An analysis of the learner's transfer errors (based on the teacher's own teaching experience, i.e., transfer in Written Expression) . A Case-Study of First Year LMD, University of Mascara, Algeria.

Benchennane Djamila, University of Mascara, Algeria

Abstract

The acquisition of English as a second foreign language among Algerian students has always been the subject matter of teachers and specialists. No one denies that English is preferred to French by a great proportion; though this latter has been a part of the Algerian child from the primary school right up to university.

However, during the process of second foreign language acquisition, the case of the English language here, errors are bound to be made and these are witnessed in performance activities like writing and speaking. This paper focuses on the errors common in the Algerian University students' written texts during their first year first semester session. Our concern here, is about the students at the University of Mascara.

The investigation was done through the use of observations and questionnaires administered to students. It was observed that some errors can be accounted for by the Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis which states that errors are a result of mother tongue interference while others can be accounted for by Error Analysis Hypothesis which assumes that errors occur due to gaps in knowledge of second language rules. It was observed through the investigation that students display quite a number of errors that include; omission, misinformation and misordering among others. Finally, some tips to assist learners in reducing errors through the provision of effective error correction in oral and written form will be suggested for the acquisition process to be effective at university.

ملخّــــص

ظل اكتساب اللغة الانجليزية باعتبارها لغة أجنبية ثانية بالنسبة للطلبة الجزائريين موضوع نقاش بين الأساتذة والمختصين، إذ لا ينكر أحد أن الطلبة يفضلون هذه اللغة على اللغة الفرنسية بنسبة كبيرة اليوم ، رغم أن هذه الأخيرة رافقت الطفل الجزائري منذ مرحلة الابتدائي وحتى الجامعة. ومع ذلك فإنّه أثناء عملية اكتساب اللغة الأجنبية الثّانية – حالة اللّغة الإنجليزية في هذا السّياق – يتمّ الوقوع في جملةٍ من الأخطاء تتعلّق غالباً بالنّشاطات الأدائية مثل الكتابة والكلام .

وستركز هذه الورقة البحثية على الأخطاء الشّائعة في النّصوص التي كتبها الطّلبة الجزائريون بهذه اللّغة أثناء السّداسي الأوّل من السّنة الأولى ، وسيكون اهتمامنا هنا بطلبة جامعة معسكر أنموذجاً . وقد أنجز هذا البحث من خلال الملاحظة واستبيانات موجهة للطّلبة . وقد لاحظنا أنّ بعض الأخطاء يمكن إدراجها ضمن فرضية التّحليل التقابلي الذي يصنّفها في إطار للتداخل مع اللغة الأم ، فيما يعتبره آخرون نتيجة للفجوة في المعرفة بقواعد اللّغة الثّانية . كما لاحظنا من خلال البحث أنّ أخطاء الطّلبة تتنوّع بين : الحذف ، الخطأ في المعلومة ، أخطاء ترتيب عناصر الجملة وغيرها.

وفي الأخير لاحظنا أنّه يمكن للطّالب أن يقلّل من أخطائه من خلال رؤيةٍ مقترحةٍ للتّصحيح الشّفهي والكتابي الفعّال في سبيل عملية اكتساب تكون فعّالة في الجامعة.

Research question :

- Why do learners make errors?

Hypothesis :

- Errors made by learners may be either a result of mother tongue interference or occur due to gaps in knowledge of second language rules.

Introduction :

English and French became the second languages (L2) for most African states. In Algeria, English became the second foreign language after French being the first foreign one. Thus the English language being the target language to people who had their own mother language, there are bound to be challenges in the learning and ultimate production of this target language. Psycholinguists believe that language acquisition is at better acquired between twelve months and five years of a child's development. In Algeria, most students are exposed to the English language from about the age of twelve. As a result they are bound to make some errors in the process of acquiring and producing the target language. Therefore, this research focused on the errors common in students' written texts and then make an analysis of the typology, patterns and possible solutions.

While reaching university level, a student should have almost reached target language-like stages in L2 usage. However, this has been noted not to be generally so. The written texts produced by first level at the University of Mascara have greatly proved that L2 learning is quite challenging as demonstrated by error riddled texts which they produce. This is the issue which triggered this research. Thus, the aim of this research is to establish the nature of errors made by students when writing academic texts.

