A CONTRASTIVE ERROR ANALYSIS
ON THE WRITTEN ERRORS OF TURKISH
STUDENTS' LEARNING ENGLISH
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A MAJOR PROJECT
SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF LETTERS
AND THE INSTITUTE OF ECONOMICS AND SOCIAL SCIENCES
OF BILKENT UNIVERSITY
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS IN
THE TEACHING OF ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE

BY
SERAN şİMŞEK
August, 1989
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BY

SERAN SIMSEK

August, 1989
I certify that I have read this major project and that in my opinion it is fully adequate, in scope and in quality, as a major project for the degree of Master of Arts.

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Project Title: A CONTRASTIVE ERROR ANALYSIS ON THE WRITTEN ERRORS OF TURKISH STUDENTS LEARNING ENGLISH

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A CONTRASTIVE ERROR ANALYSIS ON THE WRITTEN ERRORS OF TURKISH STUDENTS LEARNING ENGLISH

It is self-evident that language learning takes place over a period of time and learners will produce some forms correctly, some incorrectly and others inconsistently throughout this period. The aim of this paper is to explore and explain the linguistic difficulties which Turkish students meet during their mastery of English. An error analysis was conducted on the writing samples of Bilkent University Preparatory School students. In accordance with the results the most problematic areas for the learners were determined and some suggestions for the error correction were given. Without a study based on error analysis it is difficult to determine which errors play a major role in the student’s ability to manipulate grammatical elements to build up sentences. We need to know which part of the language they have most difficulty with so that we can conduct remedial teaching.
I
INTRODUCTION

1. STATEMENT OF THE TOPIC

During the process of learning a foreign language, learners meet some difficulties, and consequently, they often commit errors. Until recently, theorists and methodologists discussed who should accept responsibility, some regarding the student as mainly responsible, and others the teacher, depending on their standpoint. On one hand, teachers have been blamed for causing errors by careless teaching or planning; on the other hand, students have been accused of their lack of motivation, self-discipline or general intelligence. We should accept that there is truth on either side. However, it is obvious that even the most intelligent and motivated students do make errors.

In this research project, I aim to investigate:

a) the origins of errors produced by Turkish learners of English and,

b) what sort of difficulties students are confronted with when mastering English.

The use of Contrastive Error Analysis will be discussed in correcting the errors in learning English. Contrastive Analysis, it is claimed, is central to all linguistic research and Error Analysis is significant for the insights it provides.
into the language acquisition process. Therefore, the marriage of these two fields of study will be used throughout this study.

1. PURPOSE

A study of learner’s errors is essential since committing errors is an integral part of the language learning process from which we, as foreign language teachers, gain accurate and deep understanding. In other words, studying learners’ errors serves two major purposes. First, it provides data about the language learning process. Secondly, it indicates to the teachers and curriculum developers which part of the target language students have most difficulty with and which error types detract most from a learner’s ability to communicate effectively.

The aim of this study is to explore and explain the linguistic difficulties which Turkish students meet during their mastery of English. In accordance with the results, the most problematic areas for the learners were determined and some suggestions for error correction were given.

It is also essential to make a distinction between systematic and non-systematic errors. By the term error, we mean the systematic deviations of the learner from which we are able to reconstruct one’s knowledge of the language to date (transitional competence). On the other hand, mistake refers to the errors of performance due to memory lapses, psychological conditions and so on. A major question for language teachers is why learners from the same language background (i.e., Turkish) come up with different errors, or vice versa.
Most of the research that has been done so far in the area of language errors is either on Error Analysis (EA) or Contrastive Analysis (CA). Since the former is too broad and unreliable in itself and the latter is too limited, theoretical and behavioralistic, the advantages of these two approaches will be discussed.

As Richards (1985) points out, not only the foreign language teachers but also our students should know why they have committed errors if they are to self-monitor and avoid the same errors in the future.

2. METHOD

The subjects of the study were students at Bilkent University Preparatory School during the academic year of 1986-89. They were all "B" group students whose English knowledge was at low intermediate level. A random sample of 75 compositions of those students was collected. They were selected both from the mid-term exam papers which included a separate writing-composition section and from compositions written by them as homework assignments. The composition topics were descriptive and narrative in nature. Since some compositions required the knowledge of a specialized vocabulary, they can be defined as "partly guided."

