

ERRORS IN WRITTEN ARGUMENTATIVE ESSAYS OF INTERMEDIATE EFL
STUDENTS AT THE UNIVERSIDAD DEL VALLE

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ABSTRACT

This is a quantitative description of the most frequent errors in written essays of intermediate EFL students at Universidad del Valle in Cali, Colombia. A mixed traditional error analysis (Fries 1945, Weinreich 1953, Lado 1957) – Error Analysis (EA: Corder 1971, 1974; Selinker 1972, 1974; Dulay and Burt, 1974; Nemser, 1971, Richards 1974, Ellis 1985) – Computer-aided Error Analysis (CEA: Peinemann 1992, Dagneaux et al. 1998, Granger 1998, 2000, Lewandoska-Tomaszczyk et al. 2000, Tono 2000, Knutsson et al. 2003, Leriko-Szymariska 2004, Izumi et al.. 2005, Macdonald 2005, Alexopoulou 2006, Ballesteros et al. 2006) analysis, resulting in a bidimensional error typology, is used. For the classification, six linguistic categories are identified: Grammar (mostly single-word speech parts), Lexis/Vocabulary (cognates and word class confusions), Mechanics (punctuation, capitalization and syllabication), Discourse (verbosity/wordiness), Register (speech, jargon, informal), and Style/Pragmatics (fragments, unclear, vague or L1/L3-like utterances, and Code Switching). Six criteria make up the description: Omission, Over inclusion, Wrong Form (morphology and spelling), Wrong Position (word order, misplacement), and Complementation (complements of nouns, verbs, adjectives and adverbs). Error etiology –commonly classifying errors as interlingual and intralingual- is not included due to its high degree of subjectivity.

KEY WORDS

Error analysis, computer-aided error analysis, lexical-grammatical errors, EFL, written texts, learning of English by Spanish speakers

SUMMARY

Errors in written argumentative essays of intermediate EFL B.A. students at the Universidad del Valle in Cali, Colombia are studied in order to identify and classify the most frequent flaws. A historical review of error analysis -from an applied linguistics to FL teaching perspective- constitutes the theoretical framework. Three stages in error analysis are identified: in the traditional view, (Fries 1945, Weinreich 1953, Haugen 1953, Lado 1957), linked to behaviorism and structuralism, errors were seen as a product of interference or negative transfer from the mother tongue in the new or second language, something negative to be avoided by any means. Error analysis –EA-, (Corder 1971, 1974, 1981, Selinker 1969, 1972, 1974, 1984, Briere 1964, Dusková 1969, Dulay and Burt 1974, Nemser, 1971, Richards 1974, Ellis 1985, Abisamra 2003), challenged the Contrastive Analysis Hypotheses of traditional views and considered errors in a positive way, as indicators of the internal processes of language learning and acquisition. EA drew from mentalist-oriented language learning theories (Chomsky 1959) and functionalist approaches to language, psycholinguistics and sociolinguistics (Labov 1972, Hymes 1974, Halliday 1979). Errors were then a characteristic feature of the new system being constructed by the learners, progressively closer to the target language, system called idiosyncratic dialect (Corder 1971), interlanguage (Selinker 1972), transitional competence (Corder 1981), or approximative system (Nemser 1981). EA established several steps for error analysis (Corder 1971, 1974): identification and classification, explanation and diagnosis of causes, remedial proposals. Further, deep criticism to EA's limited scope and lack of methodological rigour (Corder 1971, 1981, Enkvist 1973, Bell 1974, Schachter 1974, 1977, Ellis 1994), developments of corpus linguistics (Sinclair 1992, Biber et al. 1998, McCarthy and Sampson 2005, Wallis, 2007, Facchinetti 2007) and technological development gave birth to the third approach to errors, still subject to discussion and development: Computer-aided Error Analysis, CEA (Peinemann 1992, Dagneaux et al. 1998, Granger 1998, 2000, Lewandoska-Tomaszczyk et al. 2000, Mason and Uzar 2000, Tono 2000, Knutsson et al. 2003, Leriko-Szymariska 2004, Izumi et al. 2005, Macdonald 2005, Alexopoulou 2006, Ballesteros et al. 2006). A chief product of CEA have been error taggers, like UCLEE – Université Catholique de Louvaine Error Editor- (Hutchinson 1996), MARKIN (Creative Technologies 2000) –the one used in our research-, TAGEDITOR (Izumi et al. 2003),

ENWIL -English Written Interlanguage Project- (Alcalá University 1997), SPICLE (Spanish –Peninsular- International Corpus of Learner English) Error Tagging Project (Ballesteros et al. 2006), among many others.

A mixed traditional-EA-CEA approach is adopted for the current analysis. A bidimensional error typology is used: for the classification (first stage of EA), six linguistic error categories are identified, with some subcategories in each: Grammatical errors (troubles mostly with single-word speech parts), Lexis/Vocabulary errors (problems with cognates and word class confusions), Mechanics (punctuation, capitalization and syllabication flaws), Discourse (verbosity/wordiness), Register (speech, jargon, informal), Style/Pragmatics (utterances that are fragments, unclear, vague or L1 (Spanish)/L3 (French)-like, and Code Switching). For the description (stage II of EA) the selected criteria are: Missing (omission), Extra (over inclusion), Wrong Form (including morphology and spelling), Wrong Position (word order, misplacement), Complementation (complements of nouns, verbs, adjectives and adverbs). Error etiology (stage III of EA) – commonly classifying errors as interlingual (transference) and intralingual (developmental)- is not included in our descriptive analysis, due to the high degree of subjectivity when dealing with it. The resulting 92 error tags are then defined and coded to mark the errors in the essays. 15 7BAFLUV students' argumentative essays belonging to the proficiency exam of 2008 are analyzed. The texts are subdivided into three groups, low, medium, and high level, according to the grade given by the original raters. The most frequent errors for individual essays, each level subgroup, and the total sample are described in a quantitative way.

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“If something can go wrong, it will” (Murphy’s law)

“A person who never made a mistake, never tried anything new.”

Albert Einstein

“Mistakes can often be as good a teacher as success.”

Jack Welch

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Learning a language is the most outstanding intellectual deed most human beings will carry out throughout their lives for it takes time and involves a number of factors, from linguistic to social to physical to psychological ones. Learning *another* language implies a great deal of harder effort, particularly if it is a *foreign* language, as in this case the learner does not have much social support for doing it. On the other hand, from what a language implies, writing is clearly the most difficult and the latest aspect to acquire: after having mastered speaking, mankind took thousands of years to device writing; children only learn to write long after they have mastered speaking. In turn, writing has its own set of aspects that offer a varied gamut of difficulties, which are overcome by learners through different ways and at different rhythms. Even native speakers of a language master writing the latest, after a long and complex process. So, written expression in a foreign language is the most problematic area for learners. In such an intricate learning process, errors are an inherent

feature that, besides denouncing difficult aspects of the language, point at knowledge stages and learning styles/strategies as well. Thus, it is no surprise that errors represent such a special area of interest both for language researchers and teachers. This research draws from both kinds of interest, scientific and pedagogical. Error analysis—a tool for describing and explaining errors made by speakers of other languages (Johanson, 1975) is the general theoretical framework here in this research, aimed at identifying and classifying flaws in written expression of intermediate level college students of English as a foreign language at the undergraduate Foreign Languages (FL) program of the Universidad del Valle (UV), in Cali, Colombia.

Marking a text to point at errors, mistakes, and slips (on the negative side, while teachers also give positive annotations and remarks) is not a purely grammatical task. Formal aspects do often have meaning implications: form and meaning are the two sides of every linguistic expression. In writing, errors can occur at any level: spelling, grammar, vocabulary, text structure, etc. This research is not a coming back to prescriptivist or normativist views, in an era when process approach has been running for so long that it has made us almost completely forget about previous approaches that emphasized structural aspects. Neither does it aim at being a psycholinguistic study of foreign language learners or learning. Instead, it was born mainly from the teacher's curiosity (beyond hasty blaming students themselves and their former teachers) when facing persistent basic mistakes in written compositions of students at stages in which many of those aspects are expected to have been already mastered: an intermediate learner wouldn't make so many / such basic errors in matters supposedly studied deeply in earlier beginning stages!

This report contains a general description of the problematic that led to it, a consideration of some prior research on the research problem, a theoretical support for the analysis of errors, a methodological description of the design of this research, and the analysis of the errors found in the argumentative essays of students of the 7th semester (intermediate level) of the undergraduate FL program at the UV (7BAFLUV). These essays are the written component of a graduation requirement, a TOEFL-like test the students take at the beginning of their VIII semester, (the starting point of the advanced level).

In order to fully comprehend language errors, several confluent factors should be considered: the language (first, second or foreign; its structural and functional nature; kind

of text; rhetorical features; etc.), the learning of the language (the learner, his age, sex, background, psychological and even physical resources), the teaching of the language (teachers and teaching contexts), and the context (social, cultural and historical conditions) in which the text production takes place. Covering all that is well beyond the scope of this particular research. This study focuses on written argumentative essays, as final products¹, without much consideration of the writers or of the writing and learning processes. Furthermore, it must be borne in mind that a single text, despite having been written at the chronological end of a scholastic level or stage (beginner, intermediate, advanced), cannot isolatedly be considered as fully representative of the writing of its author. Thus, what follows is to consider the texts themselves, as finished acts. It could be said that they are being considered as “ideal” objects of study, in the sense that their authors and the circumstances of production are not being taken into account for the study here.

Of a text, it is possible to consider structural, formal and functional components: vocabulary, grammar, semantics (meaning and sense), spelling, mechanics, layout, paragraph and global textual structuring, rhetorical devices and style, among others. However, again, that would be quite a load for a single piece of research; any of those aspects -lexis, grammar, meaning, rhetoric- constitutes a vast realm itself. Regarding the complexity of the task at hand, just a sample of *some types* of errors were chosen.

No generalizable inferences can be drawn from this case study: only final products (the written texts, argumentative essays) were taken into account²; no consideration of either writers (students’ background, age, actual language level of proficiency) or writing process, or writing conditions (test administration, task –nature of the writing prompt-) was made. The sample studied is not representative of all the 7BAFLUV students (just 15 texts from one academic term); the analyzed essays can not be considered as fully representative of the writing capabilities of each author (it is just *one text*³). The texts were selected taking

¹ The identification and classification of errors of a learner is, in principle, a product-oriented analysis.

² “We should be aware that different types of written material may produce a different distribution of error or a different set of error types” (Corder, 1974, p. 126).

³ “It has already been noted that learners often appear inconsistent in their production of errors” (Corder, 1974, p. 131).

into account scoring, which was given by different (independent) raters⁴. The marking of errors was made by a non-native user of English. Discourse analysis was not the approach selected for the analysis of the texts, and references to text structure or rhetorical aspects considerations are very general. A comprehensive view that takes into account all those factors would give a deeper view of those texts and the errors in them; ours is just a piece of what should be a much bigger undertaking.

This is a case study that recognizes the systematic errors in argumentative texts written by VII semester BAFLUV students at the School of Language Sciences at the Universidad del Valle, and establishes which ones are more frequent both for certain individuals and -especially- a group. The errors covered in this study fall into the following categories: grammatical (problems with single-word speech parts), lexical (false friends and word class confusions), mechanics (punctuation, capitalization, and syllabication flaws), and some general rhetoric (troubles in connectors), discourse (verbosity/redundance and inappropriate register), and style (fragments, lack of clarity, vagueness, L1/3 likeness, and code switching). Both English VII and other English courses at the UV could incorporate changes consistent with the findings of the study. This study was carried out in the hope that, though its results benefit directly and immediately students and teachers in the intermediate level of English, and then the other students (approx. 900) and teachers of English (15) of the BAFLUV, it could also further benefit EFL teachers and students from other universities in Spanish-speaking countries and EFL/ESL researchers as well.

1. RESEARCH PROBLEM

1.1 Problem Statement

When an EFL teacher finds frequent flaws in the written texts of his 5th, 6th, and 7th semester –intermediate level- students, many of which he considers to be “basic” (i.e., corresponding to initial stages of EFL learning), and some of which have persisted throughout several years of learning, he feels compelled to addressing his attention to such errors. Students should not go on passing to higher levels if they do not finally correct their

⁴ “The recognition of error [...] depends crucially upon the analyst making a correct interpretation of the learner’s intended meaning of the context” (Corder, 1974, p. 127).

basic mistakes! Such problems denote difficult aspects of English itself, students' weaknesses, and –probably- teaching flaws. While it would be a mistake to disregard this issue, paying too much attention to errors and their correction could deviate both teacher's and students' attention from what is more essential, communication in terms of effective comprehension. Besides, teachers' personal impressions must be transcended by means of systematic study. What, when, to what extent, and how to correct? Those are everyday questions teachers face but that they do not always convert into sound knowledge. To tackle the first of those questions, it is necessary first to know which are the students' errors and their types, and then search for their causes. Only after having this knowledge, a sound remedial strategy could be devised, an action plan that addresses the most frequent problems at this level and provides information to prevent students from making these errors in lower levels.

The persistence of those language flaws not only affects the students themselves, as they get low grades and could fossilize some of those errors; it also affects the institutional image when those graduate students exhibit their low proficiency in places other than the university campus. Furthermore, an inadequate rank of language accuracy in written production at the beginning of the advanced level reveals “leaks” in the evaluation in the BAFLUV.

Overall, we are interested in errors not only as linguists or psycholinguists but chiefly as FL teachers. More specifically, we are interested in what errors can tell us about the students' learning process and what that can imply for reorienting our teaching.

1.2 Problem Formulation

In order to cast some light on errors in the written production of intermediate level EFL students at the FL undergraduate program at Universidad del Valle that could help in designing a strategy for their correction in this level and prevention in prior levels, the general question to be answered in this research is the following:

What are the most persistent errors in EFL written argumentative essays by 7th semester foreign language students at U. del Valle?

To tackle this broad issue, it has been split into several particular questions:

Q1. What errors are found in the EFL written argumentative texts by 7th semester foreign language students at U. del Valle?

Q2. What kind of errors are they?

Q3. Which of them are more frequent?

2. REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Locally, at Universidad del Valle (UV), our research seems to be the first graduate study about errors in FL. At the Master's level at the Universidad del Valle (UV), 147 investigations have been carried out between 1966 and 2010 and at the *Especialización* level 108 studies have been registered between 1995 and 2010. Botero's (1984) is the only previous UV's M.A. research on errors, but it refers to attitudes towards errors in L1 (mother tongue) acquisition. The study of errors has been mainly an interest of undergraduate students. However, even at that level not many studies have been devoted to this topic: only 10 out of the 395 registered studies refer to it; of these 10, five have been produced since 2001, which implies a growing interest in this topic.

The interest in the study of errors at UV can be traced as far back as far as to 1980. Rojas' (1980) double-goaled article deals with the attitude of Aural-Oral and Cognitivist approaches to errors and proposes a change of attitude in language teachers in order to incorporate errors to the FL acquisition process through their rational management (p. 65). After reviewing the two approaches, he concludes that contrastive analysis was not as effective in preventing errors as it had initially been forecasted, and that errors are unavoidable. Thus, the teacher must learn how to live with the students' errors and profit from them. Rojas considers that the most important achievement of error analysis is that it sees errors not from the perspective of the object [language] but from the learner's

[subject].

Other local studies relevant to our interest are those of Cruz and Rizo (1997), Gómez and Restrepo (1997), and Grueso (2007)

Cruz and Rizo (1997) carried out a theoretical review with the aim of identifying the most important points of view in Error Analysis with regard to foreign language production. Based on Harmer (1991), Nunan (1991), and Rigg (1991), they revised the treatment of errors in three language teaching approaches: behaviouristic, cognitive, and communicative. They took Brown's (1994:205) concept of error: "an error is a noticeable deviation from the adult grammar of a native speaker, reflecting the interlanguage competence of [the] learner... which reveals a portion of his competence in the target language." (1997, 18-9). They also reviewed contrastive analysis (CA) and error analysis (EA), as well as Lado (1957), Lee (1957 and 1968), Whitman (1970), Brown (1984 and 1994), Shachter and Celce-Murcia (1980), Richards (1971), Corder (1972), Sridhar (1980), and Sharma (1981). Their conclusion was that "both CA and EA have given an important support to the language teaching and learning process in terms of explaining about the treatment of errors." (p.46)

Gómez and Restrepo's study originated in the questioning of the Modern Languages B.A. program at Universidad del Valle regarding problems that VI semester students showed when writing in English, which persisted up to semesters VII and VIII (1997: 9)⁵. They focused on wrong adverbial forms (frequency adverbs and adverbial *if clauses*) in the English written compositions of the students. The authors examined the texts of two groups of students, one in the morning program (ages 20-24) and one in the afternoon program (ages 22-28); both groups taking classes with native speakers at the moment of the study. To collect the data, Gomez and Restrepo first had the students write a paragraph (one in English and one in Spanish) with a series of given words, some adverbs among them. The purpose was to see the differences and similarities in adverbial constructions in the two languages and select the type of errors that would be studied. Then, a second exercise was carried out: the students wrote a paragraph on a guided topic, a character and his emotional states; vocabulary and grammatical structures were free. Here, errors in frequency adverbs

⁵ Our research roots in a very similar motivation: problems that VII semester students –ending their intermediate level in the B.A. program- have in their written essays of the proficiency exam.

and adverbial if clauses were defined as the object of study (p. 15). In the third activity, the students had to pick frequency adverbs and adverbial conditional clauses and insert them appropriately in sentences given for that purpose. Finally, the authors collected free topic compositions and final essays of the VI semester students. Gómez and Restrepo adopted a comparative Spanish-English perspective using Jacobson (1964) and Langedoen (in Abraham 1986) to support it.

In the analysis, some spelling errors in adverbs were also included. At the end, Gomez and Restrepo posed some hypotheses regarding some possible causes of the errors found and proposed exercises for preventing them. Their conclusions referred to the adverbs the students had more difficulties with and they pointed out that the students avoid using things which are difficult for them and they limit themselves to using easy, basic forms of the language. They claim that the main cause of the difficulties could be the transfer of grammar structures from Spanish into English.

Despite being a study with students of a secondary school, the following local study is also pertinent to us. Grueso (2007) carried out an error analysis case study with a twofold purpose: finding and clasifying the errors in the written narrative productions of students in tenth and eleventh grade of a monolingual school in Cali, and proposing some strategies for language teachers in that educational level. Based on the concepts of writing and the teaching of writing, errors and approaches to the treatment of errors, written errors and their treatment and correction, error analysis (Schachter and Celce-Murcia, 1988; and Ellis, 1997), and an overview of English grammar, Grueso analyzed interlingual (negative L1 transfer) and intralingual (developmental) grammatical, lexical and spelling errors in 208 narrative texts written by her students during four sessions of prompted free writing (Hedge, 1991). Grueso adopted a normative-prescriptive perspective, excluding aspects of functionality of the language in terms of communication and rhetorical analysis, and took as a point of reference the standard usage of the language (Standard English), as defined by Celce-Murcia and Hilles, (1988) to analyze sentences, which were her error analysis units. She adopted -with some slight changes- Abisamra's (2003) classification of errors.

Grueso's quantitative analysis showed that grammar errors are, by far, the most frequent, over the lexical and spelling ones, both for the intra- and inter-lingual categories. Likewise, intralingual errors are much more frequent than interlingual ones, nearly

doubling them. Her qualitative analysis followed the four-step process proposed by Ellis (1997): identification (comparing the sentences produced by the student with those considered correct), description (classification of errors into possible categories), explanation (providing a definition for all the types of errors that have been classified) and evaluation (looking for strategies to anticipate the production of errors). Grueso concluded that, first, more work on structural aspects of the target language is necessary and, second, that the teacher's feedback should engage the student cognitively rather than simply pointing out the error and providing the right target form. In her conclusions, she also pointed that

“if intra-lingual errors prevail over inter-lingual ones, that's a clear signal of a stage of learning, in which the students are closer –in their written production in this case- to the target language than to the mother tongue. This is, of course consistent with their good oral level in the target language.”⁶ (page 107)

Other local studies on errors were not taken into account for the present research due to their different research object or area: either they refer to a mother tongue (German: Aragón 2009, Spanish: Jiménez 2001, English: Saavedra 1997 and Bravo and Paredes 2008) or to another second/foreign language (French: Núñez 1995) or to translation (Narváez and Ledesma 2004), or to an aspect of language other than writing (speaking: Aguilar 1997 and Vargas 2007).

It seems there are not many systematic studies about errors similar to ours, in Colombia. The main interest has been in teachers' approaches to error correction. In this line of thought, we can mention Giraldo (2008). She reviewed concepts of writing in language acquisition theory (Bloomfiel, 1933; Crystal, 1987; Reid, 1993), concepts of error, (Gray, 2004; Truscott, 1999; Ellis, 1994; Corder, 1981, among others), error and interlanguage (Brown, 2000) and error gravity (Khalil as cited in Ellis, 1994; Vann et al., 1984 as cited in Reid, 1993; Ellis, 1994; Brown, 2000), approaches to error treatment (Corder, 1981; Allwright and Bailey, 1981; Truscott, 1999), and two error treatment

⁶ Most of her students (70%) had been to English speaking countries and were able to hold a rather fluent conversation in English. Many of them had studied previously in bilingual schools. Their problems were on the written expression.

strategies: form-focused instruction –IFI– (Spada, 1977; Ellis, 1994; Brown, 2000) and consciousness-raising (Ellis, 1994; Wright, 1987; Mantello, 1997, Cohen, 1990, Simpson, 2003, Gabrielatos, 2002). With such a wide and deep theoretical support, Giraldo discusses the effectiveness of error treatment and concludes that these techniques can be effective. She also points out that the criticism according to which error treatment generates anger, frustration, or confusion with regard to EFL writing contradicts not only a considerable amount of SLA research but also the experience of thousands of ESL teachers in diverse parts of the world.

More akin to our study, Londoño (2008) analyzed a written composition based on clinical elicitation (CE) research. He studied some errors produced by a high-beginner foreign language learner in her acquisition process with the aim of identifying the possible sources of those errors. In order to achieve that aim, he defined error as a deviation from the norms of the target language and followed Corder's (1974) five steps for error analysis: collection of a sample of learner language, identification, description, explanation, and evaluation of errors. Londoño classified the errors found into four kinds: omission, addition, misinformation, and misordering. He concluded that error analysis supports the purpose of language teaching by helping the teacher reorganize and transform his points of view and readdress his methodology, with the aim of fixing and filling the students' gaps. According to him, error analysis can also contribute to students' awareness of errors and help them gain communicative expertise.

Research on errors worldwide, on the other hand, is really rich. It can be broadly divided into the two main linguistic trends dealing with this issue: contrastive analysis and error analysis. Here, just some works are reviewed.

Shaughnessy (1979, in Grueso 2008:9) carried out a research based on the writing samples of 100 students whose errors were counted at intervals during a semester of instruction. Basically, she studied the errors produced in written compositions of students of various mother tongues, which would affect the comprehension of the reader, suggesting some of the reasons behind these errors and ways of bringing them under control. The results from this investigation showed that most of these errors do not seriously alter the

writer's meaning and that often they merely diminish the amount of redundancy in a message.

Sloan (1990) compares the quantity and quality of the grammatical errors in the writing of college freshman and of writing professionals using twenty essays written by first-year composition students and twenty short essays written by professional writers published in the course reader used by the students (Penfield, 1990). The students' essays were approximately 500 words and the professional's essays were cut to use only about the first 500 words. The author himself admits as a limitation of his study that the students had two hours to write the essay while the professionals had much more time to research their topics and probably had other people helping them. His analysis shows that professional writers commit stylistic errors (as defined in Trimmer and McCrimmon's handbook, 1992) almost as often as students. He notes (303) that students and professionals were almost equally prone to commit errors and claims that the superiority of professional writing, compared to typically dry student prose, derives from a richer vocabulary, more intimate knowledge of subject matter, and passion for the topic. The errors that commonly occurred in both groups occurred under the same conditions. This was explained by Sloan in that both groups probably used similar logic. The three most common errors identified in freshman writing were misspellings, comma misuse, and word choice; the most common errors in professional's writing were triteness, comma misuse, and verbiage. The professional's tendency to be verbose is explained in that their vocabulary is much more expansive because they have a greater language use and practice. On the other hand, verbiage in freshman writing is explained by a need to fill up space. Sloan's study ends with some suggestions as to how to improve freshman writing: student writing can be improved by giving students more stylistic freedom and authentic assignments in which they choose topics, conduct research, and write to a specific audience.

Myles (1995, in Grueso 2008:10) studies errors in writing in relation to particular aspects of second language acquisition and theories of the writing process in L1 and L2. She argues that the process approach to instruction, with its emphasis on the writing process, meaning making, invention and multiple drafts (Raimes, 1991), is appropriate for second language learners only if they are both able to get sufficient feedback with regard to

their errors in writing, and are proficient enough in the language to implement revision strategies.

Another important previous study is that of AbiSamra. Her research problem was (2003:5): “Is negative L1 transfer/interference the major cause for errors in the English writings of Brevet⁷ students?” Her subjects of study were 10 nine graders “who have been studying English since nursery; students who are studying English integratively, as a first language” (2003:5), students who speak at home mainly Arabic and not English, i.e., ESL students, as she herself acknowledges. These students were provided with the topic ‘What are your plans for the future?’ and were asked to write on it in 200 to 250 words. Based on both Corder (1967, 1971) and James (1998), AbiSamra distinguished between error (“*which are “systematic,” i.e. likely to occur repeatedly and not recognized by the learner*”) and mistake (which “*can be self-corrected*”) and focused on errors, dismissing mistakes as her object of study. The theoretical bases in Abisamra’s research were: Error Analysis, Models for Error analysis, and Sources of Errors. Based on the literature, she developed a Taxonomy for Error Analysis: grammatical (prepositions, articles, reported speech, singular/plural, adjectives, relative clauses, irregular verbs, tenses, and possessive case), syntactic (coordination, sentence structure, nouns and pronouns, and word order), lexical (word choice), semantic, and substance (mechanics: punctuation and capitalization, and spelling). She also mentioned the organizational/discourse errors but she did not quantify them “since, first, it is difficult to do so, and, second, we had trained our students, prior to the exam, to write a well-organized essay (thesis statement, restatement of the thesis, and the use of transition words).” (Abisamra, 2003: 13). After establishing the errors categories and subcategories she studied the error sources: interlingual (negative L1 transfer) and intralingual (developmental). She explained the errors in grammatical terms, paying particular attention to negative L1 transfer. Regarding the types of errors, she found that only one-third of the second language learner’s errors can be attributed to NL language transfer. According to her, most of the errors are caused by an overapplication of L2.

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At the end of the last year of Lower Secondary education (“*troisième*”), in a French Collège in Lebanon.

Trebucq, Oliva and Berrone (2006) carried out at the Universidad Nacional de Córdoba, Argentina, in 2005, a study of the written production of English students in the third year of college due to the recurrent lexical and grammatical problems affecting their coherence and cohesion. 30 compositions were analyzed for lexical and grammatical problems under the light of the systemic-functional approach (Eggins, 1994; Halliday 1985; Martin, 1992). The goal of this study was to determine if the problems were originated by lack of mastery of the target language, English, or lack of textual competence in the mother tongue, Spanish. They found that collocation and inappropriate word choice are the most common difficulties in English of the Profesorado, Traductorado y Licenciatura de Inglés students. Those problems are more prevalent in English, but they also occur in Spanish. From the pedagogical implications of their findings, Trebucq, Oliva and Berrone proposed some applications for learning strategies and techniques aimed at easing the mastery of the foreign language, more specifically in the area of vocabulary.

Wee (2009) wanted to identify and describe the written verb-form errors made by Malaysian Malay English as Second Language (ESL) learners. The subjects wrote three types of essays namely; narrative, descriptive and expository essays. The students' errors in narrative, descriptive and expository essays were identified and classified into errors of omission, addition, misformation [sic] and ordering (Dulay, Burt and Krashen, 1982). Errors of misformation were the highest, followed by those of omission, addition and ordering. By essay type, the highest percentage of errors was found in the narrative essay, followed by the descriptive essay and the expository essay. For the tense category, the highest percentage of errors was in the past tense, followed by the present tense, future tense, and other verb-forms. This study revealed that the English tense-aspect system (ETAS) and subject-verb agreement (SVA) were the most difficult areas in the verb-forms to master for Malay students due to interlingual (mother tongue) influence and intralingual factors (complexities within the target language).

Yalçın's (2008) presented her PhD study as a Poster Presentation at the 42nd TESOL Convention *Worlds of TESOL – Building Communities* in New York at the beginning of April 2008. Yalçın's (2008) research purpose was to explore the types of English syntactic errors made by 34 Turkish-speaking ELT (English Language Teaching) university students. To locate the language learners' areas of difficulty in learning, she investigated their

interlanguage productions as in Hayes (2003) and Chan (2004). The data consisted of 34 (17 at year 1 and 17 at year 3) volunteers' argumentative-type essays, one of the three types of essays collected for research purposes. The topic was "Should the sale and consumption of alcohol and cigarettes be allowed on the university campus?" The participants were instructed to write an essay in English of about 250 words, outside of their regular class hours. The essays were coded and computerized; then the errors were detected, tagged and corrected. For data analysis, the errors in the essays were identified by two raters, one of them a native speaker of English. Once the error was identified, it was tagged using an error editor program called UCLEE (Université Catholique de Louvain Error Editor) and the corrected form was also added into the text. The errors were then described and quantified using a concordance program. The final comparison of errors across class levels was performed by the SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) program. Statistical relationships were established. Errors were found at nine categories at both year levels, the most frequent of which was article errors, followed by errors related to verbs. According to the independent t test⁸, the class level was not found to have a significant effect on the number of errors in the essays. However, one-way ANOVA⁹ indicated that the error types had a significant effect on the number of errors. Yalçın's conclusion is that time spent in ELT instruction did not seem to produce significant differences in the knowledge of grammar. She hopes that the results of her study shed light on the most common syntactic errors made by adult Turkish ELT students. She also expects that her investigation can contribute to the understanding of the areas of difficulty in syntax across the two year levels and it can also help language teachers prepare more focused lesson materials and plans for her current learner needs.

To conclude this revision of some previous studies, let's see Macdonald's table (2005: 89) that summarizes some of the research carried out on the quantitative results of error analysis in second or foreign language learning:

⁸ The independent t-test is used to test for a difference between two independent groups (like males and females) on the means of a continuous variable.

⁹ One-way analysis of variance (abbreviated one-way ANOVA). This is a statistical technique used to compare means of two or more samples (using the F distribution). This technique can be used only for numerical data.

Study	Subjects	Measure/Method/Procedure	Main results
Green & Hecht (1985)	60 German EFL Learners	Letters written in English to pupils in English schools. Production corrected and graded by 3 German L1 teachers and 5 NS teachers.	(% of all errors) 54% grammar errors 24% vocabulary 7% style 15% spelling
Olsen (1999)	39 lower secondary school learners in Finmark, Norway, divided into 3 groups A= 8 subjects B = 16 subjects C = 15 subjects	Compositions written in English for an examination.	Group A 37% Orthography 45% Morphology 9% Syntax 9% Lexis B 46% Orthography 41% Morphology 5% Syntax 8% Lexis C 46% Orthography 42% Morphology 6% Syntax 6% Lexis
Meziani (1984)	Students at final year of High School in Rabat, Morocco.	Free composition. 50 essays chosen at random from 200.	(% of all errors) 39.20% tense 17.90% prepositions 17.72% articles 9.60% form 3% concord 2.82% pronouns 2.82% singular/plural 1.88% word order Rest 3.18% surrogate subject; voice; adjective and miscellaneous.
Lennon (1991)	Advanced German learners of English	Spoken performance - longitudinal study made over 6 month period.	23% lexical choice 22% preposition and adverb particle choice 21% intra -verbal group ⁵ 12% intra -noun phrase ⁶
Dusková (1969)	50 postgraduate students of Sciences.	Recurrent systemic errors (those made by a number of learners). Task: 1. Request for a correction of a letter in English. 2. Write about their last journey abroad 3. Write the conclusion of a scientific article.	(Analysis of grammar and lexis only) Number of errors per total errors Morphology 166 Modal verbs 16 Tenses 50 Articles 228 Word order 31 Syntax 54 Construction/Government 54 Prepositions 19 Lexis 138

			Total errors 756
Morrissey (1983)	Advanced German learners of English	Free conversation and essays – errors classified into 8 general categories.	% of all errors Noun phrase 31% Verb phrase 26% Complementation 9% Prepositional phrase 18% Adverbials 8% Pronouns and other pro-forms 3% Negation and non-assertion 3% Comparison 2%

5 Errors of tense and aspect. This category does not include verb morphology errors.

6 Errors of determiner, adjectival choice, N + N combinations, noun phrase post modification, etc.

Chart 1. Macdonald's summary of research work on the quantitative analysis of errors (2005: 89)

3. OBJECTIVES

3.1 General Objective

To analyze the most persistent errors in EFL written argumentative essays by 7th semester foreign language students at Universidad del Valle

3.2 Specific Objectives

1. To identify errors present in written argumentative texts in English of 7th semester students of the undergraduate Foreign Language program at Universidad del Valle.
2. To categorize them
3. To establish which errors are more frequent

4. RATIONALE

Writing is one of the hardest communicative skills to be mastered, not only in a foreign language, but also in the mother tongue. Language students face lots of difficulties when acquiring writing proficiency. Such problems increase when they deal with academic writing. There is still much to be known about systematic errors in EFL writing by foreign language native Spanish-speaking college students. Errors are an unavoidable, normal part in any learning process. On the one side, they denounce learning styles and strategies; on the other side, when referring to a foreign language learning (FLL), errors point at learning stages as well as to learning mechanisms (“working hypotheses”) of the learners. Errors play a key role in the learning process, as they allow the learner to try his ideas and –for instance, from the effects of his performance during the communicative interaction- assess his state of learning and adjust his performance and his conceptions of the language he is learning.

Learning is a process. Errors are normal in it. Teacher’s comprehension of errors can cast understanding on 1) underlying inherent difficulties of English as a foreign language for Spanish native speakers, 2) learning procedures 3) knowledge stages. In other words, around a language error, at least three main intertwined factors can be considered: the language itself, the learning of the language, and the teaching of the language. The teaching of EFL writing in our scholastic context might benefit from the knowledge of students’ persistent errors.

I have taught intermediate level EFL courses in the Foreign Language B.A. program at Universidad del Valle for several years and I have witnessed students’ frequent errors, that range from lexical to grammatical to mechanics to coherence to rhetorical flaws. However, there is any local systematic study that can give an account of them and allow for the proposal of sound solutions.

CHAPTER II

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Identifying, categorizing and establishing the frequency of the most persistent errors in EFL written argumentative essays by intermediate 7BAFLUV students implies considering what is meant by *error* and its taxonomies. In our study, errors are viewed under the integrated light of the historical process of their consideration by linguistics and language learning and teaching perspectives, i.e. applied linguistics in language teaching. The nature of *argumentative written texts* of the kind the students are required to write as a partial degree requirement for the Foreign Languages B.A. at the UV is not considered here; first, the interest of this study is in grammatical lexical errors; second, the students who wrote the argumentative essays that constitute the sample studied here were previously taught about the structure of such argumentative texts. The features of the (*intermediate*) *language level* are not pondered in our research for we consider that the nature of language levels is already quite common place in the academic milieu.

2.1 A general definition of error

Errors are a trademark of everyday life and are, of course, associated to learning. Error is a common, daily term. It seems there is not much to say about what an error is: a deviation of what is right, the opposite of truth. Coming from the Latin verb *errare*, originally meaning *to wander, roam* or *go astray* it evolved to become defined in the 13th century as a *false belief*, shifting later to its present-day meaning of *mistake, wrongdoing*. (Macdonald, 2005: 11) According to the 11th edition of the Merriam-Webster dictionary, an error is, first, *an act or condition of ignorant or imprudent deviation from a code of behavior* or *an act involving an unintentional deviation from truth or accuracy* or *an act that through ignorance, deficiency, or accident departs from or fails to achieve what should be done*. It is also *something produced by mistake*. Another acception identifies error with *the difference between an observed or calculated value and a true value* and *the amount of*

deviation from a standard or specification. Finally, an error is a deficiency or imperfection in structure or function.

An educated understanding of what an error is requires a view deeper than that of common sense and generic dictionaries. The nature and origins of the term “error” must be regarded carefully to understand them. First, synonyms of Error are *mistake, wrong, bug, fault, failure, fallacy, misunderstanding, misinterpretation, misapprehension, confusion, lapse, miss, slip, omission, miscalculation, inaccuracy, imprecision, misconception, aberration, gaffe, misdeed, misdoing, inadvertence, inadvertency, fizzle, oversight, overlook, blunder, liability, goof*¹⁰, and some other terms are covered by the generic name of “error”. From a careful consideration of those terms, it turns out that errors are act, product or condition. This side of the nature of errors is linked with temporal dimensions in their occurrence: onset, process or result. In this sense an error is, produces, and is produced for instance by misinterpretation or ignorance. A second inference from the consideration of the terms embedded within the generic term of error is that errors consist in: deviation, difference, opposition, or deficiency. In general, errors always oppose to what is: right, true, accurate, efficient, prudent, accepted, perfect, known. The degree of deviation could be seen as the 'spatial' dimension of errors, for it refers to the distance between them and the (correct) point of reference. This facet of the nature of errors constitutes the core of how they are usually regarded: something negative. Furthermore, errors are caused by: ignorance, imprudence, lack of intention, or accident. Neglect, carelessness, negligence, disregard, inattention, mistake, slip, inadvertence, inadvertency, absentmindedness, unawareness, among some other causes, constitute their origin. This feature obviously points at the causes of errors: quantity (lack) and (poor) quality of knowledge and monitoring of the linguistic production. In a nutshell, it can be said that errors can be seen (due to amount or quality) as a knowledge indicator. Historically, the judgment of those indicators has moved from a negative one (errors as something to be avoided, pure lack of knowledge) towards a more positive view (a marker of the learning process that can be used pedagogically). In applied linguistics, in particular, the criteria for

¹⁰ This latter term is the one chosen by Dually and Burt (1974), adopted from Burt and Kiparsky (1972) after a joint (with S. Macdonald, A. Lipson, and C. Cazden) careful search for a term that would fit the connotation of a definition as “deviation from syntactic structures which native adult speakers consider grammatically correct”.

judging errors are grammaticality, acceptability and appropriateness (Enkvist, 1973; Corder, 1981).

2.2. An applied linguistics view of Errors

The degree of deviation of a learner's given utterance from grammaticality, acceptability or appropriateness, i.e., its erroneous nature, is subjective to a great extent. Language errors –like language- are not purely an individual act: they are socially constructed, in the sense that they are just deviations of what is socially considered as appropriate. They are breaks in social prescriptions or usage. It is usually the others who say that you made a mistake or committed an error; if you notice your own mistake, you self-correct in a way that follows the social standards.

Errors are also relative, for linguistic rules and uses vary in a variety of echelons: that of social levels of language –social changes-, that of history –chronological changes-, that of geographic changes –dialects-, and that of pragmatic –particular use conditions-. Something that is accepted as correct in a certain social level or group could be considered a mistake or an error in another group: “*An error occurs where the speaker fails to follow the pattern or manner of the speech of educated people in English speaking countries today*”. (Liski and Putnanen 1983 cited in Lennon, 1991:182)

A linguistic sample can be considered a mistake because it is too old –outdated- or too new (a neologism) and thus is not broadly accepted, as it is the case of Xmas for Christmas. Also, deeming a word, expression or usage right or wrong varies for educated and uneducated people. For instance, features of African American Vernacular English (AAVE) grammar are used by middle-class white teen-agers who admire contemporary African-American music, entertainment and clothing: they might speak approvingly of the style of a peer by *she money* or *he be jammin'* — sentence structures associated with African Americans (Eble, 1996)¹¹.

A word or expression can also be considered right in a place and it could be a mistake or incorrect in another place. Wikipedia provides this example:

¹¹ Although this example is given by Connie Eble, Professor of English at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill for slang speaking of American college students, it is also valid for writing usage in young EFL learners outside the USA.

“*paddock* in Australia means field, whereas in the UK it means a small enclosure for livestock; *bush* or *scrub* in Australia, as in North America, means a wooded area, whereas in England they are commonly used only in proper names (such as Shepherd's Bush and Wormwood Scrubs)”.

(http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Australian_English#Vocabulary)

A linguistic form can also be considered adequate or acceptable for a child and not for an adult, for a teenager and not for a mature person. Some utterances can, on the other hand, be considered right for a man and not for a woman. Very often, native usage is preferred to non native uses: “*If a Pole says I goes, he makes an error. The same form in Black English may be considered perfectly acceptable*” (Arabski 1979, in Krzeszowski 1990: 190). Chun *et al.* (1982) report that forms used by fluent speakers are also often used as models or correctness in relation to the ones typical of non fluent speakers, which are then considered as evidence of faulty or incomplete learning. In the case of informal forms, they are usually regarded as errors if uttered by non native students but they are labeled as non standard or informal or slang or... if produced by native users. Lennon, discussing the subjectivity in the identification of errors, (1991:182) presents an example from Hughes and Lascaratou (1982):

Hughes and Lascaratou (1982) presented what they considered to be thirty-two erroneous and four correct sentences to a panel of thirty judges, ten of whom were Greek teachers of English, ten native-speaker teachers of English, and ten native-speaker non-teachers. They found that one of the 'correct' sentences (*Neither of us feels quite happy*) was judged erroneous by two Greek teachers, three native-speaker teachers, and five of the non-teacher native speakers. Another of the 'correct' sentences, which was taken from the *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English*, namely, *The boy went off in a faint*, was judged erroneous by two Greek teachers, nine native-speaker teachers, and nine native-speaker non-teachers.

Besides the variation in what is considered as correct or wrong that were just mentioned, there is a great deal of subjectivity when identifying and classifying errors. For instance, the error also depends to a great extent of the perspective of the teacher: Hendrickson (1978) defines error from the teacher's view, defining it as an utterance, form or structure that a particular language teacher deems unacceptable because of its inappropriate use or its absence in real- life discourse. However, this perspective is clearly arguable, because error detection depends in this case on the teachers' knowledge and

experience; besides, research has shown big differences between native speakers (NS) and non native speakers (NNS) teachers regarding identification of errors. Our experience is that when the teacher also speaks the mother tongue of the students, it is easier for him to understand the target language production of his students that is influenced by their mother tongue and in that process errors can slip to his judgment.

In the field of language learning and teaching, errors were a center of attention in the third quarter of the twentieth century; in this period, the audiolingual approach shaped methodological views in which errors were considered as something purely negative, forms to be avoided by any means, repetition, memorization, drilling, standard modeling, and immediate negative feedback for any error being common language learning/teaching practices. This perspective was based on a behaviorist view of learning, on the one hand, and on a structuralist linguistic vision (Saussure 1916, Hjelmslev 1928, Jakobson 1929, Bally 1932, Bloomfield 1933, Troubetzkoi 1939, Benveniste 1966), on the other hand. It used comparison/contrast between the mother tongue and the target language to address the explanations dealing with errors (contrastive analysis (CA) Fries 1945; Weinreich 1953; Haugen 1953; Stockwell, Bowen and Martin 1965a in Larsen-Freeman and Long, 1991:53; Selinker 1969; Nemser, 1971; Briere, 1964).

The most efficient materials are those that are based upon a scientific description of the language to be learned, carefully compared with a parallel description of the native language of the learner. (Fries 1945:9)

Negative transfer (interference) (Weinreich 1953, Lado 1957) from the mother tongue to the target language was seen as the main cause of errors. The Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis (CAH), in its strong form, assumed that language learning is habit formation, and where L2 and L1 differ, the old habit (L1 usage) gets in the way of the formation of the new habits (L2 learning).

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 - both productively when attempting to speak the language and to act in the culture and receptively when attempting to grasp and understand the language and the culture as practised by natives. (Lado, 1957:2)

For Dulay and Burt (1974: 94) the CAH states that *“while the child is learning a second language, he will tend to use his native language structures in his second language*

speech, and where structures in his first language (L1) and his second language (L2) differ, he will goof.” The underlying assumption was that L2 acquisition = L2 acquisition at the level of both product and process.

An accurate linguistic production was the pedagogic focus in foreign language classrooms

... 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. (Lado 1957:vii)

Linguistic patterns were described and then practiced continuously in order to imprint them in the learner’s linguistic habits. (Celce-Murcia, 1991). Later, behaviorism was succeeded by mentalist-oriented theories and structuralism was followed by functionalist perceptions related with psycholinguistics, sociolinguistics and concepts like competence, what later constituted the bases of communicative approaches. And then errors were considered in a very different way: they were now key indicators of the internal processes of language learning and acquisition. Chomsky (1959) stated that first language acquisition was not simply a product of habit formation, but one of rule formation in which the child took an active part. Increasingly a number of authors (Selinker, 1961a; Briere, 1964; Dusková 1969; Wardhaugh, 1970; Nemser, 1971; Whitman and Jackson 1972; Schachter, 1974; Long and Sato 1984... in: Macdonald, 2005: 70-71; Dulay and Burt, 1974) questioned the theoretical bases of CA, concluded that CA was inadequate for predicting the interference problems of language learners, considered unacceptable that such a complex process as language learning could be understood through the sheer comparison of different languages and proved that interference of the mother tongue explains only some of the learner’s production errors, and it disregards intralingual errors, those due to interference, both in grammar and lexis, between the forms inside the target language. Interlingual/transfer errors were now opposed to intralingual/developmental errors (Richards 1974, Corder 1971).

In the same line of thought, Corder (1974) considered incorrect utterances as evidence of how the language was developing, and they showed the active role of the child played in its development.

We interpret his 'incorrect' utterances as being evidence that he is in the process of acquiring language and indeed, for those who attempt to describe his knowledge of the language at any point in its development, it is the errors which provide the important evidence. (Corder 1974:22-23)

Concomitantly, learning was not any more mainly reception and memorization through practice, the subject being driven by his environment, a patient. Errors were now evidence of the learner's testing hypotheses about the nature of the target language, as Ellis and Corder express:

Errors are an important source of information about second language acquisition, because they demonstrate conclusively that learners do not simply memorize target language rules and then reproduce them in their own utterances. They indicate that learners construct their own rules on the basis of input data, and that in some instances at least, these rules differ from those of the target language. (Ellis 1985:9)

The study of error is part of the investigation of the process of language learning. In this respect it resembles methodologically the study of the acquisition of their mother tongue. It provides us with a picture of the linguistic development of a learner and may give us indications as to the learning strategies. In this respect, error analysis may prove to be one of the central activities in the psycholinguistics study of language learning. (Corder 1973: 125)

The learner's language was thus not the product of simple transference from L1 into L2 or FL. It was a kind of intermediate form between L1 and the target language. The researchers hypothesized the existence of a separate linguistic system based on the observable output resulting from the learner's attempted production of the target language norms (Selinker 1984). That form of language was named *interlanguage* by Selinker (1972, 1974). Errors in this independent, transitional system were considered intralingual/developmental errors, items produced by the learner, which do not reflect the structure of the mother tongue or the target language, and correspond to the learner's derived rules and hypotheses or generalizations regarding the still incomplete linguistic data he possesses (Richards, 1970).

The interlanguage was defined by Selinker (1972), as a "separate linguistic system based on observable output which results from a learner's attempted production of a target language norm" where the target language is "one norm of one dialect." The interlanguage was equivalent to Nemser's (1972) approximative system: "Learner speech at a given time is the patterned product of a linguistic system, La [approximative language], distinct from Ls [source language] and Lt [target language] and internally structured".

The interlanguage is

“a dynamic system envisaged as a continuum on which the learner builds up, in a systematic way, his/her knowledge of the target language, and which may show features at different stages, of both L1 or any other languages and the target language or of neither of these” (Macdonald 2005: 72-73)

Corder (1981, Chapter 2) considered the language of language learners a special form of dialect –an idiosyncratic dialect- for, first, being language, being meaningful, and having a grammar, i.e., being describable in terms of rules due to its systematic and communicative nature. Second, the language learners’ language partially shares the target language’s grammar rules. The main features of this idiosyncratic dialect –which he also called transitional competence-, were its changing, unstable nature.

Macdonald (2005:73) points that

The terms ‘approximative system’ (Nemser, 1971:55) and ‘transitional competence’ (Corder, 1981:67) have also been applied to this phenomenon, although with slightly different connotations. The former lays more emphasis on the learner language being a deviant system whose goal is to gain perfect proficiency in the TL, whereas the latter borrows the term ‘competence’ in the Chomskian sense of the learner’s underlying knowledge of the language as a system.

Corder (1981: 11) considered errors the most important aspect in this learners’ transitional competence:

“... they are indispensable to the learner himself, because we can regard the making of errors as a device the learner uses in order to learn. It is a way the learner has of testing his hypotheses about the nature of the language he is learning. The making of errors is then a strategy employed both by children acquiring their mother tongue and by those learning a second language”

That implies that errors are not only a knowledge (state) indicator, as we pointed above, they are also learning (process) indicators.

Errors were told apart from *mistakes* (Corder 1967, 1971, 1981; Gass and Selinker 1994; James 1998): Errors are systematic, i.e., occur repeatedly and are not recognized by the learner, while mistakes can be self-corrected. Thus errors can only be spotted by the teacher or a researcher and not by the learner himself. If the learner himself notices a flaw in his language production and he corrects it, that flaw is not an error but a mistake, a slip probably, which tells the teacher that the student knows the problem and the solution, a key

stage in the learning of the language. If the student is prompted with the right form when he commits a fault, recognizes the problem and corrects it readily, it is clear evidence of his knowledge and of his struggle with certain forms or aspects of the new language; that flaw is still a mistake. On the other hand, if the student does not recognize his own flaws, not even when he is prompted with the correct form, that is a clear proof of his lack of knowledge or mastery of the language he is learning. This latter problem is referred to as an actual error. Corder (1981) considers systematic errors to be competence errors, while performance errors are not systematic in their occurrence, for they are associated to chance circumstances like memory lapses, physical states such as tiredness, and psychological conditions such as strong emotion, that do not reflect a defect in our knowledge of language. Alternatively, “systematic error” is a concept that refers to the one that is frequent both at individual and group levels in a given sample (Gass and Selinker, 1994). This latter is the concept adopted in this study. Also, it must be noted that in our study the distinction between error and mistake is not taken into account, for the object of study were the isolated texts (writers were not considered). That distinction has been challenged by some researchers: Vázquez (1991), Hamilton (2001:76), Moerman and Sacks (1988, cited in Hamilton, 2001:86). Before, in the field of philosophy, Wittgenstein (1958) had already argued that there was no sharp distinction between a random mistake and a systematic one (in Macdonald 2005: 82)

The pedagogical focus shifted towards the learning processes; fluent production, intelligible despite inaccuracies, was now considered correct. Error analysis (EA) had to do with the research of the language of second language learners (Corder. 1981) and became a common basis in language teaching methodologies in the last quarter of the twentieth century. Corder initially proposed three steps for Error Analysis (1971): recognition of idiosyncrasy, accounting for a learner’s idiosyncratic dialect, and finally, explanation. Later (Corder 1974) he identified five stages in the procedure of EA: 1) selection of a corpus of language, 2) identification of errors in the corpus, 3) classification of the errors identified, 4) explanation of the psycholinguistic causes of the errors, 5) evaluation of the error gravity ranking of the errors. Finally, he refined his proposal into four steps, (1981: 21-25): identification and classification, description, explanation and diagnosis of causes, and remedial proposal. Ellis et al. (1984, in Ellis 1990: 46) identified five steps for EA: a)

identification of errors, b) description, c) explanation, d) evaluation, e) prevention/correction.

Critics to EA are summarized by Macdonald (2005: 74-75):

- It lacks methodological rigour, and is limited in its scope (Ellis, 1994:67).
- The identification and classification of errors poses particular problems, while there is also a lack of agreement among researchers concerning the cause of errors.
- Bell (1974, cited in James, 1998:17) also criticises EA for its poor statistical inference, and the problematic interpretation of many types of errors. Indeed, how the deviant forms, once identified, should then be evaluated poses an additional problem which involves the judgement of certain characteristics which are highly subjective such as grammaticality, appropriateness, and irritability, among others.
- Regarding the limited scope of EA, several researchers including Corder (1971), Enkvist (1973), and Hammarberg (1974) have pointed out the negative attitude reflected in its analysis of ‘what is wrong ’ or deviant in the learners’ IL, while ignoring the achievements.
- In a similar way, the question of avoidance¹² is a highly relevant aspect of learner language, but it is one which EA does not account for.

According to Dagneaux et al. (1998:164) EA suffers from a number of major weaknesses, among which the following five figure prominently, the first two being methodological:

- Limitation 1: EA is based on heterogeneous learner data;
- Limitation 2: EA categories are fuzzy;
- Limitation 3: EA cannot cater for phenomena such as avoidance;
- Limitation 4: EA is restricted to what the learner cannot do;
- Limitation 5: EA gives a static picture of L2 learning.

¹² Avoidance is a deliberate strategy -different from simple ignorance. The non-native speaker (NNS) deliberately chooses to perform one communicative task rather than another, deliberately substituting an easier or more familiar behavior, intentionally avoiding the one he finds difficult. For O'Grady, et al. (1989) avoidance is a subset of second-language (L2) learner's communication strategies; a communication strategy is a *conscious* plan. Gass and Selinker (2001) define avoidance as a type of interlanguage (IL) communication strategy where the NNS chooses to use or not to use a particular structure; the difference between first-language (L1) and L2 production is the only variable that consistently predicts avoidance.

Schachter first in 1974, (in Koch 2001:56 and later with Celce-Murcia (1977) also pointed at EA drawbacks. They showed six areas in error analysis which exhibit potential weaknesses: (1) the analysis of errors in isolation; (2) the classification of identified errors; (3) statements of error frequency; (4) the identification of points of difficulty; (5) the ascription of causes to systematic errors; (6) the biased nature of sampling procedures. Further, Corder himself analyzed some of the limitations of EA (1981). Taylor (1986) also criticized the insufficiency of linguistic analysis based only on form independently of their functions. Our research does not adopt this type of analysis, in the sense that causal explanation and remedial proposals are not aimed at in the analysis of the sample of errors we deal with. Our interest is that of identifying errors in a given corpus, classifying them and establishing which of them are more frequent, i.e. description.

Errors can occur at any level of language production, be it structural (phonetics, phonology, morphology, semantics, syntax, lexis) or functional (pragmatic, rhetoric). Our interest here is mainly that of grammar and to a much lesser extent that of vocabulary and pragmatic/rhetoric/Discourse/style structure errors/mistakes. From another point of view, errors could be broadly considered into two categories: cohesion and coherence. In fact, there are a number of taxonomies of errors.

Politzer and Ramírez' (1973) broad error categories are: Morphology, Syntax, and Vocabulary. Burt and Kiparsky (1974) distinguished global and local errors. Local mistakes are found within a limited linguistic domain -the word or clause- and they are usually specific items such as articles (excess or omission), prepositions (excess or omission), verb and noun agreement, adverbs (location), etc. They affect linguistic chunks shorter than sentences and the trouble or confusion they produce is minor, for they do not affect the comprehension of the sentence, paragraph or global text. Global mistakes involve the general structure of sentences (and paragraphs or even whole texts). They affect the understanding of the content of the text. Global errors locate in the relations between clauses, or sentences, or over longer stretches of discourse: tenses concordance or continuity, word order, missing or inappropriate connectors, relative pronouns, etc.

Dulay and Burt (1974:115) categorize goofs in the following framework:

1. Interference-like Goofs: Those that reflect native like language structure, *and*¹³ are not found in L1 acquisition data of the target language. (She's brushing hers teeths)
2. L1 Developmental Goofs. Those that do not reflect native language structure, but are found in L1 acquisition data of the target language. (I finish to watch TV when it's 4 o'clock.)
3. Ambiguous Goofs. Those that can be categorized as either interference-like Goofs or L1 Developmental Goofs.
4. Unique Goofs. Those that do not reflect L1 structure, and are also not found in L1 acquisition data of the target language.

Some of those types of errors can be related to the ones Corder (1975) named overtly and covertly erroneous sentences. Corder (1981) also mentions errors of omission, addition, selection, and ordering on the one level, and grammar, lexicosemantic and graphology/phonology errors, on another level. Dulay, Burt and Krashen (1982) in Macdonald 2005: 85 say that learners' errors can be categorized in Linguistic categories (morphology, syntax, etc.) or in Surface structure taxonomies (omission, addition, etc.)

Chun et al (1982), in Macdonald 2005:88, distinguished five categories from a corpus of spoken language:

- Discourse errors (errors beyond the sentence level and including structural/pragmatic aspects including inappropriate openings and closings, incorrect topic switches, inappropriate refusals, etc.)
- Factual errors (including those concerning the factual knowledge or truth value of an utterance).
- Word choice errors (incorrect choice or addition of a noun, verb, adjective, adverb, preposition, etc.)
- Syntactic errors (tense agreement, morphology, word order, etc.)
- Omissions (involving the incorrect omission of nouns, verbs, auxiliaries, articles, etc.)

¹³

Italics in the original.

Green and Hecht (1985) classify errors into four main categories including some subcategories: Grammar, Vocabulary, Style, and Spelling. Olsen (1999) also distinguished very general categories of errors: Orthography, Morphology, Syntax, and Lexis.

Abisamra's (2003:13) error identification and categorization was based on the literature (Corder, 1974; Richards, 1974; James, 1998; Selinker, 1972 in Richards, 1974; Richards and Sampson, 1974). She developed a taxonomy for error analysis including the following categories and sub-categories: grammatical (prepositions, articles, reported speech, singular/plural, adjectives, relative clauses, irregular verbs, tenses, and possessive case), syntactic (coordination, sentence structure, nouns and pronouns, and word order), lexical (word choice), semantic, and substance (mechanics: punctuation and capitalization, and spelling)., She mentioned the organizational/discourse errors but she did not quantify them arguing that, first, it is difficult to do so, and, second, she had trained her students, prior to the exam, to write a well-organized essay (thesis statement, restatement of the thesis, and the use of transition words). That is the same case in our study: we do not consider deeply here organization/discourse rhetoric or stylistic aspects of the learners' texts for they were previously taught about the structure of argumentative essays. After setting the categories, she chose, also based on the literature, the error sources that she wanted to study: Interlingual (negative L1 Transfer) and Intralingual (Developmental).

Alexopoulou, in Mouron and Iciar (2006: 31-43) proposes a typology of errors based upon descriptive, grammatical and etiologic criteria correlated under the light of the distinction between interlingual and intralingual errors. Her descriptive criteria (stage 1 of EA) are: omission, addition, wrong choice, wrong position, and wrong form. The classification criterion (stage 2 of EA) is that of speech parts (1. articles, 2. determinatives – demonstrative, indefinite, possessive-, 3. Pronouns –personal, relative-, 4. Verbs –verb form, tense, mood, impersonal forms, to be-, 5. Adverbs, 6. Prepositions, 7. Nouns, 8. adjectives). The etiologic criteria (stage 3 of EA, explanation) is constituted by a taxonomy of learning strategies that are compensatory strategies, a subset of communicative strategies (Faerch and Kasper, 1983:53):

INTERLINGUAL ERRORS:

Interference (IF)	interference of L1
	Interference of another L3
	literal translation
	avoidance

INTRALINGUAL ERRORS:

Reduction to a simplified system	Simplification (SPL)
	Neutralization (NTR)
	Incomplete application of rules (AIR) [IAR]
	Avoidance
Generalization	Overgeneralization (HG) [OG]
	Analogy (AN)
	Cross association (ACr) [cRa]
	Hypercorrection (HC)
	Ignorance of rules restriction (IRR)

As it is clearly seen, in error typologies, it is a common place the taxonomy that classifies them under the light of their sources: interlingual and intralingual. Interlingual are those linked to the learner's L1 or to another language he previously knows and "interferes" with the new language or from/to which positive or negative transfer occurs. Intralingual errors (also called developmental, regarding the consideration as part of the learner's interlanguage or approximative system) are

"those which reflect the general characteristics of rule learning, such as faulty generalisation, incomplete application of rules, and failure to learn the conditions under which rules apply." Richards (1974:174),

Richards (1974) classifies intralingual and developmental errors according to their causes: overgeneralization (when the learner creates a deviant structure on the basis of his previous experience with other structures in the target language), ignorance of rule restrictions (application of rules to contexts where they do not apply), incomplete application of rules (occurrence of structures whose deviancy represents the degree of development of the rules required to produce acceptable utterances), and false concepts

hypothesized (errors due to faulty comprehension or distinctions in the target language). However, it is sometimes very difficult to tell apart what is interlingual from what is intralingual. In fact, all error classifications have been challenged either because they include too broad categories, mix classification criteria, lack enough sound research support, or are conceptually or methodologically dubious or problematic (Gorosch 1973, Abbott 1980, Andersen 1984, Davies 1985, Dechert and Raupach 1989, Ellis 1995, Dordick 1996, Rifkin and Roberts 1995, Jarvis 2000, among others). Due to the subjectivity in the classification of errors according to their intra- or inter-lingual source, that criterion is not used in our study.

Regarding the gravity of errors, while global errors are frequently considered as more serious because they affect more successful communication (Tomiya, 1980; Hughes and Lascaratou, 1982; Davies, 1985; Celce-Murcia, 1991), others like Burt (1975) consider word order problems as the most important. Lexical errors are also frequently considered as the ones that affect communication the most (Nickel 1973, Olsson 1973, Chastain 1980, James 1977, Johansson 1978, and Dordick 1996). Discourse errors, according to Green and Hecht (1985) and Kramsch (1986), are the most serious ones (In Macdonald 2005: 85, 93). The degree of deviation of a learner's given utterance from grammaticality, acceptability or appropriateness, i.e., how much it hinders communication, is directly related to the judgment of its gravity. Another factor that affects the perception of and judgment of errors is, of course, their frequency: frequent errors tend to be considered as more serious than occasional ones (Olsson, 1973; Lennon 1991). Our experience is that frequent errors are especially annoying for teachers and that could be a factor influencing deeply the rating of the students' texts. The Irritability factor itself was proposed by James (1988) as a criterion regarding the gravity of errors. Being the gravity of errors such a subjective judgment, it is not considered in the present study. Instead, their systematic nature (frequency both at individual and group levels) is a basic criterion for error identification. Of course, we are aware of the fact that we are not following Corder's rejection of the terms "error", "deviate", "ill-formed", "ungrammatical", etc. when referring to the language learners' language idiosyncrasies (1981) in order to highlight the positive view of errors.

Vásquez' (1987, 2010: 164-165,) error classification is the following:

GRAMMATICAL CRITERIA:

- a. phonological
- b. orthographic
- c. lexical
- d. syntactic
- e. morph syntactic
- f. semantic
- g. pragmatic

DESCRIPTIVE CRITERIA:

- a. omission
- b. addition
- c. wrong selection
- d. wrong collocation

PEDAGOGIC CRITERIA:

- a. transitory
- b. permanent
- c. collective
- d. individual
- e. fossilizable
- f. fossilized
- g. ambiguous

ETIOLOGICAL CRITERIA:

A) extra linguistic

- a. error f (method) o induced errors
- b. error f (personality)
- c. error f (learning context)
- d. error f (social class)
- e. error f (correction)
- f. error f (memory)

B) linguistic

- a. transference
- 1. interlingual errors
- 2. intralingual errors

C) psychological

- a. simplification
- error f (analogy)
- error f (hipergeneralization)
- error f (neutralization)
- error f (crossed association)

COMMUNICATIVE CRITERIA:

- ambiguity
- irritation
- stigmatization

For Vázquez, errors are definitely positive because they are signals that allow control of the learning process both for the perspective of the learner and the teacher. From a normative perspective (2010), she classifies errors as individual and collective, these latter subdivide into fossilized or transitory. Individual errors are a feature of the interlanguage of a particular non native speaker; they are usually caused by the interference of other languages learnt previously but, more frequently, they originate in the tendency of the learner to experiment with the foreign language. They are very similar to the errors produced by children in the process of acquisition of the mother tongue. They clearly disclose the internalization of rules that correspond to the profile of the foreign language. They are idiosyncratic and disappear by themselves. Collective errors characterize a particular group of students (who share the same native language) and they are referred to aspects of the target language that hinder regularization of rules. They are more resilient to change and that resilience is manifested in a more or less steady way. This kind of errors is the basis for the lists of “typical errors” based almost exclusively on contrastive observation. Fossilized errors appear unexpectedly, generally under particular psychological conditions and they are mainly referred to rules already learnt that are correctly applied in other cases. Transitory or developmental errors appear at certain stages of the learning process. They tend to disappear after some time, depending on the sequence of exposure of materials for “practice”, i.e. activities aimed at “repairing” rules that have been learnt only partially. From a communicative perspective the criteria to establish errors are ambiguity (regarding message), irritation (regarding the interlocutor), and stigmatization (regarding the speaker).

In the vast field of error study, some integrative comments by Vázquez (1992:104 and 2007: 113-114) are very useful:

The evolution of the concept of error through the last 25 years has resulted –under the light of existent research- in a concept with positive features, free of offensive connotations, at least in the school context.

We consider finished the discussion –in our opinion, already settled- of a psycholinguistic approach vs. a pedagogical approach in the frame of the Theory of Error Analysis, because if the former is applied to formal learning, it is but the theoretical bases of the latter.

Vásquez believes that notions like “interlanguage”, “strategies”, “approximative stages” and, thus, “transitory, fossilizable and fossilized errors” have been concepts discussed enough. For her, what follows is incorporating the results of research into the didactic materials, among other implications. If we check the literature in the last decades, it is clear the consensus about these points: errors and mistakes are inherent part of the learning process, their causes are multiple (not only distraction, lack of effort, etc. but also interference from L1 and other L3, and learning strategies of regularization, simplification and generalization); errors cannot be avoided through certain grammatical or other progressions, not even through continuous self- or teacher’s correction; and finally, a number of errors respond to the formation of hypothesis of the learners.

Vasquez says that what was learnt from Error Analysis is that any error analysis of written and oral production is contrastive and a posteriori; that the basic concepts are error, mistake, interlanguage, and fossilization (Common European Framework); that it is possible to build minimal error grammars for different levels, which work as a reflection of the transitory competence of ideal non native speakers.

Last, let’s mention the most recent tendency in error analysis, called computer-aided error analysis –CEA- (Dagneaux, Denness, and Granger 1998; Granger 1998 –verb tenses-, Meunier 1998, 2000, Lewandoska-Tomaszczyk et al. 2000 –lexical problems-, Mason and Uzar 2000 –articles-, Tono 2000 –gramatical morphemes and lexical issues-, Knutsson et al. 2003, Leriko-Szymariska 2004 –lexical-, Izumi et al. 2005) which is closely related to corpus linguistics (Sinclair 1992, Biber et al. 1998, McCarthy and Sampson 2005, Wallis, 2007, Facchinetti 2007).

In CEA

using computer learner corpus –CLC-, a collection of machine-readable natural language data produced by L2 learners. Once computerized, learner data can be submitted to a wide range of linguistic software tools – from the least sophisticated ones, which merely count and sort, to the most complex ones, which provide an automatic linguistic analysis, notably part-of-speech tagging and parsing. (Dagneaux et al. 1998:165).

The first major project set up with the aim of developing computer tools for the analysis of learner language was headed by the Language Acquisition Research Centre at the University of Sydney, Australia (Peinemann 1992 in Macdonald. 2005: 30). They developed the COALA (Computational System for the Linguistic Analysis of Language Acquisition Data). The growth of computerized systems for language analysis has been really big and fast, and currently there is a rich variety of tools from word taggers to grammar correctors to translators to error editors to...

Perhaps the most important developments of CEA for us have been the word taggers and error editors. An example of the former is the used by the British National Corpus (BNC), consisting of c.100 million words, which was tagged automatically, using the CLAWS4 automatic tagger developed by Roger Garside at Lancaster, and a second program, known as Template Tagger, developed chiefly by Mike Pacey (Garside, Leech and McEnery, 1997). Error editors are software programs that support the tagging and classification of errors in comprehensive error classifications in extensive written corpora of learners. The tagging is not automatic at all: the classification and correction is still manual, the programs just facilitate the annotation and counting. Examples of these tools are the UCLEE (Université Catholique de Louvain Error Editor, Hutchinson 1996), Alcalá University's ENWIL (English Written Interlanguage) project; the TagEditor (Izumi et al. 2003) and MARKIN the one we used in our research. Another example could be Linguistic Technology Inc.'s WordMap grammar checking and linguistic analysis package. Some other error tagging systems (CLC, FreeText, NICT JLE, FALKO and HKUST) are mentioned by Díaz-Negrillo and Fernández Dominguez (2006)

After classifying the errors, the error-tagged corpus is analyzed using standard text retrieval software tools and lists of all the different types of errors and error counts are obtained. This kind of studies is very useful in discovering important features of learner writing, in particular areas of persistent difficulty. The SPICLE (Spanish –Peninsular- International Corpus of Learner English) Error Tagging Project (Ballesteros et al, en Mouron and Iciar 2006), whose error classification was quoted above, is another example of current trend, CEA. Macdonald's (2000) error tags are the same, using the UCLEE.

In the SPICLE (Spanish –Peninsular- International Corpus of Learner English) Error Tagging Project (Ballesteros et al., en Mouron and Iciar 2006: 90-91) we find the

following classification of errors into eight types: Formal (F), Grammatical (G), Lexicogrammatical (LX), Lexical (L), Word redundant, word, missing, word order (W), Punctuation (Q), Register (R), and Style (S). Formal errors group together all words that are non-existent in English (spelling and inflectional or derivational morphological errors), Grammatical errors are those that break general rules of English grammar (wrong use of articles, noun case, noun number, pronouns, adjective order, number, adverbs, verb morphology, voice and tense, auxiliaries, and word class). Lexico-grammatical errors occur where the morpho-syntactic properties of a word have been violated (countable/uncountable nouns, finite/non-finite complementation of nouns, verbs, adjectives and adverbs). Lexical errors refer to those involving the semantic (conceptual or collocational) properties of words and phrases. Punctuation errors here include missing, redundant or wrong punctuation marks (e.g. comma instead of full stop). Register includes errors that affect field (e.g. jargons), mode (e.g. speech vs. writing) or tenor of discourse (e.g. levels of formality), Style is a category restricted to long foreign-sounding (incomplete or unclear) chunks of text that a native would consider necessary to reformulate.

The SPICLE's categories are the same found in Dagneaux et al. (1998), who classified errors not taking into account sources, due to the high degree of subjectivity in this area. Their hierarchy comprised the seven major descriptive categories in the Lovaine University Error Editor (UCLEE): **F**ormal, **G**rammatical, **L**e**X**ico-grammatical, **L**exical, **R**egister, **W**ord redundant/ word missing/word order and **S**tile. Within each of those major codes, they distinguished one or more subcodes or subcategories that provide further information on the type of error. For the grammatical category, the first subcode is GV for verbs, the second is GN for nouns, GA for articles, etc. This subcode is in turn followed by any number of subcodes. For example, the GV category includes GVT (tense errors), GVAUX (auxiliary errors), GVV (voice errors), etc. In their flexible analysis, they added and deleted some categories.

Macdonald (2005) used the UCLEE, error editor developed at Lovaine University by Professors Sylvinne Gragner and John Hutchinson. Her abbreviations for error tags show some of the categories she used (2005: 9-10):

- FM - **F**orm, **M**orphology
- FS - **F**orm, **S**pelling
- FPW - **F**orm **P**unctuation **W**rong

- FPM - **F**orm **P**unctuation **M**issing
- GA - **G**rammar, **A**rticles
- GADJCS - **G**rammar, **A**djectives, **C**omparative / **S**uperlative
- GADJN- **G**rammar, **A**djectives, **N**umber
- GADJO- **G**rammar, **A**djectives, **O**der
- GADVO - **G**rammar, **A**dverbs, **O**der
- GNC- **G**rammar, **N**ouns, **C**ase
- GNN - **G**rammar, **N**ouns, **N**umber
- GP - **G**rammar, **P**ronouns
- GVAUX - **G**rammar, **V**erbs, **A**uxiliaries
- GVM - **G**rammar, **V**erbs, **M**orphology
- GVN - **G**rammar, **V**erbs, **N**umber
- GVNf- **G**rammar, **V**erbs, **N**on-Finite / **F**inite
- GVT - **G**rammar, **V**erbs, **T**ense
- GVV - **G**rammar, **V**erbs, **V**oice
- GWC- **G**rammar, **W**ord **C**lass
- LCC - **L**exis, **C**onjunctions, **C**oordinating
- LCLC - **L**exis, **C**onnectors, **L**ogical, **C**omplex
- LCLS - **L**exis, **C**onnectors, **L**ogical, **S**ingle
- LCS - **L**exis, **C**onjunctions, **S**ubordinating
- LP - **L**exical **P**hrase
- LS - **L**exical **S**ingle
- LSF - **L**exical **S**ingle, **F**alse friends
- R - **R**egister
- S - **S**tyle
- SI - **S**tyle, **I**ncomplete
- SU - **S**tyle, **U**nclear
- WM - **W**ord **M**issing
- WO- **W**ord **O**der
- WR- **W**ord **R**edundant
- XADJCO - **L**e**X**ico-**G**rammar, **A**djectives, **C**omplementation
- XADJPR - **L**e**X**ico-**G**rammar, **A**djectives, **D**ependent **P**reposition
- XCONJCO - **L**e**X**ico-**G**rammar, **C**onjunction, **C**omplementation
- XNCO - **L**e**X**ico-**G**rammar, **N**oun, **C**omplementation
- XNPR- **L**e**X**ico-**G**rammar, **N**oun, **D**ependent **P**reposition
- XNUC- **L**e**X**ico-**G**rammar, **N**oun (**C**ountable/**U**ncountable)
- XPRCO - **L**e**X**ico-**G**rammar, **P**reposition, **C**omplementation
- XVCO - **L**e**X**ico-**G**rammar, **V**erb, **C**omplementation
- XVPR - **L**e**X**ico-**G**rammar, **V**erb, **D**ependent **P**reposition

This is her description of the error tags (2005, 169-193)

FORM : (F*)

This category groups together words that include errors of a strictly formal nature. Although they are normally recognisable, this category usually includes non-existent forms in English.

Morphology : (FM)

(FM) is the tag used for errors of derivation and inflection. Inflectional errors refers to those that show errors in the grammatical morphemes, such as verb forms, plurals, genitive forms, comparative and superlative adjectives, etc., while derivational errors are due to the addition of erroneous affixes which also result in non-existent words.

Inflectional errors

- Erroneous simple present 3rd person singular morpheme

e.g. <2:2:344:1403:J_E> (GP) he \$she\$ (FM) cans \$can\$¹⁹ perfectly decide if (GP) he \$she\$ (GVM) want \$wants\$ to disconnect the mechanism.

- Erroneous simple past morpheme

e.g. <2:2:485:1665:1401:E_R> or should we (FM) sent \$send\$ messages later?

¹⁹ In order to facilitate the localization of the tagged error in each category we have marked these with adotted line.

- Erroneous past participle morpheme

e.g. <2:4:1319:1665:1665:J_Ne> if (GP) he \$they\$ (GVT) won't get \$weren't to get\$ (FM) payed \$paid\$ for it.

- Erroneous plural morpheme

e.g. <2:2:539:1400:R_J_L>The access to internet in (FM) librarys \$libraries\$, schools, work-places etc.

- Erroneous irregular comparatives/ superlatives

e.g. <5:1385:490:A_M_P> Could we please be (FM) quicklier \$quicker\$.

Derivational errors

e.g. <5:1172:490:J_B_S> we should (FM) considerate \$consider\$ (S) each situation of all the students\$ the situation of each student\$.

<5:1454:490:A_M_P> If no one participates that would show the PUSM is (FM) unuseful \$useless\$.

Spelling : (FS)

(FS) includes all spelling errors. It is also used for errors involving contracted forms without the apostrophe.

<1:354:578:J_S> This would include university, college, (FS) polytechnic \$polytechnic\$, vocational, adult, continuing, and on-the-job education and training.

<2:443:491:S_R> Teacher's knowledge in this case (FS) referrs \$refers\$ to his experience in administration.

<4:1014:486:486:S_L> Sweetie.... (FS) Ill \$I'll\$ be right back.

<5:1123:485:489:A_H> (SU) Due to some technical problems \$?\$, we are now online. (FM) we'er \$we're\$ (FS) shure \$sure\$ that.

o Letters missing – probably simply typographical errors, not due to a lack of linguistic competence.

<189:491:J_A> we should (FS) end \$send\$ them a message today - that will give them more time. Sven.

<1:260:489:V_F> We are available to answer the (FS) questinos \$questions\$ you might have.

Initially we tagged all the errors involving non-use of capital letters in the corpus. However it soon became apparent that there were far too many and tagging all of them would have been a tremendously time-consuming affair. We therefore established the following criteria for classifying the errors in this category with a certain amount of flexibility in the on-line teleconferences due to taking into account the conventions of the medium and the lack of time that the participants had for writing their messages.

Errors that were tolerated and not tagged:

§ Sentence initial missing capital letters.

§ Names of other participants (mainly used when participants of the same group send private messages to each other).

<233:491:S_M> to sven- problem is- neither have (FS) i, \$I\$ there is IRC on my computer, but I still have not figured out how to use it cathy.

Errors that were not tolerated:

§ Names of countries, nationalities and languages.

<3:867:485:R_N> we want only (FS) english \$English\$.

§ Days of the week and months of the year.

<2:625:489:S_G> (FS) wednesday \$Wednesday\$ next week...

§ The use of the pronoun 'I' in lower case.

<2:569:491:491:C_O> can (FS) i \$I\$ answer 157? cathy.

Punctuation missing: FPM

This category is used for cases where the punctuation is missing.

<187:491:A_N> When and (FS) were \$where\$ is the best place to meet.
(FPM) \$?\$.

Punctuation wrong: FPW

If the wrong punctuation marks were inserted this tag was used. It was particularly useful for the identification of relative clause problems.

<2:267:1403:R_G> Would the Commissioner (FPW), \$0\$ please (FPW), \$0\$ clarify what the (FS) responsibilities \$responsibilities\$ for each section entail?

<2:4:1315:1665:J_Ne> moving to the countries (FPW), \$0\$ where (LS) less \$fewer\$ taxes (GVV) were to pay\$ are paid\$ or.

GRAMMAR : (G)

The rules and norms of English grammar that have been violated in the IL output are classed in this main category type. There are several sub-categories, which we describe as follows:

Articles : (GA)

(GA) involves all problems of definite, indefinite or zero article, including misuse, omission or overinclusion.

Definite Articles

e.g. <3:780:491:A_N> #114 Isn't it common in (GA) the \$0\$ academic (LS) circles \$life\$ to finish your university education with either an MA.

Indefinite Articles

e.g. <3:812:486:491:P_K> Yes, if he thinks that is (GA) a \$the\$ right (LS) way \$combination\$.

Zero Article

e.g. <1:325:489:V_F> (LS) At \$Concerning\$ the questions about (GA) 0 \$the\$ campus we (GVT) will inform \$inform\$ you that by using IT.

NOUNS : (GN)

Noun case: (GNC)

This category includes:

- uses of the genitive ('s) where it should not have been used. This is an error which is also very common among writers whose L1 is English too.*
- and uses of the 'Noun + Noun' or 'Noun of Noun' combination instead of the genitive.*

e.g. <4:920:490:D_G_B> information technologies and their applications (depending on the needs of each person), will develop (GNC) the intelligence of the people \$people's intelligence\$.

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<2:5:1555:1401:1646:O_H> dear (GNC) info's \$infos\$, don't you know how to whisper, or was that meant for all of us to read?

Noun number : (GNN)

(GNN) is the tag which classes errors caused by the addition or omission of the plural morpheme.

Singular for plural

e.g. <2:518:490:J_V_G> Also, we think enterprises must collaborate economically with (GNN) university \$universities\$.

Plural for singular

e.g. <2:2:329:1400:R_J_L> If a person is terminally ill (WR) of a mortal disease \$000\$ medical personnel should be allowed to help him/her to shorten his/ (GP) hers \$her\$ (GNN) sufferings \$suffering\$.

Pronouns : (GP)

(GP) Although this category is only for pronouns, we added those errors related to adjectives, and which couldn't be categorised in the Adjective class, which only contemplated errors of number, order and degree. This tag thus groups together errors concerning demonstrative, interrogative, personal, possessive and quantifying adjectives and pronouns, as well as reciprocal, reflexive, relative and indefinite pronouns. The proforms (one/ones, so) are also included in this sub-category.

e.g. <4:996:489:489:V_F> (GP) All \$Everyone\$ should be able to use wordprocessing tools, and programs like Excel.

<3:774:490:J_O_D> We must take care of our resources, because if not we would be (LS) cheating \$deceiving\$ (GP) us \$ourselves\$ and we (FS) wil \$will\$ not be able (XVPR) to put in practice \$to put into practice\$ our education.

<2:6:2207:1403:1665:S_A> Ok, (FS) i \$I\$ haven't said (GP) nothing \$anything\$ "dangerous".

Reference problems are also dealt with in this sub-category:

<2:4:1244:1398:B_A> We mentioned our ideas in our (LP) position paper \$policy statement\$. Should we repeat (GP) it \$them\$?

ADJECTIVES : (GADJ)

Adjective order : (GADJO)

(GADJO) is the tag used for categorising errors of adjective position. In the following example, the tag classifies a word-order error when two or more adjectives precede the noun.

e.g. <5:1151:491:491:S_R> Yes we will eat and drink until we will see (GADJO)
blue little \$little blue\$ dots

It also includes errors caused by confusion of attributive and predicative functions of adjectives.

e.g. <2:3:768:1665:S_U> #100 - development of software is very expensive -and high quality is only guaranteed with (GADJO) payed software \$software that is paid for\$.

Adjective number : (GADJN)

(GADJN) consists of any errors which show the learner has used a plural morpheme with an adjective.

e.g. <2:6:2072:1413:A_R_R> As we were saying, all (GADJN) pretties \$pretty\$ women are invited to our great party (LS) of \$on\$ the last day (we promise you it is going to be a party "(CS)que se cagara la perra (Spanish col.)").

Comparative / Superlative : (GADJCS)

(GADJCS) consists of errors which either involve the wrong formation or misuse of comparatives and superlatives.

Wrong formation

e.g. <2:7:2320:1398:I_K> No, sorry but we have much (GADJCS) more sweeter \$sweeter\$ dreams.

Misuse

e.g. <2:4:1315:1665:J_Ne> where (LS) less \$fewer\$ taxes (GVV) were to pay \$are paid\$ or (FS) were \$where\$ poorer people work for (GADJCS)lower \$less\$ money. It must be a (SU) term \$?\$ of the Eutropian Constitution to develop a ministry of (FS) regualtion \$regulation\$ to protect and to control that.

Those forms of comparative and superlative that do not exist in English are tagged as (FM).

ADVERBS : (GADV)

Adverb order : (GADVO)

(GADVO) deals with problems related to adverb order.

e.g. <2:2:550:1646:J_P> You (GADVO) exactly wrote \$wrote exactly\$ what we wrote. Thank you

VERBS : (GV)

Verb number : (GVN)

(GVN) includes all errors involving number concordance between subjects and verbs.

Plural verb with singular subject

e.g. <3:738:490:J_P_J> #79: If a person over 30 (GVN) want \$wants\$ to continue his/her studies.

