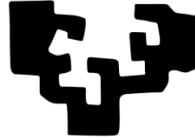


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**DEPARTAMENTO DE FILOLOGÍA INGLESA Y ALEMANA, TRADUCCIÓN
E INTERPRETACIÓN**

**THE WRITTEN PRODUCTION OF ECUADORIAN EFL
HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS: GRAMMATICAL
TRANSFER ERRORS AND TEACHERS' AND
LEARNERS' PERCEPTION OF FEEDBACK**

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**The Written Production of Ecuadorian EFL High School Students: Grammatical
Transfer Errors and Teachers' and Learners' Perception of Feedback.**

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Introduction

Today, English is an important language that facilitates communication in many parts of the world; it is considered a lingua franca that is spoken, taught and learned across the globe. Its dissemination has had a significant impact on other languages. Factors such as a colonial history, economics, information exchange, travel, and popular culture have ensured the extensive use of English worldwide (Harmer, 2007).

According to Doughty and Long (2003), the reasons for learning English as a second or foreign language include international travel, marriage, satisfying a school or university foreign language requirement, succeeding in a new environment, becoming members of a new culture, and searching for work. They also claim that globalization and cultural homogenization are accompanied by the use of international languages, especially English.

Globalization has also had an effect on Latin-American countries where English is learned as a foreign language. In this respect, when the process of learning English occurs in a setting where the language is officially used, we use the term English as a Second Language (ESL). In the case of the Latin-American context, where the present study has been conducted, we use the term English as a Foreign Language (EFL) since non-native speakers learn the language in a setting where it is not the official one. However, the term “second” language is not exactly opposed to the term “foreign” language; both terms refer to how people learn a second language - a language subsequent to the first one acquired as a young learner -, and the specific problems that learners experience in this process (Saville-Troike, 2006).

It is acceptable to talk about Second Language Acquisition (SLA) in general when people learn another language in a country or community where this language is officially used, or when they study it only in the context of a classroom (Ellis, 1997). Basically,

learning a second language means learning another language or languages apart from the mother tongue.

An important goal when learning a second language is to acquire appropriate communicative skills. In other words, learners must reach an acceptable degree of communicative competence (Kasper, 1997), which requires exposure to real-life situations and the integration of four fundamental skills: reading, writing, listening and speaking (Akram & Malik, 2010).

From the four aforementioned skills, writing has become the focus of a growing interest in SLA research. This relevance is reflected in studies on writing-to-learn approaches by Manchón (2011), Byrnes and Manchón (2014), and Storch (2016), who have emphasized the essential role that writing plays in the learning of a second language from a task-based and collaborative perspective.

One way to reinforce writing skills is the improvement of grammatical structures (Ismail, 2011), so the role of grammar is a feature that must be highlighted. Grammar for writing must be approached by establishing clear distinctions between concepts and types of grammar (Watson, 2015). Furthermore, during the development of writing skills in a foreign language, the role of the first language (L1) cannot be ignored (Lado, 1957), thus, L1 transfer may occur at different levels (pronunciation, grammar, lexicon, spelling) and its influence can be positive or negative. In this respect, many researchers in the field of SLA have been interested in understanding the extent to which errors are the result of negative transfer from the L1 (Derrick, Paquot & Plonsky, 2018).

The present study is focused on the writing skills of Ecuadorian high-school students, particularly grammatical errors caused by negative language transfer in EFL writing. Although there have been various studies conducted on language transfer errors in relation to EFL writing in the Spanish and Latin-American context, they are mostly

focused on the taxonomy and sources of these errors (Alonso, 1997; Cabrera et al., 2014; López, 2011), but hardly ever consider the impact of EFL learners' proficiency and types of written task (genre) on language transfer errors in writing.

In this regard, research on SLA in other contexts has examined the impact of learners' second language (L2) proficiency in language transfer in EFL writing. The results have shown that the higher the learner's proficiency level, the less impact regarding language transfer (e.g., Pennington & So, 1993; Zheng & Park, 2013). However, these studies were not conducted in contexts where Spanish was the L1, but rather other L1s such as English, Chinese, and Korean. The present study attempts to fill in this gap by comparing the written work of Ecuadorian EFL learners from the first, second and third year of senior high school, which are classified into three levels of English proficiency (A1, A2 and B1 of the European Common Framework of Reference for Languages) (Council of Europe, 2011), in order to determine whether grammatical transfer errors from their L1 (Spanish) vary depending on their proficiency level in their L2 (English).

Likewise, research on L2 writing has also considered how different types of written tasks can affect transfer in ESL (e.g., Chan, 2010; Kubota, 1998) and EFL (Roca de Larios, Murphy & Manchón, 1999; Wang & Wen, 2002) settings, but this research is not focused on grammatical transfer errors in an under-researched context such as the Latin-American one. Therefore, the present study also attempts to fill this gap by determining the potential impact of the type of written task as a possible influence on grammatical transfer errors in the EFL written output of Ecuadorian EFL learners. Furthermore, in almost all of the aforementioned studies (Kubota, 1998; Roca de Larios, Murphy & Manchón, 1999; Pennington & So, 1993; Wang & Wen, 2002; Zheng & Park,

2013) the participants are adult L2 learners, while the present study focuses on adolescent EFL learners.

Although it is crucial for teachers to know the different types of errors that learners make when writing, it is also important to consider how teachers address those errors. For this reason, feedback is a pivotal issue when teaching ESL/EFL writing and error correction, and it is regarded by both students and teachers as a critical part of writing instruction (Ferris & Hedgcock, 2014).

Research on feedback in ESL/EFL has been extensive, demonstrating that the actual usefulness of feedback is a widely debated issue (Wigglesworth & Storch, 2012). Despite this debate, feedback is a major challenge that English teachers face when teaching writing skills. Thus, Hyland and Hyland (2006) claim that feedback has been considered essential for L2 writing skills and that it is highly regarded in L2 writing programs worldwide. In this respect, EFL teachers and students emphasize error correction, so feedback on language forms should be an important aspect to cover in the classroom (Ortega, 2009). Such feedback, in turn, can be fundamental when correcting interference errors. In view of this, the present study also investigates the perception that students and teachers have about feedback on EFL writing in the context of their educational institution.

The present study has used a descriptive approach of text analysis and a questionnaire + interview design. Its purpose is to contribute to research on EFL writing by focusing on the effect of L2 proficiency and the type of written task on grammatical transfer errors made by Ecuadorian high-school students and by inquiring into teachers' and students' perceptions of feedback in an EFL context.

Our study has been conducted in Ecuador, a country located in South America, so these issues are researched in the context of public Ecuadorian secondary education, in

which EFL teaching has been a problematic issue because many students do not achieve the desired level required by the Ministry of Education (Ministerio de Educación del Ecuador, 2016a). For this reason, the information in the present study will be useful to assess the situation of EFL writing in Ecuadorian secondary education institutions and will allow us to suggest possible improvements.

Bearing in mind the purpose of this dissertation, the research questions that we have considered are the following:

RQ1. Which grammatical transfer errors are commonly influenced by Spanish in the written production of Ecuadorian EFL senior high school learners and how prevalent are these errors in comparison to lexical transfer errors?

RQ2. Will proficiency level in English have an impact on the amount and type of grammatical transfer errors found across three levels (A1, A2, and B1)?

RQ3. Will the type of writing tasks (narrative vs. argumentative) have an impact on the amount and type of grammatical transfer errors found?

RQ4. What is the perception of students and teachers regarding the feedback provided on EFL writing?

The data necessary to answer the first three research questions came from the written production of 180 Ecuadorian EFL senior high school students. The information used to address the fourth research question is based on the responses to written interviews and questionnaires answered by 180 Ecuadorian EFL senior high school students and their 10 EFL teachers.

The data obtained from the written work were analyzed by using contrastive analysis (CA) procedures, which are still considered an appropriate tool to analyze learner language in cases of language transfer (e.g., Fatemi & Ziaei, 2012; Gómez-Castejón, 2012; Laufer & Girsai, 2008; Salehuddin, Hua, & Maros, 2006; Zawahreh, 2013). In order to

provide support for the evidence of L1 transfer, we have devoted one chapter (chapter 5) to the different types of grammatical errors made by Spanish-speaking EFL learners when writing in English. Our choice of the investigated grammatical features to be examined has been primarily data-driven, but some categories had been considered in previous work on negative language transfer (e.g., Alonso, 1997; Bhela, 1999; Cabrera et al., 2014; López, 2011).

The information from questionnaires and written interviews was analyzed quantitatively and qualitatively to answer our fourth research question.

The findings of this study reveal several common types of grammatical language transfer errors caused by the L1 interference, with a strong presence of addition of articles, omission of subject pronouns, and misuse of prepositions. L2 proficiency level and types of task are shown to have an impact on grammatical transfer errors.

As to perceptions on feedback, students' and teachers' opinions reveal that feedback on EFL writing seems to be an activity that is carried out by teachers in the three groups of EFL learners with apparently varied frequencies. The predominant methods to provide feedback involve direct feedback on all types of errors, including positive comments and criticism. There are also occasions in which peer feedback and self-correction are implemented. Finally, although students and teachers consider feedback as essential and necessary, teachers admit that they need more training in this area. They also believe that the excessive number of students in class and the lack of teacher training are detrimental factors in providing proper feedback in EFL writing in the Ecuadorian context.

This dissertation has been organized into eleven chapters. In Part I (Literature Review), chapters 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6 provide the background for the two main aspects of the study: language transfer and feedback on L2 writing.

Chapter 1, **Writing skills in ESL/EFL environments**, highlights the relevance of writing skills in ESL/EFL contexts. Chapter 2, **Language transfer errors**, discusses issues that will show the importance of language transfer errors as a relevant topic in current research. Chapter 3, **Methods of analysis and identification of errors in L2 writing**, presents the most effective methods for the analysis of learners' written production in L2. Chapter 4, **Previous work on language transfer in writing skills**, reviews research in the field of language transfer in writing skills that considers the types of transfer errors made by learners, as well as the influence of the type of writing task and the learners' proficiency level on those errors. Chapter 5, **Common grammatical transfer errors made by L1 Spanish EFL learners**, provides a background for the common types of grammatical transfer errors found in previous research on this topic in order to facilitate the analysis of the data obtained in students' written production. Chapter 6, **Feedback on L2 writing**, is focused on reviewing theory and research conducted on different aspects of the process of feedback in ESL/EFL writing such as error treatment, feedback strategies, teacher feedback on L2 student writing, effectiveness of feedback, and perceptions on feedback.

In part II (The present study), Chapter 7, **The study**, introduces the study itself by presenting all the pertinent information concerning the context of EFL teaching in Ecuador, the rationale for the study, the research questions and hypotheses entertained, the description of the setting and participants, the research instruments and materials, as well as the procedures for data collection, coding, and analysis.

In this second part of the dissertation, due to the extension of the analysis, there are two chapters dedicated to the results. Chapter 8, **Results on grammatical transfer errors in writing by Ecuadorian EFL Learners**, shows the results obtained from the statistical analyses related to the first three research questions. Chapter 9, **Results on**

students' and teachers' perceptions of feedback, presents the results obtained from the statistical analyses that involves the fourth research question. Chapter 10, **Discussion**, discusses the findings in the light of the research questions proposed, the hypotheses entertained, and the prediction of results offered in this dissertation. Finally, Chapter 11, **General conclusions**, draws the final conclusions, considers the educational implications of the findings as well as the limitations of the present study, and suggests lines of further research in the areas covered in the dissertation.

Part I: Literature Review

The aim of this first part is to provide the reader with a review of the main issues that will be of relevance to the research questions and hypotheses discussed in this study. The topics to be covered are related to relevant theory and research conducted on language transfer in EFL/ESL writing, providing an introduction to the aspects tackled in this literature review as well as support for the rationale, method, data analysis, conclusions and recommendations of the present study. The issues reviewed include writing skills in EFL/ESL, language transfer errors, methods used to analyze and identify errors in L2 writing, previous research in the field of language transfer errors, error treatment, and feedback on L2 writing. All of these aspects contribute to support language transfer errors and perceptions on feedback as relevant aspects that continue to be studied and discussed.

For an effective communication in any language, it is necessary to integrate the four skills (reading, writing, listening and speaking), which according to Oommen (2012, p.11) are “the building blocks and effective elements of language teaching and learning processes”. Furthermore, Akram and Malik (2010) state that the purpose of teaching and learning any language is integrating the four skills in order to achieve communicative competence by focusing on real-life situations. Writing is a vital skill for foreign language learners. When learning EFL, writing is a challenging but indispensable skill; it is regarded as a fundamental part of Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL) courses (Harmer, 2007).

The importance of writing skills is also related to the reinforcement of grammatical structures (Ismail, 2011). In this respect, in ESL/EFL writing, the role of grammar is something that must be highlighted. Thus, grammar for writing must be approached by establishing clear distinctions between concepts and types of grammar such as the following: descriptive grammar, prescriptive grammar, grammar taught to

broaden the range of stylistic choices open to writers, and grammar taught to improve accuracy in the use of standard written English (Watson, 2015).

The development of linguistic features such as grammar, vocabulary, and punctuation must be contemplated when teaching writing. Teachers can diagnose the linguistic needs of a writing class through error analysis of student texts, and through eliciting from students what they explicitly know and do not know about certain language forms (Ferris & Hedgcock, 2014).

One of the main sources of errors in the process of L2 acquisition is the negative transfer from the learner's L1, which results from the use of elements from one language while speaking or writing in another language (Richards, 1974). These types of errors are called transfer or "interlingual" errors, and they have a similar structure to a semantically equivalent utterance in the learner's mother tongue (Dulay, Burt & Krashen, 1982). In addition, L1 negative transfer has been considered a major source of syntactic errors in L2 performance, although this is not the only source of errors. In this regard, studies that demonstrate a significant amount of L1 influence, such as those by Duskova (1969) and LoCoco (1975), were carried out in foreign rather than in second language contexts. On the other hand, studies conducted by Dulay and Burt (1974b), and Gillis and Weber (1976) have shown that L1 influence is rare in child L2 acquisition.

The response to the errors found in students' written work, that is, feedback, is another aspect to be considered in teaching ESL/EFL writing and error correction. Both students and teachers feel that teacher feedback about student writing is a critical aspect of writing instruction (Nation, 2009). When providing feedback on students' work, teachers should be concerned with the accuracy of their performance as well as with the content and design of their writing (Bitchener & Ferris, 2012).

The aforementioned aspects about writing, language transfer and feedback will be discussed in the following chapters below since they are related to the main focus of this research.

Chapter 1: Writing Skills in ESL/EFL Environments

This chapter aims to highlight the relevance of writing skills in ESL/EFL environments. The issues discussed include the importance of, and teaching of writing skills in ESL/EFL contexts. Therefore, all these aspects reviewed in this first chapter contribute to support ESL/EFL writing as a relevant aspect of current research.

1.1 Importance of writing skills

Writing is one of the most important technologies in the history of the human race. Although writing takes many forms, it is always a technology of explosive force as well as a cultural artifact that emerges from the human mind rather than from nature. This view leads us to think that writing is a skill that should not be taken for granted; however, some people may consider writing as an ordinary tool for communication, record-keeping and learning (Powell, 2012).

Carroll (1990) regards writing as one of the most important human inventions that allows us to have a record of information, opinions, beliefs, and feelings, amongst other aspects. This skill is useful for communication with present and future generations. Good writing involves not only writing conventions, but also creativity, problem solving, and revision that are reflected in students' written work. For learners, writing might be a difficult attempt to place ideas on paper while they try to improve aspects such as grammar and spelling (Defazio, Jones, Tennant, & Hooket, 2010). It is worth mentioning that writing uses symbols to represent units of language, events, and emotions. This skill is also an influential innovation that increases human control of communication and knowledge (Birch, 2007).

József (2001, p.5) states that “writing is among the most complex human activities because it involves the development of a design idea, the capture of mental representations of knowledge, and of experience with subjects.” Certainly, writing is a

difficult skill even in our mother tongue; furthermore, it is a skill that needs to be taught because people do not learn it naturally. This skill is also a cognitive, social and dynamic process that involves discovery as writers are challenged to think, compose and join ideas (Ismail, 2011).

Writing is also a fundamental, although complex, skill in a foreign language. In this regard, Harmer (2004) refers to the importance of writing skills regarding success in foreign language proficiency tests because these tests often rely on the students' writing proficiency in order to measure their knowledge. Indeed, English writing is a challenging but indispensable skill in EFL.

In the case of the ESL/EFL classroom, writing is seen as an important skill in which language learners need an appropriate time to develop. This is one of the reasons why writing skills are essential when preparing language learners to face the communicative demands of real-life situations. Furthermore, there has been a growing interest in writing skills in SLA research over the last few years. This importance is highlighted in studies related to the writing-to-learn approaches by Byrnes and Manchón (2014) who have worked on task-based writing. We can also mention Storch (2016), who has worked on collaborative writing as a writing-to-learn approach. In this respect, Manchón (2011) states that written production plays a vital role in engaging learners in various learning processes such as practicing, noticing and associated language learning actions.

Given these reasons, teaching ESL/EFL writing skills is a fundamental part in the teaching-learning process of an L2, and it is the skill which we have focused on in the present study.

1.2 Teaching writing skills in ESL/EFL environments

Writing has always been part of the syllabus in English teaching, and it can be used for various purposes that range from filling in a form to tasks that require a higher level of literacy such as writing a letter of application, a story or a complex report (Harmer, 2007). The production of a well-structured written work that fulfills academic requirements is one of the objectives of most ESL/EFL courses. For this reason, a writing program must be designed to meet the learners' expectations and needs (Ismail, 2011).

Regarding the approaches for improving writing skills, Ferris and Hedgcock (2014) mention that there is not a definitive understanding of optimal methods, but there are two disciplinary traditions to draw from: (1) L1 rhetoric and composition studies, and (2) applied linguistics and L2 writing. Additionally, they believe that widely effective writing instruction must consider the context of writing and that L2 writing involves both the construction and transmission of knowledge in a communicative interaction.

Whether it is inside or outside the classroom, there are numerous approaches to the practice of writing skills. The teacher has to decide which one to apply. S/he can choose between focusing on process or product, different written genres, or creative writing. These approaches can be used individually or cooperatively. Sometimes, however, teachers might find it difficult to find the appropriate approach to teach writing (J.D. Williams, 2003).

With respect to the process and product approaches mentioned above, Clark (2011) observes that the trend followed by many educators is the process approach, which is focused on the different stages of writing a good piece (e.g., pre-writing, editing, redrafting, finished version). The product approach, on the other hand, concentrates exclusively on the goal of a task and the end product and reflects an educational

philosophy that mainly focuses on the careful reading and analysis of literature, as well as copying and transforming models provided by textbooks or teachers (Nunan, 1999).

In addition to the product and process approaches, Clark (2011) refers to a post-process framework, which emphasizes that writing is an inherently social and transactional process that encompasses mediational activity involving writer, reader, text, and contexts for writing. Sinor and Huston (2004) maintain that the post-process approach does not ignore the writing steps but rather acknowledges that working through the writing steps is a crucial component while instruction is centered on the social, political, and contextual forces that surround writing. As an example, the field of ethnography can make good use of this post-process approach for teaching students the situatedness of both writing and of the self (Sinor & Huston, 2004).

When the focus of teaching writing is on genre, we must consider first that research has demonstrated that reading and writing are both social and cognitive practices that emerge in parallel. Reading and writing, in L1 and in L2, have been shown to be reciprocal processes that can involve productive transfer across skills and languages (Ferris & Hedgcock, 2014). Hence, in a genre approach, students first study texts related to the genre they are going to write; then, students will write their own text. The genre approach can be used with students of English for Specific Purposes as they are familiar with vocabulary and style, and it is also useful for general English students (Harmer, 2007).

This genre approach can work in L1 writing; this is the case of the results obtained by Olive, Favart, Beauvais, and Beauvais (2009), who investigated the cognitive effort of 5th and 9th graders while writing a text in French (L1). By measuring the correlation of cognitive effort and genre, they showed that cognitive efforts in both genres decreased from Grade 5 to Grade 9. The study confirmed that students with a low level of writing

knowledge used simpler structures and fewer connectives. In other words, students' cognitive writing effort varied depending upon the type of texts written and their L1 knowledge. In this respect, an example of the cognitive and linguistic variation in written genres is found in the study by Yoon and Polio (2017), which reported that adult ESL students with different L1s wrote more words in narrative texts than in argumentative texts because they made less cognitive efforts when writing the former. This study also revealed that argumentative essays are linguistically more challenging for ESL students than narrative essays.

In creative writing programs, teachers propose imaginative tasks so their students feel engaged rather than forced to convey information. These types of tasks usually involve writing about students' own thoughts, experiences, and emotions, which means that students can feel motivated to find the correct words or expressions (Earnshaw, 2007). In this regard, teachers need to spend some time building writing habits in their students. This means making students feel comfortable as writers in the second or foreign language and encouraging their participation in more creative or extended activities (Clark, 2011).

Involving learners in the writing process itself is one of the best ways to help them become better writers (Ismail, 2011). This means that when learners are exposed to situations in which they can write an authentic text and their interests are acknowledged, learners have more opportunities to develop their writing skills. Teachers should then choose writing activities that are appealing to their students, and, if possible, relevant activities. An engaging writing task involves students not only at an intellectual level but also at an emotional level (Harmer, 2004). In this way, students will feel more confident and motivated when learning writing skills.

In ESL/EFL writing, the development of a students' proficiency during a writing course is something that must be considered by teachers. Successful writing requires the effective deployment of a range of linguistic and extralinguistic features such as vocabulary, syntax, punctuation, capitalization, paragraphing and spacing, and other elements of document design (Ferris & Hedgcock, 2014).

A recommendation given by Ferris and Hedgcock (2014) regarding linguistic features (e.g., grammar, vocabulary, style, punctuation) when teaching writing is to design mini-lessons based on common errors made by most or all of the students, especially errors that show a lack of understanding of rules. The linguistic needs of a class can be diagnosed by teachers through error analysis of student texts, and through eliciting from students what they explicitly know and do not know about certain language forms.

Another aspect to be contemplated in teaching writing is the response to and treatment of the errors found in students' texts. When responding to students' work, teachers should be concerned with the linguistic accuracy, the content and design of their writing product or the parts of the writing process (Nation, 2009). In this case, teachers must provide appropriate feedback depending on the situation. As mentioned above, both students and teachers feel that teacher feedback on student writing is a critical part of writing instruction (Ferris & Hedgcock, 2014; Nation, 2009). On the other hand, correcting is a stage in which teachers indicate that something is not right. These errors include issues such as syntax, grammar, collocation, and word choice (Harmer, 2004). Teachers should know that they need to help L2 learners improve the linguistic accuracy of their texts. The question for these teachers is related to the best way to address error treatment (Bitchener & Ferris, 2012).

When it comes to teaching writing, the teacher can play various roles, but, according to Harmer (2007), the most important are the roles of motivator, resource and

feedback provider. This author mentions that being a motivator is one of the primary roles in teaching writing because motivation creates the appropriate conditions for the generation of ideas and involvement of students. When acting as a resource, teachers should provide information, advice, and suggestions during writing tasks. As feedback providers, teachers should carefully respond to their students' written work. This response must be positive and encouraging for students, thus always considering students' needs and types of tasks.

As previously stated, an important aspect of teaching writing is the response to and treatment of errors found in students' texts. One of the main sources of those errors is interference from their L1, also referred to as language transfer or cross-linguistic influence, which stems from the use of elements from one language while speaking or writing in another language (Richards, 1974).

The influence of the L1 is an area of second language research that has received a great deal of attention. Although there has been extensive research in this field, there is still confusion as to what extent the L1 will manifest itself in learners' use or knowledge of a L2 (Jarvis, 2000). We will discuss these concepts in the next chapter.

Chapter 2: Language Transfer Errors

This chapter reviews issues that include notions of language transfer and interlanguage, the difference between errors and mistakes, error taxonomies, and sources of errors. These aspects will show the importance of language transfer errors as a topic that is still studied in current research.

2.1 Language transfer

Language transfer can be considered a term closely related to language interference (which suggests some kind of negative transfer, especially production errors), or cross-linguistic influence (CLI) (Robinson, 2013).

Based on Odlin's (1989) concept of language transfer, the term "language transfer" will be used here to characterize the influence of the L1 on the L2 since "influence" does not establish a positive or negative distinction. Language transfer is a field of interest in L2 acquisition research, and it is also a primary issue in teaching the acquisition of complex language structures to students of a foreign language.

Similarities and differences between the target language and any other language that has been previously learned are the cause of language transfer, which is often divided into positive and negative transfer. Although it is true that some transfer occurs in the L2 acquisition process, the amount and type of transfer may vary depending on several factors, including age, motivation, literacy, social class, and the different correlation of languages (Odlin, 1989).

The idea that L1 causes most of the problems that L2 learners face had its origin in the post-war years after World War II and continued until the 1960s. One of the first claims related to language transfer was made by Fries (1945), who argued that the most efficient teaching materials should be based on a scientific description of the target language thoroughly compared with a parallel description of the learner's mother tongue.

In the 1950s, one of the first authors who identified language transfer as a relevant phenomenon was Lado (1957). He developed the Contrastive Analysis (CA) approach, which is essentially used to compare the linguistic characteristics of two languages, under the premise that similar structures would facilitate acquisition, whereas different structures would slow the learning process. This approach established that positive and negative transfer in L2 learning are based on the structural relationship between the languages being compared. Lado (1957) stated that if the L1 and the L2 were different, the learner's L1 knowledge would negatively interfere with L2 knowledge, and if the L1 and the L2 were similar, the L1 language would facilitate L2 learning (positive influence).

In order to illustrate negative transfer, think of the example of the verb *assist* used by Spanish-speakers to express the meaning *attend*; for instance, the sentence *Every child should assist to school. The negative transfer here is caused by the similarity in the form of the verbs "assist" in English and "asistir" in Spanish, which have a different meaning in both languages (false cognate). The correct expression in English here would be "Every child should attend school."

As for positive transfer, an example can be the French word "doute" and the English word "doubt", which are similar in form and meaning in both languages. Another example of positive transfer between Spanish and English could be the English word 'embarkation', which could be easily learned by a Spanish-speaker who is familiar with the word 'embarcación'.

Weinreich (1968) explored this phenomenon further and established the importance of language transfer, stating that more differences or more mutually exclusive patterns and forms between languages involve more learning problems and higher areas of interference.

Several researchers disputed the CA approach, especially the supporters of Universal Grammar (the distinct part of the mind common to all human beings that enables them to know and acquire languages), an idea which was proposed by Chomsky (1981). In this regard, Dulay and Burt (1974a), who were supporters of some kind of universal order of acquisition regardless of the learners' L1, questioned the influence of the L1 and the importance of negative transfer in L2 acquisition. They proposed an alternative approach to CA known as "Creative Construction Hypothesis", which suggests that L1 and L2 learners make the same types of mistakes when acquiring the L1 and L2, respectively. In fact, the morpheme studies of the 70s argued for a similar order of acquisition, no matter what the L1 of the learner was, that is, the role of the L1 was downplayed.

Other approaches such as Error Analysis and Obligatory Occasion Analysis emerged later and rejected or minimized the importance of the notion of language transfer. However, the rejection of the CA approach does not mean that language transfer is not an important construct, as can be seen in recent volumes (Alonso, 2015; De Angelis & Dewaele, 2011) or research articles (Luk & Shirai, 2009) devoted to the topic.

In the field of psycholinguistics, language transfer is considered as the first stage of the learning process of an L2. In this respect, Selinker (1972) proposed the term interlanguage (a concept that will be elaborated on later in this chapter), which can be defined as a linguistic system that an L2 learner has developed while making a transition to a proficient stage of mastering the language in an L2. Therefore, the term "interlanguage" refers to an intermediate stage between the native and the target language (TL), in which learners tend to reduce the TL to a simpler language (Selinker, 1972).

Kellerman (1977) states that language transfer is understood as the mental process in which the L1 has an effect on interlanguage. He mentions that it is necessary to

acknowledge that other factors different from language transfer can cause errors in the TL. Although language transfer is a term closely related to language interference or cross-linguistic influence (Robinson, 2013), Kellerman (1977) established a subtle difference between the concepts of interference and transfer. He claimed that the former is the influence occurring between L1 and the TL, and that the latter involves processes that lead to the inclusion of elements from one language to another; thus, transfer is a set of processes that precede interference.

The interest of many researchers in the field of SLA has been focused on understanding the extent to which errors are the result of L1 negative transfer (Derrick, Paquot & Plonsky, 2018). In fact, Krashen (2002) asserts that L1 negative transfer has been considered as a major source of syntactic errors in L2 performance; however, this is not the only source of errors since studies have demonstrated that learners from different L1 backgrounds make common errors. He also claims that a number of language transfer studies that have been conducted in EFL contexts show a high amount of L1 negative transfer while studies conducted in ESL environments present a significantly lower amount of these types of errors. Similarly, Jarvis and Pavlenko (2008) state that language transfer is the influence of one language on another in a person's mind. They also present important findings that connect the field of language transfer and L2 acquisition.

In his view of language transfer, Powell (1998) argues that not all similarities help in the learning of the L2 (e.g., false cognates). Additionally, some studies demonstrate that the negative influence of the L1 is much stronger regarding negative transfer errors (Cabrera, et al., 2014; López, 2011).

Research on various aspects of language transfer shows that negative transfer tends to decrease as proficiency increases. With respect to this relation between language transfer and proficiency, Kubota (1998) indicates that syntactical and lexical skills, as

well as composing experience in English, are important to decrease language transfer in ESL/EFL writing. Likewise, L2 writers will fall back on their L1 less frequently in L2 writing as their L2 proficiency increases (Wang & Wen, 2002) (more on this in chapter 4).

The following sections will provide information about the important notion of interlanguage, the difference between errors and mistakes, error taxonomies, and sources of errors.

2.2 Interlanguage: An overview

As a reaction to the notion that all errors were caused by the L1 proposed by the Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis (CAH), Selinker (1972) developed the concept of “interlanguage” in order to explain errors in language learning. The concept of “interlanguage” was based on the notions of “idiosyncratic dialect” put forth by Corder (1971, p.151) and Weinreich’s (1968, p.7) “interlingual identifications”. At this time, in the development of the SLA field, there were three linguistic systems of interest: native language, target language, and learner language (Tarone, 2014).

This third system – learner language –, which “shifted away from the cataloging of external L1-L2 differences and towards analyzing learner language” (Ortega, 2013, p.34) was called “interlanguage” by Selinker (1972). He considered the development of interlanguage as a creative process that interacts with environmental factors and is influenced by both the L1 and the L2. Although L1 influence on the L2 has been acknowledged, Selinker (1972) stresses interlanguage as a third language system whose course of development is different from the L1 and the L2 (Saville-Troike, 2006).

Interlanguage can be defined as a linguistic system that an L2 learner has developed while making a transition to a proficient L2 learner. Therefore, the term “interlanguage” refers to an intermediate language between the L1 and the L2. Selinker

(1972) claims that interlanguage is shaped by five processes: native language transfer, overgeneralization of TL rules, transfer of training, strategies of communication, and strategies of learning. These processes occur when learners reach an appropriate L2 proficiency as they make the transition from their L1 to the L2. He considers interlanguage as a separate linguistic system that is different from the mother tongue and the TL, but it is related to both. His view is that the development of interlanguage is different from L1 development because of a possible fossilization (The state when a learner's interlanguage stops developing, regardless of how long the learner has been exposed to the L2) in the L2.

At the time, there were other views of interlanguage. Although they focused on different aspects of the concept, they all agree with the idea that interlanguage is an independent language system that lies between L1 and L2. Thus, Adjemian (1976) emphasized that interlanguage systems are dynamic. He argued that the systematicity of interlanguage should be analyzed linguistically as rule-governed behavior. His view is that interlanguage systems were “by their nature incomplete and in a state of flux”, considering the L1 system as relatively stable. The structure of interlanguage may be influenced by the learner's L1, but learners may also stretch, distort, or overgeneralize a rule from the TL in an effort to convey meaning.

Another view of interlanguage is proposed by Tarone (1979), who claimed that interlanguage could be analyzable into a set of styles that are dependent on the context of use. She argues that interlanguage is not a single system but a set of styles that can be used in different social settings.

Despite the importance of the concept of interlanguage, some researchers voiced criticisms. Richards (1974) mentioned that it was difficult to identify which of the five essential processes of interlanguage (language transfer, transfer of training, strategies of

second language learning, strategies of second language communication, and overgeneralization of TL linguistic material) the data could be attributed to and which linguistic items in which interlingual situations could be fossilized. Henderson (1985) considered the lack of explanatory power of interlanguage as a weakness. He argued that interlanguage does not tell us anything about SLA since none of its phenomena needs to be explained by a new linguistic hypothesis, and it does not predict observable events.

According to Tarone (2013), there have been some changes in the manner in which some of the psycholinguistic processes shaping interlanguage are approached. For instance, some elements transfer from the L1 to influence interlanguage, and some do not. In order to explain what elements can be transferred or not, she mentions the notion of multiple effects, that is, when L1 transfer combines with other influences, such as markedness factors, learning strategies, or transfer of training, then there will be greater likelihood of fossilization. For instance, an early stage of verbal negation common among all L2 learners involves putting a negator (e.g., “no”) before the verb. Learners whose native languages (e.g., Spanish, Portuguese) negate verbs this way (e.g., “Maria no camina” for “Maria does not walk”) will be more likely to fossilize at this stage (which can result in structures such as **“Maria no walk”*).

Another aspect that can also have an effect on language transfer is the degree of cross-linguistic distance. Ringbom (2007) describes cross-linguistic similarity and difference relations by presenting three points. The first one is a similarity relation, that is, an L2 item or pattern which learners perceive to be formally or functionally similar to its L1 counterpart (e.g., cognates between related L1 and L2). The second point is a contrast relation, which means that learners perceive differences and similarities between L1 and L2 patterns (e.g., grammatical patterns such as the use of verbs, pronouns, prepositions, etc.). The third point is a zero-relation that occurs when the learner cannot

find any relevant similarities between L1 and L2 (e.g., speakers of an Indo-European L1 starting to learn Chinese).

Given the three points related to cross-linguistic distance mentioned above, positive transfer can occur when learners establish a similarity relation between L1 and L2 forms or patterns. Conversely, a contrast relation can cause both positive and negative transfer, which interact in complex ways with only negative transfer leading to errors. In a zero-relation, transfer might not be explicitly evident but could appear in the form of a slower learning rate in comparison to learners who benefit from a similarity relation or a contrast relation in L2 acquisition (Ringbom, 2007).

Furthermore, Tarone (2013) mentions that some interlanguage research has focused on cognitive psychology in order to study the influence of the use of mnemonics on memory. The result of this research has been useful in educational applications such as the establishment of workshops and even centers to train students in the use of language-learning strategies. In addition, research on interlanguage has gone beyond its original focus on phonology, morphology, syntax, and lexis, to include the sociolinguistic component of communicative competence.

After presenting the notion of interlanguage, which is a crucial one in order to study language transfer errors, we must move on to a fundamental issue in the analysis of errors: the distinction between errors and mistakes.

2.3 Errors and mistakes

The distinction between learner's errors and mistakes has been a problematic issue for teachers and researchers (Keshavarz, 2012). When analyzing problems in learners' written texts, it is crucial to differentiate between errors and mistakes, which are technically two different phenomena, to analyze language from an appropriate perspective.

Chomsky's (1965) notion of competence versus performance is also assumed by Corder (1967), who states that errors occur due to processing limitations that are connected to the learner's inability to use the TL. Learners can acknowledge and correct mistakes, but they need linguistic competence in the L2 to recognize and correct errors. As can be seen, the notion of competence versus performance associates errors with competence and mistakes with performance.

Corder (1967) also distinguished between an error and a mistake. A *mistake* is a performance error that is either a random guess or a "slip". It is a discrepancy between what learners can do (competence) and what they actually do under the existing conditions at a specific time (performance). Mistakes refer to incorrect forms caused by memory lapses, slips of the tongue and other instances of performance errors. Conversely, an *error* is the result of the learner's systematic competence. An error is a deviation in the learner's language caused by the lack of knowledge of the correct rules. Errors refer to the learners' underlying knowledge of the language.

Similarly, Ellis (1997) asserts that errors show gaps in the learner's knowledge, which are caused by a lack of mastery of the foreign language. On the other hand, mistakes are occasional lapses in performance. Furthermore, according to James (1998), errors cannot be corrected by the learners on their own, unlike mistakes, which can be self-corrected if they are pointed out to the learner.

Keshavarz (2012) also establishes a difference between errors and mistakes claiming that errors are rule-governed, systematic in nature, internally principled and free from arbitrariness. Errors also indicate the learner's underlying knowledge of the TL. On the contrary, mistakes are random deviations unrelated to any system, and they can be corrected when they are brought to the attention of the learner. Mistakes involve a learner's performance and might occur in speech and writing like slips of the tongue, slips

of the ear, slips of the pen, and false starts. He also explains that mistakes can be caused by non-linguistic factors such as fatigue, strong feelings, memory limitations, and lack of concentration.

Once we have clarified the difference between errors and mistakes, we will consider the classification of errors as another requirement for a successful analysis of transfer errors.

2.4 Error taxonomies

One of the weaknesses of Error Analysis (EA) that Dulay, Burt and Krashen (1982) point out is the lack of precision and specificity in the definition of error categories, alleging that the little effort that has been made to establish error categories does not allow accuracy in replication or comparative studies.

Jarvis and Pavlenko (2008) mention that the level of detail in analysis in traditional areas such as morphological and syntactic transfer has increased in the last two decades. In this regard, when analyzing errors in the learner's written work, it is essential to establish a classification in order to tally them and to analyze them. Ellis and Barkhuizen (2005) explain that the categories selected for analysis must be based on the data obtained, which means that the categories of errors can be established as the analysis progresses.

It is also important to bear in mind that the categories of errors can also be related to different aspects of the language. In this respect, Weinreich (1968), one of the supporters of CA, claimed that language transfer involves the variations of a language caused by the familiarity with another language and such variations are evident and frequent in the phonetic (e.g., sounds, pronunciation), morphological and syntactical (e.g., sentence structure, grammar), and some lexical aspects (e.g., word choice, pronouns). Indeed, the primary areas of focus of language transfer research include traditional areas

such as phonological, orthographic (e.g., punctuation, spelling), lexical (word choice), and semantic (meanings of words) transfer (Jarvis & Pavlenko, 2008; Keshavarz, 2012). All of these aforementioned variations have been useful for classifying errors, thus, establishing error taxonomies.

Certainly, the use of error taxonomies is a subject of a great deal of discussion and debate since the explanation of errors types is not simply a matter of assigning a single source to each error, but a question of interaction among different factors related to language learning (Dulay, Burt & Krashen, 1982). For instance, Corder (1967) argued that the occurrence of errors is an indication of the inadequacy of teaching techniques. Another explanation is that despite teachers' efforts, errors are inevitable due to reasons such as L1 transfer, overgeneralization, fossilization, lack of knowledge of the L1, and the complexity of the L2.

Therefore, we can find different error taxonomies that have been proposed by several authors. One of the first error taxonomies was proposed by Corder (1973), who classifies errors into four categories based on the differences between the learner's produced utterance and the fixed version. The categories were the following:

Omission of some required element. (e.g., in the sentence *"Carlos works in __ factory in Hong Kong.", there is an omission of the indefinite article "a").

Addition of some unnecessary or incorrect element (e.g., in the sentence *"There are many childrens." We can see the addition of the plural "s" in children).

Selection of an incorrect element (e.g., in the sentence *"She always walks from home until school.", the preposition "until" has been incorrectly selected).

Misordering of the elements, which involves the incorrect placement of a morpheme or group of morphemes in an utterance (e.g., * "She is a dear to me friend.").

After reviewing the literature on EA research, Dulay, Burt and Krashen (1982) present what they considered the most commonly used basis for the descriptive classification of errors. Their descriptive taxonomy was based on (1) linguistic category, (2) surface strategy, (3) comparative analysis, and (4) communicative effect, which is explained as follows:

(1) The error types based on *linguistic category* are classified according to either or both the language component (phonology, syntax and morphology, semantics and lexicon, and discourse) or the particular linguistic constituent that the error affects (e.g., noun phrase, auxiliary, verb phrase, adverb, adjectives, etc.) (Dulay, Burt & Krashen, 1982).

(2) *Surface strategy taxonomy* refers to the way surface structure is changed. The analysis of errors based on surface strategy taxonomy allows us to realize that errors are based on some logic. These errors do not come from faulty thinking or laziness, but from the use of interim principles to produce a new language. In this case, learners can omit essential parts, add unnecessary elements, or use the wrong form or order of some linguistic features (Dulay, Burt & Krashen, 1982). Surface strategy taxonomy classifies errors as omission, addition, misformation, and misordering.

Omission errors consist in the lack of an item that must be placed in a correct utterance. Omissions include morphological and syntactical elements (e.g., in the sentence *"Jane played with __ sister", there is apparently an omission of the possessive pronoun "her".)

Addition errors occur, unlike omission errors, when an item appears at a place where it should not be present in a correct utterance. Addition includes morphological, syntactical, and lexical elements (e.g., in the sentence *"I returned to the Ecuador", there is an unnecessary addition of the definite article "the".)

Misformation refers to using the incorrect morpheme or structure, including morphological and syntactical elements (e.g., in the sentence **“Your pupils went there in a school trip”*, there is an incorrect use of preposition, using “in” instead of “on”)

Misordering errors occur when a morpheme or more morphemes are misplaced in an utterance, *including* morphological, syntactical, and lexical elements (e.g., in the sentence **“I don’t know what is your idea”*, there is an incorrect order of the noun phrase “your idea” and the verb “be”).

(3) The analysis of errors based on a *comparative taxonomy* is rooted in comparisons between the structure of errors in the TL and other types of constructions, especially errors made by children in the acquisition of the mother tongue (Dulay, Burt & Krashen, 1982). The comparative taxonomy classifies errors into two main categories: developmental errors and interlingual errors. It also considers the categories of ambiguous errors and the category of other errors.

Developmental errors are so called because they are characteristic of both mother tongue and TL development. It can be said that these developmental errors are similar to those made by children who are learning the TL as their mother tongue. Examples of developmental errors include the misuse of the third person –s (e.g., * *“He study here.”*), or the –ed morpheme (e.g., **“Mary teached this class last year.”*). On the contrary, *interlingual errors* in the TL have a similar structure to a linguistic feature or utterance in the learner’s mother tongue (Dulay, Burt & Krashen, 1982).

Ambiguous errors could be both developmental and interlingual errors. This means that these errors may reflect the learner’s mother tongue and be similar to errors made by children when acquiring their mother tongue (Dulay, Burt & Krashen, 1982). For example, the sentence **“She no have money.”*, for a Spanish speaker learning

English, indicates the influence of the learner's native Spanish, but it can also be a characteristic of the speech of children learning English as their L1.

Other errors are the ones that cannot be classified as developmental, interlingual or ambiguous (Dulay, Burt & Krashen, 1982). For example, in the sentence *"He do hungry.", the speaker does not seem to have used his native Spanish structure (i.e., *"He have hungry" to say "Él tiene hambre"), nor an L2 developmental form such as *"He hungry" where there is an omission of the verb. For this reason, this type of error can be classified under the "*other errors*" category.

(4) *Communicative effect taxonomy* is another taxonomy established by Dulay, Burt and Krashen (1982). This taxonomy emphasizes the effects that errors have on listeners or readers. If these errors have an effect on the overall organization of the sentence, they will be an obstacle to successful communication. These errors are called *global errors*. On the other hand, if errors affect a single element of a sentence, in most of the cases, they will not hinder communication. These are called *local errors*.

Global errors include the wrong order of major constituents; missing, wrong, or misplaced sentence connectors; missing cues to signal obligatory exceptions to pervasive syntactic rules; regularization of pervasive syntactic rules to exceptions; incorrect psychological predicate constructions; and improper selection of complement types. Conversely, *local errors* include errors in noun and verb inflections, articles, auxiliaries, and formation of quantifiers.

A more recent, although not very different, approach to classification of errors, is proposed by Keshavarz (2012), who argues that, based on a linguistic-based classification, errors in L2 acquisition can be orthographic, phonological, lexical-syntactic, and morphosyntactic. On the other hand, he also posits that the classification of errors can also be process-based, that is, ways how learners make errors. The process-

based classification, which Keshavarz (2012) mentions, divides errors into the following categories: omission, addition, substitution, and permutation. This process-based classification is similar to the surface strategy taxonomy by Dulay, Burt and Krashen (1982) that divides errors into omission, addition, misformation, and misordering. In this case, the substitution and permutation errors proposed by Keshavarz (2012) are similar to misformation and misordering errors respectively.

The taxonomies referred to above share some commonalities. Thus, linguistic category and surface strategy in Dulay, Burt and Krashen (1982) are similar to linguistic-based classification and process-based classifications in Keshavarz (2012), respectively. However, Dulay, Burt and Krashen (1982) also add comparative analysis and communicative effect categories, which Keshavarz does not include. Table 1 summarizes these error taxonomies:

Corder (1973)

- 1) Omission of some required element
- 2) Addition of some unnecessary or incorrect element
- 3) Selection of an incorrect element
- 4) Misordering of the elements

Dulay, Burt and Krashen (1982)

- 1) **Linguistic category** (phonology, syntax and morphology, semantics and lexicon, and discourse)
- 2) **Surface strategy** (omission, addition, misformation, and misordering)
- 3) **Comparative analysis** (developmental errors, interlingual errors, ambiguous errors, and other errors)
- 4) **Communicative effect** (global errors and local errors)

Keshavarz (2012)

- 1) **Linguistic-based classification** (orthographic, phonological, lexical-syntactic, and morphosyntactic errors)
- 2) **Process-based classification** (omission, addition, substitution, and permutation)

Table 1. Error taxonomies proposed by Corder (1973), Dulay, Burt and Krashen (1982), and Keshavarz (2012)

Ellis and Barkhuizen (2005) explain that the categories selected for analysis can produce subcategories, but these categories and subcategories are **data-driven**. In other words, instead of beginning the analysis with a fully established set of categories and

subcategories, these should be developed as the analysis progresses so the errors in the sample can be identified.

In the case of negative transfer errors, Dam (2010) claims that Spanish-speaking English language learners show negative transfer errors concerning the areas of phonological, orthographic, lexical and semantic transfer, which they make by borrowing patterns from their mother tongue. He also states that typical negative transfer errors can be made in areas such as articles, number, pronouns, adjectives, prepositions, possessives, question formation, negation, word order, and false cognates.

In some studies conducted on negative transfer errors, their classification is based mainly on the aforementioned categories. Studies conducted on language transfer such as the ones by Bhela (1999), López (2011), and Cabrera et al. (2014) have produced specific subcategories of errors that are closely related to the linguistic-based categories proposed by Corder (1973), Weinreich (1968), and Keshavarz (2012). These subcategories include interference errors involving articles, gender, number, personal pronouns, relative pronouns, adjectives, prepositions, possessives, question formation, negation, verb tenses, passive voice, word order, invented words, and false cognates.

We have mentioned that the classification of errors is essential when performing error analysis. Another crucial, although challenging aspect is the identification of sources of errors before performing an analysis because this will help us determine the origin of errors. Below we will present some of the most relevant classifications of sources of errors.

2.5 Sources of errors

As already stated, errors are the incorrect production of learner's speech or writing, and making them constitutes part of the learning process. Learners cannot learn a language without first systematically making errors (Dulay, Burt & Krashen, 1982).

Therefore, errors can be used to measure learners' language performance since learners make errors as an inevitable part of their production of language.

Language learning can be affected by both social and cognitive factors. Research on social factors can give an idea of the reasons why learners have different L2 learning rates and ultimate attainment (Ellis, 1994). Regarding cognitive factors, it is worth mentioning that cognitive theories state that oral or written communication is a process of skills development and elimination of errors while learners internalize language. Practice leads to the restructuring of these internal representations as learners shift these representations in order to achieve increasing levels of mastery in the TL (McLaughlin, 1988).

A cognitive factor related to writing errors is language transfer. Behaviorism states that transfer is the cause of errors, whereas cognitivism establishes that transfer is a resource actively used by the learner in interlanguage development (Selinker, 1969). Although it is clear that L1 transfer is not considered as the only cause of errors at the structural level, a learner's mother tongue has an essential role in the acquisition of the TL. For instance, when learners write under pressure, they can use systematic resources from their mother tongue for the achievement and synthesis of meaning (Widdowson, 1990).

Based on the fact that L1 transfer might not be the only cause of errors, the identification of their sources is important before performing an analysis of errors, even though this identification is not an easy task. Indeed, many errors can be attributed to multiple rather than a single source (Ellis & Barkhuizen, 2005). Two main sources of errors have been identified: interlingual (caused by mother tongue interference) and intralingual (caused by the difficulty or the problem of the target language itself) transfer.

These categories are included in the study by Richards (1970), which was one of the first and most important works on EA. He acknowledges the following major sources of errors: interference from the L1, as well as intralingual and developmental factors.

Interference from the L1 is the use of elements from one language while speaking or writing in another language. This is the cause of interlingual or transfer errors. Interlingual errors have a similar structure to a semantically equivalent utterance in the learner's mother tongue (Dulay, Burt & Krashen, 1982). According to McLaughlin (1988), interlingual errors can appear because learners do not have the necessary information in the L2 or the capacity to activate the appropriate L2 routine. An example of this type of error is when a Spanish speaker writes "the house yellow" in English, this would reflect the word order of the Spanish equivalent "la casa amarilla".

Interlingual transfer is especially evident in learning situations where students' exposure to the foreign language is limited to classroom instruction (Mahmoud, 2000), and it can be present in aspects such as syntax (e.g., sentence structure), lexis (e.g., word choice, pronoun), morphology (e.g., verb, noun), mechanics (e.g., punctuation, spelling), and discourse (e.g., writing strategies and conventions). In these foreign language teaching situations, Krashen (2002) contends that appropriate natural intake is scarce and translation exercises are frequent.

Intralingual and developmental errors occur during L2 learning when the learners have not mastered the language and also occur due to the "difficulty of the second or target language" (Touchie, 1986, p. 77). Based on the results of his study, Richards (1970, p. 208-209) clarifies that intralingual errors are those which "reflect the characteristics of rule learning, such as faulty generalization, incomplete application of rules, and failure to learn condition under which rules apply", and developmental errors "illustrate the learner

attempting to build up hypotheses about the English language from his limited experience of it in the classroom or textbook.”

Regarding intralingual errors, they are not related to L1 language transfer, but to the TL itself. In this respect, Ellis (1997) claims that some errors are apparently universal and reflect learners’ attempt to simplify the task of learning and using the TL. For example, when learners overgeneralize forms that they find easy to learn and process and use “goed” instead of the correct English past form “went”.

It is necessary to point out that the distinction between intralingual and developmental errors can be ambiguous sometimes. An example of such ambiguity is mentioned by Schachter and Celce-Murcia (1977), who consider the case of the obligatory copula in English (often called a linking verb). The omission of this form could be partially explained as negative transfer in the case of native speakers of Chinese, Arabic and certain other languages due to the structural differences between those L1s and the L2 (English). On the other hand, the omission of the obligatory copula could also be described as essentially developmental because monolingual English learners (i.e., children) also produce this error (Schachter & Celce-Murcia, 1977).

Touchie (1986) adds that intralingual and developmental factors reflect general characteristics of rule learning such as simplification, faulty generalization, hypercorrection, faulty teaching, fossilization, avoidance, inadequate learning, and false concepts, which are illustrated below:

Simplification occurs when learners choose simpler forms and constructions to express themselves in the second or foreign language and reduce the linguistic burden; for instance, when students use the simple present instead of the present perfect continuous.

Faulty generalization (or *overgeneralization*) consists in the use of one form or construction in a context, and the extension of its use to another context in which it should not be applied. For example, the use of the past tense suffix “*ed*” for all verbs.

Hypercorrection is the result of the adherence to an incorrect assumption about a correct form or a misunderstanding about a point of grammar. For instance, the belief that the elements of an infinitive (to + verb) should not be separated by an adverb can result in ambiguous sentences such as “She is preparing quickly to depart” (the ambiguity here is that the writer may want to say that she is preparing to depart quickly, but the sentence indicates that she is preparing quickly). Sometimes, however, it is acceptable to separate infinitives with an adverb.

Faulty teaching is closely related to hypercorrection and occurs when the errors are caused by the teacher, teacher’s materials, or the order of presentation (e.g., If the past tense is over-taught, there could be errors of overuse of rules such as “My brother didn’t wrote the letter”).

Fossilization consists in errors that persist for a long time and are difficult to correct. For example, when Spanish speakers who are learning English continuously write or say “people is” instead of “people are”.

Avoidance occurs when learners avoid structures that are difficult to produce and use simpler ones. This term was coined by Schachter (1974) to describe the phenomenon that occurs when learners refrain from producing certain structures in the target language that they find difficult to understand. An example of avoidance can be found in the following dialogue: *Question: “Do you have a car?” Answer: “I have a bicycle”*, the learner finds the use of negation in the present tense difficult, so they use an affirmative sentence to answer a question instead of answering “*I do not have a dog*” or “*No, I don’t*”.

Inadequate learning is usually caused by ignorance of rule restrictions or underdifferentiation and incomplete learning. For instance, the lack of -s in the verb in the sentence *‘‘Charles need a new jacket.’’ could be the result of inadequate learning.

