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WHEN LANGUAGE TRANSFER IS NEGATIVE: ANALYSIS OF MORPHO-SYNTACTIC INTERFERENCE ERRORS BY LEARNERS OF FRENCH IN TANZANIAN HIGHER LEARNING INSTITUTIONS

1 INTRODUCTION

The analysis of learners' errors has been an important area of research in applied linguistics. Demirtas (2009) contends that errors are part of the learning process since they show how the learner progresses when learning a language. According to Rey (2005), one can use errors to inquire about the knowledge status of learners in the target language. Errors thus determine the procedures or strategies that learners use when learning a second or foreign language. Consequently, an error signals learners' language development at a given learning stage. Corder (1967) argues that analysing learners' errors is important: errors are indispensable since the making of errors is an indicator of the learner's strategy during the learning of a language. Moreover, error analysis can enable foreign language teachers to uncover areas that need immediate or specific attention when teaching. That is, through error analysis, teachers may understand the language patterns that pose difficulties to their learners. Gass and Selinker (2001) refer to learners' errors as "red flags" in the sense that they act as warning signals that give evidence of the learner's knowledge of the target language. By undertaking this study, we intended to uncover the morpho-syntactic errors that learners encounter when learning French at the university level in the context of Tanzania.

2 BACKGROUND TO THE PROBLEM

Earlier studies on French as a foreign language in Tanzania indicate that learners have difficulties concerning the learning of French. Some researchers refer to aspects of syntax (Hawanga, 1983), others focus on difficulties related to French oral skills (Chipa, 1983), while some studies deal with phonology (Omari, 2002; Neckemiah, 2012).

Neckemiah (2012) points out that learners of French in Tanzania experience difficulties that emanate from the differences that exist between their languages (Swahili, or ethnic community languages) and the target language system (French). Archibald and Libben (1995) posit that learners of a foreign language have a starting point when they start learning. This starting point is their L1 grammar. During the learning process, one expects learners to master the grammar of the target language. However, learners face problems when trying to learn this since they sometimes transfer the rules of their L1 into the target language, leading to errors. It is important to point out that, apart from the errors that are due to language transfer, learners may also face difficulties when learning the grammatical rules that are inherent in the target language since languages do not necessarily share the same grammatical patterns. According to Perdue (1980), the learning of a second or foreign language entails the making of errors, since learners are in a cognitive activity that includes testing hypotheses on the structure of the target language. Errors may thus occur because learners are not fully aware of the grammatical patterns that are inherent in the target language.

The existence of other studies on French as a foreign language in Tanzania further shows that other scholars have dealt with difficulties in French using different approaches. Chipa (1983) conducted a study whose major objective was to examine language teacher competence as reflected in secondary school learners' achievement in French language skills. The findings show that learners' performance in oral French was very low. Another study by Hawanga (1983) focused on aspect expression in French among Tanzanian learners at the University of Dar es Salaam. The study set out to examine how aspect is expressed in learners' written French, and the findings show that learners had problems related to the use of tense and aspect. The current study focuses on morpho-syntactic interference errors. Another study by Omari (2002) examined pronunciation problems faced by Tanzanian learners when learning French, focusing on secondary school students and teachers, as well as University of Dar es Salaam students. The findings indicate that there were French sounds that posed pronunciation problems to Tanzanian learners, such as /ə/ *(front, open, rounded vowel)*, /ø/ *(front, closed, rounded vowel)*, /ɛ/ *(front, open, unrounded vowel)*, /â/ *(back, open, unrounded, nasal vowel)*, /ɔ̃/ *(back, open, nasal, rounded vowel)*, /y/ *(closed, front, rounded vowel)* and /R/ *(voiced uvular trill)*. The findings further show that the causes of such pronunciation errors are attributed to Swahili, English or vernacular languages. The current paper focuses on morpho-syntactic interference errors.

3   THE TANZANIAN LINGUISTIC SITUATION

There are three languages that come into play in the context of Tanzania: ethnic community languages, Swahili and English. The education system in Tanzania has two languages

as media of instruction: Swahili and English. There are other languages that are taught in both private and public schools, namely French and Arabic, while other languages such as German and Chinese have been introduced in some schools. In Tanzania, there are many ethnic community languages, with little agreement as to the actual number. For example, according to Rubagumya (1990) there are 120 ethnic community languages, while Maho and Sands (2003) claim there are 126. Ethnic community languages are mostly spoken in rural areas and serve as a medium of communication in a particular ethnic community. As regards Swahili, Mtavangu (2013) notes that it serves as a lingua franca in the context of Tanzania. Thus, many Tanzanians can speak or communicate in Swahili at different levels, and it serves as a language that brings together different ethnic community languages in terms of day-to-day communication. Apart from being a lingua franca, Swahili in Tanzania serves many other functions. First, it serves as the first (L1) or second (L2) language for many Tanzanians. It also functions as the national and official language. According to Rubagumya (1990), about 10% of Tanzanians have Swahili as their first language (L1). Moreover, it is used as a medium of instruction at primary level. It is also an obligatory subject at the ordinary level in secondary schools. English in Tanzania is a second official language after Swahili. As an official language, it has different functions, being the language used in the high court, language of diplomacy and international trade. It is also used as a language of instruction at secondary and university levels. Therefore, in reality English is confined to official usage and is not spoken by many Tanzanians. French, whose introduction in the Tanzanian education system dates back to 1966, according to Chipa (1983), does not have the same social privileges as Swahili or English. Unlike French, English is widely used as a medium of instruction at secondary and tertiary levels of education. This status makes it possible for English learners to get a better exposure as compared to French learners. French is mostly confined to the classroom situation and is taught in selected public secondary schools and some private schools as a compulsory subject in the first two years (Form One and Form Two). It becomes an optional subject when students enter Form Three. French is also taught in some universities such as the University of Dar es Salaam and in some private primary schools, like the International School of Tanganyika.

The teaching of French at the university level in Tanzania first started with what was known as the East African University[1] in 1963 (Chiwanga and Iddy, 2017). The teaching of this foreign language has recently been introduced to other higher learning institutions. It is taught in public and private higher learning institutions.