Singular verb with plural subject

e.g. <4:948:489:S_G> But people (GVN) doesn't \$don't\$ have the equipment to do this at home.

Singular verb with collective subject

e.g. <2:408:491:A_N> Specially trained administration staff (GVN) is \$are\$ essential.

Verb Morphology : (GVM)

Existing verb forms that are misused are included in this category (e.g. a simple past form instead of a past participle, an infinitive instead of a past participle, etc.).

e.g. <3:850:491:A_N> We want to encourage our students to spend some semesters abroad, and, as mentioned in our paper, ideally have them (GVM) taken \$take\$ their practical semester in (GA) an other \$another\$ (FS) Eurtopian \$Eutropean\$ country.

<4:911:490:F_M_J> Northland thinks that the main points to be (GVM) discuss \$discussed\$ in this teleconference should be:

Once again, If the verb form does not exist in English (e.g. eated) the error is classified as formal (FM).

Non-Finite/Finite verb forms : (GVNF)

(GVNF) is the tag used to classify errors involving non-finite and finite verb forms.

‘-ing’ used instead of a relative clause

e.g. <2:528:491:M_E> 3.students (GVNF) having finished \$who have finished\$ school after 10 years.

nominal use of the infinitive with 'to'

The gerund is much more frequent in English than the infinitive in subject position.

e.g. <5:1449:491:S_R> (GVNF) To state \$Stating\$ (GP) it \$things\$ (WR) out \$0\$ clearly. Midland won't accept any (LS) deminishing \$reduction\$ of final exams.

Verb voice : (GVV)

(GVV) is used to tag all errors which show confusion in the passive and active voice.

Active for passive

e.g. <3:680:490:J_P_J> However, this topic should (GVV) have studied \$have been studied\$ by another delegation (policy).

Passive for active

e.g. <A:3:298:1703:1664> I \$In issue #1 of the Globe\$ (GVV) is written \$it says\$ that not the constitution (FS) bur \$but\$ the declaration of human rights will be (LS) treated \$dealt with\$. So... confusing?

Verb tense : (GVT)

(GVT) tags errors of tense or aspect.

Present simple for continuous

e.g. <2:468:486:486:S_L> Hi everybody. Sorry I am not a big help today (like most (WM) \$of\$ the time:-))... but I think you have everything under control...

I (GVT) try \$am trying\$ to read as much as my server allows me to read and hope.

Present continuous for simple

e.g. <2:3:978:1646:H_M_R> #235 We agree and (GVAUX) \$would\$ like to hear what the other delegations (GVT) are thinking \$think about\$ about this topic.

Present simple for simple past

e.g. <5:1144:491:491:S_R> As agreed on within the group (FS)i \$I\$ (GVT) send \$sent\$ it

Present simple for present perfect

e.g. <2:2:512:1403:O_O> We (GVT) spend \$have spent\$ (WO) now 1 hour in this conference \$1 hour in this conference now\$.

Simple past for present perfect

e.g. <2:3:1159:1405:C_O> This conference (GVT) was \$has been\$ very productive!

Present perfect for simple past

e.g. <2:1:253:1665:1398:E_R> Hey Bardland. We don't want you to leave, of course. We (GVT) haven't even written \$didn't even write\$ this secret message between #72 and #73.

Present simple for future

e.g. <1:330:486:578:D_B> Yes, alright. We (GVT) try \$will try\$ to coordinate the work on policy.

Auxiliaries: (GVAUX)

(GVAUX) consists of all misuses of auxiliaries, modals and semi-auxiliaries.

e.g. <5:1177:491:486:J_A> (GVAUX) Do \$Would\$ you like to make a statement?

<2:2:344:1403:J_E> We think that each person (GVAUX) could \$should\$ decide about her own life (LS) along \$during\$ all the time that this person is living.

WORD CLASS : (GWC)

(GWC) is the tag used for cases where the learner has used the wrong word class, i.e. an adjective instead of an adverb, a noun instead of a verb, etc.

e.g. <5:1203:491:S_R> 100% state funded TEC, so you give us the TEC, we will agree on other (GWC) private \$privately\$ funded Universities in EUTROPOLIS.

<2:3:938:1646:M_R> #209 medical information is very (FM) usefull \$useful\$. But it should be published (GWC) anonymous \$anonymously\$.

LEXICO-GRAMMAR : (X)

This category allows the researcher to tag those errors which violate the morpho-syntactic properties of words. Previous studies on errors tended to leave the categorisation of particular structures such as those involving complementation of verbs, nouns, adjectives, etc. in a somewhat ambiguous way, without seeming to provide a suitable description. This lexicogrammatical tag type has greatly improved the possibility of analysing and classifying this important group of error types which previously had been somewhat elusive in nature since they were not strictly speaking either wholly lexical, or grammatical, but showed properties of both these types. It

includes errors of countable and uncountable nouns, non-finite and finite complementation of nouns, verbs, adjectives and adverbs, and dependent prepositions.

COMPLEMENTATION : (X...CO)

This category deals with errors of complementation. The tag is inserted in front of the word that triggers the trouble spot, and not in front of the erroneous word.

The following sub-categories can be noted:

(XADJCO) : erroneous complementation of adjectives

e.g. <2:566:491:583:S_R> Desperately sorry for that. We would (XADJCO) be glad hearing \$be glad to hear\$ from you after the conference again.

<A:2:273:1402:-1> that we are not (XADJCO) interested to support \$interested in supporting\$ the other countries in the Eutropean Union in any possible way.

(XCONJCO) : erroneous complementation of conjunctions

e.g. <5:1293:491:G_B> (XCONJCO) According \$According to\$ 120# TEC (FS) Tertiary \$Tertiary\$ Education Center! Sorry.

<2:4:1299:1403:D_C> #107 Young people and also poor people (WR) which \$0\$ should be (GVM) back \$backed\$ by the government (XCONJCO) in order they could \$in order to\$ buy a house or something like that.

(XNCO) : erroneous complementation of nouns

e.g. <2:427:486:D_B> our (XNCO) suggestion of \$suggestion for\$ (GA) \$an\$ equal number of voices for each of the three groups?

(XPRCO) : erroneous complementation of prepositions

e.g. <A:2:252:1403:-1> punishments and penalties for drug dealers and hard drugs consumers (XPRCO) instead establish \$instead of establishing\$ (GA) \$the\$ death penalty.

(XVCO) : erroneous complementation of verbs

e.g. <1:334:489:491:V_F> We (XVCO) look forward to cooperate \$look forward to cooperating\$ with you :-).

<A:2:172:1402:-1> Due to Midland's recent (FM) economical \$economic\$ problems we are certainly (XVCO) dedicated to encourage \$dedicated to encouraging\$ (GA) the \$0\$ economic growth.

Dependent prepositions : (X...PR)

This category includes all errors involving dependent prepositions. When dealing with errors involving independent prepositions, these are classified as lexical errors (LS) for single prepositions, or (LP) lexical phrase for multiword units.

The sub-categories are as follows:

(XADJPR) : adjectives used with the wrong dependent preposition

e.g. <2:3:922:1646:1665:H_M_R> Coco we are impressed! you are so much (XADJPR) better in \$better at\$ using simple HTML-Tags to emphasize senseless statements.

<2:6:1934:1665:E_R> We had technical problems, (XADJPR) sorry for \$sorry about\$ that...

(XNPR) : nouns used with the wrong dependent preposition

e.g. <A:1:102:576:491> Hello fellow-middies and everyone else! I'm in (XNPR) charge with \$charge of\$ the technology (LS) efforts \$area\$ for the Midlandian delegation.

<A:1:148:490:-1> So we ask you for a clear (XNPR) agreement at \$agreement on\$ this issue.

(XVPR) : verbs used with the wrong dependent preposition

e.g. <2:5:1579:1398:T_K> We don't (XVPR) agree to \$agree with\$ the last sentence.

<5:1498:490:D_H_M> The Delegation of Northland wants to (XVPR) thank to \$thank\$ all the other delegations (WM) \$for\$ (GP) your \$their\$ presence in this teleconference.

Nouns: countable/uncountable : (XNUC)

(XNUC) tags errors involving countable and uncountable nouns. The tag (XNUC) should be inserted in front of the incorrect article which accompanies the noun.

Indefinite article with uncountable nouns

e.g. <A:1:162:490:-1> Northland delegation had already understood your last message, but we still think that it is (XNUC) a nonsense \$nonsense\$.

Plural of uncountable nouns

e.g. <2:2:529:1405:S_R> What glorious (XNUC) informations \$information\$ has the internet to offer that an ordinary newspaper has not.

<4:925:490:F_M_J> improve their (XNUC) knowledges \$knowledge\$.

LEXIS : (L)

This general category deals with errors involving the conceptual or collocational properties of words or phrases. It is divided into four subcategories:

Lexical Single (LS), False Friends (LSF), Lexical Phrase (LP) and Connectives. It was considered appropriate to put all the errors involving connectors together under one sub-category for two reasons: firstly, non-native speakers of English often have difficulty using connectors and secondly, if there were no special category devoted to them, some errors would be classified as (LS) and others as (LP), since the connector may involve single terms or multi-word phrases.

Lexical single : (LS)

(LS) is used for errors concerning the conceptual or collocational properties of single words. Erroneous forms involving solid and hyphenated compounds are included in this category

Conceptual

e.g. <1:346:486:486:D_B> i think at least one of us should stay till the official end... ah i just (LS) recognised \$realised\$ that (GP) it's \$there's\$ only 5 min left... so let's stay here for 5 min.

<2:507:486:D_B> but this shouldn't be (LP) so large to \$so large as to\$ (LS) infect \$influence\$ policy-making at the universities.

Collocational

e.g. <1:329:491:489:O_D_H> we are (LS) strongly \$greatly\$ interested in a veritable partnership. If you have any interesting offer for our upcoming project please contact.

<1:319:485:491:A_H> we have misunderstood (LS) small \$a few\$ moments of the taskFETE.

False Friends : (LSF)

(LSF) Lexical errors can result from the influence of a formally similar word in the learner's mother tongue which causes confusion while searching in the mental lexicon for a word in the TL. In the corpus used for this research work almost all the false friends found were related to Spanish, the only language the researcher shares with the participants in the simulation. Undoubtedly, with further study, and in collaboration with researchers from other participant universities, many more will come to light involving other L1s.

e.g. <3:719:490:J_O_D> We propose an examination in order to control the number of students that want to enter in a specific (LSF) career \$degree course\$ (Sp. carrera universitaria).

<A:1:62:486:-1> Students, (LSF) professor \$teachers/lecturers\$ and local authorities should all have one third of votes in a suffrage

Lexical phrase : (LP)

(LP) includes errors in (semi-)fixed multi-word expressions, idioms and phrasal verbs:

e.g. <3:863:490:D_L_R> If we are not tolerant, we won't be able to develop a new city like Eutropolis (LP) made from \$made up of\$ people from 5 countries.

<A:1:104:486:-1> We would like to (LP) clear out \$make clear\$ our position expressed in the (FS) forth \$fourth\$ point of Technology.

<2:5:1798:1401:1401:O_H> Was I guilty because I ironed a plastic cover and thus destroyed the (LP) ironing machine \$iron\$? Does it make me less innocent?

<A:2:175:1406:1405> Our (FS) poltical \$political\$ columnist will (LP) size up \$review\$ the different statements of the different states.

Lexis, connectives : (LC*)

This sub-category consists of errors involving different types of connectives: coordinating conjunctions (LCC), subordinating conjunctions (LCS) and logical connectors (LCL). The problems may be due to: misuse, overinclusion or wrong choice.

Logical connectors : (LCL)

The **(LCL)** category is further subdivided in (LCLS) for single connectors and (LCLC) for complex connectors.

- *Single Logical Connectors (LCLS)*

e.g. <3:680:490:J_P_J> all students should have the same opportunities (LS) to access \$to gain access\$ to University, and (LCLS) then \$therefore\$ we (S) do not have to make differences according to the age \$we should not discriminate people for their age\$.

<A:2:273:1402:-I> This means that we want to ensure that an appropriate standard of living for the retired and also for our whole society (LCLS) furthermore \$0\$ becomes an inalienable right.

- *Complex Logical Connectors: (LCLC)*

e.g. <2:1:248:1402:1405:K_K> (LCLC) As soon if \$As soon as\$ we have further information for you, we will let you know.

Coordinating conjunctions : (LCC)

(LCC) includes all errors involving the coordinating conjunctions:

e.g. <A:1:170:490:-I> We were (FM) waitting \$waiting\$ for one more clear explanation about your last message, but we (FS) can not \$cannot\$ wait (LP) for more time \$longer\$ (LCC) and \$so\$ we have decided to (LS) say \$tell\$ you what we understood and why we disagree with you.

Subordinating conjunctions : (LCS)

(LCS) consists of errors involving subordinating conjunctions.

e.g. <A:2:189:1398:-I> Human psychology usually strives to get what is forbidden.

(LCS) In case \$If\$ there is no ban, the desire is no longer so strong.

<2:3:950:1398:K_Bon> #224 That person doesn't have rights to (FS) nclaim \$claim\$ payment for the use of his or her (FS) genetyic \$genetic\$ information, (LCS) but \$although\$ this information mustn't become accessible to the (S) broad masses of people \$population in general\$.

WORD REDUNDANT, WORD MISSING, WORD ORDER : (W*)

- **Word redundant : (WR)**

(WR) tags those errors which involve the addition of unnecessary, and often incorrect, words in the discourse. It includes slips of the 'keyboard'

e.g. <A:1:168:489:-1> If the students are (FM) physical \$physically\$ disabled (WR) it \$0\$ (FS) its \$it's\$ possible to work at home. and the redundant use of particles, prepositions, pronouns, etc.

<A:1:62:486:-1> In Coastland there (GVN) is \$are\$ a small number of private universities (GP) who \$which\$ (LS) recommend \$charge\$ high (WR) studying \$0\$ fees.

<A:3:322:1403:1400> As you can see this means that illegal people will only have medical coverage in case of (WR) sickness or \$00\$ illness.

- Word missing : (WM)

This sub-category tags errors involving the omission of words, which are shown as a '0' followed by the word that should have been used.

e.g. <241:491:S_M> have a nice weekend... enjoy (WM) 0 \$yourselves\$.

<A:2:189:1398:-1> It would contribute to (GA) \$the\$ (FM) economical \$economic\$ system of the whole (WM) 0 \$of\$ Eutropia and insure new job (LS) places \$vacancies\$.

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- Word order : (WO)

These errors involve problems with word order that are not classified under the sections on Adjectives or Adverbs.

e.g. <3:771:583:490:Ö_C> That did not (WO) at all hinder Japan \$hinder Japan at all\$ from developing very fast, did it?!

<2:1:205:1400:R_J_L> Because of our tight (WR) time \$0\$ (FS) sceduale \$schedule\$, we will have (XNCO) difficulties to (FS) preaper \$prepare\$ \$difficulties preparing\$ (WO) properly (GWC) to \$the\$ (FS) confrernses \$conferences\$ \$the conferences properly\$ on fri. 10 and wed 15.

REGISTER : (R)

(R) is used for errors involving the field of discourse (e.g. jargons), the mode of discourse (e.g. speech vs writing) or the tenor of discourse (e.g. levels of formality). In our corpus this category is hardly identified at all. The nature of CMC (especially when dealing with the on-line conferences) implies that the mode of discourse is continuously changing. There are, as we have discussed beforehand, aspects of both

spoken and written discourse in the corpus, and we did not see it fit to mark these as errors. Likewise, the level of formality also changes, from inter-group and intra-group communication (whispering), to the more formal language in the asynchronous messages, and from one part of the simulation i.e. initial policy statements to the debriefing at the end. As such, we have therefore only identified cases of archaic language.

Temporal (archaic)

e.g. <A:2:176:1624:-1> (R) We (very formal/legal style), the Government of Southland, welcome all delegations to these negotiations on this important topic of human rights in Eutropia.

STYLE : (S)

This category is one that is absolutely necessary for the classification of a certain type of IL output which is not necessarily grammatically deviant, but which nevertheless sounds clumsy or foreign-sounding, and which a NS would not normally produce. This tag type may be used for whole sentences or parts of sentences or unfixed phrases, although it does not apply to the forms found in the (LP) category.

e.g. <2:498:485:A_H> The government (S) has not good enough economics \$does not have a good enough economy\$ to pay for (GA) the \$0\$ tertiary (LS) school \$education\$.

<2:3:791:1401:O_H> The carrying out of laws should be kept within a legal frame, and (S) not given in the hands of \$and not be used for\$ personal revenge.

Incomplete (SI)

This sub-category tags IL output which includes sentences that are incomplete and which do not transmit the writer's intended meaning and goals. They may involve verbless sentences, or simply have elements missing that show the message is incomplete. It is sometimes possible, nevertheless, to provide a potential correction. When no correction can be provided, the \$?\$ symbol is inserted.

e.g. <4:923:491:O_D_H> Overall computer literacy from the earliest age/semester possible (SI) by \$?\$.

<A:2:183:1403:-1> Our modest growth rate does not allow us to receive a (SI) larg
 \$?\$ The economic contribution of Northland to the Eutropan Federation must be
 reviewed in depth.

Unclear (SU)

(SU) is used when nonsensical or highly ambiguous forms are used in the discourse.
 The symbols \$?\$ is also used in this case when it is not possible to understand what
 the writer wishes to say.

e.g. <2:400:490:R_L_G> Do you mean general access or by the (SU) desible \$?\$.

<2:6:2083:1403:S_A> This conference does not (SU) have have, neither feet \$?\$.

CODE-SWITCHING (CS)

Although it is generally considered to be a strategy used by bilinguals when they
 alternate between two languages in spoken or written discourse, we consider its use
 in our corpus as erroneous since the other participants may not share the knowledge
 of the language used, and this proves to be disruptive to the flow of communication,
 and flouts politeness conventions. Sometimes the code-switching involves a whole
 sentence:

e.g. <A:1:75:558:486> Hi david! (CS) wo bist du?es ist viertel nach 8 und ich sitze
 im zfn. bist du vielleicht im fb10- lab? (Ger.) kristina.

And other times part of a sentence:

e.g. <2:6:2072:1413:A_R_R> As we were saying, all (GADJN) pretties \$pretty\$
 women are invited to our great party (LS) of \$on\$ the last day (we promise you it is
 going to be a party "(CS) que se cagara la perra" (Spanish col.).

Or a single word:

<2:5:1735:1401:1401:O_H> Do you think they have enough (CS) Sitzfleisch
 (German)(ham)?

<2:8:2503:1402:K_K> I'm in a christmas mode because I'm working on the (CS)
 Weihnachtsmarkt (Ger.) and (WO) there are the whole day \$the whole day there are\$
 (FS) hristmas \$Christmas\$ (FS) charols \$carols\$ in my ears.

UCLEE's error categories and description seem to be the best developed ones and, as we have seen, they are frequently adopted in most recent error studies and so they are important for our analysis.

CHAPTER III

6. METHODOLOGY

6.1 Type of research

First of all, this is an applied research. Miller and Salkind (2002) characterize applied research as one of the three major types of research design, altogether with basic or pure and evaluative research. Regarding the nature of the research problem, applied research seeks to understand how basic research can help alleviate a demanding social problem and provides policy makers with well grounded guides to remedial action. The goal of applied research is to explore the value of basic knowledge in an applied setting that can be useful to a policy maker who seeks to eliminate or alleviate a social problem. The underlying theory of this kind of research is a selection of a theory, guidelines, or intuitive hunches to explore the dynamics of a social system. Its techniques are very similar to those of basic research, only in a setting where the implications of the research are immediately obvious. Our study is not aimed at producing new basic knowledge; instead, it used already existing theory for the analysis of its problem, the identification and classification of the most frequent errors in argumentative essays of intermediate EFL students at the BAFLUV. Our underlying goal is to cast light on some features of the proficiency of our students at that level in order to set up actions to prevent and remedy those errors. We have drawn from EA and CEA theory and methodology. In Miller and Salkind's two subtypes of applied research (2002) ours is a study concerned with social outcomes, whose focus upon policy implications is that of a social monitor and whose focus upon data gathering and data interpretation is that of a data analyst. The first subtype of applied research is interested in social processes from the perspective of policy analysts and evaluation researchers.

From a different point of view, our study has a quantitative approach. The treatment of the data is basically descriptive statistics. Quantitative studies divide into experimental and non-experimental.

In the latter, the researcher identifies variables and may look for relationships among them but does not manipulate the variables. Major forms of non-experimental

research are relationship studies including ex post facto and correlational research and survey research.

Ex post facto research is similar to an experiment, except that the researcher does not manipulate the independent variable, which has already occurred in the natural course of events. The researcher simply compares groups differing on the preexisting independent variable to determine any relationship to the dependent variable.

...

Correlational research gathers data from individuals on two or more variables and then seeks to determine if the variables are related (correlated). Correlation means the extent to which the two variables vary directly (positive correlation) or inversely (negative correlation).

...

Both ex post facto and correlational research investigate relationships between variables. The major distinction between the two is that in ex post facto research one categorizes the participants in at least two groups on one variable and compares them on the other variable. In correlational research, a researcher deals with one group of individuals measured on at least two continuous variables. (Kothari, 2004)

Then, ours is a quantitative non experimental ex post facto study: the single variable is that of errors, that have already occurred in the studied texts. The idea is to quantify and categorize them in one group of students. This is also a descriptive study, as opposed to explanatory/causal research. Terre Blanche et al. (2006) include descriptive research as part of a useful simplification of quantitative research in the social sciences which establishes a three-unit typology consisting of descriptive research, relational research, and comparative (experimental and quasi-experimental research), each having different goals and using different techniques. Though they state that descriptive studies usually declare an intention to generalize, that is not the current case. According to Terre Blanche et al. there are two types of data analysis that can be performed: descriptive and inferential analysis. Descriptive data analysis investigates the distribution of scores of each variable studied and whether the scores on different variables are related to each other. The description is made first by presenting a

summarized frequency distribution by means of graphical or tabular representations; bar graphs and pie charts of this type of data analysis are easy to interpret; there are other kinds of graphic representations of the data, like histograms. Measures of central tendency –mode, median, and mean- are also used in quantitative data description, each suited to specific types of data.

Regarding the research field, our study is part of SLA (Second Language Acquisition) research, specifically in the area of Error Studies. Our research does not adopt EA type of analysis, in the sense that causal explanation and remedial proposals are not aimed at in the analysis of the sample of errors we deal with. Rather, it can be ascribed to CEA (Computer-aided error analysis) in the sense that the tool for error tagging was computer software., (MARKIN).

As this is a predominantly descriptive study, only linguistic categories are used; the classification according to the intra- or inter-lingual source of the errors was disregarded due to first the high subjectivity of this matter, and second, to the fact that inquiries into the subjects were not included for the study. Of the linguistic categories, just the single-word speech parts, vocabulary (false friends/cognates, word class confusion), mechanics (punctuation, capitalization, syllabication) were used, not taking into account phrases, clauses and sentences or grammar functions (e.g. subject, predicate, object, etc.) or text analysis of any type, and only a few references to rhetoric, discourse, and style.

As said by the type of sample, ours is a *Case Study* (Hernández Sampieri et al., 2003) for it works on a small population, some essays of a group of students. In this sense, the sample cannot probably be considered as fully representative of the whole universe of (intermediate) students of the BAFLUV. According to Terre Blanche et al. (2006) case studies are usually descriptive in nature and provide rich longitudinal information about individuals or particular situations. They also have the advantage of allowing new ideas and hypothesis to emerge from careful and detailed observation.

It is important to bear in mind that ours is an *analysis of final products*: the focus of attention are the written essays or texts, what can be drawn from them, without any consideration to the writing process or individual personal features that could help the analysis.

To finish the consideration of the type of research into which our study can be classified, it is necessary to consider its temporal dimension. Babbie (2007, 2010) affirms that researchers have two principal options to deal with the issue of time in the research design: cross-sectional studies and longitudinal studies. A cross-sectional study involves observation of a sample, or cross-section, of a population or phenomenon that are made at one point in time. In contrast, longitudinal studies are designed to permit observations of the same phenomenon over an extended period. There are three types of longitudinal studies: trend, panel and cohort studies. Thus, it can be said that ours is a cross-sectional study.

6.2 Context

The B.A. in Foreign Languages of the Universidad del Valle, a state university in Cali, capital city of Valle del Cauca, Southwest of Colombia, is a program that has been running since 2000. Students are admitted once a year. Most of its students –female majority- belong to a mid- and low social status and are in their late teens and early twenties. The B.A. curriculum, 10 semesters long, encompasses several areas: Linguistics and L1 (Spanish), FL (English and French), Pedagogy and Research, and mandatory courses by law: Sport and the National Constitution. Pedagogical and classroom research features are a cross-curricular line from the very first semester. The FL area paces English and French in three major stages: beginning (semesters I through IV), intermediate (semesters V to VII), and advanced (semesters VIII and IX). In the first four semesters, an integrated-skills approach is used with some emphasis on four text types: description, narration, exposition, and argumentation. In the intermediate stage, a deep treatment of text types and skills is made: English and French V focus on oral descriptive, narrative, expository and argumentative texts; English and French VI deal with the same types of texts but in a written form, their emphasis being on reading; VII semester is devoted to the same typologies from a written composition perspective. The advanced stage (English and French VIII and IX) engages the students in literary expression and free writing. The overall approach in the teaching of EFL at the BAFLUV is functional-communicative, grammar is not explicitly studied in English every course.

6.3 Population and Sample

Our object of interest in this research is not EFL learners but their written productions. We took the argumentative essays, produced by intermediate level students of the B.A. in Foreign Languages at the Universidad del Valle (BAFLUV) as part of the proficiency test they must take at the end of the intermediate level, immediately after having passed semester VII, whose emphasis is on written composition. The texts taken belong to one group of students (2008).

6.4 Design of the study (*Procedures*)

Following Ellis (1995), the corpus was selected as follows: the written argumentative essays (only version) produced by the students at the beginning of the VIII semester I 2008 were organized according to their total score¹⁴ given by the Professors of the School of Languages at Universidad del Valle (ECLUV). From them, five texts were taken at random from three achievement levels: the five bottom ones, five medium level (around the median score), and the five top essays. All the original texts were handwritten, thus we typed them as they were¹⁵ for their processing.

The essays selected were the following:

Highest score:

1. 2008-06fAMS48
2. 2008-04mOEH47
3. 2008-03fNGC45
4. 2008-03fRMT44
5. 2008-01mFH44

Medium score:

¹⁴ The argumentative essays are part of a TOEFL-like proficiency test that covers all the basic communicative skills: listening, reading, speaking and writing, plus structures, and constitutes a requirement for graduation. The students are not required or given any special preparation. The grading scheme is from 0- to 5.

¹⁵ In some cases the legibility was problematic due to unclear handwriting; extra or lack of space between words and separation of punctuation from the text was disregarded for the typed version of the texts. Grammar correction in the computers where the texts were processed was deactivated in order to avoid automatic correction of errors in the texts.

6. 2008-04mCDM37
7. 2008-02fSL37
8. 2008-03fMTC36
9. 2008-04mCAT36
10. 2008-04fVO34

Lowest score:

11. 2008-00mAR14
12. 2008-04fJLC23
13. 2008-00fMDC25
14. 2008-03fYD24
15. 2008-00fMM25

Then, taking into consideration the predominantly quantitative nature of our study and the fact that it shares traits of traditional (intuitive) error analysis, EA and CEA, the errors in each essay were tagged following our own error typology, which was set up according to classification and description criteria (EA's stages 1 and 2) and adapting the UCLEE's tagging system, as presented by Macdonald (2005). Let's remind the reader that our scope is reduced in comparison to a complete EA (we only aim at identifying and classifying errors, without an explanatory stage), and it can be considered CEA, though our use of software tools is simple.

For the analysis, we did *not* take into account speech parts beyond the word level (i.e., clauses, phrases and sentences). Grammatical functions (e.g. subject, predicate, object, connective), semantic and rhetorical/stylistic/textual properties (e.g. paragraph or text structure) were also set aside for the current purpose. The error categories are the following. In brackets with an asterisk are some error types completely or mostly excluded in our analysis, but that constitute error types:

- Grammar:
 - Speech Parts:
 - Verb:
 - Tense

- **Number**
- **Mood** (infinitive, indicative, subjunctive, imperative, conditional)
- **Aspect**: (continuous, perfect forms)
- **Voice** (passive/active)
- **Auxiliary**/Modal
- **Inflection** (verb form)
- **Noun**:
 - **Number** (plural/singular)
 - Countable/Uncountable (**UC**)
 - **Case**
 - **Genitive**: Apostrophe (**'s**) / Noun+noun/noun of noun (**NoNo**)
- **Pronoun**
- **Adjective**:
 - **Degree** (Comparative/Superlative)
 - **Number**
- **Adverb**,
- **Article**:
 - **Definite**
 - **Indefinite**
- **Preposition**,
- **Conjunction**.
- *[Clause]**
- *[Sentence...]**
- *[Function: Subject, Predicate, Object]**
- **Vocabulary** (lexis)
 - *[Lexical phrase (phrasal/prepositional verbs, idiomatic expressions)]**
 - **Cognates** (L1/L3)
 - **Word Class** (verb instead of a noun, adjective instead of an adverb...)
- **Mechanics**

- **Punctuation**, (Problems with quotation, quotation, and exclamation marks are included here.)
- **Capitalization)**
- **Syllabication**
- [**Rhetoric/Text Structure**]*
 - [**Connectives**]* (They are considered under *Conjunctions*)
- [**Discourse**]*
 - **Verbo**sity/Wordiness
 - **Register** (as in Macdonald, 190)
- **Sty**le/Pragmatics
 - Incomplete (**Frag**ment)
 - **Unc**lear (incomprehensible/coherence)
 - **Vag**ue
 - L1/3-Like (**L1/3L**)
 - Code-Switching (**CS**)

On the other hand, after the definition of the tags (classification criteria), it is necessary to turn to the error description criteria. It is also useful to remind the reader that our aim is descriptive, (we are not interested in the causes of errors because we work with the texts as final products isolated from their authors and writing task and process). That is why error etiology was not considered for the descriptive aspect of the classification criteria. As a consequence, the traditional error source typology of intralingual/interlingual errors was disregarded, also due to the great deal of subjectivity implied in it. The selected criteria were:

- **Miss**ing (omission)
- **EX**tra (over inclusion, it includes redundancy)
- **Wrong Form (WF):**
 - **Morph**ology

- **Inflection** (noun regular plural, noun irregular plural, adjective in plural, 3rd person present singular, simple past ending, past participle, irregular comparative/superlative; genitive/possessive case for nouns).
- **Derivation**
 - **Spelling** (letters, apostrophe in contracted forms)
- **Wrong Choice** (inappropriate word: conceptual, collocation/use) (**WC**)
- **Wrong Position** (word order) (**WP**)
- **Complementation**: finite and non finite complementation of nouns, verbs, adjectives and adverbs)

Thus, we have a bidimensional classification system; the first column the categorization and the second the description:

CLASSIFICATION (Category, subcategories)	DESCRIPTION						
	<u>Missing</u>	<u>EX</u> tra (over- inclusion)	<u>Wrong F</u> orm		<u>Wrong</u> <u>C</u> hoice	<u>Wrong</u> <u>P</u> osition	<u>Complement</u> ation ¹⁶
			<u>Morphology</u>		<u>Spelling</u>		
			<u>I</u> nflexion	<u>D</u> erivation			
1. <u>G</u> rammar							
1.1 Speech Parts:							
1.1.1 <u>V</u> erb:	GVMis	GVX		GV(WFMorph)D	GV(WF)Spel	GVWP	GVCompl
1.1.1.1 <u>T</u> ense			GVWVF(MorphI) TPast			GVWCT	
1.1.1.1.2 <u>P</u> erson			GV(WFMorph)I Pers				
1.1.1.1.3 <u>M</u> ood (infinitive/indicative/subjunctive/ imperative/conditional/negative			GV(WFMorph)I			GVWC	

¹⁶

As in Macdonald (2005), except in the case of prepositions (183-184): we do not differentiate here between dependent and non-dependent prepositions.

1.1.3	Pronoun [as in Macdonald's 2005: 174-5 ¹⁷]	GPronMis	GPron X	)ICGenNoNo		GPron(WF)Spe I	GPron WC	GPron WP	
1.1.4	Adjective:	GAdjMis	GAdj X		GAdj(WF Morph)D	GAdj(W F)Spel	GAdjW C	GAdjW P	GAdjCompl
1.1.4.1	Degree (Comparative/Superlative)			GAdj(WFMor ph)ICDeg GAdj(WFMor ph)XINum)					
1.1.4.2	Number								
1.1.5	Adverb,	GAdvMis	Gadv X	GAdv(WFMor ph)XINum	GAdv(WF Morph)D	GAdv(WF)Spe I	GAdvW C	GAdvW P	GAdvCompl
1.1.6	Article:						GAWC	GAWP	
1.1.6.1	Definite	GDefAMis	GDef AX			GDefA(WF)Spel			
1.1.6.2	Indefinite	GIndefAMi	GIndef			GIndef			

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Although this category is called “pronouns”, for Macdonald, it includes errors related to adjectives, and which couldn't be categorized in the Adjective class, (which only contemplates errors of number, order and degree): errors concerning demonstrative, interrogative, personal, possessive and quantifying adjectives and pronouns, as well as reciprocal, reflexive, relative and indefinite pronouns. The proforms (one/ones, so) are also included in this sub-category. Macdonald included reference problems here, too. We include them in the wrong choice of pronoun.

	s	AX			A(WF)S pel		
1.1.7 P <u>reposition</u> ,	GPMis	GPX			GP(WF) Spel	GPWP	GPCompl
1.1.8 C <u>onjunction</u> .	GCMis	GCX			GC(WF))Spel	GCWP	GCCompl
1.2 [C <u>lause</u>]*							
1.3 [S <u>entence</u> ...]*							
1.4 [F <u>unction</u> : S <u>ubject</u> , P <u>redicate</u> , O <u>bject</u> ...]*	[GFunctMis]*						
2. V <u>ocabulary</u> (lexis)							
2.1 [L <u>exical phrase</u> (<i>phrasal/prepositional verbs</i> , <i>idiomatic expressions</i>)]							
2.2 C <u>ognates</u> /False Friends (L1/L3)							
2.3 W <u>ord Class</u> (verb instead of a noun, adjective instead of an adverb...)							
3. M <u>echanics</u>							
3.1 P <u>unctuation</u>	MPunctMis	MPunctX				MPunct WP	
3.2 C <u>apitalization</u>	MCapMis	MCapX				MPunct WC	MPunct WP MCapWP P

3.3 <u>S</u> yllabication							MWFSy 1			
4. <u>[D]</u> iscourse]*										
4.1 <u>V</u> erbosity/Wordiness					DVerb os					
4.2 <u>R</u> egister (Oral, Jargon, Informal) ¹⁸								DRWC		
5. <u>S</u> tyle/Pragmatics										
5.1 Incomplete (<u>F</u> ragment)				SFrag						
5.2 <u>U</u> nclear (incomprehensible/coherence)				SUncl						
5.3 <u>V</u> ague				SVag						
5.4 <u>L1/3-L</u> ike									L1/3L CS	
5.5 <u>C</u> ode- <u>S</u> witching										

Chart 2. Our bidimensional classification system.

¹⁸ Here, again, we follow MacDonald (2005:190): She uses this tag for errors involving the field of discourse (e.g. jargons), the mode of discourse (e.g. speech vs writing) or the tenor of discourse (e.g. levels of formality).

In general, on the one hand, we consider six linguistic categories: Grammar, Vocabulary (Lexis), Mechanics, Rhetoric/Text Structure, Discourse, and Style/Pragmatics. Some of the subclasses in several categories were not considered for our analysis. Syntax errors are subclassified into four types: Speech Parts (single words), Clauses and sentences (groups of words), and Functions. For the current analysis, only single-word speech parts were considered. Vocabulary errors include Cognates, Word Class, and Lexical phrases; the latter was set aside in the current work. Mechanics covers problems with Punctuation, Capitalization, and Syllabication. For the fourth category, Rhetoric/Text Structure, here we only mentioned Connectors (linking Words/Expressions), but they were not included for the analysis, for they are already considered under the speech part “Conjunction”. Discourse errors include Verbosity (redundancy, wordiness) and Register (oral/speech, informal, jargon more than written, formal, and general/standard). The last type of errors is that of Style/Pragmatics flaws; five subtypes are included here: Fragments (incomplete sentences), Unclear (nonsensical, incomprehensible, non coherent sentences), vague (ambiguous), L1/3-Like expressions (Spanish-like –mother tongue- or French-like –L3, for our case), and Code-Switching.

On the other hand, there are six categories of error modes: either something is missing, or it is over included (extra), or it presents problems in its form, or has been erroneously chosen or located, or, it has been erroneously complemented. Form problems cover morphological and spelling troubles. Morphology problems, in turn, include two subtypes: inflectional and derivational errors. In total, for the linguistic classification, we consider 92 types of errors.

Grammar (G) errors involve the violation of the set of rules and norms of English grammar. “Speech parts” is a grammar concept that refers to the types of words based on their definition and use in context (relations with other words in the sentence). In corpus linguistics, this is part of POST (part-of-speech tagging) or category disambiguation. We included all speech parts but interjections and those beyond single words (clauses, phrases, sentences and those studied in text linguistics like the paragraph and the whole text type). We do not explain here the concepts of Verb, Tense (present, past, future), Person (singular, plural, first, second, third), Mood (indicative, imperative, subjunctive,

conditional), Voice (passive, active), Auxiliary, Modal, Noun, Number (singular-plural), Countable, Uncountable, Case, Genitive, Apostrophe, Pronoun, Adjective, Degree (comparative-superlative), Adverb, Article, Definite-Indefinite Article, Preposition, Conjunction, Phrase, Clause, Sentence, Subject, Predicate, Object, Vocabulary, Lexis, Cognate, Word Class, Mechanics, Punctuation, Capitalization, Syllabication, Rhetoric, Connector, Discourse, Verbosity-wordiness, Register, Jargon, Pragmatics, Style, Code-switching, L1, and L3, because they are either common place in Linguistics or they have already been clarified here.

The tags referring to lack (missing), overinclusion (extra), wrong choice, erroneous position are self-explanatory as well and do not deserve further elicitation.

WRONG FORM: (WF) refers to errors of formal nature, either morphological (including non-existent forms in English) or orthographic (spelling). **Morphology (Morph)** is a class at the same level of other possible linguistic categories: Phonology, Syntax, Semantics, Pragmatics... It includes inflection and derivation. **Inflectional errors** are errors in the form or in the grammatical morphemes, such as present, past, and past participle verb forms, verb mood and voice, number (plural) of nouns (and adjectives and adverbs), genitive forms, degree (comparative and superlative) of adjectives, etc. Examples of inflectional errors are:

- omission of the simple present third person (–s): “*It’s impossible that school give for free the education*” (2004-00LMET24de6)
- addition of the simple present third person (–s): “*but what does to be a good student means*”.
- Addition of plural morpheme in adjectives: “There are very importants persons in the meeting”.

Derivational errors consist in the addition of erroneous affixes which also result in non-existent words; this is a typical strategy of very beginning learners (e.g. “escuelation*” for “escuela” in many Spanish speakers). **Spelling** errors are orthography flaws that do not involve the morphological structure of the word. Macdonald (2005) includes here the omission of the apostrophe in contracted forms. Our criterion is different: if a student confuses *its* and *it’s* or *it’s* and *is*, that is well beyond simple

spelling (surface problem), it involves morphology, Word Class confusion, omission of pronoun, i.e., a more serious problem.

Following those definitions, our tags are the following:

For verbs:

1. GVMis: Missing verb; it must be added.
2. GVX: Extra, overincluded verb; it must be omitted.
3. GV(WFMorph)D: Wrong derived verb form (non existing form, incorrect affix); it must be changed for the right English verb form.
4. GV(WF)Spel: Incorrect spelling of the verb; the orthography of the verb must be checked.
5. GVWC: Wrong choice of verb, erroneous verb; another verb should be used. (No problem in the form of this verb)
6. GVWP: Incorrect position, misplacement of the verb; word order/sentence structure to be revised.
7. GVCompI: The complement of the verb has an inappropriate form.
8. GVWF(MorphI)TPast: Erroneous past tense form of the verb; It is usual with the regular verbs simple past morpheme (–ed), but it can be the use of the past perfect form instead of the simple past one, in the case of irregular verbs.
9. GVWCT: The verb is in the wrong tense. This is common in narrations that require a temporal sequence, in which the learners erroneously mix present and past, for instance.
10. GV(WFMorph)IPers: The verb number of person is wrong, This is an erroneous present tense form of the verb; usually, the third person morpheme (-s/-es) is missing. It is frequently called a problem of subject-verb agreement/concordance.
11. GV(WFMorph)IM: Problems with the mood inflection form of conditionals, imperative, subjunctive, and infinitive. Problems with negative and interrogative forms can be included here, but some doubts remain: if it is “I no like”, for instance, that could be also classified as lack of auxiliary verb. Should double negation be included here? The lack of auxiliary verb in interrogative sentences can be considered both as a problem of mood inflection and lack of auxiliary. The lack of

interrogative mark is also both part of the interrogative mood, but we classify it as missing punctuation.

12. GVWCM: The verb is being used in an erroneous mood (indicative instead of subjunctive, imperative instead of indicative, imperative in the reported speech form). Conditionals also go here.
13. GV(WFMorph)IAsp: Verb aspect (continuous, perfect form) errors.
14. GV(WFMorph)IV: The passive (or active) voice is incorrectly formed.
15. GVWCV: Voice error. Active voice is being used when active should be used or vice versa. The passive form of the verb is confused with another form (active or reflexive, for instance). Problems with reflexive forms could be included here.
16. GVAuxMis: The auxiliary or modal verb is missing.
17. GVAuxX: Extra auxiliary or modal verb(s) included.
18. GV(WFMorph)IAux: The auxiliary or modal verb is ill formed [it is a morphology problem, *not* a spelling one].
19. GV(WF)SpelAux: The auxiliary or modal verb has orthography flaws.
20. GVWCAux: The auxiliary or modal verb is inappropriate, another one should be used.
21. GVWPAux: The auxiliary or modal verb is inappropriately located, word order must be checked.

For nouns:

22. GNMis: A noun is missing.
23. GNX: There is an overincluded, extra noun.
24. GN(WFMorph)D: The noun has been incorrectly derived (e.g. by means of a wrong affix) that makes it a word non existing in English.
25. GN(WF)Spel: The noun is not well written (no morphological problem, just orthography).
26. GNWC: The noun is inappropriately used; it should be changed for another noun.
27. GNWP: The noun is in the wrong position within the sentence structure.
28. GNCompl: The complement of the noun is faulty.

29. GN(WFMorph)INum: The noun presents morphological problems regarding its number (plural instead of singular or vice versa).
30. GNWCUC: A countable noun is being used instead of an uncountable one or vice versa.
31. GN(WFMorphI)NumUC: An uncountable noun is being used in plural form as if it were countable e.g. sheeps, fishes instead of fish, knowledges, informations,
32. GN(WFMorph)ICGen's : There is a wrong apostrophe form ('s genitive form).
33. GN(WFMorph)ICGenNoNo: The noun genitive (possessive) forms *noun + noun* and *noun of noun* are being used one instead of the other.

For Pronouns:

34. GPronMis: A pronoun is missing. This is common for Spanish speakers in the case of impersonal subjects like it and they, because in Spanish that subject is omitted.
35. GPronX: There is an extra, overincluded pronoun.
36. GPron(WF)Spel: The pronoun is not well spelt.
37. GPronWC: The pronoun being used is wrong; it must be changed for another one. This is rather frequent in the case of *he* instead of *she* or vice versa.
38. GPronWP: The pronoun is misplaced.

For Adjectives:

39. GAdjMis: A necessary adjective is absent.
40. GAdjX: There is a supernumerary adjective.
41. GAdj(WFMorph)D: The adjective is ill formed in such a way that it is a word non existing in English.
42. GAdjWFSpel: The adjective is not well written (no morphology flaws implied).
43. GAdjWC: The adjective is not the appropriate in the context.
44. GAdjWP: The adjective is misplaced in the sentence. This is common for beginner Spanish speakers because the order of adjectives is "opposite" to that in Spanish.
45. GAdjCompl: The complement of the adjective presents problems.
46. GAdj(WFMorphI)Deg: There is a problem with the comparative/superlative form of the adjective.

47. GAdj(WFMorph)XINum: The adjective presents a plural morpheme. This is common for Spanish speakers, for adjectives have gender (masculine/feminine) and number (plural) inflection.

For Adverbs:

48. GAdvMis: A necessary adverb has been omitted.
49. GAdvX: There is an unnecessary adverb.
50. GAdv(WFMorph)XINum: The adverb presents a plural morpheme.
51. GAdv(WFMorph)D: The adverb form is derived in in such a way that it corresponds to a wrong morphology, which makes it a word inexistent in English.
52. GAdv(WF)Spel: The adverb is not well written (morphology not implicated).
53. GAdvWC: The adverb is not the right one in the particular context where it appears.
54. GAdvWP: The adverb is misplaced.
55. GAdvCompl: Faulty adverb complements

For Articles:

56. GAWC: Definite vs. Indefinite article confusion.
57. GAWP: The article is misplaced.
58. GDefAMis: A definite article is missing.
59. GDefAX: An extra, unnecessary definite article is present.
60. GDefA(WF)Spel: The definite article is misspelt (morphology not involved).
61. GIndefAMis: An indefinite article is missing.
62. GIndefAX: An extra, unnecessary indefinite article is present.
63. GIndefA(WF)Spel: The indefinite article is misspelt (morphology not involved).

For Prepositions:

64. GPMis: A preposition is missing.
65. GPX: There is an overincluded preposition. (e.g. *for to do it*).
66. GP(WF)Spel: The preposition is misspelt. (e.g., *betwen*)
67. GPWC: The preposition is not appropriate (e.g. *for* instead of *to*)

68. GPWP: The preposition is in the wrong position. This can occur when they put it at the end or in prepositional verbs. However, in this latter case it can be classified as a verb (prepositional verb) morphology problem.
69. GPCmpl: There is a problem with the complement of the preposition.

For Conjunctions:

70. GCMis: A conjunction is missing.
71. GCX: There is an overincluded conjunction.
72. GC(WF)Spel: The conjunction is misspelt.
73. GCWC: The conjunction is not appropriate.
74. GCWP: The conjunction is in the wrong position.
75. GCCmpl: There is a problem with the complement of the conjunction.

For Vocabulary/Lexis:

76. VCogn: This is a Vocabulary (lexis) error in which a false friend (cognate) is used instead of an English word.
77. VWordClass: This Vocabulary problem consists in the confusion of different speech parts (e.g. adjective instead of an adverb: “*He did it very good*”).

For Mechanics:

78. MPunctMis: Punctuation is missing (mechanics).
79. MPunctX: There is an overincluded punctuation mark.
80. MPunctWC: The punctuation mark used is erroneous, (e.g. comma instead of period).
81. MPunctWP: The punctuation mark is in the wrong place.
82. MCapMis: Capitalization is missing (mechanics).
83. MCapX: There is an overincluded capital letter.
84. MCapWP: A capital letter is inappropriately used in the middle of a word. In this mechanics problem we also include the case of texts that are completely written in capital letters.

85. MWFSyl: In this mechanics flaw, a word at the end of the line is incorrectly divided into syllables. (There is a connection with morphology, in the case of affixes.)

For Discourse:

86. DVerbo: In this Discourse problem there is presence of unnecessary words, expressions that do not add to the content despite being grammatically correct. Circularity is included here.

87. DRWC: This discourse flaw there is the presence of an inappropriate register (speech/oral instead of written form, informal when it should be formal; jargon that is restricted in the context being used).

For Style/Pragmatics:

88. SFrag: This is an error regarding Style/Pragmatics: a sentence/idea is not complete (Fragment).

89. SUncl: Lack of clarity, (incomprehensible/incoherent expression of ideas), is a Style/Pragmatics problem.

90. SVag: Lack of precision (ambiguity or vagueness) is a Style/Pragmatics flaw.

91. L1/3L: This Style/Pragmatics error consists in writing following the structure of the mother tongue (L1) or another second language (L3), with English words. How to tell this apart from cognates and word order? In the case of cognates, it is not Style but Vocabulary/Lexis what is involved. In the case of word order, it is not a matter of style, but a matter of grammatical structure (supra-sentential speech parts).

92. CS: This Style/Pragmatics flaw consists in using L1/L3 words/expressions in the flow of the discourse.

There are 92 tags in total. Tags are usually inserted after the error. In case of simultaneous errors e.g., spelling + morphology or capitalization in the same word), or in case of doubt in the classification, several tags are used simultaneously and underlined so as to identify them. If an error tag refers to a unit beyond the word level the words involved are underlined so as to identify the whole expression.

The tagging and counting is done with the help of a teaching software in order to establish the most frequent or systematic ones. Basic descriptive statistical treatment (total amount of errors, types of errors, totals per each type of error, comparative graphics and tables) is applied to each essay individually, to each of the three achievement levels (5 lowest, 5 medium, and 5 top texts), and to the total amount of essays per year.

6.5 Instruments for data processing

The software used for error tagging and counting was MARKIN, and EXCELL was used for further basic statistical processing of the data given by MARKIN.

MARKIN is a shareware by Martin Homes and published by Creative Technologies. Its main features (adapted from the web page characterizing it¹⁹) are:

Markin is a Windows program which runs on the teacher's computer. It can import a student's text for marking by pasting from the clipboard, or directly from an RTF or text file. Once the text has been imported, Markin provides all the tools a teacher needs to mark and annotate the text. When marking is complete, the teacher can export the marked text as an RTF file for loading into a word-processor, or as a web page so that students can view the marked text in a web browser. Marked work can even be emailed directly back to the student, all from within the Markin program.

The process of marking a single piece of work using Markin has three stages:

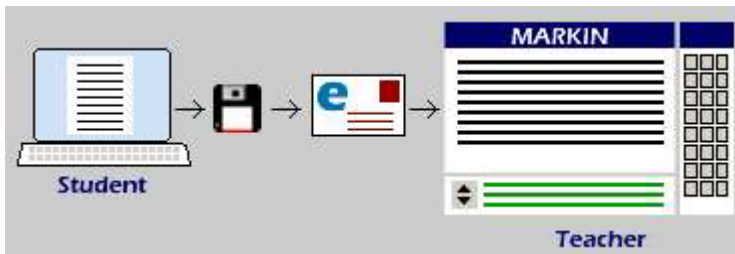
- Importing the student's text
- Marking the text using annotations, comments, and grades;
- Exporting the marked work in a format suitable for the student.

¹⁹ http://www.cict.co.uk/software/markin/what's_new.htm We used Markin 3.1, though there is a more current version.

When you have marked several pieces of work, you can use the program's comprehensive Statistics analyser to collate and compare marks from different students, or from different pieces of work by the same student.

Importing Student Text

The simplest way to import text is by cutting and pasting using the clipboard. As long as you can view the student text in a word-processor or email program, you should be able to cut and paste it into Markin.



Adding Marks and Comments

Markin provides four different ways of adding marks to an essay text -

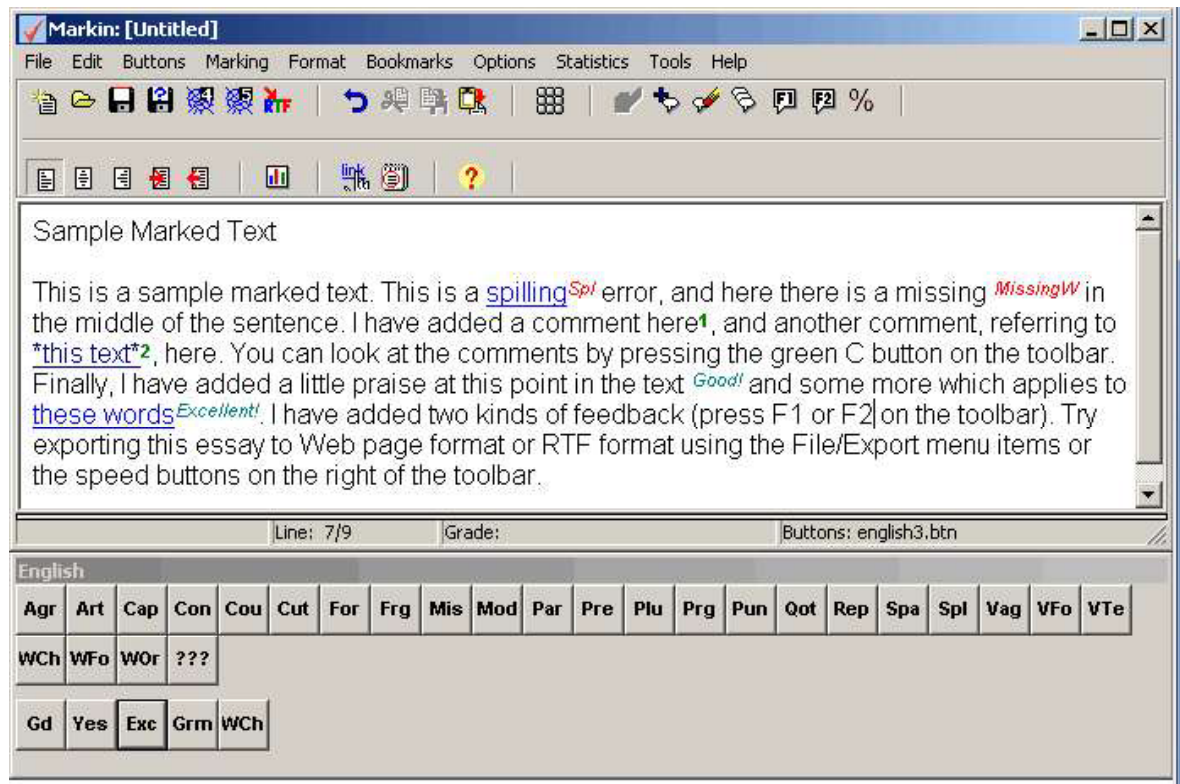
Annotations are pre-defined ways of marking specific errors, or giving specific kinds of praise. Annotations are inserted using a set of buttons on a movable button bar, which is displayed next to the main marking screen. For example, if you see a spelling mistake in the text, you could mark it by clicking a pre-defined "Spelling Error" annotation button, rather than having to type "This is a spelling error". Annotations can be positive as well as negative, and they can be divided into categories, and given "values" to indicate their relative importance.

Comments are used when you have something more specific or detailed to say. They are used when no pre-defined annotation can explain a problem in enough detail to be helpful. Comments are like footnotes; you insert a comment (which appears as a number in the text), and then type the message to the student.

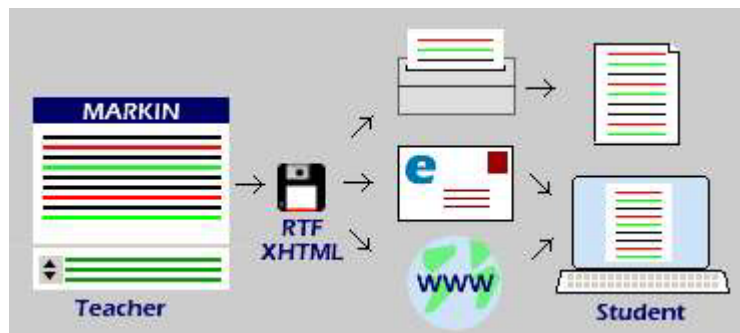
Feedback is what comes at the end of the marked essay; this is where you express your general responses to the whole text.

The **Grade** can be anything you like -- a letter grade, a percentage, a mark out of ten, or any other form of assessment.

This is **a showing how** the different kinds of marks appear to the teacher.



Exporting Marked Work



Marked work can be returned to the student in different ways, as a Word-Processor File or ...as a Web Page. Any of these exported web pages can be sent to the student as an email attachment using your usual email program, or from within Markin using the program's email feature. The Web Page exports can also be posted on a web server and accessed by the student via a network, or via the internet.

This is a sample of a marked text in v3 format:

Sample Marked Text

This is a sample marked text. This is a **spilling** error, and here there is a missing **{***}** in the middle of the sentence. I **have** added a comment here^{1}, and another comment, referring to **this text**^{2}, here. You can look at the comments by pressing the green **C** button on the toolbar. Finally, I have added a little praise here^{***}, and some more here^{***}. I have added two kinds of feedback (press **F1** or **F2** on the toolbar). Try exporting this essay to Web page format or RTF format using the **File/Export** menu items or the speed buttons on the right of the toolbar.

Grade 75%

Statistics

Instances	Description
1	Formatting problem
1	Missing word or words
1	Spelling
1	Good!
1	Excellent! Well done.

Negative total: 3

Positive total: 2

Feedback (1)

This is feedback on content. I have chosen to make it blue.

Feedback (2)

This is feedback on language. This is red, to distinguish it from the other feedback. All the colours are configurable.

As MARKIN was used only for the research purposes and not within the context of class, the features regarding scoring and feedback to the students were not taken into account for the analysis of the texts.

We also used WORDLE, an online tool used for creating word clouds.

“The clouds give greater prominence to words that appear more frequently in the source text. You can tweak your clouds with different fonts, layouts, and color schemes. The images you create with Wordle are yours to use however you like. You can print them out, or save them to the Wordle gallery.”

(<http://www.wordle.net>)

CHAPTER IV

7. RESULTS ANALYSIS

Following are the results and the analysis of errors in the argumentative essays written by VII semester EFL B.A. students at the ECLUV, taken as partial fulfillment of the degree requirement. First, the annotation key or list of error tags is presented. Then, the typed version of the original text is shown, followed by the annotated or tagged version and the error counts by using MARKIN follow. Then, WORDLE word clouds corresponding to the two versions (original and tagged) of the text are shown with the purpose of illustrating, first, a possible reader's perception of the essays without the errors in them (content) and, second, a possible rater's view that takes into account the errors in the text. The statistical description closes the presentation of results. The texts are offered in a sequence from low to medium to high level, according to the score or grade given by the original raters to each essay, which was the criterion used for the selection of the essays.

After having established our bidimensional error typology, we created a button list in MARKIN, which was applied to the essays. The following is the button chart:

CodeSwitch	RegWCD	Verbos	AdjWDer	AdjXNun	AdjDeg	AdjComp	AdjMis	AdjWC	AdjSpel	AdjWP	AdjX	dvWDer
AdvXNun	AdvCom	AdvMis	AdvWC	AdvSpe	AdvWP	AdvX	AWC	AWP	CComp	CMis	CWC	CSpel
CWP	CX	DefAMis	DefASpe	DefAX	ndefAMis	ndefASpe	IndefAX	NSpel	NWDer	NWNoN	NW's	NWNum
VNumUN	UNComp	NMis	NWC	NWCUC	NWP	NX	PMis	PWC	PSpel	PronMis	PronWC	PronWF
PronX	PronSpe	PWP	PX	VSpel	AuxSpe	VDeriv	WFAux	VFMode	VPerson	VFVoice	GVAsp	AuxMis
AuxX	VMis	WAux	WMod	VTense	WVoice	WPAux	L1/3L	CapMis	CapWP	CapX	PunctMP	PunctWC
PunctW	Syl	PunctX	Frag	Uncl	Vag	VCogn	VPosit	WordCla	PastFor	VComp	VWCh	PComp
GVX												

Graph 2. MARKIN 92 button chart.

Based upon the established buttons, MARKIN generates an annotation chart:

Annotation Key (Error tags)			
	Short Annotation	Long Annotation	Category
1	CodeS	Style/Pragmatics error, Code Switching	Choice
2	DRWC	Discourse error, Wrong Register	Choice
3	GAdjWC	Grammar error, Speech part, Wrong Adjective	Choice
4	GAdvWC	Grammar error, Speech part, Wrong Adverb	Choice
5	GAWC	Grammar error, Speech part, Wrong Article	Choice
6	GCWC	Grammar error, Speech part, Wrong Conjunction	Choice
7	GNWC	Grammar error, Speech part, Wrong Noun	Choice
8	GNWCUC	Grammar error, Speech part, Noun, Wrong Countable/Uncountable	Choice
9	GPrepWC	Grammar error, Speech part, wrong Preposition	Choice
10	GPronWC	Grammar error, Speech part, Wrong Pronoun	Choice
11	GVWCAux	Grammar error, Speech part, WrongAuxiliary/Modal	Choice
12	GVWCM	Grammar error, Speech part, Verb, Wrong mood	Choice
13	GVWCT	Grammar error, SpeechPart, Verb, WrongTense	Choice
14	GVWCV	Grammar error, Speech part, Verb, wrong voice	Choice
15	L1/3L	Style/Pragmatics error, Spanish (L1)/French(L3)-like	Choice
16	MPunctWC	Mechanics error, Wrong Punctuation	Choice
17	VCogn	Vocabulary error, Cognate	Choice
18	VWordClass	Vocabulary error, Wrong Word Class	Choice
19	WrongVerb	Grammar error, SpeechPart, Verb, Wrong Choice	Choice
20	GAdjCompl	Grammar error, Speech part, Wrong Complement of Adjective	Complementation
21	GAdvCompl	Grammar error, Speech part, Adverb, Wrong Complement	Complementation
22	GNCompl	Grammar error, Speech part, Wrong complement of Noun	Complementation
23	PrepCompl	Grammar error, Speech part, Preposition, Complementation	Complementation
24	Wrong VerbComplement	Grammar error, SpeechPart, Verb, Wrong Complement	Complementation
25	GCCompl	Grammar error, Speech part, Conjunction, Wrong complement	Complementation
26	GAdj(WFMorph)D	Grammar error, Speech part, Adjective, Wrong Form, Morphology, Derivation	Derivation
27	GAdv(WFMorph)D	Grammar error, Speech part, Adverb, Wrong Form, Morphology, Wrong Derivation	Derivation
28	GN(WFMorph)D	Grammar error, Speech part, Noun, WrongForm, Morphology, Derivation	Derivation

29	GV(WFMorph)D	Grammar error, SpeechPart, Verb Form, wrong derivation	Derivation
30	(MWFSyl)	Mechanics error, Wrong Form, Syllabication	Form
31	GAdj(WFMorph)XINum	Grammar error, Speech part, Adjective, Wrong Form, Morphology, Inflection, Extra morpheme of Number	Inflection
32	GAdj(WFMorph)Deg	Grammar error, Speech part, Adjective, Wrong Form, Morphology, Comparative/Superlative	Inflection
33	GN(WFMorph)ICGenNoNo	Grammar error, Speech part, Noun, Wrong Form, Morphology, Inflection of Case, Genitive, Noun+Noun/NounOfNoun	Inflection
34	GN(WFMorph)ICGen's	Grammar error, Speech part, Noun, Wrong Form, Morphology, Inflection of Case, Genitive, Apostrophe	Inflection
35	GN(WFMorph)INum	Grammar error, Speech part, Noun, Wrong Form, Morphology, Inflection of Number	Inflection
36	GN(WFMorph)INumUC	Grammar error, Speech part, Noun, Wrong form, Morphology, Wrong Inflection of Number of Countable/Uncountable	Inflection
37	GV(WFMorph)IAUX	Grammar error, Speech part, Verb, WrongForm, Morphology, Auxiliary/Modal	Inflection
38	GV(WFMorph)IM	Grammar error, Speech part, Verb, WrongForm, Morphology, Inflection of Mood (indicative, imperative, subjunctive, conditional)	Inflection
39	GV(WFMorph)IPers	Grammar error, Speech part, Verb, WrongForm, Morphology, Inflection of Person. Problem of Subject-Verb concordance	Inflection
40	GV(WFMorph)IV	Grammar error, Speech part, Verb, Wrong Form, Morphology, Inflection of Voice	Inflection
41	GVAsp	Grammar error, Speech part, Verb, Wrong Form, Morphology, Inflection of Aspect, -ing or PastParticiple form	Inflection
42	W PastForm	Grammar error, SpeechPart, Verb, WrongForm, Morphology, PastTense	Inflection
43	GAdjMis	Grammar error, Speech part, Adjective, Missing	Lack
44	GAdvMis	Grammar error, Speech part, Adverb, Missing	Lack
45	GCMis	Grammar error, Speech part, Conjunction, Missing	Lack
46	GDefAMis	Grammar error, Speech part, Definite Article, Missing	Lack
47	GIndefAMis	Grammar error, Speech part, Indefinite Article, Missing	Lack
48	GNMis	Grammar error, Speech part, Noun, Missing	Lack
49	GPMis	Grammar error, Speech part, Preposition, Missing	Lack
50	GPronMis	Grammar error, Speech part, Pronoun, Missing	Lack
51	GVAuxMis	Grammar error, Speech part, Auxiliary Verb, Missing	Lack
52	GVMis	Grammar error: Speech part, Verb, Missing	Lack
53	MCapMis	Mechanics error, Capitalization, Missing	Lack
54	MPunctMis	Mechanics error, Punctuation, Missing	Lack
55	SFrag	Style/Pragmatics error, Fragment (incomplete sentence/idea)	Lack

56	SUncl	Style/Pragmatics error, Unclear/incoherent/incomprehensible	Lack
57	SVag	Style/Pragmatics error, Vagueness/ambiguity/lack of precision	Lack
58	DVerbos	Discourse error, Verbosity/Wordiness	Overinclusion
59	ExtraVerb	Grammar error, SpeechPart, Verb overincluded	Overinclusion
60	GAdjX	Grammar error, Speech part, Adjective, overincluded	Overinclusion
61	GAdv(WF Morph)XINum	Grammar error, Speech part, Adverb, Wrong Form, Morphology, Inflection of number overincluded	Overinclusion
62	GAdvX	Grammar error, Speech part, Adverb, Overincluded	Overinclusion
63	GCX	Grammar error, Speech part, Conjunction, overincluded	Overinclusion
64	GDefAX	Grammar error, Speech part, Definite Article, overincluded	Overinclusion
65	GIndefAX	Grammar error, Speech part, Indefinite Article, overincluded	Overinclusion
66	GNX	Grammar error, Speech part, Extra Noun	Overinclusion
67	GPronX	Grammar error, Speech part, Pronoun, Overincluded	Overinclusion
68	GPX	Grammar error, Speech part, Preposition, overincluded	Overinclusion
69	GVAuxX	Grammar error, Speech part, Verb, Extra Auxiliary/Modal	Overinclusion
70	MCapX	Mechanics error, Capitalization, Overincluded	Overinclusion
71	PunctX	Mechanics error, Punctuation, overincluded	Overinclusion
72	GAdjWP	Grammar error, Speech part, Misplaced Adjective	Position
73	GAdvWP	Grammar error, Speech part, Adverb, misplaced	Position
74	GAWP	Grammar error, Speech part, Article, misplaced	Position
75	GCWP	Grammar error, Speech part, Conjunction, misplaced	Position
76	GNWP	Grammar error, Speech part, Misplaced Noun	Position
77	GPronWP	Grammar error, Speech part, Pronoun, Misplaced	Position
78	GPWP	Grammar error, Speech part, Preposition, misplaced	Position
79	GVWPAux	Grammar error, Speech part, Verb, Misplaced Auxiliary/Modal	Position
80	MCapWP	Mechanics error, Capitalization, misplaced	Position
81	MPunctWP	Mechanics error, Punctuation, Misplaced	Position
82	Verb Misplaced	Grammar error, SpeechPart, Verb, Wrong Position	Position
83	GAdjWFSpel	Grammar error, Speech part, Adjective, Wrong Form, Spelling	Spelling
84	GAdvWFSpel	Grammar error, Speech part, Adverb, Wrong Form, Spelling	Spelling
85	GCWFSpel	Grammar error, Speech part, Conjunction, Wrong Form, Spelling	Spelling
86	GDefAWFSpel	Grammar error, Speech part, Definite Article, Wrong Form, Spelling	Spelling
87	GIndefAWFSpel	Grammar error, Speech part, Indefinite Article, Wrong form, Spelling	Spelling
88	GN(WF)Spel	Grammar error, Speech part, Noun, Wrong form, Spelling	Spelling

89	GP(WF)Spel	Grammar error, Speech part, Preposition, Wrong Form, Spelling	Spelling
90	GPron(WF)Spel	Grammar error, Speech part, Pronoun, Wrong Form, Spelling	Spelling
91	GV(WF)Spel	Grammar error, SpeechPart, Verb, Spelling/Orthography	Spelling
92	GV(WF)Spel Aux	Grammar error, Speech part, Aux Verb, Wrong Form, Spelling	Spelling

Chart 3. Our annotation chart (Error tags list).

The short annotations in this key are the tags that are inserted in the text when marking it; they are abbreviations of the linguistic categories of errors. The tags are usually inserted after the word or group of words where the error is present. Long annotations are longer descriptions for each tag. Category in the chart refers to our descriptive categories of error. MARKIN offers two more columns, one for the value (the score given by the teacher to each error) and the other for the total. These latter two were not included in our analysis, as they are intended for feedback to the students.

For the proficiency exam in February 2008, the 7BAFLUV students were required to write an argumentative essay. The instructions given were the following:

Proficiency examination Written section (Time: 30')

Choose one of the topics below and write an essay (argumentative text) of about 350 words. Your essay should consist of

- **An introductory paragraph, in which you clearly state the issue which is going to be discussed,**
- **A main body, in which points are clearly stated and justified in separate paragraphs, and**
- **A closing paragraph, which summarizes the main points of the essay and states or re-states your opinion.**

Your stand point and conclusions should be clearly stated and supported; use specific reasons and examples. The mark scheme for the assessment will take into account Language Accuracy and Language Awareness, Range and Flexibility, Organization and Content, and Audience Awareness.

TOPIC 1: Grades should not be given for university classes.

TOPIC 2: The penalty for a conviction of rape should be castration.

The essays selected for 2008 were:

Low score:

1. 2008-00mAR14
2. 2008-04fJLC23
3. 2008-00fMDC25
4. 2008-03fYD24
5. 2008-00fMM25

Médium score:

6. 2008-04mCDM37
7. 2008-02fSL37
8. 2008-03fMTC36
9. 2008-04mCAT36
10. 2008-04fVO34

High score:

11. 2008-06fAMS48
12. 2008-04mOEH47
13. 2008-03fNGC45
14. 2008-03fRMT44
15. 2008-01mFH44

The code name starts with the year the exam was presented, then two numbers indicate the year the student was admitted in the college (cohorts: 00-06); the small case letter is for the student's gender (f:Female, m:Male). The uppercase letters are the initial letters of the learner's name. The code name ends with the numbers that indicate the score (out of 5 unless indicated /6).

7.1 2008 Low-scored essays

7.1.1. 2008-00mAR14

Nowadays, rapes have become usual activities around the world. specially in these environments where family member are near and stablsh for long time on the same way, when people don't take too much care about Its family For instance cause globalization involves their lifes enough it won't be nothing to do In addittion, when an unresponsible father left his children to others care he can receive an unexpected new even iF the person in charge is a close relative

This essay appears to contain just one paragraph; punctuation and capitalization problems make the number of paragraphs and sentences confusing. The two original evaluators of the text considered that there was only one paragraph; for one of them it was just the introductory paragraph. The lack of passive voice and other complex grammar structures evidences a basic grammar level in the text. There are only 79 words (the requested number was 350).

Regarding errors, the tagged version of 2008-00mAR14 is the following:

Nowadays, rapes have become^{GVAsp} usual activities around the world.^{MPunctWC}
specially^{MCapMis} in these^{GPronX} environments where family member^{GN(WFMorph)INum} are
near and stablsh^{GV(WF)Spel VWordClass} for long time^{MPunctMis SUncl MCapMis} on^{GPrepWC} the same
way, when^{GPronWC} people don't^{DRWC} take too^{GAdvX} much care about Its^{GPronWC MCapX}
family^{MPunctMis} For instance^{MPunctMis} cause^{DRWC} globalization involves their
lifes^{GN(WFMorph)INum SUncl} enough it won't^{DRWC} be nothing to do^{SUncl MPunctMis} In
addittion^{GN(WF)Spel GCWC}, when an unresponsible^{GAdj(WFMorph)D} father left^{GVWCT}
GV(WFMorph)IPers his children to others^{GN(WFMorph)ICGen's} care he can receive an unexpected
new^{VWordClass MPunctMis} even iF^{MCapX} the person in charge is a close relative^{MPunctMis}

The error tagging reveals a grim panorama in this passage: in addition to being so short, it is full of problems of various kinds.

Chart 4 lists the errors tagged in 2008-00mAR14 using MARKIN, according to their frequency²⁰:

2008-00mAR14		
Instances	Long Annotation	Category
6	Mechanics error, Punctuation, Missing	Lack
3	Style/Pragmatics error, Unclear/incoherent/incomprehensible	Lack
3	Discourse error, Wrong Register	Choice
2	Grammar error, Speech part, Wrong Pronoun	Choice
2	Vocabulary error, Wrong Word Class	Choice
2	Grammar error, Speech part, Noun, Wrong Form, Morphology, Inflection of Number	Inflection
2	Mechanics error, Capitalization, Missing	Lack
2	Mechanics error, Capitalization, Overincluded	Overinclusion
1	Grammar error, Speech part, Adjective, Wrong Form, Morphology, Derivation	Derivation
1	Grammar error, Speech part, Adverb, Overincluded	Overinclusion
1	Grammar error, Speech part, Wrong Conjunction	Choice
1	Grammar error, Speech part, Noun, Wrong form, Spelling	Spelling
1	Grammar error, Speech part, Noun, Wrong Form, Morphology, Inflection of Case, Genitive, Apostrophe	Inflection
1	Grammar error, Speech part, wrong Preposition	Choice
1	Grammar error, Speech part, Pronoun, Overincluded	Overinclusion
1	Grammar error, SpeechPart, Verb, Spelling/Orthography	Spelling
1	Grammar error, Speech part, Verb, WrongForm, Morphology, Inflection of Person. Problem of Subject-Verb concordance	Inflection
1	Grammar error, Speech part, Verb, Wrong Form, Morphology, Inflection of Aspect, -ing or PastParticiple form	Inflection
1	Grammar error, SpeechPart, Verb, WrongTense	Choice
1	Mechanics error, Wrong Punctuation	Choice
34		

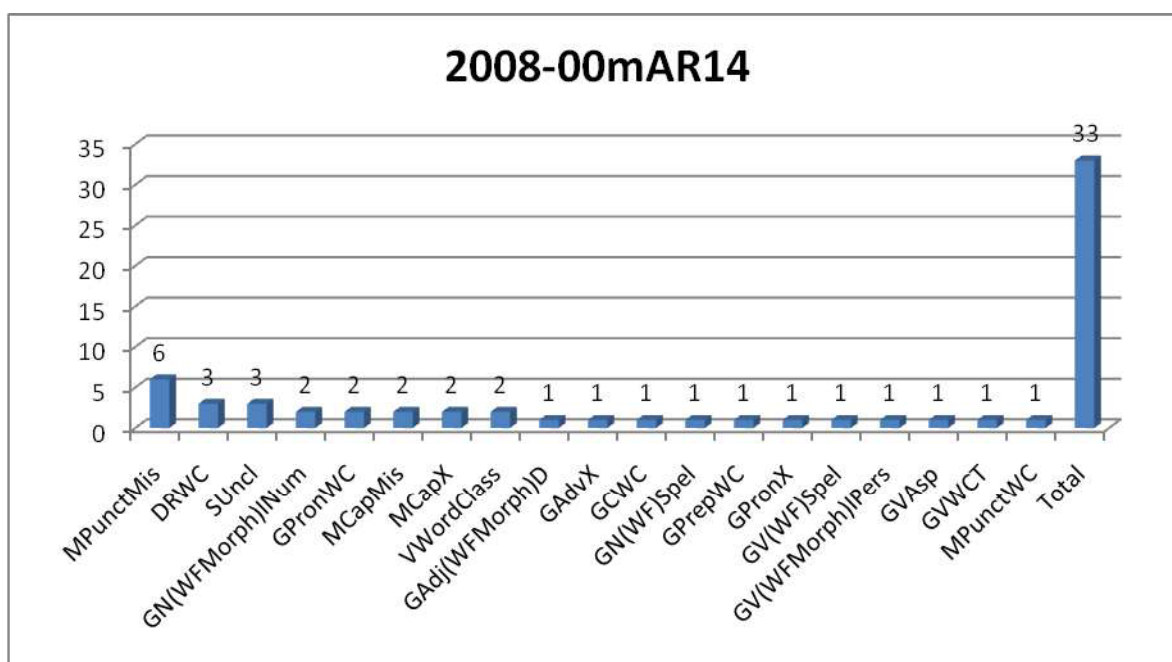
Chart 4. Errors tagged in 2008-00mAR14.

According to these figures, the main problem in this essay is clearly lack of Punctuation (Mechanics): 6/34 17.6%). This affects clarity of ideas, for thought groups are not clear.

²⁰ The error count is influenced by the fact that some corrections are “double”, “simultaneous”, or imply a choice between several possibilities. They are underlined in the tagged text.

That is the second problem, incoherence, lack of clarity (Style/Pragmatics) (3/34, 8.8%): some parts of the text are nonsensical. That is exacerbated by problems of reference (Wrong Choice of Pronouns), wrong word choice (Word Class), and Capitalization present in a 2/34, 5.9% proportion each. Almost all linguistic error categories (Mechanics, Style/Pragmatics, Discourse, Vocabulary, Grammar) and error types (Lack, Choice, Over inclusion, Morphology -Inflection and Derivation-, Spelling) are represented in this brief text. Frequent major and minor flaws continuously obstruct the reading of the text, finally creating a negative global perceptual effect. Thirty-four errors in 79 words make one error every 2.3 words; that could imply that 43% of the words in the essay (near half of them!) contain errors. 34 errors in a single paragraph of two or three sentences (not clearly delimited due to problems of punctuation, capitalization and lack of clarity) seem to be a high error rate, with between 11.3 and 17 errors per sentence.

Graph 3 shows the types of errors in 2008-00mAR14:



Graph 3. Errors tagged in 2008-00mAR14.

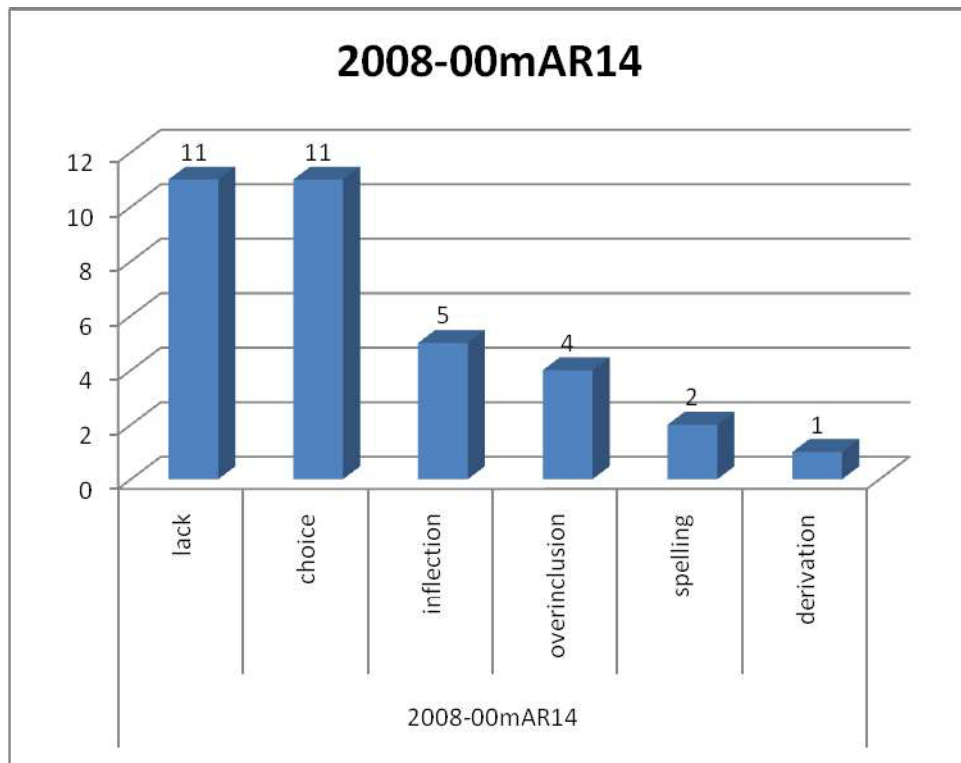
This visualization shows the total amount of errors (33) and the total of each type of error. It is evident that any type of error is too frequent; many frequent different kinds of

flaws contribute to the total result. However, it is clear that one problem alone accounts for between a fifth and sixth of all problems: that of missing punctuation, which has a big impact on the clarity of ideas through lack of clear delimitation among them.

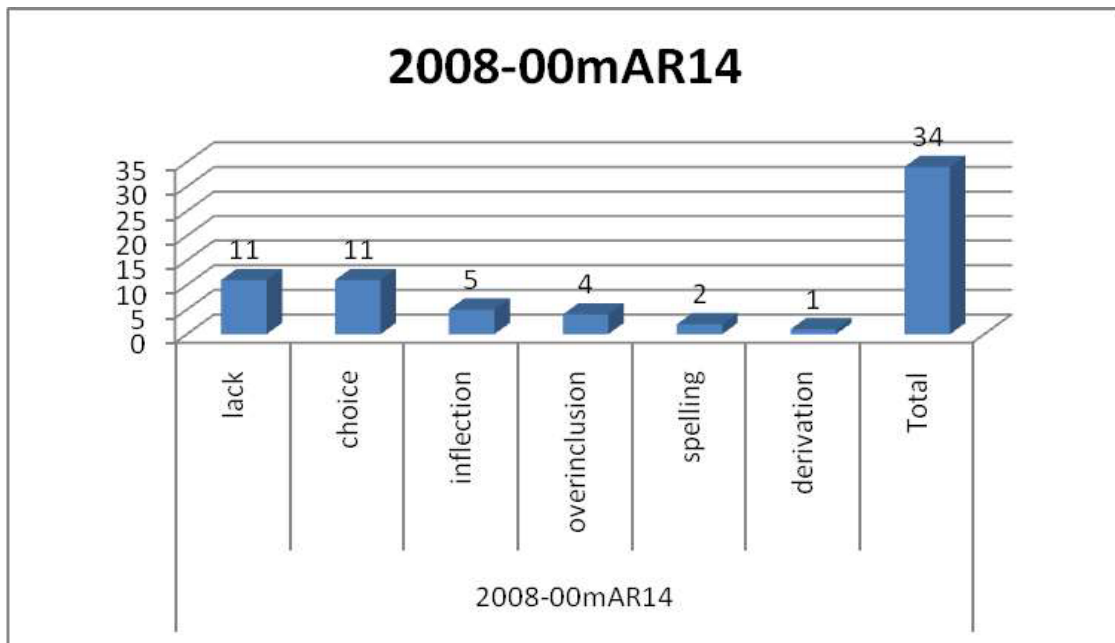
The interpretation of the results can be complemented if they are organized according to descriptive categories (chart 5, graphs 4 and 5).

