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**Presented by:**

**- Hayet MAZOUZI**

**- Nadhira HADJ SAID**

**Supervised by:**

**- Djedjiga BESSAD**

**Board of Examiners:**

Chairman: Mr. Akli AOUINE, MAA, Department of English, MMUTO.

Supervisor: Mrs. Djedjiga BESSAD, MAB, Department of English, MMUTO.

Examiner: Ms. Nassima AZOUAOU, MAA, Department of English, MMUTO.

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The Master domiciliation laboratory: .....

## ***DEDICATIONS***

*First of all, I am very grateful for being capable to achieve this work.*

*This study is wholeheartedly dedicated to my beloved Parents.*

*To my late Grandmother Fatma.*

*To my Brothers and Sisters.*

*To my Nieces and Nephews.*

***Hayet MAZOUZI***

## ***DEDICATIONS***

*I dedicate this work to my dearest Parents especially my Mother Fatma SI HAMDI, the person to whom I will be grateful for my whole life for her endless love, guidance and support during my studies from primary school until now.*

*To my sweet Grandmother Smina MOUICI for her affection and care.*

*To my dearest Brothers: Fares, Nassim and Kamel.*

*To my beloved ones who are always by my side in ups and downs.*

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## **Abstract**

*The present study explores spelling errors of EFL freshmen students of the Department of English at Mouloud Mammeri University of Tizi Ouzou. It aims to investigate the common spelling error types these students tend to make in their writings. It also tries to provide some remedial techniques to minimize such errors. The study focuses on the intralingual transfer of errors; that is to say, the spelling errors selected and analyzed are raised within the target language itself without relying on mother tongue or second language interference errors. In addition, it examines the importance of teachers' provision with written corrective feedback. The study is based on Ellis' Error Analysis Theory (1994) and his "Typology of Written Corrective Feedback Types" (2009). Moreover, it follows Corder's classification (1973) of error types and Richards's classification (1974) of the intralingual sources. The corpus includes fifty students' examination samples of civilization and literature modules of the academic year 2018/2019 and a questionnaire administered to fifteen EFL teachers of the same modules. Hence, the two research instruments are used to collect qualitative and quantitative data for the sake of answering the research questions. The results show that students commit spelling errors in the four error types including omission, addition, misinformation and misordering. They also reveal that the ignorance of rule restrictions is the major factor in the occurrence of spelling errors besides incomplete application of rules, false concepts hypothesized and overgeneralization of rules. Furthermore, EFL teachers point out the prominence of written corrective feedback in motivating students to be conscious of their errors and thus to produce less spelling errors. To minimize these errors, teachers suggest three remedy techniques namely intensive reading, practice of the oral and the written forms of the English language, and relying on hard copy dictionaries.*

**Key Phrases:** *Spelling Errors. Error Analysis. Intralingual Sources. Written Corrective Feedback.*

## **List of Abbreviations**

- CF: Corrective Feedback
- DF: Direct Feedback
- EA: Error Analysis
- EF: Electronic Feedback
- EFL: English as a Foreign Language
- ESL: English as a Second Language
- FC/UNF: Focused and Unfocused Feedback
- FCH: False Concepts Hypothesized
- HP: Hypothesis
- IAR: Incomplete Application of Rules
- IF: Indirect Feedback
- IRR: Ignorance of Rule Restrictions
- L1: First Language
- L2: Second Language
- MLF: Metalinguistic Feedback
- MMUTO: Mouloud Mammeri University of Tizi Ouzou
- OGR: Overgeneralization of Rules
- REF: Reformulation Feedback
- SPSS: Statistical Package for Social Sciences
- TL: Target Language
- WCF: Written Corrective Feedback
- ZF: Zero Feedback

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## **General Introduction**

Learning a foreign language, mainly English, requires huge and conscious efforts by students for the purpose of mastering all its components. Nowadays, English is considered as a dominant and global language. In Algeria, learning English as a foreign language (EFL) has become a necessity for students because it provides them with opportunities to increase their abilities to deal with new and complex situations. In the process of language learning, errors are inevitable; that is to say, it is natural that learners make errors while the process of language acquisition is taking place. At some point, errors provide evidence on how the learning process is progressively developing. Corder (1967) emphasizes the significance of learners' errors in the process of language learning. In this regard, Phuket and Normah (2015:99) argue that errors "provide to the researcher evidence of how language is learned or acquired, what strategies or procedures the learner is employing in the discovery of the language". Therefore, as learners make errors in the target language, Error Analysis Theory emerged in the 1960s to examine these errors.

Error analysis (EA) was first established by Corder and his colleagues (1967) in order to describe second language errors; it is regarded as one of the major fields of second language acquisition. It involves a set of procedures adopted to categorize and explain the various types of errors. It has been later defined by James (1998:1) as "the process of determining the incidence, nature, causes and consequences of unsuccessful language". In other words, EA describes the deviations that appear in the learner's language and tries to explain them by identifying their sources to decide whether they are considered as mistakes or errors. Thus, native speakers of a specific language make mistakes like slips of the tongue which differ from the errors committed by second or foreign language learners that occur several times. Ellis (1994) considers learners' errors as deviations from the norms of the target language; he argues that 'an error takes place when the deviation arises as a result of

lack of knowledge; it represents a lack of competence' while a mistake "occurs when learners fail to perform their competence" (Ellis, 1994:51).

### **Statement of the Problem**

English language consists of four major skills. The writing skill is one of the most difficult skills for EFL learners as claimed by Nunan (1999). Kroll (1990:140) also shares the same perspective; he believes that "it is partially the multiplicity of skills involved which contributes to the overall difficulty of writing". For this reason, EFL students tend to make errors in writing. Therefore, several aspects make students believe that writing is a difficult skill. There is the difference in the grammatical system, pronunciation and vocabulary between the English language and the learners' mother tongue. In fact, spelling is one of the aspects that to be inevitably mastered. It gives a good first impression about the learner especially when teachers correct their written works. The theory of EA emerged to categorize and explain errors in general including spelling. The latter represents the ability to spell appropriately words in English and the capacity to arrange them in a correct form. According to Corder (1973), spelling errors are investigated in terms of omission, addition, misinformation and misordering.

Making errors by students is something inevitable; for this reason, an effective feedback has a significant role in refining the process of learning a foreign language. This study will also rely on Ellis's "Typology of Written Corrective Feedback Types" (2009), due to the interrelation of error types and teachers' feedback. Thus, feedback can be considered as a backbone for an effective learning process because of its efficiency in helping students to get attention at some new aspects of the target language.

In the local context, some investigations have been conducted in the Department of English at Mouloud Mammeri University of Tizi Ouzou in terms of error analysis. By way of

example, the research study of Belgacem (2014) focused on analyzing argumentative essays written by third year students relying on Halliday and Hasan's (1976) classification of cohesive devices with particular reference to Error Analysis Theory. In addition, Hanachi and Berkane (2015) have conducted a research which examined a corpus of one hundred examination papers in the written expression module for the aim of categorizing and explaining the various types of errors. These errors include articles and prepositions as interlingual errors, while tenses and nouns as intralingual errors. Furthermore, Iddir and Laimeche (2020) have investigated the informal features used by third year students in their academic writing and identifying the major types of the errors they made. The data are obtained from eighty examination papers written by third year students in the civilization module. As a new aspect, it shows how the use of social networking affects students' academic writing.

The above mentioned studies are some examples among a number of works conducted in the field of error analysis in various contexts for the aim of comprehending students' errors and trying to figure out a way to improve their writing skills. However, no study has been conducted on the importance of teachers' feedback in minimizing students' spelling errors at the level of the Department of English at MMUTO. Hence, the principle behind this study is to make students reduce their spelling errors and help teachers to be conscious of these errors that students make in their written works.

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

The current study aims to examine errors of spelling. Its overall aim is to shed light on the common spelling errors that freshmen students commit in civilization and literature examinations in the Department of English at Mouloud Mammeri University of Tizi Ouzou of the academic year 2018/2019. It also investigates the intralingual sources of these spelling errors. Thus, this dissertation seeks to suggest some remedial solutions to this error type and



how teachers could contribute in this process by emphasizing the role of written corrective feedback.

### **Research Questions and Hypotheses**

In this work, we have designed three research questions which are as follow:

1. What are the types of spelling errors made by freshmen students at the Department of English at MMUTO?
2. What are the possible causes of these spelling errors?
3. Does written corrective feedback positively or negatively influence students' spelling?

The above questions led to formulate the following hypotheses:

Hp1. Many types of spelling errors are made by first year students, namely spelling errors of omission, addition, misinformation and misordering.

Hp2. The intralingual transfer is a major source of these errors.

Hp3. In teachers' view, written corrective feedback has a positive influence on students' spelling.

### **Research Techniques and Methodology**

Throughout this work, we will try to prove whether the above hypotheses are going to be confirmed or refuted. The sample population consists of fifty examination papers of both civilization and literature modules in the Department of English at MMUTO. The mixed method is adopted for the collection and the analysis of data. Thus, this case study gathered quantitative and qualitative data from students' writing samples and teachers' questionnaire administered to fifteen EFL teachers of the same modules.

## **Structure of the Dissertation**

This dissertation is divided into four chapters. The first chapter is devoted to the review of the literature by defining the main theoretical concepts related to the topic along with the two theoretical frameworks: Error Analysis (1994) and Written Corrective Feedback (2009). The second chapter deals with research design and methodology where samples and research instruments are described in order to confirm or refute the hypotheses set in the general introduction. The third chapter refers to the presentation of the findings where we will attempt to give the different errors identified in the corpus, whereas discussion of the findings is the last chapter which is devoted to the analysis of the results gained throughout this work. To sum up, the general conclusion is a restatement of the main aspects of the study. These four chapters are interrelated in order to help the reader understand the field of our research.

# **Chapter One: Review of the Literature**

## **Introduction**

Literature review chapter seeks to explore the core topic of this research study by defining the key concepts and basic components related to the two main areas of study. The latter includes the theories of Error Analysis and Written Corrective Feedback, from the occurrence of errors in students' writing examined by Error Analysis Theory to the significance of teachers' responses relying on the Written Corrective Feedback Theory. In this chapter, the focus is on the sources of errors especially intralingual ones. Since the aforementioned concepts are almost repeated throughout the whole dissertation, this chapter permits readers to better comprehend what each of these issues is about. The present study aims to examine the common spelling errors in EFL students' writing considering that difficulties in writing take various types.

## **I. Definitions**

### **1. Learning English as a Foreign Language**

Being a bilingual or multilingual is not an opportunity provided for many people. The ability to speak in many languages means the ability to think and cope with that specific area that the language is offering; it is a different version of life. Moeller and Catalano (2015:327) indicate that the "study of another language allows the individual to communicate effectively and creatively and to participate in real-life situations through the language of the authentic culture itself". Nowadays, learning many languages becomes a primordial concern especially for students. This aptitude provides the learner with a form of connections with a variety of people not only for the learning purpose, but also it nurtures his/her critical thinking across different societies; "learning another language provides access into a perspective other than one's own" (ibid). Consequently, learning a foreign language needs to be an essential part of any student's academic curriculum. Goethe and Saunders (1908:154) state "a man who has no

acquaintance with foreign languages knows nothing of his own". Hence, the process of teaching a foreign language is a complex process because the main aim of a foreign language is to talk and to communicate with.

A foreign language differs from a second language. The latter is a language that you master besides your native language whereas the former includes a language that is taught only in classrooms. Richards and Schmidt (2002:514) state "any language learned after one's native language" is called second language. But "a language is considered foreign if it is learned largely in the classroom and is not spoken in the society" claimed Moeller and Catalano (2015:327). In the Algerian educational system, English is taught as a foreign language. For instance, an Algerian speaker living in the United States of America can say that English is a foreign language to him. Learning EFL is the ability to read and write correctly, also the ability to understand and maintain conversations in real context situations. Therefore, it requires the mastery of the four skills, namely listening, speaking, reading and writing. The writing skill is the main concern of this work; it is the ability and knowledge to express ideas, information and experiences through written forms (White, 1986:10).

## **2. The Writing Skill in Language Learning**

The capacity to write well is not a natural skill; it is learnt through a lot of practice. It takes time for students to become proficient and skillful writers, and it is up to teachers to provide students with enough time and opportunities to practice writing. The latter is considered as a thinking process and with time it strengthens the critical thinking of learners. In addition, writing is a major means of evaluating students' learning since they are assessed for the way they write most of the time. Students then are taking most of their exams in the written form simply because writing has an important role in qualifying students' achievements in learning a language (Hendri; Pratomo, 2018:63).

Writing is the most difficult skill in the process of learning English. It is considered as a productive skill in which learners are producing the language. It is critical because it is an observable evidence of language acquisition and achievement. A good writing skill requires the use of an appropriate vocabulary, correct grammar and spelling along with accurate punctuation to form an entire or simply a transparent and coherent idea. To deal with all these details in writing, students of English face serious problems with the writing skill so it is impossible not to make errors in writing. In an academic context, writing plays a vital part in learning language skills, it enables students to ponder and control their own thinking and write down only what is necessary for that specific work. Oshima and Hogue (2007:15) claimed that “writing is never a one step action; it is an ongoing creative act”. Writing is regarded as a reflection of language performances. Thus, due to its complexity, learners namely EFL students find serious deficiencies in their writing skills. Unfortunately, many EFL learners are not equipped with satisfactory competences to write well since it involves a great amount of mental capacity. Writing and learning to write has always been one of the most complicated language skills that students need to develop.

The significance of writing resides in the abilities of students to improve their language skills in terms of accuracy, fluency and clarity of meanings and messages in order to perform a satisfying level of writing proficiency. Nunan (1999) considered the writing skill as the most difficult skill for all language learners either the language is the mother tongue, the second or the foreign language.

## **2.1. Deviations in Writing**

English writing skills are significant as they play an important role in the communication process. The writing problems a learner encounters during his learning process can be called deviations. This process of writing is not flawless, but it is full of barriers for EFL students who tend to make errors. In language learning, errors are no more

considered as signs of failure or a problem that should be eradicated, instead they are considered as a natural aspect of second language acquisition (Corder, 1967). Therefore, errors now are seen as an evidence of the learners' level in the target language, they give valuable information about students' learning process. Corder (1967:167) states "a learner errors, then, provide evidence of the system of the language that he is using at a particular point in the course".

Spelling, in particular, is one of the English writing problems that EFL students face. Wrong spelling creates a kind of ambiguity in the meanings a learner's message intends to transmit.

### **3. Spelling**

#### **3.1. Spelling as a Writing Component**

As an important component of writing, spelling deems to be a major challenge to students. The ability to spell in an accurate way is basic and essential. It is believed that the most important criterion for a good writing performance is the content, but we must not underestimate the other aspects for a good writing performance, namely spelling. The latter is defined "as the process of recognizing and reproducing sounds of language into a sequence of letters in a written form or in an oral form" state Santoro et al (2006, as cited in Al-Bereiki and Al-Mekhlafi, 2015:661). The difficulties encountered by learners can be caused by the differences in the orthographic system between the English language and the mother tongue of the learner or even the influence of the second language. These spelling problems bring many spelling errors into the surface which has a negative impact on the writing proficiency of a student. Moreover, wrong spelling affects sentence's structure that causes incoherent sentences and mispronunciation of words.

