


## The Structuring of English Sentences by Chadian EFL Learners

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### ABSTRACT

Recent studies have shown that there is a positive attitude and an increase motivation in the learning of English language by Chadian learners. Despite this, the learners' linguistic performances remain poor especially in their written productions which are often characterised by grammatical deviances and incomprehensible sentences. This study investigates several kinds of deviances that occur in the structure of English sentences produced by Chadian learners of English as Foreign Language (EFL). The study was carried out using corpora as the method for data collection. Thus, data were drawn from 175 authentic narrative paragraphs written by 175 Terminale A4 students from Lycée Adoum Dallah, Moundou in Chad. The analyses were based on Interlanguage and Error Analysis Theories. Findings revealed that miss elective errors were the widespread errors committed by Chadian learners of EFL as this category represents 39.17% of deviances. The results also indicate that sentences produced by Chadian learners of EFL were frequently affected by additive errors (27.76%) and omission errors (26.47%). Lastly, the study equally found that misordering errors were less committed as this category of errors represents a small proportion (6.58%) of deviances. These categories of errors were attributed to French language influences and intralingual factors.

### 1. Introduction

English language was introduced in Chad by missionaries early before independence in 1960. Forty years after, it became the most popular foreign language in Chad with the advent of oil exploitation in 2003. Since then, an increasing number of students have been motivated in learning English language. Safotso and Tompte (2018) confirm that there is positive attitude and motivation towards English as a Foreign Language (Henceforth EFL) as they conclude that Chadian learners all have a high instrumental motivation and their interest in learning English for communicative and travelling purposes is quite significant. Motivation here means having a strong desire to learn in order to communicate through speaking or writing.

Despite this motivation which serves as an important factor influencing the learning of foreign languages, it could be observed that linguistic performances of Chadian learners of EFL, notably their written productions, are extremely poor. The low performance in writing, is for instance, usually characterised by abundant grammatical deviances as well as incomprehensible sentences. At times, learners simply avoid writing essays during class continuous assessments or official exams. All these problems are clear indications that writing is a challenging task to Chadian Learners of EFL. This is in accordance with Heaton (1975) who holds that the writing skill is complex.

This study, therefore, examines categories of errors, at the morphological, lexical and syntactic level, which affect the grammaticality as well as the intelligibility of English sentences produced by Chadian Learners of EFL. These categories of error include errors of omission, errors of addition, errors of selection and errors of ordering.

### 2. Literature review and theoretical considerations

Errors committed by learners of English as Foreign Language have received a considerable attention from SLA researchers since 1980. In fact, much research revealed that the most frequent errors committed by learners of EFL were related to articles and prepositions. For example, in his error analysis, Seah (1980) found that English verbs, articles, prepositions and word order posed

a lot of difficulties to Chinese learners of EFL. Later on, Bader (1988) analysed errors in written productions of Arab learners of English and revealed similar findings as he found that the most frequent errors made by Arab learners of EFL include articles, prepositions. Similarly, Saara (2010) investigated common English language errors made by Oshiwambo, Afrikaans and Silozi first language speakers through a corpus of 360 essays. Findings revealed that the most common errors committed by students included tenses, prepositions, articles and spelling. In the same vein, Promsupa and Brudhiprabha (2017) investigated grammar error types in English writing of Thai students and found that the most frequent errors were singular/plural errors, article errors and preposition errors. In addition, other researchers (Fatemeh, 2017; Owu-Ewie & Williams, 2017) investigated errors in essay writings and found that the most common English language errors made by students included articles and prepositional errors. More recently, Sanaa (2019) explored essay writing among Saudi female learners at the departments of English, Majmaa'h University. The results showed that the most frequent types of errors made included, among other things, prepositional errors, articles errors and tense errors.

Other studies showed that items such as word order, subject-verb agreement, word choice and spelling were areas where learners of EFL encountered serious difficulties. For instance, Connell (2000, as cited in Sompong, 2014) analysed the kinds of errors Japanese students made on tests which required full written sentences. The results showed that the use of subject in a sentence, and general order created more problems than other grammatical aspects. Moreover, Chada (2004) investigated errors in students' written works and found that the most frequent errors committed by students are word choice errors, subject-verb agreement, word order errors. Al-Khasawneh's (2014) study on errors in paragraphs written by Jordanian Learners of EFL confirmed Chada's work (2004) as he found that the most common errors made by Jordanian students included spelling, word order and subject verb agreement. In like manner, Fadi (2014) analysed errors in English paragraphs written by EFL learners at Ajloun National University in Jordan. Fadi's findings were in accordance with the previous studies (Al-Khasawneh, 2014; Chada, 2004; Connell, 2000) as his study revealed that errors committed by learners included spelling, word order and subject-verb agreement. Then, Sokeng (2014) investigated difficulties that bilingual level 1 Francophone students in the Department of Bilingual Studies of Yaoundé University faced in English. Findings showed that the most salient grammar errors also included subject-verb agreement and word order.

