

**SÜLEYMAN DEMIREL UNIVERSITY**  
**DEPARTMENT OF POSTGRADUATE EDUCATION**



**TYPES OF ERRORS AS INDICATORS OF EFL  
(ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE)  
STUDENTS LANGUAGE COMPETENCE**

**MASTER'S THESIS**

**6M011900 — «FOREIGN LANGUAGE: TWO FOREIGN LANGUAGES»**

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# SIGNIFICANCE OF RESEARCH



Foreign language acquisition is not an easy task. It is a long and complex process, which requires tremendous efforts and which has different barriers on the way of realization. Within the barriers we can consider learners' errors, because very few teachers know a lot about error analysis, appropriate error correction and some related theories. They often take so negative attitudes towards errors that they cannot tolerate any and tend to correct them as soon as they appear.

# PROBLEM OF RESEAEARCH



Many teachers simply correct individual errors as they occur, with little attempt to see patterns of errors or to seek causes in anything other than learner ignorance. The significance of error analysis is not properly evaluated and emphasized by many teachers of English and thus is not considered to be a valid source indicating and enhancing the students' language competence. The problem to be solved lies in the absence of explicit relation between thorough analysis of error types and development of language competence.



In this regard, the study of students' errors will help us realize how they can serve altogether as indicators and facilitators of EFL learners' language competence.

It should be pointed out, that our focus is the development of EFL learners' writing competence at A2 level.



The **purpose** of Error Analysis is, in fact, to find " **what the learner knows and does not know**" and to " **ultimately enable the teacher to supply him** not just with the information that his hypothesis is wrong, but also, importantly, **with the right sort of information** or data for him to form a more adequate concept of a rule in the target language" (Corder, 1974, p. 170).

# THE AIM OF RESEARCH



According to this theory, the primary aims of this study are:

- to explore the types of errors made by a group of EFL learners at school level in their written works and
- to attempt to use Error Analysis as an instrument which will facilitate the dynamics of students' language competence formation



## **Hypothesis of research:**

- Error analysis will be an effective indicator and developmental tool of EFL learners' language competency in case of appropriate and consecutive error correction.

## **Research questions:**

More specifically, the study seeks to answer the following questions:

- What are the most common errors that students of A2 level commit in their written expressions?
- How Error Analysis data provided by an English teacher can help the learners develop their language competence?

# SCIENTIFIC NOVELTY



The scientific novelty of the study is that for the first time an attempt is made to classify errors, found in EFL learners' written works in terms of Kazakhstan and to use Error Analysis as a facilitator of their language competence formation.



# OBJECTIVES OF RESEARCH



- To highlight fundamental background studies done in the field of Error Analysis
- To conduct an EA of A2 level EFL learners' written works
- To provide EFL learners with EA data helping them to form a more adequate concept of a rule in the target language
- To develop Error Correction techniques, which might be implemented into the teaching practice

# METHODS OF RESEARCH



- Theoretical methods of research are literature review, analysis and synthesis of collected data
- Practical: Empirical method, which is based on observation and experiment: testing, qualitative and quantitative analysis.

# LITERATURE REVIEW



**Error analysis** in the second language acquisition (SLA) was first introduced in the 1960s by Stephen Pit Corder and his co-finders (Richards, Selinker, Cowell, etc.).

According to Pit Corder, the following are the steps in any typical EA research:

- collecting samples of learner language
- identifying the errors
- describing the errors
- explaining the errors
- evaluating/correcting the errors

# THE SIGNIFICANCE OF ERRORS



Corder (1967) noted that learner's errors are significant in three ways:

(1) provide the teacher with information about how much the learner had learnt

→ reflect traditional role of EA

(2) provide the researcher with evidence of how language was learnt

→ provide new role on L2 research

(3) serve as devices by which the learner discovered the rules of the target language

→ process of L2 acquisition

# ERROR AND MISTAKE



- Mistake is a deviation in learner language that occurs when learners fail to perform their competence. It is a lapse that reflects processing problems.
- Error is a deviation in learner language which results from lack of knowledge of the correct rule, thus lack of competence.
- Mistake is "a performance error that is either a random guess or a 'slip,' in that it is a failure to use a known system correctly". Errors, on the other hand, are problems that a native speaker would not have.
- Error is a "noticeable deviation from the adult grammar of a native speaker, reflecting the interlanguage competence of the learner." (Brown 1983)

