

# **Error production provoked by syntactic transfer and the analysis of possible causes in EFL Pre intermediate students**

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LICENCIATURA EN LA ENSEÑANZA DE LA LENGUA INGLESA**

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**Trabajo de grado presentado como requisito parcial para obtener el título de Licenciado en  
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## RESUMEN

El propósito de este estudio es describir los errores causados por la transferencia lingüística negativa que 10 estudiantes producen cuando han iniciado su proceso de aprendizaje y atienden a un curso de inglés pre-intermedio de un programa de enseñanza del inglés como lengua extranjera en una universidad pública localizada en el área cafetera colombiana. Categorizando estos errores en diferentes áreas sintácticas propuestas por Ja Park et al (2003). Además de interpretar estos errores e identificar patrones que develan potenciales causas de estos mismos, dichos estudiantes cumplieron con las actividades propuestas en el curso, las cuales en la habilidad de escritura facilitaron la recolección de datos, además de en ambos métodos (recolección de muestras escritas y entrevistas) revelaron una gran variedad de errores originados por transferencia sintáctica negativa que ellos cometen, además de que muchas veces a pesar de que hacen sus trabajos no prestan suficiente atención a releer e incluir practicas de escritura en su cotidiano, asimismo piensan en español cuando escriben en inglés y así se añade una dificultad mas a aprender un idioma extranjero que no es ampliamente hablado en el lugar de aprendizaje, especialmente para una población tan importante como es la de un grupo de futuros profesores de Ingles como lengua extranjera.

### **ABSTRACT**

The purpose of this study is describing the errors caused by linguistic negative transfer, which 10 students produced when they started their learning processes and attend a pre-intermediate course in teaching English as a foreign language program in a public university located in the Colombian coffee area. This, by categorizing those errors in different syntactic areas proposed by Ja Park et al (2003). In addition interpreting those errors and identifying patterns that show causes of these. The data collection of the present study, was facilitated by the learner's accomplishment of the activities proposed along the course, which in the writing skill, besides, both methods (written simple collection and interviews) evidenced a great variety of errors originated by the syntactic negative transfer that they do, also that many times they make their home works but they do not pay enough attention to re-read and add writing practices in their daily lives, also they think in Spanish when they write in English, and this adds one more difficulty to learn a foreign language which is not widely spoken in the learning place, specially by a population which is so important as a group of future English teachers is.

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Even when we did not want to talk to anyone in the world and they asked us to join them for dinner hehe...

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## INTRODUCTION

Among years language learning has been an issue that has attracted researcher's attention. Researchers have designed methods and approaches in order to understand the process of acquisition of a mother tongue and learning a second language so that they can offer learners a better education to fulfill the different demands which are nowadays needed to complete around the world. Currently, the world is embraced in a process of globalization and it is required to speak a universal language. Therefore, Colombia is facing the need to be part of this globalized world as it is claimed by the Ministry of Education in Colombia (MEN) which seeks to carry out a foreign language learning policy called "Plan Nacional de Bilinguismo".

Learning and teaching English as a foreign language, especially in a context such as a college, as well as in programs concerning training in English teaching, demand reflection on issues that affect an optimal development of language competences as those regarding problems with interference of the mother tongue (L1) with the acquisition of a second language (L2), and which obstruct the development of literacy skills such as reading and writing. Thus, the present study emerged from concerns related to negative transfer or interference of syntactic structures from L1 into L2 among some English language teaching (ELT) students in a state-owned university in the coffee growing region in Colombia. This study aims at diagnosing the syntactic error production of ELT learners and tries to understand the most affected syntactic areas when students produce in writing. Additionally, it intends to describe some factors that lead pre-intermediate ELT students to make errors in determined syntactic categories.

In this study, the writers focus on the syntactic transferred error constructions made by pre-intermediate English language teaching students at Universidad Eje Cafetero in their writing process. These syntactic error categories include several aspects such word order, ellipsis, pronouns omission, pronouns addition, pronouns misuse, articles omission, prepositions misuse, tenses (present form for the past, paste tense with present and infinitive) verbs (omission of -ing, omission of to), pluralities, and comparative constructions.

The writers focus their research on those several aspects of syntax after a detailed analysis of writing samples was done. From the analysis of writing samples, researchers found that the most common errors pre-intermediate English learners at UEC made were in those 8 categories.

Despite the constraints to several syntactic categories, it is also important to know that in the process of learning a language, the grammatical structures of languages play a vital role in order to facilitate readers really understanding of what the writer intends to communicate through written output. This statement is supported by Hyland (2002), who suggests that writing is an important link to communicate with others, given that writing allows the transmission of messages to unlimited numbers of recipients, moreover when students have problems concerning the use of grammatical structures in the mother tongue, it affects significantly the understanding of what the writer intends to communicate.

In this research paper, the researchers analyze the output in writing of those students in the pre-intermediate level of English who are studying to become English language teachers in the Coffee Region Area in Colombia, where students are supposed to be able to describe in simple terms aspects of their background, immediate environment and matters in areas of immediate need. Thus, through this research, the writers intend to describe those students' tendency to think in their mother tongue (Spanish) before putting their thought into words in written form in the second language (English) and describe some factors that lead English pre-Intermediate students to make errors in writing in determined syntactic categories.

Also, through this research on syntactic transferred errors, the writers hope that the result of this research facilitates to the English language learners in this region, but specifically to language learners studying to become English teachers at Universidad Eje Cafetero, to be more aware when composing written output in English. In addition, by conducting this research, the researchers are eager to give evidence of negative transfer that is unquestionably produced by English language teaching (ELT) students.

The present paper is divided into 5 main chapters. The first chapter contains the statement of the problem in which are described issues related to difficulties in writing production and the role that mother tongue plays in the writing production in the L2; followed by the rationale of the study which describes the relevance of the study in our context. Moreover, a subsequent section includes the research questions that are the central part of the present study, followed by theoretical foundations to have a clear understanding about issues concerning language learning acquisition, differences among first and second language, language transfer, Interlanguage period, the moment in second language acquisition in which transfer mainly takes place,

approaches concerning the treatment of transfer, and finally syntactic transfer and some syntactic categories that reflect the different aspects of language where ELT learners make more errors due to the differences between their mother tongue and the target language. Consequently, the steps followed and the methodology used in the data collection stage and its analysis and the results of the present study are illustrated clearly. Finally, the paper includes a section in which the findings exposed are compared and contrasted with other theories and studies; another section where research implications are suggested, and a section that provides a conclusion of the study, followed by the references used and samples of the diagnosis stage test, interview formats, writing production samples of students, tables including all errors made in the writing samples and described into categories illustrating the correct forms, and finally transcriptions of interview-conversation sessions.



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## 1. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The Colombian Government requires Colombian people to be highly skilled and literate in the use of at least one foreign language such as English. The Ministry of Education (MEN) has designed a policy project called Plan Nacional de Bilinguismo (PNB). One of the main features of the new language education policy, the National Bilingual Program (PNB), is the adoption of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFRL) to guide the teaching and learning of English in Colombia. Cardenas (2006) states that the PNB expects that Colombian students when graduate from high school, they should attain and have a B1 or Pre-intermediate level of English, and those students who graduate from higher education a B2 or intermediate level and pre-service and in-service English teachers a level of C1 or advanced level based on the CEFRL. This proficiency levels are expected to be attained between the years 2010 and 2019.

The CEFRL describes what a learner is supposed to be able to do in reading, listening, speaking and writing at each level of its six levels (A1, A2, B1, B2, C1, and C2).

The study Key Data on Teaching Languages at School in Europe carried out by La Red de

level	description
A1	Can understand and use familiar everyday expressions and very basic phrases aimed at the satisfaction of needs of a concrete type. Can introduce him/herself and others and can ask and answer questions about personal details such as where he/she lives, people he/she knows and things he/she has. Can interact in a simple way provided the other person talks slowly and clearly and is prepared to help.
A2	Can understand sentences and frequently used expressions related to areas of most immediate relevance (e.g. very basic personal and family information, shopping, local geography, employment). Can communicate in simple and routine tasks requiring a simple and direct exchange of information on familiar and routine matters. Can describe in simple terms aspects of his/her background, immediate environment and matters in areas of immediate need.
B1	Can understand the main points of clear standard input on familiar matters regularly encountered in work, school, leisure, etc. Can deal with most situations likely to arise whilst travelling in an area where the language is spoken. Can produce simple connected text on topics which are familiar or of personal interest. Can describe experiences and events, dreams, hopes & ambitions and briefly give reasons and explanations for opinions and plans.
B2	Can understand the main ideas of complex text on both concrete and abstract topics, including technical discussions in his/her field of specialisation. Can interact with a degree of fluency and spontaneity that makes regular interaction with native speakers quite possible without strain for either party. Can produce clear, detailed text on a wide range of subjects and explain a viewpoint on a topical issue giving the advantages and disadvantages of various options.
C1	Can understand a wide range of demanding, longer texts, and recognise implicit meaning. Can express him/herself fluently and spontaneously without much obvious searching for expressions. Can use language flexibly and effectively for social, academic and professional purposes. Can produce clear, well-structured, detailed text on complex subjects, showing controlled use of organisational patterns, connectors and cohesive devices.
C2	Can understand with ease virtually everything heard or read. Can summarise information from different spoken and written sources, reconstructing arguments and accounts in a coherent presentation. Can express him/herself spontaneously, very fluently and precisely, differentiating finer shades of meaning even in the most complex situations.

Información de Educación Europea (Eurydice) in 2005, showed that in the 25 European Union countries, the study of a foreign language takes about 8 years of instruction with an intensity between 5 and 9 hours per week adding up to 720 total hours; whereas in contrast with foreign language teaching in Colombia reported in the same study, students are exposed to English language instruction for an average of 6 years with approximately an intensity of three hours of instruction per week. MEN (2005) confirms what The Key Data study has claimed in the way that it states that in Colombia the time devoted averages six years, from sixth to eleventh grade, beginning at the age of eleven, with three hours a week. A total of 270 hours devoted to the study of English in Colombia during junior and high school which is not enough for students to achieve the competence required in English in the National Bilingual program, and it is planned to increment the numbers of hours from 3 to 11 to fulfill the needs of this policy.

An English proficiency diagnostic study was carried out in 2004 in Bogota by the MEN, which showed that English teachers from Bogota who were tested had an A2 level of English. This diagnosis showed that 63 % of the English teachers from Bogota proved to have a basic level of English proficiency (A1, A2), and only 14% of the English teachers, an advanced level of C1. Moreover, the secretary of Education in the Coffee Region in Colombia stated that in the 'Diagnóstico Nacional de Nivel de Inglés', language teachers in the coffee region area showed quite similar results to the ones obtained in Bogota, given that 65.4% of the language teachers in this region demonstrated to have an A1 and A2 level, 32.8% a B1 and B2 level and only 1.8% advanced levels of C1 and C2 in English.

Consequently, after detecting these weaknesses in the English language teaching area, the Ministry of Education (MEN) established guidelines as a solution to improve the way in which English courses are developed in Colombian schools and has developed a set of standards that are aligned to the CEFRL which attempt to accomplish the expectations or goals for the level that students must achieve when they finish their high school of undergraduate programs.

Based on theoretical concepts of Guerrero (2008), the concept of Proficiency is viewed as an ability that can be attained equally in all language skills; thus, it is uncertain that the Colombian government expects to attain language skills equally without implementing significant training for the development of such a policy project, because of other demands and challenges it would require in order to accomplish the goals of the PNB.

Additionally, it is important to consider that students in the Coffee region area belong to a non-native context in which the exposure to the English language is somehow limited, thus, they are not likely to have further contact with respect to the amount to the quality of English or any other foreign language. Therefore, there would be very little opportunity to acquire this proficiency required in the National Bilingual program; however, there are some learners who achieve higher proficiency in the same context.

Nevertheless, since today's society is highly influenced by technology and the use of English as an international language, people are in need of communicating with others using English and are asked to become more skilled in writing which is mainly used in these scenarios such as the internet, and are required to become more and more dependent upon greater literacy skills. Hyland (2002) states that writing has multiple roles in social, professional, and academic contexts; and it is not simply words on a page, but it is a social practice embedded in the cultural and institutional contexts. It becomes an important link to communicate with others, given that writing allows the transmission of messages to unlimited numbers of recipients and it is not as speaking which allows negotiations of meanings when performed. It means that writing is a link in communication in which people transmit messages, but if it is bad written or not revised can lead to misunderstanding and cannot be corrected as easily as in speaking where people can correct what they say immediately.

Learning a language and additionally becoming skilled in the different language abilities such as writing seems to be affected by the question of the role of language learners' existing linguistic knowledge in the process of acquisition of a foreign language. According to Paradowiski (2007), first language background appears to affect and result in developing an easy or difficult process of acquisition in second languages in students. Therefore, it is necessary to raise awareness of the complexity that can arise when learning a foreign language, what factors are affected by the first language background when learning a second language and its possible causes, and the relevance of training in such abilities like writing in many contexts nowadays, especially in academic contexts where the ability to write should be suitable and important for students to succeed and access to information concerning their professional fields.

As a result, the role of students' first language in learning a foreign language is needed for a deep exploration and treatment of this influence in Colombia in the L2 written production

which is specially affected by transfer in different areas such as spelling, lexis, morphology, and syntax; but in order to become skilled and succeed in writing as the academic skill most demanded, attention needs to be focused on syntactic transfer which is characterized by transferring syntactic structures between the source (L1) and target language (L2) when writing.

