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A Study of some grammatical errors made by speakers of informal english: the casr of traders in Bujumbura

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UNIVERSITY OF BURUNDI
FACULTY OF ARTS AND SOCIAL SCIENCES
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE

A STUDY OF SOME GRAMMATICAL ERRORS MADE BY SPEAKERS OF INFORMAL ENGLISH: The Case of Traders in Bujumbura

by
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A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Award of the Degree «LICENCE EN LANGUE ET LITTERATURE ANGLAISES ».

Bujumbura, February 2006

DEDICATION

To God my creator who has protected and assisted me until now.

To my late father and mother, Simon MBONABUCA and Euphrasie NTIGIRANKABO who passed away too early to see the fruit of their effort,

To my husband Jean Marie KINYARUSHATSI,

To my beloved son Kin King MIKASI,

To my brothers and sisters,

To my uncles and aunts,

To my nieces and nephews,

To you my friends and relatives

I warmly dedicate this work.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

It is due to many people's effort that this work has reached its present stage.

First of all, my heartfelt gratitude goes to Mrs Beatrice EKANJUME, lecturer at the University of Burundi, who, despite her many academic, personal and private commitments, supervised and assisted this work from the draft to its completion.

I am also grateful to all the teachers who contributed to my training especially those of the Department of English Language and Literature.

My sincere thanks are addressed to all my former teachers from the Primary school to the University.

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I would also like to thank my former classmates for their assistance. May the Almighty bless you all who contributed in one way or another to my studies.

Grâce NIMBONA

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND SYMBOLS

EOP : English for Occupational Purposes

EAP : English for Academic Purposes

EST : English for Science and Technology

Φ : Zero

* : Ungrammatical sentence

UB : Université du Burundi

QC : Questions asked by the customer

T : Trader

C : Customer

L1 : First Language or Mother Tongue

L2 : Second Language

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CHAPTER 1: GENERAL INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background to the Study

The use of any language is to communicate and to express one's own ideas all over the world. It is a channel through which thoughts and ideas are expressed. A language is essentially a tool for communication and its grammatical patterns play a crucial role in communication.

However, English is the most widely used language all over the world as a matter of fact, almost all countries have felt the need to use English for different purposes. For example, air traffic controllers need English primarily to guide aircraft through the skies. They may not use the language at all apart from this. Business executives need English for international trade. Waiters may need English to serve their customers. These needs have often been referred to as English for occupational purposes (EOP). There is also English for Academic Purposes (EAP). For example, when a student goes to the university in the USA, Great Britain, Australia or Canada, he/she will need English so that he/she can write reports or essays and participates in seminars.
According to Harmer (1991:2),

> *"there are also students of medicine or nuclear physics or other scientific disciplines (studying in their own countries) who need to be able to read articles and textbooks about those subjects in English. This is often referred to as EST or English for Science and Technology."*

English has a special position since it has become the international language of communication.

As far as Burundi is concerned, Burundians have to learn English for political and economic reasons. This need is justified by our geographical situation.

In fact, we have no access to the sea. So we must co-operate with our neighbours.- Tanzanians, Ugandans and Kenyans who are English speakers. Apart from that politico-economic need, no one should ignore the fact that English is a language of education. Most studies seem to be published in English. Hence, whether one is studying Applied Sciences, Medicine, Technology, Business Administration, Sociology,..... or other sciences, one needs some knowledge of English.

Therefore, it is up to all people to see the crucial role of learning English for communication needs, as Norrish (1983:3) says in the following lines : "Language is not a set of facts to be learned, but a medium of expressing thoughts, feelings and communicating with other people".

As far as Burundian traders are concerned, they use English to communicate with foreigners. So, they have to know the English language in order to achieve their mission well.

This study gives an opportunity to pick up grammatical errors made by traders in Bujumbura when addressing others and seeking for their causes. It will be an occasion to point out various errors made when speaking English, within the reach of everyone and show the consequences it could induce in communication.

1.2. Statement of the Problem.

It is known that Burundi is a French speaking country but because English is becoming a world language, people are in need of using it in their everyday activities. For example, they do business where the intervention of English language is quite necessary.

This study points out the grammatical errors made by our traders while using English due to pronunciation, grammatical structure, syntactic rules and so on. Since English is becoming a world language, a good businessman needs to know it in order to carry on his business transactions well. This is a serious problem with the Burundian traders because they do not know English well. It is this fact that pushed me to work on the present topic.

1.3. Research Hypotheses

This work is based on the following hypotheses:

1. Traders in Burundi do not pay particular attention to the rules of English language.

2. Burundian traders learn English not because they want to know it, but simply because they want to communicate with their customers.

3. Traders in Burundi do not know about the structure of their sentences, but try to make sure that the message goes through in any form including gestures.

1.4. The Importance of the Study

This work will help the readers to know the causes and types of errors that traders make and their consequences. Those who have never done any business will first of all think about learning formal English in order to avoid misunderstanding in Bujumbura city and in the whole country or abroad. This work will not only help traders to know the errors they make, their causes, but it will also reveal to them the importance of formal English as far as their profession is concerned.

Therefore, by studying some grammatical errors, this work helps to think of the roots and gravity of the speakers' errors. So, a good method of changing that ungrammatical structure is proposed and on the basis of data collection, the speakers problems are pointed out and solutions are proposed.

1.5. Aims of the Study

The main objective of this study is to look into errors made by the informal sector: the case of Traders in Bujumbura. And to show some factors which are obstacles to the learning of English in general and the speaking of it in particular, without forgetting to point out why these errors occur so that some strategies and recommendations may be suggested in order to improve the teaching of English grammar.

The main assumption is that once we find out why these errors occur, we will be able to minimize them.
The main purpose being to limit misunderstandings among people, due to grammatical errors, ignorance of importance of learning the English language, which have a great role in this century.

Therefore, this study will seek to answer the following questions:

1. What types of errors do traders make?
2. Why do they make such errors?

1.6. Motivation of the Study

The reasons behind the choice of the topic are various. First of all, insufficient study has been carried out so far on speakers with grammatical errors, especially within the informal English. Any language is an autonomous system. To understand it therefore, a person or a learner has to analyse its system.

In fact, people do not care about English language in Burundi even though it has a great role in the development of countries. The world today is becoming the English world. English has a great role in general.

Furthermore, without a serious study of the structure of a language, a good mastery of the essentials of the grammar, and a good number of structural exercises, we cannot pretend to know a language effectively.

In summary, any speakers of a broken language influence other people who do not know it resulting in a bigger population speaking even a poorer language . Example : Creole, Kiswahili spoken in Burundi, Rwanda, and the Democratic Republic of Congo.

1.7. Delimitation of the Study.

The study covers only the municipality of Bujumbura city, which is the capital of Burundi. It was decided to start the study with Bujumbura because the morality of informal activities are found in the metropolis, in some Bujumbura estates that have many English speakers.

CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.1. Introduction

The writers who dealt with grammatical errors showed how the errors are inevitable because of our first language . As Corder (1981) says:

> *... people now believed they had a principled means for accounting for these errors, namely that they were the result of interference in the learning of a second language from the habit of the first language.*

Errors could not be avoided as well as our identity, residence is this world. As Corder (1981) points out : "we live in an imperfect world and consequently errors will always occur in spite of our best efforts ." This comes to say that before traders in Burundi are introduced to English, they have already acquired the Kirundi or French language . As a matter of fact, it goes without saying that the knowledge of these two languages influence the learning of English. However, traders are sometimes forced to speak English although the grammatical rules are unknown to them.

2.2. Language and Society

Language is used to communicate and to express our ideas, thoughts, information and questions. Language is a tool for communication. Each society has its own language for the simple reason of communicating wherever they are. All communication involves senders and receivers, messages and a medium. When you write a letter to a friend you are the transmitter and your friend is the receiver.

However, there is also interpersonal communication which is another form of communication. It uses sound to carry the messages. When you have a conversation you use words to convey meanings to the person to whom you are talking. According to North (1985: 27).

> *Communication between two people is interpersonal communication and it happens so frequently that we rarely give it much thought. It does, however, have its own rules and procedures.*

If you listen to two people talking, you will soon realise that they are both senders and receivers. Messages are sent first by one person and then by the other.

In addition, you will realise that if each person speaks about something different without paying attention to what the other person has to say, it will be a very odd conversation. North (1985:29) says:

> *There is more to a good conversation than just listening to what the other person is saying. We also need to understand what is being said. We need to be able to decode the symbols. This means that we must first convert the sounds or symbols into something that we understand and then decide what it means.*

Furthermore, we have a number of other forms of communication to help us. We use body movements, facial expression, gestures to help us to decode the meaning. North (1985:37) proves this in saying that :

" Even in a telephone conversation where there are no visible clues, we use the tone of voice to add meaning to the words. There is also the setting or context which contribute in understanding. Knowing where a conversation takes place helps us to make a sense of it."

