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Investigating Intralingual and Interlingual Sources Behind Middle School EFL Learners' Errors in Writing Composition

The Case of Fourth Year Pupils at Ben Berkane Youcef Middle School

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Dedication

I dedicate this modest work to my Precious Family

Especially to my Dear Mother,

I Dedicate this Work.

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Abstract

The present study investigates the intralingual and interlingual sources behind learners' errors in writing. Subjects are fourth year pupils at ben Barkane Youcef Middle School in Akbou, Bejaia. Through this study we intend to identify the major errors made by learners and classify them in terms of their sources. Accordingly, we aim to make middle school learners aware of the importance of writing and spot out their errors at an early age. To reach this aim, the researcher opted for a mixed methodology based on both quantitative and qualitative methods. The quantitative method consists of an analysis of 62 pupils' written samples; whereas, the qualitative method was based on teachers' interviews. Findings revealed that our participants make a great deal of errors at the level of writing. Second, it is estimated that most learners make errors at the levels of spelling, tense, punctuation, subject-verb agreement, sentence fragment and other less frequent areas such as articles and prepositions, and French interference. Accordingly, it is finally revealed that the main source behind learners' errors is intralingual transfer with a high percentage; then, followed by interlingual transfer with low percentage. Encouraging extensive reading, integrating authentic materials and activities in the classroom, practicing the writing skill are some of the strategies suggested to overcome learners' abundant errors.

Key words: EFL writing, sources of errors, intralingual error, interlingual error

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List of Abbreviations:

A.M: **A**nnée **M**oyenne.

4 A.M$_1$: Quaterieme année moyenne, classe 1 (fourth year in middle school, class 1)

EA: **E**rror **A**nalysis

CA: **C**ontrastive **A**nalysis

FLL: **F**oreign **L**anguage **L**earning.

Fr: **F**rench **L**anguage.

NL: **N**ative **L**anguage

PP: **P**upil.

TL: **T**arget **L**anguage

N°: **N**umber.

Glossary of Terms

Writing

Zimmerman and Reisenberg (1997) provided a precise definition for writing as *"a goal oriented and self-sustained activity requiring the skillful management of the writing environment; the constraints imposed by the writing topic; the intentions of the writer(s), and the processes, knowledge, and skills involved in composing"* (as cited in Anderman, 2009).

Error Analysis

Error analysis is the study of the erroneous language produced by a learner or a group of learners (Corder, 1971).

Error

Lennon (1991: 182) described an error as any unusual linguistic form that is not produced by the native speaker; he defines an error as '*a linguistic form or combination of forms which in the same context and under similar conditions of production, would in all likelihood, not be produced by the speaker's native speaker counterparts*'.

Sources of error

Refers to the origin of learners' erroneous utterances; why certain errors are made? Error analysts suggested four sources of errors namely interlingual transfer, intralingual transfer, context of learning and communication strategies. (Brown, 2000)

Interlingual Error

An error which results from language transfer, that is, which is caused by the learner's native language. (Richards & Schmidt, 2002).

Intralingual Error

Is the error which results from faulty or partial learning of the target language, rather than from language transfer. (Schmidt & Richards, 2002).

General Introduction

Writing is a language skill that involves more sub-skills than any other academic task. From the first years in school to university grades, writing takes a prominent position in the learning process. As learners progress through school, they are asked to do more with this skill than any other language skills. Learners write daily and they are tested about their writing. Middle school learners write about many subjects across the curriculum; they write to express, discover, solve problem. At an advanced level, middle school learners become skilled and their writing begins to surpass the level of their speech. However, writing problems appear abundantly which may affect learners achievement and progress. Because writing is so integral to a learner's success or failure in school, identifying common writing errors early and determining the main sources behind them; then, suggesting some strategies to spot out these errors are at the core concern of this study.

I. Sources of Inspiration

The inspiration to conduct such a research on middle school EFL learners' writing skill goes back to an experience that took place in the academic year 2012/2013. When we made our training, we were allowed to be teachers of middle school learners for a whole trimester. During our training we have learnt many fruitful things that a teacher should be armed with in order to handle learners' different needs. Along the training, we have noticed that the majority of the learners face many difficulties and challenges in writing in comparison with other skills namely speaking and listening in which they interact and participate enthusiastically. After correcting their papers, we have observed that learners make a great deal of errors at different levels. Moreover, we have noticed that most of the learners do not write purely in English; we have come across a number of traces of the French language. Therefore, conducting such a research on middle school learners will certainly come with fruitful results.

II. Statement of the Problem and Research Questions

Writing is a language skill that is more focused on in the middle school textbook. In fact, many activities and tasks are implemented to improve learners' writing performance. However, intermediate learners still make a plentiful number of errors at different levels which make their production weak. Therefore, we see that it is important to shed light on these most common errors middle school learners perpetrate and the reason behind this

occurrence. The precise question we would ask is: *What are the main sources behind middle school EFL learners' writing errors?*

To answer the central problem of this study, many secondary questions are addressed:

- What are the difficulties middle school EFL learners face in writing?
- What are the most common errors do they make and what are their categories?
- What are the sources of these errors?
- How can the teacher do to remediate these errors?

III. Hypothesis

In recent years, many interesting studies have been undertaken in the field of error analysis but less had been conducted with middle school learners. Since writing is a complex process that requires both cognitive and linguistic competences as well as considerable time and effort, intermediate learners tend to make a considerable number of errors in the target language. Moreover, it is even more complicated to write in a foreign language. Middle school learners tend to transfer their knowledge in the first language into the target language. In the light of the previous research questions, we hypothesize the following:

The written errors made by middle school learners result mainly and with high percentage from intralingual transfer. Also they result from interlingual transfer but with a low percentage.

IV. Aims of the study

Conducting a research without setting objectives is a worthless research. Thus, in our present investigation we have set namely general objectives and specific ones. In general, we aim at first, raising EFL learners' awareness of the importance of the writing skill in the learning of any language. Second, we intend to facilitate the learning process for both learners and teachers. Third, we wish to make learners attentive to the different types of errors. Finally, we aim to explore middle school learners' difficulties and challenges in writing composition. Specifically, we aim at collecting and identifying the most common errors made by our participants; then, we intend to classify them according to their language categories. After that, we intend at finding out the main sources behind their occurrence. And finally, set up strategies to cope with these errors.

V. Methodology

V.1. Data collection, methods and procedures

To test our hypothesis and fit well the aim of our present study, we administered for a mixed methodology consisting of both qualitative and quantitative methods of data collection. Our quantitative method consists of written samples analysis. We collected pupils written tasks and identified all the errors; then, we classified them according first, to their category, and second, to their sources. For the qualitative method, we administered for interviews with middle school teachers. Throughout the interviews, we sought to find out learners' attitudes towards writing and the difficulties EFL learners encounter when they write. Then, we attempted to highlight the strategies, materials, activities that are used by the teacher to reduce the amount of learners' errors.

V.2. Population and sampling

The population of this study is fourth year pupils at Ben Barkene Youcef middle school situated in Akbou, one of Bejaia's towns. The total number of fourth year learners is 189 distributed into 6 classes. However, only two classes are selected as our sample namely 4.AM$_1$ and 4.AM $_3$. These two classes are chosen to be under investigation using random sampling to avoid bias.

VI. Significance of the Study

Eventhough many researches have been conducted in the field of error analysis, but few are conducted on intermediate learners. Therefore, further studies are still required. To note that the sample for the current study is taken from the middle school level in order to make learners aware of their errors in writing and help them to master this skill at an early age. The objective of this study is to investigate the main sources behind middle school learners' written errors. As a result, the present research will contribute to the existing literature in many ways. First, it will shed light on EFL intermediate learners' challenges an problems in writing. Second, it will explore the reasons behind their abundant errors. Moreover, it will put emphasis on the intralingual and interlingual sources of errors. Finally, it will suggest some adequate strategies that can be used by the teacher to lessen the frequency of learners' errors in writing.

VII. The Organization of the Work

Our research paper is divided into four chapters. In one hand, the two first chapters are theoretical; the first chapter explains thoroughly the different variables of the present study. It is further divided into three sections. In section one, we introduce the EFL writing, section two deals with linguistic error and error analysis, the last section distinguishes intralingual and interlingual sources of errors. The second chapter explores the different previous studies conducted on error analysis and the findings it reported. In the other hand, the two last chapters are practical; the third chapter consists of a description of the study including the participants, design and methods, data collection instruments and procedures. The fourth chapter aims at determining the results and interpreting the findings through analysis and discussion. Then, we conclude with limitations and implication of the present study and some suggestions for further research.

Chapter One
Theoretical Background

Writing is a language skill that involves more sub-skills than any other academic tasks; this explains its prominent position in the learning process. Many interesting studies have been undertaken in this field and revealed that writing is a complex process that requires both cognitive and linguistic competences as well as considerable time and effort. Due to the difficulties learners of a foreign language encounter when writing in English, they often make considerable errors at different levels and it has become an unavoidable part of EFL learners' writing compositions. Hence, this chapter is devoted to provide an answer to our central problem. Specifically, we intend to determine the sources behind learners' errors in writing. accordingly, this study covers three main sections; the first deals with writing in the EFL context. The second consists of linguistic error and error analysis. The last section covers the main sources behind errors' occurrence and techniques for error correction.

Section One
Writing in EFL Classroom

The invention of the written symbols to symbolize the spoken language is one of the most crucial realizations in the history of mankind in general and linguistics in specific. The written symbols helped us in overcoming the confines of space and time found in the spoken form. That is, one of the limitations is the possibility of not being able to see the other people in person; which can call for the necessity of using the written discourse (Raimes, 1983:3). In fact, for a long time, writing has been used as a tool for teaching grammar and vocabulary. However, nowadays, many researchers and linguists have proved its importance as a paramount language skill that is at the core of the process of learning and teaching (Harmer, 2004: v).

I. Perspectives on the Role of Writing in FLL

Writing is a vital skill that is largely taught and through which many tasks and activities are evaluated. It is worth mentioning that almost all the exams and most of learners' performance are evaluated through writing (Harmer, 2004:3). As it is described by Freeman (2000:18), there are different methods of teaching that highlight the role of writing in the process of foreign language learning. Firstly; he speaks about the Grammar-Translation

Method which shed light primarily on grammar, vocabulary, reading and writing but with little focus on the oral language. Secondly, he discussed the Communicative Language Teaching approach which enhances the development of the four skills. This approach views learners as real writers and puts them in real situations where they imagine themselves on the behalf of the reader and adjust their writing to thoughts they wish to convey explicitly. Finally, the Language Experience approach which points up the value of writing as part of the learning process.

II. Definition of Writing

There is no single definition for writing; it is rather defined by different scholars from different perspectives. Writing is one of the language skills that is last acquired for native speakers as well as for foreign language learners (Hamp and Heasly, 2006-cited inTuan 2010). In general, writing is viewed as a difficult skill for any language user which represents a challenge for both native and non-native speakers (Kroll, 1990) and it is the linguistic skill that is less used by language users (Davies, 2000: 96). However, writing is considered as a fundamental language skill that is worthy either in learners' school-life or in their future career as Glazier (1994: 3) states: *"Being able to write in English is essential in college, and it probably will be an asset in your career".* Additionally, Harmer (2001) supports the same idea claiming that writing is a vital skill for the users of a foreign language exactly as it is for every one using his first language.

Zimmerman and Reisenberg (1997- cited in Anderman, 2009: 564) provided a precise definition for writing as *"a goal oriented and self-sustained activity requiring the skillful management of the writing environment; the constraints imposed by the writing topic; the intentions of the writer(s), and the processes, knowledge, and skills involved in composing".* In other words, writing is an activity that requires knowledge about the topic, writing processes, writing subskills, and which involves writer's mental thinking. Thoroughly, Byrne (1988: 1) explained:

> *"When we write, we use graphic symbols; that is, letters or combinations of letters which relate to the sounds we make when we speak. On one level, then, writing can said to be the act of forming these symbols; making marks on a flat surface of some kind. But writing is clearly much more than the production of graphic symbols, just as speech is more than the production of sounds. The symbols have to be arranged, according to*

certain convention, to form words, and words have to arranged, to form sentences, although again we can be said to be 'writing' if we are merely making lists of words, as in inventories of items such as shopping lists".

It means that writing is the process of transforming sounds we use when we speak into graphic symbols on a surface; moreover, these symbols are arranged in a systemic way to form words which are themselves arranged to form sentences.

All in all, writing is a productive skill that is one of the ultimate language skill. It consists of transforming oral utterances in a paper into graphic symbols in a systematic way; in order to express meaning through following a given process and involving different sub-skills to fulfill a determined purpose.

III. Components of Writing

Raimes (1983- cited in Khan, 1999) provides an overview of the major components that are involved in the writing skill; namely, syntax, grammar, mechanics, word choice, content, organization, the writer's process, the purpose and the audience. Mastery of these micro-skills helps the learners to have good control over writing (Henry, 2000). Consequently, few errors are expected. The Figure 2 below sheds light on the different dimensions of composing that writers have to take into account in producing a piece of writing:

Figure 1: Components of a Piece of Writing (adapted from Raimes, 1983: 6- cited in Khan, 1999: 47).
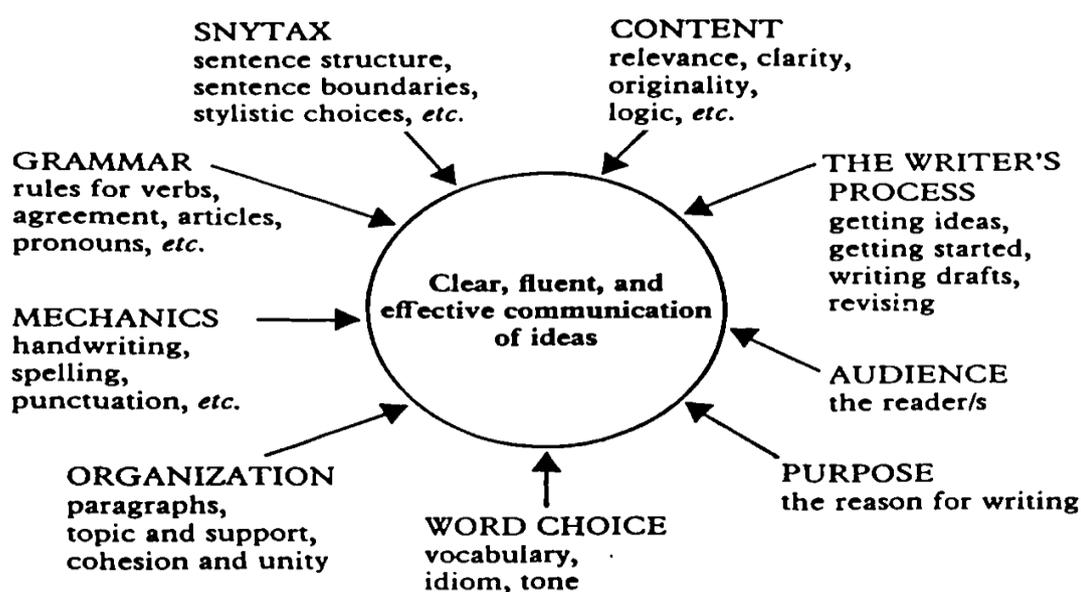
Figure 2, represents some rudiments skills that should be taught beforehand to learners to enable them produce an effective piece of writing. According to Raimes (1983- cited in khan 1999), who claims that for a clear, fluent and effective communication of ideas, all the language features including grammar, mechanics, organization, content, word choice, are to be considered in the production of a written text. Before starting writing anything, the writer has to set the objective; i.e. the reason for writing. Besides, writers have to be aware of the various grammatical rules, syntactic structures and the different agreements within the sentence as well as a pertinent choice of vocabulary and different idioms and expressions. Moreover, good handwriting, including spelling, punctuation is very precious when composing (Harmer, 2001: 255). Concerning the content, learners should make it relevant, clear and logic. In addition, organization of the text is of primary importance. That is, ideas should be organized in a systematic way and should be unified as well. The text as a whole has to be cohesive. Indeed, the learner has to follow the different stages of the writing process, including planning, drafting, editing, revising, sharing and evaluating. Finally, the writer has to take into consideration the requirements of the audience i.e, the reader; how is he going to interpret his text. These features have been selected because they are the essential components of a good writing as evidenced in the various research studies. That is to say, they have expanded and changed our ideas about the teaching of writing, i.e. writing is not a linear activity but a recursive one and writers are able to move back and forth to present their argument. Furthermore, these have increased awareness among teachers and students alike with respect to writing skills and what goes on when writers write.