Barboza (2008) states that college students in Colombia reach their last semesters without having enough competence in the academic writing field, and the most problematic situation is seen in students who are studying English teaching programs. These learners have a good English level and they do not face major difficulties concerning the other basic skills such reading, listening and speaking. Nevertheless, some problems are identified in writing since students know how to write simple and informal information about them, but when they are expected to write essays about technical issues and to express themselves about different current issues, they do not prove to have the mastery of this skill and they fail when writing. Therefore, it is necessary to begin refining students' writing skills in undergraduate foreign language programs, given that these students will have the responsibility to guide other learners and fulfill the goals established by the National Bilingual Program.

## 2. RATIONALE

As the statement of the problem illustrates, learning English in a non-native setting context (Coffee region area in Colombia) implies certain constraints since foreign language learners in Colombia have been raised in a "one language-one environment" context, where they are not likely to have further contact with the amount and quality of English or any other foreign language (Cardenas, 2006); what does not demand the knowledge and mastery of a second language or foreign language expected in the National Bilingual program.

Moreover, quality and proficiency gained in the foreign language by learners depend greatly on teachers' proficiency in the foreign language and on their methodologies to teach it. The results of different examinations and studies involving foreign language proficiency in language teachers carried out by the Ministry of Education in Colombia (MEN) in the last few years have shown that language teachers have proved to possess basic levels of English since they have been expected to attain a higher level in the L2.

Additionally, learning a foreign language is essential in all the fields of knowledge, because language is related to cultural, social and economic changes in Colombia and overseas. Nothing is as significant as knowing how to communicate in any language nowadays. Unfortunately, the way of learning our first language interferes with the acquisition of another language in the sense that language learners apply the first language rules and structures which are different from the second language system (Brown, 2000). In that way, transfer errors in writing is the focus of this research project since it relates to the development of students' writing skill, provided that one of the main problems in teaching writing is that the students think in their own language and then try to transfer the models word by word into English. In that sense, we have to take into account student's perceptions about the reasons that led them to make transfer errors. Besides, we need to gather information by collecting writing samples, conducting interviews and a diagnosis, in order to identify the relationship in the level of the students with the errors they make produced by this structures' transferring.

Consequently, the results of the present study can provide vital information for professionals in language teaching regarding the design and implementations of contents to take appropriate and innovative action in their performance when teaching to language learners,



especially to those learners studying English language teaching programs who are expected to become the new language teachers in charge of fulfilling all national education requirements.

The purpose of this study was therefore to describe the syntactic errors that pre-intermediate English language teaching students make in the Universidad Eje Cafetero in the coffee region in Colombia, and second, to describe the perceptions of language teaching students towards transfer to gain information of what leads English pre-intermediate students to make errors in writing.

### **3. QUESTIONS AND OBJECTIVES**

#### **3.1 Research questions**

##### Main Questions

- What errors does syntactic negative transfer provoke in Pre-intermediate English Learners' writing in an English as a foreign language teaching program?
- What leads English Pre-Intermediate students to make errors in writing in determined syntactic categories?

#### **3.2 Objectives**

##### **3.2.1 Main objective**

- To report how UEC students' performance is affected by syntactic negative transfer when they write in English.

##### **3.2.2 Specific objectives**

- To describe the syntactic negative transfer errors learners from a pre intermediate English course make when writing.
- To inform the potential causes for learners to produce syntactic errors due to negative transfer from their mother tongue in the production of the foreign language (English).
- To contribute with research on syntactic transfer in the coffee region of Colombia.

#### 4. DEFINITION OF TERMS

**First language:** According to Odlin (1989), first language is the communicative system acquired during early childhood that leads to spontaneous and simultaneous acts of communication. It is an inherited language acquired in the living environment which does not imply any kind of instruction but interaction.

**Foreign language or second language:** Odlin (1989) refers to second language as a language not acquired in an immediate environment where it is spoken, but it is learned through constant exposure and instruction.

**Linguistic transfer:** Odlin (1989) states that linguistic transfer is the phenomenon whereby learners use what they already know in their first language and carry over this knowledge in their performance in the new language.

**Positive transfer:** According to Brown (2000), positive transfer refers to the use of previously learned material or linguistic forms that facilitates the acquisition of a new language.

**Negative transfer (a.k.a Interference):** Brown (2000) claims that negative transfer is the application of first language patterns or rules that leads to an inappropriate form in the target language.

**Writing:** According to Odlin (1989), writing is the process where one puts down words of a language on a format that others can read.

**Interlanguage:** Selinker (1972) proposed that Interlanguage is an independent structured system which includes both error and non-errors produced by learners acquiring a second language in the attempt to produce a target language.

**Fossilization:** Gabrielatos (1994) claims that fossilization is the process whereby learners make errors and tend to become these errors in fixed elements in the target language that do not interfere seriously with communication as learners progress in other aspects of their L2 communicative competence.

**Syntax:** According to Odlin (1989), syntax is the study of how words are combined to form sentences in any language and rules which govern the construction of sentences.

**Syntactic transfer:** Zolb (1992) proposes syntactic transfer as the study of transfer in language forms and structures from mother tongue into the target language.

**Error:** According to Ellis (1994), error is an incorrect language form produced in the target language that has been learned incorrectly and leads to misunderstanding of concepts.

**Mistake:** According to Brown (2000), mistakes are incorrect language forms which result when learners forget or misapply rules which they already know.

## 5. LITERATURE REVIEW

Based on the research conducted by Cresswell (2004), this study is qualitative given that its main basis is exploring a human situation, in this case an event happening into a foreign language classroom. At the same time this study is descriptive, according to Huber (1995), given that its purpose is studying and describing the writing practices about how transferring is evident in this learners' context and happens in its negative way, sometimes as error in learners' productions. Finally, this study is also interpretive according to Baroudi (1991), as it aims at understanding, dimensioning and increasing awareness of this fact contrasting the current theories' and other researchers findings with data.

### 5.1 General description of the L1 (Spanish) and L2 (English)

English and Spanish are languages that come from different geographic areas, affecting the linguistic roots and development of both languages and making them different from each other in several aspects. English is a West Germanic language brought to Britain by Germanic invaders and evolved in several dialects spoken in the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms of England. Whereas Spanish is a romantic language that evolved from spoken Latin in the Iberia peninsula after the Ancient Rome Emporium ended. Because of these different origins both languages evolved isolated one from each other, developing differences not only in vocabulary but also in semantics, pronunciation, and syntax. Syntactically focusing these differences, it can be noticed that word order, pronouns use, pluralities differ in a marked way in both languages. In Colombia Spanish (L1) is the language spoken for the biggest amount of population, while English (L2) is spoken only by a very small amount of population as it is a foreign language. The current social demands ask Colombian people to be proficient in both languages Spanish and English.

First language (L1) has received different names such as mother tongue, primary language, and native language. This language is assumed to be acquired during early childhood which means before the age of about 3 years. This acquired language, or L1 seems to lead to simultaneous and spontaneous acts of communication. On the other hand, foreign language is considered as a language not acquired but learnt through instruction of any language. English is

nowadays one of the most common learnt foreign languages, but this is not fully developed and additionally, it is a non-official language needed for education, employment and other basic purposes in many of the contexts where it is learnt.

These are at present the most conventional cover terms for referring to languages and are the terms that will be used through the development of this study. The term first language (L1) will be used to refer to the first language acquired by the speaker from a biological perspective. The term second language (L2) will refer to any language learned or acquired subsequently, regardless of the context of acquisition or attained level of proficiency.

## **5.2 Linguistic transfer**

During the period of 60's various studies started to be conducted with first and second language acquisition learners, showing that in both first and second language acquisition, there is a dissimilarity in terms of processing the language, that usually leads to linguistic transfer (Sinha, Banerjee, & Kumar; 2009). It seems that universally the same principle on both first and second language acquisition, there is dissimilarity in terms of processing capacities that leads to interference or transfer.

Terms such as transfer and cross linguistic influence, are used to refer to the phenomenon which is debated, even though we recognize that by the 1980s some researchers such as Lado (1997), Odlin (1989), and Selinker (1983) no longer considered the term "transfer" to be a suitable label for the phenomenon because of its traditional association with the behaviorist notion of skills.

Linguistic transfer has to do with linguistic features that language learners incorporate from their native language into the knowledge system of a new language. In other words, transfer is a borrowing of linguistic features from one's mother tongue and its use in the process of acquisition of a new language.

Transfer refers to the role that previous linguistic knowledge plays in the acquisition of a second language (L2). Studies carried out about transfer have found that transfer is the structural influence of one language on another, which facilitates language acquisition or not (Ferdinand,

1997). In terms of Transfer, Mueller (2001) brings to the discussion findings by Koster (1993), and Ferdinand, (1997) to suggest that language learners appear to use a grammatical analysis compatible with the target language when necessary and it is strongly favored or not by the mother tongue to a high degree and for a long period in the target language production.

There is evidence and studies available that support the relevance of language transfer in language acquisition. According to Paradowiski (2007), one's first language (L1) remains a powerful factor in learning another language. Language learners seem to use L1 and proceed with the assumption that the linguistic patterns existing in the target language (L2) that they are acquiring are more or less the same than the existent ones in their L1.

Further questioning of the worth of language transfer is made by Durgunoğlu (2002), who uses the theoretical concepts of Geva (2000) to suggest that language learners appear to follow very similar developmental paths and courses in the acquisition of the L2 as well as in the L1. Whereas Torrijos (2009), uses the concepts of Odlin (1989) to present the term transfer as the influence that results between the similarities and differences among one's first language (L1) that is previously acquired and the target language or any other language (L2) which has been previously and possibly imperfectly acquired.

Within the last few years, the importance of language transfer in second language acquisition has increased and has been studied by professionals, as transfer seems to be an indicator of advantages and disadvantages of the mother tongue's background in second language acquisition. Influencing in either a positive or a negative way the linguistic development in the second language, evidencing in the learner's production the accurate and wrong predictions they do when they are in a beginner period and start to put their ideas together in the second language.

In the research presented by Odlin (1989), transfer is not only a matter of definition, but he refers to the different ways in which transfer can be presented and the structural factors that transfer could affect positively and negatively in language learning.

Odlin (1989) claims that transfer can be positive or negative and it could involve structural factors such as word order, segmental errors, syllable patterns or non-structural factors such as problem solving skills or reading and writing abilities. However, these factors are an attempt to

think of some other possible linguistic areas that seem to be affected by transfer when learners use the second language.

Moreover, this influence or transfer is not presented uniquely from one's first language to a second language; but this influence, also takes place even in those learners who have learnt and use more than two languages as the second language and who use them regularly.

In order to demonstrate it is necessary to cite findings that Torrijos (2009) who draws from Master (1989) and Mesthrie & Dunne (1990) to report how learners with two or more native languages perform when using a foreign or second language regarding language structure which is found in one language –the first language- but not in the others.

Dunne (1990) shows that learners with a second or third language appear to share patterns such as linguistic structures in their second or third languages which underlined language systems in general, as well as cultural, social and personal factors that are conceived during the early years in their first language. In other words, the same linguistic structures and language factors that are culturally acquired among the act of communication seem to be found more potentially built into one specific language –the first language- more than in the others.

Li (2008) uses the theoretical concepts of Jones and Tetroe (1987) and Edelsky (1982) to point out that L2 writing production by language learners seems to be greatly influenced by the mother tongue of learners, and this influence may be considered as positive transfer given that learners write in both languages and use meaningfully two different backgrounds.

Li (2008) also explains that when L2 learners have not fully developed the target language, and they do not have knowledge of some vocabulary or they do not have a good domain with the structures of the target language when they produce texts, learners would probably turn to their first language and error may result. Nevertheless, it could still be positive in the way that learners use their two different linguistic backgrounds (L1-L2), they interchange those systems in a balanced way and positive transfer seems to appear.

However, there is much more information about the phenomenon of language transfer. As this study tends to explore the possibility of combining the studying of language transfer with students' existing knowledge to encourage learners and teachers to reflect on how the second

language is employed and how their mother tongue has influenced and continues to influence their foreign or second language acquisition. This issue is important to language professionals who perform roles as researchers or teachers, in understanding the relevance of language transfer as a phenomenon of language learning that affect considerably learners' process of acquisition.

### **5.3 Interlanguage period**

The new developments in language learning theories are required to be related to the line of the discipline they belong to, in this case language transfer's roots are linked to Interlanguage. Given that this study uses different basic ideas of earlier paradigms, a variety of pertinent previous studies concerning Interlanguage will be mentioned below.

Theories on how second language is developed, show that the Second Language Learners (SLL) enter to the Interlanguage (IL) period (Selinker, 1972), when they are in the range between the beginning of Second Language Acquisition and the maximum degree of second language proficiency, where the learner moves through a serie of intermediate stages from the L1 to the L2 and then the aim is to move from the linguistic system of the IL to the L2 system. An Interlanguage is an independent structured linguistic system which includes both errors and non errors produced by the learner trying to produce a target language.

The phenomenon of linguistic transfer has attracted sufficient theoretical interest to develop sophisticated competing theoretical models involved in the occurrence of the phenomenon. For other linguists, transfer became a crucial phenomenon which would not be avoided but positively welcomed, given that first language habits are not alone responsible for all the mistakes a learner makes in second language.