### **3.2. The Significance of Correct Spelling**

Correct spelling has a great significance; it is a part of a good writing skill. The ability to spell correctly helps the reader to understand meanings appropriately. “Spelling words correctly is crucial because spelling conveys meaning, grammar and intent; thus misspellings may interfere with comprehension and eventually may hinder communication between the writer and the reader” argues Jennings (1998, as cited in Al-Bereiki and Al-Mekhlafi, 2015:662). Poor spelling influences the writing performance. Thus, it is significant for the teachers to emphasize students’ correct spelling to avoid misunderstandings especially in their written examinations. “Accurate spelling is of high importance and teachers have the responsibility for convincing learners that accurate spelling is mandatory for several parts in their exams” as stated by Al-Bereiki and Al-Mekhlafi (2015:662).

## **4. Distinguishing between Errors and Mistakes**

### **4.1. Errors**

Amara (2015:60) defines errors as “a systematic deviations made by learners who have not yet mastered the rules of L2”. In simple terms, an error is an incorrect form of the learner’s language; it is an outcome of learner’s lack of knowledge in the target language. In addition, Corder (1967) believes that errors differ from the forms used by native speakers of a language who are competent, whereas errors are more taking place with foreign language learners. Therefore, errors are no more ignored by teachers of second or foreign languages because errors still occur in students’ writing. Errors are seen as significant because they are a sign of language learning development and strategies employed by a language learner in his discovery of the aspects of the language (ibid).

### **4.2. Mistakes**

A mistake is a misapplication of the rules of the native or the second language in which these rules have been already studied and exercised in the classroom. Novita (2014:3)

claims that mistakes are related to language performance; that is to say, the student knows already the correct form but he/she is unable to perform his/her competence. Brown (2000) considers a mistake as a performance error which refers to the learner's failure to apply correctly a known system. According to Novita (2014:3), mistakes are caused by "slip of the tongue and physical condition, such as fatigue, lack of attention, and strong emotion. An example of mistake is the slip of the tongue done by someone when he wants to say mood but he wrongly utters the word moon".

For this reason, in order to examine the student's language from a scientific perspective, it is essential to make a difference between mistakes and errors which are technically two different phenomena. However, they can mean the same thing at some level. For learners of a foreign language, the major difficulty thereby may be raised due to the absence of concentration, fatigue or the pressure of what is around. Corder named them "mistakes" or "unsystematic errors" while James (1998) called them "lapses". On one hand, mistakes occur even with native speakers; so it can be effortless to determine the wrong form. On the other hand, when mistakes appear several times, and made unconsciously, they are considered as errors which are particular to second or foreign language.

## **II. Theoretical Frameworks**

### **1. Error Analysis Theory**

#### **1.1. A shift from Contrastive Analysis to Error Analysis**

The importance of the learner's native language in the acquisition of a new language led to the development of a field of research known as "Contrastive Analysis". The latter is a branch of linguistics which is concerned with the comparison of the mother tongue and the target language in order to predict and explain the errors made by learners. In this respect, Fries (1945:9) one of the leading applied linguists, argues "the most efficient materials are those that are based upon a scientific description of the language to be learned, carefully



compared with a parallel description of the native language learners”. Hence, it is a theory that attempts at contrasting the systems of two languages to figure out their differences and make use of them as a material for the prediction of errors. The main assumption contrastive analysis came with is that it allows the prediction of the difficulties learners encounter in the acquiring a second language (Richards, 1971). Richards (ibid:204) argues that “those elements that are similar to the learner’s native language will be simple for him, and those areas that are difficult will be difficult”. However, contrastive analysis was neglected in favour of error analysis because it was found unable to predict the existence of a number of actual errors.

As Contrastive Analysis deals with the identification of sources of errors and aspects of interference between the native language and the target language, error analysis came to classify and explain the errors observed in the target language itself. In this regard, Corder (1967) explains that it strives to compare the learner’s form of language at any distinct phase in his learning process with the target language. He proposes also a hypothesis which includes “some at least of the strategies adopted by the learners of second language are substantially the same as those by which a first language is acquired” (ibid:161). In other words, the same identical strategies and processes used by learners in acquiring a mother tongue are also involved in learning a second or a foreign language.

## **1.2. Definition of Error Analysis**

In the field of second language acquisition, Error Analysis was first founded in the 1960s by Corder and his colleagues. It is a theory used to analyze the errors that appear in a learner’s second or foreign language, figure out whether those errors are systematic and to explain which are the reasons behind making errors. In other words, EA focuses on the errors themselves that learners generally commit in the target language. Corder (1967) noted that errors are a visible proof that learning is taking place. He perceives errors as essential because

they permit the anticipation of learners' issues in second language acquisition for students and teachers as well. In this direction, Jain (1974, as cited in Richards 1974:208) argues that errors are rather considered as "an essential condition of learning, providing the teacher with clues on how to take the learner from limited rule schemata to more generalized ones". In other words, students' language errors provide evidence on their learning improvements and these errors facilitate to the teacher to suggest some better methods of teaching in way that is convenient to their students' level. For instance, a student who struggles in using the past continuous in English, the teacher may be helpful to accord the different ways to use this tense in the various existed situations. So, these limited rules will be effortless to apply by the student even with more complicated sentences.

In Crystal's view (1987:112), error analysis is "a technique for identifying, classifying and systematically interpreting the unacceptable form produced by someone learning a foreign language, using any of the principles and procedures provided by linguistics". For this reason, Error analysis is a fundamental and pertinent tool in language teaching regarding its aim to fill students' lacuna. This theory is carried out in four consecutive stages as suggested by Ellis (1994), namely collection of a sample of the learner's language, identification of errors, description of errors and explanation of errors. The theory came as a reaction and became distinguished from contrastive analysis that focuses only on the negative transfer of the native language, whereas error analysis attributes possible sources of errors. In this regard, Wenfen (2010:266) claimed that "errors could be fully described in terms of the TL, without the need to refer to the L1 of the learners". EA highlights the significance of learners' errors in second language learning. Therefore, Corder (1967) takes learners' errors into a new level considering them as important in language learning. He believes that learners with errors are better learners simply because each time they make an error, they learn about and avoid them in the upcoming learning context (ibid).

## **1.5. Sources of Errors**

Richards (1974) classifies error sources into two major categories: interlingual errors and intralingual errors. The former are errors derived from the interference of the native language whereas the latter are errors developed within the target language itself.

### **1.5.1. Interlingual Errors**

Learning a new language is full of challenges. The first obstacle that learners face is always drawing a connection consciously or unconsciously between their mother language and the target language. That is why learners create a correlation between what they already know and what they do not know. The notion of interference is a significant source in EFL or ESL learners' errors. The errors caused by the influence of the mother tongue are called "interlingual errors". Thus, the latter is the errors resulted from the learners' interference of the native language elements. They are defined by Schachter and Celce-Murcia (1977:443) as "those caused by the influence learner's mother tongue on production of the target language in presumably those areas where languages clearly differ". Lim (2010:24) believes that interference has always been regarded as one of the main components which cause difficulties in acquiring a second language. Xie and Jiang (2007:11) perceive interference as "neither the system of the native language nor the system of the target language, but falls between the two". In other words, learners have established a mechanism for themselves which is different in some ways from their mother tongue and the second language systems. Interlingual errors are called by Touchie (1986) "interfere errors". The interference transpires in various linguistic components such as grammar, lexis, phonology and so on.

### **1.5.2. Intralingual Errors**

Interference of first language (L1) is not the only source of errors' appearance in the learners' writings. Richards (1971), in his article entitled: "a Non-Contrastive Analysis to

Error Analysis”, emphasizes intralingual errors emerging within the structures of the target language itself. Intralingual errors are a misapplication of the target language rules which learners commit when they misuse certain target language rules. Touchie (1986:77) pointed out that “intralingual errors and developmental errors are due to the difficulty of the second/target language”. There are several types of errors noticed in learning English which are not derived from another language and they reflect the general learning strategies learners apply which are similar to those noticed in first language acquisition (Richards, 1971). The latter has suggested that errors are from different natures and caused by intralingual and developmental factors. In this regard, Richards (ibid:205) asserts that instead of reflecting “the inability to separate two languages, intralingual and developmental errors reflect the learner’s competence at a particular stage, and illustrate some of the general characteristics of language acquisition”. Richards (ibid) believes that this process is found within the structures of the English language where the learner attempts to create hypotheses from his/her own limited experience of it in the classroom or text-book. So he (1974:174-181) classifies errors observed in the acquisition of English as follows: overgeneralization of rules, ignorance of rule restrictions, incomplete application of rules and false concepts hypothesized.

#### **a) Overgeneralization of Rules**

Overgeneralization includes instances where the learner creates a deviant structure on the basis of his/her experience of other structures in the target language (Richards, 1971). Touchie (ibid:78) defines overgeneralization as “the use of one form or construction in one context and extending its application to other contexts where it should not apply”. Overgeneralization may occur with the grammatical items of the target language, for instance the omission of ‘s’ in the third person singular in the present simple because of the over-generalized rule in which all grammatical persons take no ‘s’ as an ending (Dusková, 1969 as cited in Richards, ibid.). Richards (ibid:6-7) argues that overgeneralization “involves the

creation of one deviant structure in place of two regular structures; it may be a result of the learner reducing his linguistic burden”. In addition, Littlewood (1984) mentions the examples of forming plurals by adding ‘s’ to irregular plurals, and generalizing the past form ‘ed’ for even irregular verbs; for instance, the use of ‘goed’ and ‘comed’ as the past simple of ‘go’ and ‘come’ (Touchie, 1986).

#### **b) Ignorance of Rule Restrictions**

It is caused by an incomplete learning of rules or existing structures. Sari et al (2019:140) argue that “this error occurred due to fail observation of students regarding the existing structure restrictions... in contrast to overgeneralization, where a particular rule is applied excessively”. In other words, the rule is not used in the correct context where it should be used (Hendri; Pratomo, 2018:63). Ellis (1994:59) provides the following example: “he made to rest”. He (ibid) argues that this error is a result of the “extension of the pattern found with the majority of verbs that take infinitival complements for example, he asked/wanted/invited me to go”.

#### **c) Incomplete Application of Rules**

The incomplete implementation of rules occurs when a learner fails to fully develop a certain structure needed to produce appropriate utterances. For instance, “you like sing?” instead of “do you like to sing?” (Ellis, ibid).

#### **d) False Concepts Hypothesized**

The errors are derived from faulty comprehension of some differentiations in the target language. Touchie (ibid:79) provides the following example: “it was happened last night”. The correct form is “it was last night”. So the student uses the past perfect continuous instead of the past simple tense.

To conclude, intralingual errors are distinguished from interlingual errors by Zobl and Liceras (1994, as cited in Al-Khresheh, 2016:55). They claim that intralingual errors are

originated from second language and they are similar to those made by native speakers. Thus, intralingual errors reflect the learner's competence at a certain developmental stage.

### **1.6. Four Steps to Error Analysis**

Error analysis is fulfilled in four consecutive stages as suggested by Ellis (1994) including the collection of a sample of learner's language, identification of errors, description of errors and explanation of errors.

#### **1.6.1. Collection of a Sample of the Learner's Language**

The first step to error analysis is the collection of a sample of the learner's language; it is a part of data collection methods. For the aim of conducting an error analysis study, it is necessary to collect data from students responding to the same kind of work that the researcher has identified before. The collected information is influenced by a number of important factors. Ellis (ibid:49) argues that "collecting a well-defined sample of learner language so that a clear statement can be made regarding what kinds of errors learners produce and what under conditions". Learners' errors are different; therefore, focusing on the right objective of the research is vital.

#### **1.6.2. Identification of Errors**

As mentioned before in this work, there is a distinction between what is an error and a mistake. The two phenomena are different in the way of their interpretation. Corder (1978) suggests that it is necessary to identify the presence and the nature of learners' errors in order to facilitate their interpretation. The researcher tries to draw a kind of channel between what the learner means and what he/she says. Thus, it is important to distinguish errors from mistakes and vice versa, and "to prove whether the deviations made by students can be categorized as errors" as claimed Novita (2014:5). Wenfen (2010:266) compares error identification to "the same way with what the police ask an eyewitness to identify the

suspect”. If a learner could correct his/her own deviant utterances, then it is a mistake; whereas if he/she could not, the deviations are errors.

### **1.6.3. Description of Errors**

Corder (1973) asserts that the description of errors depends on the correctness of our interpretation considering learners’ intention of meaning. This step concerns the classification and the description of errors which are categorized into four main types: omission, addition, misinformation and misordering relying on Corder’s classification (ibid:277), who states that the “difference of this sort can be classified into four categories: omission of some required element; addition of some unnecessary or incorrect elements; selection of incorrect element; and misordering of elements”. The four categories are assembled under the “Surface Strategy Taxonomy” proposed by Dulay et al (1982) for the description of students’ errors. They (ibid:150) claim that “learners may omit necessary items or add unnecessary ones; they may misform items or misorder them”. Therefore, this taxonomy includes the types of errors that distract the superficial structure of the sentences.

#### **a) Errors of Omission**

Omission errors occur when students omit certain important items of the target word or structure. Ellis (1994:56) states that “omissions are the absence of an item that must appear in a well-formed utterance”. He provides the following example “she sleeping” (ibid). In the example, there is an omission of the auxiliary ‘is’ to form the present continuous.

#### **b) Errors of Addition**

Addition errors occur when students add a letter to the target word. Unlike omission, addition errors are the occurrence of some unnecessary grammatical units in the structure of a sentence. For example, ‘the speech is a group of the sounds’, the addition of the definite article ‘the’ in this sentence is unnecessary. Two of the most common addition errors in

English are the addition of 's' at any plural noun; for instance, in the words 'womans' and 'mans', and the addition of 'ed' to form the past simple or the past participle to irregular verbs which never end with 'ed' form. For example, instead of 'given' (right form) 'gived' (wrong form).

### **c) Errors of Misinformation**

Misinformation or selection errors are characterized by the misusing of the correct form of a morpheme or a structure (Ellis, 1994:56). Ellis (ibid) provides the following example: "the dog ated the chicken"; the verb 'to eat' is an irregular verb so it does not formed by adding the past form 'ed'. In addition, in the following word 'broblem' instead of 'problem', there is a misuse in the letter 'b' instead of using the letter 'p'.

### **d) Errors of Misordering**

Errors of misordering occur when the students disorder two letters or more, or when there is a wrong organization of words in a sentence (Ellis, ibid). It is caused by a failure in applying the grammatical rules in a right way. It is the kind of errors EFL learners commit and this led them to construct incoherent and unstructured sentences. By a way of example, 'English is the best language international', the right form of this sentence is 'English is the best international language'.

All of the four categories weaken EFL students' performance. In the process of spelling error analysis, identifying the types of spelling errors is of central importance; since it assists to find out the sources of difficulties in writing.

### **1.6.4. Explanation of Errors**

The explanation of errors is a kind of a difficult task. It requires a lot of energy and a deep analysis to find out the causes that led to the occurrence of that error. It deals with the sources behind committing errors. Explanation of errors plays a significant role in the process



of second or foreign language acquisition simply because it gives insights into the process of learning.

### **1.7. The Significance of Error Analysis in EFL Classrooms**

Corder (1967), like many scholars, opted for the importance of error analysis in language learning, especially in English language teaching. In this view, Preethi (2013:211) states “error analysis in language acquisition process stimulated many major changes in teaching practice”. In other words, the errors committed by a language learner aid the teachers to propose structured methods of teaching which are suitable for students’ needs. Furthermore, Corder (ibid) indicates that the significance of error analysis concerns three groups: teachers, researchers and language learners. Preethi (ibid) also has dealt with the importance of error analysis when he asserts that “error analysis gives an insight into the learning strategies employed by the learner; it helps us to produce suitable teaching materials”. Hence, error analysis is highly an important instrument for teachers to observe how far their students are progressing. Wenfen (2010:268) has claimed that EA has great contribution for EFL teaching where “teachers should be sensitive to their students’ errors and summarize what kind of error students are most likely to make at certain period and then modify their teaching materials in order to adapt to the students’ needs”. In addition, a learner’s error occurs simply when he/she starts to test his/her hypotheses of the new language.

