Transfer mistakes in Colombian pre-service English teachers:

An analysis of grammar transfer in junior and senior students of *Licenciatura en Lenguas Extranjeras con Énfasis en Inglés* (LLE) at *Universidad Industrial de Santander* (UIS)

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Bachelor thesis to get the title graduate in foreign languages with emphasis in English

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Dedication

We would like to dedicate this work to our mothers, who have served as our primary pillars of encouragement throughout these years of study and have shown us nothing but unconditional love.

Acknowledgments

We would like to express our sincere gratitude to our director Aldair Díaz for always taking the time and making the effort to assist us, even when we were on different continents. For him, we only have admiration, respect, and gratefulness.

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Palabras claves: errores de transferencia, adquisición de una segunda lengua, aprendizaje de idiomas, inglés como lengua segunda lengua, análisis de errores, desafíos lingüísticos.

Descripción:
Esta investigación tuvo como objetivo investigar errores de transferencia comunes cometidos por personas de habla hispana que están aprendiendo inglés como lengua extranjera. El estudio abarcó tres semestres, enfocado a estudiantes de tercer y cuarto año matriculados en la Licenciatura en Lenguas Extranjeras (LLE) de la Universidad Industrial de Santander (UIS). Identificamos ocho distintos grupos de errores: verbos, concordancia, elección de palabras, artículos, preposiciones, cuantificadores, sintaxis y sujeto. El objetivo era obtener una comprensión integral de los desafíos de transferencia de idiomas a lo largo del viaje de aprendizaje de idiomas de los estudiantes y evaluar si las percepciones de los profesores Estaban alineadas con datos cuantitativos. Se utilizó un enfoque de métodos mixtos, incorporando retroalimentación cualitativa de los profesores con un estudio cuantitativo de errores lingüísticos. Los hallazgos demostraron que los estudiantes cometían con frecuencia errores de transferencia en una variedad de áreas. Notablemente, se encontraron dificultades comunes con la concordancia sujeto-verbo y las preposiciones. Vale la pena mencionar que los errores de sujeto fueron bastante notorios en el estudio. El emparejamiento entre los datos cuantitativos, y las observaciones cualitativas realizadas por los profesores comprobaron que eran conscientes de los desafíos lingüísticos que enfrentan sus estudiantes. En conclusión, esta investigación proporciona información valiosa sobre los obstáculos lingüísticos que enfrentan los estudiantes nativos de habla hispana al aprender Inglés. Los resultados resaltan la necesidad de una estrategia exhaustiva para la formación de idiomas que se centre en tipos de errores particulares. Una investigación adicional debería profundizar en la aplicación de enfoques eficaces para aumentar la competencia lingüística y aliviar las imprecisiones de transferencia sobre preposiciones y concordancia sujeto-verbo.

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*Trabajo de grado

**Facultad de ciencias humanas, escuela de idiomas, director Aldair Díaz Gómez

Abstract

Title: Transfer mistakes in Colombian pre-service English teachers: An analysis of grammar transfer in junior and senior students of Licenciatura en Lenguas Extranjeras con Énfasis en Inglés (LLE) at Universidad Industrial de Santander (UIS)*

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Keywords: transfer errors, second language acquisition, language learning, English as a second language, error analysis, linguistic challenges.

Description:

This research aimed to investigate common transfer errors made by Spanish-speaking students who are learning English as a foreign language. The study spanned three semesters, focusing on junior and senior students enrolled in the Licenciatura en Lenguas Extranjeras (LLE) program at Universidad Industrial de Santander (UIS). We identified eight distinct groups of errors: verbs, agreement, choice of words, articles, prepositions, quantifiers, syntax, and subject. The objective was to gain a comprehensive understanding of language transfer challenges throughout the students' language learning journey and to assess whether professors' perceptions aligned with quantitative data. A mixed-methods approach was used, incorporating professors' qualitative feedback with a quantitative study of language errors. The findings showed that transfer errors were frequently made by learners in a variety of areas. Notably, common difficulties were found with subject-verb agreement and prepositions. It is worth mentioning that subject errors were quite notorious on the study. The pairing between the quantitative data, and the qualitative observations made by professors verified that they were aware of the linguistic challenges faced by their students. In conclusion, this research provides valuable insights into the linguistic hurdles faced by native Spanish-speaking students learning English. The results highlight the need for a thorough strategy for language training that targets particular error types. Additional investigation ought to delve into the application of effective approaches to augment linguistic proficiency and alleviate transfer inaccuracies about prepositions and subject-verb agreement.

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*Bachelor thesis

**Human science faculty, escuela de idiomas, director Aldair Díaz Gómez

Introduction

Errors in second-language speakers are very common; all such errors have different causes. According to Selinker (1972), there are five sources of mistakes in second language learning. They are language transfer, transfer of training, strategies of second-language learning, strategies of second-language communication, and overgeneralization of target language (TL) linguistic material. When talking about errors, fossilization is a key concept. According to Selinker (1972), fossilizable linguistic phenomena are those that speakers of a given Native Language (NL) will typically retain in their interlanguage (IL) relative to a given TL, regardless of the learner's age or the quantity of explanation and training they receive in the TL. Additionally, fossilization could have some consequences. The first one could be the lack of naturalness when talking with a certain accent or with some errors. For example, saying 'I assist the class' instead of 'I attend the class' will result in an oddness effect for the hearer. Another consequence would be that some people might think that you are not proficient in the language due to the mistakes the speaker makes. Fluency and a neutrality in accent are some factors people consider part of a good English level or use.

As mentioned before, second language errors occur for various reasons such as a learner's first language transfer to their L2, or the overgeneralization of the TL rules. An example of how fossilization happens is when a grammatical error occurs and is never corrected or dealt with. As an instance, a person who speaks Spanish as L1 may erroneously say something like 'the people is', which results from the L1 Spanish construction '*la gente es*'; they transfer the Spanish singular verb agreement to the English construction. The previous example is an interlingual error. According to Al-Khresheh (2010), interlingual errors are committed by literal translation from L1 to L2. Another type of error is intralingual error; Sari (2016) stated that an

intralingual error is a term for learner-produced items that generalize based on limited exposure to the target language rather than the structure of the learner's mother tongue. For example, overgeneralizing inflectional rules or using auxiliaries for questions. For instance, when some people say or write “teached” instead of “taught” because they overgeneralize the English rule of adding the morpheme -ed to the verb in the past tense.

Similarly, Interlanguage is an important term in our research because according to Nordquist (2019) it is used to describe the sort of spoken and written language or linguistic system utilized by second- and foreign-language pupils who are studying a target language. In other words, interlanguage is the way people talk or write in the first or second language. Nevertheless, nowadays, everybody has access to updated information, social media, and entertainment. Most of this information is in English, there are translations but they take time to make, and sometimes people need the information as soon as possible. The daily use of technology impacts their lives; for instance, their learning process. Prensky (2001) defines the new generation of students as "digital natives," as a result, traditional teaching methods seem to be no longer as effective with them as they used to be. English teachers face challenges due to the limited number of hours they have per week in all courses (3 hours per course) and how they keep students' interest and motivation for the language.

Therefore, the *Ministerio de Educación Nacional de Colombia* created the P*rograma Nacional de Bilingüismo* in 2004, which has since introduced diverse learning projects to improve English in the public sector through various political cycles. The most recent of these programs is *Colombia Bilingue* 2014-2019, which aimed to raise the English levels of young Colombians to provide them with one more opportunity in their professional and academic lives. Likewise, *el Instituto Colombiano para la Evaluación de la Calidad de la Educación*

(ICFES) published the results of the exam made in 2020, one year after the program's prescribed timeframe; the subject with the lowest average was English with 46.9 out of 100. According to Torres (2021), the ICFES total score, and the other areas (Math, Critical lecture, and Natural sciences) are similar to the results of 2019, except for Social Studies, which improved. This can be considered a shortcoming of the program *Colombia Bilingue* because those are the results of the students who were in the complete process of it. Regarding the national context, Colombia is currently ranked 77/ 111 of countries and has a low proficiency level, according to the EF English Proficiency Index.

In Bucaramanga, the Department of Languages of the faculty of Human Sciences of the Universidad Industrial de Santander (UIS) offers a degree program called Licenciatura en Lenguas Extranjeras con Énfasis en Inglés (LLE). According to the educational project of the program, this program is 10 semesters long and consists of 178 credits. During the academic period, the theoretical foundation that underpins the program's purpose is approached from three complementary perspectives: critical pedagogy, didactics from a post-method perspective, and research applied to foreign languages. Training in the English language and culture, on the other hand, is based on the current vision of English as a global or universal language. With all of this in mind, the university seeks to develop a professional teacher with advanced pedagogical, didactic, and research training in the field of foreign languages, particularly English, as well as extensive knowledge of the English language and culture.

All this mentioned before shows the impact that the program had on the Colombians' English level. This affects Colombian students directly because the ICFES score is used as a selection tool by Colombian public universities to get admission into the limited spots they have in each program. For this reason, the following question is necessary: what are the most typical

transfer mistakes made by junior and senior students of the *Licenciatura en Lenguas Extranjeras con énfasis en Inglés (*LLE) at UIS, and how do they change over time?

We decided to focus this project on transfer mistakes for two main reasons: First, despite being expected to be proficient English speakers, there have been cases of program final-year students making certain transfer problems, therefore, the second is that understanding the extent to which L1 Spanish contributes to L2 English output and comprehension in ELT undergraduate students is crucial. Senior students of the program are expected to take and pass the Michigan English Test (MET), which covers the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages from high beginner to advanced levels (CEFR A2-C1). The MET results can be used for assessment, educational advancement, scholarship programs, and/or career advancement (Michigan language assessment, n.d.), even though the students' results do not affect their final grade to the point of causing them to fail the English subject because the professors have the autonomy to choose its percentile for the Advanced English course results. Additionally, this kind of exam is optional to work as a teacher in Colombia; the only necessary thing is the diploma.

This final research arose from observations and experiences gained during our academic training process, during which we questioned some grammatical errors that have been and continue to be prevalent in some students as already mentioned. These errors are expected to lower during the educational process, and students in the program are expected to use the English language competently for professional, academic, and social purposes. According to our observations in our classes as senior students in the LLE program, many of our classmates make transfer mistakes and have some others fossilized, most notably in their oral skills. We do not know if they are aware of their mistakes, or if they even realize they are making them.

For that reason, the main objective of this research is to provide a systematic classification of the most typical kind of transfer mistakes made by junior and senior students of the LLE program at UIS from 2021 to 2022. To reach the previous goal we conducted a mock test adapted from the MET, identified and classified the students' errors from a morphological, syntactic, lexical point of view, and then we spotted the most typical transfer mistakes based on the Spanish structure's influence on English. After that, we cross-contrasted the most typical transfer errors across the sixth, seventh, and eighth semesters of the LLE at UIS. Finally, we described professors' perspectives on the most typical transfer mistakes made by junior and senior students of the LLE at UIS against the quantitative data to check for professors' awareness in relation to the collected data.

In the remainder of this paper first, the theoretical framework will be presented, in which we will include important definitions and relevant sources; second, the methodological design will be presented, in which the reader can find information about the design of the instruments, the methodological organization of the data, and the process description; and third, the results will be expounded, in which you all relevant information about the data collected with students and professors will be shown by means of tables and charts and the analysis of the data collected. Finally, the conclusions section contains the most important findings, concluding remarks, and future research.

1. Theoretical Framework

1.1 Key concepts

1.1.1 Transfer

According to Bardovi-Harlig and Sprouse (2018) Transfer often refers to the learner's native language's effect in the context of acquiring or using a non-native language. Any two languages have certain points of divergence and convergence. Negative transfer, sometimes known as interference, is the process by which errors in the learning or application of a target language result from the impact of the native language. Positive transfer occurs when a person's native language influences them and helps them pick up or use the target language quickly. In this study, we will be focusing on negative transfer.

1.1.2 Interlanguage

It is important to define two concepts regarding errors; interlanguage and fossilization. According to Aini et al. (2020), the concept of interlanguage is the result of linguistic interaction between the NL and the TL. The interplay of two linguistic systems—the source language and the target language—can be said to be the source of interlanguage concentration. Students who are learning a second or foreign language typically produce a language that deviates from both target and source language standards. It is relevant to point out that Selinker coined the term interlanguage in 1972 with the following definition: a learner's language in an intermediate state, a creative process affected by their first language (L1) as well as input from their second language (L2), and an original linguistic system that partly derives from their first language's laws but is distinct from both L1 and L2.

