



A Qualitative Analysis of Inter and Intra lingual errors in Second Language Learners' Diagnostic test

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Abstract

Rural south Tamilnadu students who step into their colleges are found to be in lower level in their second language English. The researcher intended to prove this condition and conducted a diagnostic test in writing skill to the first year under graduation students. 340 first year students from various departments participated in this study. A qualitative study is made to analyse the inter lingual and intra lingual skills developed by both English Medium and Tamil medium students. Inter lingual and intra lingual errors are identified, analysed and categorized. It is found that the Tamil medium students, even after 12 years of English language acquaintance, still suffer from mother tongue influence and have committed a lot of inter and intra lingual errors. Those students could not construct correct English sentences. The students who have studied in English medium have improved their proficiency level than the Tamil medium students. This study is significant and will be useful for the teachers to know the level of the students so that they can give them the suitable remedial measures and assist the students towards successful English language learning.

Key words:

Second language learning, Inter lingual skill, Intra lingual skill, error analysis, Mother tongue influence, Medium of instruction.

Introduction:

English language teaching tradition has been exposed to constant changes throughout the centuries. Research related to second language learning are conducted all over the world in various perspectives. There has been a growing concern and attention towards assessing the proficiency level of second language learners. Second language assessment is apprehensive with procedures and techniques for measuring second language knowledge. An effort is made to analyse the inter lingual and intra lingual errors committed by the students. This paper presents and discusses the results of quantitative study of the inter and intra lingual skills in writing by the second language learners of south Tamilnadu. 340 first year students from various departments of Arts and Science college participated in this study. The errors are identified, analysed and categorized by the researcher. The researcher aims to provide the present knowledge about the inter and intra lingual errors and causes and reasons behind the errors when those students just entered into college. This study is useful to guide the second language learners towards successful language learning.

Literature Review:

Researchers have acknowledged that well developed proficiency in the areas of SLRW is the essential requirement for students who want to acquire second language proficiency. In every day situation and to master academic content English knowledge matters. (Callahan,2005; Commins 1984;Dicerbo, Anstrom, Baker & Riviera, 20`4;Olsen2014;Snow & Ucceli, 2009). Researchers Menken, Kleyn and Cae(2012) found that many of the second language learners speak colloquial English but read and write far below grade level.

Diagnostic test in writing skills are used to find the proficiency level of the students in the second language learning before starting the course. This is meant to help the teachers to understand what the students know and which areas the learners need to improve in writing. It is a significant method and helps teachers and learners to identify problems that students have with the English language writing. Alderson (2005) provides a working definition of diagnostic assessment which summarizes its purposes and use in second/foreign language assessment: “Diagnostic tests are designed to identify both strengths and weaknesses in a learner’s knowledge and use of language. Focusing on strengths will enable the identification of the level a learner has reached, and focusing on weaknesses or possible areas for improvement should lead to remediation or further instruction...” (pp. 256-257). Diagnostic language analysis is both backward-looking and forward- looking (Davies, 1968; Kunnan & Jang, 2011). It is backward-looking in the sense that it is anticipated to assess what the learners have not yet learned as well as what they have already learned.

Conscious language learning, on the other hand is thought to be a great deal by error correction and the presentation of explicit rules (Krashen and Seligner, 1975) Errors arising can be caused by various types of interferences such as the influence of source language L1 which characterizes inter lingual interference and lack of understanding of the principles of target language L2 which characterized intra lingual interference (Falhasiri, Tavakoli, Hasiri and Mohammed Zadeh, 2011)

Brown, in Abusaeedi & Borooman 2015, demarcated inter lingual interference as a negative influence of a single language concerning another. In other words, the disorder happened between, at least, two languages. It can be L1 orL2. The inference occurred because the language user is too dependent on one language so that the language rules used affect the use of other language (Al- khresheh,2010)

Research Purpose:

Even after studying English as a second language for more than 12 years in school, most of the rural students exhibit low level performance in second language learning. The purpose of this study is to analyse the errors in writing by the first year college students and to identify the sources which contributes the errors. It is hoped that the information gathered will provide some insights to the difficulties faced by the rural students in learning English. Identifying the areas of difficulty is important for learners and teachers to move towards successful second language learning and teaching.

