

**BASICS OF SYNTACTICAL ERRORS IN ENGLISH: A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY**

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**Abstract**

This paper makes an effort to evaluate the student's language proficiency in order to pinpoint the best remedial teaching strategy to support the ELT system and promote growth. This approach differs from earlier research in that it focuses more on pedagogical recommendations than on fault identification and explanation. It is believed that error analysis ought to take a more optimistic tack and offer a clear course of action for the teacher in the classroom. All forms of faults can be analysed linguistically, but for pedagogical reasons, one must be selective. Thus, this study focuses on those particular aspects of English syntax that pose the biggest challenges for learners. Errors have a favourable effect on how well students' strategies are evaluated in error analysis. It does not mean they did not learn the language; rather, it highlights problems with the teaching-learning process. Additionally, it provides feedback from the teachers on the efficiency of the instructional strategies and materials.

**Keywords:** English, Syntax, Error, Learning, Teaching

**Basics of Syntactical Errors in English: A Phenomenological Study**

English has always played a significant role in Tamilnadu's educational planning. All children are exposed to it in the preschool years. Therefore, English is studied for more than twelve years by students who register in arts and science colleges. Most colleges use English as their primary language of instruction beginning with undergrad programmes. Although some universities provide instruction in regional languages, very few students choose to take advantage of it. Both at the Higher Secondary and the Degree levels, English is a required subject. The two-language strategy of mother tongue and English has been promoted by the Tamil Nadu government. In this situation, one might anticipate that the students would have a solid command of the English language, but this is not the case. The average college student today uses English incorrectly quite a bit. The college teacher finds it difficult to help the students' English because of the little amount of time provided, the extensive syllabus to cover, and the high number of students to teach. As a result, after having been in college for three years, the student is still making blunders. Many English language education innovations that the government has made over time have undoubtedly changed the way that English teachers feel about instructing English. Although they are aware of how important "Language Work" is, they are unsure of the exact procedures to follow.

The improvements previously discussed demonstrate a practical approach to English instruction in higher education. What the student must understand now is made plain by the new curriculum. But before fresh learning may be successful, there are some things that need to be unlearned. R.N. Ghosh et al. remark, "...at the college level, one of the important tasks before the teacher is making the student first unlearn and then relearn quite substantial chunks of the language which he had learnt wrongly earlier"(99). Therefore, remedial instruction is just as crucial as new instruction. The teacher must use error analysis to choose the best remedial grammar curriculum. He would learn more about the student's level of language knowledge, or interlanguages, from a correctly executed error analysis.

The areas of difficulty could therefore be the focus of a remedial grammar course. College instructors today are aware of the importance of student errors, but due to time constraints and a lengthy syllabus to cover, they are unable to conduct error analyses. However, they are too generic to

address the demands of our pupils. Language education cannot be useful unless the needs of the learners are determined. Remedial grammar books that are recommended help to some extent to attain the intended purposes. And the only way to determine a learner's needs is through error analysis.

To raise the bar, remedial instruction is required. However, remedial instruction cannot be effectively planned unless it is founded on error analysis. All teachers must receive comprehensive training in error analysis and creating corrective resources. Recent developments in educational psychology emphasise the need of learner-centered programmes. The learner is now the centre of attention, not the teacher. Even the best instructor can only create an environment conducive to learning. Language cannot actually be taught; all we can do is provide the right environment for it to emerge naturally and in the mind's own way.

Successful educators change their behaviour to meet the requirements of the students. Errors are a necessary component of learning and show the level of a learner's competency. An essential component of education is error analysis, which examines the types and sources of errors. The student creates his own system in an effort to learn the target language, which is very different from either his native language's or the target language's system. It is his own idiolect, which is always evolving as he learns more. It is in a perpetual state of change. In "Idiosyncratic Dialects and Error Analysis," Pit Corder refers to this as "idiosyncratic dialect" (159). It is 'idiosyncratic' because it displays the quirks of the learners at that particular stage of learning; it is a dialect because students at the same level share the same qualities. William Nemser refers to this as a "approximate system" in "Approximate Systems of Foreign Language Learners" (121) because it seeks to approximate the system of the target language. In "Interlanguage," Larry Selinker refers to it as "interlanguages" since it is a stage in the process between the source language and the target language. According to Dulay and Burt in their "You Can't Learn without Goofing: An Analysis of Children's Second Language Errors," "you can't learn without goofing" (95). Pit Corder's basic tenets of error analysis are reiterated by Roger Bell in the following manner (36-37).

