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## Title

**Pupils' Mother Tongue in Elementary EFL  
Classes: Teachers' Practices.**

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*Dedications*

*To our beloved families*

*To our fathers and mothers,*

*To our sisters and brothers and their sons,*

*To our aunts and their sons and uncles and their sons,*

*To our grandfathers and grandmothers,*

*To all of our friends wherever they are.*

*Salim and Massi.*

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## **Abstract**

The current study addresses the issue of pupils' Mother Tongue interference in the development of proficiency in the practice of EFL in Algeria. This study aims to explore how pupils' first languages, Arabic and Berber, hinder their ability to acquire a foreign language. We adopted two theories in relation to language acquisition. The first one is Piaget's theory and cognitive development in relation to language transfer and the second one is called Error Analysis (EA), which can be helpful to teach language and to understand the types of errors that pupils make when they produce speech. The aim of this study is to investigate how teachers overcome the mother tongue interference during the learning process and which techniques they use to help their pupils to master and use only English during class. In this research study two data collection tools are used : nine classroom observation sessions were conducted on 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> year Elementary pupils in BELHOCINE Hocine and HAMMOUTENE Ali Elementary schools of TIZI-OUZOU, and EL MOKRANI, and AMAR Khelloufi Elementary schools of TIGZIRT. A questionnaire designed to elementary teachers was also submitted and sent via the social media 'Facebook' to teachers around Algeria. The collected data were analyzed by using the descriptive statistical method to turn the quantitative data into percentages, and the qualitative data were analyzed by using Discourse Analysis (DA). The results of the study show that 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> year Elementary school pupils make errors due to the interference between English, Arabic and Berber dialects because of the lack of proficiency since their early childhood, and that teachers tend to make use of Realia and concrete situations to help the pupil understand better the concepts and the nuances between each language.

Key words: Cognitive Development, Mother Tongue Interference, Error Analysis, Discourse Analysis.

## **List of Abbreviation**

**MT** - Mother Tongue

**NL** - Native Language

**FL** – Foreign Language

**TL** – Target Language

**EA** – Error Analysis

**EFL** – English as a Foreign Language

## **List of Tables**

- Table 1: Teachers' Work Experience.....

## List of Diagrams

- Diagram 1: The Pupils' English level.....
- Diagram 2: The Skills in which pupils face difficulties the most.....
- Diagram 3: Where do pupils find exactly difficulties in the English language.....
- Diagram 4: Pupils' speaking skill level.....
- Diagram 5: Frequency of free speech.....
- Diagram 6: Mother Tongue influence.....
- Diagram 7: The Mother Tongue influence on L1 .....

# Table Of Content

## General Introduction

Statement of the Problem.....	1
Aims and Significance of The Study.....	2
Research Questions and Hypotheses.....	2
Research Tools and Methodology.....	3
Structure of The Dissertation.....	4

## Chapter one: Review of the Literature

Introduction.....	5
-------------------	---

### Section One: Definition of Concepts

1.1. Definitions and Background.....	5
1.1.1. Mother Tongue.....	5
1.1.2. Foreign Language.....	5
1.1.3. Transfer (Interference).....	6
1.1.4. Types of Transfer.....	6
1.1.5. Factors Causing Language Transfer.....	7

### Section Two: Speaking Skills

1.2.1. Definition Speaking.....	7
1.2.2. The Importance of Speaking in Learning a Foreign Language.....	8

1.2.3. Speaking Difficulties in Foreign Language Classroom.....	8
---	---

### **Section Three: The Cognitivists Learning Theory in Relation to Language**

#### Transfer

1.3. Definition of Cognitivism.....	9
-------------------------------------	---

1.3.1. Piaget’s Cognitive Development.....	10
--	----

1.3.2. Important Cognitive Development Concepts .....	10
---	----

1.3.3. The Cognitivists View on Foreign Language Learning.....	11
--	----

1.3.4. Cognitivists View of Language Interference.....	11
--	----

1.3.4. Error Analysis.....	13
----------------------------	----

1.3.5. The Psychological Aspect.....	14
--------------------------------------	----

Conclusion.....	14
-----------------	----

## **Chapter Two: Research Design**

Introduction.....	15
-------------------	----

2.1. The Context of the Study.....	15
------------------------------------	----

2.2. The Participants.....	15
----------------------------	----

2.3. Procedures of Data Collection.....	16
---	----

2.3.1 Classroom Observation.....	16
----------------------------------	----

2.3.2. Questionnaire.....	16
---------------------------	----

2.4. Procedures of Data Analysis.....	17
---------------------------------------	----

2.4.1. Qualitative Content Analysis.....	17
--	----

2.4.2. Descriptive Statistical Method.....	18
Conclusion.....	18
 <b>Chapter three: Presentation of the Findings</b>	
Introduction.....	19
3. Presentation of the Results of the Findings.....	19
3. 1 The Results of Classroom Observation.....	19
3.2 The Results of Teachers Questionnaire.....	23
Conclusion.....	32
 <b>Chapter Four: Discussion of the Findings</b>	
Introduction.....	32
4.1 Discussion of the Findings of Classroom Observation.....	32
4.2 Discussion of the Findings of Teachers' Questionnaire.....	37
Conclusion.....	44
<b>General Conclusion.....</b>	<b>45</b>
<b>Reference list.....</b>	<b>48</b>

*General*  
*Introduction*

## **Statement of the Problem**

Language is the acquired capacity of expressing thoughts and communicating needs through a system composed of semantics and syntax. The English language becomes a very important aspect in the daily life; thus, it is used in almost every field of work such as business, jural, and science. It allows people to stay connected to the wide world, which is becoming more globalized than ever, it also gives the chance to the one to have an unlimited access to knowledge. Therefore, it helps to be in touch with the world culture and to stay tuned with the latest updates in terms of research. Because of its importance, the English as a foreign language has been adopted by the Algerian educational system.

The purpose of foreign language learning is to break language barriers and to help citizens to be more committed and globalized. However, many difficulties are faced by teachers while teaching a foreign language due to the differences between the native language and the target language.

Many scholars tackled this question of the mother tongue interference in the process of acquiring a new language, including Chomsky, Piaget, John Schumann, and Vigotsky. They developed theories on how persons acquire a second language and perform it. James B. Wold's, for instance, who investigated the difficulties faced to learn English as a second language of an adult female immigrant to the U.S. The author mentioned that the learner's first and second languages were nonalphabetical. This means that she was not taught the sound/letter rule system of English, and this major deficit played a role in the struggles to learn English. As a result, this current study will try to investigate teachers' difficulties to teach a foreign language to pupils in elementary schools and how can teachers improve their teaching techniques.

## **Aims and Significance of the Study**

The principle aim of this study is to look how the teachers cope with pupils' mother tongue interference when learning English language in syllabuses; it would be valuable to see the different methods and ways teachers use to help their students to make this language more accessible for them. Two data collection tools were used in this inquiry which are questionnaires and classroom observations in order to check how teachers' practices to avoid, correct, and teach in an effective way.

## **Research Questions and Hypothesis**

To investigate how teachers can deal with their pupils' mother tongue interference with English as a Foreign Language, this study seeks to find answers to these questions:

**Q1:** how do teachers manage the situations of mother tongue interference in EFL classes?

**Q2:** what are the tools or the techniques that teachers use to make the learning process easier for pupils?

**Q3:** do teachers really know how to help the learners understand their mistakes and show them how to avoid them?

We predicted some answers. For these questions in terms of hypothesis which are :

**H1:** Teachers can use different tools and techniques to make the learning process much easier such as the use of visual aids (by using diagrams, charts, videos, images), active and interactive learning (by encouraging active participation of pupils in the learning process through discussions, problem solving, group works, debates, and role play).

**H2:** The teachers do know how to help the pupils; they use Feedback, and explain to pupils where they made a mistake and how to correct it. They also use practice as an opportunity

to avoid the mistake made before; however, the effectiveness of this help depends on teacher's expertise, the student's willingness to learn, and the quality of the feedback provided.

**H3:** Teachers can cope with students' mother tongue interference in EFL (English as a Foreign Language) classes by being aware of common language transfer errors, encouraging practice (by giving students plenty of opportunities to practice speaking and writing in English), and correcting pupils gently.

## **Research Tools and Methodology**

This research adopts a mixed method approach, that is both qualitative and quantitative. This study aims to explain and show how teachers deal with the pupils' mother tongue interference in the process of learning English as a Foreign Language. The data for this research are gathered from questionnaires submitted to elementary teachers in BELHOCINE Hocine, HAMMOUTENE Ali, AMAR Kheloufi and EL Mokrani elementary schools and from classroom observations made to find the ways and techniques teachers use during their lecture sessions to correct their learners. The data are going to be analyzed with two data analyzing tools, which are Discourse Analysis (DA) and the statistical descriptive method.

## **The Structure of the Dissertation**

This dissertation follows the traditional complex structure including a general introduction, four chapters and a general conclusion. The introduction deals with the statement of the problem, the research questions and hypothesis, the aim and significance of the study, research techniques and methodology, and the structure of the dissertation. The first chapter is called "Review of the Literature". It reviews the main concepts and theories that are related to our study provided by scholars, and consists in reviewing the theoretical

framework that has been chosen to investigate the learners language interferences. The second chapter is called “Research design and Methodology”. It begins with presenting the tools that were used to gather data, which are questionnaires submitted to teachers, and classroom observation in the targeted elementary schools. The third chapter is named “Presenting the Findings”; it shows and explains the collected data. The last chapter is entitled “Discussion of the Findings”, it interprets the results of the collected data from the research tools used and discusses the results in relation to the theoretical framework in order to give answer to the set of the research questions. The study end with a general conclusion that gives a summary about the issue tackled and discussed.

