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Maltese to English Language Transfer: Comparative Error Analysis of Year 7 and Year 9 Writing

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Dedication

I would like to dedicate this dissertation to my family

for their continuous support and encouragement.

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Abstract

The present study investigates the role of language transfer in the writing tasks of 11-12 year old (year 7) and 13-14 year old (year 9) Maltese learners of English who follow a track 2 curriculum in a bilingual context. The study's main aims are to identify the extent of language transfer, to determine the language areas influenced by language transfer, and to analyse the role of age and text type on language transfer. The rationale behind this is to explore the pedagogical implications of the findings that can address the negative consequences of language transfer and increase accuracy in writing, and to discuss the findings in light of key language transfer perspectives. The 41 collected writing tasks were compiled into a learner corpus of 7,431 words. Computer-Aided Error Analysis was used to analyse the data. The errors were tagged using a three-level annotation system as the surface structure classification, the language area and source of each morphological and syntactical error was identified. The annotated data was principally quantitively analysed. The findings illustrate that language transfer was not prevalent in the learner corpus. Crosslinguistic influence was mostly evident in the misuse of prepositions, the use of the past simple over the past perfect, and the misuse of indefinite articles. There was no statistically significant association between the two variables: age and text type, and the types of errors. The descriptive data shows that there was an increase in verb errors in the older age group and that more verb errors were found in the narrative writing tasks. These findings shed light on different strategies that can be used for the teaching and learning, and assessment of writing skills, as well as on the importance of adopting translingual practices to reinforce the benefits of crosslinguistic influence and limit possible negative consequences.

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LANGUAGE TRANSFER **AGE** **INTERLINGUAL ERRORS**

INTRALINGUAL ERRORS **MALTESE** **ENGLISH**

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List of Abbreviations

CA	Contrastive Analysis
CAH	Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis
CEA	Computer-Aided Error Analysis
EA	Error Analysis
EFL	English as a foreign language
ESL	English as a second language
FL	Foreign language
IL	Interlanguage
L1	First language
L2	Second language
NL	Native language
OLON	One language only
TL	Target language
UG	Universal Grammar

Chapter 1 : Introduction

1.1 The Context of the Study

Maltese and English are the official languages of Malta, of which the former is also identified as the national language. In fact, the Constitution of Malta (art. V, § 2.) states that “the Maltese and the English languages and such other language as may be prescribed by Parliament […] shall be the official languages of Malta”. Both languages are compulsory components of the curriculum for compulsory education. In fact, the National Curriculum Framework advocates for the development of bilingualism, as well as plurilingualism, as it sustains the importance of “the simultaneous development of Maltese and English” within the junior cycle, and the continued development of the two languages within the secondary cycle (Ministry of Education and Employment, 2012, p. 51). Despite this, the local concept of bilingualism is not as straightforward as speakers of Maltese and English prefer the use of one language over the other in different situations, and to varying degrees (Council of Europe, 2015).

The 2015 Language Education Policy Profile states that in local state schools “Maltese is treated as the main mother tongue and English as the second language of most pupils” (Council of Europe, 2015, p. 17). Although this might describe the language situation of some native Maltese learners, classrooms are becoming increasingly more diverse. Dockrell, et al. (2021, p.2) affirms that “multilingual classrooms are now commonplace, with children speaking a wide range of first languages”. Hence, due to an increase in language plurality within the local schools, Maltese and English cannot always be considered as the students’ L1 and L2 respectively. All this shows that the relationship between Maltese and English is not

straightforward, leading to further interest in the relation and the effect of the two languages on one another.

1.2 Language Transfer and Error Analysis

The status of Maltese and English in Malta highlights that in the local context Maltese and English coexist. This “notion of a continuum of use [between the two languages] serves to successfully account for the complex linguistic behaviour of Maltese speakers” (Vella, 2013, p. 533). In turn, this sheds light on the view that languages do not exist in a vacuum, entirely separate from one another as “it is not necessary to keep the languages apart” since they can impact each other (Knudsen, et al., 2020, p. 2). Cummins’s Model of Common Underlying Proficiency (CUP) shows that “cognitive/academic proficiencies in both L1 and L2 are interdependent, that is, manifestations of a common underlying proficiency [that] makes possible transfer of concepts, skills, and learning strategies across languages” (Cummins, 2016, p. 240). As a result of this interdependency between languages, Daller and Sakel (2012, p. 3) assert that “bilinguals and L2-learners cannot keep their languages completely separate at all times, and features of the deactivated language regularly appear in the language the speaker intended to use”. This leads to language transfer, which, as Odlin (2003) asserts, can be interchangeably referred to as crosslinguistic influence. Language transfer can be defined as “the influence resulting from the similarities and differences between the target language and any other language that has been previously (and perhaps imperfectly) acquired” (Odlin, 1989, p. 27).

Although language transfer can be used in certain pedagogical strategies adopted to facilitate language acquisition, it can also affect language accuracy as it can lead to errors in language production. As a result, Error Analysis (EA) is often

implemented in the use of analsying language transfer as it seeks to explore learners' errors with the aim of identifying their source. As a result of the establishment of EA, learners are believed to "play[...] an active role [in] processing input, generating hypotheses, testing them and refining them" (Larsen-Freeman & Long, 1991, p. 132). Hence, an analysis of the learners' errors can provide an insight into the learners' interlanguage. This can shed light on the reasons for such errors, which can be used to reflect on practices that address these errors within a teaching and learning context.

1.3 The Rationale and Objectives of the Study

The concept of language transfer has been researched in various international contexts, such as Zheng's and Park's (2013) study on Chinese EFL learners, and González's and Hernández's (2018) study on L1 English and Dutch learners of Spanish, as well as in the local context (Tabone, 1992; Camilleri, 2004). However, despite the extensive existent research within this field, two principal lacunae can be identified. Firstly, recent research within the local context does not show the significance of interlingual errors in relation to all the errors present in the learners' production of the TL, and secondly, studies on language transfer and age rarely consider the effect of age among groups of adolescent early bilinguals. For this reason, the present study aims to address these two gaps. The variability in the learner corpus will be anlaysed as the present study distinguishes between interlingual and intralingual errors. That is, it considers errors resulting from language transfer in relation to other errors occurring from different sources as learner corpora allow "the researcher to quantify and compare data in systematic ways" (Ädel, 2015, p. 401). Moreover, to investigate the role of age amongst adolescent bilinguals, this study explores the differences in language transfer amongst 12-year-old and 14-

year-old learners. The differences in language transfer associated with varying text types will also be explored. In sum, the present study will be guided by the following research questions:

1. What is the extent, if any, of language transfer?
2. Which language areas are affected by language transfer?
3. What are the differences in language transfer based on age?
4. What are the differences in language transfer based on text type?

In an attempt to answer these questions, the present study aims to contribute to the existent research of second language acquisition, and, through the study's pedagogical implications, it aims to provide teachers with further insights into how learners rely on their knowledge of the Maltese language when writing in English. In turn, the obtained results can be used to plan and adapt lessons with the aim of addressing interlingual errors.

1.4 Overview of the Dissertation

The present study is organised in six chapters. Following the present chapter, the second chapter presents a review of the existing literature on language transfer. It explores the perspectives on language transfer and the development of the related methods, as well as an overview of the key studies related to crosslinguistic influence. The third chapter presents the adopted methodology. It provides information on the participants, the method used and the data analysis process. The fourth chapter presents the obtained results as it seeks to answer the outlined research questions. Chapter five presents a discussion of the results, and the relevance and pedagogical implications of these results. The seventh chapter

concludes the study by considering the study's limitations and areas for further research.

Chapter 2 : Literature Review

In this chapter relevant theories that explore the concept of language transfer and error analysis, as well as studies that analyse language transfer will be presented. First, the effects of language transfer will be discussed as these are commonly categorised into two: negative and positive transfer. A historical overview presenting the three primary perspectives on language transfer, followed by criticism of language transfer will be illustrated. The methodological approach of corpus linguistics, and the phenomenon of learner corpora will also be explored as the present study is based on an analysis of writing tasks which have been compiled into a learner corpus. The method of error analysis and its limitations is also presented. An overview of key empirical research studies is illustrated, as well as a discussion on the variables that affect language transfer. Lastly, key challenges that researchers encounter in collecting data will be outlined.

2.1 The Effects of Language Transfer on Language Acquisition

Language transfer can be described as the influence of the acquired languages on the production of the TL (Odlin, 1989). Language transfer can have two dichotomous, though not exclusive, effects on language acquisition. It has traditionally been categorised into positive or negative transfer, even though the former has not always received much interest (Jarvis & Pavlenko, 2008). It is the effect of language transfer, which can be perceived only through an analysis of the learners' output, that can be labelled as either positive or negative (Gass, et al., 2013). It can be termed positive when the learners' production of the target language benefits from their knowledge of the first language. In contrast, negative transfer hinders target language acquisition and it presents itself in the learners' errors.

Recent studies show an increasing interest in pedagogies such as translanguaging and intercomprehension, that utilise positive language transfer to aid target language acquisition (Adamson & Coulson, 2015). Nevertheless, negative language transfer remains widely researched across various contexts. This is because, from an interlanguage perspective, negative transfer is considered to be one of the principal sources of errors within the learners' oral and written production of the L2 or FL (Selinker & Lakshmanan, 1992; Ortega, 2009). Since the present study aims to analyse the concept of language transfer by carrying out error analysis, negative language transfer will form the theoretical basis of the present study.

2.2 Perspectives on Language Transfer: A Historical Overview

Different second language acquisition theories have explored the impact of crosslinguistic influence on TL acquisition (Yu & Odlin, 2015, p. 29). Lado's (1957) work introduced the idea of language as the formation of a habit. This kickstarted one of the earliest perspectives on language transfer: behaviourism (Gass, et al., 2013). Skinner (1957), one of the pioneering thinkers of behaviourism, claims that speech is a series of responses conditioned by the speaker's surroundings. If the speaker is rewarded by the listener's response, the speaker is said to acquire language. Thus, according to the behaviourist view of language learning, first language acquisition takes place through this process described as "the establishment of a habit", while second language acquisition results from "the development of a new set of habits" (Gass, et al., 2013, pp. 83-85). In turn, behaviourists believe that during second language acquisition, the former habits interfere with the newly formed habits leading to language transfer (Gass, et al., 2013, p. 85).

The principal concern of behaviourists focuses on analysing negative transfer as crosslinguistic influence was thought of as a process that could hinder, rather than potentially aid second language acquisition. In fact, the term “interference” has acquired pejorative connotations as it is often associated with this particular approach (Jarvis & Pavlenko, 2008, p. 3). According to Stockwell, et al. (1973, p. v) this inevitably led to Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis (CAH). CAH can be described as a predicative approach that identifies potential TL errors by predetermining the differences and similarities between the L1 and the TL (Fisiak, et al. 1981). This approach is primarily evident in the first wave of studies, for example Stockwell, et al. (1973) determined a hierarchy of difficulty by comparing the grammatical structure of Spanish and English. Nevertheless, certain studies on language transfer still adopt contrastive analysis as their preferred method, for example Vâlcea (2020) uses this method to pre-establish variances and resemblances between Romanian and English that might lead to errors in the students’ writing.

Critics of the Contrastive Analysis approach state that at times “cross-linguistic comparisons fail to predict actual difficulties and [the] difficulties predicted do not always materialize” (Odlin, 2003, p. 441). This, and the view that “transfer is not simply interreference” (Odlin, 1989, p. 26), sparked various criticism towards the behaviourist approach. In fact, it instigated the move from the 1950s behaviourist approach to the 1960s mentalist approach towards language acquisition as “from a preoccupation with the role of ‘nurture’ (i.e. how environmental factors shape learning), researchers switched their attention to ‘nature’ (i.e. how the innate properties of the human mind shape learning)” (Ellis, 1997, p. 32). According to VanPatten, et al. (2020, p. 24) Chomsky’s theory of Universal Grammar (UG) is one of the principal theories that put forth this new way of thinking. It claims that UG is

present in every L1 speakers' mind as it is "an innate biologically endowed language faculty", that provides learners with innate knowledge of grammatical rules and that, at times, it exceeds their input of their native language (White, 2003a, p. 20). However, this consideration changes when L2 acquisition is taken into consideration as the learners' L2 output can exceed L2 input because of "a reliance on the L1 grammar rather than a still-functioning UG" (White, 2003a, p. 22).

Although there is a consensus on the belief of first language influence on the L2, there are a number of differing UG hypotheses that disagree on the level of impact of the native language on the TL. White (2003a) identifies three major hypotheses: the Full Transfer/Full Access Hypothesis, the Minimal Trees Hypothesis and the Valueless Features Hypothesis. Those who argue in favour of the former believe that L2 learners can access and transfer the entire L1 universal grammar to acquire the TL (White, 2003b, p. 61). On the other hand, the Minimal Trees Hypothesis, developed by Vainikka and Young-Scholten (1994), shows a lesser degree of L1 grammar influence as it proposes that the initial state of L2 learners constitutes only part of the L1 grammar. Therefore, learners cannot transfer those parts which are unavailable, such as functional and lexical categories (White, 2003b, p. 68). Lastly, through a comparative analysis of English and French, Eubank's (1993/4, p. 194) Valueless Features Hypothesis proposes an even "weaker view of transfer" as even though lexical and functional categories are present in the initial state, they are valueless, or unspecified.

Criticism against the behaviourist approach continued as the importance of the learners' active role in their own language construction took precedence. In line with this, VanPatten, et al. (2020, pp. 35-37) outlines two innovative works that led to the establishment of the interlanguage theory: Corder's (1967) essay that highlights

a revolutionary shift in the view of learners' errors, and Selinker's (1972) essay on the learners' interlanguage. Selinker (1972, p. 214) states that L2 learners create an individual interlanguage which he defines as "a separate linguistic system based on the output which results from the learner's attempted production of a TL [target language] norm". He outlines five different processes that shape the learners' interlanguage: "language transfer", "transfer of training", "strategies of second language learning", "strategies of second language communication" and "overgeneralization of TL linguistic material" (Selinker, 1972, p. 215). In doing so, he "added language transfer or influence as an essential ingredient in L2 acquisition" (VanPatten, et al. 2020, p. 37). In addition, the learners' active role is further emphasised as for language transfer to take place the L2 learners have to make an "interlingual identification" that "unites the three linguistic systems (NL, TL, and IL) psychologically" (Selinker, 1972, p. 229). This can be done either consciously, as learners knowingly rely on their knowledge of the L1 to fill in a gap in their L2 knowledge, or subconsciously, depending on various factors, such as, what learners deem is transferable, or their proficiency level (Ortega, 2009).

Corder (1967, p. 162) maintained that errors should no longer be "dismissed as a matter of no particular importance, as possible annoying, distracting, but inevitable by-products of the process of learning a language". In other words, unlike CA, "the Interlanguage hypothesis sees errors as evidence of L2 learners' strategies of learning, rather than as signs of interference or as the persistence of bad habits" (Frith, 1978, p. 158). Since students' errors provide "evidence of the system of the language that he is using (i.e. has learned) at a particular point in the course", an analysis of such TL errors can provide researchers and teachers with a deeper insight into the students' interlanguage, and a better understanding of crosslinguistic

influence (Corder, 1967, p. 167). As a result, this development saw a decline in CA and a growing interest in Error Analysis (EA) as language transfer studies analysed students' errors to investigate the role of the mother tongue in TL acquisition (Gass, et al. 2013). EA is evident in both early studies and in more recent ones. For example, White (1977) concludes that language transfer is only one source of errors as she makes use of EA to analyse the errors of Spanish adults EFL learners. Warsono (2016) also adopts the method of EA to conclude that language transfer increases as TL achievement of Indonesian learners of English increases.

2.2.1 Criticism of Negative Language Transfer Approaches

As a result of the growing interest in the areas of bilingualism and plurilingualism, the following section will discuss a principal criticism of language transfer directed specifically towards the analysis of negative language transfer. Vallejo and Dooly (2019, pp. 1-2) refer to "the current multilingual shift" as they state that there is a "need to overcome persisting ideologies based on 'monolingualism' dogmas that can limit perspectives of speakers' fluent and hybrid communicative practices into 'one-language-only' (OLON) parameters". This change in perspective towards the importance of multilingualism has given rise to teaching approaches, such as, translanguaging, that reinforce positive language transfer and challenge OLON perspectives. García (2017, p. 258) defines translanguaging as a teaching strategy that takes into consideration the students' entire linguistic repertoire as it "acknowledges that speakers use their languaging, bodies, multimodal resources, tools and artifacts in dynamically entangled, interconnected and coordinated ways to make meaning". Stated otherwise, such pedagogies allow learners and teachers to purposefully, and in an organised manner, make use of both their L1 and L2 to enhance second language acquisition.

As Conteh (2018) affirms, translanguaging aligns with Cummins's model of Common Underlying Proficiency and Linguistic Interdependence Hypothesis, as all three highlight the role of language interdependency on positive transfer within language teaching and learning. On the other hand, a focus on the negative effects of transfer might highlight the adverse impact of interdependency of languages on second language acquisition. For this reason, negative transfer might be perceived as undermining the advantages of plurilingual pedagogies and overshadowing the possibility of positive language transfer. Despite this criticism, accuracy is valued in the writing skills of language, especially in examination settings, as the writing of advanced learners is characterised by accurate use of language (Harmer, 2010, p. 18). An analysis of negative transfer can be beneficial as "students' errors are great sources for improving teaching and learning" (Wu & Garza, 2014, p. 1260). In turn, teachers can use the previously mentioned pedagogies to address such errors. Therefore, an analysis of negative transfer does not necessarily have to contradict the significance of plurilingual approaches, such as approaches in which languages are compared and contrasted to aid TL acquisition, but it can be used to identify language areas which might be challenging for the students, and hence might benefit from such approaches. In addition to the discussed criticism, criticism of language transfer addresses mainly the limitations of error analysis. This criticism will be discussed at a later stage in section 2.3.2.

2.3 The Study of Language Transfer Using Corpus Linguistics

Corpus linguistics can be defined as a methodological approach towards the study of language and linguistics. In order to do so, corpus linguistics makes use of corpora, that is, "bod[ies] of written text or transcribed speech which can serve as a basis for linguistic analysis and description" (Kennedy, 1998, p.7). Biber, et al. (1998,

p. 4) identify four factors that characterise modern day corpus linguistic studies as they state that: they are empirical, they analyse patterns of real-life language use within a corpus, they make use of computers and digital programs to build, annotate and analyse the collected text, and lastly, they can “depend on both quantitative and qualitative analytical techniques”.

Furthermore, Meyer (2004, p. 28) affirms that the study of corpora has “numerous uses, ranging from the theoretical to the practical, making them valuable resources for descriptive, theoretical, and applied discussions of language”. He continues by outlining the following uses: “for creating dictionaries, studying language change and variation, understanding the process of language acquisition, and improving foreign- and second-language instruction” (Meyer, 2004, p. 28). As a result, various language transfer studies make use of corpus linguistic to provide a deeper insight into second language acquisition. For example, to investigate crosslinguistic influence from the L2 to the L1, Ghafarpour and Dabaghi (2017) built a corpus of 71,848 words collected from weblogs produced by Persian speaking migrants to Australia. Their findings show that language transfer was more frequent in the speakers’ use of lexis, and attrition is most likely to occur on this level (Ghafarpour & Dabaghi, 2017).

2.3.1 Learner Corpora

Learner corpus research is a recently developed branch within corpus linguistics. Learner corpora share the same previously discussed characteristics ascribed to corpora, with one principal addition: the collected data is produced by language learners (Meyer, 2004). Gass, et. al (2013, pp. 43-44) outline four central steps in conducting a study using learner corpora: “selecting and/or compiling learner production”, “annotating the data”, “extracting data” and “analyzing and

interpreting" the findings. As Granger (2002, p. 9) maintains "a random collection of heterogeneous learner data does not qualify as a learner corpus". Therefore, before collecting the required data it is important to limit learner variables according to the objectives of the research. The second step is optional and can be conducted in various ways depending on the research questions. For instance, a part-of-speech-tagged learner corpus can be used in studies interested in grammatical categories, while error annotation can be beneficial for interlanguage studies (Granger, 2008). The third step makes use of concordance software to analyse the annotated data. Such software can provide frequency counts of common words or categories, collocations, and they also present the data in context. Lastly, the findings are presented and related back to the theoretical framework that motivated the study (Gass, et al., 2013).

Learner corpora are closely associated with Second Language Acquisition and Foreign Language Teaching research (Granger, 2002). This is because, learner corpora are usually linked to two principal aims, that is, to "contribute to Second Language Acquisition theory by providing a better description of interlanguage [and] a better understanding of the factors that influence it", and to "develop pedagogical tools and methods that more accurately target the needs of language learners" (Granger, 2008, p. 259). Subsequently, learner corpora have become popular within language transfer studies as they have "quickly become one of the most important resources for studying interlanguage" (Borin & Prütz, 2004). As a result, the present study will take on a similar approach. Examples of previously conducted studies include Gayo's and Widodo's (2018) study of Indonesian ESL learners and Ye's (2019) study on Chinese ESL learners. In the former study, Gayo and Widodo collected 77 descriptive writing tasks of 15-year-old students to build their corpus.

Through an error analysis of the collected data, they concluded that language transfer occurs mainly as a result of word-to-word translations (Gayo & Widodo, 2018). Ye (2019) collected 115 writing tasks produced by high school learners aged between 17 and 18 years. He identified three language areas to focus on: polysemes, collocations and multiword units, and found that language transfer was present in all three (Ye, 2019). Further similar studies will be discussed at a later stage in section 2.4.

2.4 Error Analysis

The present study investigates language transfer through an analysis of learners' errors. Hence, the method of error analysis will be implemented, as well as adapted following the recent developments that led to Computer-Aided Error Analysis (CEA). Accordingly, before discussing the limitations of EA that instigated the establishment of CEA, a deeper look at the aims, advantages and steps of EA is significant. Unlike Contrastive Analysis, which solely considers adverse interferences between the L1 and the L2, EA takes into consideration different sources of errors (Al-Khresheh, 2016). This is crucial in understanding learners' interlanguage, as language transfer is not the only source of errors (Richards, 1974). In addition, as Camilleri (2004, p. 5) affirms "for a full appreciation of the significance of [the extent of language transfer], one will have to look at the ratio of [language transfer] errors in relation to all the errors". In fact, Corder (1975, p. 205) affirms that the main aim of EA is to provide "an adequate linguistic explanation of the nature of the errors found in any particular learning situation". In turn, this "methodology of description" is necessary for EA to achieve two types of functions, one applied or pedagogical, and the other theoretical (Corder, 1975, p. 205). This is because "until we are able to give a linguistic account of the nature of learners' errors, we can neither propose

pedagogical measures to deal with them nor infer from them anything about the processes of learning" (Corder, 1975, p. 205).

In order to achieve this, following Corder's (1974) steps, Gass, et al. (2013, p. 103) recommend a number of steps to follow:

Step 1: Collect data

Step 2: Identify errors

Step 3: Classify errors

Step 4: Quantify errors

Step 5: Analyse source of errors

Step 6: Remediate.

Prior to completing the first step it is important that the chosen sample is "representative of one or more combinations of situational and learner factors", depending on the objective of the study (Borin & Prütz, 2004, p. 69). In addition, after completing steps one to 4, in the penultimate the researcher seeks to identify the origins of the identified errors as the different phenomena that effect language acquisition are analysed (Al-Khresheh, 2016). As discussed earlier, Selinker (1972) outlines five processes that characterise the learners' interlanguage. Therefore, language transfer is only one source of errors. Accordingly, Richards (1974) outlines two types of errors: interlingual or interlanguage errors, and intralingual or developmental errors. The former occur as a result of L1 influence and are "systematic errors [...] found in numerous case studies", which can persist for years (Richards, 1974, p. 173). On the other hand, the latter reflect "the general characteristics of rule learning" as they arise because of "faulty generalization [of

rules], incomplete application of rules, and failure to learn conditions under which rules apply within the target language itself" (Richards, 1974, p.174). Although, as Dulay, et al. (1982) affirm this distinction is not always clear-cut, to understand the full extent and effect of language transfer on the learners' interlanguage it is important to consider interlingual errors together with intralingual errors.