This knowledge about the Interference when learners use the second language has led to conduct contrastive analyses which have been useful in identifying the likeness and differences between the languages and thus enable the linguists to expect areas of difficulty for the second language learner and the problems that a learner may experience in the learning process. However, Chomsky (1957) criticized this approach and described its inadequacy, claiming that



language acquisition cannot be reduced to a mere process of response to a stimulus and receives enough positive reinforcement for a certain response, so that it will become a habit.

#### **5.4 Procedures involved and approaches developed in earlier research**

Contrastive Analysis, to begin with, became the leading approach during the 1950's and 1960's, but it was abandoned during the 1970's. Lado (1957) argues that contrast analysis involves the process of transferring the linguistic forms from L1 to L2 in a set of habits for using the language. Through contrastive analysis it can be proved that there are languages easier to learn than others, it depends on the structure the language has and how the learner enroots habits to change from a language to another.

Selinker (1992) contrasts these arguments, expressing that when the language structures and patterns differ, learning a new language will be difficult for the learner. Different later studies were carried out, and researchers found that when the languages were not very different, learners could produce accurately, and when there was a certain grade of difference between the languages, it was more difficult for learners to produce accurately forms. (Kellerman 1979; Odlin 1989; Towell & Hawkins 1994; Withman & Jackson 1972; Wode 1978). But later on, authors like Zolb (1984) argue that some errors may be the result of performance problems, and errors are subject to different possible origins.

Additionally, morpheme studies emerged at the same time that error analysis did. It includes findings such as the discovery of natural sequences of morphological development which is the aspect of language concerned with the rules governing change in word meaning, significant congruence between L1 and L2 development, and the description of developmental errors. Long & Sato (1984), mention some limitations of morpheme studies. These limitations include, morpheme use in obligatory contexts, development is noted if the morpheme has a variety of functions.

Error correction has been studied over many generations and from many approaches and many opinions have been stated, demonstrating the complexity and wholeness of this topic. From the Behaviorist's point of view, errors not treated might become fossilized patterns.

Fossilization, which according to Selinker (1972) means that during the Interlanguage period the learner did not learn the correct use of the language and since this was not corrected or either the learner was aware of it, when the Interlanguage period is finished and the learner is highly proficient in the L2, he will still produce utterances including the error that was not corrected. This gives a great importance to error correction.

On the other side, Chomsky (1959) affirms that errors are the result of the learner's thinking in the rule formation process. This position is supported by Selinker (1972) who affirms that errors are a natural part of the learners developing of the Interlanguage. But Krashen and Terrel (1983) who stated that Error Correction has no place in the Natural Approach to learn a language, this because it has to be developed in the same way that children learn a language contrast this position about Error Correction. Other opinions such as Littlewood's (1981) have to be mentioned, as he stated from a communicative approach that errors are not important as long as they do not affect the communication. Who was supported by Long (1977) who stated that error correction and corrective feedback are ineffective and erratic at the same time they are a wasting for teachers. Supported by (Simpson 2000, Truscott 1999) who claim that teachers are told that error correction is useless and even counterproductive. Nevertheless determining why someone makes an error is a hard and difficult issue given the multiple origins it might have. Error treatment on this study is a further research step as this study aims to determine patterns in the origins and categorize errors from an English learners community exclusively.

### **5.5 Affected areas by syntactic transfer**

When referring to syntactic transfer, some categories can be determined in order to quantify the errors produced in the writing of learners according to Ja Park et all (2003). These categories include:

Ellipsis according to Corbett and Connors (1998), refers to continuous exclusion of clausal elements in a sentence like subject, verb and object which are already implied by the context. Ellipsis is commonly seen in spontaneous speech, given the need to reduce syntactic complexity and the need to communicate in less time. Additionally, Wolfson (1988) claimed that when people sped up communication, it was a matter of avoiding unnecessary repetition of words.

Nevertheless, Ellipsis differs from Semantic Ellipsis to Syntactic (grammatical) Ellipsis. Syntactic ellipsis deals with such instances of elision in which the omitted words are not related, or such instances in which certain expressions are non-expressed in the surface structure of the sentence although they are necessarily (obligatorily) present for grammatical and semantic reasons.

Articles are a group of determiners that are placed before nouns which are used to standing alone and have little meaning; however, when they are used with a noun they can indicate whether the noun refers to a specific one or ones of its type, or whether it refers to its type in general. In Spanish, the articles also specify the noun's gender, plural and mass nouns; and in English, they refer to specific or particular nouns, and non-specific or non-particular nouns. It is counted as omissions of articles all nouns that in the target language would have required an article. This means that for English, particular nouns or non-particular nouns addition, omission or misuse of an article, are considered ungrammatical and syntactically wrong only in those contexts in which the use of an article is or is not obligatory. Cohen (1998) claims that errors of articles seen in writing are derived from a deep misconception of the article system and this area of syntax has been considered a major problem for L2 learners.

Tense is a grammatical category of verbs used to express distinctions of time of a verb's action or state of being, such as past, present, or future which are one of the important things when constructing a sentence; given that without using good tenses, our speech or writing will not be understood by other people. According to Wexler's (1998), language learners go through to a stage where developmental omissions errors in the use of tense are frequent.

Word order could be defined as the syntactic arrangement of words in a sentence, clause, or phrase. In other words, it is the order in which words occur in sentences that in many languages, including English plays an important part in determining meanings expressed and if it is not use correctly, it leads to ungrammatically or lost of acceptability. Moreover, it is related to the different ways in which languages arrange the constituents of their sentences relative to each other (O'Grady. Et al, 1996).

Studies on language transfer in second language acquisition (SLA) were carried out in the field of syntax by Gass (1996) who claims that of the major concerns of those studies was to

notice how word order in L2 might be influenced by the structural differences of the word order in L1.

Prepositions are considered some short explanatory words that indicate things such as location, direction and possession. The selection of prepositions is dependent on the presence of other specific words in the context. When we compare the prepositional uses in Spanish and English, we find prepositions in English that have equivalents in Spanish and others that do not. There are structures that are equivalent in both languages and others that are not. As Pittman (1966) describes, prepositions “have received certain reputation for difficulty if not a downright unpredictability”. Takahashi (1969) adds that the correct usage of prepositions is the greatest problem for learners of English.

In English, the plural system is greatly over-represented by regular forms, showing only a handful of irregular alternatives. It means that when marking plurality in English, people may add an extra syllable (-s suffix) to the word which is the regular form, whereas in other cases may change the vowel in the existing final syllable or change some syllables of the word which is considered irregular. Additionally, at the beginning of each noun item, a cardinal number or a quantifier such as “some” “many” or “several” unambiguously indicate plurality too.

Marcus (1995) suggests that the rate of over regularization of English irregular plural nouns is not substantively different from that of English irregular past tense verbs in English, and that in most of the cases, it leads to errors in the L2.

Transfer affects many areas of language like those of semantics, syntax, phonology, pragmatics, morphology. Researchers like Kellerman (1995) claimed that syntax, as well as morphology were resistant to any kind of transfer effects. Nevertheless, this is nothing but assumptions given that there is not considerable evidence that warrants this issue. Zobl (1992) claimed that Syntactic transfer includes not only the study of transfer in language forms and structures such as word order, but also plenty of constraints that have been found in reception and production tasks by learners. Research into syntactic transfer has been useful for a better understanding of detailed factors affecting second language learning.

## 5.6 Negative transfer in Writing

In spite of the research carried out on language transfer, these studies have examined transfer in global terms and as a general issue in second language acquisition, but research has not been specifically focused on language skills such writing. Snow (2007) states that writing is probably the skill that Local English teachers are most hesitant to teach since writing has been one of the most challenging skills and one which takes more time to be fully developed and mastered in language learners, which seems to be one reason why most of the research in EFL is conducted in other skills, or at least in aspects of writing not related with transferring patterns and syntax.

Additionally, Valdés, Haro & Echevarrianza (1992) state that Local English teachers appear to not pay special attention to the development and constant improvement of writing skills in language students. Most English language professionals have considered writing as a secondary or less crucial skill than listening, speaking and reading. On the other hand, research in this field may increase due, in part, to the current existing emphasis in writing, reading and literacy skills around the world, because of the technological issues that affect people's lifestyles and which demand and asked people to become skilled in writing in order to excel in communication with people and issues around the world.

Although this may be true, writing appears to be tested in school without paying good enough attention to the patterns that seem to emerge from one's native language into the use of a foreign language. In school, language learners are asked to produce texts and apply what is supposed to have been learnt, nevertheless, language teachers seem to be unaware of these patterns that students borrow from the L1 and use in the L2. To illustrate, Li (2008) suggests that when language learners produce texts, they subconsciously support these productions by the first language which is highly skilled while the second language is not yet fully developed. This vacancy of a more complete language background can influence language learners to borrow from their mother tongue background and use it in the production of the second language.

After describing these findings and theoretical concepts; it is necessary to recall that students' writing background into the knowledge and development of the L2 may play a strong role that may have and receive merit.

Nevertheless, Wolfersberger (2003) differs from what we can observe in the findings by Li (2008) in terms of transfer, in the way that Wolfersberger (2003) claims that transfer is not a positive strategy in which language learners use different backgrounds to succeed when communicating with others; but this influence from the first language to the second language, affects considerably the act of communication and it is more given in lower proficiency learners who depend more heavily on their L1 during the writing process; given that, proficient L2 learners or more skilled language learners have a sufficient level of L2 functionality and knowledge to think and plan ahead in the target language.

According to Brown (2000), transfer can be interlingual or intralingual. Interlingual refers to the fact of transferring concepts from L1 to L2 or transferring from one area of the L2 to another. Intralingual transfer deals with the inappropriate application of L2 paradigms. In other words, when learners transfer concepts learned in L2 and generalize them in the use of the L2.

## 5. METHODOLOGY

### 5.1 Type of research

This is a qualitative research in the sense that a phenomenon that happens in human learning was described, by all the gathered data, which informed the researchers of the factors that were happening (Jacob, 1998), at the same time the variables were attempted to be interpreted and described in a specific context.

### 5.2 Context

This study took place at the heart of Colombia's coffee growing region, Pereira. This research was conducted in a state-owned university located in the urban area of this town, which is called along the study Universidad Eje Cafetero (UEC). This Higher Education institution offers professional programs in several fields such as Engineering, Health, Education and Humanities. These programs last from three up until five years. One of the main goals of UEC is to enable future professionals to be proficient in English. Consequently, UEC requires all students to fulfill an English language requirement level for graduation. All UEC students (except for those in English Teaching Training Program) are required to take sixteen English courses of instruction, until they achieve the proficiency standard B2 Level adapted from Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFRL). Students enrolled in the English Language Teaching Program (ELT) are required to achieve a C1 – an advanced English level based on the CEFRL, so the facilitator has the a high proficiency and knowledge about the language, consequently be able to teach with high standards.

The purpose of the English language teaching program is to provide training in English as a foreign language to students who study to become English teachers, and who certainly will work for public and private institutions in the different regions of Colombia.

This English language teaching degree program lasts 10 semesters. During the first 4 semesters, students are exposed to English courses focused on grammar and language, as well as pedagogy and psychology courses. From the fifth semester and on, students start receiving

instruction on content-area courses such as Linguistics, English literature, Educational law, Research, and courses in preparation towards the teaching practicum. In courses such as pre-intermediate English in the second semester, students are exposed to writing instruction.

### **5.3 Participants**

In the process of carrying out this study, 10 out from a group of 17 students from the ELT program were selected as participants. These students' ages range between 16 and 26 years old. They were Spanish speakers who were attending to the Pre-intermediate English class of the English language teaching program. In the pre-intermediate course, students are asked to constantly produce pieces of writing in English, in which they make use of the language functions required for their level, for example expressing daily routines, likes and dislikes and making polite requests.

This specific course and these specific participants were selected, for reasons such as their Pre-intermediate level instruction and contents, learners should be able to write not as quite short and easy pieces of writing as they used to write while they were attending to Basic English; but in the Pre-intermediate English course, learners were able to write longer and more complex writing pieces as the last one contain grammatical structures such as past participle and past participle continuous, while in basic English simple past and past perfect are the main tenses taught . The participants of this study were tested in different writing abilities, it was selected and applied the Key English Test (KET) to determine if the learners' language level was not higher or lower than Pre-intermediate level to prove they were really in the Interlanguage period for the necessities of the study.

The writing part in the Key English Test (KET), accomplish an A2 (Pre-intermediate) level according to the CEFRL, where learners should be able to complete a short written task appropriately by filling some gaps according to the competences they were supposed to have accomplished in writing, showing development of the skill with coherence, control of structure, vocabulary, spelling and punctuation. Throughout the implementation of this study, 10 participants from were selected according to the range of scores that settled them as real pre-intermediate learners. This diagnosis test was applied in the whole class, with 17 people attending permanently (see appendix 1)



#### **5.4 Methods for Data Collection**

As this study sought to identify the syntactic features that Pre-intermediate learners borrow from their L1 to incorporate in the L2 writing and describe the main patterns of syntactic transfer from the mother tongue into the English language when writing; it was necessary to apply a diagnosis test to the whole class to identify whether or not learners attending to the Pre-intermediate course were actually Pre-intermediate learners.

