# ENGLISH TENSE AND ASPECT CONSTRUCTIONS IN THE OPINION ESSAYS OF PRE-INTERMEDIATE LEVEL TURKISH EFL STUDENTS

**PhD Dissertation**

**Duygu AKTUĞ EKİNCİ**

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**PhD DISSERTATION**

**Department of Foreign Language Education**

**PhD Program in English Language Teaching**

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**ABSTRACT**

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Tense-aspect system in English has been one of the main challenges faced by second/foreign language learners due to its components such as language-specific features, complexity, and cross-linguistic variation (Bardovi-Harlig, 2000). Second language acquisition comprises of the acquisition of various linguistic means to express time. Lexical means include temporal adverbs, prepositions, conjunctions, and verbs, and tenses and aspects constitute grammatical means. For the most part, time is expressed by using more than one means, and learners of a second/foreign language generally have difficulty in employing the means properly when producing in the target language. The present study is an exploratory study which aims to analyze structures on the English tense-aspect system through written texts produced by pre-intermediate level Turkish EFL learners at Bursa Uludağ University School of Foreign Languages Intensive English Program to define and come up with explanations about the correct and erroneous structures. Subsequently, for comparison purposes, a native data set is investigated for tense-aspect structures to find out similarities and differences between the two corpora. The findings show that both pre-intermediate level Turkish EFL learners and native English speakers employ present-tense verbs higher in number than past-tense verbs in their opinion essays. The error analysis revealed that simple aspect of past tense was found to be the most error-prone tense while progressive aspect of present tense was found to be the most error-prone aspect. Regarding the findings of the current study, implementation of new approaches to grammar teaching, and more specifically teaching “time” in English is suggested for the second language pedagogy.

**Keywords:** Tense-aspect, Corpus, Data set, Error analysis, Turkish EFL learners

# ÖZ

YABANCI DİL SEVİYESİ ALT-ORTA SEVİYEDE OLAN VE İNGLİZCEYİ YABANCI DİL OLARAK ÖĞRENEN TÜRK ÖĞRENCİLERİN FİKİR YAZILARINDAKİ ZAMAN-GÖRÜNÜŞ YAPILARI

Duygu AKTUĞ EKİNCİ

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İngilizcedeki zaman-görünüş yapıları; taşıdığı dile özgü özellikleri, karmaşık yapısı, ve diller arası farklıklar gibi özelliklerinden dolayı ikinci dil olarak İngilizce öğrenenlerin karşılaştığı ana sorunlardan biridir (Bardovi-Harlig, 2000). İkinci dil öğrenme, o dilde zamanı ifade etmek için kullanılan çeşitli dil araçlarını kullanmayı da kapsar. Sözcüksel araçlar zaman zarflarını, edatları ve bağlaçları içerirken dilbilgisel araçlar fiilleri, zamanı ve görünüşü içerir. Genellikle zaman birden fazla araç ile ifade edilir ve ikinci/yabancı dil öğrenenler hedef dilde üretirken bu araçları uygun bir şekilde kullanmakta güçlük çekerler. Mevcut çalışma bir keşif çalışmasıdır ve Bursa Uludağ Üniversitesi Yabancı Diller Yüksekokulu İngilizce Hazırlık Programı'nda öğrenim gören alt-orta seviyede İngilizce bilen Türk öğrencilerin İngilizcedeki zaman-görünüş yapılarını yazılı metinlerde analiz etmeyi hedeflemiştir. Ardından, anadili İngilizce olan öğrencilerin yazılarındaki zaman-görünüş yapıları, iki derlem arasındaki benzerlik ve farklılıkları ortaya çıkarmak maksadıyla incelenmiştir. Bulgular hem anadili İngilizce olan öğrencilerin hem de Türk öğrencilerin fikir yazılarında en çok şimdiki zaman fiillerini kullandıklarını ortaya çıkarmıştır. Derlem çalışmasındaki hata analizi, geçmiş zamanın basit görünüşünün en hatalı zaman kullanımına sahip olduğunu, şimdiki zamanın süreklilik görünüşünün ise en hatalı görünüş kullanımına sahip olduğunu ortaya çıkarmıştır. Mevcut çalışmanın sonuçlarına dayanarak, ikinci dil pedagojisinde dilbilgisi öğretimine ve daha özel olarak İngilizce'de "zaman" öğretimine yönelik yeni yaklaşımlara yer verilmesi önerilmektedir.

**Anahtar kelimeler:** Zaman-görünüş, Derlem, Veri seti, Hata analizi, İngilizceyi yabancı dil olarak öğrenen Türk öğrenciler

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**02/08/2022**

## STATEMENT OF COMPLIANCE WITH ETHICAL PRINCIPLES AND RULES

I hereby truthfully declare that this thesis is an original work prepared by me; that I have behaved in accordance with the scientific ethical principles and rules throughout the stages of preparation, data collection, analysis and presentation of my work; that I have cited the sources of all the data and information that could be obtained within the scope of this study, and included these sources in the references section; and that this study has been scanned for plagiarism with "scientific plagiarism detection program" used by Anadolu University, and that "it does not have any plagiarism" whatsoever. I also declare that, if a case contrary to my declaration is detected in my work at any time, I hereby express my consent to all the ethical and legal consequences that are involved.

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

**St-*n*** **:** Student from the learner data set, n stands for the number of the student

**NSt-*n*:** Student from the native data set, n stands for the number of the student

**SLA** **:** Second Language Acquisition

**L1** **:** First language

**L2** **:** Second / foreign language

**EA** **:** Error analysis

**CIA** **:** Contrastive Interlanguage Analysis

**TA** **:** Tense - aspect

# CHAPTER 1

## 1. INTRODUCTION

### 1.1. Background to the Study

Learning a foreign language embodies mastering the four language skills in the target language (reading, writing, listening, and speaking). Second or foreign language acquisition (SLA / FLA) is the research area monitoring the degree to which the skills are acquired by non-native speakers (VanPatten & Benati, 2010). The main concerns of SLA researchers have been proficiency development in the target language, its properties, and the presumed stages through which language learners pass for competence in the target language. For developing this process, SLA researchers examine whether they can relate second language learners' proficiency levels to particular linguistic devices such as grammatical and lexical aspects including tense, aspect, and usage of words. Language proficiency, within this context, is described by Thomas (1994) as second language learner's entire capacity and capability in the target language; comprising of the individual's linguistic knowledge and the language skills.

The two characteristics that both human conscious and languages share are temporal reference and time expressions. Human reference codes events and situations within temporal associations as we mention utterances in the past, present, or future, and whether these utterances are finished, continuing, or repeating (Chan, Finberg, Costello, & Shirai, 2012). Through languages, speakers hold specific lexical and grammatical devices such as tense, aspect, and adverbials to be utilized during language production (Klein & Li, 2009). In broad terms, these language-specific devices express the time of the event and whether it is recurrent or not.

Morphological systems of languages are represented by verbs, and tense and aspect are the semantic concepts on which verbs are encoded. Tense is deictic, and the term 'deictic' refers to "the time of the situation referred to some other time, usually to the moment of speaking" (Comrie, 1976, p. II), yet aspect is represented as "different ways of viewing the internal temporal constituency of a situation" (Comrie, 1976, p. 3), highlighting the duration of a situation.

In second language research, tense and aspect system is approached through different theories since the factors affecting the hypotheses also vary. These theories are found to be influencing our understanding of the acquisition process, and they have been explored in a great deal of studies by investigating the learner language. Tense,

aspect, and mood systems is analyzed through the following distinctive factors (Salaberry & Ayoun, 2005):

> (a) pragmatic factors,
> (b) semantic factors (i.e., the Lexical Aspect Hypothesis),
> (c) contextual factors (i.e., the Discourse Hypothesis),
> (d) input-based factors: (i.e., the Distributional Bias Hypothesis),
> (e) cognitive processing factors (i.e., the Default Past Tense Hypothesis), and
> (f) syntactic factors (i.e., the UG-Minimalist Hypothesis) (Ayoun & Rothman, 2013, p.119).

For using and understanding of tenses and aspects in second language, there is a large and growing body of literature based on the theories mentioned above as well as other variables that cannot be listed under any theory or hypothesis; one of which is the external factors such as the type of the task.

Much of the current literature on tense and aspect research pays particular attention to non-native speakers and their acquisition of tense and aspect features (i.e., Hinkel, 2001) while some others have examined how the temporality markers are employed in a second language in specific contexts both in sentence and discourse levels (Hinkel, 1997). Besides, some studies have attempted to explain the factors related with contexts such as genre and register and how each factor affects tense and aspect choices of language learners. Many experimental studies require learners to put verbs in suitable forms related to specific tenses or aspects, or the correct voice (Rutherford & Sharwood Smith, 1985; Pfaff, 1987). Such studies investigating inflected verbs and other markers of tense, aspect, and voice in second language have illuminated the issue of the way second language learners learn and produce the abovementioned systems. Yet, participation in controlled experiments centering verb forms, the nonnative speaker participants are observed to fulfill the tasks while in real production in the target language, they simply tend to avoid employing complex tense-aspect or voice forms of the verbs (Hinkel, 2004).

For the current study, the written texts produced by pre-intermediate level Turkish EFL learners were utilized to explore the system of tense and aspect in learner English. The texts of the students were collected through the writing part of the English language proficiency examination which was held at the end of each academic year. Tense and aspect systems were analyzed through error analysis to define the usage and identify erroneous structures. Lastly, broad explanation on the sources of errors were provided.

## 1.2. Statement of the Problem

Tense-aspect system in English has been challenging for foreign or second language learners due to its features such as language-specific features, complexity, and cross-linguistic variation (Bardovi-Harlig, 2000). Rastelli and Vernice (2013) also put forward that the discrepancy between the mother tongue and the target language regarding semantic representations lexical formulations may restrain the process of acquisition. It can be said that the expression of time is common in every language, but the ways of stating time are language specific. Accordingly, foreign or second language acquisition always comprises of the acquisition of various linguistic means to express time. Lexical means include language elements such as temporal adverbs, prepositions, conjunctions, and verbs, and tenses and aspects constitute grammatical means. For the most part, time is expressed by using more than one means, and learners of a second or foreign language generally have difficulty in employing these means properly when producing in the target language. In addition, learners also have difficulty in conjugating English verbs because of pragmatic and semantic realization of tenses (Larsen-Freeman & Celcia-Murcia, 1999). For example, Turkish does not have any form referring Perfect aspect in non-past time. Rather, the suffix *–di* could be utilized to indicate *definite witnessed past* with regard to the context (Kornfilt, 1997).

In addition to these, Tyler (2012) states that tense and aspect forms are indicated formally instead of meaning-based outlines that are not sufficiently based on linguistics theories. Additionally, it was asserted by Bielak and Pawlak (2013) that most grammars can be taught as structuralist and traditional due to the way presenting it in explanations of facts. Apart from that, second / foreign language learning also includes learning proper ways of thinking-for-speaking by employing specific grammatical realizations of the target language, which can be different from those of the native language (Ellis, 1994). In compliance with that, transfer from the native language can influence learners' inferences of grammar constructions (Ellis, 2006c). Thus, erroneous constructs in learner interlanguages can be observed.

With reference to the issues mentioned earlier, the focus of the current study is to analyze structures on the English tense-aspect system through written texts produced by pre-intermediate level Turkish EFL learners who successfully completed one-year English preparation class at university and ready to start studying at their own departments. By this focus, it is aimed to investigate the correct and incorrect uses of

the grammatical means to convey time, i.e., tense and aspect, in written productions of Turkish EFL learners who are regarded as successful writers or top graders, who scored 15 points or above out of 20 from the writing test and have the B1 (pre-intermediate) proficiency level of English according to Common European Framework (CEFR).

### 1.3. Statement of the Purpose

The initial aim of the current exploratory study was to investigate tense – aspect structures on a data set of English language learners' written productions to define and come up with explanations about the erroneous structures. The following aim was to find out which tense-aspect forms were used in the opinion essays of university-level native English speakers and finally to see whether there was a difference in the tense-aspect usage patterns of native English speakers and pre-intermediate (B1) level Turkish EFL learners.

In line with the purposes above, the following research questions were designed to guide the current study:

1) Which tense-aspect forms are used in the opinion essays of pre-intermediate level Turkish EFL learners?

    a) Which tense-aspect forms prevail among pre-intermediate level Turkish EFL learners?

    b) Which tense-aspect forms are used erroneously by pre-intermediate level Turkish EFL learners?

    c) What are the possible sources of error-prone tense-aspect forms used by pre-intermediate level Turkish EFL learners?

2) Which tense-aspect forms are used in the opinion essays of university-level native English speakers?

    a) Is there a difference in the tense-aspect usage patterns of native English speakers and pre-intermediate level Turkish EFL learners?

For this aim, a learner data set to investigate the tense and aspect use of Turkish EFL learners was compiled and then analyzed for the usage of tense-aspect structures. Later, it was compared with a comparable native data set to find similar and different patterns of expressing time. For this exploratory study, the data is based on a learner data set was considered to be more appropriate to study a considerable amount of

authentic data as comprehensive studies on language use are not based on small samples (Biber, Conrad, & Reppen, 1998). As Campoy, Belles and Gea (2010) also mentioned, researchers could have the opportunity to analyze the language more profoundly thanks to corpus-based approaches that provide remarkable learner input. The compiled data set was analyzed through Error Analysis whose basis is to uncover learner errors since they could be observed, examined, and explained (Brown, 2007). Then, a data set of opinion essays written by native English speakers were examined for tense-aspect structures to find out similarities and differences between tense-aspect structure usage among the two student groups.

### 1.4. Significance of the Study

Writing is considered to be a demanding skill which is hard to master as various types of errors can occur during this process. It requires both cognitive skills and different activities performed at the same time (Flynn & Stainthorp, 2006). Most foreign language learners face difficulties in writing in another language and one of the major problems that EFL learners face is about English grammar (Belkhir & Benyelles, 2017). For example, it was found by Cam and Tran (2017) that the having less grammatical knowledge is the reason for students' deficiency in English. Research has shown that it is essential to master English grammar in order to make a good writing and achieve higher proficiency levels, which is essential for L2 pedagogy (Hammerly, 1991). It is reported by Fathman and Whalley (1990) that to promote grammatical accuracy and writing quality, language teachers should pay particular attention to feedback on grammar in nonnative learners' written productions.

Investigating tense and aspect (TA) structures is worthwhile as the tense-aspect system in a foreign language appear slowly and progressively. In addition, variation in learners' use of these structures in second language production can be observed (Howard & Leclercq, 2017a). Consequently, the acquisition of tense and aspect poses as one of the biggest difficulties for second or foreign language learners who struggle to produce target-like patterns (Fuchs & Werner, 2018). According to Aksu-Koç (1998), the reason for difficulties related with TA patterns is their typological variation among languages. In addition, Vraicu (2015) asserts that TA patterns can be challenging as language learners must achieve the use of native-like forms and relevant form-function mappings. For these reasons, another motive to investigate TA patterns in learner

production can be to inform language teachers to observe and eliminate the potential challenges that language learners may experience during the acquisition process of tenses and aspects. Depending upon these, the current study was constructed to analyze tense-aspect patterns on students' written productions and to define and come up with explanations about the erroneous structures. In the second place, a native data set was investigated for tense-aspect structures to find out similarities and differences between the two corpora regarding the employment of tense-aspect structure for comparison purposes. In this sense, it is hoped that this research would contribute to a deeper understanding the tense and aspect use by Turkish EFL learners when producing in English, and therefore would contribute to research on tense an aspect by uncovering the possible reasons why the learners commit errors. Besides, this study offered some important insights into language pedagogy and English language teachers for understanding the link between tense aspect carrying verbs and proficiency in second/foreign language writing.

# CHAPTER 2

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The first section of the literature review begins with providing major issues with respect to learner corpus research. The second part presents fundamental issues on error analysis. Later, tense and aspect structures in both languages (Turkish and English) are presented. The fourth part introduces the interlink between task type and tense-aspect choice. The last part outlines some research studies on tenses and aspects.

### 2.1. Learner Corpus Research

Biber et al. (1998) defined a corpus as "a large and principled collection of natural texts" (Biber et al., 1998, p. 4). The corpus can be comprised of spoken or written production that is typed. Written corpus can be collected through different types of written discourse such as books, newspapers, or articles and turned into a corpus via categorizing different genres. The importance of the genre in corpus research is mentioned by Ghadessy, Henry and Roseberry (2001) expressing that a corpus need to be representative of a genre, and the linguistic communication related to that specific genre need to be ensured in a corpus. Granger (2002) highlights the importance of learner corpus research as it constructs relation with second language research and corpus linguistics. Researchers are provided with the fundamental idea, instruments, and methods through corpus linguistics. Corpus linguistics enables researchers to have the chance of giving an account of learner languages in a detailed way, which is also the primary objective of corpus linguistics. Considering this objective, corpus linguistics can be used for a diverse range of aims in second language research both for researchers and language instructors (Granger, 2002).

In English for Academic Purposes (EAP) research, learner corpus studies first started in the 1990s. In 1990, Sylviane Granger began a large-scaled corpus project at the University of Louvain in Belgium, the International Corpus of Learner English (ICLE). ICLE is comprised of sub corpora written on academic argumentative essays in English by English language learners from different countries (France, Germany, Poland, etc.). Another learner corpus consisting of academic writing was started by John Milton who compiled the corpus by collecting the writing of EFL learners in Hong Kong at the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology between 1992 and 2000 (Flowerdew, 2014). The corpus is composed of about 25 million words in nearly 40,000

scripts written by approximately 6,000 students. These corpora have been followed by many other learner corpora compiled by researchers.

In second language corpus research, the compiled learner corpora are to be compared to and assessed within the context of native speaker corpora. When the comparison is regarded, the Contrastive Interlanguage Analysis (CIA) approach is adopted. CIA has two main viewpoints by benchmarking: (i) comparing learner language and target language, and (ii) comparing learner language composed by learners with different first languages (Granger, 1996b). In order to enable the comparison of different interlanguages and native language, Granger and her colleagues compiled a learner corpus, the Louvain Corpus of Native English Essays (LOCNESS) in compliance with well-defined design criteria (i.e., task type, task length). Predominantly in the last two decades, learner corpus research has found global acceptance and recognition and a vast number of research in SLA has been carried out with the help of corpora.

### *2.1.1. The Size of Learner Corpus*

The size of the corpus is one of the central issues in corpus research in general (Flowerdew, 2014). Flowerdew (2014) present that the fundamental law suggests that for wide based quantitative studies, researcher utilize corpora of around 500,000 to one-million words (p. 45). On the other hand, if researchers employ qualitative methods, smaller corpora ranging from 50,000 to 150,000 words, to examine fewer items. Another point to mention relating the size of the corpus is that it is interconnected with the linguistic items or structures to be investigated (Flowerdew, 2014). It was pointed out by McEnery and Wilson (2001) that when the frequency of the linguistic item is lower, the relevant corpus to investigate need to be larger. To set an example, if the content words are to be examined, a large corpus can be utilized as they have lower frequency than grammatical items. On the contrary, more widespread language features i.e., tenses or articles, can be investigated through a smaller corpus (Biber, 1990). Grammatical items can be retrieved by using part-of-speech (POS) taggers by automatically assigning grammatical tags to every word in a corpus, yet when the scope of the research study contains errors, the errors produced by language learners are still a lot challenging to retrieve from the corpus as manual annotation is necessary, which is demanding for the researcher (Flowerdew, 2014).

In the light of the above-mentioned notions on the size of the corpus, the current study makes use of the term "data set" instead of "corpus" as the size of the learner data and the native data is relatively small compared to corpus studies of second language acquisition in the literature. For this study, a learner dataset having approximately 125,000-word tokens was compiled by the researcher, which will be annotated by hand to examine the tense and aspect structures employed by the English language learners. In order to compare L2 learners' employment of tense-aspect structures with that of L1 learners, a native dataset, having 58,367 word-tokens, is also hand-tagged to retrieve tense-aspect structures for the present study. In line with what Biber (1990) and Flowerdew (2014) assert, smaller corpora are used for this research because smaller corpora can be investigated for grammatical features by hand tagging procedure.

### 2.2. From Contrastive Analysis (CA) to Error Analysis (EA)

Collection, classification, and analysis of learners' written products when learning a new language have been largely implemented in language classrooms for a few decades. In the following years, investigating errors had a more considerable role upon Chomskyan concepts of linguistics development in language acquisition studies (Corder, 1967 in Ellis, 1994). Error analysis became a common means of obtaining information about learner language as an alternative method to contrastive analysis (CA) which is based on behaviorist theories, and therefore claimed that the difficulties in mastering certain structures in a second or foreign language were only based on the differences between the learners' L1 and L2. Therefore, according to contrastive analysis, second language learners are deemed to be only imitating the process of first language acquisition. In this sense, interference from the mother tongue towards a second or foreign language was expected to occur when structures of learners' mother tongue differ from the target language. The fundamental goal of CA was to foresee the difficulties learners may experience and implement the results of research for language teaching pedagogy in order to enhance language learning programs. However, CA was criticized as not all errors of language learners are due to distinctions between the languages. None the less, the Contrastive Analysis presented a significant motive to generate other language learning theories and approaches of research in second language acquisition, and contrastive interlanguage analysis (CIA) and error analysis is one of them. The fundamental discrepancy between CIA and EA is depicted by Ellis

(1999) as *"whereas CA looked at only the learner's native language and the target language, EA provided a methodology for investigating learner language. For this reason, EA constitutes an appropriate starting point for the study of learner language and L2 acquisition"* (Ellis, 1999, p. 48).

As mentioned above, in SLA research, learner corpora have been used for Contrastive Analysis (CA), Contrastive Interlanguage Analysis (CIA) or later Computer-aided Error Analysis (CEA) (Granger, 1999). CIA can include both quantitative and qualitative comparisons between native and non-native texts or texts written by learners with various L1s. Computer-aided Error Analysis (CEA), on the other hand, concentrates on defining and analyzing interlanguage errors (Granger, 1996b). The method that is generally included in computer-aided error analysis is deciding on the linguistic item that learners commit errors when producing and then examining the learner corpus thoroughly to determine the examples of erroneous uses. When conducting a CEA, data processing is carried out by four stages: encoding, markup, tagging and parsing. Encoding is the first stage which includes typing the data and entering it in the computer. For the markup stage, the researcher identifies errors. Tagging denotes appointing part-of-speech labels to constructs in the corpus and parsing refers to identifying and specifying syntactic structures (James, 2013). However, the matter to question is whether target language categories or interlanguage categories should be used for parsing. For example, the International Corpus of Learner English (ICLE), one of the largest and renowned learner corpora, labels the head noun *progresses* in the sentence below as third person singular verb.

[the progress*es in nuclear physics ...] *(in ICLE)*

(James, 2013, p. 126)

However, according to parsing, the entire is a noun phrase (NP). Therefore, there is a discrepancy between the intended structure and the automatic tagging of *progresses* as a finite verb, justification of which poses difficulty (James, 2013).

Error analysis (EA) was founded by Stephen Pit Corder and his coworkers in the 1960s. Ellis and Barkhuizen (2005) represented EA as "consists of a set of procedures for identifying, describing and explaining learners' errors" (Ellis & Barkhuizen, 2005, p.51). The significance of error analysis for language learning context was asserted by Corder (1981, in James, 2013) by mentioning that learners' errors are noteworthy to investigate in three ways: first, they provide information about the language items a

language learner is using; second, they give information on how a language is learnt and finally, they provide information to the learner as errors can be regarded as a device used by the learner to learn. Error analysis also has instructional benefits since it gives valuable input to design and implement the procedure of teaching/learning.