Results of some studies rather revealed categories of errors which occurred in writing compositions of EFL learners. Olsen (1999, as cited in Sompong, 2014) carried out research in English written by Norwegian EFL learners. The results showed that less proficient learners had higher number of grammatical, orthographic and syntactic errors, which can be attributed to cross-linguistic influence. Sattayatham and Honsa (2007, as cited in Sompong, 2014) yielded similar findings as their study showed that the most frequent errors were at the syntactic and lexical levels. In addition, Sereebenjapol (2000, as cited in Sompong, 2014) conducted a study to analyse the main types of errors occurring in the discussion sections of scientific theses published in 2000 at MAHIDOL University. Findings revealed that the most frequent errors occurred in the categories of syntax, lexis, morphology and spelling. Then, Sholihatun (2013) analysed types of errors on the use of English article in descriptive texts and found three types of English article errors, notably, omission, addition and substitution errors that occurred in students' descriptive writings. Elsewhere, Putri and Dewanti (2014) analysed grammatical errors in writing narrative texts of learners of EFL at Airlangga University Surabaya and found that students frequently omitted inflections such as -s, -es, -ed and -ing. Omission errors were equally investigated by Kusumawardhani (2017) who found that omission of auxiliary, articles, countable and uncountable nouns, apostrophes and prepositions were the most frequent errors in the learners' English narrative compositions. Recently, Gayo and Widodo (2018) investigated errors that occurred in the written productions of Indonesian learners of EFL and found that the most frequent types of errors are omission, addition, misformation and disordering errors. Some of these errors occurred at the morphological level and include inflections, prepositions, articles, copula be, pronouns, auxiliaries and determiners while others occurred at the syntactical level and include the passive voice, tense, noun phrase, auxiliary, subject-verb agreement and determiner.

Lastly, Handayani, Ihsan and Mirizon (2019) analysed theses written by post graduate students and found that syntactic errors such as subject-verb agreement, tenses, redundancy, article and pluralisation were the most frequent errors while lexical errors such as wrong selection of verb and adjective were still made by students.

This review shows that much attention has been given to learners' errors throughout the expanding circle described by Kachru (1985). However, no research has been carried out to determine the kinds of errors that hinder the proficiency of Chadian learners of EFL. Hence, the present study investigates categories of grammatical errors in narrative compositions of Chadian learners of EFL.

A significant part of EFL studies consist in analysing learners' errors. In this section, the main views of errors are presented and two contemporary approaches of errors which form the theoretical framework for this study are discussed.

Researchers view errors in diverse ways. Corder (1967) considers it as a device learner use to learn, while Seah (1980) holds that they are deviations from the norm of the target language whether phonological, syntactic or semantic. Based on Chomsky's concepts of competence (the underlying system of rules mastered by the speaker-hearer which is used in actual performance) and performance (the actual use of language which, though based on linguistic competence, may involve non-linguistic factors such as lapses of memory, tiredness, distraction and other psychological states), Corder (1967) makes a distinction between "errors" and "mistakes", holding that errors are systematic deviations from the target language revealing the learner's transitional competence, whereas "mistakes", are the product of chance circumstances or errors of performance owing to lapses of memory, inattention or fatigue. Brown (2000, as cited in Al-Khresheh, 2016) categorises errors in terms of 'global' or 'local'. Global errors might hinder communication by preventing understanding of the intended meaning. Local errors might stop comprehension of the intended meaning. Taking into consideration its multiple aspects, error is considered, in this study as, a signal that learning is taking place and a deviation from the standards of the English language as well.

Theoretically, with regard to Contemporary approaches to L2 Errors Analysis, several theories have been developed to analyse L2 errors. There are, for example, Generative Grammar, Contrastive Analysis, Error Analysis and Interlanguage Analysis. However, the theoretical framework for this study is based on Corder's (1974) Error Analysis and Selinker's (1969) Interlanguage Analysis.

The Error Analysis approach was established by Stephen Pit Corder with the aim to describe errors committed by L2 learners (Al-Khresheh, 2016). It is a procedure used to identify, categorise and explain the errors committed by L2 learners. The effective investigation of L2 errors should be carried out through certain stages; collection, identification, description and explanation (Ellis, 1994).

The first stage refers to the collection of corpus while the second stage identifies errors. As far as errors identification is concerned, Corder (1974) states that to identify the presence and nature of an error, an interpretation of the learner's utterances or sentences is necessary. The description stage classifies errors and categorises them as omission errors, selection errors, addition errors, and misordering errors. (1) *Omission errors* appear when a student leaves a required item for an utterance out of a sentence that he/she constructed. (2) *Selection errors* can be done by selecting an incorrect element. (3) *Addition errors* are done by adding unnecessary elements. (4) *Misordering errors* refer to a wrong placement of an item in the sentence. However, Ellis' (1994) classification makes a distinction between errors of performance and errors of competence. Errors of competence can be caused by applying the rules of the Target Language wrongly while errors of performance are the result of committing mistakes repeatedly in language use.

The last stage explains causes of errors. Explaining causes of errors involves determining their sources in order to account for why they were made (Ellis & Barkhuizen 2005, as cited in Al-Khresheh, 2016). Generally, L2 learners' errors are attributed to two major sources or linguistic factors namely, interlingual and intralingual interference (Brown, 2000; James, 1996 as cited in Al-Khresheh, 2016).