# Error sources

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graph TD; A[Error sources] --> B[Interlingual]; A --> C[Intralingual]; B --- D[Interference of a dominant language]; C --- E[Reflect general characteristics of SLA];
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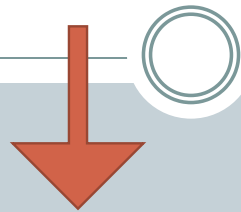
## Interlingual

Interference of  
a dominant  
language

## Intralingual

Reflect general  
characteristics  
of SLA

# Interlingual errors



## Influence of mother tongue or a dominant language

1. **Omission** (*\*Where... you live?*)
2. **Addition** (*\*I never don't drink coffee*)
3. **Disordering (replacement) and substitution** (*I love you – SVO - Мен сені сүйөмін - SOV*)
4. **Misinterpretation** (*I read\* (оқы) psychology (I study psychology)*)

## Intralingual errors Reflect general characteristics of SLA



- Over-generalization of L2 rules (Analogical errors: started, \*goed)
- Incomplete application of L2 rules
- Ignorance of rule restrictions
- Simplification: ( Redundancy/ reduction)
- False hypothesis: “\*One day I was travelled.”).
- Teacher-induced errors

(based on Richards works 1971)



# METHODOLOGY



Conducting an experiment was caused by the need of practical confirmation of a theoretical hypothesis, thus it was expected that Error analysis will be an effective indicator and development tool of EFL learners' language competency in case of systematic error analysis of their writings.

# THE STUDY POPULATION AND SAMPLING



- 20 participants of A2 – pre-intermediate level, their ages were varied from 16-23. (10-control gr., 10-experim. Gr.)
- The venue of experiment was educational centre “CES for You” which is located at 46 Mustafina St.
- Writing tasks were based on course book curriculum – “Solutions” Second Edition Pre-Intermediate by Tim Falla, Paul Davies.
- Time frame – 2 months

# PROCEDURE



- Step I. Pre-test consisting 50 multiple choice questions which assess students' knowledge of key grammar and vocabulary by which it was aimed to select approximately same – A2 level students.
- Step II. EA of written works of experimental group and teaching writing to students at A2 level during 2 months with systematic error analysis in experimental group. To be precise, here experimental group students have to write one essay twice with first draft and final draft paper. After first draft they should be provided by feedback thus error analysis and learned material revision if it's needed in order to consolidate, also they should rewrite their final drafts with self-correction and analyzing own errors. In turn control group should be only provided by error correction not error analysis as the experimental group.
- Step III. Post-test (essay) - Having Final Examination by the end of the course and analyze the progress results

