Types and Sources of Moroccan EFL Students’ Errors in Writing: A Study of Error Analysis

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Abstract
Language teachers and researchers argue that the process of learning a language is better understood if the errors that language learners make in constructing the new language system are carefully analyzed. Hence, analyzing errors has become essential for facing and overcoming problems and suggesting solutions regarding different aspects of language teaching and learning. Accordingly, this study seeks to examine the errors that Moroccan high school students of English make in writing, and investigate the reasons behind the occurrence of such errors. The sample of the study consists of students’ essays collected from different classes. The data collected were analyzed using Corder’s (1967) model, which includes three stages; data collection, description, and explanation. The study’s findings showed that Moroccan EFL students make different types of errors in writing. The most significant number of the errors found in the students’ essays are grammatical errors, and most of these errors are due to intralingual factors.

Keywords: Error analysis, intra-lingual errors, language learning, negative transfer, Moroccan EFL students

Introduction

Behaviorism continued to dominate the field of second and foreign language learning until the late sixties. This theory posits that language learning is mainly a matter of learning new habits. Therefore, behaviorists claim that learners’ errors result from transferring patterns from the mother tongue into the target language. In this respect, Contrastive Analysis was the type of study that researchers and applied linguists conducted as an attempt to investigate learners’ errors. This is based on the premise that a detailed and careful comparison of the target language and the native language of the learner is the most effective method for studying learners’ errors (Frias, 1945).

In this regard, advocates of Contrastive Analysis claim that the primary barrier to learning a target language is interference from the native language. A careful comparison of the two languages in question helps predict and describe the learning areas of difficulty. This, in turn, would provide classroom teachers with the sort of information that can be helpful in the development of appropriate teaching materials. However, this type of analysis was criticized for limiting the sources of the errors that learners make when learning a second/foreign language to interference or transfer from the mother language only (Lado, 1957).

Around the end of the sixties and the beginning of the seventies, and as a reaction to the shortcomings of Contrastive Analysis, Error Analysis emerged as a branch of applied linguistics to demonstrate that the native language of the learner is not the only factor lying behind second/foreign language learners’ errors. Language learning is a dynamic process controlled by the human mind. Therefore, the learner’s errors are regarded as a natural and integral part of the process of learning. And rather than being the result of interference from the native language solely, learners’ errors can be attributed to different factors (Corder, 1974).

The purpose of this study is to identify the types of errors that Moroccan high school students of English make at the level of writing, find out the sources of these errors, and provide explanations for their occurrence. The significance of the current study lies in its attempt to fill the gap in research on the issue of Error Analysis in Morocco. Many studies in the Arab context have been carried out to identify, analyze, and categorize the errors that learners of English as a Foreign Language make in writing. In the Moroccan context, however, although there are studies conducted about learners’ errors in different language areas (pronunciation, spelling, etc.), no study has ever been undertaken to investigate the mistakes made in writing among secondary school students. Furthermore, this study is significant because it does not only seek to identify and categorize the types of errors that Moroccan secondary students make. Instead, the study also provides detailed explanatory accounts for the sources of these errors, which would be beneficial to students, teachers, and curriculum designers as well.

The present study addresses the following research questions:

1. What types of errors do Moroccan high school students of English make in writing?
2. What is the primary source of errors that Moroccan high school students of English make in writing?
3. What are the possible explanations for the errors that high school students of English make in writing?

The first part of the study provides a theoretical background for Error Analysis. It starts by describing the branches of Error Analysis, the difference between “errors” and “mistakes”, and the procedures followed while analyzing errors. Part one also explores the significance of Error Analysis in language teaching and learning.
The second part is concerned with identifying, describing, categorizing, and explaining the errors found in English essays written by Moroccan secondary school students. The purpose is to find out the primary reason behind the occurrence of the errors that these learners make in the process of learning English as a foreign language. The second part also explains the methodology adopted in the research, presents the analysis results, and discusses the findings. Finally, the paper summarizes the results of the investigation, provides recommendations for practice and states the study’s limitations.

Literature Review

Branches of Error Analysis

According to Corder (1974), the field of Error Analysis has two main branches: a theoretical branch and an applied one. The theoretical branch is concerned with identifying and revealing the processes and strategies that the learner makes use of while learning a second language. In other words, this branch tries to understand what is happening in the minds of language learners. The applied branch, on the other hand, seeks to organize remedial work and devise appropriate materials and teaching methods (Corder, 1974). Accordingly, investigating learners’ errors could be both ‘diagnostic’ and ‘prognostic’. It is diagnostic because it shows the learner’s current stage at a given point in the learning process. And it is prognostic since it helps teachers, course designers, and textbook writers to devise appropriate language learning materials and methods according to the learners’ areas of difficulty (Corder, 1976).

