# SOME CATEGORIES OF INTERFERENCE: A CONTRASTIVE APPROACH

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# SOME CATEGORIES OF INTERFERENCE: A CONTRASTIVE APPROACH

by

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## ABSTRACT

This thesis examines certain aspects of the interference from mother tongue English in the learning of French as a second language. A corpus of errors was selected from the written compositions and translations of first- to fourth-year university students. Those errors whose source was deemed to be interference from English were classified under the general headings of lexicon, syntax and morphology. Further sub-divisions were made to try to account for as many types of error as possible, but the data did not cover all the areas of grammar where interference might occur. An attempt was then made to explain the source of the interference, based on a contrastive analysis of the given structures in both languages. It was found that the greatest variety of errors occurred in the morphology section, whereas the greatest number of errors were either lexical or syntactical. The thesis emphasizes the fact that the mother tongue is often a source of interference in second language learning, that differences and similarities between language structures should be pointed out in the classroom, and that some areas of language teaching may be better taught if based on a contrastive grammar of the source and target languages.

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# 1. INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 The problem

This study was prompted by the frustration experienced as a teacher of French as a second language to first-year university students whose mother tongue is English. These students, of Memorial University of Newfoundland, made so many errors, and of such various kinds, that it appeared improbable that all of these errors were due to carelessness or improper learning on the students' part. It was therefore decided to examine some of these errors - those which seemed due to interference from the students' native language, English. Consequently, this essay has been written from the point of view of a teacher, a teacher faced with very practical problems in the classroom. It was felt that a contrastive analysis of errors due to interference from the mother tongue would make us more aware of the pattern conflicts between French and English, and more knowledgeable about the way a learner learns a second language.

## 1.2 The project

Our intended project is to do an analysis of the errors due to interference from English. We hope to find out how and why English interfered to cause the errors in French. Our approach is based on the principle of contrastive linguistics, which is the systematic comparison of two languages to discover and describe their differences and similarities. This comparison then provides a basis for an analysis of errors made in

one or the other of the languages. It may also be used as a point de départ for teaching the structure in which the particular error was made. We will examine errors made not only by first-year students, but also by students at various other levels in their study of French, including the fourth-year level. It was assumed that at the more advanced levels students would generally not make careless mistakes, so that most errors which would occur would come from other sources, such as interference from English, or from improper learning of the particular structure, or possibly from interference from the target language itself.

Our corpus consisted of interference errors observed in and randomly collected from the essays and translations of first- to fourth-year students. Having gathered the data, we then attempted to classify these errors as belonging to either the lexicon, the syntax, or the morphology of the target language, French. Each category was further sub-divided to try to account for as many types of interference as possible. The classification of the errors proved to be a very arduous task, because it is difficult to apply these categories rigorously. Consequently, there may be cases where it could be argued that an error has been wrongly placed, since the categorizing was sometimes a matter of judgement rather than of a self-evident taxonomy. It was often difficult to determine exactly what kind of error had been made and into what category to place it, and occasionally an error fitted into more than one category. It was often necessary to draw a fine (and sometimes arbitrary)

line between what constituted a lexical error and what constitutes a grammatical one, or between errors of syntax and those of morphology. The errors treated in this study were noted in the written work of students learning French as a second language[1], consequently, no account has been made of phonological interference from English. Nor has any attempt been made to apply statistics to this study, because our main intent is not statistically-oriented, but is simply an endeavour to find out how and why English has interfered with these students' learning of French, and if possible, to draw some conclusions about the learning problems of the student.

Our approach will be first to discuss briefly the phenomenon of interference, then to look at the errors in each category, and under each sub-heading, to try to explain the interference that caused that error. We will be using the principle of contrastive analysis, noting where the differences occur between given structures in the two languages.

We have not attempted to make an exhaustive study of all the areas of grammar that may be influenced by the mother tongue. Only the examples from our corpus have been examined, so that we have made our analysis fit the data, rather

---

(1) The examples in French that are numbered and that are preceded by an asterisk indicate the errors that have been selected from our corpus. Sometimes an example may contain errors other than the one we are discussing: these errors have been left intentionally, as we have chosen to present the examples as found.

than collect data to support our thesis. Consequently, there are areas of grammar which we have left untreated simply because these were not represented in our corpus of errors, but where there may well be interference from the mother tongue, e.g. the subjunctive, irregular verbs, formation of the plural of adjectives.

In the text of our essay we have listed and discussed as many different types of interference as occurred in our data. However, we have not listed in the text all the examples of the particular type of error. Where there were additional examples, these have been listed in an appendix to each chapter.

## 2. WHAT IS INTERFERENCE?

William Mackey defines interference as "the use of elements of one language while speaking another" (1970:195). This definition is one of the few encountered in the literature which acknowledges that interference takes place at other levels of language than the phonological level. Since this essay deals with grammatical and lexical interference in written French, Mackey's definition seems a good starting point for a brief discussion on what interference is, why it occurs, and how it can be identified and described.

From the psychological point of view, interference comes under the title of negative transfer. According to Jakobovits,

> "transfer is perhaps the single most important concept in the theory and practice of education. In its general form, the principle of transfer refers to the hypothesis that the learning of task A will affect the subsequent learning of task B, and it is this expectation that justifies educational training in schools as a form of preparation subsequent demands that society will impose upon the individual" (1970:188).

If the learning of task A facilitates the learning of task B, this is positive transfer. If, on the other hand, the learning of task A impedes the learning of task B, this is negative transfer, or interference, and in second language learning it occurs when the deeply embedded structures of the native language dominate during the learning of the other language. This then causes the learner to make errors in the foreign language. From the beginning of second language

learning, the learner must be taught to observe the differences between his mother tongue and the target language, and not taught the latter as if it were a codification of the mother tongue. This principle of teaching by contrastive analysis was advocated three decades ago by Charles Fries: "The most effective (teaching) materials are those that are based upon a ... description of the language to be learned, carefully compared with a parallel description of the native language of the learner " (1945:9).

Many applied linguists and nearly all language teachers are firmly convinced that interference does occur in second language learning, and their beliefs are supported by such linguists as Lado, who says:

> "We know from the observation of many cases that the grammatical structure of the native language tends to be transferred to the foreign....we have here the major source of difficulty or ease in learning the foreign language.... Those structures that are different will be difficult" (1957:58,59).

Mackey agrees:

> "Much of the difficulty in learning to speak a second language (arises from the fact that) the deeply ingrained patterns of (the learner's) first language will interfere with those of the language he is learning. When a situation presents itself, the stronger associations of his first language will unconsciously respond ..." (1965:109).

While it is true that interference from the native language is not the only cause of errors made by second language learners, it is probably the prime cause. Catford has said:

> "On pourrait dire que le plus grand obstacle à l'acquisition d'une seconde langue est la possession préalable de la langue maternelle" (1963:8).

Duskova is less emphatic:

> "To sum up what has been found about the sources of large groups of errors we may say that while interference from the mother tongue plays a role, it is not the only interfering factor" (1969:26).

Also, according to Brooks,

> "... a certain amount of interference and distortion will often be induced in (the learner's) performance in the new language by the mere presence in his head of the words and patterns of the mother tongue" (1964:55).

There seem to be a number of reasons why interference takes place. Language is a system through which the user organizes his thoughts and expresses his experiences of the world. When he learns a new language he has to learn to organize his experiences in a new way, because this is one way in which language systems differ - their speakers organize their experience of the world differently. A language is also a system made up of structures whose parts or elements have a certain mutual relationship as opposed to a mere accumulation of mutually independent items (Malmberg 1963:5). The number of elements in a language structure is limited, and the functions of these elements "are determined by their relations to the other units with which they are combined, within a system of communication possibilities (a paradigm), and within the actual speech sequence, the chain (or the syntagm)" (1963:5). In a contrastive analysis of two languages, it is generally found that they have certain structures in common, but also that one language contains structures which are either different from, or non-existent in, the other language. Therefore, where the structures of the new

system (the target language) do not correspond with the old (acquired) system (the source language or mother tongue), there will be interference between the two systems, and the learner of the target language will often make errors because of this interference.

Language may also be considered as a form of behavior. The learner has been speaking, reading and writing his mother tongue for many years, and the structures and patterns of that language are so strongly ingrained as to be habits. In learning a second language the learner must often alter his language behavior to accommodate new structures in the target language, because, as Politzer says, "Different languages may use different methods to express structural relationships and to express the grammatical meaning of a sentence" (1970:84). For example, what is expressed lexically in one language may be expressed syntactically or phonologically in another. Thus the distinction between the sentences "He wanted to leave" and "He tried to leave" is a lexical one in English, whereas in French it is a grammatical one: Il voulait partir and Il voulut/a voulu partir, respectively. (Examples from Mackey 1965:97). Sometimes great difficulties are encountered when a known structure in one language is represented in another by several structures: e.g. Je parle = I talk, I am talking, I do talk, I have talked, I have been talking, I speak, I do speak, I have spoken, I have been speaking, (depending on the context). (Examples from Hewson 1972:79).

In a learning situation, if the learner does not know a particular structure in the new language, he will try to bridge the gap by using the known structure from his native language. Since, however, as we have said, one language is not a codification of another, this kind of procedure is rarely successful, and the learner finds that he has made an error in the foreign language because of the influence of his mother tongue. In other words, interference has occurred because the learner has tried to apply to the new language the structures and systems of his native language.

# 3. LEXICAL INTERFERENCE

## 3.1 Lexical multiplicity

Errors of this type occur because often English has several meanings for one word, whereas French has a separate word for each of these meanings. One of the most common examples of this is the word "time", whose total range of meanings includes those of French fois, temps and heure. When the learner confuses these terms in French and writes such sentences as

(1) *C'est le premier temps qu'il visite la ville.

(2) *Savez-vous le temps?

it is because he has failed to make the distinction between

time[1] (occasion) = fois

time[2] (dimension of the universe) = temps

time[3] (by the clock) = heure,

a distinction that he is not required to make in English.

A similar type of interference occurs between the prepositions "until" in English and jusqu'à and avant in French. English uses the same preposition "until" in both affirmative and negative sentences. For example,

(a) I'll stay until eight o'clock,

(b) I won't go until eight o'clock.

In French, however, there are two different prepositions to translate the "until": one for the affirmative sentence,

(a) Je resterai jusqu'à huit heures,

and one for the negative sentence,

(b) Je ne partirai pas avant huit heures.

