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TESIS DE GRADO

***LEXICO-GRAMMATICAL ANALYSIS
OF ENGLISH INTERMEDIATE LEARNER'S ERRORS IN
WRITTEN PRODUCTION AT THE DEPARTMENT OF
LINGUISTICS AND LANGUAGES AT MAYOR DE SAN ANDRES
UNIVERSITY IN LA PAZ-BOLIVIA***

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With all my love and recognition
To my father, mother, grandfather
Esteban and my aunt Berila.

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ABSTRACT

Learning a second language requires a conscious effort as it is a highly cognitive process, especially when learners want to express their ideas and thoughts by writing in the target language. Consequently, learners make different kind of errors that have to do with misconstructions of English language grammar structures, word formation, and lexis when learning and using the language. As a result, these errors produce misunderstanding and misinterpretation when decoding the message. Thus, this research is aimed at analyzing errors that English intermediate learners of the Department of linguistics and languages (UMSA) make in written production.

Therefore, this research is developed into four essential chapters. Chapter one focuses on the background of the problem that has been stated above, as well as the statement of the problem, general and specific objectives, justification and hypotheses formulation. Next, chapter two explains different theories about second language acquisition and theoretical foundations that help us to understand the subject matter as well as to support this research theoretically. Afterward, chapter three describes the type of study, population, instrument design, quantitative and qualitative analysis, and analysis of the results. In this perspective, this is a descriptive study since we make a description and categorization of grammatical and lexical errors, and subsequently an explanation of these errors as we relate them to particular aspects of second language acquisition such as interlingual and intralingual interference. It is also worth mentioning that with regard to data gathering instrument we applied *open production writing* tasks. Finally, chapter four arrives at conclusions of the research and provides some framework regarding analysis and correction of learners errors.

On the whole, it is stated that Linguistics and Languages Department learner's errors are predominantly grammatical over lexical ones. At this point, it is crucial to assert that the main source for grammatical errors made by English intermediate learners is interlingual interference. In this connection, it is also relevant to claim that preposition and article errors are the most frequent in learners' written production. To conclude, another important conclusion is that learners' mother tongue, Spanish, interferes more in grammar learning of English language than in lexis.

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CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION

Learning a second language, as stated by (Ramirez, 1995), involves the acquisition of a very complex cognitive skill involving various tasks that must be practiced until they are automatized. This implies that internal representations based on the language system are often restructured because learners gain control over the procedures for choosing appropriate grammatical rules, vocabulary and pragmatic conventions, regulating language use in a variety of situations. In the acquisition process, learners are actively engaged in a highly cognitive process. They do not merely repeat or imitate what they hear; rather they develop an internal rule system, or an interim grammar that approximates the target language in stages (Ramirez, 1995 p. 150). This language has been referred to as *interlanguage* (Selinker, 1972) which can be located in a continuum between the mother tongue and the target language. As a result, learners produce interlanguage development errors (deviations from the target language rules).

Research in second language acquisition has identified different type of learner errors such as omission errors (*He no speak*), addition errors (*Do you can speak English*), substitution errors (*I will buy a book in the library*), word order (*that boy is not enough tall*), etc. Each type of error can be considered within the different levels of language: phonology, lexicon, grammar, and discourse. Similarly, there has been a lot of research regarding the source of an error. Sources have been described in term of native-language transfer (interlingual errors) or errors made in the process of second language learning (intralingual errors) or eventually errors of overgeneralization and simplification, as when a child learns his/her mother tongue.

Studies in language acquisition and interlanguage development have used error analysis as the theory that determines the incidence, nature, causes and

consequences of unsuccessful language, (James, 1998). With this in mind, the main emphasis of this study aims to an analysis of errors made by learners that study English language as a foreign language. It is in this way that in the current research we carry out a detailed analysis of errors that English intermediate learners of the Department of Linguistics and Languages (UMSA) make in written production. In addition, it is worth pointing out that in this study we analyze learner errors in relation to the main source.

1 BACKGROUND OF THE PROBLEM

The Department of Linguistics and Languages at Mayor de San Andres University in La Paz-Bolivia, particularly the English language area, which is of our interest, develops future professionals who will either teach English, or translate from English to Spanish and vice versa. Students studying Linguistics and English language have to take English for four semesters or for four English levels, *1.Beginners, 2.Upper beginners, 3.Pre intermediate, 4.Intermediate,(compulsory)* and other two levels, *5.Upper intermediate, 6.Advanced*, to strengthen their proficiency. Finishing the compulsory four levels, students are allowed to take specialty courses such as phonology, semantics, syntax, etc. in the target language, that is, in English.

On the other hand, learning English language effectively and appropriately is not an easy task but it is relevant for students so that they can master it to have communicative competence which is the purpose of learning English at the Department of Linguistics and languages. That is, students must be able to communicate ideas and thoughts in a given situation in accordance with the new system of rules and sociolinguistic rules of the target language.

Even though learners have been exposed to the language for four semesters or four levels, they still display a number of errors or deviances. Consequently, these kinds of errors produce misunderstandings and confusions in the decoding process or

interpretation of the message, that is, what learners produce in their written production such as narrations, descriptions, or formal letters. Therefore, as these learners are developing an internal rule system (interlanguage), it is worth studying and investigating the errors they make. A close observation of intermediate learner errors allows us to provide this sample. Learners come up with deviances such as “*my father use jackets*”, “*I needed money for to travel*”, “*he can plays basketball*”, “*we were in a tall building*”, “*the desks in the park are dirties*”, “*she loses her time watching TV*”, and so on.

In the examples above, we can observe clearly the use of wrong grammatical structures taking into account both morphology and syntax errors, inappropriate word choice, that is, lexical errors, and semantic ones as well. These types of errors are those that English Intermediate learners make in the process of learning of English language. Besides, it is important to point out again that there are several sources for these errors such as interlingual and intralingual interference. Moreover, when learners write a text or a composition, some groups tend to make more grammatical errors than lexical ones and some of them the opposite.

1.1 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Considering the concepts mentioned in the previous section, the following research questions are formulated:

- What kind of errors, grammatical or lexical, do English intermediate learners of the Department of Linguistics and Languages at (UMSA) predominantly make in written production?
- What are the grammatical categories that show higher frequency of errors, nouns, articles, adjectives, adverbs or prepositions?

- What is the main source for English intermediate learner's errors, interlingual or intralingual?

2 OBJECTIVES

2.1 GENERAL OBJECTIVES

- To determine the kind of errors, grammatical or lexical, English intermediate learners of Linguistic and Languages Department (UMSA) predominantly make in written production.
- To identify the main source for English intermediate learner's errors, interlingual or intralingual.

2.2 SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

- To analyze the errors English intermediate learners make in written production.
- To categorize the errors English intermediate learners make in written production.
- To identify the grammatical categories that show higher frequency of errors in written production.
- To describe English intermediate learner's errors in relation to the possible sources.

- To evaluate English intermediate learner's errors.

3 JUSTIFICATION

In language learning process, internalizing the rules of the new language system demands a conscious effort by English intermediate learners. When learners make use of the target language, they produce different kind of errors such as grammar, syntax, lexis and semantic errors in written production. Then, it is essential to carry out an investigation or an Error Analysis so as to find out, first, the kind of errors English intermediate learners predominantly make, next, the sources of the errors and therefore help learners overcome the errors.

In this regard, the theoretical importance of this research is based on the analysis of errors to determine the kind of errors English intermediate learners predominantly make in written production and to relate them to the possible sources. Thus, this research is a contribution to the area of Linguistics (descriptive) and to second language acquisition because we make a detailed description of errors made by English intermediate learners and we relate them to psycholinguistic sources such as interlingual and intralingual interference to identify the main one. In addition, this research has a theoretical significance because it takes as a theoretical reference "Error Analysis" to explain the phenomenon of errors in written production.

Moreover, this study contributes to the field of Applied Linguistics, since this area has to do with teaching and learning languages. Therefore, the social value of this research is relevant because it is not only a help to understand English Intermediate learner's errors but it also offers a comprehensible explanation on why learners make errors and what to do to help learners. Likewise, it is fundamental to know the implications of learner errors such as the kind of errors, source and frequency so as to accomplish a successful learning of English language. Consequently, this research will be of benefit to linguists and English teachers as well as a reference for forthcoming research.

Finally, it is important to mention that this research provides relevant information about the stage of English intermediate learner interlanguage with respect to English language and the areas where these learners have more problems. That is, teachers could have an overview of the weak areas of learners. In this sense, this research apart of observing what are the errors made by intermediate learners when making use of their target language (English) and analyzing them, it is also focused on contributing to the teaching-learning process and then to facilitate the learning of English language as foreign language. What is more, the practical importance is reflected on the framework and model we provide at the end with regard to error treatment and correction.

4 HYPOTHESES FORMULATION

In this research, we aim to determine the kind of errors English intermediate learners predominantly make in written production and to find out the main source for these errors. Therefore, the following hypotheses are formulated:

- English intermediate learners of the Department of Linguistics and languages at (UMSA) predominantly make grammatical errors over lexical ones in written production, narrative, descriptive and formal complaint letter writing.
- Preposition and article errors display higher frequency of occurrence in written production of English intermediate learners.
- The main source for English intermediate learner errors in written production is Spanish interference (interlingual errors).

4.1 IDENTIFICATION OF VARIABLES

❖ *Hypothesis 1*

Variable: grammatical errors made by English intermediate learners in written production, narrative, descriptive and formal complaint letter writing.

❖ *Hypothesis 2*

Variable: preposition and article errors made by English intermediate learners in written production.

❖ *Hypothesis 3*

Variable 1: English intermediate learner errors (dependent variable)

Variable 2: Spanish interlingual interference (independent variable)

4.2 CONCEPTUAL DEFINITION

- Errors;* deviated and not self-correctable forms produced by learners in written production when making use of the target language to convey thoughts and ideas.

- ☑ *Interlingual interference*; mother tongue interference in learners' written production when making use of the target language to express ideas and feelings.
- ☑ *Intralingual interference*; target language interference such as misanalysis, incomplete rule application and overgeneralization in learners' written production when using the target language.
- ☑ *Preposition*; a word that opens up the possibilities of saying more about a thing or an action by showing the relationship of a noun or a pronoun to some other word in the sentence
- ☑ *Preposition errors*; errors that learners make in selecting the right preposition when they use the target language (English) in written production.
- ☑ *Article*; a grammatical particle that is put next to a noun to indicate the type of reference being made by the noun or to indicate definiteness.
- ☑ *Article errors*; errors that learners make in using the right article in a given situation when they use the target language in written production.
- ☑ *Interlanguage*; an intermediate observable stage in the language of the learner between the mother tongue and the target language, a different language system. That is, a systematic knowledge of a second language which is independent of both the learner's first language and the target language.

4.3 OPERACIONALIZATION OF VARIABLES

Hypothesis 1

VARIABLE	DIMENSIONS	INDICATORS
<p>Grammatical errors made by English intermediate learners in written production, narrative, descriptive and formal letter writing.</p>	<p>Grammar</p> <p><i>Morphology</i></p> <p><i>Syntax</i></p>	<p>- Articles, noun, pronoun, adjectives, adverbs, prepositions, subject-verb agreement, reported speech, and genitive form.</p> <p>- Plurality, third person, genitive, noun, adjective and adverb formation.</p> <p>- Sentence word order (Subject, Verb, Object, Manner/How?, Place/Where?, Time/When?), and coordination.</p>

Hypothesis 2

VARIABLE	DIMENSIONS	INDICATORS
<p>Preposition and article errors made by English intermediate learners</p>	<p>Prepositions:</p>	
	<p><i>Movement</i></p>	<p>- At, along, around, down, from, inside, into, near, out of, round, to, toward, towards, up.</p>
	<p><i>Position</i></p>	<p>- Above, ahead of, among, at, behind, below, between, beyond, close to, down, in, next to, on, under, upon, within.</p>
	<p><i>Time</i></p>	<p>- At, on, in.</p>
	<p>Articles:</p>	
<p><i>Definite article</i></p>	<p>- The</p>	
<p><i>Indefinite article</i></p>	<p>- A, an</p>	

Hypothesis 3

VARIABLES	DIMENSIONS	INDICATORS
English intermediate learner errors	<p>Grammatical errors:</p> <p><i>Morphological errors</i></p> <p><i>Syntactical errors</i></p> <p>Lexical errors:</p> <p><i>Word Choice errors</i></p> <p><i>Semantic errors</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Articles, noun, pronoun, adjectives, adverbs, prepositions, subject-verb agreement, reported speech, and genitive. - Plurality, third person, genitive, noun, adjective, and adverb formation. - Sentence word order (Subject, Verb, Object, Manner/How?, Place/Where?, Time/When?), and coordination. - misselection and misformation of words. - Sense relation and collocations
Interference of Spanish language (Interlingual)	<p>L₁ Grammar</p> <p><i>L₁ Morphology</i></p> <p><i>L₁ Syntax</i></p> <p>L₁ Lexis</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Articles, noun, pronoun, adjectives, adverbs, and prepositions. - Word formation - Word order and coordination. - Word selection and formation

5 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

English intermediate learners produce errors at different linguistic levels such as phonology, morphology, syntax, and lexis. Error analysis can be applied to both receptive and productive skills. Thus, this research is based on a grammatical and lexical analysis of errors that English intermediate learners of the Department of Linguistic and Languages (UMSA) make in written production. The former involves both morphological and syntactical analysis and the latter involves word choice and semantic analysis.

In addition, it is worth pointing out that English Intermediate learners are the subjects of this study because these students have more grammar and lexical knowledge of English language to express their ideas and to write compositions since written production is used as linguistic corpus. In this sense, in order to carry out a good quality analysis of English Intermediate learner errors, it is worth mentioning that substance errors such as punctuation errors, spelling errors, sound-spelling errors are not taken into account in this research due to methodological reasons. In the same way, discourse errors are not taken into account in the sense that we need to work at discourse level which is not the purpose of this research.

Likewise, in order to get an objective statistical analysis, phrase and clause errors are not taken into account for this purpose since one finds noun phrases inside prepositional phrases and these inside noun phrases. Furthermore, every phrase contains a nucleus or head, a noun heads a noun phrase, an adjective heads an adjective phrase. Therefore, if there is an error on an adjective head, the error could be morphological by definition but a syntax error as well since the head affects the phrase, for example, "I traveled to **interestings* places". Finally, another reason is that we now have a growing number of "functional" ones: determiner phrases, inflectional phrases, quantifier phrases, and so on. Regarding clause errors, these

are not taken into account since these involve whole phrases entering into the structure of clauses.

CHAPTER II THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS

This chapter describes the literature review that supports this investigation. First, we refer to some studies about language Error Analysis that have been developed in different contexts and with different objectives. Next, we explain fundamental theories and essential concepts about second language acquisition and Error Analysis taking into account different points of view. In this perspective, we set up our framework that supports and validates this research.

2 PREVIOUS STUDIES ABOUT ERRORS IN SECOND LANGUAGE LEARNING

Error analysis became an alternative to contrastive analysis at the end of 1960s. In our context, much research that has different objectives has been developed up to now. For instance, (Solíz, 1994) carried out a study which refers to an analysis of errors in the English noun phrase. The objective of this study was to show both professors and students of the university that is possible to explain the errors through the study of interaction of internal and external factors. For this purpose, she used as population students of Linguistics Department (UMSA) and students of the University of Potosí (Tomás Frías), and she arrived at the conclusion that there was not a relative preponderance of interlingual errors.

In addition, (Soruco, 2001) developed another study which refers to an analysis of errors in Spanish verb phrase. The objective of this study was to know the reason that makes students make errors in the Spanish verb phrase. For this study, she used as population school students of the last course of secondary level from the north zone, El Alto, and she concluded that the most common errors were syntactical which were influenced by Aymara language syntax.