Moving on after the diagnosis, samples of written production were collected so the syntactic error production could be examined. During this sample collecting process, 10 writing samples in English were collected once every week three weeks. These written assignments did not have to follow any model provided by the facilitator. These writings were journals, and the students were asked to write short descriptive texts about their lives by their professor as a writing assignment for them to practice and include the recently learnt structures and vocabulary in the class, in which they had freedom to express their personal thoughts and feelings towards personal and academic issues, for example daily routines, experiences, and future plans.

Finally, one interview-conversation session was handled out at the end of the semester. This interview-conversation session was documented and transcribed. The objective of this exercise was to explore whether or not, the participants were aware of using structures from Spanish into their writing productions in English, and which were their perceptions from experience towards English language learning. It was waited to the end of the semester to be conducted as the purpose of this exercise was to document the experience of the participant, and it was required to wait a prudent time to gather honest answers. Besides, if the participants were interviewed before, during the semester there was the risk to collect biased data as the learners would have been predisposed for accomplishing the exercises.

#### **5.5 Researcher's role**

According to Marshall (1998), the researchers' role in this study was as non-participants, given that none of the researchers in this study were involved or either had active part in the development of the class. The research team worked at the same time during the whole process. This, in the attempt of having expanded reflection sessions, continuous peer feedback and avoid missing small detail from the data collected.

## 5.6 Data Collection Stage

The data collection in this study was divided into three stages: (1) the diagnostic stage, (2) the stage where written samples were collected and analyzed; and (3) the stage where the interview-conversation sessions were carried out. The diagnostic stage was a separate chronological event, while the stages for collecting written samples and conducting interview-conversation sessions stages were not separate chronological events, and they all influenced one another.

To begin with, the diagnostic stage was designed in order to test whether the pre-intermediate learners were actually pre-intermediate learners. This diagnosis test included solving some exercises stipulated in the writing part in the KET. After the diagnosis was made, the higher skilled students and those who presented the lowest performances and have not reached the requirements for pre-intermediate English or either mentioned in the KET were discarded, and the real pre-intermediate ones were selected.

Furthermore, the picking up writing samples stage was designed to identify the syntactic areas that presented continuous difficulty in the writing process of learners in a pre-intermediate English course. These samples were gathered and analyzed in order to determine the types of syntactic errors and frequencies of students' errors.

Finally, the interview stage was carried out in order to know Pre-intermediate English learners' experiences regarding writing. Ten students were interviewed in order to elicit data and gain insights about their perceptions from their experience towards English language learning and experience concerning their own L1 and L2 writing. The interviews were tape-recorded and transcribed. Vital information to answer the second research question was gathered by this exercise.

The data collected in the 3 stages was analyzed and described so commonalities and contrasting issues could be evidenced and triangulated. The three different stages influenced one another enriching the details of the data and the findings of the study.

## 5.7 Data Analysis

Three research methods were selected: (1) Diagnosis test, (2) writing samples, (3) interviews. The three of them were triangulated in the exercise of identifying commonalities or particular aspects that could reveal evidence of continuity and could reveal unexpected aspects during the interpretation stage.

The diagnosis test was designed in order to test the learners' English level. For this reason, it was decided to apply the Key English Test (KET). KET is Cambridge ESOL's exam which recognizes the ability to deal with everyday written English at A2 Level of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR), being able to understand and use expressions normally used in English, being able to communicate simple routines and exchanging information from familiar contexts. KET is exam is an internationally recognized benchmark of language ability. 15 out from a group of 17 students from the ELT program attending to the Pre-intermediate class sat for the test designed based on the KET. After this, the results of the test were checked and it was decided based on the evaluation criteria for the KET. These students have passed the exam and who have failed. The evaluation criteria for the KET states that the score a candidate needs to pass the KET is 79. It means 79% of the work needs to be carried out properly and correctly. Candidates with a less score are issued with A1 Level. Additionally, all candidates are given a report explaining how they performed in each of the papers.

The results of the KET showed that 30% of the learners who took the exam did not achieve the score required for being issued with A2. It means that a 30% of the learners are still at A1 level, at a basic level, but they are attending to Pre-intermediate courses. Furthermore, 50% of the students were average and passed the exam, from here the participants were selected as it will be explained below. Only a 20% of the learners appeared to be highly skilled in L2 writing. As this study was focused on identifying and describing the syntactic errors in writing that learners transfer the most from their native language into the second language during the Interlanguage period of learning, it was necessary that the participants selected were not issued with a basic level of English, but they were qualified to be at a higher level of English were they could produce longer and more demanding pieces of writing. On the other hand, for those learners who appeared to be the highest skilled when writing, it was assumed that they have reached the

Interlanguage period already, so they did not fill the requirements for their productions being analyzed as real pre-intermediate students.

After having been selected the participants of the study based on the results of the diagnosis test, collecting samples of written production was the next stage. 10 writing samples were collected per week for the duration of three weeks. These writing activities were carried out in the Pre-intermediate course and were part of the syllabus of the course. None of these tasks were proposed or neither conducted by the research team, but they were exclusively class activities coordinated by the professor in charge. These were collected by the researchers. The analysis of the written samples started once the first samples were collected. It means, it was not a separate chronological stage, but every time samples were collected, analysis of the quantities of evidence in detail and their possible causes took place.

Moving on after the collection of written samples, the analysis of the samples included the identification and organization of syntactic errors into categories. These errors were organized in charts according to a group of syntactic categories proposed by Ja Park et. al (2003).

In order to fill these categories charts, the participants were coded using names from A1 to A10 in order to have a controlled data codification and simplify such a big group of participants information. The syntactic errors found during the analysis were divided into the syntactic categories from Ja Park et. al (2003): Word Order, Ellipsis (Ellipsis, pronouns omission, pronouns addition, pronouns misuse), Articles (Omission the/a, addition the/a, misuse the/a), prepositions (addition, omission, misuse), Tense (Present form for the past, past tense with present and infinitive), Verbs (Omission of be, Misuse of ing, Omission of ing, addition of to, omission of to), Numbers - Pluralities, and Comparative constructions (see appendix 2 for further details)

Finally, the interview-conversation sessions were carried out once samples of written production were analyzed. The 10 participants were interviewed in order to elicit information and gain insights concerning perceptions about their L1 and L2 performance when writing. These interview-conversation sessions included questions looking forward to know how participants felt about their performance when writing in their L1 as well as in the L2, their

strengths and aspects to improve, which they considered were the origins of the this problematic in writing in L1 and L2, as well as how much they relied consciously and thought in the native language when writing. Additionally, it was given a report of their strengths and things to improve in the diagnostic stage as it is required in the KET implementation.

The facilitator was not interviewed, as the main focus of this study was describing the error production in written samples from learners, and getting to know the participant's experiences and ideas about writing and their own error making.

The errors produced in the written samples were showed to the participants and they were asked what their idea was when they wrote that error. A disadvantage of preferring waiting till the end of the course to make the interview was that 60% of them did not remember what their idea was when this error was written. Nevertheless, other important questions were made so the cause of the error could be diagnosed. The other 40% of collected answers helped to determine as well the causes for errors produced in the samples.

As these three research stages were carried out, analyzed and triangulated, syntactic errors were identified and described, at the same time that some findings were revealed regarding the causes of these errors in the process of writing of learners.

## 7. FINDINGS

### 7.1 Syntactic negative transfer errors provoked by L1 influence

Errors produced by pre-intermediate students needed to be organized in categories in order to understand and identify them.

A list of categories presented by Ja Park et. all (2003), included for instance syntactic categories in which errors are produced mentioning for example: word order, ellipsis, prepositions omission, misuse of prepositions, numbers and pluralities. These remained constantly seen during the data analysis, consequently were adopted as the main categories for this study.

It is important mentioning that the errors found in the data of this research, fitted into most of these categories. Because of this reason, the previously mentioned categories were used as the main point of reference to guide the error amounts in specific syntactic areas, which differ from one language to the other, English and Spanish.

#### 7.1.1 Word order

Word order rules change from a language to another in many languages; making it variable and creating a tendency to produce errors when the learner predicts from the L1 the possible way to structure a sentence in the attempt of communicating a message, using their L1 Spanish as reference for constructing the target message in the L2 English (Li, 2008)

“I like programs tv” (A2-6)

Here the participant A2 wanted to communicate an opinion about his likes and dislikes. The construction of this sentence does not affect its meaning; the message and intention have high chances to be understood by the reader. Nevertheless its syntactic construction is evidencing that the rules from L1 were transferred into the L2 output, as in Spanish the noun is placed always before the adjective (programas de television), while in English the adjective is always located before the noun (tv programs). Although this construction reflects

a negative transferred pattern, which evidences that the learner relied in the syntactic linguistic knowledge he had within his L1 in order to construct a message in the L2.

“They asked him if he knew where was his sister” (A7-5)

Referring to the error produced by the participant A7, the same pattern of relying on the syntactic structures from the mother tongue is proved. This can be affirmed as in this example it is evident that there was a literal transference from L1 to L2. Given that in Spanish the verb “be” in affirmative sentences and questions tends to be located before the possessive pronoun and subject (estaba su hermana). While in English, in affirmative sentences the verb “be” is positioned after the subject (his sister was). However, exclusively for questions it is situated between the adverb “where” and the possessive pronoun and subject “his sister” (where was his sister?) which is not the purpose of the message.

Learners tend to transfer negatively and make errors in word order as it was previously evidenced, as they make assumptions that the structures they know in their L1 will be the same than the used ones in the L2.

### 7.1.2 Ellipsis

In the process of writing, it is a tendency that learners try to avoid the use of key words in English as they do in Spanish, this effort leads many times the learner to make errors as both syntactic structures differ, making the transference negative.

“It haven’t mathematics” (A1-2)

The participant A produced in an ellipsis error as he avoided including the adverb “any” which is necessarily used to state negative sentences. In addition, the participant used an incorrect conjugation of third person and an incorrect form for the negative sentence (It doesn’t have any mathematics). This is the result of negative transfer, as in Spanish the adverb “any” is not used and negative statements are constructed using “no” plus the verb “have” (Eso no tiene matematicas). Proving that the participant A1 knows partially the

grammatical rule for making contractions of negative sentences, but he still has gaps concerning the use of syntactic structures of English for negative statements.

“I’m not so applicate I distracted a lot” (A10-2)

In this example, the participant A10 produced a sentence in which he omitted adding the verb “get” before the adjective “distracted”. Get, as well as be, become and seem, are verbs which normally are used before adjectives in English to indicate how somebody feels or a described action (I’m not so applicate, I get distracted a lot). This is a rule of the English language which does not occur also in Spanish, since in the syntactic construction “get” is unexistent and in this case “distracted” becomes the verb (Yo no soy aplicado yo me distraigo mucho).

The evidence proves that learners transferred the syntactic structures they naturally use in Spanish into their productions in English. As in the examples presented, the adverb “any” and the verb “get” were omitted.

### **7.1.3 Articles**

The use of articles in English is one of the other syntactic aspects affected by negative transfer from L1 into L2 production. Article patters differ greatly from Spanish to English and learners tend to make errors since they use articles the same way they do in Spanish. In English articles in English are determined principally by nouns. Therefore, the use of articles depends on the nature of nouns (countable/uncountable) and the form of them (singular/plural).

Referring to the use of articles, countable nouns can have any article and they are used with unspecific words, subjects or objects, and the use of them depends on the singular or plural form. Nevertheless, uncountable nouns take only “the” when are used with specific words, subjects or objects.



### 7.1.3.1 Addition: the/a

Learners tend to add articles in the productions when not necessary when they come before plural and uncountable nouns. The example below illustrates the unnecessary addition of articles in their productions.

“I like to learn the lyrics of the songs” (A10.1)

In this example, it is evidenced the negative syntactic transfer of articles from Spanish to English, as the participant A10 added the article “the” when not necessary. In English, this construction does not need the addition of any article (I like to learn lyrics of songs), since the article “the” is only used for specific objects; whereas in Spanish the use of articles is required for referring to countable and uncountable nouns (Me gusta aprender las letras de las canciones).

### 7.1.3.2 Article misuse

There is a tendency when it comes to article selection to place incorrect articles before nouns. The syntactic errors in this section reveal that students confuse the usage of articles what makes their English less accurate.

“A lion laughed and set it free” (A8.3)

The participant A8 clearly misunderstood the usage of articles. He placed the article “a”, when he should place the article “the”, as it was noticed in his production that he was talking about a specific object “the lion”, not an unspecific object (a lion). In this construction the incorrect placement of articles (“a” instead of “the”) does not affect the grammatical construction itself, but it affects the intention of the message. It is evident that the participant once more transferred syntactic structures from his L1 to apply his knowledge in the L2, as in Spanish articles is exchangeable.

### 7.1.4 Prepositions

Prepositions in English and Spanish have in general similar functions and they even sound certainly similar in both languages. Because of this reason, errors were not extensively evidenced in addition or omission of prepositions, but the misuse of these was very affected, given that in more specific cases prepositions in English have specific functions which are hard to distinguish and learners tend to misuse.

#### 7.1.4.1 Prepositions misuse

Misusing prepositions is an error learners make often. The use of location, place and time prepositions tended to be confused by the participants continuously.

“I started in the UTP” (A5-1)

Based on the example from the participant A5, the preposition that should be used is “at” instead of “in”, as it refers to a very specific place (I started at UTP). This error of preposition has to do with the fact that in Spanish the preposition “en” is used to replace the prepositions “in”, “on” and “at” in English. (Yo empecé en la UTP).