The compositions were analyzed according to the chosen components: morphology, syntax, and prepositions. The errors related to lexicon, semantics, discourse and orthography were not
taken into consideration. All the examples presented in this paper were taken from the compositions of the selected subjects and the erroneous sentences were marked with "*".

The material used in the review of literature was collected from the libraries of M.E.T.U., Bilkent University and the Turkish American Association.

The written medium of English was taken into consideration for this study since the development of writing as a skill, as Frantzen and Kissel (1987) state, is the ability to edit one's written language for grammatical, stylistic, organizational, and other features.

3. ORGANIZATION

The first section presents an introduction to the study. The next section is a review of literature both on Contrastive Analysis and Error Analysis. In section three collection of the data, identification, and classification of errors into categories, and the analysis of the errors according to their sources are described in detail. This section also covers a brief review of Turkish in terms of morphology, syntax and prepositions. Finally, the last section is devoted to several suggestions in regard to correction of written errors.

4. LIMITATIONS

The study has the following limitations:

1. The subjects of the study were all from Bilkent University Preparatory School. The errors they
committed may not represent errors of other Turkish students learning English in other universities.

2. The data collection is based on the written compositions of these students, not on their oral work.

3. The compositions that were analyzed are limited in number (75 compositions).

II

LITERATURE REVIEW

1. BACKGROUND OF CONTRASTIVE ANALYSIS

Contrastive linguistic analysis was established by Charles C. Fries as an integral component of the methodology of target language teaching. Fries (1945) declares that the most effective materials for foreign language teaching are based on a scientific description of the language to be learned carefully compared with a parallel description of the learner's native language. Therefore, he may be said to have issued the charter for modern Contrastive Analysis. The challenge, then, was taken up by Lado, who is one of the prime movers of Contrastive Analysis. Lado (1957) presents the following propositions:

a) In the comparison between native and foreign language lies the key to ease or difficulty in foreign language learning.

b) The most effective language teaching materials
are those that are based on a scientific description of the language to be learned, carefully compared with a parallel description of the native language of the learner,
c) The teacher who has made a comparison of the foreign language with the native language of the students will know better what the real problems are and can better provide for teaching them. Therefore, we can say that the origins of Contrastive Analysis are pedagogic.

Contrastive Analysis has both a psychological view and a linguistic view. The psychological view is based on the behaviorist learning theory. Ellis (1986) notes that differences between the first and second language create learning difficulty which results in errors. Consequently, errors, according to the behaviorist theory, are considered undesirable because they were evidence of non-learning rather than wrong learning.

2. THE RATIONALE FOR CONTRASTIVE ANALYSIS

Sridhar (1980) states that the rationale for undertaking contrastive studies are basically based on the following:

(a) the practical experience of foreign language teachers;
(b) studies of language contact in bilingual situations; and
(c) theory of learning.

He claims that a substantial number of errors made by
foreign language learners can be traced to their mother tongue. On the other hand, Weinreich (1953) defines the phenomenon of interference as "those instances of deviation from the norms of either language which occur in the speech of bilinguals as a result of their familiarity with more than one language".

The third source that supports the CA hypothesis is learning theory, particularly, the theory of transfer. If we examine the strong and weak versions of CA hypothesis we can have a better opinion of what this means. According to James (1986), both the strong and the weak versions are based on the assumption of native language interference, however, they differ in their treatment of errors.

i) The Strong Version of the CA Hypothesis

The strong version claims that all target language errors can be predicted by identifying the differences between the target language and the learner's first language. Lee (1968) clearly states the strong version based on several assumptions. According to him:

1) the prime cause of difficulty and error in foreign language learning is interference coming from the learner's native language;
2) the difficulties are chiefly due to the differences between the two languages;
3) the greater these differences are, the more acute the learning difficulties will be;
4) the results of a comparison between the two
languages are necessary to predict the
difficulties and errors which will occur in
learning the foreign language;
5) what there is to teach can best be found by
comparing the two languages and then
subtracting what is common to them.

However, as Ellis (1985) notes, the strong version of the
hypothesis has few supporters today. He argues that the mother
tongue is not the sole and probably not even the prime cause of
grammatical errors.

ii) The Weak Version of the CA Hypothesis

The weak version of the CA hypothesis claims only to be
diagnostic. According to Ellis (1985), a contrastive analysis
can be used to identify which errors are the result of
interference. Thus, as Ellis claims, CA needs to work hand in
hand with Error Analysis.

