

**YAZILI ANLATIM SINAVLARINDA YAPILAN HATA TÜRLERİ VE
BUNLARIN DİL ÖĞRENİM DÜZEYLERİNE GÖRE DEĞİŞİMİ**

**TYPES OF TURKISH EFL STUDENTS'
ERRORS IN WRITING EXAMS
AND THEIR VARIATION
ACROSS THE PROFICIENCY LEVELS**

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incelenmiştir. Hata belirleme ve gruplandırma işlemlerinden sonra, sonuçlar öğrencilerin dil düzeyi ve sınav türlerine göre tablolara aktarılmıştır.

Çalışmanın sonuçları, her üç düzeyden öğrencilerin yazılı anlatım hatalarının, söz-dizimi düzleminde yer alan yüklem-eylem tamlama grubunda yoğunlaştığını ortaya koymuştur. Orta düzeyde hata yoğunlaşmasında ikinci sırayı sözcük-anlam düzleminin aldığı gözlemlenmiştir. Bu sonuçlar, daha önce yapılan araştırmalarda öne çıkan bulgular doğrultusunda, öğrencilerin yazılı iletişimde anlamsal yalınlaştırmayı öne çıkarıp, söz-dizim ve gramerde doğruluğu ikinci derecede önemli gördüklerini ortaya koymuştur.

ABSTRACT

In foreign language teaching, communication in oral or written language has two distinctive functions. They both serve as a medium for learning the target language and become the goal of learning that particular language. Language errors produced by learners naturally accompany the process of acquiring these two productive skills. As a field of research in applied linguistics, many studies have been done on learner errors and research has concentrated on what approach and understanding toward errors can foster effective language learning. It seems that a great part of this research has been on learner talk and utterances in and outside the classroom. However, linguistic and psychological aspects of writing errors made during the interlanguage period are equally important. Therefore, in this study an investigation was carried out to identify the error types in writing sections of the exams. It was continued with an observation on the distribution of errors to see if there was a rising or falling trend across the proficiency levels and to see if there were any implications about teaching writing. Finally, an attempt was made to find out what possible psycholinguistic sources could be traced back into the errors examined

For this study, out of the total 141 students that fully attended the one-year English classes at Afyon Kocatepe University, fifty-five students were selected by random sampling. Their composition sheets created in three successive formal exams were investigated for morphological, syntactic and lexico-semantic errors. After the elicitation and categorization procedures, results were transferred into tables according to their distribution across learner levels and exam types.

Findings derived from the comparison of the tables demonstrated that errors were mainly concentrated in intra verb phrase errors at the syntactic level. At the intermediate level, it was observed that next error concentration occurred in lexico-semantic category. These results at the final stage were in agreement with the conclusions of previous studies in that learners tended to commit errors either because of incomplete rule learning or of giving the priority to semantic simplification and giving less attention to syntactic accuracy.

DEĞERLENDİRME KURULU VE ENSTİTÜ ONAYI

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1. INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

‘To err is human...’ the saying goes. People from all walks of life make judgements, whether to be true or wrong, fair or unfair, on what they see and perceive. Intrinsically or through external signals, they seek evidence and instruments to validate them at the next step. This process also works in verbal and written discourse in everyday life. Language users as native or non-native speakers have an innate freedom of choice in the world of the discourse. The vastness of this choice gives way both to productivity and errors in speaking and writing. As Widdowson points out, through some cognitive interactions, a person produces errors in language use just because s/he naturally tends to make use of every resource within reach to be able to get messages across. Thus, arising from a psycho-linguistic background, errors occur as natural output of the rule-formation process during a communication period (1990, p. 111). Though there is today a more positive and tolerant attitude towards errors in learners’ speech in language teaching, it can be argued that learners do not often have much a similar chance in writing to learn from their errors because it is largely perceived as a means to learn a language but not as an end or as a skill to be acquired. This study aims to describe learner errors and discover underlying causes and their significance in teaching writing. In this chapter, the evolution that errors in language learning process has undergone will be summarized and their relevance to teaching writing will be dealt with.

1.1. Background of Error Analysis

In order to better explain the background of approaches to learner errors in general and their significance in particular as one of the sub-fields of the applied linguistics, a short summary of the Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis (CAH) will be presented since it is widely believed that CAH has been a sort of launch-pad until the present day for a great part of the linguistic research aiming both to discover the

structural relativity between any two languages and to discover learning processes during learners' interlanguage (Sridhar, 1981, p. 210).

During the period when the audio lingual method was favoured in language teaching, in line with behaviourist learning theories, errors were regarded as deviations from the normal learning path. Effective teaching meant to identify areas where students were likely to have problems, and to demarcate them. Correction was introduced immediately after errors and mistakes occurred (Nemser, 1971, p. 57). In fact, pattern practice was so fundamental to the method that the theory even rejected the idea of committing errors in classroom teaching. In order to prevent learners from producing ill-formed sentences, the amount of vocabulary needed were limited and strictly controlled (Richards, 1986, p. 46). This position restricted the learners' independence or autonomy in order to enable them to be successful language users and theoreticians devised principles on how learning materials should be designed and how language teachers should plan and present new language points or structural patterns. This approach towards the design of the materials moved from two basic notions: 'contrastive analysis' and 'language transfer' and language learning materials were based on a hierarchical order of difficulty. In conformity with the audio-lingual method's objectives, both reading and writing were put off until the learner reached a very advance level (Richards, 1986, p. 52).

The CAH was claimed to be theoretically strong because its rationale was drawn from the practical experience of foreign language teachers and from studies on language contact in bilingual situations and theoretical work on learning, or in a nutshell on 'transfer', carried out by structuralist scholars. The radical version of the Contrastive Analysis put all the emphasis on the notion of 'transfer' or first language (L1) interference. The assumption was that if a structural unit in the learner's target language (L2) had a counterpart in the learner's mother tongue the learner would make a 'positive' transfer and therefore this transfer would make a 'positive' or facilitating effect on learning. On the other hand, a 'negative' transfer would impede this process if the learner's L1 lacked the equivalent structure or showed partial or complete variance (Jackson, 1981, p. 196). In this sense, CAH proposed four successive steps to achieve the process of prediction:

1. Descriptions of two languages under investigation;
2. Selection of two assumed difficult structures;
3. Realization of contrast through the analysis of two linguistic systems specifically;
4. Prediction of errors carried out with designated degrees of difficulty.

According to this stepwise procedure, language learners suffer most in case their L1 displays more than one equivalent for a single structural item. On the other hand, language learning takes place smoothly with a positive transfer if both L1 and L2 share the same linguistic feature (Brown 1987, pp.154-55). This theoretical framework particularly seemed to be working more convincingly when phonology was in question and worked the least in syntax, but the bridge needed between the CAH and applied linguistics was put up with the claim that, "The most effective materials for foreign language teaching are based upon a scientific description of the language to be learned carefully compared with a parallel description of the native language of the learner." (Fries, 1945, cited in Sridhar, 1981, p. 213).

1.1.1. Error Analysis and its Place in Language Teaching

The transition from the strong practice of the CAH to a moderate and a more feasible version seemed not easy. The theory's main principles started to be criticized severely in a new understanding towards acquisition of the first and second language that prevailed over the post behaviourist era. Linguistic research took a new turn under the influence of the Cognitive Code Theory. This approach gave an unprecedented inspiration to a new methodology in language structure called the 'generative grammar'. While the CAH gave an excessive emphasis on developing predictive taxonomies of surface structure errors, the new model started to seek basic 'universal' principles underlying all languages (Sridhar, 1981, pp. 214-16). The theory also presented convincing evidence that the learner's L1 was not the only source of errors. Research showed that some errors displayed a type of 'developmental' or 'intralingual' character (Corder, 1967; Wardhaugh 1970; Selinker 1972; Richards, 1974). It was

discovered that, similar to the types of errors encountered in the L1 acquisition, some errors reflected the learner's competence at a certain stage and thereby their treatment differed from learner to learner. In order to describe and define the interactive process among the learner, his/her L1 and L2, the term 'interlanguage' was introduced, in which the nature of errors that learners produced were explained, -but not predicted, until they reached full competence in their L2 (Nickel, 1998, p. 2). It was also found out that the sine-qua-non character of interlanguage is "the varying degrees of learners' competences and performances." Therefore, research on learners' errors as a linguistic phenomenon taking place throughout this period, has been expected to aim an adequate explanation and description of errors both with reference to language production and learning process. Finally, it can be said that, through a re-defining process, a shift of attention occurred towards the re-orientation of the goals of error analysis and the new projection of language transfer (Richards, 1985, p. 63).

As a result of the historical evolution of language interference, learners' errors were gradually analysed in a wider range under the name of Error Analysis (EA). Briefly, Error Analysis is based on the findings of the research carried out on the language learners' performance during the language learning process and it takes into account not only learners' phonological, syntactical and semantic errors but language functions as well. As Brown and et al (1991, p. 2-3) put forward, learner errors can best be understood by examining the interaction of the form and function of the L1 and L2 of the learners. On the other hand, the broader understanding of learners' interlingual processes gave stimulus to discover other sources of errors. In addition to transfer from L1, a new umbrella term called intralingual or developmental errors went into the literature (Richards, 1985, p. 47-52).

In addition to describing learners' errors and the reasons why they want to use one certain form, and persist in not using the other one as a learning strategy, namely, avoidance, EA is claimed to suggest strong insights as to teaching methods and materials evaluation, by "...placing a healthy investigation of errors within the larger perspective of the learner's total interlanguage performance." (Brown, 1987, p. 171) Much research has been done to analyse and explain errors made in speaking by means of evidence and facts about language learners' interlanguage process. However, errors in writing tasks seem to deserve researchers' attention equally. Writing, besides

speaking, is regarded as the other productive language skill. The most fundamental difference between these two skills seems to be that during the immediate realisation or creation of written text the student-writer holds both an advantage and disadvantage in hand. S/he can monitor, revise edit the text and correct his/ her mistakes or errors. On the other hand, as a disadvantage, appeal to the teacher or peers' direct assistance is relatively limited and rarely occurs. Taking this distinction into consideration, it can be said that analysis of errors in sentences can offer a scope as wide as errors in utterances in making judgements on learners' performance across the teaching process.

1.2. Learners' Errors in Skills-based Language Teaching and Teaching Writing

In integrated language teaching, students are considered to be student-writers who are supposed to put the learned linguistic materials to writing in order to convey their message. This is both a long and short-term goal of writing classes. The first attempts are rather casual, short and simple. With patience, care and imagination they can achieve a native-like mental quickness in written discourse. However, under the influence of audio-lingual movement, writing seems to be a means to practice language forms. It is often regarded as a way of measuring to what extent a specific part of grammar has been learned. This is not considered to be completely wrong. Because one advantage of writing is that it requires "greater in-depth knowledge of the grammar system than the receptive skills and perhaps even speaking." (Chastain, 1988, p. 246). Consciousness raising activities through writing practice can be a medium to draw attention to language forms that are different in their L1. However, writing is an interactive process aiming to make meaning that goes beyond words and language forms. In language instruction, it is observed that teachers of English as a foreign language spend a great deal of time responding to learners' wrong usages of word and forms at the sentence and text level. According to Knoblauch and Brannon (1983, cited in Zamel, 1985, p. 96), this may lead to underestimating the power of composing as a discovery of new knowledge and the value of making meaning. Therefore, how to approach the problem of interference with learners' errors in a mechanical corrective

procedure seems to be closely related to efforts for understanding the true nature of learners' errors at lexical and syntactic level. Research on the effect of much involvement in these type errors argues that it does not make any positive contribution to learner's improvement in writing (Ferris, 1995; Leki, 1990; Zamel, 1983).

1.3. Statement of the Problem

Learners, regardless of their ages or social status, all expect that the language instruction they have undergone should be organized enough to meet their communicative demands and goals until the end of learning period. However, the classroom, as a formal setting for language learning, is relatively restrictive for learners with its own rules and principles. In comparison with learners' limited freedom of choice, it is teachers who have, firstly to negotiate what to learn and what not to, secondly to decide how much time to devote for each step and thirdly to make use of every available means to go into verbal or written interaction with classmates. Although students are individually responsible for their own learning needs in the long run, it is again the language teacher who sets the limits in order to prepare them for this responsibility (Widdowson 1990, p. 152). However, the tool or the criterion that the teacher employs to measure their interlingual success or performance, besides their correct language production, is the quantity or gravity of their errors they produce in their sentences or utterances, as the natural result of cognitive processes such as problem solving, principle learning and multiple discrimination etc. As they progress through getting feedback from the teacher, their peers, or exams, however, students are expected to make less and less errors in their speech and writing. In accordance with the degree of the behavioural automaticity they have gained, they will gradually become more willing to exploit complex structures pragmatically, while getting rid of avoidance as a language strategy or remedy in their language use.

The description above may not run smoothly in the classroom in which students have to develop a combination of language skills they practise by means of instruction throughout the teaching process. Among all these skills, writing is quite often perceived as something extra in language practice though due emphasis seems to be

given in the syllabus, and it is usually put off for the end of the session as follow-up work to be done if time allows to. Thus, while students' utterances receive a direct or indirect correction, errors in their compositions are not often returned to them to give feedback. A lack of awareness about the linguistic nature of errors and their sources may contribute to underestimating the importance of writing in evaluating students' interlanguage performance. For young and adult language courses in particular, reading and grammar teaching precedes writing in helping students make meaning out of what they have learnt. This may cause a delay in reducing their errors in language use.

1.4. Aim and Scope

The history of constant efforts towards understanding the nature of language learning or acquisition processes dates back to the 50s during which proponents of the CAH searched for the traces of learner's native language in his target language. For learners' failure, the blame was put on the L1's interference; learners' errors were treated as a sort of "thorns in the bud to be nipped off" (Hsien-Chin, 1985, p. 34). They were considered as barriers blocking the establishment of correct language forms in speech. At that time, second language (L2) researchers assumed that language learning should focus on the forms and their correct production in classroom teaching and they claimed affective and social factors did not have any relative importance. This theory asserted that learners L1 was responsible for the difficulty or errors that caused language learning to slow down. Hundreds of comparison inventories between almost all languages were drawn up and language syllabuses were prepared in accordance with the results of these inventories (Pica, 1994, p. 52). However, later research findings showed that language learning process were more complex than it was conceived of. It was true that L1 was a crucial factor in the acquisition of L2 phonology. But, research in linguistics beyond this, specifically syntax and semantics, was found not to give any hopes for the theory to hold true L1 interference to the extent that the CAH envisaged. Furthermore, it was found that in some cases the influence of L1 went over to include socio-linguistic variables. While learners were observed to transfer freely some features of their L1 in formal situations, they became

more attentive to their speech in formal environment and did not apply to transfer. The reason for the shift of attention may be that they share similar social or economic background (Pica, 1994, p. 53).

However, the research on the effect of L1 involvement gradually evolved into the interlanguage studies and finally triggered the research on second language acquisition or foreign language learning research. As more data were gathered from language learning contexts errors started to be evaluated as part of the outcome of the learners' rule making system (Richards, 1985, p. 64). The variability of interlanguage is now recognized as a reality in different disguises in all linguistic levels. Based on findings of the recent empirical research on language typology and universal grammar, it could be proposed that learning L2 is almost subject to the same procedures as a child's acquiring his L1 (Larsen-Freeman & Long, 1991, p. 95).

There were reactions against the absolute principles of the CAH, which made it transform into a more moderate form. Studies on language learning are now carried out in two main directions. On the one hand, partially based on the principles of Contrastive Analysis, there are now numerous attempts to map computer-based error analysis corpora for Computer Assisted Language Learning systems. On the other hand, it is suggested that not only learners' ill-formed utterances and sentences but also correct forms should be analysed so as to be able to have a full access to the whole picture and hence to construct a well-formed second language learning theory. The second direction encompasses language transfer, error analysis and all other interlingual studies (Larsen-Freeman & Long, 1991, p. 61).

As a concept of applied linguistics, error analysis may associate negativeness. Errors are unwanted and learners should stay away from them. However, this is not the case in its current understanding. Learners' errors both in written and spoken language can well be a manifestation of a healthy desire to learn second language. They could well serve as strategies in learning something new and in acquiring new skills and enhancing them.

In Corder's words, the contribution of EA to language learning is threefold:

"...First to the teacher, in that they tell him, if he undertakes a systematic analysis, how far towards the goal the learner has progressed and, consequently, what remains for him to learn. Second, 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. Thirdly, they are indispensable to the learner himself, because we can regard the making of errors as a device the learner uses in order to learn." (Corder, 1967, p.167).

This study, therefore, aims to describe and discuss learner errors they produced in compositions in the light of results of the recent research. An additional aim will be to see in which categories their errors will be concentrated and whether there will be significant differences between three language levels as being elementary, pre-intermediate and intermediate. Writing errors can be analysed in search of their potential reasons and their general characteristics, with a description of their nature as well, can be of assistance in realizing the outcomes of teaching writing. In other words, insights that will be derived from the results of the study may help teachers be aware of the limitations of classroom instruction and develop more remedial work.

In this descriptive and partially interpretative study, through the analysis of the errors that the students have made in their compositions, it is expected that the characteristics of ill-formed structures will present an observable change from syntactic errors to semantic ones at the beginning, pre-intermediate and intermediate levels. Our investigation will be based on the errors concerning tense/aspect relations, word order violations, and wrong choices of lexical items made at the word, phrase and sentence level.

Within the scope of this study, the main concern will be directed to word formation (morphological) errors, vocabulary (lexical) errors, and grammar (syntactic) errors that will be elicited from the sample compositions written in narrative, descriptive or expository types.

1.5. Research Questions

Based on the aim of the study, the following questions will be enquired specifically.

1. What kind of errors do Turkish EFL preparatory students in Afyon Kocatepe University commit in their compositions as part of their term exams?

1a. Depending on the answer of this question, as a sub-problem, can the source of the identified errors be explained by any means?

2. Will there be a significant difference in the number of errors across the elementary, pre-intermediate and intermediate learner groups?

3. Will analysis of errors in writing help us derive insights into teaching writing?

1.6. Limitations of the Study

1. The data were limited to the error corpuses collected from the exam papers of the students attending one-year-English preparatory classes.

2. This study is product-based as a methodological shortcoming. Data might have given more exact results if it were maintained in a longitudinal research process.