1.1.3 Fossilization

Similarly, according to Hyltenstam (1988) as opposed to first language acquisition, fossilization can take place when learning a second language. It covers interlanguage aspects of second-language learners that differ from native speaker norms and are not evolving any further, as well as divergent traits that, despite appearing to be left behind, reappear in the learner's speech under specific circumstances. As a result, learning has ceased or the learner has gone back to earlier phases of acquisition. Since interlanguage and fossilization are quite important in our study it is worth mentioning the connection, they have. Interlanguage is a special kind of language development that combines aspects of the target language that students are learning with their native tongue. It is a brief phase in which students use what they already know to understand the new language. One could argue that it serves as a bridge between both languages. In order to communicate and make sense of the new language, learners employ their knowledge of vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation from their mother tongue. This process is known as fossilization, which occurs when some aspects of the interlanguage become fixed. These could be different word selections, grammatical constructions, or pronunciation patterns from the target language. For instance, a Spanish speaking saying actually when they meant currently.

1.2 Literature review

Karim and Nasaji (2015) looked at recent studies that investigated the function of L1 transfer (positive and negative) in writing in second languages (L2). They concluded that, when writing in the L2, writers also use their L1. In order to make up for any potential weaknesses in their L2 proficiency, they employ the L1 as a writing method and as a tool to speed up the

writing process. They use L1 to organize information, come up with concepts, seek themes, come up with ideas, and plan. They also mentioned that studies have also revealed that learners successfully transfer a variety of additional L1-based methods to L2 writing, including (meta) cognitive, and social/affective strategies. Nevertheless, L2 competence might act as a successful transfer agent for L1-based tactics. When writing in an L2, writers with lower proficiency could find it difficult to transfer L1-based writing techniques.

Similarly, Adrián et al. (2013) investigated transfer errors at the phonetic and syntactic levels in the interlanguage of ten bilingual Basque/Spanish students aged fourteen who have been studying English for seven years in a structured classroom setting in the Basque Country. Despite the fact that phonetic transfer errors were much more common than syntactic ones, analyses revealed that learners exhibit L1 effects in the learning of both English pronunciation and syntax. It is suggested that if specific educational measures were implemented, such as raising teachers and learners' linguistic awareness of interlanguage processes, including contrastive linguistics and language-acquiring topics in teacher-training programs and requiring students to take courses where the foreign language is utilized in a more natural communicative way, negative transfer would be minimized.

Likewise, MacDonald (2016) analyzed two independent corpora—one from a technical university context and the other from students enrolled in the Humanities—she examined the faults found in the writing of argumentative texts of 304 Spanish university students of English. The findings indicate that grammatical errors are the most common and that learners' linguistic proficiency has less of an impact on these errors than may be anticipated. In addition, Odlin (1996) rethought her 1984 assertion that people can only determine an ESL student's native

language via phonological clues. The results indicate typical mistakes include issues with articles, certain adjectival forms, and word order that is both Spanish and Korean in reflection.

In discussing our context, Colombia, it's evident that the English proficiency level among professionals is notably low. Alonso et al. (2015) conducted a study examining the shifts in the distribution of students' English proficiency levels from the commencement to the completion of their higher education programs. The findings revealed that over fifty percent of the population falls below the A1 proficiency level, as evidenced by the results of the ICFES and Saber Pro assessments.

1.3 Legal reference in connection with the study

In Colombia, English proficiency is assessed using standardized curricular evaluations, which are widely used at various stages of the primary, secondary, and higher education systems. These evaluations aim to determine the level of instruction of Colombians in all areas of study and to evaluate both students and the institution, allowing a professional path to be defined based on the results. The importance of learning a foreign language has been recognized by the *Ley General de educación* (General Education Law) since 1994. Thus, "*Humanidades, lengua española y lenguas extranjeras*" were included in the definition of compulsory areas of basic and secondary education.

Although Spanish is the official language of Colombia throughout the country, education and life are increasingly globalized, resulting in the Colombian government implementing the *Programa Nacional de Bilingüismo* (National bilingualism program) to strengthen the teaching and learning of English as a foreign language in preschool, elementary, and middle school students. Projects such as Talkativ-E, which promotes the practice of the English language,

cultural exchange, and experiences of use and exposure to the language in a natural way, benefited around 1,000 students by 2021**.** Also, the Global Classroom project, which sought to unite Colombian classrooms with students from other countries to promote international educational projects and the practice of Spanish and English across cultures, has had the participation of 215 educational institutions. Both projects involved the participation of Colombian teachers as teachers and native speakers as co-agents. In the objectives of both projects, the official website of Ministerio *de Educación Nacional* (MEN) emphasizes that the program is based on participating in this cultural and linguistic exchange to promote the practice of English and generate spaces for exchange between teachers from Colombia and other countries.

The MEN Decree the Law 1278 of 2002 *Estatuto de profesionalización* (Statute of Teacher Professionalization) defines and establishes the stages for the development of the competition for admission to the state educational service. The National Government established the selection procedure using a competitive examination for admission to the Teaching Career for the majority population through Decrees 3982 of 2006, and it regulated the selection procedure utilizing a competitive examination through Decrees 3323 of 2005 and 140 of 2006. The application process is broken down into several stages, including calling for applications, registering and publishing those who were accepted to the tests, administering aptitude, basic skills, and psycho-technical tests, publishing the results of those tests, receiving documents, verifying eligibility requirements, and summoning participants to an interview, evaluating applicants' backgrounds and conducting interviews, and publishing those results.

The interesting thing to highlight about the competition is that its basis is the exam, that is, the only way to measure the knowledge of teachers in all academic areas is a standardized

exam. In the stages, the use of evidence and the application of an interview are mentioned as elements of analysis for the process, but it is secondary because if the exam is not approved, it is not possible to take another stage of the process. As already mentioned, working for the state requires passing the first test, which measures the proficiency level in the foreign language. Therefore, low proficiency may lead to failing the test; hence the increasing number of vacancies in the EFL sector in the country. The information about available vacancies is disabled, and it was impossible to find information about the percentage of teachers who took the exam and passed it, why they did not pass it, or in which area those who did not pass it were applying, for instance, if they were applying to teach English, Mathematics or any other subject.

2. Methodological design

2.1 Type of investigation

This study used a mixed-method approach. According to Creswell and Plano Clark (2011), a mixed-methods investigation is a process for gathering, assessing, and "mixing" quantitative and qualitative methodologies in one investigation or a series of studies to comprehend a research subject. This type of investigation was implemented because the sample size was not anticipated to be very large and because of the nature of the general objective, which is, precisely, to count and classify the collection of perspectives. Similarly, one of the instruments was a questionnaire, so a qualitative approach was required to analyze it, and the other instrument was a standardized test, so a quantitative approach was appropriate. Productive skills were selected because transfer mistakes are more prominent in them, more specifically in oral speech due to the spontaneity of linguistic production.

2.2 Population and sampling

As already mentioned, the sample consisted of students from the sixth to eighth-semester (junior and senior) of the LLE program at UIS. The students were in the range of ages from 18 to 25 years old, and although we even tried to have the same number of students in every course, it was not possible due to the size of the class. 11 students participated in the sixth semester, 9 for the seventh, and 11 for the eighth. Most students in the sample belong to the medium to low stratum and most of them live in Bucaramanga or close to it. The kind of sampling used was convenience sampling. According to Hernández (2020), The sample size is determined based on the convenience of the researcher and gives you complete freedom in selecting the maximum number of study participants. This type of sampling was used because it was the most convenient due to availability of participants in the program willing to contribute to the study. Students were asked to help us with the research project. It was decided to focus the research on students from the sixth to the eighth semester because, intuitively, students of the sixth semester are expected to make less mistakes given they had English classes in their previous semester, so their formal knowledge of grammar is still fresh. The students from the seventh semester, on the other hand, can be expected to produce more mistakes than the former students because it has been one year since their last formal English lesson. The last group of students, the eighth semester one, following the same reasoning, are expected to make the most mistakes. However, the opposite can also be expected, since, even if they have already finished their formal English training, the rest of the lessons in the program are fully taught in English, which can also have an improving effect in the learners' foreign language competence. We also required a few professors to complete the questionnaire in order to find out if they were

conscious of their students' transfer errors. Four professors, who oversee courses from the sixth to the eighth semester, completed the questionnaire.

2.3 Hypothesis, variables, and indicators

Due to the variety of prepositions across Spanish and English we speculated that this is one of the two most common transfer errors; the other is a misuse of articles. Language learners are widely accepted to transfer some aspects of their first language to the second. Although the precise nature of the transfer varies across languages, the grammatical structure in the first language is frequently included in the second one. It is completely natural. As you become more acquainted with your native language, you may be able to transfer rules from one language to another. All of this, we presumed, was related to the fact that in the fifth semester, students in the program stop taking the English subject in their curriculum; they continue to have English-taught courses, but the English subject is no longer taken. As time passes, errors become more common, which is why they may become fossilized. The opposite is also possible, though, as the remaining program classes are entirely taught in English, even for those who have previously completed their official English training. This may help the learners' proficiency in a foreign language. The variables are two; the dependent is errors, and the independent is the semester. The targeted sampling was 30 junior and senior students (6, 7, and 8 semesters).

2.4 Data collection instruments

For the first part of this study, we used an instrument, which we designed with the help of a mock test of the MET. This was divided into two parts; the first one was writing. In this writing section the student had to write a formal multi-paragraph essay in response to one

question. The essay had no word limit; however, candidates were expected to finish the task in 40 minutes. See appendix 1 with the test. The second part was speaking, in this part the students had to answer an open-ended question about a social issue and back up their ideas with further reasons. The questions were: some people think that school does not train young people adequately for the world of work today. What do you think Which is more important to teach people: a sense of team spirit or individual initiative? Why?

In the second part of the research, a survey was conducted with professors from junior and senior students (6, 7, and 8 semesters) to see what they think are the most common mistakes students make at this stage of the program. According to Fink (2003), A survey is a method for gathering data from individuals to characterize, contrast, or otherwise explain their knowledge, attitudes, and behavior. The survey consisted of a series of open-ended questions in which the professor expressed their opinion about the transfer errors based on their teaching experience. See appendix 2 with the survey questions.

2.5 Resources and Analysis Techniques

After doing an initial inspection and identifying commonalities among the errors that would be covered in the upcoming chapter, the categories of errors were created. We collected the students' answers; the writing test was filled out using Google Forms, and all the writing data was combined into a single document, but the students had to physically sign the informed consent form and the speaking data was collected by recording their answers, then, a review of each student's responses was conducted to classify the errors made by the students. All the errors made by the students were highlighted, and eventually, categories were developed based on the sorts of errors made by the students. It should be noted that pronunciation errors were

not considered in the section on speaking, the paradigm of grammatical errors was always upheld, and although we considered errors apart from transfer errors from Spanish, they were not disregarded in that sense either. However, non-transfer errors remained unclassified.

To analyze the students' data, we created an Excel table in which we generated the mistakes categories. Similarly, using Excel we created a pivot table that was used to better analyse the data. The nomenclature we used to talk about the participant was the following: first the semester (6,7 or 8) then a hyphen, a S to represent Semester, after an F or M for the sex (Female or Male) and to conclude the number of the participant (from 1 to 11). Example 6-SF5. Regarding the analysis of the professors' interviews, we used memos to do so, we created categories and codes, then an analysis of what was found and a discussion. According to Lee et al (2019) Analytic memoing is a style of informal, reflexive writing or visualization designed to reflect analytic thought and increase theoretical sensitivity as the data analysis process unfolds. The nomenclature we used to talk about the professors was the following: first the word professor, then a # and then a number from 1 to 4. Example, professor #1.

3. Results

According to the specific objectives, the results will be divided into four categories: 1) classification of the mistakes; 2) most common mistakes found; 3) comparison of the most common mistakes among semesters, and 4) professors' perspectives.