“Also we go to swim at river” (A8-1)

The participant A8 also made an error related to this problematic explained (Also we go to swim to the river) as well, it is necessary to add the article “the” to the object of the sentence. The misuse of “to” is related to a pattern transferred which ended to be negative influence from the L1 into the L2. The preposition “al” in Spanish, as (También nosotros vamos a nadar al río)

### 7.1.5 Tense

Syntactic errors of tense were divided in two categories. The first one includes the errors that occur when the learner is referring to a present action and words in past are included. A second instance includes the errors that arise when the learner is referring to a

past action and words in present or infinitive are incorporated. Therefore, the syntactic errors that evidenced the transference of syntactic patterns from Spanish into English were selected to belong in this category.

#### **7.1.5.1 Present forms in simple past**

Not numerous cases when the participants produced this phenomenon were evidenced, as they tended to predict accurately the model from Spanish into English.

“I can’t kicked them out because I haven’t heart for that” (A10-3)

However, the participant A10 produced a sentence that fits with the description of this specific variety of syntactic transferred error, the errors from this example are directly related to the rules of use in Spanish as the verb “can’t” is replaced by “no puedo” both in present, as well as the verb “kicked” which is changed for “echarlos”. It does not change of tense in Spanish while it does in English, and the participant did not use it appropriately then. The tense in the L1 is defined by the modal verb (Yo no puedo echarlos afuera porque yo no tengo corazón para eso), which proves that the participant transferred the patterns from L1 using the modal verb “can’t”, the verb “kicked” and negation “haven’t”.

In the L2 this sentence shows a problematic area in which the participant changed to past the wrong verb when he stated “can’t” and “kicked” showing that “can’t” needed to be written in past to indicate that the use of the modal verb “can” was suitable for a sentence in past; adding that “kicked” needed to be written in infinitive so there was a complementation of the past tense structure for the sentence. Besides, when the learner used “I haven’t” another grammatical error emerged as the rule in English proposes that the auxiliary “do” is added when a negation takes place (I couldn’t kick them out because I don’t have heart for that).

#### **7.1.5.2 Past tense with present and infinitive**

When composing sentences in simple past in the L2, learners produced errors that reflected their attempt to use the knowledge they had in Spanish, and here negative transfer occurred.

“While he was talking to his friend, his sister run away” (A7-5)

For example the participant A7 borrowed from his L1 the linguistic information to tell his sister “run away” instead of “ran away”. This, because when composing sentences in Spanish, all the verbs mentioned do not need to follow the sequence being conjugated in past as it happens in English. For instance, in the example (Mientras él hablaba con su amigo, su hermana huye) the verb “huye” can be replaced by “huyó”, the equivalent in English to “ran away”. This example evidences that the learner followed the linguistic pattern. Although, in English the rule for writing a describing sentence in simple past makes all the verbs in a sentence needed to be conjugated in past (While he was talking to his friend, his sister ran away).

### 7.1.6 Verbs

The syntactic errors concerning the use of verbs committed by the participants were divided into different categories that included the omission of “ing” forms when necessary, the omission of “to”. These errors evidenced the transferred of L1 forms when producing in the L2, as most of these forms are not used in Spanish.

#### 7.1.6.1 Omission of ing

Errors in the misuse of ing forms were frequent when the participants were producing in English since ing forms are inexistent in Spanish when used in the present tense. Furthermore, -ing forms usually correspond to Spanish infinitives.

“I like eat fast food, watch movies” (A1.2)

The participant A1 in his construction proved that there is a tendency to omit “ing” which is necessary when describing likes using the verb “like”. It is evidenced that the participant transferred Spanish syntactic forms into the construction of the sentence in English “I like go”, as in Spanish when indicating likes it is used “Me gusta ir” in which it is not used any –ing form.

### 7.1.6.2 Omission of to

In the process of writing in English, the participants omitted the particle “to” since in many cases it is not used in Spanish after a verb.

“is necessary put rules but respectfully”(A4.5)

In the utterance above produced by the participant A4, it is clearly proved the omission of the particle “to” because he made use of the syntactic structures in Spanish “necesario poner reglas”, and used this same structure when writing in the L2 “necessary put rules”, while in English the accurate syntactic construction may include “to” after an adjective and before the verb. Consequently, when the participant A4 used the same syntactic structure presented in Spanish in the attempt to write in English, he omitted “to”, making the utterance not grammatical accurate.

### 7.1.6.3 Misuse of possessive pronouns

Possession and related concepts are expressed in English by the use of “’s”, while in Spanish it is expressed by the use of “of”. The errors in the misuse of possessive pronouns revealed that learners had difficulties concerning the usage of possessive forms such “your”, “his” “her” and expressions with “’s” when describing possessions.

“My mother is works, your work is in downtown” (A6.3)

The participant A6 in this sentence totally misused the possessive form since he stated that the subject of the sentence was “my mother”, and it might remain constant in the use of a possessive form for the female third person “my mother” which is “her”. Nevertheless, he used the possessive pronoun “your” which is not variable in Spanish “su” since it is used as a possessive form with mostly all the pronouns. Additionally, there are other syntactic areas affected in this construction concerning errors in verb usage.

### 7.1.7 Pluralities

Plurality in English is significantly different from that in Spanish. Participants tended to make syntactic errors regarding pluralities since they used their L1 background to construct utterances in the L2. When marking plurality in Spanish, people may add only an extra syllable (s- suffix) to the word (e.g. un hermano – dos hermanos), whereas in English, nouns vary from irregular to regular. When marking plurality with regular nouns, it is used a –s suffix at the end of the word (e.g. one brother – two brothers), while in irregular nouns it may remain with no changes and it would be used for singular and plural nouns the same construction (e.g. candy), in some other cases may change the vowel in the existing final syllable or change some syllables of the word (e.g. foot – feet).

“For me she was the most beautiful women in this world” (A8-2)

In the example above, the participant A8 gave evidence of this phenomenon since it is evidenced the incorrect plurality of the word “woman”. The participant in the attempt to construct an utterance referring to a singular noun “a woman” used the plurality form “women” which affected the meaning and the grammatical construction of the message. Moreover, it is noticeable that when it comes to use the correct plural for a noun, learners make errors in their production and it may result in misunderstanding.

“even mouses can do a lion a big favour” (A3.1)

Moreover, the participant A3 proved the syntactic transfer from L1 constructions to L2 production concerning pluralities since in English, the plural form of “mouse” is “mice”, while when marking plurality for the word “mouse” and in Spanish “ratón”, the participant only should place a “-s” or a “-es” suffix to express plurality “ratones”.

### 7.1.8 Comparative constructions

In the errors concerning the usage of comparative and superlative forms, it was found a tendency to transfer forms of comparison from Spanish into English. These comparative patterns differ greatly from one language to the other, and in the attempt to construct sentences using

comparative forms, the participants of this study used their L1 background and applied that knowledge in the production of the L2. In this section is included evidence of comparative forms errors in “as as”, superlative constructions as “the most” or “the –est” and “more than” or “-er than”.

“I think that study is the important of the life” (A9.3)

In this example, the participant A9 clearly misused the correct form of superlative constructions, as in English it is used “the most” when it comes to describe the highest degree of grammatical comparison of an adjective or adverb. However, it was also evidenced in the construction of this sentence the omission of the noun belonging to the adjective “important” making this utterance inaccurate. Furthermore, the structure of this sentence revealed syntactic negative transfer from Spanish into English, as it reflects a precisely reproduction of the structure in Spanish “Pienso que el estudio es lo importante de la vida” which makes much sense, whereas in English this construction lacks of language forms to make it accurate and understandable.

## **7.2. Causes of syntactic errors made by English pre-intermediate learners from an English teaching program.**

### **7.2.1 Using structures in the L2 which are inexistent in the L1 directs the learner to error making.**

When learners in a pre-intermediate level of English composed a sentence, they borrowed syntactic models from their L1 to apply them in the L2 production. However, the syntactic structures among both languages are different and the productions in the L2 contained errors influenced by structures which the learner assimilated are correct in the L1. Error production was evidently widely identified in the specific cases in which the learner was required to use in English a syntactic structure which is not used in Spanish.

It can be explained by affirming it is difficult for learners to assimilate new structures, different than those they already learnt and can connect with their L1 according to Li (2008).

Evidence of this is found in two of the greatest affected categories, which contained errors condensed in “omission of to” and “omission of –ing” for expressing routines. Learners attempted to use these structures from English which are new for them. Poor received instruction and poor practice of the structures facilitate the appearing of these errors.

“I like dance, I like study, I like sleep” (A9-3)

“I like work with people” (A6-1)

“I like clean my house” (A1-3)

These examples demonstrate there was transference from Spanish into English and this is the cause of the error, as the errors correspond to the following examples:

“Me gusta bailar, me gusta estudiar, me gusta dormir” (A9-1)

“Me gusta trabajar con gente” (A6-1)

“Me gusta limpiar mi casa” (A1-3)

Evidence on this shows that even though the articles (the-a) are also widely used in their L1, Ls constantly omitted using them when writing in the L2.

“She was taken to Venezuela and I was in military service” (A6-2)

Again, the examples demonstrate there was transference from Spanish into English and this is the cause of the error

“Ella fue llevada a Venezuela y yo estaba en servicio militar”

As it was mentioned for the participant A7, the grammatical awareness instruction for using their mother language received during their elementary and school periods was very poor, and not clear ideas of how to use correctly mother tongue is a cause for the permanent problems for developing awareness when uttering in the L2. And it is evident how hard it is for learners to use the language and its new learnt constructions when they were not aware of the correct use of their existent ones in the L1.

– Cuales siente que son sus fortalezas en español?



**A-7:** *Las fortalezas? Pues a ver, de pronto sí, redactando en sí, en fluidez.*

– Y usted a qué le atribuye esa problemática, de dónde cree que venga ese problema?

**A-7:** *Yo creo que fue por la educación, de pronto la escuela, porque no fue muy buena...eh... nos explicaban cosas muy raras, que el verbo, el sustantivo y uno no tenía ni idea que era eso y pues tampoco le explicaban pa' que servía.*

(Taken from Interview A-7)

### 7.2.2 Learners think in Spanish when they write in English

It has been noticeable that language learners' knowledge in the L1 influenced in different ways their written production in the target language. During the interviews it was found the commonality that learners declared that when they wrote in English they thought in Spanish first and constructed later their utterances in the L2.

– ¿Cuál es el rol del español escribe en inglés?

**A-9:** *No, pues mucho. Por lo general uno se apoya en idioma que es natural de uno. Si me entiende? Y uno cree que como se habla en el Español se habla en el Inglés. Más si embargo uno se apoya en eso, porque no tiene más cómo. Pues cree uno que casi va a estar bien.*

(Taken from Interview A-9)

Learners started a complex cognitive process trying to transfer and predict structures into the target language, which in different cases was a not accurate and produced error. Language learners do not get to understand these rules directly in English, but they focus most of their attention in single words, to transfer their messages literally from L1 into L2.

The fact that learners do not focus totally when writing, because they do not take their time to revise and rewrite when necessary, adding the lack of routines to practice the topics presented in the classroom and dedication, plus the few exposition to the exercise of writing; are facts that definitively make the Interlanguage period longer and more difficult to get over for the learners and the constant enrichment and learning in the L2 gets trapped in a period in which learners need to depend mostly in transferring patterns which result to be inappropriate, because of the differences of languages, besides the high chances to make fossilizations of incorrect transferred terms.

### **7.2.3 Lack of practice of English and lack of commitment interrupts the interaction of the learner with the language**

The highest amount of errors in the participant's written productions occurred when they omitted in diverse cases important structures in sentences which they used correctly in other paragraphs, besides in other writing tasks. This phenomenon has to do with the fact that many nowadays learners in our region avoid including permanent self-study schedules in their routines, since literacy practices are not widely included in our culture.

In this case, it develops certain lack of autonomy for learning a foreign language and its most important rules. It was noticed that learners did not pay attention to details when writing either because their attention span was finished, or they did not receive the appropriate instruction to learn how to use the linguistic resources in the L2, given that in different utterances when several errors in omission of prepositions were evidenced, learners avoided using structures that normally need to be used in Spanish when creating a sentence. As well, errors in tenses were found:

*“Everyday, I choose different things that help to forgot bad thoughts” A2-1*

Showing either lack of attention in the tense structure the sentence is written or transferred pattern from the L1 to mean

*“Todos los dias, escojo diferentes cosas que me ayudan al olvido de malos pensamientos”*

Here is a gap in the knowledge of the correct form of the verb “forget” in simple past “forgot”. Another possible reason for this error making has to do with the problematic grammatical differences learners have to deal with when they enter in the Interlanguage period, since when using structures inexistent in the L1 learners made more errors.

Errors in Ellipsis, prepositions omission, misuse of prepositions, numbers and pluralities remained constantly seen during the data analysis. This fact, plus the information and answers from the interviews show that these errors are the result of careless writing practices and also lack of motivation.

- Ahora, ¿cuáles cree que son sus fortalezas y sus aspectos a mejorar cuando escribe en inglés?

*A-10: Pues fortaleza.. yo creo que entiendo fácil. Cuando escucho me da dificultad, porque hay palabras que no se escriben como se escuchan...eh y bueno para mejorar.. cuando escribo, pues yo creo que me pierdo mucho porque me da como inseguridad de que me quede mal hecho.*

- Y ¿de dónde cree que vienen esas problemáticas?