2.4.1 Limitations of Error Analysis

Although Error Analysis gives a deeper insight into the workings of the learners' interlanguage, which can in turn lead to pedagogical and theoretical implications, EA has been criticised due to a number of perceivable limitations. Dagneaux, et al. (1998, p. 164) identify five central weaknesses of EA:

Limitation 1: EA is based on heterogeneous learner data

Limitation 2: EA categories are not clear cut

Limitation 3: EA cannot cater for phenomena such as avoidance

Limitation 4: EA is restricted to what the learner cannot do

Limitation 5: EA gives a static picture of L2 learning

The first two weaknesses are methodological (Dagneaux, et al., 1998). Therefore, they can be amended according to the structure of the study. As Dulay, et al. (1982, p. 144) claim "language learning is an interaction of internal and external factors". Thus, "the errors that learners make can be influenced by a variety of factors", such as, learners' native language, age, and TL proficiency (Ellis, 1994, p. 49). As mentioned previously, to avoid the issue of heterogeneity, the researcher should limit the number of external factors as "a well-defined sample of learner language" allows for "clear statements […] regarding what kinds of errors the

learners produce and under what conditions" (Ellis, 1994, p. 49). Moreover, to avoid the second limitation, the classification of errors should reflect the interaction between the various factors influencing language acquisition (Dulay, et al., 1982). In order to do so, categories which are "grounded on non-observable, subjective characteristics and including overlapping categories" should be avoided (Diaz-Negrillo & Fernández-Domínguez, 2006, p. 85). For example, Dulay, et al. (1982), and Corder (1973) recommend the use of descriptive taxonomies.

The latter three limitations are related to the "scope of EA" (Dagneaux, et al., 1998, p.164). The third limitation considers the concept of avoidance, which, as Ellis (1997) maintains, can result from language transfer. TL learners are more likely to avoid using language structures that present themselves differently in the L1 and the TL, as differences between the two languages have a higher chance of leading to negative transfer (Ellis, 1997). Odlin (2006) states that "covert behaviours involving the absence rather than the presence of something can be implicated in cross-linguistic influence". This is because, since avoidance is not explicitly perceivable, EA does not take into account the possibility of this phenomenon. The fourth limitation argues that EA considers solely what learners cannot do. This is true to a certain extent, as even though EA's focus is on learners' errors, as indicated previously, errors do not simply highlight the inabilities of students, but instead they portray the learners' progress (Corder, 1967). Finally, the fifth limitation argues that EA does not show the process of L2 acquisition (Dagneaux, et al., 1998). This weakness can be avoided in longitudinal, as opposed to cross-sectional, studies that analyse learners' errors across a set period of time.

Despite the difficulties in redressing the above limitations, "errors are an integral part of interlanguage and are just as worthy of analysis as any other IL

aspect" (Granger, 2003, p. 466). The value an analysis of learner errors can provide should not be cast aside as a result of such weaknesses. In fact, these weaknesses "do not call into question the validity of the EA enterprise as a whole but highlight the need for a new direction in EA studies", that is, a move towards Computer-Aided Error Analysis (Dagneaux, et al., 1998, pp. 164-165). CEA is an integral part of EA as it sets to redress the limitations of EA, whilst at the same time it reaps the benefits of an analysis of learners' errors. The steps of CEA are presented in section 3.3.

2.5 Empirical Research

The concept of language transfer has been widely researched across the years. Most of these studies have been conducted within an EFL or ESL context, that is, they focus on foreign or second language learners of English. Studies in the local context have also analysed the linguistic features in the learners' writing, for instance, Micallef (2019) analyses the use of possessive structures in the English writing tasks of Maltese students. However, some studies in the local context such as, Camilleri (2004) and Moore (2015), specifically explore the role language transfer has within bilingual learners. In analysing the speakers' interlanguage, such studies do not only shed light on the process of language acquisition, but they can have various pedagogical implications (Huntley Bahr, et al., 2014; Cabrera Solano et al., 2014). Whereas some studies predetermine a particular language aspect to focus on, for instance, morphological transfer (Lowie, 2000) or more specifically the students' use of delexical verbs (Kittigosin & Phoocha-roensil, 2015), other studies are data driven as they determine the affected language areas while analysing the collected data (Camilleri, 2004; Hu, 2006).

In addition, such research can make use of readily available corpora, such as Moore's (2015) study, or else researchers can choose to build their own learner

corpus as they conduct an interlanguage analysis to determine the presence, or lack of, of language transfer, for example, Ye (2019). In order to do so, researchers tend to make use of EA or CEA (Wu & Garza, 2014; Ye, 2019), while others prefer using other methods, such as CA (Chan, 2004). Overall, most research shows evidence of language transfer as two types of errors: interlingual and intralingual errors, are usually identified (Gayo & Widodo, 2018; Kittigosin & Phoocha-roensil, 2015). Despite this, in some studies crosslinguistic influence is not so prevalent (Camilleri, 2004; Huntley Bahr, et al., 2014). Some also provide a list of affected language areas and they determine the frequency of language transfer in each category (Hu, 2016; Wu & Garza, 2014).

Table 2.1 presents a more detailed overview of the key empirical research studies mentioned above. Since a lot of studies have been conducted within this area of research, for the purpose of the present study I have narrowed down the studies to include ones that investigate crosslinguistic influence in the speakers' TL written, as opposed to oral, production, and ones that include adolescent participants. This is because the present study will also abide by these two factors.

Date	Author/s	Title	Context	Aims	Sample Size	Corpus	Results
2014	Cabrera Solano, et al.	Spanish Interference in EFL Writing Skills: A Case of Ecuadorian Senior High Schools	Ecuadorian EFL learners	To investigate the effect of language transfer on the students' FL writing skills and to identify the most common interlingual errors.	351 senior high school students	A test in the form of a narrative writing task of around 100 to 150 words each	76% of participants tend to think in Spanish and translate their thoughts in English, resulting in language transfer. Many of the interlingual errors were made up of vocabulary and grammatical errors, particularly verbs.
2004	Camilleri	Negative Transfer in Maltese Students' Writing in English	Maltese bilingual learners of Maltese and English	To determine the extent of negative transfer, to investigate the workings of language transfer, and to identify different types and sources of errors.	100 form 5 students who were preparing for their SEC examinations	Homework essay scripts	Although there was evidence of language transfer, mainly in the learners' use of prepositions, verbs and idioms, it was not as dominant. Language transfer resulted mainly from literal translation between the two languages.
2004	Chan	Syntactic Transfer: Evidence from the Interlanguage of Hong Kong Chinese ESL Learners	Chinese ESL learners whose L1 is Cantonese	To determine to what extent is the learners' L2 output influenced by their L1, and to explore any changes in language transfer based on TL proficiency.	65 university students and 322 secondary school students in from 3 and form 6 classes	Two free writing tasks per participant, and two elicitation tasks made up of translation tasks and grammaticality judgment tasks	Many learners tend to think in their L1 before writing in their L2. Hence, many surface structures of the learners' IL were similar to that of the L1. Syntactic transfer was more common in complex structures and

							there was a higher frequency of language transfer among learners of a lower proficiency level.
2018	Gayo & Widodo	An Analysis of Morphological and Syntactical Errors on the English Writing of Junior High School Indonesian Students	Indonesian ESL learners whose L1 is Bahasa. English is compulsory from elementary school	To analyse the learners' errors and describe the source and type of errors.	77 students aged 15	Descriptive writing tasks of around 150 words	Two principal error types were identified: interlingual and intralingual errors. The former occurred because of language transfer, which resulted mainly from a word-to-word translation technique.
2016	Hu	A longitudinal study on the extent of Mandarin influence on the acquisition of English	Mandarin-speaking students of English as an L2	To investigate the role and frequency of language transfer within the students' errors.	48 first year high school students	Written compositions, of around 110 words each, about one of the four given topics	A little over half the errors were a result of language transfer. Language transfer was more prevalent in grammatical and syntactical errors, especially in verb and tense misuse, as opposed to lexical errors.
2014	Huntley Bahr, et al.	Bilingual spelling patterns in middle	Spanish-English bilingual learners	Amongst the study's aims, the ones related to language transfer	20 middle school learners aged	Narrative and expository writing tasks in both	Language transfer was minimal and it presented itself through borrowing and code-switching

		school: it is more than transfer		focused on exploring language transfer in students' misspelling in three categories: phonology, orthography and morphology. The study also aims to compare errors across languages.	between 11 and 14 years, from which 160 writing tasks were collected	Spanish and English	techniques between the two languages. This was more prevalent in English, as opposed to Spanish misspellings.
2015	Kittigosin & Phoocha-roensil	Investigation into Learning Strategies and Delexical Verb Use by Thai EFL Learners	Thai EFL learners	To analyse the source of errors of the learners' misuse of delexical verbs, and to identify changes as a result of TL proficiency	80 participants aged between 14 and 16 years grouped into two groups: low and high TL proficiency	20-item gap-filling cloze translation test	Findings point towards three sources of errors: language transfer, synonymy and overgeneralisation. The primary source in both groups was language transfer.
2000	Lowie	Cross-linguistic Influence on Morphology in the Bilingual Mental Lexicon	Dutch ESL learners	To investigate the effect of L1 morphology on the acquisition and use of L2 morphology across different proficiencies	120 learners categorised into three levels: the lowest level containing students in the third year of secondary school, the	Translation task and gap-filling task	Evidence of language transfer in all three levels of proficiencies. Learners' production relies on the L1 through translation. The effect of similar L1 and L2 morphology was strongest at the highest proficiency level.

					second level containing students from the fifth year of secondary school and the highest level containing first year students of English		
2013	Manzano Vázquez	Lexical transfer in the written production of a CLIL group and a non-CLIL group	Spanish EFL learners	To determine differences in the number of lexical transfer errors between CLIL (content and language integrated learning) and non-CLIL students, that is, between students who have a higher degree of TL exposure in comparison to their peers, and to investigate the effect of TL	36 grade 7 students, of around 12 years, grouped into two categories: CLIL and non-CLIL	English compositions about a given topic of around 60-80 words each	Language transfer was less evident in CLIL students when compared to non-CLIL students. However, changes in language transfer resulting from TL proficiency were not significant.

				proficiency on language transfer.			
2015	Moore	The productive knowledge of the use of collocations of Maltese learners of English	Maltese learners of English	To investigate the learners' the learners' ability to produce English collocations	2238 students doing their secondary education certificate, intermediate matriculation and advanced matriculation examinations	Corpus of Learner English (CLEM v2.0) made up of 933,063 words from the writing tasks of the national examination scripts	Results related to crosslinguistic influence show that two sources of errors were identified: intralingual and interlingual transfer. Most of the students' problems with the use of collocations arise as a result of the influence of the learners' native language.
2014	Wu & Garza	Types and Attributes of English Writing Errors in the EFL Context- A Study of Error Analysis	Mandarin Chinese EFL learners	To determine the most common errors in the students' writing and to find out the cause of such errors.	Five 6th grade EFL students in an Elementary school aged between 11 and 12	40 writing tasks, between 100 and 150 each, differing in topics	The most common grammatical errors were those of subject and verb agreement. These resulted mostly from native language influence, as there were more interlingual, as opposed to intralingual, errors.
2019	Ye	Chinese to English Lexical Transfer Errors in the Writing of Rural Senior	Chinese ESL learners	To investigate lexical transfer errors caused by L1 polysemes, collocations and multiword units.	120 students attending their 3rd year of Senior High School, aged between 17 and 18	Writing tasks of various text types, including letters, narratives, prose, fairytales, and argumentative writing tasks	Language transfer was present in all the 3 presented language areas. Interlingual errors were most dominant in the use of polysemes, followed by collocations,

		High School Students			years. However, the work of 5 participants was discarded due to illegibility.		and lastly multiword units.

Table 2.1: An Overview of Key Empirical Research Studies

2.5.1 Variables Affecting Language Transfer

Language transfer can be affected by various variables. Daller and Sakel (2012, p.9) claim that studies that analyse language transfer and its changes alongside potential variables are “interesting because [they] may give us more insight into constraints on transferability [and] which conditions make transfer more or less likely”. As stated previously, Ortega (2009) outlined multiple factors that influence the learners’ interlingual identification. Together with these, other potential influential factors include: length of language exposure, similarities between languages, learners’ knowledge of other languages, and age, the latter of which will be one of the principal variables to be explored throughout the present study (Jarvis & Pavlenko, 2008). These variables can also overlap. For example, Daller and Sakel (2012, p.8) link the role of age within cross-linguistic influence to the learners’ level of proficiency, and ability to academically improve, as they state that “L1 transfer from English is not only important in the early stages of L2 acquisition, but remains influential in later stages if there is not enough positive evidence for the learners to progress in their development”.

Some of the empirical studies mentioned above analysed the role of language transfer alongside some of these variables, for example Chan (2004) investigated the differences in language transfer resulting from TL proficiency, and Manzano Vázquez (2013) outlined the differences in language transfer resulting from language exposure. On the other hand, studies that consider the age factor within crosslinguistic influence tend to focus on three principal effects: “aging”, “age of acquisition, also referred to as age of arrival”, and “age of task (i.e., the age at which the occurrence of transfer was observed)” (Jarvis & Pavlenko, 2008, p. 197). The former relates to the Critical Period Hypothesis, which states that “for a linguistic

system to be fully acquired, it must be acquired by a certain age" (VanPatten, 2020, p. 203). Since it hypothesises that child learners of a second language can acquire an additional language with less difficulty than adult learners, most research that investigates the role of age within second language acquisition focuses on differences between adults and children (Odlin, 2003). Similarly, studies that investigate the effect of age of acquisition, or arrival, on language transfer, that is the impact of the starting point of second or target language acquisition, compare participants of a wide age gap as they typically deal with the difference between early and late bilinguals.

Such studies include Hohenstein, et al.'s (2006) and Montrul's (2010) studies. The former study considers differences in lexical and grammatical transfer of early and late adult bilingual learners of English and Spanish. In this study the participants were asked to provide oral video descriptions of motion events, which were recorded and transcribed. Hohenstein, et al.'s (2006) findings show that overall bidirectional transfer, that is, transfer from the L2 to the L1, was more frequent in late bilinguals as opposed to early bilinguals. Moreover, language transfer from the native language to the second language was only evident in grammatical transfer. Similarly, Montrul (2010, p.295) takes on a bidirectional approach to transfer as her main objective was to "address whether L1 influence in adult L2 learners (late bilinguals) is similar to L2 influence in heritage speakers whose L1 is the weaker language (early bilinguals)". By analysing the oral and written task of native English speakers of Spanish as an L2, she concluded that heritage speakers showed an advantage in some areas, but overall similar effects of transfer in both groups could be detected (Montrul, 2010).

As the above studies show, most comparative studies that explore the effect of age on language transfer focus on differences between adult, or late bilingual, and

child, or early bilingual, learners. However, in his study Sychandone (2016) does not assume a wide age gap between participants, but explores differences in errors in the students' written production across 54 first-, second- and third-year university students. The participants in this study were bilingual speakers of Lao and English. In fact, although Lao is their native language, both languages can be considered as their L1 (Sychandone, 2016). Identifying language transfer was not one of the principal aims of this study, however findings show that crosslinguistic influence was one source of errors that affected the students' interlanguage. The findings showed that the highest percentage of interlingual errors occurred in the writing of second-year students (Sychandone, 2016). Although the participants of this study were close in age and were all early bilingual speakers, there still seems to be a lacuna in similar studies of language transfer and age that consider these two criteria, especially amongst teenage adolescent early bilingual participants. Hence, this latter gap will be addressed in this present study.

2.6 Challenges in Collecting Data

There are a number of difficulties researchers might encounter when conducting research that might lead to data limitation. Salkind (2007, p. 223) states that "one probable reason for […] impediments [in collecting data] is that the nature of the setting, the research problem, the researcher, the researched, the time of research, and the prevailing social conditions vary every time". Therefore, both internal factors, for instance, the researcher's attitudes or lack of planning, and external factors, such as, obtaining access to the data or getting consent, can cause challenges in collecting data. The latter is one of the predominant challenges that researchers face. In fact, Rimando, et al. (2015, p. 2026) claim that "participants who [are] resistant to participate" is a common issue. Similarly, by adopting the

perspective of a student conducting research, Dowse, et al. (2014, p. 35-36) highlight the challenges of obtaining permissions and affirm that “recruitment issues” can also arise.

Moreover, Rimando, et al. (2015) affirms that the location in which the researcher wishes to conduct the study, and the type of information needed can cause various difficulties in collecting the required data. This is especially true when sensitive information is needed, and when the data collection process takes place in sensitive locations, such as, schools (Rimando, et al., 2015). Although there are certain steps that researchers can implement to anticipate and avoid certain difficulties, this it is not always possible. Hence, to deal with challenges “beyond the control of researchers”, Salkind (2007, p. 224) suggests that researchers should “first […] not get perturbed; second, they should study the problem; and third, they should look at possible alternatives”. In addition, to counteract “respondent-based data collection difficulties”, researchers need to be aware of the effects this might have on the quality of the data (Salkind, 2007, p. 225). Thus, at times, the researcher has to adapt the originally planned study to avoid negative implications and inaccurate finings. Some of the mentioned challenges have also been encountered throughout this present study. Therefore, the following chapter will present these challenges, their effects, and any changes implemented to hinder any negative consequences.

2.7 Chapter Summary

Myles (2015, p. 310) claims that “the purpose of SLA [second language acquisition] theory is to better understand the nature of learner language, its development, and what impacts upon both”. Hence, since the present study is interested in exploring the influence of the native language (Maltese) on the learners’ second language (English) this chapter has presented a number of perspectives on

language transfer. Three major theories were broached: behaviourism, the universal grammar theory, and the interlanguage theory. These approaches provide different perspectives on the degree of language transfer, the effect of language transfer, and the way it should be analysed. However, all three confirm the influence of one's native language on target language acquisition. The interlanguage theory claims that the learners' individual interlanguage, in which learners' errors are crucial, shows evidence of language development and learning (Corder, 1962; Selinker, 1972). Accordingly, in order to analyse the learners' interlanguage and what impacts it, this theory proposes the use of EA. The present study will adopt the interlanguage theory as its theoretical basis. In fact, since the following chapter will explore the method of EA in relation to the present study, the benefits and limitations, as well as the workings of EA, were analysed. An overview of key empirical research studies was also presented. Most of these studies show evidence of crosslinguistic influence, and highlight the pedagogical implications of such findings. Moreover, some studies view the impact of varying variables, including age, on language transfer.

Chapter 3 : Methodology

In this chapter the methodology employed throughout the research study will be outlined. An analysis of the epistemology, the methodology and the design that frame this study, as well as a description of the pilot study, will be presented first. Following this, a description of the participants and the built learner corpus will be detailed. The steps employed throughout the data collection process will be presented next. In this section the collection of the data from schools, and the analysis of the tagged data through an error tagging system will be presented. A reflection on the reliability and the validity of the data, the ethical considerations and the data limitations will conclude this chapter.

3.1 Epistemology, Methodology and Design

Waring (2017) affirms that research is framed by the intertwined relationship between ontology, epistemology, methodology and the methods employed by the researcher. In order to identify an ontological position, Waring (2017) raises the issue of whether there is one single reality or truth in the world that can be identified, or whether there are multiple realities. The research questions that guide the present study seek to arrive at one single truth as the aims of these questions are to prove or disprove the existence of language transfer, to determine the affected language areas and to identify any changes resulting from age, and text type. Hence, for the purpose of the present study, a realist approach has been undertaken. The corresponding epistemological position is that of positivism. In fact, Waring (2017, p. 16) describes a positivist approach as believing it is “possible to achieve direct knowledge of the world through direct observation or measurement of the phenomena being investigated”.

In accordance with a positivist epistemological approach, a quantitative approach has been adopted as the main concern of quantitative research is measurement and the quantification of data. In doing so “quantitative approaches can illuminate important trends and patterns” (Savela, 2018, p. 41). Hence, this type of research is appropriate for the present study as it allowed for the measurement of the relationship between the dependent variables, that is the source of errors, the affected language points, and the surface structure categories, and the independent variables, that is age and text type. This has been achieved through the implementation of a cross-sectional design as the data was collected from a specific point in time. In fact, the students’ writing tasks form part of the 2019 English Language Annual examination scripts.

3.1.1 Pilot Study

A pilot study was conducted on twelve chosen writing tasks before manually analysing, transcribing and tagging the entire learner corpus. The collected 41 writing tasks were categorised according to their respective year group, and they were further subcategorised into different text types. In order to determine which writing tasks were to be included in the pilot study, two writing tasks from each text type and year group were chosen at random. This was done to ensure that the twelve chosen writing tasks were a representative sample of all the variables. Following this, the data were analysed, corrected and annotated manually. Each code used was represented in a table. The writing tasks were then transcribed and the previously identified morphological and syntactical errors were tagged using a three-level error tagging system. The annotated data was inputted into a corpus analysis software, *AntConc (3.5.7)*. A word list was generated to note the frequency and the rank of every word and code in the corpus. The concordance tool was used

to carry out a search for every tag separately and to note the frequency of every tag. The results obtained can be found in Table 3.1.

Surface Structure Taxonomy	
Addition	35
Disordering	12
Misformation	140
Omission	55
Morphology: Part of Speech	
Adverb error	11
Conjugation error	22
Definite article error	7
Determiner error	4
Demonstrative pronoun error	1
Derivational suffix error	2
First conditional error	3
Indefinite article error	5
Indefinite pronoun error	2
Noun error	2
Noun plurality error	1
Personal pronoun error	14
Preposition error	33
Possessive noun error	2
Possessive pronoun error	6
Quantifier error	2
Subject verb agreement error	5
Additional verb error	2
Auxiliary verb error	6
Infinitive verb error	4
Modal verb error	2
Missing verb error	2
Phrasal verb error	2
Morphology: Verb Tenses	
Past perfect simple instead of present perfect simple	1
Past perfect simple instead of past simple	2
Present continuous instead of past continuous	1
Present perfect simple instead of present continuous	1
Present simple instead of present participle	2
Present simple instead of past simple	4
Present participle instead of past simple	1
Past simple instead of past perfect	3
Past simple instead of present continuous	1
Simple future instead of present simple	1
Morphology: Spelling	
Extra letter/s	12

Extra spacing	3
Jumbled up spelling	7
Missing letter/s	14
Missing spacing	7
Letter/s replacement	6
Word replacement	16
Swapped letters	4
Syntax	
Adverb placement error	3
Adjective placement error	1
Noun phrase error	6
Subordinate Clause error	1
Transitive verb error	4
Verb placement error	1
Source of Errors	
Interlingual error	39
Intralingual error	203

Table 3.1: Pilot Study Results

These results highlight the most common tags that were to be expected in the continuation of the data collection and annotation process. However, during the analysis of the remaining data, more tags that determine the affected language areas were added to the ones found in the pilot study. Moreover, the pilot study anticipated the frequency differences between interlingual errors and intralingual errors, and indicated misformation and omission as the two most common surface structures affected. In addition, the pilot study ensured that the proper steps to conduct a computer-aided error analysis of the data were being followed so as to increase reliability and obtain valid results.

3.2 Participants

The participants of this study consisted of 41 students, from which 23 were year 9, 13-14 year old, students in 2019, and 18 were year 7, 11-12 year old, students in 2019. The selection criteria were based on the school sector, the nationality of the students, and the learners' academic level. The participants were chosen from two different state schools, one middle school and one secondary

school, belonging to different colleges as these were the only schools which granted the required permissions to access the writing tasks. In order to analyse the effect of Maltese language transfer on the students' written English, the participants were all of Maltese nationality, and to aim for a homogenous sample, all participants followed a track 2 curriculum. The original study proposed to collect writing tasks from the 2020 Annual English Language examination scripts of year 8 and year 10 writing tasks to analyse the most recent data. However, since the 2020 examinations did not take place due to COVID-19 restrictions, the writing tasks were collected from 2019 Annual English Language examination scripts of year 7 and 9 students. This change in year groups ensured that all the students still formed part of the school cohort at the time of the data collection process. Moreover, the original study proposed to collect a total number of 200 English writing tasks, 100 from year 8 and 100 from year 10, from four different State Schools so as to try and collect 50 writing tasks from every school: 25 from year 8 and 25 from year 10. However, due to difficulty in obtaining permissions from the Heads of Schools as a result of the uncertainties brought about by COVID-19, this was not possible.