The difficulty of learning a second/foreign language reduces when learners become knowledgeable of their learning systems and also become conscious of the distinction between L1 and L2. In Corder’s perspective (ibid), the learner needs to consider the differences and similarities between the two languages, as well as the nature of the language he/she is leaning whereby it will provide him/her with new and different hypotheses. Moreover, Xie and Jiang (2007:13) point out that “some errors need to be handled... by

profiting from mistakes and by using mistakes to obtain feedback from the environment. With the feedback they make new attempts to achieve the more closely approximate desired goals”.

## **2. Written Corrective Feedback Theory**

### **2.1. Definition of Feedback**

Feedback refers to teachers’ spoken performance or written comments provided for learners’ errors. According to Dulay et al (1982:34), “feedback generally refers to the listeners’ or readers’ response given to the learners’ speech or writing”. Hence, teachers’ attitudes to correction are varied. Giving feedback is a way to facilitate the learning process for students and teachers as well. Nevertheless, in the actual context, if students do not have spelling strategies, they may have problems with spelling correction, so it is up to teachers to check on that error. Error correction followed by feedback is a part of teachers’ evaluation of students’ writing performances. For Hyland and Hyland (2006:83), feedback is “a key element of the scaffolding provided by the teacher to build learner confidence and the literacy resources to participate in target communities”.

In the field of second language acquisition, classroom interaction between teachers and students is the main concern especially teaching and learning English as a foreign language. The main issue must be the language itself and how it is used. For this reason, students need a lot of assistance from their teachers, namely in forms of feedback. Highlighting errors by teachers is a significant element in language learning because it is an effective and a useful aspect in students’ achievements.

### **2.2. Written Feedback**

Written Feedback is one of the complicated key components of L2 writing. It refers to teachers’ strategies in providing corrections for students’ errors. It is a valuable tool used in EFL classrooms to enhance language acquisition. There are as well various techniques to give

feedback for students' writing errors. The different types of written feedback teachers provide could take several forms. Teachers' purpose from correction must rely on supporting students to overcome their gaps in writing in an appropriate way. In addition, many studies emphasized error correction contribution in second language classrooms especially concerning the writing skill, because students who receive error feedback to any error are showing improvements in their writing accuracy over time (Hyland, 2003 and Chandler, 2003 as cited in Liu, 2008).

### **2.3. Written Corrective Feedback**

Lightbown and Spada (1999:171) define corrective feedback as "any indication to the learners that their use of the target language is incorrect; this includes various responses that the learners receive". Corrective feedback includes responses to learners' utterances that contain an error (Ellis et al, 2006:340). More specifically, "the responses can consist of an indication that an error has been committed, provision of the correct target language form, or metalinguistic information about the nature of the error, or any combination of these" suggest Ellis et al (ibid). In language learning and teaching, corrective feedback is perceived as a central component in the development of the writing skill. Therefore, written corrective feedback refers to teachers' responses to language learners' writing indicating some incorrect elements in the writing process of the target language. For foreign language students, receiving written corrective feedback is important because they could have a clue about their progress as learners. In writing, the different types of errors found they receive as well different types of feedback. In brief, written corrective feedback is an important tool to respond to learners' errors committed in their writing (Ferris, 1997).

## **2.4. Methods of Written Corrective Feedback**

Ellis (2009) classified written corrective feedback into six major types in his article entitled “Typology of Written Corrective Feedback Types”, namely direct, indirect, metalinguistic, focused and unfocused, electronic, and reformulation written corrective feedback.

### **2.4.1. Direct Feedback**

In giving direct feedback, the teacher provides students with the correct version by indicating the error; it is considered as an explicit guidance for the correction of errors. Ellis (2009:99) notes that direct feedback can take a number of forms including “crossing out an unnecessary word, phrase, or morpheme, inserting a missing word or morpheme, and writing the correct form above or near to the erroneous form”. Supporters of direct feedback believe that it is more immediate and explicit and does not create any confusion for students, instead they are asked to apply the same rule for similar problems to those provided with feedback (Alimohammadi and Nejadansari, 2014:584).

### **2.4.2. Indirect Feedback**

Indirect feedback or “self-correction”, “involves indication that the student has made an error without actually correcting it” (Ellis, *ibid*:100). The learners are not told that they made a mistake in an explicit way. According to Ellis (*ibid*:98), indirect feedback takes the form of underlining the errors in a student’s text, or specifying the location of errors in the margin. In this indirect kind of feedback, learners spend more time trying to figure out what is wrong; that is to say, more reflection is needed by the learner to know the error type. It is important in a way that Alimohammadi and Nejadansari (*ibid*) argue “followers of indirect method believe that it is useful since it engages the students in a problem solving situation and activates them to think deeply about the error”.

### **2.4.3. Metalinguistic Feedback**

Metalinguistic feedback refers to the use of explicit comments or linguistic signs to indicate the nature of the error. It includes the use of a brief grammatical clarifications or error codes (abbreviations) (Ellis, 2009:100). For example, relying on our field of research, the use of ‘S’ refers to incorrect spelling while ‘WO’ refers to wrong word order. Ellis (ibid:98) states “the teacher provides some kind of metalinguistic clue as to the nature of error”.

### **2.4.4. Focused and Unfocused Feedback**

On one hand, in focused feedback, the teacher only focuses on what he/she taught and ignores the other types of errors. On the other hand, in unfocused feedback, the teacher provides correction for all the existing errors so the scope of correction is uncontrolled; for example, spelling errors, grammatical errors, or the like. Ellis (ibid:98) affirms “this concerns whether the teacher attempts to correct all (or most) of the students’ errors or selects one or two types of errors to correct”.

### **2.4.5. Electronic Feedback**

In this kind of feedback, there is use of electronic software programs. Ellis (ibid) states “the teacher indicates an error and provides a hyperlink to a concordance file that provides examples of correct usage”. In other words, the electronic program enables students to check their errors in practical way and it encourages self-correction in which they could consult the link and compare between their errors and the language samples provided (ibid:103).

### **2.4.6. Reformulation Feedback**

In Ellis’ classification, it is the last kind of feedback in which the teacher reconstructs the incorrect part. In reformulation, he/she restructures the form but the original meaning or the idea is conserved to make it more native language. Ellis (ibid:98) claims “this consists of native speaker’s reworking of the students’ entire text to make the language seem as native-

like as possible while keeping the content of the original intact”. In this sense, Nguyen and Le (2017:181) believe that reformulation encourages learners to acquire grammar and the word meanings.

In brief, teachers have to make decisions which type of written corrective feedback to provide for the errors of spelling.

## **2.5. The Significance of Corrective Feedback in EFL Classrooms**

In foreign language writing, corrective feedback has always been an aspect with great value. Many studies stresses on the importance of written corrective feedback as a serious element of language pedagogy. Teacher’s written feedback is a crucial part of EFL classrooms; it plays a fundamental role in guiding students to write well and to focus on all the language components for a good writing performance. Learners must acknowledge that the comments written down by teachers are meaningful. The written feedback motivates students to avoid a sort of errors; for instance, during revisions they may remember errors they have committed before because of their teachers’ comments. This means that it helps students to produce texts with minimal errors in the future.

## **Conclusion**

To conclude, this chapter offered a simple overview on the main concepts related to this study including; the writing skill, errors in writing, Error Analysis Theory and Written Corrective Feedback Theory. Therefore, it shows the relationship between error analysis and written corrective feedback by explaining the importance of the two in avoiding spelling errors in students’ writing. The gap this study attempts to address is to find out the common spelling errors committed by freshmen students of the Department of English at MMUTO based on Corder’s classification (1973) of error types in terms of omission, addition, misinformation and misordering. This study follows Ellis’ Error Analysis Theory (1994)

which includes the four steps to conduct an error analysis study. For the sake of getting new insights into the importance of spelling mastery, we focused on the importance of teachers' provision with written corrective feedback.

In the next chapter, we will describe the research methods and procedures used in the present study. It consists of research instruments, data gathering tools and data analysis procedures. It will be an attempt to demonstrate these theoretical findings into practice.

## **Chapter Two: Research Design and Methodology**

### **Introduction**

As the difficulties in writing take several forms, the present study aims to examine the spelling part. It investigates the most common spelling errors that first year students make, their intralingual sources and the role of teachers' written corrective feedback in the Department of English at MMUTO. To achieve this goal, we will confirm or refute the hypotheses formulated previously in relation to the findings. Thus, this presented chapter is devoted to the research techniques and methods used in order to accomplish our investigation. An exploration of the empirical data will be discussed in detail. For this purpose, two research instruments are used: a corpus composed of first year students' examination papers and a questionnaire for EFL teachers of civilization and literature modules. Thus, the data collection methods will be described as well as the data analysis procedures.

This chapter highlights four main sections. The first one traits the research methods chosen to carry out the work; the second deals with the description of the participants and the sample. The third then entails the data collection procedures especially the teachers' questionnaire. The last section represents data analysis procedures in order to provide more detailed information.

### **1. Research Design and Methods**

The present work is an investigation of the spelling problems that students encounter in their writing, the reason behind making spelling errors, and teachers' strategies to minimize such error type. For this purpose, in order to get reliable data about our research interest, a case study of first year EFL university students is carried out. It is based on analyzing a corpus which consists of fifty literature and civilization examination papers, and a questionnaire designed to EFL teachers specialized in literature and civilization as well. That



is why the mixed method is employed for the collection and the analysis of the data of this work. This method ensures appropriate and current data. It associates both quantitative data and qualitative methods. The former is a strategy that allows us to get reliable statistics displayed as numerical results. The latter focuses on non-numerical data which is gained from first-hand experience. So as to get statistical and reliable outcomes, we chose to calculate the percentage by using the rule of three.

$$X = \frac{V \times N}{100}$$

- X represents the calculated percentage.
- V represents the value of answers.
- N represents the total number of participants.

Indeed, the procedure's purpose is not only for identifying the most common spelling errors as words and sentences and classifying them, but it also shows their intralingual sources and the different types of written corrective feedback provided by teachers in order to be able to suggest some remedy strategies to minimize errors of spelling.

## **2. Population and Sampling**

The case study of the present research work is composed of fifty examination papers from civilization and literature modules that have been gathered randomly from EFL freshmen students of the Department of English at MMUTO. Adelman and Kemmis (1976:140) claim that a case study is when "one selects an instance from the case of objectives and phenomena, one is investigating and investigates the way his instance functions in context". More specifically, the case study is a key component of any research methodology which serves to get systematic analysis, efficient and current results in a particular topic. Furthermore, fifteen EFL teachers are chosen randomly to answer the

questionnaire questions. They are specialized in literature and civilization. The reason behind such selection is that we have already taken the corpus in both civilization and literature modules from the academic year 2018/2019. The study also focuses on these students as participants because they are envisaged to master the spelling as a part of mastering the English language, and hence to spell correctly.

### **3. Data Gathering Instruments**

Lahkar (2015:216) suggests that “there is no analysis without collection of data. Data is the collection of facts, figures and statistics that can be processed to produce meaningful information”. It means that the first step to any research study is data gathering, at this stage, the researcher has to obtain the appropriate information to his/her research. For instance, in our case, we relied on the examination papers in order to identify the spelling errors students have made in their writings. In addition, the figures show and display clearly the numerical results calculated previously. Therefore, in order to achieve and to gain the necessary data and with the goal of finding the answers to the research questions, a survey that consists of an analysis of students’ examination papers and a questionnaire administered to EFL teachers are used as instruments for our research study. In more details, the studied sample was selected randomly in order to examine the spelling situation in students’ writings; so we have analyzed fifty examination papers of first year students of literature and civilization modules of the academic year 2018/2019.

The other data collection instrument that we have relied on is a questionnaire. The latter is designed to fifteen EFL teachers specialized in literature and civilization in the Department of English as well of the Department of English at Mouloud Mammeri University of Tizi Ouzou. Jenn (2006:32) considers a questionnaire as “a very convenient way of collecting information from a large number of people within a period of time. Hence, the design of the questionnaire is of utmost importance to ensure accurate data is collected so that

the results are interpretable and generalisable". The questionnaire consists of thirteen questions which are arranged in a logical way. It is divided into three main sections; each one is dedicated to a specific item related to the research interests. The questionnaire is made up of close-ended questions and open-ended questions. In close-ended questions, teachers are asked to choose 'yes' or 'no' answers or to pick up the suitable answer from multiple choices with the ability to choose more than one answer where necessary; whereas, in open-ended questions, the teachers are free to express their ideas and point of views or to justify why they have selected one choice among the other choices. It is constructed in correspondence with the literature review. The questionnaire survey aims to find out teachers' perspectives and problems regarding spelling error correction in writing and the impact of their written corrective feedback on students' spelling.

#### **4. Data Analysis Procedures**

The data is gathered from two research instruments, students' examination papers and teachers' questionnaire which stand for qualitative and quantitative data. The collected data are organized, classified and tabulated before they can be discussed later. The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) method for quantitative analysis of data is used to provide the frequency and mean in accordance to the results obtained from the writing samples and from the questions of the questionnaire, whilst the qualitative method of data analysis is used to explain and analyze the data especially from teachers' questionnaire relying on the two theoretical frameworks. As mentioned previously, in the present work, the four steps of error analysis specified by Ellis (1994) are followed:

- Collection of a sample from the students.
- Identification of errors from the students' examination papers.
- Description of errors in forms of the four types of error classification.

- Explanation of errors.

In more details, after the collection of data, we have carried out the analysis of the students' errors. By doing so, the results will be presented in forms of tables, graphs and pie charts in order to show spelling error types (addition, omission, misinformation and misordering). It includes also the four main intralingual sources of these errors and the types of written corrective feedback that are mostly used by EFL teachers to indicate students' spelling errors in writing. Then, the findings will be discussed and interpreted in the fourth chapter of this research.

## **Conclusion**

This chapter has provided a brief review of the current study methodology. It includes the quantitative and qualitative data methods collected from the questionnaire and the writing samples. It presents a description of the data collection instruments. In addition, it draws attention to the data analysis procedures used to analyze the corpus and the questionnaire. The quantitative data represents the spelling errors' frequency of occurrence and the percentages while the qualitative data relies on Error Analysis Theory (1994) and teachers' Written Corrective Feedback Theory (2009). In doing so, we found that examination papers are an appropriate and suitable method to carry out our research, since students commit the most frequent spelling errors in writing. So we got all the necessary data to provide answers to our research questions.

The next chapter is devoted to 'The Presentation of the Findings' which pictures and illustrates the results obtained from the analysis of the corpus and the questionnaire.

## Chapter Three: Presentation of the Findings

### Introduction

This chapter deals with the findings of the research; it is devoted to the empirical phase of the study. In other words, it provides a clear analysis of the collected data from EFL students and teachers. Some of the results are tabled in order to identify the types of spelling errors, the intralingual sources of these errors and teachers' written corrective feedback types. Then, they are going to be presented as percentages. These calculations are then illustrated in forms of graphs and charts. As mentioned previously, the results are obtained from fifty civilization and literature examination papers of freshmen students of the Department of English at MMUTO during the academic year 2018/2019. In addition, the questionnaire targeted specifically EFL teachers of civilization and literature modules.

