. The corpus contained a limited number of exam essays. One of these essays lack consistent formats and others were either incomplete or contained illegible handwriting. Besides that, the distinction between mistakes and errors was not always identifiable because of the absence of interaction between the researcher and the sample. Thus, all the deviations were considered as errors. Furthermore, the identification of sources of errors was based on the researcher's judgements because of the lack of direct learner input. Hence, the assumptions had to be drawn from the cognitive processes of the learners, which restricted the explanatory influence of the findings.

One of the main recommendations drawn from this research is the adoption of a more comprehensive approach with the use of diverse data collection tools; future researchers could incorporate interviews, questionnaires, and focus groups for a diverse learners' input, making the research more reliable and valid. This approach would allow for a detailed analysis of the cognitive and linguistic processes with a clear identification of the sources of errors. pedagogically, it is important for English-language teachers to tailor specific materials for Arab-speaking EFL learners, using targeted teaching that focuses on the most frequent errors that occur in learners' production, particularly structural errors. It must be prioritised. It is recommended for

teachers to implement contrastive grammar instruction that addresses the differences between Standard Arabic and English structures. This would lead to minimising the occurrences of negative transfer. By focusing on both L1 interference obstacles and developmental challenges, learners will be able to improve their writing proficiency, besides overcoming L1- and L2-related errors.

The current research identifies structural errors' difficulty for EFL learners in their written production. The research findings suggest that the causes of these errors were due to the learners' mother tongue, standard Arabic, and their intra-language processes. The results call for the need for more didactic techniques that highlight the first language transfer and internal processes of second language acquisition. Ultimately, by providing a nuanced understanding of these processes would help instructors and researchers to gain more insights about the nature of errors, design more effective syllabi and aid the learners to enhance their writing abilities for greater and higher structural accuracy in English production.

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مخلص

تسلط هذه الدراسة على الأخطاء التركيبية المرتكبة من قبل المتعلمين العرب للغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية سنة أولى ماستر في جامعة عمار ثلجي بالأغواط مع تركيز خاص على تأثير اللغة الأم، العربية الفصحى، على الإنتاج الكتابي للطلاب. تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى إستكشاف الأخطاء التركيبية الشائعة من ضمنهم الأخطاء النحوية و التركيبية مع دراسة مصادرها المحتملة. تم تطبيق تصميم إستكشافي من أجل جمع و تحليل مقالات الطلاب بالإضافة إلى إطار رود إليس 2008. علاوة على ذلك، تم توظيف إجرائين تحليليين بما في ذلك التحليل المتقارن و تحليل الأخطاء، من أجل ضمان نتائج نظامية و قابلة للفهم. تم تحديد إحدى عشر صنف من بينهم ستة أصناف نحوية تشمل التوافق بين الفعل و الفاعل و إستخدام أدوات التعريف و تكوين الأفعال. بالإضافة إلى خمسة أصناف تركيبية مثل أخطاء في ترتيب الكلمات و الأسئلة و التركيب المتوازي. أظهرت النتائج بأن معظم الأخطاء كانت نتيجة عوامل داخل اللغة مثل التعميم الزائد و عدم تطبيق القواعد بشكل كامل. بالمقابل، أخطاء التداخل اللغوي لوحظت بشكل أساسي في استخدام أدوات التعريف و تركيب الأفعال و استخدام حروف الجر. عادة هذه الأخطاء تكون نتيجة النقل السلبي بين اللغة العربية الفصحى و اللغة الإنجليزية. و بالتالي، الأخطاء الداخلية للغة كانت متكررة أكثر من أخطاء التداخل اللغوي. تندرج أهمية هذه الدراسة في مجال تدريس اللغة الإنجليزية خاصة بالنسبة إلى المتعلمين العرب للغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية من أجل زيادة وعيهم نحو الإختلافات التركيبية بين اللغة العربية الفصحى و اللغة الإنجليزية.

الكلمات المفتاحية: تأثير التداخل اللغوي، فرضية التحليل المقارن، تحليل الأخطاء، المتعلمون العرب للغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية، الأخطاء التركيبية.