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**THESIS:**  
**AN ANALYSIS OF LEXICAL ERRORS IN THE**  
**ENGLISH COMPOSITIONS OF LEI LEARNERS OF**  
**WORKSHOP IV**

TESIS PRESENTADA PARA OBTENER EL TÍTULO DE:  
LICENCIADA EN LA ENSEÑANZA DEL INGLÉS

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## **Dedicatoria.**

*"The essence of all beautiful art, all great art, is gratitude."*

— Friedrich Nietzsche

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## Chapter One: Introduction

### 1.1 Introduction to the problem

One of the most important ways of communication is the language. Through language, people can manifest thoughts, knowledge, feelings, and needs. This idea about language is well defined by O'Grady (2001) who states that language is the communication channel, thought, expression, etc. Everybody around the world speaks at least one language, that is, their mother tongue. This can be possible because, they have belonged to the same community, therefore, the same context, sharing the same culture and being exposed to the same language, using it as a tool of communication (Bakhtin (1996) cited in O'Grady 2001).

However, today, due to globalization, it is not enough to communicate in just one language. That is why; it is more common that people are interested in learning other language (s) different from their mother tongue or first language. In this regard, second language can be defined as the language that is acquired after the mother tongue (Ellis, 1997). The acquisition or the learning of a new language is something difficult. O'Grady (2001) affirms that language learning is not an easy task; it implies processes. Therefore, what is called second language acquisition consists on the study of the manner or way people acquire a second language (Ellis, 1997). To reach this acquisition, students have to develop certain skills (speaking, reading, listening and writing) that allow them to communicate all what they want to say. This paper focus on writing skill, taking into consideration that it is defined as a process carried out in the brain that consists on putting on a paper ideas and thoughts (Verghese, 2007).

As mentioned before, the acquisition of a second language requires a process, in other words, some stages need to be followed. In a certain time of this process or these stages, learners commit errors in order to master the language. Errors have several definitions, one of them is provided by Ellis (1997) who defines them as learners' alterations originated by the lack of knowledge of the second language. The principal characteristic of the learners' errors is that learners do not notice them. Nevertheless, errors can be confused with mistakes. On the other

hand, mistakes are alterations that learners have but these show, not the lack of knowledge, rather, the incapacity to use the knowledge that they know about the second language (Ellis, 1997).

Errors have been discussed but also have been analyzed and studied in order to know how second language learners learn. At the beginning, they were seen as something wrong. Touchie (1986) mentions that, in the past, errors were seen as something rejected by teachers and they had to be avoided by learners. Now, it is known that errors are very useful in order to know learners' knowledge of the language they are learning. Similar to this, Richards (1984) affirms that errors let to know the strategies used by learners and how they apply the second language rules. As seen as something positive, it is necessary to analyze errors. According to James (1998), error analysis in second language acquisition is the procedure of determining the reasons, level, causes and results of ineffective language. This project deals, specifically, with the situation where English learners commit lexical errors in writing skill. According to James (1998) lexis has taken an important place in second language study due to the barriers between lexis and grammar are not so separated as it could be thought. In addition, learners believe the vocabulary is one of the most important things to learn a language, and sometimes, lexical errors are the most common committed by learners. Moreover, native speakers find lexical errors (errors in meaning) more problematic to comprehend.

## **1.2 Purpose of the Study**

The main purpose of this paper is to find out the lexical errors that students of Workshop IV have when they develop the writing skill. This research focuses on pre-intermediate students in the Licenciatura en Enseñanza del Inglés (LEI) belonging to Benemérita Universidad Autónoma de Puebla (BUAP). This study will be carried out in order to identify whether L1 transfer is the main cause of writing errors or not. Also, this paper pretends to provide teachers information about the problems that the students face when they write in the target language.

### 1.3 Research Questions

This paper sets out to answer the following research questions:

1. Which lexical errors are the most common by L2 learners of workshop IV?
2. Is L1 transfer the main cause of lexical errors? If yes/no why?

### 1.4 Significance of the Study

Errors are the wrong forms committed by learners. Nowadays, they are seen as an advantage in order to acquire a new language. According to Touchie (1986) errors are seen as something that shows the process that learners follow to learn a language. They are more recognizable and corrected in speaking skill than other skill. However, errors in writing skill can provide evidence of the second language acquisition or not due to learners application of several strategies during this process. In writing skill, grammar errors are one of the most common to investigate because they refer to language structures; however, there is another type of errors that can be very useful in writing skill to get evidence of how students acquire the L2. These errors are lexical errors because they are related to the meaning of the message without taking into account rules as the principal factor. Since the fact that the selection of the correct word and the sending of the correct message are fundamental, it is necessary then to investigate lexical errors in the writing field.

### 1.5 Key Terms

**Acquisition:** The term acquisition is used to refer to the gradual development of ability in a language by using it naturally in communicative situations with others who know the language (Yule 2004, p 163).

**Error:** The systematic errors of the learner from which are able to reconstruct his knowledge of the language to date (Richards 1984, p.25).

**Error Analysis:** Investigation of the language of second language learners (Richards 1984, p.158).

**L1 Transfer:** Using sounds, expressions or structures from the L1 when performing in the L2 (Yule 2004, p 167).

**Language:** Is a means of thinking, of representing the world to oneself (O'Grady 2001, p. 49).

**Lexis:** Is... said to consist of 'open' systems, to be irregular and unsystematic (James 1998, p. 142-143).

**Mistake:** Deviations in usage that reflect learners' inability to use what they actually know of the target language (Ellis 1997, p. 141).

**Second Language:** Any language that is learned subsequent to the mother tongue (Ellis 1997, p. 3).

**Writing:** Is a thinking process and is much more than an exercise in transcription or copying (Verghese 2007, p. 78).

## **Chapter Two: Literature Review**

### **2.1 Interlanguage**

In this section of the literature review, a brief overview of the main theories of second language acquisition is presented. It starts with a definition of interlanguage, L1 transfer and error. In addition, concepts such as contrastive analysis, error analysis, mistake, lexical errors, etc that are involved in the development of this research are defined in order to have a general idea about these concepts due to the purpose of this thesis. It is to analyze lexical errors in writing skill.

#### **2.1.1 What Interlanguage is**

To understand the base of this paper, it is important to review with special attention the definition of such an important concept: Interlanguage and its Interlanguage Hypothesis. First, it has to be mentioned that the term Interlanguage was proposed by Selinker in 1972, however, other researchers such as Nemser (1971) and Corder (1971) have renamed the concept calling it approximative systems and idiosyncratic dialects or transitional competence. Thus, according to Sharwood (1995) interlanguage refers to the systematic linguistic behavior of people who are learning a language which is different from their mother tongue. In a similar way, Ellis (1990) states that interlanguage is a systematic knowledge of language that does not belong to the mother tongue system and nor to the second language system. Finally, James (1998) says that the term interlanguage is defined under two ways, in the first, interlanguage is seen as an abstraction of the learner's language; in the second, it is seen as a set of concretizations of that language system. It can be concluded that interlanguage is an independent or autonomous system created by learners that are learning a second language or non-native language.

#### **2.1.2 Interlanguage Theory**

As the definition has already been given, it is necessary to explain what Interlanguage theory is, which, as the term, was coined by Selinker. The

Interlanguage Hypothesis according to Sharwood (1995) suggests that almost all second language learners appeal to different psychological structure from the mother tongue structure. This is true since the definitions above mentioned define interlanguage as a system between L1 and L2. This theory was one of the first efforts to try to understand and explain the second language acquisition. After this theory, many other theories were developed based on interlanguage theory Ellis (1995). The interlanguage theory had five important characteristics that were well stated by Selinker (1972, cited in Ellis 1990), these are: a) language transfer, b) transfer of training, c) overgeneralization, d) strategies of learning and e) strategies of communication. These characteristics are manners that learners use to acquire the second language system. Also, this theory suggested that when learners failed to achieve second language competence, they stayed in something called fossilization (Ellis, 1995). Finally, interlanguage theory had three ways to see interlanguage: as a dynamic system because it changes very often, as a permeable system because second language rules could be corrected and as a systemic system because learners perform according to the rules they have in their minds (Ellis, 1990). In conclusion, the Interlanguage Hypothesis is a theory that tries to know how the second language is acquired by learners.

### **2.1.3 Concept of L1 Transfer**

An important characteristic of the Interlanguage Hypothesis is the L1 transfer, so, the notions of L1 transfer are crucial in the development of this project. Although researchers have similar ideas about the concept, it is then necessary to provide a definition of it. Odlin (1989, cited in Doughty 2003) states that transfer is something originated by the differences and similarities about two languages, the target language and another that has been acquired before. In a further definition, Ellis (1990) defines L1 transfer as the process carried out by learners that consists on using the knowledge of the mother tongue when they are learning another one. Based on these ideas, it can be said that people transfer the structures and the meanings from the mother tongue to the second language Lado (1957), (cited in Gass, S.M., and Selinker, L.2001). Finally, Sharwood (1995) argues that L1 transfer refers to the consequences of transmitting elements from one linguistic

system to another. To sum up, L1 transfer is related to the effects that the first language has over the second acquired by people.

#### **2.1.4 An Idea about Error**

Finally, the last concept that has to be defined in this section is error. Error can be defined as the wrong forms that learners produce about the language being learned (Gass, S.M., and Selinker, L., 2001). Similarly, Corder (1971), (cited in James, 1998) suggests that error is the result of the lack of competence in the second language. In this view, the error is a channel through which learners show their deficiencies of the language they are learning. It is important to say that learners do not realize they are committing these wrong misunderstandings, only they can be noticed by people from outside. Finally, Edge (, cited in James, 1998) defines errors as the wrong forms that the students have and that they cannot correct by themselves although these errors are remarked by teachers or someone else. As a conclusion, errors are related to the wrong use of the structures and rules of the second language. Most of these errors are the result of the influence of the L1 over L2 and they produce poor competence.

### **2.2 L1 Transfer**

In the first heading “Interlanguage”, the concept of L1 transfer was introduced. In this heading, called “L1 transfer”, it will be explained in more detail what it is, its origins, some of its characteristics and a theory related to it.