3. Assigning categories to errors and finding out their likely equivalent correct forms were maintained by the researcher and examined first by a native speaker instructor who has been working at AKU for one year and then by the supervisor. However, there may still be some flaws or ambiguities in reducing errors into proper categories.

4. Though they are important components of written language use, punctuation errors will not be dealt with since they fall into a different research field. Pragmatic errors will also remain out of the interest of this study because they are related to a higher level called textual analysis of the data.

1.7. Definitions of the Related Terminology

Contrastive Analysis Theory: The comparison of the linguistic systems of two languages as an application of Structural Linguistics to language teaching practised in 1950s and 60s.

Error Analysis: The study and analysis of errors made by second and foreign language learners. It is carried out to discover the processes learners make use of in learning and using a language.

Interlanguage: The type language produced by second and foreign language learners who are in the process of learning a language. It involves attempts, either to borrow patterns from the mother tongue, that is, *language transfer* or extending patterns from the language being learnt, that is, *overgeneralization*, or expressing meaning using the words and grammar which are already known, namely, *communication strategies*.

Semantic Simplification: A form of overgeneralization that language learners attempt to make in order to achieve to convey their message. They tend to use a less complex linguistic rule extending it regularly over the whole context and therefore producing errors.

('Longman Dictionary of Applied Linguistics'
by Richard et al., 1985)

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

2.1. Introduction

In this chapter the evolution that language errors have experienced and the shift in their meaning in language teaching will be described and its different aspects will be reviewed within the concept of 'interlanguage' and learners' behaviour in interlanguage period. Secondly, the question of what error analysis encompasses today will be discussed in the light of the recent research. Thirdly, sources of learner errors will be presented and transfer from L1 and other related aspects will be outlined. Fourthly, an attempt will be made to discover the relation between language instruction, language learning and error making. Finally, teaching writing will be briefly mentioned in relation to learners' errors in writing.

2.2. Learners' Errors and Their Justification in Language Learning

"I can't believe I'm finally getting a son in law," Alicia told Julian. "All I've ever had is daughter-in-laws."

"Daughters," Macon said automatically.

"No, daughter-in-laws."

"Daughters-in-law, Mother."

"And didn't manage to keep them long, either," Alicia said."

(Anne Taylor, 'The Accidental Tourist', New York: Penguin Books, 1986, p. 56)

Language is defined as a system which consists of an organized network of interdependent forms and features. Learning a second language may therefore mean learning those forms and features which exist in phonology, lexicon, syntax and communication processes. As the process unfolds, language learners build a superstructure over a universal core language in accordance with their own specific needs. In this sense, their errors as unavoidable products of language learning process have been discussed and investigated in many respects from the second half of the sixties on. (Celce-Murcia and Hawkins, 1985: Corder, 1971: Nemser, 1971: Selinker, 1972: Richards, 1974: Schacter, 1974) But, their existence as a phenomenon and as a

research field from the 50s to the present day has been dealt with from two distinct perspectives. One is the Contrastive Analysis hypothesis and its approach to language errors under the influence of behaviourist theory. The other is a large number of research related to the interlanguage, which developed under the influence of the cognitive approach to language learning.

During the audio-lingual era in language learning, learners were strictly asked to learn not to produce deviant forms or errors in their language learning whereas, in the following period, under the influence of cognitive code theory, errors began to be considered as the natural outcome of the teaching process with a significant role in the learning process. Analysis of errors from this point of view has become a key point and the term 'Error Analysis', since then, has been widely used to refer to studies on their significance in second language learning or acquisition.

Learner errors' involvement in language learning came into language teaching literature as a reaction to the assumed role they played on the difficulty of language learning and hence language teaching in classrooms. Behind the difficulty, the negative transfer that learners attempted to make from their L1 was believed to be responsible.. L1 interference, or language transfer as a more moderate concept, was regarded as a so-called manifestation of the native language during the language learning and its existence was mainly voiced by Robert Lado:

"Individuals tend to transfer the forms and meanings and the distribution of forms and meanings of their native language and culture to the foreign language and culture productively when attempting to speak the language and to act in the culture and receptively when attempting to grasp and understand the language and the culture as practised by the natives." (Lado, 1957: cited in Larsen-Freeman and Long 1991. p. 53).

Assumptions like these seem to gradually encourage some linguists to search for the predictability of errors in many languages and to set up many error corpuses; Nevertheless, all their data were not empirically supported and therefore, the validity of Lado's presumption that, " where two languages were similar, positive transfer would occur; and where they were different, negative transfer or interference would result.", needed testing (Lado, 1957: cited in Larsen-Freeman and Long 1991, p. 53).

The Contrastive Analysis hypothesis, CAH, drew its basic principles from the behaviourist theory and this reliance made the theory vulnerable to the attack of the researchers working under the influence of the mentalist or cognitive views of language. As is known, its testing came from the theoretical and data-driven work carried out from the second half of the 60s on. (Corder, 1967; Wardhaugh, 1970; Selinker, 1972; Richards, 1974) These pioneering studies tried to identify all relevant sources of errors that had a non-contrastive origin and therefore the expectations of the CAH, as the only predictor of language learners' errors, seems to be brought down to a great extent. Larsen-Freeman and Long (1991, p.71) refer this to the dubious assumption that one could draw inferences and insights into the psycholinguistic process underlying the language learning solely depending on analysis of utterances as linguistic products.

The former theory, namely CAH, maximized the effect of the language transfer over learners' progress and organized the method of instruction, the design of materials etc. according to the assumed similarities and differences between any two languages. However, the researchers following the latter, the cognitive code theory, started seeking empirically proven data to see if there was really a hierarchy of difficulty and overt transfer from L1 into the target language (L2). They were convinced that the transitional learning period was more complicated than the CAH conceived of and therefore the whole concept needed re-defining and re-assessing from a more learner-centred perspective. However, much of the research and literature on learners' errors until the present day does not seem to have been carried out to provide practical answers and to give clues about the issues of language teaching in classroom. Yet, it is pointed out that in contrast with the CAH, it more than anything have helped applied linguists observe how learners learn or acquire languages and why they consciously or unconsciously prefer different learning forms or paths (Richards, 1985, p. 81).

This shift of attention towards more humane view of learner errors is explained in Widdowson's words as follows:

“Pedagogically, the process of transmission (from teacher as a source of information) to students' (as a receiver) L1 (to mediate) meaning (not as a proactive inhibition getting in the way to block learning new ones) serves not as an interference to be eliminated but as a resource to be exploited. This is because learning is not conformity of teachers and transmission is not but a self-generating process of learners. Their errors are defective sentences from the medium point of view but also

effective utterances from mediating point of view. (It is the autonomy of learning, not the authority of teaching). Too much emphasis on correctness may inhibit learners' engagement in relevant procedures gained from L1. Nonconformity is negatively evaluated as error but positively evaluated as the achievement of an interim interlanguage as well. Learners therefore need to be provided with guidance in order to extend the range of the knowledge they can draw upon." (1990, pp. 121-123).

2.3. Studies On Learners' Behaviour during the Interlanguage Period

For almost every language learner, the main objective is undeniably to gradually acquire native-like skills but this may cause them to endure a great number of discouraging errors notably at beginning levels. This disturbance may occur because interlanguages activate many variables to go into interaction on a continuum that reflects a "fluid malleable, sporadic, permeable, amorphous, pervasive, and dynamic" character (Rutherford, 1984: cited in James, 1994, p. 185). Learners' unstable state-of-affairs during the whole learning period has been described either as transitional competence or approximative systems. The former refers to relative L2 knowledge as a dynamic and constantly changing as new pieces are added, whereas the latter explains the gradual progress towards the full competence with lessening incompleteness.

These two descriptions on the learners' active status have been incorporated into the term interlanguage, which refers to an intermediate construct standing somewhere between their L1 and L2. Coined by Selinker (1972), interlanguage has been considered to be a more comprehensive concept since its basic principle is that learners' psycholinguistic behaviour is reconstructed neither by their L1 solely, nor by their L2. At this point, Yip (1994, p. 3) analyses and compares Chinese and English linguistic systems comprehensively and concludes that adopting a complementary view between the two approaches, i.e. contrastive L1 transfer and creative construction of L2 hypotheses is possible. Because, she argues, "interlanguage is the product of a complex interaction between the native and target grammars and universal principles underlying grammar construction." Hypothesis producing process is central to the language learning throughout the interlanguage period. Pica (1996, p. 6) suggests that language input should extend beyond the learners comprehension of L2. Therefore, their hypotheses on forms and features of the L2 need to be confirmed or disconfirmed.

Analysing negotiation processes between the native speaker and non-native speaker, she considers that native speaker input presents considerable assistance to correct errors.

During the interlanguage period, learners are exposed to an ongoing flow of language input. Seliger (1988, p. 22) explains that their engagement with a new input is generally achieved or processed at five steps. At first, learners try to analyse the characteristics of new particular concept and try to discover the relationship between new form and the one already learnt. Next, identification helps them to build their hypotheses. Later, they try to verify new hypotheses by using new utterances or sentences in context or by listening to a similar form. Later on, they seek confirmation and feedback. The new piece of knowledge is stored into the learners' existing conceptual schema. This schema may now have been constructed upon the facts of the L1. Therefore, at this point, language transfer is called upon in order for it to function as an agent of facilitation, or overgeneralization, or under-representation of L2 rules. Gass (1984, p. 121) places L1 transfer, as a phenomenon, in a larger perspective within the interlanguage. Learners' L1 assumes quite distinct forms that influence their behaviour in language acquisition. These are the delayed rule restructuring; transfer of typological organization, different paths of acquisition, overproduction of certain elements, avoidance of certain forms, extra attention paid to the L2 resulting in more rapid learning, and differential effects of socially prestigious phonological forms.

2.3.1. Learners' Syntax and Semantics During the Interlanguage

Research on the learners' errors related to the development of syntax, semantics and pragmatics has generally been carried on either cross-sectionally or longitudinally. In the interlanguage analysis of article errors in English among EFL Japanese adult learners, Mizuno (1999, p. 230) finds out that interlingual transfer restricts the L2 development process as well as the initial hypothesis making process in terms of acquisition of articles. Besides this, learners seemed to be more influenced by semantic and pragmatic constraints than syntactic ones in the use of articles during the interlanguage period.

Concerning the semantics, Zughoul (1991, p. 59) claims that due to the fact that lexical errors do not present enough homogenous material in comparison with syntax, interlanguage and error analysis research grew larger to the neglect of semantic-lexical studies. Yet, a few studies have been done on this part of the Interlanguage. According to the results of Zughoul's study on word collocations, L1 interference as a negative transfer plays a major role in choice of lexical items. Furthermore, it was argued that although learners in progress seemed to get richer in their lexis, they produced errors because they were not familiar with the authentic environment in which the words usually occurred (Zughoul, 1991, p. 60).

Learners' interlanguage suffers from lexical- semantic ambiguities. Sonaiya (1991, p. 279) found that there were cases in which learners committed errors even though they were aware of the correct target form, which could be not due to lack of knowledge but ignorance of rule restrictions in his L2. Sasaki (1997, p. 10) studied a Japanese learner's oral data in terms of topic continuity in which a full NP in object position was used and the nominal referencing system was carried on by either zero anaphora or pronoun in subsequent clauses. As for the errors or rather violations, they were attributed partly to the effect of L1 and L2, but they also seemed to reflect some language universals. To contribute more to the interlanguage semantics, Irujo argues that as learners acquire more fluency in L2, they tend to use the equivalent parts of idioms drawing on to their L1, which indicates a type of positive transfer. (1993, p. 207). Ellis (1982) points out that learners seek semantic simplification, not morpho-syntactic one, because it is a logical impossibility. Cited from Ellis' article, the following figure describes three overlapping stages in interlanguage development.

Figure 2.1. Three overlapping stages in interlanguage development

Stage 1: Semantic simplification + formulas

Stage 2: Semantic implementation + acquisition of some modality elements

Stage 3: Acquisition of further modality element

(1982, p. 221)

2.3.2. A Brief Look at the Reformulation of Language Learners' Errors.

It is considered that falling short of comprehensively predicting or rather ignoring errors that remained outside the scope of language transfer weaker the explanatory power of CAH. The theory on the whole presumed that if learners were ever to be successful, they had to 'overcome the differences between the two linguistic systems, that is, the target and the native language' (Brown, 1987, p. 154). Resulting from those differences, the deviant or unacceptable linguistic forms simply came to the surface as errors.

This overemphasised definition has today been criticised for being rather L2-centered since it ignores the cognitive interactions in human mind. The empirical research, particularly carried out by Corder (1967, 1971, 1973), took the form of Error Analysis and helped confirm that many of the errors made by the L2 learners were not traceable to the L1. The research also identified some of the processes that were responsible for interlanguage development. Since the timing and nature of errors in the L2 were found to be similar to those made in the process of L1 acquisition, the basic characteristic of second language learning would likely to be the existence or absence of motivation (Mizuno, 1999, p. 130). However, as mentioned earlier, later research found that L1 transfer or interference plays its crucial part in learning process (Gass, 1988, p. 390).

In modern teaching methodology, learner errors are generally treated from a positive perspective. One definition of them is that errors are learners' non-standard but systematic linguistic productions caused by incomplete knowledge about the L2 within their present competence. They cannot be self-corrected and which correct form they replace is evident in the context. On the other hand, there are mistakes that can be corrected by the learner if noticed or if reminded. In contrast, they are products of performance as either being simple pauses, or meta-linguistic strategies, or slips of brain (Corder, 1974, p. 25).

The cognitive-oriented approach to errors evaluates them on the basis of learners' needs. The significance and implications of learners' errors has become the focus of a great number of studies. These studies mainly benefited from a series of papers and books in which theoretical aspects and practical tools related to learners

errors and their analysis is efficiently dealt with, (Selinker, 1992, p. 151). Error analysis was at first used to identify the causes of errors as a diagnostic tool. However, as Ellis (1985, p. 173) remarks, research discovered that they were systematic and had a transitional character as indications of hypotheses-testing process. They began to be viewed as the way in which learners make their preferences in learning a language. Language learners are naturally expected to utilise them while striving and progressing towards catching up with the full competence set before them. This process bears on the same context and variables as a child learning his L1.

2.3.3. Redefining the Goals of Error Analysis

“The world, our countries, our communities will survive with faulty pronunciation and less than perfect grammar, but can we be sure that they will continue to survive without real communication, without a spirit of community, indeed without real communion among peoples?” (Finocchiaro, 1982: Cited in Nickel 1998, p.10).

In language instruction, teachers may develop a strong sense or perception through observation on when learners commit errors, and whether these errors follow a systematicity in all learners and what attitude will be the most convenient to cope with them. However, it is beyond discussion that perceptions vary individually and they should be verified on basis of their validity. Sridhar (1981, p. 230) says that the purpose of error analysis studies has been redefined along with the contribution that Corder (1967; 1971) made into the field. EA has both theoretical and applied goals. Traditionally the applied version has solely concentrated on erasing errors through different correcting methods. The underlying approach is that learners’ performance should evolve into a predetermined level of proficiency and omits the necessity of explanatory theory of what performance means. Corder (1971, p. 165) tends to favour theoretical research that aims to contribute to refinements into the nature of language learning strategies, and trial-error processes of learners and to discovery of ‘functional communicative systems’ during their interlanguage period. The more direct version of EA extends over the process of language acquisition in general by means of the similarities empirically identified between child L1 acquisition and second language

acquisition. As Selinker (1972, p. 67) states, error analysis, taking into account not only incorrect but correct observable linguistic production as data for research, serves as a sub-field of interlanguage studies.

Several objections have been made against this broadened goal of EA. For the product-oriented research, it seems rather difficult to capture frequently changing developmental learner output and use them as data. Richards proposes probabilistic grammars and implicational scaling to specify what types of errors appear at certain stages (1985, p. 63). Another solution is to reconstruct the erroneous item finding its equivalent in learners' L1 or evaluating it by intuition based on the knowledge of the learners' system, which implies the principles of universal grammar (Sridhar, 1981, p. 226). Another shortcoming of EA, concerning its goals, is said to be its inadequacy in explaining the fact that learners may avoid using some linguistic forms as a strategy. There are enough evidence and research findings on the existence of this phenomenon. A case in point is that learners whose L1 does not contain relative clauses or contains left branching clauses rather than right-branching ones such as Japanese show tendency to avoid using relative clauses because their L1 lacks a counterpart form (Schachter, 1974: cited in Brown, 1987, p. 172). The criticisms made on the narrowness of perspective are considered to give rise to performance analysis studies such as morpheme acquisition developmental studies (Larsen-Freeman and Long, 1991, p. 62).

2.3.4. Systematic Progress of Language Learners: Stages in Interlanguage Development

The quantity and quality of linguistic errors that language learners produce is considered significant to their progress or level in language learning. In relation to this significance, Brown (1987, p. 176) makes some improvements on Corder's model (1971, p. 167) describing procedures for identifying errors in second language learning production data and proposes a four-step model reminding the present proficiency guidelines like as follows:

Random error stage represents learners at the beginning level. It is also called the pre-systematic level because learners can only slightly understand that there is

linguistic items follow a rule-governed systematic order in making meaning. They often attempt trial-error processes resulting in inaccurate guessing.

Learners display more consistency with linguistic rules at the emergent stage. They start to perceive that there is a system with rules in it. They assume their learning keeps up with the L2 system though it contains some non-standard forms. Similar to a child's acquisition of his L1, they are not able to correct their errors even if prompts are given. Avoidance of structures or topics is frequent.

At the systematic stage, learners are able to produce correct forms owing to their approximation L2 system. From this stage on, they can correct their errors even if they are asked to indirectly. The last stage is called stabilization in which learners are able to produce intended meanings. On the whole, they do not need feedback to correct his errors but some erroneous uses may undergo fossilization slowly.

This model is not exhaustive in terms of dealing with all socio-linguistic aspects of language learning. However, it represents functional and meta-linguistic features of learners. It is based on to the quantity and quality of errors they have committed in their interlanguage period, and does not involve correct language use. Yet, as the model explains, learners' errors show a systematic fall as they pass on to each stage.

2.4. Sources of Learner Errors

Research on the EA can be considered particularly successful in promoting the status of errors from an obvious undesirable interference to that of a guide to learners' internal processes used to learn L2 knowledge and hence to use it for creating speech. Errors mainly stem from the strategies that learners employ in learning so as to internalise and automatise L2 knowledge. The use of these strategies gives way to errors while producing linguistic and functional forms automatically based on the existing resources and finally while communicating as a compensation for inadequate L2 resources. Learners' production as data does not easily allow the research to penetrate into cognitive strategies and personal factors that led learners to make certain types of error (Littlewood, 1984, p. 23).