False concepts hypothesized means that incorrect hypotheses formed by learners about the language can cause errors. For example, when learners think that the verb ‘‘be’’ is a marker for the present tense, and they produce the sentence *‘‘He is play basketball’’.

As pointed out earlier, the two traditional sources of errors have been interlingual and intralingual transfer, but some experts believe that this distinction is not always clear (Heydari & Bagheri, 2012; Ellis & Barkhuizen, 2005; Schachter & Celce-Murcia, 1977). Thus, more recently, other researchers have proposed other sources of errors.

Brown (2007), in an attempt to understand how the learner's cognitive and affective processes related to the linguistic system, identifies the following sources of errors: *interlingual transfer*, *intralingual transfer*, *context of learning*, and various *communication strategies used by learners*.

(1) *Interlingual transfer*. This source of errors is responsible for causing interlingual errors, which are very frequent during the early stages of the TL because learners rely on their mother tongue as the only language system (Brown, 2007).

(2) *Intralingual transfer* is the cause of intralingual errors.

(3) *Context of learning* refers to the classroom along with the teacher and materials. This is a source of errors that overlaps both with interlingual and intralingual transfer. For example, in a classroom context, the teacher or the textbook can lead the learner to make wrong generalizations about the language.

(4) *Communication strategies* are resources such as approximation, word coinage, omission, avoidance, etc. that learners use in order to convey a message when linguistic forms are not available to them for some reason at a certain point in communication. For

example, if learners do not know how to use the word “gallery”, they could use the word “picture place” to try to convey the intended meaning.

Considering teachers’ language deficiencies and the chance that sometimes they may not be good models of the target language regarding the way they speak, write or generally teach the language, James (1998, p.191) introduced the category of “teaching-induced errors”. This category was based on the fact that some of the errors being committed by students could be teacher-induced. Consequently, James (1998), presents three sources of errors:

(1) *Interlingual errors* (errors influenced by L1 which interfere with L2)

(2) *Intralingual errors* (errors caused by L2 itself)

(3) *Teaching-induced errors* are the result of being misled by the way in which the teachers give definitions, examples, explanations and arrange practice opportunities. In other words, these errors are caused mostly by the teaching and learning process. As an example of induced error, we can mention the situation in which the teacher uses the expression “Please put attention” in class. If this incorrect expression is regularly heard by students in class, it is likely that they repeat this error in their speech or writing. According to James (1998), teaching-induced errors can be divided into the following subcategories:

Materials-induced errors (e.g., Teaching materials with errors will make the learners confused, and they will make similar errors)

Teacher-talk induced errors (e.g., if teachers do not provide models of the standard TL in class.),

Exercise-based induced errors. In this case, we can mention errors that learners make while doing exercises on combining the sentences “I can’t go out” and “I finish my

homework”. They have been told that “unless” is equivalent to “if...not”, suggesting the possibility of replacing the negative element in “can’t” with “unless”, and producing incorrect utterances such as “Unless I can go out, I finish my homework” instead of a correct form such as “I can’t go out unless I finish my homework”.

Errors induced by pedagogical priorities (e.g., If teachers prioritize accuracy over fluency in teaching English, accuracy is considered as superior, but fluency would have lower priority; thus, students will not acquire proper fluency.), and

Look-up errors (e.g., When learners do not look up information correctly in dictionaries or grammar books and use words or expressions from these sources inaccurately.)

Regarding *intralingual errors*, James (1998) defines them as learning strategy-based errors that he divides into seven types: false analogy, misanalysis, incomplete rule application, exploiting redundancy, overlooking co-occurrence, hypercorrection, and overgeneralization.

False analogy occurs when learners incorrectly assume that a new item behaves like another item that they already know. For example, if learners add -s to a noun to make it plural (e.g., car, cars), they may think that “childs” is the plural of “child”.

Misanalysis means that learners have a wrong concept of a particular rule in the L2. For example, in the sentences **“My two turtles are beautiful. Its names are Arrow and Rocky”*, the learners have wrongly used the possessive ‘its’, singular, instead of the expected ‘their’.

Incomplete rule application takes place when learners do not apply all the necessary rules in a particular situation and do not develop a complete structure. For

example, in the sentence **"I didn't go out yesterday, nor I studied grammar"*, the use of the auxiliary "did" following the word "nor" has been ignored here.

Exploiting redundancy is the use of words or phrases that do not contribute anything to the overall meaning of a sentence. In other words, such words or phrases are redundant. For example, in the sentence **"I cannot use this ATM machine"*, there is redundancy since ATM stands for "automatic teller machine".

Overlooking co-occurrence restrictions means that learners fail to consider certain restrictions in the L2. In this case, learners do not know that certain words go together with certain complements, prepositions, etc. For example, in the sentence **"I look forward to meet you"*, the learner has ignored the rule of gerunds and failed to see the connection between "look forward to" and "meet".

Hypercorrection occurs when learners consistently apply the L2 rules that they know to other situations. For example, the sentence **"Watching videos makes her improves language"*. As shown in the example, the learner seems to be confused with the rule of adding 's' for subject-verb agreement.

Overgeneralization takes place when the learner learns an L2 pattern or rule and applies it in situations when other forms must be used. This causes the overuse of one form and underuse of others. For example, in the cases of "*much*" and "*many*", the learner might use one of the words instead of differentiating them and using them correctly in the proper situation. Overgeneralization of language rules is also common. For example, the sentence **"Does he can swim?"* reflects an overgeneralization of the use of auxiliary verbs in questions.

As can be seen, the difficulty and confusion among sources of errors have opened the door to several classifications. Although there is no uniformity in the findings, one can certainly observe common features. Most researchers have embraced a general

distinction between transfer (interlingual) errors and intralingual errors (Ellis, 1994). It can also be observed that language transfer is an important source of errors, especially at a structural level. In this respect, we can mention the fact that not having a proper knowledge of TL grammar might be a major cause of transfer errors (Cook, 2001).

Due to the focus of the present study on transfer errors, we are interested in the commonalities in the classifications proposed by Richards (1970), James (1998), and Brown (2007), that is, interlingual and intralingual errors. The differentiation among these two sources would be clearer in a written product than the differentiation of other sources such as teaching-induced errors, context of learning and communication strategies. In other words, we will consider the classification of sources of errors proposed by Richards (1970).

As already mentioned, Richards (1970), James (1998), and Brown (2007) acknowledge interlingual and intralingual errors in their classifications. However, James (1998) adds the category of teaching-induced errors, which is similar to the category of context of learning proposed by Brown (2007). It can also be seen that Brown (2007) considers the category of sources of errors related to communication strategies. Table 2 features these sources and their subdivisions:

Richards (1970)	<p>1) Interference from the first language</p> <p>2) Intralingual and developmental factors</p> <p>Subdivision of Intralingual and developmental factors (Touchie, 1986)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Simplification -Faulty generalization Hypercorrection -Faulty teaching -Fossilization -Avoidance -Inadequate learning -False concepts.
James (1998)	<p>1) Interlingual errors</p> <p>2) Intralingual errors (false analogy, misanalysis, incomplete rule application, exploiting redundancy, overlooking co-occurrence, hypercorrection, and overgeneralization)</p> <p>3) Teaching-induced errors (materials-induced errors, teacher-talk induced errors, exercise-based induced errors, errors induced by pedagogical priorities, and look-up errors)</p>
Brown (2007)	<p>1) Interlingual transfer</p> <p>2) Intralingual transfer</p> <p>3) Context of learning</p> <p>4) Communication strategies</p>

Table 2. Sources of errors proposed by Richards (1970), James (1998), and Brown (2007)

Once the types of errors and their sources are identified, it is also crucial to choose an appropriate method for analyzing errors in the students' written product. These methods will be discussed in the next chapter.

Chapter 3: Methods of Analysis and Identification of Errors in L2 Writing

The methods for analyzing errors in L2 learning have generated controversy over time. However, the most predominant methods are the ones that involve performance analysis of samples of learners' products. These methods have contributed crucial evidence of language acquisition, but they have also been criticized. In this chapter, we will discuss the most relevant ones.

3.1 Contrastive analysis

As mentioned above, one of the first models to analyze language transfer was the CA approach, developed by Lado (1957). CA was mainly used to compare the linguistic characteristics of two languages, assuming that similar structures in both languages facilitate acquisition, but different structures slow it down (Lado, 1957). Examples of errors caused by language transfer include lack of subject-verb and determiner-noun agreement, and misuse of determiners.

Lado (1957) developed CA with the purpose of making language teaching more effective based on an analysis of differences between mother tongue and TL. CA is based on the premise that the mother tongue has an influence on the TL, so similarities are conducive to learning, and differences lead to difficulties. In this context, language learning problems might be predicted.

Weinreich (1968) supported CA by claiming that more differences or mutually exclusive patterns and forms between languages mean more learning problems and higher areas of interference. In summary, CA sustains that the difficulties in acquiring a TL are derived from differences between the new language and the learner's mother tongue.

Whitman (1970) proposed four procedures for carrying out CA: description, selection, contrast, and prediction.

(1) *Description*. In this first step, the linguist or teacher explicitly describes the two languages in question by using the tools of formal grammar.

(2) A *selection* of certain forms such as linguistic items, rules, and structures will be contrasted because it is not possible to contrast all of the features of two languages. This selection procedure reflects the assumptions of the researcher, with the subsequent effect on the linguistic items selected.

(3) *Contrast*. This step consists in the mapping of one linguistic system onto the other. This procedure also involves the specification of the relationship of one system to the other which, like selection, rests on the validity of one's reference points. For this purpose, the forms selected are contrasted by using tables, clustered descriptions, or other resources.

(4) A *prediction* of error or difficulty is made based on the selected contrast of linguistic forms established in the three previous procedures. Whitman (1970) posits that this final step is achieved through two ways in which the relationship of the prediction must be clear. The first way is the formulation of a hierarchy of difficulty, not predicting difficulty directly, but establishing a relative difficulty. The second way is through more direct applications of psycholinguistic theory, describing necessary psychological adjuncts of difficulty and then fitting the contrast to these adjuncts.

One of the opponents of CA was Corder (1967), who asserts that transfer errors are given too much importance in this approach, and these errors are not the only source of language variation. He argues that variation in the L2 can also be caused by processes similar to those in L1 learning. Dulay and Burt (1974a) agree with this assertion and establish that besides transfer errors (those that reflect the structure of the L1), there can be other types such as developmental errors (those similar to the ones reported for L1

acquisition) or unique errors (those that are not related to developmental or interference errors) in the acquisition of the TL.

According to Larsen-Freeman and Long (1991), another problem associated with CA is that, although some errors are predicted by this method (e.g., the errors in word order and sentence construction that occurred in the written works of adult Czech (L1) EFL learners obtained by Duskova (1969)), CA cannot predict many errors that do happen. For example, Hyltestam (1977) studied the acquisition of negation by adult L2 learners of Swedish and found a surprising regularity in the acquisition by learners of different L1s (Polish, English, Greek, Serbo-Croatian and Persian), length of education and knowledge of other foreign languages. Sometimes, CA predicts learner difficulties which do not appear, as demonstrated by Dulay and Burt (1974b) in their study of the acquisition sequences of English functors in Chinese and Spanish speaking children; a finding that they claimed was proof of natural acquisition order that has been recently confirmed by authors such as Kwon (2005), Luk and Shirai (2009), and Chrabaszcz and Jiang (2014).

Other criticisms that have been raised are that we cannot depend on a purely linguistic analysis to describe a linguistic process, and that CA is only relevant when all learners speak the same language (Larsen-Freeman & Long, 1991).

Despite criticism towards CA, not all of its hypotheses are wrong; the method can be useful in some cases due to its explanatory power (Fisiak, 1981). In fact, some current studies incorporate CA as part of their methods and models. These will be summarized in what follows.

Salehuddin, Hua, and Maros (2006) aimed to investigate transfer between L1 Malay and the production of L2 English structures. For this purpose, Malaysian secondary school students wrote essays in English. Then, a corpus consisting of 873 sentences collected from 51 essay samples was constructed. Although the CA perspective is used in this research, the steps of EA (sample collection, identification, description, explanation and evaluation of errors) were also applied. The results indicated that determiners were a possible difficult area for Malay learners of English. The different aspects of the incorrect use of English determiners that reflect Malay grammar are related to specific places of location, instrument, countries as adjectives, name of subject, agreement with the noun, and cardinal numbers. The differences in the possessive forms in both languages are also responsible for the errors found.

Laufer and Girsai (2008) examined the effect of explicit CA and translation activities on the incidental acquisition of single words and collocations. The participants were seventy-five Hebrew 10th graders (aged 15-16) divided into three high school groups of comparable English proficiency. Each group represented one instructional condition: meaning-focused instruction (MFI), non-contrastive form-focused instruction (FFI), and contrastive analysis and translation (CAT). The target items consisted of ten unfamiliar words and ten collocations in the L2. The three groups performed content-oriented tasks, text-based vocabulary tasks, and text-based translation tasks, respectively. In the correction phase, the teacher provided a CA of the target items and their L1 translation options. After completing the tasks, the three groups were tested on the retention of the target items. The CAT (contrastive analysis and translation) group significantly outperformed the other two groups on the tests. This study also suggested that CAT activities in the acquisition of single words and collocations are important in L2 teaching, but communicative goals should also be achieved.

Fatemi and Ziaei (2012) conducted a study that aimed to detect problems that may occur due to an inadvertent translation of Farsi adjectives into English by teachers in EFL classrooms. The purpose was to contrastively study the problematic differences between some Farsi adjectives and their English equivalents and to show the differences in meaning when teachers translate the Farsi adjectives into English without considering the context. The thirty adjectives selected for this study were derived from the texts translated from Persian into English by 30 EFL learners. These adjectives had at least two equivalents in English. Bilingual dictionaries were used to choose the appropriate adjectives with more than one meaning. CA was used to compare the adjectives selected and the translations into English. The results of this study revealed that out-of-context translations and providing only one equivalent for students without informing them about the importance of context in selecting the equivalents can be misleading.

Gómez-Castejón (2012) proposes the inclusion of a cognitive approach in order to carry out a CA of English and Spanish gerunds. A simple version of a parallel corpus, which contains a collection of original texts in L1 and their translations into L2, was used for conducting a CA. This approach establishes a valid characterization of the English gerund as well as the relationship between this category and its Spanish counterparts. A translation study was also included and was not limited to equivalence relations between the source and target languages, also providing translation techniques observed in the translation product. The results indicate that parallel corpora and translated texts were useful for both the CA and the translation study.

Zawahreh (2013) used linguistic CA to examine and clarify the problematic differences in meanings between some Arabic adjectives and their possible equivalents in English. These problems may emerge when Jordanian students write an out-of-context translation of Arabic adjectives into English in the EFL classroom. The results

demonstrated that the process of finding and choosing the correct equivalents of Arabic adjectives in English when students translate adjectives out of context is difficult in most of the cases. This difficulty is due to the problematic differences between some Arabic adjectives and their possible equivalents in English.

The studies presented above show that CA is still included in the methodology of some current studies related to L2 acquisition. Indeed, CA can be useful to explore some problems concerning the acquisition of a foreign language. As Valero (1998, p.34) states, “[...] ignoring L1 in the foreign language classroom means almost certainly to teach with less than maximum efficiency since, in the learning of a foreign language, there is an inevitable association in the mind between the new language and the one already known”.

As mentioned above, in order to overcome the wrong predictions of CA, another approach called EA emerged.

3.2 Error analysis

The difference between EA and CA is that the former proposes that apart from transfer or interference from the L1, errors are also the evidence of Universal Grammar strategies or developmental errors (Byram & Hu, 2013).

EA attempts to analyze learners’ errors in relation to the TL, considering that the learners’ mother tongue could cause some of these errors. James (1998) claims that EA is the research of linguistic lack of knowledge and the attempt to deal with it. He also argues that EA will exist if there is incompleteness or failure to attain full mastery of the L2. All in all, EA can be defined as a procedure in which learners’ errors are observed, analyzed and classified in order to obtain information related to the system operating within the learner (Brown, 2007).

Before starting an EA, it is important to define errors. One of the problems lies in the use of the criterion of grammaticality versus acceptability. When we select

grammaticality, the definition of error can be a “breach of the rule of the code” (Corder, 1973, p.295). Errors based on grammaticality can be overt (e.g., *I crazy*), which are identified by analyzing the sentence, or covert, which are detected in a larger segment of discourse and can be revealed only when referring to the context (e.g., *It was stopped* - This sentence can be apparently well-formed, but it may not mean what the learner intended them to mean) (Ellis & Barkhuizen, 2005).

With respect to errors of acceptability, Ellis and Barkhuizen (2005) state that these types of errors can be subjective, involving stylistic judgments rather than grammatical ones (e.g., *She’s nurse* - This sentence can be considered acceptable despite the missing article). Acceptability can also be decided based on the context in which the utterance might fit. Due to the fact that acceptability is subjective, judgments about these types of errors might be less reliable and less consistent among researchers. In the case of EA, a distinction between grammaticality and acceptability is not very clear.

According to Corder (1967), EA helps us see to what extent learners have acquired the language and to discover the rules of the language. He establishes five steps in EA: Collection of a sample of learner’s language, identification, description, explanation and evaluation of errors.

In the first step, *collection of a sample*, the data for EA come from the sample collected. It is important to bear in mind that the nature of the sample might have an effect on the distribution of errors observed. Ellis and Barkhuizen (2005) explain that the sample collected can be influenced by learner characteristics (proficiency level, other languages, and language learning background), language (medium, genre, and content), and production (unplanned and planned) factors.

In the next step, *identification of errors*, we need to establish a comparison between the utterances produced by the learner and the utterances that a native speaker

would provide in a similar context, that is, a reconstruction of the sample (Ellis & Barkhuizen, 2005). The identification of errors can also include a specification of the domain and extent of each error.

The third step consists in the *description of errors*. This step is a comparison of the data collected, which contains the errors and the reconstructed utterance (Corder, 1974). It is necessary then to specify the way in which the forms produced by the learner differ from those produced by a native speaker. For this purpose, it is essential to develop a set of descriptive categories for coding the errors that have been identified and recording the frequency of errors in each category (Ellis & Barkhuizen, 2005).

From the point of view of L2 acquisition, the fourth step, *explanation of errors*, is the most important step in EA. In this step, the sources of errors must be determined with the purpose of accounting for the reason why they were committed. In order to explain errors, it is essential to determine the processes that learners invoke when they ignore the TL form. The errors related to these processes can be interlingual and intralingual (Ellis & Barkhuizen, 2005).

The final step in EA, *error evaluation*, consists in determining the seriousness of different errors in order to decide which ones need instruction. For this step, there must be a selection of the errors to be evaluated. Then, we should determine the criterion on which the errors will be judged; for example, seriousness, intelligibility, etc. After that, the error evaluation instrument must be prepared, and, finally, at least two judges must analyze the errors since this increases reliability and generalizability of the results. The problem with this step is the difficulty to develop a definite scale for the prediction of error gravity due to its inconclusive results. For this reason, error evaluation studies have lost popularity (Ellis & Barkhuizen, 2005).

Ellis and Barkhuizen (2005) explain that EA has limitations. One of these limitations is that this approach delimits the object of the study to errors. Basically, there is an excessive focus on learners' errors, and sometimes the correct utterance cannot be noticed. The decrease of errors plays an important role, but the goal of language learning is the communicative competence in the TL. Another problem is that the absence of error does not necessarily mean communicative competence because learners might avoid structures that are difficult for them (Schachter, 1974).

Even though EA can have its limitations, it is relevant for teachers' concerns (James, 1998). It is also necessary to mention that EA is not a theory of acquisition, but it can be a method for dealing with data (Cook, 1993).

Although EA was proposed as a method in the 1970s, studies based on EA are still being conducted because the identification of errors is useful to provide insight into learners' L2 knowledge and learning processes. We will summarize some of these studies that have considered EA in their methods.

Crompton (2005) used a corpus-based approach to EA when analyzing the use of the word "where" in texts written by Malay-speaking learners of English. The information obtained was organized as a learner corpus and compared with data from two corpora obtained from native English-speaking writers. The results of this study indicate several patterns of misuse and overuse of "where" in written academic English by the Malay-speaking learners of English. This study also makes suggestions related to causes of misuse and teaching strategies for helping students avoid misuse.

Chan (2010) conducted a study that used EA transfer analysis (a subprocedure in the diagnostic phase of EA that compares learner's interlanguage strings with their mother tongue's) in L2 acquisition and examined common lexicogrammatical problems found in Cantonese ESL learners' written English production. This study was conducted with

students from three levels of proficiency who wrote two free-writing tasks (one descriptive and one narrative). A range of lexicogrammatical error types was identified, including vocabulary compensation and inaccurate directionality, calquing, existential structures, incorrect ordering of adverbials, and independent clauses as subjects. It was also found that mother-tongue influence was an important source of problems, but lack of mastery of the correct use of the TL and universal processes were also relevant factors. These results have pedagogical implications for the design of appropriate instructional materials.

Nezami and Najafi (2012) set out to understand Iranian EFL learners' L2 writing error types. Learners were Iranian BA students at various English proficiency levels. These students answered the structure and reading comprehension questions of the TOEFL Test Preparation Kit. Then they wrote an essay about one topic presented on their Test of Written English (TWE). The proficiency scores were used to classify the participants into high, medium and low proficiency students. After that, the error types on compositions were identified, and the error analysis was based on grammaticality. The results showed statistically significant differences in error types among students of different proficiency groups. Additionally, the frequency of occurrence of error types was different in each group.

Alhaysony (2012) aimed at providing a comprehensive account of the types of errors produced by Saudi female EFL students in their use of articles, based on the Surface Structure Taxonomies (SST) of errors. Data were collected from written samples of first-year female EFL university students. Students wrote on one of six different descriptive topics related to their life and culture. After analyzing students' written production, the results showed that although students made a considerable number of errors in their use of articles, omission errors were the most frequent, and substitutions were the least

frequent. Additionally, results revealed that interlingual errors were a major source of errors, but that intralingual errors were frequent as well. The results also indicate that L1 interference strongly influences L2 acquisition of the articles, having a negative effect on the learning process. The author concludes that teachers and instructors should therefore point out more clearly towards the differences between L1 and L2 in the use of articles.

Zheng and Park (2013) examined errors made by Chinese and Korean university students, trying to identify the similarities and differences between them. For this purpose, the essays of 84 Chinese and 84 Korean university students were collected. These students wrote argumentative essays in English, and the errors in the essays were identified and coded by three coders using the computer software NVivo (a tool used for qualitative data analysis).

The analysis of the English texts shows that some errors such as run-on sentences, the omission of articles and plural suffix -s, and sentence misordering can be caused by the negative transfer from the learners' L1. The findings of the study also demonstrate that besides the language transfer errors from Chinese and Korean found in English essays, there were also some similarities and differences in these transfer errors depending on the L1. As for the similarities, Chinese and Korean learners are likely to make a similar number of mistakes in their use of tenses, selection of accurate verbs and nouns, use of prepositions and articles, subject-verb agreement, the inflection of verbs, sentence structure, conjunctions, the selection of adjectives and pronouns, plural agreement and plural forms, as well as prepositions. In addition, both the Chinese and Korean learners tend to forget articles and plural suffixes "-s".

On the other hand, the differences were found with regards to run-on sentences and "misordering" errors. The Chinese learners had more run-on sentences than the Korean ones, probably because, in Chinese, commas are frequently used to serve the

added functions of conjunctions or even periods. Conversely, Korean learners had more “misordering” errors than the Chinese ones, which may be caused by the Chinese language structure being closer to that of English.

As can be seen, EA can be very useful in English language learning and teaching to diagnose English learners’ writing problems, to analyze the reasons for these problems, and, thus, to provide effective solutions (Zheng & Park, 2013).

3.3 Obligatory occasion analysis

Another prevailing method for analyzing language learning errors that compares the forms used by learners and TL norms is the Obligatory Occasion Analysis (OOA). This type of analysis examines the accuracy with which learners use certain linguistic features, mainly grammatical morphemes.

In the 1970s, Brown (1973) conducted a seminal study on how three children acquired fourteen morphemes in their L1 (English), reporting that the children acquire the morphemes in a sequence. Unlike EA, which analyses the errors that learners make, OOA considers what learners get right and what they get wrong (Ellis & Barkhuizen, 2005) and is, thus, a more comprehensive approach than EA.

Basically, the idea behind OOA is that morphemes are obligatory in certain contexts and the correct use of these morphemes must be determined by calculating the accuracy of morpheme use through formulae. Certainly, this analysis must start with a collection of samples of learners’ language. Ellis (1994) mentions that there is a comparison between the forms used by L2 learners and the TL forms. These learners create obligatory contexts for certain linguistic features in the TL, but learners do not always provide these features in those contexts.

Numerous cross-sectional and longitudinal studies in the 70s and 80s used OOA to analyze the acquisition of morphemes. The results of so-called morpheme studies

seemed to give support to a nativist account of L2 acquisition (i.e., one in which the L1 did not have a role to play in the SLA process), different from CA, which was based on behaviorist theories that language acquisition involves habit formation (Ellis & Barkhuizen, 2005). However, as is well known today, acquisition orders can be explained by a combination of multiple determinants (Goldschneider & DeKeyser, 2005).

OOA considers correct and incorrect renditions of the language. For this purpose, Brown (1973) established the calculation of a percentage of accurate use of the morpheme based on obligatory contexts in which the correct morpheme should be provided, and the morphemes that are correctly, incorrectly, or not provided at all. For example, in the following sentence: **On a typical Sunday, I play basketball in park*, if one wants to calculate the percentage of the accurate use of articles (*a, an, the*), we need to count the number of obligatory contexts (two obligatory contexts in this sentence - *a typical Sunday*, and *the park*), and the number of correct renditions (one), and, in this case, the lack of rendition in an obligatory context (one). After tallying all these occurrences, a formula, which will be explained below, is applied to calculate the percentage of accuracy.

Ellis and Barkhuizen (2005) explain that conducting an OOA involves the use of three methods, the group score method, the group means method and implicational scaling. The first step is to calculate accuracy scores. For this purpose, it is necessary to determine which morpheme will be investigated (we will repeat the process with each morpheme). Then, the obligatory occasions for the use of the morpheme will be identified and counted. After that, we must determine if the correct morpheme is provided in each obligatory context, counting also the number of times it is supplied. The formula used to calculate the percentage of accurate use would be the following:

$(\text{number of correct supplings in contexts} / \text{total obligatory contexts}) \times 100.$

In this case, accuracy must be understood as whether the morpheme has been supplied on all occasions in which it was required.

In the case of the sentence mentioned above (*“On a typical Sunday, I play basketball in park.”), the morpheme investigated was the article (a, an, the). The percentage of accurate use would be calculated as follows:

total obligatory contexts = 2

number of correct supplings in contexts = 1

formula: $(\text{number of correct supplings in contexts} / \text{total obligatory contexts}) \times 100$

percentage of accurate use = $\frac{1}{2} \times 100 = 50\%$

For the morpheme to be considered acquired, it needs to reach a level of 80-90% of correct supplings. Although the analysis in obligatory occasions does not provide a complete view of language acquisition, it still provides valuable information about the acquisition of grammatical items.

OOA has also been criticized. One criticism is that the analysis does not provide information about whether learners understand the functions of the morphemes that they have acquired (Ellis & Barkhuizen, 2005). Another problem is that this approach does not consider occasions in which a feature has been supplied in a context where it is not obligatory (Ellis, 1994). For these reasons, language acquisition should be measured based on the use of a linguistic feature or the absence of such use.

Furthermore, Ellis and Barkhuizen (2005) make a few suggestions to solve the problems in the OOA method. These suggestions include expanding the set of morphemes to be investigated, grouping learners by proficiency level to analyze the accuracy of

morphemes at the same level of proficiency, and using an approach that considers correct suppliance and overuse of a morpheme.

In order to solve the problem of the consideration of correct suppliance and overuse of a morpheme, Pica (1983) proposed a scoring method that includes the incorrect use of the morpheme. This method is called ‘target-like use analysis’ and examines how well the learners can produce certain linguistic features, considering the overuse of the morpheme and giving more reliable information about the acquisition of the linguistic feature. As an example of overuse of a morpheme, we will use the following sentence: “*On a typical Sunday, I play the basketball in park”, where there is overuse of the article “the” (*the basketball*).

The formula used in the OOA, initially proposed by Brown (1973), was modified by Pica (1983) to include the suppliance in non-obligatory contexts:

(number of correct suppliance in contexts/ n obligatory contexts + n suppliance in non-obligatory contexts) x100.

The ‘target-like use analysis’ method was an improvement for scoring accuracy in the use of morphemes (VanPatten & Benati, 2010). This approach also attempts to determine how the linguistic nature of certain morphemes affects their use in obligatory and non-obligatory contexts and how the contexts affect their use. In addition, this type of analysis is useful to provide information on the contribution of instruction to the acquisition of morphemes.

It is worth mentioning that the accurate use of a certain linguistic feature of the TL does not necessarily involve knowledge of the function of the form. This means that the student has learned to use this linguistic feature as a chunk (N.C. Ellis, 1996). Additionally, because both OOA and target-like use analysis compare learner language and TL norms, there is a risk of “comparative fallacy”; in other words, none of the

analyses considers that learner language is a unique system in the process of learning the TL (Ellis 1994, p.75).

As seen above, OOA has also been criticized, but the morpheme order studies still have an important role in L2 acquisition research as well as potential pedagogical implications. Furthermore, morpheme order studies remain relevant because they emphasize a “deep understanding of language transfer, and a more complex view of the mechanisms that rule language development” (Kwon, 2005, p.17). Luk and Shirai (2009) show evidence of significant L1 transfer in morpheme acquisition, concluding that learners can acquire a grammatical morpheme (in this case, plural-s, articles, and the possessive ‘s) later or earlier than predicted by the so-called “natural order”, depending on the presence or lack thereof of the equivalent category in their L1. A related conclusion was drawn by Chrabaszcz and Jiang (2014), who studied the use of the English nongeneric definite article. They found that L1 Spanish learners of English (speakers of a language with a complex article system) use the English nongeneric definite article with almost native-like accuracy, while Russian learners (whose L1 does not have articles) have a greater tendency to omit articles in their oral production. From this comparison, the conclusion is that different article contexts do not present equal difficulty for L2 learners, and that learners from different L1s employ different strategies for determining the use of the L2 article.

As previously stated, studies based on morpheme order are still relevant in the field of L2 acquisition. There are current studies that use OOA as an aid to achieving their objectives. Below we present some studies that have included this method for the analysis of morpheme acquisition, whether as the major approach of the study or as a supplementary method.

Wei (2000) attempted to explain the relevance of the distinction between content morphemes (those which assign or receive thematic roles within a projection of complementizers) and system morphemes (those which neither assign nor receive thematic roles). He also differentiates between early and late system morphemes when explaining the levels of accurate production based on the 4-M model (a model of morpheme classification proposed to account for other bilingual phenomena).

The subjects in this study were 60 adult native speakers of Chinese and Japanese learners of English (L2). They were divided into three groups for each L1 background consisting of 10 people based on their stages of development in the acquisition of the L2: pre-basic, basic, and beyond-basic. The subjects were interviewed, and their speech was transcribed and analyzed. Likewise, learners described some pictures in order to provide information about the language used in their descriptions. The cross-sectional study adopted a quantitative methodology in collecting data for the designed tasks. The OOA was used as a method for counting the frequency of occurrence of the morphemes under investigation. To apply this method, the learner had to produce a target linguistic item in a particular verbal interaction context, and the author counted as errors the items that the learners did not produce or produced incorrectly.

Wei (2000) used Poisson Regression to model the frequency of occurrence obtained in the OOA and to predict the performance of the dependent variables via one or more independent variables. As a result, the model of morpheme classification assumes that there are three types of system morphemes as well as content morphemes. The four-way classification of morphemes can effectively explain why certain errors are more common than others and determine the sequence of morpheme accuracy/frequency production. The results also indicate an implicational hierarchy of morpheme acquisition: content morphemes (e.g., verbs and nouns) are acquired before any system morphemes

(e.g., determiners and most auxiliary verbs) and early system morphemes are acquired before later system morphemes. To sum up, not all elements have the same accuracy order.

Bitchener, Young, and Cameron (2005) contributed to research on grammar correction in L2 writing classes by investigating the effects of different types of feedback on accuracy in writing, including the obligatory analysis formula as one of the methods used in their research. The participants were migrant learners from several Asian and European countries who had recently entered a post-intermediate English to Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) program. The participants were divided into three treatment groups with different amounts of hours of instruction per week. However, the same amount of time was spent teaching grammar in each of these three classes, which were mainly focused on writing instruction. These three classes also received the same amount of attention in writing skills, and the learners had to write different pieces of writing over a 12-week period. Group one received direct written corrective feedback and a five-minute conference after each piece of writing. Group two received direct written corrective feedback only. Group three did not receive corrective feedback on the targeted items, but they were given feedback on the quality and organization of their content to satisfy ethical requirements.

First, the frequencies of the targeted errors, particularly prepositions, the past simple tense, and the definite article were determined. Then, the accurate performance at three levels (linguistic error, time, and feedback) was calculated as the percentage of correct usage of each targeted linguistic form (the formula of OOA). The study found a significant effect for the combination of written feedback and face-to-face conferences for feedback on accuracy levels in the use of the past simple tense and the definite article.

However, there was no effect on accuracy improvement for feedback types when the three error categories were considered as a single group.

Farrokhi and Sattarpour (2011) investigated whether direct focused corrective feedback and direct unfocused corrective feedback caused any differential effects on the accurate use of English articles across two different proficiency levels. They used the OOA to measure the acquisition of the accurate use of the morphemes of the indefinite article and the definite article. The participants were Iranian EFL learners who were divided into low and high proficiency levels on the basis of the grades they obtained in a TOEFL test. Then learners in each proficiency level formed two experimental groups and one control group (20 students each group). Students in one experimental group were provided with focused written corrective feedback, and the other experimental group received unfocused written corrective feedback. Students wrote five narrative texts, one writing pre-test, and one writing post-test.

The OOA was used by Farrokhi and Sattarpour (2011) to calculate the writing test scores and measure the differential effects of the treatments on the acquisition of the accurate use of the indefinite article and the definite article. The results indicated that the focused group had a better performance than both unfocused and control groups in terms of accurate use of English articles in both proficiency levels. The study concludes that the effectiveness of unfocused corrective feedback is limited, while focused corrective feedback is a more effective technique to improve learners' grammatical accuracy in L2 writing.

Amirghassemi and Saeidi (2013) presented a study that proposes scaffolded written corrective feedback with the purpose of exploring how much graduated and contingent provision of written feedback is helpful in improving L2 students' written accuracy. They incorporated the OOA as a part of the method to calculate writing test

scores, focusing on the morphemes of English articles and past tense. The participants were male and female Iranian university students majoring in English with low to intermediate English proficiency. The students took the Cambridge Preliminary English Test (PET) (a test that measures general proficiency) and worked on three narrative writing tests.

The study by Amirghassemi and Saeidi (2013) used a quasi-experimental design with a pre-test, post-test and delayed post-test structure, using three randomly assigned experimental groups (Direct Corrective Feedback, Indirect Corrective Feedback and Scaffolded Corrective Feedback) and a control group. Two linguistic structures were targeted to measure the subjects' accuracy performance: English articles and the past tense. Writing test scores (pretest, immediate and delayed posttest) were calculated by means of OOA. The results showed that the effectiveness of Corrective Feedback (CF) is fairly dependent on the type of error to be corrected, concluding that for certain linguistic categories, the amount and method of corrective feedback presentation could also be a determining factor in its efficacy.

In a more recent study, Khan (2014) aimed to determine the sequence of presentation of grammatical morphemes in English textbooks prescribed by the Punjab Textbook Board for primary level learners (5-10 years) in Pakistan and its relation with morpheme acquisition in young learners. The Pakistani students (Urdu-speaking EFL learners) answered a questionnaire with three parts: essay writing, a grammar exercise, and a translation activity. The OOA was conducted here to calculate the accuracy level in the use of morphemes. The results show that the sequence of presentation of grammatical morphemes in EFL textbooks for primary level learners in Pakistan is significantly different from the L2 order of morpheme acquisition proposed by Dulay and Burt (1974b). The conclusions indicate that the sequence of presentation of grammatical

morphemes in EFL textbooks does not affect the order of morpheme acquisition, but it slows down the rate of morpheme acquisition.

As can be seen, OOA is relevant in research, especially when it comes to investigating aspects about morpheme acquisition. Research on morpheme acquisition also emphasizes a better understanding of the accuracy in the use of specific linguistic features, involving a “[...] comparison between the forms used by the learners and target language forms” (Ellis & Barkhuizen, 2005, p.73).

3.4 Other forms of identifying and analyzing errors

Apart from the three predominant methods presented above, other methods have marked an improvement in evaluating development in the TL. These methods usually work with longitudinal data. One of them is Frequency Analysis, which consists of the examination of different devices used by learners to perform a certain grammatical feature (Ellis & Barkhuizen, 2005). A Frequency Analysis is based on known formulae of detection measures; however, there are problems when the formulaic and productive uses are separated.

Another method that works with longitudinal data is Emergence Analysis. Its aim is locating the point in time of emergence of a linguistic structure, which means that a learner has begun to use a linguistic structure (Pienemann, 1984). However, emergence as a criterion for acquisition was criticized due to its lack of rigor. In this method, there are no quantitative or qualitative criteria that the student’s production can meet, so it can be considered as evidence for the operation of a predicted processing strategy (Hulstijn, 1987).

Furthermore, we can mention the Interlanguage Analysis proposed by Mizuno (1988). This method analyzes L2 learner language of other aspects apart from errors such as process, vocabulary, discourse, semantic differences, and communicative strategy.

With respect to measures of linguistic accuracy in L2 research, Polio (1997) mentions measures such as holistic scales (in language and vocabulary), error-free T-units, as well as error count and classification. These measures are commonly used in text analysis and will be briefly described below.

According to Polio (1997), holistic scales can include descriptors concerning vocabulary, spelling, punctuation, syntax, morphology, idiom use, paragraph indentation, and word form. She claims that some of these holistic scales try to quantify the number of errors, using words such as “frequent” and “occasional.”; whereas, other scales attempt to characterize the quality of the language with terms such as “significant”, “meaning disrupted”, “effective”, and “sophisticated.” The holistic scales can go further than counting the number of errors and allow the rater to also consider the severity of the errors made by the L2 learner.

Regarding error-free T-units, it is necessary to mention first that Hunt (1965) introduced the T-unit, also known as minimal terminable unit, to measure the development of sentences in the writing of grade-school children. A T-unit can be defined as one independent clause and its dependent clauses. In order to use this measure, two elements must be determined: the unit (clause or T-unit) and the meaning of “error-free”. Error-free T-units are a form of quantifying errors, but this method is not useful to detail the quality of such errors. Another problem is that it is difficult to achieve interrater reliability on these measures since the meaning of “error-free” may not be well-defined. Moreover, the approach of error-free T units does not differentiate between one and more than one error per T unit (Polio, 1997, p.112-113).

As opposed to tallying the number of error-free T units, accuracy can be measured by counting the individual number of errors. Error counts better reflect the number of errors than error-free T units, and it is a more suitable option in case of homogeneous

populations. Another alternative to counting individual errors is the classification of these errors. This information on the classification of errors, and not only on the number of individual errors, can be very useful. In addition, error count allows for a higher interrater reliability (Polio, 1997).

Similarly, Polio and Shea (2014) mention measures such as holistic scales (in language and vocabulary), error-free T-units, the number of errors (including the number of errors per word), the number of specific error types, and measures that take error severity into account.

In the case of language transfer, some of the methods mentioned above can be used depending on the language samples obtained and the approach of the research. At this point, it is necessary to mention that Jarvis (2000) proposed methodological improvements to the method of CA by requiring three types of evidence: *intra-L1-group-homogeneity* (i.e., learners with the same L1 behave similarly when using the same L2), *inter-L1-group-heterogeneity* (i.e., learners with different L1s behave differently in their use of L2), and *intra-L1-group congruity* (i.e., learners' L2 use corresponds to the use of a particular feature in their L1). Nevertheless, obtaining the three types of evidence is very difficult (Jarvis, 2000). This approach can be a reliable means of identifying language transfer because transfer originates from individual language users' knowledge of the source language, which may not be identical to grammatical descriptions provided by linguists (Jarvis & Pavlenko, 2008).

As mentioned above, the present study focuses on language transfer in written production. In the next chapter, we will review previous research on this topic in both second and foreign language settings.

Chapter 4: Previous Work on Language Transfer in Writing Skills

As already mentioned, when the L1 and the L2 come into contact during the learning process, confusion often causes errors in the use of the L2. In the case of writing skills, these errors include aspects such as syntax (word order), agreement (grammatical agreement between subjects and verbs), collocation (words that go together), or word choice (Harmer, 2004). Writing skills can also be transferred from the L1 to the L2 in terms of punctuation, style, organization, grammar, spelling, code-switching, among others. In this regard, numerous studies have been conducted in this field since the beginning of the 1980s.

In what follows, we will review some of the most relevant research on language transfer in writing skills that considers the types of transfer errors made by learners, as well as the influence of the type of task and the learners' proficiency level on those errors.

When addressing different types of errors or structures in L2 writing that can be transferred from the L1, authors such as Edelsky (1982), Lanauze and Snow (1989), Alonso (1997), Bhela (1999), Salehuddin, Hua, and Maros (2006), López (2011), Mourssi (2013), and Cabrera et al. (2014), have focused on various structures in ESL (exposure to English in a setting where English is officially used) and EFL (exposure to English in a setting where English is not the official language) contexts. These studies will be detailed below.

4.1 Language transfer in ESL contexts

This section summarizes relevant research that has been conducted in the field of language transfer in L2 writing in ESL contexts. We will present these studies below.

Edelsky (1982) investigated the transfer of some writing skills from L1 (Spanish) to L2 (English) with 26 children (6-9 years old) who were 1st (nine children), 2nd (nine children) and 3rd graders (eight children) in a bilingual program with special emphasis on

ESL writing in northwest Phoenix (USA). In order to analyze the learners' writing, the regular classroom written work of these children was collected four different times during the school year. The 477 Spanish and 49 English pieces were analyzed according to various aspects such as code-switching, spelling inventions, nonspelling conventions (including segmentation and punctuation), structural features (including, beginnings, endings, and links between prepositions), other content features (including stylistic devices, characters, settings, etc.), and raters' subjective impressions of attributes of quality in the content. The results showed similarities and differences related to the aforementioned aspects in both the Spanish and English texts. It was concluded that, despite these similarities or differences, certain underlying L1 writing processes had been used in the L2 writing.

Similarly, Lanauze and Snow (1989) examined the relationship between the L1 and the L2 writing skills of thirty-eight 4th and 5th graders in a Spanish-English bilingual program in Puerto Rico. After being evaluated by Spanish and English teachers, the participants were divided into three groups: 17 children rated as good in both English and Spanish (GG), 12 children rated as poor in English but good in Spanish (PG), and a group of nine rated as poor in both languages (PP). The participants completed a task consisting in describing pictures in both Spanish and English. Approximately, half the children did the Spanish first, and half did the English first. The written essays were scored for a number of indicators of language complexity and sophistication, for language variety, and for indicators of how much and what kind of information was provided about the picture (e.g., number of different verbs, different words/total words, different verbs/total words, general and specific descriptions, etc.). The results of this study indicated that students used what they knew about writing in their L1 and about strategies for description when performing in L2. It was also found that the PG children made more spelling errors and

more language interference errors in English than GG children, whereas the PP group performed worst in both languages.

Uzawa (1996) compared second language learners' L1 (Japanese) writing, L2 (English) writing, and translation from L1 into L2. The aspects analyzed were writing and translating processes, attention patterns, and quality of language use. Twenty-two Japanese ESL students participated in the study. They were learning English at a Canadian post-secondary institution for Japanese high school graduates. Their teachers mentioned that the participants' English proficiency levels were not high enough to enter a university in North America. Additionally, the participants did not have professional experience in writing or translation.

Before starting the writing tasks, students practiced thinking aloud while writing and answered a questionnaire on educational background. Then, the learners performed three writing tasks: L1 writing (Describe the most difficult adjustment that you have had to make a living in Canada), L2 writing (What is the most important difference between Canadian and Japanese society?), and translation from Japanese into English (translation of a journal article). The researcher took observational notes and recorded the think aloud utterances while the students were writing. After the writing tasks, students were interviewed. The questions were related to L2 writing and translation tasks for language learning. All the tape-recorded think-aloud protocols were transcribed and later were segmented and coded. Two independent judges evaluated the quality of the written texts. The results showed that most students used a "sentence-by-sentence" approach in the translation task. The attention patterns were similar in the L1 and L2 writing tasks but different in the translation task. In addition, the attention to language use in the translation task was significantly higher than in the L1 and L2 writing tasks.

Saffari, Noordin, Sivapalan, and Zahedpisheh (2017) examined the negative transfer of the L1 rhetoric in Iranian undergraduate ESL learners' writings from the perspectives of choosing rhetorical structure in L2 (English) and Persian (L2) writing. For this purpose, 50 Iranian undergraduate students (22 male and 28 female, aged 20-24), who held bachelor's degrees in engineering fields at two higher education institutions in Malaysia, were selected to give their views about the styles they prefer for both English and Persian writing. They had an operational command of the English language (intermediate level of English proficiency).

The participants answered a questionnaire about their experiences in English and Persian writing. The response data on the 5-point Likert-type scale were divided into low frequency (for "strongly disagree", "disagree", and "neither agree nor disagree") and high frequency (for "agree" and "strongly agree"). The findings suggest that students were likely to use Persian-preferred rhetorical styles while writing in English. A statistical analysis of the responses points out that Iranian ESL students transfer L1 rhetorical knowledge. This knowledge shows itself in different L1 rhetorical patterns in L2 writing. It was also proven that L1 rhetorical patterns appear in the L2 essays. Learners introduce the topic briefly to engage the readers' interest. The learners also prefer to give a general comment about the topic and encourage readers at the end of the writing in their English and Persian essays.

Other studies conducted on language transfer in ESL contexts have focused on the influence of L2 proficiency on language transfer (e.g., Wang, 2003; Chan, 2010) and on the influence of the type of writing task on language transfer (e.g. Cumming, 1989; Kubota 1998). For this reason, these studies will be detailed below (see sections 4.3 and 4.4).

4.2 Language transfer in EFL contexts

Some studies about language transfer in L2 writing have been conducted in EFL contexts. Some of the most relevant ones are summarized below.

Alonso (1997) carried out a study with 28 first-year high school students (aged 14-15) in Galicia, a region in northwest Spain. Her goal was to report the main types of negative transfer errors that EFL Spanish students make, as well as the word classes associated with those errors. The students wrote a composition in which they were asked to describe the last film they had seen. The compositions were analyzed by counting the occurrences of interlingual errors (transfer of structure, overextension of analogy, substitution, and interlingual/intralingual errors). These interlingual errors were also classified according to the word class (noun, adjective, adverb, verb, determiner, pronoun, preposition, conjunction, others). The results showed that most of the errors when writing in a foreign language are related to transfer of the structure of the learners' L1 (Spanish). The findings of her study reveal that the mother tongue is the main cause of interference when writing in a foreign language. From the corpus obtained, some examples of utterances produced by students were described to explain the interference.

When learners use structures from the L1 in the production of structures in the L2, the results can be both acceptable and inappropriate texts. This finding was reported in a study conducted by Bhela (1999) with four adult English L2 learners: a Spanish-speaking 21-year-old female, a Vietnamese-speaking 39-year-old female, a Cambodian-speaking 50-year-old female, and an Italian-speaking 65-year-old male. These EFL learners had to write two stories in English based on two sets of sequential pictures without a time limit and to give a logical sequence to the written story. The learners were also asked to write the same stories in the L1.

Through an interview, learners were asked about different aspects of their L1 and L2, including the reasons to use a specific structure, their knowledge about structures, judgments of semantic acceptability of sentences in L1 and L2, and self-correction of identified errors in the L2 text. While the researcher analyzed the learners' English texts, native language experts rated the semantic and syntactic acceptability of the L1 texts. The errors were then classified (e.g. apostrophe, punctuation, passive and active voice, prepositions, pronouns, tenses, capital letters, etc.) in the learners' L1 and L2, tallied, and compared. The results of this study showed that the learners had used some L1 structures to produce appropriate responses in the L2, which resulted in semantically acceptable texts. On the other hand, the learners had also used L1 structures interchangeably with L2 structures, which resulted in inappropriate L2 responses due to L1 interference.

Salehuddin, Hua, and Maros (2006) investigated Malay language interference in the production of English structures. Fifty-one EFL Malaysian secondary school students produced narrative essays in English classes. From the 51 essays, a corpus consisting of 873 sentences was constructed. The CA and EA approaches were used to analyze the information. The results indicate that the use of determiners is a possible problematic area for Malay learners of English. The different aspects of the incorrect use of English determiners that reflect the Malay grammar are related to specific places of location, instrument, countries as adjectives, name of subject, agreement with the noun, and cardinal numbers. The differences in the possessive forms in both languages could also be a cause of errors.

López (2011) attempted to demonstrate that similarities or differences between the L1 (Spanish) and the L2 (English) can respectively facilitate or hinder the use of L2 structures. For this purpose, in this EFL context, twenty-four students of the first semester at UNICA University in Colombia were asked to write five papers in English during the

semester. Teachers and students were interviewed, and their responses were then compared with students' English papers to see if there were any similarities between what they all answered and what students wrote. The interviews were about how students use Spanish when writing in English, how much they use English-English and Spanish-English dictionaries, and how much they know about the different written structures in both L1 and L2. Additionally, three interventions consisting of teaching grammar lessons were performed. One of these interventions took place at the beginning of the semester, one in the middle of the semester and one at the end. The aim of these grammar lessons was to make students realize that Spanish written structures are not the same as English written structures. The data from the interviews and the Spanish interference errors in students' papers were analyzed quantitatively.

López (2011) determined that language transfer influenced aspects such as punctuation, spelling, prepositions, capital letters, tenses, pronouns, adverbs, plurals, and vocabulary. Findings in this research study showed that the L2 grammar mistakes significantly decreased after the participants received grammatical instruction. Finally, the results also indicated the predominance of negative transfer at the beginning stages of EFL writing. It is important to notice that this study used only twenty-four university students, which can be considered a small sample. In addition, despite the crucial interventions to teach grammar, this study did not compare different groups of students and/or different types of essays.

Mourssi (2013) focused on the L2 acquisition of the simple past tense. This study was conducted during 4 months with 74 Arab EFL learners, with ages ranging between 16 and 18, and pre-intermediate to intermediate EFL proficiency levels. There was a quantitative analysis of the simple past tense forms produced in 222 written texts, which had been collected from each subject at three stages in the experiment. The analysis of

the simple past forms in the pieces of writing appears to indicate that Arabic influenced the acquisition of the English simple past. There was contrastive interference from the L2, namely overgeneralization of newly encountered rules, where learners overgeneralize the L2 structure when forming another linguistic item. Furthermore, Moursi proposed the L1 Transfer Strategy, in which particular forms produced by Arab learners of English are caused by differences between the L1 and L2. This strategy focused on two types of uses of grammar structures: the first uses the verb to be + stem, simple past, past participle or gerund (e.g., were wanted, was came). The second type used *to* + *stem*, or simple past (e.g., to went, to called). In conclusion, most of the past tense forms produced appear to indicate crosslinguistic transfer of L1 (Arabic) in acquiring linguistic items of L2 (English).

Cabrera et al. (2014) conducted a study with the purpose of determining the negative transfer of L1 (Spanish) to L2 (English) in an EFL environment. This research was carried out with 351 (139 male and 212 female) students and 42 teachers in second year senior high schools (public and private) in Ecuador. These students were EFL learners aged between 15 and 18 years old. The instruments used were student and teacher questionnaires that included questions about background information related to English language instruction. The questions also dealt with aspects such as students' learning preferences, teacher's and student's instruction, teaching writing skills, and L1 interference. Learners also participated in a written task in which they wrote a narrative passage in English. The information gathered from the narrative passages was analyzed, and the errors were tallied to classify L1 interference errors. There was also an explanation of error samples based on a linguistic analysis.

The results from Cabrera et al. (2014) indicate that English grammar and vocabulary were the linguistic areas with the highest level of L1 negative interference. The most frequent negative interference errors were misuse of verbs, omission of personal and object pronouns, misuse of prepositions, overuse of articles, and inappropriate/unnatural word order. Finally, some suggestions were also given to teachers in order to help students prevent L1 interference problems in their written production. Although this study was conducted on a large sample of students from different high schools, there was no comparison of results among students with different levels of proficiency.

More studies related to language transfer in EFL contexts have been already summarized in chapter 3 (Laufer and Girsai, 2008; Alhaysony, 2012; Fatermi & Ziaei, 2012; Gómez-Castejón, 2012; Zawahreh, 2013; Zheng & Park, 2013).

There are also studies on language transfer in EFL contexts that focus on the influence of the type of L2 proficiency level (e.g. Kim & Yoon, 2014) and writing task on language transfer (e.g. Roca de Larios, Murphy & Manchón, 1999; Wang & Wen, 2002; Watcharapunyawong & Usaha, 2013). These studies will be explained below (see section 4.4.)

In what follows, we will briefly summarize those studies in both ESL and EFL contexts that have considered the variables of proficiency level and type of task in L2 writing as these are the ones that are the focus of the present study.