Interlanguage or the theory of transfer, is a term adopted by Selinker (1972) from the term 'interlingual'. According to him, the notion of the transfer of linguistic entities from one language to another is an adaptation of the psychologist's concept of "transfer of training". Selinker associates "prior experience" with the native language, and "current learning" with the second language. In other words, interlanguage states that the learning of a task is either facilitated or impeded by the previous learning of another task- depending on the degree of similarity or difference between the two tasks. Moreover, Interlanguage Analysis holds that in learning a target language, learner's language is influenced by different processes such as; i) borrowing patterns from the native language, ii) extending patterns from the target language, iii) expressing meanings using the words and grammar which are already known ( Richards & Schmidt, 2002, as cited in Seah, 1980 ). Therefore, Interlingual errors are errors which are caused by the impact of the L1/mother tongue or by the use or non-use of elements, structures and meanings from L1 while producing the target language at all linguistic levels. It is also seen as a process in which learners use their knowledge of the L1 in learning the L2. Learners translate word for word idiomatic expressions, vocabulary and even the grammatical rules of their L1.

As far as intralingual errors are concerned, several researchers (James, 1998; Norrish, 1983; Richards, 1974; Richards & Schmidt, 2002, as cited in Seah, 1980) argue that they are caused by the effect of the target language itself. They explain that intralingual errors occur during the learning process of the second language at a stage where learners have not really acquired the

knowledge of the target language. Therefore, they resort to using learning strategies such as false analogy, overgeneralisation, ignorance of rules, restrictions, simplifications, avoidances, overproductions, carelessness, incomplete application of rules, induced errors which are sources of errors.

In this study, Ellis (1994)'s process for errors investigation through collection, identification, and classification and explanation stage is adopted. In addition, errors are explained based on interlanguage and intralanguage theories.

### 3. Methodology

Corpus was used as the collection method for this study. Thus, data gathered from learners' corpora consisted of 175 authentic narrative paragraphs written by 175 *Terminale A4* students from Lycée AdoumDallah of Moundou in Chad, during the second term of 2019 -2020 academic year. The instrument used to collect data was an essay composition test. For this purpose, 175 students were assigned to write a narrative essay.

The topic was in accordance with the types of essays and themes recommended by the national curriculum. Instructions of the topic was as follows; *Write an essay of between 15-20 lines on the following topic: What are the consequences of deforestation in Chad? Suggest some solutions to this problem.*

The test was set in three distinct *Terminale A4* classes during their respective English periods. After collection, the scripts were, first of all, marked. The marking stage aimed at identifying morphological, syntactic and lexical errors which occurred in each text. The identified errors were classified in four categories according to Corder's taxonomy of errors which includes omission errors, addition errors, misselection errors and misordering errors. Lastly, errors were explained in the frameworks of interlanguage and intralanguage influences.

### 4. Data presentation and analyses

Data drawn from learners' corpora were presented in tables in forms of frequencies and percentages. The Table below presents the distribution of scripts collected.

Table 1: Distribution of scripts

Classes	Number of scripts	Percentages
TA4-1	63	36%
TA4 -2	49	28%
TA4 -7	63	36%
Total	175	100%

This table shows that there were 63 students in TA4 (1) representing 36%, 49 students in TA4 (2) representing 28%, and 63 students in TA4 (7) representing 36%, for a total of 175 students who sat for the test

Table 2: Overall view of errors categories

Classes	Omission	Addition	Misselection	Misordering	Total
TA4 -1	117	121	129	29	396
TA4 -2	64	71	148	20	303
TA4 -7	44	44	56	7	151
Total	225	236	333	56	850
Percentage	26.47%	27.76%	39.17%	6.58%	100%

Table 2 provides the overall view of error categories. This table indicates that misselection errors were the widespread errors committed by Chadian learners of EFL as this category represents 39.17% of deviances. Addition errors and Omission errors were equally frequent errors made by learners as they represent 27.76% and 26.47% of deviances respectively. Lastly, it could be seen that misordering errors were less frequent as this category represents 6.58% only.

The written productions of Chadian learners of EFL were characterised by all categories of deviances. The following analysis is focused on omission errors, addition errors, misselection errors, and misordering errors.

**4.1. Omission errors**

Omission errors appear when a learner of foreign language leaves a required item in his/her sentence. Table 3 below displays the distribution of subcategories of omission errors.

Table 3: subcategories of omission errors

No	Sub-categories	Frequencies	Percentages
1	<b>Morphemes</b>	45	20%
	morpheme -s (64.44%)		
	morpheme -e (13.33%)		
	morpheme -ing(11.11%)		
2	<b>Concord</b>	31	13.77%
	withto be(51.61%) withotherverbs(48.38%)		
3	<b>Determiners</b>	39	17.33%
	Definite: the(71.79%) Indefinite : a(28.50%)		
	<b>Prepositions</b>	39	17.33%
4	to (41.02%) of (48.71%)		
5	<b>Copula</b>	23	10.22%
	To have (17.39%)		
	To be (78.26%)		
	To do (4.34%)		
6	<b>Wh-words: Which</b>	4	1.77%
7	<b>Infinitives</b>	1	0.44%
8	<b>Verbs</b>	6	2.66%
9	<b>PersonalPronouns</b>	8	3.55%
10	<b>Conjunctions: and</b>	5	2.22%
11	<b>Complements</b>	7	3.11%
12	<b>Nouns</b>	3	1.33%

The table above shows that in this category of errors, the omission of morphemes has the highest percentage (20%), the omission of determiners represents ( 17.33%), the omission of prepositions (17.3%), the omission of concord (13.77%) and the omission of copula to be (10.22%). Errors in other subcategories such as Wh-words, infinitives, verbs, pronouns, conjunctions, complements and nouns were not considerable as they range between 1.77% - 1.33% .