### I. Analysis of Students' Spelling Errors

#### 1. Common Spelling Error Types

##### 1.1. Errors of Omission

##### 1.1.1. Misspelled Words of Omission

Wrong Form	Target Word	Feedback Type
1- Consitutuion/ Constution	Constitution	IF
2- Development	Development	ZF
3- Beginin/ Begining	Beginning	IF
4- Mony	Money	IF
5- Occured	Occurred	ZF
6- Stoped	Stopped	IF
7- Between	Between	ZF
8- Befor	Before	IF
9- Wich	Which	ZF

**Table (1): Students' Misspelled Words of Omission and Teachers' Feedback**

From table (1), it can be seen that students commit spelling errors of omission in writing including a variety of errors related to different word categories namely nouns, verbs, prepositions and relative pronouns. We remark that indirect feedback is the most type of feedback used by teachers to point out the errors.

### 1.1.2. Incorrect Sentences' Structures of Omission

Incorrect sentence	Correction	Intralingual Source	Feedback Type
1- They are group of people.	- They are <b>a</b> group of people.	IRR	ZF
2- It consist a group of rules and laws.	- It <b>consists</b> of a group of rules and laws.	OGR	ZF
3- There no taxes.	There <b>were</b> no taxes.	IAR	ZF
4- <u>Is an economic system</u> based on land owning.	- <b>It</b> is an economic system based on land owning.	IAR	IF
5- The poet expresses his feeling and emotion.	- The poet expresses his <b>feelings</b> and <b>emotions</b> .	IAR	ZF
6- The main theme of the poem is the death of <u>appreciate</u> person to the poet.	- The main theme of the poem is the death of <b>an appreciated</b> person to the poet.	IRR	IF
7- <u>They be free</u> .	- They <b>will</b> be free.	IAR	IF

**Table (2): Students' Incorrect Sentences' Structures of Omission, their Intralingual Sources and Teachers' Feedback**

The above table shows that students have serious problems to produce a correct sentence without committing errors of omission. It is clear that they ignore some grammatical rules including the absence of the verb (see sentence 3 and 7) that should be present in every sentence in English. There is also the absence of a subject (sentence 4) that is necessary as well. In addition, the missing of the indefinite articles ‘a’ and ‘an’ in sentence 1 and 6. Students also have difficulties in using the plural (sentence 5) and the third person singular while conjugating verbs (sentence 2). They omit the ‘s’ form to indicate the plural and the ‘s’ form to refer to the third person singular. Moreover, the majority of teachers provide indirect feedback to indicate the errors’ location. The dominant intralingual source in the omission error type is incomplete application of rules among overgeneralization and ignorance of rule restrictions errors.

## 1.2. Errors of Addition

### 1.2.1. Misspelled Words of Addition

Wrong Form	Target Word	Feedback Type
1- <u>Goverenement</u>	Government	IF
2- <u>Barrons</u>	Barons	IF
3- <u>Resulte</u>	Result	IF
4- Foods	Food	ZF
5- Develloped	Developed	ZF
6- Reacte	React	ZF
7- Theise	These	ZF
8- Frome	From	ZF

**Table (3): Students’ Misspelled Words of Addition and Teachers’ Feedback**

As can be seen, table (3) confirms that students make spelling errors of addition concerning words from different categories including nouns, verbs, prepositions and pronouns. Some of the addition errors are underlined; that is to say, indirect feedback is used by teachers.

### 1.2.2. Incorrect Sentences' Structures of Addition

Incorrect sentence	Correction	Intraligual Source	Feedback Type
1- They <u>will do</u> not pay taxes.	- They will not pay taxes.	IRR	IF
2- <u>The</u> Henry died.	- Henry died.	OGR	DF
3- He <b>wrote</b> many novels.	- He wrote many novels.	OGR	ZF
4- The War of Roses <b>it</b> was after the 100 year.	- The War of Roses was after the 100 year.	IRR	ZF
5- It's the <u>more longest</u> type of prose.	- It's the longest type of prose.	FCH	IF

**Table (4): Students' Incorrect Sentences' Structures of Addition, their Intralingual Sources and Teachers' Feedback**

As it is presented in table (4), errors of addition influence students' writing performance. They include a misuse of the definite article 'the' (sentence 2). In addition, the irregular verbs have always been a barrier for EFL students because of their irregularity concerning the past simple tense and the past participle as it is shown in sentence 3. Addition errors involves also the use of 'do' as an auxiliary verb where unnecessary (sentence 1). Moreover, in sentence (5) the student uses the superlative form 'the longest' by adding 'more' which is used to refer to the comparative form. In sentence 4, he/she employs the subject of the sentence twice. Hence, in order to emphasize more this error type, teachers provide direct



feedback to point out the errors' seriousness. The instances are part of three intralingual factors including OGR, IRR and FCH.

### 1.3. Errors of Misinformation

#### 1.3.1. Misspelled Words of Misinformation

Wrong Form	Target Word	Feedback Type
1- <u>Parliament</u>	Parliament	IF
2- Brobleme	Problem	ZF
3- <u>Taksas</u>	Taxes	IF
4- Egsample	Example	ZF
5- Gategories	Categories	ZF
6- Envirement	Environment	ZF
7- <u>Reminber</u>	Reminder	IF
8- Deffecult	Difficult	ZF
9- Evoyed	Avoid	ZF
10- <u>Gived/ Gaved</u>	Gave	IF
11- <u>Themselves</u>	Themselves	IF

**Table (5): Students' Misspelled Words of Misinformation and Teachers' Feedback**

Table (5) reveals that there is a great number of errors in the misinformation error type. In other words, students substitute a letter by another to form deviations in the different word categories. Teachers provide indirect feedback for some errors while others are neglected.

### 1.3.2. Incorrect Sentences' Structures of Misinformation

Incorrect Sentence	Correction	Intralingual Source	Feedback Type
1- It started <u>on</u> 1756.	- It started <b>in</b> 1756.	FCH	IF
2- It has an political importance.	- It has <b>a</b> political importance.	FCH	ZF
3- The <u>results was</u> so expensive.	- The results <b>were</b> so expensive.	IRR	IF
4- The type of fiction that gets the most attention this <sup>ese</sup> day <sup>s</sup> .	- The type of fiction that gets the most attention <b>these days</b> .	IAR	DF
5- It can give morals at the end or advices for the readers.	- At the end, it can give morals or <b>pieces of advice</b> for the readers.	OGR	ZF
6- Magna Carta is a document <u>who</u> was agreed by the king and his followers.	- Magna Carta is a document <b>which</b> was agreed upon by the King and his followers.	FCH	IF
7- She speaks with <u>his</u> husband.	- She speaks with <b>her</b> husband.	FCH	IF
8- The Normans <del>have</del> invaded Britain in 1066.	- The Normans <b>invaded</b> Britain in 1066.	FCH	DF
9- Samuel Adams <u>was the men</u> who led the patriots.	- Samuel Adams was the <b>man</b> who led the patriots.	IAR	IF
10- The Normans <u>has left</u> England.	- The Normans <b>have left</b> England.	IRR	IF

**Table (6): Students' Incorrect Sentences' Structures of Misinformation, their Intralingual Sources and Teacher's Feedback**

From the examples presented in table (6), it can be deduced that there is a variety of errors within the misinformation type. These several errors include: which is the suitable preposition (sentence 1), and which relative pronoun (sentence 6) or possessive pronoun

(sentence 7) is more adequate to use. Furthermore, the confusion while using the singular or the plural with the auxiliaries ‘to be’ and ‘to have’ (sentence 3 and 10). In sentence 8, the student fails to identify the right tense to use. Like struggling with tense utilization, uncountable nouns also have the lion’s share of these spelling errors (sentence 5). Students sometimes fail to choose the appropriate indefinite article like in sentence (2). In addition, we found the redundancy of some errors like the word ‘men’ being the plural of ‘man’ (sentence 9) and the misuse between the singular ‘this’ and the plural ‘these’ (sentence 4). Concerning teachers’ feedback, we notice a variation in feedback provision between direct feedback, indirect feedback and no feedback provided. The different sentences are examples of the four intralingual sources of errors including OGR, IRR, IAR, and FCH while the most frequent one is FCH.

#### **1.4. Errors of Misordering**

##### **1.4.1. Misspelled Words of Misordering**

<b>Wrong Form</b>	<b>Target Word</b>	<b>Feedback Type</b>
1- Charactres	Characters	ZF
2- Persent	Present	ZF
3- Kinght	Knight	ZF
4- Ruterned	Returned	ZF
5- Thier	Their	ZF

**Table (7): Students’ Misspelled Words of Misordering and Teachers’ Feedback**

From the findings of table (7), we notice that students make fewer errors in the misordering error type. As it is shown, the errors committed are a result of misordering two letters in all the examples given above. Teachers have not provided any feedback type for this spelling error type.

### 1.4.2. Incorrect Sentences' Structures of Misordering

Incorrect Sentence	Correction	Intralingual Source	Feedback Type
1- It's talk about actions unbelievable that happens.	- It talks about <b>unbelievable actions</b> that happen.	IRR	ZF
2- Novel is a work written.	- Novel is a <b>written work.</b>	IRR	ZF

**Table (8): Students' Incorrect Sentences' Structures of Misordering, their Intralingual Sources and Teachers' Feedback**

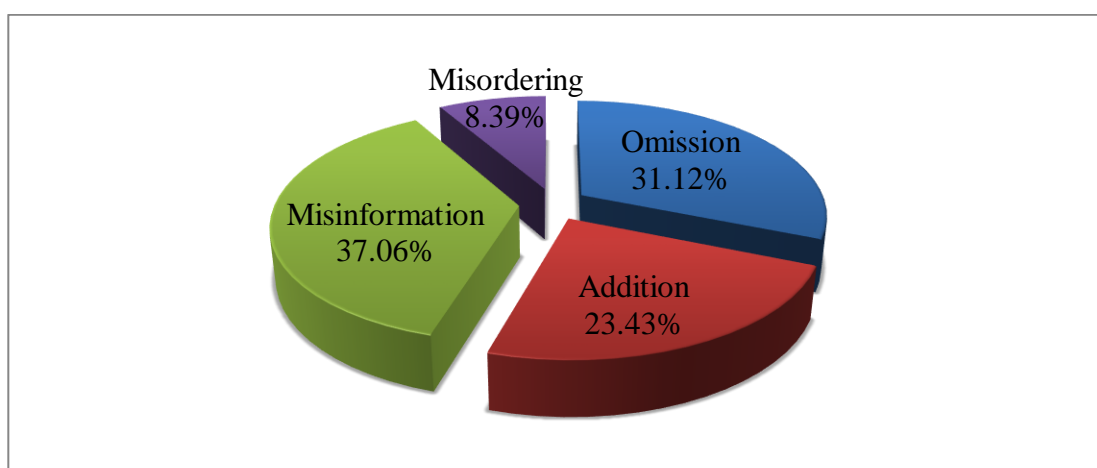
The table (8) above shows that misordering some elements in writing should not be underestimated; they could change the whole meaning. In sentences 1 and 2, the adjectives are placed after the nouns while, as a rule, they are usually placed before the nouns they modify. In these two examples, the sentences sound weird and incorrect. The teachers have not provided any written feedback. The examples are classified under the ignorance of rule restrictions factor of the intralingual sources.

## 2. Spelling Error Categories

Error Type	Frequency	Percentage
Omission	89	31.12%
Addition	67	23.43%
Misinformation	106	37.06%
Misordering	24	8.39%
Total	286	100%

**Table (9): Spelling Errors' Frequency of Occurrence and Percentages**

The spelling errors are analyzed in table (9) according to the four categories suggested by Corder (1973). This table exemplifies that learners commit different types of spelling errors in their writing. It is apparent from the above table that out of 286 total number of spelling errors committed by students, the misinformation type scores the highest percentage with 37.06%; that is to say, it is the error type committed by the largest number of students. In the second place come the errors of omission with 31.12%. In the present study, the spelling errors of addition occupy the third class with a percentage of 23.43%. Lastly, spelling errors of misordering occur as lesser frequency with a percentage of 8.39%.



**Diagram (1): Comparing the Four Spelling Error Categories Found in Students' Writing Samples**

This first pie chart compares between the four error categories found in first year students' writing. It can be seen clearly from diagram (1) that spelling errors are committed in the four error types including errors of omission, addition, misinformation and misordering. It can be inferred that students have difficulty to spell in English.

### **3. The Intralingual Transfer of Spelling Errors**

#### **3.1. Words' Categories**

From students' writing samples, we have selected 97 misspelled words that belong to different word categories. The latter includes nouns, verbs, adjectives, pronouns and

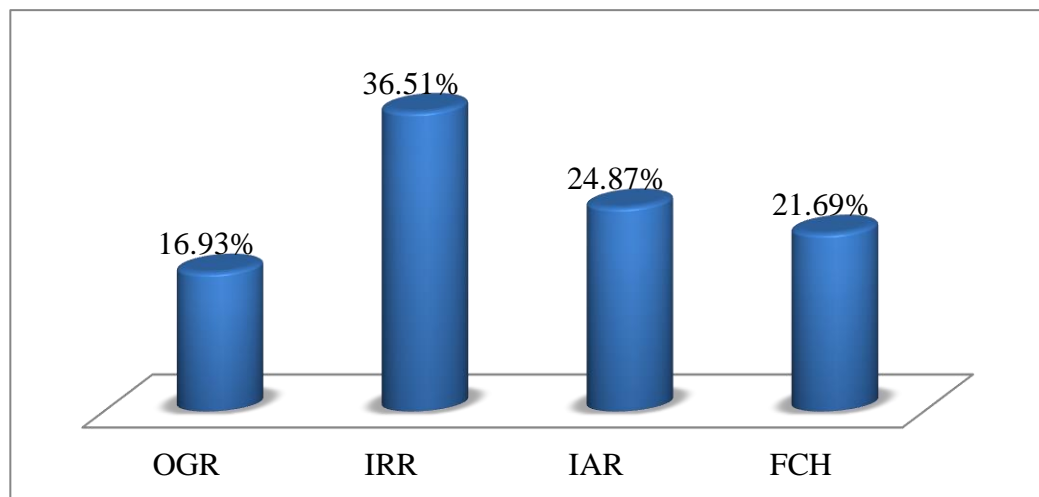
prepositions which are part from the four error categories as it is shown in tables (1), (3), (5) and (7). The selected words are errors raised within the target language. In other words, students create deviations of the target word because of his/her lack of knowledge of its correct form or spelling.

### 3.2. Sentences' Structures

Intralingual Source	Frequency	Percentage
Overgeneralization	32	16.93%
Ignorance of rule restrictions	69	36.51%
Incomplete application or rules	47	24.87%
False concepts hypothesized	41	21.69%
Total	189	100%

**Table (10): Intralingual Sources' Errors**

From the analysis of the corpus, we have selected 189 erroneous sentences to be used as a sample. The spelling errors found in these sentences are a result of the intralingual transfer of the target language namely English. The above table is an illustration of the frequency of occurrence of the intralingual sources of spelling errors.