An important ingredient of the teacher's role as a monitor
and an assessor of the learner's performance is to know why
certain errors are committed (James, 1986). It is on the basis
of such diagnostic knowledge that the teacher organizes feedback
to the learner and prescribes remedial work.

Wardhaugh (1970) says that the CA hypothesis is only tenable
in its weak version since it has a diagnostic function, and not
tenable as a predictor of error.
3. CONTRIBUTIONS OF CA TO LANGUAGE TEACHING

Applied contrastive studies gained importance in the 1940s with the recognition of CA as part of foreign language teaching methodology. However, CA is one of the major topics of controversy in linguistics. It has been much discussed and no doubt will continue to be discussed. Contributions and criticisms are only limited to a few well-known names in this brief section. Di Pietro (1971), for example, criticismising the structuralistic basis of CA, claims to renew it on the basis of transformational grammar. He suggests a CA preoccupied with the levels between deep and surface structure. His pedagogical conclusion can be summarized as rule-oriented teaching which involves the analysis of sentences in the target language according to explicit grammar rules.

James (1986) examines the effect of alternative models (structuralist, transformational-generative, case grammar) on CA. Buren (1978) suggests a semantically based CA. Some major points in the evaluation of CA are the following:

1) Native language interference is by no means the only source of error in language learning, yet practical evidence shows that the pull of the mother tongue is an evident and an important phenomenon.

2) Hierarchies of difficulty which are provided by the strong version are useful to a certain extent and will give insight into the nature of
linguistic interference and language learning.

3) Findings of CA are not for immediate classroom consumption; they are mainly for the teachers and the textbook writers. CA, for example, may help the teachers systematize and explain their pedagogical experience, thus enabling them to use it to a better advantage.

4) CA and Error Analysis need not be considered the two propositions of an alternative choice, rather, as viewed by some linguists and language experts, they complement each other.

4. OVERVIEW OF ERROR ANALYSIS

Some major claims that have been made in regard to CA have been discussed so far. This section will cover the principles and methodology of Error Analysis. Sridhar (1980) describes the goals and methodology of traditional error analysis and points to a newer interpretation of "error" stemming from interlanguage studies: the learner's deviations from target language norms should not be regarded as undesirable errors or mistakes; they are inevitable and necessary part of language learning. The goals of traditional Error Analysis were pragmatic: errors provided information to design pedagogical materials and strategies. Ellis (1985) points out that the prevention of errors, in accordance with behaviorist learning theory, was more important than the identification of errors. Therefore, it caused the decline of Error Analysis. In the late 1960s, the
study of learners’ errors assumed a new significance. The fields of Error Analysis and interlanguage studies which focus on the psycholinguistic processes of second language acquisition and learner-language systems came into prominence. The data gathered from learners' sentences and utterances in the target language are examined to find out specific language-learning strategies and processes (Richards, 1985).

A number of terms have been used to describe the successive linguistic systems that learners construct on their way to the mastery of a target language. Corder (1981) uses the term idiosyncratic dialect to connote the idea that the learner’s language is unique to the particular individual. Selinker (1978) refers to the same phenomenon as interlanguage stressing the separateness of a second language learner’s system. Nemser (1978) coins the term approximative system to emphasize the successive approximation to the target language. While each of these terms points out a particular aspect, they share the concept that the language learners are forming their own self-contained linguistic system. In this respect, learners errors provide evidence of the system of the language they are using. Corder (1981) says they are significant in three different ways:

1) First of all, if a language teacher can regularly analyze the learners' errors, one may find out how far the learner has progressed towards the goal and which part of the target language learners have difficulty with learning and using accurately.
Therefore, the teacher can understand which language item should be emphasized during the teaching/learning process.

2) It helps the researchers. By carefully analyzing the errors, the researcher can determine how the target language is acquired (or learned) and the strategies or procedures the learner follows.

3) It helps the learners see how they are building a second language rule system. As Dulay and Burt (1982) claim "people cannot learn language (both L1 and L2) without first systematically committing goofs."

