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*Investigating the Factors Behind Foreign  
Language Learners' Grammatical Errors  
in Writing Skill*

*The Case of Second Year LMD Students of English at  
the University of Bejaia*

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the  
Degree of Master of Arts in Didactics of English at Bejaia University

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## **Dedication**

I dedicate this work to:

My heart, my mum, and my mind, my dad, to whom I wish a long life.

My brothers and sisters and their families.

My beautiful niece Celia and my nephews Yacine and Sami.

My friends Hayat and Djamila who provided me with immense support and understanding.

All my friends and teachers who have always encouraged me.

Every one who sets me on my path.

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## **Abstract**

Error Analysis has long been considered as an important aspect in the educational field. The present study investigates the factors behind foreign language learners' grammatical errors in the writing skill of second year LMD students at the University of Bejaia. The aim of the present study is to determine the morphological and syntactic errors among second year students and to get some of the possible sources behind their occurrences. In order to explore this subject, the researcher uses a diagnostic test which reveals that second year students commit errors because of overgeneralization and the omission of some elements in the learners' sentences and many other factors. The results show that second year students face a problem in three main aspects of grammar which are verb-form errors, article usage, and the morpheme "s". At the end, overgeneralization of rules, incomplete application of rules, and ignorance of rule restrictions are cited as the major factors behind those errors committed by two groups of second year students. Hence, the research ends with some pedagogical implications for both teachers and students, and some recommendations for further research.

**Keywords:** Error Analysis, Writing Skill, Grammatical Errors, Foreign Language.

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## **List of Abbreviations:**

**EA:** Error Analysis.

**EAP:** English for Academic Purposes.

**EFL:** English as a Foreign Language.

**ESL:** English as a Second Language.

**L2:** The Second Language.

**LMD:** Licence, Master, and Doctorate.



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## **Glossary of Terms:**

**Error Analysis:** “It is the study of erroneous utterances produced by groups of learners” (Corder 1975 – cited in James 1998: 3).

**Errors:** “reflect deviations in usage which result from gaps in learners’ knowledge of the target language” (Ellis 1997:139).

**Fossilization:** “*a process which sometimes occurs in which incorrect linguistic features become a permanent part of the way a person speaks or writes a language*” (Richards and Schmidt 2002:211).

**Foreign Language:** “*a language which is not the native language of target numbers of people in a particular country or region*” (Richards and Schmidt 2002:206).

**Grammar:** “*It is a description of the rules for forming sentences including an account of the meanings that these forms convey*” (Thornbury 1999: 13).

**Intralingual Errors** “*Intralingual errors are those errors which occur as a result of learners’ attempt to build up concepts and hypotheses about the target language from their limited experience with it*” (Erdogan 2005:266).

**Mistakes:** “deviations in usage that reflect learners’ inability to use what they actually know of the target language” (Ellis 1997:141).

**Strategies:** “procedures used in learning, thinking, etc., which serve as a way of reaching a goal” (Richards and Schmidt 2002:515).

**Target Language:** “a language to be learnt (the foreign language and second language)” (James1998:3).

# **General Introduction**

## **Introduction:**

Foreign language learning success and failure have been a subject of a considerable amount of research in recent years. Writing, as a productive skill, plays an important role in English (Shan-Ling 2012:1124). It is a crucial activity which pre-supposes not only knowledge of a language, but also the mastery of its rules.

Through the researcher's experience in learning English, it is remarked that most of the teachers of writing complain about the grammatical level of Licence, Master, and Doctorate (LMD) students at the University of Bejaia. That is, when the students try to express their ideas in the writing composition, they commit errors, which affect negatively on their writing skill.

Accordingly, the errors can be explained in terms of inappropriate strategies applied by the students rather than the influence of affective factors such as anxiety, stress, and other factors.

## **I. Statement of the Problem:**

English is an international language which has the status of a foreign language in Algeria. Despite learning English for at least six years before University, the writing composition of LMD students is weak in English because they commit many errors at different levels; lexis, spelling, grammar and other levels. However, this study focuses only on three grammatical aspects of language which are the use of articles, the morpheme "s", and verb form. Due to this point, the problem to be stated, here, is to investigate the factors behind the grammatical errors among 60 second year LMD students at the University of Bejaia.

## **II. Questions of the Study:**

In order to answer the central problem of the study, the researcher relies on the following guiding questions:

- 1- What are the common grammatical errors made by second year students?
- 2- What are the reasons behind their occurrence?
- 3- What are the possible solutions to cope with the problem of grammatical errors?

### **III. Hypothesis:**

For the sake of finding solutions to the problem, the researcher hypothesizes that second year students do not master grammar rules of English language that is why they commit errors.

### **IV. Purpose of the Study:**

The aim of the current study is, first, to demonstrate the grammatical level among 60 second year students at the University of Bejaia in writing skill, and to find out the grammatical categories of the errors that they commit. Hence, raising the awareness of the learners on the importance of constructing correct sentences because the better students understand the grammatical rules, the more likely they will produce a good piece of writing.

Second, it aims at finding the factors behind the intralingual grammatical errors in the writing skill of second year students, hence provides some solutions to the problem.

### **V. Methods and Procedure:**

In order to explore the current research, the researcher has administered a diagnostic test which is designed to diagnose specified aspects of a language (Brown 2004:46). Hence, it is needed to test the grammatical level of second year LMD students. Besides, the diagnostic test is workable to the description and analysis of the students' errors. Hence, the diagnostic test covers both qualitative and quantitative stages.

First, qualitative stage involves a description of the grammatical errors committed by 60 second year LMD students and the factors attributed to them in order to elicit information on what students need to work on in the future (Brown 2004:47).

Second, quantitative stage is used because it provides some statistical information about the categories of errors committed by second year students

## **VI. Population and Sample of the study:**

### **VI.1. Population:**

The population of the current study is limited to 577 second year students of English enrolled in the LMD system at the University of Bejaia.

### **VI.2. Sample:**

The sample under study consists of 60 second year students of different ages and gender. The researcher randomly selects this sample because she believes that, at their level, they are equipped with a certain grammatical competence in their writing process.

## **VII. Significance of the Study:**

Although much research has been conducted on the topic studying different grammatical errors in writing, it is still that this topic needs further investigation with different objectives, population and different conditions. So, the present research may help teachers to become aware of their learners' need for mastering grammar rules in their writing. Moreover, it attempts to help learners and bring their attention to their grammatical level in writing skill.

## **VIII. The Organization of the Work:**

The present study falls into two main parts. The theoretical part is divided into two main chapters. The first chapter is entitled "Theoretical Background" which in turn is divided into two main sections. The first one introduces the writing skill, and the second section provides some theoretical perspectives on students' errors. The second chapter within the theoretical part is entitled "Literature Review", where the researcher reviews the different studies related to analyzing errors in the writing skill.

The second part is the practical one, it encompasses both chapter three and four. Hence, chapter three discusses the results and findings of the study and is divided into two sections. The first one describes the design of the study while the second section provides data analysis and classification of errors. Finally, the fourth chapter shows the conclusions, pedagogical implications for both teachers and students, and suggests some recommendations for further research.

# Chapter One:

## Theoretical Background

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## **Introduction:**

Learning a foreign language is not at the reach of every one because it demands concentration, thinking and combining elements into meaningful pieces. Hence, writing is one of the foreign language skills that interest many researchers in recent years. It is a productive skill through which we use words to generate ideas and opinions. Indeed, words are significant but only by mastering grammar that we combine those words into meaningful sentences. However, mastering grammar is bound by committing errors. This latter should be regarded as an essential feature of learning as Strevens (1969- cited in Richards and Sampson 1974:4) states: "...errors should not be viewed as problems to be overcome, but rather as normal and inevitable features indicating the strategies that learners' use".

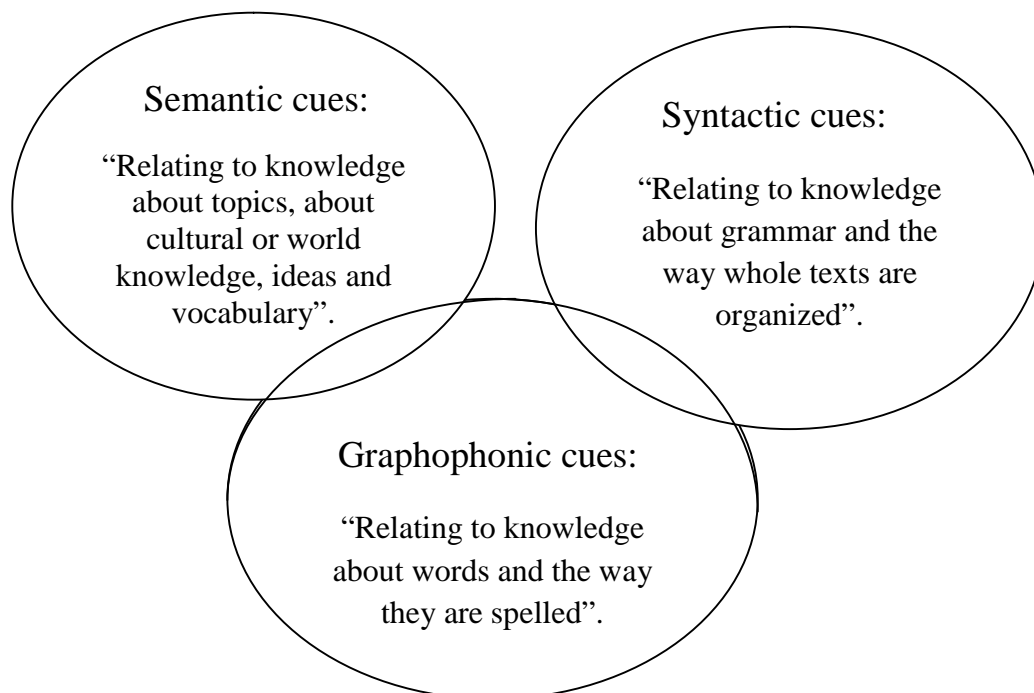
This chapter presents a theoretical background on the writing skill and the importance of error analysis in the foreign language classroom. Therefore, the researcher divides this chapter into two main sections; the first one introduces the writing skill and writing competence as well as exploring the elements of writing and introducing grammar as an important aspect in the writing skill. The second section attempts to demonstrate the significance of analyzing errors in the writing skill.



# **I. Section One: Introducing the Writing Skill.**

## **I.1. Definition of Writing:**

According to Byrne (1988:1), “the nature of writing is the combination of graphic symbols according to certain conventions”. In other words, writing is the act of constructing meaning through combining, selecting and organizing our thoughts into a set of graphic symbols using grammar and punctuation. Richards and Renandya (2002- cited in Ali Fatemi 2008:1) go on the same path claiming that writing is concerned not only with generating and organizing ideas but also translating these ideas into readable texts. Without doubt words are significant but they can not make a language alone. Grammar is needed to combine them into meaningful sentences, and meaning is also important to communicate. This is strongly supported by Pearson (1976- cited in Welsh Assembly Government 2010:24), who declares that writing encompasses three different cues which are semantic, syntactic and graphophonic cues and they are shown in the following diagram:



**Figure 1: Writing Cues (adapted from Pearson 1976- cited in Welsh Assembly government 2010:24).**

The above figure shows clearly that writing requires the mastery of three main aspects; vocabulary, the rules of grammar, and having knowledge about the meaning of words.

