

Taking Advantage of L2 Errors in EFL Learners' Written Language Production¹

Ferdi Çelik² & Zerrin Eren³, Ondokuz Mayıs University, Samsun, Turkey

Abstract

This qualitative study investigates the errors committed by Turkish EFL learners and the rate of spelling mistakes to grammar errors in learners' paragraphs. In order to examine these issues, 19 participants studying at a private high school in Turkey took part in this study. The qualitative data were collected through students' paragraphs written in English. A content and a descriptive analysis were employed to analyze the data. The grammar errors were categorized as errors of omission, addition, misformation, and double types throughout the scrutiny. The errors were related to various grammatical elements such as verbs, articles, verb inflections, noun inflections, and prepositions. The most frequent error category was omission, and the grammar elements the students errored most were prepositions. The results also showed that the students' grammar errors were approximately two times more than their spelling mistakes. Given the results of this study, some suggestions for future studies and pedagogical implications were provided.

Resumen

Este estudio cualitativo investiga los errores cometidos por los estudiantes turcos de inglés como lengua extranjera y la tasa de errores ortográficos y gramaticales en los párrafos de los estudiantes. Para examinar estas cuestiones, en este estudio participaron 19 participantes que estudiaban en una escuela secundaria privada en Turquía. Los datos cualitativos se recopilaron a través de párrafos de los estudiantes escritos en inglés. Para analizar los datos se utilizó un análisis de contenido y un análisis descriptivo. Los errores gramaticales se clasificaron como errores de omisión, adición, deformación y tipos dobles durante todo el escrutinio. Los errores estaban relacionados con diversos elementos gramaticales como verbos, artículos, inflexiones verbales, inflexiones de sustantivos y preposiciones. La categoría de error más frecuente fue la omisión y los elementos gramaticales en los que los estudiantes cometieron más errores fueron las preposiciones. Los resultados también mostraron que los errores gramaticales de los estudiantes eran aproximadamente dos veces más que sus errores ortográficos. Dados los resultados de este estudio, se brindaron algunas sugerencias para futuros estudios e implicaciones pedagógicas.

Introduction

Error analysis in linguistics refers to analyzing various problems that language learners naturally commit in spoken or written language production (James, 2013). Rather than being troublesome, committing errors might be better accepted as an indicator, which informs the teacher about the learning process. The EFL teachers may take advantage of the learners' linguistic errors to understand more about the learning process. For instance, if a learner says "They goed there yesterday" instead of "They went there yesterday", it indicates that the learner has learned the regular verb use in simple past tense but has some deficiencies in learning or lack of knowledge about the use of irregular verbs. Therefore, error analysis is a fruitful procedure that provides deeper learning insights.

Error analysis is the study that mainly investigates "errors in learners' interlanguage system" (Brown, 1994, p. 204). Interlanguage refers to the learner's current knowledge of the language in general. Selinker (1972), who coined the term, specifies that interlanguage is the unique language system independent of the learner's first language (L1) and the second language; moreover, all second language (L2) learners develop interlanguage while learning a second language. Therefore, the learner's interlanguage contains both L1 and L2 linguistic properties, yet it is not the same as either.

A learner's interlanguage contains errors because of the interlingual transfer, which is one of the primary sources of errors for L2 learners (Brown, 2007). Interlingual transfer is related to the interference of the mother tongue or any other previously learned/acquired language (Nunan, 2001). The transfer can be either negative or positive. Negative transfer, as the name suggests is the type of interlingual transfer which affects the learning in a negative way (Xu, 2008). Scholars such as Taylor (1975) and Odlin (2003) have revealed that interlingual errors are dominant in the early stages of language learning. On the other hand, the reason behind the intralingual errors is the target language rather than mother tongue of the learners. Intralingual error refers to the linguistic error occurring as a result of incorrect application of a rule in the target language such as by overemploying monitoring, or overgeneralizing a rule (Rofik, 2018). The focus in the intralingual errors is the target language rather than the learners' L1. Therefore, intralingual errors

¹This is a refereed article. Received: 15 June, 2022. Accepted: 25 November, 2022. Published: October, 2023.

²ferdicelik99@gmail.com, 0000-0001-8272-4720, Correspondent.

³erenz@omu.edu.tr, 0000-0002-8579-6639

have more potential to occur during learners' learning of elements from the target language system (Brown, 1980).

Throughout the process of language learning, learners can commit errors. Harmer (2003) points out that errors are an integral sector of interlanguage, and learners commit them on the way to mastering the target language. Thus, error analysis is of importance. Teachers can conduct error analyses and apply strategies to correct and eliminate those errors. The errors also provide insights for EFL teachers regarding their students' learning process.