3.1 Classification of the mistakes.

Following the pilot test with two students in their sixth semester as participants, the data gathered were examined and sorted to have an idea of how to categorize the errors. The

classification that we got from the pilot test served as the foundation for categorizing the errors in this investigation. Verbs, agreement, choice of words, articles, prepositions, quantifier, syntax, and subject are those categories. Odlin (1996) came to the conclusion that common errors had to do with articles, adjectives (agreement), and word order (syntax).

3.1.1 Verbs

Errors involving incorrect verb inflection were considered in this category. According to Nordquist (2019), the process of word construction known as inflection involves the addition of components to a word's base form to communicate grammatical meanings. For instance, participant 6-SF5 wrote the sentence in (1):

(1) a. *As it is know students needs to spend a lot of time doing activities for university
b. As it is known students need to spend a lot of time doing activities for university

This may have happened because in Spanish it is possible to say *como se sabe* but in English, this is not the case. Other examples of this kind of mistake would be “the purpose of this essay is to analyze which one is prefer” instead of ‘the purpose of this essay is to analyze which one is preferred’, “according to some participants who were ask” instead of ‘according to some participants who were asked’, “ it is possible to say that if online media it is use it can include the library” instead of ‘it is possible to say that if online media it is used it can include the library’ and ”the amount of information is bigger that the one that is offer by the library” instead of ‘the amount of information is bigger than the one that is offered by the library’. We believe that this participant made these mistakes because they relied on some Spanish structure to convey their ideas in English. As everyone knows, the term *se* is not used in English. (e.g. cual se prefiere) nevertheless, in English the equivalent would be the passive voice. According to Maldonado (2010), The passive in languages where the active is the unmarked construction

corresponds to marked instances where the Agent is devalued, either as an implicit or oblique force, and the Patient or Theme becomes the center of attention. This indicates the following: the subject is either unknown to us or of lesser importance than the action itself. We encountered 6 errors regarding the passive voice. Another type of mistake that was found was the wrong use of tenses. For example, participant 6-SM7 wrote the sentence in (2):

(2) a. *As mention it before
b. As mentioned before

As previously mentioned, this could have occurred as a result of interlingual errors or because it is feasible to express "como se menciona anteriormente" in Spanish. Another type of mistake found was gerunds. According to Allen (1991), a gerund is a component of a verb that ends in -ing and has the force of both a noun and a verb. For instance, participant 7-SM3 wrote the sentence in (3):

(3) a.*At the moment of consult there is a big problem.
b. At the moment of consulting there is a big problem.

This may have happened because in Spanish we do not use the verb in the *-ing* form after a preposition as a noun, just as a verb, the Spanish version would be *en el momento de consultar*. Some others examples are: “but we do not like contribute a lot to work in group” instead of ‘but we do not like contributing a lot to work in the group’ or another option would be ‘but we do not like to contribute a lot to work in the group’ orally produced by participant 6-SF4, “it even requires more than one book for investigating a single topic” instead of ‘it even requires more than one book to investigate a single topic’ written by participant 6-SF9, “students might prefer using online media for preparing an academic task” instead of ‘students might prefer using online media to prepare an academic task’ written by participant 7-SM8, “not many people get that kind of train” instead of ‘not many people get that kind of training’ orally

produced by participant 8-SM10 and finally but not least “they already expecting that someone tell what to do” instead of ‘they already expect that someone tell them what to do’ orally produced by participant 8-SM11. It is worth mentioning that we found 3 errors of using the infinite instead the gerund and the other way around as well, meaning the word use of the gerund, we found another 3. The last type of mistake was past participles. According to Ryan (2022), the past participle is a verb-derived word that can be employed in the passive voice, as an adjective, and to create perfect verb tenses. for instance, participant 8-SF9 wrote the sentence in (4):

(4) a. *Since both of them have became necessary to live in society
b. Since both of them have become necessary to live in society

This may have happened because in Spanish the past participle and the infinitive form of become are not the same, they are *convertido* and *convertirse* respectively

3.1.2 Agreement

In this category 3 types of errors regarding agreement were found. The first one was possessive adjectives, then subject-verb agreement and article-subject agreement. According to Khamying (2007), we use possessive adjectives to convey that someone or something possesses a noun. For example, participant 6-SF4 wrote the sentence in (5):

(5) a. * Both sources have its advantages
b. Both sources have their advantages

This may have happened because in Spanish we use only one word, *su* for your *(usted)*, his, her, its, and their. *Su* is used when the subject is singular, if it is plural, it is used *sus*. Other examples of this type of mistake would be written by participant 7-SM1. (6):

(6) a. * While using digital media due to their nature
b. While using digital media due to its nature

We only noticed 2 errors regarding possessives. The second one is subject-verb agreement. According to Leech (2006), the subject-verb agreement is the agreement of number, person, and gender between a subject and its antecedent. For instance, participant 6-SM6 wrote the sentence in (7):

(7) a. *This automatically seek t*hat* information that match with the concepts that we are trying to find
b. This automatically seeks information that matches with the concepts that we are trying to find

Presumably, this happened because in Spanish it is different, we do not add an s to the third person, and the sentence in Spanish would be *esto automaticamente busca*. We use an s at the end when using the pronoun, you, for example *tú buscas*. Other examples of this sort of mistake would be (8):

(8) a. * Libraries have a solitude environment that enable people to contrate on what they are doing
b. Libraries have a solitude environment that enables people to concentrate on what they are doing

Wrote by participant 6-SM7. He also wrote “getting online resources not only save time” instead of ‘getting online resources not only saves time ‘and “online media bring what a library can give and more” instead of ‘online media brings what a library can give and more’. Participant 6-SF9 wrote “social media allow us to discover and to have much more information” instead of ‘social media allows us to discover and to have much more information’. Participant 7-SM1 wrote “online media show some advantages” instead of ‘online media shows some advantages’. Participant 7-SM2 wrote “there is a lot information that still haven't been upload to the network” instead of ‘there is a lot information that still has not been uploaded to the network’. Participant 7-SM3 wrote “this type of resources make research slower” instead of ‘this type of resources makes research slower’,” there are a lot of trash content” instead of ‘there is a

lot of trash content', "information that affect the content of the assignment" instead of 'information that affects the content of the assignment' and "to determine which of those fulfill the students' requirements" instead of 'to determine which of those fulfills the students' requirements'. Participant 7-SF5 wrote "for me make it a more convenient" instead of 'for me it makes it more convenient'. Participant 8-SF1 wrote "library resources are considered, for many, a tool that enhance learning and obligate people to look for information in a more traditional way" instead of 'library resources are considered, for many, as a tool that enhances learning and obligates people to look for information in a more traditional way' and "it cost" instead of 'it costs'. Participant 8-SM3 orally said "teamwork don't help a lot" instead of 'teamwork doesn't help a lot'. Finally, participant 8-SM4 wrote "we encounter different tasks throughout the program that require certain abilities to look for accurate information" instead of 'we encounter different tasks throughout the program that requires certain abilities to look for accurate information'. We distinguished 17 errors regarding the subject-verb agreement, it was the most common. The last one was the article subject agreement. For example, participant 6-SM6 wrote the sentence in (9):

(9) a. * Information about *an* specific topic[1]
b. information about a specific topic

This may have happened because in Spanish we do not take into consideration the letter after the article but we do take into consideration the gender of the word, for example, *un tema específico* and no *una tema específico*. Another example would be when participant 7-SM2 wrote the sentences in (10):

(10) a. *In order to prepare a academic assignment
b. In order to prepare an academic assignment

[1] This can also be happening due to a phonetic mistake since 'specific' may sound [əspəsˈɪfɪk]

3.1.3 Choice of words

Errors involving false cognates, sometimes called false friends, were considered in this category. According to Chamízo and Nerelinch (2002) false friends are words that, although appearing to be identical or strikingly similar in form and meaning, are actually not. For instance, participant 6-SF2 orally said the sentence in (11):

(11) a. *It is important to give those ideas that we have and then expose them to the group

b. It is important to give those ideas that we have and then present them to the group

This may have happened because in Spanish we have the word *exponer,* according to Real Academia española (RAE) (n.d) the word *exponer* has some definitions, but the most important for us is to explain the genuine meaning of a word, text, or doctrine that is difficult to understand. This word is a synonym for the English word “present”. The word *exponer* also has the English meaning of making public something bad or dishonest (Cambridge Dictionary, n.d). But “expose” is not a synonym for “present”. Another example of this type of mistakes was made by participant 6-SF3 who expressed orally the following (12):

(12) a. *Put the students to compare between them
b. Make the students to compete between them

Finally, participant 6-SF9 stated orally “how to correlationate” instead of ‘how to correlate’, correlationate does not exist in English but in Spanish the word is *correlacionar*. We differentiated 3 false friends’ errors. Another mistake was made by participant 6-SF5 in the writing part (13):

(13) a. *The amount of information is bigger that the one that if offer by the library
b. The amount of information is bigger than the one is offered by the library

This might have occurred because in Spanish we just have one word for “that” and “than” which would be “que”. Another example of this type of mistake was produced by participant 6-SF10 who expressed orally “team spirit is a little bit more that individuality” instead of ‘team spirit is a little more important than individuality’, participant 7-SM3 also wrote “which type of resources is better that the other” instead of ‘which type of resources is better than the other’, also participant 7-SM6 wrote “online media is more practical that the library” instead of ‘online media is more practical than the library’. The previous error occurred 4 times.

3.1.4 Articles

This category covered errors pertaining to articles—for example, if the article was overlooked or deemed unnecessary. According to University of Wisconsin-Madison (2019), words called articles are used before nouns to show whether they are referring to a specific or generic subject. For example, participant 6-SF4 orally produced the sentence in (14):

(14) a.*It is important to work in group

b. It is important to work in a group

This may have happened because in Spanish it is possible to say *trabajar en grupo*. Another example would be: Participant 6-SF5 orally produced the sentence in (15)

(15) a.* She is not able to work on team
b. She is not able to work on a team

Similarly, participant 6-SM7 who wrote “as seen on online classes in pandemic” instead of ‘as seen in online classes in the pandemic’. 3 errors regarding the missed article a were found. This same participant expressed “from internet, it can be downloaded all” instead of ‘from the internet, it can be downloaded all’. Also, participant 7-SF5 wrote “libraries offer variety of information” instead of ‘libraries offer a variety of information’. Likewise, participant 8-SM10

wrote “with internet” instead of ‘with the internet’. 3 errors regarding the missed article the were also found. It was also found that mistakes where “the” was not needed, for instance, participant 6-SF3 orally produced the sentence in (16):

(16) a. *They like the working teams
b. They like working in teams

This might have happened because in Spanish it is possible to say *a ellos le gusta el trabajo en equipos*. Another example would be “future teacher have the access of a plenty of resources” instead of ‘future teachers have access to plenty of resources’ written by participant 6-SM6. As well as participant 6-SM7 w howrote the sentence in (17):

(17) a. * Media contains the state-of-art information
b. Media contains state-of-art information

This may have happened because in Spanish it is said *los medios de comunicación contienen lo último en información*. Finally, participant 6-SM10 orally stated “consider that the team spirit is a little bit more important” instead of ‘consider that team spirit is a little bit more important’. From the previous error we found 4 cases.

3.1.5 Prepositions

Errors involving prepositions of place were considered in this category. According to English grammar lesson (2024), Place prepositions are used to indicate where something is in relation to another. For instance, participant 6-SF2 wrote the sentences in (18):

(18) a. * Yahoo or Bing are found in any smart device.
b. Yahoo or Bing are found on any smart device.

