



Critical Analysis of Inappropriate Pedagogy Used in Foreign Language Teaching: The Case of French as a Foreign Language (FLE) in Tanzania

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Abstract: *This study rigorously analyses inappropriate pedagogical approaches employed in the instruction of French as a Foreign Language (FLE) within Tanzania. It examines the implementation of three linguistic theories: Contrastive Analysis (CA), Error Analysis (EA), and Interlanguage (IL), in the context of improving national FLE examination outcomes. The results indicate that linguistic interference from Kiswahili, English, and indigenous languages substantially impedes learners' mastery of French. The research recommends adopting context-sensitive teaching methodologies that identify learners' errors, anticipate linguistic difficulties, and support the gradual acquisition of target structures. The integration of CA, EA, and IL offers a comprehensive pedagogical framework that aligns instruction with Tanzania's multilingual environment, enhances learner performance, and reduces the incidence of persistent failure in FLE.*

Keywords: *French as a Foreign Language (FLE), Inappropriate Pedagogy, Personal Pronouns, Contrastive Analysis, Error Analysis, Interlanguage Theory, Multilingualism, Cross-linguistic Interference.*

1. INTRODUCTION

The teaching of French as a Foreign Language (FLE) in Tanzania represents a complex educational endeavour influenced by linguistic, cultural, and institutional factors. Introduced into the Tanzanian education system in 1966, French has gradually gained recognition as a significant foreign language, primarily taught at secondary and tertiary levels for communicative, diplomatic, academic, and professional objectives (TIE, 2011; MoEVT, 2014). Despite its long-standing integration into the national curriculum and its perceived strategic importance in regional and international communication, student performance in French remains notably low, as evidenced by national examination results and classroom assessments. This scenario prompts critical inquiries regarding the efficacy and suitability of the pedagogical strategies currently utilized in FLE classrooms throughout Tanzania.

Rooted in the discipline of applied linguistics, this research critically examines pedagogical deficiencies in the instruction of French as a Foreign Language (FLE), with particular emphasis on the treatment of personal pronouns—an essential grammatical category fundamental to sentence structure, reference, and meaning in French. Classroom observations and analysis of examination scripts reveal that Tanzanian learners frequently encounter difficulties in correctly utilising French personal pronouns, resulting in persistent grammatical errors that impede effective communication. These challenges are indicative not only of learner-related issues but also highlight deficiencies in instructional strategies, educational materials, and methodological approaches that fail to adequately consider learners' linguistic backgrounds and educational contexts.

The challenges associated with foreign language education (FLE) instruction in Tanzania are further exacerbated by the



country's highly multilingual environment. Learners are typically exposed to multiple linguistic systems, including ethnic community languages as their first languages, Kiswahili as the national and lingua franca, English as the official language of instruction from upper primary education onward, and, in some instances, additional foreign languages such as German, Arabic, or Chinese. This intricate linguistic landscape presents opportunities for cross-linguistic interference, transfer, and fossilisation, particularly when teaching methodologies do not explicitly address these interactions. Previous research (Lado, 1957; Johansson, 2008; Wales & Diaz, 2012) has demonstrated that linguistic distance between languages, coupled with late-age acquisition of second or foreign languages, substantially hampers language acquisition, especially in morphosyntactic domains such as pronoun systems.

Within this context, the present study contends that the persistence of learner errors in the use of French personal pronouns cannot be solely attributed to multilingualism. Instead, it reflects the employment of inappropriate pedagogical methodologies that inadequately incorporate contrastive analysis, learner-centred approaches, and contextualized language use. By critically evaluating current instructional practices and their influence on learners' grammatical competence, this study aims to contribute to ongoing discussions on effective Foreign Language Education (FLE) pedagogy in multilingual African environments and to recommend pedagogical strategies that are more closely aligned with the linguistic realities of Tanzanian learners.