The classification of errors is important because it helps make sense of them. James (2013) classifies errors as addition, omission, misordering, and misformation errors. Errors of addition occur when a linguistic item, which should not appear in a grammatically correct sentence, is present (Pravitasari, 2022). For example, uncountable nouns like *bread*, should not be inflected with a plural suffix (-s) but learners commit addition error by adding the plural suffix such as *breads*. The other type of error is omission error. Omission errors occur when a linguistic item, which should appear in a grammatically correct sentence, is not present (Pravitasari, 2022). For example, the verb should be inflected with (-ing) when the expression is meant to be progressive, but the learners commit omission error by not inflecting the verb with (-ing) such as writing *The elephant is move its ears now* instead of *The elephant is moving its ears now*. Misformation error, on the other hand, occurs when a learner uses an incorrect form of a linguistic item (Simanjuntak, 2019). For instance, a learner, ignoring the rule of verb-noun agreement in the sentences beginning with *there*, may make an ungrammatical sentence as shown in the following example: *There are just a book here* instead of a singular auxiliary word like *There is just a book here*. Misordering errors occur when a learner places the linguistic items in a sentence in an incorrect order as illustrated in the following example: *I went to school morning yesterday* instead of *I went to school yesterday morning*.

The learners in this study have years of English language instruction in Turkey. Despite the visible success in listening and reading comprehension, there are still many errors in the form of the language that Turkish EFL learners produce. To put it differently, the learners understand the language, but they do not accurately use the language while speaking or writing. Therefore, the learners need specific help from their teachers who can analyze their errors. Knowing about the common errors that EFL learners commit helps teachers shape their classroom pedagogy. In this way, the learners can perform better in the target language.

Literature Review

There have been several studies in the relevant literature to achieve this goal. For example, Erkaya (2012) analyzed 17 university students' errors in their essays and reported that the word choice causes most students' incomprehensible messages. Demirel (2017) investigated 150 written texts of Turkish university students studying at the Department of English Language and Literature and found that verb-related errors were the most common. Similarly, Ayar (2020) studied seven university students' errors and stated that the most frequent errors were verb-related errors. There is a growing body of research regarding error analysis in EFL learning. However, these studies focus on adult learners (Atmaca, 2016; Ayar, 2020; Demirel, 2017; Elkilic, 2012; Erarslan & Hol, 2014; Erkaya, 2012; Gök, 2020; Kazazoğlu, 2020; Köroğlu, 2014; Özkayran & Yılmaz, 2020; Taşçı & Ataç, 2018; Sürüç Şen & Şimşek, 2020). There are only a few studies in the literature analyzing the grammar errors of Turkish high school EFL learners who are not adults yet such as the study of Erdoğan (2005). Nevertheless, this study aims only to analyze a specific type of grammatical structure, such as the errors related to relative clauses. Unlike the studies mentioned earlier, our study aims to determine the grammatical errors that Turkish high school students make while writing in English. For this purpose, it seeks answers to the following research questions:

- What types of grammatical errors do Turkish high school students make in their writings?
- What is the rate of spelling mistakes to grammatical errors?

It is thought that this study will shed light on the common linguistic errors of Turkish high school EFL learners. Thus, it is believed that English teachers will gain insight into these errors. In this way, teachers can shape their teaching accordingly, eliminate detected errors, and enable students to perform better in English. Furthermore, thanks to the findings acquired in the study, coursebook writers, who focus on Turkish language learners, will have an understanding of the frequency of linguistic error types. The findings of our study will contribute to both EFL teaching and the related literature.

Method

Research design

The present study is a qualitative study conducted to find out and analyze the errors in students' written language. Shields and Rangarajan (2013) stated that a descriptive study seeks to answer the "what" question; it tries to find out the features of the population or concept being studied. Such a study focuses on the existing conditions. In other words, it is not concerned with what caused a situation. Therefore, the descriptive design fits the best in the context of the present study. Content analysis was also employed in the study.

Population and study group

In order to choose the participants, a purposive sampling method was used. We chose 10th grade students to take part in the study because they had just completed an intensive EFL course in 9th grade, in which they had 12 hours of English classes a week. There were two 10th grade classes, and the class with higher proficiency level was chosen to participate in the study as their syllabus included writing an opinion paragraph. In this way, we could integrate our study in their agenda. After taking the necessary ethical declaration, institutional permissions and parental consents, 19 private high school students took part in the study. The native language of all participants was Turkish, and they were all monolingual. They had been learning English since they were in the fourth grade. The students had an intermediate level of proficiency. They were in the same class, and their ages varied from 14 to 16.