IV. Approaches to Writing

It was until the last decade that research studies related to the writing skill have gained much attention. The writing skill becomes crucial during nineties when English has established its status as an international language of communication. As a result, English writing gained an important role in almost every field and discipline. Throughout its history, many approaches have been experimented to teach writing but three approaches have been the most influential; namely, product approach, process approach and genre approach (Raimes, 1993).

      IV.1. The product-based approach. It is the traditional approach to teaching writing which focuses on form i.e. linguistic accuracy. It is based on imitation and copying of teacher's supplied models to produce a new piece of writing (Gabrielatos, 2002: 5). The primary goal of this approach was the outcomes of writing i.e. the final text. That is, it

emphasises the capability to producing correct texts (Richards, 1990: 106). White and Arndt (1991: 2) went in the same path and claimed that "*writing will converge towards a predefined goal, with a model text being presented to form the focus of comprehension and text manipulation activities*".

In this respect, Steel (2004) suggested four stages for the product approach as the following:

- **Stage one:** learners are given a model text in which the features and the genre are highlighted. For example, when studying a formal letter, learners' attention will be paid to the importance of paraphrasing and the language used to make formal requests. If learners read a story, they will focus on the techniques used by the writer to make the story interesting.

- **Stage two:** in this stage learners are asked to make what is called the 'controlled practice' of the highlighted features, i.e. learners practice the components and the structures that are highlighted in the model text. For example, when studying the formal letter, learners may be asked to practice the language used to make formal requests such as '*I would be grateful if you would …*' (Hasan and Akhand, 2010: 78-79)

- **Stage three:** it is concerned with the organization of ideas. It is considered the most important stage where it is believed by its proponents that the organization of ideas is more important than the ideas themselves.

- **Stage four:** this is the end product where learners start writing individually using the different skills, structures and vocabulary they have practiced earlier to produce a piece of writing.

IV.2. The process writing. Process approach to the teaching of English writing has been advocated in contrast with the traditional product-oriented method of teaching writing (Fowler, 1989). There is no universal definition for the Process approach to writing but many researchers try to discuss its features (Hasan & Akhand, 2010). Besides, Nunan (1991) clearly states that the process approach focuses on the steps involved in creating a piece of work. In this respect, Hedge (1994: 2) states that the process of composing writing involves cognitive strategies in terms of exploration and organization process. Additionally, Kroll (2001: 220-221) defines process approach as follows:

> *"The process approach serves today as an umbrella term for many types of writing courses .... What the term captures is the fact that student writers engage in their writing tasks through a cyclical approach rather than a single-shot approach. They are not expected to produce and submit complete and polished responses to their writing assignments without going through stages of drafting and receiving feedback on their drafts, be it from peers and/or from the teacher, followed by revision of their evolving texts".*

In other words, the process writing does not consist of a single phase but rather made up of various stages such as drafting, receiving feedback on drafts either from peers and/or from the teacher, revision… etc.

In the light of the above definitions we can say that process approach to writing tends to focus more on varied classroom activities which promote the development of language use such as brainstorming, setting goals, generating ideas, organizing information, selecting appropriate language, drafting, reviewing, revising, editing and rewriting.

IV.2.a. Stages of the Process Approach

Many models have been emerged to describe the writing process. Specifically, White and Arndt's (1991- cited in Harmer, 2001: 258) suggest process writing model which consists of six stages which are originally designed for students. It comprises six stages through which students engage in writing through generating ideas, focusing, drafting, structuring, reviewing and evaluating. These stages are thoroughly discussed in the coming lines.

Figure 2: White and Arndt's process writing model (adapted from white and Arndt, 1991-cited in Harmer, 2001:258)**.**
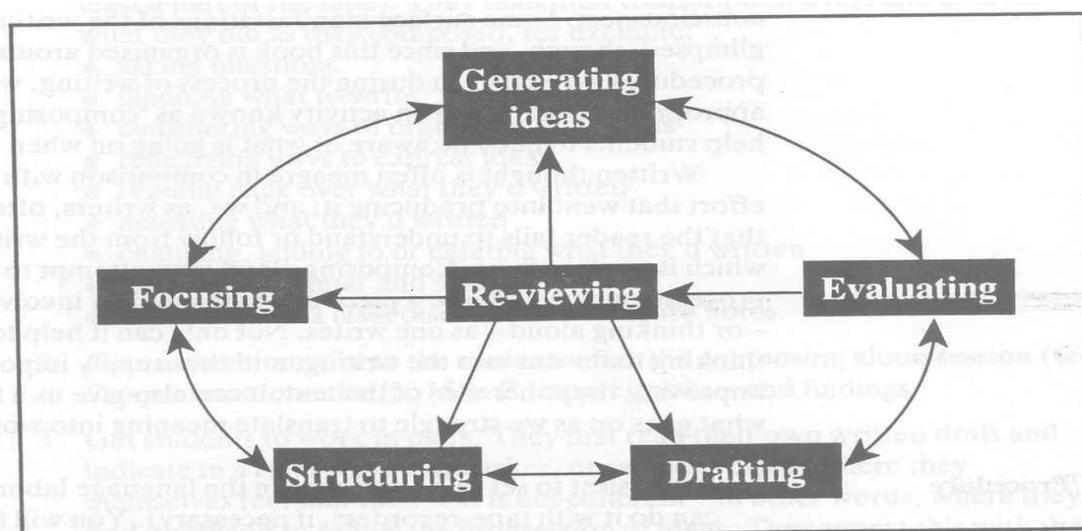
- **Generating ideas**. It consists of locating topic, gathering and collecting ideas through thinking, brainstorming and discussion with learners (Steele, 2004). This is termed by Murray (1980- cited in Khan, 1999) as rehearsing, or pre-writing.

- **Structuring**. It is seen as an extension to the first stage 'generating ideas'. This may include "*selecting information on both factual and linguistic matters and arranging it*" (White and Arndt, 1991: 78-cited in Khan, 1999: 45). That is to say, writers have to select the pertinent ideas and organize them in sequence. However, new ideas may emerge while writing. Therefore, writers have to readjust and reorganize their ideas in a process.

- **Focusing**. It consists of making sure that you are getting the message across you want to get across (Harmer, 2001: 258). In this stage, writers have to make the purpose of writing clear and focus on how to make his writing accessible. Hedge (1994: 2) summarizes this stage by pointing out that in order to produce an appropriate text a learner ought to consider the purpose and the audience through asking questions such as who am I writing to? What do I need to say? And how can I get my writing across to my reader?

- **Drafting**. This is the stage where learners write their first draft. After planning for their writing, students translate their ideas and thoughts into a meaningful text. In this stage Writers shed light on issues such as how to attract reader's attention or how to write in an appealing way (Khan, 1999: 45). During drafting writers are concerned with problems to get started and how to end the text (Khan, 1999: 45) and less attention is paid to spelling, punctuation, and other element of mechanics.

- **Reviewing**. This stage involves writer to check his draft and make possible changes (Harmer, 2001: 258). At this final stage "*writers have already made their major decisions about which words and structures give expression to their ideas*" (White and Arndt, 1991: 136- cited in Khan, 1999). In other words, learners in this stage decide about what to write after refining their works through adding, deleting, and rearranging materials until they get what they need.

- **Evaluating.** It consists of teacher's evaluation and provision of feedback to learners' writing. It refers to evaluation as the reader's or the teacher's assessment of the draft or subsequent drafts (Harmer, 2001: 258).

IV.3. The genres approach. Also called a sociolinguistic approach. Genre-based approach considers writing as a social and cultural practice. It explores the structure of

organization, and style in writing. It focuses on the form and content that have to be recognized when a writer attempts to match text to a social purpose. In this sense, genre knowledge needs to be taught explicitly in the language classroom (Hasan and Akhand, 2010). The genre approach to teaching writing, as Paltridge (2004) claims, emphasizes the teaching of particular genre students need for later social communicative success. i.e. the focus would be the language and discourse features of particular texts and the context in which the text is used. Genre approach emphasizes more on the reader and on the conventions that a piece of writing needs to follow in order to be successfully accepted by its readership (Munice, 2002- cited in Hasan and Akhand, 2010).

However, many limitations can be found in the genre approach. In one hand, Paltridge (2001) mentions that genre approach combines both the knowledge of text as well as social cultural for the students. As a result, specification between them is a difficult job. In the other hand, it is also suggested by Swales (2000) that a genre approach over-focuses on the reader while paying less attention to learner expression.

V. Writing Difficulties

Writing in a foreign language is a complex process which demands cognitive analysis and linguistic synthesis. Especially, for young learners, the theoretician Kitzhaber (1963) claims that teaching category of learners is frustrating, time consuming and laborious for teachers. This complex process makes it rather difficult. The difficulty of writing lies on the fact that it involves various subskills as Al-Samadani (2010: 53) stated "*writing is a complex, challenging, and difficult process because it includes multiple skills*" such as grammar, vocabulary, writing mechanics, style organizational skills (Freeman, 2003). This is what makes the writing skill demanding which needs concentration and constant practice. Harmer (1992) goes in the same path describing English writing as challenging for numerous EFL learners For Nunan (1989), producing a coherent, fluent, extended writing piece is likely the most difficult task in language.

Many studies have been conducted in the field of writing which have come widely to the same end reporting that writing is a difficult task either for native or non-native learners. Like other EFL contexts, the situation in the Arab world, as it is reported in several studies such as (Abdul Haq, 1982; Al-Khuweileh and Al-Shoumali, 2000; Al-Hazmi, 2006; Al-Samdani, 2010; Grami, 2010); additionally, (Ezza, 2010; Zughoul & Taminian, 1984- cited in Javid &

Umer, 2014), revealed that Arab students face a lot of problems in their writing mainly in all language features namely spelling, vocabulary, grammar and syntax including tenses, sentence structures, prepositions, articles, and conjunctions.

In fact, a range of errors and problems appear in learners' pieces of writing. As a result, many researchers have classified writing difficulties according to different areas. Byrne (1988) looked at the problems in writing in the psychological, linguistic and cognitive area. First, concerning the psychological problems, it is vital to mention that what makes writing difficult is the fact that it is a solitary activity in which learners write on their own without any interaction or feedback from neither the teacher nor peers. Second, among the linguistic problems, unlike the spoken language which is guided by reaction from other people and which is characterized by ungrammatical utterances and incomplete sentences, the written form is completely led by the learner himself who should be careful in the choice of grammatical rules and the organization of his text to make it clear. Third, concerning the cognitive problems, when learners write they have to use a very clear and a highly explicit language in order to make himself or herself clear to the reader.

In essence, Weir (1988: 17-34), suggested some defects which characterize learners' writing:

- ➢ High frequency of grammatical errors.
- ➢ Lack of variety in grammatical structures employed.
- ➢ Use of inappropriate vocabulary.
- ➢ Use of inappropriate grammatical structures.
- ➢ Limited range of vocabulary.
- ➢ Poor spelling.
- ➢ Inadequate understanding of the topic.
- ➢ Deficiency in clear self-expression
- ➢ Poor punctuation.
- ➢ Poor handwriting.
- ➢ Untidiness

VI.   Writing in Middle School

Age plays an important role when deciding to teach any language; different aged learners need different ways of teaching. Three types of learners can be distinguished namely, young learners, adolescents, and adults. In the present thesis, the main focus in on adolescents at middle school aged between 13 and 15. According to Harmer (2004, 15), adolescents differ from young learners in the ability to think; he claims that "*Adolescent students have a great capacity for learning, enormous potential for creative thought and a passionate commitment to things which interest them*". In order to engage them well in learning, teachers should take profit of their creativeness and potentialities. It is essential to get their attention where is needed, ask about their thoughts and ideas and choose topics to which they can respond from their own experience.

The English textbook that is designed for the fourth level learners at middle school encompasses six files. Within the six files, two types of units can be distinguished namely, those which are designed for Language Learning and the others for Skill Building. Language Learning covers the following units: Listen and Consider, Read and Consider, Words and Sounds. Whereas the Skill Building comprises these units: Research and Report, Listening and Speaking, Reading and Writing, Project round-up (Arab & Riche, 2007).

In fact, when having an eye to the book map (see appendix 1), we notice that only one unit is devoted to the writing skill. However, when skimming within the book pages, it is discovered that in each unit, either the language leaning ones or the skill building ones, one activity and sometimes two are devoted to practice the writing skill except for the unit of words and sound where none is given. Specifically, the reading and writing unit is designed exclusively for teaching purely writing with suitable activities, various materials and helpful illustrations and fruitful tips and hints to help learners acquire successfully this vital skill.

In this section we have dealt with the writing skill in the EFL classroom including the definition of writing, components of writing, approaches to writing, writing difficulties that are mainly encountered by learners, and we have concluded with the writing skill in middle school.

Section Two
Linguistic Error and Error Analysis

Studies carried out in English language teaching and learning revealed that errors are inevitable part of learners' learning process; however, contrastive linguistic and error analysis appeared to overcome this difficulty and help learners produce accurate written compositions.

I. Types of Data Analysis

I.1. Contrastive analysis. In the 1950s and 1960s, contrastive analysis was the favoured paradigm for foreign and second language teaching and learning (James, 1980). It involves a description of points of similarity and difference by comparing systematically native language with the target language (Freeman & Long, 1991). The structuralist, Charles fries (1945:9-cited in Freeman and Long 1991:52), among its most influential pioneers, stated: "*the most efficient materials are those that are based on scientific description of the language to be learnt, carefully compared with a parallel description of the native language of the learner*". That is to say, language materials are more efficient when based on contrastive analysis. The main idea of contrastive analysis was further clarified by Lado in 1957 assuming that CA, involves first, the comparison of learners' NL and TL; description of students' difficulties which are traced back to the difference between these two languages; then, making prediction which are more likelihood to be right (James, 1998) that learners errors are resulted from wrongly transferring of his L1 system to L2. However, knowledge about the difference between the two languages will help learners avoid these errors (Ching, n.d). However, by the early 1970s revolutionary change occurred in linguistics with the emergence of cognitive psychology and generative grammar. In fact, the focus was shifted from teaching to learning. As a result, contrastive analysis has been proven inadequate and it is criticized to be heavily derived from behavioral psychology and structural linguistics (James, 1998), which sees errors as sins that are not tolerated and must be eradicated. Moreover, many scholars reported that, the role of CA should be explanatory rather than predictive (James, 1998).

I.2. Error analysis. As a result of the failure of CA to adequately account for student errors, a new technique was developed in language learning research and language teaching which is namely, Error Analysis (EA). EA came as an alternative to CA (Richards, 1974). James (1998) goes in the same path proclaiming that error analysis was a new paradigm that came to replace contrastive analysis; it involves the learners' interlanguage and the target

language itself. He defined error analysis as the process of determining the incidence, nature, causes, and consequences of unsuccessful language (James, 1998). Additionally, Corder (1975:207-cited in James 1998:3) state: *"error analysis is the study of erroneous utterances produced by groups of learners".* Error analysis appeared in the late 1960s and it reached its peak in the 70s as Schachter and Celce-Murcia (1977:442- cited in James 1998:11) claim: "*error analysis currently appear to be the 'darling' of the 70s".* the main role for error analysis is to supplement lacks of contrastive analysis. In fact, EA is not restricted to errors caused by interlanguage or negative transfer; it highlights other types of errors frequently made by learners such as intralingual errors (Sridhar, 1975). Moreover, EA provide data and results on actual and attested problems and not on hypothetical ones (Sridhar, 1975). EA has suggested a new way of looking at errors; they are no longer seen as sins but as a way of making learning significant (Sridhar, 1975). Accordingly, Corder (1973) claimed:

> *"Errors enable the teacher to decide whether he can move on to the next*
> *item on the syllabus or whether he must devote more time to the item he*
> *has been working on. This is the day-to-day value of errors. But in terms*
> *of broader planning and with a new group of learners they provide the*
> *informagramme of teaching".*

EA is viewed as an important aspect in improving teaching methods; it provides valuable data for the preparation of teaching material textbook and examinations, as well practical applications for language teachers. Moreover, Error analysis as a new field of research in applied linguistics includes different stages. Hence, Corder (1973) suggested five steps in an error analysis namely:

- **Collection of data**. Either from free composition or from examination answers.
- **Identification of errors**. Labeling or errors depending on the linguistic feature.
- **Description of errors**. It refers to the categorization of the errors.
- **Explanation of errors**. It provides reasons behind learners' occurrence.
- **Evaluation of errors**. It tests the errors and suggests strategies that help learners overcome their difficulties.