## **I.2. The Importance of Writing Skill:**

According to Kane (1988:5), “interest in writing lies not so much in a topic as in what a writer has made of it”. That is to say, the importance of writing lies less in the content than on the way the content is to be transmitted. Furthermore, Raimes (1983- cited in Zawahreh 2012:281) highlights the importance of writing on the learners’ learning process in which she states three main aspects: first, writing reinforces the grammatical structures and vocabulary that have been taught to students. In other words, writing keeps the learners in touch with vocabulary and grammar thereby exposing the learners to the language. Second, it provides an opportunity for the learners to be adventurous with the language. So, it promotes learning. Finally, she states that writing makes the learners live a real involvement with the new language. Indeed, she explains this latter in the fact that “the effect to express ideas and the consistent use of eye, hand and brain is a unique way to reinforce learning”. So, writing is of a great importance since it helps the learners not only to interact with the language but also to learn.

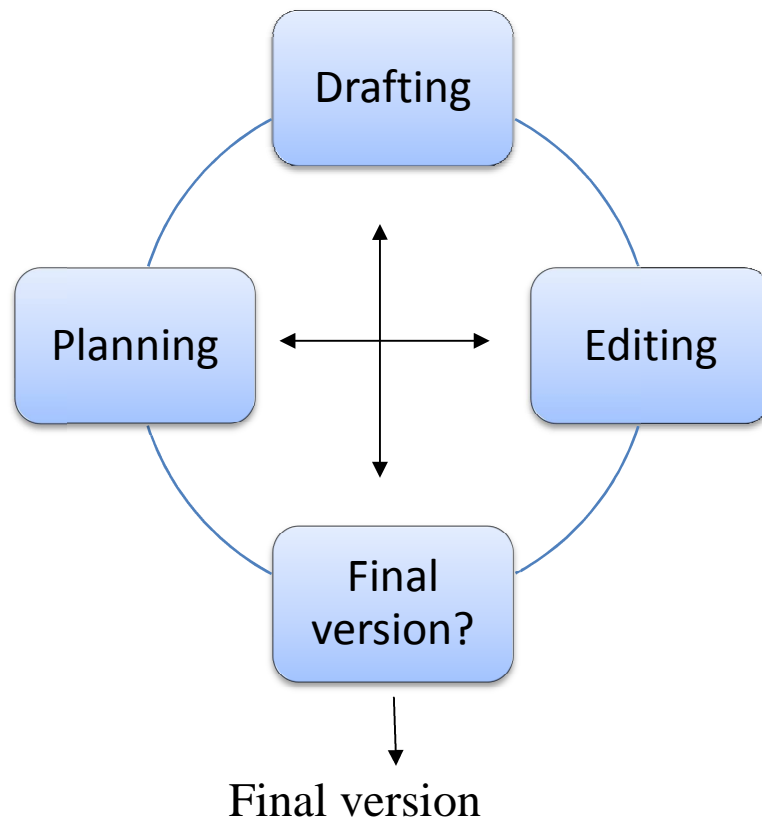
## **I.3. Approaches to Writing:**

When constructing any piece of writing the writer either focuses on the aim of the piece or on the process of writing. Hence, two main approaches are distinguished to this skill:

**I.3.1. Writing as a Product:** Harmer (2007:325) sustains that the concentration on the product means that “the interest is on the aim of the task and in the end product”. In this view, writing is related to what the writer needs to write. Hence, the amount of information to write is much more important than the form of writing.

**I.3.2. Writing as a Process:** According to Harmer (2007:326), writing as a process refers to the different stages that learners follow when constructing any piece of writing, and among them Harmer states: prewriting phase, editing, redrafting, and finally producing a final draft. This means that the focus is on how to write and not on what to write. Hence, constructing well-formed sentences is the main focus of writing as a process. Thus, writing

is a complex process which requires thinking, analyzing, organizing, then producing well constructed arguments. From the above definition, it can be concluded that writing as a process requires much time from the learners since they need to pass through different activities.



**Figure 2: The Process Wheel (adapted from Harmer 2007:326).**

The above figure shows clearly the stages that the writer follows when s/he tries to deliver her/ his ideas. The first stage is “*Planning*” which includes activating concepts in the mind about the topic that the writer is going to write about and the purpose that s/he wants to reach. The second one is “*Drafting*”, in which the writer writes down the first ideas on paper. The next stage is “*Editing*” which refers to the changing of ideas in order to better the style or to achieve other purposes. Then, the final stage is “*final version?*” which involves writing the final draft and ideas. However, this last stage can be a subject to change. That is, it can be drafted again.

## **I.4. Elements of Writing:**

In order for the writer to produce a good piece of writing, s/he needs to consider different components of writing skill and among them are the following:

**I.4.1. Grammar:** It is defined by Harmer (2007:32) as “knowledge of what words can go where and what form these words should take”. Besides, it is expressed by Crystal (2004-cited in Sharaf 2011:13) as “the structural foundation of our ability to express ourselves. The more we are aware of how it works, the more we can monitor the meaning and effectiveness of the way we use language”. That is to say, grammar is the application of the language rules.

**I.4.2. Mechanics:** They are the rules of punctuation, spelling and handwriting. In the same respect, Kane (1988:15) sustained that “in compositions, mechanics refers to the appearance of words, to how they are spelled and arranged on paper”.

**I.4.3. Word Choice:** It refers to the use of relevant words on the topic being discussed, including the use of idiomatic expressions, adverbs, idioms .., etc.

**I.4.4. The Content:** The extent to which the writer is original and clear in his work. That is to say, to use personal ideas and words and avoid plagiarism, and to be brief and concise and avoid useless details.

**I.4.5. Organization of Ideas:** Starkey (2004:2) demonstrates that “the organization of ideas lets the writer see how his developing ideas fit within a framework”. The idea is that the writer considers both coherence and cohesion of the text. Hence, the former is defined by Das (1978- cited in James 1998:161) in terms of “communicative function involving the writer’s intention and the reader’s interpretation”. That is, it refers to how to shift from one idea to another. The latter is declared by Yule (2006:125) as referring to “the ties and connections that exist within text”. So, cohesion is how to shift from one paragraph to another. Mei-Yun (1993:12) went on the same path claiming that “the importance of cohesion lies in the continuity it expresses between one part of the text and another, this continuity is necessary for the interpretation of the text”.

**I.4.6. The Purpose:** To have a better understanding of the aim of the topic. That is, to master the goal that you want to achieve or that you want your readers to grasp.

## **I.5. Definition of Grammar:**

Grammar is a crucial part of language in which we combine words and sentences in order to get meaning. It is defined in *Longman Dictionary of Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics* (2002:230) as: “a description of the structure of a language and the way in which linguistic units such as words and phrases are combined to produce sentences in the language”. It is claimed by Thornbury (1999:2) as: “the study of both the way words are chained together, and also of what kinds of words can slot into any one link in the chain”. Thus, the mastery of grammar is a serious undertaking which needs a considerable attention during writing activities. Therefore, teachers might devote a special care and emphasis on grammatical structures in writing in order to raise the learners’ awareness of the importance of correct rules in writing.

## **I.6. Types of Grammar:**

Grammar is the arrangement of words into meaningful sentences, and it is considered as the foundation of language. Thus, a distinction is commonly drawn between descriptive, prescriptive and pedagogical grammars:

**I.6.1. Descriptive Grammar:** According to Yule (2006:79), “descriptive grammar is the description of the regular structures of the language as it was used”. Thus, it is concerned with the analysis of the ways in which language operates and is used by speakers.

**I.6.2. Prescriptive Grammar:** It is described by Yule (2006:77) as: “the view of grammar as a set of rules for the proper use of language”. Thus, it is concerned with the way speakers should use a language.

**I.6.3. Pedagogical Grammar:** According to Purpura (2004:22), “pedagogical grammar provides information about how language is organized and offers relatively accessible ways of describing complex linguistic phenomena for pedagogical purposes”. Besides, Pedagogical grammar, according to James (1998:96), aims at preventing and repairing errors and that it does not describe a language but rather it exemplifies and gives opportunities for practice.

## **I.7. Grammatical Competence:**

It is an essential aspect that every writer needs to have. It refers to the ability to use the grammatical forms accurately in language use situations. According to Oxford (1990:7), “grammatical competence is the degree to which the language user has mastered the linguistic code including: vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, spelling and word formation”. It is expressed by Brown (2000:247) as “an aspect that encompasses knowledge of lexical items and of rules of morphology, syntax, sentence\_ grammar, semantics, and phonology”. Thus, grammatical competence indicates the level of proficiency of the learners.

## **I.8. Elements of Grammar:**

Grammar is a crucial aspect of a language and it is a combination of a set of elements into meaningful sentences. Among the elements of grammar are the following:

**Subject:** It is the person or thing that performs an action indicated by the verb or that is in the state of being described by the verb (Eurlish and Murphy 1991:1). Therefore, the subject is the doer of the action. For example: **The students** fail to apply the rules of the English language.

**Verb:** It is a word that expresses action, being, or condition and that changes form to show time (Silva 1998:151). For instance: The researcher **classified** the errors into categories.

**Verb Tense:** The verb form that shows the time of the action.

**Object:** It is the person, thing or topic upon which the subject carries out the action of the verb (Tulloch 1990:3).

**Noun:** A noun is a name of a person, place, thing, quality, activity, concept or condition (Eurlish and Murphy 1991:17).

**Pronoun:** It is a word used in place of a noun or another pronoun. Pronouns help you avoid unnecessary repetition in your writing and speech. A pronoun gets its meaning from the noun it stands for (Rozakis 2003:9). For example: **They** have to work hard.

**Adjectives:** They are words that describe nouns and pronouns. Adjectives answer the questions: what kind? How much? Which one? And how many? (Rozakis 2003:4). For example: The grammatical level of second year students should be **rich**.

**Adverb:** An adverb modifies a verb and indicates how the action of a verb is carried out (Tulloch 1990:9).

**Articles:** They are considered as modifiers of nouns and pronouns and we have two types:

- a- **The Definite Article “the”:** It is used to indicate a specific class of nouns or pronouns of a specific member of a class of nouns or pronouns (Eurlich and Murphy 1991:32).
- b- **The Indefinite Articles “a, an”:** They are used as modifiers to indicate an unspecified class or member of a class of nouns (Eurlich and Murphy 1991:33).