1. The construction of some sort of rule-governed structure is a necessary component of any successful communication between L2 speakers of a language.
2. This system is a code that is neither the L1 nor the "full" L2 - that is, it is not utilised by native speakers of the target language - but rather "interlanguages" containing traits from both and features from neither.
3. The student possesses a level of "transitional competence" in L2, which is comparable to his proficiency in L1.
4. Like any other code, the interlanguage can be described as an autonomous system.
5. Forms that appear in a learner's performance that are isomorphic to those of the target language may or may not represent indicative of the underlying system; in other words, they could happen randomly, just as some forms that are not isomorphic might. Therefore, the most reliable indications of the rule system of the interlanguages - though they are not the only ones - are those that, although being wrong in terms of the rules of the target language, occur with a comparable frequency in the learner's output.

Errors usually happen when learning anything new. To determine the nature of the learner's "transitional competence," errors should be investigated. The applicability of error analysis has been the subject of debates in recent years. Here, we'll look more closely at the issue of error analysis's applicability to educational goals. Error analysis based on sufficient data will show the students' weak areas. Certain things might be taught and others put off until later, depending on how tough they are. The learner's propensity to avoid particular regions should also be highlighted. The research might also point out issues that textbook authors and teachers were unaware of. In order to formulate

and test ideas on the elements that determine the levels of difficulty in second language acquisition at the intermediate level, error-based studies are not only beneficial but also necessary.

Error analysis has significant linguistic, educational, and societal value. Errors give linguists who are interested in theories of language learning feedback to evaluate the viability of their hypotheses. Contrary to L1, the error of considering L2 acquisition is distinct. We are presumable to learn a second language by building it up rule by rule, but we learn our first language by evolving a sequence of hypotheses. In "The Insufficiency of Error Analysis," Bjorn Hammarberg analyses the applicability of error analysis to linguistics. It might offer information for contrastive language description and error prediction. It might aid in enhancing the target language's description. It could be used to characterise both linguistic universals and the overall characteristics of linguistic errors. The aim of linguistics is to investigate how the mind functions. As it makes an effort to comprehend how the learner's mind functions, error analysis has a key role to play in this situation. There is still more research to be done to determine whether L2 learners of various languages go through the same psycholinguistic processes.

Through error analysis, the influence of socioeconomic background on language learning might be examined. A study of this nature might offer novel perspectives on language planning in the educational system. Error analysis could be used to prove the validity of ideas like restricted and elaborated codes. However, pedagogy is where error analysis is most immediately relevant. To some extent, every language instructor ought to be a mistake analyst. Error analysis could help us in a number of ways to improve the language teaching situation, including: creating a hierarchy of difficulties; achieving a realistic ranking of teaching priorities at different levels; objectifying grading principles; producing appropriate teaching materials; revising the curriculum in a non-ad hoc manner; creating tests that are relevant for different purposes and levels; and decompartmentalizing language teaching at different levels.

The accuracy of error analysis's underlying assumptions and methodology has come under scrutiny. In his article "Error Analysis-A Recent Pseudo-procedure in Applied Linguistics," Roger Bell refers to it as a "pseudo procedure" of the "impossible in principle" variety. He makes a very literal reference to Abercrombie's method.

I mean by it something which a masquerade as a procedure, but which is not one. If 'procedure' is taken to mean 'way or method of conducting an investigation, then a 'pseudo procedure' is something which is put forward as a way of conducting an investigation, but which in fact, is impossible, or at best a completely impracticable way. (99)

Roger Bell presents a number of arguments to back up his assertion. The most important of these are looked at below.

We have no means of knowing whether a 'correct form' has occurred in a text produced by a learner by chance, or through the application of the appropriate rule, unless it appears regularly. The same is necessarily true of errors. But and this is the problem, what degree of frequency of utterance is statically significant enough for us to be able to decide? (38)

The ability to deal with frequent and systematic errors is one of the fundamental tenets of error analysis. Pit Corder makes a distinction between systematic and non-systematic errors, with the error analyst only being interested in the latter. It is possible to determine the regularities of errors with a sufficiently large corpus. Later, Bell himself makes the suggestion that in order to properly address the issue of frequency, consideration should also be given to other elements such as comprehensibility, irritation, and seriousness. "We have discussed 'judging' statements, suggesting that judges exist. Where can we locate qualified judges? (See "Error Analysis-A Recent Pseudo-procedure in Applied Linguistics," 40) Philosophically speaking, judgements are relative, yet this does not stop people from making them in other spheres of life. Judging what is proper and wrong in a student's performance need not be tough because one is on more solid basis here. Even a natural

speaker can have doubts about certain aspects of a language, but error analysts are more concerned with the basic problems. For instance, it is clear that the following statement is incorrect:

- They are suffered a lot.
- I can become a doctor.
- He working hard.

Judgement is not as difficult as it is portrayed to be, and teachers make for the best judges. The ideal judge would be a former educator who is now an error analyst since he possesses the requisite linguistic and pedagogical training. In the same article, Bell quotes Gleason "...a sentence is grammatical or not without any reference to the situation of speaking. All that is needed to judge it is within it, in its structure and in the language under whose rules it is framed" (43). If the criteria for judgment are clear, anyone can be a judge.

