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Trabajo de Titulación como requisito previo para la obtención del título de
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**Analysis of Errors in Spoken Production of French L3 Learners of Level A2 at a
Private School in Quito**

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Quito – junio 2021

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Lingüística Aplicada

**ANALYSIS OF ERRORS IN SPOKEN PRODUCTION OF FRENCH L3
LEARNERS OF LEVEL A2 AT A PRIVATE SCHOOL IN QUITO**

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ABSTRACT

The present study deals with the issue of exploring the possible sources for the most frequent errors in oral production of teenage learners of French who are Spanish native speakers and have also received instruction in English. To attain this objective, online oral interactions of 15 students of a private school of Quito and their teacher in an interview-like setting have been transcribed and analyzed in search of errors. The quantitative data evidenced the most frequent ones which subsequently underwent a qualitative analysis. It consisted of a description of the errors and ultimately, a formulation of hypotheses on their possible causes. The results show that the most frequent types of erroneous production have to do with form rather than content and do not represent a major impediment to communication. As for their causes, the detected errors seem to have their origin not only on the interference of the first or second language, but also on overgeneralization and oversimplification of the rules of the target language. The existence of a combination of several features or sources was also deemed possible.

Keywords: causes, error analysis, French L3, frequent, oral production

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Lingüística aplicada

**ANÁLISIS DE ERRORES EN LA PRODUCCIÓN ORAL DE
ESTUDIANTES DE FRANCÉS L3 DE NIVEL A2 DE UN COLEGIO
PRIVADO DE QUITO**

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RESUMEN

El presente estudio explora las posibles fuentes de los errores más frecuentes en la producción oral de adolescentes aprendices de francés, hablantes nativos de español que también han recibido instrucción en el idioma inglés. Para alcanzar este objetivo, se han analizado y transcrito en búsqueda de errores las interacciones orales de 15 estudiantes de un colegio privado de Quito con su profesor en un contexto a modo de entrevista. Los datos cuantitativos han evidenciado los errores más frecuentes que posteriormente han pasado por un análisis cualitativo. Este último consistió en una descripción de los errores y en última instancia, la formulación de hipótesis sobre sus posibles causas. Los resultados muestran que los tipos de producciones erróneas más frecuentes tienen que ver con la forma más que con el contenido y no representan mayor impedimento para la comunicación. En lo que respecta a sus causas, los errores detectados parecen tener su origen no solamente en la interferencia de la primera o segunda lengua, sino también en la generalización y simplificación excesivas de las reglas de la lengua meta. La existencia de una combinación de varias características o fuentes fue igualmente estimada posible.

Palabras clave: análisis de errores, causas, frecuentes, francés L3, producción oral

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Lingüística aplicada

**ANALYSE D'ERREURS DANS LA PRODUCTION ORALE DES
APPRENANTS DE FRANÇAIS L3 AU NIVEAU A2 D'UN
COLLÈGE PRIVÉ À QUITO**

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Avril 2021

RÉSUMÉ

La présente étude a pour but d'explorer les sources possibles des erreurs les plus fréquentes dans la production orale des adolescents hispanophones apprenant le français qui ont déjà reçu un enseignement en langue anglaise. Pour atteindre cet objectif, les interactions orales en ligne entre 15 étudiants d'un collège privé à Quito et leur professeur ont été transcrites et analysées en recherche d'erreurs. Les données quantitatives ont dévoilé les plus fréquentes qui ont subséquemment été soumises à une analyse qualitative. Celle-ci a consisté en une description des erreurs et finalement en une formulation d'hypothèses concernant leurs possibles causes. Les résultats montrent que les types de productions erronées les plus fréquentes sont liées la forme plutôt qu'au contenu et ne représentent pas un obstacle majeur à la communication. En ce qui concerne leurs causes, les erreurs détectées semblent trouver leur origine non seulement dans l'interférence de la langue maternelle ou la langue seconde, mais aussi dans la généralisation et la simplification excessives des règles de la langue cible. L'existence d'une combinaison de plusieurs caractéristiques ou sources a été aussi estimée possible.

Mots-clés : analyse d'erreurs, causes, fréquentes, français L3, production orale

INTRODUCTION

Errors are a natural part of the language learning process. Such is the approach of several scholars (Corder, 1967; see also Bobaila & Pelea, 2018; Ellis, 1994; Gass & Selinker, 2008; Larsen-Freeman, 1986; Marquilló Larruy, 2003; Ur, 2012) who have found that errors are a fundamental part of learning, providing important information on the development of the language acquisition process and positively contributing to it.

Learners of French, as well as learners of any other foreign language, make errors in their way to mastering it. The involved learners in this research, teenage native Spanish speakers currently studying French in online modality, are no exception. However, the errors students make often constitute only empirical data for teachers as they are not systematically inventoried and their characteristics, frequency and source are not sufficiently known. Although several studies on error analysis have been conducted with students whose first language (L1) is English (Lyster & Ranta, 1997) as well as with learners of English as a second language (L2) (Cabrera et al., 2014; Ellis & Sheen, 2006; Gayo & Widodo, 2018; Golshan, 2013; Khansir, 2012, Mammeri, 2015; Purnama, 2016) or with French L2 learners with an L1 other than Spanish (Demirtas & Gümus, 2009; Preis Garcia, 2004; Rahmatian & Abdoltadjedini, 2007), there is still much to be analyzed when it comes to errors made by Spanish L1 learners of French as a third language (L3).

As a result, a few questions emerge when trying to deal with the issue:

- What errors do students make in their spoken production?
- How can these errors be described?
- What are their most frequent errors?
- What is the possible source of them?

This kind of knowledge is essential for teachers to understand their students' learning process better. A thorough analysis of errors is consequently needed so teaching can be reoriented accordingly in its methodology, syllabus design and techniques (Khansir, 2012), providing the learners with better performing linguistic tools (Bouhechiche, 2009). More concretely, error analysis enables teachers to establish

consistent error correction policies in consideration to the students' needs as well as to anticipate certain types of errors before they happen for the first time or back again (Andreou & López García, 2016).

From this perspective, the general objective of this study is to analyze the errors made by French L3 students of A2 Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFRL) level of proficiency in their spoken production during short conversations in synchronous virtual classes in order to determine their possible source.

Specific objectives have been set so that the main purpose of the investigation is attained:

- Analyze the students' spoken production in search for errors during short conversations with their teacher in synchronous virtual classes.
- Describe the found errors in order to classify them using different authors' views of error typology.
- Determine the frequency of students' errors and select the most relevant for further analysis.
- Ascertain the possible causes for such errors in account of the scholars' studies of sources.

The analysis of data, the learners' oral production during online learning, consists then in four stages: identification, description, classification and explanation of errors (Corder, 1967; Fernández, 1997; Andreou & López García, 2016).

The present work is therefore addressed to teachers of other learners in analogous conditions, especially at schools where French is offered as a third language in the city of Quito. These professionals, through the findings of this research, would be able to use quantitative and most importantly, qualitative data to guide their teaching practice that will eventually translate into the learners' improvement in speaking (Ur, 2012).

Conception of error

Making errors is a fairly natural way of learning a language. French learners as well as learners of any other language, make errors in their way to mastering a language. In “The significance of learners' errors”, S. P. Corder (1967) introduced many significant concepts on the topic and set the path for error analysis. Ever since, scholars (Ellis, 1994; Gass & Varonis, 1985; Selinker, 1972; Ur, 2012) have agreed on the importance of learners' errors and their crucial role in the process of learning a language.

In a traditional conception, an error is considered to be a sign of weakness (Marquilló Larruy, 2003) or the “evidence of lack of learning” (Van Patten & Williams, 2015, p. 20). Its presence means failure and that is why it is necessary to fight against it. For this purpose, behaviorism suggests negative reinforcement or punishment as a way of eradicating errors (Schultze, 2003).

However, with the passage of time, the conceptions around errors in second language learning have evolved. Corder (1967) underestimates the need of 'punishment' to what he defined as mistakes. The author makes a distinction between errors and mistakes, claiming that mistakes are centered solely on the result and do not deserve much attention. On the contrary, with the term error, the process of learning is taken more into consideration and includes doubts and hesitations that are worth analyzing.

