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NATIVE LANGUAGE INTERFERENCE IN LEARNING ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE: AN ANALYSIS OF WRITTEN MATERIAL PRODUCED BY SPANISH SPEAKING STUDENTS IN SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL CLASSES

RESEARCH DONE IN ORDER TO ACHIEVE THE BACHELOR'S DEGREE IN TEACHING ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE.

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CERTIFICATION

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CERTIFIES:

This research work has been thoroughly revised by the graduation committee. Therefore, authorizes the presentation of this thesis, which complies with all the norms and internal requirements of the Universidad Técnica Particular de Loja.

Loja, Septiembre 2009

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THESIS ADVISOR

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The thoughts, ideas, opinions, and the information obtained through this research are the only responsibility of the authors.

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DEDICATION

For us, the paramount idea is to live closely together as a family

To our parents' unconditional love

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

To our thesis advisor for all her gentle support

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ABSTRACT

"Native language interference in learning English as a foreign language: an analysis of written material produced by Spanish speaking students in senior high school classes" aims at finding out how, why and where language interference occurs and also at finding out the most common types of errors due to language interference that Spanish students make when they are writing in English by carrying out an investigation about the main theme. This research took place in a Guayaquil's high school named "Unidad Educativa Canadiense".

The sample consisted of a group of sixteen-seventeen years old senior year High School students. They were told to execute some writing exercises to obtain data in order to analyze the causes and effects of language interference. Obtained data consist of all the errors that students made when writing in English. Generally, it is said that language interference occurs when students try to fill English gaps with their native language knowledge. After establishing all the factors involving this research we created a proposal which intends to reduce the level of language interference and increase the level of language competence.

INTRODUCTION

Language interference (also known as linguistic interference, cross-linguistic interference or transfer) is the effect of second language learners' first language on their production of the language they are learning. The effect can be on any aspect of language: grammar, vocabulary, accent, spelling and so on. It is most often discussed as a source of errors (negative transfer), although where the relevant feature of both languages is the same, it results in correct language production (positive transfer). The greater the differences between the two languages, the more negative the effects of interference are likely to be.

Interference is most commonly discussed in the context of English as a Second Language teaching, but it will inevitably occur in any situation where someone has an imperfect command of a second language.

In our research, we have focused on the occurrence of language transfer when students write in English. We noticed that interference occurred when students try to fill knowledge "gaps" in the target language (English) using their native language structures. We also noticed that there were almost no cases of positive interference but a lot of negative.

Before carrying out the process of investigation we searched among many authors to have an idea of what we were going to deal with.

The processes of acquiring L1 (which stands for Native Language), L2 (which stands for Target Language) and the problem of interference were covered by Lightbown & Spada (1999) in their book "How languages are learned". Faerch & Kasper (1983) also cover the main theme of this investigation when referring to Strategies in interlanguage Communication. These have been the basis for preparing our Theoretical background.

After having studied the main parts of our research we have to remark its importance. Language competence is not only useful as a tool for successful communication but a key to a complete and also successful social interaction and development of the human being. Language interference represents a serious issue because it "stands in the way" of language competence. To achieve competence when writing English is very difficult since it requires more skill and concentration than speaking.

For all those reasons, we have carried out a field research in one high school from Guayaquil and have asked for a sample of twenty senior year high school students to obtain the data from. After having executed the investigation, we felt "dragged down" by this theme and we felt motivated to provide a solution to reduce the level of language interference in our high schools and to fulfil the following objectives:

- To determine the most frequent syntactic and semantic errors in writing in English through the analysis of some writing produced by the individuals selected in the sample.

After having analyzed and tabulated the collected data, we have achieved around the 80% of this goal because although this study could be used to make some generalizations, there will always be a margin of error.

- Develop some linguistic strategies to improve writing, and intend to help learners overcome to a certain extent the level of interference of Spanish linguistic habits.

After having analyzed the weakest and strongest points at which students produce language interference we came up with a proposal that focuses on these points. That means that the objective has been accomplished. But since this objective is related with the previous one, we have to remark that there could be an acceptable error margin when selecting the basic errors which the proposal is based on.

- Develop the basis for further studies and inquire on first language interference.

This thesis can definitely be the basis for other papers or works based on the same theme. The data and the conclusions provided here can be used as a reference for future research or comparison. We have achieved 100% of this goal.

METHODOLOGY

In order to achieve a successful field investigation we decided to study other authors' work about many subjects concerning the main theme (Language Interference). This research took place during October and November of 2008. After that, we carried out the field investigation which took place during November, December and January of 2008-2009. We had to simplify our work with the sample because they all were going through the process of graduation and it was very hard for them to spend some of their time developing the activities.

The sample consisted of a group of sixteen-seventeen years old senior High School students and the investigation took place in a high school named "Unidad Educativa Canadiense" located in the north part of Guayaquil.

For the purposes of our study, we asked the sample to write several pieces of writing which we collected periodically. Then, we classified them according to the theme of the writing and after that we looked through each one of them searching for mistakes that would concern language interference.

The sample was told to write a composition in English about their vacations. Then they were told to write a story or tale (some ideas as "la llorona" and "caperucita roja" were given). Then they were told to write an essay about any topic they found in a newspaper or magazine.

Finally they were told to answer a quiz with 20 short essay questions concerning different topics such as music, art, television, movies, etc.

After having selected the errors in each piece of writing we classified them in two big groups called "grammar structures" and "lexicon" each one divided in what we called "indicators" (e.g. use of subject pronoun, false cognates, etc). We placed each error under each indicator and counted them in order to fill quantitative charts.

Once the charts were built we started to analyze the situations at which interference occurred with more frequency and why this happened. We came up with several explanations and ideas stated as conclusions.

RESULTS

This section contains the collected data which was taken from our field investigation. The data has been classified under several indicators which represent the language interference errors found while looking through all the written production made by the students belonging to the sample.

The sample consisted of twenty senior year high school students who attend classes in the "Unidad Educativa Canadiense". We need to remark that the English competence level of the sample can be estimated as a 60% of proficiency.

Students were told to perform several activities in order to carry out this study. First, they were told to write a composition. Then, they were told to write a story and finally they solved an essay type quiz containing twenty questions. After collecting all the written material, we proceeded to look up for errors concerning language interference. Errors were classified according to "where" they had come from (which activity) and according to the type of error (indicator).

QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS

Grammar Structures

Chart One
Variable: Grammar Structure
Indicator: Subject pronouns

Type of writing	Common errors	Examples
Composition	Subject omission	I asked him if he wanted to go to the beach. Said he had to pick up her sister before
		He asked me if was ok for he to invite another friend
		I think is a good idea to go to the cinema during vacation time
		In Quito it's so cold. Is necessary a heater in every room
Story	Subject omission	The wolf said to "caperucita": "don´t go for that road, is very dangerous
		Many people said that killed her children because of the husband´s bretray
	Inadequate use	When Cinderella arrived to the dance all the people asked: "Who is her?"
		Cinderella had two sisters that were very bad with she
		Pinocho lived with a little "grillo". He was a friend of he
Essay	Omission	Some scientists say that is possible that the UFOs built the pyramids of Egypt
		Is very important to consider the evidence
	Inadequate use	When I saw that light I asked to me: "Is there really life in other planets?
		The kidnapped people say that the aliens were very nice with they
		All started in Rooswelt, New Mexico
Quiz	Omission	Is very important to learn English
		I want to be an architect and want to work in many projects
		Then add some eggs, remember that is very important to mix it correctly

Authors: Francisco Coello Salguero – Rafael Coello Cuntó

Chart Two
Variable: Grammar Structure
Indicator: Prepositions

Type of writing	Common errors	examples
Composition	Inadequate use	So I took the four tickets of the box so we can go to the concert. On Fridays, I took the garbage of all the trash cans in my house
Story	Inadequate use	Don´t go for that road". Many people went to see King Kong in the zoo. The girl was in love of the big monkey. Snow white cooked and cleaned the house to all the seven elfs. It was big like two or three houses. "Why do you have big eyes?" And the wolf answered: "to see you better"
Essay	Inadequate use	We can learn many things of the UFOs. They captured the flying object for study it.
Quiz	Inadequate use	I've thinking in doing something nice for this year The Next week it's Anna's birthday so I'm going to buy to her a nice present I like cooking in special occasions
	Omission	I like sitting in my room and listen music. It calms me

Authors: Francisco Coello Salguero – Rafael Coello Cuntó.

Chart Three
Variable: Grammar Structure
Indicator: Definite and indefinite articles

Type of writing	Common errors	examples
Composition	Inadequate use	So I told her to borrow me some roller skates My mother told me: 'Take any chairs to the beach We're going to The Galapagos Islands the next years
	omission	We went to soccer stadium to watch Barcelona against Emelec
Story	omission	She took poison and put it into the apple. They saw light and walked to it
Essay	Inadequate use	The UFOs have a so advanced technology. The Egypt pyramids were studied carefully
	omission	He was leader of the team of investigation
Quiz	Inadequate use	The People are worried about rising crime. I have an estrong kick when I play soccer.