5. ERROR VS. MISTAKE

Corder (1981) introduces an important distinction between errors and mistakes. Mistakes are deviations due to performance factors such as memory lapses, physical states such as tiredness and psychological conditions such as strong emotion. He defends that mistakes are random and easily corrected by the learners when their attention is drawn to them. Errors, on the other hand, are systematic, consistent deviances which reveal the learners' "transitional competence," that is, their underlying knowledge of the language at a given stage of learning. Sridhar (1980) points to a newer interpretation of "error" in the light of interlanguage studies. He argues that the learner's deviations from target language norms should not be regarded as
undesirable errors or mistakes; they are inevitable and a necessary part of the learning process.

According to Corder (1981) errors are more serious and more in need of correction than mistakes. On the other hand, Brown (1987) finds it dangerous to pay too much attention to learners' errors. This is because we, as language teachers, can lose sight of the value of positive reinforcement of clear, free communication (either orally or written) if we become preoccupied with errors.

6. THE METHODOLOGY OF ERROR ANALYSIS

According to Corder (1981) Error Analysis should be conducted in three stages:

Stage 1. Diagnosis—recognition of idiosyncracy

To start with, Corder suggests an analysis of all the sentences of the learner. Obvious deviations in the use of the target language can be easily identified as exemplified below:

* He like orange squash.

In addition to these overt errors, the data for Error Analysis must cover the covertly erroneous sentences; that is, sentences that are superficially well-formed. Here is an example of this sort of error:

* He goes to school.

Used in a context where just or this morning is implied, is unacceptable, even though it contains no formal grammatical deviation on the surface.
Stage 2. Description—Accounting for the learner's idiosyncratic dialect

A description of the diagnosed errors is attempted at this stage. In the simplest form this stage involves answering questions such as: What does the error consist of? Is it an error of spelling or grammatical usage? Or is it an error of wrong choice in terms of meaning, style, and so on?

In describing the learners' errors, Corder emphasizes the importance of a correct interpretation of their sentences. This is done by reconstructing the correct sentence of the target language and by matching, the erroneous sentence with its equivalent in the learner's native language. McKeating (1981) argues that a linguistic classification of the errors can also be done at this stage. This involves categorizing errors as:

- **Omission:** * Stromboli is small volcanic island.
- **Addition:** * She finished to the school.
- **Substitution:** * He was angry on me.

Stage 3. Explanation

At this stage, one attempts to account for how and why the learner's idiosyncratic dialect is of the nature it is. This process involves identifying the sources of errors.

Various suggestions have been made for the explanation of the learner's errors. Richards (1985), for example, groups errors into three classes: interference errors, intralingual and developmental errors. Errors which are caused by native language habits are commonly referred to as **interlingual** errors. Another explanation lies in viewing errors as signs of incorrect
hypotheses formed during the process of language learning. For this sort of errors the term intralingual is used. The following explains the different sources of errors.

7. SOURCES OF ERRORS

I. INTERLINGUAL ERRORS

The beginning stages of learning a second language are characterized by a good deal of interlingual transfer (from the native language). In these early stages, before the system of the second language is familiar, the native language is the only linguistic system in previous experience upon which the learner can draw. The errors which are attributable to mother tongue interference are the interlingual errors. While it is not always clear that an error is the result of transfer from the native language, many such errors are detectable in learner speech. Fluent knowledge of a learner's native language, of course, aids the teacher in detecting and analyzing such errors; however, even familiarity with the language can be of help in pinpointing this common source (Brown, 1987). The interlingual errors are those caused by the influence of the learner's mother tongue on his production of the target language in presumably those areas where the languages clearly differ (Schachter, 1977).

II. INTRALINGUAL AND DEVELOPMENTAL ERRORS

Intralingual errors "reflect the general characteristics of rule learning such as faulty generalization, incomplete
application of rules and failure to learn conditions under which rules apply" (Richards, 1985). Richards points out that "errors of this nature are frequent, regardless of the learner's language background. Rather than reflecting the learner's inability to separate two languages, intralingual and developmental errors reflect the learner's competence at a particular stage, and illustrate some of the general characteristics of language acquisition.

Developmental errors, according to Richards, illustrate learners attempting to build up hypotheses about the English language from their limited experience in the classroom or textbook. On the other hand, Dulay and Burt (1982) put intralingual and developmental errors into the same category. They claim that developmental errors are errors similar to those made by children learning the target language as their first language. "The omission of the article and the past tense marker may be classified as developmental because those are also found in the speech of children learning English as their first language" (Dulay and Burt, 1982).