Apart from the difficulty abovementioned, rendering errors to sources is sometimes seen as a multifaceted business and the results may be misleading considering the complexity of underlying cognitive interactions. Therefore, it does not seem that there is a unanimously accepted set of criteria, but different applied linguists have established different descriptive categories (Richards, 1974; Jain, 1974). As it is the case with the linguistic taxonomies for EA, even if researchers were to agree on a clear set of error sources, it would be difficult, if at all possible, to conclusively attribute a linguistic error to its psycholinguistic cause. Selinker (1972, p. 31) believes that behavioural events constitute relevant data and can be related to an understanding of the psycholinguistic structures and processes that manipulate the attempted meaningful performance. Thus, it could be assumed that there should be a connection between errors and their psycholinguistic sources. Also, errors are the most marked characteristics of learners' utterances and sentences and they are not allowed to go unnoticed and untreated in second language acquisition. Without attempting to analyse them as a pedagogical tool, it would have been impossible to describe learners' language in its own world (Brown, 1987, p. 177; Littlewood, 1984, p. 23). In order to make it an effective research tool, operational principles, that is, ways that interactively work in learners' psycholinguistic world so as to deal with meanings of utterances or sentences in L2 is considered to be pre-requisite. Objecting to partially made analyses, Rutherford (1987, p. 1) cautiously finds it unfounded to propose that extracting morphological errors out of learners' whole product, for example, and making their quantitative analysis and referring them to interlingual or intralingual sources would not give a rise to our knowledge about the quality of language learning process.

Besides morphology, syntax is, as well, considered to posit great difficulty when it comes to seeking evidence by means of EA, Universal Grammar or language typology because syntactic variables, unlike morphological ones are less likely to be open to binary analysis. In other words, in syntax there is more than one correct way of saying the same thing (Torone, 1978: cited in Rutherford, 1984, p. 129). This provides learners with the strategy of avoidance. Therefore, it would be plausible to argue that learners' products both correct and incorrect should be dealt with in studies not at a point in time but in movement through time so that results could have something to say

about the systematicity of interlanguage period. This approach is also necessary for sources of errors to be identified comprehensively.

As a psycholinguistic phenomenon, language transfer is categorized as the major source of interlingual errors. Language transfer is now found to account for many of phonological and morphological and even syntactic errors at the beginning level. From a negative viewpoint, it is learners' native language's interference in their target language but positively speaking, it is learners' reliance on their L1. Interlingual errors are those resulting from a non-contrastive origin. In other words, they are produced by learners' attempt to make hypotheses about the L2 input, which is often resulted in a sort of short circuit (Gass, 1988, p. 387).

On the other hand, research findings have shown that learners especially at the beginning levels commit producing interlingual errors more frequently than those at the intermediate level and beyond. They turn to their L1 due to the fact that they lack the essential knowledge about the target language to construct hypotheses and turn to their L1 to find out similarities (Brown, 1987; Littlewood, 1984; Richards, 1974). Pfaff (1982, p. 282) has found that children of Turkish immigrants in Germany produced more zero copula verbs in obligatory contexts than the counterpart Greek children, which is a piece of evidence revealing the lack of overt copula verbs in Turkish language. She argues that a tendency appeared for Turkish children to use less copulas in copula-bound verb constructions than Greeks in interviews of the same length and content. Kellerman explains that negative transfer may also have a characteristic of resistance at semantic level to using idioms, though some of them fall into the unmarked hemisphere of the universal grammar (1978, Cited in Richards, 1985, p. 66). Thus, the limited L2 knowledge of learners works as a constraint on learners' psycholinguistic structure.

Apart from those made due to reliance on L1, there are errors which learners commit as a result of their hypothesis building attempts relying on their currently available L2 knowledge. This type of errors reflects the dynamic and fluctuating structure of interlanguage period. Learners are liable to make false hypotheses because of incomplete or partial knowledge on the target language. As they progress towards the end of the continuum, some typical errors may indicate their competence has reached an end point in production of some linguistic forms. In other words, some linguistic

elements have fossilized or they show learners' complacency with what they have already internalized at a time in their transitional competence (Brown, 1987; Littlewood, 1984; Richards, 1974).

This point may be understood well with the following explanation on how mental processing is carried out in mind. Categories are made up from a set of qualities attributed to cases or items according to their nature. Those cases and items are bound to behave in accordance with pre-constructed rules which function under a certain number of constraints. Attempts to attribute new qualities may violate those constraints. They seem to fit well into the category supplied but cannot represent it because they are exceptions to the general law. Therefore, our attribution is falsified. If the item or the case represents the qualities of any other category, then the allocation should be made into a category they will fit in or a new category or new rules must be created (Widdowson, 1990, p. 86).

This process also works in learning a new language. Learners' errors that would be attributed to overgeneralization to a great extent appear at the beginning level for all linguistic levels. The relationship is indirect and based on learners' new information that is added up on their previous knowledge of the target language. The incomplete and inaccurate status of current reception may lead them to construct false hypotheses. Therefore, rendering rules to items outside the category gains an intralingual character as learners progress in learning (Brown, 1987, p. 178).

It is a fact that the majority of language learners are interested in a foreign language as a means to the end, not as an objective of studies. Therefore, breakdowns in communication in the form of errors occur naturally. This psycholinguistic fact has given way to finding theoretical and empirical answers to the sources and assessment of errors in speech and writing. Since the causes of errors can be interpreted only from the data available, i.e. evaluated on the basis of learners' written or oral production, attribution of sources to errors has been addressed in different ways and they often do not seem to overlap with each other (Brown, 1987, p.176). Tench (1996, p. 251) discusses the counter suggestions that errors or violations in accuracy and fluency can be tolerated as long as intelligibility of the message is not damaged. In case of a breakdown in communication, the cause may be incompetence in grammar, lexis, discourse, or phonology. On the surface, the answer can be found in one specific

component of language, for instance, in choice of lexis, or, there could be multiple causes underlying, such as inappropriate wording of a communicative function with faulty grammar, or an accidentally wrong-chosen item of vocabulary, which is badly pronounced. On the other hand, discussing the findings of a case study, Takashima (1995, p. 110) argues that language transfer, simplification and overgeneralization accompanies natural language development and therefore errors caused by overgeneralization and simplification represent the source of many language errors.

2.4.1 Transfer from L1 as a Psycholinguistic Tool for Language Learners

The role attributed to the first language in determining second language acquisition has considerably changed –from the maximum responsibility for all failures to total ignorance and hence to giving its proper place in today’s approach to language learning. As was mentioned in the previous chapter, the strong version of the CAH claimed that the greater the linguistic difference between any two languages was, the more difficult it would be to learn the target language and thus the greater the difficulty to learn it, the more the number of errors would be. The reaction against this led some researchers during the 70s and 80s to take a degrading position towards the role of transfer from the learners’ native language. Dulay and Burt (1974, p. 52), as a result of the morpheme acquisition studies, attributes only 3 percentage of errors to L1 interference. These results also led the researchers to make the claim that regardless of their different language backgrounds, learners follow some universal language processing strategies. However, this minimalist view of transfer has gradually been replaced by a more tolerant approach owing to more empirical studies (Gass and Selinker, 1983; Odlin, 1989).

Recently, transfer from L1 has undertaken a role as one of the cognitive strategies available in addition to simplification, overgeneralization, and other innate linguistic universals especially at the initial stage of L2 learning. Gass (1984, p.116) who outlines the research carried out on analysis of acquisition of negation, relative clauses, topic versus subject prominence, grammatical versus pragmatic word order and other research on phonology, comes to the conclusion that there is too much variability,

in learners' interlanguage, which is resulted in constraints on the exploitation of language transfer. Here, the point to be made seems to be that the effect of L1 does not always come in the form of interference. It also serves as a facilitator on behalf of language learners. These constraints may put limitations on learners' hypotheses about the target language. Concerning the linguistic levels, it could be argued that learners would produce more salient errors at the level of phonology, lexis and discourse than they would in grammar owing to their growing metalingual awareness to correct forms.

As a socio-linguistic constraint, learners would feel more relieved in natural settings to make negative transfer but would be more cautious in formal or instructional settings in which immediate correction would follow. Markedness is another constraint which, as a reformulation of the CAH, provides answers to comparative difficulty in learning L1 and L2 structures. Learners appeal to their perception to decide which structures of his L1 are irregular, infrequent and difficult to explain semantically. In accordance with this hypothesis, in case a structure is more marked in learners' L1, they do not tend to make transfer but this has not been verified in all circumstances. Native speakers' intuitions on transferability of linguistic items is argued to function best particularly in lexico-semantics. Empirical data mainly depend on native speakers' perceptions which determine whether L1 and L2 seem similar at all levels and this prototypicality of two languages leads learners to decide what to transfer and what not to. The last constraint is the developmental factors. The more the learner progresses, the less investigative transfer they need to make but this is especially the case when phonology is concerned because, as in natural status of L1 acquisition, L1 transfer may occur at any point of learner' interlanguage (Gass, 1984, p.121).

2.4.1.1. Recognition of L1 Transfer's Effect on Learners' Errors

During the early eighties, the strong rejection of CAH and L1 interference as a major factor to explain learner errors slowly disappeared. Gass and Selinker (1983, p. 7) state that there is overwhelming evidence that language transfer is indeed a real and central phenomenon that must be considered in any full account of the second language acquisition process. Sheen (1996, p. 194) investigates differences between English and

Arabic syntax. He concludes that in classroom teaching exploiting contrastive parts of two linguistic systems in a deductive approach in the classroom seemed to be more effective in language teaching than the inductive approach in minimizing the error rate.

In recent research, language transfer is not confined to learners' errors. Kellerman (1983) argues that, due to its association with behaviourist learning theory, the role of L1 transfer cannot be dismissed as impossible. As a dynamic mental activity, it 'transcends' mere L1 and L2 similarity or dissimilarity. As one of the major psycholinguistic variables, it affects the learner's decision-making procession potential transferability of denying L2 items (cited in Gass, 1988, p. 391). Despite its inadequacy to fully identify sources of errors, the concept has a cognitive characteristic and therefore it helps learners identify language specific and language universal features of both L1 and L2. These two facts in both ends have been compromised at a common point. It is argued that not only at phonological and syntactical but semantic and pragmatic levels can learners be exposed to or take advantage from language transfer (Brown, 1987, p. 178). It seems evident that those levels do not easily admit themselves to the production of erroneous forms in language use. But, learners may as well attempt to make transfer at semantic and pragmatic level after developing awareness to the forms and structures of L2 in growing degrees throughout their interlanguage (Corder 1983, p. 93). It is regarded as a sort of borrowing applied as a learning strategy. Learning itself is a kind of transfer in which learners may make use of their existing L1 knowledge. This process may result in either correct or incorrect hypotheses in some linguistic areas particularly related to structural domains of languages, in other words, related to parts of speech. In this sense, transfer works as a facilitating agent. However, this fact does not exclude the existence of interference in explaining the causes of learners' errors. Thus, in broad terms, L1 transfer has been as reconsidered not as a discredited linguistic theory but as one of the multiple causes of L2 learners' errors, which has gained an independent status from the CAH (James, 1994; Gass, 1988).

2.4.2. Overgeneralization of L1 or L2 Rules as a Source of Errors

Overgeneralization and simplification are two main strategies that could lead to developmental or interlingual errors. Generalization plays a crucial role in learning

process and learning strategies. In other words, learners pay attention to particular examples or instances and try to draw a general rule or principle from their observations. In some cases, in language learning they may tend to extend the use of a rule beyond its acceptable border (Brown, 1987, p. 82). In their attempt to relate newly encountered linguistic data to the already-stored, learners often over-generalise, and they incorporate the new concept under the same name as the acquired ones but this process may not enable them to capture the differences between them. This resembles the child's use of 'doggy words' to represent various animals. This seems to be the case at the initial stage of L2 learning process, because, as the knowledge about L2 continues to increase, learners gain to awareness towards the distinctions between related words. At the morpheme and syntax level, double negativization or extending regular endings over irregular words are two cases in point for learners from almost every L1 background. (Brown, 1987, p. 83) On the other hand, Takashima (1992, p. 108) attributes the delay in overgeneralization and simplification period to lack of continual exposure to input and interaction in L2. The data from the study suggest that it is not easy to decide whether learners have, for example, acquired rules for producing indirect questions even if their production seems to be correct on the surface. The reason for this comes from Ellis (1985, p. 29) who states that non-inversion is a universal characteristic of both L1 and L2 acquisition. A sentence, such as "why he is going?" appears to be enough to meet the requirement as a question derived from a declarative sentence, because the learner is probably anxious not to delay communication until s/he fully grasps necessary rules. The simplification, as in this example, seems to run on linguistic tasks while the necessary information is encoded.

Some researchers argue that strategies such as simplifying, overgeneralizing, and redundancy reducing are strategies of non-learning, as they prevent the formation of correct hypotheses. But this argument has been rejected because errors are tested and corrected in case learners are exposed to enough evidence. In this respect, it is a production strategy that is employed in case learners have learnt a language point but they are still unable to utilize it because of heavy communication needs or processing difficulties (Ellis, 1985, p. 173).

Littlewood argues that there is an ambiguity about the identification of an error in that it belongs to either overgeneralization or to language transfer. As in the following data, it is not plausible to go into a possible distinction.

- a. *Ricardo had not tickets
- b. *Ricardo has not tickets last night.

Whereas (a) is categorized as a type of overgeneralization, (b) is described as a product of language transfer of native Spanish speakers (1984, p. 27). So, there is a considerable grey area across which attribution of into certain classes gets more difficult. Richard (1985, p. 177) considers analogy and rote learning as being distinct from overgeneralization based on observations made in the classroom. Some errors arise from the learners' lack of attention toward some syntactic relations within sentences. That is, it is beyond their present knowledge to what extent they are allowed to move elements preserving their grammaticality at the same time. A typical example is to construct relative clauses that do not allow the head of the clause to re-appear as an object pronoun at the end as in

*The man I talked to him was a policeman.

2.4.2.1. Incomplete Application of Rules

Learners may produce errors due to incomplete acquisition of structural rules and this is resulted in their incomplete application those rules. In addition, it is argued that learning materials and teachers' may lead them to produce a sort of idiosyncratic wrong forms of language. For instance, progressive aspect of the present form and its question formation may cause confusion if learners apply relatively advanced forms before mastering more elementary rules (Brown, 1987, p. 180).

On the other hand, Soniya (1991, p. 276), as to the source of lexical-semantic errors of adult learners, points out to the lack of knowledge about how two or more semantically related items are differentiated. This implies that they are often unaware of the lexical relationships that exist between these items within the language. Therefore, it is suggested that a full appreciation of potential errors on the part of learners lies in

recognizing the fact that in the lexicon of any language there is hardly any item that does not share part of its meaning with at least another item. Mattr (1999, p. 318) studies the validity of Dulay and Burt's claim that "the proportion of interlingual errors changes with the elicitation task, translation in particular." The research concludes that the findings do not seem to support the theory, that is, translation had a positive facilitating effect rather than causing more interference errors, which is perhaps owing to over-reliance on monitoring his learning.

2.4.2.2. Ignorance of Rule Restrictions

Learners may sometimes fail to observe the restrictions of language structures and commit violations in the usage of L2 production. This kind of errors appears also as a category of overgeneralization. Rote learning or memorizing and drawing analogies are two main reasons of this type of errors. For instance, learners may generalize that object complements with to-infinitive holds true for every case and thus, may attempt to over-generalize this rule for exceptions such as 'help, make, and let'. This process is often fostered with misleading drills and presentations of course books, that is, through a transfer of learning context (Richard, 1985, p. 50; Littlewood, 1984, p. 27).

2.4.2.3. False Hypotheses or Transfer of Training

A great number of learner errors have been discovered to come out as a result of faulty learning of rules in the classroom or in the society as a form of untutored language learning. A case in point is the contrastive presentation of tenses. Sequence of events is often narrated in progressive aspect where it is normally carried out in simple aspect like sports commentators' speeches or recipe demonstrations. A learner may seem to have acquired a rule by rote learning but, since it has been poorly internalised, it may cause him or her to remember and to use the item incorrectly (Brown, 1987, p. 178).

2.4.3. Avoidance as a Language Learning Strategy

In language learning, the fact that many language learners prefer to avoid using some L2 structures or lexical item seems to be a universal linguistic phenomenon. EA normally attends to learners' production to establish its theoretical principles. However, it is claimed that it also has to account for the reason why learners tend not to use some certain structures or lexical items. Much of the evidence comes from the research of Schachter (1974) and Kleinmann (1977) on the learners' avoidance of some syntactic structures in English (Cited in Larsen-freeman and Long, 1991, p. 61). Irujo (1993, p. 211) finds out that the Spanish learners of English have avoided using idioms in translation and preferred non-idiomatic equivalents if corresponding idioms lack semantic transparency. Psycho-linguistic reasons of avoiding certain language structures seem to develop from learners' fear of failure and this fear may lead them to have an underdeveloped writing skill in which they avoid putting words down.

2.5. Steps in Analysing Learners' Errors: Traditional and Present Approaches

Analysis of learners' errors starts with collecting samples from two mediums of production, that is, in the form of utterances or sentences. However, it is argued that these samples represent a single point in time rather than a continuum of language development. For this reason, EA has been considered an insufficient tool by itself for studying the sequence of language development or determining whether a natural order of acquisition exists. In order to get conclusive findings, it is suggested that samples for error analysis should be collected repeatedly at various stages of development along with other types of studies such as longitudinal studies (Mizuno, 1999, p. 130).

Another objection against the technique of EA has been made on the basis of its inadequacy in reflecting learners' whole language knowledge, that is the full language competence. Only partial use of their written or spoken performance is available for collecting data. Therefore, in order to for a study to be able to reveal patterns in

learners' development, it is suggested that a thorough analysis of errors should focus on errors that is systematic and regular (Takashima, 1992, p. 100).

The second step in analysing errors is to identify the errors in the sample collected and decide whether they are overtly or covertly idiosyncratic. Data may include ill-formed sentences or utterances or they could be superficially well formed but when considered within the context, they appear to be ungrammatical. Here, it might be more useful to focus on the patterns or conventions of English rather than surface structure rules.