**Diagram (2): Comparing the Intralingual Sources Found in Students' Writing Samples**

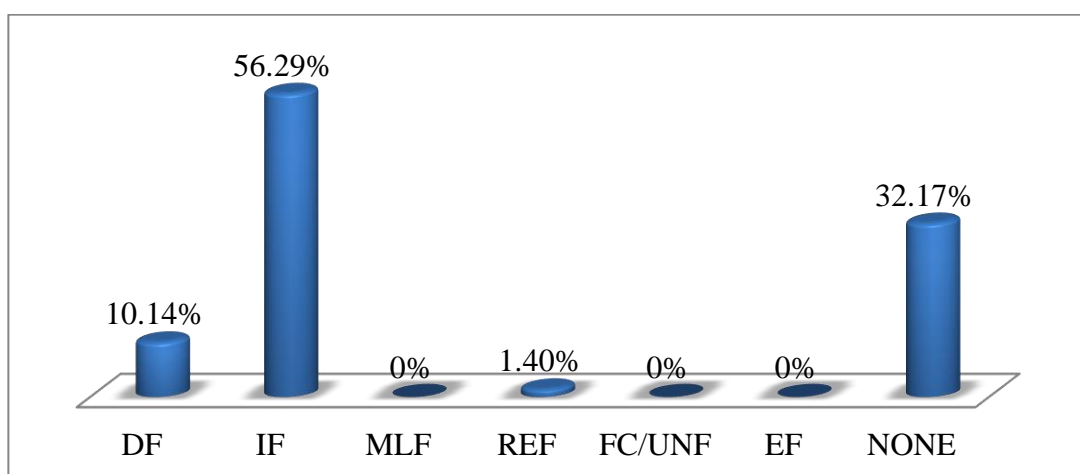
From the diagram above, it could be seen that the largest number of spelling errors are classified under the ignorance of rule restrictions factor with 36.51%. In addition, 24.87% of spelling errors occur because of the incomplete application of rules while 21.69% because of false concepts hypothesized factor. Overgeneralization of rules is the least factor of making errors of spelling with 16.93%.

#### **4. The Frequency of Written Corrective Feedback Types**

Feedback Type	Frequency	Percentage
Direct feedback	29	10.14%
Indirect feedback	161	56.29%
Metalinguistic feedback	0	0%
Reformulation	4	1.40%
Focused/ Unfocused	0	0%
Electronic feedback	0	0%
None of them	92	32.17%
Total	286	100%

**Table (11): Teachers' Written Corrective Feedback Frequency of Usage**

Table (11) shows the different types of written corrective feedback that teachers use to indicate the spelling errors committed by students in their writing. Indirect feedback is commonly the highest type of feedback provided by teachers with a mean of 56.29%.



**Diagram (3): The Different Types of Written Corrective Feedback in Students' Writing Samples**

The results reveal that 32.17% of teachers did not provide any type of feedback for the spelling errors found in students' exam papers. 56.29% opted for indirect feedback whereas only 10.14% make use of the direct feedback. Only 1.40% of teachers use reformulation. We notice that the other types were not used by teachers.

## II. Teachers' Questionnaire Analysis

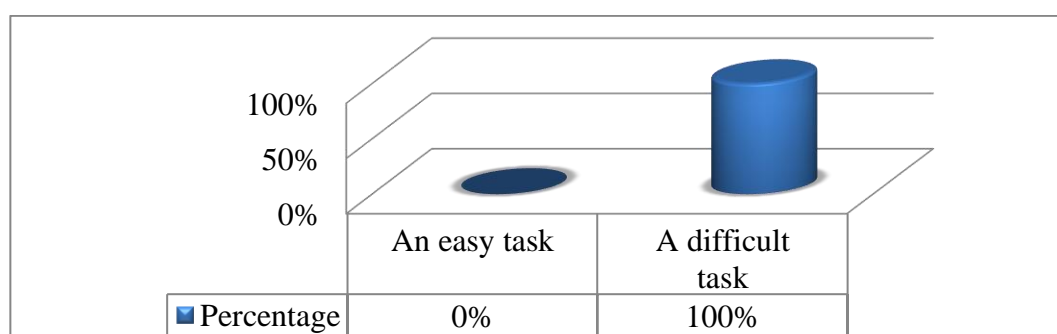
The teachers' questionnaire is the second data collection instrument this work relies on for the purpose of getting reliable data. In this section, we provide a detailed description of the questionnaire questions and the gained data from teachers' responses. Therefore, the questionnaire is designed to find out teachers' opinions towards the importance of spelling mastery, the reasons behind making spelling errors and the prominence of written corrective feedback. The questionnaire as mentioned previously is administered to fifteen EFL teachers of civilization and literature modules at the Department of English at MMUTO.



## Section One: EFL Spelling Errors According to Error Analysis Theory

### Question One: How do students consider writing?

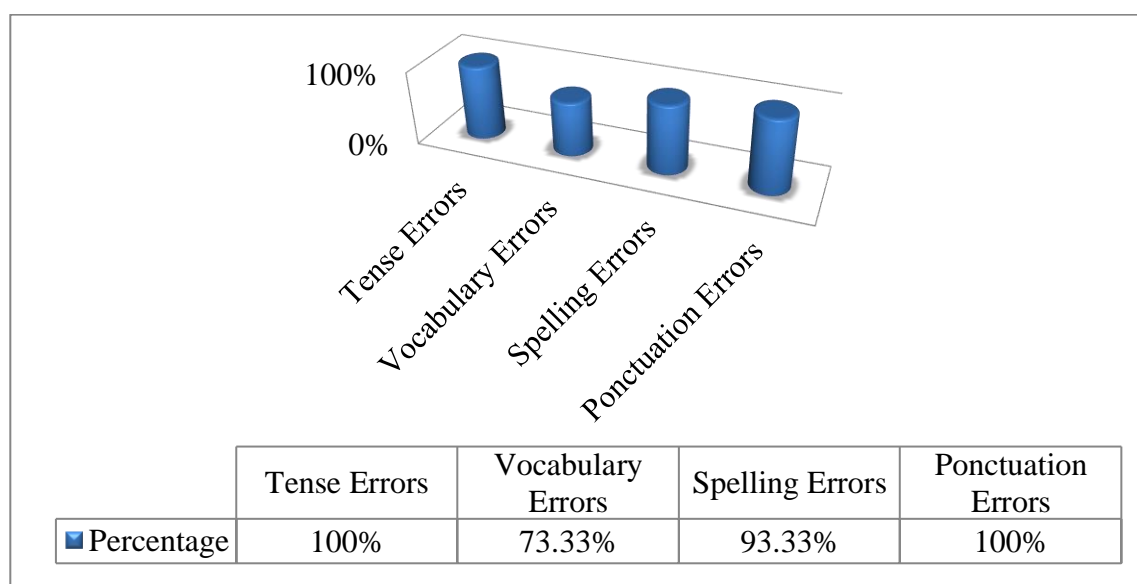
This question aims to comprehend how students consider the writing skill according to teachers; so whether it is an easy task or a difficult task.



**Diagram (4): Teachers' Views about the Difficulty of Writing**

As it is presented in diagram (4), the results reveal that 100% of teachers strongly agreed on the fact that students consider writing as a difficult task.

### Question Two: What types of errors you find the most in students' writings?

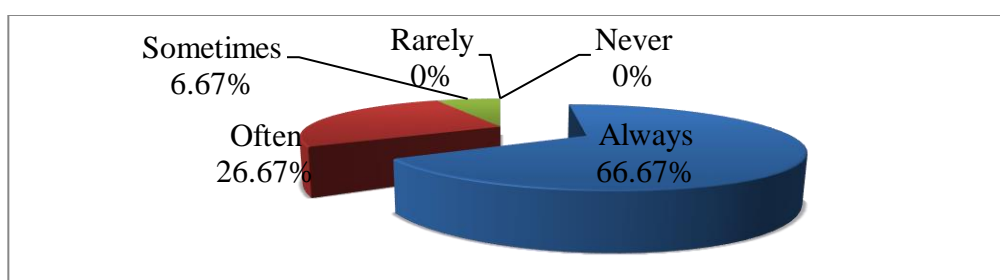


**Diagram (5): Types of Errors in Writing**

Diagram (5) shows clearly that tense errors and punctuation errors (100%) are the most common errors found in students' writings. Then, 93.33% represents the number of

spelling errors while the misuse of words or vocabulary errors represents 73.33% of the total number of errors.

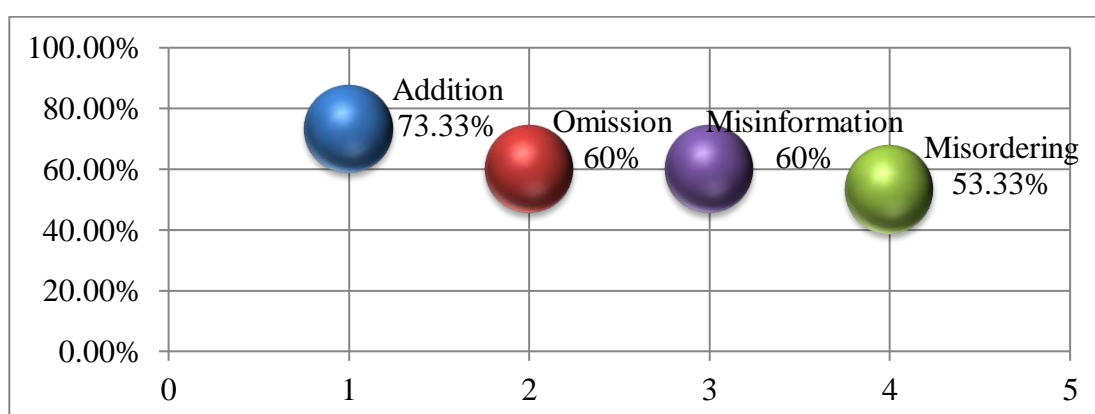
**Question Three:** How often do you find spelling errors on your students' examination papers?



**Diagram (6): Spelling Errors' Frequency**

Diagram (5) shows that 66.67% of teachers always encounter spelling errors in students' writing. 26.67% of teachers said that spelling errors are often encountered. The third option 'sometimes' scored 6.67% of the frequency of spelling errors' occurrence. This means that spelling errors are still common among the participants in the study.

**Question Four:** What types of spelling errors you mostly find on your students' examination papers?



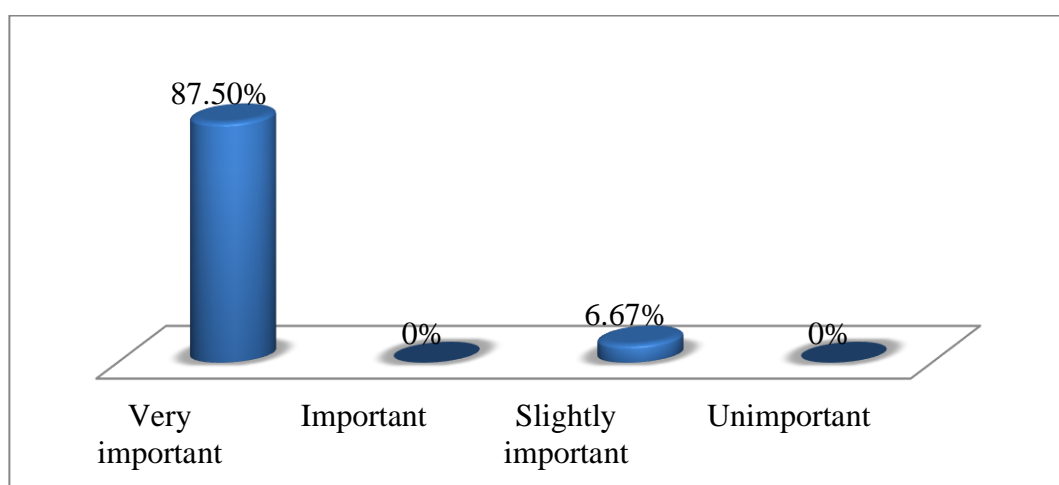
**Diagram (7): Spelling Error Categories according to EFL Teachers**

Based on the results from diagram (7), a great percentage (73.33%) represents the addition spelling error type as being the most type found in students' writing according to

EFL teachers. Then, errors of omission and misinformation received the same percentage with 60% of spelling errors. The misordering type scores 53.33% as the lowest number of errors. Relying on teachers' responses, one can say that students commit the four types of spelling errors when they write.

**Question Five:** How important is the mastery of spelling?

**5.1.** Teachers were asked to choose to which extent spelling mastery is important.

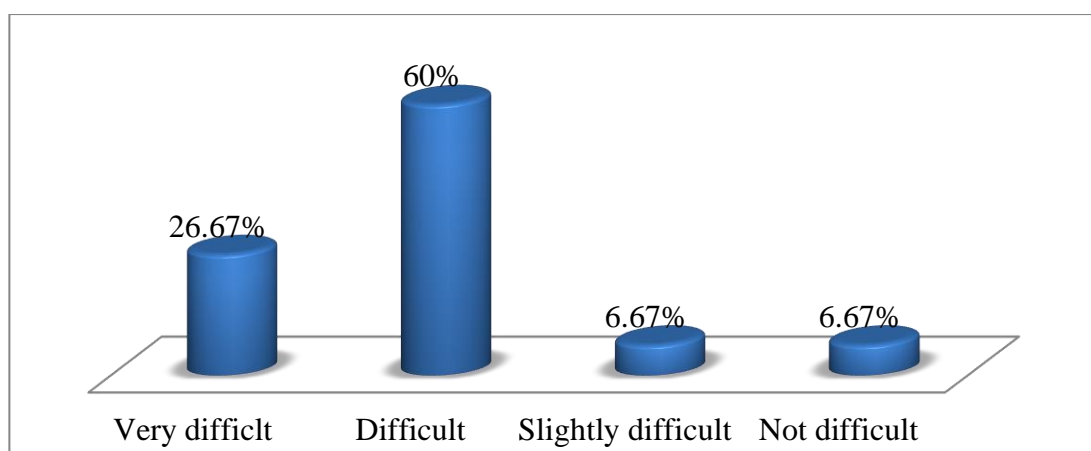


**Diagram (8): The Importance of Spelling Mastery**

The results reported from diagram (8) clearly indicate that 87.50% of the participants emphasized on the importance of spelling mastery and only 6.67% said that it is 'slightly important'.

**5.2.** As a second part of the question (5), teachers were requested to explain their opinions concerning the importance of spelling mastery. They argue that the mastery of spelling is crucial in the development of students' language skills. In addition, misspellings can affect the interpretation of meanings by the readers.

**Question Six:** How difficult is the correction of your students' examination papers because of wrong spelling?

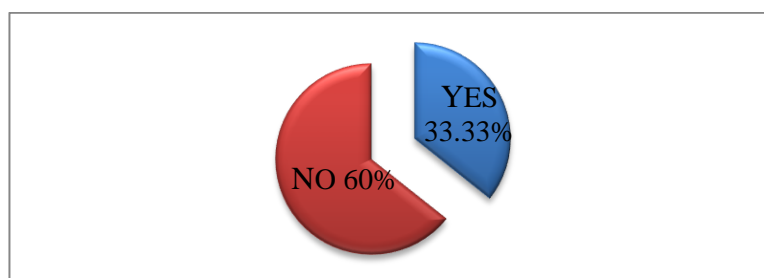


**Diagram (9): Teachers' Correction Difficulties**

The majority of answers (60%) agreed on the difficulty of correcting students' examination papers because of misspellings while 26.67% said that it is very difficult. 6.67% of teachers responded with 'slightly difficult' and 'not difficult'.

## **Section Two: The Causes of Students' Spelling Errors in Writing**

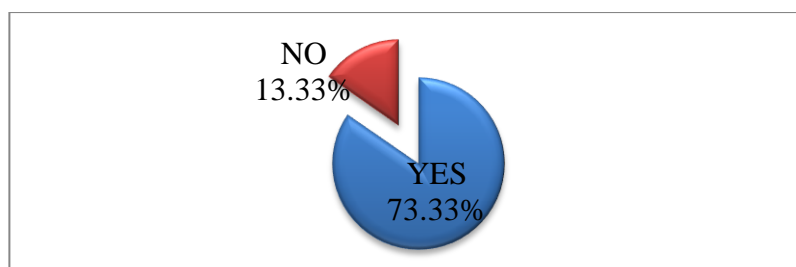
**Question Seven:** Do you think that it is due to the mother tongue interference?