In a significant study, Dulay and Burt (1974) present evidence suggesting a high degree of agreement between the order in which ESL learners acquired morphemes and the order observed in native language learners. Figure 1 displays the comparison of the order of acquired morphemes by ESL learners and native language learners. Richards (1985) presents four main subcategories in terms of the causes of intralingual and developmental errors. These four categories are overgeneralization, ignorance of rule restrictions, incomplete
application of rules, and false concepts hypothesized. The following section explains these four categories.

**Figure 1: Order of acquired morphemes by ESL and NL learners**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>First language learners</th>
<th>Second language learners</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. plural (-s)</td>
<td>1. plural (-s)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. progressive (-ing)</td>
<td>2. progressive (-ing)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. past irregular</td>
<td>3. contractible copula</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. articles (a, the)</td>
<td>4. contractible auxiliary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. contractible copula</td>
<td>5. articles (a, the)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. possessive</td>
<td>6. past irregular</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. third person singular (-s)</td>
<td>7. third person sing. (-s)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. contractible auxiliary</td>
<td>8. possessive (’s)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**a) Overgeneralization**

In accordance with Jakobovit (1970) overgeneralization is the use of previously available strategies in new situations in second language learning. Jakobovit says "In second language learning.....some of these strategies will prove helpful in organizing the facts about the second language learning, but others, perhaps due to superficial similarities, will be misleading and inapplicable". Overgeneralization generally involves the creation of one deviant structure in place of two regular structures. It may be the result of the learners reducing their linguistic burden.

"Redundancy reduction," termed by H. V. George (1972), is a strategy of overgeneralization which results in simplification.
Below are some examples of overgeneralization errors produced by the subjects of this study:

* She don't go to school with the bus.
* She hate drinking milk at breakfast.

b) Ignorance of Rule Restrictions

In this case which is very closely related to the generalization of deviant structures, the problem results from the restrictions of existing structures. This type of error may be accounted for in terms of analogy.

Analogy seems to be a major factor in the misuse of prepositions and failure to observe restrictions in article usage. The learners rationalize a deviant usage from their previous experience of English (Richards, 1985). Below is an example of this sort of error:

* I felt so upset that I didn't go to there.

c) Incomplete Application of Rules

Errors under this category result from the inapplication of all the steps of a rule to produce a correct sentence. According to Norrish (1983) there are two possible causes of this kind of error. One is the use of questions in the classroom, where the learner is encouraged to repeat the question or part of it in the answer. The other possible cause is the fact that the learner can communicate adequately using deviant forms. Here is an example:

* She doesn't wants another tea.
d) False Concepts Hypothesized

In addition to the wide range of intralingual errors which have to do with faulty rule learning at various levels, there is a class of developmental errors. Errors of this sort derive from faulty comprehension of distinctions in the target language (Richards, 1973). In the following examples the form of be is often interpreted as a marker of the simple present tense:

* He isn't work in a department store.
* We are put some tea in the kettle.

An examination of learners' performance, however, reveals that most developmental errors are intralingual (Dulay and Burt, 1982). They also say that these categories overlap and are not clear cut. Therefore, any researcher who attempts to use an error taxonomy to posit sources of errors must make a number of difficult and ultimately arbitrary decisions to attribute a singular source to an error.

8. AIMS AND USES OF ERROR ANALYSIS

An error analysis can give us a picture of the type of difficulty our learners are experiencing. For the class teacher an error analysis can give useful information about a new class and indicate problems common to all the students and common to particular groups (Norrish, 1983).

An error analysis may indicate learning items which will require special attention. This is also a major aim of CA. An error analysis may also suggest modifications in teaching techniques or order of presentation, if one has reasons for
suspecting that some of the learners' problems may have been caused or added to by the way in which a particular item was presented (McKeating, 1981).

Norrish (1983) suggests that the teacher can build up a profile of each individual's problems and see how their grasp of the target language is improving if two or three surveys are carried out at intervals of time. According to Norrish, teachers can evaluate more objectively how their teaching is helping the students by using error analysis as a monitoring device.

To conclude, interference from the mother tongue is a major source of difficulty in foreign language learning, and CA has proved valuable in determining the areas of mother tongue interference. However, as Richards (1985) also states, many errors are the result of learners' employing strategies during their mastery of a second language, and of the mutual interference of items within the target language. These cannot be accounted for by CA. If learners are actively constructing a system for the second language, language teachers would not expect all their incorrect notions about it to be a simple result of transferring rules from their mother tongue.