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Chart Four
Variable: Grammar Structure
Indicator: Double Negation

Type of writing	Common errors	examples
Composition	Inadequate use	There weren't no soccer field of grass in the beach. There weren't no tickets for the RBD concert
Story	Inadequate use	"Caperucita wasn't not going to listen to the wolf" They haven't never seen a monster like that
Essay		
Quiz		

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Chart Five
Variable: Grammar Structure
Indicator: Adjectives

Type of writing	Common errors	examples
Composition		
Story	Structure	The relationship between the kid and the cat was so bore. The pictures in the walls were too scare. The monster was more big than all the buildings
Essay	I	
Quiz	Plurarization	I like visiting diferents countries every year
Quiz	Structure	This is a course very interesting I think that is a music very beautiful She has a voice incredibly beautiful

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Chart Six
Variable: Grammar Structure
Indicator: Word order

Type of writing	Common errors	examples
Composition	interference	I spent my time swimming in the pool, basically. My uncle said that probably we could stay in a hotel. We played soccer that weekend until 8 p.m.
Story	Language interference	The witch arrived where lived the elfs and snow white. Pinocho lived with his father "Gepeto". Also "pepe grillo" lived with them
Essay	Interference	"UFO" means "unidentified flying object", basically. The government of the U.S have big telescopes and expensive
Quiz	Inadequate use	

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Chart Seven
Variable: Grammar Structure
Indicator: Possessive nouns

Type of writing	Common errors	examples
Composition	Structure	We went to the house of my uncle. When we were on the beach my cousins and I ride the motorcycle of my uncle
Story	Structure	The prince picked up the shoes of cinderella. Also, many people say that the children of Anna (a neighbour) disappeared because of "la llorona"
Essay	Inadequate use	
Quiz	Inadequate use	

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Chart eight
Variable: Grammar Structure
Indicator: Passive voice

Type of writing	Common errors	examples
Composition		
Story	Structure	They believe that the children were stealed for "la llorona". King Kong was hold in a cage by the people that capture him. In all that time, Snow white was watched for all the elfs
Essay		
Quiz		

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Lexicon
Chart nine
Variable: Lexicon
Indicator: Phrasal verbs

Type of writing	Common errors	examples
Composition	word order	I asked him if he wanted to go to the beach. Said he had to picku up her sister before I like to wear shirts on the beach. I usually don`t take off them when I go to the beach
	Incomplete phrasal verbs	My friends and I went also to the gym. We usually warm for 20 minutes On Fridays, I took the garbage of all the trash cans in my house
Story	structure	Cinderella took the shoe and she tried on it. It took down two airplanes. She ran and ran without looking. He wanted to be a real boy so he held his desire of lie
Essay	Incomplete phrasal verbs	I looked to the sky. Some people believe that UFOs want to take the world. They say that they saw the "chupacabras" but there is no picture of it because everyone runs out when they see it
Quiz		

Authors: Francisco Coello Salguero – Rafael Coello Cuntó.
Chart Ten
Variable: Lexicon
Indicator: False Cognates

Type of writing	Common errors	examples
Composition	Inadequate use	My swimming instructor was very hard with me. I assisted to class on Monday, Wednesday and Friday from 4:30 to 6:30. All my family reunited in my grandmother's house
Story	Inadequate use	The mirror said that she was actually living with seven efls. He was very anxious to become a real boy. Many people have seen her Casualty or not. The wolf went to sleep because he supported the weight of "caperucita" and her grandmother
Essay	Inadequate use	Since that time, there have been a lot of UFO visions in the U.S I think that the technology is the principal thing that we can learn from them. Actually, there are a lot of videos and photos that show UFOs. The figures in the corn fields are signals that say we are not alone
Quiz	Inadequate use	Doctors win a lot of money. I'm sure I can approve the subject. My brother lives in a department

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Chart Eleven
Variable: Lexicon
Indicator: Inflection

Type of writing	Common errors	examples
Composition	Alteration of tense and nouns	Esmeraldas has a lot of beachs. I started to learn guitar. At first it was very difficult and painfully. In the last summer, during vacation, my father and I work at the mini-market. My vacation was very good for me because I learn a lot of new things
Story	Alteration of tense and nouns	"She seem to be death". It is also said that "La llorona" appear at night on empty streets. King Kong was discovered in a dessert Island. Snow white was found by seven elfs
Essay	Alteration of tense and nouns	Aliens have big head and foot. Snow white was found by seven elfs. They believe that the children were stealed for "la llorona"
Quiz	Alteration of tense and nouns	I'm a great cooker and I know lots of recipes that children love them. She also is a politic. When I was a children I liked playing soccer in my school.

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QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS

Chart Twelve
Variable: Grammar Structures

Indicator	In class activity 1		In class activity 2		Home activity		Quiz	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Use of subject pronouns	8	26.66	10	27.77	8	53.33	11	34.37
Use of the definite and indefinite articles	7	23.33	2	5.55	3	20	2	9.3
Double negation	2	6.66	2	5.55	0	0	0	0
Adjectives position and pluralization	0	0	6	16.66	0	0	7	21.87
Prepositions	7	23.33	9	25	2	13.33	11	34.37
Passive voice	0	0	3	8.33	0	0	0	0
Word order	3	10	2	5.55	2	13.33	0	0
Possessive pronouns	3	10	2	5.55	0	0	0	0
TOTAL	30	99.8	36	99.96	15	99.99	32	99.91

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Chart Thirteen
Variable: Lexicon

Indicator	In class activity 1		In class activity 2		Home activity		Quiz	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Use of phrasal verbs	6	28.57	0	0	8	47.05	7	53.84
False cognates	5	23.80	7	36.84	6	35.29	3	23.07
Inflection	10	47.61	12	63.15	3	17.64	3	23.07
TOTAL	21	99.98	19	99.99	17	99.98	13	99.98

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DISCUSSION

This section includes three different parts. The first one consists of a theoretical analysis about the main theme of this work based upon many authors' points of view. The second one presents an analysis on the data collected taken from the main field investigation and the last part tries to explain how and how often the LI (language interference) affects positively or negatively the main goal of the teaching process which is the achievement of language competence.

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

In order to develop our study, we have to define some basic concepts which can be used as a theoretical layer from which the results and conclusions for our project will feed and lay. These concepts will help ourselves to understand the basic stages of the project itself and they are:

LINGUISTICS

According to H.G. Widdownsom: "Linguistics is the name given to the discipline which studies human language" After establishing this main concept, he states two different questions in order to expand and understand the same concept. Both questions try to define what human

language is, how it can be characterized, what does its study involves and finally the factors that define linguistics as a discipline.

In his book, he also turns to the bible to extract the following phrase which describes the importance of language in a mystical way: "In the beginning was the Word". Using this reference, Widdownsom states that language gives us social identity among other characteristics that define its importance. The Center of applied linguistics (CAL) (1992) defines linguistics as the study of human language too, but in addition, makes a distinction between linguistics and Knowledge of linguistics. For example, just as a driver can drive a car without having any knowledge about the car's engine, a speaker can use a language without any conscious knowledge of its internal structure. The term "linguist" is then defined as a person who knows and study grammar, the social and psychological aspects of language use and the relationship among languages. In other words, a linguist is a person or individual who is aware of his/her "linguistic" environment.

To support this idea, Kaye (1989) states that what linguists study are not languages but rather the particular systems that underlie them: linguistic systems or grammars.

These two concepts about language state almost the same meaning. However, Halliday (1982) points out that linguistics is not only a description of the formal features of language but it is also a study of language 'as an institution' which can condition the way individuals see

each other. As Halliday's ideas are focused to the concept of linguistics in teacher education, he remarks and demonstrates that linguistics is not irrelevant to education although he states that linguistics is not 'classroom stuff' since it can be found in every classroom practice, in the teachers' ideas about children, and so on.

BRANCHES OF LINGUISTICS

According to the Center of applied linguistics (CAL), the field of Linguistics divides itself into four big groups. This division can be summarized in the following chart:

Sub division	Areas of study	
Formal Linguistics	Phonetics	
	Phonology	
	Morphology	
	Syntax	
	Semantics	
Sociolinguistics	Language variation	
	Language and Social interactions	Sub - areas
		Pragmatics
		Discourse analysis
		Ethnography of communication
	Language Attitudes	
	Language Planning	

Psycholinguistics	Language Acquisition
	Language Processing
Applied Linguistics	No division

For the purposes of this study, we are only going to focus on certain areas of study and their definitions.

MORPHOLOGY

The term "morphology" is generally attributed to Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749-1832) who used the term based on a biological concept. The term's etymology is Greek: morph- means 'shape, form' and morphology is the study of form or forms. This biological term was then expanded in order to be used in the linguistics field.

According to Aronoff-Fudeman (2005), "Morphology refers to the mental system in word formation or to the branch of linguistics that deals with words, their internal structure, and how are they formed". Spencer and Zwicky share this main view of morphology when they say that morphology is the study of word structure, but they also conclude that this main focus of morphology (the study of word structure) makes it to locate itself at the conceptual centre of linguistics for it is the link between phonology syntax and semantics.

Matthews (2001) states a complete definition of morphology which doesn't move too apart from the other concepts presented previously

when he says that morphology is simply a term used to define that branch of linguistics which is concerned with the 'forms of words' in different uses and constructions.

PHONOLOGY

Kaye (1989) states: "Phonology may be defined as the study of the systems of linguistically significant sounds". Although this conception of phonology seems to be enough and clear, Lass (1984) adds an interesting definition which states that Phonology is a developing, essentially problem-centered discipline, growing through the interaction of complementary approaches with a complex mass of data. He also states: "much of yesterday's theory and practice is silently incorporated into todays, and this will continue as long as the subject does".

At first sight, this definition may seem a little bit confusing but we can refer to McMahon (2002) whose point of view defines and distinguishes two separate branches or sub disciplines in linguistics which deal with sound (referring to phonetics and phonology) and then defines Phonology as the language-specific selection and organization of sounds to signal meanings. In addition to all of these statements and definitions, we can not forget that Phonologists are interested in the sounds patterns of particular languages and in what speakers and hearers need to know, and children need to learn, to be speakers of those languages: in that sense, it (phonology) is also close to psychology.

SYNTAX

First of all, we have to focus on the origins of the term "syntax". It comes from the Ancient Greek sýntaxis, a verbal noun which literally means "arrangement" or "setting out together". After reviewing this, it is advisable to check Matthews' (1982) point of view which states that traditionally, syntax refers to the branch of grammar dealing with the ways in which words, with or without appropriate inflections, are arranged to show connections of meaning within the sentence. It is remarkable to say that in English and many other languages, the arrangement of words is a vital factor in determining the meaning of an utterance, as it is showed in the following example:

a. The man saw the woman.

b. The woman saw the man.

Syntax, then, studies the level of language that lies between words and the meaning of utterances: sentences. It is the level that mediates between sounds that someone produces (organized into words) and what they intended to say (Camie 2002). He also states that maybe the most amazing aspect of the study of Language is the question of how we subconsciously get from sounds to meaning. This is the study of syntax.

