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RICE UNIVERSITY

TRANSFER IN THE INTERLANGUAGE OF NATIVE ENGLISH SPEAKERS IN FIRST-YEAR COLLEGE SPANISH

by

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A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE MASTER OF ARTS

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ABSTRACT

Transfer in the Interlanguage of Native English Speakers in First-Year College Spanish

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Transfer, or native language interference in the acquisition of a second language, is studied in the developing Spanish interlanguage of English-speaking students enrolled in first-year college Spanish. The study focuses on English language interference in the development of Spanish syntax, lexicon, morphology and orthography. Student compositions are analyzed and transfer errors are identified and categorized by type. The inventory of transfer errors includes all errors found in the student compositions which can be attributed to transfer and explains the interference mechanism involved in the error. Additionally, the frequency of transfer errors is compared horizontally over a four-month period to measure increase or decrease in transfer as the students' language capabilities develop. The study also reviews previous research in transfer, a field which has enjoyed renewed interest among linguists within recent years.
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TRANSFER IN THE INTERLANGUAGE OF NATIVE ENGLISH SPEAKERS IN FIRST-YEAR COLLEGE SPANISH

"Individuals tend to transfer the forms and meanings, and the distribution of forms and meanings of their native language and culture to the foreign language and culture" - Robert Lado.

"It is comforting to know that the investigation of first language transfer has once again become respectable" - Roger W. Andersen.

1. INTRODUCTION

Language transfer, or the influence and interference of previously learned languages on subsequent language acquisition, has in recent years gained renewed acceptance amongst linguists as a contributing factor affecting foreign language learning. How and when languages in contact effect one another is a subject of interest not only in the field of theoretical linguistics in areas such as language typology, cognitive linguistics and language universals, but also in the field of applied linguistics, in the study of second language acquisition. An awareness of potential influence or interference from the mother tongue can be especially useful to the foreign language teacher or student. Specifically, knowledge of what type of errors, or deviations from the norm of native language communication, are commonly caused by first language (L1) transfer to a second language (L2) may help students avoid problems when attempting to communicate in the target language.
1.1 AN OVERVIEW OF TRANSFER THEORY

While transfer has been accepted as a learning phenomenon since classical times,\(^1\) it became a subject of intense interest to linguists in this century after the publication in 1957 of Robert Lado's influential book *Linguistics Across Cultures*, and his proposal of the contrastive analysis hypothesis. The basic assumption of Lado's theory is that many of the potential difficulties a learner may experience in second language acquisition can be attributed to influence from the mother tongue both in perception of the target language when attempting to understand the speech of native speakers and in production of the target language when attempting to communicate. Additionally, such difficulties can be predetermined by a carefully conducted contrastive analysis, or detailed comparison, of the two languages in question. As Lado states: "we can predict and describe the patterns that will cause difficulty in learning, and those that will not cause difficulty, by comparing systematically the language and culture to be learned with the native language and culture of the student" (vii). Lado's work has widely been interpreted by fellow linguists to mean that an additional language is learned by carrying or transferring the previous language into the new one (Wode 203), and that learners will "tend to transfer to their L2 utterances the formal features of their L1" (James 14).

\(^1\)Carl James refers to transfer in learning as being connected to the psychological study of Associationism, a study "dating back at least to Aristotle" (*Contrastive Analysis* 11). Gass and Selinker credit a biblical story as the first known reference to the role of the native language in the acquisition of a subsequent language. Their example deals specifically with phonological transfer. In the book of Judges, Chapter 12, Gileads submit Ephraimites fleeing from battle to a pronunciation test to detect their true heritage. Because Ephraimites traditionally could not pronounce "sh", captured survivors were killed if they could not produce the sound (*Second Language* 75).
Lado's hypothesis is linked to the behaviorist theory of learning, a school of thought supporting the concept that the acquisition of new knowledge and capabilities is based on habit formation and cumulative learning. According to behaviorism, prior learning affects new learning through the psychological process of the transfer of old habits into a new learning situation or the replacement of old habits with new ones (Gass and Selinker, *Second Language* 54). Positive transfer, or transfer of prior habits and patterns which are appropriate to the new learning situation, results in facilitation of new learning while negative transfer, or transfer of habits and patterns inappropriate to the new situation, results in interference and errors. The contrastive analysis theory purports to predict situations where such negative transfer may take place in second language acquisition with the intent of assisting the language learner in avoiding potential production and perception errors. In the years immediately following the appearance of Lado's book, supporting experimental data presented by independent researchers provided empirical evidence that contrastive analysis could, in fact, predict a fair amount of learner errors in many cases.

Contrastive analysis could not, however, predict all learner errors,\(^2\) and contrastive analysis theory fell out of favor with linguists who began to focus on the Chompskyan theories of generative linguistics in the 1960's. The new school of thought proposed that language acquisition was firmly a cognitive process in which a learner creates, or generates, his own hypotheses about the target language independent of outside influence. It

\(^2\) Contrastive analysis error prediction is based on difference in structural features of the L1 and the L2. When experimental evidence indicates either that errors are not made at all points of differentiation, or that some errors cannot be attributed to structural feature difference, opponents of contrastive analysis theory consider it's claims to be disconfirmed (Flynn 15-17).
emphasized ordered developmental sequences and stages of learning, innate mechanisms and an internalized representation of new data over the imitation and habit formation proposed by behaviorism (Corder 20). With cognitive theory, the learner came to be viewed as an active participant in the learning process, while the behaviorist view came to be seen as a misguided belief in learning "via conditioning, analogous to how a dog, a rat, or a dove learn something in animal experiments" (Wode 7). Contrastive analysis theory was considered incompatible with the new cognitive thinking, and language transfer was rejected by many linguists as being associated with both contrastive analysis and behaviorist theory.

Amongst the most influential of the new theories attempting to discredit contrastive analysis and the influential role of the native tongue in second language learning was Dulay and Burt's creative construction hypothesis. Creative construction theory, based on an extensive set of studies in the early 1970's, proposed that developmental factors, as opposed to native language factors, influence language acquisition. Dulay and Burt further contended that L1 transfer is not a part of the psychological mechanism which enables man to learn language, and is therefore unimportant in language learning (Wode 205). In order to prove these claims, Dulay and Burt conducted a set of morpheme order studies which examined the acquisition of English grammatical morphemes by Spanish and Chinese child learners of English. Because the children's development of grammatical morphemes was found to be similar regardless of the native language, the research was felt to justify the influence of universal learning factors in language acquisition and to minimize the significance of the role of the L1 (Gass and Selinker, Second Language 82).
Although creative construction theory gained popularity, the morpheme order studies were soon discredited when further analysis showed that the tests themselves biased results and that any group of learners would produce the same findings\textsuperscript{3}. However, theoreticians eager to jump on the generative linguistics bandwagon continued to support the idea of universal developmental sequences as being a key to language learning. With generative linguistic theory, certain aspects of language structure are assumed to be innately present in the language learner. Such innate structure is referred to as universal grammar. Chomsky attempted to define the principles of universal grammar as "built-in settings" that L1 learning "triggers", or that L1 input determines the choice between a multitude of built-in setting possibilities (White 217). Unlike the creative construction hypothesis, adherence to the contributing influence of universal grammar in language learning is not necessarily incompatible with belief in the contributing influence of the mother tongue. One can assume that although the learner has the ability to choose from a multitude of universal options when acquiring the components of a second language, he will most likely be predisposed to elect along the programming pattern of built-in settings already triggered by the native language.

Today most linguists accept both language transfer and developmental issues as being influential factors in second language acquisition. As stated by Jack Richards:

\textsuperscript{3}The underlying methodology of morpheme order studies also came under attack, with new theoreticians questioning whether such studies accurately reflect developmental learning sequences, whether individual variation in learner data may have been obscured by group data, and whether the limited number of grammatical morphemes studied was appropriate to the assumptions made (Gass and Selinker, Second Language 85). It can be interpreted that some theorist's primary goal during the 1970's was simply to discredit native language influence primarily because it was associated with behaviorist thinking instead of cognitive theory.
Interference from the mother tongue is clearly a major source of difficulty in second-language learning, and contrastive analysis has proved valuable in locating areas of interlanguage interference. Many errors, however, derive from the strategies employed by the learner in language acquisition, and from the mutual interference of items within the target language (214).

The field of linguistics in the 1980's began to turn away from the question of whether or not transfer was a valid agent in second language acquisition and toward the question of how language transfer works in conjunction with other factors affecting language learning. As recently as 1992, Gass and Selinker commented that such issues are not fully answered in current language transfer research and that valid questions still being asked include "What types of transfer occur, and what can actually be transferred?" (Language Transfer 5). The present thesis will attempt to answer these questions in one specific setting by analyzing the occurrence of native language transfer in the developing interlanguage of English speakers studying first-year college Spanish.

1.2 METHODOLOGY OF THE PRESENT STUDY

This study analyzes the errors attributed to native language transfer in data collected from forty-two students in the first semester of first-year Spanish at Rice University. The study was conducted with the underlying assumptions that transfer would account for a significant portion of errors committed, and that evidence of transfer would be found in all areas of grammatical structure including morphology and syntax, as well as in the lexicon and orthography employed by the students. Because data was
collected from written homework assignments and periodic examinations, no accounting of phonological transfer was considered. In addition to analyzing the types of transfer errors which occur in the English-Spanish interlanguage\(^4\), the study also measures the horizontal change in transfer errors as a percentage of all errors at three specific points over the semester.

The project informants were forty-two students of Spanish in three different sections of one course, Spanish 101. The teaching methodology and pace of instruction were identical in all three sections, with emphasis placed on the student's production of Spanish in oral exercises in the classroom and in regular written exercises in the form of freely composed dialogues related to the subject material. The text used in the course, *Tierra del Fuego*, by Hector Urrutibéheity, and its accompanying workbook of exercises *Grammar in Action*, were designed for students with no previous formal training in Spanish. During the semester in which data was collected for this study, the course material covered seven chapters of the textbook with each chapter containing an explanation of eleven or twelve new grammatical points, introduction of approximately 125 new vocabulary terms, a dialogue reflecting a situation a student may encounter when traveling or living in Spain, and a portion of a continued story which provided an opportunity for the students to practice reading comprehension and conversational skills. The dialogue and story sequence in each chapter utilized the new grammar and vocabulary presented, and

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\(^4\)Interlanguage is traditionally defined as the linguistic system intermediate between the native language and the target language (Corder 23). The interlanguage hypothesis, closely related to creative construction and universal grammar theories, is based on the assumption that the L2 learner creatively constructs a unique interlanguage system which is systematically different from both L1 and L2. This theory does not dispute a role for native language transfer, proposing instead that the process of developing an interlanguage can draw on any previous linguistic experience a learner has had (Faerch and Kasper 177).
accompanying exercises allowed for oral and written practice of new morphological and syntactical constructions.

A questionnaire completed by the students provided information regarding native language environment, previous formal training in other foreign languages, and amount of formal and informal exposure to Spanish prior to the course. All students selected for the study were from English-speaking monolingual backgrounds, and any students with more than two years of previous formal training in Spanish were eliminated from the data pool. Twenty of the selected students had no previous instruction in Spanish, three had one year or less, and nineteen had between one and two years of prior training in either junior high or high school. Five of the students considered themselves fluent in another foreign language (four in French and one in German), and a total of thirty-two had at least one year of previous formal instruction in another language (fifteen in French, eight in Latin, seven in German, and one each in Italian and Japanese). About three-fourths of the students mentioned minor informal exposure to Spanish due to the fact that they currently or previously lived in a geographical region where a measurable portion of the general population is native Spanish-speaking. Types of informal exposure mentioned included watching the Spanish-language channel on television, working at a part-time job where some of the other employees spoke Spanish to each other, vacationing in Spanish-speaking countries, performing community service in Spanish-speaking neighborhoods, hosting a Spanish-speaking exchange student during high school, and listening to the employees at Mexican restaurants. Interviews with each student early in the semester showed that such exposure was not significant enough to account for any measure of proficiency in either comprehension or production of the
Spanish language prior to the students' enrollment in the course involved in this study.