Errors versus Mistakes

The literature on Error Analysis distinguishes between an ‘error’ and a ‘mistake’. Brown (2000), for example, described a mistake as “a performance error that is either a random guess or a slip, in that it is a failure to utilize a known system correctly” (p. 165). That is to say, a learner makes a mistake when writing or speaking due to several factors, such as when the learner is tired, anxious, careless, or lacking attention. As such, mistakes do not reflect incompetence in using the language. They are, instead, the result of a breakdown when trying to have a piece of written discourse or produce an utterance. Additionally, mistakes can be noticed and corrected as soon as they are recognized. Therefore, learners can make mistakes in both native and non-native language situations.

Conversely, Brown (2000) defined an error as “a noticeable deviation from the adult grammar of a native speaker, reflecting the inter-language incompetence of the learner” (p. 165). Then, errors are when the learner mistakenly uses a linguistic item, reflecting a lack of or incomplete knowledge of the learner’s language, which implies that errors are made mainly by non-native speakers of a language. They reveal the fact that the learner has not yet reached complete mastery of the linguistic form of the target language. That is why errors, unlike mistakes, are difficult to be self-corrected immediately after they occur.

In a further attempt to differentiate between errors and mistakes, Ellis (1997) suggested two strategies. The first relates to the criterion of ‘self-correctability’ mentioned above or whether the error could be self-corrected. This is done by asking the learner to try to fix their wrong utterance. If the learner succeeds in finding the correction, the deviations are considered mistakes; otherwise, the deviations are errors. The second strategy that the author proposed requires checking the extent to which the learner’s performance is consistent. Differently put, if the learner uses the
correct form on some occasions and the faulty one on others, it is then a mistake. But, if they always use the incorrect form or utterance, it is an error.

**Procedures of Error Analysis**

The process of analyzing language learners’ errors consists of three significant steps; identifying the error, describing it, and finally providing an explanation as to what caused the error. The section below discusses these procedures.

*Identification of Errors*

Corder (1971) developed a model for identifying second/foreign language learners’ erroneous utterances. The model distinguishes between what he labels ‘overt’ errors and ‘covert’ ones. Overt errors are noticed and identified easily because such errors reveal an apparent deviation in form. For example, it would be easy to identify the error in a sentence like ‘did he be able to read’ as it is ill-formed. Covert errors, on the other hand, occur in utterances that appear to be correct but that do not stand for what the learner means to say.

Similarly, Burt (1975) distinguished between a ‘global’ error and a ‘local’ one. The former hinders communication and prevents the learner from understanding some aspects of the message. The latter affects only a particular element of a sentence or an utterance without stopping meaning from being conveyed.

*Description of Errors*

The next step in analyzing an error is to provide an adequate description. According to Brown (2000), there are four main categories of errors. These are omission, addition, selection, and ordering. ‘Omission’ can be morphological or syntactical, and, as the name suggests, it is when the learner omits an essential element from a sentence or an utterance. The ‘addition’ category involves adding unnecessary or incorrect morphological, syntactic, or lexical elements. The ‘selection’ category of a faulty element can occur at the level of morphology or syntax. ‘Ordering’, the fourth category in errors’ description, is when language elements are disordered at the lexical, morphological, syntactic, or pronunciation levels.

*Explanation of Errors*

The final step in analyzing learners’ errors is explaining the errors to determine their sources. This step is the most challenging in comparison to the previous ones. This is because making errors is related primarily to “what takes place in the learners’ minds”, as Ennaji and Sadiqi (1987, p. 151) put it. That is to say, when explaining learners’ errors, one should take into consideration the different cognitive, affective, and psychological strategies that learners make use. Generally, there are four primary sources of errors. These are interlingual transfer, intralingual transfer, the context of learning, and communication strategies.

Inter-lingual errors (or errors of interference) are “the result of language transfer, which is caused by the learner’s first language” (Erdogan, 2005, p. 266). In other words, in their early stages of learning a second/foreign language, learners drew on the already existing and internalized system of the native language because of their unfamiliarity with the new system. The result is producing errors at different levels of the target language.