*A-10: De pronto, también podría ser porque pues yo no practico mucho el inglés por fuera de la clase, solo con uno que otro del salón. Y pues además los profesores no explican bien todo, sino que a uno le toca rebuscarse muchas cosas y haciendo eso pues pierdo mucho tiempo...*

These errors are rooted in problems with understanding content and occur when learners do not pay attention to language forms because they think these are irrelevant for the communication, or because of lackadaisical attitudes when learning, what leads to learn incorrectly the language forms.

This fact, plus the information and answers from the interviews show that these errors are the result of careless writing practices and also lack of motivation rather than unawareness of the language forms in many cases.

- Ahora, usted cuáles cree que son fortalezas y sus aspectos a mejorar en Inglés?

*A-8: no pues las fortalezas, pues yo creo que todas porque a mí me va bien en la escritura y que es lo otro?*

- Aspectos a mejorar, dificultades...

*A-8: ah pues que la verdad como no me queda tiempo por tanta materia no repaso mucho en la casa y a veces me da mucha pereza porque yo siento que ya me las se casi todas y pues luego me salen bien.*

(Taken from Interview A-8)

Additionally, it was evidenced in the interviews that an important percentage of the participants expressed their perceptions about the lack of practice found in the writing skill in the ELT course they attend at Universidad Eje Cafetero, in which they are focused in working in writing as a support skill rather than a skill itself. In attempts from the ELT courses to promote meaningful writing, they have offered course inadequately integrated into the syllabus, so ELT learners feel quite academically pressed in what self correction and commitment refers, which hardly impacts their motivation.

Moreover, it is common in the answers of the learners during the interviews that autonomy in keep learning about the language forms outside the classroom was not always evident.

Evidence collected throughout this study confirmed that negative transfer is directly related to lack of practice and effort from the participants to improve their knowledge in the L2. This seems to be happening in the great amount of errors in the participant's written production, since they omitted in different cases important particles in sentences which they used accurately in other paragraphs as well as in other writing tasks.

## 8. DISCUSSION

The data obtained from three different methods used in the present study showed that learners relied on L1 (Spanish) to construct messages in L2 (English) when writing. The analysis of the data from the charts and errors produced such as word order, prepositions misuse, articles omission, omission of “to” that pre-intermediate English learners made, was contrasted with an interview conducted with the participants in the end of the course; there were discussed the perceptions, thoughts and practices from the participants. These methods proved the presence of L1 Interference (Negative transfer) into the L2 syntactic structures, given that the participants stated they had to construct their utterances first in L1 and then transfer these statements literally into the target language. Also, these statements were contrasted with the syntactic errors made by the participants and this showed that they tended to make more errors when structures in L1 and L2 were different. These points are supported by the theoretical concepts of Dulay et. all (1982) who claimed that the structures and shapes of the first language of a person were quite different from those of the second language, what led to negative transfer when learners did not know how to use the language structures appropriately. Nevertheless, this affirmation has to be discarded as the influence of L1 can be not just positive, but also negative in many ocations, as the evidence from the samples demonstrated it.

In addition, Paradowiski (2007) says that L1 remains a powerful factor when learning a second language, because learners adapt compatibilities between the L1 and the L2 and produce utterances with the belief that the patterns they found similar will help them. Li (2008) states that language learners unconsciously support with their L1 the productions in the L2, since in the L1 learners are highly skilled, while the L2 is not highly developed yet. That’s why the lack of practice made for learning English found in the interviews affected the learner’s error production and learners made errors as some of the structures were clearly adapted from Spanish to English.

However, the analysis of the data also provided information about some problems with understanding, lack of practice, and lack of motivation that crucially can lead to make errors when writing. Participants when interviewed showed they lacked of attention to the language forms when writing in the L2, which is more the result of careless writing practices than ignorance of the language forms in itself. Moreover, the participants expressed they lacked of practice in writing in the ELT beginners and pre-intermediate courses. This finding is supported

by Zolb (1984), who claimed that errors may be the result of performance problems. It means that language learners make errors not only because of the structural differences between their native language and their target language, but also they make errors because of other factors such as lack of attention, practice, and motivation what can be observed as one of the causes for making errors in the findings resulting from the analysis of the interviews and errors in the writing samples.

Selinker (1972) found that there is a series of intermediate stages from L1 to L2 when learning a second language that is currently known as Interlanguage, in which language learners adapt compatibilities between the L1 and the L2, which according to Odlin (1989) makes transfer positive or negative. When learners do not work on these crucial stages, they tend to fossilize patterns and errors seem to appear.

A remaining issue concerns whether being skilled in the L1 will remain a powerful factor in being skilled in the target language. Results from the diagnosis stage, and samples showed that those learners who did have less problems and tended to make less errors when writing in L1, were the ones who were more proficient in the L2, as they have had according to the information provided in the interviews, not a limited instruction; those learners who expressed they were less proficient when writing in the L1, were the ones who tended to think in the L1 more often than when writing in the L2. This finding can be supported by the findings by Wolfersberger (2003) who claims the influence from L1 to L2 affects considerably the act of communication and it is more given in lower proficiency learners who depend more heavily on their L1 functionality and knowledge to proceed and produce in the target language. Additionally, Odlin (1989) stated that learners, who have highly developed language skills in their native language, were most likely to find that these skills facilitate second language learning. Having this conception and adding Li (2008) who stated that when learners write, subconsciously they support their production in their L1 as this is a highly skilled language. Nonetheless, as Snow (2007) stated, writing is the skill that teachers tend to avoid the most because it is the one which takes the most time in getting totally developed.

Understanding in detail the syntactic categories analyzed throughout this study, according Wolfson (1988), ellipsis excludes casual elements already implied in the context in the attempt of avoiding repetition. The data collected in this study showed that learners from a pre-

intermediate English teaching program tend to transfer ellipsis only when they are not totally sure of the rule in the moment they transfer, or they are not paying enough attention or rewrite their productions.

Cohen (1998) confirms that the misconception of the article system is a major problem in L2 learners, since they tend to transfer the usage they make for it in their L1. Articles addition was one of the most affected areas in the data collected throughout this study. In Spanish there is a wide use of articles that differs among both languages. According to Wexler (1998), learners omit “be” as they go to a stage where developmental omission errors in the use of the tense are frequent. However, from the data collected was evidenced that the participants did not omit “be” constantly. It had to do with the fact that in their L1, the pronoun is the one that tends to be the most omitted, while the verb be is mentioned most of the times, for instance “Hoy estoy feliz”, or in English “today I’m happy. Gass (1996) claims that structural differences in word order from L1 affect the production in L2, even though the syntactic patterns are different. It was evident in the data that learners acquired so early the rule about word order given that they use it accurately already. Even so the errors found in this study associated with word order show that this area is not dominated by pre-intermediate English learners yet.

Consequently, Pittman (1966), proposed that only some prepositions have equivalence among L1 and L2, this is why the ones that do not have equivalence between English and Spanish have the reputation to be difficult and unpredictable to learn. Affirmations supported by Takahaski (1969), confirm that correct use of prepositions is one of the greatest problems for English learners. These assumptions verify the evidence found in this study, as there was not addition or omission of prepositions. However learners misused them permanently when referring to specific locations, time and places. As in Spanish they all are replaced by one single preposition “en” (Yo estoy en mi casa).

## **9. IMPLICATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH**

By revealing the syntactic errors and the potential causes why learners rely on their native language when they write in the L2, it is suggested that further research can be conducted on how and when to correct errors, as a great amount of these errors produced by negative syntactic transfer can be fossilized and affect the progressive mastery of the communicate skills in a second language. For this reason, the implementation of research on continuous feedback and error treatment should be carried out in future studies.

Moreover, it was evidenced in the interviews and in the errors produced in writing samples collected, that learners' weakly integrated writing practices were caused by a deficient instruction in L1 and L2 in school, and how these practices were responsible of gaps in other important areas of writing such as punctuation, spelling, text organization, and lexis. As a result, the areas previously mentioned are suggested for further research, as they could provide important information that could facilitate the implementation of L2 learning practices in school or college and could improve information about the way these areas have been treated.

To conclude, this study could be enriching to English language teachers and researchers who want to raise awareness on error correction.



## 10. CONCLUSION

The present study aimed at describing and reporting the syntactic transfer errors committed by pre-intermediate English language teaching learners, and the potential causes that led to make different syntactic errors when writing in the L2. This study was conducted in a state-owned institution located in the coffee growing area in Colombia.

The findings obtained suggest that the most affected areas by syntactic transfer were word order, ellipsis, use of articles, prepositions, tenses, verb conjugations, plurality, and comparative constructions. Additionally, evidence obtained from interviews and writing samples showed how the participants tended to use their L1 background knowledge in the attempt to construct their knowledge in the L2, as they found in this knowledge a linguistic source to produce in the L2. Furthermore, it was evidenced learners' perceptions towards the causes why they relied on Spanish when writing in English and their thoughts regarding their poorly-integrated writing practices in the target language.

Moreover, the present study suggests for further research exploration on how and when to treat learners' errors, and suggests research on other areas affected by language transfer and how the implementation of writing practices in school and meaningful feedback can impact the progress of learners in the mastery of the communicative skills in the foreign language. In summary, this study provides key elements concerning syntactic transfer from Spanish into English production and illustrates this phenomenon presented in an English language teaching program.

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**APPENDIX 1****Diagnosis****QUESTIONS**

Read the article about penguins.

Choose the best word (A, B or C) for each space.

**PART 1** ->For questions 1 to 8, mark A, B or C on your answer sheet.

**PENGUINS**

There (0) ..... seventeen different types of penguins. They can be (1) ..... forty centimetres to more than one metre tall. They all (2) .....in the south part of the world. In winter, they swim (3) ..... long way to find warmer weather.

In spring, (4) ..... penguins come together on the beaches of Antarctica. The female penguin has one or two eggs. She puts (5) ..... eggs on the ground and sits there to keep (6) ..... Warm. But she doesn't sit all the time because penguins can move with one egg between their legs.

(7) ..... the female penguin is sitting on the eggs, the male penguin brings her food. He also (8) ..... this after the baby penguins are born.

Example:

0 A is B are C be

Answer:

0	A	B	C
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

1 A from B by C between

2 A lives B live C lived

3 A one B the C a

4 A lots B much C many

5 A her B hers C she

6 A it B them C their

7 A When B How C Who

8 A does B do C doing

**PART 2** -> Questions 9- 13

Read the descriptions of some words about families.

What is the word for each one? The first letter is already there.  
There is one space for each other letter in the word.

For questions 9 – 13, write the words on your answer sheet.

Example:

0 This person is your father’s or mother’s sister. A \_ \_ \_

Answer:

<b>0</b>	<b>Aunt</b>
----------	-------------

9 A married man is called this by his wife h \_ \_ \_ \_ \_

10 You can learn from these people in your g \_ \_ \_ \_ \_  
 \_ \_

family because they are much older than  
 you.

11 This is what you are before you get married s \_ \_ \_ \_ \_

12 If you have any children, the girl is called this. d \_ \_ \_ \_ \_

13 This is written on your passport and is usually s \_ \_ \_ \_ \_  
 the same for one family.

**PART 3 ->** Questions 14 – 23

Complete the email.

Write ONE word for each space.

For questions 14 – 23, write the words on your answer sheet.

Example:

<b>0</b>	<b>has</b>
----------	------------

From: Jessie
To: Carmen
<p>Thanks for your email.</p> <p>This month (0) ..... been quite boring for me. I haven't had the time to do any (14) ..... the things I like. Our teacher gives us too (15) ..... homework and the weather's been terrible (16) ..... the weekends. I haven't played tennis (17) ..... three weeks now!. But (18) ..... is some good news! I can come and stay (19) ..... you in the summer. Mum and Dad have said yes! I (20)..... so pleased.</p> <p>The best time for me is (21) ..... Second half of July. (22) ..... this okay? Please ask (23) ..... mum and dad and email me back. Then I can get my plane ticket.</p>

**PART 4 ->** Questions 24 – 28

Read the advertisement and the email. Fill in the information in Sam’s notes.

For questions 24 – 29, write the information on your answer sheet.

<b>EASTON HALL CONCERTS IN THE PARK</b>	
17 June <b>MYRA</b>	
Tickets: \$12.50	
\$11.00 students.	
24 June <b>SONEX</b>	
Tickets: \$ 10.00	
\$ 8.50 students.	

From: Helena
To: Sam
Can you book two tickets – one each – for a concert at Easton Hall? I’m busy on 24 June –it’ll have to be the weekend before.
Remember we get in cheaper because we’re at university. We won’t need any food, but it may get cold so bring a jacket.

**Sam’s Notes**

**CONCERT**

Place: Easton Hail

Date: (24) .....

Name of band: (25) .....

Number of tickets: (26) .....

Price of my ticket: (27) ...\$.....

Take: (28) .....

**Paper Writing Candidate Answer Sheet**

Candidate name:

Mark one letter for each question (1-8). Write your answers in the spaces next to the numbers (9 -28)

PART 1			
1	A	B	C
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2	A	B	C
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3	A	B	C
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4	A	B	C
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5	A	B	C
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6	A	B	C
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7	A	B	C
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8	A	B	C
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

PART 2	
9	
10	
11	
12	
13	

PART 3	
14	
15	
16	
17	
18	
19	
20	
21	
22	
23	

PART 4	
24	
25	
26	
27	
28	



## APPENDIX 2

### Syntactic Transfer Error Chart divided in Categories

The evidence of errors was taken from the different samples collected from the participants. These errors were settled into the syntactic category charts they belonged to. In front of the error the correct form was written. This correct form is limited to correct the error that is being represented in the specific category, not the total amount of errors from a sentence. This with the purpose of demonstrating with clarity the affected area and not manipulating the transferred patterns' meanings.

