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MITIGATING LANGUAGE TRANSFER ERRORS ON ENGLISH WRITING SKILLS AMONG STUDENTS IN MAHAMA REFUGEE CAMP SECONDARY SCHOOLS-IN RWANDA

By

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Kigali, September, 2024

DECLARATION

I NSENGIMANA Innocent hereby affirm that this dissertation is truly the result of my own effort and where the contribution of others has been replicated, due acknowledgement has been made. This dissertation has never been submitted for any award to any institution or university.

Date…23rd September 2024

Signature…  ….

NSENGIMANA Innocent

APPROVAL

We acknowledge that this research entitled: “Mitigating language transfer errors on English writing skills among students in Mahama refugee camp secondary schools-in Rwanda” is the original work of NSENGIMANA Innocent and has been done under our guidance and supervision.

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my parents, sisters and brothers as well as beloved friends and relatives.

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the mitigation of language transfer errors affecting English writing proficiency among students at Mahama Refugee Camp secondary schools in Rwanda. Especially, this dissertation investigate the language transfer errors that hinder writing proficiency in English language learning, to examine the extent to which language transfer impact negatively on leaners writing skills in English learning and to proposed effective strategies and interventions for mitigating language transfer errors on leaners writing skills in English. The current research is built on the Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis theory (Lado, 1957) and Inter-language Theory (Selinker, 1972). These theories guided the study to achieving the study objectives. A mixed research design was employed, combining qualitative and quantitative methods. The study population comprised 169 respondents, including school staff and students from named schools B, C and D and sample size of 152 respondents were drawn from the target population. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with school teachers, and questionnaires were designed for students to answer in essay form. The findings revealed that students primarily transferred from Kiswahili, Kinyarwanda, and Kirundi to English, with lesser transfers from French and Lingala; transfers made in English from different languages of Mahama Refugee Camp secondary schools were as follows: Kinyarwanda (30.31%), Kiswahili (39.38%), Kirundi (20.08%), French (6.56%), and Lingala (3.67%). The research at Mahama Refugee Camp secondary schools highlights significant language transfer errors that hinder writing proficiency in English among students. Language transfer errors, such as grammar and syntax interference, significantly impact English language (L2) writing proficiency. This study identifies specific errors, such as incorrect verb tenses and subject-verb agreement, which stem from transferring grammatical rules from learners' native languages to English. Language transfer challenges writing proficiency by introducing errors in direct translation, incorrect grammar application, vocabulary misuse, and overgeneralization of rules. Proposed effective strategies to mitigate language transfer errors include focused grammar instruction, contrastive analysis, error correction, and communicative practice. As a recommendation the government should provide support for professional development programs for teachers focused on addressing language transfer errors in English language writing; teachers should provide opportunities for students to read extensively in the English language to help them internalize correct language patterns.

Key words: *Language transfer, English writing skills.*

LIST OF SYMBOLS AND ACRONYMS

%: Percentage

CAH: Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis

EAC: East African Community

EFL: English as a Foreign Language

G.S: Groupe Scolaire

IT: Interlanguage Theory

L1: Native Language / First Language

L2: Target Language / English language

LOI: Language of Instruction

N: Population size

S5: Senior Five (equivalent to Grade 11)

S6: Senior Six (equivalent to Grade 12)

SLA: English language Acquisition

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CHAPTER ONE: GENERAL INTRODUCTION

This chapter describes the language transfer and gives details on the study background, proof (justification), the problem statement, questions and research objectives of the study. The first chapter again focus on the significance and the scope of the study as well as research structure.

1.1 Background of the study:

English langue has become more dominant in international communication and plays a significant role in all parts of the world today**.** People who spoke English in 2023 were around 1.5 billion worldwide including native speakers as well as those who use English as a second or foreign language. In Africa, around 130 million people speak English. The importance of English for Africans lies in the opportunities it provides across various aspects of life, including education, business, and labor markets (British Council, 2020).

Writing is one of the most popular ways of expressing emotions and thoughts. According to Lampung et al. (2015), through writing, people can take time to express their emotions clearly. Writing is important because it's used extensively in higher education and in the workplace. If students do not know how to express themselves in writing, they will not be able to communicate well with teachers, employers, peers, or just about anyone else. According to Klimova (2012), much of professional communication is done in writing proposals, memos, reports, applications, preliminary interviews, e-mails, and more are part of the daily life of a college student or successful graduate. Yet, students of all levels face many problems while writing any task due to different reasons. Lack of proficiency in the language, large classes, unqualified teachers, unmotivated novices, lack of resources became the part of the etiology.

Globally, English helps people in communication and information access to career progress and personal development. It also allows them to enjoy and preserve their linguistic and cultural identities. Despite the significance of English, there is still a problem in English writing skills. Globally, English writing skills is a challenge for students while learning the English language because students are influenced by mother tongue. According to Sersen (2011) stated that Chinese students are affected by their mother tongue while learning English as second languge. Chinese students struggle with English grammar rules, such as verb tense usage or word order, which differ significantly from Chinese grammar.

For example, in Chinese, verb tenses are often indicated through context rather than verb conjugations that are clear. This could lead to errors in tense or word order when writing in English.

According to Lampung et al. (2015) in Bengali where English widely is taught in schools as English language, students believe that grammatical errors hinder their writing performance more than any other

problems in their English language classes. According to Alharthi (2018) stated that in Arab world , English is a bridge between national and international research circles. The students are required to master it because it helps them to be successful in academics. Thus, they are expected to communicate in it. Though English is very important worldwide as it is said, Arab word students meet difficulties in English writing skills like language difficulties in sentences and paragraph level development because Arabic and English have different grammar, syntax, and sentence structures. For example, Arabic is a right-to-left language, while English is left-to-right. This fundamental difference can pose challenges in adapting to English writing conventions.

According to De Lemios (2023) in Philippine, students in secondary school have lowest competencies in academic activities when it comes to writing in English as their foreign language due to interference of Tagalog langue (their L1). Students in this country have difficulties in English writing because of limited vocabularies'When writing in English, some students may mostly rely on Tagalog terminology, Particularly they feel more comfortable when they are communicating in their mother tongue.

This dependence may limit the vocabularies a student can utilize in their English writing.

In African where English languge is common used in communication and widely taught in schools, among English language skills, writing skill is still a challenge. According to *Letters & Examiners* (1945),stated that in Algeria, students meet difficulties when learning English especially in writing caused by the interference of L1 which is 'negative transfer' where students apply their first language structure and rules unlike languages.

According to Niyibizi, Sibomana, and Perumal (2019) stated that Rwanda is one EAC counties which has been using English as where it is chosen as medium of instruction in education. Being a member of the East African Community offers Rwanda numerous opportunities for education system, economic growth, development, trade, international relations and regional integration, ultimately contributing to its progress and prosperity.

Regardless to the importance of English, there is still challenges in English writing skills among students in Rwanda. Despite English language is crucial point in daily life of an African, we found that English writing skills is hinder of students to learn second lamguage and teachers also do not value English writing skills during English language teaching/learning. In Rwanda, English became medium of instruction and it plays effective communication in life of Rwandans especially English writing skills but writing skill is a barrier from when in Rwanda, the education system transitioned from French to English as the medium of instruction in 2008. This shift posed challenges for both students and teachers

in adjusting to a new language for teaching and learning, including writing (Rwanda Education Board, 2010).

Learning English language (L2) is a difficult and complicated process that presents unique challenges for individuals aiming to learn it because they are interfered by their L1. Therefore, L1 interference has been replaced by language transfer. Transfer can occur at all levels: pronunciation, vocabulary, grammar and discourse. According to Shinta (2021) the term "language transfer" in language learning often describes how a person's first language affects their ability to pick up an English language. The transfer manifests in transferring of vocabulary, grammatical rules, pronunciation patterns, and other elements from the first language to the second.

The influence of native language on SLA can be divided into two kinds: positive errors and negative errors(Chen, 2020). According to Amin, (2017) stated that there are two types of language transfer which are Positive transfer occurs when similarities between the two languages make it easier for the learner to understand and use the English language. When the two languages share many linguistics characteristics with each other, it is very helpful to students to have a good command of English language during learning process. This process of language similarities promotes English language learning which is called Positive transfer. For example, French and English are languages that share many characteristics with each other like the grammatical systems and written forms of French and English. These linguistic similarities surely help learners acquire English language.

If someone already speaks French and is learning English, they may experience positive transfer because of the similarities between the two languages they share. In the field of writing, prelim- nary studies indicate that transferability of English writing skills requires a similar threshold of English language grammatical competence as reported in the reading research(Berman, 1994).

In this study, our focus point is negative transfer which hinder English language learning. Negative transfer refers to that the knowledge and thinking habits of native language seriously affect and hinder people's learning of English language.

Many scholars believe that, in the process of SLA, under the influence of native language, students often have errors at all levels, such as pronunciation, vocabulary, syntax, writing compositions, etc(Chen, 2020). Writing is considered as one of the main pillars of mastering the English language.

The scholars have shown that there is still a problem in English writing where students have low writing proficiency and inefficient academic achievement. An example, if a French student of L1 is learning acquiring L2, a leaner tends to make mistakes in adjectives order where adjective follow a noun because both English and French have some different linguistics features. Most of foreign language student’s

errors are due to “the negative transfer” that happens when the writer transfer items or certain structures that are not common in both languages.

This study explores the field of English language acquisition, concentrating on the area of writing skill and the strategies and methods relate English writing skills to lessen the language transfer errors on English writing skills among students in Mahama refugee camp in Kirehe in order to improve competence and performance in English writing skills. Over the years, a lot of study has focused on English language acquisition since the ability to communicate successfully in English language is becoming more and more crucial in our globally interconnected society. Writing proficiency is a crucial component of English language competency because it's often a sign of success in the classroom and at work.

1.2 Problem Statement

Numerous studies have explored the impact of negative transfer on English writing skills, emphasizing both positive and negative effects (Brown & Lee, 2015). However, a significant research gap exists in effective strategies and techniques to mitigate these errors, particularly within specific contexts such as refugee camps. Studies have documented the extent of these issues: Guo et al. (2014) found that 26.8% of errors among Chinese students were related to singular and plural forms, 30.2% to sentence cohesion, and 19.6% to predicate verbs. Na & Hipertensiva (n.d.) reported that 38.5% of grammatical errors among Indonesian learners were due to incorrect verb-tense forms. Similarly, Kazazoğlu (2020) noted that Turkish students made significant errors in articles (18.82%), prepositions (17.65%), and tenses (11.76%), while Arabic students struggled with capitalization (16.19%) and punctuation (15.06%).

In Rwanda, Ndamba (2013) highlighted that 65% of students faced difficulties with English writing due to vocabulary limitations in Kinyarwanda, and 58% struggled with translating complex concepts from Kinyarwanda to English. Despite these findings, there remains a notable gap in research addressing specific strategies to mitigate these transfer errors and improve writing proficiency. This study aims to fill this gap by investigating the challenges faced by students in Mahama Refugee Camp, Rwanda, and proposing targeted interventions. Effective strategies to address these issues could significantly enhance English writing skills among students, informing policymakers and educators about the needs of English learners and leading to more tailored and effective teaching approaches.

1.3 Research objective

1.3.1 General objective

This overall aim of this study is to investigate the language transfer errors and how they affect the English writing skills among learners.

1.3.2 Specific Objectives

i. To investigate the language transfer errors that hinder writing skills proficiency in English language learning.
ii. To examine the extent to which language transfer impact negatively on leaners writing skills in English learning.
iii. To identify effective strategies and interventions for mitigating language transfer errors on leaners writing skills in English.

1.4 Research questions

To meet the research objectives, below questions guided my research:

i. What specific linguistic features of learners' native languages negatively affect their writing proficiency in acquiring L2?
ii. How language transfer affects writing proficiency in English language learning?
iii. What are the most effective strategies and interventions for mitigating language transfer errors on English writing skills among students learning English as second language?

1.5 The significant of the study

The findings of this study are significant for various stakeholders, including educational policy makers, stakeholders, teachers, learners, school leaders, and the government of Rwanda. Firstly, they provide valuable insights into the best strategies and approaches for reducing the impact of language transfer on English writing among secondary students, particularly in Mahama refugee camp. By understanding these strategies, policymakers and educators can develop more effective teaching methods and materials tailored to the needs of these learners, ultimately improving their English writing proficiency.

Furthermore, the findings will be beneficial for educators and researchers working in similar contexts worldwide. By sharing successful strategies and approaches, this study can contribute to the global understanding of language transfer errors and how to address them in English language learning.

Moreover, the study's outcomes can contribute to social integration, economic growth, and academic success. Improved English writing proficiency among secondary students can enhance their ability to communicate effectively, opening up opportunities for higher education and employment. This, in turn, can contribute to Rwanda's progress towards its national education reform plans and goals.

1.6 Scope of the Study

1.6.1 Content Scope

The study focuses on mitigating the negative errors of language transfer on English writing proficiency among secondary students. It includes factors such as interference in pronunciation, grammatical errors, vocabulary transfer, language structure, overgeneralization, cultural differences, fossilization (incorrect language become a habit and cannot be easily corrected), and psychological factors.

1.6.2 Geographical Scope

The research was conducted in rural secondary schools in the Eastern province of Rwanda, specifically focused on Kirehe District. Data was collected from selected secondary schools within the Mahama Refugee Camp.

1.6.3 Time Scope

The research was conducted from November 2023 to July 2024, based on the availability of respondents and the timeline for gathering data from the field.

1.7 Study Limitations

The study's findings may not be generalizable beyond the specific geographic area of Kirehe District and the schools within the Mahama Refugee Camp. Different regions may have unique challenges and strategies related to English language learning. The study's focus on mitigating language transfer errors specifically in English writing skills may overlook other aspects of language learning and proficiency. The study's target population includes only 169 individuals from selected schools in senior five and senior six. This sample size may not represent the entire population of students affected by language transfer in the region. The study's findings may have limited impact beyond the context of secondary schools in the Mahama Refugee Camp, potentially limiting their applicability to other educational settings or regions.

1.8 The structure of the study

The research was structured into five main chapters, with each chapter containing sub-chapters. The main chapters were structured as follows: Chapter one introduced the study, including the problem statement, study objectives, and questions. It also discussed the significance of the study, outlined the limitations, specified the scope, and detailed the organization of the research.

Chapter two provided a comprehensive review of relevant literature. Chapter three focused on the research methodology to be employed. Chapter four highlighted data presentation, analysis, presentation of findings, and discussion. Lastly, chapter five covered the summary of findings, conclusion, and recommendations

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter of literature review explores the phenomena of language transfer errors on English writing among students in secondary schools. This section again examines the strategies employed to mitigate language transfer errors focus on enhancing writing proficiency in secondary schools. It discuss the theories, approaches/ methods and research findings related to English language teaching and learning, writing proficiency ability and effective strategies for improving writing proficiency development. It discuss key concepts definitions relate to the topic. Through understanding the analysis of existing literature on language transfer errors on English among students, the researcher indicate the gap in knowledge and highlights a theoretical framework for completing this research.