Setting

The study was held at a private high school in Turkey's Central Black Sea Region. The school was managed by a private institution and used its own English course syllabus. In the syllabus, English course was offered ten class hours a week and it was compulsory. The medium of instruction was English. Moreover, another foreign language course was offered, and beginning from the 9th grade, the students had to choose one of following language classes in addition to the English course: French, German, and Russian. Except for foreign languages, the medium of instruction was Turkish language, which was the learners' L1. In the English course syllabus, grammar was taught through meaningful practices. An inductive way of teaching grammar was adopted where learners explore, question, and understand the form. Therefore, the errors of the participants might be different from that of public-school students.

Data collection procedure and instruments

The data collection at a private high school in Turkey took place at the end of 2021. To collect data, the researchers asked the participants to write an opinion paragraph between 300-350 words. They were required to discuss "Do people really need to have a university education to be successful. Why or why not?" in their paragraphs. The researcher clearly stated that the students' writings would be checked for plagiarism. No machine translation tools or dictionary use were allowed. The participants were required to write their paragraphs in *Microsoft Word* using Times New Roman font to prevent any analysis mistake caused by the font. Times New Roman was chosen because both the students and the researchers were familiar with it, and fonts with a serif, such as Times New Roman are considered more legible (Arditi & Cho, 2005), and allow the reader to distinguish the letters better (McLean, as cited in Minakata & Beier, 2022). A sample opinion paragraph was also provided along with the assignment so that the participants could remember the format of an opinion paragraph that they had learned during their English as a foreign language class such as explaining why they agreed or disagreed with a particular idea. The students had one hour to write their paragraphs. After writing the paragraphs, the students sent them to the researchers via the learning management system called K-12 Net used to send all school assignments. After collecting the data, the students' writings were analyzed.

Data analysis

A content and a descriptive analysis were employed to analyze the qualitative data. As the present study is an error analysis study, the method of Corder (1974) was followed. According to Corder, error analysis is done by collecting the learners' language, identifying, describing, explaining, evaluating, and correcting the errors. We categorized the errors into four categories: omission, addition, misordering, and misformation as explained in the introduction part of our study (James, 2009).

After collecting the samples of participants' language, the researcher manually identified the errors in the paragraphs by underlining all the errors and taking notes to prepare for the data analysis. Afterwards, all

the paragraphs were exported to *Atlas.ti 9.0*, a qualitative data analysis software, and the researcher employed an open coding method to describe the errors. Open coding is the first step of the coding process in qualitative data analysis in which the themes are determined for classification (Williams & Moser, 2019). Next, the researcher grouped the codes by using an axial coding method. Axial coding is the process of categorizing the themes (Williams & Moser, 2019). Coding in qualitative research is of significance because it enables researchers to collect data and make sense of the data, which can be sloganized as “from codes and categories to theory” (Saldaña, 2009, p. 4). Lastly, percentages and frequencies of occurrence of the themes were automatically computed through a frequency analysis in *Atlas.ti*, and the results were explained in the results section of our study.

Limitations

The current study had two limitations. First, the present study was conducted with a single group at a single school. If participants had been involved from various schools around the country, the results could have been richer. However, the nature of error analysis requires the researcher to devote much effort and time. Every single word written by the learners needs to be read and critically analyzed. For instance, the researcher needs to identify the reason behind each error to make sense of the error. Second, students’ writings were assessed by the same researcher. Different perspectives might have provided more diverse findings.

Results

The data collected through students’ paragraphs were analyzed to determine the types of grammatical errors Turkish high school students make in their writings. In order to answer the first research question, “What types of grammatical errors do Turkish high school students make in their writings?”, a content and descriptive analysis were applied to analyze students’ paragraphs. The results of the descriptive statistical analysis that we conducted after we had done the open and axial coding in *Atlas.ti 9.0* software are shown in Table 1 below:

Types of Errors	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Omission	49	39.5
Addition	38	30.6
Misformation	32	25.8
Double types	5	4
Total	124	100

Table 1: Analysis of grammatical errors

Table 1 shows four types of errors in students’ writings. They include omission, addition, misformation, and double types of errors. The most common errors in students’ paragraphs were omission errors. On the other hand, the least common errors were double types of errors. Double types of errors occur when students commit two types of errors in a single word. Double types of errors may be a combination of two of the following error types: omission, addition, and misformation.