For example a simple phrase like' can you help me? Means something different if it is said by a pupil to a teacher instead of by a drowning man. We could say that it is impossible to separate a thing called 'society' from the ways in which people interact in everyday life, from the ways in which they make their social worlds and from the ways in which they pass those worlds on to others. North (1985) says that, this approach has seen society as something which is continually being remade through the actions of individuals, but which also has an influence on how individuals become. Society has been seen as a process of becoming. He continues by saying that society is continually being made and remade through the actions of people. It is important to remember this as we discover more about the ways in which social life is organised. We often treat society as a 'thing' which somehow exists on its own, yet we know that cannot be true. The word 'Society' is often used as a shorthand way of describing this process of becoming at a particular point in time. In relation to this North (1985:39) says:

> *Because 'Society' appears to be like that at this moment of time does not mean that it has always been like that, nor that it will continue to be like that in the future.*

However, a language when it is spoken to a group of any size is a public communication and any astute business person is concerned about relations with that public, normally because people in society have and share things in common and language has an important role in activities people operate in society.

2..2.1. The English Language Spoken in the World.

The English language consists of a collection of dialects spoken mainly by monolinguals, according to Cheshire (1991). He says that it includes such typologically distinct varieties as pidgins and Creoles. Cheshire says that' New' Englishes and a range of differing standard and men standard varieties are spoken on a regular basis in more than 60 different countries around the world. Cheshire continues by saying that English is also of course, the main Language used for communication at international level.

There are sociolinguistic concepts which are often taken as self-evidence but which we are forced to question when analysing English as it is used around the world. Cheshire (1991:18) says that

"*Mother tongue is not necessarily a useful or a meaningful concept in cities, where population movement, language loss, language shift and language attitudes may all affect the language that speakers consider to be their first language.*"

Furthermore, he says that the distinction that has been drawn conventionally between the 'native speaker' and 'non native speaker' is becoming blurred and increasingly difficult to operationalize.

At one time, it may have been possible to make a distinction on the grounds that a non native speaker of English had learnt the language through formal instruction, rather than acquired it as a mother tongue, but in many multilingual countries, the functional range of English is changing rapidly, so that English is now used in formal domains. This means that although English may still be learnt at school, it may also be acquired through informal use in everyday life.

2.3. Language and Trade

Language has always held a central place in the affairs of man. According to Hymes (1964:535),

> *"Every sailor of any nationality knows some thirty English words, which he pronounces in such away that after half an hour you may get a rough idea of what he wishes to say. Each sailor, though, does not have the same vocabulary as the others, and hardly to have the same pronunciation of the same word, living together and working together, each sailor picks up the words of his companions until, after two months or so, all men aboard have acquired a working knowledge of about three hundred words common to all the crew and understood by all."*

It is very clear that it will be better for sellers to study English language in order to ovoid errors, because, the broken-down structure used and the circumstances under which it is spoken, are often held in contempt by a large group of their speakers.

As a general appellation of the language spoken by sailors, Hymes (1964:12) proposes the term **Marginal Language** with the following definition:

> *The marginal languages arise in areas of pronounced culture contacts, in situations where, broadly speaking, it is impossible or impracticable for the people concerned to learn each other's language well.*

Furthermore, Hymes continues to say that the word 'marginal' as developed by the Chicago School of Sociologists bears the connotations of lack of full participation in a society.

'We just live there and listen, and before we know it, we can hear what they say. Then we can talk' one African explained. This does not mean that he expected to be able to understand (to hear).

2.3.1. A Speech of Introduction

A Speech of Introduction points audience attention to an event beyond itself. Whether introducing another speaker, a film, or some other instance of public communication, the introductory speech serves three essential functions according to Van Ousting (1985). First, he says that it provides information necessary for the audience to fully appreciate or understand what is to come. This information most often concerns a speaker, his or her professional credentials and special qualification. This expository information may also focus upon the subject to be addressed in the main event.

The second function of an introductory speech beyond exposition is to prepare the audience for their listening role.Thus a good introduction gains the audience's attention, encourages a positive attitude toward the event to come, and provides a spring board for the next speaker's presentation. A third function of the introductory speech is to facilitate the main speaker's works to make him or her feel welcome and to establish an atmosphere in which that speaker will feel at ease.

2.3.2. Job Description

Trading one's amateur status for some level of speech mastery begins with a business speaker understanding his or her general job description. According to Van ousting (1985), when making a speech regardless of the situation or the objective, a person in business has three overseers: the subject, the audience and the business constituency that one represents.

Van Ousting (1985 : 232) support this in saying that:

> *One is under special obligation to know thoroughly The product, service, or proposal being sold. One becomes the corporate insignia as it were, representing and defending the best of its production.*

This means that everyone must be able to explain others about his/her job, which requires a good communication in order to be understood.

2.3.3. Speech Used in Business

2.3.3.1. Definition of Business Speech.

The term "business speech" evokes a number of conventional images: a salesperson extolling the advantages of a new product line, the advertising executive displaying a promotional complain, the market analyst (charting a financial forecast, or the industrial manager urging workers to meet higher standards of quality or efficiency. All these situations describe business speech activities. However, business speaking includes many other situations that may not come to mind as readily.

In addition, Van Ousting (1985: 20) says about business speech:

> *The public nature of speech situation places certain constraints on communication as well as affording unique opportunities. In dealing with public perception, there can be no private agreements or understandings, no secret handshakes or codes, no club names or jargon public communication, if it is to succeed, must establish an open, accessible relationship between speaker and audience. And the foundation of that public relationship depends on its strength upon the speech skills of business professionals at every level of corporate enterprise.*

However, there is no trade language in the true sense of the word as Hymes (1964: 416) writes in one place, though elsewhere he confines himself to the more cautious statement that :

The trade jargons are a good deal more important for communication between white masters and colored servants than between white merchants and colored traders or producers.

The trade jargons may be regarded as the east developed forms of marginal language that have attained considerable fixity.

Originally they arise out of the casual intercourse of traders (generally seamen) with a fixed population, although later they may be extended to serve the intercourse between the native population and resident foreigners who for some reason do not learn the native language.

Van Ousting says that in the beginning, they are truly makeshift, and since they tend to be short – lived, disappearing as soon as one or the other party finds it expedient to learn a standard tongue to serve as a common medium some of them retain much of their makeshift character till their end.

According to Nida (1927:27), "Tens of thousands of Africans speak a trade language or a colonial language as well as their own tribal tongue". He says that "people learn by listening, without a benefit of printed grammars, a study of phonetics, or instruction on how to learn other languages, but they master diverse tongues with apparent ease."

Mavor (1988:74) does not agree with Nida in saying that:

The fact that there is no special language for business has already been emphasised. Modern business practice has happily done away with the ponderous and stilted expression so common only a few years ago. commercial jargon sometimes called official, is not always easy to recognise, for it is an insidious disease that creeps into letters no matter how careful you are. Its main symptoms are: circumlocution (the use of many words where few would do): the use of long words for short words, unfamiliar words for familiar, phrases for single words, padding (filling-out with unnecessary words); the flush of new words and phrases.

2.3.3.2. Informal Speech

Informal speech is a type of speech used in everyday informal situations when the speaker is not paying particular attention to pronunciation, choice of words, or sentence structure. According to Nida (1957:27), an informal speech is also called colloquial speech. The latter is not necessarily none equal prestige speech and should not be considered as sub-standard. He says that educated native speakers of a language normally use colloquial speech in informal situation with friends, fellow workers, and members of the family.

For example we can say: "Why don't you come around this evening?" rather than the more formal: "We should be delighted if you would pay us a visit this evening." Nida (1957:30) continues by saying that:

> *It is often difficult for language learners to realize that in certain situations, colloquial speech is more appropriate than extremely formal speech.*

In addition, Van Ousting (1985:85) defines informal speech as "the second level of language usage which is marked by a conversational or consultative relationship between the speaker and his or her listener". He says that personal pronouns (I, you and we) are expected. He continues saying that informal speech may use anecdotes and humour. In business speech an informal level of language usage is appropriate to almost any situation in which the speaker can anticipate an audience's view point and allows for some explicit or implicit give and take.

2.3.3.3 The Requirements of Good Speech Structure.

In relation to good speech structure, Van Ousting (1985) says the following:

> *A good speech structure like language well used, offers unique satisfactions to the speaker and listener. To fashion a logical argument that holds together from beginning to end offers real pleasure to any orator and places a business speaker in the company of philosophers and statesmen throughout history.*

However, according to Nida (1957:27), "some people do not wish to say a thing until they are sure that all the forms are perfectly correct." Nida says that one should dive right-in and begin using the words in order to convey one's meaning.

The refinements of grammatical form will come, but the broad sentence structures must come first. There are, of course, those who never care to master the finer points of the language, and this is a great mistake.

