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A STUDY OF ERROR ANALYSIS IN WRITTEN PRODUCTION: A CASE STUDY OF ENGLISH ESSAYS BY STUDENTS OF MULTAN, PAKISTAN

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ABSTRACT

In the present research, the researchers analyze the errors committed by the secondary level students that belong to Multan, Punjab. Error analysis is a domain of Applied Linguistics that helps Teachers and students find the problem and their possible solution, especially during the second language acquisition classroom activities. The study is qualitative and descriptive by nature, and the data of the research has been collected from the thirty students of matric class through written essay writing. The study analyzes the data by employing Corder's (1967) model of Error Analysis. After the data analysis, the researcher finds that the students seem to have no perception of essential grammar elements, especially in the tenses while making sentences. The students have no concepts of singular and plural nouns or subjects. They are unable to use the additional form of the verb in Present Indefinite Tense. Moreover, they lack perception in pronouns, their cases, i.e., subjective, possessive, or objective case. They are unable to use adjectives and adverbs in their proper place. It seems that psychologically they look depressed and confused except having a few things in their minds. Keywords; Error Analysis, Second Language Acquisitions, Secondary education, Corder's model of EA

INTRODUCTION

The present study investigates the errors committed by the students of Secondary Level that belong to Multan, Punjab. Error analysis (EA) is a domain of Applied Linguistics that helps Teachers and students to find the problem and their possible solution, especially during the second language acquisition classroom activities.

A language is a tool of interaction and communication among human beings, and it is the primary source in the progress of any country (Iqbal et al., 2020; Iqbal et al., 2020b). English is a sign of power in Pakistan. The English language is associated with the elite class in Pakistan. Muhammad Ali Jinnah was the founder of the nation and the first Governor-General of Pakistan. He delivered his speech in English to the first constituent assembly on Pakistan's independence (Mahboob 2009; Khan, 2005). In Pakistan, some people believe English is a language of power. They can maintain their status in society with the use of the English language. Some people think they can secure desirable jobs with the help of the English language. English is the language of power in Pakistan than the National language Urdu. English is the lingua franca for social and political development and seems to be a tectonic driving force for the new generations who want to learn English in Pakistan. Rehman (1999) explores in his survey of students' attitude about English language in Pakistan, students want to learn English, including Dennis Madras (religious schools) and students of various schools.

Nowadays, almost 45 years after the constitution was declared, the position on the ground is as follows; English and Urdu two significant languages used widely in Pakistan (Simon & Charles 2018). The English language is penetrating over the local languages of Pakistan. English plays the role of gatekeeper for entry into universities and highly paid jobs in Pakistan. The English language is a golden key for success and gets highly paid jobs in Pakistan (Shahzad 2020).

However, the present researcher aims to shed light on the errors committed by the students of Pakistan, especially the matric students in Multan. Pit Corder firstly introduced error analysis in (1970). Nowadays, this term is considered very important in the field of education. For example, Sawalmeh (2013) Argues that Corder established the error analysis in 1970 that is still helpful for the students and teachers of L2 (students of the second language learning) (McDowell, 2020).

Statement of the Problem

Pakistani students who are learning English as L2 commit grammatical and thematic errors that create a problem for them to learn this language ultimately. In Pakistan, there are two types of schools operating Public and Private. However, the students of Private schools commit less errors than the government school. Meanwhile, English is being taught as a second language in Pakistan, and Urdu is a national language in Pakistan. The secondary level students commit the various types of errors that create a problem for them to learn the language. The researcher also analyzes the error of the same level students and tries to give possible solutions to that problem.

Significance of the Study

The present study has a significant role in applied linguistics because it helps the teachers of Pakistan and English teachers who are teaching it as a second

language or foreign language. The present study's findings support the teacher making a teaching plan while teaching the English language as L2.

Objectives of the Study

The main object of the study is to analyze the grammatical errors committed by the students of metric during written essay writing. Moreover, the following aims are set by the researcher to conduct this research.

