A LINGUISTIC ANALYSIS OF ERRORS IN WRITTEN PERFORMANCES OF SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS

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ABSTRACT:

Language, as defined by James William is a paramount, we use to define ourselves and to shape our place in life. We use it to learn, socialize, dream, think and preserve our customs, culture, law and stories. English has acquired the status of a second language in our country, India. In most of the schools it is being taught as a second language and there are some, where it is used as the medium of instruction. In both the situation errors are unavoidable; while it is a must have inspiration for all the language teachers to have the students producing astructured, and error-free piece of writing.In this connection the study is an effort to find out some common error areas for writing skills in English, examining the linguistic errors committed by students. For this, 600 students' written productions (free composition) were observed and analyzed thoroughly. All the identified errors were presented with proper example and the respective percentage of students. The study explored 21 distinct types of error categories, based on the area of their belongings; among them the spelling errors (89.32%) are predominant in students' writing with sentence structure in next coming percentage (59.71). Then it comes to grammatical structures like tense error (23.30%), helping verb (21.36%), subject-verb agreement (20.87%) preposition error (19.90%) and articles (18.93%) respectively. 10.19% of students committed word error and all the other error categories are below 10%. Finally, it's been summed up that the errors in a learning context should not be negatively considered and never be stigmatized.

KEYWORDS: Language, Second Language, Error analysis.

INTRODUCTION:
As stated by William (2001), language is a paramount, we use to define ourselves and to shape our place in life. We use it to learn to socialize, to dream, to think and to preserve our customs, culture, law and stories. When it comes to languages in our country, English has acquired the status of a second language. It is the first foreign language learned in schools. In most of the schools it is being taught as a second language where English is a compulsory subject, whereas there are some, where it is used as the medium of instruction and all subjects are taught in English except the other language. In both the situations students have been learning English for a long time yet most of the students are not proficient enough to produce a systematic, structured and error-free piece of writing which isthe essential aspiration for all the English teachers. They use erroneous English in their academic writing as well as in their oral performances.In this connection the study focuses on Error Analysis as an effort to find out some difficult areas in English writing, examining the linguistic errors committed by secondary school students.

ERROR ANALYSIS
All learners make mistakes

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irrespective of the language they are learning, but the nature of errors in mother tongue is quite different from that in second language (Hussain et al., 2013). Moreover, the nature of error changes as the learners moves from one stage to the other. In this concern, Swan & Smith (1995) suggested three ways to analyze the learners' English, named ascontrastive analysis, transfer analysis and error analysis. In contrastive analysis the two language systems and structuresare compared, which helpsto predict the errors in target language. Transfer analysis, on the other hand, is an analytical strategy to compare the second language of the learner with their mother tongue and attempts to explain the errors based on the assumption that the deviances in learner'sproduction are the result of first language transfer. Error analysisis all about the study and analysis of errors where the learners' English is comparedwith English (L2) itself, considering thegrammatical and semantic rules of the target language. It includes the identification, classification and systematic interpretation of the unacceptable forms, produced by a second language learner.
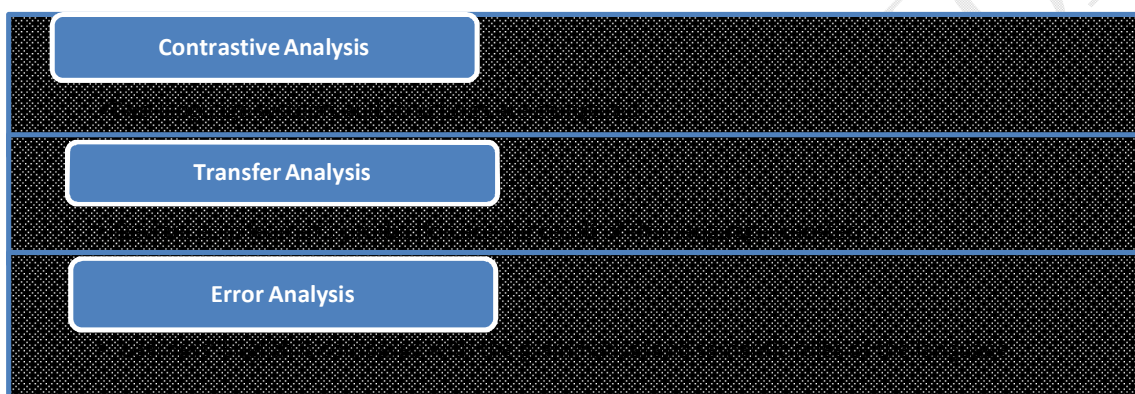

Figure 1: Various Approaches of Analyzing the Learners' English

NEED AND IMPORTANCE OF THE STUDY

Students' errors are valuable feedbacks not exclusively to the students, however for the instructors too. It is a significantpart of investigation, showing about the procedure of language learning and linguistic development of a learner. Corder, the pioneer of this field affirms in the year 1974 that the errors are unavoidable and it is likely to determine the areas which need extra support while teaching after analyzing the errors deliberately.Similarly Kwok (1998) confirmed the Corder's perceptions stating thatthe language errors, provide important information about the progress or language system of a learner. Depending upon the situation and objective, the investigation of errors can be diagnostic as well as prognostic. Here, in this study, it is diagnostic in light of the fact that it articulates us the learner's phase of the target language (Corder, 1967) at a particular point and may be prognostic for course organizers to reorient the learning materials on the basis of learners' current problems reflected after diagnostic testing (Richards, 1984).