However, later in 1980s, criticism against error analysis arose as it had some limitations in methodology. First, it was criticized since it centers only errors instead of the potential of learners about what they are able to do correctly. Brown (2000) asserts that another limitation of EA is that it places too much stress on production. James (1998) has mentioned that EA is deficient to explain avoidance strategy that learners generally employ. Despite the above-mentioned limitations, however, error analysis is still considered a useful method for collecting information about learner languages as well as providing information on language teaching. Corder (1971, in James, 2013) recommended an error analysis framework to provide explanations for underlying language acquisition processes. This framework is comprised of five essentials to research into learner errors as follows; (James, 2013, p,12):

> (i) We should look for parallels between L1 acquisition and L2 learning, since these are governed by the same underlying mechanisms, procedures and strategies. However, one difference between the two is that L2 learning is probably facilitated by the learner's knowledge of the MT.
>
> (ii) Errors are evidence of the learners' in-built syllabus, or of what they have taken in, rather than what teachers think they have put in: intake should not be equated with input.
>
> (iii) Errors show that L1 and L2 learners both develop an independent system of language, 'although it is not the adult system ... nor that of the second language' (Corder, 1967: 166) but is evidence of a 'transitional competence'.
>
> (iv) Errors should be distinguished from mistakes.
>
> (v) Errors are significant in three respects: they tell the teacher what needs to be taught; they tell the researcher how learning proceeds; and they are a means whereby learners test their hypotheses about the L2. This is patently a very positive assessment of EA, announcing a programme that might well take several decades and not just a heyday to complete (James, 2013, p.12).

In addition to putting forward the essentials of error analysis, Corder (1974 in Ellis, 1999) set up five steps to perform error analysis:

> a) collection of a sample of learner language,
>
> b) error identification,

c) error description,

d) explanation of errors,

e) error evaluation.

Nevertheless, most research studies do not include the last step, error evaluation, due to the fact that evaluation of errors are treated separately and has its own analysis methods (Ellis, 1999). The fundamentals of error analysis are explained below.

### *2.2.1 Collection of learner language samples*

The first step in error analysis is collecting a sample of learner language for analysis. Learner errors can be affected by different factors; therefore, a well-defined learner language samples are essential to define the time and the reasons behind the learner errors. In order to ensure this, there are numerous factors to be taken into account when collecting learner language such as the medium of a language (i.e., oral or written), genre of the data (i.e., conversation, essay), learners' proficiency level or mother tongue (Ellis, 1999).

The researcher needs to decide on the task(s) to collect the samples, whether natural or elicited use, for example using pictures to elicit specific language features. The other issue to consider is about time of data collection. The researcher can restrict the data by collecting it in short or long periods of time to control error patterns. Additionally, the size of the sample is another factor to be determined. The researcher can collect a massive sample for a comprehensive list of errors, specific sample for one sample gathered from small sample, and an incidental sample collected from one participant.

### *2.2.2 Error identification*

When the data set is compiled, the errors will be identified; thus, the second step is error identification at which the researcher identifies what is considered as an error first. The difference between errors and mistakes needs to be noted when error identification is considered. Mistakes are not implemented in a systematic way, rather, they can occur because of memory loss, physical or psychological conditions, yet errors are supposed to be systematic and inform about the learner's knowledge of the language or competence (Garrido & Romero, 2012). According to Brown (2000), language learners can correct their mistakes but not their errors.

The next step is to decide whether the error is overt or covert (Corder, 1971a, in Ellis, 1999). Overt errors are easy to identify while intended meaning need to be taken into account for covert errors. Examples of overt and covert errors by Ellis (1999) are as follows:

> *I *runned* al the way. (overt error)
>
> *It was stopped. (covert error – according to the context, "it" refers to "the wind")
>
> (Biber, 1999, p. 52)

Garrido (2013) conducted an error analysis to identify tense and aspect errors of 48 Spanish speakers who study English language teaching. The students translated a text for the study, and in general, the results of the translation suggest that the participants have problems with tense-aspect use. Specifically, following Corder (1981), the researcher classified the errors as overt and covert errors; and covert errors are found to have the highest frequency. In covert errors, respectively, present perfect, past perfect, and present progressive constituted the highest frequency in all tense-aspect structures. As for the overt errors, respectively, simple present, past progressive, simple future and present perfect constituted the highest frequency. The participants did not have errors with present progressive. Besides, all the errors of simple present were on the omission of third person singular mark *-s*.

As the last step, the errors can be compared with native speaker statements, which serve as the norm, to find the differences (Ellis, 1999). He also adds that researchers should provide exact numbers of errors and give absolute error frequencies when conducting a research based on error analysis.

It was also put forward by Ellis (1999) is that error identification process contains some methodological problems. The first problem is that it is difficult to differentiate an error and a mistake. The second problem is about deciding on the error, as Duskova (1969, in Ellis 1999) state "*the number of cases in which it was hard to decide whether an error had been made … did not exceed 4 per cent of all the errors examined"* (Ellis, 1999, p. 54). This problem can be overcome by providing inter-rater reliability measures to define errors. In this sense, for identification of errors, inter-rater reliability should be ensured. A native speaker rater can be required to check the learner essays and identify erroneous tense-aspect forms. Then, the researcher as the first rater can

compare the structures with errors and the two raters can reach consensus on the types and places of errors.

### *2.2.3. Error description*

The third step is error description when errors are described through a kind of taxonomy. Corder (in Ellis, 1994) categorized the errors into three types:

a. Pre-systematic errors take place when learners are not aware of the rules.

b. Systematic errors take place when learners know incorrect rules.

c. Post-systematic errors take place when learners know the rules but can produce errors.

However, to identify these kinds of errors, each learner should be accessible and be interviewed so as to see whether the learner can give an account of the error.

Another way to classify errors is to use surface structure taxonomy was introduced by Dulay et al. (1982). They point out that learners may omit necessary information, add unnecessary information, misform, or disorder the information. The categorization of grammatical errors was also presented by Ellis and Barkhuizen (2005, p. 61) as:

> 1. Errors of omission: When the learner has left out a word, e.g., *"My sister happy."*
>
> 2. Errors of addition: When the learner has added a word or an ending to another word which is grammatically incorrect, e.g., *"I have eated."*
>
> 3. Misinformation/Substitution: When the learner uses the wrong form of a morpheme or structure, e.g., when they use the wrong preposition in a sentence such as *"It was the hardest time in my life."*
>
> 4. Misordering: When the learner places a morpheme incorrectly in a grammatical construction such as *"She fights all the time her brother."*
>
> 5. Blends: When the learner is uncertain of which word to use and blends two different phrases, e.g., *"The only one thing I want."* (Ellis and Barkhuizen, 2005, p. 61).

In her study on tenses and aspects with 48 Spanish learners of English, Garrido (2013) found that the most frequent past progressive error was due to misordering. Upon examining students' answers in detail, she concluded that first language interference was the source of error as the produced structure complies with the Spanish sentence structure.

*Expected answer: Our friend Franz was waiting here…*

*Student's answer: Here was our friend waiting.*

(Garrido, 2013, p. 294)

A study on investigating and classifying grammatical errors was conducted by Nuarini (2019) with nine English Department students through analyzing their final paper of writing class. He classified the errors based on Surface Strategy Taxonomy proposed by Dulay, Burt, and Krashen (1982). A total of 178 errors were found and then divided in the categories of omission, addition, misformation, and misordering. The findings suggested that the most frequent errors found were misformation, omission, misordering, and addition respectively. In addition, verbal errors were found to have the highest frequency among all error types. Regarding the use of verbs, the students mostly committed misformation errors followed by addition and omission.

Dobrić, and Sigott (2014) summarizes that there are different classifications of errors committed by learners by using different approaches, as follows (Dobric & Sigott, p. 113):

> (1) classification as regards to linguistic description degree: to understand error types, this kind of error taxonomy uses different linguistic analysis levels, such as syntax or phonology (e.g., Ellis & Barkhuizen, 2005). It labels errors such as 'passive voice'.
>
> (2) classification as regards to changes in optimal use: this type of error classification is not used as common as the first category. It is more abstract error classification such as "misinformation" (e.g., Dulay et.al, 1982).
>
> (3) classification integrating linguistic description degree and changes in optimal use: this type of error classification describes errors both regarding linguistic description and change in optimal use, and it produces error taxonomies such as 'passive voice / misinformation" (Pibal, 2012).
>
> (4) classification regarding plausible sources of error: this kind of error classification accounts for error sources as the learner's L1, or universal constraints. Error categories in such classification include "interlingual, developmental, ambiguous, or unique errors" (Dulay et al. 1982: 163).
>
> (5) classification regarding the level of message impairment: this kind of error classification notes errors from the point of message impairment levels. Rules of syntax, such as "verb

inflections", can be mentioned as an example category for this type of error (Dulay et al. 1982, p. 172). (Dobric & Sigott, p. 113)

### *2.2.4. Explanation of errors*

The fourth step is explanation of errors, in other words, determining the causes of errors. It is relevant to the sources of errors. According to Ellis (1999), "*this stage is the most important for SLA research as it involves an attempt to establish the process responsible for L2 acquisition*" (Ellis, 1999, p. 57).

Taylor (1986, in Ellis, 1999) lists the sources of errors as psycholinguistic, sociolinguistic, epistemic, or discourse based. In SLA research, however, only the psycholinguistic sources of errors are attended. Diverse psycholinguistic sources of errors can be seen in Figure 1 below.

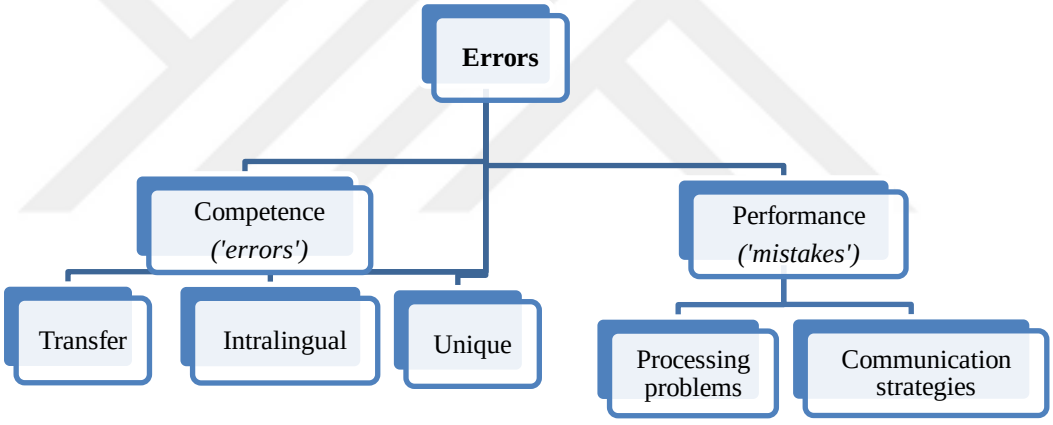



**Figure 2.1.** *Psycholinguistic sources of errors (Ellis, 1999, p. 58)*

A large number of sources of errors have been put forward in the existing literature. According to Richards (1971b), there are three sources of errors: interference errors, intralingual errors, and developmental errors (Ellis, 1999). Yet, Schachter and Celce-Murcia (1977) discuss that the distinction between intralingual and developmental errors is vague, and therefore the taxonomy is problematic. Lott (1983) put forward three categories of transfer errors: "overextension of analogy, transfer of structure, and interlingual/intralingual errors" (in Ellis, 1999, p. 59). According to previous research, intralingual errors are the most frequent error type among learners of

English. Richard (1974) offered four types of intralingual errors as can be seen in Figure 2.2 below.

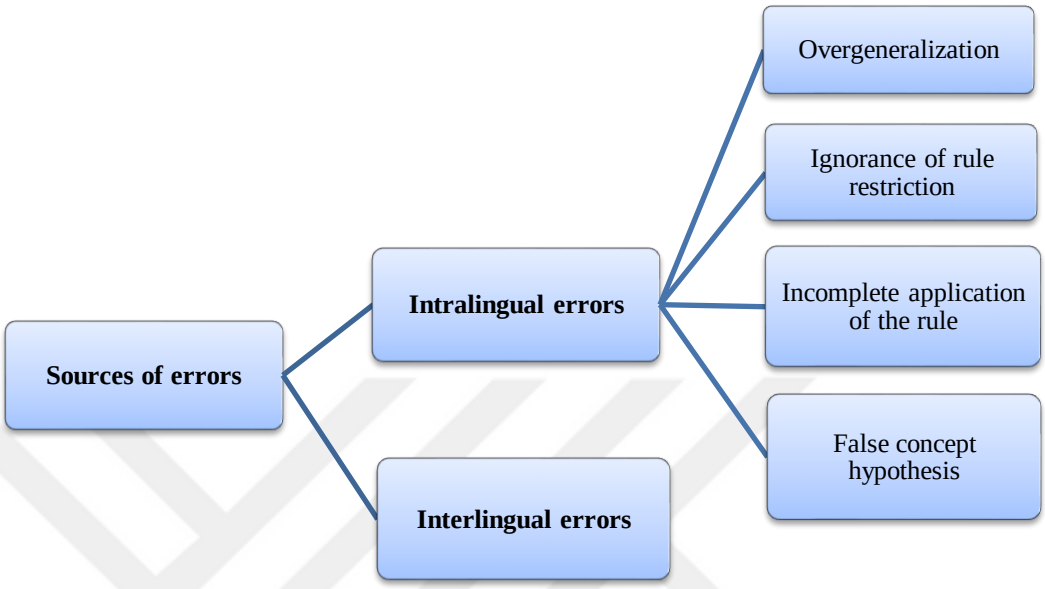



**Figure 2.2.** *Sources of errors (Richard, 1974)*

1. Overgeneralization: Learners try to apply a rule inappropriately. An example of overgeneralization from Ellis (1994) is as follows:

**He can sings.*

*He can sing.*

*He sings.*

2. Ignorance of Rule Restriction: It is closely related to overgeneralization. Learners use the rule in an unsuitable context, and they cannot use exception rules. An example from Ellis (1994) can be seen as follows:

**He asked me to.*

*He asked me to go.*

**He made me to rest.*

*He asked / wanted / invited me to rest.* (Biber, 1999, p. 59)

3. Incomplete Application of the Rule: Learners cannot present important items in word or sentence as the omission of linguistic rules. An example from Ellis (1994) indicating the declarative word order in questions can be seen as follows:

**You like sing?*

*Do you like to sing?*

4. False Concept Hypothesis: Learners misinterpret and misuse grammatical items, so learners fail to comprehend the distinctions in the target language fully. An example from Ellis (1994) indicating "was" is used as a past tense marker can be seen as follows:

**It was happened last Sunday.*

*It was last Sunday.*

*It happened last Sunday.*

Based on the preceding notions of the sources of errors, this study used Richard's (1974) model of error source, which divides the sources of errors into two categories: (1) interlingual errors and (2) intralingual errors.

Gayo and Widodo (2018) aimed at investigating common errors of Indonesian EFL learners. 77 students of grade 9 participated in the study and produced a descriptive text. The texts were analyzed through morphological and syntactical errors. Regarding morphological errors, errors with copula *be* had the highest frequency while subject-verb agreement showed the highest frequency for syntactic errors. The researchers also mentioned that interlanguage errors were found in the data, more specifically in the cases of prepositions and noun phrases. Regarding intralingual errors, sample sentences were provided with different aspects of errors as can be seen below:

*Our town is **an** big town.*

(Type of error: Ignorance of rule restriction; aspect of error: article)

*Handphone has function to communicate **Ø** someone far away without face to face.*

(Type of error: incomplete application of rules; aspect of error: preposition)

The existing research on the L1 effect has varied results. Izquierdo and Collins (2008) investigated and compared English and Spanish learners of L2 French and found that a similarity parallelism between the L1 and the L2 structures facilitates the

language acquisition process. According to Gabriele and McClure (2011) who examined learners with L1 Chinese learning Japanese as L2, instead of the first and the target language differences, the complexity of the target structure regulates interlanguage transfer process. They assert that discrepancy between the first and the target language can influence the acquisition process at earlier learning stages, yet advanced level learners do not process positive transfer. Ayoun and Salaberry (2008) discuss that first language effect can only be seen in grammatically complex areas. Verbal morphology, which often marks fine distinctions across languages and therefore pose difficulties during second language acquisition can have the feature of possible first language interference.

### *2.2.5. Evaluation of errors*

The fifth step is evaluation of errors when the researcher (or the judge) decides the type of errors needing explanation (Ellis,1999). The judge(s) can be native or nonnative speakers and decide whether the errors are semantic or lexical, and what grammatical structures or spelling errors can be detected according to predetermined criteria. These steps are at the heart of the researcher's understanding of and analyzing learner errors.

## 2.3. Tense and Aspect

Previous studies have shown that accuracy in grammar is indeed of significance in L2 writing as the writing quality is considered to be unfavorable by the native speakers when learners form erroneous structures (Johnson & Roen, 1989; Hinkel, 2001). It was also reported that L2 writing proficiency is achieved through correct grammar in written production, and related grammatical instruction is essential for writing proficiency (Hammerly, 1991). Moreover, Ellis (1997) asserted linguistic features of the target language, such as tense use, are considered to be so complicated by the learners that they mostly experience trouble when learning these features during written or oral production. It was also added by Ellis (1997) that in order to foster communication in L2, theses grammatical features have to be the objective of the instruction due to their intricacy.

Ambiguity in the message of the written production can occur due to erroneous English tense use; hence, their incorrect employment in contexts have been recorded as one of the most challenging notions of English grammar (Hinkel, 1992). Vaughn (1991)

noted that low grades and text quality in second language writing on the ground of wrong tense and aspect use has an important position in holistic L2 writing assessment. In this regard, in contrast to its complexity, the use of tense and aspect without mistakes in L2 writing can be considered as one of the key elements for second language learners' quality of written texts.

### *2.3.1 The History and Definitions of Tense and Aspect*

The renowned thinkers Plato and Aristotle define a "verb" as "above all a word which indicates time" (Hewson, 2012, p. 507). Until the twentieth century, no clear distinction had been put forward by the ancient civilizations regarding tenses and aspects. Robins (1951) mentions six tenses in both Latin and Greek with their representations of aspect and time reference (Robins, 1951 in Hewson, 2012) Guillaume (1929, 1933 in Hewson, 2012) provides the very first clear descriptions of tense and aspect, and also mentions six tenses of Greek and Latin, yet he was unable to see that Latin has three tenses and two aspects, while Greek has two tenses and three aspects. The definition provided by Guillaume (1964) can be seen below: (Guillaume, 1964, p. 48 in Hewson, 2012; p. 511)

> *Est de la nature de l'aspect toute différentiation qui a pour lieu le temps impliqué.*
> *(Every differentiation of the time internal to the event involves aspect.)*
> *Est de la nature du temps toute différentiation qui a pour lieu le temps expliqué. (Every differentiation of the time external to the event involves tense.)* (Guillaume, 1964, p.48 in Hewson, 2012; p. 511)

Considering his definition, it can be said that aspect is related to time representation included in the event, while tense is related to time representation excluded in the event.

Guillaume (1964) generated a figure describing an event by using two bars: A and B. Later, based on Guillaume's figure, Hewson and Bubenik (1997, p. 14) broadened the figure by adding five primary positions to the time of the event as shown in Figure 2.3 below.

A [ B…… C …….. D ] E

**Figure 2.3.** *Event Time (Hewson and Bubenik, 1997, p. 14)*

Figure 2.3 illustrates time of the event, and A indicates the prospective aspect taking the precedence of the event, B indicates the inceptive aspect displaying the beginning of the event, C indicates the imperfective aspect showing the medial part of the event, D indicates the perfective aspect depicting the completion of the event, and E indicates the retrospective aspect showing post-event (Hewson, 2012).

### *2.3.2. Tense and Aspect in Turkish*

Turkish is a head-final language, and the tense, aspect, and mood systems are demonstrated on the verb through affixes, agreeing with the root in vowel harmony, and forming constructions (Aksu-Koç, 1988). Yet, there is not a consensus classification of the Turkish tense, aspect, and mood system. First, Banguoğlu (1940) explained the Turkish tense system as *tripartite*, i.e., past, present and future, but other researchers such as Yavaş (1980, in Abdurrazzak, 2012) think it is binary, i.e., past and non-past, and the future is a modal concept rather than a temporal (Abdurrazak, 2012, p.44). Later, Aksan, Kutluk, and Özel (1983), Aksu-Koç (1988), and Kornfilt (1997) involved "aspect" in Turkish grammar in their linguistic studies. Much recently, Göksel and Kerslake (2005) did not include the mood category by classifying Turkish tenses into two: past and non-past. They also provided two categories for the Turkish aspect: perfective and imperfective. The current study employs categorization of Turkish tense and aspect based on the analysis of Kornfilt (1997), and Göksel and Kerslake (2005). In the existing literature, one of the most comprehensive explanations of Turkish tense and aspect patterns can be said to made by Göksel and Kerslake (2005), in their book *Turkish: A Comprehensive Grammar*.

#### *2.3.2.1. Tense in Turkish*

In Turkish, the fundamental tense distinction is made between past and non-past. For present and future tense representation, the suffixes (-(I)yor, -mAktA and -(y)AcAK) indicate relative tense, which means that present and future tense is represented without any other tense markers (Göksel & Kerslake, 2005)

The suffixes involved in the expression of present and future tense (-(I)yor, -mAktA and -(y)AcAK) are markers of relative tense. This means that the expression of absolute present and future tense is dependent on the absence of any other tense marker,

such as the past copula - (y)DI, which would indicate a reference point other than the moment of speech.

#### *2.3.2.1.1. Past Tense*

Past tense markers in Turkish are the suffixes added to verbs -DI and -mIş and the copular marker -(y)DI (Göksel & Kerslake, 2005).

**a.** *-DI* and *-mIş*: They indicate not only past tense but also the perfective aspect, in other words, these suffixes depict past situations that are regarded as a finished whole (Göksel and Kerslake, 2005). (The sample sentences are adapted from Göksel & Kerslake, 2005.)

(1) Okul-a gel-**di**-niz mi?
school-ACC come-PF-2PL INT
'Did/Have you come the school?'

(2) Derin'in annesi ona kek yap-**mış**.
make-EV/PF
'Apparently Derin's mother made/has made her a cake.'

**b.** *-(y)DI*: It is the past copula which indicates past tense and imperfective aspect demonstrating an event which happened in the past.

(3) Ev-de-y**di**-k.
-LOC-P.COP-1PL
'I was at home.'

(4) Selin Barselona'da yaş-***ıyor***-**du**.
live-IMPF-P.COP
'Selin was living in Barcelona.' (representing a continuous event in the past)

(5) Çok paramız ol-***acak***-**tı**.
be-FUT-P.COP
'We were going to have a lot of money.' (representing an anticipated event in the past)

The past tense suffixes -DI and -mIş and the copular marker -(y)DI are different from each other with regard to both aspect and tense. The past copula -(y)DI indicates past tense locating an event in a time before the time of speech. -mIş is a marker of relative past and when used before -(y)DI, it can sign to a time that is before any reference point (Göksel & Kerslake, 2005):

(6) [Ara-dığ-ım-da] annem çık-***mış*****-tı.**
call-CV-1SG.POSS-LOC my mother leave-PF-P.COP
'[When I called] my mother had left.'