1.1. Objectives

- To critically analyse the pedagogical approaches used in teaching French in Tanzanian secondary schools, with the aim of identifying methodological shortcomings that lead to students' ongoing grammatical struggles.
- To analyse the influence of Tanzania's multilingual learning environment on the acquisition of French and evaluate the extent to which current FLE pedagogical practices address cross-linguistic interference from Kiswahili, English, and local languages

2. Literature Review

2.1. Application of Contrastive Analysis (CA) Theory in teaching methods in order to Improve Performance in FLE in Tanzania

It was Charles Fries who devised this theory in the 1940s. However, it only gained prominence during the 1960s and 1970s. This linguist argued that each language has its own unique structure. According to Poth (1989), it is the influence of the structure of the mother tongue (L1) that makes learning a second language (L2) difficult. This is due to the linguistic habits of L1, acquired beforehand. The studies by Nguyen (2008), Gallés & Diaz (2012) agree with the above statement and go even further. These studies, among others, have demonstrated that language contacts inevitably lead to linguistic influence, a phenomenon referred to in linguistics as "interference".

Initially, contrastive analysis theory focused on a comparative study of two languages, aiming to highlight their structural similarities and differences. It sought to explain why certain aspects of L2 proved more difficult to learn than others. Indeed, the fundamental premise of CA is that when L1 and L2 share similarities, learners are expected to encounter fewer difficulties in acquiring the target language. Thus, the theory endeavoured to predict potential challenges that L2 learners might face. In short, CA theory suggests that it is possible to predict the potential difficulties that L2 learners might face. Contemporary proponents of this theory, including Kanté (2015), agree that good application of this theory would greatly facilitate L2 learning. The authors cited above, however, raise a well-founded warning. L2 learners should beware of the existence of false linguistic cognates, which may lead to errors.

According to the linguists cited above, in a multilingual context, linguistic interference can also stem from other languages that the learner already speaks. In the multilingual context of Tanzania, it would therefore be necessary to compare the linguistic structures of French with those of Kiswahili, as well as with those of other languages spoken in the multilingual context of this country. For instance, Kiswahili does not employ verb conjugation based on grammatical person, unlike French. While French is not an agglutinative language, like Kiswahili and the Bantu languages spoken by the majority of Tanzanian learners. According to linguists who support this theory, the difficulties in learning French for Tanzanian schoolchildren would be radical but predictable.

To enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of FLE instruction in Tanzania, teachers must be equipped to apply this theory. They should then adapt the pedagogical content of their lessons to the needs of the learners' multilingual context. To achieve this, teachers could, for instance, create simple comparison charts and explain the function of each linguistic



element. Emphasis should be placed particularly on major points of divergence, without forgetting to value the similarities where they exist. For instance, nasal vowels found in certain Bantu languages could be used to facilitate the acquisition of correct French nasal pronunciation. In this way, applying the theory of error comparison would better prepare learners to overcome the pitfalls of learning French as a foreign language.

2.2. Application of Error Analysis (EA) Theory in teaching methods in order to Improve Performance in FLE in Tanzania

This type of analysis developed significantly during the 1960s, thanks to the intensified work of educators and linguists. Corder S. P. K. (1967), in particular, made significant contributions, without forgetting his collaborators Noyau C. (1995) and Porquier R. (1984). However, it should be noted that the early work on EA was based on J. Piaget's constructivism and N. Chomsky's generative linguistics. It was this work which led to the establishment of error analysis theory.

At that time, EA sought to complement the bilingual comparison of CA, which had been developed earlier. Furthermore, error analysis also compensated the limitations of contrastive analysis, as regards unwritten mother tongues. In actual fact, the application of EA theory requires establishment of inventories of various types of errors and their frequencies. This is done according to criteria borrowed from traditional, structural and functional grammar. As a result, S. P. Corder's (1974) assertion that application of EA theory is laborious work, requiring a great deal of perseverance, is well founded.

The data collected in this way enables identification and analysis of common errors (written or oral) made by L2 learners. According to proponents of this theory, including Bagheri M. S. and Heydari P. (2012), the systematic errors made by L2 learners reflect an innate cognitive process which allows learners to internalize L2.

The remarks of Sharma S. K. (1980) seem appropriate to conclude this part of our study. EA theory can provide support, which is well suited to remedial endeavours, because it highlights both the successes and failures of the school curriculum. If properly applied, this theory would help educators to improve description of educational content, and the design of an appropriate teacher training program. Thus, using EA theory, it would be possible to develop or improve L2 teaching strategies. That is possible because this theory takes into account specific difficulties of the various target subgroups of learners.

In the case of Tanzania, FLE teachers should, from the onset, identify recurring errors made by learners. Given the highly diverse linguistic context of the country, in which the mother tongue, Kiswahili, English and other languages are spoken, one would expect the errors to be many and diverse. As a result, there will be errors due to confusion over gender, conjugations, prepositions, pronouns, tenses, etc.