The third stage involves assigning a linguistic description or category to each error. When describing the source of an error, what s/he meant to say may be asked to express in his L1. This stage of EA is found more problematic because of complex cognitive processes explained so far. However, it is suggested that a descriptive model be still needed because the classroom instruction focuses on surface structures not on deep structures, which is more relevant to EA.

At the fourth step, an attempt is made to explain the psycholinguistic reason which makes the learner produce the certain error. These are the categories of error sources that have been described in this chapter. However, the list is not exhaustive because an array of other causes or factors such as age, cognitive style, mood, motivation, etc may be involved in error production.

2.6. Pedagogical Grammar: How to Assess Learners Errors in Instructional Settings

Findings received from error analysis studies seem to be available for a direct transfer to classroom practice but that could be a mistaken idea if caution is not taken. For language learners the most direct way to get data on what does not exist in their L2 is to explain them what cannot be used there in that language. However, apart from instructors' warnings and learning materials' sections on correction, learners may not be able to find sources that identify their errors in compositions and conversations unless they produce erroneous forms and utterances during their interlanguage period. From the pedagogical perspective, it is suggested that they should be given correction in

accordance with their own interlanguage production (Mohammed, 1996; Pica, 1996). Correction in general helps them modify a hypothetical rule that they have discovered. Their output, which is either confirmed or modified, and newly acquired rules contribute to learners' accuracy, creativity and, as a result, to their linguistic competence (Mohammed, 1996, p. 284).

Responses of teachers to learners' erroneous language production have been evaluated in order to define and describe corrective discourse in language learning. Musayeva (1998, p.150) studies classroom discourse context made up from errors, responses, and their sequences. In the discourse analysis and in the survey on the students' preferences for language teachers' error treatment the results showed that students exhibited a very strong preference for error correction. However, their preferences showed some variation in accordance with the linguistic level, i.e. phonological, morphological, syntactic, semantic, and lexical. Thus, as Jain (1994, p.17) says, what learners produce in written or oral discourse is based on logic of its own even they commit errors. Pedagogical grammar generally involves grammar teaching embedded in syllabus design and language teaching materials. It is a combination of structural analysis and description of a certain language based on a particular grammatical theory and the study of the grammatical problems that are derived from error analysis studies (Richards et al., 1985, 210).

Concerning the employment of pedagogical grammar in language teaching, the problem here seems to be how much terminology should be loaded on learners' grammar. Mohammed (1996, p. 287), conducting an experiment on teaching relative clauses after analysing their errors on the same grammar point, found out that terminology-free interlingual comparisons were more effective in minimizing errors produced under the effect of L1 transfer. Myers (1997, p. 13) points out to the need of incorporating insights gained from the research on process writing into the instruction of syntactical and semantic features of English. In other words, the rationale behind process writing method should apply to not only composing but to the instruction and learning of the syntax and vocabulary of the L2 as well. She argues that, for effective use of process writing methodology, it does not suffice to use error correction techniques like pointing out to wrong usages in surface level grammar. Nunan (1995, p.154) suggests that underlying the teaching of language skills is that explicit teaching of

grammar should be regarded as a means to mastering native-like communicative skills rather than as a final aim in itself, regardless of particular pedagogical techniques and classroom activities. He proposes a gradual advancement from form-focused exercises to meaningful task-based activities with an emphasis on successful performance in communication in L2.

Pointing out to the importance of pedagogical grammar, Stern (1984, p. 176) draws attention to the relation between the linguistic research and pedagogical grammar. He seeks three essential principles for a sound relation: there should be a clear definition of specific contributions to be expected from linguistics; like the pedagogical grammar, there should be an interface or filter between linguistic theory and educational practice in the classroom; awareness should be developed towards the interdisciplinary character of language pedagogy. In that sense, the contribution of interlanguage studies into teaching materials and classroom instruction has been in four forms: direct application, filtering, simplifications and eclecticism.

2.7. Teaching Writing as Dynamic Language Skill

The basis of language is oral communication. Written language skills develop based on speaking skills. Similar to speaking, it has been studied as a cognitive process with a recursive nature (Myer, 1997, p. 18). Learning to write well in comparison with speaking is lengthy and psychologically more exhaustive to produce because, different from the casualness of speaking, writing involves relatively more accurate more effective and more appropriate transfer of information. Since the writer has to create its own context it is regarded as a decontextualized language skill. Its syntax and lexis need to be more elaborate. The linguistic system in terms of clause types, verb and noun phrases, word choice and syntactic processes like relativization present a type of autonomous system (Richards, 1994, p. 109).

Richards (1994, p. 107) points out that teaching writing in the classroom has been through a more learner-oriented approach. They are assumed to have more control over their writing, how they write it and how to edit their own writing. This skill development process is achieved through going over their writing in order to make it

ready for the pleasure of the reader. Therefore, in writing learners' errors act as a so-called catalyst.

Writing and reading are two active and generative processes that mutually feed each other. In cases where reading is favoured against writing, Zamel (1992, p. 478) reminds that writing represents a bridge on which the learner-writer may watch his learning process, his efforts to make meaning and the level s/he has reached in terms of using language while maintaining his own language construction.

Farghal (1992, p. 50) points out to another crucial aspect of writing claiming that cohesive markers are attributed a kind of ornamental role and therefore the neglect of teaching variation in the cohesive harmony of a text leaves a long lasting channel for committing the same types of errors.

2.8. Generating Awareness in Learners Toward their Own Errors in Writing

Learners' compositions like other forms of writing can be considered as products of intricate cognitive and linguistic planning and decision-making processes. But in order to achieve this, learners may have to have strengths to be the readers of their own writings and to realize that learning writing should be thought as a lifelong process rather than something done to prepare for an exam. On the other hand, for learners beginning to learn English there seems to be greater need for more efficient means to access syntactic and semantic rules of their L2 other than language input provided by their course books and teacher-learner interaction. Pienemann (1984a and 1984b) argues that there are two constraints on learning that require a degree of awareness towards its learnability and teachability. One is an order of increasing linguistic and psycholinguistic complexity and the other is setting appropriate developmental stages while changing over from L1 word order to that of L2 (Cited in Pica, 1994, p. 65).

The description above seems to be interrelated with teaching productive skills including writing. Requesting learners' awareness to their own errors and maintaining this correction in meaningful communicative contexts, teachers may develop strategies to deal with learners' errors that are naturally produced in writing. Lightbown (1992,

cited in Kramsch, 1993, p. 6) studied the effects of immediate and delayed correction. The conclusion was that immediate correction worked better in overcoming a particular error and sustaining the correct form beyond the instructional setting. In contrast, those who had error correction during audio-lingual pattern practice were able to correct their own errors but its effect did not go beyond their classroom experience.

At this point, the question of how teaching writing can be maintained while focusing on learners' gradual improvement in their interlanguage competence needs answering. There has been a radical change in approach and methodology of teaching writing from product oriented approach to the process approach (Richards, 1994, p. 107). The former one places the emphasis first, on providing practice through pattern drills and strictly controlled writing created with imitation of sample model texts and, next, on preventing learners from making errors. With respect to the final goal of the product-oriented teaching of writing, it seems that how learners can accomplish their goal step by step falls behind what they are expected to produce. Thus, as Leki (1991, p. 9) points out, in writing it seems fair to argue that ends should not be to the neglect of the means or vice versa. However, just as what skilled writers do in editing or modifying their writing in real life, in teaching and learning writing teachers and learners can cope with writing errors efficiently and gradually eliminate the role of semantic simplification. Learners' compositions, however much their topics seem to be simple or easy to write, are today dealt with in stages like rehearsing or prewriting, drafting, and revising even more than one when needed. Since learners may find occasions to go through their writing for a few times, process writing can provide them with opportunities to get feedback from their own writing and to show improvement perhaps even from the beginning level (Richards, 1994, p. 109).

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This study aims to make an analysis of student errors that were quantitatively and qualitatively culled from the compositions in descriptive, expository and narrative styles written by the students attending a one-year English preparatory course. For the classification and analysis of writing errors, a taxonomy devised by Lennon (1991) was modified and used. (see Appendix D for Lennon's taxonomy) Though it is largely a descriptive study rather than an interpretative one, this study also aims to make an attempt to explore whether there are any implications about possible sources of errors such as L1 interference, developmental errors or a blended form of the two, that is both L1 and interlingual effect. In the light of the results received, the study aims to bring to light possible implications about teaching writing.

In this chapter, first setting and subjects have been described and then detailed information has been given about the procedural tests that the data were collected from. Thirdly, arrangement of error corpuses from errors elicited from learners' exam papers has been explained. Finally, the data derived from three error corpuses have been analysed.

3.2 Research Design

One of the definitions of 'error' as a notion from the target language perspective is that they are non-native forms and patterns that arise because the students do not know the appropriate rule (Corder, 1967, p. 162). Although there is a diversity of opinions on its exact and precise definition, for the purposes of this study, a modified and exclusive definition of error, as adapted from Lennon (1991), would be as follows: a linguistic form or a combination of forms or sentences, which in all aspects and in similar circumstances will in all likelihood not be preferred in writing by adult educated native speakers of English.

Students' errors that fit into the same category were considered as tokens from 'E₁' to 'E₁₀' and were attributed to one of the three pre-determined 'domains': For morphological errors, the domain extended over the word; for the choice of noun and prepositions, the domain went beyond the noun or prepositional phrase. For errors involving clause linkage violations, word order errors, inconsistencies in verb and object complements, incompleteness, referential disorders, ellipsis and lack or overgeneralizations of tense markers, sentence constituted a domain. The sentence as the largest domain also served the purpose of the study in the comparison of global and local errors. Global errors were defined as those errors which hinder the meaning and thereby the message from being conveyed across. Local errors were the ones that were not so unacceptable as to prevent the sentence from being understood. Because there were not any variables in the data to make their statistical analysis against each other, distribution of errors into categories and proficiency levels was achieved in percentage terms, measuring the distribution of errors against proficiency levels, exam types and error categories.

3.3. Setting and Subjects

At Afyon Kocatepe University, students from the Faculty of Economics and Administrative Sciences and from the College of Tourism and Hotel Management can attend English classes for one year before they start their own departments. Some students may be dismissed if they fail to complete the required attendance or fail to receive the required score in the final exam series in order to continue to a higher level.

The students whose exam papers were investigated for this study were selected out of a hundred and forty one students. They were attending English classes that they took on voluntary basis during the fall term of the academic year 2000-2001. They all had different educational backgrounds. The students were subsequently placed into elementary, pre-intermediate and intermediate classes depending on their scores in the placement test, which was prepared and carried out by the testing office of the language institution, YAMER. According to their scores from the placement test conducted one week before the course started, they were placed in four elementary, two intermediate

and one intermediate class. Chart 3.1 is the scale of evaluation for the placement test used to place the students into proper levels.

CHART 3.1. THE EVALUATION SCALE FOR THE PLACEMENT TEST

81-100	Advanced
66-80	Upper Intermediate
51-65	Intermediate
31-50	Pre-intermediate
0-30	Elementary

AKÜ YAMER, 1999: İngilizce Hazırlık Sınıfları Yönetmeliği

Out of 141 students who took the placement test, 16 students were placed in the intermediate class; 53 students in the pre-intermediate and 72 students in the elementary.

The course was designed with equal emphasis to each basic skill in pre-intermediate and intermediate students, but for elementary level students a structure or form based syllabus was set in order to leave room for more audio-lingual practice. The researcher was also teaching the intermediate group at the time. The number of classes per week was 26 hours for the elementary groups and 24 hours for the pre-intermediate and intermediate groups.

In the exams, the range of age varied between 17 and 28 and all the students were native speakers of Turkish. Random sampling was achieved by giving equal chance to each student' exam papers from the elementary and pre-intermediate groups but in order for them to be representative, papers of all sixteen members from the intermediate group were taken for error elicitation.

From quiz 6, sixty-five student papers were selected to study and to elicit unacceptable forms and usages; from the midterm exam, the number was seventy-seven and it was fifty-five from the final exam. For the sixth quiz, papers of twenty-eight students from the elementary; papers of twenty-two students from the pre intermediate, and papers of fifteen students from the intermediate level were included into the study. For the midterm, papers were thirty-six from the elementary students; thirty from the pre- intermediate students and eleven from the intermediate level students. For the final exam, thirty-four student papers from the elementary; fourteen student papers from the

pre-intermediate and seven student papers from the intermediate level were included into the study.

3.4. Instruments

Each proficiency level was designed to last for eight weeks. During the eight-week course the students were seated for five or six quizzes at each level, for a midterm exam and for a final exam. Quizzes were designed on a specific skill or grammar in turn at each time. The sixth quiz was held at the sixth week to check their current writing skill. Error corpus I was obtained from the compositions written in this exam. The midterm exam was arranged at the fifth week. With each of the four basic skills besides a grammar section, the aim was to check learners' current level in English. Error corpus II was obtained from the compositions written in this exam. The final part of the data came from the final exam from which error corpus III was obtained from its writing part. It was presented at the last week for each level. It had the same design as the midterm except for an additional oral exam. Questions were prepared by the testing office and distributed on the day exams were planned for. Writing sections were given to the students in the last thirty minutes of the midterm and final exam. For the writing quiz, thirty minutes were allocated as well. Materials were the error corpuses devised from the elicitation of learners' unacceptable forms in their composition writings in those compulsory exams implemented within the syllabus. (see Appendices A, B and C for the exam samples for three proficiency levels)

3.5. Data Collection Procedures

The procedure of the descriptive study had three stages: 1) organizing three midterm, quiz and final exams successively, 2) identification of errors in the students' papers, 3) assigning categories for errors along with their likely correct forms again in English.

Except for the frequent quiz-like tests, the students at each level have to sit for compulsory exams and once for final exams. Data collection was made at the fifth week

of the classes from their midterm exams; from the quiz at the sixth week; and from the final exam at the last week of the course.

Testing format for the midterm and final exams was almost the same. They were designed in the form of discrete-point test so as to investigate each skill independently as listening, reading, structural forms, and finally writing. Compositions from each level were collected from one quiz specifically designed on writing, one from the midterm, and one from the final exam. The total number of papers was 197 and three different compositions on different topics were submitted. The instructors teaching each class gave them scores. After marking, results were announced by the administration and all the papers were submitted to the researcher.

Data collection procedures started with the elimination of papers that would remain out of the error elicitation process. The process was carried out on the basis of random sampling among the whole papers, but for the consistency of the results, samples belonging to the same students were chosen for each language level. That is, student A in the sample group had three composition sheets to go through an error analysis. Naturally some of the samples did not yield any errors either because they did not have proper length or they were error-free, particularly in the intermediate group.

At the next stage, the researcher first identified ill-formed sentences or unacceptable forms and then the supervisor checked them. In addition, a Canadian native speaker who is currently working at AKU edited all errors for their likely correct equivalents given in brackets at the end of each sentence. Finally, three error corpuses were obtained with the transfer of sentences identified with one or more than one errors in them.

3.6. Data Analysis

The analysis was carried out on the basis of discovering typical errors in each T-unit. By a T-unit was meant a complete sentence, namely a main clause and all its subsequent subordinate clauses and non-clausal elements. Sample compositions were thoroughly examined in order to find out sentences that involved morphologically, syntactically and lexically unacceptable usages. In classification of unacceptable forms,

ten different categories were employed each of which explains a distinct anomaly or violation of morphological, grammatical or word formation rules. Each error identified in three error corpuses was assigned to only one category. Therefore, categories became exhaustive and mutually exclusive. Likely correct target forms were matched in brackets at the end of each T-unit. In a T-unit, there was often elicited more than one error category. Chart 3.2 shows the three major categories with eight syntactic subcategories:

CHART 3.2. CLASSIFICATION OF MAJOR ERROR CATEGORIES WITH EIGHT SYNTACTIC SUBCATEGORIES

	MORPHOLOGICAL ERRORS	SYNTACTIC ERRORS	LEXICO-SEMANTIC ERRORS
WORD LEVEL	Disturbances in verb; noun and adjective/adverb morphology. Wrong word categorization or using wrong part of speech (E1)		Wrong choice of verbs, nouns, adjectives, and adverbs, whether be collocationally appropriate or inappropriate (E10)
PHRASE LEVEL		Disturbances in noun phrases (E2); intra verbal group (E3); wrong choice of prep. or adverbial particle (E4); wrong choice of pro forms (E5)	
SENTENCE LEVEL		Wrong choice of position for adverbials and participles (E6); of verb complements (E7); Wrong choice of clausal errors and of linkages (E8); and wrong choice of sentence structures including passive voice, existential or cleft ones (E9).	

(Adapted from Lennon's Error Taxonomy, 1991)

Category 1 (E1) was assigned to morphological errors since they occur at the word level as the minimum unit of our analysis. There were four sub-categories, which respectively refer to verb morphology, noun morphology, adjective plus adverb morphology and word categorisation or part of speech errors.

In category 2 (E2), syntactic errors and word-order disturbances occurring within a noun phrase were elicited in three subcategories. Errors related with all determiners

and adjectival choice; errors of adjective plus noun or noun plus noun combination; and errors stemming from violations in post modified noun phrases were the three subcategories of this group.

Category 3 (E3) included errors within a verb phrase relating to errors of tense/aspect, passive voice and copula choice. The second subcategory contained errors in choice of modals, auxiliary and participial combinations.

Errors of preposition choice and accompanying adverbial preposition choice constituted category 4 (E4).

Errors of all varieties of pronouns as pro-forms were studied in category 5 (E5) including indefinite pronouns (e.g. 'someone', 'something') and quantifiers (e.g. each, all, any when used as pronouns and interrogative pronouns).

Word-order disturbances related to adverbials and participles go under category 6 (E6).

Verb complementation errors are studied in category 7. Errors of direct or indirect objects in the form of noun phrases, gerunds, infinitives (with or without 'to'), and 'that' noun clauses made up category 7 (E7).

In category 8 (E8), errors of clause linkage, absence of conjunctions or relative pronouns or coordinators, and absence of second auxiliary in coordinate clauses were elicited.

All kinds of sentence structure errors such as inappropriate use of existential, cleft sentences and inappropriate use of active voice instead of passive were analysed in category 9 (E9). Some errors in this category may also be evaluated as semantic and pragmatic errors.

