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Trabajo Fin de Grado

SOME COMMON ERRORS OF SPANISH LEARNERS OF ESL

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01 Julio, 2020

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ABSTRACT

This work reviews the data analysis methods that have existed throughout the history of Applied Linguistics and analyzes a small catalog, proposed by Cambridge, of the most repeated errors among Spanish students of English. Moreover, a case study is developed by collecting data from the interlanguage of a sample of Spanish speakers with a basic level of English from a series of tests. This project can be useful both for teachers, at the time of locating some of the most repeated errors among their students, and for the students themselves, since it contains a good collection of learning material for the acquisition of English as a second language, based on possible mistakes that Spanish students usually make.

KEY WORDS: error, ESL, interference, mother tongue, second language.

RESUMEN

El presente trabajo repasa los métodos de análisis de datos que han existido a lo largo de la historia de la Lingüística Aplicada y analiza un pequeño catálogo, propuesto por Cambridge, de los errores más repetidos entre estudiantes españoles de inglés. Además, se desarrolla un estudio de caso práctico recopilando datos de la interlengua de una muestra de hispanohablantes con un nivel básico de inglés a partir de una serie de pruebas. Este proyecto puede ser útil tanto para profesores, a la hora de localizar algunos de los errores más repetidos entre sus alumnos, como para los propios estudiantes, ya que en él se encuentra una buena recopilación de material de aprendizaje para la adquisición del inglés como segunda lengua, basado en los posibles errores que los estudiantes españoles suelen cometer.

PALABRAS CLAVE: error, ISL, interferencia, lengua materna, segunda lengua.

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTORY CHAPTER

1.1. Introduction

Through many years linguists have been searching the way people may learn new languages successfully. Lots of theories about how we develop our communicative skills have appeared since then. However, even today learning new languages is a pretty big challenge. From my point of view, know to speak, write and understand other languages such as English, in the case of Spanish people, has become essential in this globalized world where all must socialize and communicate with people who do not speak our mother tongue. The situation has always brought to my mind a Nelson Mandela's quotation *"If you talk to a man in a language he understands, that goes to his head. If you talk to him in his own language, that goes to his heart."* For that reason, I have decided to focus my work in the application of some methods which deal with data analysis in order to try to help in the process of acquire ESL (English as a Second Language). Furthermore, I wanted to see how practical are actually these methods, so this work also contains a case study in which I prove some of these methods by myself with two Spanish learners.

The work has been divided into four chapters. The first one is an introductory chapter in which the objectives and methodology are exposed. The second chapter presents a theoretical framework which is compound by two different parts. The former gives an overview of the main methods of data analysis in second language learning which looks for a productive and effective way to learn ESL. The main methods that are collected here are: contrastive analysis, error analysis and interlanguage. The second part, however, deals with The Cambridge Error Catalog and with some learning materials proposed by Cambridge University in order to show one example of how useful errors are when you work with them. Following with the previous point idea, in the third chapter, the case study that has been mentioned before is putted into practice. It starts with a small presentation through a general background, and follows with the errors make by two Spanish learners before and after work through some grammar and lexical-learning materials.

The fourth chapter, "Conclusions", is dedicated to an exposition about all my thoughts, restlessness and motivations that have been appeared to me during it realization and in relation with the established objectives. Finally, at the end of the work, the reader may

encounter the references used in this project and also an appendix with some complementary tables and materials.

1.2. Objectives and methodology

This project tries to fulfill three general objectives. The first is to provide an overview of the data analysis methods used in Applied Linguistics. The second, to illustrate a model of error catalog which use error analysis to develop new learning materials. And finally, the third, to develop a case study with which I intend to achieve the following specific objectives:

- To collect, classify (grammar, lexical or syntactic errors), describe and analyze the errors produced by two Spanish speakers in an English writing composition and grammar and lexical tasks.
- To identify the errors which have been produced due to interlingua or intralingua.
- To determine the most common errors that two Spanish speakers make.
- To compare the errors produced by the two learners who participate in this case-study with the errors proportionate by Cambridge Corpus.
- To work through some grammar and lexical-learning materials focused on errors.
- To prove if the learning material is a useful tool.

In order to achieve these specific objectives, I have developed the following research questions:

1. What types of errors have been repeated by two Spanish learners at a basic level of English?
2. Which errors are interlinguals? and, intralinguals?
3. What kind of errors found in the case-study, also appear in The Cambridge Error Catalog?
4. Have students had more or less errors after work with the learning materials?

Taking into account the above, I am going to deal with the following research methodology. The work will start with a theoretical framework and will continue through an observative and descriptive approach. As the scientific method does, I am going to begin firstly by observation; I will identify how many errors two Spanish students made in a serial of English basic tasks which I will use to produce my data collection. Once I have recompiled in a little corpus these errors, I will organize them depending on if they are due to grammar,

vocabulary or syntax. At the same time I will search if the reason why the learner has could make them are due to an interference of the mother tongue or not. Then, through a recompilation of learning materials I will try to show how working with errors, the student may learn a new language successfully. After a period of time working with these activities, students will have to pass another test in a similar style of procedure as the first. The results will be analyzed in order to see if truly there is an improvement in students or, on the contrary, they remain stuck in what it is known as fossilization. Finally, the conclusions drawn from this experiment will be set out.

CHAPTER 2: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1. Main methods of data analysis in second language acquisition

Between the 1950s and 1960s, after the World War II, the United States, the world's largest power, was forced to increase the learning of new languages. As a consequence, an empowerment of education in a second language emerged, giving rise to different didactic procedures to achieve its acquisition. Applied linguistics (AL) is a scientific discipline that is responsible for answering the possible questions generated by the use of language.