Error of omission

The most common error was that of omission which occurs when learners omit a linguistic element in their writings. For further analysis, the types of omission errors are described in Table 2:

Type of Omission Errors	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Verb inflection	16	32
Auxiliary verb	11	22
Noun inflection	8	16
Preposition	8	16
Articles	4	8
Verb	3	6
Total	50	100

Table 2: Analysis of omission errors

As shown in Table 2, the learners omitted auxiliary verbs, noun inflection, prepositions, articles, verb inflections, and verbs.

Omission of the auxiliary verb

The following excerpts, where the omissions are highlighted with the (?) symbol, illustrate the findings. Three samples were provided to illustrate:

The error: "a new person who (?) studying at the university" [P15]

Correction: a new person who is studying at the university

The error: "You need to find a job and learn it when you (?) doing it." [P16]

Correction: You need to find a job and learn it when you are doing it.

The error: "Finally, you will (?) equipped." [P8]

Correction: Finally, you will be equipped.

This suggests that most of the omission errors in grammatical level occurred due to learners' incomplete ability to use a variety of tense forms in their writings accurately. Although the sentences or phrases are meaningful, the learners could not construct the tense structures properly.

Omission of noun inflection

The samples from students' writings are as follows:

The error: "They can learn many language(?)." [P1]

Correction: They can learn many languages.

The error: "I have few reason(?) to support." [P3]

Correction: I have few reasons to support.

The error: "a lot of thing(?)" [P17]

Correction: a lot of things

The main factor for the omission of noun inflection was the omission of plural -s. In other words, learners had difficulties in applying the rules for making a plural noun by adding -s at the end of a regular countable noun. As observed in the excerpts, the learners committed errors when there was a plural quantifier before the noun, which was needed to be inflected with plural -s. This was because a plural suffix is not used in the learners' L1 after a quantifier. It is written in the singular form as the quantifier is enough to provide the word with the meaning of plurality. Therefore, this error was interlingual error.

Omission of verb inflection

Omission of verb inflection was detected in the students' writings. Omission of verb inflection was the most common error type among omission errors, with a rate of 32%. This might be because verbs are inflected for various purposes, such as providing the meaning of continuity or making a gerund, making it possible for learners to commit this type of error easily. Verb inflection errors were highlighted in bold letters. The examples from students' writings are as follows:

The error: "Nowadays, **have** a university education is not as hard as the past." [P19]

Correction: Nowadays, having a university education is not as hard as the past.

The error: "In summary, as long as the university **give** people a qualified education..." [P8]

Correction: In summary, as long as the university gives people a qualified education

The error: "for **make** a good career" [P3]

Correction: for making a good career

Omission of preposition

The other errors consisted of omission of prepositions, articles, and verbs. In the following excerpts, which illustrate the errors, (?) symbol is used to highlight the omissions. Some examples from students' writings are as follows:

Error: "I believe that this stereotype has a big role (?) overrating university education." [P6]

Correction: I believe that this stereotype has a big role in overrating university education.

Omission of articles

A sample is provided as:

Error: "(?) Person who graduated from university has more job opportunities." [P3]

Correction: A person who graduated from university has more job opportunities.

Omission of verb

An example is as follows:

Error: "person who (?) experts in their fields" [P5]

Correction: people who are experts in their fields

The omissions were prepositions, articles, and verbs. While the omission of prepositions was found with a 16% frequency, omission of articles was found with an 8%. Omission of the verb had only a 6% occurrence. This might be because a verb is usually an essential element to make a sentence meaningful. On the other hand, articles and prepositions are not the words that significantly contribute to the meaning of a statement. Such a low frequency was expected by the researchers because the students aimed to convey a message rather than forming grammatically perfect sentences.

Error of addition

In Table 1, addition errors were the second most frequent errors. Addition is an error type that can be explained as the presence of a linguistic element that should not appear in a properly constructed sentence. Through the coding process, addition errors were found, and the codes were analyzed according to the frequency and percentage of the occurrence. Table 3 shows the types of addition errors, which the Turkish EFL high school learners committed:

Type of Addition Errors	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Auxiliary verb	13	34.2
Preposition	8	21
Articles	6	15.8
Noun inflection	6	15.8
Verb inflection	5	13.2
Total	38	100

Table 3: Analysis of addition errors

As shown in Table 3, students added auxiliary verbs to their sentences although it was unnecessary. Addition of auxiliary verbs occurred more frequently than other addition errors (f=13). It was observed that the participants added an auxiliary verb as an intralingual error, primarily when they used an adverb before the verb.