4.3 Influence of L2 proficiency on language transfer in writing

Pennington and So (1993) describe a study on six female Singaporean university students as they produced written texts in Japanese (L2) and, for comparison, in their L1 (English or Chinese). The study examines process and product data separately to see if

any relationship exists between an individual writer's process skill and product quality in the two languages. The proficiency level of the students was rated as one semi-experienced student (intermediate-high level), two inexperienced students (intermediate level), and three experienced students (high level). The students wrote a narrative task both in their L1 and L2. A case-study approach was used through the techniques of direct observation (recording their writing strategies and behaviors) and retrospective interviews to ensure minimal interference with the participants' ongoing writing process. Later on, a synthesis of the statistical and charted data of the writing process, the written pieces produced during the process, the retrospective self-reports on the writing, and the subject's background information yielded an overview of the whole writing process of each subject. The essays were rated in terms of content, organization, vocabulary, language use, and mechanics.

The findings in Pennington and So (1993) indicate that there is neither a clear relationship between process and product data in either language, nor between written products in the two languages (e.g., the subjects who received high ratings in their L1 essays did not necessarily receive high ratings in their L2 essays, and conversely). Simultaneously, the investigation uncovers a similarity in the writing process for individual subjects across the two languages, as well as a relationship between the general level of proficiency in Japanese and the quality of the subjects' written products in that language. In addition, the quality of written products in the L2 showed a consistent relationship with the subjects' general Japanese proficiency rather than a relationship between such proficiency and the quality of the written products in the L1.

Wang (2003) investigated the language switching (L-S) behaviors of eight adult Chinese-speaking ESL learners with differing proficiency in English. Through this study,

he aimed to uncover some important aspects of variation in L-S in individuals' L2 writing processes and the effects of L-S on L2 learners' written texts. The participants (whose age range was 25-34) held university degrees and were enrolled in an ESL school in Toronto. Four students were identified as learners with high levels of English proficiency (HP), while the other four other students were labeled as learners with low levels of English proficiency (LP). They answered two sets of questionnaires in order to identify the participants appropriately and illustrate their L-S behaviors. The learners also performed two writing tasks. The letter task asked participants to write an informal letter describing the most difficult adjustment that a friend had to make while living in Canada. In the argument task, the participants expressed their opinions regarding the question "Should divorce be made easier or more difficult?". The two writing tasks were written at two separate writing sessions while thinking aloud. The think-aloud verbalizations were recorded.

The data were the students' think-aloud protocols, retrospective interviews, questionnaires, and written compositions. Quantitative and qualitative analyses of think-aloud protocols, questionnaires, and written compositions showed that the participants' frequencies of language-switching varied slightly by their L2 proficiency. The HP and LP participants frequently switched to their L1 (Chinese) for three common purposes: idea generation, lexical searching, and metacomments. The interesting result here is that HP participants switched to their L1 more frequently than the LP participants did while composing the two writing tasks.

Chan (2010) used transfer analysis (the analysis of factors that can cause language transfer between L1 and L2) in L2 acquisition as one of the basis to examine common lexicogrammatical problems found in Cantonese ESL learners' written English production. This study was conducted with 387 Hong Kong Cantonese ESL learners from

three levels of proficiency, including 65 adult learners from three local universities and 322 students from five local secondary schools (aged 14-17). One hundred and twenty-four (n=124) students were from grade 9 (ages 13-15), and 198 students from grade 12 (ages 16-18) in the USA. The university students were categorized as advanced (A), the sample of 124 students from secondary schools were categorized as lower intermediate (L-I), and the sample of 198 students as upper intermediate (U-I). Learners wrote a descriptive and narrative free-writing task in English. Then, anomalous structures were identified in the corpus obtained.

A comparison between interlanguage strings and equivalent strings in the mother tongue (which is considered a subprocedure of EA) was carried out to determine crosslinguistic influences. The lexicogrammatical error types identified included vocabulary compensation and inaccurate directionality, calquing, existential structures, incorrect ordering of adverbials, and independent clauses as subjects. In the analysis of results, the percentage of errors caused by L1 negative transfer (e.g., omission of copulas, synonym confusion, misuse of conjunctions, duplicated comparatives or superlatives, and omission of subjects) varied across the three levels of proficiency, with the L-I students having a higher percentage of these errors and the A students having a lower percentage. Nevertheless, the differences in errors between the descriptive and narrative free-writing tasks in English are not specified. The results also indicate that, besides the mastery of the correct use of the L2 (e.g., lack of awareness of L2 norms, misapplication of L2 rules), lack of facilitation from L1, and universal processes, the mother tongue influence was an important source of problems as well.

It is worth noticing that the study by Chan (2010) used two different types of written tasks. However, the author did not compare the differences in errors between these types of tasks.

Other studies that address the influence of L2 proficiency on the L1 written work are the ones carried out by Cumming (1989), Wang and Wen (2002), and Kim and Yoon (2014), who concluded that the higher-level writers tend to depend less on the L1 than the lower-level writers. Basically, L2 writers use less and less L1 for writing as they become more proficient in the L2. These studies will be detailed in the next section since their focus is the comparison of the effect of writing tasks on L2 written production.

In what follows, we will briefly review language transfer studies that work with different types of writing tasks (genres) in the L2, establishing a comparison between these types.

4.4 Influence of the type of writing task on language transfer

In our study, when we talk about types of writing tasks, we are referring to genre in writing. A variety of text genres can be distinguished in writing in which some language features vary according to the genre. Two main types can be identified: narrative and non-narrative (e.g., expository, argumentative) (Beers & Nagy, 2011). In this context, research suggests that non-narrative texts are generally more challenging in terms of linguistic complexity (Ravid, 2005; Way, Joiner, & Seaman, 2000). As for language transfer, there is also research that compares differences in text genres in writing.

Cumming (1989) assessed the impact of L1 (French) writing expertise and the L2 (English) proficiency on the L2 writing performance of 23 Francophone ESL learners. The participants were young adults (in their late teens and early 20s) who were studying in an English/French bilingual program at an Ontario university in Canada. These students were classified according to their writing expertise in French (3 levels: professionally experienced writers (n=5), average student writers (n=8), and basic writers (n=10)) and proficiency in ESL (intermediate and advanced). They wrote 3 tasks in

English: an informal letter, an expository argument, and a summary of a booklet. They were also asked to think-aloud in the language or languages they were thinking in while writing.

The think-aloud information was transcribed, and the quality of the texts of the 68 compositions produced for the 3 tasks was rated for content, discourse, organization, and language use. The study of the think-aloud protocols revealed six strategies used by the participants to solve problems found during their composing: engaging a search routine (e.g. enumeration, association), direct translation or code-switching (including use of cross-linguistic resources), generating and assessing alternatives, assessing in relation to a criterion, standard explanation or rule, relating parts to whole, and setting or adhering to a goal.

After a statistical analysis of the data, it was determined that writing expertise was related to qualities of discourse organization and content, decision making, and problem-solving behaviors. In addition, the ratings of the 3 qualities (content, discourse organization, and language use) differed significantly across the three tasks. This means that the argument and the summary were more cognitively demanding than the letter. It was also concluded that writing expertise and second-language proficiency make quite different contributions to the processes and products of writing. For example, the differences in ratings given to discourse organization and content (not language use) were significantly related to participants' writing expertise. The participants with more expertise and higher ESL proficiency had higher ratings in their compositions, so L2 proficiency was an additive factor that enhanced the quality of the writing production.

Kubota (1998) conducted a study with Japanese university students comparing expository essays written by 22 students and persuasive essays written by 24 students. The purpose was to investigate if Japanese students use the same discourse pattern in L1

and ESL writing and how each individual's usage of similar/dissimilar patterns affects the quality of L2 essays. For this reason, each participant wrote two essays, one in Japanese and one in English. Participants were interviewed about their writing and views on rhetorical styles. Both Japanese and English essays were evaluated for organization. L2 essays were also rated in terms of language use through statistical analysis of errors and students' responses to interviews. The results showed slight differences in some aspects related to transfer in writing such as organization and overall rhetorical patterns between Japanese and English, and between expository and persuasive essays. Furthermore, the inductive rhetorical patterns were more common in Japanese than English essays and more common in persuasive than expository essays across languages. The data also suggest that L1 writing ability, English proficiency, genre, and composing experience in English have an effect on the quality of L2 essays.

Roca de Larios, Murphy and Manchón (1999) also investigated the transfer of L1 writing skills to the L2. In their paper, they report two small-scale studies that analyzed how restructuring is used by Spanish EFL learners. Restructuring is an important formulation strategy in L2 composing by which the interlanguage continuum or transitional competence is seen as the gradual restructuring or replacement of structures in the L1 by those of the L2 (e.g. one frequent source of problems is that of the learners who have a form in the L1 to which they do not have access in the L2. This might well be accentuated in the case of those writers who prefer translation as the strategy of text generation). The participants were five Spanish EFL learners in the Faculty of Education at the University of Murcia, who were finishing the second year of a three-year initial training course for teachers of English. The data for the study were obtained by analyzing the subjects' think-aloud protocols while writing an argumentative and a narrative writing task in their L1(Spanish) and L2 (English).

The results of the study demonstrated that, in spite of the L2 proficiency level, the participants approached their search for words with the assistance of their L1. They also used back-translation to go over the written text and revise it. This means that the translation of structures and vocabulary from and to their mother tongue was widely used by EFL learners regardless of their English level. The results also indicated that restructuring has various functions in the L2 writing process. There were significant differences between the two writing tasks (argumentative and a narrative writing task in their L1 and L2) in different aspects related to L1 and L2 composition such as ideational and textual restructuring as well as restructuring time with a slightly higher amount of these restructuring strategies used in the argumentative texts in both L1 and L2. In summary, they claim that these two types of tasks require different levels of register, rhetorical conventions, sources of information and relation to personal experience.

Wang and Wen (2002) used a story and an argument as writing tasks since narration is considered to be less demanding than the argumentative task. The purpose was to determine how Chinese EFL writers use their L1 when composing in their L2 and how L2 proficiency and writing tasks affect such L2. Their study was conducted with 16 English majors from Nanjing University in China. All the participants were female, ranging in age from 18-22 years. These Chinese EFL learners were asked to compose aloud (writing while thinking aloud) two tasks in English, a story (narration) and an argument (argumentation). The think-aloud method was used to have an idea of the writing process in the student writer's mind. This method involves participants in saying whatever comes to their mind (e.g., what they are looking at, thinking, doing, and feeling) as they complete the task, thus, giving insight into the learners' cognitive processes. Then, the student writers' think-aloud tapes containing the information provided by students

(how they did task examination, idea generation, idea organization, text generation, writing processes) were transcribed, and the composing process was coded.

A statistical analysis of the think-aloud protocols showed that the students used both their L1 and L2 when composing in their L2. The results indicate that students were more likely to rely on their L1 when they were managing their writing processes, generating, and organizing ideas, but more likely to rely on their L2 when doing task-examining and text-generating activities. Regarding levels of L2 proficiency, the study showed that the higher-level writers tend to depend less often on the L1 than the lower-level writers, namely in the case of text-generating activities (L2 writers will adopt less and less L1 for generating text as they become more proficient in the L2) and construction of sentences through L1-L2 translation (L2 writers will write more and more text directly in the L2 as they become proficient in the L2). This study also found significant differences in L1 use in the two EFL writing tasks. The participants used their L1 more frequently in the narrative writing task than in the argumentative writing task due to the observed dependence on their L1 when performing task-examining and idea-generating activities. In other words, learners used more L1 in narrative writing than in argumentative writing when they were managing their writing processes of generating and organizing ideas.

Watcharapunyawong and Usaha (2013) aimed at analyzing writing errors in English (L2) caused by transfer of the Thai (L1) language in three writing genres (narration, description, and comparison/contrast). The participants were 40 second-year English major students registered for a writing course called Writing Strategies in English at a university in Thailand. All of the students took two grammar courses, English Structure in Use, and English Structure in Context. The participants were assigned to write three paragraphs in three genres: narration (topic: "My Memorable Trip"),

description (topic: “My Ideal House”), and comparison/contrast (topic: “Watching News on Television VS Reading News from a Paper”), of at least 150 words each. The 120 English paragraphs written by these students were analyzed by using Error Analysis (EA). The three genres shared the same characteristics in terms of error categories with an obvious difference in the frequency of errors. The results revealed that the L1 transfer errors fell into 16 categories: verb tense, word choice, sentence structure, article, preposition, modal/auxiliary, singular/plural form, fragment, verb form, pronoun, run-on sentence, infinitive/gerund, transition, subject-verb agreement, parallel structure, and comparison structure. In the narrative writing task, the five most frequent errors found were verb tense, word choice, sentence structure, preposition, and modal/auxiliary, while the five most frequent errors in the descriptive and comparison/contrast task were article, sentence structure, word choice, singular/plural form, and subject-verb agreement. Apparently, genre has an effect on writing errors as different text types required different structural features.

Kim and Yoon (2014) explored the use of L1 in L2 writing tasks and the writing strategies in L1 that Korean learners of English use in L2 writing. The purpose was to understand how L2 (English) writers of different proficiency levels use their L1 (Korean) in various types of L2 composition. Nine Korean-speaking university students (3 at elementary; 3 at intermediate, and 3 at advanced EFL proficiency level) of diverse academic majors participated in the study. Their age ranged from 20 to 27 years old (4 male and 5 female). Two types of writing genres were employed: narrative writing (3 tasks) and argumentative writing (3 tasks). For the narrative writing, the tasks involved writing a personal letter, writing about something that went wrong in the writer’s life, and writing a story based on a sequence of pictures. For the argumentative writing, the tasks were about providing a cost comparison of spending money for a vacation or buying a

car, comparing different ways of learning about life, and expressing views on the statement that different clothes influence the way people behave.

The participants were asked to provide concurrent think-aloud protocols while writing. After each task, they were interviewed about the entire writing process including thinking aloud, the purpose of using their L1, the reason for any pauses while writing, or what he or she thought about during the pauses. After the students had finished their compositions, the researcher asked about their overall experience during the writing sessions. The results revealed that lower level students used their L1 much more than the advanced students. Their L1 usage increased with task difficulty, so they used more L1 in the argumentative tasks and the topics they were not familiar with. As for the writing strategies, the findings showed that the students of all three proficiency levels employed Idea generation, Direct-and Back translation, Metacomments, and Lexical searching. The low-proficiency students employed Metacomments, Language use, and Repeating more than high-proficiency students. However, the writing strategies that students applied in their L2 compositions were not significantly different regardless of proficiency, writing genres, and writing tasks.

Because the present study attempts to fill in some gaps existent in previous studies about language transfer, the next section will address them.

4.5 Gaps found in previous studies

Even though there can be positive and negative transfer between L1 and L2 writing, negative transfer seems to be much stronger (López, 2011; Cabrera et al., 2014). López (2011) and Cabrera et al. (2014) also state that the main areas of negative transfer from L1 to L2 writing are grammar and vocabulary; in other words, syntactical and lexical skills. These negative transfer errors would be reduced provided that learners have a higher level of English proficiency.

It has been found that the higher the L1 proficiency, the better the quality of the written production (Chan, 2010; Pennington & So, 1993; Wang & Wen, 2002; Zheng & Park, 2013). Regarding the influence of proficiency on language transfer, for example, Pennington and So (1993) showed that the quality of written products (in content, organization, vocabulary, language use, and mechanics) in the L2 (Japanese) had a consistent relationship with the subjects' general L2 proficiency rather than with the quality of the written products in the L1 (English and Chinese). In addition, although Wang and Wen (2002) was mentioned as a study that considers the type of tasks in language transfer, it also included a comparison of language transfer related to proficiency levels in L2 and showed that the higher-level writers tend to depend less often on the L1 than the lower-level writers, namely in text-generating activities and construction of sentences through L1-L2 translation. Likewise, in the study by Chan (2010), the percentage of errors caused by L1 negative transfer (e.g., omission of copulas, synonym confusion, misuse of conjunctions, duplicated comparatives or superlatives, and omission of subjects) varied depending on levels of proficiency, with the lower-intermediate students having a higher percentage of these errors than the advanced students. In this regard, Zheng and Park (2013) state that a proper exposure, practice and feedback in L2 writing must be provided in such a way that L2 learners' errors could be reduced. In the case of language transfer in writing, good syntactical and lexical skills in the L2 would also be important to improve written production. Nevertheless, in the studies above, the main focus is not the influence of L2 proficiency on grammar transfer errors.

As for the influence of different types of tasks on language transfer in writing, one example was Kubota (1998), which shows that inductive rhetorical patterns were more common in Japanese than English essays and more common in persuasive than expository essays across languages. Likewise, Roca de Larios, Murphy and Manchón (1999) used

two types of tasks (argumentative and narrative) in Spanish and English to analyze different aspects related to the strategy of restructuring in L1 and L2 composition. They claim that these two types of tasks require different levels of register, rhetorical conventions, sources of information and relation to personal experience. Wang and Wen (2002) also found significant differences in the influence of L1 use in two English writing tasks (narration and argumentation), with more L1 in the narrative task than in the argumentative one when learners were managing their writing processes of generating and organizing ideas. The aforementioned studies, however, do not examine grammatical transfer errors.

As can be seen, the research above includes aspects such as language transfer, the effect of L2 proficiency in language transfer in writing, and the influence of types of tasks on these transfer errors, which are the ones considered in the present study. Nevertheless, most of these studies are not only focused on grammatical transfer errors, but also on other aspects related to transfer such as organization, style, and writing skills (Roca de Larios, Murphy & Manchón, 1999; Wang & Wen, 2002). Other studies examined transfer and were conducted with a small sample (Bhela, 1999; Pennington & So, 1993), and the learners were from a variety of L1 backgrounds. The present study, however, focuses on grammatical language transfer errors in EFL writing using a relatively large sample of students (N=180).

There are also works that have some similarities (Cabrera et al., 2014; López, 2011) with the present study and analyze language transfer in EFL writing in a Latin-American context with emphasis on grammatical and lexical errors, and a predominance of grammatical errors. However, they did not compare the impact of proficiency or types of written tasks as factors that might influence grammatical transfer errors, which is another gap that our study intends to fill in.

The present study attempts to fill the gaps mentioned above by focusing on grammatical transfer errors from Spanish to English in the written production of Ecuadorian high-school students, comparing transfer errors across three different L2 proficiency levels of senior high school students (A1, A2, and B1) and between two types of writing tasks (narrative and argumentative writing). In addition, in almost all of the aforementioned studies (Kubota, 1998; López, 2011; Roca de Larios, Murphy & Manchón, 1999; Wang & Wen, 2002; Zheng & Park, 2013) the participants were college-level English learners, while our study has been carried out with adolescent EFL learners.

In order to carry out the analysis of grammatical transfer errors in the present study, it is important to have a knowledge of the common types of grammatical transfer errors made by L1 Spanish EFL learners. For this purpose, in the next chapter, we will examine pertinent literature and present examples of English sentences written by EFL learners in order to determine whether their source of error is indeed L1 (Spanish) transfer.

Chapter 5: Common Grammatical Transfer Errors Made by L1 Spanish-speaking EFL Learners

As the present study focuses on grammatical transfer errors, it is necessary to review previous research that has identified the most common errors made by Spanish EFL learners.

According to Dulay, Burt and Krashen (1982), grammatical errors are those that fall within the category of linguistic errors affecting constituents, e.g., verbs, adjectives, pronouns, conjunctions, prepositions, among others. As mentioned above, studies on transfer by Spanish EFL learners have reported that grammatical transfer errors are the most common (Alonso, 1997; Cabrera et al., 2014; López, 2011) compared to other types of errors such as those related to lexical items and mechanics.

In their corpus-based study with data from argumentative and literature essays by Spanish university EFL learners, Neff et al. (2006) reported that grammar (35%) and lexis (28%) account for two-thirds of the learners' errors, with grammar errors being the most frequent. The researchers established the following subcategories for grammatical errors: articles, nouns, pronouns, adjectives, adverb order, verb errors, and word class. Although Neff et al. (2006) see prepositions as the subcategory of lexis with the highest percentage of errors, our study will consider prepositions a grammatical subcategory because traditional approaches consider them grammatical items (Bordet & Jamet, 2010). Neff et al. (2006) found that the subcategories with the highest frequency of errors are articles, noun, verbs, and pronouns in comparison with other grammatical subcategories such as adjectives and adverbs.

Since our specific focus is grammatical transfer errors, we need to turn our attention to interlingual errors, which are the L2 errors caused by the learners' L1. In order to identify an interlingual error, the L1 is usually translated into the L2, and then both are compared to assess whether the learner's L1 utterance is discernible in the L2. We will

carry out this comparison below and refer to studies on language transfer by Spanish EFL learners.

Research about language transfer that considers grammatical errors in the interlanguage of Spanish EFL learners establishes categories of errors related to the ones that we have mentioned so far. For instance, Alonso (1997) reported that interlingual errors are more prevalent regarding transfer of structure (i.e., students' tendency to apply the rules of their L1 when they do not know the rules of the L2), that is, linguistic structures of the L1 are the main cause of errors in EFL writing, with the highest frequency in pronouns, verbs, prepositions, and phrases (more than two-word structures). On the other hand, she also determined that transfer of structure errors are less frequent when it comes to determiners, adjectives, and nouns, with adverbs and conjunctions being the least frequent of all.

López (2011) determined that there are four major kinds of errors that involve L1 transfer: word order, missing the verb *be*, implicit subject, and wrong use of the article *the*. Among these types of errors, word order was the most frequent error, and missing the verb *be* the least frequent.

More recently, Cabrera et al. (2014) also reported that grammatical transfer errors are more prevalent than lexical errors. Among the most frequent grammatical errors, they mention misuse of verbs, omission of pronouns, misuse of prepositions, overuse (or addition) of articles, and wrong word order.

In summary, most studies on grammatical transfer errors report that native Spanish-speaking EFL learners have problems with the use of articles, pronouns, verbs and prepositions, as well as negation, word order, and placement of articles in noun phrases. All these errors will be illustrated below.

5.1 Grammatical transfer errors in the use of definite articles

According to Neff et al. (2006), among the transfer errors related to article use, those about the use of the definite article are the most frequent. The following examples illustrate how transfer errors involving the addition of English definite articles render ungrammatical sentences due to the influence of Spanish:

(1) * L2: They frequently used the irony and humor (Neff et al., 2006, p. 211).

L2: They frequently used irony and humor.

L1: Usan frecuentemente la ironía y el humor.

(2) * L2: The Sunday I go to the Jipiro Park with my father and my mother (Cabrera et al., 2014, p. 46).

L2: On Sunday, I go to Jipiro Park with my father and my mother.

L1: El domingo voy al parque Jipiro con mi padre y mi madre.

(3) * L2: ...in the 2010 (López, 2011, p. 175).

L2: ...in 2010

L1: ... en el 2010

(4) * L2: We went hiking in the Lake District last autumn (García Mayo, 2008, p. 560).

L2: We went hiking in Lake District last autumn.

L1: Fuimos de caminata en el Lago District el otoño pasado.

(5) * L2: The people from around the world are meeting here today (García Mayo, 2008, p. 560).

L2: People from around the world are meeting here today.

L1: La gente de todo el mundo se reunirá aquí hoy.

Gente de todo el mundo se reunirá aquí hoy.

(6) * L2: The boss says to his employees, “I’m not happy with your work. The things are really going to have to change around here.” (García Mayo, 2008, p. 560)

L2: The boss says to his employees, “I’m not happy with your work. Things are really going to have to change around here.”

L1: El jefe le dice a sus empleados, “No estoy contento con su trabajo. Las cosas realmente tendrán que cambiar aquí.”

(7) * L2: The books are more expensive than the disks. (Raimés & Jerskey, 2011, p.511)

L2: Books are more expensive than disks.

L1: Los libros son más caros que los discos.

In the examples above, the overused article in English and the corresponding article in Spanish have been underlined. The addition of the definite article *the* is due to a transfer problem. Spanish uses definite articles (*el, la, los, las*) before nouns (e.g., days of the week, names of languages, body parts, clothing, sports, time, titles, etc.). However, English does not need to use articles before certain words such as days of the week and months, things in general (e.g., *Women* must be free), proper nouns (e.g., names of people, languages, holidays, countries, companies, religions, planets, etc.), sports (e.g., *I play*

football), streets, geographical places (e.g., *I live in Ecuador*), percentages, categories, titles, and some specific places (e.g., church, school).

The examples above illustrate how the use of the definite article to indicate genericity in Spanish is wrongly transferred to English (examples 5, 6, 7), a language that does not use them to express that characteristic (Kattán-Ibarra & Pountain, 2003). Nevertheless, in example 5, the definite article in Spanish is optional.

We can also see the case of the addition of the definite article with the use of generic abstract nouns (example 1), days of the week (example 2), years (example 3), and specific places (example 4). In these examples, the use of the article “the” in Spanish is correct, but it is not necessary in English.

5.2 Grammatical transfer errors in the use of nouns

L1 Spanish EFL learners also make transfer errors in the use of nouns (Neff et al., 2006). The following examples feature grammatical transfer errors in the use of nouns that include the possessive (Saxon genitive) and uncountable nouns. The sources of errors have been underlined.

(8) * L2: The poem of Diana (Neff et al., 2006, p.212).

L2: Diana's poem.

L1: El poema de Diana.

(9) * L2: We must practice our knowledges of English (Serrano, 2013, p. 192).

L2: We must practice our knowledge of English.

L1: Debemos practicar nuestros conocimientos de inglés.

(10) * L2: I bought three furnitures (Raimes & Jerskey, 2011, p.516).

L2: I bought three pieces of furniture.

L1: Compré tres muebles.

(11) * L2: The baby waited in the city and at night his parents and the polices found out to the baby (Alonso,1997, p. 11).

L2: The baby waited in the city and, at night, his parents and the police found the baby.

L1: El bebé esperó en la ciudad y en la noche sus padres y los policías encontraron al bebé.

Example 8 illustrates how the possessive relationship is rendered by means of the preposition *of* when the Saxon genitive would be the default (Murphy, 1998). In Spanish, on the other hand, the use of the preposition *de* is widely used to denote possession, which causes the unusual expression in English in this case.

The rest of the transfer errors (examples 9-11) stem from the different perceptions of countable and uncountable in the two languages. Nouns such as *conocimiento*, *mueble*, and *policía* can be pluralized in Spanish (by adding *-s* at the end of the noun), whereas the equivalent nouns in English (*knowledge*, *furniture*, and *police*) cannot as they are considered uncountable.

5.3 Grammatical transfer errors in the use of verbs

Errors in verbs are mentioned by Neff et al. (2006) as frequent grammatical errors made by L1 Spanish EFL learners. Grammatical transfer errors related to the use of verbs include the incorrect use of gerunds or infinitives and a wrong or unusual verb in the

context of the English sentence that comes from the translation of an equivalent verb used in the learners' L1. Consider the following examples:

(12) * L2: A teacher must be with his pupils without become a boring person (Serrano, 2013, p. 192).

L2: A teacher must be with his pupils without becoming a boring person.

L1: Un profesor debe estar con sus alumnos sin convertirse en una persona aburrida.

(13) * L2: I enjoy to play tennis (Raines & Jerskey, 2011, p.513).

L2: I enjoy playing tennis.

* L1: Disfruto jugar al tenis.

L1: Disfruto jugando al tenis.

(14) * L2: The other is a white man, he has about 32 years old (Alonso, 1997, p. 10).

L2: The other is a white man. He is about 32 years old.

L1: El otro es un hombre blanco, tiene alrededor de 32 años de edad.

(15) * L2: I learned a touch guitar (Cabrera et al., 2014, p. 45).

L2: I learned to play the guitar.

L1: Aprendí a tocar la guitarra.

Example (12) illustrates the lack of gerund in English as an object of the preposition (Murphy, 1998). In Spanish, the equivalent gerund after preposition does not make sense in this case, so the learner apparently has chosen to translate the verb

convertirse in Spanish after the equivalent preposition (*sin*) into the base form of the equivalent verb in English *become*.

The next example (13) shows a lack of distinction between gerunds and infinitives. In this case, the gerund must be used after the verb *enjoy* (i.e., *I enjoy playing tennis*). This error may occur because many people use an infinitive after the equivalent verb *disfrutar* in Spanish (This is a common error, especially in Latin America.), which is translated by the learner into an equivalent infinitive in English. This is not correct in Spanish or English (in this example, the proper form in Spanish is the gerund *jugando* that follows the verb *disfrutar*).

There are also two examples (14 and 15) of the incorrect translation of verbs from Spanish (verbs *tener* and *tocar*) into English (verbs *have* and *touch*) by the learners. Although the translation of the aforementioned verbs would be correct in some contexts in English, these examples require the use of different verbs (*be* and *play*, respectively). This is a case of semantic transfer that becomes the cause of transfer errors from Spanish to English.

5.4 Errors in the use of pronouns

One of the best known and most studied grammatical errors made by Spanish EFL learners is the dropping of subject pronouns, also known as pro-drop (Chomsky, 1981). This transfer error comes from the fact that Spanish, as well as other Romance languages, and unlike English, omits subject pronouns because verb endings provide all the necessary information to identify what the subject of the sentence is.

The following examples illustrate both examples of pro-drop as well as misuse of object and reflexive pronouns.

Pro-drop

(16) * L2: Scientists will be in trouble if don't consider the consequences of the experiment (García Mayo, 1998, p. 52).

L2: Scientists will be in trouble if they don't consider the consequences of the experiment.

L1: Los científicos tendrán problemas si no consideran las consecuencias del experimento.

(17) * L2: I remember that played with the doll that my father bought me (Cabrera et al., 2011, p. 45).

L2: I remember that I played with the doll that my father bought me.

L1: Recuerdo que jugué con la muñeca que mi padre me compró.

(18) * L2: Is raining (Raines & Jerskey, 2011, p.515).

L2: It is raining.

L1: Está lloviendo.

(19) * L2: Is mine. (López, 2011, p. 174).

L2: It is mine.

L1: Es mío.

Misuse of object pronoun

(20) *L2: Laura, then, know what her family loved she (Alonso, 1997, p. 10).

L2: Laura, then, knew that her family loved her.

L1: Laura, entonces sabía que su familia la amaba (a ella).

According to Alonso (1997, p. 10), example (20) “[...] exhibits the confusion caused by the use of subject and object pronouns”. This transfer error is apparently caused by the use of the pronoun *ella*, which can also be used as an object pronoun in Spanish (see the underlined part in the sentence in Spanish). Using *she* instead of *her* in the sentence would involve language transfer in this case.

Omission of object pronouns

(21) * L2: They met in a train station, but they didn’t recognize (Serrano, 2013, p. 192).

L2: They met in a train station, but they didn’t recognize each other.

L1: Se encontraron en una estación de trenes pero no se reconocieron.

Example (21) features the omission of the English reciprocal pronoun *each other*. Serrano (2013, p. 192) claims that it can be caused by the fact that in Spanish the use of a reciprocal pronoun (*entre sí*) is not necessary for the meaning of the sentence (we can see in the Spanish sentence that there is no reciprocal pronoun). In English, however, although the reciprocal pronoun can be omitted with some verbs (e.g., they agreed (with each other), they fought (one another), we argued (with each other), you got married (to each other)) (Whitley, 2002), in this case, it is necessary to understand the meaning of the sentence. This difference between the two languages leads to this type of transfer errors.

5.5 Errors in the use of prepositions

Prepositions have been claimed to be lexical by some researchers (e.g., Neff et al., 2006) and grammatical by others (e.g., Crystal, 2008). Although prepositions have traditionally been considered a grammatical morpheme, they can partly function as lexical items as well (Bordet & Jamet, 2010), so they would be in a middle ground between lexis and grammar. In this study, we have adhered to the traditional approach and consider transfer errors with prepositions as a category of grammatical transfer errors.

Next, we present examples of transfer errors with prepositions made by Spanish EFL learners.

(22) * L2: The handbag was in the bench (Jiménez-Catalán, 1996, p. 11).

L2: The handbag was on the bench.

L1: El bolso estaba en el banco.

(23) * L2: It depends of her (Jiménez-Catalán, 1996, p. 11).

L2: It depends on her.

L1: Depende de ella.

(24) * L2: A policeman is obsesioned for find him (Alonso, 1997, p. 11).

L2: A policeman is obsessed with finding him.

L1: Un policía está obsesionado por encontrarlo.

(25) * L2: I go to the mountains in bicycle (Cabrera et al., 2014, p. 43).

L2: I go to the mountains by bicycle.

L1: Voy a las montañas en bicicleta.

(26) * L2: This woman visited his girlfriend for speaking of her boyfriend (Alonso, 1997, p. 10).

L2: This woman visited his girlfriend to speak about her boyfriend.

L1: Esta mujer visitó a su amiga para hablarle de su novio.

(27) * L2: Jim invited to Mathews to a party (Jiménez-Catalán, 1996, p. 12).

L2: Jim invited Mathews to a party.

L1: Jim invitó a Mathews a una fiesta.

(28) * L2: Her house was near of ours (Jiménez-Catalán, 1996, p. 12).

L2: Her house was near ours.

L1: Su casa estaba cerca de la nuestra.

(29) * L2: She went quickly after of the end of the classes (Jiménez-Catalán, 1996, p. 12).

L2: She went quickly after the end of the classes.

L1: Salió rápidamente después del final de clase.

(30) * L2: Then the boy loved to the girl (Alonso, 1997, p. 11).

L2: Then, the boy loved the girl.

L1: Luego el chico amó a la chica.

(31) * L2: The woman looked the man (Jiménez-Catalán, 1996, p. 13).

L2: The woman looked at the man.

L1: La mujer miró al hombre.

(32) * L2: She listened him (Jiménez-Catalán, 1996, p. 13).

L2: She listened to him.

L1: Ella lo escuchó.

The examples above illustrate the misuse of a preposition (22-26), the addition of preposition (27-30), and its omission (31 and 32).

When Spanish EFL learners add a preposition (examples 27-30), the equivalent preposition is not necessarily the correct one in English. In those examples illustrating the omission of a preposition (31 and 32), the sentences lack a preposition that is compulsory in English.

5.6 Other types of grammatical errors

Although the types of errors mentioned above are the most frequent ones found in studies about L1 Spanish EFL learners' writing, it is worth mentioning that other types of grammatical transfer errors such as the following here have been reported as well:

- Pluralization of determiners

(33) * L2: This oil is used for others children (Alonso, 1997, p. 11).

L2: This oil is used for other children.

L1: Este aceite es usado para otros niños.

- Pluralization of adjectives

(34) * L2: And like all Americans film the good boy wins (Alonso, 1997, p. 11).

L2: And, like all American films, the good boy wins.

L1: ... y como en todas las películas americanas, el chico bueno gana.

(35) * L2: I have helpfuls friends (Raimés&Jerskey, 2011, p.516).

L2: I have helpful friends.

L1: Tengo amigos serviciales.

- *Errors in word order*

(36) * L2: His son, the children from the house of his neighbors went to the room
where was the machine (Alonso, 1997, p. 10).

L2: His son, the children from his neighbors' house, went to the room where the
machine was.

L1: Su hijo, el niño de la casa de sus vecinos, fue a la habitación donde estaba la
máquina.

Example (36) shows subject-verb inversion in English. Spanish has a more flexible word order than English (Kattán-Ibarra & Pountain, 2003) and Spanish EFL learners wrongly transfer that characteristic to English.

(37) * L2: ...because the parents of the two boys robbed in a Institute some papers very
important (Alonso, 1997, p. 10).

L2: ...because the parents of the two boys robbed some very important papers
in a high-school.

L1: ... porque los padres de los dos chicos robaron en un instituto algunos
papeles muy importantes.

Example (37) above illustrates adjective-noun inversion within the noun phrase. A similar situation occurs with the placement of adverbs (examples 38-40 below) (Kattán-Ibarra & Pountain, 2003). In English, the default order is the adjective before the noun (see examples 35 and 37), adverbs of frequency before a verb (see example 38), and adverbs of manner before a verb (except the verb *be*) (see example 39) or at the end of the sentence (see example 40) (Celce-Murcia & Larsen-Freeman, 1999).

(38) * L2: They were working always (Alonso, 1997, p. 11).

L2: They were always working.

L1: Ellos estaban trabajando siempre.

(39) * L2: They efficiently organized the work (They organized the work efficiently.)

(Raimés & Jerskey, 2011, p.514).

L2: They organized the work efficiently.

L1: Ellos organizaron eficientemente el trabajo.

(40) * L2: I like very much clam chowder (Raimés & Jerskey, 2011, p.514).

L2: I like clam chowder very much.

L1: Me gusta mucho la sopa de mariscos.

In (41) and (42) below, the prepositional phrases *with my teacher* and *with my brother* should be placed at the end of the sentence for the default word order in English.

(41) *L2: I like my school because with my teacher I learn a lot of things (Serrano, 2013, p. 192).

L2: I like my school because I learn a lot of things with my teacher.

L1: Me gusta mi escuela porque con mi profesor aprendo muchas cosas.

(42) * L2: I used to play with my brother soccer (Cabrera et al., 2014, p. 45).

L2: I used to play soccer with my brother.

L1: Solía jugar con mi hermano fútbol.

- Errors in the use of complementizers and negation

Language transfer also has an effect on the use of complementizers and negation. In the case of the former, Spanish EFL learners can write an incorrect or unnatural complementizer in English that comes from a faulty transfer of the learners' L1. As for negation, Zobl (1980) states that this type of error when making negative sentences is reinforced by the L1 structure.

(43) * L2: I want that you stay (Raimes & Jerskey, 2011, p.514).

L2: I want you to stay.

L1: Quiero que te quedas.

(44) * L2: I want that they try harder (Raimes & Jerskey, 2011, p.514).

L2: I want them to try harder.

L1: Quiero que se esfuercen más.

(45) * L2: They don't know nothing (Raimes & Jerskey, 2011, p.516).

L2: They don't know anything (or *They know nothing*).

L1: Ellos no saben nada.

Examples (43) and (44) illustrate how Spanish EFL learners transfer the complementizer *que* into *that*. In (45), the use of the double negation in the English interlanguage of the Spanish speakers is one of the most characteristic transfer errors in this group of learners (Whitley, 2002).

In summary, we have seen that grammatical transfer errors are usually more frequent than other transfer errors such as the ones related to lexis (Alonso, 1997; Cabrera

et al., 2014; López, 2011; Neff et al., 2006). The most problematic areas identified in previous work are the dropping of subject pronouns, definite article usage, prepositions and word order. Our study will determine whether these are also the most frequent categories of grammatical transfer errors in the written production of Ecuadorian high-school learners.

It is worth noticing that, although errors occur in the students' written work as a part of their learning process, it is also important to consider ways to address these errors. For this reason, the notion of feedback as a response to students' errors is another aspect discussed in the present study since most of the research conducted in this field demonstrates that appropriate feedback is required by learners and has an impact on their final written product (Bitchener & Ferris, 2012). The next chapter will be devoted to exploring different aspects related to feedback, including relevant research.

Chapter 6: Feedback on L2 Writing

The present chapter provides an overview of research on students' and teachers' perceptions of feedback on L2 writing. In what follows, we will highlight the main issues related to feedback in ESL/EFL writing such as error treatment, feedback strategies, teacher feedback on L2 student writing, effectiveness of feedback, and perceptions of feedback. This theoretical support is necessary to emphasize the relevance of feedback on ESL/EFL writing and to show how it is perceived by students and teachers.

6.1 Feedback: An overview

As previously mentioned, feedback is considered a relevant factor in ESL/EFL instruction. Feedback is seen as an important classroom activity that can motivate students by allowing them to know about their performance (Sheen, 2011).

The importance of feedback is of interest to SLA theorists and researchers because it is essential to examine how students can overcome the errors they make while acquiring the TL (Bitchener & Ferris, 2012). Indeed, feedback has been found to enhance learning, and it is expected by students (Hyland, 2003), especially in EFL contexts (Enginarlar, 1993; García Mayo & Milla Melero, forthcoming; Kamberi, 2013; Milla Melero, 2017; Yang, Badger & Yu, 2006). Furthermore, both students and teachers feel that teacher feedback on student writing is a critical aspect of writing instruction (Ferris & Hedgcock, 2014; Nation, 2009), because it provides learners with information about the correctness of their work and supplies corrective information that can be useful to modify learners' performance (Driscoll, 2007). Basically, the assumption is that feedback is an aid to achieving the correct use of grammatical structures, vocabulary, spelling and punctuation, which will improve learners' linguistic knowledge (Bitchener, 2009).

Other authors such as Reigeluth (2012) argue that feedback, especially formative feedback, has a positive impact on a student's learning process. In addition, Merrill (2013)

states that feedback is an important form of learner guidance as well as a necessary feature of learning. For these reasons, feedback has to be effective and be provided under the appropriate conditions, especially when the student is acquiring writing skills in the TL (Zamel, 1981). In the case of writing skills, teachers should be concerned with the accuracy of students' work as well as with the content and design of their writing when providing feedback about their written work (Harmer, 2004).

Providing feedback can be problematic for novice teachers because they may experience problems such as anxiety as they may not know where to start or how to make comments about their students' work. On the other hand, more experienced teachers might be worried about the time required to respond effectively to students' writing and can find themselves wondering whether their feedback is actually helpful or not. Although giving feedback is a complex task that involves an investment of time and energy for teachers, it also provides the opportunity to adapt instruction to the needs of students. This feedback may be provided through face-to-face interaction and through the draft-response-revision cycle, where teachers help students at various points through their written commentary (Harmer, 2004).

6.2 Feedback strategies

In previous sections, we have discussed the sources and classification of student errors in L2 production. Another issue related to feedback on errors is their treatment, in other words, how to correct errors and provide feedback. It is important for teachers to understand the sources of errors so they can provide a proper solution and help learners during the language learning process. In this respect, Corder (1973) states that the knowledge of being wrong is only the beginning of the error correction stage; skills in correction appear to be based on determining the necessary data to present to the learner and making the appropriate descriptive or comparative statements about such data. He

goes on to say that correction of errors is directed to exploit the incorrect forms produced by the learner in a controlled manner.

Chaudron (1977) noted that the treatment of errors may refer to any teaching behavior that spots any error with the purpose of informing learners about them. He proposed four types of treatment: generating an autonomous ability in learners to correct themselves, eliciting a correct response from learners, any reaction by a teacher that demands improvement, and positive or negative reinforcement.

Errors can give us an idea of linguistic development and provide us with valuable information about the learning process of the TL (Corder, 1981). However, it is not possible for teachers to correct all of the errors made by the learners. Teachers should not correct all errors either, since frequent correction of errors hinders the language learning process and may not motivate students to communicate in the TL (Touchie, 1986). Teachers should know that they need to help L2 learners improve the linguistic accuracy of their texts. The issue for these teachers is related to the best way of approaching error treatment rather than addressing language issues in student writing (Nation, 2009).

In order to provide proper feedback on writing, it is necessary to apply effective strategies in the classroom. Oral feedback can establish a dialogue between the writer and the source of feedback, that is, peers and teachers (Nation, 2009). In the case of oral corrective feedback, which has received a lot of attention in SLA, corrective strategies can be applied in an explicit or implicit form; for example, recast, explicit correction, clarification requests, metalinguistic information, elicitation, repetition, and translation (Lyster & Ranta, 1997; Panova & Lyster, 2002). However, written corrective feedback has been the focus of increasing attention in recent years due to inconclusive and conflicting findings obtained in previous research on this topic (Kang & Han, 2015), and it is also one of the aspects covered in this chapter.

Reformulation provides learners with the correct form, so it can be considered a form of direct corrective feedback. In this feedback strategy, the teacher reformulates the sentence or paragraph that contains errors to provide learners with positive input. Learners can benefit from this positive input since they can use it to identify their own errors. In reformulation, despite the fact that learners are provided with corrections, they are responsible for locating specific errors by comparing the reformulated text with their own text. Reformulation involves not only addressing a learner's linguistic errors, but also stylistic problems in order to improve coherence.

An interesting way to provide feedback to students' written work is through one-to-one writing conferences, which emerged as a popular teaching tool in recent decades. This popularity is due to a perception that writing conferences save time and energy that would otherwise be invested in marking student writing (Ferris & Hedgcock, 2014).

It is important to mention here that the teacher may not be the only source of feedback. There are proponents of peer response, in which students can also be encouraged to give feedback to each other. This is called *peer feedback*, and it helps learners to improve self-monitoring because they will feel more motivated to think about their written work when their classmates are the ones who correct their work. Peer feedback, consequently, is also useful when students evaluate their own work (Harmer, 2004; Nation, 2009). However, Harmer (2004) mentions that peer feedback has been criticized and argues that student feedback may focus excessively on surface concerns. Student feedback could also be vague, ill-informed, or even incorrect if students are not focused or prepared for the feedback activities, but, with a correct implementation, peer response can lead to successful feedback.

Another source of feedback can be the students themselves. In addition to using feedback from outside sources such as teachers, tutors, and peers, students should also be

led through reflection and analysis of their own writing. Self-assessment can help students become better readers and editors of their own writing as well as become aware of their own strengths and weaknesses (Nation, 2009).

In addition to teacher feedback, peer response, and guided self-assessment activities, which are planned and facilitated by classroom instructors, Ferris and Hedgcock (2014) mention other feedback sources. One example is writing or learning assistance centers, i.e., where students can go for additional assistance from trained tutors. These centers, which are common in postsecondary institutions in North America, provide additional support for L2 students. Another feedback source for supporting students is the use of online resources, including online writing labs (OWLs) or other writing sites that supply students with materials and exercises that will allow them to learn more about various aspects of the writing process.

6.3 Teacher feedback on L2 student writing

Initially, in the 1940s, teachers followed a product approach to teaching writing where the focus for teaching, producing and evaluating writing is the final product written by the learner (e.g., a paragraph or an essay). Later in time, in the 1970s, the process-writing approach appeared with a focus on the writing process (i.e., prewriting, writing, and rewriting) to produce good writing (Kern, 2000).

Ferris (2003) points out that, when the process-writing approach was introduced in the 1970s, teachers' response to students' writing became significant. In this respect, empirical studies of teacher feedback have looked at four general issues: what the feedback covers, the form and nature of the feedback, the effects of the feedback on student writing, and student reactions to and preferences regarding teacher feedback. She adds that these studies on teacher feedback suggest its continued importance in the teaching of L2 student writing as one of the aspects with the biggest investment of time

for instructors, and also an aspect highly valued by students. In view of the time and work required to provide quality feedback, writing teachers put a lot of effort into responding to students' writing. Likewise, a considerable amount of time is spent reading the written work, locating, identifying, and correcting the errors, analyzing students' ideas, and providing comments and suggestions.

There are two aspects which teachers can focus on regarding methods to provide feedback on writing: feedback on form (focused on linguistic form) and feedback on content (focused on content). Feedback on form can be provided through direct correction of surface errors, marks that indicate the place and type of error without directly correcting it, and underlining that points out the errors. Feedback on content is usually provided as comments written by teachers on drafts, indicating the problems found and giving suggestions for improvements (Williams, 2003). In this respect, findings from research studies on written feedback have been mixed. One reason might be that students react diversely to different types of feedback (Wigglesworth & Storch, 2012). Ortega (2009) posits that feedback on language forms should be one of the foci of research on EFL writing due to the fact that EFL teachers and students emphasize error correction. Certainly, there will not be an improvement in writing skills if feedback on errors is not provided. It is the responsibility of teachers to develop strategies for self-correction and regulation, not only on content but on the form and structure of writing (Myles, 2002).

On the other hand, feedback has a positive side and has proven to have beneficial effects if it is appropriately provided. For example, indirect feedback, which indicates the location of the errors but not the type, could help students improve their grammar (Fathman & Walley, 1990). Other authors have also confirmed that certain types of feedback such as indirect feedback (Ferris et al., 2000; Ferris & Roberts, 2001; Frodesen, 2001) and focused feedback (correcting certain linguistic feature) (Sheen, 2007; Sheen,

Wright, & Moldawa, 2009), can be more beneficial than direct and unfocused (correcting all errors) feedback.

Providing feedback can similarly lead to negative outcomes. A negative aspect of direct correction of errors is that it may not be accurate, clear or balanced because this feedback is solely focused on a few elements of the students' written work such as grammar and mechanics. Another negative aspect is that students may not recall or notice the mistakes pointed out in the feedback (Cohen & Cavalcanti, 1990).

As for feedback on content, there can be similar negative situations such as those previously mentioned. Thus, feedback on content may also be vague, inaccurate and even contradictory. Comments on content or form can be negative, which means the focus is mostly on problems rather than on a positive reinforcement of what students are doing correctly. This situation can cause confusion and frustration in students. On the contrary, feedback with encouraging comments and flexibility in suggestions is more effective for improving students' writing (Fathman & Walley, 1990). In the previously mentioned cases, feedback will not be useful for learning since students will not be able to do self-correction.

All in all, it is important for the teacher to use standard symbols when providing feedback. Students must also be capable of understanding these symbols to know the location and types of errors, so it is the responsibility of the teacher to familiarize them with those symbols. Likewise, feedback on content should also be consistent and accurate, i.e., where the type and location of errors are indicated (Williams, 2003). With pertinent training, students will be able to recognize, comprehend, and work on the comments in order to improve their writing (Cohen & Cavalcanti, 1990).

As a general rule, follow-up of the feedback can be seen as an aid to the learning process. That is the reason why some teachers consider student-teacher conferencing to

be a complement to feedback since it is an opportunity for instruction, clarification, and negotiation (Ferris, 2002; Ferris & Hedgcock, 2014). Moreover, this conferencing is ideal when students do not easily understand written feedback; thus, teachers can help students with specific problems in their written work.

An essential aspect of error correction for teachers is to analyze the errors made by their students. These errors can be used as an indicator of the learner's progress and of the gaps in the acquisition of the TL (Corder, 1967). Teachers should likewise provide students with notions about errors and language acquisition. In other words, raising students' awareness of their errors. Students should be aware that they need time, effort and patience to overcome errors, which are a natural part of language acquisition (Ferris, 2002).

Additionally, enhancing feedback practices for improving student writing has become a relevant aspect of corrective written feedback. In this regard, training writing teachers to give feedback is a challenge for teachers since it is important to learn more innovative ways of providing feedback (Lee, 2016). In fact, there is research that claims that teachers' innovation and preparation in feedback practices in writing is a crucial aspect that will result in an improvement of learner's writing performance (Lee, 2008; Lee, 2010; Lee, 2016; Min, 2013).

Finally, it is worth mentioning that research demonstrates that students often request feedback and have diverse preferences. For example, some students prefer feedback on content (Cohen & Cavalcanti, 1990), and there are learners that are willing to participate in conferences related to feedback (Ferris & Hedgcock, 2014).

The feedback process will be finished when students have made the pertinent corrections to the written drafts. The new version of these drafts will have to be an improvement in comparison with the previous versions (Harmer, 2007).

In conclusion, teachers need to consider students' needs and course objectives in order to provide appropriate feedback that helps them in their learning process. Teachers must know that feedback is only effective under certain conditions, and also that students are willing to receive feedback.

6.4 Research on the effectiveness of feedback

Error correction is mostly associated with oral presentation, but it is also provided on students' written production. Written feedback can be more complex than oral feedback because it addresses aspects such as content, organization, rhetoric, linguistic accuracy and mechanics (Sheen, 2011). This feedback is inherently corrective in nature, and its effectiveness has been debated in a number of studies. Research on the effects of feedback on writing errors has been extensive and the results obtained are varied and largely inconclusive. Thus, there are studies on corrective feedback that have attempted to show the effectiveness of feedback on learners' errors compared with those that do not receive such feedback. Kepner (1991), Sheppard (1992), and Polio, Fleck and Leder (1998) found no significant difference in the learners' writing accuracy after having received feedback. Other studies have found more substantial evidence in favor of feedback such as the ones conducted by Fathman and Whalley (1990) and Ellis et al. (2008).

Truscott (1996) argues that feedback in the form of grammar correction in writing courses is a practice that should be abandoned. He mentions several studies that demonstrate that grammar correction has little or no effect on learners' writing skills, concluding that there is no decisive evidence that error correction helps learners improve their writing accuracy. Another reason given by Truscott (1996) is that the typical practice of error correction disregards L2 views about the process of acquisition of structures in an L2. He also refers to some problems related to teachers' ability to

provide feedback and learners' lack of willingness to receive such feedback in the classroom. Additionally, this author claims that grammar error correction is detrimental since it deflects the focus from more productive activities for writing, and that there is a lack of merits for the arguments in favor of grammar correction.

Other authors contradict Truscott's (1996) view, stating that he has overlooked evidence of research that supports error correction. One of these authors is Ferris (1999), who contends that Truscott (1996) did not separate ineffective error corrections from effective ones and his arguments were premature. Evidence indicates that error correction in writing can be effective for some learners. Likewise, Ferris (1999) maintains that research on feedback must continue, so future research should focus on methods, techniques, or approaches that may lead to learner's progress. Truscott (1999) agrees with this view, suggesting that attention should be given to research related to error correction and learner's short-term or long-term improvement, and the monitoring of certain types of errors.

Chandler (2003) also disputes Truscott on a basis of a study that shows that students' correction of grammatical and lexical errors between assignments reduces such errors in subsequent writing without affecting fluency or quality. This researcher indicates that conclusions must consider statistically significant evidence in the original studies that show the effectiveness of feedback. Regarding Truscott's claim about the detrimental effect of grammar error correction, Chandler (2003) explains that his conclusion is not fully supported by the data obtained and that this negative effect of grammar correction is related to writing fluency.