To identify the errors

To classify the errors

To explain the errors

To evaluate the errors

Research Question

The researcher tries to attempt the following questions;

What sort of errors is committed by the students of metrics?

What are the possible causes and solutions of the error committed by the students of the secondary level?

LITERATURE REVIEW

This section investigates the relevant literature through extensive reading regarding Error Analysis to find the research gap and novelty in the present research. However, error analysis is a broad term, but the current study tries to define the error analysis that the matric level students have committed during essay writing. Error analysis is a significant domain of Applied linguistics that highlights the problem (in the shape of errors) and possible solutions to these problems. Khan and Khan (2016) argue that the English language is enjoying an international language and is being taught in different countries worldwide as a second language. Error analysis helps the teachers determine the learners' problems that they are facing to enhance the L2. Corder and colleagues founded the field of EA in Second Language Acquisition (SLA) in the 1970s. Brown's eighth chapter contains a widely accessible survey (Brown, 2000).

According to one of EA's main findings, many learners' errors were caused by learners misunderstanding the rules of the new language. EA is a form of linguistic research that concentrates on the mistakes that students make. It consists of a comparison of the errors made in TL and the errors made within that TL. EA took a new direction in his work, "The Importance of Learner Errors," published in 1967. Errors were once thought to be "defects" that needed to be fixed. Corder (1967) argued from an entirely different perspective. He said that those mistakes are "serious in and of themselves." According to him, consistently analyzing mistakes created by language learners allows teachers to identify areas that need to be reinforced in the

classroom. EA stresses "the importance of errors in the interlanguage system of learners" (Brown 1994). Selinker (1972) coined the word interlanguages to describe the proper understanding of L2 that is independent of both the learner's L1 and the TL; Nemser (1974) called it the Approximate System, and Corder (1967) called it the Idiosyncratic Dialect or Transitional Competence.

McDowell (2020) explores that Error Analysis was traditionally considered in Second Language (L2) Acquisition. The research concerning Error Analysis (EA) was started in 1960-70 to analyze the system's underlying learner language and has since gained broader English language teaching research application. However, for many language teachers, the practical and technological barriers to employing EA in their professional practices remain restrictively high.

This paper illustrates a simple but effective EA protocol that anyone with access to Microsoft Word and Excel can use. The article also shows how this technique can inform language teaching practices by defining the most pressing grammatical needs within an EA of 30 texts written by matric class students. This paper has provided a clear but rigorous error analysis technique that ELT professionals may use in their daily teaching contexts to uncover commonly occurring error patterns in a single text or through several texts representing a population (e.g., a class of language learners). It has also provided an implementation of the technique with a research error analysis (Vahdatinejad, 2008).

Darus (2009) examines error analysis of essays written by 72 students of secondary level in Malaysia. The participants are 37 males and 35 females in Form Four Malay students at a Malaysian secondary school. They have about the same number of years of schooling in Malaysia, having completed primary and secondary school. Many of the participants are nonnative English speakers who seldom communicate in English outside of the classroom. The instrument used in this project was a participant's written essays and Markin software (Guo and Wang, 2015; Lindström, 2017). The errors in the essays were all found and categorized into different categories. According to the study's findings, the participants' most common errors were singular/plural form, verb tense, word choice, preposition, subject-verb agreement, and word order (Spies et al., 2018; Deng et al., 2015). These are the most daunting elements of writing in English for participants. This research has shed light on how students internalize the laws of the target language, which in this case is English. Teachers benefit from this insight into language learning issues because it offers information on prevalent language-learning challenges that can be used to plan practical lessons.