Confusion of these two prepositions, because of interference from English, often results in the student's writing an incorrect sentence such as

(3) *Je ne partirai pas jusqu'à huit heures.

This type of error results from the fact that different semantic areas are sometimes covered by the allosemes of one word in English and by several words in French. Diagrammatically:

| English | | French |
|---|---|---|
| meaning 1 | | meaning 1 = Word 1 |
| meaning 2 | Word | meaning 2 = Word 2 |
| meaning 3 | | meaning n = Word n |

This probably explains an error such as

(4) *Nos amis ont promis de nous rencontrer à l'aéroport.

The verb rencontrer is just one of the many possible translations of the English "to meet", and in the above example it has been used in an improper context. Because the learner does not have to differentiate in English between the different meanings of "meet", he assumes that French works the same way, and so he uses the most familiar word (to him) for "meet" - in this case, rencontrer.

3.2 Basic dictionary errors

Errors of this type tend to reflect a glaring misuse of the dictionary, especially if the learner has misunderstood the particular lexeme in English. For example, the sentence "He arrived at a level crossing." produced the following translation from a third-year student:

(5) *Il arriva à une croisée des chemins en palier.

It seems obvious that the student did not understand the meaning of the compound noun "level crossing", and regarded it simply as a noun modified by an adjective. Therefore, with the help of his dictionary, he translated "crossing" by une croisée des chemins and "level" by en palier, which, since it was supposed to be an adjectival phrase, was placed in the correct position after the noun. The student has erred in French because the misunderstanding of a lexical item in English lead to the creation of a structure in French that corresponded to the one in his native language - that of a noun modified by an adjective.

Interference from English is also the cause of errors such as the following:

(6) *(Il y a) des conférences que les étudiants ne sont pas obligés d'attendre.

(7) *Si vous attendez un dîner français ...

(8) *J'étais très fatigué, mais je n'avais pas le temps de rester.

These errors have occurred because the student has used a lexical item in French which is graphically similar to the English word which conveys the meaning he wants to express. For example, French attendre looks like English "attend", which is what the student meant to say in examples (6) and (7) above, but which should have been rendered in both cases by the verb assister à. Such words as attendre and rester in French, and "attend" and "rest" in English, are examples of faux amis,(1)

(1) See Vinay-Darbelnet, p. 71-74, for a definition and discussion of faux amis.

where there is a considerable resemblance of forms and sometimes some overlap of meaning.

Sometimes a lexical error resulting from a misuse of the dictionary can be quite amusing to the reader. The following sentences are examples:

(9) *Je suis un ventilateur de John Wayne.

A rather strange occupation for a student - but he obviously intended to say that he was a fan (admirateur) of John Wayne.

(10) *Les chasse-neige ont enlevé les rues.

The student intended to say that the snowplows cleared the streets, but he did not realize, after writing this sentence, that the snowplows in his French sentence did a lot more than did the snowplows in his English sentence. There seem to be two possible explanations for the error in this example. Firstly, the student may have known the expression enlever le couvert, meaning to "clear the table", and on analogy with this he wrote *enlever les rues. Secondly, the student may not have realized that in English the expression "clear the streets" is, in this context, a shortcut, meaning "clear the snow from the streets". In French, the verb enlever takes as direct object the thing which is cleared away, and not that from which it is cleared. If the student chooses to use enlever, he must keep in mind that the primary meaning of enlever is "to remove", and so he must say exactly what is removed. In the above case, it is not les rues, but la neige.

Perhaps one of the classic errors in this category came from a first-year student who was describing his first plane ride. He said:

(11) *Les nuages ressemblaient à des hémorroïdes de neige.

The student wanted to say that the clouds looked like piles of snow, and he looked up the word "piles" in the dictionary and found hémorroïdes. Since this word is a cognate of the English "haemorrhoids", it seems rather obvious that the student did not understand that word in English. The result is an error which is amusing to a bilingual but incomprehensible to a native speaker of French who does not know English.

3.3 Phrasal verbs

There were numerous errors made on phrasal verbs, some of which are phrasal in French, and others phrasal in English. For example,

(12) *Le contrôleur nous a demandé pour nos billets.

has an error (the inclusion of pour) because the verb "to ask for" is phrasal in English but simple in French - demander. Therefore, pour is redundant in the above example. Semantically, the simple verb demander covers in one word what "ask for" does in two.

In the above example, the error was the inclusion in the sentence of a preposition that was semantically redundant. However, in the following example, the reverse has occurred - the omission of a preposition that is a necessary part of the particular verb used,

(13) *Nous avons eu travailler.

Here, it is the preposition à which has been omitted. The student has done a literal translation based on how he had

grouped his English sentence, and this appears to have been "We had / to work". He may have thought that because the infinitive is marked morphologically in French (in above example the -er ending) it would have been redundant to include the preposition à. But the verb avoir has to have the preposition à (thus making it a phrasal verb) in order to express the notion of obligation or necessity, and this à must be expressed in the sentence.

Frequently, errors on phrasal verbs resulted in faulty syntax in the French sentence. The following examples are not syntactically correct, but the source of the error lies in the phrasal verb:

(14) *Le repas français ne ressemble pas celui du Canada.

(15) *Les gens ressemblent bien ceux que je me souviens.

In both sentences the learner has omitted the à of the phrasal verb ressembler à, and has employed the construction ressembler + direct object, which produced an ungrammatical sentence. This error has probably occurred because the verbs "resemble" and "look like" both govern direct objects.

The verb se souvenir (de) of (15) is also phrasal, but has a simple counterpart in English - the verb "to remember". Since there is no preposition needed in English before the direct object, the student has omitted the necessary preposition in example (15) above.

Other examples of errors on phrasal verbs are as follows:

(16) *Nous avons passé beaucoup de magasins.

Here the preposition devant has been omitted. Passer devant (quelque chose) is not a set phrasal verb in the sense that

se souvenir de (quelque chose) is, because the verb passer can be used by itself or in combination with other prepositions such as par and à. But passer devant differs semantically from passer par, and these two differ from passer à, so that a specific combination of passer + preposition, in other words, a specific phrasal verb is required to express a specific semantic notion. In the English equivalent of example (16) above, "We passed a lot of stores", the verb "to pass" is simple and transitive it does not mean "to pass in front of". The phrasal verb passer devant is required to express that idea.

(17) *Il pense de tout.

(The English context was "He thinks of everything"). The verb penser can exist in non-phrasal form, e.g. On pense des pensées, or in phrasal form, in combinations with the prepositions à and de:

(a) Il pense à sa femme.

(b) Qu'est-ce que vous pensez de ce film?

Penser à means "to think about, to think of", in the sense of "to direct one's thoughts towards". Penser de means "to have an opinion of something or someone". Both have the common English translation "to think of". So when this student wanted to write in French "he thinks of everything", he wrote a word-for-word translation - *Il pense de tout, because of the interference from English.

3.4 Idiom

In this section on lexical idiom, we will look at some errors in the construction and use of certain expressions which

are idiomatic in French, but which may not be so in English.

(18) *Nous avons voyagé autour du Etats-Unis.

Here the student has given a literal translation of English "to travel around". The idiomatic expression for this in French is faire le tour de.

(19) *Cependant grand le péril.

This translation error was made by a third-year student who did not realize that the function of "however" in his English sentence "however great the danger" is that of an intensifier, and not of a senteme particle. But in his French sentence he wrote the conjunction cependant instead of the correct idiom si grand (soit) le péril.

(20) *L'aimez-vous ici?

This is a student's attempt to ask in French the question " Do you like it here?" (The context for this was a person asking his neighbor if the latterliked the new location to which he had just moved). In the above example (20) the error is caused by the interference from English of the impersonal pronoun "it". In the English question, the "it" has no direct reference. The "it" is a kind of filler which serves as a complement to the verb "like" which cannot normally be used impersonally in this sense, without any reference whatsoever. French has the pronouns ceci, ce, cela, and ça which are used with the verb plaire to form the idiomatic construction Cela vous plaît ici? The cela is expletive and does not have a reference.

(21) *Il était seul six.

This is really a gross calque, a word-for-word translation

of the English "He was only six". The learner either did not know, or else forgot, the idiomatic expression avoir ans - "to be X years old".

(22) *...il y était...

In this example, there seems to be both interlingual and intralingual interference - from the native language and also from the target language. The interference from English is evidenced by était (was), but the il y... does not correspond to anything in the English "there was". It seems that the learner had previously met the idiom il y a, but had become confused, or had forgotten that the verb in this expression is avoir, not être.

(23) *J'avais très faim et fatigué.

Here the learner has fused two French constructions, one idiomatic and the other non-idiomatic. This is an example of interference because in English he can cover the two semantic notions, of being hungry and being tired, with one verb, "to be". In French, however, "to be hungry" is rendered by the idiom avoir faim, whereas there is no special idiom for the expression "to be tired", but simply the verb être and the adjective fatigué. So because in one case French has the verb avoir and in the other the verb être, neither one verb nor the other can grammatically express both ideas.

(24) *Je vous manque.

Taken in itself, je vous manque is a perfectly grammatical sentence. Why it is being considered here as an error is because it is not the correct construction for the context.

What was required was vous me manquez (i.e. I miss you). In example (24) the learner has produced a grammatical form whose particular syntactic arrangement results in a semantic interpretation other than the desired one. What really caused this error was an idiomatic misinterpretation of the verb manquer. The student may have already been familiar with the construction j'ai manqué le train. English uses its regular word order (subject-verb-complement) in both this sense of "miss" and in the sense of "to notice with regret the absence of ...". However, when the verb manquer is used in this latter sense, there is not a one-to-one correspondence between the syntax of the French sentence and that of the English sentence. The patterning is the same - subject-verb-complement, but the grammatical subject of the English sentence is "I", whereas in the French sentence it is vous. The syntax of the French sentence is not natural to the English learner to express the concept "I miss you". The syntax of the English structure dominated and as a result he produced the form *Je vous manque. In order to produce the correct idiomatic form in French, the learner may perhaps have to re-interpret the verb manquer, in the sense of "to lack". The sentence "I miss you" will then become "You are lacking to me" and then the learner should not have any problem producing the form Vous me manquez.

The following errors are further examples of idiomatic interference from the English construction, which has resulted in an attempt at a direct translation - and the omission of the correct idiomatic expression in French:

(25) *La route était vide dans les deux directions.

(26) *(Il a parlé) sous son souffle.

(27) *(Il devient) plus et plus malade.

(28) *J'ai pris un voyage.