As a response to the aforementioned claims, Truscott (2004) argues that Chandler (2003) fails to analyze the arguments for the negative conclusion in his research paper

and she simply notes that the groups under study improved their accuracy. Truscott (2004) explains that such improvements in accuracy can be caused by factors other than correction (e.g., writing practice). He goes on to say that Chandler (2003) does not provide a coherent argument against the evidence of ineffectiveness and negative effects of correction. Consequently, he does not change his conclusion that error correction is harmful because the benefits shown do not properly justify the negative effects. In his opinion, grammar error corrections should be avoided until conclusive evidence of its effectiveness can be found. Later on, Truscott (2007) emphasized that, although some studies indicate that feedback can improve accuracy in writing, the benefits obtained by learners could result from other factors.

In a further attempt to support the benefits of written correction, Ferris (2004) mentioned the studies conducted by Ashwell (2000) and Fathman and Whalley (1990), which conclude that students who receive error correction produce more accurate texts than those who do not. However, the evidence from these studies was not conclusive since improvement was measured only by examining learners' revised texts. In this respect, Truscott (2004) contends that improvement in revisions alone does not provide evidence that learning has occurred. Sheen (2011) claims that learning through error correction can take place if the improvement in revisions is transferred to a new piece of writing, or if the improvement is present on post-tests or delayed post-test measures.

As already mentioned, research on the effects of feedback on writing errors has been extensive, but with a lack of conclusive results. The reasons why most studies on corrective feedback have failed to provide clear evidence of its effectiveness are mainly the methodological problems in the studies conducted (Sheen, 2011). The debate on the effectiveness of corrective feedback on errors in writing has led to a number of studies

that have been conducted with different results supporting or rejecting corrective feedback.

Regarding results that reject the effectiveness of corrective feedback, Truscott and Hsu (2008) argue that a great deal of current research lacks evidence in favor of corrective written feedback because these studies failed to include a reliable measure of progress. The study by Truscott and Hsu (2008) asked students of two evenly selected groups, an experimental group (who received indirect corrective feedback on a variety of errors underlined in the written work) and a control group (who did not receive corrective feedback), to write three pieces of writing (narrative 1, revision, and narrative 2). The results showed a significant increase in accuracy of the experimental group in the revisions. However, the number of errors (grammar, spelling, and some errors related to word choice such as determiners, prepositions and transitions) made by students in the experimental group and the control group in the second narrative task was almost identical. The study concludes that written corrective feedback is ineffective since progress made in revisions alone is not indicative of learning.

Sheen (2011) criticized the study by Truscott and Hsu (2008) especially in regards to the fact that the experimental group received indirect corrective feedback instead of direct corrective feedback. This methodological point could have an impact on the results because direct feedback may have a stronger effect than indirect feedback. Another criticism to the study conducted by Truscott and Hsu (2008) is that the feedback in this study was given in a variety of forms, which means that they investigated unfocused rather than focused feedback (Sheen, 2011).

It is worth noting that some studies neglected relevant aspects in their research. For instance, the studies by Sheppard (1992), and Polio, Fleck and Leder (1998) did not

include a control group. Likewise, the study by Fathman and Whalley (1990) analyzed text revisions but not new pieces of writing over time.

Guénette (2007), who also analyzed previous studies on feedback, claims that the results of such studies are contradictory, which, in turn, causes controversy. This researcher concludes that differences in research design and methodology, as well as some confounding variables, are the main cause of the different results obtained in the studies. When providing or receiving feedback, several factors need to be considered for it to be successful. Motivation is one of them. Learners must be committed to improving their writing skills. In addition, feedback must be appropriately provided at the right time and in the proper context (Guénette, 2007).

Bitchener (2008) examined the effect of different types of corrective written feedback (direct written corrective feedback with oral and written metalinguistic explanation, direct written corrective feedback with written explanation only, direct written corrective feedback only, and a control group who did not receive feedback) on the development of L2 writing accuracy. The learners were from different L1 backgrounds, but most of them came from East Asia, Korea, Japan, and China. All of them were learning English in private language schools in New Zealand. The conclusion of this study is that written corrective feedback assisted by additional metalinguistic explanation could be the most beneficial form of feedback. Nevertheless, only the students who received both oral and written metalinguistic explanation performed better than the direct corrective feedback group. Consequently, this study did not demonstrate that written metalinguistic feedback alone could help learners improve written accuracy.

Similarly, Bitchener and Knoch (2010) investigated the extent to which written corrective feedback can help advanced L2 learners. The 63 English learners who participated were studying a course entitled “Introductory Composition for International

students” at a university in the U.S.A in order to be prepared for the academic requirements of that university. These participants (all of them within the 18–20 year old age range) came from different L1 backgrounds, most of them from East and South Asian countries. The students had a high level of accuracy in two uses of the English article system (the use of ‘a’ for first mention and ‘the’ for subsequent or anaphoric mentions). They increased that level of accuracy as well as the extent to which there may be an effect on any observed improvement, depending upon the type of feedback. There was a control group (group 4), who did not receive corrective feedback on their texts, and three treatment groups who received: group 1, direct corrective feedback (written metalinguistic explanation); group 2, indirect corrective feedback (error circling to identify where an error had occurred); group 3, corrective feedback (written metalinguistic feedback and oral form-focused instruction of the meta-linguistic explanation). Significant differences were found in the level of accuracy on the immediate post-test piece of writing between the control group and all three treatment groups, and on the delayed post-test piece between the control and indirect groups and the two direct treatment groups. In conclusion, group 1 and group 3 were able to retain their accuracy gains, whereas group 2 could not retain the gains made in the immediate post-test. Again, these results indicate that written corrective feedback along with additional metalinguistic explanation would be the most efficient forms of feedback.

Other studies have reported on the efficacy of focused corrective feedback (aimed at correcting a specific linguistic error) and unfocused corrective feedback (aimed at a range of linguistic errors). In the study conducted by Ellis et al. (2008), it was concluded that focused (feedback on the use of indefinite and definite articles with correct forms provided) and unfocused (feedback on a variety of errors with correct forms provided) groups received equal benefits from corrective feedback. However, Ellis et al. (2008)

argue that the result might also indicate that, in the long term, focused corrective feedback could be more beneficial than unfocused corrective feedback. Likewise, Sheen, Wright and Moldawa (2009) conducted another study by carefully differentiating between focused and unfocused corrective feedback and concluding that focused corrective feedback can help improve linguistic accuracy in writing.

It is important to mention that the two aforementioned studies considered the impact of corrective feedback on specific linguistic features (definite and indefinite articles). For this reason, the results have limited generalizability, but it is extremely difficult to conduct an experimental study on multiple linguistic features.

One can see from this that the discussion of the positive effects of written corrective feedback on the development of students' L2 accuracy is far from over. Although early research has produced inconclusive results, more recent research on this aspect provides more and more evidence in favor of corrective written feedback (Sheen, 2011). This is the case of a study by Kang and Han (2015), who conducted a meta-analytic approach to synthesizing empirical research from 21 primary previous studies, concluding that written corrective feedback leads to greater grammatical accuracy in L2 writing. However, they did not find a clear difference in efficacy between direct and indirect feedback because of other variables involved in the process of feedback such as learners' proficiency, the setting, and the genre of the writing task.

In conclusion, many factors in studies on feedback are yet to be fully covered. For this reason, further research on this aspect will lead to more and more decisive conclusions.

6.5 Perceptions on feedback

The literature on written corrective feedback has also dealt with the importance of assessing teachers' and students' views and preferences. Some of these studies have

provided further evidence that most ESL/EFL writing teachers and students agree on the importance of feedback, and that students want, expect and appreciate teachers' written feedback about their errors (Amrhein & Nassaji, 2010; Chen, Nassaji & Liu, 2016; Diab, 2005; Ferris, 2011; Grami, 2005; Jodaie, Farrokhi & Zoghi, 2011; Srichanyachon, 2012; Tom, Morni, Metom, & Joe, 2013; Zaman & Azad, 2012). What follows will review the main topics that have been tackled in recent studies about perceptions on feedback. This will be of interest for the interpretation of the results of the present study.

Diab (2005) reported on the preferences for error correction and paper-marking techniques of 156 EFL university students enrolled in English language courses at the American University of Beirut (AUB). Of the 156 participants, 53% were males and 47% females, and 88% stated that their native language was Arabic, while the remaining 12% specified French, English, and Armenian as their native language (7, 3, and 2%, respectively). The participants were administered a questionnaire that consisted of two parts: The first part was a 12-item background questionnaire, designed by the researcher to obtain background information about the students. The second part was a 27-item questionnaire, consisting of 20 five-point Likert-type items and 7 nominal items. The findings of this study show that these EFL learners seem to expect surface-level error correction from their teachers and believe that such feedback is beneficial.

Grami (2005) examined the perceptions of 35 male Saudi university-level ESL students about the written feedback received from their teachers. The students were all English majors who had taken at least one specialized university-level course in English writing apart from their previous general writing classes received in previous formal education. The researchers used structured questionnaires, which consisted of two main sections where students' beliefs regarding form feedback (linguistic errors) were

questioned in the first part. In the second part of the questionnaire, students' beliefs were again questioned but this time with practical examples of errors and written feedback. The focus was mainly on feedback on form in their ESL writing. The main purpose of the study then was to investigate whether ESL students would prefer to have their written work corrected and commented on or not, and if they did believe in the effectiveness of teachers' comments or not. The study showed that the ESL students involved did want and appreciate this type of feedback.

Amrhein and Nassaji (2010) investigated how ESL students and teachers perceive the usefulness of different types and amounts of written corrective feedback, and also the reasons they have for their preferences. The participants were 31 ESL teachers and 33 ESL students (students' L1 were Korean, Spanish, Portuguese, Japanese, and Mandarin) who responded to written questionnaires. The students and teachers were from 5 different English language classes at two different private English-language schools in Victoria, B.C., Canada. The quantitative data were collected through close-ended questions such as yes-no questions, multiple choice, and Likert-scale items. Qualitative data were collected through open-ended questions. The results indicated several differences between students' and teachers' opinions. Students' explanations showed that they value large amounts of written corrective feedback from the teacher. Many of the students saw written corrective feedback as a learning tool that is the responsibility of the teacher to provide. The teachers' responses and explanations revealed that they take into account students' competency and desires when providing written corrective feedback.

Jodaie, Farrokhi and Zoghi (2011) attempted to compare Iranian EFL teachers' and intermediate high school students' perceptions of written corrective feedback on grammatical errors and also to specify their reasons for choosing comprehensive or

selective feedback and some feedback strategies over some others. The data were collected by using the student version of a questionnaire designed for their study. The questionnaires were distributed to 100 intermediate high school students who were selected based on their scores on a proficiency test. The teacher version of the questionnaire was administered to 30 EFL teachers in language institutes. The questionnaires included both closed-ended questions (in Likert and multiple-choice formats) and two open-ended questions. Eight teachers and ten students were interviewed using semi-structured interviews in order to obtain more in-depth and qualitative data. Results found some important differences as well as similarities between teachers' and students' perceptions of written corrective feedback on grammatical errors. The differences found were the following:

- Perceptions of when a teacher should correct grammatical errors
- Perceptions of students' attention given to teachers' grammar corrections
- Teachers' and student's evaluation of indirect, uncoded feedback strategy.

On the other hand, the similarities in teachers' and students' perceptions found in their study were the following:

- Negative opinions of grammatical errors and strongly valued grammatical accuracy and written corrective feedback on student writing.
- Types of grammatical errors that should be corrected.
- Perceptions of comprehensive feedback
- Preference of direct feedback as the only best technique.
- Common positive evaluations of direct feedback and indirect, coded feedback and common negative evaluations of indirect prompting of error location.

Srichanyachon (2012) aimed to investigate university EFL students' attitudes toward two types of revision methods: peer feedback and teacher feedback. The participants were 174 undergraduate students enrolled in a 14-week Fundamental English course at Bangkok University and received one hour of EFL writing instruction per week. Their written work received peer feedback (through various forms of written feedback) and teacher feedback (oral and written modes). Data were collected using students' self-report questionnaires as well as face-to-face semi-structured interviews. The questionnaires consisted of close-ended questions based on a Likert scale that ranged from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree" and two open-ended questions. Results showed that the students had a neutral attitude toward the two revision methods. In addition, most of the students chose teacher feedback as a more effective and preferable revision method.

Zaman and Azad (2012) explored Bangladeshi EFL university teachers' and learners' perceptions of the issue of feedback. In this study, 12 English teachers and 120 students in a private university based in Dhaka, Bangladesh participated by answering close-ended questionnaires designed for teachers and students respectively. Both questionnaires were constructed on a five-point Likert scale addressing both teachers and learners, except one open-ended question on the problems in dealing with feedback asked to the teachers. The questionnaires were designed to collect data on the teachers' and learners' perceptions on various aspects of feedback such as efficacy of corrective feedback, feedback on form versus feedback on content, who provides feedback - teachers or learners?, strategies for providing feedback, and problems in dealing with feedback to Bangladeshi EFL learners. The results indicated that both teachers and learners had a very positive attitude towards corrective feedback, highlighting the importance of feedback on form. As for the strategy for providing feedback, both teachers and learners preferred

direct feedback to indirect feedback, and learners preferred teacher feedback to peer feedback.

Tom, Morni, Metom, and Joe (2013) examined ESL tertiary students' perception on the importance and effectiveness of written feedback in their academic writing assignments. The study also aimed to explore students' preferred feedback in helping them revise and improve their written assignments. The participants were 34 Malaysian (L1) students (29 females and 5 males with an age range of 18-20 years old) from an intermediate ESL class at the Faculty of Accountancy of the Universiti Teknologi MARA. The data were collected through a questionnaire that consisted of 27 items. Each item in the questionnaire tried to address a particular issue in teacher feedback. These items were divided into three major categories: students' demographic data, students' perception of the feedback they received and students' preferences of the types of feedback they received. The results revealed that students considered that feedback was important and necessary to improve their writing ability. Findings also showed that students preferred feedback in the form of grammar correction and suggestions on how to improve. The least preferred form of feedback was related to questions and one-word comments.

Chen, Nassaji and Liu (2016) explored learners' perceptions and preferences of written corrective feedback in an EFL setting. The participants were 64 English learners across three proficiency levels (intermediate, advanced-intermediate, and advanced) in a university in Mainland China. The learners provided quantitative and qualitative information by answering written questionnaires. The quantitative data were collected by means of close-ended questionnaire items with multiple choices or Likert scale formats. These data were used to find out about the participants' preferences for grammar instruction and written corrective feedback activities. The qualitative data were obtained

from the answers to open-ended questions in order to explore the reasons for the learners' preferences. The results indicate that although the participants tended to have a neutral opinion on the role of explicit grammar instruction, they had a positive attitude towards error correction. They also showed a strong preference for extended comments on both content and grammar of their written work. The qualitative data indicated that the participants wanted to take more initiatives in the revision process of their writing with less interference from teachers. In conclusion, the findings confirm the value of written corrective feedback for EFL learners outside English-speaking countries.

As shown in the studies reviewed above, the perception of students and teachers on feedback on writing is an aspect that has been widely explored. The results of these studies show that, in general, ESL/EFL writing teachers and students agree on the importance of feedback, and that students want, expect and appreciate teachers' feedback about their written work

6.6 Summary of Part I

This first part of the dissertation has provided a brief background of ESL/EFL writing since this skill is the one which the present study is focused on (Chapter 1). Several aspects related to language transfer errors in L2 writing were also introduced, including the notion of interlanguage, differences between errors and mistakes, as well as taxonomies and sources of errors, to have a clear idea of language transfer errors (Chapter 2).

An important element to locate and identify language transfer errors in L2 writing is the use of an appropriate method, so the main methods of analyzing and identifying errors are also presented (Chapter 3). Apart from this, it was also helpful to see how previous studies have been conducted in the field of language transfer. In this respect, Part I has reviewed previous research in order to find the most suitable method for analyzing errors for the present study and to analyze gaps in previous studies (Chapter 4).

From what has been stated in previous points in this chapter, language transfer is an important subject of research and source of errors in the L2 since the effect of L1 knowledge on L2 is of pedagogical importance. Most of the current studies on transfer in L2 writing reviewed about have considered a variety of elements. In our review of the previous studies, we mentioned that research was conducted on three aspects: language transfer, the effect of L2 proficiency in language transfer in writing, and the influence of types of tasks on these transfer errors.

It was also necessary to review previous research about the most common errors made by L1 Spanish EFL learners. Most studies on grammatical transfer errors report that these learners have problems with the use of articles, pronouns, verbs, prepositions, negation, word order, and placement of articles in noun phrases (Chapter 5).

In Part I, we have also reviewed several aspects related to feedback on writing, including an overview of the process of providing feedback in general, the close relationship between error treatment and feedback in writing, teacher feedback, effectiveness of feedback, and perceptions of feedback (Chapter 6).

Some studies about feedback on writing have been summarized in chapter 6 to indicate the results and the arguments of authors who have doubts about the effectiveness of feedback, as well as authors who support an appropriate feedback on writing.

As for the aspect examined in the present study - i.e., perceptions on feedback on L2 writing -, after exploring the importance of feedback and knowing more about different strategies, teacher feedback, and effectiveness of feedback, chapter 6 has also reviewed previous work on perceptions of students and teachers with respect to this theme.

In the studies on ESL/EFL writing, students agree on the importance of feedback, arguing that students do want, expect and appreciate teachers' written feedback about their errors. For this reason, feedback is another important aspect tackled by the present study, particularly, the perceptions of EFL students and teachers in the Ecuadorian context. Consequently, this study adds the element of feedback provided on EFL writing as an aid to achieve the correct use of grammatical structures and avoid interlingual errors. The research questions and hypotheses examined with respect to grammatical transfer errors and feedback on L2 writing will be presented in the next chapter.

As can be seen, the present study attempts to investigate language transfer with a focus on interlingual errors, namely negative transfer errors concerning grammar and the possible influence from L2 proficiency level and types of written task. This research took place in Ecuador, a country in which EFL teaching has been a difficult process (as we will explain in part II of the present study) because many students do not reach the

required proficiency level by the end of their secondary education (Ministerio de Educación del Ecuador, 2016a). For this reason, the findings will be helpful to assess the area of written production in the Ecuadorian secondary education context and to propose improvements in the teaching of writing skills.

Part II: The Present Study

Chapter 7: The Study

This chapter presents the context of English teaching in Ecuador, the rationale for the study, the research questions and hypotheses, and methodological issues such as the description of the participants in the study, the setting, materials, and procedures for data collection, coding, and analysis. This information will be useful when the results are presented and the main findings are discussed with regard to the types of grammatical transfer errors made by learners, the effect of proficiency level on these transfer errors, the influence of the type of written tasks on such errors, and the perceptions of feedback on L2 writing.

The present study has been conducted in Ecuador, a country located in South America where English is taught as a foreign language and where the official L1 is Spanish. The data for this study come from the written production and the answers to questionnaires by Ecuadorian EFL senior high school students. In addition, it was also essential to know teachers' perceptions, so English teachers were surveyed as well in order to collect information on feedback and instruction in EFL writing skills.

In our study, we have employed a descriptive approach to text analysis for the first, second and third research questions. As for the fourth research question, we applied a questionnaire + interviews design. We used a mixed method approach since both qualitative and quantitative data have been collected. There was a qualitative analysis of language transfer errors in the learners' written work and the information from written interviews that contained questions regarding feedback on EFL writing. On the other hand, the quantitative analysis consisted in manually tallying errors in students' written work and the answers to the questionnaires about feedback provided by students and teachers. This latter type of analysis was carried out with the help of descriptive statistics

by calculating frequencies and percentages, measures of central tendency, and measures of variability. Some inferential statistics were used to compare the trends among the groups of students and between the genres of their written work, both in the errors committed and the answers to the questionnaires. This statistical analysis was performed with the SPSS software version 22.0 (IBM, 2013).

Before the data collection began, the students were administered the Oxford Quick Placement Test in order to determine their English proficiency level (UCLES, 2001). They were then classified into three levels of proficiency according to the Common European Framework of Reference for language learning (CEFR): A1, A2, and B1 (Council of Europe, 2011). This classification was necessary to address one of our research questions regarding the effect of proficiency on the types of grammatical transfer errors made by the EFL learners.

By using random sampling at the beginning and convenience sampling later, a group of 180 Spanish-speaking students was selected and distributed equally into three groups according to their proficiency level: 60 students with A1 level, 60 with A2 level, and 60 with B1 level. The students were chosen from the first, second and third year of senior high school in the institution under study. In this case, we used random sampling before administering the placement test so that they could have an equal opportunity of being selected from the population (Creswell, 2015). Then, we used purposeful sampling to select and divide the Spanish-speaking students into groups. In this regard, the purposeful selection of participants means that researchers choose individuals who will help them understand the research problem (Creswell, 2014).

The instruments used were questionnaires, written interviews, and English writing tasks (tasks which included narrative and argumentative writing) administered to the

Ecuadorian EFL students. Teachers were administered questionnaires and written interviews.

The questionnaires for teachers focused on the way they give feedback regarding L1 interference errors, grammar, vocabulary, and other aspects related to writing. The questionnaire for students featured similar questions to the one for teachers regarding the same aspects of feedback. The written interviews also explore the feedback provided in EFL writing, which is also addressed in the research questions. The results obtained were then analyzed and discussed to answer the four research questions of the present study.

7.1 The EFL context in Ecuador

This research has been conducted in Ecuador, a country located on the northwestern coast of South America. It covers approximately 272045 Km² and encompasses both sides of the equator on the Pacific Coast. Ecuador is bordered by Colombia to the north and Peru to the south and east (see Figure 1). “The name Ecuador is the Spanish term for the equator, the invisible line that divides the Earth horizontally in the Northern and Southern hemispheres and crosses the country (there is a monument near Quito, latitude 0°).” (Krahenbuhl, 2003, p. 5).



Source: <https://mayersfams.wikispaces.com/tour4+Ecuador>

Figure 1. Geographic location of Ecuador

Ecuador's current population is approximately 14 million people, and its ethnicity is divided into Indians, Afro-Ecuadorians, and Mestizos. The official language in Ecuador is Spanish, but a variety of indigenous languages are spoken by minorities (e.g., Kichwa, awapit, cha'palachi, tsafiqui, paicoca, a'ingae, huaotirio, shuar-chichan and záparo) (Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores y Movilidad Humana, 2016).

Foreign languages such as English and French were mandatory in secondary schools in Ecuador until 1992. In 1993, the Ministry of Education and Culture (MEC) and the British Council signed an agreement in order to establish the project called Curriculum Reform Aimed at the Development of the Learning of English (CRADLE). This project is the result of a bilateral technical cooperation agreement between the governments of Ecuador and the United Kingdom for the curricular reform in the English area in public and semi-public schools in Ecuador (Ministerio de Educación y Cultura, 1997). The primary objective of the CRADLE project was to provide secondary school

students with a solid basis for communication in the English language by helping them develop the four skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. A communicative approach was attempted through a series of books adapted to the Ecuadorian context. However, the results were not as satisfactory as expected (UNESCO, 2004).

In general, EFL teaching in the history of Ecuador has been a problematic issue due to the fact that many students do not achieve the desired level required by the Ministry of Education. It is also worth mentioning that education has not been a priority in past governments. Currently, the Ecuadorian government is developing the “Proyecto de Fortalecimiento de la Enseñanza de Inglés como Lengua Extranjera” (A project for strengthening English Teaching as a Foreign Language) whose primary objective is that Ecuadorian students acquire a functional level in the use of the English language. This project is aimed at the improvement of the national English teaching curricula, distribution of books that are aligned to these curricula, professional development of EFL teachers, and EFL teacher training (Ministerio de Educación del Ecuador, 2016a). The goal is to meet standards based on the document developed by the Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) (Ministerio de Educación del Ecuador, 2016c).

The Ecuadorian government is clearly promoting EFL teaching. The Ecuadorian EFL curriculum considers elements such as learner-centered approaches, Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), and Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) (Marsh, 1994). All these elements are intended as a way of developing learners’ understanding of the world, improving social and intellectual skills, and learning English in an authentic context with a focus on language (Ministerio de Educación del Ecuador, 2016d). Furthermore, the evaluation criteria of the English courses in elementary and secondary educational institutions in Ecuador are based on the CEFR.

The foreseen improvements involve an increase in the quality of English teacher training and in the proficiency of elementary and secondary education students. The expected results are in line with the Education Law of Ecuador, which contemplates the development of individual and collective skills and potential of the population, thus, enabling learning and the application of knowledge, arts, and culture (Ministerio de Educación del Ecuador, 2016b).

The Ecuadorian government has embraced the English Language Learning Standards (ELLS), which are outcomes that students are expected to achieve at the end of a proficiency level in terms of knowledge and skills gained throughout the process. The ELLS are based on the CEFR and provide a basis for the description of objectives, content, and methods. The proficiency levels set by the CEFR and established as the benchmarks for Ecuador's ELLS are A1, A2 and B1:

- Level A1: At the end of the ninth year of junior high school (9th year of “Educación Básica General”)
- Level A2: At the end of the first year of senior high school (First year of “Bachillerato”).
- Level B1: At the end of the third year of senior high school (Third year of “Bachillerato”)

The Council of Europe (2011) established the CEFR global scale presented below:

C2 (Proficient user)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can understand with ease virtually everything heard or read. • Can summarize information from different spoken and written sources, reconstructing arguments and accounts in a coherent presentation. • Can express him/herself spontaneously, very fluently and precisely, differentiating finer shades of meaning even in more complex situations.
C1 (Proficient user)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can understand a wide range of demanding, longer texts, and recognise implicit meaning. • Can express him/herself fluently and spontaneously without much obvious searching for expressions. • Can use language flexibly and effectively for social, academic and professional purposes. • Can produce clear, well-structured, detailed text on complex subjects, showing controlled use of organizational patterns, connectors and cohesive devices.
B2 (Independent user)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can understand the main ideas of complex text on both concrete and abstract topics, including technical discussions in his/her field of specialization. • Can interact with a degree of fluency and spontaneity that makes regular interaction with native speakers quite possible without strain for either party. • Can produce clear, detailed text on a wide range of subjects and explain a viewpoint on a topical issue giving the advantages and disadvantages of various options.
B1 (Independent user)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can understand the main points of clear standard input on familiar matters regularly encountered in work, school, leisure, etc. • Can deal with most situations likely to arise whilst travelling in an area where the language is spoken. • Can produce simple connected text on topics, which are familiar, or of personal interest. • Can describe experiences and events, dreams, hopes & ambitions and briefly give reasons and explanations for opinions and plans.
A2 (Basic user)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can understand sentences and frequently used expressions related to areas of most immediate relevance (e.g., very basic personal and family information, shopping, local geography, employment). • Can communicate in simple and routine tasks requiring a simple and direct exchange of information on familiar and routine matters. • Can describe in simple terms aspects of his/her background, immediate environment and matters in areas of immediate need.
A1 (Basic user)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can understand and use familiar everyday expressions and very basic phrases aimed at the satisfaction of needs of a concrete type. • Can introduce him/herself and others and can ask and answer questions about personal details such as where he/she lives, people he/she knows and things he/she has. • Can interacting a simple way provided the other person talks slowly and clearly and is prepared to help.

Table 3. Common reference levels: CEFR global scale (Council of Europe, 2011)

For a better understanding of the secondary education system in Ecuador, we must add that the levels of secondary education and average ages of students in Ecuador during these years are the following:

- Eighth year of Educación Básica General (12-13 years old)
 - Ninth year of Educación Básica General (13-14 years old)→ A1
 - Tenth year of Educación Básica General (14-15 years old)
 - First year of “Bachillerato” (15-16 years old)→ A2
 - Second year of “Bachillerato” (16-17 years old)
 - Third year of “Bachillerato” (17-18 years old)→ B1
- } Senior high school

When comparing these levels to the ones of English-speaking countries such as the United States of America (USA), we can say the eighth, ninth, and tenth year of “Educación Básica General” would be something similar to seventh, eighth, and ninth grade (freshman) of junior high school in the USA, respectively. On the other hand, the first, second, and third year of “Bachillerato” would be equivalent to the tenth (sophomore), eleventh (junior), and twelfth (senior) year of senior high school in the USA. For the purposes of the present study, we will refer to the three years of “Bachillerato” mentioned above as the first, second and third years of senior high school. In all of these levels of secondary education in public high schools, students receive five hours of EFL instruction per week during an academic year (from September to June).

As a final note, it is worth mentioning that the ELLS in Ecuador are developed by taking into consideration the language skills as a core part of the program: (a) listening, (b) speaking, (c) reading, and (d) writing (Ministerio de Educación del Ecuador, 2016c).

Despite the fact that Ecuador is among the countries with a low level of English proficiency (i.e., many students do not achieve the B1 proficiency level after finishing high school) (El Telégrafo, 2014), the government has started to implement plans to improve EFL instruction in a way that EFL teachers can be trained in universities in the USA. This will benefit EFL instruction in Ecuador so students who finish secondary education can acquire a functional level of communication in English and can have access

to scholarships to study in the best universities around the world, thereby, improving their professional opportunities (Embajada del Ecuador – Estados Unidos, 2016).

7.2 Rationale to carry out the study

Like any other component of a learner's communicative competence in a foreign language, writing skills are affected by language transfer, that is, the effect of the mother tongue on the learning process of the target language. Likewise, as mentioned above, the similarities between the two systems can be facilitative (positive transfer), and the differences may have a potential negative effect (negative transfer) on learning the foreign language (Weinreich, 1968).

Considering the claim that negative transfer from the L1 is much stronger regarding grammatical language interference errors (Cabrera et al., 2014; López, 2011) than other types of errors (e.g., lexis, mechanics), and that these errors have an important effect on L2 writing (Alonso, 1997; Bhela, 1999; Cabrera et al., 2014; López, 2011), the present study focuses on the grammatical transfer errors Ecuadorian EFL learners make when completing two different types of written tasks. The information about grammatical transfer errors resulting from the analysis of the present study will meet a part of the Ecuadorian government's needs to know and improve the situation of EFL learning in high schools, which is an important goal of the Ecuadorian EFL curriculum.

As also mentioned above, research on SLA has examined the impact of learners' L2 proficiency level on language transfer in EFL writing (e.g., Pennington & So, 1993; Zheng & Park, 2013; Kim & Yoon, 2014), but these studies were not conducted in contexts where Spanish was the L1. This impact of proficiency on language transfer has also been explored in ESL contexts (e.g., Cumming, 1989; Chan, 2010; Lanauze and Snow, 1989; Wang, 2003), which are different from EFL contexts. In order to fill in these gaps, the present study compares the written work of EFL learners from the first, second

and third year of senior high school (classified into three levels of English proficiency: A1, A2 and B1) to determine if their L2 proficiency level has an impact on the frequency of grammatical transfer errors.

Research on L2 writing has also considered how different types of written tasks can affect language transfer. There have been studies carried out in ESL (e.g., Chan, 2010; Kubota, 1998) and EFL (Roca de Larios, Murphy & Manchón, 1999; Wang & Wen, 2002) contexts, but these studies were not carried out in the Ecuadorian context, where the EFL students' level of English proficiency is low, and are focused on other aspects of language transfer (not precisely on grammatical transfer errors in an EFL context). The present study also includes the potential impact of task type as a possible influence on the grammatical transfer errors in the EFL written output of Ecuadorian EFL learners, which is something that formal research in Ecuadorian and Latin-American contexts has not discussed.

Besides assessing the types of errors that learners make when writing, it is also important to consider how those errors are addressed by teachers and how this process is perceived by both learners and teachers. As seen in previous sections, both students and teachers feel that teacher feedback on student writing is a critical aspect of writing instruction (Ferris & Hedgcock, 2014). The present study will assess students' and teachers' perceptions on the feedback received and provided in EFL writing classes in Ecuadorian high-schools.

In summary, the present study attempts to provide further insights into the field of language transfer in L2 writing by establishing the most frequent grammatical transfer errors and their variations depending upon learners' L2 proficiency and writing tasks. Although there have been various studies conducted on language transfer errors in relation to EFL writing in the Spanish and the Latin-American context, they tend to be

focused on the taxonomy and sources of these errors (Alonso, 1997; López, 2011; Cabrera et al., 2014), and do not consider EFL learners' proficiency in English and types of written task as a potential influence on the variation of grammatical language transfer errors in writing.

The study will also provide information about teachers' and learners perspectives about corrective feedback in an EFL context. The findings of the study will hopefully be relevant to improve Ecuadorian EFL teacher's skills in dealing with errors, which, in turn, will benefit the feedback that learners receive and will meet part of the objectives of the Ecuadorian Ministry of Education.

7.3 Research questions and hypotheses

On the basis of the research summarized in Part I, the present study addresses the following research questions and encapsulates the following hypotheses:

7.3.1 First research question and hypothesis

RQ1. Which grammatical transfer errors are commonly influenced by Spanish in the written production of Ecuadorian EFL senior high school learners and how prevalent are these errors in comparison to lexical transfer errors?

Studies carried out in ESL/EFL contexts (e.g., Edelsky, 1982; Lanauze & Snow, 1989; Kubota, 1998; Alonso, 1997; López, 2011; Cabrera et al., 2014) contexts have shown that grammatical transfer errors (e.g., errors in prepositions, articles, nouns, pronouns, verbs) are more common than lexical ones (e.g., false cognates, invented words). Therefore, our hypothesis is the following:

H1: Language transfer errors related to grammar will be prevalent in the written production of Ecuadorian senior high school learners in terms of articles, verbs, nouns, pronouns and prepositions. Grammatical transfer errors will be more frequent than lexical transfer errors.

7.3.2 Second research question and hypothesis

RQ2. Will proficiency level in English have an impact on the amount and type of grammatical transfer errors found across three levels (A1, A2, and B1)?

Previous research on the impact of proficiency on transfer errors (Chan, 2010; Lanauze & Snow, 1989; Pennington & So, 1993; Wang & Wen, 2002; Zheng & Park, 2013) has shown that the higher the L2 proficiency, the better the quality of the L2 written product. Thus, the hypothesis for this second question will be the following:

H2: Higher proficiency learners (B1) will generate fewer transfer errors than those generated in lower proficiency levels (A2, A1).

7.3.3 Third research question and hypothesis

RQ3. Will the type of writing task (narrative vs. argumentative) have an impact on the amount and type of grammatical transfer errors found?

Previous research has shown that different written tasks may have an impact on language transfer errors (Kubota, 1998; Roca de Larios, Murphy & Manchón, 1999; Wang & Wen, 2002). Therefore, our hypothesis regarding this issue will be the following:

H3: There will be an impact of task type on the amount of grammatical transfer errors found in the written output of Ecuadorian high school learners.

7.3.4 Fourth research question and hypothesis

RQ4. What is the perception of students and teachers regarding the feedback provided on EFL writing?

Previous research has shown that both teachers and students regard feedback on writing as a critical issue (Bitchener & Ferris, 2012; Ferris & Hedgcock, 2014; Hyland 2003), especially in EFL contexts (Enginarlar, 1993; Kamberi, 2013; Yang, Badger,

&Yu, 2006). Research on perceptions of feedback has also shown that students expect and appreciate feedback (Amrhein & Nassaji, 2010; Chen, Nassaji & Liu, 2016; Diab, 2005; Ferris, 2011, Grami, 2005; Jodaie, Farrokhi & Zoghi, 2011; Tom, Morni, Metom, & Joe, 2013; Srichanyachon, 2012, Zaman & Azad, 2012). Therefore, our hypothesis will be the following:

H4: Ecuadorian high-school learners and teachers will have positive views about corrective feedback in writing.

7.4 Method

7.4.1 Setting and participants

The present study was carried out in the city of Loja, Ecuador. Loja is a city located in southern Ecuador with a population of approximately 200,000 inhabitants. This city has 3 universities and 42 high-schools (29 public and 13 private) registered by the Ministry of Education.

The participants were 180 Spanish-speaking adolescent learners from a public high school. They were enrolled in the last three years of secondary education previous to college (i.e., senior high school). In Ecuador, these last three years of secondary education are called “años de Bachillerato”. Students’ ages in senior high school range between 15 and 18 years. The age range for the majority of students in these three years of senior high school is 15-16 (first year), 16-17 (second year), and 17-18 (third year) years old. The mean age of the participants was 16.04 years old.

In the Ecuadorian public education system, students start their EFL instruction when they are 5 years old, which means that, by the time they reach the first year of senior high school, they have already received ten years of EFL instruction in school. The only exposure to English for most of them is in the classroom for five academic hours (every academic hour is 40 minutes long) a week during the academic year, which lasts for

approximately 9 months, with a period of vacation of almost 3 months every calendar year. Of course, there is a reduced proportion of students who study in private English academies and reach an English proficiency level (B2) higher than that of their classmates in school. For this reason, these students were not considered in the sample.

The regular school year in the city of Loja starts in September and ends in June. Students in this school receive five academic hours of EFL instruction a week in high school. This is the mandatory time for English classes for public secondary education institutions established by the Ecuadorian government. These classes focus on all four English skills, and the curriculum considers CLT as the core teaching method.

At the institution under study, there are four classes (or groups) in each level of senior high school. Each class has around 30 students, with a total of almost 360 students in the three levels of senior high school. The 180 students selected for the sample were chosen after analyzing the results of the Oxford Quick Placement test (UCLES, 2001), which was taken by most but not all senior-high school students.

Then, the participants were divided into three groups of 60 students each on the basis of their proficiency level (A1, A2, and B1). The mother tongue of all the students selected is Spanish, as already mentioned, and they do not have an extensive exposure to English.

As for learner's practice in EFL writing, the most common genres practiced have been narrative and argumentative writing. Students in these three proficiency levels have written narrative paragraphs previously so we can say that they are used to this type of writing tasks. However, the students at the B1 proficiency level have had more practice writing argumentative essays in their EFL classroom, so this type of writing task was more challenging for the A1 and A2 students.

Ten English teachers from the high-school (7 females, 3 males) also participated in the study by answering a questionnaire. They were interviewed regarding topics about feedback on writing similar to the ones given to students (more on this below). All of these teachers are non-native English speakers whose L1 is Spanish. They hold academic degrees in TEFL and have experience teaching English to adolescents. Their mean age is 37 years.

7.4.2 Materials and procedure

The instruments to collect information from the sample selected were the following:

- 1) *Placement test*. Because the present study attempts to compare transfer errors across English proficiency levels, it was necessary to administer a placement test to divide the Ecuadorian students into the previously mentioned A1, A2, and B1 proficiency levels (according to CEFR). The standard test selected was the Oxford Quick Placement Test – Version 2 (2001). This is a pen and paper test that was chosen because the academic hour in the school is 40 minutes; in this way, the students would be able to answer the test within this time limit. It is also a popular standard placement test that is available on the Internet and encompasses the CEFR proficiency levels based on the following scores:

Level	Paper and pen test score		Council of Europe level
	Part 1 (score out of 40)	Part 2 (score out of 60)	
0 beginner	0-15	0-17	A1
1 elementary	16-23	18-29	A2
2 lower intermediate	24-30	30-39	B1
3 upper intermediate	31-40	40-47	B2
4 advanced		48-54	C1
5 very advanced		54-60	C2

Table 4. Scoring for the Oxford Quick Placement test (Version 2)

2) *Two writing tasks.* As for the types of writing tasks, the participants completed a narrative essay as the first task, and an argumentative essay as the second task, using at least 80 words, with a maximum word limit of 100 words. The topics chosen were the activities that students usually do on weekends (narrative essay), and students' opinions about video games (argumentative essay). It should be noted that, although argumentative writing can be challenging for A1 and A2 learners, the topic selected for the prompt (opinions about video games) is not strange for these students. In fact, adolescents are familiar with computers and mobile phones, and many of them play or have played video games (see Appendix 11 for samples of students' written production).

After considering the points mentioned above and the CEFR global scale presented earlier in this chapter, the instructions for the writing tasks (prompts) were designed as indicated in Appendix 1.

- 3) *Students' and teachers' questionnaires* (see Appendices 2, 3, 4, 5, 8 and 9). The students' questionnaire contains a total of 26 items focused on issues about the way feedback on writing is provided in the classroom regarding grammar, vocabulary, and other aspects of writing. Furthermore, some of the questions explore the educational background of the students in order to provide a better description of the sample.

The teachers' questionnaire consists of 35 items in total that also focus on the way feedback on writing is provided in the classroom, including elements regarding L1 transfer errors, grammar, vocabulary, and other aspects of writing. Some of the items here are directed to explore the background and experience of teachers. In addition, an open question at the end of the questionnaire is intended to obtain information about obstacles found when providing feedback on writing to students.

These questionnaires were based on those used in some published research on perceptions of feedback (Diab, 2005; Srichanyachon, 2012; Zaman & Azad, 2012). Some items were adapted from other studies in this same area (Amrhein & Nassaji, 2010; Chen, Nassaji & Liu, 2016; Jodaie, Farrokhi & Zoghi, 2011; Tom, Morni, Metom, & Joe, 2013) to cover the information that the present study collected from students and teachers.

Once the items were selected from the studies mentioned above, each questionnaire was divided into two parts. The first part for both teachers' and students' questionnaires consists of 10 close-ended questions to collect some background information about

teachers (e.g., gender, academic degree, teaching experience, and English skills) and students (e.g., gender, age groups, and English skills) and about the frequency and the way in which feedback on EFL writing is provided and received. The second part comprises 19 items for the student's questionnaire and 25 items for the teachers' questionnaire constructed on a five-point Likert scale (strongly disagree (1); disagree (2); neither agree nor disagree (3); agree (4); strongly agree (5)). This second part of the questionnaires was designed to collect data on the teachers' and students' perceptions on various aspects of feedback, focusing on the efficacy of corrective feedback, feedback on form versus feedback on content, and strategies for feedback. In the case of the teachers' questionnaire, there was an open-ended question at the end asking about major obstacles in providing written feedback to learners.

For the sake of obtaining more accurate data, the students' questionnaire was translated into Spanish (see Appendices 4 and 5), so learners did not have any problems understanding the items at the moment of responding. In addition, the questionnaires were designed with a minimal usage of technical jargon to make the questions easy to understand and a number of questions that can be finished in less than 40 minutes (which is equivalent to an academic hour in the high school surveyed). In the event that students had any doubt about the items, the researcher was ready to explain and clarify doubts.

- 4) *Teachers' and students' written interviews* (see Appendices 6, 7, and 10) that were used to explore further the aforementioned aspects related to feedback and L1 transfer errors in writing.

There was also a written interview prepared to delve into the students' and teachers' views on feedback on EFL writing and obtain more information that can be useful to support the quantitative analysis obtained from the feedback questionnaires. The questions for the written interview were based on and adapted from questions aimed at

perceptions on feedback in previous research on this area (Amrhein & Nassaji, 2010; Jodaie, Farrokhi & Zoghi, 2011; Srichanyachon, 2012). These questions were designed to be answered in written form by the interviewee so they could feel more at ease when responding the interview. There were seven questions for the students' interview and sixteen questions for the teachers' interview.

The questions for the students' written interview were aimed at further exploring about their perceptions on various aspects of feedback on EFL writing such as the efficacy of corrective feedback, feedback on form versus feedback on content, and strategies for feedback. With respect to the teachers' written interview, these questions were intended to collect information about teacher training in providing feedback, as well as their views on feedback on transfer errors, efficacy of corrective feedback, feedback on form versus feedback on content, and strategies for feedback.

It is also important to add that the questions in the students' written interview were translated into Spanish (see Appendix 7) so that the students could also respond in their L1 and did not have problems understanding the questions and expressing their ideas. The number of questions for both teachers' and students' written interviews were established so the interviews can be finished in less than 30 minutes.

Before beginning the process of data collection, it was necessary to formally ask for permission from the authorities of the secondary education institution studied. At this point, it is important to mention that the Department of Education at the Universidad Técnica Particular de Loja had an agreement of mutual benefit with the high-school under study. This agreement allowed people from the university to conduct research related to education in this high-school, so it was not necessary to ask for permission from parents or going throughout an ethics committee process.

Once the written approval from the principal of the school was obtained, it was necessary to know the size of the population, that is, the number of students enrolled in the last three years of high secondary education in the high school under study (first, second, and third years of senior high school). In the case of the teachers, all of them (10 teachers) answered the questionnaire and written interviews.

After determining the sample size and administering the placement tests in the case of Ecuadorian students, the collection data process was divided into four stages that are illustrated in the following table.

Data collection process for the present study		
Time	Stages	Instrument used
6 weeks	STAGE 1 Administration of placement test and scoring	Oxford Quick placement test
2 weeks	STAGE 2 Written tasks	Narrative paragraph Argumentative paragraph
3 weeks	STAGE 3 Administration of questionnaires and written interviews	Student's questionnaire Student's written interview Teacher's questionnaire Teacher's written interview

Table 5. Scheme of the data collection process for the present study

In the first stage, all the senior high school students took the Oxford Quick Placement test to determine their English proficiency level. Due to an irregular attendance of some students, not all of them could take the placement test.

As expected, the proficiency level of students in the three years of senior high school was varied, so based on purposeful sampling and the results obtained from the placement tests, 180 students were selected and classified into three levels of proficiency according to the CEFR: A1, A2, and B1 (60 students in each group). This classification was done with the objective of answering the question regarding the increase or decrease of grammatical transfer errors across the three previously mentioned proficiency levels.

The students chosen for the A1 sample were from the first year of senior high school, the students with A2 level were from the second year, and the students with B1 level were from the third year of senior high school in the educational institution under study.

In the second stage, these 180 selected students were asked to write a narrative essay about the activities that they usually do on the weekends. One week later, these students wrote an argumentative essay in which they had to express their stand on video-games. For both writing tasks, the students were asked to use between 80 and 100 words (the approximate size of a paragraph) in their essays within a time limit of 30 minutes.

In the third stage, 10 English teachers and the sample of 180 students responded questionnaires designed to collect information about the process of feedback on EFL writing. In this regard, McDonough and McDonough (2006) acknowledge the popularity of questionnaires in English language teaching research, mainly because they provide acceptable precision and clarity, and they can be used on a small or large scale. Apart from that, questionnaires are anonymous and encourage honesty from respondents.

Additionally, all the 10 teachers in the institution and a sample of 60 students answered a written interview in the form of an open-ended questionnaire about aspects related to feedback on writing such as the efficacy of corrective feedback, feedback on form versus feedback on content, and strategies for feedback. McDonough and

McDonough (2006) also believe that interviews have advantages in the process of data collection. For instance, interviews are sensitive to individual differences and encourage individuals to be more open in their answers. As for the sample of 60 students for the interview (20 students from each proficiency level), it was selected by using purposeful sampling, which is a type of sampling used in qualitative research through the intentional selection of individuals in order to understand the central phenomenon (Creswell, 2015).

7.4.3 Data coding and analysis

The written texts produced by the students were analyzed to identify transfer errors caused by their L1, based on linguistic knowledge of these errors provided by previous studies conducted in this field (Alonso, 1997; Bhela, 1999; Cabrera et al., 2014; Krashen, 2002; Lado, 1957; Lopez, 2011; Richards, 1971; Weinreich, 1968). The method of error count was used to code the grammatical transfer errors and to establish the frequencies of the errors found as well as the number of errors per total words. The data from the error count in all the proficiency groups were then compared to see variations in the measures of central tendency and frequencies of grammatical transfer errors. These data were also compared between the two types of writing tasks (narrative and argumentative essays).

The answers to the questionnaires about written feedback were coded and analyzed to obtain the frequencies, percentages, and the mode of the responses to the questions. For these questionnaires about feedback on writing, the answers given by students and teachers were coded by assigning numbers (e.g., 1, 2, 3, 4, 5) according to the options selected by the participants (e.g., male = 1, female= 2; yes=1, no=2; always= 1, often=2, sometimes=3, rarely=4, never=5; SD (strongly disagree) =1, D (disagree) = 2, N (neither agree nor disagree) = 3, A(agree) = 4, SA (strongly agree) = 5).

The results will be presented in the next chapters by using tables and graphs representing frequencies, percentages, measures of central tendency (mean, mode), and measures of variability (standard deviation). Some inferential statistics (ANOVA, matched pairs t-test, Kruskal-Wallis test, Wilcoxon test, McNemar test, Mann-Whitney U-test) were used to find significant differences in the grammatical transfer errors committed (among the three groups of students and between the two types of tasks) and the answers to the questionnaires about feedback (among the three groups of students).

For data triangulation and qualitative analysis, the results of the questionnaires administered to students were compared with the results obtained from the teachers' questionnaires and the answers given to the interviews with teachers and students. The results will be presented in Chapters 8 and 9 by means of tables and graphs as well as explanations of the results after the data triangulation.

A mixed methods approach (quantitative and qualitative approaches) has been used to analyze the results obtained in the present study. In this respect, mixed methods are employed when a single approach does not provide a full picture of the solution to or analysis of the issue (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2006). The quantitative analysis included error count and statistical analysis of grammatical transfer errors found, as well as the answers to the questionnaires on feedback. The qualitative part consisted of a contrastive analysis and explanation of grammatical transfer errors, as well as the analysis of opinions about feedback given by students and teachers in the questionnaires and written interviews.

As already mentioned, this study is aimed at charting grammar transfer errors that occur in written English of Ecuadorian high-school students and tracking a possible change in the number of these transfer patterns across three levels of proficiency and two

types of writing tasks. The present study also examines Ecuadorian students' and teachers' perceptions on feedback on written English.

The dataset for this study consisted of results of the placement test, information from the student and teachers' questionnaires and written interviews, and transcripts from narrative essays and argumentative essays written by the EFL learners who participated in this study. The research questions and the procedures to analyze the information to answer them are outlined as follows:

RQ1. Which grammatical transfer errors are commonly influenced by Spanish in the written production of Ecuadorian EFL senior high school learners and how prevalent are these errors in comparison to lexical transfer errors?

H1: Language transfer errors related to grammar will be prevalent in the written production of Ecuadorian senior high school learners in terms of articles, verbs, nouns, pronouns and prepositions. Grammatical transfer errors will be more frequent than lexical transfer errors.

This question and hypothesis will be explored by employing a qualitative and quantitative analysis of the grammar and lexicon transfer patterns found in the written material. As mentioned above, the sample of Spanish-speaking EFL learners wrote a short narrative and argumentative essay. The paragraphs were first transcribed on a digital file to facilitate word count and error tallying.

The classification of sources of errors adopted for this study is based on the ones proposed by Richards (1971), James (1998), and Brown (2007); therefore, interlingual and intralingual errors were coded, although only the former will be reported on here because they are the focus of the present study.

After determining their source, the grammar errors were classified according to the taxonomies proposed by James (1998): linguistic taxonomy and surface structure

taxonomy. The linguistic taxonomy is based on the categories of descriptive grammar (e.g., simple past, prepositions, articles, etc.). According to Dulay, Burt and Krashen (1982), the surface structure taxonomy contains the following types: omission (omission of a form that must appear in a correct utterance), addition (the presence of a form that does not appear in a well-formed utterance), misformation (the wrong form of the morpheme or structure), and misordering (incorrect placement of a morpheme or group of morphemes). Table 6 summarizes the taxonomy of errors used.

<p>Linguistic taxonomy: categories of descriptive grammar (e.g., simple past, prepositions, articles, etc.)</p> <p>Surface structure taxonomy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Omission: omission of a form that must appear in a correct utterance• Addition: the presence of a form that does not appear in a well-formed utterance• Misformation: the wrong form of the morpheme or structure)• Misordering: incorrect placement of a morpheme or group of morphemes).
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Table 6. Classification of grammar errors based on Dulay, Burt and Krashen (1982), and James (1998)

CA procedures (description, selection, contrast, and prediction) were used in this study, as recent research (reviewed in chapter 3) has incorporated this methodology for language transfer studies. Likewise, CA procedures share similarities with *intra-L1-group-homogeneity* procedures (Jarvis, 2000), that is, learners with the same L1 behave in a similar way when using the same L2.

Descriptions of grammar transfer errors in previous studies (Alonso, 1997; Bhela, 1999; Cabrera et al., 2014; Chan, 2010; Edelsky, 1982; Lanauze & Snow, 1989; López, 2011; Mourssi, 2013; Salehuddin, Hua, & Maros, 2006) have also been considered in order to interpret our participants' production.

Furthermore, as a native Spanish speaker, and as an advanced English speaker, the researcher, with the help of dictionaries, grammar books, and other bibliographic material, determined if the patterns under examination are congruent in comparing Spanish with English. It is important to mention here that, since the focus of this study is on negative transfer, this study will rely on descriptive corpus-based grammars of English to identify whether the investigated items or patterns deviate from the norms of standard English. Admittedly, defining norms and errors in today's English usage is not straightforward, but, in formal English tests and exams, deviations from the norms of standard English are considered an error even though the forms in question may be acceptable in non-standard language usage or in some L2 varieties in English.

In addition, because it has been acknowledged that not all errors are caused by negative L1 transfer (interlingual errors), we also use EA procedures to differentiate interlingual from intralingual errors so intralingual errors cannot be included as transfer errors.

Bearing all the above in mind, the whole process of analysis of the students' written work was carried out by signaling the error (e.g., *in the weekend), making a reconstruction (e.g., on the weekend), finding the appropriate linguistic description (e.g., preposition), and finding the appropriate surface structure description (e.g., misformation-incorrect use).

It was also necessary to assess language accuracy, so the number of transfer errors per number of words as well as the frequencies of the errors found were manually tallied.