Tanzanian teachers who wish to reap the benefits of EA theory should strive to conduct a thorough analysis of the errors of their students. Do they stem from interference of the languages which learners already speak, or from universal learning strategies? In the case of multilingual countries like Tanzania, it is difficult to say. That is why it is necessary to collect all the errors made FLE learners, analyse them and categorize them into different types. This approach would enable the teacher, subsequently, to prepare the appropriate corrective action. To adapt the teaching of FLE to the needs of learners, the errors of the learners should be taken into account, and the teacher should also specify the rules of English, which might mislead learners. In other words, targeted, well-adapted exercises should be created, and explicit corrections provided. This would enable more accurate and faster learning, because specific difficulties of learners would be identified and addressed.

One of the weaknesses of applying this theory is that it does not take into account the learner's steady transition towards mastery of L2. That is why we also recommend the use of Interlanguage (IL) Theory, which complements CA and EA theories.

2.3. Application of Interlanguage (IL) Theory in teaching methods in order to Improve Performance in FLE in Tanzania



In the past, the transfer of knowledge from L1 to L2 was considered an obstacle to L2 learning. However, preliminary work by Selinker L. (1972) led to the observation that this transfer was based on underlying cognitive strategies. He therefore conducted in-depth studies, which enabled him to develop Interlanguage (IL) Theory.

The latter refers to a linguistic system specific to learners of a second language. It is neither their mother tongue (L1) nor the target language (L2), but an intermediate, evolving and autonomous system. It develops as learning progresses, and reflects the linguistic knowledge acquired during the internalization of L2. It is characterized by systematic and specific rules which differ from those of L1 and those of L2. It is an innate and systematic linguistic process which L2 learners go through, before mastering the target language. This linguistic system is characterized by:

Over-generalization of L2 grammatical rules and transfer of knowledge from L1 to L2, Incorrect use of L2 knowledge, which is not yet fully mastered, Poorly designed L2 learning strategies, Evolution from L1 towards L2, without ever fully achieving it, Dynamism: it is constantly evolving, depending on the intensity of exposure to L2, and the frequency of appropriate corrections, given by the teacher, Use of simplification strategies to manage the complexity of certain L2 constructions.

The basic assumption of this theory is that there exists (in the learner's brain) a provisional, dynamic and evolving grammar continuum. This is composed of rules based on poorly conceived hypotheses. These assumptions are based on perceptions, judgements and choices which the learner assumes are likely to work within the structure of L2. This grammar is greatly influenced by the linguistic structure of L1 and exposure to the target language.

In his study of errors made by Korean learners, Bagheri M. S. (2012) noted that the percentage of errors resulting from L1 to L2 knowledge transfer was extremely high. This was in contrast to errors due to overgeneralization and other causes. Indeed, Kanté I. (2015) and other contemporary proponents of IL theory agree with these observations. Their opinions converge, to affirm that the phenomenon of knowledge transfer from L1 to L2, during the learning process, is a predominant inter-lingual factor. The term used, to denote this state of affairs, is *linguistic interference*.

Bagheri M. (2012) and his collaborators, Lennon P. (2008) and Gitsaki C. (2018), advocate the application of IL in L2 pedagogy, insofar as it: 1) Allows the teacher to undertake a systematic analysis of what has been learned, in order to determine whether the learner has progressed towards the set objectives, 2) Reveals the strategies and procedures which learners use to discover the various aspects of L2, 3) It forces teachers to identify learners' difficulties and linguistic needs, at each stage of L2 learning, 4) Facilitates regular assessment of what has been learned and what has not been learned. This knowledge allows the teacher to identify the gaps, between the student's performance at a given stage of L2 learning, and the teaching objectives. As such, it makes it easier to plan regular remedial work, 5) Highlights the strengths and weaknesses of the program.

The theory of interlanguage has become a central concept in applied linguistics, particularly in the teaching of L2. This approach allows teachers not only to show learners that their assumptions and hypotheses are incorrect, but also to provide them with the appropriate linguistic tools, to improve the quality of their L2 production. It also ensures that, before moving on to the next stage of L2 learning, the skills acquired at each stage have been mastered. This prevents errors from being used and reused, until they become a permanent part of the learner's linguistic output. Linguists refer to this state of affairs as *fossilization*. If the principles of interlanguage are followed appropriately, the learner should gradually progress towards L2.