#### **2.2.1 Origins of L1 Transfer Concept**

In the first half of the twentieth century, specifically in the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s researchers began to be interested on investigating issues related to the influence of the mother tongue when another language is learned. That is why, it was necessary to name this phenomenon. The concept “Interference” was proposed by Weinreich (1953). He defined it as deviations in the speech by bilingual people who are familiar with two languages (Murphy, 2003). This definition focused on the L1 influence as the major element of failing L2 acquisition. Later on, in 1986 the term interference was substituted by the concept of “Cross-linguistic influence” (Kellerman and Sharwood 1986) that has been defined as the

influence of L1 or an interlanguage over L2 or another interlanguage (Gass and Selinker, 2001). This concept gave less importance L1 influence over L2; rather it took into account mind issues (Sharwood, 1995), in other words, what occurred in the head of learners. According to Odlin (1989) (cited in Murphy, 2003) , second language acquisition was different from L1 acquisition due to these two systems had cross-linguistic differences, so learners´ mind worked differently in each system. Finally, Odlin (1986) returned Selinker and Gass (1982) research and as they, she suggested the term “Language transfer” defining it as the final result from L1 and L2 differences and similarities. As it was seen, the concept of L1 transfer has changed through the time, however, all these concepts refer to the same issue: mother tongue influence over the L2 or other languages (Angelovka and Hahn, 2012).

### **2.2.2 Defining L1 Transfer**

Since the concept L1 transfer arose within the second language acquisition, many researchers have tried to give a definition about this concept. It is well known that L1 transfer is related to mother tongue and second language and how one relapses over another. However, it is very important to review what has been said about this term since the point of view of different authors. One definition is provided by Sharwood (1995) who argues that L1 transfer is the influence that learners have from their mother tongue when they perform in a different language. Similar to this, Ellis (1997) states that L1 transfer occurs when L1 exerts an influence in the acquisition of a second language. Also, Ellis (1990) sees L1 transfer as a process in which because of the differences between languages user´s L1knowledge can intervene with user´s L2 knowledge. Other authors, not just take into account the L1 language transference, also they talk about culture transference. One of these authors is Lado (1957) who says that people transfer not only the forms and meanings of a language, they also transfer the culture into two ways: productively when they try to act in the second culture and receptively when they try to understand that second culture. Finally, there are some authors that state that this L1 influence has a purpose and that it is presented when there is not sufficient L2 knowledge as a tool to reach this knowledge. In this regard,

Corder 1978b (cited in Ellis 1990) maintains that L1 knowledge can facilitate the learning process of the L2. Likewise, Krashen 1981a (cited in Ellis 1990) declares that L1 can be very useful when learners do not have the knowledge that is required to produce utterances in the second language. Finally, Zolb 1983c, 1984 (cited in Ellis 1990) explains that learners back their mother tongue when second language rules are not clear, or as he said “obscure”. In conclusion, it can be said that L1 transfer refers to the effects from the L1 transference to the L2 taking into consideration not only grammatical rules, rather culture and that can be seen as a strategy for the L2 acquisition.

### **2.2.3 Positive and Negative L1 Transfer**

Transfer has been classified into two categories that are positive transfer and negative transfer. James (1998) explains that the similar elements that are easier to acquire by learners belong to the positive transfer and the elements that are different and, therefore, more difficult to acquire belong to the negative transfer. Ellis (1997) gives us a definition of these two concepts making a comparison which he sees negative transfer as something that results in ‘errors’ and positive transfer as something that ‘facilities’ the L2 acquisition. In other words, if the patterns of L1 and L2 are identical, the L2 learning is going to carry out faster and more effective (positive transfer), instead, if the L1 and L2 patterns are completely different, the L2 learning is not going to carry out or if it happens, it would be slow and with possibilities of making errors (negative transfer). Thus, negative and positive transfer will depend on what is similar and what is different in the patterns of mother tongue and second language.

### **2.2.4 Contrastive Analysis**

In the 1950s and 1960s the Contrastive Analysis (CA) was developed as an attempt to find similarities and differences between mother tongue and second language or foreign language. Freeman and Hong (1991) comment that researchers wanted to distinguish similar and different points of the first and second languages. In this way, the identification of these points would be very useful to know how to teach the L2. Based on this idea, James 1980 (cited in James 1998) emphasizes that the study of second or foreign language learning

would help to organize its teaching. The researcher that developed the Contrastive Hypothesis (CAH) was Robert Lado 1957 (cited in Braidi1999) who says that learners tend to carry out transference of some elements such as forms and patterns of their first language. According to the last point, it was necessary to provide a definition. Therefore, Contrastive Analysis was defined as the manner of carrying out a comparison of languages in order to identify possible errors in a second language (Gass, S.M., and Selinker, 2001). Another definition was given by Brown (2000) who states that CAH focuses on the effects originated by the transference of the L1 over the L2. Finally, James (1998) defines CA as a difference in the similarity's context. It can be said that CA was developed to find out a balance between languages and in base on that, look for how teach and learn languages.

CA takes into account some characteristics or assumptions. One of them is that students use to transfer features of their L1 to the sentences they produce in the L2 (James, 1997). Lado's (1957) assumption is that people who are learning a second language will learn easily the similar elements to their mother tongue and more difficulty the elements that are completely different. Furthermore, Gass, S.M., and Selinker (2001) contemplate six main characteristics or assumptions of Contrastive Analysis. These are:

- Contrastive Analysis argues that language learning requires a new set of habits.
- The principal cause for errors is related to the native language.
- The errors can be detected taking into account differences between mother tongue and second language.
- Errors will occur more frequently if the differences are more noticed.
- What has to be learned are the differences of the second language, not the similarities.
- What is difficult and what is easy to learn will depend on the differences and similarities between languages.

According to the previous ideas, Contrastive Analysis claims that similar patterns between languages are going to be learned in an easy way than different patterns.

In 1970 Wardhaugh divided Contrastive Analysis into two categories: strong and weak version (Wallace and Schachter, 1983). The strong version, according to Lee 1968 (cited in Ellis 1994) says that if the differences between L1 and L2 are identified, the errors can be predicted. In a similar way, Brown (2000) says that the strong version is an attempt of predicting language difficulties. The weak version tried to explain the errors that are produced by the transference of the L1 (James, 1998). Similarly, Freeman and Hong (1991) state that subsets of errors have to be explained through the similarities and differences of languages. To sum up, the strong version of CA is based on predictions and the weak version of CA is based on observations of the languages, L1 and L2.

## **2.3 Error**

In this subheading the concept error will be reviewed, its difference to mistake, types of deviance and level of errors, this because errors are the main issue in this paper.

### **2.3.1 Definition of Error**

The basis of the term error were established by Weinreich (1957) with his 'Interference' due to interference considered mother tongue as a barrier or obstacle to the acquisition of another language (Murphy, 2003), namely, what later was named as negative transfer and therefore, error. In addition, in its behaviorist basis, error was something that learners did not want to commit because errors meant lack of knowledge (Ellis, 1990). Because of those ideas, researchers worked hardly to provide a definition that could frame what error was. For Corder 1971(cited in James 1998) errors were the consequence of certain kind of failure of production. Edge 1989 (cited in James 1998) explains that errors were 'wrong forms' that cannot be corrected by the learner although these wrong forms were marked. On the other side, Ellis (1990) maintains that error was originated by a bad learning. All these authors coincide in that errors are something negative.

Nevertheless, other authors began to see errors with another perspective, in other words, as something that could facilitate or make easier the language learning. Touchie (1989) mentions that errors are proofs that show learners strategies that they apply in learning the L2. Taking these ideas, it is pertinent to say that errors are evidence of a wrong learning but they are also evidence of how learners acquire the second language.

### **2.3.2 Characteristics of Error**

Moreover, errors have particular characteristics that provide more information about this phenomenon. George 1972 (cited in James 1998) presents three points or causes of errors, these are: repetition of the code, bad presentations in classroom and various types of interferences. James (1998) says that a characteristic of errors is the translation from L1 to L2. To avoid them was another characteristic about errors Brooks, (1960) (cited in Ellis, 1990). They argue that errors had to be avoided because they represented low level of the language. Finally, Corder 1967 (cited in James 1998) names five important points in errors: 1) look for similarities between mother tongue and second language learning due to the fact both involve the same procedures, 2) errors show what learners have acquired or taken, 3) errors show that L1 system and L2 system are independent, 4) there is a distinction between errors and mistakes, 5) errors teach teachers what they have to teach and show how learners evaluate their L2 knowledge. The characteristics of errors help to understand that they have to be seen as something positive in the difficult task of learning a new language.

### **2.3.3 Differences between Error and Mistake**

As errors are seen as something unsuccessful of the language (James, 1998), it is necessary to make a distinction with another phenomenon or type of deviance called mistake taking into account that both refer to the failure of the language. However, errors, on one hand, occur when the learner is not able to carry out a correction of his/her fault during the performance (James, 1998). On the other hand, mistakes occur when the learner who commits them is aware of the fault and he/she is able to make a correction (Gass, S.M., and Selinker, 2001). Although this distinction, Wallace and Schachter (1983) say that to provide a distinction between

these two concepts is very difficult that requires not only their analysis and study, rather something else. They also mention that mistakes are not important in the process of learning a second language in comparison to errors. As it can be seen, errors and mistakes have an important point that makes them different. This point refers to the self or not self-correction of them. Learners pass through these kinds of deviances in order to acquire the enough competence in their L2.

#### **2.3.4 Error Analysis**

Errors have been analyzed in order to know how learners learn their L2 and, also to know how to correct them to reach learners improve their L2 knowledge. Brown (2000) says that error analysis (EA) was created to observe, analyze and classify. A definition that frames Brown's idea is provided by Gass, S.M., and Selinker (2001) who emphasize that error analysis is a process for analyzing learners' errors and try to explain them. According to James (1998) one of the purposes of EA is the identification of the values that must guide to carry out a very effective error correction. Finally, EA includes a series of steps to follow as a source to make the analysis. Gass, S.M., and Selinker (2001) list six steps in Error Analysis: a) information has to be gather, b) errors have to be identified, c) errors have to be classified, d) errors have to be quantified, e) sources have to be analyzed and f) it has to have a remediation of the errors. Corder 1954 (cited in Brown 2000) enumerates other steps, which are similar; nevertheless, he just contemplates five and changes their names. For him the steps in EA are: a) the collection of a sample of the learner language, b) errors have to be identified, c) errors have to be described, d) errors have to be explained and e) errors have to be evaluated. In conclusion, error analysis was developed as a source to identify, describe, quantify errors in order to make learners correct them.

#### **2.3.5 Level of Errors**

Errors in second language acquisition have their own classification. They are divided into three main categories. These are: **modality**, **medium** and **level**. The level category is, also, divided into three aspects. These are levels of **substance**, **text** and **discourse**. The errors of substance are: **misspellings** (punctuation,

typographic, dyslexic and confusibles), **misspellings proper** (mispronunciation, written misencoding) and **mispronunciation** (segmental, combinatorial, suprasegmental). The errors of discourse are: **receptive, coherence** (typical, relational, sequential) and **pragmatic** (taboos, size of imposition, values, power and social distance). Finally, the errors of text are: **grammar: a) morphology errors, b) syntax errors** (phrase structure errors, clause errors, sentence errors, intersentence errors (cohesion)) and **lexical errors: a) formal** (misselection, misformation, distortions), **b) semantics** (confusion of sense relations, collocational errors) (James, 1998). A summary can be found in Table 1.