2008-00mAR14		
Instances	Long Annotation	Category
6	Mechanics error, Punctuation, Missing	Lack
3	Style/Pragmatics error, Unclear/incoherent/incomprehensible	Lack
2	Mechanics error, Capitalization, Missing	Lack
11	<i>Clarity + mechanics</i>	LACK
3	Discourse error, Wrong Register	Choice
2	Grammar error, Speech part, Wrong Pronoun	Choice
2	Vocabulary error, Wrong Word Class	Choice
1	Grammar error, Speech part, Wrong Conjunction	Choice
1	Grammar error, Speech part, wrong Preposition	Choice
1	Grammar error, SpeechPart, Verb, WrongTense	Choice
1	Mechanics error, Wrong Punctuation	Choice
11	<i>Lexical Selection</i>	CHOICE
2	Grammar error, Speech part, Noun, Wrong Form, Morphology, Inflection of Number	Inflection
1	Grammar error, Speech part, Noun, Wrong Form, Morphology, Inflection of Case, Genitive, Apostrophe	Inflection
1	Grammar error, Speech part, Verb, WrongForm, Morphology, Inflection of Person. Problem of Subject-Verb concordance	Inflection
1	Grammar error, Speech part, Verb, Wrong Form, Morphology, Inflection of Aspect, -ing or PastParticiple form	Inflection
5	<i>Nouns and verbs morphology</i>	INFLECTION
2	Mechanics error, Capitalization, Overincluded	Overinclusion
1	Grammar error, Speech part, Adverb, Overincluded	Overinclusion
1	Grammar error, Speech part, Pronoun, Overincluded	Overinclusion
4	<i>Mechanics + Lexical overinclusion</i>	OVERINCLUSION
1	Grammar error, Speech part, Noun, Wrong form, Spelling	Spelling
1	Grammar error, SpeechPart, Verb, Spelling/Orthography	Spelling
2	<i>Form of nouns and verbs</i>	SPELLING
1	Grammar error, Speech part, Adjective, Wrong Form, Morphology, Derivation	Derivation
1	<i>Morphology of adjectives</i>	DERIVATION
34		TOTAL

Chart 5. Error categories in detail 2008-00mAR14.



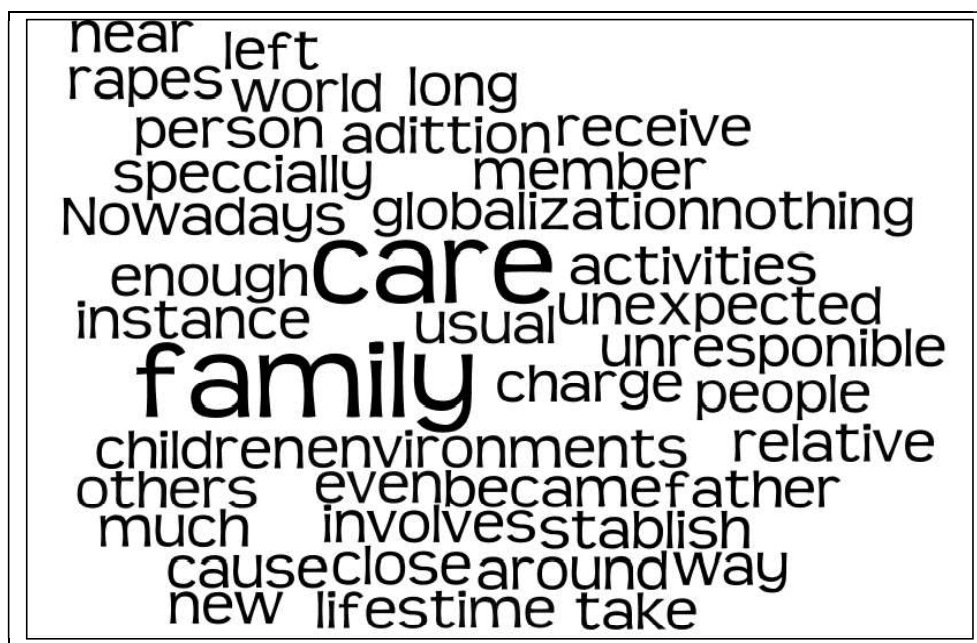
Graph 4. General error categories 2008-00mAR14.



Graph 5. General error categories 2008-00mAR14 in relation to its total number of errors.

The main error categories in this brief composition are Lack and Choice, each with 11 out of 34 error instances in the text, 32.3%), far followed by Inflection (5/34, 14.7%) and Overinclusion (4/34, 11.8%). Spelling and Derivation (Morphology) have a minor occurrence. The problems are not only on the surface of the text, they are also deep, related to content and organization. Those categories can be interpreted as lack of clarity and punctuation (11/34, almost a third), problems with lexical selection (11/34, almost a third again), morphology (inflection) of nouns and verbs (5/34, almost a sixth), Lexical overinclusion (4/34), spelling (form) of nouns and verbs (2/34) and morpholgy (derivation) of adjectives (1/34). They can be summarized in problems of meaning/sense, vocabulary, morphology and mechanics (mostly punctuation).

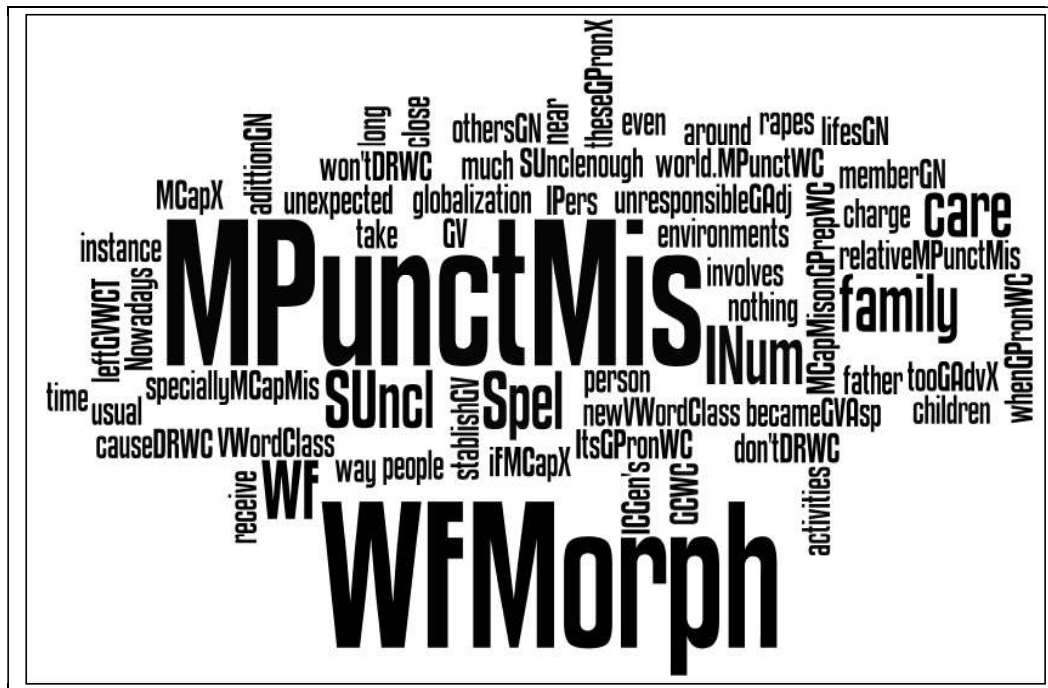
The WORDLE word cloud of 2008-00mAR14 in its original version is the following:



Graph 6. Word cloud of the original text 2008-00mAR14.

This word cloud highlights the most prominent (frequent) content words in the essay. This is, of course, related to concepts and ideas in the essay. Just two words, *Care* and *family*, are highlighted, which evidences lack of content.

The word cloud of the annotated version of 2008-00mAR14 (graph 7) illustrates the way the text might be perceived by a rater from an evaluative view: errors compete for, and win, a good deal of the reader's attention, hindering the comprehension of the content and focusing the attention on them.



Graph 7. Word cloud of the annotated text 2008-00mAR14.

7.1.2. 2008-04fJLC23

The rapier as a victim too

“The penalty for a conviction of rape should be castration”. I am not agree with this statement because more than a human organ, the penes is not the only thing that one person has in an unsain condition. The punishment it will be focuss in the restablish of the mind health and the concienciuss of their psicologys problems.

Communly we watch in televisions news, in news articles and in a friend story about children, woman and why not man who has been sexualy abused by someone else. And when the victim of this crime decide to denounced the rape the criminal is sende a prission and penalised with no more than three or fourth year in a prission while the victim is putting in a social shame and then is forget it by the society.

The comun opinion is “The penalty for a conviction of rape should be a castration” but if this happend the raper in spite of his actual condition he or she follow with his or her illness and their mad performance because the real problem is not in the penes or vagaina is in their head.

Many studies says that the victim of rape is a person who in their childhood has been abused for a parents or a family friend and when they grow up they need to do the same agains other people as a way to punish himself or herself wenever be the case. In this problematic I affirm that the better way to prevent another case of rape is not castration is the help that the raper recive from the state or the church even the society to recovered his mind health and recognize his real necessity that takes him to comit that crime.

But we can forget the victim and the consecuencess for she or he and their family at the same time that the raper has a familiar group, bouth of them are or has been a victims of this horrible and inhuman crime agains others and the only way or the more racionable is to help to overcome people with psicologyst problems in order to finish with this practis.

The text is made up of five paragraphs and 366 words. From a bird's-eye view, there seems to be lack of attention when writing, a good deal of influence or speech over writing (some words are written more or less the way they sound) and there is much influence of L1, which originates frequent syntactical and lexical problems. Errors are frequent. The ideas are unclear at some points. There are paragraphs constituted by a single (too long) sentence; the relation between sentences and paragraphs is nine to six, one or two sentences per paragraph, which points at an inadequate paragraph structure. Forty words per sentence indicate very long sentences.

Now, using the detailed error tagging with MARKIN, the view of specific problems is much clearer.

This is 2008-04fJLC23 tagged using MARKIN:

The raper^{GN(WFMorph)D} as a victim too

"The penalty for a conviction of rape should be castration". I am^{GVWCAux} not agree with this statement because more than a human organ^{GN(WF)Spel}, the penes^{GN(WFMorph)D} is not the only thing that one person has in an unsain^{GAdj(WFMorph)D} condition^{SUncl}. The punishment it^{GPronX} will^{GVWCAux} be focuss^{GV(WFMorph)IV} GV(WF)Spel in the restabish^{GN(WFMorph)D} of the mind^{VWordClass} health and the concienciuss^{GN(WFMorph)D} VWordClass of their psicologys^{VWordClass GN(WFMorph)INum} problems.

Communly^{GAdv(WFMorph)D} we watch in^{GPrepWC} televisions^{GN(WFMorph)ICGen's} GN(WFMorph)ICGenNoNo news, in news articles and in a friend^{GN(WFMorph)ICGen's} story^{GNWCUC} about children, woman^{GN(WFMorph)INum} and^{MPunctMis} why not^{MPunctMis} man^{GN(WFMorph)INum} who has^{GV(WFMorph)IPers} been sexually^{GN(WF)Spel} abused by someone else^{GAdjX}. And when the victim of this crime decide^{GV(WFMorph)IPers} to denounced^{GV(WF)Spel} GV(WFMorph)IM the rape^{MPunctMis} the criminal is sende^{GV(WFMorph)IV} GV(WFMorph)D MPunctMis a prission^{GN(WF)Spel} and penalised^{GN(WF)Spel} with no more than three or fourth^{VWordClass} year^{GN(WFMorph)INum} in a prission^{GN(WF)Spel} while the victim is putting^{GV(WFMorph)IV} in a^{GIndefAX} social shame^{GN(WFMorph)INumUC} and then is forget^{GV(WFMorph)IV} it^{GPronWP} by the society.

The commun^{GN(WF)Spel} opinion is "The^{MCapX} penalty for a conviction of rape should be a^{GIndefAX} castration" but if this^{GVAuxMis} happend^{GV(WFMorph)IM} the raper^{GN(WFMorph)D} MPunctMis in spite of his actual condition^{MPunctMis} he or she^{GPronX} GVAuxMis follow^{WrongVerb} with his or her^{GPronX} illness and their^{GPronWC} mad performance^{MPunctMis} because the real problem is not in the penes^{GN(WFMorph)D} or vagaina^{GN(WFMorph)D} PunctX GPronMis is in their^{GPronWC} head.

Many studies says^{GV(WFMorph)IPers} that the victim of rape is a person who in their^{GPronWC} childhood has been abused for^{GPrepWC} a parents^{GN(WFMorph)INum} or a family friend and when they^{GPronWC} grow up they^{GPronWC} need to do the same agains^{GP(WF)Spel} other people as a way to punish himself or herself wenever^{GCWFSpel} be the case^{SUncl}. In this problematic^{VWordClass MPunctMis} I affirm that the better^{GAdj(WFMorphI)Deg} way to prevent another case of rape is not castration^{MPunctMis GPronMis} is the help that the raper^{GN(WFMorph)D GVAuxMis} recive^{GV(WF)Spel} from the state or the church even^{VWordClass} ^{GAdvX} the society to recovered^{GV(WFMorph)IM} his mind^{VWordClass} health and recognize his real necessity that takes him to comit^{GN(WF)Spel} that crime.

But we can^{GAdvMis} forget the victim and the consecuencess^{GN(WF)Spel} for she^{VWordClass} or he^{VWordClass} and their^{GPronWC} family^{MPunctMis GCMis} at the same time that^{GCWC SUncl} ^{VWordClass} the raper^{GN(WFMorph)D} has a familiar group, bouth^{GCWFSpel} of them are or has^{GV(WFMorph)IPers} been a^{GIndefAX} victims of this horrible and inhuman crime agains^{GP(WF)Spel GPX} others^{SUncl GPronX} and the only way or the more racionable^{GN(WFMorph)D GPronMis} is to help to overcome people^{Wrong VerbComplement Verb Misplaced} with psicologist^{VWordClass GN(WF)Spel GN(WF)Spel} problems in order to finish with this practis^{GN(WF)Spel}.

The initial impression of frequency of errors and influence of L1 and lack of clarity is confirmed, and now the panorama of errors is much clearer regarding the types of errors in the essay. It is remarkable that several errors can be present in a single word, usually verbs and nouns.

The MARKIN statistics for 2008-04fJLC23²¹ (chart 6) allow even bigger detail.

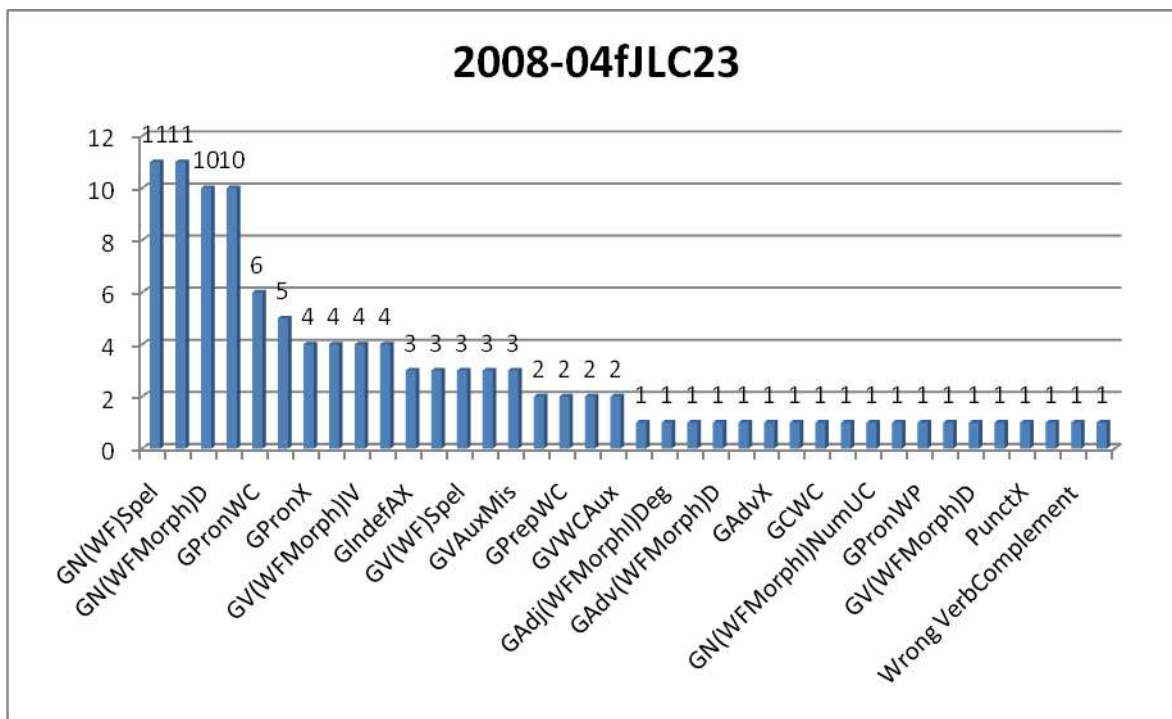
²¹ The count of errors is affected by the fact that some errors can correspond to alternatives of interpretation of a problem at any given moment.

2008-04fJLC23		
Instances	Long Annotation	Category
11	Vocabulary error, Wrong Word Class	Choice
11	Grammar error, Speech part, Noun, Wrong form, Spelling	Spelling
10	Grammar error, Speech part, Noun, WrongForm, Morphology, Derivation	Derivation
10	Mechanics error, Punctuation, Missing	Lack
6	Grammar error, Speech part, Wrong Pronoun	Choice
5	Grammar error, Speech part, Noun, Wrong Form, Morphology, Inflection of Number	Inflection
4	Style/Pragmatics error, Unclear/incoherent/incomprehensible	Lack
4	Grammar error, Speech part, Verb, WrongForm, Morphology, Inflection of Person. Problem of Subject-Verb concordance	Inflection
4	Grammar error, Speech part, Verb, Wrong Form, Morphology, Inflection of Voice	Inflection
4	Grammar error, Speech part, Pronoun, Overincluded	Overinclusion
3	Grammar error, Speech part, Verb, WrongForm, Morphology, Inflection of Mood (indicative, imperative, subjunctive,conditional)	Inflection
3	Grammar error, Speech part, Pronoun, Missing	Lack
3	Grammar error, SpeechPart, Verb, Spelling/Orthography	Spelling
3	Grammar error, Speech part, Indefinite Article, overincluded	Overinclusion
3	Grammar error, Speech part, Auxiliary Verb, Missing	Lack
2	Grammar error, Speech part, Preposition, Wrong Form, Spelling	Spelling
2	Grammar error, Speech part, Conjunction, Wrong Form, Spelling	Spelling
2	Grammar error, Speech part, wrong Preposition	Choice
2	Grammar error, Speech part, Noun, Wrong Form, Morphology, Inflection of Case, Genitive, Apostrophe	Inflection
2	Grammar error, Speech part, WrongAuxiliary/Modal	Choice
1	Grammar error, Speech part, Wrong Conjunction	Choice
1	Grammar error, Speech part, Noun, Wrong form, Morphology, Wrong Inflection of Number of Countable/Uncountable	Inflection
1	Grammar error, Speech part, Noun,Wrong Form, Morphology, Inflection of Case, Genitive, Noun+Noun/NounOfNoun	Inflection
1	Grammar error, Speech part, Noun, Wrong Countable/Uncountable	Choice
1	Grammar error, Speech part, Conjunction, Missing	Lack
1	Grammar error, Speech part, Adjective, Wrong Form, Morphology, Comparative/Superlative	Inflection
1	Grammar error, SpeechPart, Verb, Wrong Position	Position
1	Grammar error, SpeechPart, Verb Form, wrong derivation	Derivation
1	Grammar error, Speech part, Adjective, Wrong Form, Morphology, Derivation	Derivation
1	Grammar error, SpeechPart, Verb, Wrong Choice	Choice
1	Grammar error, SpeechPart, Verb, Wrong Complement	Complementation
1	Grammar error, Speech part, Preposition, overincluded	Overinclusion

1	Grammar error, Speech part, Adjective, overincluded	Overinclusion
1	Grammar error, Speech part, Adverb, Missing	Lack
1	Grammar error, Speech part, Pronoun, Misplaced	Position
1	Mechanics error, Capitalization, Overincluded	Overinclusion
1	Grammar error, Speech part, Adverb, Overincluded	Overinclusion
1	Grammar error, Speech part, Adverb, Wrong Form, Morphology, Wrong Derivation	Derivation
1	Mechanics error, Punctuation, overincluded	Overinclusion
113		

Chart 6. Errors tagged in 2008-04fJLC23.

The most frequent errors are Wrong Choice of words (confusion of Word Classes) and Spelling of Nouns, with 11 instances each (out of 113), 9.73%. Problems with the morphology (Derivation) of Nouns and the lack of Punctuation follow, with 10 instances each (8.85%). Those four types of errors make 37.16% of all errors. Then we find an abrupt decrease in the frequency of errors, almost half the frequency of the first group of errors. Wrong pronoun is the fifth error (six out of 113), wrong number of nouns presents five instances, followed by a group of errors in which inflection predominates, of nouns (number, five times) and verbs (person or agreement subject verb, four times and voice, four times). The following errors decrease steadily with three instances (inflection of verb mood, verb spelling, missing auxiliary verb, missing pronouns and overincluded articles), two instances (wrong prepositions and auxiliary/modal, spelling of prepositions and conjunctions and problems with the apostrophe) and a final group of 12 errors with only one instance each. Such panorama can be seen in graph eight. 113 errors in 366 words could mean that 30.9% of words in the text present problems (one error very 3.2 words). 113 errors in five paragraphs make an average of 22.6 errors per paragraph.



Graph 8. Errors tagged in 2008-04fJLC23

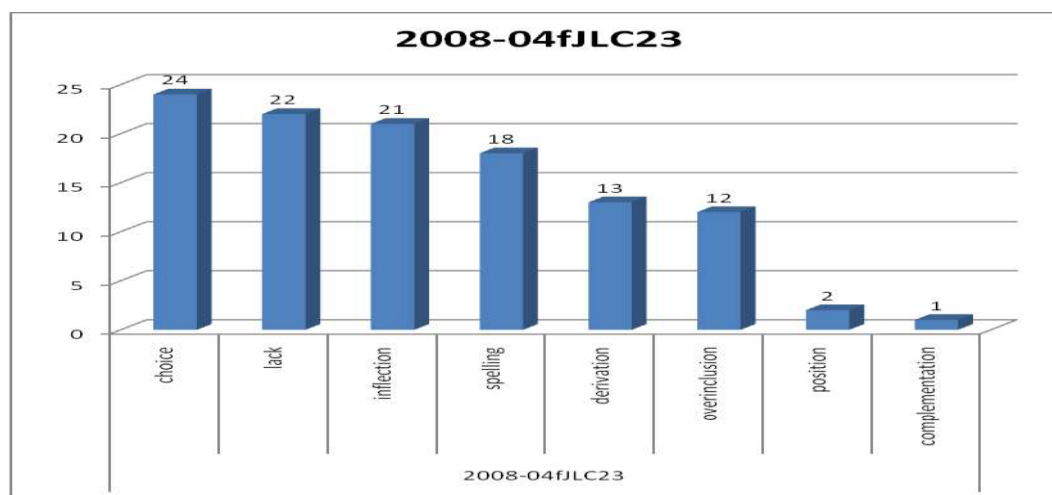
The comprehension of errors is deeper when they are organized according to category, (chart 7, MARKIN statistics for 2008-04fJLC23), graphs 9 and 10.

2008-04fJLC23		
Insta Nces	Long Annotation	Category
11	Vocabulary error, Wrong Word Class	Choice
6	Grammar error, Speech part, Wrong Pronoun	Choice
2	Grammar error, Speech part, wrong Preposition	Choice
2	Grammar error, Speech part, WrongAuxiliary/Modal	Choice
1	Grammar error, Speech part, Wrong Conjunction	Choice
1	Grammar error, Speech part, Noun, Wrong Countable/Uncountable	Choice
1	Grammar error, SpeechPart, Verb, Wrong Choice	Choice
24	<i>Lexical selection</i>	CHOICE
10	Mechanics error, Punctuation, Missing	Lack
4	Style/Pragmatics error, Unclear/incoherent/incomprehensible	Lack
3	Grammar error, Speech part, Pronoun, Missing	Lack
3	Grammar error, Speech part, Auxiliary Verb, Missing	Lack

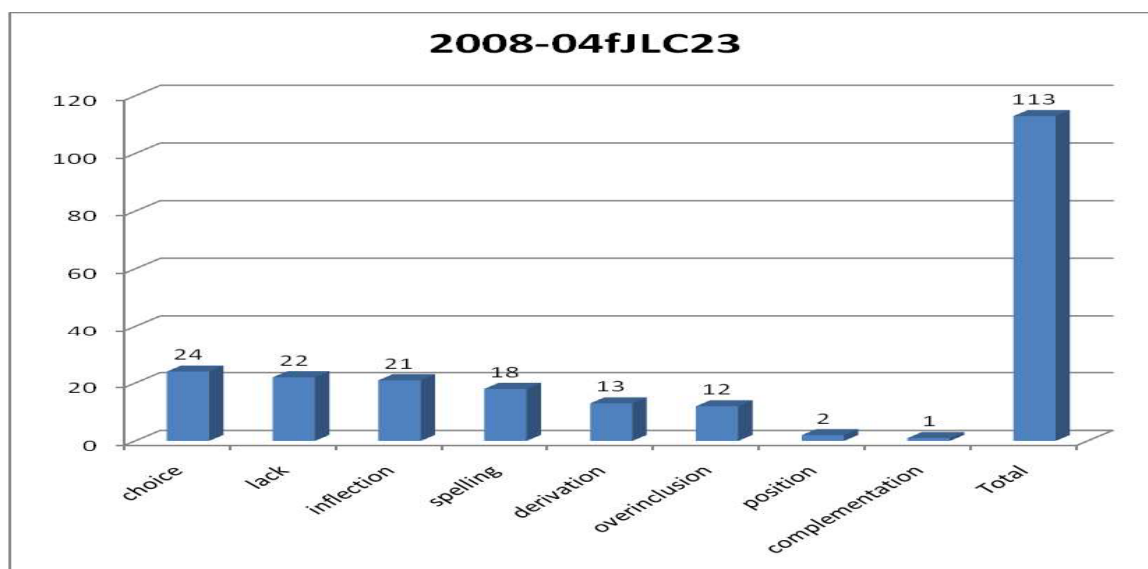
1	Grammar error, Speech part, Conjunction, Missing	Lack
1	Grammar error, Speech part, Adverb, Missing	Lack
22	<i>Missing Punctuation + clarity + vocabulary</i>	LACK
5	Grammar error, Speech part, Noun, Wrong Form, Morphology, Inflection of Number	Inflection
4	Grammar error, Speech part, Verb, WrongForm, Morphology, Inflection of Person. Problem of Subject-Verb concordance	Inflection
4	Grammar error, Speech part, Verb, Wrong Form, Morphology, Inflection of Voice	Inflection
3	Grammar error, Speech part, Verb, WrongForm, Morphology, Inflection of Mood (indicative, imperative, subjunctive,conditional)	Inflection
2	Grammar error, Speech part, Noun, Wrong Form, Morphology, Inflection of Case, Genitive, Apostrophe	Inflection
1	Grammar error, Speech part, Noun, Wrong form, Morphology, Wrong Inflection of Number of Countable/Uncountable	Inflection
1	Grammar error, Speech part, Noun,Wrong Form, Morphology, Inflection of Case, Genitive, Noun+Noun/NounOfNoun	Inflection
1	Grammar error, Speech part, Adjective, Wrong Form, Morphology, Comparative/Superlative	Inflection
21	<i>Noun, verb and adjective morphology</i>	INFLECTION
11	Grammar error, Speech part, Noun, Wrong form, Spelling	Spelling
3	Grammar error, SpeechPart, Verb, Spelling/Orthography	Spelling
2	Grammar error, Speech part, Preposition, Wrong Form, Spelling	Spelling
2	Grammar error, Speech part, Conjunction, Wrong Form, Spelling	Spelling
18	<i>Form of nouns, verbs, prepositions and conjunctions</i>	SPELLING
10	Grammar error, Speech part, Noun, WrongForm, Morphology, Derivation	Derivation
1	Grammar error, SpeechPart, Verb Form, wrong derivation	Derivation
1	Grammar error, Speech part, Adjective, Wrong Form, Morphology, Derivation	Derivation
1	Grammar error, Speech part, Adverb, Wrong Form, Morphology, Wrong Derivation	Derivation
13	<i>Morphology of nouns, verbs, adjectives and adverbs</i>	DERIVATION
4	Grammar error, Speech part, Pronoun, Overincluded	Overinclusion
3	Grammar error, Speech part, Indefinite Article, overincluded	Overinclusion
1	Grammar error, Speech part, Preposition, overincluded	Overinclusion
1	Grammar error, Speech part, Adjective, overincluded	Overinclusion
1	Mechanics error, Capitalization, Overincluded	Overinclusion
1	Grammar error, Speech part, Adverb, Overincluded	Overinclusion
1	Mechanics error, Punctuation, overincluded	Overinclusion
12	<i>Extra pronouns, articles, prepositions, adjectives, adverbs, punctuation and capitalization</i>	OVERINCLUSIO N

1	Grammar error, SpeechPart, Verb, Wrong Position	Position
1	Grammar error, Speech part, Pronoun, Misplaced	Position
2	<i>Misplacement of verbs and pronouns</i>	POSITION
1	Grammar error, SpeechPart, Verb, Wrong Complement	Complementation
1	<i>Verb complement</i>	COMPLEMENTATION
113		TOTAL

Chart 7. Error categories in detail in 2008-04fJLC23.



Graph 9. General error categories in 2008-04fJLC23



Graph 10. General error categories in 2008-04fJLC23 in relation to its total number of errors.

The main types of error are **Choice** (lexical selection) with 24 instances out of 113 errors total (21.2%), **Lack** (Missing Punctuation, clarity, and vocabulary) 22/113 (19.5%), **Inflection** (Noun, verb, and adjective morphology) 21/113 (18.6%), **Spelling** (Form of nouns, verbs, prepositions and conjunctions) 18/113 (15.9%), **Derivation** (Morphology of nouns, verbs, adjectives and adverbs) 13/113 (11.5%), and **Overinclusion** (Extra pronouns, articles, prepositions, adjectives, adverbs, punctuation and capitalization) 12/113 (10.6%). **Position** problems (Misplacement of verbs and pronouns) occur only twice and **Complementation** (verb complement) only once. If, after three years of EFL college studies, you cannot pick the right words, lack punctuation and clarity of expression of ideas, omit necessary words (pronouns, auxiliaries, etc.), and you have not fully grasped the inflection of number, person, voice, mood... (morphology), and you have not learnt the right spelling of many words, and besides you wrongly derivate the main content words – nouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs-, you are certainly in a very low level, well below the intermediate proficiency that would be expected from you after seven semesters of EFL studies. In this essay there are only two problems of Position (one of a verb and the other of a pronoun), and one Complementation of Verb.

Graph 11 shows the WORDLE word cloud of 2008-04fJLC23, in its original version:

This essay contains 288 words in four paragraphs. The initial “should happens”, soon reiterated, announces a series of flaws in the text, that are confirmed when we find “founded” and “tought” and further more serious errors, like “support”, which reminds us of the Spanish word “soportar” (stand), suggesting the reader that the writer of the essay is closer to his mother tongue than to the target language. The second paragraph is made up of one long sentence.

Of course, a clearer perspective is obtained when detailed error identification is carried out. The following are the errors tagged in 2008-00fMDC25 using MARKIN:

What should happens^{GV(WFMorph)IAux} with the man who rapes a woman? Or^{GCX} what should happens^{GV(WFMorph)IAux} with a woman who has been raped by a man? those are commun^{GN(WF)Spel} questions founded^{VWordClass} ^{GV(WF)Spel} ^{GV(WFMorph)D} on many mind^{GN(WFMorphI)NumUC} of people who think this problem of the society has to find a solution and has to be tought^{GV(WFMorph)D} ^{GV(WF)Spel} ^{GVAsp} as an important subject.^{DVerbos}

The Colombian society and more expacificly^{GAdv(WFMorph)D} ^{GAdvWFSpel} the colombian^{MCapMis} culture reflected^{VWordClass} on the view they have about that situation ^{SUncl} is a very true copie^{GN(WF)Spel} of a chovinistic^{GAdjWFSpel} society who^{GPronWC} is governed in its majority^{GPMis} men ^{SUncl} ^{SVag}, with laws that have been written by men where^{GPronWC} we can find that the punishmen^{GN(WF)Spel} for a^{GIndefAX} rape are^{GV(WFMorph)IPers} lows^{VWordClass} ^{GAdj(WFMorph)XINum} times^{GN(WFMorph)INum} of^{GPrepWC} jail that can be lowered by "good" behaviors.

But^{GCWC} the situation get^{GV(WFMorph)IPers} worst if we saw^{GVWCM} the woman situation^{GN(WFMorph)ICGenNoNo} ^{MPunctMis} all the things she will ^{GVMis} through it^{GPronX}. The Abused^{MCapX} woman has to support^{WrongVerb} a society that trait^{VWordClass} ^{GV(WFMorph)D} ^{GV(WFMorph)IPers} her^{GAdjX} not^{SUncl} ^{SVag} like the criminal, like the responsible^{GAdjWFSpel} of all those facts. The woman has to go throuth^{GP(WF)Spel} by^{GPX} a painfull^{GAdjWFSpel} situation on^{GPrepWC} the "good"^{SUncl} ^{SVag} places of the law and justice" where she has to tell and life^{VWordClass} for^{GIndefAMis} second time all the horrifies^{VWordClass} ^{GAdj(WFMorph)D} moments

he^{GPronWC} felt and lived, with all the straigh^{GAdjWFSpel GAdjWC} eyes on her and just for what? For nothings^{GN(WFMorph)INum GN(WFMorph)NumUC}.
 GPronMis Is for all that^{GPronWC} reasons that the rapers^{GN(WFMorph)D} has^{GV(WFMorph)IPers} to have a^{GAWC} biggest^{GAdj(WFMorph)Deg} punishment. Something that helps^{GVWCV} that those terribles^{GAdj(WFMorph)XINum} things happen and continue happening, an example for all those men who are thinking^{GVWCT} that a woman^{GN(WFMorph)ICGen's} respect and honor can be broke^{GVAsp GV(WFMorph)IV}, they have to feel what the woman feel^{GVWCT GV(WFMorph)IPers} they have to loose^{WrongVerb} what they took away from a woman^{MPunctMis} her dignity^{MPunctMis GPronMis} is for that reason^{GPronMis} the castration for this situation^{GNCompl} has to be as^{GAdvX} a law.

Frequency and nature of errors is made more evident. Problems occur not only with verbs but with almost all kinds of speech parts (adverbs, adjectives, nouns, prepositions, articles, pronouns). In this essay, the learner seems closer to her mother tongue than to the target language; that is evident for instance in a very basic flaw which is the omission of the subject pronoun “it”, when it corresponds to the Spanish “implicit subject”, or in the inclusion of a plural morpheme in an adjective as it is done in Spanish to make it agree with the noun it complements (*lows times*). The problems cover form, structure, usage, and meaning.

Chart 8 shows MARKIN statistics of the errors in 2008-00fMDC25²².

2008-00fMDC25		
Instances	Long Annotation	Category
6	Vocabulary error, Wrong Word Class	Choice
5	Grammar error, Speech part, Verb, WrongForm, Morphology, Inflection of Person. Problem of Subject-Verb concordance	Inflection
4	Style/Pragmatics error, Unclear / incoherent / incomprehensible	Lack
4	Mechanics error, Punctuation, Missing	Lack

²² Let's remember again that the count of errors is affected by the fact that some errors can correspond to alternatives of interpretation of a problem at any given moment.

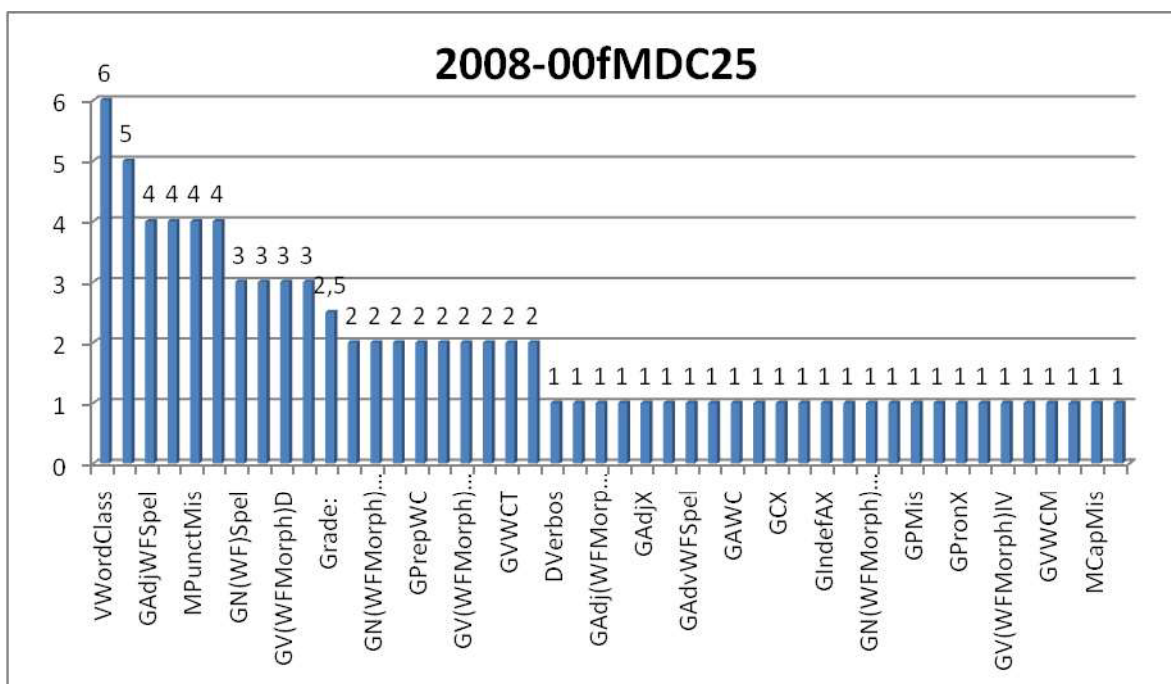
4	Grammar error, Speech part, Wrong Pronoun	Choice
4	Grammar error, Speech part, Adjective, Wrong Form, Spelling	Spelling
3	Style/Pragmatics error, Vagueness/ambiguity/lack of precision	Lack
3	Grammar error, Speech part, Pronoun, Missing	Lack
3	Grammar error, SpeechPart, Verb Form, wrong derivation	Derivation
3	Grammar error, Speech part, Noun, Wrong form, Spelling	Spelling
2	Grammar error, Speech part, Noun, Wrong Form, Morphology, Inflection of Number	Inflection
2	Grammar error, SpeechPart, Verb, WrongTense	Choice
2	Grammar error, Speech part, wrong Preposition	Choice
2	Grammar error, Speech part, Verb, WrongForm, Morphology, Auxiliary/Modal	Inflection
2	Grammar error, Speech part, Noun, Wrong form, Morphology, Wrong Inflection of Number of Countable/Uncountable	Inflection
2	Grammar error, Speech part, Verb, Wrong Form, Morphology, Inflection of Aspect, -ing or PastParticiple form	Inflection
2	Grammar error, SpeechPart, Verb, Wrong Choice	Choice
2	Grammar error, Speech part, Adjective, Wrong Form, Morphology, Inflection, Extra morpheme of Number	Inflection
2	Grammar error, SpeechPart, Verb, Spelling/Orthography	Spelling
1	Grammar error, Speech part, Noun, WrongForm, Morphology, Derivation	Derivation
1	Grammar error, Speech part, Indefinite Article, overincluded	Overinclusion
1	Grammar error, Speech part, Noun, Wrong Form, Morphology, Inflection of Case, Genitive, Apostrophe	Inflection
1	Grammar error, Speech part, Noun, Wrong Form, Morphology, Inflection of Case, Genitive, Noun+Noun/NounOfNoun	Inflection
1	Grammar error, Speech part, Wrong complement of Noun	Complementation
1	Grammar error, Speech part, Preposition, Wrong Form, Spelling	Spelling
1	Grammar error, Speech part, Verb, Wrong Form, Morphology, Inflection of Voice	Inflection
1	Grammar error, Speech part, Preposition, overincluded	Overinclusion
1	Grammar error, Speech part, Pronoun, Overincluded	Overinclusion
1	Grammar error, Speech part, Verb, Wrong mood	Choice
1	Grammar error, Speech part, Verb, wrong voice	Choice
1	Grammar error, Speech part, Preposition, Missing	Lack
1	Grammar error: Speech part, Verb, Missing	Lack
1	Grammar error, Speech part, Indefinite Article, Missing	Lack
1	Grammar error, Speech part, Adverb, Wrong Form, Spelling	Spelling
1	Grammar error, Speech part, Adverb, Wrong Form, Morphology, Wrong Derivation	Derivation
1	Grammar error, Speech part, Wrong Article	Choice
1	Grammar error, Speech part, Adverb, Overincluded	Overinclusion
1	Grammar error, Speech part, Adjective, overincluded	Overinclusion

1	Grammar error, Speech part, Adjective, Wrong Form, Morphology, Derivation	Derivation
1	Discourse error, Verbosity/Wordiness	Overinclusion
1	Grammar error, Speech part, Wrong Adjective	Choice
1	Grammar error, Speech part, Adjective, Wrong Form, Morphology, Comparative/Superlative	Inflection
1	Mechanics error, Capitalization, Overincluded	Overinclusion
1	Grammar error, Speech part, Wrong Conjunction	Choice
1	Mechanics error, Capitalization, Missing	Lack
1	Grammar error, Speech part, Conjunction, overincluded	Overinclusion
84		

Chart 8. Errors tagged in 2008-00fMDC25.

Individual error types in this essay seem not to be very frequent; many different types of flaws make up for the total: 27 types of errors (25%) occur only once (1.2%) each. The main problem in this essay is related to **wrong word class** (wrong choice of words), an important vocabulary problem (six instances out of 84, 7.1%). The second most frequent error is grammatical: **subject-verb concordance** expressed in the morphology of the verb by means of the inflection of person (five instances, 6%). That kind of problem is not a feature of an intermediate proficiency level. In the third place there is a group of four errors that occur four times each (4.8%): **lack of clarity/incoherence**, **punctuation missing**, **wrong choice of pronouns**, and **faulty spelling of adjectives**. Another group of four errors occur three times each (3.6%): **vagueness/ambiguity**, **missing pronouns**, **wrong verb derivation**, and **faulty spelling of nouns**. The following nine types of error occur two times each (2.4%); all of them are **verbs, adjectives and nouns inflection** troubles or **verb, tense, and preposition choice** problems. 84 errors in 288 words could mean that 29% of words in the text present problems (one error every 3.4 words). 84 errors in four paragraphs make an average of 21 errors per paragraph.

Graph 13 allows a graphic visualization of the frequency of errors in 2008-00fMDC25.



Graph 13. Errors tagged in 2008-00fMDC25.

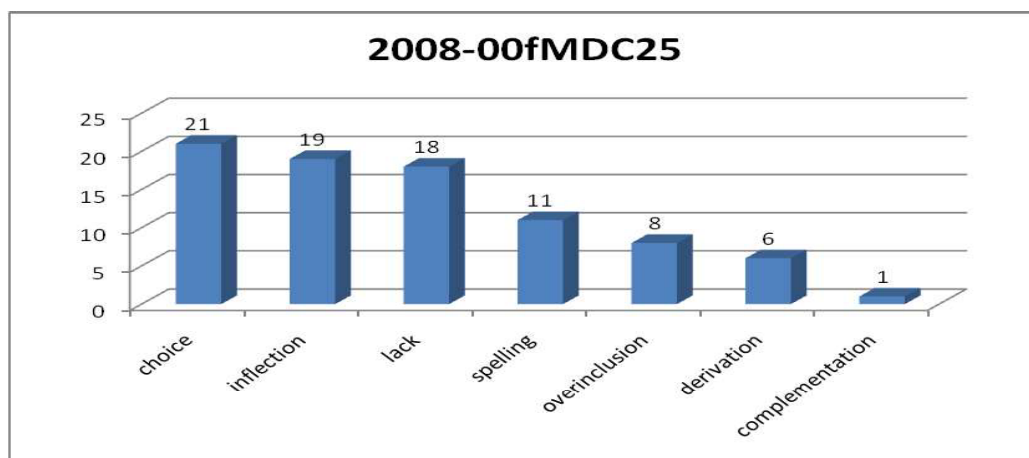
Organized according to the category, chart 9 displays the MARKIN statistics for 2008-00fMDC25. Such display is complemented by graphs 14 and 15.

2008-00fMDC25		
Instances	Long Annotation	Category
6	Vocabulary error, Wrong Word Class	Choice
4	Grammar error, Speech part, Wrong Pronoun	Choice
2	Grammar error, SpeechPart, Verb, WrongTense	Choice
2	Grammar error, Speech part, wrong Preposition	Choice
2	Grammar error, SpeechPart, Verb, Wrong Choice	Choice
1	Grammar error, Speech part, Verb, Wrong mood	Choice
1	Grammar error, Speech part, Verb, wrong voice	Choice
1	Grammar error, Speech part, Wrong Article	Choice
1	Grammar error, Speech part, Wrong Adjective	Choice
1	Grammar error, Speech part, Wrong Conjunction	Choice
21	<i>Lexis and verb inflection selection</i>	CHOICE

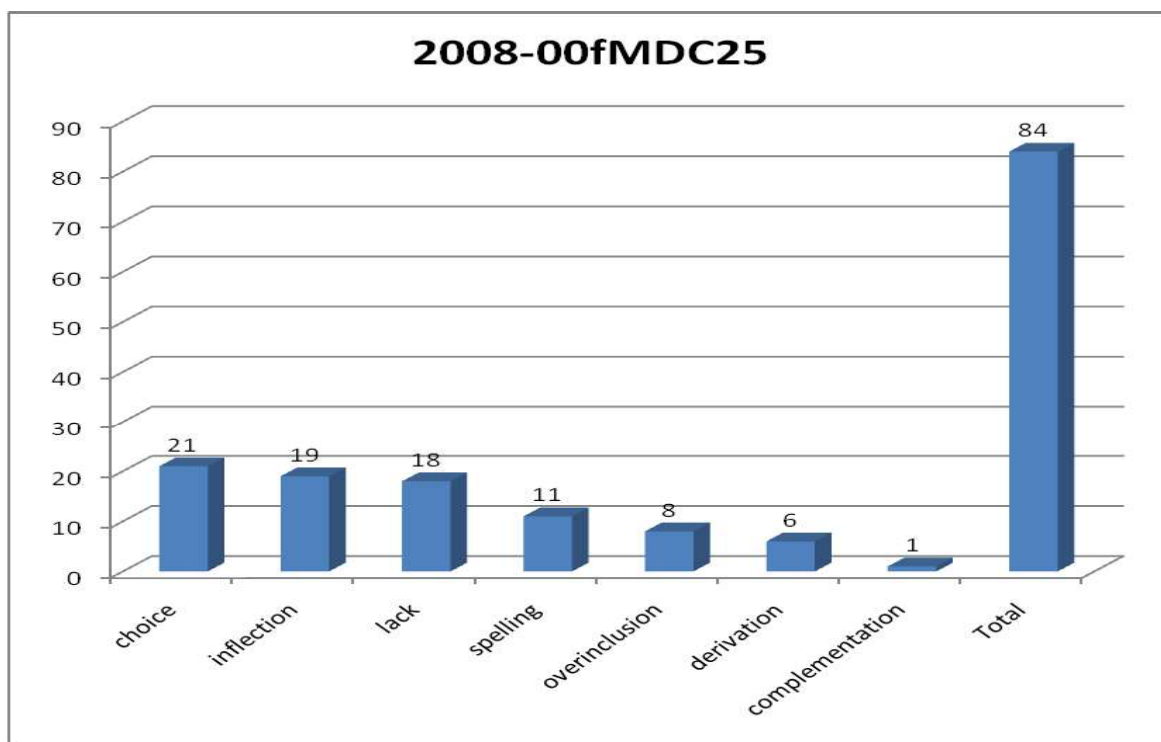
5	Grammar error, Speech part, Verb, WrongForm, Morphology, Inflection of Person. Problem of Subject-Verb concordance	Inflection
2	Grammar error, Speech part, Verb, WrongForm, Morphology, Auxiliary/Modal	Inflection
2	Grammar error, Speech part, Verb, Wrong Form, Morphology, Inflection of Aspect, -ing or PastParticiple form	Inflection
2	Grammar error, Speech part, Noun, Wrong Form, Morphology, Inflection of Number	Inflection
2	Grammar error, Speech part, Noun, Wrong form, Morphology, Wrong Inflection of Number of Countable/Uncountable	Inflection
2	Grammar error, Speech part, Adjective, Wrong Form, Morphology, Inflection, Extra morpheme of Number	Inflection
1	Grammar error, Speech part, Noun, Wrong Form, Morphology, Inflection of Case, Genitive, Apostrophe	Inflection
1	Grammar error, Speech part, Noun, Wrong Form, Morphology, Inflection of Case, Genitive, Noun+Noun/NounOfNoun	Inflection
1	Grammar error, Speech part, Verb, Wrong Form, Morphology, Inflection of Voice	Inflection
1	Grammar error, Speech part, Adjective, Wrong Form, Morphology, Comparative/Superlative	Inflection
19	<i>Noun, verb and adjective morphology</i>	INFLECTION
4	Mechanics error, Punctuation, Missing	Lack
4	Style/Pragmatics error, Unclear/incoherent/incomprehensible	Lack
3	Style/Pragmatics error, Vagueness/ambiguity/lack of precision	Lack
3	Grammar error, Speech part, Pronoun, Missing	Lack
1	Grammar error, Speech part, Preposition, Missing	Lack
1	Grammar error: Speech part, Verb, Missing	Lack
1	Grammar error, Speech part, Indefinite Article, Missing	Lack
1	Mechanics error, Capitalization, Missing	Lack
18	<i>Missing clarity, precision, vocabulary, capitalization</i>	LACK
4	Grammar error, Speech part, Adjective, Wrong Form, Spelling	Spelling
3	Grammar error, Speech part, Noun, Wrong form, Spelling	Spelling
2	Grammar error, SpeechPart, Verb, Spelling/Orthography	Spelling
1	Grammar error, Speech part, Preposition, Wrong Form, Spelling	Spelling

1	Grammar error, Speech part, Adverb, Wrong Form, Spelling	Spelling
11	<i>Form of nouns, adjectives, nouns, verbs, prepositions and adverbs</i>	SPELLING
1	Grammar error, Speech part, Indefinite Article, overincluded	Overinclusion
1	Grammar error, Speech part, Preposition, overincluded	Overinclusion
1	Grammar error, Speech part, Pronoun, Overincluded	Overinclusion
1	Grammar error, Speech part, Adverb, Overincluded	Overinclusion
1	Grammar error, Speech part, Adjective, overincluded	Overinclusion
1	Grammar error, Speech part, Conjunction, overincluded	Overinclusion
1	Mechanics error, Capitalization, Overincluded	Overinclusion
1	Discourse error, Verbosity/Wordiness	Overinclusion
8	<i>Extra article, words, and capitalization + verbosity / wordiness</i>	OVERINCLUSION
3	Grammar error, SpeechPart, Verb Form, wrong derivation	Derivation
1	Grammar error, Speech part, Noun, WrongForm, Morphology, Derivation	Derivation
1	Grammar error, Speech part, Adverb, Wrong Form, Morphology, Wrong Derivation	Derivation
1	Grammar error, Speech part, Adjective, Wrong Form, Morphology, Derivation	Derivation
6	<i>Morphology of nouns, verbs,nouns, adverbs and adjectives</i>	DERIVATION
1	Grammar error, Speech part, Wrong complement of Noun	Complementation
1	<i>Noun complement</i>	COMPLEMENTATION
84		

Chart 9. Error categories in detail in 2008-00fMDC25.



Graph 14. General error categories in 2008-00fMDC25.



Graph 15. General error categories in 2008-00fMDC25 in relation to the total number of errors.

From the category organization for 2008-00fMDC25, shown in chart 9 and graphs 14 and 15, three main groups of occurrence of errors can be seen: a) those that are numerous (over 21% of the total in this essay), those that occur more or less frequently (between 7.1% and 13% of the total) and one that scarcely occurs (1.2%). Choice, inflection and lack are the high-frequency errors in this essay. **Choice** errors occur 21 times out of 84 (25%) and can be summed up as lexis and verb inflection selection problems. **Inflection** errors occur 19 times out of 84 (22.6%) and can be summed up as noun, verb and adjective morphology problems. **Lack** errors occur 18 times out of 84 total errors in the text (21.4%). They can be summed up as missing clarity, precision, vocabulary, and capitalization.

Spelling, Overinclusion, and Derivation are among the medium-frequency errors in 2008-00fMDC25. **Spelling** errors occur 11 times out of 84 (13.1%); they can be summed up as problems with the form of nouns, adjectives, nouns, verbs, prepositions and adverbs. **Overinclusion** occurs 8 times (8/84: 9.5%) and includes extra article, preposition, pronoun,

confirmed by “that’s depends” and an extra “should”. However, the text can be read with a certain grade of ease almost to the end, when big flaws reappear.

The errors tagged in 2008-03fYD24, using MARKIN, are the following:

Grades, should they Disappear^{GN(WF)Spel MCapX}?
Even when^{GCWC GAdvX} we are Little^{MCapX} kids studying in primary, high-schools^{PunctX},
etc..^{PunctX} Ours^{GAdj(WFMorph)XINum MCapX} teachers give us grades For^{MCapX} any kind of
work.^{MPunctWC} and depending of^{GPrepWC GDefAMis} grade you wanna^{DRWC} get that's^{DRWC} the
effort you put in it. That's^{DRWC} way^{VWordClass} I make^{WrongVerb} myself this question:
“Grades, should they dissappear^{GV(WF)Spel}?.^{PunctX} I think that's^{GVAuxX DRWC} depends
of^{GPrepWC} the way you see it,^{MPunctWC} we can see grades as a goal,^{MPunctWC} For
example^{MPunctMis} If^{MCapX} you work several weeks on one^{GPronWC} assignment^{GN(WF)Spel} that
you have and I^{GPronWC SUncl} think^{DVerbos} you should^{GVAuxX} expect a higher^{VWordClass}
GAdj(WFMorphI)Deg grade because you put all your effort and time in it and you deserve it.
But^{DRWC} what happen^{GV(WFMorph)IPers} if all the work you made in those weeks was
completely wrong.^{MPunctWC} Should the teacher grade your persistent^{VWordClass}, your
effort? Well, I think they^{GPronWC} should Because^{MCapX} even if it is wrong we^{GPronWC SUncl}
can obviously see you want to Learn^{MCapX} and if^{MCapX} the teachers give you a
lower^{VWordClass GAdj(WFMorphI)Deg} grade that can be a desappointment^{GN(WF)Spel}, because
that means you can not make mistakes and I do not^{GAdvX SUncl} think^{DVerbos} that's^{DRWC}
Fair^{MCapX MPunctMis} we^{MCapMis} all are humain^{GAdjWFSpel} beings^{MPunctMis} we are not perfect,
and believe me when I say^{DVerbos} the best way to Learn^{MCapX} it^{GPronX} is From^{MCapX} our
mistakes because we do not do it again^{SVag GVTCT}.

Today, I am a student and a teacher at the same time and I can say like^{GAdvWC} both of
them that teachers should grade THE PROCESS^{MCapX} that the students have during
the course.^{MPunctWC} The^{MCapX} effort sometimes students give to the work they are doing.

Because^{GCX} we all have our strenghts^{GN(WF)Spel} and weakness^{GN(WFMorph)INum MPunctMis}
some of us are very good^{GPMis} speaking a foreign language, others^{GPMis} writing,
Listening^{MCapX}, reading^{MPunctMis} etc..^{PunctX DRWC L1/3L} But^{MCapX} that does not mean
someone it^{GPronX} is better than you^{GVMis}, it^{GPronWC GVMis} just different. And^{DRWC}
that's^{DRWC} way^{VWordClass} I think teachers should grade all the differents^{GAdj(WFMorph)XINum}
process^{GN(WFMorph)INum} it^{VWordClass} exists^{GV(WFMorph)IPers DVerbos}

From the very beginning (title) errors appear. Many of them do not hnder the comprehension of the text content; that is the case of informality (register) and capitalization in the essay. However, some errors seem to be too basic for a VII semester EFL student, who should have an intermediate level of proficiency, even if he is low within that stage. The confusion of high-higher and low-lower is a good example of such simple things that should have already been mastered at that point. The frequency and nature of errors at the end of the text leave the reader with a bad impression about it.

Chart 10 lists the errors in 2008-03fYD24²³ and graph 18 pictures that information.

2008-03fYD24		
Instances	Long Annotation	Category
15	Mechanics error, Capitalization, Overincluded	Overinclusion
9	Discourse error, Wrong Register	Choice
6	Vocabulary error, Wrong Word Class	Choice
5	Mechanics error, Wrong Punctuation	Choice
5	Mechanics error, Punctuation, Missing	Lack
5	Grammar error, Speech part, Wrong Pronoun	Choice
4	Discourse error, Verbosity/Wordiness	Overinclusion
4	Mechanics error, Punctuation, overincluded	Overinclusion
4	Grammar error, Speech part, Noun, Wrong form, Spelling	Spelling
3	Style/Pragmatics error, Unclear/incoherent/incomprehensible	Lack
2	Grammar error, Speech part, Adverb, Overincluded	Overinclusion
2	Grammar error: Sppech part, Verb, Missing	Lack
2	Grammar error, Speech part, Verb, Extra Auxiliary/Modal	Overinclusion

²³ The reader must remember that some errors correspond to alternatives of interpretation of a problem at certain points.

2	Grammar error, Speech part, Pronoun, Overincluded	Overinclusion
2	Grammar error, Speech part, Adjective, Wrong Form, Morphology, Comparative/Superlative	Inflection
2	Grammar error, Speech part, Adjective, Wrong Form, Morphology, Inflection, Extra morpheme of Number	Inflection
2	Grammar error, Speech part, Preposition, Missing	Lack
2	Grammar error, Speech part, Verb, WrongForm, Morphology, Inflection of Person. Problem of Subject-Verb concordance	Inflection
2	Grammar error, Speech part, Noun, Wrong Form, Morphology, Inflection of Number	Inflection
2	Grammar error, Speech part, wrong Preposition	Choice
1	Grammar error, Speech part, Conjunction, overincluded	Overinclusion
1	Style/Pragmatics error, Spanish (L1)/French(L3)-like	Choice
1	Grammar error, SpeechPart, Verb, Spelling/Orthography	Spelling
1	Grammar error, SpeechPart, Verb, WrongTense	Choice
1	Grammar error, Speech part, Definite Article, Missing	Lack
1	Grammar error, Speech part, Wrong Conjunction	Choice
1	Grammar error, SpeechPart, Verb, Wrong Choice	Choice
1	Grammar error, Speech part, Wrong Adverb	Choice
1	Style/Pragmatics error, Vagueness/ambiguity/lack of precision	Lack
1	Mechanics error, Capitalization, Missing	Lack
1	Grammar error, Speech part, Adjective, Wrong Form, Spelling	Spelling
91		

Chart 10. Errors tagged in 2008-03fYD24.

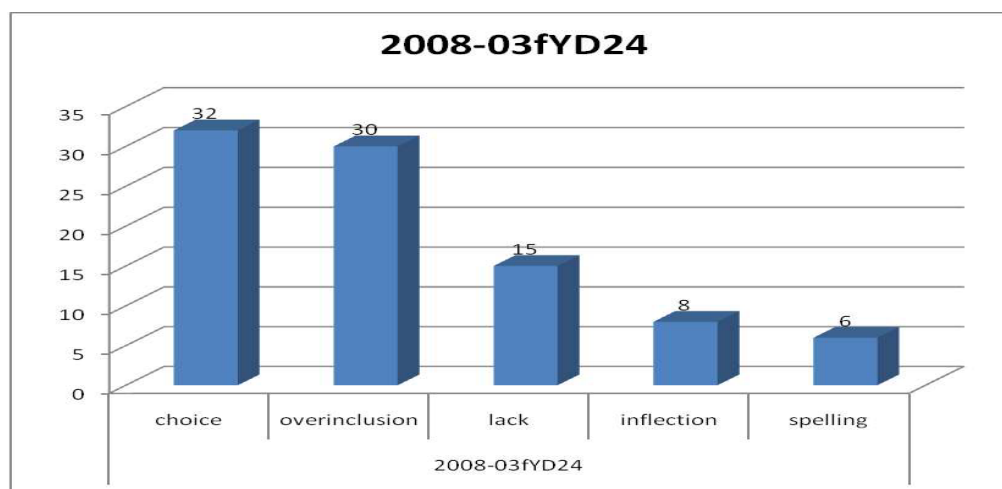
Ninety-one errors in 301 words make one error every 3.3 words (30.2%). 91 errors in three paragraphs make around 30 errors per paragraph.

Markin stats for 2008-03fYD24 organized according to the category are shown in chart 11 and in graphs 19 and 20.

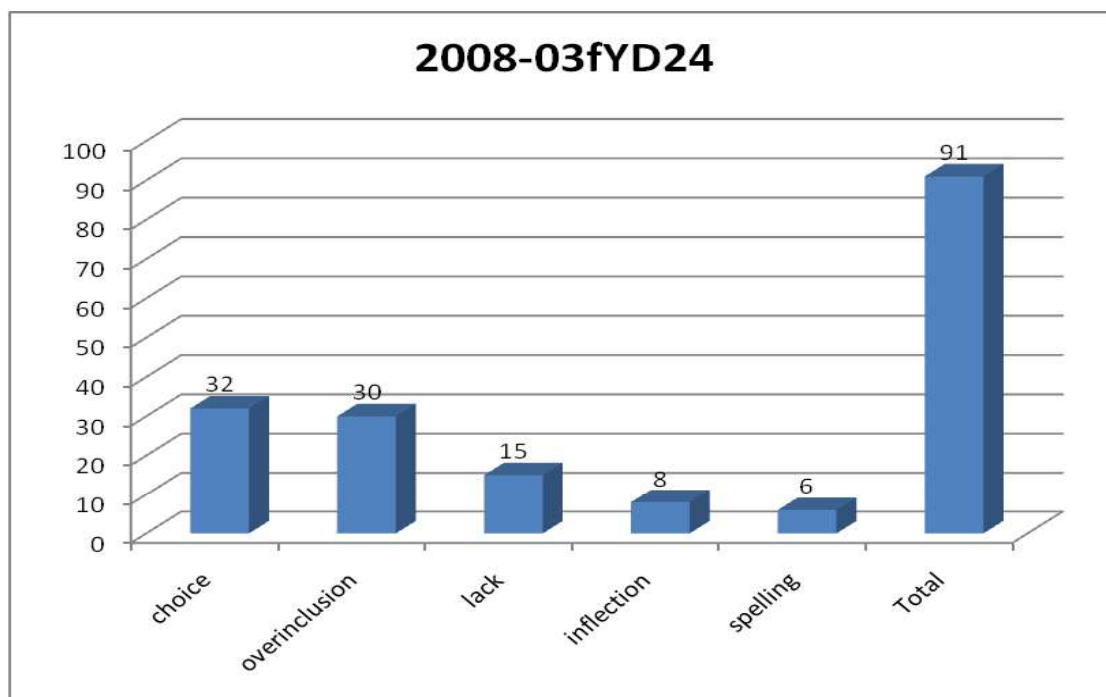
2008-03fYD2		
Instances	Long Annotation	Category
9	Discourse error, Wrong Register	Choice
6	Vocabulary error, Wrong Word Class	Choice
5	Mechanics error, Wrong Punctuation	Choice
5	Grammar error, Speech part, Wrong Pronoun	Choice
2	Grammar error, Speech part, wrong Preposition	Choice
1	Style/Pragmatics error, Spanish (L1)/French(L3)-like	Choice
1	Grammar error, SpeechPart, Verb, WrongTense	Choice
1	Grammar error, Speech part, Wrong Conjunction	Choice
1	Grammar error, SpeechPart, Verb, Wrong Choice	Choice
1	Grammar error, Speech part, Wrong Adverb	Choice
32	<i>Selection of register, lexis, punctuation, tense, L1/L3</i>	CHOICE
15	Mechanics error, Capitalization, Overincluded	Overinclusion
4	Discourse error, Verbosity/Wordiness	Overinclusion
4	Mechanics error, Punctuation, overincluded	Overinclusion
2	Grammar error, Speech part, Adverb, Overincluded	Overinclusion
2	Grammar error, Speech part, Verb, Extra Auxiliary/Modal	Overinclusion
2	Grammar error, Speech part, Pronoun, Overincluded	Overinclusion
1	Grammar error, Speech part, Conjunction, overincluded	Overinclusion
30	<i>Extra capitalization, lexis, verbosity/wordiness</i>	OVERINCLUSION
5	Mechanics error, Punctuation, Missing	Lack
3	Style/Pragmatics error, Unclear/incoherent/incomprehensible	Lack
2	Grammar error: Speech part, Verb, Missing	Lack
2	Grammar error, Speech part, Preposition, Missing	Lack

1	Grammar error, Speech part, Definite Article, Missing	Lack
1	Style/Pragmatics error, Vagueness/ambiguity/lack of precision	Lack
1	Mechanics error, Capitalization, Missing	Lack
15	<i>Missing punctuation, clarity, precision, words, capitalization</i>	LACK
2	Grammar error, Speech part, Adjective, Wrong Form, Morphology, Comparative/Superlative	Inflection
2	Grammar error, Speech part, Adjective, Wrong Form, Morphology, Inflection, Extra morpheme of Number	Inflection
2	Grammar error, Speech part, Verb, WrongForm, Morphology, Inflection of Person. Problem of Subject-Verb concordance	Inflection
2	Grammar error, Speech part, Noun, Wrong Form, Morphology, Inflection of Number	Inflection
8	<i>Adjective (degree, extra number), verb and noun morphology</i>	INFLECTION
4	Grammar error, Speech part, Noun, Wrong form, Spelling	Spelling
1	Grammar error, SpeechPart, Verb, Spelling/Orthography	Spelling
1	Grammar error, Speech part, Adjective, Wrong Form, Spelling	Spelling
6	<i>Form of nouns, verbs, adjectives</i>	SPELLING
91		

Chart 11. Error categories in detail in 2008-03fYD24.



Graph 19. General error categories 2008-03fYD24.



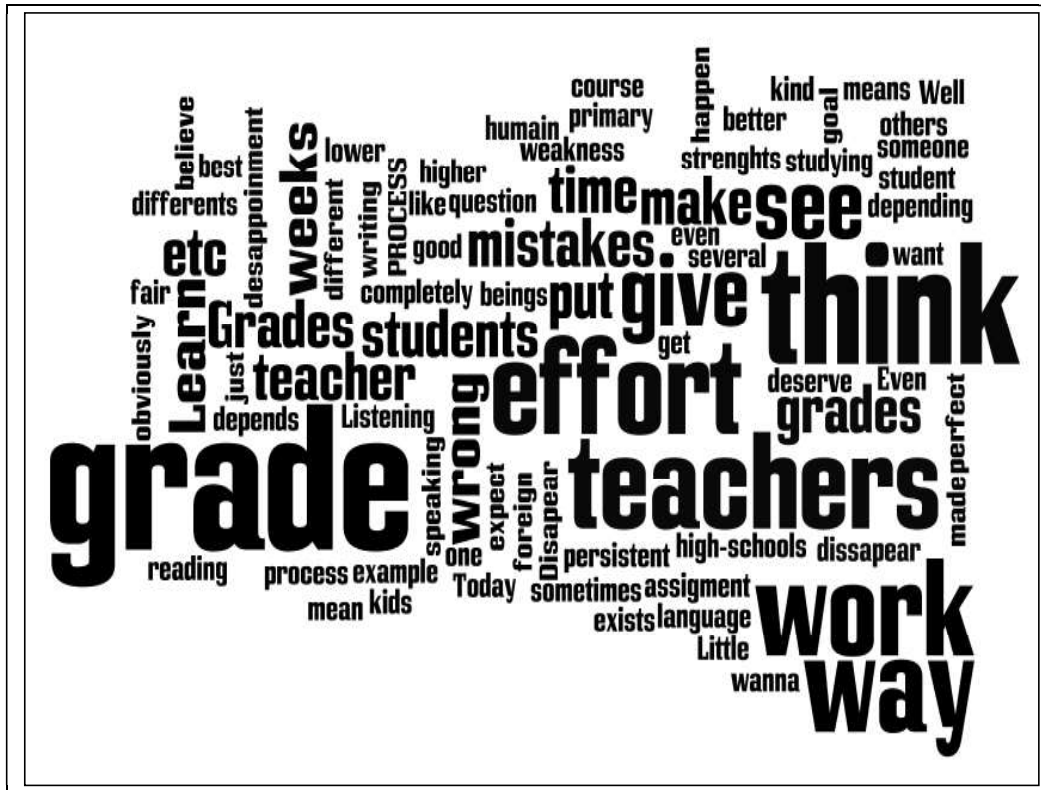
Graph 20. General error categories in 2008-03fYD24 in relation to the total number of errors.

The most frequent error categories, as shown in chart 11 and graphs 19 and 20, are choice and over inclusion (32 and 30 instances respectively, out of a total of 91 errors counted in this text). Lack has an intermediate occurrence (15/91 times). Inflection and spelling have a low frequency (eight and six times in that order). **Choice** errors include problems with selection of register, lexis, punctuation, tense, and L1/L3; its 32 instances correspond to a 35.2%, more than a third of all the errors in this text. **Overinclusion** errors comprise extra capitalization, lexis, and verbosity/wordiness; its 30 instances match a 33%, a third of the total error in the essay.

Lack errors embrace missing punctuation, clarity, precision, words, and capitalization; its 15 cases equal a 16.5% of all the errors in the passage.

Inflection errors cover adjective (degree, extra number), verb and noun morphology flaws, with 8 times, 8.8%. **Spelling** includes form of nouns, verbs, and adjectives, with six occurrences, 6.6%.

The vision given by the word cloud of 2008-03fYD24, in its original version (graph 21) shows *grade, think, teachers, effort, work, way, see, give, grades, make, mistakes, students, teacher, time, wrong, and learn* among the most frequent content words in the passage. It seems that the text is rich in content.



Graph 21. Word cloud of the original text 2008-03fYD24.

The contrast between the content words and the error tags in 2008-03fYD24 can be seen in the word cloud of the annotated text (graph 22). Errors tags do not completely outnumber the content words as in the previous essays.

2008-00fMM25 is made up of 181 words, distributed in four paragraphs. The overall development follows a clear pattern of introduction - developmental body - closing. However, some important errors stand immediately out: the initial *This issue* seems to consider the prompt (there is no title) as part of the essays itself. Then there are noticeable flaws like For human being a rape is the most awful act which a man can do it, soon followed by *The castration for her is a manner to came back the same suffer, anxiety, agonie*. Some other errors further hinder the reading, making it slow; the comprehension of the text becomes difficult at some points, for instance in *Because the penalty according to this religion only can penalt it God*).

Errorr tagging in 2008-00fMM25 provides a clearer panorama of flaws in this essay.

This issue causes an enourmous^{GAdjWFSpel} controversy in the society.^{MPunctWC} What is the best penalty, castration or the^{GDefAX} prision^{GN(WF)Spel} ? For GIndefAMis human being^{GN(WFMorph)INum} ^{MPunctMis} a^{GIndefAX} rape is the most awful act which^{GPronWC} a man can do it^{GPronX}.

According to this, for this^{SVag} society^{MPunctMis} this awful act must have a great penalty^{MPunctMis} And^{MCapX} the only way^{GNWC} is the^{GDefAX} castration. The castration^{GN(WF)Spel} for^{SUncl} her^{GPronWC} is a manner to came^{GV(WFMorph)IM} back^{WrongVerb} ^{SUncl} the same suffer^{VWordClass}, anxiety^{GN(WF)Spel}, agonie^{VWordClass}. It is a natural resoult^{GN(WF)Spel} ^{SUncl} after of^{GPX} that uncomprehensible^{GAdj(WFMorph)D} action.

On the other hand^{GCWC}, this Catholic society should respect its own Christian principles and not to^{GV(WFMorph)IM} follow^{WrongVerb} the^{GDefAX} vengeance^{GN(WF)Spel} ^{MPunctMis} Because^{MCapX} the penalty^{MPunctMis} ^{GNWP} according^{WrongVerbComplement} to this religion^{MPunctMis} only can penalt^{GV(WFMorph)D} it^{GPronX} ^{SUncl} God^{GNWP}. Personally, I consider that a^{GIndefAX} castration is not the best way to solve this terrible conflict^{GNWC} because at the end^{SUncl} ^{GAdvWP} ^{Wrong VerbComplement} ^{GPronMis} is a^{GIndefAWFSpel} illogical^{GAdjWFSpel} mesure^{GN(WF)Spel} to^{GPrepWC} a rational society.

To sum up, the human being know^{GV(WFMorph)IPers} the penalty since our first age's
life^{SUncl GPronWC}, its consequences^{GPronWP} but also^{GAdvWP} we know that each day this
society should look for strategies to regulate her^{GPronWC} members. So, Is^{MCapX} the^{GDefAX}
castration^{GN(WF)Spel} a way to this regulation?

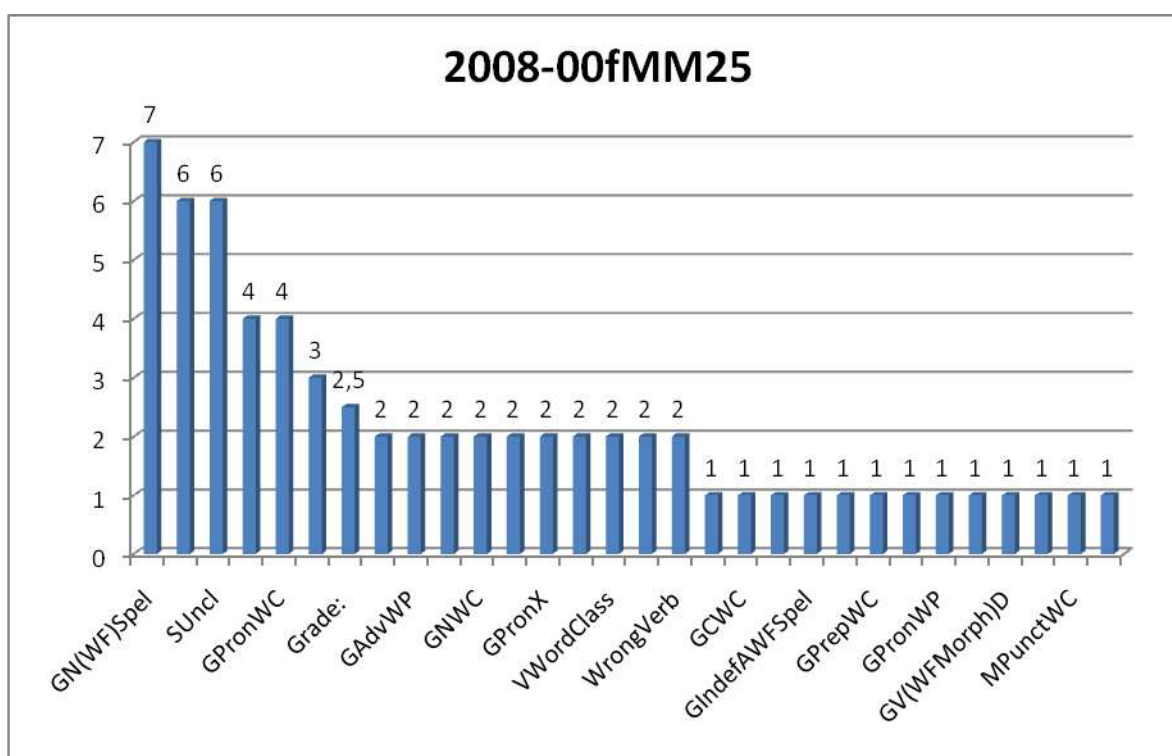
Problems with punctuation, spelling, articles, morphology of adjectives, confusion between nouns and adjectives (word class), and verb morphology seem to be the most frequent ones. Chart 12 and graph 23 specify the number of each type of error in 2008-00fMM25²⁴: (markin statisticss).

2008-00fMM25		
Instances	Long Annotation	Category
7	Grammar error, Speech part, Noun, Wrong form, Spelling	Spelling
6	Style/Pragmatics error, Unclear/incoherent/incomprehensible	Lack
6	Mechanics error, Punctuation, Missing	Lack
4	Grammar error, Speech part, Definite Article, overincluded	Overinclusion
4	Grammar error, Speech part, Wrong Pronoun	Choice
3	Mechanics error, Capitalization, Overincluded	Overinclusion
2	Grammar error, Speech part, Indefinite Article, overincluded	Overinclusion
2	Grammar error, Speech part, Wrong Noun	Choice
2	Grammar error, Speech part, Adverb, misplaced	Position
2	Grammar error, Speech part, Misplaced Noun	Position
2	Grammar error, SpeechPart, Verb, Wrong Complement	Complementation
2	Grammar error, SpeechPart, Verb, Wrong Choice	Choice
2	Vocabulary error, Wrong Word Class	Choice
2	Grammar error, Speech part, Pronoun, Overincluded	Overinclusion
2	Grammar error, Speech part, Verb, WrongForm, Morphology, Inflection of Mood (indicative, imperative, subjunctive, conditional)	Inflection
2	Grammar error, Speech part, Adjective, Wrong Form, Spelling	Spelling
1	Grammar error, Speech part, wrong Preposition	Choice
1	Grammar error, Speech part, Pronoun, Missing	Lack
1	Grammar error, Speech part, Wrong Conjunction	Choice
1	Grammar error, Speech part, Indefinite Article, Wrong form, Spelling	Spelling
1	Grammar error, Speech part, Indefinite Article, Missing	Lack

²⁴ Some errors correspond to alternatives of interpretation of a problem at certain points.

1	Mechanics error, Wrong Punctuation	Choice
1	Grammar error, Speech part, Adjective, Wrong Form, Morphology, Derivation	Derivation
1	Grammar error, Speech part, Pronoun, Misplaced	Position
1	Grammar error, Speech part, Preposition, overincluded	Overinclusion
1	Grammar error, SpeechPart, Verb Form, wrong derivation	Derivation
1	Style/Pragmatics error, Vagueness/ambiguity/lack of precision	Lack
1	Grammar error, Speech part, Noun, Wrong Form, Morphology, Inflection of Number	Inflection
1	Grammar error, Speech part, Verb, WrongForm, Morphology, Inflection of Person. Problem of Subject-Verb concordance	Inflection
63		

Chart 12. Errors tagged in 2008-00fMM25.



Graph 23. Errors tagged in 2008-00fMM25

Wrong form (spelling) of nouns is the most frequent error; it happens seven times out of 63 errors in total in this essay (11.1%). Two types of error appear in the second place, with six instances each; they are **lack of clarity (incoherence)** and **missing punctuation**. Two other errors are ranked in the third place, with 4 instances (6.3%) each: **over inclusion of definite articles** and **wrong choice of pronouns**. **Over inclusion of capital letters** follows, with three occurrences (4.8%). The last two groups of errors are

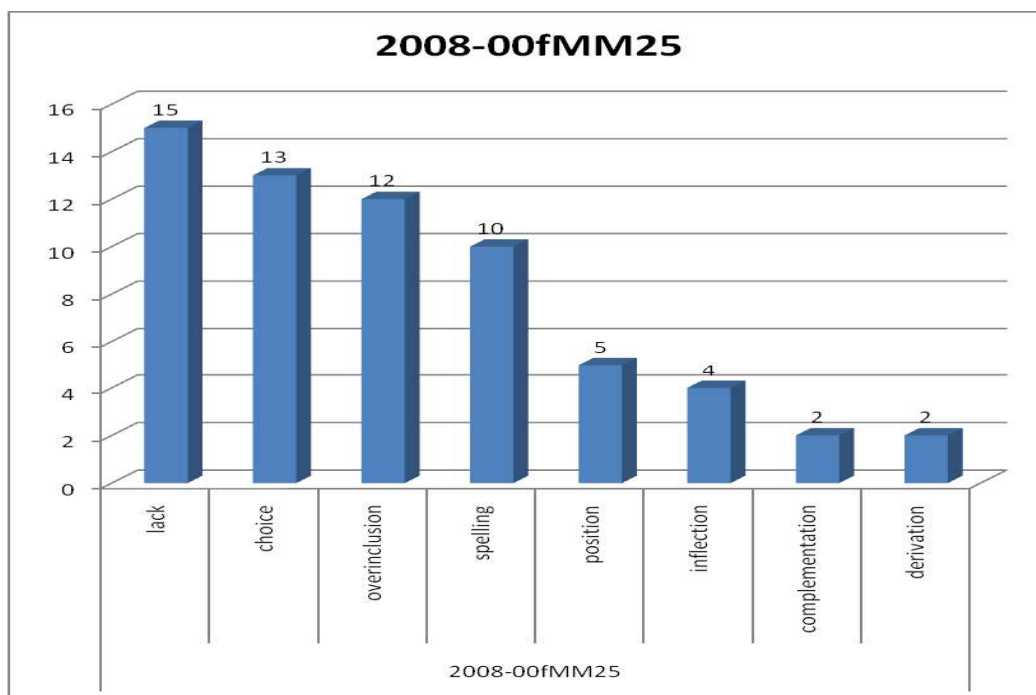
constituted by 10 errors that occur two times and 13 errors that occur one time. Two-time occurring errors are mainly problems of **choice (of nouns, verbs, and word class)**, **position (misplaced adverbs and nouns)** and **over inclusion (extra articles and pronouns)**. Errors that occur only once refer to problems of **choice (prepositions, conjunction, and punctuation)**, **lack (of clarity and missing pronouns and articles)**, **inflection (number of noun and person of verbs)** and **derivation (of adjectives and verbs)**. 63 errors in 181 words make one error every 2.9 words (34.8%). 63 errors in four paragraphs make 15 to 16 error per paragraph.

Chart 13 lists MARKIN statistics for 2008-00fMM25, organized according to the category and those data can be visualized in graphs 24 and 25.

