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RELATION BETWEEN GRAMMAR ACHIEVEMENT AND TYPES AND FREQUENCY OF ERRORS IN GRAMMAR COURSE

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Abstract

This study aims to analyze the correspondence between the students' grammar achievement and types and frequency of errors they make in grammar course. The relevant data were gathered from an EFL class at a state university in Turkey by means of two sources; students' average scores of three midterm exams and audio recordings. The analysis of the data revealed that the students mostly made phonological errors followed by grammatical errors encapsulating syntactic and morphological errors. According to the results, high achievers tended to have larger number of errors while low achievers tended to have fewer errors supporting the claim that errors are an indication of learning. However, it is adverse to infer a direct relation between these variables. The analysis of the data also indicated that there might be further factors affecting the frequency and types of errors such as number of the turns that students take, students' personality traits, their willingness to participate and to take risks for testing their knowledge.

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Keywords: types of errors; frequency of errors; grammar achievement; grammar courses; EFL learners

Introduction

Errors have been considered as substantial in language classrooms since they provide information about the students' learning process. Shahin (2011) implies that for foreign language learning, considering the significance of the errors, producing language without errors is not regarded as essential anymore. In agreement with this opinion, Chastain (1971)

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states that “more important than error-free speech is the creation of an atmosphere in which the students want to talk” (p. 249).

Some of the previous studies focus on the importance of errors. Corder (1982), for instance, claims that errors in classroom are significant in three ways: (1) errors provide the teacher with information about how much the learner has learned; (2) they provide the teacher with evidence of the way the language was learned; and (3) they help the learners to discover the rules of the target language. He argues that errors are indispensable for learners because errors are regarded as a device learner use to learn. He further adds that by means of errors, learners can test their previous assumptions about the rules and structures of the language.

Supporters of the natural acquisition of language theory also agree with the strength of errors in language learning. As specified in Shahin (2011), Ellis (1990) argues that errors are considered as an essential part of the learning process. He adds that errors are inevitable, and they provide evidence for the language acquisition. He also asserts that language teachers can evaluate the effectiveness of their teaching method by means of errors. By this way, they can additionally make the necessary adjustments to their teaching methods considering their needs. Considering the significance of errors, Atmaca (2016) believes that they are a sign of improvement. Similarly, Rattanadilok Na Phuket and Othman (2015) state "errors used to be recognized as the undesirable problems which teachers tried to prevent, but recently, errors are differently considered as a sign of learning progress" (p. 100). In alignment with these studies, Farrokh (2011) and Montrul (2011) also underline that people make some systematic errors during the process of learning a foreign language and this is an indication of their progress. Lin (2016) also considers errors to be a substantial indication of acquisition of the related items.

More recent literature on errors also highlights the significance of errors and self-initiated error corrections during the process of learning a foreign language although error correction is not the focus of the study at hand. Anton (2011) claims that thanks to the analysis of errors and self-initiated error corrections, researchers might identify learners' actual abilities. In agreement with Anton (2011), Ellis (2018) underlines that the frequency of self-initiated error corrections could be considered as significant evidence of L2 learners' awareness. Similarly, Bestgen and Granger (2011) indicate that increased frequency of self-initiated error corrections could help the learners to learn and utilize the linguistic items better. Focusing on self-initiated error corrections, Ewald (2015) and Salido (2016) also indicate that thanks to self-initiated error corrections, learners might apprehend linguistic discrepancies and they might address these differences.

Purposes of the Study

Errors are a strong indication that learning is taking place. As mentioned in Shahin (2011), educators including Burt and Kiparsky (1972), Selinker (1972), Allwright (1975), Corder (1973), Hendrickson (1978), and James (1998) argued the significance of errors. It is considerably believed that students learn from their errors and errors are inevitable and helpful in learning. In the specific context where this study was implemented, the author herself was teaching, the class. She noticed that there were many errors made by the students during the grammar courses most probably because of the students' proficiency level. The students in this class got lower scores in English Proficiency Exam at the beginning of the fall term compared to the other preparatory classes. Considering the literature on errors, the researcher tried to test whether those errors in this specific class were also an indication of learning or not. Therefore, this study aims to explore the relationship between the grammar achievement level of the students and frequency and types of errors they make. The main aim is to designate whether high achievers make more errors than the other students during the learning process in grammar course.

Definition of 'Error'

Errors have usually been defined with some reference to the native speaker form of a linguistic item. Chan et al. (1982) describe an error underlining the linguistic fluency of its user. They define an error as "the use of a linguistic item in a way, which according to fluent users of the language indicated faulty or incomplete learning" (p. 538). Their definition implies that errors occur in language learning because of deficiency in competence.

