2022-08

Analysis of Mother Tongue Interference into the Learning of Efl Orthography At Primary School: A Case Of Afan Oromo

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This is to certify that the thesis prepared by Takele Abdeta entitled "analysis of mother tongue interference into the learning of EFL Orthography at primary school: a case of Afan Oromo" and submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Masters of Arts in TEFL complies with the regulations of the university and meets the accepted standards with respect to originality and quality.

Signed by Examining committee:

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_____   _____   _____

External Examiner   Signature   Date

Abstract

The main objective of this study was to identify and classify spelling errors and indicate possible sources of the errors that occur in the writings of Primary School students. The study randomly selected 64 grade five students from Darara Alaku Primary School, The study used descriptive design and primary data sources. To this end, spelling errors obtained from the students dictation test and two school teachers' interview responses were analyzed to determine intra and inter-language related spelling errors committed by the students. To elicit the possible spelling errors from the participants, the study used dictation test, and key informant interview as data gathering tools. In the end, the data were qualitatively and quantitatively analyzed. Accordingly, descriptive statistics such as percentage and frequency distribution were used to analyze quantitative data. Data obtained through open ended question and key informant interview were analyzed qualitatively using content analyzed The result, indicated that, most of the spelling errors are intra lingual spelling errors in their writing.

Acknowledgments

Blessed be the name of the Lord for guiding my steps in writing this thesis. I also express my deepest gratitude to my advisor Dr. Abebe Admasu for his fatherly advice, encouragement, proper guidance, constructive comments and wholehearted support during my entire work as regards this study. He did a lot in guiding me to write this thesis, including setting aside his time for my success. So, I am very much grateful to his invaluable academic advice, his emotional and technical support, his generosity in giving me so much of his time, and to his great personality.

My special thanks for Dr. Tariku Nagese who has shared his knowledge and experience with me. His supports and suggestions was very much helpful for me to finalize this study.

I would express my deepest gratitude to Mr. Degemegn Mamo For his assisting me in different manner.

I would as well like to gratefully acknowledge the kind assistance of Darara Alaku Primary school director, teachers and students for their cooperation during the data collection. My gratitude is also due to my family for bearing with me during the course of my work and providing me with all the necessary help and emotional support.

Declaration

I hereby affirm that the work presented in this thesis is exclusively my own original work and has not previously been presented to any academic institution in its entirety or partially for any other award or qualification.

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Takele Abdeta

August, 2022

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CHAPTER ONE

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background of the study

The impact of mother tongue can appear in realms of phonology, lexis and grammar (Hornby, 2000) which can be observed from learners' productive skills such as speaking and writing. Hence, learners need to make efforts to the rich ideal balance of language mastery between the first language as their mother tongue and English as the other language. An imbalanced master of such two languages will lead to distortion. In terms of acquiring a foreign or second language, non-native learners will naturally be comforted with influences that stem from their first languages. During this condition, the teacher should drive the scholars in diverse cultures by using material design. Within the teacher's side, it could assist the teacher in the teaching process so that the teachers can teach the English language similarly.

Lots of studies have been done in the field of mother tongue interferences and learning a second or a foreign language. Learning a second or foreign language is often difficult for learners as their native language has rules according to which they pronounce and spell words. A second language has patterns different from their native language, which creates problems for learners as the patterns of their mother tongue become part of their linguistic instinct, which they attempt to apply to the second language (Nor & Rashid, 2018). To learn any other language, the learners linguistic instinct has to undergo various modifications to accommodate the understanding of the second language and thus developmental studies and encounters with the language many times (Kocatepe, 2017; Zuriyani & Mohamed, 2019). During the process of learning, the speakers hear sounds different to those he/she instinctively knows and has to form a hypothesis about their use learners of a second language can have implicit knowledge about the orthographic structure of the target language in so far as they can pronounce or spell a word in their second language without having explicit knowledge of the particular rule they are using.

Spelling is considered as an essential component of written language. The potential mistakes in written spellings may change the meaning and understanding of written material and would make it unclear (Gebeyanesh, 2016). Hence, it is essential to use the correct spelling of words to convey the exact intended meaning of the content. Therefore, it can be asserted that spellings

play a pivotal role in being a primary and essential skill required by students. Accurate spelling enables writers to express their ideas and thoughts within the standard framework which is easily understandable by the readers. For effective writing, spelling must also be effective.

Among various difficulties faced by Afan Oromo learners of English, the most common error relates to the spelling of words in documents (Tamiru, Tigist, & Ketema, 2015). Students, due to ineffective learning, continue to repeat the same spelling errors, even after they have completed primary school, high school, or university or have started in their field of work, which can create obstacles to their progress and development (Mudd, 1994). The present study, thus, checks out of interference of the mother tongue in learning English as a foreign language /EFL/ specifically on word spelling.

1.2. Statements of the problem

Mother tongue interference (MTI) is a common problem in the study of English among Afan Oromo native speakers. In my years of teaching in secondary schools in the countryside, I have come across challenging cases attributed to mother tongue interference. Most of my students tend to use knowledge of their native language to fill in and understand writing in English.

This language problem persists and affects their communication both orally and in writing. Thus, learners face many difficulties related to the mental representations of L1 words. Regardless of the increasing linguistic interference that students in primary and secondary schools exhibit, little research has been done to analyze the impact of this scourge on education (Mihiretu & Melkamu, 2011; Gebeyanesh, 2016).

Previous research has shown that in most writing tasks of English, Afan Oromo mother tongue speaking students tend to transfer the writing knowledge from their L1 into the TL (Gebeyanesh, 2016). For instance, the studies of Gebeyanesh (2016) and Tamiru, Tigist, & Ketema (2015) indicate Afan Oromo interference in English at different linguistic levels, are important springboards in addressing the issue under consideration.

Firstly, Tamiru, Tigist, & Ketema (2015) tried to find out if there are any patterns of mother tongue interference in Afan Oromo mother tongue speaking Secondary School grade 9 students' written English. The study explored EFL learners' writing complexities by analyzing the nature

and distribution of their writing errors. The study, thus, indicated that items such as spelling errors, grammar errors and word order were caused by negative interference of the L1 in students' TL writing. The study finding showed that most of the grammatical errors committed by the students were L1 interference in acquiring grammatical elements of L2 (English). In addition recommended base teachers to be aware of the effect of negative transfer of grammar to MT and know how to reduce this problem and implement more effective teaching and learning.

On the other hand, Gebeyanesh (2016) describes the "analyses of Afan Oromo interference into learning English as a Foreign Language (EFL) orthography and pronunciation: a case of Batu Secondary School." The study revealed that the most series interference manifestations include the knowledge of rules, revealed through resources like; grammar, vocabulary, spelling, tone, stress, syllable, semantic, etc., in both pronunciation and orthography. Hence, the researcher suggested that; EFL teachers and students ought to work critically on the distinct areas among the two languages, adopt supplementary materials, arrange special lessons, encourage outstanding activities, etc.

Different from these studies, the current study, addressed a detailed account of the instances, causes, and extent of the inferences. Unless the instances, causes, and solutions are made available, the errors remain fossilized and teachers' argument misleads the established educational norm without empirical evidence.

Thus, this study tried to investigate the orthographic errors of English that were committed by grade five students due to interlingual interference from Afan Oromo. The findings would also enable the students and teachers alike to be able to deal with the problem of MTI once they learn and know the circumstances that trigger it and this the study tries to answer the following basic research questions.

1.3. Research Questions

The study addresses the following research questions.

    i.   What types of spelling errors are commonly committed by Afan Oromo MT speaking primary school students in their EFL writings?

ii. To what extent do students use Afan Oromo orthography instead of English orthography?

iii. What are the causes of orthographic interference errors created by Afan Oromo students while writing in English?

1.4. Objectives of the study

The general objective of the study was to analyze orthographic errors of English that were committed by grade five students due to interlingual interference from Afan Oromo. Specifically the study tries to:

- ➢ Identify types of spelling errors commonly committed by Afan Oromo MT speaking primary school students,
- ➢ measure the extent of orthographic errors committed as a result of the interference from Afan Oromo by grade five students in English;
- ➢ identify causes of orthographic interference errors created by Afan Oromo students;

1.5. Significances of the study

The result of this study might be significant to help Afan Oromo primary school students and teachers to enhance their understanding on the concept of MT interference in English vocabulary studies particularly words spelling. In addition, this study may provide teachers with tools for better understanding of the learners' problems in learning EFL. Identifying the areas of difficulty is important for English Language practitioners to develop teaching materials which pay attention to these critical areas. The study could also initiate other researchers to do an in-depth research to conduct further research on related problems.

1.6. Scope of the study

The study was delimited in both the number of populations that involved and in its area of investigation. First, it is delimited to the influence of Afan Oromo on English word spelling of grade five students of Darara Alaku primary school. Darara Alaku primary school is one of the West Wollega Zones. In addition, this study limits itself to the spelling of English words, not pronunciation. This study has also not dealt with identifying instances of positive transfer but

explained why the errors occurred. In addition to that, this study will not focus on errors that are not mother-tongue interference related.