The domain of errors by L2 learners is a contentious area which led to the founding of the Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis (CAH) and eventually the error Analysis Hypothesis as approaches to determine the source, types and patterns of errors. Thus the Error Analysis Approach, which is regarded as a weaker version of the Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis, is employed in this research so as to determine the source types and even possible solutions to the errors.

Analysis :

By analyzing errors we can obtain information about how a language is learned, errors reflect the learner internal constructs, which for Selinker constitute an independent language system called interlanguage (Selinker, 1972), and the amount of knowledge a learner has of a language. However, the evaluation of the competence of a learner goes beyond the analysis of errors alone, focus on other aspects such as avoidance of difficult structures is an indicator of the progress made in the learning of a language (Yip, V., 1962: 5). The analysis of errors is however crucial because it allows the observation of actual learner output and gives teachers and researchers the possibility to explain how learning progresses. For Ellis (2003), error analysis is also important because it provides the researcher with a methodology to study learner language.

Another reason that justifies the analysis of errors is language teaching. In the evolution of language teaching methods, the study of errors has played a very distinctive role, the first they were avoided at all costs, and impeccable oral and written production was the objective for learners. The recent trends of communicative methods focus mainly on developing communicative skills, with errors being of less importance as long as they do not hinder communication.

When describing learner language, the observation of the learner output conveys certain generalizations on how a second language is learned, but what researchers look for is the reasons for the phenomena observed. In this perspective, Selinker (1972) attributes five reasons to the process of learning a second language; these reasons are briefly explained as follows:

- Language transfer: the output is explained as a result of the interaction with the learner mother tongue.
- Transfer of training: the output is explained in terms of the type of training to learn the language the learner has had.
- Strategies of second language learning: the output is explained by the association the learner makes with the material to learn.
- Strategies of second language communication: the output is explained by the association the learner makes with communication with native speakers of the target language.
-Overgeneralization of target language linguistic material: the output is explained by the overgeneralizations the learner makes of syntactic rules and semantic aspects of thetarget language.

There are three different approaches to the analysis of "learner English" (Swan and Smith, 1987), namely, contrastive analysis, transfer analysis, and error analysis. As Okuma (2000) noted, these approaches differ in their standpoints. Contrastive analysis compares the structures of two language systems and predicts errors. Transfer analysis, on the other hand, compares "learner English" with L1 and attempts to explain the structure of those errors that can be traced to language transfer. Error analysis compares "learner English" with English (L2) itself and judges how learners are "ignorant" (James, 1998).

In terms of error diagnosis and feedback giving, most existing systems adopt the contrastive analysis and error analysis approach.

Mclaughlin (1987) states that the Error Analysis Approach seeks to determine the source of errors in order to learn more about interference and development, while the Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis is concerned more about finding the nature of learner errors.

In this respect, a study on errors common in students' written texts would be of a great help to determine whether the errors will be a result of interference or development. (Mclaughlin 1987) finds out also that errors can be attributed to intra-lingual (develop-

mental) and interlingual (influence of L1) factors.

Errors are also said to be a result of the interaction of both factors. Selinker (1969) coined the term inter-language to refer to the interim grammars constructed by L2 learners as they approximate the target language and this interlanguage is riddled with errors.

Ellis (1997:33) says 'The learner's grammar is transitional. Learners change their grammar from one time to another by adding rules, deleting rules, and restructuring the whole system.

As a result, when learners add, delete or restructure their grammatical constructions, errors occur.'

Ellis (1997) raises the need to distinguish between errors and mistakes and makes an important distinction between the two. He says that errors reflect gaps in the learner's knowledge; they occur because the learner does not know what is correct. Mistakes reflect occasional lapses in performance; they occur because, in a particular instance, the learner is unable to perform what he or she knows.

Carroll (1964) argues that the circumstances of learning a second language are like those of a mother tongue. Sometimes there are interferences and occasionally responses from one language system will intrude into speech in the other language. It appears that learning is most successful when the situations in which the two languages (L1 and L2) are learned, are kept as distinct as possible (Faerch and Kasper, 1983). To successfully learn L2 requires the L2 learner to often preclude the L1 structures from the L2 learning process, if the structures of the two languages are distinctly different.