# 4. SYNTACTIC INTERFERENCE

In this study we are using the term syntax to apply to the grammatical and meaningful arrangement of words which produces a sentence. Under syntactic interference we will include errors of word order, omission of necessary articles and prepositions, and a "grey area" which we have called "unsatisfactory constructions". Into this latter category we have put constructions whose syntactic patterning was faulty in some way, but which did not fit into either of the other two sub-divisions. Again, it was sometimes difficult to classify certain errors as syntactic only, and not lexical or morphological. This kind of rigorous classification would demand that we observe clear boundaries between the lexicon, the syntax and the morphology of a given language, whereas it is our belief that no one of these areas can be described accurately without attention to the others. Consequently, as with the errors from lexical interference, we have relied on our judgement for the categorization of the syntactic errors.

## 4.1 Word order

In this section on word order we have put examples of errors in which the adverb, adjective, negative particle or pronoun has been placed in the wrong position in the sentence. These categories of parts of speech in French are understandably subject to interference from English because the rules governing their position in the sentence are often different

from those of English. For example, the normal position of the French adjective is after the noun, whereas in English adjectives normally precede the nouns (there are a few exceptions, e.g. "proof positive"). Similarly, pronoun objects normally follow the verb or infinitive in English, whereas in French pronoun objects precede the verbal form, except in the imperative affirmative. We shall now examine some errors in the categories to see how the French structure was influenced by English.

4.1.1 Adverbs

(29) *Il avait aimé la vue beaucoup.

Here the adverb beaucoup has been incorrectly placed at the end of the sentence instead of after the auxiliary avait. Interference from English is evident here as the student has followed the same word order as he would have in English - "He liked the view very much".

(30) *Ils toujours m'aident.

(31) *... le type qui toujours tire la pitié.

The adverb toujours is one which frequently gets misplaced by learners of French whose native language is English. This is due to interference from English where the adverb "always" generally occurs before the verb in a simple tense. For example,

(a) I always go to the beach on Saturdays.

(b) Timmy always puts his shoes on the wrong feet.

However, in a compound tense, in both French and English,

"always" and toujours are placed between the auxiliary and the past participle.[2] For example:

(c) He had always gone to school by bus.

(d) Il était toujours allé à l'école en autobus.[3]

4.1.2. Adjectives

(32) *... les autres trois saisons ...

In French, the adjective autre[4], if accompanied by a number, is placed after that number, so the correct version of example (32) is les trois autres saisons. In English, the word order is "other + number + noun", and it is this pattern which has probably influenced the learner and caused him to make the error (32) above.

(33) *... la toute compagnie ...

In this example of incorrect word order, the error was due to interference of the English word pattern - "the whole company". When a student learns the position of adjectives in French, he generally learns that adjectives are placed after the noun, except for a few frequently-used adjectives like grand, petit, beau, etc. which are placed before the noun. But this list is a closed one, limited to about eight adjectives,

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(2) There are six common temporal adverbs in English which take that position - always, frequently, never, seldom, sometimes, usually.

(3) It is interesting to note that in the data we collected there was not a single example of an error in the placement of a temporal adverb in a sentence where the structure in both languages are syntactically similar.

(4) Also, premier, dernier, prochain.

and if other adjectives are placed before the noun then it is to create a special or stylistic effect. However, as we have said, adjectives in English generally precede the noun, so it seems that error (33) was caused by interference from the pattern of English.

It is curious, however, that the adjective tout and its variants generally do not follow the rules for the position of adjectives in French, in that tout is, in most cases, placed neither directly before nor directly after the noun it modifies, the exception being the position of tout (or a variant of it) in a structure such as toutes sortes de vêtements se vendent dans ce magasin, where there is no article. In this sentence toutes qualified the noun sortes, and so its function here is similar to that of most adjectives in French. However, when there is an article, as in example (33) above, toute does not directly qualify the noun compagnie, but rather modifies the unit la compagnie. Thus, la compagnie is seen as a signe in itself, with la functioning as its grammatical form and compagnie as its lexical content.

Each of la and compagnie has of course its own form and content, but when they combine, they relate to each other as form and content of a new, compounded notion. Toute is then exterior to the combination of the two, as is "all" in English in a similar structure. We say in English, "It's a big family" where an adjective like "big" is interior to the form and content of a noun and its article. But we have to say "All the family is here", because "all" is predicated

of "the family", and not just of "family". "All" and tout are both exterior to the form and content of the linguistic units that they modify. Most other adjectives in English and French are notionally interior to either the content (as in English) or the form (as in French) of the noun, and so are predicated directly by being placed either directly before or after the noun.

4.1.3. Negatives

(34) *Je ne veux faire ne rien.

Incorrect word order occurs here in French because the pronoun rien should have been placed before faire, of which it is the object. English word order is different - "I don't want to do anything" - in that the object is placed after the infinitive. This English word-order pattern may have interfered to cause the student to make the error in French. But there may have been another type of interference here also. In the English gloss we have given, the pronoun "anything" follows the infinitive of which it is the object. But English word order would also permit "I don't want anything to do", although this sentence is different both grammatically and semantically from the one above. These two sentences also have different translations in French:

(a) I don't want to do anything
(b) Je ne veux rien faire.

(c) I don't want anything to do.
(d) Je ne veux rien à faire.

In (a) and (b) the pronouns are objects of the infinitives,

and in (c) and (d) they are objects of the verbs. So the student may have thought that rien could be placed before or after the infinitive, as can "anything" in the English. It was the meaning of (a) that the learner wanted to convey, but he chose (incorrectly) to put the pronoun rien after the infinitive.

4.1.4 Conjunctive pronouns

(35) *Elle les me montre.

The student has placed the pronoun objects in the wrong order. He has followed the order of the pronouns in the English "She shows them to me", where the direct object precedes the indirect. The learner realized that the pronouns were to be placed before the verb, but the pattern of the English sentence dominated and he followed this word order, direct before indirect, instead of the French order, indirect before direct, when both pronouns are of different persons.

4.2 Omission of definers

(36) *Il faut avoir bons gens avoir bons industries.

Apart from the other errors in this sentence, the partitive article de has been omitted before each adjective. The student seems to have translated directly from English, "You have to have good people to have good industries", which omits the article before the adjective. It is interesting to note that in the corrected French sentence, the noun gens has a partitive sense, whereas in the English sentence, with

zero article, the noun implies generality. In English, the partitive noun normally has zero article, whereas in French it is the exception rather than the rule that a noun stand without an article.

(37) *Elle porte lunettes tout le temps.

(38) *Il y avait masques comiques et vièrges en costume exigu, scouts et clowns, et un bruit que pouvait être entendu un mille de là.

(39) *La rue dans laquelle nous jouions et qui paraissait autrefois de longueur interminable...

(40) *Elle a cheveux longs.

In the above examples (37) - (40), the sentences are syntactically faulty because in each one, necessary definers have been omitted. Interference from English is evident, because English would have omitted the type of definer that the French sentences required.

## 4.3 Omission of prepositions

### 4.3.1 à

(41) *Cinq heures, nous sommes allés à Paris.

In this example, the preposition à has been omitted before the cinq heures. In English, we can say either "Five o'clock we went to ..." or "At five o'clock we went to ...". The preposition "at" could be omitted (and more often than not in Newfoundland speech it is omitted), and the sentence would still be meaningful and grammatical. In French, however, the choice of whether or not to include the preposition à does really not exist. It must be stated: A cinq heures...

(42) *...nous sommes allés à Paris qu'est cinq milles de notre ville.

In this case, the student has omitted the preposition à before the cinq milles, because in English we do not include a preposition: "...Paris, which is five miles (away) from our town...". The word "away" may or may not be used, but in either case there would be no ambiguity in the English sentence. In French, however, the à must be used because it introduces a noun phrase which is intended to be used adverbially, and any such phrase must be introduced by a preposition. With the à omitted in (42) the adverbial sense is lost and the noun phrase regains its noun status. We then have an ungrammatical sentence: *Paris est cinq milles..., to which a native French speaker could only reply, "Paris n'est pas cinq milles. Paris est une ville."

Another type of error in which the preposition à has been omitted is the following:

(43) *J'ai écrit ma mère.

Here the preposition is needed to indicate (grammatically, at least), that the noun mère functions as an indirect object in this sentence. The verb écrire takes as direct object the thing written, but as indirect object the person written to. Since case in French nouns is not indicated morphologically, the preposition à is needed in the above example. In English we can omit the "to" marker of the indirect object, and say: "I wrote my mother". We can even add another object to this sentence and still not insert the preposition "to": "I wrote my mother a letter". We know that the direct object is "a

letter" and that the indirect object is "my mother", but there is no preposition to indicate this latter - there is no marker here for the indirect object. In English the distinction between direct and indirect object is made by word order. In a sentence where there are two objects, a direct and an indirect, and the indirect object is not marked by a preposition, the word order is very important - the indirect object precedes the direct. With this syntactic pattern the indirect marker "to" can be omitted. However, in such a case, the indirect/direct order can not be reversed. We do not say *I wrote a letter my mother. If we want to put the direct object first in the sentence, we have to insert the preposition "to" to mark which object is the indirect one, thus: "I wrote a letter to my mother". In French, when both objects are nouns, the direct object usually precedes the indirect, but this pattern is not rigid, because it is not its position in the sentence which determines the indirect object, but the presence of the preposition à. One could say, J'ai écrit à ma mère une lettre. The word order of the latter sentence is not the normal word order of French, but it is possible and it is grammatically correct.

So when the student made the error in (43) above, he was probably influenced by the pattern of the English structure which permits the omission of the "to".

4.3.2 de

The examples above deal with the omission of the preposition à, and according to our data it seems that this preposition is more likely to be omitted by an anglophone learner of French than is the preposition de[1]. In many instances de seems to be reduced in semantic content and to function merely as a connector in such a phrase as la ville de Montréal. English has a similar connector in the word "of" - "the city of Montreal". Thus English and French exhibit similar structures in this type of phrase. However, there are many instances in French where the de is required as a connector, as "une sorte de cheville syntaxique" (Grevisse, 1964:910), but where "of" is not used in English. It is in these instances that errors are frequently made, because the learner constructs his phrase in French on the basis of the English pattern. The following is an example:

(44) *... rien intéressant...

It is a syntactic rule of French that an adjective cannot be placed directly after a pronoun, which is why the required de is a connector here. This can, however, be done in English - "nothing interesting".

(45) *Il était impossible voir tout.