This wide range of omissions clearly indicate that Chadian learners of EFL are still at a stage where they have not acquired English knowledge, or they have not yet mastered sets of rules which should enable them to generate correct sentences. These errors of competence strongly support SLA theory which maintains that our performance is influenced by our linguistic competence (Chomsky, 1965, as cited in Seah, 1980; Krashen, 1985).

The following excerpts illustrate the most frequent errors of omission committed by Chadian learners of EFL. Cases of omission are indicated by \* . Underlined words are also deviances; however, they are treated in other sections of addition, ordering or misselection errors. Correct forms of deviant sentences are italicized.

(1) The consequence of deforestation the climat\* change. This sentence shows that the ending –e is omitted from the word climate.

The correct form is: *The consequence of deforestation is climate change.*

(2) We are going to take many measure\* to protect. In this sentence, the plural morpheme –s that should be at the end of measure is left out. The correct form is: *We are going to take many measures to protect (the environment).*

(3) The people to low up \* rain. In this sentence, the determiner *the* is left out before rain.

The correct form is: *People delay the rain (fall).*

(4) \*Solution to solve the deforestation in country Chad and sacivilation in people. The determiner *the* is omitted again in this sentence.

The corrected form is : *The solution to solve deforestation in Chad is sensitization of people.*

(5) The person plante a lot of eviter problem to\* desertification. In this sentence, the preposition *of* which is required before the word desertification is left out.

The corrected, form is: *People plant a lot of (trees) to avoid problem of desertification.*

(6) The consequences of deforestation in your country is\* several. This sentence shows that the subject-verb agreement is not applied. The subject which is consequences should agree with the verb that should be are. The corrected form is: *The consequences of deforestation in your country are several.*

(7) He cute\* for one surface assez large for his agriculture. The subject-verb agreement is again omitted in this sentence. The corrected form is: *He cuts trees to get a quite large field for his agriculture.*

(8) We\* going to sensibility the population to stop the cut abusive of tree. This sentence shows that the copula *to be* is omitted. The corrected form is: *We are going to sensitise the population to stop cutting trees abundantly.*

#### 4.2. Misordering errors

Misordering error occurs when an item is wrongly placed in a sentence. The table below shows that the misplacement of adjectival phrases has the highest percentage which is 39.28% of ordering deviances. The wrong placement of prepositional phrases represents 17.85%, word-order 14.28%, and adverbs 5.35% of ordering deviances. Other subcategories include ditransitive verbs, degrees, adverbial phrases, preposition *of* and the definite determiner whose percentages range from 3.57% to 1.78% of deviances.

These deviant placements of items in the sentence show that the English syntax poses serious difficulties to Chadian learners of EF. The observation here is that there is a general tendency for the learners to arrange elements of the sentence like in French language. Thus, these misordering errors result from the great influence of French (L1) on their English performance (L2). These deviances obviously corroborate Selinker's theory of transfer which holds that L1 influences L2.

Table 4: Repartition of misordering errors

No	Sub-categories	Frequencies	Percentages
1	Adjectival phrases	22	39.28%
2	Prepositional phrases	10	17.85%
3	Word-order	8	14.28%
4	Noun phrases	3	5.35%
5	Adverbs	3	5.35%
6	Ditransitive verbs	2	3.57%
7	Degree	2	3.57%
8	Words in interrogatives	2	3.57%
9	Adverbial phrases	1	1.78%
10	Preposition of	1	1.78%
11	Determiner the	1	1.78%

The following are excerpts of the most frequent misordering errors. Misplaced items are indicated by \*.

(1)The cut of trees is a phenomén's\* natural. The noun phenomén's is wrongly placed in this sentence. It should be placed after the adjective natural. The corrected form of the sentence is: *The cut of trees is a natural phenomenon.*

(2) This push people in an exode\* rural. The noun exodus should be placed after the adjective rural. Thus, the corrected form of the sentence is: *This pushes people to rural exodus.*

(3) The solution of me\* is sensitisation of the population. The phrase "of me" which is incorrect, serves as a prepositional phrase. It should be placed at the beginning of the sentence. The corrected form of the sentence is: *In my opinion, the solution is sensitisation of the population.*

(4) Retard the rain in our country\* avancies. The prepositional phrase "in our country" is wrongly placed. It should be put either at the onset or the end of the sentence. Thus, the corrected form of the sentence is: *The delay of rain advances in our country.*

(5)My solution to solve this problem is not cutting down trees of the push\*. It is the letter *b* that should be at the beginning of the word. Thus, the corrected form is :

*My solution to solve this problem is not cutting down trees of the bush.*

(6) The fayer\* brouse is a problem of deforestation. The right order of this word is *f, i, r, e*. The corrected form of the sentence is : *Bush fire is a factor of deforestation.*

(7)We have firstly\* the irregularity of the weather. The adverb "firstly" is misplaced in this sentence. It should be placed at the beginning. Thus, the corrected form of the sentence is:

*Firstly, there is the irregularity of the weather.*

#### 4.3 Addition errors

Addition errors occur when learners add unnecessary elements in the sentence. The table below provides a general view of this type of errors. In fact, the table shows that the addition of the definite determiner was the most frequent error committed by Chadian learners of EFL, as it received the highest percentage which is 52.11%. This deviance is followed by the addition of morphemes such as -s, -ed, -ing, -e, which represent 15.67% of the addition errors. The addition of prepositions *of* and *to*, as well as the addition of verbs represent 12.28% and 11.86% of the addition errors type respectively. Other addition error subcategories occurring in addition of nouns, quantifiers, pronouns, demonstratives, possessives and *wh*-words were less significant as their percentage range from 4.23% to 0.42%.