The intra-lingual transfer involves errors that occur due to the over-generalization of particular aspects within the target language, which usually happens when the learner has not fully acquired the target language system. As Brown (2000) puts it, “as the learner progresses in the target language, his previous experience, and his existing subsumers begin to include structures within the target language itself” (p.174).
Context of learning as an additional source of errors means that the error can result from different factors. These factors can be the teacher when they explain a given item incorrectly, or the textbook if it presents a word or a structure wrongly, or a specific pattern the learner internalized in an inappropriate context. In addition to these factors, the learner’s cultural and sociolinguistic specificities, if they are not taken into consideration while learning a second language, are likely to be a source of errors too.

Communication strategies are another possible source of errors. Second/foreign learners might resort to using specific communication strategies to compensate for their lack of linguistic knowledge and to express themselves. While such strategies might be helpful for learners to express their ideas and convey the message, they usually result in the learners producing erroneous forms (Erdogan, 2005).

**Error Analysis and Language Teaching**

Teaching a language should not stand away from the findings of Error Analysis. Error Analysis is beneficial for language teachers in several ways. First, Error Analysis helps teachers get a better understanding of the learners’ errors and the reasons behind such errors. Second, Error Analysis allows teachers the chance to know the stage that the learner has achieved in the process of learning. More importantly still, through learners’ errors, teachers are more likely to infer the different strategies the learner employs.

Consequently, teachers would adapt themselves to the learner’s needs and “devise remedial measures to make his teaching and the pupils’ learning much more rapid and effective” (Sharma, 1981, p. 81). In stressing the significance of studying learners’ errors in the field of language learning, Corder (1967) said,

> We may be able to allow the learner’s innate strategies to dictate our practice and determine our syllabus; we may learn to adapt ourselves to his needs rather than impose upon him our preconceptions of how he ought to learn, what he ought to learn and when he ought to learn it (p. 27).

In other words, errors are a means of feedback for teachers in that they reflect how effective the teaching methods are and what changes and adjustments the teacher has to make to guarantee better performance on the part of the learners. As such, the errors that learners make are also significant for syllabi designers and textbook writers. Identifying these errors shows syllabi designers and textbook writers what items to include or exclude based on learners’ different needs and learning styles. Accordingly, Error Analysis is pivotal in facilitating and enhancing language learning.

**Method**

The study employs content analysis as a method for analyzing the data. The researchers chose content analysis because it is the primarily used method in social sciences. Besides, content analysis is the most appropriate method for analyzing errors that occur in written texts.

The focus of this study on writing errors is justified because errors that occur in written forms are the ones that usually lead to misunderstandings. As for errors that learners make orally, they are considered less severe for two main reasons. First, the speaker and the addressee can negotiate the error and correct it on the spot. Second, errors made orally do not result in a breakdown in meaning and communication (Penman, 1998).
Researchers Instruments

A sample consisting of students’ essays was collected and used as an instrument of the study. Specifically, the researchers randomly selected twenty written pieces from three different classes, giving a total of sixty collected writing sheets. The essays were assigned as a one-hour test. The participants took the test in the classroom under the teacher’s supervision. The topic that the students wrote about is the following:

- “Write an article for your school magazine about the importance of education for women”.

It is worth mentioning that the students studied the conventions of writing magazine articles, formerly. Another point that needs to be said is that all the students have Arabic as their native language and French as a second language which they have been learning since primary school. As for English, they have been studying it as a foreign language for four years.

Participants

The participants of this study are Moroccan second-year baccalaureate students enrolled in the sciences stream in Mohammed 6th secondary school in the provincial directorate of Sefrou. The students are from three different classes. The technique used in selecting a representative sample of students is random sampling. This technique is chosen because it is more objective and it gives a chance to everyone to participate in the study.

Research Procedures

The researchers analyzed the collected data based on Corder’s (1967) model, which includes three stages: data collection, description, and then explanation.

After the collection of data, the researchers identified and categorized the errors. Following the categorization developed by Abisamra (2003), the classification of errors includes four categories, and each category incorporates several sub-categories:

1. Grammar, which includes tenses, prepositions, irregular verbs, articles, etc.,
2. Syntax, which includes word order, sentence structure, and coordination, as sub-categories,
3. Lexis, which is related to the choice of words, and
4. Mechanics, which incorporate spelling, capitalization, and punctuation.

After identifying the errors and categorizing them, the next step was explaining the errors found in the students’ essays.