To collect the obtained data, permission from the Directorate of Curriculum, Research, Innovation and Lifelong Learning was requested and obtained. An information letter outlining the study and asking for permission to access the required writing tasks was sent to all Head of Schools in the State Sector. The accepted schools acted as an intermediary to send information letters and opt-out forms to parents and students who fitted the selection criteria on my behalf. Only those potential participants who did not want to participate in this study were asked to send back a signed copy of the opt-out form. These were collected by the school and by myself respectively. In the latter instance, the received opt-out forms were sent to the

school to ensure that I was not given access to these writing tasks. The writing tasks were anonymised by the school before collection.

All the given writing tasks were used in this study, with the exception of one as a result of illegibility problems. The total number of words in the composed learner corpus is that of 7,431 words, from which 2,681 are from the writing tasks of the 11-12 year old participants (year 7), and 4,750 from the writing tasks of the 13-14 year old participants (year 9). This difference in word count is due to the higher number of words the latter are required to write.

3.3 Data Collection: Computer-Aided Error Analysis

Computer-aided error analysis (CEA) has been used for the tabulation and the analysis of errors. As was reviewed in section 2.3.1, CEA was developed to counteract the weaknesses determined in the method of error analysis. Granger (2008, p. 268) defines CEA as a method of "analyzing learner errors on the basis of learner corpora in which error tags and possible corrections have been inserted with the help of a purpose-built editing tool". In fact, CEA is constructed upon an amalgamation of the steps needed to implement EA, highlighted in section 2.3, and the steps needed to build a learner corpus. Dagneaux, et al. (1998, p. 165-166) identify a number of steps one needs to follow to adopt the method of CEA:

1. The learner data is corrected manually and the correct forms are inserted in the text
2. Each error is assigned an appropriate error tag
3. The tag is inserted in the text file with the correct version
4. The error-tagged files are analysed using standard retrieval text tools

In line with these steps, the writing tasks were first corrected manually, and every morphological and syntactical error was error annotated manually. Punctuation errors were not taken into consideration for the purpose of this study. Whilst correcting the errors, Lüdeling and Hirschmann (2015) emphasise the importance of looking at the context to determine the best correction as there can be multiple interpretations of the same error. Hence, throughout this step, the context in which the error occurred was taken into consideration as it helped to provide a possible cue to determine the best fitting correction, especially when there was more than one possible correction. In addition, to limit subjectivity and maintain fairness, all similar ambiguous errors were handled in the same manner (Lüdeling & Hirschmann, 2015). The manual correction was revised twice and the corrections were also checked by an impartial third party to ensure maximum objectivity and reliability. Moreover, whenever a new code was assigned, it was added to the error tagging system as tags "should be very thoroughly documented so as to ensure consistency in the assignation of the tags" (Gilquin & Granger, 2015, p. 427). The writing tasks were then transcribed without codes in separate plain text files to allow for additional feasibility when analysing the data. The raw data was error annotated, that is, tagged using an appropriate error tagging system detailed in section 3.3.1. The tagged learner corpus was revised to ensure that any researcher errors were eliminated.

3.3.1 Error Tagging System

Error tagging systems play a crucial role in describing errors as they offer an "explicit and transparent way of marking errors in a learner corpus" (Lüdeling & Hirschmann, 2015, p. 135). In comparison to EA, which classifies errors into different categories, CEA uses error annotation systems to allocate categories to errors (Lüdeling & Hirschmann, 2015). These categories are assigned in the format of error

tags, that is, specific codes reflecting the chosen classifications. Granger (2003, p. 467) identifies four factors that render error tagging systems fully effective as she states that they should be “informative but manageable”, “reusable”, “flexible”, and “consistent”. Dulay, et al., (1982) argue against simplistic categories as such systems should provide valuable, yet not excessive, information about the errors. In fact, the error tagging system constructed for this study makes use of a three-level annotation system.

Furthermore, error annotation systems vary according to the preferred classifications, for instance a linguistic analysis or an analysis based on a surface structure taxonomy that annotates “order, omission or redundancy errors” (Diaz-Negrillo & Fernández-Domínguez, 2006, p. 92). Error tagging systems do not have to be limited to merely one category. In fact, James (1998, p. 114) suggests that it would be more beneficial to adapt the above two categories into a “two-dimensional taxonomy”. This is evident in the Cambridge Learner Corpus (CLC) tagset where “the error codes are based on a two-letter coding system in which the first letter represents the general type of error (e.g. wrong form, omission) while the second letter identifies the word class of the required word” (Nicholls, 2003, p. 574). James (1998, p. 114) also suggests that a “three-dimensional” taxonomy can be “invaluable”. For example, in addition to the linguistic categories and a surface structure taxonomy highlighting the cause of errors, Llanos (2014) adds another classification based on the source of errors. Despite this, some researchers, such as Dulay, et al. (1982) and Dangeaux, et al. (1998) advise against annotating systems based on the source of errors as a certain degree of subjectivity is needed to allocate such tags. However, as Lüdeling and Hirschmann (2015, p. 146) assert “the

type and granularity of the error categories depend on the research question", as they provide the rationale behind the constructed error annotating system.

Since the present study aims to identify the extent of language transfer, and to investigate its effect on various language areas and age, a three-level annotation system was used. The first tagset is based on the affected surface structures and it shows "the learner's use of interim principles to produce a new language", that is, it gives evidence to the learner's interlanguage (Dulay, et al., 1982, p. 150). The second tagset highlights the affected language areas. These two are evident in various research, such as Gayo's and Widodo's (2018) study, and the CLC (2003) tagset. The third tagset, as was proposed by Llanos (2014), portrays the source of errors. In certain instances, an identified error was made up of more than one error. In such cases the two errors were identified and a code for each error was given. A list of all the error tags can be found in Appendix A. Together with the error tags, the correct form of the error was also inserted. Each identified morphological and syntactical error was tagged using the following convention:

<#CODE1><#CODE2>original learner error|corrected error</#CODE3>

For example, to mark the incorrect use of the preposition 'for' in the phrase 'the keys for (to) my mum's car', the mark up is as follows:

<#MISF><#PRP>for|to</#INTRA>

The above convention makes use of an XML system. Any additional information that does not make up the original text, known as a markup, is enclosed within <angled brackets> (Hardie, 2014, p. 82). In the above example the first code represents the surface structure taxonomy, the second code represents the language area, and the

third code represents the source of the error. A forward slash before the code signals the end of the markup.

The surface structure taxonomy codes used for the first tagset are based on Dulay, et al.'s (1982) and Gayo's and Widodo's (2018) taxonomies which outline four types of surface structure changes. The first is "omission" which is defined as "the absence of an item that must appear in a well-formed utterance" (Dulay, et al., 1982, p. 154). Next, "addition" is defined as "the failure to delete certain items which are required in some linguistic construction, but not others" (Dulay, et al., 1982, p. 156). The third, as seen in the previous example, is "misformation" and it occurs when there is "the use of the wrong form of the morpheme or structure" (Dulay, et al., 1982, p. 158). Lastly, "disordering" or "misordering" is described as "the incorrect placement of a morpheme or group of morphemes in an utterance" (Dulay, et al., 1982, p. 162). The last two tags used to identify the source of errors were adopted from Llanos's (2014) error tagging system as he tagged each recognised error as either being interlingual, intralingual, or unknown. However, the latter was not included in the present error tagging system as, in line with Hu's (2016, p. 63) classificatory model, all errors that were not considered to result from language transfer, that is could not be "traced back to or be explained by [the] L1", were tagged as intralingual errors. On the other hand, the tags used for the second tagset were data driven and not predetermined. That is, the data itself determined which codes were to be included in the error tagset concerned with the affected language areas related to morphology and syntax.

3.4 Data Analysis

After the data was transcribed and error annotated, it was analysed using *AntConc*. First, the total number of errors in the learner corpus was determined. This

was done by inputting the entire learner corpus onto *AntConc* and generating a concordance search for the interlingual and the intralingual errors tags. The total number of each was added to identify the total number of errors. To ensure that the obtained total was correct, the sum of the surface structure taxonomy tags in all the writing tasks was calculated to ensure that the sum amounted to the previously proposed total. This was also repeated by adding up the total number of the affected language areas. This was done for all the writing tasks individually and for every identified category to make sure that all the errors were coded.

The next step was to determine the frequency of the tags that compose the error tagging system used for the present study. As seen in Figure 3.1, a concordance search for every determined tag was generated and the frequency for each tag was listed for all the writing tasks which were first uploaded simultaneously, and then individually.

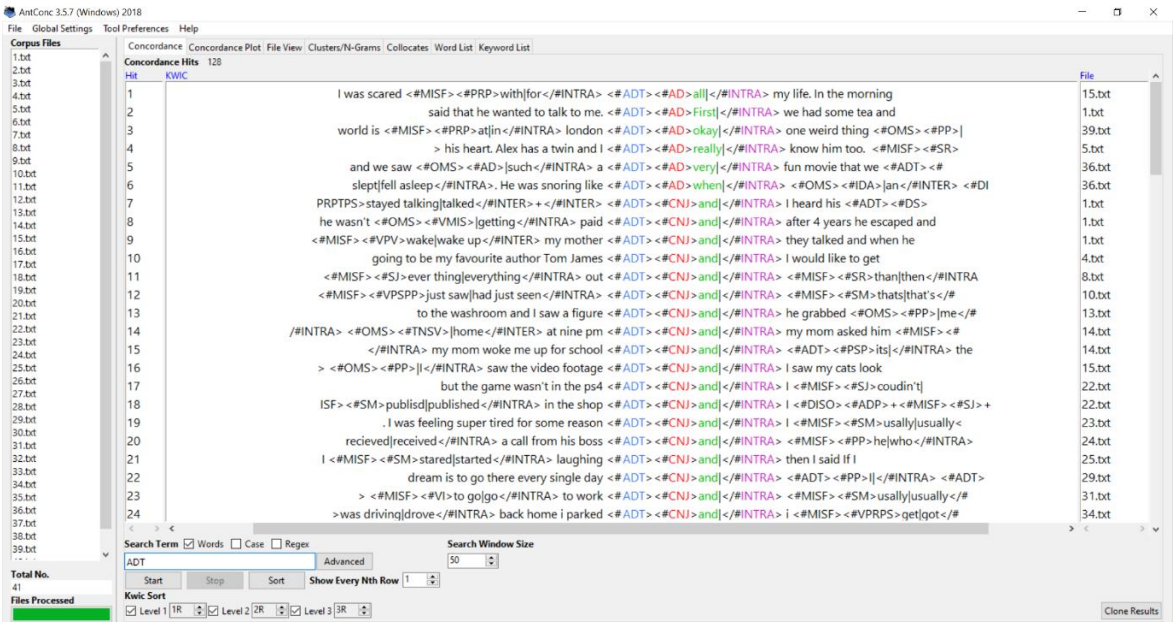


Figure 3.1: Concordance Search for ADT

The writing tasks were then categorised according to the two independent variables: age and text type. First, they were categorised into the two year groups:

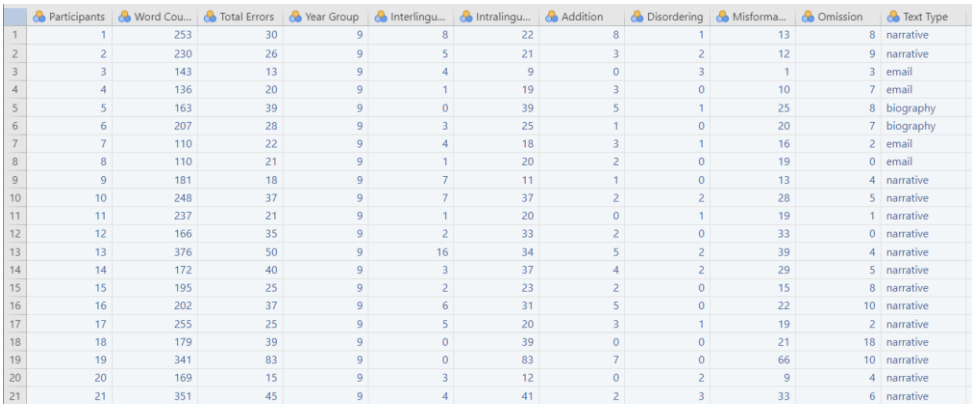
year 7 and year 9. All the year 7 writing tasks were inputted into *AntConc* and a concordance search for every tag was generated once again. The frequency for every tag found in the year 7 writing tasks was listed. This was repeated for the year 9 writing tasks. Next, the writing tasks were grouped according to text type as the analysis of the data indicated text type as another potential variable. Five different text types were identified: a narrative, common to both year 7 and year 9 writing tasks, a biography and an email for the year 9 writing tasks, and a diary entry and a description of a place for the year 7 writing tasks. The categorised writing tasks were inputted into *AntConc* according to their categorisation, and a concordance search for every tag was generated to identify the frequency of each tag according to text type. The writing tasks classified as a narrative, were first inputted together and then separately according to the year group. All the identified frequencies were listed.

The difference in frequency between the dependent variables and the independent variables was analysed. First, the frequency difference in the source of errors in relation to age and text type was determined. The same step was also repeated for the surface structure taxonomies. Next, as can be seen in Appendix B, the different tags were grouped into nine groups: pronouns, nouns, determiners, adverbs, adjectives, conjunctions, prepositions, verbs and spelling. The frequency of the determined grouped language areas was identified and categorised according to the independent variables to determine a significant difference in frequency between the dependent variable of the grouped language areas and the independent variables of age and text type.

A percentage of the frequencies, keeping in mind the wordcount differences amongst the two-year groups, was also found. First, the percentage of interlingual and intralingual errors was worked out to determine the percentage of each in

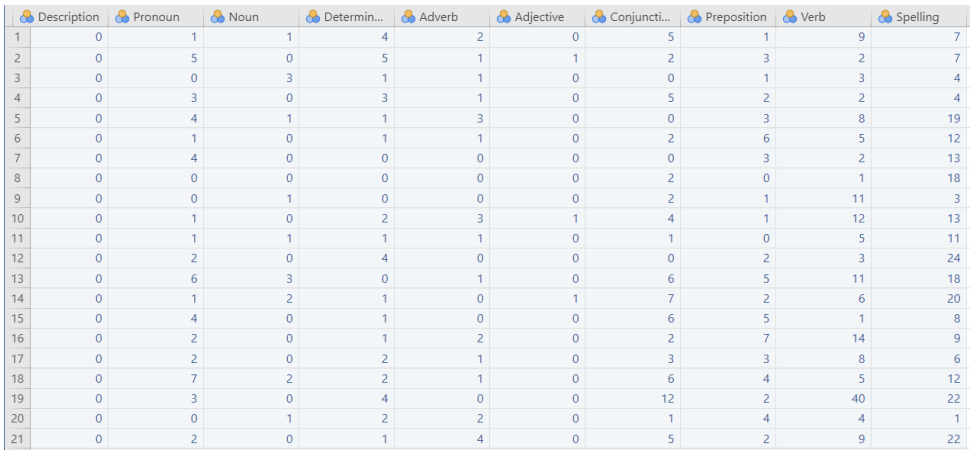
relation to the total errors. This was repeated to determine the percentage of the source of errors in the two age groups respectively, and the different text types respectively. This was repeated for the other dependent variables.

Lastly, crosstabulation of data using chi-square tests were performed in order to discover whether the distribution of errors was statistically significant across these categorical variables: age, and text type. These tests were conducted using *Jamovi (1.6.23)* and they were carried out as they "investigate[…] whether there is a relationship between two categorical variables" (Larson-Hall, 2010, p. 135). In order to do so, the code name of each writing task and the corresponding frequencies for each variable were inputted onto the software. Figures 3.2 and 3.3 present a sample of the data inputting methods.



	Participants	Word Cou...	Total Errors	Year Group	Interlingu...	Intralingu...	Addition	Disordering	Misforma...	Omission	Text Type
1	1	253	30	9	8	22	8	1	13	8	narrative
2	2	230	26	9	5	21	3	2	12	9	narrative
3	3	143	13	9	4	9	0	3	1	3	email
4	4	136	20	9	1	19	3	0	10	7	email
5	5	163	39	9	0	39	5	1	25	8	biography
6	6	207	28	9	3	25	1	0	20	7	biography
7	7	110	22	9	4	18	3	1	16	2	email
8	8	110	21	9	1	20	2	0	19	0	email
9	9	181	18	9	7	11	1	0	13	4	narrative
10	10	248	37	9	7	37	2	2	28	5	narrative
11	11	237	21	9	1	20	0	1	19	1	narrative
12	12	166	35	9	2	33	2	0	33	0	narrative
13	13	376	50	9	16	34	5	2	39	4	narrative
14	14	172	40	9	3	37	4	2	29	5	narrative
15	15	195	25	9	2	23	2	0	15	8	narrative
16	16	202	37	9	6	31	5	0	22	10	narrative
17	17	255	25	9	5	20	3	1	19	2	narrative
18	18	179	39	9	0	39	0	0	21	18	narrative
19	19	341	83	9	0	83	7	0	66	10	narrative
20	20	169	15	9	3	12	0	2	9	4	narrative
21	21	351	45	9	4	41	2	3	33	6	narrative

Figure 3.2: Sample 1 of the data inputting methods



	Description	Pronoun	Noun	Determin...	Adverb	Adjective	Conjuncti...	Preposition	Verb	Spelling
1	0	1	1	4	2	0	5	1	9	7
2	0	5	0	5	1	1	2	3	2	7
3	0	0	3	1	1	0	0	1	3	4
4	0	3	0	3	1	0	5	2	2	4
5	0	4	1	1	3	0	0	3	8	19
6	0	1	0	1	1	0	2	6	5	12
7	0	4	0	0	0	0	0	3	2	13
8	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	1	18
9	0	0	1	0	0	0	2	1	11	3
10	0	1	0	2	3	1	4	1	12	13
11	0	1	1	1	1	0	1	0	5	11
12	0	2	0	4	0	0	0	2	3	24
13	0	6	3	0	1	0	6	5	11	18
14	0	1	2	1	0	1	7	2	6	20
15	0	4	0	1	0	0	6	5	1	8
16	0	2	0	1	2	0	2	7	14	9
17	0	2	0	2	1	0	3	3	8	6
18	0	7	2	2	1	0	6	4	5	12
19	0	3	0	4	0	0	12	2	40	22
20	0	0	1	2	2	0	1	4	4	1
21	0	2	0	1	4	0	5	2	9	22

Figure 3.3: Sample 2 of the data inputting methods

After inputting the information related to each writing task, a chi-square test was carried out to determine any potential statistically significant differences between the errors across the two age groups: 11-12 years and 13-14 years. Similarly, further chi-square tests were conducted to find out whether there is a statistically significant relationship between the dependent variables and age, as well as text type.

3.5 Reliability and Validity

Two of the principal concerns of quantitative research are reliability and validity. The former ensures that the results are consistent and can be replicated, while the latter is concerned with the "integrity of the conclusions that are generated from a piece of research" (Bryman, 2004, p. 28). These two concepts are related as "reliability is the extent to which an instrument makes the same measurement each time it is used" while "validity is the extent to which the measurement made by an instrument measures what the researcher is interested in" (Watson, 2014, p. 45). In order to ensure both reliability and validity, a number of steps have been taken into consideration. Dagneaux, et al. (1998, p. 166) claim that the main aim of CEA, as opposed to EA, is to "ensure consistency of analysis", which in turn will ensure reliability. Creating an error tagging system in which all the codes were continuously updated throughout the error annotation process of the data, has ensured that all similar errors were tagged using the same codes.

Moreover, CEA allows the researcher to view the learner errors in the context in which they occur as, "standard text retrieval software tools", also referred to as corpus analysis software, "view errors in context" (Dagneaux, et al., 1998, p. 166). In fact, the concordance tool on *AntConc*, presents the researched word or tag in its existing context, and the search window size can be increased to increase the surrounding context. There is also the option of viewing the searched code in file

view which highlights it within the entire writing task in which it occurs. This has limited the subjectivity used throughout the correction and annotation of the scripts. This, together with the digitalised learner corpora and digital analysis software, allows for more accurate and reliable results (Diaz-Negrillo and Fernández-Domínguez, 2006, p. 85). The use of CEA and digital software also increase validity of the results as it increases accuracy. Furthermore, since only one writing task per participant was available, it is more difficult to determine what is an error as opposed to a mistake, which is usually accidental. Therefore, for the purpose of this study mistakes were also considered as errors to increase objectivity as much as possible.

3.6 Ethical considerations

Since this study involves raw data collected from schools, a number of ethical considerations were taken into consideration when conducting this study. Firstly, permission to access the required writing tasks was requested and granted from the Heads of School. Following this, parental/guardian and student information letters and opt-out forms were sent to potential participants by the school itself as it acted as an intermediary to send these documents on my behalf. This was done to ensure anonymity. It was also emphasised that participation was entirely voluntary and no negative consequences would have ensued should one not wish to participate. The collected writing tasks were anonymised before collection, and each writing task was given a unique code. To ensure further anonymity the names of the schools do not feature in the study. Moreover, the collected data will be securely stored and will only be used for the completion of this study.

3.7 Data limitations

Quantitative research allows the researcher to “examine patterns across many cases” (Ryan, 2006, p. 21). In turn, this allows for the possibility to “generalize

the findings beyond the cases" (Bryman, 2004, p. 77). One of the limitations of this study is the small size of participant groups which restricts the generalisations that could be made from the patterns observed. This restraint was due to the COVID-19 pandemic and time. To counteract this limitation, this study provides a deeper insight into the situation related to language transfer present in two schools. This was done by increasing the level of detail in the error tags. Rather than making use of general codes that were not specific to the identified error and could be applied to a wider range of errors, the codes chosen are specific, and were categorised into grouped language areas at a later stage. Due to a small number of participants, the analysis is also limited to five different text types, with the majority being narrative writing tasks.

The analysis of detail in quantitative research is limited as "each item can only be examined to a certain extent" (Savela, 2018, p. 41). In fact, a quantitative analysis does not always give enough information about the sample being analysed. However, to provide a more in-depth analysis of the identified errors, I present different examples. These have allowed for various patters to be identified in relation to the nature of language transfer, that is reasons as to how it might have occurred. In addition, although only writing tasks of students whose nationality is Maltese, as noted in the school records, were collected, I had no information which would shed more light into which languages the students spoke in different contexts and whether Maltese was considered to be their first language.

Although this study is based on an epistemological position of positivism, an element of subjectivity was still present as a certain degree of error analysis was based on subjective interpretation. This is mainly evident in the categorisation of the language areas into different groups. To limit this, similar language areas within the

same word class were grouped together, and, whenever possible, objectivity was maintained throughout the error analysis process to ensure validity and reliability of results.

Another limitation of the present study is that no additional information about the learners, such as their general aptitude in the language or as mentioned previously, their preferred language use outside of school, was gathered. In turn, this hindered the possibility of distinguishing between mistakes and errors. Corder (1967, p. 166) suggests that mistakes arise as a result of “memory lapses, physical states, such as tiredness, and psychological conditions such as strong emotions”. However, no such additional information could be collected because of lack of familiarity with the students and also because this study was a cross-sectional one. An analysis of consistency can aid in such a distinction (Ellis, 1997). However, since the collected writing tasks could not be compared to other pieces of writing composed by the students, it was not possible to achieve such an analysis. To counteract this and ensure reliability, all the mistakes and errors in the participants’ writing tasks were identified as errors.

3.8 Chapter Summary

This chapter has presented the methodology used that frames the findings that will be presented in the next chapter. It has given an overview of positivism and quantitative research, and the relationship between the two. The conducted pilot study was presented to determine the validity of the method used. The participants and the composed learner corpus were described, followed by the method of computer-aided error analysis. The rationale behind the constructed error tagging system and a detailed description were given. This led to a description of the steps undertaken in the data analysis process. Lastly, concerns regarding the reliability,

validity, ethical issues and data limitations were considered. The findings will be presented in the following chapter.