An analysis of the major types of intralingual and developmental errors; overgeneralization, ignorance of rule restrictions, incomplete application of rules, and the building of false concepts, may lead the language teachers and material developers to examine the teaching materials for evidence of the language learning assumptions that underlie them.
III

DATA PRESENTATION

This section covers the rationale behind the classification and the analysis of errors according to their sources. The methodology applied in this research study has already been explained in the first section.

1. IDENTIFICATION AND CLASSIFICATION OF ERRORS

The compositions of the selected subjects for this study were analyzed according to both language components and the particular linguistic constituents which were affected by errors.

The total number of 148 errors out of 75 compositions were first identified in terms of morphology and syntax. Then, these errors were categorized as an aid in presenting the data into linguistic error categories. These categories are the following:

a) morphology
b) articles
c) syntax
d) prepositions (Burt and Kiparsky, 1978)

In some categories the subclassification was based on the surface strategy that learners apply, such as addition, omission and misuse.

Morphological Errors:

The following items are the errors which were taken into account as morphological errors:

1) Incorrect third person singular verb
--- failure to attach -s
--- unnecessary attachment of -s

2) Incorrect simple past tense
--- regularization by adding -ed

Errors in the use of Articles: In this category the errors made in the usage of articles such as unnecessary addition and omission of an article were taken into account.

Errors in Syntax: This category includes the following:

- omission of "be"
- errors in negation; errors in negation with auxiliaries and multiple negation.

Errors in the use of Prepositions: Unnecessary addition, misuse or omission of a preposition in a sentence were considered as preposition errors.

2. ANALYSIS OF THE ERRORS

Each error type was analyzed in terms of number and percentages of interlingual and intralingual causes. As Table 1 displays, the number of errors in morphology was 35 (23.6 percent), the number of errors in articles was 14 (9.5 percent, in syntax 36 (24.3 percent) and in prepositions 63 (42.5 percent).

The largest number of errors was observed in prepositions; the next largest category was in syntax and then in morphology. The smallest number of errors was made in articles; yet, Turkish has no definite article.
3. ANALYZING ERRORS ACCORDING TO THEIR SOURCES

Further analysis of the errors was done in terms of the sources of errors. All the examples given in this section come from the data of this study. The errors in each category were divided into interlingual or intralingual error types. As table 2 shows, none of the errors analyzed in this study is interlingual in morphology and in articles. The number of interlingual errors in prepositions is almost equal with intralingual errors. Out of 36 syntactical errors, only four were identified as interlingual.

Table 1. Number and percentages of different error types

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>MORPH.</th>
<th>ART.</th>
<th>SYN.</th>
<th>PREP.</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>148</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent</td>
<td>23.6</td>
<td>9.5</td>
<td>24.3</td>
<td>42.5</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2. Number of interlingual and intralingual errors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>MORPH.</th>
<th>SYN.</th>
<th>ART.</th>
<th>PREP.</th>
<th>PERCENTAGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>INTRALINGUAL</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>77.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INTERLINGUAL</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>22.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
There are errors in third person singular verbs. It is sometimes the failure to attach -s as in:

* It bring them income.

In an analysis of the writing of Czech students, Duskova (1989) remarks "since (in English) all grammatical persons take the same zero verbal ending except for the third person singular in the simple present tense may be accounted for by the heavy pressure of all the other endingless forms." The problem is also the same for Turkish learners. However, there is also unnecessary attachment of -s in the use of simple present tense (see Figure 2).

Another problematic area in morphology is the usage of simple past tense incorrectly. Most of the errors in this category are often originated from the regularization by adding -ed. Here are some examples:

* She finded the job...
* The book which I losted...
* I hanged up the picture.

On the other hand, Turkish learners tend to use the past form of "be" together with the present verb.

After morphology, syntax comes second in the area that has the least effect of the mother tongue. Out of 36 errors, only four stemmed from mother tongue interference. Within syntax, one of the interference errors which comes from the mother tongue has been observed in negation. The following sentences display examples of this kind of error.

* Nobody don't like examination.
There aren't no wild trees...

There is a multiple negation as in the Turkish equivalent of these sentences. Another problem area in syntax is the use of be. There is no independent verb be in Turkish. The use of the simple copula often goes unexpressed as in the following example:

* The test two hours long.