Beardsmore (1982) suggests that many of the difficulties a second language learner has with the phonology, vocabulary and grammar of L2 are due to the interference of habits from L1. The formal elements of L1 are used within the context of L2, resulting in errors in L2, as the structures of the languages, L1 and L2 are different.

The relationship between the two languages must then be considered. Albert and Obler (1978) claim that people show more lexical interference on similar items. So it may follow that languages with more similar structures (eg English and French) are more susceptible to mutual interference than languages with fewer similar features (eg English and Japanese). On the other hand, we might also expect more learning difficulties, and thus more likelihood of performance interference at those points in L2 which are more distant from L1, as the learner would find it difficult to learn and understand a completely new and different usage. Hence the learner would resort to L1 structures for help (Selinker, 1979; Dulay et al, 1982;

Selinker et al (1975) carried out a research in an English elementary school in Canada and discovered three main errors made by learners during L2 learning. They discovered transfer overgeneralization and simplification errors. Ellis also researched on types of errors and came up with similar findings. He also discovered errors of omission, misinformation and misordering.

This study is meant to benefit the L2 teacher, from high school right up to tertiary level. The findings will help the L2 teacher in assessing the students' work and also in

coming up with methodologies suitable for assisting the L2 learner to become highly proficient and competent in using the L2. Ellis (1997) argues that classification of errors helps us in diagnosing learners' language problems at any stage of their development. The identification of errors is also essential in the sense that it becomes easier on the part of the teacher to help correct the errors after identifying their various types.

Hadley (1993) argues that writing is a complex skill as such one should be exposed to environments which enhance this skill especially those writing in the L2. Such learners should be exposed to more practice in academic writing in the L2 and making sure that the errors existing in their work are identified, corrected and then, the learner takes note of them and tries to improve on them.

Methodology :

Thi study focused on errors common among students at the University of Mascara. A sample population of a thirty eight respondents (one group) was randomly drawn out of three hundred of students. A random sample is more representative of the whole population and findings can be easily generalized to the whole population. Thus, qualitative research design was used.

Qualitative design accounts for the descriptive part of the research brought about by interviews and observations. The use of questionnaires is accounted for by the qualitative research design in which numbered data obtained from questionnaires administered to learners was analyzed.

The Case Study strategy of enquiry was also used, whereby we only focused on first year LMD students in the Faculty of Letters and Languages, department of English. This enabled us to explore in depth the envisaged problem. Observations were used in analyzing the students' written texts (only texts written in English) and as a way of questionnaires were also administered to students.

Theoretical Framework :

We need to draw a distinction between Contrastive analysis which is the systematic study of a pair of languages with a view to identifying their structural differences and similarities and Error analysis that assumes that errors indicate learning difficulties and that the frequency of a particular error is evidence of the difficulty learners have in learning the particular form. The main difference between these two is that the former I.e. Contrastive analysis tries to predict the errors one may make in L2 but the latter i.e. Error analysis identifies the errors from L2 production.

The Error Analysis Approach was employed in this study. The Error Analysis Approach is regarded as a weaker version of the Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis. It is concerned with finding out more about the nature of learner errors. This is why it was chosen for this study because it helps in the identification of errors and how they could be corrected.

Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis (CAH) was formulated by Charles Fries in 1945

and was later popularized by Robert Lado in the late 1950s. According to Ellis (1997:38) Contrastive Analysis is "a set of procedures for comparing and contrasting the linguistic systems of two languages in order to identify their structural similarities and differences." The hypothesis draws from the behaviourist perspective which regards language learning as involving habit formation and therefore according to scholars of this view, when one acquires his or her first language (Mother tongue/L1), he or she acquires its linguistic habits, for example sounds and when that person tries to learn a second language, it would mean that the second language will contend with the first language as the linguistic habits of the L1 will be transferred to the L2. Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis predicts that learning of a second language will be influenced by the first language acquisition of the second language where similarities in structure exist which is termed transference. On the other hand, it is predicted that where differences occur, the first language is said to interfere with the learning of the second language as it is assumed that the second language learner will encounter problems in acquiring the target language in such a situation.

Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis assets that errors are a result of the L1 interference and assumed that elements of the second language that are similar to the L1 will be simple for learner to acquire but elements which are different will be difficult and will cause a learner to make errors.