Chapter 4 : Findings

This chapter will illustrate the findings of the present study. These will be organised into three principal sections. Firstly, the results obtained from the entire learner corpus will be discussed. In order to do so, the data will be presented according to the previously outlined dependent variables which make up the three tagsets used to code the errors. Hence, this section will present the degree of language transfer, the taxonomy of language errors, and the errors found in each surface structure taxonomy. Following this, the next section will consider the effect of age on these three independent variables as the data from the two age groups will be compared. In addition, the effect of language transfer on the grouped language areas by age will be anlaysed. In the final section the findings highlighting any differences amongst these different types of errors and text types will be presented. The role of language transfer on the grouped language areas by text type will be investigated.

4.1 A Taxonomy of Errors within the Learner Corpus

The learner corpus is made up of 41 (number of words= 7,431) writing tasks from two age groups and five different text types. These text types include: a narrative, common to both year 7 and year 9 participants, a diary entry and a description of place, written by the year 7 participants, and a biography and an informal email, written by the year 9 participants. Table 4.1 illustrates the composition of the learner corpus. In total, there are 1,239 syntactical and morphological errors (16.67% of the sample). The following sections present this portion of the learner corpus in light of the types of errors.

Learner Corpus			
Age Group	**n of Writing Tasks**	**Word Count**	**% of Word Count**
11-12 years	18	2681	36.08%
13-14 years	23	4750	63.92%
Text Type	**n of Writing Tasks**	**Word Count**	**% of Word Count**
Narrative	23	4960	66.75%
Diary Entry	6	847	11.40%
Description	6	755	10.16%
Email	4	499	6.72%
Biography	2	370	4.98%

Table 4.1: The Composition of the Learner Corpus

4.1.1 The Language Areas and Corresponding Groupings

Since the analysis of the errors was data driven, every morphological and syntactical error was identified. As presented in Table 4.2, 59 different language areas were outlined, of which 53 have been identified as morphological areas, and six as syntactical areas.

Language Area	n	% of Total Errors
Morphology: Part of Speech		
Adverb error	29	2.34%
Adjective error	1	0.08%
Conjunction error	122	9.85%
Definite article error	24	1.94%
Determiner error	17	1.37%
Demonstrative pronoun error	10	0.81%
Derivational suffix error	4	0.32%
First conditional error	3	0.24%
Indefinite article error	16	1.29%
Indefinite pronoun error	6	0.48%
Noun error	14	1.13%
Noun plurality error	13	1.05%
Personal pronoun error	59	4.76%
Preposition error	122	9.85%
Possessive noun error	6	0.48%
Possessive pronoun error	12	0.97%
Quantifier error	4	0.32%
Relative pronoun error	7	0.56%
Subject verb agreement error	24	1.94%
Additional verb error	4	0.32%
Auxiliary verb error	20	1.61%

Verb conjugation error	6	0.48%
Infinitive verb error	21	1.69%
Modal verb error	20	1.61%
Missing verb	12	0.97%
Phrasal verb error	7	0.56%
Morphology: Verb Tenses		
Past continuous instead of past perfect continuous	1	0.08%
Past continuous instead of past simple	5	0.40%
Past perfect simple instead of present perfect simple	1	0.08%
Past perfect simple instead of past simple	11	0.89%
Present continuous instead of past continuous	3	0.24%
Present perfect simple instead of present continuous	1	0.08%
Present simple instead of present continuous	1	0.08%
Present simple instead of present participle	2	0.16%
Present simple instead of past simple	59	4.76%
Present participle instead of present simple	1	0.08%
Present participle instead of past simple	3	0.24%
Present simple instead of simple future	8	0.65%
Past simple instead of past continuous	4	0.32%
Past simple instead of past perfect	41	3.31%
Past simple instead of present perfect	2	0.16%
Past simple instead of present simple	7	0.56%
Past simple instead of present continuous	1	0.08%
Simple future instead of present simple	4	0.32%
Morphology: Spelling		
Extra letter/s	64	5.17%
Extra spacing	34	2.74%
Jumbled up spelling	67	5.52%
Missing letter/s	124	10.01%
Missing spacing	13	1.05%
Letter/s replacement	44	3.55%
Word replacement	77	6.21%
Swapped letters	25	2.02
Plural spelling error	5	0.40%
Syntax		
Adverb placement error	15	1.21%
Adjective placement error	3	0.24%
Noun phrase error	8	0.65%
Subordinate Clause error	3	0.24%
Transitive verb error	16	1.29%
Verb placement error	3	0.24%

Table 4.2: Total Errors by Language Area

Table 4.2 also illustrates the frequency of occurrence of each affected language area. The results show that the highest number of errors occurred as a result of the

misspelling of words caused by a missing letter or letters, or omission of punctuation marks that impact spelling. For instance,

example 1: 'I dreamt the whole thing that had **happened** [had happened][1]'

example 2: 'I was crying […] I **coudn't** [couldn't] hold it'

example 3: 'it was a game **caled** [called] Terraria'

example 4: 'I am so sorry but I **cant** [can't] come'

Example 1 highlights the omission of the letter 'e' from the word 'happened'. This sheds light on errors arising as a consequence of difficulties in forming the past participle as it highlights the misuse of the suffix '-ed'. Example 2 demonstrates the omission of phonetically silent letters as the letter 'l' is omitted from the modal verb 'couldn't'. Example 3 points towards the use of a single letter over the required double letter in 'called', and example 4 highlights the omission of punctuation marks through the missing apostrophe in 'can't'.

Other high frequency spelling errors occur because of phonological misrepresentation of words resulting in the spelling of other words. For example,

example 5: 'They **where** [were] expensive'

example 6: 'My father **sad** [said] yes'

example 7: 'she washes me with **soup** [soap]'

As is evident from these examples, entire words are usually replaced with other homophones resulting in spelling errors. In examples 5 and 6, the words are replaced as both words in each instance are phonetically identical, but have different

[1] The correct from of the indicated errors will be represented in square brackets following the error.

meanings and are spelt differently. However, there are also some instances in which words are replaced with others because of similarities in spelling as can be seen in example 7.

Following this, the other two high frequency spelling errors include jumbled up spelling and spelling errors resulting from the addition of extra letter or letters. The errors within the former category include spelling errors that could not be allocated to one specific reason. For example,

example 8: ‘open my chest of **droores** [drawers] to get the extra cable’

example 9: ‘the store **doesnet** [doesn’t] only sell games’

Once again, the words within this category are misspelled principally because they are spelt phonetically. Example 8, indicates the replacement of specific letters and disordered letters as the chosen spelling mirrors the phonetic representation of the word /drɔː(r)s/. Similarly, the omission of the apostrophe and the addition of the letter ‘e’ in example 9 are a consequence of the phonetic representation of the word, /dʌz(ə)nt/, in writing.

Examples within the latter category, that is spelling errors caused by an extra letter or letters, include:

example 10: ‘he was **roughfly** [roughly] at the age of seven’

example 11: ‘I **heared** [heard] something’

In part, these errors can also arise because of phonetic spelling in writing. In example 10 the letter ‘f’ is added to the adverb ‘roughly’ as the spelling mirrors the phonetic transcription /rʌfli/. As seen in example 11, such errors can also arise because of generalisation of grammatical rules. The letter ‘e’ is added to the verb

‘heard’ highlighting the generalisation of the addition of the suffix ‘-ed’ to words in the past simple.

Other high frequency morphological language areas include the misuse of conjunctions and prepositions. Instances of the former include:

example 13: ‘I saw a figure **Øand** he grabbed me’

example 14: ‘I rich man came in and bought me **and** […] put on the shoes and’

example 15: ‘**When** [As] we were going to his house I saw my brother’

Example 13 represents the omission of conjunctions in written lists of events and items as the coordinating conjunction ‘and’ is omitted from the sentence. In contrast, example 14 demonstrates the use of multiple conjunctions over the use of punctuation marks in written lists. In fact, the given sentence could have been broken down into two to avoid this. Example 15 is representative of conjunction errors resulting from the replacement of different conjunctions. In this example the subordinating conjunction ‘as’ is replaced by ‘when’ as a result of language transfer. In fact, the error mirrors the use of the subordinating conjunction ‘meta’ in the Maltese language as no distinction is made between ‘as’ and ‘when’: ***Meta*** *‘konna sejrin iddar tiegħu, rajt lil ħija* (As we were going to his house, I saw my brother)’[2].

Preposition errors, which are equally as common as conjunction errors, include misuse of prepositions of place, prepositions of directions, prepositions of time and prepositions of agent. These are represented in examples 16, 17 ,18 and 19 respectively.

[2] The corresponding translation in the English language will be given within round brackets following any examples provided in Maltese.

example 16: ‘we [arrived] **at** [in] Gozo’

example 17: ‘it ran **at** [towards] me’

example 18: ‘I got in bed **Øat** about 10 o’clock’

example 19: ‘I had to go […] meet **with** a long-lasting friend’

Examples 16 and 17 illustrate the use of the incorrect preposition, example 18 indicates the omission of a preposition and example 19 demonstrates the use of the preposition ‘with’ even though it is not necessarily needed. In fact, the latter example depicts evidence of language transfer as the use of the preposition ‘with’ after the verb ‘meet’ is required in the Maltese language: ‘*kelli mmur niltaqa **ma’** habib kbir* (I had to go meet a long-lasting friend)’.

The other two language areas which can also be considered as high frequency language areas are personal pronouns and the verb tenses, specifically the use of the past simple over the present simple. Examples of errors within the former category include:

example 20: ‘**ØI** would like to hear from you back’

example 21: ‘I lost my car keys […] my neighbours helped me to find **it** [them]’

As can be seen in examples 20 and 21 respectively, these errors are mainly characterised by an omission of personal pronouns or the incorrect use of personal pronouns. In example 20 the subject of the sentence is missing as the pronoun is not included. In example 21 ‘it’ replaces ‘them’ as the personal pronoun refers to the previous object, car keys, as a singular object rather than plural. Examples from the latter category, that is the use of the present simple over the past simple, include:

example 22: ‘I woke up […], had breakfast, **comb** [combed] my hair’

example 23: ‘it was locked, and as I **turn** [turned] around […]’

As is also evident from the above two examples, most of these arise because of inconsistency between tenses. In one particular instance, although the title of the writing task required the participants to write about a past event, the use of the present simple predominated the participant’s writing task.

In contrast to morphological errors, syntactical errors were not as common in the learner corpus. The highest number of syntactical errors resulted from transitive verb errors and adverb placement errors. Examples illustrating the former all highlight the omission of either a noun or a pronoun following the verb:

example 24: ‘I go there when I need to buy **Øsomething** for myself’

example 25: ‘he usually come[s] **Øhome** at nine pm’

In example 24 the indefinite pronoun ‘something’ is omitted from the sentence while in example 25 the noun ‘home’ is omitted. The latter example depicts the effect of language transfer as a noun does not have to necessarily follow the verb ‘to come’ in the Maltese language. In fact, the corresponding Maltese phrase is as follows: *‘is-soltu jiġi fid-9 ta’ filgħaxija* (he usually comes home at nine pm)’. Adverb placement errors all resulted from disordering of words, for instance,

example 26: ‘I [started] looking **again** for the keys’

example 27: ‘they don’t have **just** clothes’

The adverb ‘again’ in example 26 should follow the noun ‘keys’, while the adverb ‘just’ in example 27 should precede the auxiliary verb ‘have’, rather than the noun. Once again, the latter example shows evidence of language transfer as the adverb

‘just’ (*biss*) precedes the noun ‘clothes’ (*ħwejjeġ*) in the participants’ native language: ‘*m'għandhomx **biss** ħwejjeġ* (they don’t just have clothes)’.

In contrast to the previously mentioned language areas, specifically prepositions, conjunctions and personal pronouns, the remaining language areas are more specific. As a result, Table 4.2 shows that the frequency of occurrence of the other language areas is not as high as the ones already mentioned. Therefore, as can be seen in Appendix B, the language areas were categorised into nine groups to categorise similar language areas together. Prepositions formed its own group, while errors identified as subordinate clause errors were categorised together with conjunction errors as they resulted because of misuse of subordinating conjunctions. The frequency of occurrence of these groupings is presented in Figure 4.1.

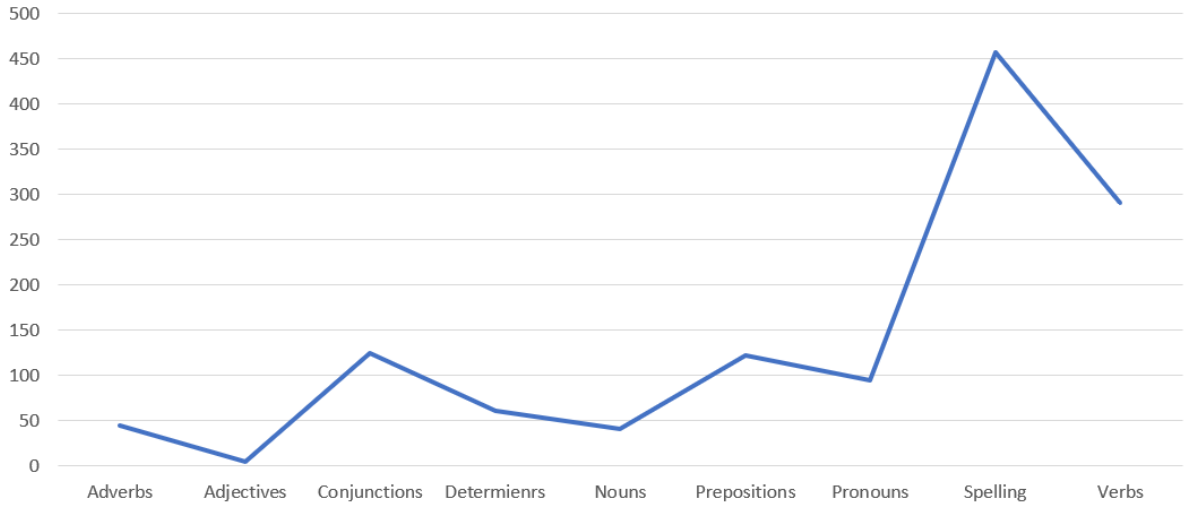


Figure 4.1: Frequency of Total Errors by Grouped Language Areas

Figure 4.1 shows that the highest number of errors occurred within the category of spelling, whilst the lowest number of errors resulted from misuse of adjectives. In fact, spelling errors comprise 36.88% of the total number of errors, followed by verb errors (23.49%), conjunction errors (10.10%), preposition errors (9.85%), pronoun errors (7.59%), determiner errors (4.92%), adverb errors (3.55%),

noun errors (3.31%) and adjective errors (0.32%). This shows that when the language areas are grouped, errors within the class of verbs are considered to be high frequency errors. As seen previously, such errors resulted mainly because of the use of the present simple over the past simple, as well as the use of the past simple over the past perfect, for instance,

> example 28: '[he] realize[d] that he [didn't] know where his car keys were, so he checked around the house and he still couldn't find them […] he called his boss and told him what **happened** [had happened]'
>
> example 29: 'I was home alone because my parents [had taken] my brother to football [practice] […] While I was in bed[,] I heard a noise, I thought my parents […] **forgot** [had forgotten] something'

In example 28 the participant uses the past simple to recount a past event. However, when referring to past events that happened prior to the phone call, the participant does not distinguish between the use of the past simple and the past perfect. Similarly, in example 29 the past simple 'forgot' replaces the past perfect 'had forgotten' when referring to an action that happened prior to another past action, that is before the parents left the house. These examples show that such errors result from the learners' difficulty in distinguishing between the function of the two structures.

4.1.2 Interlingual and Intralingual Errors

As stated in the first chapter, one of the aims of the present study is to determine the extent, if any, of language transfer between Maltese and English. Table 4.3 demonstrates the frequency and percentage of the interlingual and intralingual errors within the learner corpus. These results show that language

transfer was not as prevalent throughout the participants' written work as the percentage of interlingual errors is significantly lower than that of the intralingual errors. Hence, as stated in section 2.4, most of the errors within the learner corpus might arise because of challenges in applying and acquiring rules of the English language, rather than crosslinguistic influence.

	Frequency	**Percentage**
Interlingual Errors	144	11.62%
Intralingual Errors	1095	88.37%
Total	**1239**	**100%**

Table 4.3: Total Interlingual and Intralingual Errors

As Table 4.4 demonstrates, the highest frequency of interlingual errors can be found in verb errors followed by preposition errors as the two grouped language areas contain a significantly higher number of errors resulting as a consequence of language transfer. These are followed by noun and determiner errors, whose frequency is identical, pronoun errors, spelling errors, adverb errors, conjunction errors and adjective errors. On the other hand, the most common intralingual errors are spelling errors and verb errors.

Word Class	**Interlingual Errors**		**Intralingual Errors**	
	n	**%**	**n**	**%**
Adverbs	9	6.25%	35	3.20%
Adjectives	2	1.39%	2	0.18%
Conjunctions	6	4.17%	119	10.87%
Determiners	14	9.72%	47	4.29%
Nouns	13	9.03%	28	2.56%
Prepositions	25	17.36%	97	8.86%
Pronouns	12	8.33%	82	7.49%
Spelling	11	7.64%	446	40.73%
Verbs	52	36.11%	239	21.83%
Total	**144**	**100%**	**1095**	**100%**

Table 4.4: Source of Total errors by Word Grouping

More specifically, the interlingual errors for each specific language area are summarised in the following table:

Language Area	n	%
Morphology: Part of Speech		
Adverb error	3	2.08%
Adjective error	0	0
Conjunction error	5	3.47%
Definite article error	1	0.69%
Determiner error	2	1.39%
Demonstrative pronoun error	1	0.69%
Derivational suffix error	0	0
First conditional error	1	0.69%
Indefinite article error	10	6.94%
Indefinite pronoun error	6	4.17%
Noun error	4	2.78%
Noun plurality error	0	0
Personal pronoun error	1	0.69%
Preposition error	25	17.36%
Possessive noun error	1	0.69%
Possessive pronoun error	1	0.69%
Quantifier error	1	0.69%
Relative pronoun error	3	2.08%
Subject verb agreement error	2	1.39%
Additional verb error	3	2.08%
Auxiliary verb error	2	1.39%
Verb conjugation error	1	0.69%
Infinitive verb error	5	3.47%
Modal verb error	0	0
Missing verb	1	0.69%
Phrasal verb error	4	2.78%
Morphology: Verb Tenses		
Past continuous instead of past perfect continuous	1	0.69%
Past continuous instead of past simple	0	0
Past perfect simple instead of present perfect simple	0	0
Past perfect simple instead of past simple	0	0
Present continuous instead of past continuous	0	0
Present perfect simple instead of present continuous	0	0
Present simple instead of present continuous	0	0
Present simple instead of present participle	0	0
Present simple instead of past simple	1	0.69%
Present participle instead of present simple	0	0
Present participle instead of past simple	2	1.39%
Present simple instead of simple future	0	0
Past simple instead of past continuous	0	0
Past simple instead of past perfect	23	15.97%
Past simple instead of present perfect	0	0

Past simple instead of present simple	0	0
Past simple instead of present continuous	0	0
Simple future instead of present simple	0	0
Morphology: Spelling		
Extra letter/s	1	0.69%
Extra spacing	7	4.86%
Jumbled up spelling	1	0.69%
Missing letter/s	2	1.39%
Missing spacing	0	0
Letter/s replacement	0	0
Word replacement	0	0
Swapped letters	0	0
Plural spelling error	0	0
Syntax		
Adverb placement error	6	4.17%
Adjective placement error	2	1.39%
Noun phrase error	8	5.56%
Subordinate Clause error	1	0.69%
Transitive verb error	5	3.47%
Verb placement error	1	0.69%

Table 4.5: Total Interlingual Errors by Language Area

These findings show that language transfer was most prevalent within the language area of prepositions as these were either misused, omitted or added because of the influence of the Maltese language. Examples of such interlingual errors include:

example 30: ‘you [can] also earn gift cards to buy games **with** [at] a lower cost’

example 31: ‘When I arrived home[,] I relaxed **Øfor** a bit’

example 32: ‘my dad came **for** [to get] us and helped us find the keys’

These examples indicate a direct translation from the Maltese language to the English language. Example 30 follows the Maltese saying ‘***bi*** (with) *prezz irħas* (at a cheaper price)’ as ‘with’ replaces the preposition ‘at’. Similarly, the preposition ‘for’ was omitted from example 31 because the corresponding phrase in the participants’

native language, '*irrilassajt ftit* (I relaxed for a bit)', omits the use of a preposition. Example 32 highlights the addition of the preposition 'for' which replaces the correct use of the infinitive verb 'to get'. In this instance, the preposition 'for' mirrors the corresponding preposition in the phrase '*missieri ġie **għal**ina* (my dad came to get us)'.

The other area in which language transfer was significantly more prevalent is the use of the past simple over the past perfect, for instance

> example 33: 'It was nearly 10 o'clock and I had already gone to bed […] at eight o'clock my parents **called** [had called] me […]'
>
> example 34: 'I went back to bed and slept immediately […] I was tired because the cat **gave** [had given] me a fright'
>
> example 35: 'I had already gone to bed because I was feeling so tired. I **had** [had had] a lot to do that day'
>
> example 36: 'I woke up and checked the time on my iPhone, but that [iPhone] **changed** [had changed] into my old android phone […] I had [gone] back in time'

In the English language one of the functions of the past perfect is to refer to past actions that happened prior to another past action. However, as a result of language transfer, in all these examples the past simple is used over the past perfect. In the Maltese language, tense and aspect are simultaneously expressed in two verb forms: the *perfett* and the *imperfett* (Borg and Azzopardi-Alexander, 1997). Camilleri Grima and Zammit (2020, p. 153) state that "the *perfett* in Maltese corresponds in part to what are called perfective forms in other languages, such as the past, perfect and pluperfect in Germanic languages". In Maltese, differences between tense and

aspect “are made through the use of particles and other verbs and expressions within the verb phrase” (Borg and Azzopardi Alexander, 1997, p. 220). Borg and Azzopardi-Alexander (1997, p. 222) also state that a reference to the “past-in-the-past” is made “periphrastically […] using the Perfect *kien* together with the Perfect form of the lexical verb”. That is, the past perfect in the Maltese language can be expressed using the verb ‘*kien’*. However, they continue by affirming that this is not always the case as once “the past-in-the-past relation is established”, the use of the Perfect ‘*kien’* is no longer needed (Borg & Azzopardi-Alexander, 1997, p.222).

Hence, example 33 follows the corresponding phrase in Maltese, ‘*kienu kważi l-10 u kont diġà mort fis-sodda [...] fit-tmienja l-ġenituri tiegħi* ***ċempluli*** (it was almost 10 o’clock and I had already gone to bed [...] at 8 o’clock my parents had called me)’. In example 34 ‘gave’ replaces ‘had given’ when referring to an event that happened before the speaker went to bed following the phrase ‘[…] *Kont għajjien għax il-qattus* ***tani*** *qatgħa* (I was tired because the cat had given me a fright)’. Similarly, in example 35 the past simple is used to refer to the events of the day before going to bed, mirroring the phrase in the participants’ native language: ‘***Kelli*** *ħafna x’nagħmel dakinhar* (I had had a lot to do that day)’. A similar pattern is evident in example 36 that mirrors the corresponding phrase ‘*l-iPhone* ***inbidel*** *fil-mowbajl l-antik* (the iPhone had changed into my old phone)*’*. A list of all the interlingual errors can be found in Appendix C.

4.1.3 Surface Structure Taxonomy of Errors

The frequencies of the surface structure categories can be seen in Figure 4.2 below. As stated in section 3.3.1, this taxonomy shows the temporary principles learners use to construct language as they either misuse a language structure and replace it with another (misformation), they omit it (omission) or make use of it when

not needed (addition). As demonstrated in the line graph, misformation errors account for the highest number of errors (70. 06%). For instance, in example 37 the adverb ‘too’ replaces the correct use of ‘either’, and in example 38 the conjunction ‘so’ replaces ‘so that’ highlighting difficulties in choosing the correct language structure that fits the specific context.

example 37: ‘my sister hadn’t **too** [either]’

example 38: ‘I’ve sent this email **so** [so that] I could invite you to come with me’

Misformation errors are followed by omission errors (17.03%), addition errors (10.33%) and disordering errors (2.58%). These are represented in examples 39, 40 and 41 respectively.

example 39: ‘I had a lot of plans and **Øa** meeting’

example 40: ‘After **the** work […]’

example 41: ‘I thank **too** […] the school’

These three errors highlight language transfer. The Maltese language does not distinguish between indefinite and definite articles as an indefinite noun stands on its own or is preceded by the definite article ‘*(i)l-’* to form a definite noun (Borg & Azzopardi-Alexander, 1997, p.72). In line with this, in example 39 the indefinite article is omitted following the corresponding phrase ‘*Kelli ħafna pjanijiet u laqgħa* (I had a lot of plans and a meeting)’, and the definite article ‘the’ is added to example 40 following the corresponding example ‘*wara **ix**-xogħol* (after work)*’*. In example 41 the adverb ‘too’ is placed after the verb rather than the noun. Once again, this shows a direct translation from the native language to the target language: ‘*nirringrazzja* **ukoll** *lill-iskola* (I thank the school too)’.