To expand this concept about Syntax, Carnie (2002) demonstrates how syntax acts in the same way as a science since it follows the same

steps of the scientific method which are: Gather and observe data, make generalizations and develop hypotheses.

The first step is done by observing data about the language we are studying, then we make generalizations about patterns in the data (e.g., in simple English declarative sentences, the subject precedes the verb). They then generate a hypothesis and test it against more syntactic data, and if necessary go back and re-evaluate our hypotheses. The hypotheses are called rules, and the group of hypotheses that describe a language's syntax is called grammar.

SEMANTICS

According to Saeed (2003), Semantics is the study of meaning communicated through language.

To support this idea he divides linguistics in a clear way and specifies that it has different levels of analysis giving semantics the function of studying the meanings of words and sentences. Similarly, Palmer (1981) agrees with the definition stated above but also "places" semantics within linguistics. He says: "Nearly all linguists have, explicitly or implicitly, accepted a linguistic model in which semantics is at one 'end' and phonetics at the other, with grammar somewhere in the middle".

Lyons (1977) states a short but clear definition which is: "Semantics is generally defined as the study of meaning". This is basically the main root and definition of semantics. The question which needs to be

answered then is "what is meaning?" since even the noun "meaning" and the verb "to mean" themselves have many distinguishable meanings.

PRAGMATICS

The modern usage of the term pragmatics can be attributable to the philosopher Charles Morris (1938), who was concerned to outline the general shape of a science of signs, or semiotics. During his research, Morris detected three distinct branches which were: Syntactics (or syntax), being the study of "the formal relation of signs to one another", semantics, the study of "the relations of signs to the objects to which the signs are applicable" (their designata), and pragmatics, the study of "the relation of signis to interpreters".

Starting with this basic definition, Levinson (1983) simply says that pragmatics is the study of language usage.

After establishing the probably "main" concept of pragmatics, Levinson (1983) declares he is unsatisfied with this definition and starts developing different concepts of pragmatics based upon different theories and authors, some of them are considered below:

a. Pragmatics is the study of those principles that will account for why a certain set of sentences are anomalous, or not possible utterances.

b. Pragmatics is the study of language from a functional perspective. In other words, pragmatics tries to explain linguistic structures by reference to non-linguistic causes.

c. Pragmatics is the study of all aspects of meaning not captured in a semantic theory.

d. Pragmatics is the study of the relations between language and context that are basic to an account of language understanding.

Although these concepts define pragmatics in different ways, the main definition is in all the cases almost the same. Similarly according to Stalnaker (1972) pragmatics is the study of linguistic acts and the contexts in which they are performed.

As we can see pragmatics in all of it extent is mainly the study of those context-dependent aspects of meaning which are systematically abstracted away from in the construction of content or logical form.

APPLIED LINGUISTICS

According to Cook (2003) applied linguistics is considered a branch of linguistics concerned with the relation of knowledge about language to decision making in the real world. Cook (2003) provides us with some general and vague definition for applied linguistics.

He says that it (applied linguistics) sets out to investigate problems in the world in which language is implicated (e.g. social problems, educational problems, etc.).

He also states that applied linguistics constitutes a series of processes of study, reflection, investigation, and action concerning to events happening to people in the real life. In addition to that main idea the mentioned author classifies "problems" into types or so called "areas of study" in orders to define the principal aims of applied linguistics, these areas are:

1) Language and education

This area includes:

First-language education, when a child studies their home language or languages.

Additional-language education, often divided into second-language education, when someone studies their society's majority or official language which is not their home language, and foreign-language education, when someone studies the language of another country.

Clinical linguistics: The study and treatment of speech and communication impairments, whether hereditary, developmental, or acquired (through injury, stroke, illness, or age).

Language testing: The assessment and evaluation of language achievement and proficiency, both in first and additional languages, and for both general and specific purposes.

2) Language, work and law

This area includes:

Workplace communication: the study of how language is used in the workplace, and how it contributes to the nature and power relations of different types of work.

Language planning: The making of decisions, often supported by legislation, about the official status of languages and their institutional use, including their use in education.

Forensic linguistics: The deployment of linguistic evidence in criminal and other legal investigations, for example, to establish the authorship of a document, or a profile of a speaker from a tape-recording.

3) Language, information and effect

This area includes:

Literary stylistics: The study of the relationship between linguistics choices and effects in literature.

Critical discourse analysis (CDA): the study of the relationship between linguistic choices and effects in persuasive uses of language, of how these influence (for example, in marketing and politics).

Translation and interpretation: The formulation of principles underlying the perceived equivalence between a stretch of language and its translation, and the practices of translating written text and interpreting spoken language.

Information design: the arrangement and presentation of written language, including issues relating to typography and layout, choices of medium and effective combinations of language with other means of communication such as pictures and diagrams.

Lexicography: The planning and compiling of both monolingual and bilingual dictionaries and other language reference works such as thesauri (Thesauri are based on concepts and they show relationships among terms. Relationships commonly expressed in a thesaurus include hierarchy, equivalence (synonymy), and association or relatedness. These relationships are generally represented by the notation BT (broader term), NT (narrower term), SY (synonym), and RT (associative or related term) (Hodge 2000).

As we can conclude, applied linguistics' definition is not defined by a solid concept but what most introductions and collections try to do is to use applied linguistics concerns and activities in order to illustrate and then analyze what applied linguistics methods and purposes are.

COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE

Russell (1981) says: "I take the communicative competence of normal people to be acquired in the course of social experience and to reflect their psychological needs" (Russell 1981). This concept means that people's utterances will express social and psychological messages as well as referential meaning.

He also says: "I take communicative competence to include capability for use necessarily includes knowledge of what is linguistically appropriate for any given context". For instance, this concept does move apart from Chomsky's original notion of competence and adds a new perspective or twist to it.

We must remark that Chomsky (1965) states that 'competence' is a technical term within transformational-generative grammar to mean a hypothetical monolingual native-speaker's tacit knowledge of grammaticality. To remark this difference some linguists have with Chomsky's theories we can refer to Le Page (1973) who describes competence in his way (which he claims is not the same as Chomsky's) as a quality or resource that consists in having available a code, and the knowledge of how and in what contexts to use that code. Communicative competence itself divides into four major components as described in the next table stated by Canale and Swain (1980).

Communicative Competence
1. Grammatical competence: words and rules
2. Sociolinguistic competence: appropriateness.
3. Discourse competence: cohesion and coherence.
4. Strategic competence: appropriate use of communication strategies.

Grammatical competence

Grammatical competence can be seen as the ability to recognize and produce the distinctive grammatical structures of a language and to use them effectively in communication.

In addition to the concept presented above grammatical competence comprises knowledge of vocabulary, syntax, morphology and phonology/graphology (Bachman 1990). For example, a person needs to arrange words in a correct order in a sentence with appropriate endings (e.g. high, higher, or highest).

Sociolinguistic competence

According to Bachman (1990) sociolinguistic competence is sensitivity to the context where language is used, ensuring that language is appropriate to the person or the situation.

In addition, Holmes (2001) agrees when she says "the knowledge which underlies people's ability to use language appropriately is known as their sociolinguistic competence". For instance, both remark that the relation of language with the social environment where it develops is the field of study concerning with sociolinguistic competence. Finally, to expand this concept Bachman (1990) states that another part of sociolinguistic competence is the ability to interpret cultural references and figures of speech. For example and to clear this out, there are some expressions or figures of speech which wouldn't be understood by people if they don't have sociolinguistic competence.

Strategic competence

Bachman and Palmer (1996) see strategic competence as cognitive executive processes that govern language behavior. Although this concept may not seem clear enough to provide us with a clear definition it is remarkable to state that Bachman and Palmer (1996) expanded Canale & Swain ideas of the division of communicative competence in which they declare that strategic competence refers to a part of the ability to use the linguistic resources available in order to achieve one's communicative goals (Canale & Swain, 1980a). Taking this into account and If we move towards the land of teaching and learning languages we might find that strategic competence comes into play both in L1 (first or native language) acquisition and in L2 (second language) acquisition or learning, irrespective of age.

In L1 circumstances this can be illustrated when children use already identified question words with an extended significance. With L2 speakers it includes such things as over-generalizations, simplifications, a preference for a fixed word order, and avoidance strategies (Felix, 1982: 63-64; Selinker, Swain & Dumas, 1975: 174-49). This concept enters weakly into the field of language interference which we'll see later in detail.

Discursive competence

Discursive competence may be defined as the ability to interpret and produce different kinds of oral or written discourse, organized according to the communicative situation in which they are interpreted or produced (Cuerpo de Maestros 2006).

RETHORIC

Rhetoric has had many definitions; no simple definition can do it justice. For Aristotle, rhetoric is the art of practical wisdom and decision making, a counterpart to logic and a branch of politics. The word is derived from the ancient Greek eiro, which means "I say." In its broadest sense, rhetoric concerns human discourse.

As a course of study, rhetoric trains students to speak and/or write effectively. The rhetorical curriculum is nearly as old as the rhetorical tradition itself.

Over its many centuries, the curriculum has been transformed in a number of ways, but, in general, it has emphasized the study of principles and rules of composition as a means for moving audiences.

To support the idea presented above, Hawcroft (1999) states that Rhetoric is the art of persuasion, as codified by ancient rhetoricians and synthesized, refined, and developed by their numerous successors in the Western world, and also claims that since its beginnings in the acnient Greek world, rhetoric has been an academic discipline.

This art, traditionally divided into five parts, teaches the techniques of finding appropriate material (invention), arranging it (disposition), expressing it in the most effective words (elocution) and, in the case of oral communication, memorizing it (memory) and delivering it (action) (Hawcroft 1999).

We can finally add that rhetoric not only taught the techniques of persuasive writing and speech; a useful and fundamental exercise was to use the framework of rhetoric to analyze the discourse of others (mainly famous writers).

ERROR ANALYSIS

According to Hedge (2000) two types of linguistic comparison have been useful in suggesting appropriate grammatical items to be selected and sequenced ina a course. The first is between the learner's native language and the target language, and is known as contrastive analysis. The second is between the learner's interlanguage and the target language and is known as error analysis.