This is why, for a more general definition, we turn to Reason's (1993) approach which defines an error as “the failure of planned actions to achieve their desired ends - without the intervention of some unforeseeable event” (p. 71). The author proposes an ampler or generic vision of errors and despite the fact he does not refer directly to the teaching-learning process, this notion is extensible to this domain. He talks about a planned sequence of mental or physical activities that do not reach the desired goal - communication in the case of language learning and acquisition. According to Chiahou et al. (2009) the error gives the teacher access to such mental process, the learner's *interlanguage*.

Errors and interlanguage

The concept of interlanguage was introduced by Selinker (1969, as cited in Song, 2012) as “the systematic knowledge of language which is independent of both the learner’s native language and the target language” (p. 778). Given that the process of acquisition of a second language is relatively long, the student goes through different stages of linguistic competence to get closer step by step to the target language. These different phases of learning give origin to the dynamic system defined as interlanguage.

It is worth mentioning that every student has his or her own interlanguage. It belongs to the student because he has built it himself throughout his learning process with the means he has at disposal. It is a true and proper linguistic system with its own particular rules and logic.

Error typology

The errors learners make are dictated by various factors that depend on the students' linguistic background, learning experience, but especially the degree of evolution of their interlanguage (Selinker, 1972). The variety of errors comprises then a wide range of possibilities making it difficult to restrict certain errors to a specific category (Alahmadi, 2014) even though it might seem error typology is extensive (Alba Quiñones, 2009).

Besse and Porquier (1984) show that part of the errors in L2 (second language) could be attributed to L1 (native language) influence or interference: interlingual errors, while others are very similar to those produced by children who are acquiring their L1: intralingual errors. This classification led to a change of perspective upon the influence of the L1 (traditionally considered as the main source of errors), considered nowadays as one of many strategies the learner uses for the endeavor of *reconstruction* of the L2. However, it is important to signal the L1 to which the learner recurs to produce language could be either the mother tongue or any other acquired language that differs from the target language.

According to Durão (1999), the specific sources for interlingual and intralingual errors could be the following:

Table 1*Sources for interlingual and intralingual errors*

Interlingual errors	Intralingual errors
analogy	oversimplification
phonetic or spelling similarities – cognates, false friends	over-generalization
nuances in lexicon	induced errors
nuances in grammar	excessive production
use of L1 words	
foreignisms	
literal translation	
syntactic negative transfer	

Adapted from Durão (1999)

From a different perspective, according to Demirtas and Gümüs (2009), errors are usually assessed in two dimensions, the pragmatic and the linguistic level. These two levels lead us to distinguish two types of errors: errors of content and errors of form. The latter being more evident and identifiable, they include errors of phonology, morphology, orthography and syntax. In contrast, errors of content include other elements of discourse, for example the number of words to write or the length of the speech, structure, coherence and cohesion of the ideas, among others.

As for Burt and Kiparsky (1972) as well as Johansson (1973, 1978), there is a need to analyze and classify errors according to the communicative effect they produce. Consequently, Burt and Kiparsky distinguish between global and local errors. Global errors affect seriously and hinder the intelligibility of the message, because they “affect overall sentence organization”, while local errors “affect single elements in a sentence” (Ellis, 2009, p. 6) and manage to cause less processing errors. In the latter case, despite the presence of local errors, communication is more or less intelligible. This is why Johansson proposes a hierarchy between these two types of errors. He classifies those that hinder message comprehension as the most serious.

Error treatment

Much research on errors in second language acquisition show that corrective feedback is possible in various forms in order to face errors (Carroll, 1955; Corder, 1969; Ellis & Sheen, 2006; Esser, 1984; Ferguson, 1966; Freiermuth, 1997; Golshen, 2013; Hagège, 1999; Lyster & Ranta, 1997; Mackey, 1999; Muranoi, 2000; Nicholas et al., 2001; Porte, 1993). However, scholars do not seem to agree on how effective different corrective feedback strategies actually are and it remains a controversial topic (Ellis & Sheen, 2006; Keck & Kim, 2014). It is necessary nevertheless to reflect around the significance of the verb *to correct*.

In one definition, the Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary states:

to point out usually for amendment the errors or faults of (Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary, 2020)

Besides this definition, let us take into consideration other definitions regarding this term, even in other languages:

In Spanish, the Diccionario de la Real Academia records this definition of *corregir*:

Dicho de un profesor: Señalar los errores en los exámenes o trabajos de sus alumnos, generalmente para darles una calificación. (D.RAE, 2001)

In French, the Larousse en ligne defines *corriger* as follows:

Faire disparaître une erreur, un défaut, en rétablissant ce qui est exact, bon, correct (Larousse en ligne, n.d.)

Regardless of the definition we take into consideration, we can notice that undeniably, the notion of correction is directly linked to that of error. This is why correction is an endeavor that comprises the understanding of the error and its remediation. In this sense, Chiahou et al. (2009) argue that correction is not always pertinent if there is not a previous reflection on the causes of the error.

However, error treatment is not limited only to corrective feedback, but also to appropriate instruction with the goal of preventing errors from (re)occurring. Lee (1970, p. 77) claims that “one of the teacher's aims should be to prevent mistakes from

occurring” and emphasizes on the fact that this is decidedly achievable at early stages of learning. With that objective, the instructor could help students avoid errors by providing them with specific materials and techniques (Hendrickson, 1978) founded on Lado's (1973) Contrastive Analysis.

With this in mind, the importance of error analysis is vital before any type of intervention takes place. This kind of information will allow the teacher to make a decision on what, how, when to correct and who does so and to eventually reorient his teaching with the aim of the prevention of errors.

Error analysis

Several studies on error analysis have been conducted with English L2 learners (Cabrera et al., 2014; Gayo & Widodo, 2018; Golshan, 2013; Mammeri, 2015; Purnama, 2016) or with L2 French learners with an L1 other than Spanish (Lyster & Ranta, 1997; Preis Garcia, 2004), but there is still much to be analyzed when it comes to errors made by L1 Spanish learners of French, especially in oral production, although Deswarte et al. (2020) carried out a study with participants of this linguistic background.

Regarding English L2 learners, research conducted by Cabrera et al. (2014) explains to what extent the L1 (Spanish) interferes in written production of high school seniors in Loja - Ecuador. Based on their results, the researchers prepared a handout for teachers “which contained some key strategies and suggestions on how to prevent L1 interference”. Gayo and Widodo (2018), Purnama (2016) and Mammeri (2015) conducted similar research but go further in their studies by considering not only interference from the L1 of the participants (Indonesian, for the first two and French, for the latter), but also the intralingual factors as a source for errors in written production. They also acknowledge the importance of recognizing the most common errors and the pedagogical implications for the improvement of teaching and learning of English. As for Golshan (2013), he analyzed the effect of corrective feedback on certain errors in written production and comes to the conclusion that the effectiveness of feedback depends on the linguistic feature, i.e. the type of error.

The research around error analysis of French L2 learners, includes similar

approaches to what has been done for English learning. Lyster and Ranta (1997) quantify and classify errors to ultimately explore the different types of corrective feedback used by teachers and their native English speaking students' uptake according to the type of error. Preis Garcia (2004) found intralingual and interlingual errors in written responses to questions in her research conducted with participants of Portuguese L1 learning French in higher education. Both studies agree on the fact that corrective feedback type and remedial instruction base their effectiveness on the error type the learners make.

More recently, Deswarte et al. (2020) published an analysis of fossilizing mistakes of French pronunciation in Spanish speakers. The participants of this research were undergraduate students of Modern Languages whose metalinguistic knowledge was included in the collection of data. However, this study does not cover other types of mistakes or errors, such as morphosyntactic or semantic.

An integral analysis of Spanish speakers' errors in the early stages of French L2 or L3 learning is consequently yet to be done, considering different categories and sources for error typology that would enable language instructors to carry out adjustments to their teaching-learning process that may include or not corrective feedback.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The methodological organization of the present work is descriptive based on a design – collection analysis of a quantitative – qualitative nature.