The methodology employed by the study followed that suggested for traditional error analysis: collection of data from free compositions by students on a given theme or from examination materials, identification of errors, classification into error types, statement of relative frequency of errors, analysis of the source of errors, determination of the degree of communication disturbance caused by the error, and identification of areas of difficulty for pedagogical purposes (Sridhar 222). Data used to identify and classify types of errors was taken at five points throughout the semester from free compositions assigned to students as homework and from regular exams. Data from three of these collection points was used for the horizontal comparison of change in transfer errors as the semester progressed. The three points of data collection used for horizontal analysis were evenly spaced toward the beginning, middle and end of the semester. The first assignment used in the horizontal comparison was a paragraph summarizing the key points of the continued story the students were in the process of reading in the course textbook, the second assignment involved creating a dialogue between the student and a person of the same age that he or she encountered on an imaginary trip to a Spanish-speaking country, and the third set of data, taken from an examination, involved the students' creating a dialogue in which a fortune teller reads either the student's or the instructor's past, present and future. Additional data used for error analysis but not included in the horizontal comparison was collected from two of the periodic exams given throughout the semester. In these cases, the data source was a free composition dialogue created by the student in response to a fictional situation presented in the test material. The
situations presented and resulting student compositions reflected the subject material, the vocabulary, and the grammatical points learned in the lessons covered by the exam. In the case of data collected from homework assignments, the students were instructed not to use textbooks or other resource materials during the composition of their papers. This request was made in an effort to insure that the Spanish produced by the student would be an accurate reflection of the language production capability actually achieved. Errors were divided into two groups: those attributable and those not attributable to English language transfer, and four subgroups: errors in lexicon, syntax, morphology and orthography. The criteria for identifying an error as being a product of transfer was based on Gass's statement that "a form used by a learner which resembles a form in the learner's native language" is most likely explained as transfer (A review 117). Additional consideration was given for identifying an error as being attributable to transfer when the error took place in an area of structural difference between the two languages, as in the case of gender marking and gender agreement, whether the error resembled a form in the learner's native language or not. Percentage of errors attributable to transfer was measured as a whole, within each subgroup, and across the trajectory of the learning experience at the three points on the time-line continuum.

2. WHAT CONSTITUTES TRANSFER?

Language transfer can affect both the cultural and structural domains of the linguistic experience. Early in the field of contemporary transfer studies, Lado identified the cultural miscommunication potential of transfer in the perception of meaning communicated by pitch phonemes, or relative
intonation levels. For example, a student learning a target language with fewer pitch phonemes than his native language may not have any problems with hearing and using the simpler intonation system but may feel that the native speakers of the target language are cold and distant (43). Similarly, a student going from a less complex to a more complex system may erroneously interpret the native speaker as exaggerating the emotional content of his message or as being excessively excitable while he himself is perceived as aloof by the same native speaker. A second potential source of cultural miscommunication is a difference in discourse norms as illustrated by Olshtain and Cohen:

A native English speaker speaking Hebrew says "I'm sorry" after bumping into someone, and the response by the native Hebrew speaker is "you could at least apologize!" Conversely, a native Hebrew speaker arriving late to a meeting with a native English speaker says in English, "the bus was late", and the annoyed native English speaker mutters "these Israelis, why don't they ever apologize!" The speakers had employed conversational norms acceptable in their L1s but which did not bring the same results in the L2 (53).

We can see here that that which is considered polite in the L1 may not transfer appropriately to the L2. Odlin provides another entertaining look at cultural miscommunication due to transfer with the story of a Russian speaker asking an English speaker for a cigarette. The Russian language employs a more direct approach in making requests than does English, and the Russian phrase Daite sigaretu! or "Give [me] a cigarette!" is considered acceptably polite. Therefore, the Russian speaker learning English may have great difficulty understanding the syntactical complexity of the polite
English request "Excuse me, you wouldn't by any chance happen to have a cigarette, would you?" (52).

Language transfer can occur from either the L2 to the L1 or from the L1 to the L2. Haugen's 1953 study of the Norwegian language in America discovered that "the learning of English proved to have a quick and disastrous effect on the Norwegian spoken among the immigrants" (53). He refers to numerous testimonials of the "corrupting influence" of English and determines that "the letters which some of the earliest pioneers wrote to their relatives and friends at home... must often have been difficult to decipher for those who knew no English" (Ibid). Native speakers of Spanish who have been living in the United States for many years and who work and socialize in English-speaking settings report similar consequences of English affecting their Spanish, such as finding themselves uttering esperar por, an error directly attributable to the influence of English "wait for".

The majority of published research in the field of transfer to date deals with the effect of the L1 on the structural aspects of the L2. Because such structural aspects are also the focus of the present study, it is helpful to review the evidence and definitions of structural transfer provided by previous investigation before analyzing the data of this project. If we accept that native language interference, or transfer, is at least one of the potential factors affecting a learner's ability in a second language, our next task is to determine what types of interference have been identified by research, and how such research has defined the concept at hand. The proliferation of studies related to contrastive analysis and to language transfer in the decades following the publication of Lado's book have led to a multitude of meanings being associated with the phenomena. While many
linguists use "transfer", "borrowing", "interference", "interlingual errors" and "influence" interchangeably, others argue about shades of difference in the meanings of these and other terms associated with the field. Corder, for instance, disputes the appropriateness of the word "transfer" itself. He claims that "interference" is an equally incorrect name for the phenomenon and that "borrowing" is no more than the use of items from the native language in order to make up for deficiencies in the interlanguage (26). He considers borrowing in its extreme form to be no different from "re-lexification", and goes so far as to distinguish "mistakes" from "errors". Dechert and Raupach, in the introduction to their 1989 book on transfer, illustrate the ambiguous range of meaning associated with the terminology by listing seventeen different randomly selected and often contradictory definitions of transfer offered by previous researchers. The pair does not, however, clarify the matter with their own definition: "language transfer... is a meta-metaphor of verbal infraction". In contrast to such semantic and linguistic splitting of hairs, a more level-headed viewpoint is offered by Kellerman who defines transfer as "a cover term for a number of unspecified processes which lead to L1-like behavior in the L2" ("Empirical evidence" 102). In the present study, the words

5Interlingual errors arise from the influence of previously learned languages on the target language while intralingual errors arise from developmental problems within the target language itself (Smith 204). The major types of intralingual, or developmental, errors are caused by faulty rule learning and include "over-generalisation [of rules], ignorance of rule restrictions, incomplete application of rules, and the building of false systems or concepts" (Richards 213). Interlingual errors are transfer errors while intralingual errors are not.

6Re-lexification is the replacement of lexical items in one language with those of another. An example from Ringbom’s study of trilingualism in Finns and Swedes is the sentence produced by a Swedish L1 learner of English, "Sometimes I must go bort". Swedish bort is "away" (Cross-Linguistic 157).

7In Corder’s studies, mistakes are random deviations generally caused by memory lapse or physical state of being, while errors are systematic defects in linguistic knowledge (Duskova 12).
"transfer", "influence" and "interference" are used interchangeably to refer to L1-like patterns or structures observed in the interlanguage of the L2 learner, or errors caused by transfer of linguistieic pre-conditioning attributable to the native language.

Where exactly should one look within a learner's interlanguage to find evidence of native language interference? We should, according to previous research, be able to find evidence of transfer in phonology, lexicon, syntax, morphology and orthography. These are the areas most often mentioned by those linguists who have reviewed the field from a concrete as opposed to a theoretical perspective. For example, Terence Odlin's book Language Transfer analyzes cross-linguistic influence in the areas of discourse and semantics (which includes lexicon), syntax, phonetics, phonology and writing systems. Oller and Ziahosseiny also find native language interference in writing systems and report that transfer may account for at least some of the spelling errors made by second language learners (183). Richards states that evidence of transfer has been identified and studied "at the levels of phonology, morphology and syntax" (204). Isle Lehiste writes in Lectures on Language Contact that "interference can be found at all levels: phonetics, phonology, morphology, syntax, semantics, and lexis" (1-2). Echoing much the same viewpoint in Languages in Contact, Uriel Weinreich finds interference in "the more highly structured domains of language, such as the bulk of the phonemic system, a large part of the morphology and syntax, and some areas of the vocabulary" (1). Gass and Selinker review studies of transfer in the acquisition of L2 vocabulary (Second Language 91) and in the areas of phonology and syntax (Ibid 96). As mentioned previously, this thesis
will not study transfer in phonology, but will concentrate on the effects of the native language in L2 lexicon, syntax, morphology and orthography.

2.1 TRANSFER IN LEXICON

Lexical transfer is primarily concerned with content words or those words which carry the semantic meaning of the sentence - nouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs - as opposed to function words which are more a grammatical issue than a lexical one. Errors attributed to lexical transfer generally stem from interference due to a partial overlap in lexicon in which the overlap in one area is wrongly extended into another (Politzer 156). This type of transfer can be found in either the form or meaning of words. Lexical meaning is not always parallel in all uses in both languages. While Spanish *tiempo* is equivalent to English "time", and *no tenemos tiempo* is a construction acceptable in Spanish as well as in a direct English translation, *he venido tres tiempos* is not correct even though "I've come three times" is (Politzer 156). Transfer errors due to overlap in meaning may occur when a number of L2 items correspond to one L1 item even when the differences in meaning are clear to the L1 speaker. English "get" carries a clearly different meaning in the constructions "get up", "get on" and "get out" and will probably correspond to several different vocabulary words in any other language. The potential for transfer error is even greater when the conceptual differences are unclear to the L1 speaker, such as in the case of English "to know" corresponding to two different Spanish lexical items, *conocer* and *saber*, and "to be" corresponding to *estar* as well as *ser*. Duskova found that a major group of lexical errors among Czech speakers learning English were attributable to the fact that a Czech word had several equivalents in English. Czech *delaat*, for instance, is both "to
do" and "to make", *cesta* is both "way" and "journey", *spravit* is "repair" as well as "correct" (24).

Another type of lexical error due to transfer of meaning involves what Lado refers to as "strange meanings" (92). Native English speakers will generally accept that *planta baja* is "first floor" since English also uses the terminology "ground floor". They will find it strange however that *primer piso* corresponds to "second floor" since in English the floor above the ground floor is the second, not the first. More loosely associated with transfer of meaning are those errors in which some grammatical property tied to a word in the L1 is mistakenly transferred to the L2. Transfer of transitive meaning, for example, can be seen when a native English speaker learning French utter *Elle marche les chats* for "She walks the cat" when a French speaker would use the verb *promener*. Similarly, transfer of reflexive properties is seen when a native Spanish speaker learning English utters "They wash themselves the hands".

Lexical transfer due to partial overlap in form is generally found in the incorrect use of deceptive cognates. A native English speaker in the early phases of learning Spanish will commonly misunderstand and misuse such words as *lectura, asistir, embarazado, molestar* and *librería* since English words similar to these in form carry distinct semantic meanings from that of the Spanish word. Overlap in form is also a cause of outright substitution of L1 lexicon in L2 utterances. Faerch and Kasper found in their study of transfer in interlanguage production that Danish speakers learning English will substitute without hesitation Danish *fabrik* for "factory", *matematik* for "mathematics" and *hver* for "every" (179). Such substitution is likely due to the formal similarity of the words in the two languages.
The most common source of lexical error not attributed to transfer involves the confusion or distortion of words within the L2 itself. Misuse of related words such as "institution" for "institute" or *interesado* for *interesante* cannot be considered an error of transfer. Intralingual error, or confusion based on factors inherent in the learned language itself as opposed to being based on interference from the native language, is the basis for such substitution of words similar in form. A number of examples of this type of error were found by Duskova whose study of Czech speakers learning English produced forty-eight cases in which the subjects confused words like "then" and "than", "think" and "thing", "role" and "rule", "take part" and "take place" (24). It is safe to assume that such errors may be attributable to sound perception deficiencies in the L2 learner without necessarily being the result of native language influence.