Compared to the previous description, Lennon (1991) employs a more flexible description for errors. He defines an error as 'a linguistic form or combination of forms which in the same context and under similar conditions of production, would in all likelihood, not be produced by the speaker's native speaker counterparts' (p. 182). His definition underlines that errors are linguistic forms that native speakers do not normally produce.

Based on the native speaker's form, Allwright and Bailey (1991) also introduce a similar definition for errors. They define an error as the production of a linguistic form which deviates from the correct form. However, they also indicate that using departures from the native speaker norm to define an error is too narrow and inadequate. They imply that the target language model the learner is exposed to may not be the native speaker norm considering the increasing number of the non-native speaking teachers who are doing a great deal of the world's foreign language teaching.

Sources of Errors

Erdoğan (2005) suggests two major sources of errors in second language learning. The first source is interference from the native language which is also called interlingual transfer. Second source is usually believed to be intralingual and developmental factors.

Interlingual Transfer

Interlingual transfer could be defined as a significant source for language learners. When they are learning a new language, learners consciously or unconsciously compare the new language with their mother tongue. Dictionary of Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics (1992) defines interlingual errors as being the result of language transfer, which is caused by the learner's first language (as cited in Erdoğan, 2005). There exist positive and negative transfer. Positive transfer facilitates the target language learning while negative transfer results in errors. There might be distinct types of interlingual errors such as phonological, morphological, grammatical and lexical-semantic errors.

Intralingual Transfer and Developmental Errors

Previous studies on the sources of errors claim that apart from the interferences from the students' own language, there is another source for errors in language learning. As mentioned in Shahin (2011), Ellis (1997) denotes that some errors are universal in which learners try to make the process of learning a new language simpler. Overgeneralization is sometimes the reason for these errors. An example for overgeneralization is the use of past tense suffix '-ed' for all verbs. Regardless of their mother tongue, these errors are common in the speech of second language learners.

Touchie (1986) remarks that intralingual errors may also result from partial learning or lack of practice of the target language. They may be caused by the influence of one target language item upon another. For example, sometimes learners attempt to use two tense markers at the same time in one sentence since they have not had enough practice. When they say: "He is comes here", it might be because the singularity of the third person requires "is" in present continuous, and "-s" at the end of a verb in simple present tense. In short, as underlined by Touchie (1986) intralingual errors are results of language learners' attempt to test hypotheses about the new language with which they have limited experience.

Types of Errors

There have been discrete views on the types of errors in literature. As mentioned in Touchie (1986), some researchers distinguish between performance errors and competence errors. Performance errors usually result from lack of attention, fatigue or carelessness. These errors are not regarded as serious since the speakers can correct them with little effort. They

are also called mistakes in some studies. Competence errors, on the other hand, are more serious than performance errors since they result from a deficiency in learning. As already mentioned, speakers are not able to correct their competence errors since they do not know the correct answer.

As signified in Touchie (1986), Burt and Kiparsky (1974) distinguish between local and global errors. According to their distinction, local errors do not hinder communication and comprehension of an utterance. However, global errors are more serious than local errors because they cause communication breakdowns. Examples for local errors encapsulate noun and verb inflections, and the use of articles, prepositions, and auxiliaries. Global errors might involve incorrect word order in a sentence.

Some studies agree on the phonological, morphological, lexical, and syntactic errors. An example of a phonological error is an incorrect pronunciation of a word. Touchie (1986) claims that examples for morphological errors might incorporate the production of such errors as womans, sheeps, and furnitures. A lexical error comprises the use of wrong vocabulary in the second language. He further adds that they may also result from inappropriate direct translation from the learner's native language. To illustrate, 'the clock is now ten' might be regarded as a lexical error. Finally, syntactic errors are usually related to word order and subject-verb agreement.

For the present study, a model suggested by Levelt (1983) is used for determining the types of errors. This model includes three main types which are phonological errors, grammatical errors and lexical errors. Grammatical errors are also grouped into two subcategories: syntactic and morphological errors.

Considering the findings and assumptions of previous studies, this study tries to find the answers to the following questions:

1. What is the frequency of errors for each student in a grammar course?
2. What types of errors does each student make in a grammar course?
3. Is there a correlation between the students' grammar achievement level and the frequency of the errors?
4. Is there a correlation between the students' grammar achievement level and types of errors they make in grammar course?

Method

For this study, ethics committee approval was obtained from Aksaray University, Human Research Ethics Committee, and the document number is 2020/12-01. It was obtained on the 9th of November, 2020.

Error analysis was employed to investigate the frequency and types of errors for each student.