*Chapter One*

*Review of the*

*Literature*

## **Introduction**

This chapter is dedicated to the review of the literature that reports the principal research linked to the mother tongue interference on a foreign language. This chapter contains three sections. The first section is composed of different definitions related to the theme of this study, which is the influence of the mother tongue on the foreign language. The second section involves speaking skills. Finally, the last section consists of an account of the major theory used in this investigation which is the cognitivism learning theory in relation to the acquisition of a second language in addition to a second useful theory which is called ‘‘Error Analysis’’ (EA).

## **Section 1: Definitions of Concepts**

### **1. Definitions and Background**

#### **1.1 Mother Tongue**

The term mother tongue refers to a person’s native language that is a language learned from birth. It is also known as a first language, dominant language, home language, or native tongue. Effiong (2013) stated that ‘‘the child’s native language is the language utilized to influence the child’s life since the child was born’’. In other terms, the mother tongue is the language that the new born learns from his early childhood, and will shape his thoughts, emotions, and worldviews.

## **1.2 Foreign Language**

A recent study concluded that “a foreign language is a language that is not the native language of a particular speaker or community, but rather is learned as a second or additional language” (Asli & Sevgi-Sole, 2023, p. 25). Being able to speak a foreign language can open many doors in one’s professional and personal life, by adding a whole different approach of things from a foreign perspective. Many countries adopted English as a foreign language just like our country Algeria.

## **1.3 Transfer (Interference)**

In an early article Sasha Blakeley (2023) suggested that “Language transfer occurs when students learning a new language apply the rules and norms of their first language to their second.” Sometimes, those rules do apply, but other times they result in errors. Another author stipulates that interference as “the automatic transfer, due to habits of the surface structure of the first language into the surface of the target language” (Duley & al. 1982, p.77). Thus, the second language superimpose itself directly on the NL.

### **1.3.1 Types of Transfer**

Lado (1957, p.2) argues that individuals tend to transfer the forms and meanings and the distribution of forms and meanings of their native language and culture to the foreign language and culture. This transfer leads to both positive and negative transfer. In one hand, we have the positive transfer it refers to the instances in which prior knowledge helps the learner to acquire a foreign language for example when the pupil tries to understand a word in the target language, but systematically returns to his NL to make the equivalence. On the other hand the negative transfer, which refers to the mother tongue interference that influence negatively on learning a foreign language. It was assumed that “those elements

that are similar to his native language will be simple for him, and those elements that are different will be difficult” (Op.cit.).

### **1.3.2 Factors Causing Language Interference**

According to the explanation given in the scientific article written by Lekova (2010), many factors contribute to the interference. The first fact is that the speech participants are bilingual. Bilingualism is one of the principal factors of the interference because the speaker have both vocabularies in his mind so he can switch from L1 to L2 and vice versa. The second is the lack of user’s loyalty to the language received. This causes negative interference, because the user makes use, unconsciously, of the grammatical rules from his mother tongue on the L2. The third is the lack of vocabulary in accepted languages. This means that the more someone has knowledge of vocabulary the more he masters the target language. The fourth is the need for synonyms. They play a basic role when it comes to interfere in between the use of two languages. The last one is the prestige towards L1 language and language style. The use of foreign terms, especially unfamiliar phrases, in communication settings meant to develop pride will show interference because there are several phrases whose meaning is awkward for the listener.

## **Section 2: Speaking Skill**

### **1.2.1 Definition of Speaking**

According to (Brown, 1994; Burns & Joyce, 1997) “Speaking is an interactive process of constructing meaning that involves producing and receiving and processing information”. It is often spontaneous, open-ended, and evolving, but its forms and meaning

are still dependent on the context including the environment, participants, and experiences of each individual.

### **1.2.2 The Importance of Speaking in Learning a Foreign Language**

Speaking is a basic skill that EFL learners should master with the other language skills. It is a skill which has been regarded as the primary form of language as Harmer (2001,p.270) declared without speaking you do not understand what the speaker says, by looking confused as agree with, scratching your head in confusion. It means speaking skill play an important role in speech community, also if you master the speaking skill this means mastering others skills.

### **1.2.3 Speaking Difficulties in Foreign Language Classroom**

In EFL classes learners tend to face difficulties when they try to speak in the target language. According to Ur (2000, p.12) there are four major obstacles that learners may face during while expressing themselves in the L2. The first is inhibition, which is the process of restraining the individual's behaviour consciously or unconsciously due to some factors like shyness, and fear of making mistakes. The second is nothing to say, which means that the pupils are either less motivated to make efforts like the others or they lack of information about the context and use concentration. The third is the use of the mother tongue. Though it is the first language of learners, it is totally normal to switch to their L1 because they find themselves more at ease to use it outside and inside the classroom. The Fourth is uneven participation. During the session there are several types of pupils that may or may not perform in the lecture. Some of them participate each time when the teacher asks questions and some of them choose deliberately to speak only when they have the right answer.

## **Section 3: The Cognitivist Learning Theory and Language Transfer**

Language is one of the most outstanding elements of humanity, allowing us to communicate. For years, researchers have been drawn to this complex communication system. The study aimed to comprehend the foreign language acquisition and how children unconsciously learn language norms throughout their early years. If mother tongue learning is a tough process for scholars, so is foreign language acquisition. Thus, when learning a new language the temptation is to rely on the prior knowledge of the individual.

According to Mergel (1998, p.2) “cognitivism is a theory that is based on the thought process behind the behavior”. This factor showed that the result of contested theories of language acquisition was the evidence of human cognition. In this case language is as a result shaped by the stimulus - response and a conscious and reasoned thinking process, involving the deliberate use of learning strategies.

### **1.3 Definition of Cognitivism**

Several definitions were given to this learning theory by different scholars. According to Morales and Gray (2023) cognitivism is a theory in psychology that focuses on how the mind receives, processes, organizes, stores, and retrieves information. It examines how learning takes place within learners’ head.

#### **1.3.1 Piaget’s Cognitive Development**

According to Piaget (1959, p.11) cognitive development and language acquisition are closely interrelated processes. During childhood the abstract knowledge about the world can be gained through seeing objects around them, through observing how the objects function and interact with each other.

Much of Piaget's interest in the cognitive development of children was inspired by his observations of his own nephew and daughter. These observations reinforced his hypothesis that children's minds were not smaller versions of adult minds. In other words, children were largely treated as smaller adults. In fact, the children's minds are solely different and think in a complete different way. He proposed that the intelligence of children go through four different cognitive development stages, where he emphasized the fact that the children were not less intelligent but only think differently. His theory focuses not only on understanding how children acquire knowledge but also on understanding the nature of intelligence. Much has been written about cognitive development stages Piaget (1936) is as follow:

***1) The Sensorimotor Stage of the Cognitive Development :***

During this early period of cognitive development, from birth to two years old, babies and toddlers learn by their senses and by handling objects.

***2) The Preoperational Stage of Cognitive Development :***

The preoperational stage begins with the emergence of language, while the groundwork for language development may have been established during the prior stage, which lasts between two and seven years.

***3) The Concrete Operational Stage of Cognitive Development :***

Children are still highly literal and concrete in their thinking between the ages of 7 and 11, but they are much better at using reasoning throughout this time in their growth.

***4) The Formal Operational Stage of Cognitive Development :***

According to Piaget's thesis, the last stage entails developing one's capacity for deductive reasoning, logic, and comprehension of abstract concepts. At this age, teenagers

and young adults start to think more logically about their surroundings and are able to recognize several possible solutions to issues.

### **1.3.2 Important Cognitive Development Concepts**

It is important to note that Piaget did not view children's intellectual development just like adding more information and knowledge to their existing knowledge as they get older. Instead, Piaget suggested that there is a qualitative change in how children think as they progressively process these 4 stages. Supported by Lazarus (2010) in his article named 'Educational Psychology: In Social Context' who points out that:

“quality of thinking difference between adult and child's thinking has to do with difference in thinking quality and have important implications for understanding moral, social and emotional aspects of development and those aspect relate to child`s understanding of social relations and affect how they deal with moral, social and emotional issues as they develop”.

### **1.3.3 The Cognitivist View on Language Learning**

When we talk about second language learning, it is unavoidable to use psychological concepts since our thinking on learning is influenced by the psychological knowledge that is part of understanding of the human behaviour in our life. This psychological terms such as “remembering”, “skill”, “motivation”, “frustration”, “inhibition”, etc. are adopted in the process of second language learning. In this section, for example the two key concepts for a language teaching theory are language and learning. They will be reviewed in terms of general psychology so that we can have clear picture about the second language learning.

### **1.3.4 Error Analysis (EA)**

Error analysis, initially suggested by Corder in 1967, is a method used in psycholinguistics that can also be useful in language teaching. It involves systematically recording errors made by a language learner in speech or writing, categorizing those errors and determining their cause or source. As a response to the limitation of the contrastive analysis hypothesis in explaining language errors made by second-language learners, researchers looked for a better approach.

The theories behind how people learn their first and second languages are the foundation of this new approach, known as error analysis. By comprehending the mental processes learners employ to rearrange the information they take in from the target language, it seeks to explain why they perform as they do.

#### **A- Importance of Errors**

Like with any other type of learning, making mistakes is a natural part of learning a language. Make mistakes so that you can get feedback from your surroundings and enhance your language skills. Learning a language is an ongoing process that requires making mistakes and then learning from them.

#### **B- Error Analysis versus Contrastive Analysis**

The passage contrasts EA with CA, a traditional approach to understanding language errors. Error analysis is presented as a more efficient alternative for several reasons:

- a. It does not restrict its focus on errors resulting from native language interference, it considers a broader range of errors.
- b. Error Analysis deals with real, and observed language problems made by learners.

- c. Error Analysis is suggested to be free from the complex theoretical challenges encountered in Contrastive Analysis.

### **C- Receptive versus Productive Errors**

There are two further categories of errors, Receptive and Productive. “receptive errors” are mistakes made by the listener that lead to misinterpretation of the speaker’s intentions, while the “productive errors” are mistakes made by language learners during their speech.