Throughout history there have been many methodologies in the field of AL that have been developed with the aim of understanding and, therefore, also facilitating the acquisition of second languages. In the following theoretical framework, I will especially treat those data analysis methods that focus on the acquisition of a foreign language: contrastive analysis, error analysis and interlanguage. Although nowadays there are more methods which work to obtain the same objective such as the discourse analysis, the study of learning variables or the social approach of language teaching and learning processes, I have decided to deal only with the three previous methods because they were the first that from an analysis of a series of specific data made possible to find useful tools for the second language learning process.

2.2.2. Contrastive Analysis

Contrastive Analysis (CA) is a stream which belongs to Applied Linguistics. It was born between the 50s and 70s of the XX Century, thanks to works of authors like Fries (1945), Weinreich (1953) and Lado (1957). Charles Carpenter Fries worked and directed the Michigan English Language Institute where the best methods of foreign language teaching

were researched for military aims during WW2, standing out the teaching of ESL to Spanish speakers in Latin America. He was the first who established CA as the main method to target language teaching and ESL since he declared that "The most efficient materials are those that are based upon a scientific description of the language to be learned, carefully compared with a parallel description of the native language of the learner." (Fries, 1945, p.9). Later, Robert Lado in his work, *Linguistics Across Cultures* (1957) gave the idea that the biggest difficulty in learn a new language was based on the transfer notion.

Individuals tend to transfer the forms and meanings, and the distribution of forms and meanings of their native language and culture to the foreign language and culture (...) both productively when attempting to speak the language and to act in the culture, and receptively when attempting to grasp and understand the language and the culture as practised by natives. (Lado, 1957)

According to CA, all the errors produced by students of a second language can be predicted if we compare their mother tongue (the first language that a person learn to speak when a child) with the target language (the new language that a person want to learn) and identify the differences between them. It is based on the assumption that errors appear as a consequence of interferences that the first language transfer to the second language. In this way, on the one hand, following the assertions of (Baralo, 1999), the CA is based on two points: learning is produced by transference of habits from the mother tongue to the target language, and the transference will be positive when the structures of both languages coincide, while the transference will be negative if there are differences between the two systems. So according with these two points, we can establish that "a linguistic interference is produced when a learner uses phonetic, morphological, syntactic or lexical features of the native language (L1) when speaking or writing in the target language (L2)" (Santos Gargallo, 1993:35). On the other hand, CA follows the following procedures:

1. Description and comparison of the first language and target language's linguistic-systems.
2. Determination of their differences and similarities.
3. Selection of the most complex structures of the target language.
4. Possible errors prediction.

5. Design of suitable teaching methods and materials to prevent the errors produced by negative transfers from the 1L.

From a psycholinguistic point of view, it was based on the principles of behaviorism and its theory that we learn across the association of stimulus, response, reinforcement and habit. All these ideas had a strong influence on teaching. The error was conceived as something to prevent, since it can generate incorrect habits. However, many of the predicted errors did not appear and the CA was strongly criticized during the 1970s.

2.2.3. Error Analysis

This situation provided the birth of a new current, the Error Analysis (EA). It emerged during the 70s of the XX Century as an evolution of the CA. This model aimed to study and analyze the errors made by second language learners in order to identify their causes and the strategies that students use in the learning process, being able, in this way, to provide an explanation for their occurrence. Moreover, EA generally follows the steps that in 1967 S. P. Corder in his article, *The significance of learners' errors*, recommended:

1. Identification of errors in context (data collection).
2. Classification and description.
3. Explanation of its origin, looking for psycholinguistic mechanisms or strategies and the sources of each error: at this point the possible interference of the mother tongue enters, as another strategy.
4. Evaluation of the severity of the error and search for a possible therapy.

In the same article, Corder also exposes his distinction between the concept of "error" and "mistake", according to which the error is a deviation from the target language that appears in the verbal production of the learner as a consequence of ignorance of the correct rule (systematic error), while the so-called "mistakes" refer to sporadic mistakes that the learner makes due to lapses or oversights. However, most researchers acknowledge that at the time of practice, this distinction is not so clear. Likewise, Corder also affirmed that errors can be understood in three different ways. On the one hand, from the teacher's perspective, if he undertakes a systematic analysis, the errors will show how far the student has gone in relation to the proposed objective and what remains to be achieved. On the other hand, from the

learner's perspective, error is considered a procedure used by those who learn to learn. Finally, on the part of the researcher, the errors provide data on how a language is acquired and the strategies developed by the learner until reaching it.

As Corder stated, the error occurs due to a lack of knowledge of the target language. However, if we delve further into the possible motivation of each error, what may have been its cause, we will realize that it is something much more complex. Many have been the authors who have tried to categorize the error, but even today it is difficult to find a fixed classification. Instead, we can find different classifications according to the type of specific objective pursued, whether in areas such as research, teaching, correction, etc. The most prominent are the following:

Based on a linguistic criteria, errors could be classified depending on whether they are due to: lexicon (lexical errors) when deals with vocabulary gaps; morphology (morphological errors) when the learner does not use correctly certain morphemes such as the –ed in past tenses or the third singular person –s; syntax (syntactic errors) those which deal with phase, clause, sentence and paragraph; or pronunciation (pronunciation errors) when the learner has problems with phonemes.

Moreover, errors can also be classified according to superficial strategies. These strategies look at how a word, phrase or sentence has been written. So we can find: omission errors, when a letter or even a complete word is missing in a phrase, leaving it meaningless; addition errors, when if on the contrary we add an extra letter or word; miss-election errors, if the word chosen does not mean what it was intended to say or miss-ordering errors, when we change the natural order of letters, words or even phrases in a sentence.

