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**Investigating the Grammatical Errors made by Third Year**  
**Learners in their Writing Compositions at Chihani Bachir Secondary**  
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## ***Dedications***

*I dedicate this work to :*

*My beloved family,*

*To the memory of my grandmother Dahbia and my father Elhacene*

*My mother Djedjiga*

*My only brother Mourad*

*My sisters Karima, Samira, Malha, Fatiha and Nadia*

*My nieces Imane, Yasmine, adil, Serine and nephews Cherif, Ales, Zinnedine and Aris*

*My future life partner Ahcene who was always beside me*

***Ouardia Cherif***

*I dedicate this work to:*

*My beloved family,*

*My mother Nouara, my father Mouloud*

*My brothers Mouhand and Younes*

*My sisters Miassa, Lilia and Yamina*

*My nieces Ania and Celia and my nephews Iliane and Aris*

*To the memory of my grandmother Tassadit*

*My uncle Boussad*

*My aunt Samia and her daughter Celya*

*My best friends Fatima and Fettouma*

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## **Abstract**

The current study is mainly concerned with the investigation of the grammatical errors made by secondary school learners' in their writing compositions. It aims at identifying the types of grammatical errors that are most frequent in learners' exam compositions of the second term English exam and determine the sources behind these errors. In order to conduct this study, we have analyzed a sample of 70 exam papers written by third year students in the academic year 2018/2019. We followed the procedure of error analysis adopted by Pits Corder, namely collection, identification, description and explanation. To analyze the data collected, we adopted the mixed method approach, combining both quantitative and qualitative procedure of data gathering and data analysis. The results obtained reveals that third year students make different types of errors in different categories while they write. These identified errors are mainly due to the lack of the knowledge of the target language, overgeneralization and incomplete application of the English language rules and/or interference from previously learned languages.

**Key word:** Grammatical Errors, Error Analysis, Exam Compositions, Mixed Method.

## **List of Abbreviations**

**EFL:** English as a Foreign Language.

**Hp:** Hypothesis.

**L1:** First Language.

**L2:** Second Language.

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### ▪ Statement of the Problem

Learning a foreign language is a very complex and challenging task. Therefore, the mastery of this language involves the learning of the four skills: listening, speaking, reading and writing. However, writing in foreign language seems to be the most difficult skill for learners to acquire. Richards and Renandya (2002: 303) state that “*there is no doubt that writing is the most difficult skill for L2 learners to master.*” In fact, writing is less spontaneous but more permanent. It demands a lot of efforts, mental work and the use of different aspects effectively, such as grammar and vocabulary to transmit the meaning that the writer wants to communicate.

Grammar plays an important role in language learning and each language has different grammatical rules. Although grammar is regarded as a system of syntax that states the order in which words should be arranged in a sentence, in addition to the attention given by teachers to these devices in classroom teaching, students of secondary school fail to express themselves accurately. In writing, during the learning process of a foreign language, learners face many difficulties; and most of the time, those difficulties are related to the use of grammatical rules. They appear in the form of errors that can be caused by two main factors. The first factor can be attributed to their first language while the second one is linked to the lack of knowledge of English grammatical rules, and this affects badly the quality of their writing. learner’s errors reflect an inappropriate use of the grammatical devices and a misunderstanding of the foreign language that he is learning.

Error analysis is used to analyze any type of error made by students in their writing. According to Corder(1967), “*error analysis is an explanatory and descriptive procedure that aims to explain how errors occur and the sources that cause these errors during the learning process*”. For these reasons, error analysis is the most

suitable tool to understand the source(s) behind the errors made by students of secondary school, and subsequently help them to master the grammatical rules, and improve their writing.

This work is an attempt to investigate the grammatical errors made by third year secondary school learners in their writing compositions. In fact, if there are some research works devoted to error analysis, these are mainly conducted either at the level of the middle schools (Isselnane 2010) or at the university level (Yacine, 2010; Hanachi, 2015). Therefore, in our research, we try to investigate another level of school education, which is the secondary school level, and particularly the third year.

### ▪ **Aims and significance of the study**

Although writing skills have an important place in teaching classes, teachers of secondary school complain about the learners quality of writing and the amount of grammatical errors they make. Thus, in order to enhance the grammatical level of the learners, this study aims first, to identify the common grammatical errors made by third year secondary school learners. Second, it describes the frequency of these errors in their writing compositions. Finally, it aims at finding out the factors behind these errors.

### ▪ **Research questions and hypotheses**

In order to conduct our research, we have formulated the following questions:

1. What are the common grammatical errors made by third year secondary school students in their writing compositions?
2. What are the sources behind these errors?

In order to answer these questions, we have advanced the following hypotheses:

**H1.** The grammatical errors made by the students are mainly related to the wrong choice of the types of articles used, verb tense and subject-verb agreement.

**H2.** These errors are related to interference from the mother tongue and/or previously acquired languages; to the lack of knowledge of the target language itself.

### ▪ **Research techniques and methodology**

To conduct our research, we have adopted a mixed method adopted by Heigham and Croker (2009). This means that we made a combination between the quantitative and the qualitative method for the collection and the analysis of the data. The quantitative method is used to quantify the number of errors made by the learners in their writing compositions, relying on the SPSS software. The qualitative method is used to interpret and explain the data in relation to the theoretical framework.

In our research, we have used a corpus of seventy (70) exam papers of writing compositions of third year learners at “Chihani Bachir” of “Azazga”. These are selected randomly in order to check the common grammatical errors made by the learners.

### ▪ **Structure of the dissertation**

This dissertation follows the traditional complex model, which consists of a general introduction, four chapters and a general conclusion. The first chapter is a ‘review of literature’; it reviews the important concepts and definitions related to our topic of investigation and provides the theoretical framework. It is divided into two sections; the first section introduces the writing skill and the concept of writing. And the role of grammar in writing. The second section is entitled ‘*error and error analysis*’, it gives a general view about errors and mistakes, the sources of errors, and the theoretical framework adopted in this study. The second chapter is called ‘Research Design’. It shows the methodology adopted in our study, in addition to the procedures of data collection and data analysis. The third chapter is called ‘Presentation of the Findings’; it presents the results sorted out from the investigation. The last chapter is

entitled 'Discussion of the Findings', it is about the discussion and the interpretation of the findings in relation to the research question and to the theoretical framework. the study ends with a general conclusion that summarizes the whole work.

### **Introduction**

This chapter deals with the review of literature, it aims at providing the reader with a theoretical background of the research; it is divided into two sections. The first section deals with the writing skill by providing us the definition and the importance of writing, it also introduces grammar as an important aspect of writing and elements of grammar. The second section highlights the notion of error analysis which is the main procedure on which this study is based. It includes the definition of errors and mistakes, the level of errors followed by approaches to study errors and their sources; it ends with the theory in relation to errors.

### **Section one: An Overview of Writing and Grammar**

#### **1. Definition of Writing**

Writing is one of the productive skills in learning a foreign language. The success of learners in their education is based on this skill, for this writing is an essential part in the learning process. According to White and Arndt (1991:3), “*writing is far from being a simple matter of transcribing language into symbols : it is a thinking process in its own right. It demands conscious intellectual effort which usually has to be sustained over considerable effort of time*”. In other words, writing is a complex process that requires frequent practice.

Furthermore, Lado (2000:248) considers writing in a foreign language as “*the ability to use structure, the lexical items, and their conventional representation in ordinary matter of fact of writing*”. That is to say, writing is to use a language and its graphic representation productively in an ordinary situation; therefore, learners have to master the graphic aspects such as grammar and appropriate vocabulary related to the subject matter. For Widdowson (2001), writing is the act of making up sentences and transmitting them

through visual mediums as marks of paper; however, the graphic symbols must be arranged in certain way and follow particular rules to produce coherent sentences.

Writing is defined by different scholar as a very difficult task that requires a lot of efforts from the learners. Nunan (1999:36) claims that “*writing is an extremely complex, cognitive activity for which the writer is required to demonstrate control of a number of variables simultaneously*”. This means that while writing, the learner has to take into consideration many language aspects like grammar, vocabulary and punctuation in order to write a meaningful paragraphs; moreover, Troyk and Nudelman (1994) state that “*writing is more than just taking pen in hand and expecting words to flow perfectly on a paper*”. Writing is a greater challenge for the learners, it requires a mental efforts to ensure that the message that they want to communicate can be understood by the reader.

Harmer (2001) also asserts that writing is a vital skill for the users of a foreign language exactly as it is for everyone using his first language. In other words, writing is an important skill that enable us to communicate our ideas and thoughts with others. On the other hand, Coulmas (1999:560) defines writing as “*a set of visible signs used to represent units of language in a systematic way, with the purpose of recording messages which can be retrieved by virtue of which its units are encoding in the writing system*”. As mentioned above, writing is a difficult skill , needing the appropriate use of various elements to translate ideas into grammatical sentences and the most important aspect is that the language can be understood only by those who knows the language . Thus, writing is not limited only to express thoughts, but it is a complex cognitive process, involving the appropriate use of different aspects simultaneously. The learners has to take into consideration different aspects like grammar and vocabulary to produce a coherent paragraph.