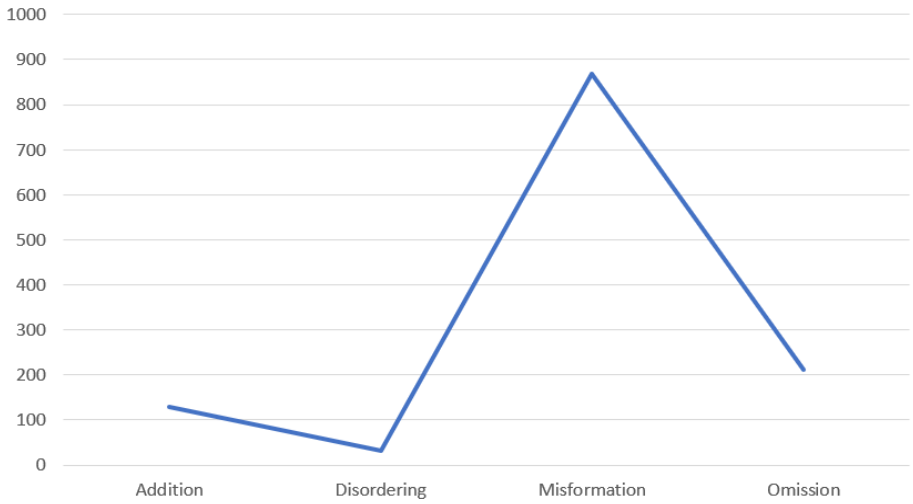


Figure 4.2: Total Errors by Surface Structure Category

Results depicting the prevalence of language transfer within the identified surface structure classifications, demonstrated in Figure 4.3, show that the highest number of interlingual errors are also misformation errors (55.56%). In contrast, these are followed by omission errors (21.53%), disordering errors (12.50%) and addition errors (10.42%).

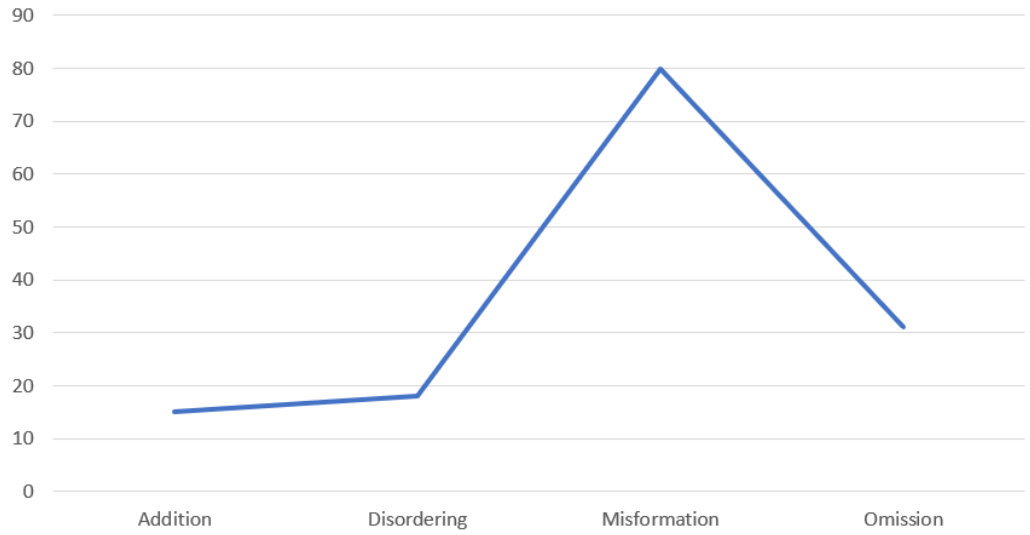


Figure 4.3: Total Interlingual Errors by Surface Structure Category

4.2 A Distribution of Language Errors by Age

The frequency and percentage of morphological and syntactical errors within each age group is represented in Table 4.6.

	Frequency	Percentage
11-12 years	501	18.69%
13-14 years	738	15.54%

Table 4.6: Total Errors by Age Group

These results show that a higher number of errors is present in the writing tasks composed by 11–12 year olds, in comparison to the writing tasks of 13-14 year olds, suggesting that within the built learner corpus errors decrease as age increases. A chi-square test was carried out to analyse the significance of this change. The results in Table 4.7 concluded that there was no statistically significant association between the age and the occurrence of errors.

Variable		Value	df	p
Total Errors	χ **2**	28.1	28	.457
	N	41		

Table 4.7: Effect of Age on Errors

4.2.1 Source of Errors by Age

Table 4.8 summarises the source of errors by age. The presented results show that in both age groups language transfer is not very prevalent as there is a substantial difference between the percentage of interlingual and intralingual errors within the two age groups.

Source of Errors	11-12 years		13-14 years	
	n	%	n	%
Interlingual Errors	58	2.16%	86	1.81%
Intralingual Errors	443	16.52%	652	13.73%

Table 4.8: Interlingual and Intralingual Errors by Age Group

Moreover, it is also evident that both types of errors are most common in the writing tasks of 11-12 years old learners in comparison to the older age group. In order to determine whether this difference highlights a statistical association, a chi-square test was conducted to investigate the effect of age on source of errors. The results, presented in Table 4.9, show that there was no significant correlation

between age and source of errors. Hence, the decrease in errors identified in Table 4.8 is not statistically significant. This also suggests that there are no statistically significant differences in language transfer as a result of age within the built learner corpus.

Variable		Value	df	p
Interlingual	**χ 2**	1.96	9	.992
	N	41		
Intralingual	**χ 2**	27.5	26	.385
	N	41		

Table 4.9: Effect of Age on Source of Errors

4.2.2 Language Area Groups by Age

Figure 4.4 summarises the total number of errors within the year 7 and the year 9 writing tasks according to grouped language areas. As can be seen from the line graph, the highest number of errors in both age groups is present within the category of spelling and verbs.

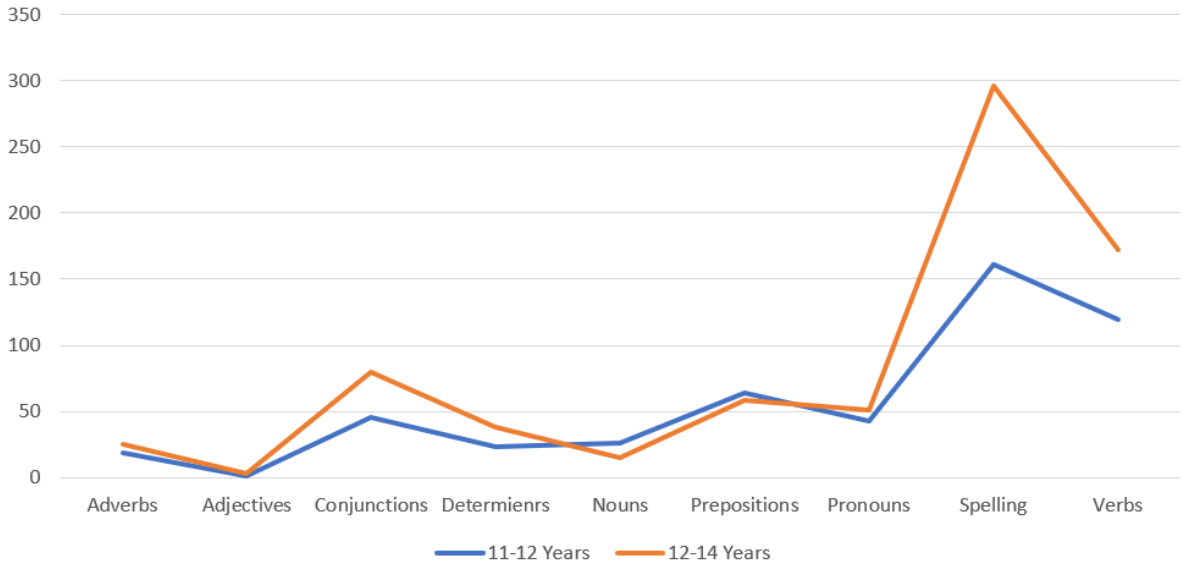


Figure 4.4: Frequency of year 7 and Year 9 Errors by Word Grouping

The findings in Table 4.10 show the errors within each age group and language area group.

Grouped Language Areas	11-12 years		13-14 years	
	n	%	n	%
Adverbs	19	0.71%	25	0.53%
Adjectives	1	0.04%	3	0.06%
Conjunctions	45	1.68%	80	1.68%
Determiners	23	0.86%	38	0.80%
Nouns	26	0.97%	15	0.32%
Prepositions	64	2.39%	58	1.22%
Pronouns	43	1.60%	51	1.07%
Spelling	161	6.01%	296	6.23%
Verbs	119	4.44%	172	3.62%

Table 4.10: Errors by Age and Grouped Language Areas

These findings show that amongst the collected sample, adverb errors, determiner errors, noun errors, preposition errors, pronoun errors and verb errors decreased with age as a higher percentage of such errors is evident in the writing tasks of the 11-12 year old students. On the other hand, adjective errors and spelling errors increased with age as a higher percentage of such errors is apparent in the writing tasks of the 13-14 year old learners. No changes in conjunction errors were identified across the two age groups. A chi-square test was conducted to investigate the relationship between age, if any, and the language area groups. The results, shown in Table 4.11, illustrate that the association between age and the grouped language area was not significant.

Variable		Value	df	p
Adverb	**χ 2**	7.56	6	.272
	N	41		
Adjective	**χ 2**	0.643	1	.423
	N	41		
Conjunctions	**χ 2**	12.7	9	.179
	N	41		
Determiners	**χ 2**	9.58	6	.143
	N	41		
Nouns	**χ 2**	5.66	4	.226
	N	41		
Prepositions	**χ 2**	4.44	8	.815
	N	41		
Pronouns	**χ 2**	4.32	7	.742
	N	41		

Spelling	**χ 2**	19.3	22	.624
	N	41		
Verbs	**χ 2**	11.9	14	.614
	N	41		

Table 4.11: Effect of Age on the Grouped Language Areas

The previously identified frequencies in Figure 4.4 were further subcategorised according to source of errors. This was done to determine any changes between the year 7 and the year 9 interlingual and intralingual errors across the grouped language areas. These findings are shown in Table 4.12.

Language Area Groups	**Interlingual Errors**				**Intralingual Errors**			
	11-12 years		**13-14 years**		**11-12 years**		**13-14 years**	
	n	**%**	**n**	**%**	**n**	**%**	**n**	**%**
Adverbs	4	0.15%	5	0.11%	15	0.56%	20	0.42%
Adjectives	0	0	2	0.04%	1	0.04%	1	0.02%
Conjunctions	4	0.15%	2	0.04%	41	1.53%	78	1.64%
Determiners	7	0.26%	7	0.15%	16	0.60%	31	0.65%
Nouns	7	0.26%	6	0.13%	19	0.71%	9	0.19%
Prepositions	17	0.63%	8	0.17%	47	1.75%	50	1.05%
Pronouns	3	0.11%	9	0.19%	40	1.49%	42	0.88%
Spelling	7	0.26%	4	0.08%	154	5.74%	292	6.15%
Verbs	9	0.34%	43	0.91%	110	4.10%	129	2.72%

Table 4.12: Errors by Source of errors, Age and Language Area Groups

These results show that adverb, conjunction, determiner, noun, spelling and preposition interlingual errors decrease with age, while adjective, pronoun and verb interlingual errors increase with age. On the other hand, taking into consideration the intralingual errors, it can be concluded that these increase with age in the area of adjectives, pronouns and verbs. A chi-square test was carried out to determine if these differences were statistically significant. The results in the following tables show no significant association between age and source of errors within each grouped language area as the differences outlined in Table 4.12 are not statistically significant.

Variable		Value	df	p
Adverb	**χ 2**	1.31	2	.519
	N	41		
Adjective	**χ 2**	1.65	1	.200
	N	41		
Conjunctions	**χ 2**	2.60	1	.107
	N	41		
Determiners	**χ 2**	2.50	3	.475
	N	41		
Nouns	**χ 2**	5.23	3	.156
	N	41		
Prepositions	**χ 2**	4.47	3	.215
	N	41		
Pronouns	**χ 2**	1.69	3	.640
	N	41		
Spelling	**χ 2**	2.70	2	.259
	N	41		
Verbs	**χ 2**	7.32	5	.198
	N	41		

Table 4.13: Effect of Age on Interlingual Errors per Language Area Group

Variable		Value	df	p
Adverb	**χ 2**	7.15	5	.210
	N	41		
Adjective	**χ 2**	0.0317	1	.859
	N	41		
Conjunctions	**χ 2**	13.8	9	.130
	N	41		
Determiners	**χ 2**	3.67	5	.598
	N	41		
Nouns	**χ 2**	4.99	4	.288
	N	41		
Prepositions	**χ 2**	6.46	6	.374
	N	41		
Pronouns	**χ 2**	3.76	7	.807
	N	41		
Spelling	**χ 2**	21.4	23	.558
	N	41		
Verbs	**χ 2**	17.5	14	.231
	N	41		

Table 4.14: Effect of Age on Intralingual Errors per Language Area Group

4.2.3 The Effect of Age on the Surface Structure Taxonomy

Figure 4.5 summarises the total frequency of errors by age group and the surface structure taxonomy. The findings show that misformation errors are the most

common type of errors in both age groups. These are followed by omission errors, addition errors and disordering errors.

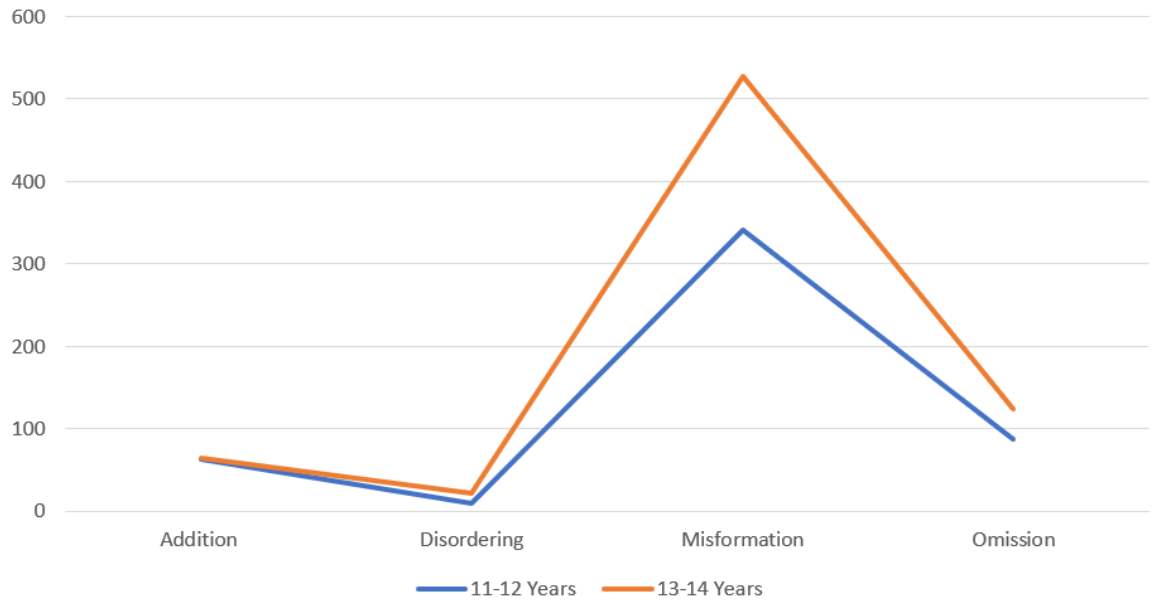


Figure 4.5: Frequency of Errors by Age and Surface Structure Category

Table 4.15 illustrates the errors by age group and the surface structure classifications.

Surface Structure Classification	11-12 years		13-14 years	
	n	%	n	%
Addition	63	2.35%	65	1.37%
Disordering	10	0.37%	22	0.46%
Misformation	341	12.72%	527	11.09%
Omission	87	3.25%	124	2.61%

Table 4.15: Errors by Age and Surface Structure Categories

These findings show that the errors within all the surface structure classifications, with the exception of disordering errors, decrease with age as such errors are more frequent in the writing tasks of the 11-12 year old participants. On the other hand, disordering errors are more frequent in writing tasks of the 12-14 year old learners, thus these errors might increase with age. In order to determine whether these findings demonstrate a statistical difference, a chi square test was conducted to analyse the relationship between age and the surface structure

taxonomy. The results presented in table 4.16 show that there was no statistically significant association between the age groups and the errors within the surface structure classifications.

Variable		Value	df	p
Addition	**χ 2**	10.0	9	.347
	N	41		
Disordering	**χ 2**	2.57	3	.463
	N	41		
Misformation	**χ 2**	22.1	26	.686
	N	41		
Omission	**χ 2**	10.9	13	.620
	N	41		

Table 4.16: Effect of Age on the Surface Structure Taxonomy

4.3 The Effect of Text Type on Language Errors

The learner corpus consists of five different text types: a biography, an informal email, a description of place, a diary entry, and a narrative. The results in the following table show that errors are most frequent in the descriptive and the biography writing tasks. These are followed by the diary entry and the narrative. However, the difference between the latter text types is marginal. In comparison to the other text types, errors occurred least in the informal email.

Text Type	Average Word Count	Frequency	Percentage
Description	126	144	19.07%
Biography	185	67	18.11%
Diary Entry	141	141	16.65%
Narrative	216	811	16.35%
Email	125	76	15.23%

Table 4.17: Total Errors by Text Type

4.3.1 The Effect of Text Type on Source of Errors

The total number of errors within each text type was categorised according to the two sources of errors. These findings are shown in Table 4.18.

Text Type	Interlingual Errors		Intralingual Errors	
	n	%	n	%
Biography	3	0.35%	64	17.30%
Description	17	2.25%	127	16.82%
Diary Entry	17	2.01%	124	14.64%
Email	10	0.80%	66	13.22%
Narrative	97	1.96%	714	14.40%

Table 4.18: Total Interlingual and Intralingual Errors by Text Type

These findings show that Interlingual errors, that is errors resulting from language transfer, are most prevalent in the descriptive writing tasks, followed by the diary entry and the narrative writing tasks. The difference amongst these three text types is marginal. These are followed by the informal email and the biography whose frequency of interlingual errors is substantially less. On the other hand, intralingual errors are most frequent in the biography, the description of place, the diary entry, the narrative, and the informal email. A chi-square test was conducted to investigate this relationship between text type and source of errors. The results, presented in Table 4.19, show that there is no significant relationship of text type on interlingual and intralingual errors.

Variable		Value	Df	p
Interlingual	**χ 2**	34.4	36	.545
	N	41		
Intralingual	**χ 2**	112	104	.281
	N	41		

Table 4.19: Effect of Text Type on Source of Errors

4.3.2 The Effect of Text Type on the Language Area Groups

The results summarising errors by text type and the language area groups are presented in Table 4.20.

Language Area Groups	Biography		Description		Diary Entry		Email		Narrative	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Adverbs	4	1.08%	4	0.53%	3	0.35%	2	0.40%	31	0.63%
Adjectives	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0%	4	0.08%
Conjunctions	2	0.54%	10	1.32%	12	1.42%	7	1.40%	94	1.90%
Determiners	2	0.54%	3	0.40%	6	0.71%	4	0.80%	46	0.93%
Nouns	5	0.27%	9	1.19%	10	1.18%	3	0.60%	18	0.36%
Prepositions	9	2.43%	17	2.25%	20	2.36%	6	1.20%	70	1.41%
Pronouns	5	1.35%	17	2.25%	12	1.41%	7	1.40%	53	1.07%
Spelling	31	8.38%	55	7.28%	50	5.90%	39	7.82%	282	5.69%
Verbs	13	3.51%	29	3.84%	28	3.31%	8	1.60%	213	4.29%

Table 4.20: Total Errors by Text Type and Grouped Language Areas

These findings show that adverb and preposition errors are most frequent in the biography writing tasks, and noun and pronoun errors are most common in the descriptive writing tasks. In addition, determiner, verb and conjunction errors are predominantly found in the narrative writing tasks, with the latter being only evident in the narrative writing tasks. In order to compare the affected word classes across the different text types, a chi-square test was conducted. The results, illustrated in Table 4.21, show that there was no statistically significant association between text type and the errors present in each language area group.

Variable		Value	df	p
Adverb	**χ 2**	16.8	24	.858
	N	41		
Adjective	**χ 2**	3.47	4	.483
	N	41		
Conjunctions	**χ 2**	28.4	36	.811
	N	41		
Determiners	**χ 2**	15.9	24	.893
	N	41		
Nouns	**χ 2**	20.0	16	.222
	N	41		
Prepositions	**χ 2**	19.9	32	.953
	N	41		
Pronouns	**χ 2**	19.7	28	.874
	N	41		
Spelling	**χ 2**	94.8	88	.292
	N	41		
Verbs	**χ 2**	47.9	56	.771
	N	41		

Table 4.21: Effect of Text Type on the Language Area Groups

The frequencies illustrated in Table 4.20 were divided into interlingual and intralingual errors. The percentage of these, in line with text type and the language area groups, was calculated to investigate the role of source of errors across the two variables. The results illustrated in the following table summarise the interlingual errors.

Language Area Groups	Biography		Description		Diary Entry		Email		Narrative	
	Interlingual		Interlingual		Interlingual		Interlingual		Interlingual	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Adverbs	0	0	1	0.13%	1	0.12%	1	0.20%	6	0.12%
Adjectives	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0.04%
Conjunctions	0	0	0	0	1	0.24%	0	0	4	0.08%
Determiners	1	0.27%	2	0.26%	2	0.24%	0	0	9	0.18%
Nouns	0	0	2	0.26%	2	0.24%	3	0.60%	6	0.12%
Prepositions	2	0.54%	5	0.66%	5	0.59%	0	0	13	0.26%
Pronouns	0	0	2	0.26%	1	0.12%	2	0.40%	7	0.14%
Spelling	0	0	3	0.40%	2	0.24%	2	0.40%	4	0.08%
Verbs	0	0	2	0.26%	2	0.24%	2	0.40%	46	0.93%

Table 4.22: Interlingual Errors by Text Type and Language Area Groups

It can be concluded that interlingual errors in the word class of adjectives and verbs might increase in narrative writing tasks. Interlingual errors within the word class of adverbs, nouns and pronouns are principally evident in the email writing tasks, while those in the category of determiners are mostly present in the biography writing tasks. Spelling interlingual errors are equally frequent in the informal email and descriptive writing tasks. In the latter text type, the highest frequency of preposition interlingual errors is also evident, whilst conjunction interlingual errors are primarily evident in the diary entries. A chi-square test was carried out to determine if the previously mentioned differences were significant. The findings presented in Table 4.23 indicate that the association between interlingual errors in each language area group and the text types was not statistically significant.