II. Definition of Error

The word error is open to a myriad of definitions that are proposed by many language scholars. To exemplify, Lennon (1991: 182) defined error as *"a linguistic form or a combination of forms which, in the same context and under similar conditions of production would in all likelihood, not be produced by the speakers' native speaker counterparts"*. That is to say, error is an erroneous production of a linguistic form, within the same circumstances, by non-native speakers comparing to the native speakers' production. Additionally, Chan et al (1982: 538) claims that error is *"the use of a linguistic item in a way, which according to fluent users of the language indicated faulty or incomplete learning"*. In other words, error is the misuse of linguistic items that are resulted in the interrupted and wrong learning which referred technically as an intralingual transfer (Richards, 1974). In essence, George 1972 (as cited in Elliot, 1983: 6) puts forth that error reckoned by stakeholders as the undesired and unacceptable usage of the language.

III. Difference Between Error and Mistake

Corder (1967) distinguished between mistake and error. According to him, the former refers to deviations due to performance factors such as memory lapses or physical and psychological states such as tiredness, emotions. Corder refers to such errors by unsystematic errors or errors of performance. The latter refers to systematic and consistent deviations of the learner's linguistic system; this might be resulted from learner's ignorance of the target language norms. In the same path, Ellis (1997) distinguished between error and mistake. According to him, error refers to gaps in the learner's knowledge; whereas, the latter refers to the occasional lapses in performance. Additionally, Larsen-Freeman and Long (1991) point out that errors are permanent part of the learners' learning process while mistakes are temporary. Therefore, it is meaningful to refer to errors of performance as mistakes. Then, keep the term 'error' for systematic errors (Corder, 1967).

IV. Significance of Learners' Errors

Before the 1960, when the behaviouristic view point of language was the dominant one, learners' errors were considered as something undesirable; errors are considered as sins (Lennon, 1991). With the appearance of "Universal Grammar" proposed by Chomsky (1965) and his rationalistic claim that human beings have innate capacity that can guide them through sentence generation, cognitive approach instead of behaviouristic viewpoint was emphasized

by many scholars. In fact, Chomsky's new linguistic theory contributed to the emphasis on learners' errors so as to form hypothesis. Accordingly, a more favorable attitude has developed for error analysis during the 1970s and 1980s (Farrokh, 2011). Toury (1995- cited in Farrokh, 2011) mentions that Corder in 1967 was the first to advocate the importance of errors in the language learning process.

Unlike mistakes that are considered insignificant to the process of language learning (Corder, 1967), learners' errors provide signs about learners' knowledge and acquisition in the target language (Corder, 1973: 293). It is seen that "*systematically analyzing errors made by language learners makes it possible to determine areas that need reinforcement in teaching*" (Corder, 1973: 120). In other words, analysing learners' errors are of great value in that they help in determining the areas of weaknesses in learners' learning. Besides, making of errors is considered as a device used by the learners in order to learn. Moreover, Corder (1967) claimed that learners' errors are significant in three different ways. First, they are helpful for the teacher in that they reflect learners' progression including language strength and weaknesses. Second, they provide the researcher with evidence of how language acquisition takes place including the strategies and procedures. The last and no least, they are useful for learners themselves in that they permit them to test their hypothesis about the language they are learning. Hence, making of errors is a way of learning.

V. Types of Error

Classifying errors into their levels help us specify on what level of the language was the learner operating when he or she erred (James, 1998). Many scholars provided different categorization of learners' errors; this classification is given by lee (Lee, 1990). According to him, errors are classified into these levels namely: grammatical errors, discourse errors, phonological-induced errors, and lexical errors.

V.1. **Grammatical (morphosyntactic) errors**. They are errors that are found at the sentence level. They focus on the need for grammatical accuracy. Sentence level errors often reflect performance mistakes for which immediate correction is unnecessary.

V.2. **Discourse errors**. They are errors which reflect learners' cultural and pragmatic knowledge in the use of language.

V.3. Phonological errors. They are manifested in wrong pronunciation and intonation including word stress, vowel length, voiced and voiceless sounds… etc.

V.4. Lexical errors. They are errors that belong to other linguistic levels which may hamper communication.

VI.   Fossilization

According to Brown (2000), fossilization is the process of internalizing and storing an erroneous linguistic structure by the learners that is seen as an incurable disease as metaphorically termed by Brown (2000: 231) '*an unchangeable situation etched in stone'*. Additionally, it is resulted from the teacher's positive affective feedback; as in this example, keep talking; I'm listening (Brown, 2000: 232) followed by positive cognitive feedback as in the following instance, I understand your message; it's clear (Brown, 2000: 232). These feedback are provided by the teacher following wrongly uttered forms exactly as it is provided for the correct utterance, this what Brown (2000: 233) stated: " *internalization of incorrect forms take place by means of the same processes as the internalization of the correct forms*". In fact, feedback is not a mere cause of fossilization; however, learners' harsh and overthought on language accuracy and the lack of language practice that open them the door of monitoring and testifying made up rules on their speech. According to Ur (1991: 242) *"feedback is information that is given to the learner about his or her performance of a learning task, usually with the objective of improving this performance".* That is to say that teacher's quality of feedback should be given according to the correctness and incorrectness of the utterance for the purpose of improving learners' performance.

VII. Error Correction

The way to respond to learners' writing errors is a controversial topic in second language writing. In this respect, error correction emerged to overcome this writing difficulty. The notion of error correction is defined by many language scholars; According to Chaudron (1988), Error correction refers to '*Any teacher behavior following an error that minimally attempts to inform the learner of the fact of error'*. In other words, it is the teacher's reaction towards students' erroneous responses. In the same path, Allwright and Beiley (1991) state that error correction is a remedy to learners' errors, i.e. eradicating learners' errors from further production. In fact, the issue of correcting writing errors is remarkably complex

(Brown, 2000: 235). However, all the teachers agree for the importance of providing feedback to learners' errors (Ellis, 2013). Likewise, Scrivener (2005: 229) proclaimed: "*if the objective is accuracy, then immediate correction is likely to be useful*". That is to say, when the purpose is to improve learners' language accuracy, then effective error correction is required. Nevertheless, studies conducted on error correction didn't determine a specific and particular method for error correction.

Specifically, Ellis (2009) and Ferris (2011) identified two types of techniques for teacher's corrective feedback; namely, direct and indirect feedback. Direct feedback, consists of providing learners with a corrected version of the erroneous language forms; an example of direct correction is provided by Kinsella (n.d: 97) as the following:

- ~~*Study*~~ *hard is very important if you* ~~*want*~~ *to go to college.*
  Studying   want

Whereas, the indirect feedback involves pointing out the errors without providing any corrected form. In fact, many techniques are used by the teacher to indicate learners' errors such as highlighting the error using different coded colors i.e. use a specific color for a specific type of error. Another technique might be underlying a specific word or phrase that is erroneous and let the learner to find the error and correct it himself or seek assistance from peers as it is illustrated in the following example:

- <u>Study</u> hard is very important if you <u>wanted</u> to go to college.

Peer correction is a fruitful technique in which learners read each other's writing in pairs and groups and offer comments. Many language scholars advocate this technique, among them, (Robinson, 1991; Arndt, 1993;). Furthermore, another technique consists of indicating the error using verbal cue (such as verb, subject, article…etc) or error codes i.e, short form of the verbal cue; this technique is termed by (Raimes, 1983) as written comments in which the teacher writes comments on students' written work in the margins or between the lines or at the end. Above are two examples listed respectively:

- <u>Study</u> hard is very important if you <u>wanted</u> to go to college.
     wf   vt

- <u>Study</u> hard is very important if you <u>wanted</u> to go to college.
  Word form   verb tense

These methods and techniques are summarized by (Norrish, 1983) which may consist of any of the following: locating errors, coding errors, treatment of errors.

A list of marking codes and symbols is presented by Kinsella (n.d: 98), (see appendix 2).

In this section we have presented a general overview about the linguistic error in foreign language learning. We covered mainly the definition of error and what distinguishes it from mistake. Then, we dealt with significance of learners errors and how they contribute to the learning process. After that we included the types of errors, their fossilization and finally their correction.

Section Three
Intralingual and Interlingual Sources

Along the process of learning, learners tend to make a great deal of errors which become an inevitable part of their learning. Many studies have been done in the field of error analysis which revealed that most of errors are resulted from either learner's incomplete and partial acquisition of the target language itself or from mother tongue transfer; namely, interlanguage and intralanguage.

I. The Status of English in Algeria

In Algeria, the English comes after the French language. It has the status of a second foreign language (Terraf, 2012:98). It is taught from the first year of the middle level, after the educational reforms of 2000. Starting from this date, Algeria has started a series of changes to improve the quality of the educational system. Rapid development of information communication technologies, lead the English language to gain its power and impose itself in the Algerian educational system in Algeria (Mami, 2013). On the other hand, globalization called for the shift in the aims and objectives of teaching so as to meet the demands of the socioeconomic market. As a matter of fact, new methods of English language teaching and linguistics shaped the new educational curricula (Mami, 2013). However, learners show a negative attitude towards English and they are more and more decreasing in their level. Accordingly, in the school year 1996-1997 in Constantine results showed that more than 38, 08% of learners decreased in their courses of English, whereas in French courses, they are progressively increasing (Derradji, 2000- cited in Terraf, 2012).

I. The Status of French in Algeria

I.1. During French colonization. The beginning of the French colonization in Algeria started with the functionink;kkk g of the French language in the administration and the management of the country (Terraf 2012). Many koranic institutions and schools were

replaced by French schools where the teaching of the French language and culture was guaranteed. Moreover, French attempted to assimilate Algeria linguistically and culturally and to create francophone elites (Aitselimi & Marley, n.d). The result of such policy was triglossia which still exist today where French like standard Arabic is the high (H) language (Aitselimi & Marley, n.d). It is important to note that during the colonial era ,from 1830 to 1962, French was the solely official language in Algeria (Terraf: 2012).

I.2. Post-colonial era. After achieving independence from France, Algeria undertook a policy of Arabization, seeking to eradicate French from public life and restore Arabic as a national and official language. Despite this, they remained closely linked in a number of ways; French continues to play an important role in a number of domains and it is no longer seen as a foreign language (Aitselimi & Marley, n.d).The relationship between Algeria and French language is complex as a result of a long shared history. This is what the Algerian linguist Rabah Sebaa (1999:9) claimed "*the situation of the French language in Algeria is unquestionably unique in the world*". In other words, French language takes a paramount position in Algeria.

I.3. The current status of French. Although it has lost the status it had during the colonial era, French has gained a number of speakers, and French has remained an important element of the education system across Algeria. Despite half a century of Arabization, the French language retains a strong physical presence in the region. French appears, together with Arabic, on street names in town centers, and directions signs both in towns and on major roads. Many shops and cafes, banks and other businesses have their signs written in both French and Arabic, as do hospitals, schools and local and national government buildings (Aitselimi & Marley, n.d). Official documents such as bills for utilities and taxes are bilingual, as are doctors' prescriptions and most medicines, postage stamps, coins and bank notes (Aitselimi & Marley, n.d); French can be heard on radio and television, even on the official government channels, and French language publications are as common as Arabic in bookshops. Therefore, the status of French in Algeria today is not merely a foreign language; French is almost as natural as Arabic and many others aspire to this (Aitselimi & Marley, n.d). In the field of education, French is seen as a valuable asset by many Algerians. In the Algerian educational system, French is taught as a foreign language. It is integrated into school starting from the second year of the primary level (Aitselimi & Marley, n.d); then, it is taught also throughout the four years of the middle school as well as in the three years of the secondary school but with different time allotment regarding the streams (math, sciences,

foreign languages etc.). At the university level, humanities and social sciences are arabized whereas scientific and technical streams are taught exclusively in French.

VIII. Sources of Error

Errors are an inevitable part of learners' production; therefore, many scholars sought to find why are certain errors made? Richards (1974) distinguished between interlingual errors from intralingual and development errors as main sources of errors as the following:

IV.1. Interlingual errors. Are errors that drive from transfers from other languages. It reflects the inability of the learner to separate or distinguish between two different languages (Richards, 1970). Lado (1957:86) goes in the same path stating that this source of error is the result of the negative influence of the mother tongue on the target language learner's performance.

IV.2. **Intralingual errors**. According to Richards (1974:6) intralingual errors are "*items produced by the learner which reflect not the structure of the mother tongue, but generalizations based on partial exposure to the target language*". That is say, errors that are not resulted from the native language transfer but resulted rather from the incorrect generalization of target language rules. Richards distinguished four categories of intralingual errors namely: overgeneralization rules, ignorance of rule restrictions, incomplete application of rules, and false concept hypothesized.

IV.2. **Developmental errors**. Are errors that are resulted from Learner's hypothesis about the target language rules relying on a limited background (Richards, 1970). Later, Richards (1970) included developmental and intralingual errors in one category under the nomination of 'intralingual errors'. Developmental and intralingual errors are those errors that occur when learners have not acquired complete and significant knowledge about the target language (Richards, 1970).

Another classification is given by Brown (2000) who explained error occurrence according to four sources namely interlingual transfer, intralingual transfer, context of learning, communication strategies.

IV.1. Interlingual transfer. Interlingual transfer is a significant source for all learners; Brown (2000) explain that at the beginning of learning a second language, learners are not familiar with the system of the target language; thus, they rely on their native language

which provide them with the only linguistic system. Brown (2000: 224) proclaimed that all learners have committed errors such as: 'sheep' instead of 'ship' or 'the book of jack' instead of 'jack's book'; *"these errors are attributable to negative interlingual transfer"* Brown (2000:224). In other words, such errors are resulted from native language negative transfer.

IV.2. intralingual transfer. According to Brown (2000), intralingual transfer is the fundamental factor in second language learning. He further explained that while interlingual errors appear at the early stage of second language learning, the intralingual errors appear when learners begins to acquire some parts of the new system, i.e. intralingual transfer is manifested within learners' progress in second language learning.

IV.3. Context of learning. A third major source of errors is the context of learning. Context refers to the classroom including the teacher and materials. Context of learning source refers to those errors which results from faulty hypothesis about the target language, this what Richards (1971) refers to as 'false concepts hypothesized' and what Stenson (1974- cited in brown, 2000). These errors might be due to a misleading explanation from the teacher, faulty presentation of a structure or a word in textbook or incorrect information provided by the teacher Brown (2000). The following example is provided to illustrate the context of learning error:

- The cat is **at** the table.

To illustrate the above error ,we may discover that in teaching the preposition (at), the teacher may hold a box and say (I'm looking at the box) so the learners may infer that **at** means **under** .After that the learner may use **at** for **under** as in the above example (Keshavarz 2008:112- cited in Faisal, 2013).

IV.4. Communication strategies. The communication strategy is used by learners to overcome a problem in communication resulting from their inability to have an ease access to foreign language knowledge (Ellis, 1997). Learners evidently use production strategies when they write in English in order to transmit their message across; however, these techniques can themselves become a source of error (brown, 2000: 227). These strategies may include: approximation, word coinage, circumlocution, false cognates, prefabricated patterns which can all be a source of error (brown, 2000: 227).

As we have seen above, there exist various sources behind learners' errors. As it is shown above, we have provided two classifications of error sources given by different language

scholars namely, Richards (1970) and brown (2000) classifications. However, in our current study, the emphasis is put on only two sources: interlingual and intralingual sources.

II. Intralingual Transfer

Is one type of interference which consists of language transfer of one language item upon another, this can be resulted from faulty or partial learning of the target language (Richards & Schmidt, 2002).

Richards (1970), views that intralingual interference as items that are produced by the learner relying on generalizations which are originated from lack of complete exposure to the target language. Richards noted subcategories of errors that are generated from learner's attempting to express using the English structure

III. Types of Intralingual Error

Are errors that reflect the target language rules, they reflect as well the learner's competence at a particular stage; these errors are originated from the English language itself Richards (1970). He stated some intralingual examples: *did he comed, what you are doing, he coming from Israel, make him to do it, I can to speak French*. According to Richards, errors like this are frequent regardless the learner's language background. Following Richards' classification of intralingual errors we distinguish four categories namely: over-generalization rules, ignorance of rule restrictions, incomplete application of rules, false concepts hypothesized. Let us discuss in details:

VI.1. Over-generalization. According to Richards (1970), over-gearalization refers to learner's creation of deviant structures on the basis of other structures in the target language; that is to say, learners attempting to generalize the target language structure he has acquired earlier, on new situations which seems or him similar to the previous structure, resulting in incorrect structures which David (n.d-cited in Richards 1970) describe as overlearning of a structure. Examples are given by Richards to illustrate this category: *he come from, he can sings, we are hope, it is occurs*. If we take the first example '*he come from*' it is noticed that since the English grammatical rule sates that all the pronouns take the 's' at the end of the verb except for the third person singular, hence learners tend to generalize the endingless form for all the pronouns Dŭskova (n.d).