However, according to the founder of this theory, Selinker L. (1972), and other proponents of this conceptual framework, L2 learners never achieve total mastery of L2. This is particularly true as regards the accent, the intonation and the prosody. Thus, in a given situation, the utterances produced by the learner would be different from those produced by native speakers, in the same context and communication situation.

The application of this theory requires us to accept that L2 learners (in this case, French) do not immediately speak 'perfect' French. We would therefore expect them to make mistakes. For the learners of French as L2 in Tanzania, the linguistic difficulties would be expected to increase, depending on the number of different languages the learner already speaks. Indeed, the Tanzanian teachers who would like to draw maximum benefits from application of IL, in the teaching of French as L2, must study the interlanguage of each learner. This would enable them to closely monitor each student's progress, in order to intervene in a relevant and precise manner at every juncture. This approach would enable them to guide learners to progress towards the correct forms of L2. To do this, it would be necessary to create an environment



where mistakes are not stigmatized, but rather seen as natural and inevitable aspects of learning L2.

It is clear, from the explanations above, that effective L2 teaching, using the principles of IL, would be a laborious and complex process. The teacher and the learner have to overcome numerous linguistic obstacles. Despite its complexity, our recommendation is that Tanzanian teachers should use this method, as a basis for progression. It is our shared opinion that if FLE teachers make good use of this approach, learners will master the objectives of each level of the secondary school program. By the time they reach High School level, they will be well-prepared and able to pass their examinations successfully.

2.4. Summary of the Literature Review

Our study was based on a theoretical framework comprising the Contrastive Analysis of Fries C. (1945) and Lado R. (1957), Error Analysis of Corder (1974), and Interlanguage study of Selinker L. (1972) and Adjemien C. (1976). We recommend that stakeholders, involved in the teaching of French as a foreign language, take advantage of the recommendations made by the proponents of these theories. In a country like Tanzania, where several languages are in contact (Kiswahili, ethnic languages, English, French and other languages), it is essential to adopt an integrated pedagogical approach. It is even essential to combine the three theories analysed above, as no single theory seems capable of explaining sociolinguistic phenomena. These theories have brought about a positive change, in the paradigm of L2 teaching. However, we have observed that Tanzanian FLE teachers don't use them. They continue using archaic and inefficient methods.

The theories above have complementary qualities, which combine to constitute the complex and multifaceted tool, required for this type of undertaking. As such, it should make it possible to examine the dynamic interaction between the student, the teacher and their performance, in the multilingual context of Tanzania.

According to linguists who support these theories, applying them would make it possible to adapt teaching strategies to the linguistic realities of the national context. This would make French teaching more targeted, clearer and more effective. It is only by adopting this approach that teachers can understand the specific needs of Tanzanian learners of FLE.

Schachter J. & Mrianne C. M. (1977), and Kanté (2015) argue that, despite their usefulness, the above conceptual frameworks cannot identify all the difficulties of learning a second language. These specialists, and other critics, assert that each of them has strengths and weaknesses:

Proponents of contrastive analysis, for instance, simply compare the structures of two languages. Effort is made to predict the areas of L2 which are likely to cause difficulties to L2 learners. However, the anticipated difficulties don't always arise, whereas others which were not predicted do.

There are researchers, such as Khansir A. A. (2012), who have demonstrated that factors such as analogical replacement, avoidance, and outright confusion can also cause linguistic errors.

Proponents of IL theory argue that CA and EA theories are limited to comparison of linguistic structures and compilation of inventories of errors, respectively. They don't concern themselves with the learner's progressive transition towards L2.

The conceptual framework of IL is content to identify errors and monitor the learner's progress towards mastery of L2. The conceptual framework of each of these three theories is limited to the study of two languages. Yet the reality is that before they begin to learn French, as a foreign language, Tanzanian students already speak ethnic languages, Kiswahili and English. None of these three conceptual frameworks mentions the dynamics of the learner-teacher-institution-sociolinguistic context relationship. The errors made by L2 learners may also be linked to non-linguistic factors, as educators would assert. The criticisms raised above are well-founded and seem to converge on one fact — even strict application of the theories above is not sufficient to resolve all the problems of failure in FLE.