### 2. The Importance of Writing

Writing takes an important place in our life, it is the structure of our communication. People express their opinion, ideas, experience through this skill as they can acquire a new knowledge through it. Writing is essential because it is used extensively in higher education and in the workplace, if the learners don't know how to express themselves in writing, they won't be able to communicate well with their teachers. Much of the communication is done in writing for this it is necessary for the learners to master it.

According to Alexanders (2008), knowledge may be a power, but how one communicates his knowledge is the prerequisite for learning within society. Writing skill is a primary tool for communicating knowledge, especially in educational setting. That is to say the capacity to communicate ideas is very important for the learners in their learning process. Moreover, writing reinforces the grammatical structures and vocabulary that have been taught to student and provides an opportunity for the learners to be adventurous with the language, they can express their feeling and embody their thoughts, it makes the learners live a real involvement with the new language.

### 3. Definition of grammar

Grammar is an important aspect in language; it helps us to combine words to have meaningful sentences. Kumar (2013) defines grammar as *“the study of words and the way words work together, it is an invisible force that guides the learners unconsciously to combine words in order to communicate.”* Another definition given by Harmer (2001:12), who states that *“Grammar of the language is the description of the rules through words that can be formed and then can change their meaning, in addition to the possible ways of their construction into sentences”*. In other words,

grammar is the rules that enable us to combine the same words in multiple ways to have different meanings or in order to make well-structured sentences.

The term grammar has been defined by many scholars and each of them defines it according to their point of view, such as Canale and Swain and Beverly. According to Beverly (2007:1), "*grammar is the sound, structure and meaning system of language. All languages have grammar, and each language has its own grammar*". That is to say, grammar enables the learner to write meaningful sentences. Furthermore, Canale and Swain (1980) consider grammar as the description of the structure of a language and the way in which linguistic units such as words and phrases are combined to produce sentences of language. This means that grammar is the combination of units to form sentences that have meaning in a language. Another definition given by Thornburg (1999:13) who states that grammar is "*A description of the rules for forming sentences, including an account of the meaning that these forms convey*." In other words, grammar is a set of rules which are used in sentences.

### **4. The Role of grammar in Writing**

Grammar is a crucial aspect of language; it is the key that enables us to express our thoughts in a coherent way. According to Azar (2007:13), the role of grammar is to help students discover the nature of a language; that language consists of predictable patterns that make what we say, read, hear and write intelligible. That is to say, grammar provides students with rules to follow in order to have a meaningful paragraph.

There is no doubt that grammatical knowledge is essential for the mastery of any language, and without it, communication is impossible. Thus, the development and acquiring of a new knowledge is also impossible. This point is supported by Richards and Renandya (2002) who claim that "*without a complete*

*knowledge of grammar, learners' knowledge development will be limited*'. Moreover, many teachers give a great attention to grammar because learning a foreign language requires to use that language effectively and grammar plays a vital role in the learning process.

Kohli (1984) emphasizes the importance of grammar by providing us with an illustration of two car drivers. The first driver knows only driving and nothing about the working of the engine. The second driver knows driving and also understands the working of the machinery. The person who knows grammar is like this second driver. In case he is doubtful about the correctness of a particular structure, his knowledge of grammar comes to his rescue. As mentioned above grammar is the key to communicate. Without grammar the expression of our thoughts is unclear.

### 5. Elements of Grammar

Grammar takes an important place in the learning of a new language. In order to master it, the learners should understand correctly these elements, and these elements as follows:

- **Subject** it is the person which is performing the action.

Example:

The learner succeed in their exam.

- **Verb** it is used to explain what a person is doing ; in other words, it explains what is happening .

Example:

James plays football every day.

- **Verb tense:** it is a form that shows the tense in which the action occurs.
- **Noun** is a word that represent a person, place or a thing. A noun is an essential element in any sentences.

Example:

1. Austin was very sad because he lost his dog;
2. Water was very cold;
3. New York is known as the city that never sleeps.

- **Pronoun** it is a word that is used to replace a noun or a person, it is usually used to avoid repetition.

Example:

She smiled at them but, she didn't smile to me.

- **Adjectives** They are descriptive words, these describe a noun or pronoun. These are used to add meaning to the message.

Example:

Emma lives in a beautiful house.

## Section Two: Errors and Error Analysis in EFL

### 1. Errors and mistakes

In order to analyze learners' errors in learning a foreign language or a second language, it is important to make a distinction between mistakes and errors. Many linguists pay attention to this distinction, so it is important to provide a definition of these two concepts.

Errors are also called errors of competence that occur in the process of learning or acquiring a foreign language or a second language, because the learner tends to apply rules that do not correspond to the target language or they misapply the grammatical rules. Errors are systematic; they can not be self-corrected by the learners because they may not be conscious when making them. Brown (1994:205) defines errors as "*a noticeable deviation from the adult grammar of a native speaker, reflecting the interlanguage competence of the learner*". In other words, the deviation when making errors is due to the learners' lack of

competence in the target language, whereas a mistake refers to performance errors which is a failure in the use of a known system correctly, they are unsystematic and not very serious because the learner can correct them when the attention is drawn to them. This kind of errors are due to the main sources like slips of the tongue, lapses, and tiredness. As defined by Brown, “*a mistake refers to performance errors that is either a random guess or slip of the tongue, in that it is a failure to utilize a known system correctly.*”(ibid).

Furthermore, Ellis (1997:17) claims that “*errors reflect gaps in learners’ knowledge and they occur because the learner does not know what is correct. Mistakes reflect occasional lapses in performance and they occur because the learner is unable to perform what they know*”. This means that when a foreign language learner makes an error it is due to the insufficient knowledge of the target language, whereas a mistake occurs because the learner fails to perform his known system of language.

## **2. Approaches to the of Study Errors**

There are two main approaches to study learners’ errors: contrastive analysis and error analysis. The former aims to show that students’ errors are due only to interference of the mother tongue language; the latter aims to show the students’ errors from other sources.

### **2.1. Contrastive Analysis**

Contrastive analysis is the systematic comparison of two or more languages, with the purpose of describing their similarities and differences. Lado (1957), claims that “*the student who comes into contact with a foreign language will find some features of it quite easy and others extremely difficult.*” That is to say, the learner of a foreign language will find that some features of that language are not difficult to learn mainly those structurally related to his mother tongue. Contrastive analysis aims to show that students’ errors are due to interference; it helps to predict the difficulties that exist in second language learning as the mother tongue is a source of the difficulties. Contrastive analysis will not be able to predict all the errors

made by the learners; it deals only with those due to the interference of the mother tongue. For this reason, contrastive analysis was criticized when a new approach has shown that transfer from first language is not the only source of errors. Ellis (1996) argued that “*the study of learners errors showed that although many errors were caused by transferring L1 habits, many more were not.*” This means that there are other causes of errors, besides those related to the interference of the mother tongue.

### **2.2. Error Analysis**

The weaknesses of contrastive analysis led to the development of a new approach that is called error Analysis. Error analysis differs from contrastive analysis. While the latter generates a prediction based on a comparison between the mother tongue and the target language, error analysis is the best way to describe and explain errors made by second language learners; it provides an examination of errors that can be attributed to all possible sources, not only those which are caused by mother tongue interference. According to Corder (1967), error analysis is “*A technique for identifying, classifying and systematically interpreting the unacceptable forms produced by someone learning a foreign language, using any of the principles and procedures provided by linguistics.*” In other words, error analysis is an activity to identify, classify and interpret different errors made by learners during the process of learning a foreign language. Brown(2000) suggested the following definition of error analysis:

“the fact that learners do make errors, and that these errors can be observed, analyzed and classified to reveal something of the system operating within the learners, led to the surge of the study of learners’ errors, called Error Analysis” (Brown,2000:218).

In other words, error analysis deals with the learners’ problem in the target language by detecting, analyzing and then classifying them in different categories. Error analysis takes into consideration all the errors that occur in second language systems.

### **3. Source of errors**

Errors are problems that the learner face during the learning process of second or foreign languages. Therefore, there are two main sources of the student's errors. The first source is interference from the mother tongue or from other previously learned languages, while the second source can be attributed to the difficult rules of the target language.

### **3.1. Interlingual Errors**

During the process of learning any foreign language or second language, learners may refer to their native language in producing the target language because they are not familiar with the system of the target language. These errors occur because of the interference of the mother tongue and the transfer of some elements of it into the target language. Corder (1971) claims that these kinds of errors occur when the learners' habits ( patterns, system, or rules) interfere or prevent him/her to some extent, from acquiring the patters, and rules of the foreign language. The Dictionary of Language Teaching and Applied linguistics (1992) defines interlingual errors as being the result of language transfer, which is caused by learner's first language. That is to say, interlingual errors are those errors due to the interference from the mother tongue.

Interlanguag errors are due to the linguistic differences between the native language and the target language which leads to the problem of interference between two languages. This interference consists in the negative influence of the first language on the performance of the target language.