***2.3.2.1.2. Present Tense***

There is no present tense marker in Turkish. Instead, it is presented by joining (a) a progressive aspect marker, often -(I)yor, less often - mAktA, and
(b) without the past copular marker -(y)DI (Göksel & Kerslake, 2005).

Progressive aspect, referring a continuous event at a specific point in time, can be said to be equal to 'relative present' (Göksel & Kerslake, 2005). The sentence below (7) is the non-past form of the sentence (4) above:

(7) Selin Barselona'da yaş-ıyor.
'Selin lives / is living in Barcelona.'

When ol- is not used in nominal sentences, present tense is shown by not using the past copula marker. The sentence below (8) is the non-past form of the sentence (3) above:

(8) Evde-yiz. -1PL
'We're at home.'

***2.3.2.1.3. Future Tense***

**a.** The future tense marker is -(y)AcAK:

(9) Onlar parti-y-i sev-**ecek.**
they the party-DAT love-FUT
'They will love the party.'

The auxiliary ol- help the suffix -(y)AcAK in nominal sentences:

(10) Sunumunuz yarın saat 10.00'da **olacak**.
'Your presentation will be at 10.00 tomorrow.'

**b.** The imperfective aspect is marked with -(I)yor and is used for reference for the future when scheduled events or fixed times are mentioned (Göksel & Kerslake, 2005):

(11) Haftasonu Los Angeles'a uç-**uyor**lar.
'They're flying to Los Angeles at the weekend.'

(12) Otobüs kaçta kalk-**ıyor**?
'What time does the bus leave?'

Göksel and Kerslake (2005) posit that there is difference between future tense suffixes -(I)yor and -(y)AcAK. For planned situations in the future, -(I)yor is used to indicate the certainty of the speaker while -(y)AcAK is used when a planned event is disrupted. For example, the sentence below (13) shows the case when the bus has not left at the planned time, yet the previous sentence (12) shows that it is not for the bus to leave.

(13) Otobüs kaçta kalk**acak**?
'What time *is* the bus *going to* leave?'

#### *2.3.2.2. Aspect in Turkish*

Aspect represents when a situation is indicated from the temporal viewpoint. It may be seen 'external', as finished regarding its starting and end is visible, which is called the perfective aspect. It may also be seen 'inside', as unfinished and continuing which is called the imperfective aspect. It represents states, habits, or general statements (Göksel & Kerslake, 2005).

##### *2.3.2.2.1. The Perfective and Imperfective Aspect in Turkish*

The perfective and imperfective aspects can mainly be seen in past tense sentences. -DI and -mIş is used for the perfective aspect, and -(I)yor, -mAktA, -(y)DI and -(A/I)r is used for the imperfective aspect (Göksel & Kerslake, 2005).

The perfective aspect:

(14) (a) Geçen Pazartesi üç saat ders çalış-**tı**-m.
study-PF-1SG
'Last Monday I studied for three hours.'
(b) Üç saat ders çalış-**mış**-ım.
study-EV/PF-1SG
'I seem to have studied for three hours.'

The imperfective aspect:

(15) (a) Saat yedide ders çalış-**ıyor-du**-m.
study-IMPF-P .COP-1SG
'At seven o'clock I was studying.'

(b) Saat sekizde ev-de-**ydi**-m.
home-LOC-P.COP-1SG
'At eight o'clock I was at home.'

(c) Genellikle üç saat ders çalış-**ır-dı**-m
study-AOR-P.COP-1SG
'I would generally study for three hours.'

According to Göksel and Kerslake (2005), progressive and habitual aspects are situated under the imperfective aspect. These aspects are used for past and non-past events. Progressive aspect treats an occasion as dynamic or static, as incomplete or continuing. Habitual aspect treats an occasion as incomplete as part of a recurrent form.

The suffix -(I)yor appears with progressive and habitual sense, yet -mAktA generally appears with progressive aspect most of the time and can appear with habitual sense in formal use. Therefore, the distinction between -(I)yor and - mAktA can be said to be stylistic. Sentences having different aspectual meanings are illustrated below:

Progressive: (event)

(16) Şu an ne dinl-**iyor**-sunuz?

'What are you listening at the moment?'

(17) Bugünlerde gençlerin fikirleri değiş-**mekte**-dir.

'These days the ideas of the youth are changing.'

Progressive: (state)

(18) Sen bu şehri çok iyi bil-**iyor**-sun.

'You know this city very well.'

(19) Ülkede yoksulluk artışı gör-ül-**mekte**-dir.

'An increase in poverty can be seen in the country.'

(Habitual):

(20) Ahmet okula genellikle metroyla gid-**iyor**.

'Ahmet usually goes to school by subway.'

(21) Öğretmenler artık otonom öğrenmeyi destekle-**mekte**-dir.

'Now teachers support/are supporting autonomous learning.'

In Turkish, events and states can be viewed as imperfective. Many Turkish verbs have a dynamic (event) sense in a perfective use, and a stative (state) sense in a progressive form, such as uyan- *wake up* in event form; *awake* in state form (Göksel & Kerslake, 2005).

### *2.3.3. Tense and Aspect in English*

The English tense and aspect system is comparatively well reported in the existing literature. Recently, studies including Carter and McCarthy (2006) highlighted descriptive analysis of the English tense and aspect system. Yet, similar to Turkish, the controversy of unmarked / simple aspects being considered as an aspect or present tense remains in English. Carter and McCarthy (2006) propose two tenses and two aspects, progressive and perfect. Biber, Johansson, Leech, Conrad, and Finegan (1999) list two tenses in English, present and past, and four aspects unmarked/simple, perfect, progressive, and perfect progressive. Future time references are considered as a

combination of modal and aspect in both studies. The current study employs the English tense-aspect approach by Biber et al. (1999).

#### *2.2.3.1. Tense in English*

According to Biber et al. (1999), English verbs have only two tenses: present and past. However, many verb phrases, in imperative clauses and non-finite clauses, do not indicate tenses. Finite clauses can indicate modality or tense, so when a finite clause has a modal verb, it excludes tense marking. Verb phrases inflected with a tense are specified as *tensed*.

Tensed verbs demonstrate whether a verb is present or past tense. Tensed forms include the *-s* form and the past form of the verb, and non-tensed forms include the *-ing* and the *-ed* participles. Verb base form may be tensed or non-tensed: it is regarded as tensed if it has a subject, and non-tensed if used as infinitive (Carter & McCarthy, 2006).

##### *2.2.3.1.1. Past Tense*

Past tense inflections indicate past time through past reference points by using the past tense marker *-ed* to regular verbs as in the example below:

> The flight last**ed** ten hours and we land**ed** at 6.30 in the morning.
>
> (Carter & McCarthy, 2006, p. 408)

Irregular verbs do not take the past tense marker -ed, rather they change a vowel, add a novel ending or do both of them to indicate a past reference.

Apart from that, the past tense forms are also utilized to indicate present time, specifically for politeness or indirectness purposes (Carter & McCarthy, 2006). This means that "past tense distances an event from the present and distancing an event can make it more indirect" (Carter & McCarthy, 2006, p. 406). Biber et al. (1999) also mentioned that stance is added to the verbs in this way, and the verbs that are most commonly used are *think*, *wonder*, and *want*. In the example below, past tense is utilized but the referred time is present.

> A: I wonder**ed** if you **felt** it would make a difference if more people wrote or telephoned or said what they thought.

B: Well yes.

(Carter & McCarthy, 2006, p. 406)

Another use of past tense is in fictional narratives and descriptions to depict imaginary past events (Biber et al.,1999).

> The clock on the tower of St Michael-in-the-Moor **chimed** nine as he **came** onto the road. The milkman's van **was** on the green; Mrs. Southworth from the Hall **was** at the pillar box, posting a letter. He **walked** on away from the green and the houses up the bit of the Jackley Road from which …

(Biber et al.,1999, p.454)

In addition, simple past is also used in dependent clauses to show hypothetical situations:

> And if you **were** in the mood we could at least go.

(Biber et al.,1999, p.454)

#### *2.2.3.1.2. Present Tense*

Present tense is unmarked excluding the suffix -(e)s on the third person singular. It refers to present time, and it holds two meanings when referring to present time: describing a state and describing present habits, either temporarily or for a longer time:

> Describing a state at present time, for a longer time:
>
> *Some recent field experimental evidence **suggests** that biotic interactions also can be important to grasshoppers.*
>
> Describing a state at present time, temporarily:
>
> *I **want** a packet of crisps.*
>
> Describing present habitual behavior:
>
> *She's vegetarian but she **eats** chicken.*

(Biber et al.,1999, p.453-454)

Additionally, the simple present can inform about a continuing action at the time as can be seen below:

> Oh, my goodness. There he **goes**. Look at him walk. <talking about a toddler>

(Biber et al.,1999, p. 454)

Simple present tense is also used when the speaker intends to refer to past or future situations and is referred as "the historic present tense" (Biber et al., 1999). The historic present tense indicates past time and can generally be seen in fiction or in conversational narratives, and in all jokes to mention more pictorial description. An example can be seen below:

> A: I could tell you a really boring joke that goes on for ages.
>
> B: Go on then. Go on then.
>
> A: All right. There's a fortune teller and the man **goes** to the fortune teller and the fortune teller **goes** <. . .> he goes I can't tell you. This is, this is, this is awful. All right, it's, it's worse than dying. He **goes** look, I'll write it down on an envelope, <. . .> So the man **goes** all right. The man **walks** home and the man's depressed. He **walks** like this. <pause> He has to buy a new pair of trainers on the way home because he's dragging his feet on the floor so much. So, he **gets** in the home <. . .>

(Biber et al.,1999, p. 454)

An example of present tense use in conversational narrative is below:

> *No. He **says**, are you going home tonight. He thought I was going home to my parents*.

(Biber et al, 1999, p.455)

Present tense use to indicate past time is related with conversational narratives (register), but present tense use to indicate future time is based on grammatical factors including a future time adverbial or conditional or temporal adverbial with a future time reference. Some examples from Biber et. al. (1999) are provided below:

> If I **refuse** to do what she **says** this time, who knows where my defiance will end?

> Although production will continue for many years yet, I feel it is time to record what historical production data is available before records **are** lost and memories **fade**.
>
> (Biber et al, 1999, p.455)

To sum up, in some fundamental respects, the Turkish tense-aspect construction is comparable to English tense-aspect construction. The summary of the representation of tense and aspect in English can be seen in Carter and McCarthy (2006: 405-417).

> (a) English has two tenses, present and past.
>
> (b) Tense and aspect are compounded in the verb phrase.
>
> (c) Verb phrases can combine more than one aspect: the perfect progressive forms in English, and the periphrastic inflections in Turkish.
>
> (d) Simple past with no explicit aspectual indication.
>
> (e) Negation (when the auxiliary is *be* in English) follows predicative adjectives.

Some distinctions proposed by Jandraschek (2011) can be listed as below:

> (a) In Turkish, there is no simple present.
>
> (b) In English there are two aspects, progressive and perfect(ive), yet Turkish has two additional aspects, the prospective and the dispositive; the English *going to* construction is corresponding to a prospective (Comrie 1976, p. 64).
>
> (c) English has two auxiliaries, *be* and *have*, In Turkish there is a form equivalent to 'to be', *olmak.*
>
> (d) Turkish participles can be used in negatives in the same way as finite verbs.

In summary, the most fundamental aspects which are parallel in both languages is the inflection use based on participles. The verb participle can be identified for aspect, while tense identification follows *be* or *have* clauses. The distinctions between the two systems can be regarded as rather insignificant. That there is no overt copula in Turkish overshadows the similarities, while the English participles integrate with overt copula

verbs. A morphological comparison of English and Turkish tense - aspect system and their cross-equivalents are provided below by Jendrascheck (2011, p. 266) in Table 2.1.

**Table 2.1.** *Tense-aspect combinations in English and their Turkish counterparts (Jendraschek, 2011, p. 266)*

| | Present | Past |
|---|---|---|
| Progressive | (gidiyor)um | (gidiyor)dum |
| | I am (going) | I was (going) |
| Prospective | (gideceğ)im | (gidecek)tim |
| | I am (going to go) | I was (going to go) |
| Perfective | (gitmiş)im | (gitmiştim) |
| | I have/am (gone) | I had/was (gone) |
| | | gittim |
| | | I went |

Researchers have attempted to explain the process of English tense-aspect development and use by Turkish EFL learners. Bozdağ (2017) investigated present simple tense employment in Turkish adult EFL learners having six different proficiency levels ranging from A1 to C2 by using Turkish sub corpus of Cambridge Learner Corpus (CLC) through computer-aided error analysis. CLC included answer papers of the students from Cambridge ESOL exams. The Turkish sub corpus was divided into three as A1-A2, B1-B2, and C1-C2. The results suggested that regardless of the proficiency level, errors of verb tense had the highest frequency among the other type of errors such as incorrect verb uses, subject-verb agreement errors, and inflection errors. Upon analyzing the tenses employed by the participants, it was found that present simple was used the most frequently across all proficiency levels, followed by past simple. The analysis of errors of tense-aspect revealed that present simple was the most frequent tense-aspect structure with errors in two sub corpora; A1-A2 and B1-B2 while it was the second erroneous tense-aspect structure in C1-C2 sub corpus. C1-C2 sub corpus had simple past tense errors the most while it was the second erroneous structure for A1-A2 and B1-B2 levels. The detailed analysis on the erroneous uses uncovered that the students used present simple instead of past simple by far the most regardless of

proficiency levels. Following that, students also used present simple instead of present progressive among the three sub corpora.

### 2.4. Register and Tense Choice

In terms of the relationship between register and tense choice, Biber et al. (1999) demonstrated corpus evidence on frequency of the four registers, i.e., fiction, academic writing, news, and conversation. In this regard, they noted that in conversation and in academic writing, present tense appears more often than past tense while past tense appears more often than present tense in fiction. On the other hand, both tenses can be seen about equally in news. These uses are shaped by the characteristic meanings of each register; for example, present tense is used frequently in conversation as speakers generally focus on the existing context (Biber et al., 1999). Yet, the dominance of present tense in academic writing is mainly due to the writers' concern with "general truth" where particular time is not significant (Biber et al., p. 458). Concordantly, it was also mentioned that the choice of verb's tense is related to the text category as L2 writers in opinion essays build their arguments by describing specific events and by providing generalizations and generalizable statements or describing events that are considered general truths to the reader (Beason & Lester, 2010, Hunston, 2006). These require the use of present tense, whereas in writing an article or a story the occurrence of past tense is more frequent since it requires reporting events that happened in the past (Paltridge, 1996). Hinkel (2004) found upon analyzing the employment of English tenses, aspects and voice in native and nonnative speaker academic texts that even after getting many years of second language instruction, advanced nonnative speakers can have problems with the conventionalized uses of tenses, aspects and the passive voice in written academic discourse. In addition, studies of academic text conventions have voiced that the simple present tense is greatly dominant in different types of academic genre, i. e. published articles and student papers, while the simple past tense is limited to narratives, or descriptions of events (e.g., Swales, 1990; Paltridge, 2001). In this sense, present tense is expected to be utilized more frequently than the other tenses in the current study.

## 2.5. Studies on Tense and Aspect

The phenomena of tense-aspect have been researched in varied frameworks such as morphological, semantic, pragmatic, and syntactic. These frameworks propose different methods and theories to investigate tense-aspect systems. Studies focusing on morphology emphasize the representation of tense-aspect markers generally in a cross-linguistic manner (Deo, 2012). Lexically-based approaches investigate verbal morphology development through actional classes (States, Activities, Accomplishments, Achievements) generated by Vendler (1957) and analyze lexical aspectual classes of verbs. Approaches based on syntax examine the morphemes of tense and aspect in a morpho-syntactic manner.

Evidence for the effect of first language (L1) on second language (L2) tense and aspect acquisition has been observed in the literature on tense and aspect-based studies. Martinovic-Zic (2009) examined language-specific L1 effects in the L2 acquisition of tense-aspect on L2 English learners of L1 Russian and L2 Russian learners of L1 English. She elicited written data by using two written tasks; a cloze task and a story task, and found that L2 Russian learners with L1 English show tense-bias and restrict the aspects while L2 English learners with L1 Russian show aspect-bias and misuse English tenses due to negative transfer from their L1. More recently, Diaubalick and Guijarro-Fuentes (2019) analyzed the acquisition of tense and aspect features in Spanish as L2 by learners with L1 German and L1 Romance languages. They demonstrate that participants having a Romance language depend on the similarities between L2 Spanish and their L1, and similarly, the German learners of Spanish also rely on their L1 when acquiring tense and aspect in Spanish. In German, aspect is expressed by lexical means, and an adverb-based learning strategy has been observed by German learners when learning tense and aspect.

Much of the tense-aspect research has focused on identifying and evaluating the role of lexical aspect on tense-aspect development in a second language. For example, Chan, Finberg, Costello, and Shirai (2012) examined the roles of lexical aspect, morphological regularity, and transfer of past and progressive morphology for L1 Italian and L1 Punjabi learners of English. The results support the Aspect Hypothesis as learners mainly utilized past and perfective markers with telic predicates, and progressive markers with activity verbs. Furthermore, it was found that neither morphological regularity nor L1 had an apparent effect on acquiring temporality in

English. Another study by Notarianni Burk (2018) investigated whether lexical aspect and grounding has an effect on tense-aspect acquisition within the framework of the Aspect Hypothesis and the Discourse Hypothesis. She examined L2 Italian learners of L1 English through a grammaticality judgment task, a sentence completion task and a narrative elicitation task. Similar to Chan et al. (2012), the findings supported the Aspect Hypothesis and telic verbs mainly occurred in the foreground and had the past perfective meaning.

There is a large volume of published studies describing the classification of grammatical errors by using surface structure taxonomy presented by Dulay et al. (1982), according to which learners of a second language may omit necessary information, add unnecessary information, misform, or disorder the information. The study by Fatiha (2018) investigated the use of past tenses in the narrative essays of English language learners with L1 Arabic and according to the error analysis on verbs, misformation error prevails among all error types is and the main source of errors has been found to be intralingual errors. Nuraini (2019) set out to identify the grammatical errors committed by L1 Indonesian learners of English and in line with what Fatiha (2018) found, Nuraini also revealed that: misformation is the most frequent error type, followed by omission, misordering, and addition. It was also found that in 178 errors in total, errors of employing wrong tense account for only 3 in 178 errors. Klopfenstein (2017) assessed recurring errors in in learner essays by categorizing the errors according to Politzer and Ramirez's (1973) error classification for morphology, syntax, and vocabulary and found that subject-verb agreement errors are the most common errors followed by copula deletion errors before noun, prepositional and adjective phrases. Furthermore, when the tense-aspect carrying verbs were examined, it was revealed that the participants employed 2286 tense-carrying verbs, 1834 (81%) of which were simple present tense.

To date, a number of studies examined the use of tenses and aspects in second language learner written or spoken production, similar to Klopfenstein (2017). Hinkel (2004) investigated the patterns and frequency rates of L1 and L2 uses of three English tenses (the present, the past and the future), two aspects (the progressive and the perfect), and passive verb structures in native speaker and non-native speaker corpus of various L1 speakers. Comparing English proficiency levels in the corpora, the median rates of tense-aspect use show that advanced non-native speakers have difficulty with

tenses, aspects and the passive voice as they employ past-tense carrying verbs more frequently than native speakers. Moreover, most of the advanced level participants are also found to avoid using complex verb phrases. The investigation of the association between proficiency level and tense-aspect use was also carried out by Panagiotopoulos (2015). She compared verb features (tense, aspect, voice, degree of embedding) and word-level n-grams for proficiency assessment in Asian corpora. The results suggest that students with different proficiency levels employ similar tense patterns, yet verbs carrying both tense and aspect tense demonstrated variation across different proficiency levels. Moreover, simple present tense is found to be dominant in learner essays no matter what the proficiency level is; therefore, tense, aspect and voice is not found to be discriminative across different proficiency levels. However, parallelism between the level of proficiency and tense-aspect use can also be encountered in the existing literature. For example, Min (2013) examined the relationship of L2 writing proficiency with verb tense and aspect use in Korean and Chinese L1 speakers of English. It was revealed that the use of particular tense-aspect patterns was associated with L2 writing proficiency of the students as advanced learners used present perfect more often and more properly, and intermediate learners employed simple past tense when the use of present perfect was more appropriate.

Researchers have attempted to analyze errors related to tense and aspect use in second language. A recent study by Zhang (2022) set out to identify erroneous uses of tense-aspect structures of Chinese L1 speakers of English and revealed that Chinese EFL learners committed errors in present tense and perfect aspects. Similarly, Liu (2012) also identified erroneous tense-aspect uses of Chinese EFL learners and found that simple present tense errors outnumbered other tense-aspect combination errors. The second most frequent errors were relevant to simple past tense. Likewise, the results of the study with French L1 speakers of English show that present simple and past simple tenses are the most error-prone tense-aspect structures among second language learners (Grange, 1999). That the simple present tense is the most erroneous tense – aspect pattern among all tense – aspect patterns can be seen in Hulvova (2015) with Czech L1 speakers and Götz (2015) with German L1 speakers of English.

Within the scope of the current study, previous studies investigated the use of tense-aspect structures by Turkish EFL learners. Şahin (1993) investigated Turkish learners' tense – aspect errors and found that using present simple for past simple was

the most common tense- aspect error by the students followed by present progressive for present simple, and present perfect for past simple. Zıngır (1999) analyzed narrative essays written by Turkish EFL learners and found that past simple for past perfect was the most frequent tense-aspect error committed by the students. Çakır (2011) examined the challenges of teaching tenses to university level Turkish students and revealed that Turkish L1 speakers of English usually tend to use present progressive for present simple, and past simple for present perfect. It was also found that Turkish EFL learners tend to confuse past progressive and past simple tenses. Summary of some of the latest research studies can be seen in Appendix – 5.

Considering the relevant literature, it can be seen that the phenomena of tense and aspect use by second language learners has been investigated on several counts. Based on the previous research, the present study is an attempt to investigate university-level pre-intermediate level Turkish EFL learners' employment of tenses and aspects in their opinion essays. Furthermore, upon detecting the uses of tense- aspect structures, it is also aimed to explain the sources of the errors which has not been researched as often as detecting and categorizing errors of tense and aspect. It is hoped that the current study would have substantial contribution to the existing literature on tense and aspect by exploring both the correct and erroneous uses and the possible reasons behind using tenses and aspects erroneously by means of its specific research procedure which will be elaborated in the next chapter.

# CHAPTER 3

## 3. METHODOLOGY

This chapter informs about the research design, the educational setting, the corpora used in the study, and data collection and analysis procedures.

### 3.1. Research Design

The acquisition and employment of tense and aspect by language learners has long engaged SLA researchers' attention. Similarly, the scope of the present study is designed to define and describe language learners' tense and aspect employment patterns through a learner dataset. This is an exploratory study based on a native dataset and a non-native (learner) dataset compiled from a portion of the writing of 422 opinion essays written by Turkish EFL learners and 120 opinion essays written by native speakers.