However, the theories analysed above have complementary qualities, which constitute the flexible tool needed for this type of analysis. In our opinion, they provide approaches which can be used to address the difficulties of L2 learning,



by analysing the performance of the learner. It should also be noted that the strategies of these methodologies are not mutually exclusive: in fact, they are convergent. This seems to be the best approach for analysing the errors made by Tanzanian students in FLE. We hope that combining these three conceptual frameworks will enable us to account, not only for the linguistic aspects of our study, but also for the pedagogical aspects. In actual fact, to overcome failure in FLE, a thorough review of the school system is necessary. This should be done in order to appropriately adapt its paradigm to the sociolinguistic, sociocultural and socio-professional realities of Tanzania. Ideally, each entity at these levels should function optimally.

Any educator worth his salt will tell you that, apart from the difficulties outlined above, teaching French, as a foreign language, also faces multiple non-pedagogical challenges. The adverse effects of the latter also have a direct and detrimental impact on L2 learning. Examples include shortage of qualified and experienced teachers, lack of teaching resources, time constraints, unfavourable linguistic environment, among others. It should be noted, however, that this work is the targeted contribution of a teacher of French, as a foreign language, to the fight against failure in this area, at the national level. In order to achieve the desired results, it is incumbent upon all parties involved in the teaching of FLE (educational institutions, parents, the Ministry of Education, the French Cultural Centre in Tanzania, public bodies, etc.) to fulfil their duties.

3. Research Methodology

This study employed a primarily qualitative descriptive and analytical research design, suitable for critically examining pedagogical practices and learner language within authentic Foreign Language Education (FLE) contexts. The qualitative approach allowed for an in-depth exploration of classroom instruction, learner productions, and teacher perspectives, while limited quantitative data were included to support emerging patterns identified through Error Analysis and questionnaire responses. This mixed-methods approach enhanced the analytical depth of the study by linking instructional practices to observable learner outcomes in a multilingual educational environment.

The research was carried out in six government secondary schools in the Iringa Region of Tanzania: Kiwele, Mgalo, Changarawe, Kihesa, Malangali, and Kilolo. These schools were chosen purposively because they have active French as a Foreign Language (FLE) programmes. Participants included 60 students studying French at Form Three and Form Four levels (30 males and 30 females) as well as nine French language teachers. Stratified random sampling was used to ensure representation across learner levels, while systematic sampling based on examination performance was used to include learners with varying proficiency levels.

Data were collected using multiple instruments to ensure methodological triangulation. These included self-administered questionnaires for students, structured interviews with teachers, classroom observations, and the collection of learner-written scripts. The research instruments were validated by two experts in linguistics and applied linguistics to ensure alignment with the study's objectives and theoretical framework. Quantitative data from questionnaires and error-frequency counts were analysed using SPSS and Microsoft Excel, while qualitative data from interviews and observations were analysed thematically and cross-validated against learner error data. This integrative approach improved the credibility, reliability, and interpretative validity of the findings.

4. Findings

The findings show that Tanzanian students learning French as a Foreign Language consistently struggle with the use of French personal pronouns, which are crucial for constructing sentences and communicating effectively. An error analysis of 2,888 instances of personal pronouns taken from learners' written work revealed that only 36.3% were used correctly, while 63.7% contained errors. This high rate of mistakes highlights a basic weakness in learners' grammatical skills in French and indicates that personal pronouns are a significant challenge within the FLE curriculum.

Among the identified error types, confusion was the most common, making up 69.7% of all errors. This category mainly involved incorrect substitutions between subject and object pronouns, improper agreement, and misuse of tonic versus clitic forms. Omission errors made up 14% of the total, often involving the absence of necessary subject pronouns. Misplacement errors accounted for 12% and reflected learners' difficulty in correctly positioning French object pronouns relative to the verb. Wrong order (3.4%) and addition (0.9%) happened less often but still show learners' inconsistent grasp of French syntactic rules.



These error patterns reveal the combined influence of interlingual and intralingual factors. Interlingual errors are mainly caused by negative transfer from Kiswahili and English. Kiswahili encodes subject reference through verbal affixes rather than independent pronouns, which explains the frequent omission of subject pronouns in French sentences. English influence is apparent in pronoun placement and word order errors, where learners directly transfer English syntactic structures into French. Intralingual errors, meanwhile, stem from learners' overgeneralisation of partially acquired French rules, rule simplification, and hypercorrection. These processes show that learners are actively developing their interlanguage but lack adequate pedagogical guidance to reshape it towards target-like norms.