It is important to point that the table below indicates that written productions of Chadian learners of EFL were strongly influenced by their L1 grammar rules which is the French language. This influence mostly appears, for instance, through the addition of morpheme -s and the determiner *the*. Other subcategories of addition errors which occurred in the addition of prepositions *to*, *of*, *in*, and in copula *to do*, as well as in other verbs, are intralingual errors because they are a reflection of the non-mastery of the English grammar rules and the lack of knowledge in English language by Chadian learners of EFL.

Table 5: Repartition of Addition errors

No	Sub-categories	Frequencies	Percentages
1	Morphemes	37	15.67%
	Morpheme -s:62.16%		
	Morpheme-d:21.62%		
	Morpheme-ing:10.81%		
	Morpheme-e:5.40%		
2	Prepositions	29	12.28%
	Of: 51.72%		
	To: 27.58%		
	In: 13.79%		
	From: 3.44%		
	On: 3.44%		
3	Determiners	123	52.11%
	Definite: 96.74%		
	Indefinite: 3.25%		
4	Copula	28	11.86%
	To be: 21.42%		
	To do: 42.85%		
	Other verbs: 35.71%		

5	Nouns	10	4.23%
6	Quantifiers	4	1.69%
7	Personal Pronouns	1	0.42%
8	Demonstratives	2	0.84%
9	Possessives	1	0.42%
10	Wh-words	1	0.42%

The following sentences are provided as evidence of the confusion of rules which occurred in paragraphs. Added items are followed by the sign \*.

(1) The peoples\* destroys\* trees. Unnecessary –sis added to people and destroy. The correct form of this sentence is: *People destroy trees.*

(2) The solutions\*is then the government plantes\* many trees. In this sentence, -s and –e are added to solution and plants. Therefore, the corrected form is : *The solution is that the government plants many trees.*

(3) We can planted\*the three. In this case, the inflection -ed is added unnecessarily to the infinitive plant because modals are usually followed by infinitive without to. Thus, the corrected form of the sentence is: *We can plant trees.*

(4) Give the advice the people protected\* the environment. Here again, an unnecessary -ed is added to the verb protect which is an infinitive. The corrected form is : *Giving people advice to protect the environment.*

(5) The government must sensibilise the\* people for this plantation the\* tree and interdict of not coup the\* tree. In this single sentence, the determiner *the* is added thrice. A possible acceptable form is: *The government must sensitise people to plant trees and forbid them to cut trees.*

(6) Chad must of\*sinbilite population of\*to cut trees. The addition of the preposition *of* occurs twice in this sentence. The correct form is: *Chad must sensitise populations not to cut trees.*

(7) We must regularly to\* build many industries in our country. The preposition *to* is unnecessary added. The correct form is: *We must regularly build many industries in our country.*

(8) The deforestation canto\*put off animals. It could be noticed that in sentences (7) and (8), the preposition *to* is added unnecessarily. Modals are usually followed by infinitives without to. Thus, these sentences could be corrected as: *We must regularly build many industries in our country. Deforestation can extinct animals.*

(9) The people does\*plante the trees in protege environment. The addition of copula *to do* is not necessary in this sentence. The copula *to do* should be used either in negative or interrogative sentences. Therefore, the corrected form is: *People plant trees to protect the environment.*

(10) The population goes\* have not water. This sentence is a French word- by- word translation. Therefore, the addition of the verb *go* is useless. The corrected form is: *The population will not have water.* Another alternative is: *The population has no water.*

#### 4.4 Misselection errors

Selection errors can be done by selecting an incorrect element.

Table 6: Repartition of misselection errors

No	Sub-categories	Frequencies	Percentages
1	<b>Prepositions</b>	43	12.91%
	of : 23,25%		
	for: 13.95%		
	by : 9.30%		
	to : 39.53%		
	in : 9.30%		
	on : 2.35%		
over: 2.35%			
2	<b>Use of French words</b>	89	26.72%
3	<b>Nouns</b>	64	12.21%
4	<b>Verbs</b>	54	16.21%
5	<b>Tense</b>	7	2.10%



6	<b>Relative Pronouns</b>	11	3.30%
7	<b>Modals</b>	1	0.30%
8	<b>Demonstratives</b>	2	0.60%
9	<b>Noun phrases</b>	7	2.10%
10	<b>Determiners</b>	12	3.60%
	Definite: 83.33%		
	Infinite :16.66%		
11	<b>Quantifiers</b>	4	1.20%
12	<b>Possessives</b>	9	2.70%
13	<b>Adjectives</b>	13	3.90%
14	<b>Conjunctions</b>	3	0.9%
	and : 66,66%		
	or: 33.33%		
15	<b>Adverbs</b>	2	0.60%
16	<b>Copula to be</b>	3	0.90%

The table above shows that misselection errors which occurred in the selection of French words received the highest percentage (26.72%) of misselection errors type. Other subcategories which were frequently committed appeared in wrong selections of nouns, verbs and prepositions as they represented 19.21%, 16.21%, and 12.91% respectively. Less frequent misselection errors occurred in wrong choices of tense (2.10%), relative pronouns (3.30%), modals (0.30%), demonstratives (0.60%), noun phrases (2.10%), determiners (3.60%), quantifiers (1.20%), possessives (2.70%), adjectives (3.90%), conjunctions (0.9%), adverbs (0.9%) and copula to be (0.9%).