**Table 1.** Level of errors

<b>MODALITY</b>					
<b>MEDIUM</b>					
<b>LEVEL</b>	SUBSTANCE	MISPELLINGS			
		MISPELLINGS PROPER			
		MISPRONUNCIATION			
	DISCOURSE	RECEPTIVE			
		COHERENCE			
		PRAGMATIC			
	TEXT	GRAMMAR ERRORS	MORPHOLOGY ERRORS		
				SYNTAX ERRORS	PHRASE STRUCTURE
			CLAUSE		
			SENTENCE		
			INTERSENTENCE (COHESION)		
			LEXICAL ERRORS	FORMAL ERRORS	
					DISTORTIONS
					MISFORMATIONS
		SEMANTIC ERRORS			CONFUSION OF SENSE RELATIONS
				COLLOCATION	

#### 2.4 Writing Skill and Lexical Errors

In this heading, a definition of writing skill and lexical errors, some characteristics and a taxonomy of this kind of errors are provided. In addition, a review of why lexical errors have to be taken into account as criteria of language learning is presented.

#### **2.4.1 Definition of Writing**

According to Hartman (2001), writing is the representation of languages through graphics that allow that the information be transmitted in a better way. This can lead to think writing is something that does not requires effort. However, it is not an easy task. Bell and Burnaby 1984 (cited in Nunan, 1989) provide a definition that tells us the complex process that writing represents. They define writing as a very complex activity carried out in the brain which requires that the learner be able to dominate different variables at the same time such as content, format, vocabulary, punctuation, spelling, letter formation, etc. in a coherent and cohesive way. On the other hand, Coulmans (2003) gives a definition not taking into account the complexity of the process, rather, the steps to follow during the process. Thus, he says that writing is not just a system based on visible marks. It is an activity of using that system that has as a result a text, that lead to a specific kind of script, then, to an artistic composition and finally, to a professional occupation. Professional occupation refers to something that is showed to an audience. According to this idea, Reid, J.M, and Byrd, P. (1998) define writing as a social act that includes context, a purpose of the author and what the audience needs and expects. Based on these ideas, writing skill is a visible and cognitive difficult activity that deals with the control of variables that later is showed to the society with a purpose.

#### **2.4.2 Definition and Characteristics of Lexical Errors**

Before providing a classification of lexical errors, it is pertinent to give a definition of what they are. Leech 1981 (cited in James 1998) says that lexis is an issue of the language that cannot be taken into account within rules. On other hand, Sinclair (1987) (cited in James 1998) defines lexis as divagations of the words. According to this information, it can be said that lexis is related to the meaning rather than grammar. So what it is called lexical errors according to Sanaiya (1991) is the unawareness of the difference that exists between items of the second language that is being learning, namely, when learners use one word where another would be more appropriate. Agustin (2007) explains that lexical errors are predictors and a proof of lack of general knowledge of the second

language. Finally, Hemchua and Schmitt (2006) say that lexical errors consist on the misunderstanding of the message when inappropriate words are chosen. To sum up, it can be said that lexical errors refers to the incorrect election of a word that changes the meaning of an idea.

### **2.4.3 Classification of Lexical Errors**

Lexical errors have had different classifications. For example, Duskova (1969) (cited in Zughoul 1991) made a classification with just four categories. Her categories are: a) formal similarity, b) relatedness of meaning, c) assumed equivalence and d) distortions. Ten years later, Arabski (1979) (cited in Zughoul 1991) provided a different taxonomy with eight categories. Some of them are: a) lexis, b) morphological similarity, c) graphic similarity, d) hyponymy, e) primary counterpart coinage, f) semantic similarity, and others. Likewise, Engber (1995) classified lexical errors within nine categories. The categories are: a) lexical individuality, b) lexical sophistication, c) lexical variation, d) lexical density, e) lexical variety, f) lexical specificity, g) lexical sophistication, h) lexical diversity and i) lexical diversity of form classes numeratos. Recently, James (1998) has made a more complete classification based on previous investigations and studies. This paper will take into account James' taxonomy of lexical errors. James classifies lexical errors into two categories: Formal and Semantics.

#### **2.4.3.1 Formal errors**

Formal errors have been classified into three categories: a) formal misselection, b) misformations and c) distortions (James, 1998). The sub-categories and examples of each category are as follows:

Formal misselection: They are two or three words that look and sound similar (James, 1998). The four types of formal misselection are:

1.1 Suffix type: Words that have the same root but different suffixes (Hemchua, S., and Schmitt, N., 2006). (for example, careless/careful )

1.2 Prefixing type: Words that have the same root but different prefixes (Hemchua, S., and Schmitt, N., 2006). (for example, solution/pollution)

1.3 Vowel-based type: (for example, it/eat)

1.4 Consonant-based type: (for example, life/live)

Misformations: These are interlingual errors, namely, those errors produced in the second language by the resources of the mother tongue (James, 1998). Misformations are classified into:

2.1 Borrowing: Words from the mother tongue used in the target language without changes (James, 1998). (for example, *She was doing her tarea* <In Spanish *tarea= homework*> )

2.2 Cognate: Words in two different languages that are derived from another parent word (Schmit and McCarthy, 1997). (for example, *My friend is an exit person* <In Spanish *éxito= success*> )

2.3 Calque: Translation word-for-word of an expression from one language to another, in some cases with different meanings (Schmit and McCarthy, 1997). (for example, *I made my homework* <*I did my homework*>)

Distortions: These are intralingual errors, namely, those errors created without mother tongue resources (James, 1998). Distortions have five types of errors. These are:

3.1 Omission: (for example, *frend* <*friend*>)

3.2 Overinclusion: (for example, *hability* <*ability*>)

3.3 Misselection: (for example, *bissness* <*business*>)

3.4 Misordering: (for example, *candel* <*candle*>)

3.5 Blending: (for example, *writting* <*write+ written*>)

#### 2.4.3.2 Semantic errors

Semantic errors have been classified into two categories: a) confusion of sense relations and b) collocation (James, 1998). The sub-categories and examples of each category are as follows:

Confusion of sense relations: This involves the relations in the meaning of the words (Schmit and McCarthy, 1997). Confusion of sense relations has four sub-types. These are:

1.1 Superonym for hyponym: A general term is used (Hemchua, S., and Schmitt, N., 2006) (for example, there is new equipment <furniture> in my house)

1.2 Hyponym for superonym: A specific term is used (Hemchua, S., and Schmitt, N., 2006) (for example, *the policies <policemen> caught the killer*)

1.3 Using the less apt of two co-hyponyms: (for example, *in this city there are a lot of assassins <murderers>*)

1.4 Using the wrong one from a set near-synonym: (for example, the *alone <lonely> man was walking on the street.*)

Collocation: Relationship between words or items (McCarthy, 1990). Collocation errors are classified as follows:

2.1 Semantically determined word selection: (for example, *the volume is up <loud>*)

2.2 Combinations with statically weighted preferences: (for example, *Learn a language requires a big work <hard work is preferred>*)

2.3 Arbitrary combinations: (for example, *we took <had> a breakfast.*)

The subcategory of preposition partners was added, it belongs to the Leech (1986) collocation type of meaning. It is necessary to explain it in more detail.

2.4 Preposition Partners: Refer to the word association to communicate but taking into account the environment to choose the correct word. For example,

(some channels in <on> television, surrounded with <by> nature) (Hemchua and Schmitt, 2006). A summary can be found in Table 2.

**Table 2.** Summary of lexical error taxonomy

Formal Errors	Semantic Errors
<b>1 Formal misselection</b> 1.1 Suffix type 1.2 Prefix type 1.3 Vowel-based type 1.4 Consonant-based type	<b>1 Confusion of sense relations</b> 1.1 General term for specific one 1.2 Overly specific term 1.3 Inappropriate co-hyponyms 1.4 Near synonyms
<b>2 Misformations</b> 2.1 Borrowing 2.2 Coinage 2.3 Calque	<b>2 Collocation errors</b> 2.1 Semantic word selection 2.2 Statistically weighted preferences 2.3 Arbitrary combinations 2.4 Preposition partners
<b>3 Distortions</b> 3.1 Omission 3.2 Overinclusion 3.3 Misselection 3.4 Misordering 3.5 Blending	

#### 2.4.4 Lexical Errors as Criteria of Writing Quality

Writing is very useful to know how learners learn their second language. Raimes (1983) enumerates three reasons why writing helps students. She says that writing a) reinforces students' grammar, vocabulary and idioms, b) gives learners the opportunity to go beyond the mechanic structures they have been taught and c) get involve within the new language they are putting on the paper. If writing is seen as a very helpful skill, lexical errors have to be seen as the same, as something can help to improve writing skill and therefore language proficiency because a text contemplates a great lexical variety, that is vocabulary. In other words, writing has simple sentences that include complex and difficult words (Reid, 1993). In a similar way, Engber 1995 (cited in Agustin 2007) explains that lexical errors are a fundamental part of the second language process and the acquisition of second language vocabulary and he suggests that researchers have to pay

attention to these errors in order to assess second language competence. On the other hand, other authors C. Engber 1995, B. Laufer and P. Nation 1995, P. Meara et al 2000(cited in Agustin 2007) point out that lexical errors are a tool for evaluating learners' proficiency and a tool for measuring the quality of their production in their writing skill. Finally, Coulmans (2003) says that one of the purposes of writing is the meaning as it is a dimension used in all languages and lexical errors are related with meaning. Similarly, Agustin (2007) says that if the message contents a considerable number of lexical errors, its meaning would have a poor communicative value. In conclusion, lexical errors show learners knowledge of the second language.

## **2.5 Procedures in Error Analysis**

In this last heading of the literature review, the procedures to carry out an error analysis are revised because errors are identified, described, explained and evaluated.

### **2.5.1 Identification of Errors**

Identification of errors implies, as its name says, the detection of the wrong forms of the learners. Ellis (1997) points out that the identification of errors is related to the comparison of sentences. He also says that to carry out this is very difficult due to it deals with three problems: a) some of the learners' sentences are acceptable in the target language; b) it is difficult to make a correction because each learner knows what he/she wants to say and c) the distinction between error and mistake. Reid and Byrd, (1998) emphasize that the main purpose of the identification of errors is to determine what knowledge of the language is already developed. Also, they suggest some resources that teacher can take into account such as student assistance, language activities, and changes in lesson planning. As it can be seen, identify errors plays an important role in the development of a second language in order to know what learners have acquired and what they have not.

### **2.5.2 Description of Errors**

When a previous identification of errors has been made, it is moment to continue to their description. As regards this, Ellis (1997) declares that the description of errors can be carried out in different ways. One of them is the classification of errors into grammatical categories. The other can be the identification of ways in which utterances are different from the target language ones. Corder (1973) states that describing errors can give teacher a general idea of what features of the language are provoking error problems and what has to be explained with more detail. In conclusion, description of errors is very helpful to recognize in what part of the language learning process learners are failing.