From an interlanguage perspective, the consistency and recurrence of these errors indicate the presence of partially stabilised, non-target-like forms. Rather than reflecting temporary developmental mistakes, many errors appear to be fossilised due to insufficient corrective feedback and limited opportunities for meaningful practise. This interpretation is supported by teacher interview data, which indicate that pronoun-related errors recur across learner levels and persist despite prolonged exposure to French instruction.

Pedagogical, sociolinguistic, and institutional factors further exacerbate these linguistic challenges. Teacher interviews revealed limited professional training in modern FLE methodologies, heavy teaching loads, and inadequate access to teaching resources and refresher programmes. Classroom observations showed a strong reliance on grammar-translation approaches, with instruction mainly focused on rule explanation and written exercises rather than on communicative practice. Corrective feedback was rare and often confined to error marking without explanation, especially regarding cross-linguistic differences.

Student questionnaire responses strongly supported these findings. Most learners reported ongoing difficulties with French personal pronouns and expressed dissatisfaction with the level of explanation and practice provided. Learners indicated that lessons rarely included explicit comparisons between French, Kiswahili, and English, despite the obvious structural contrasts. Many also reported that grammar instruction was heavily examination-oriented and offered few opportunities for oral practice or guided correction. These perceptions align with classroom observation data and help explain the persistence of recurrent pronoun errors identified through Error Analysis.

Table 1: Distribution of French Personal Pronoun Errors Among Tanzanian Learners

Error Type	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Likely Source / Theoretical Interpretation
Confusion	1,274	69.7	Interlingual transfer: Kiswahili/English influence; subject-object substitution; IL overgeneralization
Omission	256	14.0	Kiswahili influence: Subject pronouns often encoded in verbal affixes; IL developmental omission
Misplacement	220	12.0	Cross-linguistic interference & IL: French clitic placement differs from English word order
Wrong order	62	3.4	IL overgeneralization / transfer from English syntax
Addition	17	0.9	Intralingual overgeneralization: insertion of redundant pronouns or hypercorrection
Total	1,829	100	

The results presented in the table closely align with the explanatory frameworks of Contrastive Analysis (CA), Interlanguage (IL) Theory, and Error Analysis (EA). From a contrastive perspective, many of the identified errors can be attributed to structural differences between French, Kiswahili, and English, thereby confirming CA's prediction that negative transfer occurs in systematic and predictable ways; for instance, the frequent omission of subject pronouns reflects Kiswahili's reliance on verbal affixation rather than independent pronoun use. Interlanguage Theory further explains the persistence of error types such as confusion and misplacement as evidence of partially stabilised, non-



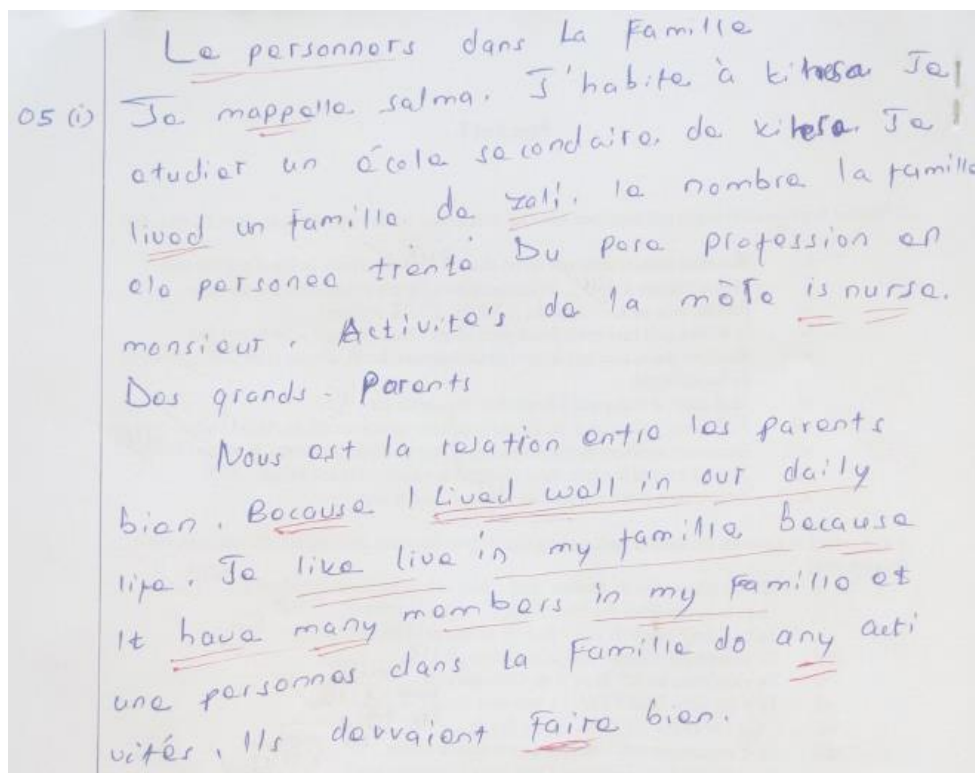
target-like forms within learners' developing interlanguage systems, shaped by overgeneralisation and prone to fossilisation in the absence of explicit pedagogical intervention. Error Analysis complements these interpretations by providing a systematic classification of error types and their frequencies, offering practical diagnostic insights that enable teachers to identify recurrent problem areas, anticipate learner difficulties, and adjust instructional strategies accordingly.