### **3.2. Intralingual Errors /Developmental Errors**

Intralingual errors are those errors which result from the process of acquisition itself, independent of the native language. They are free from student's first language. The learners do not have a problem with the interference of the mother tongue but they face a problem of deviation in the use of the English grammatical rules. According to Richards (1970) ,these errors are

Items produced by the learners which reflect not the structure of the mother tongue but generalization based on partial exposure to the target language. The learner, in this case, tries to derive the rules behind the data which he/she has been exposed to, and may develop hypotheses that correspond neither to the mother tongue nor to the target language. (Richards, 1970:06).

In other words, learners make errors which have no relation with the mother tongue, but concern the target language, they tend to over generalize the rules which develop a language that belongs neither to mother tongue nor to the target language. Intralingual errors are caused by non assimilation of the rules of the target language. Richards (1970:07) asserts that *“intralingual errors are those which reflect the general characteristics of rule learning such as faulty generalization, incomplete application of rules and failure to learn the conditions under which rules apply.”* This means that intralingual errors result from the overgeneralization of rules and ignorance of rules in the target language.

In order to explain the causes of intralingual errors Richards (1970) proposed four main categories of language deviation they are the following:

### **3.2.1. Overgeneralization Errors**

According to Richards (1970), over-generalization refers to learner's creation of deviant structures on the basis of other structures in the target language. That is to say, learners apply certain rules in language learning to several structures when different rules are needed for instance, the use of the suffix 'ed' for all English verbs such as 'eated' instead of ate. The learners generally attempt to generalize the target language structure that he has acquired earlier on new situations which seem to him similar to the previous structure, resulting in incorrect structures.

### **3.2.2. Ignorance of Rules Restrictions**

Another cause in intralingual errors is ignorance of rule restrictions, it is to apply the rules in a context where they do not apply. For instance, some verbs are usually followed

with a preposition; however, the learners misuse this rule by using the same preposition with other verbs.

### 3.2.3. Incomplete Rule Application

It is when the learner fails to fully develop a structure. Ellis states that it occurs when the learner fails to fully develop a structure with the appropriate rules of the target language, which means that the correct form of rules learned is not applied in a correct manner. James (1998:185-186) asserts that incomplete rule application is opposite to overgeneralization; “one might call it undergeneralization”, and exemplifies this deviancy in the order of subject and verb found in the sentence like in the sentence “nobody knew where was Barbie” instead of “nobody knew where Barbie was”. This error is due to the incomplete application of the rule of interrogative form. In other words, the learners failed to invert the subject with the verb in the interrogative form.

### 3.2.4. False concept hypothesis

Some development errors drive from faulty comprehension of the target language rules; this kind of errors occur because of poor selection and gradation of teaching items (Richard, 1974 :178) .

As Corder (1981:53) claims, false concept hypothesis can be considered as a sort of generalization which is due to the learners’ limited knowledge of the target language. An example is given by Richards (1974): the form “was” which may be interpreted as a mark of the past tense and the form “is” which may be interpreted as a mark of the present simple as it is shown in the following respectively: “one day it was happened”; “He is speaks French”. Ellis (1997) distinguishes between incomplete application of the rules and false concept hypothesis. According to him the former refers to the learner’s failure to develop a full and

complete structure whereas the latter happens when learners do not completely understand a distinction in the target language.

### **4. Procedures of error analysis**

In order to analyze learners' errors in the target language, there are some steps to follow. Corder (1973), in second language acquisition, suggests the following:

- Collection of samples of learners' language;
- Identification of errors;
- Description of errors;
- Explanation of errors.

#### **4.1. Collection of data**

The first step of error analysis is to collect a sample of learners' language in order to use it for analysis. In this step, the researcher must try to collect the errors made by learners at all sentence levels.

#### **4.2. Identification of errors**

The second step in error analysis is to identify the errors found in the samples collected. In this step, one tries to compare sentences produced by students to the correct sentences in the target language. Ellis (1995:15) states that " *in order to identify errors, it is necessary to compare the learners' sentence with the correct form in the target language.*" In our work, we try to identify these errors by selecting them according to their appropriate grammatical categories.

#### **4.3. Description of errors**

After collecting students' samples and identifying all the errors made by the learners, the next step is to describe and classify these errors into different grammatical categories. According to Corder, (1973) errors may fall into four main categories: omission of some

required elements, addition of some unnecessary or incorrect elements, selection of incorrect element and misordering of elements.

### **4.3.1 Errors of omission**

This type of error happens when the learner omit certain items that must appear in the sentence.

### **4.3.2.Errors of addition**

his type of error is indicated by the unnecessary presence of an item in a sentence, which means that learners add other unnecessary elements in the sentences.

### **4.3.3. Errors of selection**

This type of error happens when the learner uses the wrong forms of certain structures.

### **4.3.4.Errors of misordering**

This type of error is indicated by incorrect placement of certain morphemes.

## **4.4.Explanation of errors**

After describing the type of errors, the next step is to explain the sources of those errors which are made by learners. These errors can result from many factors. They may be related to interlingual errors, which means the negative transfer of the learners' mother tongue to the target language rules or intralingual errors, including overgeneralization of the rules, ignorance of the rules restrictions and incomplete application of the rules. Explaining why errors occur is an important issue in second language learning. Ellis and Barkhuizen (2005:62) state that "*explaining errors involves determining their sources in order to account for why they were made.*"

## **Conclusion**

In this chapter we dealt with the theoretical background related to our research. It is divided into two main sections. The first section clarified the concept of writing through various definitions and explain its importance in the learning process; it provides also a set of definitions concerning grammar and its role in writing. The second section deals with the concept of error and error analysis; it starts with the distinction between mistakes and errors, level of error, then, it provides different approaches to study error and the causes that lead the learners to make errors in their writing compositions. Finally , it describes the theoretical framework adopted to achieve the goal of this research. In the next chapter we are going to deal with research methodology where we will present the data collection and the data analysis methods that will be used in our research.

### **Introduction**

This chapter aims to describe the research techniques and the procedures used in investigating the present issue, which consists in analyzing grammatical errors made by third year secondary school learners in their writing compositions.

The research methodology of this study is divided in to two sections. The first section is called procedures of data collection; it presents the method used in this study. It is divided into four sub-sections. The first sub-section is about the place of the investigation; the second deals with the participants. It describes the context of the study. The third sub-section describes the corpus. The last one is about the research method which concerns the description of the instruments of data analysis. The second section is called procedures of data analysis. It describes the different steps followed to examine the gathered data, by using the method adopted by Pit Corder.

### **1. Procedure of data collection**

#### **1.1. The setting of the study**

Our investigation aims at identifying grammatical errors made by students in their writing compositions. To achieve the aim of our aim, we have taken exam papers from “Chihani Bachir” secondary school of “Azazga”.

#### **1.2. Participants**

The participants of the study are third year students from “Chihani Bachir” secondary school of “Azazga”, during the academic year 2018/2019. These students have been studying English as a foreign language since first year middle school, which makes it their seventh year of English learning. Their ages vary between seventeen and twenty years old. Gender difference was not taken into consideration in our study.

As an assignment, the students were asked by their teacher to write a short paragraph, the length of which varies from eight to twelve lines, about counterfeit products and corruption, and this included in the second term exam.

### 1.3. Corpus

In order to deal with the questions that have been raised in the general introduction of the present work. In an attempt to provide answers, we conducted our research using a corpus that consists of seventy (70) third year learners' exam compositions. These papers were selected randomly.

The examination papers comprise two parts. The first part includes questions concerning text comprehension and mastery of the language. The second one deals with the written production, where the students were asked to choose between two topics. In the first topic, they were asked to write a composition of eighty to one hundred and twenty words, in which they will state the strategies that should be used to fight counterfeiting, while the second is concerned with giving examples of unethical practices that spread in their country, and then suggest solutions to fight this problem.

Our focus was on learners' writing production, where we have identified, classified and explained the grammatical errors made by the students of third year.

### 1.4. Research method

In order to reach our aim and to be able to identify and analyze the different grammatical errors, we have adopted the mixed method approach for both data collection and data analysis. Heigham and Croker (2009: 137) claim that it is important to *“mix quantitative and qualitative data at some stage of the research process within a single study in order to understand a research problem more completely”*. This means that it is necessary to combine both the quantitative and the qualitative methods in order to understand the research problem. We use the quantitative method to present

the results in the form of numbers and percentages to be displayed on tables and graphs in order to make it easy for the reader. In order to obtain numerical data, we have used a computer program which is called **Statistical Package for The Social Sciences (SPSS)**. It is “*a software package for the manipulation and statistical analysis of the data*” (Landu and Everit, 2004:03).

Thus, through quantitative method, we explained and interpreted the sum of grammatical errors made by third year students in their writing compositions.

## 2. Procedures of Data Analysis

After displaying the section of data collection, the next step to explain the procedures of data analysis; this section is devoted to the presentation of the method used to analyze the collected data, which means it presents the theoretical approach adopted in this study. Errors are an inevitable part in the language learning process. The foreign language learners inevitably face problems of error when putting their knowledge into practice. These errors occur in both oral and written tasks. In our study, we will focus on written tasks. Thus, in order to analyze the different errors students make while writing, we have adopted procedures of error analysis of Pit Corder. This process is made up of several steps.