In French the sequence il est + adjective demands de

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(1) In fact, according to our data, the preposition de is very often inserted in a sentence where it is not needed at all, e.g. *après de, *devant de, *à part de.

before the infinitive as a relator between the adjective and the infinitive when the verb is impersonal. According to Gougenheim, "d'une façon générale de a tendu à s'agglutiner avec l'infinitif comme to en anglais" (1966:282). This may explain why the learner omitted the de in example (45) above, where he was translating "It was impossible to see everything". The preposition "to" was probably thought of as belonging to the infinitive "to see", which is simply voir in French. So since voir = "to see", the student probably thought that it would be redundant to include a preposition before the infinitive.

(46) *... le soleil automne ...

The omission here of the preposition de is an error because the word automne is a noun, and cannot be used simply as if it were an adjective, because then it would have to make gender and number agreements with the noun it is modifying, and might be expected to form comparative and superlative degrees, etc. In the above example (46) the learner has considered automne an adjective and has placed it in adjectival position after the noun soleil, because in English the word "autumn", although a noun, is used in its same form as an adjective in the phrase "the autumn sun". What is actually meant is "autumnal" or "of autumn" (French: d'automne) but these would rarely be used in ordinary English by a native speaker. In French, a noun or noun phrase, when used adjectively or adverbially, must normally be preceded by a preposition, and the omission of such a preposition by a learner of French

as a second language is due in many cases to the interference of the parallel English structure, where the preposition is not needed.

4.4 Unsatisfactory constructions

The errors in this final group did not fit into either of the previous categories in this chapter, so this is a very mixed group of syntactic errors - what we have called "unsatisfactory constructions".

(47) *... un endroit où on fait comme il plaît.

Here the learner was attempting a translation of the English construction "a place where one does as he pleases". The error in syntax may be compounded by a kind of lexical interference from English, from the form "please(s)". When the verb <u>plaire</u> means "want" or "choose", as was intended in (47) above, then its subject is an impersonal one, <u>il</u> or <u>cela</u>, and the person is indicated in the indirect object of <u>plaire</u>. This structure is the same as we have in <u>s'il vous plaît</u>, and as it was in Old and Middle English, "(if it you) please". In Modern English, with the verb "to please" we can use either an impersonal or a personal subject. We can say, "If it pleases you to do that", and "he does as he pleases". It is the meaning of this latter that was intended in example (47) above, and it was undoubtedly this English structure which interfered and caused the error in the French.

(48) *Elle a gêné tout le monde par étendre son linge le dimanche.

This is an unsatisfactory combination of the preposition

par and the infinitive, causing a syntactic error. The interference is really the incorrect translation (in this context) of "by" by par. The only time in which an infinitive can be preceded by par is when that infinitive is the complement of the verbs finir or commencer, (sometimes also terminer and débuter), e.g. Il a fini par étendre la main à l'ennemi. Elsewhere in a verbal construction "by" is normally translated by en and is followed by a present participle, e.g. en étendant. However, in the original error (48) the learner used an infinitive instead of a present participle, which would have been the more obvious form to use if he were just translating from English. So there seems to be partial interference from a previously-encountered structure in French - par + infinitive. The student knew that par is followed by an infinitive and not by a present participle, but it was the lexical interference of the preposition "by" which eventually resulted in a faulty syntactic structure.

(49) *Il a été donné le livre par son père.

This syntactic arrangement of the passive voice construction is unacceptable in French. Sentence (49) is really a literal translation of the English "He was given the book by his father". In this sentence the grammatical subject "he" is really the dative participant of the sentence, and yet English permits its use as a subject. This sentence can also be paraphrased "the book was given (to) him by his father", where the grammatical subject is the logical direct object. The agent, father, is indicated by the marker "by".

English has several possible syntactic constructions for sentence (49), whereas French will accept only one syntactic form: Le livre lui a été donné par son père. This form of the passive voice is common to both French and English. Complex syntactic arrangements such as encountered in this example (49) occur with certain verbs when there is also an indirect object in the structure. English permits this dative participant to be used as a grammatical subject, whereas French does not. e.g. He was allowed to leave/ Il lui était permis de partir.

# 5. MORPHOLOGICAL INTERFERENCE

Errors in morphology were perhaps the most difficult to classify. As was explained previously, it is often a rather difficult task to draw a line between morphology and syntax, and so we have used both Lyons' and Nida's definitions of morphology to support our categorization.

Lyons says the following about the distinction between morphology and syntax:

> "According to a common formulation of the distinction between morphology and syntax, morphology deals with the internal structure of words and syntax with the rules governing their combination in sentences" (1968:194).

Nida makes a similar distinction:

> "Morphology is the study of morphemes and their arrangements in forming words. Morphemes are the minimal meaningful units which may constitute words or parts of words... The morpheme arrangements which are treated under the morphology of a language include all combinations that form words or parts of words. Combinations of words into phrases and sentences are treated under the syntax" (1949:1).

So when there was an error in a word, we classed that error under morphology, although we realize that many of these errors are syntactically conditioned, such as concord, for example.

## 5.1 Gender

French has two genders of nouns, masculine and feminine, and English has these two plus the neuter gender. In English, gender is generally correlated with sex, so that nouns denoting male and female beings are either masculine or feminine,

and nouns referring to "sexless objects" (Gleason 1966:227) are usually described as neuter. But as Gleason says,

> "In English (the category of gender) is not richly developed. The gender of an English noun is defined solely in terms of the pronoun substitute, he, she or it, which may be used in its place" (1966:227).

As regards gender in French,

> "Il est admis en général que le français a deux genres: le masculin et le feminin, et ne dispose pas comme l'anglais d'un genre neutre, résérvé aux choses, à l'inanimé, plus généralement à tout ce qui n'a pas de genre" (Guillaume 1971:72).

The French linguist Guillaume says that on both levels of language, langue and discours, French distinguishes two types of gender, real and fictive. On the level of langue, real gender admits both masculine and feminine alternatives, e.g. le berger/la bergère, whereas with fictive gender there are no such alternatives, e.g. (le) fauteuil. On the level of discours, these distinctions are marked. Real gender is marked as either masculine or feminine. The marking is in the noun itself, and extends to its determiners, e.g. le roi/la reine: le lion/la lionne. (Examples from Guillaume 1971). Fictive gender is marked by the absence of the alternation masculine/feminine. Where this alternation is missing, we are concerned with non-gender, with the neuter. But substantives of fictive gender get arbitrarily assigned, on the level of discours, to either the category of masculine gender or the category of feminine gender. Thus the fact that French has only two genders, masculine and feminine, and that all nouns are assigned to one or the other of these categories, presents problems for native English speakers who are learning

French, because although they have no problem as to the gender of certain nouns such as le garçon or la dame, where the gender is inherent in the nouns, they do however have problems when they must assign a gender to certain animals or inanimate objects. In a noun like crayon, masculinity or feminity is certainly not inherent in the noun, yet the learner has to accept that this noun has been assigned, however arbitrarily, to the masculine gender category.

In English, therefore, gender is mainly a syntactic category, while in French gender seems to belong more to the category of morphology, because although nouns themselves are generally not influenced as to gender, adjectives are inflected, so that there is a masculine and a feminine form of any given adjective. Also in French the gender of the noun is marked by the article which accompanies it. This is not the case in English. For example:

| | |
|---|---|
| the boy | le garçon |
| the little boy | le petit garçon |
| the girl | la fille |
| the little girl | la petite fille |
| the house | la maison |
| the little house | la petite maison |

In English the definite article "the" does not change whether it designates a masculine, feminine or neuter noun. Nor does the adjective change. In French, however, the article does change - le designates a masculine noun, la a feminine noun. Similarly, both the indefinite article and the adjective change form to agree with the gender of the nouns they modify.

We stated earlier that gender seems to be morphological in French, but this is not to deny that syntax is involved. Certainly the fact that la, a feminine article, must be used with dame, a feminine noun, is a fact of syntax - of the liason between article and noun. But when an error is made, for example if someone writes *le dame, there is still a syntactic relationship (article + noun) but this relationship is not a completely true one because an error of gender has been made - the learner has used the wrong morphological form of the article. It is on this basis that we are including gender under the category of morphology. We may call it "morphology with syntactic conditioning", and other divisions besides gender will also best fit under this heading.

(50) *Paris est belle.

(51) *La meilleure façon de la (Paris) voir, c'est...

According to Grevisse, "On pose parfois en règle que généralement les noms propres de villes sont masculins quand ils sont terminés par une syllabe sans e muet ... et qu'ils sont féminins quand ils sont terminés par une syllabe muette" (1964:201). Following this, one would replace belle by beau in example (50), and la by le in example (51) above. (However, in actual fact, the French would prefer something like Paris est une belle ville, rather than the structure of example (50).

In English, on the other hand, we tend to refer to cities as being feminine, as exemplified in such expressions as: London - her towers; Venice - her canals; Paris - her charm. And is it not also Venice that is called the Queen .

of the Adriatic? So perhaps it is this tendency in English which influenced the students who wrote examples (50) and (51) above.

(52) *Notre professeur est excellente.

The error here is one of discord, but it is caused by interference related to the gender of the noun. In English, the noun "teacher" can refer to either a man or a woman. We can say: the teacher/he, or the teacher/she. In French also the noun professeur can designate either a man or a woman, but unlike English, French marks the gender of the noun by the article which accompanies it. Le professeur, while capable of designating either a male or female teacher, is grammatically a masculine noun, and as such its modifiers must also be masculine. If an anglophone student writes about his teacher in French, and the teacher is male, there is no problem. There is simply the agreement between adjective and noun, e.g. Le professeur est excellent. But if his teacher is female, the learner will not be satisfied by le professeur est excellent because this would imply that the teacher is male. On the other hand, he could not write (as in (52) above) *Notre professeur est excellente, because there would be grammatical discord (a feminine adjective modifying a masculine noun). So the learner has to get around this problem by using a word such as femme to indicate that the teacher is a woman. He could then write, Notre professeur femme est excellente.

5.2 Concord

Again, we defend the placing of concord in the category of morphology. Agreement of subject and verb, or of adjective and noun, is a visible sign of the rapport that exists between the members of each group. This rapport is syntactic, but the visible sign (the agreement of the verb with the subject or of the adjective with the noun) has a morphological form, and when an error is made, when the wrong morphological form is chosen, the syntactic relationship is weakened. Thus a good syntactic relationship of concord depends on each member having the correct morphological form.

5.2.1 Subject and verb

(53) *Ses cheveux est trop de longs.