This may have happened because in Spanish we only have one for that is *en* that is the equivalent for in and on in English. Other examples of this kind of mistake would be: “people

have the possibility to search for something in their cellphones in an easy way" instead of 'people have the possibility to search for something on their cell phones in an easy way', " in the other hand we have the library tools" instead of 'on the other hand we have the library tools' written by participant 6-SM10, "there are more documents in the web that in a library" instead of 'there are more documents on the web than in a library' written by participant 7-SF6, "the information you are reading in pages" instead of 'the information you are reading on pages' written by participant 7-SM8 and "if you are searching media or data in internet" instead of 'if you are searching media or data on internet' written by participant 8-SM8. The previous error occurred 6 times. On the other hand, we found the opposite mistake, participant 6-SM7 wrote the sentence "house or wherever we are, as seen on online classes" instead of 'house or wherever we are, as seen in online classes', where the error is the opposite, on is the error instead of in. Another kind of mistake would be "finding the right book could take longer than arriving to the library" instead of 'finding the right book could take longer than arriving at the library'. This might have happened because in Spanish we only have a word that is *a* that is the equivalent for to and at in this case and maybe the participant thought the word at as an equivalent for the Spanish word *en*. As mentioned before, in Spanish we only have one word for the prepositions of place that is *en* and we found that participant 6-SF4 wrote the sentence "all the information existing in the tip" instead of 'all the information existing at the tip'. It is worth mentioning once again that in, at and also on just have one word in Spanish, *en*. We also discovered some cases where prepositions were missing, for instance, participant 6-SM6 wrote the sentence in (19):

(19) a. *And tedious look for an information
b. And tedious to look for information

This could happen because in Spanish it is possible to omit the preposition to. Other examples would be: “even though there are lots old tools that may not be ethically correct to use” instead of ‘even though there are lots of old tools that may not be ethically correct to use’ written by participant 6-SM10 and **“**media provides us more tools” instead of ‘media provides us with more tool’ written by participant 7-SF4. We also encountered other kind of missing prepositions, for example participant 6-SM11 wrote the sentence **“**you can find several articles and books just typing keywords” instead of ‘you can find several articles and books just by typing keywords’, because in Spanish we do not need a preposition. Other examples are: **“**because we need this support from people that we care” instead of ‘because we need this support from people that we care about’ orally produced by participant 7-SF5. Another kind of preposition mistakes we observed were the ones relating to purpose. According to Top English grammar (2021), To convey the relationship between an action and a reason or aim, we employ prepositions of purpose. For instance, participant 6-SM6 wrote the sentence in (20):

(20) a. * Books that might work or not to my assignment
b. Books that might work or not for my assignment

This could have happened because in Spanish the preposition *para* in English could be to and/or for. Other examples of this kind of mistakes are “the information that is necessary to certain assignments” instead of ‘the information that is necessary for certain assignments’ written by participant 6-SM10. The previous mistake arose 3 times. It also occurs the other way around, for example, participant 6-SF9 wrote the sentence “it even requires more than one book for investigating” instead of ‘it even requires more than one book to investigate’, the error is the for instead of the to. Another example of this would be “using online media for preparing an academic task” instead of ‘using online media to prepare an academic task’ written by 7-SM8.

The previous error just appeared twice. Another kind of errors we observed was the use of prepositions in circumstances when they were not needed. For instance, participant 6-SM7 wrote the sentence in (21)**:**

(21) a. * Different opportunities to access to the formation required
b. Different opportunities to access the formation required

This may have happened because the preposition 'to' is mandatory after the verbs in Spanish. Other examples would be "team spirit is much better to teach to people" instead of 'team spirit is much better to teach people' orally produced by participant 7-SM2, "students can access to the internet" instead of 'students can access the internet' written by participant 8-SF6. The previous error arose 3 times. Another preposition that is needed after verbs in Spanish is with. Some examples are "they are going also to face with a lot of teamwork" instead of 'they are going also to face a lot of teamwork' orally produced by participant 6-SM9 and "searching one by one the book that most fits with your search" instead of 'searching one by one the book that most fits your search' written by participant 7-SF4. The previous error just arose twice. Lastly, we distinguished an error related with prepositions of direction. According to Herdi and Andriana (2017), The placement of a noun in relation to another noun is indicated by prepositions of direction. For example, participant 6-SF9 wrote the sentence in (22):

(22) a. * I honestly prefer resources related with online media.
b. I honestly prefer resources related to online media.

This might have happened because in Spanish we use the equivalent of the preposition with that is *con* in the previous example.

3.1.6 Quantifier

Quantifiers of errors are a common challenge for English language second-language learners, and some important elements contribute to these mistakes. The learner's original language has a substantial impact on the choice and placement of quantifiers in English sentences, which is one important factor (Ringbom, 1987, p. 137). According to Learn English (2024) When describing the quantity of something to someone, we utilize quantifiers. As different languages have varied rules and structures for quantifying nouns, language transfer from the native language frequently results in errors in quantifier usage. Secondly, the complexity and variability of quantifiers in English represent a challenge for second-language learners. English boasts an extensive range of quantifiers, including articles (a, an, the), demonstratives (this, that), numerals (one, two), and quantifying expressions (many, few). This multitude of options can overwhelm learners, leading to overgeneralization or underuse of certain quantifiers. This phenomenon is well-documented in studies like Hawkins (2004), who highlights that learners often employ the same quantifier for multiple contexts, thus committing errors in usage. Furthermore, context and practical expertise are crucial when using quantifiers. The contextual appropriateness of quantifiers may be difficult for learners to understand, which can lead to mistakes (Bardovi-Harlig, 2001, p. 295). Learners must understand when and how to apply the rules of quantifier usage in a context to employ them properly. According to the results of this research quantifier mistakes were one of the categories with a smaller number of mistakes made by the population selected. With only one oral mistake in the category orally produced by participant 7-SM2 in one sentence (23):

(23) a. *Little persons have done and
b. Few persons have done and

In this sentence, we have the wrong use of the word little which was used instead of few because little is used for non-countable nouns and in Spanish, we do not 2 words for *pocas*, we care about gender and number, not countability.

3.1.7 Syntax

The impact of Spanish syntax on the process by which Spanish language learners acquire English syntax is a complex and multidimensional issue involving several important variables. English language learners who are learning the language as a second language frequently make mistakes with subject-verb agreement and subject selection, which can be linked to the learners' original tongue. Studies by Kanno and Varghese (2010, p. 255) shed light on this phenomenon by showing how subject-related errors are frequently caused by the transfer of rules governing subjects and verb agreement from one's home language in this case, Spanish to English. For Spanish learners, this transfer of linguistic principles from Spanish to English poses a significant obstacle to understanding the intricacies of English subjects. We can analyze an example of this in the sentence orally produced by the 6-SF1 in (24):

(24) a.* Nowaday world requires more abilities to work in group
b. Nowadays the world requires more abilities to work in group

We believe that this might have happened because in Spanish the adverb is *hoy en día*. According to Grammarly (2023) an adjective, an adverb, a verb, or even an entire sentence can all be modified or described by an adverb. Other mistakes regarding adverbs are: “we must have the ideas first individual and then” instead of ‘we must have the ideas first individually and then’ orally produced by participant 6-SF2, “which lowers little by little the articles we find” instead of ‘which lowers gradually the articles we find’ written by participant 7-SF7. We also encountered mistakes regarding the position of the adverb, for instance participant 7-SM3 wrote the sentence

“online there are a lot of trash content” instead of ‘there is a lot of trash content online’. We believe the previous error happened because it is possible to place the adverb at the beginning of the sentence in Spanish. The previous error occurred 3 times. Comprehension of the pragmatic and contextual features of topic use is another essential part of this language journey. In English, the information structure of a phrase, the discourse organization, and the communicative environment all have a significant role in the choice of topic (Celce-Murcia et al., 2018, p. 223). Learners of Spanish need to adjust to these complex subtleties and acquire the ability to employ topics in a way that is consistent with the unique communicative requirements of English. Another kind of mistake we found was the wrong use of pronouns, according to Grammarly (2024) when your reader or listener already understands the noun you're referring to, you can use pronouns in place of nouns. For example, participant 6-SM7 wrote the sentence in (25):

(25) a. *It can be downloaded every book for free
b. Every book can be downloaded for free

This could have happened because in Spanish is possible to say *puede ser descargado cada libro gratis*. We also observed a mistake regarding the lack of a verb, according to Ellis (2022) verbs are words that denote both internal and exterior actions. For instance, participant 7-SM2 wrote the sentence in (26):

(26) a. *In order to that I would encourage people
b. In order to do that I would encourage people

This might have happened because in Spanish is possible to say *para eso yo animaría a la gente*. We also did find an error regarding preposition, it was not in the right place, for example participant 7-SM8 orally produced the sentence in (27):

(27) a. *With people that you can share those ideas and
b. People that you can share those ideas with and

This may have happened because in Spanish we say *con gente que puedas compartir esas ideas*. Another mistake we distinguished was regarding adjectives, according to Grammarly (2023) words that characterize a noun's attributes or states of being are called adjectives. For example, participant 8-SF4 orally produced the sentence in (28):

(28) a. *Both are really importants
b. Both are really important

We believe this happened because in Spanish adjectives need to agree in number. To conclude this section, we had errors regarding the word order, in other words syntax itself, according to Ellis (2022) the placement of phrases and words in a particular order is known as syntax in English. For example, this sentence taken from the oral production of participant 7-SM2 (29):

(29) a. * Make better our world
b. Make our world better

The syntax mistake in this sentence is the position of the adjective affected by the Spanish because it is possible to say *hacer mejor nuestro mundo* and the overgeneralization of the English rules, in this case the rule that says that the adjective must be before the subject. Another example would be “libraries have also spaces in which you can get online media” instead of ‘libraries also have spaces in which you can get online media’ written by participant 8-SM8. The previous error happened twice. Lastly, we noticed an error regarding the lack of a auxiliary verb, according to Ryan (2023), In order to convey tense, mood, or voice, auxiliary

verbs—also known as assisting verbs—are employed in conjunction with a main verb. For instance, participant 8-SF9 wrote the sentence in (30):

(30) a. *Not only it makes easier to find accurate information

b. Not only does it make it easier to find accurate information

This might have happened because in Spanish it is not necessary an auxiliary verb to make the previous sentence. In summary, there is a complicated interaction between linguistic, structural, environmental, and cognitive elements that affect how Spanish learners learn English syntax. Interference from native languages provides tremendous obstacles. Spanish learners also encounter additional challenges because of the pragmatic and contextual components of topic use in English. To create strategies and support systems that effectively help Spanish learners in their pursuit of English syntactic competency, these problems must be acknowledged and addressed.

3.1.8 Subject

The impact of Spanish language structure on native speakers' capacity to employ subjects effectively when learning English is a complicated and multidimensional problem that is influenced by several variables that have been studied in recent studies. Given that English and Spanish have quite different topic norms, learning English grammar presents a substantial obstacle for Spanish speakers learning Spanish. An example of this category of mistakes is the orally produced sentence by the participant 6-SF5 (31):

(31) a. * And is that we need to do something like a practical activity
b. And it is that we need to do something like a practical activity

The mistake in this sentence is the absence of the subject. We believe that this may have happened because in Spanish it is possible to say *es que necesitamos hacer algo como una actividad práctica*. In Spanish you can omit the subject because you can know it by just looking at the conjugation of the verb but in English it is always necessary because the conjugations do not change dramatically according to the subject. Before giving more examples, a definition of subjects is necessary, according to Walden university (2023) The person or object doing the action in a sentence is the topic of the sentence. For instance, the previous participant also orally produced another sentence that is "but also it is necessary to have in some moments an individual spirit" instead of 'but also it is necessary to have in some moments an individual spirit'. Some other examples are "in the library is kind of hard look for an information" instead of 'in the library it is kind of hard to look for information' written by participant 6-SM6, " if in each situation is necessary to work in groups" instead of 'if in each situation it is necessary to work in groups' orally produced by 6-SF8, "furthermore is not my method" instead of 'furthermore it is not my method' written by participant 6-SF9, " I think that must change" instead of 'I think that it must change' orally produced by participant 7-SM1, "but as is well known" instead of 'but as it is well known' orally produced by participant 7-SM2, "physically is not so easy" instead of 'physically it is not so easy' and "we think will help us" instead of 'we think it will help us' written by 7-SF4, " for me make it a more convenient option" instead of 'for me it makes it an option more convenient' written by participant 7-SF5, "in countries like Colombia is difficult to find resources" instead of 'in countries like Colombia, it is difficult to find resources' written by participant 8-SF1, "because es easier to find" instead of 'because it is easier to find' written by participant 8-SM2 and finally "so I don't think that is only important to teach team skills" instead of 'so I don't think that it is only important to teach team skills'

orally produced by participant 8-SF5. This category had 13 cases, being the second most common.

