

## Language Transfer in Graduate Candidates' Essays

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**Abstract :** Candidates to some graduate studies are asked to write essays in English to prove their competence to write essays and to do it in English. In the present study, language transfer (LT) in 15 written essays is identified, documented, analyzed, and classified. The essays were written in 2019, and the graduate program is a Masters in Modern Languages in a North-Western Mexican city border with USA. This study is of interest since it is important to determine whether or not some errors have been fossilized and have become mistakes, or if it is part of the candidates' interlanguage. The results show that most language transfer is negative and syntactic, where the influence of candidates L1 (Spanish) is evident in their use of L2 (English).

**Keywords :** language transfer, cross-linguistic influence, interlanguage, error vs mistake

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