Contrastive analysis was popular in the 1960s and 1970s as a method of predicting difficulty for students. On the other hand, Error analysis has provided teachers with insights into the main problems which learners seem to have with English, and there are useful descriptions of these available. For example, Swan and Smith (1987) took eighteen language groups and itemized the frequently occurring

errors in their production of English. Such descriptions form a database for the selection of items in courses for upper-intermediate and advanced learners where the aim of the grammar component is to give students further opportunities to refine the accuracy of their production.

To be more specific; in language teaching, error analysis studies the types and causes of language errors. Taking into account this definition we can also point that errors are classified according to:

1. Modality (i.e. level of proficiency in speaking, writing, reading, listening).
2. Linguistic levels (i.e. pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, style)
3. Form (e.g. omission, insertion, substitution).
4. Type (systematic errors/errors in competence vs. occasional errors/errors in performance).
5. Cause (e.g. interference, interlanguage)
6. Norm vs. System.

This definition of error analysis based on grammar can be extended to cover the field of vocabulary.

In order to show and example of how to carry on the process of error analysis we have decided to extract a chart representing a sample class error analysis procedure taken from FERRIS, Dana (2003).

Response to student writing: implications for Second language students.

Routledge, Mahwah, New Jersey.

APPENDIX 7A: SAMPLE CLASS ERROR ANALYSIS PROCEDURES

Error Analysis Procedures

1. With a highlighter, look carefully through the student essay. Highlight and consecutively number every error you find in the following categories:

- Verbs (tense, form, verb agreement with subject)

- Noun endings (plural and possessive)

- Articles and other determiners

- Word form

- Word choice

- Sentence structure

- Spelling, capitalization, and punctuation (not covered by other categories)

- Other (any errors that do not fit above categories)

2. Use the analysis form to categorize and offer a correction for each error.

3. Use the summary form to total up the types of errors and numbers of each error. Then based upon your reading of the paper and your analysis, identify the three most significant

problems and write them in on the bottom of the form. Note: The "most serious problem" is not always the most frequent problem.

Use the analysis form to total up the types of errors and numbers of each error.

Then based upon your reading of the paper and your analysis, identify the three most significant problems and write them in on the bottom of the form. Note: The "most serious problem" is not always the most frequent problem.

Error analysis Sheet		
Error #	Type	Possible correction

This procedure might be useful when carrying out an error analysis.

After reviewing these concepts there is a question which appears almost as if it weren't there. How come we call it "error analysis"? Why don't we call it "mistake analysis"?

The reason may be explained as follows: An 'error' is a deviation from accuracy or correctness. A 'mistake' is an error caused by a fault: the fault being misjudgment, carelessness, or forgetfulness. Now, say that I run a stop sign because I was in a hurry, and wasn't concentrating, and the police stop me, that is a mistake. If, however, I try to park in an area with conflicting signs, and I get a ticket because I

was incorrect on my interpretation of what the signs meant, that would be an error. The first time it would be an error. The second time it would be a mistake since I should have known better.

As a conclusion we can simply say that a mistake e.g. a slip of the tongue can be self-corrected and an error "cannot". An error is systematic e.g. likely to occur repeatedly and not recognized (known) by the learner.

NATIVE LANGUAGE ACQUISITION

First of all, we need to define what does the term "native language" means. According to Lightbown & Spada (1999) "native language" (also called first language, mother tongue, L1) is the language first learned. It is the main or first linguistic code(s) (plural since many children learn more than one language from birth and may be said to have more than one mother tongue).

After establishing this concept, we can move towards the definition of "native language acquisition". The theories of native or first language acquisition try to explain the way babies and children develop communication features in order to become skilled speakers. This process is considered as amazing by many authors since all of them try to ask the same questions at once. How do children accomplish this? What is it that enables a child not only to learn words, but to put them together in meaningful sentences? What pushes children to go on

developing complex grammatical language even though their early simple communication is successful for most purpose? (Lightbown & Spada -1999).

In order to answer these questions, the authors mentioned above begin by defining a chronological progress referring to how does the language behaviour improves with age in almost all children around the world. To define this progress I've selected the main ideas and built the following chart with them.

Chronological period	Language features acquired
Less than a year	- Crying, cooing and gurgling. - Babies can distinguish very suitable differences between the sounds of human language.
By the end of the first year	- Babies understand quite a few frequently repeated words. - Babies can respond to different stimulus (They wave when someone says 'bye-bye')
At twelve months	- Babies will be able to produce one or two words. - The number of words they can produce multiplies quickly.
Two years	- Most children produce at least

	fifty different words.
	- They begin combining words.
Three-and-a-half or four years	- Most children can ask questions, give commands, report real events, etc. - By the age of four, it is said that children have mastered the main structures of the language (or languages) they have been spoken since the early years.

Once they have established one "common" process trough which most of the children pass during their early years. The authors expose some theories which try to explain how this process is developed and they also cover the inevitable fact that many children around the world are exposed two more than one language at a time during their early years. Back to the first idea, the theoretical approaches to explaining first language learning are synthesized in the following table:

Theoretical approach	Main features
Behaviourism	- Psychological theory of learning which believes that language learning is the result of imitation, practice, feedback on success, and habit

	information.
	- Children are encouraged to imitate and practise the sounds and patterns they constantly hear.
	- They repeat and practise until they form "habits" of correct language use.
	- The quality of the language the child hears affects directly on the child's success in language learning.
Innatism	- Noam Chomsky is its main referent of this theory.
	- Chomsky states that children BORN supplied with a special ability to discover for themselves the underlying rules of a language system.
	- The child does not have to be taught. The environment makes a basic contribution and then the child develops language as if it was just a matter of time for him/her to do so.
	- Basically, Innatism states that the children 'discover' and develop language by themselves as if it were

	just another natural process in their lives, just like walking.
The interactionist position	- Textually: "the interactionists' position is that language develops as a result of the complex interplay between the uniquely human characteristics of the child and the environment in which the child develops" (Lightbown & Spada – 1999). - Lev Vygotsky concluded that language develops entirely from social interaction. - According to Piaget language can be used to represent knowledge that children have acquired through physical interaction with the environment.

Now that we have seen the different theories that are behind the native language acquisition process I shall claim that Is it not the purpose of this investigation to adopt one position or another but only to give the reader an idea of what and how does language acquisition develop by looking at it from different points of view.

FOREIGN LANGUAGE ACQUISITION

By now you might be familiar with the concept of native language acquisition and probably u have inferred the meaning of the term "foreign language acquisition". Indeed the term "foreign language" (also called second language or "L2") represents any language other than the first language learned (Lightbown & Spada – 1999).

In order to explain how second language is acquired, many theories have been developed which are similar to the ones reviewed during the study of the native language acquisition and as those ones, they try to explain how does the process of SLA (second language acquisition) develops.

Some of these theories give primary importance to the learner's innate characteristics; some emphasise the role of the environment in texturing language learning; and others try to integrate both (learner characteristics and environmental factors) in order to find out how SLA takes place.

First of all, we have to focus on the general aspects of all the theories. These aspects, as mentioned above, are: learner characteristics and environmental factors. To sum up this clearly I have conveniently constructed the following chart:

	Features	
Learner characteristics	Knowledge of another language	- May be an advantage since it gives learners the ability to predict second language behaviour. - It could also be a disadvantage when native language structures "interferes" with the SLA.
	Cognitive maturity	
	Metalinguistic	
	Knowledge of the world	
	Nervousness about speaking.	
Learning conditions	Freedom to be silent	
	Ample time	
	Corrective feedback: grammar and pronunciation	
	Corrective feedback: word choice	
	Modified input	

After reviewing the main characteristics of all the theories behind second language acquisition, we can proceed to analyse directly which are these theories and what do they consist of.

Basically, there are three main points of view which try to explain SLA and they are: Behaviourism, Innatism and interactionism (Lightbown &Spada – 1999).

As we saw earlier, behaviourism state that the language is acquired trough repetition and practise rather than by another way. In this theory learners receive linguistic input from speakers in their environment and they form 'associations' between words and objects or events. These associations then become stronger as experiences are repeated (Lightbown &Spada – 1999).

This approach also is related to the Contrastive Analysis hypothesis (CAH) which states that whenever the second language holds similarities towards the native language, the learner would develop the process of SLA in a faster and accurate way.

Similarly when the structures differ a lot the learner would experiment difficulty depending on the degree of difference between the native and the second language.

In the other hand, Innatism (the second SLA approach) can not fully explain SLA by itself since it depends on the age of the learner. That is, innatism is no longer available to guide the acquisition of a second language in learners who have passed the critical period for language acquisition.

This implies the usage of another theory to support innatism. This is the point where Krashen's 'monitor model' takes the lead.

Stephen Krashen (1982) claims that there are five hypotheses which represent the ways a person can acquire a second language. These hypotheses can be described this way:

Hypothesis	Features
The acquisition-learning hypothesis	- According to Krashen there are two ways for adult second language learners to develop knowledge of a second language: 'acquisition' and 'learning'. - We 'acquire' as we are exposed to samples which come from the environment. - We 'learn' via a conscious process of study and attention to form and rule learning.
The monitor hypothesis	- The 'acquiring system' produces the utterances. - The 'learning system' acts as a 'monitor' to correct little mistakes appearing at the acquiring system output. - The 'monitor system' is usually applied in writing since we have more time to think what we are writing.
The natural order hypothesis	- Like the first language learners, second language learners seem to

	acquire the features (such as grammatical structures) of the target language in predictable sequences (lightbow & Spada – 1999).
The input hypothesis	- The input is the source of acquisition. - This input must be comprehensible in order to achieve total acquisition and learning.
The affective filter hypothesis	- The affective filter can be described as a 'barrier' constructed with emotional elements (such as needs, attitudes, motives, etc) which can turns in favour or against the acquiring and learning process.

As we can see, Krashen's theories lay upon the innatism point of view. This means that in all his five hypotheses, he states (in certain way) that the ability of the learner to acquire and learn depends on himself/herself.