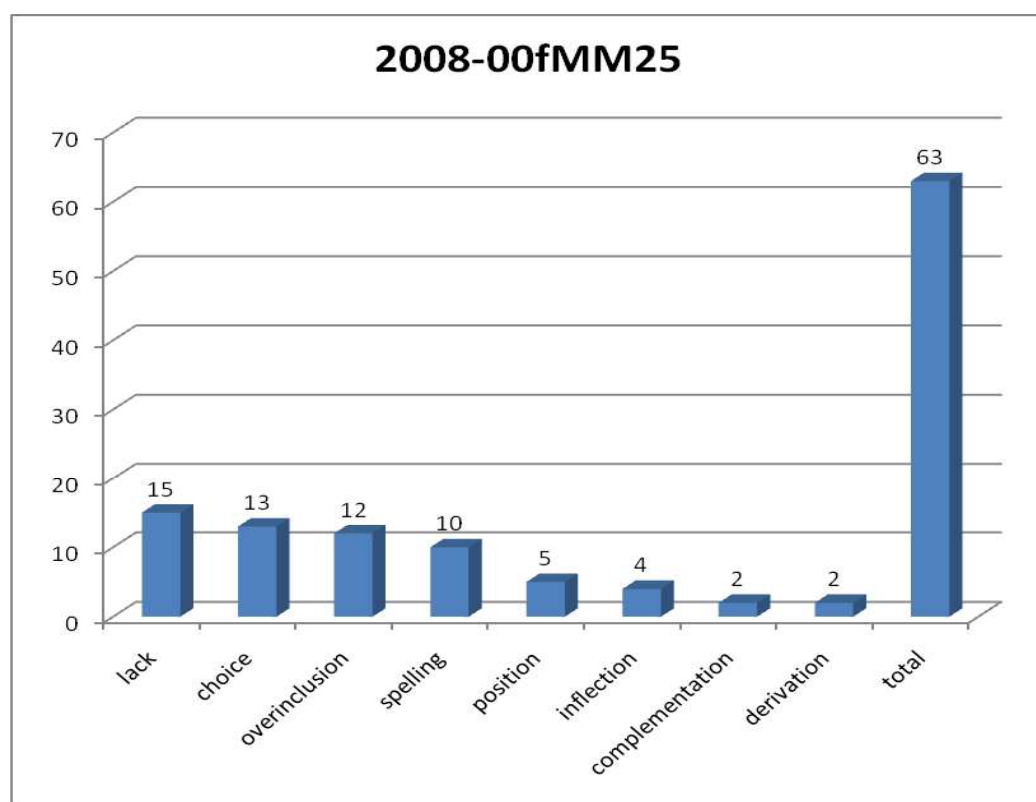
2008-00fMM25		
Instances	Long Annotation	Category
6	Style/Pragmatics error, Unclear/incoherent/incomprehensible	Lack
6	Mechanics error, Punctuation, Missing	Lack
1	Grammar error, Speech part, Pronoun, Missing	Lack
1	Grammar error, Speech part, Indefinite Article, Missing	Lack
1	Style/Pragmatics error, Vagueness/ambiguity/lack of precision	Lack
15	<i>Missing clarity, precision, punctuation, articles and pronouns</i>	LACK
4	Grammar error, Speech part, Wrong Pronoun	Choice
2	Grammar error, Speech part, Wrong Noun	Choice
2	Grammar error, SpeechPart, Verb, Wrong Choice	Choice
2	Vocabulary error, Wrong Word Class	Choice
1	Grammar error, Speech part, wrong Preposition	Choice
1	Grammar error, Speech part, Wrong Conjunction	Choice
1	Mechanics error, Wrong Punctuation	Choice
13	<i>Selection of words and punctuation</i>	CHOICE
4	Grammar error, Speech part, Definite Article, overincluded	Overinclusion
3	Mechanics error, Capitalization, Overincluded	Overinclusion
2	Grammar error, Speech part, Indefinite Article, overincluded	Overinclusion
2	Grammar error, Speech part, Pronoun, Overincluded	Overinclusion
1	Grammar error, Speech part, Preposition, overincluded	Overinclusion

12	<i>Extra articles, pronouns, prepositions and capital letters</i>	OVERINCLUSION
7	Grammar error, Speech part, Noun, Wrong form, Spelling	Spelling
2	Grammar error, Speech part, Adjective, Wrong Form, Spelling	Spelling
1	Grammar error, Speech part, Indefinite Article, Wrong form, Spelling	Spelling
10	<i>Form of nouns, adjectives, and indefinite article</i>	SPELLING
2	Grammar error, Speech part, Adverb, misplaced	Position
2	Grammar error, Speech part, Misplaced Noun	Position
1	Grammar error, Speech part, Pronoun, Misplaced	Position
5	<i>Misplaced adverbs, nouns, and pronouns</i>	POSITION
2	Grammar error, Speech part, Verb, WrongForm, Morphology, Inflection of Mood (indicative, imperative, subjunctive,conditional)	Inflection
1	Grammar error, Speech part, Verb, WrongForm, Morphology, Inflection of Person. Problem of Subject-Verb concordance	Inflection
1	Grammar error, Speech part, Noun, Wrong Form, Morphology, Inflection of Number	Inflection
4	<i>Morphology: inflection of verbs (mood and person), nouns (number)</i>	INFLECTION
2	Grammar error, SpeechPart, Verb, Wrong Complement	Complementation
2	<i>Verb complement</i>	COMPLEMENTATION
1	Grammar error, Speech part, Adjective, Wrong Form, Morphology, Derivation	Derivation
1	Grammar error, SpeechPart, Verb Form, wrong derivation	Derivation
2	<i>Morphology of adjectives and verbs</i>	DERIVATION
63		

Chart 13. Error categories in detail in 2008-00fMM25.



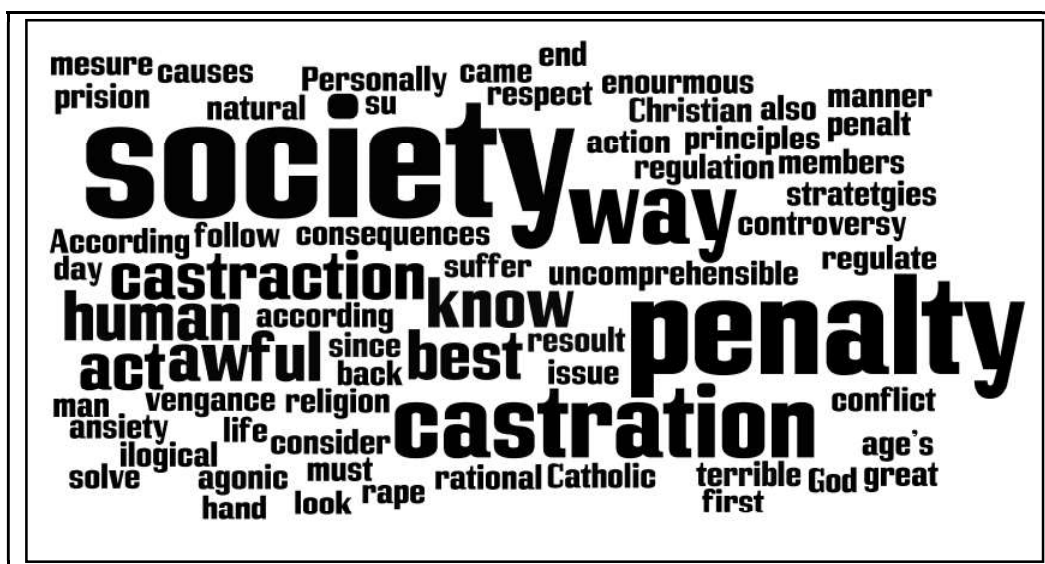
Graph 24. General error categories 2008-00fMM25.



Graph 25. General error categories in 2008-00fMM25 in relation to the total number of errors.

The error categories that are more frequent in 2008-00fMM25 are **Lack** (Missing clarity, precision, punctuation, articles and pronouns) with 15 occurrences (23.8%), **Choice** (Selection of words and punctuation) with 13 (20.6%), **Overinclusion** (Extra articles, pronouns, prepositions and capital letters) with 12 (19%), and **Spelling** (Form of nouns, adjectives, and indefinite article) with 10 instances (15.9%). Then we have five (7.9%) **Position** errors (Misplaced adverbs, nouns, and pronouns), and four (6.3%) **Inflection** problems (Morphology: inflection -mood and person- of verbs, number of nouns). The errors that occur less in this passage are **Complementation** (Verb complement) and **Derivation** (Morphology of adjectives and verbs), that take place two times (3.2%) each.

Graph 26, the word cloud of 2008-00fMM25 in its original version, let us see the main content lines in it. *Society, penalty, castration, way, human, awful, act, know, and best* are the most frequent words in the text. Not much content, it seems.



Graph 26. Word cloud of the original text 2008-00fMM25.

In turn, the word cloud of the annotated text 2008-00fMM25 illustrates the contrast between the errors tagged in the text and the content in it. Errors stand out, but the content is not completely covered by them.

Chart 15 and graphs 28, 29, 30 and 31 present the list and total error categories²⁵ present in the five low-scored essays written by the 7BAFLUV students in the proficiency exam of 2008.

	5 Low Essays			
	Short Annotation	Long Annotation	Category	Instances
1	MPunctMis	Mechanics error, Punctuation, Missing	Lack	31
2	VWordClass	Vocabulary error, Wrong Word Class	Choice	27
3	GN(WF)Spel	Grammar error, Speech part, Noun, Wrong form, Spelling	Spelling	26
4	MCapX	Mechanics error, Capitalization, Overincluded	Overinclusion	22
5	GPronWC	Grammar error, Speech part, Wrong Pronoun	Choice	21
6	SUncl	Style/Pragmatics error, Unclear/incoherent/incomprehensible	Lack	20
7	GV(WFMorph)IPers	Grammar error, Speech part, Verb, WrongForm, Morphology, Inflection of Person. Problem of Subject-Verb concordance	Inflection	13
8	DRWC	Discourse error, Wrong Register	Choice	12
9	GN(WFMorph)INum	Grammar error, Speech part, Noun, Wrong Form, Morphology, Inflection of Number	Inflection	12
10	GN(WFMorph)D	Grammar error, Speech part, Noun, WrongForm, Morphology, Derivation	Derivation	11
11	GPronX	Grammar error, Speech part, Pronoun, Overincluded	Overinclusion	10
12	GAdjWFSpel	Grammar error, Speech part, Adjective, Wrong Form, Spelling	Spelling	7
13	GPrepWC	Grammar error, Speech part, wrong Preposition	Choice	7
14	GPronMis	Grammar error, Speech part, Pronoun, Missing	Lack	7
15	GV(WF)Spel	Grammar error, SpeechPart, Verb, Spelling/Orthography	Spelling	7
16	MPunctWC	Mechanics error, Wrong Punctuation	Choice	7
17	GIndefAX	Grammar error, Speech part, Indefinite Article, overincluded	Overinclusion	6
18	WrongVerb	Grammar error, SpeechPart, Verb, Wrong Choice	Choice	6
19	DVerbos	Discourse error, Verbosity/Wordiness	Overinclusion	5
20	GAdvX	Grammar error, Speech part, Adverb,	Overinclusion	5

²⁵ Let us insist in the idea that some errors correspond to alternatives of interpretation of a problem at certain points, which naturally could have implication for the counting.

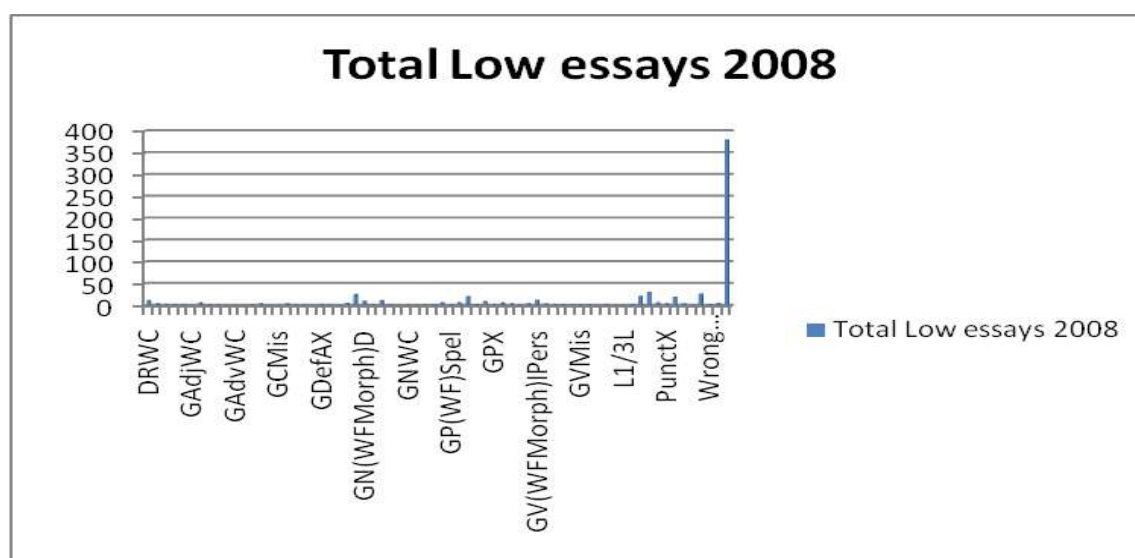
		Overincluded		
21	GCWC	Grammar error, Speech part, Wrong Conjunction	Choice	5
22	GV(WFMorph)D	Grammar error, SpeechPart, Verb Form, wrong derivation	Derivation	5
23	GV(WFMorph)IM	Grammar error, Speech part, Verb, WrongForm, Morphology, Inflection of Mood (indicative, imperative, subjunctive,conditional)	Inflection	5
24	GV(WFMorph)IV	Grammar error, Speech part, Verb, Wrong Form, Morphology, Inflection of Voice	Inflection	5
25	PunctX	Mechanics error, Punctuation, overincluded	Overinclusion	5
26	SVag	Style/Pragmatics error, Vagueness/ambiguity/lack of precision	Lack	5
27	GAdj(WFMorph)D	Grammar error, Speech part, Adjective, Wrong Form, Morphology, Derivation	Derivation	4
28	GAdj(WFMorph)XINum	Grammar error, Speech part, Adjective, Wrong Form, Morphology, Infection, Extra morpheme of Number	Inflection	4
29	GAdj(WFMorphI)Deg	Grammar error, Speech part, Adjective, Wrong Form, Morphology, Comparative/Superlative	Inflection	4
30	GDefAX	Grammar error, Speech part, Definite Article, overincluded	Overinclusion	4
31	GVWCT	Grammar error, SpeechPart, Verb, WrongTense	Choice	4
32	MCapMis	Mechanics error, Capitalization, Missing	Lack	4
33	GN(WFMorphI)NumUC	Grammar error, Speech part, Noun, Wrong form, Morphology, Wrong Inflection of Number of Countable/Uncountable	Inflection	3
34	GPMis	Grammar error, Speech part, Preposition, Missing	Lack	3
35	GP(WF)Spel	Grammar error, Speech part, Preposition, Wrong Form, Spelling	Spelling	3
36	GPX	Grammar error, Speech part, Preposition, overincluded	Overinclusion	3
37	GVAsp	Grammar error, Speech part, Verb, Wrong Form, Morphology, Inflection of Aspect, -ing or PastParticiple form	Inflection	3
38	GVAuxMis	Grammar error, Speech part, Auxiliary Verb, Missing	Lack	3
39	GVMis	Grammar error: Speech part, Verb, Missing	Lack	3
40	Wrong VerbComplement	Grammar error, SpeechPart, Verb, Wrong Complement	Complement	3
41	GAdjX	Grammar error, Speech part, Adjective,	Overinclusion	2

		overincluded		
42	GAdv(WFMorph)D	Grammar error, Speech part, Adverb, Wrong Form, Morphology, Wrong Derivation	Derivation	2
43	GAdvWP	Grammar error, Speech part, Adverb, misplaced	Position	2
44	GCWFSpel	Grammar error, Speech part, Conjunction, Wrong Form, Spelling	Spelling	2
45	GCX	Grammar error, Speech part, Conjunction, overincluded	Overinclusion	2
46	GIndefAMis	Grammar error, Speech part, Indefinite Article, Missing	Lack	2
47	GN(WFMorph)IC GenNoNo	Grammar error, Speech part, Noun, Wrong Form, Morphology, Inflection of Case, Genitive, Noun+Noun/NounOfNoun	Inflection	2
48	GNWC	Grammar error, Speech part, Wrong Noun	Choice	2
49	GNWP	Grammar error, Speech part, Misplaced Noun	Position	2
50	GPronWP	Grammar error, Speech part, Pronoun, Misplaced	Position	2
51	GV(WFMorph)IAux	Grammar error, Speech part, Verb, WrongForm, Morphology, Auxiliary/Modal	Inflection	2
52	GVAuxX	Grammar error, Speech part, Verb, Extra Auxiliary/Modal	Overinclusion	2
53	GVWCAux	Grammar error, Speech part, WrongAuxiliary/Modal	Choice	2
54	GAdjWC	Grammar error, Speech part, Wrong Adjective	Choice	1
55	GAdvMis	Grammar error, Speech part, Adverb, Missing	Lack	1
56	GAdvWC	Grammar error, Speech part, Wrong Adverb	Choice	1
57	GAdvWFSpel	Grammar error, Speech part, Adverb, Wrong Form, Spelling	Spelling	1
58	GAWC	Grammar error, Speech part, Wrong Article	Choice	1
59	GCMis	Grammar error, Speech part, Conjunction, Missing	Lack	1
60	GDefAMis	Grammar error, Speech part, Definite Article, Missing	Lack	1
61	GIndefAWFSpel	Grammar error, Speech part, Indefinite Article, Wrong form, Spelling	Spelling	1
62	GNCompl	Grammar error, Speech part, Wrong complement of Noun	Complem entation	1
63	GNWCUC	Grammar error, Speech part, Noun, Wrong Countable/Uncountable	Choice	1

64	GVWCM	Grammar error, Speech part, Verb, Wrong mood	Choice	1
65	GVWCV	Grammar error, Speech part, Verb, wrong voice	Choice	1
66	L1/3L	Style/Pragmatics error, Spanish (L1)/French(L3)-like	Choice	1
67	Verb Misplaced	Grammar error, SpeechPart, Verb, Wrong Position	Position	1
68	CodeS	Style/Pragmatics error, Code Switching	Choice	0
69	ExtraVerb	Grammar error, SpeechPart, Verb overincluded	Overinclusion	0
70	GAdjCompl	Grammar error, Speech part, Wrong Complement of Adjective	Complement	0
71	GAdjMis	Grammar error, Speech part, Adjective, Missing	Lack	0
72	GAdjWP	Grammar error, Speech part, Misplaced Adjective	Position	0
73	GAdv(WFMorph)XINum	Grammar error, Speech part, Adverb, Wrong Form, Morphology, Inflection of number overincluded	Overinclusion	0
74	GAdvCompl	Grammar error, Speech part, Adverb, Wrong Complement	Complementation	0
75	GAWP	Grammar error, Speech part, Article, misplaced	Position	0
76	GCCompl	Grammar error, Speech part, Conjunction, Wrong complement	Complementation	0
77	GCWP	Grammar error, Speech part, Conjunction, misplaced	Position	0
78	GDefAWFSpel	Grammar error, Speech part, Definite Article, Wrong Form, Spelling	Spelling	0
79	GN(WFMorph)ICGen's	Grammar error, Speech part, Noun, Wrong Form, Morphology, Inflection of Case, Genitive, Apostrophe	Inflection	0
80	GNMis	Grammar error, Speech part, Noun, Missing	Lack	0
81	GNX	Grammar error, Speech part, Extra Noun	Overinclusion	0
82	GPronWFSpel	Grammar error, Speech part, Pronoun, Wrong Form, Spelling	Spelling	0
83	GPWP	Grammar error, Speech part, Preposition, misplaced	Position	0
84	GV(WF)SpelAux	Grammar error, Speech part, Aux Verb, Wrong Form, Spelling	Spelling	0
85	GVWPAux	Grammar error, Speech part, Verb, Misplaced Auxiliary/Modal	Position	0
86	MCapWP	Mechanics error, Capitalization, misplaced	Position	0
87	MPunctWP	Mechanics error, Punctuation, Misplaced	Position	0
88	MWFSyl	Mechanics error, Wrong Form, Syllabication	Form	0

89	SFrag	Style/Pragmatics error, Fragment (incomplete sentence/idea)	Lack	0
90	VCogn	Vocabulary error, Cognate	Choice	0
91	W PastForm	Grammar error, SpeechPart, Verb, WrongForm,Morphology, PastTense	Inflection	0
92	PrepCompl	Grammar error, Speech part, Preposition, Complementation	Complem entation	0
				380

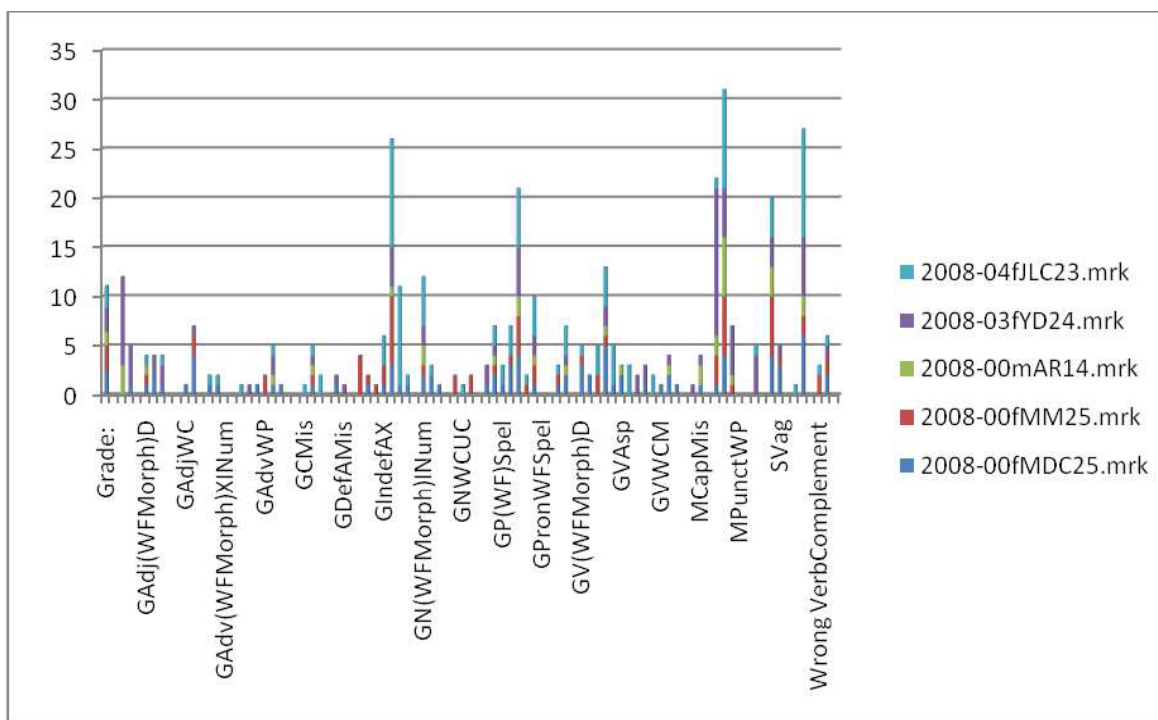
Chart 15. Total errors in low-scored essays



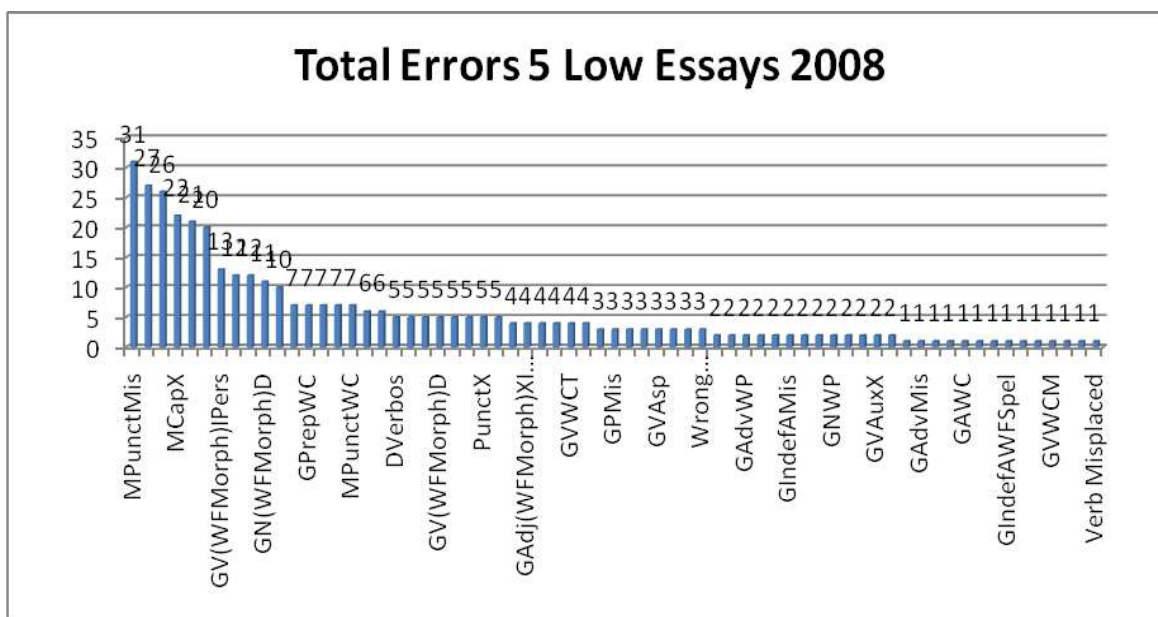
Graph 28. Error categories in low-scored essays, in relation to the total number of errors in that group.

In the first group of 2008 essays, the low-scored ones, there are 380 errors in total, belonging to 67 (72.8%) of the 92 categories established in our bidimensional (classification-description) system. Any particular type of error occurs with a frequency that could be considered really high: the most frequent one is less than 10% of the total. This confirms the tendency mentioned in the previous analysis of individual essays: it is the combination of various flaws what finally renders these (intermediate proficiency) texts low-quality compositions. On the one hand, this can be related to the effect of frequency of errors on the perception of readers and raters, (what the literature about errors has called *irritability*), many errors end up making a bad impression of a text. On the other hand, it is clear that, more than the amount of errors, it is their gravity or impact on meaning and clarity of content what affects the most the readability of these passages. Of course, a

purely quantitative account of errors in a text cannot explain that. A mixed qualitative-quantitative approach is necessary for that.



Graph 29. Accumulated total errors by type in low-scored essays.



Graph 30. Total errors by type in low-scored essays 2008.

Regarding the linguistic classification categories, the results evidence that **missing punctuation**, a mechanics lack error, is the most frequent, with 31 instances (8.16% of the total). **Wrong word class**, a problem of vocabulary choice, is the second most frequent flaw, with 27 instances, 7.1% of the total. The first two types of errors represent serious problems, for they affect the content and clarity of the ideas in the texts.

The third most frequent error in 2008 low-scored essays is **spelling (form) of nouns** (26 times out of 380, 6.8%). The next most frequent problem in 2008 low-scored essays is **over inclusion of capital letters** (22 times, 5.8% of the total errors in the group). These two types of errors can be considered as “non serious” problems, because they usually do not affect meaning.

Pronouns prove to be the most problematic speech part for 2008 low-scored writers: the fifth most frequent flaw in their texts is the **wrong choice of pronouns**, present 21 times (5.5%). Again, this is an important problem, which affects the content and clarity of ideas. The sixth error type is **lack of clarity, coherence, or understandability**, a style/pragmatics problem. Nonsensical errors amount to 20, which is 5.3% of the total. It is necessary to remind the reader here that lack of clarity is a type of error that usually does not refer to a single word but to complete phrases, clauses sentences and even longer text pieces. It must be said that nonsense is often the result of other errors, as well. For instance, lack of punctuation makes the limits between thought groups unclear; if you add wrong lexical choice (word class confusion, adjectives instead of adverbs, nouns instead of adjectives) and wrong pronouns (faulty references) to that, the result can be a linguistic and communicative failure.

After those six major types of frequent errors, which combined amount to 147 instances (39%, more than a third of all the errors in the 2008 low-scored essays), come some errors that have 13, 12, 11, and 10 instances each, i.e. they could be considered as “intermediately” frequent for the 2008 low-scored essays. Problems of **verb-subject concordance** (inflection of verb person) occur 13 times (3.4%). Teachers usually deem this

error important, despite the fact that it does not indeed affect understandability too much. **Wrong register** is the eighth most frequent flaw, occurring 12 times (3.2%). It regularly consists of contractions or oral (speech) style. Problems with the **number (inflection) of nouns** take place the same number of times. The tenth most frequent problem is wrong derivation of nouns, which happens in 11 occasions (2.9%).

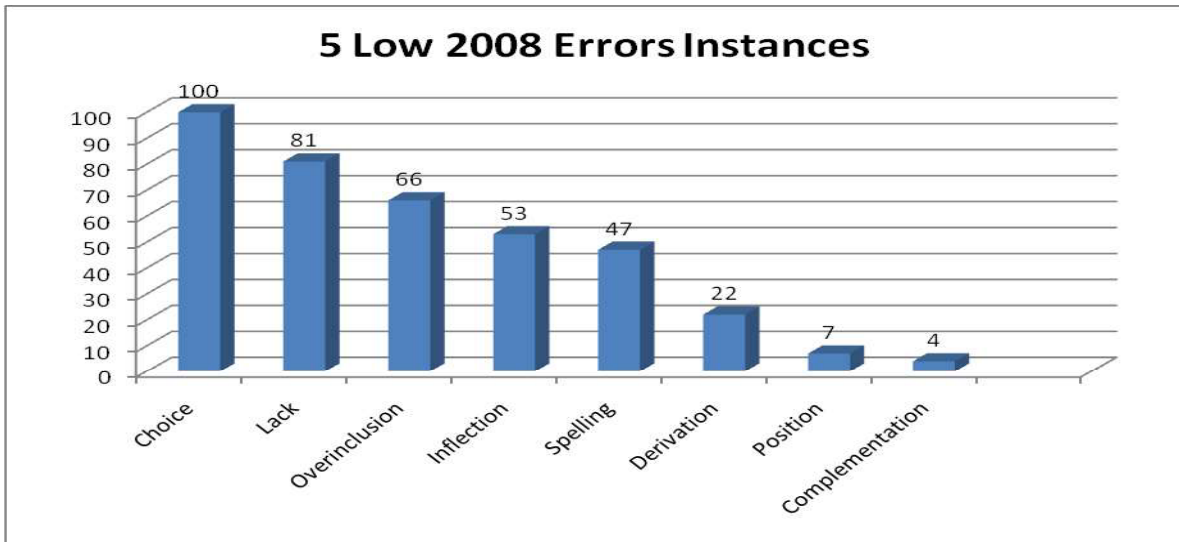
Problems that occur seven times each (five types of errors), six times each (two types), five times each (eight types), four times each (six types), three times each (eight types), two times each (13 types), and only one time each (14 types) make up the final group of (very) low frequency errors in the 7BAFLUV students' low-scored essays of 2008.

Seven times (1.8%) errors make 9.2% of the total; they are five types of errors; two of them are **spelling flaws in adjectives and verbs**, other two are problems of **choice (wrong prepositions and punctuation)**, the other one is **lack (missing pronoun, especially the one that corresponds to the subject of the sentence)**. Six times (1.6%) errors amount to 3.2%. They comprise two types: **over inclusion of indefinite articles** and **wrong choice of verbs**. Both are linked to Spanish-like procedures. In turn, five times (1.3%) errors total 6.6%; they correspond to eight types of problems. **Over inclusion (of adverbs and punctuation, and wordiness)** is the most prominent of them, followed by **inflection (verb mood, and adjective extra number and degree)**. Four times (1.1%) errors constitute 6.6% of all the errors in the group. They correspond to six types of problems; the most prominent among them is **inflection (adjectives: extra number and degree)**, followed by **wrong form (derivation) of adjectives**, **over inclusion of definite article** –related to Spanish-like structuring-, **choice of verb tense** and **missing capital letters** where necessary. Three times (0.8%) errors sum 6.3%. They embed eight types of problems; the most prominent here are **lack (missing prepositions, verbs and auxiliary/modal)** and **inflection (number of countable/uncountable nouns and verb aspect –ing/past participle)**. Two times (0.5%) errors add to 6.8% of the total. 13 types compose this group. **Overinclusion (extra conjunctions and auxiliary/modal)** and **Position (misplaced adverbs, nouns and pronouns)** stand out among them, followed by

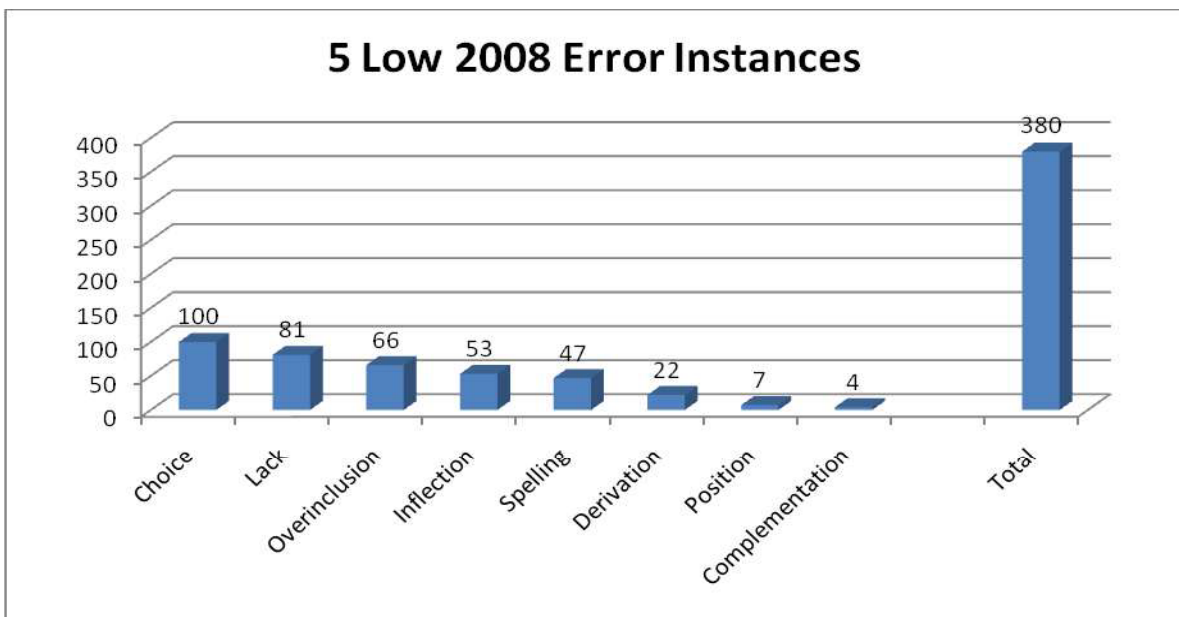
Inflection (morphology of auxiliary/modal and noun-noun vs. noun-of-noun genitive noun inflection) and **Choice (wrong nouns and auxiliary/modal)**. This group ends with errors regarding **form (derivation) of adverbs**, **form (Spelling) of conjunctions**, and **missing (Lack) indefinite articles**.

The least frequent errors in the 2008 low-scored essays are one time (0.3%) errors, which total 3.7% of all the errors there. They correspond to 14 types of errors. The most prominent among them, (1.8% of the total, half the amount in this group), deals with **wrong choice of words (adjective, adverb, and article)**, **confusion of countable/uncountable noun**, **incorrect selection of verb mood and voice**, and **use of L1/L3-like structuring** instead of the one proper of English. **Lack (missing adverb, conjunction, and definite article)** problems are next, followed by flaws of **Spelling (adverb and indefinite article)**. The last among the least frequent errors in the 2008 low-scored essays are inaccuracies of **Complementation of noun** and **Position (misplacement) of verb**.

Now, in relation to the second dimension in our errors analysis system, descriptive categories of errors, in the 2008 low-scored essays, **Choice** is clearly the most frequent type of error, with 26.3% of the total (100 out of 380). **Lack** comes second with 21.1% (80/380). **Over inclusion** is the third most frequent error, with 17.4% (66/380). **Inflection** comes fourth with a frequency almost half of the most frequent one: 53 times, which is 13.9% of the total. **Spelling** problems occur 47 times (12.4%). There is an abrupt drop in the frequency of errors at this point. **Position** errors occur only four times (1.8%) and **Complementation** errors happen only four times (1.1%). (See graphs 31 and 32 and chart 16),



Graph 31. Total error by modes (description categories) in low-scored essays 2008.



Graph 32. Total error by modes (descriptive categories) in low-scored essays 2008 against the total errors in the sub group.

5 LOW ESSAYS			
Short Annotation	Long Annotation	Category	Instances
VWordClass	Vocabulary error, Wrong Word Class	Choice	27
GPronWC	Grammar error, Speech part, Wrong Pronoun	Choice	21
DRWC	Discourse error, Wrong Register	Choice	12
GPrepWC	Grammar error, Speech part, wrong	Choice	7

	Preposition		
MPunctWC	Mechanics error, Wrong Punctuation	Choice	7
WrongVerb	Grammar error, SpeechPart, Verb, Wrong Choice	Choice	6
GCWC	Grammar error, Speech part, Wrong Conjunction	Choice	5
GVWCT	Grammar error, SpeechPart, Verb, WrongTense	Choice	4
GNWC	Grammar error, Speech part, Wrong Noun	Choice	2
GVWCAux	Grammar error, Speech part, WrongAuxiliary/Modal	Choice	2
GAdjWC	Grammar error, Speech part, Wrong Adjective	Choice	1
GAdvWC	Grammar error, Speech part, Wrong Adverb	Choice	1
GAWC	Grammar error, Speech part, Wrong Article	Choice	1
GNWCUC	Grammar error, Speech part, Noun, Wrong Countable/Uncountable	Choice	1
GVWCM	Grammar error, Speech part, Verb, Wrong mode	Choice	1
GVWCV	Grammar error, Speech part, Verb, wrong voice	Choice	1
L1/3L	Style/Pragmatics error, Spanish (L1)/French(L3)-like	Choice	1
CHOICE: Word class, register, punctuation,			100
Wrong VerbComplement	Grammar error, SpeechPart, Verb, Wrong Complement	Complementation	3
GNCompl	Grammar error, Speech part, Wrong complement of Noun	Complementation	1
COMPLEMENTATION:			4
GN(WFMorph)D	Grammar error, Speech part, Noun, WrongForm, Morphology, Derivation	Derivation	11
GV(WFMorph)D	Grammar error, SpeechPart, Verb Form, wrong derivation	Derivation	5
GAdj(WFMorph)D	Grammar error, Speech part, Adjective, Wrong Form, Morphology, Derivation	Derivation	4
GAdv(WFMorph)D	Grammar error, Speech part, Adverb, Wrong Form, Morphology, Wrong Derivation	Derivation	2
DERIVATION:			22
GV(WFMorph)IPers	Grammar error, Speech part, Verb, WrongForm, Morphology, Inflection of Person. Problem of Subject-Verb	Inflection	13

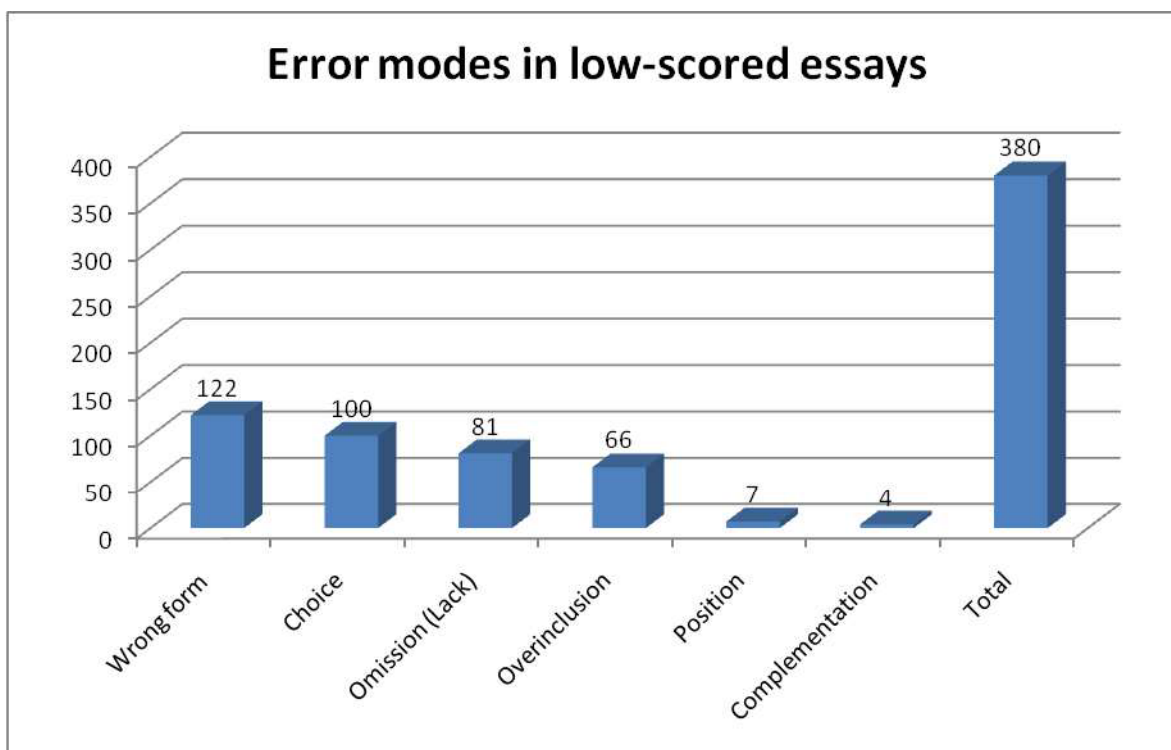
	concordance		
GN(WFMorph)INum	Grammar error, Speech part, Noun, Wrong Form, Morphology, Inflection of Number	Inflection	12
GV(WFMorph)IM	Grammar error, Speech part, Verb, WrongForm, Morphology, Inflection of Mode (indicative, imperative, subjunctive,conditional)	Inflection	5
GV(WFMorph)IV	Grammar error, Speech part, Verb, Wrong Form, Morphology, Inflection of Voice	Inflection	5
GAdj(WFMorph)XINum	Grammar error, Speech part, Adjective, Wrong Form, Morphology, Infection, Extra morpheme of Number	Inflection	4
GAdj(WFMorph)IDeg	Grammar error, Speech part, Adjective, Wrong Form, Morphology, Comparative/Superlative	Inflection	4
GN(WFMorph)INumUC	Grammar error, Speech part, Noun, Wrong form, Morphology, Wrong Inflection of Number of Countable/Uncountable	Inflection	3
GVAsp	Grammar error, Speech part, Verb, Wrong Form, Morphology, Inflection of Aspect, -ing or PastParticiple form	Inflection	3
GN(WFMorph)ICGenNoNo	Grammar error, Speech part, Noun,Wrong Form, Morphology, Inflection of Case, Genitive, Noun+Noun/NounOfNoun	Inflection	2
GV(WFMorph)IAux	Grammar error, Speech part, Verb, WrongForm, Morphology, Auxiliary/Modal	Inflection	2
INFLECTION:			53
MPunctMis	Mechanics error, Punctuation, Missing	Lack	31
SUncl	Style/Pragmatics error, Unclear/incoherent/incomprehensible	Lack	20
GPronMis	Grammar error, Speech part, Pronoun, Missing	Lack	7
SVag	Style/Pragmatics error, Vagueness/ambiguity/lack of precision	Lack	5
MCapMis	Mechanics error, Capitalization, Missing	Lack	4
GPMis	Grammar error, Speech part, Preposition, Missing	Lack	3
GVAuxMis	Grammar error, Speech part, Auxiliary Verb, Missing	Lack	3

GVMis	Grammar error: Speech part, Verb, Missing	Lack	3
GIndefAMis	Grammar error, Speech part, Indefinite Article, Missing	Lack	2
GAdvMis	Grammar error, Speech part, Adverb, Missing	Lack	1
GCMis	Grammar error, Speech part, Conjunction, Missing	Lack	1
GDefAMis	Grammar error, Speech part, Definite Article, Missing	Lack	1
LACK:			81
MCapX	Mechanics error, Capitalization, Overincluded	Overinclusion	22
GPronX	Grammar error, Speech part, Pronoun, Overincluded	Overinclusion	10
GIndefAX	Grammar error, Speech part, Indefinite Article, overincluded	Overinclusion	6
DVerbos	Discourse error, Verbosity/Wordiness	Overinclusion	5
GAdvX	Grammar error, Speech part, Adverb, Overincluded	Overinclusion	5
PunctX	Mechanics error, Punctuation, overincluded	Overinclusion	5
GDefAX	Grammar error, Speech part, Definite Article, overincluded	Overinclusion	4
GPX	Grammar error, Speech part, Preposition, overincluded	Overinclusion	3
GAdjX	Grammar error, Speech part, Adjective, overincluded	Overinclusion	2
GCX	Grammar error, Speech part, Conjunction, overincluded	Overinclusion	2
GVAuxX	Grammar error, Speech part, Verb, Extra Auxiliary/Modal	Overinclusion	2
OVERINCLUSION:			66
GAdvWP	Grammar error, Speech part, Adverb, misplaced	Position	2
GNWP	Grammar error, Speech part, Misplaced Noun	Position	2
GPronWP	Grammar error, Speech part, Pronoun, Misplaced	Position	2
Verb Misplaced	Grammar error, SpeechPart, Verb, Wrong Position	Position	1
POSITION:			7
GN(WF)Spel	Grammar error, Speech part, Noun, Wrong form, Spelling	Spelling	26
GAdjWFSpel	Grammar error, Speech part, Adjective, Wrong Form, Spelling	Spelling	7

GV(WF)Spel	Grammar error, SpeechPart, Verb, Spelling/Orthography	Spelling	7
GP(WF)Spel	Grammar error, Speech part, Preposition, Wrong Form, Spelling	Spelling	3
GCWFSpel	Grammar error, Speech part, Conjunction, Wrong Form, Spelling	Spelling	2
GAdvWFSpel	Grammar error, Speech part, Adverb, Wrong Form, Spelling	Spelling	1
GIndefAWFSpel	Grammar error, Speech part, Indefinite Article, Wrong form, Spelling	Spelling	1
SPELLING:			47
TOTAL			380

Chart 16. Descriptive error categories in low-scored essays 2008.

Let us remember that there are six major descriptive criteria in our error analysis system: Omission (missing elements), Overinclusion (extra elements), Wrong Form (Morphology and Orthography), Wrong Choice, Wrong Position and Complementation. Wrong form contains Morphology and Spelling flaws, and morphology in turn is subdivided into Inflection and Derivation problems. Orthography errors correspond to spelling problems. Thus, Inflection, derivation and spelling should be grouped as a single mode of error. That changes completely the panorama, as chart 15 and graph 33 illustrate. It is Wrong Form the error mode that is more frequent than the rest: 122 instances out of 380, which is 32.1% of the errors in the group of low-scored essays of 2008, almost a third of the total. The following most frequent errors—descending in frequency- drop in steps of about 20 instances each: Choice 100, Omission 81, and Overinclusion 66. Position and complementation errors are almost neglectable (7 -1.8%-and 4 -1.1%- instances only, respectively).



Graph 33. Total error modes in low-scored essays 2008.

It might also be interesting listing the errors that did not occur in the low-scored essays of 2008, for this could mean that those linguistic aspects present no problem for the learners at that level. See chart 17.

1	CodeS	Style/Pragmatics error, Code Switching	Choice
2	ExtraVerb	Grammar error, SpeechPart, Verb overincluded	Overinclusion
3	GAdjCompl	Grammar error, Speech part, Wrong Complement of Adjective	Complement
4	GAdjMis	Grammar error, Speech part, Adjective, Missing	Lack
5	GAdjWP	Grammar error, Speech part, Misplaced Adjective	Position
6	GAdv(WFMorph)XINum	Grammar error, Speech part, Adverb, Wrong Form, Morphology, Inflection of number overincluded	Overinclusion
7	GAdvCompl	Grammar error, Speech part, Adverb, Wrong Complement	Complementation
8	GAWP	Grammar error, Speech part, Article, misplaced	Position
9	GCCompl	Grammar error, Speech part, Conjunction, Wrong complement	Complmentation
10	GCWP	Grammar error, Speech part, Conjunction, misplaced	Position
11	GDefAWFSpel	Grammar error, Speech part, Definite Article, Wrong Form, Spelling	Spelling

12	GN(WFMorph)ICGen's	Grammar error, Speech part, Noun, Wrong Form, Morphology, Inflection of Case, Genitive, Apostrophe	Inflection
13	GNMis	Grammar error, Speech part, Noun, Missing	Lack
14	GNX	Grammar error, Speech part, Extra Noun	Overinclusion
15	GPronWFSpel	Grammar error, Speech part, Pronoun, Wrong Form, Spelling	Spelling
16	GPWP	Grammar error, Speech part, Preposition, misplaced	Position
17	GV(WF)SpelAux	Grammar error, Speech part, Aux Verb, Wrong Form, Spelling	Spelling
18	GVWPAux	Grammar error, Speech part, Verb, Misplaced Auxiliary/Modal	Position
19	MCapWP	Mechanics error, Capitalization, misplaced	Position
20	MPunctWP	Mechanics error, Punctuation, Misplaced	Position
21	MWFSyl	Mechanics error, Wrong Form, Syllabication	Form
22	SFrag	Style/Pragmatics error, Fragment (incomplete sentence/idea)	Lack
23	VCogn	Vocabulary error, Cognate	Choice
24	W PastForm	Grammar error, SpeechPart, Verb, WrongForm,Morphology, PastTense	Inflection
25	PrepCompl	Grammar error, Speech part, Preposition, Complementation	Complementation

Chart 17. Errors not present in low-scored essays.

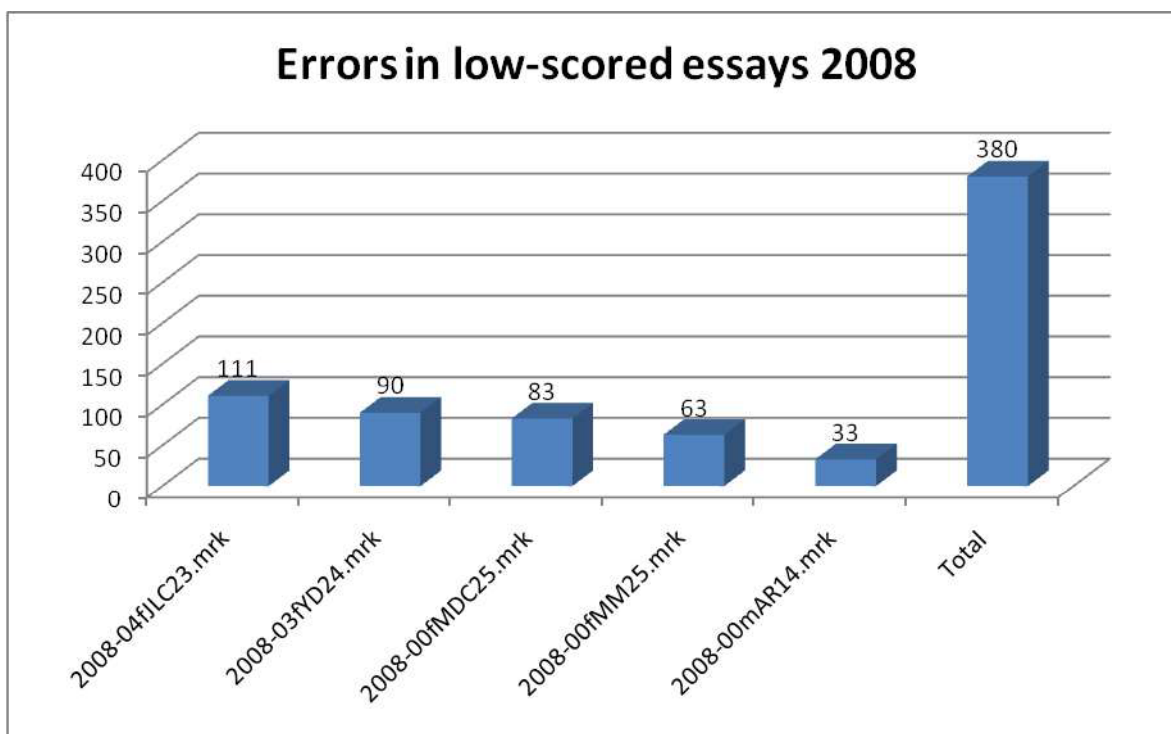
There are some interesting aspects in relation to non-occurring errors. First, 25 non-occurring errors out of 92 possible errors is 27.2%. This could be understood as a “safe” zone, the area in which errors do not occur at this intermediate proficiency level. Of course a bigger study both in population and time could confirm this hypothesis. Next, low-scored essays do not present code switching. This means that, despite the presence of L1/L3 and derivation features that correspond mainly to their mother tongue, the students do not resort to their mother tongue for complete language chunks or ideas. This seems to be a normal trait in a learning stage in which you should rely more on the target language rules than on your mother tongue.

Third, adverbs do not present the overinclusion of inflection of number (extra morpheme of plural). That feature is restricted to adjectives. Verbs and nouns are not over included. Pronouns, articles, and prepositions are. That shows a vocabulary and grammar area that probably needs more attention.

Besides, there is no problem with the complementation of adjectives, adverbs, conjunctions, and prepositions. The ones that occur are verb and noun complementation, with very low frequency (three and one times, respectively). It seems this is a grammatical aspect that does not represent much problem at this level.

Further, there is no lack of adjectives and nouns; lack is something that seems to affect more global aspects of sense and meaning (clarity, precision) than local grammar. There are no fragments. It could mean that the global sentence structure (complete ideas) is something that is already mastered by the learners at this level. No spelling problems are present in pronouns, definite articles, auxiliary/modal verbs: first, they are short words and, second, they are just a few, which makes them easy for the learners. There are no problems of misplacement (word order) of adjectives, despite all the other problems regarding them (spelling, derivation, degree, overinclusion, wrong choice, wrong plural form); either this is a lower level, basic proficiency, feature or could be due to the fact that the students tend to use simple, non complex structures in which no more than one adjective is used. On the other hand, the fact that articles, conjunctions, prepositions, auxiliary/modal and verbs do not present wrong position can be due to the steadiness of English in this respect. The lack of misplaced capitalization and punctuation could in fact be due to an error in our classification system: wrong capitalization and wrong punctuation can overlap with “lack”... Syllabication problems did not occur. Modern word processors could be influencing handwriting: any essay presented divided words at the end of a line.

One last thing about the 2008 low-scored essays is the particular contribution of each essay to the total amount of errors in the group. Graph 34 allows a clear visualization of this.



Graph 34. Total Individual and global errors in medium-scored essays.

It calls the attention the fact that score and number of errors are not directly proportional: for instance, the essay with the fewer number of errors is the one with the lowest score in this group. For their rating, the evaluations must be using other or more criteria than the sole presence of errors: extension of the text, development of ideas (content quality), and gravity of errors could be some of them.

7.2. 2008 Medium-scored essays

7.2.1. 2008-04fVO34

Colombian education has been always ruled by grades and it is something that at this time would be really difficult to change. University students, unfortunately in spite of their interest in doing a professional career that help them to improve their status and to reach their personal aims, need the grades to pressure their academic progress.

In this country, grades are the main component of education because they are result of the process. Students have been used from the very beginning of the school to study

and work hard for having a good grade and not for acquiring a real and concious knowledge of whatever the field.

As this problem is so fosilized in the students, when they go to university, they just continue the method they have used for their whole life. Probably, if the system changes, that would be very difficult to get into a new habit and the result would become in a mess.

Grades are important because they stimulate students, moreover, they are part of the colombian education system.

This essay is made up of 173 words in four paragraphs, with only seven sentences, some of them passive (28% of passive, according to the statistics given by Word). Regarding the extension in number of words, this text is almost a half of what was requested. In relation to the development, the division in paragraphs evidences an acceptable overall structure, but it is difficult to identify clearly the introductory, developmental and closing sections. The presence of passive, subordination and connectors support the level of structural complexity or grammar range. Thus, on the whole, it seems to be a good text. However, a more particular scrutiny reveals some probematic details.

Errors tagged in 2008-04fVO34 using MARKIN:

^{GDefAMis} Colombian education has been always ^{GAdvWP} ruled by grades and it is something that at this time would be really difficult to change. University students, unfortunately ^{GAdvX SVag} in spite of their interest in doing a professional career that help ^{GV(WFMorph)IPers} them to improve their status and to reach their personal aims, need the grades to pressure their academic progress.

In this country, grades are the main component of education because they are result of the process. Students have been used from the very beginning of the ^{SVag} school to study and work hard for having a good grade and not for acquiring ^{GV(WF)Spel} a real and concious ^{GAdjWFSpel} knowledge of whatever the field.

As this problem is so fossilized^{GV(WF)Spel} in the students, when they go to university, they just continue the method they have used for their whole life. Probably, if the system changes, that^{GPronX} would^{GVWCAux} be very difficult to get into a new habit and the result would^{GVWCAux} become in a mess.

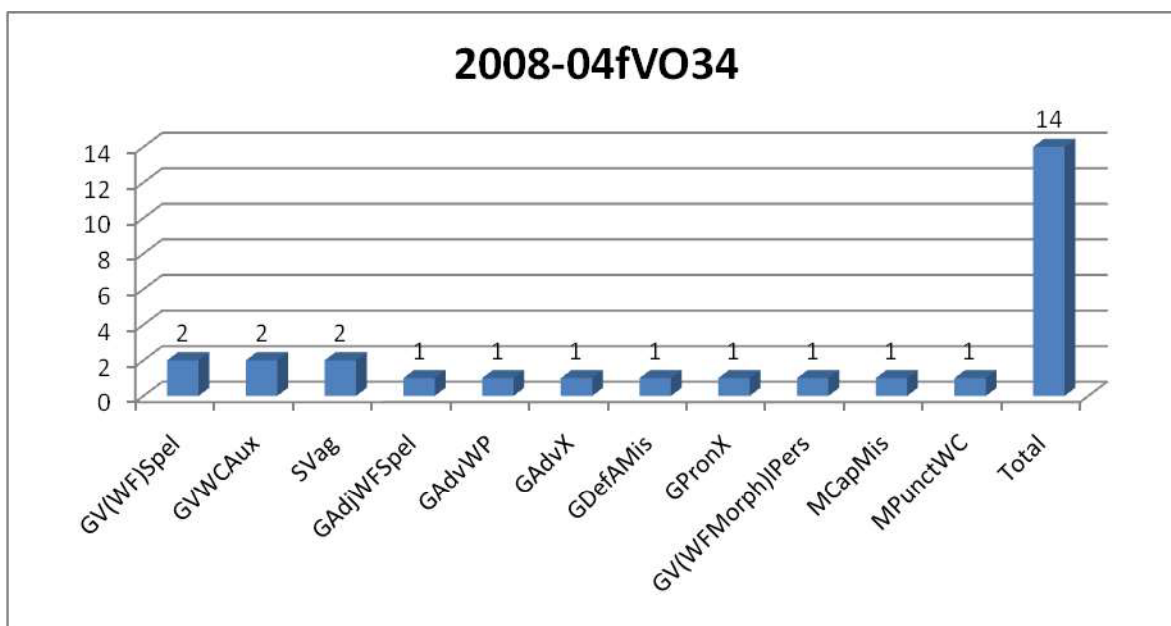
Grades are important because they stimulate students,^{MPunctWC} moreover, they are part of the colombian^{MCapMis} education system.

Chart 18 (MARKIN statistics) and graph 35 (the corresponding graphic chart) show those problems in 2008-04fVO34²⁶:

2008-04fVO34		
Instances	Long Annotation	Category
2	Style/Pragmatics error, Vagueness/ambiguity/lack of precision	Lack
2	Grammar error, SpeechPart, Verb, Spelling/Orthography	Spelling
2	Grammar error, Speech part, WrongAuxiliary/Modal	Choice
1	Grammar error, Speech part, Adjective, Wrong Form, Spelling	Spelling
1	Grammar error, Speech part, Adverb, misplaced	Position
1	Mechanics error, Wrong Punctuation	Choice
1	Grammar error, Speech part, Verb, WrongForm, Morphology, Inflection of Person. Problem of Subject-Verb concordance	Inflection
1	Mechanics error, Capitalization, Missing	Lack
1	Grammar error, Speech part, Adverb, Overincluded	Overinclusion
1	Grammar error, Speech part, Pronoun, Overincluded	Overinclusion
1	Grammar error, Speech part, Definite Article, Missing	Lack
14		

Chart 18. Errors tagged in 2008-04fVO34.

²⁶ Some errors correspond to alternatives of interpretation of a problem at certain points.



Graph 35. Errors tagged in 2008-04fVO34.

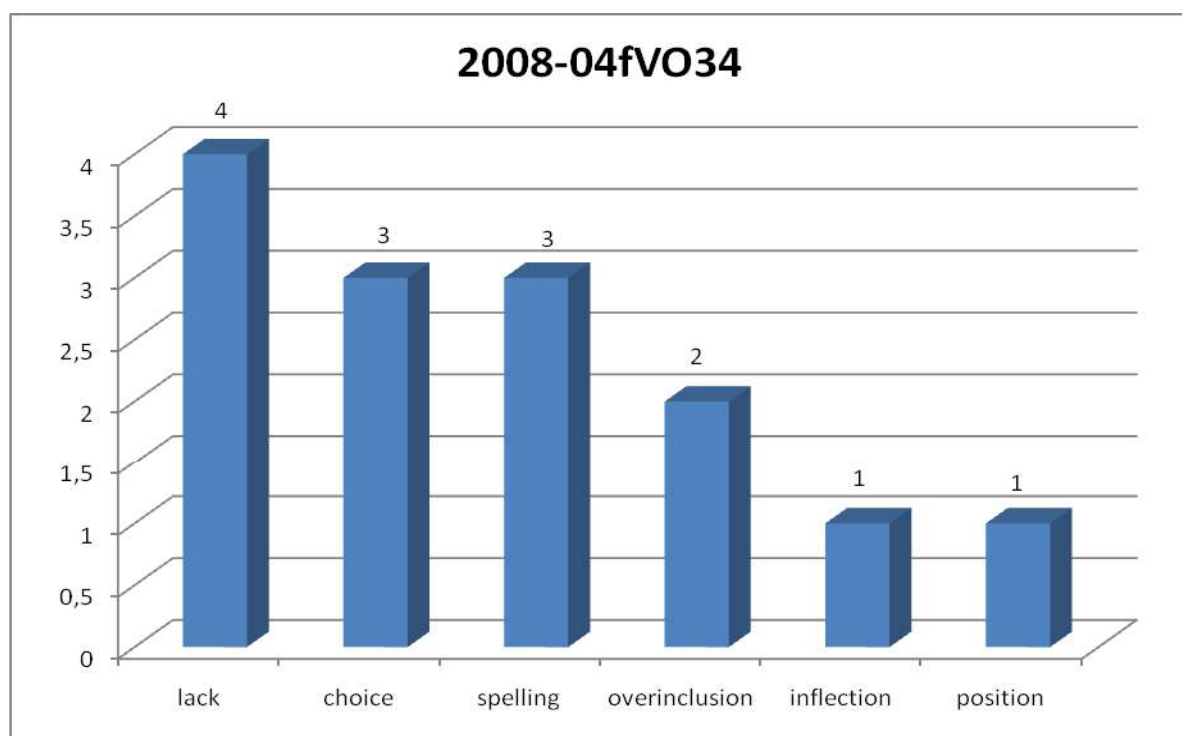
14 errors in 173 words make one error per 12 or 13 (12.4) words, 8.1% only. Fourteen errors in four paragraphs is a bit over three errors per paragraph, not much probably. The figures show three errors occurring two times each and the rest occur only once. Two-time occurring problems are **vagueness/lack of precision/ambiguity**, **verb spelling**, and **wrong choice of auxiliary/modal**. The other errors refer to **spelling of adjectives**, **misplaced adverbs**, **punctuation wrong choice**, **inflection of person (concordance subject-verb) in verbs**, **missing capitalization**, **adverbs and pronouns over included**, and **missing definite articles**. All those errors seem not to be too serious, except ambiguity, wrong auxiliary/modal, and maybe the wrong punctuation. From the linguistic error analysis perspective, this essay is not a low-scored one.

The interpretation of the results can be complemented if they are organized according to the descriptive categories (chart 19, graphs 36 and 37). Here, the descriptive – not the classification- criteria are taken into account. Totals are given for individual error types, each error mode, and the total errors for the essay.

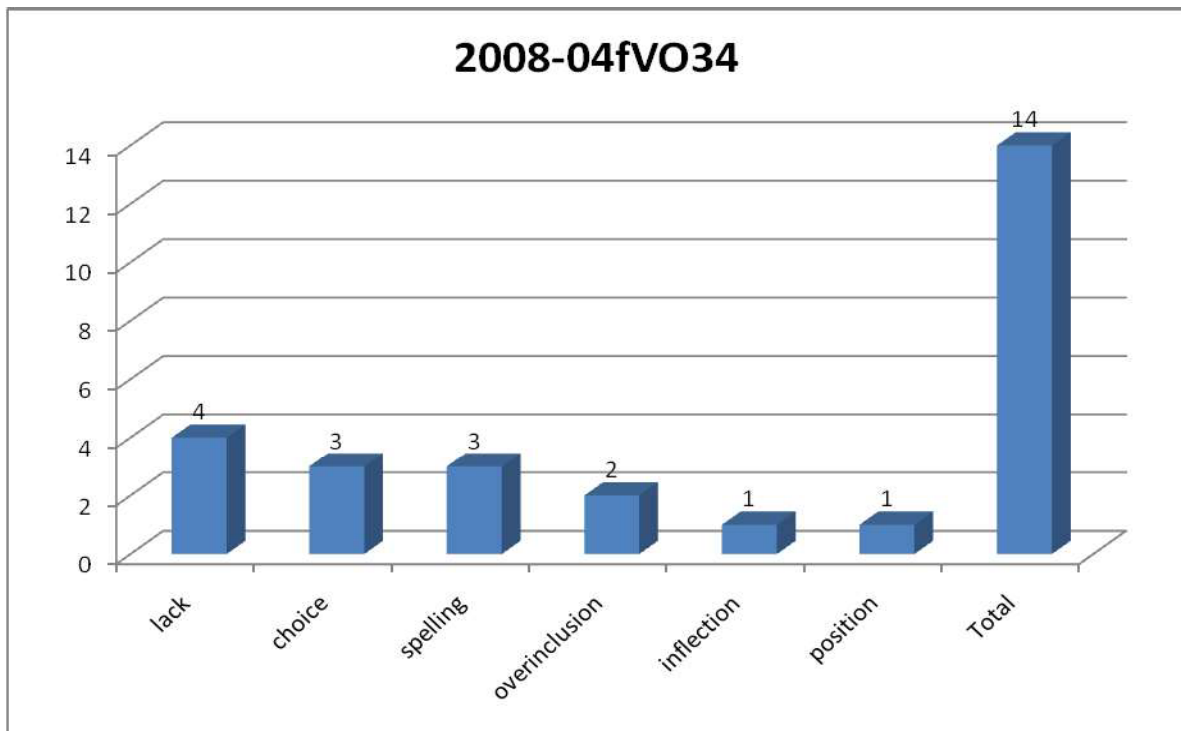
Markin stats for 2008-04fVO34 organized according to the category:

Instances	Long Annotation	Category
2	Style/Pragmatics error, Vagueness/ambiguity/lack of precision	Lack
1	Mechanics error, Capitalization, Missing	Lack
1	Grammar error, Speech part, Definite Article, Missing	Lack
4	<i>Precision, capitalization, definite article</i>	LACK
2	Grammar error, Speech part, WrongAuxiliary/Modal	Choice
1	Mechanics error, Wrong Punctuation	Choice
3	<i>Selection of auxiliary/modal and punctuation</i>	CHOICE
2	Grammar error, SpeechPart, Verb, Spelling/Orthography	Spelling
1	Grammar error, Speech part, Adjective, Wrong Form, Spelling	Spelling
3	<i>Form of verbs and adjective</i>	SPELLING
1	Grammar error, Speech part, Adverb, Overincluded	Overinclusion
1	Grammar error, Speech part, Pronoun, Overincluded	Overinclusion
2	<i>Extra adverb and pronoun (morphology)</i>	OVERINCLUSION
1	Grammar error, Speech part, Verb, WrongForm, Morphology, Inflection of Person. Problem of Subject-Verb concordance	Inflection
1	<i>Verb person (concordance subject-verb) (morphology)</i>	INFLECTION
1	Grammar error, Speech part, Adverb, misplaced	Position
1	<i>Adverb</i>	POSITION
14		

Chart 19. Error categories in detail in 2008-04fVO34.



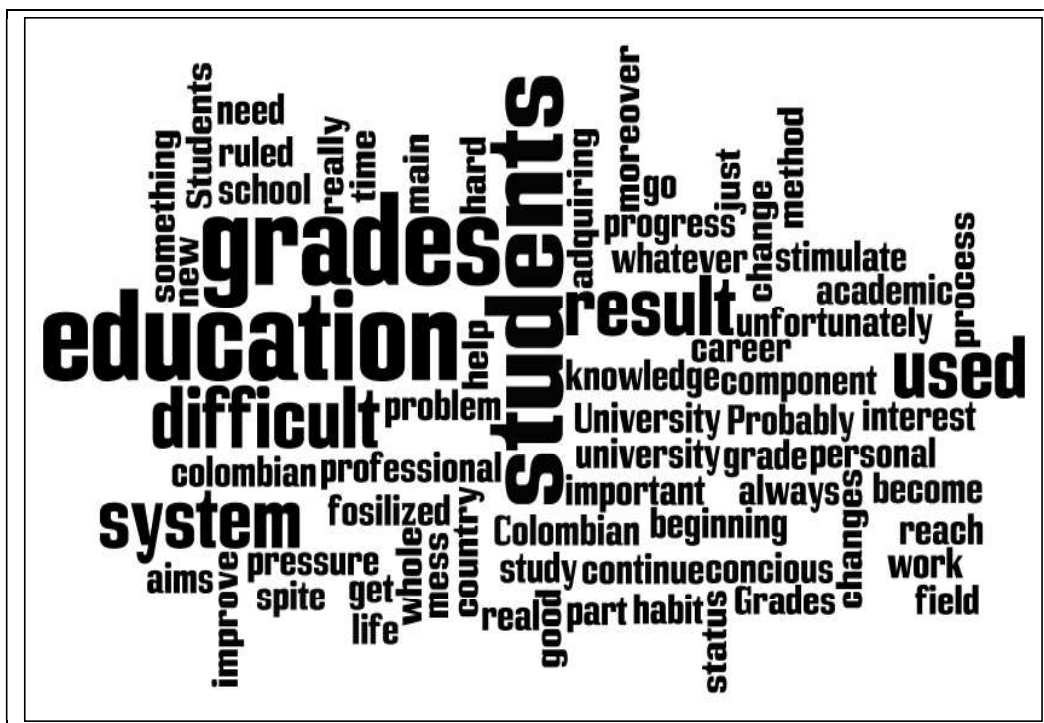
Graph 36. General error categories in 2008-04fVO34



Graph 37. General error categories in 2008-04fVO34 in relation to the total number of errors.

What chart 19 and graphs 36 and 37 tell us is that **Lack** is the most frequent problem in 2008-04fVO34; it occurs four times (28.6% of the 14 errors present in the text), **Wrong Choice** and **Spelling** come then with three instances (21.4%) each. Half of the most frequent errors in this passage is **Overinclusion**, which happens only two times (14.3%). **Inflection** and **Position** (misplacement) errors occur only once (7.1%) each. Lack of precision can be, of course, something important in an essay. However, it seems that most of the problems in this essay are on the surface or form of the text.

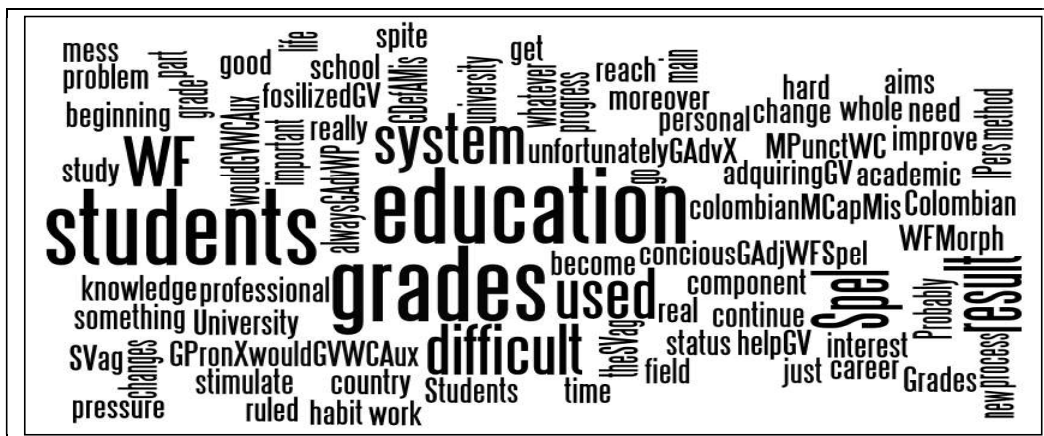
Graph 38 (WORDLE word cloud) depicts the content of 2008-04fVO34, in its original version, in terms of most frequent content words.



Graph 38. Word cloud of the original text 2008-04fVO34.

Education, students, grades, system, used, and result are the words that are more frequent in this passage. It seems that there is not much content in it.

The word cloud of the annotated text 2008-04fVO34 (graph 39) indicates that the errors present in the text do not cover its content.



Graph 39. Word cloud of the annotated text 2008-04fVO34.

7.2.2. 2008-04mCAT36

The penalty for a conviction of rape should be castration. This kind of people should be punished in a way which avoid them to commit again the same crime because they can cause big trouble to their victims.

First of all, people who commit a rape produce a feeling of frustration to most, if not, all of their victims. Actually it can be worst if the victim is a woman and get pregnant or if a child realizes he or she is the result of a rape. In this case the victims are a growing chain.

Secondly, we know that a conviction of rape also causes a kind of everlasting pain. As I mentioned above, the chain of victims keeps growing since the moment in which the crime takes place. I think we could consider that each of the close family could be counted as a victim. As a result, many people is touched by this terrible and I would say unforgivable crime and this feeling seems to be endless or not to have a forgetting day.

Furthermore, I think that people who commit a rape is committing an act of castration in a figurative way. As I just said, the act of committing a rape could be considered as a castration, because it is an event that puts a mark on somebody's life that cannot be removed.

In such a simple word, committing a rape is destroying the life of the victim, by the means of putting a mark that cannot be erased and the only punishment that cannot be erased of a conviction of rape is castration.

The essay 2008-04mCAT36 is made of 269 words in five paragraphs. Its division in paragraphs shows an acceptable general structure, reinforced by the use of sequence connectors. The presence of some passive (8% passive sentences, according to Word statistics), relative clauses (subordination), and connectors both within and between paragraphs support the good level of structural complexity and grammar range displayed by the writer. In general, like the previous essay, this seems to be a good text, not exempt of some flaws, which can be seen in the annotated text that follows.

Errors tagged in 2008-04mCAT36 using MARKIN:

The penalty for a conviction of rape should be castration. This kind of people should be punished in a way which ^{GPronWC} avoid ^{WrongVerb GV(WFMorph)IPers} them to commit again the same crime because they can cause big trouble to their victims ^{DVerbos} .

First of all^{DVerbos}, people who commit a rape produce a feeling of frustration to most, if not,^{PunctX} all ^{DVerbos} of their victims. Actually^{MPunctMis} it can be worst if the victim is a woman and get^{GV(WFMorph)IPers} pregnant or if a child realizes he or she is the result of a rape. In this case^{MPunctMis} the victims are a growing chain.

Secondly^{VWordClass GCWC}, we know that^{DVerbos} a conviction of rape also causes a kind of everlasting pain. As I mentioned above^{DVerbos}, the chain of victims keeps growing since the moment in which the crime takes place. I think we could consider that^{DVerbos} each of the close family could be counted as a victim. As a result, many people is^{GV(WFMorph)IPers} touched by this terrible and I would say^{DVerbos} unforgivable crime and this feeling seems to be endless or not to have a forgetting^{GAdjWC} day.

Furthermore, I think that people who commit a rape is^{GV(WFMorph)IPers} committing^{GV(WF)Spel} an act of castration in a figurative way. As I just said^{DVerbos}, the act of committing^{GV(WF)Spel} a rape could be considered as a castration^{DVerbos}, because it is an event that puts a mark on somebody's life that cannot be removed^{DVerbos SUncl}.

In such a simple word^{DVerbos GCWC}, committing^{GV(WF)Spel} a rape is destroying the life of the victim, by the means of putting a mark that cannot be erased and the only punishment that cannot be erased of a conviction^{SUncl} of rape is castration.

The presence of wordiness, verbosity seems to be a major feature that could lead a reader to deem the text as superficial, as if the writer was repeating words without adding much content to his exposition. At some points, wordiness leads or is accompanied by vagueness or lack of clarity. Also, the presence of verbs lacking the morpheme that imarks the third person singular can be seen as a major flaw, if you take into account the proficiency level the student should have (intermediate).

The quantitative approach to the errors present in 2008-04mCAT36* (see chart 20 - MARKIN statistics- and graph 40) makes clear that one error stands out over the rest in terms of frequency, occurring 11 times out of 29 (37.9%) well over a third of all the errors in this passage. It is an over inclusion problem, that of **wordiness or verbosity**, which can

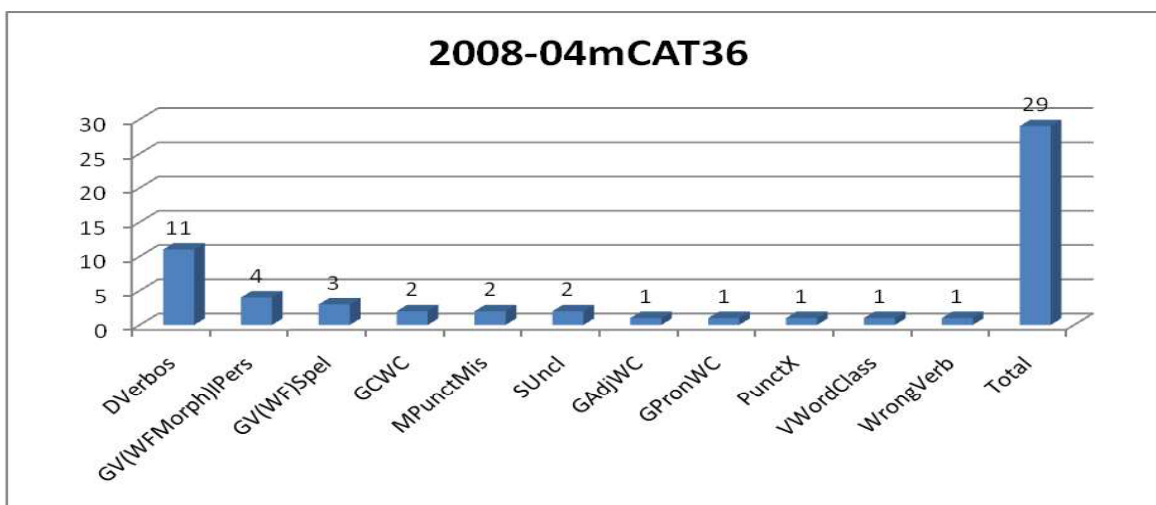
be perceived from the very first moment, from a purely intuitive view. The second most frequent error in 2008-04fJLC23, far following the first one, is a verb morphology flaw, that of **inflection of person**, which constitutes a problem of concordance between the subject and the verb. It occurs only four times, almost a third of the first type of error and itself only 13.8% of the total. Although it does not affect much the comprehension of the text, it is usually regarded as a basic error, a matter taught in the first semester, something that should not occur in an intermediate level -7th semester-. **Verb spelling/orthography** is the third type of error found in this text; it occurs 3 times, 10.3%. It is not a very serious flaw, since it does not affect comprehension. Then a group of three errors occurring two-times (6.9%) each follows: two of them are **missing punctuation** (lack) and **lack of clarity** (incoherence); the other is **wrong choice of conjunctions**. The least frequent types of errors in this essay occur only once each (3.4%); they are mainly **word choice** errors (four of them): one adjective, one verb, and one pronoun, and one adverb instead of a conjunction. This is linked to the previous wrong conjunction, making word choice probably the principal problem in this passage. The remaining error is **overinclusion of punctuation**, which happens only once, too.

2008-04mCAT36		
Instances	Long Annotation	Category
11	Discourse error, Verbosity/Wordiness	Overinclusion
4	Grammar error, Speech part, Verb, WrongForm, Morphology, Inflection of Person. Problem of Subject-Verb concordance	Inflection
3	Grammar error, SpeechPart, Verb, Spelling/Orthography	Spelling
2	Style/Pragmatics error, Unclear/incoherent/incomprehensible	Lack
2	Mechanics error, Punctuation, Missing	Lack
2	Grammar error, Speech part, Wrong Conjunction	Choice
1	Mechanics error, Punctuation, overincluded	Overinclusion
1	Grammar error, Speech part, Wrong Adjective	Choice
1	Vocabulary error, Wrong Word Class	Choice
1	Grammar error, SpeechPart, Verb, Wrong Choice	Choice
1	Grammar error, Speech part, Wrong Pronoun	Choice
29		

Chart 20. Errors tagged in 2008-04mCAT36²⁷.

²⁷

Some errors correspond to alternatives of interpretation of a problem at certain points.

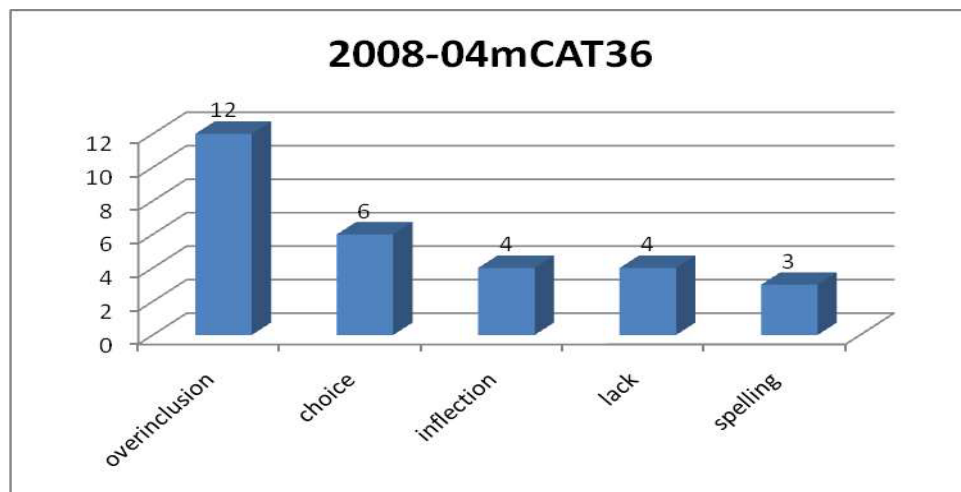


Graph 40. Errors tagged in 2008-04mCAT36.