Variable		Value	df	p
Adverb	**χ 2**	1.41	8	.994
	N	41		
Adjective	**χ 2**	1.65	4	.801
	N	41		
Conjunctions	**χ 2**	2.36	4	.670
	N	41		
Determiners	**χ 2**	11.5	12	.485
	N	41		
Nouns	**χ 2**	14.7	12	.260
	N	41		
Prepositions	**χ 2**	14.5	12	.269
	N	41		
Pronouns	**χ 2**	12.7	12	.393
	N	41		
Spelling	**χ 2**	9.45	8	.306
	N	41		
Verbs	**χ 2**	12.4	20	.903
	N	41		

Table 4.23: Effect of Text Type on Interlingual Errors per Language Area Group

On the other hand, the findings in the following table summarise the intralingual errors:

Language Area Groups	Biography		Description		Diary Entry		Email		Narrative	
	Intralingual		Intralingual		Intralingual		Intralingual		Intralingual	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Adverbs	4	1.08%	3	0.40%	2	0.24%	1	0.20%	25	0.50%
Adjectives	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0.04%
Conjunctions	2	0.54%	10	1.32%	10	1.18%	7	1.40%	90	1.81%
Determiners	1	0.27%	1	0.13%	4	0.47%	4	0.80%	37	0.75%
Nouns	1	0.27%	7	0.93%	8	0.94%	0	0	12	0.24%
Prepositions	7	1.89%	12	1.59%	15	1.77%	6	1.20%	57	1.15%
Pronouns	5	1.35%	15	1.99%	11	1.30%	5	1.00%	46	0.93%
Spelling	31	8.38%	52	6.89%	48	5.67%	37	7.41%	278	5.60%
Verbs	13	3.51%	27	3.58%	26	3.07%	6	1.20%	167	3.37%

Table 4.24: Intralngual Errors by Text Type and Language Area Groups

These results show that adverb, spelling and preposition intralingual errors are mainly present in the biographies, and adjective and conjunction intralingual errors are most frequent in the narrative writing tasks. Errors within the word grouping of determiners are mainly found in the informal email, and those within the category of nouns are chiefly evident in the diary entries. Lastly, pronoun and verb

intralingual errors are most common in the descriptive writing tasks. A chi-square test was conducted to determine any statistically significant differences in the previously mentioned findings. The results in Table 4.25 show no statistically significant association between text type and intralingual errors within the identified language area groups.

Variable		Value	df	p
Adverb	**χ 2**	16.1	20	.712
	N	41		
Adjective	**χ 2**	1.65	4	.801
	N	41		
Conjunctions	**χ 2**	29.5	36	.771
	N	41		
Determiners	**χ 2**	11.5	20	.932
	N	41		
Nouns	**χ 2**	24.5	16	.080
	N	41		
Prepositions	**χ 2**	20.6	24	.659
	N	41		
Pronouns	**χ 2**	22.1	28	.777
	N	41		
Spelling	**χ 2**	101	92	.242
	N	41		
Verbs	**χ 2**	58.6	56	.380
	N	41		

Table 4.25: Effect of Text Type on Intralingual Errors per Language Area Group

4.3.3 The Effect of Text Type on the Surface Structure Taxonomy

The results in Table 4.26 demonstrate the frequency and percentage of errors for every surface structure category and text type.

Word Class	Biography		Description		Diary Entry		Email		Narrative	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Addition	6	1.62%	17	2.25%	17	2.01%	8	1.60%	80	1.61%
Disordering	1	0.27%	1	0.13%	2	0.24%	4	0.80%	24	0.48%
Misformation	45	12.16%	100	13.25%	100	11.81%	52	10.42%	571	11.57%
Omission	15	4.05%	26	3.44%	22	2.60%	12	2.40%	136	2.74%

Table 4.26: Total Errors by Text Type and Surface Structure Taxonomy

The results show that the errors within every text type are principally classified as misformation errors, followed by omission errors, addition errors and disordering errors. Moreover, these findings indicate that descriptive writing tasks comprise of the highest scores of addition and misformation errors. Emails consist of the highest number of disordering errors, whilst biographies account for the majority of omission errors. A chi-square test was carried out to analyse any potential significance in the previously obtained results. However, from the results presented in Table 4.27 it can be concluded that there were no statistically significant differences between the surface structure classifications and text type.

Variable		Value	df	p
Addition	**χ 2**	28.7	36	.803
	N	41		
Disordering	**χ 2**	10.4	12	.584
	N	41		
Misformation	**χ 2**	105	104	.450
	N	41		
Omission	**χ 2**	39.4	52	.903
	N	41		

Table 4.27: Effect of Text Type on Surface Structure Taxonomy

4.4 Summary of Results

The findings of this study were presented throughout this chapter. The results reflecting the total number of errors within the learner corpus were illustrated first. The total score of errors was analysed alongside the three tagsets and dependent variables: source of errors, language area groups and surface structure taxonomy. The total number of errors were categorised according to the two age groups to analyse the role of age on the identified errors and the previously outlined variables. The findings highlighting the role of text type on the identified errors were also presented. Following this, the presented findings will be further explored and

discussed in light of pedagogical implications and in relation to theories of transfer in the next chapter.

Chapter 5 : Discussion

In the previous chapter the obtained results highlighted a distinction between interlingual and intralingual errors. This was done to view the significance, or lack thereof of language transfer in relation to all types of errors. However, for the purpose of the objectives of the present study, this chapter will mainly focus on a discussion of language transfer. In this chapter a deeper insight into the identified interlingual errors will be provided as two principal patterns of language transfer will be identified. The findings will also be discussed in relation to the previously identified theories that explore language transfer, that is, in light of the behaviourist, mentalist and interlanguage perspectives. The effect of age and text type will also be discussed, and compared to the findings in other similar studies. Following this, the findings of the present study will be viewed in relation to the findings of the key empirical research studies. The pedagogical implications of the study will also be discussed.

5.1 The Degree of Language Transfer

The findings in section 4.1.2 show that language transfer was not prevalent within the present learner corpus as interlingual errors comprised 11.62% of the total errors. This obtained result can be both contrasted and compared to other studies as the findings on the degree of crosslinguistic influence vary. The results in Kittigosin's & Phoocharoensil's (2015) study, Moore's (2015) study and Cabrera Solano, et al.'s (2014) study show that the influence of the participants' native language was the dominant cause of errors. On the other hand, Camilleri (2004), Huntley Bahr, et al. (2015) and Manzano Vázquez (2013) conclude that language transfer was not prevalent.

Although the frequencies were not prevalent, further examination of the types of errors could provide valuable insight into the way learners might rely on transfer from Maltese and English in their writing. As discussed in section 1.1, learners in Malta are introduced to the formal teaching and learning of both Maltese and English at the start of the junior cycle. Thus, having been exposed to English from the age of five at school, this is likely to affect the participants' proficiency level. In turn, this could have influenced the minimal degree of language transfer as "L2 learners may become less dependent on their L1 with the increase of L2 proficiency" (Ye, 2019, p. 652). In addition to the bilingual status of the learners, the increased exposure to the English language through various modes of media could also impact the level of L2 proficiency and the minimal influence of Maltese on the English language. However, since the independent variables were limited to age and text type, the extent, if any, of the influence of other variables cannot be determined.

Although interlingual errors were limited, errors in certain language areas occurred mainly because of crosslinguistic influence. In the local context, this is also evident in Moore's study (2015, p. 109) in which she identifies crosslinguistic influence from Maltese to English as the main source of errors in her analysis of the use of collocations as she states that "most of the learners' collocational problems are attributed to L1 interference". In the present study language transfer was the primary cause of verb errors. This was also evident in Hu's (2016) study as the participants' L1 influenced principally grammatical errors, in particular the misuse of verb tenses.

5.2 Patterns of Language Transfer

Although the percentage of interlingual errors was minimal (11.62%), a closer analysis of these errors revealed that direct translation and difference in the

grammatical structure of Maltese and English mainly account for sources of language transfer. In the former, errors result as a consequence of direct translation of words and phrases from Maltese to English. On the other hand, the errors within the latter category reflect differences between the two languages as morphological or syntactical features within the Maltese language are transferred to English, or those present in the English language are omitted as they do not feature in Maltese. Camilleri (2004, p.8) makes use of the term “L1 form” errors to refer to the former, and “new category” errors to refer to the latter. These two patterns of language transfer will be discussed further in the following sections.

5.2.1 Direct Translation

Direct translation has been identified as a source of error in various different studies (Lowie, 2000; Chan, 2004; Kittigosin & Phoocharoensil, 2015; Ye, 2019). In the present study, direct translation was mainly evident amongst preposition errors. As a consequence, some prepositions were either misused, omitted or added, for example

example 1: ‘[they] can go **by walk** [on foot]’

example 2: ‘I didn’t know what I was doing **with** [as a result of] tire[d]ness’

example 3: ‘I felt **Ølike** I was in have[a]n’

example 4: ‘I thank too **to** the school [I thank the school too]’

As can be seen from these examples, and other examples in section 4.1.2, in most similar instances the participants engaged in direct translation of entire phrases from Maltese to English. In fact, example 1 does not solely highlight the misuse of the preposition ‘by’, but it also shows the incorrect use of the following noun as the participant translated the phrase ‘*jistgħu jmorru **bil-mixi*** (they can go on foot)’.

Example 4 also demonstrates two errors: the misuse of the preposition and the misplacement of the adverb ‘too’ as the phrase ‘*nirringrazzja* ***ukoll lill-****iskola* (I thank the school too)’ is literally translated. Example 2 shows that the learner does not differentiate between the prepositions ‘with’ and ‘as a result of’ because of a direct translation of the phrase:‘*ma kontx naf x’qiegħed nagħmel* ***bl-****għeja* (I didn’t know what I was doing as a result of tiredness). A direct translation of idioms caused by the omission of a preposition was also evident in example 3: ‘*ħassejtni qiegħda l-ġenna* (I felt like I was in heaven)’. In comparison to these findings, Cabrera Solano, et al. (2014, p. 42) also identifies direct translation as the principal cause of language transfer as it was concluded that “learners think in their mother tongue and then translate into English”. In addition, their study highlights that direct translation was also commonly evident in the misuse of prepositions (Cabrera Solano, et al., 2014).

The effect of direct translation was also evident in conjunction errors. More specifically, it was mainly evident in errors that failed to distinguish between the use of ‘when’ and ‘as’, for example

example 5: ‘**When** [As] I was telling them the address, we heard a knock’

example 6: ‘**When** [As] we walked to the car[,] it started raining’

In these examples, the use of ‘as’ would have been more fitting as the first action is still ongoing by the time another action interrupts it. However, even though both ‘when (*meta*)’ and ‘as (*filwaqt*)’ are used in Maltese, the former is more commonly used. In fact, these errors respectively reflect the corresponding phrases: ‘***Meta*** *kont qiegħed ngħidilhom l-indirizz, smajna taħbita* (As I was telling them the address, we heard a knock)’ and ‘***Meta*** *konna mixjin għal karozza bdiet nieżla ix-xita* (As we walked to the car, it started raining).

Another common instance in which direct translation was evident is in noun phrase errors such as the following:

example 7: '**Me and my sister** [My sister and I] were playing'

example 8: '**me and my siblings** [my siblings and I] were panicking'

In these examples the order of the nouns is reversed as the singular first-person pronoun is placed at the beginning of the sentence. This reflects the corresponding phrases in Maltese: '***Jien u oħti*** *konna qegħdin nilagħbu* [My sister and I were playing]' and '***jien u ħuti*** *konna qegħdin nippanikjaw* [my siblings and I were panicking], in which the singular first-person pronoun 'I (jien)' commonly precedes the possessive pronoun. Hence, although such structures are also common in spoken speech in English, such errors might have also been a result of language transfer.

5.2.2 Morphological and Syntactical Differences

Interlingual errors arising as a result of morphological and syntactical differences between the two languages occurred mainly due to the omission of existing structures within the English language that are not always used in the Maltese language. This was also evident in multiple studies conducted in an international context (Cabrera Solano, et al., 2014; Wu & Garza, 2014; Hu, 2016; Gayo & Widodo, 2018). As was demonstrated in section 4.1.2, some of the most common interlingual errors are those that occurred because of the use of the past simple over the past perfect. In the Maltese language, the past perfect is no longer used once the relation between past actions has been established (Borg & Azzopardi-Alexander, 1997). However, in English the past perfect can be used

throughout to “make it clear that something had already happened at the time we are talking about” (Swan, 2016, p. 53). For instance,

> example 9: ‘It was nearly 10 o’clock and I had already gone to bed. I was home alone because my parents **to[ook]** [had taken] my brother to football [practice] [...] I **went** [had gone] to watch TV [...]’

In this example the use of the past simple suggests that the narrator’s parents took his brother to football practice after 10 o’clock and that the narrator went to watch television after 10 o’clock. However, the example continues as follows:

> ‘[...] and at ten I **got** [had gotten] bored watching TV so I **went** [had gone] to bed early’

This suggests that the narrator is referring to actions that happened before, rather than after, 10 o’clock. Thus, to ensure that this is clear the past perfect can be used, whereas in Maltese the relationship of the actions can be established through the use of the past perfect (*kont*) in the first sentence only: *‘Kienu kważi l-10 u **kont** diġà **mort** fis-sodda* (It was nearly 10 o’clock and I had already gone to bed)’. Following this, the past simple is used, example: ‘*il-ġenituri tiegħi **ħadu** lil ħija l-futbol* (my parents had taken my brother to football)’. In comparison to the present study, Wu and Garza (2014) conclude that the highest frequency of errors in the writing tasks of Mandarin Chinese EFL learners, occurred primarily within the word class of verbs. This was specifically evident in the misuse of the subject-verb agreement, which occurred because of grammatical differences in the L1 and the FL as “in Chinese, verb does not change its form with different subject” (Wu & Garza, 2014, p. 1260).

Another observed difference between the two languages which resulted in language transfer was also evident in Camilleri’s (2004) study on language transfer

as he refers to the use of indefinite articles as a new grammatical category that is used in English but does not feature in Maltese. Similar examples within the collected sample include:

example 10: ‘she always cooked us **Øa** special dinner’

example 11: ‘I had to do **Øa** barbeque with my father’

The indefinite article in the respective corresponding L1 phrases is not used: ‘*dejjem kienet issajrilna ikla speċjali* (she always used to cook us a special dinner)’ and ‘*kelli nagħmel barbeque ma’ missieri* (I had to do a barbeque with my dad)’. Hence, it can be concluded that such errors might arise because of morphological differences between the two languages.

Interlingual errors caused by the differences between the two languages resulted also from the transfer of morphological and syntactical features that are present in the Maltese language, but are not always used in the English language. Although this was quite a common source of interlingual errors in Camilleri’s study (2004), only a few examples were identified within the present corpus. One instance that could be attributed to such differences between the L1 and the L2 is related to spelling errors, particularly the addition of spacing between words, such as,

example 12: ‘he [disappeared] again **for ever** [forever]’

example 13: ‘I had **some thing** [something] on the keys’

In Maltese the spelling of the adverb ‘forever’ is made up of two components: ‘*għal dejjem*’ as the preposition ‘*għal* (for)’ is not attached to the adverb ‘*dejjem* (ever)’. In line with this, example 12 reflects this separation. This is also evident in example 13

as the spelling of the indefinite pronoun ‘something’ is split into two: a quantifier and a noun, following the native spelling ‘*xi ħaġa*’ (something).

Camilleri (2004, p. 8) also refers to the “redundant use of the definite article in L2 utterances” as an example of what he terms “L1 forms”. He claims that such errors result because “Maltese nouns are rarely used without the definite article, including abstract or generic nouns, which is not the case in English” (Camilleri, 2004, p. 8). Although this was not a common feature in the collected sample, one such example was identified:

example 14: ‘after **the** work’

In example 14 the definite article ‘the’ precedes the noun ‘work’ reflecting the L1 use of the definite article in the phrase ‘*wara **ix-**xogħol* (after work)’. The misuse of the definite article ‘the’, specifically when preceding a proper noun, was also linked to the effect of language transfer in Cabrera Solano, et al.’s (2014) study. In this study, such errors resulted mainly because of differences in the L1 (Spanish) and the FL (English) as “the overuse of the article occur[ed] because the Spanish rule states that general nouns are preceded by a definite article [while] the English grammar rule for article usage states that *the* is not used with proper nouns”.

Another example of what Camilleri (2004, p.8) terms “new category” was identified through the misuse of the first conditional:

example 15: ‘if I lose something[,] I **check** [will check] [...] my trousers’

In Maltese, “the adverbial conjunction *jekk* introduces a conditional clause expressing a condition which may or may not be fulfilled ("real conditions")” (Borg & Azzopardi-Alexander, 1997, p.42). However, even though both languages express the first conditional, it is formed differently. Whilst in English the first conditional is

formed using the present simple in the first clause, and the future simple in the second clause, in Maltese the present simple is used in both clauses. This is evident in example 15 as the use of the present simple throughout reflects the corresponding L1 phrase: '*jekk* ***nitlef*** *xi ħaġa* ***niċċekkja*** *il-qalziet* (if I lose something, I will check my trousers).

5.3 Perspectives of Language Transfer

Section 3.2 highlights three principal perspectives of language transfer: the behaviourist approach, the mentalist approach and the interlanguage perspective. As discussed previously, in the former perspective the influence of the native language is deemed to be one of the principal source of errors as errors are said to increase because of the differences between the native language and the target language. In fact, it is believed that "where two languages [are] similar, positive transfer [...] occur[s]; where they [are] different, negative transfer, or interference, [...] result[s]" (Larsen-Freeman & Long, 1991, p. 120). Although this perspective views language transfer as a main source of errors, the findings of the present study show that language transfer was not prevalent in the collected sample. The identified errors were largely intralingual errors. Thus, the majority of the errors might have occurred because of challenges encountered in learning and fully applying the rules that guide the structure of the target language (Richards, 1974). For example,

example 16: 'he **admire** [admires] Russel Westbrook'

example 17: 'First I offered **Øhim** some tea [...]'

Example 16 indicates subject-verb disagreement, showing that similar inaccuracies might arise as a consequence of the learners' difficulties in maintaining constant subject-verb agreement throughout their written production. Similarly, example 17

can be allocated to difficulties in learning and applying rules as the omission of the pronoun ‘him’ shows that the participant might not have distinguished between the occurrence of transitive and intransitive verbs.

Nevertheless, the findings show that differences between the L1 and the L2 can lead to interlingual errors. In fact, one overarching source of interlingual errors outlined in the previous section was that of differences between Maltese and English. For instance, the differences in using the present simple over the past perfect and the use of the indefinite article. However, such differences do not always lead to an increase in errors caused by language transfer. In fact, as explored in section 2.1.1, mentalists have criticised the use of contrastive analysis, developed by behaviourists, for its failure in predicting errors based on differences as some of the identified difficulties do not always manifest themselves in the target language use (Odlin, 2003). For instance, as seen in the previous section, the definite article is often used in front of nouns in Maltese, yet this is not always the case in English (Camilleri, 2004). However, in the collected sample, this difference led only to one such difficulty depicted in example 14. This shows that difficulties between languages might not always generate and increase language transfer errors. In fact, universal grammar hypotheses within the mentalist approach do not share a consensus on the degree on crosslinguistic influence (VanPatten, et al., 2020).

Moreover, in contrast to a behaviourist approach, errors resulting from differences, do not necessarily eliminate the possibility of similarities between languages also being a cause of difficulty in language use. This is mainly evident in the high occurrence of intralingual errors. For instance, subject-verb agreement in example 16 is also maintained in Maltese: ‘***hu jammira*** *lil Russel Westbrook* (he

admires Russel Westbrook)', and the transitive verb 'offered' in example 17 also requires a pronoun in Maltese: '*offrejt**lu** naqra té* (I offered him some tea)**'.**

In the behaviourist perspective errors are also perceived to be "the result of the intrusion of L1 habits over which the learner [has] no control" (Larsen-Freeman & Long, 1991, p. 131). In other words, learners are seen as taking on a passive role in their language learning. This view opposes the standpoint of the interlanguage theory which emphasises the learners' active role (Larsen-Freeman & Long, 1991). In turn, this perspective is reinforced by Selinker's (1972) view that, during second language acquisition, learners construct individual temporary linguistic systems, and Corder's (1967) viewpoint on errors as portraying learners' progress. Language transfer is identified as an element of the learners' interlanguage, however, it is considered to be only a part of the learners' interlanguage. This is also evident in the obtained findings as language transfer has been identified as only a marginal source of error. This negates the view of passive learners who do not have control over the influence of Maltese as not all differences between the two languages have led to errors.

In addition, the surface structure taxonomy allocated to the errors also sheds light on the participants learning process as the classifications within the taxonomy help in "identifying cognitive processes that underlie the learner's reconstruction of the new language" (Dulay, et al., 1982, p. 150). The results in section 4.1.3 show that misformation errors, that is errors in which the wrong form of the morphological or syntactical item is used, across both age groups, account for the highest percentage of errors. These errors show that "some learning has transpired and that […] the learner is on his or her way to target language proficiency" (Dulay, et al., 1982, p. 162). This is because, unlike omission errors, in which an item is absent,

the learner is aware that a grammatical item is needed, yet it is not always applied accurately. It has also affirmed that omission errors are also more frequent in the earlier stages of second language acquisition (Dulay, et al., 1982). However, in the present study, there was no statistically significant difference in omission errors across age. The difference in the year 7 and the year 9 writing tasks was not significant even though the 11-12 year old (year 7) participants are at an earlier stage of acquisition. This might be because, within the local context the learners' exposure to the formal teaching of English starts at the age of five years. Hence, both age groups would have advanced over the early stages of L2 acquisition.

5.4 Variables that Can Affect Language Transfer

Ädel (2015, p. 403) affirms that one of the aims of corpus linguistics is to "account for the variability found in language and to establish the causes of such variability" through an analysis of the role of variables. In the present study, the role of age and text type in the learner corpus was investigated. The findings in sections 4.2 and 4.3 show that there was no statistically significant association between these two variables and the different types of errors. These results could be linked to the small sample size of the present study, and the influence variables might have on each other (Daller and Sakel, 2012; Jarvis & Pavlenko, 2008). In fact, Ädel (2015, p. 403) maintains that "it is often the case that more than one variable has a role to play in linguistic variation". Hence, although the study was limited to two variables, the role of age and text type on the different types of errors and language transfer could have been influenced by other "learner-specific variables", such as, the participants' preferred languages and educational background, and "general variables", like the participants' gender and socio-economic background (Ädel, 2015, pp. 404 & 407).

Nevertheless, the findings on the role of age on crosslinguistic influence reflect Sychandone's (2016) study in which the writing of Lao early bilingual learners of English in their first, second and third year of university is investigated. Sychandone (2016) concludes that language transfer was mainly prevalent in the writing of the second-year students, with the highest percentage difference pointing towards a decrease of language transfer from third- to second- year. On a descriptive level, this compares to the results of the present study as the obtained percentages show that the effect of language transfer decreased with age, yet this difference was not statistically significant. Similarly, the findings on the role of text type on language transfer mirror Watcharapunyawong and Usaha's (2012) study in which no significant association between language transfer and the three text types: narration, description and a compare and contrast writing task, composed by Thai EFL learners, was identified.

However, Watcharapunyawong and Usaha (2012, p. 75) maintain that language transfer was more evident in certain language categories as they state that "although there is considerable overlap in the common errors caused by L1 interference, the number of errors of specific categories varied, depending on a particular genre". Thus, although the findings of the present study cannot be generalised, a number of differences in relation to age and text type were observed on a descriptive level. One of the principal differences observed in the obtained percentages is that of an increase in interlingual verb errors with age. One of the primary causes of this is that most of the interlingual errors that depicted the use of the past simple over the past perfect were mainly evident in the older age group. This difference has been allocated to two reasons: the effect of text type and the syllabus of the two year groups. The past perfect, which was identified as one of the

primary sources of interlingual errors, does not feature in the year 7 (11-12 years) syllabus as it is generally introduced in year 9 (13-14 years). Hence, the younger group of participants were less likely to make use of the past perfect in their writing.

On a descriptive level, verb errors were predominantly present in narrative writing tasks. More specifically, these were mainly evident in the narrative writing tasks composed by the 13-14 years old participants. In this writing task, the students were asked to write a story for the school magazine beginning with: 'It was nearly 10 o'clock and I had already gone to bed'. Certain participants chose to recount some events that led up to the specific point described in the given title before moving on to the events that took place after 10 o'clock. However, as was seen in previous examples in section 4.1.2 and 5.1.2, some participants failed to distinguish between the function of the two verb aspects. Since, the past perfect is introduced in year 9, the writing task titles of the end-of-year exams are more likely to encourage the use of language points covered throughout that year. This could have led to an increase of such errors in the narrative writing tasks of the 13-14 year old participants in year 9.