2.1.1 Mitigating

Mitigating refers to reducing the severity or seriousness of something, in the context of my study, mitigation is likely refers to reducing the impact of language transfer errors on students' English writing skills. Mitigation can be viewed as a weakening or downgrading that lessens the speaker's commitment to the proposition, degree of directness or indirectness of the illocution, endorsement of a social role, emotive involvement, topical salience, etc.), which constitute the system of an encounter (Ali & Salih, 2020).

2.1.2 English writing skills

Among the four skills needed to be proficient in a English language , writing skill is one of the crucial skills where most learners have difficulties in mastering and hindering the learning progress (Yee et al., 2022).English writing skills refers to the ability to effectively communicate through written language and it includes aspects such as grammar, vocabulary, sentence structure, coherence, and organization.

According to (Yee et al., 2022) stated that Writing enables a learner to develop their thinking and imaginative abilities and allows them to record their ideas. Writings enables record keeping which ensures documentation. Writing as skill unlike speaking, allows the learner to ideate and create words and sentences after due diligence. Practicing writing will help the learners to answer the questions accurately in the routine and competitive exams. It will help learners to perform well in their competitive exams and interviews.

2.1.3 Transfer and Language Transfer

According to Odlin (1989), as cited in Shinta Sari (2021), "transfer is the influence resulting from similarities and differences between the target language and any other language that has been previously (and perhaps imperfectly) acquired." Behaviorist psychologists, who first defined 'transfer' in a technical

sense, described it as the automatic, uncontrolled, and subconscious use of past learner behaviors in the attempt to produce new responses (Shinta Sari, 2021). Transfer is also known a term used in applied linguistics to refer to a process in foreign language learning whereby learners carry over what they already know about their first language to their performance in their new language.

In the fields of applied linguistics and English language acquisition, language transfer especially native language transfer has long been a significant study area. Language transfer as a linguistic concept has always been considered and seen as a phenomenon which occurs in language learning situations.

According to Oxford Learner's Dictionaries, the term language transfer is the process of using your knowledge of your first language or another language that you know when speaking or writing a language that you are learning, which may make the process of learning the new language either easier or more difficult. Language transfer refers to "the influence of one language on learning another" (Longman Dictionary of language teaching and applied linguistics 1992).(Chen, 2020).

According (Berman, 1994) defines language transfer as the influence resulting from similarities and differences between the target language and any other language that has been previously acquired. Language transfer may hinder or facilitate language acquisition depending on the number of similarities and differences between two languages (Feng, 2017).

2.1.4 Types of language transfer

According to the results of language transfer, it can be divided into positive transfer and negative transfer. Positive transfer refers to the process of prior learning influencing subsequent learning while negative transfer refers to that the former learning hinders the latter learning.(Chen, 2020).

Positive transfer

Positive transfer occurs when there is the influence of the native language leads to immediate use of the target language(Sarwat et al., 2021).Positive transfer occurs when areas of similarity between the two languages facilitate learning. Positive transfer may help learners recognize and retain words with similar or identical pronunciation and/or spelling in both languages

According to the Contrastive Analysis Theory (Shinta Sari, 2021), states that if the units and structures of two languages are the same, linguistic interference can result in correct language production (positive transfer). Chinese and English are languages that share many characteristics with each other.

Examples of the characteristics they might share:

- **Subject-Verb-Object (SVO) Sentence Structure:**
  Both Chinese and English use a Subject-Verb-Object (SVO) sentence structure in basic sentences.

  English: "I eat an apple."

  Chinese: "我吃苹果" (Wǒ chī píngguǒ) – "I eat apple."

- **No Grammatical Gender**:
  Neither Chinese nor English nouns are marked for grammatical gender, unlike languages like French or Spanish. Both languages have neutral nouns without masculine or feminine distinction.

  English: "teacher" (no gender distinction).

  Chinese: "老师" (Lǎoshī) – "teacher" (no gender distinction).

For English language learners, it is simpler to have a strong command of the English language during the SLA process if L1 and L2 are more similar. This process of language similarities promoting SLA.

For instance, the written forms of Chinese and Japanese and French and English share similarities in their grammatical systems. Undoubtedly, these linguistic parallels aid in the English language acquisition of learners. Many students employ grammatical rules and techniques from their native language acquisition process without realizing it while learning SLA. According to Chen (2020) if there are more commonalities between L1 and L2, students can master the grammatical rules of L2 more easily and accelerate the learning speed for L2 more effectively, which can prove that the positive transfer of native language plays a vital role in promoting the learning of English language .

Negative transfer

According to Chen (2020) stated that negative transfer refers to that the knowledge and thinking habits of native language seriously affect and hinder people's learning of English language . Many scholars believe that, in the process of SLA, under the influence of native language, students often have errors at all levels, such as pronunciation, vocabulary, syntax, writing compositions, etc

Negative transfer occurs when there is an influence of the native language leads to errors in the acquisition or use of a target language(Shinta Sari, 2021). Negative transfer (or interference) occurs when differences between the two languages' structures lead to systematic errors in the learning of the English language or to fossilization. As explained by Feng (2020) negative transfer appears to be inevitable in L2 acquisition since it may not be possible to discover two languages that are identical in

their units and structures. For examples, at level of vocabulary: French leaners of English can use of "sympathy" instead of "compassion" incorrectly due to false friends. The word "sympathie" can mean both "sympathy" and "compassion," but in English, "sympathy" usually refers to understanding or pity, while "compassion" implies a deeper empathy.

At level of sentence structure: French students of English learning may make this error "**She goes often** to the gym." This is a direct translation from French **"Il va souvent à la gym."** where the adverb usually comes after the verb. In English, the adverb should come before the verb: "She often goes to the gym."

At level of grammar: French students might use articles incorrect by saying "I go to university" instead of "I go to the university." In French, the definite article is not used with the names of institutions in this way, but in English, it is required.

2.1.5 Students' English writing skills

Basing on this study, students are people to whom the research is carried out and also, they are the ones who contribute significantly to propose the answers of research topic. The students need to show if there is language transfer and the impact of it in their learning writing proficiency in English(Cole & Feng, 2015).

They show if it impedes their academic performance through this research, students' writing proficiency and performance in English are the outcome expected is the secondary schools.

Writing has an important role to play in the creation and training of intellectuals (Berman, 1994). It conveys prose thoughts, expectations, desires and plans, which needs knowledge rather than expertise.

Students' writing proficiency in the context of academics is a critical skill that plays a vital role in their educational development and success. According to (Process Approach to Teaching English Writing Skill in Secondary Schools : A Feasibility Study with Ninth Grade Students of Quantum Cosmo School in Bandarban A Research Report Submitted to the Documentation Centre under NAEM Research Division National Acad, 2021)Writing proficiency refers to a student's ability to communicate effectively through the written word, and it encompasses several key elements such clarity and coherence, grammar and mechanics, vocabulary and style, critical thinking. This means that the more students engaged in writing activity, they are able to communicate in academic setting writing their papers, engage in scholarly discussions. Students become more successful in academic works like doing exams, course homework, writing dissertations as mean of sharing their ideas. Proficient writing is essential for the success and recognition of these scholarly endeavors/ pursuits.

Enhancing refers to the act of improving, increasing, or make something better in terms of quality, value, or performance that it was before.

In this study, the language transfer errors will be reduced via different strategies and approaches to enhance Students 'writing proficiency and their academic performance. The implementation of those strategies and approaches will enhance writing proficiency and academic performance of students and will be the solution for teachers who have are in luck of ways to use when teaching students in order to help them to overcome difficulties they face when learning English as English language (Cole & Feng, 2015). The goal is typically to achieve a more desirable results compared to the previous condition.

2.2 Theoretical Framework

This study was directed by a number of theories in relation to relation to mitigating language transfer to enhance English writing for no-native of English in secondary schools due to the time limit and space. The two theories that guided this study are Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis (**CAH**) and Interlanguage Theory (**IT**) and were chosen because both play a big role to mitigate language transfer among students and again they are related with English language teaching and learning. They are called theories of English language teaching/ learning. Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis help educators anticipate areas of difficulty based on the differences between L1 and L2 While Interlanguage theory helps them understand the stages of development in English language acquisition and tailor instruction to address errors and challenges at each stage, ultimately mitigating negative transfer. They have briefly discussed below:

2.2.1 Theory 1: Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis (Lado, 1957)

Developed by Robert Lado, this theory suggests that comparing linguistic elements of L1 and L2 can predict areas where learners might face challenges due to language transfer. By identifying these contrasts, teachers can design targeted instruction to address them (Lado, 1957).

The Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis (**CAH)** is a theory in the field of English language acquisition (SLA) that was developed in the mid-20th century, particularly associated with the work of Robert Lado (González, 2012). As explained by Lennon, P. (2008)The central idea behind CAH is that a comparison of the native language (L1) and the target language (L2) can help predict and explain the difficulties that learners may encounter in the process of acquiring the English language .

Lado (1957) introduced the CAH in his 1957 book titled "Linguistics Across Cultures: Applied Linguistics for Language Teachers."(Johansson, 2008) The theory proposed that the difficulties a learner encounters in acquiring an English language are a result of the differences between the native language (L1) and the target language (L2). According to Lado (1957) he believed that identifying these differences through contrastive analysis could help teachers and learners understand and predict areas of

a target language where interference from the learner's native language was more likely to occur. By analyzing the contrasts between languages, they could predict which linguistic features might be challenging for learners.

Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis contributes to Analyzing errors produced by language learners of English language s where teachers should give more focused remedial feedback to students to help them overcome language transfer difficulties by identifying the causes of errors(González, 2012).The central idea behind CAH was that by identifying and analyzing the linguistic differences and similarities between a learner's native language and the target language, educators could better understand and address potential language transfer errors. This theory suggests that the difficulty of learning a English language is influenced by the similarities and differences between the learner's native language (L1) and the target language (L2). By comparing the two languages, educators can predict areas where learners are likely to face challenges due to negative transfer from their L1.

For example, if a learner's L1 does not have articles like "a" or "the," they might struggle with using these correctly in English. To mitigate negative transfer, teachers can focus on teaching these areas explicitly, providing explanations and exercises that highlight the differences between the two languages.

2.2.2 Theory 2: Inter-language Theory (Selinker, 1972)

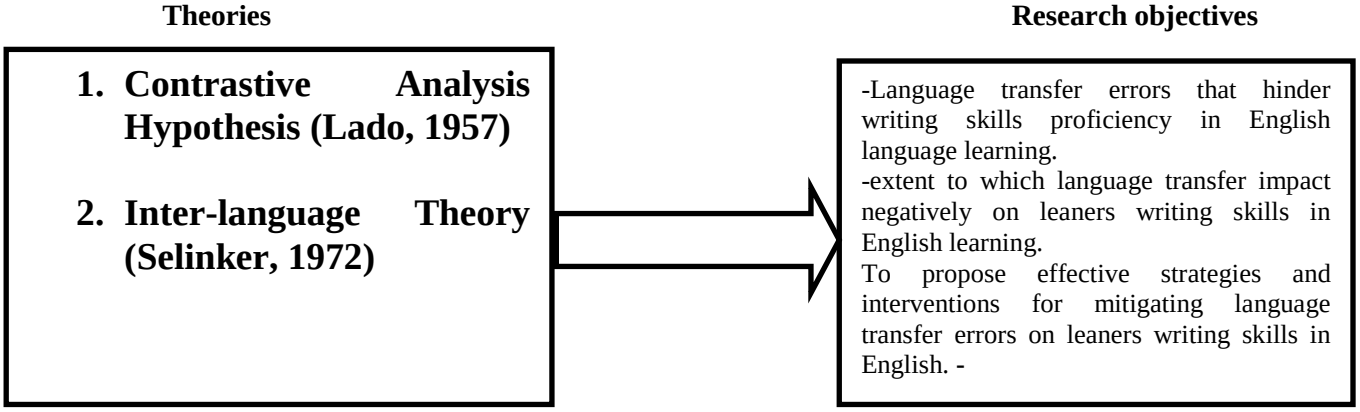
The Interlanguage Theory was proposed by Larry Selinker in the 1972. He suggested that language learners develop a separate linguistic system, or interlanguage, that is influenced by both their native language and the language they are learning. This interlanguage evolves as learners are exposed to more of the target language and gradually approximates the rules of the target language.

Interlanguage theory is proposed by Larry Selinker, who is known for his work on Interlanguage Theory in 1972. He is a linguist proposed several key ideas related to the implications of Interlanguage Theory for mitigating language transfer, or the influence of a learner's native language on their acquisition of a English language (Frith, 1978). Larry Selinker stated that Interlanguage is the linguistic system that language learners create as they progress toward full competence in a target language. According to Ain and Widodo (2019) Interlanguage refers to the linguistic system that learners create as they progress from their native language to their target language. It's essentially a transitional, dynamic state that learners go through as they acquire a new language. Interlanguage theory acknowledges that learners may produce language forms that are neither entirely the same as the native language nor identical to the target language they are trying to learn.

For Selinker, he said that Interlanguage theory primarily deals with the stages and processes of English language acquisition. It doesn't focus on reducing language transfer errors or improving writing proficiency directly, but it is relevant to those issues. Understanding the Stages of Language Acquisition: Interlanguage theory helps educators understand that learners go through distinct stages in acquiring a English language (Mahmood & Murad, 2018). Recognizing these stages can inform teaching strategies and expectations. While interlanguage theory doesn't specifically address writing proficiency, it does offer a framework for comprehending the mistakes and challenges that learners may encounter when writing in a second linguistic. Educators can use this understanding to develop writing tasks and activities that specifically address these challenges.

This theory proposes that English language learners (**SLA**) develop a separate linguistic system, known as an interlanguage, as they progress toward proficiency in the target language. This interlanguage is influenced by both the learner's L1 and the target language, leading to errors and simplifications as the learner constructs their linguistic system. Educators can use this theory to understand the stages of development that learners go through and tailor instruction to address specific errors and challenges at each stage. By recognizing that errors are a natural part of the learning process, teachers can provide feedback and guidance that help learners move closer to native-like proficiency while minimizing Negative transfer from their L1.

Figure 2 1: Theories used and their effect on the research objectives



The Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis (CAH) by Lado (1957) and Inter-language Theory by Selinker (1972) are instrumental in shaping the research objectives concerning language transfer errors in English language learning. The CAH posits that errors in second language (L2) acquisition arise from differences between the learner's native language (L1) and the target language (L2). This theory informs the research objective of identifying specific language transfer errors that hinder writing skills proficiency in English, as it emphasizes the role of L1 interference.