Research Questions:

The study addresses the following research questions:

1. What are the errors committed by the second language learners in writing?
2. Why Tamil medium students could not perform well in writing in second language?

Objectives:

The objectives of the study are,

1. To identify the level of the students
2. To analyse the significant study of inter lingual and intra lingual errors in writing skill
3. To analyse the students’ performance in developing the L2 language skills in terms of their medium of study.

Error Analysis:

Error analysis theory (EA) was established by Stephen Corder in 1970s and has become one of the popular approaches in analysing the errors committed by second language learners

Error analysis is a very significant area in Applied Linguistics as well as second language learning. Error analysis is a method commonly used to identify the cause of the difficulty the learner under goes in language learning. It is a method of reviewing a student's effort and then looking for patterns of misconstruction.

Errors are signals that indicate an actual learning process and show that the learner has not yet mastered or shown a well – structured competence in the target language. Errors have been classified by J. Ricgard et al.(2002) into two categories. They are inter lingual and Intra lingual errors. The negative influence of both the learner's native language and the target language affect the second language learning.

Inter lingual errors:

Inter lingual errors often named as transfer errors are those attributed to the first language. These errors interfere with or prevent the language learner from acquiring the patterns and rules of the target language (Corder 1973) in p.21. Generally, L1 learners commit inter lingual errors because they use their mother tongue to learn a foreign language. They transfer some structure from L1 to produce L2. In Second language writing, learners make errors because they are unable to separate their thought processes from L1 and could not go towards L2. They rely on word by word translations of a sentence and thus end up with the L1 sentence patterns (Dulay , Burt & Krashen, 1982) in p.22. Thus the students think in L1 and change it into L2.

First language influence appears to be stronger in complex word order sentences and word for words translation of phrases. The position of adjectives, Omission of plurals on nouns, lack of Subject Verb agreement, adjective noun agreement and most of the morphological errors, un necessary insertion of words are due to inter lingual errors.

Students from Tamil medium have very poor English acquisition environments. As they have developed inadequate listening to the second language, they tend to use the native language knowledge and try to apply that in the second language learnings. Apart from language transfer inter lingual errors consists of over generalization of rules of L2., simplification and variabilities usage of the target language also.

Intra lingual errors:

Intra lingual errors are often called as developmental errors. They are due to partial learning of the target language L2. Intra lingual errors occur because of ignorance of rules and restrictions, incomplete application of rules, false concepts of some grammatical rules, spelling errors, Punctuation errors, voice errors, tense errors, incorrect choice of reasonably related words, unknown meaning of a word in different contexts and are the results of intra lingual errors.

If the learner is motivated, he will progress with conscious learning. He will try to apply the rules correctly and incur sufficient knowledge about the target language. Paying attention to the correction of the target language, the level of involvement will influence a learner to achieve the intra lingual skills gradually towards successful learning. English speaking environment also influences the second language learning.

Research Methodology:

This study is a qualitative study of error analysis in terms of inter lingual and intra lingual errors. A diagnostic test in writing skill is given for the first year Arts and Science under graduation students of South Tamilnadu. The time duration is 45 Minutes and two parts of questions were given. Part I consists of rearranging the jumbled words into correct sentences and Translation questions. Part II consists of Sentence framing for the given words and Paragraph writing. The inter lingual skills of the students were assessed by Part I and intra lingual skills were assessed by Part II performances of the students. Around 340 students wrote the test and papers were evaluated by the researcher. The answer scripts were analysed, errors were identified and inter and intra lingual errors were categorized.

Error Analysis of the current study:

The errors of the diagnostic test papers were analysed according to the following categories:

- (A) Inter lingual Errors
- (B) Intra lingual Errors

(1) The analysis of Part I answers by Tamil medium students throw light on the errors related to inter language skills.

