



AN ERROR ANALYSIS OF ENGLISH TENSES IN WRITING

1st Mr. Solomon Dharmapaul, 2nd Dr. V. M. Subramanian

¹Research Scholar, R & D, Bharathiar University, Coimbatore

²Assistant Professor and Head *i/c*, Department of Linguistics, Bharathiar University, Coimbatore.

Abstract

The study aimed to evaluate the errors in using Tenses in English. The objective of the investigation of Tenses in grammatical error occurred among the 11th standard students in Coimbatore district. The method of this study was applied descriptive study. The number of the sample was selected 60 that consisted of 20 each classes and each school. The researcher provided a questionnaire among students and given instruction to change appropriate tenses in sentence. Based on the analyze from the test. The researcher analyzed all data and found out the students' error occurred in the sentences. The majority of the students had committed error in change of writing. The major error found in spelling, addition, omission, misformation and misordering. In the conclusion part of the study, the structure did such error because students preferred most of the words translated from their mother tongue into English. Hence, they forget to use the correct pattern of the sentence structure.

Keywords: Error Analysis, Spelling, Tenses, writing

1. Introduction

Grammar is the most important most essential part of language learning for second language learners. It is important to improve knowledge of grammar in the beginning level. Writing is one of the four skills that should be mastered by the students. The written form is that can be read and understood by readers and also writing is one of the ways to communicate with others. According to Hornby (2003) writing is a process of expressing ideas into words to give clear information. In communication, writing is an important skill that must be improved by second language learner. By the way writing, learners can share their thoughts, ideas, experiences and knowledge with other people. The higher secondary students need to improve their as a part of their subject and future purpose of the study.

According to Brown (2001) writing is a written process of thinking, drafting, and reversing that need a special skill on how to create and organize the coherently, how to make clear meaning and how to make written text for appropriate grammar that can be a writing product. In addition, Harmer (2002) argues that besides grammar and vocabulary, there are some parts such as text forming, spelling arrangement and punctuation which must be learned by second language learners. It means that writing plays an important role in language learning, such as to increase students' vocabulary, grammar knowledge and how to express students' their understanding into written form. Similarly, Javed, Juan, and Zlu (2013) conclude that writing skill has an important role to improve students' communication skill. In this contest above, the researcher concluded a study about the grammatical error in students writing among higher secondary students in Coimbatore district.

1.2 Objectives of the study

This study is carried out based on the following objectives:

- 1). To identify the grammatical errors committed by ESL learners in writing.
- 2). To find out the various forms of errors in the use of tenses committed by students in writing.

1.4 Significance of the study

Theoretically, this study is to propose to be useful for the process of the teaching English for the Higher Secondary students. The result of this study is to be useful for the Teachers of English to gain skills. This study brought up grammatical mistakes made by the students in writing. Therefore, teachers know about students' mistakes and teachers will pay more attention to the grammatical parts. The study result shows that mostly on grammatical error in writing. The study also useful to conduct further research related to English writing.

1.5 Error Analysis

Learning either second language or foreign language by the non-native students will make more difficulties and discomfort than their own native language. The native language has been used from the time of a child's birth which may appear easy and simple for them. Apart from that the native people and the situation and surrounding will help to learn and speak easily the native language. Whereas English is being taught only in high schools and more over few hours are only allotted for English teaching and learning. Unless students have special interest and effort in learning English, it will not be learnt easily. Most of the students memorize everything but do not practice sentence formation regularly. Chomsky said that the theory of the genetic component of the language faculty is planted partly in the human brain which he named as Universal Grammar. He said that certain set of structural rules are innate to humans and independent sensory experience. When Second or foreign language is learnt, the first language, mother tongue interferes without the knowledge of the learner. This is called "Interlingual" or "Intralingual" which will lead to error.

1.5.1 Theoretical Frame work with Error Analysis

The researcher had done this study based on Corder's (1974) the theoretical framework on his details of errors and mistakes. Error appears because that the gap in learner's English knowledge and mistakes occur due to lack of English knowledge which could be corrected by the learner himself or herself. In case of error, to rectify or correct it, learner needs an expert in English language. Corder had schemed certain analytical tool which is called Error Analysis. It has been explained as "a set of procedures for identifying, describing and explaining learner's error (Ellis & Barkhuizen, 2005:51) Error Analysis is applied not only to find out errors but also has been trying to explain the reason for the error occurred. Apart from this method, there are more methods are available for the research to collect data. According to Ellis & Barkhuizen, the best method is to collect samples from the students of their English language usages.

1.5.2 Kinds of Errors

Corder said that there are some differences between natives and non-natives on committing errors which has been categorized by Ellis & Barkhuizen as follows:

- **Errors of omissions:** Sometimes, the learner would have omitted some word in a sentence, for example: "I playing Chess game." (omitted 'am')
- **Errors of addition:** Sometimes, the learner would have added unnecessarily as in the sentence, for example: "I have bought my lunch today" (addition is '-Ed')
- **Misformation/substitution:** Sometimes, the learner used wrong formation of either morpheme or structure, for example: "She is the most beautifullest girl of the world" (misformation of the superlative degree; 'the most beautifullest' Note: present day style is "the most beautiful girl" correct.
- **Misordering:** Sometimes, learners do commit error in using the morphemes in the grammatical construction, as "Many a times, I used to watch the boys playing foul game.