Last category or category 10 (E10) involved lexical choice errors. The first 8 subcategories were studied, in an order, wrong word choices of parts of speech. Errors of verb, noun, adjective and adverb choices yielded two different forms: errors that were collocationally appropriate or inappropriate in the context. Subcategory 9 was collocational errors. However, there were some cases where error could not be located unambiguously in one of the two combined elements alone, but the combination was unacceptable.

The following are examples of sentences as T-units with their likely equivalent correct forms and assigned error categories:

*Her father not want her go out because she is very much young. (does not/ to go out/ young very much) E3i/ E7/ E6

(Error corpus I)

*I walked near the sea and I swim. (had walks/ by the sea/ went swimming) E10ii/ E4/ E3i/ E10i

(Error corpus II)

*I go to on holiday in Alanya. (I am going/ to Alanya on holiday) E3i/ E4/ E6

(Error corpus III)

4. ANALYSIS OF RESULTS

4.1. Introduction

In this study, an investigation was carried out on what kind of errors Turkish students learning English at AKU committed in the writing section of compulsory exams. Secondly, an attempt was made to see whether the errors significantly concentrated in one of the three major categories. An additional investigation was made to see in which subcategories they showed concentration. Thirdly, evidence was searched to answer the question if the errors elicited differed markedly both in number and in category across the three language levels in their distribution. The last question awaiting answer was whether there was a significant decline in the number of writing errors from the initial exposure to classroom instruction through the time that our study covered.

Analysis of the data was carried out after the errors in each T-unit were assigned an error category. Errors in each category were counted and this was followed with their calculation in percentage terms and finally, they were placed into the tables. Tables were designed; first, calculating the rate of errors in three exam types against the number of errors in each of the ten categories and the same procedure was repeated at the next step in reverse order. For each proficiency level, the number of errors in each of the three major error categories was calculated against three exam types in order to find the percentage of errors. This design was repeated twice: first, for three major error categories and then for ten error categories. The whole results were shown in one table and the number of errors in each exam in each proficiency level was calculated against three major error categories. Lastly, for each type of exam, the number of errors in each proficiency level was calculated in percentage terms against eight syntactic subcategories. Table 2 shows the whole number of errors on which the analysis was carried out based on the number of exam papers selected and the number of T-units in those papers.

TABLE 4.1. TOTAL NUMBER OF UNACCEPTABLE SENTENCES IN THE PAPERS SELECTED AND TOTAL NUMBER OF LINGUISTIC ERRORS IN EACH T-UNIT.

	NUMBER OF PAPERS	NUMBER OF T - UNITS	NUMBER OF ERRORS
Elementary Final	34	165	287
Elementary Midterm	36	93	226
Elementary Quiz 6	28	136	290
Pre-int. Final	14	19	38
Pre-int. Midterm	30	77	142
Pre-int. Quiz 6	22	57	96
Intermediate Final	7	18	34
Intermediate Midterm	11	28	61
Intermediate Quiz 6	15	47	87
Total	197	640	1261

4.2. Analysis of the Results According to Students' Language Level

As to the main research question, tables 4.2.1, 4.2.2 and 4.2.3 below show the distribution of errors that fall into 10 error categories. Each of these three tables depicts the number and the percentage of errors in each category for the learners at Elementary, Pre-intermediate and Intermediate levels successively. Taken as a whole, results demonstrate that errors concentrated on two main syntactic categories: Intra-verb phrase errors (E3) and prepositional phrase errors (E4).

Each of the vertical columns gives in ten categories the number and percentages of errors elicited from three exams, namely quiz 6, the midterm and the final. Based on the procedures presented in 4.1, at the second stage, the findings derived from the tables 4.3.1, 4.3.2 and 4.3.3 were discussed. In these tables, learners' errors were evaluated in three main error categories, which were morphological, syntactic and lexico-semantic respectively. Morphological errors in elementary and pre-intermediate learner groups for all three exams do not present any significant deviation and this similarity in percentages is true for lexico-semantic errors across the exam types with one exception of lexico-semantic errors in Elementary Quiz 6.

In the following three tables, E1 corresponds to morphological errors at word level. While E2, E3, E4, and E5 correspond to syntactic errors, -even though E4 also involves a semantic character, at phrase level, E6, E7, E8, and E9 categorize syntactic errors at sentence level. Lastly, E10 corresponds to lexico-semantic errors at word level, whereas E10i involves the same kind of errors at phrase level. (See chart 3.2 for the classification of error categories.)

4.2.1. Analysis of the Elementary Group's Errors

TABLE 4.2.1. DISTRIBUTION OF THE ERRORS IN ALL CATEGORIES AT THE ELEMENTARY LEVEL AND THEIR PERCENTAGES IN THE TOTAL NUMBER OF ERRORS

Exam	E1	%	E2	%	E3	%	E4	%	E5	%	E6	%	E7	%	E8	%	E9	%	E10	%	Total
Quiz	26	9	24	8	48	17	62	21	18	6	23	8	45	15	5	2	8	3	31	11	290
Midterm	17	8	21	9	41	18	32	14	23	10	31	14	27	12	14	6	1	0	19	8	226
Final	24	8	48	17	71	25	28	10	17	6	12	4	48	17	11	4	4	1	24	8	287

4.2.1.1. Analysis of the Elementary Group's Errors in Quiz 6

Returning to the Table 4.2.1, elementary learners' errors in this table are highly concentrated in specific categories. Of the 290 errors elicited from the quiz sheets, 62 (21 per cent) consist of E4, preposition choice errors, and 48 (17 percent) of E3, errors within the VP and 45 (15 percent) of E7, errors of object complementation. Thus, more than half of the errors in their quiz composition sheets are accounted for by these three categories alone. E10, lexical choice errors, appears as another big category with 31 (11 per cent), followed by E1, word morphology errors. 24 (8 per cent) errors fall into E2, violations within the NP, and equally 23 (8 per cent) go into E6, word-order errors related to the position of adverbials and participles. On the other hand, category 5, errors of all varieties of pronouns as pro-forms, E8, clause linkage errors, and E9, inappropriate use of sentence structures, make up 11 per cent of the total with 31 errors.

4.2.1.2. Analysis of the Elementary Group's Errors in Midterm Exam

Analysis of the midterm exam gives a similar picture to that of the quiz, regarding its findings. Of the total 226 in ten categories, 41 (18 per cent) represent E3, errors within VP. A further 32 (14 per cent) go into E4, preposition choice errors, which is followed by 31 (14 per cent) in E6, errors of participle and adverbial related word order disturbances. 27 (12 per cent) errors of object complementation make up E7, and another 23 (10 per cent) consist of E5, errors of pronouns as pro-forms. These five categories explain two-third of the total. 21 (9 per cent) comprise E2, errors within the NP, and this is followed by 19 (8 per cent) errors of lexical choice in E10 and equally by 17 (8 per cent) words morphology errors in E1. E8 and E9 are the categories that have the least share with 14 (6 per cent) and 1 (0 per cent) in the total.

4.2.1.3. Analysis of the Elementary Group's Errors in Final Exam

The whole picture in the final exam in relation to the number and percentage of errors shows a noticeable difference in their distribution into categories. Of the total 287 errors, 71 (25 per cent) constitute E3, errors within the VP. Number of errors in E2, errors within the NP is 48 (17 per cent), rather higher than the previous two exams. This is equally followed by 48 (17 per cent) errors of object complement. 28 (10 per cent) errors of preposition choice consist of E4. These four categories make up two-third of the total. E1, word morphology errors and E10, lexical choice errors, receive equal share with 24 (8 per cent) errors each. The remaining categories E5 with 17, E6 with 12, E8 with 11, and E9 with 4 errors make up 15 per cent of the total.

4.2.2. Analysis of the Pre-intermediate Group's Errors

TABLE 4.2.2. DISTRIBUTION OF THE ERRORS IN ALL CATEGORIES AT THE PRE-INTERMEDIATE LEVEL AND THEIR PERCENTAGES IN THE TOTAL NUMBER OF ERRORS

Exam	E1	%	E2	%	E3	%	E4	%	E5	%	E6	%	E7	%	E8	%	E9	%	E10	%	Total
Quiz	8	8	14	15	18	19	12	13	4	4	8	8	11	11	2	2	16	17	3	3	96
Midterm	6	4	20	14	33	23	18	13	8	6	8	6	12	8	13	9	14	10	10	7	142
Final	4	10	5	13	6	16	6	16	1	3	1	3	9	23	1	3	2	5	3	8	38

4.2.2.1. Analysis of the Pre-intermediate Group's Errors in Quiz 6

Compared with the findings of the elementary level, pre-intermediate learners' error corpus presents nearly a similar picture regarding the percentages of error categories. But there are some categories in which errors are specifically concentrated. Considering the learners' compositions in the quiz 6, the biggest category is E3, errors within the VP, with 18 (19 per cent) out of the total 96. 16 (17 per cent) interestingly consist of E9, clause linkage errors. E2 is the third category with 14 (15 per cent) errors within the NP. This is followed by 12 (13 per cent) E4, preposition choice errors. 11 (10 per cent) comprise E7, object complement errors. These five categories account for nearly three-fourth of the total. E1, word morphology errors, E6, adverbial and participle position related word order errors have an equal share with 8 (8 per cent) for each. E5, errors of pronoun choice as pro-forms with 4, E10, lexical choice errors, with 3, and E8, clause linkage errors, with 2 errors make up the remaining 9 per cent of the total errors.

4.2.2.2. Analysis of the Pre-intermediate Group's Errors in Midterm Exam

When the table is studied closely, it will be noticed that error distribution of midterm error corpus of pre-intermediate learners is almost similar to the quiz 6's. 33 (23 per cent) represent E3, errors within the VP. E2 follows with 20 (14 per cent) errors within the NP. 18 (13 per cent) go into E4, errors of pronoun choice as pro-forms. 14 (10

per cent) consist of E9, sentence structure errors, and three fifth of total 142 is accounted for by these four categories. The number of clause linkage errors, E8, with 13 (9 per cent) is much more than the other two exams, that is, the quiz 6 and the final. By contrast, 12 (8 per cent) from E7, object complement errors, 10 (7 per cent) from E10, lexical choice errors, show diminishing rates. The remaining three categories, E5 with 8, E6 with 8, and E1 with 6 errors explain 516 of the total errors.

4.2.2.3. Analysis of the Pre-intermediate Group's Errors in Final Exam

In the distribution of final exam composition errors, we observe a sharp decline of total errors. Of the total 38 errors, 9 (23 per cent) fall into E7, object complement errors, and 6 (16 per cent) go into E3, errors in the VP and another 6 (16 per cent) are elicited in E4, preposition choice errors. 5 (13 per cent) consist of E2 errors within the NP followed by E1, verb morphology errors, with 4 (11 per cent). All these categories make up 80 per cent of the total. With 3 (8 per cent) from E10, with 2 (5 per cent) from E9, with 1 from E5, E6 and E8 each, the remaining 22 per cent is accounted for by these five categories.

4.2.3. Analysis of the Intermediate Group's Errors

TABLE 4.2.3. DISTRIBUTION OF THE ERRORS IN ALL CATEGORIES AT THE INTERMEDIATE LEVEL AND THEIR PERCENTAGES IN THE TOTAL NUMBER OF ERRORS

Exam	E1	%	E2	%	E3	%	E4	%	E5	%	E6	%	E7	%	E8	%	E9	%	E10	%	Tota
Quiz	3	3	3	3	21	24	13	15	5	6	4	5	7	8	4	5	2	2	25	29	87
Midter	8	13	7	11	1	2	9	15	2	3	3	5	8	13	2	3	0	0	21	34	61
Final	0	0	4	12	3	9	9	26	1	3	1	3	7	21	1	3	1	3	7	21	34

4.2.3.1. Analysis of the Intermediate Group's Errors in Quiz 6

It is at the intermediate level that an observation can be made about a fundamental shift in the distribution towards a more semantic structure. Of the semantic categories, E10, lexical choice errors, presents itself as the biggest error category with 25 (29 per cent) of the total 87. On the other hand, 21 (24 per cent) consist of E3, VP errors, which display a striking similarity in the rate of errors to the other two categories in the quiz 6 though there is a sharp fall in the midterm and final exam in the same category. 13 (15 per cent) represent E4, prepositional choice errors and this is followed by E7, object complement errors, with 7 (8 per cent). Three fifth of total errors is accounted for by these four categories. E5, pronoun choice errors as pro-forms, contains 5 (6 per cent), which is followed by 4 (5 per cent) errors of E8, clause linkage disturbances. E2, intra-NP errors, E1, word morphology errors and E9, sentence structure errors are the remaining three categories that explain 8 per cent of the total.

4.2.3.2. Analysis of the Intermediate Group's Errors in Midterm Exam

The leading category in the midterm exam is once more E10, lexical choice errors with 21 (34 per cent) of the total 61. E4, preposition choice errors, is the next as in the quiz 6 with 9 (15 per cent). This obvious deviation from what is normally expected is taken further by E1, word morphology errors, and by 8 (13 per cent) from E7, object complement errors. 7 (11 per cent) comprise E2; errors within NP. These five categories make up more than four-fifth of the total. E6, pronoun choice errors as pro-forms, follows this order with 3 (5 per cent). E8, clause linkage errors, with 2, E6, adverbial & participle position word order errors, and E3, intra-VP errors, account for the remaining 13 per cent of the total errors.

4.2.3.3. Analysis of the Intermediate Group's Errors in Final Exam

In the final exam total number of intermediate learners' errors are relatively less than the previous two exams. Here, the leading category is E4, preposition choice errors,

with 9 (26 per cent) of the total 34. 7 (21 per cent) constitute E7, object complement errors, with the equal numbers from E10, lexical choice errors. 4 (12 per cent) consist of E2, intra-NP errors, and intra-VP errors contain 3 (9 per cent). All other categories are represented with one error each only amounting to 12 per cent of the total.

4.3. Distribution of Errors into Three Major Error Categories

The findings of the study have so far been analysed into ten error categories. However, except for the first and last the other eight categories are of mainly syntactic character, bearing in mind that E4, when taken liberally, could have a semantic element. Therefore, it was considered necessary to describe the data in three main categories based on the information derived from the Tables 4.3.1, 4.3.2 and 4.3.3 because it would contribute clarity and concision to the purpose of the study.

4.3.1. Distribution of Elementary Group's Errors into Three Major Error Categories

TABLE 4.3.1. ERRORS OF ELEMENTARY CLASSES AND THEIR DISTRIBUTION IN THREE MAJOR CATEGORIES FOR THREE EXAMS AND THEIR PERCENTAGES IN THE TOTALITY

TYPE OF EXAM Error Category	QUIZ 6		MIDTERM		FINAL		TOTAL	
		%		%		%		%
Morphological Errors	26	9	17	7.5	24	8.4	67	8.3
Syntactic Errors	233	80.3	190	84	239	83.2	662	82.4
Lexico-Semantic Errors	31	10.6	19	8.4	24	8.4	74	9.2
Total	290	99.9	226	99.9	287	100	803	99.9

All three tables, when examined altogether, prove that for all level of learners errors are highly concentrated in one specific category. The overwhelming majority of errors carry out a syntactic character. 662 (82.4 per cent) are of syntactic nature for elementary level; 242 (276) for pre-intermediate and 118 (64.8 per cent) for intermediate levels. The rate of morphological and lexico-semantic errors remains rather low for the

elementary and pre-intermediate learners. 67 (8.3 per cent) consist of morphological error category while 74 (9.2 per cent) are of lexico-semantic character for the elementary level students. For the pre-intermediate level the order remains the same. 18 (7.7 per cent) displays a syntactic character number of lexico-semantic errors are 16 (6.4 per cent). By contrast, errors elicited from intermediate learners present a significant change from the other two groups. Out of the total 182 errors, nearly two third are syntactic errors but nonetheless, a sharp rise is observed in the number of lexico-semantic errors. While only 11 (6 per cent) errors represent the morphological errors category, errors with semantic nature 53 (29.1 per cent) consist of the lexico-semantic errors category.

Morphological errors in Elementary learners' compositions in the exams show an equal distribution for all the three exams. For the quiz 6 it is 9 per cent (26 errors); for the midterm it is 7.5 per cent (17 errors) and its 8.4 per cent (17) for the final exam. Syntactic errors are also distributed equally through the three exams. For the quiz 6 it is 80.3 per cent (233 errors): 84 per cent (190 errors) for the midterm and 83.2 per cent (239 errors) for the final. Lastly, for percentages of lexico-semantic errors, it is 10.6 per cent (31 errors) for the quiz 6; 8.4 per cent (19 errors) for the midterm, and 8.4 per cent (24 errors) for the final exam, an average that still bears on equality.

4.3.2. Distribution of Pre-intermediate Group's Errors into Three Major Error Categories

TABLE 4.3.2. ERRORS OF PRE-INTERMEDIATE CLASSES AND THEIR DISTRIBUTION IN THREE MAJOR CATEGORIES FOR THREE EXAMS AND THEIR PERCENTAGES IN THE TOTALITY

TYPE OF EXAM Error Category	QUIZ 6		MIDTERM		FINAL		TOTAL	
		%		%		%		%
Morphological Errors	8	3.1	6	4.2	4	10.6	18	6.5
Syntactic Errors	85	88.5	126	88.7	31	81.6	242	87.6
Lexico-Semantic Errors	3	8.3	10	7	3	7.8	16	5.8
Total	96	99.9	142	99.9	38	100	276	99.9

Pre-intermediate learners' error corpus is not significantly different to a great extent regarding their distribution into three main error categories. The rate of morphological errors is quite low in all three types of exams. It is 8.3 per cent (8 errors) in the quiz; 4.2 per cent (6 errors) in the midterm. In the final exam a sharp rise is observed with 10.5 per cent (4 errors). Syntactic errors make up the major category here as well. 85.5 per cent (85 errors) in the quiz; 88.7 per cent (126 errors) in the midterm and 81.6 per cent (31 errors). Lexico-semantic errors are even less than the morphological ones in this group. It is 3.1 per cent (3 errors) in the quiz; 7 per cent (10 errors) in the midterm and finally it is 7.8 per cent (3 errors) in the final exam.