**The Final “s”:** It is of three types:

1- Possessive “s”

2- Plural “s”

3- Third person “s”

Hence, the elements of grammar that the present researcher is interested in are: verb-form, the use of articles and the final “s”.

## **I.9. The Role of Grammar in Writing:**

Grammar is of a paramount importance because it is a crucial aspect in writing skill. It is asserted by Frodesen and Eyring (2000 - cited in Ali Fatemi 2008:7) that “a focus on grammar in a composition can help learners developing their language proficiency”. Thus, mastering the writing skill means to be able to use its grammatical rules in real-life purposes / situations. In this regard, Brown (2007a – cited in Sharaf 2011:15) claims that “without grammatical structure, the use of language could easily become chaotic and might not be understandable”. In the same respect, Frodesen and Eyring (2000 - cited in Ali Fatemi 2008:10) claim that “a focus on form in a composition can help writers develop rich linguistic resources needed to express ideas effectively”. That is to say, a focus on form in any piece of writing helps the writer to better and ameliorate his style and hence increase his grammatical competence.

## **II. Section Two: Theoretical Perspectives on Students' Errors.**

### **Introduction:**

After introducing the writing skill with its features, it is necessary to shed light on the theoretical perspectives of the students' errors in the writing skill. Hence, this section presents approaches to the study of errors and provides some benefits for analyzing errors as well as demonstrates the factors behind errors.

### **II.1. Two Major Approaches to the Study of Learners' Errors:**

Learning a foreign language is bound by committing errors. Diminishing this latter is an important criterion for increasing language proficiency. This is done through both the processes of Contrastive Analysis and Error Analysis:

#### **II.1.1. Contrastive Analysis:**

According to Ellis and Barkhuizen (2005:52), Contrastive Analysis involves “describing comparable features across the mother tongue and the target language, identifying the differences, and, then, predicting what errors learners would make”. This means that contrastive analysis involves a comparison between the mother tongue and the target language. In this regard, Richards and Sampson (1974:5) claim that “contrastive analysis is assigned to predict errors by comparing the linguistic systems of the mother tongue and the target language”. Besides, Ellis and Barkhuizen (2005:52) state two main aims of contrastive analysis. First, it aims at providing an explanation for the reason behind committing errors. Second, it serves as a source of information to identify which structural areas of the target language teachers need to teach. From the above aims, it can be concluded that contrastive analysis provides an attempt to the source behind errors as well as it predicts the problems that need considerable attention for the teachers to teach.

In the same respect, Ellis (1997:19) considers contrastive analysis to be of particular importance because “it serves as a tool to pre-identify the probable areas of learning difficulty, with a given target language and learners speaking a given first language”. Also, Nemser (1971:60) declares that the positive point of contrastive



analyses is that the comparison of second language and first language predicts learners' behavior. However, when analyzing errors there are different analyses and hence different predictions and the predictions are often ambiguous.

### **II.1.2. Error Analysis:**

Ellis and Barkhuizen (2005:51) report that Error Analysis consists of a set of procedures for identifying, describing and explaining learners' errors. This means that it refers to the detection of the learners' errors, their classification and finally finding the sources behind committing them. Brown (1980- cited in Hasyim 2002:43) goes on the same path claiming that "Error Analysis is the process of observing, analyzing and classifying the deviations of the rules of the second language and then revealing the systems operated by learner". That is, Error Analysis is the study of the difficulties that learners face in language learning.

James (1998:19) also argues that the purpose of Error Analysis is "to gain a first impression of the learners' capacities and limitations to identify the areas of target language competence where they are most susceptible to error".

Moreover, Mclaughlin (1987- cited in Mutima and Mariko 2012:219) differentiate Error Analysis from Contrastive Analysis in which he stated that Error Analysis aims at finding the sources behind errors in order to learn more about interference and development. However, Contrastive Analysis aims at finding the nature of the learners' errors. Besides, According to Brown (2000:218), Error Analysis is distinguished from Contrastive Analysis in that it examines all possible sources of errors.

## **II.2. Theories in Respect to Learners' Errors:**

The main important theories that have dealt with errors in language learning are the behaviorist theory and the Cognitive one:

**II.2.1. The Behaviorist Theory:** According to Ellis (1997:31), it is a dominant theory of the fifties and sixties. It states that the learners learn a language through habit formation. He also argues that habits are created through the connection between stimulus and response. That is, when providing a correct answer to a certain stimulus that language will be imitated by the learners and hence it will be a habit through reinforcement. However, when giving a wrong answer, that is, a sentence that contains an error the language will be

rejected and will not be learned. From the above explanation, it can be concluded that errors are not allowed in the behaviorist theory.

**II.2.2. The Cognitive Theory:** It is an alternative theory to the behaviorist one. It is a theory which claims that language is innate. That is learners are equipped with a certain background knowledge that helps them to learn. Thus, they can construct an infinite number of sentences. And from this latter, they can commit errors which are not considered as obstacles but rather as part of the learning process. So, in the cognitive theory errors are allowed.

### **II.3. The Distinction between an Error and a Mistake:**

In order to analyze the learners' errors appropriately, in the learning context, researchers make a distinction between errors and mistakes. Thus, according to Ellis (1997:17), "errors reflect gaps in a learner knowledge, they occur because the learner does not know what is correct". Errors are defined by Corder (1974- cited in Ellis and Barkhuizen 2005:62) as "a phenomenon that occurs because of gaps in the learners' second language knowledge". In other words, errors are committed because learners are not aware of the language rules. On the other hand, according to Brown (2000:217), Mistakes refer to "performance errors that are either a random guess or "a slip of the tongue", in that it is a failure to utilize a known system correctly". They are also defined by Corder (1974- cited in Ellis and Barkhuizen 2005:62) as a phenomenon that occurs because of the difficulty of processing forms that are not yet fully mastered. This means that mistakes occur because learners may have forgotten the rules.

### **II.4. Benefits of Analyzing Errors:**

Errors are no longer seen as obstacles and constraints in the speech and writing of the learners but rather as evidence of the learners' strategies of learning Corder (1967:27). Essentially, there is a current interest for analyzing the errors in writing skill. According to Corder (1967- cited in Brown 2000:217), "the learners' errors ... are significant in [that] 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". As indicated above, errors reveal how well the learners are constructing their knowledge as well as how do they learn. This is strongly supported by Hendrickson (1978- cited in Ellis 2008:65) when he says that "thanks to error analysis researchers are able to take decisions

about the second language features to teach”. The same idea is shared by Mutima and Mariko (2012:224) claiming that “EA provides factual data to base preparation of teaching material and methods rather than relying on theoretical speculation”. Thus, error analysis has become an essential technique to make use of because it helps the teacher to know a lot about the learning problems of individual students. Besides, it allows the teacher to tailor his teaching method to the level s/he is working with.

## **II.5. Levels of Errors:**

Errors are the unavoidable part of learning process, and they occur at different levels: substantial, text, lexical, discourse and grammatical errors:

**II.5.1. Substance Errors:** According to James (1998:130), substance errors are those errors that occur at the level of spelling such as those of punctuation and misselection of letters and at the level of pronunciation.

**II.5.2. Text Errors:** They arise from ignorance and misapplication of the lexicogrammatical rules of the language including how these rules are exploited to achieve texture (James 1998:142). This means that text errors are shown in the relations that occur between the structures of a language.

**II.5.3. Lexical Errors:** They are those errors which operate at the level of words. Richards (1976- cited in James 1998:144) stated seven things to know about a word: (i) Its morpho-phonology; that is, its spelling and pronunciation. (ii) Its syntactic behavior. (iii) Its functional and situational restrictions which means that the use of words depends upon the situation and the function needed to be achieved. (iv) Its semantic value. For example, we do not say “he broke my foot”, instead, we say “he broke my leg”. (v) Its secondary meaning; that is to say, every word can have more than one meaning. (vi) Word association. (vii) The last thing to know about a word is how likely it is to be used. In other words, the learner needs to master the use of different words in language.

**II.5.4. Discourse Errors:** They are those errors which concern the coherence of the text and they are differentiated from text errors in that this latter is concerned with the meaning of text, however the former is concerned with the interpretation of the text ( Widdowson 1995- cited in James 1998:161).

**II.5.5. Grammatical Errors:** They are those which occur at the level of grammar. Hence, the current research is limited and concerned only with grammatical errors which are divided into two categories: morphological and syntactic.

Morphologically, in the present study, the researcher selects the following elements to be examined: the omission, misplacement and over inclusion of the “s” of plural, genitive and third person singular. Besides, she sheds light on the verb tense and the use of articles.

Syntactically, the researcher is interested in the subject verb order, inappropriate verb construction and sentence structure.

## **II.6. Sources of Errors:**

### **II.6.1. Intralingual Errors:**

Errors are familiar and expected from every learner who wants to improve his/her foreign language. The present study is concerned with the developmental errors or what we call intralingual errors that learners encounter in their studies. They are those errors caused by the target language itself because of different reasons. However, Richards (1971:174) distinguishes between intralingual and developmental errors: the former reflects “the general characteristics of rule learning such as faulty generalization, incomplete application of rules, and failure to learn conditions under which rules apply”. The latter are “those errors which occur when learners attempt to build up hypotheses about the English language from their limited experience of it”. Indeed, for Alsulmi (2010:3), developmental errors, “occur when a learner derives a rule from the data s/he learned and according to this rule develops a hypothesis which may not coincide with the target language”. Richards and Sampson (1971:9) focuses on intralingual errors and distinguishes four types.

- i- **Overgeneralization:** In which the learner over generalizes the rules of language. In this regard, Johnson (2008- cited in Alsulmi 2010:2) claims that this process occurs when “the learner mistakenly broadens the scope of the rule to a situation where the rule is not applied”. For instance: He **made** many mistakes. Instead of: He **made** many mistakes.
- ii- **Ignorance of Rule Restriction:** In which the learner commits errors because s/he ignores totally the rules of language. According to Richards (1985- cited in Wee 2009:355), it refers to “the failure to observe

restrictions of existing structures. That is, application of rules to contexts where they do not apply”.

- iii- **Incomplete Application of Rules:** In which the learner commits errors as a result of deviations in their speech. For instance, the use of deviant order of subject and verb. For example: He **had work** hard. Instead of: He **had worked** hard.
- iv- **False Concepts Hypothesized:** In which the learner wrongly assumes that new concepts behave like others. Ellis (1996- cited in Mungungu 2010:29) distinguishes between incomplete application of rules and false concepts hypothesized, in which he claimed that the former arises when learners fail to develop a structure fully while the latter occurs when learners do not completely understand a distinction in the target language.

## **II.6.2. Interlingual Errors:**

Before defining interlingual errors, it is important to introduce first the term interlanguage. According to Brown (2000:215), it is a term that Selinker (1972) adapted from Weinreich's (1953) and it refers to “the separateness of a second language learners' system that has a structurally intermediate status between the native and the target language”. According to Johnson (1987- cited in James 1998:179), Interlingual errors are “those errors that happen when an item or a structure in the second language manifests some degree of difference from, and some degree of similarity with the equivalent item or structure in the learners' first language”.