1.7. Limitations of the study

The study focused on studying negative transfer traced in the grammatical bits of the two languages; and more specifically the phonological processes. The research dealt with common grammatical transfers in the learning of English basing on some grammatical forms, and ratio of equivalents. To get answers to this, a description of Afan Oromo was necessary in terms of its morphology and phonology. The morphological processes to be discussed are: prefixation, suffixation, reduplication and agglutination (though not a process, it's important to this study); the phonological ones are assimilation, labialization, nasalization, palatalization, vowel lengthening and weakening, vowel insertion and vowel coalescence. This study will not describe English as it has already been described in so many studies.

1.8. Definitions of Key Terms

The terms defined below reflect the context in which they have been used in this study.

Literacy: Literacy means the knowledge and skill necessary to communicate, including the reading, writing basic skills, computation, speaking and listening skill normally associated with the ability to function so that education, employment, community and family life are enhanced (Edwards 1990).

Mother tongue interference: the language errors which occur when mother tongue elements are brought into the language which is being learned.

Spelling: Spelling involves the integration of several skills including knowledge of phonological representations, grammatical and semantic knowledge, as well as the formation of analogies with words and the knowledge of orthographic rules and conventions (Kress as cited in RichardZool: 14: Piper, 2003 and Wagner, 1987)

Spelling error: Any word that does not match the target in part or in full is marked as a misspelling. Any faulty word, faulty grapheme (single rowel), single consonant, vowel digraphs, phonograms, suffix or prefix within a word is counted as an error.

CHAPTER TWO
2. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.1. Introduction

This chapter presents a review of related literature that related the influence of Afan Oromo as mother tongue on English Language words spelling of students in English class room understanding this influence is important to shed light on class room practice when learners are dealing with spelling.

2.2. The Concept of spelling

Various writers describe spelling in a different way. Some describe it as the act of forming words correctly from individual letters (Hornby, 2000). This means spelling has its rules to form words acceptably, that is, letters must appear in correct sequence to be meaningful; otherwise it will lead to spelling errors. In supporting this, Hodges (1984) defines spelling as a process of conveying oral language to visual form by placing graphic symbols on some writing surface. In a agreeing with this, Ehri (2014) states that spelling is an act of seeing or hearing accurately what may be written or spoken and translating that visual or oral image in to motor activity.

This nation is supported by curriculum development and implementation core process. According to Bryant & Bradley cited in (Carney, 2012) spelling involves integration of several skills including knowledge of phonological representation, grammatical and semantic knowledge, as well as formulation of analogies with words in visual memory.

Therefore, spelling is more than just a convention of writing it is an indication of a child's word knowledge of language (Templeton, 2004), Craft (1983) states teaching and learning of spelling must take place with the context of writing as much as possible.

2.3. Essential skill necessary for spelling

To understand the nature of the influence of Afan Oromo on English spelling, it is important to discuss the significance of phonemes in spelling.

2.3.1. Phonemic Awareness

This team usually refers to the awareness of the words as sequences of separate phonemes but it is often used in place of the term phonological awareness (chap man, 2002). Many people do not understand difference between phonological awareness, phonic awareness and phonic (piper, 2003).in order to understand the concept of phonological awareness, it is important to have a clear understanding of each of these terms.

Phonological awareness is the ability to recognize that a spoken word consists of smaller component such as syllables and phonemes and that these units can be manipulated (zambard is et al as cited in pijper, 2003).

This nation is supported by champan (2002) who states that phonological awareness is the awareness of various sound aspects of language. As Ehrit et at (2001) states that phonological awareness is a more general term for awareness of sound unit with words where as phonemic awareness consists of the ability to explicitly accurately analyze, synthesize, manipulate and separate phoneme size sound units with words phoneme is the smallest speech sound that distinguishes words.

2.4. The causes of spelling error

Different cause of English spelling errors have been mentioned and examined in various studies. In this sub-section, the four most common kinds of spelling mistakes and errors in the written work of students of English are discussed. Overall, spelling errors can be a result of omission, or substitution or insertion or the misplacement of a letter when writing a particular word.

Omission error are where the student does not complete word something is left out. Derivation errors occur when the student does not apply a basic rule or follow the basic instruction for spelling a particular word. For instance, they write snobbish for snobbish.

Inflection errors occur when the student ignores or does not make the necessary changes when adding the inflection. For instance students forgot do drop or remove "e" when adding to some words, producing timing for timing or reducing for reducing. Residue error is when students forget to drop letters in a particular context like bite when the past form bit is required.

Phonetic errors are produced when the students spell words as they are spoken like for watch for watched. Omission is concerned when the inflectional or derivational morphine in English words is left out, when the speller did not attempt the morpheme at all. E.g bill as an error attempt of billed or behind as an error attempt of behind omission errors also refers for example, hopy (happy) and speling (spelling). In other words, this kind of error occurs when the speller leaves out one or two letters from the standard spelling of a word. Moreover, this sort of spelling error may be caused by the in consistency of the sound and the letter system in the English language (critten, Connelly, Dockell & Walter (2014).

The second kind of error is a substitution, which occurs when speller substitutes one of the letters of the standard spelling of a word with another. The main cause of substitution and omission errors of English spelling is silent letters (somachelGingra&L.Haurevx, 2016). Sevechol et.al (2016) Further explain that there is some statistical evidence that children used their prior or orthographic context knowledge when making substitution errors. This can also be because some English letters have in consistent pronunciation, depending on the context for instance the sound /F/ can be represented by letter f, FF or gh as in life. Different and laugh letter 'c' can be pronounced as /k/ in car, in another context in words like, city, nice, and mice.

In addition, another sort of substitution error in English spelling occur as a result of the in consistent pronunciation of English vowels, for example, hangry (hungry) their for (this) fascinating (fascinating), and so forth. Al- zuoud and kabilan (2013) posit that vowels are another major reason why, Arabic students struggle to write error free English.

Other sort of English spelling errors commonly committed by learners are insertion errors where the spellers add and an additional letter when writing a word. A study conducted by Alhaisoni, AL-zuoud, and gaudel (2019) shows that insertion errors of spelling are very common among saud EFL learners, which may be result of different sound system. For examples of insertion error may be different from person to person.

For instance, a speller may wrongly write words like. Famouse (famous) prouduce (produce) or by doubling a letter in a word as in assisstant (assistant) and inclusion (inclusion) (Gail, Hantler, Laker Lanchner&Mich 2016).

2.5. Stages of spelling Development

Researchers have studied the stages of spelling development and there seems to be similarities as to how students develop. They all agree that to spell a word is not a once off case though the names of the stages are not the same.

Generally describing learners' spelling development, stages theories have been used as a foundation for the construction of spelling activities and to guide the development of instructional materials for teaching spelling (Gently, 1982: trainman at a.l, 1997). This statement makes it clear that spelling is a subject area that must be taught to learners at their own developmental levels: than simply memorizing letter and sound relationships (Du Bois; et al, 2007) learners progress through stapes on their way to spelling proficiency, and each stage indicates a different level of intelligence and cognitive awareness about how spelling works (savage,2001). As learners learn more about spelling, their invented spellings become more sophisticated to reflect their new knowledge even if the words are still spelled in correctly and in caressingly learners spell more and more words correctly they more through the stages of spelling development (jomp kin, 2007). Therefore, stages of spelling development seem to provide guidance to teachers in adopting the mass foundation for the constitution of spelling activities and for teaching spelling.

Researchers (Du Boise et al, 2007) have indentified the following stage of spelling development and from their work; they seem to agree on the issues presented in the following section.

2.5.1. Pre Communicative Spelling Stage

Learners at this stage literally spell what they hear, therefore their letter choices do not conform to conventional English spelling. Their writing is not read able to others and there may be random strings of symbols.

2.5.2. Semi- phonetic spelling stage.

Their writing is simple, a collection of scribbles, circles and lines with a few random letters being thrown in, and they are writing formed letter of the alphabet and stringing the letters together so that they looked like printed language. Spelling is characterized by chief at letter sound correspondence. It may be abbreviated, with only one or two letters to represent a word. E.g. ulk (walk) and (saw)

There present a portion of the phonetic information in the word and they recognize the left to right directionality of the English language.

2.5.3. Phonetic spelling stage

Learners at this stage not expected to spell conventionally because their spelling concepts are not yet fully developed. Spelling is not standard, but writing is meaningful and can be read and understood by others.

2.5.4. Transitional Spelling stage

At this stage learners pay attention to what words look like. They begin to incorporate vowels and endings in their spelling and they demonstrate their growing knowledge of English orthographic.

2.5.5. Standard or Conventional spelling stage

They should not be expected to spell at higher frequency level. At this stage, most words are spelled appropriately. The spell can often recognize a word that doesn't look right and a large reservoir of words are spelled automatically. On the other hand, others described three stages of spelling development.

Stage 1: first graders tend initially to the mainly consonants to spell words.

Stage 2: second and third graders learn to spell words they read and write. They rely on phonetic and visual information.

Stage 3: Most learners have mastered a basic spelling vocabulary and most third graders have no difficult with words such as cloud, are, their, there, would, and they.