Furthermore, (Delgado, 2002) developed a study about frequency and communicative effects of grammar errors in written texts of English intermediate learners. The objective of this was to detect if grammar errors can affect communication in writing language. For this purpose, she worked with intermediate and upper intermediate levels of the Language School CETI which belongs to the Department of Linguistics (UMSA). She concluded that grammar errors might cause difficulty in comprehension of written language. Likewise, (Rodriguez, 2004), carried out another study on error analysis. The objective of this study was to determine if preposition errors committed by intermediate learners were related to first language transference. For this study, she worked with intermediate learners of Linguistic Department (UMSA), and she came to the conclusion that intermediate learner errors are attributable to learners' first language.

In sum, these previous studies provide us some ideas to carry out an investigation about learner errors when using the language, and more important, they provide us with an overview regarding the study of errors in our context. The next section of the thesis presents different theories which support our study.

2.1 LANGUAGE ACQUISITION AND LEARNING THEORIES

2.1.1 Behaviorism

Regarding theories of language acquisition and learning, several theories try to explain this phenomenon. One of these theories is the behaviorist learning theory. This theory is seen as a psychology of the association stimulus-answer where to the measured stimuli and the answers that are given, other events intervene, (Hilgard, 1977).

As for the acquisition of a language, according to (Brown, 2000, p.9) “a behavioristic paradigm is focused on the immediate perceptible aspects of the linguistic behavior -observable responses-, those that can be objectively perceived, recorded, and measured”. In addition, it is focused on the relationship or association among those answers and events in the world that surrounds them. Besides, based on behaviorist learning theory, a behaviorist could consider an affective behavior of the language like the production of a correct answer to a stimulus.

Therefore, if a particular answer is reinforced it ends up being habitual or conditioned. In this way, learners produce answers of linguistic type that are reinforced. However, concepts as consciousness and intuition came to discussion. Consequently, the unreliability of observation of states of consciousness, thinking, concept formation, or the acquisition of knowledge made such topics impossible to examine in a behaviorist framework.

In addition, (Ellis, 1995) maintains that according to behaviorist learning theory, transfer takes place from the first to the second language. On the one hand, transfer is negative when previous learning prevents the learning of new habits, so learners make errors. On the other hand, transfer is positive when the first and second language habits are the same, so learners do not make errors. Thus, differences between the first and second language create learning difficulty which results in errors, while the similarities between the first and second language facilitate rapid and easy learning.

Moreover, Ellis (1995) based on behaviorist theory points out that “errors were the result of non-learning, rather than wrong learning” (p. 22). However, there was a total agreement that errors should be avoided. Then, many comparisons between learners’ mother tongue and their target language were made in order to predict areas of potential error.

In other words, behaviorist theory has to do with the association stimulus-answer where learners' answers are conditioned to certain stimulus. Besides, it is focused on observable responses that can be measured objectively, however, processes such as the state of consciousness, thinking could not be examined. For this reason, we can say that this theory has some limitations to explain the phenomenon of second language acquisition.

Nevertheless, another model that deals with second language acquisition and learning is the Innatist model.

2.1.2 Innatist model

Concerning this model, Krashen cited in Brown (2000) suggested five interrelated hypotheses as for target language internalization. These five hypotheses with their own characteristics are developed in detail below.

1 The Acquisition-Learning Hypothesis

Regarding this hypothesis, second language learners have two means for internalizing the target language. The first is "acquisition", a sub conscious and intuitive process of constructing the system of a language. The second means a conscious "learning" in which learners attend to form, figure out rules, and are generally aware of their own process. In addition, Krashen points out that fluency in second language performances is due to what we have acquired, not what we have learned. Furthermore, Krashen maintains that our conscious learning processes and our subconscious acquisition processes are exclusive. Learning cannot become acquisition.

2 The Monitor Hypothesis

As to this hypothesis, it is important to mention that monitor is involved in learning, not in acquisition. It is a device to have control about one's output, for editing and making alterations or corrections as they are consciously perceived. Besides, Krashen cited in Ellis (1995) argues that monitoring has an extremely limited function in language performance, even where adults are concerned. Then, he refers to three conditions for its use: (1) there must be sufficient time; (2) the focus must be on form and not meaning; and (3) the user must know the rule.

3 The Natural Order Hypothesis

With regard to this hypothesis, Krashen cited in Ellis (1995) has claimed that we acquire language rules in a predictable or natural order. Learners may follow a more or less invariant order in the acquisition of formal grammatical features. In addition, the hypothesis affirms that learners acquire grammatical structures in a predictable order. Thus, when the learner is engaged in natural communication tasks, he/she will manifest the standard order. Nevertheless, when the learner is engaged in tasks that require or permit the use of metalinguistic knowledge, a different order will emerge.

4 The Input Hypothesis

As for this hypothesis, the most important point has to do with the acquirer understanding (via hearing or reading) of the input language that contains structure a bit beyond the current competence level of the acquirer. If a learner is at certain stage or level 'i', the input should contain 'i+1'. In other words, the language that learners are exposed to should be just far enough beyond their current competence so that they can understand most of it but still be challenged to make progress.

Another important point of the input hypothesis is Krashen's recommendation in Brown (2000, p.278), "speaking should not be taught directly or very early in the language classroom. Speech will emerge once the acquirer has built up enough comprehensible input (i+1)".

5 *The Affective Filter Hypothesis*

This hypothesis deals with how affective factors relate to second language acquisition. Krashen points out that the best acquisition will occur in environments where anxiety is low. The filter controls how much input learner is exposed to, and how much input is converted into intake. We say that it is "affective" because the factors that determine its strength have to do with the learner's motivation, self-confidence or anxiety state. Then, learners with high motivation and self-confidence and with low anxiety have low filters and so they obtain and let in plenty of input. However, learners with low motivation, little self-confidence and high anxiety have high filters and so they receive little input. Finally, the Affective Filter influences the rate of development, but it does not affect the route.

Therefore, we can say that Innatist model gives explanation about several significant factors that are involved with the internalization of a target language. It is worth clarifying that some of them are only involved in learning (a conscious process), and some are involved in acquisition (a sub conscious process). For instance, monitor hypothesis is concerned with learning; monitor is a device to control one's output. Besides, learners use this device in both oral and written production. Another important aspect of this model has to do with input. That is, the new language that learners learn should contain structures a bit beyond their current competence or knowledge so that they can progress.

On the other hand, there is another model that is concerned with mental processes in language acquisition and learning that is explained in detail in the next section.

2.1.3 Cognitive Model

Concerning cognitive model, an important characteristic is that language learning refers to several mental processes implied in internalizing and automating the new knowledge of the rules of the target language. In addition, consequent with Gibson cited in Richards (1994, p.), “the perceptive learning consists on the answer to variables of physical stimulation”. This way, the process of learning arises of certain psychological and physiologic particularities.

On the one hand, (Sahakian, 1997) points out some relevant principles of cognitive theory regarding language learning. One of them has to do with the perceptive characteristics of the presented problem since these are important conditions for the learning. The organization of the knowledge should be a primordial concern of the teacher in the educational planning. Besides, learning with understanding is more durable and, at the same time more transferable than learning in writing or learning through formulas. The cognitive “feedback” shows the correct acquisition of knowledge and corrects a faulty learning. In other words, the idea is that learners provisionally attempt something and then, they accept or reject what they made in function of the consequences, and the setting of objectives by learners who are supposed to have an important motivation to learn.

On the other hand, cognitive theory is not only interested in describing language but also in arriving at an explanatory level in the study of language, why a particular event occurs. Then, this theory is not only related to observable responses but also to unobservable language ability, what Chomsky called competence. Thus,

there is a distinction between overtly observable aspects of language and hidden levels of meaning and thought. These levels give birth to and generate observable linguistic performance, Brown (2000). In addition, cognitive psychologists asserted that meaning, understanding, and knowing are significant data for psychological study. Instead of focusing rather mechanistically on stimulus-response connections, cognitivists tried to discover psychological principles of organization and functioning.

In sum, we can say that the main aspect to consider of this theory is that the internalization of the target language is based on several mental processes, psychological principles. Another important characteristic is that the cognitive feedback about learners' production shows the correct acquisition of knowledge and corrects a faulty learning. Moreover, something that is important to take into account is that cognitive theory is not only interested in describing learners' language but also in explaining it, why a certain phenomenon occurs.

In the same way, interaction among learners and the context they study in are relevant factors that are exposed in the following model, constructive model.

2.1.4 Constructivist Model

As for this model, it is based on the social constructivist perspectives that are associated with more current approaches to both first and second language acquisition. These approaches emphasize the dynamic nature of interplay among learners, their peers, their teachers and others with whom they interact. Then, the interpersonal context in which a learner operates takes on great significance, and therefore, the interaction among learners and others is the focus of observation and explanation.

Furthermore, another important point deals with interaction and input that are two major players in the process of acquisition. Interaction refers to the way learners communicate with their peers and input refers to the new language they learn in a

given context. On the other hand, according to Long cited in Brown (2000, p.287), “conversation and other interactive strategies of communication are the basis for the development of linguistic rules”.

Therefore, something essential to take into account of this model is that social interaction is something significant in second language learning process. In addition, language classroom is not seen just as a place where learners with different backgrounds mingle, but as a place where the contexts for interaction are carefully designed. Thus, learners work in a task-based instruction context so that they can interact, participate with their peers producing new language, output.

Another theory that has to do with second language acquisition and learning is Interlanguage theory which is explained below.

2.1.5 Interlanguage theory

Concerning interlanguage theory, it refers to the systematic knowledge of a language that is completely independent of both the learners’ mother tongue and the second language system they are trying to learn. The concept of interlanguage involves the following premises about L2 acquisition (Ellis, 2002):

- 1** The learner constructs a system of abstract linguistic rules that underlines comprehension and production of the second language. In addition, this system of rules is seen as a “mental grammar” and is referred to as an “interlanguage”.
- 2** The learner’s grammar is permeable. In other words, the grammar is open to influence from the outside (e.g. through the input). It is also influenced from the inside, for example: omission, overgeneralization, and transfer errors constitute evidence of internal processing.

- 3 The learner's grammar is transitional. That is, learners change their grammar from one time to another by adding rules, deleting rules, and restructuring the whole system. This results in an **interlanguage continuum**. In other words, learners construct a series of mental grammars or interlanguages as they gradually increase the complexity of their L2 knowledge. For example, initially learners may begin with a very simple grammar where only one form of the verb is represented (for example, "*paint*"), but over time they add other forms (for example, "*painting*" and "*painted*"), gradually sorting out the functions that these verbs can be used to perform.
- 4 Ellis points out that some researchers have claimed that the systems learners construct include variable rules. That is, they argue that learners are likely to have competing rules at any one stage of development. However, other researchers argue that interlanguage systems are homogeneous and that variability reflects the mistakes learners make when they try to use their knowledge to communicate. These researchers see variability as an aspect of performance rather than competence. According to Ellis (2002, p.34), "the premise that interlanguage systems are themselves variable is, therefore, a disputed one".
- 5 Learners employ **learning strategies** to develop their interlanguages. The different kinds of errors learners produce reflect different learning strategies. For example, omission errors suggest that learners are in some way simplifying the learning task by ignoring grammatical features that they are not yet ready to process. Overgeneralization and transfer errors can also be seen as evidence of learning strategies.
- 6 The learner's grammar is likely to fossilize. According to Selinker cited in Ellis (2002, p.34) "only about five per cent of learners go on to

develop the same mental grammar as native speakers". Then, the majority stops some way short. The prevalence of **backsliding** (i.e. the production of errors representing an early stage of development) is typical of fossilized learners. In this perspective, Ellis (2002) states that "fossilization does not occur in L1 acquisition and thus, it is unique to L2 grammars" (p.34).

Therefore, this concept of interlanguage offers a general account of how L2 acquisition takes place. It incorporates elements from mentalist theories of linguistics (for example, the notion of a "language acquisition device") and elements from cognitive psychology (for example, "learning strategies").

On the other hand, Selinker cited in Richards (1994) points out that the term interlanguage refers to the intermediate stages between the native and the target language observable in learner's language. Also, he suggests five processes that take part inside the interlanguage to internalize the learning; language transfer, transfer of training, strategies of second language learning, strategies of second language communication, and overgeneralization of target language linguistic material. In this respect, the interference is one more of the processes of the interlanguage. Likewise, Selinker points out that the learners do not reach a total competition because a continuous interlanguage does not exist, these stop to learn when their interlanguage contains enough rules to communicate. It is then when one opens the way to the fossilization that is not more than the reach of a stage inside of the development of the acquisition of a language.

Concerning language-learner language, this is seen as permeable, dynamic and systematic. It is permeable in the sense that rules that constitute the learners knowledge at any one stage are not fixed, but are open to amendment. Next, it is dynamic because learner's interlanguage is constantly changing. However, he does not jump from one stage to the next, but rather slowly revises the interim systems to accommodate new hypothesis about the target language system. This takes place by the introduction of a new rule, first in one context and then in another, and so on.

Lastly, it is systematic in the sense that the learner does not select haphazardly from his store of interlanguage rules, but in predictable ways. He bases his performance plans on his existing rule system in much the same way as the native speaker bases his plans on his internalized knowledge of the L1 system.

Overall, something relevant to consider of this theory is that Interlanguage is seen as an independent system of both learner's mother tongue and learner's target language. In addition, this new system of the learner can be influenced by internal and external factors. Then, learners have a chance to add rules, to delete them, and restructuring the whole system depending on learning strategies. Besides, some learners grammar tend to fossilize when students think what they have learned is enough to communicate with their peers. That is why, few of learners develop the same mental process as native speakers.

Nevertheless, it is important to consider variability in learners' interlanguage

2.1.5.1 VARIABILITY IN INTERLANGUAGE

Once we described the principles of interlanguage theory, we necessarily have to give explanation about the variability inherent in language-learner language. Ellis (1995) affirms, "Each new rule is slowly extended over a range of linguistic context" (p.75). Therefore, at any given stage of development, the learner's interlanguage system will contain a number of competing rules, with one rule guiding performance on one occasion and another rule on a different occasion. In addition, each interlanguage system contains linguistic forms that are in free variation; that is, forms that are not guided by rules and whose use is not systematic at all. It is important to assert that variability is not only a characteristic of language-learner language, but also it occurs in all language use.

On the one hand, when variability is systematic, it can be explained by means of variable rules which indicate the possibility of alternative forms occurring in different contexts, Ellis (1995). It is necessary to point out that systematic variability is of two kinds: individual variability and contextual variability. The former consists of the variability that can be explained in terms of individual differences to do with such factors as age, motivation, and personality whereas the latter concerns itself with the variable performance that is determined by situational context or determined by linguistic context. Situational context refers to the situation in which the utterance is produced while linguistic context refers to the linguistic environment, the surrounding language.

On the other hand, when variability is non-systematic, it refers to the variation apparent in the haphazard use of two or more alternate forms which exist within the learner's interlanguage, Ellis (1995). Non-systematic variability is of two kinds as well: free variability and performance variability. It is important to consider that not all interlanguage is contextual. In the initial stages it is likely that a fair proportion of the variations is haphazard. That is, the learner possesses two or more forms which he uses to realize the same range of meanings. In order to detect free variation in interlanguage, it is necessary to look at form-function relationships, that is, to investigate which forms are used to express which meanings. Performance variability involves psycholinguistic factors to do with the learner's emotional or physical condition that can lead to slips, hesitations, and repetitions.

As to the role of variability in second language acquisition, Ellis (1995) suggests that variability serves a dual purpose, depending on the nature of the variability. Contextual variability serves as a mirror for viewing the course that subsequent development will take. Free variability serves as the impetus for development, as the learner strives to make his interlanguage system more efficient. In the same way, variability contributes to second language acquisition in two ways. First, there is a spread of rules along the interlanguage continuum, from the careful towards the vernacular style and from simple to complex linguistic environments.

This process is motivated by the learner's need to be socially acceptable and is helped by practice which automatizes rules that initially can be applied only when the learner is attending to his speech. Second, there is the need to make the interlanguage system more efficient by removing free variability. This involves the progressive reorganization of form-function relations and the eventual elimination of redundant forms.