### **D- Errors versus Mistakes**

Errors are seen to be systematic, rule-governed, and the result of a learner’s insufficient understanding of the rules governing the target language. As such, they provide insight into the learner’s linguistic system at a particular point in their language acquisition. They are probably going to happen frequently and go unnoticed by the student. As such, their location only know to the researcher or teacher (Gass & Selinker, 1993, p.102).

Differentiating between mistakes and errors made by learners has long been a challenge for educators and academics. However, the frequency of recurrence is a common criterion used by the majority of error analysts to differentiate between errors and mistakes. In other words, mistakes that occur infrequently are referred to be performance errors which occur when the pupils are tired or in a hurry to leave the classroom; while errors that occur frequently are referred to as systematic errors that occur when the language development manifest itself. James (1998) also proposes the criterion of self-correctability. That is, mistakes can be corrected by the learners if their attention is drawn to them, but errors cannot be self-corrected.

## E- Significance of Errors

Errors are an important step in the process of learning, it helps to describe how learning occurs by examining correct and incorrect utterances of pupils. Pit Corder, for instance in his article (1967) remarks that errors:

. . . they are significant in three different ways. First to the teacher, in that they tell him, if he undertakes a systematic analysis, how far towards the goal the learner has progressed and, consequently, what remains for him to learn. provide to the researcher evidence of how language is learned or acquired, and what strategies or procedures the learner is employing in his discovery of the language. Thirdly, they are indispensable to the learner himself, because we can regard the making of errors as a device the learner uses in order to learn. It is a way the learner has for testing his hypotheses about the nature of the language he is learning. (Corder, 1967, p.167)

Relying on the idea of Corder, it is interesting to understand how the manifestation of errors are seen differently from linguists, psycholinguists and teachers as Richards (1971) mentioned for example, notices that errors are significant and of interest to :

- **Linguists**, because as Chomsky suggests, the study of the human language is the most fruitful way of discovering what constitutes the human intelligence.
- **Psycholinguists**, because by looking at children speech and comparing it with adult speech, psycholinguists have been able to examine the nature of the mental processes that seem to be involved in language.
- **Teachers**, because by analyzing learners' errors they would be able to discover their difficulties and devise a method for comparing them.

### **1.3.5 The Psychological Aspect of Language**

In the study of mental development of the child, "Nature vs nurture" became a contentious topic in research on children's mental development. Certain specialists advocated for "nature," which refers to a child's mental growth acquired via biological and nativistic maturation, while others supported "nurture," which emphasizes mental development mostly acquired through social or environmental interactions. For decades, psychologists have grappled with the connection between language and mind. Piaget created the theory of language and mind in childhood in 1923. Language development and functional language usage in childhood indicate a child's mental development. Later, such thesis resulted in his theory. For instance, by Cameron (1947) who stated that the individual's view of the world and his entire cognitive system were shaped by the verbal symbols given to each one of us by society as we learn our native language. It is important to make a link between this theory and our work in order to understand better how the child develops his intelligence and how he improves it during the different cognitive stages.

### **1.3.6 Conclusion**

This chapter has laid out the review of literature of previous works related to our subject of investigation which is concerned with the interference of mother tongue on speaking foreign language in classroom. This is presented in three sections which are definitions of main terms, the cognitivist learning theory in relation to language transfer and Error Analysis. In the next chapter we are going to deal with research design where we will present the data collection tools and the data analysis procedures that will be used in this work.

*Chapter two*

*Research design*

## **Introduction**

This chapter provides an overview of our study's methodology and research design. This chapter illustrates the approaches utilized to address the research questions asked in the general introduction. First, it establishes the setting of the research and introduces the subject of the study. This chapter is divided into two sections : the first section is named data collection tools ; involving a questionnaire for primary school English teachers and classroom observations, and the second section is named data analysis methods including the statistical description to analyze the quantitative data and content analysis for open-ended questions.

### **2.1 Context of The Study**

This present study was done in a concrete way in our research field on 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> year in AMAR KHELOUFI ; Tigzirt, EL MOKRANI ; Tigzirt, BELHOUCINE HOCINE ; Tizi-Ouzou, HAMMOUTENE ALI ; Tizi-Ouzou. This research aims to investigate the L1 interference in English language learning. We conducted 9 classroom observation sessions in order to observe students' L1 interference with L2 while speaking. We also surveyed their English language teachers to understand the causes of this interference.

### **2.2 Participants**

The participants included in this research are divided into three groups. The first group involves elementary English teachers in the chosen schools of Tizi-Ouzou and the second group involves elementary English teachers in the chosen schools of Tigzirt. The last group is an onlin group of elementary English language teachers. We have provided each group with a questionnaire composed of 20 questions related to our study in order to gather more information about the issue tackled. We also created a checklist in order to observe

sessions in the different schools and to check directly how the mother tongue interference appears during the classroom.

## **2.3 Procedures of Data Collection**

By using a mixed method approach, both qualitative and quantitative data are gathered through questionnaires, in addition to classroom observations in order to investigate and understand better the L1 interference with the FL while speaking.

### **2.3.1 Classroom Observation**

It is a crucial instrument for gathering data, this technique is useful for our research project as it allows us to monitor students speaking English and identify L1 interference while learning in EFL classes. As argued by Kane, Taylor, Tyler, & Wooten in 2011 only direct classroom observations can reveal the subtle nuances and dynamic intricacies of effective teaching. Observation research is a valuable method for studying classroom contexts because it allows researchers to collect detailed information about environmental characteristics, students and teachers behaviours within natural and authentic settings.

### **2.3.2 Questionnaire**

A questionnaire is a research instrument that consists of a set of questions for the purpose of gathering information from respondents through survey or statistical study. According to Brown (2001) “questionnaires are any written instruments that present respondents with a series of questions or statements to which they are to react either by writing out their answers or selecting from among existing answers” (p.6). A questionnaire include open-ended questions, where participants are requested to respond freely and in their own words, and closed-ended questions, which are multiple-choice questions with an expectation that teachers select one of the answers suggested.

In this research study we have used a questionnaire which is divided into 5 sections. The first is the general information about the teachers. The second is pupil's profile. The third is pupil's difficulties. The fourth is teachers view and practices. The last one is about the mother tongue interference. Our questionnaire was submitted to the Elementary English teachers of the chosen schools, and was also shared in different online groups in the social media Facebook.

## **2.4 Procedure of Data Analysis**

Through the classroom observations and the questionnaires given to the different schools and teachers, we have chosen to use a mixed method approach to analyze all the data gathered since the beginning of our field research, combining both qualitative data and quantitative data. Considering that the quantitative data are the teachers' answers and our observations which are going to be interpreted, and the qualitative data are the statistics gathered through the questionnaire.

We used bar charts and pie charts to illustrate the percentage of findings of the questionnaire. There are two sections in this chapter, the first one deals with the findings from the teachers' answers to find out the causes of the mother tongue influence on learning L2. And the purpose of the classroom observations part in this chapter is to watch pupils as they acquire the second language and how their mother tongue interferes within their speech.

### **2.4.1 Discourse Analysis**

Discourse analysis is a method used in this research in order to analyze the classroom observation sessions and the open-ended questions of the questionnaire. According to Snape and Spencer (2003) "Discourse analysis originates from the discipline of sociology and is about examining the way knowledge is produced within different discourses and the performances, linguistic styles and rhetorical devices used in particular accounts" (p.200).

It is a pertinent technique to interpret, thus it is going to clarify the mistakes produced by the pupils as a result of the interference of their mother tongue. The pupils' responses are used in this study to analyze the classroom observation sessions.

### **2.4.2 Descriptive Statistical Method**

The results of close-ended questions including numerical data are analyzed statistically to provide teachers with information regarding the factors that contribute to students' L1 interference during the acquisition of L2 language. The analysis of the close-ended questions in this study is based on descriptive method, which is the suitable technique to display the results as percentages.

### **Conclusion**

We have discussed in this chapter the techniques of data collection instruments used, comprising a questionnaire and a classroom observation. In order to understand why L1 interferes with L2 during learning and speaking. Next, we have presented the data analysis tools that are utilized for the recolted analysis of the information. Namely, the statistical descriptive method, which is used to describe and translate the close-ended answers of the questionnaire into statistics, and the discourse analysis method used to analyze the open-ended answers as well as the classroom observation, to find out how MT interferes in the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> year elementary EFL classes.

*Chapter three  
presenting the  
findings*

## **Introduction**

This chapter presents the empirical data gathered from the two research tools which have been used (classroom observations and questionnaires). Fifteen questionnaires (15) were sent to elementary school English instructors concerning our field study, and some of them were sent via Facebook groups. For the classroom observation, we conducted nine classroom observation sessions to understand how pupils' mother tongue interferes with learning target language.

### **3. Presentation of The Findings**

#### **1. Classroom Observation**

This section analyzes data obtained from classroom observation sessions made with 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> year pupils. A checklist is needed to be completed in each observation session to check the important aspects and ways of teaching. The checklist identified how the pupils' mother tongue interfered with their English language learning.

#### **Question 01: Do pupils appear to have a low level of confidence?**

During our different observation sessions we noticed that 3<sup>rd</sup> year pupils were less confident than 4<sup>th</sup> year, this is surely because they are newly introduced to a foreign language for them. So they do not really feel at ease to speak in front of their mates as they are afraid of doing mistakes and being mocked.

#### **Question 02: Do pupils interfere with their mother tongue while speaking English?**

We observed that the majority of pupils often interfere with their MT while speaking English, especially 3<sup>rd</sup> year pupils who use it when they do not know the

missing word in the target language. So they go back to their original register to find it. Instead of saying “should we write now?” they said “ a misses anekthev thura ?”.

**Question 03: Do the teacher make use of different tools to make the learning process easier?**

We noticed that teacher rely on activities such as, peer work, group work, dialogues between three or more pupils, and singing songs at the end of the lecture, and some activities which rely on the use of visual aids like flashcards, images and videos. The instructors try to make the pupils in touch with the lesson and the new words that they are learning with the materials used during the session in an easier way so that they can understand and absorb the information presented. Thus, they try to turn the learning process into an active and interactive process.