- (i) Sample inter lingual errors by Tamil Medium Students in Rearranging the Jumbled Sentences:

Questions:

1. ship/ violently / the/ storm/rocked/the
2. parts/ many/ coffee/ popular/ in/ world/ the/ is/ very/ of
3. apple / brother/ took/ his/ the
4. tried/ the/ apple/ baby/ to / the / eat
5. from / eyes / were/ crying / her / red /

Answers(Incorrect):

1. The violently ship storm the rocked
2. Popular coffee is world in the parts of very many
3. The apple his took his brother
4. The eat the apple tried to the baby
5. Eyes from her crying were red

- (ii) Sample inter lingual errors by Tamil medium students in Translation exercise (Incorrect answers)

Questions:

1. பழங்களை உண்பது உடலுக்கு நல்லது
2. சத்தம் போடாதே
3. நீ கல்லூரிக்கு செல்லும் பொழுது என்னையும் அழைத்து செல்.
4. காரில் உள்ள ஸ்பெனரை எடுத்து வா.
5. நான் எழுதிக் கொண்டிருந்த போது அவன் கீழே விழுந்தான்

Answers (Incorrect)

1. Fruit eating good body
2. Sound not
3. You will be going on college I come
4. Car is in spanner in walk here
5. I am writing in note he fell down

(1) The analysis of Part II answers by Tamil medium students throw light on the errors related to intra language skills.

- (i) Sample intra lingual errors by Tamil Medium Students in Framing Sentences for the following words:

Questions: Agree, Reach, Able, Steal, Praise

Answers (Incorrect)

1. Agree: I am agree department
2. Reach : I am reach the hospital for some health issues.
3. Able : I am able to listening in the class
4. Steal :I steal body fit
5. Praise : The customer paye the praise

(ii) Sample intra lingual errors by Tamil Medium Students Paragraph writing:

Questions: Write a paragraph on Education

Write a paragraph oh Dangers of Polythene Bags

Answers (Incorrect):

Education :

Education is best in the world . He helps to learning communication. I and speaking and reading to the innovative speaking more etc. It provides other exta curricular activities to etc. I helps to self innovation to etc. It helps gives some innovative ideas. Some motivation speech like classes and our culture, our food, some historical places, events etc. I t provides way of speaking and manners and discipline etc.

Dangers of using Polythene Bags :

Polythene Bags is dangers. Polythene bage in water and plants storagena to the life. Human being of using the polythene bags. Polythene ag a disadvantages of human life. Polythene bage in market, vegetable in the using. Polythene bage your cancer. Polythene bage did not under the sand. Polythene bage did not use in the government rules.

Analysis of Inter and Intra lingual errors by Tamil medium students:

The above answers are the exact examples of mother tongue influence of Tamil medium students. Most of the sentences have incorrect construction of sentences. We come to know that the student does not know the basic sentence structure of English language. Also he does not know the basic elements like Parts of Speech. To frame a correct jumbled sentence, a student should know to identify the subject and verb from the given question. This basic knowledge is found missing in the above incorrect answers. The student has just tried to write the word in his mother tongue's word order and thus resulted in incorrect answer. Some sentences do not have the subject in the proper place. It is found from the above, that the students need continuous guidance and feedback from the concern second language teacher. Much concentration is needed from the student's side also. As they could not identify the various parts of speeches, their answers have improper position of adverbs and adjectives also. Subject verb agreement and Adjective noun agreement errors are another important error found from most of the incorrect answers.

In the translation exercise, it is obvious that the students lack the vocabulary power. They could not choose the correct word as they are week in vocabulary skills. One of the students have used the vocabulary 'sound' instead of 'loud'. It is clear the students have read the Tamil sentences and have tried to write the same in English. Awareness of correct choice of words and sentence structure are missing here.

The incorrect sample framing sentences for the given words show that the students lack in vocabulary and grammatical skills. Most of the students have misunderstood the related words which convey a different but related meaning. They do not have any knowledge about homonyms and homophones. The word 'steal' is misunderstood for 'steel' , the word 'agree' for 'agri' (agriculture) and the word 'Praise' for 'Price'.