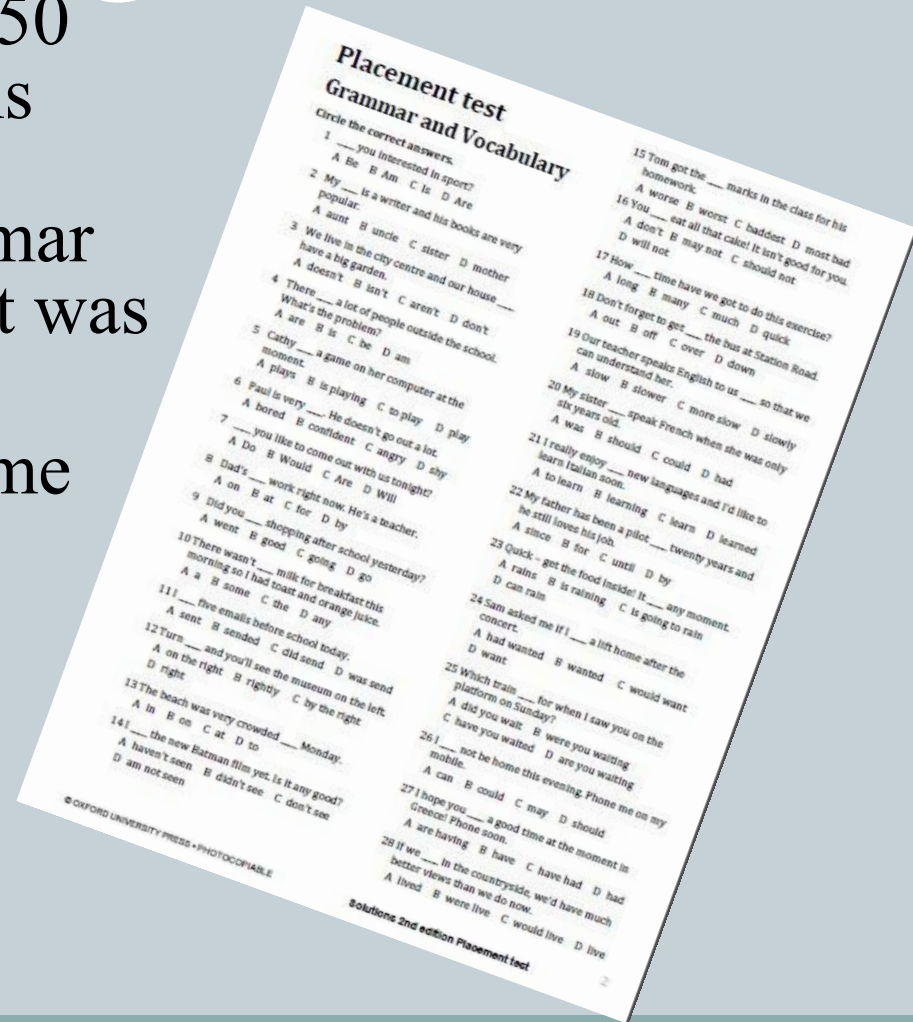
# DATA COLLECTION TOOLS



The source of data used to find answers to the research questions is the written essays of 20 participants of the chosen language school.

# Step I. Pre-test

The pre-test contained 50 multiple choice questions which assess students' knowledge of key grammar and vocabulary. This test was aimed to select learners comparatively on the same A2 level