It does not mean that one should attempt to memorise the grammar. It simply means that one should become familiar with the overall picture of what one is likely to find in the language. Nida (1957) says "It is so much easier to appreciate and understand a foreign country if one has first read some travel guides". In the same way, a grammar can be a travel guide for one's learning of a new language. Nida continues by saying that such travel guides and grammars are not to be memorized nor to be considered infallible or complete but they will provide important information along the route and what may seem meaningless or arbitrary may be seen to fit into the larger framework of the language.

2.3.3.4. When the Language Becomes a Handicap to Trade

In everyday life, the language has a great role in communication. When it is not known efficiently there is somehow some difficulties which cause misunderstanding between people. The English language can be a handicap to trade, when for example the customer is a native speaker and the seller a speaker of informal English or vice versa. In this case, the customer will be angry of repeating many times the same words without being understood. It will be of course some words very difficult to one of them. As Mavor (1988:72) says: "the use of Colloquial forms is not necessarily always bad English, but in a business letter, they give the impression of slackness or laziness – and this is discourteous."

In addition, there is also a sound which can be a tool of misunderstanding.

For example in Uganda there are some business men/women who pronounce [th] as [s]. When a speaker of informal English goes in Uganda, Kenya or Dubai, to buy her/his goods, he can get many problems during the journey and come back without achieving his/her goal because of the language.

For example: How much does this branket cost?

Thirty three thousand. [θʒ: ti θri : θaʊznd]

*[sʒ: ti sri : saʊznd]

Traders make many errors in speaking and as Burling (1970:129) says, there are some grammatical patterns missing in their words. The writer says that there is loss of phonological contrast particularly at the end of words, the weakening of suffixes, and the analogical extension of the resulting patterns. Corder (1981:25) comes to realise that the errors traders make in the process of building a new system of language, need to be analysed carefully, for they possibly hold in them some keys to the understanding of the process of foreign language learning.

2.4. Survey Identification of Grammatical Errors

As we grow up, our needs grow increasingly complex and along with them, our communication efforts. The different words we discover, are appropriate in different settings. The expressions we hear on the playground or through the bedroom door may not be acceptable at the super table. We may decide to use them anyway to attract attention.

Along with words we learn to use intonation, gestures, social expression, and many other features of communication to convey our meaning to persons around us:

In fact, we can identify grammatical errors because of the broken – down structure, but also because of the circumstances under which they are spoken, they are often held in contempt by a large section of their speakers, by speakers of the parent languages or by both.

According to Hymes (1964:534) "a language with grammatical errors is called jargon which are marginal in reference both to their parent languages and to the cultural environment in which their parent language are spoken." But he continues by saying that the marginal language is dismissed not merely as 'bad grammar' or' dialect'. They are in fact so broken down and deviant from the parent dialects as to become new unintelligible languages.

Furthermore, the word 'marginal' as developed by the Chicago school of Sociologists bears the connotations of lack of full participation in a society.

2.4.I. What is Error?

According to the Longman Dictionary of Applied Linguistics, the speech or writing of a second or foreign language learner, the use of a linguistic item (example: a word, a grammatical item, a speech act and so on) in a way which a fluent or native speaker of the language regards as showing faulty or incomplete learning.

A distinction is sometimes made between an error, which results from incomplete knowledge, and a mistake made by a learner when writing or speaking and which is caused by lack of attention, fatigue, carelessness or some other aspect of performance.

Errors are sometimes classified according to vocabulary (lexical error), misunderstanding of a speaker's intention or meaning (interpretive error), pronunciation (phonological error), grammar (syntactic error), production of the wrong communicative effect (e.g. through the faulty use of a speech act) or one of the rules of speaking (pragmatic error). In the study of second and foreign language learning, errors have been studied to discover the processes learners make use of in learning and using a language.

2.4.2. Error Gravity

It is a measure of the effect that errors made by people speaking a second or foreign language have on communication or on other speakers of the language. The degree of error gravity of different kinds of errors (e.g. errors of pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary etc) varies; some errors have little effect, some cause irritation, while others may cause communication difficulties. For example let consider the following sentences.

(a) Since the harvest was good, was rain a lot last year.

(b) The harvest was good last year, because plenty of rain.

Sentence (a) causes greater interference with communication than (b) and shows a greater degree of error gravity.

2.4.3. Error Analysis

According to the Longman Dictionary of Applied Linguistics, error analysis is the Study and analysis of the errors made by second and foreign language learners. Error analysis may be carried out in order to:

a) Find out how well someone knows a language.
b) Find out how a person learns a language.
c) Obtain information on common difficulties in language learning, as an aid in teaching or in the preparation of teaching materials.

2.4.4. Learning Environments

There are four skills of learning a language : Listening, speaking,writing and reading . One hears the target language in a classroom, the only chance to practise the language. The other lives in a different type of environment where the language is in use around him, on advertising hoardings for example, and hear it used by his fellow countrymen in certain situations in his society. This leads us to two types of environments: Formal environment and informal environment.

Furthermore, the language environment encompasses everything the language learner hears and sees in the new language. And this environment may include a wide variety of situations such as exchange in restaurants, conversations with friends and the like. And according to Dulay et all (1982:3).

> *The most beneficial language environment is one where language is used naturally for communication, while some aspects of the language may need conscious study. The acquisition of the basics of a language is best accomplished in contexts where the learner is focused on understanding or expressing an idea, message or other thought in the new language.*

Normally, language learning is easily accomplished if the language learner is exposed to language data.
Caroll (1967) says that one of the major distinguishing characteristics of an environment is the presence or absence of natural exposure opportunities. He says that the speaking example is that of the host language environment which permits to talk with native speakers about their lives in the new environment.

Therefore, as a matter of fact, the quality of language environment is of paramount importance to success in learning a new language.
In other words, with no exposure at all, no learning can take place.

For example people who live in place where English is spoken by everyone will perform their English more than those who live where English is not even known as an important language, or spoken.

2.4.4.1. Formal Environment

It is quite important to study the learner's language, for it brings a contribution as Corder (1981: 58) says in the following lines: "One of the principal reasons for studying the learner's language is precisely to discover why it is as it is."

This means that in the course of learning a second language, it is normal for learners to produce ungrammatical or strange utterances when judged by the generally accepted rules of the language they are learning. This is not only to be felt by language teachers but also any native speaker of the target language who comes in contact with them.

I agree with Corder (1981: 21) when he says that:

> *The learning of the second language after the first one is not an easy task to account for, especially when they are adult learners. They have already a firm knowledge of the first language, so that the integration of a new language is likely to encounter some problems.*

Similarly to Richards (1974:25) 'the learner's errors are useful both to the teacher and the learner. In fact, errors are very significant to the teacher because they tell him what his learner knows and what he does not know. This new information will direct the teacher's attention to areas where the learner has problems.

When we learn a language, we learn by imitation, mimicry, constant practice and, at the end of the lesson our new language habits become as fixed as those of our mother tongue.

In fact, there is also the influence of the society. According to Bell (1981:27):

> *The sociolinguistic is interested in who speaks what, to whom and when, and where and why? That is in the social contexts of a language use. He may adopt a theoretical sentence towards language teaching and learning and concentrate on building abstract models of language use but his commitment to the social aspects of a language makes it very likely that he will become involved, at some level, in the creation of language training programmes.*

It is easier to correct mistakes or to avoid errors when you are learning a language (tutored environment) according to methodology used. As Corder (1981) says,

> ..... *if we were to achieve a perfect teaching method the errors would never be committed in the first place, and therefore the occurrence of errors is merely a sign of the present inadequacy of our teaching techniques.*

2.4.4.2. Informal Environment

Many people want to learn English as much as they can. For some, it is only a matter of reading and writing it, and they will find no help . But many want to be able to speak English well, with a pronunciation which can be easily understood by both English people and others.

As O' Connor (1980) says, "my ideas make a focus on listening to a sound so that we can imitate it and understand". He says that language starts with the ear.

He gives an example related to babies when they start to talk, they do it by hearing the sounds their mothers make and imitating them.

In fact, there is an influence of native language interference which will not let us pronounce a word well. O' Connor(1985) says

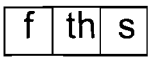
> *By the time we are grown up, the habits of our own language are so strong that they are very difficult to break.*
> *In our own language, we have a fairly small number of sound units which we put together in many different combination to form the words and sentences we use everyday. And as we get older, we are dominated by this small number of units.*

O' Connor (1985:42) illustrates this with an example of different boxes in our minds. He says that it is as if we had in our heads a certain fixed number of boxes for sounds. He states it as follows:

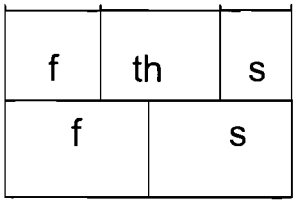
> *When we listen to our own language, we hear the sounds and we put each into the right box, and when we speak we go to the box and take out the sounds we want in the order we want them.*

And as we do this over the years the boxes get stronger and stronger until everything we hear whether it is our own language or another, has to be put into one of these boxes and everything we say comes out of them.