### **2.5.3 Explanation of Errors**

The third step after identifying and describing errors is their explanation. Reid and Byrd, (1998) name four motives for explaining errors: a) first language interference, b) overgeneralization of language rules, c) high level of difficulty and d) production errors. Similar to this, Ellis (1997) and Reid (1993) say errors are the result of transferring first language, overgeneralization and difficulty level. Also, Ellis (1997) states that errors are predictable and universal and he adds other motive in the explanation of errors: omission. Finally, Corder (1973) attributes errors to what happens in the classroom, that is, the presentation and classification of models and examples and the activities carried out to reach learners acquire the information. To sum up, it can be said that explain why errors are committed is fundamental in the process of second language acquisition due to it gives a general idea about what to do to deal with them.

### **2.5.4 Evaluation of Errors**

Finally, the last point in the procedure of error analysis is the evaluation of errors. In this matter, Reid (1991) (cited in Reid 1993) says that evaluation lies on the clarifications that justify a judgment. Ellis (1997) emphasizes that evaluate errors is very important because some are more serious (global errors that affect the all structure) than others (local errors that affect only a single part) and, therefore, they deserve more attention by the teacher. Reid and Byrd, (1998) comment that evaluates writing errors implies their recognition and the

implementation of strategies in order to make the student has the confidence to revise his/her writing. Likewise, Dubin and Olshtain (1986) (cited in Reid 1993) state that evaluation allows learners to develop strategies of communication and correct vocabulary to be successful in academic work. Finally, Reid (1993) points out that the teachers have to tolerate errors but also be able to encourage learners to improve them through response. Apart from this, he emphasizes that for effective evaluation of writing errors, teacher has to have a very good preparation about the content and the criteria to carry out that evaluation. As it can be seen, evaluation plays a very important role if teacher wants learners improve writing skill.

## **2.6 Empirical Studies of Lexical Errors**

Lexical errors have not been studied as it should. However, some researchers have carried out some studies. Some of them will be presented in this section:

Saengchan Hemchua and Norbert Schmitt made a study called *An analysis of lexical errors in the English compositions of Thai learners* in which the principal objective was to show that lexical errors and their analysis can provide evidence of second language learning process. The methodology used in this study was descriptive research. The participants of this study were 20 Thai English majors in their third year of study at a university in Bangkok. The participants were similar in age, ranging from 19 to 20 years old. The procedure was based on asking the participants to write an argumentative composition of about 300-350 words without consulting their dictionaries within one-and-a-half hours on a topic related to the advantages of urban or country living. Finally, the results were that from the 20 compositions yielded 261 lexical errors which misselection was the most problematic error category in formal errors and collocation errors were the most frequent in semantic errors. Overall, semantic errors were roughly twice as frequent as formal errors (63.22% versus 36.78%). The results suggested that formal errors were less problematic for the students than semantic errors and L1 transference was not the major factor of errors.

Another study was the one carried out by María Pilar Agustín Llach titled *Lexical errors in young EFL learners: How do they relate to proficiency measures?* The objective of this study was to examine the relationship between the frequency of lexical errors and the proficiency level of the learners in order to see lexical errors as a measure of language proficiency and as objective criteria to determine linguistic competence and quality of language production. The methodology used was descriptive and survey research. The participants for this study were 79 Spanish subjects from a school in Logroño (La Roja, Spain) with ages ranging from 9 to 10 years old. Their proficiency in English was low and they could be ascribed to the beginner level. The procedure consisted on that participants had to write a composition or better said, a letter to a prospect English host family where the learner introduced him/herself and talked about his/her family, home town, school, hobbies, main interests, and any other thing about their life and liking they may have deemed interesting for the host family to know. Also, they were asked to complete two proficiency level tests: a cloze procedure and a reading comprehension tests with 10 minutes to complete each of the two proficiency tests. The results revealed that subjects scored poorly in both tests, nevertheless, the reading comprehension test lower than the cloze test. Related to lexical errors, the study concluded that there is not significant relationship between the marks in the cloze test for a particular subject and the lexical errors he/she committed in his/her composition. On the contrary, there is significant correlation between reading scores and frequency of lexical errors at the significance level.

Finally, the last study this paper is going to refer to is the one called *Lexical choice: Towards writing problematic word lists* by Muhammad Raji Zughoul. The objective of this study was to analyze quantitatively and qualitatively the errors in lexical choice made by a sample of Arabic speaking learners of English. The methodology used in this study was descriptive and survey research. The participants were 128 Yarmouk University students enrolled in six sections of two composition courses in the English department of Yarmouk University. The procedure was that were chosen three compositions for each student from the both courses: English 202 (paragraph writing) and English 206 (essay writing). Each of

the compositions was corrected in a mini conference with the writer for errors, and lexically deviant sentences were recorded. The topics of the compositions varied depending on the courses. They included Jordanian TV program, problems in registration, automobile accidents, my favorite teacher or course, coeducation, a typical day, my house, why learn a second language, the rising rate of crime, tourism in Jordan, a recipe, a story or a movie, working women, a person that admire and my father. The results were that a total of 691 lexically deviant sentences were recorded and analyzed into thirteen error categories. Finally, the study showed that first language interference is the major variable in lexical choice.

## **Chapter 3: Methodology**

This chapter will provide information about the setting, the participants and the instruments used to carry out this research. First of all, since the purpose of this thesis was to perform an analysis of lexical errors with students of Workshop IV at the Faculty of Languages at BUAP, a descriptive methodology was used. Descriptive methodology involves collecting data to answer questions. In this case, a composition was written by the participants. Survey research determines people's opinions, attitudes, and perceptions about the situation being studied. In this case, a written questionnaire was applied to participants. Both, the questionnaire and the composition were used in order to find out the main needs regarding the writing skill in English language.

### **3.1 Participants**

A total of 51 students participated in this study. All of them are similar in age ranging from 18-21 years old. They are native speakers of Spanish, studying Language Teaching at Benemérita Universidad Autónoma de Puebla (BUAP). Participants are enrolled in the first year of the Licenciatura en Enseñanza del Inglés (LEI), specifically, in Workshop IV. In the LEI program, learners study five workshops in the first three semesters. In the first semester, learners develop listening and speaking ability. In the second semester they develop reading and writing. Finally, in the third semester, the last workshop combines all the abilities that learners have studied previously. As can be seen, workshop IV was selected because it is the workshop designed for developing writing skill. The two Workshop IV groups were selected because of the accessibility and willingness to participate in the project. According to the requirement of Workshop IV, participants' English proficiency is pre-intermediate. These English classes are given twice a week during 1:30 hours per day. The participants had little English-writing experience, focused mainly on grammatical structures. Permission to apply the instruments was given by teachers, and students gave their consent to answer the questionnaire and to provide personal information in the composition task.

## 3.2 Instruments

For this research two different instruments were used, a questionnaire and a composition, which are thoroughly described as follows.

### 3.2.1 A Questionnaire

For this research, a multiple-choice questionnaire (Appendix A) was designed by the researcher. As the study does not take into account grammatical rules, rather words, the purpose of this questionnaire was to know if the students know how to use words related to the vocabulary of a letter in a sentence that were similar in spelling and meaning due to the composition task consisted on writing a letter for a host family. It consisted of 21 multiple choice items, which presented statements about the different features of the written language: verbs, adjectives, nouns and prepositions. Participants were asked to choose the correct word in each statement by underlining the correct answer.

The questionnaire was piloted to see if the questions and the instructions were clear and specific. The piloting was carried out in a group of Target Language II. Target Language II was chosen for the piloting because it is equivalent to Workshop IV and because of the availability of schedule for the researcher. Once the piloting was carried out, the instructions and questions were modified. Finally, the questionnaire had 21 questions. At the end of the piloting it was found that some questions were not clear, specifically, the questions number 5 and 18. These questions were revised and modified. The questions that were modified were:

(1) I know it is difficult, but you have to \_\_\_\_\_ a decision.

a) do    **b) make**    c) making    **d) make**

(2) They arrived at the bus station \_\_\_\_\_ time.

**a) in**    **b) in**    c) ---    d) on

As it can be seen, in both questions' answers, one option appears twice, one of them was changed in both cases. After that, the questionnaire was reviewed by a native English professor at the Faculty of Languages, who modified some questions; these questions were the numbers 6, 11 and 15. The questions were:

(3) From this day \_\_\_\_\_ I promise **studying** very hard.

a) In    b) at    c) on    d) ---

(4) If he \_\_\_\_\_ experience, he will find a better job.

a) earn b) gain c) win d) save

(5) Which country \_\_\_\_\_?

a) comes Tom b) Tom is coming c) does tom come d) is coming Tom

In the question number six, the verb was changed into infinitive (to study). In question number eleven, in all options was added an “s” at the end of the verbs. And in question number fifteen was added the word “from” at the end of the question. Finally, the questionnaire was completed and applied to the participants. The final version can be seen in Appendix A.

### 3.2.2 A Composition

The second instrument that was employed for this study was a composition. (Appendix B). Its purpose was to obtain real language from the participants, namely, if students spelled and chose the correct words to express their ideas without having more options. The composition task consisted on writing a letter to an American host family where the participants had to introduce themselves and write about their family, home town, school, hobbies, main interests, and any other aspect about their life that could be interesting for them. The topic was selected because students are familiar with that kind of information and vocabulary. It is important to mention that all groups where the instrument was applied were working with introductions covering some of the aspects in the composition task. Participants had to write between 200-250 words in an approximately an hour. The composition was also piloted to see if the instructions and the points to follow to write the letter were clear.

At the beginning, the compositions had ten points to follow according teachers’ information and model letters. Once the piloting was made, it was found that the point number eight was not clear enough because students were not sure about what to write, consequently, that point was eliminated. Points were reduced to nine. The point that was eliminated was:

(6) Expectations for the host family.

The instructions were not modified. Once the composition worksheet was finished, this final version of the composition was applied to the participants. The final version can be seen in Appendix B.

### **3.3 Procedure**

First of all, the instruments (a questionnaire and a composition) were designed to be worked individually. After the instruments were finished, they were reviewed by the thesis director. They were piloted with 25 participants of a group in one day, 12 of them wrote the composition and 13 of them answered the questionnaire. Once the instruments were improved, they were administered to two groups in two days each group. The first instrument that was applied was the questionnaire on the first day and then the composition on the second day.