Inter-language Theory, on the other hand, describes the evolving linguistic system that learners create as they progress towards L2 proficiency. This theory helps in understanding the extent to which language transfer impacts learners' writing skills negatively. It acknowledges that learners' inter-language is influenced by various factors, including L1 interference, and provides a framework for assessing the stages of error development and persistence in learners' writing. This understanding is crucial for evaluating the depth and persistence of language transfer errors.

Together, these theories guide the formulation of effective strategies and interventions for mitigating language transfer errors in learners' writing skills. By leveraging insights from CAH, strategies can be designed to address specific L1-L2 differences, while Inter-language Theory supports the development of adaptive teaching methods that consider the dynamic nature of learners' language development. Thus, these theories collectively enhance the research objectives by providing a comprehensive understanding of the sources and progression of language transfer errors, facilitating the proposal of more effective educational interventions.

2.3 Empirical Review

2.3.1 Language transfer errors on English writing among students

Language transfer refers to the influence of a learner's native language on their acquisition and use of an English language. In the context of English writing skills among students in secondary schools, language transfer errors can manifest in various ways, impacting grammar, vocabulary, sentence structure, and overall coherence of written texts (Jarvis & Pavlenko, 2010).

This empirical review examines strategies and interventions aimed at mitigating language transfer errors to enhance the English writing skills of secondary school students. Numerous studies conducted in various parts of the world demonstrate that Language transfer may hinder or facilitate language acquisition depending on the number of similarities and differences between two languages (Odlin, 2020; Trofimovich & McDonough, 2016).

In this study, we focus on negative language transfer errors that hinder writing skill as we mitigate the language transfer errors on English writing among learners where English is taken as their second language learning. Language transfer is an important topic in the field of English language acquisition research. Language transfer can be used to explain the interact among factors in the process of English language learning and influence the acquisition and use of language, and help learners to learn the correct language learning strategies.(Feng, 2017).

According to Yuan (2021) said that langue transfer the degree of English writing proficiency among pupils is greatly impacted by language transfer. Students' ability to write in English language can be enhanced by using understandable input and other instructional strategies that support mother tongue transfer.

"As we have defined earlier, positive transfer in English language learning refers to the beneficial influence of prior knowledge from one language (often the native language) on the learning of English as a second language (ESL)." This can appears in various ways, such as similarities in vocabulary, grammar structures, or pronunciation between the two languages, which make it easier for learners to understand and acquire the new language (Ringbom, 2007; Ellis, 2015).

For example, if someone's native language is Spanish and they are learning Italian, they might find it easier to learn Italian due to the similarities in vocabulary and grammar structures between the two Romance languages. Truly, language transfer is a motivation for students who are learning English as a second language when a positive transfer in language takes place. When a student master well L1, he is likely to transfer correct L1 vocabularies, grammar, and pronunciation. (Ringbom, 2007).

Teaching writing proficiency in English as second language, teachers have to understand the errors of language transfer that hinder English writing skills among students. In this study, the researcher attempts to describe the errors of negative transfer that hinder English writing among students. Negative transfer occurs when students apply the rules or structures of their native language to English or apply previous learned knowledge of first language in the context of English language learning which resulting errors or interference in their writing, (Gass & Selinker, 2008).

According to Yuan (2021), in her study pointed out common errors made by Chinese students when learning as English as their second language learning when it comes to wring. She identified common errors of negative transfer on English writing among secondary ESL students. Students enjoyed the English learning but when it comes to English writing students feel absent. When students are learning English as their second language learning, they make grammatical errors, syntax errors, vocabulary errors, lack of cohesion and coherence, words order errors, tenses errors caused by their L1 due to the differences from two languages. Students may transfer grammatical rules from their native or previous leant language to English, leading to errors in sentence structure, verb tense, and word order. For example, in some languages, adjectives come after the noun, so students might write "car red" instead of "red car."

Vocabulary errors may occur when students use their L1 words that are similar in sound or meaning to English words but have different meanings, leading to confusion and misunderstandings. Examples: French and English share many words that look or sound similar but have different meanings.

For example, "actuellement" in French means "currently," but many French learners mistakenly use it to mean "actually" in English, which means "in fact" or "really." (Swan, 2001).

Students who learn English as their English language face the challenges of vocabulary Choice, Students may use literal translations of words from their native language, leading to inappropriate word choices in English writing and this affect the clarity and effectiveness of their writing. Example: French learners directly translate French expressions into English, resulting in incorrect usage. For instance, a French student might say "I have 20 years" instead of "I am 20 years old," as in French, the expression is "J'ai 20 ans." (Swan, 2001).

Lack of Cohesion and Coherence: Negative transfer can also affect the overall organization and structure of a student's writing, leading to a lack of cohesion and coherence in their essays and compositions. Namouchi (2008, p.18) clarifies that, if a student does not have or know the vocabulary and the rules of a given language cannot give his point of view, this is means that student must know the right grammatical structure, the appropriate vocabulary, in addition, to the correct use of punctuation in order to convey coherent and understandable piece of writing(Letters & Examiners, 1945).

According to Sari (2021) in his study, he said that Grammatical interference means that the L1's grammatical patterns is negatively transferred. In this present study, grammatical interference is grammatical error which is caused by the negative transfer of the structure of L1, Bahasa Indonesia, to the target language, English.

Negative Transfer of Mother Language in English Compositions by Jiujiang University Students, 2015 published by EDP Sciences written by Yifei Wang The researcher found that there were five kinds of errors caused by negative transfer. They were attributive clauses including avoidance strategy, redundant pronoun or antecedent, omission preposition, underused, misplaced or redundant relative words. Consciously or unconsciously, transfer errors occurred in students' writing(Shinta Sari, 2021). Inappropriate knowledge of grammatical rules affects the results of learners' effective writing. Such writing problems produce embracement among the various students at their academic level. By using good and grammatically correct English students bargain their educational needs effectively (Adams & Keene, 2000)

2.3.2 Strategies for mitigating language transfer errors in English writing skills among learners

Language transfer, also known as interference, can impact English writing, especially for non-native speakers. Here are some strategies to mitigate its negative errors:

Strategy 1: Increase Exposure to English

Researchers like Stephen Krashen and James Asher have emphasized the importance of exposure to the target language for acquisition. Krashen's Input Hypothesis suggests that learners improve their language skills through exposure to comprehensible input, while Asher's Total Physical Response (TPR) method incorporates a lot of listening and reading activities (Nattinger, 2014). Encouraging reading English materials enhances language skills and reduces reliance on native language structures.

Additionally, Lightbown and Spada (2013) highlight that increased exposure to English through immersive environments can significantly enhance language acquisition. They argue that frequent and meaningful interaction in the target language is crucial for developing proficiency (Lightbown & Spada, 2013).

Strategy 2: Focus on Differences

It is essential to understand the differences between English and the native language, such as word order, idiomatic expressions, and phrasal verbs. According to Goldin-Meadow (2020), focusing on these differences aligns with Contrastive Analysis, a theory popularized by Robert Lado. Lado believed that by comparing and contrasting the native language with the target language, learners could identify areas of potential difficulty and focus on those differences.

Ellis (2015) supports this view by stating that understanding the specific linguistic differences between L1 and L2 can help in creating targeted learning strategies that address potential difficulties and reduce negative transfer (Ellis, 2015).

Strategy 3: Practice Writing

Regular writing practice helps identify and correct language transfer errors. Encouraging varied writing tasks develops different aspects of English writing skills. Scholars like John Swales and Christine Feak have written extensively on academic writing and the importance of practice in developing English writing skills. They emphasize the need for learners to engage in various types of writing tasks to improve different aspects of their writing (Irmawati, 2015).

Moreover, Hyland (2003) argues that consistent practice in writing across different genres helps learners understand and apply appropriate language conventions, thereby reducing errors caused by language transfer (Hyland, 2003).

Strategy 4: Provide Feedback

Offering constructive feedback that focuses on specific language transfer errors and suggests corrections is crucial. Utilizing language learning tools such as apps and software that offer grammar and vocabulary exercises tailored to address language transfer issues can be beneficial.

Bitchener and Ferris (2012) emphasize that timely and specific feedback is essential for learners to understand their errors and make necessary adjustments. Effective feedback can guide students in recognizing patterns of language transfer and correcting them (Bitchener & Ferris, 2012).

Strategy 5: Cultural Context

Emphasizing the importance of understanding the cultural context behind language use in English writing can help avoid literal translations from the native language (Kramsch, 1998).

Kramsch (1998) highlights that cultural awareness is integral to language learning. By understanding the cultural nuances of English, learners can avoid direct translations that do not align with the target language's conventions (Kramsch, 1998).

Strategy 6: Peer Collaboration

Engaging learners in peer editing or group discussions to exchange ideas and collectively correct language transfer errors is effective (Vygotsky, 1978).

Vygotsky (1978) suggests that social interaction plays a fundamental role in cognitive development. Peer collaboration allows learners to benefit from shared knowledge and corrective feedback, fostering a deeper understanding of language use (Vygotsky, 1978).

Strategy 7: Monitor Progress

Keeping track of language transfer errors over time to assess improvement and adjust teaching strategies accordingly is important for long-term success (Nation, 2009).

Nation (2009) argues that ongoing assessment and monitoring of language progress help educators tailor their instruction to address persistent issues, leading to more effective learning outcomes (Nation, 2009).

Strategy 8: Encourage Creativity

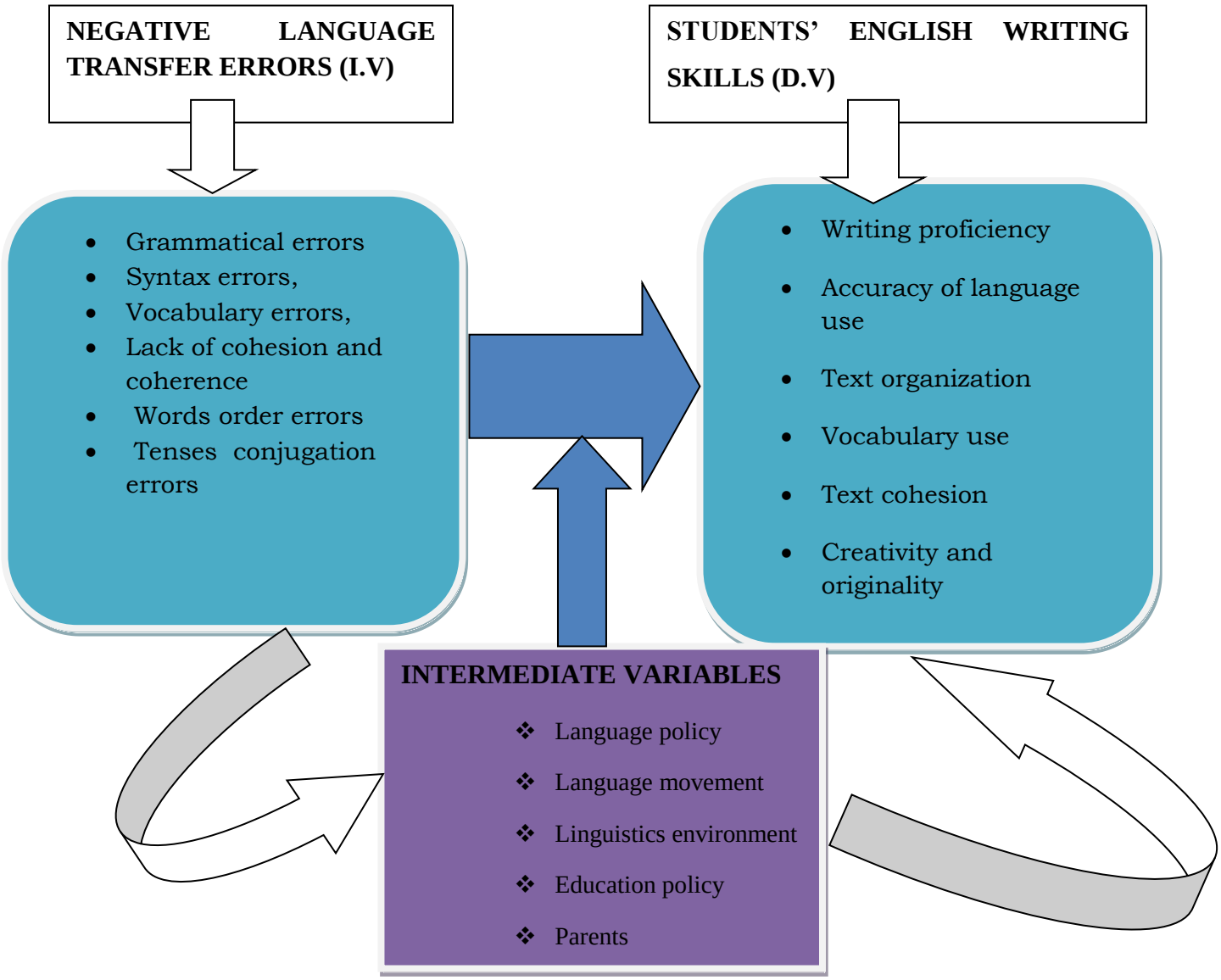
Encouraging learners to experiment with language use and explore different writing styles helps develop a more natural and fluent English writing style (Richards, 2015).

Richards (2015) emphasizes that creative tasks and exploratory writing activities can enhance language proficiency by allowing learners to apply language structures in diverse contexts, thus reducing reliance on their native language.

2.4 Conceptual Framework

A conceptual framework is a representation of the relationship expected to be seen between variables of the study. The conceptual framework for this study shows the connection and relation between the independent variable (language transfer) and the dependent variable (enhancing writing proficiency). The relationship between the independent and dependent variables can also be impacted by intervening variables. The conceptual framework is offered as follows.

Figure 2. 2 Conceptual Framework



In this research conceptual framework, the independent variable (IV) is "Language Transfer," which encompasses several components: language background, language proficiency, instructional approach, language exposure, language use, cultural background, teacher feedback, writing tasks, and motivation. These factors collectively influence the dependent variable (DV), which is "Students' English writing skills," defined through dimensions such as writing proficiency, accuracy of language use, text organization, vocabulary use, text cohesion, creativity and originality, and task achievement. The framework also identifies intermediate variables, specifically language policy, language movement, linguistic environment, and education policy which act as intervening factors that can impact the relationship between the IV and DV. This framework highlights the complexity of language transfer in shaping students' English writing skills, illustrating that both the instructional environment and external influences from language policy and education policy play crucial roles in students' writing development.