This is a clear evidence of the shallow knowledge of vocabulary skill among the Tamil medium students. The first person singular noun I is often replaced by I am by Tamil medium students which is equivalent to 'Naan' in Tamil. The preposition used by the students are also not up to the level. They have used wrong preposition in the wrong places. Most of the students have even used the main verb in the place of noun in the incorrect sentences. Incorrect sentences therefore does not convey any meaning.

In Paragraph writing also we find numerous errors. They do not give any meaningful information to the readers. The reader will not get any benefit from the above incorrect paragraph and it misguide the readers because it could not convey what the writers intend to convey. All sentences are found meaningless which show the Tamil medium students have not gained any knowledge about English language even after 12 years of studying English as a second language in their schools.

(2) The analysis of Part I answers by English medium students throw light on the errors related to inter language skills.

(i) Sample inter lingual errors by English Medium Students in Rearranging the Jumbled Sentences:

Questions:

1. teach/she/in New York/these days
2. / till / you / come back / wait / here / shall /I /
3. own / the details / in / words / your / interpret
4. that/lived in/ hills/I dreamt/I /Malabar
5. /necessary / are / growth / of/ sports / for / the / body / the /

Answers(Incorrect):

1. She teaches these days in Newyork.
2. I come back here, shall you till wait
3. The details words in your own interpret
4. I dreamt that Malabar hills I lived in
5. The sports are growth of the necessary body

(ii) Sample inter lingual errors by English medium students in Translation exercise (Incorrect answers)

Questions:

1. எவ்வளவு உணவுப் பொருள் உனக்கு தேவைப் படும்?
2. இதை எத்தனை முறை நான் உனக்கு சொல்லனும்?
3. நீ கல்லூரிக்கு செல்லும் பொழுது என்னையும் அழைத்து செல்.
4. நீ ஏன் இங்கு நேற்று வரவில்லை?
5. அவளை அவ்வாறு கூப்பிட கூடாது.

Answers (Incorrect)

1. How much food you will want ?
2. How many times I will told you?
3. You going to college please invite me
4. Why, you are not come this place yesterday
5. Don't call like this that girl

The analysis of Part II answers by English medium students throw light on the errors related to intra language skills.

(iii) Sample intra lingual errors by English Medium Students in Framing Sentences for the following words :

Questions: Prevent, Cabin, Present, Satisfy, Eradicate

Answers (Incorrect)

1. Prevent : I prevent a cup of coffee
2. Cabin : The manager sitting in his cabin
3. Present : Ram present gift by vishal
4. Satisfy : I am satisfy with your opinion
5. Eradicate : Eradicate the sentence with correct form

(iv) Sample intra lingual errors by English Medium Students in Paragraph writing:

Questions: Write a paragraph on Pet animal

Write a paragraph on Whatsapp Tool.

Answers (Incorrect):

Pet animal :

In all our homes we are growing Dog, cat and etc as pet animals. To grow pet animal most loved by all people. Pet animal growing habit is good and it gives their part on the other way. Mostly the people's grow the dogs as pet animals in their home. Please don't hunt or hurt animals. They are living their life happily in their own way. It's not disturbing us. So, please save the pet animals.

Whatsapp Tool :

These days online classes is very useful. Teachers send pdf files on whatsapp. Students go and through it. Facebook and whatsapp some advantages and some disadvantage . Many people send their photos in whatsapp. So this app how it is useful for people's. It is easy to communicate through social media. We refer many books also. We receives answers easily and quickly.

Analysis of Inter and Intra lingual errors by English medium students:

The researcher has noted that the English medium students' performance is better than the Tamil medium students. From the above incorrect responses, it is evident that Subject Verb agreement goes wrong in some places. Unlike Tamil medium Students, it is found that the students who studied in English medium has got some knowledge about the parts of speeches and its usage in a sentence.