Participants

The participants of this research are 15 teenage students, aged 14 to 17 at a private school in Quito who are learning French as a third language during the first term of the academic year 2020 – 2021. The students belong to two different classes with the same teacher and attend two 40-minute video conferencing lessons a week. From a total of 30 students taking the course, parents of 15 students authorized their participation through a consent act. The learners' native language is Spanish and they have been exposed to English as a foreign language, for the most part, since elementary school, for at least eight years. The learners are at the A2 level of the CEFRL in French.

Materials

An interview-like test was given to the students in a semi-structured fashion through a video conference. The interview consisted of five main questions proposed by Brilliant and Himber (2016) and Gallon et al. (2017) for preparation of a speaking part of DELF A2 (*Diplôme d'Études en Langue Française*, official examination to certify French language abilities at level A2 of the CEFRL with the topic “*Mon/ma meilleur(e) ami(e)*” - My best friend.

Procedure

In a real DELF A2 setting, the test-takers are provided with a list of topics from which they have to choose for the information exchange portion of the speaking section. Then, they prepare their speech for 10 minutes (along with the role-play part), and talk about it continuously for about two minutes. The candidate may or may not be asked questions depending on their performance (CIEP, 2016). For the purpose of the present study, however, in order to guarantee the reliability of the results, the students were not given either a choice of topic or preparation time. Additionally, the students were not asked to speak continuously, but rather to answer the aforementioned questions in full sentences.

Their teacher did not provide them with any kind of corrective feedback and did not interrupt their intervention. On the contrary, his attitude towards errors on a regular basis is not the same, as he would normally take some kind of action towards error treatment, particularly recasts and explicit correction.

In order to analyze the data, the procedure for error analysis proposed by Corder (1981) was used. The interaction was recorded (audio only) to be later transcribed, then underwent four stages of analysis: identification of errors, classification, description and explanation (Andreou & López García, 2016).

For the identification, the learners' production was compared to what a proficient speaker of the language would have produced to convey the same meaning in a correct way. A coding of colors was used to highlight errors of different categories in the transcription.

The classification was carried out by describing the errors very briefly following linguistic criteria to divide them into three main groups: phonological errors, morphosyntactic errors and semantic errors. The errors were then quantified to establish the number of tokens and determine their frequency.

Besides, in a qualitative perspective, the stages of description and explanation took place simultaneously, so that the most frequent errors were described hypothesizing on their possible causes based on the previously cited authors' criteria of error typology, particularly such developed by Burt and Kiparsky (1972), Demirtas and Gümüs (2009) and with a special emphasis on Durão's (1999), which all deal with possible causes and effect of errors.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

From the results of the analysis of errors made by the participants in their oral interactions, three main groups of errors were identified: phonological, morphosyntactic and semantic. Based on their frequency, the most prevalent errors have been selected and are described in this section. At the same time, an attempt to determine their possible source has been carried out and is also presented.

Phonological errors

Out of the three main groups, phonological errors have the most prevalence in the participants' spoken production. A total of 265 instances of errors have been recorded and include, but are not limited to: mispronunciation of 15 frequent words and expressions, inattention to two phonological rules and incorrect production of six phonemes. These errors of form, as they are at the phonological level (Demirtas & Gümüs, 2009), although numerous, would fall in the category of local errors considering the communicative effect they have since, given the context, they do not hinder communication and affect only the aforementioned elements (Burt & Kiparsky, 1972).

Table 2 shows the words and expressions that appeared most frequently in the participants' production and the times that such items were pronounced in a way that differs from the standard pronunciation. In many cases, the students' utterances include more than one way of pronouncing the word or expression.

The possible etiology of these errors is however more complex and an explanation cannot be provided for them as a whole. Errors such as *est* /ɛ/ uttered as [est]; *je* /ʒə/, /ʒ/ as [ʒe] or [dʒe]; *nous* /nu/ as [nows]; *cheveux* /ʃəvø/ as [tʃeβewks] or [ʃeβews], *parce que* (*parce qu'*) /paʁskə/, /paʁʁsk/ as [parseke] or [paʁseke]; *vidéo* /video/ as [bi'ðeo]; *yeux* /jø/ as [jewks] or [ʒœks]; *c'est* /sɛ/ as [sest]; and *très* /tʁɛ/ as [tʁes] suggest they are instances of interlingual errors by analogy (Durão, 1999). In this case, interference from L1 Spanish could have been the reason why the participants opted to pronounce every letter of the words as they would in Spanish with sounds they have in their phonetic repertoire as speakers of the Ecuadorian variety (Haboud & De la Vega, 2003). This phenomenon is especially remarkable in the pronunciation of vowel sounds, as the

participants who uttered them erroneously had a tendency to reduce French mid-central /ə/ and mid-front /ø/, /ɛ/ to Spanish mid-front vowel /e/ as well as to pronounce digraphs <ou> /u/, <eu> /œ/, /ø/ as diphthongs [ow], [ew].

Table 2

Errors in pronunciation of frequent words and expressions

Word/expression	N° of tokens	N° of errors	Uttered as...
<i>est</i> /ɛ/	43	10	[est] [es]
<i>nous</i> /nu/	30	9	[nows] [nus] [nuz]
<i>je</i> (j') /ʒə/ /ʒ/	28	13	[ʒe] [dʒe]
<i>parce que</i> (<i>parce qu'</i>) /pɑʁskə/ /pɑʁsk/	24	7	[parseke] [paske] [pɑʁseke]
<i>c'est</i> /sɛ/	20	1	[sest]
<i>meilleur(e)(s)</i> /mɛʒœʁ/	15	4	[meljœʁ] [meʒœʁ] [meʒov]
<i>sont</i> /sɔ̃/	14	2	[son]
<i>très</i> /tʁɛ/	14	1	[tʁes]
<i>jeu(x)</i> /ʒø/	13	6	[zew] [ʒwe] [ʒoe]
<i>vidéo</i> /video/	12	4	[vi'ðeo] [bi'ðeo]
<i>beaucoup</i> /boku/	10	3	[beakup] [bokup]
<i>cheveux</i> /ʃəvø/	9	8	[ʃeβews] [ʃeβo] [ʒe] [tʃeβewks] [ʃeβe] [ʃeβø] [ʃaβø] [ʃeβek]
<i>yeux</i> /jø/	8	4	[jewks] [ʒə] [ʒœks]
<i>fait</i> /fɛ/	6	2	[fet]
<i>j'ai</i> /ʒɛ/	4	3	[zea]

Samples such as *nous* /nu/ uttered as [nus]; *jeu(x)* /ʒø/ as [zew]; *meilleur(e)(s)* /mɛʒœʁ/ as [meljœʁ], [meʒœʁ] or [meʒov]; *vidéo* /video/ as [vi'ðeo]; *yeux* /jø/ as [ʒə] or [ʒœks]; *beaucoup* /boku/ as [beakup] [bokup]; *j'ai* /ʒɛ/ as [zea]; and *fait* /fɛ/ as [fet] likely evidence an incomplete mastery of the rules of pronunciation of French in

addition to a possible interference from Spanish. When comparing the spectra of the learners' utterances to the standard pronunciation using Praat, it has been determined that some phonemes of the word were pronounced closely to the standard pronunciation while others were articulated with the Spanish sounds that correspond to the graphemes.

Another case of interference of the L1 is that the learners' phonetic repertoire would not facilitate the articulation of some French sounds. The word *cheveux* /ʃəvø/ produced in several different ways: [ʃeβo], [ʒe], [ʃeβe], [ʃeβø], [ʃaβø], [ʃeβek] (88,89% of erroneous utterances) as well as [ʒoe] for *jeu(x)* /ʒø/, and [paske] for *parce que* /paʁskə/, /paʁsk/ reveal the unsuccessful learners' attempt at pronouncing the words and suggest that the learners might know the rules of pronunciation, but have not yet mastered the articulation of /ə/ and /ø/, vowel sounds that do not exist in Spanish or English.