2.5 Critical review and research gap identification

Jarvis and Pavlenko (2010) discuss the various manifestations of language transfer errors on English writing, such as impacts on grammar, vocabulary, and overall coherence. While the study provides a comprehensive overview of the topic, it lacks specific examples and detailed analyses of how these errors manifest in student writing. The study is largely theoretical, which limits its practical applicability. Furthermore, it does not offer sufficient practical strategies for teachers to mitigate these transfer errors in classroom settings. Additionally, the study does not consider cultural factors that might influence language transfer, which can be significant in multilingual settings.

Odlin (2020) explores how language transfer can either hinder or facilitate language acquisition, depending on the similarities and differences between the languages involved. The study provides a balanced view of both positive and negative language transfer errors, which is commendable. However, similar to Jarvis and Pavlenko, Odlin’s work lacks practical strategies for educators. The inclusion of case studies or real-world examples would enhance the applicability of the findings. Moreover, the study would benefit from longitudinal data to show how language transfer errors evolve over time in students' writing.

Trofimovich and McDonough (2016) examine the factors influencing language transfer and its impact on English language acquisition, with a focus on English writing skills. The study employs robust research methods, including both qualitative and quantitative analyses, which strengthens its findings. However, it could be more specific about which factors most significantly impact language transfer, as the current discussion is somewhat broad. Furthermore, there is a lack of detailed intervention strategies for educators to address negative language transfer. A comparative analysis of different educational contexts (e.g., rural vs. urban schools) would provide more nuanced insights.

Feng (2017) discusses how language transfer can be used to explain interactions among various factors in English language learning, emphasizing the importance of correct language learning strategies. The study is heavily theoretical, with limited empirical evidence to support its claims. While it highlights the importance of learning strategies, it does not provide concrete examples or guidelines on implementing these strategies effectively. Additionally, the study would benefit from incorporating student perspectives on language transfer and its impact on their learning. It also does not sufficiently address how contextual factors such as socio-economic background and educational resources influence language transfer.

Yuan (2021) points out common errors made by Chinese students due to negative language transfer when learning English and suggests using understandable input and other instructional strategies to support language learning. Yuan's focus on specific errors provides valuable insights for educators, and the study offers practical instructional strategies, which is a significant strength. However, the sample size of the study is not mentioned, which raises questions about the generalizability of the findings. The study does not delve deeply into cultural nuances that might affect language transfer among Chinese students. Additionally, a longitudinal perspective would help in understanding how these errors and transfer errors change over time with continuous instruction.

The reviewed studies collectively provide a broad understanding of language transfer errors on English writing among students. However, they share common limitations, such as a lack of empirical data, insufficient practical strategies for educators, and limited consideration of cultural and contextual factors. Future research should address these gaps by incorporating more empirical evidence, offering detailed intervention strategies, and considering the broader socio-cultural context in which language learning occurs. Additionally, longitudinal studies would provide deeper insights into how language transfer errors evolve over time and how effective different mitigation strategies are in the long run.

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

As it said before the aim of this study is to investigate the language transfer error on competence and performance representation in L2 English writing skills among students in Mahama Refugee Camp secondary schools. The research design used for this study is described in this research methodology, along with the justifications for its selection.The methodology describes the approaches and processes that are used in the dissertation aimed at enabling the researcher to achieve the specific objectives of the study and ensuring that the research questions are adequately addressed and answered. Furthermore, the chapter outlines the population of interest and sampling designs as well as the data collection methods and data analysis methods used in presenting and explaining the results of the study. This chapter further outlines the ethical considerations the study takes into account and it concludes by setting out the limitations of the study.

3.1. Research design

My study employed a mixed-methods approach, combining both quantitative and qualitative methods to provide a comprehensive understanding of the language transfer errors on English writing skills among secondary school students (Creswell, 2014; Yin, 2018). This approach allows for the collection of numerical data to identify and quantify language transfer errors and the collection of qualitative data to gain deeper insights into the underlying causes and potential solutions (Creswell, 2014; Yin, 2018). A well-chosen research design helps to ensure the validity and reliability of the study findings (Creswell, 2018).

There are different types of research according to Oshagbemi (2017) and this research is a mixed research in its nature. According to Stadtländer (2009) a mixed research combines both qualitative and quantitative data. The selection of this design lie on the fact that "it is more than simply collecting and analyzing both kinds of data; it also involves the use of both approaches in tandem so that the overall strength of a study is greater than either qualitative or quantitative research (Stadtländer, 2009)."

3.2 Target Population

Rwanda hosts several refugee camps, each equipped with educational facilities to support the children of refugee families. Key camps include **Mahama Refugee Camp**, located in Kirehe District, which is one of the largest in Rwanda and features multiple primary and secondary schools designed to meet the educational needs of its sizable refugee population (UNHCR, 2023). **Kiziba Refugee Camp** in Kayonza District also includes educational facilities for both primary and secondary levels (UNHCR, 2023). Similarly, **Nyabiheke Refugee Camp** in Gatsibo District, **Gihembe Refugee Camp** in Gicumbi

District, and **Huye Refugee Camp** (also known as Biryogo) in Huye District provide essential schooling for refugee children (UNHCR, 2023). **Kigeme Refugee Camp** in Nyamagabe District is another key location with primary and secondary education facilities (UNHCR, 2023).

Mahama Refugee Camp which is consisted by G.S Paysannat LA, G.S Paysannat L B and G.S Paysannat LC was specifically chosen for this study for several reasons. Firstly, Mahama's well-established educational facilities, combined with the availability of current data from UNHCR and other organizations, ensure that the study can utilize up-to-date and relevant information (UNHCR, 2023). This context is particularly valuable for studying language transfer errors, as it allows for a detailed examination of how different language backgrounds influence English writing skills among students.

Table 3. 1 Refugee camps in Rwanda

S/N	REFUGEE CAMP	PROVINCE	DISTRICT
1	Mahama	Eastern	Kirehe
2	Kiziba	Eastern	Kayonza
3	Nyabiheke	Eastern	Gatsibo
4	Gihembe	Northern	Gicumbi
5	Huye/Biryogo	Southern	Huye
6	Kigeme	Southern	Nyamagabe

Source: Researcher (2024)

Table 3. 2 **Study participants**

Classes of respondents	Target population	
	Population	**Number**
School staff	Deputy head teacher in charge of studies	3
Teaching staff	**School A**	4
	School B	6
	School C	4
Students (S5 & 6)	**School A**	8
	School B	87
	School C	57
Total	**All targeted respondents**	**169**

Source: Researcher (2024)

3.3 Sample size

Krejcie and Morgan (1970) table was used to obtain the sample, using Krejcie and Morgan's table for sample size determination simplifies the process of selecting an appropriate sample size for a given population. This table provides pre-calculated sample sizes based on population size, ensuring that the selected sample is statistically representative of the population with a specified level of confidence (usually 95%) and a specified margin of error (usually 5%). For a population size of 169, Krejcie and Morgan's table recommended a sample size of approximately 152 respondents. This ensures that the sample is statistically representative of the entire population with a 95% confidence level and a 5% margin of error.

Table 3. 3 Krejcie and Morgan's table

Population Size	Sample Size
50	44
100	80
200	157
300	189
400	196
500	217
600	230
700	242
800	252
900	261
1,000	270
1,500	306
2,000	322
2,500	336
3,000	345
3,500	353
4,000	360
4,500	366
5,000	371
10,000	384
15,000	388
20,000	392
25,000	396
50,000	399
100,000	400

Basing on Krejcie and Morgan table, my study used the sample size of 152 respondents

3.4 Sampling Techniques

To select a sample size of 152 from the target population of 169 respondents, a combination of stratified sampling and simple random sampling techniques, were used to ensure that all subgroups within the population are adequately represented, thus maintaining the diversity and representativeness of the sample. Stratified sampling involves dividing the population into homogeneous subgroups (strata) based on a characteristic important to the study, such as the role in the school. In this case, we stratified the population into three strata: deputy head teachers, teaching staff, and students. Specifically, the strata include 3 deputy head teachers, 14 teaching staff from secondary school B secondary school C, and secondary school D, and 152 students from the same schools.

Proportional allocation ensures that the sample size from each stratum is proportional to the size of the stratum in the population. The proportions resulted in approximately 3 deputy head teachers, 13 teaching staff, and 136 students. Simple random sampling within strata involves selecting a sample randomly from each stratum, ensuring each member has an equal chance of being selected. Therefore, all 3 deputy head teachers were included, 13 teachers was randomly selected from the total 14, and randomly selected 136 students from the total 152, with proportional representation from each school. By using this stratified random sampling approach, each subgroup is adequately represented in the sample, leading to more reliable and generalizable study results.

3.5 Data collection instrument

In this research, the researcher utilized a mixed methods in order to fulfill the goals of this study. A mixed methods research design is a procedure for collecting, analyzing, and mixing both quantitative and qualitative research and methods in a single study to understand a research problem.(Meadows et al., 2008). Mixed methods research combines qualitative and quantitative research methods to gain a more comprehensive understanding of a research problem than either approach alone can provide.

This dissertation was enriched by the data that were gathered through written tests which were given to students and they answered designed questions in essay form. Interview guide with open ended-questions for both Depute head teachers in charge of studies and teachers from secondary school B, secondary school C, and secondary school D in Kirehe district. The researcher got all accessible data materials and resources from respondents. Tests were distributed to students while deputy head teachers and teachers were given open-ended questions during interviews. The purpose of mixed methods was used to leverage the strengths of both qualitative and quantitative methods, allowing researcher to explore a research questions from multiple angles, using different types of data and analysis techniques.

By doing so, researcher obtained more complete picture of the phenomenon under study, enhancing the validity and reliability of their findings.

The study was conducted in various stages including:

a. Written Tests and Data Analysis

The researcher employed the Corpus –based method as data instrument to analyse language transfer from collected learners 'papers. Following collection, the papers of the learners were examined to ensure that the language transfers was consistent throughout. Corpus refers to a large and structured set of texts, spoken or written and it is used for linguistic analysis or study(Kennedy, 2014). Corpus was prepared where learners were given essays to work on during one hour and half. Each papers carried out four questions which required students to write in length. It was used to examine actual language use, identify patterns of language transfer, and analyze writing proficiency. A mixed methods research design is a procedure for collecting, analyzing, and mixing both quantitative and qualitative research and methods in a single study to understand a research problem.(Meadows et al., 2008). Learners were asked to make a composition on given topics in order to help a researcher to find out language transfers through papers and have insights on their impact on English writing skills. Texts were selected based on the relevance to the study's focus on language transfer errors on English writing skills, this included students' essays. The corpus comprised written texts from students with diverse language backgrounds, including speakers of Swahili, Kinyarwanda, Kirundi and French in Mahama Refugee camp secondary schools.

A corpus helped a researcher to identify specific language transfer patterns in the writing of English language learners. By analyzing a large collection of learner texts, I pointed recurring errors or structures that reflect the influence of the learners' first languages and transfers from Kinyarwanda, Kirundi, Kiswahili and French. A corpus allowed for quantitative analysis, enabling researcher to measure the frequency and distribution of language transfer phenomena in the learners' writing. This provided valuable insights into the extent of these errors on writing proficiency. By compiling a corpus that included texts from learners with diverse language backgrounds, a researcher was able to compare the nature and impact of language transfer across different learner groups.

This comparative analysis helped the researcher to understand how the transfer errors vary based on the learners' first languages. Analyzing a corpus provided opportunity to identify strategies that have been effective in mitigating language transfer errors. By examining instances where learners successfully avoid transfer errors, you can glean insights into effective teaching approaches or interventions. A corpus can serve as a valuable tool for gaining a deeper understanding of language transfer errors in

English language writing and for developing targeted strategies to address these challenges. An analysis of written samples from students in Mahama Refugee Camp secondary schools revealed a high incidence of language transfer errors, including direct translation, grammatical interference, and limited vocabulary use. By identifying and addressing these transfer errors through targeted teaching strategies and support, students' English writing abilities can be improved over time.

b. Interview

At this stage, the researcher asked questions to the participants from aiming at knowing about language background of learners, identifying whether there was a language transfer in English language learning, their perceptions about the errors of their native languages during English writing skills. Other questions were given for the purpose to find out the methodologies the teachers use to help students to overcome these challenges that hinder students 'writing proficiency caused by their mother tongue or previous learned skills in language.

3.6 Reliability and validation of data collection instrumentation

Reliability of Instruments

In simple terms, research reliability, as explained by Richard P. Bagozzi (2017), refers to the extent to which a research method yields stable and consistent outcomes. Test-retest reliability was employed to evaluate the consistency of measurements obtained from the instruments when they are given to the same group of participants on two separate occasions. To measure test-retest reliability, researchers administered the instruments to a sample of responders at two different times and calculate the correlation between their responses.

Validity of Research Instrument

To establish the validity of instruments for the current research a combination of content validity and pilot testing. Content validity was ensured by systematically examining the instruments' content to ensure they accurately capture the constructs of interest, ensuring the validity of the findings. Pilot testing with a sample of respondents further validated the instruments by identifying and addressing any potential validity issues before full-scale data collection. This approach helped ensure the reliability and validity of the research instruments, thereby enhancing the credibility of the study's findings.

3.7 Data Analysis and Presentation Technique

Data that was collected through corpus method, questionnaires and discussion was recorded, later to be analyzed into numbers according to language transfers appeared in each language and their frequencies. The study used data descriptive analysis for quantitative data.

The data were presented using tables and figures. Quantitative data was analyzed by using descriptive statistics through SPSS. On the other side, qualitative data was analyzed by using themes which is common to all qualitative data (Kraska et al., 2020).

3.8 Ethical Considerations

Before starting the research itself, full ethical approval was obtained from administration of university of Rwanda. This included the institution's standard ethical checklist and insurance documentation, approval of ethical amendments, legal confidentiality agreements. Then after, the authorization letter for collecting data was requested by the researcher via Kirehe district administration and was signed. Authorization letter was handled to school head teacher of secondary school B, secondary school C, and secondary school D in order to have right to meet with participants. Also Consent letters from concern participants were provide to them and kept by the research. The participants were told their full right to participate in the study willingly and understood well that the research was conducted for academic purpose and knew that the information provided by them must be treated confidentiality. They also understood that they have to withdraw from the study willingly without any penalties or other errors on their academic studies. Prior written consent was obtained from all study participants (See Appendix A for all relevant ethical documentation).

CHAPTER FOUR: DATA PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION

This chapter presents the analysis of data collected for the study entitled “Mitigating language transfer errors on English writing skills among Students in Mahama Refugee Camp Secondary Schools’. The chapter is structured around the research objectives, which are to investigate the language transfer errors that hinder writing proficiency in English language learning, to examine how language transfer challenges writing proficiency in English language, and to identify effective strategies and interventions for mitigating language transfer errors in English language writing.