Zhou & Liu (2021) argue that computer programming technology to automatically identify and correct grammar errors in English text written by nonnative language learners is known as an English grammar error correction algorithm. (Antonelli et al., 2015; Gamez, Lesaux, and Rizzo, 2016). The classification model, which can be used to extract information from English text data and create a reliable grammar correction tool, is at the heart of machine learning and data mining. (Kahani et al., 2019). The study findings

show that as the number of training samples grows and the learning process progresses, the proposed English grammar error correction algorithm is based on classification. The model would improve classification accuracy, refine recognition laws, and gradually improve correction performance, reduce processing time, and save storage space. The findings of this study may be used as a starting point for future studies on English grammar error correction algorithms based on classification models. (Pajouh et al., 2016; Autili et al., 2015). The paper built a basic model for English grammar error correction based on the classification model, analyzed the classification model and translation model of English grammar error correction, proposed an English grammar error correction algorithm based on classification mode, performed analyses of the model architecture and model optimizer of the grammar error correction algorithm, and offered a grammar error correction algorithm based on classification model (Yang et al., 2015). It mainly uses the rules given by the above modules to use the corpus, combined with the restricted back-off algorithm, to complete the automatic grammar inspection and correction feature in the inspection and correction section. The generator's input and output in the grammar error correction task are natural language sentences, discrete symbols. Since the optimization algorithm cannot be in continuous space, a standard generative confrontation network cannot be directly applied to mapping modeling in a discrete area, and slight changes to the generator parameters are generated (Alkubaisi, Kamaruddin, and Husni, 2018).

The system is clear to the classifier foundation, and they are only responsible for training the appropriate sample set and obtaining an output during testing. The findings show that, as the number of training samples grows and the learning process progresses, the proposed English grammar error correction algorithm based on a classification model can improve classification accuracy, refine recognition laws, and gradually improve correction performance, reducing processing time and saving storage space (Bittrich et al., 2019). The findings of this study can be used as a starting point for future studies on English grammar error correction algorithms based on classification models (Schossee et al., 2015).

Zafar (2016) argues that error analysis enables the students and teachers to understand the causes of failure to learn the English language. After analyzing the errors committed by the students, teachers can make a new method of teaching according to the weak areas of the students. Moreover, Shamim & Rashid (2019) also claim that error analysis is an emerging area of education, especially in applied linguistics. It helps the teachers and learners improve their language (L2) by identifying the errors that become the reason for incompetence in the target language.

According to Crystal (1987), English is a language taught at the broader level (international level), so it becomes a lingua franca. However, there are a lot of hurdles and problems that are being faced by the students of learning English as a second language. Error analysis helps the students to get more proficiency in the target language because it identifies and gives the solution to the students' problem & Jiang (2007) & Brow (2002) also support the arguments mentioned earlier.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In this study, the researcher analyzes the data through the qualitative method by applying the qualitative and descriptive. The data is collected from the 30 metric level students through written essay writing, but only ten essays have been selected through random sampling (each 3rd essay has been chosen). For data analysis, the researcher employs the Corder (1982) model that consists of the following tools.

To identify the errors

To classify the errors

To explain the errors

To evaluate the errors

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework is the structure that can hold or support a theory of a research study. The theoretical framework introduces and describes the theory that explains why the research problem under study exists. According to Corder (1967), a learner's errors represent the discrepancy between the transitional competence of that learner and the target language. This technique has the following steps that helped the evaluation:

The collection of the errors in the sample,

The identification of the errors in the sample and The description of the errors that are identified and explained.

Data Analysis

The students of the 10th (= O' Levels) class have collected the data. They were given two essays to write; my father and my best friend. After the collection of data, errors have been identified committed by the students. They are unable to use diction properly.

Identification of errors

Essays were checked, and errors have been indicated under different grammatical categories. The researcher has pointed out covert and overt errors as well.

Classification of errors identified.

Errors are classified in a careful way to identify the real issues related to the use of nouns, singularity and plurality, pronouns, verbs, especially regarding tenses, placement of adverbs and mistakes of spellings, and improper use of articles were commonly found in their essays. Errors have been indicated in italic and bold words.