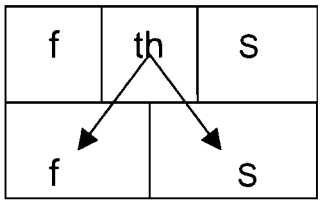
He continues by saying that every language has a different number of boxes and the boxes are arranged differently. He gives an example of 3 English boxes, which contain 3 words, fin, thin, and sin, that is f, th (this is one sound) and s.



Now many other languages have boxes which are similar to the English ones for f and s, but they do not have a special box for the th-sound and we can picture this in the following way:



When the foreign listener hears the English th- sound, he has to put it in one of his own boxes, his habits force him to do so, and he has no special th box, so he puts it into either the f box or the s box



eg. Something, [sʌmθɪŋ]

* [sʌmsɪŋ]

* [sʌmfɪŋ]

In other words, he 'hears' the th- sound as either f or s, a funny f or a funny s, no doubt, but he has nowhere else to put it. And in speaking the samething happens: if he has to say thin, he says fin or sin (or it may be tin , if he has a t box in his language.

This clearly shows that the meaning of the word is bound to change and communication will be difficult between people.

We need to do a great deal of hard work if we want to build ourselves a set of English boxes which are nearly as firm as those of our own language.

O' Connor (1980) mentions his critic saying that :

"Anyone who says that we can get a good English pronunciation without hard work is talking rubbish". He suggests that most of us need to work hard at it, but this work can contribute only to demonstrating that pronunciation is one of the great facts which lead to understanding in conversation.

Performance consists of the comprehension and production of a language, how a person uses his knowledge in producing and understanding sentences.

According to the Dictionary of Applied Linguistics, People may have the competence to produce an infinitely long sentence but when they actually attempt to use this knowledge (to' perform'), there are many reasons why they restrict the number of adjectives, adverbs, and clauses in any one sentence they may run out of breath, or their listeners may get bored or forget what has been said if the sentence is too long.

Psycholinguists attempt to describe how competence is used in the actual production and understanding of sentences (Performance). In second and foreign language learning, a learner's performance in a language may indicate his or her competence.
In informal environment (untutored people) people repeat what they hear around them without taking into account the rules, which govern a language.

In informal environment, it is quite understandable that people can not benefit from correction in their spoken language. Most often, they pronounce English words as they want, sometimes using only content words, sentences without verbs, ill-formed sentences and so on, and the language they speak becomes Pidgin and Creole.

Pidgin and Creole languages represent a system which is neither the L1 of the learners nor the L2 at which they were aiming, that is, a compromise system which contains elements of both but which is neither.

Pidgin and Creole languages are fossilised systems which ceased to change at a particular point in their development, that is they are fixed in time, the assumptions about the target system held at that time by the learners.

2.5. Definitions of some Useful Notions

Word order: According to the Longman Dictionary of Applied Linguistics (1985:313), It is the arrangement of words Sentence. Languages often differ in their word order

For example: * He has to me the book given.

"He has given me the book".

In English, the position of a word in a sentence often signals its function. Thus, in the sentence *"dogs eat meat",* the position of dogs shows that it is the subject and the position of meat shows that it is the object. In some languages, including English, a change from the usual word order may often be used to emphasize or contrast example.

That cheese I really don't like.

Where the object of the sentence is shifted to the beginning.

Developmental error: According to the Longman Dictionary of Applied Linguistics (1985:78),

it is an error in the language use of a first or second language learner which is the result of a normal pattern of development, and which is common among language learners, for example in learning.

English, first and second language learners often produce verbs forms such as camed, goad, and beaked instead of came, went and broke.

This is thought to be because they have learned the rule for regular past tense formation and then apply it to all verbs.
Later, such errors disappear as the learner's language ability increases.

Third person singular: According to the Longman Dictionary of Applied Linguistics(1985:213),

it is a grammatical category which determines the choice of to such principles as whether the pronoun represents someone or something other than the speaker/writer or the listener/reader example the, she, it.

Tense: According to the Longman Dictionary of Applied Linguistics (1985:290),

It is the relationship between the form of the verb and the time of the action or state it describes.In English, verbs may be in the past or present tense however, the present tense form of the verb is also used in.

a) Timeless expressions: The sun rises in the east
b) For future events: I leave/am leaving next Monday
c) Past events for dramatic effect: suddenly she collapses on the floor.

The past tense form of the verb may also occur in conditional clauses example: If you worked harder, you would pass the exam.

Auxiliary Verb: According to the Longman Dictionary of Applied Linguistics (1985:23). It's a verb which is used with another verb in a sentence, and which shows grammar and person.
In English, be, do and have and the modal verbs like may, can and will are all auxiliaries for example:

She is working.
He didn't come.
They have finished.
You may go now.
Can you come?
They will arrive tomorrow.

The verbs working, came, finished, go and arrive in these sentences are called lexical verbs or full verbs.
Auxiliary verbs can also be used as lexical verbs.
Example: She is happy; she does computer studies at university and they have four children.

2.5.1. Different Use of Articles

The encyclopedia Americana defines an article as "a part of speech used before noun to limit or define their application". In the English language, a and an are indefinite articles whereas the is the definite article.

"a" is used before a noun beginning with a consonant sound and an is used before a noun beginning with a vowel or an unpronounced h. The chief function or articles is one of the most difficult points for foreign learners of English grammar. The different use of articles is complicated because learners do not know when to use them or when to omit them.

a) Use of "the"

The is the commonest specific determiner. It is called the definite article. However when using the, we must always bear in mind two basic facts.

First of all the person or thing referred to is assumed to be known by the speaker or hearer, second, the combines with singular countable, plural countable and uncountable nouns. The word the alone is insufficient and means nothing to identify the nouns.

In fact, there are three reasons why in English we specify a particular noun:

1) Because the noun has been mentioned before and we want to refer back to that specific object, person or animal.
Example: I ate a sweet. The sweet was very delicious.

2) Because it has been specified in the noun group and in this case, the use of the presupposes that identification of the items under question will be given to the listener by a following text.

Example a) My car is the bus you see over there
b) The beer that BRASSERI produces is good.

In a) The bus is identified by the prepositional phrase which follows the noun. In saying the bus, the speaker assumes that there is only one bus in front of the hearer/listener.

In b) The interdependence between the determiner and the relative clause is obvious.

3) Because it is specified in the context. The context can be a global one which is known to all people.

Example: The rain is coming

When we talk about the white, the black, the sky, the presupposition is that in our experience or field or interest there is only one white color, one black color, one sky which are concepts common to mankind as a whole.

b. Use of ϕ (zero) article

There are instances where people do not make use of articles at all in English. The non use of articles is so important that we give it a name the zero article. As far as traders are concerned, the use of nouns on their own without an article is so fundamental in English that we should not regard this omission of an article as something negative.

There are a number of count nouns that take zero articles in abstract or rather specialized use chiefly in certain idiomatic expressions with verbs like be, go.

Examples:

Go by air.

Be in bed.

Go to church.

But we say: Sit in the air.

Sleep in the bed.

Common no count nouns take ϕ (zero article) as well as the definite or indefinite quantifiers but, they do not take the indefinite article or have a plural form.

Example: a pen, the pen

Two bottles, many/some bottles

Examples for indefinite quantifiers and definite articles

a) I want ϕ wine (zero article)

b) The wine you are taking is good (definite article)

c) Some wine is not here indefinite quantifier)

But not: They drink some wine

They drink a wine

They drink three wines

The/a book is on the table

But not: Book is on the table

The indefinite or definite article can be used before singular countable nouns, but a singular countable noun cannot be used without an article.

2.5.2. Errors, Mistakes and Lapses

It is important to differentiate between these terms. When a learner makes a mistake, he breaks the rules of the language as a result of non linguistic factors. It is not always possible to distinguish between errors and mistakes. However, if a pupil uses an item correctly many times but gets it wrong once, he has obviously made a mistake.
If a person frequently uses the same item wrongly then he is almost certainly making errors.

Corder (1971) put forward a useful distinction between three types of 'fault': the grammatically incorrect form – termed error – The socially inappropriate form – the mistake – and the slip of the tongue or pen – the lapse.
We might consider these in order, since most of us would agree that errors, as we have just defined them, are more serious and more in need of correction than mistakes and that lapses may well require no corrective action at all.

Richards explains 4 other types of errors:

1° Ignorance of rule restriction

We may believe that this ignorance of rule restriction is closely related to generalization because both cases fail to observe the restrictions of the existing structures and this applies rules to contexts where they do not fit.

2° Overgeneralization

It implies the generalization of transfer as the use of previously available strategies in new situations. Generally, overgeneralization involves the creation of one deviant structure in place of two regular structures. And this normally happens for items which do not carry significant and obvious contrast for the learner.

3° Incomplete applications of rules

In Richards (1974:177)' terms under this category, we may note the occurrence of structures whose deviancy represents the degree of development of the rules acquired to produce acceptable utterances. Thus, the fact may be due to the motivation to achieve that excessive motivation to produce grammatically correct sentences.