## **II.7. Steps in Conducting an Error Analysis:**

According to Corder (1974- cited in Ellis and Barkhuizen 2005:57), among the steps to follow when conducting an error analysis one can select: identification of errors, description, and explanation of errors:

### **II.7.1. Identification of Errors:**

In this step, the researcher has to realize that errors exist. This is done through making a comparison between the correct forms of sentences with the sentences produced by the learners. In this sense, this step involves a contrastive analysis procedure as it deals with comparing between utterances to indicate the similarities and differences between them. In

this regard, Corder (1971:166) distinguishes between Overt and Covert errors. Overt errors are those errors which are grammatically incorrect, however, they can be interpreted easily by the learners. While Covert errors are those errors that are well-formed at the sentence level but can not be interpreted by the learners.

## **II.7.2. Description of Errors:**

Here the researcher needs to specify the differences between the forms produced by the learner and the correct forms. According to James (1998: 104-106), there are two main taxonomies or what he refers to system of categories: a linguistic taxonomy and surface structure taxonomy.

**A- Linguistic Taxonomy:** According to James (1998:105), the learner needs to indicate at which level the error occurred. That is, at the level of grammar, lexis, discourse or other levels. And then, if the error, for instance, occurs at the level of grammar, the grammatical structures need to be categorized into categories such as verb phrase, adjectives and many others. These categories can be further sub- categorized into other categories including: verb tense, the use of modals and other aspects (James 1998:105).

**B- Surface Structure Taxonomy:** It is based on the ways surface structures are constructed (Dulay et al. 1982- cited in Ellis and Barkhuizen 2005:61). Besides, they suggest four principal ways in which learners modify the target forms:

**1/- Omission Errors:** They are those errors caused by the absence of an item that must appear in a well- formed utterance (Dulay et al. 1982- cited in Qaid 2011: 540). From the above definition, omission errors refer to the deletion of needed elements in the learner utterances.

**2 /- Addition Errors:** According to (Dulay et al. 1982- cited in James 1998:107), addition is “the result of all too- faithful use of certain rules”. Hence, they refer to the occurrence of unnecessary elements in the learners’ utterances.

**3/- Misformation Errors:** They refer to the use of the wrong form of a structure or morpheme (Dulay et al. 1982- cited in James 1998:107).

**4/- Misordering Errors:** They refer to the use of wrong order of words in sentences.

### **II.7.3. Explanation of Errors:**

Explanation of errors means determining the sources behind the occurrence of the errors. That is to say, after identifying and describing the errors, they are classified into their sources either relating to interlingual factors or to intralingual ones. A detailed explanation of these factors is found in pages 16 and 17.

## **Conclusion:**

All along this chapter, the researcher provides some background knowledge about the researcher's topic. Thus, in the first section, she introduces writing skill as an important activity which requires the mastery of grammar rules. Besides, in the second section, she reviews clearly some perspectives on students' errors in which she demonstrates the importance of analyzing the students' errors, as she reveals the factors behind the occurrence of errors.



# **Chapter Two:**

## **Literature Review**

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## **Introduction:**

Error analysis has been a subject of interest for many researches and studies of many Arab and non-Arab countries. Although, there is some overlap between these studies in terms of overall aims, all of them afford and provide insights into language learning. The present chapter presents a selection of the studies that dealt with error analysis and they are classified into studies of non-Arab countries and studies of Arab countries.

## **A - Error Analysis Studies in Non-Arab Countries:**

Haded (1998) investigates the value of analyzing errors in foreign language teaching and learning in which he provides a background on the importance of error analysis in identifying and explaining the sources behind learners' errors. In his study, he selects 20 students enrolled in the Arabic school in Kuala Lumpur for the academic year 1995-1996 and provides them with a test which contains twenty five items. The results obtained reveal that the students commit a lot of errors at the level of tenses specifically in the use of past perfect; which in turn are due to both interlingual and intralingual sources. At the end, the researcher discloses the importance of error analysis as a pedagogical technique to discover the learners' errors and the sources behind them.

Hasyim (2002) conducts a research on the value of error analysis in the teaching of English as a foreign language. In his research, he aims to identify the kinds and causes of grammatical errors as a means to increase the learners' knowledge of English grammar. In his research, he provides some data on the importance of error analysis. The results show that error analysis is a crucial technique that can help teachers to select and design appropriate methods and materials for classroom use.

Erdogan (2005) examines the contribution of error analysis to foreign language teaching. In his research, Erdogan tries to demonstrate the importance of analyzing errors as well as finding the sources behind them so as to overcome them. In the light of these elements, he provides two main aims of error analysis. First, theoretical analysis aims at investigating what is going on in the learner's mind and what strategies they use. Second, applied analysis concerns with choosing appropriate material and trying to tailor the teaching method according to the level of the students. At the end, Erdogan reveals that finding the sources of errors is the key to treat them. Furthermore, he states that the priority of feedback on learners' errors should be given to errors which may affect communication and cause misunderstanding, and that it should be given according to the goal of study.

Wee (2009) investigates the written verb-form errors in the writing compositions of 50 Malaysian ESL learners caused by both intralingual and interlingual factors. The aim is to identify and categorize those errors in order to provide a clear explanation to them. Their writing compositions show a lack of grammatical accuracy. Hence, the researcher reveals that the common problems with Malaysian Malay ESL learners lie in English tense aspect system and subject-verb agreement which are due to both intralingual and interlingual

factors. That is why the researcher reveals a desperate need to give more attention to grammatical rules.

Kirkgöz (2010) provides an analysis of Turkish adult learners of English. The sample of the study consists of 72 adult learners of English majoring in first year of undergraduate education. The objective of the study is to analyze and classify the errors committed by the adult learners in order to detect the possible sources behind them. The results clearly show that the adult learners commit a lot of errors which are in turn due to both interlingual and intralingual factors. The interlingual errors are 221 in number and are divided into grammatical, lexical and prepositional errors. Besides, the number of the intralingual errors is 179 in number, and they are divided into errors in the use of articles, redundancy errors and overgeneralization.

Mungungu (2010) conducts a research on the errors made by Oshiwambo, Africans and Silozi first language speakers. Her research aims to identify and compare the types of errors committed by the three groups as well as to determine how frequent these errors occur in their English written works. The researcher adopts a quantitative method because she believes it is suitable for her work since it is a comparison of errors made by three main groups of learners. As a conclusion, the researcher brings out the fact that errors should not be considered as constraints in the way of the learners but rather as a necessary part that should be used by teachers in order to improve their teaching method.

Wee et al. (2010) examine the written verb-form errors found in the EAP writing of 39 second year learners pursuing a three year diploma program from a public University in Malaysia. The study intends to find the frequency and types of verb-form errors in the written essays of the learners. The outcomes show that the grammatical level among learners in Malaysia is not encouraging. Hence, there is a high frequency of errors in the omission of verb-forms in the area of the third person singular verb (-s, -es, -ies). Besides, the learners have more difficulties in the use of the verb "to be". Indeed, these errors affect on the quality of the learner's piece of writing. At the end, the researchers declare that it is of great importance to reduce the grammatical errors in order to increase the linguistic competence of the learners in their writing tasks.

Nayernia (2011) explores errors in the writing of Iranian students studying English as a foreign language in order to find out whether the native language plays a role in the learners' difficulties in learning the target language. In his research, he instructs his students to write about a free topic in a few paragraphs. At the end, he points out that the level of grammatical errors among Iranian students was not encouraging. Hence, he deduces that the most frequent errors committed by Iranian students belong to substitution errors which are in turn due to intralingual factors. The end of his research calls upon the importance of analyzing the learners' errors in order to gain a better understanding of the learners' language system.

Nozadze (2012) studies the value of treating error fossilization with Georgian students in which she advocates the need to treat error fossilization with adequate attention. In her survey, she shows that Georgian students have problems especially with syntax and morphology. They are in turn due to: lack of attention, knowledge and lack of practice. As a result, she demonstrates the need for more practice as well as more attention from the learners. As a conclusion, Nozadze calls upon the importance of treating fossilized errors through different aspects and among them are: cultivation of language learners, fostering a positive learning attitude in language learner and developing language competence among learners.

## **B – Error Analysis Studies in Arab Countries:**

Tahaineh (2010) discusses an empirical analysis of compositions written by Jordanian first-, second-, - and third year University EFL students. The purpose of his study is to identify and to reveal the types of errors students make in the use of prepositions. Finally, he reports that the errors committed by Arab learners in prepositions are either because they consider that an Arabic preposition is equivalent to more than one in English preposition, or they translate words from Arabic to English. Furthermore, he deems it necessary to encounter such errors by exposing the learners to language skills such as listening and reading.

Qaid (2011) analyzes the intralingual errors committed by 200 Yemeni students of first to fourth levels and University EFL students in writing compositions. In his research, he aims to identify and categorize those intralingual error types in the compositions of Yemeni students. A total of 501 intralingual errors are found and classified into six categories namely, omission, addition, selection of the word, structure of the sentence, and

simplification. The findings indicate that teachers should devote a special care in their teaching to the error types committed by their students in order to take precautions towards them in their teaching process.

Abushihab et al. (2011) analyze the grammatical errors of 62 second year students' writing compositions at Alzaytoonah private University of Jordan. In their article, they aim to show and recognize the grammatical errors made by second year students at the level of morphology, prepositions, articles, and active and passive voice in order to get rid of them as well as to find pedagogical implications to overcome such errors. The results note that the students commit a lot of errors in their writing compositions including errors of prepositions as well as morphological errors such as the morpheme "s". Hence, a special attention for grammatical aspects is required.

Zawahreh (2012) studies the written English errors committed by 350 students selected from tenth grade students in school of Ajloun, Jordan. He aims to identify the most common errors in their writing and explains the causes behind those errors. The findings indicate that tenth grade students in Ajloun School commit a lot of errors at different levels. Hence, at the morphological level, errors are shown in the lack of agreement between subject and verb. Function words are seen in the insertion of prepositions. Moreover, syntax is revealed through the omission of the main verb in addition to the wrong use of lexical items and the verb tenses. Hence, both interlingual and intralingual factors are the main causes of those errors. As a result, the researcher assumes that teachers should handle a variety of assignments in order to encounter this serious problem by teaching students the restriction of grammatical rules in writing skill as well as more practice of those rules in meaningful contexts.