2.2 TRANSFER IN SYNTAX

Scholars generally agree that a great deal of evidence exists in support of native language interference in target language syntax. Previous studies have grouped syntactical transfer errors into four categories: errors in word order, in relative clauses, in negation, and in the outright omission or deletion of a required grammatical element. Word order errors are amongst the most common of syntactical transfer errors because languages vary considerably as to the flexibility or rigidity of their basic word order patterns. Most human languages follow either a verb-subject-object (VSO), subject-verb-object (SVO) or subject-object-verb (SOV)

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8Such patterns refer to the relative placement of grammatical components within a sentence. VSO indicates a word order pattern of verb first, followed by subject, followed by object. While VSO, SVO and SOV are the most common basic word order patterns found in human language, additional secondary patterns may be found within a given language as shown in the Spanish examples above.
word order pattern. English and Spanish are both primarily SVO but Spanish is much more flexible than English regarding rigidity of the pattern. English "The man chases the cat" and Spanish El hombre persigue al gato demonstrate the primary SVO pattern. The English sentence cannot be ordered differently, but a Spanish VOS construction of Persigue al gato el hombre is not incorrect. Spanish uses other word order patterns as well. English "He is buying it" maintains the SVO order even when the object is a pronoun, but Spanish El lo compra shifts to SOV. Such a difference in rigidity may result in transfer of incorrect patterns into English by native speakers of Spanish. As Odlin states the point, "speakers of a flexible language... may use several word orders in English even though English word order is quite rigid" (87). A study by Schumann of Spanish speakers learning English found that about half of the subject's utterances where characterized by a "subject drift to the right", or subject-verb inversion, as in the example "in my house is working one lady" for "a lady is working in my house" (366-367). An even higher rate of error may be predicted in the English of speakers whose native languages are considerably more flexible than Spanish. Russian, for instance, allows for six different word order patterns of subject, object and verb to communicate what in English may only be constructed as "He bought the car" which follows the expected English SVO pattern (Odlin 86).

Norms which govern the order of words within clauses and noun phrases may also result in transfer where the rules differ from language to language. Duskova finds in the English of native Czech speakers that errors in the placement of modifiers are clearly the influence of Czech word order patterns. Because Czech places a temporal modifier before a local one, Czech-English interlanguage produces constructions such as "I
returned last month from Paris." Likewise, the utterance "I met there some Germans" demonstrates the Czech pattern of placing an adverbial modifier before the direct object (16). A study of Israeli students learning English found similar preference for native language syntax in the use of adverbial elements. "I like very much movies", uttered by a native Hebrew speaker demonstrates direct transfer of the Hebrew word order pattern to the English interlanguage (Odlin 96). Errors in the word order of noun phrases can be seen in the interlanguage of Spanish students learning English. Because the languages differ in the ordering of possesive constructions, a native Spanish speaker may say "the house of Carmen", a direct translation of la casa de Carmen, instead of the correct "Carmen's house." Additionally, because adjectives generally precede nouns in English and generally follow nouns in Spanish, inversion of correct word order regarding nouns and modifying adjectives may be observed in students of either language learning the other.

Another area of syntactical transfer is found in the placement of relative clauses and the use of relative pronouns. The formation of relative clauses in any given language will primarily follow either a left branching or a right branching directional pattern. In a left branching language, relative clauses will precede the noun they modify and adverbial clauses will precede the main clause of the sentence, while in a right branching language such dependent clauses will usually follow the item they modify. The potential for transfer exists when the native language and the target language employ different branching patterns. Japanese, for instance, is a left branching language and English is right branching. In the English sentence "The house that Jack built was small", the relative clause "that Jack built" follows "house". In Japanese the equivalent relative clause would
preceed the noun which signifies "house". Sentences with multiple clauses such as "Jack built the house that Mary bought for her daughter who just got married" may seem syntactically complex and therefore confusing to a native speaker of a language whose relative clauses branch in another direction. According to Odlin, "there is evidence that when two languages show a difference in principal branching directions, the acquisition of complex syntax will be more difficult than when both languages show the same branching direction" (98). Because Spanish and English are both right branching languages, we may expect to find little transfer or perceptual confusion of relative clauses amongst native speakers of one of these languages learning the other. Schumann's study of a Spanish native speaker whose English had fossilized⁹ at the earliest stage of learning does in fact fail to show evidence of incorrect branching direction of relative clauses. The subject, Alberto, did occasionally omit a necessary relative pronoun as in the sentence "I have one girl sing very nice" for "There is one girl who sings very nice" or use an incorrect pronoun as in "I find people they feed me" for "I found people who fed me" (366), but this type of pronoun error is not necessarily caused by transfer.

A third type of syntactical transfer error can be found in the incorrect usage of negative constructions. Languages differ as to the placement of negators in relation to verbs. English and Spanish regularly use preverbal negators as in "I don't know" and Juan no sabe while languages such as German employ postverbal negation as in Ich weiss nicht. Other languages may use more complex multiple negators as in the French

⁹Fossilization has been defined as "the long term persistence of plateaus of non-target like structures in the interlanguage of non-native speakers, even those who are very fluent speakers of the L2" (Selinker and Lakshmanan 197). Although there are multiple factors which cause fossilization, linguists generally agree that native language transfer is always at least one of the causative elements.
*Je ne sais pas*, where *ne* and *pas* work in conjunction to form the negation. Because of such negator and verb word order differences, some linguists regard the question of negation to be simply an extension of the issue of word order, but other factors also come into play in negation. These include the use of prefixes and suffixes as in the words "uninterested" and "thoughtless" (Odlin 105) and the proper selection of the situationally appropriate negation device when the language employs multiple negators such as English "no", "not" and "don't".

Research has provided empirical evidence of transfer when the native and target languages differ in negator placement or in complexity of negative constructions. A German student saying "I'm steal not the base" demonstrates his native language's postverbal negation pattern incorrectly transferred to English (Odlin 107). A Spanish speaker uttering "You no watch TV, no?" shows transfer of the Spanish negation pattern of *no* + verb instead of using the syntactically more complex English "don't" (Schumann 372). Butterworth and Hatch attributed the predominant use of "no" as negator in the speech of a native Spanish-speaking adolescent learning English to direct interference from the L1 (236). Recent findings, however, have shown that factors other than native language transfer, specifically universal language developmental elements, must also be considered in explaining errors in L2 negation. Wode's study of the development of negators in childhood native language acquisition as compared to second language acquisition found that both native language and second language learners progress through similar stages of acquisition (145). Both learners will first use one-word negation as in responding "no" to a question requiring a negative answer, then develop negation patterns of two or more words such as "no want milk", and finally
progress to more complex intrasentential negation as in "I don't want milk" (Odlin 106). Because childhood first language acquisition of English in the second stage of negation may produce the same "no" + verb structure as found in the interlanguage of a Spanish speaker learning English, it may be argued that transfer is not the factor causing such a construction in the speech of the Spanish speaker. Further research, however, has found that this stage of negation will last much longer in the English of Spanish speakers than in the speech of English-speaking children, perhaps due to the fact that preverbal no is the only Spanish negator corresponding to English "no", "not", "don't" and "doesn't" and will be abandoned only when the learner's English is more developed (Cancino 210). Similarly, Schumann found in a comparison of English acquisition by Spanish and Japanese speakers that Spanish speakers persist in the "no" + verb stage much longer than do Japanese speakers whose native language does not employ such preverbal negation (118). It is reasonable, therefore, to infer that while multiple factors affect the development of negation in language acquisition, native language transfer is one of the interferring elements.

A final area of syntactical transfer is that of outright omission of a necessary grammatical element in the target language. Whenever an element is required in the target language but not in the native language, we may conclude that the omission of the element in the interlanguage is due to native language interference. One common occurrence of this type of transfer is the omission of English articles by speakers whose native language does not use articles. Duskova found in her previously mentioned study of Czech speakers learning English that the largest number of errors amongst all types of errors studied consisted in omission of the article (18). Similarly, an English speaker in the early stages of Spanish acquisition will
regularly omit the personal "a" in a sentence such as yo veo a María because English has no equivalent grammatical element. We can observe omission due to transfer in a Danish learner's utterance of "[I have] a little and a big" for "a little one and a big one", which in Danish is en lille og en store (Faerch and Kasper 184). The same construction can also be seen in Spanish el grande meaning "the big one", which may lead to a Spanish speaker saying in English simply "the big". Another omission error common to the interlangue of Spanish speakers learning English is the omission of the subject, as in "Maybe go home" for "Maybe I'll go home", or "No like cine" for "I don't like the movies". Because the subject, discernable in the morphology of a conjugated Spanish verb itself, is not required in Spanish sentence construction, such omission in English, where it is required, can be attributed to influence of the native language.

2.3 TRANSFER IN MORPHOLOGY

The study of morphological transfer is concerned with the usage of plural markers and gender markers, and with subject-verb agreement. As with lexical and syntactical transfer, morphological errors due to interference can be found wherever the native and target languages differ regarding the norms and rules of formation in the mentioned areas. A common morphology error due to transfer by English speakers learning Spanish is the failure to mark adjectives as plural. While Spanish constructions such as las casas son bonitas mark the article, the noun and the adjective modifier as plural, English "the houses are pretty" marks only the noun. Because of the language's differing rules of morphology, the English speaker in the early phase of learning Spanish may construct incorrect sentences such as las casas son bonita, where the adjective is not
marked for plural, or even *la casas son bonita*, where neither the article nor the adjective are marked plural.

Morphological interference in the use of plural constructions can also be observed when words are borrowed from one language to another. When two languages use plural markers of different form, Italian and English as one example, the form may be unrecognized as plural to the early-phase second language learner. Lehiste has found that "in the integration of a loanword, plural suffixes are frequently treated as if they were part of the stem, and new plural markers are added" (15). The Norwegian spoken in America, for example, borrowed the word "cars" from English, but American Norwegian *kars* became the single version and *karsar* the plural version.

The grammatical category of gender associated with nouns is especially susceptible to transfer. Native speakers of languages such as English which mark only clear inherent gender, or sex, as in the pronouns "he" and "she" or the words "man" and "women", may have trouble learning the obligatory gender distinctions which some other languages apply to all nouns. "It is well known to language teachers that students whose native language is English have difficulties in mastering the gender systems of languages like French and German" (ibid 14). Anderson found three distinct examples of negative transfer related to gender marking in the Spanish of an English-speaking adolescent subject learning Spanish through daily interaction with peers while living in Puerto Rico (89). First, non-native usage was observed in the construction of mixed gender compound noun phrases such as *muchachas y muchachos* or *nenes y nenas* instead of simply *muchachos* or *nenes* as would be heard in native speech. Secondly, the subject marked gender in possessives, saying *él mamá* and
"ella cuarto" for "his mom" and "her room" instead of following the correct Spanish non-marked pattern of "su mamá" and "su cuarto." Thirdly, in constrast to the overdifferentiation of gender in the above examples, Andersen observed underdifferentiation in the use of articles and quantifiers. The subject's sole indefinite article was "un" regardless of the gender of the following noun, and his sole definite article "la." Also, the word "eso" was used for all instances of English "those," without consideration for the gender of the modified noun. The fact that the subject correctly used masculine and feminine nouns with inherent gender such as "hermano" and "hermana," and subject pronouns with inherent gender such as "él" and "ella," can be attributed to positive transfer, or facilitated learning due to the fact that in this one area of gender marking, the two languages coincide.