VI.2. Ignorance of rule restrictions. Is violation of the limitation of a given rule that is to say the application of a given rule in context where it does not fit. This can be mainly shown through analogy; for instance, some verbs are accompanied by prepositions; however, learners tend to misuse these prepositions that is to say, they attempt to use the same preposition with similar verbs which results in an analogy as it is shown in the following example: *He <u>said</u> **to** me* is violated to *he <u>asked</u> **to** me***;** here the verb said takes the preposition 'to', and since the two verbs are almost similar; thus, learners associate the 'to' for the verb 'ask'. Many other instances can be caused by the rote learning of the English rules Richards (1974).

VI.3. **Incomplete rule application.** According to Richards (1974:177), this sort of errors occur when the "*deviant structure represents the degree of the development of the rules required to produce acceptable utterances*". The statement form of a question is a relevant example to illustrate this issue; according to Richards (1974) the statement of a question is a difficult grammatical item that may never become part of competence in the second language; This difficulty can be seen in the omission of one element in the series of transformations, or the addition of a question word to the statement. James (1998:185-186) states 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 "nobody knew where *was Barbie" instead of (√Barbie was). This error results from the learner using incomplete rule of interrogative information. In fact learners have succeeded applying one rule ('Wh'-element) form but failed to invert the subject and the verb.

VI.4. False concepts hypothesized. According to Richards (1974:178-179), false concepts hypothesized refers to errors which "derive from faulty comprehension of distinctions in the target language. These are sometimes due to poor gradation of teaching items." That is to say errors that are resulted from learner's wrong assumptions that new concepts behave like others. An example is given by Richards (1974) the form 'was' may be interpreted as a mark of the past tense and the form 'is' may be interpreted as a mark of the present simple as showed in the following respectively: *one day it <u>was</u> happened, he <u>is</u> speaks French*. Ellis (1997) distinguished between incomplete application of rules and false concepts hypothesized. 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.

IV. Theory of Interlanguage

Larry Selinker (1972:214 - cited in Rolf Palmberg 1977) defined the term interlanguage as "*a separate linguistic system which results from a learner's attempted production of a target language norm*". That is to say, the linguistic system that the learner constructs when he tries to produce items using his target language. The term was first referred to by Corder as 'idiosyncratic dialects'; an alternative name might be 'transitional dialect' Corder (1967); then, termed by William Nemser as 'approximative system' Nemser (1969). An approximative system refers to the deviant linguistic system that the learner employs when he attempts to use the target language Nemser (1969).

V. Definition of Interlangual Transfer

Weinreich (1953: 1- cited in Dulay & Burt 1972: 11) defines interference or interlingual transfer as "...*those instances of deviation from the norms of either language which occur in the speech of bilinguals as a result of their familiarity with more than one language, i.e., as a result of languages in contact...*"; that is to say; any deviation from the standard of English usage due to learner's familiarity with more than one language. Robert Lado (1957: 1):

> "*Individuals tend to transfer the forms and meanings, and the distribution of forms and meanings of their native language and culture to the foreign language and culture—both productively when attempting to speak the language and to act in the culture and receptively when attempting to grasp and understand the language and the culture as practiced by natives*".

That is to say, when learners' attempt to produce items using the target language, they tend to transfer both the language and the culture of his native language; likely, when attempting to receive linguistic items in the target language, they tend to incorporate native language and culture for his own understanding. In our case, EFL learners attempt to produce and grasp target language (which is English) items, relying on the French language, which is considered as natural as the first language (which is Arabic) as Aitselimi & Marley (n.d) stated: "*The status of French in Algeria today is not merely a foreign language; French is almost as natural as Arabic and many others aspire to this*"; as a result, many English-French interlingual errors are to be appeared in learners writing composition.

I. Types of Interlingual Errors

Interlingual errors are errors which results from learner's native language transfer into the target language. Interlingual errors are also known as 'interference errors', 'transfer errors', 'language-specific errors' and 'interlanguage errors' (Catalán 1997). Interlingual errors or interference are those errors result from the transfer of phonological ,morphological ,grammatical, lexico-semantic ,and stylistic elements of the learner's native language to the learning the foreign language (Keshavarz,2008:103)

VIII.1. Phonological interference: Mehlhorn (2007) claims that learners owe phonological knowledge to their L1; this is manifested in their speaking and reading indicated by word stress, intonation speech sound, typically of French which influence the acquisition of the English language. We will not go in details with this point since the present study focuses on the written corpus.

VIII.2. Orthographic interference: it occurs at the level of writing where English words are influences by French spelling; this can be displayed through:

- The addition of a final 'e', as in the following example: groupe instead of group (no author, 2001).
- The adoption of French suffixes as in the following example: electrique instead of electric.
- Write 'ch' instead of 'sh', because 'sh' is infrequently used in French this lead to errors like: *chare, englich* instead of *share, english*. (no author,2001).

VIII.3. Lexical interference: it is exhibited by:

- The borrowing of French words to fill the gaps in their knowledge of English vocabulary for example: *langues* instead of *languages.*
- False friends: a word which has the same or very similar form in two languages, which has a different meaning in each (Longman dictionary); for example: the French word 'experience' is the equivalent of 'experiment' in English; however many EFL learners tend to use the word 'experience' instead, as in the following example: *Yesterday we performed an interesting experience in the laboratory.*

VIII.4. Grammatical interference. French influences English grammatical rules in terms of:

- Word order: French tends to alter the English sentence order especially in the placement of the adjective in noun phrases. The French rule states that the adjective comes after the noun it modifies which is not the case in English grammar; this may generate such utterances: *image clear* instead of *clear image*. (Hanafi, 2014).

- Omition of the apostrophe in possessive nouns; in French apostrophie is not used to designate possession, for example: *the cats tail* instead of *the cat's tail.*

- Accents: learners use accent with English words because this is common in French language; for example: célery instead of celery (no author, 2001).

- Articles: the use of a definite article with proper nouns is a French feature which is usually transferred into English words as in the following example: *the professor bracket teaches in England* instead of *professor bracket teaches in England.* (Hanafi, 2014).

All in all, this section cover the main sources of learners' errors suggested by different scholars namely, intralingual and interlingual transfer. Accordingly, we have made an overview of the status of the French and English language in Algeria and how each one influences the other. Moreover, we have defined each items and presented the different types that are included in each source of error with illustrations.

Chapter Two
Literature Review

Error analysis has been the subject of interest for many researchers. Error analysis is a type of linguistic study that focus on errors learners make when they perform either in spoken or written form. According to Corder (1967), error analysis has two main objectives: one theoretical and another applied. The theoretical refers to what and how learners learn when he studies a second language. The applied objective is concerned with how to enable a learner to learn more efficiently. Therefore, although there are some differences between the studies conducted in the field of error analysis, but all of them intend for the same objective. This current chapter represents a range of studies conducted in the field of errors analysis and which has in one way or another share some point of overlap with our present study.

- **Studies Related to Error Analysis**

Richards (1971) highlights the value of analyzing learners' errors and how can these errors impede the thread of the target language acquisition. His study focused on errors learners commit while learning the English language and the sources behind such errors. His study involved learners from different language background: Japanese, Chinese, Burmese, French, Czech, Polish, Tagalog, Maori, Maltese, and Indian and West African Languages; and showed the different types of relating to production and distribution of verb groups, prepositions, articles and the use of questions. Accordingly he distinguished three sources of errors: interlingual, intralingual and developmental errors. He also divided intralingual errors into the following subcategories: overgeneralization errors, ignorance of rules restrictions, incomplete application of rules, and false hypothesis.

Erdogan (2005) highlighted the importance of error analysis in a foreign language teaching. The researcher examines and analyse the errors and finding the sources behind them as well. Through his research, Erdogan aimed first, at investigating what is going in the mind of the learners including the strategies they use. Second, he aimed at choosing appropriate material and trying to tailor the teaching methods according to the level of the students. The findings revealed that the sources of errors are the key to treat them. Moreover, he states that feedback on errors should be given according to the gaol of study.

Yang (2010) in his paper 'A Tentative Analysis of Errors in Language Learning and Use' tries to describe and diagnose learners' errors. Yang aims at determining the causes behind

learners' errors and to help learners make a better understanding of their occurrence. Throughout his paper, he draws attention to the importance of error analysis in detecting, locating, describing and diagnosing errors as well as identifying different levels of errors. Yang concluded that learners' errors are not primarily caused by L1 interference; instead their errors are resulted from inappropriate teaching strategies and a lack of materials within the target language. At the end, Yang pointed out that teachers should be sensitive to learners' errors and focus on the most frequent errors learners make and adapt teaching materials and strategies accordingly.

Taghavi (2012) examines errors in writing tasks of twenty Iranian lower intermediate male students aged between 13 and 15. The main concern of the study was to find out the most frequent error made by these learners during their process of learning languages. To reach the aim of the study, a subject was given to the participants to write a composition about the seasons of a year. All of the errors were identified and classified. The results showed that most common errors were spelling, word choice, verb tense, preposition, subject-verb agreement and word order. Sources of errors were examined too. The results of the study show that errors which the students committed were both interlingual transfer based and intralingual transfer based. The participants also had a relatively weak vocabulary and their sentences were sometimes incomprehensible; so, they transferred the parallel form of words from their first language to target language. They committed errors in applying sentence structure rules. Therefore, it can be concluded that these participants have problems in acquiring normal grammatical rules in English. This study has shown that most errors due to both interlingual transfer and intralingual transfer errors.

Zawahreh (2012) investigated the errors of written productions of English essays of tenth grade students in females and males schools in Ajloun, Jordan. The researcher aimed at identifying the written errors of English committed by the tenth grade; then, estimating the predominant errors and the least ones and finally, explaining the causes of the written errors of English committed by the tenth grade students. The sample of study consisted of 350 students selected randomly from group of schools in Ajloun. The students were asked to write a free essay about "A journey to the ancient city of Jerash in Jordan" in an ordinary English language exercise in the class; then, the essays collected and analysed depending on a table of errors. The findings reported that most predominant errors among tenth grade students in Ajloun schools were classified from the most frequent to the least frequents in this order :

first, the within morphology were errors of lack of agreement between subject and the main verb. Second, within function words were errors of insertion of prepositions. Third, within syntax were errors of omission of the main verb. Fourth, within tenses were errors of using present instead of past. Fifth, within lexical items were errors of lexical items wrongly used in place of others.

Adway (2013) investigates errors made by grade 12 male students in the use of definite and indefinite articles in the secondary schools for boys in Umm Al Quwain (UAQ) Educational Zone. In his research, he aims to find out the most frequent errors committed by those students and the sources of these errors; moreover, to suggest teaching and learning strategies needed to cope with students' challenges. Adway claims that errors made by students of his sample are due to first language interference with a high degree and from intralingual source with a low percentage. To reach the aim of the study, Adway opted for two instruments for data collection namely interviews and tests. The former were used with teachers and the latter with students. The results showed that the main source of learners' errors in using definite and indefinite articles in English is not language interference but rather intralingual causes. At the end, Adway claimed that with only appropriate teaching strategies through which learners' errors could be reduced.

Kaweera (2013) reviews intralingual and interlingual interference in EFL context within school of liberal arts at the University of Phayao, Thailand. The aim of the present paper is to show the existence of errors as an unavoidable part of EFL learners' writing according to their sources. It attempts also to exemplify some frequent errors found in Thai writing based on three perspectives of interlingual interference, namely lexical, syntactic and discourse interference and seven aspects of intralingual interference namely, false analogy, misanalysis, incomplete rule application, exploiting redundancy, overlooking co-occurrence restrictions, hypercorrection and overgeneralization. The results showed that errors found in Thai students are mainly influenced by both interlingual and intralingual causes. It is assumed that writing errors are not only a result of L1 interference but also from inadequate acquisition of the target language. At the end, Kaweera points out strategies and practical aspects the teacher can use in order to develop the methodology as well as materials for remedial teaching.

Kertous (2013) shed light on the importance of error analysis in the educational field. She investigated the factors behind foreign language learners' grammatical errors in the writing

skill of 60 second year LMD students at the University of Bejaia. In her study, the researcher aimed at determining the morphological and syntactic errors and find out the possible sources behind their occurrence. To reach the aim of the study, the researcher administered a diagnosis test. The findings revealed that second year students face problems in three main aspects of grammar which are verb-form errors, article usage, and the morpheme "s". Moreover, it is revealed that major factors behind students' errors are resulted from overgeneralization of rules, incomplete application of rules, and ignorance of rule restrictions. The researcher concluded with some pedagogical implications for both teachers and students, and some recommendations for further research.

Saihi (2013) conducted a research on the misuse of prepositions in English by second year students at the University of Mohamed Khider, Biskra. In her research, Saihi aims at determining the main errors and finding the sources of the errors. To fulfill the aims of the study, the researcher adopted two data gathering tools namely test and questionnaire. Test (pre-test and post-test) are used to classify errors and determine their sources while questionnaires are used to confirm the result found in the test. The results confirmed that most of second year students' errors are resulted from Arabic interference which is the main factor that affects students' writing process. At the end, Saihi claimed that learners of English as a foreign language should pay considerable attention to English grammar rules.

Sawalmeh (2013) attempts to investigate the errors in a corpus of 32 essays written by 32 Arabic-speaking Saudi male learners of English. All these participants are students who graduated from Saudi secondary schools and joined the Preparatory Year Program at University of Ha'il. The aim of the study is to investigate the most common errors made by these learners and then to find out the reason behind such occurrence. To reach the aim of the study, the researcher has opted for different tools. The main instrument used for this study was participants' written essays in English language. All of the errors in these essays were identified and classified into different categorizations. The results show that the participants in this study committed ten common errors which are: verb tense, word order, singular/plural form, subject-verb agreement, double negatives, spellings, capitalization, articles, sentence fragments and prepositions. After diagnosing these ten errors Sawalmeh concluded that these errors to students mother tongue negative transfer. At the end, the researcher suggested recommendations to further research and some pedagogical implications with some helpful suggestions that will reduce future problems regarding writing English essays among Arab learners.

Ali Asghar & Faezeh (2014) investigates the importance or error analysis and its contribution to foreign language teaching and learning. These researchers conducted a research on 100 Iranian advanced EFL learners (50 male learners and 50 female learners) in the English institute in Kerman (a city in south-east Iran). The main concern of the study was to identify and analyze the sources of errors extracted from learners' writing papers and the frequencies of these sources as well. To reach the aim of the study, the two researchers collected learners' writing papers for data gathering; the writing papers had been written by males and females learners on the same topic. The results showed that learners' errors aren't rooted from language interference, but they are mainly and primarily rooted from imperfect leaning and incomplete acquisition of the target language. At the end Boroomand & Rostami Abusaeedi, suggested some pedagogical strategies and remedial materials for leaners to cope with their writing challenges.

Javid and Umer (2014) investigated the areas of difficulty in academic writing, the factors causing these difficulties and the corrective measures in the Saudi EFL academic context. The aim of the study was to identify the common difficulties in writing and its sources and the possible measurements that should be taken. To meet well the aim of the study, the researcher administered a 40-item questionnaire to 194 Saudi EFL learners (108 male and 86 female) studying at Taif university. Another tool was descriptive analyses and independent-samples t-test that were run using SPSS version 17. Then finding reported that Saudi EFL learners have serious problems in their academic writing due to their weaknesses in using appropriate lexical items, organisation of ideas and grammar. Moreover, the other secondary areas include: wrong use of prepositions, spellings, irregular verbs, articles, punctuation, suffixes and prefixes. At the end the researcher recommended for implementing a stricter admission policy, increase language courses, developing tailor-made activities, providing increased practice in academic writing, exploiting modern teaching techniques and equip the classrooms with modern teaching aids to improve Saudi EFL learners' academic writing.

Tan (n.d) highlighted the importance of the English writing competence as a widely recognized skill for educational, business and personal reasons. In his study, the researcher sought to explore EFL learners' major writing difficulties by analysing the nature and distribution of their writing errors. The participants were 95 second year non-English majors of Kun Shan University. To meet well the aim of the study, the participants were requested to

respond to one of the articles posted on the researcher's English blog in about 50 words. The error analysis inferred that the four most commonly made errors were word choice, verb form, missing subject and verb tense. The major causes of these errors were due to limited vocabulary size, poor grammar knowledge and interference from first language. The researcher has suggested six appropriate instructional strategies that teachers can adopt a more effective approach to enhance students' writing proficiency.

From the previous studies cited above, we notice an emphasis on error analysis. The present study agrees with the studies underlined previously in that it copes with learners' errors in writing. In fact, our study examines the different errors committed 62 middle school learners and find out the sources behind their occurrences through putting emphasis on interlingual and intralingual transfer as the main sources of learners' written errors. We aim behind this study to identify all the errors perpetrated by middle school learners, determining their categories, and finally, find out their sources and the possible ways to spot out these errors. To reach the aim of the present investigation, we have opted for a mixed methodology namely quantitative method based on written samples of 62 pupils and the qualitative method based on the interviews conducted with middle school teachers.