Error counts are a good measure to reflect the number of errors, and it is a better option in case of homogeneous populations. As for the classification of errors, this information can be very useful along with the error count. In addition, error count allows for a higher interrater reliability (Polio, 1997). In this respect, an independent researcher also revised the types of errors and the error count with the purpose of achieving a high interrater reliability (85% in the case of the present study).

The choice of the investigated grammatical features to be examined was primarily data-driven, but, as will be seen, some categories coincide with those from previous work on negative language transfer (e.g., Alonso, 1997; Cabrera et al., 2014; Lopez, 2011).

RQ2. Will proficiency level in English have an impact on the amount and type of grammatical transfer errors found across three levels (A1, A2, and B1)?

H2: Higher proficiency learners (B1) will generate fewer transfer errors than those in generated lower proficiency levels (A2, A1).

The data of the error count in the three groups of learners (A1, A2, and B1) were compared to see variations in the measures of central tendency and frequencies of transfer errors. The significance in the difference of errors among the three EFL proficiency groups was obtained using an analysis of variance (ANOVA), which is a suitable test for the comparison of three or more groups in the case of parametric tests (Oakes, 1998).

RQ3. Will the type of writing task (narrative vs. argumentative) have an impact on the amount and type of grammatical transfer errors found?

H3: There will be an impact of task type on the amount of grammatical transfer errors found in the written output of Ecuadorian high school learners.

Transfer errors were also compared between the two types of writing tasks (narrative and argumentative essays) by using the matched pairs t-test. This statistical test was used

because we are comparing correlated samples (Oakes, 1998), that is, the narrative and argumentative essays produced by the same groups of participants.

RQ4. What is the perception of students and teachers regarding the feedback provided on EFL writing?

H4: Ecuadorian high-school learners and teachers will have positive views about corrective feedback in writing.

This question will be explored by qualitatively and quantitatively analyzing the information obtained from students and teachers in the questionnaires and written interviews related to their perceptions on feedback on EFL writing. The results will be first analyzed quantitatively after coding the answers given in the questionnaires. The responses from students and teachers were coded following the procedures to code closed-ended questions in the first part by counting the occurrences of the answers given and assigning a numeric value to each option (e.g., option a = 1, option b = 2, etc.). In the case of four questions in which the participants gave more than one answer (questions 7, 8, 9 and 10), we counted all the occurrences by considering one option at a time and calculating all of the frequencies obtained out of a total of 100%.

In the second part of the questionnaire, all the questions were designed based on a Likert scale. The coding was almost similar to the one in the first part of the questionnaire, in this case, we assigned numbers to the corresponding answers like this: strongly disagree = 1, disagree = 2, neither agree nor disagree = 3, agree = 4, and strongly agree = 5. The central tendency measure recommended for each question was the mode since we have continuous variables in all the items. Regarding the written interviews, the responses were grouped in tables that gathered and classified the different types of answers given by students and teachers.

In order to compare the responses to the items of parts 1 and 2 of the questionnaire, we used the Kruskal-Wallis method because the variables are categorical and we are comparing three groups (A1, A2, and B1). In items 7-10 of the first part (items in which students chose 2 or more options to answer the question), the Wilcoxon and the McNemar test for related samples was used to determine statistically significant differences between the most frequent options selected.

Finally, the results obtained were analyzed qualitatively taking into account the answers given by the teachers to the questionnaires and written interviews as well as the learners' answers to the interviews. All these responses will be compared and contrasted in the chapter devoted to discussion of these results.

7.5 Summary of the chapter

This chapter has provided information about the Ecuadorian EFL context. This background is necessary to familiarize the reader with the educational setting in which the study was carried out. After summarizing the rationale of the study, we addressed the method used with a detailed description of the participants and setting, research instructions and materials used, the process of data collection, the activities assigned, and the procedure involved in coding and analyzing the data gathered.

The next two chapters (Chapters 8 and 9) will be devoted to the analysis of the results obtained in the present study.

Chapter 8: Results on Grammatical Transfer Errors in Writing by Ecuadorian EFL Learners

This chapter presents the results obtained after analyzing the data gathered, both quantitatively and qualitatively, in order to answer the first three research questions in our study. We aimed to provide information about the following issues:

1) The common types of grammatical errors that are influenced by Spanish in the written production of Ecuadorian EFL senior high school learners and their prevalence over lexical transfer errors;

2) The difference in the amount of grammatical transfer errors across EFL proficiency levels;

3) The difference in the amount of grammatical transfer errors depending on the type of written task.

This chapter focuses on the description of results concerning the research questions dealing with grammatical transfer errors only. Their detailed discussion will be presented in Chapter 10.

8.1 First Research question: What grammatical transfer errors are commonly influenced by Spanish in the written production of Ecuadorian EFL senior high school learners and how prevalent are these errors in comparison to lexical transfer errors?

H1: Language transfer errors related to grammar will be prevalent in the written production of Ecuadorian senior high school learners in terms of articles, verbs, nouns, pronouns and prepositions. Grammatical transfer errors will be more frequent than lexical transfer errors.

After analyzing the essays written by the participants in this study, we have obtained a list of interlingual transfer errors. Other types of errors, including intralingual errors (those that do not resemble similar structures in the L1), code-switching, and

unintelligible expressions and words were excluded. We determined the choice of the investigated grammatical features on the basis of deviant grammatical patterns in the written work by Spanish-speaking students participating in previous studies reported in the literature. These features were analyzed contrastively between both Spanish and English to determine whether the incorrect use could be caused by L1 transfer.

First of all, in order to account for intra-L1-group-homogeneity (Jarvis, 2000), a construct that refers to the fact that learners with the same L1 behave similarly when using the same L2, we will show the frequencies (f) and percentages (%) of these errors in all of the students' written production. Table 7 displays the relevant information about the total number of grammatical and lexical transfer errors found in the Ecuadorian EFL students' written production (27306 words in total):

TRANSFER ERRORS	f	%
Grammatical transfer errors		
ARTICLES	512	24.77
PREPOSITIONS	504	24.38
PRONOUNS	498	24.09
VERBS	110	5.32
WRONG WORD ORDER	98	4.74
ADVERBS	73	3.53
NOUNS	59	2.85
ADJECTIVES	44	2.13
NEGATION	37	1.79
DETERMINERS	34	1.64
COMPLEMENTIZERS	25	1.21
Lexical transfer errors		
INVENTED WORDS	59	2.85
FALSE COGNATES	14	0.68
TOTAL	2067	100
TOTAL WORD COUNT: 27306		

Table 7. Total number of language transfer errors made by Ecuadorian EFL learners

The numbers in table 7 show that transfer errors related to lexical items (i.e., invented words (or calques) and false cognates) feature low percentages (3.53%). On the

contrary, grammatical transfer errors amount to 96.5% of the transfer errors found in the total written production of these Ecuadorian EFL learners. It is clear that, at least in our corpus, grammatical transfer errors are much more prevalent than lexical transfer errors in EFL writing. It is also important to notice in the table that the highest percentages of grammatical transfer errors in these EFL students' written output are found in the categories of articles, prepositions and pronouns, whereas the lowest percentages are found in negation, determiners, and complementizers.

In what follows, we will provide the frequencies (as well as the denominator indicating the total contexts in which the grammatical structure should be used) of each type of transfer error together with examples illustrating those errors and how they might be claimed to be due to transfer from the learners' L1. In the examples, some other errors in the original English sentences written by the participants have been corrected so that the reader focuses only on the transfer errors being addressed. The presentation of these errors will go from the most to the least frequent in Table 7 (from articles to complementizers).

8.1.1 Transfer errors in the use of articles

A great majority of the errors found in the written work of these Ecuadorian EFL learners involves the use of articles and, more precisely, the misuse of definite articles. Table 8 shows the frequency of transfer errors related to articles by proficiency level and essay type. The denominators indicate the number of contexts in which the articles should be used in each type of essay in each proficiency group:

ARTICLES	A1		A2		B1	
	Narrative	Argumentative	Narrative	Argumentative	Narrative	Argumentative
Add-a	79/138	118/141	59/143	115/156	47/151	75/168
Om-a	9/138	3/141	2/143	4/156	1/151	0
Total	88/138	121/141	61/143	119/156	48/151	75/168

Table 8. Frequency of grammatical transfer errors related to articles

The examples below, with an approximate translation into Spanish within parentheses, show how the element underlined has been incorrectly transferred from the learners' L1 to English.

8.1.1.1 Addition of articles

The following examples show the use of an unnecessary article in English, which are part of the grammatical transfer errors found in the EFL learners' written production. The explanation is given after the examples.

(46)**Then I play the basketball.* (subject 47, level A1, narrative)

(Luego juego al baloncesto.)

(47)**When the video games are about mathematics, they are good.* (subject 1, level B1, argumentative)

(Cuando los video juegos son sobre matemáticas, son buenos.)

(48)**The Saturday, I went to the field.* (subject 38, level A1, narrative)

(El sábado fui al campo.)

(49)**I have a breakfast in the morning.* (subject 34, level A2, narrative)

(Tomo un desayuno en la mañana)

In (46), we observe that the Spanish “al” used in the translated sentence “Luego juego al baloncesto” is a contraction of the preposition “a” and the article “el” (Real Academia Española, 2010). This error has been considered within the category of addition of articles in the present study because we have an unnecessary use of articles in English (*the basketball*). The definite article in English is not used with names of sports (Whitlam, 2011), so a correct rendition of the sentence in English would be “*Then I play basketball*”.

The definite article in Spanish can often be employed with plural nouns used generically (e.g., los videoguegos), which contrasts with its use in English, where the definite article with plural generic nouns is not used (Kattán-Ibarra & Pountain, 2003). This means that the correct form of the sentence in English could be “When video games are about mathematics, they are good.” Example (47) is ungrammatical in English because the learner has transferred the Spanish definite article into his L2.

Example (48) shows an incorrect use of the definite article in English. While Spanish uses definite articles before names of the week (Kattán-Ibarra & Pountain, 2003) to indicate time (e.g., “El sábado fui al campo.”), in English it is necessary to use a preposition of time instead. In this case, we can use the preposition “on” (e.g., “On Saturday...”) with dates and days (Murphy, 1998).

Example (49) features an ungrammatical sentence because English does not take articles before the name of a meal (e.g., lunch, dinner, breakfast), except when it is preceded by an adjective (e.g., “That was a nice lunch”) (Murphy, 1998), so we can say “I have breakfast in the morning” in this case. In Ecuadorian Spanish, however, it is correct to use the article “un” (“a” in English) before the word “desayuno” (“breakfast” in English). This situation leads to the transfer from Spanish to English of this

grammatical structure, which results in an error in the English utterance. Addition of indefinite articles is not a common transfer error in our database, though, and the vast majority of problems come from the addition of definite articles.

8.1.1.2 Omission of articles

In the grammatical transfer errors involving articles, we have also found cases of articles in English that are omitted in places where they are necessary. These examples and their corresponding explanation are presented below.

(50)**We returned to house for resting.* (subject 51, level A2, narrative)

(Regresamos a casa a descansar.)

(51)**It has turned into vice.* (subject 2, level A2, argumentative)

(Se ha convertido en vicio.)

We can see in (50) that the definite article “the” has been ignored as a result of transfer from Spanish. In the case of the Spanish sentence, it is fine to suppress the article “la” before the noun “casa” with the meaning ‘We returned home’. The same as in English, if a definite article is included, the meaning would be different. Both ‘We returned to the house’ and ‘Volvimos a la casa’ would imply that the speaker was familiar with the house and that the house had been referred to previously in the discourse (Sargeant, 2007).

In (51), the indefinite article “a” is needed in English before the noun “vice” in order to form an acceptable sentence, so we should say “It has turned into a vice”. In Spanish, no article is required.

8.1.2 Transfer errors in the use of prepositions

Table 9 below shows the different types of transfer errors involving prepositions found in the Ecuadorian EFL learners’ written production. The grammatical errors in prepositions were labeled as addition, misuse and omission of prepositions. Table 9 also shows the frequencies of transfer errors along with the obligatory contexts (contexts in which the grammatical structure should be used) in the denominator:

PREPOSITIONS	A1		A2		B1	
	Narrative	Argumentative	Narrative	Argumentative	Narrative	Argumentative
Add-p	18/266	2/81	11/270	2/84	7/284	2/95
Mis-p	89/266	29/81	92/270	23/84	63/284	16/95
Om-p	28/266	17/81	33/270	15/84	41/284	16/95
Total	135/266	48/81	136/270	40/84	111/284	34/95

Add-p = Addition of prepositions
 Mis-p = Misuse of prepositions
 Om-p = Omission of prepositions

Table 9. Frequency of grammatical transfer errors related to prepositions

The most frequent transfer errors in this category of prepositions are the ones regarding the misuse of prepositions. In what follows, we will explain these grammatical transfer errors that involve prepositions and present some typical examples of the errors found in the written production of these Ecuadorian learners.

8.1.2.1 Addition of prepositions

Sometimes, native Spanish speakers can incorrectly add an unnecessary preposition in English utterances because the use of the equivalent of such preposition in those contexts is common in their L1. This difference results in the transfer of this feature to their L2. In most of the transfer errors illustrated below, the preposition “to”, for example, is unnecessary in English, and these errors come from using a wrong equivalent in English of the preposition “a” in Spanish. We also present further examples of other types of prepositions used incorrectly by these Ecuadorian EFL learners as a result of language transfer.

(52)**Trying to inform to them to use it correctly.* (subject 11, level B1, argumentative)

(Tratar de informarles a ellos para usarlos correctamente.)

(53)**I go to shopping with my family.* (subject 4, level A2, narrative)

(Me voy a comprar con mi familia)

(54)**Finally I go to home.* (subject 14, level A1, narrative)

(Finalmente voy a casa.)

(55) **I open my facebook for to chat with my friends.* (subject 16, level A1, narrative)

(Abro mi facebook para chatear con mis amigos)

In (52), in the sentence in Spanish (“Tratar de informarles a ellos para usarlos correctamente”) the preposition “a” is used with the verb “informar” (inform). In this case, we can use the personal “a” (the use of “a” before a direct object in Spanish) with

pronouns denoting people (Kattán-Ibarra & Pountain, 2003). The equivalent preposition in English “to” must not be used here because the verb ‘inform’ does not take a preposition (i.e., “*Trying to inform them to use it correctly.*”).

In (53), the preposition “a” in the Spanish translation of the sentence (“Me voy a comprar con mi familia”) is required before the infinitive of the verb “comprar” because some verbs need this preposition before the infinitive (Nissenberg, 2016). This is apparently the cause of L1 transfer in the original sentence in English (**I always go to shopping on Sundays*), in which the preposition “to” is not necessary because the combination *go + gerund* is correct here (Celce-Murcia & Larsen-Freeman, 1999). For this reason, the correct course of action here is to drop the preposition “to” in the original sentence in English (i.e., “*I go shopping with my family.*”).

In the case of (54), the Spanish preposition “a” has been used. In Spanish, this preposition has several uses such as the personal “a” before a direct object, the introduction of a direct object, expressing a direction towards, expressing location, expressing rate and expressing manner. In the translated sentence above (Finalmente voy a casa) the use of the preposition “a” is correct because we are expressing direction towards (Kattán-Ibarra & Pountain, 2003). The learner’s sentence in English (**Finally I go to home*) contains a preposition of direction (the preposition “to” in this example) that is omitted when you have a locative now (e.g., home, downtown) used with a verb of motion or direction (e.g., “go”). In addition, the noun “home” is used adverbially (Celce-Murcia & Larsen-Freeman, 1999), so the preposition “to” in the sentence in English is not necessary.

In (55), we have a case of addition of preposition of purpose in which only one of the two prepositions should be used, followed by the appropriate form of the verb (infinitive with “to” or gerund with “for”). The origin of this transfer error seems to come

from the use of the preposition “para” in Spanish, whose equivalent in English in this example is “for” and the verb in Spanish “chatear” whose infinitive form has been used as an equivalent in English (i.e., “to chat”). This word for word rendition of the expression in Spanish “para chatear” is then transferred as “for to chat”, which causes the error in this sentence.

8.1.2.2 Misuse of prepositions

Learning English prepositions is a problem for most L2 English learners (Walcyn-Jones & Allsop, 1990), including Spanish learners (Diez-Bedmar & Casas Pedrosa, 2011). Spanish EFL learners who are not proficient enough in English use wrong equivalents of some Spanish prepositions in their English interlanguage. These errors have been underlined in the examples below.

(56)**Sometimes I go in bus.* (subject 13, level B1, narrative)

(A veces voy en bus.)

(57)**That depends of yourself.* (subject 37, level B1, argumentative)

(Eso depende de tí.)

(58)**We stay in home.* (subject 60, level A1, narrative)

(Nos quedamos en casa)

(59)**I play basketball in the weekends.* (subject 31, level A2, narrative)

(Juego baloncesto los fines de semana.)

(60)**I went for play with my brother.* (subject 7, level A2, argumentative)

(Fui a jugar con mi hermano.)

(61)**My cousins arrive to my house.* (subject 16, level A1, narrative)

(Mis primos llegan a mi casa.)

(62)**I went with my family for the city.* (subject 24, level A2, narrative)

(Fui con mi familia para la ciudad.)

In (56), “by” should be used (not “in”) since “by” is associated with nouns referring to vehicles (e.g., bus, car, bike, train, boat, and plane). In (57), we should use “on” because the verb “depend” is used in combination with the preposition “on” (not “of”) (Swan, 2002). Likewise, in (58), the preposition in Spanish “en” in (58) seems to have been used as the equivalent of “in” by the EFL learners, but this use of the preposition “in” is not appropriate in this example in English. We could use “at” in the second sentence, which is, in this case, a preposition of place usually associated with the noun “home” (i.e., “at home”) (Murphy, 1998).

We can see in (59) a misuse of the preposition of time (“in” instead of “on”). This is one of the most common transfer errors in the Ecuadorian EFL learners when it comes to misuse of prepositions. “On” is used in English to indicate time before “weekend/weekends” (Murphy, 1998) (“at” could be used in British English), so the use of the preposition “in”, which is assumed as the equivalent of the preposition “en” in Spanish, is not correct.

The preposition “for” in (60) is used as a preposition of purpose. In this example, it is being used as the equivalent of the preposition “para” in Spanish. In English, since we have the past tense of the verb “go” in connection with the verb “play”, we need to

use the preposition “to”. The correct expression, then, would be “I went to play with my brother”.

In (61), the preposition “to” is used as the equivalent of the preposition “a” in Spanish. The preposition “to” is not used with the verb arrive here. Depending on the noun, the correct prepositions after the verb “arrive” are “at” and “in” (Lea, 2002); for example, “I have arrived at the airport” or “I will arrive in New York tomorrow”. In this case, it is grammatically correct to use “at” as a preposition of movement after the verb “arrive” when the noun that follows is “house” (i.e., “My cousins arrive at my house”). In other cases of nouns such as city, town, a country, continent that follow the verb “arrive”, the correct preposition to be used after the verb “arrive” is “in” (Rosset, 2003).

Example (62) is also a case in which the preposition “for” is used as an equivalent for the preposition “para” in English. However, the purpose of this sentence is to use a preposition of direction to indicate that people are going somewhere, so the correct preposition is “to” instead of “for”.

8.1.2.3 Omission of prepositions

The omission of a necessary preposition in the L2 can sometimes be caused by L1 language transfer because the equivalent of such preposition is not used in the learner’s L1. Examples of these errors in EFL writing are shown below.

(63)**I listen the music.* (subject 21, level A1, narrative)

(Escucho la música.)

(64)**I had to explain him the problem.* (subject 19, level B1, argumentative)

(Tuve que explicarle el problema.)

In the first example above (63), the learner has omitted the English preposition “to” to connect the verb to the object (Lea, 2002; Murphy, 1998), which, in this sentence, is the noun “music”. In Spanish, the verb “escuchar” (the equivalent of the verb “to listen”) can be linked to the word “música” (“music” in English) without using a preposition. This results in the transfer error (underlined in the example) that can be fixed by adding the preposition in English (i.e., “I listen to the music”).

In (64), the preposition “to” is also missing in the English sentence due to the transfer of the grammatical structure in Spanish that does not require a preposition to join the Spanish verb “explicar” (“explain” in English) with the indirect object (i.e., object pronoun) “le” (which is equivalent to “him” in English). In other words, object pronouns in Spanish can be placed before or after the verbs they are associated with (Real Academia Española, 2010). In order to fix this problem, we can begin by changing the order of the indirect object “him” and the noun phrase “the problem” and then add the preposition “to” between the noun phrase and the indirect object (i.e., “I had to explain the problem to him”). The preposition “to” is required after the verb “explain” before an indirect object (Swan, 2002).

8.1.3 Transfer errors in the use of pronouns

In this category, we have included transfer errors concerning pronouns that have been found in the Ecuadorian EFL students’ written work. Table 10 below shows that most errors involve omission of pronouns:

PRONOUNS	A1		A2		B1	
	Narrative	Argumentative	Narrative	Argumentative	Narrative	Argumentative
Om-pron	96/408	87/367	114/419	91/374	43/433	50/392
Mis-pron	0	10/367	0	7/374	0	0
Total	96/408	97/367	114/419	98/374	43/433	50/392

Om-pron = Omission of pronouns

Mis-pron = Misuse of pronouns

Table 10. Frequency of grammatical transfer errors related to pronouns

8.1.3.1 Omission of pronouns

Spanish-speaking learners of English may omit pronouns when writing in English due to language transfer because this grammatical feature is not always necessary in Spanish. Below we present the cases of omission subject pronouns, which is by far the most common transfer error related to pronouns, and other types of pronouns.

First of all, as expected on the basis of the numerous studies on the topic carried out in the SLA field (García Mayo, 1998; Liceras, 1996; Liceras, Fernández-Fuertes & Pérez-Tattam, 2008 to name just a few), there is a high frequency of omission of subject pronouns. In Spanish, null subjects are the default case. The subject pronoun can be omitted before the verb without altering the correct structure and meaning of the sentence as long as the subject of the verb is clearly inferred from the context (Real Academia Española, 2010). In contrast, in English, the subject pronoun before the verb is essential for the meaning of the sentence most of the time, with exceptions such as imperatives (Celce-Murcia & Larsen-Freeman, 1999) and some informal situations or the writing in diaries and recipes. This difference between Spanish and English leads Spanish EFL learners to make errors in which they drop the subject pronoun in English in cases where it is necessary to use it.

The examples below show this type of error (the verbs have been underlined). We have indicated the form of the verb from which the null subject can be inferred in the translation of the sentences in English into Spanish as well as the place (before the verb) in which the subject pronouns (“I” in (65), and “it” in examples 66-68) should be added to the original sentences in English.

(65)* *In the evening, played soccer.* (subject 1, level A1, narrative)

(En la noche, jugué fútbol.)

(66)* *I have a new App. Is available on smartphones.* (subject 60, level A2, argumentative)

(Tengo un nuevo App. Está disponible en smartphones.)

(67)* *On Saturday, rained all day.* (subject 29, level A2, narrative)

(El sábado, llovió todo el día.)

(68)* *Today is usual to play on the cell phone.* (subject 56, level A2, argumentative)

(Hoy es habitual jugar en el teléfono celular.)

Since Spanish is a pro-drop language (Chosmky, 1981; Licerias, 1996), in (65), it is correct to use a null subject before the verb as long as the subject can be easily inferred from the context (Real Academia Española, 2010). As English is not a pro-drop language, the verb “play” needs to express its subject overtly.

The pronoun “it” in (66) and (68) is necessary in English to refer to the noun phrases “a new App” and “to play on the cell phone”, respectively. In (67), we have a *weather* verb, so the subject has to be filled with the expletive “it” (Chomsky, 1981).

As for the omission of other types of pronouns, the most representative example found is the following:

(69)* *There are bad and good for the children.* (subject 41, level A2, argumentative)

(Hay buenos y malos para los niños.)

We can see in (69) that it is necessary to use a pronoun (e.g., the pronoun “ones”) that follows the adjective so the sentence makes sense. In the equivalent sentence in Spanish, it is not necessary to use a pronoun after the adjective since adjectives can be frequently used as nouns or pronouns (Kattán-Ibarra & Pountain, 2003). Consequently, the transfer error that occurs is the omission of a pronoun; however, as indicated in table 10, the frequency of these errors is extremely low.

8.1.3.2 Misuse of pronouns

There are also cases in which language transfer occurs when Ecuadorian EFL learners use an incorrect pronoun in English. This error might be caused by the similarity between the pronouns in English and in Spanish. The examples below show this type of error.

(70)*Video games helped we. (subject 10, level A2, argumentative)

(Los videojuegos nos ayudaron (a nosotros))

(71)*I don't have time to play with they. (subject 24, level A1, argumentative)

(No tengo tiempo para jugar con ellos)

In (70), the personal pronoun “we” has been used instead of the object pronoun “us”. This can be considered a transfer error related to the misuse of an object pronoun since the word in Spanish equivalent to “us” and “we” in English is the same (“nosotros”). In this case, the pronoun in English “we” has been used to replace the implicit pronoun “a nosotros” (“us” in English) in the equivalent sentence in Spanish.

The error in (71) is of a similar nature: the personal pronoun “they” has been used instead of the object pronoun “them”, and the source of the transfer error is the use of the

pronoun in Spanish “ellos”, which is the equivalent for “they” and “them” in English in this case.

8.1.4 Transfer errors in the use of verbs (misuse of verbs)

It is important to mention that errors related to tense and aspect in verbs when learning an L2 are considered of developmental nature (Dulay, Burt & Krashen, 1982). In fact, errors such as the lack of “s” in the present tense with the third person singular (e.g., *“He go to the church”) or the lack of “ed” at the end of the verb in the past tense (e.g., *“They walk to the park yesterday” instead of “They walked...”) do not involve language transfer between Spanish and English, so we will not focus on those types of errors. The types of errors associated to L1 transfer found in Spanish-speaking EFL learners are linked to incorrect selection of verbs and wrong use of infinitives and gerunds (Alonso, 1997; Cabrera et al., 2014; Raimés & Jerskey, 2011). Thus, in the written production of Ecuadorian EFL learners in our database, we have seen that the participants use an incorrect or unusual verb or a wrong form of the verb in English that comes from the transfer of the verb used in the learners’ L1.

Table 11 displays the frequencies of grammatical transfer errors in the use of verbs found and the number of contexts in which verbs should be used (the denominators). This type of error will be explained below.

TRANSFER ERRORS	A1		A2		B1	
	Narrative	Argumentative	Narrative	Argumentative	Narrative	Argumentative
Mis-verb	9/492	34/411	21/507	29/421	9/546	8/451

Mis-verb = Misuse of verbs

Table 11. Frequency of grammatical transfer errors related to verbs

After the explanation above about this category of errors, below we present the sentences in English written by the EFL learners that contain errors about the misuse of verbs (underlined) and an approximate translation into the L1 (in parenthesis).

(72)**My brother usually looks action or scary movies.* (subject 54, level A1, narrative)

(Mi hermano normalmente ve películas de acción o de terror.)

(73)**I played video games for the first time when I had eight years old.* (subject 29,
level A2, argumentative)

(Jugué videojuegos por primera vez cuando tenía 8 años.)

(74) **When we do a party, we don't know how many people we will invite.* (subject 33,
level B1, narrative)

(Cuando *hacemos una fiesta*, no sabemos cuanta gente invitaremos.)

(75)**To play video games is not good for your mind.* (subject 15, level A2,
argumentative)

(Jugar videojuegos no es bueno para tu mente.)

(76) **An advantage of play video games is that you improve your intelligence.* (subject
44, level B1, argumentative)

(Una ventaja de jugar videojuegos es que mejoras tu inteligencia.)

(77) **He is afraid of lose.* (subject 22, level A2, argumentative)

(Él tiene miedo de perder.)

In (72), the learner uses the verb “look” as an equivalent of the verb “ver” instead of “see” or “watch”, which are the verbs selected in English to refer to television shows and films (Swan, 2002).

Similarly, in (73), the verb “have” is incorrectly used in English to refer to age because in Spanish the verb that is normally used to talk about age is “tener” (have). The learner, then, seems to have used the verb “have” as the equivalent of the Spanish verb “tener” in a context in which the verb “be” (i.e., “...when I was 8 years old”) should be used.

The sentence that the learners wrote in (74) also indicate a faulty transfer of the verb (underlined). The verb “do” is used to mean “hacer” in Spanish, but it is not employed in the correct English context, in which the verbs, for example, “organize” or “throw” could be used for a more natural utterance.

In (75), there is an incorrect structure of the noun because the learner is using the infinitive instead of the gerund. In the learners’ L1, the infinitive can be used as the subject of a sentence, which usually corresponds to the *-ing* form (gerund) used in English for this purpose (Whitlam, 2011). The correct way to start this sentence in English is then “Playing video games is not good ...”, but the learner has used the infinitive (to play) since that is the way they do it in their L1 when they use the infinitive with the Spanish verb “Jugar” (see the underlined parts). Therefore, Spanish-speaking EFL learners can also make these types of errors when writing in English.

Another type of error included in this category has been the lack of gerund after a preposition in English. In Spanish, it is correct to use the infinitive form after the preposition “de” (Real Academia Española, 2010). The preposition “de” is usually translated into English as “of”. For instance, in (76) the incorrect utterance in English “An advantage of play video games...” is caused by the negative transfer of the structure in

Spanish “una ventaja de jugar juegos de video”, in which the gerund of the verb “jugar” (to play) is not necessary in this context after the preposition “de” (of). A similar situation occurs in (77) with the utterance “He is afraid of lose”, which results from the grammatical transfer of the Spanish sentence “El tiene miedo de perder” (He is afraid of losing). In both sentences in English previously mentioned, the correct form is the use of gerund (verb + -ing) after the preposition (Murphy, 1998).

8.1.5 Wrong word order

Table 12 displays the frequencies of grammatical transfer errors made by the Ecuadorian EFL students that violate English word order as well as the number of contexts in which the correct word order should have been used (denominator). This type of error will be explained below.

TRANSFER ERRORS	A1		A2		B1	
	Narrative	Argumentative	Narrative	Argumentative	Narrative	Argumentative
WO	18/546	16/453	17/557	22/463	11/590	14/478

WO = Wrong word order

Table 12. Frequency of grammatical transfer errors related to wrong word order

Certain features in the syntax of an L1 can have an effect on the word order of an L2. This is the case of some structures in Spanish that can affect the structures of sentences in English in EFL learners’ writing. In the examples below, we present some cases of wrong order found in the students’ writing that are caused by the transfer of the grammatical structures from Spanish to English. An approximate translation into the learners’ L1 is shown in parentheses to have a clear idea of the correct word order in L1.

(78)**I usually on the weekends play soccer.* (subject 10, level A1, narrative)

(Usualmente los fines de semana juego fútbol.)

(79)**You can avoid some problems that cause video games.* (subject 11, level B1, argumentative)

(Puedes evitar algunos problemas que causan los juegos de video.)

(80)**Too came a group of friends.* (subject 54, level A2, narrative)

(También vino un grupo de amigos.)

There is an unnatural word order of the expression in English “on the weekends” in (78). In this example, this expression should be used at the end or beginning of the sentence (i.e., “*I usually play soccer on the weekends*”). We can use this word order in Spanish, and the equivalent expression (“los fines de semana”) can be used in the middle of the sentence.

In (79), the verb “cause” and the direct object “video games” do not make sense together because video games cannot be caused by something. It sounds more logical to say that the video games are the cause of problems, so the word “video games” should not be placed as the direct object of the verb “cause” in this case. In Spanish, it is usual to use the equivalent verb “causar” and the equivalent cause (“los juegos de video”) after the verb without using prepositions or any other elements to link them. One way to fix the error of the sentence in English is to switch the order to the verb and the direct object (i.e., “*You can avoid some problems that video games cause.*”)

Example (80) illustrates the unnatural order of the adverb “too” which, when it is an equivalent of “also”, is typically used at the end of an English sentence (e.g., *Carlos can sing, too*), except in formal or literary style, in which “too” is used after the subject and between commas (e.g., *I, too, have experienced despair*) (Swan, 2002). In Spanish, the word order for the equivalent word “también” is much more flexible. This situation

of word order causes a negative transfer error in the sentence in English, in which the word “too” has been placed at the beginning of the sentence. It can also be seen that the order of the subject pronoun and the verb is incorrect as well. In this case, when the subject of the sentence is indefinite, the verb can precede it (Whitlam, 2010). On the other hand, the order of verb and subject in English is not that flexible, so a correct word order for the example below would be “A group of friends came, too.”

8.1.6 Transfer errors in the use of adverbs (misuse of adverbs)

Table 13 features the frequencies of the errors related to misuse of adverbs and the obligatory contexts in which adverbs should be used (denominator). We can observe a lower frequency of these errors in argumentative essays. This type of error will be explained as follows.

TRANSFER ERRORS	A1		A2		B1	
	Narrative	Argumentative	Narrative	Argumentative	Narrative	Argumentative
Mis-adv	18/132	4/133	21/138	9/151	17/144	4/165

Mis-adv = Misuse of adverbs

Table 13. Frequency of grammatical transfer errors related to adverbs

(81)**I have dinner; after, I go to bed.* (subject 18, level A2, narrative)

(Ceno, luego voy a dormir.)

Here, in (81) we can see an incorrect use of the preposition “after” as an equivalent of the adverb “después” in Spanish. The correct word here is the use of an adverb of time instead of a preposition (e.g., afterwards, later, after that), so in this case, we could say, for example, “I have dinner; later/afterwards/after that, I go to bed.” The transfer error in this situation comes from using the wrong equivalent in English of the word in Spanish

“después”, which can have a variety of similar meanings in English depending on the context.

8.1.7 Transfer errors in the use of nouns (misuse of nouns)

In this category, we have included errors related to incorrect ways of using nouns in English that are caused by the transfer of grammatical structures from Spanish, particularly incorrect pluralization of nouns. The following table contains the frequencies of transfer errors involving nouns (and the obligatory contexts in the denominator) found in the Ecuadorian EFL learners’ written production.

NOUNS	A1		A2		B1	
	Narrative	Argumentative	Narrative	Argumentative	Narrative	Argumentative
Mis-n	18/857	8/718	10/870	5/732	4/901	14/762

Mis – n = Misuse of nouns

Table 14. Frequency of grammatical transfer errors related to nouns

Consider two examples:

(82)**I have homeworks.* (subject 8, level A1, narrative)

(Tengo tareas.)

(83)**Video games can be educational for childrens.* (subject 19, level B1, argumentative)

(Los videojuegos pueden ser educativos para los niños.)

In Spanish, the plural of a noun is generally marked by adding the letters “s” or “es” at the end of a noun, depending on different aspects such as the ending of the singular form of the noun (Real Academia de la Lengua, 2010). For example, the plural of “mano” (hand) is “manos” (hands), and the plural of “león” (lion) is “leones” (lions). In English,

the plural of regular nouns is usually formed by adding “s” at the end of the singular form of the noun, but this rule is not applied in many irregular (e.g., child) or non-count nouns (e.g., homework), to indicate plural. For example, the English word “homework” used in (82), which is a non-count noun, does not have a plural form in English, but it can be quantifiable if the word “piece” is used (e.g., pieces of homework) (Lea, 2002). However, in the equivalent singular word in Spanish (tarea), we need to add “s” to pluralize this noun.

Example (83) shows the use of the regular plural morpheme –s with an irregular noun (child), resulting in the wrong form “childrens”.

8.1.8 Transfer errors in the use of adjectives (misuse of adjectives)

The incorrect use of English adjectives that may have a similar form or meaning to adjectives in Spanish but are incorrectly applied to the appropriate context of an English utterance can cause confusion when Spanish-speaking EFL learners try to write in the L2. The table below represents the occurrence of this type of errors and the number of contexts in which the adjectives have been used (obligatory contexts).

ADJECTIVES	A1		A2		B1	
	Narrative	Argumentative	Narrative	Argumentative	Narrative	Argumentative
Mis-adj	2/75	10/84	2/79	19/81	1/91	10/98

Mis-adj = Misuse of adjectives

Table 15. Frequency of grammatical transfer errors related to adjectives

Table 15 displays the frequencies of misuse of adjectives as one of the types of grammatical transfer errors found in the Ecuadorian EFL learners’ written work. The incorrect pluralization of adjectives is related to these errors in which adjectives are used incorrectly. A typical example of this type of error and its approximate translation into L1 (in parentheses) is presented below.

(84)**My family and I go to the park and play differents games.* (subject 20, level A1, narrative)

(Mi familia y yo vamos al parque y jugamos diferentes juegos.)

In (84), we can see an incorrect pluralization of the adjective “different” by adding an “s” to it. This is caused by the fact that, in Spanish, adjectives have plural forms (an “s” is added at the end of the adjective) because there must be gender and number agreement between nouns and adjectives (Castro, 1997).

8.1.9 Transfer errors in the use of negation (misuse of negation)

Table 16 below shows the frequencies of grammatical transfer errors in the use of negation made by all of the Ecuadorian EFL learners as well as the obligatory contexts in which negation should be used (denominator). This type of error will be explained below.

TRANSFER ERRORS	A1		A2		B1	
	Narrative	Argumentative	Narrative	Argumentative	Narrative	Argumentative
Mis-neg	1/10	17/37	3/13	10/44	1/21	5/49

Mis – neg = Misuse of negation

Table 16. Frequency of grammatical transfer errors related to negation

This category of grammatical transfer errors involving the misuse of negation has to do with the errors made by Spanish-speaking and EFL learners when writing negative sentences in English. We can see in table 16 that this type of error is less frequent in narrative essays.

Although Dulay and Burt (1974a) labeled negation errors as “ambiguous”, Cancino, Rosansky, and Schumann (1975) speculate that the first hypothesis of Spanish-

speaking learners is that negation in English is similar to negation in Spanish, so learners rely on their L1 structures.

Research on the acquisition of negation in an L2 has provided evidence that, in these types of errors, which presumably begin as L2-dependent developmental errors and can be UG-driven, the learner's L1 also plays an important role (Perales, García Mayo, & Liceras, 2009; Zobl, 1980). The source of the errors listed below is Spanish where the negative particle 'no' is used before verbs and no help from auxiliaries similar to 'do-support' is necessary.

(85)**They played with it, but I not.* (subject 36, level A2, argumentative)

(Ellos jugaron con eso, pero yo no.)

(86)**I not wanted to go to the movies.* (subject 17, level A2, narrative)

(Yo no quería ir al cine.)

(87)**They don't learn nothing.* (subject 1, level B1, argumentative)

(Ellos no han aprendido nada)

In (85), "didn't" is necessary to form the ellipsis of the sentence after the conjunction "but", so the correct way to write the sentence would be "They played with it, but I didn't (played with it)". Here, the ellipsis is an acceptable way to sound natural in English by leaving out words to avoid repetition (Swan, 2002).

It is necessary to use the auxiliary "did" in (86) and change the verb to the base form "want" because the sentence is in the past tense (i.e., "I didn't want to go to the

movies”). In both examples (85 and 86), there is a transfer of the negation in their L1 to “not”, which is not considered correct in the context of these sentences in English.

The English utterance produced by the EFL students in (87) is not correct because the grammatical rule in English dictates that double negatives must be avoided, so when the sentence is in the negative form (or a question) the pronoun must be in the affirmative form “any” (e.g., anything, anybody) (Celce-Murcia & Larsen-Freeman, 1999). In this sentence, the correct word is “anything” instead of “nothing”. On the contrary, double negatives in Spanish are normal, so the pronoun “nada” (“nothing” in English) can be used in a negative sentence.

8.1.10 Transfer errors in the use of determiners (misuse of determiners)

The frequencies of grammatical transfer errors in the use of determiners found in the Ecuadorian EFL learners’ written production as well as the obligatory contexts in which determiners should be used (denominators) are shown in table 17 below. We can see that this type of error is less frequent in narrative essays.

TRANSFER ERRORS	A1		A2		B1	
	Narrative	Argumentative	Narrative	Argumentative	Narrative	Argumentative
Mis-det	4/6	9/27	1/6	13/30	1/9	6/30

Mis-det = Misuse of determiners

Table 17. Frequency of grammatical transfer errors related to determiners

These grammatical transfer errors in determiners will be explained with the help of the examples below.

(88)* *These games take you to other world.* (subject 55, level A2, argumentative)

(Estos juegos te llevan a otro mundo.)

(89)**I see much animals in the zoo.* (subject 48, level A1, narrative)

(Veo muchos animales en el zoológico.)

In (88), the intention of the writer is to refer to “an additional or extra world”, but they are using “other world”, which expresses an alternative. In this case, the correct path to follow is the use of the word “another” with the singular countable noun (i.e., “another world”) to express “additional or extra” (Swan, 2002).

Example (89) shows a misuse of the quantifier “much” instead of “many”. Since we have the count noun “animals” after the quantifier, the correct quantifier for count nouns here is “many” (Murphy, 1998). This transfer error comes from the use in Spanish of the quantifier “muchos”, which is used for count nouns in Spanish. It can be seen that the word “muchos” in Spanish is similar in form to “much” in English, so this is apparently the origin of the grammatical transfer error.

8.1.11 Transfer errors in the use of complementizers (misuse of complementizers)

The numbers in table 18 below, indicate that grammatical transfer errors in the use of complementizers are not present in narrative essays, mainly because these structures have rarely been used in narrative essays in the proficiency levels A1 and A2 (as indicated by the obligatory contexts in the denominator).

TRANSFER ERRORS	A1		A2		B1	
	Narrative	Argumentative	Narrative	Argumentative	Narrative	Argumentative
Mis-comp	0/0	11/14	0/0	9/16	0/3	5/21

Mis-comp = Misuse of complementizers

Table 18. Frequency of grammatical transfer errors related to complementizers

Due to negative language transfer, EFL learners can write an incorrect or unnatural conjunction in English that comes from the use of an equivalent conjunction in the learners’ L1. This is shown in the example below.

(90)**I think what video games are very fun.* (subject 38, level A1, argumentative)

(Creo que los videojuegos son muy divertidos.)

In (90), the writer is introducing an indirect statement (...video games are very fun), so the correct equivalent in English of the conjunction “que” would be “that” (i.e., “*I think that video games are very fun.*”). However, “that” can be omitted in English in these cases (Whitlam, 2011). We can see here that Spanish-speaking EFL learners apparently use the word “what” as an equivalent in English of the conjunction in Spanish “que”, probably due to flaws in formal instruction. Even though “what” can be the equivalent of “que” in Spanish (e.g., The question in English “What are you doing?” is the equivalent of the question in Spanish ¿Qué estás haciendo? in which “what” is the equivalent of “qué”), this is not the correct word to be used in the contexts of the English sentence in (90).

As can be seen, Spanish grammatical structures are transferred to a considerable extent in students with English proficiency that goes from beginner to intermediate (levels A1-B1). For a clearer view, table 19 below presents the frequencies, percentages, and errors (N) per number of words (per 1000 words) of the types of grammatical transfer errors found in the Ecuadorian EFL learners’ written production.

Type of error	f	%	N/1000
Add-a	493	24.72	18.05
Om-a	19	0.95	0.69
Add- p	42	2.11	1.54
Mis- p	312	15.65	11.43
Om-p	150	7.52	5.49
Om-pron	481	24.12	17.62
Mis-pron	17	0.85	0.62
Mis-vrb	110	5.52	4.03
WO	98	4.91	3.59
Mis-adv	73	3.66	2.67
Mis-n	59	2.96	2.16
Mis- adj	44	2.21	1.61
Mis-neg	37	1.86	1.36
Mis-det	34	1.71	1.24
Mis-comp	25	1.25	0.92
TOTAL	1994	100	73.02
TOTAL WORD COUNT: 27306			

Add-a = Addition of articles
Om-a = Omission of articles
Add-p = Addition of prepositions
Mis-p = Misuse of prepositions
Om-p = Omission of prepositions
Om-pron = Omission of pronouns
Mis-pron = Misuse of pronouns
Mis-vrb = Misuse of verbs
WO = Wrong word order
Mis-adv = Misuse of adverbs
Mis-n = Misuse of nouns
Mis-adj = Misuse of adjectives
Mis-neg = Misuse of negation
Mis-det = Misuse of determiners
Mis-comp = Misuse of complementizers

Table 19. Grammatical language transfer errors made by all of the Ecuadorian EFL learners

As Table 19 shows, the highest percentages and number of grammar transfer errors per one thousand words in all of the EFL students' written production are found in the addition of articles (24.72%; 18.05/1000 words), omission of pronouns (24.12%; 17.62 errors/1000 words), and misuse of prepositions (15.65%; 11.43 errors /1000 words). Conversely, the lowest percentages correspond to misuse of complementizers

(1.25%; 0.92 errors /1000 words), omission of articles (0.95%; 0.69 errors /1000 words), and misuse of pronouns (0.85%; 0.62 errors /1000 words). It is also important to notice that the participants have made an average of 73.02 grammatical transfer errors per one thousand words in their EFL written output.

8.2 Second research question: Will proficiency level in English have an impact on the amount and type of grammatical transfer errors found across three levels (A1, A2, and B1)?

H2: Higher proficiency learners (B1) will generate fewer transfer errors than those generated in lower proficiency levels (A2, A1).

Table 20 below presents a comparison of the grammatical transfer errors made in the written production of these Ecuadorian EFL learners at the three proficiency levels. We have used the number of errors per one thousand words (N/1000) to allow for a more accurate measure of the proportion of grammatical language transfer errors.

Type of error	A1			A2			B1		
	f	%	N/1000	f	%	N/1000	f	%	N/1000
Add-a	197	25.79	27.39	174	22.92	18.18	122	25.9	11.57
Om-a	12	1.57	1.67	6	0.79	0.63	1	0.21	0.09
Add-p	20	2.62	2.78	13	1.71	1.36	9	1.91	0.85
Mis-p	118	15.45	16.41	115	15.15	12.02	79	16.77	7.49
Om-p	45	5.89	6.26	48	6.32	5.02	57	12.1	5.41
Om-pron	183	23.95	25.44	205	27.01	21.42	93	19.75	8.82
Mis-pron	10	1.31	1.39	7	0.92	0.73	0	0	0
Mis- vrb	43	5.62	5.98	50	6.59	5.22	17	3.61	1.61
WO	34	4.45	4.73	39	5.14	4.08	25	5.31	2.37
Mis-adv	22	2.88	3.06	30	3.95	3.13	21	4.46	1.99
Mis-n	26	3.4	3.62	15	1.98	1.57	18	3.82	1.71
Mis- adj	12	1.57	1.67	21	2.77	2.19	11	2.34	1.04
Mis-neg	18	2.36	2.5	13	1.71	1.36	6	1.27	0.57
Mis-det	13	1.7	1.81	14	1.84	1.46	7	1.49	0.66
Mis-comp	11	1.44	1.53	9	1.19	0.94	5	1.06	0.47
TOTAL	764	100	106.23	759	100	79.31	471	100	44.65
Word count (A1): 7192			Word count (A2): 9570			Word count (B1): 10544			

Add-a = Addition of articles
Om-a = Omission of articles
Add-p = Addition of prepositions
Mis-p = Misuse of prepositions
Om-p = Omission of prepositions
Om-pron = Omission of pronouns
Mis-pron = Misuse of pronouns
Mis-vrb = Misuse of verbs

WO = Wrong word order
Mis-adv = Misuse of adverbs
Mis-n = Misuse of nouns
Mis-adj = Misuse of adjectives
Mis-neg = Misuse of negation
Mis-det = Misuse of determiners
Mis-comp = Misuse of complementizers

Table 20. Grammatical transfer errors made by Ecuadorian EFL learners across three levels of proficiency

The total frequencies of grammatical transfer errors across the three proficiency levels (A1, A2, and B1) are displayed in table 20. The highest percentages and number of grammatical transfer errors per one thousand words are found in the addition of articles (A1: 25.79%, 27.39 errors/1000 words; A2: 22.92%, 18.18 errors/1000 words; B1: 25.9%, 11.57 errors /1000 words), omission of pronouns (A1: 23.95%, 25.44 errors /1000

words; A2: 27.01%, 21.42 errors /1000 words; B1: 19.75%, 8.82 errors/1000 words), and misuse of prepositions(A1: 15.45%, 16.41 errors/1000 words; A2: 15.15%, 12.02 errors/1000 words; B1: 16.77%, 7.49 errors /1000 words). On the other hand, we can observe the lowest figures in errors such as misuse of complementizers (A1: 1.44%, 1.53 errors /1000 words; A2: 1.19%, 0.94 errors/1000 words; B1: 1.06%, 0.47 errors/1000 words), omission of articles (A1: 1.57%, 1.67 errors/1000 words; A2: 0.79%, 0.63 errors/1000 words; B1: 0.21%, 0.09 errors/1000 words), and misuse of pronouns (A1: 1.31%, 1.39 errors/1000 words; A2: 0.92%, 0.73 errors/1000 words; B1: 0%, 0 errors/1000 words).

As seen in table 20, most of the errors, including the three most frequent grammatical transfer errors, have a tendency to decrease as the level of proficiency increases. This tendency can be clearly observed in the total of number of errors per one thousand words.

The comparison of the three proficiency level groups regarding the grammatical transfer errors made in their writing tasks in English can be considered as evidence for intra-L1-group homogeneity (i.e., the grammatical transfer errors have a similar behavior across groups A1, A2, and B1 in the sense that the percentages of errors show similarities in the three groups as shown in table 20).

In order to test the significance of these observed differences among groups, we conducted a one-way analysis of variance (One-way ANOVA) for independent samples since the groups have different students. In case that a significant difference is found, we will present the results of the post-hoc test using the Tukey's test.

Table 21 below shows the means (M) and standards deviations (SD) of grammatical transfer errors in each group as well as the F and p-values resulting from the ANOVA tests.

Transfer error	A1		A2		B1		F	p
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD		
Add -a	3.28	2.19	2.9	2.21	2.03	2.12	5.21	0.00632
Om-a	0.2	0.51	0.1	0.3992	0.017	0.13	4.85	0.009
Add-p	0.33	0.816	0.2167	0.45	0.15	0.404	1.5	0.22595
Mis- p	1.967	1.47	1.917	1.67	1.317	1.535	3.22	0.0423
Om-p	0.75	0.89	0.8	1.1	0.95	1.32	0.52	0.5954
Om-pron	3.05	2.53	3.42	2.53	1.55	1.71	11.05	<.0001
Mis-pron	0.167	0.49	0.117	0.49	0	0	2.72	0.0686
Mis-vrb	0.7167	0.885	0.833	1.044	0.283	0.613	6.72	0.0015
WO	0.5667	0.81	0.65	0.899	0.417	0.645	1.34	0.264
Mis-adv	0.3667	0.61	0.5	0.98	0.35	0.685	0.67	0.513
Mis-n	0.433	0.87	0.25	0.6	0.3	0.497	1.18	0.3097
Mis-adj	0.2	0.546	0.35	0.63	0.18	0.43	1.71	0.184
Mis-neg	0.3	0.59	0.217	0.524	0.1	0.303	2.54	0.0817
Mis-det	0.217	0.555	0.233	0.533	0.1167	0.324	1.03	0.359
Mis -comp	0.18	0.596	0.15	0.515	0.0833	0.2787	0.67	0.513

Add-a = Addition of articles

Om-a = Omission of articles

Add-p = Addition of prepositions

Mis-p = Misuse of prepositions

Om-p = Omission of prepositions

Om-pron = Omission of pronouns

Mis-pron = Misuse of pronouns

Mis-vrb = Misuse of verbs

WO = Wrong word order

Mis-adv = Misuse of adverbs

Mis-n = Misuse of nouns

Mis-adj = Misuse of adjectives

Mis-neg = Misuse of negation

Mis-det = Misuse of determiners

Mis-comp = Misuse of complementizers

Table 21. Statistical significance of grammatical transfer errors in the three groups of proficiency

Table 21 indicates a statistically significant difference among the three proficiency groups with respect to addition of articles (p -value < 0.05), which is one of the most common errors in the list. In this grammatical transfer error, Tukey's post-hoc test shows a non-significant statistical difference between groups A1 and A2, and between groups A2, and B1. However, there is a significant difference between groups A1 and B1 ($p < 0.01$). A similar behavior of the errors is observed in the omission of articles. The p -value ($p < 0.05$) means a statistically significant difference among the three groups, and the results of the post-hoc test point out to a statistically significant difference between groups A1 and B1 ($p < 0.01$), but there is no significant difference between groups A1 and A2, or between groups A2 and B1.

In terms of omission of pronouns, which is also a frequent language transfer error found in the list, a p-value $<.0001$ results in statistically significant differences among groups. After running the Tukey's post-hoc test, we can find that the difference between A1 and A2 is not statistically significant, but the differences between A1 and B1 ($p<0.01$), as well as between A2 and B1 ($p<0.01$) are statistically significant. Similarly, the results of the Tukey's post-hoc test point out to statistically significant differences in errors concerning the misuse of pronouns between groups A1 and B1 ($p<0.01$), and between groups A2 and B1 ($p<0.01$), which means that no statistically significant difference was found between groups A1 and A2.

A statistically significant difference can be observed when comparing the three groups in the error related to misuse of verbs ($p<0.05$). The results of the post-hoc test indicate a statistically significant difference is existent between groups A1 and B1 ($p<0.05$), and between A2 and B1 ($p<0.01$), but there is no significant difference when comparing groups A1 and A2.

We have seen here that the p-values in table 21 that result in statistically significant differences in language transfer errors among the three groups of English proficiency (A1, A2, and B1) are the ones referring to addition of articles, omission of articles, omission of pronouns, misuse of pronouns, and misuse of verbs. In these five grammatical transfer errors, the difference between groups A1 and A2 is not statistically significant, but it is significant between groups A1 and B1. There is a statistically significant difference between groups A2 and B1 in errors of omission of pronouns, misuse of pronouns and misuse of verbs, that is, three of the five errors in which statistically significant differences were found.