A final area of morphological transfer is that of subject-verb concordance. We can easily see the potential for interference by comparing the morphology of one present-tense verb in Spanish and English. Depending on person and number, the Spanish verb "ser" has six forms in the present tense: "soy," "eres," "es," "somos," "sois" and "son." The English equivalent, however, has only three: "am," "are" and "is." Any case where the native and target languages differ regarding verb morphology as related to person and number may result in incorrect constructions in the L2 interlanguage. The fact that Danish, for instance, does not have a separate morphological marker for third person plural as compared to singular while English does, leads to utterences such as "my two little sisters is five and 11 year" by Danish-speaking learners of English (Fearch and Kasper 184).
2.4 TRANSFER IN ORTHOGRAPHY

A difference in the symbolization of native language and target language writing systems can lead to both mispronunciation and misspelling in the L2. In cases where the languages use the same alphabet, one symbol may represent two distinct sounds in the different languages, and a learner will tend to transfer the symbolization of the native language to the target language (Lado 20). An English-speaking learner of Spanish may incorrectly aspirate the beginning of the Spanish word *habitación* because the letter "h" in English represents such an aspirated sound. Conversely, he may incorrectly spell the word without the initial "h" if he has heard the word spoken by a native speaker but has not seen it in written form. Oller and Ziahosseiny refer to such spelling errors resulting from similar writing systems with differing auditory symbolization as "interference due to false generalization" (183). The learner falsely transfers the symbolization of sounds in his native to the target language spelling system. We can expect to find this type of transfer only when the L1 and the L2 employ similar writing systems because the learner must have a pre-coded symbol and sound connection from the native language in order for the symbolization to be transferred to the target language. A study of spelling errors made by foreign students of English whose native language employed a Roman alphabet as compared to students whose native language used a non-Roman system found that learners with different native and target language systems produced only intralingual spelling errors, or errors attributable to confusion within the target language itself, as opposed to errors attributable to transfer. Learners whose native language used the same alphabet as the target language, however, produced interlingual or transfer errors as well (Ibid 188). Because of interference of native
language sound symbolization, a German speaker will tend to write f-l-e-i-t for "flight", and a Spanish speaker may write t-r-a-i-e-d for "tried", p-a-y for "pie", or even a-i-s-t-i for "iced tea". A common menu item in Mexico City restaurants is pay de chocolate.

We may also expect to see transfer in the spelling of cognates when the two languages spell the cognates differently. An English speaker learning Spanish will commonly misspell inteligente with a double "l" as found in the English version, while a Spanish speaker learning English may mispell "difficult" with one "f" following the Spanish version of the word.

2.5 TRANSFER SPECIFIC TO THE ENGLISH-SPANISH INTERLANGUAGE

While the field of applied linguistics and second language acquisition has produced a multitude of research in the past twenty-five years relating to the phenomena of language transfer, the majority of investigations have dealt with acquisition of English as a second language, and relatively few studies have specifically investigated English transfer in second language acquisition of Spanish. A computer search of dissertation abstracts of all dissertations published since 1970 related to the topics of language transfer, languages in contact, or cross-linguistic influence, found 365 dissertations related to the field, but only five dissertations indicating specific research of English interference or influence in learning Spanish. In the bibliographic materials consulted for this thesis, only six sources provided samples of data specific to English transfer in the learning of Spanish. Such a lack of previous research represents either a deficiency in the field of transfer study or an opportunity for further investigation by those interested in the combined fields of applied and Hispanic linguistics. This
may be especially true for English-speaking teachers of Spanish in the United States. As Andersen points out, while most second language acquisition research has dealt with immigrant or foreign student populations, second language acquisition in settings where the target input is from other second language speakers is probably the norm around the world, rather than a unique isolated type of second language acquisition (Second Languages 76).

The relatively small amount of available data in the area of English transfer in the acquisition of Spanish does, however, provide a helpful foundation for further investigation. While much of this information was included in the previous sections, a few dissertations pertaining specifically to college-level second language acquisition of Spanish by native speakers of English merit further review. A 1980 Ph.D. dissertation at the University of Texas at Austin by Karen Smith comparing the errors of native English speaking students of Spanish in first-, second- and third-year classes identified and categorized a large number of developmental and transfer errors common to college-level learners. While not all of the errors in all of the categories could be attributed to transfer, a review of specific errors reported by Smith finds many parallels to the transfer errors outlined in the above sections.

Within the area of lexical transfer, Smith found that one of the most common errors, confusion between ser and estar, continued throughout the second year of learning and was not mastered until the third year. Another common error, that caused by transfer of a grammatical property such as the reflexive or transitive character of a verb, manifested itself in Smith's study as a failure to use the Spanish reflexive when it is not used in the English equivalent construction. And finally in the area of lexicon, Smith
reported confusion in the use of preterit and imperfect tenses. Because English does not distinguish differences in past tense aspect as explicitly as does Spanish, the English-speaking students tended not to understand some of the distinctions between preterit and imperfect meaning.

The most common type of syntactical transfer error reported by Smith involved omission of a required grammatical element. In each case of error by omission, a direct translation to English of the incorrect Spanish construction would have rendered a perfectly acceptable construction in English. Errors included the omission of the relative pronoun when such use is optional in English but required in Spanish, omission of the object pronoun, omission of *lo* in relative pronoun constructions, and omission of the relator *que* when a parallel element is not required in English. Another syntactical transfer error found by Smith involved the ordering of nouns and their modifying adjectives. Smith reported relatively few errors of word order beyond that of noun and adjective, and reported none in the areas of subject, verb, and object ordering. As discussed previously, because Spanish is a more flexible language than English in the area of word order, we can expect more problems in this area for learners going from Spanish to English than from English to Spanish. It should not be surprising therefore, that relatively few errors were found by Smith in this category.

Transfer errors of morphology were found by Smith in subject-verb agreement, gender and number agreement, use of gerund versus infinitive, and use of subjunctive versus infinitive. While not all subject-verb agreement errors were caused by English transfer, misuse of verbs such as *gustar* and *faltar*, which employ significantly different constructions in the two languages, may be attributed to transfer when the incorrect Spanish
construction closely resembles the construction of the equivalent sentence in English. Errors of gender agreement are most often found in words which do not end in -a or -o, and in -a ending words which are masculine gender or -o ending words which are feminine gender. Failure to mark articles, possessives, and adjectives as plural was found to be common in the first year of study, and even as students mastered number agreement in words adjacent to a plural noun, they continued to fail to mark as plural those modifiers which were removed from the noun by even one word length within the sentence.

One of the more predictable transfer errors of verb morphology was the use of a gerund after prepositions where Spanish requires the infinitive. However, the most persistent error of verb morphology in the students' constructions was observed in use of the subjunctive mood. According to Smith, even in third year Spanish, correct use of subjunctive never exceeded 50%, and in the second year the success rate was only 16% (74). Because the subjunctive is so often not required in English (or is used unknowingly because so many indicative and subjunctive forms are identical except third person singular) where it is regularly required in Spanish, we may attribute this lack of mastery to transfer.

It is of special interest to note that Smith found the amount of transfer errors, along with all errors in general, actually increased as the student advanced from first- to third-year Spanish. Since we can certainly not infer that a student's second language mastery decreases with increased instruction, we must look for another explanation of this phenomena. Smith concludes that the trend "does not mean that the students lose competence, but rather that the frequency of uses and inaccurate choices increases sharply as the students attempt to employ more complex
structures" (31-32). This negative trend will usually discontinue as students progress to more advanced levels of Spanish learning, as evidenced by another Ph.D. dissertation consulted for this thesis, completed in 1988 by Kent Yager at the University of New Mexico. Yager found that some native English-speaking advanced learners of Spanish as a second language can actually achieve native-like mastery of grammar and pronunciation in Spanish as judged by native speakers of Spanish themselves. Yager's study measured the nativeness of grammar and pronunciation of fifteen advanced learners of Spanish, all of whom had begun their study of Spanish after the age of fourteen and had maintained contact with Spanish for at least six years. Degree of grammatical nativeness in the subjects' syntactical and morphological constructions was judged by thirty-two native speakers of Spanish who listened to readings of the subject informants' free compositions on tape. All of the compositions were recorded by one native Spanish speaker so that the judgement of grammatical nativeness would not be influenced by a subject's pronunciation. The grammar of five out of fifteen of the subject informants was considered native by the Spanish-speaking judges, and fully eleven of the fifteen were judged to have "intermediately native" grammar or better (63). We may conclude from these findings that although student errors actually increase during the first three years of Spanish learning as demonstrated by Smith's study, at some point between three and six years of contact with the language, errors begin to decrease and production becomes increasingly closer to native construction.

Yager's study does not specifically mention the effect of native English on student progress in mastering Spanish grammar, but a 1977 dissertation by Donald Flemming at the University of Massachusetts found
that transfer was the dominant factor behind the majority of errors produced in the interlanguage of college learners of Spanish. Flemming's study analyzed the errors committed by five English speaking learners of Spanish during a three-month period in which the students were enrolled in Spanish 202, fourth semester college Spanish. The study focused on syntax and semantic factors, attempting to determine which components of the student's interlanguage were most fossilized at that stage. Flemming's six most seemingly fossilized syntactic errors could all be attributed to transfer. In order of frequency, these included overuse of subject pronoun, failure to use the appropriate preposition, failure to mark appropriately for gender and number, failure to select appropriately verbal aspect, and failure to mark appropriately subject-verb agreement (226-227). Flemming concludes that transfer is the predominant factor of error production in the Spanish interlanguage of his subject informants:

In this study, transfer was deemed to play a major role in the production of the errors collected. While it must be conceded... that unique attribution [of transfer as the cause of error] in every case is impossible to substantiate, having followed the guidelines generally accepted by researchers in this field, there can be little doubt that the results speak for themselves. That is to say that the prime strategy of communication for English-speaking learners of Spanish is to map Spanish forms insofar as known onto the English code (239).

While Smith's and Flemming's studies resulted in slightly different listings of most common errors, both dissertations make a claim for transfer as an important factor in error production of English speakers
learning Spanish. Evidence suggests that this may be true at all levels in the beginning and intermediate stages of learning. Smith's study focused on the interlanguage of students in the first three years of Spanish instruction while Flemming concentrated on students in the second year. The present thesis analyzes the errors committed by students in college Spanish at the first-year level.

3. RESEARCH FINDINGS

A total of 773 errors were collected from 184 student compositions. Of the total errors, 356 were found to be caused by transfer. Interference or influence from the mother tongue, therefore, contributed to or caused 46% of all errors. Transfer was the leading cause of error in two of the categories in which errors occurred, constituting 82% of the lexical errors and 53% of syntactical errors, but only 19% of morphological errors and 27% of orthographic errors.

The 356 transfer errors were categorized by type of error into twelve subgroups. An explanation of the error mechanism in each of these subgroups is included in the inventory of errors which follows in section five. Fully 89% of all the transfer errors committed fell into the six most common categories of error types. The six most common errors in order of frequency were those caused by one word in English corresponding to two or more words in Spanish (103 occurrences), errors caused by omission of an element in a Spanish construction when that element had no counterpart in the equivalent English construction (86 occurrences), errors caused by word-for-word translation (58 occurrences), errors of plural marking and number agreement (26 occurrences), errors caused by mistaken addition of an element in a Spanish construction when the
equivalent English construction contains an element which has no counterpart in Spanish (24 occurrences), and errors caused by transfer of cognate spelling (21 occurrences).

One word in English corresponding to two or more words in Spanish was found to be the primary interference mechanism behind transfer error in this study, causing 29% of all transfer errors committed. Omission of a required element accounted for an additional 24% of errors, and word-for-word translations caused 16% of transfer errors. The remaining error types accounted for less than 8% of total errors each. It is in these aforementioned areas, therefore, that students and teachers of Spanish who wish to use knowledge of transfer error to eliminate mistakes should focus their attention.