**Question 04: Do teachers make use of concrete situation to teach English?**

Pupils actively participate when the teacher engage them in an activity which includes, drawings, flashcards, and slates. The pupils feel more absorbed and motivated when their imagination is triggered through these tools. We even observed a teacher using a bluetooth speaker to monitor pupils to sing a song all together. For example, a teacher chose each time 3 pupils and make them go to the board with a flashcard that shows farm animals. He first monitor the dialogue, and then when the pupils feel more at ease he gives them the floor and tell them to carry alone all the dialogue, and each time the pupils chose a different farm animal and describe it personally.

**Question 05: Do teachers correct immediately pupils' errors or let them deduce their errors by themselves?**

We noticed that teachers in every classroom observation correct the pupils immediately when they do spelling mistakes. In addition, when we were in HAMMOUTENE Ali Elementary school of Tizi-Ouzou, we noticed that the teacher involves directly pupils to correct their classroom mates.

**Question 06: Do pupils use their mother tongue's grammatical rules when speaking English language?**

They never use the grammatical rules of their mother tongue while speaking English; they rather use their mother tongue to explain concepts to the teacher when they do not find the right word in English. In EL MOKRANI elementary school of Tizirt, they rather use the Berbere dialect like “a misses yiwen yehzen yiwen yefreh ?” as they ignore the synonyms in English which are “happy” and “sad”. And at HAMMOUTENE Ali elementary school of Tizi-Ouzou pupils tend to use more often the French language. For example, instead of saying “miss can I erase the board ?” they said “madame ? est-ce que je peux effacer le tableau ?”.

**Question 07: Is the transfer positive?**

Actually, the transfer is sometimes positive and sometimes negative, because they use the technique of equivalence in both languages, they try to mix their pre-existing knowledge of their MT to find out the equivalent word in the TL. For example, some of the pupils used the word in arabic “الحشيش” and “lehcic” in berber for the equivalent word in the TL which is « grass ». And the word « اللوحة » for its equivalent word which is « slate ». So, we can neither judge it positive nor negative because they are trying to find out the terms/words of English from their MT.

### **Question 08: Do the teachers give their feedback to pupils?**

Yes, the teachers always give their feedback to their pupils. In the case of HAMMOUTENE Ali elementary school, the teacher actually gives positive reinforcement when they give a correct answer by giving them a high-five and telling them that « you are doing a great job ! keep it up ! ». In the four schools, the teachers always try to explain the concepts to the pupils in order to get them along with the idea that they are trying to share with them. When the pupils make mistakes they do not shout or use any bad language with them but rather reassure them to build a communicative bond and remind them that they can do mistakes and that they are supposed to learn and not to be judged.

### **Question 09: How teachers overcome the use of mother tongue during the session?**

We concluded from the observation sessions that the teachers sometimes ignore the fact of the MT interference, and sometimes they tend to tell to the pupils that the MT is not allowed during the English session. For example, in a session where a pupil said “amenqar n-uffrux”, they usually stop the pupil who made the mistake and make him repeat what he said. Then, the teacher comes to him with a representation in a form of a flashcard that shows him the word in the TL which is « bill », and tell him if it is this what he meant? and then the teacher goes back with the flashcard to the board and explains to others by showing them the picture and telling them that this is called « a bill » and not « amenqar n-uffrux ».

## **2. Presentation of The Results of Teachers' Answers**

### **2.1 The Result of Section One : General Information**

The first aspect of the questionnaire includes information about the respondent. The first question examines their job experience.

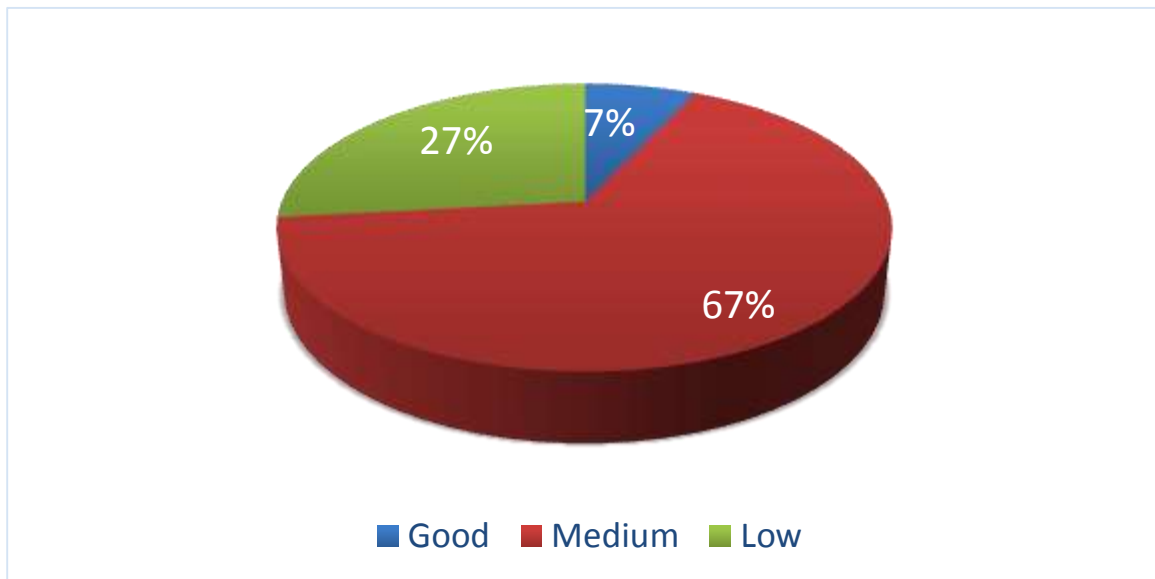
### **2.1.2 : Work Experience**

<b>Teaching experience</b>	<b>Teachers</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
1 – 4	4	27%
5 – 7	5	33%
8 – 10	4	27%
+12	2	13 %

**Table 2 : Teacher’s work experience**

## **2.2 The Results of Section Two: Pupils Profile**

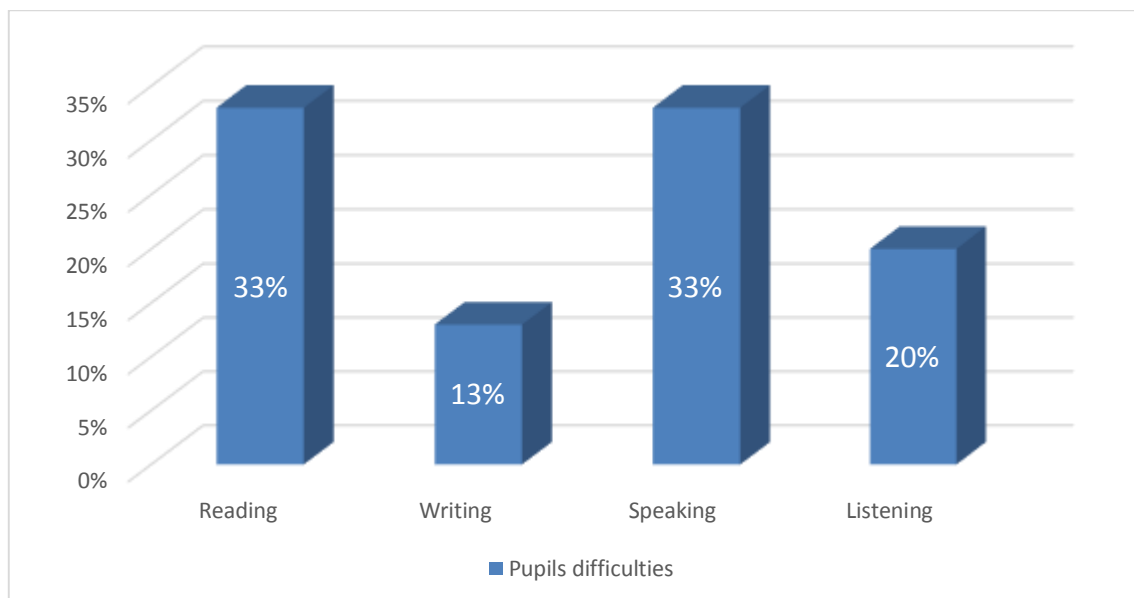
### **2.2. Q1 : How can you describe your pupils’ English level ?**



r the

level of their pupils in English language as medium, and 27% as low and 7% of them estimates it as a good level in English.

## 2.2. Q2: Which skill pupils find the most difficult to practice?



**Diagram 2: The skills in which pupils face difficulties**

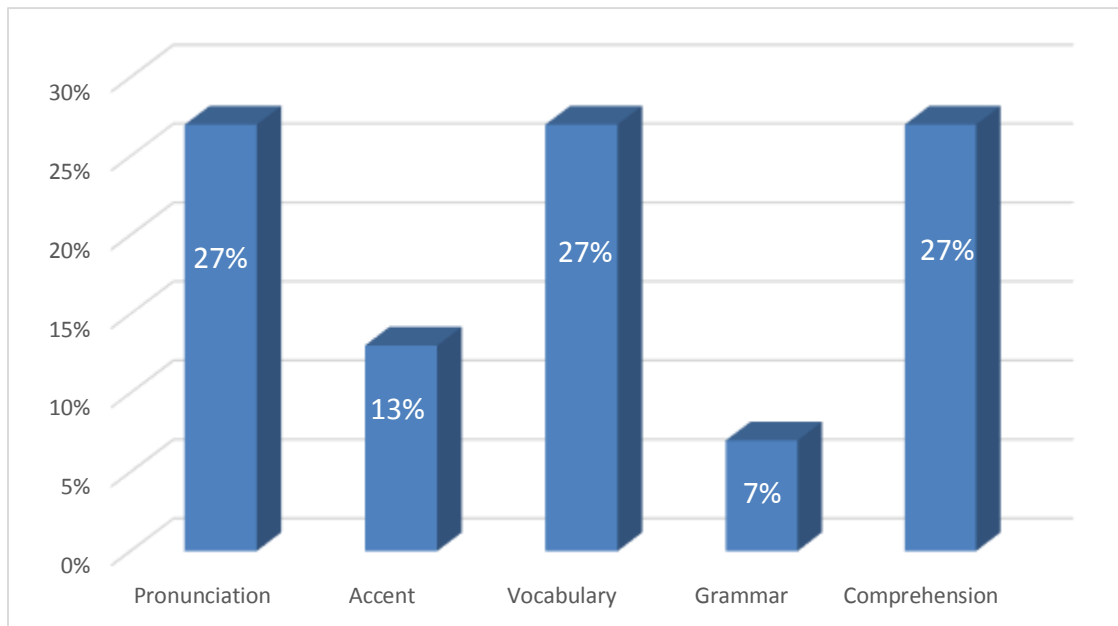
Teachers emphasized that both reading and speaking are the two skills in which pupils face most difficulties when learning the English language, while 20% of them said that they face difficulties in listening skill, and 13% of them answered that they face difficulties in writing skill.