Participants

For the present study, there were 19 pre-intermediate level participants. They were preparatory class students at a state university. Their departments were English Language Teaching and English Language and Literature. There were 8 male students and 11 female students in this specific class. There were 7 foreign students who were accepted to the university without any exam. Therefore, it should be noted that neither their Turkish nor their English was good enough to follow the lectures. The rest of the class were from divergent parts of Turkey. At the beginning of the fall term, they took English Proficiency Exam and they were placed to different classes according to their level of English. The students in this class got lower scores compared to the other students in the other classes. During the one-year preparation class, they have Reading, Writing, Listening, Speaking and Grammar courses every week. They had their grammar course seven hours a week. The students had four midterms and pop-up quizzes; therefore, they were supposed to be ready for the quizzes any time.

Instruments for Data Collection

For the present study, relevant data were gathered by means of two sources: students' average scores of three midterm exams and audio recordings.

Students' Exam Scores

Until the implementation of this study, students had three midterm exams and six quizzes. For this study, the average results of three midterm exams are provided for each student to get a clear and more reliable understanding of their grammar achievement. These exams usually embodied filling in the blanks questions, rewriting and matching questions. There was not any multiple-choice question in the exams. So as to calculate the average scores, quizzes were not taken into consideration because some of the students missed several of the quizzes. Moreover, quizzes were not comprehensive compared to midterm exams.

Recordings

For the present study, six different hours in pre-intermediate grammar class were recorded. In these recorded lessons, the author herself was teaching. These recordings were

used for determining the frequency of errors, types of errors and number of turns students take. In these grammar courses, there were discrete activities embracing matching, filling in the blanks, rewriting and open-ended questions.

Results

Students' Average Grammar Scores

As already mentioned, students had three midterm exams so far from the beginning of the academic year. In order for the study to be more reliable, average scores of all the exams were calculated. These exams were out of 100 and average grammar score of these three midterm exams for each student are provided in Table 1.

Table 1.

Average grammar scores for each student

Students	Average score of 3 midterm exams
Student 1	66,3
Student 2	50,3
Student 3	67,6
Student 4	64,6
Student 5	65,3
Student 6	55,3
Student 7	56,6
Student 8	64,6
Student 9	78,3
Student 10	75,6
Student 11	17
Student 12	21,3
Student 13	29,6
Student 14	75,6
Student 15	77,3
Student 16	35,3
Student 17	22

Student 18	45,3
Student 19	16,6

Table 2.

Three different levels of students

High Achievers	Middle Achievers	Low Achievers
Student 9	Student 1	Student 11
Student 10	Student 2	Student 12
Student 14	Student 3	Student 13
Student 15	Student 4	Student 16
	Student 5	Student 17
	Student 6	Student 18
	Student 7	Student 19
	Student 8	

As Table 2 indicates students were mostly middle and low achievers in this class considering their grammar achievement levels. Even the average scores of high achievers were not very promising. There was not any student whose average score for grammar course was above 80. There are various reasons for these results. First of all, the score that is required to be registered to the Department English Language Teaching and English Language and Literature is quite low at that state university. Another reason is that there were seven foreign students in that specific class and they were accepted to the university without any exams. Due to their lack of proficiency in both English and Turkish, the process was very challenging for both the students and instructors.

Frequency of Errors for Each Student

While doing the analysis of the recordings, each and every error for each student was counted one by one to discover the frequency of errors for each student. The results of error analysis and number of turns for each student in six hours of grammar course are provided in Table 3.

With regard to the comparison of frequency of errors, number of turns and average grammar scores, the results in Table 3 show that it is adverse to infer a direct relationship between these variables although students with high grammar scores tended to have more errors because of the number of turns they took and their willingness to participate. There are also other factors affecting this relationship. First of all, there were four high achievers in this class based on their average grammar scores. Students 10, 14 and 15 had relatively high number of errors. However, the other student, student 9, had only three errors. This might suggest that high grammar scores do not necessarily indicate fewer or more errors. The reason for this difference might lie in the personality traits of these students. As can be seen in the number of the turns they took, Students 10, 14 and 15 were quite outgoing and willing to take risks. On the other hand, although student 9 had relatively high grammar scores, she was not very willing to participate since she was an introverted learner. Sometimes the teacher used direct nomination to make her participate. However, direct nomination was not used very often in order not to discourage the learners since each learner has a different personality.

The comparison between the frequency of errors and grammar scores for middle achievers was also in alignment with the results for the high achievers. As can be noticed in Table 2, there were 8 middle achievers in this class. Some of them such as Student 1 and Student 8 had more errors while Student 2 and Student 4 had very few errors. One reason for this difference is that Student 1 and Student 8 were more willing and hardworking than the others in the middle achievers group. Since they took more turns in the class, they tended to have more errors. On the other hand, Students 2, 3, and 7 were not very interested in the class and they seldom participated.