The initial step consists in collecting the samples of learners' language. Once the representative sample of learner language is collected, the second step is to identify the errors. In this step we identified the errors by selecting them according to their appropriate grammatical category such as:

**Errors in the use of subject verb agreement:** this kind of error occurs when the subject does not agree with the verb. For example, if the subject is singular the verb must be also singular and if it is plural the verb must be plural;

- **Errors in the use of articles:** this kind of error occurs in sentences due to omission, addition, or wrong use of (in) definite articles( (a/n) / the );
- **Errors in the use of prepositions:** this kind of error occurs when a preposition is misused, omitted or added in the sentence;
- **Errors in the use of verb form:** these errors occur when a verb is incorrectly formed.
- **Errors in the use of verb tense:** these errors occur when an incorrect tense is used in a sentence;
- **Errors in the use of auxiliaries:** they occur when the wrong form of to be or to have is used.
- **Errors in the use of pronouns:** they refer to misuse of pronouns or a wrong choice of pronouns;
- **Errors in the use plural-singular noun:** this kind of error occurs when using a singular form where a plural form should have been used, and using a plural form where a singular form should have been used.

After identifying the different grammatical errors, the third step is the description of these errors. It is carried out through dividing them into categories and sub categories. after the identification and description of errors ,we explained and analyzed the nature of the different errors. Then, we related these errors to one of the two sources; either interlingual errors (errors due to interference of other languages) or intralingual errors (errors within the language itself)

### Conclusion

In this chapter, we have dealt with the methodology used to conduct our research. It was divided into two main sections. The first one dealt with the procedures of data collection in which we described the place where we gathered our corpus, the level of the participants, and eventually the research method used to describe this corpus. Also, as we

have seen, both quantitative and qualitative approaches were introduced as method of data analysis used to explain and present the learners' grammatical errors. As for the second section, it showed that our research work focused on error analysis theory, relying on Pit Corder's procedures of error analysis.

### Introduction

This chapter aims at presenting the results obtained from the seventy (70) exam papers elicited from the third year students of “*Chihani Bachir*” secondary school in “*Azazga*”. This chapter highlights the common errors made by the students in their writing compositions. After the analysis of the corpus, the findings are calculated and presented in percentages and displayed in tables and pie charts using SPSS.

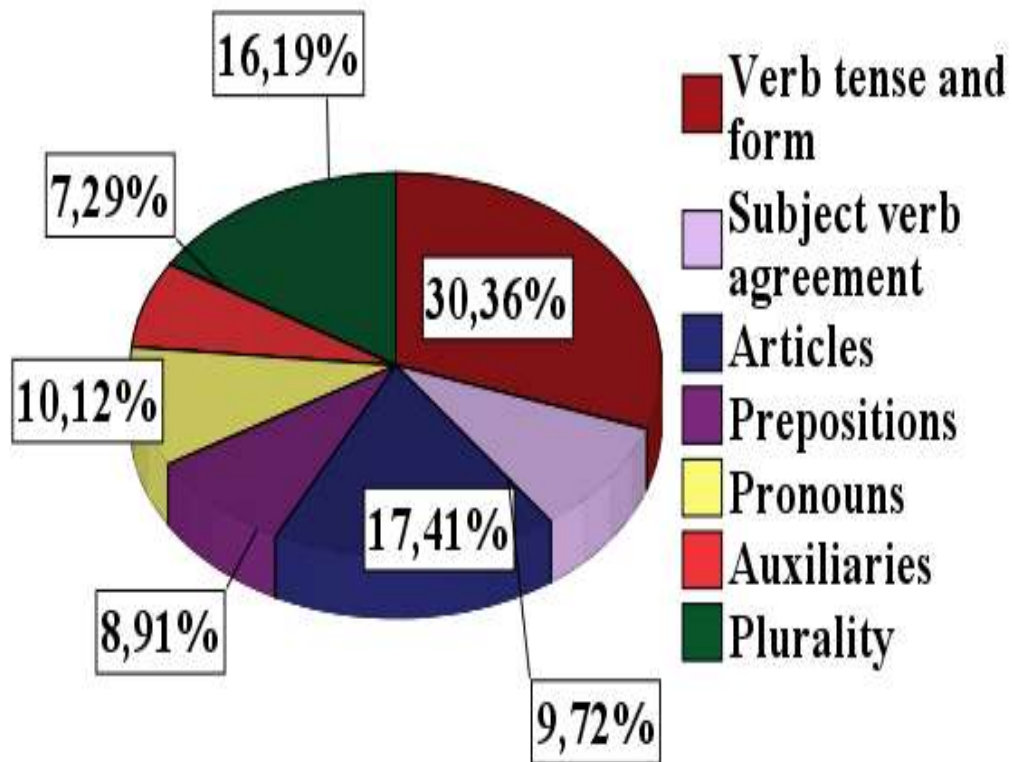
#### ▪ Results of Analyzed corpus

The analysis of the seventy (70) paragraphs which have been selected for our research reveals that third years learners of secondary school make a significant number of errors of different types when they write. These errors are summarized in the table below:

#### ▪ Classification of Grammatical Errors Made by Third Year Secondary School Learners in their Writing Compositions.

Types of errors	Frequency	Percentage
Verb tense and form	75	30,36
Articles	43	17,41
Pluralitly	40	16,19
Pronouns	25	10,12
Subject-verb agreement	24	9,72
Prepositions	22	8,91
Auxiliaries	18	7,29
Total	247	100,0

**Table 1 : Total Number of Learners’ Grammatical Errors in Their Writing Compositions.**



**Pie Chart : Types of Grammatical Errors Identified in the Learners' Writing Compositions.**

The results in the table below shows that the most common grammatical errors that learners made were in the verb tense and form ( 30.36%), and in the choice of articles (17,41%), followed by the use of plurality (16,19%) ,the choice of pronouns (10.12%) , and then subject- verb agreement (9,72%) and the use of preposition (8,90%). The last one are in the use of auxiliaries constitut's (7,29%).

## I. Classification of Errors Types

In this part, we try to explain in details each type of error by providing examples and possible corrections.

### 1. Articles

Type of error	Identified Errors	Correction
<b>Omission</b>	<p>1. Brand without the brand itself is just another product nowadays.</p> <p>2. You can pay off police to ignore any crime.</p>	<p>1. <b>A</b> brand without the brand itself is just another product nowadays.</p> <p>2. You can pay off <b>the</b> police to ignore any crime.</p>
<b>Addition</b>	<p>3. The government should pass <b>a</b> strict laws.</p> <p>4. <b>The</b> counterfeiting is producing <b>a</b> fake products.</p> <p>5. Imitations are of <b>the</b> bad quality that people should not buy.</p>	<p>3. The government should pass strict laws.</p> <p>4. Counterfeiting is producing fake products.</p> <p>5. Imitations are of such bad quality that people should not buy.</p>
<b>Wrong substitution</b>	<p>6. Counterfeit is <b>an</b> big and dangerous problem in society.</p>	<p>6. Counterfeit is a big and dangerous problem in our society.</p>

**Table 2: Classification of the Errors Related to the Use of Articles in the learner'**

**Writing Compositions.**

As shown in the table 2 bellow, we can notice that there are three types of errors concerning the use of articles; in the example 1 and 2, the learners have omitted the definite and indefinite article “a” and “the” where it is needed. In the sentence 3,4 and 5 they have used the articles where it is not necessary; in the third category they have used the wrong article instead of the correct one. From this, we understand that third year students have difficulties to use the right article.

**2 .Auxiliaries**

<b>Types of errors</b>	<b>Identified Errors</b>	<b>Correction</b>
<b>Addition</b>	<p><b>1.</b> The world must <u>be</u> do.</p> <p><b>2.</b> Counterfeiting is always <u>be</u> a major problem.</p>	<p><b>1.</b> The world must do.</p> <p><b>2.</b>Counterfeiting is always a major problem.</p>
<b>Omission</b>	<p><b>3.</b> It not the important work.</p> <p><b>4.</b> People should not by these products because it a waste of money.</p>	<p><b>3.</b>It <b>is</b> not the important work.</p> <p><b>4.</b> People should not buy these products because it <b>is</b> a waste of money.</p>
<b>Wrong auxiliaries</b>	<p><b>5.</b> As we know there <u>is</u> many fake products.</p> <p><b>6.</b> Most countries <u>has</u> highest level</p>	<p><b>5.</b>As we know there <b>are</b> many fake products.</p> <p><b>6.</b> Most countries <b>have</b> highest level.</p>

**Table 3: Classification of the Auxiliaries Identified in Learners’ Writing Compositions.**

As shown in the table 3 bellow: the errors made in the category of auxiliaries. They are divided into tree sub-categories. As indicated in the examples 1 and 2, the learner have added the auxiliary “to be” where it not necessary. In the examples 3 and 4, the learners have omitted the auxiliary “is” while in the last category illustrates the wrong use of auxiliaries. From these examples, we notice that third year learners de not use the appropriate auxiliaries.