On the other hand, Tomkins (2007) describes five stages of spelling development with different concept which have some differences in terms of learners' level of development. They are as follows.

Stage 1: Emergent spelling: learners string scribbles, letter – like forms together, but they don't associate the marks the make with any specific phonemes. Spelling, at this stage, represent natural, early expression of the alphabet and other written language concepts. Learners may write from left to right, right to left, to bottom or randomly across their understanding of directionality.

Some emergent spellers have a large collection of letter forms to use their writing, whereas others repeat a small number of letters over and over. To word the end of the stage, children are beginning to discover how spelling works and that letters represent sounds in words. This stage is typical of three to five years old. During the emergent stage, learners learn concepts such as the distinction between drawings writing, how to make letters; the direction of writing on page and some letter sound matches.

Stage 2: letter name, Alphabetic spelling learners develop an understanding of the alphabetic principle that a link exists between letters and sounds. At first, the spellings are quite appropriated and represent only the most prominent features in words. Learners use only several letters of the alphabet to represent an entire word. Examples of early stage 2 spelling are D (dog) and KE (cookie), and children may still be writing mainly with capital letters. Learners slowly pronounce the word they want to spell, listening for familiar letter names and sound.

In the middle of the letter name – alphabetic stage, learners use most beginning and ending constants and include a vowel in most syllables, they spell like as like and bed as bad by the end of the stage, they use consonant blends and diagraphs and short vowels patterns to spell hat, get and min but some still spell ship as sep. spellers at this stage are usually five to seven years old. During the letter name stage, learners learn these concepts such as the alphabetic principle, consonant sounds, short vowel sounds, consonant blends and diagraphs.

Stage 3: within word pattern spelling. Learners begin the within word pattern stage when they can spell most one syllable short vowel words and during this stage, they learn to spell long vowel pattern and r-controlled vowels.

The experiment with long vowel patterns and learns that words such as come and breed are exceptions that don't fit the vowel patterns. Learners may confuse spelling patterns and spell meet as mate and they reverse the order of letters such as form for from and girl for girl. They also learn about complex, such as consonant sound including –tch (match) and dge (sudge) and less frequent vowel patterns, such as oil /oy (boy)s, an (caught), aw (saw), ew (sew, few) ou (house) and ow (cow). Learners also become aware of homophones and compare /ong – and short-vowels.

Stage 4 syllables and Affixes spelling learners focus on syllables in this stage and apply what they have learned about one syllable words to longer multisyllabic words. They learned about inflectional ending syllabication and homophones during the syllables and affixes stage of spelling development.

Stage 5 Derivational relations spelling students explore the relationship between spelling and meaning during the derivational relations stage and they learn that words with related meanings are often related in spelling despite changes in vowel and consonant sounds (e.g. wise, wisdom, sign, signal, nation, national). The focus in this stage is on morphemes and students learn about Greek and Latin root words and affixes. They also begin to examine etymologies and role of history in shaping how words are spelled.

2.6. Factors influencing students' practices

According to Spencer (as cited in Richards, 2011) factors that negatively contribute to spelling accuracy are the frequency with which the word is used in the English language. The less the learner will remember the spelling of that particular word, the length of the word, and the presence of "tricky" letters or letter combinations.

Medrano and zych (1998) state possible factors that contribute to learners' spelling practice accordingly, they argue that many teachers do not know spelling strategies to use with their grade level they do not understand the stages of the development spelling and writing.

2.6.1. Complication of English as Language by itself

English has the largest vocabulary of any language a vast and sophisticated literature, extensive borrowing of words from other languages relatively simple grammar, a clear pronunciation, and

an efficient script, but its spelling system is archaic (outdated) and dysfunctional (carter,2006). There are about half million words in English, even though it was twenty six letters for about forty four sounds and many of its words are not spelt as they sound. Gentry(2004) states that its alphabetic principle is complex, with a plethora of foreign spellings, in numerable spelling combinations, a huge vocabulary and sometimes arbitrary spelling pattern and this complex of English Spelling makes it more difficult to spell than any other alphabetic language carter (2006) states that the English language has irregular orthography sometimes words are not written as they are pronounced. This discrepancy between the spoken and written form contributes a lot to spelling errors of students since many words having the sound are spelt differently, many others have silent letters in their spelling and many words are not spelt as they sound (Miressa and Dumessa,2011). Nell (2007) states that most teachers lack the training knowledge tools and time to support learners.

2.6.2. Pronunciation

Pronunciation based problems occur when learners do not know the English sound system and therefore use the wrong letters (AL-Jabri 2006). Temple on (2004) and wild (1992) point out that pronunciation and word origin can effect spelling.

Miratu Miressa and Melkamu Dumessa (2011) believes that learning the spelling rules of English word is very difficult due to the discrepancy between the pronunciation of many words and its spelling system . They further state that getting a pronunciation out of alphabetic writing requires people to analyze the sound string down to the level of component sounds.

2.6.3. First Language Interference

Dulay et al. (as cited in Bhela, 1999) define interference as the automatic transfer, due to habit of the surface structure of the first on the surface of the target language. Dubo is et al, (2007) points out that another probable factor for students' in ability to transfer correct spelling may be found within the child's own language area. This occurs when students use a native language rule to spell in second language English (Al- Jarf:2008). This view is supported by Dubois et al (2007) stating that the factor affecting the success of learner writers is the lack of experience with language. Mother tongue interference, in particular as language transfer know as L interference, logistics interference and a cross meaning which refers to a speakers or writers applying the

knowledge from the native language acquisition method in to learning a second language (Viole, 2013).

In fact, interference can appear in phonology, grammar word formation, word and sentence sequences (Negeri, 2011). However, the difficulties in L2transfer and its importance in to second language acquisition (SLA), besides the relationship between students' L1 and L2 linguistic resources always appear difficult (Karimand Nassaji, 2013). The mismatch between the languages used in schooling and spoken at home might have important interference for educational attainment, (Ramanchandra,2012). Whenever we counter a foreign language, our natural tendency wants to hear it in terms of the sounds of our own language that we actually perceive it rather different from the way native speakers do (Well, 2000).

2.6.4. Using word families spelling words list strategy

Ideally teachers should make use word families and spelling lists to meet the unique requirements of their own class. Teaching learners word families is a power full strategy because it draws their attention to spelling patterns that they can use when they are writing (Medrano &Zych, 1998). According to Davies and Ritchie (as cited in Candy, et al, 2010) teaching hand writing, reading and spelling skills is a synthetic analytic phonics programmed where young learners learn to spell, read and write by using pictures and key words.

2.7. Errors versus Mistakes

Before analyzing learner errors, it is important to distinguish between 'errors' and 'mistakes'. Errors are caused by learners' inadequate knowledge of the target language while mistakes are slips of the pen or tongue. L2 learners can self-correct their mistakes but they cannot self-correct the errors they make (Mourtaga, 2004). Mistakes are not a result of deficiency in competence (Yuksel, 2007) instead they can be considered as lapses which may result from memory failure and physical and mental fatigue.

There are two types of errors normally committed by L2 learners which are interlingual and intralingual errors. Interlingual errors are caused by L1 interference while intralingual errors are caused by the difficulty of acquiring the language being learned (Hourani, 2008). Interlingual errors have been classified into various distinct categories by different scholars. However, this

study has adapted three out of seven general categories proposed by (Hanafi, 2014) which the learner errors are classified into. The categories are 'transfer of rules', 'redundancy reduction' and 'overgeneralization'.

This type of errors occurs when the writers apply knowledge of their native language to the second language situation when they do not have the native-level command of a language, such as when translating into a second language. The ESL/EFL writers have the tendency to use their mother tongue experience to structure the information in the target language.

This type of errors is committed by ESL/EFL learners when they remove necessary or add unnecessary items in a sentence due to ignorance. They simplify or modify the L2 sentence structure because they have not fully acquired the language yet. This type of errors is usually committed by beginner level writers. For example, they produce phrases such as "… I happy to study" instead of "…I am happy to study". The word 'am' is eliminated.

Overgeneralization happens when the learners apply the rules of L2 without taking into consideration the exceptions to the general rules. Lee (1990) classifies overgeneralization errors into four categories namely grammatical, discourse, phonologically-induced and lexical errors.

2.8. Aspects of Afan Oromo Phonology

2.8.1. The Language

Oromos describe their language as 'Afan Oromo' which is spoken in a choice of dialects and was organized into different categories based on special scenarios. Previously, Kebede (2005) and Gragg (1976) listed five dialects considering users' geographical sites. Lately, Feda (2015) systematized Oromo varieties by indicating hierarchies of small and big clusters. He, thus, classified the dialects into three big clusters where the first cluster comprises varieties such as Arsi-Bale, Harar, Wollo-Rayya. The second and third include Wollega-Ilubabor-Jimma, Shawa and Borana-Guji, respectively.

Oromo constitutes its own consonant and vowel phonemes that earlier phonological works consistently described. In the previous phonological studies of Oromo 24 native consonants and sounds like /p, v, z, s'/ in loan words were listed along with five vowel sounds (Fikadu, 2014).