## **2.2. Q3: What limits hinder the pupils from learning the English language?**

According to the teachers, the difficulties that may hinder the pupils from learning English as a foreign language is, first of all, inhibition. It is one of the factors that encounter the pupils during their process of acquisition of L2. The second reason is the lack of vocabulary and oral practice which push the pupil to grab words from his MT. The third one is difficulties in pronunciation.

## **2.3. The Results of Section Three: Pupils difficulties**

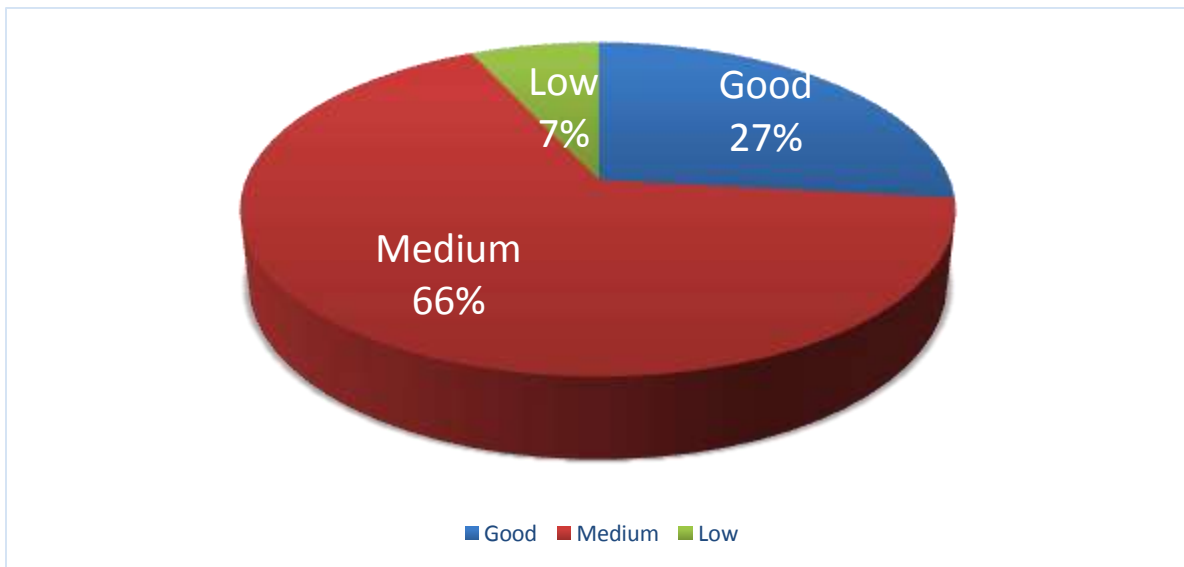
### 2.3. Q1: Where do pupils exactly find difficulties in the English language?



**Diagram 3: Where do pupils find exactly difficulties in the English language**

The aim of this bar chart is to show us the area where the pupils find difficulties in the English language. 27% of the teachers answered that pronunciation, vocabulary, and comprehension are the areas where the pupils are the most lost in terms of learning, whereas 13% of them said that the accent is the area where they find difficulties, and 7% of them said that is grammar.

### 2.3. Q2: How can you describe the speaking skill of your pupils ?



**Diagram 4: Pupils' Speaking Skill Level**

The majority of the teachers 66% consider that the level of their pupils in English language, as medium 27% view as low, and 7% of them assume that it is good.

### 2.3. Q3: Which materials do you use to practice speaking skill?

Teachers answered this question similarly which is the fact of using realia, such as, flashcards, songs, bluetooth devices, short stories, videos, and sometimes cartoons. This can be explained by the fact that it makes the pupils interested and engaged in funny but educational environment so they do not get bored quickly.

### 2.3. Q4: What is the common mistake that they do in class?

The teachers' answers are divided into three different mistakes. The first mistake is that pupils tend to interrupt their mates and do not let them finish their ideas. The second one is that they do not make a concrete difference between French and English words. The last mistake is that pupils do make the switch to their MT when they do not find the appropriate word in the TL.

## **2.4 The Results of Section Four: Teachers Practices**

### **2.4. Q1: How do you evaluate your pupils' lesson comprehension?**

The majority of teachers answered by ticking the task proposition. Some of them make use of group works and a very few part use homeworks.

### **2.4. Q2: What is the main obstacle that pupils face during class session in terms of studying?**

All of the teachers had a similar answer which is the lack of materials, and lack of time, so they do not finish their lessons. They argued that the schools do not provide them with qualitative material and that they often find themselves innovating in terms of materials used, they assume that 45 minutes for a lesson is not enough for pupils to absorb the information.

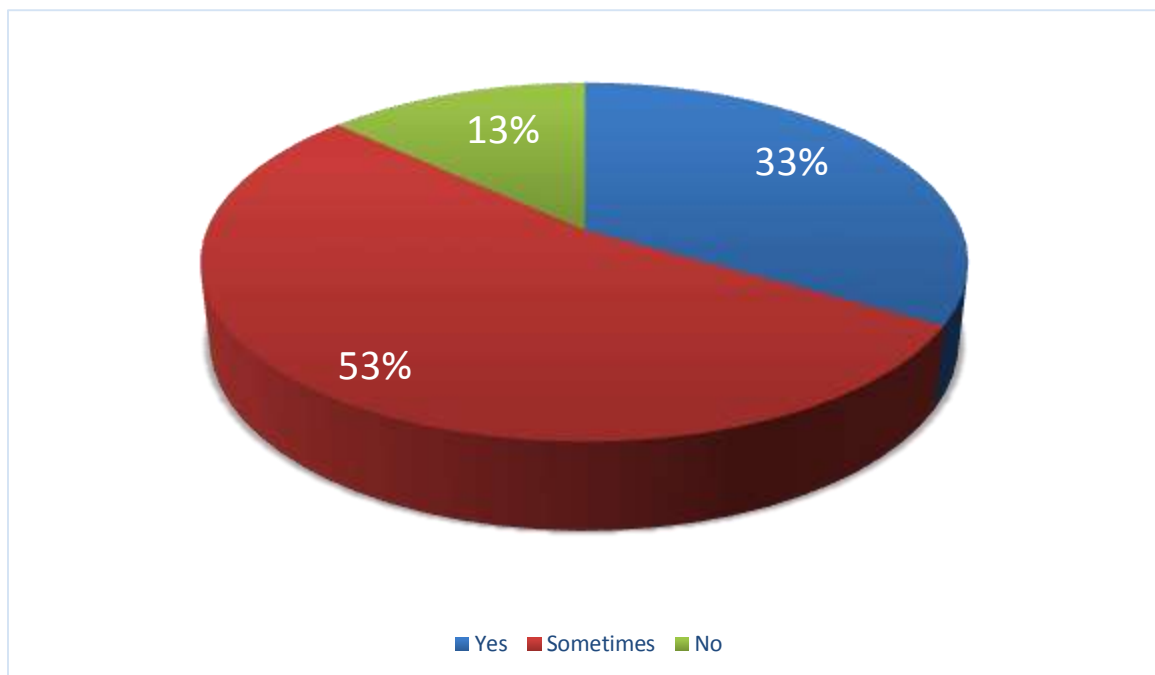
### **2.4. Q3: Do you provide feedback to your pupils to show for them their mistakes?**

All of them answered with a positive answer to this question. They all try to explain concisely and shortly due to the lack of time.

#### **2.4. Q4: Do you find the textbook relevant for an English teacher to practice his duty as a teacher?**

The teachers answered by arguing that the textbook can be a relevant item to use but not with all the lessons. They further said that they needed other documents and tools to fulfill their tasks as a foreign language teacher.

#### **2.4. Q5: Do you let your pupils talk freely in some occasions?**



**Diagram 5: Frequency of free speech**

As it is shown on this pie chart. 53% of the teachers answered that they let their pupils talk freely sometimes, 33% of them said that they let them do, whereas 13% said that they do not let them talk freely.

#### **2.4. Q6: On which criteria you do rate your pupils' speaking skill?**

The teachers answered that they focus especially on two elements which are pronunciation and fluency, which are to be considered as two very important aspects when talking about speaking as a skill.

#### **2.4. Q7: What are the strategies that you use to overcome the pupils' difficulties in speaking?**

Teachers answered differently but still with a common answer which is repetition. Actually they argued that they use several times the technique of the “choral” that engages all the pupils to sing a song together and makes them more engaged. They also added that they make use of graded tasks to create competition between the elements.