Al-Shormani (2012) conducts a study on the sources of syntactic errors made by 50 Yemeni third year learners of English at the Ibb University. In his study, he adopts James' (1998) and Al-Shormani's (2012) error taxonomies in which he classifies the syntactic errors into five categories: prepositions, verb-phrase constructions, articles, subject-verb agreement and relative clauses. Finally, he declares that Yemeni learners face a serious problem in syntax. That is why he calls upon teaching syntactic categories inductively so as to elicit rules rather than memorizing them. At last, the researcher provides a remedy for syntactic errors of Yemeni learners by applying a technique suggested by both Celce-Murcia and Hilles (1988) which is called "discovery"; that contains four main steps: (i)

presentation, (ii) focused practice, (iii) communicative practice, incorporating information gap, choice and feedback, and (iv) teacher feedback.

Alhaysony (2012) investigates the types of errors in the use of articles among 100 first-year female Saudi EFL students of English in the University of Ha'il. The researcher categorizes those errors into: omission, addition and substitution errors which are frequent in the students' written samples. In addition, he maintains that English article system is a complex aspect of English grammar that even the most advanced learners can face problems in its acquisition. The findings indicate that Arabic interference and English itself are the main sources which influence the English writing of Saudi female EFL students which in turn affects negatively the learning process. Finally, the researcher suggests that explaining clearly the differences between L1 and L2 in the use of articles and more practice of English grammar are the best solutions to eliminate the writing errors of Saudi students.

It is obvious from the above studies that the focus is on analyzing the learners' errors. Hence, the current study agrees with the previous studies in that it tackles the grammatical errors as well as they are concerned with the writing skill only. Besides, it deals with analyzing errors. Indeed, there is a close relationship between Hasyim' s (2012), Al-Shormani' s (2012), and Zawahreh' s (2012) studies and the present one as all of them treat the factors behind grammatical errors. However, the present study is different from the previous studies in that it is concerned only with three main grammatical aspects: the use of articles, the morpheme "s" and verb-tense. Besides, it treats the factors behind grammatical errors among 60 second year Algerian students enrolled in the LMD system. Moreover, the current investigation is diagnostic because it informs the researcher about the grammatical competence of second year students at the University of Bejaia, Algeria.

# Chapter Three:

## Methodological Design and Presentation of the Findings

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## **Introduction:**

The current research is based on an error analysis approach focusing on the intralingual factors behind grammatical errors in the writing skill of second year students of English at the University of Bejaia. The following grammatical errors are selected by the researcher: the use of articles, verb-form and the morpheme “s”.

In this chapter, the researcher presents the analysis and the findings of the current study which are done manually. Hence, she provides a description of the participants as well as the procedure used for data collection. Besides, the researcher follows in her research Corder’s model of analyzing errors (1974- cited in Ellis and Barkhuizen 2005:57) which contains three main steps: 1- Identification of errors, 2- Description of errors, and 3- Explanation of errors. Moreover, the researcher focuses on identifying the possible sources of the grammatical errors in writing skill. Indeed, the researcher highlights a statistical analysis and classification of the intralingual grammatical errors committed by second year students.

## **Section 1: Design of the Study**

### **Description of the Sample:**

The sample under investigation consists of 60 second year LMD students of English at the University of Bejaia. They had studied English as a foreign language for at least 6 years before coming to University. Their age and sex are not taken into consideration in the present study. In fact, they are enrolled in the second semester of the academic year 2012/2013. Hence, they are equipped with certain background knowledge about paragraph writing since they practiced the writing skill in the first semester.

### **Description of the Procedure:**

The researcher had administered a diagnostic test to two groups of second year students (Group: 11 and 12) in which she asked them to write a narrative paragraph about one of the following topics:

- “An experience in your life through which you have learned something or a value”.
- “How can media improve your English language proficiency?”

The period of collecting data was in the second semester of the academic year 2012-2013. At that time, the students finished dealing with paragraphs writing and moved to writing essays. Indeed, the researcher intended to give the learners the test as part of her research, but the idea was given up after distributing the test to one group of second year students which shows their lack of seriousness. For this reason, the test was given by their teachers in order to raise the learners’ attention and work seriously.

After collecting data, it was remarked that most of second year students had chosen to write about the importance of media and they were 33 in number and the 27 others preferred to write about an experience they lived and through which they have learned something. Besides, the students were given a full class period about one hour and a half to write about one of the previously mentioned topics.

## Section Two: Data Analysis and Classification of Errors:

The students' writing compositions contain a lot of errors at different levels: grammar, spelling, and lexis, but the subject under investigation is concerned only with the grammatical errors. Hence, after collecting data and analyzing the grammatical errors, they were ascribed to intralingual factors. Indeed, the grammatical errors that the researcher is interested in are: the use of articles, verb-form, and the morpheme "s".

The following table reveals the classification of those error types found in the writing compositions of second year students:

**Table 1: The Number and Percentages of the Morphological and Syntactic Errors:**

<b>Types of errors</b>	<b>Number of errors</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Verb-form	39	34.52%
Articles	38	33.63%
The Morpheme "s"	36	31.85%
Total	113	100%

Table 1 shows the number and percentages of the intralingual errors committed by second year students. It seems to show clearly that second year students face a real problem at the grammatical level. Hence, there is a higher frequency of verb-form errors which contains 34.51% of the total grammatical errors, followed by errors of articles usage 33.62%. Finally, errors at the level of the morpheme "s" consist of 31.85% of the total number of errors. Indeed, the percentages mentioned in table 1 are obtained through dividing the number of error type by the total number of errors and then multiplied by one hundred.

## A Detailed Classification According to Errors' Sources:

The grammatical errors stated above are classified and presented with more details as follows:

### 1- Verb-Form Errors:

The total number of verb form errors, as indicated in table 1, consists of 39 which comprises 34.51% and they are divided into three main categories:

**Table 2: Verb-Form Errors:**

Types of errors	Number of Occurrence	Percentage
Inappropriate verb construction	31	79.50%
Lack of agreement between subject and verb	4	10.25%
Word order	4	10.25%
total	39	100 %

As indicated in Table 2, the most predominant type of errors within verb-form errors are the errors of inappropriate verb construction 79.48%, followed by both the subject-verb agreement and word order with 10.25% for each.

A representative sample of these errors is clearly shown in the following tables:

**Table 3: Inappropriate Verb Construction/ Tense:**

The Error	The Correction
1-When I <b>grow up</b> I understood that she was trying to hurt me.	1-When I <b>had grown up</b> I understood that she was trying to hurt me.
2-Last month, when the earthquake <b>shakes</b> I <b>have thought</b> that it was the end of the world.	2-Last month, when the earthquake <b>shook</b> I <b>thought</b> that it was the end of the world.
3-In the past, my best friend <b>betrays</b> me.	3-In the past, my best friend <b>betrayed</b> me.

4-One day, my father <b>wants</b> to test me, he <b>give</b> me a lot of work.	4-One day, my father <b>wanted</b> to test me, he <b>gave</b> me a lot of work.
5-Through this experience, I <b>realize</b> the real value of friendship.	5-Through this experience, I <b>realized</b> the real value of friendship.
6-In all my life, I <b>have</b> never <b>seen</b> a bad experience.	6-In all my life, I <b>had</b> never <b>seen</b> a bad experience.
7-I <b>have seen</b> the girl who <b>has deceived</b> me.	7-I <b>saw</b> the girl who <b>deceived</b> me.
8-After this experience, I <b>have learned</b> that every one lives to satisfy only himself.	8-After this experience, I <b>learned</b> that every one lives to satisfy only himself.
9-I <b>have not listened</b> to my mother's advice.	9-I <b>did not listen</b> to my mother's advice.
10-I <b>had lived</b> a situation which <b>had changed</b> my life.	10-I <b>lived</b> a situation which <b>changed</b> my life.
11-She <b>never told</b> me the truth.	11-She <b>had</b> never <b>told</b> me the truth.
12-He <b>runned</b> to help my father.	12-He <b>ran</b> to help my father.
13-I <b>heard</b> some one calling me.	13-I <b>heard</b> some one calling me.
14- They <b>gived</b> me a huge amount of money.	14-They <b>gave</b> me a huge amount of money.
15-I <b>didn't known</b> what to do.	15-I <b>didn't know</b> what to do.
16-I <b>didn't learned</b> any lesson.	16-I <b>didn't learn</b> any lesson.
17-When I <b>leaved</b> home, I <b>did not took</b> my umbrella.	17-When I <b>left</b> home, I <b>did not take</b> my umbrella.
18-I <b>didn't joined</b> my uncle's wedding.	18-I <b>didn't join</b> my uncle's wedding.
19-Something terrible <b>was happen</b> in my life.	19-Something terrible <b>happened</b> in my life
20-I asked my father <b>to came</b> .	20-I asked my father <b>to come</b> .
21-We will have much experience that <b>made us learned</b> something.	21-We will have much experience that <b>will make us learn</b> something.

22-Through listening to the radio, we <b>are becoming</b> more fluent.	22-Through listening to the radio, we <b>become</b> more fluent.
23- Also reading newspapers <b>led</b> us to know more about English language.	23- Also reading newspapers <b>leads</b> us to know more about English language.
24-Nowadays, media <b>become</b> a way of improving our skills.	24-Nowadays, media <b>has become</b> a way of improving our skills.
25-Internet <b>becomes</b> the most important tool in learning.	25-Internet <b>has become</b> the most important tool in learning.
26-We use media every day in every work that we <b>done</b> .	26-We use media every day in every work that we <b>do</b> .

The above table represents the errors committed by second year students in their writing compositions. Thus, the first ( number1) example in table 3 shows that the participants use the present simple “grow up” instead of past perfect “had grown up” which reveals the participants’ failure to perceive the conditions of applying the two verb forms. Thus, the error is due to the incomplete knowledge application of grammar rules.

As mentioned in table 3, the examples 2, 3, 4, and 5 reveal that the participants do not master when to use the appropriate form of tenses that is why they confuse their uses. Hence, they use the present simple “shakes”, “betrays”, “gives” and “realize” instead of the past simple “shook”, “betrayed”, “gave” and “realized”. In addition, in the example 2 they use the present perfect “have thought” instead of “thought”. These examples reflect clearly to what extent the participants confuse between the use of tenses. Hence, these errors are attributed to incomplete rule application on tenses. The same reason is attributed to example number 6 in which the participants use the present perfect “have never seen” instead of past perfect “had never seen”.

Furthermore, the examples 7, 8, and 9 in table 3 demonstrate that the participants fail to apply the rules of the language. They use the present perfect “have seen” and “has deceived”, “have learned” and “have not listened” instead of using the past simple “saw”, “deceived”, “learned”, and “did not listen”. Hence, such errors are due to incomplete rule application where the participants do not have sufficient knowledge on the use of tenses. The same reason is ascribed to the instances 10 and 11 in which the participants use the

past perfect “had lived ...had changed” instead of past simple “lived ...changed” and they use the past simple “never told” instead of past perfect “had never told”.