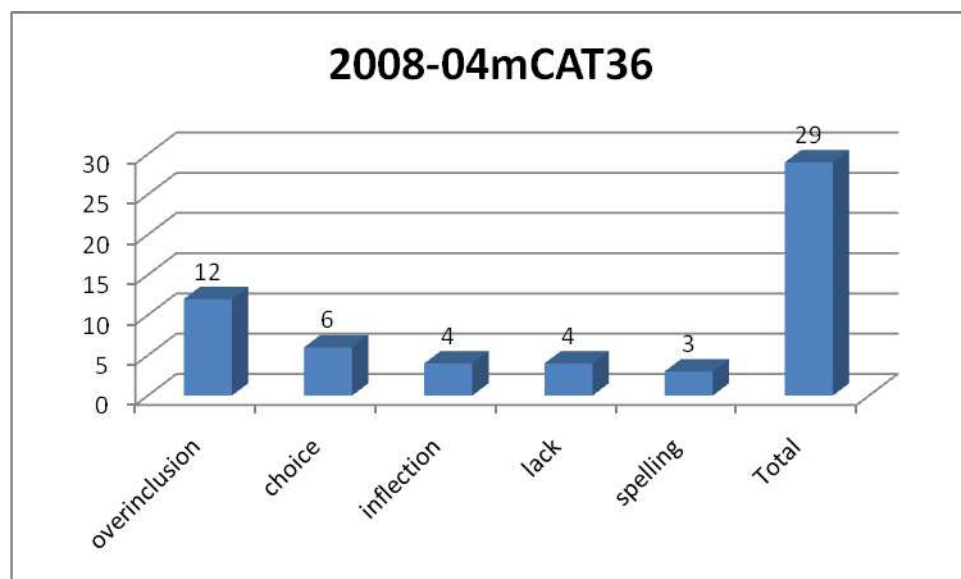
With respect to error modes, (descriptive axis of our error analysis system), chart 21 and graphs 41 and 42 show the results from MARKIN statistics for 2008-04mCAT36 organized according to the category:

Instances	Long Annotation	Category
11	Discourse error, Verbosity/Wordiness	Overinclusion
1	Mechanics error, Punctuation, overincluded	Overinclusion
12	<i>Wordiness + Punctuation</i>	OVERINCLUSION
1	Grammar error, SpeechPart, Verb, Wrong Choice	Choice
1	Grammar error, Speech part, Wrong Pronoun	Choice
1	Vocabulary error, Wrong Word Class	Choice
2	Grammar error, Speech part, Wrong Conjunction	Choice
1	Grammar error, Speech part, Wrong Adjective	Choice
6	<i>Selection of words</i>	CHOICE
4	Grammar error, Speech part, Verb, WrongForm, Morphology, Inflection of Person. Problem of Subject-Verb concordance	Inflection
4	<i>Morphology of verbs (inflection of person)</i>	INFLECTION
2	Style/Pragmatics error, Unclear/incoherent/incomprehensible	Lack
2	Mechanics error, Punctuation, Missing	Lack
4	<i>Missing clarity + punctuation</i>	LACK
3	Grammar error, SpeechPart, Verb, Spelling/Orthography	Spelling
3	<i>Form of verbs</i>	SPELLING
29		

Chart 21. Error descriptive categories in detail in 2008-04mCAT36.

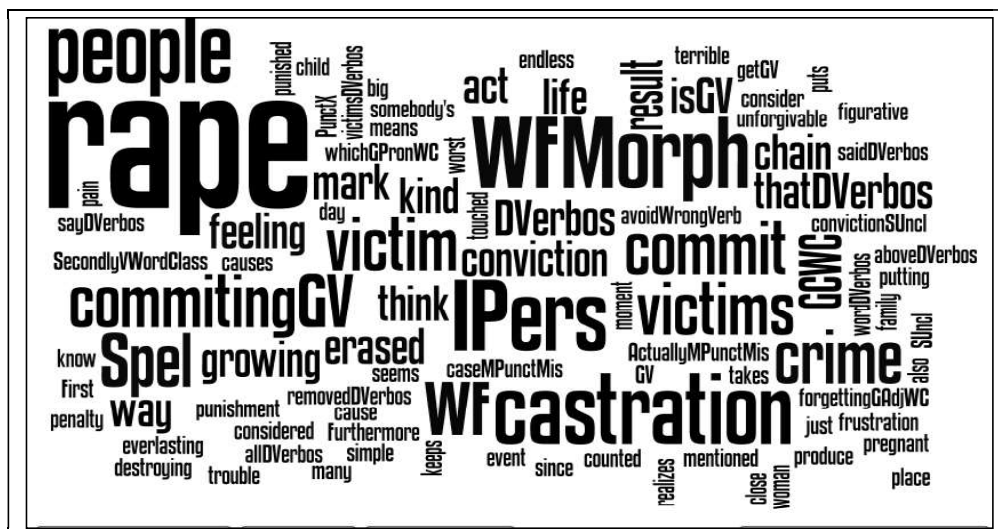


Graph 41. Error descriptive categories 2008-04mCAT36.



Graph 42. Error descriptive categories in 2008-04mCAT36 in relation to its total number of errors.

From the chart and graphs illustrating the general error categories comes out that **Overinclusion** (Wordiness and Punctuation) is the most frequent flaw in 2008-04mCAT36, with 12 instances, 41.4%, near half of all the errors in the text. The second type of error comes after an abrupt plunge in their frequency: half of the frequency of the first one. **Choice**, (selection of words), occurs six times (20.7%). This is an important problem, for – naturally- the presence of incorrect words affects the sense of the text and reflects problems



Graph 44. Word cloud of the annotated text 2008-04mCAT36.

7.2.3. 2008-03fMTC36

Castration?

Sexual assaults have become into a daily issue more and more women and even children (both girls and boys) suffered its consequences psychologically and physically. The penalty for these acts are commonly short periods of time in prison. Some people think that this kind of penalty must be changed. The penalty for this conviction should be castration.

Many people don't agree with this assertion. they think a person who has committed a crime like this must be have a second chance in life an opportunity to have a rehabilitation because these are people with psychological problems. Dr Brown argued that these people need attention and a treatment according to the problem, castration does not solve the problem. Moreover it'd create more problems in the patience.

However, the group against violence in women believe the castration might be the perfect penalty for this conviction Because this assure the person will not commit the crime twice. More over this will help to convince future rapists the will have a hard penalty if they dare to do it.

This debate is now open, but who is right? It is really necessary to allow castration to get low numbers of sexual assaults in our community? What do you think?

Four paragraphs, 205 words, make this essay. It contains 7% passive sentences, according to Word statistics. From the very beginning grammar problems are evident: *have became*, *its consequences*, *must be have a second chance*, *this assure*, etc. However, the overall structure seems to be acceptable, and introductory, development and closing parts

are identifiable. Despite this, errors play an important role in the perception of this passage. The following is the annotated (error-tagged) text 2008-03fMTC36 using MARKIN:

Castration?

Sexual assaults have become^{GVAsp} into^{GPX} a daily issue^{MPunctMis} more and more women and even children (both girls and boys) suffered^{GVWCT} GVAsp its^{GPronWC} consequences psychologically and physically. The penalty^{GN(WFMorph)INum} for these acts are^{GV(WFMorph)IPers} commonly short periods of time^{DVerbos} in prison. Some people think that this kind of penalty must be changed. The penalty for this conviction should be castration.

Many people don't^{DRWC} agree with this assertion. they think a person who has committed a crime like this must be^{GVAuxX} have a second chance^{GN(WF)Spel} in life^{MPunctMis} an opportunity^{GN(WF)Spel} to have a GIndefAX GN(WFMorphI)NumUC rehabilitation because these are people with psychological problems. Dr Brown argued that these people need attention and a treatment according to the problem, castration does not solve the problem. Moreover^{MPunctMis} it'd^{DRWC} create more problems in the patience^{VWordClass} GN(WFMorph)D GN(WF)Spel.

However, the^{SVag} group against violence in women believe the^{GDefAX} castration might be the perfect penalty for this conviction Because^{MCapX} this^{GVAuxMis} assure the person will not commit the crime twice. More over^{GCWFSpel} this will help to convince^{GV(WF)Spel} future^{GAdjWC} rapists the^{GPronWFSpel} will have a hard penalty if they dare to do it.

This debate is now open, but who is right? It^{GPronWP} is^{Verb} ^{Misplaced} really necessary^{GAdjWFSpel} to allow castration to get^{WrongVerb} low numbers of sexual assaults in our community? What do you think?

From this, it becomes evident that various verb aspects and punctuation are salient flaws in the passage, with pronouns and auxiliary/modal verbs as well. There are vague references, like “Dr. Brown” and “the group against violence in women”. However a more

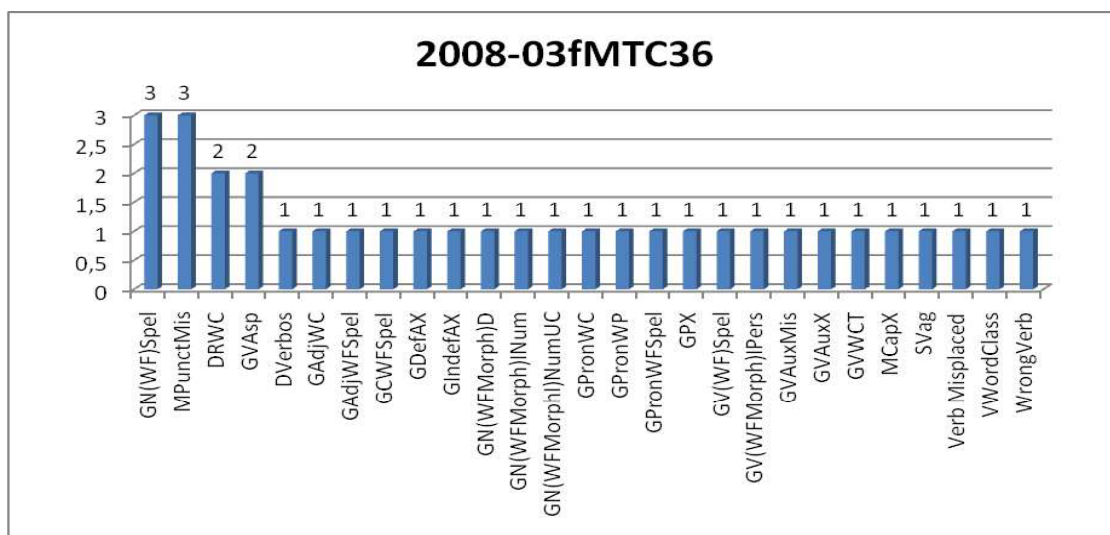
detailed analysis of errors is necessary. Chart 22 and graphs 45 and 46 illustrate the types of errors in 2008-03fMTC36²⁸.

2008-03fMTC36		
Instances	Long Annotation	Category
3	Mechanics error, Punctuation, Missing	Lack
3	Grammar error, Speech part, Noun, Wrong form, Spelling	Spelling
2	Discourse error, Wrong Register	Choice
2	Grammar error, Speech part, Verb, Wrong Form, Morphology, Inflection of Aspect, -ing or PastParticiple form	Inflection
1	Grammar error, Speech part, Auxiliary Verb, Missing	Lack
1	Style/Pragmatics error, Vagueness/ambiguity/lack of precision	Lack
1	Grammar error, Speech part, Indefinite Article, overincluded	Overinclusion
1	Grammar error, Speech part, Noun, WrongForm, Morphology, Derivation	Derivation
1	Grammar error, Speech part, Noun, Wrong form, Morphology, Wrong Inflection of Number of Contable/Uncountable	Inflection
1	Grammar error, Speech part, Noun, Wrong Form, Morphology, Inflection of Number	Inflection
1	Grammar error, Speech part, Verb, WrongForm, Morphology, Inflection of Person. Problem of Subject-Verb concordance	Inflection
1	Discourse error, Verbosity/Wordiness	Overinclusion
1	Grammar error, Speech part, Conjunction, Wrong Form, Spelling	Spelling
1	Grammar error, Speech part, Pronoun, Misplaced	Position
1	Grammar error, Speech part, Adjective, Wrong Form, Spelling	Spelling
1	Grammar error, SpeechPart, Verb, Spelling/Orthography	Spelling
1	Grammar error, Speech part, Pronoun, Wrong Form, Spelling	Spelling
1	Grammar error, Speech part, Verb, Extra Auxiliary/Modal	Overinclusion
1	Grammar error, Speech part, Definite Article, overincluded	Overinclusion
1	Mechanics error, Capitalization, Overincluded	Overinclusion
1	Grammar error, SpeechPart, Verb, Wrong Position	Position
1	Grammar error, Speech part, Preposition, overincluded	Overinclusion
1	Grammar error, SpeechPart, Verb, WrongTense	Choice
1	Grammar error, Speech part, Wrong Adjective	Choice
1	Vocabulary error, Wrong Word Class	Choice
1	Grammar error, Speech part, Wrong Pronoun	Choice
1	Grammar error, SpeechPart, Verb, Wrong Choice	Choice
33		

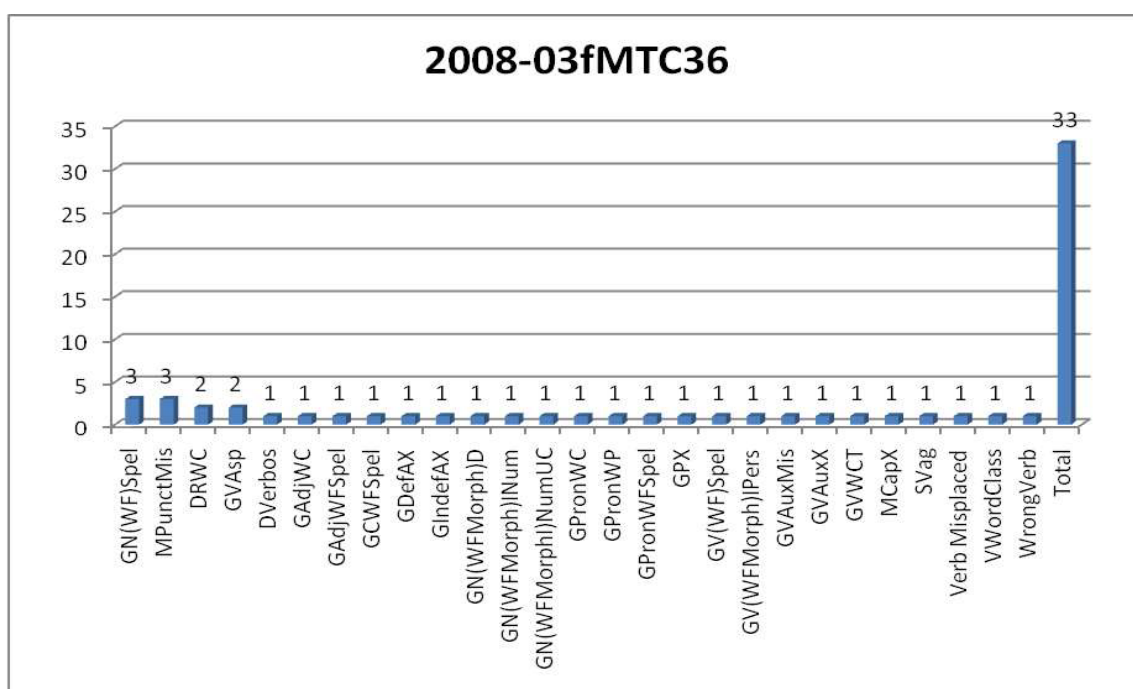
Chart 22. Errors tagged in 2008-03fMTC36. (MARKIN statistics).

²⁸

Some errors correspond to alternatives of interpretation of a problem at certain points.



Graph 45. Errors tagged in 2008-03fMTC36.



Graph 46. Errors tagged in 2008-03fMTC36 in relation to the total errors in it.

The first thing that is evident from the quantitative analysis of the errors in 2008-03fMTC36 is that all the errors present in it have a very low frequency: two of them (the most frequent ones) occur only three times (9.1%) each, two other occur just twice (6.1%)

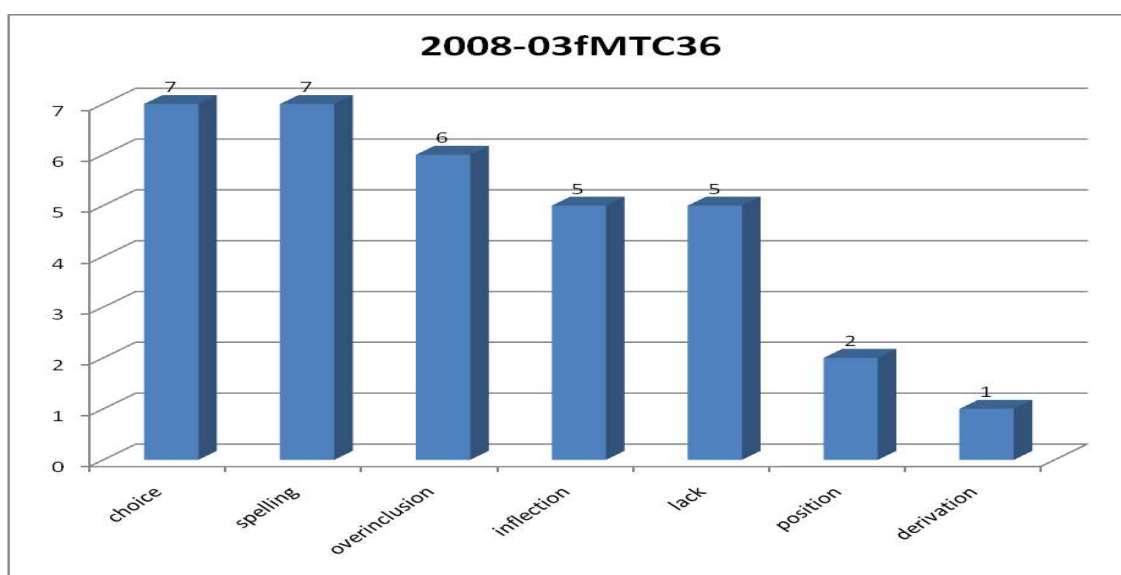
each, and the remaining 23 errors occur only once (3%) each. The most frequent flaws in this essay are **missing punctuation** and **noun spelling**. The former is important in the sense that it can affect meaning in the text. Two-time occurring errors are **wrong choice of register** (contractions) and **verb inflection of aspect** (past participle in present perfect forms). The second could be deemed more important than the first, which does not affect meaning or clarity of ideas. Errors that occur only once can be grouped according to their type: six are **overinclusion problems** (articles, auxiliary/modal, prepositions, wordiness, capitalization), other five errors are **wrong choices (words, tenses)**, four flaws are **spelling faults (conjunctions, adjectives, verbs, pronouns)**. Of course, wrong choice might imply content/clarity problems. There are three **inflection flaws (number of countable/uncountable and other nouns and of verb person)**, two **lack problems (missing auxiliary/modal verb and clarity)**, two **position errors (misplaced pronoun and verb)**, and one **derivation problem (noun morphology)**. In this case, lack problems are the ones that affect content and clarity. In general, most errors in this essay, besides not being very frequent are not very serious.

The results of errors in 2008-03fMTC36, according to the descriptive categories, (MARKIN statistics) can be seen in chart 23 and graphs 47 and 48.

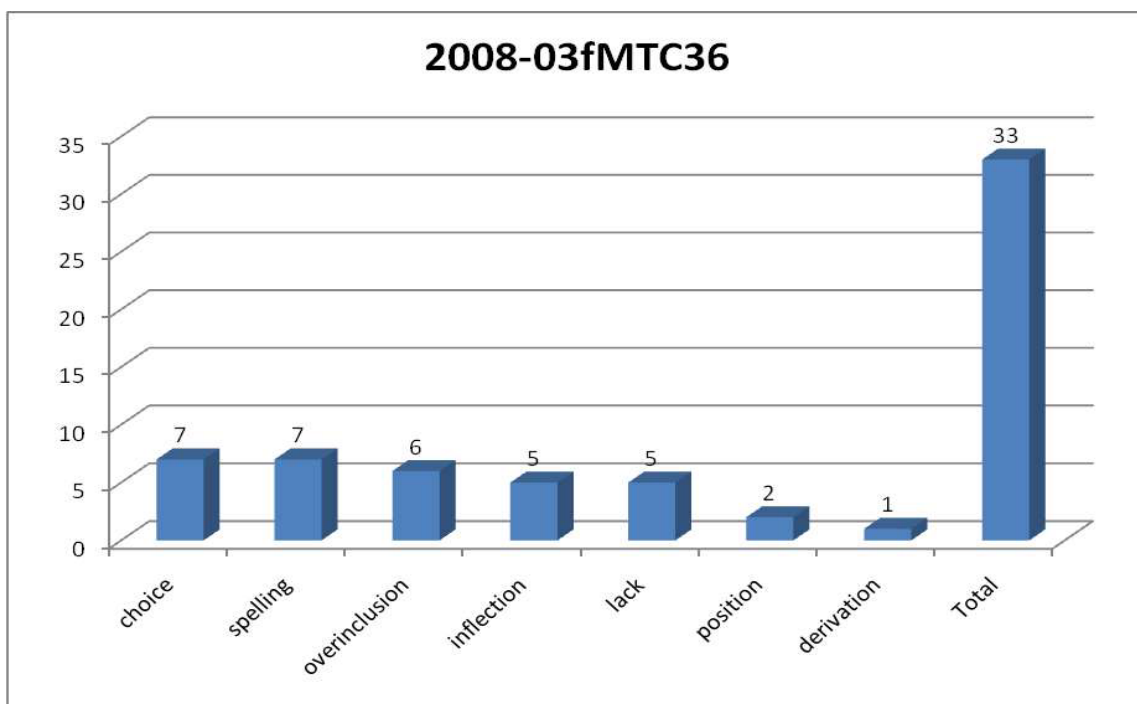
Instances	Long Annotation	Category
1	Grammar error, Speech part, Wrong Pronoun	Choice
1	Vocabulary error, Wrong Word Class	Choice
1	Grammar error, SpeechPart, Verb, Wrong Choice	Choice
2	Discourse error, Wrong Register	Choice
1	Grammar error, Speech part, Wrong Adjective	Choice
1	Grammar error, SpeechPart, Verb, WrongTense	Choice
7	<i>Selection of words + Register + Tenses</i>	CHOICE
1	Grammar error, Speech part, Adjective, Wrong Form, Spelling	Spelling
1	Grammar error, Speech part, Pronoun, Wrong Form, Spelling	Spelling
1	Grammar error, SpeechPart, Verb, Spelling/Orthography	Spelling
3	Grammar error, Speech part, Noun, Wrong form, Spelling	Spelling
1	Grammar error, Speech part, Conjunction, Wrong Form, Spelling	Spelling
7	<i>Form of adjective, pronoun, verb, noun, conjunction</i>	SPELLING
1	Grammar error, Speech part, Preposition, overincluded	Overinclusion
1	Grammar error, Speech part, Indefinite Article, overincluded	Overinclusion

1	Grammar error, Speech part, Definite Article, overincluded	Overinclusion
1	Grammar error, Speech part, Verb, Extra Auxiliary/Modal	Overinclusion
1	Mechanics error, Capitalization, Overincluded	Overinclusion
1	Discourse error, Verbosity/Wordiness	Overinclusion
6	<i>Extra words + capitalization + wordiness</i>	OVERINCLUSION
1	Grammar error, Speech part, Noun, Wrong Form, Morphology, Inflection of Number	Inflection
2	Grammar error, Speech part, Verb, Wrong Form, Morphology, Inflection of Aspect, -ing or PastParticiple form	Inflection
1	Grammar error, Speech part, Verb, WrongForm, Morphology, Inflection of Person. Problem of Subject-Verb concordance	Inflection
1	Grammar error, Speech part, Noun, Wrong form, Morphology, Wrong Inflection of Number of Contable/Uncountable	Inflection
5	<i>Morphology: number of nouns, countable/uncountable, and verb person + verb aspect (-ing/past participle)</i>	INFLECTION
1	Style/Pragmatics error, Vagueness/ambiguity/lack of precision	Lack
3	Mechanics error, Punctuation, Missing	Lack
1	Grammar error, Speech part, Auxiliary Verb, Missing	Lack
5	<i>Missing precision + punctuation + auxiliary/modal</i>	LACK
1	Grammar error, Speech part, Pronoun, Misplaced	Position
1	Grammar error, SpeechPart, Verb, Wrong Position	Position
2	<i>Misplaced pronouns and verbs</i>	POSITION
1	Grammar error, Speech part, Noun, WrongForm, Morphology, Derivation	Derivation
1	<i>Morphology of nouns</i>	DERIVATION
33		

Chart 23. Error descriptive categories in detail in 2008-03fMTC36.



Graph 47. Error descriptive categories in 2008-03fMTC36.



Graph 48. Error descriptive categories in 2008-03fMTC36 in relation to the total number of errors.

Choice, (Selection of words, Register, and Tenses), and **Spelling**, (Form of adjective, pronoun, verb, noun, conjunction), are the most frequent types of error in 2008-03fMTC36, occurring seven times, 21.2%, each. Choice is the one that affects the content the most. The second most frequent error is **Overinclusion**, (Extra words + capitalization + wordiness), with six instances, 18.2%. **Inflection**, (Morphology: number of nouns, countable/uncountable, and verb person + verb aspect (-ing/past participle)) and **Lack**, (Missing precision + punctuation + auxiliary/modal) occur five times (15.2%) each. Lack also affects text content in an important way. The fourth most frequent problem in this essay is **Position**, (Misplaced pronouns and verbs,), occurring two times. **Derivation** (Morphology of nouns), is the least frequent flaw in this passage with only one occurrence, 3%. Only two types of errors –choice and lack- can be said to affect content in a significant way. In general, 33 errors in 205 words give a ratio of one error every 6.2 words, 16.1% a moderately high error frequency.

“You raped her, you’ll get castated”

It’s a fact that you owe your body and only you can decide what to do with it; no one should take that decision for you or force you to do what you just don’t want to. Since the dawn of humanity, sexual pleassure has made a hole in human brain, that is to say, the whole human body have become addicted to the pleassure sex gives to it. Rape has been badly seen in most of the cultures world wide across time: Greek, Egyptian, Chinnesse, Roman, etc.; rules have been setted down and also punishments but it’s still a probleme nowadays in all societys.

Psychologists say that the need that some people have of sexual pleassure caused by problems and bad experiences in childhood; lack of discipline, teaching of human values and more importantly love given by the parents, thus they create a necessity of get this pleassure no matter what have to do in order to get it. That could be a good explanation of why they do that, a mental or personal desease, but what about the person who is being raped? What about his/her family’s pain? Is it fair to have just an apology from the one who raped one of your relatives? What about his/her feelings? the damage caused cannot be healed. Estatistics show that most of the rapers are men and I know that one’s opinion is not enough, but I think that the man who rapes another person should be castrated. If he is capable of force a woman, kick and punch her and make her keep it in secret, just to get the pleassure he needs, should be able to accept the consequences, in this case, well, I, as a man, don’t dare to describe that feeling.

2008-04mCDM37 is made up of two paragraphs, with 301 words. There is a good deal of passive voice in this composition (45% passive sentences, in Word text statistics). The quotation marks and the lack of attention when writing-reading evident in the term *castrated* in the title alert you about problems in the text, soon confirmed at the level of ideas by expressions like *“you owe your body and only you can decide what to do with it”* and *“sexual pleassure has made a hole in human brain”* and by some erroneous word forms like *setted*, *probleme*, and *societys*. The number of paragraphs does not match the overall text structure regarding introduction, development and closing. Taking all that general impression, you wonder if the score given to this text was not too generous.

The errors tagged in 2008-04mCDM37, using MARKIN, reveal further problems. The following is the annotated versin of the passage:

“You raped her, you'll get castated^{GV(WF)Spel},”

It's^{DRWC} a fact that you owe^{WrongVerb SUncl} your body and only you can decide what to do with it; no one should take that decision for you or force you to do what you just don't^{DRWC} want to. Since the dawn of humanity, sexual pleassure^{GN(WF)Spel} has made a hole in human brain, that is to say, the whole^{GAdjX} human body^{GNWC} have^{GV(WFMorph)IPers} become addicted to the pleassure^{GN(WF)Spel} sex gives to it. Rape has been badly seen in most of the^{DVerbos} cultures world wide^{GN(WF)Spel GN(WFMorph)D VWordClass} across time: Greek, Egyptian, Chinnesse^{GAdjWFSpel}, Roman, etc.;^{PunctX} rules have been settled^{GV(WFMorph)D} down^{WrongVerb} and also^{GAdvX DVerbos} punishments^{MPunctMis} but it's^{DRWC} still a probleme^{GN(WF)Spel L1/3L} nowadays in all societys^{GN(WFMorph)INum}.

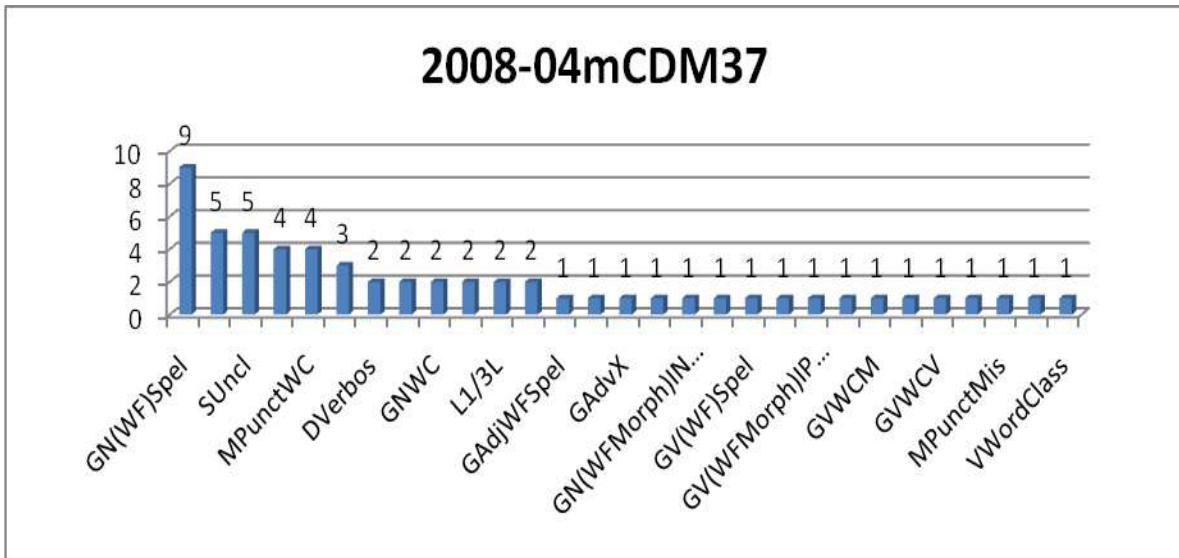
Psychologists say that the need that some people have of sexual pleassure^{GN(WF)Spel} ^{GVAuxMis SUncl} caused by problems and bad experiences in childhood;^{MPunctWC} lack of discipline, teaching of human values and more importantly love given by the^{GDefAX} parents,^{MPunctWC SVag SUncl} thus they create a necessity of get^{GVAsp} this pleassure^{GN(WF)Spel} no matter what^{GPronMis} have to do in order to get it. That could be a good explanation of why they do that, a mental or personal^{GNWC SUncl} desease^{GN(WF)Spel MPunctWC}, but what about^{DRWC} the person who is being raped^{GVWCM GVWCT}? What about his/her family's pain? Is it fair to have just an apology from the one who raped one of your relatives? What about his/her^{GPronWC SVag} feelings? the^{MCapMis} damage caused cannot be healed. Estatistics^{GN(WF)Spel} show that most of the rapers^{GN(WFMorph)D} are men and I know that one's opinion is not enough, but I think that the man who rapes another person should be castrated. If he is capable of force^{GVAsp GVWCV L1/3L} a woman, kick^{GVAsp} and punch^{GVAsp} her and make^{GVAsp} her keep it in secret, just to get the pleassure he needs, ^{GPronMis} should be able to accept the consequences^{GN(WF)Spel MPunctWC}, in this case, well, I, as a man, don't dare to describe that feeling^{SUncl SVag}.

From the picture given by the error tagging, it is clear that there are many problems both of form and content, i.e. not only superficial but also deep ones. The chart 24 and graphs 51 and 52 show MARKIN statistics of errors in 2008-04mCDM37²⁹.

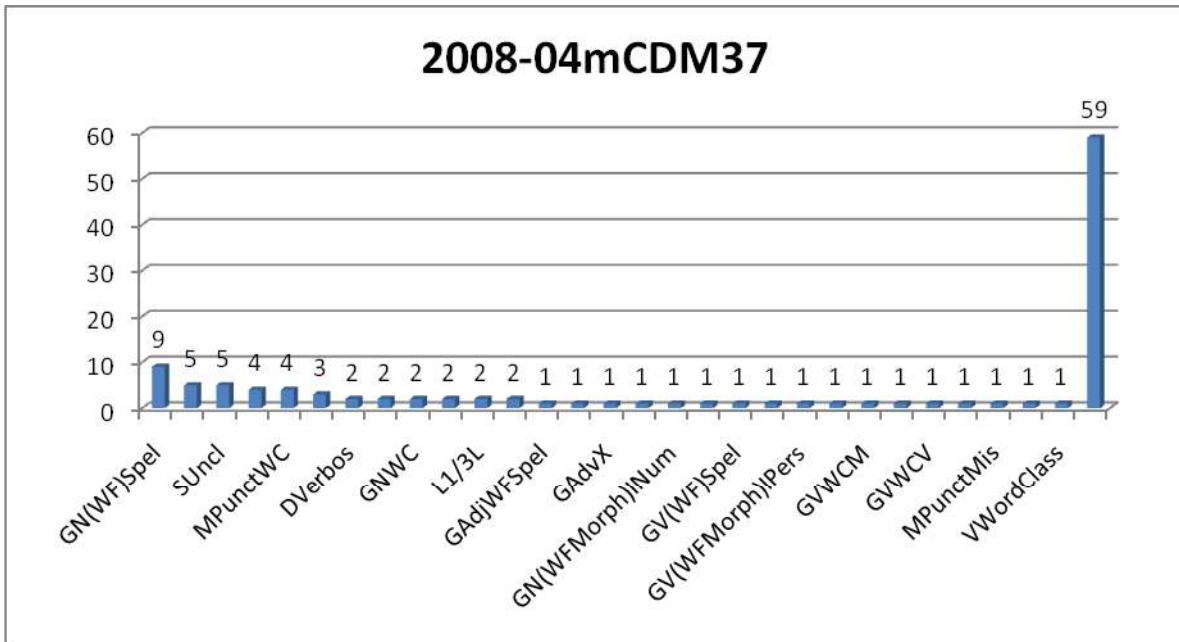
Instances	Long Annotation	Category
9	Grammar error, Speech part, Noun, Wrong form, Spelling	Spelling
5	Style/Pragmatics error, Unclear/incoherent/incomprehensible	Lack
5	Grammar error, Speech part, Verb, Wrong Form, Morphology, Inflection of Aspect, -ing or PastParticiple form	Inflection
4	Mechanics error, Wrong Punctuation	Choice
4	Discourse error, Wrong Register	Choice
3	Style/Pragmatics error, Vagueness/ambiguity/lack of precision	Lack
2	Grammar error, Speech part, Wrong Noun	Choice
2	Discourse error, Verbosity/Wordiness	Overinclusion
2	Grammar error, SpeechPart, Verb, Wrong Choice	Choice
2	Grammar error, Speech part, Pronoun, Missing	Lack
2	Grammar error, Speech part, Noun, WrongForm, Morphology, Derivation	Derivation
2	Style/Pragmatics error, Spanish (L1)/French(L3)-like	Choice
1	Grammar error, Speech part, Adjective, Wrong Form, Spelling	Spelling
1	Grammar error, Speech part, Verb, WrongForm, Morphology, Inflection of Person. Problem of Subject-Verb concordance	Inflection
1	Grammar error, SpeechPart, Verb Form, wrong derivation	Derivation
1	Grammar error, Speech part, Noun, Wrong Form, Morphology, Inflection of Number	Inflection
1	Grammar error, SpeechPart, Verb, Spelling/Orthography	Spelling
1	Mechanics error, Capitalization, Missing	Lack
1	Grammar error, Speech part, Definite Article, overincluded	Overinclusion
1	Mechanics error, Punctuation, overincluded	Overinclusion
1	Grammar error, Speech part, Adjective, overincluded	Overinclusion
1	Mechanics error, Punctuation, Missing	Lack
1	Grammar error, Speech part, Auxiliary Verb, Missing	Lack
1	Grammar error, Speech part, Adverb, Overincluded	Overinclusion
1	Grammar error, Speech part, Verb, wrong voice	Choice
1	Grammar error, SpeechPart, Verb, WrongTense	Choice
1	Grammar error, Speech part, Wrong Pronoun	Choice
1	Vocabulary error, Wrong Word Class	Choice
1	Grammar error, Speech part, Verb, Wrong mood	Choice
59		

Chart 24. Errors tagged in 2008-04mCDM37.

²⁹ Some errors either correspond to alternatives of interpretation of a problem at certain points or are “simultaneous”.



Graph 51. Errors tagged in 2008-04mCDM37.



Graph 52. Errors tagged in 2008-04mCDM37 in relation to the total errors in it.

Fifty-nine errors in 301 words mean one error every five or six words (5.1), 19.6%. Fifty-nine errors in two paragraphs are almost 30 errors per paragraph. This confirms that the frequency of errors is rather high in this essay.

Regarding error categories, **spelling of nouns** is the most frequent type of errors in 2008-04mCDM37. It has nine instances, out of a total of 59 errors in the essay, which is 15.3%. Two types of errors compete in the second place of major frequency, which is five times (8.5%), almost just a half of the first place (nine times). These two types of errors are **lack of clarity** (incoherence) and **a morphological problem in the inflection of verbs, that of aspect, regarding –ing or past participle form**. From that second place on, in a descending sequence of frequency, there is a gradual steady fall: 2 four-time errors, 1 three-time, 6 two-time, and 17 one-time errors. Again, it is clear that it is not a single error or a few types of errors what results from the error analysis of the texts but a joint, mass effect of many of them (29 in this case) occurring a few times.

The next most frequent type of error in 2008-04mCDM37 occurs just three times, 5.1% of the total; it is a style/pragmatics problem consisting in **vagueness or lack of precision**. The subsequent error types occur only two times, 3.4% of the total of errors in this passage; they are three **choice problems (noun, verb, and L1/L3-like style)**, one **over inclusion fault (wordiness/verbosity)**, one **lack error (missing pronoun)**, and one **derivation flaw (noun morphology)**.

One-time errors cover a variety of flaws. There are five choice problems (**faulty word class selection, incorrect verb tense, mood and voice, and wrong pronoun**), four over inclusion flaws (**extra punctuation, definite article, adjective, and adverb**), three lack faults (**missing auxiliary verb, capitalization, and punctuation**), two spelling errors (**adjective and verb orthography**) and two inflection errors (**verb person and noun number**), and –finally- one derivation problem (**verb form**).

Regarding how important or serious those errors are, it is clear that it is not frequency but the impact on meaning/sense or clarity of ideas what counts more. Lack of clarity (incoherence, nonsense), vagueness (lack of clarity/precision), choice (wrong selection), and lack (missing aspects) could seem the most serious problems, for they “naturally” affect the content. However, the impact of particular errors, missing, extra or wrong punctuation or pronouns, for instance, may have an important effect on content, too.

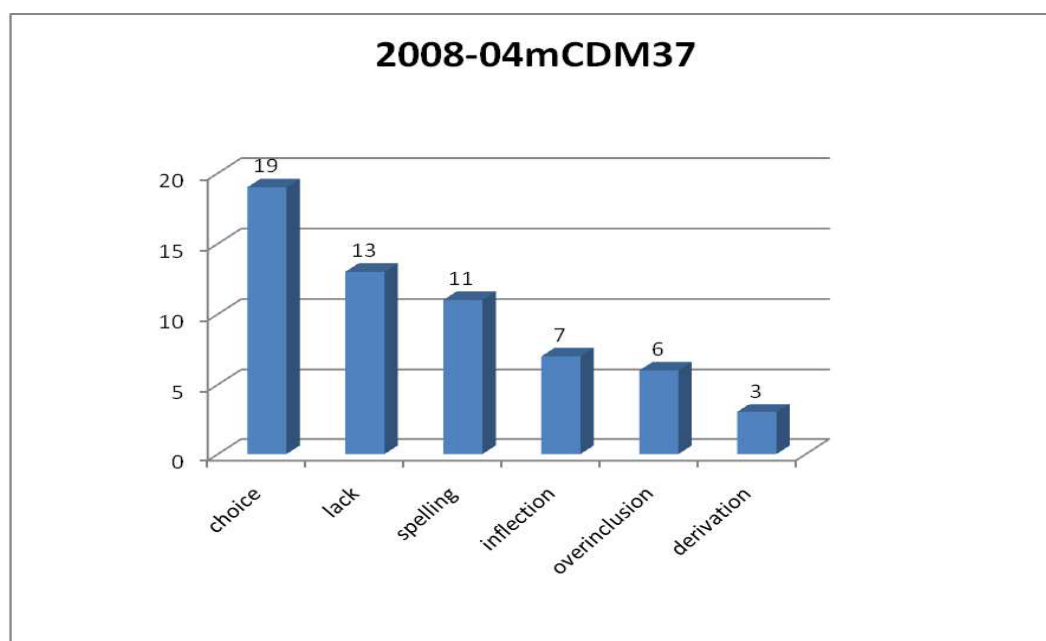
What is more evident is that it is the *combined effect of various flaws*, both form and content/meaning problems, what impinges more on the perception and comprehension of these texts written by EFL students who have not finished their studies yet and need reaching a higher level of proficiency regarding writing. Of course, this is related to factors like the fact that English is a foreign and not a second language in Colombia and a background of grammar-centered methods in the students' learning while in their secondary schools. However, in this study, our focus is on errors and not on their causes.

Chart 25 and graphs 53 and 54 show MARKIN statistics for 2008-04mCDM37 organized according to the category. The error types that result are Choice, Lack, Spelling, Inflection, Over inclusion and Derivation. Let us remember that spelling, inflection and derivation can be grouped together under a more global category, Morphology or Form.

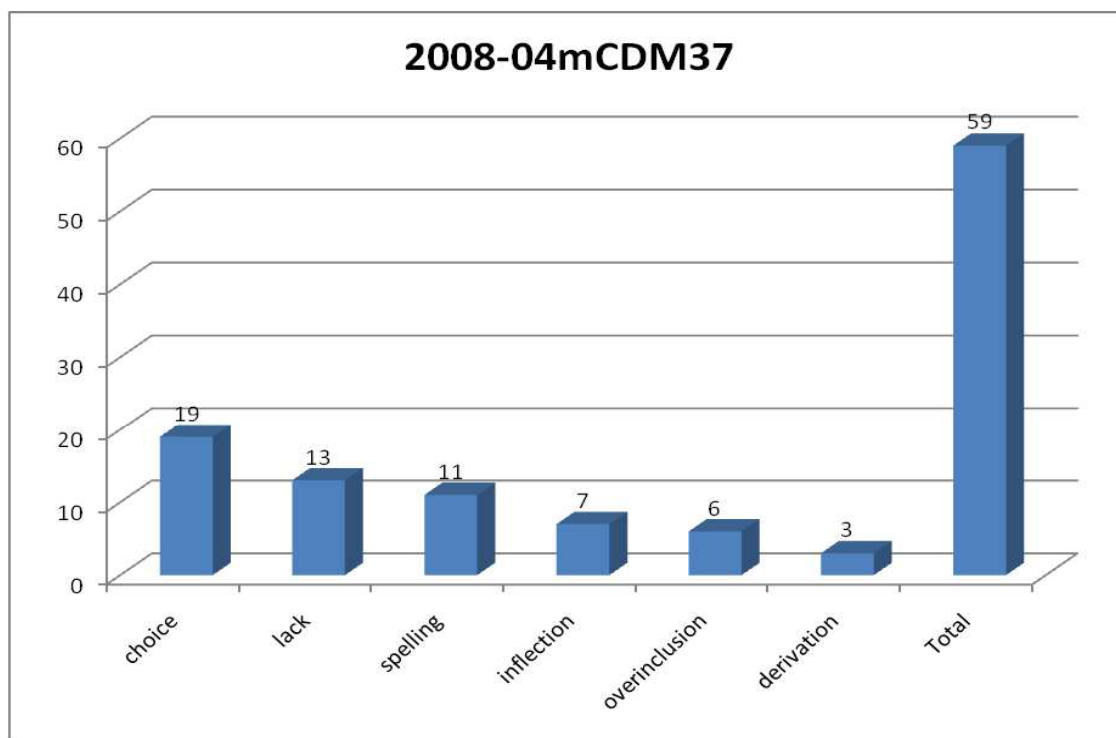
Instances	Long Annotation	Category
1	Vocabulary error, Wrong Word Class	Choice
1	Grammar error, Speech part, Verb, Wrong mood	Choice
1	Grammar error, Speech part, Verb, wrong voice	Choice
1	Grammar error, SpeechPart, Verb, WrongTense	Choice
1	Grammar error, Speech part, Wrong Pronoun	Choice
2	Grammar error, SpeechPart, Verb, Wrong Choice	Choice
2	Style/Pragmatics error, Spanish (L1)/French(L3)-like	Choice
4	Mechanics error, Wrong Punctuation	Choice
4	Discourse error, Wrong Register	Choice
2	Grammar error, Speech part, Wrong Noun	Choice
19	<i>Selection of words + verb mood, voice, and tense + Style (L1/L3) + punctuation + Register</i>	CHOICE
1	Mechanics error, Capitalization, Missing	Lack
2	Grammar error, Speech part, Pronoun, Missing	Lack
1	Mechanics error, Punctuation, Missing	Lack
1	Grammar error, Speech part, Auxiliary Verb, Missing	Lack
3	Style/Pragmatics error, Vagueness/ambiguity/lack of precision	Lack
5	Style/Pragmatics error, Unclear/incoherent/incomprehensible	Lack
13	<i>Missing words, capitalization, punctuation, precision, clarity</i>	LACK
1	Grammar error, SpeechPart, Verb, Spelling/Orthography	Spelling
9	Grammar error, Speech part, Noun, Wrong form, Spelling	Spelling
1	Grammar error, Speech part, Adjective, Wrong Form, Spelling	Spelling
11	<i>Form of verbs, nouns, and adjectives</i>	SPELLING

5	Grammar error, Speech part, Verb, Wrong Form, Morphology, Inflection of Aspect, -ing or PastParticiple form	Inflection
1	Grammar error, Speech part, Verb, WrongForm, Morphology, Inflection of Person. Problem of Subject-Verb concordance	Inflection
1	Grammar error, Speech part, Noun, Wrong Form, Morphology, Inflection of Number	Inflection
7	<i>Morphology: number of nouns and verb inflection (person and aspect)</i>	INFLECTION
1	Grammar error, Speech part, Definite Article, overincluded	Overinclusion
2	Discourse error, Verbosity/Wordiness	Overinclusion
1	Mechanics error, Punctuation, overincluded	Overinclusion
1	Grammar error, Speech part, Adverb, Overincluded	Overinclusion
1	Grammar error, Speech part, Adjective, overincluded	Overinclusion
6	<i>Extra words + wordiness + punctuation</i>	OVERINCLUSION
1	Grammar error, SpeechPart, Verb Form, wrong derivation	Derivation
2	Grammar error, Speech part, Noun, WrongForm, Morphology, Derivation	Derivation
3	<i>Morphology of verbs and nouns</i>	DERIVATION
59		

Chart 25. Error descriptive categories in detail in 2008-04mCDM37.



Graph 53. Error descriptive categories 2008-04mCDM37.



Graph 54. Error descriptive categories in 2008-04mCDM37 in relation to its total number of errors.

The error type that is the most frequent is **Choice**. It contains several aspects that represent confusion for the students: Selection of words, of verb mood, voice, and tense, of style -L1/L3-, of punctuation, and of Register. Choice problems are present 19 times out of a total of 59 error in this passage; that makes 32.2%, almost a third of all the errors, which is an important proportion. The second most frequent error type is **Lack**: words, capitalization, punctuation, precision, and clarity appear as missing 13 times, 22% of the total errors in the text, a bit over a fifth of them. In the third place, appears **Spelling**, (form of verbs, nouns, and adjectives), with 11 instances, 18.6%, a bit less than a fifth of the errors in the passage. **Inflection** (number of nouns and verb person and aspect occur seven times, 11.9%, a bit over a tenth of the total of errors in the text. The fifth type of errors is **Overinclusion**, (extra words, punctuation, and wordiness/verbosity) happens six times, 10.2%, a tenth of the whole count of errors in 2008-04mCDM37. The last error category is **Derivation**, (Morphology of verbs and nouns), with only three instances, a bare 5.1% of the total. In this text, it can be said that the most frequent errors are the kind that affect content the most.

So let's think about it, numbers always is bad way to analyze something, quality people is not a thing we could mesure, it has not a size, what we should evaluate is the way we do it, what are we doing wrong? How can we improve? and in that way have had the experience to be in a course named "Seminario de investigación en el Aula I" and not say "I got my credits after many 3.5 but now I had finished this xxx carrier"

This essay has three paragraphs and 353 words. Some sentences are long. There are no passive sentences. The very title (*WHY DO NOT BE*), seems an omen of what is coming in relation with errors in this text. That guess is confirmed by expressions like *a foreing languages carrier*, and *at the same time, you got the three credits*, and *and when you had passed through all that...* It seems that all aspects of language from grammar, to vocabulary to orthography... present flaws here!

The errors tagged in 2008-02fSL37 using MARKIN, are the following:

WHY DO NOT BE^{GV(WFMorph)IM} JUST A GOOD STUDENT IN A UNIVERSITY CLASS?

^{GAdvMis} Seeing a curriculum from a foreing^{GAdjWFSpel} languages carrier^{VWordClass}
^{GN(WFMorph)D} ^{MPunctMis} we could think we are going to study maths; everything means
 you have to have a number. At the end of each course, if you have passed "the xxx
 Seminar I"^{MPunctMis} it means you can add^{GNWC} "the xxx seminar II" and then continue
 with the third one, etc. But^{GCX} at the same time, you got^{GVWCT} the three credits from
 the thirty you should get in the linguistic Area^{MCapX} and when you had^{GVWCT} passed
 through all that, you can count 10 semesters, around 40 courses, many zeros (0), few
 four^{GN(WFMorph)INum} (4^{GN(WFMorph)INum})^{SVag SUncl}, hours and hours of classes, One different
 teacher for each of the 40 coures^{GN(WF)Spel} and a big sac^{GNWC LI/3L} full of
 three^{GN(WFMorph)INum} (3^{GN(WFMorph)INum})^{SUncl SVag}, copies, corrections, dossiers, etc^{MPunctMis}
 Why we^{GPronWP} cannot be just a^{GIndefAX} good^{GAdjX SVag SUncl} student?,^{PunctX} why^{MCapMis}
 we^{GPronWP} cannot do things easy^{VWordClass GAdj(WFMorphI)Deg}?,^{PunctX} why^{MCapMis} should we
 get full of numbers? How can we grade a person?.^{PunctX} We got^{GVWCT} a quality testing

problem^{SUncl SVag MPunctMis} but^{GCWC} this is not the only way to test or analyze or evaluate^{GV(WF)Spel DVerbos} a student^{SUncl MPunctWC}; if we analyze^{Wrong VerbComplement} when we go to the teacher's office, to discuss about our process, they^{GPronWC} do not do it with numbers, they start^{GPMis} saying: "you're great in xxxxxx and you have to improve in xxxxxx", so you are thinking^{GVWCT GVWCM}: "I'm not so bad in english^{MCapMis}", but at the end you have to get a grade, then your teacher said^{GVWCT}: "see you on^{GPX} next semester, you got 2.9"; so everything you though^{VWordClass GV(WF)Spel GV(WFMorph)D} was wrong^{MPunctMis} so were^{GV(WFMorph)IPers} everything you did in this^{GPronWC} semester.

So let's think about it,^{MPunctWC} numbers always^{GAdvWP} is^{GV(WFMorph)IPers GIndefAMis} bad way to analyze something,^{MPunctWC} quality^{VWordClass GN(WFMorph)ICGenNoNo} people^{SUncl SVag} is^{GV(WFMorph)IPers} not a thing^{GN(WFMorph)INum} we could measure^{GV(WF)Spel}, it GVAuxMis has^{not}^{GV(WFMorph)IM} GVAuxMis a size,^{MPunctWC} what we should evaluate is the way we do it, what are we doing wrong?^{GV(WFMorph)IM} How can we improve?^{GV(WFMorph)IM} and^{MCapMis} GCX in that way^{GCWC DVerbos GPronMis} have had the experience to be^{GV(WFMorph)IM} in a course named "Seminario de investigación en el Aula I^{CodeS}" and not say^{SUncl SVag} "I got my credits after many 3.5^{GN(WFMorph)INum} but now I had^{GVWCT} finished this xxx carrier^{VWordClass GN(WFMorph)D}."

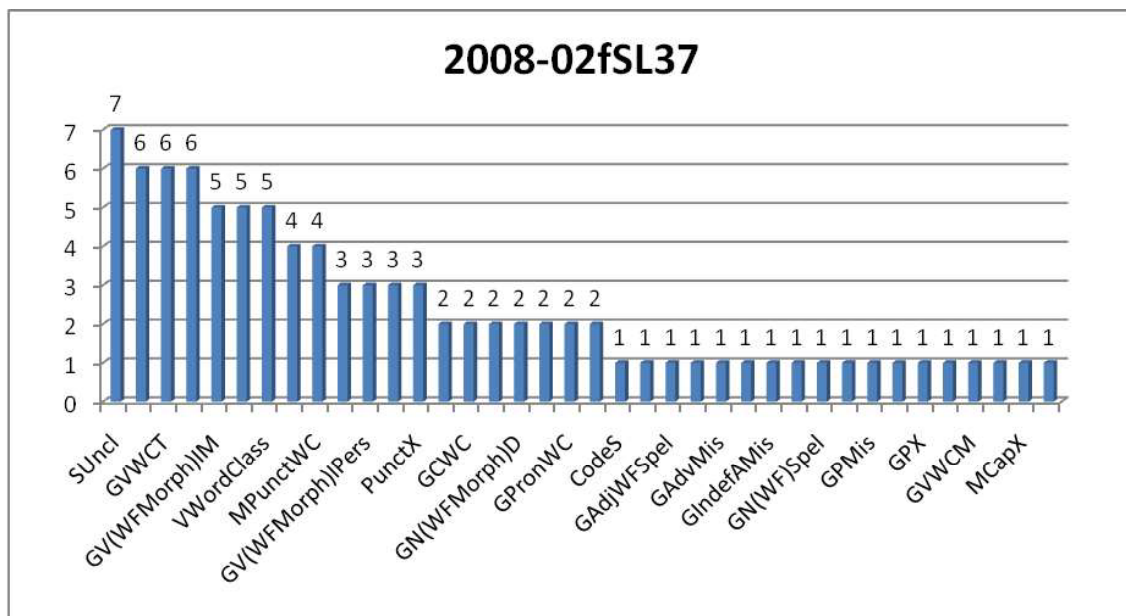
The initial impression seems to be confirmed. Errors are frequent and varied in this passage. Ninety-two errors in three paragraphs and 353 words make over 31 errors per paragraph (26.1%) and one error every three or four (3.8) words. It is a high rate of faults. Chart 26 and graphs 57 and 58 show the statistics for the errors in 2008-02fSL37³⁰. The most frequent error (**Lack of clarity/incoherence** –a serious problem-) occurs seven times, 7.6% of the total. From that number of instances the subsequent flaws follow a gradual descending pattern of more types of errors occurring fewer times each (3 six- and five-time errors, 2 four-time, 4 three-time, 7 two-time, and 18 one-time errors).

³⁰ Some errors are either simultaneous or correspond to alternatives of interpretation of a problem at certain points. That affects the counting.

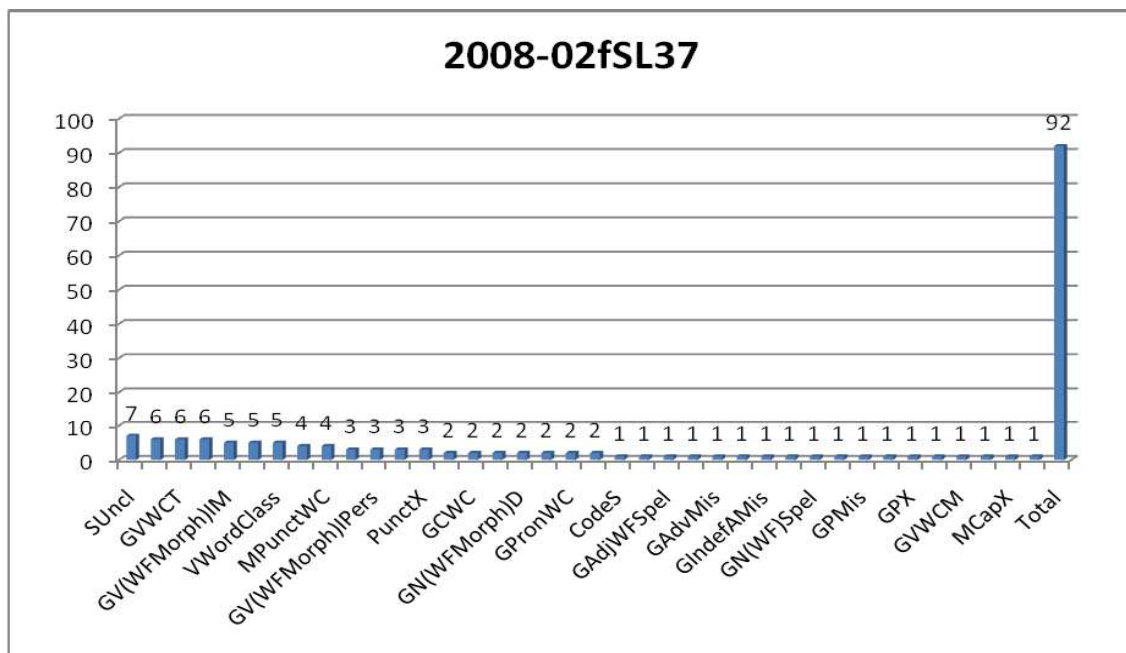
2008-02fSL37		
Instances	Long Annotation	Category
7	Style/Pragmatics error, Unclear/incoherent/incomprehensible	Lack
6	Style/Pragmatics error, Vagueness/ambiguity/lack of precision	Lack
6	Grammar error, Speech part, Noun, Wrong Form, Morphology, Inflection of Number	Inflection
6	Grammar error, SpeechPart, Verb, WrongTense	Choice
5	Vocabulary error, Wrong Word Class	Choice
5	Grammar error, Speech part, Verb, WrongForm, Morphology, Inflection of Mood (indicative, imperative, subjunctive, conditional)	Inflection
5	Mechanics error, Punctuation, Missing	Lack
4	Mechanics error, Wrong Punctuation	Choice
4	Mechanics error, Capitalization, Missing	Lack
3	Mechanics error, Punctuation, overincluded	Overinclusion
3	Grammar error, Speech part, Verb, WrongForm, Morphology, Inflection of Person. Problem of Subject-Verb concordance	Inflection
3	Grammar error, Speech part, Auxiliary Verb, Missing	Lack
3	Grammar error, SpeechPart, Verb, Spelling/Orthography	Spelling
2	Grammar error, Speech part, Wrong Conjunction	Choice
2	Discourse error, Verbosity/Wordiness	Overinclusion
2	Grammar error, Speech part, Wrong Noun	Choice
2	Grammar error, Speech part, Noun, WrongForm, Morphology, Derivation	Derivation
2	Grammar error, Speech part, Conjunction, overincluded	Overinclusion
2	Grammar error, Speech part, Pronoun, Misplaced	Position
2	Grammar error, Speech part, Wrong Pronoun	Choice
1	Grammar error, Speech part, Indefinite Article, Missing	Lack
1	Grammar error, Speech part, Verb, Wrong Mood	Choice
1	Grammar error, Speech part, Adjective, overincluded	Overinclusion
1	Grammar error, Speech part, Preposition, overincluded	Overinclusion
1	Grammar error, Speech part, Indefinite Article, overincluded	Overinclusion
1	Grammar error, Speech part, Adjective, Wrong Form, Spelling	Spelling
1	Style/Pragmatics error, Code Switching	Choice
1	Grammar error, Speech part, Noun, Wrong form, Spelling	Spelling
1	Grammar error, Speech part, Noun,Wrong Form, Morphology, Inflection of Case, Genitive, Noun+Noun/NounOfNoun	Inflection
1	Grammar error, Speech part, Preposition, Missing	Lack
1	Grammar error, SpeechPart, Verb Form, wrong derivation	Derivation
1	Mechanics error, Capitalization, Overincluded	Overinclusion
1	Grammar error, Speech part, Adverb, misplaced	Position
1	Grammar error, SpeechPart, Verb, Wrong Complement	Complementation
1	Grammar error, Speech part, Pronoun, Missing	Lack
1	Grammar error, Speech part, Adjective, Wrong Form, Morphology,	Inflection

	Comparative/Superlative	
1	Style/Pragmatics error, Spanish (L1)/French(L3)-like	Choice
1	Grammar error, Speech part, Adverb, Missing	Lack
92		

Chart 26. Errors tagged in 2008-02fSL37.



Graph 57. Errors tagged in 2008-02fSL37.



Graph 58. Errors tagged in 2008-02fSL37 in relation to the total errors in it.

Following the lack of clarity, three kinds of errors rank in the second place of foremost frequency. They occur six times (6.5%) each. They are **vagueness/ambiguity/lack of precision**, **inflection of number in nouns**, and **wrong verb tense**. Three types of errors that occur five times (5.4%) each fill the third place in frequency. The first of them is **wrong word class choice** (for instance *carrier* instead of *career* –used for *university studies* or *program*–, *easy* instead of *well*, *though* instead of *thought* –a spelling problem in fact, which affects the morphology of the word turning it into another word–, *quality* instead of *qualified*). The next five-time errors are **verb inflection of mood** and **missing punctuation**.

Two four-time (4.3% each) errors go in the fourth place: **wrong punctuation** and **missing capitalization**. Four three-time (3.3%) errors go in the fifth place of frequency; they are **over included punctuation**, **verb inflection of person** (subject-verb concordance), **missing auxiliary verb**, and **verb spelling**. Seven two-time (2.2%) errors go in the sixth place of frequency. They are **wrong choice of words (conjunctions, nouns and pronouns)**, **over inclusion of conjunctions**, **wordiness/verbosity**, **wrong derivation (form) of nouns**, and **misplaced pronouns**.

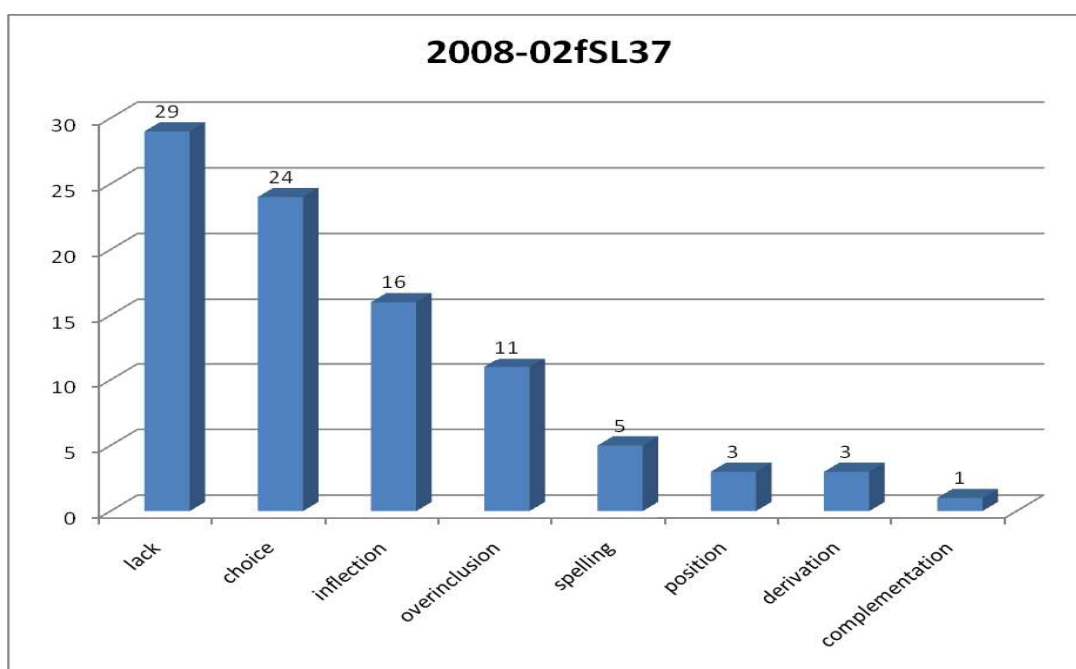
The least frequent errors in 2008-02fSL37 occur in an almost neglectable proportion: only once (1.1%) each. However, they are 18 types of errors, a joint result of 19.6%, a fifth of the total amount of error in the text. That is to say, the combined effect of various errors can account more for the flaws in a text than the high frequency of isolated error categories. Those one-time errors are mainly lack, with four times (**missing article, preposition, pronoun, and adverb**), over inclusion with four times (**extra adjective, preposition, indefinite article, and capitalization**), and choice with three times (**wrong verb, code switching, and L1/L3-like style**). **One adjective and one noun present spelling problems**. Inflection has also two occurrences: **noun genitive case (noun-noun vs. noun of noun and adjective degree)**. One **verb wrong derivation**, one **misplaced adverb**, and one **verb complementation** close the counting of errors in this essay.

Regarding the descriptive category, chart 27 and graphs 59 and 60 present MARKIN statistics for 2008-02fSL37.

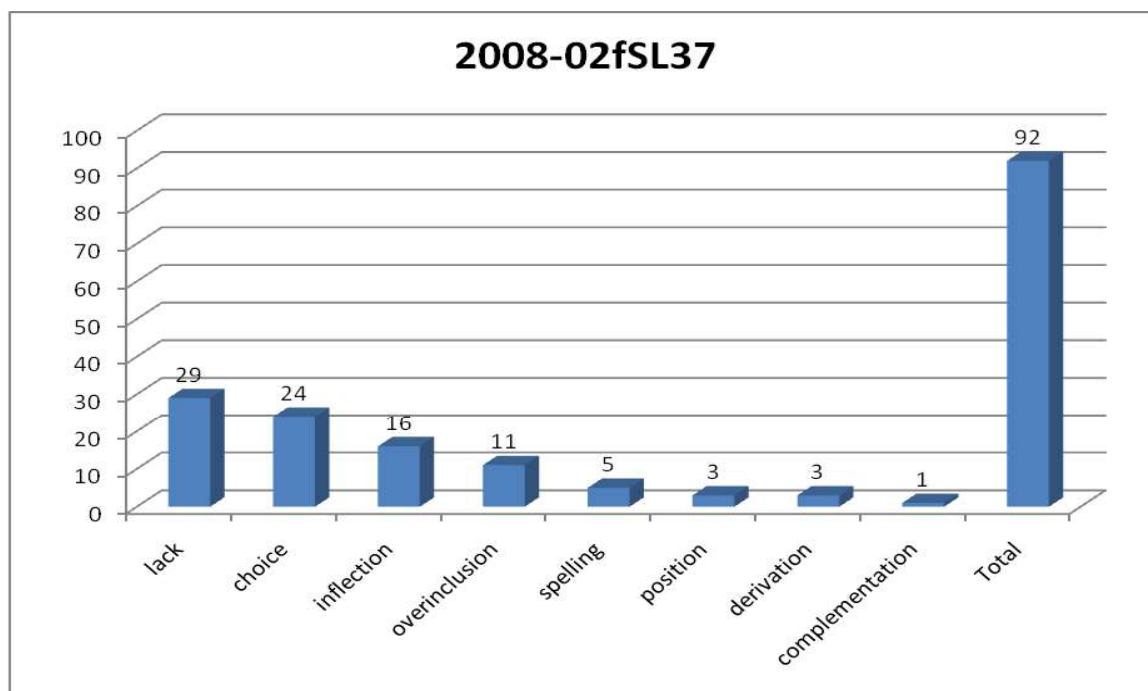
2008-02fSL37		
Instances	Long Annotation	Category
7	Style/Pragmatics error, Unclear/incoherent/incomprehensible	Lack
6	Style/Pragmatics error, Vagueness/ambiguity/lack of precision	Lack
5	Mechanics error, Punctuation, Missing	Lack
4	Mechanics error, Capitalization, Missing	Lack
3	Grammar error, Speech part, Auxiliary Verb, Missing	Lack
1	Grammar error, Speech part, Indefinite Article, Missing	Lack
1	Grammar error, Speech part, Preposition, Missing	Lack
1	Grammar error, Speech part, Pronoun, Missing	Lack
1	Grammar error, Speech part, Adverb, Missing	Lack
29	<i>Missing clarity, precision, punctuation, capitalization, words</i>	LACK
6	Grammar error, SpeechPart, Verb, WrongTense	Choice
5	Vocabulary error, Wrong Word Class	Choice
4	Mechanics error, Wrong Punctuation	Choice
2	Grammar error, Speech part, Wrong Conjunction	Choice
2	Grammar error, Speech part, Wrong Noun	Choice
2	Grammar error, Speech part, Wrong Pronoun	Choice
1	Grammar error, Speech part, Verb, Wrong Mood	Choice
1	Style/Pragmatics error, Code Switching	Choice
1	Style/Pragmatics error, Spanish (L1)/French(L3)-like	Choice
24	<i>Selection of tenses, words, punctuation, verb mood, code, style (L1/L3)</i>	CHOICE
6	Grammar error, Speech part, Noun, Wrong Form, Morphology, Inflection of Number	Inflection
5	Grammar error, Speech part, Verb, WrongForm, Morphology, Inflection of Mood (indicative, imperative, subjunctive,conditional)	Inflection
3	Grammar error, Speech part, Verb, WrongForm, Morphology, Inflection of Person. Problem of Subject-Verb concordance	Inflection
1	Grammar error, Speech part, Noun,Wrong Form, Morphology, Inflection of Case, Genitive, Noun+Noun/NounOfNoun	Inflection
1	Grammar error, Speech part, Adjective, Wrong Form, Morphology, Comparative/Superlative	Inflection
16	<i>Morphology nouns (number and noun-noun/noun-of-noun), verbs (person and mood), and adjectives (degree)</i>	INFLECTION
3	Mechanics error, Punctuation, overincluded	Overinclusion
2	Discourse error, Verbosity/Wordiness	Overinclusion
2	Grammar error, Speech part, Conjunction, overincluded	Overinclusion

1	Grammar error, Speech part, Adjective, overincluded	Overinclusion
1	Grammar error, Speech part, Preposition, overincluded	Overinclusion
1	Grammar error, Speech part, Indefinite Article, overincluded	Overinclusion
1	Mechanics error, Capitalization, Overincluded	Overinclusion
11	<i>Extra punctuation, wordiness, words, capitalization</i>	OVERINCLUSION
3	Grammar error, SpeechPart, Verb, Spelling/Orthography	Spelling
1	Grammar error, Speech part, Adjective, Wrong Form, Spelling	Spelling
1	Grammar error, Speech part, Noun, Wrong form, Spelling	Spelling
5	<i>Form of verbs, adjectives, nouns</i>	SPELLING
2	Grammar error, Speech part, Pronoun, Misplaced	Position
1	Grammar error, Speech part, Adverb, misplaced	Position
3	<i>Misplaced pronouns and advrbs</i>	POSITION
2	Grammar error, Speech part, Noun, WrongForm, Morphology, Derivation	Derivation
1	Grammar error, SpeechPart, Verb Form, wrong derivation	Derivation
3	<i>Morphology of nouns and verbs</i>	DERIVATION
1	Grammar error, SpeechPart, Verb, Wrong Complement	Complementation
1	<i>Verb complement</i>	COMPLEMENTATION
92		

Chart 27. Error descriptive categories in detail in 2008-02fSL37.



Graph 59. Error descriptive categories in 2008-02fSL37.



Graph 60. Error descriptive categories in 2008-02fSL37 in relation to its total number of errors.

The most frequent error mode is **Lack** (Missing clarity, precision, punctuation, capitalization, and words), with 29 occurrences, 31.5%, almost a third of the whole amount of errors in the passage. The second most frequent error mode is **Choice**, (Selection of tenses, words, punctuation, verb mood, code, style -L1/L3-), which has 24 instances, 26.1%, over a quarter of all the errors in the text. At this point the frequency plunges. The third error in frequency is **Inflection**, (Morphology of nouns -number and noun-noun/noun of noun-, verbs -person and mood-, and adjectives -degree-, which occur 16 times, 17.4%. Next comes **Overinclusion**, (Extra punctuation, wordiness, words, and capitalization), that happens 11 times, 12%. The fifth error mode is **Spelling**, (Form of verbs, adjectives, and nouns), occurring five times, 5.4%. **Position**, (Misplaced pronouns and adverbs), and **Derivation**, (Morphology of nouns and verbs) occur only three times each, 3.3%. Finally, **Complementation**, (Verb complement), happens just once, 1.1% of the total 92 errors that occur in 2008-02fSL37.

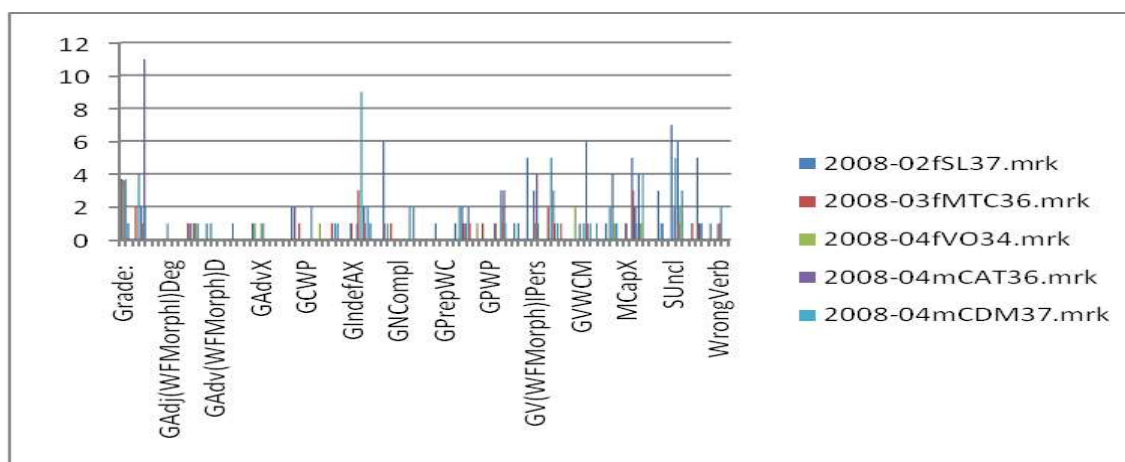
The word cloud of 2008-02fSL37, in its original version (graph 61) illustrates the content of this passage by emphasizing the most frequent words in it. *Way, got, analyze,*

The total amount of words in the medium-scored essays is 1301: 173 (2008-04fVO34) plus 269 (2008-04mCAT36) plus 205 (2008-03fMTC36) plus 301 (2008-04mCDM37) plus 353 (2008-02fSL37). Two hundred and twenty-seven errors in 1301 words is one error every 5.7 words, 17.4% for the group, which is a rather high rate³¹. See chart 28.

6 2008-04fVO34	173	14	1 / 12	8%
7 2008-04mCAT36	269	29	1 / 9	11%
8 2008-03fMTC36	205	33	1 / 6	16%
9 2008-04mCDM37	301	59	1 / 5	20%
10 2008-02fSL37	353	92	1 / 4	26%
Five medium-scored essays	1301	227	1 error every 6 words	17.4%

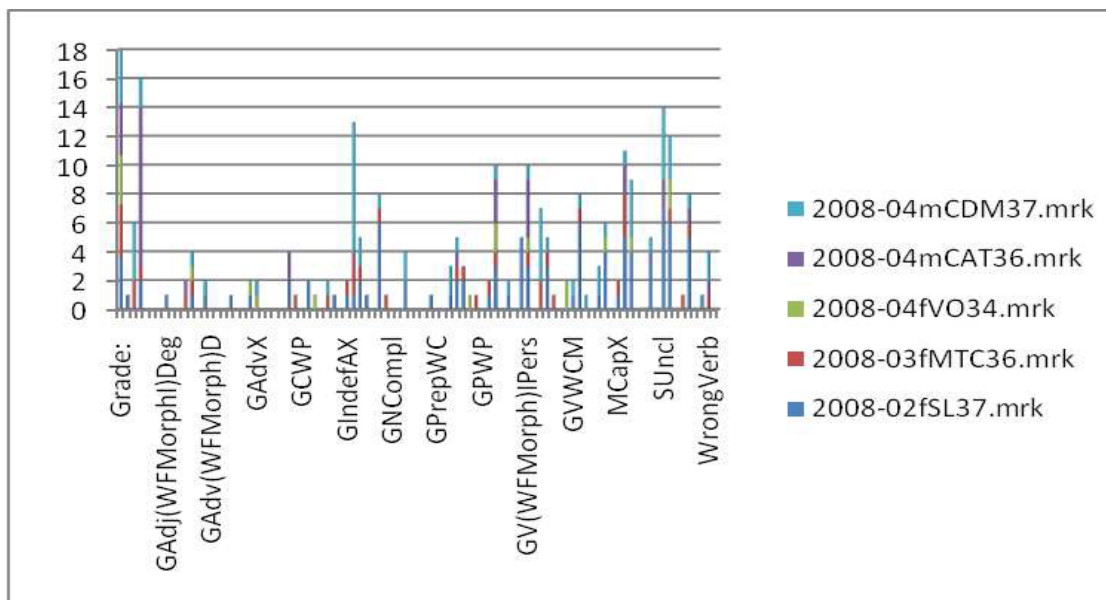
Chart 28. Errors and text length in medium-scored essays.

The data in the graphs that illustrate the error categories in the medium-scored essays result too big to appreciate visually their details, corresponding to each essay in comparison to each other (graph 64), their accumulated amount as a group (graph 65), and their accumulated amount in comparison to the total (graph 66). However, chart 29 and graph 67 provide the necessary details corresponding to the same information.

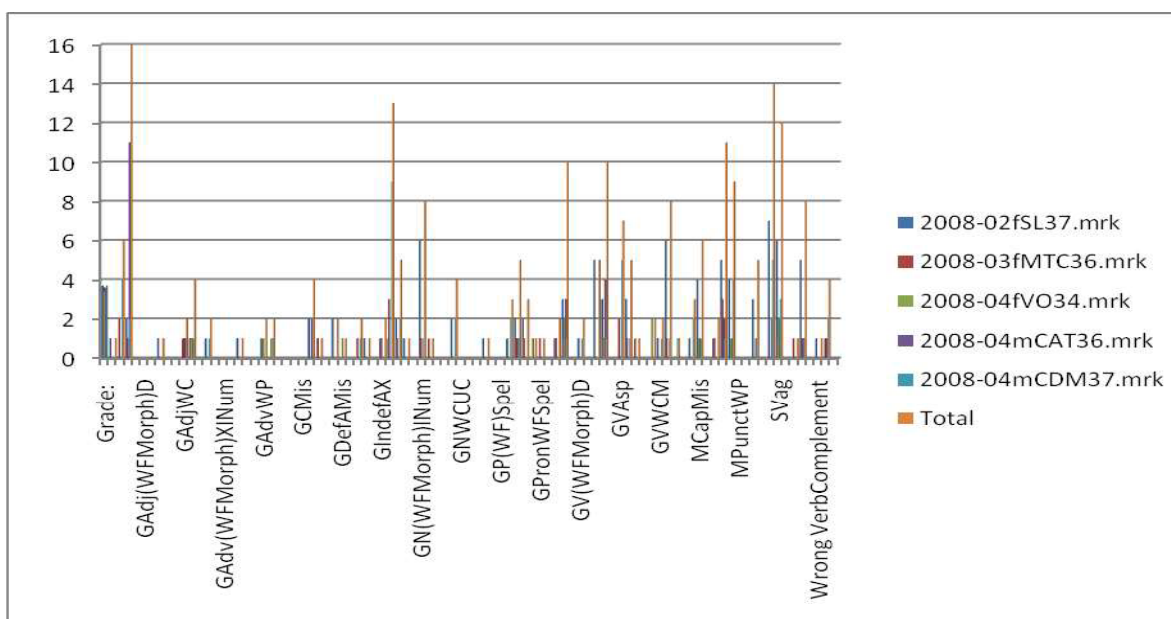


Graph 64. Error categories in medium-scored essays

³¹ Let us remember that the rate in the low-scored essays is one error per 2.9 words, 34.8% (426 errors in 1225 words).



Graph 65. Accumulated total errors by type in medium-scored essays.



Graph 66. Error categories in medium-scored essays, in relation to the total number of errors in that group.

Chart 29 details the errors in the group of medium-scored essays³², by category type, and graph 67 shows this information in a graphic way.

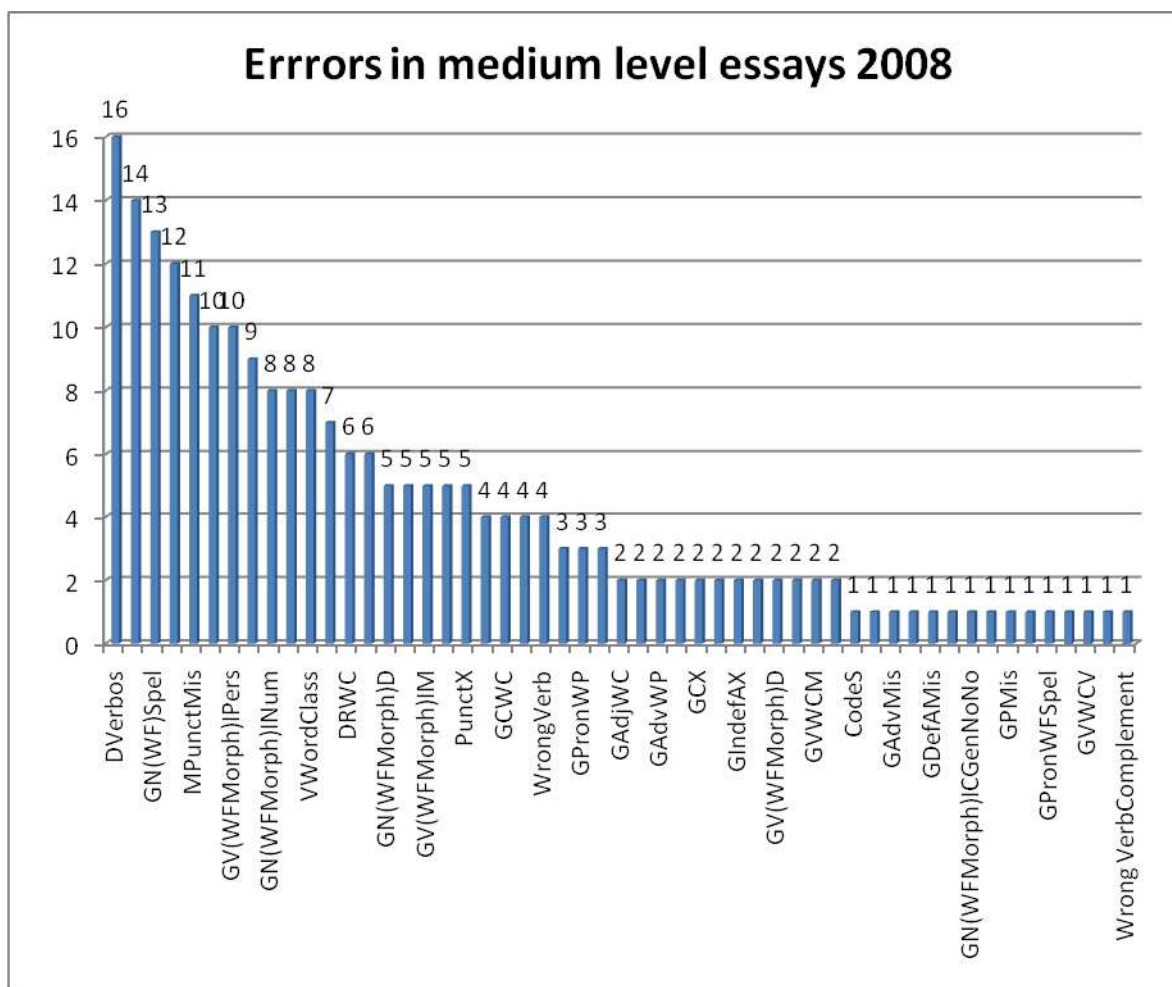
³² Once again, we must insist that some errors either are simultaneous or correspond to alternatives of interpretation of a problem at certain points. That affects the counting.