The frequency of total errors as well as that of transfer errors was found to increase throughout the semester of study. In the students' first compositions, written after one month of classroom instruction, a transfer error was committed on the average at the rate of one error per fifty-one words. Toward the middle and at the end of the semester, the student compositions averaged one transfer error per thirty-six and thirty-five words respectively. Most of the increase took place in the first half of the semester, with no significantly measurable change in frequency of transfer error from the middle of the semester to the end. The frequency of transfer errors as a percentage of all errors remained relatively constant at 43% of all errors at the beginning of the semester, 44% of all errors at the middle of the semester, and 46% of all errors at the end of the semester. Whether or not the slight increase of transfer error as a percentage of all error is a continuing trend is impossible to ascertain from this study.
These findings concur with previous studies which claim that student errors increase as learning increases, at least during the first few years (or in this case the first year) of instruction or exposure to the language. This is not surprising as it is expected that increased knowledge of and practice with vocabulary and grammar allows for more areas in which to err. What the present study also demonstrates is that errors specifically related to the phenomena of transfer increase, not just errors in general.

An analysis of specific error types indicates that many of the transfer errors may cause some degree of communication disturbance. In the lexical arena, for example, a common error was confusion between ser and estar. When the non-native speaker asks an incorrectly formulated question such as: ¿Dónde son sus abuelos?, we are not sure if the intent was ¿De dónde son sus abuelos? or ¿Dónde están sus abuelos?, two questions with distinct meanings: "Where are your grandparents from?" and "Where are your grandparents?". Likewise, one student's statement Usted ha sabido muchas novias has rather different connotations from the intended Usted ha conocido a muchas novias ("You have known many girlfriends"). Another student construction with a lexical error of this type, Su buena Ventura mira bien for "Your fortune looks good", has the interesting consequence of personifying an abstract concept. In Spanish, a buena Ventura is not capable of the action inherent in the verb mirar which means "to look at".

Transfer errors in the syntactical category, although they will most likely cause the speaker to sound non-native in his or her speech, may result in a lesser degree of communication disturbance than do errors of lexicon. Although incorrect constructions such as El no es Sr. Nuñez and El hotel está cerca la estación do not reflect native syntax, there is little
doubt that the intention of the statements would be easily understood by native speakers. Similarly, morphological errors of number agreement such as ¿Cuánto camas desea? are more likely to brand the speaker as a foreigner than to cause any real miscommunication of the intended message. Errors in the orthographic category are also unlikely to cause communication disturbance. Most of the misspelled words remain fairly close to the correct Spanish orthography.

4. CONCLUSIONS

For both the student and the teacher of Spanish, an increased awareness of the role of transfer in error production may assist in the avoidance of many of the most commonly occurring error types. Although we may not draw absolute conclusions about all errors committed by all students in all situations from a study which measured errors in only 184 student compositions at one level of instruction at one university, we can reasonably conclude that transfer is a significant factor in error production of English-speaking students learning Spanish at the college level. Not only were almost half of all errors identified in this study attributable to transfer, but the frequency of transfer errors increased over the period of time involved in the study. These findings support Politzer's claim that "English interference is the enemy against which the teacher is constantly fighting. We must know the exact nature of the enemy -- the psychological and linguistic mechanism which may cause the student's errors" (Teaching Spanish, 114).

In this particular study, it is significant to note that just six identifiable interference mechanisms accounted for 89% of all transfer errors. Any analysis of transfer for pedagogical purposes, therefore,
should concentrate in these areas. Language students should not be burdened, at least in the early years of instruction, with complex presentations on the psychological and linguistic processes involved in language acquisition. The teacher, however, who is aware of the phenomena of transfer and especially of the most commonly occurring types of transfer errors may wish to point out to students the specific areas of potential error wherever these interference mechanisms are likely to occur.

5. APPENDIX: INVENTORY OF TRANSFER ERRORS

As previously mentioned, a significant percentage of errors collected from the student compositions in this study were found to be attributable to the influence or interference of the native English language. These errors, which represent 46% of all errors found in the compositions, are listed in the following sections with the corrected form placed in brackets after the errored student construction and the English translation following the corrected Spanish form. In the case of a number of errors which were repeated multiple times in the exact same construction, that construction is listed only once. The remaining 54% of errors which could not be attributed to English interference are not included in this list.

5.1 LEXICAL ERRORS

Four categories of lexical transfer errors were found in the student compositions. These include errors caused by one word in English corresponding to two or more words in Spanish, those caused by false assumption of parallel meaning in the use of misleading cognates, errors
caused by word-for-word translation, or calques, of English constructions, and errors caused by direct borrowing from English.

5.11 ERRORS CAUSED BY ONE WORD IN ENGLISH CORRESPONDING TO TWO OR MORE IN SPANISH

A common cause of transfer error in the lexical category is "an overlap or correspondence in an area of meaning [which is] extended by the learner into another area where the overlap no longer exists" (Politzer and Staubach, 116). One example of this false extension stems from the correspondence of multiple Spanish lexical items to the English word "time". The following diagram shows how the one English word corresponds to at least three words in Spanish:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What time is it?</th>
<th>¿Qué hora es?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I've gone one time.</td>
<td>He ido una vez.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I need more time.</td>
<td>Necesito más tiempo.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A student who learns that tiempo corresponds to "time" in the construction Necesito más tiempo may assume that "time" and tiempo share a one-to-one correspondence. The student may then mistakenly extend that correspondence to any other construction in which the word "time" is used in English. In a number of cases, however, such as He viajado por metro por el tiempo primero, as included in the following list, or ¿Qué tiempo es?, the extension would be incorrect.

Such errors commonly occur when two or more Spanish lexical items correspond to one English lexical item as in ser and estar corresponding to "to be", or saber and conocer corresponding to "to
know". Errors in the usage of ser and estar and saber and conocer comprise the majority of the following list of lexical transfer errors. In other cases, the false extension of correspondence may be less obvious. Spanish completo, for example, corresponds to English "full" in the construction El hotel está casi completo, meaning "The hotel is almost full". The association of "full" to completo in this sentence (which appeared in the student textbook used in the course involved in the study) was falsely extended by one student to El mar es casi completo con basura, who wanted to say "The sea is almost full of trash".

This same type of error can also be observed when one lexical item in English functions as two different parts of speech and the learner falsely assumes that the functions are parallel in Spanish. For example, English "only" serves as both an adjective and an adverb, while Spanish has distinct lexical items, único and solamente, for the two parts of speech. A learner who sees that solamente is equivalent to "only" in the construction Solamente bebemos vino tinto, meaning "We only drink red wine", may falsely assume that it will also work in the construction Es la solamente habitación en el hotel for "It's the only room in the hotel."

The correspondence of multiple Spanish pronouns to single English pronouns also leads to errors of this type. For example, English "you" can function as a subject pronoun, a direct object pronoun, an indirect object pronoun, and an object pronoun following a preposition. Spanish tú, however, becomes te as an object pronoun and ti after a preposition. Usted becomes either lo or la as a direct object pronoun and le as an indirect object pronoun. The pronoun "you" is rife with potential transfer errors since "you" corresponds to such a large number of Spanish items: tú,
vosotros, vosotras, usted, ustedes, vos, te, ti, le, les, lo, la, los, las, os and se, a Spanish-to-English correspondence of at least sixteen-to-one.

**Examples:**

In the following diagrams, the first sentence, which contains an error, was found in the student compositions. The second sentence is the corrected version of the sentence in Spanish, and the third is the English translation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>La información no</th>
<th>es</th>
<th>dentro de la biblioteca.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>La información no</td>
<td>Está</td>
<td>dentro de la biblioteca.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The information is not in the library.

The English verb "to be" has two Spanish equivalents, ser and estar. Ser implies a permanent state or condition, identifies a person, place or thing, or indicates origin, while estar indicates location or temporary state or condition (Urrutibéheity, 12). Thus, estar would be the correct choice in the above sentence regarding the location of information, and the use of ser in the first line is an error. Other errors with ser and estar include the following.

Su bisabuelo está un rey.
[Su bisabuelo es un rey.]
His great-grandfather is a king.

*Es muy interesado.*
[Está muy interesado.]
He is very interested.

El hotel es completo.
[El hotel está completo.]
The hotel is full.

*Está* la única habitación en el hotel.
[Es la única habitación en el hotel.]
It is the only room in the hotel.
Aquí son sus llaves.
    [Aquí están sus llaves.]
    Here are your keys.

¿Dónde es mi habitación?
    [¿Dónde está mi habitación?]
    Where is my room?

¿Dónde es el ascensor?
    [¿Dónde está el ascensor?]
    Where is the elevator?

El restaurante es cuatro cuadras de aquí.
    [El restaurante está a cuatro cuadras de aquí.]
    The restaurant is four blocks from here.

Estoy una estudiante en la universidad.
    [Soy estudiante en la universidad.]
    I am a student at the university.

Aquí es una mesa.
    [Aquí está una mesa.] or [Aquí hay una mesa.]
    Here's a table.

Mis clases difíciles están química y física.
    [Mis clases difíciles son química y física.]
    My difficult classes are chemistry and physics.

El hotel es todo recto.
    [El hotel está todo recto.] or [El hotel queda todo recto.]
    The hotel is straight ahead.

Eso está muy fácil.
    [Eso es muy fácil.]
    That's very easy.

Hoy he desayunado un café - está todo.
    [Hoy he desayunado un café - es todo.]
    Today I had coffee for breakfast - that's all.
Soy en vacaciones.
    [Estoy de vacaciones.]
I'm on vacation.

¿Cuánto tiempo va a ser en España?
    [¿Cuánto tiempo va a estar en España?]
How long are you going to be in Spain?

Allí es el mercado.
    [Allí está el mercado.]
There's the market.

Aquí es su bar.
    [Aquí está su bar.]
Here's your bar.

La oficina de correos es a la derecha.
    [La oficina de correos está a la derecha.]
The post office is on the right.

El mercado es a la izquierda.
    [El mercado está a la izquierda.]
The market is on the left.

No soy interesado.
    [No estoy interesado.]
I'm not interested.

La casa va a ser en San Marcos, Texas.
    [La casa va a estar en San Marcos, Texas.]
The house is going to be in San Marcos, Texas.

¿Dónde es mi esposo ahora?
    [¿Dónde está mi esposo ahora?]
Where is my husband now?

La vida no va a estar fácil.
    [La vida no va a ser fácil.]
Life is not going to be easy.

Usted está una profesora de español.
    [Usted es profesora de español.]
You are a Spanish professor.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>¿Usted</th>
<th>sabe</th>
<th>un hotel cerca de aquí?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>¿Usted</td>
<td>conoce</td>
<td>un hotel cerca de aquí?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Do you know a hotel near here?

English "to know" has two equivalents in Spanish, saber and conocer. Saber means "to know a fact", "to know how to" or "to know from having studied". Conocer implies "to be familiar with" (Urrutibéheity, 122). Therefore, in the above question asking about knowledge of or familiarity with a hotel, conocer is the correct verb, and the use of saber in the first example is incorrect. Other errors of this type include the following.

¿Sabe usted "Dallas"?
[¿Conoce usted "Dallas"?]
Do you know "Dallas"?

Sé un restaurante muy bueno.
[Conozco un restaurante muy bueno.]
I know a very good restaurant.

¿Sabe un restaurante o un bar?
[¿Conoce un restaurante o un bar?]
Do you know of a restaurant or a bar?

Usted ha sabido mucha novias.
[Usted ha conocido a muchas novias.]
You have known many girlfriends.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unos</th>
<th>tiempos</th>
<th>no puedo comprender.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>veces</td>
<td>no puedo comprender.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sometimes I don't understand. (or) At times I don't understand.

As previously noted, English "time" corresponds to multiple items in Spanish including vez, tiempo, and hora. In the above example, only vez is correct. One other error with "time" was found in the student compositions:
He viajado por metro por el tiempo primero.
[He viajado por metro por la primera vez.]
I traveled by subway for the first time.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ella</th>
<th>consegue</th>
<th>una llamada de un amigo de David.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ella</td>
<td>recibe</td>
<td>una llamada de un amigo de David.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

She gets a call from a friend of David's.