Other criteria are: the pedagogical, according to which the errors can be induced, transitory or fossilized; the etymological criteria, depending on the cause or origin they can be due to interlingua (errors which belong to the mother tongue influence when the meaning, grammatical pattern or transfer of signifier respect) or intralingua (errors which do not have the mother tongue influence but are produced into the target language); or the communicative criteria by which errors may be due to ambiguity, coherence, among others.

After these studies, it could be observed that errors show many universal strategies of learning. This fact changed the error's vision. Now, the error would not be something to avoid any more, but a useful tool that would allow achieves the new language. It was thought that each student created his own mental way from his mother tongue to the target language. This path had got different stages that the learner surpassed each time he learned about his errors. This idea allowed the birth, in the late 70s, of the interlanguage studies.

2.2.4. Interlanguage

The term interlanguage makes reference to the internal linguistic system of a 2L or FL student. In other words, interlanguage represents each of the different levels of language's acquisition that a learner builds by himself. Thus, "Interlanguage is viewed as a separate linguistic system, clearly different from both the learner's 'native language' (NL) and the 'target language' (TL) being learned, but linked to both NL and TL by interlingual identifications in the perception of the learner" (Tarone, 2006:747). This term, closely related to cognitive theories of language learning, was coined by Selinker (1972); however, the first to deal with the concept was Corder (1967).

Interlanguage is also characterized, as Mónica (2015) says and explains in her article, by deal with: fossilization, permeability, systematicity and variability. Fossilization is considered as a state in which a learner gets when he gets stuck in a language that he is acquiring and he does not advance. It may takes place at any level. Permeability means that interlanguage may include different languages with its grammatical systems, while systematicity says us that each of these languages has its own and unique grammatical system. Finally variability gives to interlanguage the feature to be in a constantly change.

The studies that were carried out on interlanguage aimed to analyze and describe the student's language in its entirety. From these, it was possible to characterize the linguistic system used by the 2L learner and make hypotheses about the learning process, what opened the door of the study of communication strategies. The Theory of interlanguage was a push for empirical research in SLA. First, this type of research took the form of error analysis and helped demonstrate that many of the errors that 2L students produce are not due to the influence of 1L, but are explained by other factors.

2.2. The Cambridge Error Catalog

Numerous errors corpus or catalogs have been develop through the collection of data analysis during the last years. The majority of them contain rich information from students of different ages, levels and nationalities. Thanks to all these data achieved by different universities, publishing houses, teachers and authors, it has been possible the creation of powerful learning materials and methods which improve the acquisition process of a foreign language. In this second point of this chapter, I am going to show one example of an error catalog taken from Cambridge Corpus in order to see how useful may be the knowledge of some data in the teaching and learning process of ESL.

2.2.1. *Spanish learners errors*

Through the English Corpus of Cambridge University where the most common errors of Spanish speakers when learning English are recorded, I have been able to find the most outstanding. The data is collected from the official Cambridge exams and is useful not only to detect what are the most common mistakes, but to be able to work on tools that help avoid them, such as those that we will see later at the end of this chapter. Thus, the main errors found by Cambridge have been the following:

Wich or Which: Spanish students tend to forget the interspersed h of this word. According to Cambridge, it seems to be the most committed error. However, it is not the only word that tends to be misspelled because replacing the m in "comfortable" with an n is also quite common. This error is attributed to the idea that Spanish learners find easier to write nouns than verbs, and that in general, they tend to write as the word sounds so they often fail especially in words like: accommodation, possible, different, bicycle, environment and beautiful.

Because: Cambridge has found up to 237 different ways that the Spanish write this word, including: becoz, becouse, becuase or becaus. It is undoubtedly the most curious case of the study, due to the extraordinary ability to search for combinations for this term.

Adding "e" to the words beginning with "s": another very frequent error is to convert terms such as specific, spectacular or specialized, both when speaking and writing, into "especific", "espectacular" or "especialized". In Spain there is not any word that starts with –s,

generally there is an –e before, so it is a difficult thing to avoid the pronunciation, and then, also write a word in English which starts with –s without –e.

"False friends": false friends are also a headache. Words that are written very similarly in both languages but have a completely different meaning are confusing, and as a consequence errors occur in words like "assist" used in the context of "to come somewhere" instead of helping, or "actual" Which has nothing to do with "actual" in Spanish since it means "in fact" and not "current", and like these many more false friends.

Failing to write the correct preposition or determine: it is another of the most characteristic errors. Spanish students usually have problems with certain collocations and confuse many place and time prepositions. Moreover, learners have difficulties in remember all the rules which deal with determines (the, a, an, or nothing).

2.2.2. Materials proposed by Cambridge University Press to avoid errors

Cambridge University Press, as its name suggests, is the publishing house of Cambridge University and also the oldest in the world. In fact, it is a department of the University itself, and as it is indicated on its official website, its mission is to distill and shape all the knowledge generated there: Sciences, Humanities, Linguistics, etc., are five hundred years in the world of teaching, and in the last century has specialized in methods for teaching English.

Along with Cambridge Assessment English, the specialist section for university exams, the publishing house designs the preparation methods for these certified English exams, such as First, Proficiency or Advanced, among others. But in addition to all this, it also designs English methods for all kinds of needs and students. Specifically, focusing on Spanish students, the publishing house studies the specific difficulty areas in which they are. For this study they have what they call their "secret weapon", the Cambridge English Corpus, where, the error analysis belong to Spanish candidates in the official Cambridge exams are recorded. It is, as it appears on the official page of the publishing house's, "main own and unique research tool" with which they obtain a faithful follow-up of the use of the English language at present times from all over the world: how to speak, write, or evolves. Cambridge University Press is therefore "the only publisher with access to the information of these exams: what is correct, what mistakes are made and how to tackle them. Valuable information

to analyze statistically to make the most effective English methods that can be found." (Cambridge University Press).