4.1 Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

The study's respondents were teachers, deputy head teachers, and students in Mahama Refugee Camp secondary schools. The characteristics of the respondents included gender, age, education level, and the duration of their time spent in the surveyed area.

4.1.1 Gender of respondents

The gender of the respondents was categorized into male and female, with the following distribution:

Table 4. 1 Gender of respondents of Mahama Refugee Camp secondary schools (N=152)

Gender of respondents	Frequency	Percent
Male	82	53.8
Female	70	46.1
Total	**152**	**100.0**

Source: Primary data, 2024

The study's respondent gender distribution consists of 82 males (53.9%) and 70 females (46.1%), totaling 152 respondents. This indicates a slight predominance of male respondents over female respondents, with both genders being well-represented in the sample. The relatively balanced distribution provides valuable insights into the study's context and helps assess the representativeness of the sample.

4.1.2 Age group of the respondents

In this research, the distribution of respondents by age group is crucial for understanding the demographic profile of secondary school students in Mahama Refugee Camp. The study aims to examine how age influences various factors, including language transfer errors on English writing skills. Table 4.2 provides a detailed breakdown of the age groups among the respondents:

Table 4. 2 Age group of the respondents of Mahama Refugee Camp secondary schools (N=152)

The age group of the respondents	Frequency	Percent
Under 18 years	108	71.1
18-25 years	28	18.4
26-30 years	12	7.9
30 years and above	4	2.6
Total	**152**	**100.0**

Source: Primary data, 2024

The age distribution of respondents in the study shows a high percentage of younger individuals, with 71.1% (108 respondents) being under 18 years old, indicating that many respondents were students. The next largest group, aged 18-25 years, comprises 18.4% (28 respondents), followed by those aged 26-30 years at 7.9% (12 respondents), and a small minority of 2.6% (4 respondents) aged 30 years and above. This age distribution highlights the youthful demographic of the sample, which can be attributed to the study's focus on a student population.

4.1.3 Educational background of respondents

The study also sought to determine the educational backgrounds of the respondents, who possessed different levels of education. The table below presents information about pupils-respondents and respondents with Diplomas (A1), Bachelors (A0), and students of senior five and six from different combinations who took part in the study:

Table 4. 3 Educational background of respondents of Mahama Refugee Camp secondary schools (N=152)

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Deputy head teacher and teachers' educational background	A1	6	3.90%
	A0	10	6.60%
Students level	Senior five (S5)	81	53.30%
	Senior six (S6)	55	36.20%
Students combination	History Economics and Literature (HEL)	40	26.30%
	Mathematics Economics and Geography (MEG)	32	21.10%
	Literature French and Kinyarwanda (LFK)	36	23.70%
	Literature Kinyarwanda and Kiswahili (LKK)	28	18.40%

Source: Primary data, 2024

The educational background of respondents from Mahama Refugee Camp secondary schools shows that a small proportion of deputy head teachers and teachers have A1 and A0 qualifications, with 3.9% (6 respondents) having an A1 level and 6.6% (10 respondents) holding an A0 level. The majority of student respondents are in Senior Five (S5), representing 53.3% (81 respondents), while 36.2% (55 respondents) are in Senior Six (S6). In terms of student combinations, 26.3% (40 respondents) are studying History, Economics, and Literature (HEL); 21.1% (32 respondents) are in the Mathematics, Economics, and Geography (MEG) combination; 23.7% (36 respondents) are in Literature, French, and Kinyarwanda (LFK); and 18.4% (28 respondents) are pursuing Literature, Kinyarwanda, and Kiswahili (LKK). This distribution reflects a diverse range of academic focuses among students, with a slightly higher concentration in the HEL combination.

4.1.4 Teacher experience, subject taught and students native language

The information in Table 4.4 describes respondents' opinion about their experience, subject taught and students' native language.

Table 4. 4 Teacher experience, subject taught and students' native language of Mahama Refugee Camp secondary schools (N=152)

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Deputy head teacher and teachers' experience in teaching	Below 1 year	4	2.63%
	2-5 years	5	3.29%
	Above 5 years	7	4.61%
Number of teachers per subject	English	6	3.95%
	French	3	1.97%
	Kinyarwanda	5	3.29%
	Kiswahili	2	1.32%
Students' native language(L1)	English	2	1.32%
	French	1	0.66%
	Kinyarwanda	127	83.55%
	Kiswahili	6	3.95%

Source: Primary data, 2024

The data from Mahama Refugee Camp secondary schools reveals a diverse linguistic environment with a predominant Kinyarwanda-speaking student body and a teaching staff that has a significant portion with extensive experience. The majority of teachers (4.61%) have over 5 years of experience, indicating a strong foundation of teaching expertise within the school, while a smaller proportion have less experience (3.29% with 2-5 years and 2.63% below 1 year). English is the most commonly taught subject (3.95%), which is important for communication and integration in the international curriculum, followed closely by Kinyarwanda (3.29%), highlighting the importance of maintaining the native language and culture. French (1.97%) and Kiswahili (1.32%) are less commonly taught, reflecting the linguistic diversity and needs within the refugee camp. A significant majority of students (83.55%) speak Kinyarwanda as their native language, emphasizing the need for educational support and resources in this language, while other languages such as Kiswahili (3.95%), English (1.32%), and French (0.66%) are spoken by a smaller number of students. This diversity indicates that while Kinyarwanda is dominant, there is a presence of multilingualism that should be considered in teaching strategies and curriculum development. The varied subjects taught by the teachers and the extensive

experience of the teaching staff present both challenges and opportunities for tailored educational programs that address the needs of the refugee camp's population.

4.2 Research findings

This section is structured around the research objectives, which are to investigate the language transfer errors that hinder writing proficiency in English language learning, to examine how language transfer challenges writing proficiency in English language, and to identify effective strategies and interventions for mitigating language transfer errors in English language writing.

4.2.1 Finding 1: Language transfer errors that hinder writing proficiency in English language learning

Language transfer in the context of writing proficiency can manifest in various ways, such as grammar, vocabulary, and syntactic structures. This section explores the common language transfer errors observed in English language learners and their impact on English writing skills. The findings on this objective are supported by the tables indicating the code mixing and switching that were made by learners and their answers in photos

4.2.1.1 Error 1: Grammar and Syntax Interference

Learners often transfer grammatical rules and sentence structures from their native language to English, resulting in errors such as incorrect verb tenses, subject-verb agreement, and word order.

Examples from the students' answers from written test are:

1. "I am going to school every day since I was a child."

   In this example, the student uses the present continuous tense "am going" instead of the present perfect continuous "have been going" due to the influence of their native language tense structure (l1=Kinyarwanda).

2. "She like to play football with her friends."

   Here, the student fails to add the necessary's' to "like" for subject-verb agreement in English, likely influenced by the simpler verb conjugation rules in their native language.

The author notes that these examples are representative of a broader phenomenon documented in language acquisition research. Specifically, Ellis (1994) discusses how learners' native languages can significantly influence their use of grammar and syntax in a second language, leading to such errors. These examples underscore the importance of understanding L1 influences in the process of learning and teaching an L2.

4.2.1.2 Error 2: Vocabulary and Word Choice

The use of false cognates or direct translations from the native language can lead to incorrect word choices. Learners select words that seem similar to their native language but have different meanings or usage in English.

Examples from the students answer are:

1. "I have a lot of sympathy for my friend because she is very rich."
   The student uses "sympathy" instead of "admiration" or "respect," possibly due to a false cognate in their native language.
2. "The climate in the room was very hot."
   In this case, the student uses "climate" instead of "temperature," directly translating a word from their native language (Kinyarwanda) that means both.
   These errors are well-documented in studies by Odlin (1989) and Ringbom (2007), which explore how native language influences can lead to vocabulary and word choice mistakes in second language learning. Understanding these influences is crucial for educators to address and correct such errors effectively.

4.2.1.3 Error 3: Spelling and Phonetics:

Differences in phonetic and orthographic systems between the native language and English can cause spelling errors. Learners may spell words based on the phonetic rules of their native language, leading to misspellings.

Examples from the students answer are:

1. "I recieved the letter yesterday."

The student spells "received" as "recieved," likely influenced by their native languages phonetic rules. French students may confuse the position of the vowels **"i"** and "**e"** because of how certain vowel combinations are pronounced and spelled in French. In French, the phonetic rule where "**ie"** often appears as a common combination (like in "**pied"** meaning "**foot**") could lead them to believe "recieved" is correct. This mistake might stem from the students' mental application of French phonetic rules when trying to spell an English word.

2. "My favorit subject is math."

Here, the student spells "favorite" as "favorit," possibly due to the absence of certain orthographic conventions in their native language. This finding is supported by research on phonological transfer (Swan & Smith, 2001).

The omission of the "**e"** at the end of "**favorite**" may be influenced by French orthographic rules. In French, adjectives like "favori" (masculine form of "favorite") do not end in an "e" unless they're feminine. Also, French-speaking learners might not fully grasp the difference between British English and American English spelling, where the latter uses "favorite" and the former "favourite." As they become familiar with different conventions, their spelling may reflect influences from both languages.

4.2.1.4 Error 4: Punctuation and Capitalization

Different conventions for punctuation and capitalization in the native language can affect writing in English as the English language. Learners might misuse commas, periods, quotation marks, or fail to capitalize proper nouns and the first words in sentences correctly.

Examples from the students answer are:

1. "i went to the market, and i bought apples oranges and bananas."

   The student fails to capitalize the pronoun "I" and omits the necessary commas between items in a list, likely influenced by their native language's punctuation rules.

These findings are in line with the studies by Celce-Murcia and Larsen-Freeman (1999) who have noted these issues in L2 writing.

4.2.1.5 Finding 2: Frequencies of language transfer errors in English from other languages (N=136)

The table below presents the frequency and percentage of language transfers made in English by students from different linguistic backgrounds at secondary schools in Mahama Refugee Camp. The data, collected from a sample of 136 students, highlights the influence of various native languages on English writing proficiency. The languages include Kinyarwanda, Kiswahili, Kirundi, French, and Lingala, with Kiswahili transfers being the most frequent. Errors from students' written tests were coded and computed in SPSS to produce frequency table.

Table 4. 5 Frequencies of language transfers from other languages spoken at Mahama refugee camp school.

Languages	Frequency	Percentage
Kinyarwanda	157	30.31%
Kiswahili	204	39.38%
Kirundi	104	20.08%
French	34	6.56%
Lingala	19	3.67%

Source: Primary data, 2024

The data from the essay writing administered to 136 students of the Mahama refugee camp shows that the highest number of transfers to English were made from Kiswahili (39.38%), followed by Kinyarwanda (30.31%), and Kirundi (20.08%). Transfers from French accounted for 6.56%, while Lingala accounted for 3.67%. This distribution indicates a significant influence of Kiswahili and Kinyarwanda on students' English language writing, reflecting the prevalent use of these languages in their daily communication. The lower percentages of transfers from French and Lingala suggest limited use or familiarity with these languages among the students. This diversity highlights the need for tailored language support in the education programs at the refugee camp to address the linguistic backgrounds of the students.

The unequal transfer percentages can be justified by considering the prevalence of these languages in daily communication and the linguistic profile of the refugee population. Kiswahili, as the most common lingua franca in East Africa, is widely spoken and understood across multiple countries. Many refugees in the Mahama camp are likely from countries such as the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Tanzania, Burundi, and Kenya, where Kiswahili is either the national language or widely spoken. Its dominance in daily communication is reflected in the high percentage of language transfers to English. Kinyarwanda, being the national language of Rwanda, is spoken by the majority of the local population. Refugees in Rwanda, including those in Mahama, inevitably interact with Kinyarwanda speakers and may use it extensively in daily activities, leading to significant transfers from Kinyarwanda to English. Kirundi, which is very similar to Kinyarwanda and is the national language of Burundi, also shows a substantial transfer rate due to the presence of Burundian refugees in the camp.

The educational background and language exposure of the students also play a crucial role in the transfer percentages. While French is one of the official languages in Rwanda and is also widely spoken in parts of Burundi and the DRC, its lower transfer rate suggests that the refugee students may have

limited formal education in French or that French is not as dominant in their immediate social and educational environment. This may be due to the recent educational reforms in Rwanda prioritizing English as the medium of instruction. Lingala, primarily spoken in the DRC, has a lower transfer rate, indicating that it is not as prevalent among the student population in Mahama, possibly due to the specific regions from which the refugees originate or the lower functional usage of Lingala compared to other languages like Kiswahili and Kinyarwanda.

The geographical origins of the refugees are a significant factor in the linguistic profile and usage. The Mahama refugee camp hosts individuals predominantly from neighboring countries such as Burundi, DRC, and Tanzania. These countries have diverse linguistic profiles, with Kiswahili, Kinyarwanda, and Kirundi being highly prevalent, correlating with the higher transfer rates from these languages. Social and community interactions in a multilingual camp environment necessitate the use of common languages for broader understanding. Kiswahili, serving as a regional lingua franca, becomes a practical choice, thereby increasing its influence on English writing. Community interactions also play a role, as refugees from Burundi and Rwanda share cultural and linguistic similarities, leading to frequent use of Kinyarwanda and Kirundi.

Educational policies and the medium of instruction further explain the transfer percentages. Rwanda's shift towards English as the medium of instruction impacts the refugees' language learning. Students may be transitioning from systems where Kiswahili or Kinyarwanda were used more frequently, hence the higher transfer rates from these languages. The focus on English in the Rwandan education system means that other languages like French and Lingala, despite their historical or regional significance, may be less emphasized in the current educational context.

Given the linguistic diversity and the prevalence of certain languages, educational programs at the Mahama refugee camp should offer tailored support for students transitioning from Kiswahili, Kinyarwanda, and Kirundi to English. This could include specialized language classes that address common transfer errors and emphasize differences between these languages and English. Educators should receive training on the linguistic backgrounds of their students to better address specific transfer issues. Understanding the common errors originating from Kiswahili and Kinyarwanda can help in developing effective teaching strategies. Incorporating aspects of the students' native languages into the curriculum can help bridge the gap between their linguistic backgrounds and English learning, making learning more relatable and effective.

4.2.1.6 Finding 3: Language transfer based on code mixing;

Table 4. 6 Examples of code mixing

The table below showcases examples of code mixing among students from Mahama Refugee Camp secondary schools. These examples illustrate the blending of English with other languages spoken by the students, including Kinyarwanda, Kiswahili, Kirundi, and French.