In addition, in the five grammatical transfer errors in which statistically significant differences were found, the number of errors per words decreases as the students'

proficiency level in English improves. This tendency is present in most of the grammatical transfer errors (see table 20), except for misuse of nouns and omission of prepositions, in which, although the number of errors per one thousand words is higher in group A1, this number is a little higher in group B1 than in group A2. Another exception is found in the errors of misuse of adjective and misuse of adverbs, in which the number of errors per one thousand words is lower in group B1, but it is slightly higher in group A2 than in group A1.

To sum up, the tendency of the most frequent grammatical transfer errors observed in research question 1 (addition of articles, omission of pronouns, and misuse of prepositions) is basically maintained in each of the proficiency groups of these Ecuadorian learners, which means that the most frequent errors in each group (A1, A2, and B1) are addition of articles, omission of subject pronouns, and misuse of prepositions. We could also see that the total number of words written by the EFL learners tends to increase as the proficiency level increases (see word count in table 20). It is worth mentioning here that the A1 learners have written many more words in the narrative essays than in the argumentative essays, compared to groups A2 and B1 (who have had more practice writing argumentative essays than the A1 students).

Overall, we can say that the difference between the three proficiency levels is not statistically significant in ten types of grammatical transfer errors, whereas this difference is statistically significant in five types of transfer errors.

8.3 Third research question: Will the type of writing task (narrative vs. argumentative) have an impact on the amount and type of grammatical transfer errors found?

H3: There will be an impact of task type on the amount of grammatical transfer errors found in the written output of Ecuadorian high school learners.

In this research question, we will compare the errors in the three proficiency groups (A1, A2, B1) based on the two types of writing tasks that the EFL learners completed: writing a narrative essay and writing an argumentative essay. For this purpose, we have used the matched pairs t-test to test statistically significant differences because the same group of students wrote the narrative and argumentative essays. First, we will compare the total number of errors made by the three groups in the two writing tasks. Then, we will assess whether grammatical transfer errors vary in each group by comparing the results between narrative and argumentative essays.

Table 22 displays the global results of these three groups:

Type of error	Narrative essays					Argumentative essays					p
	f	%	N/1000	M	SD	f	%	N/1000	M	SD	
Add- a	185	18.12	12.14	3.08	2.45	308	31.65	25.52	5.13	3.72	0.001
Om-a	12	1.18	0.79	0.20	0.51	7	0.72	0.58	0.12	0.32	0.279
Add -p	36	3.53	2.36	0.60	0.87	6	0.62	0.49	0.10	0.35	< 0.0001
Mis-p	244	23.89	4.07	2.62	2.66	68	6.99	5.63	1.13	1.37	< 0.0001
Om-p	102	9.99	6.69	1.70	1.83	48	4.93	3.98	0.80	0.94	0.003
Om-pron	253	24.78	16.61	4.22	3.14	228	23.43	18.89	3.8	2.67	0.452
Mis-pron	0	0	0	0	0	17	1.75	1.41	0.28	0.67	0.002
Mis- vrb	39	3.82	2.56	0.65	1.02	71	7.29	5.88	1.18	1.63	0.052
WO	46	4.51	3.02	0.77	0.95	52	5.34	4.31	0.87	0.97	0.585
Mis-adv	56	5.48	3.68	0.93	1.07	17	1.75	1.41	0.28	0.61	< 0.0001
Mis - n	32	3.13	2.1	0.53	0.91	27	2.77	2.24	0.45	0.72	0.546
Mis- adj	5	0.49	0.33	0.08	0.28	39	4.01	3.23	0.65	0.95	< 0.0001
Mis-neg	5	0.49	0.33	0.08	0.28	32	3.29	2.65	0.53	0.85	< 0.0001
Mis-det	6	0.59	0.39	0.10	0.35	28	2.88	2.32	0.47	0.83	0.003
Mis-comp	0	0	0	0	0	25	2.57	2.07	0.42	0.81	< 0.0001
TOTAL	1021	100	67.01	-	-	973	100	80.61	-	-	-
Total word count (narrative essays): 15236						Total word count (argumentative essays): 12070					

Add-a = Addition of articles

Om-a = Omission of articles

Add-p = Addition of prepositions

Mis-p = Misuse of prepositions

Om-p = Omission of prepositions

Om-pron = Omission of pronouns

Mis-pron = Misuse of pronouns

Mis- vrb = Misuse of verbs

WO = Wrong word order

Mis-adv = Misuse of adverbs

Mis-n = Misuse of nouns

Mis-adj = Misuse of adjectives

Mis-neg = Misuse of negation

Mis-det = Misuse of determiners

Mis-comp = Misuse of complementizers

Table 22. Statistical significance of grammatical transfer errors in narrative and argumentative essays (total errors from A1, A2, and B1)

Table 22 above shows the global results of the comparison of the language transfer errors between narrative and argumentative essays. The total number of errors is higher in the narrative paragraphs (Narrative essays: 1021; Argumentative essays: 973). Nevertheless, it is important to notice that the total number of words for the narrative paragraphs is much higher than the total number of words for the argumentative essays (Narrative essays: 15236 words; Argumentative essays: 12070 words). When taking into account the number of errors per one thousand words, we can see that this number is higher in the argumentative essays (Narrative essays: 67.01/1000; Argumentative essays:

80.61/1000), bearing in mind that the students in the A1 and A2 groups have had less experience writing argumentative paragraphs.

In the narrative essays, the highest percentages are found in the errors involving omission of pronouns (24.78%), misuse of prepositions (23.89%), and addition of articles (18.12%). In the case of argumentative essays, the addition of articles (31.65%) and the omission of pronouns (23.43%) display the highest percentages.

As for the difference in grammatical transfer errors between these two types of writing tasks, the p-values indicate a statistically significant difference in most error types ($p < 0.05$). These significant differences were found in ten types of grammatical transfer errors. From these errors, the number of errors per one thousand words is higher in argumentative paragraphs in terms of addition of articles, misuse of pronouns, misuse of prepositions, misuse of adjectives, misuse of complementizers, misuse of negation, and misuse of determiners. The remaining three types of errors related to addition of prepositions, omission of prepositions, and misuse of adverbs have a higher number of errors per one thousand words in narrative essays.

All in all, the findings presented above show that the total number of all the grammatical transfer errors as a whole is higher when the Ecuadorian EFL learners write an argumentative essay as indicated by the number of errors per thousand words, except for errors that involve omission of articles, addition of prepositions, omission of prepositions, and misuse of adverbs. Additionally, an interesting fact is that the total number of words written is lower in the argumentative essays across the three levels of proficiency.

Now, we will analyze the results of the grammatical transfer errors in each of the proficiency groups. Table 23 below, shows the results of the grammatical transfer errors

in the narrative and argumentative essays written by the students with A1 proficiency level.

Type of error	Narrative essays					Argumentative essays					p	
	f	%	N/1000	M	SD	f	%	N/1000	M	SD		
Add-a	79	20.31	18.61	1.32	1.44	118	31.47	40.03	1.97	1.63	0.0233	
Om-a	9	2.31	2.12	0.15	0.40	3	0.8	1.02	0.05	0.22	0.0571	
Add-p	18	4.63	4.24	0.3	0.7	2	0.53	0.68	0.03	0.26	0.0027	
Mis-p	89	22.88	20.97	1.48	1.39	29	7.73	9.84	0.48	0.75	< 0.0001	
Om-p	28	7.19	6.59	0.47	0.75	17	4.53	5.77	0.28	0.59	0.161	
Om-pron	96	24.68	22.62	1.60	2.1	87	23.2	29.51	1.45	1.63	0.678	
Mis-pron	0	0	0	0	0	10	2.67	3.39	0.17	0.49	0.011	
Mis-verb	9	2.31	2.12	0.15	0.4	34	9.07	11.53	0.57	0.83	0.001	
WO	18	4.62	4.24	0.30	0.65	16	4.27	5.43	0.27	0.58	0.780	
Mis-adv	18	4.62	4.24	0.30	0.59	4	1.07	1.36	0.07	0.25	0.009	
Mis-n	18	4.63	4.24	0.30	0.70	8	2.13	2.71	0.13	0.47	0.115	
Mis-adj	2	0.51	0.47	0.03	0.18	10	2.67	3.39	0.17	0.53	0.0733	
Mis-neg	1	0.26	0.24	0.02	0.13	17	4.53	5.77	0.28	0.59	0.001	
Mis-det	4	1.03	0.94	0.07	0.31	9	2.4	3.05	0.15	0.48	0.2789	
Mis-comp	0	0	0	0	0	11	2.93	3.73	0.18	0.60	0.0205	
TOTAL	389	100	91.66	-	-	375	100	127.2	-	-	-	
Word count (narrative essays): 4244						Word count (argumentative essays): 2948						
Word count (group A1): 7192												

Add-a = Addition of articles
 Om-a = Omission of articles
 Add-p = Addition of prepositions
 Mis-p = Misuse of prepositions
 Om-p = Omission of prepositions
 Om-pron = Omission of pronouns
 Mis-pron = Misuse of pronouns
 Mis-verb = Misuse of verbs

WO = Wrong word order
 Mis-adv = Misuse of adverbs
 Mis-n = Misuse of nouns
 Mis-adj = Misuse of adjectives
 Mis-neg = Misuse of negation
 Mis-det = Misuse of determiners
 Mis-comp = Misuse of complementizers

Table 23. Statistical significance of grammatical transfer errors in narrative and argumentative essays (A1)

Table 23 shows that the total number of grammatical transfer errors in narrative essays in students at the A1 English proficiency level is higher (Narrative essays: 389; Argumentative essays: 375), but this difference is small. We can also observe that the total number of words is much higher in narrative essays (Narrative essays: 4244 words; Argumentative essays: 2948 words). When taking into account the number of errors per

one thousand words, the total number of errors per one thousand words is higher in the argumentative essays (Narrative essays: 91.66/1000; Argumentative essays: 127.2/1000).

The percentages of errors in the narrative essays indicate that the most frequent errors here are omission of pronouns (24.68%), misuse of prepositions (22.88%), and addition of articles (20.31%). In the case of argumentative essays, the highest frequencies are in the addition of articles (31.47%) and the omission of subject pronouns (23.2%).

With respect to the difference in the errors between these two types of written tasks in the A1 group, we can see, based on the column of the p-values, that there is a statistically significant difference in eight types of transfer errors ($p < 0.05$): addition of articles, misuse of pronouns, addition of prepositions, misuse of prepositions, misuse of adverbs, misuse of complementizers, misuse of negation, and misuse of verbs.

It is worth noticing that in most of the grammatical transfer errors in which statistically significant differences were found, the number of errors per one thousand words is higher in argumentative essays, particularly, errors related to addition of articles, misuse of pronouns, misuse of complementizers, misuse of negation, and misuse of verbs. On the other hand, the errors of addition of prepositions, misuse of prepositions, and misuse of adverbs have a higher number of errors per one thousand words in narrative essays.

Considering all the grammatical transfer errors presented in table 23, the results indicate that the number of errors per thousand words is higher in narrative essays in most of these errors, except for omission of articles, misuse of nouns, addition of prepositions, misuse of prepositions, omission of prepositions, and misuse of adverbs, which is higher in narrative essays.

Now, we will analyze the results of the students with A2 English proficiency level.

Table 24 below shows the results of the language transfer errors in the narrative and argumentative essays written by this group.

Type of error	Narrative essays					Argumentative essays					p	
	f	%	N/1000	M	SD	f	%	N/1000	M	SD		
Add-a	59	15.28	11.19	0.98	1.48	115	30.83	26.73	1.92	1.67	0.002	
Om-a	2	0.52	0.38	0.03	0.18	4	1.07	0.93	0.07	0.25	0.419	
Add-p	11	2.85	2.09	0.18	0.43	2	0.54	0.46	0.03	0.18	0.019	
Mis-p	92	23.83	17.46	1.53	1.46	23	6.17	5.35	0.38	0.72	< 0.0001	
Om-p	33	8.55	6.26	0.55	0.93	15	4.02	3.49	0.25	0.51	0.0405	
Om-pron	114	29.53	21.64	1.90	1.86	91	24.39	21.15	1.52	1.5	0.186	
Mis-pron	0	0	0	0.02	0.13	7	1.88	1.63	0.12	0.49	0.070	
Mis-verb	21	5.44	3.99	0.35	0.73	29	7.77	6.74	0.48	0.81	0.369	
WO	17	4.4	3.23	0.28	0.59	22	5.89	5.11	0.37	0.68	0.480	
Mis-adv	21	5.44	3.99	0.35	0.82	9	2.41	2.09	0.15	0.44	0.83	
Mis-n	10	2.59	1.89	0.17	0.46	5	1.34	1.16	0.08	0.28	0.167	
Mis-adj	2	0.52	0.38	0.03	0.18	19	5.09	4.42	0.32	0.59	0.001	
Mis-neg	3	0.78	0.57	0.05	0.22	10	2.68	2.32	0.17	0.46	0.070	
Mis-det	1	0.26	0.19	0.02	0.13	13	3.49	3.02	0.22	0.52	0.006	
Mis-comp	0	0	0	0	0	9	2.41	2.09	0.15	0.52	0.028	
TOTAL	386	100	73.27	-	-	373	100	86.7	-	-	-	
Word count (narrative essays): 5268						Word count (argumentative essays): 4302						
Word count (group A2): 9570												

Add-a = Addition of articles

Om-a = Omission of articles

Add-p = Addition of prepositions

Mis-p = Misuse of prepositions

Om-p = Omission of prepositions

Om-pron = Omission of pronouns

Mis-pron = Misuse of pronouns

Mis-verb = Misuse of verbs

WO = Wrong word order

Mis-adv = Misuse of adverbs

Mis-n = Misuse of nouns

Mis-adj = Misuse of adjectives

Mis-neg = Misuse of negation

Mis-det = Misuse of determiners

Mis-comp = Misuse of complementizers

Table 24. Statistical significance of grammatical transfer errors in narrative and argumentative essays (A2)

Table 24 shows a small difference in the total number of language transfer errors between narrative and argumentative essays in students from the A2 group (Narrative essays: 386; Argumentative essays: 373).

We can also see that the total number of words written by students is higher in comparison to the A1 group in both narrative and argumentative essays. In the A2 group, the total number of words is much higher in narrative essays (Narrative essays: 5268 words; Argumentative essays: 4302 words), which also results in a difference in the number of errors per one thousand words. Here, the total number of errors per one thousand words is higher in the argumentative essays (Narrative essays: 73.27/1000; Argumentative essays: 86.7/1000). When comparing these figures to those of group A1, the number of errors per one thousand words in group A2 decreases in both types of essays.

The percentages of grammatical transfer errors in the narrative essays show that the most frequent errors in group A2 are omission of pronouns (29.53%), misuse of prepositions (23.83%), and addition of articles (15.28%). As for the argumentative essays, the highest percentages can be found in the addition of articles (26.73%) and the omission of pronouns (21.15%).

Regarding the difference in grammatical transfer errors between these two types of writing tasks in group A2, we can see that there is a significant difference ($p < 0.05$) in seven types of grammatical transfer errors: addition of articles, addition of prepositions, misuse of prepositions, omission of prepositions, misuse of adjectives, misuse of complementizers, and misuse of determiners.

When focusing on the p-values that result in an important significance in difference in grammatical transfer errors between narrative and argumentative essays, from the seven types of errors mentioned above, the number of errors per one thousand words is higher in argumentative essays than in narrative essays as to four types of errors: addition of articles, misuse of adjectives, misuse of complementizers, and misuse of determiners. The other three types of errors –addition of prepositions, misuse of

prepositions and omission of prepositions- have a higher number of errors per one thousand words in narrative essays.

Out of all of the grammatical transfer errors presented in table 24, the results show that the number of errors per thousand words is higher in argumentative essays in most of these errors. On the other hand, the number of errors per thousand words is higher in narrative essays as to misuse of nouns, omission of pronouns, addition of prepositions, misuse of prepositions, omission of prepositions, and misuse of adverbs, which is higher in narrative essays.

After presenting the results of groups A1, and A2, we will show the results of the grammatical transfer errors in the narrative and argumentative essays written by the students with B1 proficiency level in table 25.

Type of error	Narrative essays					Argumentative essays					p	
	f	%	N/1000	M	SD	f	%	N/1000	M	SD		
Add-a	47	19.11	8.21	0.78	1.21	75	33.33	15.56	1.25	1.45	0.053	
Om-a	1	0.41	0.17	0.02	0.13	0	0	0	0	0	0.321	
Add-p	7	2.85	1.22	0.12	0.32	2	0.89	0.41	0.03	0.18	0.058	
Mis-p	63	25.61	11.01	1.05	1.19	16	7.11	3.32	0.27	0.63	< 0.0001	
Om-p	41	16.67	7.16	0.68	0.95	16	7.11	3.32	0.27	0.55	0.037	
Om-pron	43	17.48	7.51	0.72	1.57	50	22.22	10.37	0.83	1.06	0.661	
Mis-pron	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Mis-verb	9	3.66	1.57	0.15	0.48	8	3.56	1.66	0.13	0.39	0.837	
WO	11	4.47	1.92	0.18	0.39	14	6.22	2.90	0.23	0.47	0.496	
Mis-adv	17	6.91	2.97	0.28	0.67	4	1.78	0.83	0.07	0.25	0.027	
Mis-n	4	1.63	0.69	0.07	0.25	14	6.22	2.9	0.23	0.43	0.011	
Mis-adj	1	0.41	0.17	0.02	0.13	10	4.44	2.07	0.17	0.42	0.011	
Mis-neg	1	0.41	0.17	0.02	0.13	5	2.22	1.04	0.08	0.28	0.103	
Mis-det	1	0.41	0.17	0.02	0.13	6	2.67	1.24	0.1	0.3	0.058	
Mis-comp	0	0	0	0	0	5	2.22	1.04	0.08	0.28	0.024	
TOTAL	246	100	42.98	-	-	225	100	46.68	-	-	-	
Word count (narrative essays): 5724						Word count (argumentative essays): 4820						
Word count (group B1): 10544												

Add-a = Addition of articles

Om-a = Omission of articles

Add-p = Addition of prepositions

Mis-p = Misuse of prepositions

Om-p = Omission of prepositions

Om-pron = Omission of pronouns

Mis-pron = Misuse of pronouns

Mis-verb = Misuse of verbs

WO = Wrong word order

Mis-adv = Misuse of adverbs

Mis-n = Misuse of nouns

Mis-adj = Misuse of adjectives

Mis-neg = Misuse of negation

Mis-det = Misuse of determiners

Mis-comp = Misuse of complementizers

Table 25. Statistical significance of grammatical transfer errors in narrative and argumentative essays (B1)

Table 25 shows a slight difference in the total number of grammatical transfer errors between narrative and argumentative essays in students at the B1 English proficiency level with the total number of errors being higher in the narrative essays (Narrative essays: 246; Argumentative essays: 225). These frequencies notably decrease in comparison with those of groups A1 and A2.

It can also be noticed that the total number of words written by students is higher in comparison to groups A1 and A2. In the B1 group, as in the other two groups, the total

number of words is much higher in narrative essays (Narrative essays: 5724 words; Argumentative essays: 4820 words), which results in a difference in the number of errors per one thousand words. We can also see in this group that the total number of errors per one thousand words is higher in the argumentative essays (Narrative essays: 42.98/1000; Argumentative essays: 46.68/1000). When comparing these numbers to those of groups A1 and A2, we can see a noteworthy reduction in the number of errors per one thousand words in group B1.

The most frequent errors in group B1 can be seen more clearly in the percentages column. In the narrative essays, the most frequent errors are a misuse of prepositions (25.61%), addition of articles (19.11%), omission of pronouns (17.48%), and omission of prepositions (16.67%). In the argumentative essays, the highest percentages are present in the addition of articles (33.33%) and the omission of subject pronouns (22.22%). In addition, EFL learners in the B1 group have not made errors related to misuse of pronouns.

It is also important to mention the difference in the errors between these two types of writing tasks. A statistically significant difference ($p < 0.05$) can be observed in six types of grammatical transfer errors: misuse of nouns, misuse of prepositions, omission of prepositions, misuse of adjectives, misuse of adverbs, and misuse of complementizers. The rest of transfer errors show no significant difference ($p > 0.05$) between these two types of essays.

In the six errors in which the p-values indicate a clear statistical significance in difference in transfer errors between narrative and argumentative essays, we can see that, in three types of errors, the number of errors per one thousand words is higher in narrative paragraphs: misuse of prepositions, omission of prepositions, and misuse of adverbs. In the other three types of errors –misuse of nouns, misuse of adjectives, and misuse of

complementizers-, the number of errors per one thousand words is higher in argumentative essays.

Taking into account all of the errors in table 25, the number of errors per one thousand words is higher in argumentative essays in most of the types of errors, except for omission of articles, addition of prepositions, misuse of prepositions, and omission of prepositions, and misuse of adverbs, which are more prevalent in narrative essays in this group.

Additionally, more grammatical transfer errors with statistically significant differences exist between narrative and argumentative paragraphs in group A1 than in the other two groups. On the other hand, there are less grammatical errors with statistically significant differences between narrative and argumentative paragraphs in group B1.

When taking a look at the total number of errors for the three proficiency groups, statistically significant differences between narrative essays and argumentative essays can be detected in most grammatical transfer errors. Most of these errors are more prevalent in argumentative essays.

This chapter has examined the data to answer our first three research questions. The next chapter (Chapter 9) will present the data to answer our research question on perceptions about written feedback. All results will be discussed in detail in Chapter 10.

Chapter 9: Results of Students' and Teachers' Perceptions of Feedback

Chapter 9 presents the results obtained after analyzing the data from the questionnaires and written interviews with the purpose of answering the fourth research question and testing the fourth hypothesis proposed in the present study. The data gathered have been examined quantitatively and qualitatively. With the results obtained, we attempt to find out about the perceptions of students and teachers regarding the feedback provided on EFL writing. The discussion of these findings will be presented in the next chapter.

Before starting the analysis of the results of the last research question, it is important to remember that the items in the students' questionnaire about perceptions regarding feedback and the questions of the written interview were translated into Spanish to avoid any confusion since the students' proficiency level was not high.

Below we present the results related to the fourth research question and hypothesis of the present study.

9.1 Fourth research question: What is the perception of students and teachers regarding the feedback provided on EFL writing?

H4: Ecuadorian high-school learners and teachers will have positive views about corrective feedback in writing.

First of all, in order to assess students' and teachers' perceptions, the answers given to the questionnaires (parts 1 and 2) were coded by assigning a number (1, 2, 3, 4, 5) depending on the alternative chosen by the participants as an answer (e.g., yes=1, no=2; always= 1, often=2, sometimes=3, rarely=4, never=5; SD (strongly disagree) =1, D (disagree) = 2, N (neither agree nor disagree) = 3, A(agree) = 4, SA (strongly agree) = 5).

Then, we counted the occurrences, obtaining the frequencies, percentages, and measures of central tendency, in this case, the mode. The mode was used because these data are considered continuous data.

9.1.1 EFL students' answers to the questionnaire

Below we present the results obtained from the 10 items in the first part of the questionnaire. The first 5 items were aimed at eliciting some background information from the students with the purpose of providing a better description of the participants in the study.

In relation to the gender of the students, the proportion of males and females in each of the three groups (EFL students of level A1, A2, and B1) is balanced. This is shown in table 26 below.

Gender	A1		A2		B1	
	f	%	f	%	f	%
Male	28	46.67	30	50	32	53.33
Female	32	53.33	30	50	28	46.67
TOTAL	60	100	60	100	60	100

Table 26. Number of male and female learners for the EFL students across proficiency levels A1, A2, and B1

The age ranges and mean age (16.04) of the Ecuadorian EFL students are presented in table 27 below. Most of the A1-level students are within the 15-16 year-old range (63.33%), and the second age group is between 14 and 15 years old (25%). The mean age of this group is 15.38.

Most of the A2-level students (60%) are within the 16-17 year-old range, although a significant amount of them are between 15 and 16 years old (38.33%). The mean age of the A2 group is 16.08.

The majority of B1-level (80%) students are also within the 16-17 year-old range, and the second age group is 18 years old or older (18.33%) (see table 27 below). Their mean age is 16.76.

Age group	A1		A2		B1	
	f	%	f	%	f	%
14 -	0	0	0	0	0	0
14-15	15	25	1	1.67	0	0
15-16	38	63.33	23	38.33	1	1.67
16-17	6	10	36	60	48	80
18 +	1	1.67	0	0	11	18.33
TOTAL	60	100	60	100	60	100
Mean age (A1): 15.38		Mean age (A2): 16.08		Mean age (B1): 16.76		
Mean age (A1, A2, and B1): 16.04						

Table 27. Age groups of EFL students across proficiency levels A1, A2, and B1

When the students were asked to self-assess their own English proficiency level, the answers were somewhat surprising. It is curious to see that, although the results of the placement tests indicated that they have varied levels of English proficiency, most learners consider themselves as having a medium level of proficiency (A1= 65%; A2= 66.67%; B1=76.67%). Among the learners who might not have their EFL skills tested, there are those who were not really certain about their English proficiency level. Moreover, the results clearly show that none of the students has lived in an English-speaking country for over a year.

English (L2) proficiency	A1		A2		B1	
	f	%	f	%	f	%
Very low	1	1.67	1	1.67	2	3.33
Low	11	18.33	13	21.67	6	10
Medium	39	65	40	66.67	46	76.67
High	9	15	4	6.67	6	10
Very high	0	0	1	1.67	0	0
TOTAL	60	100	60	100	60	100

Table 28. Perceptions of EFL students on their own English proficiency level

After presenting the results about the background information of these EFL learners, we will discuss the rest of the items of this first part of the questionnaire. These items were intended to obtain information about the frequency of some activities that involve feedback on EFL writing. We applied the Kruskal-Wallis test to see if statistically significant differences exist among the three groups of learners.

Item 5. This item elicits information related to feedback by asking about the frequency of correction.

How often does your teacher correct your written work?	A1		A2		B1		TOTAL	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
Always	18	30	11	18.33	13	21.67	42	23.3
Often	19	31.67	19	31.67	20	33.33	58	32.2
Sometimes	15	25	20	33.33	20	33.33	55	30.6
Rarely	6	10	9	15	4	6.67	19	10.6
Never	2	3.33	1	1.67	3	5	6	3.3
TOTAL	60	100	60	100	60	100	180	100

Table 29. Frequency of correction of students' written work

Table 29 above shows that the most selected options are “often” (A1= 31.67%; A2= 31.67%; B1=33.33%; TOTAL= 32.2%) and “sometimes” (A1= 25%; A2= 31.33%; B1=33.33%; TOTAL=30.6), although “always” (A1= 30%; A2= 18.33%; B1=21.67%; TOTAL=23.3) has a significant frequency as well. A $p\text{-value} > 0.05$ indicates no statistically significant differences in the perceptions of the three groups. These results show that the correction of the learners' written work on the part of the teacher is done regularly.

Item 6. This item asks about the frequency with which students make the corrections given by their teacher.

How often do you make the corrections given by your teacher?	A1		A2		B1		TOTAL	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
Always	16	26.67	14	23.33	5	8.33	35	19.4
Often	21	35	18	30	18	30	57	31.7
Sometimes	14	23.33	19	31.67	24	40	57	31.7
Rarely	5	8.33	8	13.33	9	15	22	12.2
Never	4	6.67	1	1.67	4	6.67	9	5
TOTAL	60	100	60	100	60	100	180	100

Table 30. Frequency of correction made by students on their written work

In this sixth item, we can see that “often” (A1= 35%; A2= 30%; B1=30%; TOTAL=31.7%), and “sometimes” (A1= 23.33%; A2= 31.67%; B1=40%; TOTAL=31.7), are the most frequent answers, so, in general, the students in group A1 said that they frequently make the corrections suggested by their teachers. On the other hand, students in groups A2 and B1 make corrections sometimes. Nevertheless, there are no statistically significant differences in the opinions of these three groups ($p\text{-value}>0.05$). In other words, learners make the corrections given by their teacher on a regular basis.

Many students chose two or more options in items 7-10 to answer the questions, so the statistical analysis involved multiple response items. In order to determine statistically significant differences between the most frequent options, we used both the Wilcoxon and the McNemar test for related samples. These results will be presented below.

Item 7. This item is focused on asking the students about the focus of the feedback provided by their teacher.

When responding to your written work, the correction given by your teacher is mainly on...	A1		A2		B1		TOTAL	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
Grammar (verb tenses, subject/verb agreement, article use...etc.)	34	47.22	28	40	38	53.53	100	46.9
Vocabulary	14	19.44	15	21.43	14	19.72	43	20.2
Spelling	10	13.89	20	28.57	14	19.72	44	20.7
Punctuation	1	1.39	1	1.43	1	1.4	3	1.4
Ideas, content and organization	13	18.05	6	8.57	4	5.63	23	10.8
TOTAL	72	100	70	100	71	100	213	100

Table 31. Aspects on which correction on writing is provided by teachers

The table above shows that most of the corrections on the students' written work are focused on grammar (A1=47.22%; A2=40%; B1=53.53%; TOTAL=46.9%), although corrections on vocabulary (A1=19.44%; A2=21.43%; B1=19.72%; TOTAL=20.2%), and spelling (A1=13.89%; A2=28.57%; B1=19.72%; TOTAL=20.7%), have important percentages of occurrence. In this respect, no statistically significant differences exist in the opinions of these three proficiency groups ($p\text{-value} > 0.05$). Additionally, the correction related to ideas, content, and organization is also important in A1 students (18.05%), but the percentage decreases as the proficiency level increases. This is a sign that B1 learners are probably more aware of the structure of texts.

Both the Wilcoxon and the McNemar test ($p\text{-value} < 0.05$) show statistically significant differences between corrections focused on grammar and corrections focused on vocabulary and spelling, so grammar is a really important aspect in the feedback provided by the teachers.

Item 8. This item inquiries into the aspects that learners consider important when revising their written work after teacher feedback.

If you look carefully at some of the marks/comments your English teacher makes on your written work, which one(s) do you consider most important to look at?	A1		A2		B1		TOTAL	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
Marks indicating errors in grammar	44	34.1	39	29.77	51	42.5	134	35.3
Marks indicating errors in vocabulary choice	29	22.48	35	26.72	24	20	88	23.2
Marks indicating errors in spelling	33	25.58	25	19.08	22	18.33	80	21.1
Marks indicating errors in punctuation	6	4.65	9	6.87	5	4.17	20	5.3
Comments on the ideas/content/organization	17	13.18	23	17.56	18	15	58	15.3
TOTAL	129	100	131	100	120	100	380	100

Table 32. Aspects that students consider important about teacher's written corrective feedback

It can be seen that students consider that the most important comments and/or marks are the ones related to grammar (A1= 34.1%; A2= 29.77%; B1=42.5%; TOTAL=35.3%). We should notice, however, that a considerable amount of students consider that the comments and/or marks about vocabulary (A1= 22.48%; A2= 26.72%; B1=20%; TOTAL=23.2%), and spelling (A1= 22.58%; A2= 19.08%; B1=18.33%; TOTAL=21.1%) are also important.

There are no statistically significant differences in these perceptions among the three proficiency groups ($p\text{-value} > 0.05$), but there are statistically significant differences between the marks/comments on grammar in comparison to marks/comments on vocabulary or spelling ($p\text{-value} < 0.05$).

Item 9. This question refers to the way in which their teachers indicate errors in the written work.

How does your English teacher currently indicate errors in your written work?	A1		A2		B1		TOTAL	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
By crossing out what is incorrect and writing the correct word or structure.	34	54.84	32	52.46	47	66.2	113	58.2
By showing where the error is and giving a clue about how to correct it.	18	29.03	19	31.15	13	18.3	50	25.8
By only showing where the error is.	9	14.52	9	14.75	11	15.49	29	14.9
By ignoring the errors in grammar, spelling, punctuation...etc. and only paying attention to the ideas expressed.	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Your teacher does not supply any correct form.	1	1.61	1	1.64	0	0	2	1
TOTAL	62	100	61	100	71	100	194	100

Table 33. Ways in which teachers indicate errors in the students' written work

According to the students, the most frequent way of correcting errors in the written work is by crossing out what is incorrect and writing the correct word or structure, which is a practice that involves direct feedback (A1= 54.84%; A2= 52.46%; B1=66.2%; TOTAL=58.2%). Learners (A1= 29.03%; A2= 31.15%; B1=18.3%; TOTAL=25.8%) also point out a less frequent practice related to indirect feedback (showing where the error is and giving a clue about how to correct it). The opinions are not statistically different among the three groups since the $p\text{-value} > 0.05$. However, both the Wilcoxon and the McNemar test show statistically significant differences between the direct feedback and the indirect feedback that shows the location of the errors and provides a clue about the correction ($p\text{-value} < 0.05$). This means that teachers overwhelmingly use direct feedback.

Item 10. The table below shows the proportion of what students think their teachers do if the written work has many errors.

If there are many errors in your written work, your teacher:	A1		A2		B1		TOTAL	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
Corrects all errors major and minor	41	68.33	30	50	37	59.68	108	59.3
Corrects all errors the teacher considers major, but not the minor ones	9	15	8	13.33	9	14.52	26	14.3
Corrects most but not necessarily all of the major errors if there are many of them	5	8.33	14	23.33	14	22.58	33	18.1
Corrects only a few of the major errors no matter how many there are	3	5	4	6.67	2	2.23	9	4.9
Corrects no errors and respond only to the ideas expressed	2	3.33	4	6.67	0	0	6	3.3
TOTAL	60	100	60	100	62	100	182	100

Table 34. Actions taken by teachers when they found many errors in students' written work

We can observe in table 34 that most students agree that their teachers correct all errors, major and minor, when students have many errors in their written work (A1= 68.33%; A2= 50%; B1=59.68%; TOTAL=59.3). The perceptions of the three groups are similar because there are not statistically significant differences ($p\text{-value} > 0.05$), so this way of providing feedback is clearly dominant across the three groups.

As was mentioned in the previous chapter, the second part of the questionnaire was based on a Likert scale using the options SD (strongly disagree), D (disagree), N (neither agree nor disagree), A (agree), and SA (strongly agree). Below we present the items employed and then the results for the questions in this second part.

Items
1. Written corrective feedback (error correction) helps you develop your writing.
2. Your teacher uses a set of correction or proof-reading symbols (circling, crossing out, underlining, etc.)
3. You read every one of your teacher's marks/comments carefully.
4. You rewrite your work according to the corrections given by your teachers.
5. You like to get your writing corrected by your classmates.
6. Correction given by your classmates during the writing process helps more than the correction given by your teacher.
7. Teacher's correction at various stages of writing hampers the flow of your writing.
8. You can rely on your classmates to give correction about your writing.
9. You are confident enough to correct your own errors and revise your writing.
10. Error correction frustrates you.
11. Your teachers give only positive comments on your writing.
12. Your teachers give only negative comments on your writing.
13. Your teachers give both positive and negative comments on your writing.
14. Your teachers arrange an open discussion with all the students of your class about errors on a specific item.
15. If open discussions are arranged, students can benefit from the correction given to others' errors.
16. It is important to me to have as few errors as possible in my written work.
17. You revise and make the corrections given by your teachers by rewriting your work.
18. Your teacher checks that you have rewritten your work, including the pertinent corrections.
19. The corrections given by your teacher are related to the grammar and vocabulary already studied.

Table 35. Items used in the second part of the student's questionnaire

In this second part of the questionnaire, which is fully focused on exploring the perceptions on different aspects of feedback on writing, it is necessary to present first the global results of the answers provided by all of the learners before comparing the groups

and see if there are any statistically significant different perceptions. We must remember that the answers given by the students were coded according to the option chosen (e.g., strongly disagree (SD) = 1; disagree (D) = 2; N = neither agree nor disagree (N) = 3; agree (A) = 4, strongly agree (SA) = 5), so the modes are based on those codes. Table 36 displays these global results.

Items	SD		D		N		A		SA		Mo
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	
1	5	2.78	3	1.67	9	5	89	49.44	74	41.11	4
2	2	1.11	3	1.67	18	10	102	56.67	55	30.56	4
3	2	1.11	13	7.22	49	27.22	88	48.89	28	15.56	4
4	9	5	21	11.67	65	36.11	62	34.44	23	12.78	3
5	21	11.67	36	20	62	34.44	44	24.44	17	9.44	3
6	25	13.89	60	33.33	66	36.67	20	11.11	9	5	3
7	15	8.33	48	26.67	78	43.33	38	21.11	1	0.56	3
8	10	5.56	26	14.44	72	40	55	30.56	17	9.44	3
9	7	3.89	22	12.22	59	32.78	63	35	29	16.11	4
10	23	12.78	48	26.67	76	42.22	20	11.11	13	7.22	3
11	10	5.56	46	25.56	76	42.22	39	21.67	9	5	3
12	28	15.55	57	31.67	74	41.11	15	8.33	6	3.33	3
13	1	0.56	9	5	55	30.56	81	45	34	18.89	4
14	10	5.56	26	14.44	48	26.67	67	37.22	29	16.11	4
15	7	3.89	19	10.56	45	25	79	43.89	30	16.67	4
16	3	1.67	4	2.22	19	10.56	80	44.44	74	41.11	4
17	8	4.44	22	12.22	59	32.78	69	38.33	22	12.22	4
18	15	8.33	19	10.56	51	28.33	63	35	32	17.18	4
19	5	2.78	2	1.11	23	12.78	91	50.56	59	32.77	4

SD= strongly disagree

D= disagree

N = neither agree nor disagree

A = agree

SA= strongly agree

Total of frequencies = 180

Total percentage = 100%

Table 36. Frequencies (f), percentages (%) and modes (Mo) of the second part of student's questionnaire (All the students)

Students in general agree (Mo=4) with most of the items (1, 2, 3, 9, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19), and they neither agree nor disagree (Mo=3) with the rest of the items (4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10, 11, 12).

The percentages (%) and modes (Mo) for each of the items in the A1 group are displayed in table 37 below.

Items	SD		D		N		A		SA		Mo
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	
1	1	1.67	0	0	0	0	33	55	26	43.33	4
2	0	0	1	1.67	5	8.33	26	43.33	28	46.67	5
3	0	0	2	3.33	11	18.33	34	56.67	13	21.67	4
4	2	3.33	9	15	19	31.67	22	36.67	8	13.33	4
5	6	10	11	18.33	24	40	10	16.67	9	15	3
6	12	20	25	41.67	20	33.33	1	1.67	2	3.33	2
7	9	15	23	38.33	15	25	13	21.67	0	0	2
8	1	1.67	11	18.33	24	40	19	31.67	5	8.33	3
9	2	3.33	5	8.33	20	33.33	25	41.67	8	13.33	4
10	9	15	19	31.66	25	41.67	3	5	4	6.67	3
11	4	6.67	17	28.33	17	28.33	18	30	4	6.67	4
12	15	25	22	36.67	19	31.66	3	5	1	1.67	2
13	0	0	3	5	18	30	23	38.33	16	26.67	4
14	1	1.67	9	15	14	23.33	21	35	15	25	4
15	1	1.67	6	10	8	13.33	31	51.67	14	23.33	4
16	1	1.67	1	1.67	2	3.33	28	46.67	28	46.67	4;5
17	1	1.67	6	10	12	20	31	51.67	10	16.67	4
18	2	3.33	4	6.67	16	26.67	21	35	17	28.33	4
19	2	3.33	0	0	2	3.33	27	45	29	48.33	5

SD= strongly disagree

D= disagree

N = neither agree nor disagree

A = agree

SA= strongly agree

Total of frequencies = 60 = sample for A1 students

Total percentage = 100%

Table 37. Frequencies, percentages, and modes of the second part of the A1 students' questionnaire

In general, students express their agreement with most of the items about feedback helping them develop their writing (item 1), teacher using proof-reading symbols (item

2), reading teacher's comments carefully (item 3), rewriting their work (item 4), being confident to self-correct (item 9), teacher giving positive comments (item 11), teachers giving both positive and negative comments (item 13), teachers organizing open discussion for feedback (item 14), obtaining benefit from these open discussions (item 15), importance of having as few errors as possible (item 16), making the corrections suggested (item 17), teachers checking corrections (item 18), and teacher feedback being related to grammar and vocabulary studied (item 19).

However, they neither agree nor disagree on items 5, 8, 10, which is an indication that students do not have a clear opinion as to whether they can trust their colleagues for error correction or about whether error correction frustrates them or not.

With regards to items 6, 7, and 12, most students do not consider that the correction given by their classmates helps more than the one given by their teacher. They also agree with the statement that teacher's correction does not interfere with the flow of writing and that their teachers do not provide negative comments about their written work.

Table 38 shows the findings from the A2-level students:

Items	SD		D		N		A		SA		Mo
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	
1	2	3.33	1	1.67	7	11.67	28	46.67	22	36.66	4
2	2	3.33	1	1.67	8	13.33	36	60	13	21.67	4
3	1	1.67	7	11.67	20	33.33	24	40	8	13.33	4
4	6	10	7	11.67	22	36.67	20	33.33	5	8.33	3
5	8	13.33	14	23.33	18	30	15	25	5	8.33	3
6	7	11.67	14	23.33	26	43.33	7	11.67	6	10	3
7	3	5	14	23.33	30	50	12	20	1	1.67	3
8	6	10	10	16.67	14	23.33	20	33.33	10	16.67	4
9	1	1.67	10	16.67	19	31.67	17	28.33	13	21.66	3
10	7	11.67	16	26.67	27	45	5	8.33	5	8.33	3
11	5	8.33	13	21.67	32	53.33	9	15	1	1.67	3
12	4	6.67	14	23.33	31	51.67	7	11.66	4	6.67	3
13	1	1.67	3	5	21	35	25	41.67	10	16.66	4
14	6	10	8	13.33	21	35	19	31.67	6	10	3
15	5	8.33	4	6.67	21	35	23	38.33	7	11.67	4
16	1	1.67	2	3.33	13	21.67	20	33.33	24	40	5
17	4	6.67	8	13.33	25	41.67	18	30	5	8.33	3
18	10	16.67	3	5	20	33.33	18	30	9	15	3
19	2	3.33	1	1.67	15	25	29	48.33	13	21.67	4

SD = strongly disagree
D= disagree
N = neither agree nor disagree
A = agree
SA= strongly agree
Total of frequencies = 60 = sample for A2 students
Total percentage = 100%

Table 38. Frequencies, percentages, and modes of the second part of the A2 students' questionnaire

The group A2 has a tendency to express their agreement on almost half of the items about feedback helping them develop their writing (item 1), teacher using proof-reading symbols (item 2), reading teacher's comments carefully (item 3), relying on peer feedback (item 8), teachers giving both positive and negative comments (item 13), obtaining benefit from open discussions (item 15), importance of having as few errors as possible (item 16), and teacher feedback being related to grammar and vocabulary studied (item 19). As for the rest of the questions, students are not sure about those items since

they tend to neither agree nor disagree. Perhaps the rest of the items are about aspects that do not actually involve the feedback provided in EFL writing in this group.

Table 39 presents the results of the second part of the student’s questionnaire for the group B1.

Items	SD		D		N		A		SA		Mo
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	
1	2	3.33	2	3.33	2	3.33	28	46.67	26	43.33	4
2	0	0	1	1.67	5	8.33	40	66.67	14	23.33	4
3	1	1.67	4	6.67	18	30	30	50	7	11.66	4
4	1	1.67	5	8.33	24	40	20	33.33	10	16.67	3
5	7	11.67	11	18.33	20	33.33	19	31.67	3	5	3
6	6	10	21	35	20	33.33	12	20	1	1.67	2
7	3	5	11	18.33	33	55	13	21.67	0	0	3
8	3	5	5	8.33	34	56.67	16	26.67	2	3.33	3
9	4	6.67	7	11.67	20	33.33	21	35	8	13.33	4
10	7	11.66	13	21.67	24	40	12	20	4	6.67	3
11	1	1.67	16	26.66	27	45	12	20	4	6.67	3
12	9	15	21	35	24	40	5	8.33	1	1.67	3
13	0	0	3	5	16	26.67	33	55	8	13.33	4
14	3	5	9	15	13	21.67	27	45	8	13.33	4
15	1	1.67	9	15	16	26.66	25	41.67	9	15	4
16	1	1.67	1	1.67	4	6.67	32	53.33	22	36.66	4
17	3	5	8	13.33	22	36.67	20	33.33	7	11.67	3
18	3	5	12	20	15	25	24	40	6	10	4
19	1	1.67	1	1.67	6	10	35	58.33	17	28.33	4

SD = strongly disagree
D= disagree
N = neither agree nor disagree
A = agree
SA= strongly agree
Total of frequencies = 60 = sample for B1 students

Total percentage = 100%

Table 39. Frequencies, percentages, and modes of the second part of the B1 students’ questionnaire

The results of the B1-level students in table 39 above show that learners, in general, agree with the statements about feedback helping them develop their writing (item 1), teacher using proof-reading symbols (item 2), reading teacher’s comments carefully (item 3), being confident enough to self-correct (item 9), teachers giving both

positive and negative comments (item 13), teachers organizing open discussions for feedback (item 14), obtaining benefit from these open discussions (item 15), importance of having as few errors as possible (item 16), teachers checking corrections (item 18), and teacher feedback being related to grammar and vocabulary studied (item 19).

Learners are unsure about their views on the statements about rewriting their work (item 4), liking peer feedback (item 5), teacher feedback at various stages of writing hampering the flow of students' writing (item 7), relying on peer feedback (item 8), error correction being frustrating (item 10), teacher giving only positive comments on students' writing (item 11), teacher giving only negative comments on students' writing (item 12), and making corrections suggested (item 17).

In addition, they do not think that the correction given by their classmates helps them in the writing process more than the correction provided by their teacher (item 6).

In this study, we consider that, as in the first part of the questionnaire, it is also important to compare the results of the second part of the questionnaire among the three groups of learners: A1, A2, and B1. We have seen above that there seem to be differences in perceptions among these three groups in some of the items, so we need to determine if these differences are statistically significant. For this purpose, we will present below comparison of the results of each item in the second part of the questionnaire across the three proficiency levels. Due to the ranked nature of the data in the Likert scale used (i.e., the data are on a ranked scale), we cannot use parametric techniques to analyze Likert type data, so we applied the Kruskal-Wallis test to see if there is any statistically significant difference in the perceptions of the three groups. The hypotheses to be tested with respect to these differences in perceptions by using the Kruskal-Wallis test are the following:

Ho: There is no difference in perceptions among A1, A2, and B1-level students.

H1: There are differences in some perceptions among A1, A2, and B1-level students.

The significance level was set at $\alpha = 0.05$, meaning that a p-value ≤ 0.05 rejects the null hypothesis (Ho) (the difference among groups is statistically significant), and a p-value > 0.05 does not reject the null hypothesis (the difference among groups is not statistically significant).

Item 1. Written corrective feedback (error correction) helps you develop your writing.

Proficiency level	SD		D		N		A		SA		Mo
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	
A1	1	1.67	0	0	0	0	33	55	26	43.33	4
A2	2	3.33	1	1.67	7	11.67	28	46.67	22	36.66	4
B1	2	3.33	2	3.33	2	3.33	28	46.67	26	43.33	4
TOTAL	5	2.8	3	1.7	9	5	89	49.4	74	41.1	4
<i>p-value = 0.3781</i>											

SD = strongly disagree

D= disagree

N = neither agree nor disagree

A = agree

SA= strongly agree

Total of frequencies = 180 (60 students per group)

Total percentage = 100%

Table 40. Frequencies, percentages, modes, and p-value of item 1 in the second part of the students' questionnaire

We can see in table 40 above that most students believe that written corrective feedback helps them develop their writing (Mo = 4). In addition, a considerable proportion of the three groups of students strongly agree on this aspect. The results also reveal that there are no statistically significant differences in the perceptions of the A1, A2, and B1 learners with regard to this item (p-value = 0.3781 > 0.05); thus the null hypothesis (Ho) is not rejected.

Item 2. Your teacher uses a set of correction or proof-reading symbols (circling, crossing out, underlining, etc.).

Proficiency level	SD		D		N		A		SA		Mo
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	
A1	0	0	1	1.67	5	8.33	26	43.33	28	46.67	5
A2	2	3.33	1	1.67	8	13.33	36	60	13	21.67	4
B1	0	0	1	1.67	5	8.33	40	66.67	14	23.33	4
TOTAL	2	1.1	3	1.7	18	10	102	56.7	55	30.6	4
<i>p-value = 0.0243</i>											

SD = strongly disagree
D= disagree
N = neither agree nor disagree
A = agree
SA= strongly agree

Total of frequencies = 180 (60 students per group)
Total percentage = 100%

Table 41. Frequencies, percentages, modes, and p-value of item 2 in the second part of students' questionnaire

Table 41 above indicates that, in general, students agree that their teachers use forms of correction or proof-reading symbols such as circling, crossing out, underlining, and others (Total percentage= 56.7%; Mo=4). Most students in the A1 group strongly agree (Mo=5), and most in the A2 and B1 groups agree with this item (Mo=4). A p-value of 0.0243 rejects the null hypothesis, so there are statistically significant differences in some perceptions of these groups of learners.

After applying the Mann-Whitney test, we found statistically significant differences in perceptions between the A1 and A2 levels ($p = 0.01016 < 0.05$) and between the A1 and B1 levels ($p = 0.0477 < 0.05$) but not between the A2 and B1 group ($p=0.4413$; $p>0.05$).

Item 3. You read every one of your teacher's marks/comments carefully.

Proficiency level	SD		D		N		A		SA		Mo
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	
A1	0	0	2	3.33	11	18.33	34	56.67	13	21.67	4
A2	1	1.67	7	11.67	20	33.33	24	40	8	13.33	4
B1	1	1.67	4	6.67	18	30	30	50	7	11.66	4
TOTAL	2	1.1	13	7.2	49	27.2	88	48.9	28	15.6	4
<i>p-value= 0.0225</i>											

SD = strongly disagree

D= disagree

N = neither agree nor disagree

A = agree

SA= strongly agree

Total of frequencies = 180 (60 students per group)

Total percentage = 100%

Table 42. Frequencies, percentages, modes, and p-value of item 3 in the second part of students' questionnaire

The results in table 42 show that approximately half of the students (TOTAL=48.9%; Mo=4) say that they carefully read their teachers' marks and/or comments on their written work. However, an important proportion of students does not agree or disagree with this item. (see figures under the column "Neither agree nor disagree" (N) in this item). In addition, a significant difference in opinions exists among these three groups of learners ($p\text{-value}=0.0225$), so the null hypothesis is rejected.

The rejection of the null hypotheses means that there are differences in perceptions, so the Mann-Whitney U test indicates a statistically significant difference in perceptions between groups A1 and A2 ($p=0.00932 < 0.05$). The results of the comparisons of groups A1 and B1 suggest a statistically significant difference in perceptions between these two groups ($p=0.04236 < 0.05$). On the other hand, there is no statistically significant difference in perceptions between groups A2 and B1 ($p\text{-value of } 0.48392 > 0.05$).

Item 4. You rewrite your work according to the corrections given by your teachers.

Proficiency level	SD		D		N		A		SA		Mo
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	
A1	2	3.33	9	15	19	31.67	22	36.67	8	13.33	4
A2	6	10	7	11.67	22	36.67	20	33.33	5	8.33	3
B1	1	1.67	5	8.33	24	40	20	33.33	10	16.67	3
TOTAL	9	5	21	11.7	65	36.1	62	34.4	23	12.8	3
<i>p-value= 0.2729</i>											

SD = strongly disagree

D= disagree

N = neither agree nor disagree

A = agree

SA= strongly agree

Total of frequencies = 180 (60 students per group)

Total percentage = 100%

Table 43. Frequencies, percentages, modes, and p-value of item 4 in the second part of students' questionnaire

It can be observed in table 43 that approximately a third part of the students rewrite their written work based on the corrections given by the teachers (TOTAL=34.4%). It is noteworthy that an important amount of learners may not do this activity (TOTAL=36.1%; Mo=3). The null hypothesis here is not rejected, which suggests that the perceptions among these three groups of students are not significantly different (p-value= 0.2729) regarding this item of the questionnaire.

Item 5. You like to get your writings corrected by your classmates.

Proficiency level	SD		D		N		A		SA		Mo
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	
A1	6	10	11	18.33	24	40	10	16.67	9	15	3
A2	8	13.33	14	23.33	18	30	15	25	5	8.33	3
B1	7	11.67	11	18.33	20	33.33	19	31.67	3	5	3
TOTAL	21	11.7	36	20	62	34.4	44	24.4	17	9.4	3
<i>p-value</i> = 0.798											

SD = strongly disagree

Total of frequencies = 180 (60 students per group)

D= disagree

Total percentage = 100%

N = neither agree nor disagree

A = agree

SA= strongly agree

Table 44. Frequencies, percentages, modes, and p-value of item 5 in the second part of students' questionnaire

A significant amount of learners in the three groups (see table 44) are not sure about whether they like to have their writings corrected by their classmates or not ($Mo=3$). With respect to the hypotheses, the null hypothesis is not rejected ($p\text{-value} = 0.798 > 0.05$). Therefore, the opinions of these groups of learners about this item in the questionnaire do not present much variation across A1, A2, and B1-level students.

Item 6. Correction given by your classmates during the writing process helps more than the correction given by your teacher.