At the University of Dar es Salaam, French is taught in two bachelor's degree programmes: BA in languages and BA with education. Thus, students who are enrolled in the two programmes take French as a major course for three years. Normally, a major course is taught for 3 hours in a week. There is a total of 15 weeks of teaching and

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1   Currently the University of Dar es Salaam.

evaluation in a semester (with a total of 45 hours). Students who are enrolled in the BA with education programme are also found in other higher learning institutions: UDOM[2], Makumira[3] and DUCE[4].

On the other hand, at Saint Augustine University French is taught as an obligatory language course to all students in the first semester in their first year, although it is not obligatory afterwards. In other higher learning institutions, such as Sokoine University of Agriculture[5] and the Open University of Tanzania, French is obligatory to all students who are enrolled in the department of tourism. It is also taught as an optional language course in other higher learning institutions, such as the Centre for Foreign Relations (CFR) and College of Business Education (CBE). Finally, it is taught as an optional language at the Muslim University of Morogoro (MUM) to students who are enrolled in the BA languages and interpretation programme.

4   LITERATURE REVIEW

4.1   Conceptualizing errors and mistakes

Corder (1967) asserts that mistakes relate to performance and errors relate to competence. He further argues that errors are systematic and may occur several times, unrecognized by the learner. Norrish (1987) distinguishes between mistakes and errors. He contends that errors are a systematic deviation from the language norms. An error occurs when a learner has not properly learnt something and consistently gets it wrong. He goes further to define mistakes as inconsistent deviations. Thus, the term *mistake* refers to a random slip of tongue. A mistake is therefore a performance fault that a learner can correct when he draws his attention to it and an error is not easily corrected since a learner cannot correct it even when he knows about it. In this case, errors imply that a learner lacks competence. Our focus in this study is on learners' morphosyntactic interference errors.

4.2   Morpho-syntax

Morpho-syntax[6] is the study of forms and rules that govern the formation of words and sentences. Generally, morphology focuses on the formation of words in a language whereas syntax refers to the formation of phrases and sentences. Thus, morpho-syntax focuses on all structures that enable a language user to make grammatical statements in

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2   University of Dodoma

3   Situated in Arusha

4   Situated in Dar es Salaam

5   Situated in Morogoro

6   Wilmet. M. (2003). *Grammaire critique du français*. Bruxelles: Duculot.

a language. Morpho-syntax has a great role to play in the forms of words, inflections of regular and irregular forms of nouns and verbs as well as the arrangement of syntactic patterns around the noun: determiners, modifiers, adjectives and adverbs. Finally, it deals with the organization of words and word groups in a sentence.

4.3   Interlingual errors

Interlingual errors are generally related to language interference. This interference is due to learners' first language or any previously studied languages. Füsun (2009) contends that when learning a second or foreign language, everyone is influenced positively or negatively by another language. This influence may emanate from the learner's first language and/or previously acquired languages. Positive influence occurs when the learner's language or languages and the target languages are similar in terms of grammatical aspects. On the other hand, negative influence occurs when the learner's language(s) and the target language are different.

Richards (1980) points out that an interlingual error results from the learner's mother tongue or more precisely from the learner's negative transfer from the mother tongue to the target language. This type of error occurs when the learner fails to distinguish a specific feature in the target language, different from the source language. For example, an English speaker learning French may say "*Je vais maison*[7]" I am going home. This French sentence is erroneous since a learner should necessarily insert a preposition "à" followed by "*la*" hence the correct form "*je vais à la maison*". This learner may write or utter the erroneous statement above since he transfer the English structure into French. The term "interlingual" comes from Selinker (1972, who posits that interlingual errors can occur in several language aspects such as phonology, lexicology and morpho-syntax. This study deals with the morpho-syntactic aspect. Lado (1957) postulates that the mother tongue greatly influences foreign language learning. If learners do not know how to control language interference, the spontaneous learning process leads them to linguistic and cultural deviations. If learners are in the early stages of learning a foreign language, they unconsciously reveal the properties of the system in their mother tongue speeches: forms and meanings as well as their culture. Therefore, since learning a language is a sort of training, for some psycholinguists such as Selinker (1972) errors and habits would play a role in second or foreign language learning. When learners start learning a new language, they start to form habits and these habits may be derived from the source language (L1). Such habits may modify the formation of a new habit in a foreign language. In this case, the mother tongue may be an important source of errors.

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7   We use the symbol * to denote agrammatical aspects

4.4   Intralingual errors

According to Öztokat (1993), intralingual errors are those which directly concern the acquisition of the target language. From a cognitive point of view, it is a question of error sources in the target language itself. If the learner is not familiar with the rules of the foreign language that he is learning, he may commit errors based on another form or rule that resembles the already acquired grammatical rules. According to Richards (1980), such errors result from a defective or partial learning of the target language. For example, a learner may say, "*he singed**" instead of "*he sang*" due to the overgeneralization of rules about the formation of the simple past in English for regular verbs such as *finish* and *wash*. These errors occur since the learner does not know the grammatical rules that govern the target language. For example, a learner who has learnt that the simple past tense of *finish* is *finished* may be tempted to use the same rule when changing the verb *hit* into past tense, hence producing the incorrect form * *hitted*.

According to Ellis (1995), the incomplete application of rules may emerge when learners fail to develop a certain structure in full. Consequently, false concepts occur when learners do not completely understand different structural patterns in the target language. Ellis further contends that overgeneralization errors occur when learners produce deviant structures on other structures of the target language, while ignorance of rule restrictions refers to the application of rules in inappropriate contexts. Lindsay and Norman (1972) consider the wrong generalization of rules to be among the important sources of learners' errors in second or foreign language learning. In this case, the learner creates his own structures of the target language. Thus, the learner, after learning some rules of the target language, generalizes them to other rules that have common characteristics. Our focus in this study was on interference errors.

5   CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The interlanguage theory and the error analysis approach guided this study. Error analysis was proposed by the British applied linguist Pit Corder in 1967. Before error analysis emerged, contrastive analysis was the only approach to the study of errors. While contrastive analysis only focused on errors that are due to negative transfer from the learner's first language, error analysis examines all possible sources of errors. While contrastive analysis compares the target language with the source language, error analysis compares the target language with the learner's interlanguage. This is what is called the applied comparative study. Moreover, the possibility of analysing errors without knowing the language is presented as an advantage against analysing errors using the contrastive approach. Thus, error analysis does not only deal with errors that are due to language interference, but also errors due to difficulties that are strictly internal to the target language.