### **3.4 Data analysis**

In order to carry out the analysis of the compositions and questionnaires, the classification of lexical errors provided by James (1998) and Hemchua and Schmitt (2006) was used. The categories used in this study were five divided into two main groups as follows:

Formal Errors:

a) Formal misselection: They are words that sound similar but they are spelled in a different way changing the meaning of the message.

b) Misformations: They are words that are influenced by the mother tongue and they show lack of knowledge.

c) Distortions: They are words that are not influenced by the mother tongue; however, they are wrong because of the spelling.

Semantic Errors:

a) Confusion of sense relations: They are words that are similar with others; nevertheless, depending of the context and the idea, they do not fit inside the sentence.

b) Collocation errors: They are pre-determined words that accompany phrases and expressions in the second language.

For the analysis of data, the instruments (composition and questionnaire) were divided into grammatical categories. The grammatical categories or parts of speech were used to analyze sentences (Morenberg, 2002). These categories were: nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, pronouns, prepositions, auxiliaries, determiners, and conjunctions. From the nine categories, in the questionnaire were chosen just four (adjectives, nouns, prepositions and verbs) having the next:

- Adjective: Questions number 1,8,14,16, 20 contain adjectives as in the example:  
(7) I am so \_\_\_\_\_ to travel to another country.  
a) exited b) excitted c) excited d) exciting
- Verb: Questions number 2, 5, 7, 9, 11, 12, 15, 19 contain verbs. An example of this category in the questionnaire can be seen as follows:  
(8) Thank you very much for \_\_\_\_\_ me.  
a) sustaining b) upholding c) supporting d) cheering
- Noun: Questions number 3, 4, and 10 contain nouns. An example of this is:  
(9) I´m sure this \_\_\_\_\_ to London is going to help me a lot.  
a) journey b) travel c) trip d) travelling
- Preposition: Questions number 6,13,17,18,21 contain prepositions as it can be seen in the next example:  
(10) It´s a big city in the north \_\_\_\_ Canada.  
a) from b) --- c) to d) of

Compositions´ errors were divided into grammatical categories too, having the same ones as in the questionnaire and adding the pronoun grammatical category: (adjectives, nouns, prepositions, verbs and pronouns).

As the grammatical categories have been chosen, it is time to explain them, Nouns are those words related to their meaning, distribution, and form (Morenberg, 2002) such as *dream, freedom, president*, etc. Verbs are those words that express actions or a state of being (Morenberg, 2002) such as *Brian studies German* and *My friend is in Italy*. Adjectives are those words that qualify and modify nouns (Morenberg, 2002), Kartchner, 2011) such as *the beautiful girl*. Prepositions are

those words that tell when, how long, why, how and what condition such as *after*, *like*, *for*, *despite*, etc. Finally, pronouns are those words that replace nouns (Kartchner, 2011) such as *I*, *we*, *she*, etc.

### 3.4.1 Questionnaire Analysis

This part was developed after modifying the piloted instruments. For the application, a table was made to classify questions into grammatical categories.

Table 3 shows this classification. To see the complete table, see Appendix C.

**Table 3.** Multiple choice answers

N° of Question	Grammatical Category	Correct Answer	Answers				No Answer
			A	B	C	D	
1	Adjective	C	3	2	37	9	
2	Verb	C	16	1	33	1	
3	Noun	B	5	10	34	2	
4	Noun	B	7	36	8	0	
5	Verb	D	0	49	0	2	

As the table shows, questions' answers were separated in the options a, b, c and d; these columns show how many students chose each option. The incorrect options were taken and classified into formal and semantic errors. Table 4 shows in more detail this information. To see all the questions, see Appendix D

**Table 4.** Analysis of formal and semantic errors

N° of Question	N° of Error	Type of error
1	4	Formal
2	8	Formal
3	4	Semantic
	1	Formal
4	1	Formal
	1	Semantic
5	13	Formal

### 3.4.2 Composition Analysis

For the compositions, the errors were analyzed; the grammatical categories were colored to distinguish them having the next: adjectives-green, nouns-brown, verbs-purple, prepositions-orange and pronouns-blue. Then, the results were classified on a table. Table 5 shows the analysis and some examples for each category.

**Table 5.** Analysis of students' compositions

Student	Error	Type of error	Correct form
<b>Adjectives</b>			
7	I'm <u>risponsable</u>	Formal	I'm responsible
<b>Nouns</b>			
3	...is an <u>oportunity</u> ...	Formal	...is an opportunity...
<b>Verbs</b>			
23	I'd like to <u>travell</u> ...	Formal	I'd like to travel...
<b>Prepositions</b>			
34	...team <u>in</u> the weekend.	Semantic	...team on the weekend
<b>Pronouns</b>			
4	<u>Theire</u> names are...	Formal	Their names are...

As can be seen in these examples, students committed both type of errors in all grammatical categories. This tells us that there is a balance between how students write words and the context where they.

In chapters 1, 2 and 3 the purpose of this research, some concepts and theories about lexical errors and writing skill, the instruments and the procedure that were used are provided. In chapter 4 the results of this project will be analyzed.

## Chapter Four: Results

In this chapter, the results of the analysis of lexical errors carried out with Workshop IV students at Faculty of Languages will be presented. For a better organization, the results will be divided as follows: First, a general overview of the students' error analysis, secondly, formal and semantic errors are presented, thirdly, the formal errors and their categories, finally, the semantic errors and their categories.

### 4.1 Grammatical Categories

The grammatical categories that were analyzed in both instruments were adjectives, verbs, prepositions, pronouns and nouns.

#### 4.1.1 Questionnaire

In chapter 3, it was explained how the questionnaire's questions were divided according to the grammatical categories. This section will present only the percentages in these questions and categories.

##### 4.1.1.1 Adjectives

In this category, learners had more correct answers than incorrect. Table 6 shows that question number 20 had 94.1% of correct answers, which means; it had the major number of correct answers while question number 8 was the only question that presented more incorrect answers with 62.7%. There were students that did not answer questions 8 and 16. In this regard, 3.9% of students did not answer question 8 and 1.9% question 16.

**Table 6.** Percentages (%) of the analysis of adjective grammatical category

N° of Question	Correct Answer	Incorrect Answer	No Answer
1	72.5%	27.4%	0%
8	33.3%	62.7%	3.9%
14	68.6%	31.3%	0%
16	70.5%	27.4%	1.9%
20	94.1%	5.8%	0%

As shown on Table 6, students seem not to have problems with adjectives, however, question number 8 presented similar adjectives and this question was

confuse to learners maybe because of lack of vocabulary. Thus, option a) was the most chosen.

(11) I really want to share the \_\_\_\_\_ year with you.

a) **all** b) entire c) every d) whole

#### 4.1.1.2 Verbs

In verb category, participants had more incorrect answers than correct. Question number 5 presented the major percentage of errors 96% while question number 7 had the major number of correct answers 74.5%. Also, there were students that did not answer question 7, specifically the 5.8%. This can be seen on Table 7.

**Table 7.** Percentages (%) of the analysis of verb grammatical category

N° of Question	Correct Answer	Incorrect Answer	No Answer
2	64.7%	35.2%	0%
5	3.9%	96%	0%
7	74.5%	19.6%	5.8%
9	64.7%	35.2%	0%
11	15.6%	84.3%	0%
12	47%	52.9%	0%
15	41.1%	58.8%	0%
19	41.1%	58.8%	0%

As can be seen on Table 7, Workshop IV participants manifested problems when using verbs in almost all questions being question number 5 the most problematic, probably because of L1 influence, 96% of the students chose letter b).

(12) I know it is difficult, but you have to \_\_\_\_\_ a decision.

a) do **b) take** c) making d) make

#### 4.1.1.3 Nouns

In this category, as in the verb category, there were more incorrect answers than correct. The results say that question number 3 obtained more incorrect answers with 80.3%. As shown on Table 8, from the questions in this category.

**Table 8.** Percentages (%) of the analysis of noun grammatical category

N° of Question	Correct Answer	Incorrect Answer	No Answer
3	19.6%	80.3%	0%
4	70.5%	29.4%	0%
10	23.5%	76.4%	0%

Table 8 shows that the most problematic question for learners was number 3. Also, this result says that students failed in choosing nouns being option c) the most chosen by learners.

(13) My sister won a \_\_\_\_\_ in Chile.

- a) internship   b) scholarship   **c) scholarship**   d) scholarship

#### 4.1.1.4 Preposition

Finally, in the last category, learners had more incorrect than correct answers. As can be observed on Table 9, just question number 21 obtained more correct answers having a percentage of 88.2% while question number 6 had the highest number of incorrect answers 94.1%. There were students that did not answer some questions, 3.9% did not answer questions 6 and 17.

**Table 9.** Percentages (%) of the analysis of preposition grammatical category

N° of Question	Correct Answer	Incorrect Answer	No Answer
6	1.9%	94.1%	3.9%
13	39.2%	58.8%	1.9%
17	68.6%	27.4%	3.9%
18	11.7%	88.2%	0%
21	88.2%	11.7%	0%

Table 9 shows that prepositions were problematic for the participants. A clear example of this can be observed in question number 6, in which, students thought that a preposition was not necessary when it was.

(14) From this day \_\_\_ I promise to study very hard.

- a) in   b) at   c) on   **d) ---**

To sum up, it can be said that learners presented most of the problems in the verb category with 45.1% of all incorrect answers followed by the preposition category with 26.3%. On the other hand, the adjective category obtained most of

the correct results with 33.3% of the answers. This information is showed in more detailed on Table 10.

**Table 10.** Percentages (%) of the analysis of grammatical categories

<b>Grammatical Category</b>	<b>Correct Answer</b>	<b>Incorrect Answer</b>	<b>No answer</b>
Adjective	33.3%	14.5%	30%
Verb	34.7%	41.5%	30%
Noun	11.1%	17.5%	0%
Preposition	20.6%	26.3%	40%

#### 4.1.2 Composition

Composition task was applied as the instrument to find out lexical errors, which means, errors in words not in grammatical rules. Students were asked to write a letter introducing themselves to an American family. Lexical errors in the composition task were divided into grammatical categories. This section shows the percentages in each category.

##### 4.1.2.1 Adjectives

Adjective category obtained 17.2% of errors. This is showed on Table 11.

**Table 11.** Percentages (%) of the analysis of adjective grammatical category

<b>Grammatical Category</b>	<b>N° of Errors</b>
Adjective	17.2%

An example of adjective error is:

(15) ...and meet people of **differents** countries...

In this example, it can be seen that students pluralized the adjective; nevertheless, in English this is not possible. According to this, it can be said that learners presented L1 transference in adjectives.

##### 4.1.2.2 Verbs

This category registered 26.1% of lexical errors. Table 12 shows this information.

**Table 12.** Percentages (%) of the analysis of verb grammatical category

<b>Grammatical Category</b>	<b>N° of Errors</b>
Verb	26.1%

An error on verb grammatical category can be seen in the next example:

(16) ...I don't like to **stand up** very morning.