Results

The study’s findings are presented in light of the research questions posed. The first question investigates the errors found in the students’ essays. The second question seeks to determine the sources of the errors. The third question focuses on explaining the errors.

Types of Students’ Errors

The available number of errors in the 60 compositions is 262. Specifically, the 60 compositions contain 106 grammatical errors, 20 syntactic errors, 84 lexical errors, and 52 mechanics errors. Figure one shows the results.
A close analysis of the figure shows that the highest rate of errors is attributed to grammar (40%), followed by lexis with a percentage of 33%. For errors of mechanics, the rate is 19%. As for syntactic errors, the rate is 8%.

Sources of Students’ Errors
The results of the analysis revealed that 82 grammatical errors are the result of the intra-lingual transfer, and 24 are a result of the inter-lingual transfer. Under the heading of syntax, eight errors are due to intra-lingual transfer, and 12 are due to inter-lingual transfer. The lexical category consists of 36 errors of intra-lingual transfer and 48 errors of inter-lingual transfer. Concerning errors of mechanics, 20 errors are due to intra-lingual transfer, and 32 are because of inter-lingual transfer. Figure two describes the sources of errors.

In terms of percentage, the total rate of intra-lingual errors is 55%, while the total rate of inter-lingual errors is 45%. Given the results presented in figure two, the highest rate of intra-lingual errors is in grammar and lexis, respectively. Concerning inter-lingual errors, on the other
hand, the highest rate is that of mechanics (mainly spelling), followed by that of lexis. The two tables below show examples of students’ errors from the analyzed compositions.

Table 1. Examples of students’ Inter-lingual errors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grammatical Errors</th>
<th>Syntactic Errors</th>
<th>Lexical Errors</th>
<th>Errors of Mechanics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“the illiteracy”, “the poverty” for “illiteracy”, “poverty”</td>
<td>“the help that give them civil organizations” for “the help that civil organizations give them”</td>
<td>“interestant” for “interesting”</td>
<td>“development” for “development”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“have a look on” for “have a look at”</td>
<td>“every body body” (repetition of ‘body’)</td>
<td>“we’ll attend the grant” for “we’ll attain”</td>
<td>“methode” for “method”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“stay in home” for “stay at home”</td>
<td></td>
<td>“they do a lot of efforts” for “they make a lot of efforts”</td>
<td>“Leçon” for “lesson”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“5 million of Dirham” for “5 million Dirham”</td>
<td></td>
<td>“I have 24 years” for “I am 24 years”</td>
<td>“responsability” for “responsibility”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The table above shows examples of the inter-lingual errors found in the students’ essays. Table two below, on the other hand, contains examples of errors that the students made because of intra-lingual factors.

Table 2. Examples of students’ Intra-lingual Errors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grammatical Errors</th>
<th>Syntactic Errors</th>
<th>Lexical Errors</th>
<th>Errors of Mechanics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“everybody should benefits” for “everybody should benefit”</td>
<td>“education in its all forms” for “education in all its forms”</td>
<td>“girls should still at home” for “girls should stay at home”</td>
<td>“wich” for “which”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“refuses to lets” for “refuses to let”</td>
<td>“the project needs also” for “the problem also needs”</td>
<td>“that is the own way” for “that is the only way”</td>
<td>“scool” for “school”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“homeworks” for “homework”</td>
<td></td>
<td>“school is the best place to educate” for “the school is the best place to learn”</td>
<td>“were” for “where”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>“phisiks” for “physics”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As tables one and two above show, the analyzed students’ samples contain errors made in different areas of language; grammar, syntax, lexis, and mechanics. Some of these errors are inter-lingual, i.e., they are attributed to negative transfer, while the majority of the errors are the result of intra-lingual factors. There are several possible explanations for the sources of these errors. The section below provides some explanatory accounts for these errors.
Explanation of Students’ Errors

Examples of Intra-lingual Errors

Grammatical Errors

As has been mentioned above, errors that are related to grammar were ranked first. Some of these errors are the following:

- “everybody should benefits” for “everybody should benefit”.
  Overgeneralizing specific rules is one of the main problems for learners of English. In the example above, the learner has added the ‘s’ to the verb since it is a rule in English when dealing with the third person singular in the present tense. However, no “s” is added when a modal precedes the verb (‘should’ in our example).
- “refuses to lets” instead of “refuses to let”.
  This is similar to the previously mentioned example. The learner has added the ‘s’ to a verb in the infinitive.
- “homeworks” instead of “homework”.
  In English, the ‘s’ is added to form the plural of nouns. This rule, however, is applied with countable nouns only. In this example, the learner overgeneralized the rule by adding the ‘s’ to an uncountable noun (work).