Such errors appear as a reflection of the level of competence of learners in the language learned at a given time and the illustration of some general characteristics of the process of foreign language acquisition. In other words, error analysis cannot replace contrastive analysis, but it offers additional solutions that the latter does not bring to light. The interlanguage theory and the error analysis approach are relevant to this study since they are important in addressing the research objectives. With the interlanguage theory, the researcher could have a clear understanding of the cognitive processes that a learner goes through when learning a target language (Selinker, 1972). Such processes include language transfer, transfer of training, overgeneralization, strategies of second language learning and strategies of second language communication. Understanding these processes was important, as this enabled the current researcher to uncover the reasons why learners committed the errors encountered. With regard to the error analysis approach, the researcher analysed the errors using the following steps: identification, description, explanation, evaluation and correction of errors (Corder, 1981).

6 METHODS

6.1 Study population and sample

The study's sample included 61 respondents, who all agreed to participate in this study. The following table presents the total number of French learners in the four higher learning institutions, indicating their year of study.

Table 1. Number of respondents

Institution	Year of study	Present	Absent	Total
DUCE	1	3	5	8
	2	2	4	6
	3	14	2	16
MAKUMIRA	1	2	2	4
	2	16	5	21
	3	1	1	2
UDOM	2	5	12	17
	3	8	1	9
UDSM	1	6	2	8
	2	2	5	7
	3	2	3	5
Total		61	42	103

The table above presents respondents from the selected higher learning institutions. Thus, the population included first, second and third year students. The table shows the institution, year of study, number of respondents who were present in each year of study, number of those who were not present and the total number. The total number of French learners in the selected higher learning institutions was 103, and the total number of students who willingly participated in this study was 61. Looking at the table, we notice that first year respondents at the University of Dodoma (UDOM) are missing. This is because there were no first-year students in the French stream in the 2017/2018 academic year. We therefore collected data from second and third year students only, giving the total of 61 respondents. From this number of respondents, we had a total of 122 written texts from which we made the corpus.

The study adopted a purposive sampling procedure (Creswell, 2009). Purposive sampling, alternatively known as non-probability sampling, involves the deliberate selection of units of the universe under investigate to obtain a representative sample, convenient to the researcher. In this case, the study involved first, second and third year students with a prior knowledge of French since they learned this language at both ordinary and advanced levels of secondary education. We found this type of sampling suitable for this study because we intended to select only those French language learners who had learned this language for a long time, that is, from Form One to the university level. The choice of these learners over the other ones is highly influenced by the need to examine their competence after learning French for a long time. We therefore did not want to include French learners who started learning French at university as a basic course.

6.2   Study approach and design

This study used a qualitative approach and a descriptive design. Creswell (2009) contends that a qualitative approach is appropriate in the analysis of certain phenomena. In this context, the qualitative approach was needed in the analysis of the morphosyntactic errors. For example, the use of a qualitative approach in this study is justified in data collection whereby the researcher used open-ended topics from which learners wrote compositions. In addition, the researcher identified, described, explained and corrected the encountered morphosyntactic errors.

6.3   Data collection instruments

To collect data, the researcher first relied on a corpus of language from learners' written texts on given subject matters (Ellis, 1995). The language corpus was derived from the learners' written productions with a focus on the encountered morphosyntactic interference errors. These written productions were produced by the 61 respondents in their

respective universities. A questionnaire was also administered to collect information on the respondents' language profiles.

6.4   Data analysis

The data analysis was qualitative, following the five successive steps stipulated by Corder (1981), which include identification, description, explanation and correction of errors. Identification is the first stage, which must focus on the correct recognition of errors. This stage is purely a linguistic activity, since the researcher focuses on judgments of grammar with respect to the target language rules. Description of error is essentially a comparative process. The data to be compared are the incorrect and correct forms. In this respect, the researcher compared French interlanguage to Standard French and highlighted the areas of differences. Explanation of errors is about accounting for why and how errors come about. It is at this stage that an explanation on the sources of errors was sought and given.

7   FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

7.1   Respondents' language profiles

Responses from the questionnaire enabled the researcher to get respondents' information on their language profiles. Prior to the learning of the French language, respondents had other languages which are ethnic community languages (ECLS), Swahili and English. Ethnic community languages included Lunyambo, Haya, Sukuma, Hehe, Bena, Hangaza, Fipa, Ha, Chaga and Iraqw. Figure 1 shows that 50 respondents spoke ethnic community languages, Swahili and English (81.97%), while 11 spoke Swahili and English (18.03%).
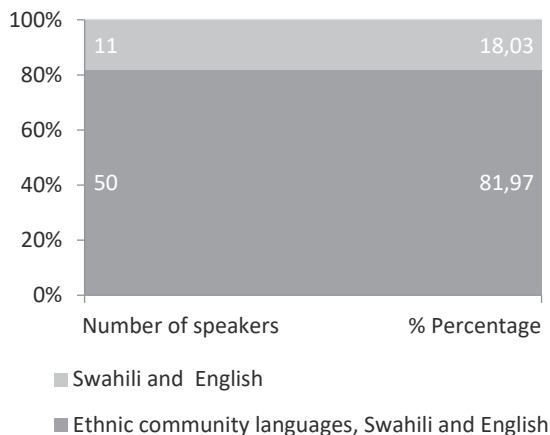
Figure 1. Respondents' language profiles

These findings indicate that most of the respondents spoke ethnic community languages, Swahili and English.