Similarly, consistent with these former studies, this study listed the consonant and vowel sounds employed in the speech of the participants.

Obstruents						Sonorants			
	labials	*Alveolar*	*Palatal*	*Velar*	*Glottal*		*labials*	*Alveolar*	*Palatal*
Stops	b	t d		k g	ʔ	*Nasals*	m	n	ɲ
Affricates			ç ɟ			*Glides*	w		j
Fricatives	F	s	ʃ		h	*Liquid*	--	r	--
Implosive		ɗ						l	
Ejectives	p'	t'	ç'	k'		--	--	--	--

Symbols that appear to the right corner represent a voiced consonant.

TABLE 1: Consonant sounds

Majority of the consonant sounds are obstruents. In addition to the consonants, five vowel sounds were distinguished with their long counterparts. Lip rounding and relative tongue position are the defining characteristics of the vowels. In view of the parameter of lip rounding, all the vowels except the two back vowels are unrounded. In the mouth, the position of the tongue determines the shape of the oral cavity, which divides the vowels into three great classes: (a) front vowels, (b) back vowels, and (c) central vowels. Below is a chart that shows Oromo vowel sounds/phonemes identified in the speech of the participants.

	FRONT	*CENTRAL*	*BACK*
Close	i	--	u
Mid	e	--	o
Open		a	

TABLE 2: Vowel phonemes of Oromo

Different vowels never coalesce to make a diphthong, but similar vowels may combine to bring about a contrastive vowel length in an identical environment for all consonants of the language.

2.8.2. The Distributions of phonemes

In any language, phonemes have a definite pattern of an arrangement called phonotactics. Phonotactics is, therefore, some constraints on the sequences of the phoneme that have to be obeyed in the language, which is part of every speaker's phonological knowledge (Yule, 2006). Thus, while phonemes come together in Oromo, there are some phonotactic constraints on the possible combination of sounds operating on units larger than its segment like a syllable. For example, a cluster of consonants is not permissible both word-initially and finally. All vowels both short and long do occur only in word medial and final positions (Habte, 2003). That means there is no word that begins with a vowel while in clusters the maximum number of consonant allowed word medially is only two (Hawine, 2007). The consonants make parts of different syllables in the syllabification of the language.

Individual sounds have their own distinctive distributions. For instance, Wako (1981) asserted that from the stop consonants /p'/ does not occur word-initially in the dialect. The other sounds categorized as stops can begin a word. Furthermore, from the fricatives, Wako (1981) claimed that /s/ does not word finally occur. Likewise, Habte (2003) stated that /č/ hardly exist in a word-initial position. Besides, all the fricative sounds may come about word-initially or medially apart from the glottal fricative /h/, which is restricted to initial position only (Wako, 1981). In fact, word medially the sound serves sometimes as a free variant of the glottal stop. For instance, /naʔe/ 'he's startled' can be surfaced as [nahe] alternating the glottal stop freely with the glottal fricative.

Majority of the words in Oromo end in vowel sounds although some consonant sounds such as /m, n, r, s, f/ more frequently occur word finally than other consonants (Habte, 2003). With the exception of these sounds, all the non-loan consonant segments, except /c, w, ʔ, ɗ/, may occasionally occur word finally in idiophone expressions (Dejene, 2010). From the affricates, no sound takes the word-final position; but all the nasals excepting the palatal nasal sound (which does not occur word finally) can take word-initial, medial, and final positions.

In addition, consonant clusters are rarely studied in Oromo and it is difficult to know the exact number and type of clusters in the language. Since a cluster of consonants is permissible only in word medial position and the consonants are part of different syllables. In the language,

consonants singly take the word-initial and final position (Wako, 1981). Yet, clusters of more than two consonants in the word medial position do not exist in the language. Consequently, there is no possibility of the cluster for consonants in an onset or coda position. The happenings of the consonants in the medial position as clusters itself have some restrictions as in every language of the world; merely some sounds can make clusters in Oromo.

CHAPTER THREE

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1. Introduction

This part of the thesis presents the design and methodologies employed. It includes thorough information about how the student population whose spelling errors were analysed had been selected. The methods employed in selecting, preparing and administering, the test materials for this research work are also dealt with. Moreover, methods of analysing and interpreting the data are pointed out. It also addresses the procedures employed to maintain the ethical issues to be kept safe and how the paper is set.

3.2. Designof the study

This study aims at analyzing mother tongue interferences on grade five students' English spelling as a result of Afan Oromo inter-lingual interference. Thus, it is designed to employ both qualitative and quantitative methods (a mixed approach). To this end, a descriptive design was used to employ both the quantitative and qualitative methods.

3.3. Setting of the study

The study was conducted at Darara Alaku Primary school which was found in the West Wollega zones of Oromia National Regional State. Yubdo is the center of the district with the same name. The study site was chosen for its convenience during data collection. Thus, the study was carried out in a real-setting world; the people and situation are as well real.

3.4. Participants of the study

When this fieldwork was conducted, the school had 198 grade five students and two English teachers. Of the total students, 102 were male and 96 were female whereby, the entire teachers of the grade level were male. From 198 total students in the school the subjects of this study consist grade five students both boys and girls aged who are learning at Darara Alaku primary school. The students in this class were all Afan Oromo native speakers. They were enrolled in

three sections, with sixty-eight students on average in each section. Therefore, since all the students are Afan Oromo MT speakers, the target participants of this study were 64 grade five students who were randomly drawn from among the targeted three sections that constitute 30% of the entire population. In addition, two EFL teachers who were teaching grade five students in the school were part of the study.

3.5. Data Collection Instruments

3.5.1. Dictation test

For this study, the main data-gathering instrument was dictation. Since grade five students are possibly unable to write paragraphs on their own, a dictation test was used to elicit linguistic data. In addition to that dictation was selected to avoid students from searching for words they already know and to introduce them to words of various natures. Accordingly, sixty two (62) words were collected from all the chapters of grade five English textbook that the students learnt at their regular class. Familiar, less familiar, and unfamiliar words, as well as simple, moderate, and difficult words were integrated based on pedagogical reasons. According to Ehri (2014), word spellings are linked to their pronunciations and meanings in memory. Pronunciation and meaning in memory of words depend on the recurrence of words in students' academic experience. Word recurrence in students' academic experience was used in selecting words with different familiarity levels. In doing so, the researcher consulted lower grade English subject teachers. The selection of words with different orthographic complexity levels was made based on linguistic parameters, phoneme-phonetic-grapheme relationships. Then, the selected words were dictated to the students within the sentences to avoid the problem of homophones. The sentences were dictated three or more times based on students' demand, to avoid temporal confusion.

Regarding its administration, all the words in the dictation test of the pilot and main studies were presented in contexts. This was done to minimize misspellings that could arise from confusion of meanings. The administration of the test was done in their classroom for about 60 and 90 minutes for the pilot and main studies, respectively, without any interruption. During the presentation of the dictation test, both in the pilot and main studies, each word was read three times. During the first and second times, only the words were read at a moderate speed. During

the third time, the words were read in contexts at a slower speed so that the trainees could discriminate the words they hear. However, the administration of the dictation test was not recorded because of lack of recording materials during the study. It (the dictation test) was, thus, read by the researcher during the administration.

3.5.2. Key informant interview

To make the data more reliable and valid, key informant interview was conducted with two of the school's grade five teachers using English as a medium. Semi-structured interview guide was prepared to help the smooth administration of the key informant interview. To help the interviewer and interviewees focus on the interview process and to easily find the data whilst analysis an audio recording was used.

3.6. Pilot study

The subjects for the pilot study were 32 students from the school. To select these students, the following preconditions were fulfilled. Of the three sections, one was chosen randomly for the pilot study. After choosing one of the three sections of the students at the grade level, dictation test was conducted to check for the reliability and validity of the words. The words were read by the researcher and informed the students not hastate to ask to repeat when they need to.

3.7. Analysis

Since this study considers the explanation of some of the spelling errors of grade five students, the study identified and classified spelling errors into four levels as errors of omission, substitution, analogy with TL, and SL orthography. This study employed both quantitative and qualitative methods to analyze the data collected from the participants. Orthographic errors in the students' text were collected manually, classified, statistically computed, and then the causes and the instances of the interference were described linguistically. Orthographic errors obtained from the students were compared to trace the causes and the depth of mother tongue orthographic interference with English. Descriptive statistics such as percentage and frequency distribution were used to analyze quantitative data. Percentage was used to analyze information obtained through dictation test while frequency distribution of the errors was used to analyze data

obtained through dictation test. Data obtained through open-ended questions and key informant interviews were analyzed qualitatively using content analysis. In doing so, qualitative data were transcribed, tabulated, and the common ideas of the respondents were taken to substantiate and refute the data obtained through other tools.