Each participants' production is differenced by colors.

The total amount of errors represented in specific categories is written in the chart "total", just in front of the name of the category or sub-category when necessary.

Participant: P

#### Categories subdivisión:

#### Word Order

P	Evidence of Error	Correct Form	Total	12
<b>A2</b>	-I like programs tv (A2-6)	-I like tv programs	<b>12</b>	
<b>A4</b>	- I sometimes bring that the bus is crowde	- Sometimes I bring that the bus is crowded		
<b>A6</b>	- my live professional it's very important (A6-1)	- my <u>professional life it's</u> very important		
	- a opportunity great (A6-1)	- a great opportunity		
	- I first met my serious love (A6-2)	- I met my first serious love		
	- She sometimes called me but all it was ending	- She called me sometimes, but it all was ending		
<b>A7</b>	- chating with my contact, facebook, etc. (A7-2)	- Chatting with my facebook contacts, etc.		
	- they asked him if he knew	- They asked him if he knew where		

<p><b>A8</b></p> <p><b>A10</b></p>	<p>where was his sister (A7-5)</p> <p>- but still he is looking foward to find his little sister.(A7-5)</p> <p>- Also I like to out run to differents places for improve my healt. (A8.1) W.O – Prep add</p> <p>-I want to become a teacher English (A10-1)</p> <p>- I don't know what should I do (A10-3)</p>	<p>his sister was</p> <p>- But he's still looking forward to find his little sister.</p> <p>- Also I like running in different places to improve my health.</p> <p>-I want to become an English Teacher</p> <p>- I don't know what I should I do</p>		
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### Ellipsis

P	Evidence of Error	Correct Form	Total	20
<p><b>A1</b></p> <p><b>A5</b></p> <p><b>A6</b></p> <p><b>A7</b></p> <p><b>A10</b></p>	<p>- Two sister () are 17 and 12 (A1-2)</p> <p>- I live () my son () is 11 months (A1-2)</p> <p>- It haven't () mathematics (A1-2)</p> <p>- She () with me to the corner (A5-2)</p> <p>- Turned out my clothes ()() closet looking for a shirt (A6-3)</p> <p>- and woxe him up lion got angry () cought mouse (A6-4)</p> <p>- Im studying 3 hours () now (A7-3)</p> <p>I'm not so applicate I () distracted a lot (A10-2)</p>	<p>- Two sisters <u>who</u> are 17 and 12</p> <p>- I live <u>with</u> my son <u>who</u> is 11 months</p> <p>- It <u>hasn't any</u> mathematics</p> <p>- She <u>came</u> with me to the corner</p> <p>- Took out my clothes <u>and opened the</u> closet looking for a shirt</p> <p>- And <u>woke</u> him up. The lion got angry <u>and</u> caught the mouse.</p> <p>- <u>I'm</u> studying 3 hours <u>until now</u></p> <p>- I'm not so applicate I get distracted a lot</p>	<p><b>8</b></p> <p><b>7</b></p>	

	<p><b>Pronouns omission</b></p> <p><b>A2</b> I listen to English music but I imprime the letter, and listen () one, two or three times (A2-1)</p> <p><b>A4</b> Is necessary put rules but respectfully (A4-2)</p> <p><b>A6</b> - First () were very good friends but little by little we were falling in love (A6-2)</p> <p>- I turned on the light because () was dark (A6-3)</p> <p><b>A9</b> - I told () about my hobbies and all the things that () make in my free time (A9-4)</p> <p><b>A8</b> - and ()said now you know that even () can do for a lion a big favour (A8-3)</p> <p><b>A10</b> - I like to learn the lyrics of the songs because () is a good way to learn English plus () is very funny. (A10-1)</p>	<p>I listen to English music but I <u>imprime</u> the letter, and listen <u>to it</u> one, two or three times</p> <p>It is necessary put rules but respectfully</p> <p>- First <u>we</u> were very good friends but little by little we were falling in love</p> <p>I turned on the light because <u>it</u> was dark</p> <p>- I told <u>you</u> about my hobbies and all the things that <u>I</u> like doing in my free time.</p> <p>- and <u>he</u> said. Now you know that even <u>I</u> can do for a lion a big favour.</p> <p>- I like to learn the lyrics of the songs because <u>it</u> is a good way to learn English plus <u>it</u> is very funny.</p>		
<p><b>A6</b></p>	<p><b>Pronouns addition</b></p> <p>- I think this career is it a challenges for me (A6-1)</p> <p>- Did you go to <u>the</u> Atenas library? There if you buy two books they'll give <u>it</u> to you one more (A6-4)</p>	<p>- I think this career is a challenge for me.</p> <p>- Did you go to Atenas library? There if you buy two books they'll give to you one more (A6-4)</p>	<p><b>2</b></p>	
<p><b>A4</b></p>	<p><b>Pronouns misuse</b></p> <p>- If a students consume drugs the teacher must understand his</p>	<p>- If a students consume drugs the teacher must understand <u>their</u></p>	<p><b>3</b></p>	

	behaviors (A4-2)  - So I can teach them and help you to obtain more opportunities in your lifes (A4-3)	behaviors  So I can teach them and help them to obtain more opportunities in <u>their</u> <u>lives</u> .		
<b>A5</b>	- I started to look her as the most beautiful woman in they university (A5-1)	- I started to look her as the most beautiful woman in the university (A5-1)		

## Articles

P	Evidence of Error	Correct Form	Total	29
<b>A2</b>	<b>Omission: the/a</b>  The lion was roaring for help mouse appeared (A2-3)  Even mouse can do lion big favour (A2-3)	  The lion was roaring for help <u>and the</u> mouse appeared  Even mouse can do <u>the</u> lion big <u>a</u> favour	<b>17</b>	
<b>A6</b>	The lion got angry, () cought mouse and threatened to kill him (A2-3)  - She was taken to Venezuela and I was in () military service. (A6-2)  - Turned out my clothes () () closet looking for a shirt (A6-3)  - One day while () lion was sleeping () mouse ran over his face (A6-4)  - () Lion laughed and set if free (A6-4)  - and woxe him up () lion got angry () cought mouse (A6-4)  - and said now you know that even () mouse can do lion a big favour (A6-4)	The lion got angry, cought <u>the</u> mouse and threatened to kill him  - She was taken to Venezuela and I was in the military service.  - Took out my clothes and opened <u>the</u> closet looking for a shirt.  - One day while <u>the</u> lion was sleeping, <u>the</u> mouse ran over his face  - <u>The</u> lion laughed and set it free  - and woke him up, <u>the</u> lion got angry and caught <u>the</u> mouse  - and said now you know that even <u>a</u> mouse can make to <u>a</u> lion a big favor		

A8	<p>- One day while lion was sleeping (A8-3)</p> <p>- the mouse appeared cut ropes with his teeth (A8-3)</p>	<p>- One day <u>thsee</u> lion was sleeping</p> <p>- the mouse appeared and cut <u>the</u> ropes with his teeth</p>		
A9	<p>- While lion was sleeping mouse ran over his face (A9-1)]</p> <p>- Lion got angry (A9-1)</p> <p>- Lion laughed and set if free (A9-1)</p>	<p>- While <u>the</u> lion was sleeping, <u>the</u> mouse ran over his face</p> <p>- The lion got angry</p> <p>-The lion laughed and set it free</p>		
A10	<p>-One day () lion was sleeping () mous ran over his face and woke him up. () Lion got angry cought the mause and threatened to kill him. (A10-4)</p> <p>- ()Lion laughed and set it free (A10-4)</p> <p>-As () lion was roaring for help () mouse and appeared cut () rapes with his teeth and said now you know that even () mouse can do () lion a big favor</p>	<p>-One day the lion was sleeping, and a mouse ran over his face and woke him up. The lion got angry, cought the mouse and threatened to kill him.</p> <p>- The lion laughed and set it free</p> <p>As the lion was roaring for help a mouse and appeared cut the rapes with his teeth and said now you know that even a mouse can do the lion a big favor</p>		
A1  A6  A7  A9	<p><b>Addition: the/a</b></p> <p>- If you take a taxi, you can get to the office faster.</p> <p>- You have a reason (A1-1)</p> <p>- Did you go to <u>the</u> Atenas library? There if you buy two books they'll give it to you one more (A6-4)</p> <p>- I would never had <u>the</u> heart to deny (A7-1)</p> <p>- I think that study is the important of <u>the</u> life (A9-3)</p>	<p>- If you take a taxi, you can get to the office faster.</p> <p>You have reason</p> <p>- Did you go to Atenas library? There if you buy two books they'll give you one more.</p> <p>- I would never have heart to deny...</p> <p>- I think that study is the ____ important of life</p>	7	

A10	<p>- When I was in <u>the</u> school (A9-4)</p> <p>I like to learn <u>the</u> lyrics of <u>the</u> songs (A10-1)</p>	<p>- When I was in school</p> <p>- I like to learn lyrics of songs</p>		
	<p><b>Misuse: the/a</b></p>		<b>5</b>	
A4	<p>- If a students consume drugs (A4-2)</p> <p>- I don't like having an animals in the house (A4-3)</p>	<p>- If students consume drugs</p> <p>- I don't like having animals in the house (A4-3)</p>		
A8	<p><u>A</u> lion laughed and set it free (A8-3)</p>	<p>- The lion laughed and set it free</p>		
A10	<p>- I have always loved English and teaching a see people developing. (A10-1)</p>	<p>- I have always loved English and teaching and see people developing.</p>		
	<p>-I met him throught a mutual friend of us. (A10-5)</p>	<p>- I met him by a mutual friend of us.</p>		

### Prepositions

P	Evidence of Error	Correct Form	Total	17
A6	<p><b>Omission</b></p> <p>- and said now you know that even mouse can <u>do</u> () lion a big favour (A6-4)</p>	<p>- and said now you know that even a mouse can do <u>to</u> lion a big favor</p>	<b>2</b>	
A10	<p>- When I am clases I like to participate (A10-2)</p>	<p>- When I am <u>in</u> classes I like to participate</p>		
A8	<p><b>Addition</b></p> <p>- Also I like <u>to out run</u> to differents places <u>for</u> improve my healt. (A8.1)</p>	<p>- Also I like <u>to run</u> in different places <u>to</u> improve my health.</p>	<b>1</b>	
A1	<p><b>Misuse</b></p> <p>- And Saturday (A1-3)</p>	<p>On Saturday</p>	<b>14</b>	

	- And Sunday (A1-3)	On Monday		
<b>A2</b>	- Sometimes at weekends (A2-1)	Sometimes on weekends		
<b>A3</b>	- I call <u>on</u> her (A3-1)	I call her		
	-I read manga or watch anime in the internet (A3-2)	I read manga or watch anime on the internet (A3-2)		
<b>A4</b>	- Talk with my friends (A4-3)	- Talk to my friends		
<b>A5</b>	- I started in the UTP (A5-1)	- I started at the UTP		
<b>A6</b>	- He didn't give up to the college <u>for</u> this problem (A6-3)	- He didn't give up at college because of this problem		
	- Turned out the coffe machine (A6-3)	- He turned off/took out the coffee machine		
<b>A7</b>	I saw that he () sad to a girl (A7-1)	I saw that he was sad <u>for</u> a girl		
<b>A8</b>	- I go to visit some friends <u>at</u> their houses (A8-1)	I go to visit some friends to their houses		
	- Also we go to swim at river (A8-1)	Also we go to swim to the river		
	- I was the happiest man of earth (A8-2)	I was the happiest man in earth		
<b>A9</b>	- A day I stay in her house with her when <u>at the</u> moment give off the tv and we give up drinking the beer because we run <u>for</u> all the house because we were very nervous.	One day I stayed in her house with her. <u>In</u> the moment we turned off the tv and we gave up drinking the beer we ran through all the house because we were very nervous.		

## Tense

P	Evidence of Error	Correct Form	Total	12
	<b>Present form for the past</b>		<b>3</b>	
<b>A7</b>	- I want you to came with me (A7-3)	- I wanted you to come with me		
	- They run over a friend of her, so they ask him (A7-5)	- They ran over a friend of her so they asked him		
<b>A10</b>	- I can't kicked them out because I haven't heart for that (A10-3)	- I couldn't kick them out because I haven't heart for that		
	<b>Past Tense with present and infinitive</b>		<b>9</b>	
<b>A2</b>	- Every day, I choose different things that help to forgot bad thoughts (A2-1)	Every day, I choose different things that help to forget bad thoughts		
	-I continue to got out spiders (A2-1)	I continue to get out the spiders		
<b>A3</b>	- I didn't know who it was, soon I get lost (A3.1)	I didn't know who it was, soon I <u>got</u> lost		
	- I was scary (A3.1)	I was scared		
<b>A4</b>	- for me is better to tell my experience I feel happy and calm (A4-4)	- for me is better to tell my experience I feel happy and calmed		
<b>A7</b>	-I told him that I can't be (A7-1)	- I told him that I couldn't be		
	- But if you made a mistake, it won't be my fault (A7-4)	-But if you make a mistake it won't be my fault		
	-While he was talking to his friend, his sister run away (A7-5)	- While he was talking to his friend his sister ran away		
<b>A10</b>	That night we hug all the time (A10-5)	That night we hugged all the time.		