According to the example, one of the errors committed by learners in this category was that they did not choose the correct word to express their ideas.

#### 4.1.2.3 Nouns

Noun category obtained 34.6% of the errors in the composition. This can be seen in Table 13.

**Table 13.** Percentages (%) of the analysis of noun grammatical category

<b>Grammatical Category</b>	<b>N° of Errors</b>
Noun	34.6%

An example of this category is:

(17) ...I don't like to **smok**, I don't like the **partys**.

In the example, it can be appreciated that students had problems when spelling the words. One reason can be the fact that in English some letters are not pronounced. That is why, students do not write them.

#### 4.1.2.4 Prepositions

As can be seen on Table 14, this category had 15.7% of the errors.

**Table 14.** Percentages (%) of the analysis of preposition grammatical category

<b>Grammatical Category</b>	<b>N° of Errors</b>
Preposition	15.7%

A prepositional error can be:

(18) I'd like to travel **for** the world.

Although, the sentence is understood, the preposition that was chosen was not the most appropriate. In this example, students had L1 transference.

#### 4.1.2.5 Pronouns

Finally, the last category that was analyzed presented 6.2% of the errors. Table 15 shows this number.

**Table 15.** Percentages (%) of the analysis of pronoun grammatical category

<b>Grammatical Category</b>	<b>N° of Errors</b>
Pronoun	6.2%

An example of pronoun error is:

(19) My father likes work and spends his time with **ours**.

The example shows clearly that students presented lack of knowledge about pronouns writing ones instead of others.

## **4.2 Lexical Errors Committed by Students**

In this subheading, lexical errors are going to be analyzed being divided in semantic and formal errors. As it was mentioned before in chapter two, James' (1998) classification of lexical errors was chosen to develop this thesis.

### **4.2.1 Questionnaire**

The questionnaire consisted on 21 multiple-choice questions, in which, students had to choose the correct option. The main purpose of the questionnaire was to determine if the students distinguished words related to the vocabulary of a letter in a sentence that were similar in spelling and meaning. 51 participants answered the questionnaire.

The total number of lexical errors that were found was 611. In this regard, 39.2% of these errors were formal. Formal errors refer to those words that suffer modifications in spelling and meaning and sometimes, they can be influenced by the mother tongue. And 60.1% were semantic, which refers to those words that accompany phrases or that have been pre-determined and they cannot be changed. As it can be seen on Table 16, in this instrument, semantic errors presented the highest number of errors.

**Table 16.** Percentages (%) of lexical and semantic errors

<b>Formal Errors</b>	<b>Semantic Errors</b>
39.2%	60.1%

### **4.2.2 Composition**

51 students wrote a host family letter. The total number of lexical errors in the compositions was 403. From this number of errors, it can be said that 72.2%

were formal and 27.7% were semantic. Table 17 shows in a more detailed way this numbers.

**Table 17.** Percentages (%) of lexical and semantic errors

<b>Formal Errors</b>	<b>Semantic Errors</b>
72.2%	27.7%

### **4.3 Formal Errors**

As it was mentioned in chapter 2, formal errors refer to words written incorrectly because of different aspects such as L1 transference, similar pronunciation with different spelling or different letter position inside the word that changes the meaning of the message. These errors are classified in formal misselection, misformations and distortions.

#### **4.3.1 Questionnaire**

In order to examine which lexical errors are committed by learners, 51 LEI students (described in Chapter 3) participated as English writers. When all students' writings were analyzed, it was possible to determine which lexical errors were the most common. These results can also show if mother tongue transference is a factor when committing errors. In general, it was found that learners, presented problems in all categories, however, not in all subtypes. The most common errors were found in prefix, suffix, coinage, calque, omission and overinclusion types. These errors may be due to L1 transference, lack of knowledge and misunderstanding of the message.

##### **4.3.1.1 Formal Misselection**

Formal misselection errors are words that are spelled in a different way but they have similar pronunciation and they can change the meaning of the message. The subcategories that this category has are suffix, prefix, vowel-based and consonant-based types, which, were analyzed. In this regard, learners failed more in suffix type than other sub type, namely, in words with the same root but different suffixes. As can be seen on Table 18, this type obtained the majority of errors. Workshop IV learners committed this error more times with the adjective category

3.7% while with the verb category 2.9%. Preposition and noun did not present errors.

- (20) I will \_\_\_\_\_ my best while I live with you.  
 a) make    b) making    c) do    d) **doing**

The example shows that students overused the suffix “ing” in their answers; however, the option that fits the sentence is letter c.

Prefix type also presented the 2% of errors. In other words, within words that have the same root but different prefixes. In this regard, noun category was the only one that obtained errors. It is important to mention that vowel type and consonant type did not have errors in any grammatical category.

- (21) My sister won a \_\_\_\_\_ in Chile.  
 a) internship    b) scholarshipp    c) **scholarship**    d) scholarship

According to the example, learners failed in choosing the option with the correct prefix, however, although the word school has double “o”, the word in the option d was the correct one.

**Table 18.** Percentages (%) of formal misselection errors

<b>Formal Misselection</b>	<b>Adjective</b>	<b>Noun</b>	<b>Verb</b>	<b>Preposition</b>
Suffix type	3.7%	0%	2.9%	0%
Prefix Type	0%	2%	0%	0%
Vowel-based type	0%	0%	0%	0%
Consonant-based type	0%	0%	0%	0%

As can be observed on Table 18, the lower percentages of formal misselection suggest that learners do not have spelling problems when writing. These findings suggest also that learners are not influenced by the mother tongue.

#### **4.3.1.2 Misformations**

Misformation category is related to those words that show lack of knowledge because they are influenced by the L1. Its subcategories are borrowing, coinage and calque. These subcategories were analyzed as follows. From the three misformations types, students committed the most errors in calque type, that is, in words that are translated from the mother tongue to the second. Verb category

was the only one category that obtained calque type with 29.1%. Table 19 shows this information.

(22) I know it is difficult, but you have to \_\_\_\_\_ a decision.

- a) do   b) **take**   c) making   d) make

As can be seen in the example, students translated word by word sentences from their mother tongue that is why, they presented calque type. In this example, the correct answer was option d.

Coinage type had misformations errors too. These errors refer to words that look similar in the two languages, Spanish and English but they have different meanings. The grammatical categories that presented this type were verb with 6.6% and noun with 6.2% of all errors. The last type called borrowing, namely, L1 words used in the L2, did not present errors in any grammatical category.

(23) Why don't \_\_\_\_\_ yourself?

- a) **present**   b) show   c) introduce   d) introduction

(24) I keep good \_\_\_\_\_ of you.

- a) **remembers**   b) memories   c) remains   d) remembrances

In these two examples, learners were influenced by L1 and because of lack of vocabulary; they had coinage errors because they chose words that are derived from other parental words in Spanish. So, in the first example the correct answer was option c and in the second was the letter b.

**Table 19.** Percentages (%) of misformations errors

<b>Missformations</b>	<b>Adjective</b>	<b>Verb</b>	<b>Noun</b>	<b>Preposition</b>
Borrowing	0%	0%	0%	0%
Coinage	0%	6.6%	6.2%	0%
Calque	0%	29.1%	0%	0%

According to Table 19, these results suggest that learners are influenced by L1 resources, this means, they associate L1 patterns with L2. This also suggests lack of knowledge when they use verbs and nouns.

### 4.3.1.3 Distortions

Distortion category refers to the words that are not influenced by the mother tongue rather they are wrong because of the spelling. The subtypes of this category are omission, overinclusion, misselection, misordering and blending types. Distortions presented the highest number of formal errors. Related to this, it can be said that learners got wrong more in overinclusion type than other sub type because learners added letters in some words, which is the principal characteristic of these errors. As can be seen on Table 20, this type obtained the majority of errors. Participants committed this error more times in noun category with 15% while in verb category 12.9% and in adjective category had 0.8%. Preposition did not presented errors.

(25) I am so \_\_\_\_\_ to travel to another country.

a) exited b) **excitted** c) excited d) exciting

In the example, many students chose option b, however, the word is not written correctly. Base on this, option c is the correct answer.

Finally, omission type, as its name says, letters omitted in a word, obtained errors in preposition category with 19.1% and in adjective category with 1.2% of the errors. The other three types: misselection (replace some letter with others), misordering (change the position of letters) and blending (overuse word rules) did not obtain errors.

(26) They arrived at the bus station \_\_\_\_\_ time.

a) in b) of c) **---** d) on

The example shows that learners did not understand the question and they omitted the preposition choosing letter c while the correct option was letter a.

**Table 20.** Percentages (%) of distortions errors

<b>Distortions</b>	<b>Adjective</b>	<b>Verb</b>	<b>Noun</b>	<b>Preposition</b>
Ommision	1.2%	0%	0%	19.1%
Overinclusion	0.8%	12.9%	15%	0%
Misselection	0%	0%	0%	0%
Misordering	0%	0%	0%	0%
Blending	0%	0%	0%	0%

As Table 20 shows, these percentages suggest that learners have many problems in the order of the letters when writing adjectives, prepositions and verbs.

### 4.3.2 Composition

With the purpose of identifying which lexical errors are the most common in Workshop IV learners when writing a letter, 51 LEI students (described in Chapter 3) participated. When all students' compositions were analyzed, it was possible to examine errors originated by L1 transference, misspelling and lack of second language resources. These results can also show if mother tongue transference is a factor when committing errors. Results suggest problems in suffix, vowel, consonant, borrowing, calque, overinclusion and misselection types which are explained as follows.

#### 4.3.2.1 Formal Misselection

Formal misselection errors, as it was mentioned, are similar words with different spelling. It is divided in suffix, prefix, consonant-based and vowel-based types. Three of all formal misselection types presented errors in three and four of the five grammatical categories. As can be seen on Table 21, suffix type that refers to words that have different endings with similar roots contained the majority of errors having the verb category the highest percentage with 7.2%. Only the vowel-based type which is related to words that suffer changes in the vowels obtained errors in preposition category with 1.3% of these errors. For example:

(27) ...I'm very **exciting** <**excited**>...

(28) ...I like practicing my English with tutorial **in** <**on**> youtube...

These results suggest that students have problems when choosing words to express a written idea in a second language. This also suggests that participants are influenced by their L1 when writing such as:

(29) I'm a honest, punctual and **responsable** <**responsible**> person.

(30) ...an your classroom is **confortable** <**comfortable**>...

**Table 21.** Percentages (%) of formal misselection errors

<b>Formal Misselection</b>	<b>Adjective</b>	<b>Verb</b>	<b>Noun</b>	<b>Preposition</b>	<b>Pronoun</b>
Suffix Type	2.7%	7.2%	1%	0%	0%
Prefix Type	0%	0.3%	0%	0%	0%
Vowel-based Type	2.7%	0.6%	5.8%	1.3%	0%
Consonant-based Type	1%	1.7%	2.7%	0%	0%

As Table 21 shows, students have problems with the way they write verbs and nouns. This suggests that participants make an effort in expressing their message respecting grammatical rules than in choosing the appropriate words to write the message.