The error that we wish to point out in this example is the use of the singular verb <u>est</u> with a plural subject. The interference here is due to the fact that in English the noun "hair" is, in the sense intended above, a mass noun, and thus takes a singular verb. In French, however, the noun is plural, <u>les cheveux</u>, and thus requires a plural verb. In the above example, the learner has obviously remembered that this noun is plural in French, but he is still thinking in English, and even though he has written a grammatically plural noun, <u>ses cheveux</u>, the English "hair" is still uppermost in his mind, and so he writes a singular verb.

(54) *Toute la famille prennent les vacances ensemble.

What has happened here in example (54) is the reverse

of the error in example (53) above - here the learner has used a grammatically singular subject with a plural verb. This appears to be because in Newfoundland speech "the whole family takes their holidays together" is normal usage. In the English sentence the learner would normally make the correct grammatical agreement of singular subject and singular verb, so it is not this which interferes with the French form. We think rather it is the use of the word "their" in English, which seems to indicate that the speaker is thinking of the individual members that make up the family, rather than of the family as a unit, that interferes and causes the learner to write prennent instead of prend. In the French sentence there is nothing to indicate that one is thinking of the individual members of the family. This may be because in French one can talk about les vacances (Using the definite article) whereas English normally requires a possessive adjective, not simply an article, before the noun "vacation". One would normally say, for example, "John is taking his vacation in July", and not "John is taking the vacation in July". So referring back to example (54), the English equivalent would not be "The whole family is taking the vacation/holidays together". One could substitute the possessive adjective "its" - "the whole family is taking its vacation together" - but to the learner this may have sounded odd, as if the speaker were detaching himself from the situation involving the family and talking about the family as an "it". Also, the word "together" (French: ensemble) implies

plurality of the constituent parts - only two or more people can go on vacation together. Therefore, the notion of plurality is dominant in the English structure, in some form or other, and it is clearly this which interfered and caused the student to write, incorrectly, prennent, in example (54) above.

5.2.2 Adjective and noun

Lack of agreement between adjective and noun in French could, it is assumed, be due to interference from English in that adjectives in English do not agree, either in gender or in number, with the nouns they modify. In French, however, the adjective generally agrees, both in gender and in number. This would explain an error of the type "Les professeurs sont excellent. This kind of error was found at all the levels of French study that were represented by the errors we collected. Since agreement of adjective and noun is a "rule of grammar", that the student learns quite early in his French program (at Memorial University) and has repeated in nearly all his courses, this type of error would not be due to incomplete learning or misunderstanding. The student forgets to make the agreement because the pattern of the adjective-noun construction in his native language is dominant in his mind.

Other examples of this type of error:

(55) *L'histoire est amusant.

(56) *Les jeunes gens sont allongé au soleil.

## 5.3 Pronouns

### 5.3.1 Reflexive

(57) *Je se promenais ...

This example shows a very common type of error[1] on the reflexive pronoun, and in fact it is the only kind of error in this category which occurred in our data. The error of using the se form as a reflexive pronoun in combination with any of the subject pronouns, e.g. *tu se promenais; *nous se promenions, seems due partly to interference from English, and partly to incomplete understanding of the reflexive pronoun itself. The error seems not to occur with certain pronominal verbs, such as se laver, because generally the meaning given for this verb is "to wash oneself". Thus in English there is a reflexive pronoun which inflects according to the subject pronoun, and the learner will generally make the correct inflectional changes in the French verb, e.g. Je me lave, nous nous lavons. But other pronominal verbs in French, which are not pronominal in English, e.g. s'arrêter, se promener, provide bases for error because the learner does not recognize that the s' or se is a reflexive pronoun in French. He sees the infinitive s'arrêter as meaning only "to stop", and this verb means both to stop oneself and also to stop someone or something else. French, however, makes

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(1) We have considered this type of structure as a deviant from the standard French form, and thus an error. But this structure is apparently still found in some dialects of French.

a distinction between stopping oneself (s'arrêter) and stopping another party (arrêter). The learner then does not realize that a verb such as se promener is actually the verb promener with a direct object which happens to be a reflexive pronoun. He does not see that the verb promener (to take someone for a walk, for a drive, etc.) is the same verb in se promener, and that the se is the same person as the subject of the verb, so that se promener is literally "to take oneself for a walk"; in other words, to go for a walk.

5.3.2 Relative

(58) *C'était Pierre Deschamps qui je n'avais pas vu depuis cinq ans ... .

It seems that the interference here is the fact that common English usage has all but eliminated the distinction between nominative and accusative cases of the relative pronoun "who", that is, most speakers use "who" both as subject and also as object (instead of "whom"). This notion has been expressed by several linguists, among whom, Zandvoort: "... whom exists almost exclusively on paper, who being used instead in the spoken language" (1957:155). (This statement was made about interrogative who/whom, but it applies equally well to relative who/whom). Learners in beginning courses in French (at Memorial University, at least) tend to accept qui as the interrogative or relative pronoun standing for persons (that is, "who", rather than "which" or "that"), irrespective of case.

## 5.4 Prepositions

### 5.4.1 en

(59) *... les hommes en nos bureaux de police ...

This is an error[1] because the preposition en is not generally used with concrete, countable nouns, but rather with collective nouns that are usually abstract, e.g. en bonne santé, en ce temps-là. En is rarely followed by a determiner: en "s'accomode mal d'être suivi de l'article défini, à part quelques expressions plus ou moins figées (en l'honneur, en l'air, etc.) ..," (Gougenheim 1966:295)

The correct preposition for example (59) above is de, because this is one of the few prepositions in French which can be used with concrete nouns to form adjectival clauses, English differing significantly from French in this regard. Similarly, in the following example, the preposition should also be de:

(60) *... la route était vide dans les deux directions.

What the student wrote here is actually a calque d'expression. (Here, however, it is adverbial).

The prepositions en and dans are often the source of much confusion to the student of French, because he has to differentiate between their usages in French, whereas in

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(1) It seemed to us rather surprising that the student used en in example (59)--- we would have expected dans, since, to beginning students of French, at least, dans is more familiar than en. Perhaps it is because en "looks" more like English than dans does. This graphic similarity of en and "in" may explain why many students use en in front of names of cities, e.g. *en Paris.

English, the preposition "in" (the most common translation of en and dans) covers most of the contexts in which en and dans are used. Therefore, we think that these prepositions are worthy of a brief comment.

According to Gougenheim, "D'une façon générale, dans a un caractère nettement plus concret que en ..." (1966:295). LeBidois is generally of the same opinion:

> "Dans se fait suivre régulièrement d'un nom déterminé par un article ou un introducteur (possessif, démonstratif, etc.). Comme le remarque Lafaye, 'être en ville, travailler en chambre, n'exprime rien que d'indéterminé, un rapport abstrait d'opposition entre le lieu où l'on se trouve et un autre où on pourrait être... Mais dans la ville, dans la chambre, se dit en parlant précisément de telle ville entre telle chambre entre les murs de laquelle on est renfermé...' " (1968:714).

From the point of view of the notions of these prepositions, en expresses the interior view of an interiority, and dans expresses the exterior view of an interiority. This is the mechanism underlying the difference in meaning of the following sentences:

(a). Il est en uniforme.

(b). Il est dans son uniforme.

In (a) what is meant is not the uniform itself, but the mode of dress, an abstraction, which has neither exterior form nor material reality, and therefore cannot be viewed from the outside. Therefore, the preposition is en. In (b) we are concerned with the uniform itself, a suit made of cloth, a concrete object which has material reality and thus exterior form, therefore we use the preposition dans. (We

know that it is a specific uniform that is meant because the possessive adjective son has been used with it.) So we see that dans is used when the specific sense of the noun is implied, and en when it is the general, abstract sense.

English does not make this distinction between interior and exterior views. The preposition "in" is used in both abstract and concrete senses, and before nouns with zero article, definite article, and indefinite article, e.g. in appreciation, in the room, in a city. Thus, because the learner does not have to make such a distinction in English, he often does not make it as a beginner in French, either, and errors result.

5.4.2 à

(61) *Nous avons pris l'avion à Halifax.

Here the English reference was "We took the plane to Halifax", but what the student has actually written is "We took the plane in Halifax". (Example (61) is grammatically correct in itself, but is incorrect for the context).

English uses different prepositions to indicate the two different notions covered by the same preposition à, as exemplified in the following:

(a) Je vais à Paris. — movement towards (motive)
(b) I am going to Paris.

(c) Je suis à Paris. — locality (stative)
(d) I am in Paris.

(That is why example (61) is incorrect for the context.)

Since à can be both stative and motive, something in the French sentence has to make clear the distinction. Normally, that something else is the verb. But prendre does not imply movement towards a goal, so the stative notion of prendre and the stative notion of à give example (61) the meaning "We took the plane in Halifax". In order to convey the idea of taking the plane to Halifax, in other words, the idea of movement, we have to change something in the sentence or add something to it. We could rearrange the sentence in either of two ways:

(a) by adding the preposition jusque, and thus obtaining Nous savons pris l'avion jusqu'à Halifax. Grevisse explains the impact of jusque: "Jusque marque l'arrivée à un terme que l'on ne dépasse pas" (1964:947). In other words, we were on the plane until (jusque) we arrived in (à) Halifax.

(b) by rewriting the sentence thus: Nous sommes allés à Halifax en avion. Here the movement is expressed in the verb aller, so the preposition à can remain as is.

5.4.3 sur

(62) *....sur son complètement ...

(63) *....sur le cinquième étage ...

According to Grevisse, "sur, d'une manière générale, indique la position d'une chose par rapport à ce qui est

plus bas, en contact ou non avec elle: s'asseoir sur une chaise - un nuage orageux plane sur la ville" (1964:959). In example (62) above, such a relationship is not the case. What is really meant is "when it was or will be completed; at the time of its completion", and these notions are rendered in French by the preposition à. English uses "on", but this cannot be translated in example (62) by sur, because achèvement is an abstract noun whose semantic content is too remote to be used with sur.

Similarly, sur cannot be used as it has been in example (63). Here again there is obvious interference from English - we can say, "on the fifth floor" because English does not distinguish between "floor" meaning the level (as regards height) of a house or building, and "floor" meaning what we walk on. French, however, does make this distinction - it uses étage to mean "level", and either le plancher, le parquet, or le carrelage for the more concrete meaning. English uses "on" with both concrete and abstract nouns, e.g. on the table, on the contrary, whereas French tends to use sur with concrete nouns, such as sur la table, while with abstract nouns many other prepositions are used, such as à, dans, de, en, par, pour, sous. Therefore, in French it would be difficult to imagine a situation where one would say *sur le cinquième étage.