**Diagram (10): Mother Tongue Interference**

The results obtained from teachers' answers to this question spotlight that the majority of teachers disagree with mother tongue interference as a cause of spelling errors in writing (60%). However, 33.33% of teachers said 'yes' to mother tongue interference.

**Question Eight:** Do you think that spelling errors are due to students' lack of competence in the target language?



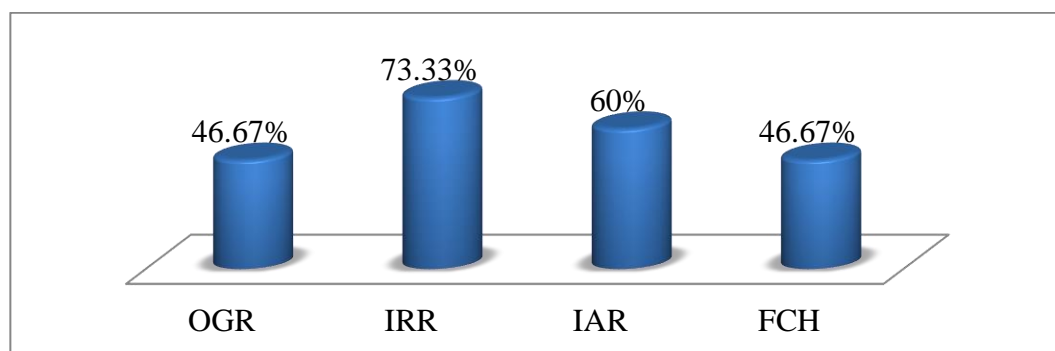
**Diagram (11): Target Language Errors**

**8.1.** From the diagram above, it is shown that the majority of participants (73.33%) think that spelling errors are due to the lack of students' competence in the target language while 13.33% disagree with this statement.

**8.2.** Teachers then were asked to justify their choice if they have chosen 'yes' as a response. Thus, the majority of teachers claim that students do not read in the target language in order to improve their spelling skills. In addition, programs designed to students should focus on learning spelling as it is the focus on the other language components.

**Question Nine:** What are the causes of these intralingual errors?

**9.1.** Teachers were asked to choose the frequent intralingual error source among the four sources or tick more than one including overgeneralization of rules, ignorance of rule restrictions, incomplete application of rules and false concepts hypothesized.



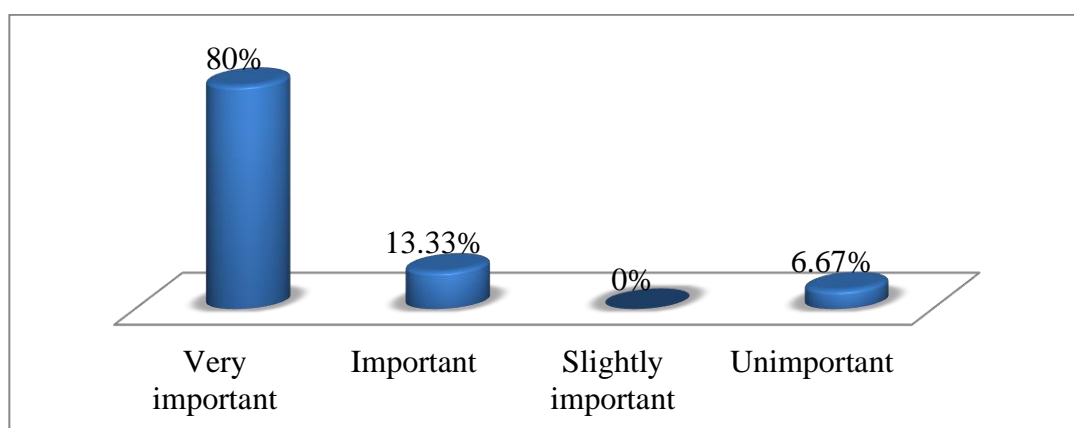
**Diagram (12): Comparing between the Intralingual Sources according to EFL Teachers**

With regard to the answers illustrated in the diagram (12), the most frequent intralingual type encountered in students' writing is the ignorance of rule restrictions (73.33%). In the second rank comes incomplete application of rules with 60%. In the last place, overgeneralization and false concepts hypothesized share the same average which is 46.67%.

**9.2.** In the second part of the question nine, EFL teachers were asked to choose the most frequent type of errors encountered during the correction of students' writings. Three of them have chosen all the above intralingual errors; that is to say, a mixture of all the sources is found in students' writing. Then, the majority of teachers have emphasized on the ignorance of rule restrictions as the most frequent factor. In the second rank, errors occur due to faulty rules learning at various levels namely false concepts hypothesized. Both of overgeneralization of rules and incomplete application of rules are in the same position with fewer errors occurrence.

### **Section Three: Teachers' Provision of Written Corrective Feedback on Students' Examination Papers**

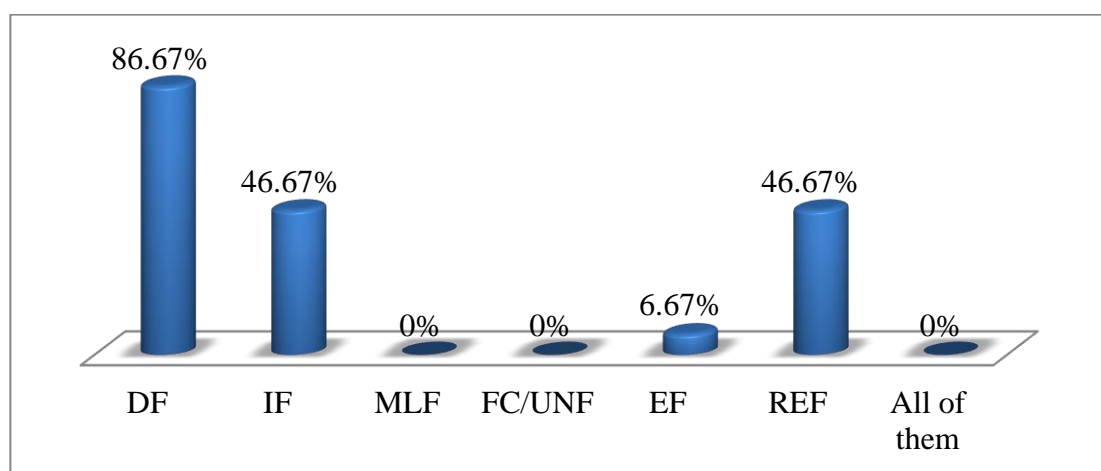
**Question Ten:** Providing students with written corrective feedback is:



**Diagram (13): The Importance of Teachers' Provision of WCF**

The diagram (7) reveals that a large percentage of 80% of teachers consider written corrective feedback ‘very important’ and only 6.67% of them consider it as being ‘unimportant’. 13.33% of teachers responded that WCF is ‘important’.

**Question Eleven:** What type of written corrective feedback do you mostly use to indicate spelling errors?



**Diagram (14): The Types of Written Corrective Feedback Used by EFL Teachers**

A glance on the above diagram shows that 86.67% of EFL teachers agreed on the use of DF to indicate students’ spelling errors in writing. In addition, 46.67% of teachers confirmed that both IF and REF are used while only 6.67% represents the number of teachers who use EF feedback which we consider more appropriate when providing feedback by computer software.

**Question Twelve:** Would you explain the impact of effective written corrective feedback on the students’ motivation to improve spelling?

The twelfth question is an open-ended question that attempts to obtain detailed explanations from EFL teachers on how written corrective feedback motivates students to avoid their spelling errors. Teachers believe that students will be encouraged to produce less errors of spelling because they will be reminded and become conscious of their errors.

**Question Thirteen:** What are the possible solutions you may suggest to allow your students to minimize their spelling errors?

The thirteenth question is a key element in this work. The ultimate goal is to suggest some remedial techniques for the error type this study is all about namely spelling. From the analysis of the answers obtained from teachers on this question, they have suggested three main solutions which will be discussed deeply in the next chapter.

## **Conclusion**

The present chapter has exposed the statistics about the findings of the current study. The findings of fifty examination papers and teachers' questionnaire are analyzed and presented in forms of tables, pie charts, histograms and bubble diagrams. The quantitative data results were arranged by the use of SPSS method whereas the qualitative data results were interpreted and analyzed relying on the two research frameworks.

The next chapter entitled 'Discussion of the Findings' tries to interpret and explain the obtained data so as to reach the objectives, answer the questions and confirm or refute the hypotheses this work is built upon.



## **Chapter Four: Discussion of the Findings**

### **Introduction**

The fourth chapter deals with the interpretation and analysis of the data gathered from students' examination papers and teachers' questionnaire. This chapter is the core of this study. The focus was put on spelling error types found in students' writing. In this perspective, we wanted to check the extent to which EFL freshmen students of the Department of English at MMUTO are good spellers or they are not. We wanted also to know the target language factors that cause the spelling problems in their writing. Then, we wanted to show the impact of teachers' provision with written corrective feedback. Spelling errors are the issue of this research study; the main goal is to find out if they are given much attention by EFL teachers among the other language components especially during the correction of the examination papers. Through the results illustrated in the previous chapter, we are supposed to discover new insights into the mastery of spelling and some of the remedy techniques.

### **I. Explaining the Common Spelling Errors Found in Students' Writing**

The process of describing students' errors in writing is categorized into four types: omission, addition, misinformation and misordering according to Corder's classification (1973). The results confirm that the four error types are present in students' writing samples and they are an evidence of their lack mastery of spelling. Each of the error types is analyzed individually as well as the intralingual sources. After the description of errors comes the next step of explaining them by trying to figure out and determine the reasons of their occurrence. The provided examples of the spelling errors taken from students' writings are raised within the target language because these errors are emphasized in this work. The different spelling error categories were calculated so we can compare their frequency of occurrence.

## **1. Analysis of Students' Different Misspelled Words**

Tables (1), (3), (5), and (7) display the misspelled words from the four categories of errors, namely omission, addition, misinformation and misordering. We notice that the errors are from different word categories including nouns, verbs, adjectives, prepositions, and pronouns. According to the collected samples, students made a large number of errors in the misinformation error type. Therefore, when they are uncertain about correct spelling, they made wrong use of vowels and consonants combinations. As Al-Bereiki and Al-Mekhlafi (2015) research study has confirmed in which they investigated the difficulties of Omani EFL students with spelling mastery. The instances provided in table (5) exemplify this process. The substitution of consonants and vowels are common; students may replace a consonant letter with one or two consonant letters or a vowel letter with one or two vowel letters. Furthermore, in the same error category, many errors occur because of students' unawareness of the irregularity of some verbs in English when making the past simple and the past participle, like the verb 'to give', 'gived' and 'gaved' instead of 'gave'. In analyzing the students' misinformation spelling error words, we observe that they have clearly major problems with making accurate spellings without replacing letters with one another. In addition, we notice that they confuse the use of some consonant letters like 'b' and 'd' in 'reminber' instead of 'reminder', and 'c' and 'g' in the word 'gategories' instead of 'categories', or they spell words just as they pronounce them like the word 'egsample' instead of 'example'.

Table (1) presents the type of spelling errors of omission committed by students. Misspelled words of omission are the second most common spelling error found in students' writings. Similarly to the misinformation error category, the omission one includes the same feature with consonants and vowels. But, here, students delete a consonant or more and a vowel or more from the target word. We notice that this type of error occurs especially when

words need consonants doubling like ‘begining’ instead of ‘beginning’. This error is also mostly common with verbs which need a double last consonant while forming the past simple and the past participle like ‘occured’ instead of ‘occurred’. Another recurrent error is the omission of the consonant letter ‘h’ after the consonant letter ‘w’ in many words like in the word ‘which’. In English, many words are formed by ‘wh’ form; sometimes the consonant ‘w’ is silent; sometimes it is the consonant ‘h’ which is silent.

The third in the list of misspelled words is the addition error type which is a result of the addition of redundant letters to the target word (table 3). Students so add unnecessary items which result in incorrect forms. In this perspective, Hendri and Pratomo (2018:66) claim “additions of such elements result in errors in the language”. So students prefer to double consonants where it is not necessary. Consequently, they ignore the uncountable nouns that do not carry the plural form ‘s’ as in the word ‘foods’. In the previous example, even if the word ‘foods’ is correct and can be used sometimes, but only while referring to particular kinds of food. The most frequent error in this category is the addition of the phoneme ‘e’ in the majority of errors as shown in table (3).

Finally, misspelled words of misordering are the least error type. Examples of such errors are shown in table (7). Students reverse a letter or two from the target word. They make such errors because they are not enough aware of the correct patterns of the English language in addition to student’ incompetence and misguided intuition.

Spelling words correctly in English is a challenge as it is in learning any other existing language. The spelling part of language learning must be emphasized by teachers as well as by students. The English spelling system may be a complicated matter because of its differences with the mother tongue of students. Therefore, they have a difficulty to get the letters right. English involves a unique system of vowels and consonants usage which could

be an obstacle for them especially the distinction between spelling words and their pronunciation most of the time. Spelling skills have to be acquired at the very beginning stage of the English language learning.

## **2. Analysis of Sentences' Structures according to their Intralingual Sources**

This paper seeks to identify the sources of spelling errors that students commit in their writings. It focuses mainly on the causes of their appearance within the target language itself, namely the intralingual transfer. The latter is the errors raised due to students' lack of competence in the target language; thus, 73.33% of teachers agree that they are a major factor of students' spelling errors occurrence as displayed in diagram (11). Since the majority of them agree with the idea that spelling errors are raised within the target language itself, they stressed on the significance of reading in the target language. They argue that most of students do not read to boost their English skills because they only focus on what they learn in class which is insufficient. This may be a result of not showing any interest in learning new words. It results also from their lack of practice in writing which is a must as reading. Teachers suggest that this lack of competence may be the result of the unfocused programs on the mastery of spelling as the existing focus on the other skills. Moreover, only 13.33% of teachers think that spelling errors are due to L1 interference. They defend the view that stands with students suffering from lack of contact with native speakers of English, so they are basically influenced by their mother tongue.

Learners' capacities can be displayed effortlessly when producing correct and structured sentences. So in order to transmit messages successfully, correct spelling is strongly required. From the analyzed samples, we notice constantly that students have trouble forming a correct sentence without making an error in spelling; any error in spelling could affect the whole meaning. The tables (2), (4), (6) and (8) are illustrations of wrong sentences' structures identified in students' writings among the different error categories suggested by

Corder (1973). Irpan (2019:86-87) argues that these spelling errors “appear in omission, misinformation, misordering and addition that can lead to confusion on the meaning of the sentence”.

As mentioned previously, we have relied on Richards’s classification (1974) of the intralingual sources which are classified into four categories: overgeneralization of rules, ignorance of rule restrictions, incomplete application of rules and false concepts hypothesized. (see table 10)

## **2.1. Overgeneralization of Rules Errors**

Gharizi (2016:145) states that overgeneralization is “the learners’ own way to make rules of the second language”. In other words, it is one feature where a learner develops certain deviations on the basis of his/her experience of the other structures. Al-Khresheh (2013, as cited in Al-Khresheh 2016:55) states that “overgeneralization occurs when the learner incorrectly widens the scope of the rule to a situation where the linguistic rule cannot be applied”. There are 32 kinds of overgeneralization spelling errors found in the analyzed corpus including errors of omission, addition and misinformation with a mean of 16.93%.