4.3.3. Distribution of Intermediate Group's Errors into Three Major Error Categories

TABLE 4.3.3. ERRORS OF INTERMEDIATE CLASSES AND THEIR DISTRIBUTION IN THREE MAJOR CATEGORIES FOR THREE EXAMS AND THEIR PERCENTAGES IN THE TOTALITY

TYPE OF EXAM Error Category	QUIZ 6		MIDTERM		FINAL		TOTAL	
		%		%		%		%
Morphological Errors	3	3.4	8	13.1	0	0	11	6
Syntactic Errors	59	67.8	32	52.4	27	79.4	118	64.8
Lexico-Semantic Errors	25	28.7	21	34.4	7	20.6	53	29.1
Total	87	99.9	61	99.9	34	100	182	99.9

Distribution of errors in the intermediate learners' compositions shows a clear decline in morphological errors and a striking rise in the number of lexico-semantic errors against the syntactic ones. The rate of morphological errors remains stable in three exams. It is 3.4 per cent (3 errors) in the quiz; 13.1 per cent (8 errors) with a rise in the midterm, which needs explaining, and 0 per cent for the final exam. Of the total 64.8 per cent, the distribution of syntactic errors, it is 67.8 per cent (59 errors) for the quiz; 52.4 per cent (32 errors) for the midterm, and 79.4 per cent (27 errors) for the final exam. Lastly, for lexico-semantic errors the distribution is 28.7 per cent (25 errors) for the

quiz; 34.4 per cent (21 errors) for the midterm, and 20.6 per cent (7 errors) for the final exam.

4.4. Discussion of Results: General Evaluation

In 3.4 we have observed how the learners' tendencies towards making errors changed or showed similarities across three language levels, which stem from a number of interrelated reasons, as was outlined in chapter 2. Table 4.2.1, 4.2.2 and 4.2.3 have already shown what kind of errors and mistakes they usually committed when the learners of English were required to sit for writing compositions in given topics. Table 4.4 shows the students' errors in each exam type across three major error categories in number and percentages.

TABLE 4.4. DISTRIBUTION OF ERRORS FOR EXAM TYPES IN THREE LEVELS ACROSS THREE MAJOR ERROR GROUPS

LEVEL & TYPE OF EXAM	MORPHO- LOGICAL ERRORS		SYNTACTIC ERRORS		SEMANTIC / LEXICAL ERRORS		TOTAL 1263
		%		%		%	
Elementary Final	24	8.4	239	83.3	24	8.4	287
Pre-Intermediate Final	4	10	31	82	3	8	38
Intermediate Final	0	0	27	79	7	21	34
Elementary Midterm	17	7.5	190	84	19	8.4	226
Pre-intermediate Midterm	6	4.2	126	88.7	10	7	142
Intermediate Midterm	8	13.1	32	52.4	21	34.4	61
Elementary Quiz 6	26	9	233	80	31	10.7	290
Pre-intermediate Quiz 6	8	8.3	85	88.5	3	3.1	96
Intermediate Quiz 6	3	3.4	59	67.8	25	28.7	87

Counted the frequency of their errors in three main categories, in which syntactical errors were represented with eight subcategories, the students at elementary, pre-intermediate and intermediate levels were found to be producing errors in all ten

categories. However, findings also brought out that in some specific syntactic categories errors showed significant rises. Tables 4.5.1, 4.5.2 and 4.5.3 show the distribution of errors in the students' levels across errors of syntactic subcategories for each exam.

With respect to the table above, when syntactic subcategories are studied more closely, attention is devoted to E3 (217 out of 803) "Intra Verb Phrase Errors" for both elementary and pre-intermediate learners. Learners, as a result of their fluctuating interlanguage state, were likely to be suffering from lack of confidence over their current understanding of tense and aspect and appropriate usage of modal verbs. Another interpretation could be that in general intra-verb phrase is the slot where most of the verbal information procession occurs because the learner writer's attention has been focused on the conjugation of the VP. So, they may devote less attention to the other error categories. Two examples from Category 3:

*I'm something became. (For 'I felt very strange.')

(B. Akyol, from Error Corpus III)

Here the learner seems to have preferred a type of pragmatic word order to maintain his textual communication.

*It's usually takes about fifteen minutes to the airport. (For 'It usually takes me about fifteen minutes to go to the airport.')

(B. Daloğlu from Error Corpus III)

The learner's unstable L2 knowledge probably induced him to insert a contracted copula 's.)

This category is outnumbered only by lexical choice error category for intermediate learners. (53 out of 181) Except for the intermediate learners' errors, the majority of learner errors were concentrated in four syntactic subcategories. They were E4 (164 of 1079), preposition and adverbial particle choice errors, -though we did not notice any attempt to frequently use phrasal verbs which would likely have given way to adverbial particle errors, E2 (132 of 1079), intra noun phrase errors related to initiator, determiner, article and adjectival choice, and E7 (152 of 1079), which is concerned with incorrect choice of structures following the verb phrase. 665 of 1079 (61.6 per cent) account for four dominant categories of total syntactic errors. Some examples from these three categories are as follows:

*Today the weather is hot and sunny. *So, I don't go to out. (For 'I am not going or don't want to go out')

(İ. Kılıç from Error Corpus III)

The learner seemed to preserve the preposition 'to' probably because he thinks 'go' is always used to refer to a move to a direction.

*The entrance cost is £1 to visiting the tower. (For 'the cost for entrance is £1 to visit or for visiting the tower')

(M. Yörük from Error Corpus II)

The learner might have supposed that 'visiting was right word category because probably he had not learnt anything about to-infinitive structures.

*It has got a black colour eyes. (For 'it has got black eyes')

(H. Çoban from Error Corpus II)

The learner seemed to think that it was necessary to use the word 'colour' to make a declarative sentence, probably misled by the question form 'what colour ?'

*I like cleaning the my room. (For 'I like cleaning my room')

(B. Daloğlu from Error Corpus)

Co-occurrence errors of articles are quite frequent throughout the error corpora. The learner was probably unaware of the rule restricting co existence of articles and possessive pronouns.

* Nurşen is very exciting when we go to swim. (For 'Nurşen gets very excited when we go swimming')

(M. Karadona from Error Corpus II)

The learner probably misinterpreted 'to' as a prep referring to a direction and 'swim' as a place. It seemed hard to her/him to acquire the structure 'go + v-ing for pastime activities.

* He doesn't like study. (For 'studying')

(S. Aksakal from Error Corpus III)

This is one of the typical errors that were probably resulted from incomplete rule learning on how to construct verb +object complements.

However, it is noted that these figures never give systematicity as to a plausible framework of learner errors and cannot be generalized. This is mainly because, as Rutherford (1984: 130) suggests, descriptive means necessitate the need to regard language syntactic phenomena as 'static constructs' but it is not really so because learners' interlanguage syntax is constantly in motion and its broadest description should be a movement through time, a process from zero level to proficiency.

The remaining 38.4 per cent of errors is distributed among 6 categories. Lexico-semantic errors receive a significant share with 90 errors and morphological ones follow this category with 80 errors. It should be pointed out that while pre-intermediate learners have a 5.8 per cent of the lexico-semantic errors, elementary group is strikingly higher in this category with 10.4 in their own totals. It is because learners might have been in lack of self-confidence to bring new vocabulary into their writing. By contrast, while there are few samples of errors in E9, sentence structure errors, in elementary and intermediate level learners' error corpuses, pre-intermediate learners seemed to make more errors of existential 'there is/are', cleft or passive voice use. This is probably because of the instructions given on writing topics in the exam sheets, which require learners to carry on some transformations between active and passive voice at the surface structure level. Four fifth of the learners in this part of error corpus II seemed to fail to make changes from active into passive voice or vice versa.

Another significant figure is the number of errors in E6, word order errors, caused by wrong positioning of adverbials and participles. That was probably resulted from an incomplete use of linguistic rule learned through instruction on the aforementioned language point. Finally, it is observed that the rate of word morphology errors in the elementary group of learners is again higher than the other two levels. This shows that elementary learners committed more morphological errors, particularly in word formation. This seems to make a contrast with some observable rises in other categories, such as E9, clause linkage errors, and E10, lexico-semantic errors, in the pre-intermediate and intermediate learners' error corpora. Therefore, it seems plausible to suggest that in all error categories there is natural tendency to move from errors

involving functional or grammatical errors –from parts of speech, phrases and sentences towards those which concern the whole content. Certainly, this requires to be supported by findings from the research on advanced and proficient learners' attitude in free writing compositions. Lennon (1991; 37) argues that 45 per cent of errors of advanced learners in speech consisted of lexical element to the rest of the whole errors. Examples from the remaining four categories except category 5 and 8, which do not have significant totals, are as follows.

*I have all qualifications you need. (For 'all qualifications needed or required or the job requires.)

(L. Kaşlıköse from Error Corpus III)

The learner seems to have confused the semantic content of the two verbs 'need' or 'require'. In the context of the composition topic, those qualifications were required or obligatory for the job. The vacancy probably requested or expected the applicants to have them.

*Can I have a swimming pool? (For 'is there a swimming pool in your hotel?')

(H. Razi from Error Corpus III)

This learner, like many in the same exam, (elementary final) was probably unaware of the semantic scope of the language form. While 'Can I' refers to as asking for permission, simply questioning whether the hotel had a swimming pool would have been correct.

*I like turning yellow views. (For 'views which turn yellow')

(Z. Bulut from Error Corpus I)

What this learner meant to write and its corresponding linguistic form seemed to be beyond her/his present L2 knowledge. Thus, s/he committed an error of wrong position of participles

*Cengizhan is interested. (an interesting boy)

(S.Küçükdavarıcı from Error Corpus III)

The learner, while describing her/his friend, probably meant to say that his friend was an interesting boy, as interpreted from the context and therefore made an error of using a wrong part of speech.

Up to this point, learners' errors in three corpora have been discussed in respect to the relation between exam types or language levels and the categories and subcategories they belong to. Now, they will be particularly discussed in contrast with learner groups in each level so that the exact category where the most errors were made.

4.4.1. Discussion of Syntactic Subcategories

In error corpora of each exam, syntactic errors have preponderance over morphological and lexico-semantic categories. However, in each exam's error corpus, intermediate level learners make an exception to this case. In all exams, lexico semantic error category comes forward, which would propose or rather prove that there is tendency from the production of syntactic errors towards the ones with more semantic characteristics. This point is supported by the findings of Mizuno's study (1999), which demonstrated that pragmatic-semantic constraints were more influential than syntactic ones in the interlanguage development of Japanese learners tested on the use of articles. Brown, (1991, pp. 115-135) examines eighty compositions of Japanese ESL learners and forty compositions of English JSL learners written as class or test assignments in order to find out systematic traces of L1 transfer at functional-discourse level in the usage of passives. She supports the findings by cross checking the data with one account of news and one personal experience account. The results suggested that there was a considerable degree of interplay between form and function. Errors from both groups showed tendency to wrong perception of topicalization and affectedness, which indicates that, in most cases, pragmatic-semantic constraints are more influential than syntactic rules. In his study on the analysis of syntactic and semantic errors in verb-aspect relations made in written discourse of university learners, Sahin (1993, p. 26) arrives at the same conclusion that semantic/ pragmatic errors were more common and therefore, the meaning of tenses is more problematic than the form. At this point, subcategories of syntactic errors require to be evaluated in terms of their significance.

Tables 4.5.1, 4.5.2 and 4.5.3 show the distribution of errors in each exam across the language levels. When studied closely, despite the interlanguage stage that learners in all three levels are assured to go through vary in terms of development or acquisition, the frequency of errors, and their percentages are close to each other with exception in some categories. This decline or rise in error frequency on the exam sheet could be accounted for by the fact that the instructions given with a view to serve as a guide for learners' writing seems to have sometimes distracted them and made them overproduce errors in categories like E5 and E6 in the midterm exam for elementary level.

The overwhelming quantity of errors with a syntactic character and their high percentage throughout the three learner groups concerns a set of factors related to the quality and techniques of the written exams; setting and beyond this, affective conditions or personal attitudes of learners. When errors resulting from probable carelessness are eliminated, a considerable number of errors with syntactic features imply, to a limited extent, that learners' approach towards constructing phrases, sentences and paragraphs in the target language appears to be giving priority to making meaning. In other words, what they think they should attend to more than anything is not how to say something in linguistically correct forms but what to say in the context of their relatively limited L2 knowledge. Though there is still a lot of debate on whether formal instruction or teaching syntax can gradually transform learnt language points or memorized chunks into 'acquired' knowledge, it could be argued that a gradual diminishing observed in the amount or syntactic errors and accompanying rise in lexico-semantic errors in the intermediate group could be interpreted to be the result of the instruction that they received.

TABLE 4.5.1. DISTRIBUTION OF ERRORS IN THE STUDENTS' LEVELS ACROSS SYNTACTIC SUBCATEGORIES FOR THE FINAL

FINAL EXAM	INTRA-NOUN PHRASE %		INTRA-VERB GROUP %		PREP./ADV. PARTICLE CHOICE %		PROFORM CHOICE %		ADV. / PART. POSITION %		VERB COMP. %		CLAUSE LINKAGE %		SENTENCE STRUCTUR %		TOTAL %	
	Elementary	48	20	71	30	28	12	17	7	12	5	48	20	11	4	4	2	239
Pre- int.	5	16	6	19	6	19	1	3	1	3	9	29	1	3	2	6	31	99
Intermediate	4	15	3	11	9	33	1	4	1	4	7	25	1	4	1	4	27	100

TABLE 4.5.2. DISTRIBUTION OF ERRORS IN THE STUDENTS' LEVELS ACROSS SYNTACTIC SUBCATEGORIES FOR THE MIDTERM

MIDTERM	INTRA-NOUN PHRASE %		INTRA-VERB GROUP %		PREP./ADV. PARTICLE CHOICE %		PROFORM CHOICE %		ADV. / PART. POSITION %		VERB COMP. %		CLAUSE LINKAGE %		SENTENCE STRUCTUR %		TOTAL %	
	Elementary	21	11	41	22	32	17	23	12	31	16	27	14	14	7	1	0	190
Pre- int.	20	16	33	26	18	14	8	6	8	6	12	10	13	11	14	11	126	100
Intermediate	7	22	1	3	9	28	2	6	3	9	8	25	2	6	0	0	32	99

TABLE 4.5.3. DISTRIBUTION OF ERRORS IN THE STUDENTS' LEVELS ACROSS SYNTACTIC SUBCATEGORIES FOR THE QUIZ 6

QUIZ 6	INTRA-NOUN PHRASE %		INTRA-VERB GROUP %		PREP./ADV. PARTICLE CHOICE %		PROFORM CHOICE %		ADV. / PART. POSITION %		VERB COMP. %		CLAUSE LINKAG %		SENTENCE STRUCTUR %		TOTAL %	
	Elementary	24	10	48	21	62	27	18	8	23	10	45	19	5	2	8	4	233
Pre- int.	14	18	18	21	12	14	4	5	8	9	11	13	2	2	16	19	85	99
Intermediate	3	5	21	36	13	22	5	8	4	7	7	12	4	7	2	3	59	100

5. CONCLUSION

5.1. Summary of the Study

Errors in language learning process may be called a sort of manifestation of the ongoing interaction between learners' general knowledge and processing ability. They are outcomes of malformation in their interlanguage competence. They come to the surface when language learners try to put the language into communicative effect, in spoken or written medium.

Chapter 1 presents the background of analysis of language learners' errors from a general perspective in general and with reference to writing skill in particular. The chapter states the research questions based on this presentation. Learning a second language is considered to involve creation of a new language compartment in mind and a system almost totally distinct from one's own native language with complex puzzle-like rules and exceptions. Theoretical studies and research in applied linguistics in general focused on what language learning was until the 60s and why learners failed to be a native-like speaker of their target language. The belief behind these questions was that they could be answered by identifying points of similarity and difference between any pre selected native languages and target languages. Thus, they would be able to work out an effective language pedagogy taking into account those areas of difficulty between the two languages. However, this approach was found to be prescriptive and caused reactions. Therefore, in the next era, the question concentrated on how and through what processes a learner developed his or her second language system.

The CAH directly reflected its theories into language teaching materials based on contrastive analyses and it was named Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis. The theory predicted that where the distance between L1 and L2 was the greatest, the most errors would occur and the similarity would lead to fewer errors when it was greater. Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis was also adapted to the behaviorist learning theory, which held the view that language acquisition was a product of habit formation. Errors produced as a result of negative transfer from learners' L1 or L1 interference were outlawed as bad habit formation and therefore to be overcome through pattern drills,

memorization and imitation. The predictions of CAH were empirically tested in a great number of studies. Despite some conflicting claims or opinions in their results, the conclusion was that CAH was inadequate to predict errors because L1 interference could explain only a tiny portion of the whole errors in actual performance particularly at syntax level. Research in applied linguistics, in response to the question above, gradually involved learners' psychological characteristics in learning or acquisition process.

Learners' errors meanwhile prospered as a field of research and studies within the scope of the second question, that is the 'how' side of the language teaching. They were evaluated at first under the influence of the cognitive code theory and after a series of theoretical work by Corder (1967 1971 and 1974), Selinker, (1972) Richards (1974) et al. research on learner errors studies took carried out under the name of 'error analysis'. In the course of time, error analysis caused debates about its data collection method, that is, whether it should be carried out in product or process oriented form and whether its findings would be of any use directly or indirectly to applied linguists and language teachers. The response to criticisms was that EA provided strong insights on weaknesses and defects likely to be caused by learning strategies, teaching styles or materials. It also proved to be useful in the analysis of learners' spoken performance in the classroom, and in receiving feedback on learners' progress in writing.

Language teaching in classroom, with diverse learner profiles, seems to be not easy to handle productively. It requires not only language skills but a good recognition of learners' psychological and social status as well. It can be said that, in EFL classes, classroom atmosphere does not yield much positive chance for learners to learn from their own errors. Except for learners who individually have a relative amount of intrinsic motivation, they often do not have an access to receive feedback about their progress in language skills. On the other hand, it is often a hard work for teachers to properly attend to learners' errors due to restrictions that physical environment and some social factors impose on. Therefore, EFL teachers can evaluate better and receive feedback if they are made aware of linguistic areas where learners are expected to make errors and of their reasons. This becomes more important when the learner group consists of young and adult learners who need relatively more conscious learning. To assess EA's contribution to language teaching, it may be worth considering Corder's (1974) assessment at this point. First to the teacher, in that learners' errors tell him, if he undertakes a systematic

analysis, how far towards the goal the learner has progressed and, consequently, what remains for him to learn. Second, 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. Thirdly, they are indispensable to the learner himself, because we can regard the making of errors as a device the learner uses in order to learn (Corder, 1967, p. 167). Therefore, a global description and analysis of written work may help language teachers observe how much their instruction can ease the disturbances that learning a new language is likely to cause. The focus of this study was, in this sense, to identify the types of errors that learners make in written compositions. Based on the elicitation, an observation was made to see if there was any significant change in the rate of errors among the proficiency level groups. The results were evaluated in relation to their significance in teaching writing.