We have just stated that the use of sur with a concrete noun also produces unacceptable forms. For example, one student wrote about his trip to Toronto, and said that he

had gone

(64) *sur l'avion

i.e. on top of the plane. The error is due to interference from English "on", which, in this case, is expressed in French by dans, meaning "inside".

5.5 Verbs and verbal forms

As in the morphological classification of the other parts of speech, there were numerous difficulties encountered in trying to classify errors in the verbal system. Based on the relevant data obtained from our corpus, we have decided to examine errors in the categories of tense and aspect, voice, and lexical and grammatical auxiliaries.(1)

5.5.1 Tense

The choice of tense is largely a semantic one - a particular tense is chosen to locate in time the action in question. However, our reason for putting errors in tense under the heading of morphology is that it is in the morphology of the verb, the inflectional endings, that tense is marked in French. Thus, in the form je marchais the notional content of the verb, the lexical element, is represented by the root march--- , and the morphological, grammatical element by the -ais morpheme. It is this -ais morpheme, (indicating

(1) We have not taken into account in this section les locutions verbales, e.g. avoir faim, avoir besoin, etc. These were considered earlier as idiomatic expressions under the heading of lexicon.

here the imperfect tense) which indicates "un fait qui était encore inachevé... au moment du passé auquel se reporte le sujet parlant; il montre ce fait en train de se dérouler, mais sans en faire voir la phase initiale ni la phase finale..." (Grevisse 1964:652).

In French there are five simple tenses - present, imperfect, future, conditional and past definite. In addition, each tense makes use of the category of aspect to form compound forms of these tenses. The simple tenses are said to be in the immanent aspect, e.g. je marche; the compound forms of these tenses are in either the transcendant aspect, e.g. j'ai marché, or the bi-transcendant aspect, e.g. j'ai eu marché. Aspect indicates the "resultant phase" (Hirtle 1967:15) of an event's having taken place.

Whereas there are five tense forms in French, there are only two in English - the past, e.g. I walked, and the non-past, e.g. I walk. Also, according to Hirtle (1967:16), English has only two grammatical aspects, immanent and transcendent, whereas, as we have stated, French has these two plus the bi-transcendent aspect. In English, the transcendent aspect is marked by the auxiliary verb "have" with a past participle, e.g. he has walked. "All other forms of the verb are in the immanent aspect" (Hirtle 1967:16). English also has the progressive forms of the verb, e.g. I am walking, but the progressive form does not exist in French. So with all these differences between the verbal systems of English and French it is understandable that many errors should be

made by anglophone learners of French. We shall now examine some of these errors.

5.5.1.1 Use of passé composé for present

(65) *Nous avons été amis pour dix ans.

Past time in English, that is, time immediately anterior to the present would be indicated in the translation of example (65) by the transcendent aspect of the non-past - the present perfect "have been". Past time in French (for example 65) would be indicated by a present tense, sommes. The present perfect in English "still preserves much of its original meaning (i.e. as an aspect of present tense) in that it is usually employed when the time is felt as not wholly past but still at least in close relations with the present..." (Curme 1931:360). In other words, the present perfect in English can be used to indicate that an action which began in the past is still continuing, still present. When French wants to indicate such a notion, it normally uses a present tense, hence, nous sommes amis depuis dix ans. This type of present tense in French contains some accompli(1) as well as some accomplissement(1). In the English translation of (65) above("We have been friends for ten years") the accompli is indicated by "been", and the accomplissement by "have".

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(1) Terms from Guillaume 1969:187

This retrospective view of the simple present is new to the anglophone learner of French, because it does not exist in his own language. In the simple present in English there is no accompli, only accomplissement[1]. Consequently, for example (65) the student's own system of representation of the past (here, the present perfect) dominated and caused him to make the error in French.

5.5.1.2 Use of passé composé for imperfect

(66) *Je les ai connus tous il y a des années.

(The student wanted to say "Years ago I knew them all", so there is an error in the verb of example (66)). This error is due to interference caused by the fact that the past tense "knew" can be representative of either an operation or a state of mind. With verbs of "mental event" (Hirtle 1967:74), such as knowing, and verbs of perception, such as seeing, we do not normally use the progressive form, except in certain special cases. For example, we usually say "I see" and not "I am seeing", except in instances like "I am seeing stars", (Hirtle 1967:72), in which case, Hirtle continues, "the object exists only in the mind of the perceiver (and so) no view of a whole (is) experienced" (1967:72). With verbs of mental event such as the verb "to know" the simple form "I know" denotes a state of mind, a result of mental operation - the result of "having gotten to know"

(1) Cf. Hirtle 1967:19-21

So since a result has been attained, there is no need to represent the act as being in progression. That is why we normally say "I know" or "I knew" and not *I am / was knowing. Therefore, the form "I knew" has to cover both the mental operation (as indicated in the example "I knew her as soon as I saw her", where "knew" really means "recognized"), and the result of the mental operation, the state of mind. In French, a verb denoting state of mind at a given moment in the past is normally in the imperfect tense, a state of mind having accompli and accomplissement virtuel in the stream of time. In actual fact, with certain verbs, such as connaître, savoir, vouloir and pouvoir the passé composé means something quite different from the imperfect. Thus, je connaisais = I knew, but J'ai connu = I met; je savais = I knew (I was aware), j'ai su = I suddenly realized, I found out.

Since "knew" is a past tense (preterit), therefore, not an imperfect as indicated by the "was + (verb) + -ing" form, the student uses a past tense in French, but due to the influence of English, avoids the imperfect tense which he associates with the "was" form in English. This may also explain what happens in similar errors which occur with the verb vouloir. The student frequently uses j'ai voulu instead of je voulais in the rendering in French of such English sentences as "That was the last thing I wanted to do":

(67) *C'était la dernière chose que j'ai voulu faire.

The learner uses a preterit in French because "wanted" is a past preterit in English. He does not realize that the

effet de sens of j'ai/j'aie voulu are quite different from je voulais. (J'ai voulu = I tried; je voulais = I wanted).

5.5.1.3 Use of present for future

(68) *J'écrirai quand j'ai plus à vous dire.

The student has made an error in not using the future tense in French in the verb of the subordinate clause introduced by quand. In French, because the verb in the main clause is in the future tense, the whole event is viewed as hypothetical, and the action expressed by the verb in the subordinate clause is simultaneous with that of the verb in the main clause. In English, however, we would normally say, "I'll write you when I have more news to tell you", using a future form in the main clause and a present in the dependent clause. Perhaps this is because there is no ambiguity of time because the time has already been established by the principal verb, but more likely it is because the present (or non-past) in English may refer to the whole of non-past time, there being no future tense as such (the future is represented modally, not by the tense system).

Thus interference from the English verbal system is the likely cause of the error in example (68) above.

5.5.1.4 Interference from the progressive form in English

(69) *Il faisait chaud et la lune était brille.

At first glance this error seems to be a rather strange

one, because the learner has, in one clause, used the imperfect tense correctly, and in the other clause has used it incorrectly. The choice of imperfect is correct for both clauses, but in the second clause the morphological form of the verb is incorrect.

Judging from our data, it seemed to us that many students associate the "was" form with the notion of the imperfect. Consequently, the learner knows that to render in French "it was warm", he has to use an imperfect tense. The use of the verb faire as the "weather verb"[1] is taught early in the course of study of French as a second language and much practice is given in the use of the various tenses of this verb. Therefore, that may account in part for the student's having chosen it correctly for the first clause.

In the English version of the second clause, "the moon was shining", we have a past progressive. The learner identifies the "was" with the imperfect, but does not recognize the form "was shining" as a verb in the progressive form which is rendered in French by the simple imperfect tense of the verb briller. Instead, the student takes the form "was" as the imperfect tense of the verb "to be" (être), and translates it into French as était. Then, what to do with "shining"? One would perhaps expect that he produce the form brillant, but either he does not know that "shining" is a present participle, or else he does know this but does not know how to form a present participle in French. The form that he eventually produces is the third person singular,

present tense of the verb briller, and thus his clause becomes *la lune était brille.

5.5.2 Use of present participle for infinitive

(70) *Après ayant couru longtemps, je suis arrivé à la ferme.

The learner ought to have used the infinitive avoir instead of the present participle ayant, because only the preposition en may be followed by the verbal form in -ant. The interference which caused the error seems to be due to the fact that English would use the present participle (or verbal noun) in a comparable example: "after running ..." (regardless of whether past or future time were implied). However, the semantic content of après requires that anteriority be expressed, either by a tense of the verb or an aspect of it. Since the infinitive does not have tense, we have to represent the anteriority, and thus the past, through the system of aspect - we view the event as being hypothetically completed and transcend the event time, thus producing the past infinitive avoir couru.

(71) *Nous avons passé une heure regardant les chefs d'oeuvre.

The student could have written a correct sentence by inserting the preposition en before regardant, because, as we have said, en is the only preposition which may be followed by a form in -ant. Or, another way of writing this sentence correctly is to use the preposition à and an

infinitive, thus giving nous avons passé une heure à regarder ... is intentive - "by looking at", the other, the form in -ant is accidentive. The preposition à expresses the intention. The durative aspect of the present participle is not important here because of the semantic content of the verb passer. What is important is how the hour was spent - what event took up the hour's time. English, unlike French, uses the present participle to cover both the intentive and the accidentive aspects, hence the interference which cuased the above error.

5.5.3 Voice

According to Grevisse, "les voix sont les formes que prend le verbe pour exprimer le rôle du sujet dans l'action" (1964:547). French generally recognizes three categories of voice - Active, passive, and pronominal, i.e. middle. English has two categories - active and passive. Passive voice is marked in French by the form être + past participle, and in English by the verb "to be" + past participle. The form of the passive is thus similar in both languages. However, from the errors in the passive that we examined, it seems that many students have problems with the passive voice in French, and it is possible that these errors are due to a confusion between the past form of the passive voice in English, e.g. "I was impressed", and the imperfect tense active voice of French, e.g. j'impressionais. The student, when translating a form such as "I was impressed", is

influenced by the "was" form, which he associates with the imperfect tense. So he writes a form like

(72) *J'impressionais ...

instead of j'ai été / étais / fus impressioné.

Another error similar to this, and with similar cause, occurs in the following:

(73) *La maison construisait l'année dernière.