There were 7 low achievers in this class and all of them were the foreign students who were accepted to the university without a valid exam. Although all of them were low achievers, some of them were more willing and hardworking than the others. Students 13, 16 and 18 were more outgoing and willing to participate; therefore, they took more turns during the lectures which resulted in more errors. In addition, their achievement levels for both Turkish and English were better than the other students in the low achievers group. On the other hand, Students 11, 12 and 17 knew neither English nor Turkish. They almost never volunteered to participate. As is reflected in Table 3, these students had very few errors because of the number of turns they take.

All in all, the comparison between the frequency of errors and average grammar scores suggests that high achievers tended to have more errors while low achievers tended to have fewer errors because of the number of turns they take. Although this was not valid for each and

every student, it might be remarked that high achievers usually tried to test their knowledge and learn from their errors. However, it is still difficult to infer a direct relationship between the frequency of errors and grammar scores. Although they were high achievers, some students might not have been so enthusiastic to participate because they were more introverted. This resulted in fewer errors.

Types of Errors for Each Student

In this study, types of errors for each student were also identified. For types of errors, the model suggested by Levelt (1983) was used for this study. According to this model, there are three different types of errors which are phonological, grammatical and lexical errors. He also divides the grammatical errors into two groups: morphological and syntactic errors. As already mentioned, in these recorded grammar lessons, students had various activities for practicing the grammatical structures. These activities included matching, filling in the blanks, rewriting and open-ended questions. However, open-ended questions and rewriting activities were not so frequent. Still, students' lexical errors were also analyzed in these open-ended and rewriting activities. In Table 3, the numbers and percentages of the errors for each type of error and the number of turns taken by the students in six recorded hours of grammar course are given.

Table 3.

Types of Errors for Each Student

Students	Phonological Errors	Morphological Errors	Lexical Errors	Syntactic Errors	Total	Number of Turns
Student 1	9 (32%)	2 (7%)	4 (14%)	13 (46%)	28	33
Student 2	1 (33%)	-	-	2 (66%)	3	6
Student 3	4 (66%)	-	1 (16,6%)	1 (16,6%)	6	7
Student 4	1 (50%)	-	-	1 (50%)	2	4
Student 5	11 (91,6%)	-	-	1 (8,3%)	12	16
Student 6	10 (71 %)	-	2 (14%)	2 (14%)	14	12
Student 7	5 (55,5%)	1 (11,1%)	1 (11,1%)	2 (22,2%)	9	8
Student 8	12 (80%)	-	2 (13,3%)	1 (6,6%)	15	14
Student 9	3 (100%)	-	-	-	3	5
Student 10	7 (58,3%)	-	1 (8,3%)	4 (33,3%)	12	15

Student 11	1 (100%)	-	-	-	1	3
Student 12	1 (100%)	-	-	-	1	4
Student 13	13 (86,6%)	1 (6,6%)	-	1 (6,6%)	15	17
Student 14	10 (55,5%)	3 (16,6%)	-	5 (27,7)	18	21
Student 15	12 (44,4%)	3 (11,1%)	2 (7%)	10 (37%)	27	26
Student 16	11 (68,75%)	3 (18,75%)	-	2 (12,5%)	16	19
Student 17	5 (83,3%)	-	-	1 (16,6)	6	5
Student 18	8 (66,6%)	-	2 (16,6%)	2 (16,6%)	12	14
Student 19	1 (100%)	-	-	-	1	2
Total	125 (62%)	13 (6%)	15 (7,4%)	48 (23,8%)	201	

The results in Table 3 show that in these 6 hours, students mostly made phonological errors. Phonological errors compose the 62% of all the errors. It is followed by the grammatical errors with 29,8%; morphological errors compose 6% and syntactic errors compose 23,8% of the grammatical errors. Lastly, lexical errors are the least common errors. These results illustrate that students had problems with phonology which is most probably because of their lack of practice in speaking. During those classes, they did a lot of grammar activities in their book and checked them with the teacher. Therefore, it is not surprising that they also had a lot of grammatical mistakes. They had few lexical errors since the activities in these lessons were quite mechanical such as filling the blanks and matching activities. Although students were also expected to respond to open-ended questions and rewriting activities, there were not many activities concerning vocabulary and communication. Still, students' lexical errors were also included in order to analyze their errors in open-ended and rewriting activities.

In the following section, examples for each type of error are provided from the transcripts of the recordings.

Extracts for Phonological Errors

In this section some of the phonological errors of the students are provided with extracts from the class recordings. In these extracts, pseudonyms are used instead of the students' real names.