Although none of the errors in Table 2 were considered to have an intralingual origin only, without any influence of the L1, there is an error that could be categorized as either interlingual or intralingual (Durão, 1999). That is the case of *est* /ɛ/ pronounced as [es]. Overgeneralization could have occurred (silent final -t) or it might simply be a case where the learner used the equivalent word in Spanish.

Table 3 shows the number of errors learners made in the application of two phonological rules of French: pronunciation of final letters and elision of *que*, *je*, *me* and *ne* before vowels. These errors could be more easily described to a certain extent using Durão's (1999) classification. The pronunciation of final letters -e, -s, -t and -er when they should be silent seem to be due to interference of Spanish L1, which puts them into the interlingual category. The learners had a tendency to pronounce every letter of the word as they would do in Spanish resulting in 19,67% of words mispronounced as shown in Figure 1. We can visualize the phenomenon in a passage of the transcription of participant 5's interaction:

Elle porte ø pantalons grands.

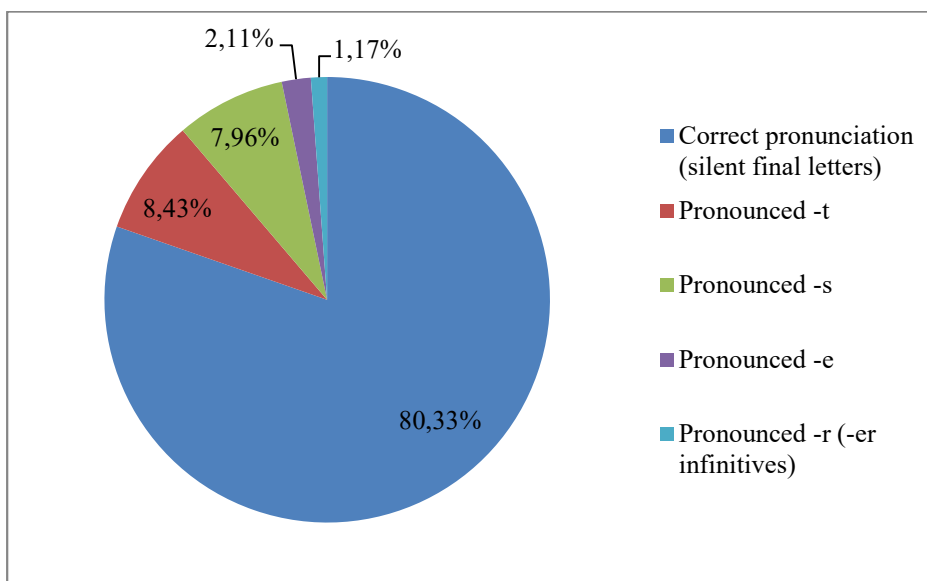
[ˈelepov'tepanta'lonsɣrands]

(...) *Nous regardons la télé, nous écoutons ø la musique.*

[nusɣegar'donslate'lenuseku'tonslamy'sik]

Table 3*Errors in the application of phonological rules*

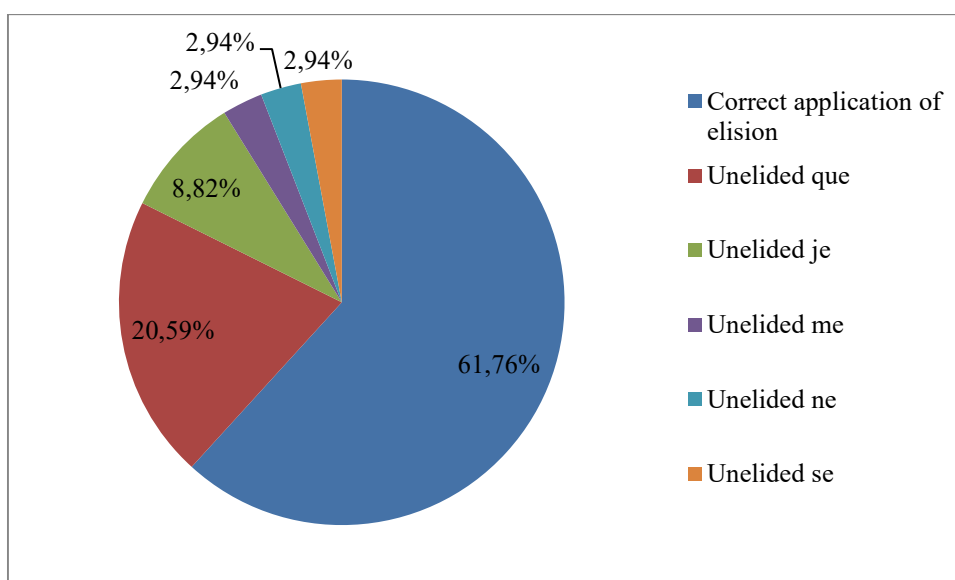
Rule	N° of tokens	Errors	Examples
Silent final letters			
-t	160	36	<i>amusant</i> /amyzã/ > *[a'mysant], <i>et</i> /e/ > *[et]
-s	151	34	<i>nous</i> /nu/ > *[nus], <i>elles</i> /ɛl/ > *[els]
-e	101	9	<i>écoute</i> /ekut/ > *[ekute], <i>adore</i> /adɔʁ/ > *[adɔʁe]
-er (infinitive verbs)	15	5	<i>discuter</i> /diskyte/ > *[diskutɛʁ], <i>jouer</i> /jwe/ > *[ʒuɛʁ]
Elision of words preceding vowels			
<i>que</i> > <i>qu'</i>	13	7	<i>parce qu'elles</i> > * <i>parce que elles</i>
<i>je</i> > <i>j'</i>	7	3	<i>j'ai</i> > * <i>je ai</i>
<i>me</i> > <i>m'</i>	1	1	<i>il m'aide</i> > * <i>il me aide</i>
<i>ne</i> > <i>n'</i>	5	1	<i>je n'ai pas</i> > * <i>je ne ai</i>
<i>se</i> > <i>s'</i>	8	1	<i>elles s'intéressent</i> > * <i>elles se intéressent</i>

Figure 1*Errors in pronunciation of silent final letters*

In spite of the previous assertion, the source for errors in elision may be different. There could be an interference of the L1, since this phenomenon is not a standard linguistic feature of Spanish. The source could also be the oversimplification of the rule, especially in the case of *que* as it might be thought that only two-letter words such as *je*, *me*, *se*, *de*, *ne* are elided before a vowel and not three-letter words like *que*. The evidence from this study suggests that errors in elision of two-letter words occur less often than in the word *que*. As shown in Figure 2, a word *que* that has not been elided represents 20,59% of the utterances involving elision.

Figure 2

Errors in elision



Some phonemes posed more difficulty in pronunciation than others for the participants of this study. Such phonemes are presented in Table 4 including the number of errors the participants committed. An interference from the L1 could be one of the reasons for the incorrect utterance of the sounds, since they are characteristic French sounds that do not exist in Spanish or in English. It is worth mentioning that the errors in the phoneme /ʁ/, although recurrent (16 times, 19,28%), were not as significant as the errors in the vowel and semivowel sounds (92,86% for /ã/, 100% for /õ/, 93,33% for /ẽ/, 83,33% of errors for /y/ and 100% of errors for /ɥ/).

Table 4*Errors in pronunciation of specific phonemes*

Phoneme	N° of tokens	N° of errors	Percentage of errors	Uttered as...
/õ/	19	19	100,00%	[on]
/ɥi/	3	3	100,00%	[u] [wi]
/ẽ/	15	14	93,33%	[in][im][un]
/ã/	28	26	92,86%	[an]
/y/	18	15	83,33%	[u] [ju]
/ʁ/	83	16	19,28%	[r] []

The participants of the present study replaced nasal vowels by oral vowels followed by nasal consonants 95,16% of the times, e.g. *indépendante* /ẽdepãdãt/ pronounced as [indepãdãnt] or *pantalons* /pãtalõ/ as [pantalons]. The results coincide with Deswarte et al.'s (2020) who also found that these vowels and semivowels were articulated in a similar fashion by Spanish speakers, intermediate learners of French (B1 level of the CEFRL). The researchers state that the source for the errors could be an analogy with Spanish. However, overgeneralization might also be behind the errors because the graphemes <a>, <e>, <i>, <o>, <u>, <n> are pronounced /a/, /e/, /i/, /o/, /u/, /n/ in certain contexts in French.