This publishing house of Cambridge has a variety of grammar and lexical learning materials to deal with the errors mentioned in the previous point. From dictionaries, workbooks or small readings to a recently launched application called "English Monster".

Although it is well known that for the good learning of the vocabulary of any language the use of the dictionary is necessary, the reality is that this instrument is little valued today by the youngest learners as the essential tool that it is. Cambridge University Press provides both bilingual Spanish-English and English-Spanish dictionaries for all levels and monolingual dictionaries also adapted for all levels.

Likewise, the publishing house also has numerous and varied workbooks with activities focused on the most common mistakes made by Spaniards in English. In them the learner will be able to look for the error in different sentences (all taken from Cambridge official exams with the errors of other Spanish candidates) and correct it himself, so he can be familiar with the error and the self-correction could be automatic and autonomous. It also includes the typical activities of choosing among several words the correct one or filling in the gaps.

However, the most striking thing for new generations is "English Monster". The app consists of a series of interactive exercises, which can be done as many times as you like. As I have mentioned before, it is based on the most common errors and the areas of difficulty that Spanish people have when learning English.

The information has been obtained from the Cambridge English Corpus linguistic analysis software, which has more than 1,800 million analyzed words taken from the most common errors found in the Cambridge exams carried out by Spanish students.

In this app you can find from examples of words that Spaniards normally misspell (misspellings) to lists of more typical false friends. As for the level, in principle it is a medium-high level. During its use two monsters will accompany the learner, a good one who will sometimes help and an evil one who will try to make things difficult.

In addition to being able to play from a Smartphone or tablet, it can be played through Facebook. It is a different, attractive and fun way to practice and remedy the most common errors.

CHAPTER 3: CASE STUDY

3.1. Background

In order to personally test the effectiveness of the data analysis methods mentioned in the previous chapters, I will propose the following case study. It consists of a small compilation of errors extracted from activities that two children to whom I give English classes have carried out. These children have Spanish as their mother tongue and present a basic level of English. In addition, as their participation are going to be anonymous, throughout this practical case I will refer to them as student A and student B.

Both learners received clear instructions about the test and were conscious at all times that they were participating in a case study about some errors that Spanish students usually have when learn English. This was really important in order to the learners were relax and without any kind to stress to carry out the test without help.

From the corpus of errors collected, I will analyze them one by one grouping them, by a side, according to the type of error, if they are grammatical, lexical or syntactic, and on the other, if they owe their origin to a kind of interference or not (interlingua/intralingua errors). Concerning to the way I have tested the participants of the present case study, I give them some activities from which I collected the errors they made. Two of these tasks were created by myself, and the other one was taken out from Cambridge Assessment English “A2 Flyers Reading and Writing” (figure 1). The formers (figure 2) are two tasks, one to fillip the gaps with the correct form of the giving verbs and the second to form adjectives from nouns. In relation with the writing composition, the learners must create a short story from three photos which show three different situations.

After have classified and analyzed the kind of errors found, the Spanish learners will work with some grammar and lexical-learning materials that I have considered useful for the specific type of errors that they have had, during approximately a month. After that period of time, I will test them again with another writing composition and tasks very similar to the first. In this way, I could contrast if the learning-material has been effective or not.

3.2. Case study: the interlanguage of a sample of students

The present section has the aim of answer the first three research questions, which were well exposed at the beginning of this work in its objectives and methodology, of this case study. I will answer them by displaying and analyzing the results I have reached.

3.2.1. Answers to the first and second questions research

Taking into account the Cambridge Corpus reference, I am going to create another one by myself. In first place, I will show the errors collected from the two writing compositions and then, the errors taken from the other two tasks. So, starting by student A, I could found the errors included in the first list of the appendix (table 1). Now, in the next paragraph I am going to classify and analyze them depending on if they have been made by means of grammar, lexis or syntax mistakes, as well as saying if they have been produced due to any type of transference, reorganized them into interlingual or intralingual errors.

Lexical errors: the first error that I found was due to a formal miss-election error because the learner had confused the word "history" (referring to real facts which occur in the past) with the word "story" (referring to fictional facts that occur mainly in tales), this last should had been the correct one due to the fictional context of the writing. This confusion might be due to a negative transference (interlingual error) from the mother tongue since in Spanish the word "historia" which is pretty similar to the English word "history" is used in both contexts, as a real fact and as a fictional one. The next error I could find was an omission error, it occurs when a letter or a word is missed in the sentence. Student A have made many omission errors along his writing, the ones I have found are: "sumer", in which miss another "m", "sanwich" and "girlfiren" in which miss a "d" and the famous word "becase" in which miss the letter "u". All these errors occurred by omission are not caused by any negative transference from the MT, but by mistakes caused into the target language (intralingual errors).

Syntax errors: The second error that student A made was because of a miss-ordering error. He wrote "my friend alien" instead of "my alien friend" because in Spanish the logical sentence order when you use an adjective is: SUBJECT + NOUN + ADJECTIVE. However, in English is different, the adjective is always before the noun: SUBJECT + ADJECTIVE + NOUN. This is a clear case of interlingual error because there is a negative transference from the mother tongue to the target language causing misunderstandings to the learner.

Grammar errors: Moreover, the learner also made morphological errors due to his confusion in some morphemes such as the present singular person -s that in Spanish does not exist. For this reason these kind of errors are considered intralingual since they have not any equivalence with the student's first language.