Error analysis hypothesis is regarded as a weaker version of CAH and arose as a counter argument of the assertions made by Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis . The hypothesis seeks to find out more on the nature of the learner errors. It studies the patterns of errors so as to explain their courses. Researchers in this field include Corder (1976), Dulay and Burt (1972) among several others.

According to [1] Dulay and Burt (1972) in McLaughlin (1987:67) '…the majority of errors that children make reflect the influence of the target second language more than the influence of the child's first language'.

This shows that errors are not merely a result of L1 interference as predicted by Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis but are evidence of the 'gaps in learners' knowledge of the target language' (Ellis 1997:139).

Error Analysis Hypothesis does not pin down error causes on L1 interference but regards error making as 'an inevitable and positive part of language learning as the learner gets creative in the construction process' (Hedge 2000:15). The language produced by a learner in the process of acquiring the second language is referred to as the interlanguage which is a term coined by Selinker in (1969) to refer to 'the interim grammars constructed by second language learners on their way to the target language. Interlanguage is riddled with errors as the learner tries to reach target language-like forms and errors are regarded as development rather than caused by interference of the L1. Error Analysis thus tries to identify and describe errors in a learner's interlanguage.

Error Analysis Hypothesis has met a number of criticisms from different scholars. Schachter and Celce-Murcia (1977) argue that it is difficult to be certain precisely what type of error a second language learner is making or why the learner makes it'

(McLaughlin 1987:68). They assert that the same error can be attributed to developmental errors as those found in the acquisition of the first language as well as to factors reflecting the influence of the learner's first language.

Another point of argument against Error Analysis has been that most studies in the field are based on cross-sectional samples in which data are gathered at a single point in time by various subjects.

Analysis of errors made by second language learners is important to the second language teacher in that it provides information as to how the learner has progressed towards the goal of second language acquisition. The learner can also analyze errors so as to self correct and researchers can also analyze errors to determine how a second language is learned. Errors bring out the psychological state of the learner and thus Error Analysis is of great importance as it provides factual data to base preparation of teaching material and methods rather than relying on theoretical speculation.

A learner does not always recognize his or her errors and even when his or her attention is drawn to them, he or she may fail to correct them and might, in trying to correct them, commit more errors.

Error Analysis is therefore vital as it enables the teacher to know how the learner makes these errors and provide corrective feedback which enhances learning and acquisition of the appropriate rules. Error analysis also provides the language teacher with information as to whether what has been taught has been well grasped or not. The hypothesis is of paramount importance to this study as the teacher has to determine the source and patterns of errors a learner makes so that he or she provides appropriate error correction that enables the learner to identify the errors and be able to self correct.

Dulay and Burt in Mclaughlin (1987:67), say that "…the majority of errors that children make reflect the influence of the target second language more than the influence of the child's first language."

Errors are not merely a result of first language interference as predicted by the Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis, but are evidence of, "gaps in learners' knowledge of the target language." This hypothesis also regards error making as, "…an inevitable and positive part of language learning, as the learner gets creative in the construction process" (Hedge (2000:15). However the Error Analysis Hypothesis has met with a number of criticisms from different scholars. Schachter and Celce-Murcia (1977) [2] agree that it is difficult to be certain what type of learner is making or why the learner makes it. They argue that the same error can be attributed to developmental errors as those found in the acquisition of the second language as well as to factors reflecting the influence of the learners' L1.

Types and causes of errors :

Errors are an inevitable part of language learning as they indicate the learner's level of proficiency in the target language. A teacher's role is to assist the learner to work on reducing his/her errors so as to produce students who according to Rivers (1993) in

the end are capable of effectively communicating at a high level in the target language, in this case, English. It is vital therefore to study the patterns of errors students make so as to help them achieve higher levels of competence. From this research of errors common in first year, first semester LMD students at the University of Mascara, it was gathered that the most prevalent errors are as Ellis (1997) and Selinker et al (1975), noted, that is, errors of transference, misinformation, misordering and other type of errors such as punctuation and use of informal language.

It was noted that predictions of CAH are evident in the errors students make. Transference errors are a result of L1 interference where a learner falls back on the knowledge of his/her L1 to express him/herself through applying that knowledge to the target language. 44% of the observed scripts showed that L1 tends to interfere with L2 learning. As an example, one student said, "…meet the demands politely even if it does not mean to solve their problems but at least partial is better than nothing."
Errors of Misinformation: their, there, they / Were, where.