Addition of auxiliary verb

The following excerpts, where the additions are underlined, show some of the auxiliary verb additions:

Error: "the answer of this question is actually depends on what success means to you" [P1]

Correction: the answer of this question actually depends on what success means to you

Error: "because people are generally go to a university" [P15]

Correction: because people generally go a university

Addition of preposition

The other addition error was addition of prepositions with 21% of occurrence among all the addition errors. When the researcher examined the prepositions which were added, errors were predominantly the addition of the preposition to (87.5%). In participants' L1, objects are always inflected with a dative suffix when creating a sense of motion towards them. However, learners do not need a preposition in L2 to give that meaning most of the time. Therefore, the errors caused by students' L1 interference in the L2 language production process could be classified as interlingual errors.

Error: "I support to everyone" [P3]

Correction: I support everyone

Error: University teaches to you a lot of things about life." [P8]

Correction: University teaches you a lot of things about life.

Addition of articles

The next addition type was that of articles. As there is no article use in the participants' L1, it is not surprising that they committed mistakes related to the articles. The reason for this might be the students' incomplete ability to decide where and when to use the articles. Students committed addition errors regarding both the addition of the article and a/an article:

Error: "for an example, if you are looking for a job" [P1]

Correction: for example, if you are looking for a job

Error: "Do we need to go to the university?" [P8]

Correction: Do we need to go to university?

Addition of noun inflections

This type of error occurred via the plural -s. Errors occurred due to a variety of reasons. One of the most significant reasons was that some nouns are irregular and have a specific plural form. Students overgeneralized the rules because of their lack of competence in the use of L2 and the absence of irregular plural nouns in their L1 grammar. The following excerpts from the writing of P10 might illustrate:

Error: "but for the other things like having a good friends" [P10]

Correction: but for the other things like having good friends

Error: "Secondly, peoples can work in any job which doesn't require knowledge. [P10]

Correction: Secondly, people can work in any job which doesn't require knowledge.

Error: "We all know someones" [P10]

Correction: We all know someone

Error of misformation

Misformation errors were 25.8% of all the error types. The researcher discovered 32 errors in this type. They consisted of prepositions, articles, singular and plural forms, and auxiliary verb misformations, as seen in Table 4.

Type of Misformation Errors	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Preposition	13	50
Articles	5	19.2
Singular-Plural Forms	5	19.2
Auxiliary verb	3	11.6
Total	26	100

Table 4: Analysis of misformation errors

According to Table 4, misformation of prepositions had the highest percentage of occurrence (50%). Articles and singular-plural forms had 19.2% of occurrence each, and auxiliary verbs covered 11.6%. Most of the preposition errors occurred due to the prepositions at/on/in. This might be because only one case suffix in the learners' L1 covers the meaning of these three prepositions, as Elkilic (2012) states. Therefore, the students were highly challenged for using the correct preposition.

In light of these findings, another frequency analysis was conducted on the grammar item types to understand the most problematic grammar item, as shown in Table 5.

Type of Grammar Item	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Preposition	29	25.2
Auxiliary verb	27	23.5
Verb inflection	23	20
Noun inflection	16	13.9
Articles	15	13
Verb	5	4.4
Total	38	100

Table 5: Frequency regarding grammar item type

As can be seen, most of the errors were related to prepositions, auxiliary verbs, and verb inflections. On the other hand, the least common item type related to verbs.

Spelling Mistakes

The second research question was "What is the rate of spelling mistakes to the grammatical errors?". Table 6 shows the rates:

Type	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Grammar	124	66
Spelling	64	34
Total	124	100

Table 6: The rate of spelling mistakes to grammar errors

According to Table 6, students committed nearly two times more grammar errors (66%) than spelling mistakes (34%). The following excerpts might illustrate the spelling mistakes:

Mistake: "unfortunetly, the answer is yes" [P1]

Correction: Unfortunately, the answer is yes.

Mistake: "should be streinght" [P10]

Correction: should be strength

Mistake: "You don't need a certificate in this sutiation." [P18]

Correction: You don't need a certificate in this situation.

When spelling mistakes were investigated, it was understood that most spelling mistakes were caused by pronunciation. This might stem from the differences between the way words sound when they are uttered and written. It might also stem from the differences in the alphabet structures and the pronunciations between students' L1 and L2.

Discussion

The objective of this study was to find out the types of grammar errors that Turkish EFL students make in their writings. The researcher collected data through high school students' paragraphs in an English language class. After the error analysis, the researcher found that the students' grammar errors were mainly addition, omission, and misformation errors, and the most common error type was the omission. This finding was different from the finding of Özkayran and Yılmaz (2020), who analyzed university students' errors and found that misformation was the most frequent error type. However, our study was conducted on high school EFL learners, who are not adults. Therefore, it is stated that adult and non-adult learners' types and frequency of errors may differ.