The complexities of English subjects, as well as their role within the framework of sentence structure, add to the difficulty. In English, subjects can range from basic nouns and noun phrases to pronouns, and their placement inside sentences changes depending on the sentence type. The complex rules that regulate subject position might be especially difficult for Spanish learners who are used to the more straightforward and regular structure of Spanish subjects (Lardiere, 2017, p. 12). The transition from relatively rigorous Spanish topic regulations to the flexible and context-dependent structure of English subjects marks a significant jump for Spanish learners. Furthermore, understanding the contextual and pragmatic features of subject use is critical to comprehending English grammar. As highlighted by Celce-Murcia et al. (2018, p. 223), the choice of a subject in English is frequently dependent on the communicative context, discourse organization, and information structure inside the sentence. Spanish students must adjust to these subtle distinctions and learn to employ topics in ways that correspond to the special communicative demands of English. As Kormos (2014, p. 58) points out, cognitive factors have a significant impact on subject usage since learners commonly struggle with working memory restrictions and processing constraints when forming subjects in real-time language production. The cognitive difficulties of choosing the appropriate subject in a particular context and controlling overall sentence structure can overwhelm learners, resulting in subject-related errors.

In conclusion, the impact of the Spanish language structure on Spanish nationals' ability to employ subjects effectively when learning English is a multidimensional difficulty. It is the result of a complex interaction of linguistic, structural, environmental, and cognitive elements.

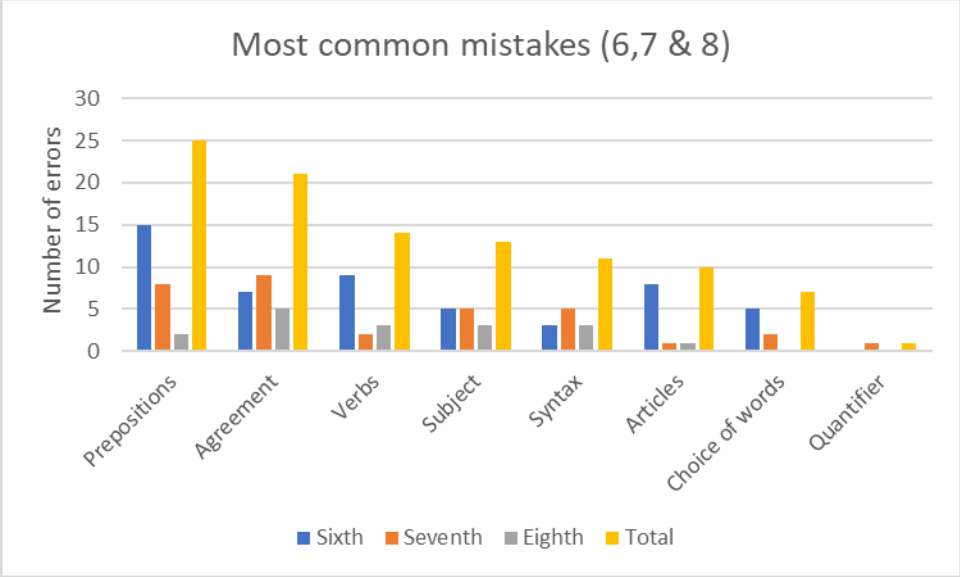
The problems faced by Spanish learners are exacerbated by native language interference, stark disparities between Spanish and English topic regulations, the complexities of English subjects, and contextual and pragmatic issues. Recognizing and addressing these issues is critical in designing effective tactics and support systems to help Spanish learners achieve mastery of English syntax, notably in the right use of subjects.

3.2 Most common mistakes found.

3.2.1 Most common mistakes in general

Figure 1

Most common mistakes in general



In figure 1 we can observe that the most common mistakes across semesters were the ones regarding prepositions, with 25 errors, following agreement errors with 21 cases, then we

have the verbs with 14 occurrences and the subject section with 13 errors. Then these were 11 mistakes repeated in the syntax category and articles with 10, choice of words has 7 and the least common mistake across semesters was quantifier with just one. Now being more specific, the sixth semester students had the most errors in the preposition section, followed by seventh and eighth. In the agreement section the ones who made most mistakes were the seventh semester students followed sixth and eight. In the verbs section once again the sixth semester students made the most mistakes, but now followed by eight and seventh. In the subject section there was a tie between sixth and seventh followed by eight. In the article segment the sixth semester students made the most mistakes for the third time and it was a tie between seventh and eighth. In the choice of words part the ones who committed most mistakes were the sixth semester students followed by seventh but in this case eight did not have any error. To conclude, in the quantifier section only the seventh semester made a mistake, sixth and eighth did not take part in the section. Across all semesters, prepositions were consistently identified as a difficult feature for pupils, with frequent errors noted. The problems in agreement and syntax also continued over the semesters but at different rates. On the other hand, choice of words and quantifier errors were less common, suggesting that students had a somewhat better understanding of these concepts. The comprehensive review highlights the significance of focused instruction and interventions to solve students' recurring mistakes in prepositions, agreement, and syntax. By recognizing these patterns, curriculum, and teaching strategies that aim to improve students' written and oral communication skills can be developed.

3.2.1.1 Prepositions. The data shows that although students continue to struggle with prepositions as they get to the seventh semester, the types of errors they make start to shift. There are certain seventh semester students that struggle with time and place prepositions. For example, they do not know the difference between "at," "in," and "on" correctly. Incorrect writing could be seen. Students are still having trouble using prepositions in the eighth semester. Still, some students make errors when it comes to time and place prepositions. It is evident that prepositional errors are not entirely eliminated in the program, even at this advanced stage. In conclusion, prepositional problems change as students advance in the course. The sixth semester focuses on teaching students how to use prepositions; the seventh and eighth semesters are spent helping students learn how to use prepositions of location and time. Preposition-related errors continue to be a concern despite significant progress being achieved, indicating the need for ongoing assistance and education in this area.

3.2.1.2 Agreement. Possessive adjectives, subject-verb agreement, and article-verb agreement are examples of agreement problems. Problems with subject-verb agreement are common in the sixth semester. In addition to the ongoing difficulty with subject-verb agreement, possessive adjectives also become problematic in the seventh semester. Errors in subject-verb agreement appear to be decreasing by the eight semesters. Subject-verb agreement problems are ubiquitous across all semesters, suggesting that language instruction needs to keep concentrating on this area.

3.2.1.3 Verbs. Different patterns appear in this area between semesters. The most common mistakes made in the sixth semester have to do with the passive voice and improper tense usage. However, errors in gerund usage are seen in the seventh semester. Past participle mistakes are particularly noticeable in the seventh semester. These differences show how verb-related problems become more complex as learners progress through the English language.

3.2.1.4 Subject. All three semesters have a high rate of subject-related mistakes. The sixth semester contains a significant number of subject errors. The seventh semester has fewer errors but still has difficulties in this area. The eighth semester shows no significant reduction in subject-related mistakes. The persistence of topic errors emphasizes the significance of focused attention and reinforcement in this component of language acquisition.

3.2.1.5 Syntax. Syntax errors show a remarkable degree of stability over all three semesters. The sixth and seventh semesters both involve a significant amount of syntax challenges. The eighth semester shows a decrease in syntax problems but still has a significant amount. This implies that, while learners' comprehension of English syntax may advance, there is still opportunity for refinement and improvement.

3.2.1.6 Articles. These errors are divided into two categories: missing articles and unnecessary articles. There are a significant number of missing articles from the sixth semester. While some of these mistakes are still present in the seventh semester, the problem of pointless articles gains more attention. The number of errors in articles dramatically drops in the ninth semester, indicating progress in this area of grammar. It is impossible to overestimate the significance of articles written in English, thus the progress observed in the eighth semester is encouraging.

3.2.1.7 Choice of words. This category encompasses the challenging aspects of false friends and misunderstandings of word meanings. The seventh semester introduces fewer choice of words faults than the sixth semester, which shows problems in both categories. Choice of words mistakes are absent in the eight semesters. These findings point to a positive trend in language learners' language acquisition journeys: they progressively get better at comprehending vocabulary as they advance.

3.2.1.8 Quantifiers. Quantifier mistakes appear to be uncommon across all semesters, with no discernible pattern forming. The absence of quantifier errors in the eight semester implies that this element of language learning has improved.

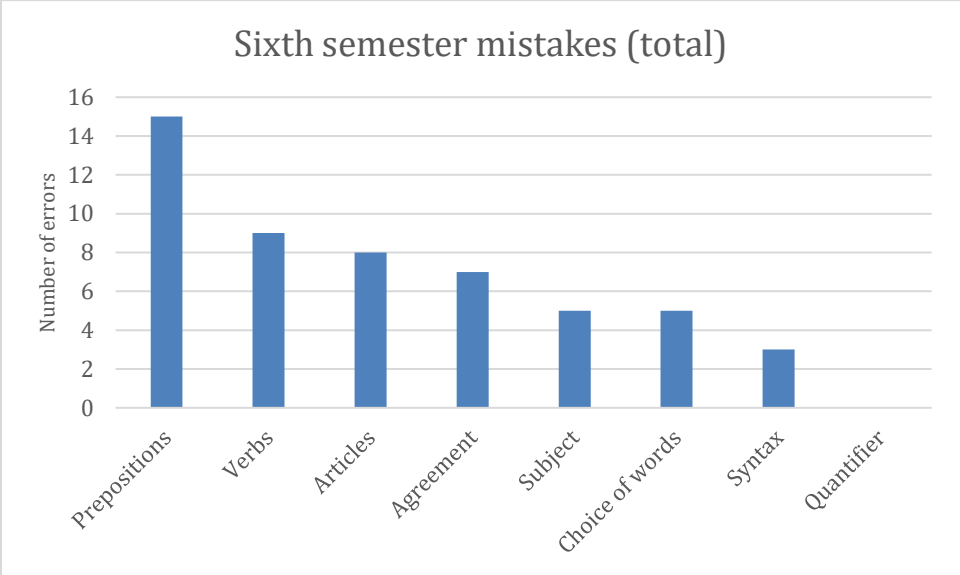
In conclusion, this investigation provided light on major tendencies and obstacles encountered by Spanish-speaking English learners throughout three consecutive semesters. While the sorts of faults detected evolve, some constant issues arise, particularly in prepositions, subject-verb agreement and verbs. The findings highlight the significance of comprehensive language instruction that tackles these issues. Learners develop in several parts of language, such as articles and choice of words understanding, as they continue in their language journey. However, to achieve continuous growth and competency throughout all linguistic areas, monitoring is essential. The findings of this study provide a solid foundation for improving language instruction and improving the language learning experience for Spanish-speaking English learners. The issue with prepositions is the most common error across all three

semesters. Preposition mistakes are regularly prevalent throughout the sixth, seventh, and eighth semesters. This shows that correct prepositional usage will continue to be a struggle for Spanish-speaking English learners throughout their language acquisition journey. To help learners overcome this problem and improve their overall language ability, it is an area that requires persistent effort and specialized language education.

3.2.2 Sixth semester

Figure 2

Six semester mistakes



In figure 2, the sixth semester students got the most prevalent errors observed in the category of prepositions, with a total of 15 mistakes. This was followed by errors in verbs with 9 occurrences. The next one was articles with 8 errors. Additionally, errors in agreement and subjects were relatively common, with 7 and 5 instances respectively. Choice of words, and

syntax errors were less frequent, with 5, and 3 occurrences respectively. There were not errors in the quantifier section.

Acquiring proficiency in a new language is a complex process that comes with challenges and rewards of its own. This journey represents the ongoing efforts made by native Spanish speakers learning English as a second language to develop a range of language abilities, such as speaking and writing.

Now, being more specific we have that prepositions are essential for showing chronological, spatial, or logical linkages inside sentences. In figure 2 we can evidence that the prepositions category highlighted many challenges for students. Due to differences in how prepositions are used in English and Spanish, participants frequently had trouble choosing the right one. Furthermore, learners had trouble telling the difference between time and place prepositions and mistook terms like "in," "at," and "on." For example, "finding the right book could take longer than arriving to the library" should be used in a phrase like ‘finding the right book could take longer than arriving at the library’ in order to accurately convey the intended idea.

In the same manner, there are many errors in the verb category, according to the findings analysis in figure 2. These are a variety of errors, including gerunds and passive voice faults as explained in sub section 3.1.1. In the passive voice category, students commonly needed help with accurately crafting passive sentences and frequently left out important details. Errors such as "It is know" rather than ‘It is known’ were rather common, suggesting difficulties in using the passive voice structure. Another common problem was found to be tense-related errors, where students were employing the incorrect tense in different situations. "As mention it

before" as opposed to ‘As mentioned before’, for instance, demonstrated ambiguity on the appropriate use of the past tense. Another problem with gerunds was that students mistook the "ing" form of verbs for nouns.