Figure 2: Errors in the use of prepositions

<p>| | | | | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. with instead of *</td>
<td>She married with him.... Susan met with Fred in 1972.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>She doesn't work with the store.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. to instead of *</td>
<td>They all arrived to home... didn't want to go to there. We went to homes. She finished to the school. She don't want to another baby. beside to this by...</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I don't understand she looked at me.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. for instead of since</td>
<td>have lived that since ten years. she not see her mother since a long time.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>since instead of for</td>
<td>they have been married for 1977. have waited them for the afternoon.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. of instead of *</td>
<td>...finished of the college.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. at instead of in</td>
<td>...start university at 1989. found a job at a market.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>...went to school at New Orleans.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. in instead of at</td>
<td>...wait me to come in home.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>...in the bottom of the picture.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The largest number of errors was identified in prepositions and some particular prepositional errors stemmed from mother tongue interference. This is not surprising since there is often one case marker in Turkish which can be used in various instances, as in figure 3, below:

**Figure 3: Case markers in Turkish and English**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Turkish</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>-de</td>
<td>in</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-den</td>
<td>on</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-(y)le</td>
<td>at</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>den beri</td>
<td>from</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>than</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>by</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>with</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>since</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>for</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The following errors observed in this category were interlingual errors. These are *at/in/on; than/from; with/by; to/for/at*. One of the prepositions which causes the most confusion among Turkish learners is *from*. The Turkish equivalent of this preposition is the case marker *-den* and Turkish learners tend to use *from* whenever they need this case marker in their translated sentences. Here are some examples:

* We left from the party very late.
* ...who is old from me.

The last sentence which is a direct translation from Turkish shows us the confusion of *than* and *from*.

The learners also tend to add an unnecessary *to* to the
verb as in the following example:

* We went to homes.
* ...didn’t want to go to there.
* It is nice to go to swimming.

This type of an error again comes from the "pull" of the mother tongue since the preposition to is expressed by a noun case marker in Turkish.

However, there is no influence of the mother tongue in the following examples. They are all intralingual as in the example below:

* She finished to the school.
* She don’t want to another baby.

Omission of to illustrates another example for intralingual errors as shown below:

* ...because he didn’t listen it.
* I came back the dorm.

The following are the errors made in the use of on which were simply categorized as addition, omission and misuse in intralingual errors:

* We got on the car...
* I’m hoping to go holiday in Izmir.
* There is an active volcano in the island.
* ...I was born on this date.

Several intralingual errors were observed in the usage of different prepositions. Here are some examples:

* I am living near my aunt in Ankara.
* The hairdresser cut my hair very short style.
...have lived there since ten years.

* She will start university at 1989.

* Smoking is not different a gun due to its killing power of innocent people.

As Table 2 illustrates, mother tongue interference is not a cause for article errors. Therefore, 14 errors were considered as intralingual errors.

Turkish has an indefinite article which is embedded between adjective and noun. However, it is not used for professions or in negative existentials:

* He was driver in California.
* But I didn't have ticket for the film.

The choice between a/an and some is another problematic area for Turkish learners, since the line between countable and uncountable is less sharply drawn than in English. Here are some examples of errors in the use of countable and uncountable nouns:

* Some horseman is riding towards the village.
* Mary want to make a tea.
* a large rocks and hills.
* ...grows a delicious oranges and fruits.

Turkish has no definite article, but direct objects are different in form according to whether or not they are definite in meaning. This encourages Turkish learners to put the with all definite direct objects, leading to errors such as:

* She met the Fred in 1977.
* In the Stromboli.
* All the my friends enjoyed it.
4. CONCLUSION

As mentioned in the first section, the aim of this study has been to explore the origins of errors that Turkish learners make during their mastery of English and the sort of difficulties they are confronted with. By conducting an error analysis on a set of student compositions the problematic areas were examined. The study has also attempted to defend CA and EA, as pedagogical tools, are available for language teachers in the diagnosis and explanation of language learning difficulties. The errors made by the students in their written samples were accounted for as "interlingual" and "intralingual" in their source. It can be concluded that the proportion of intralingual errors is much more higher than that of "interlingual" errors. This finding seems to support the other research findings reported by Duskova and Grauberg. In his analysis of German foreign language learners' errors, Grauberg (1971) found that mother tongue interference accounted for only 25% of the lexical errors, 10% of the syntactic errors and none of the morphological errors. In the present study, too, none of the morphological and article errors were interlingual. Duskova (1969) found the proportion of interlingual errors to be 24.9%.