In sum, language use is characterized by systematic and nonsystematic variation. Systematic variation can be explained with reference to both situational and linguistic factors which determine which variants are used where, when and how. One type of non-systematic variation is free variation. Linguistic forms that are initially used in free variation may later be used systematically to convey different meanings. It is essential to consider the role that variability plays in the process of development. Each stage of development consists of the rearrangement of a previous variable system into a new variable system. This takes place in two ways. First, forms that were to begin with available only in one style (e.g. the careful style) move along the continuum so that they can be used in another style (e.g. the vernacular style). Second, there is a constant reshuffling of form-function relationships in order to maximize the communicative effectiveness of the interlanguage system; non-systematic variability slowly becomes systematic. Now, we will go over some explanation about learners' writing skills.

2.2 WRITING SKILLS

Concerning writing skills, we have to state that there are significant fundamentals to consider for a successful writing performance. That is, the abilities learners have to narrate, describe actions, or write formal letters. It is also important to claim that learners acquire and use writing skills through negotiated interaction with real audience expectations, such as in peer group responses. On the one hand, narrative writing refers to the telling of a true or fictional happening. It tells the actions

in chronological order, the order in which they happened. Besides, the narrative has a definite beginning and a definite ending as well as a high point, where the suspense or excitement is greatest. "Early in the narrative, the writer gives the setting, the time and place of the actions"(Houghton). The writer also introduces you to the characters who take part in the story. On the other hand, descriptive writing is based on careful observation by using all of our senses –sight, hearing, touch, smell and taste to write a precise description about a determined subject. Then, the writer has to use specific words to describe a person, place or object so as to get a comprehensible description. Likewise, as to formal letters writing, it is important to state that it is a valuable tool and an essential skill to convey news, to express gratitude, to complain, or to request information.

In addition, it is important to assert that the use of cohesive relationships by using different types of conjunctions in such tasks is essential to get cohesion and coherence in written production. According to Halliday and Hasan cited in Nunan (1993), there are four types of logical relationships in English: additive (marked by conjunctions such as *and*); adversative (marked by words such as *but* and *however*); causal (marked by words such as *because*); and temporal (marked by words such as *firstly*, *then*, *next*).

Therefore, the use of logical connectives is an important aspect in the development of logical thinking in written production to convey factual information clearly and to facilitate comprehension.

From now on, we will go over different models of analysis with regard to second language acquisition.

2.3 MODELS OF ANALYSIS

2.3.1 Contrastive analysis

Contrastive analysis is focused on the description of similarities and differences between two languages and to the problems because of the interferences, this for the divergences that exist between two languages. In this way, contrastive analysis refers to a comparative study of two languages in whichever of the levels (morphological, syntactic, semantic, etc.). The objective to compare languages consists on the parallel description of two or more linguistic systems to each other in opposition relationship, that is to say, a description of similarities and divergences at the same time.

In addition, (Nickel, 1971) points out that the purpose of a contrastive analysis of two languages is the description of a partial grammar. It consists on the sum of the differences between the grammar of the starting language and the grammar of the target language. Besides, he points out that this differential grammar is the center of the didactic programming. "The teacher who has made a comparison of the foreign language with the native language of the students will know better what the real problems are and can provide for teaching them" Lado, R. cited in Ellis (1995, p.23). Likewise, taking into account contrastive analysis foundations, a problem learners have in second language acquisition is the interference of the first language system in second language learning, Brown (2000). He also points out that a scientific, structural analysis of the two languages in question would yield a taxonomy of linguistic contrasts between them which in turn would enable the linguist to predict the difficulties a learner would encounter.

Therefore, Contrastive analysis is a model that aims to determine similarities and differences between two languages to predict possible difficulties for second language learners. What is more, second language learners make many errors that based on contrastive analysis foundations are attributable to the negative transfer of the native language in the learning of the target language. However, Contrastive analysis had some criticism. Ellis (1995) points out that there were doubts concerning the ability of contrastive analysis to predict errors when researchers began to examine language-learner language in depth. Next, there were a number of theoretical criticism regarding the feasibility of comparing languages and the

methodology of contrastive analysis. Finally, there were reservations about whether contrastive analysis had anything relevant to offer to language teaching.

Overall, this model only describes the learners' language and predicts possible errors of second language learners. Nevertheless, errors were not only due to interference of learners' mother tongue but also due to the characteristics of the target language and teaching strategies. That is why, error analysis appeared as an alternative model of analysis.

2.3.2 Error analysis

The analysis of errors consists in the analysis of the most common errors and their respective classification. It has a pedagogic character oriented to the teaching of languages. Consequent with (Corder, 1971), the analysis of errors is a comparative process, and it also refers to the description and the explanation of the errors made for the learners. One of the theoretical objectives of error analysis consists on explaining how the errors take place.

On the other hand, Corder (1971) describes the procedure for error analysis in five steps. First, selection of the corpus where the size and the homogeneity of the sample are taken into account. Next, identification of errors in which the difference between lapses and error is made. After, classification of errors considering the grammatical description of the error is made. Then, explanation of errors in which psycholinguistic aspects are taken into account. Finally, the evaluation of errors where a new contribution for a new teaching methodology is done.

Moreover, Brown (2000) claims that "language learning is like any other human learning" (p.216). That is, language learning involves a process in which success comes by profiting from mistakes and errors, and next by using them to obtain feedback from the environment. In addition, learners use this feedback to make new

attempts when using the target language to get desired goals.

Besides, he adds, “second language learning is a process that is clearly not unlike first language learning in its trial-and-error nature” (p.217). Consequently, learners inevitably make mistakes and errors in the process of acquisition, and this process will be impeded if they do not commit errors. Then, learners will not get any benefit from various forms of feedback about errors they make.

Therefore, errors and mistakes learners make when trying to express their ideas and thoughts in their target language need to be studied and analyzed carefully. According to Corder cited in Brown (2000, p.217), “learners’ errors are significant because they provide to the researcher evidence of how language is learned or acquired, what strategies or procedures the learner is employing in the discovery of the language”. That is why, we clarify the distinction between mistakes and errors in the next section so that we could manage these terms.

2.3.2.1 Mistakes and Errors

It is worth making a distinction between mistakes and errors in order to analyze learners’ language appropriately. On the one hand, Brown (2000) maintains that mistakes refers to a performance error that is either a random guess or a ‘slip’ when learners try to use a known system correctly. Learners make mistakes in both native and second language situations. In addition, mistakes are not the result of a deficiency in competence but the result of some sort of temporary breakdown or imperfection in the process of producing speech. Furthermore, mistakes can be self corrected when learners are able to recognize or realize them.

On the other hand, errors are noticeable deviations from the learner’s grammar of the new language system that reflects the competence of the learner in the target language. Consequent with James cited in Brown (2000), errors can not be self-corrected while mistakes can be self corrected if the deviation is pointed out to the

speaker. In addition, something important to mention is that when we are not sure if we are in front of a mistake or an error, the frequency of a deviant form can help us to determine whether the deviant form is a mistake or an error.

2.4 THE SIGNIFICANCE OF LEARNER'S ERRORS

The errors of the learners are considered from several points of view. Corder (1967) points out that the application of the linguistic and psychological theory to the study of the learning of a language added a new dimension to the discussion of errors because people believed that the errors were the result of the interference of habits of the first language in the learning of the second language. In addition, he adds that in the field of the methodology two schools of thought have existed with regard to the errors of learners. First, the school that emphasize that if we were capable to carry out a perfect method the errors would never be made. The philosophy of the second school is that we live in an imperfect world and consequently the errors will always happen in spite of our best efforts.

On the other hand, Corder (1967) points out that the errors of production, mistakes, characteristically will be nonsystematic and the errors of competition, errors, will be systematic. In this sense, one of the difficulties, which require a sophisticated study and error analysis, is to determine which is an error or mistake of the learner. What is more, apart from affirming that the errors of the learners provide evidence of the system of the language that is using in a particular point of the course, he also tells us that these errors are significant in three ways. First, to the teacher that indicates him in which way the learner has advanced with regard to his goal and what he needs to learn. Then, learner errors provide the investigators evidence of how a language is learned or acquired and what strategies or procedures the learner is using in his discovery of the language. Finally, they are indispensable for the same learner because we can consider the production of errors like a mechanism that the students use in order to learn.

Likewise, Ellis (1995) maintains that errors are an important source of information about second language acquisition because they demonstrate conclusively that learners do not simply memorize target language rules and then reproduce them in their own utterances. Furthermore, errors indicate that learners construct their own rules based on input data, and that in some instances at least these rules differ from those of the target language.

In this perspective, since the language is considered as a system, it is relevant to make an analysis of the language system of the learner. However, several factors can influence and characterize these systems of the learners of a second language. The major factors that tend to influence the approximative system of learners of a second language are the mother tongue influence and the target language causes. Thus, sources of errors are the subject of study in the next section.

2.4. SOURCES OF ERROR

Once we identify errors in the production data of second language learners, the next step of error analysis is to determine the source of error. Sources must be inferred from available data of second language learners so that we can understand how the learner's cognitive processes relate to the linguistic system and to formulate an integrated understanding of the process of second language acquisition. As to sources of errors in second language acquisition, we can mention interlingual transfer, intralingual transfer, context of learning and communication strategies. It is worth mentioning that we only explain what concerns to interlingual transfer and intralingual transfer because of the characteristics and objectives of this study.

2.5 MOTHER TONGUE INFLUENCE; INTERLINGUAL ERRORS

Interlingual errors are produced because of interference of the mother tongue when learners express utterances or expressions in a given situation. Jackson cited

in (James, 1998, p.179) states, “interference happens when an item or structure in the second language manifests some degree of difference from and some degree of similarity with the equivalent item or structure in the learner’s first language”. In addition, there also occasions where learners have L₁ patterns that could be advantageously transferred to the L₂ but they do not exploit this potential. Besides, the main value of L₁ transfer-based diagnosis is that it can lead to the compilation of compact and practical profiles, not of individual learners’ interlanguage, but of the shared characteristics of the interlanguage of a group of learners, a group having the same L₁ or L₂, (ibid, p.180).

Furthermore, Richards (1994) points out that this factor refers to the structures, words that are influenced by the mother tongue of the learners when they make use of the target language. This way, the sentences produced by learners in the target language can show interference of their mother tongue. Moreover, Brown (2000) maintains that interlingual transfer is a significant source of error for all learners. He adds that the beginning stages of learning a second language are specially vulnerable to interlingual transfer or interference from the native language. In these early stages, before the system of the second language is familiar, the native language is the only previous linguistic system upon which the learner can draw.

In sum, one of the major sources for learners’ errors is the learners’ mother tongue that interferes in the process of second language learning. Then, learners when producing utterances in the target language, they take as a resource the rules of their mother tongue. Nevertheless, other errors reflect the transfer of the target language itself, intralingual transfer.

2.6 TARGET LANGUAGE CAUSES; INTRALINGUAL ERRORS

According to James (1998), “the learners in ignorance of a target language form on any level and of any class can set about learning the needed item, engaging

the learning strategies or they can try to fill the gap by resorting to communication strategies”(p.184). In this regard, learning strategies are used for code breaking while communication strategies are encoding and decoding strategies. Both types of strategies can be the source of error.

In the same way, according to Richards (1994), “it refers to the items produced by the learner that reflect not the structure of the mother language, but rule learning generalizations based on partial exposure to the target language”, (p.6). On the one hand, he mentions that the systematic intralingual errors involve overgeneralizations, ignorance of the rule restrictions, incomplete application of rules and semantic errors. On the other hand, the developmental errors illustrate how learners attempt to form hypotheses about English language from his limited experience of it in the classroom or textbook. In addition, he maintains that both the language transfer and the intralingual errors confirm the traditional notion of training transfer; the previous learning can influence the later learning.

Moreover, consequent with Brown (2000), intralingual transfer is a major factor in second language learning. Second language learners make generalizations within the target language to produce new utterances once they have learned some parts of new language system. From now on, we explain some causes for learning strategy based errors such as misanalysis, incomplete rule application and overgeneralization.

2.6.1 Learning strategy-based errors

2.6.1.1 Misanalysis

It refers to the hypotheses that learners form concerning an L₂ item, which they are now putting into practice. The hypothesis is not based on L₁ knowledge at all. For example, students produce sentences such as “*they are carnivorous plants and*

**its (their) name comes from ...*” In this example the false concept in operation is that *its* is the s - pluralized form of *it*, a hypothesis plausible based on target language evidence. What is more, it is important to mention that a false concept is the result of the learners’ misanalysis of the target language.

* *Wrong item or structure*

Besides, this type of development errors derives of a faulty understanding of distinction in the target language, and he mentions that these errors are sometimes produced due to the poor gradation of teaching items, Richards (1994 p.178). That is to say, learners can use incorrect structures and tenses to communicate ideas and thoughts. For example, for a narration they could use the present time which is incorrect. On the other hand, Richards points out that many courses progress is for certain suppositions, for example, contrasts within the language are an essential aid to accelerate the teaching-learning process.

2.6.1.2 Incomplete rule application

It is the opposite of overgeneralization, that is, learners do not apply the correct grammatical rules when producing an expression or an utterance. The strategy here is aimed at simplification rather than attempt to get the appropriate rules. For instance *nobody knew where *was Barbie (Barbie was)*.

Furthermore, consequent with what Richards (1994) affirms, the occurrences of structures of which their deviation represents the degree of development of the required rules to produce acceptable expressions are in this category. For example, in some cases the learners do not make the inversion of the verb to form questions, they just add the question mark to an affirmative expression. Then, the learner’s motivation to end up communication overcomes to the motivation to produce correct grammatical sentences.

2.6.1.3 Overlooking cooccurrence restrictions

It refers to the wrong selection of words which are wrongly assumed, that is, a kind of an oversimplification system. For instance, *I would enjoy *to learn (learning) about America*, caused by ignorance of the fact that the verb enjoy selects a gerundial complement.

This kind of errors is also related to the application of some rules in situations where it is not correct. For Richards (1994), “these are again a type of generalization or transfer, since the learner is making use a previously acquired rule in a new situation” (p.175). He also adds that some errors due to the restriction of rule can be considered by analogy; other instances can result from the rote learning of rules.

2.6.1.4 Overgeneralization

Overgeneralization refers to the application of some rules in different situations or structures where is inadequate. Consequent with Brown (2000), overgeneralization is seen as a process that occurs when second language learners act using their target language. They tend to overgeneralize a particular rule or item in the second language based on previous experience and observations of particular examples of the target language. In addition, Richards (1994) states “overgeneralization covers instances where the learner creates a deviant structure based on his experience of other structures in the target language” (p.174).

Likewise, Ellis (2002) maintains that overgeneralization has to do with the oversuppliance of an interlanguage feature in context in which it does not occur in target-language use (e.g. ‘she eated an apple’). This kind of errors can be explained as extensions of some general rule to items not covered by this rule in the target language. Thus, overgeneralization refers to the incorrect application of certain rules of the new language system by second language learners to form new items and structures in a given situation. Furthermore, it is important to mention that any

system is susceptible to be overgeneralized by learners and it is not just, for example, restricted to grammar or lexis.

2.7 LEVELS OF ERROR

2.7.1 Text error

According to James (1998), “text errors arise from ignorance and misapplication of the “lexico-grammatical” rules of the language, including how these rules are exploited to achieve texture” (141). Besides, it is relevant to know how a unified system called lexico-grammar operates in language. In addition, Widdowson cited in James (1998), points out that texts can come in all shapes and sizes. They can correspond in extent with any linguistic unit: letter, sound, word, sentence, combination of sentences. Besides, he mentions that texts may be spoken or written. He adds that the word text is used in linguistics to refer to any passage, spoken or written of whatever length. Thus, text forms a unified whole and when it does form a unified whole, it is said to have the formal property of texture. In smaller texts, this texture is supplied by their patterns of lexis, morphology and syntax. Larger texts, in addition to using these devices, tend to use sentence-linking or cohesive ties.