In the first extract, the class is doing an activity in which they are expected to cross out the unnecessary parts of the sentences. It is in correspondence with avoiding repetition in

English by means of some words such as one, ones and that. The teacher chooses students from the volunteering ones. Student 18 is also willing to participate. He is a foreign student from Iraq. Although English proficiency level of the foreign students is not very promising, Student 18 is one of the best among the foreign students. He is usually active in the class. When Student 18 gives the answer for the question, he makes a phonological error. He pronounces the word determined /dɪ'tɜ:rmɪnd/ as /dɪ'tɜ:rmænd/. The teacher uses recasting to correct the student's error.

Extract 1

- 1 t: I guess you are ready. Shall we start?
- 2 several students: Yes.
- 3 t: Ok, you are going to cross out the words that are not
- 4 necessary. Yes, Ahmet. (chooses from the volunteering
- 5 students)
- 6 s8: This venue was the ideal place to see for myself if all
- 7 the media hype about this new Scottish singer was true. It
- 8 did not take me long to find out it was true. True omit.
- 9 t: Yes, fine. We should omit true. Mehmet. (chooses from the
- 10 volunteering students)
- 11 s18: From the opening number 'I Dreamed A Dream' it was clear
- 12 that the fans were determined /dɪ'tɜ:rmænd/ to have a good
- 13 time and that is exactly what the fans did.
- 14 t: Ok, that is true. It was clear that the fans were
- 15 determined /dɪ'tɜ:rmɪnd/. (uses recasting for correction).

In Extract 2, the class is doing activities about the formation of adjectives by means of the prefixes. Student 4 wants to volunteer who is one of the middle achievers and not very active in the class. When he is giving the answer, he pronounces the word untidy /ʌn'taɪdi/ as /ʌn'tidi/. The teacher again uses recasting for the correction of the error.

Extract 2

- 1 t: Now we will complete the letter with suitable adjectives.
- 2 Who would like to start? Fatma. (chooses from the
- 3 volunteering students)
- 4 s1: This unusual bad behavior has come as a shock to us as
- 5 Matthew had previously been an excellent student.

- 6 t: Ok, unusual means not usual and excellent comes from the
 7 verb excel. Next one, Murat. (chooses from the volunteering
 8 students)
 9 s4: In recent weeks I have also noticed that his clothes are
 10 untidy /ʌn'tidi/ and he seems unhappy.
 11 t: His clothes are untidy /ʌn'taidi/ and he seems unhappy.
 12 (uses recasting to correct the student's error)

In Extract 3, the class is again doing activities on word formation. There is an activity in which there are some mistakes about the formation of the adjectives. Students are expected to correct them. Student 15 is one of the high achievers and as already mentioned she is one of the most outgoing students. When she responds to the question, she makes two phonological errors. The first one is the pronunciation of the word wear /wer/. She pronounces it as /wɪər/. The other error is related to the pronunciation of fashionable /fæʃnəbl/. She pronounces it as /fæʃneɪbl/. Both of her errors are corrected by means of recasting.

Extract 3

- 1 t: There are six more mistakes in this activity, we will find
 2 and correct them. Let's start. Mustafa. (*chooses from the*
 3 *volunteering students*)
 4 s14: I'm sorry but this answer is completely incorrect.
 5 Uncorrect değil incorrect.
It is not incorrect, it is incorrect.
 6 t: Yes, it should be incorrect. Second sentence, Melek.
 7 (*chooses from the volunteering students*)
 8 s15: They are models so they always wear /wɪər/ fashionable
 9 /fæʃneɪbl/ clothes. It must be
 10 *fashionable*.
 11 t: Ok, instead of fashionable, we should say they always wear
 12 /wer/ fashionable /fæʃnəbl/ clothes. (*uses recasting for*
 13 *correction*)

Extracts for Morphological Errors

Students' morphological errors usually include problems with the usage of plural *-s*, third person singular *-s*, and use of incorrect prefixes. Some examples of the morphological errors from the recordings are illustrated in this section.

In the following transcript, the teacher wants the students to form some sentences using the linking words. Student 7 also volunteers to give the answer. She is one of the middle achievers and she sometimes participates. In her sentence, she makes a morphological error; she forgets to use the plural *-s*. She says *several novel* instead of *several novels*. The teacher helps her correct her error by means of elicitation technique. Turkish does not have pluralization of nouns for more than one item; therefore, this error might be a result of negative transfer from the student's L1.

Extract 4

- 1 t: So, for adding new information, we can use *in addition*,
 2 *moreover, as well as* etc. Now, you will choose one linking
 3 word for adding new information and you will use it in a
 4 sentence.
 5 You have 3 minutes. (waits for 3 minutes)
 6 t: Are you ready?
 7 several students: Yes.
 8 t: Who would like to share their examples? Seda. (*chooses*
 9 *from the volunteering students*)
 10 s7: Yesterday, I went shopping and I bought some pencils.
 11 Moreover, I bought several novel for my sister.
 12 t: Ok, an example with *moreover*. There is one mistake. You
 13 bought several? (*uses elicitation*)
 14 s7: Novels.