Regarding the phonemes /y/, /ɥ/ and /ʁ/, the participants also replaced the phonemes with equivalent sounds found in Spanish in accordance with the spelling of the words: [u], [w] or [r]. This is why words such as *musique* /myzik/, *nuit* /nuɥi/ and *adore* /adõʁ/ were uttered as [musik], [nwi] and [adore] motivating their classification as interlingual errors.

Morphosyntactic errors

Morphosyntactic errors are items that have to do directly with the form of the elements of the discourse, that is why they are classified as errors of form according to Demirtas and Gümüs (2009). A total of 81 instances of errors concerning this aspect were recorded. Any of them were considered to represent major hindrance to

communication, therefore all of them are included in the category of local errors (Burt & Kiparsky, 1978). The errors were divided into two main groups, those revolving around nouns and the ones that have something to do with verbs.

Table 5

Morphosyntactic errors

Category	N° of errors	Examples
Errors affecting noun phrases		
Determiners	27	* <i>ma meilleur ami</i>
Word order	5	* <i>vidéo jeux</i>
Agreement	3	* <i>cheveux brunes</i>
Quantity expressions	1	* <i>beaucoup amis</i>
Errors related to verbs		
Conjugation	29	* <i>nous fait</i>
Verb + preposition	7	* <i>nous jouons jeux vidéo</i>
Negation	6	* <i>non, nous jamais disputés</i>
Verb modifiers	3	* <i>je connocé il</i>

Errors related to nouns

Determiners

The erroneous use of determiners or their omission represent 33,33% of morphosyntactic errors and 75% of those related to nouns. Determiners are words that modify nouns and fulfill different functions “to specify the status of the noun” (Hawkins & Towell, 2015). The use of determiners in French is particularly complex for learners as they agree in gender and number with the noun and are sometimes used in contexts where Spanish or English would not use any (Hawkins & Towell, 2015).

Possessive adjectives

In response to the first question of the interview *Qui est ton/ta meilleur(e) ami(e) ?* (Who is your best friend?) the participants were prompted to initiate their speaking with the use of a possessive adjective and eventually use it again to answer other questions, usually “my” - *mon*, masculine singular; *ma*, feminine singular or *mes*, plural. In their production, a few learners failed to use a possessive adjective that agrees with the noun

(7 times), as showed in the following transcriptions (names have been changed intentionally to protect the participants' identities):

**Ma meilleur ami, c'est Andrés.*

**Mon meilleure amie, c'est Mariana.*

*Darío et Leonardo sont mes- sont *mon meilleurs amis...*

The misuse of adjectives may have its source on the L1, owing to the fact that possessive adjectives for the persons of singular are not variable in Spanish: a case of analogy, a feature of interlingual errors (Durão, 1999). In contrast, the errors could be explained as intralingual if we take into consideration that the participants who used a masculine adjective to talk about a female friend might have overgeneralized the rule that prescribes that *ma* becomes *mon* before a noun starting with a vowel: *mon amie* overlooking the adjective *meilleur* that was placed before the noun this word determines. Although this type of errors could be classified as global because the gender of the people could have been mistaken, the errors are only local, as the message is conveyed (Burt & Kiparsky, 1972) because the people's names are explicitly mentioned afterwards.

Definite and indefinite articles

In the participants' descriptions of their best friends, some of them talked about the color of their hair and eyes. The noun phrases for these descriptions require the use of definite articles before the noun, in this case, *les* as both *cheveux* and *yeux* are plural nouns. The participants, however, omitted this article six times, as in the Ecuadorian variety Spanish, a construction without article is allowed and preferred:

*Elle a ø cheveux *brunes et ø yeux *brunes.*

*Elle est petite et a ø *verts yeux.*

In a similar fashion, while the French indefinite article *des* that usually goes before plural nouns of an indeterminate quantity, Spanish or English permit equivalent constructions without an article (Hawkins & Towell, 2015). The implication would be a negative transfer resulting in the omission of the article in French, so we encountered constructions such as:

Elle porte ø pantalons grands.

*Nous jouons à ø jeux *de vidéo*

On regarde ø films.

Consequently, the aforementioned errors in the use of determiners could be interlingual (negative transfer and analogy with L1) or intralingual (overgeneralization of rules) (Durão, 1999).

Partitive articles

Both interlingual and intralingual features for the errors in the use of partitive articles were found in this research. The three instances of this type of error revolve around the noun *musique* “music”, an abstract noun that is usually preceded by the partitive article *de la* when functioning as the direct object of the verb. The notion of a partitive article does not exist in Spanish and a similar structure would not need an article. thus generating interference of negative transfer between the two languages.

However, the learners who produced this error used a definite article instead of a partitive: **Nous écoutons ø la musique.*, bringing up the possibility of an intralingual error of oversimplification of the rule (Durão, 1999) when assuming a feminine article - definite in this case- would fit in the structure.

Word order

Table 6

Errors of word order in noun phrases and comparison with Spanish and English structures

Erroneous production	Spanish	English
<i>*jeux de vidéo</i>	<i>juegos de video</i>	
<i>*vidéo jeux</i>	<i>videojuegos</i>	video games
<i>*verts yeux</i>		green eyes

Syntactical features of Spanish and English were used in the production of certain noun phrases. Structures that include **jeux de vidéo*, **vidéo jeux*, **verts yeux*, have been

observed in the corpus and reveal a syntactic negative transfer of Spanish or English, consequently produced as interlingual errors.

The case of *jeux vidéo* is worth further analysis, however. There is a possibility that the Spanish speaker was not necessarily thinking in their L1 to produce this structure. The word *vidéo* in French has an adjective function here and it is its only function in the Dictionnaire Larousse (n.d.), nevertheless it can also be employed as a noun and the learner might have thought that the juxtaposition of two nouns in French is not possible without a preposition – *de* – to link the elements giving place to the expression **jeu de vidéo*, considered an intralingual error.

Noun – adjective agreement

Only two instances of adjectives that do not agree with the noun in gender were spotted. The structures *cheveux *brunes* and *yeux *brunes* used by one participant are interpreted as intralingual errors of oversimplification, a lack of application of the rule of agreement of gender. Both *cheveux* and *yeux* are masculine plural nouns and are incorrectly accompanied by the adjective *brunes*, which is feminine plural.

Errors related to verbs

Verb conjugation

The use of incorrect verbal forms proved to be recurrent and became an important part of the morphosyntactic errors in the participants' spoken production, representing 36,25% of their erroneous production.

Errors of verb conjugation include not only conjugated verbs that do not agree with the subject, but also irregular verbs conjugated with a wrong root, the use of an infinitive or participle form instead of a conjugated verb, an omission of an element of the conjugation (subject pronoun, auxiliary verb, reflexive pronoun), the verb omission altogether or the use of an elided subject and verb as an independent verbal form.

The conjugation of irregular verbs became the category involving more errors with 14 occurrences. The verbs that caused difficulty for the participants were *être*, *avoir*, *faire* and *prendre* (to be, to have, to do or to make and to take), some of the most frequent verbs of French (Blanche-Beveniste, 2002). The use of *c'est* instead of the verbal form of *être*, *est*, after a third person subject was especially remarkable since it

occurred nine times, however it represents only 15,79% of the errors. Apparently, the participants who used this item hypothesized the elided form *c'est*, which already comprises a subject *ce*, as a verb form in and of itself. Regarding verbs *avoir* and *faire*, the participants utilized the third person singular present form for other subject pronouns, as in **Je a* or **Nous fait*. As for the verb *prendre*, participants treated it as a regular verb, in other words, applying the rule to the exception. These difficulties, unique to the language, bring us to the conclusion the errors are examples of intralingual errors of overgeneralization (Durão, 1999).