The investigation is likewise valuable to learners as researches (Kaplan, 1966; and Nunan, 2001) reflected that thestudents' errors are systematic, instead of irregular, which implies that the students have a tendency to commit the similar sorts of mistakes during a particular phase of language learning. It is, subsequently, the obligation of instructors to abridge these frequently appearing errors, and help understudies to remember those errors as frequently as feasible. So that they can try more prominent endeavors to avoid them and maintain the accuracy in second language.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

Knowing about the fact that the students make various types of errors while writing a second language, the prime objective of this study is to identify the errors committed by students in written English. In this way, the purpose of this analysis is diagnostic. Further, the categories of errors were studied in terms of the percentage of students committed that error.

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METHOD OF THE STUDY

Taking into consideration the nature of problem the study will be descriptive and survey was conducted to collect the data. Therefore, the research method used for the present investigation is Descriptive Survey.

POPULATION AND PARTICIPANTS

All the students of class XI in the session 2017-2018, studying in different secondary schools of Chhattisgarh board are the population for this study. Since the investigator planned to study on a sufficient sample, the subjects for this study were 600 students of class XI using Multistage random sampling. Students were from different schools of Chhattisgarh board whose medium of instruction was Hindi and they study English as a compulsory subject within the school curriculum. The students' age ranges from 15 to 18 years. Due representations were given to gender (male and female), locality (urban and rural), and management of school (government and private).

PROCEDURE OF DATA COLLECTION & ANALYSIS

To fulfil the objective of analyzing the errors committed by students in their written English, free composition of students were analyzed thoroughly. For this the students were told to write an essay describing their ideal teacher in not more than 100 words. After getting the required data, it was analyzed and all the identified errors are presented in terms of percentage of students committed that error. Hence the study explored the common types of errors made by the students.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

A thorough analysis of the written performances revealed the picture of teaching learning status of English in this state. As a result, the researcher came to know that:

- 30.81% of students (185 out of 600) were not able to write a single sentence in English without prier preparation. Though they were capable of and wished to express it in Hindi, they could not translate their views in English despite given due motivation by the researcher.
- 11.48% of students (69 out of 600) could not write a single correct sentence in their second language English. Though they tried to translate their views but it was just a meaningless combination of words and sometimes letters too. Even though it was too tough to infer the meaning the student wanted to convey from the text.
- 57.67% of the written productions (346 out of 600) were analyzed thoroughly to come up with various types of errors committed by the students in their English writing. Observed errors with their description and examples are being presented here in the table below:

Table 1: Errors with their Description and Examples from Written Productions

S.No.	Error	Description	Example
1.	Adjective Error	Incorrect use of adjectives	<u>beauty queen</u> for a male teacher,<u>bravefull</u>,<u>mindfull</u>, <u>respectfull</u>
2.	Adverb Error	Adverb in place of adjective	My teacher is very <u>carefully</u>
3.	Apostrophe	To make plurals and not possession	<u>Teacher's</u> in place of teachers
4.	Articles Error	Additional use of articles	<u>a</u> best
		Incorrect use of articles	<u>the</u> good <u>a</u> honest person
		Absence of articles	(the) best
5.	Capitalization Error	Practice of not using capital letters when it required as per the conventions	<u>i</u> like my teacher <u>h</u>indi