The research has found that most of the jumbled sentences start with the subject followed by the verb. The students have committed errors like improper placement of adverbs and adjectives. In some sentences they could not find the main verb and has misunderstood the prepositional phrases into subordinate clause or main clauses. They lack knowledge in if conditionals also. From some answer scripts the researcher has found that there is a lot of confusion in placing the adjectives. They have tried to construct correct English sentences but have failed because of the partial and inadequate knowledge of basic English grammar. Only some students have exhibited mother tongue influence in their errors but not by most students. It is obvious that most of the errors occur because of inadequate knowledge and partial learning of the second language.

In translation exercise, the sentence structure need to be improved. The adjectives and adverbial placement errors are found in numerous places. Some students have struggled to find the suitable vocabulary in translation questions. Incorrect tense usage is also found in the above incorrect translated sentences.

In framing sentences the words are misunderstood for their homonyms and homophones which result in wrong sentence. This shows the students are lacking in their vocabulary skills. The repeated words, redundancy and omission of words, using unwanted phrases are also found among the errors by the English medium students.

In Paragraph writing most of the students have drafted very good content when compared to the Tamil medium students. Some grammatical errors are also found in the above given paragraphs. Usage of unwanted and additional phrases, incorrect adjectives, adverb placements, subject verb agreement etc. are some of the errors. The students' vocabulary skill is also need to be developed.

Finding:

The students from Tamil medium and English Medium were given a diagnostic test. Their incorrect answers were analysed. It is found that the students from Tamil medium have shown very low level of Proficiency in their performance in writing skill. They do not even have the knowledge of the basic elements of a sentence like Parts of Speech .and its usage in writing correct English Sentences. They are unaware of the grammatical rules also. Their vocabulary skill is very poor.

The students from English medium exhibit good knowledge about basic English grammatical rules. The errors committed by them are mostly on incorrect adverbial and adjectival placements. Some students are found to be lagging in Sentence patterns also. Their vocabulary skill is comparatively good to the Tamil medium students. Some students have exhibited inadequate knowledge of Homophones and Homonyms. The overall Proficiency level is better than Tamil Medium Students.

Result:

340 students participated in the diagnostic test.

234 students are from Tamil medium

106 students were from English Medium in their schools.

As per the performance and marks secured the researcher has categorized them based on their Inter lingual and Intra lingual skills.

In Inter lingual skills,

180 students have secured 0 to 4 marks out of 10.

160 students have secured 6 to 10 marks out of 10

$180 < 234$ (Total Tamil Medium students)

So, 77 % of Tamil medium students have not developed Inter lingual skills

23 % of Tamil medium students have developed Inter lingual skills

$160 > 106$ (Total English Medium students)

So, 100 % of English medium students have developed Inter lingual skills

0 % of English medium students have not developed Inter lingual skills

In Intra lingual skills,

256 students have secured 0 to 4 marks out of 10

84 students have secured 5 to 10 marks out of 10

$256 > 234$ (Total Tamil Medium students)

So, 100 % of Tamil medium students have not developed Intra lingual skills

0 % of Tamil medium students have developed Intra lingual skills

$84 < 106$ (Total English Medium students)

So, 20.7 % of English medium students have not developed Intra lingual skills

79.3 % of English Medium students have developed Intra lingual skills.

Thus, as per this research, the rural South Tamilnadu students, when they enter their college, 88.5% (77%+100%) of Tamil medium students have not developed inter and intra lingual skills and 20.7 % of English medium students have not developed intra lingual skills.

Conclusion:

The students who enter Arts and Science colleges from rural back ground, only 24.7% (84 high scorers in intra lingual skills / 340 total students) of students are up to the level in English language as they study in English medium in their schools. Remaining 75.3 % students' needs continuous motivation and guidance from the English teachers to achieve their level in English Language.

Teachers play a vital role in teaching English. If the teacher is aware of the level of the students, it will be easy for them to assist the students towards success. Giving a diagnostic test in the beginning of the course and analysing the errors committed by the students will be a remedy for the students of second language. If the teachers have the clear idea about the students' level, it is sure, that they will be treated accordingly to learn the language. Proper guidance, continuous motivation, correct teaching tools and content, giving regular feed backs about the students' performance and corrective measures will lead the students towards successful language learning

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