#### **2.5 The Results of Section Five: Mother Tongue Interference**

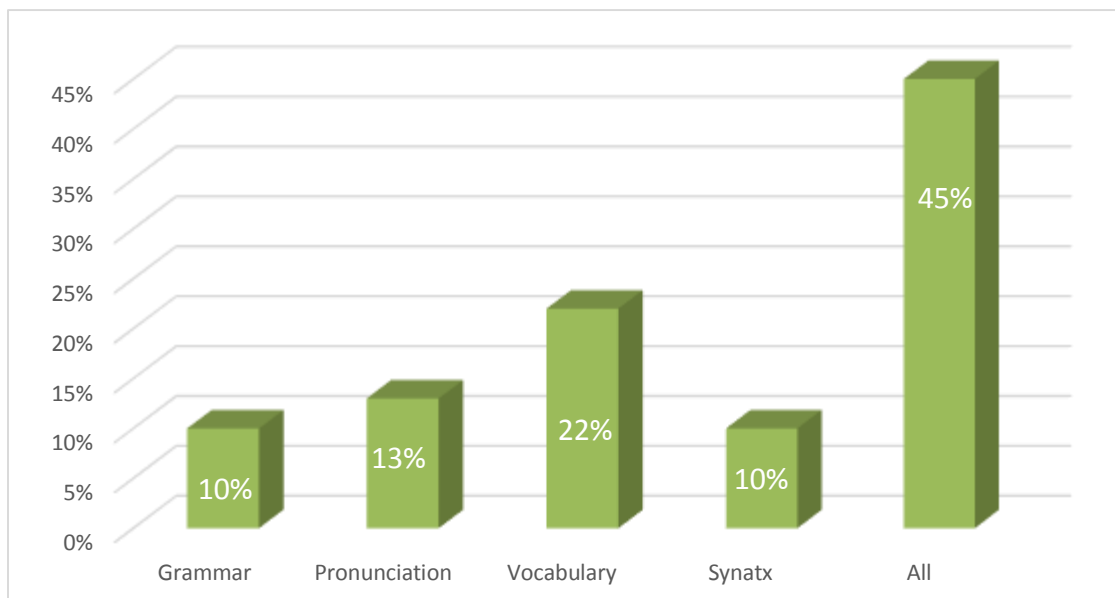
##### **2.5. Q1: Do you think that the Mother Tongue influences in EFL classes?**



**Diagram 6: Mother Tongue influence**

All the teachers agreed that the pupils' mother tongue has an influence in the classroom. Since the pupils retrieve the words that they do not find in the English vocabulary from their mother tongue, and apply it in the dialogues performed.

## 2.5. Q2: In which side the L1 influences the L2?



**Diagram 7: The Mother Tongue influence on L1**

From the whole participants, a total of 45% of teachers answered that the mother tongue influences all the language aspects proposed, 22% of them said it influences the vocabulary, 13% claimed that it influences the pronunciation aspect, and with the same percentage find that it influences syntax and grammar.

## 2.5. Q3: How do you deal with such interference?

The teachers spoke about a certain encouragement for pupils to express themselves in the L2 and not try to translate words to the L1, and they said that they should not punish the pupils if they use their MT.

### **2.5. Q4: According to you why do pupils refer to their mother tongue when they speak English during class?**

The teachers argued about a certain habit of speaking with their mother tongue, because it is their reference and very first words that were pronounced, they further talked also about the lack of proficiency in the English language.

### **2.5. Q5: What do learners do when they are stuck with English when they speak during class?**

Almost all the teachers said that their pupils turn completely silent and embarrassed when they are stuck with English. Some of them said that they refer to their Mother Tongue to find the appropriate word. few of them said that they make small groups to discuss about the missing word and try to find it out in the English language.

## **Conclusion**

This present study aims to investigate the mother tongue interference in the process of the acquisition of a foreign language. This chapter's findings are based on classroom observations done in 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> year classes in elementary schools and questionnaires designed to 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> year Elementary English teachers. The results are presented in the form of tables, bar charts and pie charts that interpret and display the collected data from the research tools used and will be discussed in the next chapter.

*Chapter four*  
*discussion of*  
*findings*

## **Introduction**

This chapter describes how the study's findings relate to the research topic. The findings from classroom observation sessions and the teachers' questionnaires are analyzed individually, despite the fact that both research approaches address similar topics and objectives. Nine classroom observations were done and fifteen teachers in all were questioned to determine the impact of the MT interference and their ways to overcome such phenomenon. The findings are examined and analyzed under the scope of the literature review that was cited in the first chapter. There are two main sections in this chapter, and each one seeks to address the research questions given in the introduction. The outcome of the observation sessions are covered in the first section and the discussion of the instructors' questionnaire results is covered in the second section.

### **4.1 Discussion of The Results of The Classroom Observation**

#### **4.1.1 Pupils' low level of confidence during class**

We concluded from the observation sessions that we conducted on 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> year elementary classes, pupils of the 3<sup>rd</sup> level appeared to have a lower level of confidence than 4<sup>th</sup> year pupils. We noticed that the majority of them found real difficulties when it comes to engaging a discussion with their teacher or their mates, they tended to remain silent and only nodding with the head when the teacher asked if they understood or if he needs to repeat. When the teacher asked gently the pupil to answer even with a wrong answer they keep smiling with shyness, avoiding every eye contact with him, and in a given situation the pupils go directly to the teacher's ear to tell him what they want. "inhibition has been defined as a pattern of responding or behaving possibly biologically based, such that when unfamiliar or challenging situations are encountered, the child shows signs of anxiety, distress, or wariness" (Kagan, 1989). For instance, he will turn silent and tries to seek help with the other classroom mates.

#### **4.1.2 Pupils' Mother Tongue interference while Speaking English**

In each of our observation session conducted in the different schools chosen during the month of may, we tried to depict the reality of the mother tongue interference and we noticed that in each session that we had in both levels (3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup>) pupils always relied on their Mother Tongue when they get stuck in a word and do not find its equivalence in the TL. We saw that pupils from 3<sup>rd</sup> year tended to go back more often to their MT since they are newly introduced to this new language, while 4th year are less relying on their MT and retrieved more easily words in the TL.

In other words, related to the framework that we are standing on which is the Piagetian Cognitive Development, we can mention in this stage of learning : the sensorimotor stage of the cognitive development which states that children have a different way of cognition than adults, their minds are build up in a different way which permits them to build new abstract knowledge from an ancient one since they have a basis in term of handling daily objects that help them build a relation between prior and new observations through observation on how objects function, handling them and interaction with the real world. We noticed language transfer in basic words with Arabic, French and Berber dialects during the lectures that we attended, for example, in the 3<sup>rd</sup> year classes the teacher conducted a plot about a birthday and chose a random pupil to ask him what should be given to him during his birthday and answered “هدية”. And in a situation where the pupil did not fully comprehend the word “happy”, she asked the teacher “acu lme3nas happy?”. In another situation the pupils said “les céréals” with the French pronunciation instead of the English one. In fact, much of a child's future social and intellectual development hinges on the milestone of mother tongue (Plessis, 2008).

### **4.1.3 The use of different tools by the teacher to make the learning process easier**

We noticed that in every 9 classroom observation sessions, teachers relied every time on the use of drawings, flashcards, songs, and dialogues. In the BELHOCINE Hocine Elementary school of TIZI-OUZOU, the teacher used drawings with the 3<sup>rd</sup> year pupils, she used to draw animals on the board and explain at the same time where do we find those animals and which sound they make and how they look like in real life. By making the link with the concrete operational stage of cognitive development stated in the review of the literature, the children are more concrete and literal in terms of understanding, were actually all receptive, and engaged when the teachers explained with sounds and gestures. All the time they tried to participate by giving answers even though they used a language transfer. Emphasized by Piaget in his theory of cognition and cognitive development, where he claimed to keep the children in touch with the concept learned and try to make a link with the new vocabulary learned with concrete examples given by the teacher inside the classroom.

In the Elementary school HAMMOUTENE Ali of TIZI-OUZOU, the teacher actually was more experienced than the first one and used flashcards and group works at the same time, she mixed both techniques to keep the 4<sup>th</sup> year pupils totally absorbed during the lecture. She used to stick the flashcards on the board and conduct her lesson by explaining what was on those cards and then asked her pupils at the end of the lesson to take their slates out and write the animals' names and to verify their lesson comprehension and their writing abilities. She asked them to raise their slates up and if a pupil made a mistake, she would bring him to the board and directly ask his mates to identify the mistake and correct it and then ask the pupil who made the mistake to rewrite it correctly and cheered him up right after with a high five.

#### **4.1.4 Teachers' use of concrete situation to teach English**

During our observation sessions in AMAR Khelloufi elementary school of TIGZIRT, the teacher used a picture that she stuck on the board, that showed animals in the farm. She conducted her lesson with the help of that picture, she highlighted the main terms that should be used to explain what was on the picture, and then at the end of the lecture she picked 3 pupils and gave them the floor to conduct a dialogue about their favorite farm animal. Each time a pupil did a mistake she would hurry to correct him immediately to carry on the dialogue with smoothness, and sometimes without the help of the teacher, the pupils corrected their mates directly.

In BELHOCINE Hocine Elementary school of TIZI-OUZOU, the teacher reached a unit where the main subject was « my fancy birthday », she first took out flashcards that showed a cake, candles, and a table full of fancy decorations, then she asked the pupils to guess what the lecture is about and then all the pupils shouted « A BIRTHDAY ! », then she picked her daughter who was actually having her birthday that weekend, then she announced that all the pupils were welcome to her daughter's fancy birthday party. She asked every pupil what he/she will bring with him to the birthday party. So she contextualized the unit to make the pupils interested and engaged in the flow of the session, and to motivate each child to participate directly by giving her their date of birth and asked them to ask another pupil to come to his/her birthday party. At this stage the formal operational stage of cognitive development is directly involved in the process of cognition, since the pupils are directly encouraged to develop their capacity of deductive reasoning and logic to get along with the birthday subject. According to the National Standards for Language Learning, published by the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (1999), cultural knowledge can be gained through examining cultural practices, products, and perspectives.