Finally, we have to check the third big theory: the interactionist. As we review previously, interactionists defend that in order to carry on any satisfactory process of language acquisition, the learner must interact with his/her environment in order to assimilate and process new language features. We also have to keep in mind Vigosky's theories

which state in a similar way that all cognitive development, including language development, arises as a result of social interactions between individuals. For instance, remember these theories apply to first language acquisition. If we expand the interactionist's concept towards second language acquisition we can find ourselves involved in Jim Lantolf's definition which states: "second language learners advance to higher levels of linguistic knowledge when they collaborate and interact with speakers if the second language who are more knowledgeable than they are".

LANGUAGE INTERFERENCE

Language transfer (also known as L1 interference, linguistic interference, and cross-meaning) refers to speakers or writers applying knowledge from their native language to a second language. It is most commonly discussed in the context of English language learning and teaching, but it can occur in any situation when someone does not have a native-level command of a language, as when translating into a second language.

When the relevant unit or structure of both languages is the same, linguistic interference can result in correct language production called positive transfer — "correct" meaning in line with most native speakers' notions of acceptability. An example is the use of cognates. Note, however, that language interference is most often discussed as a source

of errors known as negative transfer. Negative transfer occurs when speakers and writers transfer items and structures that are not the same in both languages. Within the theory of contrastive analysis (the systematic study of a pair of languages with a view to identifying their structural differences and similarities), the greater the differences between the two languages, the more negative transfer can be expected.

The results of positive transfer go largely unnoticed, and thus are less often discussed. Nonetheless, such results can have a large effect. Generally speaking, the more similar the two languages are, the more the learner is aware of the relation between them, the more positive transfer will occur. For example, an Anglophone learner of German may correctly guess an item of German vocabulary from its English counterpart, but word order and collocation are more likely to differ, as will connotations. Such an approach has the disadvantage of making the learner more subject to the influence of "false friends" (false cognates).

Transfer may be conscious or unconscious. Consciously, learners or unskilled translators may sometimes guess when producing speech or text in a second language because they have not learned or have forgotten its proper usage. Unconsciously, they may not realize that the structures and internal rules of the languages in question are different. Such users could also be aware of both the structures and internal

rules, yet be insufficiently skilled to put them into practice, and consequently often fall back on their first language.

Transfer can also occur between acquired languages. In a situation where French is a second language and Spanish a third, an Anglophone learner, for example, may assume that a structure or internal rule from French also applies to Spanish.

As we have seen, the production of native language interference stands as a big wall against our goal which is the achievement of communicative competence and the creation and implementation of methods to reduce its effect to the minimum would be the main aim of our investigation.

DESCRIPTION AND ANALYSIS OF RESULTS

In this section we will try to explain how and how often language interference affects (positively or negatively) the communication process during writing. This analysis will be done based upon data collected from a field investigation which was carried out by the authors of this thesis project. The mentioned data has been classified and tabulated in order to fulfil the investigation requirements and also in order to have a clear perspective of the circumstances that led to the production of language interference.

Since the main theme of this thesis project includes defining why, how and "where" does language interference occur; before we proceed with the analysis of the collected data it is advisable to remind that this communication "phenomena" called "interference" (also known as L1 interference, linguistic interference, language transfer and cross-meaning) refers to speakers or writers applying knowledge from their native language when using a second language.

Taking into consideration the concept presented above, we have to state the fact that when the main structure of both languages involved in the process of communication is the same, linguistic interference can

result in correct language production called positive transfer — "correct" meaning in line with most native speakers' notions of acceptability. An example is the use of cognates. Note, however, that language interference is most often discussed as a source of errors known as negative transfer. Negative transfer occurs when speakers and writers transfer items and structures that are not the same in both languages. Within the theory of contrastive analysis (the systematic study of a pair of languages with a view to identifying their structural differences and similarities), the greater the differences between the two languages, the more negative transfer can be expected.

After stating these important points; it is necessary to define how close or how distant are the structures which constitute both languages used in this study (English and Spanish) in order to define how much negative or positive interference can be expected.

There are many similarities between English and Spanish when it comes to syntactic and lexicon analysis but maybe the most remarkable of all is that the main structure of the "sentence" is basically the same in both languages. This is: Subject + verb + complement.

Differences between both language structures are vast. Syntactic differences combined with lexicon differences are the main reasons why language interference is produced. If we focus in the syntactical aspect of both languages we can find that adjectives are used in different ways in both languages as we will see in the results of the field investigation.

Prepositions are also a point where we can find language interference. Syntactical differences expand themselves to the use of the subject within a sentence and so on. When it comes to the lexicon, false cognates are the most "dangerous". They are used as a measure to compensate the lack of knowledge when the speaker or writer wrongly uses a word that would have certain meaning in his/her native language but it actually means something else in the target language. The language interference then is produced due to the confusion between "shape" and "meaning" of words in both languages.

GRAMMAR STRUCTURES

First of all, after having analyzed the collected data taken from the field investigation concerning to the variable named "grammar structures" we can state that the instances where the syntactic structures of Spanish are used in English producing errors are: The use of subject pronouns. For example, "I think is a good idea"; prepositions: "So I took the four tickets of de box"; use of definite and indefinite articles: "We're going to The Galapagos Islands the next year"; word order; "I spent my time swimming in the pool, basically"; and finally the use of the passive voice: "They believe that the children were stealed for "la llorona".

Similarly; we have to define that the language interference may also be produced because of the absence of some structures in Spanish that are available in English and that may lead to confusion since the

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learner has never been familiarized with these "new structures". In this research, those grammar structures were identified as: Double negation: "There weren't no soccer field of grass"; Possessive nouns: "We went to the house of my uncle"; and finally adjectives: "The relationship between the kid and the cat was so bore".

If we analyze each indicator separately we might be able to point out how and why the interference occurs and how it can affect the meaning of sentences and ideas.

When it comes to the use of subject pronouns, language interference is quite noticeable; the collected data revealed the presence of many cases of interference. In this case, the Spanish structures on the use of subject pronouns are different than the English ones. For example:

"I asked him if he wanted to go to the beach. Said he had to pick up her sister before."

In this case, the omission of the subject pronoun is not allowed when it comes to the English structures; however, it can be omitted in Spanish. Hopefully, the sentence would not experiment a deep change in its original meaning when read by a native speaker.

These are some other examples of omission found in our research such as:

- "Is very important to consider the evidence."

- "Some scientists say that is possible that the UFOs built the pyramids of Egypt."

- "I think is a good idea to go to the cinema during vacation time."

- "In Quito it's so cold. Is necessary a heater in every room."

- "Is very important to learn English."

Let us look at the following example: "He asked me if was ok for he to invite another friend."

As we can see, language interference has produced two different errors. First, the writer has omitted the "it" pronoun which may be located between "if" and "was". Second, the writer has used the word "he" instead of "him" which would be the correct form. It is remarkable to state that the structure of the "object pronoun" is confusing when it comes to English learners; in this case, the writer has used the word "he" in the sentence since its Spanish translation would represent the same function within a Spanish sentence.

In the following example: "When Cinderella arrived to the dance all the people asked: "Who is her?"", there has been a confusion between the use of subject and object pronouns. The writer has chosen to use "her" instead of "she" which would be the correct form of the pronoun.

The following examples contain cases of substitution:

- "Pinocho lived with a little "grillo". He was a friend of he."

- "Cinderella had two sisters that were very bad with she."

- "The kidnapped people say that the aliens were very nice with they."

In both cases, an English native speaker would be able to understand the meaning of the main idea since these cases of interference are kind of "controllable" and may not affect considerably the message that the writer would like to express.

Prepositions are another grammar structure that produced language interference at certain stages of the investigation.

It is remarkable to state that the most common cases of interference were produced by the use of "of" and "from" prepositions. In those cases, the learners had a Spanish basis concerning to the use of "of" and "from". In Spanish, the word "de" can be used to substitute "of" and "from" as we can see in the following examples:

- "On Fridays, I took the garbage of all the trash cans in my house".

- "So I took the four tickets of the box so we can go to the concert".

- "The girl was in love of the big monkey".

- "We can learn many things of the UFOs".

Similarly, learners' native language structures caused some negative language interference when it came to use of the "for" and "to" prepositions since in Spanish the word "para" can be used to substitute both mentioned prepositions. Here are some examples:

- "Don´t go for that road".

- "Snow white cooked and cleaned the house to all the seven elfs".

- "They captured the flying object for study it".

- "I've thinking in doing something nice for this year".

In the following examples, there has also been negative interference because of the learners' previous knowledge about their native language. In these cases, the comparative form "as" has been confused with "like" since in Spanish they both can be substituted with the word "como" in comparative forms. The last two examples are used to show that writers have also used the "in" preposition instead of "at" since they can use one word ("en") to substitute both prepositions. Let us look at the examples:

- "It was big like two or three houses".

- "We wanted to look like if nothing was happening".

- "Many people went to see King Kong in the zoo".

This following sentence constitutes a unique example. In Spanish, the English structure "listen to music" will not make sense, so the writer has omitted the preposition "to" so it can "make sense" in Spanish.
- "I like sitting in my room and listen music. It calms me".

Since the language interference in all the cases related to prepositions involves the use of only one word, the meaning of the entire sentence would not be considerably altered when read by a native speaker.

Moving on; we found that the use of definite and indefinite articles was another indicator that writers found a little difficult to deal with.

Generally, the omission or bad placement (to add where it is not needed) of definite and indefinite articles is due to the learners' previous native language knowledge about the structure of articles.

When it comes to English, there are certain rules to follow in order to use one of the articles (attached in Annexe 1).

In Spanish, the only "rule" to follow is to identify whether the noun preceeding the article is singular or plural. On the other hand, the use of "the" produces a positive interference since it is used for all kinds of nouns which is not valid in Spanish since the article depends upon the gender of the noun and whether it is singular or plural. Let us look at some examples found in our research:

- "So I told her to borrow me some roller skates".
- "My mother told me: 'Take any chairs to the beach'".

In these two examples we can notice how the writers have confused the use of the words "some" and "any" with the Spanish words "unas/unos" since they know that "some" and "any" can be translated that way.