7.2   Major findings

Learners' written productions enabled us to make a corpus. From this (written production) corpus, different morphosyntactic errors were identified. There were 20 errors on the use of nouns with English origins (18.87%), 39 errors on the omission of prepositions (36.79%), and 47 errors on the absence of determiners (44.34%), as presented below.
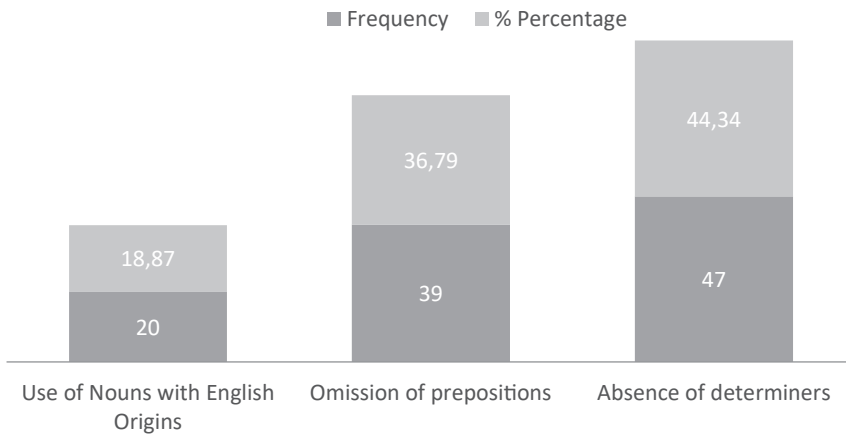
Figure 2. Morphosyntactic errors

7.2.1   Absence of determiners

Examples

 i. **En apprenant Ø français*

  Correction: *En apprenant <u>le</u> français*

      By learning the French/by learning French

 ii. **Il y a Ø bonne classe qui a øbonne condition.*

  Correction: *Il y a <u>une</u> bonne classe qui a une bonne condition.*

      There is a good class that has a good condition

 iii. **Pour obtenir Ø emploi*

  Correction: *Pour obtenir <u>un</u> emploi*

      To get   an employment

iv. *Le français pour Ø tanzaniens

   Correction: Le   français   pour   <u>les</u>   tanzaniens.

   The   French   for   the   Tanzanians/French for Tanzanians.

v. *Nous avons Ø langue française

   Correction: Nous avons <u>la</u>   langue   française.

   We   have   the language French/we have the French language

vi. *Mais aussi, Ødémocratie crèer bonne relation.

   Correction: Mais aussi, <u>la</u>   démocratie crée   une bonne relation.

   But   also   [the] democracy creates a   good   relationship

vii. *C'est Ø développement de la langue

   Correction: C'   est <u>le</u>   développement de la   langue

   This   is   the   development   of the language

viii. *Il y a Øgrande population

   Correction: Il   y a une grande population

   There is a   big   population

ix. *C'est Ø régime politique

   Correction: C'   est <u>un</u> régime politique

   This   is   a   regime political/this is a political regime

x. *il donne Ø unité

   Correction: il donne <u>l'</u>   unité

   It gives   the unity

xi. *Il y a Ø grand propagation des maladies.

   Correction: Il   y a <u>une</u> grande propagation des maladies.

   There is a   big   spread   of illnesses

xii. *Avoir Ø libre élection

   Correction: Avoir   <u>une</u> élection libre

   Having an   election free/having a free election

The examples above show that some respondents omitted articles from common nouns. By examining the examples, we notice that the absence of articles is generally found in contexts where there is a direct object, a subject complement or noun phrases.

In (i), (iii), (vi) and (x), we notice that the transtive verbs are followed by nouns. In French, nouns require the attachment of articles (definite/indefinite). Indeed, the constructions in (i), (iii), (vi) and (x) are structurally correct in Swahili and in other Bantu languages spoken by our respondents. The following examples from Swahili and other Bantu languages show that nouns can stand without articles as opposed to French.

Examples

1. Ni   na   kula $\emptyset$[8] ndizi   [Swahili]

   1 SG[9] PRES[10] eat   banana

   'I am eating banana.'

2. *Je   mange   une   banane*   [French]

   I   eat   INDF[11] a banana

   'I am eating a banana.'

Thus, the noun phrases[12] are different as presented below, using phrase structure rules (Chomsky, 1957; 1995).

(a)   NP   [French]

                    DET   N

               Un   homme
                A   man

(b)   NP   [Swahili]

                    DET   N

               $\emptyset$ mwanaume
                                      man

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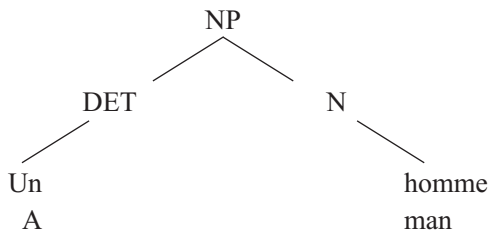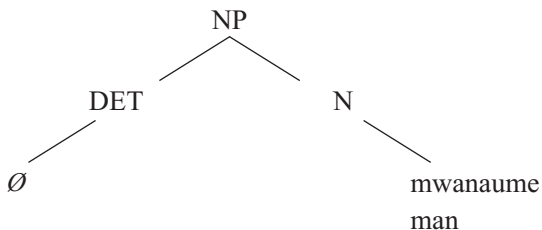
8   We use the symbol $\emptyset$ to denote the absence of an element.

9   Singular

10   Present

11   Indefinite

12   NP (noun phrase), DET (determiner), N (noun), 3SG (third person singular), PST (past), AUX (auxiliary), PP (Past Participle), INDF (indefinite) and 1PL (first person plural).

3. A   ka   gula   <u>suluβali</u>   [Sukuma]
    3SG   PST   buy   pair of trousers
    'He/she bought a pair of trousers.'

4. Il/elle   a   acheté   un   pantalon   [French]
    He/she   AUX has   PP bought   INDF   a pair of trousers
    'He/she bought a pair of trousers.

Noun phrases:

(c)   NP   [French]

                        DET   N

                Un   pantalon
                        A   pair of trousers

(d)   NP   [Sukuma]

                        DET   N

                Ø   suluβali
                                                     Pair of trousers
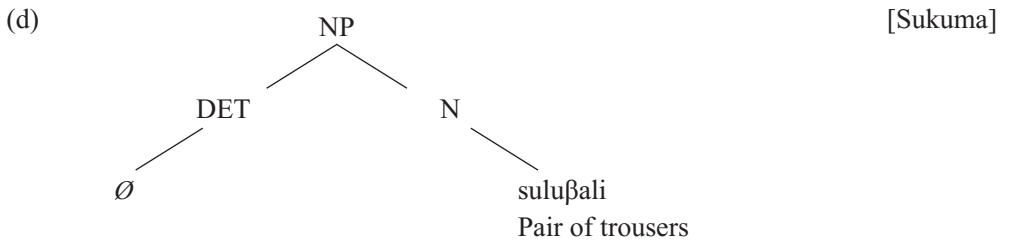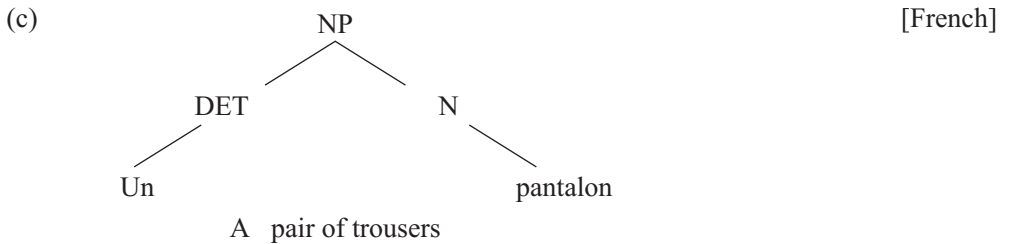
5. Tu   li   chukua   <u>kiti</u>   [Swahili]
    1PL   PST   take   a chair
    'We took a chair.'