Table 7

Errors in verb conjugation

Category	N° of errors	Example
Regular verb conjugation	3	<i>On *dansons</i>
Irregular verb conjugation	14	<i>Nous *prendons</i>
Use of <i>c'est</i> instead of <i>est</i>	9	<i>Il *c'est sympathique</i>
Use of infinitive to express a present action	2	<i>Nous *jouer</i>
Use of past participle to express a present action	1	<i>Nous *vu</i>
Subject pronoun omission	1	<i>...parce que \emptyset sont très drôles</i>
Auxiliary verb omission	2	<i>...nous \emptyset jamais disputés</i>
Reflexive pronoun omission	2	<i>...on \emptyset dispute pas</i>
Verb omission	2	<i>Julio est petit et \emptyset cheveux noirs</i>

Errors of other categories around verb conjugation were less significant in number, nevertheless, it is worth analyzing two of them:

The errors in the conjugation of regular verbs occurred three times when a first person plural present verbal form was used for the pronoun *on*, when this is a third person singular subject pronoun. However, as the pronoun replaces “we” in spoken informal language learners might have thought about using it as the conjugation for *nous*. The error could be interpreted as either interlingual or intralingual. Interlingual

because of a literal translation of the pronoun and intralingual because of the overgeneralization of the rule of conjugation according to the meaning of the pronoun.

The use of non-conjugated forms of the verb, i.e. infinitives alongside subject pronouns to express an action in simple present, suggests a possible interference of English. In this language, verbs are used in their base form with any subject other than the third person singular in present simple. The participants might have made an analogy between the two languages that resulted in an error.

Verb + preposition

The verb *jouer* (play) is usually followed by the preposition *à* before a complement. In this study, it has been observed that in constructions of this type, the preposition was usually omitted. Constructions with the verb *jouer* that required the preposition *à* were spotted six times, but only one of them included *à*. The verbs “to play” in English and “*jugar*” in Spanish, the equivalent to *jouer* are transitive and do not require a preposition in both languages thus interfering with the structure in French. Negative transfer was then the possible source for this interlingual error.

The verb *se disputer*

The syntax of this particular verb entailed errors in three different categories: reflexive pronoun omission, auxiliary verb omission and formation of negative statements.

T. *Est-ce que vous vous disputez parfois ?*

P1. **Non, nous ø jamais disputés (...).*

To begin with, as one of the questions in the interview was *Est-ce que vous vous disputez parfois ?* (“Do you guys -you and your best friend- argue sometimes?”), the participants were compelled to answer using the verb *se disputer*. The equivalent in Spanish, similar in spelling, *discutir*, is an intransitive verb and therefore does not accept a reflexive pronoun for constructions with it. This situation interfered and led to the omission of the reflexive pronoun in French.

Two participants, who answered negatively to the question, faced another difficulty, the syntax of the negation in French, which usually needs two elements: *ne... pas* or *ne... jamais*. The participants usually omitted one of the elements, recalling the

syntax of Spanish as they omitted *pas* in *ne... pas* and *ne* in *ne... jamais*.

Finally, participant 1 answered the question using *passé composé*, which further complicated the syntax. In this case, he ended up omitting the auxiliary verb of the structure that could be also influenced by Spanish or English that express this action with a simple tense without the need of an auxiliary verb.

All in all, we can assume these errors are interlingual because of the negative transfer exerted by the L1 Spanish (and/or L2 English) in the syntactic structure of French.

Semantic errors

Table 8

Semantic errors – nuances in lexicon

Concepts	N° of tokens	N° of errors	Percentage of errors	Example
<i>Être – avoir</i>	80	4	5,00%	<i>Elle *est ses cheveux ondulés.</i>
<i>En – au – sur – on</i>	4	4	75,00%	<i>Nous parlons *en WhatsApp®.</i>
<i>Pourquoi – parce que</i>	25	3	12,00%	<i>*Moi meilleur ami est Jonathan pourquoi ø est gentil (...).</i>
<i>Plus – très</i>	13	1	7,69%	<i>Le caractère à Cristina est moi-est plus adorable.</i>
<i>Savoir – connaître</i>	4	1	25,00%	<i>Mon meilleur ami est Miguel parce que je *sais él desde hace mucho tiempo.</i>
<i>Discuter – se disputer</i>	7	1	14,29%	<i>Non, je n'aime pas discuter.</i>
<i>Comme – comment</i>	1	1	100,00%	<i>Je ne sais pas *comme ça dit.</i>
<i>Nuit – soir</i>	1	1	100,00%	<i>Nous faisons des activités scolaires dans la nuit.</i>
<i>Bien - bon</i>	9	1	11,11%	<i>Nous sommes très *bien d'amis.</i>
<i>Large – grande</i>	7	1	14,29%	<i>Alicia est *large.</i>
<i>Il y a – il a</i>	1	1	100,00%	<i>(...) pourquoi ø est gentil, dynamique et parfois triste quand il y a mal au ventre.</i>
<i>C'est – il est</i>	33	1	3,03%	<i>*C'est intelligente, sincère, (...)</i>

Most participants' errors around the semantic aspect of the language have to do with a difficulty in distinguishing certain nuances in lexicon that are designated by different words in French. In this sense, the following has been found:

Être - avoir

Four participants used the verb *être* to express possession instead of *avoir*. *Être* and *avoir* are by far the most used verbs in French and are categorized as stative verbs (Blanche-Beveniste, 2002). Even though the participants may not know they are verbs of the same category, they probably have been greatly exposed to the two verbs and eventually ended up confusing their meaning and usage. A phonological explanation could also be given: conjugated forms of both verbs *ai* and *est* are homophones [ɛ], which could mean that the participants used a verbal form of *avoir* that does not agree with the subject and not a verbal form of *être*. In either case, we could come to the conclusion that this is an instance of intralingual error because of overgeneralization of the use of a verb for two different functions (Durão, 1999).

En - sur – au – on

The errors in the use of prepositions can be acceptable at level A2 because learning to use prepositions could be particularly difficult, even for advanced learners (Buescher & Strauss, 2015). Moreover, negative transfer often occurs due to the variation between one language and another (Lorincz & Gordon, 2012). That is the case of one learner in this study who experienced negative transfer, thus making an interlingual error in the use of prepositions. He produced the phrase *Nous parlons *en WhatsApp*, possibly a literal translation from Spanish where the preposition *en* would be acceptable. In French, the correct form would be *sur WhatsApp*, since *sur* is the preposition used for Internet supported platforms. Surprisingly enough, the preposition *en* appeared twice more in a construction of the type **parler en téléphone* (instead of *parler au telephone*), which does not coincide with the preposition used in Spanish. This could indicate that the learners overgeneralized the use of the preposition *en* and extended its meaning to other contexts and functions. However, negative transfer from English could also have happened. The preposition used in these contexts in English is *on* and since the word *on* [ɔ̃] exists in French as a personal pronoun, the learners could have tried to use it as a preposition, failing to pronounce it correctly to end up sounding closer to *en* [ã].

Pourquoi - parce que

It is also worth analyzing the use of *pourquoi* instead of *parce que* to express cause. This is probably a case of negative transfer from the L1. In Spanish, the interrogative *por qué* (why) has phonological and spelling similarities with the adverb *porque* (because) and the difference is sometimes unnoticed by native speakers. This phenomenon leads to an interlingual error in French: the learners might have made an analogy when hearing the word *pourquoi* in a question and assuming the same word is used for answering it.

Invented words

A final semantic error is worthy of analysis. One of the participants came up with invented words in French in his spoken production. This phenomenon could evidence a certain degree of evolution of his interlanguage. Participant 1 hypothesized the existence of the words **connocé* and **amistés* to mean *je connais* and *amis*. Both could be considered cases of analogies with the Spanish words *conocer* and *amistades*, leading to the possible conclusion that these are interlingual errors. However, there are also features of intralingual errors, for example, overgeneralization of rules. The student probably knows the existence of verbs ending in [-e] and abstract nouns ending in [-te] and applied the rule to these made-up words.