In the second chapter, recent literature on learners' errors was reviewed and theoretical and practical aspects of error analysis were discussed. The relation between teaching writing and errors in written discourse was described in the light of recent studies. Firstly, from a historical perspective, justification of learner errors in language teaching was outlined. During the audio-lingual period, correctness in production of language forms was overemphasized and errors produced were confined and given harsh criticism and correction. Along with the introduction of the cognitive learning theory, blaming students on their failure in learning a new language caused by wrong hypothesis building was replaced with positive attitude. Errors were regarded as natural as correct productions and a shift in viewpoint was that errors were effective utterances from mediating point of view.

Secondly, the term 'interlingual errors' and another coinage 'interlanguage' were discussed under the recent studies available. Since language acquisition is now a more comprehensive term, covering all areas of applied linguistics, it seems an interesting question to ask if interlanguage and language acquisition are two similar concepts that involve the same developmental processes. During their interlanguage development learners in case of receiving a new input they start building their own hypotheses and seek ways to test them against the real use of the target language. Thus, second language learning went through a radical change and it was regarded not as a habit formation but a

rule formation process. This evaluation was also supported by the research carried out on L1 acquisition process of children.

As a contributing factor to making errors, L1 transfer was given its due share in language learning and acquisition. Research on L1 transfer, showed that it encompasses not only phonology but also transfer in semantics, pragmatics and even behavioral codes of the target language. Thus, the point was made that there were other psychological reasons that led learners to commit so many types of error categories. L2 learning process was studied a unique process with its own principles and rules. So, the learner's status and behaviour started to be observed and studied within the concept of interlanguage. Errors that are committed by learners, regardless of their L1, is called interlingual errors. Interlanguage involves a period starting from zero knowledge to native speaker-like competence. Learners pass through five central processes that are responsible for their unique behaviour, according to Selinker (1972, p.96), in their L2 development. One is language transfer or transfer of rules from their L1 and employ them in their L2 production, which frequently turns up in errors. Another process is transfer of training resulting from over- or under-drilled language forms. L2 learning and communication strategies are two next processes. Last one is overgeneralization of particular language forms. In short, learners' behaviour as a whole is considered to be a process of hypothesis testing for acquisition of L2 linguistic system's components such as phonology, syntax, semantics and pragmatics. Recent interlanguage research on learners' behaviour and errors in these fields yielded traces of L1 transfer.

Another issue dealt with in second chapter was psycholinguistic causes of learner errors. Along with the downfall of the CAH, research on morpheme acquisition order in L2 and other theoretical studies contributed much to the positive look to errors. Learners, who are grouped in three main categories as elementary, intermediate, and advanced in today's EFL terminology, show rises and falls in the quality and quantity of their errors in proportion to their level. They also display changes in monitored and edited learning or communicative contexts. Reflecting their transitional or interlanguage competence, learners in each level apply to diverse strategies to make up for the gap between their intended meaning and how it should be said to be acceptable. These are overgeneralization, simplification, transfer of training, redundancy reduction, and communication based errors. Fossilization, an end point in some linguistic areas, can be

seen as another source of errors because in normal circumstances, environment constantly encourages the learner to remain unstabilized but in some cases their competence stabilizes at a point in his interlanguage and their errors indicate fossilization if they are not repaired.

As a result of later research findings, avoidance of using some forms, which results from differences in L1 and L2 language typologies, was added to the list. In case a learner confronts an interactive situation in which s/he needs to employ his/her L2, s/he can either avoid the situation that requires a troublesome linguistic form, or can divert to paraphrasing the meaning with a relatively simpler form s/he feels safe of when she realizes a contrastive conflict between his/her L2. Learners from L1 A may show reluctance in using a certain linguistic form which does not exist in their language and thus produces less errors in speech and writing than the ones with L1 B whose language has more or less an equivalent structure. Teachers may suppose the former group is more successful but in fact this reveals avoidance to a certain degree. The latter group is willing to use this form though they are likely to make errors due to the fact that typologically their L1 and L2 are subject to different rules and restrictions.

Another point made in this chapter was the requirements for a sound analysis of errors. Briefly, samples should be collected at successive stages of interlanguage development. Next, they should be sorted out according to whether they are overtly or covertly unacceptable. The third step is assignment of errors into a phonological, syntactic or semantic category. The last stage is an attempt to explain psycholinguistic reasons of errors. Considering this aspect of analysing errors, it is pointed out that pedagogical grammar is key to reducing errors as distinct from classic presentations of grammar books. It is argued that unless they are interpreted and prepared according to the needs of classroom instruction, findings of research in applied linguistics cannot be directly applied to the language learning. Therefore, the concept 'pedagogical grammar' provides a link or intermediary between linguistics studies or theory and classroom teaching or practice. For a language syllabus to involve pedagogical grammar, primary concern should be given on psychological and socio linguistic factors rather than pure linguistic concerns. It is a matter of not 'what' but 'how' it should be presented. In addition to this, how to achieve error correction has been a matter of concern within the pedagogical grammar. Research on contrastive analysis and error analysis can make a

contribution to building an inventory from which linguistic content of the syllabus can be determined.

Another dimension taken up in the study was the current practice of writing classes in EFL classrooms. Despite its dynamic value, writing is perceived as secondary in the process of information transfer as a medium. It seems to be undervalued in language teaching and consequently much of the learners' products are left unattended and this could be one of the reasons that their errors resist though they seem to be progressing in their learning. This channel can be used to a great extent to receive feedback both by the teacher and the learner.

In chapter 3, the process of an analysis of errors was presented after its method and data collection procedures were given in detail. A comprehensive definition of errors involving its limitations may be rather hard to make. However, it was necessary to remain restricted to the framework given in a definition. Data was collected from elementary, pre-intermediate, and intermediate learners' written work in three successive compulsory exams. The papers were randomly selected out of the whole learners attending the classes and then scanned for ungrammatical and unacceptable sentences that were turned into T-units. All the errors in T-units were categorized in three main domains in taxonomy. For each exam, errors categorized were collected in an error corpus.

Errors in T-units were evaluated at first according to their nature, that is, whether they were at word level or morphological errors; at phrase level or syntactic errors and at sentence level or semantic errors. This was followed with the distribution of syntactic errors into eight different subcategories aiming to describe them in more exact details. Morphological errors included errors in all parts of speech besides the word categorization deviations. Wrong lexical choices were made up from errors that were collocationally appropriate and inappropriate uses in four main word categories: verbs, nouns, adjectives and adverbs.

Errors identified under ten different categories were assigned their likely correct equivalents that the learner-writer probably intended to say at word and phrase level, and at sentence level as the whole T-units. The analysis was carried out in reference to the research questions. In other words, it was aimed to present general description of the learners' performance reflecting their interlanguage competence through the assessment

of the errors in their composition writings. An investigation into possible causes of their performance was expected to inform about how learners transferred their ideas through writing compositions.

5.2. Major Findings of the Study

As a response to the first research question in chapter 1, results received from the tables depicted the general state of affairs of the learners' composition papers regarding the writing errors in them. For the elementary and pre-intermediate learners, analyses gave similar results on concentration of errors in certain error categories. Across three exam types, learner errors were on the whole of syntactic character. In terms of syntactic subcategories, intra verb phrase errors seemed to be the category that the learners got confused more. While the next two categories were prepositional choice errors for elementary and pre-intermediate groups, the next largest category was lexical choice errors for intermediate learners. This slightly implies that the pace that learners keep in their learning process slowly changes from giving priority to the 'what to say' toward conjoining it with the 'how-to-say'. As Myers (1997, p. 2) concludes, learners do not seem to be as much concerned with what to write part of the question. In the survey studies she examined they were predominantly concerned with error-free writing. It is obvious that as the learners continue develop their ability to judge semantic relations they will start to come close to estimating a native-like competence. The large quantity of errors within the first two months of instruction shows us where the problems lie for them and throws light on finding solution to them. Error types elicited in this study and their frequency certainly do not explain the quality of instruction they received. Some papers from the intermediate learners were received almost error free. This may imply that they have benefited the instruction in varying degrees.

In view of the difference among the number of errors elicited from the elementary, pre-intermediate and intermediate learner groups as an explanation of the second research question, it can be said that the first two learner groups did not present any significant increase in any of the three major categories against each other. Their errors concentrated in the third, fourth and seventh syntactic subcategories. However, for

the intermediate group, making proper lexical choices probably became more important. Therefore, learners' performance in writing slightly implies that learners still suffer to a great extent when they are left alone to edit their writing while producing their texts at the same time.

Another dimension of the analysis is that, though pre-intermediate learners' syllabus had covered some syntactic structures such as passive voice, relative clauses, or reporting verbs, they seemed to have been either unable to process them or not to have self-confidence for employing them in their writings. Here, though there is a strong possibility of falling in the danger of making sweeping generalizations from the learners' behaviour in the three written exams, the existence of learners' avoidance from using complex but appropriate structures must be noted. Examples given above imply that learners, as Ellis (1982: 214) states, seemed to seek a sort of semantic simplification to a great extent. In doing that, learners probably tried to identify what elements were considered "given" and what elements were to be "new" in the context of any task by drawing on experience and present knowledge. It also seems to be worth stating here that, as Mizuno (1999, p. 135) considers, despite their mechanical nature with regard to mechanical components in their production, pragmatic/semantic traces are salient in their errors.

With reference to the last research question, results seems to support the idea that practising writing should be seen as matter of process. Considering the characteristics of certain error categories and high error frequency in them, it can be said that their improvement in their writing papers is determined by a combination of such factors as the amount of attention demanded by the writing task –a compulsory exam in their case, the nature of the task itself, learners' competence at the time, setting, and the time allocated. Shifts in these factors might have caused rises and falls in their performance and in the number of unacceptable forms. But, regarding the benefit that they could have had from revising and editing their errors in various techniques, it can be said that the learners might have had a chance to learn from their own errors. One is what Muncie (2000, p. 47) exploits in order to teach the importance of feedback in writing compositions. At the mid-draft stage of process composition writing, learners make a summary under the title of 'How I can improve future compositions.' Here they write down recommendations from their peers and the teacher about both grammatical and

stylistic errors. Before asking the learners to start writing down right away in the exam, teaching writing through having feedback could contribute to increasing their awareness toward their own errors. Cresswell (2000, p. 235) argues that composition process needs generating ideas recursively and writing is blocked and they stop thinking about the topic when their linguistic resources are inadequate. Therefore, he proposes self-monitoring for effective feedback on specific linguistic points not on the global content of compositions. Robb et al. (1986, p. 91) suggest that according to the result of their study, contrary to learners' wish and expectations, detailed feedback or correction at sentence level mechanics may be a waste of time and effort. Their solution is that, "the instructor can respond to their writing with comments that force the student writers to go back to the initial drafting stages of composing."

In any event, apart from non-standard unacceptable forms, all learners were able produce target-like sentences in their writings. However, most of them were rather inadequate to transmit basic coherence and a piece of stylistic fragrance at the minimum except some of the compositions written by learners at the intermediate level.

To conclude, many learners have difficulty learning correctly the problematic sides of the target language. Many other papers made it feel the need that a new interest should be taken in teaching structures under guidance of cognitive psychology and pragmatic approaches. This was because, habitually acquiring or non-habitually learning, learners seemed to pragmatically need to make use of many language functions at a relatively early period in writing and speaking as well.

5.2.1. Possible Psycholinguistic Causes of the Learners' Errors

Results of the analysis give evidence and clues about their interlingual and intralingual characteristics of the errors elicited in the error corpuses. Any attempt to convincingly explain possible causes of the errors committed in papers seems not to be plausible. Only references, not in absolute values could be made to these sources of errors after an analysis of surface structures. In the context of this study, samples from the error corpuses were analysed and interpreted under the title of each source category. A possible source for each error was attributed within each T-unit. Investigation seemed

where they should have preferred the latter one because they were required to describe a place with objects in it.

An example on Interlingual Errors as simplification:

Sample Sentence: *I like that it is large.

Explanation: Since it probably looked very hard to express the meaning in his mind the learner found it easier to construct an embedded noun clause than saying “I like its being large or spacious.”

An example on Intralingual Errors as communication based:

Sample Sentence: *The computer I like best in my room.

Explanation: The learner seems to have given priority to the topic putting ‘the computer’ at the initial and then it is followed by its comment. That was enough to convey his idea. But, he seems not to have known that s/he also needed a copula before the noun clause as the complement of the sentence.

An example on Interlingual Errors as induced incorrect choices; errors due to effects of the teaching & incomplete rule learning:

Sample Sentence: *I hope so I’m going to buy a computer.

Explanation: This learner, besides overgeneralizing ‘so’ for pre-stated that-noun clauses after some state-of-mind verbs such as hope, suppose, think, also overgeneralize the ‘going to future tense’ for intended actions. The correct sentence would be “I hope I will buy a computer.”

Error analysis maintained based on the findings of three error corpora in this study is basically a product-oriented research. It can answer the question of what had been learned until the time that the data collection was carried out. It can also be used as a tool to throw light on the then-picture of those particular learners in language learning. However, it could be unwise to expect this study to identify how those language points were learnt, that is, to identify the processes through which those learners picked up. Therefore, these interpretations on the possible causes of the errors are limited and directed to the aim of knowing what might have occurred in their interlanguage during

the intervals between each exam. Rutherford (1984: 135) argues that the systematicity of learners' transitional competence can meaningfully be defined only in terms of what constitutes the system itself and not through any kind of appeal to, or comparison with other language systems, particularly that of the target language. But in order to construe their pedagogical or teaching implications it becomes necessary to refer learner errors to the target language's criteria to see whether they hinder the meaning and if it so, to what extent they do.

As was discussed in chapter 2 quite at length, there has not been a complete agreement on whether there are any conclusive ways to classify learners' errors as developmental or effects of instructional factors and how much conclusive they are. Besides, learners' performance is accompanied by other factors such as the amount of attention demanded by that special writing task, the nature of the task itself, setting, etc. However, as far as the findings of this analysis suggest that, unacceptable forms, whether at morphological, syntactic or semantic level, reflect a developmental character. They also stay, with exceptions, within the definition the term error defined at the beginning of 3.1. Learners may have used a syntactic feature correctly once and then, when they want to use it again, they might have constructed it incorrectly. This wouldn't prove that they had learnt the rule but accidentally they were not able to remember it. They probably internalized syntactic rules but these were not awake enough to stay within the limitations of those rules. Even learnt chunks like request or offer forms were not mastered to the degree that they could be produced in written form as acquired language skills. By extension, it can be said that, as learners developed linguistic skills in time, though slightly it may be realized, learners especially intermediate ones seemed to be improving skills with an increasing sensitivity towards forms and variations of written language. Equally, they seemed to perceive easily the borderline between what they meant to produce and its acceptable forms and functions in the target language that they were still being exposed to through the classroom instruction. As Corder (1974) states, in accordance with the fluctuating characteristic of interlanguage period, learners seemed to keep modifying their hypotheses about the linguistic nature of the L2 in all categories until their performance in writing gains momentum and conforms to their total performance in their L2.

In modern applied linguistics, it has been widely accepted that L2 learners' errors are traceable to both L1 transfer and developmental acquisition and learning processes. Therefore, it may be more convenient to unite these two main psycholinguistic sources in a framework in order to be able to attribute the errors identified in this study to possible sources and it may be easier to see how much of the whole corpus can give way to this analysis. As was explained in chapter 2, learner errors do not submit themselves to any distinct systematic analysis because the border dividing interlingual and intralingual is not so distinctly marked. However, to a certain extent, learners' performance in written exams would be helpful to determine a useful direction for some tentative explorations on the context of classroom instruction and learners' behaviour. If the samples from the error corpuses are examined, it can be noticed that many of the errors in the categories that they have been attributed to imply a systematicity to a considerable degree. Errors described and explained above certainly do not guarantee that they are pervasive i.e. not easy to be realized under all circumstances. However, they seem to prove that in some areas of language use learners start to possess the basic construction rules but they were using those rules making wrong preferences in usage. Here, whether instruction in the classroom or teaching linguistic rules are of any help to learners could be questioned, but the problem is perhaps to determine when or at which stage of their interlingual development, instruction of rules may have a facilitative effect on their progress.

5.3. Implications for Teaching

Since learner errors are inherent products of hypothesis making process, the pedagogical implications of this study are significant from both EF learning and teaching perspectives. As far as EF learning is concerned, the results of this study reveal that learners seem to have produced errors in syntactic categories in construction of sentences needed to form a whole paragraph, which could be regarded as coherent even at the most basic level. They feel the impact that writing imposes on them as a productive and demanding skill. If this is coupled with inadequate L2 knowledge, writing their compositions seems to be a systematic process because they largely concentrate not on monitoring their writing but channel the meaning in their minds through words. A great

number of errors in intra-verb and intra-noun phrase categories seems to support this argument and indicates an unstable bias in favour of making meaning.

On the other hand, from classroom instruction perspective, considerable quantity of syntactic errors can be interpreted as healthy signs of learners' interlanguage development. In this sense, relatively less number of global errors- mainly sentence structure errors, than that of local ones and low frequency of intermediate learners' errors can be considered as evidence supporting this implication. Therefore, in creating a corrective discourse aiming to improve their writing skills, their existing capacity for making generalization and abstraction should be enhanced and empowered through consciousness raising activities. Designing writing classes can be revised so as to treat learners as student writers. The process of composing must be considered not as one-session products but as involving stages. At each stage learners are given opportunity to gradually eliminate their linguistic errors by means of group and peer feedback. An additional implication is that a global and systematic analysis of errors may help language teaching circles make true guesses about their progress that is much they still need to learn so that they acquire a native like competence.

5.4. Suggestions for Further Research

This study suggests that most of the errors that learners made in compositions were of syntactic character and the most frequent syntactic error is intra-verb phrase errors regardless of their proficiency level. The indication of this consequence could be that under the pressure of conveying the message or ideas learners do not have opportunity to remember rule restrictions about the verb phrase errors. This consequence requires verification with further research in different contexts. However this study is based on relatively short period and it uses learners' written product as data. Therefore, longitudinal studies are needed to observe the same results. One way could be to observe the changes in the gravity of their errors applying process-writing model.