A clear look at the sentences number 12, 13, 14, and 17 shown in table 3 reveals that the participants apply the past forms of the regular verbs which end with “ed” to irregular verbs. They use the verb “runned” instead of “ran”, “heared” instead of “heard”, “gived” instead of “gave”, and they use the verb “leaved” instead of “left”. These errors are attributed to overgeneralization. That is to say, the participants over generalize the “ed” form of the regular verbs to the irregular ones because they do not know their conjugations.

Indeed, the example 17 shows also that the informants commit errors using the wrong form after the verb “to do”. They use “did not took” instead of “did not take”. Hence, they apply the past simple after the past simple of the negative form “didn’t” instead of the infinitive “do”. The same errors are committed in the examples 15, 16, and 18. The participants write “did not known”, “did not learned”, and “did not joined” instead of “did not know”, “did not learn”, and “did not join”. All these instances are evidence of the ignorance of rule restrictions on the use of forms of verbs after the auxiliary “to do”.

Besides, the example number 19 reveals that the participants create a structure “was happen” instead of “happened” because they believe that the auxiliary “was” refers to something in the past. This process is due to overgeneralization in which Richards (1974: 174) states that “overgeneralization covers instances where the learner creates a deviant structure on the bases of his experience of other structures in the target language”. That is, the participants tend to use the auxiliary “was” plus a verb because they know that “was” expresses an action done in the past. So, they over generalize the rule.

The example number 20 contains an error in which the informants use the past simple form after “to” that is “to came” instead of applying “bare infinitive” that is “to come”. This shows that the participants ignore the rules of using the infinitive after the use of “to”. This kind of error is attributed to ignorance of rule restrictions. Besides, the example 21 contains an error in which the participants use the past simple “made us learned” instead of the future form “will make us learn”. This shows that the informants lack the mastery of the use of the future tense. So, the error is attributed to incomplete rule application. The same reason is obvious in the example number 23 in which the participants use the past simple “led” instead of the present simple “lead”.

Besides, example 22 presents another error made by the participants where they use the present continuous “are becoming” instead of “become”. This error is due to incomplete application of rules on tense.

In the instances 24 and 25 the participants commit errors in the use of the present simple “become” and “becomes” instead of present perfect “has become” and “has become». This is caused by incomplete knowledge of rules in which the learners are confused in the use of tenses.

Finally, the last example reveals that the informants do not have sufficient knowledge on the use of tenses that is why they did not distinguish when to use the past participle of verbs. They used “done” instead of “do”. Hence, it is attributed to incomplete application of rules.

Another category of verb-form errors is the lack of agreement between subject and verb which contains four errors. The following table contains those errors committed by the participants:

**Table 4: Lack of Agreement between Subject and Verb:**

The Error	Correction
1-Problems <b>is</b> the meaning of life.	1-Problems <b>are</b> the meaning of life.
2-There <b>is</b> some people who do not know what is meant by a friend.	2-There <b>are</b> some people who do not know what is meant by a friend.
3-There <b>is</b> many different kinds of technologies.	3-There <b>are</b> many different kinds of technologies.
4-Newspapers <b>is</b> another way that can help us in our learning process.	4-Newspapers <b>are</b> another way that can help us in our learning process.

Table 4 shows the errors committed by the participants in the relationship between subject and verb. It shows clearly that the participants do not capture the rules of subject-verb agreement, in which a verb must agree with its subject in person and number. That is, if the subject is plural, the verb must be in plural form and if the subject is singular, the



verb must be in singular form (Silva 1998:151). Hence, as it is obvious in all the examples shown in the above table, the participants use “is” instead of “are” which is the correct form. So, these errors are attributed to incomplete application of rules.

The written compositions of the participants reflect another problem at the level of the word order which contains four main errors. They are clearly shown in the following table:

**Table 5: Errors at the Level of Word Order:**

The Error	Correction
1-I <b>really do</b> know <b>not</b> what I’m going to do.	1-I <b>really do not</b> know what I’m going to do.
2-I <b>say always</b> that I have a lot of friends.	2-I <b>always say</b> that I have a lot of friends.
3-The thing that I learned is <b>to not be</b> shy.	3-The thing that I learned is <b>not to be</b> shy.
4-By time children <b>will more be</b> professional.	4-By time children <b>will be</b> more professional.

Table 5 shows that the participants face a problem at the level of word order. It reveals clearly that they do not capture the rules of syntax. Hence, the first example represents that the participants used a wrong form of the negative form. It is shown in “really do know not” instead of “really do not know” while the usual way to express negation is with “not” after the auxiliary (Raimes 1998:29). In the second example, the participants use “say always” instead of “always say” where indeed adverbs of frequency go before the main verb (Penston 2005:52). In the third instance, they use a wrong form of the negative “to be” in which they write “to not be” instead of “not to be” and in the fourth example they use “will more be” instead of “will be more”. All these errors are ascribed to incomplete knowledge application of rules which represents some deviations in the participants’ sentences.

## **2- The Use of Articles:**

The use of articles is another problematic area for the participants which comprises 33.62% errors of the total errors found in the writing compositions of the participants. These errors are divided into categories as follows:

**Table 6: Errors in Articles:**

Types of errors	Number of errors	Percentage
Omission of “the”	19	50%
Addition of “the”	01	02.63%
Omission of “a, an”	11	28.95%
Addition of “a, an”	01	02.63%
Misuse of articles	06	15.79%
Total	38	100%

From the above Table, the first thing to be noticed is that the errors do not occur with similar frequency under one linguistic category. Hence, as it is mentioned, the total number of errors in the use of articles is 38. Thus, the omission of the article “the” consists of 50% of the total errors, followed by the errors of omission of “a” and “an” with 28.94%. Then, misuse of articles consisting of 15.78%. Finally, addition of “the” and addition of “a” and “an” with 02.63% for each.

**Table 7: Omission of “the”:**

Omission of “the”	Correction
1-When I was a student <u>in first year.</u>	1-When I was a student in <b>the</b> first year.
2-It was my first year <u>in University.</u>	2-It was my first year in <b>the</b> University.
3-When I was <u>in secondary school.</u>	3-When I was in <b>the</b> secondary school.
4... that we can not get <u>during lecture</u> in the University.	4... that we can not get during <b>the</b> lecture in the University.
5-Through listening <u>to radio</u> we can improve our listening.	5-Through listening to <b>the</b> radio we can improve our listening.
6- It was one <u>of most</u> beautiful places that I wish to visit again.	6- It was one of <b>the</b> most beautiful places that I wish to visit again.
7- <u>Among ways</u> which lead the students to master a language is using media.	7-Among <b>the</b> ways which lead the students to master a language is using media.
8- <u>On other hand</u> , media is important.	8-On <b>the</b> other hand, media is important.

9- <u>Internet</u> helps us to <u>master speaking</u> skill.	9- <b>The</b> Internet helps us to master <b>the</b> speaking skill.
10-Reading a newspaper helps us to know more <u>about English</u> language.	10-Reading a newspaper helps us to know more about <b>the</b> English language.
11- <u>Internet</u> is a tool that facilitates learning.	11- <b>The</b> Internet is a tool that facilitates learning.
12-According <u>to new methods</u> the use of media helps us to improve our skills.	12-According to <b>the</b> new methods the use of media helps us to improve our skills.
13- <u>First thing</u> I did when the earthquake shook was to go outside.	13- <b>The</b> First thing I did when the earthquake shook was to go outside.
14-Media allows us to know more <u>about rules governing English</u> language.	14-Media allows us to know more about <b>the</b> rules governing <b>the</b> English language.
15-I want my experience to be an advice <u>for readers.</u>	15-I want my experience to be an advice for <b>the</b> readers.
16-When I was <u>in high school.</u>	16-When I was in <b>the</b> high school.
17-When I was <u>in primary school.</u>	17-When I was in <b>the</b> primary school.

All the examples shown in the above table are comprised mainly of incorrect use of the article “the” where the participants omit it. So, the errors are shown in: “in first year”, “in University”, “in secondary school”, “during lecture”, “to radio”, “of most”, “among ways”, “on other hand”, “internet”, “master speaking skill”, “about English”, “internet”, “to new methods”, “first thing”, “about rules”, “English language”, “for readers”, “in high school” and “in primary school”. The correct forms are: “in the first year”, “in the University”, “in the secondary school”, “during the lecture”, “to the radio”, “of the most”, “among the ways”, “on the other hand”, “the internet”, “master the speaking skill”, “about the English”, “the internet”, “to the new methods”, “the first thing”, “about the rules”, “the English language”, “for the readers”, “in the high school” and “in the primary school”. In all these examples, the participants have omitted “the” before nouns or noun phrases made particular in context. In this context, Raimes (1998:59) claims that the definite article “the” is used “*when a noun or a noun phrase makes a specific reference for your reader, the reader will know from information contained in the text what actual person, thing or concept you are referring to*”. Hence, these errors are ascribed to incomplete knowledge of

rules application because it shows clearly that the participants confuse the situations of using the article “the” before nouns made particular in context.

**Table 8: Addition of “the”:**

Addition of “the”	Correction
1- <u>The confidence</u> is an important aspect.	1- <b>Confidence</b> is an important aspect.

In the above example, the participants used the article “the” instead of no article before abstract nouns where they should not be used, and this is attributed to incomplete application of rules in which the participants do not have sufficient knowledge on the use of the article “the”. In this case, the rule says: “No article is used before abstract nouns” (Azar 2002:108).

**Table 9: Omission of “a” and “an”:**

Omission of “a” and “an”	Correction
1-He lets his students <u>in bad situation</u> .	1-He lets his students in <b>a</b> bad situation.
2-I always say that I <u>have lot of friends</u> .	2-I always say that I have <b>a</b> lot of friends.
3-One day my father wanted to test me, he gave <u>me lot of work</u> .	3-One day my father wanted to test me, he gave me <b>a</b> lot of work.
4-It was <u>experience</u> that I will never forget.	4-It was <b>an experience</b> that I will never forget.
5-... knowledge that we can not get <u>during lecture</u> in the University.	5-... knowledge that we can not get during <b>a</b> lecture in the University.
6-How words are combined <u>in good way</u> .	6-how words are combined in <b>a</b> good way.
7-The internet can provide many things <u>in very short time</u> .	7-The internet can provide many things in <b>a</b> very short time.
8- <u>Reading newspaper</u> leads us to know more about the English language.	8-Reading <b>a</b> newspaper leads us to know more about the English language.
9-Media permits the learners to communicate with native speakers <u>as result</u> they will achieve language proficiency.	9-Media permits the learners to communicate with native speakers as <b>a</b> result they will achieve language proficiency.
10-In my opinion <u>as student</u> .	10-In my opinion as <b>a</b> student.

11-Media <b>is easy</b> way to get knowledge.	11-Media is <b>an</b> easy way to get knowledge.
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Table 9 shows that the participants confuse between the use of articles. This is clear in the omission of both the articles “a” and “an” in the examples 1, 6, 7 and 11. This is obvious in “bad situation”, “good way”, “very short time” and “easy way” instead of “a good situation”, “a good way”, “a very short time” and “an easy way”. Hence, in all these examples, the participants omit the articles “a” and “an” before class nouns defined by adjectives which is an error. Apparently, the participants are not knowledgeable enough of some rules of applying both articles “a” and “an”. That is why these errors are attributed to incomplete application of rules.