In Extract 5, the teacher asks the students to form sentences using linking words for ordering events. Student 14 is willing to share his answer. He is one of the high achievers and usually active in the class. He makes a morphological error in his sentence; he forgets to use the third person singular *-s*. Instead of *works*, he says *work*. His error is corrected by means of recasting.

Extract 5

1 t: Here are some linking words for ordering events. *Before,*
 2 *after, as soon as, when, while, during, until, first, then,*
 3 *later, etc.* Choose one of them and write a sentence. (*waits*
 4 *for a few minutes*)

5 t: Shall we start?

6 several students: Yes.

7 t: Ok, Mustafa. Which one did you choose?

8 s14: Birkaç tane 3 cümlede kullandım.

I used several linking words in three sentences.

9 t: Ok, let's see.

10 s14: He is very hardworking. First, he wakes up early. Then,
 11 he goes to the company. After that, he work_very hard every
 12 day.

13 t: Ok, he works very hard every day. (*uses recasting for*
 14 *correction*)

The following transcript is an extract from the lesson in which the students are providing examples for adjectives formed by means of prefixes. The teacher asks the students to say adjectives with the prefix *in-*. Student 15 is one of the high achievers and she is one of the active students. Instead of *uncomfortable*, she says *incomfortable*. In order to correct this morphological error, the teacher uses repetition with a change in her intonation.

Extract 6

1 t: *in-* is also a prefix. Can you give some examples with *in-*?

2 s10: Incomplete.

3 s6: Incorrect

4 t: Fine, incomplete, incorrect. Anything else?

5 s8: Indefinite.

6 t: Indefinite.

7 s15: Incomfortable.

8 t: Incomfortable? (*uses repetition with a change in*
 9 *intonation*)

10 several students: Uncomfortable.

Extracts for Syntactic Errors

The analysis of the errors reflects that students' syntactic errors usually include problems with word order, failure to use the auxiliary verb and problems with subject-verb agreement. To illustrate, some extracts are provided from the recordings.

In the following transcript, the topic of the lesson is inversion in English. The teacher asks the students to use *never* at the beginning of the sentence. Student 13 is one of the low achievers. However, she usually tries to participate in the class. Her answer is incorrect since she fails to change the word order for inversion. In order for the student to correct her error, the teacher uses metalinguistic clues. Then several other students correct the error.

Extract 7

- 1 t: She has never seen this movie before. Can you say the same
- 2 sentence starting with *never*? Gizem.
- 3 s15: Never has she seen this movie before.
- 4 t: Yes, good. We need inversion when we start the sentence
- 5 with *never*. I have never been to London. Can you also say
- 6 this sentence with *never* at the beginning?
- 7 s13: Never I have been to London.
- 8 t: But you need inversion. (*uses metalinguistic clues for*
- 9 *correction*)
- 10 several students: Never have I been to London.

Extract 8 is an illustration for the problem with subject-verb agreement. The topic of the lesson is again linking words. The teacher asks the students to write some sentences using linking words. Student 14, a high achiever, makes a morphological error. The subject of his sentence is plural but he uses a singular auxiliary verb. His error is corrected by the teacher by means of recasting.

Extract 8

- 1 t: Can you use some of these linking words in your own
- 2 sentences in a few minutes?
- 3 s18: Only one?

- 4 t: However you like. (*waits for a few minutes*)
 5 t: Ok, let's start. Yes, Mustafa. (*chooses from the*
 6 *volunteering students*)
 7 s14: He is very rich. He spends a lot of money. Moreover, the
 8 things he buys is very expensive.
 9 t: Ok, you have used moreover. Moreover, the things he buys
 10 are very expensive. (*uses recasting for correction*)

In the following extract, a morphological error with the failure to use the auxiliary verb is provided. The lesson is about changing the word order. The teacher wants the students to use *neither* with the sentences she gives. Student 3 wants to give an answer. She is one of the middle achievers and she sometimes participates in the class. In her sentence, she forgets to use the auxiliary verb and she corrects her sentence by means of the metalinguistic clue provided by the teacher.

Extract 9

- 1 t: I don't like pop music. My sister does not like either.
 2 Now, we will combine these sentences.
 3 s1: Neither mı kullanıcaz?
 4 t: Yes. Who would like to try? Ok, Mert. (*chooses from the*
 5 *volunteering students*)
 6 s3: I don't like pop music, neither my sister.
 7 t: Ok, but where is the auxiliary? (*uses metalinguistic clues*
 8 *for correction*)
 9 s3: Neither my sister does, neither does my sister.
 10 t: Yes, neither does my sister. We should change the word
 11 order.