The review then turned to Apasu's (2018) study on linguistic interference in the learning of French as a Foreign Language among Ewe-speaking learners in Ghana. The study identified significant morphosyntactic deviations in the written production of FLE learners at the École Normale Supérieure for French language teachers in Amedzofe, Ghana, highlighting the impact of cross-linguistic influence on learners' written performance. Some scholars see that interlingual errors occur during the process of foreign language (FL) learning and reflect the general characteristics of rule acquisition in the target language. Lennon (2008), supporting Richards (1971), argues that many errors made by FL learners, particularly those involving irregular verb and noun forms, are intralingual in nature. These are errors that originate within the target language itself. Richards (1971) distinguishes two categories of intralingual errors based on their source, beginning with what he terms overgeneralization errors. In such cases, learners produce unacceptable structures by relying on their experience with other structures within the target language.

Intralingual errors may also result from the incorrect application of grammatical rules by FL learners. Since learners have not yet fully acquired and mastered the grammatical rules of the target language, they often fail to generate the appropriate linguistic structures required to produce acceptable sentences. Touchie (1986) similarly maintains that intralingual errors can arise from the misapplication of grammatical rules by foreign language learners (see examples from students' written production).

Samples of students' works

Student 1



Source: Data collected in the field 2020

Student 2

Si LA FAMILLE DE MON AMIE ROSE

La famille de mon amie Rose. Elle a 5 enfants et deux parents
noms et ~~the~~ a famille a mon soeur Joyce, Frolo, Halimo, Adamu et
Rose. Noms a parents a Tumaini et Yusupha. Ton mère fait a
docteur et Ton père fait a ingénieur. Grand père fait a professeur
et Grandmère fait a pilot. La relation entre les parents et leurs
enfants espère bien à cause leur parents aiment a enfants et
developer a bien la sociétés. Mon amie la famille a ~~coopere~~ bien
cooperation en à la sociétés.

Source: Data collected in the field 2020

Student 3

Si) J'aime la famille de Luhwavi qui ils dix personnes
et La profession du père est Cuisinière et activités
de la mère est journaliste. Ils vivent ~~bon~~ bien
Ils ont bien relations entre les parents et leurs
enfants et la société générally.

J'aime cette famille parce que ils /elles
prohibitent compretement behavior exemple le
tumer de cigarette et Marijuana mais uselles
conseils personnels d'arrêter compretement behavior
J'espère que vous allez bien avec ces travaux
exemple en champs etc.

Source: Data collected in the field 2020

The corpus presented above illustrates one of the written outputs of the participants and provides concrete evidence of the multiple intralingual and interlingual errors made by learners of French as a Foreign Language in Tanzania. Within the framework of this study, these errors reflect not



only cross-linguistic interference from Kiswahili and English but also the internal restructuring processes of learners' developing interlanguage systems. The recurrence and systematic nature of these errors emphasise the complexity of the learning context in which French is taught as a foreign language with limited exposure and largely grammar-based instruction. Consequently, the corpus exemplifies how inadequate pedagogical practices, when combined with a multilingual sociolinguistic environment, contribute to persistent grammatical difficulties and hinder learners' progress towards communicative competence.