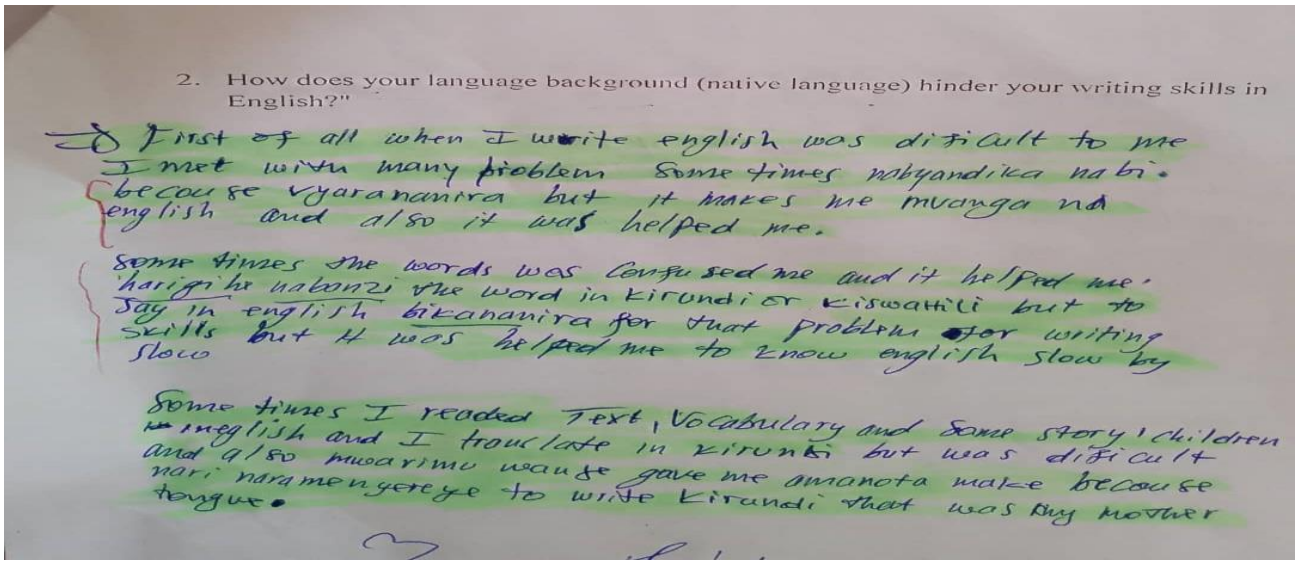
Example	Language(s) Mixed
"I don't English and their vocabulary ariko ikibazo ni to use that language."	English, Kinyarwanda
"English ngirikibazo mukumva proverbs, pronouns nogukora incamake."	English, Kinyarwanda
"I can not try inglish rimwe na rimwe ndakoresha gike even kiswahili."	English, Kinyarwanda, Kiswahili
"Challenges to me when writin english inshinga zirangora kuzimenya."	English, Kinyarwanda
"biratugora cyane because english is not our mother tongue."	English, Kinyarwanda
"my linguistic background is kirundi ariko I know languages nyinshi."	English, Kinyarwanda
"I want to know to write clearly english ariko byaranze pe, my english ni nkeya cyane."	English, Kinyarwanda
"my name is Simbikangwa I have not ubumenyi bwinshi in english language."	English, Kinyarwanda
"I do not know to write inshinga zikurikirana mu bihe because my native language hasn't that."	English, Kinyarwanda
"mwarimu wange yampaye zeru because english I do not know to write."	English, Kinyarwanda
"it is difficult to make sentences kuberako mbura amagambo yo gukoresha."	English, Kinyarwanda
"yes, my native language help me to write rimwe na rimwe gusa mbura vocabulary of english."	English, Kinyarwanda
"Teacher don't listen me kwasabu sijui kuandika English language."	English, Kiswahili
"when writing language kinyarwanda and English nakosa misamiati ya kingeleza."	English, Kinyarwanda, Kiswahili
"my native language helped me studying english lakini natumia kiswahili kuliko english kwani nakosa vocabulary."	English, Kiswahili
"nakutana na matatizo when writing english kwa sababu english is difficult."	English, Kiswahili

Example	Language(s) Mixed
"nakosa marks in english writing kwa sababu ninachangia maneno ya kiswahili yasoyofanana."	English, Kiswahili
"somehow my native help to write english wakati mambo yakiwa na maana sawa na kiswahili, natafsiri."	English, Kiswahili
"I have both parents, igihugu canje ni Brundi. Mfise ababyeyi banje with sublimgs."	English, Kirundi
"speaking my native language vyaramashije kuberako haribyo ntisigurira in English."	English, Kirundi
"when I enter in Rwanda country, icongoye cane ni ukumenya vocabulary of English."	English, Kirundi
"now I get fear when I meet agizi banabi they do not know my language."	English, Kirundi
"when I come from Burundi I know kirundi nico coroshe ivyo umuntu avuga ntavyumva nkavyandika."	English, Kirundi
"the challenge I meet when writing english and kinyarwanda nicongereza kuberako amagambo adasigura kimwe."	English, Kirundi, Kinyarwanda
"Birangora to find the vocabulary in English and English words ntasigura kimwe nayikirundi."	English, Kirundi
"To translate from kirundi to english help me to write english ariko imbogamizi icongereza nigike cane."	English, Kirundi
"I use my kirundi language kuko gifise amagambo yoroshye than english language."	English, Kirundi, Kinyarwanda
"English is difficult to me, moi meme j'aime francais seulemet."	English, French
"I want to write english j'ai eshoe parceque je comprend le francais."	English, French
"fisrt of all english is difficutl moi meme j'ai utilise le francais c'est facile."	English, French
"Today, am a student in S5LFK and je peut m'exprime in english."	English, French
"j'aime de transforme l'anglais dans kirundi because there some common words."	English, French, Kirundi
"it is challenge to write english vraiment, moi je prefere d'utilise le francais."	English, French

Example	Language(s) Mixed
"c'est difficile de comprendre l'anglais when we write sentences c'est pourquoi j'ai utilise le francais."	English, French

Source: Primary data, 2024

The following picture shows an example of the student whose native language is Kirundi. In his writing of English, he is interfered with Kirundi language.



4.2.1.7 Finding 4: Language transfer errors based on code switching

Table 4. 7 Examples of language transfer errors reflected through code switching

The table below showcases examples of code switching among students from Mahama Refugee Camp secondary schools. These examples demonstrate how students switch between multiple languages, such as English, Kiswahili, Kinyarwanda, Kirundi, and French, within their writing.

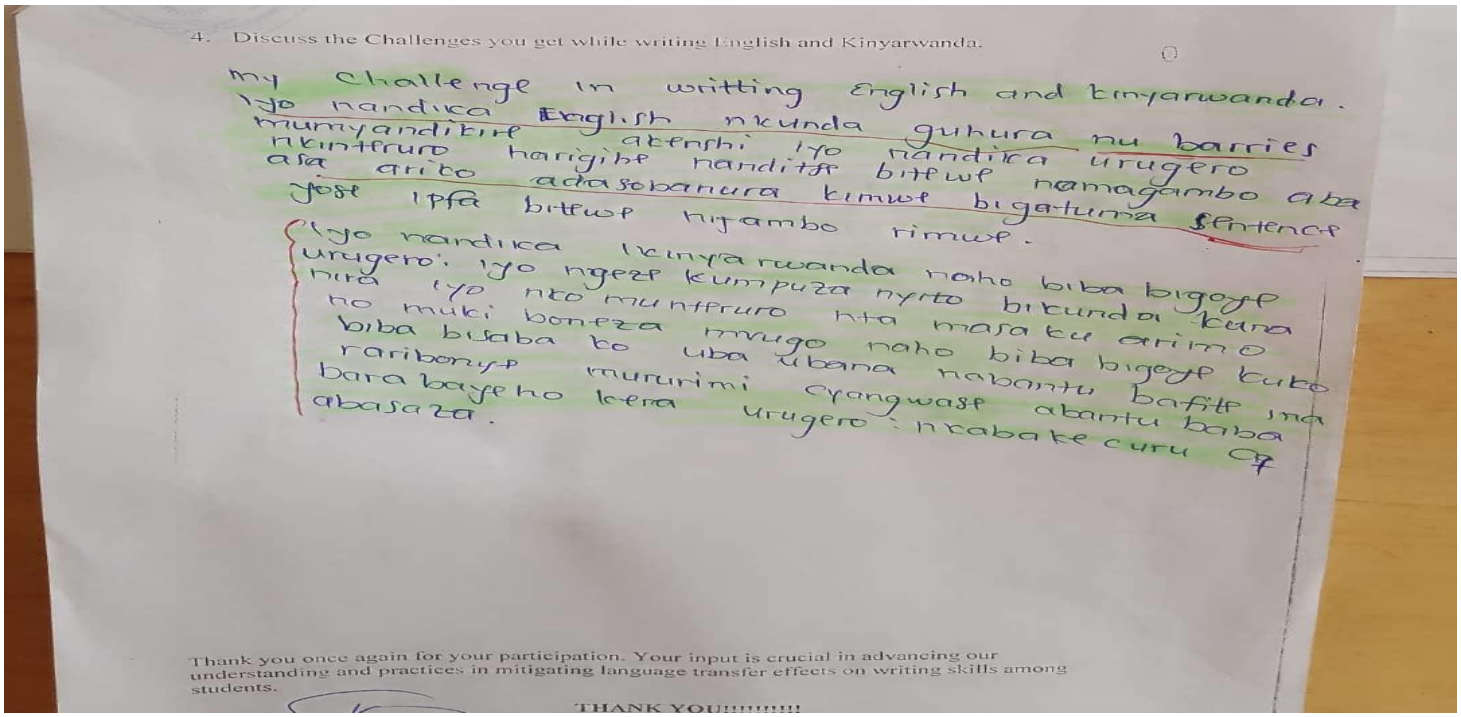
Example	Languages Switched
"after three years in Rwanda I was saying Kiswahili ariko uyu munsi ndageregeza gusubiza mu cyongereza."	English, Kiswahili, Kinyarwanda
"My language background iko kiswahili au kinyarwanda and I speak english when I am conversation."	English, Kiswahili, Kinyarwanda
"when I speak kiswahili then nikasikiliza wengine wako wanasema that language I don't understand."	English, Kiswahili
"I try to write english because nilitembelea nchi nyingi sana na kujua english kidogo nikashindwa."	English, Kiswahili
"whem I am gonna to write kinyarwanda icyangoraga nibihekane bakampa zeru."	English, Kinyarwanda
"mu gihe gito my teacher call me to teach ivyerekeranye english language."	English, Kirundi
"English is difficult to me, moi meme j'aime francais seulemet."	English, French
"I want to write english j'ai eshoe parceque je comprend le francais."	English, French
"fisrt of all english is difficutl moi meme j'ai utilise le francais c'est facile."	English, French
"Today, am a student in S5LFK and je peut m'exprime in english."	English, French
"j'aime de transforme l'anglais dans kirundi because there some common words."	English, French, Kirundi
"it is challenge to write english vraiment, moi je prefere d'utilise le francais."	English, French
"c'est difficile de comprendre l'anglais when we write sentences c'est pourquoi j'ai utilise le francais."	English, French

Source: Primary data, 2024

These tables illustrate how students incorporate multiple languages into their writing through both code mixing and code switching. Code mixing involves blending elements from different languages within a single sentence, while code switching involves shifting between languages across sentences or phrases.

Examples of pictures that contain writings that contain language transfers specifically code switching

The examples of the following students whose native language is Kiswahili and Kirundi respectively.



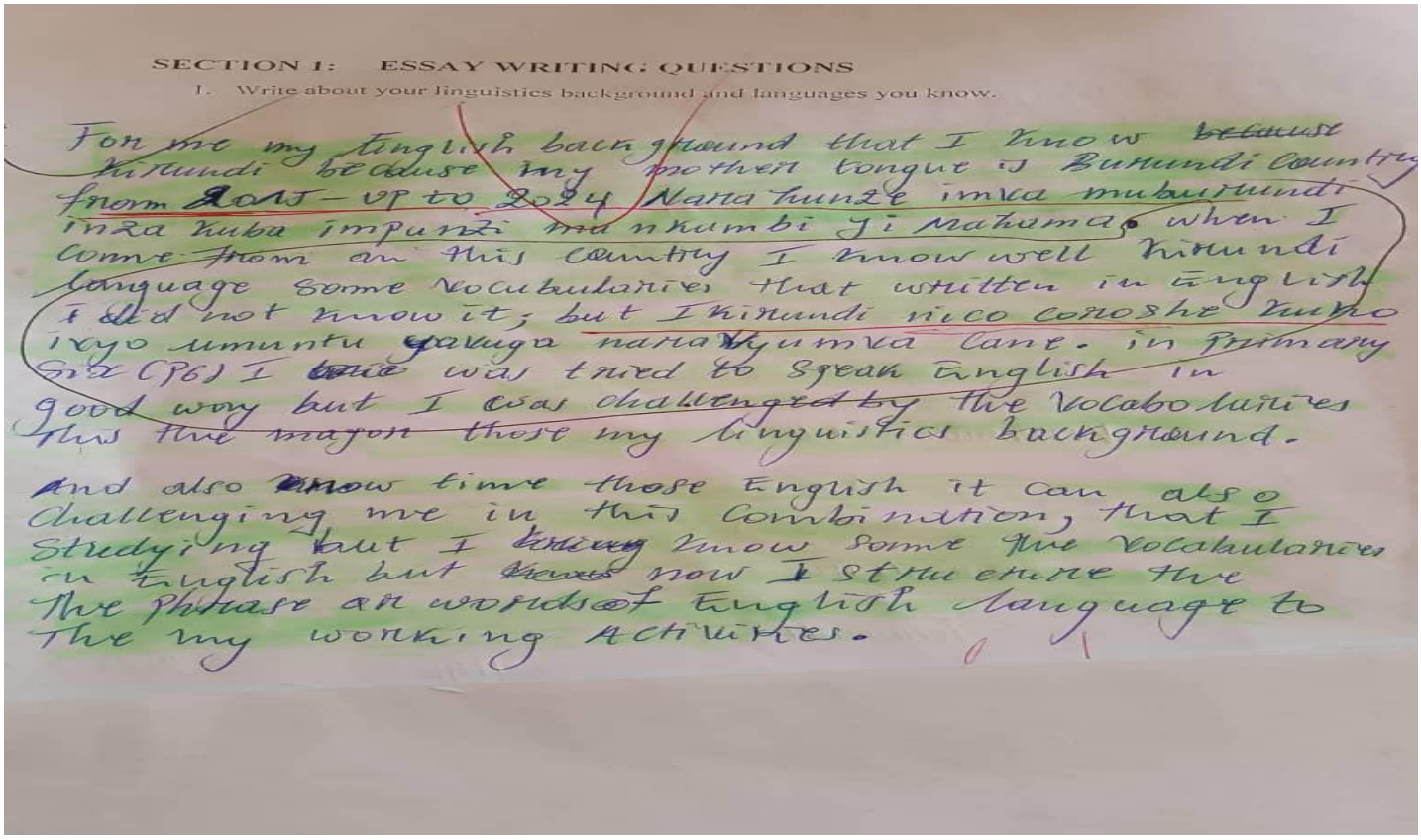
4. Discuss the Challenges you get while writing English and Kinyarwanda.