English "to get" has a multitude of corresponding Spanish words depending upon the meaning of "get" in the English sentence. These include conseguir ("to get", "to obtain"), recibir ("to receive") and sacar ("to get", "to take out"). In the above example, "get" means "receive" and therefore recibir is the correct Spanish word. One other error with "get" was found in the student compositions:

Va a ganar malas notas.
[Va a sacar malas notas.]
You are going to get bad grades.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Estás</th>
<th>mirando por</th>
<th>un suéter de lana.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Estás</td>
<td>buscando</td>
<td>un suéter de lana.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

You are looking for a wool sweater.

English "to look" corresponds to Spanish mirar ("to look at"), buscar ("to look for"), and parecer ("to seem"). In the above example, the intention is "look for", so the use of mirar is an error. One other error with "look" was found in the student compositions:

Su buena ventura mira bien.
[Su buena ventura parece buena.]
Your fortune looks good.
Quisiera | ayudar *usted.*
---------|---------------------
Quisiera | ayudarlo.

I would like to help you.

English "you" corresponds to multiple Spanish words. Spanish formal *you*, *usted*, corresponds to "you" only as a subject pronoun and after prepositions. When formal you is an indirect object it becomes *le*, and when a direct object it becomes *lo* or *la*. The following errors are caused by multiple correspondence to "you".

¿Puedo preguntar *usted* algunas cosas?
[¿Puedo preguntarle algunas cosas?]
Can I ask you some things?

Quisiera ayudar *usted*.
[Quisiera ayudarlo.] or [Quisiera ayudarla.]
I would like to help you.

El espera *usted*.
[Lo espera.] or [La espera.]
He's waiting for you.

Ve *usted* en la televisión.
[Lo veo en la televisión.] or [La veo en la televisión.]
I see you on television.

¿Qué va a ocurrir *a usted*?
[¿Qué va a ocurrirle?]
What's going to happen to you?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><em>Este</em></th>
<th>es muy fácil.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>Esto</em></td>
<td>es muy fácil.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This is very easy.

English "this" corresponds to Spanish *este*, *esta*, and *esto*. *Esto* is used as a pronoun, and *este* and *esta* are adjectives. The use of the adjective *este* in the above example is incorrect. English "this" may also correspond
to Spanish tan in constructions such as tan lejos for "this far". Additional errors of with "this" include the following.

Ella quiere ver esto Sr. Nuñez.
   [Ella quiere ver a este Sr. Nuñez.]
   She wants to see this Mr. Nuñez.

Hay muchas camas en esto hotel.
   [Hay muchas camas en este hotel.]
   There are lots of beds in this hotel.

Esta es mucho preguntar.
   [Esto es mucho que pedir.]
   This is a lot to ask.

Este es muy fácil.
   [Esto es muy fácil.]
   This is very easy.

Este fin de semana voy a Mérida.
   [Este fin de semana voy a Mérida.]
   This weekend I'm going to Mérida.

Coja usted este calle.
   [Coja usted esta calle.]
   Take this street.

¿Qué piensa sobre este ciudad?
   [¿Qué piensa sobre esta ciudad?]
   What do you think of this city?

Ha comido este tarde.
   [Ha comido esta tarde.]
   He's eaten this afternoon.

Voy a tener sed después de caminar este lejos.
   [Voy a tener sed después de caminar tan lejos.]
   I'm going to be thirsty after walking this far.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Necesito una habitación doble</th>
<th>por</th>
<th>mí y mi amiga.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Necesito una habitación doble</td>
<td>para</td>
<td>mí y mi amiga.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

I need a double room for me and my friend.

English "for" corresponds to two Spanish words, *por* and *para*. In the above sentence, "for" indicates "for the benefit of" which corresponds to *para*. Therefore, the use of *por* is an error. In the following sentence, "for" means "in exchange for" which corresponds to *por*.

Vas a vender manzanas y naranjas *para* mucho dinero.
[Vas a vender manzanas y naranjas *por* mucho dinero.]
You are going to sell apples and oranges for a lot of money.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Soy estudiante</th>
<th>a</th>
<th>la universidad.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Soy estudiante</td>
<td>en</td>
<td>la universidad.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

I'm a student at the university.

English "at" corresponds to Spanish *a* in phrases such as *a petición mía* meaning "at my request" and *al menor ruido* meaning "at the slightest noise". However, in cases where "at" indicates location, as in "at the movies", it generally corresponds to Spanish *en*. Multiple correspondence to "at" is responsible for the following errors.

Vamos a cenar *a* un restaurante romántico.
[Vamos a cenar *en* un restaurante romántico.]
We're going to have dinner at a romantic restaurant.

Me quedo en una habitación *al* hotel María Teresa.
[Me quedo en una habitación *en* el hotel María Teresa.]
I'm staying in a room at the hotel María Teresa.

¿A qué hotel está usted?
[¿En qué hotel está usted?]
At what hotel are you staying?
Hay un hotel a la esquina.
[Hay un hotel en la esquina.]
There's a hotel at the corner.

Está a su hotel.
[Está en su hotel.]
He's at his hotel.

He comprado unos aguacates al mercado.
[He comprado unos aguacates en el mercado.]
I bought some avocados at the market.

Gire a la derecha a la calle Coronel.
[Gire a la derecha en la calle Coronel.]
Turn right at Coronel street.

Each of the following examples includes an error which occurred only once in the student compositions. In each example, the corresponding English construction and an explanation of the error follow each sentence. The errors in the first two sentences were explained previously in the introduction to section 5.11.

Es la solamente habitación en el hotel.
[Es la única habitación en el hotel.]
It is the only room in the hotel.

La mar es casi completo con basura.
[El mar es casi lleno de basura.]
The sea is almost full of trash.

Llevo la habitación.
[Tomo la habitación.] or [Me quedo con la habitación]
I'll take the room.

English "to take" corresponds to Spanish llevar ("to take", "to carry") and tomar ("to take", "to accept").
Prefiero una cama doble.
[Prefiero una cama matrimonial.]
I prefer a double bed.

English "double" generally corresponds to Spanish doble. Doble, however, is not used in the Spanish equivalent of "double bed", cama matrimonial.

Tenemos una habitación con baño comunidad.
[Tenemos una habitación con baño común.]
We have a room with a community bathroom.

The English noun "community" corresponds to Spanish comunidad. The adjective "community" as in "community bathroom" corresponds to Spanish común, or "common".

He tratado gazpacho, churros, y una tortilla española.
[He probado gazpacho, churros, y una tortilla española.]
I've tried gazpacho, churros, and a Spanish omelet.

English "to try" corresponds to Spanish tratar de ("to try to") and to probar ("to try out", "to test", "to try on").

Los hijos están en la escuela.
[Los niños están en la escuela.]
The children are in school.

English "children" corresponds to Spanish hijos when one is speaking of his or her own children and niños when speaking of children in general.

No puedo decir algo más.
[No puedo decir nada más.]
I can't say anything more.

English "anything" corresponds to Spanish algo when used in an affirmative statement. When used in a negative construction, "anything" corresponds to nada.
Yo tengo una chaqueta para tú.
    [Tengo una chaqueta para ti.]
I have a jacket for you.

Spanish tú corresponds to familiar "you" as a subject pronoun. After
a preposition, tú often becomes ti.

Esto es mucho preguntar.
    [Esto es mucho que pedir.]
This is a lot to ask.

English "ask" corresponds to Spanish preguntar meaning "to ask a
question" or "to ask about something", and pedir meaning "to request".

5.12 ERRORS CAUSED BY FALSE COGNATES

Another type of transfer error in the lexical category is caused by
the assumption that words which are similar in form are also similar in
meaning. Misleading cognates are defined by Politzer and Staubach as
"English and Spanish words which have a great resemblance in terms of
orthography or sound but which have basically different meaning" (120).
False assumption of parallel meaning in misleading cognates is the basis for
the following errors.

• Examples:

  Estudio muchos sujetos.
    [Estudio muchas asignaturas.]
  I study many subjects.

  Spanish sujeto in its most common use is an adjective meaning
"secure," "fastened," "firm." It corresponds to English "subject" in
constructions such as "subject to" (sujeto a), and in "subject" used as a
grammatical term. English "subject" meaning "course in school" is
asignatura in Spanish.
La vida en España es muy *excitante*.
    [La vida en España es muy emocionante.]
    Life in Spain is very exciting.

Spanish *excitante* means "exciting" as in "physically stimulating". English "excited" is generally better translated in most usage as *emocionante, apasionante*, or *lleno/a de emoción*.

Quiero ser un *doctor* o un abogado.
    [Quiero ser médico o abogado.]
    I want to be a doctor or a lawyer.

Spanish *doctor* is generally used as a title indicating profession or level of university degree obtained. "Medical doctor" is *médico*.

No tienes esposa. ¿*Realmente*?
    [No tienes esposa. ¿*Verdad*?]
    You don't have a wife. Really?

Spanish *realmente* means "in fact", "actually". The English tag question "really?" corresponds to Spanish ¿*verdad*?

5.13 ERRORS CAUSED BY WORD-FOR-WORD TRANSLATION (CALQUES)

A third type of lexical transfer error involves the direct word-for-word translation of English phrases or idioms. Such translation, resulting in constructions known as "loan translations" or "calques", is loosely related to the linguistic phenomena of borrowing, in which loanwords are taken from one language and adopted into another. Loanwords may be taken directly or may be reproduced using the morphemes of the adopting language. English "handbook", a translation of Latin *manualis liber*, is an example of a loanword reproduced using native language morphemes
(Lehmann 216). In the following calques, English constructions are reproduced word-for-word using Spanish lexicon. Although these errors are included in the lexical category, it is recognized that the constructions may include errors of syntax or morphology as well.

•Examples:

¡Como maravilloso!
[¡Qué maravilla!]
How marvellous!

No problema.
[De nada.] or [No se precupue.] or [Está bien.]
No problem.

¡Tenga diversiones!
[¡Páselo bien!] or [¡Páselo de maravilla!] or [¡Qué se divierta!]
Have fun!

¡Tenga un buen tiempo!
[¡Pásalo bien!] or [¡Pásalo de maravilla!] or [¡Qué se divierta!]
Have a good time!

¿Qué ha comido para el desayuno?
[¡Qué ha desayunado?]
What have you eaten for breakfast?

Soy no veintiuno.
[No tengo veintiún años.]
I'm not twenty-one.

Estoy tarde por trabajo.
[Llego tarde al trabajo.]
I'm late for work.

¡Voy loco!
[¡Me vuelvo loco!]
I'm going crazy!
muchos hijos e hijas
[muchos hijos]
many sons and daughters

hermanos y hermanas
[hermanos]rothers and sisters

niños y niñas
[niños]
girls and boys

Está dos y media cuadras al este.
[Está a dos cuadras y media al este.]
It's two and a half blocks to the east.

Hay no problemas.
[No hay ningún problema.]
There are no problems.

Tengo no otra solución.
[No tengo ninguna otra solución.]
I have no other solution.

Hay no otra solución.
[No hay ninguna otra solución.]
There is no other solution.

Tienes no dinero.
[No tienes nada de dinero.]
You have no money.

Ha llegado en Madrid.
[Ha llegado a Madrid.]
He has arrived in Madrid.

Piensa terminar su trabajo y viajar en Argentina.
[Piensa terminar su trabajo y viajar por la Argentina.]
He plans to finish his work and travel in Argentina.

Me levanto a las seis en la mañana.
[Me levanto a las seis de la mañana.]
I get up at six in the morning.
Camino a la universidad en la mañana.
[Camino a la universidad por la mañana.] I walk to the university in the morning.

¿Cuándo ha llegado en Madrid?
[¿Cuando ha llegado a Madrid?] When did you arrive in Madrid?