Moreover, in the instances 2 and 3, the participants omit “a” in “lot of friends” and “lot of work” instead of “a lot of friends” and “a lot of work”. In these cases, the participants ignore the rule of using the article “a” in certain expressions of quantity. Thus, these errors are ascribed to ignorance of rule restrictions.

Besides, the instances 4, 5, 8, 9 and 10 represent the omission of the article “a” and “an” in “experience”, “lecture”, “newspaper”, “result” and “student” instead of “an experience”, “a lecture”, “a newspaper”, “a result” and “a student”. These errors are due to incomplete application of rules in which the participants tend to omit “a” where they should not omit it.

**Table 10: Addition of “a” and “an”:**

<b>Addition of “a” and “an”</b>	<b>Correction</b>
1-I had <b><u>a bad emotions.</u></b>	1-I <b>had bad emotions.</b>

From the above table, it is noticed that second year students commit an error in which they add the article “a” in the example “a bad emotions” instead of “bad emotions”. The informants add “a” instead of “no article” before a plural noun qualified by an adjective. This process is attributed to incomplete application of rules.

**Table 11: Misuse of Articles:**

<b>Misuse of Articles</b>	<b>Correction</b>
1-It was <b><u>an horrible</u></b> picture that I will never forget.	1-It was <b>a</b> horrible picture that I will never forget.
2-It is <b><u>the way</u></b> that students can help them with.	2-It is <b>a</b> way that students can help them with.
3-Media is <b><u>the means</u></b> of knowledge.	3-Media is <b>a</b> means of knowledge.
4-Through experience we understand <b><u>a real</u></b> values of things.	4-Through experience we understand <b>the real</b> values of things.
5-The radio remains <b><u>the source</u></b> of acquiring <b><u>the good</u></b> pronunciation in any language.	5-The radio remains <b>a</b> source of acquiring <b>a</b> good pronunciation in any language.

The first noticeable error, in the table above, is the misuse of the article “an”. The participants learnt that the article “a” is used before words beginning with a consonant and “an” is used before words beginning with a vowel. Besides, they learnt that “an” is used before a silent letter “h”. Hence, in this case, they over generalize the rule and use “an” before a word starting with “h” which is not a silent letter in the instance “an horrible” instead of “a horrible”.

Moreover, the instances 2, 3, 4 and 5 shed light on the extent to which the informants do not have enough knowledge on the use of both articles “a” and “the”. That is why they used “the way”, “the means”, “the means”, “the source” and “the good” instead of “a way”, “a means”, “a means”, “a source”, and “a good”. Such cases are due to incomplete application of rules.

### 3- Errors in the Use of the Morpheme “s”:

Another problem faced by second year students is the use of the morpheme “s” and these are the results of the present investigation on the use of this morpheme:

**Table 12: Errors Related to the Morpheme “s”:**

Types of Errors	Number of Errors	Percentage
1-Omission of plural ending “s”.	04	11.11%
2-Misplacement and over inclusion of plural “s”.	05	13.89%
3-Omission of third person “s”.	27	75%
Total	36	100%

The table above reflects the errors made by second year students in the use of the morpheme “s”. Thus, the most difficult features encountered by the participants within the category of the morpheme “s” are the omission of third person “s” (75%), then misplacement and over inclusion of plural ending “s” (13.88%). Finally, the omission of the plural ending “s” contains 11.11% of the total errors at the level of the morpheme “s”.

**Table 13: Omission of Plural Ending “s”:**

The Error	Correction
1-Media can improve our English language proficiency by many <u>way</u> .	1-Media can improve our English language proficiency by many <b>ways</b> .
2-Media are <u>mean</u> by which information are transmitted.	2-Media are <b>means</b> by which information are transmitted.
3-Every body had passed through many <u>experience</u> in their life.	3-Every body had passed through many <b>experiences</b> in their life.
4-In my life I lived many <u>experience</u> .	4-In my life I lived many <b>experiences</b> .

From the four examples shown in table 13, it is seen that the participants omit the plural ending “s” in the words “way”, “mean”, “experience” and “experience” instead of using “ways”, “means”, “experiences” and “experiences”. All these errors are attributed to incomplete application of rules in which the participants used the plural form of words as similar to their singular forms where it is not the case.

**Table 14: Misplacement and Over Inclusion of Plural “s”:**

<b>The Error</b>	<b>Correction</b>
1-Much <u>informations</u> are transmitted through using media.	1-Much <b>information</b> are transmitted through using media.
2-All these advantages help <u>peoples</u> to improve their language.	2-All these advantages help <b>people</b> to improve their language.
3- The internet is a <u>tools</u> which provides much information.	3- The internet is <b>a tool</b> which provides much information.
4-Life is <u>a challenges</u> that we have to meet.	4-Life is <b>a challenge</b> that we have to meet.
5-I began to judge myself about any <u>mistakes</u> .	5-I began to judge myself about any <b>mistake</b> .

In table 14, the examples 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5 the participants over include the plural “s” in the following words: in the first example they use “informations” instead of “information” as a plural form which is an error. In the second example, they use “peoples” in which they have to use “people” because they do not refer to “nations”. Besides, in the third, fourth, and the fifth instance they over include the plural “s” in the words “tools”, “challenges”, and “mistakes” where they should use “tool”, “challenge”, and “mistake”. Hence, all the examples 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5 are ascribed to ignorance of target language restrictions on the use of the plural “s”.



**Table 15: The Omission of Third Person “s”**

<b>The error</b>	<b>Correction</b>
1-When some one <b>arrive</b> to the end, every thing seems dark to him.	1-When some one <b>arrives</b> to the end, every thing seems dark to him.
2-She <b>tell</b> my secrets to other people.	2-She <b>tells</b> my secrets to other people.
3- Friendship is one of the relations that <b>give</b> importance to our life.	3- Friendship is one of the relations that <b>gives</b> importance to our life.
4- When one of the friends <b>neglect</b> the real meaning of friendship.	4- When one of the friends <b>neglects</b> the real meaning of friendship.
5- If one person <b>betray</b> his friend.	5- If one person <b>betrays</b> his friend.
6- She <b>know</b> that it is very difficult to go far alone.	6- She <b>knows</b> that it is very difficult to go far alone.
7- Suddenly my sister <b>fall</b> down.	7- Suddenly my sister <b>falls</b> down.
8-He <b>let</b> me know that true friendship is a divine quality.	8-He <b>lets</b> me know that true friendship is a divine quality.
9-This experience <b>reveal</b> how am lucky to have him as a friend.	9- This experience <b>reveals</b> how am lucky to have him as a friend.
10- She <b>prefer</b> her because she was her friend’s daughter.	10- She <b>prefers</b> her because she was her friend’s daughter.
11- Reading a newspaper for example <b>help</b> the students to enrich their minds.	11- Reading a newspaper for example <b>helps</b> the students to enrich their minds.
12- It <b>allow</b> us to acquire a good level.	12- It <b>allows</b> us to acquire a good level.
13-Even if it <b>kill</b> creativity.	13- Even if it <b>kills</b> creativity.
14-It <b>facilitate</b> research and <b>enrich</b> the researcher.	14-It <b>facilitates</b> research and <b>enriches</b> the researcher.
15- It <b>serve</b> as a guide for the students.	15- It <b>serves</b> as a guide for the students.
16- It <b>develop</b> our English language proficiency and <b>reinforce</b> our learning process.	16- It <b>develops</b> our English language proficiency and <b>reinforces</b> our learning process.
17- We look to media as a way which <b>promote</b> the learning process.	17- We look to media as a way which <b>promotes</b> the learning process.

18- The radio which <b>remain</b> a source of knowledge.	18- The radio which <b>remains</b> a source of knowledge.
19- It <b>provide</b> opportunities for practice.	19- It <b>provides</b> opportunities for practice.
20- It <b>seem</b> to be one of the easiest means to get knowledge in a very short time.	20- It <b>seems</b> to be one of the easiest means to get knowledge in a very short time.
21- Television <b>help</b> us to improve the listening skill.	21- Television <b>helps</b> us to improve the listening skill.
22- It <b>permit</b> us to know how should we speak.	22- It <b>permits</b> us to know how should we speak.
23- It <b>give</b> much information.	23- It <b>gives</b> much information.
24- He <b>ignore</b> the importance of being faithful in this life.	24- He <b>ignores</b> the importance of being faithful in this life.
25- My friend <b>manage</b> his time.	25- My friend <b>manages</b> his time.

All the examples mentioned above are due to overgeneralization. So, the errors are: “arrive”, “tell”, “give”, “neglect”, “betray”, “know”, “fall”, “let”, “reveal”, “prefer”, “help”, “allow”, “kill”, “facilitate”, “enrich”, “serve”, “develop”, “reinforce”, “promote”, “remain”, “provide”, “seem”, “improve”, “permit”, “give”, “ignore”, and “manage” instead of; “arrives”, “tells”, “gives”, “neglects”, “betrays”, “knows”, “falls”, “lets”, “reveals”, “prefers”, “helps”, “allows”, “kills”, “facilitates”, “enriches”, “serves”, “develops”, “reinforces”, “promotes”, “remains”, “provides”, “seems”, “improves”, “permits”, “gives”, “ignores”, and “manages”. The participants understand that the personal pronouns end with no “s” in the present tense that is why they generalized the rule to the third person which ends with “s”. This type of error was explained by Duskova (1971- cited in Richards 1974:174) in that “*all grammatical persons take the same zero verbal ending except the third person singular in the present tense ...omissions of the “s” in the third person singular may be accounted for the heavy pressure of all other endingless forms*”.

Hence all the previously mentioned errors indicate that the participants do not know the rules of using the third person singular in which only this latter can serve as subjects of present tense verbs having the “-s” suffix (Silva 1998:22).

## **Conclusion:**

All along this chapter, the researcher presents in details the discussion of the findings obtained from the diagnostic test used in the present study. Hence, the results show that second year LMD students at the University of Bejaia commit a lot of grammatical errors. Hence, the results reveal that the most obvious frequent errors are verb-form errors, followed by article usage errors, and then errors at the level of the morpheme “s”. Besides, the researcher provides interpretations and discussion of the factors behind those grammatical errors committed by second year students.

# **Chapter Four:**

## **Conclusions, Implications, and Recommendations for Further Research**

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## **Introduction:**

This study investigates the possible factors behind grammatical errors in the writing skill of second year LMD students at the University of Bejaia. Hence, the present chapter is devoted to present the findings of the study, and to give its pedagogical implications. Besides, the limitations of the study are cited. Finally, some recommendations for further research are suggested.