6. Nous   avons   pris   <u>une</u>   chaise   [French]
    We   AUX have   PP took   INDF   a chair
    'We took a chair.'

Noun phrases:

(e)   [French]

```
                    NP
              /            \
          DET                N
          /  \              /  \
       Une              chaise
              A   chair
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(f)   [Swahili]

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                    NP
              /            \
          DET                N
          /  \              /  \
        Ø                  kiti
                        A chair
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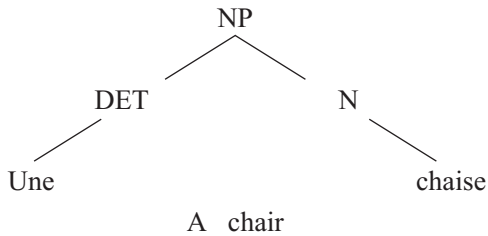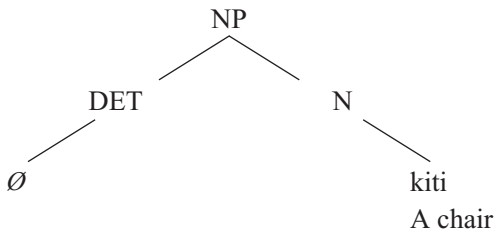
Indeed, the NP formation rules above apply in (7), (9) and (11) where noun phrases in learners' languages do not require the attachment of articles.

7. Na   la   guze   <u>imodoka</u>   [Hangaza]
    1SG   PST   buy   car
    'I bought a car.'

8. *J'   ai   acheté   <u>une</u>   voiture*   [French]
    I   AUX have PP bought   INDF   a car
    'I bought a car.'

9. Nda   la   guze   <u>imodoka</u>   [Ha]
    1SG   PST   buy   car
    'I bought a car.'

10. *J'   ai   acheté   <u>une</u>   voiture*   [French]
    I   AUX have PP bought   INDF   a car
    'I bought a car.'

11. N   guzire   <u>emotoka</u>   [Lunyambo]
    1SG   PAST buy   car
    'I bought a car.'

12. *J' ai   acheté   <u>une</u>   voiture   [French]

     I   AUX have PP bought   INDF   a car

     'I bought a car.'

7.2.2   Omission of prepositions

Examples

    i.   *Pour arriver Ø cette mission.*

        Correction: *Pour   arriver   <u>à</u>   cette   mission.*

                   To   arrive   at   this   mission

    ii. *Il permet Ø une personne d'obtenir un travail*

        Correction: *Il   permet   à   une   personne d' obtenir un   travail*

                   It   allows   to a   person   to get   a   work/it allows a person to get employment

    iii. *On ne peut pas échapper Ø l'interdépendance*

        Correction: *On   ne peut pas échapper <u>à</u>   l'   interdépendance*

                   One   cannot   escape   from the interdependence

    iv. *Cette relation a contribué Ø le développement de la Tanzanie.*

        Correction: *Cette relation a   contribué   au développement de la Tanzanie*
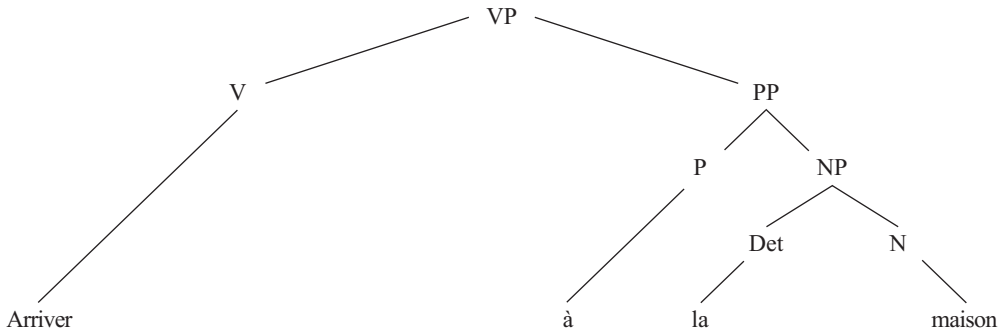
                   This   relation has contributed to development of the   Tanzania/ this relation has contributed to the development of Tanzania.

The examples above show errors due to the absence of à, an obligatory structural pattern for the verbs used. In French, there are verbs that should necessarily be used with this preposition as presented in the following examples. *aider à faire quelque chose* (to help to do something), *apprendre à faire quelque chose* (to learn how to do something), *arriver à faire quelque chose* (to succeed in doing something), *s'autoriser à faire quelque chose* (to allow oneself to do something), *chercher à faire quelque chose* (to attempt to do something), *commencer à faire quelque chose* (to begin to do something) and *continuer à faire quelque chose* (to continue to do something).
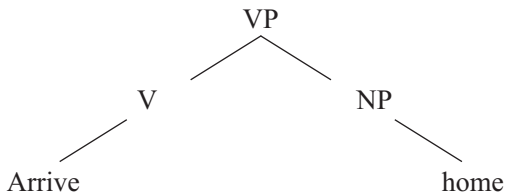