4° False concepts hypothesized

It is a class of developmental errors which are derived from faulty comprehension of distinctions in the target language. And most of the time, this results from wrong teaching methods from the very first day.

Obviously, as it is shown, the origin of the previously mentioned types of errors are found within the structure of English itself, and through reference to the strategy by which a second language is acquired and taught. And as a matter of fact, all errors find their origin in the English grammar itself.

2.6. How to Avoid Grammatical Errors

Since readers differ, each message should be adapted to a particular receiver. Remember written communication should at all times be accurate and meaningful to both the sender and receiver.
But, according to Tanga (1980 : 20) one can write so that people can know him or her. She continues by saying that it is important to consider the following guide lines in order to avoid grammatical errors.

1. What is your relationship with the reader? Is the reader a customer a client, a colleague or peer? The knowledge of this relationship will help you to write proper words, well spelt and good tone.
2. What is the reader's position? Is he an engineer, sales manager, production supervisor etc?
3. What is the reader's reading level? This will help you to choose words with vocabulary that will suit the situation.
4. What are the reader's interests? Knowing the reader's job related or social interest can help one to personalise a message, to choose appropriate words and tone the message accordingly.
5. What knowledge of the subject matter does the reader have? Are you free to write without expressing technical terms and concepts?

In order to use language appropriately, learners have to try to achieve coherence. Achieving coherence is the use of words with appropriate relationship in order to avoid grammatical errors. The use of English grammar has to be revisited. The use of action verbs, adjectives, adverbs, linking words and prepositions are all useful.

We remember that all words have literal meanings but many have connotative meanings as well. The following words have connotative difference.

Celebration - merry making
Purse – money bag
Spokesperson – mouth piece
Messenger – envoy
Test – examination

i) Use of verbs

The verb is the centre of any complete thought (sentence). To construct a meaningful expression one has to choose a proper verb. It is useful to use action to convey precise meaning. For example, we can note the difference in these verbs underlined:

She walked down the street
She sped down the street
She strolled down the street
She hobbled down the street

The above verbs described each pronoun with different meaning of her movement.

ii) Descriptive Adjectives

These adjectives support active verbs, describe and add value to nouns. They include comparative and superlative adjectives

Adjective	Comparative	Superlative
small	smaller	smallest
young	younger	youngest
cheap	cheaper	cheapest
long	longer	longest

Examples: John is taller than Mary

Good health is more important than Money

iii) Adverbs of Manner, Place and Time

An adverb that says how something happens

e.g. Carefully is adverb of manner.

An adverb that says where something happens

e.g. Here in the garden: is an adverb of place

An adverb that says when something happens

e.g. Now and yesterday are called adverb of time

Examples of Adverbs of manner, place and time.

a) I read the letter carefully

b) We saw Maria in the garden

c) He bought a chair yesterday

iv) Linking words

These are used when we want to convey two or more ideas in the same sentence. Linking words can be used if you want to say something about time contrast, reason, result or purpose.

a) Linking words for time include the following:

- When, as, while, as soon as, before, after and until.

e.g: I am not going out now, I will wait until it stops raining.

b) Linking words contrast include the following: although even though, though, in spite of, despite, while, whereas, however.

e.g: She has plenty of money, but she is very mean.

Although she has plenty of money she is very mean.

c) Linking words – Reason/Result include the following: because of, as, since, as a result of, therefore, so/such.... that

e.g. We had to walk home because we missed the taxis.

d. Linking words Purpose include the following: to, in order to, so as to, for, so that.

e.g. I am going to the library to return a book.

V. Prepositions

These are used in relationship to the known or pronouns to other words. We use preposition to show relationship of noun or pronoun to place, to movement, to time, means of transport and adjectives or adverbs.

Place: (in, at, on)

We use in when we think of a place as enclosed.

e.g: In a room.

We use in when we think of an area.

e.g: In the garden.

We use at when we think of a place as a point.

e.g: At the taxi park.

We use on when we think of a place as surface.

e.g: on that wall.

We use at when we think of a place as addresses.

Movement: in, into, out of, on, in to, off, inside, outside.

e.g: He is in the bedroom.

He fell into the river

He came out of the room.

He jumped onto/on the horse.

Take your feet off the table

She was sitting inside the classroom

The is a telephone box outside the bank

Time: at, in, on

at weekends

at Christmas

at public holidays

at Easter

on Monday

on Christmas days

on 1st January

on 4th July

on time, in time

On time means at exactly the right time. In time means early enough within the time limit.

At the end = at the point where something stops in the end finally or after sometime.

Time (by, until, from, to/until). Until means up to the time why by means "not later than". From..... to/until: mean between the starting point to the ending point.

Time (For, since, ago and before) for is used with a past, present or future.

For and since: This is to talk about something that has continued over a period.

Ago: means before now

Before: means 'before a past time'

vi) Other Prepositions of Place and Movement

I will meet you in front of the post office.

He is behind that tree.

They live near the lake.

The police station is next to the cinema.

Come and sit by beside me.

He walked past me without saying something

We drove through the city

I live just round the corner

In summary, the use of English grammar is important in a speech and speaking words is the most important and useful weapon in communication. English is the most language used all over the world. So, it has to be acquired and developed so that the communication circle is complete.

These informations are sourced from A guide to effective communication by Tanga.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

3.1. Introduction

The present study entitled 'A Study of Some Grammatical Errors Made by Speakers of Informal English: The case of Traders in Bujumbura as any other scientific study, comprises a methodology chapter. This chapter looks at all the steps which were followed in the field research process.

It is basically a part where we tried to describe the research area as well as the strategies used to collect the data needed. The following step consists of identifying the techniques used to analyse the errors collected. Finally, the problems that we came across during the study are mentioned.

3.2. Data collection procedures

Any academic work needs to be carried out with a well-defined methodology. Similarly, this study used a number of systematic procedures which are going to appear under this section.

The learner's errors are indicative both of the state of the learner's knowledge, and of the ways in which a second or third language is learned, according to Richards (1974:22).

Hence, in order to have a base for the study of Errors Made by Traders while Speaking English, an oral test was given to traders who work in Bujumbura as it has been said before. The questions were related to relations between customers and traders. It means in asking prices.

In this manner the questions were designed specifically to test if traders can try attempting English conversation, while taking into account the grammatical structure mainly to see if they can deal with well structured sentences. This was done in a recorded form.

On the whole, the questions comprises sentences for fifteen traders. This helped me to detect some errors traders make when speaking English.

3.3.Research Instruments.

Instruments used are paramount importance for a scientific study. They are of different types but each is used according to the kind of research undertaken. Therefore, I decided that it was necessary to say a word about the instruments used to carry out the present study.

Audio-recording.

With this method, the researcher happened to record naturally occurring pieces of conversation. Moreover, this method was used with discretion in order for participants not to pretend. In fact, it was a conversation in English because during my investigation each of fitfeen traders, I was to record all the words and sentences used and analyse them.

Observation.

As far as this instrument is concerned, it was used in order to notice difficulties in communication and to get exactly what kind of errors that traders say in natural settings that are shops.

3.4. Research sample.

To collect my research data, I had recours to two groups of subject, that are women and men who work in business places in Bujumbura. They were fifteen in number (nine men and six women).
As far as traders are concerned, I was interested in those who work in some places such as Bujumbura Supermarket, shops in Avenue de la mission and people who sell in drug store. Those traders were chosen because they could speak English or they could make a conversation in English.

Traders in bujumbura are in permanent contact with their customers and therefore, in making a conversation in English,we can hear their strengths and weaknesses in grammar. There is no doubt that these problems repercussions on the learning of grammar.

In fact, to carry out such a study, all materials that can help the researcher must be gathered. And the most important thing as stated by Corder (1973:264) is “the homogeneity of the group”. When we speak homogeneity of the group, we are mostly interested in the linguistic aspect, namely that the group should be formed of speakers of the same mother-tongue.

In addition, it would be required that their knowledge of the formation and speaking rule of the second language should be equivalent. But also some degree of similarity in their characteristics such as motivation, social background, experience of the world, age, maturity, intelligence and so on would be expected.

Thus, in selecting the level of informal sector, I was expecting this homogeneity of group of speakers. I expected these people to speak the same mother – tongue, that is, Kirundi.
I expected them to have the same knowledge of rule formation and speaking and also the same degree of motivation. Actually, they have different mother-tongue: they speak Kiswahili, french and kirundi language. They have differences in knowledge and motivation.

In fact, it is quite easier and more beneficial to analyse errors of a homogeneous group of learners than a heterogeneous group. Actually, although it is the individual who learns and not a group, an analysis of a group of learners' errors help to find the common errors made in the language learning process especially when they acquire it through environment, and thereafter help to correct them or more importantly, help in elaboration of syllabus or planification of learning English effectively. And by choosing traders in Bujumbura, such an idea was in my mind.