3.8. Ethical Issues

All ethically vital pre-emptive measures were well thought-out in carrying out this study. Firstly, a formal letter of request from Bahr Dar University elucidating objectives and purposes of the study was provided to the local area administrators and the school principal. After making the purpose of the study clear, permission was requested to conduct the study on school premises and to use prior exam papers of the students. Every part of the data collected from the students was also kept secret and anonymity is granted up on demand of confidentiality. Indeed, the participants were given reference numbers to exclude details such as name or any other identifying information in their writings and the reports. It is also mandatory to make sure that no mischief or harm will inflict on the willing participants for being part of the study. When considered necessary, the students were given breaks and encouragements at the middle of their writings.

CHAPTER FOUR

4. Results

This chapter analyses data collected from the participants through dictation, and interview. The analysis is done with the help of tables and diagrams as explanations are given. This chapter also groups the errors according to word classes, phonological and morphological errors.

4.1. Error Analysis from Dictation

Errors obtained from dictation were divided into systematic and non-systematic (asymmetric) errors. Systematic errors are errors are errors that are not accidental. For instance, errors like substitution of sounds that they do not have in their native language with other sounds which are close to them. Systematic errors were categorized either under SL or TL related causes or both. Asymmetric errors were categorized neither under SL nor TL related causes. Errors which do not fall into these classifications were categorized under asymmetric errors.
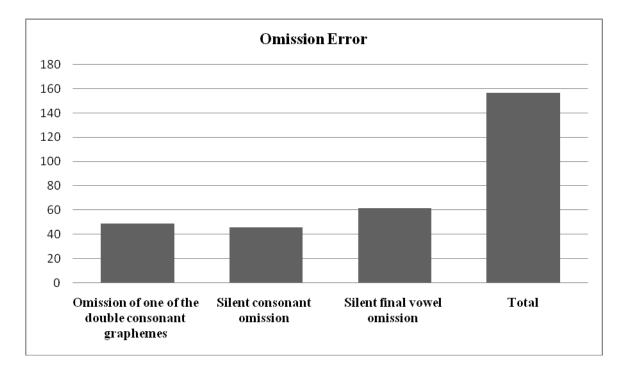
4.1.1. The amount of errors

From the total 856 errors committed by Afan Oromo mother tongue speakers, 606 (70.3%) errors accounted for systematic errors and 250 (29.7%) accounted for asymmetric errors. From the total errors created by the participants, substitution errors accounted for 401 (46.8%) of which 338 (39.5%) were specific to cause of the target language which is English while 50 (5.84%) were specific to orthographic interference. Errors of analogy with the orthography of the TL accounted for 80 (9.3%) errors created by Afan Oromo mother tongue speakers. The cause of this error was peculiar to TL orthography. From the total orthographic errors, errors of analogy with the orthography of the SL accounted for 112 (13.1%) out of which 118 (13.8%) were unique to SL orthographic interference errors and 59 (6.9%) were the results of TL.

TABLE 1. Dictation test results

Error type		Error Count	%
Omission	Omission of one of the double consonant graphemes	49	5.7
	Silent consonant omission	46	5.4
	Silent final vowel omission	62	7.2
	Total	157	18.3
Substitution	Vowel Substitution for the closest phoneme	118	13.8
	Consonant phoneme phonetic substitution	92	10.7
	Vowel phoneme phonetic substitution	89	10.4
	Phonetic Substitution of a vowel phoneme for double vowel	76	8.9
	Phonetic substitution of a vowel phoneme for vowel clusters	50	5.8
	Total	425	49.6
Analogy with TL orthography	Consonant Substitution based on TL	4	0.5
	<e> vowel insertion at word-final	3	0.4
	Diphthong Substitution	2	0.2
	Homophone Substitution	3	0.4
	Total	12	1.5
Analogy with SL orthography	Word initial vowel insertion	4	0.5
	Word medial vowel insertion	2	0.2
	Word final vowel insertion	4	0.5
	Vowel lengthening (doubling existing vowel)	2	0.2
	Total	12	1.5
Total systematic errors (SL plus TL)		606	70.8
Asymmetric errors		250	29.2
	Total errors	856	100

Of the total 50 words dictated, the students on average spelled 15 incorrect words approximately. Concerning the causes and instances of orthographic errors of English the study indicated the following result. Firstly, the omission error indicated the following result.
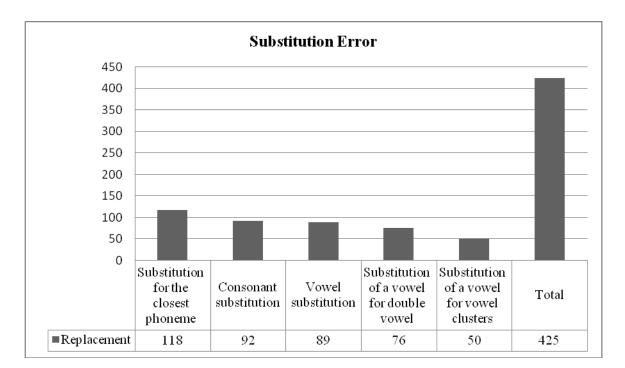
a. Omission

The students made an omission error which is missing a grapheme in a predictable environment from graphemes used to denote a word. From the total errors of omission accounted for (157 (18.3%)) the study classified them into three sub-categories based on their nature. The first is the omission of one of the double consonant graphemes. This error represents 49 (5.7%) of omission errors created. Removal of one of the double consonants as in *cabage* for *cabbage /kæbɪdʒ/, catle* for cattle/*kætl/*, and *mamal* for mammal /*mæml/* resulted from either the SL or the TL orthographic nature (see the appendix). In English language, the relationship between phonemes and graphemes is not one-to-one. This makes English writing system haphazard that cannot easily be captured and internalized (Carney, 2012). In phonemic/phonetic writing systems like Afan Oromo, double consonant grapheme stands for geminated consonant phoneme (Dejene, 2010; Tariku, 2021). But in English words like cabbage, cattle and mammal, the occurrence of double consonant graphemes has no connection with the phoneme in the environment. Therefore, the causes of this error can be traced to both Afan Oromo and English language orthographies.

The second type of error identified under the omission was the omission of silent consonant graphemes. It accounted for 46 (5.4%) of the errors. The concept of silent phoneme representations in a word is not known in Afan Oromo orthography. Only consonant phonemes that appear in words are represented by graphemes. In addition to the non-systematic nature of the orthography of the TL, SLs orthographies have a stake in the omission of graphemes standing for non-existing consonant phonemes in the TL.

The third sub-category of omission error was that of silent final vowel omission accounted for 62 (7.2%) errors from the total errors created. The omission of word-final vowels accounted for the majority of the omission errors. Although it was not phonemic, the data implied that vowel grapheme <e> appeared at the end of many TL words. Under the omission of silent final vowels, students were found writing *cultivat* for cultivate /kʌltɪveɪt/, *mixtur* for mixture /mɪkstʃər/, and *separat* for separate /seprət/. The omission of vowel <e> at word-final where it is not pronounced based on the phonetic paradigm of both sources and TLs.

b. Substitution

The other error is substitution, which is the use of a grapheme for another grapheme in a word, either based on phonetic or non-phonetic patterns. The study result indicated the following result.

Substitution Error

	Substitution for the closest phoneme	Consonant substitution	Vowel substitution	Substitution of a vowel for double vowel	Substitution of a vowel for vowel clusters	Total
■ Replacement	118	92	89	76	50	425

As can be seen from the Table 1 the error accounted for 425 (49.6%) errors created. Error of substitution has five sub-divisions. Among substitution sub-types, vowel substitution for the closest phoneme accounted for 118 (13.8%) from the entire errors committed by the students. Most of the substitutions were made for vowel phonemes that do not have representation in the alphabet of the TL. In this regard, the substitutions of <a> for < u, o, e, i >, and <e> for <u, a> vowel graphemes were observed. In the words where the substitution errors happened, both the substituted and the removed graphemes do not represent the phonemes in the environment. In *darty* for dirty /dɜːrti/ and *jamp* for jump /dʒɜːmp/ grapheme <a> is substituted for <i> and <u> which stand for phoneme /ɜː/. In the substitution of /hʌŋgri/, *caltivate* for cultivate /kʌltɪveɪt/, and *brather* for brother /brʌðər/ vowel grapheme <a> was substituted for vowel graphemes <u> and <o> which stand for phoneme /ʌ/. In the substitution of vowel <e> for <u> in *mixtere* for mixture /mɪkstʃər/, vowel <u> stands for phoneme /ə/. Variation of graphemes representing phonemes, such as /ɜː/, /ʌ/ and /ə/ and absence of phonemes' symbolic representation in the alphabet of the TL were the main sources of errors committed by the students. Moreover, the absence of /ɜː/, /ʌ/, and/ə/ phonemes in Afan Oromo has contributed to the production of more errors among the students. Generally, from the data discussed so far, it can be inferred that phoneme /ɜː/, /ʌ/ and /ə/ having approximately the same color and denoted by graphemes, such as <i>, <u> and <o> in different words, invited students to substitute them with either <a> or <e> vowel graphemes based on their distribution in words.