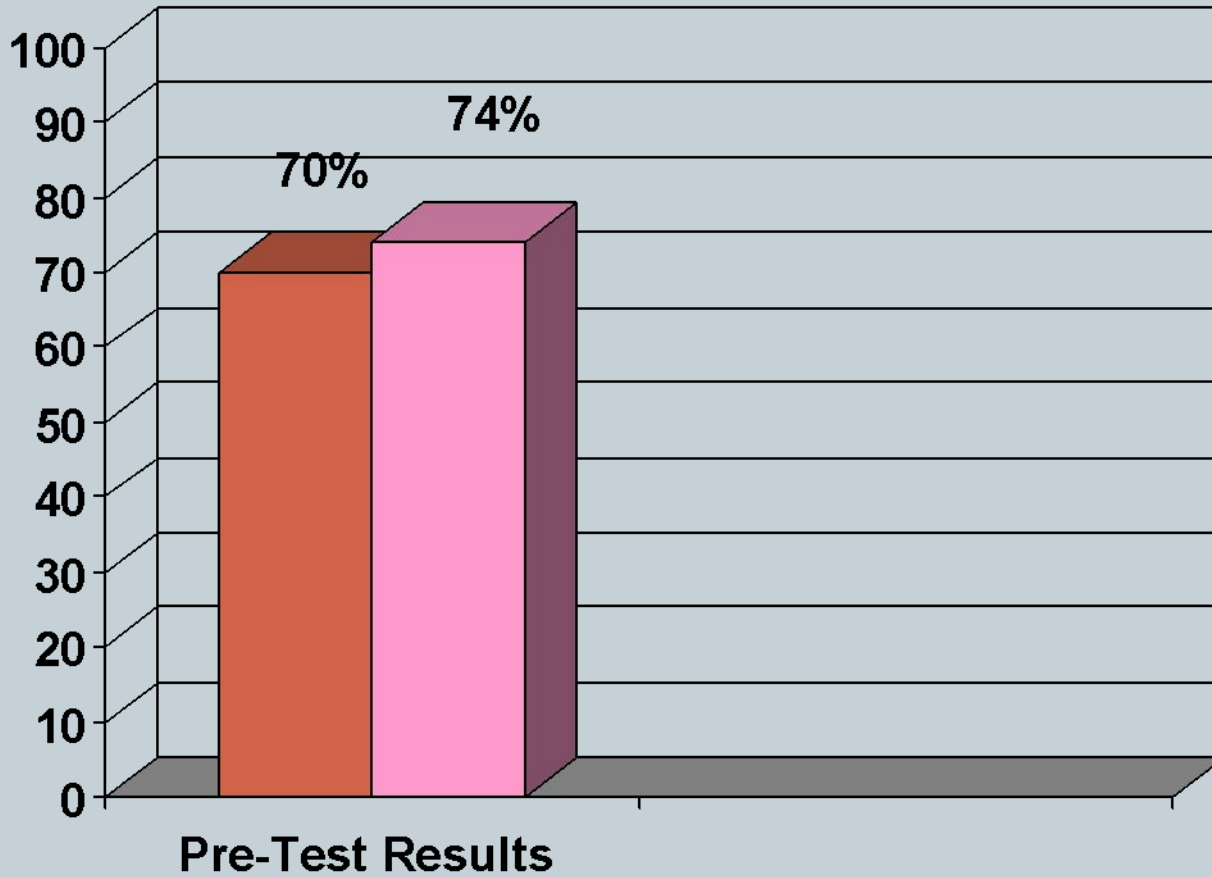


# Pre-Test Results



*Chart 1* below shows the results of learners after level test, thus pre-test results which was 50 multiple choice questions (as 100%) to assess students' knowledge of key grammar and vocabulary (Appendix 1). If student scores more than 21 and till 30 points he or she was regarded as pre-intermediate student and applied as the subject of experiment. If student scores more than 21 and till 30 points he or she was regarded as pre-intermediate student and applied as the subject of experiment.

# PRE-TEST RESULTS



**50 correct  
answers - 100%  
for A2 level**

-  Experimental
-  Control

## **Step II. EA of written works of experimental group**

After first stage of investigation learners were involved into second stage, where they were taught General English according to course book of Solutions Pre-Intermediate level curriculum and how to write descriptive, comparison/contrast and argumentative and other types of essays during the 2 month .



# Error Hint Technique



- It is important to note on how instructions and feedback to experimental group were given. As soon as they pass any written essay, there were made error analysis with whole group and revision of the most difficult grammar structures regarding to the errors. However they were not given correction,
- In first draft essays learner was given only hints about where and which type of errors he or she made.
- In final draft the learner supposed to make self-correction and overcome errors through EA and supervision of instructor

# DATA ANALYSIS



The analysis of written essays were based on Corder's (1967) method of error analysis. This method has three stages:

- (1) collection of sample errors,
- (2) identification of errors and
- (3) description of errors.

## Step III. POST TEST



For the post-test stage as the final examination learners were asked to write comparison and contrast essay on theme “The Best city to live in Kazakhstan” which should contain 200 to 250 words. They were given sufficient time to write. They had to start with an outline, then a first draft and a final draft.

# Step III. POST TEST RESULTS

Type of errors	Control group		Experimental group	
	# of errors	percentage	# of errors	percentage
<i>FIRST DRAFT</i>				
Article (addition and omission) (Interlingual)	55	22,9	47	18,1
Word choice (Intralingual)	60	25	57	22
Preposition (addition, omission, and misuse) (intra and interlingual)	32	13,3	26	10,03
Punctuation (omission and misuse) (intra and interlingual)	24	10	25	9,65
Singular/plural noun agreement (Intralingual)	25	10,4	20	7,72
Spelling (Intralingual)	35	14,5	28	10,81
Sentence fragment (Interlingual)	15	6,25	10	3,86
Verb Tense (Inter and Intralingual)	21	8,75	29	11,19
Subject-verb agreement (intralingual)	10	4,6	17	6,56
Total	280	100%	259	100%

Type of errors	Experimental group		Control group	
	# of errors	percentage	# of errors	percentage
<i>FINAL DRAFT</i>				
Article (addition and omission) (Interlingual)	27	9,6	45	17,37
Word choice (Intralingual)	35	12,5	43	16,60
Preposition (addition, omission, and misuse) (intra and interlingual)	14	5	28	10,81
Punctuation (omission and misuse) (intra and interlingual)	20	7,14	18	6,94
Singular/plural noun agreement (Intralingual)	8	2,85	12	4,63
Spelling (Intralingual)	15	5,35	24	9,26
Sentence fragment (Interlingual)	9	3,21	7	2,7
Verb Tense (Inter and Intralingual)	11	3,92	17	6,56
Subject-verb agreement (intralingual)	7	2,5	8	3,08
Total	146	52,14	202	77,9