I wanted to have evidence if adults persons can acquire English and have a minimum knowledge of English which can help them to communicate. As they could not speak English all the time without formal teaching, if some great efforts are still needed to accomplish this task.

3.5. Data Analysis Procedure

Normally, you cannot begin to describe something until you are aware of its existence. Thus to recognize that an error has been committed is not such a simple matter as it sounds. Because it is this recognition that enables you to make the remaining steps of error analysis.

After having identified the second language learner's errors, a classification of the same errors is necessary in this analysis procedure.

In fact, there are two different but complementary stages in error analysis. The classification involves assigning a grammatical description on the one hand, and on the other hand gives account of what has to be explained.

Thus, to classify Errors made by traders in the use of English, I will identify some erroneous sentences from the language corpus and thereafter proceed by classifying them according to Richards (1974) classification of second language learner's errors. I will try to explain the errors of traders of second language acquisition basing myself on Richards' description.

In fact, Richards (1974) put an emphasis on the several types of errors, which do not derive from transfer of another language. Thus, according to him, we have two types of errors; Intralingual and developmental errors. Richards (1974:175) insists on this saying that:

"*differentiating two language systems, intralingual and developmental errors reflect the learner's competence at a particular stage in his language learning process and illustrating the general characteristics of the language acquisition.*"

In other words, intralingual errors are those which reflect characteristics of rule learning such as faulty generalization, ignorance of rule restrictions, and failure to learn conditions under which rules apply. Developmental errors illustrate the learner attempting to build up hypothesis about the English language from his limited experience.

CHAPTER 4: DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

4.1. Introduction

As said earlier, this work deals with Error Analysis. It aims at an analysis of the speaker's competence concerning a particular subject matter. Therefore, my study deals with the study of some errors made by traders when speaking English.

The present chapter is subdivided into three main sections, namely:

a) Analysis of the Answers to the Questions
b) Findings
c) The Causes of the Errors Encountered

Section a) deals with the presentation of the results from the questions
In section b), I will attempt an exploration of the types of
errors in showing if they are due to interference,
overgeneralization or ignorance of rule restrictions.
The last section provides some of the possible causes of errors made by traders when speaking English.

4.2. Analysis of the Answers from the Questions

4.2.1. Introduction

This section deals with an analysis, of the results from questions given to the sample under study.

As mentioned earlier, the data collected appeared in a recorded form. In fact, questions were given to fifteen persons from two different places: the Bujumbura central market and different shops. The analysis, deals with some errors found in a short conversation I made with traders as a customer in asking some questions relating to buying.

In order to make my analysis easier, the data will be presented by means of questions and answers and corrected answer followed by a short explanation so as to help the reader to follow the analysis easily. The corrected item is given after each sentence. This will help the reader to get a clear idea of the traders' performance.

4.2.2. Questions and their Answers

A. Wrong Position of Adverbs

QC: How much does this radio cost?
⇒T* Voulez vous savoir combien ça coûte ?
⇒ T : Would you want to know how much it costs?
C: yes but speak English.
T*: I can't speak very well English
⇒ I can not speak English very well.
QC : Don't you know English?
T* A biginner can't speak correctly English.
⇒ A biginner can not speak English correctly.
T* But she speaks very well English but I'm not sure whether she can speaks french too.
⇒ She speaks English very well but I'm not sure whether she can speak french too.

For many traders, there is tendency of speaking french, Kirundi and Kiswahili languages. For the last sentence there is an-s on the verb speak which come after an auxiliary and the sentence becomes a wrong sentence

QC: what is the price of this shirt?
T:* it costs two, five thousands.

Here, this sentence means ten thousand. One can think that it costs five thousand, another, two thousand but the exact price is known only by the trader. It means that he is familiar with the number five. So, ten is dirived in two five thousand, fifteen is derived in three five thousand.
Trader wrote the price on a paper that is how I discovered how he considered his numbering.

QT* Would you like me to send it you ?
⇒ Would you like me to send it to you ?
C: No, I will come tomorrow to take it.
QC: When do you open?
T:* I always am on time. It means at seven O' clock.
⇒ I am always on time.
C: Ok, see you tomorrow

Here the trader has a problem of word-order, he has a message to transmit but he does not know the place of each word.

B. Confusion of Parts of Speech

a. Misuse of Able as a Verb.

QC: How much does this radio cost?

T: Three hundred thousand francs.

C: It is very expensive!

T: Do you want to buy it?

C: No, I am poor and a poor person isn't able to pay so much money.

T:* A poor person doesn't able to pay! Are you poor you!

⇒ A poor person is not able to pay! Are you poor?

Here able is an adjective, and we can't use it as a verb.

b. Misuse of Rest as an Adjective.

QC: How much does this bottle cost?

T: Only eight thousand francs

C: I was here yesterday afternoon, It was closed.

T* Oh, yes! I spent the rest day at home.

⇒ Oh yes! I spent the rest of the day at home.

C: Ok! So, I will come another day . bye!

Rest is a noun, and we can not use it as an adjective in the meaning of that is left.

c. Misuse of This for These.

QC: How much do these shoes cost?

T* : This shoes are nice! Give me only fifteen thousand.

⇒ These shoes are nice.

C: Can you reduce the price?

T: No, because I buyed it much money and I shoosed high quality, new fashion.

This changes to these if the noun that follows is in the plural. For the last sentence, it is shown that the trader does not know how irregular verbs change in simple past, he things that it must take-ed + infinitive.

⇒ the correct sentence is:

No, because I paid a lot of money and I chose high quality, new fashion.

C. Confusion of Number

1. Clothes+ plural verb.

QC : How much do these clothes cost ?

T : Only thirty

C: Can you reduce the price!

T:* This cloth is very fashionable

⇒ These clothes are very fashionable

T:* You see! Quality high

⇒ You see! High quality

⇒ Cloth, meaning the material of which clothes are made, is singular, and has a plural form cloths (without the-e).

Eg: She cleaned the table with a cloth .

Merchants sell different kinds of cloths

T:* I've geted it in china and it's a sold.

T:* It costed too much last week: fourty five.

The correct sentences are:

I have got it from China and it is a sold.

It cost two much last week : fourty five thousand.

Here there is a developmental error when the trader makes verbs in past, he does not pay a particular attention to some irregular verbs.

2. Dozen; Thousand.

QC : How much does a dozen eggs cost?

T:* One thousand two hundreds

⇒ One thousand two hundred francs.

C: Will you reduce the price?

T:* Do you want to buy two dozens eggs?

⇒ Do you want to buy two dozen eggs?

T* If it is two , give me two thousands three hundreds.

⇒ If it is two , give me two thousand three hundred francs.

C: Ok. I come back this afternoon.

⇒ A dozen= 12 = I would like to buy a dozen eggs. When dozen is not preceded by a numeral (like three) or by a we use the plural form: There were dozens of eggs.

⇒ Thousand as well as hundred and million take the plural form, if they are not preceded by a numeral or by a.

e.g.: Thousands of people were present.

3. Work.

QC: How much does this watch cost?

T:* This one is breaked

⇒ This one is broken

T* A new commande arrive tomorrow, I can go to take it today at the airport but today I've many works to do. So, you can come tomorrow.

⇒ .....I can go to take it today at the airport but today I have a lot of work to do.

The plural form works means a factory or the writings of an author.

Eg: The works of shakespeare are many.

I visited the steel works.

There is also a problem of making the verb to break in past.

D. Confused Nouns.

1. Cost for Price

QC: What's the price of this watch?

T: Boss, what's the cost of this watch?

T: Sixty five thousand.

Price is the amount of money paid by the customer; cost is the amount paid by the shopkeeper.

We can say: how much does it cost?

2. Dress for Suit.

Q.C: How much do these trousers cost?

T:* Thirty five thousands

⇒ Thirty five thousand.

C: Humm! Too much!

T:* It depend upon the quality.

⇒ It depends upon the quality.

T:* you see! My husband has this new dress and I sympathise it very much.

⇒ You see! My husband has this new suit and I like it very much.

T* It is quality high . See yourself

⇒ It is high quality. See yourself.

Only girls and women wear dresses; anyone can wear suits (a jacket with trousers or a skirt) clothes is a general word.

e.g. John! Mary is wearing new clothes.

We can say a man in full evening dress or morning dress for traditional, formal clothes.

3. Customer and Client.

T: They were many yersterday.

T:* I had plenty of clients yersterday

* A trouser good, your husband fit it

The correct sentences are:

I had plenty of customers yesterday.
A good trouser, it fits your husband.

A person can be a customer at a shop but a client of a bank, lawyer etc..... The trader also has a problem of word-order when he says a trouser good. Your husband fit it. Instead of a good trouser, it fits your husband.