As well as I have done with the first student, I am going to do with the second. The errors made by student B which I am going to analyze now are also recompiled in the appendix (table2), and they are the following:

Lexical errors: As in the previous student, the learner has fallen into the formal miss-election errors too. In his case, student B has confused the relative pronouns "that" and "who". Although both relative pronouns may share the same meaning when the learner looks the word in a dictionary, the grammatical rule varies, so when the learner wrote "that", as far the noun which this pronoun replaces makes reference to a person, the correct relative pronoun should had been "who". From my point of view, this error is not due to any transference being another intralingual error which takes place into the target language. Other formal miss-election errors that I found are the wrong election between the words "plane and airplane", "Marcian and Martian" and "but and because" which I also consider as intralingual errors. Student B has also had errors due to false friends, when he wanted to write the word "introduce" in the context that someone is going to know another for the first time, he wrote "present". The issue is that "present" which in English makes reference to a "gift" or a "verbal tense" in Spanish is quite similar to the word "presentar/se", to know somebody for the first time. All errors due to false friends, words are produced by negative transferences so they are clear interlingual errors.

Grammar errors: Otherwise, the learner has problems with prepositions and certain collocations like his confusion with "in or at" when refers to places "in the house vs at home" or "to and for" when the word which it follows is a verb or a noun. All the errors concerning with prepositions are due to lack of knowledge about the English grammar rules so these errors are intralingual. Finally, as student A, the second participant has morphological errors due especially to the present singular person -s like when he writes "he want" instead of "wants" (intralingual errors).

The errors collected from "fillip the gaps" and "form adjectives from nouns" have been the following: In relation with student A, in the first task has had morphological problems with the present third singular person -s. However, in the second task he has had only one error missing an "s" in successful. It show that the learner has studied the words giving and because he is familiarized with them he has not had errors but only one surely because a lapse of concentration. From the part of student B, in spite of he does not have any error due to the

third singular person –s, he has show to have problems with the present continuous –ing and with the past simple morpheme –ed. Student B has showed also that he does not know well the words giving in the second task, and although he has some of them right the majority of them present errors in its formation as adjectives. All the errors in these two activities are considered intralingual because there is not any transference from Spanish to English.

3.3.2. Answer to the third question research

After have classified the previously commented errors made by students A and B, it is time to compare them with the most common errors that Cambridge University assures Spanish students make when studying English as a second language. Are the rankings of errors collected by Cambridge really the most common? How many of them have our Spanish students, A and B, made? What kinds of errors have they made more? And what kind have they made the less? Well, all these questions are going to be dispelled in this section.

On the one hand, Student A has made two of the five errors exposed by Cambridge. The first one, the famous and interesting case of "because" that our learner has mistakenly written as "becase" and the second one a false friend, "present", that in spite of in Spanish it might very much resemble the word "present" has little to do with the English word. Apart from the two errors that are in the list of the most repeated by the Spanish students, student A has repeated the errors by omission several times. However, the learner has had no errors due to prepositions or collocations, although he has had errors due to determines, such as when he writes wrong the possessive determine "my" by writing the personal pronoun "me".

On the other hand, student B, although he has also committed two of the five errors that appear on the university list, the number of times he has committed one of them is greater. Like the previous learner, this one has also made the same false friend error with the word "present". However, unlike the previous one, this one has made prepositional errors, three of them to be more exact. The learner has made so much prepositional errors due to his confusion with the prepositions of place "in and at", with the prepositions of finality "for and to" and with the prepositions of direction "to". Their greatest number of errors are due to those errors in prepositions and also, morphological errors due to forgetfulness in the use of the present simple third singular person -s.

Both students have made at least two of the errors mentioned by Cambridge University Press. These have been errors by false friends, by prepositions and by the misspelling of the conjunctive word "because". However, none of them have made errors by misspelling "which" or writing an "e" in words beginning with "s".

3.3. Grammar and lexical-learning materials

Paying attention to the errors made by the two Spanish students I am going to propose some grammar and lexical-materials to improve their English learning process as Cambridge University Press did with the error collected in its Cambridge Corpus. The idea is that both students work through these activities during approximately a month. After that period of time I will check if they have reduced some of their initial errors.

The first task that I propose and which I consider really helpful to the learners is inspired from one activity that Cambridge works in its second edition book “Complete First” in which learners must find in a short sentence an error made by other English students and then, correct it. In this occasion I do something similar, I have extracted some wrong sentences or words from the writings compositions that both participants wrote but never saw corrected and they must find the error and correct it. This kind of task is useful in order to they become conscious about the errors they might make or even have made. So, if they keep an eye on these mistakes, they could avoid some of them the next time.

The second task although it is a very common activity when learn a new language, is really effective to work formal miss-election errors. Learners have to choose between some similar words the best option. In this kind of activity the student can also work false friends, collocations, grammar errors, etc. The third task that I recommend is focus on grammatical errors (morphological and syntax errors). It consist on translate the same sentence from Spanish to English in all its verbal tenses (present simple, past simple, present continuous, present perfect, futures..) in all its forms (affirmative, negative and interrogative) and in all its persons (first singular, second singular, third singular, first plural...). With this exercise learners will review auxiliaries, third person singular-s, irregular verbs, etc.

Other useful activities for learners of a basic level of English to avoid errors are game-like activities. With these kind of activities the teacher must work with Bloom’s Taxonomy (figure 9) since they carry to create, evaluate, analyze, apply, understand and recall basic

concepts. Some interesting game-like activities could be: the famous “Hangman” a kind of activity that may help with distortion errors by omission. It consists of drawing on the board as many holes as there are letters in a word, the students will have to say letters until completing the enigmatic word. However, for each letter that they say but it does not contain the word, the parts of the body (head, arms, body, legs) of a man to be hanged will be drawn. The winner will be whoever completes the word with all its letters, without the man has being drawn in its totality.