Dörnyei (2007) posed some essential aspects on methodology about the characteristics of qualitative research that can be applied to analyzing L2 tense and aspect in a qualitative manner. Dörnyei stated that the benefit of qualitative research is its being exploratory in nature; that is, it is concerned with ''new details or openings that may emerge during the process of investigations'' (Dörnyei, 2007, p. 37). To analyze learners' tense and aspect employment patterns, one should approach the data by considering the context where a verb is used as the employment of the verbs for language learner statements can be unpredictable in learner datasets. Another point that was also asserted by Dörnyei (2007) that especially sample size and the notion of generalizability are the two main issues to be taken into consideration as the weaknesses of qualitative research. Yet, Ellis and Barkhuizen (2005) mention that qualitative data can be compared as quantitative data is thanks to, for instance, percentage comparison. Therefore, besides its being exploratory nature, qualitative studies can comprise a basis for larger-scale quantitative studies. In the existing literature on tense and aspect in English, a good deal of studies has already taken a corpus-based approach by using a concordance software to examine how tense and aspect is used. As Dörnyei (2007) discussed, while these corpus-based studies are able to generalize about the usage patterns, there may arise a need to find the sources and explore the reasons behind the choices of the usages. In the light of these, for the current study, the data in the two data

sets are approached qualitatively to extract and analyze each tense-aspect carrying verb in order to explore Turkish EFL learners' tense-aspect usage patterns. Furthermore, the possible sources of errors are also explored in order to describe the habits of tense-aspect use by Turkish L1 speakers of English.

In addition, Error analysis (EA), "consists of a set of procedures for identifying, describing and explaining learners' errors" (Ellis & Barkhuizen, 2005, p. 51). Identification and description of learner errors is significant in the sense that these processes enhance both language teaching and learning. To analyze tense and aspect (TA) constructions in this study, an error analysis was conducted. First, a learner dataset of opinion essays written by pre-intermediate level Turkish EFL learners was compiled and then the essays in the dataset were hand-tagged for tense-aspect structures to define the correct and erroneous structures. Tagging learners' errors can be considered as a time-consuming process, yet all the possible errors of a pre-determined language category can be attained by this approach (Granger, 1999). The next step was to come up with explanations about the erroneous structures. The erroneous uses were explained in an interpretative and qualitative way considering a pre-determined classification through error analysis. The qualitative manner allows of comprehending the reasons as well as the challenges of forming the target structures. Following these, for comparison purposes, a native speaker dataset of opinion essays was investigated to define tense and aspect patterns and to compare these patterns with Turkish EFL learners' usage patterns.

### 3.2. Educational Setting

The learner dataset of the present study was collected at Bursa Uludağ University School of Foreign Languages (BUU SFL). The school offers intensive English program, i.e. the English preparatory class.

Before being allowed to progress to their respective undergraduate programs, the students admitted to BUU have to pass the BUU English Proficiency Test. The students are considered successful if they score at least 60 out of 100, and they can study at their own departments. When they fail to obtain 60 or above from the proficiency test, they have to attend the English preparation classes offered by SFL, where they receive full-time English language training for one academic year. In that academic year at UU SFL, English was taught through a skills-based instruction by teaching and testing four skills separately: listening and speaking, reading, writing; and additionally, grammar and

vocabulary are taught. The students had five different courses in their teaching scheme. The grammar instruction was explicit and carried out based on the grammar course book *Live English Grammar Volume.1 Elementary* and *Live English Grammar Volume.2 Pre-intermediate* (Mitchell & Parker, 2004) respectively throughout the academic year. The content of the books can be seen in Appendix 4-a. The writing instruction was carried out based upon *Great Writing 1 – Great Sentences for Great Paragraphs* (Folse, Muchmore-Vokoun, & Vestri, 2014). The content of the book can be seen in Appendix 4-b. After the content of the course book is finished, the writing instruction continued with the Supplementary Writing Pack which was compiled by the instructors in the institution by adding additional chapters to teach how to write an opinion essay with sample essays and exercises based on the essays.

At the end of the one-year intensive English instruction, an English proficiency examination is administered at B1 proficiency level to measure whether the students are proficient enough to study at their departments having 30% of the medium of instruction is English. For some departments, all the courses are taught in English. Therefore, the students of 2018-1019 academic year had five different course books, and assessment tools such as quizzes, and midterm exams. As part of their exit procedures, the students had to take the proficiency test at the end of the academic year in June conducted in one session and having two sections: 80 multiple choice questions to test grammar, reading, listening, and vocabulary (1 point each), and a writing part for grading 20 points, 100 points in total. For the writing part of the exit exam, students had to write an opinion essay of about 250 words on one of the given topics. After the exam, based on an analytic rubric including the five bands of *content/ideas, organization, grammar, vocabulary,* and *mechanics*; each opinion essay was rated by two experienced instructors who separately rate the essays and do not know the appointed grade. Testing and Assessment unit members (as the third grader) checked the grades given by the two instructors, and in case of a disagreement, the unit members graded the paper again for the final score. The data in the current study includes the corpora of students' timed-writing productions on the given topic for the timed proficiency exam. The opinion essays were written in response to one of these given topics:

*a. Sometimes, it is a better idea not to tell the truth.* Do you agree or disagree?

*b. Social media is a waste of time.* Do you agree or disagree?

*c. University students should have part-time jobs.* Do you agree or disagree?

One sample essay from each given topic is provided in the Appendices part (see Appendix-1c, 1d, and 1e).

### 3.3. Data Collection Procedure and the Learner Data Set

When conducting studies, researchers can employ either probability or nonprobability sampling according to Creswell (2011). In order to make a meticulous sampling form, researchers can employ probability sampling by selecting participants who are the representative of the population. In this sense, making generalizations about the population can be ensured (Creswell, 2011). However, in educational research, researchers may not always employ probability sampling, and instead, nonprobability sampling can be employed. As Creswell (2011) mention, "In nonprobability sampling, the researcher selects individuals because they are available, convenient, and represent some characteristic the investigator seeks to study" (Creswell, 2011, p. 145). Creswell (2011) also states that participants are selected as they are available to be researched in convenience sampling. For the present study, one of the most frequently used approach in nonprobability sampling, convenience sampling approach was employed by means of collecting written productions of the learners at the institution where the researcher works. It can be said that the participants of this study are representative of the population to yield valuable data to answer the research questions because the researcher restricted the sampling according to the criteria that will be detailed below.

At the end of each academic year, approximately 1000 students are qualified to take the exit examination as their average grade is 60 points or above. The data set used in the study was collected at the end of 2018-2019 academic year. That year, 938 students were qualified to take the exit examination as their average grades were above 60 points. In 938 students, 913 students took the exit examination; however, 522 students got 15 points or more from the writing part of the exam. For the current study, the essays of the students that scored 15 points or more from the writing part (top-graders) and were successful to pass the exam were compiled into the student data set. A correlational analysis was conducted to determine the relationship between the students who scored 15 points or above from the writing part of the proficiency exam and their overall proficiency exam scores. The CORREL function of MS Excel was

used to find the correlation coefficient between the two variables. There was a positive correlation between the two variables, $r = .65$, $p = < .001$; hence, it was found that the students with high overall proficiency scores also had high writing scores. Sample learner essays with a higher and lower grade are provided in the Appendices part (see Appendix 1a and 1b). Thus, before the last step, the 522 essay writers were investigated to see whether these students were successful to pass the exam. In order to restrict the first language of the learners, the researcher checked the final learner data set to exclude the students from different L1 backgrounds as the study is concerned with Turkish EFL learners. It was found that only 422 of the Turkish students who scored 15 points or above from the writing part of the exam were successful to pass the exam and study at their academic departments of the university the following year. Therefore, the final learner data set, including 422 opinion essays, had approximately 125,000 words (see Table 3.1). In this research stage, the ethical approval process was followed (See Appendix-6).

### 3.4. The Native Data Set

For the purpose of comparison between the learner data set and the native data set, The Corpus of Multilingual Opinion Essays by College Students (MOECS) was utilized in the present study. The corpus was compiled by Megumi Okugiri (University of the Sacred Heart), Ikuko Ijuin (Tokyo University of Foreign Studies), and Kazuko Komori (Meiji University). Since all the essays of the MOECS were collected on a single topic in the same manner, the learner and the native corpus can be regarded as comparable with each other. The multilingual opinion essays were written by students with L1 English, Japanese, Taiwanese, Korean; and L2 English by Japanese speakers, Japanese by English, Taiwanese, and Korean speakers. For the current study, only the opinion essays written by L1 English students were retrieved and analyzed so that the essay type was the compatible with the English learner data set. The native data set contained 120 essays having 58,367 words involving essays written by young adult NSs of English. Detailed information about both learner and native corpora are given below (see Table 3.1.). A sample essay from the native corpus can be seen in Appendix – 3.

**Table 3.1.** *The data sets used in the study*

| | **The Learner Data Set** | **The Native Data Set** |
|---|---|---|
| **Contributors** | Pre-Intermediate level Turkish EFL learners studying at university | Undergraduate and graduate L1 English university students |
| **Essay Genre** | Opinion essay | Opinion essay |
| **Total Corpus Size** | Approx. 125,000 word tokens | 58,367 word tokens |
| **Average Essay Length** | 250 words | 480 words |
| **Essay Topic** | Daily Life | Technology and daily life |

When a research is based on compiled texts to investigate the frequency of properties across texts, it is important to ensure the comparability of the counts. Specifically, if the texts in data sets / corpora are not all the same length, then frequency counts cannot be directly comparable. Therefore, "normalization" can be implemented to compared texts of different length (Biber et. al, 2012). For normalization, the raw frequency count should be divided by the total number of words in the text, and then multiplied by the basis chosen for norming, which is generally 1,000000 words for corpus-based studies. Therefore, Following Biber et. al (2012), the word token (raw frequency) of the current study was normalized per 1,000000 words in order to compare the learner and the native data sets as the compiled data sets are of unequal in size.

### 3.5. Data Analysis

For the current study, the use of English verb tense and aspect constructions in opinion essays of Turkish EFL learners and native speakers on the basis of two verb tenses (present and past) which are inflected, and four aspects (simple, progressive, perfect, perfect progressive) were investigated following Biber et al. (1999) as in Table 3.2. below. The study did not involve future tense as predictive aspect for the future time cannot be stated in inflections of verbs and is connected to predictions in the future (Biber et al., 1999).

**Table 3.2.** *Tenses and aspects in English (Biber et. al, 1999)*

| Tenses | Aspects |
|---|---|
| **Present** | Simple (unmarked) |
| | Perfect |
| | Progressive |
| | Perfect Progressive |
| **Past** | Simple |
| | Perfect |
| | Progressive |
| | Perfect Progressive |

As the first step of the analysis, a taxonomy on the use of tense-carrying verbs was created and a table suitable for that taxonomy was designed (see Figure 3.1). For each essay, all occurrences of verb tense-aspect forms were analyzed, and rather than only counting the raw numbers, correct and incorrect uses with their reasons were investigated, categorized, and noted in the table. By this means, each occurrence of correct and incorrect tense or aspect uses as well as the other errors on tense-carrying verbs would be easy to see. Additionally, the information regarding the essay number, word count, and the score are also included, as can be seen in Figure 3.1. All the analyzing process was conducted manually by hand-tagging. Although manual annotation of the learners' errors can be regarded as a time-consuming approach, all the possible errors can be captured by this way. Granger (1999) discusses that the whole errors of a specific language category can be undergone through hand-tagging the data. She also adds that learners can benefit from this tiresome process because they will have the chance to see all their errors and raise awareness regarding the errors they have committed (Granger, 1999). A sample hand-annotated learner essay can be seen in Appendix-2.

| Tense | PRESENT | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | PAST | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Aspect | Simple Present | | | Present Progressive | | | Present Perfect | | | Present Perfect Progressive | | | Present Modals | | | Simple Past | | | Past Progressive | | | Past Perfect | | | Past Perfect Progressive | | | Past Modals | | |
| Use | C | Incorrect | | C | Incorrect | | C | Incorrect | | C | Incorrect | | C | Incorrect | | C | Incorrect | | C | Incorrect | | C | Incorrect | | C | Incorrect | | C | Incorrect | |
| | | TEN | O | | T | O | | T | O | | T | O | | T | O | | T | O | | T | O | | ASP | O | | T | O | | T | O |
| N.162 309w 17pts | 28 | | 1om | 2 | | | | | | | | | 11 | | 5vf | 2 | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| N.163 261w 18pts | 18 | 1pastsimp | 2ag 1vf | | | | | | | | | | 12 | | | 4 | | | | | | | 1pastsmple | | | | | | | |
| N.164 456 16pts | 35 | 6pastsimple | 4ag 1vf 1om 3mv | 1 | | 1vf | | | | | | | 6 | | | 1 | 1prsnts mple | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| N.165 239w 15pts | 26 | | 3wv | | | | | | | | | | 7 | | 1vo 2wv 1vf | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| N.166 268w 18pts | 22 | | 5ag 2mv | | | | | | | | | | 7 | | 1mv | 4 | 3prsnts mp | | | 1prsntprogrs | | | | | | | | | | |

*Note: C: correct use, Incorrect: incorrect use, T / TEN: incorrect tense, ASP: incorrect aspect O: other errors (not tense or aspect errors), om: omission, ag: S-V agreement, vf: verb form, mv: missing verb, wv: wrong verb.*

**Figure 3.1.** *Taxonomy of verb tense-aspect use, and example analyses of five essays*

For the second step of the analysis, all the correct and incorrect occurrences per page (one page of analysis is shown in Figure 3.1) were combined in a new table for the total number of uses so as to make the counting in a less demanding way. As the last step, and to see the final distribution of tense-aspect use, another table was created (see Figure 3.2 below) to note down the total counts for each category. The research questions are reexpressed below as a reminder:

1) Which tense-aspect forms are used in the opinion essays of pre-intermediate level Turkish EFL learners?

    a) Which tense-aspect forms prevail among pre-intermediate level Turkish EFL learners?

    b) Which tense-aspect forms are used erroneously by pre-intermediate level Turkish EFL learners?

    c) What are the possible sources of error-prone tense-aspect forms used by pre-intermediate level Turkish EFL learners?

2) Which tense-aspect forms are used in the opinion essays of university-level native English speakers?

    a) Is there a difference in the tense-aspect usage patterns of native English speakers and pre-intermediate level Turkish EFL learners?

Although the hand annotation process began with investigating all tense-carrying verbs and grammatical errors related to them; for example, “missing verb” or “omission”, upon revisiting and ensuring on the research questions to answer for the current study, the “other errors” category was neglected, and errors related to tense and aspect structures were focalized.

| Tense | PRESENT | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Aspect | Simple Present | | | | Present Progressive | | | | Present Perfect | | | | Present Perfect Progressive | | | | Present Modals | | | |
| Use | Correct | Incorrect | | | Cor | Incorrect | | | Cor | Incorrect | | | Cor | Incorrect | | | Cor | Incorrect | | |
| | | Tns. | Asp | Oth. | | Tns | Asp | Oth. | | T | Asp | Oth | | T | Asp | Oth. | | Tns | Asp | Oth |
| Number of times | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

**Figure 3.2.** *Table for the total counts for the distribution of present tense and aspect use*

All the opinion essays included in the learner data set of opinion essays were analyzed and hand-annotated in terms of correct and erroneous tense and aspect use as the first step. Therefore, research questions 1, 1a, 1b, and 2 were answered by checking the tables created upon the hand-annotation. Following this, the native data set of opinion essays was also examined in terms of the employment of tense and aspect structures for the purpose to see whether the employed tense and aspect structures were in line with the learner data set.

In order to answer the research question 1c, i.e., *What are the possible sources of error-prone tense-aspect forms used by pre-intermediate level Turkish EFL learners*?, the taxonomy of sources of errors by Richard (1974) was employed. The taxonomy can be revisited as:

Sources of errors according to Richard (1974):

1) Interlingual errors (transfer from L1)

2) Intralingual errors (interlanguage errors):

a) Overgeneralization

b) Ignorance of rule restriction

c) Incomplete application of rules

d) False concept hypothesis

Therefore, each sentence containing a tense-aspect error was examined to find out the possible source of error according to the taxonomy above.

### 3.6. Interrater Reliability

The procedure of conducting interrater reliability includes evaluations and observations made by two or more raters on a predetermined topic. The raters note their evaluations and later compare the results with the other rater in order to detect similar or different results. Conducting interrater reliability ensures eliminating any possible bias which one rater may have during grading. However, other rater(s) should be trained by the researcher for the grading or evaluation process (i.e. taxonomies or evaluation criteria) before conducting any interrater reliability procedure in order to familiarize the other rater with the process of evaluation; which requires extra time and effort.

For the present study, when the essays were being analyzed manually to determine tense and aspect errors, a second rater who is a native speaker checked 25% of the essays to let the researcher conduct an interrater reliability check. The second rater is from the US and can speak English, Japanese, Spanish, French and Turkish. She has taught English for almost a decade in the US, France and Turkey. Most of her experience has been with young adults and adults ranging from ages 17 to 50. She worked in an international school for one year and taught 1st, 2nd and 3rd graders. She also holds a CELTA certification. She has been teaching at the researcher's institution for almost three years. In order to find agreement between two raters, the researcher counted the number of ratings in agreement and the total number of ratings, then divided the total number by the number in agreement. Following that, the result was converted to a percentage (Vogt, 2005; Glen, 2016). After the analysis, interrater reliability rate of over 85% was achieved. The discrepancies were discussed in the follow-up meetings between the researcher and the native speaker rater.

On the other hand, another interrater reliability check was conducted after the researcher examined all the sentences with erroneous tense-aspect constructions and decided upon the categorization of each error. In this instance, two expert raters who are Turkish and work at the same institution with the researcher took part in the process. Both external raters hold master's degrees in English language teaching (ELT), and one of them is pursuing her Ph.D. degree in the same domain. They have 10 and 15 years of teaching experience. First, the raters became familiar with the error categorization regarding sources of errors during a meeting with the researcher. Then, they were provided with the erroneous structures to check for the categorization. Another meeting was held to compare the error taxonomies. According to percentage agreement (Vogt,

2005), 89% interrater reliability rate was reached. The instances of disagreement were discussed, and the discrepancies were analyzed one more time to reach full agreement.

Ellis (1999) maintains that during evaluation of errors, error judgements made by native speakers and nonnative speakers differ to a great extent. In a general sense, nonnative speakers are considered harsher in their judgements especially in morphological and functional errors while they tend to be less harsh when lexical and global errors are considered (e.g., Davies, 1983; James, 1977 cited in Ellis, 1999). It was also pointed out in Ellis (1999) that the criteria employed for judgement differs for native and nonnative speakers. Native speaker judges are alleged to be interested in the effect of comprehension while nonnative speaker judges are more affected by their opinions of the fundamental rules in the target language. Davies (1983, cited in Ellis, 1999) suggests that nonnative teachers will be affected by the knowledge coming from the course of study and the textbook. Within this context, when detecting the tense-aspect errors, which can be considered as a more evident process, the researcher worked with a native speaker and 85% agreement was achieved. In order to determine the sources of errors, which can be considered a vaguer process when the relevant literature is also taken into account, the researcher who is also a nonnative speaker worked with two nonnative speakers. The process of determining the sources of errors according to a predetermined taxonomy was effortful for the researcher herself as the bands of the taxonomy were sometimes barely distinguishable when learner sentences were being analyzed in detail. In the same vein, the two nonnative speaker judges also had the same concerns as the researcher, making the agreement process a bit longer than that of the native speaker.

In conclusion, this dissertation aimed to investigate the tense-aspect patterns used by nonnative English speakers. Further, it attempted to uncover the possible sources of errors related to them. Another purpose of this study was to assess the extent to which native speaker and nonnative speaker opinion essays are in line with each other in adopting similar tense-aspect structures. The results of the analyses are presented in the next chapter.

# CHAPTER 4

## 4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The purpose of this research was to explore tense-aspect use of the pre-intermediate level Turkish EFL learners. Upon investigating the correct and incorrect uses of each tense and aspect, it was aimed at explaining the possible sources of errors. More specifically, the research questions that will be answered in this chapter are as follows:

1) Which tense-aspect forms are used in the opinion essays of pre-intermediate level Turkish EFL learners?

    a) Which tense-aspect forms prevail among pre-intermediate level Turkish EFL learners?

    b) Which tense-aspect forms are used erroneously by pre-intermediate level Turkish EFL learners?

    c) What are the possible sources of error-prone tense-aspect forms used by pre-intermediate level Turkish EFL learners?

2) Which tense-aspect forms are used in the opinion essays of university-level native English speakers?

    a) Is there a difference in the tense-aspect usage patterns of native English speakers and pre-intermediate level Turkish EFL learners?

### 4.1. Tense-Aspect Forms Employed by the Turkish EFL Learners

In order to answer the first research question, all the learner opinion essays were analyzed by hand and all verbs carrying tense or aspect were examined and noted in a table. The results showed that pre-intermediate level Turkish EFL learners employed present-tense verbs higher in number than past-tense verbs in their opinion essays. The results obtained from the analysis of the essays written by Turkish EFL learners showed that apart from perfect progressive aspect of past tense, all the other tense-aspect forms were employed by the learners. Upon analyzing a total of 12119 verbs carrying tense-aspect features, it was revealed that simple aspect of present tense was used relatively higher (11108 times) in number than the other tense-aspect structures in learner opinion essays as shown in Figure 4.1 below.

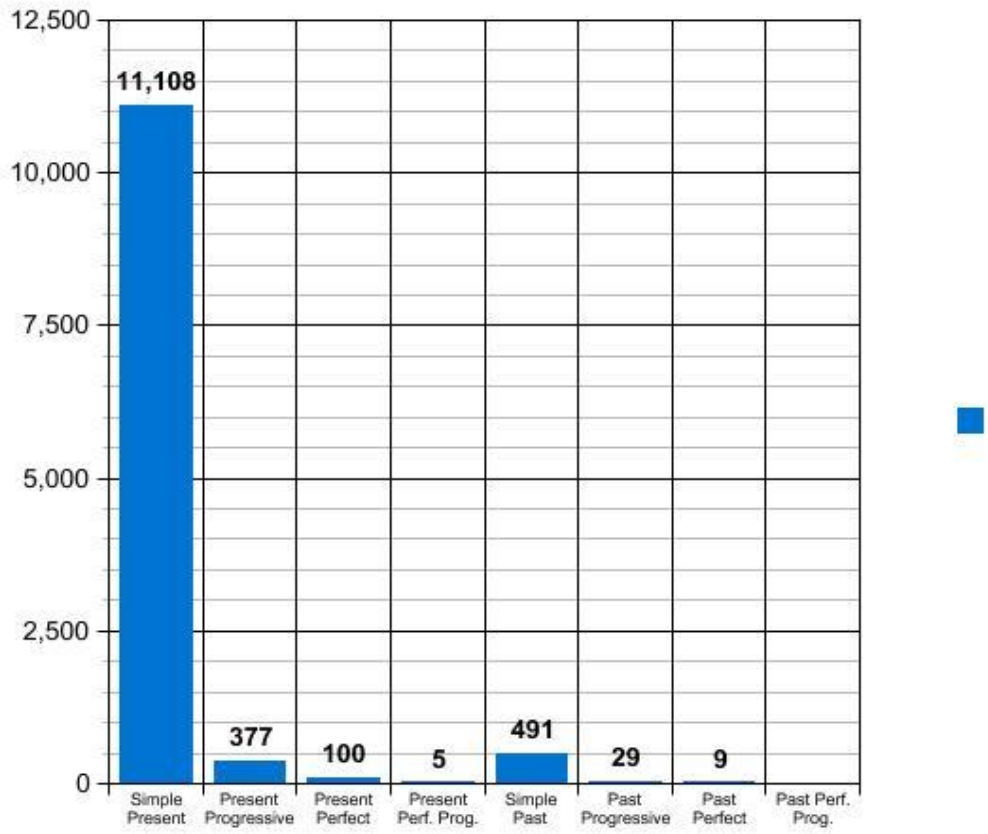



**Figure 4.1.** *The distribution of the employed tense-aspect structures*

As can be seen in the figure above (Figure 4.1), simple past was the second most used structure (491 times) among university student writers when writing their opinion essays. Progressive aspect of present tense followed simple past by being used 377 times.