Likewise, in figure 2, errors were classified under the articles category according to whether the article was required or not. Because they had trouble knowing whether to utilize articles like "the" or "a," learners either overused or neglected to use them. On the other hand, mistakes such as writing "Media contains the state-of-art information" rather than ‘Media contains state-of-art information’ demonstrated the excessive use of the article when it was not necessary. This is sometimes caused by the different grammatical rules between Spanish and English.

Similarly, errors pertaining to possessive adjectives, subject-verb agreement, and article-subject agreement were identified as belonging to the agreement category. Singular/plural disagreements were the main cause of possessive adjective problems, which frequently led to inappropriate word choice. An example would be "Sources have its advantages" as opposed to ‘Sources have their advantages’. Another difficulty was subject-verb agreement, especially when it came to using the proper verb tense for third-person singular subjects. It was usual to hear mistakes like "This automatically seek" instead of ‘This automatically seeks’. Article-subject agreement mistakes were evident when deciding when to employ the article, especially when "a" or "an" was used before nouns. In the same order of ideas, according to figure 2, a variety of errors pertaining to selection were revealed by the Subject category. Because Spanish and English have different subject standards, this category also brought attention to subject placement difficulties.

In the same manner, errors in the choice of word category were mostly related to word meanings and false friends. As can be seen on figure 2, participants frequently used terms that, although sounding the same in their mother tongue, meant quite different things in English, which resulted in errors. Reliance on word similarity could cause confusion, as evidenced by mistakes like "It is important to give those ideas that we have and then expose them to the group" instead of 'It is important to give those ideas that we have and then present them to the group'. Additionally, students found it difficult to understand English definitions of words having various meanings, often selecting the definition that seemed less relevant. An illustration would be the statement "Spirit is more important that individuality" rather than 'Spirit is more important than individuality', where "that" is used in place of "than".

Likewise, the syntax category provided insights into students' understanding of word order and sentence structure. The participants faced difficulties while trying to form phrases that followed the syntactic rules of English. For instance, it was clear that certain sentences had improper sentence structure. Similarly, the total amount of errors in the quantifier category was not very high. But because Spanish and English have different quantifier rules, learners had difficulties. Many times, these mistakes had to do with quantifying terms like "few" and "little."

In summary, our investigation into language learning among Spanish-speaking English language learners has unveiled a multitude of challenges and prevalent errors across various linguistic categories. Among the most notable findings are the difficulties encountered in prepositions usage as well as verb usage, including issues with passive voice constructions, tense-related errors, and confusion about gerunds. Article errors arise from challenges in determining when to use articles like "the" or "a," leading to both overuse and omission.

Subject-related errors highlight struggles with subject-verb agreement while agreement errors encompass discrepancies in possessive adjectives and article-subject agreement. Choice of word errors predominantly stems from misunderstandings of word meanings and false cognates; syntax errors reveal challenges in forming coherent sentences and adhering to English word order standards. While quantifier errors underscore challenges in quantifier usage due to differences between Spanish and English rules.

3.2.3 Seventh Semester

Figure 3

Seventh semester mistakes

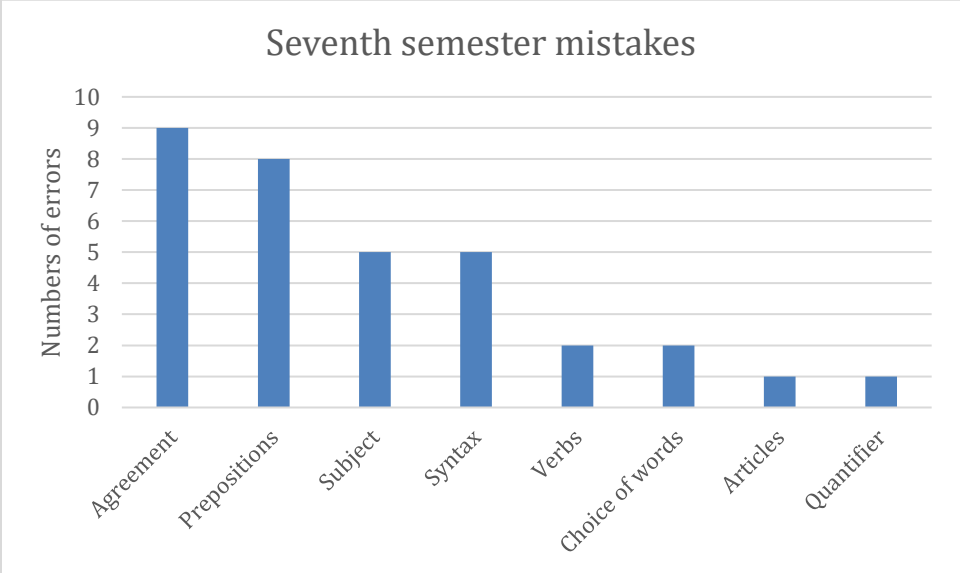


Figure 3 shows the distinct pattern of errors that appeared among seventh-semester students in various linguistic categories. With nine faults in total, agreement was the most frequent error category. Preposition was the second one with 8 error while syntax and subject

displayed five faults each, verbs and choice of words displayed a similar incidence of 2 errors by category. There was also one mistake in each of the quantifier and articles categories. Interestingly, the only semester with an error in the quantifier category is the seventh one.

Seventh-semester participants' language skills showed in figure 3 a considerable prevalence of agreement problems, such as possessive adjectives, subject-verb agreement, and article-verb agreement. Because Spanish uses the same word "su" for all English equivalents (your, his, her, its, and their), whereas English differentiates between singular and plural possessives, possessive adjectives sometimes cause misunderstanding. Subject-verb agreement was problematic; individuals would occasionally omit the letter "s" from third-person verbs and construct sentences incorrectly. While Spanish speakers frequently concentrated on the word gender instead of the form of the article that preceded it, article-subject agreement problems also occurred. For example, "A academic assignment" should be changed to ‘An academic assignment’, in accordance with how English articles are used.

In the same manner, the prepositions, which Spanish speakers usually find difficult, led to a variety of mistakes. There were challenges since Spanish and English use prepositions differently, particularly when expressing thoughts or concepts that are comparable. Prepositions were also misused in time and location contexts, with difficulty in choosing between "at," "in," and "on" for particular formulations.

Likewise, the topic category in figure 3 included difficulties with subject since some participants forgot to write the subject in some sentences for example “but as is well kwon” instead of ‘but as it is well known’. Similarly, in figure 3 is evident that participants made mistakes in syntax, especially when it came to sentence construction. Acquiring knowledge of

English syntax presented some difficulties, particularly for those transferring from Spanish. A better comprehension of English grammar rules and structure was required due to the complex and context-dependent character of English subjects as well as the variances in sentence form.

Similarly, in figure 3 we evidence the main subcategory of errors in the verbs category were gerunds, for instance “at the moment of consult” instead of ‘at the moment of consulting’ we believe that this mistake happens because in Spanish we do not have this kind of gerund. In the same order of ideas, the choice of words category explores vocabulary-related topics, particularly the definitions of terms caused problems for the participants. Furthermore, there have occasionally been instances of word meaning errors, such as using "than" when "that" would have been a better choice. These choice of words difficulties highlight the value of getting a thorough grasp of word meanings and identifying the dangers of making fake acquaintances.

In the same manner, articles constitute another important category in the analysis as can be evidence in figure 3. The participants had trouble utilizing articles correctly; they frequently used them when they were not needed or omitted them altogether. On the other hand, when articles were added needlessly, mistakes happened. Learning how to use articles correctly—both definite and indefinite—remains crucial to becoming proficient in the English language.

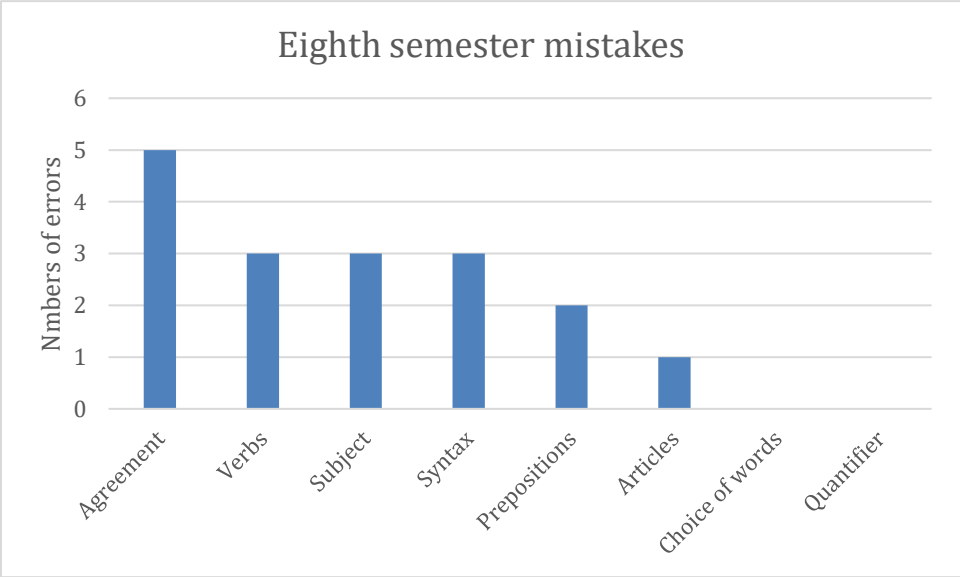
Although less common evidenced on figure 3, quantifier errors were nonetheless noticeable and demonstrated difficulties in the selection and arrangement of quantifiers in English phrases. Despite being less common, these mistakes demonstrated the influence of language transfer, the difficulty of English quantifiers, and the significance of context and real-world experience when using quantifiers. For instance, using " little persons" incorrectly rather than ‘few persons’ illustrates the difficulty in choosing the right quantifier. Learners must

overcome these obstacles by comprehending the various situations in which distinct quantifiers are used in order to improve their English language proficiency.

3.2.4 Eight Semester

Figure 4

Eighth semester mistakes



As depicted in Figure 1, the analysis of eighth-semester students reveals a moderate frequency of errors across various linguistic categories. In particular, there were two errors identified in the prepositions category, closely followed by five instances of agreement. Three errors were found in each of the verbs, subjects, and syntax, suggesting a constant degree of difficulty in these domains. Furthermore, there was only one error in the articles category, and there were none in the quantifier or word choice, indicating a high degree of accuracy in these specific linguistic characteristics. This complex breakdown indicates a developed

comprehension of grammatical structures among eighth-semester students, with substantial competency in certain areas as well as possibilities for improvement in others.

Now, being mor specific, the agreement category reveals in figure 4 both strengths and weaknesses in eighth-semester participants. In this category, the command of possessive adjectives is quite impressive. Nevertheless, there are observable mistakes in the subcategory of subject-verb agreement. Learning the subtle differences between Spanish subject-verb agreement rules and their English counterparts can be difficult for Spanish language learners. All things considered; the Agreement category emphasizes how crucial it is to address subject-verb agreement in word order as well as article-subject agreement in order to get higher linguistic accuracy.

When evaluating language skills, the verbs category opens up as a crucial topic. In figure 4 participants in their eighth semester present a mixed performance within this area. Although their use of the passive voice shows a good degree of proficiency, the repeated mistakes with the past participle cause concern. A more thorough examination shows that the errors are mostly caused by the variations in verb formulations between Spanish and English. Instances of incorrect verb tenses, such as the use of "both of have became" instead of ‘both of them have become’, demonstrate the influence of the Spanish structure. Although the passive voice is handled quite successfully, the past participle errors seem to point out regions where verb usage needs to be further refined, particularly with regard to irregular verbs. These results highlight how crucial it is to improve overall language competency by focusing on correct tense usage, correcting irregular verbs, and strengthening English verb structures.

One of the more complex facets of language competency is highlighted by the subject category in figure 4. Participants who are in their eighth semester have excellent subject skills since they did not commit a lot of mistakes regarding subjects, one of the few errors “in countries like Colombia is difficult” instead of ‘in countries like Colombia it is difficult’ we have the theory that the aforementioned mistake happened because in Spanish it possible to omit the subject.