My challenge in writting English and kinyarwanda.
Iyo nandika English nkunda guhura nu barries
mumyanditse atenshi iyo nandika urugero
nkintfuro harigihe nanditse bitfwe nomagambo aba
asa ariko adasobanura kimwe bigatuma sentence
yose ipfa bitfwe higambo rimwe.

Iyo nandika Ikinyarwanda naho biba bigoye
urugero: iyo ngeze kumpuza nyito bitunda kuna
hira iyo nto muntfuro nta masa tu arimo
no muki bonteza mugo naho biba bigoye kuko
biba bisaba to uba ubana nabantu batite ina
raribonye mururimi cyangwase abantu baba
bara bayeho kera urugero: nzabake curu of
abasaza.

Thank you once again for your participation. Your input is crucial in advancing our understanding and practices in mitigating language transfer effects on writing skills among students.

THANK YOU!!!!!!!!!!



SECTION 1: ESSAY WRITING QUESTIONS

1. Write about your linguistics background and languages you know.

For me my English background that I know ~~because~~ Kirundi because my mother tongue is Burundi Country from 2015 - up to 2024 Nara hunze imva mubuirundi inza kuba impunzi ma nkumbi ji mahama. when I come from an this country I know well Kirundi language some vocabularies that written in English I did not know it; but I Kirundi nico coroshe kuko ivyo umuntu yavuga naravyumva cane. in Primary Six (P6) I ~~was~~ was tried to speak English in good way but I was challenged by the vocabolaries this the major those my linguistics background.

And also ~~know~~ time those English it can also challenging me in this combination, that I studying but I ~~know~~ know some the vocabularies in English but ~~know~~ now I structure the the phrase an words of English language to the my working Activities.

The above findings are in accordance with objective one.

4.2.2. Finding 2: The extent to which language transfer errors affecting negatively the learners writing skill in English.

The findings below were drawn from deputy head teachers and teachers in interview. The deputy head teachers and teachers were asked to give their views on how language transfer errors affecting negatively the learners writing in English language. Their answers were as follows:

Challenge 1: Direct Translation Issues

Direct translation from the first language (L1) to the English language (L2) often results in sentences that may be grammatically correct but semantically awkward or incorrect. This issue arises because certain idiomatic expressions, syntactic structures, and cultural nuances do not translate directly between languages. For example, a phrase that makes sense in Kinyarwanda might not have a direct equivalent in English, leading to confusion or miscommunication in writing and the example from the finding is linked to the teacher 1 argument: *"One frequent issue I see is students using direct translations from Kinyarwanda that don't quite fit in English. For instance, a student wrote, 'The car is the house,' trying to express 'The car is at home.' The direct translation from Kinyarwanda didn't capture the intended meaning and resulted in a sentence that made no sense in English"*

This finding aligns with Ellis (2008), who noted that direct translation from a native language often leads to errors in second language writing. According to Ellis, such errors stem from the lack of direct equivalence in idiomatic expressions, syntactic structures, and cultural contexts between languages.

Challenge 2: Incorrect Application of Grammar Rules

Language transfer can lead to the incorrect application of grammar rules. Learners might apply L1 grammatical structures to L2, resulting in errors such as incorrect verb tenses or sentence structures. For instance, a Kinyarwanda speaker might incorrectly use present tense forms in contexts requiring past tense in English, impacting the clarity and accuracy of their writing (Odlin, 1989).

"I've noticed that students often use present tense verbs when writing about past events. For example, they might write, 'Yesterday I go to the market,' instead of 'Yesterday I went to the market.' This is a common issue because they apply the present tense rule from Kinyarwanda to English"

Challenge 3: Vocabulary Misuse

Vocabulary transfer issues occur when learners use words from their L1 inappropriately in L2 contexts. This can result in semantic errors where the chosen word might not fully capture the intended meaning, or where a false cognate (a word that looks similar in both languages but has different meanings) is used incorrectly. For example, the Kinyarwanda word "imishahara" (salaries) might be confused with "salary" in English, leading to improper usage in writing (Gass & Selinker, 2008).

"A common problem is when students use vocabulary that seems similar in Kinyarwanda and English but has different meanings. For instance, a student used the word 'eventually' to mean 'sometimes,' reflecting its use in Kinyarwanda, but it actually means 'ultimately' in English. This misuse of vocabulary can change the intended meaning of their writing"

Selinker, (2008) pointed out that false cognates and direct translations can result in vocabulary errors, where learners use words that resemble their native language but have different meanings in English. This was evident when a student used 'eventually' to mean 'sometimes,' reflecting its use in Kinyarwanda, while in English, 'eventually' means 'ultimately.' Such misuses of vocabulary can significantly alter the intended meaning, as students may fail to recognize the nuanced differences between the languages.

Challenge 4: Overgeneralization of Rules

Learners might overgeneralize L1 rules to L2, leading to errors. For instance, if a learner overgeneralizes the pluralization rules from their L1, they might incorrectly apply these rules to irregular plurals in English.

"Students sometimes over apply the rules they've learned from Kinyarwanda to English. For example, they might write 'mouses' instead of 'mice' or 'foots' instead of 'feet,' because they are used to a more regular pluralization system in their native language. This leads to errors in their writing that are hard to correct"

Lightbown and Spada (2013) further explained that learners might overgeneralize L1 rules to L2, leading to errors such as using 'mouses' instead of 'mice' or 'foots' instead of 'feet,' due to the regular pluralization system.

Further findings on the extent to which language transfer errors affecting negatively the learners writing skill in English.

Respondent eleven: *"In my experience as a teacher, the most commonly observed types of language transfer in English writing among students with diverse language backgrounds include lexical, syntactic, and phonological transfer. Lexical transfer occurs when students borrow vocabulary from their native languages, resulting in mixed sentences where English words are interspersed with words from Kinyarwanda, Kiswahili, Kirundi, or French. This often leads to confusion and a lack of clarity in their writing. Syntactic transfer involves the direct translation of sentence structures from the students' native languages into English, which can result in grammatically incorrect or awkward sentences. For instance, students might use subject-verb-object structures that mirror their native language rules, leading to errors in tense and agreement. Phonological transfer, on the other hand, is when students write words as they sound in their native language, causing spelling mistakes and mispronunciations. These types of language transfer significantly affect English writing by reducing readability and making it challenging for students to express their thoughts accurately. They also reflect a deeper need for targeted language instruction that addresses these specific transfer issues, helping students to develop proficiency in English without the interference of their native language structures".*

Respondent one identified lexical, syntactic, and phonological transfer as the most common types of language transfer observed in English writing among students with diverse language backgrounds. Lexical transfer involves borrowing vocabulary from native languages, resulting in mixed sentences that cause confusion and reduce clarity. This finding aligns with the research by Odlin (1989), who noted that lexical transfer often leads to code-switching and semantic errors in bilingual students' writing.

Syntactic transfer, where students translate sentence structures directly from their native languages, leads to grammatically incorrect sentences. This concurs with the findings of Ringbom (2007), who highlighted that syntactic transfer can cause persistent structural errors in English language writing. Phonological transfer, where students write words as they sound in their native language, resulting in

spelling mistakes, is also supported by the research of Swan and Smith (2001), who found that phonological interference often leads to pronunciation and spelling errors in English language learners.

Respondent nine*: who has extensive experience teaching students with diverse language backgrounds, emphasizes that both positive and negative language transfer are prevalent in English writing. Positive transfer occurs when similarities between English and the student's native language facilitate the learning process, helping students grasp concepts more quickly. For instance, students who speak French often find it easier to understand English vocabulary and syntax due to the significant overlap between the two languages. However, negative transfer is more commonly observed and poses substantial challenges. Negative transfer includes lexical borrowing, where students insert words from their native languages into English sentences, resulting in code-mixing. For example, a student might write, "I don't understand the proverbs ariko ngirira ikibazo n'uburanga bw'ikinyarwanda," mixing English with Kinyarwanda. Syntactic transfer is also prevalent, where students apply the grammatical rules of their native language to English, leading to errors in sentence construction. For instance, a Kinyarwanda-speaking student might write, "She go to school every day," omitting the third-person singular due to differences in verb conjugation rules. Additionally, interviewee two points out that phonological transfer affects spelling and pronunciation in writing. Students often write words as they sound in their native language, which can result in incorrect spelling and misunderstood meanings. For instance, a student might write "serious" as "sirius," reflecting the phonetic pronunciation in their native language.*

Respondent two emphasized the dual nature of language transfer, highlighting both positive and negative errors. Positive transfer facilitates learning when there are similarities between the native language and English, such as shared vocabulary or syntax. This view is supported by Cummins (2000), who argued that similarities between languages can accelerate English language acquisition through positive transfer.

Selinker (1972) introduced the concept of "interlanguage," noting that negative transfer from the first language often leads to systematic errors in the second language. This includes lexical borrowing and syntactic errors, where students might mix English with their native languages, resulting in code-mixing and grammatical mistakes. These findings collectively underscore the complexities of language transfer and the need for targeted instructional strategies to mitigate these errors.

4.2.3 Finding 3: Proposed Effective strategies and interventions for mitigating language transfer errors in English language writing

The deputy head teachers and teachers were asked to give their views on strategies and interventions for mitigating language transfer errors in English language writings. Their answers were as follows:

Proposed strategy 1: Focused Grammar Instruction

Providing targeted grammar instruction that emphasizes the differences between the first language (L1) and the English language (L2) can help mitigate transfer issues. Teachers should focus on common areas of confusion, such as tense usage and verb forms, and provide explicit explanations and practice opportunities. This approach can help learners become more aware of the specific areas where their L1 might influence their L2 writing (Chen, 2020).

Teacher1:

"I've found that when we dedicate class time specifically to contrasting English tenses with Kinyarwanda tenses, students start to recognize where their mistakes come from. For instance, when we highlight the differences between past and present tense usage, students are better able to correct errors like writing 'Yesterday I go to the market'" (Interview, July 2024). These findings are in line with Lightbown and Spada (2013) further explained that learners might overgeneralize L1 rules to L2, leading to errors such as using 'mouses' instead of 'mice' or 'foots' instead of 'feet,' due to the regular pluralization system.

Proposed strategy 2: Use of Contrastive Analysis

Employing contrastive analysis involves comparing and contrasting the grammatical structures of the L1 and L2. This method helps learners understand how their first language influences their English language writing and provides clear examples of common errors and correct usage. By making these differences explicit, learners can develop strategies to avoid common mistakes (Chen, 2020).

Deputy Head Teacher1:

"Implementing contrastive analysis in our curriculum has been very effective. For example, we show students how English tense structures differ from those in Kinyarwanda, which helps them avoid common errors like using present tense for past events" (Interview, July 2024). This approach aligns with Odlin (1989), who supports the use of contrastive analysis to identify and address language transfer issues. Odlin argued that by comparing the structures of the learner's native language (L1) and the target language (L2), educators can predict and mitigate potential errors, thereby enhancing the effectiveness of language instruction.

Proposed strategy 3: Error Correction and Feedback

Providing timely and specific feedback on writing errors helps learners identify and correct language transfer issues. Teachers should focus on providing constructive feedback that addresses specific errors related to language transfer and offer guidance on how to correct these mistakes. Regular error correction and feedback can help learners improve their writing accuracy over time (Shinta Sari, 2021).

Teacher2:

"I make it a point to highlight and correct errors related to language transfer in students' writing. For example, when students misuse tenses, I provide detailed feedback and explanations on how to use the correct tense. This helps them improve their writing and reduces recurring mistakes" (Interview, July 2024). These practices are supported by Ellis (2008), who notes that targeted feedback is crucial in helping learners overcome language transfer issues. Ellis emphasizes that providing specific, corrective feedback helps learners recognize and address errors caused by interference from their native language. By focusing on particular aspects of language transfer, such as tense misuse, educators can guide students more effectively towards correct language use, thus reducing recurring mistakes and enhancing overall proficiency

Proposed strategy 4: Incorporation of Communicative Practice

Integrating communicative practice into the curriculum allows students to use the language in meaningful contexts, which helps reinforce correct usage and reduce the impact of language transfer. Activities such as role-plays, writing exercises, and peer review sessions provide opportunities for learners to apply language skills in real-life scenarios, thus improving their writing proficiency.

Deputy Head Teacher2:

"Encouraging students to engage in communicative practice, such as peer review and role-playing, has been beneficial. These activities allow students to practice using correct tenses and structures in context, which helps them internalize proper usage and reduce language transfer errors". This strategy is in line with Gass and Selinker (2008), who highlight the value of communicative practice in enhancing language learning and reducing transfer errors. Gass and Selinker argue that interactive activities facilitate language acquisition by providing learners with practical opportunities to apply grammatical rules and structures in real-life contexts.

4.5 Discussion of the findings

Objective i: Investigating Language Transfer Errors on Writing Proficiency

Language transfer errors, such as grammar and syntax interference, significantly impact English language (L2) writing proficiency. This study identifies specific errors, such as incorrect verb tenses and

subject-verb agreement, which stem from transferring grammatical rules from learners' native languages to English. For instance, students' use of “am going to school every day since I was a child” reflects the influence of their native language's tense structure. Additionally, vocabulary transfer issues, such as the misuse of “sympathy” instead of “admiration,” highlight how false cognates can lead to semantic errors, and these are in line with the findings of Odlin (1989) and Ringbom (2007). These observations underscore the challenges posed by language transfer in L2 writing, aligning with previous research that documents similar issues (Celce-Murcia & Larsen-Freeman, 1999).

Objective ii: Examining How Language Transfer Challenges Writing Proficiency

Language transfer challenges writing proficiency by introducing errors in direct translation, incorrect grammar application, vocabulary misuse, and overgeneralization of rules. Teachers and deputy head teachers report frequent issues such as direct translations leading to semantically awkward sentences and incorrect application of grammar rules (Ellis, 2008; Odlin, 1989). For instance, the direct translation error “The car is the house” illustrates the difficulty students face when idiomatic expressions do not align between languages. Incorrect grammar application, such as “Yesterday I go to the market,” reflects a misunderstanding of tense usage due to native language influence. These observations align with previous studies on language transfer, such as Selinker (1972), who introduced the concept of "interlanguage," and Lightbown & Spada (2013), who emphasized the impact of overgeneralization from L1.