The problem with the passive voice in French seems only to occur with past tenses, especially those in which the English form is constructed with "was". This is the type "he was killed", which would generally be mis-translated by the learner as il était tué, making no distinction between the imperfect tense, the passé composé, or the passé simple. Other tenses of the passive generally seem to be rendered correctly in French.

5.5.4 Auxiliaries

Auxiliary verbs are those that are used with other verbal forms. They include avoir, être, devoir, pouvoir, vouloir, savoir, aller, faire, venir in French, and "do", "be", "have", "can", "may", "must", "shall", "will", "ought", and need in English.

Guillaume says that

> "Dans toutes les langues, les verbes auxiliaires sont des verbes dont la genèse matérielle, interrompue par un achèvement plus rapide de la genèse formelle, reste en suspens, ne s'achève pas et appelle, en conséquence, un complément de matière qui ne peut venir ... que de l'extérieur: d'un autre mot" (1969:78)

In other words, Guillaume is saying that auxiliary verbs have grammatical meaning but very little lexical meaning, and that in the total verbal piece the lexical content comes not from the auxiliary but from the other verbal forms with which the auxiliary is used.

Guillaume's definition gives us the notional impact of auxiliary verbs. Wartburg and Zumthor define auxiliaries according to their functions:

> "... la flexion verbale en français moderne comporte deux séries de formes: les unes dites 'simples', les autres 'composées'. Ces dernières sont constitutées d'un verbe sémantiquement incolore, dit auxiliaire, lié à une forme modale impersonelle (infinitif, participe présent ou passé). Ces temps composés doivent (en vertu de leur origine historique, et leur valeur propre) être distingués en deux groupes: d'une part, ceux dans lesquels l'auxiliaire (surtout devoir, aller, venir, sortir) est lié à l'infinitif; d'autre part, ceux dans lesquels l'auxiliaire (être ou avoir) est lié au participe passé..." (1958:183)

We have attempted to classify the errors in auxiliary verbs under two headings: errors in:

(a) grammatical auxiliaries - <u>avoir</u> and <u>être</u> in French; "do", "be" and "have" in English.

(b) lexical auxiliaries - <u>devoir</u>, <u>aller</u>, <u>faire</u>, <u>pouvoir</u>, <u>vouloir</u>, <u>savoir</u>, and <u>venir</u> in French; "can", "may", "must", "shall", "will", "ought", and "need" in English.

We shall now examine some errors in both groups.

5.5.4.1 Grammatical

(74) *... je leur ai dit que J'ai eu.

(Context - "The police asked me if I had seen the thieves and I told them I had".) Here the learner has used the passé composé of the auxiliary avoir, as if this were a finite verb. This error is probably due to interference from English, where the past participle which completes ".. I had" is not expressed. It is permissible in English to omit the past participle and simply use the auxiliary, but this is not normally the case in French. One can ask in English, "Have you seen this film?" and obtain the answer, "Yes, I have", or "No, I haven't". But one would not answer in French, *Oui, j'ai, or "Non, je n'ai pas, to the question, Avez-vous vu ce film? When avoir is used as a full verb it is generally transitive and is followed by a direct object, in which case it expresses the notion of possession. But when avoir is an auxiliary verb, the past participle of the other verb (which carries the lexical content) must be expressed, because avoir has very little semantic content when used as an auxiliary verb. This is why the *... j'ai eu of example (74) is an error.

(75) *Les étudiants s'ont faché contre l'introduction d'un nouveau système.

(76) *Je m'ai amusé bien.

In both the above examples the wrong grammatical auxiliary has been used (should have been être). In these cases, however, the source of interference is not immediately evident. It may be from English because English uses "have" as the auxiliary with reflexive verbs, e.g. she has washed herself, and also with verbs which are not reflexive in

English but are in French, such as the verbs in the above two examples. But the interference may also be due to over-generalization of the use of the auxiliary avoir in French, as most verbs take avoir. The student may not have known that pronominal verbs être as auxiliary, or he may have known it, but not practised the usage sufficiently to master it.

5.5.4.2 Lexical

(77) *Nous avons pu voir les arbres...

The error here is in the use of the auxiliary pouvoir. Because the English sentence has "could", a past tense, the learner uses a past, nous avons pu in his sentence. But with the verbs of perception, pouvoir is not expressed in French. Vinay and Darbelnet say,

> "avec les verbes de perception 'can' ne se traduit pas. Son passé, 'could' se rend alors par l'imparfait. 'I can hear him' - Je l'entends. 'I could see the lights of the city in the distance' - Je voyais au loin les lumières de la ville." (1958:139)

The verb pouvoir and "can" both express capacity and possibility. With the verbs of perception, "l'idée de possibilité est implicite en français et explicite en anglais." (Vinay and Darbelnet 1958:140). Therefore, there is no need to use the verb pouvoir in example (77) above.

(78) *Je n'ai jamais appris par coeur comment on commencerait et finirait un lettre.

(Context: "... how one should begin and end ...")

The error in the use of the conditional in the student's

sentence seems to be due to interference from the form "should" in the English sentence. The student senses that "should begin" is in some way a conditional, so he uses a conditional in his corresponding French sentence. He does not realize, however, that "should" is an auxiliary verb in English and that it "indicates that the subject is under some kind of constraint, the constraint of duty, circumstances or the will of another." (Curme and Kurath 1931:367). This constraint must also be expressed in French, in the above example by means of the verb devoir, because the conditional of the verbs commencer and finir will not express that constraint.

5.6 One grammatical form in English for several in French

(79) *Ils peuvent préparer eux-mêmes.

In the above example the learner has used an emphatic pronoun instead of a reflexive pronoun. This seems due to the fact that in English, the pronoun "themselves" can be both emphatic and reflexive, whereas in French there are two different pronouns, eux-mêmes and se.

The fact that one grammatical form in English often corresponds to several in French is a frequent source of interference for the learner. Our data included many examples of errors due to this kind of interference. We will list some of these examples and also give the source of the interference that caused them.

| Examples (with relevant errors underlined) | English | Possibilities in French |
|---|---|---|
| (80) *Donnez-<u>les</u> le livre. | them | les; leur; eux |
| (81) *Il est difficile de parler avec <u>leur</u>. | them | |
| (82) *<u>Les plus</u> étudiants font leurs devoirs chez eux. | most | le/la/les plus (+ adj.) la plupart |
| (83) *Il y avait beaucoup d'étudiants dans la classe, et <u>quelques</u> savaient déjà parler français. | some, a few | quelques (adj.) quelques-un(e) (pronoun) |
| (84) *<u>Voilà</u> vingt étudiants dans notre classe. | there is/ are | il y a voilà |

There were also numerous errors (as examples 85-88 following will demonstrate) caused by interference from the English system of "that". English has a single morpheme, "that", which may belong to five different grammatical categories, whereas French has about fifteen different morphemes covering the same items. In other words, the morpheme "that" may have as many as fifteen different equivalents in French, not counting idiomatic constructions such as English "and that was that" : French <u>plus rien à dire</u>, where there is no word corresponding to "that".

The following is a list of the different uses of "that" in English and their equivalents in French:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Demonstrative adjective | that book<br>that house<br>that child | ce livre<br>cette maison<br>cet enfant |
| Demonstrative pronoun | Give me that. | Donnez-moi cela.<br>ça<br>celui-là<br>celle-là |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Relative pronoun | | |
| (a) Subject | The car that is in front of our house is my sister's. | La voiture qui est devant notre maison est celle de ma soeur. |
| (b) Object (of a verb) | The car (that) I bought is a Ford. | La voiture que j'ai achetée est une Ford. |
| (c) Object (of a preposition) | Where's the box that I put my hat in? | Où est la boîte dans laquelle/où j'ai mis mon chapeau? |
| Adverb | The wall is not that high. | Le mur n'est pas si/aussi/tellement haut. |
| Conjunction | | |
| (a) Introducing noun clause | I think (that) she is ill. | Je crois qu'elle est malade. |
| (b) Purpose | Bring your chair close (so) that you may hear better. | Approchez votre chaise pour que/afin que vous entendiez mieux. |
| (c) Result | He was so weak that he died right away. | Il était si faible qu'il mourut tout de suite. |
| | ...that they had to leave | ...de sorte qu'il fallait partir. |

Since the single morpheme "that" may be used as several parts of speech, the learner does not have to think about any special form to use for any given category. However, when he writes his French sentence he has to decide whether the "that" he wants to express is a demonstrative adjective or pronoun, relative pronoun, etc. Then when he has decided on the appropriate category, he has to make choices within that category as to gender, number, and case.

The choice system is much simpler in English, and so the student becomes confused when confronted with all these different forms in French. So the errors in the examples 85-88 following are due primarily to confusion between forms in French resulting from interference from the English system of "that":

(85) *Qu'est-ce que je ferai avec tout ça temps?

(86) *Qu'est-ce je ferai avec tout que temps?

(87) *Ces gens ressemblent bien à ces-là je me souviens.

(88) *L'homme qui je connais ...

5.7 Confusion of parts of speech

The final section to be discussed in this category of morphology is one in which we have put errors caused by the student's writing of an adverb for an adjective, a preposition for a conjunction, etc.

(89) *J'ai été au chez.

(90) *Je resterai chez.

The interference here is that the student has equated chez with the morpheme "home", in all its uses. In example (89), (English: I was at home) the student sees the preposition "at" followed by the noun "home", so he attempts to make a noun from the preposition chez, producing *le chez, which he then precedes by à and with the contraction of à and le to au, the resultant unacceptable form is *au chez.

In example (90), the learner seems to realize that in

the English sentence, "home" is used adverbially, therefore he tries to use chez adverbially in his sentence *Je resterai chez.

In both examples, the morphological form chez, which is a preposition, has been used as another part of speech.

(91) *Le voyage a été vite.

The learner who wrote this sentence has used the adverb vite instead of the adjective rapide, because of interference from English, where "fast" can be both an adjective and an adverb.

(92) *Il court jusqu'à il tombe.

Here the learner has made an error by using the compound preposition jusqu'à instead of the conjunction jusqu'à ce que. Whereas English does not differentiate in form between "until" as a preposition and "until" as a conjunction, French does make this distinction, as illustrated by the following:

(a) Stay until three o'clock.

(b) Restez jusqu'à trois heures.

(c) Stay until he comes back.

(d) Restez jusqu'à ce qu'il revienne.

So the interference from his mother tongue, English, caused the learner to make the error in example (92) above.