At the very initial level of grammar learning, the students often seem not to understand the utilization of the linking verb. For instance, in the following sentence, the linking verb 'is' is skipped;

He also helpful.. (missing *is*)

He *teaches* to us English.

In this sentence, he committed the error of tense using the verb 'teach' instead of teaches, and also he used the preposition 'that' should not have been used there.

He doesn't *wants* his students to be late.

The helping verb 'does' asserts to remove 's' from the main verb 'want' while the student was unaware of the rule of subject-verb aggregate.

We enjoy *him* class.

The main mistake of the use of the pronoun in the sentence has been indicated. Students, sometimes, can't understand the difference between or among personal pronoun cases. They are not aware of the use of subjective cases, possessive case, or objective case.

He teaches us *english*.

This sentence indicates the error of the use of proper nouns having the first letter capital. The word 'English' is a proper noun that should be started with 'E'.

He *makes laugh us* most of the time.

He and I *is* best friends.

When two or more than two pronouns are used together with the conjunction 'and', they take the plural verb. According to this sentence, there should have been 'are' instead of 'is.'

He and *me works* together.

Again the same mistake has been committed but differently. Mostly, students don't know the usage and placement of pronouns when they are used as subjects. This error occurs when the mother language interferes, as given in the following example. The second mistake is of subject-verb agreement when 'he and I' are used as subjects; the verb never takes 's' with them.

Me should respect all the teachers.

Again, in this sentence, it can be seen that the student doesn't know the difference between the subjective case and the objective case of pronouns. In Pakistan 'Urdu' language interferes. In the Urdu language, the word 'mujhay' is translated in 'me', and the word 'mein' is translated as 'I'. That's why students are not, mostly, trained according to the needs of a foreign language and hence they commit errors.

He is a M.A Bed.

Errors of articles are widespread in Pakistanis. Due to not having acquaintance with 'vowels,' students feel difficulty using articles with any noun or pronoun.

Ali is my best teacher. *Her* method of teaching is so good.

The concept of gender or sexual identity, sometimes, becomes a complex situation for language learners. Consciously or unconsciously, they fail to use the correct pronoun for each gender. In the above sentence, the student seems not to know that the pronoun 'his' will be used for Ali instead of 'her.'

He advises us to hard work.

'Hard' has been used as an adjective in the sentence, while the student wanted to use it as an adverb of the verb 'work.' The usage of adverbs has always been a difficult task for Pakistani English language learners. They can't perceive the meaning and depth of the word 'adverb' and its placement. Therefore, they avoid using such transitions that could put them in embarrassment or confusion.

He is *respect* by all teachers.

Although, the concept of passive voice is not complicated, yet learners of the English language don't concentrate on the basic elements of the language. They don't have a grip on sentence structure primarily related to tenses. They don't know when the sentence in passive form, the 3rd form of the verb is used.

My favorite teacher is one who *change* my life.

There will be such blinders as given in the above example when there is no concept of relative pronouns. The student cannot comprehend the usage of relative pronoun being used as the pronoun of the subject 'teacher' that is singular, and due to singularity, the verb 'change' will take 's.'

He always helps *the poors*.

Although there is no word 'poors' yet the student is applying the same word. It happens when the students can't identify the concept of collective nouns and adjectives. Here the word 'poor' has been used as a collective noun having no other plural form of 's' as other nouns take such as 'cows' 'girls' etc.

He solve many *problem* when I *stood* crying before him.

Subject-verb agreement and use of tense according to action are other phenomena. The English language learners, as the 2nd language in Pakistan, don't concentrate on the basic rules of grammar. In most of the initial classes, they are taught with direct methods without teaching the basic information of the sentence structure. Moreover, there is no concept of the primary and subordinate clause. The idea of singularity and plurality seems nowhere in daily routine life.

....but sir Tahir *is* my best teacher.

Again there is an error of verb that indicates that the student doesn't have a clear concept of using pronouns because of the interruption of the Urdu language. In a respective mood, the word 'haen' is used for a person we respect. And the Urdu word 'haen' is translated as 'are' in the English language. Students can't approach the true sense of 'is; are' and hence go in the wrong direction.