### 3. Preposition

Types or error	Identified Errors	Correction
<b>Omission</b>	<p>1. First all</p> <p>2. It exist both developing and developed country.</p> <p>3.citizens may help the original manufactures low taxes</p>	<p>1. First <b>of</b> all</p> <p>2. It exist both <b>in</b> developing and developed countries.</p> <p>3. Citizens may help the original manufactures <b>with</b> low taxes.</p>
<b>Addition</b>	<p>4. We must destroy fake products <b>in</b> and we should punish counterfeiters.</p> <p>5. It affects badly <b>on</b> society and business.</p>	<p>4. We must destroy fake products and punish counterfeiters.</p> <p>5. It affects badly <b>the</b> society and business.</p>

**Table 4 : Classification of Preposition Errors Identified in Learners’ Writing.**

As shown in the table 4 bellow: two type of errors are observed concerning the category of preposition; these errors show that most of the learners omit or add prepositions in their compositions. It is clear that learners have difficulties in using the right preposition

#### 4. Verb tense and form

Type of error	Identified Errors	Correction
<b>Verb tense and form</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The majority of countries <u>faces</u> a serious challenge.</li> <li>2. The law must <u>punished</u> counterfeiters.</li> <li>3. We should <u>raising</u> citizens awareness.</li> <li>4. In our days, everything <u>had changed</u>.</li> <li>5. we have <u>to organized</u>.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The majority of countries <b>face</b> a serious challenge.</li> <li>2. The law must <b>punish</b> counterfeiters.</li> <li>3. We should <b>raise</b> citizens awareness.</li> <li>4. In our days, everything <b>has changed</b>.</li> <li>5. We have to <b>organize</b>.</li> </ol>
<b>Past, present or infinitive tense</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>6. There is what we <u>called</u> counterfeiting.</li> <li>7. We have <u>appoint</u> honest civil servants.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>6. There is what we <b>call</b> counterfeiting.</li> <li>7. We have <b>to appoint</b> honest civil servants.</li> </ol>

**Table 5 : Classification of the tense errors identified in the Learners' writing**

#### **Compositions.**

As shown in the table 5 below: the third year learners confound English tenses. In the example 1, the learner has added “s” to third person plural. In sentences 2 and 3 instead of using the infinitive after the modal verbs “must punish”, “should raise”, the learners have used past simple and present continuous “must punished”, “should raising”. Moreover, in the example 5, the learner has conjugated the verb after the infinitive “to organized.” These examples show clearly that the learners do not understand correctly the grammar rules as they misuse the correct form of the verb by putting in the example 6 the past form “called” instead of the present form “call” and in the sentence 7 the present form “appoint” instead of the infinitive “to appoint”.

#### **5.Plurality**

Examples of identified errors	Correction
<p>1. In our <u>countries</u> we have corruption .</p> <p>2. Some people argue that counterfeiting benefits <u>consumer</u> by giving them access to lower price.</p> <p>3. <u>This</u> illegal activities.</p> <p>4. Those <u>association</u> are not able to denounce</p> <p>5. Those <u>company</u> should raise citizens awareness.</p>	<p>1. In our <b>country</b> we have corruption.</p> <p>2. Some people argue that counterfeiting benefits <b>consumers</b> by giving them access to lower price.</p> <p>3. <b>These</b> illegal activities.</p> <p>4. Those <b>associations</b> are not able to denounce.</p> <p>5. Those <b>companies</b> should raise citizens awareness.</p>

**Table 6: Classification of Plurality Identified in the Learners' Writing**

**Compositions.**

As shown in the table 6 bellow: the errors identified concerning the use of plurality. In the first sentence, the learner has used plural form “countries” instead of the singular form “country” and in sentences 2, 3, 4 and 5 they used singular form instead of plural. This demonstrates that third year learners do not use plurality appropriately.

**6. Pronoun**

Types of error	Identified Errors	Correction
<b>Omission</b>	<p>1. The companies suffer from corruption should reduce their price.</p> <p>2. In conclusion, should fight counterfeiting.</p>	<p>1. The companies <del>that</del> suffer from corruption should reduce their price.</p> <p>2. In conclusion, we should fight counterfeiting.</p>
Addition		

	<p><b>3.</b> They should reduce the price of their products so that consumers can <b><u>their</u></b> buying them.</p> <p><b>4.</b> <b><u>They</u></b> citizens have to militate to fight counterfeiting.</p> <p><b>5.</b> People prefer to buy counterfeit products because <b><u>his</u></b> it is not expensive.</p>	<p><b>3.</b> They should reduce the price of their products so that consumers can buy them.</p> <p><b>4.</b> citizens have to militate to fight counterfeiting.</p> <p><b>5.</b> People prefer to buy counterfeit products because <b>they</b> are not expensive.</p>
<b>Wrong pronoun</b>	<p><b>6.</b> The companies <b><u>he</u></b> suffer from corruption.</p> <p><b>7.</b> No one will buy <b>there</b> products.</p> <p><b>8.</b> We must take care about fake products and destroy <b><u>it</u></b> in market</p> <p><b>9.</b> <b><u>It</u></b> must help the original marks..</p>	<p><b>6.</b> The companies <b>that</b> suffer from corruption.</p> <p><b>7.</b> No one will buy their products</p> <p><b>8.</b> We must take care about fake products and destroy <b>them</b> in market.</p> <p><b>9.</b> <b>We</b> must help the original marks.</p>

**Table 7: Classification of Pronoun Errors Identified in Learners' Writing**

**Compositions.**

As shown in the table 7 bellow : errors in the use of pronouns; these errors are divided into three sub-categories. The learners tend to omit pronouns where they are necessary and add them where they are not required. In some other cases , they choose the wrong pronoun. We conclude that third year students confuse between the

different pronouns of the English language, in addition to their unawareness to use them in an appropriate context.

**7. Subject-verb agreement**

Identified Errors	Correction
<p>1. Counterfeiting is a big problem which <b>destroy</b> the world.</p> <p>2. It <b>reduce</b> the productivity.</p> <p>African countries <b>is</b> increasing.</p> <p>There <b>is</b> many fake products</p> <p>3. It present a big problem in our society.</p>	<p>1. Counterfeiting is a big problem which <b>destroys</b> the world.</p> <p>2. It <b>reduces</b> the productivity.</p> <p>African countries <b>are</b> increasing.</p> <p>There <b>are</b> many fake products</p> <p>3. It presents a big problem in our society.</p>

**Table 8: Classification of Subject- Verb Agreement Errors Identified in the Learners’**

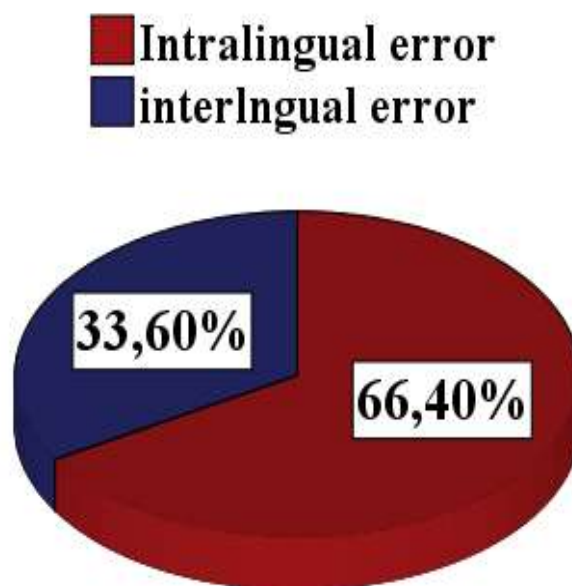
**Writing Compositions.**

As shown in the table 8 bellow: the errors made by the learners in relation to subject and verb agreement. The examples 1, 2 and 3 show that the learners do not understand the rules of subject-verb agreement where the verb and the subject must agree in number and person.

**2. Intralingualvs Interlingual Errors.**

Source of errors	frequency	percentage
Intraligual error	164	66,4
Interlingual error	83	33,6
Total	247	100,0

**Table 9: Classification of the Source of Errors.**



**Diagram 2 : Intralingual vs Interlingual Errors**

The results indicate that there are two main sources of third year Learners' errors : intralingual and interlingual sources. However, errors caused by the insufficient knowledge of the language itself constitute the higher percentage , that is 66.40%. Errors caused by previously learned languages constitute 33.60%.

### **Conclusion**

The present chapter has provided the different findings sorted out from the analysis of the corpus consisting of seventy exam papers of third year students. The results are displayed in tables and pie charts, including the percentages and the frequency of each type of errors made by the learners. The results showed that third year learners make a lot of grammatical errors. These errors are divided into seven (07) categories : verb tense, articles, plurality, preposition, auxiliaries, pronoun and subject verb

agreement errors. These categories vary in the number of frequency; the most frequent errors are verb tense and articles. Also, as it is indicated in the results, the number of errors due to intralingual source are higher than errors due to the interference of the mother tongue. From this, we can notice that third year students' difficulties are related to their limited knowledge of the target language itself and interference from the previously learned languages. The data gathered throughout our investigation will be interpreted in details in the following chapter.

### Introduction

This chapter is devoted to the interpretation and discussion of the findings of our investigation. It provides an explanation of the results obtained from the analysis of our corpus, which consists of seventy exam papers. The different types of errors found in the corpus are interpreted and explained according to the theory of Pit Corder (1973) in an attempt to bring answers to the research questions and confirm or refute the hypothesis advanced in the introduction. This chapter is divided into two sections. The first section deals with classification and explanation of the different types of errors by providing examples which are identified in the corpus. The second section focuses on the main sources behind students' errors.