## Verbs

P	Evidence of Error	Correct Form	Total	31
	<b>Omission of be</b>		<b>2</b>	
<b>A7</b>	I saw that he () sad to a girl (A7-1)	- I saw that he <u>was</u> sad to a girl		
<b>A10</b>	-I Julian. (A10-1)	- I <u>am</u> Julian		
	<b>Misuse of ing</b>		<b>8</b>	
<b>A2</b>	- but now I like it very much a tv program that entertaining me (A2-2)	-but now I like it very much a tv program that entertains me.		
<b>A4</b>	- I couldn't go to visit him, I didn't talking to frequently (A4-4)	- I couldn't go to visit him, I didn't <u>talk</u> to frequently (A4-4)		
	- I like go to shopping	- I like going shopping		
<b>A6</b>	- I drinking coffe and I came for the class (A6-3)	- I drank coffe and I came for the class		
<b>A9</b>	- I relax when I listening to music (A9-4)	- I relax when I listen to music		
	- In my free time I reading, watc tv studing (A9-4)	- In my free time I read, watch tv, study		
	- And I told that we are very drinking (A9-5)	- And I told that we were very drank		
	- I study English in my books, reading, listening to music in English, and write (A9-3)	- I study English in my books, reading, listening to music in English and Writing.		
	<b>Omission of ing</b>		<b>11</b>	
<b>A1</b>	- I like eat fast food, see movie (A1-2)	- I like eating fast food, watching movies		
	- I like play with my son (A1-2)	- I like playing with my son		
	- I like go to the park (A1-3)	- I like going to the park		

<b>A3</b>	I like spend time with my friends, have a coffe or go to the cinema. That's nice. (A3-2)	I like spending time with my friends, having a coffee or going to the cinema. That's nice.		
<b>A4</b>	I like listen to music (A4-3) I don't like smoke, drink (A4-3)	- I like listening to music - I don't like smoking, drinking		
<b>A6</b>	- I like work with people (A6-1)	- I like working with people		
<b>A8</b>	- for improve my healt. (A8-1)	- For improving my health		
<b>A9</b>	- I like dance, I like study, I like sleep (A9-3)	- I like dancing, I like studying, I like sleeping.		
<b>A10</b>	- I like to listen to music, dance, watch movies, hang out with friends, chat on the computer, play videogames, read and such.  -I like to go to clubs and pubs and drink (A10-1)	- I like listening to music, dancing, watching movies, hanging out with friends, chatting on the computer, playing videogames, reading and such.  - I like going to clubs pubs and drinking		
	<b>Addition of To</b>		<b>1</b>	
<b>A6</b>	- Yesterday I got up at 6 o'clock to go to the college. (A6-3)	- Yesterday I got up at 6 o'clock for going to college		
	<b>Omission of <u>to</u></b>		<b>8</b>	
<b>A1</b>	- I like clean my house (A1-3) - Finally we go eat ice cream (A1-3)	-I like <u>to</u> clean my house - Finally we go <u>to</u> eat ice cream		
<b>A4</b>	- is necessary put rules but respectfully  - At the moment when I want get on	- is necessary <u>to</u> put rules but respectfully  - At the moment when I want <u>to</u> get on		
<b>A6</b>	- He answered me (A6-3)	- He answered <u>to</u> me		
<b>A8</b>	- I wanted kiss her, she wanted kiss me too (A8-2)  - the mouse appeared cut ropes	- I wanted <u>to</u> kiss her, she wanted to kiss me too  - the mouse appeared <u>to</u> cut <u>the</u>		

<b>A9</b>	with his teeth (A8-3) - I love buy music (A9-2)	ropes with his teeth. - I love <u>to</u> buy music		
<b>A6</b>	<b>Missuse of possessive pronouns</b> - My mother is works, your work is in downtown (A6-3)	-My mother is works, her work is in downtown (A6-3)	<b>1</b>	

### Numbers - Pluralities

	Evidence of Error	Correct Form	Total	15
<b>A1</b>	- Pay this books - Two sister	- Pay these books - Two sisters	<b>15</b>	
<b>A2</b>	-I built station, stores, car parks (A2-2) -The women told me (A2-4) -This days (A2-4) - Something apple	- I built stations, stores, car park -The woman told me -These days - Some apples		
<b>A3</b>	- mouses can do a lion a big favour” (A3-1)	- I don't like having an animals in the house		
<b>A4</b>	- I don't like having an animals in the house (A4-3) - I like friendly, responsible and honest person (A4-3) - So I can teach them and help you to obtain more opportunities in your lifes (A4-3) - and thelp the student share with	- I like friendly, responsible and honest people - So I can teach them and help you to obtain more opportunities in your <u>lives</u> and thelp the student share with different classmate <u>s</u>		

	different classmate (A4-3)			
<b>A6</b>	- And if you go now, maybe they'll give you two book more. (A6-5)	-and if you go now maybe they'll give you two books more		
<b>A7</b>	- chating with my contact, facebook, etc. (A7-2)	- chatting with my contacts facebook, etc.		
<b>A8</b>	- For me she was the most beautiful women in this world. (A8-2)	- For me she was the most beautiful woman in this world.		
<b>A9</b>	- I remember that I have a good friends (A9-4)	- I remember that I have good friends		
	- I always give back the help with others things (A9-4)	- I always give back the help with other things.		

### Comparative Constructions

P	Evidence of Error	Correct Form	Total	5
<b>A3</b>	- I could hear whispers into the darkest (A3-1)	- I could hear whispers into the darkness	<b>5</b>	
<b>A9</b>	- I think that study is the ___ important of <u>the</u> life (A9-3)	- I think that study is the most important of life (A9-3)		
<b>A10</b>	-We like to be at U as earlier as possible. (A10-2)	-we like to be at U as early as possible.		
	-I have some other friend to talk with or ask favours. (A10-2)	I have some other friends to talk with or ask favours. (A10-2)		
	-No-one want them (A10-3)	-No-one want <u>s</u> them (A10-3)		

**APPENDIX 3****Summary****Syntactic Transfer Error Chart divided in Categories**

<b>Category</b>	<b>Total of Errors 139</b>	<b>Errors sub-categories</b>
<b>Word Order</b>	<b>12</b>	-
<b>Ellipsis</b>	<b>20</b>	Ellipsis: 8 Pronouns omission: 8 Pronouns addition: 2 Pronouns misuse: 3
<b>Articles</b>	<b>29</b>	Omission the/a: 17 Addition the/a: 7 Misuse the/a: 5
<b>Prepositions</b>	<b>20</b>	Omission: 2 Addition: 1 Misuse: 14
<b>Tense</b>	<b>12</b>	Present form for the past: 3 Past tense with present and infinitive: 9
<b>Verbs</b>	<b>24</b>	Omission of be: 2 Misuse of Ing: 8 Addition of To: 1 Omission of To :11 Misuse of possessive pronouns: 1
<b>Numbers-pluralities</b>	<b>11</b>	-
<b>Comparative constructions</b>	<b>11</b>	-

## APPENDIX 4

## Written sample from the participant A8

In my free time. I like to play different sports, like a football, volleyball, and Gym. also I like to out run to different places, to improve my health, when I feel very tired. I like to read some books that I have in my home. too, I watch sports through tv with my friends and talking about the matches, sometimes I go to visit some friends at their houses.

also we go to swim at river, also I go out to eat something. I like to study, when I stay alone in my house. that's all.

**Written sample from participant A10**

I want to become a teacher english because  
I have always loved english and teaching a see  
people developing.

I learn english by listen\_ to music and learning  
the lyrics also, read<sup>ing</sup> magazines and review\_  
what I saw on classes.

**APPENDIX 5****Interviews****UNIVERSIDAD EJE CAFETERO****HUMANITIES AND LANGUAGES DEPARTMENT****PRE-INTERMEDIATE ENGLISH COURSE**

The interview conversation session was conducted in Spanish given that the students do not have the language level to carry out a talk of such extensive details. Additionally, it in Spanish it was easier to avoid anxiety in learners as well.

Para todos los participantes:

El propósito de la siguiente charla es hacerle unas preguntas relacionadas a su desempeño en escritura tanto en Español como en Inglés.

1. ¿Usted cuáles cree son sus fortalezas y sus debilidades a la hora de escribir en Español?
2. ¿Usted cuáles cree son los orígenes de sus debilidades cuando escribe en Español?
3. ¿Usted a qué cree se deben sus fortalezas cuando escribe en Español?
4. ¿Usted cuáles cree son sus fortalezas y sus debilidades a la hora de escribir en Inglés?
5. ¿Usted cuáles cree son los orígenes de sus debilidades en el momento de intentar comunicarse de manera escrita en Inglés?
6. ¿A qué le atribuye sus fortalezas cuando escribe en Inglés?



7. ¿Usted que tanto cree que piensa en Español cuando escribe en Inglés?

*Interview conversation answers samples*

*Participante A8*

El propósito de la siguiente charla es hacerle unas preguntas relacionadas a su desempeño en escritura tanto en Español como en Inglés.

1. ¿Usted cuáles cree son sus fortalezas y sus debilidades a la hora de escribir en Español?

*Pues, mis fortalezas yo creo que son todas; porque a mí me va bien en la escritura, y pues, debilidades, no creo que tenga muchas debilidades en Español. Un poquito sí los signos de puntuación.*

2. ¿Usted cuáles cree son los orígenes de sus debilidades cuando escribe en Español?

*Del bachiller, si uno no tiene un buen bachiller, uno pues no viene por decirlo sólido a la universidad por ejemplo en ese tema.*

3. ¿Usted a qué cree se deben sus fortalezas cuando escribe en Español?

*Pues a que uno desde chiquito aprendió como escribir, a uno desde que estaba en la escuela lo ponían a redactar cosas y pues eso es práctica, pero pues cosas como las tildes, la puntuación y todo eso no lo enseñaban muy bien.*

4. ¿Usted cuáles cree son sus fortalezas y sus debilidades a la hora de escribir en Inglés?

No pues que muchas veces no se como decir las cosas en Inglés, no se como cuadrar lo que quiero decir en Inglés y que diga, que exprese, lo que yo quiero. Y pues fortalezas; quizá que se como palabritas de vocabulario.

5. ¿Usted cuáles cree son los orígenes de sus debilidades en el momento de intentar comunicarse de manera escrita en Inglés?

*De pronto, también podría ser porque no nos han enseñado bien como hacerlo. A nosotros si nos dan ejemplos, pero no nos explican mucho, y*

*pues cuando quiere uno hacer algo propio uno no es capaz de dar a entender lo que uno quiere en Inglés. ¿Si me entiende? , y pues también, la falta de práctica.*

6. ¿A qué le atribuye sus fortalezas cuando escribe en Inglés?  
*Pues como le dije, creo que lo que me salva es el vocabulario, y pues eso lo he aprendido, escuchando música y viendo las letras, o pues en las actividades acá en salón y en los libros. Eso ayuda.*
7. ¿Usted que tanto cree que piensa en Español cuando escribe en Inglés?  
*No, pues mucho. Por lo general uno se apoya en idioma que es natural de uno. Si me entiende? Y uno cree que como se habla en el Español se habla en el Inglés. Más si embargo uno se apoya en eso, cuando uno no sabe como decir algo, uno no tiene más cómo. Pues cree uno que así va a estar bien.*

#### *Participante A6*

1. ¿Usted cuáles cree son sus fortalezas y sus debilidades a la hora de escribir en Español?  
*Fortalezas, cuando yo escribo en Español? No pues yo creo que redacto muy bien las cosas o pienso también muy bien para escribir. Y cosas por mejorar, la puntuación y ponerle las tildes y eso a las palabras.*
2. ¿Usted cuáles cree son los orígenes de sus debilidades cuando escribe en Español?  
*No pues, que de pronto uno si sabe, pero por escribir rápido a uno se le olvida y no las pone.*
3. ¿Usted a qué cree se deben sus fortalezas cuando escribe en Español?  
*No pues, que cuando uno escribe en Español uno es más fluido, y se le vienen más ideas a la cabeza a uno. Uno ya está acostumbrado a escribir.*
4. ¿Usted cuáles cree son sus fortalezas y sus debilidades a la hora de escribir en Inglés?  
*Las fortalezas cuando escribo en Inglés? Eh, no pues yo creo que a mí escribiendo me va bien, porque igual, no sé, ya he aprendido las estructuras de las frases y las oraciones. Y debilidades, pues no se, quizá*

*tener más vocabulario. Muchas veces tengo que rebuscarme palabras porque hay un vocabulario que de pronto no sé, entonces tiene uno que escribir muchas veces, o sea, una idea con otras palabras que uno de pronto ya se sepa, y de pronto por eso es muy limitado.*

5. ¿Usted cuáles cree son los orígenes de sus debilidades en el momento de intentar comunicarse de manera escrita en Inglés?  
*No sé, como falta de práctica, como ponerme a estudiar más*
6. ¿A qué le atribuye sus fortalezas cuando escribe en Inglés?  
*Pues que yo desde que estaba en el colegio tuve un buen profesor, y por eso empecé a entender.*
7. ¿Usted que tanto cree que piensa en Español cuando escribe en Inglés?  
*No pues mirá que, pensando así las ideas, pues uno siempre que va a escribir una idea, una composición, uno siempre está pensando primero en Español para escribir en Inglés.*