2. Research Methodology

The method which is used in the research is descriptive method. This study was conducted among higher secondary students in Coimbatore district. The research provided subjective type of question and asked to change correct form of the tenses and analysed grammatical errors occurred in their write-up. The researcher collected all the write up from the students and identified grammatical errors. The simple percentage method was used for identifying students' frequency of errors.

2.1 Participants

The sample was selected based on convenience as they were accessible to the researcher. The participants in this study were 60 students in each class and each school for 10 numbers for the study. The location the research conducted in four schools; Government Higher Secondary school, Ganapathy, Government Higher Secondary school, Ramnagar and Mani's Higher Secondary school Pappanayakkanpalayam in Coimbatore district. Researcher used simple statistical percentage method to analyse for this study. Their age range was between 16 to 17 years.

3. Analysis

The present study analysed on two systems: Qualitative method and Quantitative method. Error analysis had been used qualitative method for analysing grammar. The Quantitative method had been applied on analysing numerical data which had been collected from the students.

3.1 Findings

After collecting and analysing the data, the researcher tabulated and explained them in detail. Also the researcher identified and then marked the mistakes in the students writing. These mistakes were classified into several aspect such as spelling, omission, addition, Misformation and Misordering. The following table were presented and answer to the objectives of the study.

Table. 1

Students errors in tenses			
S.No	Error Types	Frequency of errors	Percentage of error
1	Spelling	55	91%
2	Omission	20	34%
3	Addition	40	66.6%
4	Misformation	52	86%
5	Misordering	49	81.6%

The table shown the entire of tenses mistakes in students writing. Which is largest number mistake in spelling 91%. Moreover, in omission 34%, Addition 66.6%, Misformation 86% and misordering 81.6%. This table results shown that also students need to concentrate tenses in the all the aspects and also teachers' pay more attention in the grammatical part. It is very essential part of basic writing skills.

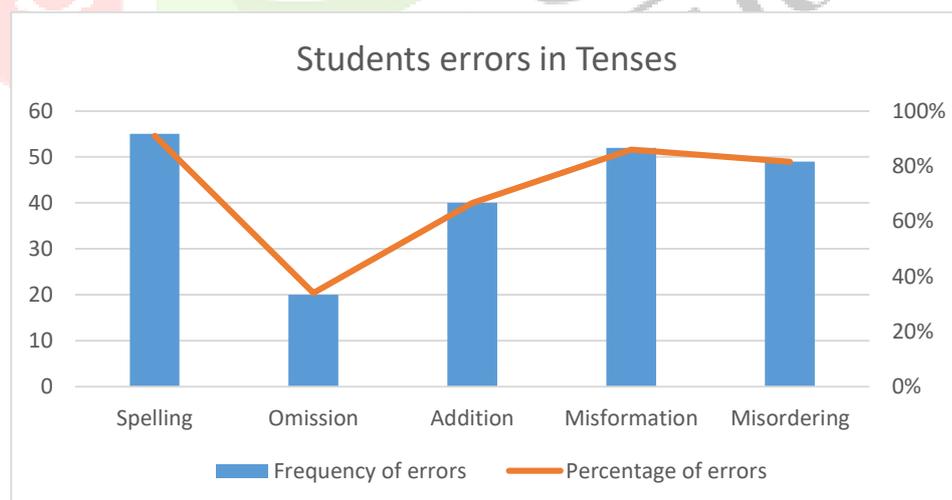


Figure. 1

3.2 Errors in Spelling

Sample of spelling errors are identified in students write up. Most of the students are confusion with word of similar spelling as shown below:

Amang (among), devolove(develop),depance(defence), principle(principal), to(too), where(were),cerreer(career), lifes(lives),obsession (obsession),morden(Modern), by (buy), middle(middle), business(business).

The results revealed that the students confused with similar spelling in English. They also confused while writing these words. It can be made out that the cohort of students had challenges faced in their writing. This type of errors could be due to the influence of their mother tongue.

Simple Tenses

Simple Present Tenses

Example:

- Incorrect: I goes to college regularly. (Addition of morpheme '-es')*
Correct: I go to college.
- Incorrect: I am of sixteen years of age. (Addition of 'of')*
Correct: I am sixteen years of age.
- Incorrect: Cricket are lovable game. ('are' the aux-v shall be for plural but singular) Misformation*
Correct: Cricket is a lovable game.

Simple Past Tense

- Incorrect: There was a cyclone symptoms. (Addition of '-s' with the object)*
Correct: There was cyclone symptom.
- Incorrect: I was look better in the past years. (Misformation of sentence)*
Correct: I was looked well in the past years.
- Incorrect: Ragu comed to my house yesterday. (Addition '-ed' with the main verb)*
Correct: Ragu came to my house yesterday.