Camine trescientos metros en la calle Asunción.
[Camine trescientos metros por la calle Asunción.] Walk three blocks on Asunción street.

Está en la izquierda.
[Está a la izquierda.] It's on the left.

Sus padres van a llegar en los Estados Unidos hoy.
[Sus padres van a llegar a los Estados Unidos hoy.] Your parents arrive in the United States today.

¿Qué piensa hacer aquí hasta usted vuelve?
[¿Qué piensa hacer aquí hasta volver?] What do you plan to do here until you return?

Después ganando su confianza...
[Después de ganar su confianza...] After gaining his confidence...

En el futuro una señorita muy bonita está mirando su paquete.
[En el futuro una señorita muy bonita mira su paquete.] In the future, a very pretty girl is looking at your package.

Necesito trescientos dólares por leyendo tu buena Ventura.
[Necesito trescientos dólares por leer tu buena Ventura.] I need three hundred dollars for reading your fortune.

Dentro de diez años está viviendo en Colorado.
[Dentro de diez años vive en Colorado.] In ten years you are living in Colorado.
Necesito la habitación ser muy barata.
[Necesito que la habitación sea muy barata.]
I need the room to be very inexpensive.

5.14 ERRORS CAUSED BY RE-LEXIFICATION

A final group of lexical errors involves the direct borrowing of English words within an otherwise Spanish construction. This codeswitching of one lexical item within a sentence, referred to by some linguists as re-lexification, usually represents a gap in learning which is filled by the most available substitute, the native language. Such gaps in learning are not necessarily caused by native language interference but instead are resolved by resorting to transfer of a native language word into the target language construction. In most of the following cases, a word is borrowed directly from English without modification, but in a few instances the learner modifies the word, usually by adding a final "o", either in an attempt to make the word more like Spanish or under the mistaken assumption that the word in fact is Spanish.

• Examples:

Puede ir un kilometer por esta calle.
[Puede ir un kilómetro por esta calle.]
You can go ten blocks along this street.

Quiero una habitación comfortable.
[Quiero una habitación cómoda.]
I want a comfortable room.

Los taxes están incluidos en el precio.
[Los impuestos están incluidos en el precio.]
The taxes are included in the price.
Estudio *biochemistry* en Rice University.
   [Estudio bioquímica en Rice University.]
   I study biochemistry at Rice University.

Quiero beber algo, una cerveza fría por *example*.
   [Quiero beber algo, una cerveza fría por ejemplo.]
   I want to drink something, a cold beer for example.

No tienes dinero pero *you know* mucho sobre filosofía.
   [No tienes dinero pero sabes mucho sobre la filosofía.]
   You don't have money but you know a lot about philosophy.

Has viajado a Madrid y *London*.
   [Has viajado a Madrid y Londres.]
   You've traveled to Madrid and London.

Tiene una habitación *singulario*.
   [Tiene una habitación individual.]
   You have a single room.

Estudio *económicos* en la universidad.
   [Estudio economía en la universidad.]
   I study economics at the university.

Usted es *stupido* americano.
   [Usted es un americano estúpido.]
   You are a stupid American.

5.2 SYNTACTICAL ERRORS

Three categories of syntactical transfer errors were found in the student compositions. These include errors caused by omission of an element which is required in Spanish but which has no corresponding element in English, errors caused by addition of an element parallel to one found in English construction but which has no correspondence in Spanish, and errors of word order.
5.22 ERRORS OF OMISSION

Similar to the findings in Smith's previously discussed study of errors made by English-speaking students of college Spanish, the most common syntactical transfer error found in the present study involved omission of a grammatical element which is required in Spanish but optional or non-existent in the construction's English counterpart. An example of an element which is optional in English is the relator "that" corresponding to Spanish *que*. English accepts both "I know that Diana is his sister" or "I know Diana is his sister" as correct. By analogy, a student may falsely assume that *Sé Diana es su hermana* is correct as well. Another example is the omission of *para* in dependent clauses indicating purpose. Because the English infinitive itself may indicate purpose, English accepts both "I called Diana to ask about the class" or "I called Diana in order to ask about the class". By analogy, a student may falsely assume that *He llamado a Diana preguntar por la clase* is acceptable in Spanish.

The most common error of omission of a grammatical element which is required in Spanish but non-existent in English was failure to include the Spanish "personal a" in constructions with a human direct object. The English construction "John called Diana" has no element corresponding to the *a* in *Juan llamó a Diana*. When an element in a Spanish construction has no counterpart in a corresponding English construction, that element is often mistakenly ommitted by the student. A number of different elements in Spanish constructions have no counterpart in English. The following diagrams show how otherwise parallel constructions contain one Spanish element which does not exist in the English construction:
The fact that English has what may be called a "zero element" corresponding to a required Spanish element may lead the student to omit that element in Spanish constructions.

• Examples:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>He has called</th>
<th>Diana</th>
<th>Vidal.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ha llamado</td>
<td>a Diana</td>
<td>Vidal.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As noted in the above diagram, a "zero element" in English construction corresponds to the Spanish "personal a". Transfer of this "zero element" is the cause behind the following list of errors.

Ha llamado Diana Vidal.
[Ha llamado a Diana Vidal.]
He has called Diana Vidal.
David mata el extranjero.
[David mata al extranjero.]
David kills the foreigner.

Ella espera a David.
[Ella espera a David.]
She is waiting for David.

Piensa ir al café para ver sus amigos.
[Piensa ir al café para ver a sus amigos.]
He's thinking of going to the café to see his friends.

David va a viajar a Madrid para ver a Diana.
[David va a viajar a Madrid para ver a Diana.]
David is going to travel to Madrid to see Diana.

Hoy una voz llama a Diana.
[Hoy una voz llama a Diana.]
Today a voice calls Diana.

La voz no llama a Guillermo.
[La voz no llama a Guillermo.]
The voice doesn't call Guillermo.

Necesito encontrar a mis amigos.
[Necesito encontrar a mis amigos.]
I need to find my friends.

Vas a la telefónica para llamar a tu novio.
[Vas a la telefónica para llamar a tu novio.]
You go to the main phone center to call your boyfriend.

Has viajado a Nueva York para visitar a tu familia.
[Has viajado a Nueva York para visitar a su familia.]
You traveled to New York to visit your family.

Quiere a una mujer.
[Quiere a una mujer.]
You love a woman.
Debo ver mi novio ahora.
[Debo ver a mi novio ahora.]
I should see my boyfriend now.

Encuentras tu hermano.
[Encuentras a tu hermano.]
You find your brother.

Va a ayudar muchas personas.
[Va a ayudar a mucha gente.]
You are going to help many people.

Veo muchos hijos en su futuro.
[Veo a muchos hijos en su futuro.]
I see many children in your future.

Veo un esposo muy guapo.
[Veo a un esposo muy guapo.]
I see a very handsome husband.

Vas a llamar su primer niño Chris.
[Vas a llamar a su primer niño Chris.]
You are going to call your first child Chris.

Prefiere los estudiantes de Rice.
[Prefiere a los estudiantes de Rice.]
He prefers the Rice students.

Alguien quien tú quieres está en peligro.
[Alguien a quien tú quieres está en peligro.]
Someone whom you love is in danger.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>He arrives</th>
<th>in</th>
<th>Argentina</th>
<th>para</th>
<th>to work.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Llega</td>
<td>a</td>
<td>la Argentina</td>
<td></td>
<td>trabajar.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As noted in the above diagram, a "zero element" may be found in the English construction where Spanish uses para to indicate purpose. This "zero element" transferred to Spanish is the error mechanism behind the following list of errors of omission of para.
Ha llamado a Diana preguntar por la historia de sus antepasados.
[Ha llamado a Diana para preguntar por la historia de sus antepasados]
He called Diana to ask about the history of her ancestors.

Llega a la Argentina trabajar más con sus investigaciones.
[Llega a la Argentina para trabajar más con sus investigaciones.] He arrives in Argentina to work more on his research.

Ha llamado a Diana decir de la llegada de David.
[Ha llamado a Diana para hablar de la llegada de David.] He called Diana to talk about David's arrival.

Estudio ser un ingeniero.
[Estudio para ser ingeniero.] I'm studying to be an engineer.

No tiene tiempo oír su futuro.
[No tiene tiempo para oír su futuro.] He doesn't have time to hear his future.

Pago mucho dinero oír mi buena ventura.
[Pago mucho dinero para oír mi buena ventura.] I pay a lot of money to hear my fortune.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>It is</th>
<th>inside</th>
<th>the</th>
<th>library.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Es</td>
<td>dentro</td>
<td>de</td>
<td>la</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Spanish preposition *dentro de* is a two-word construction where the English equivalent is one word, "inside". As noted in the above diagram, a Spanish two-word construction corresponding to an English one-word construction results in a "zero element" which may be incorrectly transferred to the Spanish construction.

Such is also the case in the use of verbs which carry a dependent preposition. For example, "to play" corresponds to *jugar a* when the verb is followed by a sport or game, and "to go" corresponds to *ir a* when the verb is used to indicate future action.
Multiple word construction in Spanish in which *de* or *a* has no correspondence in the equivalent English construction is the error mechanism behind the following list of errors of omission of *de* and *a*.

No es dentro la biblioteca.
[No es dentro de la biblioteca.]
It's not inside the library.

Piensa ir al café después recibe una llamada de David.
[Piensa ir al café después de recibir una llamada de David.]
He's thinking of going to the cafe after he gets a call from David.

El hotel está cerca la estación.
[El hotel está cerca de la estación.]
The hotel is near the station.

Es estudiante en la Universidad Nueva York.
[Es estudiante en la Universidad de Nueva York.]
He's a student at New York University.

Puedo pagar con mi tarjeta crédito.
[Puedo pagar con mi tarjeta de crédito.]
I can pay with my credit card.

Cuesta tres millón pesetas.
[Cuesta tres millones de pesetas.]
It costs three million pesetas.

Podemos cenar juntos después dos semanas.
[Podemos cenar juntos después de dos semanas.]
We can have dinner together in two weeks.

Estudio para mi clase español.
[Estudio para mi clase de español.]
I'm studying for my Spanish class.

¿Quiere jugar golf?
[¿Quiere jugar al golf?]
Do you want to play golf?
Juega a fútbol americano.
   [Juega al fútbol americano.]
He plays American football.

¿Cuánto tiempo va a estar en España?
   [¿Cuánto tiempo va a estar en España?]
How long are you going to be in Spain?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>He</th>
<th>is</th>
<th>Mr.</th>
<th>Nuñez</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>El</td>
<td>es</td>
<td>el</td>
<td>Sr.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As noted in the above diagram, Spanish uses a definite article in a number of instances where English does not. Such cases include Spanish definite article before personal titles as in Es el Sr. Nuñez. In the following examples, the definite article used in Spanish does not exist in the equivalent English construction.

El no es Sr. Nuñez.
   [El no es el Sr. Nuñez.]
He is not Mr. Nuñez.

Sé que Sr. Nuñez es de Uruguay.
   [Sé que el Sr. Nuñez es de Uruguay.]
I know that Mr. Nuñez is from Uruguay.

Ha pasado por aduana.
   [Ha pasado por la aduana.]
He passed through customs.

Todos estudiantes de Rice son locos.
   [Todos los estudiantes de Rice son locos.]
All Rice students are crazy.

Estudiantes americanos saben mucho.
   [Los estudiantes americanos saben mucho.]
American students know a lot.
Los hijos están en escuela.
[Los niños están en la escuela.]
The children are in school.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I believe</th>
<th>he</th>
<th>lies.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Creo</td>
<td>que</td>
<td>él</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The relator *que* is required in Spanish where the corresponding English "that" may be optional. In the above example, *que* corresponds to a zero element where "that" has been electively omitted from the English construction. Omission of relator *que* where the use of its English equivalent is optional or omitted is the error mechanism behind the following errors.