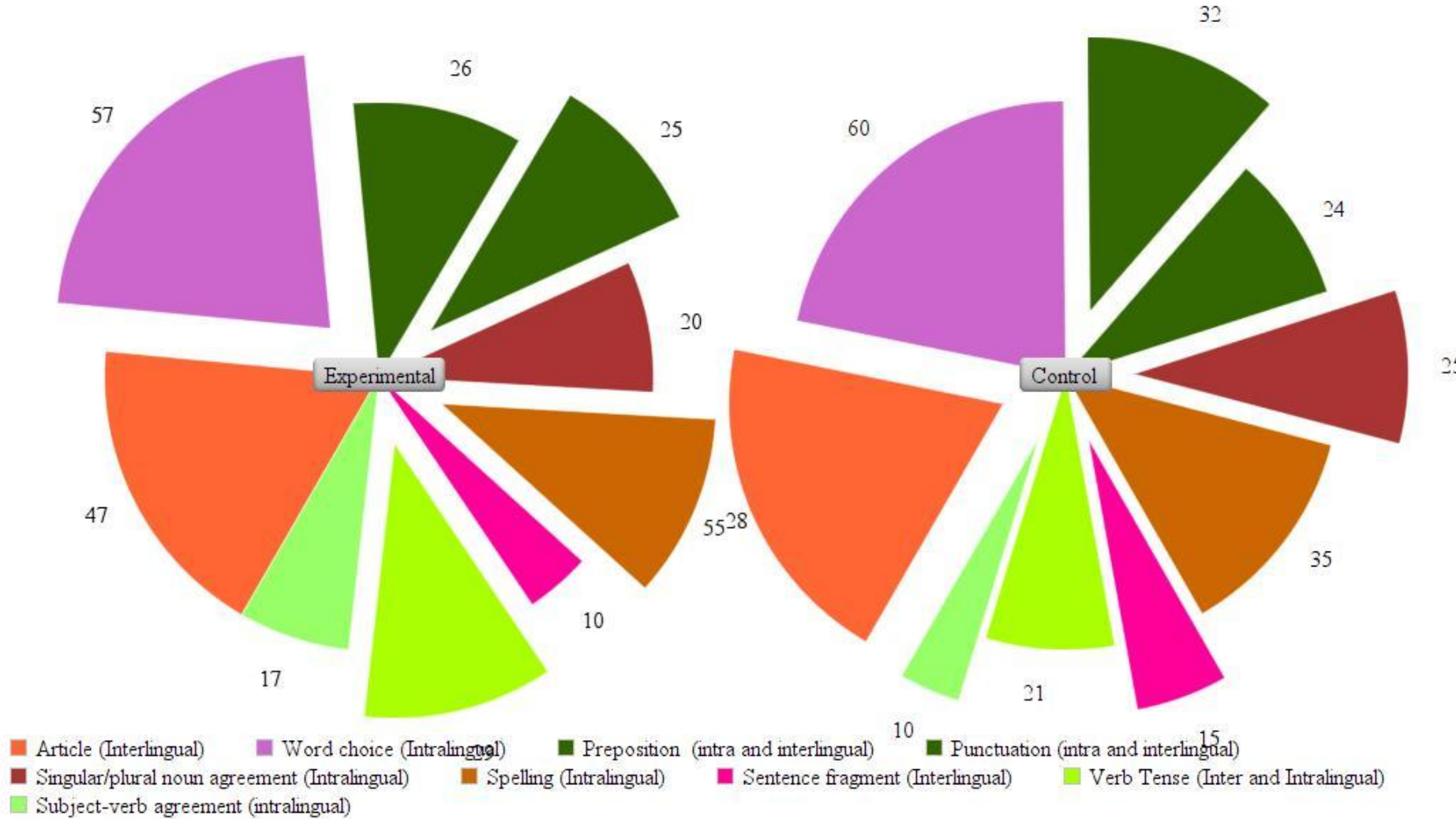
# Result Discussion



Amount of identified error types and their sources provided us with such groundings as errors committed by A2 level students in both groups mostly were caused by intralingual sources, thus because of general reflections of ELA (English language acquisition) and rest of them were caused by Interlingual sources, thus impact of L1, these results are showed in charts below (Char2 and Chart3).