Chapter Three
Methods and Research Design

The present research is based on an error analysis approach focusing on the interlingual and intralingual sources behind middle school learners' written errors. These errors are selected by the researcher for analysis. This chapter presents an outline of the process of data collection and research. Besides, the researcher presents a description of the study including the sampling, design, and the instruments for data collection. The data was collected from Ben Barkane Youcef middle school in Akbou during April 2015 with the permission of the college administration.

Table 01: Description of the Study

Date	Respondents	N° of the respondents	Tools for data collection	N° of the involved respondents
April 2015	Pupils	68	Writing assignments	62
	Teachers	03	Interviews	03

Table 01 summarizes the range of data collection tools and the number of respondents involved in the study; each item in the table is discussed below in details.

I. Participants

The participants under this study are selected from Ben Barkane Youcef School; a middle school that is situated in Akbou, one of Bejaia's towns. Our population is fourth year intermediate learners which comprises 189 pupils. However, due to limitations in time and resources we have opted for two classes as a sample for our investigation. They comprise 68 pupils who have studied English at least for three years. Age and sex are not taken into consideration in this study. All the participants are homogenous in terms of their linguistic,

educational background and their social context as well. They receive English only inside the educational context and they do not have any exposure to it outside the classroom. However, outside the classroom, learners use their native language, namely 'Berber', and their first foreign language, namely 'French' interchangeably at home, with friends, using media…etc. Learners in classes 4 A.M $_3$ and 4 A.M $_1$ whom we asked to write a piece of writing were 68 in number but only 62 written papers were received. Their papers are collected, corrected and analyzed by the researcher.

Another type of respondents is middle school teachers. In Ben Barkane Youcef middle school we find 06 teachers of English but only 02 teachers are in charge of the fourth level whom we interviewed for a period of 20 to 30 minutes. So as to gather as much data as possible we have made an interview with a third year teacher of English. Eventhough he is in charge of the third level but he has already taught the fourth level learners for a long period of time and he has a sufficient acquaintance with fourth year learners and with their syllabus as well.

II. Design and Methods

The aim of the present study is to identify learners' errors and then analyze those errors through different steps to ultimately find out the sources behind learners' occurrences. So as to meet this objective, the choice of the methodology should be made accordingly. In the light of Rao (2003- cited in Hammar, 2012) point of view concerning the complementation of one approach to another stating that the strength of one approach complements the weakness of the other one, and vice versa, we have opted for both the qualitative and the quantitative approaches. Using the quantitative approach helped the identification, classification and ordering of errors according to their frequency. This is done through the analysis of pupils' pieces of writing, as Wallace (1998:38) summarizes: "*Quantitative is broadly used to describe what can be counted and measured, and therefore can be considered objective*". Moreover, we have administered for the qualitative approach which helped us in gathering data concerning learners' attitudes towards writing and how learners experience writing in the classroom including the difficulties they are facing and how the teacher reacts to learners' lacunas in writing; this is done through interviews conducted with middle school teachers. Accordingly, qualitative approach, as described by Wallace (1998) "*is used to describe data which are not amenable to being measured or counted in an objective way, and are therefore subjective*".

III. Data Collection Instruments and Procedures

For any investigation to be conducted and so as to test the research hypothesis data need to be gathered and analyzed using reliable and adequate research instruments and following required procedures as well. In fact, a variety of methods and sources are utilized in this present study so as to strengthen the validity of the results. Many researchers have recommended the use of different data collection tools. For example, Alderson and Beretta (1992 cited in Meygele, 1997) claimed that a multi-method approach increases the validity and reliability of the findings. Therefore, the researcher opted for written samples and interviews as the main tools in this study. The written samples are written by 62 middle school learners and the interviews are conducted with three (03) middle school teachers.

III.1. Written Samples. Writing task is a research instrument that is used as a primary tool in this study. It is regarded as primary for two reasons. In one hand, it is the suitable one for middle school learners who may probably find difficulties in answering a questionnaire which they have not experienced before and which might be linguistically challenging for them. In the other hand, it is the tool that provides the researcher with concrete, reliable and evident data. 62 written samples are collected from the two classes namely, the 4th A.M$_1$ and 4th A.M$_3$. The teacher asked the learners in the two classes to write about two different topics. With the 4A.M$_1$, the topic was to write about: what learners used to do in the past that no longer use to do now. Whereas, with the 4A.M$_3$ class the topic was about: telling about an incident that learners have witnessed and what was their reaction (see appendix 3). The topics were selected by the teacher taken from the textbook so as not to make learners less anxious and to write spontaneously and at their ease. The purpose of the writing tasks was:

➢ To assess Learners' strengths and weaknesses in writing.
➢ To find out the major difficulties that they are facing when writing.
➢ Identifying common errors and their sources.

III.1.a. Procedure. At the beginning, the instrument was administered on the 7th April 2015 at Ben Barkane Youcef middle school. 68 EFL intermediate learners were divided into two classes; class 01 and class 03 and were asked to write about what they have done during the spring holidays and what are the places they visited. The topic was selected by the researcher himself. The time allotted for this task was 30 min. At the end of the session the

papers were collected; however, when reading pupils papers, we found that learners were not serious in their writing; most of them wrote only two or three sentences with unintelligible handwriting. This might be due to the fact that they knew that their papers will not be evaluated by their teacher. Therefore, we were obliged to redo the task.

We decided to reschedule the date of the task just after one week exactly in 14ᵗʰ April, 2015. In order to avoid the lack of carelessness from the learners, the teacher himself asked his learners to do the task. After the grammar lesson where pupils learnt the semi-model: used to, the teacher asked his pupils to do the writing task to practice this grammar aspect, the instruction was as the following: think about the times when you were younger and write a short paragraph about what you used to do and what you did not use to do. The topic was accessible for the learners because different related items were previously taught and introduced to the learners in the previous session. With the 4A.M3 the topic was different; after introducing the grammar lesson where learners learnt the past continuous tense, the teacher asked them to write a paragraph about an incident they have witnessed in their way to school. At the end, he collected the papers and handled the researcher 62 written samples for analysis. (see appendix 4).

III.2.Interview. Interview is a research instrument that is used as a complementary tool in this study. The interviews are held with 03 middle school English teachers. It is complementary in two ways. In one hand, it is hoped that the discussion with teachers would shed light on what the researcher has already observed in participants' writing samples. In the other hand, meanwhile the writing task provides the researcher mainly with numerical data including frequencies and percentages. The interviews highlight more the qualitative part, i.e. it complements and explains what is ambiguous in learners' writing tasks. Through the interview, the researcher discovers the reasons behind learners' difficulties in writing, the techniques, and the materials used by the teacher in the writing session and the strategies the teacher is using to reduce the amount of learners' errors and deficiencies in writing.

The interview consisted of about six structured questions that are prepared in advance by the researcher but there are additional questions that are generated during the discussion. The interviews took place in different days. All the interviews were conducted privately. However, the teachers did not accept to use any recording tool for their privacy. Therefore, the interviews were recorded using the a pen and a paper which the researcher has interpreted later on.

III.2.a. Procedures. The great difficulty the researcher encountered when conducting the interviews was getting the interviews' appointments, i.e, teachers were on strike. After coming back to school, we find that their time schedule was very busy; they work the whole day to catch up the delay. However, after a long insistence, they have accepted to make the interview. All the interviews were hold in the same week for the sake of not wasting time.

The first interview took place with teacher **A** in 21st April, 2015 and it lasted 30min 11s. The second interview was scheduled with teacher B in 22nd April, 2015 which lasted for 20min 53s. The last interview was hold with teacher C in 23rd April, 2015 in duration of 23min 49s. All the interviews took place within the institution. During the three interviews we have tried to explore all the issues related to the writing session and learners' involvement. Along this study the teachers remain anonymous; we use instead, letters A, B, and C to refer to them.

Before conducting any scientific research, many tools should be gathered and prepared in advance in order first, to make clear your path of research and second, to make your findings reliable and trustworthy. In fact, this chapter presented a description of the methodology we adopt in our present investigation including our participants, methods we relied on, data collection tools and procedures we administered.

Chapter Four
Findings and Discussion

The main aim of the present study is to find out the sources behind middle school EFL learners' writing errors. To meet well the aim of this study, we have presented previously in chapter three, a clear description of the participants, methods, research tools and procedures. The present chapter aims at providing an answer to the research question and the hypothesis. In fact, chapter four is divided into two sections. In the section one, we provide the research findings and the discussion of the results. The second section covers the limitations, implications of the research and ultimately with suggestions for further research.

Section One : Results and Discussion

In this section, we report the findings of the present research and then discuss them in details. The data obtained by means of learners' written samples is presented in tables and figures using frequencies and percentages. In addition, the interviews are analysed and each question transcribed and summarised according to teachers' views. In this section, we use tables and graphs to better illustrate the research findings and facilitate the discussion.

I. Results

This part provides both the qualitative and the quantitative findings of the research and their interpretations.

I.1. Learners' written samples. The findings of the written samples are presented in tables and graphs using percentages and frequencies.

I.1.1. Collection of errors. We start by reporting all the errors made by 62 middle school EFL learners in both classes.

Table 2: Frequency of pupils' errors

	Spelling	Punctuation	Tense	Sentence Fragment	Subject-verb disagreement	Articles and preposition	Others	French Interference
PP 01	7	3	1	1	0	0	1	2
PP 02	3	2	0	0	1	0	0	0
PP 03	3	4	1	1	2	1	0	0
PP 04	1	4	1	0	3	0	1	0

PP 05	1	4	2	1	3	0	0	0
PP 06	2	1	0	1	2	1	1	0
PP 07	1	2	1	0	1	1	0	0
PP 08	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0
PP 09	0	0	1	0	1	0	1	0
PP 10	0	1	1	0	1	2	1	0
PP 11	0	3	3	2	0	0	0	0
PP 12	1	2	1	2	1	0	0	0
PP 13	1	2	6	0	0	1	0	2
PP 14	0	2	1	0	1	0	0	0
PP 15	1	1	1	0	0	1	2	0
PP 16	2	1	1	0	1	0	1	2
PP 17	1	0	1	1	1	1	0	0
PP 18	6	0	2	0	0	1	1	0
PP 19	1	0	2	0	2	0	1	0
PP 20	1	2	1	0	1	0	0	0
PP 21	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0
PP 22	0	0	2	0	1	0	0	0
PP 23	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
PP 24	1	4	1	1	0	0	0	0
PP 25	10	3	3	0	0	1	0	2
PP 26	2	1	3	0	0	0	1	0
PP 27	4	0	2	0	0	0	1	1
PP 28	3	0	4	0	0	0	0	0
PP 29	2	0	3	2	1	0	1	1
PP 30	2	0	1	0	0	0	1	0
PP 31	0	1	2	0	1	0	0	0
PP 32	4	2	1	1	0	1	1	1
PP 33	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
PP 34	2	0	5	0	0	0	0	0
PP 35	4	2	1	0	0	0	0	1
PP 36	1	2	1	0	0	0	0	0
PP 37	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	0
PP 38	0	1	2	4	3	0	0	0
PP 39	3	0	1	0	0	0	1	0
PP 40	0	3	2	0	1	0	1	1
PP 41	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0
PP 42	2	4	0	0	0	0	2	6
PP 43	7	2	1	1	1	2	1	0
PP 44	3	3	1	3	0	0	0	0
PP 45	0	1	1	3	0	0	1	0
PP 46	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	0
PP 47	3	0	0	2	0	0	0	0
PP 48	10	0	5	2	1	0	0	2
PP 49	6	2	1	1	0	0	1	0
PP 50	7	0	3	1	1	0	1	1
PP 51	5	3	1	1	0	0	0	0
PP 52	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0
PP 53	12	0	1	1	4	2	1	2
PP 54	2	1	0	2	0	0	0	0
PP 55	5	1	2	1	0	0	2	2
PP 56	6	2	5	1	0	0	1	0
PP 57	7	1	0	0	0	0	0	0

PP 58	2	2	0	0	0	0	1	0
PP 59	1	3	2	1	1	0	1	0
PP 60	0	1	2	1	0	0	0	0
PP 61	6	3	2	0	1	2	0	0
PP 62	1	4	0	2	0	0	0	1
Frequency	**162**	**90**	**92**	**40**	**39**	**17**	**32**	**28**
Total	**500**							

Table (2) presents all the errors that are found in learners' written samples. However, the table (3) below summarises the different error type with their frequencies and percentages. Then, the findings are demonstrated in a figure (3).

Table 3: errors' type in terms of frequency and percentage

Error type	Spelling	Punctuation	Tense	Fragments	Subject Verb Agreement	Article And Preposition	Others	French Interference
Frequency	162	90	92	40	39	17	32	28
Percentage%	32, 4 %	18 %	18,4 %	8 %	7, 8 %	3, 4 %	6, 4 %	5, 6 %

The above table 3 reports the major errors made by 62 middle school learners in both the 4AM$_1$ and the 4AM$_3$ classes. These errors are collected and then identified in terms of their type into eight groups: Spelling, Punctuation, Tense, Sentence Fragment, Subject-Verb Disagreement, Articles and Preposition, French Interference and Others. It is clear from the table that 32, 4% participants, which is the major score, make errors at the level of spelling. Then, it is followed by 'Tense' with 18, 4%. After that, come 'Punctuation' errors with 18%. 'Sentence Fragment' comes in the fourth position with 8% of errors. In the fifth position, comes the 'Subject-Verb disagreement' with 7, 8%. The 'Other' category is ranked the sixth with 6, 4%. In the seventh position come the 'French Interference' errors with 5, 6%. In the last position, we have the errors related to 'Articles and Preposition' with only 3, 4%. The following figure (3) demonstrates these errors' percentages according to their types:

Figure 3: learners' errors and their type
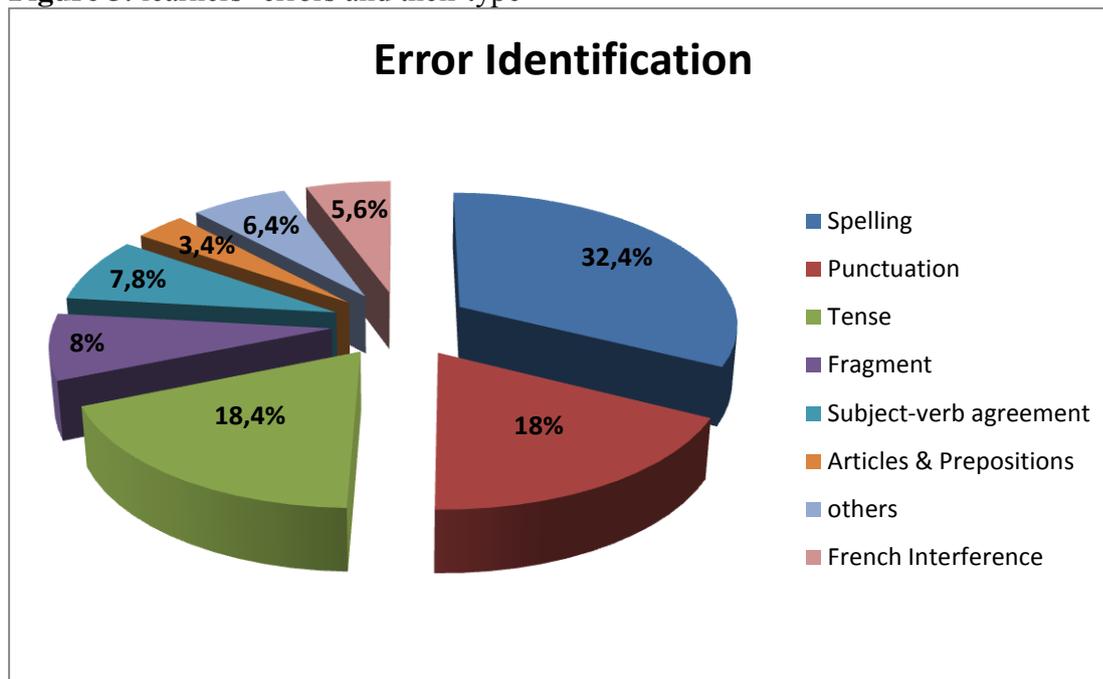
Table 4: Classification of errors according to their categories

Error category	Grammatical Error	Orthographic Error
Frequency	188	252
percentage	37, 6 %	57, 27 %

   The total number of errors made by middle school learners as a whole reaches 500 errors. These errors are first classified into eight types related to language features including spelling, punctuation, tense, sentence fragment subject-verb disagreement, articles and prepositions, others and French interference. In table 4 above, we have further classified these types into categories namely grammatical errors, orthographic errors. Within the grammatical category, we have included errors related to tense, sentence fragment, subject-verb disagreement and errors related to articles and prepositions. In the orthographic category, we involved errors related to spelling and punctuation.