### **I. Interpretation and Explanation of the Main Grammatical Errors Made by Learners in their Writing Compositions.**

This research work focuses on two main questions, the first question is “*what are the common grammatical errors made by third year secondary school students in their writing composition?*”. The second one is about the identification of the sources behind these errors. Therefore, after analyzing the whole corpus and in an attempt to provide answers, it is important to mention the amount of grammatical errors made by third year secondary school learner; 247 errors are found in their writing compositions. These errors are divided into seven categories, and each category will be explained in details according to the sources, either interlingual or intralingual.

#### **1. Interlingual errors**

Interlingual errors are related to the native language interference or are due to the influence of previously learnt languages. In the case of Algeria, Arabic, Berber and French languages have been considered as three main languages which are either learnt by the students from primary until secondary school or, in the case of kabyle, it is the

native language of many learners. Those languages differ from the English language in many aspects. As a consequence, this can create an area of difficulty in the process of its acquisition. Thus, it leads students to make errors of interference because of the Arabic and Berber languages. From our analysis of the corpus, we will explain three main categories of errors : articles, auxiliaries and prepositions.

### 1.1 Articles

There are three types of articles in English language: definite article “the”, indefinite one “a/ an” and zero articles. Each one has its particular context of use. According to Quirk et al (1972), “the” is used with specific nouns, “a” or “an” is used with non-specific nouns in the singular. Zero article is used with non-specific nouns in the plural, proper nouns, mass nouns, abstract nouns and non-countable nouns. The use of articles constitute one of the most important difficulties for EFL learners, especially for those whose mother tongue observe different rules concerning their use.

In the case of secondary school “ ChihaniBachir”, located in Azazga, all third year pupils have Berber as their mother tongue. In addition to this, they have also learnt Arabic and French during their school education.

The notion of article in Arabic is ensured through the mark “al” for the definite article. When it is absent, it means that the noun is indefinite. For example: kitab/ **al**kitab. In the case of Berber, article use operates differently, not only because it is attached to the noun, for example “**a**rgaz”, **a**+ rgaz, but also because the notion of definition/ indefiniteness depends on the context. “**a**rgaz” can be both definite and indefinite, while in English this mark is clearly identifiable. Example: “**a** man” **the** man”, “ [Ø]men”.

In this study , misuse of article(s) is identified as category of errors made by third year learners with the percentage of 17,41%. This type of errors is divided into three sub- categories : omission, addition and the misuse of articles.

Table (4) presents examples of errors made by the students in the use of articles:

### 1.1.1. Omission of the Definite and Indefinite Articles When They are Required.

a. *Brand without the brand itself is just another product nowadays.*

- *A Brand without the brand itself is just another product nowadays.*

b. *You can pay off police to ignore any crime.*

- *You can pay off **the** police to ignore any crime.*

These examples show the omission of the definite and indefinite article where it is necessary. In the first example the learners did not apply the indefinite article “a”. The omission of this article is due to the influence of both Arabic and Berber language which do not employ an indefinite article. Moreover, in the second example the omission of the definite article “the” is due to the insufficient knowledge of the definite articles’ rules which lead the learners to make this kind of error.

### 1.1.2. Addition of the Definite and Indefinite Articles

c. *The government should pass **a** strict laws.*

- *The government should pass strict laws.*

d. ***The** counterfeiting is producing **a** fake products.*

- *Counterfeiting is producing fake products.*

e. *Imitations are of **the** bad quality that people should not buy.*

- *Imitations are of bad quality that people should not buy.*

In English rules, the indefinite article “a/an” is not used when we refer to uncountable nouns and a noun is not preceded by “the” when it is used in the general sense. Furthermore, zero article is generally used after a preposition. In these cases, the learners have added the articles where they are not necessary. Thus, these errors are due to the incomplete application of the rules and to the unawareness about the rule zero article needed.

### 1.1.3. Wrong substitution

f. *Counterfeiting is an big and dangerous problem in society.*

*-Counterfeiting isa big and dangerous problem in our society.*

In this example, the learner misused the article “an”. Knowing that the article “a” is used before a vowel and the article “an” is used before a consonant. This error is due to the misunderstanding and the ignorance of the rule.

## 1.2. Auxiliaries

Another difficulty that EFL learners face is the use of auxiliaries in an appropriate way. The misuse of auxiliaries occur with the percentage of 7.30%. These errors appear mainly through the absence of the auxiliary “to be” in the majority of the students’ writing compositions.

Table (5) showed errors concerning the use of auxiliaries:

### 1.2.1. Omission of the auxiliaries

a. *It not the important work.*

*- It is not the important work.*

b. *People should not buy these products because it a waste of money.*

*- People should not buy these products because it is a waste of money.*

c. *There a direct link between counterfeiting and child labor.*

*- There is a direct link between counterfeiting and child labor.*

These examples denote the absence of “to be” where it is needed. These errors are caused because of the influence of both Arabic and Berber languages which have no equivalent for this auxiliary. The learners probably translated these sentences from their native language.

### 1.2.2. Addition of the auxiliaries

*e. The world must **be** do.*

*-The world must do.*

*f. Counterfeiting is always **be** a major problem.*

*-Counterfeiting is always a major problem.*

These examples show clearly the addition of the auxiliary “to be” in both sentences where it is not necessary; these errors are due to the learners’ unawareness. The results indicate that they are not concentrated while they are writing.

### 1.2.3. Wrong auxiliaries

*g. As we know there **is** many fake products.*

*-As we know there **are** many fake products.*

*h. Most countries **has** highest level of counterfeiting.*

*-Most countries **have** highest level of counterfeiting.*

These examples show the wrong form of both auxiliaries “to be “ and “to have”. The learners face difficulties while using them with singular and plural pronouns. In the example (g) instead of using “are” they used “is” . The learners did not pay attention to the plural pronoun “we” .In the example (h), instead of using “have” the learner used “has” after the plural noun “countries”. These kind of errors are not due to the mother tongue interference. It is the result of incomprehension and no-distinction between them. The learners overgeneralize their rules and misuse them in different situation with different subjects.

### 1.3. Prepositions

Prepositions are connective words that show the relationship between the nouns following them. Sinclair, John, et al (1991) state that “*prepositions help us to indicate the place where an action occurs, the place where someone or something is, the place they are going to or coming from, or the direction they are moving in*”. However, EFL students face a great difficulty to use the appropriate preposition due to their different forms and various functions. These are not easy for the students to assimilate. This category of errors is found to be less frequent than the others with the percentage of 8.90%. The majority of learners omit or overuse prepositions in their writing productions.

Table (6) shows errors concerning the use of prepositions

#### 1.3.1. Omission of prepositions

*a. First all.*

*-First of all.*

*b. It exists both developing and developed country.*

*-It exists both **in** developing and developed country.*

*c. Citizens may help the original manufactures low taxes.*

*-Citizens may help the original manufactures **with** low taxes.*

In these examples, the learners have made the same error by omitting the preposition. These errors are caused by the interference of Arabic language in which usually we do not use preposition between two nouns. The learners tend to apply what they have learned from previous languages to the new situation.

#### 1.3.2. Addition of prepositions

*d. We must destroy fake products **in** and punish counterfeiters.*

*-We must destroy fake products and punish counterfeiters.*

*e.It affects badly on society and business.*

*-It affects badly society and business.*

The learners in these sentences seem to not master correctly the usage of prepositions; they do not know exactly where and when to use them. According to Tetreault and Chodorow (2008:24), “*the difficulty in mastering prepositions seems to be due to the great variety of linguistic functions that they serve*”. The learners find themselves confused, the similarities between them and the lack of knowledge led to such kind of errors to appear during their writing.

### **2.Intralingual Errors**

Intralingual errors are deviations resulted from the process of learning itself, which means that the learner does not have a problem of interference of the mother tongue, but he faces problems in the use of English rules. Erdogan (2005:266) claims that “*intralingual errors occur as a result of the learners’ attempt to construct concepts and hypotheses about the target language from their limited experience with it*”. These errors are made in relation to the misapplication of grammatical rules. These errors are explained in terms of some factors: overgeneralization, ignorance of rule restriction, incomplete application of rules and false concept hypothesis. From our analysis of the corpus, we are going to explain four categories of error that are: verb tense, plurality, pronoun and subject-verb agreement.

#### **2.1. Verb tense and form**

A verb tense represents the way a verb is formed to communicate when an action takes place, it enables the reader to understand when the action occurs (present-past) which makes it the most important element in a sentence. However, most learners face difficulties to apply the right form of the verb. In this study, the second highest number of errors made is in the use of the verb tense and form with a total

## Discussion of the Findings

number of 75 30.40%. The findings explain that third year learners find difficulties in the application of English tenses. The most commonly misused tenses are the past simple and present simple. On another hand, in many cases, instead of using the infinitive form after modal verb “should” and “must”, the learners use the past simple or present continuous. Also, they tend to conjugate the verb after “to” of the infinitive.