#### **4.1.5 Teachers' implication in the process of correcting pupils**

From the observation sessions conducted on 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> year in each school, pupils tended to correct themselves and their mates even though they were still doing mistakes. But with further implication the teachers would be aware about the common language transfer on the new words that the children would grasp during the lecture, and will try to give plenty opportunities to the pupils in order to practice their speaking abilities by producing speech during the different activities conducted through the stream of the session.

Actually if we take in consideration implicitly the EA approach, the teacher will not correct only errors resulting from language transfer, but they also correct spelling, writing, and grammatical errors. In some sessions we saw the teacher emphasizing the pronunciations of some words that were difficult to the pupil to pronounce such as “sheep”, “cow”, “chick”, and “feather”.

#### **4.1.6 The influence of the Mother Tongue's grammatical rules on the English language**

We concluded during our classroom observation sessions that the pupils never mixed between the grammatical rules of each language, but rather they used directly their mother tongue to explain words that they do not find. This could be as negative as positive. As mentioned before in the review of literature, the MT is the source of prior knowledge which helps the pupils learn. They used to utter utterances from both French language such as in “madame? est ce que je peux effacer le tableau ?” instead of saying “miss ? can i erase the table ?”, and in situation like “a misses yiwen yehzen yiwen yefreh ?” instead of “one is sad and the other is happy ?”.

#### **4.1.7 Positive transfer of the language**

Such influence may be called positive when it facilitates the learning of a skill, gives similarities between two languages, on the other hand, it can be negative when a skill transferred from the L1 results in production that is different from target language expectations (Noor,1994). Sometimes we heard the pupils during the observation session mixing pre-existing knowledge from their MT to the TL but not finding the word exactly, so we encountered situations, such as when the teacher showed a flashcard about “grass” and let the pupils guess what it was in English, and then right after a pupil answered by yelling “lehcic a miss”, so we deduced that, thanks to his prior knowledge, he knows the word that was shown to him but did not have enough knowledge which is the word itself “grass”.

#### **4.1.8 Teachers’ feedback towards pupils**

During all the observation sessions that we conducted in the 4 schools, we noticed that the teachers always gave feedback gently to their pupils. This feedback is manifested in a way, which the teacher asks the pupils to repeat to automatically deduce their mistake and also by directly telling where the mistake is and will give the right form to the pupil and will ask him to repeat with the corrected version. Sometimes as mentioned earlier, the teacher will bring the child to the board and ask directly his mates if he is correct or not, and then she brings a second pupil to correct the first one. The teachers are aware that the pupils are still attached to their Mother Tongue because it is the first language they learned and that it is with this MT that they know everything, so it may be delicate to take it off since the beginning of their learning process.

According to Harmer (1998) “correction helps students to clarify their understanding of the meaning and construction of the language” (p.62). Teachers should be concerned with how to correct students as one way may be appropriate for one but may not be appropriate

for another. Sometimes pupils can correct themselves when the error it is a slip of tongue, other times they need the help of the teacher.

#### **4.1.9 Overcoming the use of Mother Tongue during the session**

During the observation sessions that we conducted on 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> year Elementary schools, we noticed that teachers ignore the MT interference to not disturb the stream of the session, but sometimes they state directly that they would not tolerate the use of the mother tongue during the class. So when it occurs the teacher stops immediately the stream of the lecture and goes directly to the pupil who struggles to find the word in the TL with a flashcard containing the right word in the TL in her hands and will explain to him that the word that he was trying to get was displayed on the picture, and will ask him to repeat several times with the flashcard in his hand, and then she will take it off from him and ask him to repeat again and check if he grasped the concept and in fact he will repeat it correctly.

### **4.2 Discussion of The Findings of Teachers' Questionnaire**

#### **4.2.1 Teachers' evaluation of pupils' level**

The study and interpretation of the teachers' questionnaire revealed valuable information on pupils' level. In general, teachers were dissatisfied with their pupils' low level of communication. They assumed that the pupils were lacking in the fundamental skills. According to Lazarus "children have the basic structure of organizing and adapting to their environment and their behavior tend to be circular and also develop an elementary understanding of the things around" (2010).

Teachers reported that children struggled to express themselves effectively; they accorded to say that the most common flaws were made in both the speaking and the reading skills. They generally tend to rely on their MT when they produce any piece of speech, thus

they compensate their low level of vocabulary in the TL with the vocabulary of their NL and this leads to recurrent interference and transfer in both languages.

Teachers claimed that the pupils had difficulties dealing with the English language in general due to some cited hindrance such as inhibition, lack of vocabulary, and oral practice. This may lead to some delay in the process of acquiring a foreign language, an inhibited fearful temperament may be an early precursor of internalizing behavioural problems such as anxious and depressive symptoms (Fox, Calkins, Shmidt, Rubin, & Coplan 1996). They furthermore argued that with their lack of vocabulary toddlers remain inconsistent in speaking and writing tasks because they further noticed the unexisting self-efforts in reading tasks to grasp new vocabulary and this led to difficulties faced by the teachers when all the pupils ignored the concepts taught. According to Grabe “reading involves continual extraction and incremental integration of text information. Successful reading comprehension, therefore, necessitates a set of linguistic knowledge and the skills to utilize the knowledge for construction of textual meaning” (2009, p.40).

#### **4.2.2 Teachers’ evaluation of pupils’ difficulties**

After we have analyzed the results of the questionnaires submitted. We noticed that teachers said that the most difficult areas that the pupils faced in EFL classes were comprehension, vocabulary, and pronunciation. Children struggled in fact to understand the basic assignments that the teachers gave them, therefore, they ignored at the basis what is the teacher saying and what he intended to make them do. The teachers mainly relied on visual aids like flashcards, sounds, videos and gestures. As Spurr said “it could be shown in more detail just how the inclusion of the realia in the foreign language course contributes to the facility of learning and the depth of comprehension of the language itself” (1942).

The majority of teachers also judged the level of speaking of their pupils as medium due to their lack of proficiency in the English language and their unfamiliar environment to

such language, although the pupils are still in the preoperational stage of cognitive development some elements in the teachers' class proved them that they have a good level despite their young age. The teachers noticed the gap between them and how quick and easily the good elements answered directly without making errors or mistakes due to their active involvement and their love towards the English language, so the learning process became much easier for them because it does not manifest itself as an effort but rather as a pleasure to them.

Furthermore, the teachers claimed that there are 3 major mistakes that their pupils made during class while teaching, the first one is quite a disciplinary problem which led to a chaotic classroom where the pupils instead of answering one by one, they interfere when their mates are already answering and this provoked a general miss-comprehension in the class and made the teacher lose precious time during his session. The second one is that they do not make a real difference between French and English words, so they mix and combine words from both languages. The last one is the most recurrent one which is the MT interference that influence the acquisition process. Teachers struggle to make them used to the English language because their MT always present itself during speech unconsciously.

Through our analysis, the teachers make use of realia to keep the pupils actively engaged and interested during the lesson, thus they judged useful images, records, songs, plays and videos to attract the attention of the child and make him/her understand with depth the word, that they are learning throughout the course. With the application of Piaget's theory that describes the cognitive development of children, we can tell that at this age these young teenagers start to think more logically of their surroundings and as Lazarus said "the child use the objects and symbols to represent something which exists in a concrete form for example, a child plays with a car as if it is a real car"(2010). Thanks to all these tools the learning activity itself becomes active and interactive between the elements present in the classroom and this may lead to an easier way to teach pupils, "it is not a question of quantity,

but of quality, nor does it necessarily follow that because one item of interest is beneficial, ten items are ten times as helpful' (Spurr, 1942). This confirms our second hypothesis which is stated in the general introduction, and which states that teachers can use different tools and techniques to make the learning process much easier, active and interactive by encouraging the interactional aspect of learning.

#### **4. 2.3 Teachers' practices**

According to the results of the questionnaire, the majority of the teachers answered the question by ticking the task proposition and some of them make use of group works. They said that from this kind of practice they were able to monitor the pupils and at the same time to keep the session under control to prevent some kind of errors. They further said that thanks to this type of activities they could potentially evaluate the degree of pupils' comprehension of the lesson. They trigger their ability of understanding and proficiency in ESL, since in this stage as cited in the framework the children are still highly concrete and literal in their thinking so they will directly grasp the information given without any difficulty. According to Piaget, J. (1983) "the further implication for instruction is the use of concrete hands on experiences to help learners learn additional suggestions" (p, 69). Teachers further argued that the textbook also can be a relevant source to rely on but still not sufficient enough, thus it does not go along with all the lesson in the yearly course, so they said that they have to rely on more than only the textbook, they make also use of other documents and tools to fulfill their duty as a foreign language teacher.

However, the teachers all agreed on the fact that they lack severely both materials and time. In all the schools where we conducted this study, teachers were not provided with the right equipment such as, data show, maps, and so on.... .Despite this fact, the teachers were always innovative in such ways that they always try in a way or another to convey the information to the pupils in a way that every they will understand the lesson that is being

taught even though they find themselves limited in terms of time when they tend to take a test or even a simple task and always finding themselves stealing from other teachers'. Anderson (1991) says that "the removal of time constraints may also mitigate other factors associated with poorer performance, including inadequate test-taking strategies, test anxiety, and familiarity with testing contexts"

The teachers have also positively answered the question of providing feedback to pupils. They all try to give a formative feedback to their pupils to make them understand the main principles of a lesson and guide them through the stream of the session. According to Cohen, feedback "is one of the more instructionally powerful and least understood features in instructional design" (1985, p.33).