The second sub-type of error occurred under substitution was consonant phoneme phonetic substitution. This error accounted for 92 (10.7%) errors created by the students. Substitution of <k> for <c> as in *diskession* for discussion /dɪˈskʌʃn/, <j> for <g> as in *cabbaje* for cabbage /kæbɪdʒ/, and <s> for <c> as in *reseive* for receive /rɪˈsiːv/ are some of the examples captured. In phonetic substitution of consonant phonemes, the graphemes representing a phoneme in writing were varied. Thus, the students switched to the phonetic representation of the phonemes in the TL or SL Afan Oromo than the graphemes inconsistently representing a phoneme in the TL writing.

The third sub-category of substitution error was vowel phoneme phonetic substitution in the environment where vowel graphemes represent a phoneme contrary to their phonetic representation. From the total errors, 89 (10.4%) errors related to vowel phoneme phonetic

substitution. Substituting vowel <i> for <e> as in *rivision* for revision /rɪvɪʒn/ and *riceive* for receive /rɪsiːv/ and vowel <i> for <u> as in *bisy* for busy /bɪzi/ and *bisiness* for business /bɪznəs/ are some examples to mention. The data conveyed that vowel phonemes that were represented by non-phonetic symbols were substituted by phonetic symbols that led to errors.

Phonetic substitution of a vowel phoneme for a double vowel grapheme was the fourth sub-category of error committed by the students. From the total errors, 76 (8.9%) were committed. In circumstances where students replaced double vowel graphemes with single ones in the TL, double vowel graphemes represented no vowel phonemes in the environment; they simply visually represented words. The students then substituted the phoneme in the environment with the appropriate grapheme based on phoneme-phonetic representation. Substitutions of *cuk* for cook /kʊk/, *classrum* for classroom /klaːsrum/, *buk* for book /buːk/ and *futball* for football /futboːl/ are some of the errors committed by students. This is the one-to-one phoneme-grapheme relationship in the TL that led students to commit this orthographic error.

The fifth sub-type of substitution errors found was phonetic substitution of a vowel phoneme for vowel clusters. The vowels in the clusters did not provide diphthong service; they were simply inserted to represent the phoneme they did not phonetically match. This accounted for 50 (5.8%) errors encountered. Substitutions of vowels such as vowel <i> for <ei> as in *recive* for receive /rɪˈsiːv/, *protin* for protein /prəʊtiːn/, vowel <i> for <ea> as in *repit* for repeat/rɪˈpiːt/, vowel <i> for <ie> as in *chif* for chief /tʃiːf/, *belive* for believe /bɪˈliːv/ and vowel <uu> for <ou> as in *yuuth* for youth /juːθ/ were some of the errors committed by the students.

In all the substitutions, in addition to the TL orthographic knowledge, the one-to-one phoneme-grapheme relationship in Afan Oromo (Fikadu, 2010) has a stake in looking for phonetic substitution of phonemes in the TL.

c. Intra-language interference errors

Thirdly, the intra-language interference errors which happen as the result of the influence of pre-established language habits in the TL itself ((Lekova, 2010). It is wrongly using learnt habits for different items in the same language, causing errors. From the total errors, error of analogy with the orthography of the TL created was accounted for 12 (1.5%) errors. Error of analogying is an

error that is exclusive to the TL and has nothing to do with SL orthography. For instance, substituting consonant diagraph <ph> for <gh> as in *rouphly* for roughly /rʌfli/ is distinctive to the TL. Phoneme /f/ is represented by different graphemes like <gh> as in rough, <ph> as in photo, and <f> as in father. So, in the word rough, substituting <ph> for <gh> is the confusion emanated from the nature of the TL, in which one phoneme is represented by different graphemes. Regarding the confusing nature of the TL orthography, Mudd (1994) stipulate the inconsistent phoneme-grapheme relationship in English as the main source of learners' difficulty in clearly spelling words in English. The problem has emanated from students' challenge in internalizing inconsistent orthography of the TL.

Under the analogy of the TL orthography, four distinct sub-types of errors were identified. The first of these four sub-types is consonant substitution based on the TL orthographic pattern. From the total errors created by the participants, it accounted for 4 (0.5%) errors. Substitution of consonant grapheme <c> for <ck> that stands for phoneme /k/ as in *stic* for stick /stɪk/, <t> for <ss> that stands for phoneme /ʃ/ as in *discution* for discussion /dɪˈskʌʃn/ and <th> for <s> that stands for phoneme /z/ as in *buthness* for business /ˈbɪznəs/, and grapheme <q> for <c> that stands for phoneme /k/ as cliniq for clinic /ˈklɪnɪk/ were some of the errors identified. Where grapheme <c> is substituted for <ck> that stands for phoneme /k/ in the word stick, the phoneme is phonetically represented by <k> grapheme. However, due to the representation of phoneme /k/ in the language by different graphemes such as <c> as in cat /kæt/, <k> as in keep /ki:p/, <ck> as in kick /kɪk/, <q> as in square /skweə(r)/, and <ch> as in character /ˈkærəktə(r)/ confusion arose about what grapheme to use when phoneme /k/ appeared in different word environments. This confusion led the students to use graphemes <c, ck, k, q, ch> interchangeably in the environment where phoneme /k/ appeared.

The addition of vowel grapheme <e> at word-final position was the other error happened due to the nature of the TL. From the total errors committed by the participants, it accounted for 3 (0.4%) errors. It was found out that vowel grapheme <e> was inserted at word-final of the word repeat /rɪˈpi:t/ as *repeate*, sheet /ʃi:t/ as *sheete*, revision /rɪˈvɪʒn/ as *revisione*, peak /pi:k/ as *peake*, and lunch /lʌntʃ/ as *lunche*.

In most cases, the presence of vowels at the end of words is not phonemic in the English language. They only appear to distinguish words in their written forms. This invited students to insert vowel <e> at word-final positions where phoneme /e/ or grapheme <e> does not exist. To bring the vowel at the right place based on the existing spelling norm regardless of its phonemic presence demands visual capturing and memorization of each word's orthographic pattern, and studying commonly misspelled words (Ehri, 1989). Failure to do these leads to the addition and omission errors of vowel graphemes.

Although small in number, diphthong substitution for a vowel based on a phoneme-phonetic relationship was seen in the orthographic errors of the students. It is a phenomenon of substituting a diphthong grapheme for a vowel grapheme standing for a phoneme it does not phonetically represent. It represented 2 (0.2%) of errors committed. The concept of the diphthong is not known in the SL. In the SL, distinct vowel phonemes do not appear consequently (Dejene, 2010; Tariku, 2021). So, the phonetic substitution of a diphthong for a phoneme in the environment has nothing to do with the orthography of Afan Oromo. Phoneme phonetic substitution of vowel <iu> for <u> as in *niutrient* for nutrient /*njuːtriənt*/, vowel <ai> for <i> as in *raight* for right /*raɪt*/ and as in *desaign* for design /*dɪˈzaɪn*/ were some of the orthographic errors created based on this pattern.

Within the category of the analogy with the TL orthography, homophone substitution accounted for 12 (1.5%) of the total errors committed. Due to the irregularity of English language orthography, words with similar pronunciation and different meanings are represented by the combination of different graphemes. Homophone confusion in the dictation test, overwhelming students' understanding of the context, led them to replace a word with other words having different meanings and grapheme representations but similar in pronunciation. Homophone substitution of *shit* for *sheet*, *meet* for *meat*, *live* for *leave*, and *write* for *right* were some of the errors taken from the data of the study. Generally, in the error of analogy with the orthography of the TL, SL do not have a stake. Instances attributed to this error have no basis in SL. Thus, the causes of all the errors created were attributed to the TL.

4.1.2. Analogy

Spelling requires precise knowledge of individual letter combinations which can be acquired in various situations. When writing new words, therefore, learners are likely to draw upon some letter sequences which they are familiar with in order to spell the new ones. Accordingly, as can be seen from the data gathered, in addition to TL letter sequences; the subjects use their Afan Oromo (MT) letter sequences in spelling some TL words.

Errors emanated from the analogy with SL were not exclusive to the SL. The reason this category was classified under the SL analogy is that, unlike the other categories of errors, high numbers of errors were attributed to mother tongue speakers. Moreover, errors in the analogy with the SL were much more familiar with Afan Oromo than with English language orthography. The analogy with the orthography of the SL represented 12 (1.5%) of the total errors committed by the students. In the analogy with SL orthography, four sub-categories of errors were identified. These are vowel additions at the beginning, middle and end of words, and vowel lengthening. Word-initial vowel insertion errors emanated from the analogy with the spelling pattern of Afan Oromo. Based on the phoneme pattern, two and more consonant clusters are not allowed at the beginning of Afan Oromo words (Dejene, 2010; Tariku, 2021). Unlike the TL phonotactics, the students inserted vowel grapheme <i> at the beginning of words having consonant clusters. From the total errors created, word-initial vowel insertion accounted for 198 (5.12%) errors. The insertion of vowel <i> word-initially was the only error identified in this regard. The insertion of vowel <i> in *isweet* for sweet /swiːt/, *istrategy* for strategy /strætədʒi/, and *istring* for string /strɪŋ/ were some instances to mention. Although it is premature to conclude, the insertion of vowel <i> at the beginning of words began with <st> consonant clusters were prevalent.