Table (7) presents examples of the errors identified concerning the use of verb tense and form :

### 2.1.1. Infinitive is not used after modals:

*a. The low must punished counterfeiting.*

*- The low must **punish** counterfeiting*

*b. We should raising citizens awareness.*

*- We should **raise** citizens awareness*

*c. We have to organized.*

*- We have **to organize***

Examples a, b and c demonstrate the learners' difficulties in applying the suitable form after modal verbs : “must”, “have” and “should”. In these examples , the learners have formed the tense in a wrong way; instead of using the infinitive after “must”, “have” and “should”, they added “ed” and “ing”. These errors are due to the misapplication of English rules and occur either because of the learners' misunderstanding of the rules or ignorance of the exception of “modal verb+stem. Chen's (1998) assert that most of EFL students have difficulties in the use of English verbs due to the absence of verb conjugation in Arabic .

### 1.1.2. The Use of the Present or the Past Instead of the Infinitive Form:

*d. There is what we called counterfeiting.*

*- There is what we **call** counterfeiting.*

*e. We have appoint honest civil servants.*

*- We have **to appoint** honest civil servants.*

In the first example, the learner has used the wrong verb tense “called”. He/she used the past tense instead of the present “call” in correspondence to the verb to be “is” in the same sentence. In the second example, instead of using the infinitive form “to appoint” after the verb “have”, he/she used the present form “appoint”. These kind of errors are due to the overgeneralization of English rules, the learner made an incomplete application of the rule. It is clear that they do not have a sufficient knowledge on the use of English tenses.

### 1.1.3. Misuse of the tense

*h. The majority of the countries faces a serious problem.*

*- The majority of the countries **face** a serious problem.*

This sentence shows clearly the misapplication of the rules; instead of “face” he used “faces”. The learner has added “s” to third person plural. According to Azar and Hagen (2009), “*simple present tense is generally used to express habits and facts. In simple present tense, the base form of the verb is used for all subjects except for third person singular subject. The verb after subject needs to add s/es at the end of the word*”. Then, this error is due to the ignorance of the present simple tense rules.

## 2.2. Plurality

English language has singular and plural nouns which are used to name persons, animals, ideas or qualities. When we talk about plurality the mark “s” is obligatory at the end of the noun. Without this mark, the words are considered singular. However, there

## Discussion of the Findings

are some exceptions to this rule. Only countable nouns have plural forms. Uncountable nouns do not have plurals at all. In this study, the percentage of plurality errors made is 16.20%; the results show that third year students have difficulty in the use of plural and singular forms. They use plural where it is not necessary and vice-versa.

Table (8) provides examples of errors identified in plurality:

### 2.2.1. Omission of plural “s”

*a. Some people argue that counterfeiting benefits consumer by giving them access to lower price.*

*- Some people argue that counterfeiting benefits **consumers** by given them access to lower price.*

*b. Those association are not able to denounce.*

*- Those **associations** are not able to denounce*

*c. Those company should raise citizens awareness.*

*- Those **companies** should raise citizens awareness.*

*d. This illegal activities.*

*- **These** illegal activities.*

In these examples, the learners have omitted the ending “s” to plural nouns and pronouns such as “companies”, “association”, “consumer” and “this”. These kinds of errors are due to the learners ignorance of determiners like them and those which require plural nouns, in addition to the learners incomprehension of the rules. Al Buainain(2007) states in her study, “Researching Types and Causes of Errors in Arabic Speakers Writing” that learners use singular instead of plural in order to simplify their linguistics tasks.

### 2.2.2. Addition of plural “s”

*1. In our countries we have corruption.*

The learner in this sentence added the plural “s” to the noun “country”. In this example the learner speaks about his/her own country in relation to indicator “our”. The noun can not be plural. This error occurs because of the misunderstanding of the plural rules.

### 2.3. Pronoun errors

Pronouns are words that take the place of the nouns, they are used to avoid repeating the noun they refer to. However, English language has a great number of pronouns and due to these various types, third year learners confuse between them. The total number of errors made is 25; the result reveals that the learners encounter many difficulties concerning this category.

Table (9) provides examples of errors identified in pronouns

#### 2.3.1. The omission of pronouns

*a. The companies suffer from corruption should reduce their price.*

*- The companies that suffer from corruption should reduce their price.*

*b. In conclusion should fight counterfeiting.*

*- In conclusion we should fight counterfeiting.*

In the first example, the learner fails to use the relative pronoun because of the insufficient knowledge about the English rules concerning the use of pronouns, thus he/she did not use the pronoun just to simplify the task. In the second example, the learner did not use the personal pronoun “we”, this error shows that the learner did not master the use of English personal pronouns.

### 2.3.2. The addition of pronouns

*c. They should reduce the price of their products , so that consumers can **their** buying them.*

*-They should reduce the price of their products, so that consumers can buy them.*

*D. **They** citizens have to militate to fight counterfeiting.*

*- Citizens have to militate to fight counterfeiting.*

This kind of error occurs because the learner did not consider the noun “consumers” and “citizens” as a subject, that is why he/she added the pronoun or simply the learner does not distinguish between the subject and pronouns.

### 2.3.3. Substitution of pronouns

*e. The companies **he** suffer from corruption.*

*- The companies **that** suffer from corruption.*

*f. No one will buy **there** products.*

*- No one will buy **their** products.*

In the first example, the learner confuses between the personal pronoun “he” with the relative pronoun “that” , while in the second example used the word “there” instead of the possessive pronoun “their”. These errors are due to the diversity English pronouns which makes the learner confuse between them.

## 2.4. Subject-verb agreement

English grammar requires the subject and the verb to agree in number; both must be singular or plural. In this regard, the rules are close to those applied in Berber and Arabic. In this study the percentage of subject-verb agreement is relatively low compared to others categories of errors, with the percentage of 9.70%, 24 errors were counted in the learners’ paragraphs. Though, the learners make errors, they are relatively fewer.

## Discussion of the Findings

Learners tend to confuse between singular and plural, they do not know exactly where to add “s”. They tend to add “s” to the verb when the subject is plural and omit it when the subject is singular. The reason behind this type of errors may be overgeneralization of the rules applied to plurality in English.

Table (10) provides examples in relation to errors of subject-verb agreement:

### 2.4.1. The omission of “s” third person singular

*a. Counterfeiting is a big problem which destroy the world.*

*-Counterfeiting is a big problem which destroys the world.*

*B. It reduce the productivity.*

*-It reduces the productivity.*

In these examples, the singular subject does not agree with its verb; these types of errors happen because of the misunderstanding of the rule used when we form plural “s” to third person singular in the present simple. As it is explained by Silva (1998:151), “a verb must agree with its subject in person and number, that is if the subject is plural, the verb must be in plural form and if the subject is singular, the verb must be in singular form”. Learners make less errors regarding this point, as we have stated previously.

### 2.4.2. The substitution of “are” with “is”

*-African countries is increasing.*

*-African countries **are** increasing.*

Here also the learner did not apply the rule of subject-verb agreement because he/she did not understand that the verb follow its subject in gender and number, or maybe the pupil learned that the verb follow the singular noun “African”, this kind of errors may also occur due to incomplete knowledge of to “be”, which results in the overgeneralization in the use “is” .

### II. Sources of errors

After analyzing and explaining the different categories of grammatical errors, we need to answer the second question of this research which is “what are the sources behind these errors?”

During our explanation of the seven categories of errors made by the students in their writing compositions, we found that there are two main sources behind these grammatical errors. As it is confirmed by James (2013) and Richards, (1974) there are two main factors causing the learners' error; namely interlingual and intralingual. The former refers to the errors that are related to the interference of the mother tongue, while the latter arises due to the misunderstanding of the target language itself.

The different categories of errors found in the students' writings are classified according to their sources. The total number of interlingual errors found in the learners' compositions was 83. This shows that most of the students tend to be influenced by their native language structures. Errors found were about the category of articles to use 17.40%, prepositions 8.90% and auxiliaries 7.30%. These errors are due to the interference of the mother tongue and language transfer that result from both similarities and differences of students' target language and previously acquired language. Based on our results, these three categories show that most of students produce deviations by applying their knowledge of the first language rules to newly learned language.

Errors can also occur due to the difficulty of the target language. The total number of intralingual found was 164; verb tense error was the first category with the largest percentage 30.40%, followed by plurality errors 16.20%, pronoun errors 10.10% and subject-verb agreement errors 9.70%. We found that these errors are due to the misapplication, misunderstanding and ignorance of some grammatical rules. There is also

## Discussion of the Findings

a lack of practice in the classroom. From our analysis? we notice that the learners tend to over generalize the rules.

As it is shown throughout our investigation, the number of errors found in the students' compositions due to intralingual errors is higher than to those which are related to interlingual errors. Accordingly, we can conclude that even though learners' mother tongue and previously acquired languages have an important influence on them, the target language with its specific rules is more challenging to the learner.

As an answer to the two main questions that were asked in the general introduction, what are the common grammatical errors made by third secondary school pupils in their writing compositions? and what are the sources behind these errors?, our analysis has led to the confirmation of both sources: interlingual and intralingual.

In fact, the first hypothesis is confirmed, that is to say, common grammatical errors made by the students are verb tense, articles, proposition, auxiliaries, pronoun, plurality and subject-verb agreement errors. The second hypothesis is also confirmed, which means that the errors are attributed to intralingual factor they are due to learners' incomplete knowledge of the rules, and others are due to the influence of Arabic and Berber languages.