5.5 Pedagogical Implications

One of the objectives of the present study is to determine the pedagogical implications of the findings to address errors, in particular interlingual errors. A translanguaging pedagogy can be implemented within the teaching and learning of English to address the potential impact of crosslinguistic influence. In this approach the students' entire linguistic repertoires are used to facilitate target language acquisition (García, 2017). As a result of this approach "within the field of bilingual education, there is a growing movement to view students' multiple languages as resources" (Stewart & Hansen-Thomas, 2016, p. 450). Stewart and Hansen-Thomas

(2016, p. 453) propose that translanguaging can be achieved by employing what they term “creativity” as when this is used “students can play with words and language in ways that draw on their bilingualism”. For instance, keeping in mind the outlined interlingual errors of the present study, teachers can support and guide the students in identifying the differences between the two languages that might hinder accuracy, for instance, the lack of the indefinite article in Maltese and the difference in use of the past perfect. Similarities, for example the similar use of the subject-verb agreement, can also be highlighted to aid target language production, and potentially address intralingual errors. In doing so, teachers can encourage metalanguage practices in which the students make use of their existing knowledge of the L1 to acquire and improve accuracy in the L2.

In addition to noticing differences and similarities across languages, Stanley (2013, p. 39) refers to the technique of “noticing errors” as a translingual practice. Through this technique learners are guided to make use of their entire linguistic repertoires to notice errors in their and their peers’ writing, and reflect on and negotiate the linguistic features of the errors (Stanley, 2013). In turn, this can also encourage the use of formative assessment for writing as students are guided to use translingual techniques to edit and improve their work.

Furthermore, the outlined errors shed a light on the importance of improving and encouraging a focus on literacy. In fact, attaining increased literacy levels is one of the aims of the National Curriculum Framework (Ministry of Education and Employment, 2012). In the built learner corpus, spelling errors account for the largest portion of errors. One way in which this can be addressed is in further promoting literacy, particularly reading within and outside of the classroom as this exposes the leaners to a model use of language. To promote the importance of reading,

adequate time needs to be dedicated to reading during lessons. Moreover, reading can be rendered more engaging through the choice of activities and material that reflect the learners' interests. As indicated in section 4.1.1 misspelling was also a consequence of phonological spelling. Once again, metalanguage practices in which the learners are guided to notice the differences between phonology and writing of words can aid in addressing such spelling errors.

The findings also shed light on the importance of adopting effective techniques in the teaching and assessment of writing. Harmer (2010, p. 112) distinguishes between "writing-for-learning and writing-for-writing". In the former writing is used as a "practice tool to help students practise and work with language they have been studying", while the latter aims at "developing the students' skills as writers" (Harmer, 2010, p. 112). The two are interlinked as to achieve the latter it is important to give students plenty of opportunity to practise the language forms expected of them in that particular writing task. For example, the year 9 narrative writing task necessitated the use of the past perfect. Hence, to address the possibility of such errors, learners can be given different tasks to practise this language point prior to completing the writing task. In addition to this, a model text can be given to highlight accurate use of language as this "will help students produce appropriate texts even with fairly limited English" (Harmer, 2010, p. 113). Moreover, Hunter, et al. (1996, p. 62) distinguishes between "holistic scoring" and "analytic scoring" in the assessment of writing. Adopting analytic scales can be more beneficial in a classroom setting as, in contrast to holistic scales, this allows the teachers to focus on and score different aspects of the writing separately. In turn, the learners are given more specific and individualised feedback on the identified errors.

For instance, in light of these findings the learners might be given feedback on improving their use of spelling as this accounted for the greatest number of errors.

5.6 Chapter Summary

The role of language transfer in the present learner corpus is contextualised within a wider frame of types of errors against which the degree and relevance of crosslinguistic influence has been investigated. However, in line with the study's objectives, this chapter focused primarily on the role of language transfer. First the degree of language transfer was discussed and compared to other studies in the local and international context. The identified patterns of language transfer in the present learner corpus were also discussed. The findings were related to the three principal theories that reflect on language transfer: the behaviourist, mentalist and interlanguage approaches. In line with the latter, the identified errors are perceived to provide an insight into the process and progress of the students' L2 acquisition. The findings highlighting the limited effect of age and text type on language transfer were also discussed. Lastly, the pedagogical implications of the results were explored.

Chapter 6 : Conclusion

The overarching objective of this study was to gain a deeper insight into the students' interlanguage through an analysis of written errors. More specifically, such an analysis was aimed at exploring the role of language transfer from Maltese to English in L2 writing within a bilingual context. Language transfer was also analysed in relation to two variables: age and text type, that might influence it. A summary of the findings, together with implications for future studies and for practice, and data limitations will be discussed in this concluding chapter.

6.1 Summary of Study

For the purpose of this study, the obtained raw data: year 7 and year 9 writing tasks, were compiled into a learner corpus. Computer-Aided Error analysis was used to analyse and tag the identified errors. A three-level annotation system was implemented to tag the errors. The surface structure classification, language area, and source were identified for each error. The tagged corpus was analysed using concordance (*AntConc*) and statistical (*Jamovi, 1.6.23*) tools to investigate the role of language transfer, its effect on the different language areas, and the role of age on crosslinguistic influence. In addition to this, data analysis highlighted the different text types as another variable that might influence errors. Hence, the effect of text type was also analysed. The obtained findings in relation to the identified research questions are summarised in the following table:

Research Questions	Findings
RQ 1: What is the extent, if any, of language transfer?	Language transfer was not prevalent in the collected sample, and in both age groups.
RQ 2: Which language areas were affected by language transfer?	Language transfer was present in some, but not all the identified language areas. It mainly influenced preposition errors, the misuse of the past simple over the past perfect, and indefinite article errors.
RQ 3: What are the differences in language transfer based on age?	There was no statistically significant association between age and language transfer. On a descriptive level, the principal change observed was an increase in verb errors with age, but this change was not statistically significant.
RQ 4: What are the differences in language transfer based on text type?	There was no statistically significant association between text type and language transfer. On a descriptive level, the predominant difference was evident in a greater percentage of verb errors in the narrative writing tasks. However, this difference was not statistically significant.

Table 6.1: Summary of Findings

6.2 Data Limitations and Implications for Future Studies

Although an analysis of the obtained data has allowed for an investigation of the learners' interlanguage and crosslinguistic influence, a number of data limitations can be identified. In turn, such limitations can be redressed in future studies. One of the principal data limitations of this study is the small sample size. The built learner corpus was composed of 41 writing tasks collected from two different state schools. In order to have a better representative sample of the local context, it can be suggested that future studies make use of a more representative sample by increasing the number of participants, and the number of schools from which the data is collected. Moreover, ensuring more variety in the collected text types can improve the analysis of effect of text type on language transfer. It can also be suggested that future studies gather further information about the participants, such as gender, as other variables can also influence language transfer. In fact, due to anonymity, another limitation of the present study is the lack of information about the learners, for example the participants' use of language at home and competence in

the languages, which might have influenced the other variables and language transfer. Moreover, to ensure that the identified interlingual errors occurred as a result of the influence of the L1, it can be suggested that future studies compare their corpus with a more established native speaker corpus to explore whether the identified interlingual errors are present in the native learner corpus. If so, such errors do not necessarily highlight crosslinguistic influence.

This study focuses mainly on a quantitative analysis of the data. To counteract the limitations of a quantitative analysis, a more in-depth analysis of the identified errors was carried out to determine the source of language transfer in interlingual errors. However, in addition to this, it is suggested that future studies can adopt a more qualitative approach to explore certain areas such as, the learners' and the teachers' views on the role of errors and on native language influence. A qualitative approach that seeks to explore the role of translanguaging on interlingual errors can also be adopted as this pedagogical approach was identified as a beneficial approach in addressing language transfer and facilitating language acquisition.

6.3 Conclusion

Although the findings of this study have shown that language transfer is a characteristic of the participants' interlanguage, it could not be identified as the leading element. Direct translation and differences between Maltese and English were outlined as the two primary sources of language transfer. However, it is significant to note that differences between languages do not always lead to errors, and similarities between the two do not eliminate the possibility of errors. Moreover, specific language areas were identified as being more challenging than others and as being more susceptible to the effect of language transfer. Hence, interlingual

errors, and the overarching role of crosslinguistic influence in L2 language teaching and learning should not be dismissed.

In fact, an error analysis of the collected data has emphasised the importance of viewing errors as tools that can aid the teaching and learning of languages. Errors highlight the learners' interlanguage, that is their process and progress in acquiring a language. In turn, this evidence can be used to adapt and plan lessons in line with the identified students' needs as errors are "especially rich opportunit[ies] [...] for language development" (Stanley, 2013, p. 43). An analysis on the potential negative effects of native language influence was not carried out to promote a separation of languages, but rather it was done to put forth the idea of adopting pedagogical approaches that utilise the benefits of bilingualism and plurilingualism. With the guidance and support of teachers who implement a translanguaging approach to teaching and learning, learners acquiring a second or foreign language can benefit from making use of their entire linguistic repertoire and from systematically transferring skills and concepts across languages.

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Appendices

Appendix A: List of Error Tags

Code 1: Surface Structure Taxonomy		**Examples**
ADT	Addition	we have two *the* lost
DISO	Disordering	I thank *too* the school
MISF	Misformation	We arrived *at* Malta
OMS	Omission (Ø)	I was *Øso* exhausted that I couldn't walk
Code 2: Language Areas		**Examples**
2.1 Morphology: Part of Speech		
AD	Adverb error	We were *such* happy that
AJS	Superlative adjective error	*most sad*
CNJ	Conjunction error	I went to check *and* it was hard
DFA	Definite article error	After *the* work
DM	Determiner error	tried to find *this* car keys
DMP	Demonstrative pronoun error	*That's* why I admire Alex
DS	Derivational suffix error	I heard his *experienced*
FC	First conditional error	If he plays like this he *would* be a legend
IDA	Indefinite article error	and *a* long hair
IDP	Indefinite pronoun error	I can't say *something*
NN	Noun error	we have two lost *Øthings*
NP	Noun plurality error	many *thing*
PP	Personal pronoun error	*Øhe* tried to call a taxi
PRP	Preposition error	*in* seven o'clock
PSN	Possessive noun error	my *brothers* magazine
PSP	Possessive pronoun error	my mum, *Ømy* sister and me too
QNT	Quantifier error	think of *Øsome* ideas
RP	Relative pronoun error	a long-lasting friend *that* I had not seen
SVA	Subject verb agreement error	*he* usually *come* at nine pm
VADD	Additional verb error	I'll *come* pick you up
VAV	Auxiliary verb error	since I *had* five
VC	Verb conjugation error	I *losted* the car keys
VI	Infinitive verb error	to be myself and not *be* scared of
VM	Modal verb error	It was too far way. He *can't* go
VMIS	Missing verb	it only *Øsells* gaming stuff
VPV	Phrasal verb error	I went to *wake* my mother
2.3 Morphology: Verb Tenses		
VPCPPC	Past continuous instead of past perfect continuous	I went to tell my mum [...] she *was dreaming* about the same creepy figure
VPCPS	Past continuous instead of past simple	I *was driving* back home, I parked

VPPPRP	Past perfect simple instead of present perfect simple	He *had done* plastic surgery
VPPPS	Past perfect simple instead of past simple	Jack was sad and *had searched* for another job
VPRCPC	Present continuous instead of past continuous	phoned me to tell me he *is going* fishing
VPRPPRC	Present perfect simple instead of present continuous	I'*ve sent* this email
VPRPRC	Present simple instead of present continuous	Now I *visit* a bunch of different countries
VPRPRPT	Present simple instead of present participle	without *leave*
VPRPS	Present simple instead of past simple	had breakfast, *comb* my hair
VPRPTPR	Present participle instead of present simple	I usually sleep at midnight and *playing* video games
VPRPTPS	Present participle instead of past simple	my family and I *going* to the cinema
VPRSF	Present simple instead of simple future	We saw that tomorrow *is* a sunny day
VPSPC	Past simple instead of past continuous	While I *swam*
VPSPP	Past simple instead of past perfect	I was so tired because the cat *gave* me a fright
VPSPPR	Past simple instead of present perfect	you won't believe what I just *heard*
VPSPR	Past simple instead of present simple	This film *was* the best film in the world
VPSPRC	Past simple instead of present continuous	I *asked* you
VSFPR	Simple future instead of present simple	to get some money and *will return* home
2.2 Morphology: Spelling		
SEL	Extra letter/s	be*a*cause
SES	Extra spacing	*a lone*
SJ	Jumbled up spelling	*siccors*
SML	Missing letter/s	aleady
SMS	Missing spacing	*alot*
SRL	Letter/s replacement	alm*a*st
SRW	Word replacement	to see *were* he was
SS	Swapped letters	b*iu*lding
SP	Plural spelling error	countr*ys*
2.4 Syntax		
ADP	Adverb placement error	She *just* was like our best friends
AJP	Adjective placement error	there were many things *different*
NPH	Noun phrase error	*Me and my siblings* were panicking
SC	Subordinate Clause error	*When we ate them,* they were as good as gold
TNSV	Transitive verb error	he plays *Øbasketball*

VP	Verb placement error	The first thing *was* I *had* a huge meeting
Code 3: Source of Errors		**Examples**
INTER	Interlingual error	I couldn't hear *with* my dad
INTRA	Intralingual error	got a *knive* from the kitchen

Appendix B: Categorised Language Areas

Adverbs	
AD	Adverb Error
ADP	Adverb placement error
Adjectives	
AJS	Superlative adjective error
AJP	Adjective placement error
Conjunctions	
CNJ	Conjunction error
SC	Subordinate Clause error
Determiners	
DFA	Definite article error
DM	Determiner error
IDA	Indefinite article error
QNT	Quantifier error
Nouns	
NN	Noun error
NP	Noun plurality error
PSN	Possessive noun error
NPH	Noun phrase error
Spelling	
DS	Derivational suffix error
SEL	Extra letter/s
SES	Extra spacing
SJ	Jumbled up spelling
SML	Missing letter/s
SMS	Missing spacing
SRL	Letter/s replacement
SRW	Word replacement
SS	Swapped letters
SP	Plural spelling error
Prepositions	
PRP	Preposition error
Pronouns	
DMP	Demonstrative pronoun error
IDP	Indefinite pronoun error
PP	Personal pronoun error
PSP	Possessive pronoun error
RP	Relative pronoun error
Verbs	
FC	First conditional error
SVA	Subject verb agreement error
VADD	Additional verb error
VAV	Auxiliary verb error
VC	Verb conjugation error
VI	Infinitive verb error
VM	Modal verb error
VMIS	Missing verb

VPV	Phrasal verb error
VPCPPC	Past continuous instead of past perfect continuous
VPCPS	Past continuous instead of past simple
VPPPRP	Past perfect simple instead of present perfect simple
VPPPS	Past perfect simple instead of past simple
VPRCPC	Present continuous instead of past continuous
VPRPPRC	Present perfect simple instead of present continuous
VPRPRC	Present simple instead of present continuous
VPRPRPT	Present simple instead of present participle
VPRPS	Present simple instead of past simple
VPRPTPR	Present participle instead of present simple
VPRPTPS	Present participle instead of past simple
VPRSF	Present simple instead of simple future
VPSPC	Past simple instead of past continuous
VPSPP	Past simple instead of past perfect
VPSPPR	Past simple instead of present perfect
VPSPR	Past simple instead of present simple
VPSPRC	Past simple instead of present continuous
VSFPR	Simple future instead of present simple
TNSV	Transitive verb error
VP	Verb placement error

Appendix C: Identified Interlingual Errors

Surface Structure Code	Identified Error	Maltese Translation	Corrected Error
Adverb Error (AD)			
MISF	Sometimes I hurt and sometimes *no*	Ġili nweġġa w ġili *le*	Sometimes I hurt and sometime I do *not*
MISF	so that I will know if you are gonna come or *no*	ħalli nkun naf ux ġejja jew *le*	so that I will know if you are going to come or *not*
MISF	We were searching for it *where* we walk	Konna qegħdin infittxuha *fejn* imxejna	We were searching for it *everywhere* we walked
Conjunction Error (CNJ)			
OMS	without school nothing	mingħajr skola xejn	without school *or* anything
MISF	*When* we wear going to his house I saw my brother.	*Meta* konna sejrin id-dar tiegħu, rajt lil ħija.	*As* we were going to his house, I saw my brother.
MISF	and *when* we were going to put on the car we couldn't find the key.	U *meta* konna se nixgħelu il-karozza ma stajniex insibu ċ-ċavetta.	and *as* we were going to put on the car, we couldn't find the key.
MISF	*When* I was telling them the address, we heard a knock	*Meta* kont qiegħed ngħidilhom l-indirizz, smajna taħbita	*As* I was telling them the address, we heard a knock.
MISF	*When* we walked to the car it started raining	*Meta* konna mixjin għal karozza bdiet nieżla ix-xita	*As* we were walking to the car it started to rain
Definite Article Error (DFA)			
ADT	After the work	Wara ix-xogħol	After work
Determiner Error (DM)			
ADT	I am coming for you abot fiften *more* minutes	Jien ġej għalik madwar ħmistax il-minuta *oħra*	I am coming for you in about fifteen minutes
ADT	Birkirkara Triq *il-* Għasel street	Birkirkara Triq *il-* Għasel	Birkirkara Għasel street
Demonstrative Pronoun Errors (DMP)			
OMS	how lives in Birkirkara [...] can go by walk	min jgħix Birkirkara jista jmur bil-mixi	*those* who live in Birkirkara can go on foot
First Conditional Error (FC)			

MISF	if I lose something I *check* in my trousers	jekk nitlef xi ħaġa *niċċekkja* fil-qalziet.	if I lose something, I *will check* in my trousers
Indefinite Article Error (IDA)			
OMS	I had to do barbeque with my father.	kelli nagħmel barbeque ma' missieri.	I had to do *a* barbeque with my father.
OMS	it even gives me discount	anke skont jagħtini	it even gives me *a* discount
OMS	as kangaroo	bħal kangaru	like *a* kangaroo
OMS	with long beard	b'daqna twila	with *a* long beard
OMS	he was dead long time ago	kien mejjet żmien ilu	he had died *a* long time ago
OMS	She always cooked us special dinner	Dejjem kienet issajrilna ikla speċjali	She always cooked us *a* special dinner
OMS	gave €500 voucher	tawna €500 vawċer	gave us *a* €500 voucher
OMS	like when dog is angry	bħal meta kelb ikun irrabjat	like when *a* dog is angry
OMS	by overdouse	minn overdose	from *an* overdose
OMS	I had a lot of plans and meeting	Kelli ħafna pjanijiet u laqgħa	I had a lot of plans and *a* meeting
Indefinite Pronoun Error (IDP)			
MISF	without school *nothing*	mingħajr skola *xejn*	without school or *anything*
MISF	I saw *nothing*	ma rajt *xejn*	I didn't see *anything*
MISF	When we went to check we saw *nobody*	Meta morna niċċekkjaw ma rajna lil *ħadd*	When we went to check we didn't see *anyone*
MISF	and saw *nobody*	u ma rajna lil *ħadd*	and we didn't see *anyone*
MISF	I can't say *something* negative	Ma nistax ngħid *xi ħaġa* negattiva	I can't say *anything* negative
MISF	I looked in the corridor but I *saw nothing*	Ħarist fil-kuritur imma *ma rajt xejn*	I looked in the corridor but I *didn't see anything*
Noun Error (NN)			
MISF	I saw a lot of staff [...] like [...] guard, *police*, and more.	rajt ħafna affarijiet bħal [...] gwardjani, *pulizija*, u iktar.	I saw a lot of stuff [...] like [...] guards, *policemen*, and more.
OMS	to my brother to football	ħadu l-ħija l-futbol	took my brother to football *practice*
ADT	Birkirkara *Triq* il-Għasel street	Birkirkara *Triq* il-Għasel	Birkirkara Għasel street

MISF	can go by *walk*	jistgħu jmorru bil-*mixi*	can go on *foot*
Personal Pronoun Error (PP)			
MISF	Sometimes I hurt and sometimes no	Ġili nweġġa w ġili *le*	Sometimes I hurt and sometime *I* do not
Preposition Error (PRP)			
MISF	*at* Birkirkara	*f'*Birkirkara	*in* Birkirkara
MISF	he was known *by* all of the United states	kien magħruf *mill-* Istati Uniti kollha	he was known *to* all of the United States
OMS	When I arrived home I relaxed a bit because I had to go	Meta wasalt id-dar irrilassajt ftit ghax kelli mmur	When I arrived home, I relaxed *for* a bit because I had to go
OMS	to see them a bit	biex narahom naqa	to see them *for* a bit
MISF	we were walking *for* car	konna mixjin *għal* karozza	we were walking *to* the car
MISF	learned how to dance from Michael Jackson	tgħallimt niżfen *minn* Michael Jackson	learned how to dance *thanks to* Michael Jackson
OMS	I was crying [...] I coudn't hold it.	Kont qiegħedd nibki [...] ma stajtx inżomm il-biki.	I was crying [...] I couldn't hold it *in.*
OMS	I am coming for you abot fiften more minutes	Jien ġej għalik madwar ħmistax il-minuta oħra	I am coming for you *in* about fifteen minutes
ADT	check *in* my trousers	jekk nitlef xi ħaġa niċċekkja *fil*-qalziet.	check my trousers
MISF	me and my mum went *in* his room	jien u ommi morna fil-kamra tiegħu	me and my mum went *into* his room
MISF	I go there often *like* once a month.	Immur hemm ta' spiss *qisu* darba f'xahar.	I go there often, *around* once a month
OMS	I felt I was in haven	ħassejtni qiegħda l-ġenna	I felt *like* I was in heaven
MISF	I had to go *near* my grandparents	Kelli mmur *ħdejn* in-nanniet	I had to go *to* my grandparents
MISF	there was the ghost floating *on* me	kien hemm Il-ħares itir *fuq*i	there was the ghost floating *above* me
ADT	my mum felt somebody tapping *on* her back	ommi ħasset xi ħadd itaptap *fuq* darha	my mum felt somebody tapping her back
ADT	I thank too *to* the school	nirringrazzja ukoll *lill-* iskola	I thank the school too
MISF	I didn't know what I was doing *with* tireness	ma kontx naf x'qiegħed nagħmel *bl*-għeja	I didn't know what I was doing *as a result of* tiredness
MISF	they couldn't hear *with* my dad	ma setgħux jisimgħu *b*'missieri	they couldn't hear *because of* my dad

ADT	to meet *with* a long lasting friend	Biex niltaqa *ma'* habib kbir	to meet a long-lasting friend
MISF	to buy games *with* a lower cost	biex trixtri logħob *bi* prezz irħas	to buy games *at* a lower cost
MISF	can go *by* walk	jistgħu jmorru *bil-* mixi	can go *on* foot
MISF	*In* weekends	*Fi* tmiem il-ġimgħa	*On* weekends
OMS	it has alot cheap stuff	għandu ħafna affarijiet irħas	it has a lot *of* cheap stuff
ADT	my dad came *for* us	missieri ġie *għal*ina	my dad came to get us
OMS	Saturday June 17 my mum and I	Is-Sibt 17 ta' Ġunju jien u ommi	*On* Saturday June 17th my mum and I
Possessive Noun Error (PSN)			
MISF	the palace of the qeen	il-palazz tar-reġina	the queen's palace
Possessive Pronoun Error (PSP)			
ADT	that I have over 70 books of *hers*	li għandi l'fuq minn 70 ktieb tagħha	of whom I have over 70 books
Quantifier Error (QNT)			
OMS	didn't have money	ma kellnix flus	didn't have *any* money
Relative Pronoun Error (RP)			
ADT	somewhere else *that* I had never been before	x'imkien ieħor *li* qatt ma kont mort	somewhere else I had never been before
MISF	the one *that* I have over 70 books of hers	il-waħda li għandi l'fuq minn 70 ktieb tagħha	of *whom* I have over 70 books
MISF	to meet with a long lasting friend *that* I never saw since	niltaqa ma' habib kbir *li* kont ili ma' nara minn	meet with a long-lasting friend *whom* I hadn't seen since
Subject Verb Agreement Error (SVA)			
MISF	There *was* about 15 tonnes of gas bombs	Kien *hemm* madwar 15-il tunnellata ta' bombi tal-gass	There *were* about 15 tonnes of gas bombs
MISF	there *is* even decorations	*hemm* ukoll dekorazzjonijiet	there *are* even decorations
Additional Verb Error (VADD)			
ADT	if your'e coming I'll *come* pick you up	Jekk ġejja niġi niġbrok	if you're coming, I'll pick you up
ADT	At my grandparent's house I *stood* relaxed	Fid-dar tan-nanniet tiegħi *qgħadt* rilassat	At my grandparents' house I relaxed