4. House and Home.

Q.C. Do you close?
T: Yes it's time to close.
T*: I can go to my house now.
⇒ I can go home now.
C: Do you have shoes?
T:* No, I goed in Uganda Monday and I forgeted to bring its.
⇒ No, I went to Uganda on Monday and I forgot to bring it.
We can not say my house, his house or your house when we should say home. A house is any building used for duelling in and home is the particular house in which someone is living.
There is olso developmental error of making verbs (to go and to forget) in past.

E. Confused Verbs.

1. Sympathise for Like.

T:* You see! My husband has this new dress and I sympathise it very much.

⇒ You see! My husband has this new suit and I like it very much.

Sympathise is not synonymous with like

To sympathise with means to share some feeling (usually on sorrow) with another person.

e.g. I sympathise with you in your sorrow.

Here there is interference of French language in which the verb to sympathise is " sympatiser" which has a similar meaning with "to like" in English.

2. Put for Keep

Q.C: How much do these shoes cost?

T: Fourty five thousand

C: You have many things! I think at the end of the day you keep your money in the bank.

T*: Yes I put my money in the bank

⇒ Yes I keep my money in the bank.

It is better to use keep for a more or less permanent resting place, and put for a temporary one.

3. Like for Want

QC: How much do these shoes cost?

T: Twenty five

C: It is not my size!

T*: The size is you!

⇒ It is your size!

⇒ The size is yours!

T* : Do you like to see another pair?

⇒ Would you like to see another pair?

C: Yes! But can you reduce the price?

No, It is the last price.

Do you like to do something? Means do you enjoy doing it as a habitual action ?

Do you want to do something ? Means do you wish to do it now?

4. Remember for Remind.

QC: How much does this radio cost?

T: Two hundred twenty thousand francs.

C: Can you reduce the price?

T: Give two hundred thousand.

Ok! Take but I will come to take it this afternoon

I leave this bag also.

T:* Ok! Please remember me to give you this bag!

⇒ Ok! Please remind me to give you this bag

To remember is to have in mind.

e.g: I remember what you told me.

To remind is to make a person to remember something.

F. Confused Preposition

1. For and At (price)

Q.C: How much does this shirt cost?

T:* Ten thousands

⇒ Ten thousand

C: Humm! I bought a shirt like this for five thousand.

T:* You bought a shirt at five thousand!

⇒ You bought a shirt for five thousand!

C: yes

T: You lie.

C: Really! I can not buy it at such a high price.

T:* You say that you can't buy it for such a high price

⇒ You say that you can not buy it at such a high price.

C: yes

T: Ok, see you.

We can use for if the actual sum is mentioned.

We can use at if the actual sum is not given, except that when the weight or measure follows the price, we use at with the actual sum.

e.g: This velvet is available at 5 thousand a metre.

G. Unnecessary Preposition.

1. Finish (= come to the end of).

Q.C: Do you close?

T:* Yes I finish from my work

⇒ Yes I finish my work.

H. Incorrect Omissions.

1. Thank you used instead of no, thank you.

Q.C: How much does this shirt cost?

T: Twenty thousand

C: Can I give you fifteen thousand francs?

T:* Thank you

⇒ No, thank you.

Normally, we use thank you to accept an offer. It generally means yes, please.

2. Omission of the word <u>and</u> between numbers.

Q.C: How much does a dozen cost?

T:* A dozen costs seven thousand thirty five

⇒ A dozen costs seven thousand and thirty five.

C: Can you reduce the price?

T: No.

We use the conjuction and to connect hundred, thousand; million to a number of tens or units.

3. Omission of the article before a countable noun in the singular.

Q.C: How much does this chain cost?
T: Only seventy thousand and there is also a nice watch
C: I have no money to buy a watch.
T:* You have no money to buy watch!
⇒ you have no money to buy a watch!
T: It is in your pocket!
C: No, but I can come tomorrow.
As a rule, we use either the or a or an before a countable noun in the singular.

4. Using one and a half instead of half past one.

C: When do you open the shop?
T:* We open at eight and a half
⇒ We open at half past eight.
In telling time; we say half past one; half past two, half past three etc.....

4.2.3. Analysis of Answers from observations.

This section deals with on analysis of the result from observations made in conversation between burundian traders and customers.

It is Known that in busness there is a transparent guideline to follow in order to be cool and shap when you want to gain money.

The communication has a great importance to success. This means a language Known by the seller and the custumer. As English is Known by most of the foreign people, there is a problem in our country Burundi to understand English as second language learning since we even do not learn it sufficiently in general and especially Traders.

The latters do not see the importance of learning English the problems accur when they meet a speaker of English as a customer. The fact of speaking of incomplete sentence, content words, bad pronunciation, use of gestures, some Unknown materials, etc.

I saw that some foreign soldiers are not understood when buying some articles. They change chops in searching where they can find someone who can speak English in general. Some write the price on a paper, athers use gestures, testing something needed.

For example : C: give me lipstick
T: What ?
C: Lipstick
T: This? (eye liner)
C: No,
T: This? (eye shadow)
C: That one.

There are also foreign people from Kenya, Uganda, ... Africans and non – Africans who are English speakers and who could not communicate easily with Burundian Traders. The latters try to explain in Kiswahili or Kirundi language.

4.3. Classification of Errors

This section is concerned with analysing and interpreting the different errors identified as far as the English spoken by traders on the questions addressed to the traders as well as observations during their interactions with customers.

4.3.1. Word-order.

a. Wrong position of adverbs

* He put into his pocket the money.
⇒ He put the money into his pocket.

* I can speak very well English.
⇒ I can speak English very well.

* A bigginer can't speak correctly English.
⇒ A bigginer can not speak English correctly.

* Would you like me to send it you?
⇒ Would you like me to send it to you ?

* I always am on time.
⇒ I am always on time.

b. Wrong position of words

* Quality high.

⇒ High quality.

* Many boxes you take?

⇒ Do you take many boxes ?

* The size is you.

⇒ It is your size.

* A trouser good

⇒ A good trouser

* Your husband fit it.

⇒ It fits your husband.

When speaking, the speaker wants to give the message only. He/she does not care about the order of words in a sentence.

4.3.2. Developmental Error.

When making verbs in simple past or past participle, there is no particular attention made by traders, they do not care about rules in speaking. This is shown in following verbs:

* This one is breaked

⇒ This one is broken

* I buyed it much money.

⇒ I bought it much money.

* I shoosed high quality, new fashion.

⇒ I shose high quality, new fashion.

* I've geted it in china.

⇒ I've got it in china.

* It costed too much last week.

⇒ It cost too much last week.

* I goed in Uganda Monday.

⇒ I went to Uganda on Monday.

* I forgeted to bring it.

⇒ I forgot to bring it.

4.3.3.Errors with the Third Person Singular.

This category of pronoun is almost complex for many traders when speaking English. This is shown in the following sentences:

* I am not sure whether she can speaks french too.

⇒ I am not sure whether she can speak french too.

* It depend upon the quality.

⇒ It depends upon the quality.

After listening to traders' conversation, I heard that some do not put an-s in its place. They forget it and they do not see if it is an error or not.

4.3.4.Confusion of Parts of Speech.

* A poor man doesn't able to pay.
⇒ A poor man isn't able to pay.

* I spent the rest day at home.
⇒ I spent the rest of the day at home.

* This shoes are nice.
⇒ These shoes are nice.

a. Confusion of Number

* This cloth is very fashionable.
⇒ These clothes are very fashionable.

* Do you want to buy two dozens eggs.
⇒ Do you want to buy two dozen eggs.

* It cost five thousands francs.
⇒ It costs five thousand francs.

* Today I have many works to do.
⇒ Today I have a lot of work to do.

b. Confused Nouns

* What's the cost of this watch ?

⇒ What is the price of this watch ?

* My husband has this new dress.

⇒ My husband has this new suit.

* I had plenty of clients yesterday.

⇒ I had plenty of customers yesterday.

* I can go to my house now.

⇒ I can go home now.

* I sympathise it very much.

⇒ I like it very much.

* Yes, I put my money in the bank.

⇒ Yes, I keep my money in the bank.

* Do you like to see another pair?

⇒ Do you want to see another pair?

* Please remember me to give you this.

⇒ Please remind me to give you this.

c. Confused Prepositions

* You bought a shirt at five thousand

⇒ You bought a shirt for five thousand.

* You say that you can't buy it for such a high price

⇒ You say that you can not buy it at such a high price.

d. Unnecessary Preposition

* I finish from my work

⇒ I finish my work

e. Incorrect Omissions

* Thank you

⇒ No, thank you

* A dozen cost seven thousand thirty five.

⇒ A dozen costs seven thousand and thirty five.

* You have no money to buy watch.

⇒ You have no money to buy a watch.

* I open at eight and a half.

⇒ I open at half past eight.

All these sentences show errors traders make when speaking English. They try to speak words without knowing if they are correct or not. It is shown that a great number of my sample, that is fourteen traders out of fifteen, made ill-formed sentences and did not remark if it is an error or not. This is due to many reasons: ignorance of Rule Restrictions, carelessness,overgeneralization.