### Conclusion

This chapter deals with the discussion and interpretation of the different results presented previously. It aims first at classifying and explaining the different errors identified in the seventy English exam papers of third year Chihani Bachir secondary school learners. Each category of error is illustrated with examples, which are interpreted and analyzed in order to illustrate their nature. Second, it provides the sources behind these errors. These are intralingual as well as interlingual.

This study investigated the grammatical errors made by third year learners of Chihani Bachir secondary school in (Azazga). It is aimed to identify and categorize the types of grammatical errors and explore the possible sources behind them. To reach our objectives, we have adopted Pit Corders' procedures of error analysis.

In order to provide valid answers to the questions advanced in the introduction, seventy (70) exam papers of third year learners studying in secondary school in the academic year 2018/2019 were analyzed. A mixed method was adopted for the analysis of errors. This method combines both quantitative and qualitative data. The quantitative method is used in order to quantify the number and the percentages of error occurrence, using a computer program called "Statistical Package of Social Sciences" (SPSS). The qualitative method is used to interpret and explain the different types of grammatical errors and their sources, relying on an error analysis framework.

The results of the investigation revealed that third year students face problems with the basic grammatical rules in their writing. The total number of identified errors is 247. They were classified into seven categories: verb tense, articles, plurality, pronoun, auxiliaries, preposition and subject-verb agreement errors. We found that there are two main sources for these errors which are: interlingual and intralingual.

The interlingual errors are those made in relation to the use of articles, auxiliaries and prepositions. These three categories are in turn divided into three sub-categories: omission, where the learner omits certain items that must appear in the sentence and addition, in which the learner adds unwanted elements in the sentence; wrong substitution in which they use the wrong forms of certain structures. These errors are related to interference of Berber and Arabic languages. In intralingual errors, verb form, plurality, pronoun and subject-verb agreement were the four main categories of errors found in the corpus. The errors in the use of verb tense and form occur when the

learners tend to conjugate the verb after the infinitive and modal verbs. Also, they usually use the present continuous and past simple when the infinitive is required. The second category of errors identified in intralingual errors is plurality. This latter is related to the confusion in the use of plural and singular nouns. The third category is linked to misuse of pronouns. The last category is subject-verb agreement errors where the learners fail to apply the rule of subject-verb agreement; the errors related especially to third person singular mark “s”. These errors are attributed to the overgeneralization, incomplete application and ignorance of grammatical rules.

The results obtained show that the errors associated with intralingual sources are relatively more important compared to those originating from interlingual aspects. This means that learners find difficulties in applying English grammatical rules in their writing. Also, they usually go back to grammatical rule of their previous learnt languages’. Hence, we can conclude that many third year secondary school students do not master the grammatical rules of English language due to the different types of errors found in their writing compositions. Thus, it is fair to say that our first hypothesis is confirmed. The second hypothesis is also confirmed, as the learners make error due to both interlingual and intralingual sources.

On another hand, after the examination of the corpus, we realized that six learners did not produce any writing composition in their exam papers. In other cases, the learners seem that they did not understand the teacher’s assignments. In fact, instead of exploiting the information given in the form of short sentences in order to deal with the assigned topic, they just link these sentences using “and”, and thus fail to develop their own ideas.

To conclude with, based on our research and the results obtained we suggest to conduct researches on the following topics:

- We can for learners to conduct a research work comparing; for example, grammatical errors between two secondary schools of similar or different geographical locations in order to compare the importance of intralingual/interlingual influences.
- This study explored the sources behind the grammatical errors; hence, other studies may compare between intralingual errors and interlingual errors.
- Our study is limited only to 70 participants so we can suggest to conduct a research on a large number of participants
- This study focused only on grammatical errors, further researches may focus on the different strategies used by teachers to help learners avoid errors.

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## **Appendix 1**

Learners exam paper, it deals with the writing production.

## **Appendix 2**

The corpus which consist of the learners' exam composition papers.

0,25

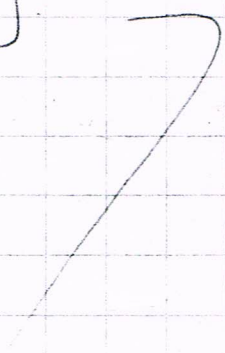
1 syllable	2 syllable	3 syllable	4 syllable
Ethics x	damages buses x	intelligent x	—

Counterfeiting is to copy others' work  
and it's unmoral and illegal practise  
and we should stop it.

0,1  
proposed

First we must destroy fake products  
in and we should minimize counterfeiting  
and we must help the original  
manufacturers (low taxes, cheap raw  
materials ...)

should  
stop



Counterfeit is <sup>a</sup> ~~an~~ <sup>summary</sup> big and dangerous problem in our society so we should fight it in ~~a~~ <sup>a</sup> faster moment

In order to fight it we should exercise many strategies first we should rise our citizens awareness through different programs and <sup>media</sup> ~~societies~~ like TV, Radio schools and the public places then to Edict stringent ~~laws~~ for the counterfeiters to his exsengence of laws and to take them in jails and pay ~~her~~ <sup>big</sup> ~~pen~~ <sup>pen</sup> fines ~~then~~, we must help our ~~original~~ <sup>original</sup> manufactures to pay low taxes and cheap raw materials and then to ~~protect~~ <sup>protect</sup> ~~intellacual~~ <sup>intellacual</sup> property. To ~~conclucte~~ <sup>conclucte</sup> we should destroy and eliminate fake products in the markets

## II / Writing & Topic ones

Sell own  
lydia  
BLE

### How to fight counterfeiting?

Counterfeiting is a very big problem which destroys the world, so we must fight it.

Proposito  
4

Firstly, we should raise citizens' awareness through TV, radio, schools, newspapers and counterfeiter must be punished. Secondly, we can also help the original manufacturer low taxes, cheap raw materials... and protecting intellectual property. Finally, police should confiscate and destroy fake products in markets.

We must help each other in order to fight counterfeiting and live in peace.

4)

50

	01 Syllable	02 Syllables	03 Syllables	04 Syllables
Ethics	X	brakes	intelligent	damages
	X	X	X	X

Topic one:

Counterfeiting is an issue in the world it is very dangerous for citizens

Should + stem we should eradicate This phenomenon

Firstly, we should raising citizens awareness through TV, radio, newspaper, schools and edict stringent laws and punish counterfeiters.

Secondly, we must take care about fake products and destroy them in market, and we should helping the original manufacturers and protecting intellectual property.

Finally, we hope This phenomenon will departs and this step will be good for citizens.

## Strategies to fight counterfeiting

Many countries are suffering from counterfeiting even the rich countries or the poor one, as humans, we should respect some strategies and roles to face counterfeiting and for creating a flourish country.

First of all, we have to make documentation and publicities to avoid people from using this an unethical phenomenon by showing them the consequences and the bad results of a corrupt society, parents should give advice to their kids for making them far from corruption and counterfeiting when they grow.

32  
After that, the government should punish counterfeiters by sending them to jail or by making them pay a fine and then, they it we must help the original makers by giving them what they deserve "their duties" so that they will not lose their honesty.

At the inde, counterfeiting will be eradicated providing that humans respect the strategies and the law.

# the counterfeiting

~~The~~ counterfeiting is producing ~~a~~ fake products, it's like ~~chitting~~ <sup>Cheating</sup> people about the quality.

firstly, so that we can fight ~~the~~ counterfeiting we have to help the original manufacturers and raising citizens awareness through tv, radio, schools.

should + skm

Secondly we should ~~confiscating~~ and ~~destroying~~ fake products in markets and ~~protecting~~ the intellectual property.

finally people must ~~stop~~ buying the counterfeiting and the ~~other~~ markets should be honest.

2  
1

~~should + skm~~

e - funds to use for the operation of essential services to the population.

4 -

(1) Syllable → Ethics \*

(2) Syllables → bribes \*

(3) Syllables → damages ✓

(4) Syllables → intelligent ✓

\* Topic one:

Counterfeiting

Counterfeiting is a strategies of fight the money and money raising citizen's.

52 ✓ The raising ~~citizen's~~ awareness through TV, and Radio, schools, with Edict stringent laws corruption with punish counterfeiters, jail, pay a fine, helping the original manufacturers (low taxes) cheap raw materials, protecting intellectual property

• Confiscating and destroying fake product in markets.

Topic anal.

~~The~~ counterfeiting.

In our life's they are many and  
lot of counterfeiting, so all is fragile.

4

error  
in ans

So, to fight counterfeiting we should  
~~be~~ use some ~~of~~ strategies, for example low  
taxes, cheap raw materials, ~~they~~ helping the  
original manufacturers, ~~etc~~

1

\* we  
word  
choic

~~they~~ also have to confiscating & and destroying  
fake products in markets for example a

verb  
use

make  
simple  
sentences

Perfume you buy this with a price expense  
but the quality its o, so we buy just a  
quantity not a quality, also, protecting  
intellectual property. can edit strongest laws  
punish counterfeiters jail, also when we buy  
a TV its all a counterfeit are raising citizen's  
awareness through radio, schools.