- "We went to soccer stadium to watch Barcelona against Emelec".
- "We're going to The Galapagos Islands the next year".
- "The UFOs have a so advanced technology".

- "The People are worried about rising crime".

- "She took poison and put it into the apple".

These examples show us that the writers are not very aware of the rules when using definite or indefinite articles and that they have applied some Spanish structures to add or omit some articles inappropriately according to the Spanish translation of the sentence.

The following example is peculiar.

- "I have an estrong kick when I play soccer".

In this case, the writer has made a wrong choice at choosing the article. In this case, the problem is phonetic since "strong" is pronounced as "estrong" in Spanish, therefore the writer has written the word incorrectly producing the language interference when choosing the article preceding the adjective.

When a native speaker was asked about the way this indicator would change the meaning of the sentences; he said it is still understandable since the main sense of the idea was not deeply affected by the interference.

Word order represents a serious issue when it comes to language interference.

English and Spanish have both different syntax structures and therefore the order of words in a sentence can affect considerably the meaning of it.

Let us look at the following examples taken from our field research:

- "Pinocho lived with his father "Gepeto". Also "pepe grillo" lived with them".

- "My uncle said that probably we could stay in a hotel."

- "We played soccer that weekend until 8 p.m."

In the examples showed above, Spanish structures have been applied while constructing the English sentences.

For example, the location of "also", "probably" and "that weekend" clauses was determined by the writers' native language knowledge. Although even thought the order of the words was changed, the meaning of the sentence does not get affected when read by an English native speaker.

However, the following examples deserve to be examined a little deeper.

- "The witch arrived where lived the elfs and snow white."

- "I spent my time swimming in the pool, basically."

These two examples represent a very special case since the language interference which appears in them changes the syntactic meaning of the sentences. As we can see, the writers have used Spanish structures as "where lived" to express "donde vivían". They have also used the adverb "basically" at the end of a sentence producing confusion when read by English native speakers.

The results obtained in our research showed that the most common error concerning language interference in the use of the passive voice is generated when the writers substituted "by" with "for". In Spanish, both words have the same meaning ("por") when used in this kind of structure (passive voice). Here are the examples:

- "They believe that the children were stealed for "la llorona"".

- "In all that time, Snow white was watched for all the elfs".

The use of "for" in these cases could affect the meaning of the sentence and it could be very confusing when spoken to an English native speaker.

Even though there are a lot of writing errors caused by the presence of similar structures in both languages, there are also cases in which the lack of this "structures" in the writers' native language cause them to confuse and sometimes they use their own language structure to fulfil the lack of knowledge.

Let us take a look at the following examples extracted from our field investigation:

- "There weren't no soccer field of grass in the beach".

- "There weren't no tickets for the RBD concert".

- "They haven't never seen a monster like that".

In Spanish, learners use the word "no" (as in "no hay") to negate a fact. As we can see, they did not notice the presence of the negative form

of the verb "to be" as they are used to see the "no" word as a separated one.

In the last example ("They haven't never seen a monster like that"), the writer used an English structure based upon his/her knowledge about their native language (meaning "no han visto nunca").

Since the structure of possessive nouns (using the apostrophe) is not present in Spanish, many writers did not make use of it. Instead they tried to express the idea using the "of" preposition which in Spanish means ("de") hoping this could create a possessive structure. Here are some examples:

- "We went to the house of my uncle."

- "When we were on the beach my cousins and I ride the motorcycle of my uncle."

- "The prince picked up the shoes of cinderella."

- "Also, many people say that the children of Anna (a neighbour) disappeared because of "la llorona""

This type of interference may confuse English native readers because the "of" preposition does not represent possession when used that way and English native readers may not be able to understand the idea.

Usage of adjectives can be the source of language interference too. Learners make errors based upon their knowledge about adjectives presented in their native language. In Spanish, adjectives are located

after the noun they are modifying. Adjectives may also need suffixes to define their plural form. In English, adjectives come before the noun and they have no plural form. Let us look at the following examples:

- "I like visiting diferents countries every year."

- "This is a course very interesting."

- "I think that is a music very beautiful."

- "She has a voice incredibly beautiful."

In the following special case, the writer has used the Spanish comparative structure using English words to fulfil the lack of knowledge about English comparative structures. As we can see, the writer used "more big than" (meaning "mas grande que") instead of "bigger than".

- "The monster was more big than all the buildings."

After having established not only the main indicators that led to the appearance of language interference but the knowledge background of the people belonging to the sample, we can state that the indicator that appears more frequently is the use of the subject pronoun. It appears nineteen (19) times among the results of the research. As researchers, we think that this indicator is the most common because many important reasons:

1. It is the most used Spanish structure.

   a. Being the most used Spanish structure adds more chances to the occurrence of language interference.

2. The differences between the uses of the subject pronoun in both languages.

    a. Obviously there are differences when using subject pronouns in English and Spanish. These differences (for example the omission of the subject pronoun in Spanish) can produce language interference when writing.

3. The absence of the English object pronoun in Spanish structures.

    a. The use of one specific object pronoun for each subject pronoun in English sometimes confuses Spanish writers who only know few structures than can represent "object pronouns" (mi, ti). In most of the cases, the Spanish "object pronouns" have the same shape of the subject pronouns.

Another important and remarkable factor is the fact that the amount of errors caused by language interference decreased when the sample was ordered to write an English essay at their homes. This was definitely due to the time and pressure factor. When it comes to the time factor, we can say that the sample was told to perform the class writing activities in less than 40 minutes. This pressure certainly affected the students' concentration. When talking about home activities, it can be said that the sample had more time to write their essays. They also could have been helped by some friend or relative and they certainly did not have to deal with the pressure of the teacher. So it could be said

that the amount of errors is directly related to the factors mentioned above.

LEXICON

After having analyzed the collected data taken from the field investigation concerning to the variable named "Lexicon" we can state that the instances where the Spanish lexicon structures are used in English producing errors are: false cognates: "My swimming instructor was very hard with me"; inflection: "Esmeraldas has a lot of beachs"; and the use of phrasal verbs; "Some people believe that UFOs want to take the world".

It may be proper to analyze one indicator at a time since analyzing them will provide us with the keys to understand how and why Spanish lexicon is used when constructing English sentences.

When it comes to the use of false cognates, we need to understand that this term is used to refer pairs of words in two languages or dialects that look and/or sound similar, but differ in meaning. Using this definition we can easily understand how the interference is produced. There are words like "assist", "attend", "actually", "sympathetic" that Spanish native speakers may use because of their similarity with Spanish words.

As we saw when we analyzed the previous variable (grammar structures), the syntactic changes within the sentences barely affected the main sense of the sentences. However, when the use of a false

cognate occurs, it may affect the semantic aspect of the sentence in a very dangerous way causing a complete misunderstood between the writer and the reader (assuming the reader is an English native speaker. Remember that false cognates may differ in meaning although they would look the same as their "Spanish cognates". If an English native speaker reads a false cognate he/she would be thinking about the meaning the word has in his/her language and it will confuse the native reader. Let us look at the following examples:

- "My swimming instructor was very hard with me."

- "I assisted to class on Monday, Wednesday and Friday from 4:30 to 6:30."

- "All my family reunited in my grandmother's house."

- "The mirror said that she was actually living with seven efls."

- "He was very anxious to become a real boy."

- "Many people have seen her Casualty or not."

- "The wolf went to sleep because he was supporting the weight of ""caperucita" and her grandmother."

- "Since that time, there have been a lot of UFO visions in the U.S"

- "I think that the technology is the principal thing that we can learn from them"

- "Actually, there are a lot of videos and photos that show UFOs."

- "The figures in the corn fields are signals that say we are not alone."

- "Doctors win a lot of money."

- "I'm sure I can approve the subject."

As we can see, the use of false cognates is very frequent. This may be due to the lack of vocabulary the writers have.

Time factor is also a reason to use false cognates. Students wanted to finish their essays/stories/tales within 40 minutes so they had to write quickly. It can be said that they were also under pressure.

Inflection was another indicator that produced language interference when used in a wrong way by the writers. In grammar, inflection or inflexion is the way language handles grammatical relations and relational categories such as tense, mood, voice, aspect, person, number, gender, case. In English as in Spanish many nouns are inflected to express number using the inflectional plural affix -s (as in "dog" → "dog-s"), and most English verbs are inflected for tense change purposes with the inflectional past tense affix -ed (as in "call" → "call-ed").

English also inflects verbs by affixation to mark the third person singular form in the present tense (with -s), and the present continuous (with -ing). English short adjectives are inflected to mark comparative and superlative forms (with -er and -est respectively).

In addition, English also shows inflection by ablaut (mostly in verbs) and umlaut (mostly in nouns), as well as the odd long-short vowel alternation. For example:

Write, wrote, written (ablaut, and also suffixing in the participle)

Sing, sang, sung (ablaut)

Foot, feet (umlaut)

Mouse, mice (umlaut)

Child, children (vowel alternation, and also suffixing in the plural)

The inadequate use of inflected structures could generate several obstacles when transmitting an idea. First of all, it would obviously affect the meaning of the sentences and second it could confuse the reader if the writer has inflected a verb in a wrong way so the tense of the sentence would have suffered drastic changes. Let us look at the following examples which may help us to understand what kinds of difficulties Inflection produces:

- "Esmeraldas has a lot of beachs".

- "I started to learn guitar. At first it was very difficult and painfully".

- "In the last summer, during vacation, my father and I work at the mini-market."

- "My vacation was very good for me because I learn a lot of new things."

- "It is also said that "La llorona" appear at night on empty streets."

- "King Kong was discovered in a dessert Island."

- "Snow white was found by seven elfs."

- "Aliens have big head and foot."

- "I'm a great cooker and I know lots of recipes that children love them."

- "Nowadays is better to learning English than some other language."

- "She also is a politic."

- "When I was a children I liked playing soccer in my school."

Again, the reasons why writers have used wrong inflected forms may be the lack of knowledge about English vocabulary, the time factor and the pressure factor could also be a part of the factors.