	Short Annotation	Long Annotation	Category	Instances
1	DVerbos	Discourse error, Verbosity/Wordiness	Overinclusion	16
2	SUncl	Style/Pragmatics error, Unclear/incoherent/incomprehensible	Lack	14
3	GN(WF)Spel	Grammar error, Speech part, Noun, Wrong form, Spelling	Spelling	13
4	SVag	Style/Pragmatics error, Vagueness/ambiguity/lack of precision	Lack	12
5	MPunctMis	Mechanics error, Punctuation, Missing	Lack	11
6	GV(WF)Spel	Grammar error, SpeechPart, Verb, Spelling/Orthography	Spelling	10
7	GV(WFMorph)IPers	Grammar error, Speech part, Verb, WrongForm, Morphology, Inflection of Person. Problem of Subject-Verb concordance	Inflection	10
8	MPunctWC	Mechanics error, Wrong Punctuation	Choice	9
9	GN(WFMorph)INum	Grammar error, Speech part, Noun, Wrong Form, Morphology, Inflection of Number	Inflection	8
10	GVWCT	Grammar error, SpeechPart, Verb, WrongTense	Choice	8
11	VWordClass	Vocabulary error, Wrong Word Class	Choice	8
12	GVAsp	Grammar error, Speech part, Verb, Wrong Form, Morphology, Inflection of Aspect, -ing or PastParticiple form	Inflection	7
13	DRWC	Discourse error, Wrong Register	Choice	6
14	MCapMis	Mechanics error, Capitalization, Missing	Lack	6
15	GN(WFMorph)D	Grammar error, Speech part, Noun, WrongForm, Morphology, Derivation	Derivation	5
16	GpronWC	Grammar error, Speech part, Wrong Pronoun	Choice	5
17	GV(WFMorph)IM	Grammar error, Speech part, Verb, WrongForm, Morphology, Inflection of Mood (indicative, imperative, subjunctive,conditional)	Inflection	5
18	GVAuxMis	Grammar error, Speech part, Auxiliary Verb, Missing	Lack	5

19	PunctX	Mechanics error, Punctuation, overincluded	Overinclusion	5
20	GAdjWFSpel	Grammar error, Speech part, Adjective, Wrong Form, Spelling	Spelling	4
21	GCWC	Grammar error, Speech part, Wrong Conjunction	Choice	4
22	GNWC	Grammar error, Speech part, Wrong Noun	Choice	4
23	WrongVerb	Grammar error, SpeechPart, Verb, Wrong Choice	Choice	4
24	GPronMis	Grammar error, Speech part, Pronoun, Missing	Lack	3
25	GPronWP	Grammar error, Speech part, Pronoun, Misplaced	Position	3
26	L1/3L	Style/Pragmatics error, Spanish (L1)/French(L3)-like	Choice	3
27	GAdjWC	Grammar error, Speech part, Wrong Adjective	Choice	2
28	GAdjX	Grammar error, Speech part, Adjective, overincluded	Overinclusion	2
29	GAdvWP	Grammar error, Speech part, Adverb, misplaced	Position	2
30	GAdvX	Grammar error, Speech part, Adverb, Overincluded	Overinclusion	2
31	GCX	Grammar error, Speech part, Conjunction, overincluded	Overinclusion	2
32	GDefAX	Grammar error, Speech part, Definite Article, overincluded	Overinclusion	2
33	GIndefAX	Grammar error, Speech part, Indefinite Article, overincluded	Overinclusion	2
34	GPX	Grammar error, Speech part, Preposition, overincluded	Overinclusion	2
35	GV(WFMorph)D	Grammar error, SpeechPart, Verb Form, wrong derivation	Derivation	2
36	GVWCAux	Grammar error, Speech part, WrongAuxiliary/Modal	Choice	2
37	GVWCM	Grammar error, Speech part, Verb, Wrong mood	Choice	2
30	MCapX	Mechanics error, Capitalization, Overincluded	Overinclusion	2
39	CodeS	Style/Pragmatics error, Code Switching	Choice	1
40	GAdj(WFMorphI)Deg	Grammar error, Speech part, Adjective, Wrong Form, Morphology, Comparative/Superlative	Inflection	1
41	GAdvMis	Grammar error, Speech part, Adverb, Missing	Lack	1
42	GCWFSpel	Grammar error, Speech part,	Spelling	1

		Conjunction, Wrong Form, Spelling		
43	GDefAMis	Grammar error, Speech part, Definite Article, Missing	Lack	1
44	GIndefAMis	Grammar error, Speech part, Indefinite Article, Missing	Lack	1
45	GN(WFMorph)ICGenNoNo	Grammar error, Speech part, Noun, Wrong Form, Morphology, Inflection of Case, Genitive, Noun+Noun/NounOfNoun	Inflection	1
46	GN(WFMorphI)NumUC	Grammar error, Speech part, Noun, Wrong form, Morphology, Wrong Inflection of Number of Countable/Uncountable	Inflection	1
47	GPMis	Grammar error, Speech part, Preposition, Missing	Lack	1
48	GPronX	Grammar error, Speech part, Pronoun, Overincluded	Overinclusion	1
49	GPronWFSpel	Grammar error, Speech part, Pronoun, Wrong Form, Spelling	Spelling	1
50	GVAuxX	Grammar error, Speech part, Verb, Extra Auxiliary/Modal	Overinclusion	1
51	GVWCV	Grammar error, Speech part, Verb, wrong voice	Choice	1
52	Verb Misplaced	Grammar error, SpeechPart, Verb, Wrong Position	Position	1
53	Wrong VerbComplement	Grammar error, SpeechPart, Verb, Wrong Complement	Complementation	1
TOTAL				227

Chart 29. Total errors in medium-scored essays, by category type.



Graph 67. Total errors by type in medium-scored essays 2008.

Fifty-three error categories, out of our 92, (57.6%%), are present in the medium-scored essays analyzed. In general, like in low-scored essays, any single type of error prevails too much. Instead, it is the combined presence of a number of various flaws what can be perceived. The frequency starts at 16 instances and then gradually decreases. The first problem is **Verbosity/wordiness**, a discourse error of over inclusion, 16 times out of 227, 16 7% of the total. The second most frequent error is **Lack of clarity/incoherence**, a style/pragmatics lack error that happens 14 times, 6.2% of the total. The third is **Noun spelling**, a grammar wrong form error that occurs 13 times, 5.7% of the total. Then comes **Vagueness/ambiguity/lack of precision**, a style/pragmatics lack error, with 12 occurrences, 5.3%. The fifth most frequent error type is **Missing punctuation**, a mechanics lack error, 11 times, a 4.8% of the total. **Verb spelling** and **verb inflection of person**,

grammar errors follow with 10 times, 4.4% each. The eighth error is **Wrong punctuation**, a mechanics choice error, occurring 9 times, 4% of the total. Then we have **Noun inflection of number**, (a grammar morphology error), and two grammar choice errors: **wrong tense** and **wrong word class** (vocabulary error), which happen eight times (3.5%) each of the three. The twelfth place is for **Verb inflection of aspect**, a grammar morphology problem, with seven occurrences, 3.1% of the total. **Wrong register** (discourse choice error) and **missing capitalization** (mechanics lack error) come next with six times (2.6%) each. Then we have **Noun derivation** (grammar morphology error), **wrong pronoun** (grammar choice error), **verb inflection of mood** (grammar inflection error), **auxiliary verb missing** (grammar lack error), and **extra punctuation** (mechanics over inclusion error), these five errors occurring five times (2.2%) each. Then follow **Adjective spelling** (grammar form error), and **wrong word -noun, verb, and pronoun-** (grammar choice errors), each with four instances, 1.8%. Then follow **Missing pronoun** (grammar lack error), **misplaced pronoun** (grammar position error), and **L1/L3-like** (style/pragmatics choice error), each with 3 occurrences, 1.3%.

Occurring only twice (0.9%) each, there are 12 types of errors: **Extra words – adjectives, adverbs, conjunctions, definite and indefinite articles, prepositions-** (grammar over inclusion error) and **extra capitalization** (mechanics over inclusion error), **wrong words –adjective and auxiliary/modal-** (grammar choice error) and **wrong verb mood** (grammar choice error), **misplaced adverb** (grammar position error), and **wrong verb form** (grammar derivation error). The least frequent errors in medium-scored essays are 15 types of errors that happen only once (0.4%) each: four **words missing** (lack): **adverb, definite article, indefinite article, and preposition**; three **inflection** errors: **adjective, noun genitive case –noun-noun vs. noun of noun-, and number in countable/uncountable noun**; two choice errors (**code switching** and **incorrect verb voice**); two **spelling problems (conjunction and pronoun)**; two over inclusion errors (**extra pronoun and auxiliary/modal**); and, finally, one position problem (**misplaced verb**).

In general, in this group of essays, it can be said that the second most frequent error is one that can be considered serious: lack of clarity. Maybe the first one, verbosity/wordiness, and the fourth –vagueness- also contribute to or are caused by the former.

When organized by descriptive type, the second facet of our bidimensional error analysis system, further details come up in relation to the errors in the medium-scored essays; chart 30 and graphs 68 and 69 illustrate them.

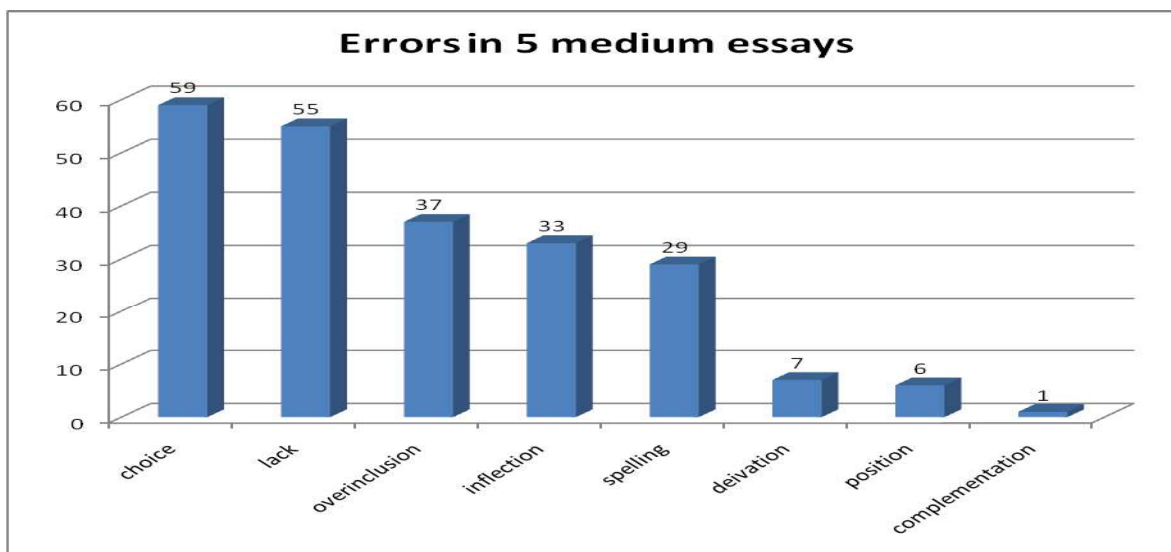
	Short Annotation	Long Annotation	Category	Instances
1	MPunctWC	Mechanics error, Wrong Punctuation	Choice	9
2	GVWCT	Grammar error, SpeechPart, Verb, WrongTense	Choice	8
3	VWordClass	Vocabulary error, Wrong Word Class	Choice	8
4	DRWC	Discourse error, Wrong Register	Choice	6
5	GPronWC	Grammar error, Speech part, Wrong Pronoun	Choice	5
6	GCWC	Grammar error, Speech part, Wrong Conjunction	Choice	4
7	GNWC	Grammar error, Speech part, Wrong Noun	Choice	4
8	WrongVerb	Grammar error, SpeechPart, Verb, Wrong Choice	Choice	4
9	L1/3L	Style/Pragmatics error, Spanish (L1)/French(L3)-like	Choice	3
10	GAdjWC	Grammar error, Speech part, Wrong Adjective	Choice	2
11	GVWCAux	Grammar error, Speech part, WrongAuxiliary/Modal	Choice	2
12	GVWCM	Grammar error, Speech part, Verb, Wrong mood	Choice	2
13	CodeS	Style/Pragmatics error, Code Switching	Choice	1
14	GVWCV	Grammar error, Speech part, Verb, wrong voice	Choice	1
Choice: wrong selection of words, punctuation register, verb traits (e.g. tense, mood, voice), style (L1/L3-likeness and code-switching)				59
15	SUncl	Style/Pragmatics error, Unclear/incoherent/incomprehensible	Lack	14
16	SVag	Style/Pragmatics error, Vagueness/ambiguity/lack of precision	Lack	12
17	MPunctMis	Mechanics error, Punctuation, Missing	Lack	11

18	MCapMis	Mechanics error, Capitalization, Missing	Lack	6
19	GVAuxMis	Grammar error, Speech part, Auxiliary Verb, Missing	Lack	5
20	GPronMis	Grammar error, Speech part, Pronoun, Missing	Lack	3
21	GAdvMis	Grammar error, Speech part, Adverb, Missing	Lack	1
22	GDefAMis	Grammar error, Speech part, Definite Article, Missing	Lack	1
23	GIndefAMis	Grammar error, Speech part, Indefinite Article, Missing	Lack	1
24	GPMis	Grammar error, Speech part, Preposition, Missing	Lack	1
<i>Lack: missing clarity (incoherence), precision (vagueness/ambiguity), words, punctuation, and capitalization</i>				55
25	DVerbos	Discourse error, Verbosity/Wordiness	Overinclusion	16
26	PunctX	Mechanics error, Punctuation, overincluded	Overinclusion	5
27	GAdjX	Grammar error, Speech part, Adjective, overincluded	Overinclusion	2
28	GAdvX	Grammar error, Speech part, Adverb, Overincluded	Overinclusion	2
29	GCX	Grammar error, Speech part, Conjunction, overincluded	Overinclusion	2
30	GDefAX	Grammar error, Speech part, Definite Article, overincluded	Overinclusion	2
31	GIndefAX	Grammar error, Speech part, Indefinite Article, overincluded	Overinclusion	2
32	GPX	Grammar error, Speech part, Preposition, overincluded	Overinclusion	2
33	MCapX	Mechanics error, Capitalization, Overincluded	Overinclusion	2
34	GPronX	Grammar error, Speech part, Pronoun, Overincluded	Overinclusion	1
35	GVAuxX	Grammar error, Speech part, Verb, Extra Auxiliary/Modal	Overinclusion	1
<i>Overinclusion: wordiness/verbosity, and extra words (adjective, adverb, conjunction, articles, preposition, pronoun, auxiliary/modal), punctuation, and capitalization</i>				37
36	GV(WFMorph)IPers	Grammar error, Speech part, Verb, WrongForm, Morphology, Inflection of Person. Problem of Subject-Verb concordance	Inflection	10

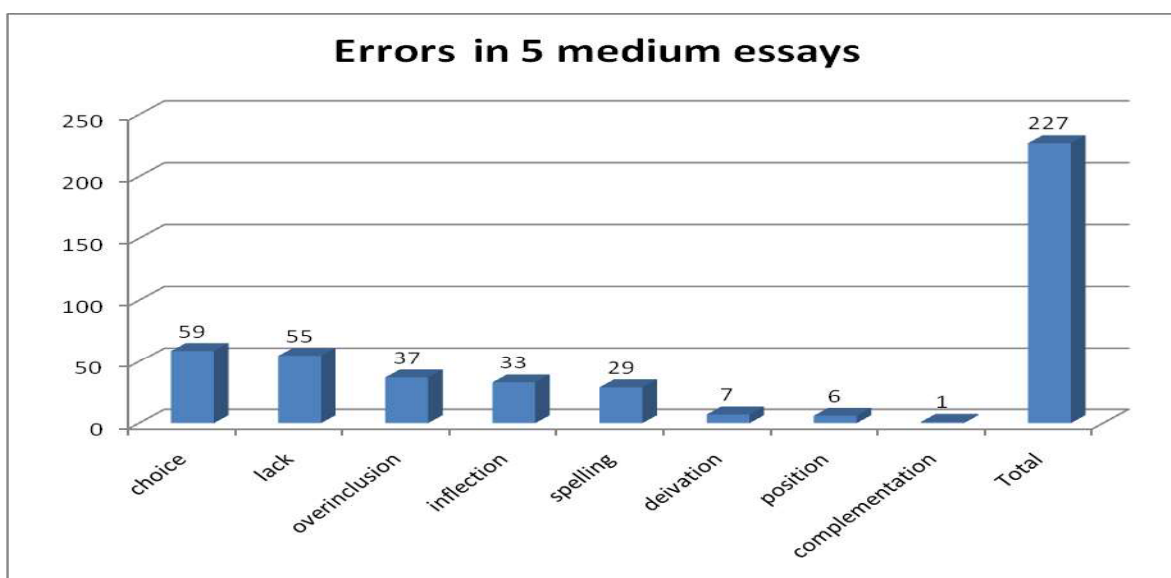
37	GN(WFMorph)INum	Grammar error, Speech part, Noun, Wrong Form, Morphology, Inflection of Number	Inflection	8
38	GVAsp	Grammar error, Speech part, Verb, Wrong Form, Morphology, Inflection of Aspect, -ing or PastParticiple form	Inflection	7
39	GV(WFMorph)IM	Grammar error, Speech part, Verb, WrongForm, Morphology, Inflection of Mood (indicative, imperative, subjunctive,conditional)	Inflection	5
40	GAdj(WFMorphI)De g	Grammar error, Speech part, Adjective, Wrong Form, Morphology, Comparative/Superlative	Inflection	1
41	GN(WFMorph)ICGenNoNo	Grammar error, Speech part, Noun,Wrong Form, Morphology, Inflection of Case, Genitive, Noun+Noun/NounOfNoun	Inflection	1
42	GN(WFMorphI)Num UC	Grammar error, Speech part, Noun, Wrong form, Morphology, Wrong Inflection of Number of Contable/Uncountable	Inflection	1
<i>Inflection: faulty morphology of nouns (number, genitive, countable/uncountable), verbs (person, aspect, and mood), and adjectives(degree)</i>				33
43	GN(WF)Spel	Grammar error, Speech part, Noun, Wrong form, Spelling	Spelling	13
44	GV(WF)Spel	Grammar error, SpeechPart, Verb, Spelling/Orthography	Spelling	10
45	GAdjWFSpel	Grammar error, Speech part, Adjective, Wrong Form, Spelling	Spelling	4
46	GCWFSpel	Grammar error, Speech part, Conjunction, Wrong Form, Spelling	Spelling	1
47	GPronWFSpel	Grammar error, Speech part, Pronoun, Wrong Form, Spelling	Spelling	1
<i>Spelling: faulty orthography/form of nouns, verbs, adjectives, connunction, and pronoun</i>				29
48	GN(WFMorph)D	Grammar error, Speech part, Noun, WrongForm, Morphology, Derivation	Derivation	5
49	GV(WFMorph)D	Grammar error, SpeechPart, Verb Form, wrong derivation	Derivation	2
<i>Derivation: wrong verb and noun forms</i>				7
50	GPronWP	Grammar error, Speech part, Pronoun, Misplaced	Position	3
51	GAdvWP	Grammar error, Speech part, Adverb, misplaced	Position	2
52	Verb Misplaced	Grammar error, SpeechPart, Verb, Wrong Position	Position	1
<i>Position: Misplaced words (pronoun, adverb, verb)</i>				6

53	Wrong VerbComplement	Grammar error, SpeechPart, Verb, Wrong Complement	Complementati on	1
Complementation: wrong verb complement				1
TOTAL				227

Chart 30. Total errors in medium-scored essays by descriptive type



Graph 68. Total error by modes (descriptive categories) in medium-scored essays 2008.

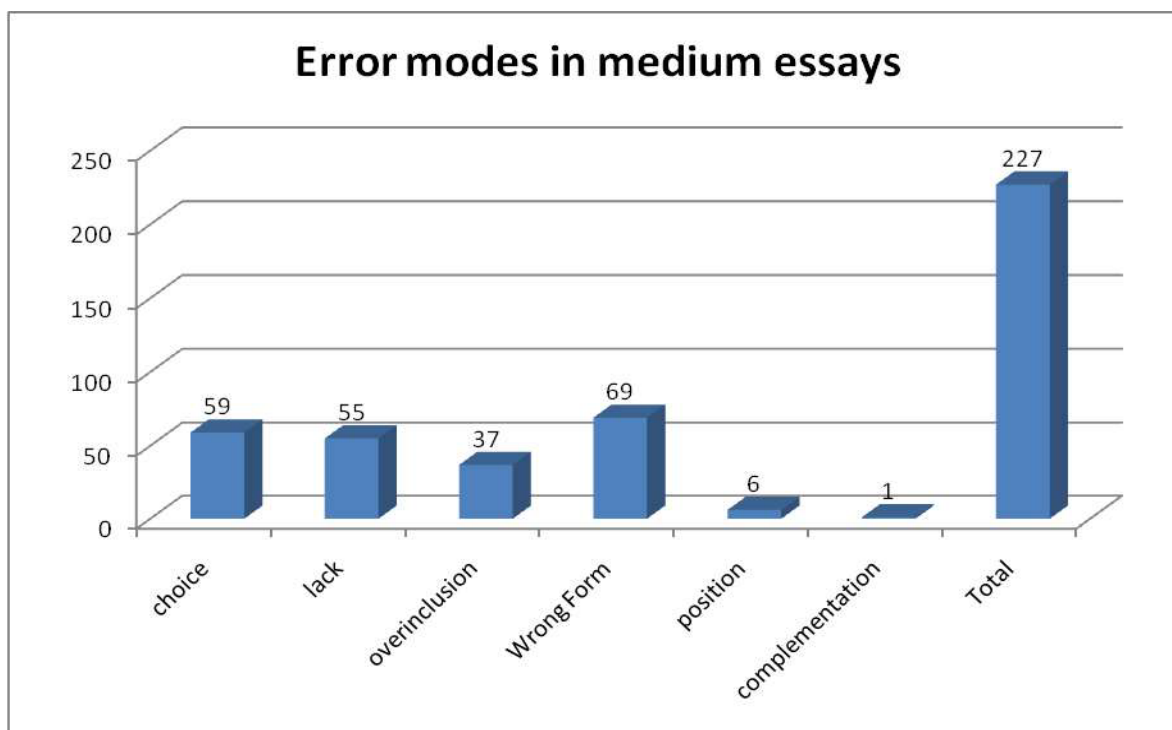


Graph 69. Total error by modes (descriptive categories) in medium-scored essays 2008 against the total errors in the sub group.

Choice, embedding wrong selection of words, punctuation register, verb traits (e.g. tense, mood, voice), and style problems (L1/L3-likeness and code-switching), is the most frequent error mode, with 59 instances, 26%, around a quarter of the whole amount of errors in the subset of medium-scored errors. **Lack**, which includes missing clarity (incoherence), precision (vagueness/ambiguity), words, punctuation, and capitalization, is the second most frequent error mode, with 55 occurrences of the total amount of errors in this group of essays. **Overinclusion**, comprising wordiness/verbosity, and extra words (adjective, adverb, conjunction, articles, preposition, pronoun, auxiliary/modal), punctuation, and capitalization, is the third most frequent error mode in this group of essays, with 37 errors, 16.3%. The fourth most frequent error mode in this group of essays, with 33 errors, 14.5%, is **Inflection**, which includes faulty morphology of nouns (number, genitive, countable/uncountable), verbs (person, aspect, and mood), and adjectives (degree). **Spelling** comes next, including faulty orthography/form of nouns, verbs, adjectives, conjunction, and pronoun; it has 29 instances, 12.8%. **Derivation** occupies the sixth place in frequency of errors in the group of medium-scored essays. It covers wrong verb and noun forms. Seven errors are counted under this type, 3.1%. **Position** is the one before the last; it embeds Misplaced words (pronoun, adverb, verb) and occurs six times, 2.6%. **Complementation** is the least frequent error mode in this group of essays. It includes only one wrong verb complement, 0.4% of the total of errors for the group. The first two of those errors are the kinds that are considered as serious problems, for they affect meaning and content. The other errors modes do not always affect content so gravely.

At this point it is necessary to remind the reader that inflection, derivation and spelling belong to Wrong Form, one of the six descriptive criteria in our error analysis system. They are Omission (missing elements), Overinclusion (extra elements), Wrong Form (Morphology –subdivided into inflection and derivation- and Orthography), Wrong Choice (selection), Wrong Position (misplacement) and Complementation. Under this more general perspective, the analysis of error modes in medium-scored changes, and it is **wrong form** the error mode that is more frequent in this group of essays, with 69 instances, which is 30.4% of the 227 errors in the group. **Choice** is second with 59 errors (26%), closely followed by **Lack** with 55 errors (24.2%). A frequency fall happens here, and we find

overinclusion in the fourth place, with 37 instances (16.3%). The last error modes have really few occurrences: **position** errors occur only six times (2.6%) and **complementation** problems happen only once (0.4%). Graph 70 shows these grouped results for error modes in them.



Graph 70. Grouped error descriptive modes in medium-scored essays.

From a different perspective, considering errors *not* present in medium level essays is also very enlightening. (chart 31).

1	ExtraVerb	Grammar error, SpeechPart, Verb overincluded	Overinclusion
2	GAdj(WFMorph)D	Grammar error, Speech part, Adjective, Wrong Form, Morphology, Derivation	Derivation
3	GAdj(WFMorph)XINum	Grammar error, Speech part, Adjective, Wrong Form, Morphology, Inflection, Extra morpheme of Number	Inflection
4	GAdjCompl	Grammar error, Speech part, Wrong Complement of Adjective	Complement
5	GAdjMis	Grammar error, Speech part, Adjective,	Lack

		Missing	
6	GAdjWP	Grammar error, Speech part, Misplaced Adjective	Position
7	GAdv(WFMorph)D	Grammar error, Speech part, Adverb, Wrong Form, Morphology, Wrong Derivation	Derivation
8	GAdv(WFMorph)XINum	Grammar error, Speech part, Adverb, Wrong Form, Morphology, Inflection of number overincluded	Overinclusion
9	GAdvCompl	Grammar error, Speech part, Adverb, Wrong Complement	Complementation
10	GAdvWC	Grammar error, Speech part, Wrong Adverb	Choice
11	GAdvWFSpel	Grammar error, Speech part, Adverb, Wrong Form, Spelling	Spelling
12	GAWC	Grammar error, Speech part, Wrong Article	Choice
13	GAWP	Grammar error, Speech part, Article, misplaced	Position
14	GCCompl	Grammar error, Speech part, Conjunction, Wrong complement	Complmentation
15	GCMis	Grammar error, Speech part, Conjunction, Missing	Lack
16	GCWP	Grammar error, Speech part, Conjunction, misplaced	Position
17	GDefAWFSpel	Grammar error, Speech part, Definite Article, Wrong Form, Spelling	Spelling
18	GIndefAWFSpel	Grammar error, Speech part, Indefinite Article, Wrong form, Spelling	Spelling
19	GN(WFMorph)ICGen's	Grammar error, Speech part, Noun, Wrong Form, Morphology, Inflection of Case, Genitive, Apostrophe	Inflection
20	GNCompl	Grammar error, Speech part, Wrong complement of Noun	Complementation
21	GNMis	Grammar error, Speech part, Noun, Missing	Lack
22	GNWCUC	Grammar error, Speech part, Noun, Wrong Countable/Uncountable	Choice
23	GNWP	Grammar error, Speech part, Misplaced Noun	Position
24	GNX	Grammar error, Speech part, Extra Noun	Overinclusion
25	GPrepWC	Grammar error, Speech part, wrong Preposition	Choice
26	GP(WF)Spel	Grammar error, Speech part, Preposition, Wrong Form, Spelling	Spelling
27	GPWP	Grammar error, Speech part, Preposition, misplaced	Position
28	GV(WF)SpelAux	Grammar error, Speech part, Aux Verb, Spelling	Spelling

		Wrong Form, Spelling	
29	GV(WFMorph)IAux	Grammar error, Speech part, Verb, WrongForm, Morphology, Auxiliary/Modal	Inflection
30	GV(WFMorph)IV	Grammar error, Speech part, Verb, Wrong Form, Morphology, Inflection of Voice	Inflection
31	GVMis	Grammar error: Sppech part, Verb, Missing	Lack
32	GVWPAux	Grammar error, Speech part, Verb, Misplaced Auxiliary/Modal	Position
33	MCapWP	Mechanics error, Capitalization, misplaced	Position
34	MPunctWP	Mechanics error, Punctuation, Misplaced	Position
35	MWFSyl	Mechanics error, Wrong Form, Syllabication	Form
36	SFrag	Style/Pragmatics error, Fragment (incomplete sentence/idea)	Lack
37	VCogn	Vocabulary error, Cognate	Choice
38	W PastForm	Grammar error, SpeechPart, Verb, WrongForm, Morphology, PastTense	Inflection
39	PrepCompl	Grammar error, Speech part, Preposition, Complementation	Complementation

Chart 31. Errors not present in medium-scored essays.

In the medium-scored essays considered for our study, 39 (42.4%) error modes do *not* occur. This rate is higher than in low-scored essays, in which the percentage is 27.2%, corresponding to 25 error types. That is consistent with the level of the essays. It is interesting to note that that there is no extra number in adjectives; there are almost no complementation problems, there are no fragments, there are no problems with cognates and no problems occur with the past tense form of the verbs. These are errors usually considered as basic.

7.3. 2008 High-scored essays

This is the last of the three subsets of essays taken into account for the study. As done for the other groups of essays, essays were selected randomly among the texts that received high scores.

Castration is not the Correct Way to punish a Convicted of Rape

In our Colombian context, as in other ones, the fact of rape has ever existed. A way to punish people who commit that fault in some countries or cultures is to castrate them. However that penalty does not solve the problem. So the punishment is not to use it.

First of all, when a person is accused to have committed a rape there is a percentage that he or she is not guilty. But they are condemned as the contrary. So people can castrate someone who has not committed a rape.

Second the fact of being castrated does not change the raper's mind where is the problem: The raper can continue with the fault using other parts of his body.

So, it is better to control someone convicted of rape is using a correct mental treatment which finds the reason why this person has committed this crime. It is posible to change this person's mind. Another, solution to the problem is pay attention what this person is doing all the time to avoid he or she does it again.

Moreover, if the penalty for a conviction of rape is castration, every person should be castrated because rape is a problem that shows the society has a problem.

In conclusion, castration is not the proper way to punish a raper because it could be a mistake doing it with a innocent person; cutting a tool but not the ill mind of the raper and not solving the problem in its real origin.

This essay contains 263 words distributed all through six paragraphs. Most of the paragraphs are short, with no more than four sentences. Despite the flow of ideas is rather smooth, some problems stand out: *So the punishment is not to use it at the end of the first paragraph. And then, in the second paragraph, when a person is accusated to have committed a rape there is a percentage that he or she is not guilty. Raper* is a wrongly derived word that creates bad impression in the reader. The presence of errors like those makes you wonder about the proficiency level of the student.

The annotated version of 2008-01mFH44 using MARKIN shows the errors tagged in it:

Castration Is ^{MCapX}Not ^{MCapX}The ^{MCapX}Correct Way to punish a Convicted of Rape

In our Colombian context, as in other ones, the fact of ^{DVerbos} rape has ever existed. A way to punish people who commit that fault in some countries or cultures is to castrate them. However ^{MPunctMis} that penalty does not solve the problem. So the punishment is not to use it. ^{SUncl SVag}

First of all ^{DVerbos}, when a person is accused ^{GV(WFMorph)D} to ^{GPrepWC} have ^{GVWCM} committed ^{GV(WF)Spel} a rape ^{MPunctMis} there is a percentage ^{SUncl SVag GNCompl} that he or she is not guilty. But ^{GCWC} they are ^{SUncl GVWCM} condemned as the contrary ^{SUncl GAdjWC}. So ^{GCWC} ^{MPunctMis} people ^{SVag} can castrate someone who has not committed ^{GV(WF)Spel} a rape.

Second the fact of being castrated does not change the raper ^{GN(WFMorph)D}'s mind where is ^{GVWPAux} the problem: The raper ^{GN(WFMorph)D} can continue with the fault ^{GNWC GPMis} using other parts of his body.

So ^{DRWC}, it is better to control someone convicted of rape is ^{GVAuxX GPMis} using a correct mental treatment which finds the reason why this person has committed ^{GV(WF)Spel} this crime. It is possible ^{GAdjWFSpel} to change this person's mind. Another, ^{PunctX} solution to the problem is pay ^{GV(WFMorph)IM} attention ^{GN(WF)Spel GPMis} what this person is doing all the time to avoid he or she does it again ^{WrongVerb Wrong VerbComplement LI/3L GPronWC GPMis GVWCM}.

Moreover, if the penalty for a conviction of rape is castration, every person should be castrated because rape is a problem that shows the society has a problem ^{SUncl}.

In conclusion, castration is not the proper way to punish a raper ^{GN(WFMorph)D} because it could be a mistake doing ^{GVWCM} it with a ^{GIndefAWFSpel} innocent person; ^{MPunctWC} cutting a tool but not the ill mind of the raper ^{GN(WFMorph)D} and not solving the problem in its real origin.

There are more flaws than the assumed in the initial reading. However, most of them seem to be of the kind that does not affect content too much: capitalization, verbosity, punctuation, morphology. On the other hand, some vagueness/lack of clarity is evident in this passage.

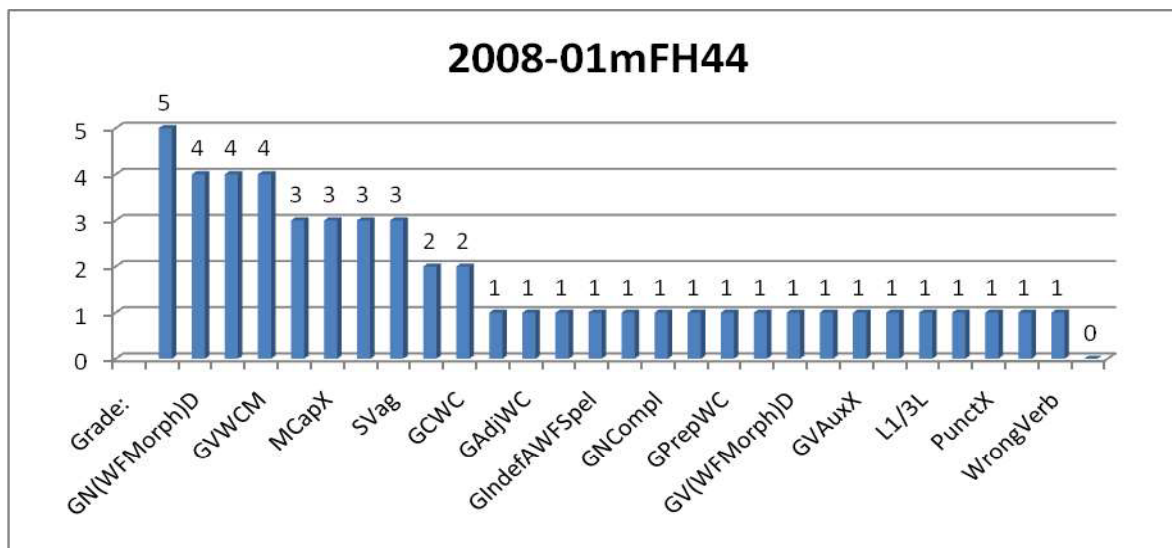
Chart 32 and graphs 71 and 72 detail the errors in 2008-01mFH44³³ (MARKIN statistics).

2008-01mFH44		
Instances	Long Annotation	Category
5	Style/Pragmatics error, Unclear/incoherent/incomprehensible	Lack
4	Grammar error, Speech part, Noun, WrongForm, Morphology, Derivation	Derivation
4	Grammar error, Speech part, Verb, Wrong mood	Choice
4	Grammar error, Speech part, Preposition, Missing	Lack
3	Style/Pragmatics error, Vagueness/ambiguity/lack of precision	Lack
3	Grammar error, SpeechPart, Verb, Spelling/Orthography	Spelling
3	Mechanics error, Capitalization, Overincluded	Overinclusion
3	Mechanics error, Punctuation, Missing	Lack
2	Discourse error, Verbosity/Wordiness	Overinclusion
2	Grammar error, Speech part, Wrong Conjunction	Choice
1	Discourse error, Wrong Register	Choice
1	Grammar error, Speech part, Verb, Misplaced Auxiliary/Modal	Position
1	Grammar error, Speech part, Wrong complement of Noun	Complementation
1	Mechanics error, Punctuation, overincluded	Overinclusion
1	Grammar error, Speech part, Verb, WrongForm, Morphology, Inflection of Mood (indicative, imperative, subjunctive,conditional)	Inflection
1	Grammar error, Speech part, Verb, Extra Auxiliary/Modal	Overinclusion
1	Grammar error, SpeechPart, Verb, Wrong Complement	Complementation
1	Grammar error, SpeechPart, Verb Form, wrong derivation	Derivation
1	Grammar error, SpeechPart, Verb, Wrong Choice	Choice
1	Mechanics error, Wrong Punctuation	Choice
1	Grammar error, Speech part, Indefinite Article, Wrong form, Spelling	Spelling
1	Grammar error, Speech part, wrong Preposition	Choice
1	Grammar error, Speech part, Noun, Wrong form, Spelling	Spelling

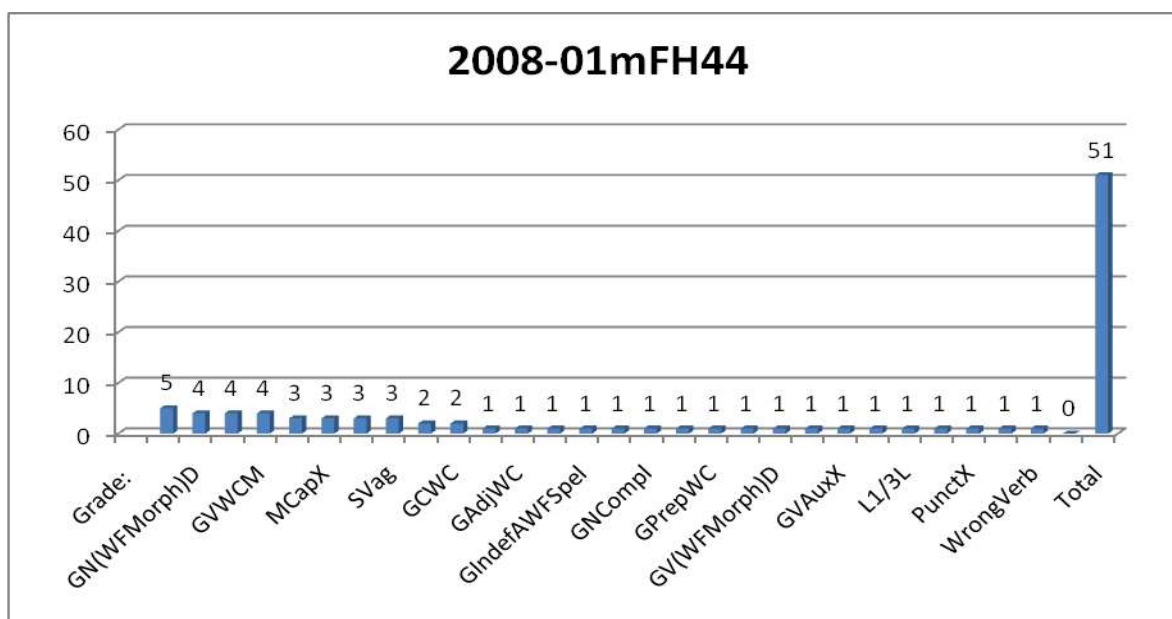
³³ Some errors either are simultaneous or correspond to alternatives of interpretation of a problem at certain points. That affects the counting.

1	Grammar error, Speech part, Wrong Pronoun	Choice
1	Grammar error, Speech part, Adjective, Wrong Form, Spelling	Spelling
1	Style/Pragmatics error, Spanish (L1)/French(L3)-like	Choice
1	Grammar error, Speech part, Wrong Adjective	Choice
1	Grammar error, Speech part, Wrong Noun	Choice
51		

Chart 32. Errors tagged in 2008-01mFH44.



Graph 71. Errors tagged in 2008-01mFH44.



Graph 72. Errors tagged in 2008-01mFH44 in relation to the total errors in it.

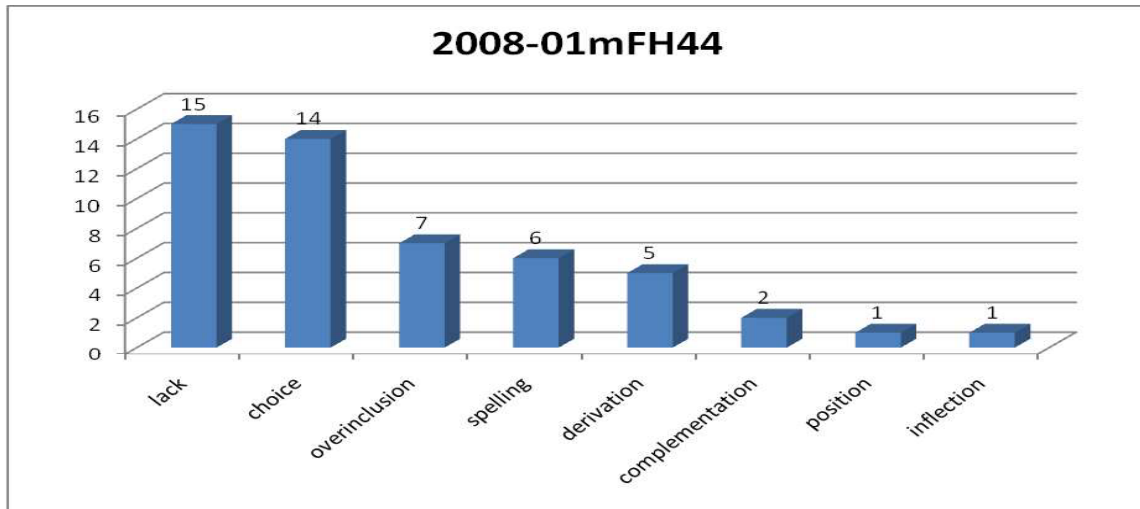
In total, there are 51 errors in 263 words distributed in six paragraphs. That makes one error every 5.2 words (19.4%) and 8.5 errors per paragraph. It is a rather high frequency of errors, especially if we consider that the paragraphs are very short. In relation to errors classified according to linguistic categories, the first dimension of our analysis system, of the 51 errors in this passage the most frequent type is **lack of clarity** (incoherence), which occurs five times, 9.8%, almost a tenth of all the errors in the text. The second most frequent types of errors are three that occur four times (7.8%) each: **verb wrong form** (derivation), **incorrect verb mood** (choice) and **missing preposition** (lack). Then, the next most frequent error types are four that happen three times (5.9%) each: **lack or precision** (vagueness/ambiguity), **missing punctuation** (lack), **verb orthography** (spelling), and **extra capitalization** (overinclusion). Next, 2 two-time occurring errors: 2 times: **verbosity/wordiness** (overinclusion) and **wrong conjunction** (choice). The last position, the least frequent error types in 2008-01mFH44, is conformed by a group of 18 errors, each with only one instance (2%). Again, it can be said that it is the combined “force” of a number of errors that are not necessarily very frequent individually what characterizes the error panorama in this passage.

Regarding the second dimension of our error analysis system, chart 33 and graphs 73 and 74 show the panorama of errors for 2008-01mFH44, organized by descriptive categories.

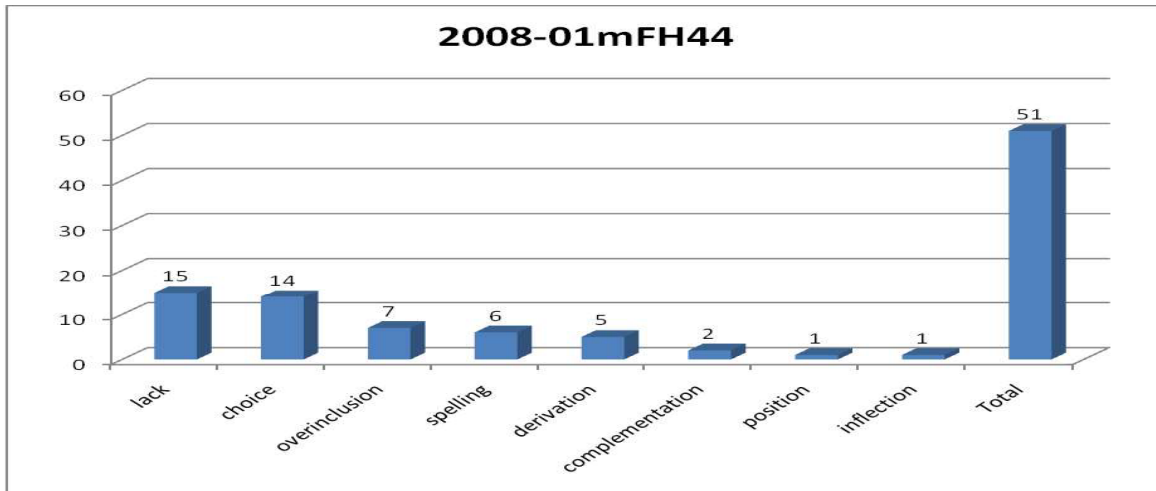
Instances	Long Annotation	Category
3	Mechanics error, Punctuation, Missing	Lack
3	Style/Pragmatics error, Vagueness/ambiguity/lack of precision	Lack
5	Style/Pragmatics error, Unclear/incoherent/incomprehensible	Lack
4	Grammar error, Speech part, Preposition, Missing	Lack
15	<i>Missing punctuation, precision, clarity, prepositions</i>	LACK
1	Grammar error, Speech part, wrong Preposition	Choice
1	Grammar error, Speech part, Wrong Pronoun	Choice
1	Style/Pragmatics error, Spanish (L1)/French(L3)-like	Choice
1	Grammar error, SpeechPart, Verb, Wrong Choice	Choice
1	Mechanics error, Wrong Punctuation	Choice
1	Grammar error, Speech part, Wrong Adjective	Choice
1	Grammar error, Speech part, Wrong Noun	Choice

2	Grammar error, Speech part, Wrong Conjunction	Choice
1	Discourse error, Wrong Register	Choice
4	Grammar error, Speech part, Verb, Wrong mood	Choice
14	<i>Selection of words, style (L1/L3), punctuation, register, verb mood</i>	CHOICE
1	Grammar error, Speech part, Verb, Extra Auxiliary/Modal	Overinclusion
3	Mechanics error, Capitalization, Overincluded	Overinclusion
2	Discourse error, Verbosity/Wordiness	Overinclusion
1	Mechanics error, Punctuation, overincluded	Overinclusion
7	<i>Extra auxiliary/modal, capitalization. Wordiness, punctuation</i>	OVERINCLUSION
1	Grammar error, Speech part, Adjective, Wrong Form, Spelling	Spelling
1	Grammar error, Speech part, Noun, Wrong form, Spelling	Spelling
3	Grammar error, SpeechPart, Verb, Spelling/Orthography	Spelling
1	Grammar error, Speech part, Indefinite Article, Wrong form, Spelling	Spelling
6	<i>Form of adjectives, nouns, verbs, indefinite article</i>	SPELLING
4	Grammar error, Speech part, Noun, WrongForm, Morphology, Derivation	Derivation
1	Grammar error, SpeechPart, Verb Form, wrong derivation	Derivation
5	<i>Morphology of nouns and verbs</i>	DERIVATION
1	Grammar error, SpeechPart, Verb, Wrong Complement	Complementation
1	Grammar error, Speech part, Wrong complement of Noun	Complementation
2	<i>Verb and noun complements</i>	COMPLEMENTATION
1	Grammar error, Speech part, Verb, Misplaced Auxiliary/Modal	Position
1	<i>Misplaced auxiliary/Modal</i>	POSITION
1	Grammar error, Speech part, Verb, WrongForm, Morphology, Inflection of Mood (indicative, imperative, subjunctive,conditional)	Inflection
1	<i>Morphology of verbs (mood)</i>	INFLECTION
51		

Chart 33. Error descriptive categories in 2008-01mFH44.



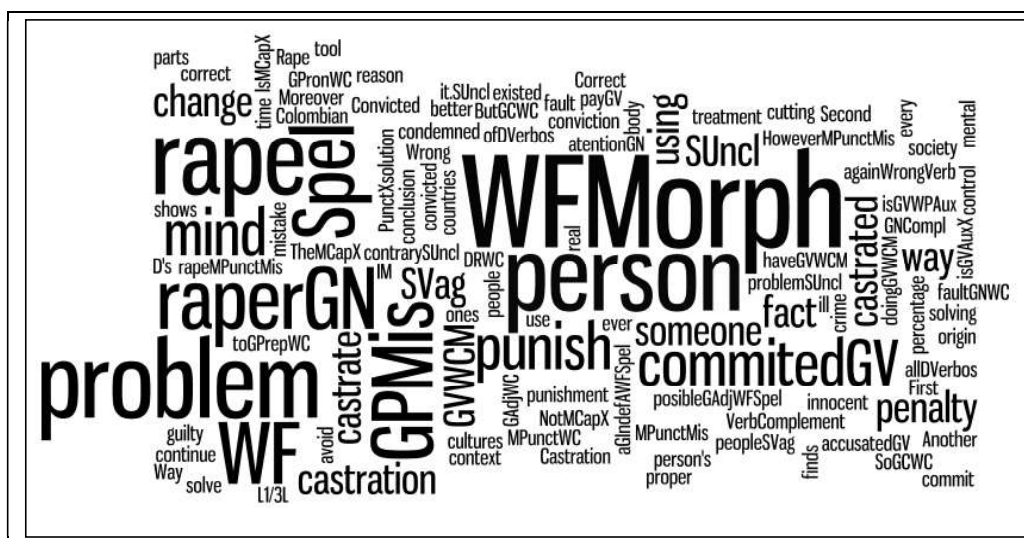
Graph 73. Error descriptive categories in 2008-01mFH44.



Graph 74. Error descriptive categories in 2008-01mFH44 in relation to the total number of errors.

The most frequent error mode is **Lack**, (including missing punctuation, precision, clarity, and prepositions), which happens 15 times, 29.4%, near a third of all the errors in 2008-01mFH44. The second most frequent error mode is **Choice**, (including problems with selection of words, style (L1/L3), punctuation, register, and verb mood), which occurs 14 times, 27.5%, over a fourth of the errors in the passage. Next is **Overinclusion**, (including extra auxiliary/modal, capitalization, wordiness, and punctuation), with 7 errors, 13.7, a seventh of all the errors in the text. Then we have **Spelling** errors (including problems with the form of adjectives, nouns, verbs, and indefinite article), which happen six times, 11.8%

However, the impact of faults in the text is big, as can be seen in the word cloud of the annotated text 2008-01mFH44, graph 76.



Graph 76. Word cloud of the annotated text 2008-01mFH44.

7.3.2. 2008-03fRMT44

Castration should be a fair penalty for a conviction of rape. Well, it is known that the penalties for rape, here in Colombia and in many other places of the globe, are really short, if we think about all the frustration, anxiety and concerns that a raped person has to deal with by his entire live.

So, if you agree with eye by eye law and you think that a physical punishment would be the best for those criminals, castration would be the solution but this practise could avoid the rape itself Well, there is a factor of fear of loosing one important part of their bodies, which they commit their crimes without they couldn't made those things again. It sounds logique but at the end it is not just revenge without any other implication or research to the respect just action-reaction bad interpreted Skinner ideology.

However, there are people fighting for humain rights. Maybe for them. The answer is to get more knowledge about the problem itself, searching the reason of that phenomenon which would be better to work for avoiding that situation not because of the results but trying to build a reasonable society. One that acts for human rights and gives really fair penalties for criminals but overall encourages to grow up as a better person started by a humanistic sense of society.

Finally, we have two visions about this problem. One encourages the idea of castration following eye for eye law meanwhile the other ones defends the human rights of any single person searching a humanistic society.

This text of four paragraphs contains 261 words. There is no title that helps a first glance of its content. It flows well at the beginning but the more you read the more flaws - and more and more serious- you find: *...the frustration, anxiety and concerns that a raped person has to deal with by his entire live... if you agree with eye by eye law... castration would be the solution but this practise could avoid the rape itself... one important part of their bodies, which they commit their crimes without they couldn't made those things again... It sounds logique but at the end it is not just revenge without any other implication or research to the respect just action-reaction bad interpreted Skinner ideology...*) Disregarding errors, the text structure follows an evident sequence marked by the use of linking expressions at the beginning of the paragraphs two, three and four. However, a more meticulous reading makes you wonder about the presence of a clear introduction and conclusion sections. As the focal point of our analysis does not include text properties beyond the presence of some errors, let us leave this aspect aside.

The errors tagged in 2008-03fRMT44 constitute the annotated version of this passage:

Castration should be a fair penalty for a conviction of rape. Well^{DRWC}, it is known that the penalties for rape, here in Colombia and in many other places of the globe, are really short, if we think about all the frustration, anxiety and concerns that a raped person has to deal with by^{GPrepWC} his entire live^{VWordClass}. So^{DRWC}, if you agree with^{GDefAMis} eye by^{GPrepWC} eye law and you think that a physical punishment would be the best for those criminals, castration would be the solution ^{MPunctMis} but this practise could avoid the rape itself ^{SUncl GCWC SVag MPunctMis} Well^{DRWC}, there is a factor of fear of loosing^{WrongVerb GV(WF)Spel} one important part of their bodies, ^{GPMis} which they commit their crimes^{MPunctMis} without ^{GPronMis SUncl} they couldn't^{DRWC} made^{GVWCM} those things again. It sounds logique^{VCogn LI/3L GAdj(WFMorph)D MPunctMis} but at the end it is not just revenge^{GN(WFMorph)D LI/3L SUncl} without any other implication or research to the respect ^{MPunctMis SUncl} just action-reaction^{MPunctMis} bad^{VWordClass} interpreted Skinner ideology^{SUncl}.

However, there are people fighting for humain^{GN(WF)Spel} rights^{SUncl}. Maybe for them^{SFrag}
^{SUncl}. The answer is to get more knowledge about the problem itself, searching the
reason of that phenomenon which would be better to work^{SUncl} for avoiding that
situation^{MPunctMis} not because of the results but trying to build a reasonable
society.^{MPunctWC} One that acts for human rights and gives really fair penalties for
criminals but overall^{GAdvWP} encourages to grow^{GVWCM VWordClass} up as a better person
started^{SUncl GVAsp} by a humanistic sense of society.^{SFrag}
Finally, we have two visions about this problem. One encourages the idea of castration
following^{GDefAMis} eye for eye law^{MPunctMis} meanwhile^{GAdvWC} the other ones
defends^{GV(WFMorph)IPers} the human rights of any single person searching^{GPMis} a
humanistic society.

The initial perception about the frequent and important presence of errors is confirmed but it is clearer now. Style/register and lack problems are noticeable in this passage.

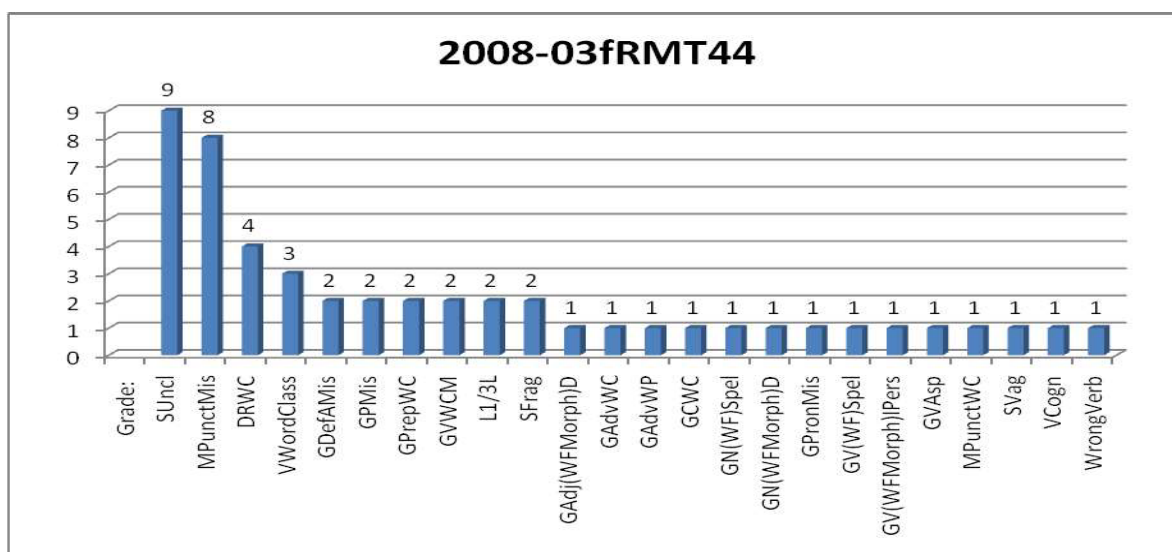
The statistics of errors in 2008-03fRMT44³⁴ can be seen in chart 34 and graphs 77 and 78. There are 50 errors in this passage, belonging to 24 categories of the 92 in our system (26.1%). Fifty errors in 261 words mean one error per every 5.2 words (19.4%); 50 errors in four paragraphs make 25 errors per paragraph. It seems to be a rather high frequency of problems for a text that is scored 4.4 (out of 5.0) by an evaluator. Of course, the immediate conjecture is that there is not necessarily a direct connection between the score given to a text and the presence of errors in it, for there are other aspects that are taken into account in the evaluation of a text.

2008-03fRMT44		
Instances	Long Annotation	Category
9	Style/Pragmatics error, Unclear/incoherent/incomprehensible	Lack
8	Mechanics error, Punctuation, Missing	Lack
4	Discourse error, Wrong Register	Choice
3	Vocabulary error, Wrong Word Class	Choice

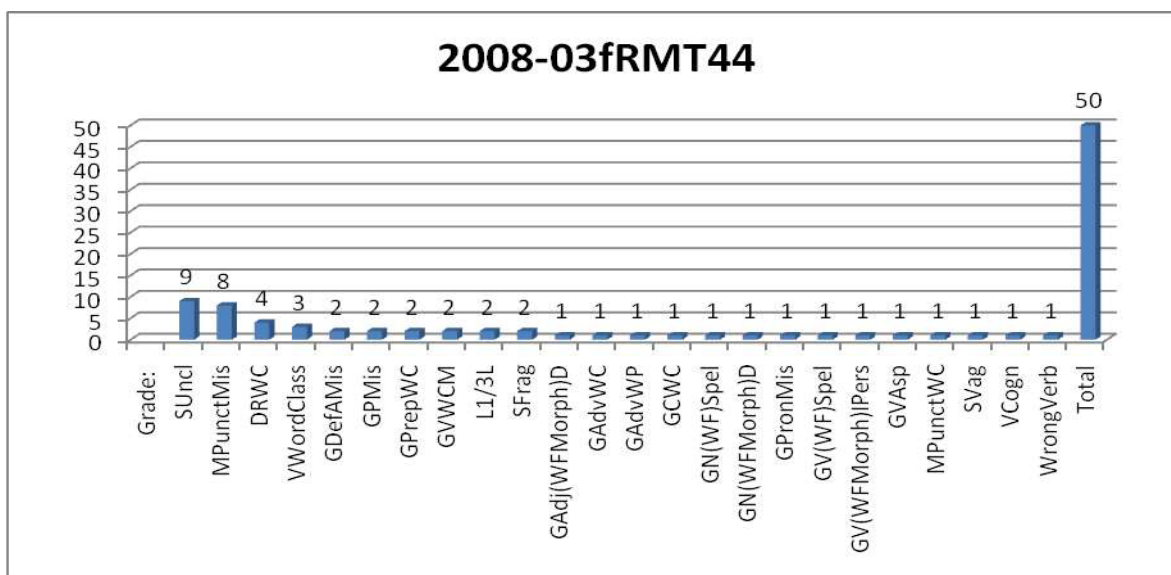
³⁴ Some errors either are simultaneous or correspond to alternatives of interpretation of a problem at certain points. That affects the counting.

2	Grammar error, Speech part, Verb, Wrong mood	Choice
2	Grammar error, Speech part, Preposition, Missing	Lack
2	Grammar error, Speech part, wrong Preposition	Choice
2	Style/Pragmatics error, Fragment (incomplete sentence/idea)	Lack
2	Grammar error, Speech part, Definite Article, Missing	Lack
2	Style/Pragmatics error, Spanish (L1)/French(L3)-like	Choice
1	Grammar error, Speech part, Verb, Wrong Form, Morphology, Inflection of Aspect, -ing or PastParticiple form	Inflection
1	Grammar error, Speech part, Adjective, Wrong Form, Morphology, Derivation	Derivation
1	Grammar error, Speech part, Noun, WrongForm, Morphology, Derivation	Derivation
1	Grammar error, Speech part, Pronoun, Missing	Lack
1	Grammar error, Speech part, Verb, WrongForm, Morphology, Inflection of Person. Problem of Subject-Verb concordance	Inflection
1	Grammar error, Speech part, Adverb, misplaced	Position
1	Grammar error, Speech part, Wrong Adverb	Choice
1	Grammar error, Speech part, Wrong Conjunction	Choice
1	Mechanics error, Wrong Punctuation	Choice
1	Grammar error, Speech part, Noun, Wrong form, Spelling	Spelling
1	Grammar error, SpeechPart, Verb, Wrong Choice	Choice
1	Vocabulary error, Cognate	Choice
1	Grammar error, SpeechPart, Verb, Spelling/Orthography	Spelling
1	Style/Pragmatics error, Vagueness/ambiguity/lack of precision	Lack
50		

Chart 34. Errors tagged in 2008-03fRMT44.



Graph 77. Errors tagged in 2008-03fRMT44.



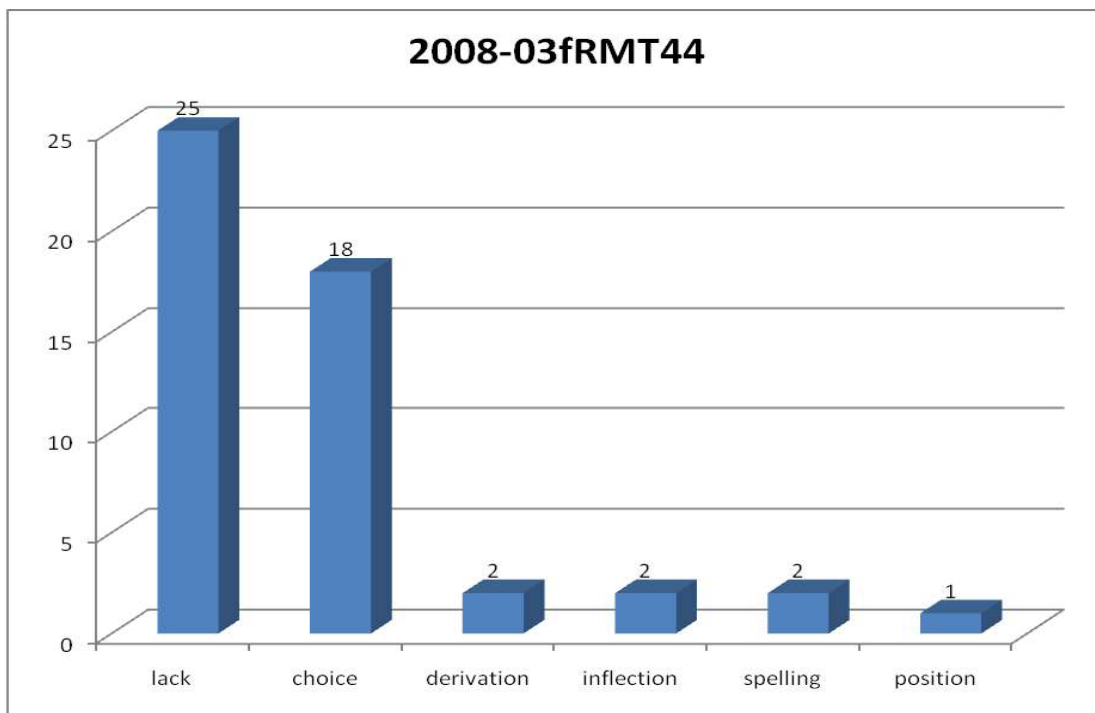
Graph 78. Errors tagged in 2008-03fRMT44 in relation to the total errors in it.

From the detail provided by chart 34 and graphs 77 and 78 we have that the most frequent error category for 2008-03fRMT44 is **lack of clarity** (incoherence), a Style/Pragmatics error that counts nine instances, 18% of all the errors in the passage. The second category of error is **missing punctuation**, a mechanics error that happens eight times, 16% of all the errors in the text. The next category is less than half the frequency of the most frequent error type in the text. It is **wrong register**, a Discourse error that occurs four times, 8% of the total. The fourth most frequent error type in this text is **wrong word class**, a Vocabulary error, which presents three instances, 6%. Then, six error types occur two times (4%) each and at the end 14 error categories count one occurrence (2%) each. The joint total of two-time occurring errors is 24% and the one of one-time errors is 28%. Once again, it is clear that the general feature regarding errors in these texts is that many low-frequency errors concur. Again, too, the most frequent error type is the kind that affects content seriously, lack of clarity.

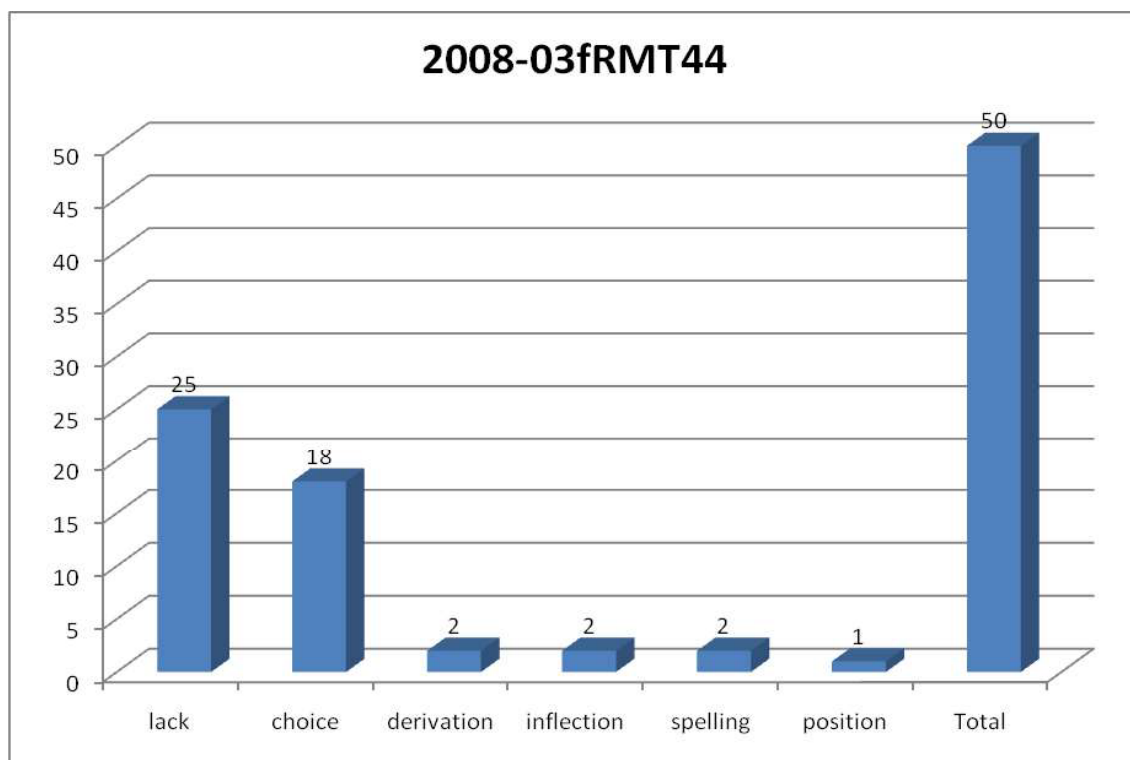
Regarding the second dimension of our error analysis system, descriptive categories, chart 35 (Markin stats for 2008-03fRMT44 organized according to the category) and graphs 79 and 80 show the corresponding details.

Instances	Long Annotation	Category
1	Grammar error, Speech part, Pronoun, Missing	Lack
9	Style/Pragmatics error, Unclear/incoherent/incomprehensible	Lack
8	Mechanics error, Punctuation, Missing	Lack
1	Style/Pragmatics error, Vagueness/ambiguity/lack of precision	Lack
2	Grammar error, Speech part, Preposition, Missing	Lack
2	Grammar error, Speech part, Definite Article, Missing	Lack
2	Style/Pragmatics error, Fragment (incomplete sentence/idea)	Lack
25	<i>Missing words, clarity, punctuation, precision + fragment</i>	LACK
1	Vocabulary error, Cognate	Choice
1	Grammar error, SpeechPart, Verb, Wrong Choice	Choice
1	Grammar error, Speech part, Wrong Adverb	Choice
1	Grammar error, Speech part, Wrong Conjunction	Choice
1	Mechanics error, Wrong Punctuation	Choice
2	Style/Pragmatics error, Spanish (L1)/French(L3)-like	Choice
3	Vocabulary error, Wrong Word Class	Choice
2	Grammar error, Speech part, Verb, Wrong mood	Choice
2	Grammar error, Speech part, wrong Preposition	Choice
4	Discourse error, Wrong Register	Choice
18	<i>Selection of words, cognate, punctuation, style (L1/L3), register</i>	CHOICE
1	Grammar error, Speech part, Noun, WrongForm, Morphology, Derivation	Derivation
1	Grammar error, Speech part, Adjective, Wrong Form, Morphology, Derivation	Derivation
2	<i>Morphology of nouns and adjectives</i>	DERIVATION
1	Grammar error, Speech part, Verb, WrongForm, Morphology, Inflection of Person. Problem of Subject-Verb concordance	Inflection
1	Grammar error, Speech part, Verb, Wrong Form, Morphology, Inflection of Aspect, -ing or PastParticiple form	Inflection
2	<i>Morphology of verbs (person and aspect)</i>	INFLECTION
1	Grammar error, Speech part, Noun, Wrong form, Spelling	Spelling
1	Grammar error, SpeechPart, Verb, Spelling/Orthography	Spelling
2	<i>Form of nouns and verbs</i>	SPELLING
1	Grammar error, Speech part, Adverb, misplaced	Position
1	<i>Misplaced adverb</i>	POSITION
50		

Chart 35. Error descriptive categories in detail in 2008-03fRMT44.



Graph 79. Error descriptive categories in 2008-03fRMT44.



Graph 80. General error categories in 2008-03fRMT44 in relation to the total number of errors.

professionally. Grades are aspects that can't measure how capable and interested a university student can be.

This essay contains 272 words distributed in four paragraphs. There is no title. There is a very long indentation beginning the third paragraph, which lacks punctuation and then is just a too long sentence. According to Microsoft Word text statistics, there are a 30% of passive sentences in the passage, which evidences a good level of grammatical range or complexity. The global structure of the text is clear and the introductory, developmental and closing sections are apparent. The initial word *Additioning* stands out as a vocabulary error but the bad impression it causes dissipates soon for the subsequent sentences and ideas flow almost flawlessly. However, *to continue study what one wants* reminds the reader that there are some basic problems. Anyway, in general the flaws seem to be scarce and the ideas are well expressed.

The errors tagged in 2008-03fNGC45 by means of MARKIN are the following:

Additioning^{GN(WFMorph)D L1/3L}, counting, multiplying, calculating are some of the common activities university students do at the end of a semester trying to have good grades enough to be able to register the following courses. Is it so important to have good grades to continue study^{GVAsp} what one wants? Along^{GPrepWC} this text^{MPunctMis} I will expose some reasons why grades should not be given for university classes.

It is commonly said that having good grades at University show^{GV(WFMorph)IPers} the capacity and the knowledge of a person in a certain field,^{MPunctWC} for example, if you have good grades in math, people will start asking you questions about everything that has numbers, even if it is not related to the real knowledge you have. However^{MPunctMis} it is important to recognize that having good grades doesn't^{DRWC} mean that someone has more capacity than others^{GVAuxMis}. Learning is the most important aspect of going to the University^{MCapX}. Even if there are not good results, the process of learning can be successful.

Grades don't^{DRWC} show how able you are to learn certain topic, they are just the result of some processes done in a moment that can be influenced by factors that can affect the student's performance,^{MPunctWC} it^{GPronWC} is to say that students^{MPunctMis} as^{GCWC} all human beings^{MPunctMis} have their own troubles that can affect^{GV(WF)Spel} the moment of evaluation,^{MPunctWC} indeed, there are students that get panic when evaluating^{GV(WFMorph)IV}.

In clonclusion, grades shouldn't^{DRWC} be given in^{GPrepWC} university due to the fact that they shouldn't^{DRWC} ^{GVAuxX} affect what students really want to learn and the way how^{GAdvWC} they grow proffesionaly^{GAdvWFSpel}. Grades are aspects that can't^{DRWC} measure how capable and interested a university student can be.

The annotated version reveals more problems than the ones seen in the initial – content-centered - reading, but it also seems that their frequency is not very high and that most of them are not so seirous so as to affect the readability of the text.

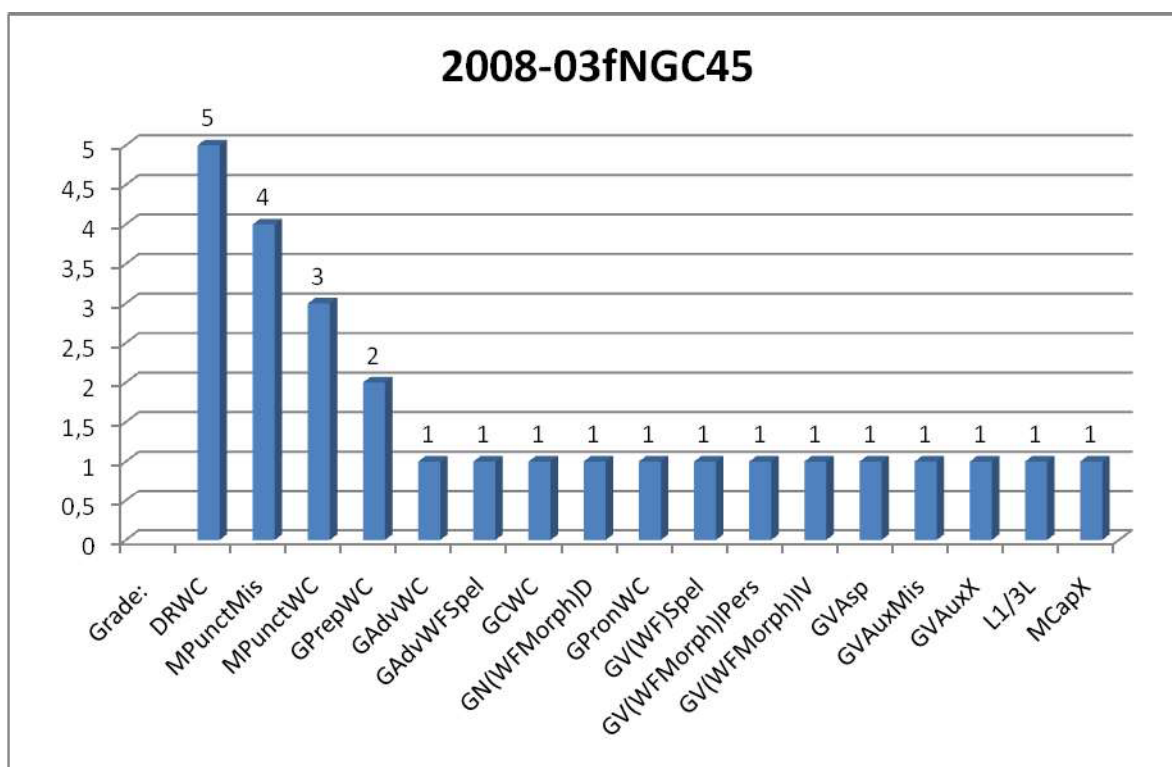
Chart 36 and graphs 83 and 84 show the errors in 2008-03fNGC45³⁵ (MARKIN stats). Twenty-seven errors in 272 words mean one error every 10.1 words (9.9%); in four paragraphs, it is between six and seven errors per paragraph. It does not seem to be too high a frequency of errors, though it is still noticeable.

2008-03fNGC45		
Instances	Long Annotation	Category
5	Discourse error, Wrong Register	Choice
4	Mechanics error, Punctuation, Missing	Lack
3	Mechanics error, Wrong Punctuation	Choice
2	Grammar error, Speech part, wrong Preposition	Choice
1	Grammar error, Speech part, Verb, WrongForm, Morphology, Inflection of Person. Problem of Subject-Verb concordance	Inflection

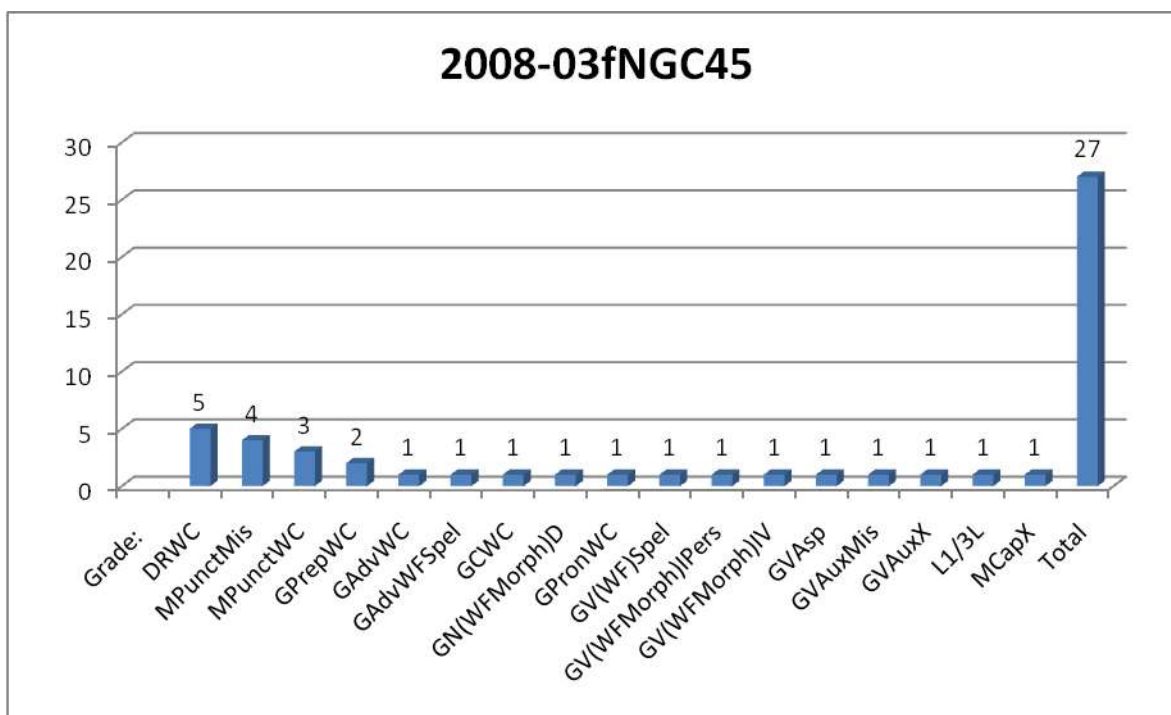
³⁵ Some errors either are simultaneous or correspond to alternatives of interpretation of a problem at certain points. That affects the counting.

1	Grammar error, Speech part, Verb, Wrong Form, Morphology, Inflection of Aspect, -ing or PastParticiple form	Inflection
1	Style/Pragmatics error, Spanish (L1)/French(L3)-like	Choice
1	Grammar error, Speech part, Noun, WrongForm, Morphology, Derivation	Derivation
1	Grammar error, Speech part, Verb, Wrong Form, Morphology, Inflection of Voice	Inflection
1	Grammar error, Speech part, Adverb, Wrong Form, Spelling	Spelling
1	Grammar error, SpeechPart, Verb, Spelling/Orthography	Spelling
1	Mechanics error, Capitalization, Overincluded	Overinclusion
1	Grammar error, Speech part, Auxiliary Verb, Missing	Lack
1	Grammar error, Speech part, Verb, Extra Auxiliary/Modal	Overinclusion
1	Grammar error, Speech part, Wrong Conjunction	Choice
1	Grammar error, Speech part, Wrong Adverb	Choice
1	Grammar error, Speech part, Wrong Pronoun	Choice
27		

Chart 36. Errors tagged in 2008-03fNGC45.



Graph 83. Errors tagged in 2008-03fNGC45.



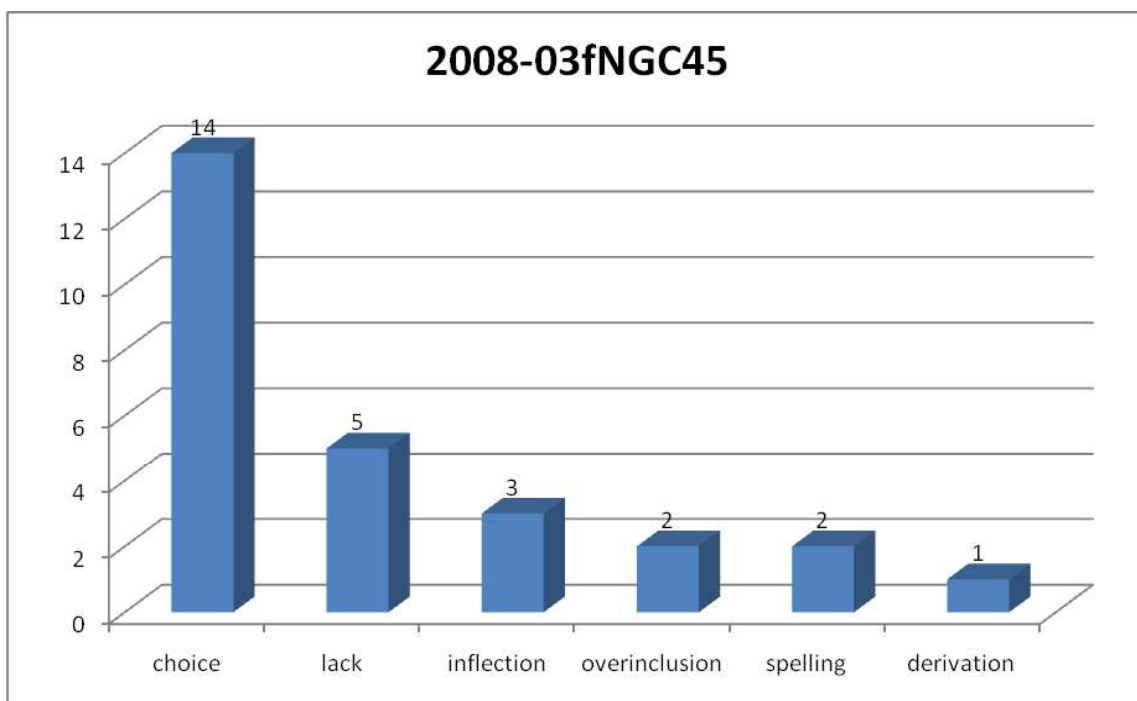
Graph 84. Errors tagged in 2008-03fNGC45 in relation to the total errors in it.