   In fact, the orthographic category covers the high score with 57, 27% of errors whereas the grammatical category is ranked in the second position with 37, 6% of errors. In the light of these statistics we can deduce that learners face problems mainly, with orthography and grammar. Figure 4 below illustrates these statistics in a histogram.

Figure 4: classification of errors according to their categories
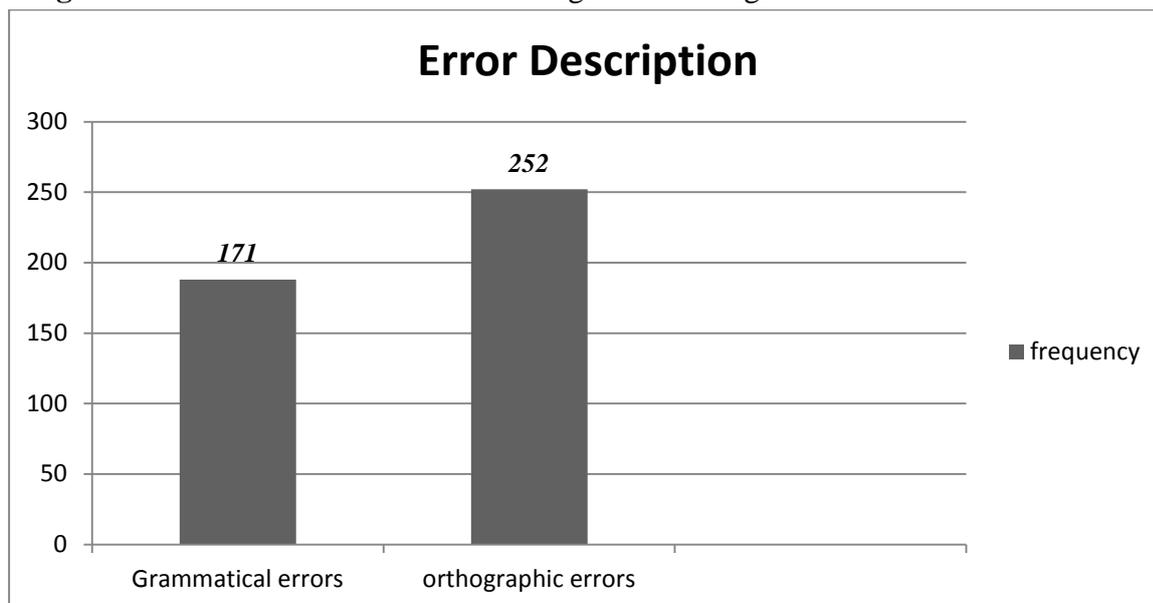
I.1.2. Error identification and their correction. In this part, we try to explain in details each type of error with illustrations and provide a possible correction to these errors.

➤ **Spelling**. The total number of spelling errors as indicated in table 3. It consists of 162 which represents the high score with 32, 4%. Table 5 below represents some examples of learners' spelling errors and their correction.

Table 5 : examples of spelling errors and their correction.

The Error	The Correction
1-I like eting a lot of **shugure.**	1-I like eating a lot of **sugar.**
2-I like **whatching cartonse whith** my friend**.**	2-I like **watching cartoons with** my friend**.**
3-He becomes **fayemes.**	**3-**He becomes **famous.**
4-I don't **new** who it is**.**	**4-**I don't **know** who it is.
5-He **whent** to the doctor and said to him that he is **faine** and he can **pley** football again**.**	5-He **went** to the doctor and said to him that he is **fine** and he can **play** football again.
6-To take **car** of his **lig.**	6-To take **care** of his **leg.**
7**-**The **bast** footballor in the **word.**	7-The **best** footballor in the **world.**

8-She phoned the **fyerman.**	**8-**She phoned the **fireman.**
9-intile she heard her dog.	**9-until** she heard her dog.
10-a **wendrful lendscap** i will **alweys rimamber.**	10-a **wonderful landscape** i will **always remember.**

In the table 5 above, there are ten (10) examples out of 162 spelling errors taken from learners' pieces of writing. From a close sight to the examples we can understand that these spelling are due to English pronunciation system. Throughout learners' written papers we have noticed that learners write as they hear as in the examples '1, 3, 5, 8...etc. This is also manifested through the omission of the silent letters as in the examples '4 and 7'. Another spelling problem is that the majority of learners do not capitalize neither the first word in a sentence nor the name of places and persons.

> **Tense.** The total number of tense errors as indicated in table 2 above consists of 92 errors which are ranked the second among other types of errors made by middle school learners with 18,4%. Learners have difficulties in choosing the appropriate tense. Moreover, when they know the appropriate tense they face problems in conjugating the verbs especially with regular and irregular verbs.

Table 6: examples of errors related to the tense and their correction

The Error	The Correction
1- but the doctor **telled** him	1- But the doctor **told** him.
2- i **heared** a lot of cough	2- I **heard** a lot of cough.
3- the smoke **growed up**	3- The smoke **grew up.**
4- I × still strong and brave.	4- I **am** still strong and brave.
5- the fireman arrived and **switch** the fire	5- The fireman arrived and **switched** the fire.
6- if he was not there, Maya **will die**	6- If he was not there, Maya **would die.**
7- she **has preparing** her homework	7- She **is preparing** her homework.
8- I saw a man and I **follow** him.	8- I saw a man and I **followed** him

9- He is happy because he **cans play** football again.	9-He is happy because he **can play** football again.
10- yesterday, jack **returns** to play football	10-yesterday, Jack **returned** to play football.
11- after a month, he will × back to training	11- After a month, he will **come** back to training.
12- I used **to playing to hiding** and seek.	12- I used **to play hide** and seek.
13- Now **I didn't like** him so much.	13- now I **don't like** him so much.

In table 6 above, are examples of learners' errors related to tense and their correction. After scanning the learners papers concerning errors related to tenses, we find out a range of problems; namely, omission of the verb. Some learners write a sentence without a verb as in the example '*4*'. Moreover, some others put an '**ed**' for the irregular verbs as in the examples '*1, 2, 3*'. Another difficulty, is conjugating more than one word in a sentence as in the example '*12*'. Sometimes learners write only the auxiliary without the verb as in example '*11*'. As it is shown in examples '*13* and *10*', some pupils do not match the tense of the verb with the time sequencer that is in the sentence**.** In addition, learners switch off from one tense to another in the same sentence; as it is illustrated in the examples '*5, 8, 6*'.

- ➢ **Punctuation.** The number of punctuation errors as it is shown in table 3 is 90 with a percentage of 18% which makes it the third type of errors that is highly made by middle school learners after the spelling and tense type. Table 7 below illustrates some punctuation errors and their correction.

Table 7: examples of learners' punctuation errors and their correction

The Error	The Correction
1-For example**:** I used to hate vegetables.	1-For example**;** I used to hate vegetables.
2-Jack Smith was training with his team**.**	2-Jack Smith was training with his team

when he broke his leg.	when he broke his leg.
3-he is afraid, that he won't play again.	3- He is afraid that he won't play again.
4- When I was younger × I used to play all the time.	4- When I was younger, I used to play all the time.
5- I like watching cartoons, and traveling, in the holidays.	5- I like watching cartoons and traveling in the holidays.
6- He has a good chance to be saved × some days after × Jack his family and his team were very happy.	6- He has a good chance to be saved. Some days after, his family and his team were very happy.
7- Suddenly × a car comes ahead and hits him.	7- Suddenly, a car comes ahead and hits her.
8- his family is very happy, because their child can play football again×	8- His family is very happy because their child can play football again.
9- she heard her dog ,then, she phoned the fire brigade×	9- She heard her dog; then, she phoned the fire brigade.

From the table 7, we notice that pupils make punctuation errors at different levels. Either learners do not use punctuation at all or they use it inappropriately. In the examples '4, 6, 7, 9', learners have written full sentences without any punctuation. Some other learners put the punctuation but randomly, where it doesn't fit as in the examples '2, 3, 5, 8'; where learners put a comma before the subordinate clause. There are learners who put a specific punctuation mark that is not the appropriate one. This is illustrated in the example '1, 9'. Concerning the dot, the majority of learners do not put a full stop at the end of the sentence and build their piece of writing upon only one sentence.

➢ **Sentence Fragment.** The total number of sentence fragments as indicated in table 2 is 40 with a percentage of 8 which gives it the fourth rank after spelling, tense and punctuation. The table 6 below illustrates some fragments.

Table 8: examples of sentence fragments and their correction

The Fragment	The Correction
1-Really it is fantastic animal which.	1-really it is a fantastic animal which loves people.
2- But love play handball. And he, play football.	2- He plays football and he loves handball too.
3-when he was training.	3- When he was training, he broke his leg.
4- after some days of his operation in his leg.	4- After some days of his operation he becomes better.

Sentence Fragments are among the major problems that learners face whenever they write. We notice in table 8 above that there are some examples of sentence fragments among 40 errors written by middle school learners. Learners tend to write long sentences but incomplete ones; either they put a full stop and continue the idea or they put a comma and write completely a new idea which cause a mismatch. This phenomenon is manifested mainly in subordinate clauses as in the examples *'2, 3, 4'* where learners write the dependent clause and make a full stop. Hence, a clause that cannot stand alone causes a sentence fragment.

➢ **Subject-Verb Disagreement.** The total number of subject-verb disagreement errors as indicated in table (3) reaches 39. It is ranked in the fifth position with 7, 8%. Table 9 below illustrates some cases of errors related to subject-verb disagreement.

Table 9: examples of subject-verb disagreement errors and their correction

The Error	The Correction
1-**they was** very sad.	1- **They were** very sad.

2- **He like** to play football.	2- **He likes** to play football.
3- **He get up** in the morning.	3- **He gets up** in the morning.
4- **He choose** handball.	4- **He chooses** handball.
5- **This accident are** very terrible.	5- **This accident is** very terrible**.**
6- **He become** famous.	6- **He becomes** famous.
7-**He become** better after some days.	7- **He becomes** better after some days.
8- **His friends encourages** him.	8- **His friends encourage** him.
9- **They was** horrible.	9- **They were** horrible**.**

Table 9 above represents a set of examples related to subject-verb disagreement errors made by middle school pupils. This category of errors represents 7, 8%. A score that is not high but it represents a challenge for learners; almost in each paper, we find at least one subject-verb disagreement error. Learners either put a verb in singular form for plural subjects as in examples *'1, 8, 9'* or put the verb in the plural form for the singular subjects as in the examples '*2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7'.*

> **Articles and preposition.** The total number of errors related to articles and prepositions is 17 with only 3, 4%. This type represents the least category of errors that are made by the intermediate learners. These errors are manifested through either omitting the article or/and the preposition or putting inappropriate forms. Table 10 below, represents some examples of such errors.

Table 10: examples of errors related to articles and prepositions and their correction

The Error	The Correction	
	Article	**Preposition**
1- He becomes × best footballor.	1- He becomes **the** best footballor.	
2-when she comes back **to**		2-when she comes back

school.		**from** school.
3-he comes back **at** his team.		3-he comes back **to** his team.
4-**in** the end, he comes back.		4-**At** the end, he comes back.
5- A woman was going to call × police.	5- A woman was going to call **the** police.	
6- The best footballor **of** the world.		6-the best footballor **in** the world.
7- He listens to × advices of × doctor and he becomes × better footballor.	7- He listens to **the** advices of **the** doctor and he becomes **a** better footballor.	

From table 10, we notice that pupils face difficulties in choosing the appropriate prepositions. They are commonly using prepositions like 'to, of and in'. However, few learners use prepositions like 'from, on, at'. Moreover, some learners use the formers in irrelevant manner as it is illustrated in examples '2, 3, 4, 6'. Concerning the use of articles, we have noticed that learners use the three types of articles 'a/an, the, and zero article'; but, there are some cases here where learners do not use articles at all, as it is illustrated in examples '1, 5, 7'.

➢ **French interference.** It is the last but not least category of errors. The total number of French interference errors found in 62 written papers reaches 28 with 5, 6%. It is ranked before the last. French interference errors refers to errors resulted from negative transfer from the French language. The table below represents some examples of French interference errors.

Table 11: examples of French interference errors and their correction

The Error	The Correction	
	Lexical Interference	**Orthographic Interference**
1- Courte Dress	- Short Dress.	
2- Végétables		- Vegetables

3-Danse Classique		- Classical Dance.
4- Les Chômeurs	- Unemployed People	
5- Footballeur	- Football player/ footballor	
6- Monde	- World	
7- Soudenly		- Suddenly
8- Petit	- Small	
9- Médecin	- Doctor	
10- Opération		- Operation
11- Espoir	- Hope	
12- Docteur		- Doctor
13- Dans	- In	

Table 11 shows some examples of French interference errors. Eventhough they do not consist of a great number, still they represent a challenge for middle school learners. From this table, we notice that the French language influences negatively learners' production in English; this is manifested mainly in two areas, namely lexical interference and orthographic interference. In the former, learners take exactly the French word when they ignore it in the English language; this is illustrated in examples *'1, 4, 6, 8, 9, 11, and 13'*. Thus, this might be due to learners' lack of the English vocabulary. The latter consists of orthographic interference, when a word exists both in the English and the French language, learners tend to write the English words using the French spelling either partially as in examples '7, 2' or completely as in examples *'3, 10, 12'*.

> **Others.** The total number of this type errors reached 6, 4%. A score that is high than the errors related to articles and prepositions and French interference. This category of errors consists of words that are not understood due to the intelligible handwriting,

repeated words, and words that are not put in their right place. These errors are highlighted using a circle or a question mark.

Table 12: sources of learners' errors

Source	Intralingual	Interlingual
Frequency	440	28
Percentage	88 %	5, 6 %

Table 12 above represents frequencies and percentages of each source of errors. Errors are unavoidable part of learners' writing. Thus, learners tend to make a range of errors at different language levels. In figure 5 below, 88% of pupils' errors are due to intralingual source. That is to say, errors that are resulted from incomplete knowledge of the rules of the target language; whereas, 5, 6% of pupils' errors are resulted from interlingual interference. It is related to the errors that are resulted from French language negative transfer. The figure below shows these data in a sector:

Figure 5: intralingual and interlingual sources
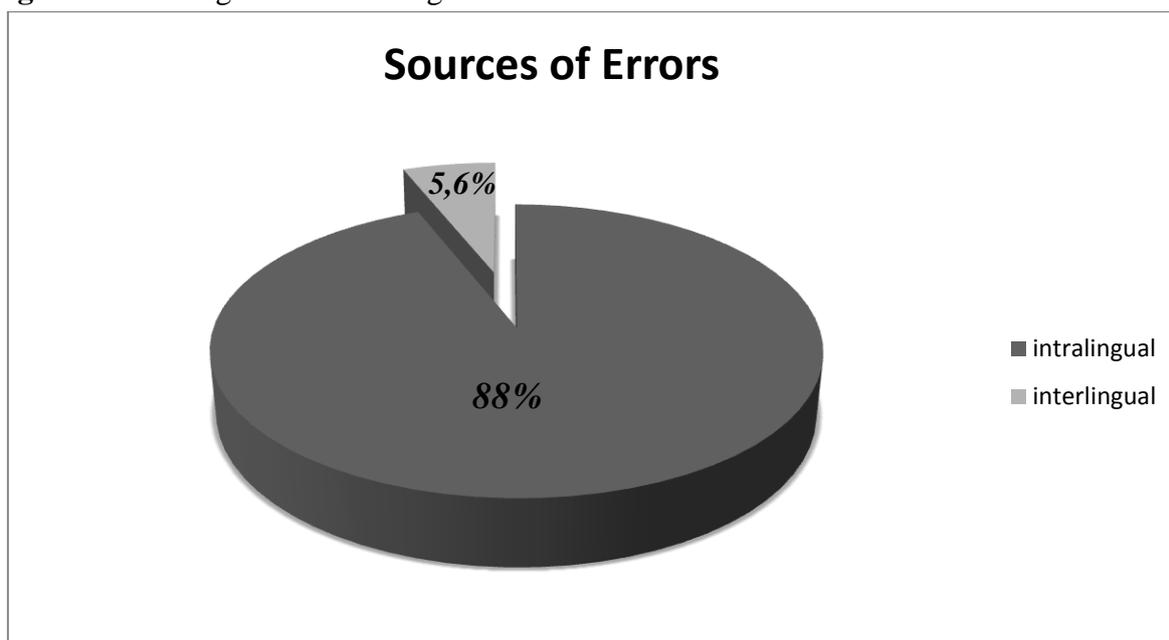
Table 13: classification of interlingual errors