Sé Diana Vidal es la última descendiente de Felipe Vidal.
[¿Qué Diana Vidal es la última descendiente de Felipe Vidal?]
I know Diana Vidal is the last descendent of Felipe Vidal.

Recuerde usted la habitación está muy cómoda.
[Recuerde usted que la habitación está muy cómoda.]
Remember the room is very comfortable.

No cree las líneas de su mano dicen el futuro.
[No cree que las líneas de su mano dicen el futuro.]
He doesn't believe the lines of your hand tell the future.

Creo las líneas no mienten.
[Creo que las líneas no mienten.]
I believe the lines don't lie.

Hay tanto estudiar.
[Hay tanto que estudiar.]
There is so much to study.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A</th>
<th>room</th>
<th>with</th>
<th>everything</th>
<th>you want</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Una</td>
<td>habitación</td>
<td>con</td>
<td>todo</td>
<td>lo que</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Everything</td>
<td>that</td>
<td>you know</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>----------</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Todo</td>
<td>lo</td>
<td>que</td>
<td>sabe</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Spanish *lo que* meaning "what", "that", or "that which" often corresponds to a "zero element" in English either entirely or in part as evidenced by the above diagrams. Such correspondence is the error mechanism behind the following constructions which mistakenly omit either *lo* or *lo que*.

Todo qué yo sé de Diana Vidal...
   [Todo lo que yo sé de Diana Vidal...]
   Everything that I know about Diana Vidal...

Todo sé sobre el hombre que ha llamado a Diana...
   [Todo lo que sé sobre el hombre que ha llamado a Diana...]
   Everything I know about the man who called Diana...

No tengo una habitación con todo desea.
   [No tengo una habitación con todo lo que desea.]
   I don't have a room with everything you want.

¿Sabe usted que va a ocurrir?
   [¿Sabe usted lo que va a ocurrir?]
   Do you know what is going to happen?

Yo sé que has hecho, que haces, y que piensas hacer.
   [Yo sé lo que has hecho, lo que haces, y lo que piensas hacer.]
   I know what you've done, what you are doing, and what you plan to do.

Dígame que sabe usted.
   [Dígame lo que sabe usted.]
   Tell me what you know.

Yo sé que yo veo.
   [Yo sé lo que yo veo.]
   I know what I see.
5.22 ERRORS OF MISTAKEN ADDITION

Just as an error may be caused by the omission of an element which is required in Spanish but has no correspondence in English, errors may be caused by the addition of an element where one that is required in the English construction has no correspondence in the Spanish construction. A common error of this type is the tendency by English-speaking students of Spanish to insert an article before nouns which identify profession. English "I am an engineer" may lead to the error Soy un ingeniero. Such constructions are often calques, as described in the previous section on lexical errors. In this section however, the word-for-word translations involve function words which have no independent lexical meaning and are therefore included in the listing of syntactical errors.

• Examples:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I have</th>
<th>a</th>
<th>car.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tengo</td>
<td></td>
<td>coche.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The above diagram demonstrates the "zero element" in Spanish where an English speaker may mistakenly transfer the use of the indefinite article. Such transfer is the error mechanism in the following sentences.

Soy un estudiante en la universidad aquí.
[Soy estudiante en la universidad aquí.]
I'm a student at the university here.

¿Tiene un coche?
[¿Tiene coche?]
Do you have a car?
Quiero ser un ingeniero.
[Quiero ser ingeniero.]
I want to be an engineer.

Gire a la derecha y camine un cien metros.
[Gire a la derecha y camine cien metros.]
Turn to the right and walk one hundred meters (ten blocks).

No tiene un esposo.
[No tiene esposo.]
She doesn't have a husband.

Va a ganar mucho dinero siendo una profesora.
[Va a ganar mucho dinero como profesora.]
You're going to make a lot of money as a professor.

No soy una gitana.
[No soy gitana.]
I am not a gypsy.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Wait</th>
<th>for</th>
<th>ten</th>
<th>minutes.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Esperar</td>
<td>diez</td>
<td>minutos.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When English verbs with dependent prepositions correspond to single word constructions in Spanish such as English "to wait for" corresponding to Spanish esperar, the dependent English preposition may be mistakenly transferred to Spanish. Such is the case in the following example.

Espere para diez minutos.
[Espere diez minutos.]
Wait for ten minutes.

5.23 ERRORS OF WORD ORDER

Relatively few transfer errors of word order were found in the student constructions. Those which were committed include errors caused
by inversion of noun and modifier, and errors of negation where no was used as a negative adjective instead of a negative adverb.

- Examples:

  Guillermo es un uruguayo amigo de David.
  [Guillermo es un amigo uruguayo de David.]
  Guillermo es an Uruguayan friend of David's.

  Camine unos más cientos metros.
  [Camine unos cien metros más.]
  Walk a few more hundred meters (a few more blocks).

  ¡Míos Dios!
  [¡Dios mío!]
  My God!

  Es no importante.
  [No es importante.]
  It's not important.

  Veo no dinero en el futuro.
  [No veo dinero en el futuro.]
  I don't see any money in the future.

  Tengo no más tiempo.
  [No tengo más tiempo.]
  I don't have any more time.

5.3 MORPHOLOGICAL ERRORS

Three types of morphological transfer errors were found in the student compositions including errors of plural marking, errors of subject-verb agreement, and errors in verb tense.
5.31 ERRORS OF PLURAL MARKING

Because English marks nouns for plural but does not mark their modifiers while Spanish marks both nouns and modifiers, errors in number agreement are common in the constructions of English speaking students of Spanish. Again, the phenomena may be explained as transfer of a partial overlap into an area where correspondence no longer exists. A student may incorrectly reason that if *su* means "your" in the construction *su casa*, it should also mean "your" in *su antepasados*. Likewise, if *cómodo* means "comfortable" in *El hotel es muy cómodo*, it should function equally well in *Los hoteles son muy cómodo*.

Another type of plural marking error, which appeared three times in the student compositions, is the incorrect formation of the plural morpheme. Where English says "The Vidals" to refer to the entire family, Spanish does not add the [s] as a plural morpheme in the case of surnames and the English speaking student may tend to say *Los Vidals* instead of the correct *Los Vidal*. Additionally, where the Spanish plural morpheme is always [es] in words ending in a consonant, the English plural morpheme after final consonants can be either [s] as in "caps", [z] as in "cabs" or [ez] as in "buses". The plural of Spanish *hotel* and its English cognate are not formed equally. Spanish *hotel* becomes *hoteles* while English "hotel" becomes "hotels".

**Examples:**

*su* antepasados  [sus antepasados]

*nuestro* antepasados  [nuestros antepasados]

amigas *quien* van siempre al café  [amigas quienes van siempre al café]
un compañeros de facultad  [unos compañeros de facultad]
los últimos descendientes directo  [los últimos descendientes directos]
su amigos  [sus amigos]
la ocho  [las ocho]
¿cuánto camas?  [¿cuántas camas?]
tres millón pesetas  [tres millones de pesetas]
camas muy grande  [camas muy grandes]
maletas grande  [maletas grandes]
clases muy interesante  [clases muy interesantes]
hoteles muy cómodo  [hoteles muy cómodos]
madre y padre cómico  [padres cómicos]
clases difícil  [clases difíciles]
otro clases  [otras clases]
líneas muy interesante  [líneas muy interesantes]
ojos rojo  [ojos rojos]
manos muy guapa  [manos muy guapas] or [manos muy lindas]
otros plans  [otros planes]
los Vidal  [los Vidal]
los hotels  [los hoteles]

5.32 ERRORS OF SUBJECT-VERB AGREEMENT

Some errors in subject-verb agreement can be attributed to transfer
due to the fact that the Spanish verb is inflected for six persons while the
English verb is inflected for three. In some situations where English shows
no inflection, Spanish does show inflection. English, for example, uses
"have" for first person plural "we have" and for third person plural "they
have". Spanish in this case uses tenemos and tienen. The incorrect
extension of third person verb to second person nouns may cause errors in subject-verb agreement when the English speaker assumes that if "they have" is *ellos tienen*, then "we have" is *nosotros tienen*. That example was the only error of this type found in the student compositions.

Other transfer-related errors of subject-verb agreement are caused when a Spanish noun like *gente* takes a verb form corresponding to third person singular while the English equivalent "people" takes the verb form corresponding to third person plural. In Spanish, *él toma* and *la gente toma*, with both verbs in the third person singular. In English, however, "he drinks" and "people drink", with the first verb being in the third person singular and the second in the third person plural. The student incorrectly extending the English subject-verb correspondence to Spanish may say *la gente toman*.

•Examples:

Mucha gente *han* venido hoy.
   [Mucha gente ha venido hoy.]
   Many people have come today.

La policía *trabajan* bastante.
   [La policía trabaja bastante.]
   The police work a lot.

Todos *toma*.
   [Todos toman.]
   Everybody drinks.

5.33 ERRORS IN VERB TENSE

In any construction where English employs a different verb tense than does the equivalent Spanish construction, the English tense may be mistakenly transferred to Spanish. Errors of this type are generally
calques, or word-for-word translations, that result in the use of an incorrect verb tense in Spanish without any other syntactical or lexical error. Although most calques were included in the previous listing of lexical errors, the following are included in the morphological category because the incorrect verb tense is the only error in the construction.

**Examples:**

Espero que su viaje será bueno.
   [Espero que su viaje sea bueno.]
   I hope your trip will be good.

Después termina el trabajo, piensa pasar varios meses en Argentina.
   [Después de terminar el trabajo, piensa pasar varios meses en la Argentina.] or [Después de que termine el trabajo...]
   After he finishes the work, he plans to spend several months in Argentina.

Piensa ir al café después recibe una llamada de David.
   [Piensa ir al café después de recibir una llamada de David.] or [Piensa ir al café después de que reciba...]
   He plans to go to the cafe after he receives a call from David.

Voy a tener sed después de camino.
   [Voy a tener sed después de caminar.]
   I'm going to be thirsty after I walk.

Después de ha pasado la calle Mercedes, la oficina está a la izquierda.
   [Después de pasar la calle Mercedes, la oficina está a la izquierda.]
   After you have passed Mercedes street, the office is on the right.

5.4 ORTHOGRAPHIC ERRORS

In the study of transfer, investigation of orthography is usually concerned with how spelling may influence pronunciation. When two languages employ the same alphabet, the student will often take the sounds
associated with symbols in the native language and apply them to the target language, mistakenly assuming symbol-sound correspondence. However, because this study investigates written material, we can only look at transfer in orthography as it relates to spelling errors. Transfer errors in spelling include those caused by transfer of cognate spelling and those caused by English symbolization of Spanish sound.

5.41 ERRORS CAUSED BY TRANSFER OF COGNATE SPELLING

The most obvious transfer error in spelling is the extension into Spanish of English spelling of cognates, resulting in student errors such as *intelligente* and *tourista*. Errors attributable to transfer of cognate spelling affected both true cognates as well as false cognates.

**Examples:**

- inteligente [inteligente]
- mysteriosa [misteriosa]
- acuerdo [acuerdo]
- double [doble]
- libraría [librería]
- precio [precio]
- necessito [necesito]
- officina [oficina]
- tourista [turista]
- theátrica [teátrica]
- diferente [diferente]
- filosófía [filosofía]
- hacia me [hacia mí]
5.42 ERRORS CAUSED BY TRANSFER OF ENGLISH 
SYMBOLIZATION OF SOUND

Another type of spelling error attributable to transfer is the 
representation of Spanish sounds with English symbolization, or in other 
words, the spelling of Spanish words as they may have been spelled if they 
were English words. For example, English [kwa] is represented as "qua" 
in words like "quadrant" and "quality". English [kwe] is represented as 
"que" in words like "question". Such association led one student to misspell 
cuatrocientos as quatrocientos and another to misspell acuerdo as aquerdo. 
These two examples were the only errors of this type found in the study.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