Word-medial vowel insertion accounted for 4 (0.5%) of the total errors. The data obtained indicated that predominantly vowel grapheme <i> is inserted between consonant clusters at the beginning and at the end of words where it was not phonemic. Students were spelling brother /brʌðə(r)/ as *birother*, pronunciation /prəˌnʌnsiˈeɪʃn/ as *pironunciation*, friend /frend/ as *firienid* and artist /aːtɪst/ as *artisit*. As a result of Afan Oromo orthographic rule prohibiting two or more consonant clusters at the beginning and end of words, students committed word-medial vowel insertion errors in the TL.

The other sub-category of SL related orthographic errors was the insertion of vowels at word-final position. Although its magnitude is small, it is worthwhile to note SL related errors students were making. It represents 12 (1.5%) errors from the overall errors created. The addition of vowel <i> at the end of words like friend /frend/ as *friendi*, difficult /dɪfɪkəlt/ as *difficulti*, and artist /aːtɪst/ as *artisti* were some of the instances of errors students committed in this regard. The insertion was made based on an impermissible consonant cluster at the end of words in the SL. Vowel grapheme <e> was also found inserted where more than two consonant clusters appeared word-medially and more than one consonant clusters appeared word-initially and finally. These have happened based on Afan Oromo phonotactics that prohibit consonant clusters in the environment, according to Dejene (2010). Spelling cattle /kætl/ as *cattele*, photographs /fəʊtəgraːf/ as *photographes*, hungry /hʌŋgri/ as *hungrey*, and nutrients /njuːtriənts/ as *nutrientes* were some of the examples captured.

From the insertion at all positions of the words of the TL, it has been identified that the inserted vowels were not phonemic in the environments. It was the phoneme-grapheme rule in the SL that affects the spelling norm in the TL. In Afan Oromo, such impermissible consonant clusters do not happen in normal circumstances. They happen during word derivation and inflection through morpheme epenthesis (Dejene, 2010; Feda, 2015; Tariku, 2021; Habte, 2003). At that moment, it is the insertion of the vowel <i> that brings the impermissible consonant clusters to the permissive norm.

Vowel grapheme lengthening is one of the SL caused orthographic errors. It is doubling vowel grapheme where vowel phoneme is perceived to be long (Fikadu B. , 2010). English language orthography cannot be governed by this rule. So, the knowledge of using double grapheme where the phoneme is perceived long is derived from SL orthographic rules. Vowel lengthening error accounted for 280 (7.26%) and 46 (1.26%) errors committed by AOMSs and AMSs, respectively. Lengthening related errors were common among English words familiar in the SL through borrowing, and code-switching. Students" familiarity with the spelling of borrowed words in the SL created opportunities to misspell them in the TL. Accordingly, students wrote *maalaariyaa* for malaria, *pirootiinii* for protein, *kiliniikii* for clinic, and *biizinasii* for business (see the appendix).

Generally, the analogy with the orthography of the SL has stake in English orthographic errors committed by Afan Oromo speakers. There are no TL related reasons for vowel insertion errors since they did not occur after the phoneme in the environment. However, the irregularities of the TL did encourage the occurrence of the insertion errors. More dominantly, the insertion happened based on the orthographic rule of Afan Oromo that does not permit the existence of consonant clusters in the environment. Students, based on the SL phonotactics, were inserting vowels between consonants irrespective of the phoneme in the environment, as in *isweet* or *siweet* for sweet. In the word sweet, phonetically transcribed as /*swi:t*/ neither phoneme /i/ nor grapheme <i> does exist before <s> or between <s> and <w>.

4.1.3. Asymmetric errors

Asymmetric errors are not errors that are linked to neither the SLs nor the TL causes. Additionally, they are not predictable by nature. Different asymmetric errors like substitution and omission of vowels and consonants, and insertion of vowels were identified in an unpredictable environment and pattern. This error accounted for 250 (29.2%) errors from the total errors created by the participants.

4.2. Responses from the key informants interview

After this, teachers' responses from the key informant interview were discussed. The data gathering tools was prepared to triangulate the linguistic data. Accordingly, the key informants were asked the following questions.

i. Have you ever encountered orthographic interference from Afan Oromo to English?

ii. If you believe students' orthographic interference from Afan Oromo to English affects students' English orthography, what do you think could be the solution to minimize the problem?

Accordingly, the teachers were asked if they have ever encountered students' orthographic interference from Afan Oromo to English. Both teachers said 'yes'. The data obtained from the respondents support the idea that Afan Oromo orthographic interference with English was common among the students. Based on item one, teachers were asked two open-ended questions.

The same questions were presented to the key informant interview participant teachers. The questions demanded if the respondents were able to identify the context and the pattern of the interference from Afan Oromo to English. According to their suggestion, the students overtly use a script which stands for a sound in Afan Oromo for a similar sound in English which has to be represented by a different script. In instances where the phoneme-grapheme relationship is inconsistent in English, instead of recalling a grapheme standing for a phoneme in a specific place, students look for a phoneme that matches the grapheme based on the phoneme-grapheme relationship they are accustomed to in Afan Oromo.

Examples from the data include writing *folse* for false, *tiru* for true, *inglish* for English, and *buuk* for book. The same data obtained from the teachers in the meantime reveals errors of vowel phoneme phonetic substitution obtained from students' texts. Moreover, errors of „consonant phoneme phonetic substitution obtained from students text were also identified by teachers as in writing *kat* for cat, *kemikal* for chemical and *soket* for socket.

Word initial, medial, and final vowel insertion errors, identified from students' texts as Afan Oromo unique orthographic interference to English were also instances and patterns identified by the teachers as in writing *extira* for extra, and *ispeak* for speak.

Omitting silent vowels and consonants based on the rules established in Afan Oromo as in writing *nife* for knife and *nowledge* for knowledge were also cases reported by the teachers. In Afan Oromo, these patterns are not allowed and students depending on Afan Oromo orthographic rule try to correct the norm in English causing interference errors.

Again, the teachers were asked to propose solutions for the orthographic inference from Afan Oromo to English. From the total of teachers, none proposed learning in Afan Oromo throughout academic life as a way out to tackle the problem. Out of the eligible respondents, two of the teachers proposed mastering the orthography of both languages separately based on their specific principles without mixing them. From the overall responses, it can be presumed that the solution to minimize Afan Oromo orthographic interference with English is to learn to manage the orthography of both languages separately and independently. The remaining options were not much supported by the respondents as a likely solution.

Generally, the key informant interview participants witnessed, the solution to minimize interference is to set a strategy of learning the orthography of both languages independently, and to use Afan Oromo interference as an opportunity to learn the arbitrary orthography of English language. According to Lekova (2010), learning independently enables students to develop command of both languages' linguistic habits and skills separately. To substantiate their argument, the respondents forwarded that there were students who learned in Afan Oromo in pre-ninth grades but had a good command of English orthography, and there were students whose MT and language of instruction in pre-ninth grades were Amharic but made similar errors. They argue that rather than blaming the similarity of graphemes between Afan Oromo and English as an exceptional cause of the problem in English orthographic, it is better to learn from those good orthographic performers and extend their strategy to the majority.

Giving attention to the areas of interlingual orthographic interference errors, practicing misspelled words, and incorporating areas of orthographic interference into the second language curriculum and syllabus were some of the recommendations made based on the linguistic data. In contemporary pedagogy for teaching second languages, interference errors have been used as a productive methodological approach (Lekova, 2010). If first language interference persists in learning a second language, taking the content of the first language and the cultural background of the students into account is vital. First language interference into a second language can therefore be considered in both languages' curriculum, syllabus, and textbook preparation or revision, so that the problem can be minimized (Lekova, 2010). Students' errors have always been of interest and significance to teachers, syllabus designers and test developers. Second language teachers are therefore required to possess good command and knowledge of the first language in the areas of interference to equip second language learners with the necessary pedagogical and linguistic information to minimize interlanguage challenges.

4.3. Discussion

This study attempted to identify, describe, categorize, and diagnose the mother tongue interference in English spelling. The results of the study show that the impact of native language is more negative than positive. Most of the learners rely on their mother tongue while writing or using English Orthography. They made a higher quantity of the errors that, according to our assumption, imply an interference of the Afan Oromo orthography (L1). The fact that 582 (68.0%) detected errors were of *substitution* and *omission r*eflects that the Afan Oromo language actually intervenes decisively in the English spelling of the students.

Afan Oromo specific phonotactic rules played a role in creating Afan Oromo specific orthographic interference with English. In Afan Oromo, two or more consonant clusters at the beginning and end of words and more than two consonant clusters in the middle of words are impermissible. Contrary to the norm in the TL, based on this paradigm, they were found inserting vowels where such impermissible consonant clusters happened in the TL. Errors of lengthening English words familiar in Afan Oromo were also among the errors committed due to interference.