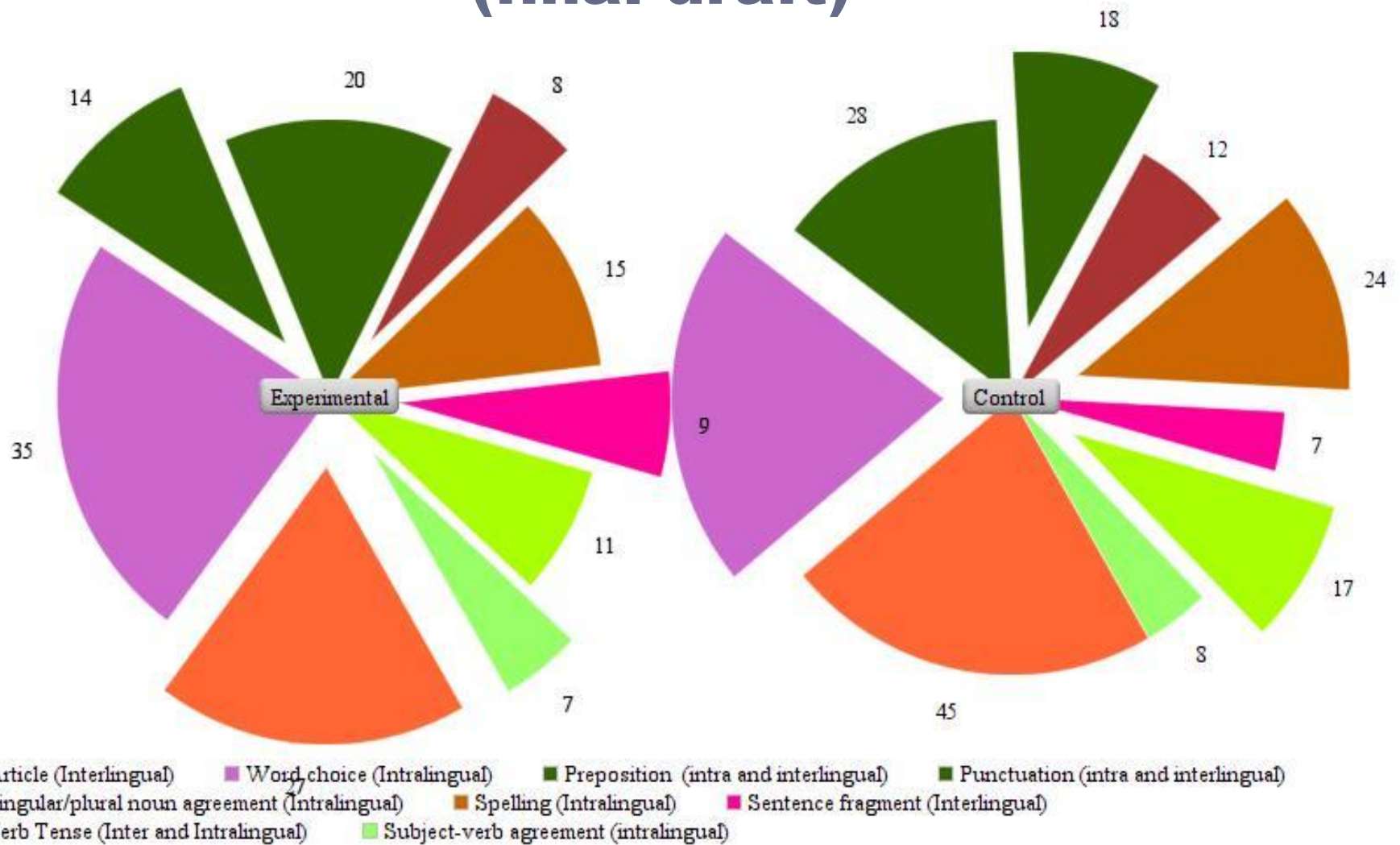
These conclusions correspond to the first aim of our research – to explore the types of errors made by a group of EFL learners at A2 level in their written works.