2.7.2 Errors in writing

Writing is a skill used in the early stages of language learning in order to aid to the consolidation of this process. In English language learning process, learners make different kind of errors because of the new language system they are trying to master. “Even for native speakers the written form of a language is harder to manipulate effectively than the spoken form”, (Norrish, 1995, p.78)

Furthermore, Norrish (1995) points out that learners should be prevented from making errors in writing by giving them a great deal of guidance in the early stages and not asking them to do exercises which they are not sufficiently prepared for. The appropriate style for a written communication is determined by its context. Besides, students gain confidence in their handling of written language if they practice in using the language in realistic situations.

Moreover, in written communication learners can not use any more additional help in transmitting their message than the language itself. Then, they can not use gestures, facial expressions, stress, intonation and occasional repetition of the utterance which are some methods used in conversations. For this reason, the learner is forced to write a clear and unambiguous text about the information he/she wishes to convey. In this regard, learners have to pay more attention to the language as a code, to the grammatical and lexical systems. "Learners are better motivated when they are given work in a recognizable context" (ibid, p.65).

2.7.3 Lexical errors

According to Leech cited in James (1998) grammar is that part of a language that can be described in terms of generalization of rules while lexis refers to all the particular facts about language that can not be generalized into rules. That is why, lexis has been sharply differentiated from grammar since it said to be organized in "closed" systems, to be systematic and regular.

In addition, James (1998, p.143) affirms, "Lexis takes a central role in language study because of many reasons". First, the boundaries between lexis and grammar are now seen to be less clear. For instance, morphological aspects of words that were treated as part of grammar can be viewed as part of the word: this is true of derivational morphology, whereby words of different form classes can be derived from the same root: adjective *bright* = noun *brightness* = adverb *brightly*.

It is important to make clear that many lexical items consist of more than one word, and have a structure of their own. This is the case of idioms like *pull my leg*, the integrity of which is easily shown by the impossibility of pluralizing the noun. Next, learners believe that vocabulary is very important in language learning. For this reason, it is important to mention that lexical errors tend to be the most frequent category of error for some learning groups. Finally, it is worth pointing out that vocabulary carries a particularly heavy functional load, especially in learning interlanguage. This is so because there is little grammar in such interlanguage and the message often has to be inferred, mainly from the lexical terms assembled for its representation.

2.7.3.1 Formal errors of lexis

1. Formal misselection; It includes errors of the malapropism type. That is, learners select a wrong vocabulary item to produce different utterances in given contexts. This may be because of the similarity with regard to word class, stress pattern, number of syllables or some phonemes in common. In addition, the crucial feature of lexical errors is that a real existed word is used. This substitute resembles the target word in form but not necessarily in meaning, though it might do so accidentally. "The bigger the gap between the semantics of the substitute and the target, the more absurd the malapropism" James, (1998, p.147). The substitute item can be either a target language word or a mother tongue word. For instance:

- He wanted to **cancel* (conceal) his guilt
- It was a **genius* (genuine) diamond

Besides, this type of errors is common where the mother tongue and the target language are cognate, so a difficulty is created by interlingual

similarity instead of facilitating second language learning.

2. Misformations; According to James (1998, p.149) “these are errors that produce ‘words’ that are non-existent in the target language”. These kind of errors can be originated either in the mother tongue or be created by the learner from the resources of the target language itself. For instance, if the mother tongue word is used in the target language with no perception of any need to tailor it to its new code, we speak of **borrowing**:

- He asked to the **conductor* (driver)

In addition, if the new word (derived from L1) is tailored to the structure of the target language, presumably because the learners think there is a trusty friend, we have **coinage**:

- To **massacrate* (massacre) the victim

Finally, if the L2 word created is the result of literal translation of an L1 word, we have a **calque**:

- My mother bought a **sleep suit* (pyjamas)

2.7.3.2 Semantic errors in lexis

1. Confusion of sense relations; James (1998, p.151) points out that Lexicologists describe vocabulary in terms of lexical systems, reflecting the meaning relations existing between words. Lexico-semantic clusterings are referred to as lexical fields. Besides, there is considerable neurolinguistic evidence to suggest that humans store words in the mental lexicon in terms of such sense- relations. It is therefore reasonable to try to categorize lexis

errors by reference to these systems. The major types of errors are:

- a. Using a more general term where a more specific one is needed (superonym for hyponym). The result is an underspecification of the meaning:

- The flowers had a special **smell* (scent/perfume).

- b. Using too specific a term (hyponym for superonym):

- The **colonels* (officers) live in the castle.

- c. Using the less apt of two co-hyponyms:

- ...a *decision to *exterminate* (eradicate) dialects

- d. Using the wrong one from a set of near-synonyms:

- ...a **regretful* (penitent/contrite) criminal or sinner..

2. Collocational errors: According to James (1998, p.152), “collocations are the other words any particular word normally keeps company with”. Therefore, the question is not which word could substitute for this word, but which words typically precede and follow it. There are three degrees of collocation. First, semantically determined word selection: it is right to say *crooked stick* but not **crooked year* because in the world as we know it years cannot literally be crooked. Next, there are combinations with statistically weighted preferences. We can say that an army has suffered *big losses* but *heavy losses* are preferred. Finally, there are arbitrary combinations: *we make an attempt and have a try* but can neither **make a*

*try nor *have an attempt*, despite the synonymy of *attempt/try*.

To sum up, we can say that collocation errors can be intralingual or interlingual. Thus, transfer of L1 collocations leads to interlingual errors of this kind.

2.7.4 Grammar errors

Concerning grammar errors, these involve the study of morphological and syntactical errors learners make when learning and using the target language. “Grammar has traditionally been discussed in terms of morphology and syntax, the former handling word structure, the latter handling structures ‘larger’ than the word”, James (1998, p.154). That is why; some aspects of morphology take part of lexis errors.

2.7.4.1 Morphology errors

Regarding morphology errors, it is important to state that there are five lexical word types in English: noun, verb, adjective, adverb and preposition, James (1998). Then, we can define as a morphology error one which involves a failure in the norm of the target language that has to do with word formation. Some examples of errors in word formation of the word classes mentioned above are the following: *six book**, *aboli*shment (-tion)* are noun morphology errors; **bringed*, *was drink*en (-ing)* are verb morphology errors; *visit me soon *ly* is an adverb morphology error; and a *colourfull*er* scene, an adjective morphology error. However, it is worth clarifying that prepositions do not have morphology.

The kind of errors mentioned above tend to be persistent in learners’ production, but among the most important ones we also have third person singular -s

(*She drink coffee*) that is an aspect of concord and is suffixed to lexical verbs (drinks) and to auxiliaries (has, is, does). Plural -s (*six book*) is less worrying than third person singular -s. “It appears redundant when preceded by numerals and other quantifiers”, James, (1998, p.155). In addition, other significant morphological markers to study are those of Past tense -ed (he work yesterday), progressive -ing (*she is play right now*) and genitive.

2.7.4.2 Syntax errors

As for syntax errors, James (1998) states, “these errors affect texts larger than the word” (p, 156). In this regard, word order and coordination are aspect to study. Consequently, we deal with errors at the level of phrase, clause, sentence and ultimately paragraphs.

2.7.4.2.1 Phrase structure errors

James (1998) maintains that linguists assumed there were as many phrase types as there were lexical word types: Noun Phrases (NP), Verb Phrases (VP), Adjective Phrases (AjP) and Preposition Phrases (PP). Then, this ought to yield five syntactic classes of error, but there are problems. First, the fact that these five phrase types are not discrete entities, since one finds NPs inside PPs and these inside NPs. For example, (**some immatured teenagers*) we do not know exactly if it is a NP with an error in its AjP *some immatured* or an erroneous NP. Second, every phrase contains a head, a noun heads a NP, a verb heads a VP, an adjective an AjP. Therefore, when there is an error on this head the error could be morphological and syntactical. For instance, (*We have no firewood*S*) it is a morphological error by definition but also the error affects to the whole phrase, so we have a syntax error.

2.7.4.2.2 Clause errors

These involve the ways in which phrases -themselves well formed- operate in clauses. While phrase errors involve violations in the internal (or “textual”) relations between parts of phrases, clause errors involve whole phrases entering into the structure of clauses, (ibid, p.157). For example, (**Ronney sent to her a flower*). On the other hand, sentence errors involve the selection and combination of clauses into larger units. In addition, it refers to the coordination and subordination. The former is focused on how clauses and sentences are joined and the latter is focused on how relative clauses are formed and joined as well. Thus, learners produce fragments and run on sentences when using the target language in written production, e.g.

- Tourism brought many negative results. A destroyed coastline.

(Sentence fragments)

- Tourism brought many negative results, such as a destroyed coastline.

(Corrected sentence)

2.7.4.2.3 Word order

Alexander (1995) points out that the meaning of an English sentence depends on the basic word order of an English sentence. Thus, we have to keep in mind the following rules with regard to English language word order.

1. We put the subject before the verb and the object after the verb:

- **Mark** wrote *a poem*

2. Adverbials (How?, Where?, When?) usually come after the verb or after the object:

- Jhonny wrote a letter **quickly**. (How?)

- Emily waited **at the corner**. (Where?)

- My partner bought an umbrella **yesterday**. (When?)

3. The basic word order of a sentence that is not a question or command is usually:

Subject verb object adverbials

How? Where? When?

My friends washed their clothes slowly in my house yesterday.

4. We also put the time reference at the beginning:

- **Yesterday**, my uncle bought a computer.

2.7.4.2.4 Coordination

When we say or write something, we often want to put together two or more clauses of equal importance. We do this by using a coordinating conjunction such as but, and, nor, or, then, and yet, (Collins Cobuild, 1993). In addition, we use coordinating conjunctions to link words and group words.

- My sister opened the door **and** got out.
- She asked me if she could borrow my bicycle **but** I refused.
- Jane likes domestic animals such as dogs **and** cats.

Alexander (1995) adds that we keep the basic word order in a compound sentence, but when the subject is the same in all parts of the sentence, we do not usually repeat it:

- Jimmy fell off his bike, but (*he*) was unhurt

However, we usually repeat the subject after *so* and always after *for*.

- We rarely stay at hotels, **for we** can not afford it

2.7.4.3 The articles: *a/an*, and *the*

An article is seen as a word that is put next to a noun to indicate definiteness. According to Eastwood and Mackin (1994, p.128) the indefinite articles (***a/an***) and the definite article (***the***) are used in the following situations:

1. We use ***a/an*** only with singular countable nouns e.g.

- There is ***a*** man and some girls in the water.

a/an = one a man = one man

It is important to state that ***a, an*** are used when we do not have a previous reference, that is, an item or a word not mentioned before. We also use ***a, an*** in the following situations:

a. We use ***a/an*** before a noun saying what a person's job is.

Then, we can not leave out ***a/an***, e.g.

- Mr. Marlone is ***a*** writer and Mrs. Stein is ***an*** artist.

b. We use ***a/an*** before a noun of nationality, e.g.

- He is ***an*** Englishman and she is ***an*** American.

However, we can also use an adjective to give a person's nationality, e.g.

- He is English and she is American.

c. We use ***a/an*** before nouns which say what a person believes in, e.g.

- He is ***a*** Catholic and his friend does not believe it.

2. We use **one**, not a/an, when we are interested in number, e.g.
- There is only **one** hotel in this town. (Not two or three)

3. We use **the** with countable nouns (singular and plural) and with uncountable nouns e.g.

a. We use **the** before nouns already mentioned, e.g.

- **The** man is swimming, but **the** girls are not.

b. We use **the** before nouns that refer to unique things in the world, e.g.

- **The** sun is shining

c. We use **the** when it is clear that the speaker is talking about one special thing e.g.

- **The** beach is visited by many people

(We know which beach)

d. We do not use **the** before an uncountable noun with a general meaning, e.g.

- Meat is expensive = all meat

e. But we use **the** before an uncountable noun with a limited meaning, e.g.

- **The** meat at our supermarket costs a lot.

f. We do not use **the** before the names of people, continents, countries, lakes, mountains, cities, towns, villages, streets, parks, bridges and buildings other than hotels, museums etc. e.g.

- This is Mrs. Wood
- England is a small country
- We stayed in New York

But we use **the** before plural names referring to a whole family, plural place names, the names of rivers, canals, seas, the names of theatres, cinemas, hotels, museums, galleries and phrases with of, e.g.

- **The** Lawsons are sociable.
- This package is from **the** United States
- Emily lives near **the** British Museum

2.7.4.4 Noun

A noun is a word which refers to people, things, and abstract ideas such as feelings and qualities (Collins Cobuild, 1993). In order to explain in a detailed way, nouns are classified according to whether they have a plural form, whether they need a determiner on front of them, and whether they occur with a singular verb or a plural verb when they are the subject of the verb.

1. **Count Nouns**

These nouns refer to people or things which can be counted. We can put numbers in front of them. In addition, they have plural forms and need determiner, e.g.

- Carol bought a **book** yesterday.
- My aunt gave me *three* **books** this morning.

2. **Uncount nouns**

Some nouns refer to general things such as qualities, substances, processes, and topics rather than to individual items or events. These nouns have only one form, are not used with numbers, and are not usually used with the determiners 'the', 'a', 'an', e.g.

- Animals need **food** and **water** to survive.
- **Intelligence** is a quality that some students have.

3. Singular nouns

There are certain things in the world that are unique. There are other things which we almost want to talk about one at a time. This means that there are some nouns, or more often some meanings of nouns, for which only a singular form is used. They do not have plural form and need determiner, e.g.

- The **moon** is clear tonight.

4. Plural nouns

There are some things which are thought of as being plural rather than singular, so some nouns have only a plural form. Other nouns have only a plural form when they are used with a particular meaning, e.g.

- My uncle bought some **goods** last week.
- Take care of your **clothes**.

5. Collective nouns

There are a number of nouns in English which refer to a group of people or things. They have only one form, but many collective nouns have other meanings in which they are count nouns with two forms. When we use a collective noun, we can use either a singular verb or a plural verb after it. In addition, we choose a singular verb if we think of the group as a single

unit, and a plural verb if we think of the group as a number of individuals, e.g.

- Our **family** is not poor any more.
- My **family** are perfectly normal.

6. Proper nouns

When we refer to a particular person, we can use their name. Names are usually called proper nouns. People's names are spelled with a capital letter, and do not have a determiner in front of them. However, sometimes a person's name can be used to refer to something they create. We can refer to a painting, sculpture, or book by a particular person by using the person's name like a count noun, e.g.

- **Jhon** is writing a poem.
- In those days, you could buy a **Picasso** for \$300

2.7.4.5 Pronoun

When we use language, both in speech and writing, we constantly refer to things we have already mentioned or are about to mention, Collins Cobuild (1993, p.28). Furthermore, a pronoun is a word used instead of a noun, when we do not want to name someone or something directly.

There are several different types of pronoun.

1. Personal pronouns

We use personal pronouns to refer to yourself, the people we are talking to, or the people or things we are talking about. There are two sets of personal pronouns: subject pronouns and object pronouns.

Subject pronouns are used to refer to the subject of a clause. ***I, you, he, she, it*** (*singular*) and ***we, you, they*** (*plural*), e.g.

- *I* do not know what to do.
- Mary came in. ***She*** was a good-looking woman.

Object pronouns refer to the same sets of people or things as the corresponding subject pronouns. ***Me, you, him, her, it*** (*singular*) and ***us, you, them*** (*plural*), e.g.

- The nurse washed ***me*** with cold water.
- The children asked Simon if he would give ***them*** some money.

2. Possessive pronouns

When we are talking about people or things, we often want to say in what way they are connected with each other. There are different ways in which we can do this, but we most often do it by using a possessive pronoun to indicate that something belongs to someone or is associated with them. ***Mine, yours, his, hers*** (*singular*) ***ours, yours, theirs*** (*plural*).