#### 4.3.2.2 Misformations

The words that are influenced by L1 integrate misformations category. It has three types that are borrowing, calque and coinage. In Table 22, it can be observed that two misformations types had errors in four categories being calque type (copy exactly the same words from one language to another) in verb category the major with 2%. Coinage type, namely, words originated by similar ones, did not present errors in any category.

(31) In a **comun <common>** day usually I go to the school.

(32) ...and maybe have my own school of **idioms <languages>**.

In the first example, it can be observed that, although the word is very similar in L1 and L2, it is not correct in English, clearly, it is a borrowing error. In the second example, the error belongs to coinage error because although the word “idioms” exists in English, it is more appropriate use the word “languages”.

**Table 22.** Percentages (%) of misformations errors

<b>Misformations</b>	<b>Adjective</b>	<b>Verb</b>	<b>Noun</b>	<b>Preposition</b>	<b>Pronoun</b>
Borrowing	0.6%	0.3%	0.3%	0.3%	0%
Coinage	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Calque	1%	2%	0.3%	0.6%	0%

#### 4.3.2.3 Distortions

This category presented errors not related to the L1 rather lack of knowledge. Its subtypes are omission, overinclusion, misselection, misordering and blending. All grammatical categories presented distortions. However, blending type, (the combination of the spelling in some words when writing another similar) obtained errors in only one grammatical category. This was the verb (0.3%). While omission (some letters are not contemplated inside the word) obtained the major number of errors in noun category having the 21.6% of the errors.

(33) I'd like to **travell** <travel> for the world.

(34) I'm so excited for this **oportunity** <opportunity> in my life.

Blending error is presented in the first example because travel is written with one "l" and travelling with two, so students wrote travel with double "l". The second example belongs to omission type because students omitted one "p".

As can be seen on Table 23, overinclusion type, that refers to add letters in words, presented the major number of errors in the verb category with 9.6%, misselection, namely, the fact of not choosing the correct letters in words, had more errors in noun category with 6.1% and misordering, which means not to respect the word order, obtained the major percentage in the adjective category with 0.6%.

(35) I dislike **watsh** <wash> the dishes, clean the kitchen...

(36) I'm learning to play the **guittar** <guitar>.

(37) ...I'm learning about a **foreing** language...

(35) is a misselection error because the student miss selected the letter "t" to write the word. (36) exemplifies an overinclusion error because a "t" was added in the word. Finally, (37) is an example of misordering because the letters were chosen correctly, however, some of them were written in the incorrect position.

**Table 23.** Percentages (%) of distortions errors

<b>Distortions</b>	<b>Adjective</b>	<b>Verb</b>	<b>Noun</b>	<b>Preposition</b>	<b>Pronoun</b>
Omission	2%	7.2%	21.6%	0.3%	0.3%
Overinclusion	6.8%	9.6%	7.2%	0.6%	0.3%
Misselection	0.3%	2.4%	6.1%	0%	0%
Misordering	0.6%	0.3%	0%	0%	0%
Blending	0%	0.3%	0%	0%	0%

According to Table 23 students have problems with second language vocabulary and they got confused when the words are similar with their mother tongue because they use to copy L1 patterns. This also indicates lack of knowledge.

#### **4.4 Semantic Errors**

In chapter 2, a definition of semantic errors was given, nevertheless, it is important to define it again. Semantic errors are related to words that have been established in phrases or sentences and they cannot be changed by similar words. These errors are classified in confusion of sense relations and collocation.

##### **4.4.1 Questionnaire**

51 LEI students (described in Chapter 3) participated answering a questionnaire. The results found according to the analysis, show errors in near synonyms, semantic word selection and preposition partners types, which suggest insufficient vocabulary.

##### **4.4.1.1 Confusion of Sense Relations**

The words that are replaced by others in a pre-determined sentence are called confusion of sense relation errors. These errors are classified in general term for specific one, overly specific term, inappropriate co-hyponyms and near synonyms. Table 24 shows four types of semantic errors: near synonyms type of confusion of sense relations errors. Near synonyms errors refer to words that have similar meaning but context determines which words fit or not in a sentence. This type of error was committed in all the grammatical categories, being the adjective category the one that obtained the highest percentage (16.9%). This means that

students did not have problems in the meaning of the words rather in distinguish words' contexts. An example of this is:

(38) I really want to share the \_\_\_\_\_ year with you.

- a) all   b) entire   c) **every**   d) whole

In this example, it can be clearly observed that these words are synonyms; however, the word that fits the sentence is option b) **entire** because of the context of the sentence.

**Table 24.** Percentages (%) of confusion of sense relation errors

<b>Confusion of Sense Relations</b>	<b>Adjective</b>	<b>Verb</b>	<b>Noun</b>	<b>Preposition</b>
General term for specific one	0%	0%	0%	0%
Overly specific term	0%	0%	0%	0%
Inappropriate co-hyponyms	0%	0%	0%	0%
Near synonyms	16.9%	14%	1.3%	1.8%

As can be seen on Table 24 near synonyms obtained all the errors in all grammatical categories. This means that students have to acquire more vocabulary and they also have to know in which contexts these words are used.

#### **4.4.1.2 Collocation**

Collocation errors are originated when it is not respected the relationship that exists between words and items. It has four types that are semantic word selection, statistically weighted preferences, arbitrary combinations and preposition partners. This type of error was not committed by learners. Nevertheless, table 25 shows that semantic word selection which refers to words that accompany other words without any changes had more errors in verb category with 12.9%.

(39) I will \_\_\_\_\_ my best while I live with you.

- a) **make**   b) making   c) do   d) doing

As can be observed in this example, L1 transference influenced the decision taken by students. However, the word that accompanies the phrase “my best” is “do” because it is pre-determined in English language. The correct answer for this question is option c.

In a similar way, arbitrary combinations type (pair of words that have been determined in a language) presented 19.1% of errors in verb category too.

(40) I know it is difficult, but you have to \_\_\_\_\_ a decision.

- a) do   b) **take**   c) making   d) make

This example shows that students tried to translate the sentence to the mother tongue to choose the correct answer, however, in English; the word “decision” is pre-determined by the word “make”. So, option d is the correct answer.

Finally, preposition partners, as its name says, are two words that always are written together, just obtained errors in preposition category having 24.5%.

(41) From this day \_\_\_\_ I promise studying very hard.

- a) **in**   b) at   c) on   d) ---

The example shows that the students did not associate in a correct way the word and the preposition. Nevertheless, he/she knew that a preposition was necessary in the sentence. In other cases, students chose option d, but in this question, the correct answer was letter c.

**Table 25.** Percentages (%) of collocation errors

<b>Collocation</b>	<b>Adjective</b>	<b>Verb</b>	<b>Noun</b>	<b>Preposition</b>
Semantic word selection	0%	12.9%	9.1%	0%
Statistically weighted preferences	0%	0%	0%	0%
Arbitrary combinations	0%	19.1%	0%	0%
Preposition partners	0%	0%	0%	24.5%

The evidence that can be observed on Table 25 shows that students do not associate words or items. Also, this shows that in these kinds of phrases because of lack of knowledge and vocabulary, participants use their L1.

#### **4.4.2 Composition**

Participants were asked to write a letter that contained personal information from the learners. The composition task worked to analyze if students relate the meaning of the words and if L1 is a factor of this errors. The results indicate that the error types more common were inappropriate co-hyponyms, near synonyms, semantic word selection and preposition partners.

#### 4.4.2.1 Confusion of Sense Relations

Confusion of sense relation errors are presented in established words replaced by others with similar meaning. It is classified into general term for specific one, overly specific term, inappropriate co-hyponyms and near synonyms. Table 26 shows that only 3 types of semantic errors were found in the data. In this regard, overly specific term type (when a specific term is chosen) had 3.5% just in noun category.

(42) ...I love to meet new **persons** <people> because...

The example shows that the noun was pluralized. Although the sentence is understood, the word that fits better in the sentence is people, which is the plural word of person. This is a clear example of L1 transference.

Inappropriate co-hyponyms type, (the less apt term), obtained errors in three categories having pronoun category the most common errors with 10.7%.

(43) ...and I spend a lot of time with **they** <them>...

In this example, it was used the incorrect pronoun, however, the plural person was correct, the pronoun was not well chosen, it was necessary to choose a possessive pronoun.

On the contrary, near synonyms (words which have similar meanings with different pronunciation) did not presented errors in pronoun category, rather in the other grammatical categories, preposition category obtained the major percentage with 21.4%.

(44) My future plans is work in a airline **from** <of> EE.UU. of stewardess...

This example shows L1 transference due to the word in bold has the same meaning than “of” in Spanish, however, the context of the sentences requires another word.

**Table 26.** Percentages (%) of confusion of sense relations errors

<b>Confusion of sense relations</b>	<b>Adjective</b>	<b>Verb</b>	<b>Noun</b>	<b>Preposition</b>	<b>Pronoun</b>
General term for specific one	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Overly specific term	0%	0%	3.5%	0%	0%
Inappropriate co-hyponyms	0.8%	1.7%	0%	0%	10.7%
Near synonyms	4.4%	4.4%	1.7%	21.4%	0%

This suggests that learners have serious problems with similar words because they do not understand the complete meaning of the idea they express.

#### 4.4.2.2 Collocation

Collocation errors, as its name says, refer to the collocation of some wrong words when others have been already determined in the language. It has four types which are semantic word selection, statistically weighted preferences, arbitrary combinations and preposition partners. Collocation category did not have errors in statistically weighted preferences type, namely, in the type where the words are chosen based on learners' preferences. The other three types had errors in three and one grammatical category. In this regard, table 27 shows that semantic word selection type (the type in which is not possible the election of a similar word than which is pre-determined in a sentence) had more errors in pronoun category with 11.6%.

(45) I don't have father I don't know about **he <him>**.

The example shows lack of knowledge about pronouns and how to use them in different contexts. In the example, the word "him" is the only word that fits the sentence.

Arbitrary combinations type, or say in a different way, combination of words that are acceptable in the target language and that are influenced by the mother tongue, presented a low percentage with 1.7% of errors in just verb category.

(46) I **have <am >** 18 years old.

L1 transference is the main cause of error in this example. In English the verb "have" is not use to talk about age, rather the verb "to be". This shows lack of knowledge in the second language.

Finally, preposition partners that refer to words that are accompanied by specific prepositions, obtained errors in just preposition category having 25.5%.

(47) I want to study in the United States **for <to>** increase my knowledge...