The choice of verb's tense is related to the text category as L2 writers in opinion essays build their arguments by describing specific events and by providing generalizations and generalizable statements or describing events that are considered general truths to the reader (Beason and Lester, 2010; Hunston, 2006). These require the use of present tense, whereas in writing an article or a story the occurrence of past tense is more frequent since it requires reporting events that happened in the past (Paltridge, 1996). Hinkel (2004) also state that in formal academic writing, tense usage is quite strictly conventionalized, and the acceptability of different tenses in context often depends on the type of discourse in which they are used. In the current study, the learners employed simple present the most as they mention generalizable statements as opinions. For example, the following learner essay includes verbs in simple present

tense both for the introduction and the body paragraph. The sentences are mostly generalizable opinions of the learners as can be seen below:

> University students in our country, **have** part time jobs. The students **prefer** working because part time jobs **are** good idea for them. The students should have part time jobs for two reasons their economical *(economic)* situation and communication.

> Firstly, most students **need** a job to earn money. To bein *(begin)* with, they **have to** buy books, pay their phone bill. They **have to** earn money for their necessary *(necessities)*. Moreover, the students **are** young people. The young, **want** to travel somewhere. They **earn** money easily thanks to their part-time job eventually they **visit** somewhere which they **wonder** to see. The students should have a good part time *(job)* when they **have** a free time. (St-5)

> Most of people **want** to have a job which **is** good for them. But sometimes a person **have to** *(agreement error)* do some part time jobs that **is** not their want to do. However, this type of job can be good for some people, especially university students. I strongly **believe** that part time jobs are good for university students because of some factors.
> First of all, earning money **is** one of the good side of part-time jobs for university students. They always **need** money to do something such a buying food, clothes and educational stuff or paying bills. So, if they **have** a part-time job, they can do these things easily.
> (St-73)

As Beason and Lester (2010) mentioned, other students also use simple present tense to describe events that are considered general truths to the reader. Expressions regarding the general truth can be seen in the introduction part most of the time to set their claims as background information. Some examples can be seen below:

> Social media **has** a big rle *(role)* in our life. Many people **use** social media nowadays suc*(h)* as instagram, whatsapp, facebook, snapchat, etc. These social media programmes **are** common in the world and people **spend** a lot of time these programmes. I think, social media **is** a waste of time of some reasons.
> (St-12)

> Today's peple *(people)* **use** the social media every moment in their life. There **are** a lot of necessary or not necessary things in our mobile phone, however we **use** them. But this using **is** entirely wrong. Social media **means** that throwing a lot of time in garbage. Instead

> of passing time in the social media, we **make** different things like studying lessons and passing time with family.
> (St-27)

> Nowadays, most of the people **have** smart-phone so you can download some apps and you can join the social media. Some researches **show** that 93% of people **use** everyday social media *(every day)*. It **is** such high rate that **looks** like bad thing. In my opinion, social media **is** not a waste of time for some reasons.
> (St-116)

> Nowadays, most of young people who **graduate** the high school **prefer** to study university. University life **charms** to young people. Despite this charming, university life **contain** *(contains)* some problem. Such as echonomical *(economic)* problem. It **seems** that university students should have part-time job for *(to)* earn money and being social person. (St-70)

Although simple past tense was utilized as the second most used tense-aspect pattern, the opinion essays of the learners contained relatively fewer past tense verbs, nearly one to 22 times lower than present tense verbs. Past tense was employed by the students to report events happened in the past (Paltridge, 1996) to provide examples in order to support their ideas in simple present tense. In formal academic writing, the suitability of tense use in context mainly is subject to the discourse type. Upon analyzing large written English corpora, Hunston (2002) reported that past tense use is mostly relevant to narratives, while formal academic writing employs present tense for generalizations, observations, and descriptions. The participants of the current study also used past tenses for narration as can be seen below:

> In the past, my cousin **went** different city for school. His **had needed** money, so he **workd** *(worked)* in a restaurant. He **was** a waiter when he **worked** in a restaurant, he **went** to school every day. I think university students should have part-time jobs.
> (St-33)

> In the past, people **didn't use to** have neitheir *(neither)* internet nor social media, so it **was** very difficult to provide information and send message. But nowadays with the internet throygh *(through)* social media we can do all this *(these)* activities easily. In that way I strongly believe that social media isn't a waste of time for two major reasons: The best way to provide easily information *(easily)* and the best way to send message. (St-52)

When I **was** at university, I **worked** *(at)* part-time jobs. I **found** many people who can help me when I read *(study)* I have never forgotten my colleagues. In my point of view, every university student should have part-time jobs.

With the increasing of developments in technology, our habits and behaviors **started** to change rapidly. In the past, people **used to** find different staff to have fun. They **used to** manage their time in proper. People **became** so irresponsible and lazy that never really work hard when the social media **enter** *(entered)* our life. I strongly believe that social media is a waste of time despite its benefits.
(St-83)

When I **was** a university student, I **came** to Bursa. Although Bursa has many advantages for me, I **lived** there so hardly. Both being student and living in a big city **was** very difficult. My family **sent** to me more money day by day. So, one day I **said** to myself that I should work at a part time job. I **was** so determined that I **worked** every year. In my opinion, university student should have part time jobs because of some reasons.
(St-127)

In summary, the Turkish EFL learners in this study employed all tense-aspect constructions except the past perfect progressive. Furthermore, they used simple aspect of the present tense the most in their opinion essays to present their ideas that can be regarded as general truths or can be generalized. Evidence for employing the simple aspect of present tense primarily can also be found in the relevant literature as these results corroborate the findings of a great deal of the previous work in tense – aspect studies. The findings are in line with Panagiotopoulos (2015) assert that present tenses with indefinite aspect are dominant over four learner corpora in the study. These results reflect those of Bozdağ (2019) who also revealed that the whole participants having three different proficiency levels use present simple dominantly. When the participants with different proficiency levels are cross-compared, present simple use by C1-C2 level learners stands out, and it is followed by A1-A2 level learners and B1-B2 level learners and present simple use. Therefore, according to Bozdağ (2019), the dominant use of present simple may not predict proficiency level. This finding is consistent with that of Klopfenstein (2017) who found that the participants in the sample used simple tenses 97% of the times. Furthermore, Fuchs and Werner (2022) state that simple forms are used earlier and more often than complex forms at any stage in the acquisition process.

In this sense, it seems possible that these results are due to the proficiency level of the participants. Higher level participants can add complexity to their writing easily by not depending on only simple present tense. Support for employing present simple tense was also reported by Hinkel (2004) who posits that progressive and perfect aspects seem rather uncommon in academic writing in English. She adds that prior research on written academic register revealed that progressive aspects can be found mostly in spoken discourse while it is very rare in academic writing (Hunston, 2002). Therefore, L2 writers can produce more powerful academic texts by using simple present tense.

The second most used tense aspect structure, simple aspect of the past tense, was employed by the students to give a description of what happened in a past time. According to certain studies, the employment of aspects offers an extra layer of complexity in writing for non-native speakers (Sharwood Smith & Rutherford, 1988; Hinkel, 1992). When Figure 4.1 above is considered, the learners employed simple aspects of both present and past tenses more often than perfect and progressive aspects; therefore, it can be possible to state that the written products of the Turkish EFL participants in this study have a low level of complexity. In accordance with the present results, previous studies have also demonstrated that simple tenses and forms are employed more frequently in learner written production (i.e. Klopfenstein, 2017; Fuchs & Werner, 2022).

## 4.2. The Most Error-prone Tense-aspect Forms Employed by the Turkish EFL Learners

Although the employment of simple aspect of the present tense outnumbered the other tense-aspect forms, upon the analysis of all the 422 student essays for tense and aspect errors, it was revealed that learners sometimes used simple present tense abundantly and made few tense and aspect errors related to it. On the other hand, the second most used verb pattern, simple aspect of past tense, was found to be the most erroneous structure in student essays. The total counts for the distribution of errors related to present and past tenses and aspect use for student essays can be seen in Table 4.1 below.

**Table 4.1.** *The distribution of erroneous structures related to tenses and aspects*

| Tense | Aspect | Number of Tense Errors | Number of Aspect Errors |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Present** | Present Simple | 54 | 14 |
| | Present Progressive | - | 33 |
| | Present Perfect | 5 | 4 |
| | Present Perfect Progressive | 1 | 1 |
| **Total** | | **60** | **52** |
| **Past** | Past Simple | 103 | - |
| | Past Progressive | 5 | - |
| | Past Perfect | 1 | 1 |
| | Past Perfect Progressive | - | - |
| **Total** | | **109** | **1** |

The table shows that pre-intermediate level Turkish EFL learners seem to have mastered the most used tense aspect form, i.e., simple present tense as the erroneous structures related to this tense can be regarded as fewer when the number of total uses is considered (see Figure 4.2).

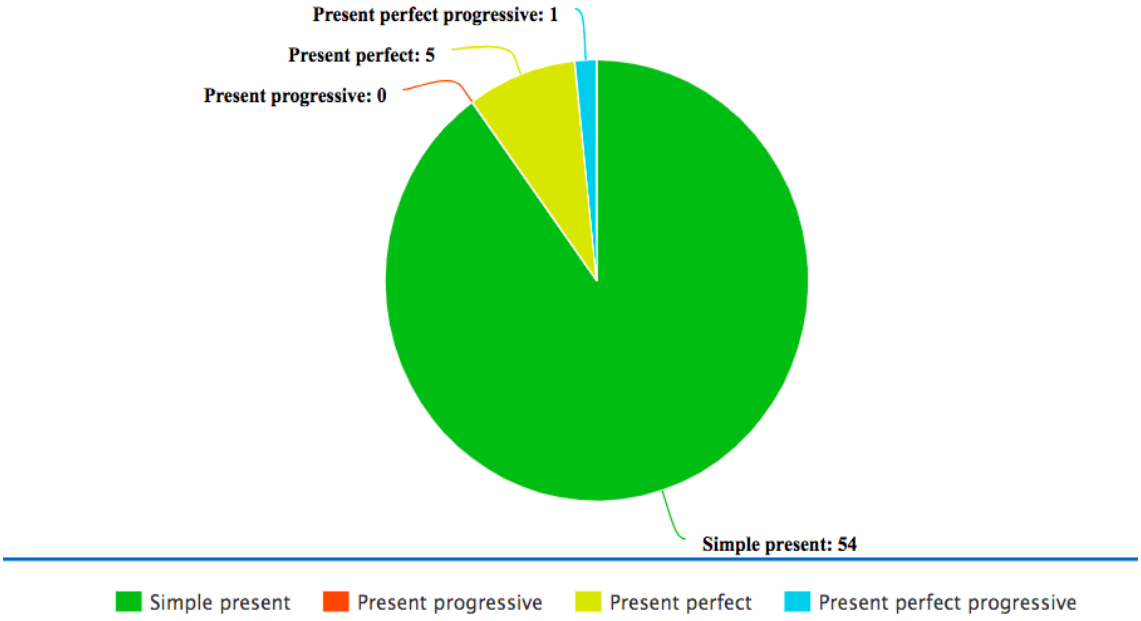



**Figure 4.2.** *Error distribution of present tenses*

Comparison of the findings with those of other studies in the literature confirms these results. Grange (1999) found that the two most error-prone tense – aspect structures are present simple and past simple. This finding was also reported by Patanasorn (2013) who revealed that writers of low proficiency make less accurate use of simple past, and almost never use present perfect. However, this finding that the most error-prone tense – aspect pattern is past simple is contradicting to some previous studies. For example, according to Zhang (2022), the learners of second language commit errors most frequently in present time and perfect aspects. Liu (2012) also reported that erroneous use of simple present tense far outnumbers other tenses and aspects. According to the results obtained by him, simple past tense errors are the second most frequent errors found in second language written productions.

Upon analyzing the errors related to simple present, it was found in this study that all the simple present tense errors (54 errors) were related to simple past tense. In other words, the students used simple present tense carrying verbs erroneously instead of simple past tense carrying verbs 54 times in their essays as shown in Figure 4.3.

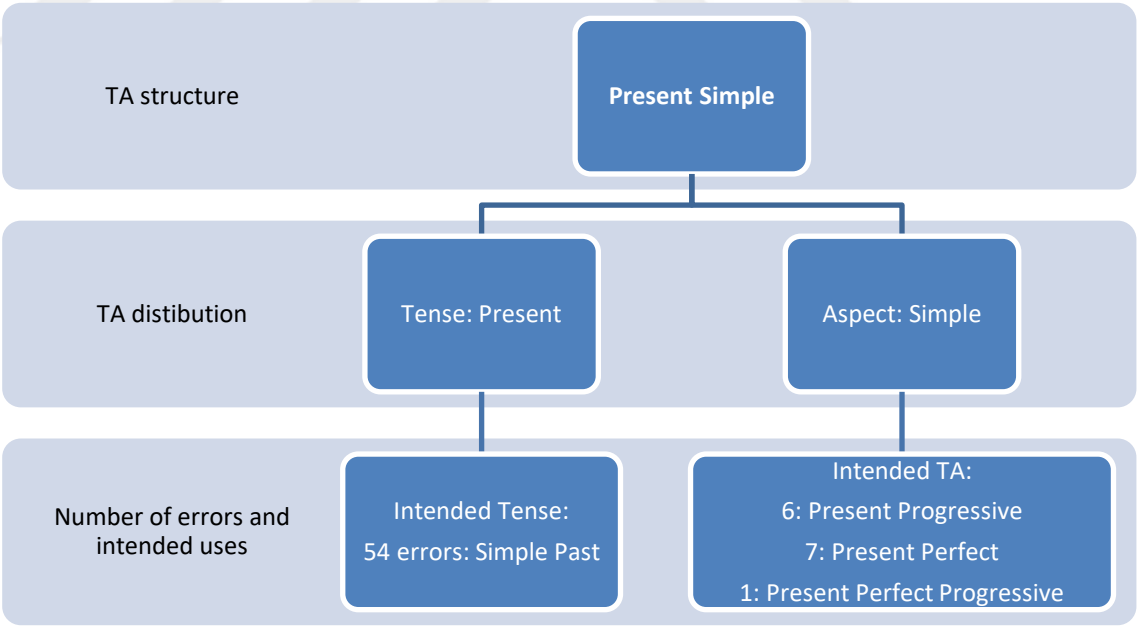



**Figure. 4.3.** *Error analysis of present simple*

For example, the following paragraphs were written in simple past tense as the students wanted to mention the events in the past; yet some verbs are erroneously used in simple present tense:

> My cousin **worked** part-time job when she **was** university student. My cousins *(cousin's)* family **was** middle income and they **lived** in a small village. My cousin **come (CAME)** for university another a city. She **started** a part-time job and she **liked** her job. She **met** different people and she **save (SAVED)** a lot of money. I believe that, university students should have part-time jobs. (…)
> (St-66)

> When I **was** a child, a lot of children **go out (WENT OUT)** and **play (PLAYED)** there. We always **play (PLAYED)** at the street, but now everybody uses social media. (…)
> (St-326)

> With the increasing of developments in technology, our habits and behaviors **started** to change rapidly. In the past, people **used to** find different staff to have fun. They **used to** manage their time in proper. People **became** so irresponsible and lazy that never really work hard when the social media **enter (ENTERED)** our life. I strongly believe that social media is a waste of time despite its benefits. (…)
> (St-83)

Regarding the aspect errors of simple present tense, 6 errors could be corrected if the student used present progressive while 8 errors were related to present perfect tense and 1 error was related to present perfect progressive tense. Error distribution of present aspects can be seen in Figure 4.4.

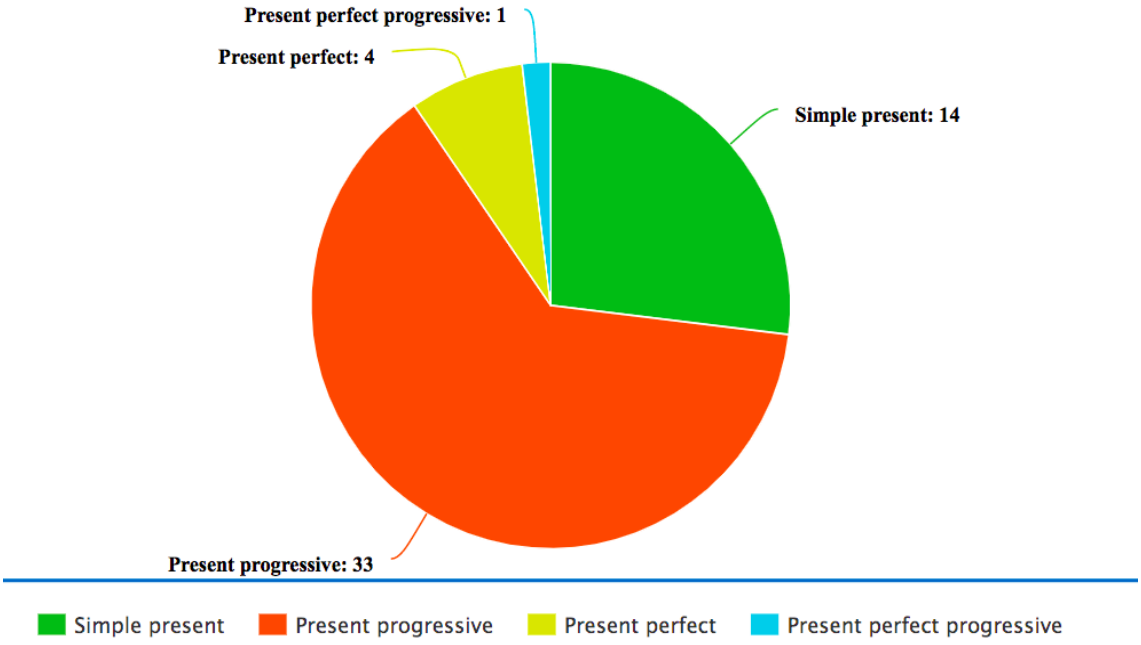



**Figure 4.4.** *Error distribution of present aspects*

Some examples of aspect errors of present tense are as follows:

> Recently, social media **attract (HAS ATTRACTED)** many humans like smoking. (…)
> (St-377)
>
> Our world **becomes (IS BECOMING)** a digital world nowadays. (…)
> (St-365)
>
> I **use (HAVE BEEN USING)** social media since 2009. (…)
> (St-301)

These results match those observed in earlier studies that investigated both Turkish EFL learners' and learners with different L1's use of tenses and aspects. For example, Şahin (1993) investigated Turkish EFL learners' tense and aspect use and he found that the most common error-prone tense-aspect pair is present simple employment instead of past simple. The aspect confusion is also supported by Çakır (2011) who revealed that Turkish EFL students usually confuse present progressive with present simple. Czech L1 learners of English had the same errors regarding the aspect as Hulvova (2015) reported that the most error- prone pair in the sample is

present progressive employment instead of present simple. This result is in agreement with that obtained by Götz (2015).

The students employed present progressive tense carrying verbs 377 times in their essays, 33 of which had aspect errors. Among the erroneous structures, 28 verbs could be corrected if simple present tense was employed while 4 verbs were related to present perfect tense and one verb was related to present perfect progressive. The number of errors related to present progressive can be seen in Figure 4.5.

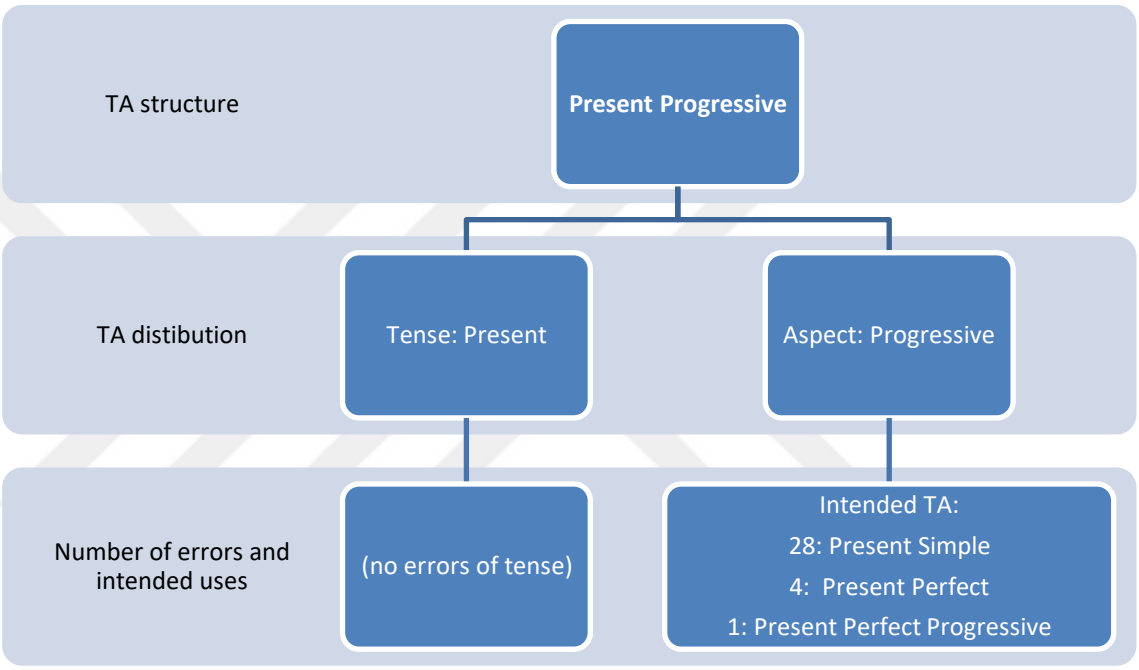



**Figure. 4.5.** *Error analysis of present progressive*

Some examples of erroneous uses of present progressive can be seen below:

> If they work part-time job, they **are developing (DEVELOP / CAN DEVELOP)** their own career easily. (…)
> (St-384)

> You can talk to your relatives which **are working (WORK)** abroad with social media account. (…)
> (St-392)

Present perfect and present perfect progressive tenses were employed in relatively low numbers when all the present tense verbs are considered. They were used 100 times and 5 times respectively. Consistent with the literature, this research found that participants were reported avoiding to use perfect tenses in their essays. Hinkel (2004) also observed avoidance in non-native speaker uses of complex verb tenses and aspects such as the perfect aspect, the progressive aspect, or passive voice. He also notes that avoiding these complex structures cause non-native speakers' writing to be unnatural and less academic. Evidence for the avoidance of the perfect aspect on second language writing can also be seen in Min (2013) comparing EFL learners from three different proficiency levels and Dürich (2005) investigating tense - aspect use by German learners of English.

When present perfect tense is considered, contrary to general view that the learners could have difficulty in using the tenses and aspects that do not exist in their native language, the participants of the current study committed only a few errors regarding these perfect tenses. Yet, the 5 tense errors of present perfect could be corrected if the learners used simple past tense, and 3 aspect errors could be corrected if they used present simple instead of present perfect tense as demonstrated in Figure 4.6. Present perfect tense use instead of past simple also accords with earlier studies by Şahin (1993), Çakır (2011), and Götz (2015).