- Is that coffee yours or ***mine***?
- It was his fault, not ***theirs***.

3. Reflexive pronouns

When we want to show that the object or indirect object of a verb is the same person or thing as the subject of the verb, we use a reflexive pronoun. Unlike personal pronouns and possessive pronouns, there are two forms of the reflexive pronoun used for the second person. ***Myself,***

yourself, himself, herself, itself (*singular*) and **ourselves, yourselves, themselves** (*plural*). We use 'yourself' when we are talking to one person. You use 'yourselves' when you are talking to more than one person, or referring to a group which includes the person you are talking to, e.g.

- All of us shook hands and introduced **ourselves**.
- Here is the money, you can go and buy **yourself** a watch.

4. Demonstrative pronouns

When '**this**', '**that**', '**these**', and '**those**' are used as pronouns, they are called demonstrative pronouns. They can be used as the subject or the object of a clause, or the object of a preposition. Demonstrative pronouns are rarely used as the indirect object of a clause, because the indirect object is usually a person and demonstrative pronouns normally refer to things, Collins Cobuild (1993, p.35).

- **This** is a list of the rules.
- **Those** are easy questions to answer.

5. Indefinite pronouns

When we want to refer to people or things but we do not know exactly who or what they are, or their identity is not important, we can use an indefinite pronoun. An indefinite pronoun indicates only whether we are talking about people or about things, rather than referring to a specific person or thing, (ibid, p.36), e.g.

- I was there for over an hour before **anybody** came.
- Jack was waiting for **something**.

6. Relative pronouns

When a sentence consists of a main clause followed by a relative clause introduced by '**who**', '**whom**', '**which**', or '**that**', these words are known as relative pronouns. Relative pronouns do two things at the same time. Like other pronouns, they refer to somebody or something that has already been mentioned. At the same time they are conjunctions, because they join clauses together, e.g.

- I know some mathematicians **who** are concerned with very difficult problems.
- That is the house in **which** I was born.

7. Interrogative pronouns

One way of asking questions is by using an interrogative pronoun. They are '**who**', '**whose**', '**whom**', '**what**', and '**which**'. They can be used as the subject or object of a clause, or as the object of a preposition. In addition, '**whose**' and '**which**' can also be determiners. Other words such as '**where**', '**when**', '**why**', and '**how**' can also be used to ask questions. However, they are not used as the indirect object of a clause, e.g.

- **Who** was at the door?
- **Which** came first, the chicken or the egg?

2.7.4.6 Preposition

A preposition is seen as a word which opens up the possibilities of saying more about a thing or an action because we can choose any appropriate noun group after it as its object, Collins Cobuild (1993, p.296). Most prepositions are single words, although there are some that consist of more than one word, such as '*out of*' and '*in between*'. However, many prepositions can also be adverbs, that is, they can be used without an object.

1. **Prepositions of position**

Prepositions of position indicate the place where an action occurs, or the place where someone or something is, (*above, around, at, behind, between, down, in, near to, on, under, up, upon, etc*) e.g.

- She kept her picture **on** her bedside table.
- The whole play takes place **at** a beach club.

2. **Prepositions of direction**

Prepositions of direction indicate the place that someone or something is going to, or the place that they are moving towards, (*along, at, away from, from, near, out of, to, towards, etc*) e.g.

- I am going with her **to** Australia.
- He saw his mother running **towards** him.

3. **Prepositions of time**

Alexander (1995) adds an explanation about prepositions of time: '*at*', '*on*', '*in*', e.g.

- We use **at** for: exact time: *at ten o'clock*; meal times: *at lunch time*; points of time: *at night*; festivals: *at Christmas*; age: *at the age of 14*; + time: *at this/that time*.
- We use **on** for: days of the week: *on Monday, on Mondays*; parts of the day: *on Monday morning*; dates: *on June first*; particular occasions: *on that day*; anniversaries: *on your birthday*; festivals: *on New Year's Day*.

- We use **in** for: parts of the day: *in the evening*; months: *in May*; years: *in 2005*; seasons: *in (the) spring*; centuries: *in the 20th century*; periods: *in Ramadan, in two years' time*.

2.7.4.7 Adjectives

One way of giving more information within a noun group about people or things is by the use of an adjective. Adjectives can be used as modifiers of a noun or as complements of a link verb, Collins Cobuild (1993, p.62). Types of adjectives are explained below.

1. **Qualitative adjectives**

Qualitative adjectives identifies a quality that someone or something has, such as '*sad*', '*pretty*', '*small*', '*happy*', '*healthy*', '*wealthy*', etc. In addition, these adjectives are gradable, which means that the person or thing referred to can have more or less of the quality mentioned. For this purpose, we can use submodifiers such as *very* and *rather* or comparative and superlative forms.

- Yesterday, I met a **pretty** girl in the park.
- The desk my father bought is very **small**.

2. **Classifying adjectives**

Classifying adjectives are the other main type of adjectives that we use to identify the particular class that something belongs to. These adjectives are not gradable. In addition, adjectives that indicate nationality or origin, are also classifying adjectives. They start with capital letter because they are related to names of countries.

- Jhon told me that he had **abdominal** pains.
- I talked to **American** citizens in the party

3. Color adjectives

When we want to say what colour something is, we use a color adjective such as *green, black, yellow, purple, white, red, and orange*. In addition, if we want to specify a colour more precisely, we can use a submodifier such as *light, pale, dark, deep, or bright*, in front of a colour adjective.

- George bought a **brown** jacket last week.
- My friend has *bright* **blue** eyes

4. Emphasizing adjectives

We can emphasize your feelings about something that we mention by putting an adjective such as *complete, absolute, and utter* in front of a noun. We generally use an adjective of this kind only when the noun indicates our opinion about something. They are used to show strong feelings.

- He made me feel like a **complete** idiot.
- Some of it was **absolute** rubbish.

5. Attributive adjectives

Attributive adjectives are always or almost always used in front of a noun and are never or rarely used as the complement of a link verb, e.g.

- I saw an **atomic** explosion.

However, we do not say:

- The explosion was **atomic**.

6. Predicative adjectives

Predicative adjectives are normally used only as the complement of a link verb and not in front of a noun, e.g.

- She felt **glad**.

However, we do not say:

- She is a **glad** woman.

Comparative and Superlative adjectives

We can describe something by saying that it has more of a quality than something else does or than anything else of its kind, Collins Cobuild (1993, p.87). We do this by using comparative adjectives. Only qualitative adjectives usually have comparatives and superlatives, but a few colour adjectives also have them. On the one hand, comparatives normally consist of the usual form of the adjective with either **'-er'** added to the end, as in *'smaller'*, or **'more'** placed in front, as in *'more interesting'*. On the other hand, superlatives consist of either **'-est'** added to the end of an adjective and **'the'** placed in front of it, as in *'the smallest'*, or of **'the most'** placed in front of the adjective, as in *'the most interesting'*.

Alexander, (1995) adds that we use the comparative when comparing one person or thing to another, and superlative when comparing one person or thing with more than one other, e.g.

- We add **-er** and **-est** to form the comparative and superlative of one syllable adjectives and some two syllable adjectives:

Clean – cleaner - the cleanest

- Adjectives like *hot, big, fat, sad, and wet* double the consonant:

Hot – hotter - the hottest

- Adjectives like *nice, fine, large, late, and safe* add **-r, -st**.

Nice – nicer - the nicest

- With adjectives like *busy* we use **-l** in place of **-y**.

Busy - busier - the busiest

- Some two-syllable adjectives like *happy, clever, common, narrow, pleasant, quiet, simple, and stupid* have two comparative or superlative forms, either with **-er/more** or **-est/the most**.
 - She is *cleverer* than you.
 - She is *more clever* than you.
- Therefore, we use **more/the most** with most two-syllable adjectives: *careless, correct, famous, etc.*
- We use **more/the most** with three-syllable adjectives:
 - *more beautiful, the most beautiful.*

2.7.4.8 Adverbs

Consequent with Eastwood and Mackin (1994, p.167) we use an adverb to give more information about *how, where, when, how often* something happens:

1. We use **adverbs of manner** to say *how* something happens, e.g.
 - The children walked home **quickly**.
2. We use **adverbs of place** to say *where* something happens, e.g.
 - Mr. Smith is going to have lunch **here**.
3. We use **adverbs of time** to say *when* something happens, e.g.
 - You can speak to him **then**.
4. We use **adverbs of frequency** to say *how often* something happens

- They usually come on Sundays.

5. We use **adverbs of degree** to make the meaning of an adjective, adverb or verb stronger or weaker, e.g.

- I had to get up **really** early.

6. We use **sentence adverbs** to refer to a whole sentence and show what the speaker thinks about the sentence, e.g.

- **Maybe** I will come and see you.

7. Some adverbs are like prepositions without a noun phrase after them. They are **prepositional adverbs**, e.g.

- The Browns were not **in**.

Comparative and superlative adverbs

When we want to say how something happens or is done in relation to how it happens on a different occasion, or how it was done by someone or something else, we do this by using adverbs in the comparative or superlative, Collins Cobuild (1993, p.289), e.g.

- He began to speak **more quickly**.

- For me, Haitink is the conductor who re-writes those maps, most often and **most** convincingly.

2.7.4.9 Subject-Verb Agreement

When we use a singular noun as the subject of a verb, we use a singular form of the verb. When we use a plural noun as the subject of a verb, we use a plural form of the verb, e.g.

- **The atmosphere is** very relaxed.
- **Refreshments were** on sale in the snack bar.

When we use an uncountable noun as the subject of a verb, we use a singular form of the verb.

- **Electricity is** potentially dangerous

When we use a collective noun, we can use either a singular verb or a plural verb after it. We choose a singular verb if we think of the group as a single unit, and a plural verb if we think of the group as a number of individuals.

- **Our family is** not poor any more.
- **My family are** perfectly normal.

When we want to talk about groups of people who share the same characteristic or quality, we often choose an adjective rather than a noun as a headword by using the appropriate adjective preceded by 'the'. We do not add '-s' to the headword, even though it always refers to more than one person. When the adjective being used as headword is the subject of a verb, we use a plural form of the verb, e.g.

- **The rich have** benefited much more than the poor.

2.7.4.10 Reported Speech

There are different ways of reporting what people say or think.

One way of reporting what someone has said is to report their actual words, a quote structure, e.g.

- *'I do not know much about music,'* Judy said.

When we report people's thoughts, we almost always use report structures, because thoughts do not usually exist in the form of words, so we can not quote them exactly, Collins Cobuild, (1993, p.314). Report structures can be used to report almost any kind of thought. In addition, we indicate that we are quoting or reporting what someone has said or thought by using a reporting verb. Every reporting clause contains a reporting verb, e.g.

- He *answered* that the price would be three dollars.

- I *suggested* that it was time to leave.

We can also report a question that people ask or wonder about. When we report a question, we do not treat it as a question by using interrogative word order and we do not use a question mark, e.g.

- 'Do you know my name?' a woman asked

A woman asked if I knew her name.

If someone orders, requests, or advises someone else to do something, this can be reported by using a *'to'- infinitive clause* after a reporting verb such as 'tell'. The person being addressed, who is to perform the action, is mentioned as the object of the reporting verb, e.g.

- Jhonson told her *to wake* him up

- My doctor advised me *to see* a neurologist

Time reference is relevant in report structures. Whatever the tense of the reporting verb, we have to put the verb in the reported clause into a tense that is appropriate at the time that we are speaking, (ibid, p.327). That is, if we use a report structure to report what someone has said, the word we use to refer to

things must be appropriate in relation to ourselves, the time when we are speaking, and the place in which we are speaking. The words we use may be different from the words originally spoken, e.g.

- 'I washed my clothes *yesterday*,' Jill said

Jill said he had washed his clothes *the previous day*.

2.7.4.11 Genitive

We use the genitive form of a noun to show possession. That is, we use (**'s**), (**s'**) before the noun it refers to. We use the possessive form with persons to show that something belongs to somebody or that something is for somebody, Eastwood & Mackin (1994, p.122), e.g.

1. With singular nouns, we use an apostrophe + s, (**'s**) e.g.

- That is my *brother's* watch.

2. With plural nouns we put an apostrophe after the s, (**s'**) e.g.

- Is that a *girls'* school or a *boys'* school?

3. With irregular plural nouns that do not end in -s/-es

we use an apostrophe + s, (**'s**) e.g.

- There is a *children's* playground in the park.

Of used instead of the possessive form

1. We normally use **of** instead of the possessive form before the name of the thing. We use it to show that something

(e.g. *the bank*) belongs to or is part of another thing

(e.g. *the river*), e.g.

- There were people picnicking on *the bank **of** the river*.

2. We also use **of** instead of the possessive for with people when the noun has a phrase or clause after it which describes the noun, e.g.

- We could hear the voices **of the children playing in the water**.

Alexander (1995) adds an explanation about the use of ´s and s' with non living things.

1. We use ´s and s' with fixed phrases, e.g.

- The *earth's* surface, the *ship's* company

2. We use ´s and s' with singular time phrases, e.g.

- an *hour's* journey, a *day's* work

3. We use ´s and s' with plural time phrases, e.g.

- two *hours'* journey, two *months'* salary

CHAPTER III METHODOLOGY

3 DESIGN OF THE STUDY

This chapter explains the methodology used to collect the data to accomplish our objectives and to prove our hypotheses stated in chapter one. On the one hand, the present investigation belongs to a descriptive study since what we want to achieve with this is to determine the kind of errors English Intermediate learners predominantly make in written production. Regarding this point, (Tamayo, 2000) maintains that descriptive investigation works on reality facts, and its fundamental characteristic is to present a correct interpretation. In addition, (Hernández, 2003) mentions that the purpose of the investigator is to describe situations and events, that is, to say how it is and how a certain phenomenon occurs.

On the other hand, it is relevant to point out that this research ends with an explanation about the main source for English intermediate learner errors because we describe learner errors in relation to particular aspects of second language acquisition, interlingual and intralingual interference. With regard to this point, Hernández (2003) points out that the purpose of explanatory investigations is to answer to the causes of determined events and social phenomena. In addition, another characteristic of this type of study is to explain why a phenomenon occurs

and in what conditions. Likewise, an explanatory study as stated in Méndez (2001) is based on the identification and analysis of the causes (independent variables) and their results, those that are expressed in observable facts (dependent variables). In this sense, we took into account all these appreciations on the type of investigation as fundamental concepts to carry out this research.

3.1 POPULATION

Concerning population, “it is the entirety of the phenomenon to study where the units of the whole population share some characteristic that we study and give origin to the data of the investigation”, Tamayo (2000, p.113). In this regard, the subjects of investigation are both male and female university learners of the fifth semester (intermediate level) of English language of the Department of Linguistic and Languages (UMSA) from La Paz city. It is worth mentioning that the data gathering for this research was conducted in the first semester of 2005. Therefore, we established the whole population in this period since the number of English intermediate learners (level 5) varies each semester, approximately from 60 to 70.

On the one hand, the reason for making this selection was that courses of English language at this level provide learners the knowledge and reinforcement of the four learning skills so that they can use English language to communicate ideas and thoughts appropriately. On the other hand, the common characteristics that these learners possess are that all of them are studying English as foreign language and have Spanish language as mother tongue. This is the language English intermediate learners use to communicate themselves outside the classroom. It is for such reasons that the data we obtained from these learners have been useful and valuable to study, categorize, and describe both grammatical and lexical errors in

learners' narrative, descriptive and formal complaint letter writings, and at the same time to relate them to particular aspects of second language acquisition.

3.2 SAMPLE

As to the sample, Hernández (2003) states, "the sample is in essence, a subgroup of the population". In other words, the sample should have the same characteristics to the other ones of the population from which was extracted so that we could have in this way a representative sample. This is so because the information that we obtained as well as the results of the investigation are generalized for the whole population.