The students made an omission error which is missing a grapheme in a predictable environment from graphemes used to denote a word. This is in agreement with the idea of formulated by Gebeyanesh (2016). It is known that since the relationship between phonemes and graphemes is not one-to-one in English writing system cannot be easily captured and internalized (Carney, 2012). In phonemic/phonetic writing systems like Afan Oromo, double consonant grapheme stands for geminated consonant phoneme (Dejene, 2010; Tariku, 2021). But in English words like cabbage, cattle and mammal, the occurrence of double consonant graphemes has no connection with the phoneme in the environment. Therefore, the causes of this error can be traced to both Afan Oromo and English language orthographies. Substitution error also occurs due to the one-to-one phoneme-grapheme relationship in Afan Oromo has a stake in looking for phonetic substitution of phonemes in the TL (Fikadu, 2010).

On the other hand error of analogy with the orthography of the target language is an error that is exclusive to the English and has nothing to do with Afan Oromo orthography. This augments the idea that the intra-language interference errors which happens as the result of the influence of

pre-established language habits in the TL itself is wrongly using learnt habits for different items in the same language, causing errors (Lekova, 2010). Mudd (1994) also stipulate the inconsistent phoneme-grapheme relationship in English as the main source of learners' difficulty in clearly spelling words in English. So it is the problem has emanated from students' challenge in internalizing inconsistent orthography of the TL.

In most cases, the presence of vowels at the end of words invited students to insert vowel <e> at word-final positions where phoneme /e/ or grapheme <e> does not exist. To bring the vowel at the right place based on the existing spelling norm regardless of its phonemic presence demands visual capturing and memorization of each word's orthographic pattern, and studying commonly misspelled words (Ehri, 1989). Failure to do these leads to the addition and omission errors of vowel graphemes. In addition with the TL orthography, homophone substitution accounted for the irregularity of English language orthography.

CHAPTER FIVE

5. Conclusion and Recommendation

5.1. Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study it is possible to draw the following conclusions:

This study has provided a glimpse of issues faced by grade five Afan Oromo speaking students spelling problems when writing in the English language. In all the instruments used to gather data, it is apparent that the influence of the students' native language is significant when the students are spelling words. Some of the words that students spelt incorrectly were literal translations from Afan Oromo. For example, Afan Oromo specific phonotactic rules played a role in creating Afan Oromo specific orthographic interference with English. In Afan Oromo, two or more consonant clusters at the beginning and end of words and more than two consonant clusters in the middle of words are impermissible. Contrary to the norm in the TL, based on this paradigm, the students were found inserting vowels where such impermissible consonant clusters happened in the TL. Errors of lengthening English words familiar in Afan Oromo were also among the errors committed due to interference.

From the analysis of the findings, this study concludes that the common spelling errors were mostly found in two areas: omission and insertion. It appears that some of the errors made can be attributed to transfer from their L1 and L2. These are interlanguage errors, caused by the students' application of L1 and L2 structures whilst spelling in the English language. To sum up, most of the spelling errors committed by the students clearly appear to be due to mother tongue interference of L1 in acquiring L2 elements of writing in English.

5.2. Recommendation

The findings of the current study call for great attention to be given to students' language improvement. Teachers are required to make extra efforts to support students so that students can cope with the major difficulties that seriously affect their language use or their spelling. There is also urgency in giving proper attention to the teaching of English in schools. The practice of teaching the language in schools needs revisiting by the government and the public. In addition to the efforts being made to enhance students' use of their L1, it is also mandatory that the concerned bodies should collaborate in improving students' English language use given the significant role it is playing in Ethiopia and worldwide.

In addition, giving students more activities on writing exercises starting from the lower grades helps optimize the writing of the foreign languages and encourage students to write continuously. To incite students to speak and write in English at home and with their friends in order to reduce the number of mistakes due to negative L1 transfer, teachers also need to try to teach more effectively the rules and conventions of writing. Teachers should correct the errors not only on the blackboard but individually to show their students where their errors lie.

In general, managing the orthography of both the Afan Oromo and English languages independently, giving attention to the areas of interlingual orthographic interference, practicing misspelled words due to interlingual orthographic interference, and incorporating areas of orthographic interference into TL curriculum and syllabus are recommendations made based on the finding of the study.

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Appendix A

Linguistic Data used for the dictation Test

1. **Adjective**: The word 'big' is an adjective.

2. **Artist**: Tola is an artist.

3. **Believe**: If you believe the numbers, you will agree that we need a change.

4. **Book**: He opened the book to page 37 and began to read aloud.

5. **Brother**: My brother is a teacher.

6. **Business**: I am going to Bahr Dar on business.

7. **Busy**: The director cannot see you now; he is busy.

8. **Cabbage**: Cabbage is an edible plant.

9. **Cat**: We see a cat in the room.

10. **Cattle**: Do you want to raise cattle?

11. **Character**: He has a great deal of character.

12. **Chemical**: I color my hair with henna, not chemicals.

13. **Chief**: All firefighters report to the fire chief.

14. **Classroom**: Students are in their classroom.

15. **Clinic**: She went to clinic.

16. **Cook**: I like to cook in the weekends.

17. **Cultivate**: Most farmers in our country cultivate Teff.

18. **Design**:   Ethiopian design of furniture is world famous.

19. **Difficult**: It is difficult to predict what the future holds.

20. **Dirty**: Politics is a dirty game.

21. **Discussion**: We had a discussion with our classmates.

22. **English**: We are learning the English language.

23. **Extra**: Students should take part in the extra-curricular activities.

24. **False**: The statement is false; not true.

25. **Football**: We always play football.

26. **Friend**: Sara is my friend.

27. **Hungry**: He is hungry; he needs something to eat.

28. **Jump**: He jumped from the fence.

29. **Keep**: We have to keep what we learned in our mind.

30. **Kick**: The boy kicked the ball.

31. **Knife**: She cuts a tomato with a knife.

32. **Knowledge**: having knowledge of a subject is highly important.

33. **Leave**: You have to leave the class after this session.

34. **Listen**: Please listen to what you teacher instructs you.

35. **Lunch**: Now it is time to have lunch.

36. **Mammal**: Caw is a mammal.

37. **Match**: The students mistakenly matched the answer.

38. **Meat**: Meat contains protein.

39. **Mixture**: The day was a mixture of sunshine and showers.

40. **Nutrient**: In our diet we get different nutrients.

41. **Peak**: Syllable has a peak.

42. **Photo**: I took the photo of the artist.

43. **Photographs**: We had photographs of the places we visited.

44. **Pronunciation**: Ethiopians cannot appropriately pronounce a word 'that'.

45. **Protein**: Meat contains protein.

46. **Receive**: She received a prize.

47. **Repeat**: We asked our teacher to repeat the last word.

48. **Revision**: Today, we make the revision of the lesson.

49. **Right**: This is my right arm.

50. **Roughly**: The amount is roughly 20,000.

51. **Separate**: The couples were separated two years ago.

52. **Sheet**: remember to sheet the floor before you start painting.

53. **Socket**: Plug in the socket.

54. **Speak**: She speaks English fluently.

55. **Square**: Two is the square root of four.

56. **Stick**: He hits the dog with a stick.

57. **Strategy**: We have to design a different strategy.

58. **String**: That is a string.

59. **Sweet**: Sugar is sweet.

60. **Watch**: Our teacher advised us to watch soccer games.

61. **Write**: We were told to write the assignment.

62. **Youth**: The youths have got many advantages.

Appendix B

Questions during the interview discussion

Teachers' responses to the key informant interview were discussed. The two data gathering tools were prepared to triangulate linguistic data.

1. Have you ever encountered orthographic interference from Afan Oromo to English?
2. Have you ever encountered violating English orthographic rule?
3. Who is more dominant in committing English orthographic errors?
4. If you believe students' orthographic interference from Afan Oromo to English affects students' English orthography, what do you think could be the solution to minimize the problem? You can give more than one answers
5. Can you able to identify the context and the pattern of the interference from Afan Oromo to English.

Appendix C

Name: ~~[redacted]~~

1. The word big is an (njective)
2. Tolaa is an artist
3. If you (bilive) the numbers you will agree that we (niid) a change
4. He opened a (buuk) to page 37 and begun to read aloud.
5. My (brather) is a teacher.
6. I am going to Bahiir Daar on (Bizinus)
7. The director is (bizy)
8. we see a (kat) in the (ruum).
9. (Cabage) is an edible plant.
10. Do you want to raise (catle).
11. He has a great deal of Character.
12. All fire fighters report to the (faire) (chief). students are in the (Klasroom) She went to (Kilinik) I like to (Kook) in the (weet ads.) Most farmers in our (kantri) (kaltivat) Teff. Ethiopian (dezign) of furniture is world famous. We had a discussion with our (Klasmate) we are learning the (Inglism) (anguage). The (statementi) is (folse) we (jumpid) from the (fensi). please (lisen) to what your teacher (instruets) you. Now it is (tayme) to have (lanch) cow is (mamel) Meat contains (pirotin). (Silable) has (puk) she (ricived) a prize. We asted our teacher to (ripeat) the last word. ~~(Tibe is my)~~ (rayt) (To) is the square (nut) of (tow). we have to (dezin) a different (Wtrategy). That is (Wtring) (Snugar) is sweet. we were told to write the (asignment). The (yourjs) have got many (aduantages).

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