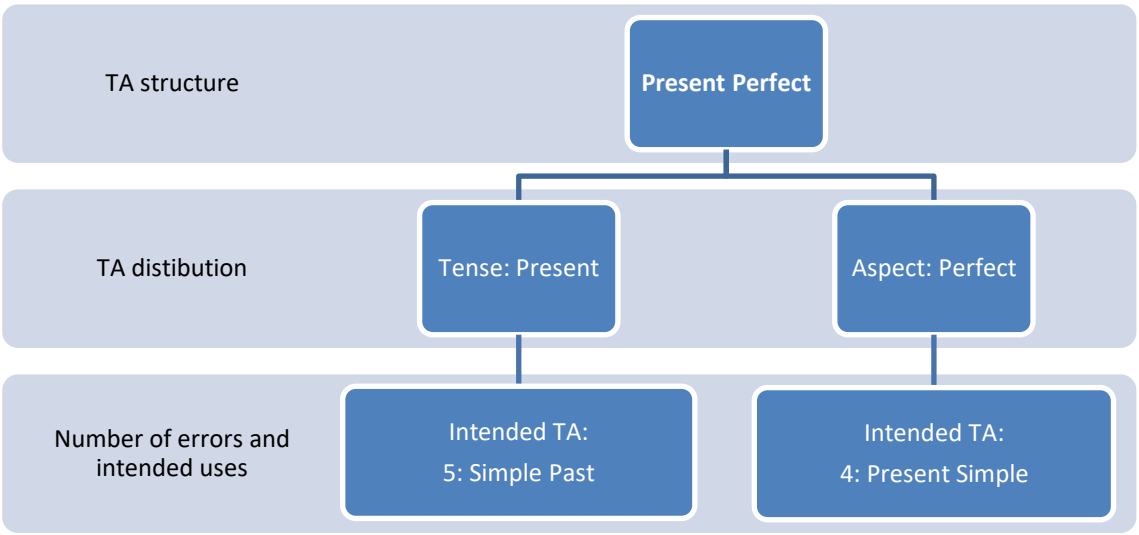



**Figure 4.6.** *Error analysis of present perfect*

Some erroneous use of present perfect can be seen below although they include voice errors as well:

> In the past, (…) the phones **have used (WERE USED)** for communication with people. (…) (St-350)

> In recent years, some countries **have banned** social media applications. For example, Sweden **have tried (TRIED)** this, but people **have denied (DENIED)** quickly because they **have addicted (ARE ADDICTED)** to social media. (…)
> (St-413)

When past tenses are considered, simple past tense is the second mostly used tense-aspect structure in Turkish EFL learners' opinion essays. However, progressive, perfect, and perfect progressive aspects of past tense were not employed as frequently as present aspects.

In 110 errors of past tense in total, 103 are simple past tense errors. The error distribution of past tenses can be seen in Figure 4.7.

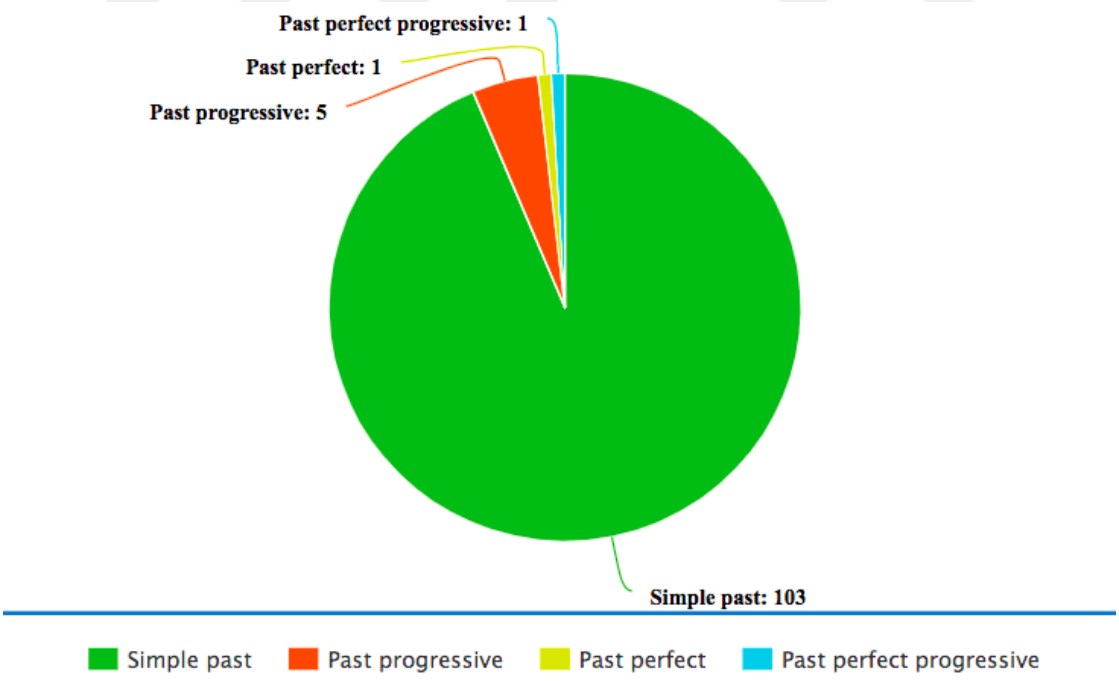



**Figure 4.7.** *Error distribution of past tenses*

When writing their essays, the students used simple past tense instead of simple present tense 99 times. This result supports evidence from previous studies such as Hulvova (2015) who found that the participants confused and used past simple instead of present simple. As for the other errors, present perfect tense could be used instead of simple past tense 4 times as shown in Figure 4.8.

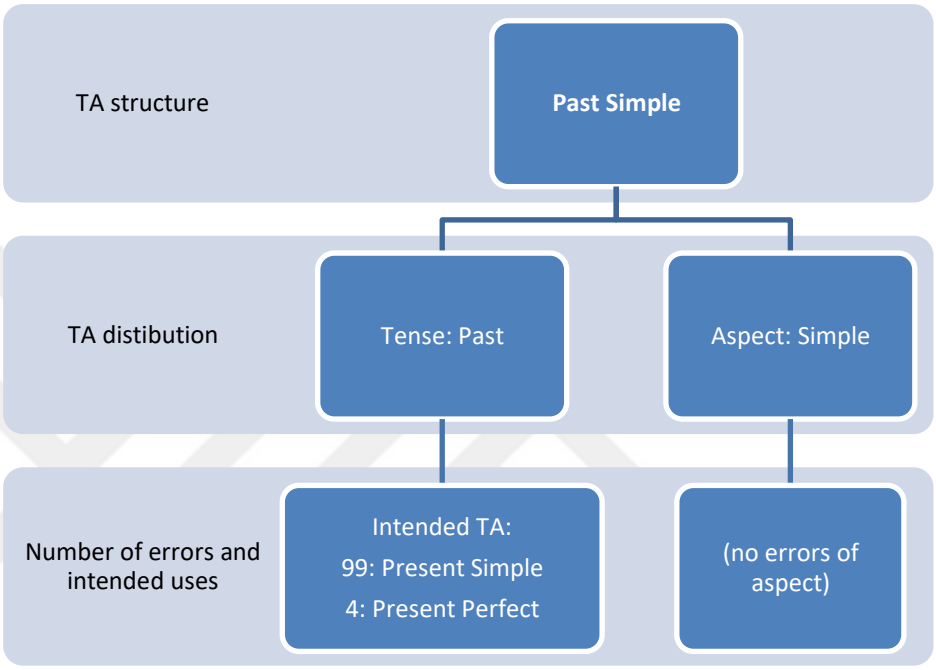



**Figure. 4.8.** *Error analysis of past simple*

For example, in the following text, the students wanted to give some generalizable examples to support their ideas, yet some of the verbs are erroneously in simple past tense:

> When we **graduated (GRADUATE)** from university, we have to have experience because many bosses does *(do)* not give a job opportunity if we do not have experience about this job. (…) Secondly, I think we should have a part-time job before we **graduated (GRADUATE)** from university. (…)
> (St-385)

> We don't make important things when we **spent (SPEND)** time in social media. (…)
> (St-400)

2019 university research show that rate of students who go to university **increased (HAVE INCREASED)** 70% since 2012. (…)
(St-402)

The last tense-aspect structure with erroneous use is progressive aspect of past tense. When using past progressive tense, no errors related to aspect were committed (See Table 4.1 and Figure 4.9.).

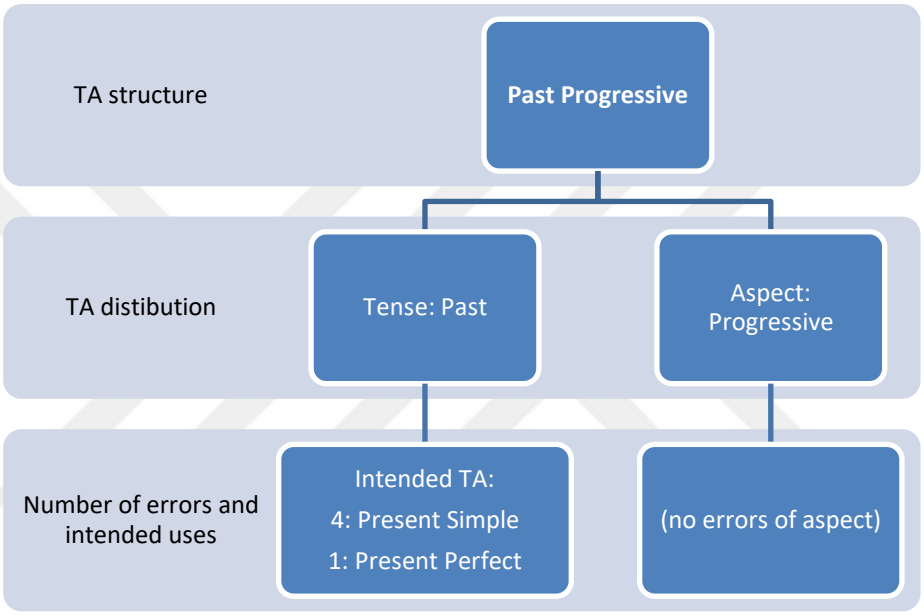



**Figure. 4.9.** *Error analysis of past progressive*

While some students **were spending (SPEND)** time on social media, these students cannot do homework, so they may fail. (…) (St-421)
Since the internet was invented, everything **was being (HAS BEEN)** easy. (…)
(St-238)

However, this finding (confusing past progressive and present tenses) of the current study does not support some of the previous research. For example, according to Zıngır (1999), in second language learner writing, the second most common error is in the use of past progressive as the learners in the study were required to use past simple instead of past progressive in most instances.

## 4.3. The Possible Sources of Errors related to Tense-aspect Forms Employed by the Turkish EFL Learners

The data analysis revealed that interlingual and intralingual errors are the two most common forms of error in students' English writing. The distribution of error types can be seen in Table 4.2 below.

**Table 4.2.** *The distribution of sources of error*

| Source of error | Number of times | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Interlingual | 39 | 17,5% |
| Intralingual | 183 | 82,5% |
| **Total** | **222** | **100%** |

### *4.3.1. Interlingual errors*

Interferences generated by the first language are the most common source of interlingual errors in the target language statements. Turkish has an impact on English statements, particularly when it comes to verb tense choice. Because of the differences in principles between Turkish and English, English sentences can be grammatically incorrect. The learners' literal word-to-word translating technique also contributes to these types of errors. Some examples of interlingual errors are shown below:

(1) English: When we **graduated (GRADUATE)** from university, we have to have experience because (…) (St-385)

Turkish: *Üniversiteden mezun* ***ol-du-ğumuzda****, tecrübemiz olmalıdır çünkü (…)*

(2) English: When we **saw (SEE)** a friend in social media who **went (GO ON)** a holiday trip, we should be happy but we don’t. (St-322)

Turkish: *Sosyal medyada bir arkadaşımızın tatile* ***çık-tı-ğını gördüğümüzde*** *mutlu olmalıyız, ama olmayız.*

(3) English: First of all, when we **used (USE)** social media, we don't notice time. (St-396)

Turkish: *İlk olarak, sosyal medya **kullandığımızda**, zamana dikkat etmeyiz.*

(4) English: Secondly, people must react when bad things **happened (HAPPEN)**. (St-426)

Turkish: *İkinci olarak, insanlar kötü şeyler **olduğunda** tepki göstermelidirler.*

In the examples above, the students intended to mention generalizable statements as their opinions; however, because of literal translation from Turkish to English, they employed past tense verbs instead of present tense verbs. In Turkish, the statements with the adverbial conjunction "when" meaning "at the time that" is translated as "olduğunda", which can require a completion of the action, and the same form is used for both present tense with future meaning and past tense with the completion of an action. For example:

Turkish: *Okula gittiğinde* beni ara. (with future meaning: *Call me when you go to the school.)*

Turkish: *Okula gittiğinde* arkadaşını gördü. (with past meaning: *She saw her friend when she went to the school.)*

Therefore, the participants of the current study had interlingual errors with the adverbial conjunction "when" is used because of L1 interference.

Interlingual errors account for 17,5% of all the errors in this study (see Table 4.2). This result corroborates the findings of the previous work in the literature investigating the effect of the first language on second language production. According to Diaubalick and Guijarro-Fuentes (2019), the effect of the first language was found in L2 English acquisition for German learners. Similarly, the study by Götz (2015) also supported the possibility of negative L1 transfer in the sample.

### *4.3.2. Intralingual Errors*

Intralingual errors occur when L2 learners try to invent the forms in the target language. Intralingual interference, according to Richard (1974), refers to items produced by learners that indicate generalization based on limited exposure to the target language rather than the structure of the native language. In the current study, the students committed all the four types of intralingual errors. The distribution of intralingual errors is demonstrated in Table 4.3.

**Table 4.3.** *The distribution of intralingual errors*

| **Sources of intralingual errors** | **Number of times** | **Percentage** |
|---|---|---|
| Overgeneralization | 51 | 27,9% |
| Ignorance of rule restriction | 26 | 14,3% |
| Incomplete application of the rule | 100 | 54,6% |
| False concept hypothesis | 6 | 3,2% |
| **Total** | **183** | **100%** |

As can be seen in the table above (Table 4.3), incomplete application of the rule covers most intralingual errors related to tense-aspect among Turkish EFL learners. This type of errors is related to students' being unable to apply the grammatical rules when producing their statements. Incorrect tense and aspect use constitutes this type of error. Some examples can be seen below:

> (…) If they work part time, they don't have monetary problem. For example, when I **study *(studied)*** last year, I **work (*worked*)** at the restaurant. Thus, I **don't *(didn't)*** have monetary problems. (…)
> (St-401)

> (…) Our world **becomes *(is becoming)*** a digital world nowadays. (…)
> (St-365)

> (…) Three years ago, I did a research for Tubitak. I and my friend **examine *(examined)*** social media's effects on people. (…)
> (St-357)

Errors related to overgeneralization happen when learners produce deviant structures based on other structures during L2 learning process. The main reason for this can be their learning experiences, and they generalize some rules accordingly. In this study, some students generalized and misused the past tense carrying verb "spent" and "met" as their infinitive form "spend" and "meet" more than once in their essays. The main reason why this type of error was not counted as incomplete application of the rule is that the incorrect forms are used more than once in their essays in paragraphs stating general ideas and opinions. An example can be seen below:

> (…) As opposed to the above ideas, some people believe that university students shouldn't have part-time jobs because they **spent *(spend)*** time with play computer games and chatting their friends. (…)
> (St-359)

> (…) We don't make important things when we **spent *(spend)*** time in social media. (…)
> (St-400)

In the following example, the student overgeneralized the structure with if conditional type 1. Instead of using simple present tense in the main clause, the learner used present progressive more than once.

> (…) If you have money, you're **doing *(do / can do)*** what you want. (…) If they work part-time job, they're **developing (*develop / can develop*)** their own career easily.
> (St-384)

Errors related to ignorance of rule restriction take place when learners fail to employ restrictions of target structures and do not obey the target rules. In the following examples, students failed to apply the rule in respect to present perfect tense use after *since.*

> I **use *(have used / have been using)*** social media since 2009.
> (St-301)

> Since the internet was invented, everything ***was being (has been)*** easy.
> (St-238)

Errors regarding false concept hypothesis results from learners' poor understanding of target language item distinctions. Learners' incorrect grasp of target language item distinctions leads to inaccurate concept hypotheses and inaccurate structures. Some examples can be seen below:

She **has working *(has been working / works)*** a part time job.
(St- 259)

I **hadn't *(didn't have)*** much money.
(St-85)

## 4.4. Tense-Aspect Forms Employed by the Native English Speakers

To compare the tense and aspect structures between Turkish EFL learners and the native speaker opinion essays, The Corpus of Multilingual Opinion Essays by College Students (MOECS) written by young adult NSs of English was analyzed. The distribution of tense and aspect use can be seen in Table 4.4 below.

**Table 4.4.** *The distribution of tense and aspect use by the native speakers*

| Tense | Aspect | Number of Use |
|---|---|---|
| **Present** | Simple Present | 2698 |
| | Present Progressive | 148 |
| | Present Perfect | 357 |
| | Present Perfect Progressive | 9 |
| **Total** | | **3212** |
| **Past** | Simple Past | 203 |
| | Past Progressive | 6 |
| | Past Perfect | 3 |
| | Past Perfect Progressive | 1 |
| **Total** | | **213** |

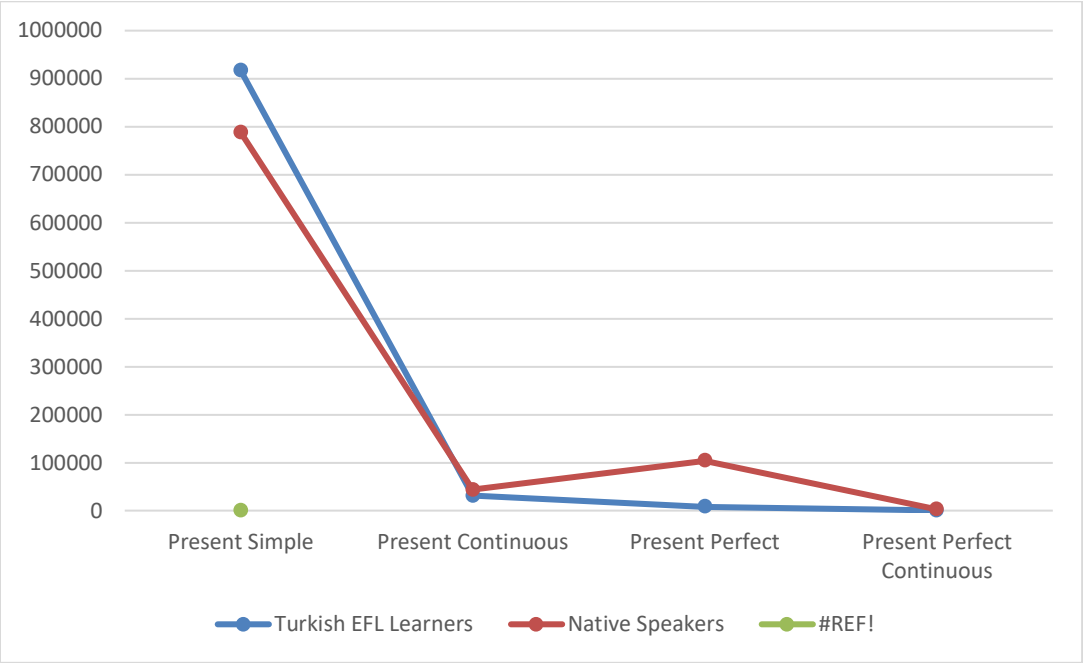
At first glance, the distribution of tense and aspect structures employed by native speakers reveal that present tenses in general and especially simple present tense use outnumber simple past and past tenses in native speakers' opinion essays. As mentioned earlier, the appropriateness of tense use in context in formal academic writing is mostly determined by the discourse type. Hunston (2002) found that past tense is largely relevant to narratives, while formal academic writing utilizes present tense for generalizations, comments, and descriptions after studying large written English corpora.

In an attempt to compare the uses by the two groups, the following table (Table 4.5) indicates the number of uses for each tense and aspect structure by the Turkish EFL learners and native speakers in their opinion essays. Under the numbers, normalized values for each item are presented in parentheses.

**Table 4.5.** *The distribution of tense and aspect use by Turkish EFL learners and native speakers*

| **Tense** | **Present** | | | | **Past** | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Aspect** | **Simple Present** | **Present Progres.** | **Present Perfect** | **Present Perfect Progres.** | **Simple Past** | **Past Progres.** | **Past Perfect** | **Past Perfect Progres.** |
| **Turkish EFL Learners** | 11108 *(916.577)* | 377 *(31.108)* | 100 *(8.251)* | 5 *(412,575)* | 491 *(40.514)* | 29 *(2.392)* | 9 *(742,635)* | 0 *(0)* |
| **Native Speakers** | 2698 *(787.737)* | 148 *(43.211)* | 357 *(104.233)* | 9 *(2.627)* | 203 *(59.270)* | 6 *(1.751)* | 3 *(875,912)* | 1 *(291,970)* |

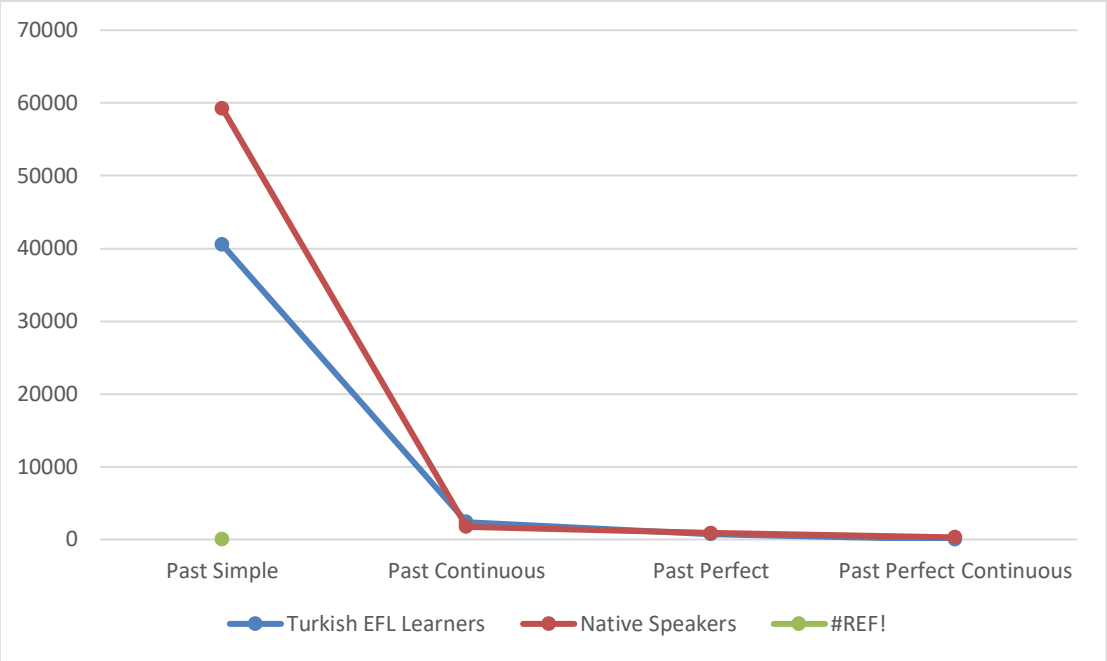
*(Normalized values are presented in parentheses.)*




*Note: Normalized values are used in the figures*

**Figure 4.10.** *The distribution of number of present tense uses between Turkish EFL learners and native speakers*

Figures 4.10 and 4.11 show the distribution of numbers of present and past tense uses by the two groups of students. The figures indicate that both native and nonnative groups make use of simple present and simple past tenses higher in number in their opinion essays. However, regarding present tenses, native group employed present perfect tense higher in number than nonnative group.