Syntactic Errors

Most of the syntactic errors in the students’ analyzed compositions are related to word order. For instance, one of the learners wrote “education in its all forms” instead of “education in all its forms”. Another example is “the project needs also” instead of “the problem also needs”.

Lexical Errors

The participants’ lexical errors are generally attributed to their failure to choose the right word for each context. The production of such errors shows that however complete the mastery of the grammatical rules of the target language may be, learners will still need to use the language in appropriate contexts. Examples of such errors are “girls should still at home” for “girls should stay at home”, “that is the own way” for “that is the only way”, “school is the best place to educate” for “the school is the best place to learn”, etc.

Errors of Mechanics

In addition to punctuation which proves to cause significant difficulty for the participants, there are also spelling problems. The students, for instance, write “wich” for “which”, “scool” for “school”, “were” for “where”, “phisiks” for “physics”, etc. Such problems have nothing to do with negative transfer. They are, rather, due to factors inherent in the English language itself.

Examples of Inter-lingual Errors

Inter-lingual errors result from the negative transfer of interference from learners’ first or second language. It is worth re-iterating here that the study’s participants have Arabic as their first language and French as a second language which they have been studying since the third grade of primary education.

Grammatical Errors

- “the illiteracy”, “the poverty” for “illiteracy”, “poverty”.
In Arabic, abstract words that refer to ideas, attributes, or qualities are preceded by a definite article. In English, however, abstract terms are used without the definite article ‘the’. Therefore, this error is more likely the result of a negative transfer from Arabic into English.

- “have a look” for “have a look at”, “stay in home” for “stay at home”.

In these examples, the problem lies in the use of prepositions. The results reveal that prepositions pose considerable difficulty for Moroccan EFL learners because various prepositions in English have the same function. Consequently, when students are unsure which preposition to use in a particular sentence, they usually compare that sentence with its equivalent in Arabic and translate it literally. Nevertheless, as “prepositions seldom have a one-to-one correspondence between English and Arabic” (Scott and Tucker, 1974, p.85), such translation results in errors.

- “5 million of Dirham” instead of “5 million Dirham”.

This is again a problem of a preposition. The student has added the preposition ‘of’ to the sentence. This error results from a negative transfer from French, where we find (five million de Dirham). The student has put ‘of’ which is equivalent to the French ‘de’.

**Syntactic Errors**

- “the help that give them civil organizations” instead of “the help that civil organizations give them”.

The most significant difference between the grammar of English and that of Arabic is related to word order. This difference often results in errors. In Arabic, the sentence structure follows the Subject, Verb, Object (SVO) order. That is, the verb comes before the subject. While in English, the subject comes before the verb (SVO). The student in this example adopted the rule from Arabic and applied it in an English sentence, which resulted in an error.

- “every body body” (repetition of ‘body’).

This is purely a translation from Arabic. In Arabic, an item can be repeated for the sake of emphasizing an idea. In English, however, such a repetition is not used.

**Lexical Errors**

- “a very interessant subject” “we’ll attend the grant”.

In the first sentence, the learner used ‘interessant’ to mean ‘interesting’. In the second sentence, the learner used ‘attend’ to mean ‘wait’. In both examples, the errors are due to interference from French. The learners used French words to compensate for the lack of vocabulary in English.

- “they do a lot of efforts” instead of “they make a lot of efforts”.

In English, the verbs ‘to do’ and ‘to make’ are not used interchangeably. ‘to do’ is usually associated with acting (to do research, an exercise…). For ‘efforts’, we say ‘to make an effort’. In French, on the other hand, ‘faire’ stands for both ‘to do’ and ‘to make’, which means that this error is caused by a negative transfer from French.

- “I have 24 years” instead of “I am 24 years”.

Here, the student substituted ‘to be’ with ‘to have’. This error is due to interference from French. The student translated the expression either from French or from colloquial Arabic in which ‘age’ is used as a feature with a verb of possession.

**Errors of Mechanics**

Concerning mechanics, the area that seems to pose the most severe difficulty for the learners is spelling. Most of the spelling errors are due to interference from French. Examples

In summary, Moroccan secondary school students of English do make errors in their writing samples at all levels (grammar, syntax, lexis, Mechanics). The analysis showed that grammatical errors are the most prevalent type of errors in students’ essays. Regarding the sources of students’ errors, the study disclosed that most of the errors made by the students in writing are intra-lingual errors.