In (i), the learner fails to use the preposition à (to) which is a necessary structural pattern when using the verb *arriver* (to arrive). For example, although one may say *kufika nyumbani* (to arrive + home/at home) in Swahili, one cannot say *arriver ø maison* in French. In French, the use of the preposition à is obligatory as shown in the following phrasal structure:

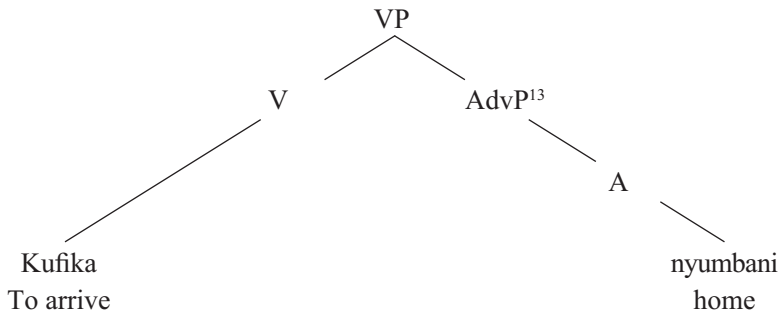Phrase structures for *arriver à la maison* (to arrive home/kufika nyumbani).

(a)   [French]

VP

V   PP

P   NP

Det   N

Arriver   à   la   maison

(b)   [English]

VP

V   NP

Arrive   home

(c)   [Swahili]

VP

V   AdvP[13]

A

Kufika   nyumbani
To arrive   home

The phrasal structures above indicate that the verb *arriver* (to arrive) does not require the attachment of a preposition in English or Swahili as opposed to French.

Thus, one should necessarily say *arriver à la maison* (to arrive home/at home). In (ii), the learner does not use the preposition à (to). In this context, this preposition is structurally used with the verb *permettre* (to allow). In French, one cannot say **permettre quelqu'un* (to allow someone). Although this is acceptable in English, in Swahili and in other Bantu languages French necessitates the use of a preposition. For example, in
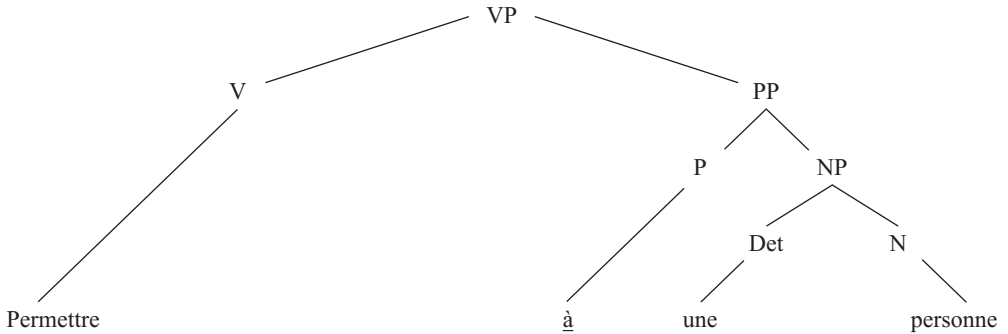
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13   Adverbial Phrase (AdvP)

English one can say *allowing a person* and this is also applicable in Swahili and other Bantu languages, as shown in the following examples:

13. Ku   m   jubula Ʊ   muntu   [Haya]
    To   OBJ allow AU person
    'To allow a person.'

14. Ku   m   ruhusu   mtu   [Swahili]
    To   OBJ allow   a person
    'To allow a person.'

15. Ku   m   lekula u   munu   [Hangaza]
    To   OBJ allow AU person
    'To allow a person.'

16. Ku   mu   lekula u   munhu   [Ha]
    To   OBJ allow AU person
    'To allow a person.'

17. Ku   m   jubura Ʊ   muntu   [Lunyambo]
    To   OBJ allow AU person
    'To allow a person.'

18. Ku   luhusu u   muuntu[Fipa]
    To   allow AU person
    'To allow a person.'

19. Hu   mu   leha   munu   [Bena]
    To   OBJ allow/let person
    'To allow a person.'

20. I   dhekelia mndu   [Chaga-Rombo dialect]
    To   allow   a person
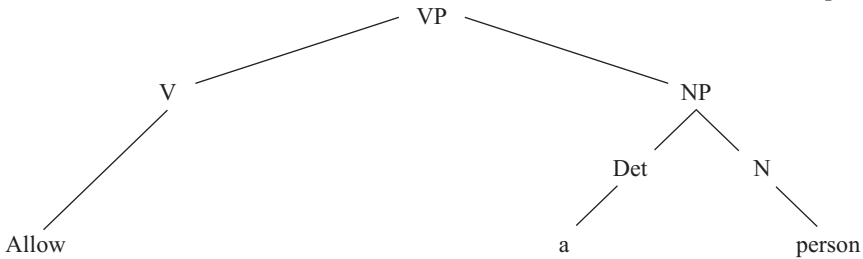   'To allow a person.'

Thus, in French, one must say *permettre à une personne* (to allow + to + a + person/ to allow a person) as presented in the following phrase structure.

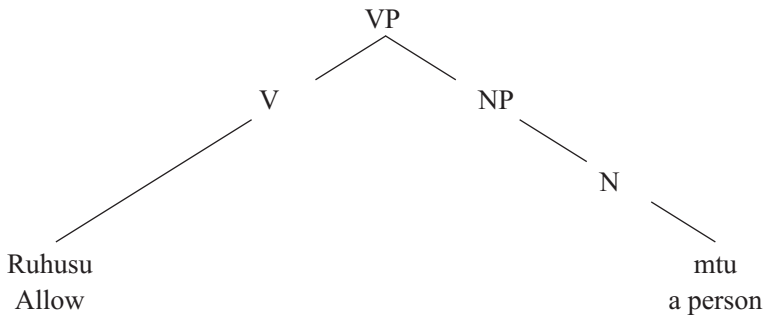**Example:** Phrase structure for *permettre à une personne* (to allow + to + a + person/to allow a person).

(d)   [French]

```
                              VP
                   /                    \
                  V                      PP
                  |                    /     \
                  |                   P       NP
                  |                   |      /  \
                  |                   |    Det    N
                  |                   |     |      \
             Permettre                à    une    personne
```

(e)   [English]

```
                              VP
                   /                    \
                  V                      NP
                  |                     /   \
                  |                   Det     N
                  |                    |       \
                Allow                  a      person
```

(f)   [Swahili]