*Note: Normalized values are used in the figures*

**Figure 4.11.** *The distribution of number of past tense uses between Turkish EFL learners and native speakers*

Comparing the two results, as it can also be seen in Table 4.5 and the Figures 4.10 and 4.11 above, the variety of tense and aspect employment is salient in native speaker essays when compared to nonnative EFL learners. Some examples can be seen below:

> The Internet has become a big part of our lives today, as we rely on it for communication and accomplishing our daily tasks. Although it seems like the Internet has given us so much convenience, it is not the case that it has not brought us major changes in the way that we interact with others. Journalism, an objective report of news story by journalists or communication professionals, has encountered the biggest change. It is no longer a one-way dissemination of news. Instead, it has become a complex chain of communication process with the rise of Internet, resulting in the popular use of social media and blogs. While people can retrieve news online today, newspapers or magazines are still relevant in today's society in order to protect the quality of journalism.
> (NSt-86)

> The churning art of newspapers generate a lot of paper waste, and man has shown, over the year, to be wasteful. Whenever one is finished with a newspaper, it is thrown away into the nearest receptacle one can find, leading to mountains upon mountains of paper waste. The introduction of recycling bins has saved the global populace well to a certain extent, providing

> an alternate means to 'go green', rather than to check it into the bins. Online news removes this problem of paper waste tremendously. And this can have positive effects on the environment and its rate of deforestation, thus reducing our carbon footprint as a global population.
> Technology has proven time and time again to be superior in those factors mentioned above. However, man does have their own preferences to the way they want their news presented to them. The phrase 'to each his own' might apply here, but we can clearly see the advantages of having electronic print over the fine print.
> (Nst-89)

> I never liked reading through a screen. I read a lot but I only read physical books. I have only ever finished one book through a screen and I didn't like the experience while I admit that it is convenient as I do not need to bring a book around with me, on top of my phone that I will always have with me. I am willing to carry the additional weight, solely because I feel that reading is about the experience. Physically holding the book, the flipping of the pages, the way the words are inked onto the paper; Everything about it seems to provide a better reading experience. Being able to hold and feel what you are reading makes it feel real. Like real effect has been put into what you are reading. It gives it character. A screen can never provide the same experience. It always feels 2-dimensional and flat.
> (NSt-103)

Together these results provide important insights into the patterns of tense-aspect structures employed by Turkish EFL learners and native speakers. First of all, both groups of students utilized simple aspect of present tense in their opinion essays to express their opinions and generalizable situations. Besides, perfect aspect of present tense use by the native speakers outnumbers its use by Turkish EFL learners due to the fact that its broadened semantic properties compared to simple present tense. This finding is consistent with that of Patanasorn (2013) who revealed that the writers of low proficiency make less accurate use of simple past and almost never use present perfect. The other present tense-aspect constructions, present progressive and present perfect progressive are also preferred to use more by the native speakers when compared Turkish learners. The number of the use of past tenses is higher in number in native speaker essays, too. Taken together, these results suggest that there is an association between proficiency level and complexity in writing, supported by certain studies that found that the employment of aspects provides an extra layer of complexity in writing for non-native speakers (Sharwood Smith & Rutherford, 1988; Hinkel, 1992). This finding was also reported by Min (2013) revealing that the use of tense – aspect patterns

was in association with the students' second language writing proficiency. In his study, advanced second language learners made higher in number and appropriate use of present perfect, yet intermediate learners used more simple past structures even in statements where present perfect was more appropriate. Investigating tense – aspect structures of Turkish EFL learners having three different proficiency levels through Cambridge Learner Corpus, Bozdağ (2019) voices that according to the initial results, the employment of past and non-past tenses and the simple aspect differs considering learners' proficiency levels.

# CHAPTER 5

## 5. CONCLUSION

The current research aimed at exploring tense – aspect structures on a data set of English language learners' written productions to define the correct and erroneous tense and aspect structures. The aim was to come up with explanations on the sources of errors. Finally, it was aimed to see whether there is a difference in the tense-aspect usage patterns of the native English speaker opinion essays and the pre-intermediate (B1) level Turkish EFL learner opinion essays. The summary of the findings, limitations of the study, and suggestions for both future research and language pedagogy are included in this chapter.

### 5.1. Summary of the Findings

In this study, the aim was to investigate the correct and error-prone tense-aspect structures employed by the pre-intermediate level Turkish EFL learners in their opinion essays that were collected at the end of the one-year English language learning program. In order to answer the first research question, a total of 12119 verbs carrying tense-aspect features employed by the pre-intermediate level Turkish EFL learners in their opinion essays were analyzed by hand annotation, and the findings suggest that apart from the perfect progressive aspect of past tense, all the other tense-aspect structures were employed by the learners in their opinion essays. Further analysis revealed that the learners used present-tense verbs higher in number than past-tense verbs in their opinion essays. More specifically, the participants dominantly used simple aspect of the present tense in their written productions. A strong relationship between present tense use and second language learner written production has been reported in the literature, therefore the results of this study support the results of a considerable number of the literature investigating tense and aspect constructions in second language production. For example, this finding is consistent with that of Klopfenstein (2017) who found that the participants in the sample used simple tenses 97% of the times. These results reflect also those of Panagiotopoulos (2015) who investigated verb features (tense, aspect, voice, degree of embedding) and word-level n-grams in Asian corpora. The findings reveal that present tenses are dominant over four learner corpora in the study. She asserts that the students having different proficiency levels use similar tense structures, yet the analysis on verbs with both tense and aspect showed difference across the proficiency

levels. Furthermore, in line with the findings of the current study, it was found that the simple aspect of present tense is found to be dominant in the learner essays regardless of the proficiency levels; therefore, this result may be explained by the fact that tense, aspect and voice is not found to be discriminative across different proficiency levels. These results are in agreement with those of Bozdağ (2019) who investigated Turkish EFL learners' tense – aspect use through a learner corpus. It was revealed that all the participants having three different proficiency levels use the simple aspect of present tense dominantly. Upon the use of present simple, the participants are cross-compared, and the result shows that present simple use by C1-C2 level learners use present simple most often than A1-A2 and B1-B2 level learners respectively. In these premises, Bozdağ (2019) posits that the use of present simple may not predict proficiency level. Within this context, furthermore, Fuchs and Werner (2022) state that simple forms are used earlier and more often than complex forms at any stage in the acquisition process. These data must be interpreted with caution because in this sense, it seems possible that the result that the pre-intermediate level Turkish EFL learners' employment of present simple in second language production higher in number than the other tense-aspect structures may not be due to the proficiency level of the participants. Therefore, second language learners with higher proficiency levels may not add complexity to their writing by not depending on only simple present tense use in their written production. This idea is also supported by Hinkel (2004) who posit that "the uses of the present-tense constructions in such generalizations in L2 texts is not sufficient to make the students' text appear academic if other features of formal academic prose are lacking" (Hinkel, 2004, p. 23).

The second most used tense aspect structure, simple aspect of the past tense, was employed by the students to give a description of what happened in a past time. According to certain studies, the employment of different aspects offers an extra layer of complexity in writing for non-native speakers (Sharwood Smith & Rutherford, 1988; Hinkel, 1992). When Figure 4.1 in the previous chapter is considered, the learners in this study employed simple aspects of both present and past tenses more often than perfect and progressive aspects; therefore, it can be possible to state that the written products of the pre-intermediate level Turkish EFL participants in this study have a low level of complexity.

To analyze the most error-prone tense-aspect forms employed by the Turkish EFL learners, annotation by hand was carried out and it was found that the learners employed simple present tense abundantly and made few tense and aspect errors related to it. Among 68 errors related to simple present tense, tense errors were 54 and aspect errors were 14. According to the results obtained by Garrido (2013) upon analyzing the translation data obtained from forty-eight Spanish speakers learning English, simple present tense was found to employ the most among all tense-aspect structures, and the simple present tense structures in their translation task contained few errors. This finding is contrary to some previous studies which have investigated Turkish EFL learners' tense-aspect employment and the result suggested that present simple errors account for the most frequent errors (Şahin, 1993; Bozdağ, 2019). The research by Şahin (1993) examined Turkish EFL learners' tense-aspect usage and errors and it was found that simple aspect of present tense was observed to be the most frequent tense-aspect structure that was used erroneously, followed by present progressive and present perfect, respectively. Comparing tense-aspect structures over three different proficiency levels, Bozdağ (2019) found overlapping results that present simple is the one of the most error-prone structure observed in the corpora.

For the current study, the most surprising aspect of the data is about the second most used verb pattern, simple aspect of the past tense, as it was found to be the most erroneous structure in student essays. The number of errors related to past tenses was 110, 103 of which were simple past tense errors, and among these, 99 errors could have been avoided if the students employed simple present tense. It can be said that the learners intended to use simple present tense in their essays, yet they failed to do so and used simple past tense instead. A possible explanation for this might be negative language transfer employed by the Turkish EFL learners in their written productions. This finding supports evidence from previous observations. Grange (1999), for example, found that present simple and past simple are the two most error-prone tense – aspect structures among the other tense – aspect combinations. This finding is consistent with that of Patanasorn (2013) who reported that past simple is used less accurately by students of lower proficiency levels, and they were also reported to employ present perfect very few in number. However, the finding that the most error-prone tense – aspect pattern is past simple differs from some previous studies. The results obtained from a recent study conducted by Zhang (2022) revealed that present time and perfect

aspect errors account for the most frequent error types committed by the learners of second language. Liu (2012) also found that simple present tense errors are the most frequent errors while simple past tense errors account for the second most frequent errors found in second language learners' written productions. In line with these studies, Hulvova (2015) report erroneous use of simple past instead of simple present in his study.

In reviewing the literature, prior studies investigating tense-aspect structures of second language learners were observed to reveal that the perfect aspect of present tense is used erroneously instead of the simple aspect of past tense. Şahin (1993) and Çakır (2011) examined tense-aspect structures produced by Turkish EFL learners and the results revealed erroneous use of present perfect. When the source of this error was analyzed in detail, it was found that the perfect aspect of present tense was confused with simple past in student writing. Götz (2015) investigated German learners' tense-aspect usage and he also found overlapping results. German learners were also reported to use present perfect erroneously instead of past simple. The results of the current study on error-prone tense-aspect constructions also revealed that pre-intermediate level Turkish EFL learners committed tense errors of present perfect that can be corrected if they use simple past five times. Further analysis suggests that the participants of the current study also committed aspect errors regarding present perfect. The aspect errors of present perfect are found to be related with simple present; in other words, these aspect errors can be corrected if they used simple present instead of present perfect.

When the research question about the possible sources of errors related to tense-aspect form is regarded, interlingual and intralingual errors were defined initially. The analysis revealed that interferences generated by the first language are the most common source of interlingual errors in the target language production. These results support previous research into the source of tense-aspect errors of EFL learners. Götz (2015) reports that the main source of the most erroneous tense- aspect pairs are because of possibility of negative L1 transfer. Diaubalick and Guijarro-Fuentes (2019) found the effect of first language in L2 Spanish acquisition for L1 learners of German and Romance languages. They also report that negative L1 transfer from German to Spanish when producing tenses and aspects in Spanish accounted for the erroneous structures in German learners' written productions. When the source of errors is considered, intralingual errors are found to be the main source of tense-aspect structure

errors among the pre-intermediate level Turkish EFL learners. This result seems to be consistent with other research by Fatiha (2018) who found that intralingual error is considered to be the most frequent source of students' tense-aspect errors. In intralingual errors, incomplete application of the rule constitutes most of this type of error among the pre-intermediate level Turkish EFL learner essays which means that students are unable to apply the grammatical rules when producing their statements by using tense and aspect. The observed increase in incomplete rule application could be attributed to the proficiency level of the participants in the current study. This study was conducted with the Turkish EFL learners having pre-intermediate proficiency level of English. A study with EFL learners with higher level of proficiency levels would have yielded dominance of different source of levels. Another possible explanation for this is that the texts for the current study were collected through a high-stakes examination; i.e. the English proficiency examination conducted at the end of the academic year. This examination is carried out in 180 minutes having different parts, and the writing part is also included in the exam. The scores of the exam is the main determinant whether the students are proficient enough in English and eligible to start studying in their departments. Therefore, incomplete rule application of the learners in this study can be due to these factors.

The last question in this study sought to compare the native English speaker essays and the Turkish EFL learner essays on the usage patterns of tense-aspect in both groups' opinion essays. The findings revealed that similar to the Turkish EFL learner opinion essays, the native speakers also used the simple aspect of the present tense higher in number than other tense-aspect forms in their opinion essays, following Hunston (2002) who found that formal academic writing utilizes present tense for generalizations, comments, and descriptions. Panagiotopoulos (2015) investigated three learner corpora and compared them with two native-speaker corpora and variation of tense employment across the proficiency levels was found. Upon analyzing the tense-aspect structures over the corpora, she also revealed that present tense is used dominantly in learner essays. Housen (2002) also assert that during early phases of language development, learners are not able to notice the distinction between tenses and aspects, and regard it as "the different forms of the verb behave like allomorphs" (2002, p, 160). Thus, it can be alleged that during early phases of second language learning, learners can use certain verb forms more abundantly or on the contrary, they can avoid

using certain verb forms. Similarly, Isarankura (2011) examined realization of tense aspect forms across low, intermediate and high proficiency levels, and compared their using of tense aspect structures with native speakers through a survey. For the survey, the participants chose the most appropriate aspect and time references. According to the results, there is a certain similarity across the native speakers and the learners with high proficiency levels which indicates the significance of proficiency level on tense-aspect forms. On English tenses and tense aspect structures, Biber (1999, p. 458) mentions that "in some ways, present tense can be considered the unmarked form, occurring more frequently than past tense, and expressing a wide range of meanings.". In English, present tense can be applied to state situations in the past, present or in the future with its "all-inclusive time reference" (Biber, 1999, p. 457). Likewise, in the current study, present simple is the most used tense-aspect form across the language learners and the native speakers. Biber (1999) also suggested that conversation and academic prose are similar in some manner as there is a need to prefer to use present tensed verbs. In conversations, present-tense verbs are employed so as to provide speakers' immediate engagement to the topic yet in academic prose these verbs are employed to convey general truths or generalizable ideas.

### 5.2. Pedagogical Implications

This study set out to investigate tense-aspect patterns that have long been considered as complex for second or foreign language learners as in foreign or second language learning contexts, the acquisition of tenses and aspects, i.e. temporal and aspectual system, can be challenging and complex for nonnative speakers (Ellis, 1997). In line with the results of the current study, it was also observed by Bozdağ (2017) that Turkish EFL learners, even with advanced proficiency level of English have difficulty in employing specific English tense-aspect structures. In this part of the chapter, some implications are provided considering the findings of the current study which were mentioned in detail in Chapter 4 and in the Summary of the Findings part in Chapter 5. Since the existence of various issues to be taken into consideration, the implications will be given under two sub-headings: implications for teaching grammar and implications for teaching grammar in EFL writing courses.

### *5.2.1. Implications for Teaching Grammar*

The expression of temporality is essential when both the acquisition and the production stages in the target language. The knowledge of English structures of tenses and aspects is related to the morphological knowledge of English. The results of this study suggest that regardless of students' first languages, proficiency levels, and other factors, expressing temporality is one of the biggest and most fundamental obstacles that second or foreign language learners face (Belkhir & Benyelles, 2017). Since tense and aspect employment is rule-governed and, for the most part, not arbitrary in especially formal teaching environment, it is essential for language teachers to raise the awareness of second language learners to this troublesome phenomenon of language. One approach to raise awareness can be ensured by raising second language learners' awareness of tenses and aspects in their first language. As suggested by Cook (1999, p. 191), 'language teaching is concerned with developing an L2 in a mind that already contains an L1'. In this vein, students' existing knowledge on expressing time by using tenses and aspects can be fostered by contextual classroom activities such as detecting tenses and aspects separately in a given context. Furthermore, grammatical judgement / acceptability activities carried out in and outside of the class can be utilized by language teachers to raise the second language learners' awareness on tenses and aspects.

Some of the issues emerging from the findings of this study on sources of errors relate specifically to negative transfer of the first language; therefore, it is essential to attract second language learners' attention to the differences between tense and aspect use when it is needed. Thanks to this awareness, learners can notice the accurate uses of tenses and aspects when engaging receptive skills, and this process assists producing accurate structures during producing in the target language. The idea is in agreement with the 'noticing' hypothesis proposed by Schmidt (1990) highlighting the importance of consciously noticing the input in order to grasp specific language features.

The results of this study suggest that the pre-intermediate level Turkish EFL learners have the tendency to confuse specific tense-aspect pairs. For example, past simple and present simple, present simple and present perfect, past simple and past perfect, and present progressive and present simple are some of the salient erroneous pairs in this study. In order to minimize the possible confusion among different tenses and aspects, tense-aspect structures can be taught by using specific contextual activities that support explicit teaching of the structures. For example, specifically designed texts

including the most confusing tense – aspect pairs can be prepared by the language teachers and conducted during grammar classes to establish the meaning of each tense – aspect pair and contribute to second language learners' understanding of the structures. Subsequent production activities can also foster correct production of the target tense-aspect structures. Moreover, as tenses are already available in the second/foreign language learning course books, the term "aspect" can also be taught to learners. Teaching tenses and aspect with their meaning and suitable examples may yield better results and enhance accuracy in written production. Therefore, remedial teaching and new approaches to teaching temporality in English is crucial to overcome the challenges that are faced by second language learners.

### *5.2.2. Implications for Teaching Grammar in EFL Writing Courses*

As mentioned in the previous section, the expression of temporality is essential when producing in the target language. At the same time, when written production in an L2 is considered, accurate language production is expected from the reader; however, writing requires more than one skill and activity performed by the writer which poses difficulty for novice L2 writers (Flynn & Stainthorp, 2006). In this sense, second language novice writers'awareness of temporality could be raised. Writing instructors and syllabus designers can approach the writing syllabus separately and put more emphasis on both the meaning and the correct uses of tenses and aspects. The importance of the correct grammar use was also asserted by Cam and Tran (2017) as most foreign language learners face problems due to lack of grammatical knowledge which result in deficiency in target language, including written production.

Based on the findings of the current study revealing that the simple aspect of the present tense is found to be the most frequent tense-aspect pattern employed by both the native and the nonnative students in their opinion essays, specific tense-aspect structures incidental to academic writing discourse can be put in emphasis in writing instruction. First, for writing tasks such as opinion essays and argumentative essays, teaching the most common tense-aspect structures; the simple present, present perfect and simple past might be necessary due to the fact that generalizations and truths are the most common features of these academic discourse. Even though textbooks of grammar and writing explain the usage of these tense-aspect structures, additional and specific

instruction on these structures can yield more accurate learner production and raise overall quality in nonnative writing.

In addition, it was observed upon the analysis of the current study that the pre-intermediate level EFL participants employed tenses in an inconsistent way in their opinion essays; therefore, the number of tense errors is found to be higher in number when compared with the aspect errors in this study. In this sense, writing courses can include teaching how to write consistent texts during a specific academic discourse instruction. Through teaching tense consistency in an explicit way in second language writing instruction, it would be hindered to observe simple past tense carrying verbs in paragraphs where the intended meaning is to mention generalizable statements. By this means, low level second language learners can increase awareness on tense-aspect use in written production, write both grammatically and semantically more accurate texts, and increase writing proficiency and quality.

### 5.3. Limitations and Suggestion for Further Studies

The exploratory nature of the present study and the comparability of the two datasets compiled enabled to uncover the temporality and aspectual patterns in second language writing. Exploring the actual uses along with erroneous uses and possible sources of errors facilitated the recognition of tense – aspect patterns in detail. Although the present study has been mindfully designed and provides some useful insights into expressing temporality in second language acquisition, a few limitations need to be acknowledged. Firstly, the current study focused on Turkish EFL learners having one proficiency level, i.e., pre-intermediate, as the written productions of the learners during the exit examination were utilized. However, further studies can compile corpora from students having different proficieny levels and compare their tense-aspect structure employment, error-prone tense-aspect structures, along with the sources of errors. This would yield more generalizable results as both the number of participants and the number of proficiency levels would be increased. The second shortcoming of this research is that it focused only on tense and aspect structures as they were reported to pose certain problems for EFL learners by a wide range of previous work in the literature. Further studies can investigate all the verbs features employed in learner essays by utilizing different error taxonomies. It should also be considered that the study utilized one written product of each participant which is opinion essays. However,

the comprehension level of the learners has been neglected in the current study, yet it can be ensured by further studies by investigating different task types written by the same participants.

As this study is exploratory in nature, it explored tense-aspect usage of the pre-intermediate level Turkish EFL learners in their opinion essays. The error-prone tense-aspect pairs and the possible reasons behind the errors were also examined. Based on the findings of this research, second language grammar and writing syllabi can be designed and the effectiveness of the instruction of the newly designed syllabi can be evaluated through explanatory studies. Future studies on the current topic are therefore recommended.

Another limitation of the study can be about the data collection process. The data for the current study was collected cross-sectionally, i.e., the data was collected at single point in time (Ellis, 1999). Therefore, further studies can collect data longitudinally in order to observe different errors at different stages of language development that can provide important insights into language pedagogy. In addition, qualitative data such as think-aloud protocols or open-ended questionnaires can be conducted with each participant to uncover the reasons of the choice of tenses and aspects. In this regard, the real reasons behind specific tense-aspect choices of the second language learners can be attained. Such kind of qualitative data would provide useful insights in second language pedagogy as most tense-aspect studies in the existing literature are based on large corpora.

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## APPENDICES

APPENDIX – 1a. Sample Opinion Essays Written by Turkish EFL Learners: a learner essay with a lower grade

*University Students (by St-7)*

*University students have part time jobs in the world. From my point of view, university students should have part time jobs. There are many reasons for this. These are fun, in the future life and self-confiednt. Firstly, university students should have part-time jobs. They maek friend in there. They gain a lot of money. They go to the cinema at the weekends. They buy dress. If university students don't prefer spend a lot of money their family, they should have part-time jobs.*

*Secondly, University students should have part time for in the future life. They feel comfortable in the future life. If they want to good income. If university student work part-time job maybe, they buy house and car. They want to manage to own job. Maybe they are goals in the future life. These goals achieve fort hey should have part time job. Some people say that, university student's don't refer to part time jobs. However, If they want to work part time jobs in this case, they are increose self-confident. They are responsible age year if they this job achieve. They so very happy.*

*İn conlusion, All university students should have part time job. There are many benefical in this case. These are fun, they feel comfortable in the future and they are self-confident.*

APPENDIX – 1b. Sample Opinion Essays Written by Turkish EFL Learners: a learner essay with a higher grade

*SHOULD UNIVERSITY STUDENTS HAVE PART TIME JOBS? (by St-78)*

*University students require a lot of variety things during university education. One of these things is money. It is also the biggest problem that students face. Some students have a remedy for this situation. They prefer having part time jobs. I strongly believe that having part-time jobs is no use owing to some reasons.*

*One reason why having part-time jobs isn't essential is that working triggers tiredness. Students mustn't be tired physically. Strong body means strong mind. We know mind is the key for the students to learn. What is more, students who work at part-time jobs aren't able to sleep enough since they have many lessons to repeat continuously at home as well. They need to be awake when they go to school at the same time. In my view, students shouldn't be willing to have part-time jobs.*

*Another problem is psychological problems. Focusing on two or more issues in life for students is hard. Their mind will be complicated when they have part time jobs. They will have many responsibility at work. They will have to worry about time more than ever because they must be at work on time. After a while, this situation probably leads to being stressfull. At the end, stress affects your psychological system in a bad way. As a consequence, students had better pay attention to these things before they decide to work.*

*As opposed to above ideas, some students might think that it is essential a study at the university. This may be true. Money is one of the greatest thing they need. However they miss a significant point. If they have part time jobs, their qualifies of education will decrease because of themselves. In my opinion, the most important purpose here isn't money but the exucation. Therefore, parents ought to encourage students on account of money as much as they can.*

*Consequently, there are many reasons not to work if the education carries on. Having psychological problems affects your life at the end but not the money so, let's finish the school first.*

APPENDIX – 1c. Sample Opinion Essays Written by Turkish EFL Learners: an essay written in response to the topic "*a. Sometimes, it is a better idea not to tell the truth.* Do you agree or disagree?"