One of the limitations that were set for this study was that it was restricted to describing and interpreting young adult learners' errors for an 8-week period of instruction at their language level. So it was not possible to observe and study what

changes their errors underwent within the whole period of learning. In fact, in a longitudinal study on their compositions it would be possible to recognize their developmental or interlingual errors. Then, it would be a profitable step and would give teachers valuable insights in preparation of their own syllabus and portfolio in monolingual classes.

This study covers three language proficiency levels: elementary, pre-intermediate and intermediate. A further study can be carried out to see how the direction of the study will change when high intermediate and advanced levels are included into the study.

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APPENDIX -A
Sample Paper from the Quiz 6 of the Elementary Level

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AFYON KOCATEPE ÜNİVERSİTESİ YABANCI DİLLER EĞİTİM ÖĞRETİM
ARAŞTIRMA MERKEZİ 2.KUR
ELEMENTARY QUIZ

NAME Özgür Melih Misirli
CLASS 8

DATE 8 / 12 / 2000

A- Complete the paragraph using the following words.

~~Kids - relax - meet - lives - like - domestic - get up - come - have - buy - have - likes - gym - stopping - fast - exciting - have - take - visit - early.~~ (2 Pts)

My weekends are (1) relax and (2) domestic. My weekdays are fast and (3) exciting (4) have two sons, Dylan, 7, and Dakota, 5. Every morning I (5) get up one hour before them, at 6.00, and I go to the (6) gym (7) come home and I (8) have breakfast, then I (9) kids them to school. On Mondays I always (10) buy shopping. I (11) take all the food for the week. I often (12) have dinner in the evenings, but not every day because I don't (13) like cooking. Fortunately. My husband, Don, (14) likes cooking. On Tuesdays and Thursday I (15) visit my father. He (16) lives on the next block. Every afternoon I take (17) the early from school. In the evenings Don and I usually (18) relax but sometimes we (19) meet friends. We never go to bed (20) fast on Friday evenings.

45
28
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B- Write a paragraph about your last summer holiday. Explain (30 Pts)

- Where did you go? 25
- When did you go?
- Who did you go with?
- How did you go?
- How long did you stay there?
- What did you do there?
- Did you enjoy or not?
- Why or Why not?

Two months ago I went to Mersin with my friend. I traveled by bus. One month stayed in Mersin. I saw beach and sea and beautiful girls. I met my friends I played football with my friends I went to disco in night. I walk beach. I listened to music in a hotel. I enjoyed on holiday because I was happy there.

Sample Paper from the Midterm of the Elementary Level

ELEMENTARY
WRITING(30 MINUTES)20 POINTS

A- Write about 100 words about on old friend. Use and, but, so, because, when and until. (10 Pts)

What is his / her name ? When did you meet ? Where did you meet ? What did you do together ? How often do you meet now ? What do you do when you meet ?

Write to
write to

Her name is Lati? I met her at the school, two years ago. I met her when very exciting. She is the most beautiful my friend. I often her visit now. She's was the first university last year. We sometime go to park. She's very unfriendly.

3

Sample Paper from the Final Exam of the Elementary Level

comment. — ?

17 ✓

FINAL EXAM

**ELEMENTARY
WRITING TEST ((30 MINUTES)25 POINTS**

A- Write about 100 words about someone in your family. (10 Pts)

Paragraph 1 Description

Paragraph 2 Likes / dislikes

Paragraph 3 personality

B- Write a postcard to an English friend. Write about...(10 Pts)

- where you are on holiday
- the weather
- something you do often
- something you did yesterday
- something you are going to do tomorrow

C- Write a letter to the Alexandra Hotel (in a letter style)and (5 Pts)

- Book a single room for four nights next month
- Ask for a room with a view of the sea
- Ask for a brochure of the hotel.

The address is :

The Alexandra Hotel

5 Cliff Road

Lyme Regis

Dorset

RG 6 8 TY

Y. Golden

—A—

7

My brother name is Peter. He is long hair. He is black eyes
 is wearing sports. He likes use^{ing} a computer. He likes
 laying basketball and football. He likes swimming. He is married.
 is computer programmer. He speaking English and German.
 e doesn't likes traveling. He likes a coffee and Tea.

11-1-2000

Dear M. Ali,

I'm going to Kemer Now. I'm very beautiful weather

I went to museum yesterday and I swam I walked ^{on the} street in Kemer yesterday. I playing football, table tennis today.

I playing beach woley today. I'm going to pub and dance.

I playing chess tomorrow. I'm shopping tomorrow. I swim.

I sunbathe tomorrow. I and girlfriends relax

6

See you later.

love M. Ali

The Alexandra Hotel
5 cliff Road
Lyme Regis
Dorset
26 68 T4.

4

Miss Ali

Have I Book a single room for four nights next month

Have I Ask for a room with a view of the sea

Have I Ask for a brochure of the hotel.

am I come the brochure in Adress.

Not = Mehmet Akif Ersoy 39
yurdu 1 Blok. / AFYON

APPENDIX -B
Sample Paper from the Quiz 6 of the Pre-intermediate Level

D- Describing your favourite room. Write a paragraph, (Don't tell which room it is.) use there is / there are / have got / has got / Love / like and the negatives. (30 Pts)

(25) / (25)

There is a bed and one wardrobe. There are a lot of posters on the wall.
 example: Metallica posters, Iron Maiden posters, Sepultura posters, etc. - -

There are a lot of CD on my desk. CD's for example = games, music and films CDs.

I love this room. Because I'm very relax this room

There is a computer. It is old computer. However I use it.

I love this room. Because Nobody ask "What are doing in this room?"

I like watching Tennis and Ice Hockey match in this room.

In this room I have got a recorder. The recorder big and have got a:

"High Volume and Mega Bass". I have got a lot of book in this room.

I favourite novel of Adventure. "Yüzüklerin Efendisi" written by

J.R.R Tolkien

If I give negative mark this room. It is a small room.

Sample Paper from the Midterm Exam of the Pre-intermediate Level

MID-TERM EXAM

PRE-INTERMEDIATE
WRITING(30 MINUTES)20 POINTS

V.EROL TOKS52
11/17
CLASS=3

WRITING ABOUT A PLACE

Use the information in the questionnaire and write about the Tower of London.

GENERAL FACTS			
NAME OF BUILDING	the Tower of London		
DESCRIPTION	one of the oldest castles in Britain		
LOCATION	in London near the River Thames		
AGE	dates from the 11 th century		
VISITORS	visited by thousands of tourists ever year		
FACILITIES AND INTEREST			
	Different parts of the castle can be visited		
	The museum of old weapons and armour		
	The Crown Jewels		
	A restaurant		
	A shop for postcards, books and souvenirs		
OPENING TIMES AND COST OF ADMISSION			
Summer	9.30 a.m	to 5 p.m	Adults 1
Winter	9.30 a.m	to 4 p.m	Children 50 p

It's name of building the Tower of London. It is one of the oldest castles in Britain. It is in London near the River Thames. The Tower of London's building dates from 11th century. It is about one thousand years old. Every year visitors visit by thousands of tourists.

Visitors can visit different parts of the castle. They can see the museum and the Crown Jewels. Visitors can eat a restaurant. They can buy postcards, books and souvenirs of shop.

In Summer The Tower opens at 9.30 am and closes at 5 p.m
In Winter It opens at 9.30 a.m but closes at 4 p.m

Sample Paper from the Final Exam of the Pre-intermediate Level

FINAL EXAM

M. Sep 21

PRE-INTERMEDIATE
WRITING TEST (30 MINUTES) 25 POINTS

You are the sales manager of KESKIN Export & Import Company. You have received a letter from Mr Daniel Freeman who is the managing director of Sunshine Sports Wear Company. In his letter of 10th December 2000, he invited you to Los Angeles and offered to meet you at the airport. Your general manager Yüksel Keskin wants you to go to the USA. So you are going to write a letter to Mr Freeman about the journey.

Your business address is KESKIN Export & Import Company, Atatürk Street no: 142 Mecidiyeköy Istanbul, Turkey

Mr Freeman's business address is P.O Box 176 Los Angeles, California, USA.
Your Flight is on the 20th of February 2001.

Flight number: THY279

Depart: Yeşilköy Airport (Istanbul) 14:30

Arrive: J.F Kennedy Airport (Los Angeles) 13:15 –Local time

Guide: Be careful about

1. Addresses.
2. Opening –“dear”
3. Thanks and acceptance of the offer
4. Details of flight
5. Arrangements to meet
6. Conclusion
7. Closing and signature.

Keskin Export & Import Company.
Atatürk street no: 142
Mecidiyeköy / ISTANBUL - TURKEY.

10th December 2000

Mr Daniel Freeman ✓
Managing Director ✓
Company ✓
P.O Box 176 Los Angeles ✓
California, U.S.A ✓

Dear Mr Daniel. ✓

Thanks for your offer to meet me at the airport. ✓
My flight number is THY279 ✓ it will leave Yeşilköy Airport (Istanbul) ✓
the 20th of February at 14:30. and will arrive in J.F Kennedy ✓
Airport (Los Angeles) at about 13:15 - Local time. I will meet you at ✓
information desk at about 13:30 ✓

I look forward to meeting you.

Yours sincerely

Mehmet

APPENDIX -C

Sample Paper from the Quiz 6 of the Intermediate Level

AFYON KOCATEPE ÜNİVERSİTESİ YABANCI DİLLER EĞİTİM ÖĞRETİM
ARAŞTIRMA MERKEZİ 2.KUR
INTERMEDIATE QUIZNAME Gözde DemircanCLASS 4DATE 06/12/2000

69

- A- Suppose that you are either the daughter or the father, Tell the event with your own words. Write 3 paragraphs, use necessary conjunctions and coordinators. (70 Pts)

Daughter's voice 'saved my life'

Accident victim Walter Morgan believes that the sound of his daughter's voice saved his life.

Mr Morgan of Alvescot Road, Carterton, was lying unconscious with multiple injuries after a car crash when his daughter, ambulance driver Mrs Maxine Tabberer, arrived on the scene.

Maxine is based at Witney ambulance station and was called to the accident at RAF Brize Norton.

Mr Morgan, 63, said "She called out 'Dad' to me. I thought I had been having a bad dream and she was waking me up.

"I'm convinced that if it hadn't been for the sound of her voice, I would not have woken up and would not be here today.

"I was out cold and apparently my blood pressure was very low. I think her voice brought me round and her presence reassured me. She was wonderful."

Mr Morgan was given oxygen and taken to the John Radcliffe Hospital, Oxford, in Maxine's ambulance. He spent a week in hospital being treated for a broken leg, broken arm and three broken ribs.

The accident with a Land Rover happened as he was returning to work at RAF Brize Norton where he is a senior storekeeper. Mr Morgan, who acts as the 'eyes' for his wife Madge who is a blind bowls champion representing England, is now recovering at home.

His daughter Maxine, who lives in Queens Road, Carterton, said: "It was a great shock when I arrived at the scene of the accident and saw my father lying there.

"He was in a pretty bad way. He didn't come round until I started talking to him, and he was in a state of shock."

-Ambulance Driver-

It was a routine day. There was an accident on the Bridge Road. We went there quite fast. There were four dead people. We carried them to hospital. My senior ^{colleague} said to me that I must drive to Brize Norton because an accident had happened there, too.

We prepared the ambulance quickly and I started to drive to Brize Norton. I was feeling very bad and had a strange feeling. I thought that something is going wrong, a bad thing was happening.

When I arrived on the scene, I saw a man. He was lying down with multiple injuries. He was unconscious. I got of the ambulance, went near man and turned up him. I was shocked! He is my father! I started to talk to him. I understood that he was hearing me. We took him to ambulance and brought to hospital.

Thank Goodness my father is recovering now. Some part of his body broken but he will be and better. I think it was the worst day of my life / or the worst?

49

Sample Paper from the Midterm Exam of the Intermediate Level
MID-TERM EXAM

INTERMEDIATE
WRITING(30 MINUTES)20 POINTS

N. Cozileca's
1. intermediate

A- Write a composition using the following headings and compare your country to the other countries (or one of them)
Write the similarities or differences (20 Pts)

- the kind of invitation, formal or informal, ^{tavet}
- the time of day
- the preparations that the host or hostess makes ^{nowsa}
- the presents that people take, ^{sharika}
- the food and drink served ^u

~~10~~
9- no compar

Food and drink served

when someone come to my house, we will repair something. one or two hours later we ask the

- what would you like to drink tea or coffee
- child is want coca-cola, Man is drink tea
- woman is drink coffee

- we prepare it - first we serves child after woman and man.

if they come meal - we say

- Now we are going to cinema - This is best way

the preparations that - - -

If my friends come to my house My father sells something, chicken, coca-cola, delight + extra, extra - - My mother cleans house and my sister goes to my aunt Because my guest is boy. You know the reason we meet him our door - I shake hands and he kiss my mother and father hand

Sample Paper from the Final Exam of the Intermediate Level

INTERMEDIATE
WRITING TEST (30 MINUTES) 25 POINTS**Trainee computer programmer**

Good opportunity for a start in computers. Ability at maths is essential. Application forms from : Personnel Department, Continental Computers, Honeywell Rd., Bournemouth.

Fernside Engineering

Require a junior clerk for the accounts department.
Apply in writing to: The Personnel Officer, Fernside Engineering, Western Rd., Poole.

Shop assistant

A vacancy for a smart, lively young person Good prospects. Please write to: Mrs J.. Frost, 'Cool Boutique', 39 High St., Dorchester

Howard.

Suppose that you have recently graduated from the university. Look at the following job advertisements and write to apply for the following jobs. Write your CV and state your qualifications and experience clearly [Use in at least 200 words]

11-01-2001

Dear Sir/Madam

I saw your advertisement in a Business Journalist in today's newspaper.

I am interested in this job. I'd like to introduce myself

I was born in Istanbul in 1982. But I didn't live there for a long time because of my father's job. But I live in Istanbul now. I graduated university one year ago. I graduated from Oxford University. I studied computer programming and modern languages at university. I am fluent in English, Spanish, Turkish, and French. But unfortunately I don't know another languages. I like reading books, swimming and going to the cinema. I hate watching tv. Unfortunately I have never worked anywhere. Now I am looking for a job for my experience. I think I will be successful.

I look forward to hearing from you soon. Please let me if you need more information about me.

Yours Sincerely

Nilay B. Dogulu

APPENDIX –D
Lennon's Error Taxonomy For the Analysis of Speech Errors

E1, intra-lexeme error per T- Unit

These comprise:

E1 i) verb morphology error

E1 ii) noun morphology error

E1 iii) adjective and adverb morphology error

E1 iv) categorisation error (using of one part of speech for another)

E2, intra-noun phrase error per T-Unit

These comprise:

E2 i) errors of initiator, determiner, adjectival choice, the vast majority of which involve the article

E2 ii) adjective plus noun and noun plus noun combinations

E2 iii) errors of noun phrase post-modification

These comprise errors employing an inappropriate structure to postmodify the noun phrase. The bulk of such errors involve using a postmodifying 'of' phrase inappropriately. Errors in the relative clause are not included here but under E8, clause linkage error.

E3, intra-verbal group error per T-Unit

This does not include errors of verb morphology (see E1 ii, above) but comprises:

E3 i) errors of tense and aspect choice

Where an error of tense and aspect occurs in one verb form, it is counted only as an error of tense.

E3 ii) errors in choice of 'co-verbs' (modals and catenatives) and auxiliary and participial combinations (excluding tense choice)

E4, preposition and adverbial particle choice error per T-Unit

This large category consists chiefly of preposition choice errors, plus a few adverbial particle choice errors, and occasionally examples where the combination of preposition and adverbial particle following a verb constitutes error. In such cases the error is regarded as a preposition choice error:

E5, choice of pro-forms error per T-Unit

These include a wide variety of forms as follows: personal, possessive, reflexive pronouns, possessive adjectives, demonstrative pronouns and adjectives, indefinite pronouns (e.g. 'someone', 'something'), 'here' and 'there', 'any', 'each', and 'all' as pronouns (as initiators they are included in category E2, see above), interrogative pronouns.

E6, position of adverbials and participles error per T-Unit

These constitute word order errors. Word order may also be disturbed in errors occurring in other categories, of course, notably in intra-noun phrase errors (E2), sentence structure errors (E9), and verb complementation errors (E7). Errors in E4 may also involve word order disturbance occasionally (compound prepositions). However, in these cases disturbances in word order do not themselves primarily constitute the error but are concomitant with error. In this class (E6) the error consists solely of word order disturbance of the elements adverbial or participle.

E7, verb complementation error per T-Unit

This category is concerned with incorrect choice of structures following the verbal group, involving structures such as noun phrase (direct or indirect object), prepositional phrase, gerund, infinitive with or without 'to', 'that' clause. Infinitives and gerunds following co-verbs are, however, excluded from this category and included in category E3, intra-verbal group errors.

Also included in this category are adjective complements following the verb:

NOTE: errors of the example 2 type are regarded as distinct from preposition choice errors and are not included in E4.

E8, clause linkage error per T-Unit

Errors in this category divide into three varieties:

E8 i) conjunction choice

E8 ii) relative pronoun choice

E8 iii) omission of the second auxiliary in coordinate clauses

E9, sentence structure error per T-Unit

This involves inappropriate use of existential and cleft sentences

E10, lexical choice error per T-Unit

These are errors which comprise:

E10 i) verb choice errors without collocational inappropriacy

E10 ii) verb choice errors with collocational inappropriacy

E10 iii) noun choice errors without collocational inappropriacy

E10 iv) noun choice errors with collocational inappropriacy

E10 v) adjective choice errors without collocational inappropriacy

E10 vi) adjective choice errors with collocational inappropriacy

E10 vii) adverb choice errors without collocational inappropriacy

These include one or two adverbial phrases, too:

E10 viii) adverb choice errors with collocational inappropriacy

These also include one or two adverbial phrases:

E10 ix) collocational errors where error cannot be located unambiguously in one of the two combined elements alone, but the combination is unacceptable.

The scheme of error classification just described does not distinguish between substitution, addition, omission and re-ordering of elements as errors. Where reference is made to errors involving choice of forms (e.g. pro-forms, prepositions, conjunctions, relative pronouns), then omission of a form where it is required or addition of a form where its suppliance is erroneous are regarded as such choices.

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