These figures mean that Chadian learners of EFL usually resorted to using French words in their written performances. This learning device is attributable to the limited vocabulary size of learners (Mbaiornom, 2019). As far as misselections of other items are concerned, they are a clear illustration of the low level of the linguistic competence which prevents learners from using appropriate words.

The following excerpts shed light on subcategories of misselection errors which characterised Chadian learners' writings. Misselected words are indicated by \*. Underlined words are errors; however, they are not treated in this section.

- (1) We have the disparition\*for animals. *Disparition* is a French word. The appropriate word for this context is disappearance or extinction. Thus, the possible accepted form is: *There is the extinction of animals.*
- (2) The deforestation causes the deplacement\* of many people. Just like in the preceding sentence, *deplacement* is a French word. The word which suits the context is *displacement*. Therefore, the correct form of the sentence is: *Deforestation causes the displacement of many people.*
- (3) I ask my people to stop cauting threes\*. There is a misselection of *threes* which is wrongly spelled. The right choice of word is *trees*. The corrected form is: *I ask my people to stop cutting trees.*
- (4) We have miss\*of precipitation abundament\*. The noun *miss* does not fit the context. In addition, the word *abundament* is a French word. The accepted form is: *There is lack of abundant precipitation.*
- (5) The deforestation gives\*the desertification. The right verb for this context is the verb *cause*. Thus, the accepted form is: *Deforestation causes desertification.*
- (6) Chad know\* big\*consequences of deforestation. The verb *know* and the adjective *big* used in this sentence are problematic. The verb that fits this context is *face*, and the adjective is *considerable*. The corrected form is: *Chad faces considerable consequences of deforestation.*
- (7) It is place of\* heart in\* Africa. Prepositions used in this sentence are not appropriate. The corrected form is: *It is placed in the heart of Africa.*
- (8) The Chad is menace\_of\* deforestation. The preposition *of* is also misselected in this sentence. The corrected form is: *Chad is threatened by deforestation.*

For further evidences of deviances, consider excerpts in the appendix.

## 5. Discussion

This study has revealed that the structuring of English sentences produced by Chadian learners of EFL has significantly deviated from the English Grammar standards. As a result, the grammatical ability to understand the great majority of sentences produced is highly affected.

The analysis has shown that a significant number of errors committed were attributed to transfer influence. For example, the abundant use of French words (39.28%) as well as considerable additions of definite determiner (96.74%) obviously resulted from the strong influence of the French language. These empirical evidences support the language transfer theory which claims that interlanguage is a process in which learners use their knowledge of the L1 in learning a foreign language (Selinker, 1972, as cited in Seah, 1980). The structuring of English sentences produced by Chadian learners of EFL was highly influenced by French language. This influence mostly appeared in forms of French vocabulary. It could also be observed that sentences produced resulted either from the use of French grammar or from a word for word translation.

Moreover, the analysis has also revealed that many other errors made were induced by intralanguage influences. For instance, occurrences of omission of the definite determiner (71.79%), concord with the copula *to be* (78.26%), and morphemes *-s* (62.16%) illustrate the intralanguage influence. These errors are competence errors because, according to several researchers (James, 1998; Norrish, 1983; Richards, 1974; Richards & Schmidt, 2002, as cited in Seah, 1980) learners are at a lower stage where they have not really acquired the knowledge of English.

It is obvious that errors committed by Chadian learners of EFL were due either to language transfer or interlanguage influence, but does it mean that learning has not actually taken place?

Though these errors are a clear indication of a low level of writing proficiency in English, however, it does not mean that learning has not taken place or the knowledge of English was not absolutely acquired. Foreign language is learnt through error process. When learning a foreign language, developmental errors are expected to occur. Nevertheless, after multiple feedbacks and error treatments, learners will end up consolidating their knowledge. It is important to point that minor cases of successful bits of language identified from the excerpts in this study resulted from this process. With regard to errors significance, Hendrickson (1987, as cited in Seah, 1980) argued that foreign language errors are rather a signal that actual learning is taking place.

Therefore, as far as errors committed by Chadian learners are concerned, it could be said that learning has taken place but to a lesser extent. In this perspective, it could be concluded that errors committed by Chadian learners of English indicate that they have actually learnt English at a lesser extent but the dimension of English language knowledge that remains to be consolidated is quite considerable.