Errors of misinformation are a common feature in students' written texts. Ellis (1997) states that this type of error occurs when a learner lacks knowledge of the appropriate language forms. Unlike transference errors which can be accounted for by CAH, errors of misinformation can be accounted for through EAH which shows that errors are evidence of gaps in knowledge of the target language rather than merely being L1 interference or transference.

Hedge (2000) noted that this type of error is a result of the fact that some language teachers have limitations in their competence of the L2. This is the case with the majority of Algerian teachers especially in relation to pronunciation issues as evident in the confusion of the use of words like "there", "their" and "they" as well as "were" and "where". Of the observed scripts, 43% had problems with the use of "their", "they" and "there", 51% confused "were" and "where". Gaps in knowledge tend to be passed on from the teacher to the learner to the extent that a student can reach university level bearing the gaps as seen in the majority of the students' written texts at Mascara University.
Errors of misinformation also occur in relation to vocabulary consistence (subject-verb agreement), as well as application of articles. In terms of vocabulary, 35% tended to confuse homonyms and homophones like weather and whether, conservation and conversation, conduct and contact, and also words which appear to mean the same but applied to different contexts like "avoid" and "prevent" only to mention a few. Articles are also a problem with 27% of students displaying lack of knowledge as to when to use "a" and "the" for instance. 43% have a great challenge with issues pertaining to consistence especially in subject-verb agreement as shown below. The study also showed that the use of articles is really a problem, students do not know where to use "a" and "the".
The gaps in the students' knowledge of English as a target language is clearly noticed here.

Another error of misinformation which seems fairly prevalent is that of incomplete sentences especially when it comes to complex sentences. Students who make this error seem not to be aware of the fact that subordinate clauses are dependent and cannot

stand alone as complete statements. An example of an incomplete sentence witnessed is; "Although learning is quite necessary." This statement leaves the reader hanging as it shows that some information is missing. For the statement to be complete a main clause is needed, for example, "…it demands certain skills for it to be an effective process." nouns to indicate plurality but it was also used in nouns like "tooth" to become "tooths", "child" to "childrens", and 15% made this error. nouns to indicate plurality but it was also used in nouns like "tooth" to become "tooths", "child" to "childrens", and 15% made this error. Misordering as an error was mainly seen in one sentence where the first person "I" is supposed to come last when accompanied by other nouns before a verb. 10% made this error as some tended to say "I and my sister", instead of "my sister and I".

Punctuation is also an area where 25% showed a challenge in. Some tend to leave out full stops as they begin new sentences. Others leave out capital letters where they are necessary.

Contractions such as "can't", "don't", "wasn't" are found to be prevalent in students' written texts.

There are other factors that influence language learning including environmental factors or exposure variables, for instance if a learner comes from a disadvantaged environment, he/she faces challenges in terms of resources and practice opportunities. Such a learner will perform differently from a learner who has more exposure to the target language. The former is likely to make errors than the latter.

Individual differences also account for the differences in competence and performance levels. A learner who is highly motivated has a positive attitude towards learning and thus gains more knowledge and performs better than the one who lacks motivation. Also extroverts are likely to perform better than introverts.

From the interviews carried out with lecturers, all the ten were in total agreement that error and causes are as mentioned above. Respondents to questionnaires confirmed that they indeed have challenges in the use of L2 as they indicated different areas of difficulty which include spellings, punctuation, tenses, vocabulary and sentence construction. This confirms the classification made by Ellis (1997) and Selinker et al (1975) which are discussed above. 90% of the lecturers and 96% of the learners are of the view that L1 has an influence in performance though all of them agree that exposure variables, levels of motivation and attitude do play a pivotal role in L2 learning. 91% of the learners indicated that errors are a result of lack of knowledge of the L2 due to the aforementioned factors especially exposure.

All the respondents and lecturers agreed that learners have to put more effort to know and pay attention to L2 rules to reduce errors. They all acknowledge the fact that the learner has to play his/her role in trying to self correct and gain more knowledge and that the lecturer should assist through error correction.