While the recognition and description of error are clearly linguistic tasks, the explanation of errors is necessarily a far more impressionistic and psycholinguistic undertaking. Hence, the explainer is forced into hypothesizing about the nature of a system to which he has no direct access and must, therefore, qualify his explanations far more strongly than his descriptions. ("Error Analysis-A Recent Pseudo-procedure in Applied Linguistics,"41-42)

This justification could be used to dismiss language research as pointless. A linguist cannot directly access the human mind; instead, he seeks to reconstruct how the mind functions by building a linguistic model. Scientific research is comprised of a sequence of subsequent hypothesis that each refute the one before them. All scientific research would halt if one was not allowed to posit theories regarding objects to which one did not have first-hand access. The error analyst must create assumptions about the learner's interlanguages and then test the veracity of those hypotheses. The interlanguage is at once the singular outcome of the individual's search among the data to which he has been exposed in the target language and an illustration of some kind of social dialect whose norms it more or less accepts, according to error analysts, who appear to hold two incompatible views on the issue of autonomy. It is challenging to see a solution to such divergent viewpoints. The contrast between an idiolect and a dialect is analogous to this circumstance. Each person has their own idiolect, which is also a particular dialect in manifestation. Though there will be some areas of change, the most of his idiolect's features are the same as those of his dialect. The debate between the two viewpoints has ended. Teachers are more interested in the group than they are in addressing each student's unique learning style. The practical challenge is to complete the analysis rapidly enough for the results to be useful. The learner advances more quickly than our analysis does. We gain 'post hoc' insights that we are unable to apply to the system's initial owner.

Error analysis is frequently criticised for its failure to provide classroom teachers with pedagogical insights. Talking of error analysis, B.K.Das, "The remediation of Learner's Errors," says,

"The infuriating thing about it is the almost clinical detachment which it affects on an issue which is so very vital to the teacher; it puts up an elaborate show of diagnosis, but shirks therapy. To me there is something morally reprehensible in saying that errors should be analyzed because they reveal the working of the learner's mind; it is like saying that a cancer is interesting because it reveals the physiology of the cell. (57)

Today, the majority of error analysts pinpoint problems and describe their causes. A diagnosis is made so that a treatment plan can be recommended. A linguist might believe that after making the diagnosis, the language teacher should pick up the slack and recommend corrective actions. While describing errors is helpful, if one decides to employ error analysis in treatment, the next question is, "What is the task, and where do I find footholds for the learner?" Such information is purposefully ignored during the error analysis process. There are only two ways to answer this question: either a linguist should work in pedagogy, or a language instructor must completely become a linguist.

Otherwise, a lot of crucial knowledge that is critically needed in the teaching of second languages today would be kept secret.

While error analysis cannot promise to be the answer to every issue in learning a second language, it would be extremely helpful in remedial work. It is not the exclusive domain of a small group of linguists or researchers. Language instruction would be far more enjoyable, fruitful, and difficult if every language teacher in some tiny way became a mistake analyst.

All linguists agree that making mistakes is a necessary component of learning a language. Errors should not be seen as obstacles to be overcome but rather as expected characteristics revealing the methods used by students.

There are two schools of thinking on learners' faults in the methodological sector. One institution contends that if the teaching strategies were flawless, errors would never occur. The opposing school holds that making mistakes is an essential component of learning a language. Therefore, the finest teachers should focus on developing corrective strategies to handle mistakes after they have happened. The course developers and textbook authors are unaware of the needs of the actual students. They expect the learner to have a specific degree of proficiency. As Etherton remarks, "the author ... tends to concentrate on what he assumes to be the universal core of English ... not knowing local problems, the author cannot provide solutions for them" ("Error Analysis: Problems and Procedures," 68). The syllabuses are based upon impressionistic judgments and vaguely conceived theoretical principles.

The internal syllabus created by the student may be in some ways more effective than the sequence created by the instructor. The majority of teachers are aware of the importance of mistakes in the acquisition of a second language, yet they frequently exhibit a negative attitude towards mistakes and fail to view mistakes from the proper angle. As French remarks, errors into, the student flounders into common errors because he strives - and strives hard - to apply rules which are largely of his own compiling; and he uses commonsense where the illogical conventions and habits characteristic of English, are in fact, the only criteria of what is correct. (*Common Errors in English*, 42)

Our teacher needs to be more understanding of mistakes. The satisfaction of being able to express oneself verbally, even when mistakes are made, vastly outweighs that of being able to do flawless pattern drills, which have no pretence of being communication. It is highly advised to tolerate forms that emerge from desirable mental effort. The care that some teachers take with linguistic oddities is not warranted. The study of syntactic structure aids in the acquisition of linguistic abilities such as speaking and writing in second languages. Since speaking and writing are the two most useful skills in every language, students must become proficient in these areas to increase their employability. This provides the basics of teaching core components of English syntax.

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