The structuring of English sentences produced by Chadian learners of EFL is not only impacted by interlanguage and intralanguage influences, but also by pedagogical factors. In his investigation on the teaching of vocabulary to Chadian learners of EFL, Mbaïornom (2019)'s study revealed that less learning took place through the Grammar- Translation Method. This approach is still in use in Government High Schools in general, and particularly in Lycée Adoum Dallah, Moundou where this study was carried out. In this approach, it could be observed that the focus is rather on grammar which is mainly taught through translation. In addition, no attention is given to the development of writing skill and, required stages such as practices and evaluations are totally absent from the teaching process.

In the light of what is said above, it could be concluded that different types of errors that affect the structuring of English sentences produced by Chadian learners of EFL were caused by French influences, intralingual factors and pedagogical factors. These multiple influences make the learning of foreign languages a very challenging task.

## 6. Conclusion

This study has revealed that the syntax of the vast majority of sentences produced by Chadian learners of EFL is incorrect from the grammatical point of view. This finding certainly reinforces existing theories of language transfer and intralingual influences as errors committed by learners have been induced by learners' French background, their low level in English competence and some pedagogic factors. Nevertheless, this result indicates that learners are less proficient in writing.

Therefore, to significantly reduce negative effects of these factors, it seems necessary for educational stakeholders, notably, pedagogic inspectors and English teachers to reconsider the existing teaching approach of Grammar. In this regard, grammar should be taught inductively with subsequent practices in class, and learners should be taught how to write narrative, descriptive and argumentative paragraphs as well. Of course, the prevailing positive attitude of Chadian students toward the learning of

English (Safotso & Tompte, 2018) is a key asset; however, effective grammar teaching approaches are needed to help learners make significant progress in their performances. This study was limited to the written production of 175 participants from one Government High School in Chad. Data obtained from these participants could not be generalised to all secondary schools in Chad. The data dealt with issues relating to this specific research topic. In the future, other researchers can carry out investigation on other institutions and why not go beyond the aspect of grammar to include investigations on phonological problems that emanate from learners' spoken productions thereby influencing their performances in English language.

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**APPENDIX: Sample of learners corpora**

- 1.The deforestation is systems in your country Chad.
- 2.The cup of the tree is in phenomen's natural.
- 3.Particularly, the people is cup of the tree.
4. My suggest some solutions to solve this problem is are not the cup in the tree.
5. My one dispositions suggest some solutions to solve this problem is not cut down the tree to push.
- 6.The people copeine many arbre some difficile to cut down.
- 7.Some solution to solve the deforestation in country Chad and sacivilation in people.
- 8.The deforestation is the consequence of l'avancement of desers.
9. Will do not rain.
- 10.We going to sensibly the population in the village to stop the cut abusive of tree.
- 11.The country her Chad a several consequences of deforestation are is abusive coup the trees, the vent of violent,the destruction of l'environement, the burn of broussed.
12. The government must sensibilise the people for this plantation the tree and interdict of not coup the tree.
- 13.Deforestation is destroyed of fores.
- 14.The deforestation in your country is the action of woman.
- 15.This is the cut lot a or the plantes.
- 16.The fayerbrousse is a problem of deforestation.
17. To talk about de suggestion some solution, the statt must make an effort to send the agents
- 18.The government must mobilising the population of to put end of cut the plantes.
19. The deforestation is definition destruction the fore and the consequences are lot to see.
20. The people going to plant tree.
21. Because of destruction environment disparution the animals.
- 22.Fayer of the brouss is not chose to make.
- 23.Because destruction augment forte chaleur.
- 24.No abundance of the rain.
25. The government proposition the information your people not cut wood and not burn deforestation.
26. Deforestation is the cut abusive the tree.
- 27.The Chad is menace of deforestation and the bush-burnt.
28. The country met problem is deforestation.
- 29.The government given the country the solution to solve this problem to arret in cut abusive of trees.
- 30.The government fought the cut tree.
31. What are solution.
32. Deforestation is the place that there haven't tree.
33. There have problem on the habitation.
34. If there examined in the nord for the countrie, many peopilssoffer like they are in the iron.
- 35.The person plainte lot of eviter problem to desertification.
36. The deforestation is the mean by what the people cut the trees.
- 37.If there are the deforestation, it don't rain much also.
- 38.There are irregularity of rain in the area where deforestation is present.
- 39.This push the people in an exode rural.
- 40.The consequence in the crise economic.
41. Have it the consequences in Chad?
- 42.There are a lot of difficulties that we have not jump out.
- 43.The deforestation give your difficulted in country Chad.
- 44.My country Chad is more and more destruction for deforestation.
- 45.The true solutions of deforestation is the protection environment.
46. She well is not cooking.
- 47.We will organisation the week celebration in tree of people in plantation several trees.
- 48.The government must in disposition the energie solar, and gaz, an the preparationon in cookie.
- 49.The consequences of deforestation for in country use more problem is the desert becom, the achaufementclmatique.
- 50.You will planted many trees of lutter of desertification.
- 51.If you cut you will go at prison.
- 52.The consequences of deforestation are many: the change climatique who late the activity economic, agriculture and elevage who provocated the hungry over at people.