Two more great options are: “Order the story” and “Kahoot”, the former is an activity by which learners may work with syntax errors. Students will have messy words, sentences, or paragraphs and they will have to arrange them so that they make sense and coherence. Kahoot is an application which through short questions, the learners compete with each other and at the same time are doing a review of English grammar rules, false friends, prepositions, etc.

3.4. Errors make by two Spanish learners after work with learning material

This final point of the case study is focused on answering the fourth and last research question: Have students had more or less errors after work with the learning materials?

3.4.1. Answer to the fourth question research

It has passed a month since the two Spanish learners of English basic level participated in the first text composed by a writing composition and two tasks concerning grammar and vocabulary. Now with this second test the aim is to prove if the learning materials, proposed in the previous point, have been effective. Learners, after have been practicing with those activities must do a second test, also composed by another writing composition and the same grammar and vocabulary tasks but with some modifications. The writing has been taken again from another smoke exam of Cambridge (figure 5).

The results of Student A (table 4) in his second writing composition is clearly better than the previous one. The errors I have found are only two, both due to lexis (formal miss-election errors) the first is the incorrect use of the object pronoun “them” when he wanted to use the time adverb “then” (intralingual error). As both words are written the same way except for the letter at the end in which one is an m and the other is a ne, the student can easily confuse them. The second error was due to confusion with the word “kitchen”, the learner had written right the word at the beginning, but then he crossed out the word and

wrote “chicken”. Both words are similar but one signifies an animal and the other one of the rooms of a house where you cook. On the other hand, the errors which the learner has made in the other two tasks, has also gone down. In the first task “Fillip the gaps” has had all correct and in the second task “form nouns from verbs” has only two mistakes.

In general, if we compare this second test with the first, student A has made great improvements. The biggest problems for him were distortions errors and, in this case, as we have been able to see, he has not any. However, the learner still has some problems with formal miss-spelling errors so the next step would be to pay more attention to these and work more with learning material focus on this type of mistakes.

In the case of Student B, he has made some more errors (table 5). He has made errors in lexis and grammar. In his writing composition I have found distortion errors by over-inclusion in a word because he has wrote “browng” when the final “g” is not correct. As student A, he has also made formal miss-spelling error, this time because, maybe, the learner has confused the sound of the letter “o” in “mother” [ʌ] with the letter “a” and he wrote “mather”. Concerning with grammar he has a colloquial error due to the confusion between the collocations “do” and “make”, the learner wrote “do” when the right collocation with the word “breakfast” would have been “make”. And two morphological errors, the first one because of the oblivion of third person singular –s in the auxiliary word “do” “he doesn’t”, and the second one due to the use of the inflected morpheme –er in the word “cook” when he wanted to refer the person who cooks the meal. However, this last error could be also a miss-spelling error because the general grammar rule is to add the morpheme –er to a verb to say that is the person who does this action, but in this case the word “cook” is an exception so it can be also the person who cooks and “cooker” the place where the cook cooks. Finally in “Fillip the gaps” he has not had any error either but one in “Form nouns from verbs”, showing in this way that his perseverance, work and review while he was working with the learning materials has been worth the trouble.

So, on balance, Student B has had reduce his number of errors too. However, he has repeated the same kind of errors in some cases such as his problem with the third singular person -s in auxiliaries. Even so, the grammar and lexical learning-materials have shown its usefulness. I would also like to say that, to my mind many of the errors made in this second

test have been due to a lapse which would make their correction easier since the students themselves, by rereading their writings more slowly, they would correct themselves.

CHAPTER 4: CONCLUSIONS

Having reached to the final chapter of this work, I would like to present my final thoughts, ideas and conclusions. On the one hand, I am pretty glad because I have reached all my objectives. We began this journey towards the maximum exploitation that the use of error can have in the acquisition of a new language from a theoretical framework. In that chapter the reader was able to immerse himself in the first learning methods that dealt with error within applied linguistics, either to eradicate it as in the case of contrastive analysis or to extract from it relevant information on how the student is progressing in the process of learning, as it was in the case of error analysis, and even more so in the study of interlanguage. Likewise, the reader could see one of the plenty of examples that there are about errors catalogs. The chosen one was the presented by Cambridge University taken from its Cambridge Corpus which some of the most common errors made by Spanish learners were shown. With all that initial information, the reader found himself in chapter three in which there was a case-study that tried to put into practice all the previous chapters. There two Spanish volunteers participated in a test composed by a writing composition and two grammar and lexical tasks. After correcting their errors it could be seen that most of the errors cited by Cambridge were made too. The majority of them were due to morphological and intralingual errors. After that, some learning materials were proposed and the learners worked on them during a month with the goal that in a second test they could reduce their errors number. The learning material had a fantastic success, the Spanish students had fewer errors and, as a consequence they advanced in their path to English acquisition language.

On the other hand, I have also reached to the following conclusions: In first place I have be able to find out that in my case-study the two Spanish learners who have a basic level of English usually have more intralingual errors than interlingual errors. From my point of view, they only have as a linguistic reference their mother tongue and due to that they have some problems at the time to follow the grammatical rules of English. For instance, the main error, which I have found in the two Spanish participants, have been the wrong use of the present third singular person. They do not have the -s morpheme in Spanish so is difficult for them do

not forget it. Of course there are several interlingual errors too, but mainly in vocabulary such as in the case of false friends. However, I have found out that once the student has learned the significant of the false friend word, he rarely makes the error twice; something that not occurs when is about intralingual errors. I think that the majority of these types of errors are due to lexical/vocabulary errors and these two students who are starting learning the English language find easier remember the vocabulary rather than the grammar. This is why I have found more intralingual errors in my case-study. Maybe if the participants had had a higher level, these kinds of errors had been less because they had acquired more grammatical rules. Finally, I have also compare the errors that my two anonymous learners have made with the errors that Cambridge says to be the most frequent between the Spanish students and I can say that some of them have been fulfilled. For instance, the famous case of the word: "because".