```
                       VP
                    /      \
                   V        NP
                   |          \
                   |           N
                   |            \
                Ruhusu          mtu
                Allow          a person
```

The examples of phrasal structures above show that while French requires a preposition (à) regarding the use of the verb *permettre* (to allow), Swahili, ethnic community languages and English do not.

In (iii), the learner fails to use à (to) which is an obligatory preposition when using the verb *échapper* (to escape/avoid). In French, the verb *échapper* demands the use of a preposition (à) when it means escaping something/somebody as opposed to the following

examples from Swahili and other Bantu languages, where the use of a preposition is not applicable. Thus, the error in (iii) can be attributed to language interference from Swahili and other Bantu languages.
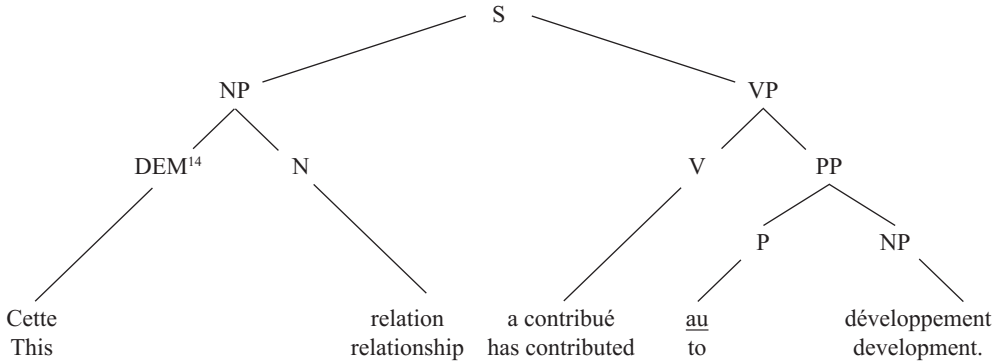
21. Ku   Kwepa   Ugonjwa   [Swahili]
    To   avoid   disease

22. Ku   iluk   endwala   [Haya]
    To   avoid   a disease

23. Ku   kwepa   u   wutamwa   [Hehe]
    To   avoid   AU   disease
    'To avoid a disease.'

24. Ku   epuka   amalwaale   [Fipa]
    To   avoid   diseases

25. Ku   iruka   ingwala   [Ha]
    To   avoid   a disease

Thus, the use of the preposition à is necessary in French. One should say *échapper à la maladie*. In (iv), the learner fails to use the preposition *au* (to) which is a necessary structural pattern in this context, following the presence of the verb *contribuer* (to contribute). In French, this verb is used with the preposition à (to) when it means to contribute to something. This is opposed to Swahili, where one can say *uhusiano huu umechangia ø maendeleo* (*this+project+has+contributed+development) without using a preposition with the verb *kuchangia* (to contribute), as presented below:

Sentence structures for *cette relation a contribué <u>au</u> développement* (*uhusiano huu umechangia ø maendeleo*).
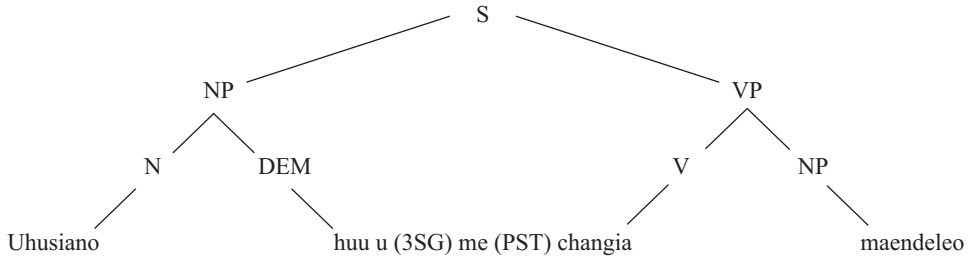
(a)   [French]

```
                              S
              _____
             NP                          VP
          _____                    _____
        DEM¹⁴    N                  V         PP
                                          _____
                                         P        NP

   Cette              relation    a contribué   au      développement
   This               relationship has contributed to   development.
```

(b)   [Swahili]

```
                          S
            _____
           NP                              VP
        _____                         _____
       N      DEM                     V         NP