From the detailed information provided by Chart 36 and graphs 83 and 84 it becomes evident that any error category is too frequent. The first place is occupied by a Discourse error, **Wrong Register** (choice) with five instances, 18.5%, less than a fifth of all the errors in the text. Let us remember that register problems refer to contractions and oral, speech features that are not considered as formal, but that do not necessarily imply lack of clarity or any content flaw. The second place of error frequency is for a Mechanics error, **Missing Punctuation** (lack) with four instances, 14.8% of all the errors in the passage. The next error category is for a Mechanics error, **Wrong Punctuation** (choice) that occurs three times, 11.1%. Then comes a Grammar error, **wrong preposition** (choice), which happens just two times, 7.4%. Last, come 13 error types occurring only once (3.7%) each. In this last group, four are choice errors (**L1/L3-like** and **wrong words: conjunction, adverb, pronoun**), three correspond to **inflection problems (verb person, aspect, and mood)**, two are **spelling flaws (adverb and verb)**, other two are **overinclusion problems (extra capitalization and modal/auxiliary)**, one is a **derivation fault (noun)** and only one is a **lack error (auxiliary verb)**.

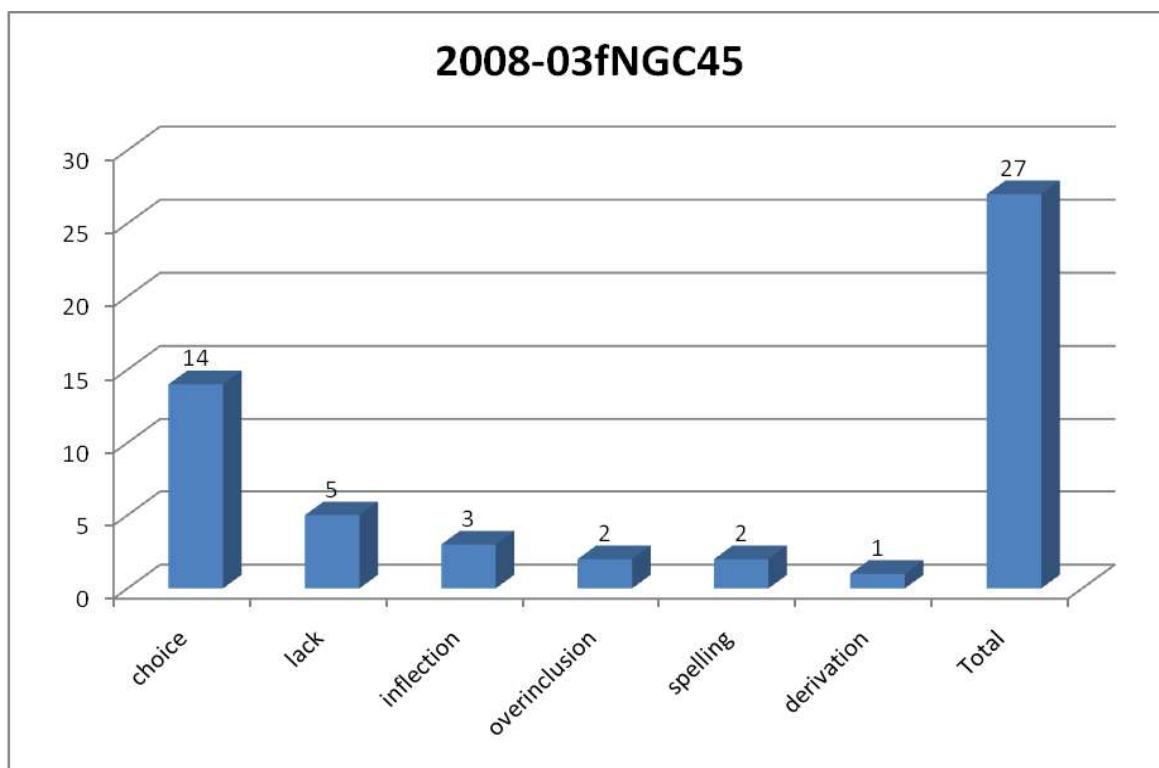
With regard to the descriptive categories, they can be seen in chart 37 (Markin statistics for 2008-03fNGC45 organized according to the category), and graphs 85 and 86 (error descriptive categories in 2008-03fNGC45).

Instances	Long Annotation	Category
1	Grammar error, Speech part, Wrong Conjunction	Choice
1	Grammar error, Speech part, Wrong Adverb	Choice
1	Grammar error, Speech part, Wrong Pronoun	Choice
3	Mechanics error, Wrong Punctuation	Choice
2	Grammar error, Speech part, wrong Preposition	Choice
1	Style/Pragmatics error, Spanish (L1)/French(L3)-like	Choice
5	Discourse error, Wrong Register	Choice
14	<i>Selection of words, punctuation, style (L1/L3), and register</i>	CHOICE
4	Mechanics error, Punctuation, Missing	Lack
1	Grammar error, Speech part, Auxiliary Verb, Missing	Lack
5	<i>Missing punctuation and auxiliary/modal</i>	LACK
1	Grammar error, Speech part, Verb, WrongForm, Morphology, Inflection of Person. Problem of Subject-Verb concordance	Inflection
1	Grammar error, Speech part, Verb, Wrong Form, Morphology, Inflection of Voice	Inflection
1	Grammar error, Speech part, Verb, Wrong Form, Morphology, Inflection of Aspect, -ing or PastParticiple form	Inflection
3	<i>Morphology of verbs (person, voice and aspect)</i>	INFLECTION
1	Grammar error, Speech part, Verb, Extra Auxiliary/Modal	Overinclusion
1	Mechanics error, Capitalization, Overincluded	Overinclusion
2	<i>Extra auxiliary/modal and capitalization</i>	OVERINCLUSION
1	Grammar error, Speech part, Adverb, Wrong Form, Spelling	Spelling
1	Grammar error, SpeechPart, Verb, Spelling/Orthography	Spelling
2	<i>Form of adverbs and verbs</i>	SPELLING
1	Grammar error, Speech part, Noun, WrongForm, Morphology, Derivation	Derivation
1	<i>Morphology of nouns</i>	DERIVATION
27		

Chart 37. Error descriptive categories in detail in 2008-03fNGC45.



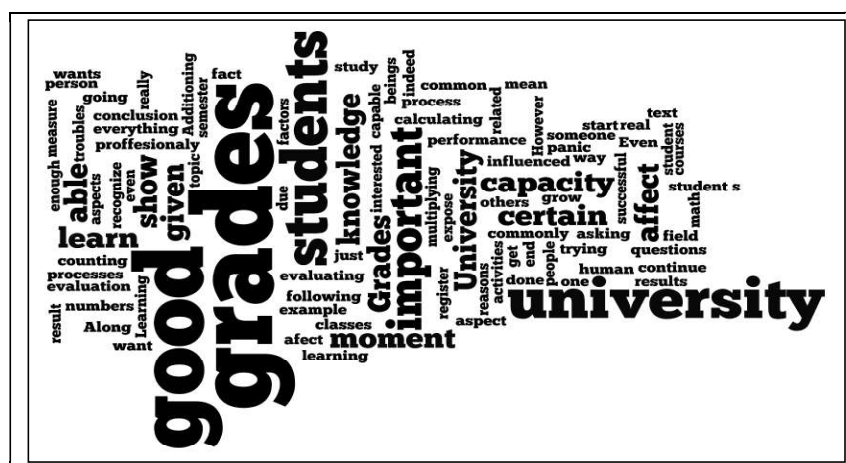
Graph 85. Error descriptive categories in 2008-03fNGC45.



Graph 86. Error descriptive categories in 2008-03fNGC45 in relation to the total number of errors.

The most frequent error descriptive category is **Choice**, which occurs 14 times (51.9%); it includes problems with selection of: words, punctuation, style (L1/L3), and register. It is more than half of the total errors in the passage. We have said before that choice or wrong selection problems are not necessarily serious; instead, they reflect a still developing manipulation of the language options by the learner. The second most frequent error mode in this passage is **Lack**, with five instances, 18.5% of all the errors in the essay; it includes missing: punctuation and auxiliary/modal. The third error type is **Inflection**; it happens three times (11.1%) and comprises problems with the morphology of verbs (person, voice and aspect). **Overinclusion** errors come next, with just two occurrences (7.4%); they are extra auxiliary/modal and capitalization. **Spelling** errors also happen twice, they imply faulty form of one adverb and one verb. The last error mode, the least frequent one, is **Derivation**, which has only one instance (3.7%); it is a problem with the morphology of a noun. The analysis of these errors confirms that they are not too serious in this passage; although they are rather frequent, they do not affect the content deeply.

Graph 87 illustrates the content of the text in terms of the word cloud of 2008-03fNGC45, in its original version. *Grades, good, university, students, important, able, learn, certain, capacity, university, Grades, moment, affect, knowledge, show, and given,* are the most frequent content words. From this list not much content can be appreciated, though.



Graph 87. Word cloud of the original text 2008-03fNGC45.

Graph 88 shows the word cloud of the annotated text 2008-03fNGC45, through which the reader can see the effect of errors against content, which illustrates the possible perception of an evaluator of the text writing in terms of error analysis. Some errors are important, but they do not coat the text content.



Graph 88. Word cloud of the annotated text 2008-03fNGC45.

7.3.4. 2008-04mOE47

CASTRATION: A SOLUTION FOR RAPING

Have you ever heard about someone who had been raped? Can you remember what you felt when you heard about it? For sure you had thought rapists deserve severe punishments, even death penalty sounds fair to some people –in fact, I also think it would be a fair penalty for a conviction of rape; far away from this possibility, new alternatives had shown as possible punishment for this type of crimes. Castration, for example, appears to be the end of rapes, if not of rapist. Well, as I see it, castration is not the answer to this problem; and I dare to say, a penalty like this would make the problem bigger.

If we think of the victim and his/her relatives, castration could seem to be fair enough as a punishment and, for sure, a castrated criminal would regret for good what he did. But, is it going to heal the victim's pain? I don't think so. A penalty like this would lead us in to a law of "eye for an eye" which would affect our life as a community. You can also think that castration would make rapists unable to rape again. Well, not every case of raping implies penetration. The rape can be done in many different ways. And what about rapists women? Rape is not an exclusive male crime. You can be raped by a women for under raping is the fact that the criminal likes to dominate his victim and his/her destiny! It is like playing GOD over someone's life.

Thus, even if castration appeared as a possible fair penalty for rapes in nowadays societies, it does not take into account the different circumstances in which such

crimes are committed and forget the fact that not for getting castrated, a rapist is going to stop doing what he enjoys: dominating somebody else.

Three paragraphs containing 312 words make this text up. The title announces an idea opposite to the view that is claimed in the text; it is misleading. One clear and one dubious paragraph divisions appear in it. There are some errors like *Rapped... you had thought... new alternatives had shown as possible punishment... the end of rapes, if not of rapist... a penalty like this would make the problem bigger... rapists women... a women... appeared*. However, they do not seem too frequent or important so as to hinder deeply the comprehension of the text. It can be said that the overall development follows the typical introduction-body-closing sequence.

Concerning errors, the tagged version of 2008-04mOE47 is the following:

CASTRATION: A SOLUTION FOR RAPING

Have you ever heard about someone who had been rapped ^{GV(WFMorph)D GV(WF)Spel}? Can you remember what you felt when you heard about it? For sure ^{MPunctMis} you had thought rapists deserve severe punishments, ^{MPunctWC} even death penalty sounds fair to some people - ^{MPunctWC} in fact, I also think it would be a fair penalty for a conviction of rape; ^{MPunctWC} far away from this possibility, new alternatives had ^{GVWCT GV(WFMorph)IPers} shown ^{GV(WFMorph)IV' GVAuxMis} as possible punishment for this type of crimes. Castration, for example, appears to be the end of rapes, if not of rapist ^{GN(WFMorph)INum}. Well ^{DRWC}, as I see it, castration is not the answer to this problem; and I dare to say ^{DVerbos}, a penalty like this would make the problem bigger.

If we think of the victim and his/her relatives, castration could seem to be fair enough as a punishment and, for sure, a castrated criminal would regret for good ^{DRWC} what he did. But ^{DRWC}, is it going to heal the victim's pain? I don't ^{DRWC} think so. A penalty like this would lead us in to a law of "eye for an eye" which would affect our life as a community. You can also think that castration would make rapists unable to rape

again. Well, not every case of raping implies penetration. The rape can be done in many different ways. And^{DRWC} what about rapists^{GAdj(WFMorph)XINum} women^{VWordClass} ^{GNWP}? Rape is not an exclusive male crime. You can be raped by a women^{GN(WFMorph)INum} for under raping is the fact that the criminal likes to dominate his victim and his/her^{DVerbos GPronX} destiny! It is like playing GOD over someone's life. Thus, even if castration appeared^{GV(WF)Spel} as a possible fair penalty for rapes in nowadays societies, it does not take into account the different circumstances in which such crimes are comitted^{GV(WF)Spel} and forget the fact that not for getting castrated, a rapist is going to stop doing what he enjoys: dominating somebody else.

Some new flaws become evident, like punctuation, register and punctuation, but they seem not to be too important in terms of affecting the comprehension of the passage.

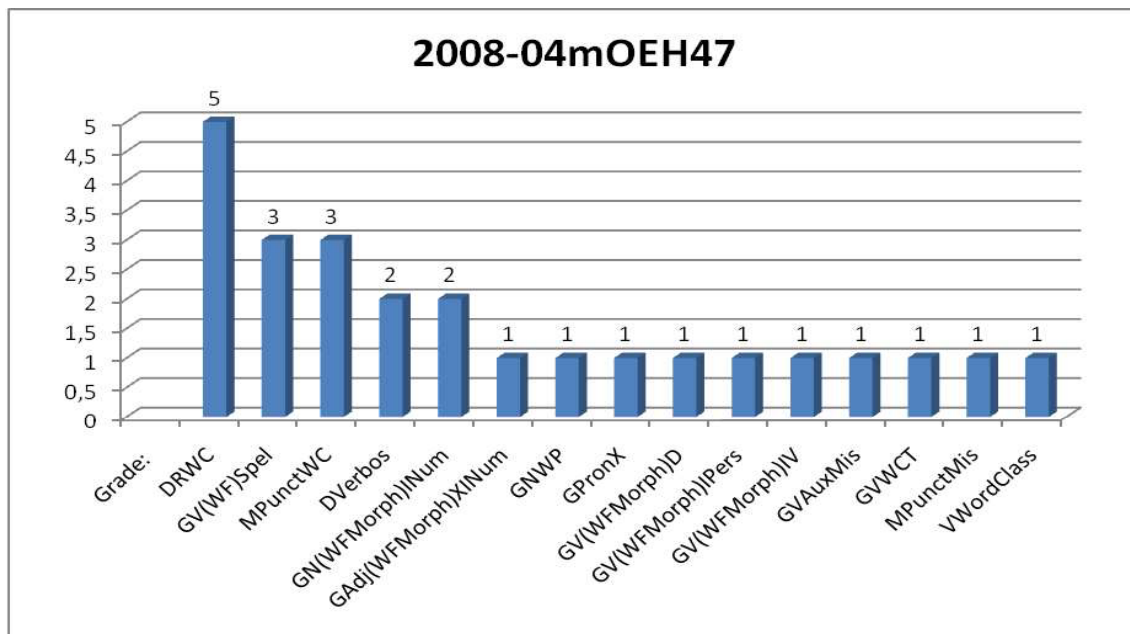
Chart 38 and graphs 89 and 90 specify the errors in 2008-04mOE47³⁶. Twenty-five errors in three paragraphs containing 312 words give a percentage of 8% of errors, one error per 12.5 words, and an average of around eight errors per paragraph. It seems a low count of problems.

2008-04mOE47		
Instances	Long Annotation	Category
5	Discourse error, Wrong Register	Choice
3	Mechanics error, Wrong Punctuation	Choice
3	Grammar error, SpeechPart, Verb, Spelling/Orthography	Spelling
2	Grammar error, Speech part, Noun, Wrong Form, Morphology, Inflection of Number	Inflection
2	Discourse error, Verbosity/Wordiness	Overinclusion
1	Grammar error, Speech part, Verb, WrongForm, Morphology, Inflection of Person. Problem of Subject-Verb concordance	Inflection
1	Grammar error, Speech part, Adjective, Wrong Form, Morphology, Infection, Extra morpheme of Number	Inflection
1	Grammar error, SpeechPart, Verb Form, wrong derivation	Derivation
1	Grammar error, Speech part, Pronoun, Overincluded	Overinclusion
1	Grammar error, Speech part, Misplaced Noun	Position

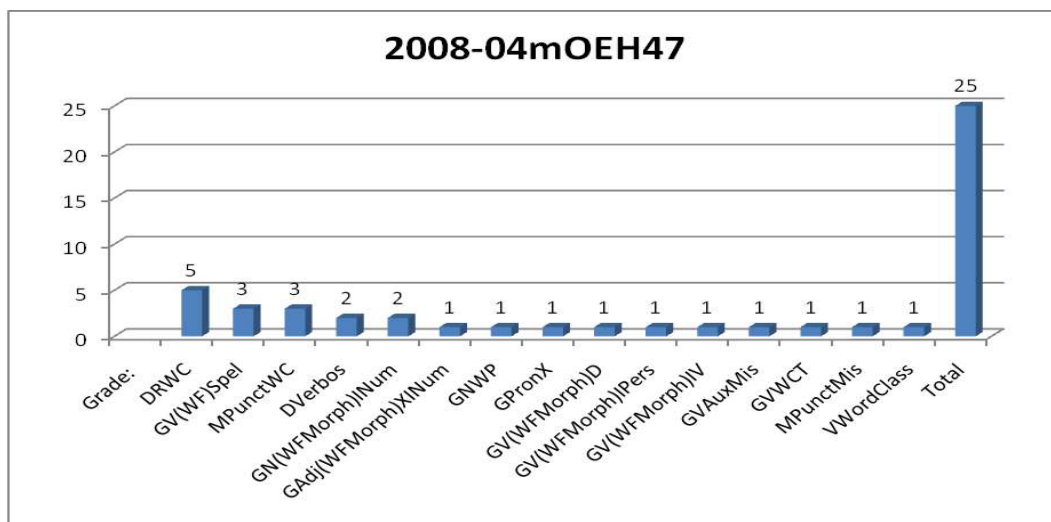
³⁶ Some errors either are simultaneous or correspond to alternatives of interpretation of a problem at certain points. That affects the counting.

1	Grammar error, Speech part, Auxiliary Verb, Missing	Lack
1	Grammar error, Speech part, Verb, Wrong Form, Morphology, Inflection of Voice	Inflection
1	Mechanics error, Punctuation, Missing	Lack
1	Grammar error, SpeechPart, Verb, WrongTense	Choice
1	Vocabulary error, Wrong Word Class	Choice
25		

Chart 38. Errors tagged in 2008-04mOE47.



Graph 89. Errors tagged in 2008-04mOE47.



Graph 90. Errors tagged in 2008-04mOE47 in relation to the total errors in it.

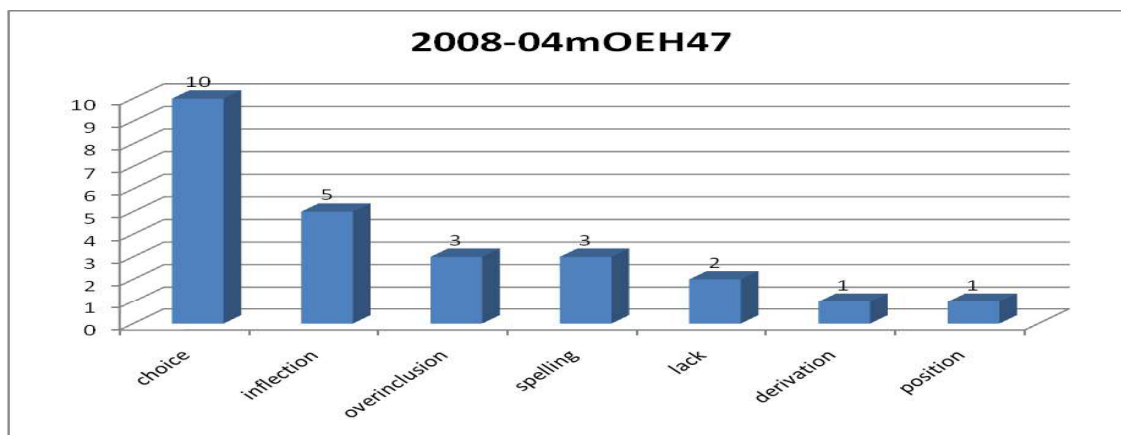
Wrong Register, (Discourse Choice), errors are the most frequent problem, with five instances (20%, afifth of the total). The second most frequent error category is **Wrong Punctuation**, (Mechanics Choice), happening three times, 12% of the total in the text. **Verb Spelling**, (Grammar Orthography), errors also occur three times. Next, **Inflection of Noun Number** (Grammar Wrong Form, Morphology) errors happen twice (8%). The same frequency is valid for **Verbosity/Wordiness**, (Discourse Overinclusion), errors. Ten error types occur only once (4%) each. Their combined presence is 40% of the total amount of errors in the passage. The tendency already seen in the previous essays continues here: the predominance of a single error type is not that high; instead, a number of low-frequency errors take place. The most frequent problems in this passage are not the kind that affects the text comprehension too deeply.

Chart 39 and graphs 91 and 92 present the MARKIN statistics for 2008-04mOE47, organized according to the error descriptive categories.

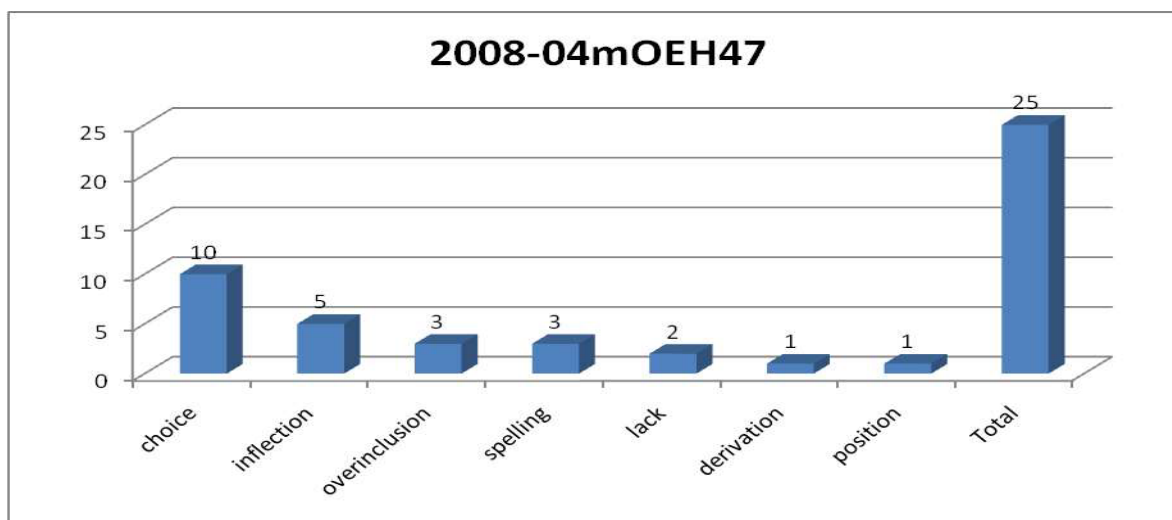
Instances	Long Annotation	Category
3	Mechanics error, Wrong Punctuation	Choice
1	Grammar error, SpeechPart, Verb, WrongTense	Choice
5	Discourse error, Wrong Register	Choice
1	Vocabulary error, Wrong Word Class	Choice
10	<i>Selection of punctuation,tenses, register, words</i>	CHOICE
1	Grammar error, Speech part, Adjective, Wrong Form, Morphology, Infection, Extra morpheme of Number	Inflection
1	Grammar error, Speech part, Verb, WrongForm, Morphology, Inflection of Person. Problem of Subject-Verb concordance	Inflection
1	Grammar error, Speech part, Verb, Wrong Form, Morphology, Inflection of Voice	Inflection
2	Grammar error, Speech part, Noun, Wrong Form, Morphology, Inflection of Number	Inflection
5	<i>Morphology of adjectives (extra number), verbs (person and voice), and nouns (number)</i>	INFLECTION
2	Discourse error, Verbosity/Wordiness	Overinclusion
1	Grammar error, Speech part, Pronoun, Overincluded	Overinclusion
3	<i>Extra pronoun + wordiness</i>	OVERINCLUSION
3	Grammar error, SpeechPart, Verb, Spelling/Orthography	Spelling
3	<i>Form of verb</i>	SPELLING
1	Grammar error, Speech part, Auxiliary Verb, Missing	Lack
1	Mechanics error, Punctuation, Missing	Lack

2	<i>Missing verb and punctuation</i>	LACK
1	Grammar error, SpeechPart, Verb Form, wrong derivation	Derivation
1	<i>Form of verb</i>	DERIVATION
1	Grammar error, Speech part, Misplaced Noun	Position
1	<i>Misplaced noun</i>	POSITION
25		

Chart 39. Error descriptive categories in detail in 2008-04mOE47.



Graph 91. Error descriptive categories in 2008-04mOE47.



Graph 92. Error descriptive categories in 2008-04mOE47 in relation to the total number of errors.

From the error descriptive categories shown in Chart 39 and graphs 91 and 92 the results show that **Choice**, (Selection of: punctuation, tenses, register, and words), is the most frequent error mode, with 10 occurrences, 40% of the total errors in the text. The

However, this seems to be too much to ask. The grading culture will remain the same unless some teachers get into our shoes and remember what it felt like to be judged instead of being the judge. So, until then, I'll keep on sucking up and being the puppet the system asks me to be in order to reach my dreams.

This essay has 375 words and five paragraphs. Microsoft Word text statistics give a 21% of passive sentences in it. It has no title. It is well written and the only faults could be the excessive informality at some points and, perhaps, a developmental sequence that is not so clear all the time. Regarding errors, *acknowledged...* *The problem are not the grades...* *grated* [graded] and *strengths* are some of the few faults that can be appreciated at first sight.

The errors tagged in 2008-06fAMS48 using MARKIN can be seen in the annotated version of this passage

It is a truth universally acknowledged^{GAdjWFSpel} by all students that, when it comes to the evaluation of one's academic performance, the parameters to do so can often be as random and unexpected as the results in a poker game. And so^{DRWC} the question comes up. Should university classes be graded?

Truth is, it depends^{DRWC}. When you study something as exact as maths or physics, where everything you do can be proven right or wrong, it should be ok. But^{DRWC} what happens when you study something as subjective as a foreign language? Can your real knowledge be grated^{GV(WF)Spel}?

In the long journey to graduation^{MPunctMis} we encounter several kinds of students, and along this way we also^{GAdvX} learn about how unfair the grading system can be. More often than not, it is those who keep on handing in absolutely all the homeworks the ones that pass with flying colours, and that's why it is so unfair, because many of those that can be considered as lazy or uninterested stay behind the teachers' pets, when in

reality they could beat their classmates in the tests, they just lack the ^{GDefAX} motivation to be as devoted as the nerds.

But ^{DRWC} what is my point? You must be wondering ^{DVerbos}. Well ^{DRWC}, I do believe courses should be graded, ^{MPunctWC} after all, there must be a way to find out whether you've ^{DRWC} improved or not, ^{MPunctWC} and ^{GCX} besides, the educational system is just too big, old, complex, traditional, you name it... to change. Grading is easy, quick and oh lord, our futures depend on it if we hope to get a scholarship or an equally cheap, yet satisfying way out. But ^{GCX DVerbos L1/3L} on the other hand, evaluations should be revamped. The problem are ^{GV(WFMorph)IPers} not the grades, but the homogeneous way in which us ^{GPronWC} students are tested. We're ^{DRWC} not machines, and we have our own strenghts ^{GN(WF)Spel} and weaknesses that can't ^{DRWC} be evaluated in the same way.

However, this seems to be too much to ask. The grading culture will remain the same unless some teachers get into our shoes and remember what it felt like to be judged instead of being the judge. So ^{DRWC}, until then, I'll ^{DRWC} keep on sucking up and being the puppet the system asks me to be in order to reach my dreams.

More flaws appear here, beside the ones than can be seen from the initial content-centered reading: verbosity, punctuation, incorrect terms, and spelling. From these latter, particularly, it seems there is some lack of revision while and/or after writing; that could be due to the conditions of time in the test, in which the students had only 30 minutes for writing.

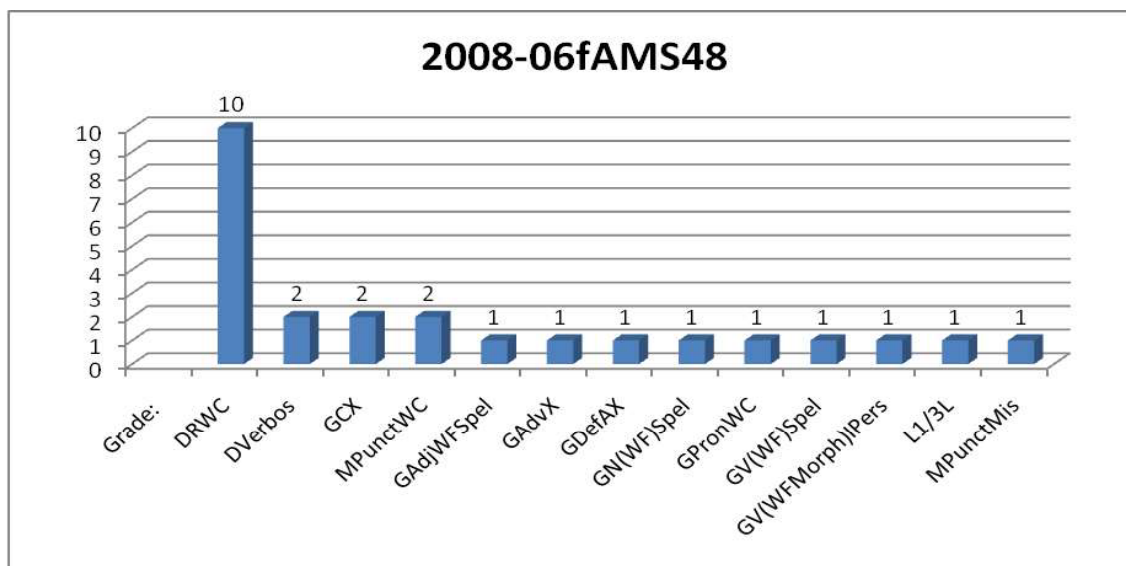
The error statistics in 2008-06fAMS48³⁷ show a total of 25 errors in this passage. See chart 40 and graphs 95 and 96. Twenty-five errors in 375 words distributed in five paragraphs make one error per every 15 words (6.7%), an average of five per paragraph. It

³⁷ Some errors either are simultaneous or correspond to alternatives of interpretation of a problem at certain points. That affects the counting.

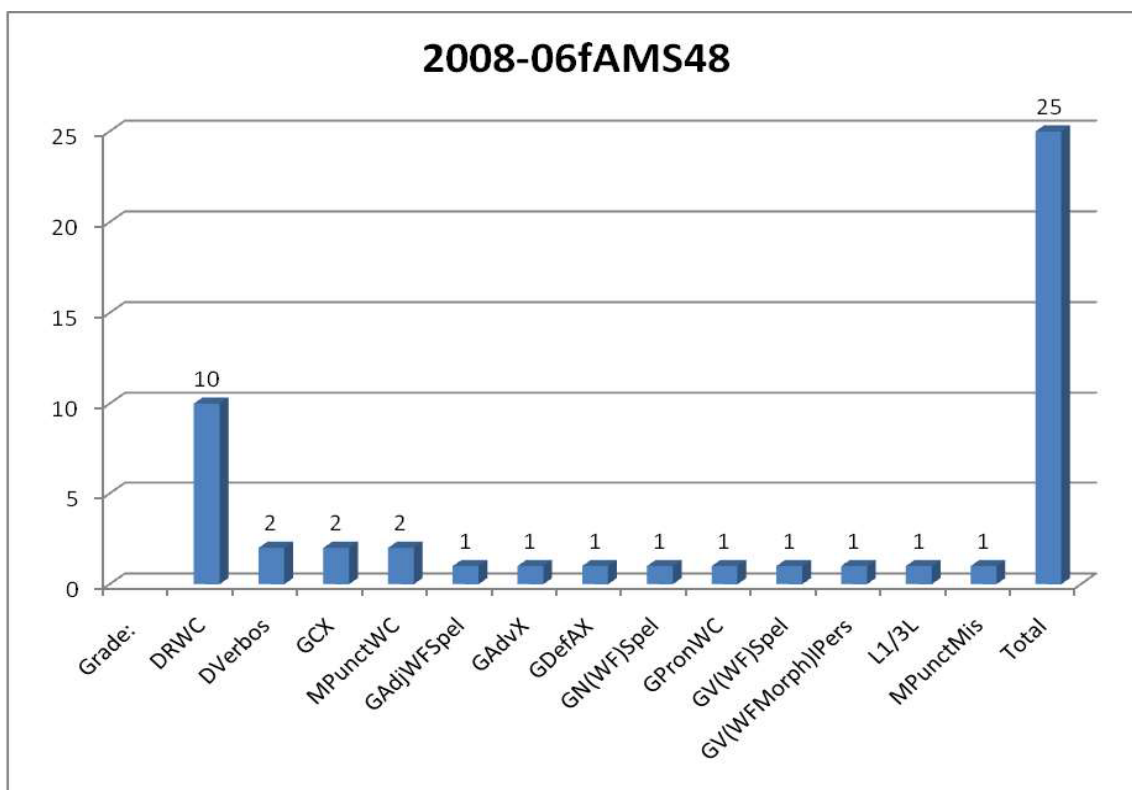
is a fairly low error rate; in fact, it is the lowest error rate in the sample. It could be said that the high score and the lack of errors are correlated here.

2008-06fAMS48		
Instances	Long Annotation	Category
10	Discourse error, Wrong Register	Choice
2	Mechanics error, Wrong Punctuation	Choice
2	Discourse error, Verbosity/Wordiness	Overinclusion
2	Grammar error, Speech part, Conjunction, overincluded	Overinclusion
1	Grammar error, Speech part, Verb, WrongForm, Morphology, Inflection of Person. Problem of Subject-Verb concordance	Inflection
1	Grammar error, Speech part, Adjective, Wrong Form, Spelling	Spelling
1	Style/Pragmatics error, Spanish (L1)/French(L3)-like	Choice
1	Grammar error, Speech part, Definite Article, overincluded	Overinclusion
1	Grammar error, Speech part, Adverb, Overincluded	Overinclusion
1	Grammar error, SpeechPart, Verb, Spelling/Orthography	Spelling
1	Grammar error, Speech part, Wrong Pronoun	Choice
1	Grammar error, Speech part, Noun, Wrong form, Spelling	Spelling
1	Mechanics error, Punctuation, Missing	Lack
25		

Chart 40. Errors tagged in 2008-06fAMS48.



Graph 95. Errors tagged in 2008-06fAMS48.



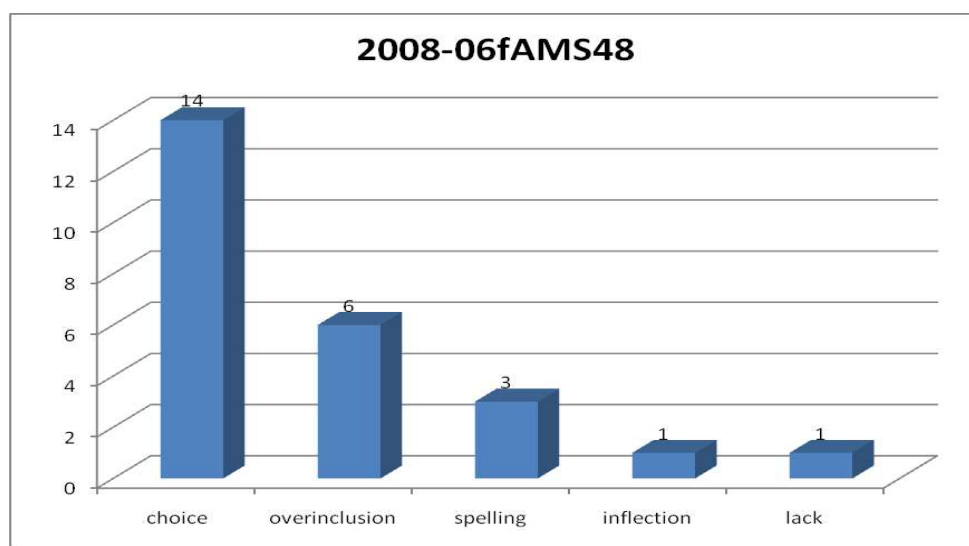
Graph 96. Errors tagged in 2008-06fAMS48 in relation to the total errors in it.

Unlike most of the texts analyzed in this study, in this passage it is clear the prevalence of a single error type over the rest. However, the presence of many low-frequency faults is not absent. **Wrong Register** (Discourse error) is the most frequent error category in this passage. It occurs 10 times, a 40% of the total flaws identified in the text. The next frequency levels are really low. There are 3 two-time (8%) occurring error types: **wrong punctuation**, **verbosity/wordiness**, and **extra conjunction**. Then nine error types occur only once (4%) each: three spelling problems (**faulty form of adjective**, **verb**, and **noun**), two over inclusion faults (**extra definite article** and **adverb**), two choice errors (**wrong pronoun** and **L1/L3-like**), one inflection flaw (**faulty verb person**), and one lack fault (**missing punctuation**). Most of these errors are the kind that does not affect content deeply; they are mostly form faults. Those errors belong to 13 of the 92 error categories that constitute the first dimension of our error analysis sytem; that is just 14.1%.

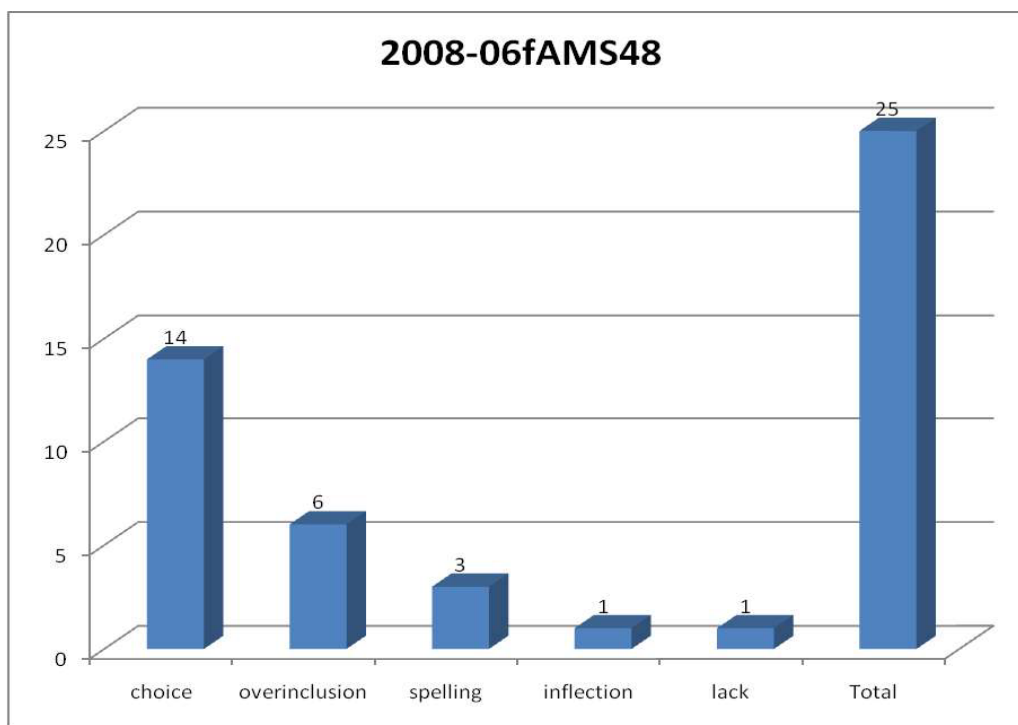
In relation to the second dimension of our error analysis system, the descriptive categories, the MARKIN statisticss for 2008-06fAMS48 are shown chart 41 and graphs 97 and 98:

Instances	Long Annotation	Category
1	Grammar error, Speech part, Wrong Pronoun	Choice
2	Mechanics error, Wrong Punctuation	Choice
10	Discourse error, Wrong Register	Choice
1	Style/Pragmatics error, Spanish (L1)/French(L3)-like	Choice
14	<i>Selection of pronouns, punctuation, register, style (L1/L3)</i>	CHOICE
1	Grammar error, Speech part, Adverb, Overincluded	Overinclusion
2	Grammar error, Speech part, Conjunction, overincluded	Overinclusion
2	Discourse error, Verbosity/Wordiness	Overinclusion
1	Grammar error, Speech part, Definite Article, overincluded	Overinclusion
6	<i>Extra words + wordiness</i>	OVERINCLUSION
1	Grammar error, SpeechPart, Verb, Spelling/Orthography	Spelling
1	Grammar error, Speech part, Adjective, Wrong Form, Spelling	Spelling
1	Grammar error, Speech part, Noun, Wrong form, Spelling	Spelling
3	<i>Form of verbs, adjectives, and nouns</i>	SPELLING
1	Grammar error, Speech part, Verb, WrongForm, Morphology, Inflection of Person. Problem of Subject-Verb concordance	Inflection
1	<i>Morphology of verbs (person)</i>	INFLECTION
1	Mechanics error, Punctuation, Missing	Lack
1	<i>Missing punctuation</i>	LACK
25		

Chart 41. Error descriptive categories in detail in 2008-06fAMS48.



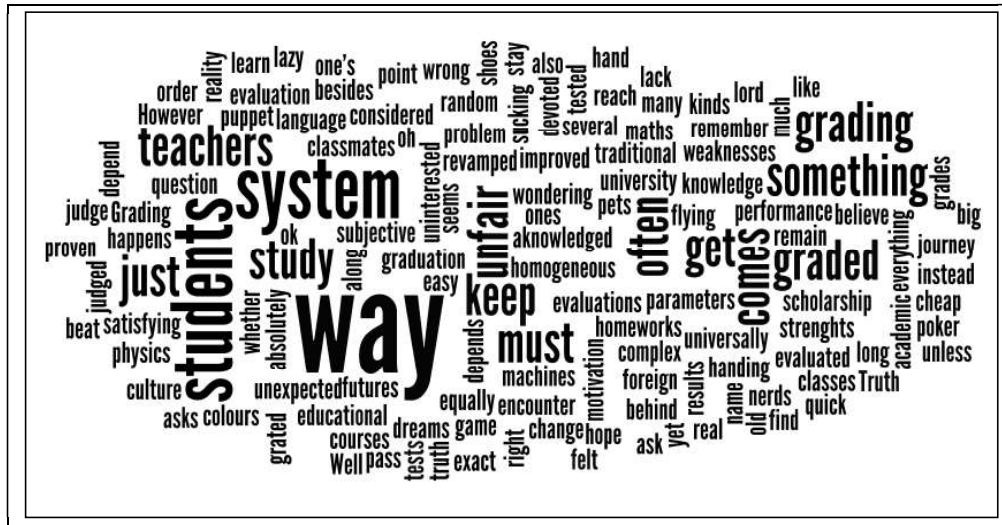
Graph 97. Error descriptive categories in 2008-06fAMS48.



Graph 98. Error descriptive categories in 2008-06fAMS48 in relation to the total number of errors.

From chart 41 and graphs 97 and 98 we can see that **Choice**, (Selection of pronouns, punctuation, register, and style -L1/L3-), is far the most frequent error mode in 2008-06fAMS48, with 14 instances, which is 56%, more than half of the total amount of errors in the passage. After a significative drop, the second most frequent error mode in this text is **Overinclusion**, which embraces extra words and wordiness, occurring six times, 24% of the total. Then, after another big fall in frequency, comes **Spelling**, (faulty form of verbs, adjectives, and nouns), with three instances, 12% of the total. Third is **Inflection**, in the form of problems with the morphology of verbs (person), occurring only once, 4% of the total. **Lack** also occurs only once; it consists in missing punctuation. From this dimension as well, errors in tis passage (including lack in this case) are not the kind that affects content deeply.

In relation to content, graph 99 shows the word cloud of 2008-06fAMS48, in its original version.



Graph 99. Word cloud of the original text 2008-06fAMS48.

According to this word cloud, *way, students, system, teachers, grading, often, get, graded, unfair, must, keep, just, study, comes, and something* are the most frequent content words. From it, it seems the content is o.k., though it is not very varied.

Graph 100 shows the word cloud of the annotated text 2008-06fAMS48, which contrasts content words and error tags.

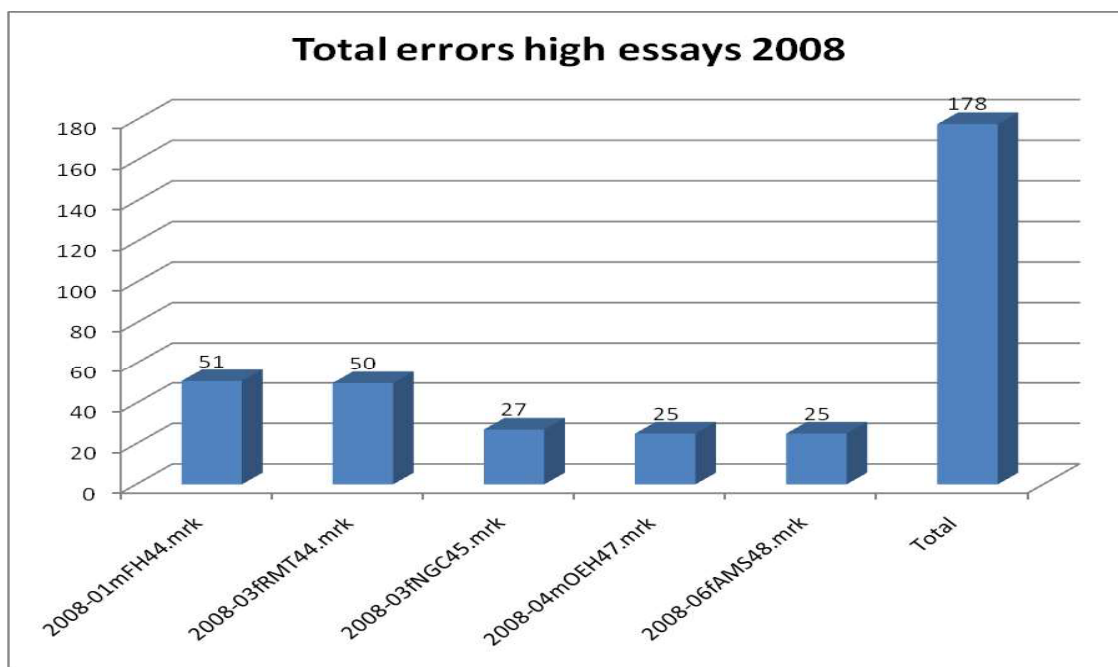


Graph 100. Word cloud of the annotated text 2008-06fAMS48.

It is clear that, despite appearing, errors do not stand too much out in this word cloud. Only three error tags can be seen in the visible frequency shown by this graph. They are DRWC (Discourse Register Wrong Choice), MPunctWC (Mechanics Punctuation Wrong Choice), and WF (Wrong Form). The content prevails over form flaws, which means that you can read the text smoothly without much hindrance from the errors in it.

7.3.6. Outputs for 2004 High-Scored Essays

There are 1483 words in the five high-scored essays, the first of these essays, 2008-01mFH44, has 263 words; the second, 2008-03fRMT44, contains 261 words; the third, 2008-03fNGC45, comprises 272 words; the fourth, 2008-04mOEH47, has 312 words; the fifth, 2008-06fAMS48, 375 words. The total of errors in this group of texts is 178 the first essay has 51 errors, the second presents 50, the third contains 27, the fourth 25, and the fifth has 25 errors as well (graph 101). When the total number of errors and words in the group of high-scored essays are crossed, 178 errors in 1483 words, the result is one error per 8.3 words, 12%, a moderate error rate.



Graph 101. Total Individual and global errors in high-scored essays.

11 2008-01mFH44	263	51	1 / 5	19%
12 2008-03fRMT44	261	50	1 / 5	19%
13 2008-03fNGC45	272	27	1 / 10	10%
14 2008-04mOEH47	312	25	1 / 12	8%
15 2008-06fAMS48	375	25	1 / 15	7%
Five high-scored essays	1483	178	1 error every 8 words	12%

Chart 42. Errors and text length in high-scored texts.

Chart 43 and graphs 102 and 103 present the list and total error categories³⁸ present in the five high-scored essays written by the 7BAFLUV students in the proficiency exam of 2008.

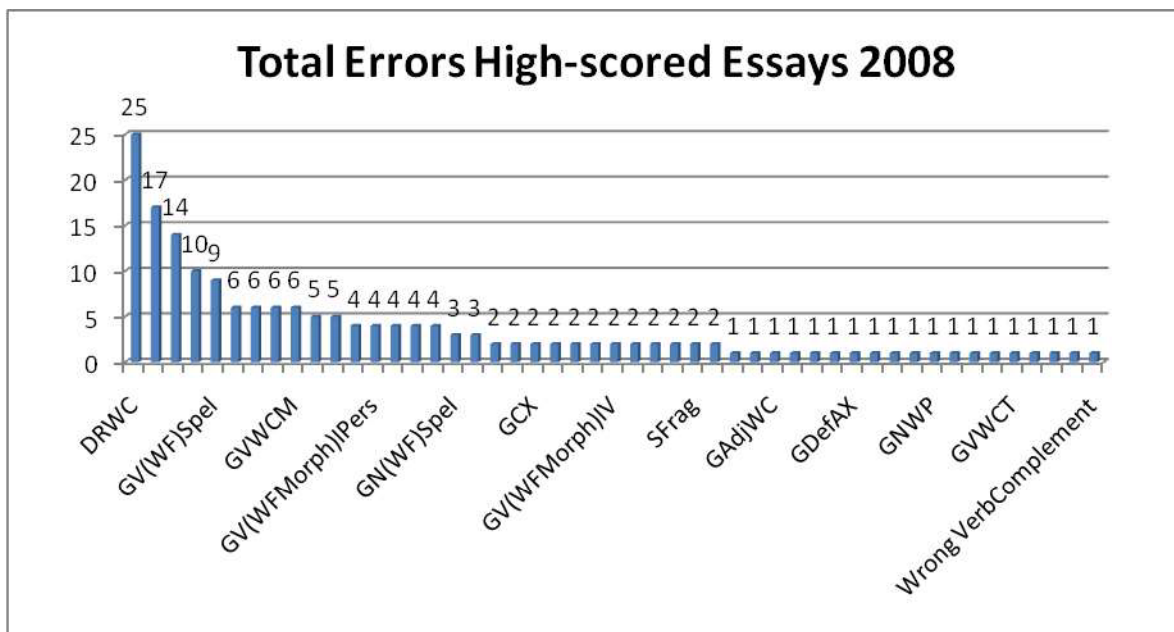
	Short Annotation	Long Annotation	Category	Instances
1	DRWC	Discourse error, Wrong Register	Choice	25
2	MPunctMis	Mechanics error, Punctuation, Missing	Lack	17
3	SUncl	Style/Pragmatics error, Unclear/incoherent/incomprehensible	Lack	14
4	MPunctWC	Mechanics error, Wrong Punctuation	Choice	10
5	GV(WF)Spel	Grammar error, SpeechPart, Verb, Spelling/Orthography	Spelling	9
6	DVerbos	Discourse error, Verbosity/Wordiness	Overinclusion	6
7	GN(WFMorph)D	Grammar error, Speech part, Noun, WrongForm, Morphology, Derivation	Derivation	6
8	GPMis	Grammar error, Speech part, Preposition, Missing	Lack	6
9	GVWCM	Grammar error, Speech part, Verb, Wrong mood	Choice	6
10	GPrepWC	Grammar error, Speech part, wrong Preposition	Choice	5
11	L1/3L	Style/Pragmatics error, Spanish (L1)/French(L3)-like	Choice	5

³⁸ Some errors correspond to alternatives of interpretation of a problem at certain points, which naturally could have implication for the counting.

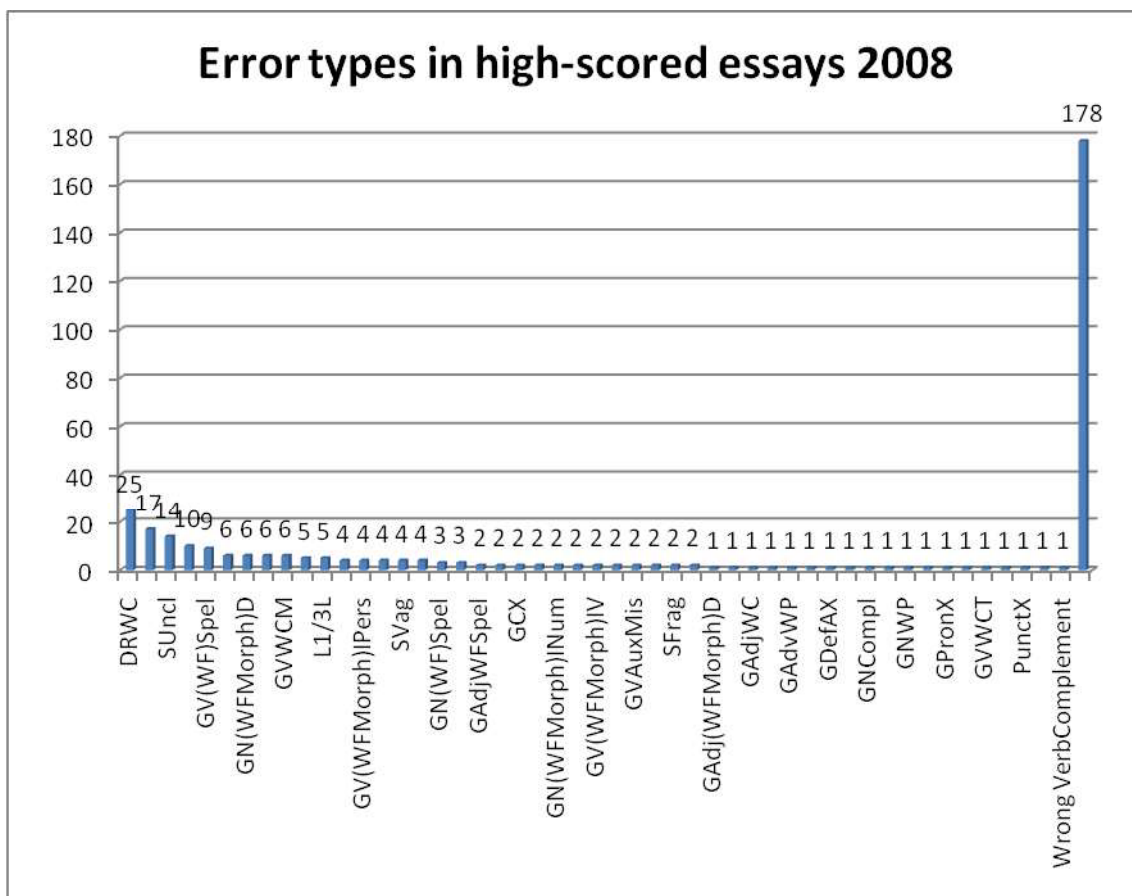
12	GCWC	Grammar error, Speech part, Wrong Conjunction	Choice	4
13	GV(WFMorph)IPers	Grammar error, Speech part, Verb, WrongForm, Morphology, Inflection of Person. Problem of Subject-Verb concordance	Inflection	4
14	MCapX	Mechanics error, Capitalization, Overincluded	Overinclusion	4
15	SVag	Style/Pragmatics error, Vagueness/ambiguity/lack of precision	Lack	4
16	VWordClass	Vocabulary error, Wrong Word Class	Choice	4
17	GN(WF)Spel	Grammar error, Speech part, Noun, Wrong form, Spelling	Spelling	3
18	GPronWC	Grammar error, Speech part, Wrong Pronoun	Choice	3
19	GAdjWFSpel	Grammar error, Speech part, Adjective, Wrong Form, Spelling	Spelling	2
20	GAdvWC	Grammar error, Speech part, Wrong Adverb	Choice	2
21	GCX	Grammar error, Speech part, Conjunction, overincluded	Overinclusion	2
22	GDefAMis	Grammar error, Speech part, Definite Article, Missing	Lack	2
23	GN(WFMorph)INum	Grammar error, Speech part, Noun, Wrong Form, Morphology, Inflection of Number	Inflection	2
24	GV(WFMorph)D	Grammar error, SpeechPart, Verb Form, wrong derivation	Derivation	2
25	GV(WFMorph)IV	Grammar error, Speech part, Verb, Wrong Form, Morphology, Inflection of Voice	Inflection	2
26	GVAsp	Grammar error, Speech part, Verb, Wrong Form, Morphology, Inflection of Aspect, -ing or PastParticiple form	Inflection	2
27	GVAuxMis	Grammar error, Speech part, Auxiliary Verb, Missing	Lack	2
28	GVAuxX	Grammar error, Speech part, Verb, Extra Auxiliary/Modal	Overinclusion	2
29	SFrag	Style/Pragmatics error, Fragment (incomplete sentence/idea)	Lack	2
30	WrongVerb	Grammar error, Speech Part, Verb, Wrong Choice	Choice	2
31	GAdj(WFMorph)D	Grammar error, Speech part, Adjective, Wrong Form, Morphology, Derivation	Derivation	1
32	GAdj(WFMorph)XINum	Grammar error, Speech part, Adjective, Wrong Form,	Inflection	1

		Morphology, Inflection, Extra morpheme of Number		
33	GAdjWC	Grammar error, Speech part, Wrong Adjective	Choice	1
34	GAdvWFSpel	Grammar error, Speech part, Adverb, Wrong Form, Spelling	Spelling	1
35	GAdvWP	Grammar error, Speech part, Adverb, misplaced	Position	1
36	GAdvX	Grammar error, Speech part, Adverb, Overincluded	Overinclusion	1
37	GDefAX	Grammar error, Speech part, Definite Article, overincluded	Overinclusion	1
38	GIndefAWFSpel	Grammar error, Speech part, Indefinite Article, Wrong form, Spelling	Spelling	1
39	GNCompl	Grammar error, Speech part, Wrong complement of Noun	Complementation	1
40	GNWC	Grammar error, Speech part, Wrong Noun	Choice	1
41	GNWP	Grammar error, Speech part, Misplaced Noun	Position	1
42	GPronMis	Grammar error, Speech part, Pronoun, Missing	Lack	1
43	GPronX	Grammar error, Speech part, Pronoun, Overincluded	Overinclusion	1
44	GV(WFMorph)IM	Grammar error, Speech part, Verb, WrongForm, Morphology, Inflection of Mood (indicative, imperative, subjunctive,conditional)	Inflection	1
45	GVWCT	Grammar error, SpeechPart, Verb, WrongTense	Choice	1
46	GVWPAux	Grammar error, Speech part, Verb, Misplaced Auxiliary/Modal	Position	1
47	PunctX	Mechanics error, Punctuation, overincluded	Overinclusion	1
48	VCogn	Vocabulary error, Cognate	Choice	1
49	Wrong VerbComplement	Grammar error, SpeechPart, Verb, Wrong Complement	Complementation	1

Chart 43. Total errors in high-scored essays.



Graph 102. Error categories in high-scored essays.



Graph 103. Error categories in high-scored essays, in relation to the total number of errors in that group.

Chart 43 and graphs 102 and 103 show that in the last group of 2008 essays, the high-scored ones, there are 178 errors in total, belonging to 49 (27.5%) of the 92 categories established in our bidimensional (classification-description) system. As in the previous groups, any particular type of error occurs with a frequency that could be considered really high: the most frequent one is 14% of the total. This is coherent with the tendency mentioned previously: it is the combination of various low-frequency flaws what characterizes the error panorama in these intermediate proficiency compositions.

The error category that is most frequent is **Wrong Register** (a discourse choice error) 25 times (14% of all the errors in the group). This error category usually refers to contractions and stylistic forms that correspond to speech rather than to formal writing; although they are considered errors in our analysis, they are in fact evidence of a good level of proficiency of the writers, who display their informality in the texts. It seems that the higher levels of proficiency are attained by students in contact with informal sources, like friends who have a good mastery of the target language, native speakers, TV, music, video games, and the Internet. The second most frequent error category in the high-scored essays is **Missing Punctuation**, (a mechanics lack error) that occurs 17 times (9.6% of the total). This is an error that does not necessarily affect meaning or content, but it does in some occasions.

Lack of clarity -**Unclear/incoherent/incomprehensible**- (a Style/Pragmatics lack error), is the third most frequent error category in this group of texts; it has 14 occurrences, 7.9% of all the errors in the group. This is –of course- a serious problem. The fourth most frequent error type here is **Wrong Punctuation** (a Mechanics choice error), with 10 instances. 5.6% of the total. This kind of error is not necessarily grave but it can be, in some cases. Then comes **Verb Spelling** (Orthography Grammar error) with nine instances, 5.1%. The sixth place is for **Verbosity/Wordiness** (Discourse over inclusion error,) which happens six times, just 3.4% -each- of all the errors in the group. Other three types of errors share the same frequency of six instances: **Noun Wrong Form**, (Morphology, Derivation Grammar error), **Missing Preposition**, (Grammar lack error), and **Verb wrong mood** (Morphology, inflection Grammar error). Then, two error categories share a frequency of

five instances (2.8% each): **Wrong Preposition** (Grammar choice error) and **Spanish (L1)/French(L3)-like** (Style/Pragmatics choice error).

Next, sharing the frequency of four times each (2.2%), there are five error categories: **Wrong Conjunction** (Grammar choice error), **Verb Person** -Problem of Subject-Verb concordance- (Morphology, Inflection Grammar error), **overincluded Capitalization**, (Mechanics overinclusion error), **Vagueness/ambiguity/lack of precision** (Style/Pragmatics lack error), and **Wrong Word Class** (Vocabulary choice error). It seems that the rule is “the lower the frequency the more types of errors”. **Noun Spelling** (Morphology Wrong Form Grammar error) has only three instances (1.7% each). **Wrong Pronoun** (Grammar choice error) also occurs only three times.

The subsequent frequency is for two-time (1.1% of the total, each) error categories: **Adjective Spelling**, (Wrong Form, Grammar error), **Wrong Adverb** (Grammar choice error,) **overincluded Conjunction**, (Grammar overinclusion error), **Missing Definite Article** (Grammar lack error), **Noun Inflection of Number** (Morphology, Grammar error), **Verb wrong derivation** (Grammar Wrong form Derivation error), **Verb Voice**, (Morphology, Inflection Grammar error), **Verb Aspect, -ing or PastParticiple form**, (Morphology, Inflection Grammar error), **Missing Auxiliary Verb** (Grammar lack error), **Extra Auxiliary/Modal Verb** (Grammar overinclusion error), **Fragment -incomplete sentence/idea-** (Style/Pragmatics lack error), and **Wrong Verb** (Grammar Choice error). It is very interesting to note that Fragments are present only in the high-scored essays. May be there is some over confidence in higher proficiency learners.

A group of 19 error types constitutes the least occurring errors in the high-scored essays of our study; they occur only once, 0.6% of the total each, 10.7% -as a subset- of the total 178 errors in the group. Of these one-time errors, choice and overinclusion problems occur four times each, position faults happen three times, inflection and spelling occur two times, complementation happens twice as well, and derivation and lack occur just once.

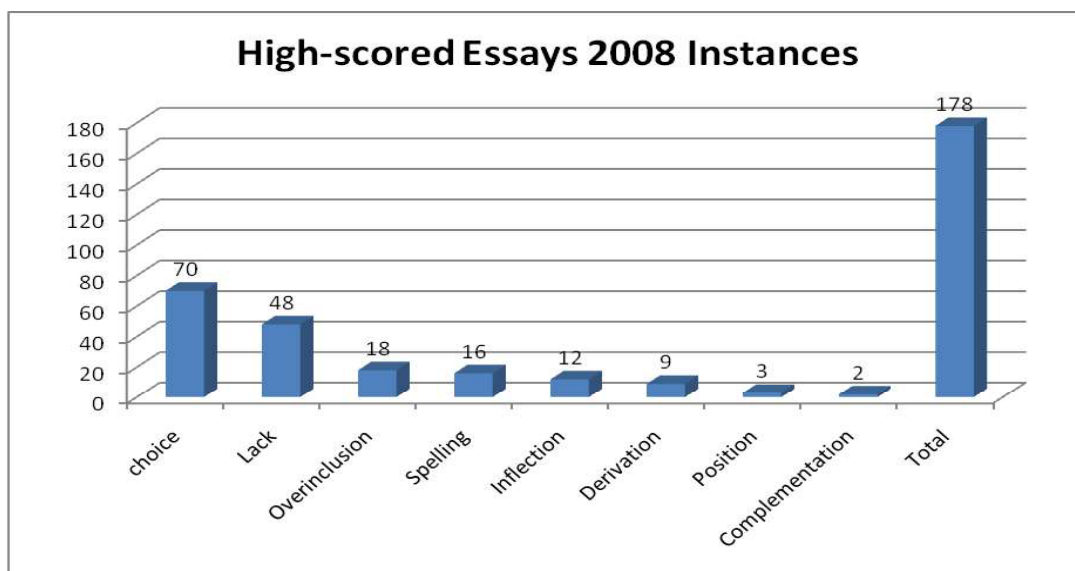
In relation to the descriptive categories of errors, (chart 44 and graphs 104 and 105), **Choice** happens to be the most frequent error mode in the high-scored essays analyzed; it occurs 70 times out of the 178 in the group of texts, that is to say 39.3%, well over a third of such total, which is a high frequency. **Lack** is second, occurring 48 times, 27% of the total in the group, a rather high frequency. At this point there is a big drop in the amount of errors. The next category is **Overinclusion**, with 18 instances, 10.1% of the total. **Spelling** is fourth, with 16 occurrences, 9% of all the errors in this group of texts. **Inflection** follows, with 12 errors, 6.7% of the total. The sixth place is for **Derivation**, with nine instances, 5.1%. Here takes place another big drop in the frequency of errors. Two last error modes remain, with very low frequencies: **Position** counts three instances (1.7%) and **Complementation** totals two (1.1%). Most errors in this high-scored essays are not serious: however, lack, the second most frequent error mode, is usually a serious problem, for it affects directly content and meaning.

Short Annotation	Long Annotation	Category	Instances
DRWC	Discourse error, Wrong Register	Choice	25
MPunctWC	Mechanics error, Wrong Punctuation	Choice	10
GVWCM	Grammar error, Speech part, Verb, Wrong mode	Choice	6
GPrepWC	Grammar error, Speech part, wrong Preposition	Choice	5
L1/3L	Style/Pragmatics error, Spanish (L1)/French(L3)-like	Choice	5
GCWC	Grammar error, Speech part, Wrong Conjunction	Choice	4
VWordClass	Vocabulary error, Wrong Word Class	Choice	4
GPronWC	Grammar error, Speech part, Wrong Pronoun	Choice	3
GAdvWC	Grammar error, Speech part, Wrong Adverb	Choice	2
WrongVerb	Grammar error, SpeechPart, Verb, Wrong Choice	Choice	2
GAdjWC	Grammar error, Speech part, Wrong Adjective	Choice	1
GNWC	Grammar error, Speech part, Wrong Noun	Choice	1
GVWCT	Grammar error, SpeechPart, Verb, WrongTense	Choice	1
VCogn	Vocabulary error, Cognate	Choice	1
CHOICE: Register, Punctutation, words, style (L1/L3), word class, verb mode and tense,			70

<i>cognates</i>			
MPunctMis	Mechanics error, Punctuation, Missing	Lack	17
SUncl	Style/Pragmatics error, Unclear/incoherent/incomprehensible	Lack	14
GPMis	Grammar error, Speech part, Preposition, Missing	Lack	6
SVag	Style/Pragmatics error, Vagueness/ambiguity/lack of precision	Lack	4
GDefAMis	Grammar error, Speech part, Definite Article, Missing	Lack	2
GVAuxMis	Grammar error, Speech part, Auxiliary Verb, Missing	Lack	2
SFrag	Style/Pragmatics error, Fragment (incomplete sentence/idea)	Lack	2
GPronMis	Grammar error, Speech part, Pronoun, Missing	Lack	1
LACK: punctuation, clarity, precision, words, fragments			48
DVerbos	Discourse error, Verbosity/Wordiness	Overinclusion	6
MCapX	Mechanics error, Capitalization, Overincluded	Overinclusion	4
GCX	Grammar error, Speech part, Conjunction, overincluded	Overinclusion	2
GVAuxX	Grammar error, Speech part, Verb, Extra Auxiliary/Modal	Overinclusion	2
GAdvX	Grammar error, Speech part, Adverb, Overincluded	Overinclusion	1
GDefAX	Grammar error, Speech part, Definite Article, overincluded	Overinclusion	1
GPronX	Grammar error, Speech part, Pronoun, Overincluded	Overinclusion	1
PunctX	Mechanics error, Punctuation, overincluded	Overinclusion	1
OVERINCLUSION: wordiness, capitalization, words, punctuation			18
GV(WF)Spel	Grammar error, SpeechPart, Verb, Spelling/Orthography	Spelling	9
GN(WF)Spel	Grammar error, Speech part, Noun, Wrong form, Spelling	Spelling	3
GAdjWFSpel	Grammar error, Speech part, Adjective, Wrong Form, Spelling	Spelling	2
GAdvWFSpel	Grammar error, Speech part, Adverb, Wrong Form, Spelling	Spelling	1
GIndefAWFSpel	Grammar error, Speech part, Indefinite Article, Wrong form, Spelling	Spelling	1
SPELLING: verbs, nouns, adjectives, adverbs, indefinite article			16
GV(WFMorph)IPers	Grammar error, Speech part, Verb, WrongForm, Morphology, Inflection of	Inflection	4

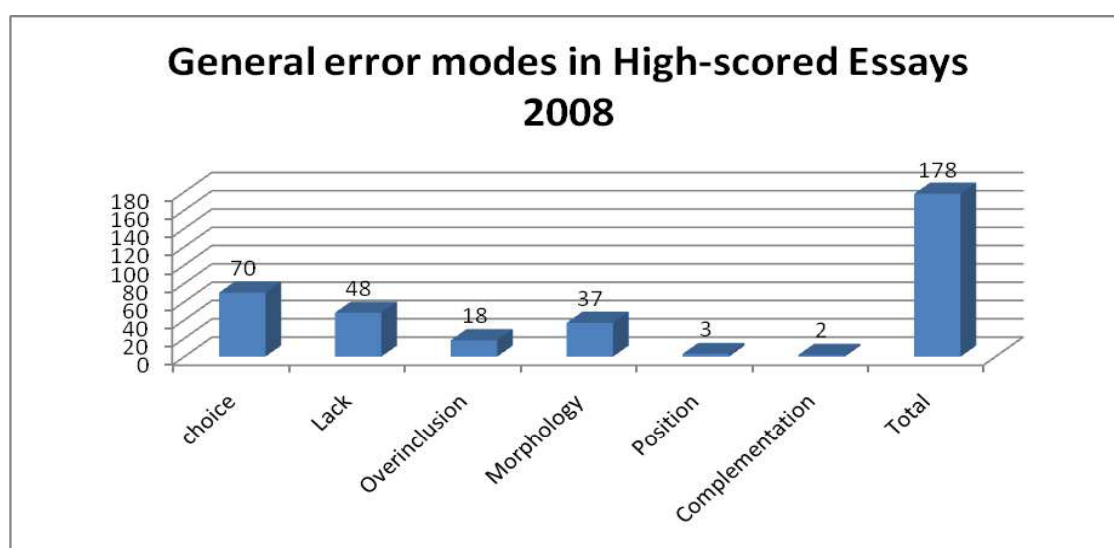
	Person. Problem of Subject-Verb concordance		
GN(WFMorph)INum	Grammar error, Speech part, Noun, Wrong Form, Morphology, Inflection of Number	Inflection	2
GV(WFMorph)IV	Grammar error, Speech part, Verb, Wrong Form, Morphology, Inflection of Voice	Inflection	2
GVAasp	Grammar error, Speech part, Verb, Wrong Form, Morphology, Inflection of Aspect, -ing or PastParticiple form	Inflection	2
GAdj(WFMorph)XINum	Grammar error, Speech part, Adjective, Wrong Form, Morphology, Inflection, Extra morpheme of Number	Inflection	1
GV(WFMorph)IM	Grammar error, Speech part, Verb, WrongForm, Morphology, Inflection of Mood (indicative, imperative, subjunctive,conditional)	Inflection	1
INFLECTION: verb (person, voice, mood), noun (number), and adjective (extra number)			12
GN(WFMorph)D	Grammar error, Speech part, Noun, WrongForm, Morphology, Derivation	Derivation	6
GV(WFMorph)D	Grammar error, SpeechPart, Verb Form, wrong derivation	Derivation	2
GAdj(WFMorph)D	Grammar error, Speech part, Adjective, Wrong Form, Morphology, Derivation	Derivation	1
DERIVATION: nouns, verbs, adjectives			9
GAdvWP	Grammar error, Speech part, Adverb, misplaced	Position	1
GNWP	Grammar error, Speech part, Misplaced Noun	Position	1
GVWPAux	Grammar error, Speech part, Verb, Misplaced Auxiliary/Modal	Position	1
POSITION: misplaced adverb, noun, auxiliary/modal verb			3
GNCompl	Grammar error, Speech part, Wrong complement of Noun	Complementation	1
Wrong VerbComplement	Grammar error, SpeechPart, Verb, Wrong Complement	Complementation	1
COMPLEMENTATION: noun and verb complements			2
TOTAL			100

Chart 44. Descriptive error categories in high-scored essays.



Graph 104. Error descriptive categories in high-scored essays.

However, we cannot forget that spelling, inflection and derivation must be grouped within the single descriptive category they belong to, Wrong Form (Morphology). Graph 105 shows this perspective. There is not much change, but, naturally (due to the various types of error it includes), Morphology becomes the third most frequent error mode, with 37 instances, 20.8% of the total.



Graph 105. Error descriptive *general* categories in high-scored essays

In relation to non-occurring errors, (chart 45), it is noticeable that 43 of the total 92 error categories in our system are absent; that is 46.7%, almost half of them. This is the error “safe” area or the linguistic aspects that the 7BAFLUV learners who score better at this level seem to have already mastered. They do not resort to code switching; they do not have troubles with the degree (comparative/superlative) form of adjectives; they do not have troubles with genitive forms (apostrophe, noun-noun or noun-of-noun), most spelling, position and overinclusion problems seem to have been overcome by them.

	Short Annotation	Long Annotation	Category
1	CodeS	Style/Pragmatics error, Code Switching	Choice
2	ExtraVerb	Grammar error, SpeechPart, Verb overincluded	Overinclusion
3	GAdj(WFMorphI)Deg	Grammar error, Speech part, Adjective, Wrong Form, Morphology, Comparative/Superlative	Inflection
4	GAdjCompl	Grammar error, Speech part, Wrong Complement of Adjective	Complementation
5	GAdjMis	Grammar error, Speech part, Adjective, Missing	Lack
6	GAdjWP	Grammar error, Speech part, Misplaced Adjective	Position
7	GAdjX	Grammar error, Speech part, Adjective, overincluded	Overinclusion
8	GAdv(WFMorph)D	Grammar error, Speech part, Adverb, Wrong Form, Morphology, Wrong Derivation	Derivation
9	GAdv(WFMorph)XINum	Grammar error, Speech part, Adverb, Wrong Form, Morphology, Inflection of number overincluded	Overinclusion
10	GAdvCompl	Grammar error, Speech part, Adverb, Wrong Complement	Complementation
11	GAdvMis	Grammar error, Speech part, Adverb, Missing	Lack
12	GAWC	Grammar error, Speech part, Wrong Article	Choice
13	GAWP	Grammar error, Speech part, Article, misplaced	Position
14	GCCompl	Grammar error, Speech part, Conjunction, Wrong complement	Complementation
15	GCMis	Grammar error, Speech part, Conjunction, Missing	Lack
16	GCWFSpel	Grammar error, Speech part,	Spelling

		Conjunction, Wrong Form, Spelling	
17	GCWP	Grammar error, Speech part, Conjunction, misplaced	Position
18	GDefAWFSpel	Grammar error, Speech part, Definite Article, Wrong Form, Spelling	Spelling
19	GIndefAMis	Grammar error, Speech part, Indefinite Article, Missing	Lack
20	GIndefAX	Grammar error, Speech part, Indefinite Article, overincluded	Overinclusion
21	GN(WFMorph)ICGenNoNo	Grammar error, Speech part, Noun, Wrong Form, Morphology, Inflection of Case, Genitive, Noun+Noun/NounOfNoun	Inflection
22	GN(WFMorph)ICGen's	Grammar error, Speech part, Noun, Wrong Form, Morphology, Inflection of Case, Genitive, Apostrophe	Inflection
23	GN(WFMorphI)NumUC	Grammar error, Speech part, Noun, Wrong form, Morphology, Wrong Inflection of Number of Countable/Uncountable	Inflection
24	GNMis	Grammar error, Speech part, Noun, Missing	Lack
25	GNWCUC	Grammar error, Speech part, Noun, Wrong Countable/Uncountable	Choice
26	GNX	Grammar error, Speech part, Extra Noun	Overinclusion
27	GP(WF)Spel	Grammar error, Speech part, Preposition, Wrong Form, Spelling	Spelling
28	GPronWP	Grammar error, Speech part, Pronoun, Misplaced	Position
29	GPronWFSpel	Grammar error, Speech part, Pronoun, Wrong Form, Spelling	Spelling
30	GPWP	Grammar error, Speech part, Preposition, misplaced	Position
31	GPX	Grammar error, Speech part, Preposition, overincluded	Overinclusion
32	GV(WF)SpelAux	Grammar error, Speech part, Aux Verb, Wrong Form, Spelling	Spelling
33	GV(WFMorph)IAux	Grammar error, Speech part, Verb, WrongForm, Morphology, Auxiliary/Modal	Inflection
34	GVMis	Grammar error: Sppech part, Verb, Missing	Lack
35	GVWCAux	Grammar error, Speech part, WrongAuxiliary/Modal	Choice
36	GVWCV	Grammar error, Speech part, Verb, wrong voice	Choice
37	MCapMis	Mechanics error, Capitalization,	Lack

		Missing	
38	MCapWP	Mechanics error, Capitalization, misplaced	Position
39	MPunctWP	Mechanics error, Punctuation, Misplaced	Position
40	MWFSyl	Mechanics error, Wrong Form, Syllabication	Form
41	Verb Misplaced	Grammar error, SpeechPart, Verb, Wrong Position	Position
42	W PastForm	Grammar error, SpeechPart, Verb, WrongForm, Morphology, PastTense	Inflection
43	PrepCompl	Grammar error, Speech part, Preposition, Complementation	Complementation

Chart 45. Non-occurring errors in high-scored essays of 2008.

7.4. General outputs for all 2008 essays

Once we have finished the analysis of each individual and subset of the 7BAFULV intermediate level students' essays of 2008 a global view can be drawn. We proceed from the general to the specific issues. In the global perspective, we first review the total number of errors both in the individual essays and in each of the three subgroups in which the sample was segmented, low-, medium-, and high-scored texts; then, we examine the proportion of errors in relation to the number of words in each passage and within each subset of essays, in order to determine connections between the number of errors and the length of the passages. Third, the global occurrence of the error classification and descriptive categories is checked.

For the particular issues, we inspect the errors within the bidimensional error analysis system established for this study. Here, we first consider the occurrence of the error (classification) types in detail and then we do the same with the error (description) modes. Last, non-occurring errors are scanned, for interesting facts can be drawn from them, too.

7.4.1. Errors and level

The global amount of errors in the 15 7BAFLUV intermediate students' essays that constitute the sample of this study is 785 (chart 46 and graphs 107 and 109). If we consider averages, the global mean of errors is 52.3 errors per essay; the average in the low-scored essays is 76 (380 errors in five passages); the average for the medium-scored essays is 45.4 (227 problems in five texts); for the high-scored essays the mean is 35.6 (178 faults in five essays). In general, the number of errors is compatible with the level established from the score given to the essays: there are fewer errors the higher the levels. However, individually, the score given to a particular essay does not only correspond to the presence of errors in it. This can be seen in chart 46³⁹. It is remarkable that 2008-02fSL37 occupies the second place in the ranks of maximum amount of errors, but its score is not so bad, 3.7 out of 5. 2008-00mAR14 has a very low score (1.4) in spite of having only 33 errors. The essay that has the lowest amount of errors -2008-04fVO34- (only 14) has a rather low score (3.4). It is clear that other criteria concur when evaluating an essay, like the required length of the text, the clarity, extension and depth of its content, the global and local rhetoric structure, among other aspects. The presence of errors in a given text is just one facet of its analysis.

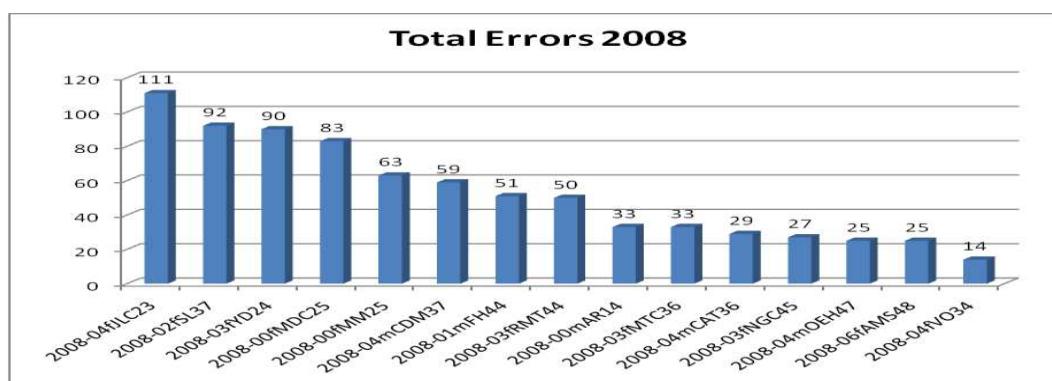
1	2008-04fJLC23	111
2	2008-02fSL37	92
3	2008-03fYD24	90
4	2008-00fMDC25	83
5	2008-00fMM25	63
6	2008-04mCDM37	59
7	2008-01mFH44	51
8	2008-03fRMT44	50
9	2008-00mAR14	33
10	2008-03fMTC36	33
11	2008-04mCAT36	29
12	2008-03fNGC45	27
13	2008-04mOEH47	25
14	2008-06fAMS48	25
15	2008-04fVO34	14
	Total	785

Chart 46. Total individual and global errors 2008.