CONCLUSIONS

Errors, as a natural phenomenon in the process of learning a language, French in this case, can be attributed to a wide range of causes that are sometimes difficult to establish. While some of them could have their source in the learner's first language, Spanish, some others may be independent from it and there are even those that are dictated by other languages in which the learner has received instruction (English), or by a combination of these features. The error analysis carried out in this study has tried to contribute to getting acquainted with the learners' interlanguage in their process of "reconstruction" of the target language, thus adding elements to the discussion about how errors are produced and why learners make them.

After the analysis of the students' oral production, using Demirtas and Gümüş (2009) categories of errors, the errors of form were the most frequent and include phonological and morphosyntactic structures that are not in accordance with the norm. In contrast, errors of content were recorded in a smaller proportion, and have to do with the semantic aspect of the language.

The phonological errors were by far, the most numerous: 265 tokens in total. The learners pronounced certain phonemes, especially vowels, in words and expressions incorrectly. The use of Spanish sounds and a tendency to pronounce all letters in words are remarkable features that give account of the L1 interference in the phonological system of the students' interlanguage.

As for the morphosyntactic aspect of the language, the imprecision in the use and in the agreement of nouns and their modifiers and the utilization of inaccurate verb forms represented the most frequent instances of errors. The participants recurred to their L1 and also to their L2 to a lesser extent, causing negative transfer, particularly when the target language demanded elements that do not exist or are not required in the other two languages. The learners ended up omitting articles, subject or reflexive pronouns, auxiliary verbs or particles of the negation, among others. However, the errors also revealed a certain degree of difficulty inherent to the French language that showed up in the tendency to overgeneralize some rules that resulted in determiners and conjugations used in opposition to the norm, for instance.

Another point is that although semantic errors were recorded 20 times in total, they

proved to be of little significance because of both their little number and the fact that the intended meaning of the utterances could be easily deduced. Apparently, the difficulty in distinguishing the nuances in lexicon appeared mainly because of analogies with the L1 or the L2.

Overall, the interference of Spanish L1 has been very noticeable throughout the corpus: analogy and negative transfer were assumed to be the major causes of interlingual errors (Durão, 1999). In contrast, the L2 English did not exert a major influence on the production of errors: analogy and negative transfer also appeared, but only in punctual instances such as verb conjugations and the adjective-noun order in the phrase.

Even though overgeneralization and oversimplification at the morphosyntactic level, common features of intralingual errors, were recorded, this kind of errors by and of themselves was rather uncommon in the analysis of the participants' production. In fact, a great number of errors with this etiology gathered features of both the intralingual and interlingual categories. This supports the approach that errors are eclectic in nature and no definitive assertion could be made when trying to establish their source.

In any case, the communicative effect of the learners' errors was not regarded as a major hindrance. For the most part, the students' message could get across without much trouble since their errors affected single elements of the discourse. Burt and Kiparsky (1972) classify these as local errors. Their counterpart, global errors, were not spotted in the students' productions, taking into account that their production was rather short and consequently, coherence among sentences could not be analyzed.

Hence, further research is recommended to unfold more underlying causes of errors in spoken production as some of them might have been missed. A similar study that involves the analysis of a larger corpus, designed to provide more information on the errors presented in this research is suggested in order to ascertain if the results could be generalized.

However, the conclusions drawn from this work and the quantitative and qualitative data, could be used as a diagnostic, a starting point for future investigation in which scholars, linguists and other teachers could explore the actions to be taken

towards remediating or preventing the occurrence of the most frequent errors. This may include not only the provision of corrective feedback, whose effectiveness is still on debate (Chen et al., 2016; Ellis & Sheen, 2006; Keck & Kim, 2014; Mohebbi, 2021), but also, and more importantly, adjustments to the methodology, didactic procedures, syllabus design, and the provision of input. To sum up, reorienting the teaching-learning process by turning more attention on the areas that pose more difficulties to Spanish speaking learners of French L3 as a way of error treatment would be the ultimate goal towards which this study has made a first step.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Interview questions

- *Qui est ton meilleur ami ?*
- *Pourquoi est-ce qu'il/elle est ton/ta meilleur(e) ami(e) ?*
- *Quel est son caractère ? / Tu peux le/la décrire physiquement ?*
- *Quelles activités vous faites ensemble ?*
- *Est-ce que vous vous disputez parfois ?*

Adapted from Brillant and Himber (2016) and Gallon et al. (2017)

APPENDIX B
PLAN OF RESEARCH

**Pontificia Universidad
Católica del Ecuador**

Facultad de Ciencias de la Educación

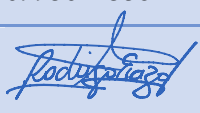
Facultad de Comunicación, Lingüística y Literatura




I. DATOS GENERALES DEL PROYECTO DE INVESTIGACIÓN

PROPUESTA TITULO PROYECTO: <i>Breve, preciso y claro. Máximo 20 palabras</i>	DEL DEL	ANALYSIS OF ERRORS IN SPOKEN PRODUCTION OF FRENCH L3 LEARNERS OF LEVEL A2 AT A PRIVATE SCHOOL IN QUITO
PROGRAMA POSTGRADO:	DE	MAESTRÍA EN PEDAGOGÍA DEL INGLÉS COMO LENGUA EXTRANJERA
Tipo de trabajo de titulación (Seleccionar)		1. Artículo Profesional
LÍNEAS INVESTIGACIÓN: (Seleccionar)	DE	1. Lingüística Aplicada <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Análisis de errores
FECHA PRESENTACIÓN:	DE	Plan de investigación: Noviembre de 2020

III. INFORMACIÓN DEL MAESTRANTE

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GRADO ACADÉMICO PREGRADO	Spanish and French
GRADO ACADÉMICO POSGRADO	Master of Arts in Hispanic Studies – Applied Linguistics
FIRMA DE TUTOR:	

ANALYSIS OF ERRORS IN SPOKEN PRODUCTION OF FRENCH L3 LEARNERS OF LEVEL A2 AT A PRIVATE SCHOOL IN QUITO

1. INTRODUCTION

The analysis of errors has become of vital importance in second language acquisition since 1967 with the studies of S.P. Corder, the pioneer on this subject. Scholars have found that errors are a natural and fundamental part of learning and provide important information on the development of the process of learning and acquisition. However, in order to understand this phenomenon, it is necessary to understand why errors are produced.

For the purposes of this study, speaking errors made by students of French as a third language (L3) at an A2 level will be analyzed in order to establish the possible causes for their appearance. The different perspectives of some authors around classification and typology will be taken into consideration so this endeavor could be possible. The importance of this study will be demonstrated with the findings in the form of quantitative and qualitative data that will ultimately lead to reorienting the teaching practice resulting in an improvement of the speaking skills.

2. BACKGROUND

In the process of learning French as a foreign language, the learners of this private school -at an A2 level of proficiency according to the Common European

Framework of Reference for Languages- make errors in their spoken production, as much as any other foreign language learner. However, since such errors are not systematically inventoried, their characteristics, frequency and source are not known.

The errors learners make are dictated by various factors that depend on the students' linguistic background, learning experience, but especially the degree of evolution of their interlanguage (Selinker, 1972). As a result, even though error typology might seem extensive (Alba Quiñones, 2009), it could be difficult to restrict certain errors to a specific category (Alahmadi, 2014).

In this context, several studies on error analysis have been conducted with first language (L1) English speakers (Lyster & Ranta, 1997) as well as with second language (L2) English learners (Cabrera et al., 2014; Ellis & Sheen, 2006; Gayo & Widodo, 2018; Golshan, 2013; Khansir, 2012, Mammeri, 2015; Purnama, 2016) or with L2 French learners with an L1 other than Spanish (Demirtas & Gümus, 2009; Preis Garcia, 2004; Rahmatian & Abdoltadjedini, 2007). However, there is still much to be analyzed when it comes to errors made by L1 Spanish learners of French L3.

2.1 Problem Statement

As a result, a few questions emerge when trying to tackle the problem:

- What errors do students make in their spoken production?
- What are the main features of these errors?
- What are their most frequent errors?
- What is the possible source of these errors?