In figure 4 it can be seen that the syntax category provides information on the arrangement and sentence structure of participants. Although the syntax is generally competent, there are sporadic mistakes, especially in the word order and sentence construction. The primary cause of these errors is the effect of Spanish sentence structure. Improving word order, sentence structure, and general syntactic skills is essential to reaching higher language accuracy.

Likewise, the prepositions category demonstrates significant space for improvement in the language skills of eighth-semester participants. Prepositional errors are common; examples include using "in internet" instead of ‘on the internet’. The disparate usage of prepositions in Spanish and English is the cause of these errors, which presents difficulties for students. One enduring problem is deciding whether to use "in," "on," or "at" to indicate temporal or locational links. Preposition usage is one area that needs to be addressed in order to improve language competency, particularly when it comes to time and location.

When talking about the articles category in figure 4 can be seen that it represents a particular language domain in which eighth-semester students demonstrate a high degree of skill in certain areas and a need for development in other areas. By effectively avoiding pointless

articles, participants show that they have a solid comprehension of when they are unneeded in English sentences. On the other hand, mistakes occur when articles are absent when they should be. This category highlights how, in order to improve general language competency, the use of articles must be adjusted, both in terms of their presence when necessary and their absence when not.

Regarding the language proficiency of the eighth-semester participants, the choice of words category shows a great picture. In this subcategory, participants demonstrate expertise in comprehending and applying word meanings, with no significant errors made. Similarly, the eighth-semester participants' linguistic proficiency is particularly strong in the quantifiers category. This category has no errors as can be seen in figure 4, indicating that the student has a strong grasp of quantifying expressions, numbers, and other quantifiers. A high degree of competency is demonstrated by the participants' ability to correctly express the quantity, extent, or degree in English sentences. Even though quantifiers can be a challenging linguistic concept, mastery of them highlights the learners' capacity to employ a variety of quantifying expressions in productive ways.

The analysis of language proficiency among eighth-semester participants concludes with a trip characterized by noteworthy strengths and opportunities for improvement. Although the participants demonstrate proficiency in a number of categories, such as choice of words and Quantifiers, difficulties arise in Agreement, verbs, subject and syntax. These difficulties are frequently caused by the influence of Spanish, which emphasizes the necessity of specialized language training that takes into account certain linguistic subtleties. Priorities should be given to encouraging improved precision in the subject-verb agreement, verbs, subject and syntax.

Language proficiency is a process that takes time to develop, but eighth-semester learners can improve their English language ability by concentrating on these particular areas.

3.3 Contrasting among the semesters.

Figure 5

Speaking and writing mistakes

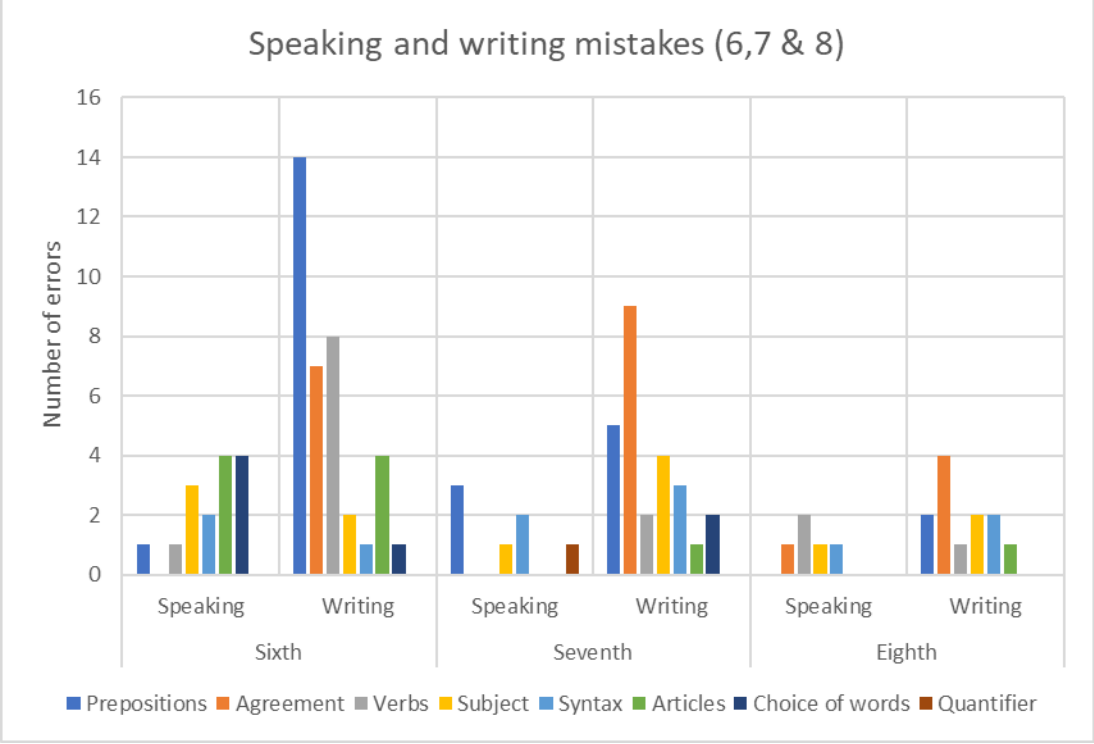


Figure 5

In the sixth semester, students demonstrated varying levels of proficiency in speaking and writing abilities. For speaking, a total of 15 mistakes were identified. These errors were distributed across different categories: 1 mistake in prepositions, 0 in agreement, 1 in verbs, 3 in

subject, 2 in syntax, 4 in articles, 4 in choice of words, and 0 in quantifiers. Notably, participants exhibited challenges with verb usage, as exemplified by participant 6-SM7's statement "As mention it before," highlighting the need for practice in verb tenses. In writing, a total of 37 mistakes were observed, with the distribution as follows: 14 mistakes in prepositions, 7 in agreement, 8 in verbs, 2 in subject, 1 in syntax, 4 in articles, 1 in choice of words, and 0 in quantifiers. Participant 6-SM6's phrase "This automatically seek" underscored the importance of verb conjugation accuracy in written communication.

Moving to the seventh semester, students continued to showcase their language abilities. In speaking, a total of 7 mistakes were noted, with 3 in prepositions, 0 in agreement, 0 in verbs, 1 in subject, 2 in syntax, 0 in articles, 0 in choice of words, and 1 in quantifiers. Notably, the seventh semester was the only one with an error in the quantifier category, as observed in participant 7-SF2's speech. In writing, a total of 26 mistakes were identified, with the distribution as follows: 5 in prepositions, 9 in agreement, 2 in verbs, 4 in subject, 3 in syntax, 1 in articles, 2 in choice of words, and 0 in quantifiers. Participant 7-SF6's statement "more practical that the library" highlighted challenges with word choice accuracy.

Finally, in the eighth semester, students exhibited further progress in their language skills. For speaking, a total of 5 mistakes were recorded, with 0 in prepositions, 1 in agreement, 2 in verbs, 1 in subject, 1 in syntax, 0 in articles, 0 in choice of words, and 0 in quantifiers. Participant 8-SF6's phrase "students can access to the internet" exemplified challenges with preposition usage. In writing, a total of 12 mistakes were observed, with the distribution as follows: 2 in prepositions, 4 in agreement, 1 in verbs, 2 in subject, 2 in syntax, 1 in articles, 0 in

choice of words, and 0 in quantifiers. Participant 8-SF2's statement "it cost" highlighted issues with subject-verb agreement.

To sum up in speaking, challenges include verb inflection, subject-verb agreement, vocabulary usage, article placement, prepositions, syntax. For instance, students struggle with verb tenses, adding "s" to verbs, choosing appropriate words, using articles correctly, and placing prepositions. Additionally, syntax and subject identification pose difficulties. In writing, issues encompass verb conjugation, agreement rules, article usage, prepositions, syntax, and subject placement. Notable challenges include verb tense consistency, subject-verb agreement, article placement, preposition usage, syntax structure. Across the semesters, prepositions and syntax errors were prominent in writing, while verb and preposition errors were common in speaking. Students' first language (Spanish) influenced their language learning journey, particularly in areas like agreement, syntax, and prepositions. The study underscores the multidimensional nature of language learning and the need for targeted training to address structural and cognitive factors affecting errors. Effective language instruction should tackle both surface-level and deeper linguistic challenges to enhance language acquisition and competency among Spanish-speaking learners in English.

It is worth mentioning that semester sixth students made the most mistakes in prepositions and verbs, seventh made the most mistakes in agreement and prepositions as in sixth semester students and for eighth agreement and verbs were the most common, sharing the most common mistakes with sixth (verbs) and seventh (agreement) semester students. Now, talking about the least common mistakes, for the sixth semester we got the quantifier category, for the seventh semester we got a tie between articles and quantifiers that is the least common

mistakes in the sixth semester as well, to conclude we got another tie between choice of words and quantifiers once again.

3.4 Professors' perspective

It is essential for educators, especially those preparing future English instructors, to comprehend the competence levels and typical mistakes made by students learning English as a second language. Four professors' qualitative opinions were analysed, and the results offer important new perspectives on the difficulties faced by junior and senior students of the LLE (Licenciatura en Lenguas Extranjeras) at UIS (Universidad Industrial de Santander). The assessments of students' proficiency by professors differed significantly, exhibiting a range of viewpoints. However, their perspectives were not far from results. Professor #1 was confident about the students' ability because of their hard work and apparent language proficiency, but professor #2 was cautious because of the enduring nature of fundamental mistakes and the lack of standardised assessment processes. This discrepancy emphasises the necessity of complex assessment frameworks in order to precisely determine students' language proficiency levels.

The frequency of transfer errors, especially in the area of verb conjugation, was a recurrent subject in the professors' comments. In professor #2's lesson, incorrect past tense conjugations were pointed out through the use of sentences such as "She catched." Similarly, professor#4 pointed out typical mistakes such missing verb ends and poor subject-verb agreement ("people is"), which are signs of interference from the pupils' own language. Furthermore, professor #2 raised concerns about misleading similar words, giving instances like as "attend - atender" and "compromise - comprometerse." These lexical traps highlight the

complex interactions between linguistic structures in different languages and the possibility of cross-linguistic interference in situations involving the acquisition of a second language.

The professors also pointed out instances of syntax difficulty, with professor #3 pointing out phrases like "acknowledge more information." These findings demonstrate that in order to reduce transfer errors and improve linguistic accuracy, specific teaching and clear advice on syntactic structures are required. Significant issues were identified in relation to pronunciation disparities, which were influenced by the phonological systems of the student's original language. Professor #1 described challenges with terms like "STEAK," highlighting the significance of articulatory training and phonetic awareness in addressing mispronounced words. However, as warned before our study did not take into account phonological errors

One common worry among educators was the tendency of fossilisation, in which repeated mistakes become embedded and difficult to repair. In order to avoid transfer errors becoming entrenched, professor #2 underlined the importance of prompt error rectification, highlighting the pedagogical necessity of proactive involvement. Even though the analysis concentrated on different facets of language competency, it is interesting to notice that prepositions were the category in which errors occurred most frequently across all three semesters. Despite divergent opinions on overall proficiency levels, professors unanimously identified prepositional errors as a pervasive issue requiring targeted intervention. These insights have far-reaching implications for pedagogical practice and curriculum design. Addressing transfer mistakes necessitates a multifaceted approach encompassing targeted instruction, scaffolded feedback, and diagnostic assessment tools to track students' progress systematically. Furthermore, cultivating metalinguistic awareness and fostering a supportive

learning environment are integral to mitigating transfer errors and facilitating linguistic development.

In conclusion, the qualitative analysis of professors' perspectives provides valuable insights into the complex interplay of linguistic transfer phenomena among students of English as a second language. By elucidating patterns of transfer errors and delineating pedagogical strategies to address them, educators can navigate the intricacies of language acquisition more effectively, empowering students to attain greater linguistic proficiency and communicative competence. The professors' perspectives aligned with our results.