Among omission errors, verb inflection had the highest frequency because they have many functions. Regarding the error of addition, addition of auxiliary verbs was the most frequent error type. Students added an auxiliary verb when there is an adverb before the verb. This can be categorized as an intralingual error. Polat (2018), who conducted a study on Turkish, Azerbaijani and Syrian university students, found that one of the most frequent errors that Turkish students made were related to auxiliary verbs. This was linear with our findings related to auxiliary verbs.

Next, the most frequent misformation error, also known as malformation, was related to prepositions. The findings are consistent with the studies of Erkaya (2012), Darus and Subramaniam (2009), and Elkilic (2012), Kazazoğlu (2020). This finding was in line with the findings of Ciesielkiewicz and Marquez (2015), who conducted an error analysis on the Spanish adult learners' writings, and the study of Fauziati (2003), who studied the errors of Indonesian high school students. They all discussed that the use of prepositions might be rugged for EFL learners. The present study also found that the students made a significant number of errors while using articles. The findings of the present study are congruous with the study of Kirkgöz (2010) Kazazoğlu (2020), in which the participants were adult learners. One of the most frequent errors in their studies was related to articles. This is because there is no article in students' L1.

Elkilic (2012) and Gök (2020) state that developmental errors occur more than the errors caused by L1 interference in general. Nevertheless, our study exhibited that most errors concerning the singular and plural forms were caused by L1 interference. As mentioned in the results section, this type of error mainly occurred after using a quantifier, which is consistent with the literature. For instance, Erkaya (2012) and Kirkgöz (2010) similarly found that the Turkish EFL learners made a significant number of errors related to singular and plural forms. It is agreed with Erkaya (2012) that the cause of these errors was L1 interference because, in the Turkish language there is no need to use the plural -s after using a plural quantifier. Therefore, the learners omitted the plural marker and did not inflect the noun when they were writing in English, which caused the error. In addition to the previous studies, the present study found that students also make errors of addition of plural markers. Learners commit this mistake, especially when the word is an irregular one, which carries the meaning of plurality such as someone and people.

In the present study, it was determined that the grammar errors occurred nearly twice as many times as the spelling mistakes. However, the percentage of spelling mistakes in high school EFL learners' writings was higher than the adult learners in the studies of Kirkgöz (2010), Erkaya (2012), Sürüç Şen and Şimşek (2020). The participants of Kirkgöz (2010) made only eight percent of spelling mistakes, and the participants of Erkaya (2012) made only seven percent of spelling mistakes, and the participants of Sürüç Şen and Şimşek (2020) made approximately 14 percent.

The most common erroneous grammatical item in high school EFL learners' writings was prepositions. The finding matched with the study of Taşçı and Ataç (2018), who analyzed the errors of Turkish university at a faculty of education, and the study of Atmaca (2016), who studied errors of Turkish EFL university students. The finding also matched with the study of Erarslan and Hol (2014). However, according to the study of Demirel (2017) and Ayar (2020) the most frequent error that adult EFL learners committed were related to verbs.

When the results are reviewed holistically, it is seen that the interlingual errors dominate the intralingual errors, which supports the studies of Erkaya (2012), and Ayar (2020). The results also showed that grammar errors were far more than spelling mistakes. Moreover, the students mainly focused on the meaning rather than form as the omission and addition of verbs had a significantly low frequency compared to other grammatical elements. Therefore, it may be concluded that an English teacher not only needs to focus on the functions of the language, but also the forms of the language.

Conclusion and Suggestions

EFL learning is a complex and dynamic process in which many factors intervene, such as learners' L1. The learners' interlanguage is a unique system influenced by the L1. EFL teachers need to be conscious of to whom they are going to teach, in addition to what and why they are going to teach. Therefore, cross-linguistic influence should also be considered by all EFL teachers all over the World. For instance, in our experience, most English language coursebooks do not focus on the prepositions at/on/in separately; instead, they are designed to teach these prepositions holistically. The EFL teachers also teach them at once. However, our results have indicated that the learners are quite challenged with these prepositions due to L1 interference, although they are in the upper-intermediate level. We have found out that the students have also been challenged when using adverbs before verbs; they tend to add an auxiliary verb. Additionally, irregular plural nouns and quantifiers have caused errors in learners' writings due to the learners' interlanguage. Therefore, EFL teachers are suggested to be context sensitive.