The example suggests lack of knowledge about prepositions and also L1 influence. If the preposition "for" is used, the verb has to end with "ing", however, the student wrote "increase" which the preposition "to" is its partner.

**Table 27.** Percentages (%) of collocation errors

<b>Collocation</b>	<b>Adjective</b>	<b>Verb</b>	<b>Noun</b>	<b>Preposition</b>	<b>Pronoun</b>
Semantic word selection	8.9%	2.6%	0%	0%	11.6%
Statistically weighted preferences	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Arbitrary combinations	0%	1.7%	0%	0%	0%
Preposition Partners	0%	0%	0%	25.5%	0%

To sum up, the analysis showed that students committed errors in both categories of lexical errors. In many cases, these errors were originated by lack of knowledge, lack of vocabulary and mother tongue transference. When these factors were not the principal cause, students tended to write incorrectly the words, change the position of the letters and replace one for another with similar meaning. In chapter 5, the conclusions of this thesis are explained based on the findings of this chapter.

## Chapter Five: Conclusions

In this chapter, a summary of the results and their main highlights are presented. In addition, the implications of the study, its limitations, and some directions for further research are also provided.

### 5.1 Conclusions

The purpose of this study was to analyze lexical errors in Workshop IV LEI students' compositions at Facultad de Lenguas, in order to determine which error types were the most frequent, and if L1 transference is the main cause of these errors. For this purpose, the James (1998) lexical errors taxonomy was used to classify and analyze errors. The main findings obtained in the study are summarized below.

### 5.2 Implications

The results and their main highlights will be presented below as they relate to the research questions posed in Chapter 1.

#### *1. Which lexical errors are the most common by L2 learners of Workshop IV?*

The data provided evidence of formal and semantic lexical errors. With respect to the formal categories, about the words that sound and look similar (formal misselection), learners committed errors when writing or choosing words with the same root but different suffixes and with vowels in words with the same sound but different spelling, Most of these errors were committed in adjectives and verbs. Also, calque and coinage errors were commonly committed by participants. This means that in this kind of errors, L1 resources were used by learners (missformations). L1 transference was observed in verbs and nouns. In addition, in words not related with L1 transfer (distortions), learners tended to over include and omit letters in some words. This was clearly observed in verbs, nouns and adjectives. It is important to mention that all the subtypes registered errors.

Regarding the semantic errors, when learners had to relate words because of their meaning (confusion of sense relations), they failed the most in words that

had synonyms because they did not write or choose the correct word. This was evident in adjectives, verbs and prepositions. On the other hand, with respect to the relationship between words (collocation), students used to replace pre-determined words with others with similar meaning. This was noticed in verbs pronouns and nouns. On the contrary of formal errors, in semantic errors, statistically weighted preferences and general term for specific one sub types did not present errors. These findings may suggest that lack of knowledge is a limitation which prevents the use of more and varied vocabulary to construct sentences. As learners acquire that vocabulary, they are able to use more words and know how to use them.

## *2. Is L1 transfer the main cause of lexical errors? If yes/no why?*

The results show that with respect to L1 transference, there were a considerable number of errors originated by the mother tongue. However, this aspect was not the principal cause of committing errors by learners. In other words, there was not enough number of errors influenced by L1 to affirm that Spanish resources were the principal problem in errors. However, there were other causes in lexical errors, which were not related to L1 transference. On the one hand, a cause of lexical errors was the confusion letter and root, namely, confusion in the elements of words; this indicates that even though learners have acquired vocabulary, they were not able to write or choose words correctly because they omitted, added and changed the position of the letters in the words. On the other hand, another cause was the word use, which means that students did not know how to distinguish the correct word among similar words with similar meanings. In addition, one more cause was related to pre-determined words that are expressions and phrases with specific words that cannot be changed by others. In this aspect, learners have not acquired word partners that are pre-determined in the L2. Finally, it seems that as language learners, participants preferred to use vocabulary they know and that they can manipulate and manage than unknown words although these unknown words fit better in what they want to express.

### **5.3 Limitations of the Study**

The present project intended to show lexical errors of LEI Workshop IV students. For this purpose, a descriptive methodology was used through an analysis of 51 students. However, in some cases, lexical errors could not be classified as they were related to grammatical rules. The research did not contemplate grammatical rules analysis, nor grammatical categories or parts of the speech. Similarly, the sample could be more significant if more Workshop groups were included, but due to time constraints and permission issues, it was not possible to collect a larger sample.

### **5.4 Directions for Further Research**

The data collected in this research were analyzed focusing only on lexical errors divided in parts of the speech without taking into consideration grammatical rules. However, these data can be used for further studies. Other research studies can be conducted comparing lexical errors with grammatical errors in all grammatical categories. Also, other languages such as German, French, Italian, among others can be contemplated. Target language subjects in all levels can be analyzed through this kind of research. Finally, teaching vocabulary strategies can be analyzed based on students' perceptions. It is hoped this study will provide some insights that can be useful to teach vocabulary.

### **5.5 Pedagogical implications**

Error analysis is related to the process of detecting errors and providing feedback in order to achieve what is expected to learn in the second language. That is why; some of the pedagogical implications are the next. First of all, by errors analysis, teachers will have a complete and precise knowledge about students' errors. When a second language is being learning, it is impossible not to commit errors. So, teachers should learn to tolerate and deal with errors. Second, errors can help the teacher to know the progress of the student and what is already learned by the learner. Third, inevitably, learners will commit errors; however, they can see their errors as a tool for learning. Finally, some errors have to be manipulated and corrected; otherwise, they will become fossilized.

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## Appendices

### APPENDIX A: QUESTIONNAIRE MADE BY THE RESEARCHER FINAL VERSION

#### BENEMÉRITA UNIVERSIDAD AUTÓNOMA DE PUEBLA

##### Instructions

For questions 1-21, read the sentences below and decide which answer (A, B, C or D) fits each gap. Underline your answer.

1.- I am so \_\_\_\_\_ to travel to another country.

- a) exited b) excitted c) excited d) exciting

2.- Why don't \_\_\_\_\_ yourself?"

- a) present b) show c) introduce d) introduction

3.- My sister won a \_\_\_\_\_ in Chile.

- a) internship b) scholarship c) schoolarship d) scholarshipp

4.- I keep good \_\_\_\_\_ of you..

- a) remembers b) memories c) remains d) remembrances

5.- I know it is difficult, but you have to \_\_\_\_\_ a decision.

- a) do b) take c) making d) make

6.- From this day \_\_\_\_\_ I promise to study very hard.

- a) in b) at c) on d) ---

7.- Thank you very much for \_\_\_\_\_ me.

- a) sustaining b) upholding c) supporting d) cheering

8.- I really want to share the \_\_\_\_\_ year with you.

- a) all b) entire c) every d) whole

9.- She's always \_\_\_\_\_ forward.

- a) look b) looked c) looking d) seeing

10.- I'm sure this \_\_\_\_\_ to London is going to help me a lot.

- a) journey b) travel c) trip d) travelling

- 11.- If he \_\_\_\_\_ experience, he will find a better job.  
a) earns b) gains c) wins d) saves
- 12.- I will \_\_\_\_\_ my best while I live with you..  
a) make b) making c) do d) doing
- 13.- I like reading in the afternoons because I think reading \_\_\_\_\_ that time is much more pleasant.  
a) of b) at c) on d) in
- 14.- Living in a \_\_\_\_\_ country is a great experience.  
a) outside b) abroad c) out d) foreign
- 15.- Which country \_\_\_\_\_ from?  
a) comes Tom b) Tom is coming c) does Tom come d) is coming Tom
- 16.- This breakfast looks \_\_\_\_\_ to me.  
a) badly b) good c) nicely d) well
- 17.- He hasn't written to me \_\_\_\_\_ we met last time.  
a) without b) to c) since d) before
- 18.- They arrived at the bus station \_\_\_\_\_ time.  
a) in b) of c) --- d) on
- 19.- Denisse leaves \_\_\_\_\_ home at 7 o'clock so that she can be in her school at 8.  
a) from b) for c) at d) ---
- 20.- She doesn't speak languages very \_\_\_\_\_.  
a) good b) best c) better d) well
- 21.- It's a big city in the north \_\_\_\_\_ Canada.  
a) from b) --- c) to d) of

APPENDIX B: COMPOSITION WORKSHEET MADE BY THE RESEARCHER  
FINAL VERSION.

COMPOSITION

Language Exchange Program

You have been accepted in a University in a Language Exchange Program in the United States. One of the requirements for the application is living with an American family to be closer to a real and everyday environment of the English language. Your host family does not know anything about you. So, you have to write a letter talking about you and include the following information.

- Personal information (name, age, nationality, etc).
- Family (how many brothers and sisters)
- Likes and dislikes.
- Habits and routines.
- Interests and hobbies.
- Your community and school (your major, describe the place where you live).
- Reasons and expectations for living and studying in the United States.
- Future plans.
- Additional information that will help your host family know you better.

Write between 200 and 250 words

APPENDIX C: ANALYSIS OF THE STUDENTS' QUESTIONNAIRES  
(APPLICATION)

N° of Question	Grammatical Category	Correct Answer	Answers				No Answer
			A	B	C	D	
1	Adjective	C	3	2	37	9	
2	Verb	C	16	1	33	1	
3	Noun	B	5	10	34	2	
4	Noun	B	7	36	8	0	
5	Verb	D	0	49	0	2	
6	Preposition	C	0	2	1	45	3
7	Verb	C	1	3	39	5	3
8	Adjective	D	14	5	13	17	2
9	Verb	C	8	8	33	2	
10	Noun	C	5	31	12	3	
11	Verb	B	5	9	31	5	1
12	Verb	C	21	2	22	6	
13	Preposition	B	4	20	8	18	1
14	Adjective	D	10	5	1	35	
15	Verb	C	13	6	21	11	
16	Adjective	B	3	35	5	7	1
17	Preposition	C	2	1	35	11	2
18	Preposition	A	5	0	1	45	
19	Verb	D	11	2	18	20	
20	Adjective	D	3	0	0	48	
21	Preposition	D	7	0	0	44	

APPENDIX D: ANALYSIS OF FORMAL AND SEMANTIC ERRORS  
(APPLICATION)

N° of Question	N° of Error	Type of error
1	4	Formal
2	8	Formal
3	4	Semantic
	1	Formal
4	1	Formal
	1	Semantic
5	13	Formal
	13	Semantic
6	12	Formal
	1	Semantic
7	5	Semantic
8	10	Semantic
9	3	Semantic
10	1	Semantic
	7	Semantic
11	8	Semantic
12	2	Semantic
	2	Formal
13	7	Semantic
14	10	Semantic
15	8	Semantic
16	3	Semantic
17	6	Semantic
18	10	Semantic
19	9	Formal
20	1	Semantic
21	1	Formal
	1	Semantic