There are many other examples of errors of the above type, where the student has used a preposition instead of a conjunction. The following are some examples:

(93) *Après nous finissons notre dévoir, allons chez Pierre.
(après instead of après que)

(94) *Pendant vous étiez en vacances, il y a eu un accident au coin de la rue.
(pendant instead of pendant que)

(95) *Nous avons pris nos billets deux jours avant nous sommes partis.
(<u>avant</u> instead of <u>avant que</u>)

# 6. CONCLUSION

The aim of this study has been to examine certain aspects of the interference of the mother tongue of a group of anglophone students on their learning of French as a second language. Our method was to analyze various types of errors made by the students, in the hope of determining how the system of their native language interfered to cause these errors.

Chapters 1 and 2 introduced our thesis and briefly discussed the concept of interference. We then proceeded to an analysis of the errors which we had classified, according to their nature, as being either lexical, syntactical or morphological.

In Chapter 3 we examined lexical errors, which we had sub-divided into areas of lexical multiplicity, basic dictionary errors, errors in phrasal verbs and errors in idiomatic constructions.

Chapter 4 treated syntactical errors, which, for this study, were those of word order, omission of articles and prepositions, and unsatisfactory combinations of words.

Chapter 5 then presented our classification and analysis of the errors in morphology. Many of these errors were by far the most difficult to analyze in terms of native language interference. We examined errors in the following categories: gender, concord, participles, infinitives, pronouns, prepositions, the verbal system - tense, voice and auxiliaries - and confusion of parts of speech.

As a result of having done this study, we are even more firmly convinced that the systems of English do interfere in certain respects when students are learning a second language, because the patterns of their mother tongue are so deeply ingrained, so much a part of the learner that they come to the forefront when he has to make a choice of structure in the target language. We also feel that the interference is likely to be strongest where there is a partial similarity between the structures of the two languages. In other words, we believe that if the structures of the source language and of the target language are either very similar or very different, the interference will perhaps not be as great as when there is an overlap of certain areas, either lexicon or grammar. Therefore, when there are certain similarities between the structure of two given languages, these similarities, and also the differences, between the structure need to be emphasized and practised in the classroom. This teaching method is based on the hypothesis of contrastive linguistics, which, according to Carroll, "...is that wherever there are similarities, learning can be facilitated, and wherever there are contrasts, learning may be retarded or interfered with." (1968:114) We support this definition, but we would underline the word <u>may</u>, for surely the simple fact that language structures differ does not necessarily imply difficulty in the learning of one or the other of them. But if the teacher neglects to point out these differences, then the student may very well have a learning problem.

We would also like to note that the teaching of idiom seems to be one of the most badly neglected areas of second language teaching, and needs to be taught at all levels.

The teacher may very well benefit from a contrastive grammar, a teaching grammar, based on linguistic principles, which points out the differences and similarities between the structures of the two languages, and stressing areas where there are partial similarities and differences. It would be in these areas, e.g. idiom, choice of tenses, syntax, that the learner would require the most practice.

In conclusion, we restate our belief that native language interference is a primary cause of many errors produced in the learning of a second language, but we realize that it is certainly not the only cause, others being overgeneralization of patterns from within the target language itself, and also the incomplete learning of a particular structure.

We hope that this study has been able to shed some light on this very obscure concept of interference.

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# 8. APPENDIX TO CHAPTER 3

## 3.1 Lexical multiplicity

Confusion between:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| apporter; emmener | - | to carry |
| dire; raconter; parler | - | to tell |
| peuple; gens; personnes | - | people |
| marcher; aller à pied; faire une promenade; se promener | - | to walk |
| partir; quitter; laisser | - | to leave |
| jour; journée | - | day |
| soir; soirée | - | evening |
| matin; matinée | - | morning |
| savoir; connaître | - | to know |

## 3.2 Basic dictionary errors

(96) *de courses nuages (i.e. racing clouds)

(97) *Les congés tombaient des arbres.
(i.e. The leaves were falling from the trees.)

(98) *Le dîner est servi autour de 6 or 7 h.

(99) *la chance (i.e. the chance)

(100) *Nous comblons la carte au bureau du accueil.
(i.e. We fill in the card....)

(101) *Ma famille me prend à la gare.

(102) *Nous avons eu un bon temps.

(103) *un événement excitant.

(104) *Je prends un voyage.

(105) *les constructions (i.e. the buildings)

(106) *un goulet (i.e. a sound, a noise)

(107) *des habits propres (i.e. the proper clothes)

(108) *Cela le fait furieux.

(109) *en voie (i.e. in a way)

(110) *Au front du cortège.... (i.e. at the head of the procession)

(111) *places d'intérêt

(112) *Il était le fois aller à la gare.

(113) *... un complet gris comme en portent les ecclésiastiques chauds/ardents. (i.e. ... hot clergymen)

(114) *Il s'était amusé beaucoup la vue de sa fenêtre. (i.e. He enjoyed the view.)

(115) *J'ai ordonné un steak.

3.3 Phrasal verbs

(116) *dépendre sur

(117) *demander pour

(118) *chercher pour

3.4 Idiom

(119) *sous son souffle

(120) *sous sa haleine

(121) *la raison pourquoi

(122) *Il n'avait pas dormi un clignement d'oeil. (i.e. He hadn't slept a wink.)

(123) *Aussi loin que la France est inquiet (i.e. As far as France is concerned...)

# 9. APPENDIX TO CHAPTER 4

## 4.1 Word order

### 4.1.1 Adverbs

(124) *Je suis allé souvent à ...

(125) *Je fais connaissance avec beaucoup de monde déjà.

(126) *Je m'ai amusé bien.

### 4.1.2 Adjectives

(127) *C'était le plus haut pouvoir.

(128) *La région a accepté un assez triste air.

(129) *J'aime à voir la belle terrain et les grandes forêts et ouverts champs.

(130) *J'ai une verte maison.

(131) *la plus célèbre église

(132) *la pure injsutice de cela

(133) *Un autre très important raison...

### 4.1.3 Negatives

(134) *Je ne suis allé pas ...

(135) *... de n'avoir pas été ...

(136) *Ne personne est venu.

### 4.1.4 Conjunctive pronouns

(137) *Je faut de voir vous après la classe.

(138) *Il a nous conduit.

(139) *Il a demandé moi ...

4.2 Omission of definers

(140) *J'aime à voir ... les grandes forêts et ouverts champs.

(141) *Autres membres de ma famille... (i.e. the other members...)

(142) *J'étais triste de quitter Canada.

(143) *Nous prenions notre petit déjeuner du café et croissants.

4.3 Omission of prepositions

4.3.1 <u>à</u>

(144) *J'aime beaucoup la pêche mais j'ai été seulement la pêche deux ou trois fois.

(145) *Nous étions une semaine recevant prêt aller. (i.e. We were a week getting ready to go.)

(146) *L'extérieur la maison (i.e. outside the house)

(147) *Nous avons commencé rire.

(148) *Les gens qui habitent ces tout maisons sont vraisemblable celles que je me rappelle.

(149) *J'enseignerai des enfants.

(150) *... un fracas qu'on pouvait entendre un mille du loin. (i.e. a noise that could be heard a mile away.)

4.3.2 <u>de</u>

(151) *Il est facile aller aux villages.

(152) *J'ai oublié venir en classe.

(153) *La rue où nous jouions maintenant est vraiment que un cul-de-sac environ cinquante mètres long.

(154) *J'ai tant devoirs.

4.4 Unsatisfactory constructions

(155) *Il était difficile apprenant ma voie autour de. (i.e. It was difficult learning my way around.)

(156) *les nouvelles programmes (i.e. the news programs)

(157) *Nous avons pu voir les platanes du boulevard St, Michel commencent à s'effeuiller.

(158) *Le film a été très excellent.

(159) *Ne ne peux pas m'empêcher d'étonner.

(160) *... par glancer à ...

(161) *Aussi présents aux grandes occasions sont les vins fameux - blancs d'Anjou, rosés de Provence.

(162) *Je n'ai jamais été dans un avion avant.

(163) *Et juste quelle sorte d'homme est-il à mériter telle nomenclature?

(164) *La vie n'a pas été facile avec lui.

(165) *Elle incommodait tout le monde par pendant son blanchissage le dimanche.

(166) *Je dois aller pour aider mon père.

(167) *Maintenant est une bonne occasion d'attraper sur tout ton travail.

(168) *Elle habite près de moi.

(169) *J'ai décidé de vous écrire et vous raconter de mon voyage.

(170) *Il avait l'air de fatigue.

(171) *Cela fait Terre Neuve différent de tout le Canada.

# 10. APPENDIX TO CHAPTER 5

## 5.1 Gender

(172) *Un autre ... raison ...

(173) *un lumière

(174) *la belle terrain

(175) *le circulation

## 5.2 Concord

### 5.2.1 Subject and verb

(176) *La police ont commencé chercher pour moi.

(177) *Les avocats travaille ...

(178) *La famille vont ...

### 5.2.2 Adjective and noun

(179) *toutes mes amis

(180) *les petites villages

(181) *mon études

(182) *ce nuit

### 5.3.2 Relative pronouns

(183) *L'université à qui j'étudie...

(184) *Le livre que j'ai besoin

## 5.4 Prepositions

### 5.4.1 en

(185) *en Terre Neuve

(186) *Je n'ai pas trouvé en de province les gentils gens que j'ai trouvé à Terre Neuve.

(187) *Je n'ai jamais voyagé en un autre pays.

## 5.5.1 Tense

### 5.5.1.1 Use of passé composé for present

(188) *Tu as eu ta maladie depuis six jours.

(189) *C'est la première fois que j'ai mangé des épinards.

### 5.5.1.4 Interference from the progressive form in English

(190) *Mon frère est travaille à Vancouver.

(191) *Mercredi dernier je m'asseyais dans le métro quand quelqu'un m'a touché à l'époule. (i.e. Last Wednesday, I was sitting (seated) in the subway...)

## 5.5.2 Use of present participle for infinitive.

(192) *Nous avons vu un hélicoptère voland autour près de nous.

(193) *Il est dur restant au lit.

(194) *Il avait conscient d'étant poursuivi.

(195) *J'ai un peu de difficulté parlant français avec leur.

(196) *La toute companie ont dédié eux-mêmes à la tâche d'amusante les enfants.

5.5.4 Auxiliaries

5.5.4.1 Grammatical

(197) *... s'avoir contracté...

(198) *J'ai allée...

(199) *Les étudiants s'ont fâché

(200) *Je m'ai amusé bien.