# Comparison of Error Sources in both groups (first draft)





# Comparison of Error Sources in both groups (final draft)



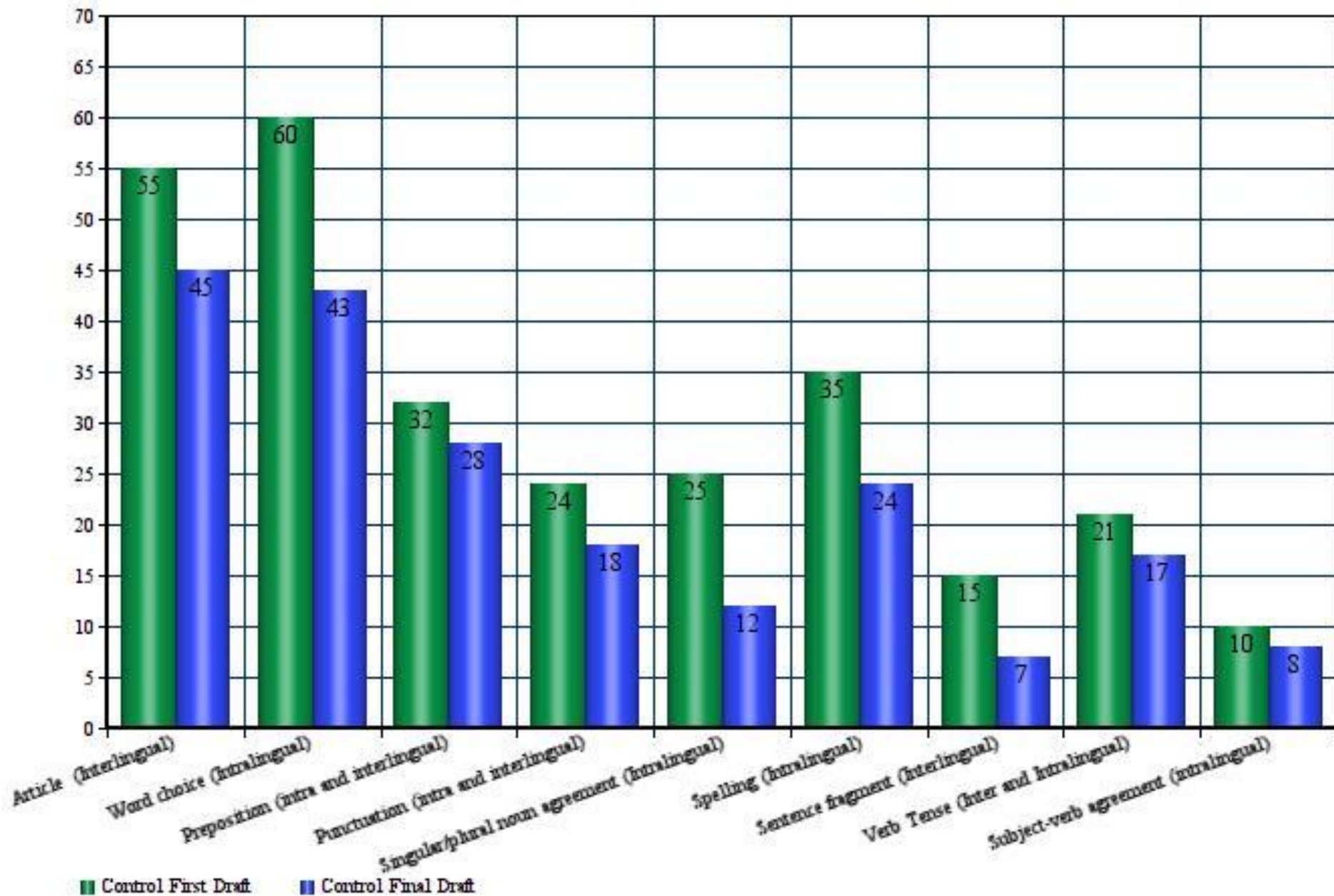




Furthermore, the investigation was focused on the most important - *second aim of our study, thus the role and impact of Error Analysis on adequate language competence formation*. In other words how error analysis influence to the language competence formation: positively or negatively.

According to research hypothesis, Error analysis will be an effective indicator and developmental tool of EFL learners' language competence in case of appropriate and consecutive error analysis. In order to examine this, the final results of experimental group and control group were compared.