Extracts for Lexical Errors

As already mentioned in the types of errors section, during these six hours, students had a few lexical errors. The reason might be the nature of the grammar course. The activities in this course usually include filling in the blanks, matching, rewriting and open-ended questions. Although there was not much focus on vocabulary and communication, there were some open-ended questions and rewriting activities in which students were expected to form their own sentences. Students' lexical errors usually include wrong choice of words.

There is an incorrect word usage in the following extract. The teacher expects the students to form a sentence with *in order to*. Student 5 is one of the middle achievers and she usually seems interested in the lesson. Instead of *many*, she uses *much* with a countable noun. For correction, the teacher repeats the student's answer with a change in intonation. Then she is able to correct her answer.

Extract 10

- 1 t: Now, let's use *in order to* in a sentence. Please write a
- 2 sentence with *in order to*. (*waits for a few minutes*)
- 3 t: Are you ready? Who would like to read? Nilay yes please.
- 4 (*chooses from the volunteering students*)
- 5 s5: I should earn a lot of money in order to buy much things.
- 6 t: Yes, I should earn a lot of money in order to buy much
- 7 things? (*uses repetition for correction*)
- 8 s5: Many things, sayılabilir.

Countable

In the following extract, there is a lexical error with prepositions. The topic of the lesson is prefixes for forming negative adjectives. The teacher asks the students to form sentences with negative adjectives. Student 2 is one of the middle achievers and she seldom participates in the class. She is willing to share her answer for that task. Instead of *on*, she says *in* the table. The teacher uses recasting for correcting the error.

Extract 11

- 1 t: *Un-* is negative. It is used with adjectives. For example,
- 2 *untidy*. Can you give other examples?
- 3 s2: Unhappy.
- 4 t: Unhappy yes. Can you write a sentence using one of these
- 5 adjectives starting with *un-*? (*waits for a few minutes*)
- 6 t: Ok, Ali.
- 7 s6: There was something unusual in the table.
- 8 t: Ok, there was something unusual on the table. (*uses*
- 9 *recasting for correction*)

The last extract illustrates a lexical error with the usage of adjectives and adverbs. The topic is the linking words for giving extra information. The teacher asks the students to form

some sentences with the linking words for giving extra information. As already mentioned, Student 1 is one of the high achievers. In her sentence, instead of using an adverb, she uses an adjective. Her error is corrected by the teacher by means of recasting.

Extract 12

- 1 t: Now, for extra information, which words do we use?
 2 s2: And.
 3 s5: Both
 4 t: Ok, *and, both*. Can you use *both* in a sentence? (*waits for*
 5 *a while*)
 6 s1: She both plays the guitar and sings beautiful.
 7 t: Yes, sings beautifully. (*uses recasting for correction*)

Comparison of the Grammar Scores and Types of Errors

This study also aims to discover the relation between the students' grammar scores and types of errors. For each student grammar score and the number of the errors of each type are provided in Table 4.

Table 4.

Comparison of the Grammar Scores and Types of Errors

Students	Phonological Errors	Morphological Errors	Lexical Errors	Syntactic Errors	Total	Average Grammar Score
Student 1	9	2	4	13	28	66,3
Student 2	1	-	-	2	3	50,3
Student 3	4	-	1	1	6	67,6
Student 4	1	-	-	1	2	64,6
Student 5	11	-	-	1	12	65,3
Student 6	10	-	2	2	14	55,3
Student 7	5	1	1	2	9	56,6
Student 8	12	-	2	1	15	64,6
Student 9	3	-	-	-	3	78,3
Student 10	7	-	1	4	12	75,6

Student 11	1	-	-	-	1	17
Student 12	1	-	-	-	1	21,3
Student 13	13	1	-	1	15	29,6
Student 14	10	3	-	5	18	75,6
Student 15	12	3	2	10	27	77,3
Student 16	11	3	-	2	16	35,3
Student 17	5	-	-	1	6	22
Student 18	8	-	2	2	12	45,3
Student 19	1	-	-	-	1	16,6

The results in Table 4 illustrate that high achievers usually made phonological errors. One of them, Student 15 made a lot of syntactic errors as well. The reason for this might be that Student 15 was very active and she took many turns during the lessons. She tried to test her knowledge even when she was not so sure of her answers and this resulted in more grammatical errors.

As for middle achievers, the results show that they also mostly made phonological errors, which was a common problem for all of the students because of their lack of practice. However, Student 1 also had many syntactic errors and the reason is similar to that of Student 15. Student 1 was also very outgoing. Therefore, she took many turns and had more grammatical errors compared to other students.