53. The solutions some suggest is then the government Chadian use.d pass reboisement plaint the many tree evited the cut down.
- 54.The consequence of deforestation in my country chad to cut down the tree to burn the forest.
55. There are not water.
56. The comsequence is the advance of the desert
57. It giving enni consequences.
- 58.How we can stopper this deforestation?
59. The deforestation cause the degration of environment.
60. This does not rains.
61. The Chad is a country of desertification because come of deforestation.
62. The consequences of deforestation in chad of in soffering in people chad, the increase the temperature, chalaria, the disperition animals, the desert.
- 63.The people going to plant tree.
- 64.Give the advice the people protected the environmental.
- 65.The deforestation caused lot difficult.
66. The country chad a several consequences of deforestation are is:
67. The practice is not got becose is come the consequences of deforestation in to country chad.
- 68.The true solutions of deforestation s the protection environment for government and law formal.
69. We are demands my father are not cut trese.
- 70.Chad meets many consequences of deforestation such as late of rain, lost of trees, the hungry.
71. In my country chad the consequences of deforestation from the people and naturel.
72. If you plante a tree our developpe your country.
73. I have no many idea
74. Government have to find solutions.
- 75.This make from cut the tree of made charbon.
- 76.The people is should plant the three and give sensibilisation the village aren't not cut the three.
77. Chad is acountry hot which 45° c.
- 78.The people must to plante the tree.
- 79.Don't have rainin.
80. The deforestation this does left the tree in a country given.
- 81.the government make forbidden the peoples of cut the tree.
- 82.Government does sensibility the peoples.
83. The problem is which the government take the man for lute contry of deforestation.
84. The children are hungry and thirsty.
85. Etat come to develop the poor.
- 86.I may planted the tree in the field for empeched during in deforestation in your country chad.
87. Deforestation is a mankingarbustury.
88. Planeting the tree.
89. The consequences of deforestation in your country chad are the l'insuffisance the water, l'augmentation the chaleur, come the desert.
- 90.The people does plante the trees in protégé l'environnement.
- 91.Plante many threen before evited advancement of desert.
- 92.The government has make the research.
93. The people who make charccol fine respect regulation.
- 94.She deforestation the plants.
- 95.The peoples plants the tree.
96. This is not good for cute the tree at the forest.
97. L'Etat can interdict the population in the fabrication of charbon.
- 98.The people can plante the arbre of eviting the desertification.
- 99.L'Etat canneteke the loi in interdiction the cup abusible in arbre trees.
100. The deforestation ia the manner the detruyl'environnement.
- 101.Evity the couped the tree.
102. The vegetation chad in important because nourrityanimale.
- 103.He work beaucoup planty the arbre and protégé the environment.
104. The forest is important in the Africa.

- 105 The government of Chad does interdict the peoples for coopic abusive tree.
106. The government do required the peoples to planted tree.
- 107.The deforestation is a action cut the big three.
108. The solution consist is planted tree stoping cut abusive trees.
109. Deforestation in the aversement of desert and vent, of the coupingarbre in foret, feu of brousse, in your county chad.
- 110.We have the disparition for animals.
- 111.Chad is a country who is situy in Afrique centrally.
112. The state take the law the people not cut the plant.
113. The deforestation who is defined that destruction has many consequences who are secheress,famine.
114. The consequence of deforestation in your country chad: secheress, not work, pauvryind people, not pluviometried correct, deplacemntind people.
- 115.Hungry will took place.
- 116.We continuous to cut wood.
- 117.We have so much industries of our country which cause heating.
- 118.We must regular to build many industries in our country.
- 119.We have not big trees who protect the nature.
- 120.Everyone, we must keep our environment.
121. The government must of investigation and resolution the problem.
- 122.Many the peoples are died because of deforestation.
123. We don't the three.
124. We can planted the three
- 125.The deforestation gives deplacement many the peoples this country.
126. It is question the government the metter the pression on the peoples used the gaz.
- 127.The deforestation in your country these coupe abisif in herbre.
128. We cite entre others, activity of man example the cute abusive the three in transformation charbon.
- 129.He cute for one surface assez large for his agriculture.
130. peole must planted another arbre.
131. The desert of chad is come on.
- 132.What are this consequences?
- 133.There does not rain.
- 134.The consequences are lot.
135. The government control the emvironment.
- 136.Chad is country who is climat tropical.
- 137.The population has planted tree of the evited the problem.
138. He is not cut the tree.
139. He goes help the forest of is habitation and person is going sick.
140. The forest in important thing life in humain.
- 141.The government education people.
142. He coup the wood is distruct the environment.
- 143.Chad is in country democracy.
- 144.The man is cut in arbusts.
- 145.There consequences of deforestation is in to blow up.
146. The man and woman coups the foris.
- 147.The desert progresse because of the deforestation.
148. The president Chadian he sencivilised the population for in planted the plantes and the protection.
- 149.The deforestation is detournement of environment.
- 150.The consequences of deforestation is the man wo detournemnt of forest.
151. Retard the rain in our acountryavancies.
152. People of hungry of cut arbre.
153. The people planted the arbre.
- 154.The trees have disappeared.
155. There not tress for the people.
- 156.The consequences of deforestation are more number.
157. The fire of brousse is a element dangerous of deforestation.
158. The cut of street in burn the street.

159. The thirsty, the hungry of the population.
160. They stoping the burn the forest.
161. She gives the hunger in our country.
162. It is consequences the burning the forests.
163. The solution to solve this problem it drive of arrested the deforestation.
164. We must stop to cut wood.
165. We have miss of precipitation abondament.
166. Cut the streets brings desert.
167. The forest is transformation in dessert.