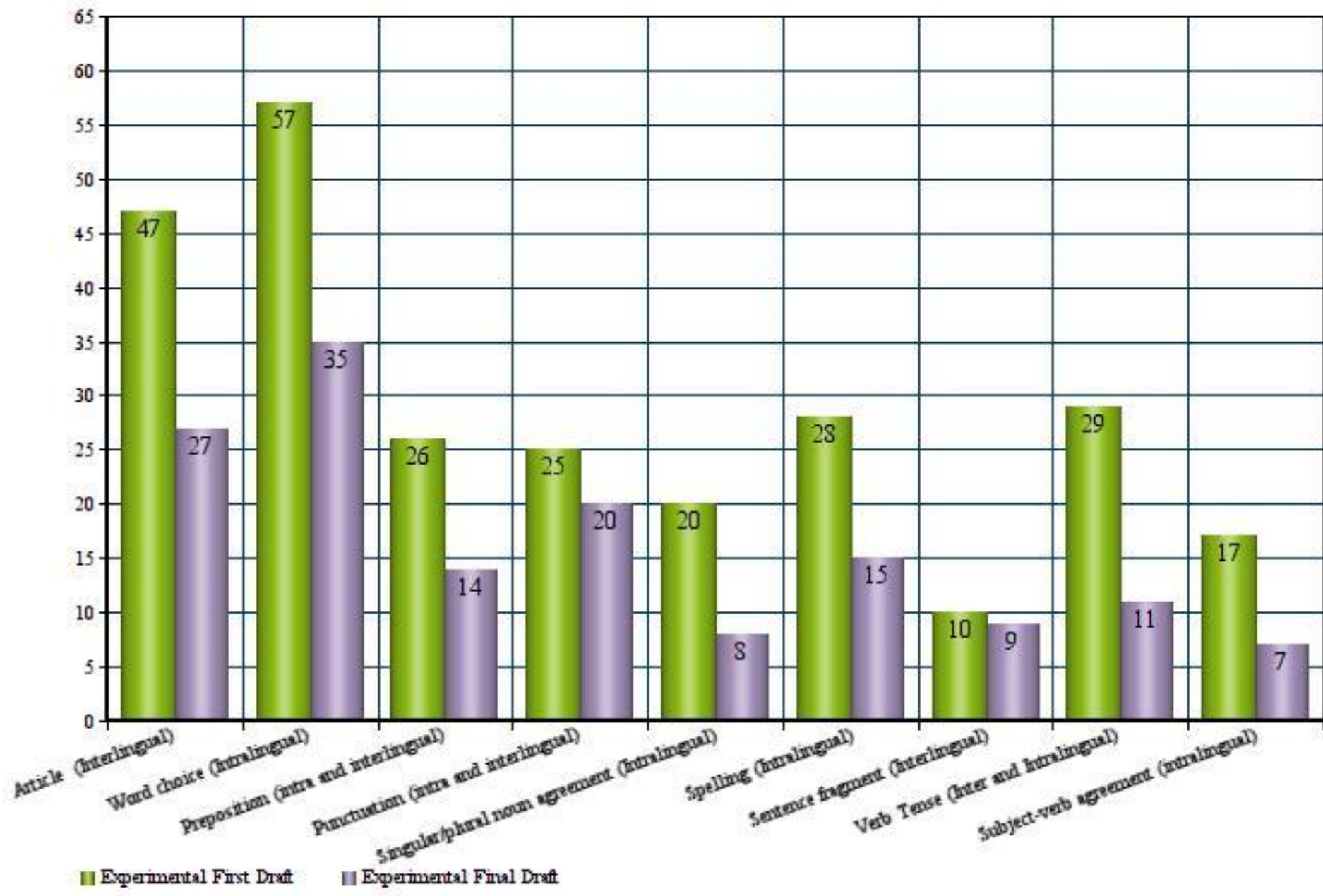
Comparison of First and Final Draft Results in Control Group



■ Control First Draft

■ Control Final Draft

Comparison of First and Final Draft Results in Experimental Group



# Experimental Group Feedback Example



- They were given “hints” about their errors on their first draft papers, but not error correction.
- Further it was expected that they could self-correct themselves with the help of hints.
- For instance, for the verb tense error, instructor highlighted error and wrote the specific of this error but not right variant as it is showed below. Further these hints were given in constrictions.
- \*I've been lived in Pavlodar for 10 years. (**verb tense**)
- \* I have planned my future a long time ago. (**tense**)

# Control Group Feedback Example



- *\*The population of Almaty is increasing continuously.  
continuously \* ... which will allow me to live in a suitable  
enviroment.    **environment***
- *\*I've been lived in Pavlodar for 10 years. **I have been  
living in Pavlodar for 10 years***
- *\* I have plan my future a long time ago. **I planned my  
future a long time ago***



- by the end of current experiment the group which provided by “error hints”, thus experimental group succeed more in their error overcoming and correction comparing with control group, which was only provided by error correction (see the charts 4 and 5 below).
- Thereby special technique of feedback as ‘error hints’ within the Error Analysis has given positive impact on language competence formation. Therefore we can claim that our research hypothesis was confirmed. In a nutshell the procedure of error analyzing influenced positively on adequate comprehension and formation of language structure and competence by experimental group learners.

# CONCLUSIONS



To sum up, we supposed that error analysis will be an effective indicator and developmental tool of EFL learners' language competency in case of appropriate and consecutive error analysis and adequate feedback. In order to examine this hypothesis, firstly we analyzed most frequent errors that A2 level students commit. After experimental group learners were provided with more explicit EA , which reveals all the features of their errors as sources, revising of the learned material in order to form more adequate concept of a rule in the target language, thus it supposed to lead them to the intensive self correction and accurate writing. By the end of experiment we realized that our hypothesis was confirmed and gave positive results



- More specifically, the study sought to answer the following questions:
- What are the most common errors that students of A2 level commit in their written expressions?

*More Intralingual rather than Interlingual*

- How Error Analysis data provided by an English teacher can help the learners develop their language competence?

*Error Analysis influenced positively on adequate comprehension and formation of language competence*