In order to overcome the pupils' difficulties in the practice of the English language, the teachers use a widely spread technique which is called the "choral" which consists of singing a song all together even with the participation of the teacher to make the pupils less intimidated and anxious. It will engage all the elements in a common activity and the teacher will still check the pronunciation of the pupils when they sing. According to Mwamwenda "It is absolutely possible to incorporate Piaget's theory in the classroom" (2009) explain first and page. Since the teachers are using basic features and easy to the child to absorb, they do not need to complicate too much things for the pupils. Piaget also suggests that children are only capable of learning specific material in specific stages of cognitive development. They further added that when they face uninterested class they make use of graded tasks to create a competition that encourages the pupils to make efforts. From this we can confirm our third hypothesis present in the general introduction which states that the teacher always knows how to help the pupils by handing them feedback, tips, and to take benefits from practice as an opportunity to take over the difficulties that the pupils may encounter during their learning process.

#### **4.2.4 The Mother Tongue interference**

Throughout our analysis of the results of the teachers' questionnaire, the teachers stated that the L1 do not influence only on grammar, pronunciation, and syntax separately but the influence happens in all of these cited aspects, since the pupils will always try to find an equivalent word from the L1. According to Hakan "the L1-influence can be expected to be greater than in a spontaneous speech situation, since the student's task is primarily to find equivalents to given L1-words"(1978, pp. 80-101).

Teachers also argued that the pupils use their MT in terms of habit, since it is their reference language, they also added that they lack proficiency in the English language. Because it is the first year that this new language has been introduced to them. They noticed that almost all the pupils turn completely silent and embarrassed when they are stuck while producing speech in the English language, and that some of them get back to their MT directly to find the equivalent word. However, the teachers also spoke about positive reinforcement for pupils to express themselves in the L2 only, though the teachers are aware of the common language transfer errors they always try to give the chance and the opportunity to each element in order to improve and practice his English through speaking and writing activities and not to limit their efforts. From this we can confirm our last hypothesis which says that teachers cope with the students' MT interference in EFL classes by correcting the pupils gently and providing them the chance to practice and feedback to improve themselves.

#### **Conclusion**

This third chapter reveals that 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> year elementary school English pupils make numerous errors and mistakes due to interference with their MT, which is one of the major challenges they confront in achieving proficiency in speaking. The teachers are always present to give maximum efforts in terms of teaching approaches and techniques by handing

the information to the pupils in every way possible, since this field needs innovative teachers to keep the pupils always engaged and interested with captivating activities.

To sum up, English language pupils who make mispronunciation and language transfer caused by their low level of proficiency in English are unable to communicate and express themselves in English. The pupils rely on previous knowledge of the NL to face difficulties caused by the lack of vocabulary, and this comes along with the cognitive theory of Piaget cited above that the children do not have similar brains like adults and that children go through 4 stages during their growth to build new knowledge from previous knowledge. Here comes the role of the teachers in such situation, to help their pupils by making the learning process much easier to them, They are aware of the common language transfer errors, they are also conscious that it is the first year of introduction of this new foreign language so they should take it easy with the toddlers since they need a peaceful environment to grasp information. And to provide the pupils with all the materials and tools needed to make the learning process active and interactive and easier than the traditional one.

# *General Conclusion*

## General Conclusion

The goal of the current study was to determine firstly, how learners' mother tongue affects their ability to learn and speak English, then how the teachers deal with such interference and help them to learn English as a second language at the third and fourth level in Elementary schools BELHOCINE HOCINE and HAMMOUTENE ALI situated in Tizi-Ouzou, AMAR KHELOUFI and EL MOKRANI situated in Tizirt. In this study, we investigated the teachers' proficiency in teaching English and how they deal with such interference in particular and how is the global level of English of the pupils. In addition to transferring all of their prior information from their L1 to the target language, learners of FL also frequently carry over their old habits into the target language. These details lead to the linguistic interference. This study has been conducted relying on two theories of learning named *The Cognitivists Learning Theory* chosen in order to understand how our English learners can acquire a new language thanks to the active process of building new knowledge from prior one, and how can the teachers help the pupils achieve this goal easily and actively. Error Analysis by Corder in 1967 we systematically recorded errors made by language users in both speech and writing to determine their cause and source to understand why the users perform in such ways, and especially how the teachers deal with such errors.

In the review of the literature, we have emphasized the theoretical concepts related to our topic, the learners' mother tongue interference on learning English as a foreign language speaking skill. We adopted the Error Analysis approach in order to record the errors made by the children while they perform English, to understand why and how they are making such errors which lead to L1 influence on L2. And how the teachers help their students to outpass the use of the mother tongue by adapting their teaching techniques according to each element present in the class.

The current attempt aims to accomplish three main goals. The first goal is to understand how the teachers cope with the pupils' mother tongue interference in EFL classes, it aims to determine the tools or the techniques that teachers can use to make the learning process easier for pupils. Finally, to know if the teachers really know how to help students to understand their mistakes and show them how to prevent them to occur another time.

In order to gather the needed data, two research tools have been used : a questionnaire distributed to fifteen teachers of English in BELHOCINE HOCINE (Tizi-Ouzou), HAMMOUTENE ALI (Tizi-Ouzou), AMAR KHELOUFI (Tigzirt), EL MOKRANI (Tigzirt), and some of them via 'Facebook English Language teaching groups'. In addition to the classroom observation sessions done in the above-cited schools, in order to give an answer to the proposed research questions and explain the hypothesis advanced in the General Introduction. A mixed method approach was used and this with the combination of both qualitative and quantitative methods. The quantitative data were analyzed by using the descriptive statistical method, and the qualitative data were presented referring to the discourse analysis (DA) method. These data are already drawn from two research tools, 15 questionnaires which have been distributed to the different schools and to teachers in some English language teaching groups. Nine classroom observations were conducted also to record the teacher's ways of teaching and the reaction of their pupils.

Through our observation sessions, we noticed that the pupils made several errors when they came to practice English in aspects such as, vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation. In our study, the results showed that the L1 influence on the L2 in every language aspect thus, the L1 of the pupils is the very first language and words pronounced so the learners are going to make an obvious and unconscious link between the new and the already acquired language and this confirms the third hypothesis.

From the results gathered from both the research tools: questionnaire and classroom observations, we were able to respond positively to the research questions asked in the general introduction by using the data from the questionnaire and classroom observation. We were able to determine that effectively the teachers know how to cope with the pupils' mother tongue interference with their foreign language. We also got to confirm the two advanced hypotheses : that the teachers both know how to cope with the children' mother tongue by being aware of the common language transfer errors, and that the teachers make use of different tools to overcome the pupils' difficulties towards learning a new language which may help them understand more easily new words from passed ones by making the learning task way more easier and interactive with modern techniques and new tools.

It is hoped that our study has contributed positively to the field of language education, especially in the context of the influence of the mother tongue in EFL classes. It is also hoped that this study will be beneficial for elementary teachers of English to understand how to overcome the pupils' difficulties when it comes to learn a new language. At the end, we hope that this modest research will open opportunities for further research in this area of study in the purpose of improving the English learning.

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# *Appendices*

# Appendices

## Appendix 1

The teachers' Questionnaire

Dear misses and misters,

This questionnaire is designed for Elementary English teachers in order to answer some questions related to our research topic and help us to gather sufficient amount of information to conduct our study entitled « The Role of Pupils' Mother Tongue in Elementary EFL Classes : Teachers views and Practices ». Your answers will be used for our research in a complete anonymous way. Please read carefully the questions and answer them with honesty. Thank you for your cooperation.

Master 2 Language and Communication students.

Mouloud Mammeri University of Tizi-Ouzou.

### *Section One: General Information*

**01: What is your work experience?**.....

### *Section Two: Learners Profile*

**01: How can you describe your pupils level?**

Good  Medium  Low

**02: Which skill pupils do find the most difficult to practice ?**

A) Reading

B) Writing

B) Speaking

D) Listening

**03: What limits that hinder the pupils from learning the English language?**

.....

*Section Three: Pupils Difficulties*

**01: Where do pupils find exactly difficulties in the English language?**

A) Pronunciation

B) Accent

C) Vocabulary

D) Grammar

E) Comprehension

**02: How can you describe the speaking skill of your pupils?**

A) Good

B) Medium

C) Low

**03: Which material do you use to practice speaking skill?**

.....

**04: What is the common mistake that they commit in class?**

.....

*Section Four: Teachers' Views and Practices*

**01: How do you evaluate your pupils' lesson comprehension?**

A) Tasks  B) Homeworks

C) Group works  D) Brainstorming

**02: What is the main obstacle that pupils face during class in terms of studying?**

.....

**03: Do you provide feedback to their pupils to show them their mistakes?**

A) Yes  B) No

**04: Do you find the textbook relevant for an English teacher to practice his duty as a teacher?**

.....

**05: Do you let your pupils talk freely in some occasions?**

A) Yes

B) No

C) Sometimes

**06: On which criteria you rate your pupils' speaking skill?**

A) Pronunciation

B) Accent

C) Vocabulary

D) Grammar

E) Fluency

**07: What are the strategies that you use to overcome the pupils' difficulties in speaking?**

.....

*Section Five: Mother Tongue Interference*

**01: Do you think that the Mother Tongue influence in EFL classes?**

A) Yes                       B) No

**02: In which side the L1 influences the L2?**

A) Grammar                       B) Pronunciation

C) Syntax                       D) All the above

**03: How do you deal with such interference?**

.....

**04: According to you why pupils refer to their MT when they speak English?**

.....

**05: What pupils do when they are stuck with English when they speak during class?**

.....

## Appendix II

### The checklist

ITEMS TO BE OBSERVED	Frequency				
	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always
01: Do the pupils appear to have a low level of confidence?					
02: Do pupils interfere with their MT while speaking English?					
03: Do the teacher make use of different tools to make the learning process easier?					
04: Do teachers make use of concrete situation to teach English?					
05: Do teachers correct immediately pupils' errors or let them deduce their errors by themselves?					
06: Do pupils use their mother tongue's grammatical rules on the English language?					
07 : Is the transfer positive ?					
08: Do the teachers give their feedback to pupils?					
09: How teachers overcome the use of Mother Tongue during the session?					