Discussion

The purpose of this study is to identify and analyze the types of errors that students make in writing and to explain the sources of these errors. More specifically, the study is an attempt to answer the following questions:

1. What types of errors do Moroccan high school students of English make in writing?
2. What is the primary source of errors that Moroccan high school students of English make in writing?
3. What are the possible explanations for the errors that high school students of English make in writing?

In light of the findings presented above and as an answer to the research questions, Moroccan high-school students of English make different types of errors in their writing. The most significant difficulty that the participants encounter is related to grammar. Concerning the sources of the learners’ errors, while many errors are attributed to negative transfer, mainly from French, the study’s results showed that the errors attributed to English (intra-lingual errors) outnumber those attributed to French or the student's first language (Arabic).

A possible explanation for these results is that the learners are not at their early stages of acquiring the language, where they should resort to their first or second language to compensate for their lack of knowledge in the target language. Instead, this proves that the participants have started to internalize the system of the target language, and this leads them to overgeneralize specific rules and hence make errors. As argued by Brown (2000),

> Early stages of language learning are characterized by a predominance of inter-lingual transfer, but once the learner has begun to acquire parts of the new system, more and more intra-lingual transfer-generalization within the target language is manifested (p.174).

The results of this study are consistent with the findings of several other studies conducted in different contexts. For example, Abisamra (2003) found that most of the errors that Arabic-speaking ESL students make are intra-lingual developmental errors. Similarly, Huwari and Al-Khasawneh (2013) investigated the reasons behind the writing weaknesses among pre-year Saudi students of English at Taibah University. The results of the investigation yielded that the primary reasons behind the students’ errors are related to the target language rather than to interference from the students’ L1. Specifically, the study attributed the students’ errors to intra-lingual factors such as lack of practice, grammatical weakness, educational background, incomplete knowledge and lack of understanding. The errors occurred because the students had not completely mastered the target language.

Other studies yielded different results regarding learners’ attributes of errors. For example, Al-khresheh (2010) analyzed the errors made by Jordanian EFL learners, and concluded that the
vast majority of the analyzed errors are the result of the inter-lingual transfer. Additionally, Crompton (2011) studied tertiary level Arabic-speakers’ article system errors in a corpus of English writings. The study disclosed that the errors found in the students’ texts are most likely the result of the L1 transfer. Along the same line, Wu and Garza (2014) conducted a study to examine Chinese EFL students’ main problems in writing. The study found that students' primary source of errors is interlingual transfer. Students tend to employ their mother tongue’s rules and habits in the target language writing. This finding is also similar to the findings of Ruwaida (2015), who tried to find out the challenges faced by Palestinian EFL students in Writing paragraphs in English. The results of the study showed that the participants had problems in different areas of paragraph writing, and that these problems are due to L1 transfer.

Conclusion
This study attempted to introduce what Error Analysis is, and its implications for foreign language teaching. The primary focus of this study is on the Moroccan English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classroom at high school. More specifically, the study provided a detailed identification, description, categorization, and explanation of the errors that Moroccan high-school students of English make in writing. The results yielded that most of the errors that students made were attributed primarily to overgeneralizations within English instead of negative translations from Arabic, the mother tongue, or French, the student's second language.

Recommendations
In light of the results yielded in this study, the paper recommends that EFL teachers give considerable and careful attention to the errors their students make in writing. Students should be made aware of the types of errors that they frequently make and should be guided toward overcoming their areas of difficulty. In this respect, teacher feedback is a prerequisite so that learners can recognize their weaknesses in writing and develop effective strategies to improve the quality of their writing. Additionally, this study suggests that new approaches to students’ errors must be employed, and innovative techniques for identifying and understanding learners’ errors should be devised.

Limitations
Although the results of this study are based on accurate data, they cannot be generalized owing to some limitations of the study. The limitations of the study are twofold. First, the study was conducted on a small number of students and a relatively limited number of compositions. Therefore, a larger sample of essays might have yielded different and more representative results. Second, like several other studies of Error Analysis, there is always the possibility of making wrong judgments in explaining errors. Accordingly, this study is a simple attempt to give an idea about some of the errors that Moroccan high-school students make at the level of writing and explain the possible reasons behind these errors.

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