Proficiency level	SD		D		N		A		SA		Mo
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	
A1	12	20	25	41.67	20	33.33	1	1.67	2	3.33	2
A2	7	11.67	14	23.33	26	43.33	7	11.67	6	10	3
B1	6	10	21	35	20	33.33	12	20	1	1.67	2
TOTAL	25	13.9	60	33.3	66	36.7	20	11.1	9	5	3
<i>p-value = 0.0075</i>											

SD = strongly disagree

D= disagree

N = neither agree nor disagree

A = agree

SA= strongly agree

Total of frequencies = 180 (60 students per group)

Total percentage = 100%

Table 45. Frequencies, percentages, modes, and p-value of item 6 in the second part of students' questionnaire

Table 45 above indicates that a significant amount of students in the A1 and B1 levels of proficiency (41.67% and 35% respectively; Mo=2) believe that the correction given by their classmates during the writing process does not help them more than the correction given by their teachers. Almost a quarter of A2-level students (23.33%) also share this view. Additionally, it is necessary to note that a very important number of students (TOTAL=36.7%; Mo=3) are undecided about this. It could be seen that there are some differences of opinions among the three groups. This is confirmed with a p-value of 0.0075 (p-value \leq 0.05), which leads us to reject the null hypothesis.

The application of the Mann-Whitney U test reveals statistically significant differences in perception between groups A1 and A2 in item 6 ($p = 0.00318 < 0.05$). This is shown in practically all of the percentages for their answers in table 45. A greater number of students in the A1 group strongly disagree and disagree than the A2 group (options SD and D). The opposite trend is observed in the rest of the options (options N,

A, and SA), i.e., where more students in the A2 group neither agree nor disagree, agree, and strongly agree more than the students in the A1 group.

Statistically significant differences ($p = 0.02144 < 0.05$) appear as the result of comparing groups A1 and B1. The percentages suggest that more students in the A1 strongly disagree with this statement than in the A2 group (option SD). Conversely, many more students in the A2 group agree (option A) with item 6, compared with the A1 group.

As for the A2 and B1 groups, the p-value ($p = 0.4593 > 0.05$) means that there is no statistically significant difference in the opinions of these two groups.

Item 7. Teacher's correction at various stages of writing hampers the flow of your writing.

Proficiency level	SD		D		N		A		SA		Mo
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	
A1	9	15	23	38.33	15	25	13	21.67	0	0	2
A2	3	5	14	23.33	30	50	12	20	1	1.67	3
B1	3	5	11	18.33	33	55	13	21.67	0	0	3
	15	8.3	48	26.7	78	43.3	38	21.1	1	0.6	3
<i>p-value</i> = 0.0415											

SD = strongly disagree

D= disagree

N = neither agree nor disagree

A = agree

SA= strongly agree

Total of frequencies = 180 (60 students per group)

Total percentage = 100%

Table 46. Frequencies, percentages, modes, and p-value of item 7 in the second part of students' questionnaire

We can see in table 46 above that approximately half of the students (TOTAL=43.3%; Mo=3) are unsure about whether teachers' correction at various stages of writing impedes the flow of their writing, but students in the A1 level of proficiency tend to disagree with this (Mo=2). It is also worth mentioning that a significant proportion of learners disagree (D) and agree (A) with this statement and that some differences in

opinions exist among the three groups. A p-value of 0.0415 ($p\text{-value} \leq 0.05$) rejects the null hypothesis in favor of differences among the A1, A2, and B1 students regarding their views on this item.

By running the Mann-Whitney U test for the A1 and A2 groups, we obtained a p-value of 0.4236 ($p < 0.05$), so there is a statistically significant difference in the perceptions between these two groups about item 7. This difference can be observed in table 46 in the first three options: SD, D, and N. The number of students who strongly disagree and disagree with item 7 is higher in group A1. As for the option N (neither agree nor disagree), the amount of students is higher in group A2.

With respect to differences between groups A1 and B1, there is a statistically significant difference in perceptions between these two groups ($p = 0.02144 < 0.05$). This difference can also be observed in the three first options: SD, D, and N. Here, the number of students who strongly disagree and those who disagree with item 7 is higher in group A1. The number of students who chose option N (neither agree nor disagree) is higher in group B1.

In groups A2 and B1, there was no statistically significant difference found in the students' perceptions between these groups ($p\text{-value} = 0.75656 > 0.05$).

Item 8. You can rely on your classmates to give correction about your writing.

Proficiency level	SD		D		N		A		SA		Mo
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	
A1	1	1.67	11	18.33	24	40	19	31.67	5	8.33	3
A2	6	10	10	16.67	14	23.33	20	33.33	10	16.67	4
B1	3	5	5	8.33	34	56.67	16	26.67	2	3.33	3
TOTAL	10	5.56	26	14.44	72	40	55	30.56	18	10	3
<i>p-value < 0.05</i>											

SD = strongly disagree

Total of frequencies = 180 (60 students per group)

D= disagree

Total percentage = 100%

N = neither agree nor disagree

A = agree

SA= strongly agree

Table 47. Frequencies, percentages, modes, and p-value of item 8 in the second part of students' questionnaire

The results in table 47 above indicate that students' levels are, in general, not decided on whether or not they can rely on their classmates to correct their writing (TOTAL=40%; Mo=3). However, a considerable percentage of the A2-level students (33.33%, Mo=4) think that they can trust their classmates when doing this activity. The amount of students in the three groups that agree on this item is important (see the percentages and frequencies under the column "Agree" (A) in table 47). As seen earlier, some statistically significant differences in the opinions of these three groups of learners can be corroborated by the rejection of the null hypothesis due to a $p\text{-value} < 0.05$. We will talk about these differences below.

In the comparison of the A1 and A2 groups, the p-value obtained was $p = 0.00398$ ($p < 0.05$), so there is a difference in the perceptions of item 8. This difference can be observed in table 47 in options SD, N and SA. In SD (strongly disagree) and SA (strongly disagree), more students in the A2 group chose this option. In N (neither agree nor disagree) more students in the A1 selected this option.

A p-value of 0 in the comparison of groups A1 and B1 also revealed significant differences in perceptions ($p < 0.05$). These differences are noticeable in options D and N. The amount of students who disagree with item 8 is higher in the A1 group. On the other hand, the number of students who neither agree nor disagree with this item is higher in the B1 group.

When comparing groups A2 and B1, no statistically significant difference was found in the perceptions between these two groups ($p\text{-value} = 0.28462 > 0.05$).

Item 9. You are confident enough to correct your own errors and revise your writing.

Proficiency level	SD		D		N		A		SA		Mo
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	
A1	2	3.33	5	8.33	20	33.33	25	41.67	8	13.33	4
A2	1	1.67	10	16.67	19	31.67	17	28.33	13	21.66	3
B1	4	6.67	7	11.67	20	33.33	21	35	8	13.33	4
TOTAL	7	3.9	22	12.2	59	32.8	63	35	29	16.1	4
<i>p-value</i> = 0.637											

SD = strongly disagree

Total of frequencies = 180 (60 students per group)

D= disagree

Total percentage = 100%

N = neither agree nor disagree

A = agree

SA= strongly agree

Table 48. Frequencies, percentages, modes, and p-value of item 9 in the second part of students' questionnaire

As shown in table 48, most students in the three groups tend to believe that they are a) confident enough to correct their own errors in their written work and revise their own writing (TOTAL=35%; Mo=4), and, b) not sure if they are confident to do these activities (TOTAL=32.8%). We have also obtained a $p\text{-value}=0.637 > 0.05$, so no statistically significant differences exist in the opinions of the three groups of learners.

Item 10. Error correction frustrates you.

Proficiency level	SD		D		N		A		SA		Mo
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	
A1	9	15	19	31.66	25	41.67	3	5	4	6.67	3
A2	7	11.67	16	26.67	27	45	5	8.33	5	8.33	3
B1	7	11.66	13	21.67	24	40	12	20	4	6.67	3
TOTAL	23	12.8	48	26.7	76	42.2	20	11.1	13	7.2	3
<i>p-value = 0.2154</i>											

SD = strongly disagree

D= disagree

N = neither agree nor disagree

A = agree

SA= strongly agree

Total of frequencies = 180 (60 students per group)

Total percentage = 100%

Table 49. Frequencies, percentages, modes, and p-value of item 10 in the second part of students' questionnaire

The results of the answers to this tenth item in the questionnaire displayed in table 49 demonstrate that students in the three proficiency groups are not sure about whether error correction frustrates them or not (Mo=3). On the other hand, an important number of students think that error correction does not frustrate them (see the frequencies and percentages under the column “disagree” (D): A=31.66%; A2=26.67%; B1= 21.67%; TOTAL=27.6%). In this case, the null hypothesis is not rejected because of the $p\text{-value}=0.2154 > 0.05$; therefore, there is no statistically significant difference in the perceptions among A1, A2, and B1-level students.

Item 11. Your teachers give only positive comments on your writings.

Proficiency level	SD		D		N		A		SA		Mo
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	
A1	4	6.67	17	28.33	17	28.33	18	30	4	6.67	4
A2	5	8.33	13	21.67	32	53.33	9	15	1	1.67	3
B1	1	1.67	16	26.66	27	45	12	20	4	6.67	3
TOTAL	10	5.6	46	25.6	76	42.2	39	21.7	9	5	3
<i>p-value= 0.4803</i>											

SD = strongly disagree

D= disagree

N = neither agree nor disagree

A = agree

SA= strongly agree

Total of frequencies = 180 (60 students per group)

Total percentage = 100%

Table 50. Frequencies, percentages, modes, and p-value of item 11 in the second part of students' questionnaire

In table 50 above, we can see that a considerable number of learners (in the A1 group) think that their teacher gives only positive comments on their writings (Mo=4). A similarly important proportion a) do not have a clear opinion about this (28.33%), and, b) do not think that their teachers provide only positive comments on their written work (28.33%). Overall, most students are undecided about their views on this item, (TOTAL=42.2%; Mo=3). In conclusion, the opinions of these groups of learners about item 11 in the questionnaire do not show statistically significant variation across the three groups (p-value=0.4803 > 0.05).

Item 12. Your teachers provide only negative comments on your writing.

Proficiency level	SD		D		N		A		SA		Mo
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	
A1	15	25	22	36.67	19	31.66	3	5	1	1.67	2
A2	4	6.67	14	23.33	31	51.67	7	11.66	4	6.67	3
B1	9	15	21	35	24	40	5	8.33	1	1.67	3
TOTAL	28	15.6	57	31.7	74	41.1	15	8.3	6	3.3	3
<i>p-value= 0.0014</i>											

SD = strongly disagree

Total of frequencies = 180 (60 students per group)

D= disagree

Total percentage = 100%

N = neither agree nor disagree

A = agree

SA= strongly agree

Table 51. Frequencies, percentages, modes, and p-value of item 12 in the second part of students' questionnaire

It can be observed in table 51 that there is a tendency for students to be undecided about the issue of their teacher giving only negative comments on their written work (TOTAL=41.1%, Mo=3). However, an important number of them believe that their teachers do not provide only negative comments about their EFL writing (A1=36.67%, Mo=2; A2=23.33%; B1= 35%; TOTAL=31.7%). There are statistically significant differences in the opinions of these three groups of learners due to the fact that the p-value= 0.0014 < 0.05.

The Mann-Whitney U test indicates a statistically significant difference in perceptions between the A1 and A2 groups ($p = 0.00038 < 0.05$). The number of students who strongly disagree and disagree with item 12 is higher in group A1. In the rest of the options (N, A, and SA), the number of students who chose these options is higher in the A2 group.

Statistically significant differences in perceptions between groups A2 and B1 are pointed out by a p-value of 0.0251 ($p < 0.05$). The difference is clear in the options SD and

D, where the number of students in the B1 group that strongly disagree and disagree with item 12 is higher than in the A2 group. A marked difference can also be noticed in the option N, where the number of students in the A2 group who selected that option is higher.

As for the A1 and B1 groups, there is no statistically significant difference in perceptions ($p = 0.14706 > 0.05$).

Item 13. Your teachers provide both positive and negative comments on your writing.

Proficiency level	SD		D		N		A		SA		Mo
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	
A1	0	0	3	5	18	30	23	38.33	16	26.67	4
A2	1	1.67	3	5	21	35	25	41.67	10	16.66	4
B1	0	0	3	5	16	26.67	33	55	8	13.33	4
TOTAL	1	0.6	9	5	55	30.6	81	45	34	18.9	4
<i>p-value = 0.5187</i>											

SD = strongly disagree

D= disagree

N = neither agree nor disagree

A = agree

SA= strongly agree

Total of frequencies = 180 (60 students per group)

Total percentage = 100%

Table 52. Frequencies, percentages, modes, and p-value of item 13 in the second part of students' questionnaire

The results above (table 52) reveal that students tend to believe that their teachers provide both positive and negative comments on their written work ($Mo=4$), although an important amount of them are undecided about their views on this strategy for feedback (A1=30%; A2=35%; B1= 26.67%; TOTAL=30.6%). In addition, a p-value of 0.5187 (> 0.05) here does not reject the null hypothesis, so the differences among groups are not statistically significant.

Item 14. Your teachers arrange an open discussion with all the students of your class about errors on a specific item.

Proficiency level	SD		D		N		A		SA		Mo
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	
A1	1	1.67	9	15	14	23.33	21	35	15	25	4
A2	6	10	8	13.33	21	35	19	31.67	6	10	3
B1	3	5	9	15	13	21.67	27	45	8	13.33	4
TOTAL	10	5.6	26	14.4	48	26.7	67	37.2	29	16.1	4
<i>p-value = 0.0708</i>											

SD = strongly disagree

D= disagree

N = neither agree nor disagree

A = agree

SA= strongly agree

Total of frequencies = 180 (60 students per group)

Total percentage = 100%

Table 53. Frequencies, percentages, modes, and p-value of item 14 in the second part of students' questionnaire

Table 53 above shows that students have the tendency to agree with the fact that their teachers organize open discussions with the students about specific errors in writing (TOTAL=37.2%; Mo=4). An important amount of the students is undecided on this aspect (A1=23.33%; A2=35, Mo=3%; B1= 21.67%, TOTAL=26.7%). Nevertheless, a p-value=0.0708 > 0.05 allows us to conclude that there is no statistically significant difference in perceptions among A1, A2, and B1-level students in regards to this fourteenth item.

Item 15. If open discussions are arranged, students can benefit from the correction given to others' errors.

Proficiency level	SD		D		N		A		SA		Mo
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	
A1	1	1.67	6	10	8	13.33	31	51.67	14	23.33	4
A2	5	8.33	4	6.67	21	35	23	38.33	7	11.67	4
B1	1	1.67	9	15	16	26.66	25	41.67	9	15	4
TOTAL	7	3.9	19	10.6	45	25	79	43.9	30	16.7	4
<i>p-value = 0.0348</i>											

SD = strongly disagree

D= disagree

N = neither agree nor disagree

A = agree

SA= strongly agree

Total of frequencies = 180 (60 students per group)

Total percentage = 100%

Table 54. Frequencies, percentages, modes, and p-value of item 15 in the second part of students' questionnaire

The results in table 54 above indicate that students, in general, believe that students can benefit from correction given to others' errors in open discussions about their written work (TOTAL=43.9%; Mo=4). However, an important proportion of students are not sure about this (see the percentages under the column "Neither agree nor disagree" (N)). The p-value is $0.0348 \leq 0.05$, which means that there is a statistically significant difference in perceptions among the A1, A2, and B1 groups.

After comparing the A1 and A2 groups, the p-value obtained ($p = 0.01208 < 0.05$) reveals a statistically significant difference in the perception of item 15. We can observe in table 54 differences in almost all of the options, except option D (disagree) where the difference is very small. In options SD (strongly disagree) and N (neither agree nor disagree), the amount of students that chose these options is higher in the A2 group. On

the contrary, in the options A (agree) and SA (strongly agree), the number of students that chose these options is higher in the A1 group.

A comparison of groups A1 and B1 does not result in statistically significant differences in perceptions of these two groups since the p-value obtained is 0.06876 ($p > 0.05$). Similarly, a p-value of 0.5157 ($p > 0.05$) does not point out a significant difference between groups A2 and B1 in regards to the perceptions of item 15.

Item 16. It is important to me to have as few errors as possible in my written work.

Proficiency level	SD		D		N		A		SA		Mo
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	
A1	1	1.67	1	1.67	2	3.33	28	46.67	28	46.67	4;5
A2	1	1.67	2	3.33	13	21.67	20	33.33	24	40	5
B1	1	1.67	1	1.67	4	6.67	32	53.33	22	36.66	4
TOTAL	3	1.7	4	2.2	19	10.6	80	44.4	74	41.1	4
<i>p-value = 0.2717</i>											

SD = strongly disagree

D= disagree

N = neither agree nor disagree

A = agree

SA= strongly agree

Total of frequencies = 180 (60 students per group)

Total percentage = 100%

Table 55. Frequencies, percentages, modes, and p-value of item 16 in the second part of students' questionnaire

As shown in table 55, students believe it is important to have as few errors as possible in their written work (A1: Mo= 4, 5; A2: Mo=5; Mo=4), thereby tending to agree and strongly agree with this item (TOTAL=44.4% (A) and 41.1% (SA)). In this case, the p-value for this item is $0.2717 > 0.05$, so there are no statistically significant differences in the opinions of these three groups of learners.

Item 17. You revise and make the corrections given by your teachers by rewriting your work.

Proficiency level	SD		D		N		A		SA		Mo
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	
A1	1	1.67	6	10	12	20	31	51.67	10	16.67	4
A2	4	6.67	8	13.33	25	41.67	18	30	5	8.33	3
B1	3	5	8	13.33	22	36.67	20	33.33	7	11.67	3
TOTAL	8	4.4	22	12.2	59	32.8	69	38.3	22	12.2	4
<i>p-value 0.0122</i>											

SD = strongly disagree

D= disagree

N = neither agree nor disagree

A = agree

SA= strongly agree

Total of frequencies = 180 (60 students per group)

Total percentage = 100%

Table 56. Frequencies, percentages, modes, and p-value of item 17 in the second part of students' questionnaire

We can see in table 56 above that most of the students in the A1 group (51.67%, Mo=4), and approximately a third part of the A2 (30%) and B1 (33.33%) groups agree with the fact that they revise and make the corrections given by their teachers by rewriting their work. On the other hand, an important number of learners in the three groups are not certain about doing this activity (TOTAL=32.8% (N)). There are also differences in perceptions among these three groups as demonstrated by a p-value of $0.0122 \leq 0.05$, so the null hypothesis is rejected.

In the comparison of the A1 and A2 groups, the p-value obtained was 0.00424 ($p < 0.05$), so a statistically significant difference exists in the perceptions between these two groups. This difference can be observed in table 56 in the three last options: N, A and SA. In this respect, the number of students that neither agree nor disagree with item 17 is higher in the A2 group. However, the number of students who agree and strongly agree with this item is higher in the A1 group.

We obtained a value of $p = 0.03318$ ($p < 0.05$), which means that there is a statistically significant difference in perceptions between groups A1 and B1. This difference is clear in two options: N and A. Here, the number of students who neither agree nor disagree with item 17 is higher in the B1 group. Conversely, the number of students who agree with this statement is higher in the A1 group.

Regarding groups A2 and B1, there was no statistically significant difference found in the perceptions between these two groups because we obtained a p-value of 0.4902 ($p > 0.05$).

Item 18. Your teacher checks that you have rewritten your work, including the pertinent corrections.

Proficiency level	SD		D		N		A		SA		Mo
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	
A1	2	3.33	4	6.67	16	26.67	21	35	17	28.33	4
A2	10	16.67	3	5	20	33.33	18	30	9	15	3
B1	3	5	12	20	15	25	24	40	6	10	4
TOTAL	15	8.3	19	10.6	51	28.3	63	35	32	17.8	4
<i>p-value = 0.0239</i>											

SD = strongly disagree

D= disagree

N = neither agree nor disagree

A = agree

SA= strongly agree

Total of frequencies = 180 (60 students per group)

Total percentage = 100%

Table 57. Frequencies, percentages, modes, and p-value of item 18 in the second part of students' questionnaire

The results above (table 57) indicate that students, for the most part, agree with the statement that their teachers check that their work has been rewritten and corrected based on the feedback provided (TOTAL=35%; Mo=4). On the other hand,

approximately a quarter of the students (TOTAL=28.3%) manifest that they are not sure about whether doing this activity. Regarding the differences in opinions among these three groups, we conclude that the null hypothesis is rejected because the p-value is = 0.0239, and $0.0239 \leq 0.05$, which points out to a statistically significant difference.

The opinions of the A1 and A2 groups differ since there is a statistically significant difference (p-value = $0.01828 < 0.05$). The difference is noticeable in the options SD and SA. The number of students who strongly disagree and disagree with item 18 is higher in group A2. On the other hand, the amount of students who strongly disagree with this item is higher in group A1.

As for the groups A1 and B1, the p-value of 0.01828 ($p < 0.05$) also reveals statistically significant differences in perceptions that can be clearly observed in table 57 in the options D and SA. The number of students who disagree with statement 18 is higher in the B1 group, and the number of students who strongly agree with this statement is higher in the A1 group.

When comparing the groups A2 and B1, we did not find statistically significant differences in the perceptions between these groups (p-value = $0.84148 > 0.05$).

Item 19. The corrections given by your teacher are related to the grammar and vocabulary already studied.

Proficiency level	SD		D		N		A		SA		Mo
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	
A1	2	3.33	0	0	2	3.33	27	45	29	48.33	5
A2	2	3.33	1	1.67	15	25	29	48.33	13	21.67	4
B1	1	1.67	1	1.67	6	10	35	58.33	17	28.33	4
TOTAL	5	2.8	2	1.1	23	12.8	91	50.6	59	32.8	4
<i>p-value = 0.002</i>											

SD = strongly disagree

Total of frequencies = 180 (60 students per group)

D= disagree

Total percentage = 100%

N = neither agree nor disagree

A = agree

SA= strongly agree

Table 58. Frequencies, percentages, modes, and p-value of item 19 in the second part of students' questionnaire

For this item, the findings show that students in the three groups agree (TOTAL=50.6%, Mo= 4) and strongly agree (TOTAL= 32.8%) with the statement that the corrections given by their teachers are related to the grammar and vocabulary already studied (see table 58). A p-value of $0.002 \leq 0.05$ leads us to conclude that there are some differences in the perceptions among A1, A2, and B1-level students with respect to this last item in the questionnaire.

After running the Mann-Whitney U test for the A1 and A2 groups, we found statistically significant differences in the perceptions between these two groups ($p = 0.00062 < 0.05$). This difference is clear in table 58 in options N and SA. It can be seen that the number of students who neither agree nor disagree with item 19 is higher in group A2. Regarding option SA, the number of students who strongly disagree with this item is higher in group A1.

In the comparison of groups A1 and B1, we obtained $p = 0.0394$ ($p < 0.05$), which means that there is a statistically significant difference in perceptions between these two

groups. This difference is marked in options N, A, and SA. In options N (neither agree nor disagree) and A (agree), the number of students who chose this option is higher in the B1 group. Conversely, in the option SA (strongly agree), the number of students who chose this option is higher in the A1 group.

As for the groups A2 and B1, a p-value of 0.101 ($p > 0.05$) indicates no statistically significant difference in perceptions between these two groups in regards to this last item in the student's questionnaire.

In summary, the results of the first part of the student's questionnaire reveal that they perceive that their teachers regularly correct learner's written work and that this correction is frequently made by students. In addition, these corrections appear to be mostly focused on grammar, which learners and teachers seem to rank as one of the most important aspects of writing. These corrections are apparently done, for the most part, by crossing out what is incorrect and writing the correct word or structure and marking all errors (major and minor).

In the second part of the student's questionnaire, the results suggest that, in general, students from the A1 group express their agreement on most of the items. However, they neither agree nor disagree on aspects that involve liking peer feedback, relying on their classmates to provide feedback, or frustration related to error correction, so they do not have a clear opinion on these topics. With regard to items with which students disagree, they do not consider that the correction given by their classmates helps more than the one provided by their teacher. They also believe that teacher's correction does not interfere with the flow of writing and that their teachers do not provide negative comments about their written work.

The results in the second part of the student's questionnaire referring to the students from the A2 group indicate, in general terms, that they neither agree nor disagree

with more than half of the items in the questionnaire about rewriting their work (item 4), liking peer feedback (item 5), peer feedback being more useful than teacher feedback (item 6), teacher feedback at various stages of writing hampering the flow of students' writing (item 7), being confident enough to self-correct (item 9), error correction being frustrating (item 10), teacher giving only positive comments on students' writing (item 11), teachers giving only negative comments on writing (item 12), teachers organizing open discussions for feedback (item 14), making corrections suggested (item 17), and teachers checking corrections (item 18).

On the other hand, they express agreement with the rest of the items about feedback helping them develop their writing (item 1), teacher using proof-reading symbols (item 2), reading teacher's comments carefully (item 3), relying on peer feedback (item 8), teachers giving both positive and negative comments (item 13), obtaining benefit from open discussions (item 15), importance of having as few errors as possible (item 16), and teacher feedback being related to grammar and vocabulary studied (item 19).

The results of this second part of the questionnaire suggest that B1-level students tend to agree with more than a half of the statements about feedback helping them develop their writing (item 1), teacher using proof-reading symbols (item 2), reading teacher's comments carefully (item 3), being confident enough to self-correct (item 9), teachers giving both positive and negative comments (item 13), teachers organizing open discussions for feedback (item 14), obtaining benefit from these open discussions (item 15), importance of having as few errors as possible (item 16), teachers checking corrections (item 18), and teacher feedback being related to grammar and vocabulary studied (item 19).

On the other hand, they neither agree nor disagree with the rest of the items about rewriting their work (item 4), liking peer feedback (item 5), teacher feedback at various

stages of writing hampering the flow of students' writing (item 7), relying on peer feedback (item 8), error correction being frustrating (item 10), teacher giving only positive comments on students' writing (item 11), teachers giving only negative comments on writing (item 12), and making the corrections suggested (item 17).

As for the differences in perceptions among the three proficiency groups of EFL learners, there are no statistically significant differences in perceptions in more than half of the items about feedback helping them develop their writing (item 1), rewriting their work (item 4), liking peer feedback (item 5), being confident enough to self-correct (item 9), error correction being frustrating (item 10), teacher giving only positive comments on students' writing (item 11), teachers giving both positive and negative comments (item 13), teachers organizing open discussions for feedback (item 14), and the importance of having as few errors as possible (item 16).

However, there are significant differences in the rest of the items about teacher using proof-reading symbols (item 2), reading teacher's comments carefully (item 3), peer feedback being more useful than teacher feedback (item 6), teacher feedback at various stages of writing hampering the flow of students' writing (item 7), relying on peer feedback (item 8), teachers giving only negative comments on writing (item 12), obtaining benefit from open discussions (item 15), making corrections suggested (item 17), teachers checking corrections (item 18) and teacher feedback being related to grammar and vocabulary studied (item 19). The differences in perceptions are found between groups A1 and A2, and between groups A1 and B1, which means that there is no statistically significant difference in perceptions between groups A2 and B1, except in the aspect about teachers giving only negative comments on students' writing (item 12). These differences will be further discussed in chapter 10.

9.1.2 EFL teachers' answers to the questionnaire

Below, we present the results obtained from the 10 items in the first part of the teachers' questionnaire. Like in the students' questionnaire, there were items at the beginning of this first part of the questionnaire (the four first items in this case) that were intended to gather some information about background and experience.

As mentioned above, 10 EFL teachers (7 female and 3 male) work at the collaborating institution, and all of them hold Bachelor's degrees in TEFL. One of them holds a master's degree in education and evaluation. The answers given to the questionnaire on the part of the teachers also indicate that teachers' experience varies (20% have 0-5 years of experience; 60% have 5-10 years of experience; 20% have 10 or more years of experience) and that all of them consider that they have a high proficiency level in English.

In what follows, we will provide information obtained from the rest of the items (5-10) of the first part of the questionnaire.

Item 5 asked about frequency of correction.

How often do you correct your students' written work?	f	%
a) Always	2	20
b) Often	8	80
c) Sometimes	0	0
d) Rarely	0	0
e) Never	0	0
TOTAL	10	100

Table 59. Frequency of correction of students' written work

The table above shows that most teachers often make corrections to the students' work (80%). The rest of teachers say that they always make corrections (20%).

The following item (item 6) provides information about the frequency with which students make the corrections provided by teachers.

How often do your students make the corrections that you give them?	f	%
a) Always	1	10
b) Often	1	10
c) Sometimes	8	80
d) Rarely	0	0
e) Never	0	0
TOTAL	10	100

Table 60. Frequency with which students make corrections given by the teachers

Table 60 above indicates that most teachers (80%) think that their students sometimes make their corrections based on the feedback provided on their work.

Item 7 asked teachers about the focus of the feedback provided to students' written work.

When responding to your students' written work, the correction you give is mainly on:	f	%
a) Grammar (verb tenses, subject/verb agreement, article use...etc.)	8	44.44
b) Vocabulary	4	22.22
c) Spelling	1	5.56
d) Punctuation	1	5.56
e) Ideas, content, and organization	4	22.22
TOTAL	18	100

Table 61. Aspects on which teachers focus when providing written corrective feedback

The data in table 61 above reveals that a significant amount of teachers focus their feedback mainly on grammar (44.44%), although vocabulary (22.22%) and content (22.22%) are relevant aspects as well.

We were also interested in knowing about aspects that teachers consider important when marking their students' written work. Thus, item 8 focused on this issue.

When you make marks/comments on your students' written work, which one(s) do you consider most important to look at?	f	%
a) Marks indicating errors in grammar	9	47.37
b) Marks indicating errors in vocabulary choice	5	26.32
c) Marks indicating errors in spelling	2	10.53
d) Marks indicating errors in punctuation	1	5.26
e) Comments on the ideas/content/organization	2	10.53
TOTAL	19	100

Table 62. Aspects that teachers consider important to be marked or commented on

In a similar fashion, the most essential aspects considered by teachers at the moment of marking or correcting students' work are grammar (47.37%) and vocabulary (26.32%).

Item 9 refers to the way in which the teachers indicate errors in the students' written work.

How do you currently indicate errors in your students' written work?	f	%
a) By crossing out what is incorrect and writing the correct word or structure	5	50
b) By showing where the error is and giving a clue about how to correct it	4	40
c) By only showing where the error is	0	0
d) By ignoring the errors in grammar, spelling, punctuation...etc. and only paying attention to the ideas expressed	1	10
e) You do not supply any correct form	0	0
TOTAL	10	100

Table 63. Ways in which teachers indicate errors in the students' written work

We can see in table 63 that the most frequent way teachers correct errors in written work is by crossing out what is incorrect and writing the correct word or structure (50%). Moreover, showing where the error is and giving a clue about how to correct it is an important action pointed out by teachers (40%).

The last item of the first part, item 10, provides information about what teachers do if their students' written work has many errors.

How do you currently indicate errors in your students' written work?	f	%
a) Correct all errors major and minor	5	45.45
b) Correct all errors the teacher considers major, but not the minor ones	4	36.36
c) Correct most but not necessarily all of the major errors if there are many of them	1	9.09
d) Correct only a few of the major errors no matter how many there are	0	0
e) Correct no errors and respond only to the ideas expressed	1	0.09
TOTAL	11	100

Table 64. Actions taken by teachers when they found many errors in students' written work

Half of the teachers correct all errors, major and minor, when students have many errors in their written work (45.45%). An important amount of teachers (36.36%) claim they correct only major errors.

As was mentioned in the previous chapter, the second part of the teacher's questionnaire was based on a Likert scale using the levels SD (strongly disagree), D (disagree), N (neither agree nor disagree), A (agree), and SA (strongly agree). Below we present the 25 items (plus the open-ended question at the end) used and the results for the questions in this second part.

Items
1. Written corrective feedback (error correction) helps learners develop their writing.
2. You ask your learners to rewrite following the corrections given by you in their writings.
3. Your students read every comment carefully.
4. Your students rewrite their work by themselves according to the corrections you give.
5. You ask your learners to self-correct.
6. Your learners are proficient enough to correct their own writing.
7. You ask your learners to get their writings corrected by their peers.
8. Peer feedback is more effective than teacher feedback in the writing process.
9. Your learners are proficient to give peer feedback.
10. Peer feedback may mislead learners due to a poor level of proficiency.
11. Teacher feedback during the mid-drafts affects learners' flow of writing.
12. Feedback in writing should be given only on content and organization, not on grammar.
13. You correct all types of errors in your learners' writings.
14. Feedback on form is more effective than feedback on content.
15. Negative feedback, i.e., error correction, makes learners frustrated and undermines their confidence.
16. A combination of both negative and positive feedback (i.e., feedback on both strength and weakness) helps better than only negative feedback.
17. If open discussions are arranged, learners can benefit from the feedback on others' errors.
18. Feedback only on form creates an opportunity for producing writing that is almost flawless in form but lacking in substance.
19. Feedback only on content and organization often seems vague to learners and they feel helpless.
20. It is not possible to give very specific feedback on content and organization as it is possible in case of feedback on form.
21. You correct the errors in student writings by supplying the correct form.
22. You correct the errors in student writings by simply marking them (circling, crossing out, underlining, etc.) or using codes like 'art' for an article, 'sp' for spelling, etc.
23. Your students read your corrections and rewrite their texts with the corresponding corrections if they are given as an assignment.
24. You check your students' written work to see if they have corrected their mistakes.
25. The corrections you suggest are related to grammar and vocabulary being studied by your students

OPEN QUESTION: Please list down major obstacles in giving written feedback to your learners:

Table 65. Items used in the second part of the teachers' questionnaire

Now, we will show the percentages and modes obtained for each item. It is important to remember that the answers given by the teachers were coded according to the option chosen (e.g., strongly disagree (SD) = 1; disagree (D) = 2; N = neither agree nor disagree (N) = 3; agree (A) = 4, strongly agree (SA) = 5), so the modes are based on those codes.

Items	SD		D		N		A		SA		Mo
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	
1	0	0	0	0	0	0	7	70	3	30	4
2	2	20	0	0	0	0	7	70	1	10	4
3	2	20	2	20	2	20	3	30	1	10	4
4	1	10	5	50	1	10	3	30	0	0	2
5	0	0	2	20	2	20	5	50	1	10	4
6	6	60	2	20	2	20	0	0	0	0	1
7	0	0	2	20	0	0	7	70	1	10	4
8	3	30	5	50	0	0	2	20	0	0	2
9	3	30	4	40	3	30	0	0	0	0	2
10	0	0	0	0	0	0	8	80	2	20	4
11	3	30	1	10	3	30	3	30	0	0	1, 3,4
12	4	40	5	50	0	0	0	0	1	10	2
13	2	20	3	30	0	0	4	40	1	10	4
14	0	0	4	40	4	40	0	0	2	20	2, 3
15	1	10	3	30	0	0	2	20	4	40	5
16	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	40	6	60	5
17	0	0	0	0	0	0	7	70	3	30	4
18	0	0	3	30	6	60	0	0	1	10	3
19	0	0	1	10	0	0	6	60	3	30	4
20	0	0	2	20	2	20	4	40	2	20	4
21	0	0	2	20	0	0	5	50	3	30	4
22	2	20	4	40	2	20	2	20	0	0	2
23	0	0	4	40	0	0	5	50	1	10	4
24	0	0	0	0	3	30	6	60	1	10	4
25	0	0	0	0	3	30	6	60	1	10	4

SD = strongly disagree

D= disagree

N = neither agree nor disagree

A = agree

SA= strongly agree

Total of frequencies = 10

Total percentage = 100%

Table 66. Frequencies (f), percentages (%) and modes (Mo) of the second part of the teachers' questionnaire

The results displayed in table 66 above indicate that teachers show agreement with the statements about feedback helping learners develop their writing (item 1), asking learners to rewrite work (item 2), students reading comments carefully (item 3), asking

learners to get peer feedback (item 7), peer feedback misleading learners due to low proficiency (item 10), correcting all types of errors (item 13), negative feedback frustrating learners and undermining their confidence (item 15), a combination of both negative and positive feedback being better than only negative feedback (item 16), learners obtaining benefit from open discussions for feedback (item 17), feedback only on content and organization being vague to learners (item 19), not being possible to give very specific feedback on content and organization as it is possible in case of feedback on form (item 20), correcting the errors by supplying the correct form (item 21), students reading corrections and rewriting if it is an assignment (item 23), checking if students have corrected their mistakes (item 24), and corrections being related to grammar and vocabulary already studied (item 25).

Additionally, they are unsure about their views on item 18, which means that they think that feedback only on form may or may not create an opportunity for producing writing that is almost flawless in form but lacking in substance. On the other hand, they disagree with statements about students rewriting their work by themselves (item 4), learners being proficient enough to self-correct (item 6), peer feedback being more effective than teacher feedback (item 8), learners being proficient to give peer feedback (item 9), feedback being provided only on content and organization, not on grammar (item 12), and correcting the errors by simply marking them or using codes (item 22).

There is a division of opinions regarding items 11 and 14 as indicated by the presence of more than 1 mode. In item 11, “teacher feedback during the mid-drafts affects learners’ flow of writing” (modes 3, 1, 4), the opinions are divided as 30% of the teachers disagree, 30% do not agree or disagree, and 30% agree. In item 14, the modes are 3 and 2, which means that most of the teachers disagree with, or are unsure about, this statement.

In fact, 40% of teachers think that feedback on form is not more effective than feedback on content, whereas 40% are not sure.

To sum up, the results of the first part of the teachers' questionnaire reveal that most teachers often make corrections on the students' work, thinking that their students sometimes consider the corrections given. Most of these corrections seem to be mainly focused on grammar, and they are frequently implemented by crossing out major and minor errors and indicating the correct word or structure.

The results of the second part of the teachers' questionnaire show that teachers, in general, agree with most of the statements. Furthermore, there is a division of opinions (agree, disagree, neither agree nor disagree) with respect to knowing if feedback on mid-drafts affects the learners' flow of writing. Another division of opinion (agree, neither agree nor disagree) is present regarding the matter of knowing whether feedback on form is more effective than feedback on content.

As for the open-ended question at the end of the second part of the questionnaire, teachers wrote learners' problems such as insufficient opportunities for teachers' training, large classes, and lack of time as major obstacles in providing written feedback.

As mentioned in previous chapters, students and teachers also answered a written interview that was basically designed to obtain further information about the process of written feedback provided in the English classes. We will present students' responses summarized in table format, so the comparison of answers among the students from the three proficiency levels is easier to see. After that, we will provide a summary of the responses given by teachers.

9.1.3 Answers to the students' interview

First, we will start by presenting a summary of the answers given to each question by the students from the proficiency levels A1, A2, and B1. We attempted to observe a

common pattern in the answers and took the most frequent and pertinent ones to summarize them in the tables below.

1. *How does your teacher give you feedback on your written work?*

In this first question of the written interviews, the prevalent opinion is that teacher marks (circles, crosses out) errors and writes the correct expression on one side or above the errors. Table 67 below collects the opinions expressed by the students.

How does your teacher give you feedback on your written work?		
A1	A2	B1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher reads the written works and marks errors. • Teacher explains what is wrong and how to correct it. • Sometimes peer feedback then teacher corrects. • Sometimes teacher marks errors and gives a clue on how to correct it. • Teacher crosses out errors and does not revise again. • Teacher asks students to do the task again with the corrections given. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher marks (circles, crosses out) errors and writes the correct expression on one side or above the errors. • Sometimes teacher observes errors and tells what the correct word or expression is. • Teacher just crosses out errors and does not tell us the correct word. • Sometimes the teacher revises my work thoroughly 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher marks (crosses out, underlines, circles) what is incorrect and writes the correct word or expression. • Teacher explains what is wrong and how to correct errors. • Teacher makes us research and repeat the task. • Teacher revises our work with us. • Through self-correction she makes us see where our errors are. • Checking that verbs and sentences are correct. • By explaining an exercise on the board and eliciting correct forms from the class.

Table 67. Answers given by students to the first question of the written interview: How does your teacher give you feedback on your written work?

2. *Would you like to receive positive, negative of both types of comments on your written work?*

In this second question, most of the students think that positive and negative comments are useful for the learning process. Table 68 below shows the opinions given by the students.

Would you like to receive positive or negative comments on your written work?		
A1	A2	B1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Both because in that way we know what is wrong and how to correct it. • Both so I can improve my English and learn • I would like to receive positive encouraging and beneficial comments. • I would like to receive negative comments. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Both are important. • Both because in that way we know what is wrong and how to correct it. • Both so I can improve my work. • Positive. I would like constructive criticism from the teacher without him getting stressed out or annoyed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Both are important. • Both, because in that way we know what is wrong and what is right • Both in order to reinforce our learning process and improve our work. • I like positive comments. • I like negative comments, so I can be motivated to research and study.

Table 68. Answers given by students to the second question of the written interview: Would you like to receive positive, negative of both types of comments on your written work?

3. *What kind of corrections would you like to receive?*

In this question, most students say that they would like to receive corrections on all aspects of their writing, especially those which are focused on vocabulary, spelling, and grammar. Students' answers to this question are collected in table 69 below.

What kind of corrections would you like to receive?		
A1	A2	B1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vocabulary • Spelling • All types • Grammar • Punctuation • Organization of ideas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All of them • Grammar • Spelling • Organization of ideas • Vocabulary 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All of them • Vocabulary • Grammar • Spelling • Organization of ideas

Table 69. Answers given by students to the third question of the written interview: What kind of corrections would you like to receive?

4. *How do you like your corrections done?*

The students' favorite method of correction is that their teacher crosses out what is incorrect and then writes the correct word or structure. A summary of the opinions expressed by the students is shown in table 70 below.

How do you like your corrections done?		
A1	A2	B1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By crossing out what is incorrect and writing the correct word or structure. • I would like my teacher to show the error and give me a hint about how to correct it. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By crossing out what is incorrect and writing the correct word or structure. • I would like my teacher to show the error and give me a hint about how to correct it. • By only showing where the error is. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By crossing out what is incorrect and writing the correct word or structure. • By crossing out what is incorrect and writing the correct word or structure or by showing where the error is and giving a clue about how to correct it. • Personal corrections.

Table 70. Answers given by students to the fourth question of the written interview: How do you like your corrections done?

5. *If you have many errors in your written work, how should your teacher help you?*

When students have many errors in their written work, their general opinion is that their teacher should correct all the errors (major and minor). Table 71 below collects the students' answers to this question.

If you have many errors in your written work, how should your teacher help you?		
A1	A2	B1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All errors, major and minor so we know where the errors are. • Every correction is useful and important • By correcting all errors the teacher considers major, but not the minor ones. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All errors, major and minor. • By correcting all errors, the teacher considers major, but not the minor ones. • By correcting a few of the major errors no matter how many there are. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All errors, major and minor. • By correcting all errors, the teacher considers major, but not the minor ones. • Whatever the teacher believes is convenient.

Table 71. Answers given by students to the fifth question of the written interview: If you have many errors in your written work, how should your teacher help you?

6. *Do you think grammar correction is more effective than feedback on content and organization?*

The students generally think that feedback on grammar is more effective than feedback on other aspects such as content and organization. Table 72 below summarizes the opinions given by the students.

Do you think grammar correction is more effective than feedback on content and organization?		
A1	A2	B1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes • Grammar is more helpful when detecting errors. • Grammar is the base for writing rather than content and organization. • Grammar is fundamental in English. • All types of corrections are important. • Not always. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes • Yes. Grammar is important to understand what we write. • Yes. Without grammar, sentences would make no sense. • No. All types of correction are important. • I think that grammar, content, and organization are important to improve writing. • No. The written work needs coherence too. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes • I think that both grammar, and content and organization are important. • Yes. Grammar is important for good writing. • Yes. Grammar helps us see the correct form of sentences. • Yes. Grammar is important to understand what we write • No. All types of correction are important.

Table 72. Answers given by students to the sixth question of the written interview: Do you think grammar correction is more effective than feedback on content and organization?

7. *Do you revise and work on the corrections that your teacher does on your written work? How?*

The prevalent opinion in this question is that students revise and work on the corrections provided by their teachers by using approaches such as rewriting, doing it as homework, and noticing where their errors are. All of the students' views are collected in table 73 below.

Do you revise and work on the corrections that your teacher does on your written work? How?		
A1	A2	B1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes. I see where my errors are and correct them by rewriting. • Yes. Sometimes she tells us to revise our work by ourselves and see if there are errors. • Yes. With the help of my classmates. • Yes. I read corrections and take notes so I can remember. • No. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes. I see where my errors are and correct them by rewriting. • Yes. I see where my errors are and correct them. • Yes, by reading my written work again. • Yes. When it is necessary. • Yes. Looking up in the dictionary (or on the Internet) and correcting. • No 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes. I try to see where my errors are and correct them. • Yes. I do it as homework. • Yes. I read my work and the errors marked by the teacher. • Yes. I rewrite the sentences based on the corrections made. • Yes. I make the corrections on another sheet of paper in order to improve my grade. • Yes, by consulting on the Internet, in books and tutorials. • Sometimes.

Table 73. Answers given by students to the seventh question of the written interview: Do you revise and work on the corrections that your teacher does on your written work? How?

8. *Does your teacher ensure that you do the corrections on your written work? How?*

In this question, the opinion of most students is that teachers revise the corrections that students have done based on the feedback provided. Teachers usually do this by giving students an assignment of correcting their written work based on the feedback and then grading it. Table 74 below shows all of the opinions expressed by the students.

Does your teacher ensure that you do the corrections on your written work? How?		
A1	A2	B1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes. The teacher asks me to repeat the parts that are wrong. • Yes. Teachers check both homework and class activities. • Yes. Revising the work that I have written again. • Yes. The teacher reads what we write. • Sometimes. • On other occasions, the teacher only corrects tests. • No. We have to ask her to revise our task because she says that is our responsibility. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes. • Yes. Revising the work that I have written again. • Yes. Teacher asks me to correct, and then he gives me a grade. If the corrections are not done, I do not get a grade. • Yes. Both homework and class activities. • No. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes. Revising homework and grading it. • Yes. Revising the work and explaining how to make the corrections. • The teacher asks us to correct in class and gives a limited time to correct. • Yes, by giving us another chance to correct. • No.

Table 74. Answers given by students to the eighth question of the written interview: Does your teacher ensure that you do the corrections on your written work? How?

9. *Are corrections done by your teacher related to the grammar and vocabulary that you are currently studying?*

Regarding this question, students think, in general, that most of the corrections provided by their teachers are related to the grammar and vocabulary being studied. Table 75 below summarizes the students' answers to this question.

Are corrections done by your teacher related to the grammar and vocabulary that you are currently studying?		
A1	A2	B1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes. • Yes. The teacher explains everything explicitly. • Yes. Most of them. • Sometimes she corrects things that we have not studied. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes. • Yes. Most of them. • Sometimes. • No 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes. • I don't know. Maybe.

Table 75. Answers given by students to the ninth question of the written interview: Are corrections done by your teacher related to the grammar and vocabulary that you are currently studying

10. Do you think that feedback is consistent with the English course's goals and units?

The answers given to this question suggest that students think that feedback is consistent with the English course's goals and units and that this is helpful in the learning process. Table 76 below collects all of the answers provided by the students.

Do you think that feedback is consistent with the English course's goals and units?		
A1	A2	B1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes. It is important that they are consistent with the course's goals and units • Yes. It helps us to remember what we have studied. • Yes. Sometimes we review things that we have studied in previous units or levels, and that helps. • Not always. The most important thing is the way teachers teach us English and the review of previous lessons. • No. We have to make an effort to correct mistakes. • I don't know. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes. • Yes. Corrections help us learn and improve our English. • Yes. Corrections help us to remember what we have studied. • Yes. Corrections help us improve our grades. • No. • Sometimes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes. • Yes. Corrections help us learn. • Yes. Corrections help us to remember what we have studied. • No. • I don't know.

Table 76. Answers given by students to the tenth question of the written interview: Do you think that feedback is consistent with the English course's goals and units?

11. In general, what do you think of the feedback on your written work provided by your teacher?

In this last question of the written interview, students see feedback as a beneficial process that helps them realize their errors and improve their EFL writing. All of the opinions given by the students are summarized in Table 77 below.

In general, what do you think of the feedback on your written work provided by your teacher?		
A1	A2	B1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is good because it helps us recognize the errors we have made. • It is good because it helps our English learning process. • It is a good strategy. • Sometimes the teachers get confused. • Not very good. • Not very good because the teacher only grades grammar. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is good. • It is good because it helps the learning process. • It's good but not excellent. • It is good because it helps us recognize the errors we have made. • I think it is good, but sometimes the teachers get confused, and it is difficult to understand. • It is good most of the time. • I do not like it. • It is only based on the textbook and vocabulary. • It is not appropriate since he crosses out error but does not indicate what to correct. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is good. • It is good because it helps the learning process. • It is good because it helps us recognize the errors we have made and learn from mistakes. • Very good • It would be great if the teacher used Spanish sometimes to indicate errors.

Table 77. Answers given by students to the eleventh question of the written interview: In general, what do you think of the feedback on your written work provided by your teacher?

After presenting the summary of the answers to the students' written interviews, we will summarize the answers to the teachers' interview below.

9.1.4 Answers to the teachers' interview

In this part, unlike in the reporting of the answers in the students' interview, we have decided to present a summary of the answers given by the teachers since we only have one group of teachers.

1. *How long have you been teaching English? Can you tell me about your experience of teaching English?*

The selected teachers have had over 4 years of experience teaching English. The views that they share about teaching English are the following:

- My experience in private institutions has helped me to improve.
- Teaching English is difficult because students do not have a habit of studying.
- It is important to plan every day and apply different strategies to teach English. It also necessary to use ICTs.
- It is difficult to face disciplinary problems and problems due to a lack of knowledge of students, so you have to be careful.
- I started working with teenagers, children.

2. *Can you tell me about your qualifications?*

For this question, all of the teachers say that they have trained in TEFL. Indeed, all of them have been awarded their bachelor degrees in that field.

3. *Can you tell me about your experience of teaching writing?*

With respect to their experience in teaching EFL writing, teachers shared the following:

- It is difficult to teach EFL writing
- Writing and reading are connected at the time of teaching
- The knowledge of vocabulary in students is scarce.
- We are learning to construct paragraphs.

4. *Have you received any previous training on giving corrective feedback? If so, can you explain more?*

In general, the teachers said that they have not had much training as to how to provide written corrective feedback, but they claim that it is important to allow free-writing; then, you can give some basic guidelines about writing. One can also be more specific and talk about punctuation, topic sentences, supporting details, etc. Additionally, feedback must be given in a general way, without focusing on correcting the errors but allowing students to find out their mistakes and correct them.

5. *Are you aware of students' Spanish interference errors? Do you provide feedback on these types of errors?*

The teachers think that, as non-native English speakers, they also make errors related to L1 interference. They say that they try to correct and explain these errors when they are detected in order to avoid fossilization.

Written corrective feedback practices:

1. *Do you think it is important to give feedback on students' writing errors?*

When answering this question, all the teachers agree on the importance of providing feedback on students' writing errors in English. They think that it is important to provide general feedback in all of the lessons and say that it is a way to improve students' EFL writing.

2. *How important do your students consider feedback on their written work?*

The teachers' general opinion on this matter is that feedback on students' written work is important because it helps them recognize their errors, thus, reinforcing their learning process.

3. *Do you give feedback on all students' writing errors or do you select some of the errors to be given feedback? Can you explain the reasons?*

The teachers said that they have limited time. Although they would like to provide feedback on as many errors as possible, they have to select the most common errors and try to explain how to correct them.

4. *Which approach do you prefer? Can you explain your answer?*

For this question, the teachers have varied approaches to correction. They mark errors, write brief comments, correct errors with their students in class, make lists of common errors, show examples of well-written paragraphs, and have their students rewrite their written work after the corrections.

5. *Which categories of writing errors do you focus your feedback on more? Why?*

The teachers think that correction on form, especially grammar and syntax, is their main focus because they believe that their students can improve their language with a better knowledge of grammar. They also say that other aspects such as punctuation, organization of ideas, meaning, and structure of paragraphs are considered as well.

6. *Which categories do you think are important to be focused on for feedback? Why?*

The teachers think that both form and content are equally important to focus on when correcting students' written work.

7. *Which type of corrective feedback (direct vs. indirect) do you use when giving feedback on writing errors? Why do you use it?*

The teachers prefer to provide direct feedback when the errors need to be seriously addressed. Sometimes they use indirect feedback because students can feel more comfortable and be encouraged to correct the errors by themselves.

8. *Do you ask your students' about their preferences with regard to how much and which type of corrective feedback should be given? Can you explain the reason?*

The teachers said that they do not ask their students about their preferences with respect to feedback; however, they think that it would be a good idea to discuss this matter with their students.

9. *Do you ask your students to revise and rewrite their written work based on the feedback that you have provided? How?*

In general, the teachers said that they sometimes ask their students to rewrite their written work if they want to improve their grades. On other occasions, they revise their students' written work with the whole class. All in all, they think that it is important for the student to get used to reviewing their own work.

10. Do you check if they rewrite their work? How?

As mentioned in the previous question, the teachers ask their students to rewrite their written work as homework, so they do monitor their students' assignments and grade them. However, they say that they do not do this activity frequently and that students can also do peer feedback and self-correction, but teachers do not necessarily monitor these activities.