Therefore all these errors and factors determine levels of competence in the L2. Errors lead to incompetence which might impede accurate transfer of information from

one point to another as comprehensibility might be tempered with. This shows, as noted by Rivers (1994:831) [3] that, If we are to become effective communicators via (or through) language we must be able to operate through the formal systems of that particular language (phonological, morphosyntactic, pragmatic).All these systems interact to produce comprehensible and acceptable language for communicating meaning.

This indicates therefore that L2 students must be assisted by all means for them to attain native-like competence in the target language for them to communicate effectively. Error Analysis is thus important as it provides knowledge of the type and sources of errors made and this may determine error correction, that is, the kind of feedback a teacher should give to enhance learning of the L2.

Recommendations :

It is important to note that errors can be corrected but this is possible where a learner bears a positive attitude towards learning and pays attention to corrective measures provided by the teacher. A learner's attitude is of paramount importance in error correction and the teacher should cultivate this attitude in students.

For instance, for a global error (those that interfere with the intelligibility of what someone says), the teacher can have an oral discussion with the learner in which he/she points out what is wrong with a learner's written statement(s) and provide ways in which the error can be corrected. This should be done mostly to correct errors caused by mother tongue interference as a learner will require a lot of explanation on why there is an error in his/her statement(s).

A teacher can also provide the correct form when a minor error occurs, but this form of correction must be applied minimally for a learner who makes a lot of errors as this might fill the learner's paper with the teacher's ink which might be really dampening to the learner's seek to learn.

As another form of error correction, a teacher can just highlight the form of error made for example, (ww, or sp) so as to draw a learner's attention if he/she feels the learner will be able to work out the correct form(s). However, it is of great importance to note that any signs to I an error type for example (sp) should be explained to learners so that they know how to interpret these signs. Teachers should endeavor to provide a conclusive atmosphere for learning. This can be done if the teacher provides feedback in a friendly manner instead of in or belittles the learner. Also a teacher should avoid highlighting errors made by individuals in front of the whole class as this might be regarded as victimization which might lead to a l developing a negative attitude towards learning and improving knowledge on the second language. This is supported by Robinson and Ellis (2008:10) who highlight that "the whole educational process is deeply influenced by beliefs and attitude." This brings out the fact that both the teacher and the learner have to have positive attitudes if learning is to successfully occur. The teacher's role should be one of instilling motivation and highlighting the I success. While correcting, he/she should do it in a soft way in order not to harm or humiliate the learner; on the contrary, teachers are advised to teach their learners to be risk-takers whatever mistakes or errors the make. They should

make them aware that this is a part of the learning process that allows them to learn and improve. Involvement is another criterion to make learners free to learn since it is learner centeredness.

Oral correction in the classroom should be directed to the whole class if a situation where a large percentage of learners seem to make the same type of error but names should not be mentioned at all costs. Also, to be taken into consideration in error correction and method chosen for this should be determined by how often the error has occurred.

However, since learning is a continuous process for an L2 speaker, errors should therefore be parts of the learning process.

Although it is believed that an L2 speaker cannot acquire complete acquisition of the language, at least students and teachers had better work towards target language-like competence. This is supported by various researchers such as Ellis (1997)' Hedge (2000) and Edge (1989) who postulate that only global errors should be corrected as they cause misunderstanding between interlocutors. On the other hand, local errors which are defined by Ellis (1997) affect only a single element in a sentence should not be corrected as they do not pose any problems in meaning conveyance.

The pictures below are illustrations of both learners and teachers'attitudes:

LEARNERS

1/ confused	2/ upset	3/ seeking

TEACHERS

1/ screaming	2/ comprehensive but…	3/ error and so what…

Explanation of illustrations :

By having a look at the first set of pictures concerning learners, one could clearly understand that they are the results of the second set of pictures. The teacher, who screams whenever the learner makes an error, is likely to produce a confused learner who will carry on learning wrong since he is all the time frightened. The second teacher, who seems to be comprehensive, as if he is saying to the learner; " Well, you are wrong but your idea may be better if you ……, this teacher is giving the learner a chance to reconsider his error and then correct it. The last teacher is making the learner feel comfortable as if he did not make any error; "error and so what!!!!!!!!! Where is the problem? It is not the end of the world! This kind of teachers are needed in our educational system: they are making of the learners risk-takers and try to teach them that errors are parts of the learning process.