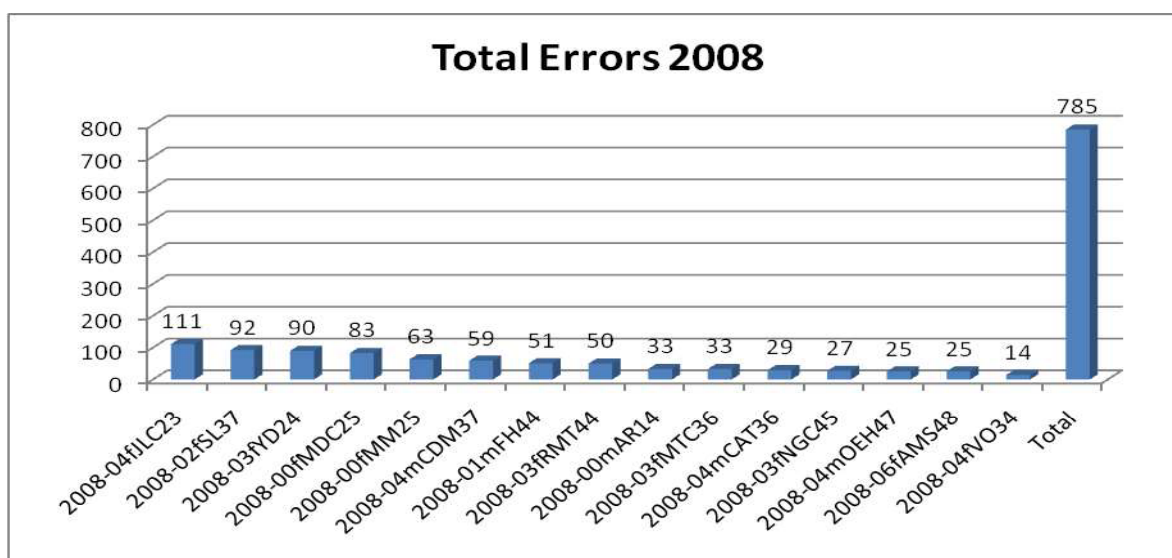
³⁹

Purple: low-scored essays; green medium-scored essays; blue: high-scored essays

It is also surprising that in the medium-scored essays, the connection between the score and the amount of errors is inverse, i.e. the more errors, the higher the score. The total of errors in each of the 15 essays can be seen in graphs 106 and 107.

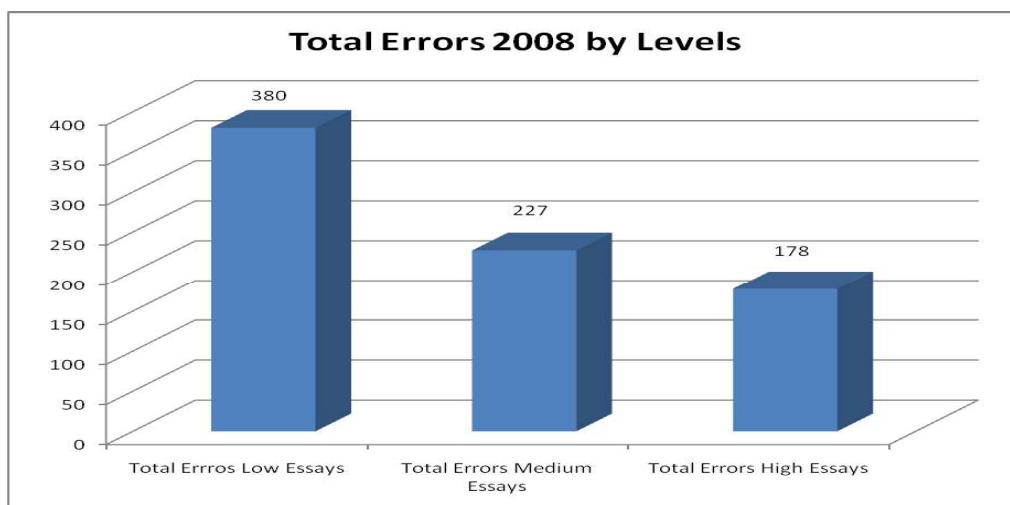


Graph 106. Total errors in individual essays 2008.

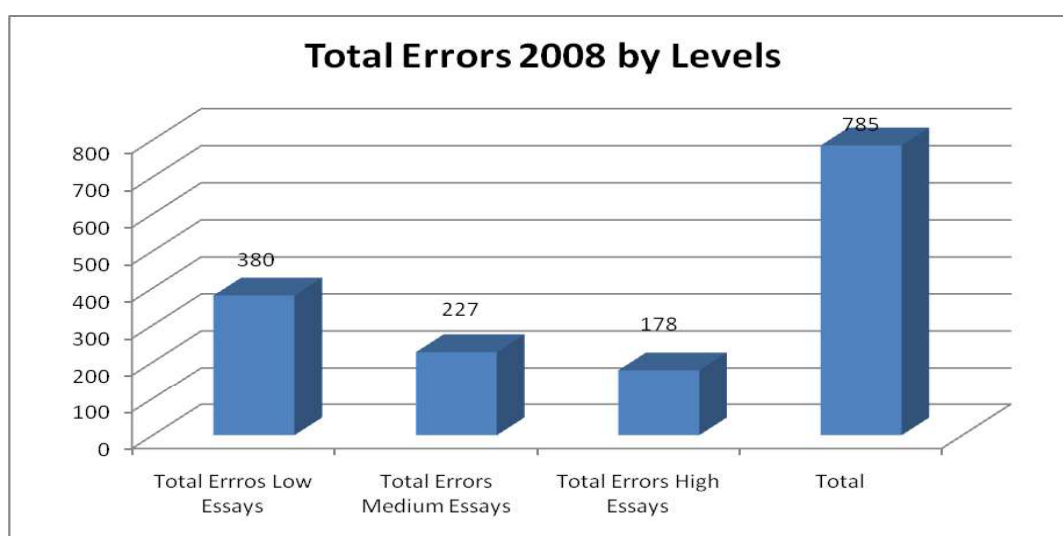


Graph 107. Individual and global total errors 2008.

On the other hand, it is also noteworthy that the gap between the total number of faults in the low-scored essays and the medium-scored texts (380 versus 227: 153) is higher than the one between the medium-scored and high-scored passages (227 versus 178: 49), as it can be seen in graphs 108 and 109.



Graph 108. Total errors in each sub group 2008 essays.



Graph 109. Total errors in each sub group of essays 2008, against total errors.

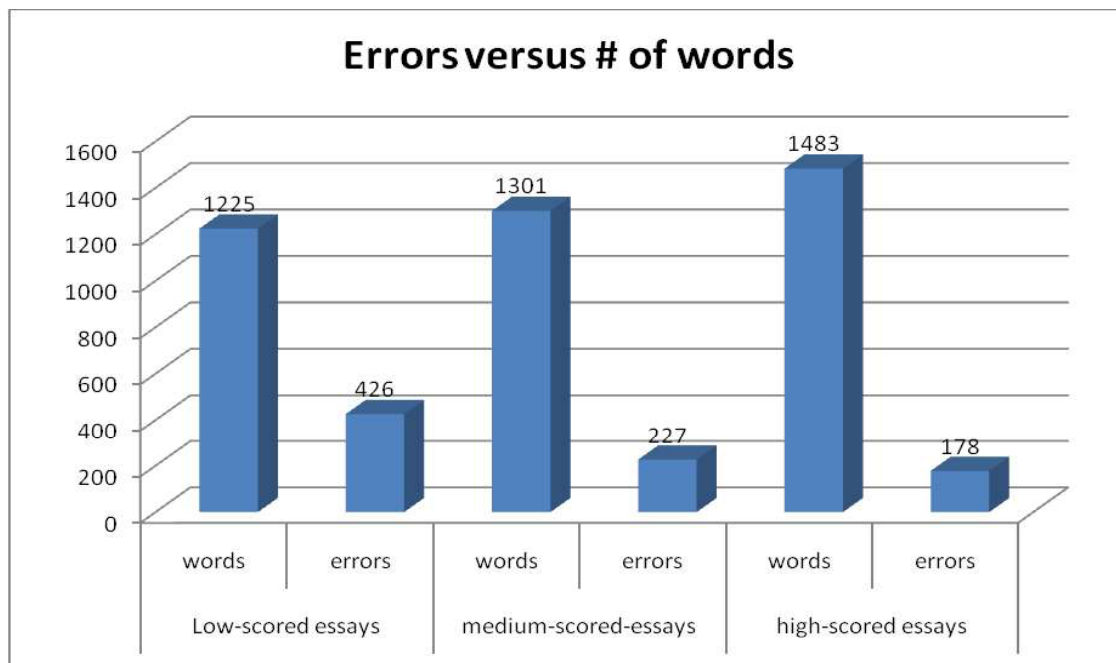
7.4.2. Errors and text length

Besides the connection between errors and language proficiency level, which is “natural” or direct, meaning that the lower the proficiency the more likely errors are frequent and more serious, it is also interesting to see the relationship between errors and text length, as part of the descriptive statistics that constitute the quatitative analysis that is central to our study. Let us remember that the corresponding rates are as follows: in the

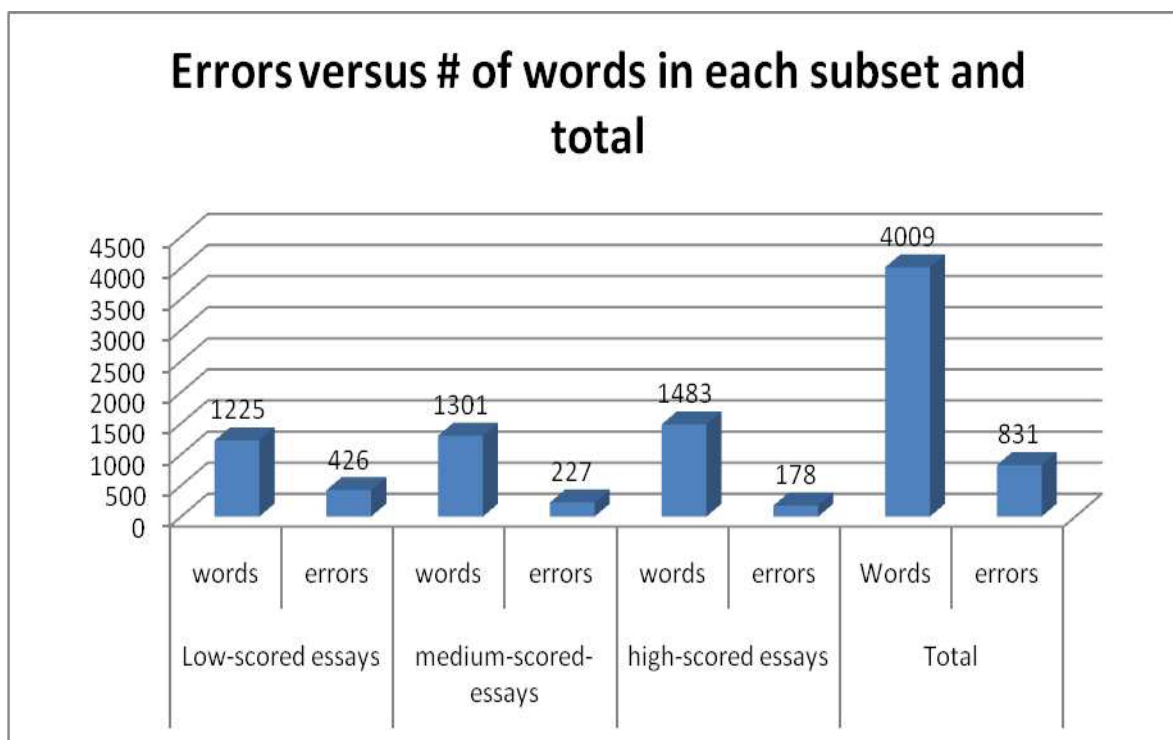
low-scored essays there is one error per 2.9 words, 34.8% (426 errors in 1225 words), -a high rate of error frequency-; in the medium-scored essays the rate is 227 errors in 1301 words, one error for every 5.7 words, 17.4%, -a rather high rate-; finally, in the group of high-scored essays 178 errors in 1483 words, the result is one error for each 8.3 words, 12%, -a moderate error rate-. This can be seen in chart 47 and graphs 110 and 111. It is clear that the higher the proficiency level the more the students write (the longer their texts). It is also clear, as expected, too, that the higher the proficiency level, the fewer errors occur. It must be noted that the error rate in the low-scored essays (one error every 2.7, i.e. 3 words) is twice the one in the medium-scored essays (one error per 5.7, i.e. 6 words) and this in turn is twice the rate in the high-scored essays (one error per 12 words).

	# of words	# of errors	Ratio Error/Words	Percentage
1 2008-00mAR14	79	34	1 / 2	43%
2 2008-04fJLC23	366	113	1 / 3	31%
3 2008-00fMDC25	288	84	1 / 3	29%
4 2008-03fYD24	301	91	1 / 3	30%
5 2008-00fMM25	181	63	1 / 3	35%
Five low-scored essays	1225	426	1 error every 3 words	35%
6 2008-04fVO34	173	14	1 / 12	8%
7 2008-04mCAT36	269	29	1 / 9	11%
8 2008-03fMTC36	205	33	1 / 6	16%
9 2008-04mCDM37	301	59	1 / 5	20%
10 2008-02fSL37	353	92	1 / 4	26%
Five medium-scored essays	1301	227	1 error every 6 words	17.4%
11 2008-01mFH44	263	51	1 / 5	19%
12 2008-03fRMT44	261	50	1 / 5	19%
13 2008-03fNGC45	272	27	1 / 10	10%
14 2008-04mOEH47	312	25	1 / 12	8%
15 2008-06fAMS48	375	25	1 / 15	7%
Five high-scored essays	1483	178	1 error every 8 words	12%
All essays	4009	831	1 error every 5 (4.8) words	21% (20.7%)

Chart 47. Errors and text length in all essays.



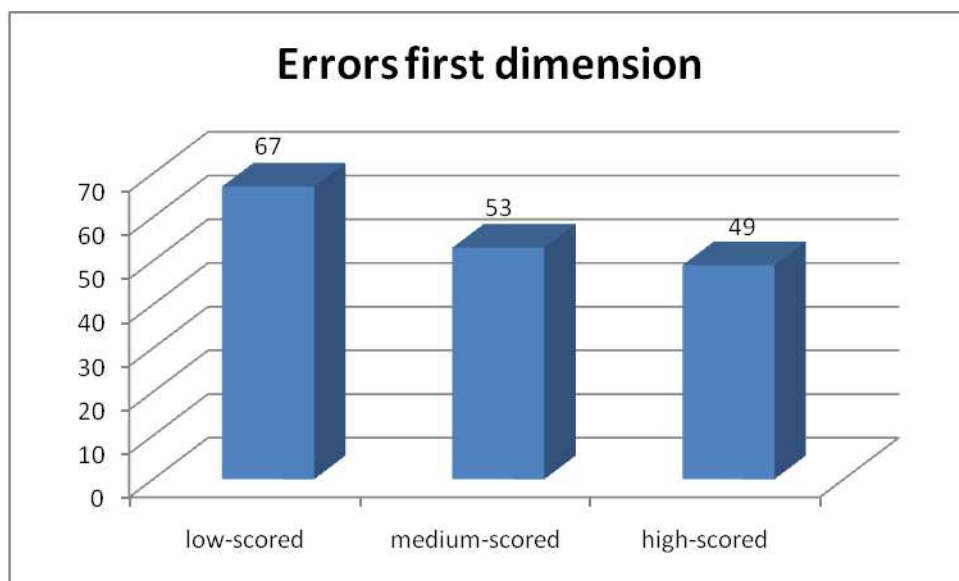
Graph 110. Errors versus number of words in low-, medium-, and high-scored essays.



Graph 111. Errors versus number of words in low-, medium-, and high-scored essays against the total

7.4.3. Errors in the classification axis

There are two axes in our error analysis system: classification and description criteria. The former covers 92 error types according to linguistic categorization classes and the latter comprises six error modes according to explanatory criteria. Regarding classification, in the first group of 2008 essays, the low-scored ones, there are 380 errors in total, belonging to 67 (72.8%) of the 92 classification categories; 53 error types, 57.6% out of the 92, are present in the medium-scored essays analyzed; last, in the the high-scored ones, there are 178 errors in total, belonging to 49 (27.5%) of the 92 possible types (see graph 112). In any of the three groups any particular type of error occurs with a frequency that can be considered really high: in the low-scored essays, the most frequent one is less than 10% of the total; in the group of medium-scored essays, the error frequency starts at 16 instances -7%- and then gradually decreases; in the high-scored essays subgroup, the most frequent error is 14% of the total. What characterizes the error panorama in these intermediate proficiency compositions is the presence of a number of low-frequency errors. This can be related, on the one hand, to the effect of frequency of errors on the perception of readers and raters, (what the literature about errors has called *irritability*), many errors end up making a bad impression of a text. On the other hand, it is clear that, more than the amount of errors, it is their gravity or impact on meaning and clarity of content what affects the most the readability of these passages. Of course, a purely quantitative account of errors in a text cannot explain that; a mixed qualitative-quatitative approach is necessary for that.



Graph 112. Errors in the first dimension (classification) of our analysis system.

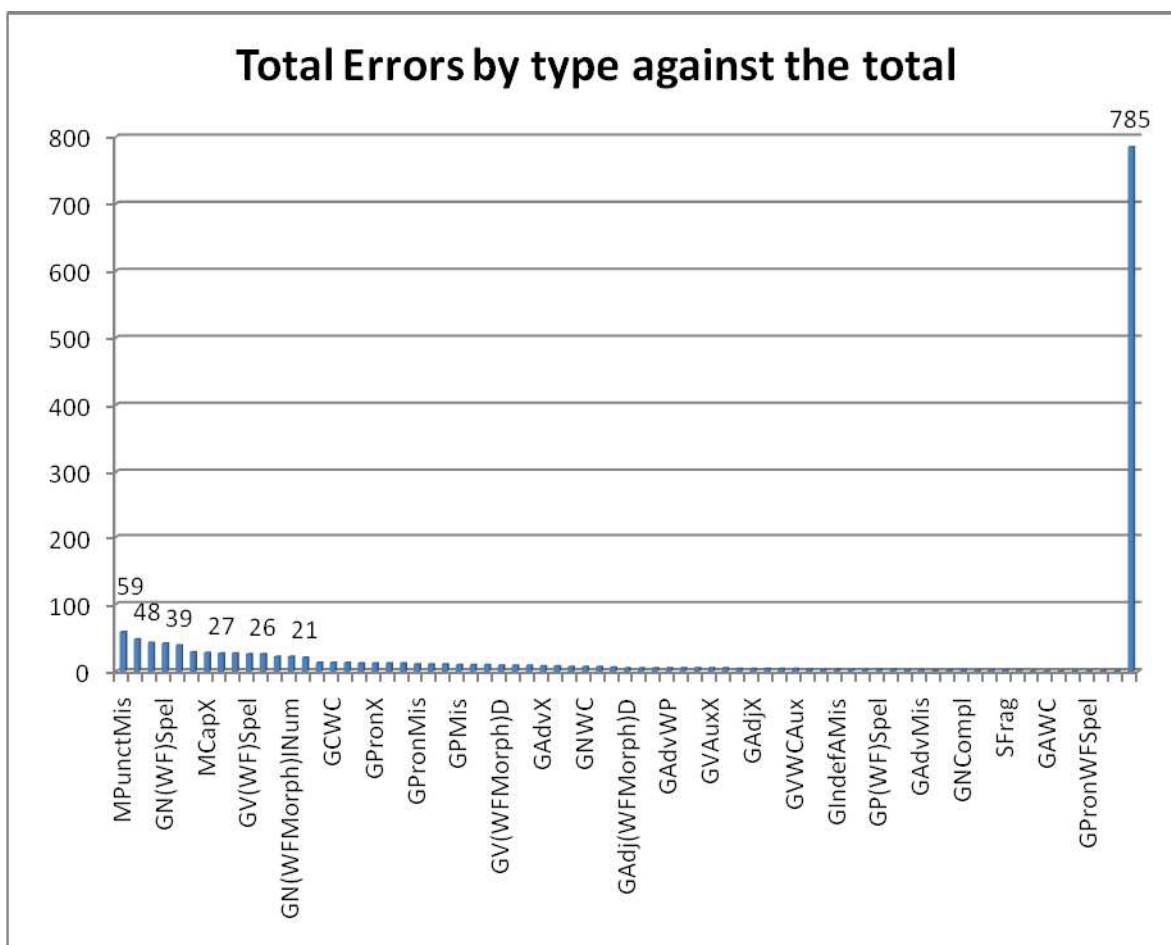
In relation to the specific error types that occur in the sample of essays in this study, graphs 113 and 114 illustrate their total occurrence for the whole sample. Chart 48 provides further detail in this respect by listing each occurring error with its Short Annotation or abbreviated name (used for error tagging), its corresponding Long Annotation (the full name or explanation of the error type), its number of instances or occurrences and the linguistic category it belongs to in our classification system. Non-occurring errors are included as well, for their consideration complements the analysis. The first important remark is that 72 categories of the 92 occur, which is 78.3%. It seems to be a high rate of error occurrence, in the sense that most of the possible errors occur at the end of a proficiency level –intermediate- where one expects much less faults to take place.

	Short Annotation	Long Annotation	Instances	Category
1	MPunctMis	Mechanics error, Punctuation, Missing	59	Lack
2	SUncl	Style/Pragmatics error, Unclear/incoherent/incomprehensible	48	Lack
3	DRWC	Discourse error, Wrong Register	43	Choice
4	GN(WF)Spel	Grammar error, Speech part, Noun, Wrong form, Spelling	42	Spelling
5	VWordClass	Vocabulary error, Wrong Word Class	39	Choice
6	GPronWC	Grammar error, Speech part, Wrong Pronoun	29	Choice
7	MCapX	Mechanics error, Capitalization, Overincluded	28	Overinclusion
8	DVerbos	Discourse error, Verbosity/Wordiness	27	Overinclusion
9	GV(WFMorph)IPers	Grammar error, Speech part, Verb, WrongForm, Morphology, Inflection of Person. Problem of Subject-Verb concordance	27	Inflection
10	GV(WF)Spel	Grammar error, SpeechPart, Verb, Spelling/Orthography	26	Spelling
11	MPunctWC	Mechanics error, Wrong Punctuation	26	Choice
12	GN(WFMorph)D	Grammar error, Speech part, Noun, WrongForm, Morphology, Derivation	22	Derivation
13	GN(WFMorph)INum	Grammar error, Speech part, Noun, Wrong Form, Morphology, Inflection of Number	22	Inflection
14	SVag	Style/Pragmatics error, Vagueness/ambiguity/lack of precision	21	Lack
15	GAdjWFSpel	Grammar error, Speech part, Adjective, Wrong Form, Spelling	13	Spelling
16	GCWC	Grammar error, Speech part, Wrong Conjunction	13	Choice
17	GVWCT	Grammar error, SpeechPart, Verb, WrongTense	13	Choice
18	GPrepWC	Grammar error, Speech part, wrong Preposition	12	Choice
19	GPronX	Grammar error, Speech part, Pronoun, Overincluded	12	Overinclusion
20	GVAsp	Grammar error, Speech part, Verb, Wrong Form, Morphology, Inflection of Aspect, -ing or PastParticiple form	12	Inflection
21	WrongVerb	Grammar error, SpeechPart, Verb, Wrong Choice	12	Choice

22	GPronMis	Grammar error, Speech part, Pronoun, Missing	11	Lack
23	GV(WFMorph)IM	Grammar error, Speech part, Verb, WrongForm, Morphology, Inflection of Mood (indicative, imperative, subjunctive,conditional)	11	Inflection
24	PunctX	Mechanics error, Punctuation, overincluded	11	Overinclusion
25	GPMis	Grammar error, Speech part, Preposition, Missing	10	Lack
26	GVAuxMis	Grammar error, Speech part, Auxiliary Verb, Missing	10	Lack
27	MCapMis	Mechanics error, Capitalization, Missing	10	Lack
28	GV(WFMorph)D	Grammar error, SpeechPart, Verb Form, wrong derivation	9	Derivation
29	GVWCM	Grammar error, Speech part, Verb, Wrong Mood	9	Choice
30	L1/3L	Style/Pragmatics error, Spanish (L1)/French(L3)-like	9	Choice
31	GAdvX	Grammar error, Speech part, Adverb, Overincluded	8	Overinclusion
32	GIndefAX	Grammar error, Speech part, Indefinite Article, overincluded	8	Overinclusion
33	GDefAX	Grammar error, Speech part, Definite Article, overincluded	7	Overinclusion
34	GNWC	Grammar error, Speech part, Wrong Noun	7	Choice
35	GV(WFMorph)IV	Grammar error, Speech part, Verb, Wrong Form, Morphology, Inflection of Voice	7	Inflection
36	GCX	Grammar error, Speech part, Conjunction, overincluded	6	Overinclusion
37	GAdj(WFMorph)D	Grammar error, Speech part, Adjective, Wrong Form, Morphology, Derivation	5	Derivation
38	GAdj(WFMorph)XINum	Grammar error, Speech part, Adjective, Wrong Form, Morphology, Infection, Extra morpheme of Number	5	Inflection
39	GAdj(WFMorph)IDeg	Grammar error, Speech part, Adjective, Wrong Form, Morphology, Comparative/Superlative	5	Inflection
40	GAdvWP	Grammar error, Speech part, Adverb, misplaced	5	Position
41	GPronWP	Grammar error, Speech part, Pronoun, Misplaced	5	Position
42	GPX	Grammar error, Speech part, Preposition, overincluded	5	Overinclusion

43	GVAuxX	Grammar error, Speech part, Verb, Extra Auxiliary/Modal	5	Overinclusion
44	Wrong VerbComplement	Grammar error, SpeechPart, Verb, Wrong Complement	5	Complementation
45	GAdjWC	Grammar error, Speech part, Wrong Adjective	4	Choice
46	GAdjX	Grammar error, Speech part, Adjective, overincluded	4	Overinclusion
47	GDefAMis	Grammar error, Speech part, Definite Article, Missing	4	Lack
48	GN(WFMorphI)NumUC	Grammar error, Speech part, Noun, Wrong form, Morphology, Wrong Inflection of Number of Countable/Uncountable	4	Inflection
49	GVWCAux	Grammar error, Speech part, WrongAuxiliary/Modal	4	Choice
50	GAdvWC	Grammar error, Speech part, Wrong Adverb	3	Choice
51	GCWFSpel	Grammar error, Speech part, Conjunction, Wrong Form, Spelling	3	Spelling
52	GIndefAMis	Grammar error, Speech part, Indefinite Article, Missing	3	Lack
53	GN(WFMorph)ICGenNoNo	Grammar error, Speech part, Noun,Wrong Form, Morphology, Inflection of Case, Genitive, Noun+Noun/NounOfNoun	3	Inflection
54	GNWP	Grammar error, Speech part, Misplaced Noun	3	Position
55	GP(WF)Spel	Grammar error, Speech part, Preposition, Wrong Form, Spelling	3	Spelling
56	GVMis	Grammar error: Sppech part, Verb, Missing	3	Lack
57	GAdv(WFMorph)D	Grammar error, Speech part, Adverb, Wrong Form, Morphology, Wrong Derivation	2	Derivation
58	GAdvMis	Grammar error, Speech part, Adverb, Missing	2	Lack
59	GAdvWFSpel	Grammar error, Speech part, Adverb, Wrong Form, Spelling	2	Spelling
60	GIndefAWFSpel	Grammar error, Speech part, Indefinite Article, Wrong form, Spelling	2	Spelling
61	GNCompl	Grammar error, Speech part, Wrong complement of Noun	2	Complementation
62	GV(WFMorph)IAux	Grammar error, Speech part, Verb, WrongForm, Morphology, Auxiliary/Modal	2	Inflection
63	GVWCV	Grammar error, Speech part, Verb, wrong voice	2	Choice

64	SFrag	Style/Pragmatics error, Fragment (incomplete sentence/idea)	2	Lack
65	Verb Misplaced	Grammar error, SpeechPart, Verb, Wrong Position	2	Position
66	CodeS	Style/Pragmatics error, Code Switching	1	Choice
67	GAWC	Grammar error, Speech part, Wrong Article	1	Choice
68	GCMis	Grammar error, Speech part, Conjunction, Missing	1	Lack
69	GNWCUC	Grammar error, Speech part, Noun, Wrong Countable/Uncountable	1	Choice
70	GPronWFSpel	Grammar error, Speech part, Pronoun, Wrong Form, Spelling	1	Spelling
71	GVWPAux	Grammar error, Speech part, Verb, Misplaced Auxiliary/Modal	1	Position
72	VCogn	Vocabulary error, Cognate	1	Choice
73	ExtraVerb	Grammar error, SpeechPart, Verb overincluded	0	Overinclusion
74	GAdjCompl	Grammar error, Speech part, Wrong Complement of Adjective	0	Complement
76	GAdjMis	Grammar error, Speech part, Adjective, Missing	0	Lack
76	GAdjWP	Grammar error, Speech part, Misplaced Adjective	0	Position
77	GAdv(WFMorph)XINum	Grammar error, Speech part, Adverb, Wrong Form, Morphology, Inflection of number overincluded	0	Overinclusion
78	GAdvCompl	Grammar error, Speech part, Adverb, Wrong Complement	0	Complementation
79	GAWP	Grammar error, Speech part, Article, misplaced	0	Position
80	GCCompl	Grammar error, Speech part, Conjunction, Wrong complement	0	Complmentation
81	GCWP	Grammar error, Speech part, Conjunction, misplaced	0	Position
82	GDefAWFSpel	Grammar error, Speech part, Definite Article, Wrong Form, Spelling	0	Spelling
83	GN(WFMorph)ICGen's	Grammar error, Speech part, Noun, Wrong Form, Morphology, Inflection of Case, Genitive, Apostrophe	0	Inflection
84	GNMis	Grammar error, Speech part, Noun, Missing	0	Lack
85	GNX	Grammar error, Speech part, Extra Noun	0	Overinclusion
86	GPWP	Grammar error, Speech part, Preposition, misplaced	0	Position
87	GV(WF)SpelAux	Grammar error, Speech part, Aux	0	Spelling



Graph 114. Total detailed error types 2008 essays against the total.

After the global panorama of error categories, let us review them more specifically in the subsets in which the sample was divided. Let us see the five most frequent errors in each subgroup of essays. For the low-scored essays, the results evidence that **missing punctuation**, a mechanics lack error is the most frequent, with 31 instances (8.16% of the total). **Wrong word class**, a problem of vocabulary choice, is the second most frequent flaw, with 27 instances, 7.1% of the total. The third most frequent error is **spelling of nouns** (26 times out of 380, 6.8%). The next most frequent problem is **over inclusion of capital letters** (22 times, 5.8% of the total errors in the group). The fifth most frequent flaw in these texts is the **wrong choice of pronouns**, present 21 times (5.5%). Most of the errors in the low-scored essays represent serious problems, for they affect the content and clarity of the ideas in the texts.

In the medium-scored essays, the first problem is **Verbosity/wordiness**, a discourse error of over inclusion, 16 times out of 227, 6.7% of the total. The second most frequent error is **Lack of clarity/incoherence**, a style/pragmatics lack error that happens 14 times, 6.2% of the total. The third is **Noun spelling**, a grammar wrong form error that occurs 13 times, 5.7% of the total. Then comes **Vagueness/ambiguity/lack of precision**, a style/pragmatics lack error, with 12 occurrences, 5.3%. The fifth most frequent error type is **Missing punctuation**, a mechanics lack error, 11 times, a 4.8% of the total. The second most frequent error in this group of essays is one that can be considered serious: lack of clarity. Maybe the first one -verbosity/wordiness-, and the fourth -vagueness- also contribute to or are caused by the former.

In the high-scored essays, the error category that is most frequent is **Wrong Register** (a discourse choice error) with 25 times (14% of all the errors in the group). The second most frequent error category is **Missing Punctuation**, (a mechanics lack error) that occurs 17 times (9.6% of the total). Lack of clarity –**Unclear / incoherent / incomprehensible**- (a Style/Pragmatics lack error), is the third most frequent error category in this group of texts; it has 14 occurrences, 7.9% of all the errors in the group. The fourth most frequent error type here is **Wrong Punctuation** (a Mechanics choice error), with 10 instances. 5.6% of the total. Then comes **Verb Spelling** (Orthography Grammar error) with nine instances, 5.1%. Most errors in this group of essays are not serious. For instance, the first error category here –wrong register- usually refers to contractions and stylistic forms that correspond to speech rather than to formal writing; although they are considered errors in our analysis, they are in fact evidence of a good level of proficiency of the writers, who display their informality in the texts. Of course, lack of clarity is a serious problem.

Now let us see the top ten error types in all the essays analyzed in our study:

1. Missing Punctuation, (Mechanics Lack error), 59 instances (just 7.5% of the 785 total errors in the 15 essays that constitute the study sample).
2. Unclear/incoherent/incomprehensible, (Style/Pragmatics Lack error), 48 occurrences (6.1%).

3. Wrong Register, (Discourse Choice error), 43 times (5.5%).
4. Noun Spelling, (Grammar Wrong form error), 42 errors (5.4%).
5. Wrong Word Class, (Vocabulary Choice error), 39 faults (5%).
6. Wrong Pronoun, (Grammar Choice error), 29 times (3.7%).
7. Overincluded Capitalization, (Mechanics Overinclusion error), 28 occurrences (3.6%).
8. Verbosity/Wordiness, (Discourse Overinclusion error), 27 instances (3.4%).
Verb Inflection of Person. -Problem of Subject-Verb concordance-, (Grammar WrongForm, Morphology Inflection error), 27 faults (3.4%).
9. Verb, Spelling, (Grammar Orthography error), 26 instances (3.3%).
Wrong Punctuation, (Mechanics Choice error) , 26 occurrences (3.3%).
10. Noun Derivation, (Grammar Wrong Form, Morphology error) 22 instances (2.8%).

Punctuation initiates the list of the most frequent errors in the essays studied. It is not necessarily a serious error per se, but it often affects the readability of a text when the limits between thought groups are blurry; a clear division of phrases, clauses, and sentences is -more often than not- carried out through punctuation. Of course, the **lack of punctuation**, (the most frequent problem), is more severe than its wrong choice, (the last in the list of the most frequent error types). The second most frequent type of error is naturally a serious problem: **lack of clarity**, incoherence, or nonsensical expressions. **Wrong register**, the third most frequent error type, is not a serious error here, in the sense that it refers mainly to contraction and speech traits that are not considered right in formal writing. **Faulty noun spelling**, the fourth most frequent error type, is not often a grave problem, but it evidences an important linguistic area that has not been fully mastered by the learner at this level, noun morphology. The fifth and sixth most frequent error categories in the essays studied, **wrong words class** and **wrong pronoun**, are important faults, since using a word instead of another (wrong word class) or using a wrong pronoun affect meaning and sense directly. Pronouns are then, after nouns, one of the most problematic speech parts for the students considered in our study.

Over included capitalization, which occupies the seventh place in the top ten error frequency, is not always a severe fault. However, it can be serious in some occasions, as it

was mentioned before. **Verbosity/wordiness** is seldom a severe problem, but it often indicates lack of clarity and it can also be a strategy of students who want “to fill in” words in order to comply with the required extension of the passage. **Verb inflection of person** is usually deemed an important error at this level; many professors consider subject-verb concordance a topic largely studied from the very beginning EFL learning stages. However, very often, the lack or over inclusion of the third person marker morpheme, -(e)s, does not really affect badly the comprehension of the ideas. **Verb spelling** and **wrong punctuation**, are usually non-serious errors. Last in the top ten most frequent error types is **Noun Derivation**, which is a serious morphological problem, although it is not grave in the sense that it does not necessarily affect meaning.

Other salient problems in the sample are Number (in nouns -13th most frequent fault-, verb person, and adjectives). Alongside with noun and pronoun, verb is one of the most problematic speech parts for the learners in our study: inflection of person, tense, aspect, mood, complementation, and voice.

Overall, it is necessary to remark that errors cannot be considered as isolated. First, their scope or effect is not always purely local, and, second, they can combine their effects; for instance, wrong punctuation can affect clarity, wrong capitalization can affect meaning (by making a common noun proper), faulty spelling can change a word into another (e.g., the missing *-t* in *thought*, which turns it into *though*), etc. We must remember that language is not only grammar or structure, it is a structural-functional entity with links to individual and social factors.

7.4.4. Errors in the description axis

In the second dimension of our bidimensional error analysis system, the axis constituted by descriptive criteria, six general categories were established: lack (something misses), overinclusion (something is extra), wrong form (problems of spelling and morphology: inflection and derivation), wrong position (misplacement), and incorrect complementation. In all the three subsets of essays, all the six descriptive types are present.

See graphs 31, 32 and 33 for the low-scored essays, graphs 68, 69 and 70 for the medium-scored essays, and graphs 104 and 105 for the high-scored essays.

In the first two subgroups, low- and medium-scored essays, the six error modes present the same sequence of frequency: Choice, Lack, Overinclusion, Inflection, Spelling, Derivation, Position, and Complementation. In the last group, the high-scored essays, the frequency rank of the descriptive classification of errors varies a bit: like in the other two groups Choice, Lack, and Overinclusion keep the first three places, and Derivation, Position, and Complementation keep the last three positions; what changes are positions four and five: Spelling is fourth and Inflection is fifth (chart 49). When totalized (chart 50), the final sequence of frequency is **Choice** (229 errors), **Lack** (184), **Overinclusion** (121), **Inflection** (98), **Spelling** (92), **Derivation** (38), **Position** (16), and **Complementation** (7).

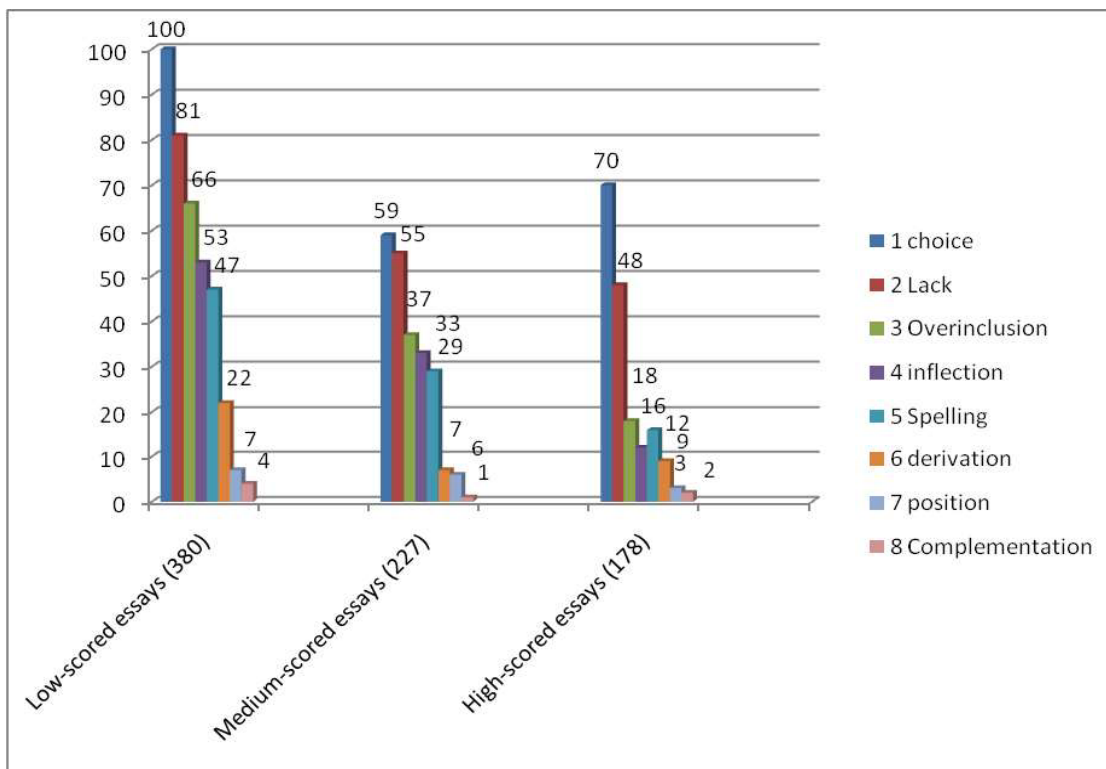
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Low-scored essays (380)	choice 100,	lack 81,	Over inclusion 66,	inflection 53,	spelling 47,	derivation 22,	position 7,	Complementation 4
Medium-scored essays (227)	Choice 59,	lack 55,	Over inclusion 37,	inflection 33,	spelling 29,	derivation 7,	position 6,	Complementation 1
High-scored essays (178)	Choice 70	lack 48	Over inclusion 18	spelling 16	inflection 12	derivation 9	position 3	Complementation 2
TOTAL	229	184	121			38	16	7

Chart 49. Error modes frequency, detailed.

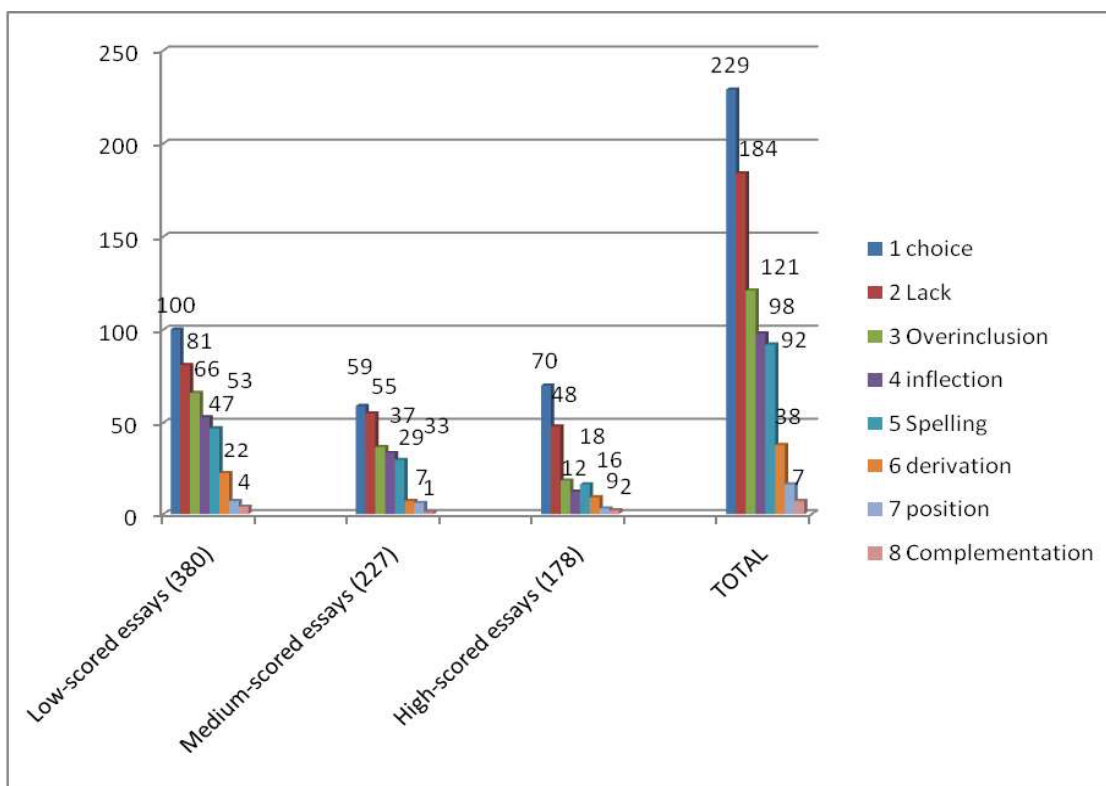
	1 choice	2 Lack	3 Over inclusion	4 inflection	5 Spelling	6 derivation	7 position	8 Complementation
Low-scored essays (380)	100	81	66	53	47	22	7	4
Medium-scored essays (227)	59	55	37	33	29	7	6	1
High-scored essays (178)	70	48	18	12	16	9	3	2
TOTAL	229	184	121	98	92	38	16	7

Chart 50. Error modes frequency, detailed and adjusted.

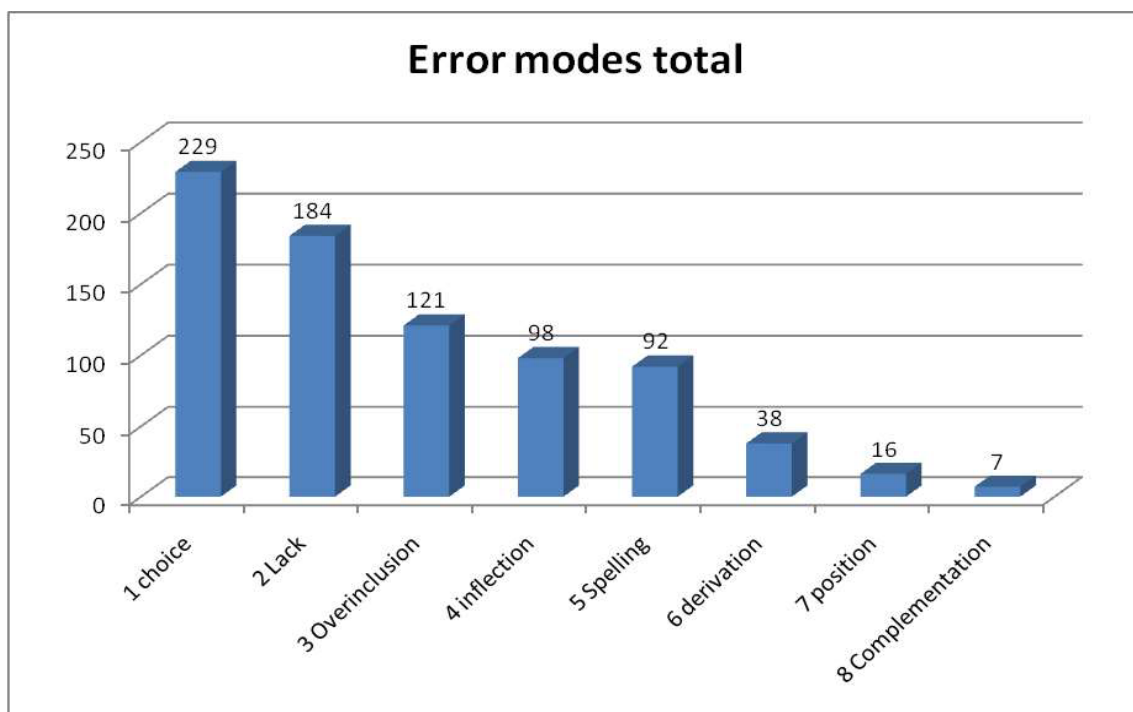
Graphs 115 and 116 illustrate the details given in charts 49 and 50. Graph 117 shows the total results for the error modes or descriptive categories. Lack, the second most frequent error mode is almost always a serious error. Wrong Choice, the first, though not always serious, usually adds confusion to the text and affects content clarity. The other error modes -Overinclusion, Inflection, Spelling, Derivation, Position, and Complementation- can be considered as usually non-serious faults, except when they affect meaning or content clarity. However, this judgement is not completely fair when made in general; particular cases must be analyzed to deem the gravity of errors. In addition, we cannot forget that errors can “combine” their effect or affect not only local areas of a text (a single word, for instance) but they can also have a more general scope in some moments (for instance, when lack of punctuation affects clarity or a wrong word changes the meaning in a dramatic way).



Graph 115. Error modes detailed, frequency by subsets.



Graph 116. Error modes detailed, frequency by subsets and against the total.



Graph 117. Error modes total.

A fairly different view comes up when we group together the three error types that correspond to Wrong Form: Spelling, Inflection and Derivation⁴⁰. Wrong form, naturally, climbs positions in the frequency rank, becoming the second most frequent error mode, separated from the first –Choice- by only one instance (chart 51 and graphs 118 and 119). “Naturally” means here that the fact that Wrong Form covers more subcategories than the other error descriptive modes gives it a greater probability of scoring higher in the frequency of errors. Position and complementation problems are really minor problems. It seems that more teaching work should be done on morphology, among other aspects.

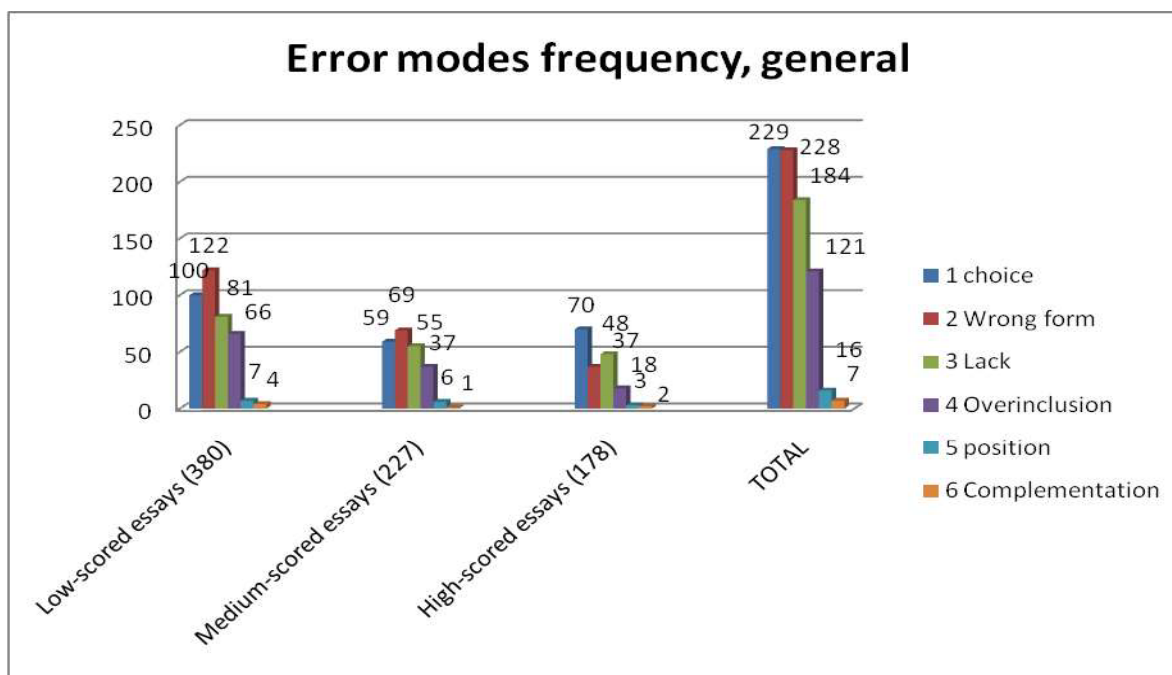
⁴⁰

Let us remember that the first is an Orthography problem, while the last two are Morphology faults.

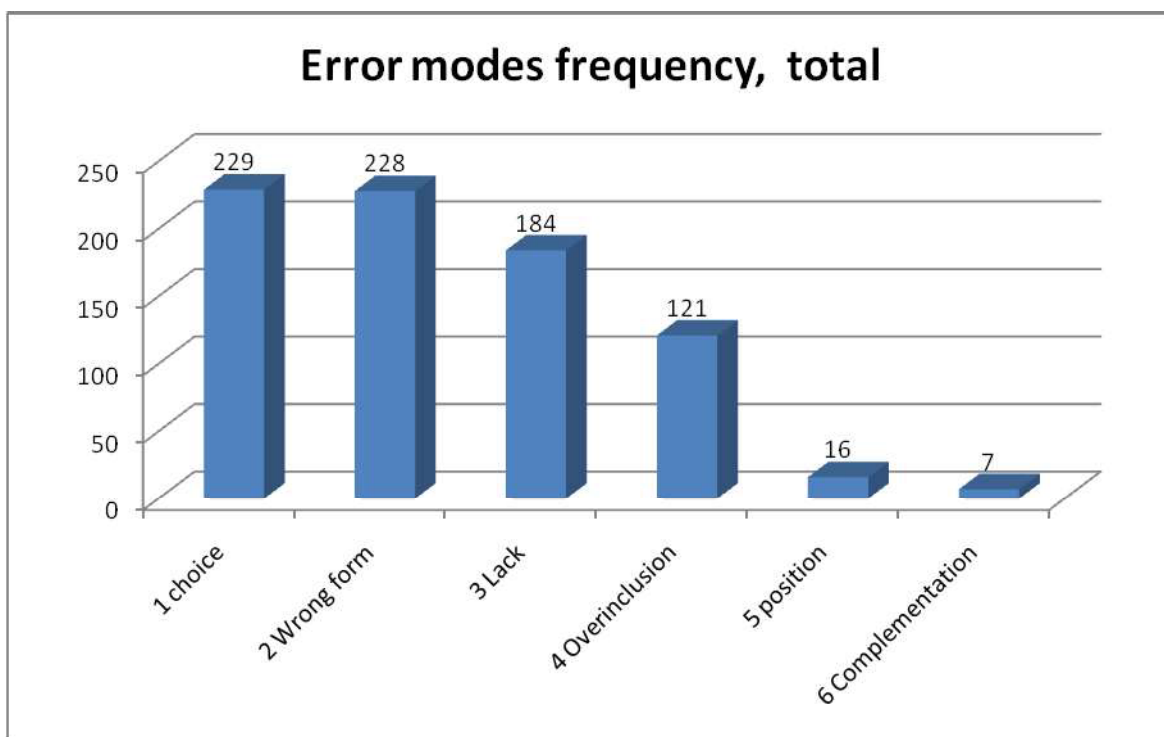
Error mode	1 Choice	2 Wrong form	3 Lack	4 Over inclusion	5 Position	6 Complementation
Low-scored essays (380)	100	122	81	66	7	4
Medium-scored essays (227)	59	69	55	37	6	1
High-scored essays (178)	70	37	48	18	3	2
TOTAL	229	228	184	121	16	7

Chart 51. Error modes frequency, general.

In terms of figures, **Choice** with 229 instances out of the 785 total errors in the sample covers 29.2% of them almost the same of **Wrong Form**, which covers 29% (228 instances). **Lack**, with 184 occurrences, has 23.4%. **Overinclusion**, the fourth most frequent error mode covers 15.4% (121 errors). The remaining error categories are really minor: **Position** errors occur only 16 times, which is only 2% of the total; **Complementation** is just 0.9% of the sample (only 7 errors).



Graph 118. Error modes frequency, general.



Graph 119. Error modes frequency, total.

Further necessary detail is provided in chart 52. It is the same information presented in chart 48, organized now according to the second dimension of our analysis system, descriptive categories. The short annotation is the abbreviation used in the tagging system; the long annotation is the full name of the error category, type, or mode; instances refer, of course, to the number of errors for each error category, and Category is the error descriptive type, for this particular chart. The first column is just the consecutive number. The specific error types in each of the descriptive categories can be appreciated in this chart, especially in the summary provided in the rows highlighted in yellow, which list briefly the main linguistic error categories within each error mode or descriptive type. Furthermore, in this chart Wrong Form can be seen not only in a global, general way, but in the specific errors occurring in each of the subtypes it comprises (rows highlighted in orange).

	Short Annotation	Long Annotation	Instances	Category
1	DRWC	Discourse error, Wrong Register	43	Choice
2	VWordClass	Vocabulary error, Wrong Word Class	39	Choice
3	GPronWC	Grammar error, Speech part, Wrong Pronoun	29	Choice
4	MPunctWC	Mechanics error, Wrong Punctuation	26	Choice
5	GCWC	Grammar error, Speech part, Wrong Conjunction	13	Choice
6	GVWCT	Grammar error, SpeechPart, Verb, WrongTense	13	Choice
7	GPrepWC	Grammar error, Speech part, wrong Preposition	12	Choice
8	WrongVerb	Grammar error, SpeechPart, Verb, Wrong Choice	12	Choice
9	GVWCM	Grammar error, Speech part, Verb, Wrong Mood	9	Choice
10	L1/3L	Style/Pragmatics error, Spanish (L1)/French(L3)-like	9	Choice
11	GNWC	Grammar error, Speech part, Wrong Noun	7	Choice
12	GAdjWC	Grammar error, Speech part, Wrong Adjective	4	Choice
13	GVWCAux	Grammar error, Speech part, WrongAuxiliary/Modal	4	Choice
14	GAdvWC	Grammar error, Speech part, Wrong Adverb	3	Choice
15	GVWCV	Grammar error, Speech part, Verb, wrong voice	2	Choice
16	CodeS	Style/Pragmatics error, Code Switching	1	Choice
17	GAWC	Grammar error, Speech part, Wrong Article	1	Choice
18	GNWCUC	Grammar error, Speech part, Noun, Wrong Countable/Uncountable	1	Choice
19	VCogn	Vocabulary error, Cognate	1	Choice
<i>CHOICE: Register, Word class, punctuation, words, verb tense-mood-voice, style (L1/L3-like), auxiliary/modal, code switching, cognate</i>			229	CHOICE
20	GV(WFMorph)IPers	Grammar error, Speech part, Verb, WrongForm, Morphology, Inflection of Person. Problem of Subject-Verb concordance	27	Inflection
21	GN(WFMorph)INum	Grammar error, Speech part, Noun, Wrong Form, Morphology, Inflection of Number	22	Inflection

22	GVAsp	Grammar error, Speech part, Verb, Wrong Form, Morphology, Inflection of Aspect, -ing or PastParticiple form	12	Inflection
23	GV(WFMorph)IM	Grammar error, Speech part, Verb, WrongForm, Morphology, Inflection of Mood (indicative, imperative, subjunctive,conditional)	11	Inflection
24	GV(WFMorph)IV	Grammar error, Speech part, Verb, Wrong Form, Morphology, Inflection of Voice	7	Inflection
25	GAdj(WFMorph)XINum	Grammar error, Speech part, Adjective, Wrong Form, Morphology, Infection, Extra morpheme of Number	5	Inflection
26	GAdj(WFMorph)IDeg	Grammar error, Speech part, Adjective, Wrong Form, Morphology, Comparative/Superlative	5	Inflection
27	GN(WFMorph)I)NumUC	Grammar error, Speech part, Noun, Wrong form, Morphology, Wrong Inflection of Number of Countable/Uncountable	4	Inflection
28	GN(WFMorph)ICGenNoNo	Grammar error, Speech part, Noun,Wrong Form, Morphology, Inflection of Case, Genitive, Noun+Noun/NounOfNoun	3	Inflection
29	GV(WFMorph)IAux	Grammar error, Speech part, Verb, WrongForm, Morphology, Auxiliary/Modal	2	Inflection
Inflection: verb (person, aspect, mood, and voice), noun (number, number of countable/uncountable, and genitive case), and adjective (extra number, comparative/superlative degree)			98	INFLECTION
30	GN(WF)Spel	Grammar error, Speech part, Noun, Wrong form, Spelling	42	Spelling
31	GV(WF)Spel	Grammar error, SpeechPart, Verb, Spelling/Orthography	26	Spelling
32	GAdjWFSpel	Grammar error, Speech part, Adjective, Wrong Form, Spelling	13	Spelling
33	GCWFSpel	Grammar error, Speech part, Conjunction, Wrong Form, Spelling	3	Spelling
34	GP(WF)Spel	Grammar error, Speech part, Preposition, Wrong Form, Spelling	3	Spelling
35	GAdvWFSpel	Grammar error, Speech part, Adverb, Wrong Form, Spelling	2	Spelling
36	GIndefAWFSpel	Grammar error, Speech part, Indefinite Article, Wrong form, Spelling	2	Spelling
37	GPronWFSpel	Grammar error, Speech part,	1	Spelling

		Pronoun, Wrong Form, Spelling		
Spelling: nouns, verbs, adjectives, conjunctions, prepositions, adverbs, indefinite article, and pronoun			92	SPELLING
38	GN(WFMorph)D	Grammar error, Speech part, Noun, WrongForm, Morphology, Derivation	22	Derivation
39	GV(WFMorph)D	Grammar error, SpeechPart, Verb Form, wrong derivation	9	Derivation
40	GAdj(WFMorph)D	Grammar error, Speech part, Adjective, Wrong Form, Morphology, Derivation	5	Derivation
41	GAdv(WFMorph)D	Grammar error, Speech part, Adverb, Wrong Form, Morphology, Wrong Derivation	2	Derivation
Derivation: nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs.			38	DERIVATION
<i>WRONG FORM: Inflection of verbs, nouns and adjective.</i>			228	WRONG FORM
42	MPunctMis	Mechanics error, Punctuation, Missing	59	Lack
43	SUncl	Style/Pragmatics error, Unclear/incoherent/incomprehensible	48	Lack
44	SVag	Style/Pragmatics error, Vagueness/ambiguity/lack of precision	21	Lack
45	GPronMis	Grammar error, Speech part, Pronoun, Missing	11	Lack
46	GPMis	Grammar error, Speech part, Preposition, Missing	10	Lack
47	GVAuxMis	Grammar error, Speech part, Auxiliary Verb, Missing	10	Lack
48	MCapMis	Mechanics error, Capitalization, Missing	10	Lack
49	GDefAMis	Grammar error, Speech part, Definite Article, Missing	4	Lack
50	GIndefAMis	Grammar error, Speech part, Indefinite Article, Missing	3	Lack
51	GVMis	Grammar error: Speech part, Verb, Missing	3	Lack
52	GAdvMis	Grammar error, Speech part, Adverb, Missing	2	Lack
53	SFrag	Style/Pragmatics error, Fragment (incomplete sentence/idea)	2	Lack
54	GCMis	Grammar error, Speech part, Conjunction, Missing	1	Lack
<i>LACK: Punctuation, clarity, precision, speech parts, capitalization, fragments.</i>			184	LACK

55	MCapX	Mechanics error, Capitalization, Overincluded	28	Overinclusion
56	DVerbos	Discourse error, Verbosity/Wordiness	27	Overinclusion
57	GPronX	Grammar error, Speech part, Pronoun, Overincluded	12	Overinclusion
58	PunctX	Mechanics error, Punctuation, overincluded	11	Overinclusion
59	GAdvX	Grammar error, Speech part, Adverb, Overincluded	8	Overinclusion
60	GIndefAX	Grammar error, Speech part, Indefinite Article, overincluded	8	Overinclusion
61	GDefAX	Grammar error, Speech part, Definite Article, overincluded	7	Overinclusion
62	GCX	Grammar error, Speech part, Conjunction, overincluded	6	Overinclusion
63	GPX	Grammar error, Speech part, Preposition, overincluded	5	Overinclusion
64	GVAuxX	Grammar error, Speech part, Verb, Extra Auxiliary/Modal	5	Overinclusion
65	GAdjX	Grammar error, Speech part, Adjective, overincluded	4	Overinclusion
OVERINCLUSION: Capitalization, wordiness, punctuation, speech parts.			121	OVER INCLUSION
66	GAdvWP	Grammar error, Speech part, Adverb, misplaced	5	Position
67	GPronWP	Grammar error, Speech part, Pronoun, Misplaced	5	Position
68	GNWP	Grammar error, Speech part, Misplaced Noun	3	Position
69	Verb Misplaced	Grammar error, SpeechPart, Verb, Wrong Position	2	Position
70	GVWPAux	Grammar error, Speech part, Verb, Misplaced Auxiliary/Modal	1	Position
POSITION: Adverbs, pronouns, nouns, verbs, auxiliary/modals			16	POSITION
71	Wrong VerbComplement	Grammar error, SpeechPart, Verb, Wrong Complement	5	Complement ation
72	GNCompl	Grammar error, Speech part, Wrong complement of Noun	2	Complement ation
COMPLEMENTATION: Verbs and nouns			7	Complementa tion
73	ExtraVerb	Grammar error, SpeechPart, Verb overincluded	0	Overinclusion
74	GAdjCompl	Grammar error, Speech part, Wrong Complement of Adjective	0	Complement
76	GAdjMis	Grammar error, Speech part, Adjective, Missing	0	Lack
76	GAdjWP	Grammar error, Speech part,	0	Position

		Misplaced Adjective		
77	GAdv(WFMorph)XINum	Grammar error, Speech part, Adverb, Wrong Form, Morphology, Inflection of number overincluded	0	Overinclusion
78	GAdvCompl	Grammar error, Speech part, Adverb, Wrong Complement	0	Complement ation
79	GAWP	Grammar error, Speech part, Article, misplaced	0	Position
80	GCCompl	Grammar error, Speech part, Conjunction, Wrong complement	0	Complment ation
81	GCWP	Grammar error, Speech part, Conjunction, misplaced	0	Position
82	GDefAWFSpel	Grammar error, Speech part, Definite Article, Wrong Form, Spelling	0	Spelling
83	GN(WFMorph)ICGen's	Grammar error, Speech part, Noun, Wrong Form, Morphology, Inflection of Case, Genitive, Apostrophe	0	Inflection
84	GNMis	Grammar error, Speech part, Noun, Missing	0	Lack
85	GNX	Grammar error, Speech part, Extra Noun	0	Overinclusion
86	GPWP	Grammar error, Speech part, Preposition, misplaced	0	Position
87	GV(WF)SpelAux	Grammar error, Speech part, Aux Verb, Wrong Form, Spelling	0	Spelling
88	MCapWP	Mechanics error, Capitalization, misplaced	0	Position
89	MPunctWP	Mechanics error, Punctuation, Misplaced	0	Position
90	MWFSyl	Mechanics error, Wrong Form, Syllabication	0	Form
91	W PastForm	Grammar error, SpeechPart, Verb, WrongForm,Morphology, PastTense	0	Inflection
92	PrepCompl	Grammar error, Speech part, Preposition, Complementation	0	Complement ation

Chart 52. Error modes frequency, total.

According to what can be seen about errors in the sample of essays studied, some genral interpretation can be attempted. Choice errors cover all language aspects from discourse to pragmatics, to vocabulary to mechanics to grammar. That seems a grim panorama, especially if we take into account the percentage of choice problems in the sample, which is relatively high (29.2%, 229 errors out of the total 785). Certainly, as our focus in this study is grammar, this seems to be the most problematic area; however, a more

complete analysis, one that covers the other language aspects will provide a better picture of errors. Inflection problems affect some of the most important speech parts (verbs, nouns, and adjectives) and some of those problems have a scope that goes beyond single words; for instance, wrong verb person implies a faulty subject-verb concordance, a sentence feature, and can also imply meaning in a more global sense. That is an important problem particularly if we remember that it is present in a 12.5% of the sample (98 errors in 785). Spelling, in turn, compromises almost all the speech parts, evidencing a problem that, even if is not usually serious, it is perturbing for its general nature. Derivation, again, affects some of the most important speech parts (nouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs); derivation is often a strategy used by beginners to adapt mother tongue lexical items to the target language rules. This is not necessarily a serious error, and in this sample it is not very frequent (4.8%, 38 instances of a total of 785 errors). Derivation and Inflection problems are part of Morphology faults and this, alongside Spelling, conform Wrong Form errors, which is near a third of all the errors in the studied sample of essays.

On its side, Lack also involves key language aspects from mechanics to grammar to pragmatics. Missing punctuation, clarity, precision, speech parts, capitalization, and fragments compose the Lack error mode. They are important errors often directly connected to meaning; perhaps, missing capitalization is the least severe fault in this descriptive error category. Lack is the third most frequent error type in the sample, but it is probably the one that affects the essays the most, because it hampers their readability and comprehension. Overinclusion, 15.4% of the errors in the sample, near a sixth of them, comprises wordiness and extra capitalization, punctuation, and speech parts. It usually does not affect the comprehension of a text severely and it is a feature often linked to influence of the mother tongue or, especially in the case of wordiness/verbosity not to lack of knowledge or skill or language resources but to lack of clarity in the ideas, uncertainty regarding the text structure, and/or desire to abide by the required extension for the text in the test situation. Position and complementation errors are minor faults in the sample, not because they are not important in some cases, but referring to their scarce occurrence in the sample.

To finish this general interpretation of occurring errors (classification and description) categories, it is necessary to remark that one must not forget that errors are individual and that globalizing and using averages can somehow lead to misleading generalizations, not applicable to every case in the sample. The consideration of each particular error case is necessary to assess its significance fairly.

7.4.5 Non-occurring: errors

Twenty error categories out of the 92 classification types established (21.7%) are never present in the sample studied. In the low-scored essays, there are 25 non-occurring errors (27.2%); in the medium-scored essays, 39 (42.4%) error modes do *not* occur; in the high-scored non-occurring errors are 43, that is 46.7%, almost half of them. Consistent with the level of the essays, the amount of non-occurring errors increases.

Following, the analysis regarding the classification and description axes in our analysis system is presented. It must be taken into account that -as this section refers to *non-occurring* items- the interpretation of the figures is inverse: the higher a figure of a given error category, the less times it happens.

	SHORT ANNOTATION	LONG ANNOTATION	CATEGORY
1	ExtraVerb	Grammar error, SpeechPart, Verb overincluded	Overinclusion
2	GAdjCompl	Grammar error, Speech part, Wrong Complement of Adjective	Complement
3	GAdjMis	Grammar error, Speech part, Adjective, Missing	Lack
4	GAdjWP	Grammar error, Speech part, Misplaced Adjective	Position
5	GAdv(WFMorph)XINum	Grammar error, Speech part, Adverb, Wrong Form, Morphology, Inflection of number overincluded	Overinclusion
6	GAdvCompl	Grammar error, Speech part, Adverb, Wrong Complement	Complementation
7	GAWP	Grammar error, Speech part, Article, misplaced	Position
8	GCCompl	Grammar error, Speech part, Conjunction, Wrong complement	Complmentation

9	GCWP	Grammar error, Speech part, Conjunction, misplaced	Position
10	GDefAWFSpel	Grammar error, Speech part, Definite Article, Wrong Form, Spelling	Spelling
11	GN(WFMorph)ICGen's	Grammar error, Speech part, Noun, Wrong Form, Morphology, Inflection of Case, Genitive, Apostrophe	Inflection
12	GNMis	Grammar error, Speech part, Noun, Missing	Lack
13	GNX	Grammar error, Speech part, Extra Noun	Overinclusion
14	GPWP	Grammar error, Speech part, Preposition, misplaced	Position
15	GV(WF)SpelAux	Grammar error, Speech part, Aux Verb, Wrong Form, Spelling	Spelling
16	W PastForm	Grammar error, SpeechPart, Verb, WrongForm,Morphology, PastTense	Inflection
17	PrepCompl	Grammar error, Speech part, Preposition, Complementation	Complementation
18	MCapWP	Mechanics error, Capitalization, misplaced	Position
19	MPunctWP	Mechanics error, Punctuation, Misplaced	Position
20	MWFSyl	Mechanics error, Wrong Form, Syllabication	Form

Chart 53. Non-occurring errors in the classification dimension.

Chart 53 lists the non-occurring errors organized according to the first dimension of our analysis system: linguistic classification (Long Annotation column, highlighted in yellow). Only three of the 20 types listed are non-grammatical; they are mechanics faults related to capitalization, punctuation and syllabication. The latter does not occur probably because the students' writing follows the current computer usage of not dividing words at the end of a line. The other 17 (85%) are all grammar speech part errors. This finding is also in harmony with the grammatical emphasis adopted in our study. Adverbs and adjectives seem to be the speech parts that are less problematic for the learners at this level.

	SHORT ANNOTATION	LONG ANNOTATION	CATEGORY
1	GAdjCompl	Grammar error, Speech part, Wrong Complement of Adjective	Complementation
2	GAdvCompl	Grammar error, Speech part, Adverb, Wrong Complement	Complementation
3	PrepCompl	Grammar error, Speech part, Preposition, Complementation	Complementation
4	GCCompl	Grammar error, Speech part, Conjunction, Wrong complement	Complementation

5	MWFSyl	Mechanics error, Wrong Form, Syllabication	Form
6	GN(WFMorph)ICGen's	Grammar error, Speech part, Noun, Wrong Form, Morphology, Inflection of Case, Genitive, Apostrophe	Inflection
7	W PastForm	Grammar error, SpeechPart, Verb, WrongForm, Morphology, PastTense	Inflection
8	GAdjMis	Grammar error, Speech part, Adjective, Missing	Lack
9	GNMis	Grammar error, Speech part, Noun, Missing	Lack
10	ExtraVerb	Grammar error, SpeechPart, Verb overincluded	Overinclusion
11	GAdv(WFMorph)XINum	Grammar error, Speech part, Adverb, Wrong Form, Morphology, Inflection of number overincluded	Overinclusion
12	GNX	Grammar error, Speech part, Extra Noun	Overinclusion
13	GAdjWP	Grammar error, Speech part, Misplaced Adjective	Position
14	GAWP	Grammar error, Speech part, Article, misplaced	Position
15	GCWP	Grammar error, Speech part, Conjunction, misplaced	Position
16	GPWP	Grammar error, Speech part, Preposition, misplaced	Position
17	MCapWP	Mechanics error, Capitalization, misplaced	Position
18	MPunctWP	Mechanics error, Punctuation, Misplaced	Position
19	GDefAWFSpel	Grammar error, Speech part, Definite Article, Wrong Form, Spelling	Spelling
20	GV(WF)SpelAux	Grammar error, Speech part, Aux Verb, Wrong Form, Spelling	Spelling

Chart 54. Non-occurring errors in the description dimension.

Chart 54 lists the non-occurring errors organized according to the second dimension of our analysis system: descriptive types (category column, highlighted in yellow). All the six descriptive error modes are present in the non-occurring list. The least frequent error descriptive type is **Position** (six types); there are no misplaced adjectives, articles, conjunctions, or prepositions, nor capitalization or punctuation. It is 30% of the non-occurring errors. **Complementation** in the second least frequent error mode, (four types, 20%); adjectives, adverbs, prepositions, and conjunctions have no faulty complements. The third less frequent descriptive error type is **Overinclusion**; it includes three error types (15%): there are no extra verbs or nouns, nor extra number in adverbs. **Inflection** has only two non-occurring types: noun genitive apostrophe and verb past tense.

Lack as well has only two non-occurring types: no missing nouns or adjectives. It is the same for **Spelling**: definite articles and auxiliary verbs do not present spelling flaws.

The immediate general interpretation in relation to non-occurring errors could be that they constitute the “safe” zone, the area in which errors do not occur at this intermediate proficiency level. Of course a bigger study both in population and time could confirm this hypothesis. A clear determination of the typical errors in the various proficiency levels is necessary for a clear determination of the levels themselves, besides casting light on learning stages and strategies, and language aspects that have already been mastered or are still more or less problematic for the learners. However, it might be first necessary to revise the error classification itself.

8. CONCLUSIONS

This research report started with three quotes that summarize the general vision we have about errors. First, flaws are a matter of life; they are unavoidable. They occur at any moment, especially when you are not competent enough or are still learning. Even native speakers commit errors in their native language; it is usual for a foreign language learner to commit faults, some of them due to (complete or partial) lack of knowledge or to slips. Second, errors are an indication of the student's knowledge, assumptions, and strategies regarding the target language. Flaws in language production reflect both what the learner knows and what he does not know; they also indicate options the student picks in relation to the selection of language elements and options the student chooses to make the language work. The selection is made within what the learner knows of what the language (*the target language or his L1, or even another L2*) offers and –this is very important- within what the student thinks that can work. The former -what the learner thinks the language offers-, can be right or wrong; in this zone the student just picks what he considers adequate. The latter is intent to make things work; it is an area of experimentation.

Third, both from the positive *and the negative* results of those experiments the learner learns, i.e., identifies what is right and what is wrong, what to do and what not to do, what to use and what not. Much of that learning is not conscious, for the feedback in actual ongoing communication is not always explicit in the identification of errors. Thus, the learner has to go on experimenting in order to progressively adjust his performance to what is accepted in the target language. Here, the role of feedback from interlocutors in actual communicative intercourse and from teachers in formal learning situations is central, for errors –unlike mistakes- can not be identified by the learner himself; they can only be reached from the outside, either from an interlocutor who gives any sign of problem in the communication or an overt suggestion or correction so as to clarify or eliminate the problem, or from a teacher who provides adequate feedback concerning those errors.

We achieved the aims we had established for this study: the most persistent errors present in written argumentative essays by students of the 7th semester of the B.A. in Foreign Languages at U. del Valle (7BAFLUV) were recognized and categorized and then

the most frequent errors were identified. For that, a bidimensional error analysis system was established. Classification and description were the two axes of our analysis; etiology or analysis of causes was set aside here due to the high degree of subjectivity involved in it, for instance when determining if an error is intra- or inter-lingual. Six classification categories constitute the first axis (Grammar, Vocabulary, Mechanics, Rhetoric/Text Structure, Discourse, and Style/Pragmatics); of them, mainly the first one, corresponding to single speech parts was taken into account for our analysis. The second axis included six description criteria (Omission -missing elements-, Overinclusion -extra elements-, Wrong Form (Morphology subdivided into inflection and derivation) and Orthography, Wrong Choice -election-, Wrong Position -misplacement- and Complementation). Of course, this classification and description system can be modified, either by simplifying, by complementing, or by correcting it.

The most frequent problems found in the sample of essays studied belong to all the description categories and to most of the error classification types we established. The most frequent errors do not have a really high frequency and the subsequent flaws follow a gradual descending pattern of more types of errors occurring fewer times each. Most errors are located in the lower frequency ranks. First, this naturally means that, most likely, at this intermediate level most of the potentially problematic areas of the target language have already been learnt to a good extent by the learners, but they are still consolidating them. Second, many of those errors are not intrinsically serious, but their association often results in important text problems regarding both form and content. It is mainly such combined effect of errors that affects mostly the perception of a reader and a rater of those essays. Naturally, a more detailed study focusing on the gravity of errors is necessary. For us, Lack is probably the most important problem, for it commonly affects content directly and it points at what the learner most likely does not have⁴¹; unlike the other faults, lack can represent what has not been acquired yet or -at least from the eyes of the reader- it is clearly negative evidence, which also applies to the case of avoidance.

⁴¹ The problem of avoidance persists.

Other error modes might represent more positive degrees of learning in terms of communication strategies and linguistic areas in which the learner is manipulating elements generally *within* the new language, either by choosing (no matter if it is wrongly), over including, (mis)placing, or maneuvering with words form. Cognates, and L1/L3-likeness can also sometimes be considered as part of experimental manipulation of language elements, often in the form of assimilation to already known forms, both within the mother language and within the target language or another L2. However, cognates and L1/L3-likeness can also be a signal of lack, a “withdrawal” to linguistic forms other than the ones in the target language. Certainly, it is necessary to include the writers in an error study that seeks to go deeper into causal explanations.

It is remarkable that some error categories are in fact linked to high levels of *oral* proficiency that interferes with *written formality*. In our sample, that happens especially in the high-scored essays. It is the case of Wrong Register, usually referred to contractions and stylistic forms that correspond to speech rather than to formal writing; although they are labeled as (formal) errors in our analysis, they evidence a good level of oral proficiency of the writers, who display their informality in the texts. A study that includes the text’s author is necessary to account for those aspects. It seems that, in our EFL context, the higher levels of proficiency are attained by students in contact with informal sources, like friends who have a good mastery of the target language, native speakers, TV, music, video games, and the Internet. Yet, it is necessary that the 7BAFLUV students (FL teachers-to-be) who wrote the essays in the sample studied here differentiate and use appropriately formal and informal registers when adequate.

The facts are related to factors like English being a foreign and not a second language in Colombia and a prevalent background of grammar-centered methods in our secondary schools: first, that it is not a single error or a few types of errors what results from the error analysis of the texts but a joint, mass effect of many of them (extension) and, second, that it is not frequency but the impact on meaning/sense or clarity of ideas what counts more (depth). What each essay and each group of texts offers here is a complex area of error analysis. A ranking of errors regarding their importance or gravity could be useful to establish priorities for the solution of this complexity. A study combining quantitative

and qualitative analysis could tackle the aspect of seriousness of errors and cross that information with the levels of occurrence of errors.

Another broad inference that is easily drawn from the errors found in the essays studied here is that these students need a higher degree of awareness when writing: very probably, revision of what they write *while* they write it and when they finish their texts would allow them identify and correct many mistakes, that can be caused, for instance, by simple lack of attention, in turn caused by certain time pressure –one of the test conditions in which the studied essays were written-. One consequence of this is that the BAFLUV should revise its teaching of writing, regarding revision and edition, among others.

The connection between errors and the grade given to the compositions is clear. Nevertheless, it is interesting to note that such relationship is not always direct, as it was the case in the medium-scored essays of our sample, where, in fact, the link errors-score was inverse: the fewer the errors, the lower the score. It was the case for some low-scored essays, too. For us, it is evident that other criteria than only errors are part of the rating of any composition, like considerations regarding the extension of the text, its global structure, the content and development of ideas, etc. This leads to an issue that should be considered in a more comprehensive study: the evaluation criteria. However, we must remind the reader that we did not take into account any consideration apart from the texts themselves as final products. Factors associated to errors, like the authors, the writing process, the test conditions and the evaluators, were disregarded in our study. Thus, the reliability of the evaluation is another aspect that a more qualitative study could address.

In general, it can be said that the learners in our study still have to further improve their formation in terms of the writing process and the various aspects of language regarding not only grammar and vocabulary, but also form, meaning and usage. It is true that they are still developing their foreign language, but their proficiency level in some cases does not correspond to an intermediate stage of proficiency. The BAFLUV program must refine evaluation in each grade or level in order to make sure the students do not pass with a proficiency that does not correspond to the required level. Clearer evaluation criteria might be useful in that respect. For the proficiency examination –in which the argumentative essays studied here were written, a double-blind evaluation system plus a systematic analysis of texts by means of not only error analysis, plus texts statistics, word

clouds, and text linguistics might be useful for that purpose. Our error tagging system or any other error analysis system should be more widely used in order to account for the flaws in the students' essays, to provide them with specific feedback, and to establish priority areas for the teaching of writing and language proficiency in general.

To finish, some considerations about error analysis systems are necessary. Despite the subjectivity involved in etiological considerations of errors, it is necessary to include that aspect in a further study, especially if, as language teachers, we are interested in devising teaching strategies that address the most important causal factors leading to impaired or faulty learning in our students. In this study, we did not go much beyond description and we considered only two of the dimensions, focusing on lexico-grammatical faults. Other grammatical aspects should be taken into account as well for a more complete error analysis: errors occur not only at single-word speech level but at the phrasal, clausal and sentential levels, too. In relation to the levels beyond the sentence, i.e. paragraphs and whole texts, they can be covered by Rhetoric/Text structure. The categories in the classification axis could be reduced if Discourse and Style/Pragmatics are unified into a single one than can be called Pragmatics. Ours was a predominantly quantitative analysis; a more complete reflection about the seriousness of errors can be undertaken -beyond mere counting- under the light of specific situations evidenced in the corpus of errors.

Despite the limitations of our analysis system, we would like to highlight that it constitutes a first contribution to an area that has not been studied much in our particular academic setting. One advantage of our bidimensional analysis is that it leaves space for a further refinement of a more comprehensive error analysis system: rhetoric, pragmatics, discourse, and supra-sentential levels can be included in the template we propose.

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APPENDIX

ERROR ANALYSIS TEMPLATE

TYPE		DESCRIPTION AXIS							
		Lack	Over inclusion	Wrong Form			Choice	Position	Complement-ation
				Inflection	Derivation	Spelling			
C L A S S I F I C A T I O N A X I S	Grammar								
	Vocabulary								
	Style / Pragmatics								
	Rhetoric / Text Structure								
	Discourse								
	Mechanics								