As far as their level or knowledge is not the same, traders met a lot of problems in their communication with customers, if the latter speaks only English language, for example there are many foreign soldiers of UN organization (Pakistans, Nepals, Mozambians, South Africans, etc..) and foreign residents of Bujumbura city or countryside.

In fact, in terms of language knowledge, I can say that traders who live in some quarters such as Buyenzi, Bwiza have more advantages than those who live in others because they have opportunities to perform their English, by speaking it at home or listening to the radio.

4.4. Findings

4.4.1. Causes of Errors Encountered

1) False concepts hypothesized

This is a class of developmental errors, which derive from faulty comprehension of distinctions in the target language. For traders, this type of errors is due to poor teaching methods of English because most of them listen to what others say and try to repeat it even without

knowing its meaning. Into this category there are 7 cases of errors. See page 66-67.

2) Incomplete application of rules

The origin of traders' errors in speaking English is also the incomplete application of rules. When foreign people come and speak English, traders are in need of answering the customer whether they know English or not, they try to speak informal English in order to transmit the message. So, because trading is buying, selling, exchanging goods, there should also be good communication otherwise there is a misunderstanding. There are twenty four cases of errors into this category. See page 67-68-69-70.

3) Overgeneralization

This implies the generalization of transfer as the use of previously available strategies in new situation. It involves the creation of deviant structure in place of two regular structures.
Traders speak English without particular attention to good structure. This is why over generalization is also an origin of traders' errors when speaking English. There are ten cases of errors into this category. See page 65-66.

In brief, this chapter was intended to give the reader a broad picture of the errors committed by traders when speaking English. It is an illustration of a language spoken in an informal setting.

As mentioned in the previous chapters, some reasons such as misunderstanding, bad communication, can motivate the traders or people who wish to do business, to learn English before they begin their job.

In summary, regarding grammatical errors, a great part of this chapter was devoted to the description of how they speak broken English. Four categories of errors such as developmental error, word-order, third person singular and confusion of parts of speech are analyzed and they occur in different ways.

Grammatical errors may occur in any language as in English. What is important is to make a good communication between the speaker and the listener. But we see that many traders in Bujumbura in particular do not know English in general, and English use in business in particular. Some traders try to communicate and have advantages to get many customers, and can go to do business in other countries but those who do not know English get problems.

CHAPTER 5: GENERAL CONCLUSION

The preceeding chapter was about the analysis of the data collected. In fact we can call it the heart of the matter in so far as it allowed us to classify errors and to identify their causes. Also, the first three chapters presented earlier have been of paramount importance in that they allowed us to shape the study and carry it out up to its end. Therefore, the four parts that make up this work will help me in this last part to formulate a general conclusion with regard to the learning of English language in particular and English grammar at large.

When I decided to work on the topic "A Study of Some Grammatical Errors Made by Speakers of Informal English: The case of Traders in Bujumbura" my objective was to prove the following research hypotheses right or wrong:

1. Traders in Burundi do not pay a particular attention to the rules of English language.
2. Burundian Traders learn English not because they want to know it, but simply because they want to communicate with their customers.
3. Traders in Burundi do not know about the structure of their sentences, but try to make sure that the message goes through in any form including gestures.

As I have come to the end of this study, I deem it necessary to have a look at the whole work and draw conclusions related to the research questions. In fact, the present study was divided into four main chapters.

The first chapter which is a General Introduction is the one which clarifies the topic as it clearly states the problem and indicates to a large extent the perspective under which this study was carried out.

The second one is entitled "Review of Related Literature' It reviews the contribution of previous researchers who worked on this branch of Linguistics, that is, "Error Analysis".
This chapter defined and integrated the present topic into what has already been done in the above-mentioned domain.

As for the third chapter, it is entitled "Methodology "and it is within this part that the description of the research area as well as the mechanisms I resorted to in order to collect the data are mentioned. It also tells the reader how the data collected was analysed.

The fourth chapter is the core of the study. In fact, it reveals some errors made by Traders in speaking English. For instance, the study has shown how a wrongly constructed sentence or missing some elements (articles, auxiliaries and so on) may take another meaning when it is spoken in business.

First of all, many errors were made by traders while trying to form the past tense. This is a developmental error. For example when they said:

* I buyed it much money.

⇒ I bought it much money.

Traders have problems in making irregular verbs in past and this prove right to the first hypothesis of my study.

Most erroneous sentences were made in answering questions related to prices. Traders confuse parts of speech when speaking. This prove right the part third hypothesis of my study.
There are confusions of numbers, of prepositions, of nouns and so on.

This is due to the lack of enough learning guidelines because most of the traders try to learn English by repeating what have been said by customers or others.

My observations proved that they had many difficulties in using word-order in speaking English.

* A trouser good
⇒ A good trouser

This proved right to the second hypothesis of the study.

It was interesting to notice that some traders got much trouble in speaking English while others can speak it easily. This is because those who know English influence others to learn it just for communication purpose.

However, businessmen/businesswomen are obliged to speak English whether they know it or not. This is so because trading has no limit and English language has an important role in communication all over the world.

In addition, as far as Burundi is concerned, there are many people from other countries who speak English and who need to be understood.

So people who cannot speak English have difficulties of travelling Abroad. My suggestion is to recommend everyone in Burundi, traders or not, ladies and gentlemen, young or old, to learn the English language because it is the world language. And a deep stress goes to young people who intend to do business or to travel.

Nevertheless, I can in no way pretend to have exhausted the study of some errors made by traders in speaking English because of a number of reasons.

Moreover, any scientific study must have limits. Therefore, this study focuses on some errors made by traders in speaking English and their consequences.

In a nutshell, this work is a contribution to what has been done in this area by other researchers as well as a guide for further research.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A.

A.The following sentences show word-order errors.

1. Wrong position of adverbs

1. He put into his pocket the money.
2. I can speak very well English.
3. A bigginer can't speak correctly English.
4. Would you like me to send it you?
5. I always am on time.

2. Wrong position of words

1. Quality high.
2. Many boxes you take?
3. The size is you.
4. A trouser good
5. Your husband fit it.

B.The following sentences show Developmental Errors .

1. This one is breaked
2. I buyed it much money.
3. I shoosed high quality, new fashion.
4. I've geted it in china.
5. It costed too much last week.

6. I goed in Uganda Monday.
7. I forgeted to bring it.

C.The following sentences show errors with the Third Person Singular.

1. I am not sure whether she can speaks french too.
2. It depend upon the quality.

Appendix B

1. Confusion of Parts of Speech.

1. A poor man doesn't able to pay.
2. I spent the rest day at home.
3. This shoes are nice.

2.Confusion of Number

1. This cloth is very fashionable.
2. Do you want to buy two dozens eggs.
3. It cost five thousands francs.
4. Today I have many works to do.

3.Confused Nouns

1. What's the cost of this watch ?
2. My husband has this new dress.
3. I had plenty of clients yesterday.
4. I can go to my house now.

5. I sympathise it very much.
6. Yes, I put my money in the bank.
7. Do you like to see another pair?
8. Please remember me to give you this.

4. Confused Prepositions

1. You bought a shirt at five thousand
2. You say that you can't buy it for such a high price

5. Unnecessary Preposition

1.I finish from my work

6. Incorrect Omissions

1. Thank you
2. A dozen cost seven thousand thirty five.
3. You have no money to buy watch.
4. I open at eight and a half.

Appendix C key to sentences .

A. Word- Order

1. Position of adverbs

1. He put the money into his pocket.
2. I can speak English very well.
3. A bigginer can not speak English correctly.
4. Would you like me to send you it ?
5. I am always on time.

2. Position of words

1. High quality.
2. Do you take many boxes ?
3. It is your size.
4. A good trouser
5. It fits your husband.

B. Developmental Error.

1. This one is broken
2. I bought it much money.
3. I shose high quality, new fashion.
4. I've got it in china.
5. It cost too much last week.
6. I went in Uganda Monday.
7. I forgot to bring it.

C. Third Person Singular.

1. I am not sure whether she can speak french too.
2. It depends upon the quality.

5. Correct Parts of Speech.

1. A poor man isn't able to pay.
2. I spent the rest of the day at home.
3. These shoes are nice.

6. Correct Number

1. These clothes are very fashionable.
2. Do you want to buy two dozen eggs.
3. It costs five thousand francs.
4. Today I have a lot of work to do.

7.Correct Nouns

1. What is the price of this watch ?
2. My husband has this new suit.
3. I had plenty of customers yesterday.
4. I can go home now.
5. I like it very much.
6. Yes, I keep my money in the bank.
7. Do you want to see another pair?
8. Please remind me to give you this.

8. Correct Prepositions

1. You bought a shirt for five thousand.
2. You say that you can not buy it at such a high price.
3. I finish my work

9. Correct Omissions

1. No, thank you
2. A dozen costs seven thousand and thirty five.
3. You have no money to buy a watch.
4. I open at half past eight.