11. Is the feedback that is provided related to the grammar and vocabulary studied in class?

Most of the time, the corrections involve the grammar and vocabulary that are currently studied in class. However, feedback provided is not always related to the grammar and vocabulary studied in class.

12. Is feedback consistent with the goals of the English course and the units studied?

Regarding this question, the teachers said that they try to provide a feedback consistent with the goals of the English course, but the contents are extensive and the time is limited, so they try to do their best.

13. What do you expect to achieve through feedback provided on your students' written work?

According to the teachers, the feedback provided on the students' written work has the objective of allowing their students to notice their errors, be aware of their progress, and improve their English. In addition, they think that the process of providing feedback can help students learn grammar and vocabulary.

14. Additional comments:

Some of the additional comments that teachers gave are the following:

- We need more training
- There is an excessive number of students per class
- We need more technological resources
- We try to look for new ways to teach and improve our teaching experience.

All in all, we have presented the results obtained after analyzing the data with the intention of answering the fourth research question.

As can be seen, most of the data in chapters 8 and 9 have been analyzed quantitatively, but a part of them have been analyzed qualitatively. Because these two chapters only focused on the description of results of the present study, we will discuss the main findings in the next chapter.

Chapter 10: Discussion

10.1 Introduction

The main goal of the present study was to answer four research questions about the prevalence of grammatical transfer errors over lexical transfer errors, the impact of learners' L2 proficiency level and task type on these grammatical errors, and the students' and teachers' views on written corrective feedback.

All these aspects that involve answering the research questions and testing their corresponding hypothesis will be discussed in detail below.

10.2 Research questions: Major findings

Regarding the **first research question** of the present study (Which grammatical transfer errors are commonly influenced by Spanish in the written production of Ecuadorian EFL senior high school learners and how prevalent are these errors in comparison to lexical transfer errors), the findings suggest a strong presence of negative language transfer in Ecuadorian EFL learners' written production, specifically grammatical errors related to addition of articles, omission of pronouns, and misuse of prepositions. In other words, learners use articles where they are not required, do not use subject pronouns where they are necessary, and use prepositions incorrectly. These categories of errors have also been found in other related studies conducted on language transfer between Spanish and English, but these types of transfer errors do not appear as the three most frequent errors in previous work (e.g., Alonso, 1997; Bhela, 1999; Cabrera et al., 2014; Edelsky, 1982; López, 2011). In this respect, the results show some differences with related studies done on grammatical transfer errors (e.g., Alonso, 1997; Cabrera et al., 2014; López, 2011). In these studies, transfer errors related to prepositions, pronouns, and articles also appear among the types of errors found, but grammatical

transfer errors in verbs and nouns are not as frequent in the Ecuadorian EFL learners' writing as the three most frequent types errors already mentioned.

Other errors commonly influenced by Spanish in the written production of EFL senior high school Ecuadorian learners are omission and addition of prepositions, misuse of verbs, wrong word order, misuse of adverbs, misuse of nouns, misuse of adjectives, misuse of negation and misuse of determiners. From these grammatical transfer errors, misuse of complementizers, omission of articles, and misuse of pronouns are the least frequent. We could also see that grammatical transfer errors have a similar behavior across the three proficiency groups (A1, A2, B1), which provides evidence for Intra-L1-group-homogeneity, meaning that learners with the same L1 behave in a similar way when using the same L2 (Jarvis, 2000).

In summary, we can say that the amount of grammatical transfer errors is higher in the learners' EFL written output compared to lexical transfer errors. These grammatical transfer errors are more prevalent as to articles, prepositions and pronouns, but less frequent in terms of negation, determiners and complementizers, which provides evidence to support our **first hypothesis** (Language transfer errors related to grammar will be prevalent in the written production of Ecuadorian senior high school learners in terms of articles, verbs, nouns, pronouns and prepositions. Grammatical transfer errors will be more frequent than lexical transfer errors.), although grammatical transfer errors involving nouns are not that prevalent in the corpus collected.

As also observed in the results, the most frequent transfer errors made by the Ecuadorian EFL learners (addition of articles, omission of subject pronouns, and misuse of prepositions) are also the most prevalent transfer errors in each of the proficiency groups of these Spanish-speaking EFL learners: A1, A2, and B1. It is also noteworthy to mention that the total number of words written by the EFL learners in the essays increased

as the level of proficiency improved. This phenomenon is probably associated with an improvement of proficiency in EFL writing, which leads us to the **second research question** (Will proficiency level in English have an impact on the amount and type of grammatical transfer errors found across three levels (A1, A2, and B1)?)

The findings reveal that the number of some grammatical transfer errors decreases as the learners' English proficiency improves. This is partially related to the results of other similar studies on language transfer that include grammatical errors as part of their research and compare their frequencies across levels of L2 proficiency in ESL students (e.g., Chan, 2010; Lanauze and Snow, 1989), and in students whose L1 is not Spanish (e.g., Pennington & So, 1993; Zheng & Park, 2013), showing that L2 proficiency has an important impact on language transfer. However, when it comes to the grammatical transfer errors found in EFL writing as in the present study, the impact of proficiency is important in just some of the grammatical errors as demonstrated by the statistically significant differences among these three proficiency groups.

There are significant differences among the three groups of students (A1, A2, and B2) in some of the grammatical transfer errors (addition of articles, omission of articles, omission of pronouns, misuse of pronouns, and misuse of verbs), especially between groups A1 and B1. It can be observed here that two of these types of errors (addition of articles and omission of pronouns), except for misuse of prepositions, are among the three most frequent among the Spanish-speaking EFL learners who participated in this study.

In order to provide an answer to the **second research question**, we would say that proficiency plays a role in some grammatical transfer errors. This impact is more obvious when comparing the proficiency levels A1 and B1. This provides partial support to the **second hypothesis** entertained (Higher proficiency learners (B1) will generate fewer transfer errors than those generated in lower proficiency levels (A2, A1)). Moreover, we

can say that the impact of proficiency levels on the amount of grammatical errors is not clear in all of the grammatical transfer errors found in the EFL learner's written output.

As for the comparison between narrative and argumentative essays, the results of the **third research question** (Will the type of writing task (narrative vs. argumentative) have an impact on the amount and type of grammatical transfer errors found?) reveal that the proportion of grammatical transfer errors is higher in argumentative essays than in narrative essays, considering that the total number of words written by EFL learners is lower in argumentative essays. This increase in the proportion of grammatical transfer errors and the decrease in the word count are probably caused by a higher level of difficulty in writing skills that an argumentative essay represents in comparison to a narrative essay. These two types of tasks also require different levels of register, rhetorical conventions, sources of information and relation to personal experience (Roca de Larios, Murphy & Manchón, 1999).

When analyzing each type of grammatical transfer error, the amount of errors is higher in argumentative essays in the majority of grammatical transfer errors, except for four types of errors (omission of article, addition of preposition, omission of preposition, and misuse of adverbs), whose amount is higher in narrative essays. This means that the most frequent grammatical transfer errors in all of the three proficiency groups (addition of articles, misuse of preposition, and omission of pronouns) are more prevalent in argumentative essays.

We also found statistically significant differences that appear in most grammatical transfer errors between narrative essays and argumentative essays except in omission of articles, omission of pronouns, misuse of verbs, wrong word order, and misuse of nouns, in which the difference in errors is not statistically significant.

Another interesting result is that there are more grammatical transfer errors with statistically significant differences between narrative and argumentative paragraphs in group A1 than in the other two groups. This could be related to the lower English proficiency of the EFL learners in this group, who find argumentative essays much more challenging. This may result in grammatical transfer errors that exhibit a more marked variation due to the combination of low English proficiency and the difficulty of written tasks for group A1.

Bearing in mind the findings of other studies on language transfer that have reported differences in various aspects of language transfer depending on the genre used in the writing task (Kubota, 1998; Roca de Larios, Murphy & Manchón, 1999; Wang & Wen, 2002), we can summarize that the answer to the **third research question** is that the type of essay also has an important effect on the proportion of most types of grammatical transfer errors found in the learners' L2 writing. The results provide evidence to support the **third hypothesis** (There will be an impact of task type on the amount of grammatical transfer errors found in the written output of Ecuadorian high school learners), so it can be said that the task type (narrative vs. argumentative) assigned to students can have a great impact on the number of the grammatical transfer errors found in Ecuadorian EFL learners' written output.

The results for the **fourth research question** related to perceptions about feedback (What is the perception of students and teachers regarding the feedback provided on EFL Writing?) suggest that students think that their teachers often correct their written work and that this correction is acknowledged and implemented by students most of the time. According to the information provided by the teachers and students, it seems that learners make these corrections because it is part of an assignment with the purpose of improving their grades rather than improving their English. On the other hand,

the teachers claim that they often make corrections to the students' written work in English. They believe that their students sometimes make the corrections, but not as frequently as the students said. Teachers are also aware of language transfer errors in their students' written production, so they say that they try to correct them when they are detected to avoid fossilization.

The students and teachers think that corrections are mostly focused on grammar, which is perceived by them as one of the most important aspects in writing. However, despite considering feedback on grammatical aspects as very important, students would like to receive more feedback on other aspects such as vocabulary, spelling and organization of ideas. In this respect, students at the B1 proficiency level seem to be more aware of the structure of texts because the feedback on content and organization decreases as the proficiency level increases.

In addition, students and teachers agree with the aspect that teachers' favorite method of correction is direct feedback since it is provided by crossing out errors and writing the correct word or structure. Although, direct feedback is a practice that can be useful sometimes, especially with students of low L2 proficiency (Ferris & Hedgcock, 2014), studies demonstrate that indirect feedback is more beneficial for learners (Fathman & Walley, 1990; Ferris et al., 2000; Ferris & Roberts, 2001; Frodesen, 2001).

Both students and teachers also agree that all types of errors, major and minor, are corrected in students' writing. This unfocused feedback may be an old-fashioned way of providing feedback because research has proven that focused feedback is more effective (Sheen, 2007; Sheen, Wright, & Moldawa, 2009). However, teachers claim that, due to restrictions of time, they sometimes have to focus on the most common and serious errors. This could mean that, if they had enough time, they would be continuously providing unfocused feedback.

On the other hand, the students feel comfortable with this direct feedback and believe that it helps them recognize their errors and improve their English. Similarly, teachers acknowledge the importance of providing feedback on students' EFL writing errors in order to help students become aware of their errors. They think it is necessary to provide feedback in a general way in all of the lessons in both content and form, and it is a way to improve students' EFL writing. Furthermore, teachers believe that, besides direct feedback, sometimes indirect feedback could be useful in a way that the students feel encouraged to find out and correct their own errors. They also think that it would be a good idea to discuss students' preferences with respect to feedback. Hence, awareness raising seminars would be beneficial for novice teachers.

The results of the student's questionnaires and interviews also indicate that, in general, students perceive that it is important to have as few errors as possible in their writing. They also state that, besides direct feedback, teachers also use other ways of providing feedback, including the use of codes and symbols (e.g., circling, crossing out, underlining, etc.) and organizing open discussions with the class about the errors made by students. These discussions are considered beneficial by both students and teachers since students can learn from the correction given to others.

Students also think that both positive and negative comments on their work are useful in their learning process. Indeed, teachers believe that a combination of both positive and negative feedback, that is, feedback focused on strengths and weaknesses, is better than giving only feedback on weaknesses because they believe that negative feedback can affect the students' confidence.

According to the students, the corrections provided involve the grammar and vocabulary studied in class. They take a careful look at the corrections given by their teachers and make these corrections by rewriting their work, which is a process monitored

by their teacher. It is necessary to mention here that teachers have a slightly different opinion with respect to the aforementioned aspects. Teachers claim that the corrections are about the grammar and vocabulary studied in class, which is not always the case. They also say that assignments related to rewriting based on corrections are not something frequently given and that they do not necessarily monitor this process. The teachers added that the students make these corrections if they are given as an assignment. Students do not correct their work by themselves.

The results also indicate that the students in general neither agree nor disagree with other aspects of feedback, which means that they are not sure about their opinions on matters such as being confident enough to correct their own errors and revise their writing, and feeling frustrated with error correction. The students also seem unsure about their views on peer feedback such as having their writing being corrected by classmates and relying on them for correction. They are not sure if the correction given by their classmates helps them more than the one provided by their teachers. For this reason, it is important to make teachers and learners aware of the importance of collaborative writing and peer feedback (Storch, 2016).

As confirmation of the fact that their teachers give positive and negative comments on their writing, they expressed uncertainty about the aspect that teachers give only positive or only negative comments about their students' writing. This correction, at various stages of writing, according to the students, may or may not hamper the flow of the students' writing.

Despite thinking that peer feedback can be misleading and less effective (due to the students' poor level of proficiency) than teacher feedback and that learners are not proficient enough to correct their own writings, teachers also include peer feedback and

ask their students to correct by themselves. However, the teachers said that they do not necessarily monitor peer feedback and do self-correction activities.

Teachers also think that it is not possible to give very specific feedback on content and organization as it is possible in the case of feedback on form. In addition, they believe that feedback only on content and organization often seems vague to learners and learners feel helpless.

Unlike the students, who think that grammar is the most important aspect to receive feedback on, the teachers think that, besides grammar, other aspects such as content and organization must also be considered. For this reason, they seem unsure about their opinion that feedback only on form may or may not create opportunities for producing writing that is almost flawless in form but lacking in substance. In addition, there is a division of opinion in which teachers agree and are unsure about the item on the topic of whether feedback on form is more effective than feedback on content.

Furthermore, there is a division of opinion, that is, they agree, disagree, or neither agree nor disagree in similar proportions with respect to knowing if feedback on mid-drafts affects the learners' flow of writing. Perhaps teachers do not revise or assign mid-drafts, they cannot implement this revision because of large class sizes, or they just do not have a clear view on this issue.

It is necessary to add that teachers in this institution have experience in EFL teaching (more than 4 years on average), so they are aware of the ways in which writing can be taught and feedback can be provided. However, they claim that they have not had much training as to providing feedback on EFL writing and regard EFL writing as difficult to teach. This difficulty is apparently due to a lack of study habits, disciplinary problems, the excessive number of students in each class, lack of students' knowledge, extensive contents to be studied, and lack of time due to a packed syllabus.

It is also important to note that there are some differences in the students' opinions. These differences are not statistically significant between the A2 and B1 groups, but they are significant between the A1 group and the rest of the groups. Many of these differences are present in the levels of agreement and in the proportions of some students who chose the same options in each group. These statistically significant differences suggest that some of the strategies used by teachers for giving feedback and how students try to obtain benefit from these corrections might vary in frequency. These strategies include the type of indirect feedback used by teachers, students reading these corrections carefully, rewriting the written tasks, teachers checking these corrections, knowing if benefits are reaped from doing corrections as open discussions, and knowing if corrections given by teachers are related to the grammar and vocabulary already studied. In these statements, A1 students tend to agree and strongly agree more than groups A2 and B1.

Conversely, in aspects such as relying on classmates for peer feedback, teachers giving only negative comments on writing, and knowing if teacher's correction at various stages of writing hampers the flow of students' writing, A1 students tend to strongly disagree and disagree more than the other two proficiency groups.

These statistically significant differences in the levels of agreement are also present in views regarding if corrections given by classmates are more helpful than the ones given by teachers, in which more students in the A1 group are undecided.

As mentioned above, the difference in views may be caused by the variation in frequency of these activities related to feedback in each proficiency group, especially in the A1 group, who tend to agree or disagree more than groups A2 and B1. On the other hand, the learners from the A2 and B1 groups share similar views about the aforementioned aspects.

To sum up, feedback on EFL writing seems to be an activity that is done by the teachers in the three groups of EFL learners. Feedback is a process that can improve learning and is expected by students (Hyland 2003), especially in EFL contexts (Enginarlar, 1993; García Mayo & Milla Melero, forthcoming; Kamberi, 2013; Milla Melero, 2017; Yang, Badger & Yu, 2006), which is corroborated by the perceptions of teachers and students in the present study. For the students, improving their grade on their assignments seems to be an important factor in rewriting their work and acknowledging the corrections given by their teachers. As direct feedback seems to be mostly given on all types of errors, this could be a detrimental factor because research suggests that students can obtain more benefits from indirect feedback (e.g., Fathman & Walley, 1990; Ferris & Roberts, 2001) and from focused feedback on certain features (Sheen, 2007; Sheen, Wright, & Moldawa, 2009). Therefore, these practices should also be included in EFL instruction.

Based on the aforementioned aspects related to the fourth research question, we can conclude that our **fourth hypothesis** entertained (Ecuadorian high-school learners and teachers will have positive views about corrective feedback in writing.) is proven since Ecuadorian learners expect feedback on their written output, and this feedback is given on a regular basis. However, the way in which feedback is provided and monitored may not seem ideal.

Another concern is that teachers claim that they need more training in teaching EFL writing and providing feedback, so they might not give feedback on writing as appropriate. Other problems in providing feedback appear to be related to the excessive number of students in the class and the lack of time.

10.3 Conclusion: General findings

The findings in the present study suggest a strong evidence that grammatical transfer is an important source of errors in the written production of Ecuadorian EFL learners, which is far more prevalent than the presence of lexical transfer errors related to invented words (calques) and false cognates. It is important to add that other errors that were considered intralingual and developmental were not included in the present study.

There is also an impact of the learners' L2 proficiency level and the task type on the number of grammatical transfer errors in the EFL learner's written output. With respect to students' and teacher's views about feedback on their written output, they have positive opinions about it. These findings discussed in this chapter will be summarized in the next chapter.

Based on the information above, the recommendations of the present study will be principally focused on feedback, since it is the aspect in which students and teachers expressed their opinions. However, the noteworthy presence of grammatical transfer errors is important as a source of errors in students' EFL writing, so including the most relevant ones (e.g., errors related to prepositions, articles, and pronouns) as part of EFL writing instruction and feedback could be helpful for learners.

Although students from levels A1 and A2 do not have a good proficiency level in EFL writing yet, it would be a good idea to familiarize them more with genres in writing by including readings that can lead them to further work with genres. These activities could be increased as the students reach level B1 of English proficiency.

It is important for students to receive feedback in different forms (e.g., direct feedback, indirect feedback, peer feedback, self-correction, conferences) and on several aspects (e.g., content and form). It is true that students may not recall all of the feedback provided but, despite the lack of time, teachers should find some time to monitor and do

a follow-up of the feedback given on student's written work; otherwise, feedback will not be that useful.

Considering what was mentioned above about the most frequent grammatical transfer errors found, it would be important to focus most of the feedback activities on types of errors that can be related to what students are studying and to what students seem to find problematic (e.g., grammatical transfer errors) instead of providing feedback on all types of errors.

It is necessary to add that, for a more effective learning, teachers and students must be prepared for the feedback process. For this reason, the educational institutions must provide teachers with appropriate training and resources, and teachers must prepare their students before any form of feedback on EFL writing is introduced in the class.

Chapter 11: General Conclusions

11.1 Summary

The main aim of the present study was to chart the most common grammatical transfer errors in the writing of Ecuadorian EFL high-school students and to assess whether proficiency level and type of written task have an impact on that type of error. Besides, the study also considered both students' and teachers' perception on written feedback. In order to achieve this aim, the study was organized in 11 chapters that provide support for its findings.

Chapter 1 (Writing skills in ESL/EFL environments) referred to the importance of writing skills in ESL/EFL environments, which contributed to support ESL/EFL writing as a relevant aspect of current research.

Chapter 2 (Language transfer errors) covered issues that demonstrate the importance of language transfer errors as a topic that is still studied in current research. These issues included notions of language transfer and interlanguage, error taxonomies, and sources of errors.

Chapter 3 (Methods of analysis and identification of errors in L2 writing) discussed the most relevant methods for analyzing errors in L2 learning that involve performance analysis of samples of learners' written production. These methods have provided crucial evidence of language acquisition.

Chapter 4 (Previous work on language transfer in writing skills) reviewed research in the field of language transfer in L2 writing skills that will contribute to support this dissertation. These studies included the impact of learners' proficiency level and the type of writing task on transfer.

Chapter 5 (Common grammatical transfer errors made by L1 Spanish EFL learners) presented previous research that has identified the common types of grammatical transfer errors in order to provide a background for data analysis.

Chapter 6 (Feedback on L2 writing) focused on issues and research about different aspects of the process of feedback in ESL/EFL with the purpose of supporting the last research question of this dissertation.

Chapter 7 (The study) presented all the pertinent information related to the study itself such as the context of EFL teaching in Ecuador, the rationale for the study, the research questions and hypotheses, the setting and participants, the research instruments and materials, as well as the procedures for collection and analysis of information.

Chapter 8 (Results on grammatical transfer errors in writing by Ecuadorian EFL Learners) showed the results obtained after a quantitative and qualitative analysis of the data collected. This information contributed to answering the first, second and third research questions of the present study.

Chapter 9 (Results on students' and teachers' perceptions of feedback) presented the results obtained after analyzing the data from the questionnaires and interviews in order to address the fourth research question of this dissertation.

Chapter 10 (Discussion) discussed the results of the research questions and hypotheses based on the prediction of results offered in Part I about the literature review for this dissertation.

Finally, the present chapter (General conclusions) draws the final conclusions and recommendations and considers the educational implications of the findings, the limitations, as well as future lines of research.

As for the findings of the present study, the **first research question** focused on interlingual errors found in the essays written by EFL learners and revealed several

frequent types of grammatical and lexical language transfer errors caused by the interference of Spanish (L1) in English (L2). The grammatical transfer errors found in the Ecuadorian EFL learners' written output are much more frequent than lexical transfer errors, with a strong presence of addition of articles, omission of pronouns, and misuse of prepositions. Other grammatical transfer errors found were omission of articles, addition of prepositions, omission of prepositions, misuse of pronouns, misuse of verbs, wrong word order, misuse of adverbs, misuse of nouns, misuse of adjectives, misuse of negation, misuse of determiners, and misuse of complementizers. The proportion of the three most frequent grammatical transfer errors found in the present study is somewhat different to the proportions of frequent grammatical transfer errors found in other related works (e.g., Alonso, 1997; Cabrera et al., 2014; López, 2011). Furthermore, the proportion of grammatical errors related to nouns is not prevalent in the EFL learners' written work of the present study as it is in those works. The types of grammatical transfer errors found in the present study will meet a part of the Ecuadorian government's needs to know the situation of EFL learning at a high-school level in order to establish improvement plans.

Considering the **second research question** that dealt with the effect that proficiency in the L2 can have on language transfer from L1 to L2 as well as the very limited research done on this topic in the Latin-American context, the findings show that the EFL proficiency does not have a crucial effect on the grammatical transfer errors mentioned above when comparing the proficiency levels A1 and A2. In fact, the effect of proficiency is not strong across the three levels of proficiency (A1, A2, and B1) in the improvement of most of the grammatical transfer errors found. However, it is worth mentioning that proficiency does play an important role in the reduction of transfer errors when comparing groups A1 and B1 in five types of grammatical transfer errors: addition

of articles, omission of articles, omission of pronouns, misuse of pronouns, and misuse of verbs. Part of these results follows the tendency found in ESL studies (e.g., Chan, 2010; Lanauze and Snow, 1989) and in studies in which Spanish is not the L1 (e.g., Pennington & So, 1993; Zheng & Park, 2013). They show that L2 proficiency has an important impact on language transfer. In this respect, the present study has examined the impact of learners' L2 proficiency level on grammatical transfer errors in EFL writing in a Latin-American context where Spanish is the L1, which is something not explored in formal research in Latin America.

Although there are studies about the effect of the genre of the writing task on various aspects of language transfer (e.g., Kubota, 1998; Roca de Larios, Murphy & Manchón, 1999; Wang & Wen, 2002), these studies are not precisely focused on grammatical transfer errors in a Latin-American EFL context. Therefore, the scarce research in the Latin-American context with respect to the topic of the **third research question** of the present study, which is about the effect of the genre of written task on grammatical transfer errors in EFL writing, has also led us to examine the effects of two different types of written tasks: the narrative essay and the argumentative essay. The examination of the types of grammatical transfer errors determined that there are statistically significant differences in most of the grammatical transfer errors found. The number of these grammatical errors is higher in argumentative paragraphs. Consequently, the genre of the written task has an important role in the amount of grammatical transfer errors found in the Ecuadorian EFL learners' written production. The present study, then, has addressed something that formal research in Ecuadorian and Latin-American contexts has not discussed and determined the potential impact of task type as a possible influence on the grammatical transfer errors in the EFL written production of Ecuadorian EFL learners.

Apart from assessing the grammatical language transfer errors in EFL writing and their relation with the English proficiency level and type of task, it was also important to consider how those errors were corrected, so feedback is a pivotal issue when teaching ESL/EFL writing and error correction. In this respect, the **fourth research question** examined teachers' and students' perception of feedback in EFL writing.

Students' and teachers' perceptions were interesting regarding feedback on EFL writing. First of all, feedback on EFL writing seems to be an activity that is carried out by teachers in the three groups of EFL learners with apparently varied frequencies. For the students, improving their grade on their assignments seems to be an important factor in rewriting their work and acknowledging the corrections given by their teachers. Second, direct feedback seems to be mostly given on all types of errors, which does not seem to be quite as beneficial in comparison with indirect and focused feedback. Most of the time, the feedback provided is related to the structures and contents currently studied in class, including positive comments and criticism of errors. There are also occasions on which peer feedback and self-correction are implemented, but teachers do not necessarily monitor or rely on these activities. Finally, teachers admit that they need more training in teaching EFL writing and providing feedback, and acknowledge that the excessive number of students in the class as well as lack of time as the most detrimental factors in providing proper feedback in EFL writing.

The information from both sides of perceptions of feedback will be useful for teachers since they will be aware of their students' perceptions regarding feedback on EFL writing and may use that information to improve their teaching methods. The information could also be used to enhance EFL teachers' skills to deal with errors, as a

clear improvement in this regard is something that the Ministry of Education attempts to achieve (Ministerio de Educación, 2015).

The results of this study can also be of use for the authorities of the secondary educational institutions under study since they will be aware of potential problems in the EFL teaching-learning process. In summary, the findings of the present study will contribute to research on EFL writing, EFL teaching, and language transfer in the context of secondary education.

11.2 Implications

Grammar transfer errors are an important source of the errors made in the writing by the participants in this study, but we should not forget that errors occur as part of the learning process (Corder, 1981).

Charting the most common errors made by this group of students at three proficiency levels and in two different written tasks will be beneficial for both teachers, who will be made aware of those systematic errors that their students make, and learners, who will take advantage of the ways their teachers will implement to help them to avoid these errors.

The findings discussed in this study will be useful as a reference in a way that teachers in the Latin-American, Spanish-speaking context (in which research on the impact of L2 proficiency and task type on grammatical transfer errors in EFL writing is practically inexistent) can be aware of the most common types of grammatical language transfer errors made by their EFL students in writing, especially at the proficiency levels A1, A2, and B1. These types of errors should also be considered when providing feedback in EFL writing because there are no significant improvements in most types of grammatical transfer errors as the EFL students' proficiency level increases. In addition,

further practice with genres could also be useful in teaching EFL writing (Ferris & Hedgcock, 2014) since most grammatical transfer errors that are much more frequent in argumentative essays, which means that students find this genre very challenging in this context.

Likewise, because a number of grammar errors can be attributed to L1 transfer, it is recommended that pedagogical activities do not inadvertently promote the incorrect transfer of grammatical rules. In this case, explicit instruction in L2 grammar would be more beneficial than implicit instruction. In addition, corrective feedback, awareness-raising activities that draw attention to L1-L2 differences and the use of learner corpora are also suggested to deal with L1 transfer errors in EFL classes (Derrick, Paquot, Plonsky, 2018).

Both students and teachers consider feedback on writing as a critical aspect of writing instruction (Ferris & Hedgcock, 2014; Hyland & Hyland, 2006), and this has been showed in the present study as well. It is important for students to receive both direct and indirect feedback, not only on grammatical errors, but on other types of errors such as content and organization. If feedback is provided only on form, this correction may not be accurate, clear or balanced due to the fact that this feedback can only be focused on elements of the students' written work such as grammar. Another negative aspect is that students may not recall or notice the mistakes pointed out in the feedback (Cohen & Cavalcanti, 1990).

Feedback should also be focused, that is, dedicated to certain types of errors that can be related to what students are currently learning rather than dedicated to all types of errors. Apart from this, teachers should also consider preparing their students for peer feedback and self-correction. Organizing conferences or meeting in which feedback is

addressed would also be a good strategy that should be included in the syllabus. A student-teacher conferencing is necessary as a complement to feedback since it is an opportunity for instruction, clarification, and negotiation (Ferris, 2002; Ferris & Hedgcock, 2014).

The information of perceptions of feedback could also be used to improve EFL teachers' skills to deal with errors. Teacher education with regard to feedback is a challenging aspect that involves innovation and preparation in feedback practices, which will result in the improvement of learner's writing performance (Lee, 2008; Lee, 2010; Lee, 2016; Min, 2013). In addition, teachers' training in different aspects of EFL teaching is an improvement that the Ministry of Education in Ecuador attempts to achieve (Ministerio de Educación, 2015).

Authorities of secondary educational institutions can also make use of the information obtained in the present study since they will be aware of potential problems in the EFL teaching-learning process in the Latin-American Spanish-speaking context.

11.3 Limitations and lines for further research

As in any research study, limitations should be acknowledged. These limitations will serve as guidelines for future research on the topic.

Firstly, it would have been interesting to involve more high-schools in our study in order to increase our database and, thus, make the findings more robust. However, obtaining access and permission to do research in schools is a difficult task because of some constraints imposed by the Ministry of Education. One of them is that an agreement needs to be signed between the school and the institution that sponsors the research. For this reason, we are grateful to the people behind this agreement that allowed us to access the high-school and to collect data.

Secondly, the present study has not used a control group. Due to limitations of availability of people and research sites, it was difficult to obtain a control group of EFL learners (who were not L1 Spanish speakers), which could be large enough to be fully comparable with the group of EFL Ecuadorian learners. Therefore, this research did without the control group, but, instead, analyzed the types of grammatical transfer errors based on errors found in similar studies that did not use control groups either (e.g., Alonso, 1997; Chan, 2010; López, 2011). Likewise, the present study only used procedures of traditional CA and EA, which did not include read-aloud protocols (e.g., Roca de Larios, Murphy and Manchón, 1999) or analysis of interlanguage strings (e.g., Chan, 2010). Future work in the Latin-American context can include these procedures as a part of the method to analyze interlanguage in order to determine crosslinguistic influences in grammatical transfer errors in L2 writing.

Thirdly, the argumentative text was probably too challenging for the A1 and A2 level groups, as they were not really used to writing them in the classroom context. In a way, that difficulty was mitigated by the topic chosen, which was of clear interest for the age-range of the participants. Further research should consider this issue and perhaps include other types of written genres.

Finally, we cannot forget that the study has been conducted in a particular school and in a particular country, which clearly influences the generalizability of the findings. Besides, only the errors in learners of three proficiency levels were assessed. Including higher proficiency levels to complete the study would have been interesting.

Future research could also consider the effects of focused written feedback on the most common grammatical transfer errors identified in the present study.

In summary, the present study has had limitations but also suggestions for future research that could be included in studies in the Latin-American context. The lines of research could be extended to other types of transfer errors such as vocabulary, rhetorical patterns, and organization of ideas. We hope that its findings and the suggestions for further research we have made would be of interest in the Ecuadorian and Latin-American EFL context.

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Appendices

Appendix 1. Writing tasks

WRITING TASK 1 - Narrative essay

What do you usually do on weekends?

Write a short essay about your weekend activities.

(The paragraph must have a minimum of 80 words and a maximum of 100 words.)

WRITING TASK 2 - Argumentative essay

Write a short essay about the following situation:

People say that videogames can be bad for you. Other people say that playing videogames is good for you.

Do you like videogames? Why or why not?

Write an essay about your opinion of videogames. Explain advantages or disadvantages of videogames and why do you like to play them or not.

(Your paragraph must have a minimum of 80 words and a maximum of 100 words.)

Appendix 2. Students' questionnaire. Part I

STUDENTS' QUESTIONNAIRE PART 1

Background information

Select the correct answer and mark with an X.

<p>1. Gender Male () Female ()</p>	<p>2. Age group: a. Younger than 14 years old () b. 14-15 years old () c. 15-16 years old () d. 16-17 years old () e. Older than 18 years old ()</p>
<p>3. Evaluate your English writing skill: a. very low () b. low () c. medium () d. high () e. very high ()</p>	<p>4. Have you lived in an English speaking country for more than 1 year? a. Yes () b. No () If so, for how long? _____</p>
<p>5. How often does your teacher correct your written work? a. Always () b. Often () c. Sometimes () d. Rarely () e. Never ()</p>	<p>6. How often do you make the corrections given by your teacher? a. Always () b. Often () c. Sometimes () d. Rarely () e. Never ()</p>
<p>7. When responding to your written work, the correction given by your teacher is mainly on:</p> <p>a. Grammar (verb tenses, subject/verb agreement, article use...etc.) () b. Vocabulary () c. Spelling () d. Punctuation () e. Ideas, content and organization ()</p>	<p>8. If you look carefully at some of the marks/comments your English teacher makes on your written work, which one(s) do you consider most important to look at? (Please mark ALL that apply).</p> <p>a. Marks indicating errors in grammar () b. Marks indicating errors in vocabulary choice () c. Marks indicating errors in spelling () d. Marks indicating errors in punctuation () e. Comments on the ideas/content/organization ()</p>
<p>9. How does your English teacher currently indicate errors in your written work?</p> <p>a. By crossing out what is incorrect and writing the correct word or structure () b. By showing where the error is and giving a clue about how to correct it () c. By only showing where the error is () d. By ignoring the errors in grammar, spelling, punctuation...etc. and only paying attention to the ideas expressed () e. Your teacher does not supply any correct form ()</p>	<p>10. If there are many errors in your written work, your teacher:</p> <p>a. Corrects all errors major and minor () b. Corrects all errors the teacher considers major, but not the minor ones () c. Corrects most but not necessarily all of the major errors if there are many of them () d. Corrects only a few of the major errors no matter how many there are () e. Corrects no errors and respond only to the ideas expressed ()</p>

Appendix 3. Students' questionnaire. Part II

STUDENTS' QUESTIONNAIRE PART 2

Read each statement and then decide if you: (1) strongly disagree, (2) disagree, (3) neither agree nor disagree, (4) agree, or (5) strongly agree. Please mark your answer with and X in the space provided.

There are no right or wrong answers. We are simply interested in your opinions.

Statements	strongly disagree	Disagree	neither agree nor disagree	agree	strongly agree
1. Written corrective feedback (error correction) helps you develop your writing.					
2. Your teacher uses a set of correction or proof-reading symbols (circling, crossing out, underlining, etc.)					
3. You read every one of your teacher's marks/comments carefully.					
4. You rewrite your work according to the corrections given by your teachers.					
5. You like to get your writing corrected by your classmates.					
6. Correction given by your classmates during the writing process helps more than the correction given by your teacher.					
7. Teacher's correction at various stages of writing hampers the flow of your writing.					
8. You can rely on your classmates to give correction about your writing.					
9. You are confident enough to correct your own errors and revise your writing.					
10. Error correction frustrates you.					
11. Your teachers provide only positive comments on your writing.					
12. Your teachers provide only negative comments on your writing.					
13. Your teachers provide both positive and negative comments on your writing.					
14. Your teachers arrange open discussion with all the students of your class about errors on specific item.					
15. If open discussions are arranged, students can benefit from the correction given to others' errors.					
16. It is important to me to have as few errors as possible in my written work.					
17. You revise and make the corrections given by your teachers by rewriting your work.					

18. Your teacher checks that you have rewritten your work, including the pertinent corrections.					
19. The corrections given by your teacher are related to the grammar and vocabulary already studied.					

Appendix 4. Encuesta al estudiante. Parte I

ENCUESTA AL ESTUDIANTE – PARTE 1

Seleccione la respuesta correcta y marque con una X

<p>1. Sexo Masculino () Femenino ()</p>	<p>2. Edad: a. Menos de 14 años de edad () b. 14-15 años () c. 15-16 años () d. 16-17 años () e. Mayor de 18 años de edad ()</p>
<p>3. Evalúe su destreza para escribir en inglés: a. muy baja () b. baja () c. intermedia () d. alta () e. muy alta ()</p>	<p>4. ¿Ha vivido en un país de habla inglesa por más de 1 año? c. Sí () d. No () Si su respuesta es positiva, ¿Cuánto tiempo? _____</p>
<p>5. ¿Con qué frecuencia su profesor de inglés corrige su trabajo escrito en inglés? a. Siempre () b. Frecuentemente () c. A veces () d. Rara vez () e. Nunca ()</p>	<p>6. ¿Con qué frecuencia usted realiza las correcciones que su profesor de inglés hace en tu trabajo escrito? a. Siempre () b. Frecuentemente () c. A veces () d. Rara vez () e. Nunca ()</p>
<p>7. Al revisar su trabajo escrito en inglés, las correcciones que su profesor de inglés son principalmente en: a. Gramática (tiempos verbales, concordancia entre sujeto y verbo, uso de artículos, etc.) () b. Vocabulario () c. Ortografía () d. Puntuación () e. Ideas, contenido y organización ()</p>	<p>8. Si usted ve cuidadosamente algunos de los comentarios o marcas que su profesor de inglés hace en su trabajo escrito, ¿cuál considera más importantes para ver? (Por favor marque todas las que apliquen) a. Marcas que indican errores en gramática () b. Marcas que indican errores en vocabulario () c. Marcas que indican errores en ortografía () d. Marcas que indican errores en puntuación() e. Comentarios sobre ideas/contenido/organización ()</p>
<p>9. ¿Cómo indica los errores su profesor de inglés en su trabajo escrito? a. Tachando lo que es incorrecto y escribiendo la palabra o expresión correcta. () b. Mostrando dónde está el error y dando una pista sobre cómo corregir. () c. Solamente mostrando dónde está el error.() d. Ignorando errores en gramática, ortografía, puntuación, etc. y solamente poner atención a las ideas expresadas. () e. Su profesor no le proporciona la forma correcta. ()</p>	<p>10. Si es que hay muchos errores en su trabajo escrito, su profesor de inglés: a. Corrige todos los errores mayores y menores () b. Corrige todos los errores que el profesor considera mayores, pero no los menores. () c. Corrige la mayoría, pero no necesariamente todos los errores si es que hay muchos () d. Corrige sólo unos pocos de los errores mayores, sin importar cuántos haya () e. No corrige errores y sólo responde a las ideas expresadas. ()</p>

Appendix 5. Encuesta al estudiante. Parte II

ENCUESTA AL ESTUDIANTE - PARTE 2

Lea cada enunciado y decida si usted está (1) totalmente en desacuerdo, (2) en desacuerdo, (3) ni de acuerdo ni en desacuerdo, (4) de acuerdo, (5) totalmente de acuerdo. Por favor marque su respuesta con una X en el espacio proporcionado. No hay respuestas correctas o incorrectas; simplemente queremos conocer sus opiniones.

Enunciado	Totalmente en desacuerdo	En desacuerdo	Ni de acuerdo ni en desacuerdo	De acuerdo	Totalmente de acuerdo
1. La corrección de errores le ayuda a desarrollar su destreza de escritura en inglés.					
2. Su profesor de inglés usa símbolos para corregir su trabajo escrito (por ejemplo, círculos, tachado, subrayado, etc.)					
3. Usted lee cuidadosamente cada uno de los comentarios o marcas que su profesor de inglés hace en su trabajo escrito.					
4. Usted vuelve a escribir su trabajo de acuerdo a las correcciones hechas por su profesor de inglés.					
5. A usted le gusta que sus compañeros de clase corrijan su trabajo escrito en inglés.					
6. Las correcciones hechas por sus compañeros a su trabajo escrito en inglés son más útiles que las hechas por su profesor de inglés.					
7. La corrección del profesor de inglés en las diferentes etapas del trabajo escrito obstaculiza la fluidez de su escritura.					
8. Usted puede confiar en sus compañeros de clase para la corrección de su trabajo escrito en inglés.					
9. Usted tiene la suficiente confianza para corregir sus propios errores y revisar su trabajo escrito en inglés.					
10. La corrección de errores en su trabajo escrito de inglés lo hace sentir frustrado(a).					
11. Su profesor de inglés le da solamente comentarios positivos (lo que hace bien) sobre su trabajo escrito en inglés.					
12. Su profesor de inglés le da solamente comentarios negativos (lo que hace mal) sobre tu trabajo escrito.					
13. Su profesor de inglés le da comentarios positivos y negativos sobre su trabajo escrito.					
14. Su profesor de inglés organizan discusiones abiertas con todos los estudiantes acerca de los errores en el trabajo escrito en inglés.					
15. Si se organizan discusiones abiertas, los estudiantes se pueden beneficiar de las correcciones dadas a los errores de otros estudiantes.					
16. Es importante para usted tener tan pocos errores como sea posible en su trabajo escrito en inglés.					

17. Usted revisa y realiza las correcciones hechas por su profesor reescribiendo su trabajo.					
18. Su profesor revisa que usted haya reescrito su trabajo con las correspondientes correcciones.					
19. Las correcciones realizadas por su profesor se relacionan con gramática, vocabulario y otros aspectos ya estudiados.					

Appendix 6. Students' interview

STUDENTS' INTERVIEW

- 1) How does your teacher provide feedback on your written work?
- 2) Would you like to receive positive comments of your written work?
- 3) Would you like to receive negative comments of your written work?
- 4) Would you like to receive both positive and negative comments of your written work?

- 5) What kind of corrections would you like to receive?

In Grammatical aspects?

Spelling?

Punctuation?

Vocabulary?

Organization of ideas?

- 6) How do you like your corrections done?

By crossing out what is incorrect and writing the correct word or structure?

By showing where the error is and giving a hint about how to correct it?

By only showing where the error is?

- 7) If you have many errors in your written work, how should your teacher help you?

By correcting all errors major and minor?

By correcting all errors the teacher considers major, but not the minor ones?

By correcting a few of the major errors no matter how many there are?

- 8) Do you think grammar correction is more effective than feedback on content and organization?
- 9) Do you revise and work on the corrections that your teacher does on your written work? How?
- 10) Does your teacher ensure that you do the corrections on your written work? How?
- 11) In general, what do you think of the feedback on your written work provided by your teacher?

Appendix 7. Entrevista a los estudiantes

ENTREVISTA A LOS ESTUDIANTES

1) ¿Cómo corrige su profesor su trabajo escrito en inglés?

2) ¿Te gustaría recibir comentarios positivos, negativos o ambos sobre tu trabajo escrito en inglés?

3) ¿Qué clase de correcciones le gustaría recibir en su escritura en inglés? En aspectos gramaticales? Ortografía? Puntuación? Vocabulario? Organización de ideas?

4) ¿Cómo le gusta que le corrijan su trabajo escrito?

¿Tachando o marcando lo que es incorrecto y escribir la palabra o expresión correcta?

¿Mostrar el error y dar una pista sobre cómo corregirla?

¿Solamente mostrando en dónde está el error?

5) Si tiene muchos errores en su trabajo escrito, ¿cómo le gustaría que le ayude su profesor de inglés?

¿Corrigiendo todos los errores mayores y menores?

¿Corrigiendo todos los errores que el profesor considere graves, pero no los errores menores?

¿Corrigiendo unos pocos errores mayores sin importar la cantidad?

6) ¿Cree que la corrección gramática es más efectiva que la corrección de contenido y organización?

7) ¿Revisa y realiza las correcciones que hace su profesor en su trabajo escrito?
¿Cómo?

8) ¿Su profesor revisa que realices las correcciones a su trabajo escrito en inglés?
¿Cómo?

9) ¿Las correcciones realizadas por su profesor se relacionan a las estructuras gramaticales y vocabulario que se está estudiando?

10) ¿Cree que la retroalimentación (corrección de errores) es consistente con las metas del curso de inglés y las unidades que se está estudiando?

11) En general ¿Qué opine del proceso de corrección del trabajo escrito por parte de su profesor de inglés?

Appendix 8. Teachers' questionnaire. Part I

TEACHERS' QUESTIONNAIRE PART 1

Background information

Select the correct answer and mark with an X.

<p>1. Gender Male () Female ()</p>	<p>2. Academic degree: _____</p>
<p>3. Evaluate your English writing skill: a. very low () b. low () c. medium () d. high () e. very high ()</p>	<p>4. Years of experience in teaching? _____</p>
<p>5. How often do you correct your students' written work? a. Always () b. Often () c. Sometimes () d. Rarely () e. Never ()</p>	<p>6. How often do your students make the corrections that you give them? a. Always () b. Often () c. Sometimes () d. Rarely () e. Never ()</p>
<p>7. When responding to your students' written work, the correction you give is mainly on: a. Grammar (verb tenses, subject/verb agreement, article use...etc.) () b. Vocabulary () c. Spelling () d. Punctuation () e. Ideas, content and organization ()</p>	<p>8. When you make marks/comments on your students' written work, which one(s) do you consider most important to look at? (Please circle ALL that apply). a. Marks indicating errors in grammar () b. Marks indicating errors in vocabulary choice () c. Marks indicating errors in spelling () d. Marks indicating errors in punctuation () e. Comments on the ideas/content/organization ()</p>
<p>9. How do you currently indicate errors in your students' written work? a. By crossing out what is incorrect and writing the correct word or structure () b. By showing where the error is and giving a clue about how to correct it () c. By only showing where the error is () d. By ignoring the errors in grammar, spelling, punctuation...etc. and only paying attention to the ideas expressed () e. You do not supply any correct form ()</p>	<p>10. If there are many errors in your students' written work, what do you do? a. Correct all errors major and minor () b. Correct all errors the teacher considers major, but not the minor ones () c. Correct most but not necessarily all of the major errors if there are many of them () d. Correct only a few of the major errors no matter how many there are () e. Correct no errors and respond only to the ideas expressed ()</p>

Appendix 9. Teachers' questionnaire. Part II

TEACHERS' QUESTIONNAIRE - PART 2

Read each statement and then decide if you: (1) strongly disagree, (2) disagree, (3) neither agree nor disagree, (4) agree, or (5) strongly agree. Please mark your answer with and X in the space provided.

There are no right or wrong answers. We are simply interested in your opinions.

Statements	strongly disagree	disagree	neither agree nor disagree	agree	strongly agree
1. Written corrective feedback (error correction) helps learners develop their writing.					
2. You ask your learners to rewrite following the corrections given by you in their writings.					
3. Your students read every comment carefully.					
4. Your students rewrite their work by themselves according to the corrections you give.					
5. You ask your learners to self-correct.					
6. Your learners are proficient enough to correct their own writing.					
7. You ask your learners to get their writing corrected by their peers.					
8. Peer feedback is more effective than teacher feedback in the writing process.					
9. Your learners are proficient to provide peer feedback.					
10. Peer feedback may mislead learners due to poor level of proficiency.					
11. Teacher feedback during the mid-drafts affects learners' flow of writing.					
12. Feedback in writing should be provided only on content and organization, not on grammar.					
13. You correct all types of errors in your learners' writings.					
14. Feedback on form is more effective than feedback on content.					
15. Negative feedback, i.e. error correction, makes learners frustrated, and undermines their confidence.					

16. A combination of both negative and positive feedback (i.e. feedback on both strength and weakness) helps better than only negative feedback.					
17. If open discussions are arranged, learners can benefit from the feedback on others' errors.					
18. Feedback only on form creates opportunity for producing writing that is almost flawless in form but lacking in substance.					
19. Feedback only on content and organization often seems vague to learners and they feel helpless.					
20. It is not possible to provide very specific feedback on content and organization as it is possible in case of feedback on form.					
21. You correct the errors in student's writing by supplying the correct form.					
22. You correct the errors in student writings by simply marking them (circling, crossing out, underlining, etc.) or using codes like 'art' for article, 'sp' for spelling etc.					
23. Your students read your corrections and rewrite their texts with the corresponding corrections.					
24. You check your students' written work to see if they have corrected their mistakes.					
25. The corrections you suggest are related to grammar and vocabulary being studied by your students					

1. Please list down major obstacles in giving written feedback to your learners:

Appendix 10. Teachers' interview

TEACHER'S INTERVIEW

Background questions

1- How long have you been teaching English? Can you tell me about your experience of teaching English?

2- Can you tell me about your qualifications? (previous and major of studies)

3- Can you tell me about your experience of teaching writing?

4- Have you received any previous training on giving corrective feedback? If so, can you explain more?

5. Are you aware of students' Spanish interference errors?

6. Do you provide feedback on these types of errors?

Written corrective feedback practices:

1- Do you think it is important to provide feedback on students' writing errors?

2- Do you provide feedback on all students' writing errors or do you select some of the errors to be given feedback? Can you explain the reasons?

3- Which approach do you prefer? Can you explain your answer?

4- Which categories of writing errors do you focus your feedback on more? Why?

5- Which categories do you think are important to be focused on for feedback? Why?

6- Which type of corrective feedback (direct vs. indirect) do you use when giving feedback on writing errors? Why do you use it?

7- Which type of corrective feedback do you think can be more beneficial for improving students' writing? Can you explain the reason?

8- Do you ask your students' about their preferences with regard to how much and which type of corrective feedback should be provided? Can you explain the reason?

9. Do you ask your students to revise and rewrite their written work based on the feedback that you have provided? How?

10. Do you check if they rewrite their work? How?

11. Is the feedback that is provided related to the grammar and vocabulary studied in class?

12. Is feedback consistent with the goals of the English course and the units studied?

13. What do you expect to achieve through feedback provided on your students' written work?

14. Additional comments:

Appendix 11. Samples of students' written production

Narrative paragraph (A1 proficiency level)

WRITING TASK 1

Narrative paragraph

What do you usually do on weekends?

Write a paragraph about your weekend activities.

Remember to use a topic sentence at the beginning. (The paragraph must have between 80 and 100 words)

I'm go to school at 6:30 am and next go to
play soccer, I go my house at 4:30 and check
my homework I finish homework at 7:30 and
play video games and listen to music,
I finish day go to sleep at 10:00 pm.

Narrative paragraph (A2 proficiency level)

WRITING TASK 1

Narrative paragraph

What do you usually do on weekends?

Write a paragraph about your weekend activities.

Remember to use a topic sentence at the beginning. (The paragraph must have between 80 and 100 words)

In the weekends, I go to the park with my dogs 11
Cris, Bonita and Max. Next, I do my homework and 21
listen to music. Then, I into to my facebook for to talk 33
with my friends, too I play in the computer. Next, I help 45
in the kitchen for then, my family and me, have the lunch. 57
Next, I see a movie and eat pop-corn with ice cream, my 70
cousins arrive to my house for play with my brother and 81
me. We play football, basket and volley in the park.
finally we return to house for rest

Narrative paragraph (B1 proficiency level)

WRITING TASK 1

Narrative paragraph

What do you usually do on weekends?

Write a paragraph about your weekend activities.

Remember to use a topic sentence at the beginning. (The paragraph must have between 80 and 100 words)

I went the last week to Canamanga, In the house of my grandmother. My grandmother was very cheerful and happy because all your family met this day. In her house were at 6:00 of the morning and were here at the night. My grandmother gave us a so much food, the climate was very sunny especially in the afternoon and then we went with my cousin to eat icecream. Finally we dancing a lot of time in the night. All the day was very funny and cheerfull, but when I said good bye, was very sad.

Argumentative paragraph (A1 proficiency level)

WRITING TASK 2

Argumentative paragraph

Write a paragraph about the following situation:

SITUATION

People say that videogames can be bad for you. Other people say that playing videogames is good for you.

Do you like videogames? Why or why not?

Write a paragraph about your opinion of videogames. Explain advantages or disadvantages of videogames and why do you like to play them or not. Try to persuade your audience of your point of view.

Remember to write a topic sentence at the beginning. (Your paragraph must have between 80 and 100 words)

I don't mind because I play video games in my free time but don't much because I have a lot of homework. The videogames can be bad because the people can become addicted to this things. Much people spend much money playing video games and don't go to school.

Argumentative paragraph (A2 proficiency level)

WRITING TASK 2

Argumentative paragraph

Write a paragraph about the following situation:

SITUATION

People say that videogames can be bad for you. Other people say that playing videogames is good for you.

Do you like videogames? Why or why not?

Write a paragraph about your opinion of videogames. Explain advantages of disadvantages of videogames and why do you like to play them or not. Try to persuade your audience of your point of view.

Remember to write a topic sentence at the beginning. (Your paragraph must have between 80 and 100 words)

For me, videogames are good for people specially for the children because they are funnier and interesting but play video games in excess is bad because they become a distraction for the children and their had addiction in the people who play by the way they are enjoy. They are diferentsⁿ topics of video game. There are bads and good for the children there are of logic, entretenement and others. Finally, videogames for me can be bad or good!

Argumentative paragraph (B1 proficiency level)

WRITING TASK 2

Argumentative paragraph

Write a paragraph about the following situation:

SITUATION

People say that videogames can be bad for you. Other people say that playing videogames is good for you.

Do you like videogames? Why or why not?

Write a paragraph about your opinion of videogames. Explain advantages of disadvantages of videogames and why do you like to play them or not. Try to persuade your audience of your point of view.

Remember to write a topic sentence at the beginning. (Your paragraph must have between 80 and 100 words)

The videogames are not totally good for the people because we can be addicted of this. I like videogames, there are very interesting and sometimes I play videogames with my cousin when I was bored. The videogames are so cool because we can play all the time when we don't have nothing to do. The graphics of the video games are so good and the games same. The video games produce stress for other people if the people play a lot. and finally the video games are bad for the eyes.