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6.	Conjunctions Error	Incorrect use of various conjunctions	that in place of who
7.	Helping verb Error	Missing helping verb	He (is) teaching
		Incorrect use of helping verb	Has in place of is, was in place of is, she is look ..... She is helps
		Repeated helping verb	am is
8.	Homophones	Incorrect use of spelling/ words due to similar sound	Then for than, no in place of know, leave for live, write for right, there for their, berth for birth
9.	Noun Error	Noun in place of adjective	progress in place of progressive
10.	Number Errors	Wrong use of singular / plural words	My ideal teachers is... Men for man My ideal teacher is a nice women
		Incorrect plurals	Childrens
11.	Preposition Error	Incorrect use of preposition	Talk toHindi
12.	Pronoun Error	Plural pronoun for a singular noun or singular pronoun for a plural noun	They/ their/ it for a single teacher He/ him for a female and she/ her for a male teacher
13.	Pronoun case Error	Incorrect use of pronoun cases according to their function in sentence	We in place of us
14.	Punctuation	Incorrect use/ absence of punctuation	My ideal teacher.teach very good.
15.	Redundant Words	Words in which at least one word is unnecessary	Very expert, very very good, very best, best good, super best
16.	Sentence structure	Sentence components are not systematic or in proper order	We must our respect teacher
17.	Spelling Error	A word spelled incorrectly or the error in conventionally accepted form of spelling	Pechix for Physics, wech for which, idoal for ideal, averywhere for everywhere
18.	Subject-Verb agreement	Subjects and verbs not having agree in number	They was, they teaches, Teacher are...
19.	Tense error	Incorrect expression of tense or time	My ideal teacher was ver
20.	Verb Forms Error	Incorrect use of forms of verb according to tense	Teaching in place of teach, educated in place of educate, he don't refused.
21.	Word Error	Inappropriate selection of words in context	Read in place of teach or study, cut in place of deduction, dangerous while describing an ideal teacher, half in place of incomplete, donate instead of provide,

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Hence the researcher comes up with 21distinct types of error categories, based on the area of their belongingness, identified in free composition of secondary school students. During this analysis the researcher observed that the students are not competent enough to express their views in English. They only make simple sentences or try to replace the words of their first language with their English substitute without considering the sentence structure or context. Written production also indicates about the limited vocabulary of students as the adjectives used to describe their ideal teacher was very common and limited in numbers. For example: good, best, honest, beautiful, knowledgeable, time bound etc.

Having a significant amount of insights about errors in students' writing the researcher found an onus to know about the contribution of these errors which makes the written output erroneous. For this the error categories identified after the analysis of 346 compositions were further studied in terms of the percentage of students committed that error.

Table 2: Error Categories with Respective Number and Percentage of Students

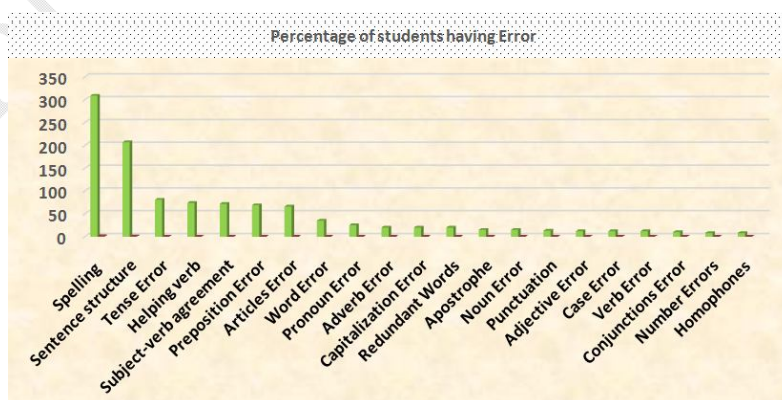| S. No.	Error category	No. of students	% of students
01.	Spelling	309	89.32%
02.	Sentence structure	207	59.71%
03.	Tense Error	81	23.30%
04.	Helping verb	74	21.36%
05.	Subject-verb agreement	72	20.87%
06.	Preposition Error	69	19.90%
07.	Articles Error	66	18.93%
08.	Word Error	35	10.19%
09.	Pronoun Error	25	07.28%
10.	Adverb Error	20	05.83%
11.	Capitalization Error	20	05.83%
12.	Redundant Words	20	05.83%
13.	Apostrophe	15	04.37%
14.	Noun Error	15	04.37%
15.	Punctuation	13	03.88%
16.	Adjective Error	12	03.40%
17.	Case Error	12	03.40%
18.	Verb Error	12	03.40%
19.	Conjunctions Error	10	02.91%
20.	Number Errors	8	02.43%
21.	Homophones	8	02.31%

Figure 2: Error Category and Percentage of Students

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CONCLUSION AND EDUCATIONAL IMPLICATION OF THE STUDY

Error analysis is an interesting as well as an important tool which sheds the light on the manner in which effective teaching should be done. In spite of the fact that mistakes at a times hinder the communication, they can frequently encourage second language learning, playing a significant role in preparing the instructors and helping them identify and distinguish students'errors, just as helping them build correction techniques.

The study will be important to educators and study material developers, being in a better position to put appropriate intervention strategies. It helps the educators to distinguish in an orderly way the particular and common language problems understudies have, so they can concentrate on that kinds of errors. For students, it demonstrates the areas of difficulty in their writingcomposition. Along these lines, it isn't just valuable to instructors, syllabus designers and textbook writers by showing them a student's progress, yet it is likewise critical to specialists and to the students.

Besides, it's been summed up that the errors in a learning setting ought not be negatively considered and never be vilified. It must be considered as a guide in educating or in the planning of instructing materials.

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