Conclusion :

The study of errors in students' written texts enables the teacher to prescribe the most suitable corrective measures so that the learner reaches a higher level of competence in the L2 which in turn will improve performance. It is crucial to know the causes of these errors so as to ensure effectiveness of the error correction method (s) to be employed. Apart from this it is also important for the teacher to have knowledge of individual learners' background so as to correct their errors as this gives a great influence on competence and performance.

When the learners experience gaps in their L2 syntactical structures, they adjust the form of their L2 written responses by using syntactical items which are part of their L1. The analysis learners' writing revealed the extent to which their L2 responses are affected by their L1, the procedures used to express concepts for which L2 syntax is unknown and the extent to which and the manner in which L1 syntax interferes with L2 (Bialystok, 1990). The L2 errors made traceable to the learners› L1 and we can conclude that there is definite interference of L1 on L2. All in all it needs a great effort on both the teacher's and learner's side for effective L2 learning to be at the top. By working hand in hand, not only motivation will arise but challenge and competition among learners will occur, which lead to improvement.

Footnotes :

(1) Dulay and Burt (1972) in McLaughlin (1987:67) '…the majority of errors that children make reflect the influence of the target second language more than the influence of the child's first language'.
(2) Schachter and Celce-Murcia (1977) "It is difficult to be certain what type of learner is making or why the learner makes it".
(3) Rivers (1994:831) "If we are to become effective communicators via (or through) language we must be able to operate through the formal systems of that particular language (phonologi cal,morphosyntactic, pragmatic)".

Bibliographical References :

• Alhaysony, M. (2012) "An Analysis of Article Errors among Saudi Female EFL Students: A case study", Asian Journal of Social Science 8 (12), www.ccsenet.org/journal/index.php/ass/article/view/20759 (accessed 22/10/12)

• Brown, D. 1994. (3rd ed.) Principles of Language Learning and Teaching. New Jersey: Prentice Hall. Chap. 5: 103-136.

• Brown, J. D. & Rodgers, T. S. (2002) Doing Language Second Research. Oxford University Press: Oxford.

• Celce-Murcia, M. and L. McIntosh (1979). Teaching English as a Second or Foreign Language. Massachusetts: Newbury House Publishers, Inc.

• Corder, S. P. (1974). Error Analysis. In Allen J. P. B. and Pit Corder (1974, editors). Techniques in Applied Linguistics (The Edinburgh Course in Applied Linguistics).

• Corder, S. P. (1978). Language-Learner Language. In Richards, J.C. (1978, editor). Understanding Second and Foreign Language Learning. Massachusetts: Newbury House Publishers, Inc.

• Corder, S. P. (1974) in Vasquez, D. A. L. (2008) "Error analysis in a written composition." "Profile Issues in Teachers' Professional Developments." Profile no. 10 Bogota July-December 2008.

• Dulay & Burt M. K. (1972) in Maclaughlin, B. (1987) Theories of Second Language Learning, Edward Anorld Publishers: London.

• Ellis, R. (1997) Second Language Acquisition. Oxford University Press: Oxford.

• Ellis, R. 1999b. "Item versus system learning: Explaining free variation" Applied Linguistics, 20/4: 460-480.

• Hedge, H. T. (2000) Teaching and Learning in the Language Classroom. Oxford University Press: Oxford.

• Langé, G. 2002. TIE-CLIL Professional Development Course. Direzione Regionale della Lombardia. Milan: Italy.

• Lightbown, P. & N. Spada. 1993. How Languages are Learned. Oxford: Oxford University Press. Chap. 4: 53-68.

• MacLaughlin, B.(1987) Theories of Second Language Learning. Edward Anorld Publishers: London.

• Rivers, W. M.(1994) in Hutchinson, T. & Waters, A. (1987) English for Specific Purposes: A Learning Centred Approach. Cambridge University Press: Cambridge.

• Swan, M. and B. Smith. 1987. Learner English. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

• Selinker, L., M. Swain and G. Dumas. 1975. Interlanguage hypothesis extended to children. Language Learning, 25(1):139-152.

• Torrás, R. 1994. "La interlengua en los primeros estadios de aprendizaje de una lengua extranjera" Comunicación, Lenguaje y Educación, 24: 49-62.