### **a) Omission Errors**

This error type includes subject-verb agreement pattern. The omission of the third person singular suffix ‘s’ that indicates the present simple tense in the verb preceded by ‘it’ in the sentence ‘it consist of a group of people’ (sentence 2, table 2). The error occurs because of the generalization of the rule in which verbs in the present simple tense do not carry the third person singular form ‘s’. Considering this, all the pronouns expect for ‘He’ ‘She’ and ‘It’ do not.

### **b) Addition Errors**

Two errors have been selected which are: the addition of the definite article ‘the’ in ‘the Henry died’ in which ‘the’ is used before specific nouns and not followed by proper nouns which they already identify a person. Furthermore, the addition of the third person singular ‘s’ form in the sentence ‘he wrotes many novels’ in which ‘wrote’ is the past simple of the irregular verb ‘to write’. It means that verbs conjugated in the past simple tense do not carry the form ‘s’. The irregular verbs in English are exceptions when forming the past simple and the past participle. The addition error type is a good example for the irregularity of verbs, the third person singular of an irregular verb does not carry the suffix ‘s’ in the past simple tense because this form refers only to the present simple.

### **c) Misinformation Errors**

The sentence ‘it can give morals at the end or advices for the readers’ should be ‘at the end it can give morals or pieces of advice for the readers’. The word ‘advice’ is an irregular plural; that is to say, it is formed without the plural ‘s’ form. Uncountable nouns do not exist as plurals.

## **2.2. Ignorance of Rule Restrictions Errors**

They include errors where the learners apply rules in inappropriate contexts (Richards, 1974). 69 errors are identified in this error source. Ignorance of rules restrictions factor includes all of the four spelling error types.

### **a) Omission Errors**

Students tend to make a common error which is the omission of articles. In the instances, ‘they are group of people’ and ‘the main theme of the poem is the death of appreciate person to the poet’, the students have omitted the indefinite articles ‘a’ from

sentence one and ‘an’ from sentence two (see table 2). This error occurs because of students’ lack of knowledge of their appropriate usage in English.

#### **b) Addition Errors**

From the findings of table (4), many EFL students used to repeat the subject of the sentence twice; that is to say, they reutilize the subject as a personal pronoun just after they mentioned it. For example, ‘the War of the Roses it was after the 100 year’; the subject ‘the War of the Roses’ is already present, so why to repeat it a second time as a personal pronoun ‘it’. The other addition error is in adding the auxiliary verb ‘do’ in ‘they will do not pay taxes’, because students are not aware of its correct utilization.

#### **c) Misinformation Errors**

Students make a significant number of subject-verb agreement errors especially with auxiliary verbs. The students ignore the difference in the use of ‘was’ and ‘has’ used for plural subjects rather than their correct form ‘were’ and ‘have’. As it is illustrated in table (6), sentences 3 and 10. For instance, in sentence 3: ‘the results was so expensive’, the word ‘results’ is a plural so the auxiliary ‘to be’ has to be used in its plural form ‘were’.

#### **d) Misordering Errors**

Students’ inadequate learning may influence their language performance. Such errors result in ambiguous and unclear meanings. Students’ incorrect placement of some elements affects the sentence structure which seems grammatically incorrect. For instance, ‘novel is a work written’; this sentence sounds non-English at all because of the mis-ordering elements between the noun and the adjective where the latter should come first. This error type belongs to word order system. Examples of such error are found in table (8). In sentences 1 and 2, students mis-order the position of nouns and adjectives by putting the adjective after the noun. Nevertheless, in English adjectives usually go before nouns. A sentence can be

simply identified as grammatically incorrect when you do not comprehend its meaning obtained from a string of words; hence, the ability to do so needs a correct spelling in order to form structured and a well-formed sentences. Irpan (2019: 84) states that “constructed sentence patters with incorrect language units can lead to incomplete information delivery”.

### **2.3. Incomplete Application of Rules Errors**

Incomplete application of rules errors occur “when a language learner finds that he/she can communicate successfully by using simple grammatical rules rather than more difficult ones” states Al-Khresheh (2016:56). There are 47 errors identified in this intralingual source including spelling errors of omission and misinformation types.

#### **a) Omission Errors**

The analysis of students’ writing samples reveals that subjects’ omission and verbs’ omission errors are frequent errors made by students in writing. The omission of the subject ‘it’ in: ‘is an economic system based on land owning’, whilst the omission of the auxiliary verb ‘are’ in: ‘there no taxes’ and the modal verb ‘will’ in: ‘they be free’. Such kind of errors exists as a failure to apply the rules completely by the learner because a complete and a correct sentence in English require two important elements: a subject and a verb. Students also omit the form ‘s’ in plural nouns as in the following sentence: ‘the poet expresses his feeling and emotion’ because of the wrong spelling.

#### **b) Misinformation Errors**

EFL students still suffer with some irregular plurals such as ‘men’ which is the plural of ‘man’, as illustrated in the sentence: ‘Samuel Adams was the men who led the patriots’. The subject of the sentence is a singular noun so the word ‘man’ has to be used in the singular form as well. So the student did not apply the rule fully. In addition, the misuse of the incorrect demonstrative in ‘the type of fiction that gets the most attention this day’ instead of



‘the type of fiction that gets the most attention these days’; hence, the first sentence is grammatically incorrect.

## **2.4. False Concepts Hypothesized Errors**

There are 41 errors encountered as false concepts hypothesized errors. This intralingual source involves errors of double marking as part of the addition error type and archi-forms as part of the misinformation error type.

### **a) Addition Errors**

Double marking refers to students’ use of two patterns instead of one for the same feature; errors of addition are the best examples to provide. As in the following example: ‘it’s the more longest type of prose’. In this sentence, the student combines the comparative form and the superlative form in the same time which is grammatically incorrect, so ignoring their appropriate usage. The two forms are used to show how people or things are different. The comparative form involves the addition of the suffix ‘er’ to the adjective or ‘more’ in front of the adjective; whilst the superlative form includes the addition of the suffix ‘est’ to the adjective or to precede the adjective with ‘the most’ or ‘the least’.

### **b) Misinformation Errors**

Archi-forms are students’ selection of some patterns to represent others. Hence, students make use of ‘in’ instead of ‘on’, ‘an’ instead of ‘a’, ‘who’ instead of ‘which’ and ‘his’ instead of ‘her’ (see table 6). In English, prepositions do not clearly possess a set of rules; thus, their mastery of usage is quite complicated for students. In the sentence ‘it started on 1756’, there is a misuse of the preposition ‘on’ instead of ‘in’ which is the appropriate one. As a rule, the preposition ‘in’ is used for specific years as the case with the example ‘it started in 1756’ instead of ‘it started on 1756’. In addition, the function of pronouns in English is whether to stand in place of nouns and noun phrases or to link between clauses.

Two types of pronoun errors have been identified in students' writings: the possessives in sentence 7 (table 6), and the relatives in sentence 6 (table 6). Hence, students still do not appropriately make a distinction between the use of 'his' and 'her', and 'who' and 'which'. The misinformation error is also displayed in the sentence: 'it has an political importance' where there is a use of the indefinite article 'an' used with instead of 'a'. The indefinite article 'a' is used before words that start with a vowel sound while 'an' precede nouns that start with consonant letters. All these errors found in students' writing are an evidence of their failure in choosing the right element that must be used for a correct utterance. In addition, students have difficulties to choose the right tense as a result of their failure to distinct between tenses' usage in English. The student chooses to use the present perfect instead of the past simple as in: 'the Normans have invaded Britain in 1066'. The correct form is: 'the Normans invaded Britain in 1066'.

To sum up, in English, the structure of a sentence involves a variety of elements assembled together to form a whole and a meaningful utterance. The spelling skills should be emphasized as any other components of the language. The analysis of errors brings out the gravity of spelling mastery. Al-Bereiki and Al-Mekhlati (2015:662) argue that "the emphasis of spelling accuracy is closely related to its role in successful writing, effective communication". In other words, spelling words correctly take part in successful writing as well as conveying meanings appropriately.

### **3. Frequency of Spelling Error Types and Intralingual Sources' Errors**

#### **3.1. Spelling Errors' Frequency in Students' Writings**

##### **3.1.1. Frequency of Students' Spelling Error Types**

On the basis of the spelling errors identified in students' writing samples and the results interpreted in details, we draw the conclusion that students make spelling errors in the four error categories suggested by Corder (1973). The data collected reveals that students

commit a large number of spelling errors in the misinformation error type with a mean of 37.06%. Thus, it is the most common type of spelling errors made by students. The second in the list of spelling error type is omission with 31.12%, while 23.43% represents addition error type as a third place. Misordering errors are the least number of spelling errors made by students with a mean of 8.39%. (See diagram 1)

### **3.1.2. Frequency of Students' Intralingual Sources' Errors**

The analysis of students' writing samples and the detailed explanation of the errors raised within the target language have displayed that spelling errors are made in the four intralingual sources suggested by Richards (1974). The highest number of spelling errors belongs to the ignorance of rule restrictions with a mean of 36.51%, that is to say, EFL students ignore some significant English rules. Incomplete application of rules is the second largest number of spelling errors with 24.87%. In this study, false concepts hypothesized errors are classified in the third rank with a mean of 21.69%. The lowest error made by students is overgeneralization of rules errors with 16.93%. (see diagram 2)

## **3.2. Teachers' Questionnaire Insights towards Spelling Errors' Frequency**

### **3.2.1. Spelling Error Types in Students' Writing Samples**

Teachers' questionnaire reveals another hierarchy of spelling error types made by students. According to teachers, addition errors are the most common spelling errors found in students' writings with a mean of 73.33%. Then, spelling errors of omission and misinformation represent the same percentage (60%). Likewise, the least common spelling error found in students' samples, 53.33% of the majority of teachers agreed on misordering error type. (see diagram 7)

### **3.2.2. Intralingual Sources' Errors in Students' Writing Samples**

EFL teachers confirm that students' spelling errors are under the four intralingual sources. The majority of teachers (73.33%) agree on the fact that errors are due to students' ignorance of rule restrictions. In other words, students often ignore the rules of writing, they rather focus on the idea and its flow, so no importance is given to the way it is expressed. 60% of teachers emphasize the incomplete application of rules error. Whilst overgeneralization of rules and false concepts hypothesized error occur with a mean of 43.33%. (see diagram 12)

## **II. Teachers' Written Corrective Feedback**

The goal of our research study is to help EFL students in improving their spelling skills. Teachers could participate in this process of learning by providing some kind of assistance, namely feedback. The findings were gathered from students' writing samples so the written feedback is emphasized. Corrective feedback is a distinguishing feature in learning and teaching writing. It has been a topic of interest by many studies conducted to examine its efficacy in the process of language learning and teaching as points out Mohammadi (2009). In addition, Nguyen and Le (2017:179) consider CF "as a medium to encourage the learners to acquire profound linguistic accuracy; besides, with the support of CF, teachers are able to acknowledge the method and the suitable time to correct the learners' written texts". For these reasons, 80% of teachers have strongly agreed on the idea that providing students with written corrective feedback is a very important aspect (see diagram 13). Regarding its impact, "providing CF will prompt the learners to organize, structure and modify knowledge" state Nguyen and Le (ibid).

As noted previously in this work, the written corrective feedback is classified into six types relying on Ellis' typology (2009). Hence, it is up to the teacher to decide whether to

correct the error of spelling or not and how to correct it; that is to say, the type of written feedback he/she is going to provide. The various types of WCF could have a particular influence among students. Some students may be satisfied on how their teachers evaluate their work, but others may be not. However, in Mohammadi's research study (2009:227), he suggested that "no matter what type of being put to use, could provide a highlighted input, for it raises a selective attention for the input on the side of the learners and this physical saliency can work for the betterment of language learning". In brief, from the analysis of students' writing samples, feedback provision helped us in identifying some of the spelling errors.

### **1. Different Types of Written Corrective Feedback Found in Students' Writing**

The results show that the indirect feedback has the lion's share as being the recurring type of written feedback largely used by teachers with a mean of 56.29%. In providing indirect feedback, teachers have underlined and circled the spelling errors. Nguyen and Le (2016:179) argue that such kind of corrective feedback "plays a role in improving learners' proficiency level in writing an essay or composition". Although a significant number of spelling errors were noticeably not taken into consideration by some teachers (32.17%), the analyzed samples also show that direct feedback is uncommon among EFL teachers. Thus, only 10.14% of teachers employ it; they cross out the misspelled items or rewrite the correct form above the wrong elements. Kao (2013, as cited in Nguyen and Le, *ibid*) states that "in terms of accuracy in learners' writing, direct corrective treatment is actually a valuable means". Reformulation is another means of giving feedback, the students rewrite the correct text from the target language by keeping the original meaning (Nguyen and Le, *ibid*:181), so only 1.40% of teachers utilize this technique. It is the lowest kind of written feedback provided by EFL teachers. To conclude, metalinguistic feedback, focused and unfocused feedback and electronic feedback are not used by teachers (0%). That is to say, the analysis of

the findings reveal that these three kinds of WCF are not encountered in students' writing, which means that the spelling errors are not receiving such feedback types. (see diagram 3)

## **2. Written Corrective Feedback Types Used by Teachers**

Teachers believe in the prominence of corrective feedback provision for students' errors in writing. However, drawing a comparison between the types of feedback found in students' samples and teachers' questionnaire responses can simply display a great and a significant difference in their use. 80% of teachers agree on direct feedback as the most frequently written feedback type used to indicate spelling errors while 40% of teachers opt for indirect feedback. The metalinguistic feedback has not been figured out in the samples, but it is selected by 40% of teachers, similarly to reformulation provided with a mean of 46.67%. In addition, 6.67% of teachers pick electronic feedback. The electronic WCF type is only used by electronic software which means that it is not appropriate for our research study. In this regard, Ellis (2009:102) states that "this assistance can be accessed by means of software programs while students write or it can be utilized as a form of feedback". Furthermore, teachers approve their opinions that focused and unfocused feedback is not utilized for spelling errors correction. (see diagram14)

We can clearly perceive that teachers opt for indirect feedback usage most of the time. They choose to locate the errors in order to provide opportunities for their students to correct them by their own. This reflects teachers' strategies on how students should make efforts to learn the language appropriately. It encourages students to be productive and motivated learners.

## **3. Efficiency of Written Corrective Feedback on Students' Spelling Errors**

Teachers explain the impact of effective written corrective feedback on students' motivation to improve their spelling skills. They argue that written corrective feedback is

important in motivating their willingness to know the correct form. In other words, the student is going to be aware and conscious of his/her error and tries to avoid it. This allows him/her to write words in their correct form and will not make the same spelling errors if they consider the correction. Providing students with written feedback encourages them to imitate the correct form and to produce less errors of spelling because they have to be reminded of their errors as much as possible to make the writing skill better. Furthermore, effective written corrective feedback is the most important technique to get students motivated; it may send them check their spelling which could become a habit that helps with the improvement of spelling mastery. Nguyen and Le (2017:178) confirm that “the effectiveness of written corrective feedback on the learners’ performance has been confirmed through various studies”. In their own study, they have investigated the impact of teachers’ corrective feedback on English students’ writing. They find out that students have a positive attitude towards their teachers’ corrective feedback. Besides, “correction with comments and teacher correction was considered as the most useful strategy when giving feedback in the learners’ performance” (Nguyen and Le, *ibid*:177). So the outcomes of their study have fostered the employment of corrective feedback when teaching writing in EFL classrooms.