	Lexical interference	Orthographic interference	
Interlingual errors	Typical Fr Word	Fr Spelling	Partially Fr Spelling
Frequency	15	7	6
Percentage %	53, 57	25	21, 42

Table 13 provides frequencies and percentages of each type of interlingual error namely, lexical and orthographic interference. The former include interference of typical French word which cover the high score with 53, 57%. The latter include interference of French spelling with a score of 25% and the interference of partially French spelling with a score of 21, 42%. These data are shown in the next histogram:

Figure 6: types of interlingual errors
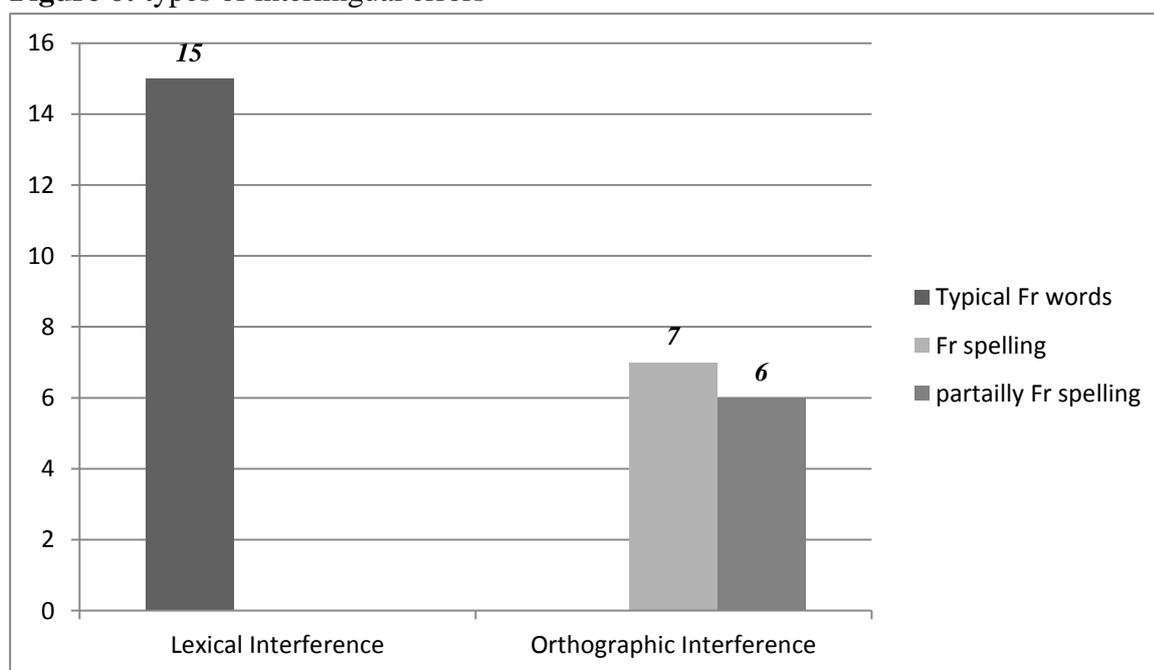
I.2. Interview. As it is mentioned earlier in the research methods chapter, the interviews took place after collecting learners' pieces of writing; they were conducted with a sample of three teachers among six (6) teachers of English in Ben Barkene Youcef middle school. Teachers agreed to be interviewed after telling them that their information would be confidential and that they would remain anonymous. All the teachers are asked the same questions to make the analysis easier for the researcher.

As it is previously mentioned, the aim of the interviews is to expand our understanding on learners writing difficulties and to find out the reasons behind learners' written errors. Interviews are used as a complementary tool to clarify what is ambiguous in learners' compositions. In this study, we have referred to the teachers using letters 'A, B and C' for them to be anonymous. The interviews covered six (6) questions. These questions cover these areas:

- Learners' attitudes and perceptions of writing.

- Methods and materials used by the teacher in the writing session.
- Common type of errors made by learners.
- The reason behind learners errors.
- The use of French language when writing in English.
- Strategies and treatment used by the teacher to cope with learners' errors.

I.2.1 Results of teachers' interviews

Question One: what are learners' attitudes and perception of writing; do learners feel dynamic and motivated or are they frustrated and passive during the writing session?

Two teachers answered that learners are not frustrated about writing but instead, they show a positive attitude and eager to write a good composition because the best one will be written in the blackboard. According to them, learners perceive writing as a paramount language skill that should be practiced to improve it. Teacher A said that *"English language is the language of prestige for learners, eventhough they face many challenges especially in writing however the majority of them work hard and listen to the advice of the teacher to cope with writing difficulties"*. Teacher B added that "*learners are really motivated and dynamic when dealing with a writing session; they ask me about how to express a given idea, they use dictionaries and they ask even peers for help"*. He continued: *"the writing session is the noisy session; this explains learners' dynamism and collaboration when writing"*. According to these two teachers, learners are really motivated to learn English and many of them hope to opt for the foreign languages stream in the high school and further specialize in the English language at the university. This is what pushes them to work hard and make efforts especially in writing. However, teacher C was very pessimist in regard to learners' perception of the English language in general and writing skill in specific. He claimed that "*the majority of learners do not show any care about the English language; there are others who perceive writing as a very challenging task that goes beyond their competencies"*, he told us that "*one learner told me one day that English for him is Chinese"*. According to this teacher, the majority of his pupils face many difficulties in English especially writing and they do not seek to improve it because it is secondary for them and they are convinced that mastering the one foreign language, French, is sufficient for them.

Question Two: what are the tools and materials you are using when teaching the writing session?

All the teachers approximately use the same materials when dealing with the writing session. All the teachers rely on the textbook as a fundamental source for activities. The textbook devotes a writing activity at the end of each file except for the 'words and sounds' one. Besides, the file of 'Reading and Writing' is devoted exclusively for the writing task where learners integrate all the items they have learned during the whole unit and integrate them to produce a piece of writing. This is why it is no longer called 'written expression' but instead "*situation of integration'.* Another material that is used in the writing session is pictures which according to the teachers enhance and inspires learners to generate ideas and expand their imagination. Dictionaries are useful tool that learners rely on when they write and when they are not available learners ask the teacher all the time to translate for them words from French to English. All the teachers agree that before asking learners to write about any topic, they pre-teach them the items they estimate they will need in their production.

Question Three: do learners made a lot of errors in writing? If yes, what type of errors? How can you rank learners errors?

All the teachers we have interviewed agreed for the fact that middle school learners make, as teacher B has described, a bulk of errors. According to them, Learners cannot write without errors, it is part of their learning. Teacher A pointed out that when correcting learners papers I found a lot of errors and sometimes *"the number of erroneous words and sentences is larger in number than the correct ones"*. Teacher C expressed the same idea claiming that *"at the end of the correction, some pupils papers becomes red in color"* which means that they are full of errors. Concerning the type of errors, all the teachers pointed that they find various types of errors in learners' pieces of writing. Teacher A classified learners' errors from the most common to the least common as the following: first, grammatical, especially tenses, and sentence order and subject-verb agreement. Second, orthographic. In the third position, we find lexical errors. Teacher B gave the following classification: First, orthographic, especially spelling. Second, grammatical including tenses, sentence structure. Third, we find lexical errors. Teacher C gave the same classification as teacher B but for the grammatical errors, he puts emphasis on the regular and irregular verbs, and the confusion between tenses.

Question Four: what might be the reason behind the abundance of learners' errors in writing?

All the three teachers argue for the same idea concerning the reason behind the excessive number of errors found in learners' pieces of writing. Teachers correlated learners' plenty of errors with the lack of practice in the English language itself. According to them, the lack of practice is the fundamental reason behind learners' errors. Moreover, they associated learners' erroneous productions with other factors. Teacher A, for example, associates this lack of practice with the insufficient time allotted for the English language, he pointed "*in the learners' time table, only three hours are devoted for the English language per week*". He explained that learners cannot practice all what they need to learn just in three hours. Teacher B linked learners' errors in writing with the learners' lack of English language exposure. According to him learners are not put in an authentic English language environment; they use it just in the classroom where sometimes we find teachers who prefer use French instead of the English. Otherwise, they neither use it outside the classroom nor when using media. According to him this is why learners find difficulties in English and why many of them consider it as highly challenging. He concluded: *"Unlike French, learners come with no prior background of the English language; they rely only on what is provided for them by the teacher"*. Teacher C related learners' errors with the English language factor in comparison with other 4th level subjects; he claimed that "*the factor of the English language is 2 whereas the factor of math, Arabic language is 4 and for French it is 3*". Besides, he explained that the fundamental languages are those with high factors while the secondary languages are those with lower factors which is the case of English. Factors are effective stimulus that motivates learners' learning. Teacher C added *"how learners would care of it if stakeholders do not care about it"*, for him English language should be given the same factor as French and Arabic languages so as for learners to be stimulated to improve their performance in the language.

Question five: Do learners use French when they write in English?

Teacher B and C argue that many learners rely much on the French language to express themselves in English. Teacher B stated *"As I have already mentioned, learners are more exposed to the French language than English; this is what pushes them to use French to overcome their gaps in English"*. According to these teachers, French language doesn't interfere much in learners' writing in English; however, we find some traces of the French language especially in spelling and lexis. Teacher A added that "*sometimes, when I correct learners' papers, I find words that are typical to the French language*". Teacher C argues for the fact that learners use French when writing in English; however, for him this is helpful

for them when writing in English, he stated *"French language is a more helpful than disruptive"*. According to him, eventhough he finds French spelling and lexis in learners compositions, but this is not troublesome.

Question six: what are the strategies you are using as teachers to cope with your learners' errors in writing?

All the teachers have approximately the same way of dealing with learners' writing difficulties. Teacher A and B claimed that after correcting pupils papers, he distributes the papers for them in which he has noted a set of remarks. Then, he chooses the average composition and ask a learner to write it in the blackboard. When the whole composition is in front of the learners eyes, he reads aloud the piece of writing and asks his pupils to stop him at each moment they see that there is an incorrect utterance. Learners try in a collaborative way to give the correct form for the error with the help of the teacher. In case where learners have not detected some errors or they can't find the correct answer; here, the teacher intervenes. Teacher C chooses another strategy that is no different from the previous one. According to him, the teacher should not correct learners' papers. After learners finish with their composition, he asks them to exchange their papers with their classmates who correct the papers and spot out the errors; then, they discuss with the teacher. This is what teacher termed as '**peer correction'.**

II.   Discussion

In this part we will deal with the interpretation and discussion of the results we have found in both the written samples conducted with middle school learners and the interviews held with middle school teachers. The interpretation of the findings is based on the hypothesis and objectives of the present research and in accordance with previous research findings. In this part, we are going to infer the findings from pupils' written samples and teachers' interviews.

Writing is a paramount language skill for acquiring any language. Thus, investigating our participants' difficulties and challenges in writing in English and the identification of the major common errors they fall in each time they write is at the core concern of this study.

When reporting the findings of the learners' written samples, we estimated that the total number of errors committed by 62 intermediate learners reaches 500 errors which represent a significant number that show how writing represent a challenge for middle school learners. These errors are then classified into eight types (see table 3) ranked from the high frequent to

the least frequent, namely: spelling, tense, punctuation, sentence fragment, subject-verb disagreement, other types of errors, French interference, article and preposition. This classification is similar to that of Hammar (2012). Concerning the spelling, learners write as they listen to the word as if they are transcribing it, this is a major problem that can be related to the English language disagreement between its spelling and its pronunciation, this is manifested especially through the omission of the silent letters as in the examples in 4 and 7 in table 5. For the errors related to tense, learners confuse between tenses, and sometimes they omit the verb completely. The most common problem related to tenses that pupils face is the confusion between the regular and irregular verbs as it is illustrated in table 6. This might be related to learners' overgeneralization of rules; Learners overgeneralize the rule that state that regular verbs take an 'ed' in the past simple tense to all the verbs (irregular). Punctuation errors are manifested mainly in either using the inappropriate punctuation or omitting it completely besides, when used, only one or two types of punctuation are used each time which are the comma and a full stop, and other punctuation marks are ignored. Similarly to what is reported in the interviews, all teachers agreed that learners face difficulties in spelling, tense and punctuation. Concerning sentence fragment, many learners write incomplete sentences which result in sentence fragment. This is shown mainly in complex sentences where there is a subordinate clause and a main clause; as it is illustrated in table 8; when learners write complex sentences, they write only the subordinate clause which make the sentence appear as a fragment. Subject-verb disagreement is another problem that is committed by middle school learners; as it is shown in table 9, learners do not care about the endings of the verbs they are using; they just write the infinitive of the verb and end it randomly. In the majority of the cases, learners do not put an 's' for verbs in the present tense. This related to the learners' overgeneralization of English rules; learners overgeneralize the endingless for all the pronouns (third person singular). This is Similar to the findings of Kertous (2013). Errors related to articles and prepositions are not of a great frequency. The errors related to articles and prepositions found in the papers we have analysed (see table 10) were either misused or not used. Concerning French interference errors, we have reported that 5, 6% of errors were resulted from French language negative transfer. Some middle school learners rely on the French language in which they have enough knowledge to fill their gaps in the target language, English. French interference errors are seen mainly at the level of spelling and lexis as it is illustrated in table 11; this is related to the learners' exposition to the French language and its lacuna in English. The same answers were given by the teacher A and B who supported the idea of French negative transfer to learners' English production. Teacher

C supported the same idea but stating that French is not harmful for learners when writing in English. Other type of errors are those that are not understood by the researcher due to an intelligible handwriting, and those that are committed by only one learner or two. All these findings are an answer to the research question concerning the most common errors committed by middle school learners.

After classifying errors into types, they were than classified in terms of categories into two namely orthographic, grammatical listed according to their frequency from the highest to the lowest. This classification goes with that provided by the interviewed teachers namely B and C whereas that of teacher C was approximately the same where he ranked the grammatical category at the first position followed by orthographic than lexical. This finding is an answer to the research question concerning the categories of errors.

Later on as it is displayed in table 12, learners' errors are classified in terms of their sources into two categories namely intralingual and interlingual sources. As we have reported in the interviews dealt with middle school teacher, learners' abundance of errors are due to the lack of practice in the English language due to time constraint and the absence of the authentic English environment where learners can practice the English language. When teacher were interviewed about the interference of French into learners' writing in English, we have not received too much support to this idea. Eventhough, they have admitted that French traces are often found in learners' pieces of writing; however they are according to them neither frequent nor harmful to pupils' production. This confirms what we have found as results related to French interference errors and our observation when correcting pupils written samples. As for the strategies that are used by the teacher to reduce the amount of learners errors in writing, the teachers we have interviewed suggested two ways for correcting learners errors namely teacher correction in collaboration with learners and peer correction. The former consist of the teacher who helps his learners to correct each erroneous utterance. The latter consist of learners correcting one another errors.

At the end of the interviews that were conducted with middle school teachers, each teacher has recommended that the ministry of education should give the English language the importance it deserves as an international language and as the language of technology and development. This can be achieved through scheduling it more than three times a week and integrating it among the principle languages together with math, Arabic and French subjects.

This will raise middle school learners' awareness about the prominence of the English language and stimulate them to improve their competencies and achieve proficiency.

Throughout this section we have reported the results of our investigation and discussed them in accordance with previous research findings. As a reminder, the central aim of the present study is to find out the main sources behind middle school learner's errors in writing. The interpretation and the discussion about the results allowed us to reach significant findings and answer our research problematic and related research questions.

- First, Intermediate learners at the middle school ben Barkene Youcef make errors mainly and with high frequency at the level of spelling, tense, punctuation, sentence fragment and subject-verb disagreement.

- Second, Middle school learners errors in writing are classified into two categories ranked in terms of frequency as the following: orthographic, grammatical.

- Third, the main reason behind pupils' errors in writing is the lack of practice and knowledge in the English language.

- Fourth, Strategies used by the teacher to decrease errors' frequency in writing is peer correction and teacher correction.

- Finally, the main sources behind middle school learners' errors in writing are intralingual source with high percentage and interlingual source with a low percentage.

Section Two
Limitation, Implication, and Suggestions for Future Research

In this study, we assume that the sources of learners' errors in writing are first, intralingual source with high degree and second, interlingual source with low degree. As such we have confirmed our hypothesis and reached interesting findings regarding learners' perceptions, attitudes and difficulties in writing composition. In this last section, we deal with limitations of the study; then, we provide teachers and pupils with some implications, and we end up with suggestions for further research.

I. Limitations of the Study

In the course of this present investigation, we have reached significant findings; however it is vital to point out that some limitations are encountered by the researcher. In fact many pieces of research have been done in the field of error analysis; however, few have been conducted with middle school learners.