## I.1. Conclusions:

After analyzing the data collected, the results show that second year students have a low level in grammar. That is, the higher percentage of errors lies in verb-form errors consisting of 34.51% of the total errors, followed by article usage 33.62%. Finally, errors of the morpheme “s” consist of 31.85% of the total errors. Moreover, the errors are attributed to their factors and they can be summarized as the following:

**Table 16: Summary of the Errors According to their Sources:**

<b>Error Type</b>	<b>Due to Incomplete application of rules</b>	<b>Due to Overgeneralization</b>	<b>Due to Ignorance of rule restrictions</b>
<b>Verb-form</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>05</b>	<b>05</b>
<b>Articles</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>01</b>	<b>02</b>
<b>Morpheme “s”</b>	<b>04</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>05</b>

The above table shows that the majority of errors at the level of verb-form is due to incomplete application of rules and the minority is attributed to overgeneralization and ignorance of rule restrictions. Indeed, the major verb-form error is in the use of past simple as it was shown in the results (see table 03) in addition to the errors of subject-verb agreement (see table 04). Besides, at the level of article (mis) use, incomplete application of rules is the factor behind the majority of errors. This is revealed in the omission of the articles either the definite article “the” or the indefinite articles “a” and “an”. Moreover, other errors are ascribed to ignorance of rule restrictions and overgeneralization. Finally, at the level of the morpheme “s”, overgeneralization is the main factor behind most of the errors. This is indicated in the omission of third person “s” which constitutes the major error in the use of the morpheme “s”. However, only few others are attributed to incomplete application of rules and ignorance of rule restrictions.

Moreover, the results obtained by the researcher supports the cognitive theory since the intralingual grammatical errors committed by second year students reveal the use of some strategies such as overgeneralization, omission, addition, and many others that are indicated in the results.

Finally, throughout this study, the researcher does not only reveal the occurrence of grammatical errors in the writing skill of second year students but also investigates the factors behind them. Therefore, there is a need for a possible solution in order to overcome the grammatical errors such as providing second year students with more practice and raising their awareness of their errors by providing them with feedback.

## **I.2. Pedagogical Implications for both Teachers and Students:**

Based on the findings of the present study, which reveal that second year students do not master the grammar rules of the English language, it is noteworthy to provide some pedagogical implications for both teachers and students.

At the level of the three grammatical categories investigated in this study, that are verb-form errors, article (mis) use, and errors of the morpheme “s”, teachers should create a way of introducing the grammar rules and this can be by applying the PPP process which stands for Presentation Practice Production in which teachers set up a situation to use a language, elicit some words that fits the situation, having the students practice the new language in a controlled way, and then encouraging the students to use the new language in a free way (Harmer 2001:80-82). By doing so, we are encouraging the students to deduce the rules instead of just memorizing them.

Besides, teachers should encourage their students to read in order to reinforce their knowledge on grammar rules because through reading they will encounter different situations and contexts in which articles, verb-forms and the morpheme “s” are used which in turn will raise the students’ awareness of the use of these linguistic categories. Harmer (2007:69) agrees with this idea by saying: *“plentiful exposure to language in use and plenty of opportunities to use it are vitally important for a student’s development of knowledge and skill”*. Moreover, teachers of morpho-syntax should inform the students about the rule restrictions of the morpheme “s” and the use of articles.

Furthermore, it is said that the syllabus of morpho-syntax module contains the same content as the syllabus of the writing module. However, the application of these contents still be just a façade in our University. That is to say, there is no application of the syllabuses. Hence, teachers of writing had better provide their students with topics that permit them to apply the grammatical rules that are taught in morpho-syntax sessions.

However, this may demand skillful teachers especially of writing since the application of grammar rules depends upon the needs of the learners.

Raising the students' awareness of the importance of analyzing errors in order to foster the spirit of making research in the students and increase their curiosity to look for the factors behind their errors.

Encouraging the students to write and making them conscious of the importance of writing is another criterion to take into consideration.

Furthermore, students should expose themselves to listening to authentic language produced by native speakers in order to compare their language and the native one and keep them in touch with language and raise their consciousness of the different rules of the English language.

### **I.3. Limitations of the Study:**

The present topic investigates the factors behind grammatical errors in the writing skill of second year students. Hence, it is crucial to present its limitations:

First, this study concerns writing skill only. So, the findings cannot be considered as the same in other language skills as it is concerned only with the intralingual grammatical errors.

Second, the present study involves a sample of 60 second year LMD students only. So, the findings cannot be generalized to all students of different levels. Besides, this study is conducted at Bejaia University. Thus, the results cannot be generalized to other Algerian Universities.

Finally, this research is conducted in a very limited period of time. Hence, there is a need to lengthen the period of time.

### **I.4. Recommendations for Further Research:**

Based on the review of literature and the results of the present study, the researcher suggests the following recommendations for further research:

The current study explored the factors behind the intralingual grammatical errors in the writing skill of second year students. Hence, further researchers may investigate the



interlingual grammatical errors and make a comparison between the intralingual grammatical errors and the interlingual errors.

This study is only concerned with the grammatical errors. Hence, other studies are required in other levels as lexis, spelling and punctuation.

This study is limited only to 60 participants. Hence, future studies on a larger example in a longer period of time are recommended.

The present study focuses on the factors behind grammatical errors in the writing skill. So, future studies may focus on the effect of error correction on the students' writing compositions.

Finally, this study focuses on the language production that is grammar. Hence, further research is needed to investigate the effect of errors on language comprehension.

# **General Conclusion**

## **Conclusion:**

The current study investigates the possible factors behind grammatical errors in the writing skill of second year LMD students at the University of Bejaia. Hence, the researcher has selected 60 second year students as a sample for her investigation. And in order to explore the research problem, she hypothesizes that second year students commit errors at the grammatical level because they do not master the grammar rules of the English language.

The ultimate aim of the study is to explore the different types of the grammatical errors committed by second year students and to look for the factors behind them.

In this research, the researcher administers a diagnostic test through which she obtains some data about the types of the grammatical errors among second year students which are: errors at the level of verb-form, article usage, and the morpheme “s”. Besides, the researcher discusses the factors behind those errors.

Verb-form errors, article misuse, and the morpheme “s” are the main categories of errors committed by second year students and they are attributed to overgeneralization, incomplete application of rules, and ignorance of rule restrictions. Therefore, more practice of the grammar rules is necessary and raising the students’ awareness of the importance of grammar and writing is another criterion to take into consideration.

The results of the present investigation show that second year students lack the mastery of grammar rules of the English language which is the researcher’s hypothesis. Hence, it is fair to say that the hypothesis of the current study is confirmed. However, our research is an on-going topic which needs to be extended with a large number of students with different objectives.

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# Appendices

Sample 01:

Write a paragraph about one of the following topics:

- 1- "How can media improve your English language proficiency?"
- 2- "An experience in your life through which you have learned something or a value".

Life is full of experiences, most of them can change the way you behave and the way you think. In my life I lived many experiences. I've got a chance to test some people's friendship. Friendship is one of the relations that give importance to our life and to our existence. It is a relation that all people look for and give it more importance. However, the experience that I had, taught me not to wait for others! Help. All this is because, few years ago, I was a kid playing with friends and suddenly I heard mum calling me and asking me to hurry up. Because my father was ill and he couldn't even move. So, I had to take him to the nearest hospital. I went out to beg people for a help. I was like a homeless kid in the street and people were laughing at me instead of helping me. Fortunately, I found my father's friend who helped my father. I say always that I have a lot of friends but this experience shows that I have no friend. It was experience that I will never forget.

Sample 02:

Write a paragraph about one of the following topics:

- 1- "How can media improve your English language proficiency?"
- 2- "An experience in your life through which you have learned something or a value".

Last month, something terrible was  
happen to me. When the earthquake shakes,  
I have thought that it was the end of the  
World. At that time I was at home with my  
little brother. My mother went to visit my  
grand parents and asked me to take care of  
my brother. Suddenly, I saw everything moving  
around us. I was afraid and my brother was  
shouting. I didn't know what to do. Suddenly,  
I saw the television falling down, I took my  
brother under the table and we waited till my  
father arrived. It was an horrible picture that  
I will never forget.

Sample 03:

Write a paragraph about one of the following topics:

- 1- "How can media improve your English language proficiency?"
- 2- "An experience in your life through which you have learned something or a value".

English language nowadays is the dominant language all over the world. So, media permits the learners to communicate with native speakers as result they will achieve language proficiency and according to new methods. The use of media helps us to improve our skills because it give much information. Among the media we have, the internet which helps us to develop our writing due to several information found in it. Besides, listening to the radio helps us to acquire a good pronunciation and learn new vocabulary and expressions also media helps us to save time. All these advantages help peoples to improve their language.

Sample 04:

Write a paragraph about one of the following topics:

- 1- "How can media improve your English language proficiency?"
- 2- "An experience in your life through which you have learned something or a value".

.....Media is the means of communication which can improve our English language proficiency. Nowadays, there exist different types of media such as TV, radio, newspapers and magazines. They are used for different purposes such as providing information, entertainment and learning. They can be helpful in learning a foreign language. For example: Television help us to improve the listening skills through exposure to authentic language produced by native speakers. Moreover, the internet is another medium which help us to improve our language skills through exposure to different types of texts. Consequently, it helps us to acquire a considerable amount of vocabulary and expressions.

To conclude, media is easy way to get knowledge, it facilitate research and enrich researchers. Therefore, we have to use it in the classroom.

## Résumé

L'analyse d'erreurs est considérée, depuis longtemps, un important aspect dans le secteur d'éducation. La présente étude a pour objectif de mettre en évidence les facteurs entraînant les étudiants de deuxième année LMD- Université de Bejaia- à commettre des erreurs grammaticales dans la production écrite en cours d'apprentissage d'une langue étrangères. L'objectif de cette recherche est de déterminer les erreurs de la morphologie et de la syntaxe des étudiants de la deuxième année Anglais et de trouver des facteurs qui entraînent ces erreurs. Pour analyser ce sujet, le chercheur s'est servi d'un teste diagnostique. Ce dernier à révélé que les étudiants de la deuxième année Anglais commettent des erreurs vue la généralisation et l'omission de certains segments de la phrase, et plusieurs d'autres facteurs. Les résultats montrent que les étudiants de la deuxième année rencontrent des difficultés en trois aspects principaux de la grammaire : la forme du verbe, l'utilisation d'articles et le morphème « s ». Enfin, la généralisation de règles, l'application incomplète de règles et l'ignorance de restrictions des règles sont les facteurs principaux de ces erreurs commises par deux groupes d'étudiants de la deuxième année Anglais. Alors, la recherche déduit quelques suggestions pédagogiques aux enseignants ainsi qu'aux étudiants et donne quelques recommandations pour approfondir la recherche.

**Mots-clés :** Analyse d'erreur, les compétences dans l'écrit, les erreurs grammaticales, langue étrangère.