It is agreed that being exposed to the target language is important in language learning. Does any type of input help learners regarding language learning? The language input should be comprehensible and also contain elements from a slightly more advanced level than the learners' interlanguage so that the learners can learn the language by comprehending them (Krashen, 1988). Input hypothesis is also linear with zone of proximal development of Vygotsky (1978), which suggests that the learners should be presented with tasks which are slightly out of their current ability yet still can be achieved with aid from more knowledgeable others. As interlingual errors provide us with the information about the linguistic units that might be more challenging for a specific group of learners, EFL teachers can benefit from the findings of our study to facilitate the learning process of their learners.

As stated in the discussion section, our study has shown that the interlingual errors of high school EFL learners were linear with the adult learners' errors. It can be deduced that these errors are fossilized and continue to exist through different stages of education unless a specific instructional focus is given to fix them. Therefore, EFL teachers from any part of the world are suggested to be conscious of the fossilized errors and help learners troubleshoot them. For instance, aiding learners to notice these errors, providing explicit information about the error, promoting peer assessment in the classroom can be beneficial.

As a result of this study, curriculum designers and coursebook designers are encouraged to focus on each of these prepositions separately and provide the learners with as many different contexts as possible regarding the use of these prepositions. The EFL teachers are suggested to explain or teach the logic behind irregular plural nouns and quantifiers. As Kazazoğlu (2020) also suggests, EFL teachers need to be conscious that some grammatical errors may be a consequence of their mother tongue.

For a future study, a researcher can analyze the learners' errors with a bigger sample of high school students who study at public high schools. Since the participants of this study have been studying at a private high school, which uses an English course syllabus different from one used in public schools in Turkey, a future study could be conducted on error analyzes of the students studying at public high schools. Moreover, a

more comprehensive, comparative study can be conducted on the grammatical error analysis of students studying in both public and private high schools.