Learners' age is the first limitation we have undergone in this study; working with young or adolescent learners is not an easy task. Especially, if you are a stranger for them. When we have asked them to write a piece of writing, most of the learners did not take it seriously; the majority of them wrote very small paragraphs with an intelligible handwriting. This pushed us to ask the teacher to do the task for us.

The second limitation is strike. At the time we have decided to make our data collection, teachers of English at the Ben Barkane Youcef middle school were on strike. Thus, we couldn't do it only after the spring holidays.

A third limitation is that when coming to make the interviews; we found that only two teachers teach the fourth level at that middle school. This pushed us to ask another teacher who is in charge of the third level but who has enough experience with the fourth level learners and syllabus. Another point concerning interviews is that teachers did not allow us to use any recording tool for privacy reasons.

The last limitation is time constraint. Time is the most crucial factor when conducting a research. In fact, as a student in master II, applied linguistics option; we were overloaded with many tasks namely, exposes, courses, and exams all together at the same time. This led us to put aside our thesis for a period of time.

Concerning the content of the thesis, less attention is paid to learners' pieces of writing structure, cohesion and coherence aspects. Moreover, this study highlighted mainly the written product and neglected the different processes that learners undergo before, while and after composing. Second, this study shed light only on two sources of errors namely intralingual and interlingual sources. Besides, learners interlingual errors might be resulted from other languages negative transfer not only French. Third, other data collection tools could be used such as teachers' and learners' questionnaires to broaden the scope of the research validity and reliability and may be found other sources of errors and generate other results.

All in all, due to all these limitations, many lacunas might be revealed in this present study.

II. Implications

In the light of the previous findings, a number of implications can be addressed to both teachers and other educators in order to take advantage from our findings that may contribute both to learning and teaching improvement. This can be achieved through applying the following implications in foreign language classroom.

- **Special care for spelling.** As it is shown in our results, spelling errors are the most propagated type. Thus, teachers should give a special care to their learners' spelling through raising learners' awareness that there is no correspondence between how English words are pronounced and how they are spelt especially with vowels. For example, the word make is not written as '**meike'**. Moreover, confusion should be highlighted by the teacher in areas where the similarities between French and English spelling are great and are expected to cause problems to learners of English. For example, the final '**ic'** and '**ique,** apostrophes**,** final **'er'** and **'re'…**etc**.** These spelling errors can be reduced by the teacher through focusing attention to writing problems and explain why they occur, engaging learners in an extensive reading, and asking them to copy from written models.

- **Developing learners' handwriting.** *"A good handwriting is precious"* (Harmer, 2001); many learners have an intelligible handwriting that might affects or hinders the readers' understanding of the message. Moreover, badly-formed words will be perceived by the reader as carelessness from the writer. In fact, teachers should develop learners' handwriting especially for young learners through a special training. Besides, teachers have to engage learners in practicing letters formation and provide them with a written model that they should imitate the writing.

- **Giving importance to writing.** Much importance should be given to the writing skill since it is one of the basic language production skills. Teacher and other educators should devote much more time to the practice of this vital skill and engage learners in authentic situations.

- **Show difference and similarities between the French and English.** So as not to face problems related to French language negative transfer in learners' English writing, teacher should underline each time the areas of differences and similarities between the two languages. The areas where the two languages are similar result in many

confusion which leads to different interlingual errors; whereas, where the two languages differ, the scope of interlingual errors is narrowed.

- **Engaging learners in authentic writing practice.** So as to improve learners writing skill, teachers should engage learners in personal writing through involving them in authentic activities such as asking learners to keep a journal, get a pen-friend, use a Word processor…etc. Another kind of activities is computer activities. According to Cook (1997- cited in Meygle 1997), Computers can be used as an effective tool for developing learners' writing abilities through e-mail for peer response, journal writing, online class discussion, and communication.

- **Strategy training.** Strategy training is another tool to develop learners' writing abilities. In fact, it is obvious that learners are using a set of strategies while writing; however, teachers should train their learners on some writing strategies that they can use when composing in English such as meta-cognitive strategies, cognitive strategies and social affective strategies.

- **Encouraging reading.** Everyone agree that in order to write you have first to read. Anita Brookner (n.d- cited in Fowler, 2006: 6) claimed that *"writing is an offshoot of reading".* In other words, writing is the source of reading. In fact**,** many studies revealed that reading and writing are complementary skills. Researchers such as (Rosenblatt, 1988; Chuenchaichon, 2011) emphasized on the correlation that exists between reading and writing. It is claimed that learners lack of reading influences negatively their writing composition. As a result, teacher should encourage learners to devote time to practice reading and raise their awareness on the advantages of reading in developing writing.

III. Suggestion for Further Research

In the light of the limitation of the present study, future studies can be conducted in the same topic considering the following suggestions. First, other researchers can replicate this study by investigating other sources of errors that might be the reason behind learners' errors in writing. Second, other data collection instruments might be conducted to support and generate various findings such as teachers' questionnaire and learners' questionnaires. Third, future research can be conducted to investigate other type of errors such as, errors related to the structure, cohesion and coherence with a special emphasis on the different stages learners undergo in their process of writing.

In this section, we have dealt with the limitations of the present study that the researcher has encountered along his investigation. After that we have moved to implication for both middle school teachers and learners that should be regarded and applying them in the writing session. Finally, we have provided future researchers with some suggestions that they should consider when conducting similar topic.

Throughout this chapter, we have identified the most common written errors committed by middle school learners and their sources. Besides, errors are identified and classified at different levels using tables and figures. In fact, after analyzing the findings and discussed them relying on text analysis and interviews as the main tools, we confirmed our hypothesis and come to the conclusion that the main sources behind learners' errors in writing are intralingual source with high percentage and interlingual source with low percentage. And that the most common errors are orthographic and grammatical errors.

General Conclusion

The present research has investigated the intralingual and interlingual sources behind fourth year learners' errors in writing at Ben Barkane Youcef middle school in Akbou, one of Bejaia's towns. Specifically, we hypothesized that the main sources behind middle school learners' errors in writing are first, intralingual source with high percentage and second, interlingual source with a low percentage. For the research objectives, we have aimed at identifying the common errors committed by middle school learners and finding out the main sources of such errors. To reach the aim of the study, we have opted for two data collection tools namely written samples and interviews.

This present study encompasses four chapters. The first chapter is theoretical; it aimed at explaining thoroughly the different variables of the present study. The second chapter is theoretical too; it aimed at exploring the different previous studies related to error analysis and the findings they reported. The third chapter is a practical chapter; it aimed at describing the study including the participants, design and methods, data collection instruments and procedures. The last chapter is practical too; it aimed at identifying the results and inferring the findings through analysis and discussion.

Our investigation is conducted relying on a mixed methodology involving both quantitative and qualitative methods of data collection. The former has been achieved through the analysis of written samples done by 62 middle school learners. The latter consisted of interview hold with 03 middle school teachers. The findings we have interpreted from the analysis of learners written samples and teachers' interviews revealed the following findings:

- First, our participants commit a great deal of errors in writing at different levels.

- Second, the majority of middle school learners' errors were orthographic and grammatical ones.

- The main reason behind learners errors in writing is the lack of knowledge and practice in the in the target language, English.

- Fourth, not many participants tend to negatively interfere the French language in their writing.

- Finally, intralingual source proved to be the main source behind learners' errors with high percentage; then followed by interlingual source with a low percentage.

Therefore, the results obtained answer the research question and confirm our hypothesis.

To benefit from the present study, we provided some implication for both teachers and learners. First, teachers should provide a Special care for spelling since it is the most affected type in terms of errors. Second, learners' handwriting should be improved. Third, much more importance should be offered to the writing skill in the classroom. Fourth, teacher has to raise learners' awareness of the difference and similarities between the French and English. Fifth, learners ought to be engaged in authentic writing practice. Finally, learners are encouraged to read and use writing strategies to improve their writing abilities.

To overcome the limitations of this present investigation, we have previously provided some suggestion for future research. We suggest replicating our research on other sources of errors and with more emphasis on other type of errors we have not analysed. Moreover, it is vital to use other instruments such as learners and teachers' questionnaire in addition to those we have opted for so as to obtain more reliable data.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Middle School Book Map

BOOK MAP

	Skills Building				Competencies/ Project
	Primary Skills			Social Skills	
Listening	**Speaking**	**Reading**	**Writing**		
- Listening for specific information - Listening for general ideas - Listening for conversation	-Talking (about the origin of some foods) - Predicting and checking predictions in spoken texts	- Reading instructions (for making pancakes) - Predicting and checking predictions in written texts - Distinguishing between fact and opinion (in an advert)	- Writing instructions (for a menu, a recipe ...) - Transforming a text giving advice about table manners into a set of instructions - Reading and interpreting food labels	- Dining out -Talking about meal times - Giving a recipe to a guest - Advertising a restaurant - Writing a letter of invitation	COMPETENCIES/ PROJECT DESIGNING AN ADVERTISING LEAFLET FOR A RESTAURANT
- Listening to an interview - Listening for functions (agreement and disagreement) - Listening for intonation patterns - Listening for specific information	- Talking about one's abilities - Talking about possibilities - Talking about obligations and rights	- Reading a magazine article - Reading for specific information - Predicting and checking predictions - Interpreting texts with the help of illustrations	- Writing a short magazine article/a school report -Transposing information to a graph - Drawing a graph -Writing texts from a graph	- Making a survey - Managing through conversation - Drawing rules for a charter	COMPETENCIES/ PROJECT: MAKING A PROFILE OF CHANGES IN MAN'S CAPABILITIES

BOOK MAP

Skills Building					
Primary Skills				Social Skills	
Listening	**Speaking**	**Reading**	**Writing**	- Acting as a tourist guide - Making decisions for the future - Planning an excursion - Drawing a road map - Making a fact file	**COMPETENCIES/ PROJECT ARRANGING A CONFERENCE**
- Listening for specific information - listening to a talk - listening for general ideas -recognising tone in speech	- Making a short class presentation - Talking about one's expecta-tions -recognising tone in speech	Reading for specific information (CD jacket) Reading for general ideas (song) Recognising features of a song - Guessing meaning from context - Recognising tone in written texts	- Transfering information (from oral script to map and from map to speech) - Transforming prose into song - Summarising - Writing about contingency plans - Writing about one's expectations		
- Listening to a radio interview - Listening for specific information - Listening to a lecture (making notes)	- Coping with interruptions in a conversation - Asking for clarification - Correcting oneself - Doing a class presentation - Speaking from notes	- Reading a letter of opinion - Recognising important information in a text - Deducing the meaning of words from context - Recognising organisational patterns in written texts (listing)	- Avoiding repetition in writing - Writing from notes - Writing a short biography - Writing about one's reminiscences	- Writing a letter of opinion for publication - Solving riddles - Singing - Making connections between the present and the past - Making a fact file	**COMPETENCIES/PROJECT MAKING A DIFFERENCES POSTER**

Appendix 2: Example of Error Marking Codes and Symnbols

Error Marking Codes & Symbols

Error Code	Error Explanation
vt	incorrect verb tense
vf	incorrect verb form
ss	incorrect sentence structure
wo	incorrect or awkward word order
sv	incorrect subject-verb agreement
art	incorrect or missing article
s/pl	problem with the singular or plural of a noun
wc	incorrect word choice
wf	incorrect word form
prep	incorrect use of a preposition
frag	sentence fragment - incomplete sentence
rts	run-together sentences
pro ref	pronoun reference unclear or agreement incorrect
id	idiom error- not expressed this way in English
inf	informal English/slang
sp	spelling error - word incorrectly spelled
cap	capitalization - capital letter needed
lc	lower case - word(s) incorrectly capitalized
?	unclear - I don't understand.
⌀	Omit this word. It doesn't belong.
⌃	Insert a word. Something is missing.
⌣	Connect these two words, clauses or sentences.

(Kate Kinsella, San Francisco State University, 6/02)

Appendix 03 : Writing Lesson Plan

Youcef Ben berkane Middle school   **School Year:** 2014/2015

Level: 4.A.M   **Sequence Three:** I Was Walking

File 03: Work Group

Objective: by the end of the lesson, the students should be able to:

➢ Predict the predict the continuation of excerpts using the past continuous to narrate actions continuing in the past but interrupted by other actions in the past simple tense to talk about what happened.
➢ Produce an excerpt to tell about an accident or an incident using the past continuous to narrate actions continuing in the past but interrupted by other actions in the past simple tense to talk about what happened.

Vocabulary: using vocabulary related to life incidents and accident.

Aids: textbook, the blackboard, a newspaper.

	Procedure	
Stages	**Teacher tasks**	**Pupils tasks**
Stage 1: Step 1 Step 2	**Pre-writing:** T. shows a newspaper and asks the SS about what can we find in the 1st page T. asks some questions such as: 1. why the headlines are written in a telegraphic style? Which tense is used? T asks the students to interpret the text T introduces the topic after writing them on the blackboard and asks the SS to use just one	Ss answers

	topic to write their paragraph.	
	Topic 1: take the two first excerpts as models to imagine the continuation of the two last ones.	SS copy on their copybook
	Topic 1: take the two first excerpts to write a short narrative about an incident or an accident you witnessed on your way back to school.	
	Tasks about the criteria of the success.	
Stage 2	**The form:** ➢ Using with the feather pen. ➢ Text with 3 paragraphs: Introduction Body Conclusion ➢ new line for each paragraph ➢ Jumping over the lines. T asks about the key words in the text above T underlines them in the text **The content:** • Introduction: who, where, what and when. **Body:** * negative changes. • causes : why? • Effect: what happened exactly • Personal pronoun,: it, we, I, they • Past continuous • Conjunction: suddenly, when, as, while.	Students try to guess them with the hel^p of the teacher Ss try to find them SS write in their paragraph

Stage 2	• Capitalization and punctuation **Conclusion:** an advice , feeling	
Stage 3	**While writing:** T guides the SS **Post- writing:** T collects the SS' sheet to correct them at home	Student write their paragrapgh.

Appendix 04: Samples of Pupils' Written Composition

Yesterday, I was returning at home after a long day of school, I was very happy and suddenly I saw something that took my happiness.

I saw a smoke was exciting in to the window of my neighboring, I was very scary, but I still strong and brave, I called a fire brigade and was alerting the neighborings to live the place. They was every thing black and we can't breathe, I heared a lot of coughs of the people, little by little, the smoke growed up; they was horible. Happily,

(The) last night, I was
inap Art
going home. When I was walking
punc
I found a gold necklace.
punc
But I don't mew who's
sp   inappun
it. Then I looked (ferd) for.
sp
punc
who's it. Soudenly, one (swob)
Fr. sp
swoleew stollen it and it
sp   n. Aux   inap punc
was going x punc

really it is x fantashie
n. Aux
animals x loves (the) gold.
sing   Frag   inap Art

In my way, I have witnessed an

incident × between a car and a girl × when
　　　　n.v between　　　　　　　　　　punc

she × back (in the) school × the car was
n.v　　　　　to inap prep　　punc [N,s]

fasting and the driver was looking
to the other _____ place × punc
the brock her leg and her hand ×
CL　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　punc

the driver ___ him to the hospital ×
CL　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　punc
　　　　　　take inap t

quickly, she has an (ague) very hot × punc.
　　　　　　　　　　　sp?

When I was younger⨯I use to do⨯lot of
                        punc   T   n.Art

things that I no longer do, because now we
                           inap punc

are older. For escample.; I used to hat
              Cl   inap punc   SP

végétables, but now I eat them, I used
Fr. sp   inap punc

to watch litle Kids' programs, but now I
   SP   SP

watch (and) older programs. I use ⨯play
SP   T   n.prep

geims, ~~soit~~ whith my Freinds but now
SP   SP   SP

I play Sport Football, I have espire to
       SL   SL   Fr. W

becomes a faymous footballeur in the
   T   SP   Fr. SP

mond ⨯punc
Fr. W.

when I was younger, I used to
right my name whith the help of
SP   SP
my parents but now I right it with
SP
myself. I didn't use to clean my
room but now I clean it. so and
                              inap conjunct
when I was a child I didn't use to
travel but when I come have 13
I use to travel every where whith
any transportation   . when
                            CL
I was in x primary school my dad
         n.Art   SP   SP
take me at school but now I used
inap T   inap prep
to go whith out him. And when
       SP
I was a child I didn't use to use
spends my money but now I do it. and I didn't
T
use to walk alone of my home
                        inap prep
and new it x so different x I have
            n.V   punc
some autonomy and I didn't have use
to have nopp Rep [N.s] Resposabilites but
now I have some of them and x
                            Rep   punc
N.s] I used to like a suprises and new
                      inap Art
I didnt to like him so much.
inap.T   inf Ø to   inap.pro