Lastly, low achievers' errors were also mostly phonological. However, they had another reason for this problem. Because of their origin and their native language, they had difficulty in pronouncing some words. Some sounds were especially difficult for them to articulate. Apart from this problem, they usually participated when they were sure of their responses. Therefore, they had few grammatical errors.

In conclusion, the comparison of grammar scores and types of mistakes illustrates that there was a tendency for high achievers to take more turns which resulted in more errors. However, as already mentioned, there might be other factors affecting the students' participation such as their personality and willingness. The errors in the grammar course were not necessarily grammatical errors all the time. As is illustrated in Table 4, they were mostly phonological errors. Phonology was a common problem for the students since they did not have enough practice.

Conclusion and Discussion

This study has four research questions. The first question is related to the frequency of errors for each student. The results display that the frequencies range from 1 to 27. There are different factors affecting the frequency of errors such as number of the turns that students take, their willingness to participate and to take risks for testing their knowledge.

The second question is with reference to the types of errors each student makes. The analysis of the errors show that students mostly made phonological errors. It is a common problem for almost all of the students since they did not have much practice for speaking. They are followed by grammatical errors which can be divided into two groups: syntactic and morphological errors. The activities in the grammar course included rewriting, matching, filling the blanks tasks, etc. According to the results, common syntactic errors in the grammar course were failure to use auxiliary verbs, word order and subject-verb agreement. Morphological errors usually consisted of failure to use third person singular -s, plural -s and incorrect usage of prefixes. Students made fewer lexical errors in the grammar courses because of the nature of grammar. Lexical errors were usually related to wrong word choice.

The third research question is in connection with the correlation between students' grammar achievement level and the frequency of the errors. The results show that high achievers tended to have more errors while low achievers tended to have fewer errors, which supports the claim that errors are an indication of learning (see Ellis, 1990; Anton, 2011; Farrokh, 2011; Montrul 2011; Shanin, 2011; Rattanadilok Na Phuket and Othman, 2015; Atmaca, 2016; Lin, 2016). However, it is still adverse to claim a direct relation between the students' grammar achievement and frequency of errors. The results indicate that some of the high achievers had relatively few errors while some low achievers had more errors. First of all, each and every student had a different personality. Some students were more extroverted whereas the others were more introverted. Extroverted students were usually more willing to take risks for testing their knowledge. Even though they had more errors, students who take turns more frequently and who are more willing to participate in the class might have had higher scores in the exams. These results are in agreement with Beebe (1983) and Cervantes (2013) since they underline that students who take more risks are more successful as their willingness to make mistakes might result in a more effective communication.

On the other hand, introverted students tended to remain silent although they were interested in the lesson. As highlighted by Cervantes (2013) introverted learners are less likely to take risks in order to avoid mistakes. They did not want to lose their face in the class; therefore, they did not wish to participate unless they were sure of their answers. Several

students had fewer errors but higher grammar scores. This might also be related to the fact that they learn from their peers' errors. Another reason might be the interest level of the students. Some of the students were not very interested in the lesson even though they seemed to be listening to what the teacher was explaining.

The final research question deals with the relation between the students' grammar achievement level and types of errors they make. As already mentioned in the results section, for almost all of the students encapsulating high achievers, middle achievers and low achievers, phonological errors were a big problem. This issue was especially important for low achievers who were foreign students. Because of their mother tongue, it was difficult to articulate some sounds in English for most of the foreign students in this class. Some of the students had also a lot of syntactic errors. The analysis of the learner profiles illustrates that these students were usually the ones who were more outgoing and willing to take risks.

To summarize, the results of this study suggest that most of the students might be said to learn from their errors and errors are an important indication of learning in agreement with several previous studies including Ellis (1990), Shanin (2011) and Lin (2016). However, it should be noted that different personality types affect the number of the turns that each student takes. Therefore, it is difficult to generalize these results to all the students. Moreover, risk taking and being more willing for participation may not always result in higher scores in the exams. To illustrate, even though some students did not participate very often, they could still learn from both their own errors and their peers' errors although the process may not be visible to the observers of the class.

To the knowledge of the researcher, the relation between grammatical achievement and errors in grammar course concerning learners of English living in Turkey has not been investigated so far. This is exactly where the importance of this study lies since the findings might offer some implications for learners and teachers of English. According to the results, high achievers tend to have more errors in grammar course; therefore, motivating and encouraging the students to participate and take more turns might result in positive results. However, generalizing these results seems not to possible due to the various personality traits of the learners. As highlighted in the results section, some introverted learners had fewer errors but they had high scores in the exams. Thus, paying close attention to these personality differences and avoiding forcing the learners to take risks is another implication of this study.

Declaration of Conflicting Interest

The author declares that there is no conflict of interest for this study.

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