To conclude, except for articles the students have difficulty with controlling the areas of prepositions, syntax, and morphology. Therefore, these areas require maximum attention in remedial drills and error correction by the teacher.
The aim of this section is to discuss one of the most important practical problems in foreign language pedagogy, the matter of when and how to correct learners' errors in the classroom.

Norrish (1983) says that in the written medium, information has to be transmitted without any aid from sources other than the language itself. Therefore, more attention needs to be paid to the written language, particularly to the grammatical and lexical systems rather than speech. He suggests that when considering correction of errors at the stage of "free" writing, it is useful and stimulating to design an activity in which the students check their work in groups or pairs. This sort of exercise saves the teacher's time and encourages communication among the students. He also notes that correction work, if possible, should be conducted in English.

In his article on error correction, Hendrickson (1980) advises teachers to try to discern the difference between what Burt and Dulay (1982) call "global" and "local" errors that learners make. Global errors hinder communication; they prevent the receiver from comprehending some aspect of the message. On the other hand, local errors do not prevent a message from being heard since they usually affect only one single element of the sentence. In other words, the context provides keys to meaning.

Hendrickson (1980) presents five techniques for correcting
written errors:

1. The teacher gives sufficient clues to enable self-correction to be made;
2. The teacher corrects the script;
3. The teacher deals with errors through marginal comments and footnotes;
4. The teacher explains orally to individual students;
5. The teacher uses the error as an illustration for a class explanation.

Norrish (1983) suggests that errors that cause irritation but do not block comprehension should receive a lower priority of treatment than those which prevent comprehension. In any piece of written work the errors which are at the top of a list of teacher's priorities would be global rather than local.

Figure 4 shows a method developed by Norrish for working out an order of priority in dealing with errors. The suggested diagram helps the teacher decide whether an error is a major one or not and what priority to give it in planning remedial treatment.

Broughton and Brumfit (1988) suggest that students should be responsible in the first instance for their own mistakes. The written work, they say, must always be read through and carefully checked before submission. Later on, the students can say what they feel they have written wrong. This is a useful technique for developing an awareness of one's own errors. Proof-reading and self-correction can be encouraged by setting aside specific class time for it, and by not correcting errors which students
Baddock (1988) presents an error-spotting exercise. It is a detective activity in which students look at sentences for grammar mistakes which they know to exist. It begins as an individual activity, then moves on to pair work, and will invite the whole class for discussion at the end.

Figure 4: Order of priority in dealing with errors

```
Is the form acceptable?

   YES (=no error)
   MARGINAL (=grammatical but not idiomatic)
   NO

Does the error block comprehension?

   NO
   YES

Does it result in writer/listener irritation?

   NO
   YES

No treatment immediately necessary

Priority 3

Lower grade error

Priority 2

Lower priority of treatment

Priority 1

Higher grade error
```

Norrish (1983) suggests another activity which encourages the students to check their work in groups or pairs. He claims
that this saves the teacher's time and also encourages communication among students. In this activity, students should be seated in such a way that it is easy for them to converse with one another while they look at each others' papers. If possible, correction work should be conducted in English. A group of four is convenient and allows quite a large number of communication possibilities (see Figure 5).

Frantzen and Rissel (1987) suggest another error-spotting exercise which can be carried out in three phases:

Phase I. The error is underlined and a symbol is placed in the margin showing what type of error it is (e.g., $Sp$ for spelling, $T$ for tense and so on).

Phase II. The error is underlined but an indication of the error type is not given.

Phase III. The error is not underlined, but crosses are placed in the margin indicating the number of errors on a particular line.

Figure 5: Communication in groups of four

To conclude, errors are a natural and important part of the language learning process. However, accuracy is important as much as fluency; therefore, language teachers should encourage their students to be aware of the errors they produced.
REFERENCES


SERAN ŞİMŞEK

RESUME

I was born in Adana in 1963. After studying for my primary and secondary education in Büyük Çekmece in Istanbul, I attended Gazi University, the department of Foreign Languages. I graduated from university in 1985 and worked as a teacher of English at a private language center in Adana for six months. In 1986, I began to work as an instructor at Çukurova University, Faculty of Engineering and Architecture.