*The Truth (by St-28)*

*Everyone need to know the truth. But they do not except the reuslts. So some news can destory the life of other. We have to lie in some events. So I think, sometimes it is a better idea not to tell the truth for many reasons.*

*First, we never want lose our friends. So sometime the turth can abattl or problem with our friends. For example if my friend has a girl friend while he married and I know that its not good to tell the truth to her wife. Because I well destory his family. Extra some rangs in the past can be a reason to lost our family and friends. For examp, I saw in one movie a man had a crime and no one was know that so after few years the police destory his and his family life. So we don't have to know things wich a god keep it.*

*Secondly, same truth is like security for goverments. Usually ther is crimes which goverments did to procted the country. For example, the politicks truth is alnes securts we must not tell it for anyone. And goverments some time has solders information. Every time there is a bad moment in solders life. So the solders can bot tell the truth for everyone. All of all, the bad truth of goverments must not be knowledge.*

*Some ideas do not agree my opinion. Thy say all one has to say the truth. But the miss an important point, all truths don't have a good results. My be some truth can destory countrys.*

*Finally, telling the truth is a good behaway. But, sometime we have to think about our friend and our country. So keep a bad truth to avoid a bad end.*

APPENDIX – 1d. Sample Opinion Essays Written by Turkish EFL Learners: an essay written in response to the topic "*b. Social media is a waste of time.* Do you agree or disagree?"

*The Importance of Social Media (by St-52)*

*In the past, people didn't use to have neitheir internet nor social media, so it was very difficult to provide information and send message. But nowadays with the internet throygh social media we can do all this activities easily. In that way I strongly believe that social media isn't a waste of time for two major reasons: The best way to provide easily information and the best way to send messages.*

*First of all, getting information easily is one pro of why social media isn't a waste of time. In this time almost every single person in the planet is using social media to keep connected to world's news. For example in event which happened right now in Europe, we can be informed about every single details of this event in a short time. As a result getting information easily is one fact that shows social media isn't a waste of time.*

*Another big reason why social media isn't a waste of time is sending easily messages.*

*With the social media like facebook, Instagram, twitter we can easily send messages to our families, friends and relatives living away from us in a short time. They also permit us to keep contact easily. In short, sending messages is one other evident proof why social media isn't a waste of time.*

*Although some people don't share those ideas, they think that social media is a waste of time it is the first reason why people failed in life all. However, they should know that everything in this life has advantages and disadvantages, so we have to us social media in the right way to help ourselves.*

*To sum up, with some activities like providing information and sending messages, social media can never be considered as a waste of time. All we have to have*

*to do is to use social media in the right way and in the right time in order to not be affected by its disadvantages. Basically, social media means easy life.*

APPENDIX – 1e. Sample Opinion Essays Written by Turkish EFL Learners: an essay written in response to the topic "*c. University students should have part-time jobs.* Do you agree or disagree?"

*Students and Part Time Jobs (by St-75)*

*While I was a student at university, I have a friend in my class. He was a waiter in the café. He went the his job after school. Thanks to his job, he gave money and he had a lot of experience. I think that students should have part-time job at their university years because of these reasons.*

*First of all, they can help their parents about financial situations. When students started to university, they need to a lot of money. Sometimes, their parents may have not enough economic situations. If students have jobs, they can help their parents. In addition, they can collect their money and spend for themselves or their educations. Basically, if students have jobs, their parents and they can live more comfortable life at their students years.*

*Secondly, they have many experience about work life while they working at the job, they have to discharge some responsibilities. For example, they meet lots of people and they should not be rude while they talking. Also, they can have self-confident because they notice their skills, so, students should have jobs if they want to live experience about work life.*

*As opposed to above ideas, some people believe that students should not have part-time jobs. They think that, they should focus their lessons. That may be true, but they can focus their lessons at the same time with their jobs, because working at the part time job not affect their educational life. They can go after their school and decide to work hours.*

*In summary, if students want to help their families, they can find part-time jobs. Furthermore, this process beneficial for themselves about have experience and self-confident. In my opinion, they should work in the part-time job such as waiter.*

APPENDIX - 2. A Hand-annotated Opinion Essay

Part-Time Job (by St-66)

My cousin worked part-time job when she was university student. My cousing family was WV – HAD middle income and they lived in a small village. My cousin come TENSE for university another a city. She started a part-time job and she liked her job. She met different people and she save TENSE a lot of money. I believe that, univerity students should have part-time jobs.

One important factor is that if they work part-time job, they will save money. They go to job there days of week. They usually go to job at the weekend. They can go to abroad also they do not want to a lot of money from their family. For this reason they ought to work part-time jobs.

Another factor, they make a friends lots of, if they come different city for university. Working friends are interesting than university friends. Because thay can share different things. Sometimes they can MV ill and they can not go to job but working friend goes instead you. I think, working friends are the best among kinds of friend.

Some people may argue that, part-time jobs is not AG good for university students because this job can affect badly their course. It may be true in some ways. However, they wor there days of week end they can work at the weekend, so their job do not affect AG them.

All in all, every university student can wrk part-time job. In this way, they do not Money MV their family and they can save money. This provide AG to live very well during university life.

APPENDIX - 3. An Opinion Essay Written by a Native English Speaker

*Should we rely on the internet? (by NSt-75)*

*Due to globalisation, countries all over the world have been keeping up with technology, and the internet is something that most people in this generation would have heard of, if not already an expert in, The internet is used for people to past their time, spending time browsing through websites, through social medias, through blogs, online shopping, communication, and even necessary for completing assignments or essays for the purpose of school or university. It is also common for people to get their local or world news from the internet through various news websites such as, bbc news, or through forums or social networking websites. Some may say that there is no need for newspapers or magazines, however, is this really the case?*

*The internet is easily accessible in first world countries such as America, the United Kingdom, Australia, and so many other countries. However, in some countries such as Cambodia or India, access to technology or the internet may seem impossible. Most of those countries use or do things manually like how we would in the 1990s, and many of those countries have not heard of desktops, laptops, and the internet. Even in first world countries, such as Australia, there are the less fortunate who do not have a working internet in their homes, and thus, it would not be feasible for these families to rely on getting their news through the internet.*

*Next, technology may be difficult and foreign for some, especially the older generations where the internet was not so vast and available yet. It may be tough to get them to familiarise with the technology, much less to expect them to find a portal or a website to get their news from.*

*Furthermore, it is also less flexible to rely on just having the news from the internet. For example, one may expect to head to a cafe and read the news from there. However, the internet connection may not be stable resulting in slow speed internet or there may not even be an internet connection available. In this case, buying a copy of the newspapers or magazines would thus appear to be more feasible and the more*

*sensible option. The cafe or the place where one intends to head to may also prepare hard copy of newspapers and magazines to attract customers into their shop. However, with relying on the internet to read the news, it can be done anywhere and there would no longer be an incentive for customers.*

*Some may, however, argue that having the internet for news will save people a lot of trouble from having to physically carry the newspapers or magazines around. Well, this may be true. Nonetheless, it has become a tradition or a habit for people, especially the generation who grew up with little technology, to read the newspapers daily for their news, or read the magazines to pick up gossips, shopping tips, car deals etc. Furthermore, it would seem a routine for those without access to the internet to pick up their news through the papers instead of expecting everyone to shift towards the internet.*

*It may be fair to still continue with the traditional newspapers and magazines, keeping what most of us are used to. Internet, however, can still be the predominant form of conveying news across to people worldwide. However, I would think that having the choice of the internet or the choice of the traditional newspapers and magazines, is necessary for this time of the century where many still do not get access to technology or many still do not have a familiarisation to the internet. Perhaps, in the next generation, where all may have been exposed to internet and technology, that this question can then be brought up and debated on again. For now, however, my stand would be to continue with traditional newspapers and magazines for access to the news.*

APPENDIX – 4a. The Content of the Grammar and Writing Course Books: The content of the grammar course book

# Live English Grammar **Elementary**

## Contents

# Live English Grammar **Pre-Intermediate**

## Contents

APPENDIX – 4b. The Content of the Grammar and Writing Course Books: The content of the writing course book

# Scope and Sequence

| Unit | Writing | Grammar for Writing | Building Better Vocabulary | Original Student Writing |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **1** p. 2 **UNDERSTANDING SENTENCE BASICS** | • What Is a Sentence?<br>• Capitalization and Punctuation in a Sentence<br>• Editing Your Writing<br>• Journal Writing | • Parts of a Sentence: Subjects, Verbs, and Objects<br>• A Fragment—An Incomplete Sentence<br>• The Verb *Be*<br>• Prepositions of Place—*At, On,* and *In* | • Word Associations<br>• Using Collocations<br>• Parts of Speech | **Original Student Writing:** Write about a country you want to visit.<br>**Photo Topic:** Describe an amazing place in your country. |
| **2** p. 32 **UNDERSTANDING PARAGRAPH BASICS** | • What Is a Paragraph?<br>• Parts of a Paragraph: The Topic Sentence<br>• Parts of a Paragraph: The Body<br>• Parts of a Paragraph: The Concluding Sentence | • Using Adjectives<br>• Word Order: Adjective + Noun<br>• Word Order: *Be* + Adjective<br>• Word Order: Linking Verb + Adjective<br>• Subject Pronouns<br>• Object Pronouns<br>• Possessive Adjectives | • Word Associations<br>• Using Collocations<br>• Parts of Speech | **Original Student Writing:** Write about an interesting person that you know.<br>**Photo Topic:** Write about an activity or sport that you enjoy. |
| **3** p. 70 **WRITING ABOUT THE PRESENT** | • Writing about the Present | • The Simple Present Tense: Statements<br>• *There Is / There Are*<br>• The Simple Present Tense: Negative Statements<br>• Simple Sentences<br>• Compound Sentences<br>• Connecting Words in Compound Sentences<br>• Using *A* and *An* with Count Nouns | • Word Associations<br>• Using Collocations<br>• Parts of Speech | **Original Student Writing:** Write about your favorite sport.<br>**Photo Topic:** Write about your typical routine for a day of the week.<br>**Timed Writing Topic:** Describe a typical "free day." |

| Unit | Writing | Grammar for Writing | Building Better Vocabulary | Original Student Writing |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **4** p. 98<br>**WRITING ABOUT THE PAST** | • Writing about the Past | • The Simple Past Tense of *Be*<br>• The Simple Past Tense of Regular Verbs<br>• The Simple Past Tense of Irregular Verbs<br>• Time Phrases with the Simple Past Tense<br>• The Simple Past Tense of *Be*: Negatives<br>• The Simple Past Tense: Negatives<br>• Using *But* Correctly<br>• Sentence Variety: Complex Sentences<br>• Using Complex Sentences to Show Time Order | • Word Associations<br>• Using Collocations<br>• Parts of Speech | **Original Student Writing:** Write about an important person.<br>**Photo Topic:** Describe a home you lived in when you were a child.<br>**Timed Writing Topic:** Describe an event or time from your past. |
| **5** p. 128<br>**DESCRIBING ACTIONS** | • Describing Actions | • The Present Progressive Tense<br>• Verbs in Complex Sentences<br>• Adverbs of Manner<br>• Prepositional Phrases of Place | • Word Associations<br>• Using Collocations<br>• Parts of Speech | **Original Student Writing:** Write about what is happening in an emergency situation.<br>**Photo Topic:** Describe what is happening in a large city.<br>**Timed Writing Topic:** Describe an activity that you are doing this year. |
| **6** p. 152<br>**WRITING ABOUT THE FUTURE** | • Writing about the Future | • The Simple Future Tense: *Be Going To*<br>• The Simple Future Tense: *Will*<br>• Time Words and Phrases<br>• The Simple Future Tense: Negatives<br>• Verbs in Complex Sentences about the Future<br>• The Indefinite Articles: *A/An*<br>• The Definite Article: *The*<br>• Article Use Summary<br>• Using Modifiers with Singular Count Nouns<br>• Complex Sentences with *Because* | • Word Associations<br>• Using Collocations<br>• Parts of Speech | **Original Student Writing:** Write about an event in your future.<br>**Photo Topic:** Write about what you think will happen in the future.<br>**Timed Writing Topic:** Describe something that you plan to do next year. |

| Unit | Writing | Grammar for Writing | Building Better Vocabulary | Original Student Writing |
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| **7** p. 180<br>**WRITING COMPLEX SENTENCES WITH ADJECTIVE CLAUSES** | • The Importance of Sentence Variety | • Sentence Variety: Recognizing Sentences with Adjective Clauses<br>• Sentence Variety: Writing Adjective Clauses<br>• Using Modals to Add Meaning | • Word Associations<br>• Using Collocations<br>• Parts of Speech | **Original Student Writing:** Write about your dining preference: cooking at home vs. eating out.<br>**Photo Topic:** Write about an animal that you like.<br>**Timed Writing Topic:** Describe something that is important to you. |
| **8** p. 206<br>**PULLING IT ALL TOGETHER AND PREPARING FOR MORE** | • Review: Parts of a Paragraph<br>• Brief Reader Response: Writing a Response to Topics in the News | • Writer's Note: Making Your Writing More Interesting<br>• Verbs that Express an Opinion<br>• Writer's Note: Using *Should* to Soften Your Tone | • Word Associations<br>• Using Collocations<br>• Parts of Speech | **Original Student Writing:** Write your opinion on banning smoking in public places.<br>Write your opinion on government limits on the size of sugary drinks.<br>**Photo Topic:** Write about your opinion on graffiti. |

APPENDIX 5. Summary of some of the latest research studies on L2 tense and aspect

| | Author & Year | General Aim | Context | Main Findings |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Fuchs & Werner, 2022 | The order of acquisition of tense and aspect (OATA) and the Default Past Tense Hypothesis (DPTH) | Learner writing from the beginning to the advanced level in four typologically different L1 backgrounds (German, Chinese, Polish, Spanish) | The results support the predictions of the OATA and the DPTH. Results show that simple forms are used earlier and more frequently, and more accurately than complex forms. However, accuracy does not linearly increase with usage frequency or proficiency and that it is mediated by L1 background. |
| 2 | El Khateeb, 2003 | To analyze verb tense errors in the Written English of Gaza Secondary School Students | L1 Arabic | The analysis of common errors of the three tenses (present, past and future) proved that the highest percentage of errors has been found in tense shift, mostly in present simple tense, where the lowest percentage of errors has been found in verb omission area. |
| 3 | Fatiha, 2018 | Investigating the use of past tenses in the narrative essays | L1 Arabic | Misformation error is the most common error type, and intralingual error is considered to be the first source of |

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| | | | | students' errors. |
| 4 | Diaubalick & Guijarro-Fuentes, 2019 | To explore the acquisition of tense and aspect features in Spanish as L2. | L1 German & L1 Romance Languages | L1 has an undeniable effect in the acquisition of tense and aspect process. German learners show a learning strategy based on their L1. |
| 5 | Nuraini, 2019 | To identify the grammatical errors of English Department students | L1 Indonesian | The most frequent errors are misformation, omission, misordering, and addition. From the linguistic categories, the most frequent errors are misformation of verbal, misordering of complex sentence and omission of determiner errors. In 178 errors, tense errors were only 3. |
| 6 | Toma & Saddik, 2019 | To investigate the acquisition of translation competence system | L1 Behdini | Learners were able to attain a high translation competence to accept the grammatical translations. They failed to attain a complete translation competence as they failed to reject the ungrammatical translations. |
| 7 | Chan, Finberg, Costello, & Shirai, 2012 | To examine the roles of lexical aspect, morphological regularity, and transfer in the developmental emergence of past and progressive morphology | L1 Italian<br>L1 Punjabi | Lexical aspect and tense-aspect morphology is found to correlate and support the Aspect Hypothesis: learners mostly use pas tor perfective markers with telic predicates, and they use progressive morphology with activity verbs. |

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| 8 | Çakır, 2011 | The problems in teaching tenses to Turkish students at university level | L1 Turkish | Turkish students usually mix present progressive with present simple, present perfect with past simple, and past simple with past progressive. |
| 9 | Hinkel, 2004 | To identify the patterns and median frequency rates of L1 and L2 uses of three English tenses (the present, the past and the future), two aspects (the progressive and the perfect), and passive verb structures encountered in a native and nonnative corpus | (various) | Advanced nonnative students have difficulty with tenses, aspects and the passive voice. They employ past-time narratives more frequently than native speraker students. Majority of advanced nonnative speaker students avoid using complex verb phrases: passive voice, the perfect aspect, and predictive / hypothetical would. |
| 10 | Zhang, 2022 | To identify erroneous use of TA | L1 Chinese | Errors most frequently occur in present time and perfect aspects. |
| 11 | Burk, 2018 | The extent to which lexical aspect and grounding influence the acquisition of tense and aspect | L1 Italian | Telic verbs were observed to occur in the foreground and carried past perfective morphology, and in the background, the *imperfetto* was the dominant tense with atelic verbs. |
| 12 | Klopfenstein, | To assess recurring errors in | L1 Arabic | S-V agreement errors are the most frequent errors followed by copula deletion before noun phrases, prepositional |

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| | 2017 | TA | | phrases, and adjective phrases. Simple tenses accounted for 97% of all tense-carrying verbs in the sample. |
| 13 | Martinovic-Zic, 2009 | To investigate language-specific L1 effects in the L2 acquisition of tense-aspect. | L1 English<br>L1 Russian | L1 English / L2 Russian learners show ‘tense-bias’ and limit aspectual choices; conversely, L1 Russian/L2 English learners show ‘aspect-bias’ and mix L2 tenses. |
| 14 | Panagiotopoulos, 2015 | To compare verb features (Tense, aspect, voice, degree of embedding) and word-level n-grams for proficiency assessment | Asian corpora | Tense and aspect was examined seperately, and tense indicated little variation across different proficiency levels, but tense and aspect showed variation. Most essays used present tense, indefinite aspect, and passive voice, thus the discriminative power of tense, aspect, and voice features was limited. |
| 15 | Patanasorn, 2013 | To investigate whether the perfect emerges after L2 learners demonstrate a stable rate of accurate use of the simple past | L1 Thai | L2 learners were observed to acquire the simple past before the present perfect. There is a direct relation between the accurate use of simple past and the usage of present perfect. Learners with higher proficiency levels of English employ present perfect and simple past more often and more appropriately, but students with lower proficiency levels use of simple past inappropriately and they almost never used |

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| | | | | present perfect. |
| 16 | Min, 2013 | To examine the relationship of L2 writing proficiency with the usage of verb tense and aspect | L1 Korean<br>L1 Chinese | Employing tense-aspect patterns was accociated with the students' L2 writing proficiency.<br>Advanced level English learners used present perfect appropriately, yet intermediate level learners used simple past for statements where present perfect was more appropriate. |
| 17 | Darmawan, 2018 | To investigate Chinese L1 older migrants'acquisition of tense and aspect in English L2 | L1 Chinese | Participants were able to develop tense-aspect use through form-focused instructions. They were reported to follow the developmental stages in L2 English acquisition. |
| 18 | Bozdağ, 2019 | To discover patterns of tense-aspect use and errors specific to Turkish EFL learners with different proficiency levels | L1 Turkish | The importance of the proficiency level over employing correct tense-aspect structures is highligted. Present simple is used abındantly by learners with all proficiency levels. |
| 19 | Isarankura, 2011 | To investigate TA structures across three proficiency levels, comparing to native speakers | Various | There is a similarity across native speakers and learners with higher proficiency levels which demonstrate the importance of proficiency level over tense – aspect structures. |

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| 20 | Dagneaux, 1998 | To analyze development differences in TA errors between the intermediate and advanced subcorpora | L1 French | Although the proficiency levels are different, all the students used tense and aspect forms erroneously. Employing correct tense-aspect structures is challenging for even advanced level learners. |
| 21 | Liu, 2012 | To analyze TA errors | L1 Chinese | The most error-prone tense-aspect structure is present simple, and the second most common error- prone structure is past simple. |
| 22 | Grange, 1999 | To investigate advanced level learners' errors of TA | L1 French | The two most error-prone TAs are present simple and past simple. |
| 23 | Şahin, 1993 | To investigate learners' errors of TA | L1 Turkish | The most common error-prone pairs respectively are present simple for past simple, present progressive for present simple, and present perfect for past simple. |
| 24 | Zıngır, 1999 | To examine TA use in L1 Turkish learners of English | L1 Turkish | Past Simple is used abundantly by intermediate level learners in their narratives. The most common error-prone pair is past simple and past perfect. Past progressive use for past simple |

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| | | | | was observed. |
| 25 | Hulvová, 2015 | To analyze TA errors | L1 Czech | The most error- prone pairs respectively are present progressive for present simple, present simple for past simple, and past simple for present simple. |
| 26 | Götz, 2015 | German EFL learners' TA use in spoken corpus | L1 German | As negative L1 transfer from German is possible, the most common error-prone pairs are present progressive for present simple, present perfect for past simple, and present simple for future tense. |

APPENDIX - 6. Research Ethics Approval

| Evrak Kayıt Tarihi: 05.11.2020 | Protokol No: 64728 |
|---|---|

Tarih: 25.11.2020

ANADOLU ÜNİVERSİTESİ
SOSYAL VE BEŞERÎ BİLİMLER BİLİMSEL ARAŞTIRMA VE YAYIN ETİĞİ KURULU
KARAR BELGESİ

| | |
|---|---|
| **ÇALIŞMANIN TÜRÜ:** | Doktora Tez Çalışması |
| **KONU:** | Eğitim Bilimleri |
| **BAŞLIK:** | Yabancı Dil Olarak İngilizce Öğrenen Alt-Orta Düzeyde Yeterlik Seviyesindeki Türk Öğrencilerin Fikir Yazılarındaki Zaman-Görünüş Yapıları<br>(English Tense And Aspect Constructıons ın The Opınıon Essays Of Pre-Intermediate Level Turkish Efl Students) |
| **~~PROJE~~/TEZ YÜRÜTÜCÜSÜ:** | Dr. Öğr. Üyesi Gonca SUBAŞI |
| **TEZ YAZARI:** | Duygu AKTUĞ EKİNCİ |
| **ALT KOMİSYON GÖRÜŞÜ:** | - |
| **KARAR:** | Olumlu |

# ÖZGEÇMİŞ