Present continuous tense

Samples:

- Incorrect: I playing football today. (Omission of Aux-v 'am' in this sentence)*
Correct: I am playing football today.
- Incorrect: They is speaking some serious subject. (Misformation of sentence)*
Correct: They are speaking some serious subject.
- Incorrect: Jenny spending her vacation on watching movies on the television. (Omission of Aux-V 'is')*

Past Continuous tense

Samples

- Incorrect: James did not went to college yesterday. (Addition of main verb; instead of 'went' should have been used 'go' with 'did')*
Correct: James did not go to college yesterday.
- Incorrect: These mangos were tasting soured. (Misformation adjective; instead of using 'sour' used as a main verb as 'soured')*
Correct: These mangos were tasting sour.
- Incorrect: My school Headmaster was plan to go to Dubai. (Omission of '-ing')*
Correct: My school Headmaster was planning to go to Dubai.

Present Perfect Tense

Samples

- Incorrect: Peter has just leave from home. (Misordering of the sentence)*
Correct: Peter has just left home
- Incorrect: I have not see him to be sad. (Omission of 'en' in the main verb)*
Correct: I have not seen him to be sad.
- Incorrect: Helen has finished with her home work. (Misinformation of preposition 'with')*
Correct: Helen has finished her home work.

Present Perfect Continuous

Samples

- Incorrect: Gemini has playing since this morning. (Omission of 'been')*
Correct: Gemini has been playing since this morning.
- Incorrect: Where have you been since a long time? (Misinformation- because of 'since' usage)*
Correct: Where have you been for a long time?
- Incorrect: Why have you not writed the essay of the novel of Malgudi Days? (Addition of '-ed' in the main verb)*
Correct: Why have you not written the essay of the novel of Malgudi Days?

The Future Tense**Samples**

- a. *Incorrect: We will celebrated Deepawali this year. (Addition of '-ed')*
Correct: We will celebrate Deepawali this year.
- b. *Incorrect: It's raining. I will took umbrella. (Misinformation: incorrect use of main verb 'took' instead of 'take'.*
Correct: It's raining. I will take an umbrella.
- c. *Incorrect: I will sell my mobike because I will bought a new car. (Wrong substitution of 'bought' instead of 'buy'.*
Correct: I will sell my mobike because I will buy a new car.

4. Results and discussion

Based on the students' writings, there are some students still made grammatical mistakes. Also, there are several students who write like speaking style which is an informal writing, after analysing students' paragraph completely. They got a lot of grammatical errors in tenses. Some students got Addition of error as in the sentence: "I am at sixteen years of age". 'at' is the addition error in the sentence. Major number of students did 'Omission' error in the article usage, like, "I went to my aunt's house play". 'to' is omitted in this sentence. "Chess is game of the human brain". 'a' is omitted in this sentence. Misformation and Misordering can be seen subject & verb agreement, verb, preposition, pronoun, conjunction and what not. Any ESL students are prone to commit error but it could be rectified clearly, provided students have interest and attention. Carelessness causes error and inattentive in classes leads to commit error. Rest of the problems, like economy of the family as well as illiteracy can managed easily by the students.

The reason for the error was that most of the students were from rural areas and more over their parents were uneducated and the income was very poor. Since, English was 2nd language and above all it is a foreign language which such student were unable to understand and resulted in inattentive in the class room. Sometimes, few of them were being criticised and to the extent of making fun of them which resulted as aliens. City dwelling students had an opportunity to learn English privately but not the village students because this practise, they cannot understand clearly. It is a communication problem.

Another reason is that the most of the students were from Tamil medium and that was their mother tongue which had the influence while speaking or writing, i.e. 'intralingual' and 'interligual' can be found in their English language. In their mother tongue Tamil, the sentence formation will be S+O+V but in English S+V+O. This is another problem which can be passed by only practise. Another problem with Tamil students are the difference between regular and irregular verb. This might be lead to committing error either addition or omission. Sometimes, there will be a misformation also. To have practise, they need more hours but other subjects will occupy more and teachers will concentrate more on scoring higher marks for to get admission in either medical or engineering colleges.

5. Conclusion

In spite of these problems, researcher concluded that if students had shown interest to develop their skill in all the four modules, through practice, they could definitely surpass as better students in communicating with high competency level by which they can get better job with better salary to be better position in the society because English in an international language which is accepted universally. So, 2nd language students should develop their skills to better life.

References

- Brown, H. D. (2000). *Teaching by principles: An interactive approach to language pedagogy*. Regents/Prentice Hall.
- Burns, A., & Richards, J. C. (2008). *Cambridge guide to second language teacher education*. Cambridge University Press.
- Chomsky, N. (1957), *Syntactic Structures*, Mouton, The Hague
- Chomsky, N. (1980), *Rules and Representations*, Oxford, Blackwell
- Corder, S. P. (1981). *Error analysis and Interlanguage*. Oxford University Press, USA.
- Ellis, R. (2002). *Second language acquisition*. Oxford University Press
- Harmer, J. (2002). *The practice of English language teaching*. Longman Publishing Group.
- C.R. Kothari, & Gaurav Garg. (2019). *Research Methodology : Methods And Techniques (Multi Colour Edition)* (4th ed.). New Age International Publisher.