### **III. Teachers’ Remedy Techniques to Minimize Students’ Spelling Errors**

#### **1. Teachers’ View towards Students’ Spelling Mastery**

From teachers’ questionnaire responses, we remark their attempt in highlighting spelling mastery. First of all, they all perceive writing as a difficult task (100%). Spelling then is a part of writing. Among the other errors found in students’ writings, spelling errors are classified in the second rank with 93.33% after tense and punctuation errors (100%); hence, they are the major errors in writing in English. Therefore, the majority of teachers acknowledge that they always encounter this kind of error (66.67%). That is why, learning to spell correctly is perceived as very important by 87.50% of EFL teachers because writing

with spelling errors seem to be a difficult task to teachers when correcting students' written works (60%).

From the results viewed in diagram (8), teachers point out that the mastery of spelling is a part of mastering the language; in other words, learning a language should involve all its components including spelling. Students must not underestimate the seriousness of learning spelling. Therefore, mastering spelling enhances the capacity to develop language skills. For instance, a student who masters spelling will undoubtedly write good and correct English. This will improve his writing capacities and he will be able to form correct and meaningful sentences, besides improving his reading abilities. Furthermore, the mastery of spelling makes the learner trustworthy; that is to say, he inspires confidence and validity. The consequences of misspelling may influence and affect the whole meaning and mislead the reader in his interpretation. One of the teachers says 'university students must not write with spelling errors'. Lastly, some students are formed to become teachers, so they have to master the oral and the written language as well.

## **2. Solutions to Spelling Errors**

Al-Khresheh (2016:53) argues that "the ultimate objective of EA theory is explanation of errors. Hence, this stage is considered the most important for EA research in order to reach some remedial measures". Therefore, one of the objectives this research study aims to reach is suggesting some effective solutions to minimize errors of spelling. Relying on teachers' views, they recommend three main solutions to reduce such errors. To start with, they think that the best solution is intensive reading in order to develop their English language. Students should read for instance novels, short stories, newspaper articles and magazines. Intensive reading is one of the types of reading. Its purpose is to remember as much as possible information when reading. This form of reading could be helpful for language learners to snatch new vocabulary and to start using it in real contexts. Therefore, it will increase their



consciousness about spelling those erroneous words or items correctly. Krashen (1993:85) points out the importance of intensive reading by learners as “they will become adequate readers, acquire a large vocabulary, develop the ability to understand and use the complex grammatical constructions, develop a good writing style”.

In order to be well equipped, students have to practice their English to enrich their vocabulary both in the oral and written form. This has to be followed by practice in real situations between themselves or in front of teachers, and practicing writing as well. The writing skill is a productive skill; students should have the tendency to write in English to improve their writing abilities because the majority still faces difficulties to express ideas without making errors. To conclude, the best and most effective solution to any spelling error is checking a dictionary. Teachers advise their students to rely on a hard copy dictionary so as to learn new words and check the correct forms to avoid errors. Consequently, Students have to make genuine efforts to achieve some satisfactory level of writing performance. These remedial techniques fall within student’s self-evaluation strategies.

Student’s self-evaluation is mainly a learning strategy. It is defined by Kastrati (2013:431) as “students judging the quality of their work, based on evidence and explicit criteria, for the purpose of doing better work in the future”. Self-evaluation is a powerful strategy because it enhances students’ performance concerning self-efficacy and intrinsic motivation (ibid). Kastrati (ibid:433) believes that self-efficacy involves “beliefs about one’s ability to perform actions that lead to desired ends... Higher self-efficacy translates into higher achievement”. Thereby, accurate self-evaluation is essential for effective language learning in which students’ abilities could allow them to distinguish between what they already know and what they do not yet know. Kastrati (ibid:431) states that “they begin to recognize their own strengths and weaknesses. They become more familiar with their own beliefs, and possibly their misconceptions”. She (ibid:433) also declares that many advantages

have been observed in her research as in other research studies conducted before concerning the impact of students' self-evaluation including cognitive achievement, motivation and students' attitudes. Indeed, reading is significant for many reasons; the student could learn new aspects, broadening knowledge, boosting potentials and improving the critical thinking of his or her. In the process of learning foreign languages, the importance of reading has much interest. It enables students to attain a kind of mental strength because of the fresh spirits reading provides. So the students should pursue some guidance for the sake of making language learning as familiar as possible to break boundaries of complexity.

The reading skill has to be followed by practising writing since developing good reading habits affect positively and strengthen the writing abilities of learners. The capacity to write well reflects students' proficiency in language. For EFL students, reading and writing are two fundamental skills that require personal efforts even more than the other language skills. Because, they help learners to acknowledge their weaknesses, fill their language understanding gaps and adjust their techniques of learning. Thus, students' personal efforts could be the turning point in their improvements. Oscarson (2009) believes that those students who believe, for instance, in their capacity in leaning a new language is under their control, they will never give up when facing some sort of difficulties. In addition, it is necessary for students to feel responsible of their learning process in general and their writing performance in specific. Because, they are going to be assessed for the way they write not on what they have in mind or about their intentions. So, it is noteworthy that students who possess these language skills are more often aware of the limits of their knowledge and they seek to ameliorate their language performance.

The strategy of students' self-evaluation involves metacognitive functions. Metacognition knowledge refers to "what students know about learning, including their own learning processes, awareness of effective study strategies and when and why to use them"

state Stanton et al (2015, as cited in Osterhage et al, 2019:1). In other words, students should have the tendency to depend on themselves and develop their knowledge so to achieve and control their own learning. But for some of them, they need some guided practice and teachers' feedback, so they can develop such skills (Gipps, 1994). Oscarson (2009:39) also considers metacognitive strategy training as a tool to provide them with opportunities to become autonomous and independent learners. Therefore, it has a positive impact over language learners as the case with EFL students. For this reason, students' self-confidence to yield the wanted results in any field will be crowned with success no matter what are the difficulties they encounter during that journey.

The interpretation of data gained from the research instruments which were used to reach the aims of our research study has confirmed the three hypotheses outlined at the beginning. The first hypothesis claims that spelling errors are made in the four error types suggested by Corder (1973). Thus, the spelling errors found in students' writings are: misinformation, omission, addition and misordering errors. The misinformation spelling error type is the most frequent one. The second hypothesis concerns the intralingual errors raised within the target language as being the major factor of spelling errors occurrence. The sentences analyzed are illustrations of the intralingual transfer, namely overgeneralization of rules, ignorance of rule restrictions, incomplete application of rules and false concepts hypothesized. Ignorance of rules restrictions is a major source of misspellings. The last hypothesis focuses on the positive or the negative effect of written corrective feedback. EFL teachers strongly agree on its positive influence in minimizing students' spelling errors in writing. Students' personal efforts followed by teachers' effective written feedback could help students becoming better spellers of the English language.

## **Conclusion**

To sum up, it is clearly observed that first year EFL students of the Department of English at Mouloud Mammeri University of Tizi Ouzou have difficulties to spell accurately. This chapter has discussed and analyzed the findings of the major concepts this study is about. The gathered data from both research instruments have helped us to reach our research aims and to provide the necessary answers to the questions asked at the beginning of this work. According to the statistical data gained from the analyzed corpus, a large number of students still commit errors of spelling. Therefore, teachers have suggested some techniques to minimize this error type. Applying these solutions will not only help students to improve their spelling skills, but it will also boost their writing performance. The intralingual transfer is clearly a main source of these misspelled and incorrect items. The application of some rules or incomplete application of others and the faulty learning or comprehension of some other rules appropriately affect learning English as a foreign language. The latter involves the learning of all its components including spelling. Finally, in teachers' view, the written corrective feedback is a useful method to help learners to be aware of their errors. In other words, students who are conscious of the importance of feedback will take it into consideration and try to correct and improve errors of spelling by their own. Thus, after the analysis of data, the three hypotheses set at the beginning have been confirmed.

## **General Conclusion**

This research study has investigated spelling errors of year one EFL students' writings and teachers' written corrective feedback of the Department of English at Mouloud Mammeri University of Tizi Ouzou. It attempts to shed light on the significance of spelling mastery in language learning and improving the writing skill performance. To achieve this aim, we have relied on Ellis' Error Analysis Theory (1994) and his "Typology of Written Corrective Feedback Types" (2009). The two theories were used to analyze and explain the spelling errors found in students' writing and the types of WCF teachers provide. EA is carried out in four consecutive stages including collection of a sample of learner's language, identification of errors, description of errors and explanation of errors. Whilst WCF is classified into six types which are direct feedback, indirect feedback, metalinguistic feedback, focused and unfocused feedback, reformulation feedback and electronic feedback; hence, the study targets EFL students and teachers to spotlight the need of accurate spelling especially by university students.

The students' writing samples were collected randomly. They contain fifty examination papers of literature and civilization modules from the academic year 2018/2019. To back up our research study with reliable data, we have administered a questionnaire to fifteen EFL teachers in the same modules. So the results are gained from two research instruments that have been chosen. Therefore, the mixed method is adopted. The statistical and empirical data was analyzed by the SPSS method whereas the qualitative data includes the explanation and the comparison of the different spelling errors types, the intalingual transfer and teachers' written corrective feedback relying on Error Analysis (1994) and Written Corrective Feedback (2009) theories.

The study has fulfilled the three main objectives outlined at the beginning. We have investigated the target language sources of spelling errors followed by suggesting some remedial techniques to minimize such error. In addition, we have examined the significance of teachers' provision with written corrective feedback. Therefore, the interpretation of data confirms the hypotheses mentioned formerly.

The findings reveal that freshman students still have problems with accurate spelling. They must pay attention to what they write and how to write it and not to focus only on transmitting the idea, but also on the way the correct form of words is put together to build correct sentences' structures. Students make spelling errors in the four categories suggested by Corder (1973). It includes errors of misinformation as the most frequently error committed by students with a mean of 37.06% besides errors of omission (31.12%), addition (23.43%) and misordering (8.39%). The total number of spelling errors analyzed is 286. It involves 97 misspelled words and 189 incorrect sentences' structures. The former includes nouns, verbs, adjectives, pronouns and prepositions while the latter includes article errors, subject errors, agreement errors, plurality errors, verbs errors, preposition errors, pronoun errors, superlative and comparative errors, word order system errors. The intalingual transfer is a major factor in the emergence of such errors. The incorrect sentences' structures because of spelling errors are selected to exemplify the different sources, namely ignorance of rule restrictions (36.51%), overgeneralization of rules (16.93%), incomplete application of rules (24.87%) and false concepts hypothesized (21.69%). As a result, the ignorance of rule restrictions is the most common errors source. Then, teachers provide indirect feedback for the great majority of the spelling errors with a mean of 56.29%. In other words, they rather prefer underlying or circling the errors' location.

The questionnaire allows EFL teachers to contribute in this research study. Due to their responses, we have suggested the three remedial techniques which may help EFL

students to minimize spelling errors which are: intensive reading, practice in real contexts and relying on hard copy dictionaries. Thus, the majority of them emphasize on the importance of spelling mastery. However, they consider that students' personal efforts in improving their writing performance could be the key element to achieve a satisfactory level in learning English as a foreign language. In brief, the results from students' writing samples and teachers' questionnaire facilitate the explanation of the spelling errors.

Finally, errors occur as a sign of developmental processes which participate in the learning of a language. Corder (1967:168) argues that "errors are not being regarded as signs of inhibition, but simply as evidence of his strategies of learning". Just as the spelling errors students make. The deviations in spelling are a result of a new system developed by the language learner. An error may be a sign of failure for some, but in the field of Error Analysis Theory an error provides better understanding about the learning strategies employed by the language learner. Corder (ibid:163) believes that "we live in an imperfect world and consequently errors will occur in spite of our best efforts".

It should be mentioned that this study has some limitations. It has investigated the spelling error analysis of first year students relying on a corpus of fifty examination papers of civilization and literature modules. So the sample is limited to a number of fifty EFL students and fifteen EFL teachers of the same modules in the Department of English at Mouloud Mammeri University of Tizi Ouzou, since it is not possible to study all the students' writings and with all the teachers.

For further recommendations, students could investigate to which extent the provided solutions help learners minimize errors of spelling; whether they are efficient strategies and whether they are used by EFL learners. They could as well examine the role of metacognition methods in enhancing students' spelling skills.

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## Appendix

### Teachers' Questionnaire

#### Spelling Error Analysis and Teachers' Written Corrective Feedback: a Case of Year One Students of the Department of English at MMUTO.

The present questionnaire is a data collection tool used as part of this research study that aims at investigating the common spelling errors students commit in their writings, identifying the reasons behind such errors, and examining the significance of teachers' written corrective feedback in developing students' awareness towards these errors. The data is gathered randomly from students' examination papers of civilization and literature modules. To achieve this aim, you are kindly requested to answer the questions below.

##### ❖ Section One: EFL Students' Spelling Errors According to Error Analysis Theory

**Q 1:** How do students consider writing?

- a) An easy task ☐
- b) A difficult task ☐

**Q 2:** What types of errors you find the most in students' writings? (You can tick more than one box)

- a) Tense errors ☐
- b) Vocabulary errors ☐
- c) Spelling errors ☐
- d) Punctuation errors ☐

**Q 3:** How often do you find spelling errors on your students' examination papers?

- a) Always ☐
- b) Often ☐
- c) Sometimes ☐
- d) Rarely ☐
- e) Never ☐

**Q 4:** What types of spelling errors you mostly find on your students' examination papers? (You can tick more than one box)

- a) Addition ☐

- b) Omission ☐
- c) Misinformation ☐
- d) Misordering ☐

**Q 5:** How important is the mastery of spelling?

- a) Very important ☐
- b) Important ☐
- c) Slightly important ☐
- d) Unimportant ☐

Please, would you explain your view? .....

.....

.....

**Q 6:** How difficult is the correction of your students' examination papers because of wrong spelling?

- a) Very difficult ☐
- b) Difficult ☐
- c) Slightly difficult ☐
- d) Not difficult ☐

### ❖ Section Two: The Causes of Students' Spelling Errors in Writing

**Q 7:** Do you think that it is due to the mother tongue interference?

- a) Yes ☐
- b) No ☐

**Q 8:** Do you think that spelling errors are due to students' lack of competence in the target language?

- a) Yes ☐
- b) No ☐

If your answer is yes, why? .....

.....

.....

.....

**Q 9:** What are the causes of these intralingual errors? (You can tick more than one element)

- a) Overgeneralization of rules ☐
- b) Ignorance of rule restriction ☐
- c) Incomplete application of rules ☐
- d) False concepts hypothesized ☐

And which type do you frequently encounter?.....  
.....

❖ **Section Three:** Teachers' Provision with Written Corrective Feedback on Students' Examination Papers

**Q 10:** Providing students with written corrective feedback is:

- |                       |                          |
|-----------------------|--------------------------|
| a) Very important     | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| b) Important          | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| c) Slightly important | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| d) Unimportant        | <input type="checkbox"/> |

**Q 11:** What type of written corrective feedback do you use mostly to indicate spelling errors?  
(You can tick more than one box)

- |                                   |                          |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------------|
| a) Direct feedback                | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| b) Indirect feedback              | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| c) Metalinguistic feedback        | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| d) Focused and Unfocused feedback | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| e) Electronic feedback            | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| f) Reformulation feedback         | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| g) All of them                    | <input type="checkbox"/> |

**Q 12:** Would you explain the impact of effective written corrective feedback on students' motivation to improve their spelling?

.....  
.....  
.....

**Q 13:** What are the possible solutions you may suggest to allow your students to minimize their spelling errors?

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

*Thank you for your cooperation.*