However, it is worth pointing out that the number of learners of the fifth semester of English language (intermediate level) in the first semester of 2005 was exactly 57. For this reason, we decided to work with the entire sample in order to have precise and reliable data. Consequently, we used "census technique" for the present research. Regarding this technique (Méndez, 2001) maintains that the object of census is to study all the elements of the population.

In this respect, we took into account all learners of intermediate level for this investigation. There were three different courses of this level in the first semester of 2005. It is also important to state that the number of learners of each course varied:

level V A = 18 learners

level V B = 22 learners

level V C = 17 learners

3.3 INSTRUMENT

In order to gather data and to study learner errors in written production we used “**open production writing**”. In other words, learners had to write a composition on a certain topic and later the sample elicited studied or analyzed. The sample obtained by asking learners to write on a topic is representative of other possibilities as completing tests since this instrument allows learners to express what they want to communicate in an authentic task, and what is more important, they make use of the target language at their own pace and language resource. As for compositions, (Isabel Santos, 1993) points out that this instrument provides a data corpus to make general characterizations as the learner has the opportunity to avoid some structures which he is not sure of. That is why; we designed two different types of compositions in order to have a significant and large amount of data of learners’ written production. Consequently, we obtained a precise and reliable data to analyze English intermediate learner errors in detail and to achieve the objectives of this research.

3.4 INSTRUMENT DESIGN

It is worth mentioning that the instrument was designed taking into account the context which the learners are in because learners are motivated in writing when they have to write on topics in a recognizable context. In other words, the choice of topics is based on the context and familiarity learners have about them as well as the scope of the different topics so that learners can write as much as possible. In addition, we considered that we had to apply the instrument two times, at the beginning and at the end of the first semester in 2005. Therefore, we designed two different tasks to collect data in order to have an example of a different genre and to obtain a precise and reliable data. Each task had two possibilities.

On the one hand, the first one was about a narrative about their best/worst vacation they had in their life or a description about environmental pollution in our city. On the

other hand, the second one was about writing a formal letter complaining about classroom infrastructure or language resource center.

3.5 PILOTING OF THE INSTRUMENT

In order to make the instrument format and vocabulary understandable, we piloted the instrument before applying it to intermediate learners. Then, we asked some learners of this level to read the instructions of each task and to tell us if they had understood them or not so that we could clarify the instructions in the case that learners had had some doubts about them. In addition, we asked intermediate learners for some opinions and comments about the two different tasks in order to contextualize them better. Thus, we obtained enough feedback about the instrument design to write the final copy so that it can be applied to learners of fifth semester of English language for data gathering.

3.6 INSTRUMENT VALIDITY

Concerning validity of an instrument, Hernandez (2003) points out that it refers to the extent in which an instrument really measures the variable that intends to measure. In addition, in order to clarify this aspect he refers to three types of validity, content validity, criterion validity, and contrast validity. Therefore, we analyze each one of these types of validity with regard to the instrument we applied in order to make it valid.

Content validity

Content validity refers to the extent in which an instrument reflects a specific mastery of the content of what is measured. In addition, a measurement instrument requires including, practically, to all items of the content mastery of the variables to be

measured. Thus, taking into account the previous definition, the instrument we applied is valid because it aims to provide a considerable data of intermediate learners written production in order to analyze grammar and lexis errors based on the whole aspects or indicators stated in the operationalization of variables.

Criterion validity

Criterion validity establishes the validity of a measurement instrument comparing with an external criterion. In addition, this criterion is a standard with which we judge the validity of an instrument. Then, if the relation of the results of the measurement instrument with the criterion is higher, the criterion validity will be higher. In this regard, we designed the instrument based on the theoretical framework that supports this research in order to value the results of the instrument. Therefore, the theoretical framework of this research supports the validity of the instrument that we applied to intermediate learners.

Construct validity

Construct validity refers to the extent that a measurement is consistently related to other measurements in accordance to hypotheses with theoretical base and related to the concepts that we are measuring. In this way, we can say that the process of construct validation is closely related to the theories that support the research. Thus, the instrument we designed aimed to measure variables of the hypothesis stated in the first chapter in accordance with theoretical bases of second language learning.

3.7 INSTRUMENT RELIABILITY

Concerning reliability of an instrument, Hernández (2003) maintains that we get the reliability of a measurement instrument when we apply it two times or more to the same subject or object of study and produces the same or similar results. In

addition, reliability of an instrument is determined by using different techniques of statistics. Besides, depending on the objectives of the study, different formulae are used to get reliability coefficients.

However, it is necessary to mention that we worked with the whole population, census technique. That is, we applied the instrument to all learners of the fifth semester of English language. Although we applied two times the instrument, the objective was not to compare them but to get a precise and a reliable data. Furthermore, something to emphasize is that the results we obtained are parameters to come to conclusions about the whole population with regard to grammar and lexis errors made by English intermediate learners in written production. For this reason, we are able to state that the application of this instrument was highly reliable.

3.8 DATA GATHERING PROCEDURE

Concerning to this aspect, this section is seen as the operative expression of the investigation design and the concrete specification of how we develop the investigation, Tamayo (2000, p.120). In such a sense, once the instrument was designed, piloted and reviewed, the instrument was applied to the three courses of English V (intermediate level) with the previous permission of the teachers of these courses.

Therefore, all the learners of the fifth semester of English language (intermediate level) of the Linguistic and Languages Department (UMSA) wrote two different types of compositions. The instrument was applied two times, at the beginning and at the end of the first semester 2005. It was applied in their own classrooms so that learners could feel confident to write as much as they can about the two different tasks and to obtain a reliable data. The first time, learners wrote a composition on topics detailed in the previous section in approximately 25 minutes

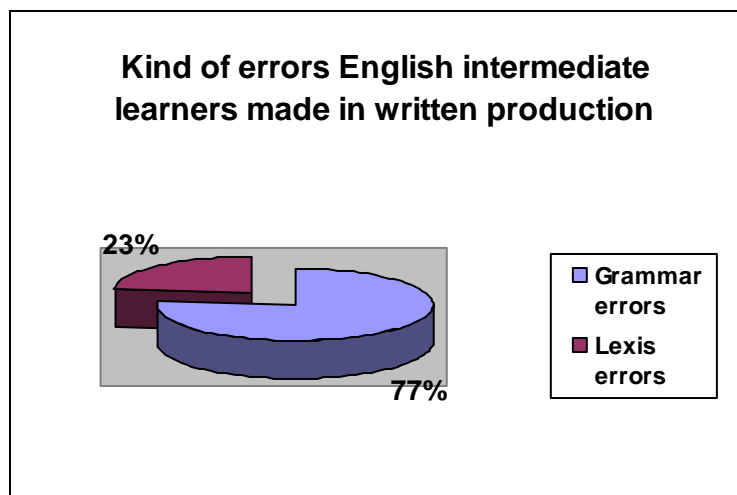
and the second time learners wrote a letter on topics detailed previously in approximately 25 minutes, too.

4 DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

Once we applied the instrument, '*open writing production*' (free compositions and letters writing); we carried out the quantitative and qualitative analysis of the data. On the one hand, regarding quantitative analysis, it is worth stating that the statistical analysis is based on 107 samples that were analyzed in detail. Consequently, the number of errors made by English intermediate learners is 435. On the other hand, concerning qualitative analysis, the error analysis was carried out taking into account the objectives of the research. That is, it was focused on grammar and lexis errors; identification, categorization, and description of English intermediate learner errors in relation to their source. We also mention other kind of errors made by English intermediate learners in written production

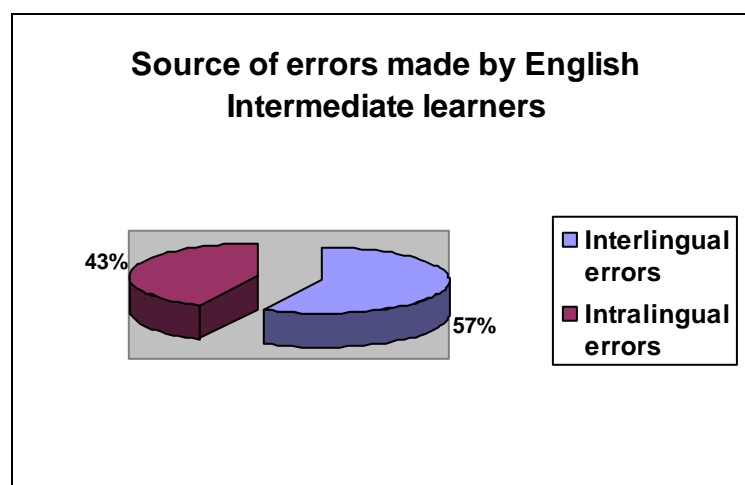
4.1 QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS

Graphic 1



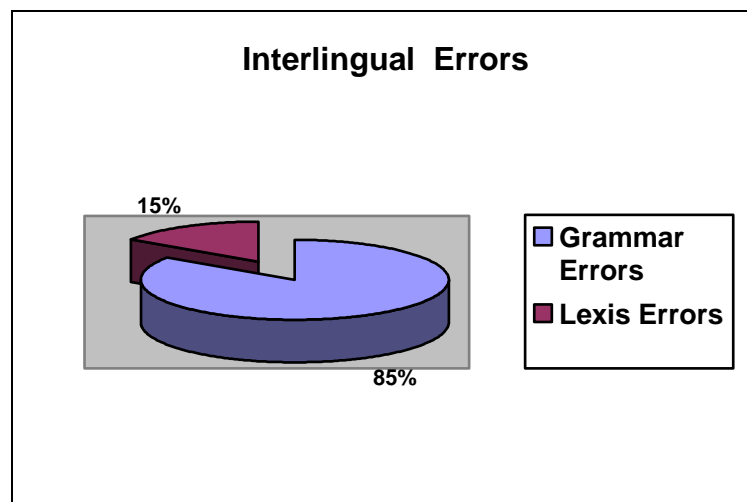
This graph shows the kind of errors English intermediate learners make in written production. Thus, we can observe clearly that 77% of errors is grammatical and 23% is lexical. Therefore, we can say that grammar errors are more frequent than lexis errors in English intermediate learners' written production.

Graphic 2



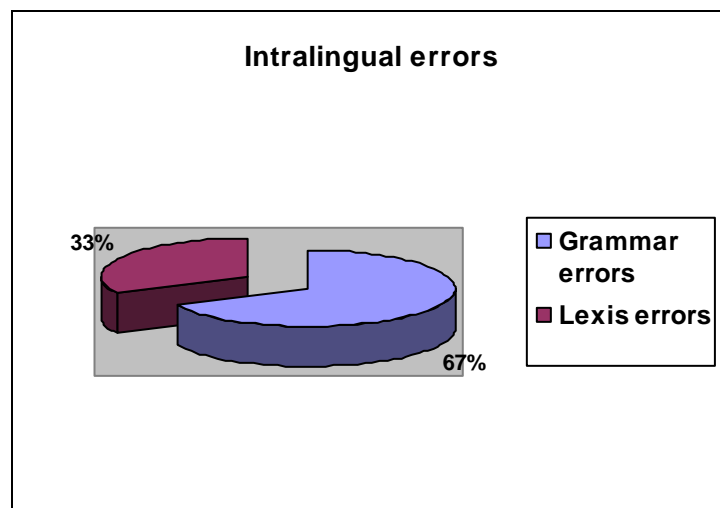
The chart above shows the source of errors made by English intermediate learners. In this way, we could notice that 57% of errors is because of interlingual interference and 43% because of intralingual interference. Then, we can assert that Spanish language interference is the main source for most errors that intermediate learners made in written production.

Graphic 3



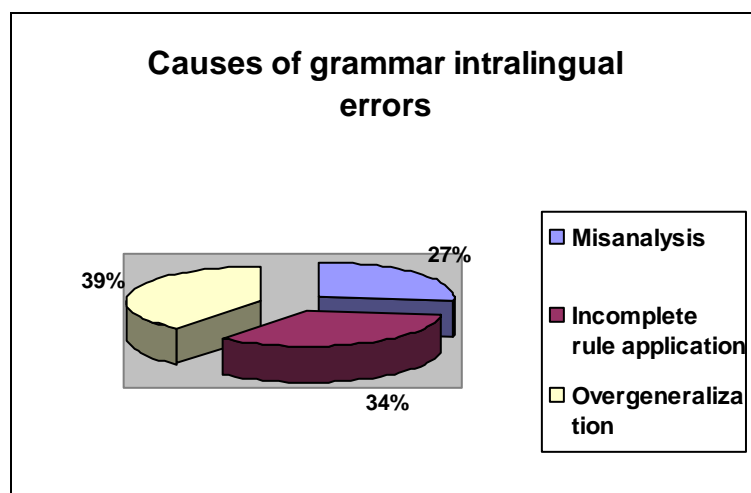
This diagram shows interlingual errors. Thus, we can see that 85% of interlingual errors is grammar errors and just 15% of interlingual errors is lexis errors. Therefore, with regard to the next graphic we can see that grammar errors are more influenced by interlingual interference than intralingual causes.

Graphic 4



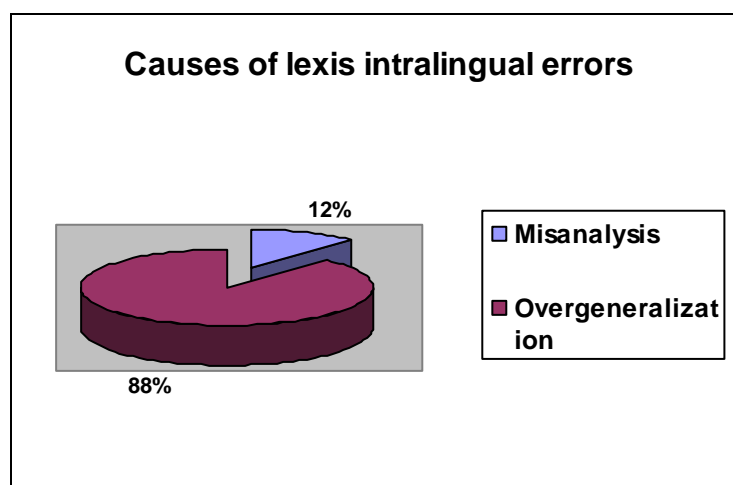
In the same way, this chart shows that 67% of intralingual errors is grammar errors and 33% is lexis errors. Then, with regard to the previous graphic representation and this chart, we can notice evidently that lexis errors are more influenced by intralingual causes than interlingual interference.

Graphic 5



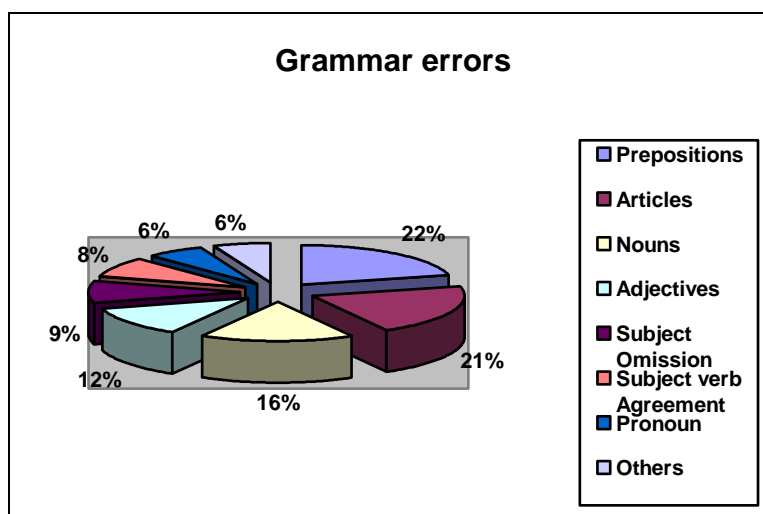
With reference to grammar intralingual errors, this chart shows the causes of grammar intralingual errors. In this respect, we are able to observe noticeably that 39% of grammar errors is because of overgeneralization, 34% because of incomplete rule application, and 27% because of misanalysis. Then, overgeneralization is the main source for intralingual grammar errors.