References

- Arditi, A., & Cho, J. (2005). Serifs and font legibility. *Vision Research*, 45(23), 2926-2933. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.visres.2005.06.013>
- Atmaca, Ç. (2016). Error analysis of Turkish EFL learners: A case study. *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 232, 234-241. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2016.10.007>
- Ayar, Z. (2020). Error analysis of Turkish learners' English paragraphs from lexical and grammatical aspects. *ELT Research Journal*, 9(2), 123-134.
- Brown, H. D. (1980). *Principles of language learning and teaching*. Prentice Hall.
- Brown, H. D. (1994). *Teaching by principles: Interactive language teaching methodology*. Prentice Hall.
- Brown, H. D. (2007). *Principles of language learning and teaching* (5th ed.). Pearson.
- Ciesielkiewicz, M., & Marquez, E. (2015). Error analysis and its relevance to teaching ESL composition. *International Journal of Linguistics*, 7(5), 119-138. <https://doi.org/10.5296/ijl.v7i5.8076>
- Corder, S. P. (1974). Error analysis. In J. P. B. Allen & S. P. Corder (Eds.), *Techniques in applied linguistics* (pp. 122-154). Oxford University Press.
- Darus, S., & Subramaniam, K. (2009). Error analysis of the written English paragraphs of secondary students in Malaysia: A case study. *European Journal of Social Sciences*, 8(3), 483-495.
- Demirel, E. (2017). Detection of common errors in Turkish EFL students' writing through a corpus analytic approach. *English Language Teaching*, 10(10), 159-178. <https://doi.org/10.5539/elt.v10n10p159>
- Elkilic, G. (2012). Mother tongue traces of Turkish university students on composition papers written in English. *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 47, 656-664. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2012.06.713>
- Erarslan A., & Hol, D. (2014). Language interference on English: Transfer on the vocabulary, tense, and preposition use of freshmen Turkish EFL learners. *ELTA Journal*, 2(2), 4-22.
- Erdoğan, V. (2005). Contribution of error analysis to foreign language teaching. *Mersin Üniversitesi Eğitim Fakültesi Dergisi*, 1(2). <https://dergipark.org.tr/tr/pub/mersinefd/issue/17391/181766>
- Erkaya, O. R. (2012). Vocabulary and L1 interference-error analysis of Turkish students' English paragraphs. *MEXTESOL Journal*, 36(2), 1-11. <https://journal.teflin.org/index.php/journal/article/view/197>
- Fauziati (2003). Interlanguage errors in English textbooks for junior high school students in Surakarta. *TEFLIN Journal*, 14(2), 179-186. <https://journal.teflin.org/index.php/journal/article/view/197>
- Gök, Ş. (2020). Contrastive error analysis of Turkish EFL learners in writing. *International Journal of Language and Literary Studies*, 2(4), 236-242. <https://doi.org/10.36892/ijlls.v2i4.429>
- Harmer, J. (2003). *The Practice of English Language Teaching* (3rd ed.). Longman.
- James, C. (2013). *Errors in language learning and use: Exploring error analysis*. Routledge.
- Kazazoğlu, S. (2020). The impact of L1 interference on foreign language writing: A contrastive analysis. *Journal of Language and Linguistic Studies*, 16(3), 1177-1188. <https://www.jlls.org/index.php/jlls/article/view/1654/612>
- Kırkgöz, Y. (2010). An analysis of written errors of Turkish adult learners of English. *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 2(2), 4352-4358. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2010.03.692>
- Krashen, S. D. (1988). *Second language acquisition and second language learning*. Prentice Hall.
- Köroğlu, Z. Ç. (2014). An analysis on grammatical errors of Turkish EFL students' written texts. *Turkish Studies*, 9(12), 101-111. <http://dx.doi.org/10.7827/TurkishStudies.7415>
- Minakata, K., & Beier, S. (2022). The dispute about sans serif versus serif fonts: An interaction between the variables of serif and stroke contrast. *Acta Psychologica*, 228. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.actpsy.2022.103623>
- Nunan, D. (2001). Second language acquisition. In R. Carter & D. Nunan (Eds.), *The Cambridge guide to teaching English to speakers of other languages* (pp. 87-92). Cambridge University Press.
- Odlin, T. (2003). Cross-linguistic influence. In C. J. Doughty & M. H. Long (Eds.), *The handbook of second language acquisition* (pp. 436-486). Blackwell.
- Özkayran, A., & Yılmaz, E. (2020). Analysis of higher education students' errors in English writing tasks. *Advances in Language and Literary Studies*, 11(2), 48-58. <https://doi.org/10.7575/ajac.all.v.11n.2p.48>
- Polat, M. (2018). A Comparative analysis of written errors of Turkish, Azerbaijani and Syrian students in English writing skills. *International Journal of Contemporary Educational Research*, 5(2), 64-78. <http://dx.doi.org/10.33200/ijcer.470855>
- Pravitasari, S. G. (2022). Error analysis of EFL students' essay writing (Fourth semester students of STMIK Sinar Nusantara Surakarta). *Surakarta English and Literature Journal*, 5(1), 13-25. <https://doi.org/10.52429/selju.v5i1.690>
- Rofik, A. (2018). Grammatical errors made by secondary students in writing: From interlingual to intralingual. *JELLT*, 2(2), 19-28. <https://jurnal.ustjogja.ac.id/index.php/JELLT/article/view/3270/2119>
- Saldaña, J. (2009). *The coding manual for qualitative researchers*. Sage.
- Selinker, L. (1972). Interlanguage. *International Review of Applied Linguistics in Language Teaching*, 10(1-4). <https://doi.org/10.1515/iral.1972.10.1-4.209>
- Shields, P. M., & Rangarajan, N. (2013). *A playbook for research methods: Integrating conceptual frameworks and project management*. New Forums.
- Simanjuntak, H. L. (2019). Error analysis of students' writing: A case study of EFL undergraduate students at Indraprasta PGRI University. *Scope: Journal of English Language Teaching*, 3(2), 100-108. <https://doi.org/10.30998/scope.v3i2.3371>
- Sürüç Şen, N. & Şimşek, A. (2020). An analysis of Turkish students' written errors: A case of an EFL context. *Journal of Language Research*, 4(1), 58-68. <https://dergipark.org.tr/en/pub/jlr/issue/54148/687646>
- Taşçı, S. & Ataç, B. A. (2018). İngilizce Öğrenen Yetişkin Türk Öğrencilerin Yazılı Dilbilgisi Hatalarının Bir Analizi [Written grammatical errors of Turkish adult learners of English: An analysis]. *Journal of International Social Sciences Education*, 4(1), 1-13. <https://dergipark.org.tr/en/pub/issej/issue/37517/348530>
- Taylor, B. P. (1975). The use of overgeneralization and transfer learning strategies by elementary and intermediate students in ESL. *Language Learning*, 25(1), 73-107. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-1770.1975.tb00110.x>

- Vygotsky, L. S. (1978). *Mind and society: The development of higher psychological processes*. Harvard University Press.
- Williams, M., & Moser, T. (2019). The art of coding and thematic exploration in qualitative research. *International Management Review*, 15(1), 45-55. <http://www.imrjournal.org/uploads/1/4/2/8/14286482/imr-v15n1art4.pdf>
- Xu, J. (2008). Error theories and second language acquisition. *Us-China Foreign Language*, 6(1), 35-42. <https://doi.org/10.17265/1539-8080/2008.01.007>