On balance, I think I have fulfilled all my objectives and answered the questions researches proposed at the beginning of the work. I hope in the same way, to have been able to inspire and motivate the reader to make from their mistakes great working tools, because as Brian Herbert said "the capacity to learn is a gift; the ability to learn is a skill; the willingness to learn is a choice". Learn a new language may be a difficult thing, errors will be close to you during the process, but is a choice of you to get discouraged and give up or learn with them.

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Recuperado de:

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Part 7

Look at the three pictures. Write about this story. Write 20 or more words.






A2 Flyers
B7

Figure 1

1. Fillip the gaps with the correct form of the following verbs: DRINK, HAVE, TO BE, DRIVE, READ, WATCH, SEE AND WRITE.
 - a) My brother _____ a bottle of water every day.
 - b) Susan and I _____ the best friends forever.
 - c) I love read books and one day I want _____ a book by myself.
 - d) Yesterday my dog _____ a cat, but he does not barked.
 - e) The last time I _____ a film at the cinema was when I was six years old.
 - f) My father _____ from Bailén to Jaén every week.
 - g) Our teacher ordered us to _____ the page number four of the Math book.
 - h) I am _____ headache right now.

2. Form adjectives from the following nouns:
 - a) Happiness:
 - b) Sadness:
 - c) Beauty:
 - d) Creation:
 - e) Difference:
 - f) Success:
 - g) Motivation:

Figure 2

MISTAKE	CORRECTION
History	story
My friend alien	my alien friend
Sumer	summer
I am going to a planet	I go to a planet
A alien	an alien
Is my friend	who is my friend
Becase	because
We saw each 10 year	Without coherence
I invited _	I invited him
A one sanwich	a sandwich
Girlfrien	girlfriend
Sowed up	show up
We invited _	we invited her
Me	my
My friend going	my friend goes
Presen	meets
A my family	Write “a” when it is not necessary
	long sentences without dots
	Final without coherence

Student A: (table 1)

1. Fillip the gaps with the correct form of the following verbs: DRINK, HAVE, TO BE, DRIVE, READ, WATCH, SEE AND WRITE.
 - a) My brother drink a bottle of water every day.
 - b) Susan and I are the best friends forever.
 - c) I love read books and one day I want write a book by myself.
 - d) Yesterday my dog saw a cat, but he does not barked.
 - e) The last time I watched a film at the cinema was when I was six years old.
 - f) My father drive from Bailén to Jaén every week.
 - g) Our teacher ordered us to read the page number four of the Math book.
 - h) I am having headache right now.

2. Form adjectives from the following nouns:
 - a) Happiness: **happy**
 - b) Sadness: **sad**
 - c) Beauty: **beautiful**
 - d) Creation: **creative**
 - e) Difference: **different**
 - f) Success: **successful**
 - g) Motivation: **motivated**

Figure 3 (student A)

MISTAKES	CORRECTION
That	who
Want's _	Wants to
Want's	wants
These reason	This reason
Cauch	takes
Plane	airplane
At	to
Are	is

Marcian	Martian
And going to Max for eat	It is not understood
Tech	shows
In the home of the Marcian	at the martian's house
In the home of the Marcian	at the Martian's house
He present's his wiffe	He introduce his wife
He present's his wiffe	He introduce his wife
But	because
For	to

Student B: (table 2)

1. Fillip the gaps with the correct form of the following verbs: DRINK, HAVE, TO BE, DRIVE, READ, WATCH, SEE AND WRITE.

a) My brother drinks a bottle of water every day.

b) Susan and I are the best friends forever.

c) I love read books and one day I want write a book by myself.

d) Yesterday my dog seen a cat, but he does not barked.

e) The last time I watch a film at the cinema was when I was six years old.

f) My father drives from Bailén to Jaén every week.

g) Our teacher ordered us to read the page number four of the Math book.

h) I am have headache right now.

2. Form adjectives from the following nouns:

a) Happiness: **happy**

b) Sadness: **sad**

c) Beauty: **beautiful**

d) Creation: **create**

e) Difference: **differ**

f) Success: **success**

g) Motivation: **motivate**

Figure 4 (Student B)

Part 7

Question 32

Look at the three pictures.
Write the story shown in the pictures.
Write **35 words** or more.



Write the email/story on your answer sheet.

Figure 5

1. Fillip the gaps with the correct form of the following verbs: paint, eat, run, sleep, meet, fly, ride, go.

- a) My mother _____ to shop a week ago.
- b) Megan is _____ a yellow bike.
- c) Yesterday I _____ my old t-shirt with spray
- d) Carol was _____ when Jake and I arrived because she was very tired.
- e) Her grandparent _____ her grandmother when they were young.
- f) Ian _____ a sandwich to dinner every night.
- g) She is _____ because she want participate in a marathon
- h) My cousin _____ in a plane for the first time two months ago.

2. Form nouns from the following verbs:

- a) Win:
- b) translate:
- c) fail:
- d) choose:
- e) confuse:
- f) produce:
- g) meet:
- h) communicate:

Figure 6

MISTAKE	CORRECTION
Them	then
Chicken	kitchen

Student A (table 3)

1. Fillip the gaps with the correct form of the following verbs: paint, eat, run, sleep, meet, fly, ride, go.

a) My mother went to shop a week ago.

b) Megan is riding a yellow bike.

c) Yesterday I painted my old t-shirt with spray

d) Carol was sleeping when Jake and I arrived because she was very tired.

e) Her grandparent met her grandmother when they were young.

f) Ian eats a sandwich to dinner every night.

g) She is running because she want participate in a marathon

h) My cousin flew in a plane for the first time two months ago.