4. Conclusions

We explored the complex realm of language transfer errors faced by Spanish-speaking students enrolled in an English Language Learning program at Universidad Industrial de Santander (UIS) in this study. Through a thorough examination of these language transfer errors and a careful comparison with the viewpoints of committed educators, we have been able to gather important information on the most frequent and enduring difficulties that young people have while navigating their language acquisition process. In each of the eight categories we examined—verbs, agreement, choice of words, syntax, prepositions, articles, quantifiers, and subject—our thorough study has revealed important conclusions. These results have a tight relationship to the body of knowledge about language transfer errors.

Verbs: Our findings highlight the fact that students frequently struggle with gerund and the passive voice in particular. This is in complete agreement with earlier studies' findings,

which emphasize the long-lasting influence of the mother tongue (L1) on the learning of second-language verb tenses (Odlin, 1989; Sharwood Smith, 1994).

Agreement: They particularly struggled with possessive adjectives and subject-verb agreement. Subject verb-agreement was the most common error. Our quantitative data's confirmation of educators' perceptions highlights the critical role that subject-verb agreement plays in language transfer problems (Ringbom, 1987; Ellis, 1994).

Choice of words Issues: False cognates—words that seem similar but have different meanings in L1 and L2—are identified by our research as posing a significant difficulty for learners. This supports other research findings (Corder, 1983; Odlin, 1989) that highlight the importance of vocabulary and choice of words transfer problems.

Prepositions: The professors correctly pointed out that students frequently struggle with prepositions. Our numerical data strongly supports their findings, emphasizing how important it is to understand prepositional structures, which can vary greatly across L1 and L2. This was the category with most errors.

Articles: the existence of transfer errors associated to the article was revealed by our quantitative data. These results highlight the significance of carrying out thorough data analysis, particularly in the lack of specific qualitative observations, to detect any possible linguistic difficulties.

Quantifiers: This points to a topic that needs more investigation in order to examine these particular language difficulties and create improved teaching methods.

Subject: we encountered that these kinds of errors were quite prominent in general, some students omitted the subject in some sentences. This is the second most typical mistake.

It is important to note again that sixth-semester students made the most errors in prepositions and verbs; seventh-semester students made the same errors in agreement as well as prepositions as sixth semester students; and eighth semester students made the most errors in agreement and verbs, sharing the most common errors with sixth semester students (verbs) and seventh semester students (agreement). Speaking of the least common errors, we have the quantifier category for the sixth semester, a draw between articles and quantifiers for the seventh semester, which is also the least common error category for the sixth semester, and finally, another tie between word choice and quantifiers for the final semester once again

Our results complement and add to the body of knowledge already available on language transfer errors in second language acquisition (SLA). Transfer errors related to verbs, agreement, choice of words, syntax, prepositions, articles, and subjects are consistently present and persistent. These findings are consistent with earlier research showing the long-lasting influence of L1 structures on L2 production (Ringbom, 1987; Odlin, 1989; Jarvis & Pavlenko, 2008). Furthermore, the professors' viewpoints being in line with numerical data indicates that they are capable of identifying and resolving the linguistic difficulties that their students have. This congruence reaffirms the effectiveness of their instructional strategies, which were created to address transfer errors and other SLA difficulties (Ellis, 1994).

Answering to our research question: what are the most typical transfer mistakes made by junior and senior students of the *Licenciatura en Lenguas Extranjeras con énfasis en Inglés (*LLE) at UIS, and how do they change over time? We found out that the most typical

mistakes are prepositions and agreement and yes, they change over time but no the way we expected, it was the other way around. We thought that eight semester students made the most mistakes but it was the sixth semester. So, as students move forward in the program, they make less mistakes. We also had the idea that prepositions were one of the most common mistakes and we were right.

In the process of trying to better comprehend the complex world of language transfer errors, we have found a number of areas that need more research:

Descriptors: The lack of particular observations or numerical data about quantifier mistakes suggests a significant knowledge vacuum in this domain. It would be interesting to investigate the kinds of quantifier transfer errors that Spanish-speaking students typically make in the future. These studies can yield priceless insights that make it possible to create extremely focused teaching methods.

Longitudinal Studies: It is essential to carry out longitudinal studies that monitor students' development and the persistence of transfer errors over time. These kinds of studies would provide further insight into how these mistakes change over time and might even disappear or recur as students' progress in their language learning.

Comparison with Other L1 Groups: Including students from a variety of L1 backgrounds in the study will help clarify how transfer errors vary throughout language groups. By dissecting the part played by particular L1 structures in transfer errors, this comparison study can provide information that can be used to develop specialized teaching methods.

Techniques for Correcting Pronunciation Errors: As the professors have pointed out, pronunciation mistakes are a major cause for concern. Education professionals may help students develop clear and understandable spoken language, which is essential for successful communication, by conducting more study on successful tactics for correcting pronunciation mistakes.

Teaching Strategies: Our research has not only pinpointed particular transfer faults, but it has also shed light on the development of efficient teaching techniques that may fully solve these problems:

Grammar training: Incorporating targeted grammar training into the curriculum is essential because to the high frequency of transfer problems involving verbs, agreement, syntax, and articles. Instructors should focus on the areas in which students struggle, offering clear explanations and lots of practice opportunities.

Contrastive Analysis: Students can identify possible transfer faults by using the contrastive analysis approach, that compares L1 and L2 structures explicitly. This method can be used by professors to promote accurate L2 production and increase awareness of certain linguistic variations (Lado, 1957).

Vocabulary growth: Professors should stress the value of vocabulary growth when addressing choice of words issues like false cognates. Lexia exercises that highlight possible hazards might improve pupils' choice of words awareness.

Error Correction: It is critical to regularly and constructively repair errors. Professors ought to rectify students' transfer faults and provide feedback, pointing them in the right

direction. A more productive learning environment is created when error correction is handled in a constructive and encouraging manner (Hendrickson, 1978).

Implications of the Study: The findings of our research have implications for the field of second language acquisition as a whole as well as for the immediate context of language transfer failures among Spanish-speaking students at UIS. We improve this particular group's language acquisition process and advance our knowledge of how language transfer mistakes function in second language acquisition by addressing these transfer flaws and by giving some customized solutions. We highly recommend to reinforce the teaching of prepositions and agreement. Professors at UIS and around the world can use this study as motivation to create lesson plans that meet the individual language needs of their students. On the other hand, regarding prepositions most of them are not aware of the problems students have with this kind of errors.

In summary, this thorough analysis of the language transfer mistakes made by Spanish-speaking UIS students makes a significant addition to the study of second language learning. Even though we focused on transfer mistakes, we also included non-transfer mistakes when analysing the data and we found out that the majority of errors were transfer errors therefore we recommend not over relying on Spanish structures.

The convergence of qualitative and quantitative data has verified educators' astute awareness of these linguistic obstacles in addition to identifying prevalent faults. More insights can be gained to guide even more successful teaching tactics by expanding this research to examine quantifier mistakes and the learning experiences of students from various L1 backgrounds. Educators can ultimately enable pupils to express themselves more effectively in English and promote success in academic and professional situations by recognizing and fixing

these transfer problems. This study highlights the potentially transformative effects of evidence-based pedagogical techniques in language instruction and demonstrates the close relationship that exists between research and teaching.

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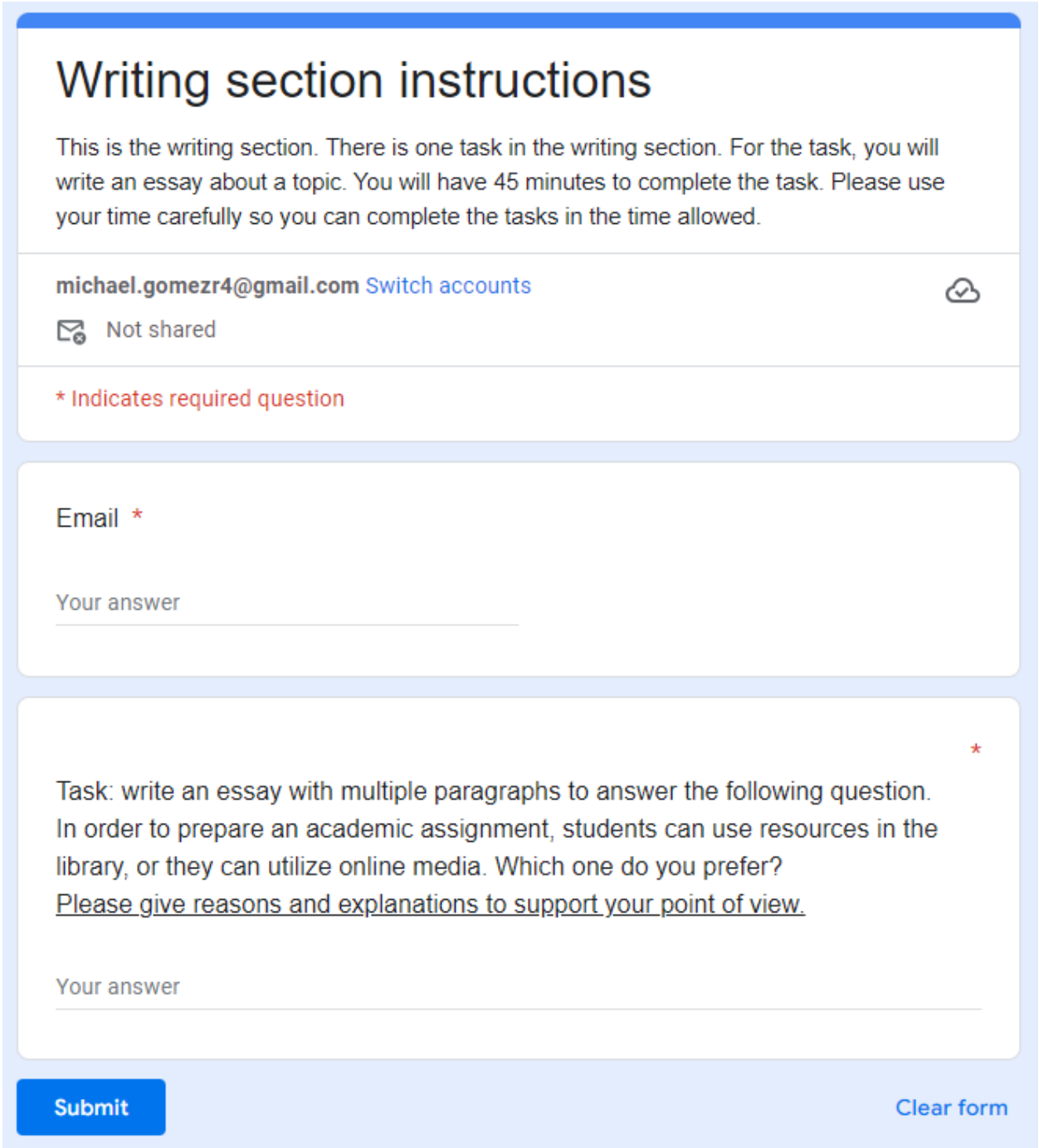
Appendices

Appendix A



Appendix B

Do you consider that the students attending your sixth to eighth semester classes meet the profile set by the program which indicates that at this stage of the program, they have a level of English C1? Why?

Your answer

According to you, sixth to eighth semester students have errors in their writing and oral productions related to wrong verb conjugation? Any particular example you remember? Example: The house on this street with the canopy of shady trees are too expensive

Your answer

According to you, sixth to eighth semester students have errors in their writing and oral productions related to false cognates? Any particular example you remember? Example: pie means foot in Spanish, but a type of pastry in English

Your answer

According to you, sixth to eighth semester students have errors in their writing and oral productions related to wrong syntax structure? Any particular example you remember? Example: Food delicious

Your answer

Do you consider students of sixth to eighth semester have problems with the proper use of prepositions? Any particular example they remember? Example: I have been waiting from three hours.

Your answer

Any other kind of mistakes you can think of? If so, which ones?

Your answer

To recall, fossilization happens when a learner never corrects a mistake they make in their speech, so it becomes a habitual mistake that is, then, difficult to fix. Have you noticed any fossilised (transfer) mistakes common across the students? If so, which ones?

Your answer

Do you think your students use a lot of Spanish structures when speaking in English? If so, what structures?

Your answer

Do you think this will change at some point in the program or will those mistakes become fossilized? Why?

Your answer

Do you actively help students to correct mistakes?

Your answer