We can notice some sentences in which students demonstrate they do not know the rules to construct plural forms in English so they have used Spanish rules ("elfs", "foot"). We can also notice that English structures could be confusing some times. For example, in the following sentence: "She also is a politic" the writer chase the word "politic" meaning the person who is involved in politics. We all know he/she should have used the word "politician" but the writer's previous knowledge about Spanish structures "told" him/her to use "politic" since it reminds him/her of the word "político" which in Spanish means "a person who is involved in politics".

The use of phrasal verbs could represent a problem if their structure is not well assembled and also if they are incomplete (remember that phrasal verbs consist of more than one word). A phrasal verb is a combination of a verb and a preposition, a verb and an adverb,

or a verb with both an adverb and a preposition, any of which are part of the syntax of the sentence, and so constitutes a complete semantic unit. Phrasal verbs are particularly frequent in the English language. A phrasal verb often has a meaning which is different from the original verb.

The wrong usage of phrasal verbs will cause serious damage to the meaning of a sentence. Since the words that constitute phrasal verbs have different meanings when used separately, when it (the phrasal verb) is incomplete, the sentence will have different meaning than it was intend to. On the other hand, when written with an incorrect structure (word order, etc) it would be strange when read by an English native speaker. However, the meaning of the sentence would not be affected in a "dangerous" way.

In the following examples taken from our field investigation we will see both cases. Many phrasal verbs are not complete ("took out", "warm up", "look up", "take over", "look back"). We will also find some errors when it comes to the structure of the phrasal verbs.

- "I asked him if he wanted to go to the beach. Said he had to pick up her sister before."

- "On Fridays, I took the garbage of all the trash cans in my house."

- "I like to wear shirts on the beach. I usually don`t take off them when I go to the beach."

- "My friends and I went also to the gym. We usually warm for 20 minutes."

- "I looked to the sky."

- "Some people believe that UFOs want to take the world."

- "They say that they saw the "chupacabras" but there is no picture of it because everyone runs out when they see it."

- "Cinderella took the shoe and she tried on it."

- "It took down two airplanes."

- "She ran and ran without looking."

- "He wanted to be a real boy so he held his desire of lie."

During our field investigation, we found that errors concerning phrasal verbs could have been produced because the writers needed to express an idea that can be expressed in their native language (Spanish) by using only one of the words which are part of a phrasal verb (usually the verb so they leave out the preposition/adverb). If we take into account that there is no such thing as "phrasal verbs" in Spanish it can also be state that the errors concerning phrasal verbs can be generated because of the lack of previous knowledge or the lack of a similar Spanish structure.

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

Based upon the quantitative tabulation obtained from the classification of the collected data we can make some observations that can help us to understand the nature of language interference.

First of all, we have to state that the highest number of grammar errors was found in the second class activity (the story). We found 36 errors concerning language interference.

It is remarkable to state that most grammar errors were found when writers make use of the subject pronoun during the quiz activity and in the use of prepositions taken from the same activity (11 errors).

The highest percentage of errors was obtained in the use of subject pronouns from the essay sent as homework (53.33%) but we have to analyze the fact that the amount of total errors concerning language interference was very low compared with the other class activities (only 15). This fact can lead us to determine that the use of subject pronoun is the most common error.

When it comes to lexicon, the highest number of errors was obtained from the class activity 1 (composition). We found 21 errors concerning language interference. It is also important to state that the highest number of errors occurred in the second class activity (the story) when writers used inflections (12 errors).

We can also say that the highest percentage of errors caused by language interference was the use of phrasal verbs (47.05%) in the home-sent activity.

After having determined the most common errors in order to focus our attention at what may be the first and more serious issues to deal with, it is important to compare the number and percentage of errors between activities to see if the theme and the environment in which the activity was developed was influencing enough to increase or decrease the amount of errors.

First we have to analyze the variable named "grammar structures". We found that the number of errors in the class activities may follow a pattern (30 errors in the first class activity, 36 errors in the second and 32 errors in the last one). However, the number of errors in the home activity was reduced to 15.

After having analyzed the different indicators, we found that almost all the activities follow a pattern when it comes to the percentage of errors. The highest percentage belongs to the use of the subject pronoun (26% in the first activity, 27% in the second one, 56% in the third and 34% in the last one) followed by the use of prepositions (26%, 25%, 13%, 34% respectively).

When analyzing the variable named "lexicon" we noticed the same variation on the amount of errors. They decreased when it came to the home-sent activity. There were 17 errors compared with the first two

activities (21 and 19 respectively). However, the number of errors decreased in the last activity (13 errors found in the quiz).

Errors concerning Inflection had the highest percentage in both the first and second class activity (47% and 63% respectively). However, the use of phrasal verbs obtained the highest percentage in the third and last activities (47% and 53%).

As a conclusion, we can state that the previous section (refer to "Description and analysis of results") helped us to understand "why" language interference occurs depending upon each indicator. In addition, comparative analysis section has provided us with significant statistical data which would determine how often language interference occurs according to each indicator. Using both analyses we have proceeded to establish the conclusions showed in the following section.

CONCLUSIONS

After performing the investigation we have found that the level of language interference found is considerably acceptable. We also found that the most frequent syntactic error was the use of the subject pronoun (37 errors in 4 activities; and the highest percentages in all the activities).

The most frequent semantic error was the use of inflexions (28 errors in 4 compositions).

The amount of grammar errors decreased when the students were told to write an essay at their homes. This can be explained by the fact that the sample had more time to write their essays. They also could have been helped by some friend, relative or dictionary and they certainly did not have to deal with the pressure of the teacher.

In the English quiz, some typical grammar errors increased their values (use of subject pronoun and prepositions) and some did not even appear (e.g. passive voice). In this case, students had less time to work on a test with 20 short essay questions so they felt almost obliged to use the same "easy" structures over and over again.

On the other hand, the semantic errors decreased when it comes to the result of the English Quiz. This may be explained by the fact that they learned new semantic structures (vocabulary) during their regular class period so they avoided making some mistakes.

Most errors were found in the second class activity (36 grammar errors; 19 semantic errors). In this case, students had to use their imagination to tell stories and tales. We conclude that the freer the writing is the more interference would appear.

Grammar indicators affect the meaning of sentences in a less "dangerous" way than lexicon indicators. Errors concerning the use of subject pronouns or prepositions would not change significantly the meaning of sentences. On the other hand, the use of false cognates will definitely affect the meaning of the idea.

We believe that language interference is definitely caused by several reasons:

- o The obvious differences between both languages' structures

- o Students' knowledge Gaps concerning L2 (target language; English) grammar and lexicon structures.

- o Deficiencies in the teaching program.

Teachers who participated on the research showed a lot of interest in its development. They want to implement some parts of the proposal to their teaching program in order to "battle" language interference.

As authors of this work we have to remark that our knowledge about language interference and its importance has increased and reached to a point where it represents a serious issue in the communication process. We have learned that interference could be a

serious obstacle not only in the process of expressing ideas in a second

language but also in the social development of an individual.

PROPOSAL

1.- INFORMATIVE DATA

Title: Activities and techniques to reduce L1 interference in writing English.

School: "Unidad Educativa Canadiense"

School year: 2009-2010

City: Guayaquil

Duration: Two days.

Authors: Msc. Rafael Coello Cuntó – Francisco Coello Salguero

Beneficiaries: Students of this school

Introduction:

The following activities and strategies are designed to be used by a high school teacher. They are based on the necessity of achieving language competence by trying to eliminate language interference. This proposal consists of a two day workshop which contains four activities that can be applied to any language unit of the curriculum. They can be used at any point the teacher wants so they can be adapted to the lessons and units of every high school textbook.

2.- GENERAL OBJECTIVE

- To reduce the level of language interference in native Spanish English learners.

3.- SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

- To identify the weakest and strongest "indicators" within a group of Spanish students.

- To provide a comfortable environment with fun activities designed to reduce the level of language interference.

- To make teachers feel aware of the language interference problem and encourage them to find a viable solution.

4.- STRATEGIES

This is the most important part of our proposal. We believe that activities can be developed easily but they must be based on strategies that assure the achievement of the objectives.

As researchers, we believe that the main problem of language interference "lives" in the classrooms of the lower grades. When a teacher uses a lot of Spanish in his/her class or when they use translations to give meaning to some words they are creating what we call "Spanish conscience" inside each student. They are teaching them to translate every English word to Spanish. Let's propose a little example:

If a teacher tells his/her students: ""happy" means "feliz"", then each time the student would look at the word "happy" they would be

thinking of "feliz". Imagine that in a bigger scale and with more complex structures. They would be translating word by word.

Now imagine if the same teacher shows his/her student a photo of a smiling man and says: "He is happy, see?" then each time the students would look at the word "happy" they would be thinking of "feliz" and also they will associate it to a feeling of comfortableness and joy. In other words, teachers need to use more visual/listening/reading English aids.

Another point that we have to remark is that the teacher must avoid giving meanings in Spanish. They should try to give the meanings of words in English so the student must get "an idea" of what the word means. Same thing should happen with complex structures like sentences.

For example, days ago I was teaching a friend of mine the structure of "wish" (my friend is 16 years old) and as I was explaining her, she told me to translate the following sentence "I wish you could come with me". I said: "ojalá pudieras venir conmigo". But she did not understand my translation because she was wondering about the meaning of "wish". She thought the sentence should be translated as: "Yo deseo que tu puedas venir conmigo" and kept asking me why the word "that" ("que") did not appear.

This example could be useful as a guide to build the following strategy: Teachers should avoid translating words, they must translate

(only if they must) "ideas". They must explain their students the syntactic and semantic differences between English and Spanish and prevent them to "fall" into interference.

And the last strategy should be the most difficult. Teachers must encourage their students to "think" in English. They must teach them to separate both languages and to achieve domination of English at an unconscious level. When they are in class they should be encouraged to live in an English based world (class) and encouraged to be in contact with the "new" language when they are not in class.

To achieve those objectives, several activities can be performed during the class period.

6.- ACTIVITIES

We proposed several activities in order to detect the presence of language interference. Remember to follow the strategies given above.