2. Form nouns from the following verbs:

a) Win: winner

b) translate: translation

c) fail: failure

d) choose: chosen

e) confuse: confusion

f) produce: production

g) meet: meeting

h) communicate: communication

Figure 7 (Student A)

MISTAKE	CORRECTION
Browng	brown
Mather	mother
Do breakfast	Makebreakfast
He don't	He doesn't
Cooker	cook

Student B (table 4)

1. Fillip the gaps with the correct form of the following verbs: paint, eat, run, sleep, meet, fly, ride, go.
 - a) My mother went to shop a week ago.
 - b) Megan is riding a yellow bike.
 - c) Yesterday I painted my old t-shirt with spray
 - d) Carol was sleeping when Jake and I arrived because she was very tired.
 - e) Her grandparent met her grandmother when they were young.
 - f) Ian eats a sandwich to dinner every night.
 - g) She is running because she want participate in a marathon
 - h) My cousin flew in a plane for the first time two months ago.

2. Form nouns from the following verbs:
 - a) Win: winner
 - b) translate: translation
 - c) fail: ~~faile~~
 - d) choose: choice
 - e) confuse: confusion
 - f) produce: production
 - g) meet: meeting
 - h) communicate: communication

Figure 8 (Student B)

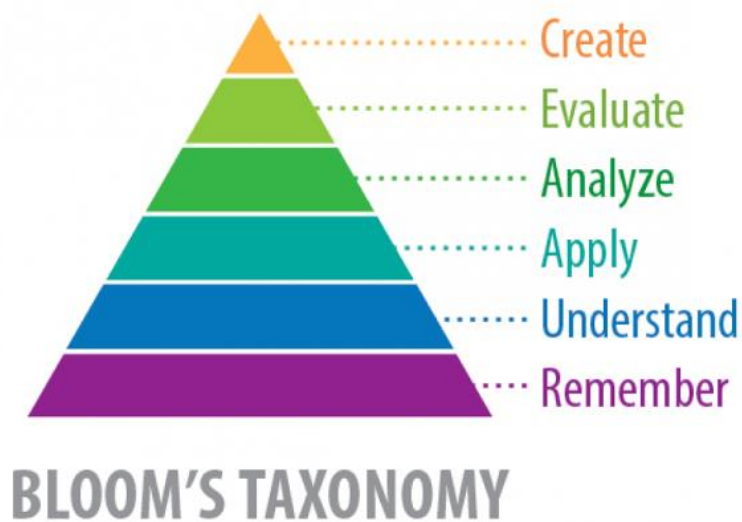
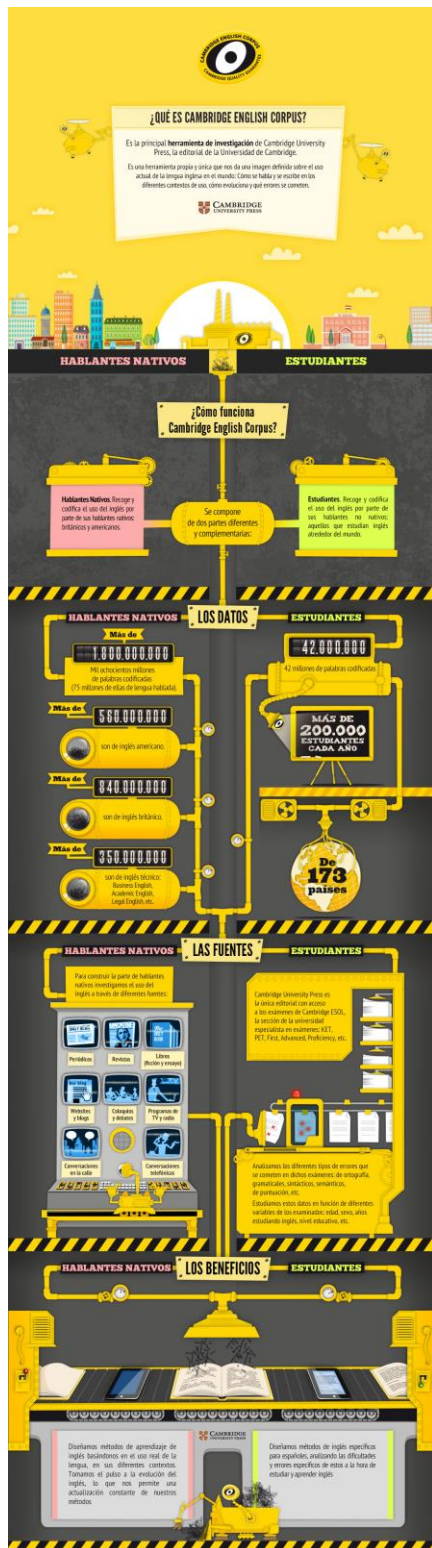


Figure 9



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Metodología de Inglés basados en el uso real de la lengua.

¿Quieres saber más sobre Cambridge English Corpus?

Sabías qué

Algunos datos interesantes sobre el uso del inglés en el mundo: cómo se habla, cómo se aprende y cómo lo analizamos.



El curioso caso de 'Because'

Analizando los exámenes de Cambridge alrededor del mundo, ¡nos dimos cuenta de que existen hasta 237 diferentes tipos de errores diferentes al escribirla!! Because, becaus, beacuse, becuose... así hasta 237.

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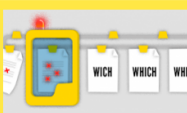
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¿Wich o Which?

'Wich' es el error escrito más común entre los estudiantes españoles de inglés. La forma correcta es 'which'.

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