Graphic 6



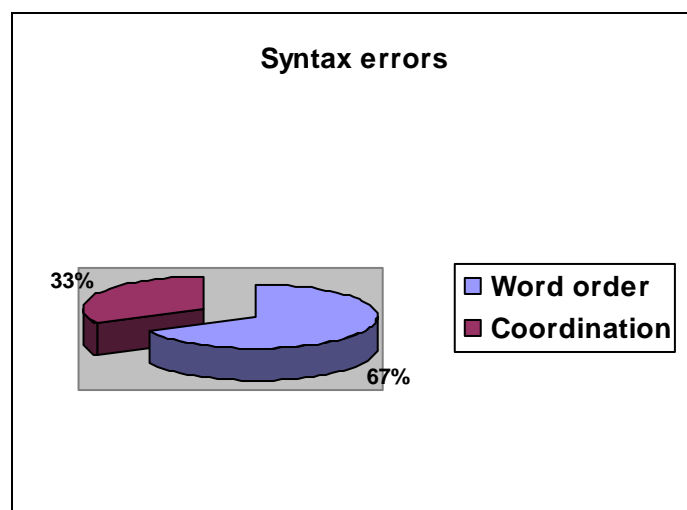
Likewise, this graph shows the causes of lexis intralingual errors. In this case, we notice that 88% of lexis intralingual errors is because of generalization and 12% because of misanalysis. Then, overgeneralization is the main cause for lexis intralingual errors as well.

Graphic 7



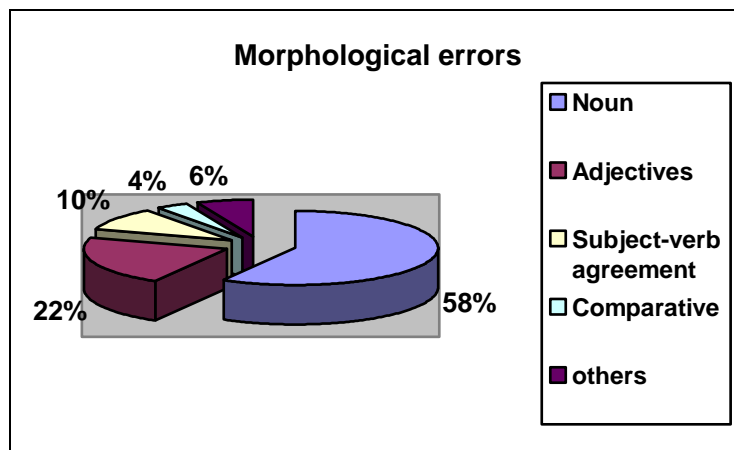
Regarding frequency of grammar errors, 22% of grammar errors is prepositions, 21% of errors articles, 16% nouns, 12% adjectives, 9% subject omission, 8% subject verb agreement, 6% pronoun and the rest 6% refers to reported speech, comparative, superlative, adverb and genitive. Therefore, the main grammatical categories that show bigger frequency of errors are prepositions and articles.

Graphic 8



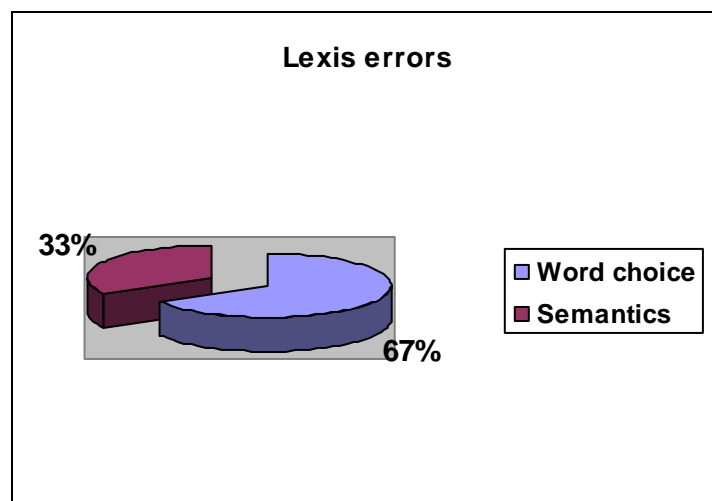
Similarly, with regard to frequency of syntax errors, we observe that 67% of syntax errors is related to word order, and 33% of errors is related to coordination. Therefore, we can see that most of syntax errors intermediate learners made have to do with the basic word order of English sentences.

Graphic 9



This graph shows the frequency of morphological errors made by English intermediate learners in the different grammatical categories. Thus, we can see that 58% of morphological errors has to do with noun formation, 22% of errors with adjective formation, 10% with subject-verb agreement, and 4% with comparatives. Then, we can state that intermediate learners have more problems in noun and adjective formation.

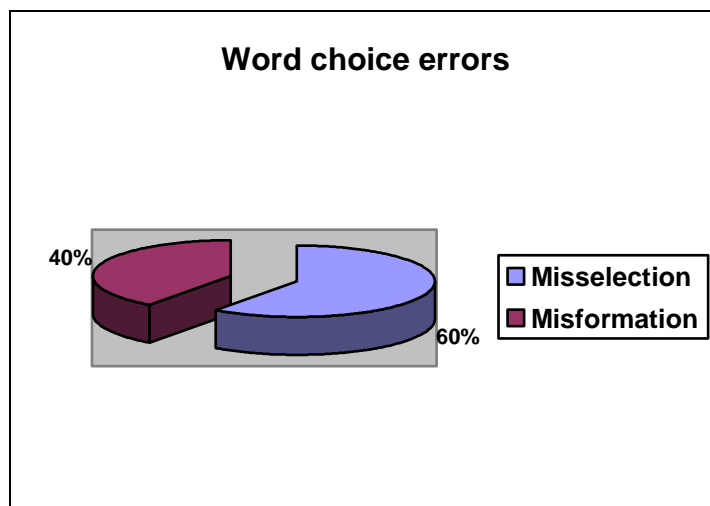
Graphic 10



This graphic representation shows the frequency of lexis errors made by English intermediate learners. Thus, we can see that 67% of lexis errors has to do with word choice and 33% of errors has to do with semantics. Then, we can state

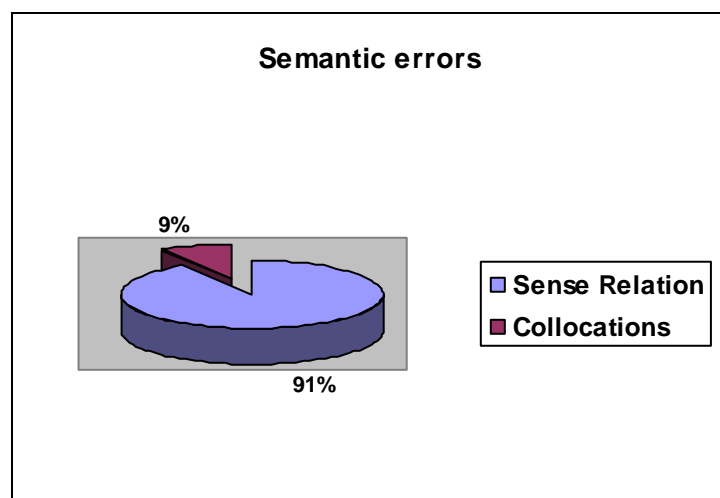
that intermediate learners have some problems in selecting the correct word for the correct situation.

Graphic 11



With reference to this graph, it shows word choice errors made by English intermediate learners. We observe clearly that 60% of these errors is due to misselection of a word and 40% of errors is due to misformation of a word. Therefore, we can assert that intermediate learners have some trouble in selecting the correct item for the correct context.

Graphic 12



Concerning semantic errors made by English intermediate learners, 91% of these errors is sense relation and 9% is collocation. Therefore, intermediate learners have some problems with the exact meanings of some words that are applied for specific contexts.

4.2 QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS

Once developed the statistical description of errors made by English intermediate learners and the statistical analysis of them in relation to the main source, in this section, we interpret and analyze the results in the previous section. For this purpose; first, we analyze grammar and lexis errors; next, we analyze the source for these errors (interlingual and intralingual), and we also mention other kind of errors that English intermediate learners made in written production.

4.2.1 GRAMMAR ERRORS

Regarding grammar errors, we are able to claim that English intermediate learners predominantly make grammar errors in written production. That is, intermediate learners make both morphology and syntax errors in different grammatical categories such as prepositions, articles, nouns, and adjectives (see graphic 7). The main source for grammar errors is interlingual interference. In other words, most of grammar errors of English intermediate learners are influenced by the mother tongue, Spanish. For instance:

a. "...when I traveled the bus crashed ***with** a minibus..."

b. "***The** last August I stayed alone in my house because my

family went to a little town...”

- c. “...the problem was that my friends decided to go to three
***museum...**”

In the first example, there is an error in the use of preposition (**with*) instead of *into* which is the correct one. In addition, this error shows that there is an interference of Spanish language, an interlingual error. In the second example, we can notice that the definite article (**the*) is used in a context where is not necessary. Besides, this error is an interlingual error because of the interference of Spanish language, too. In the third example, there is a noun morphology error (**museum*) because plural –s is needed after the numeral. This is also a noun phrase error because the word (**museum*) is part of this phrase. Therefore, it is a syntax error as well.

- d. “... people was very friendly and ***intelligents.**”

- e. “...When I was to the language resource center, I didn’t
find *one* ***book important...**”

- f. “In addition, rooms are always dirty, you should see ***its.**”

In example (d), on the one hand, there is no subject verb agreement, and on the other hand, there is an adjective morphology error because of Spanish language interference. A different example, (e), shows us that there is a syntactical error. In other words, the word order in the adjective phrase is wrong. In addition, we have to mention that that it is an interlingual error, Spanish interference. Finally, in example (f), we notice an intralingual error, misanalysis, because there is a wrong use of the pronoun (**its*). In this regard, we can infer that the learner assumes that the plural form of the object pronoun ‘*it*’ is ‘**its*’, which is wrong.

4.2.2 LEXIS ERRORS

Concerning lexis errors, we are able to point out that word choice errors are more frequent than semantic ones. (see graphic 9). It is important to mention that word choice errors involve misselection and misformation while semantic errors involve sense relation and collocation. For example:

- a. "We *take* a drink, because the *weater* was warm.
Finally, my ***travel** was the best."
- b. "In my opinion this pollution isn't enough important for the government and for this reason it will continue for ***many** time in our city,..."
- c. "First, we met in buses ***terminal**, I arrived late but I met to my friends..."

In the first example (a), there is a misselection of the word (*travel) for this context, word choice error. The learner assumed that this word could act as a noun for any context. Therefore, this is a false concept hypothesis error, an intralingual error. Example (b), refers to an overgeneralization by the learner in the use of the word (*many). The learner assumed that this word could be used with both count nouns and noun count nouns. Then, it is an intralingual error again. However, the error in example (c) (*terminal) is a borrowing of Spanish language, a misformation error. Therefore, this is an interlingual error.

- d. "Everyday, La Paz is being ***contaminated**, But I think this is due to lack of education."
- e. "In my opinion, the government ought to put a lot of trash

***containers** and...”

- f. “...I think the cleaners don’t clean the classroom never,
and this classroom isn’t ***comfort** because...”

In a different example, (d), we observe that there is a sense relation error, a semantic error. The word (**contaminated*) is not the correct for this context; the correct one is ‘polluted’ since we are talking on environment. In addition, this is an interlingual error, Spanish language interference. Likewise, in example (e), we have another error of sense relation because the word (**containers*) is not the correct for this context but it clearly shows Spanish language interference. It is worth mentioning that for this kind of errors is necessary a good interpretation of what learners wanted to express. Finally, we have an intralingual error in example (f) because there is a word choice error, misselection of the word (**comfort*) in the sense that we need an adjective (*comfortable*).

4.2.3 INTERLINGUAL ERRORS

English intermediate learners make errors because of interlingual and intralingual interference. Interlingual errors are produced by interference of learners’ mother tongue, Spanish language, when using the target language in a given situation. In this respect, we found out that mother tongue interference influence more to grammar errors than lexis errors (see graphic 3), e.g.

- a. “***The** last January I went to Peru for my vacation, when I
arrive to Puno I saw...”
- b. “***The smoke** of the cigarettes ***cause** cancer and brain
damage...”

- c. "I think that ***O** is important and necessary that we as young people teach other people."

In the first example (a), we observe noticeably the addition of the definite article (**the*) that shows negative transfer of Spanish language, interlingual error. In example (b), there is no subject-verb agreement. In addition, the learner uses Spanish structure. In example (c), there is subject omission. It is an interlingual error as well because it shows the use of Spanish structure.

- d. "...in the morning it was bored but finally I arrived ***to** Cochabamba city and I arrived January 6th."

- e. "These activities are ***necessaries** for people jobs and..."

- f. "Although, you have to create the same ***assignature** with different time."

As to example (d), we can see a wrong use of preposition (**to*) that is due to interlingual interference, translation from Spanish into English. In example (e), there is an adjective morphological error because of interlingual interference because in Spanish we pluralize adjectives. Finally, in the last example, we have a word choice error, misformation, as the learner tries to create a word based on Spanish language vocabulary (*asignatura*).

4.2.4 INTRALINGUAL ERRORS

English intermediate learners also make intralingual errors which are not produced by interference of the mother tongue. They are produced because of some learning strategies that learners use in second language learning. That is, the use of

strategies such as overgeneralization, incomplete rule application and misanalysis, e.g.

- a. “For all these ***reason** I ask you to take into account...”
- b. “...we returned to the hotel, we were ***here** a moment, then we went to dance...”
- c. “It is very difficult to understand teacher’s words ***at** the blackboard, and...”

In the first example (a), we can see a noun morphological error (**reason*) that has to do with the singular/plural formation of the noun. Even though the learner wrote the plural demonstrative adjective ‘these’, he forgot to add morpheme ‘s’ to the noun ‘reason’. Then, it is an intralingual error because of incomplete rule application. In addition, in example (b), the learner uses reported speech to narrate an event. However, we observe an incomplete rule application because the learner changed the tense of the verb but not the adverb (**here*). Therefore, this is an intralingual error as well. In example (c), there is an overgeneralization that has to do with the use of preposition (**at*) when this precedes to the word ‘blackboard’. Thus, we can deduce that the learner used this preposition based on previous exercises in English learning.

- d. “...Then around ***at** 1:00 afternoon we went to ...”
- e. “We have a big ***problems** with the language resource center...”
- f. “One of the most ***danger** environmental pollution because they work with...”

Likewise, in example (d) the learner assumes that time is always preceded by preposition (**at*) despite of using another preposition before. Then, it is a case of overgeneralization as well. With regard to example (e), we can deduce that the learner assumes that article (**a*) always precedes to adjectives despite of plural form of the noun. Therefore, it is an intralingual error because of overgeneralization. Finally, in the last example, we see a word choice error, misselection of the noun (**danger*) used instead of an adjective (dangerous).

4.2.5 OTHER LEARNER ERRORS

Analyzing intermediate learners' writings, we found different types of errors that are not part of our study but important to mention. Among these types of errors, we have errors such as punctuation errors, spelling errors, sound spelling errors, and parallelism, e.g.

a. "there were a lot of trees, plants and **fruts*"

b. "the **wether* was very hot"

c. "I had many **frends* when I visited..."

Concerning these examples, we can notice sound spelling errors. We are able to state that the cause of these errors is phonological because learners wrote these words (**fruts/fruits, *wether/weather, and *frends/friends*) as they are pronounced, that is, they are influenced by the pronunciation of each word.

d. "...that is, to say that we do not have facilities **wich* are **necessary* and useful to learn second language."

e. "People were friendly and the food was different because all

meals always had yucca and other things but these type of foods are very **delisious.*”

f. “...because we need some comfortability *to read* or **listening* some...”