  Uhusiano         huu u (3SG) me (PST) changia      maendeleo
```

Thus, unlike Swahili, French requires the use of a preposition with the verb *contribuer* (to contribute).

7.2.3   Use of nouns with English origins

i.   *Un *translateur*

   Correction: *Un   traducteur*
                        A   translator

ii. *Ces *advantages*

   Correction: *Ces   avantages*
                        These   advantages

---

14   Demonstrative

iii. *La *comparison*

Correction: *La   comparaison*
             The   comparison

iv. *Pour avoir la *capabilite*

Correction: *Pour avoir   la   capacité*
             To   have   the   capacity

v. *A l'*east Afrique*

Correction: *En   Afrique   de   l'   est*
            In   Africa   of   the   east/in East Africa

vi. *Les *crops*

Correction: *Les   récoltes*
             The   crops

vii. *L'*environment*

Correction: *L'   environnement*
             The   environment

viii. *En politique *issues*

Correction: *Dans   les   enjeux   politiques*
            In   the   issues   political/in political issues

ix. *L'*employment*

Correction: *L'   emploi*
             The   employment

x. *Les *citizens*

Correction: *Les   citoyens*
             The   citizens

The findings above indicate that there were nouns with English origins or sources. In (i), the learner uses a wrong noun form that is not in the French lexicon. The noun **translateur* may have been derived from the English verb translate which is *traduire* in French. Thus, a person who translates is *traducteur* and not **translateur*. In (ii), the learner uses an English word advantage instead of using the French word *avantage* (advantage). In (iii), the learner uses an English noun form comparison instead of using the French noun *comparaison* (comparison). In (iv), the learner uses a wrong noun form

(*capabilite*) instead of using *capacité* (capacity). The learner, in this context, may have transferred the English noun capability into French. In (v), the learner uses an English noun form (east) instead of using a French noun form *est* (east). In (vi), the learner uses an English noun form (crops). In (vii), the learner uses an English noun (environment) instead of *environnement* (environment). In (viii), the learner uses an English noun form (issues). In (ix), the learner uses an English noun form (employment) instead of using the French noun *emploi* (employment). Finally, in (x), the learner uses an English noun form (citizens).

8   RECOMMENDATIONS

In order for learners to master the use of definite and indefinite articles in French, teachers should provide a guided reading of different French texts through which learners will be able to understand how articles are used in the language while capturing the relevant themes in texts. Furthermore, errors on the absence of definite and indefinite articles should be corrected and learners should be taught about the importance of determiners in French. Finally, there should be various activities geared towards the learning of articles in French. The use of prepositions in French was found to be a problem for learners. Indeed, this can be attributed to differences that exist between Swahili, ethnic community languages and French. In order to enable French language learners to master the use of prepositions, teachers should encourage learners to read a variety of texts in French, as this can make them understand and internalize the different prepositions. By reading various French texts, learners may be able to understand how French prepositions are used contextually. It is worth noting that French prepositions are greatly linked with the context of use, and so prepositions with the same meaning may be used in different contexts. Therefore, failure to understand the context in which a certain preposition is used may lead to errors. We thus recommend that French instructors should give regular exercises on the use of prepositions in French and correct learners accordingly. Learners should also be encouraged to use different prepositions in different contexts. Regarding the mastery of noun forms in French, we recommend that French instructors should explain the different morphological patterns of nouns in French. For example, there should be a clarification on aspects of derivation and inflection, free and bound noun forms. Moreover, errors on noun forms should be corrected and different exercises on word formation given to learners.

We also recommend that learners should read a variety of texts with different themes so that they can learn the recurring vocabulary. Instructors may also use other learning activities such as the association of words, parts of speech, affixes and suffixes. Through regular exercises on word formation, learners may be able to familiarize themselves with French nouns, hence internalizing their forms.

9   CONCLUSION

This paper attempted an analysis of French morpho-syntactic interference errors committed by learners in four Tanzanian universities. It entailed an analysis of the morphosyntactic errors that learners encounter when writing in French as a foreign language. The study had three specific objectives, namely identifying learners' morpho-syntactic errors in written texts, explaining the reasons for the occurrence of the morpho-syntactic errors in learners' written texts, and recommending an appropriate corrective treatment to the encountered morpho-syntactic errors. The study's findings show that errors included the use of nouns with English origins, omission of prepositions and absence of determiners. Although the findings focused on morphosyntactic errors, they are to some extent related to previous studies in terms of interference errors (Nelius, 2012; Omari, 2002). Like previous studies, this paper showed that learners in the context of Tanzania have interference errors when learning French. These errors are attributed to Swahili, ethnic community languages (ECLS) and English.

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POVZETEK

NEGATIVNI JEZIKOVNI TRANSFER: ANALIZA NAPAK, KI SO POSLEDICA OBLIKOSKLADENJSKIH INTERFERENC, PRI UČENCIH FRANCOŠČINE NA TANZANIJSKIH VISOKOŠOLSKIH USTANOVAH

V prispevku predstavljamo rezultate raziskave, katere namen je bil analizirati napake, ki so posledica oblikoskladenjskih interferenc. V raziskavo smo vključili učence francoščine kot tujega jezika na štirih tanzanijskih univerzah: Univerzi v Dar es Salaamu (UDSM), Univerzi v Dodomi (UDOM), Visoki šoli za izobraževanje v Dar es Salaamu (DUCE) in Univerzi Makumira. Cilj pričujočega prispevka je (i) identificirati napake, ki so posledica oblikoskladenjskih interferenc, (ii) pojasniti vzroke za te napake in (iii) predlagati načine, kako jih odpraviti. V raziskavo smo vključili 61 respondentov, katerih pisni sestavki v francoščini so bili podlaga za nastanek korpusa. Raziskovalno delo smo zasnovali na metodi analize napak in teoriji vmesnega jezika. Kvalitativna analiza rezultatov je pokazala, da med pogoste napake učencev francoščine kot tujega jezika na tanzanijskih visokošolskih ustanovah sodijo raba samostalnikov angleškega izvora (18,87 %), izpuščanje predlogov (36,79 %) in izpuščanje določevalnikov (44,34 %). Te napake so posledica vpliva jezikov, ki so jih učenci usvojili že v preteklosti: svahilija, jezikov etničnih skupnosti in angleščine. V prispevku predlagamo različne načine za odpravo omenjenih napak. Za utrjevanje rabe francoskega določnega in nedoločnega člena predlagamo metodo vodenega branja francoskih besedil, ki bi učencem pomagala pri razumevanju rabe členov. K učenju pravilne rabe predlogov lahko pripomore vzpodbujanje k branju različnih francoskih besedil, s pomočjo katerih učenci lažje razumejo in ponotranijo rabo francoskih predlogov. Za utrjevanje rabe francoskih samostalnikov

predlagamo, da učitelji za učence redno pripravljajo vaje iz francoskega besedotvorja, ki bodo učencem pomagale pri spoznavanju francoskih samostalnikov in njihovih oblik. Pri tem je pomembno, da učenci samostalnike spoznavajo s pomočjo sobesedila.

Ključne besede: analiza napak, vmesni jezik, interferenca, negativni transfer, ciljni jezik

ABSTRACT

WHEN LANGUAGE TRANSFER IS NEGATIVE: ANALYSIS OF MORPHO-SYNTACTIC INTERFERENCE ERRORS BY LEARNERS OF FRENCH IN TANZANIAN HIGHER LEARNING INSTITUTIONS

This paper analyses morpho-syntactic interference errors committed by learners of French as a foreign language in four Tanzanian universities: UDSM[15], UDOM[16], DUCE[17] and Makumira. The paper has three specific objectives: (i) to identify morpho-syntactic interference errors, (ii) to account for their sources and (iii) to recommend a corrective treatment. The study included a total of 61 respondents. The data was collected through learners' written texts in French from which a corpus was developed. The study was guided by the interlanguage theory and the error analysis approach. Data analysis was qualitative. The findings reveal that errors included the use of nouns with English origins (18.87%), omission of prepositions (36.79%) and absence of determiners (44.34%). The findings further show that these errors are due to previously acquired or learned languages: Swahili, ethnic community languages and English. Different recommendations are given following the findings. As regards the use of definite and indefinite articles in French, teachers should provide a guided reading of different French texts through which learners will be able to understand how articles are used. To master the use of prepositions, teachers should encourage learners to read a variety of texts in French as this can make them understand and internalize the different prepositions. Moreover, through regular exercises on word formation in French, learners may be able to familiarize themselves with French nouns, hence internalizing their forms. Finally, the learning of French nouns should be done in context.

Keywords: error analysis, interlanguage, interference, negative transfer, target language

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