5. Discussion

This study clearly shows that pedagogical shortcomings, rather than learner incapacity or multilingualism itself, are the main reasons for poor FLE outcomes in Tanzania. The widespread and systematic misuse of French personal pronouns reflects expected cross-linguistic interference patterns that match the predictions of Contrastive Analysis. However, the ongoing errors also indicate a failure of teaching methods to foresee, identify, and effectively address such difficulties.

From the perspective of Interlanguage Theory, learners' repeated pronoun errors represent stabilised intermediate forms that are not being sufficiently directed towards target-language norms. Interlanguage development is inherently dynamic and requires ongoing pedagogical intervention through meaningful input, interaction, and feedback. Without such intervention, learner language risks fossilisation. The observed teaching practices, characterised by decontextualised grammar instruction and limited corrective feedback, do little to challenge learners' existing interlanguage systems.

Error analysis further shows that learner mistakes are systematic and patterned rather than random. This patterning suggests that errors are learnable issues that can guide instructional design. However, classroom practices observed in this study rarely used learner errors as diagnostic tools. Instead, errors were often seen as isolated mistakes to be corrected mechanically, without addressing their underlying linguistic causes. This pedagogical neglect directly contributes to the continued presence of errors over time.

The study also highlights the gap between pedagogical theory and actual classroom practice. Although modern FLE pedagogy stresses communicative competence, learner-centred instruction, and context-based grammar teaching, many classrooms still depend on traditional grammar-translation methods. This mismatch restricts learners' chances to use French meaningfully and promotes rote memorisation rather than practical language use. As a result, learners find it difficult to internalise grammatical structures such as personal pronouns, which need repeated exposure and contextualised practice.

6. Conclusion

This study shows that the ongoing grammatical challenges faced by Tanzanian learners of French as a Foreign Language—especially with personal pronouns—are mainly due to unsuitable teaching methods rather than learner limitations or the multilingual setting itself. The results highlight consistent interlingual and intralingual error patterns that indicate predictable linguistic interference and partly fossilised interlanguage forms. These errors are not sufficiently addressed within the current grammar-translation and exam-focused teaching framework.

The study further demonstrates that combining Contrastive Analysis, Error Analysis, and Interlanguage Theory provides a comprehensive and context-aware framework for enhancing FLE teaching. This combined approach allows teachers to foresee structural challenges, systematically examine learner errors, and support the gradual development of learner interlanguage towards communicative competence. For meaningful progress to occur, FLE teaching in Tanzania must adopt learner-centred, error-sensitive, and communicative pedagogies that mirror learners' linguistic realities.

7. Limitations

Despite its contributions, this study has several limitations. Firstly, it was limited to secondary schools in the Iringa Region, which restricts the generalisability of the findings to other regions of Tanzania with different sociolinguistic and institutional conditions. Secondly, the relatively small sample size limited broader sociolinguistic analysis, especially regarding language use outside formal classroom contexts. Lastly, the cross-sectional design did not permit longitudinal examination of interlanguage development and fossilisation processes. Future research with larger samples and longitudinal approaches would offer deeper insights into how learner errors evolve over time.



8. Recommendations

In light of the findings, this study recommends comprehensive reforms in teacher education, curriculum design, and institutional support for FLE in Tanzania. Pre-service and in-service teacher training programmes should explicitly incorporate Contrastive Analysis, Error Analysis, and Interlanguage Theory, enabling teachers to design instruction that anticipates predictable errors and offers targeted remediation. Such training would promote a shift from grammar-translation methodologies towards communicative, learner-centred, and error-sensitive pedagogy.

Curriculum developers ought to revise the national Foreign Language Education (FLE) curriculum to aptly mirror Tanzania's multifaceted multilingual sociolinguistic context. This revision should emphasize the promotion of contrastive explanations, contextualized grammar instruction, and meaningful communicative practice. At the institutional level, educational establishments must be equipped with contemporary instructional materials, audio-visual resources, and digital tools to augment authentic exposure to the French language. It is essential to implement continuous assessment mechanisms to monitor learners' interlanguage development and inform instructional decision-making. Lastly, future research initiatives should adopt longitudinal and multi-regional methodologies to deepen the understanding of FLE acquisition processes and to guide evidence-based language education policy formulation in Tanzania.

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