ADT	we sat on the sand and *stayed* talking	poġġejna fuq ir-ramel u *qagħadna* nitkellmu	we sat on the sand and talked
Auxiliary Verb Error (VAV)			
MISF	since I *had* five	minn meta *kelli* ħames snin	since I *was* five
OMS	Sometimes I hurt and sometimes no	Ġili nweġġa w ġili le	Sometimes I hurt and sometime I *do* not
Verb Conjugation Error (VC)			
MISF	I had *went* back in time	*mort* lura fiż-żmien	I had *gone* back in time
Infinitive Verb Error (VI)			
MISF	I can come *pick* you up	nista niġi *niġbrok*	I come *to pick* you up
MISF	I had a lot to do that day that I *had to go* immidetly	Kelli ħafna x'nagħmel dakinhar għalhekk *kelli mmur* mill-ewwel	I had had a lot to do that day so I *had gone* immediately
OMS	my dad came for us	missieri ġie għalina	my dad came *to get* us
OMS	something to eat and drink with me	xi ħaġa x'nixrob u niekol għal miegħi	Something to eat and drink *to* also *take* with me
ADT	The gas bombs where set *to go* to bomb japen	Il-bombi tal-gass kienu lesti *biex imorru* jibbumbardjaw il-ġappun	The gas bombs were set to bomb Japan
Missing Verb Error (VMIS)			
OMS	I changed	Biddilt	I *got* changed
Phrasal Verb Error (VPV)			
MISF	after 10 seconds we *turned* and saw	wara 10 sekondi *dorna* u rajna	after 10 seconds we *turned around* and saw
MISF	I went to *wake* my mother	mort *inqajjem* lil ommi	I went to *wake up* my mother
MISF	I *wok* feeling like	*qomt* inħossni qisu	I *woke up* feeling like
OMS	We were waiting for our coach to come	Konna qegħdin nistennew il-kowċ jiġi	We were waiting for our coach to come *pick* us *up*
Past Continuous instead of Past Perfect Continuous Error (VPCPPC)			
MISF	I went to tell my mum what had happened [...] she *was dreaming* about	mort ngħid lil ommi x'kien ġara [...] *kienet qiegħda*	I went to tell my mum what had happened [...] she *had been dreaming*

	the same creepy figure	*toħlom* bl-istess figura tal-biża	about the same creepy figure
Present Simple instead of Past Simple Error (VPRPS)			
MISF	I just layed there [...] so I *don't* make a noise	Imteddejt hemmhekk [...] biex *ma nagħmilx* ħoss	I just laid there [...] so that I *didn't* make a noise
Present Participle instead of Past Simple Error (VPRPTPS)			
MISF	but its better like that than something more dangerous *happened* while	aħjar hekk milli *ġrat* xi ħaġa agħar waqt	But it's better like this than something more dangerous *happening* while
MISF	we sat on the sand and stayed *talking*	poġġejna fuq ir-ramel u qagħadna *nitkellmu*	we sat on the sand and *talked*
Past Simple instead of Past Perfect Error (VPSPP)			
MISF	It was nearly 10 o'clock and I had already gone to bed [...] at eight'o clock my parents *called* me	Kienu kważi l-10 u kont diġà mort fis-sodda [...] fit-tmienja l-ġenituri tiegħi *ċempluli*	It was nearly 10 o'clock and I had already gone to bed [...] at eight o'clock my parents *had called* me
MISF	My mum *called* the police and he *tooked* some details.	ommi *ċemplet* lill-pulizija u l-pulizija *ħa* xi dettalji	My mum *had called* the police and he *had taken* some details.
MISF	She *died* infront of our eyes	*Mietet* quddiem għajnejna	She *had died* in front of our eyes
MISF	We couldn't belive that she *died*	Ma stajniex nemmnu li *mietet*	We couldn't believe that she *had died*
MISF	my room has chang [...] that I phone *changed* into my old android phone	il-kamra inbidlet [...] dak l-iPhone *inbidel* fil-mowbajl l-antik	my room had changed [...] the iPhone *had changed* into my old android phone
MISF	After 15 minuts we *didn't find* them	Wara 15-il minuta *ma sibniehomx*	After 15 minutes we *hadn't found* them
MISF	and asked if we seen his keys mum sad no I *didn't touch* them	u saqsa rajniex iċ-ċwievet tiegħu ommi qalet le *ma missejthomx*	and asked if we had seen his keys mum said no, I *haven't touched* them
MISF	I was tired, because the cat *gave* me a fright	Kont għajjien għax il-qattus *tani* qatgħa	I was tired because the cat *had given* me a fright
MISF	It was nearly 10 o'clock and I had already gone to bed [...] I *went* to watch	Kienu kważi l-10 u kont diġà mort fis-sodda [...] *mort* nara it-TV u fl-10 *iddejjaqt*	It was nearly 10 o'clock and I had already gone to bed [...] I *had gone* to watch TV and at 10 I

	tv and at 10 I *got* bored [...] so I *went* to bed early	[...] għalhekk *mort* fis-sodda kmieni	*had gotten bored* [...] so I *had gone* to bed early
MISF	I *had* a lot to do that day	*Kelli* ħafna x'nagħmel dakinhar	I *had had* a lot to do that day
MISF	I was dreaming the whole thing that had happend. That I *saw* a figure that *dissapered*, that I *went* to grab some siccors and that I *looked* in the corridor but I *saw* nothing. So I *kept* walking to the living room	Ħlomt dak kollu li kien ġara. Li *rajt* figura li *sparixxiet*, li *mort* biex inġib l-imqass u li *ħarist* fil-kuritur imma ma *rajt* xejn. Għalhekk *bqajt* mixja għas-salott	I dreamt the whole thing that had happened. That I *had seen* a figure that *had disappeared*, that I *had gone* to grab some scissors and that I *had looked* in the corridor but I *hadn't seen* anything. So, I *had kept* walking to the living room
MISF	My mum *tooked* it really hard.	Ommi *ħaditha* bi kbira	My mum *had taken* it really hard.
MISF	my parents *to* my brother to football	il-ġenituri tiegħi *ħadu* lil ħija l-futbol	my parents *had taken* my brother to football
MISF	So I *went* to bed to sleep	Għalhekk *mort* fis-sodda biex noroqd	So, I *had gone* to bed to sleep
MISF	and thats why I *went* to bed at almost 10 o'clock	u għalhekk *mort* fis-sodda kważi fl-10	and that's why I *had gone* to bed at almost 10 o'clock
Extra Letter/s Error (SEL)			
MISF	in *I*msida	fl-*I*msida	Msida
Extra Spacing Error (SES)			
MISF	dissapiered again *for ever*	sparixxa *għal dejjem*	disappeared again *forever*
MISF	when *some body* comes	meta jiġi *xi ħadd*	when *somebody* comes
MISF	when I was at the shop *some one* came	meta kont il-ħanut ġie *xi ħadd*	when I was at the shop *someone* came
MISF	I had *some thing* on the keys	kelli *xi ħaġa* fuq iċ-ċwievet	I had *something* on the keys
MISF	we can go get *some thing* to eat	Nistaw imorru nġibu *xi ħaġa* x'nieklu	we can go get *something* to eat
MISF	We heard *some thing*	Smajna *xi ħaġa*	We heard *something*
MISF	to buy *some thing*	biex tixtri *xi ħaġa*	to buy *something*
Jumbled Up Spelling Error (SJ)			
MISF	*frot*, vegtuls	*Frott*, ħaxix	*fruit*, vegetables

Missing Letter/s (SML)			
MISF	on the 23 of July	fit-23 ta' Lulju	on the 23*rd* of July
MISF	Saturday June 17 my mum and I	Is-Sibt 17 ta' Ġunju jien u ommi	On Saturday June 17*th* my mum and I
Adverb Placement Error (ADP)			
DISO	They don't have *just* clothes but	m'għandhomx *biss* ħwejjeġ imma	They don't *just* have clothes
DISO	I thank *too* to the school	nirringrazzja *ukoll* lill-iskola	I thank the school *too*
DISO	my mom got out the vacum so *maybe* she will find them	ommi ħarġet il-vaku biex *forsi* isibhom	My mom got out the vacuum so she could *maybe* find them
DISO	I was at another location [...] but *now* this black figure was talking to me	kont f'lokazzjoni oħra [...] imma *issa* dil-figura is-sewda kienet qiegħda tkellimni	I was at another location [...] and this black figure was *now* talking to me
DISO	my powers *now* transfer to you	is-setgħat tiegħi *issa* jittrasferixxu għandek	my powers transfer to you *now*
DISO	We went *all* home	Morna *kollha* id-dar	We *all* went home
Adjective Placement Error (AJP)			
DISO	there where many thing *different*	kien hemm ħafna affarijiet *differenti*	there were many *different* things
DISO	I made a night *awake*	Għamilt lejl *imqajjem*	I was *awake* all night
Noun Phrase Error (NPH)			
DISO	if you come with *me and Janette*	jekk tiġi *miegħi u ma' Janette*	if you come with *Janette and I*
DISO	if your coming my mom, *me and Janette*	jekk ġejja ommi, *jien u Janette*	if you're coming my mum, *Janette and I*
DISO	*Me and my siblings* were panicking	*Jien u ħuti* konna qegħdin nippanikjaw	*My siblings and I* were panicking
DISO	*Me and my neighbours* thought that someone	*Jien u l-ġirien* ħsibna li xi ħadd	*My neighbours and I* though that someone
DISO	*Me and my sister* were playing	*Jien u oħti* konna qegħdin nilagħbu	*My sister and I* were playing
DISO	He said to me "*me and my family* didn't have [...]"	Qalli "*jien u l-familja* tiegħi ma kellniex [...]	He said to me "*my family and I* didn't have [...]"
DISO	So *me and my mum* went in his room	Għalhekk, *jien u ommi* morna fil-kamra tiegħu	So, my *mum and I* went into his room

DISO	We are gonna be three *me you and Janette our bestfriend*	Ħa nkunu tlieta, *jien, int u Janette*, l-aqwa ħabiba tagħna	We are gonna be three, *Janette, our best friend, you and I*
Subordinate Clause Error (SC)			
DISO	I relaxed for an hour *because I didn't know what I was doing with tireness*	Irrilassajt għal siegħa *għax ma kontx naf x'qiegħed nagħmel bl-għejja*	I relaxed for an hour *because, as a result of tiredness, I didn't know what I was doing*
Transitive Verb Error (TNSV)			
OMS	at four o'clock my dad *came*	fl-erbgħa *ġie* missieri	at four o'clock my dad *came home*
OMS	he usully *come* at nine pm	isoltu *jiġi* fid-9 ta' filgħaxija	he usually *comes home* at nine pm
OMS	We were waiting for our coach *to come*	Konna qegħdin nistennew il-kowċ *jiġi*	We were waiting for our coach *to come* pick *us* up
OMS	I couldn't even *belive*	Ma stajtx nemmen	I couldn't even believe *it*
OMS	If you want *to buy* from Game Stop	Jekk trid *tixtri* minn Game Stop	If you want *to buy something* from Game Stop
Verb Placement Error (VP)			
DISO	some thing on the keys that tell me where *is* it	xi ħaġa fuq iċ-ċwievet li tgħdli fejn *qegħdin* huma	something on the keys that tells me where they *are*

Appendix D: Head of School Permission Letter

[DATE]

Dear Head of School,

I am Elaine Farrugia, a student reading for a Masters in Teaching and Learning in English with Second and Foreign Language Teaching and Learning, within the Faculty of Education at the University of Malta. As part of this course I will be carrying out research in order to write a dissertation. My dissertation supervisor is Dr. Lara Ann Vella.

The title of my dissertation is 'Maltese to English Language Transfer: Comparative Error Analysis of Year 8 and Year 10 Writing'. For this study, I will be investigating the influence the Maltese language exerts upon written English, the affected language areas and the differences of such language transfer based on age.

Should you give me permission, I would like to be able to access year 7 and/or year 9 writing tasks in the 2019 Annual English Language exam scripts. Should you wish to participate, I would need to access writing tasks completed by track 2 students of Maltese nationality. To safeguard students' privacy, I kindly ask you to forward me anonymised exam scripts of students who fit the selection criteria and of whom I have consent. I will prepare Information letters, outlining what participation entails, and Opt-Out forms, which need to be signed and returned only if parents and/or students do not wish for their or their son/daughter's script to be used in the study. I kindly also ask you to act as an intermediary to distribute these Information letters and Opt-Out forms to parents and students on my behalf.

Participation in the study is voluntary and participants will suffer no negative consequence should they choose not to participate. I will not view the writing tasks of students or parents who do not wish to participate. All writing tasks will be coded to further safeguard participants' and schools' privacy. All raw data will be securely stored and the data obtained will be solely used for the completion of my dissertation.

Should you require further information, please do not hesitate to contact me or my supervisor.

Thank you for your kind consideration.

Sincerely,

Elaine Farrugia

Mobile number: ____

Email address: ____

Supervisor's Details:

Name: ____

Office number: ____

Email: ____

_____

Researcher's signature

Appendix E: Parental/ Guardian Information Letter

[DATE]

Dear Parent/Guardian,

I am Elaine Farrugia, a student reading for a Masters in Teaching and Learning in English with Second and Foreign Language Teaching and Learning at the University of Malta. As part of this course I will be carrying out a research study entitled 'Maltese to English Language Transfer: Comparative Error Analysis of Year 7 and Year 9 Writing'. My study will focus on the influence the Maltese language has on the students' written English. My dissertation supervisor is Dr. Lara Ann Vella.

To collect the data I require, I would need to access students' writing tasks in the 2019 English Language examination scripts. All exam scripts will be anonymised by the school prior to data collection. Students' names and name of School will not be featured on the exam script or in the study. All writing tasks will be given a code to make sure the student's and the school's privacy is further safeguarded. The collected data will be stored securely and it will only be used for the purpose of this study.

Participation is voluntary. Should you NOT wish your son/daughter's writing task to be included in this study, kindly fill in the attached 'Opt-Out' form and return a signed copy by email to [EMAIL OF SCHOOL SECRETARY]. I will be collecting these forms one week from the date you received this sheet. Please note that your son/daughter has also been given an information sheet and Opt-out form.

If more students agree to participate than is needed for the study, writing tasks will be chosen at random.

If you require further information, please do not hesitate to contact me or my supervisor using the details below.

Thank you for your kind attention.

Regards

Elaine Farrugia

Mobile number: ____

Email address: ____

Supervisor's Details:

Name: ____

Office number: ____

Email: ____

_____

Researcher's signature

[DATA]

Għażiż ġenitur/ gwardjan,

Jien, Elaine Farrugia, qiegħda insegwi Masters fit-tagħlim tal-Ingliż flimkien ma' tagħlim ta' lingwi sekondarji u barranin fl-Universita ta' Malta. Bħala parti minn dan il-kors se nwettaq studju ta' riċerka bl-isem ta' '*Maltese to English Language Transfer: Comparative Error Analysis of Year 7 and Year 9 Writing*'. Dan l-istudju se jiffoka fuq l-influwenza li l-lingwa Maltija tħalli fil-kitba bl-Ingliż tal-istudenti. Is-supervajżer ta' din it-teżi tiegħi hija Dr Lara Ann Vella.

Biex niġbor l-informazzjoni neċċessarja, għandi bżonn aċċesss ghat-taħriġ tal-kitba tal-istudenti li jinsabu fil-karta Annwali tal-eżami tal-Lingwa Ingliża tal-2019. L-informazzjoni miġbura se tkun anonimizzata mill-iskola qabel tkun tista tinġabar. L-ismijiet tal-istudenti u l-isem tal-Iskola mhumiex se jissemmew fl-istudju. Ix-xogholijiet tal-kitba se jingħataw kodiċi biex ikun żgurat li l-privatezza tal-istudenti u l-iskola tiġi salvagwardjata. L-informazzjoni miġbura se tinżamm f'post sigur u se tintuża biss għall-iskop ta' dan l-istudju.

Il-parteċipazzjoni hija volontarja. Jekk MA TIXTIEQX li t-taħriġ tal-kitba ta' ibnek/ bintek tiġi użata f'din ir-riċerka, ġentilment imla l-formola mehmuża ma' din l-ittra eletronika u rritornaħha lura billi tibgħat kopja iffrimata fuq [EMAIL TAS-SEGRETARJA TAL-ISKOLA]. Se niġbor dawn il-formoli ġimgħa wara d-data minn meta tirċievi din l-ittra. L-istudenti ukoll ngħataw karta ta' informazzjoni u formula indirizzata għalihom.

Jekk iktar studenti jaqblu li jipparteċipaw milli hemm bżonn għall-istudju, is-studenti se jintgħażlu b'mod anonimu.

Jekk teħtieġ aktar informazzjoni toqgħodx lura milli tikkuntattja lili jew lis- supervajżer tiegħi fuq l-informazzojini provduta.

Grazzi tal-attenzzjoni tieghek.

Dejjem tiegħek,

Elaine Farrugia

Numru tal-mowbajl: ____

Indirizz Eletroniku: ____

Dettalji tas-supervajżer:

Isem: ____

Numru tal-offiċju: ____

Indirizz Eletroniku: ____

_____

Firma tar-riċerkatur

Appendix F: Student Information Letter

[DATE]

Dear student,

My name is Elaine Farrugia. I am a student at the University of Malta, and I am studying to become a teacher.

As part of my course, I am working on a research study about the influence of the Maltese language on students' writing tasks in English. To complete this study, I would like a number of students to help me.

I am inviting you to take part in my study. If you wish to participate, you will be giving me permission to access your writing task in the 2019 Annual English Language examination script. Your real names will not be on the exam script and they will not be used in this study. Instead, every writing task will be given a code made up of different numbers and letters.

I will look at your writing task only if you wish to. If you would NOT like to take part in this study, you need to fill in the attached 'Opt-Out' form and return a signed copy by email to [EMAIL OF SCHOOL SECRETARY]. I will be collecting any returned forms in a week's time.

If you have any questions, please ask. You may email me or ask your parents to email or phone me.

Thank you

Regards

Elaine Farrugia

Email address: ____

_____

Researcher's signature

[DATA]

Għaziz student/a,

Jien jisimni Elaine Farrugia. Jien studenta ġewwa l-Universita ta' Malta, u qiegħda nistudja biex insir għalliema.

Bħala parti mill-kors tiegħi, qiegħda naħdem fuq studju ta' riċerka dwar l-influwenza tal-lingwa Maltija fuq it-taħriġ tal-kitba bl- Ingliż tal-istudenti. Biex inkompli naħdem fuq dan l-istudju nixtieq numru ta' studenti jgħinuni.

Qiegħda nikteb din l-ittra biex nistiednek tieħu sehem f'dan l-istudju tiegħi. Jekk tixtieq tipparteċipa, int tkun qieghed/a tagħtini permess biex naċċessa it-taħriġ tal-kitba tiegħek, li jinsab fil-karta annwali tal-eżami tal-Lingwa Ingliża tal-2019. L-isem tiegħek mhux se jissemma f'dan l-istudju. Minflok, kull taħriġ tal-kitba se jingħata kodiċi magħmul minn numri u ittri differenti.

Se naċċessa it- taħriġ tal-kitba tiegħek jekk tixtieq biss. Jekk MA TIXTIEQX tipparteċipa f'dan l-istudju għandek timla l-formola mehmuża ma' din l-ittra. Jekk timla din il-formola, irritornaha lura billi tibgħat kopja iffrimata fuq [EMAIL TAS-SEGRETARJA TAL-ISKOLA]. Se niġbor dawn il-formoli fi żmien ġimgħa.

Jekk għandek xi mistoqsijiet toqgħodx lura milli tistaqsi. Tista tibghat email fuq l-indirizz eletroniku provdut jew tistaqsi lil ġenituri/ gwardjani tiegħek biex jikkuntattjawni.

Grazzi

Dejjem tiegħek,

Elaine Farrugia

Indirizz Eletroniku: ____

_____

Firma tar-riċerkatur

Appendix G: Parental/ Guardian Opt-Out Form

Maltese to English Language Transfer:

Comparative Error Analysis of Year 8 and Year 10 Writing

I have read the attached *Parent/ Guardian Information Letter*. I understand that:

- Ms Elaine Farrugia will access the 2019 Annual English Language examination scripts, in order to collect a copy of the students' writing tasks.
- All examination scripts will be anonymised by the school. The students' names will not be written on the examination scripts or the writing tasks.

I do NOT wish my child to participate in this study. I therefore do NOT wish Ms Elaine Farrugia to access my son's/daughter's writing task in the 2019 annual English Language exam script.

_____	_____	_____
Son/Daughter's Name	Parent/ Guardian's Name	Parent/ Guardian's Signature

Date: _____

Elaine Farrugia

Mobile number: ____

Email address: ____

_____

Researcher's Signature

Maltese to English Language Transfer:

Comparative Error Analysis of Year 8 and Year 10 Writing

Nikkonferma li qrajt l-ittra tal-informazzjoni għal ġenitur/ kustodju rigward dan l-istudju. Nifhem li:

- Ms Elaine Farrugia se taċċessa il karti annwali tal-eżami tal-Lingwa Ingliża tal-2019, sabiex tiġbor kopja tat-taħriġ tal-kitba tal-istudenti.

- Il-karti tal-eżami se jkunu anonimizzati mill-iskola. L-ismijiet tal-istudenti mhux se jkunu miktuba fuq il-karti tal-eżami jew fuq it-taħriġ tal-kitba.

Jien MA NIXTIEQX li ibni/binti tipparteċipa f'dan l-istudju. Għalhekk ma nixtieqx li Ms Elaine Farrugia taċċessa il karti annwali tal-eżami tal-Lingwa Ingliża tal-2019.

_____	_____	_____
Isem ibnek/ bintek	Isem tal-ġenitur / kustodju	Firma tal- ġenitur / kustodju

Data: _____

Elaine Farrugia

Numru tal-mowbajl: ____

Indirizz Eletroniku: ____

.

_____

Frima tar-riċerkatur

Appendix H: Student Opt-Out Form

Maltese to English Language Transfer:

Comparative Error Analysis of Year 8 and Year 10 Writing

I confirm that I have read and understood the attached *Student Information Letter* and that I have had the opportunity to ask questions about the study. I understand that:

- Ms Elaine Farrugia will be accessing the 2019 Annual English Language examination scripts, in order to photocopy the students' writing tasks.

- Students' names will not be written on Exam papers or on the photocopied writing tasks.

I do NOT wish to participate in this research project. I therefore do NOT wish Ms Farrugia to collect my 2019 Annual English Language examination script to photocopy the writing task.

_____	_____	_____
Student's Name	Student's Signature	Date

.

_____

Researcher's Signature

Maltese to English Language Transfer:

Comparative Error Analysis of Year 8 and Year 10 Writing

Nikkonferma li qrajt u fhimt l-ittra tal-informazzjoni għall-istudenti u li kelli l-opportunita li nistaqsi mistoqsijiet dwar dan l-istudju. Nifhem li:

- Ms Elaine Farrugia se taċċessa il karti annwali tal-eżami tal-Lingwa Ingliża tal-2019, sabiex tiġbor kopja tat-taħriġ tal-kitba tal-istudenti.

- L-ismijiet tal-istudenti mhux se jkunu miktuba fuq il-karti tal-eżami jew fuq it-taħriġ tal-kitba.

Jien MA NIXTIEQX nipparteċipa f'dan l-istudju. Għalhekk ma nixtieqx li Ms Elaine Farrugia taċċessa il karti annwali tal-eżami tal-Lingwa Ingliża tal-2019 tiegħi u tiġbor kopja tat-taħriġ tal-kitba .

_____	_____	_____
Isem tal-istudent/a	Firma tal-istudent/a	Data

_____

Frima tar-riċerkatur