With the aim of answering these questions, which constitute a gap in knowledge in the field of error analysis of this particular group of learners, the following objectives have been set:

General objective

Analyze the errors made by L3 French students of A2 CEFR level of proficiency in their spoken production during short conversations in synchronous virtual classes in order to determine their possible source.

Specific objectives

- Analyze the students' spoken production in search for errors during short conversations with their teacher in synchronous virtual classes.
- Describe the found errors in order to classify them using different authors' views of error typology.
- Determine the frequency of students' errors and select the most relevant for further analysis.
- Ascertain the possible causes for such errors in account of the scholars' studies of sources.

2.2 RELEVANCE AND IMPORTANCE OF THE RESEARCH

Although errors are a sign of the learner's competence, the most popular types of errors constitute only empirical data for teachers. It is worth noting though, that recurrent ones are not ideal in second language acquisition (Selinker, 1972). Therefore,

the need of research on error analysis and typology is relevant.

This kind of knowledge is essential for teachers to anticipate to certain types of errors before they happen for the first time or back again (Andreou & López García, 2016). A thorough analysis of errors is needed so teaching can be reoriented accordingly in its methodology, syllabus design and teaching techniques in order to prevent eventual learning difficulties associated with erroneous production (Khansir, 2012).

Ultimately, it will also make corrective feedback provision more effortless. Teachers would be able to establish consistent error correction policies in consideration to the students' needs. This will raise accuracy awareness in them (Ur, 2012) that will eventually reflect on their improvement in speaking (Sheen & Ellis, 2011).

3. LITERATURE REVIEW

Errors in foreign language learning have been the focus for a great amount of scholars who view the topic from many different perspectives and conceptions aiming to find explanations for their occurrence. Ever since the emerging of their study in 1967 with S. P. Corder, however, not much analysis has been done in what concerns errors in spoken production of French as a foreign language by Spanish native speakers.

Several postulates for the definition of error have been set ranging from seeing it as a sign of weakness or failure (Marquilló Larruy, 2003) to a type of production that does simply not comply with the norms (Narcy-Combes, 2005). These and other authors support their conception on the source of errors as a starting point for its understanding and have extensively researched to assert explanations.

In contrastive analysis, a theory by Lado (1957), errors are attributed to one major cause, the interference of the L1 or other previously learned languages. In contrast, error analysis proposes a different view on the source as being independent of the learner's L1 (Corder, 1967). On a third and more holistic perspective, Selinker (1972) introduces a notion in which errors are much more complex elements and are evidence of functioning of an independent system called interlanguage.

As a result of the theories, scholars have proposed classifications of errors according to their causes and effects and divided them into opposite pairs: interlingual and intralingual (Besse & Porquier, 1984); procedural and declarative (Narcy-Combes, 2005); errors of forms and error of content (Demirtas & Gumus, 2009). The reasoning of these studies and other experimental ones in nature (Cabrera et al., 2014; Ellis & Sheen, 2006; Gayo & Widodo, 2018; Golshan, 2013; Khansir, 2012, Mammeri, 2015; Purnama, 2016), however, have come to realization taking into account corpora of errors made by speakers of English as a L1 or target language (TL) leaving the typology and source of French TL errors in speaking, unexplained.

Consequently, more evidence is needed in order to meet an understanding of these constructs with data that covers errors from learners and speakers of other languages, namely Spanish L1 and French L3. This is the first step that will be achieved through this work which will lead to an ultimate goal (in further research) of determining ways to predict, avoid, treat or remediate errors in this specific pair of languages in a similar approach of several authors (Carroll, 1955; Ferguson, 1966; Corder, 1969; Esser, 1984; Porte, 1993; Freiermuth, 1997; Lyster & Ranta, 1997;

Hagège, 1999; Mackey, 1999; Muranoi, 2000; Nicholas et al., 2001; Ellis & Sheen, 2006; Golshen, 2013).

4. RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODS

The present work will be conducted in the aim of analyzing the errors made by French L3 students at a private school in Quito. The methodological organization of the project is descriptive based on a design – collection analysis of quantitative – qualitative nature.

4.1. Description of method

The participants of this research are 24 teenage students at a private school in Quito who are learning French as a third language during the first 5-month term of the academic year 2020 - 2021. Their native language is Spanish and they have been exposed to English as a foreign language, for the most part, since elementary school, at least eight years. The learners are at the A2 level of the CEFRL in French.

Their spoken production will be analyzed in search for errors during short conversations with their teacher in synchronous virtual classes. The interaction will be recorded audio-only to maintain their identity protected. The speaking tasks will be extracted from DELF-type evaluations proposed by Gallon et al. (2017).

To analyze the data obtained, a quantitative approach will be applied to obtain numerical and statistical data (Atmowardoyo, 2018) regarding the amount of errors and their frequency. Besides, in a qualitative perspective, research “involving inductive

thinking” will be applied “to reveal hypotheses” (Atmowardoyo, 2018) of their possible causes. In order to achieve this, the errors will be described and classified using different authors' criteria of error typology, particularly such developed by Barbieri-Durão (1999), Nancy-Combes (1996) and Demirtas & Gümüs (2005) which all deal with possible sources for errors. This research will in turn make way for further studies on error treatment and its effectiveness.

4.2. Limitations

Even though the present work will provide some leads to the understanding of the errors made by native Spanish speakers learners of French L3, it does not intend to provide a definitive assertion about the etiology of those errors. Such endeavor has proven to be nearly unachievable as it would require to conduct an extensive study of the learner's interlanguage (Paul, 2005). What is more, since errors by nature do not fall into only one category, but could rather be a combination of different sources and possibilities Demirtas & Gümüs (2005), all the reasons behind the errors might be missed out.

Besides, given that acquisition and thus, interlanguage, is a complex process developed in the brain, inherent to the individual (Paul, 2005), it cannot be easily explored both because of the time it would take and the need of mastery of clinical methods outside of the expertise acquired during this master's program (Fasold & Preston, 2007).

This research will not cover the teachers' intervention set against errors either

as it would be a matter of further investigation.

5. IMPLICATIONS AND CONTRIBUTION TO KNOWLEDGE

The value of learners' errors has been documented since Corder's studies in the 1960s. They help teachers understand the process of learning and acquisition their learners undergo. That is why it is important to scrutinize these little pieces of information, granting teachers a certain access to the interlanguage of the learners.

As much as interlanguage varies from individual to individual, a number of errors made by learners in a common setting might be similar. The analysis of such errors and the proposition for their possible causes will allow a better understanding of the acquisition of the involved learners. Besides, it will give a general idea for other learners in similar conditions especially in other schools where French is offered as a third language in the city of Quito.

The present work is therefore addressed to teachers who, through the findings of this research, would be able to use quantitative and most importantly, qualitative data to guide their teaching practice. An inventory of errors as well as their description and etiology could be used as a start for a teaching adjustment, not only with the aim of avoiding the appearance of common errors but also in order to establish consistent corrective feedback policies in the case of their presence. Further research is also encouraged starting with the findings of the present study to guide such adjustments using the scientific method.

6. PROPOSED CHAPTERS

This study takes the form of a scientific article and consists of three main chapters. Chapter one presents and analyzes the existing literature about error analysis: error conception, description and typology in both a theoretical and a referential framework. Chapter two deals with the methodology and collection of data from oral interaction of the students and the analysis of the quantitative data: number of errors and their frequency. Chapter three is devoted to the findings of the research with a main focus on the qualitative analysis of the data; in other words, the establishment of the possible causes for errors.

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8. SCHEDULE

Activity	August 2020				September 2020				October 2020				November 2020				December 2020				January 2021				February 2021			
	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
Identification of the problem	█	█	█																									
Definition of the topic of research				█																								
Problem statement					█	█																						
Objectives							█	█																				
Relevance and importance of the research									█																			
Literature review										█	█																	
Research design and methods												█																
Implications and contribution to knowledge												█																
First draft of plan													█	█														
Edition of plan														█														
Approval of plan																												
Theoretical framework																	█	█										
Referential framework																			█	█								
Data collection																					█	█						
Analysis of the data																							█	█				
Findings																									█	█		
First draft of final article																												█