DAY 1

ACTIVITY 1:

Writing some small pieces of text (letters, lists, forms)

Activity A: Tell the students to pretend they are the chief of the department and that they have to dictate a letter (as you can see in the picture) to your secretary offering your office's services to a client of yours. (Tell the students to imagine what kind of service the office would offer).

Activity B: Exchange the letters written in the previous activity between the students and ask them to read each other's letters (students will find it funny to discover what kind of business their classmates created) and then ask them to respond to their friend's letter with another one showing approval or disapproval.

Activity C: Pretend you are the office's phone operator and you find yourself interviewing someone to replace you while you are on

vacation. Write the necessary instructions to perform your daily tasks.

With this group of activities students can develop their abilities concerning the use of simple sentences. This can be used to practice the correct usage of the subject pronoun. Vocabulary and the usage of false cognates could also be practiced.

ACTIVITY 2:

Activity A: Write words according to the picture and then select the topic of your writing and according to that try to eliminate or keep some of the words you wrote.

This activity involves brainstorming and outlining. Remember they would probably write about the picture from different angles so this

activity helps them to select an appropriate topic taking into account the brainstorming and the outlining. This would avoid "detours" when they finally reach the writing stage it means that they would eliminate some of the outlined ideas helping them to decide what their writing is going to be about.

Activity B: Write about the picture above.

Since this activity seems to be "open", students may find it difficult to organize their ideas. They would not know where to start so this is a perfect activity to analyze how each student develops the writing task in meanings of organisation.

Activity C: After finishing your composition. Compare it to the following essay Model:

- Introduction

    o Main Idea: The Beatles is the best band of all times.

- Topic Sentence: They changed music.

    o Support 1:

    o Support 2:

- Topic Sentence: They are still famous nowadays.

    o Support 1:

    o Support 2:

- Conclusion

This activity would help students to understand what might be the correct order when writing an essay but also tells them that they can be original as they might have chosen another different "angle" where to write from.

ACTIVITY 3:

Since you have some data on your students' language interference level you can continue creating some exercises dedicated to the weakest points where interference seems to appear more frequently. Remember not to translate word by word but the "ideas".

For example, if you notice they are having troubles with the passive voice you can use the following picture and describe the correct usage of the passive voice

Try to explain that the word "by" is not "por" but it serves us to refer to the person who is doing the action in the active voice". You can also explain the grammatical structure of the passive voice and finally ask them to write 3 or 4 paragraphs each commenting on a different famous person and his/her work. For example: Shakira's music. It could lead to many kinds of examples such as:

- The music sung by Shakira is very beautiful.

- Shakira's first album was published in …

- Shakira's songs were composed by…

- Shakira's dog was given to her by…

ACTIVITY 4:

Using phrasal Verbs

The use of phrasal verbs is yet another important point in our proposal. Since a lot of errors concerning this indicator were found during our investigation, it is advisable to build a group of activities that would lead to the eradication of this communicative problem.

Activity A:

Act a phrasal verb.

The teacher must give a list of the most common phrasal verbs and explain the structure and the meaning (in English) of each phrasal verb. They should also explain some of the rules concerning the use of each of the mentioned phrasal verbs (remember some can include the object pronoun within the structure of the phrasal verb).

Then, teachers can proceed to cut some pieces of paper and write a phrasal verb in each one of them. They must distribute them among the students in the class each one containing a different phrasal verb.

Then, teachers should tell students to work in pairs and write short story (100 to 150 words) including both phrasal verbs. Each pair of students must play their story as a skit for all the other classmates. They should emphasize the phrasal verbs.

Here are some examples of the cards containing the phrasal verbs.

WARM UP	PICK UP	TURN	RUN	PULL

The key in this activity is how well the teacher is going to deal with the phrasal verbs since they are completely new structures because there are no Spanish forms that substitute phrasal verbs.

DAY 2

ACTIVITY 1:

Working with articles

To deal with the use of definite and indefinite articles we can develop some fun activities that would be useful to deal with this apparently easy "problem". As we can remember, the use of definite and indefinite articles can not only produce negative language interference, but positive specially with using the "the" article.

We have to take into account that there are some certain rules when it comes to the use of the definite and indefinite articles. These rules may be explained before conducting the following activities.

Activity A:

This game is fun and it would definitely achieve our goal which is to make students aware of the usage of the definite and indefinite articles.

In order to conduct this activity the teacher needs a computer projector, slides or something that can show images on the blackboard. The teacher then passes a little paper ball to the first student and tell him/her to number himself/herself and then to pass the ball to their next classmate. Before doing that, the teacher must declare a number. When numbering, when a student's number is equal to the number or to a multiple of the number given by the teacher, that student must complete the sentence (which will be projected on the blackboard at that

time) using a definite of indefinite article. The process then repeats itself with another number but starting with the last student who answered. If the teacher feels it to be appropriate, students who do not answer correctly could perform some kind of funny "punishment" in front of the class.

Activity B:

Divide the class into two big groups and use the projector to present a big paragraph with blanks. The blanks would correspond to the missing definite and indefinite articles. Ask each group to fill the paragraph using the knowledge they recently acquired. Notice answers would be different; this is a good chance for the teacher to reinforce the concept of using both types of articles and to establish differences between Spanish articles and English articles in a soft way. This exercise can be repeated using other paragraphs. Students would find if fun because of the fact that they are "competing".

ACTIVITY 2:

Avoiding false cognates

Activity A:

As an introduction to this activity the teacher can write some words on the blackboard, words such as: "attend", "assist", "principal". The teacher then will ask students to create a sentence using one of the words in a piece of paper. Papers should then be collected and some of the sentences should be written in the board to point out language interference.

After that, the teacher must give students many examples of the most common "false friends" and their meanings.

Finally, the teacher must ask the students to write a composition using ALL the false cognates reviewed in the previous part.

ACTIVITY 3:

Dealing with the order of words

Activity A:

First of all, the teacher should show the students a group of sentences and then the students will be asked to decide whether the sentence is well-written or not. If not, they will be asked to correct the sentences.

Sentences should be like these:

- Our classroom is a group of students, basically.

- He likes to visit fun places.

- America is a country enormous.

Students then would correct the sentences that need to be corrected and then the teacher must point out the main purpose of the exercise. Notice this exercise is oriented to explain the location of adjectives and adverbs. The teacher must focus his/her class around this topic but this activity can also be extended to cover another language features.

At this point, the teacher should explain the order of words when it comes to adverbs and adjectives.

After that, the teacher will tell the students to form groups of two people. Give each member of each group five cards containing images. One of the group members shall receive cards containing objects and the other shall receive cards containing images of persons performing activities. Here are some examples:
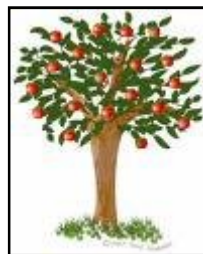
After receiving the cards, one of the group members will show the other a card containing a picture. The Student who the picture is shown to must describe the object using adjectives or adverbs (adjectives for objects and adverbs for actions).

Activity B:

The teacher will ask students to write a composition describing their rooms. Then, they will be asked to write about the way they clean it. The teacher will also ask them to use adverbs and adjectives to write both parts of the activity.

Note: Teachers can also use this activity to work with pluralisation of adjectives.

ACTIVITY 4:

Legends and Inflections

This activity may combine the four language skills in one so it is very important for the teacher to capture the main skill he/she wants to emphasize and focus on it.

First of all, the teacher will perform a little review about the simple past or any other structure that implies inflections. Then, the teacher will perform an oral exercise asking the students about local legends.

Next, the teacher will divide the classroom into three or four groups (depending on the number of students). Each group will receive an image showing an item. For example:

After that, students will be asked to create a legend and write it down in a piece of paper. Finally, one student will read the legend out loud and the other members of his/her group will perform a skit about it.

This activity may be helpful to work in the use of inflections. Since it revolves around legends, it should be obvious that the students may use the past form of verbs to describe their ideas. As a teacher, you may use this activity to remark this English feature.

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ANNEXES

ANNEXE 1

QUIZ

NAME: _____
DATE: _____

Please, read the questions carefully and answer.

1. - Do you know any recepies? Write one.

2. - What' is your favourite subject at high school? Why?

3. - What do you like about yourself? Why?

4. - What are you going to do on the next vacation?

5. - What are your hobbies?

6. - What would you like to do after finishing highschool?

7. - Explain the importance of learning English.

8. - Do you think learning other languages is important? Why?

9. - Describe your childhood.

10. - What do you like to do in your free time?

11.-Which is your favourite soccer team? Why?

12.-What do you think your high school needs?

13.-Write a short paragraph about the worst day in your life

14.-Who are your best friends? Why?

15.-What are you going to do next weekend?

16.-Who is your favourite singer? Why?

17.-Describe your hometown problems.

18.-Do you play any sports? Are you good at them?

19.-What kind of movies do you like? Why?

20.-Describe your family.

ANNEXE 2

Here are the rules for when to use "A, An or The":

- a = indefinite article (not a specific object, one of a number of the same objects) with consonants
  She has a dog
  I work in a factory.
- an = indefinite article (not a specific object, one of a number of the same objects) with vowels (a,e,i,o,u) .
  Can I have an apple?
  She is an English teacher.
- the = definite article (a specific object that both the person speaking and the listener know)
  The car over there is fast.
  The teacher is very good, isn't he?

- The first time you speak of something use "a or an", the next time you repeat that object use "the".
  I live in a house. The house is quite old and has four bedrooms.
  I ate in a Chinese restaurant. The restaurant was very good.

- DO NOT use an article with countries, states, counties or provinces, lakes and mountains except when the country is a collection of states such as "The United States".
  He lives in Washington near Mount Rainier.
  They live in northern British Columbia.

- Use an article with bodies of water, oceans and seas - My country borders on the Pacific Ocean

- DO NOT use an article when you are speaking about things in general
  I like Russian tea.
  She likes reading books.

- DO NOT use an article when you are speaking about meals, places, and transport
  He has breakfast at home.
  I go to university.
  He comes to work by taxi.