He teaches them with *cares*.

The difference between care and cares is not sure to the student. Care means to give attention or look after and cares means 'worries' and tensions, but the learner goes beyond their sense and finds himself helpless while using such puzzling words.

He my age

The correct use of prepositions makes sense clear of the sentence, but it is mainly seen that no proper rule is taught to the learner. He is asked to learn prepositions parrot-like without their practical use.

I, you, and they help the poor and needy people.

The sequence of pronouns in a sentence is considered essential to get accuracy, but it is also a fact that school-level teachers are not specialists. They don't have expertise in English language teaching. It is the leading cause of the failure of English language learning. They can't tell the students how the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd persons are placed together when used simultaneously.

- Explanation of the psycholinguistic causes of the errors

As an err is to humans, the language error is also to the learning and production of speech. A man genetically has the capability and capacity to produce language on the condition that he is born to a human house and also grows up there. When he can learn any language, he desires within a specific environment in which he lives. In the early years of his childhood, he knows his mother language, then moves to an institution to get an education where he can and mainly faces another language that is his source of formal education.

Whereas 2nd language learning or acquisition concerns, he feels difficulty adapting himself according to its requirements. He chooses one way; either he starts escaping from the language class or starts getting genuine interest in the learning process. Now the question arises why the students fail to improve their language learning process. Its answer can be given with different logical observations.

Language Aphasia

Mostly, the students face language aphasia, and naturally, they can't cope with the needs of the language they learn, especially the English language. Due to physical and mental disabilities, they become confused to feel suffocated in the learning class, and thence they consider themselves efficient to complete the task.

Psychological issues Psychological element is another phenomenon that creates hindrance in the way of learning the language. They come from homes where there are always depressing conditions and situations that prevail on the children's minds and never let them know with positive moods.

Teachers' efficiency

Teachers are untrained and of low-level teaching standards. They are not, primarily, language specialists. Therefore, they don't have proper knowledge of language teaching, and thence the student feels bored and flees away from the learning environment. So there are a lot of psychological and situational issues that create problems for language learners. And it's not difficult to uproot them.

Findings and discussions

After the collection and evaluation of data, it has been noted that students committed errors in the following fields;

Errors in use of linking verbs, tense (sub & verb aggregate), possessive pronouns, proper nouns, causative sentences, subjective case of pronouns, articles, sex identification, adverb and adjective, passive voice, relative and collective pronouns, main and subordinate clauses, the misconception of pronoun and verb agreement, vocabulary choice, prepositions and sequence of pronouns. All these errors are commonly found from initial to masters and M.Phil classes. These errors occur due to many factors such as ignorance of basic components of the language under the learning stage. The learners don't concentrate on what they are told. The main element of failure in English language learning is the incompetence of the teachers who teach language despite being ignorant and untrained. They can't create interest that is a necessary step for positive learning. Sometimes, students are mentally or physically retired and don't want to attend class, but they are forced to do so. That's why they can't pay full attention to their task.

CONCLUSIONS

Error analysis always helps out to judge the learning output by the language learners. In this study, ten students were given two essays to write down. When the written work was collected, errors which they committed were identified and classified under different grammatical categories. It has been concluded that students lack concepts in parts of speech. They seem to have no perception of essential elements of grammar, especially in the tenses while making sentences. The students have no concepts of singular and plural nouns or subjects. They are unable to use the additional form of the verb in Present Indefinite Tense.

Moreover, they lack perception in pronouns, their cases, i. e, subjective, possessive, or objective case. They are unable to use adjectives and adverbs in their proper place. It seems that psychologically they look depressed and confused except having a few things in their minds. They show low confidence while expressing their ideas due to the inefficiency in language competence. The researcher's findings indicate that they can improve their language if given the proper opportunity and environment under the best learning conditions.

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