With reference to example (d), we can observe a sound-spelling error as well. However, in example (e), we have a case of spelling error where the learner uses letter ‘*s’ instead of letter ‘c’ in the word delicious. To finish, we have an example of parallelism error because the learner, first, uses an infinitive form and next a progressive form after a noun (*comfortability).

4.3 VALIDITY AND REALIBILITY OF THE RESULTS

In order to support the results of this research, it is very important to make sure that they are valid and reliable. Thus, we can demonstrate that the process of analysis of errors made by English intermediate learners was exhaustive and serious. Therefore, we are able to affirm that the results of this research are unquestionably valid and reliable because of the following reasons.

On the one hand, regarding quantitative analysis we have already stated that we worked with the whole population. That is, the instrument was applied to all English intermediate learners to get enough, precise and consistent data. Consequently, it was not really necessary to obtain reliability coefficients or frequency intervals because the results we got are parameters, results that are highly reliable for this research.

On the other hand, concerning qualitative analysis, first, we did an in-depth analysis of the compositions written by English intermediate learners in order to identify, categorize and describe learner errors in relation to their source. This

process was based on a taxonomy designed in accordance with the theoretical foundations that support this research. Next, in order to make our data analysis completely reliable, we made use of “inter-rater reliability”. That is, we analyzed learners’ compositions with native speakers of English language. In this respect, we worked with Harrie Venn Tiffany from the United States of America, Florida and Nathan Johnson from Australia (two professional BA linguists) who reviewed and identified errors in the learners’ compositions. After they finished their analysis, we discussed about the errors made by English intermediate learners and we came to the same conclusions. For instance, they stated that sometimes a good interpretation was needed to understand what they wanted to express. In addition, they stated that sometimes vocabulary, lexical errors interfere more than grammar errors for a misunderstanding of the message. On the whole, we confirmed that native speakers identified the same errors that we identified in our analysis. Therefore, the reliability of our study increases.

4.4 GENERAL FINDINGS

Based on the quantitative and qualitative analysis, this research has found out that English intermediate learners make more grammar errors than lexis errors in written production at this level. In addition, we are able to state that English intermediate learners produce more errors due to the fact that the mother tongue (Spanish) interferes in their written production. However, it is worth mentioning that the degree of percentage of interlingual errors is not very high with respect to intralingual errors. (See graphic 2)

Furthermore, concerning to syntax, in the analysis of errors made by English intermediate learners we found out that learners have some problems with the basic

word order of English sentences, and coordination. In other words, English Intermediate learners tend to write fragments and run on sentences in written production. We also found out that learners do not use parallelism in written production. Another important finding with regard to lexis is that learners tend to use translation from Spanish into English language to find the appropriate word for a given situation.

Finally, regarding source of errors, another significant finding is that the main source for grammar errors is interlingual interference while the main source for lexis errors is intralingual. Therefore, we can claim that the mother tongue (Spanish) interferes more in the use of the different grammatical categories, word order and coordination whereas learning strategies such as misanalysis, incomplete rule application, and overgeneralization are the main source for word choice errors and semantic errors.

4.5 EVALUATION OF ENGLISH INTERMEDIATE LEARNER ERRORS

As we have seen in the qualitative analysis, English intermediate learners make different kind of errors with regard to grammar and lexis. In addition, we have established the main source for grammatical and lexical errors made by English intermediate learners in written production. With this in mind, we evaluated English intermediate learner errors according to the criteria of comprehensibility in the sense that communicative competence is the main objective of teaching English language at the Department of Linguistics and Languages.

Intelligibility

It refers to the accessibility of the basic, literal meaning, the propositional content encoded in an utterance or sentence. In this regard, after an exhaustive error analysis that we carried out about errors made by English intermediate learners in written production, we observed that most of the statements they produced were intelligible. However, it is worth mentioning that sometimes a good interpretation of what the learners wanted to express was necessary. It is worth stating that native speakers confirmed these affirmations. They asserted that the message intermediate learners wrote in their compositions and letters was understandable. In addition, they pointed out that lexical errors interfered more in communication.

Communicativity

Communicativity involves access to pragmatic forces, implicatures and connotations. In this way, we can claim that intelligibility has to do with text and communicativity with discourse. In addition, James (1998) maintains that we are right to insist on the intelligibility of learners' language, in terms of its textual well-formedness, and we should always welcome communicativity when we see it, but we should realistically admit that we can not demand it. Therefore, we can affirm that learners' compositions are acceptable in terms of their textual well-formedness, however we can not make sure anything about communicativity since we did not work at discourse level.

CHAPTER IV CONCLUSION

The results obtained from both qualitative and quantitative analysis of the data of the research permitted us to draw general conclusions about grammar and lexis errors made by English intermediate learners of the Department of Linguistics and languages (UMSA) in written production. In fact, the results we got in the data analysis allowed us to accomplish the objectives of this research stated in Chapter one.

On the one hand, we could determine the kind of errors, grammatical or lexical, English intermediate learners predominantly make in written production. Consequently, according to the data analysis, we can claim that English intermediate learners predominantly make grammatical errors in written production. That is, they

are facing more difficulties with the use and internalization of new grammatical rules of the new language system, English language. Subsequently, learners' weaknesses have to do with word formation, word order and the use of right items such as prepositions and articles in a correct situation. In addition, we could identify the grammatical categories that show higher frequency of errors in written production. With reference to this, according to the data analysis, we can affirm that prepositions and articles are the grammatical categories that show higher frequency of errors in relation to the other ones. (See graphic 7)

On the other hand, we could identify the main source for English intermediate learner errors, interlingual or intralingual. In this regard, based on the data analysis, we can assert that the main source for English intermediate learner errors is interlingual interference. That is, English intermediate learners use the mother tongue, Spanish language, as a resource when they do not know some vocabulary, grammatical structures, and the use of grammatical categories or otherwise they use it subconsciously in written production. Nevertheless, it is significant to emphasize that learners' mother tongue, Spanish, interferes more in grammar learning of English language than in lexis. In other words, the main source for English intermediate lexis errors is intralingual interference. Likewise, based on the detailed analysis carried out about these kind of errors we could prove our hypothesis stated for this research in chapter one.

HYPOTHESIS CONFIRMATION

Based on previous investigations, literature review, and observations, learners make errors at different linguistic levels such as grammatical and lexical ones which were studied in this research. In addition, learners make errors because of interference of the mother tongue, intralingual interference, communication strategies and classroom situation. However, interlingual and intralingual interference are the

ones that influence learners' production in a higher proportion. For this reasons, we stated the following hypotheses in this research.

- English intermediate learners of the Department of Linguistic and languages at (UMSA) predominantly make grammatical errors in written production.

As to this hypothesis, after a detailed analysis of the data and results we obtained, we are able to affirm that English intermediate learners predominantly make grammatical errors in written production, (77%). (See graphic 1). That is, grammatical errors such as wrong use of articles, adjectives formation, subject-verb agreement, wrong word order and coordination show higher frequency in learners' written production.

- Preposition and article errors show higher frequency in written production of English intermediate learners.

Regarding this hypothesis, according to the exhaustive analysis we carried out, we are able to state that prepositions and articles are the grammatical categories that show higher frequency of errors, (22%) and(21%) respectively. (See graphic 7). That is, learners have more problems when using English prepositions and articles in written production.

- The main source for English intermediate learner's errors in written production is Spanish interlingual interference.

With regard to this hypothesis, consequent with the results we obtained after an extensive analysis, we are able to assert that the main source for English intermediate learner's errors is interlingual interference (57%). That is, most English intermediate learner errors in written production reflect the interference of their mother

tongue. However, it is worth mentioning that the difference is not high with respect to intralingual interference. (See graphic 2). Thus, we proved the three hypotheses of this research according to both qualitative and quantitative analysis of the data.

FRAMEWORK FOR ERROR TREATMENT

Learning a second language involves a conscious process by which a language other than the mother tongue is learnt by internalizing the rules of the new language system. Therefore, acquiring grammatical and lexical accuracy through a variety of techniques becomes a crucial aspect to have communicative competence. As Ramirez (1995. p. 126) points out, “grammar is an essential feature of language instruction and it might be approached in terms that link language forms and meaning.” It is also important to emphasize that learners should be made aware of the major organizing principles of language. This in such areas as the kinds of grammatical marking devices (use of affixes, word order); means for connecting sentences to make a distinction between main, coordinating, and subordinate clauses; the use of appropriate lexical terms (word choice, collocations); and the use of discourse markers (substitution, conjunction) to obtain a unified text.

In consequence, second language acquisition is not an easy task, so learners make different kind of errors in written production. Furthermore, it is essential to make learners get communicative competence in using English language since it is the objective of English language teaching at the Department of Linguistics and Languages. Moreover, teachers need to be aware that in second language learning process, learners construct transitional grammars that permit them to systematize the already acquired knowledge and form hypothesis about some morph-syntactic rules and how the new language system works.

On this basis, one of the purposes of doing Error Analysis is to identify the principles which should guide effective error correction. Thus, English learner errors

are considered as significant evidence that learning is taking place. Then, English teachers have to keep in mind that correction of learner's errors should involve for learners to add new knowledge by the reformulation of the previous hypothesis.

Consequent with Ramirez (1995), "teachers' corrective feedback on learner errors is seen as a way to provide students with useful information necessary to modify their transitional, developing grammatical systems."(p.138). Then, students need to be assured that feedback on errors is not an indication of failure. It is worth arguing that error correction does not necessarily lead to student improvement in accuracy levels. However, learners play an important role in the development of grammatical and lexical accuracy since both aspects of linguistic competence require a significant level of personal participation and commitment. In this regard, error correction is a critical issue that affects instructional practices. Nevertheless, some teaching behaviors, such as overt corrections, questions, repetitions and expansions, may not be effective unless most students are psycholinguistically ready for such feedback.

With this in mind, we have to point out that there are different techniques for error correction, but the technique to choose depends on the kind of errors learners make. In addition, it is worth stating that the same technique might not help to all learners in the same way. In this respect, we can mention some error correction techniques such as error correction in groups, editing, and observation cards. To conclude, we want to propose a model of observation card to register, categorize, and identify the source of learner's errors in order to prepare and organize tasks so that learners could overcome that stage of their interlanguage and improve accuracy in their production.

<i>Error</i>	<i>Error</i>	<i>Error</i>	<i>Error</i>	<i>Error</i>
<i>identification</i>	<i>Category</i>	<i>subcategory</i>	<i>source</i>	<i>correction</i>
				<i>technique</i>

e.g.

“***The** last august I stayed alone in my house because...”

With reference to this model, we apply it following some steps. First, we identify the errors made by learners (**the*). Next, we categorize them in the correct linguistic level (*grammar error*). After, we subcategorize learner errors (*article*). Then, we identify the source for learner errors (*interlingual*). Finally, we decide the technique we will use to correct learner errors so that they can overcome those errors. In this case, we could use editing technique where learners have to edit an article, composition or essay by identifying errors related to articles use and correcting them.

To conclude, it is worth pointing out that there some considerations as to error correction as the one stated by Walz cited in Ramirez (1995) who proposed four basic considerations to keep in mind when correcting learner errors:

1. Comprehensibility. Correct first those errors that interfere with understanding (meaning).
2. Frequency. Correct the most frequently occurring errors in a consistent manner.
3. Pedagogical forms. Correct those errors that reflect misunderstandings or inadequate learning of current classroom instruction.
4. Individual student concerns. Treat errors according to the learner’s abilities and reaction to feedback. Some students

profit more than others with correction of errors in language forms. Others should only be corrected on errors related to meaning.

Similarly, James (1998) suggests some principles to be considered when correcting errors. First, the use of correction techniques that brings about improvements in learner's written production accuracy and the use of techniques that are efficient. However, we have to consider that the relative effectiveness of different feedback types will depend on individual differences and on some group factors such as the learners' level of attainment in the foreign language. Next, the crucial point is that correction should be non-threatening. That is, teachers should not embarrass the learner when correcting errors.

Then, they should make use of non-threatening forms of correction such as self-correction or any sort of correction that appears to be self-initiated. Finally, another principle we have to consider is that of matching error correction techniques to students' preferences. In other words, we have to establish students' preferences for certain types of error correction techniques. As compositions are seen as a form of language practice, learners might expect teacher's focus on accuracy. Therefore, correction should be functional and content oriented.

Suggestion for ongoing research

English intermediate learners produce errors at different linguistic levels such as phonology, morphology, syntax, and lexis. Error analysis can be applied to both receptive and productive skills. In this regard, this research is based on a grammatical and lexical analysis of errors that English intermediate learners of the Department of Linguistic and Languages (UMSA) make in written production. The former involves both morphological and syntactical analysis and the latter involves word choice and semantic analysis.

Therefore, this research has been an advance as to error analysis of learners' second language, in particular with regard to grammar and lexis because of the implication we have referred to throughout this study.

On this basis, we can apply Error analysis to any of receptive or productive skills. In other words, we can study learners' second language from different points of view, different criteria, and at different levels; for instance, we may analyze learners' oral speeches, written tasks at discourse level with regard to grammaticality or block of communication. Similarly, we could analyze phrase errors, spelling errors, sound spelling errors, parallelism or other studies that mean a progress in this field. As we have shown, there is still a lot to explore, investigate and analyze in second language acquisition.

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APPENDIX A

WRITING TASKS

APPENDIX B

DATA ANALYSIS CHART

Data Analysis

	Number and Source of Errors	Free Composition	Letter	Number of errors		Source		Inter-lingual	Intra-lingual	Misanalysis	Incomplete Rule Application	Overgenera- lization		
				#	%	#	%							#
GRAMMAR ERRORS	Article	56	27	83	20.85	58	30.05	25	12.19	3.86	3.38	4.83		
	Adjective	33	16	49	12.31	13	6.73	36	17.56	2.89	2.41	12.07		
	Adverb	1	3	4	1	1	0.52	3	1.46	0	0.96	0.48		
	Preposition	59	25	84	21.10	43	22.28	41	20	7.73	2.89	9.18		
	Noun	40	25	65	16.33	5	2.59	60	29.26	4.35	18.35	6.28		
	Pronoun	13	12	25	6.28	3	1.55	22	10.73	6.28	1.44	2.89		
	S.V. Agreement	19	14	33	8.29	33	17.09	0	0	0	0	0		
	Subject Omission	22	13	35	8.79	35	18.13	0	0	0	0	0		
	Reported speech	9	0	9	2.26	0	0	9	4.39	0	4.35	0		
	Comparative	5	3	8	2	2	1.03	6	2.92	0.48	0.48	1.93		
	Superlative	1	1	2	0.5	0	0	2	0.97	0.96	0	0		
	Genitive	0	1	1	0.25	0	0	1	0.48	0	0	0.48		
			258	140	398	71.45	193	55.14	205	99.03				
		Syntax												
		Word order	65	42	107	67.29	105	66.87	2	100	0	0	0.96	
	Coordination	30	22	52	32.70	52	33.12	0	0	0	0	0		
		95	64	159	28.54	157	44.85	2	0.96					
	Grammar Errors	353	204	557		350	62.84	207	37.16	26.55	34.26	39.10	100%	
LEXIS ERRORS														
		Word Choice												
		Misselection	39	27	66	40.24	6	9.37	60	60	12	0	48	
		Misformation	28	16	44	26.82	44	68.75	0	0	0	0		
			67	43	110	67.03	50	78.12	60	60	12	0	48	
		Semantics												
		Sense Relation	14	35	49	29.87	11	17.18	38	38	0	0	38	
		Collocations	1	4	5	3.04	3	4.68	2	2	0	0	2	
			15	39	54	32.92	14	21.87	40	40	0	0	40	
		Lexical Errors	82	82	164		64	39.02	100	60.97	12	0	88	
						414	57.42	307	42.57					
	Grammar Errors	353	204	557	77.25	350	84.54	207	67.42	17.91	23.13	26.38		
	Lexical Errors	82	82	164	22.75	64	15.46	100	32.57	3.91	0	28.66		
	TOTAL	435	286	721	100%	414	100%	307	100%	21.82	23.13	55.04	100%	