Objective iii: Effective Strategies and Interventions for Mitigating Language Transfer Errors in English Language Writing

Effective strategies to mitigate language transfer errors include focused grammar instruction, contrastive analysis, error correction, and communicative practice. Targeted grammar instruction helps learners recognize differences between L1 and L2 tenses, improving their accuracy (Chen, 2020). Contrastive analysis, by comparing grammatical structures of L1 and L2, aids in understanding transfer issues and correcting common errors (Chen, 2020). Error correction and feedback, which provide specific guidance on writing mistakes, enhance learners' ability to self-correct and improve over time (Shinta Sari, 2021). Communicative practice, incorporating activities like peer review and role-play, reinforces correct language use in meaningful contexts (Gass & Selinker, 2008). These strategies align with findings from Lightbown and Spada (2013), who emphasize the importance of focused grammar instruction in addressing overgeneralization from L1.

CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY, CONCLUSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Introduction

The current chapter summarizes the results that were presented in the previous chapter. The summary is guided by the three research objectives that guided the whole process of data collection and analysis. The summary is presented under objective by objective and after the summary, a number of conclusions and recommendations are drawn. The study was guided by the following objectives:

i. To investigate the language transfer errors that hinder writing proficiency in English language learning.
ii. To examine how language transfer challenges writing proficiency in English language.
iii. To identify effective strategies and interventions for mitigating language transfer errors in English language writing.

5.1 Summary of findings

The research at Mahama Refugee Camp secondary schools highlights significant language transfer errors that hinder writing proficiency in English among students. Language transfer errors, such as grammar and syntax interference, significantly impact English language (L2) writing proficiency. This study identifies specific errors, such as incorrect verb tenses and subject-verb agreement, which stem from transferring grammatical rules from learners' native languages to English. Language transfer challenges writing proficiency by introducing errors in direct translation, incorrect grammar application, vocabulary misuse, and overgeneralization of rules. Teachers and deputy head teachers report frequent issues such as direct translations leading to semantically awkward sentences and incorrect application of grammar rules. Effective strategies to mitigate language transfer errors include focused grammar instruction, contrastive analysis, error correction, and communicative practice.

5.2 Conclusion

In conclusion, the research conducted at Mahama Refugee Camp secondary schools reveals several critical insights into the impact of language transfer errors on English writing proficiency among students. These conclusions reflect the significant challenges and potential solutions identified through the study: The study highlights that language transfer errors—such as interference with grammar and syntax—pose substantial challenges to English writing proficiency. Students frequently exhibit errors related to incorrect verb tenses, subject-verb agreement, and other grammatical issues. These problems arise from applying native language rules to English, which leads to incorrect grammar, awkward sentences, and overall reduced writing quality.

Specific errors identified include incorrect verb tenses and subject-verb agreement issues, which result from direct translation and the application of native language rules to English. These errors disrupt the clarity and accuracy of students' writing, indicating that language transfer significantly affects their ability to write proficiently in English.

Language transfer challenges writing proficiency by introducing errors in direct translation, incorrect grammar application, vocabulary misuse, and the overgeneralization of grammatical rules. Teachers and deputy head teachers report frequent issues, such as semantically awkward sentences resulting from direct translations and improper application of grammar rules. These challenges highlight the need for targeted interventions to address language transfer errors. The study identifies several effective strategies to mitigate language transfer errors: focused grammar instruction, contrastive analysis, error correction, and communicative practice.

5.3 Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made and addressed to the government of Rwanda, the school administration, teachers and students:

Government:

- ✓ Provide support for professional development programs for teachers focused on addressing language transfer errors in English language writing. This can include funding for workshops, seminars, and resources.
- ✓ Implement policies that promote the use of bilingual education models in refugee camps, allowing students to maintain proficiency in their first language while learning the English language.

School Administration:

- ✓ Encourage a supportive environment for teachers to experiment with new strategies and interventions to mitigate language transfer errors. This can include providing time and resources for professional development.
- ✓ Implement regular assessments to monitor the effectiveness of strategies used to mitigate language transfer errors and adjust them as needed.

Teachers:

- ✓ Incorporate explicit instruction on language differences between the first language and the English language in their teaching practices.
- ✓ Provide opportunities for students to read extensively in the English language to help them internalize correct language patterns.

Students:

- ✓ Actively engage in reading and writing activities in the English language to improve their language proficiency.
- ✓ Seek feedback from teachers and peers on their writing to identify and correct language transfer errors.

5.4 Suggestions for further studies

Here are three areas for further study related to mitigating language transfer errors on English writing skills among students in Mahama Refugee Camp Secondary Schools:

1. Investigate the effectiveness of peer feedback in mitigating language transfer errors on English writing skills. This study could explore how peer feedback can help students identify and correct language transfer errors in their writing.
2. Examine the impact of teacher training programs on mitigating language transfer errors. This study could assess how specific training programs for teachers can improve their ability to address language transfer issues in the classroom.
3. Explore the use of technology in mitigating language transfer errors on English writing skills. This study could investigate how tools such as grammar-checking software or online writing platforms can support students in identifying and correcting language transfer errors.

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Research Questionnaire: **Mitigating language transfer effects on Writing Skills among Students in Mahama Refugee Camp Secondary Schools.**

Dear Participant,

Thank you for taking the time to participate in this research study. Your insights are invaluable in understanding and addressing language transfer effects on writing skills among students specifically in Mahama refugee camp secondary schools. Your responses will contribute in providing recommendations on proper strategies for educators to use when teaching second language and facilitate students to overcome in such difficulties or challenges they face when learning English as their second lamguage.

Please answer the following questions honestly to the best of your ability.

DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

- Names:…….....
- Gender: Male ☐ Female ☐
- Age: Under 18 18-20 21-25 26-30 Over 30
- Nationality:……
- Native Language:……
- Educational Background: Combination: Year of Study:

APPENDIXI I: PERIMISSION FOR DATA COLLECTION

NSENGIMANA Innocent

MED/ English/ UR-CE

E-mail: inno100nsengi@gmail.com

Tel: +250788923257

SECRETARIAT CENTRAL - KIREHE
Pour Réception
Date :
N° d'enregistrement :
A traiter par :

Kirehe, 19th March, 2021

To the Mayor of Kirehe district

Dear Sir,

Re: Application for Data Collection Authorization in Kirehe district you are the Mayor of.

I am NSENGIMANA Innocent, living in Kirehe district, Kirehe sector, Nyabikokora cell and am also a teacher of English and Kiswahili at ES Rusumo from 2014 up today. I am a student at University of Rwanda and am doing Masters of Education in English Education.

In fact, I humbly write this letter to apply for data collection authorization for my Masters Research
Project entitled **"MITIGATING LANGUAGE TRANSFER EFFECTS ON WRITING SKILLS AMONG STUDENTS IN MAHAMA REFUGEE CAMP SECONDARY SCHOOLS"** in Kirehe district you are the Mayor of.

Data collection activities will be conducted at GS Paysannat L A, B, C and D from Mahama Refugee Camp in Kirehe district. The requested data collection authorization is necessary to facilitate me in the activities of data collection at indicated schools where Refugee students attend the class daily from Mahama Sector.

I hope you will consider my application and I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,
NSENGIMANA Innocent

CamScanner

APPENDIX II: ETHICAL CLEARANCE FORM

RETHC: Ethical Research Approval Form

UNIVERSITY OF RWANDA

Directorate of Research and Innovation (UR-DRI)

SECTION A: Project Information

Project title: "MITIGATING LANGUAGE TRANSFER EFFECTS ON WRITING SKILLS AMONG STUDENTS IN MAHAMA REFUGEE CAMP SECONDARY SCHOOLS''.			
Investigators:	NSENGIMANA Innocent		
Student No.	221031615		
Co-Investigators (i f applicable): NONE			
Supervisor/s: (if ap plicable) **Assoc. Prof. Epima que NIYIBIZI**			
Contact details of Investigators:	***Phone*** +250788923275	***Fax***	***E-mail:*** Inno100nsengi@gmail.com
Degree enrolled in (if applicable):	Masters in English Education (Med)		
Project location:	GS Paysannat L A, B and C from Mahama Sector, Kirehe district, Eastern Province.		
Project duration:	9 months		

SECTION B: Ethical Review Application *(To be filled by Applicant (s))* **Please answer all of the following questions**

1. Who are the research participants and how will they be recruited?
1.1. Research participants are mainly students and teachers from mentioned schools.
Etc

CamScanner

APPENDIX III: AUTHORIZATION FOR DATA COLLECTION

REPUBLIC OF RWANDA

EASTERN PROVINCE
KIREHE DISTRICT

18th April 2023
Ref 4818/07.05.05

Mr. NSENGIMANA Innocent
Tel: 0788923275/0783292243

RE: Response to your Letter.

Dear Sir,

Reference is made to your letter dated 19/03/2024 requesting the authorization to conduct data collection for your research project entitled **"Mitigating Language transfer effects on writing skills among students in Mahama refugee camp secondary schools;**

Reference also is made to the project information document of University of Rwanda informing us that you are a Student of this University following the Master's Program of Education especially in English Education and you want to conduct a research for your studies;

I am pleased to inform you that your request to conduct data collection for your research is granted in condition that you will work *only in schools of GS Paysannat LA, GS Paysannat LB, GS Paysannat LC and GS Paysannat LD* located in **Mahama** Sector as you requested.

Sincerely

RANGIRA Bruno
The Mayor of Kirehe District
CC:

- The Vice Mayors (Both)
- District Executive Secretary
- Division Manager of Corporate Services

CamScanner

APPENDIX IV: INFORMED CONSENT

INFORMED CONSENT

Part I: Participant' Information Sheet

Date: 25th April 2024

Dear, ...

My Name is **NSENGIMANA Innocent**, a student at University of Rwanda College of Education. I am pursuing a Master of Education in English Education and I am currently conducting a research entitled "**MITIGATING LANGUAGE TRANSFER EFFECTS ON WRITING SKILLS AMONG STUDENTS IN MAHAMA REFUGEE CAMP SECONDARY SCHOOLS**".

You have been selected to willingly participate in this research. To take part in this research is free and I will highly appreciate your contribution. This research aims at **MITIGATING LANGUAGE TRANSFER EFFECTS ON WRITING SKILLS AMONG STUDENTS IN MAHAMA REFUGEE CAMP SECONDARY** SCHOOLS" in order to find out strategies to use in line with helping students to improve their writing skill in English and provide insights to educators and policymakers to understand the effects of language transfer that hinder students wring skills. Understanding these effects will help them to know strategies, methods to use and pedagogical practices in order to lessen these effects so that students can develop writing skills in English. Policy makers will recognize this issue of transfer during curriculum designing in order to meet students' needs in English writing skills.

To address this issue will empower students to communicate effectively though writing skill, improving their academic performance in all subjects. It will also contribute to professional opportunities and Rwanda development.
Kindly, you are requested to participate in this research by answering some questions related to it. There is no right or wrong response to any question. Feel free to express your ideas as you want. Your responses will remain private and will not be shared with anybody in your school or elsewhere. The findings of this study will not identify any name of school, student, teacher or leader. By filling this form, you are approving to take part in this research. You are free to your view during your participation at any time you want or to take back from participation without penalties. Please sign this informed consent, if you agree to participate in this study.
I sincerely appreciate your involvement

Thank you!

CamScanner

APPENDIX V: INTERVIEW TO DEPUTY HEAD TEACHERS AND TEACHERS

In this section, the structured interview will be used. The teachers who will answer the section will be interviewed face to face.

Topic: Mitigating language transfer errors on English writing skills among Students in Mahama Refugee Camp Secondary Schools.

Part I: DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

Demographic information of respondents	
1. Names of respondents	1. ……
2. What is your gender	1. Male 2. Female
3. What is your age?	1. Under 18 years 2. 18-25 years 3. 26-30 years 4. 30 years and above
4. What is your education level	1. A1 2. A0
5. What is experience in teaching	1. Below 1 year 2. 2-5 years 3. Above 5 years
6. Subject taught	1. English 2. French 3. Kinyarwanda 4. Kiswahili

Part II: Objective one: The language transfer errors that hinder writing proficiency in English language learning

1. Have you encountered students with language transfer issues in writing? Please describe.

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2. What types of language transfer are most commonly observed in English writing among students with diverse language backgrounds and how do they affect English writing?

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3. What role do you think language transfer plays in influencing the English writing skills of students?

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4. In your experience, what specific language transfer errors have you observed in the writing of students in English?

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Part III: To examine how language transfer challenges writing proficiency in English language

5. Can you describe some common language transfer issues that your students face when writing in English language, and how these issues affect their writing proficiency?

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6. In your experience, what specific aspects of students' first language most frequently interfere with their ability to write proficiently in English language?

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Part IV: Effective strategies and interventions for mitigating language transfer errors in English language writing.

7. What strategies or approaches have you found to be effective in mitigating language transfer errors on English writing skills?

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8. Have you received any training or professional development related to addressing language transfer in writing?

a. Yes

b. No

Thank you once again for your participation. Your input is crucial in advancing our understanding and practices in mitigating language transfer errors on English writing skills among students.

THANK YOU!!!!!

APPENDIX VI: QUESTIONNAIRE TO STUDENTS

Topic: Mitigating language transfer errors on English writing skills among Students in Mahama Refugee Camp Secondary Schools.

Dear Participant,

Thank you for taking the time to participate in this research study. Your insights are invaluable in understanding and addressing language transfer errors on English writing skills among students specifically in Mahama refugee camp secondary schools. Your responses will contribute in providing recommendations on proper strategies for educators to use when teaching English language and facilitate students to overcome in such difficulties or challenges they face when learning English as their second lamguage.

Please answer the following questions honestly to the best of your ability.

Part I: Demographic Information

Demographic information of respondents	
7. Names of respondent	5. ……
8. What is your gender	3. Male 4. Female
9. What is your age?	2. Under 18 years 6. 18-25 years 7. 26-30 years 8. 30 years and above
10. Education background	3. Combination…….. 4. Year of study…….
11. Native language	5. English 6. French 7. Kinyarwanda 8. Kiswahili 9. ……

PART 2: ESSAY WRITING QUESTIONS

1. Write about your linguistics background and languages you know.

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2. How does your language background (native language) hinder your English writing skills in English?"

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3. Does your language background help you master English writing skills in English? If so, how?"

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4. Discuss the Challenges you get while writing English and Kinyarwanda.

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Thank you once again for your participation. Your input is crucial in advancing our understanding and practices in mitigating language transfer errors on English writing skills among students.

THANK YOU!!!!!!!!!!