

Investigating Linguistic Errors Made by Post-graduate Students of Scientific Colleges in the University of Baghdad

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Abstract

Throughout many years of teaching English at all university levels and proof reading of so many theses and dissertations, the researchers feel the Iraqi postgraduate students' need for an extensive course in English. This would help them get rid of many common errors they make when writing English. Such a course should consider types and causes of the errors made, and contribute in illuminating them. Besides experience, the researchers have checked fifteen theses on Scientific specialization, and the most common errors have been classified, described, and explained so as both teachers and students may focus on them for the sake of a better command of the English language.

Chapter One Introduction

True language learning is a process that necessarily involves errors. The study of errors made by foreign language learners reveals much about the process of language learning and the factors that affect this process. By describing and classifying the errors in linguistic terms, the researchers may build up a picture of the features of the language that cause the learner difficulty.

It has been observed that postgraduate Iraqi students make errors (linguistic errors) when they use the Foreign language (FL) (in this case the English language) in their writings. In other words, Post-graduate Iraqi students face a certain kind of difficulty in using the FL. In order to overcome this difficulty they use strategies in dealing with FL, for example; overgeneralization and simplification strategies.

The purpose of this study is to identify, classify the errors made by postgraduate Iraqi students who are specialized in scientific studies, and find out the causes and remedies to such errors.

The study also draws the attention to take the teaching of English at higher studies seriously, with special programs and well-prepared models. Widdowson (1975:3) states that one of two developments apparent in the methodology of teaching English has been “an increased concern with the problems of learners in further and higher education who need to know the language to pursue their specialist studies, in particular in the fields of science and technology”.

The study aims at discovering the subjects’ linguistic errors in the target language (TL) and identifying such errors. This will help in eliminating such errors.

Remedial suggestions can be made on the basis of the result.

Students of Scientific branches were chosen and those of humanities were excluded depending on the fact that the former are better in using English than the latter due to their continual practice in English (which is proved by the results of the proficiency test of postgraduate Iraqi students). The percentage of success among Scientific studies students is much more than that among humanities students.

It is hypothesized that postgraduate Iraqi students face a real difficulty in using the FL especially when they use it in writing their theses.

Fifteen scientific theses had been surveyed including architecture, civil engineering, science, astrology, biology, chemistry and physics. The researchers have checked the grammatical errors of these postgraduate Iraqi students’ theses which had already been sent to the researchers for the sake of proofreading.

Chapter Two

A Theoretical Survey of Error Analysis

2.1. Introduction

Errors are no longer considered (or seen) as a sign of failure in teaching or in learning. Errors are seen now as an essential part of language learning process.

Now it is widely believed that language learning like acquiring any other human learning, involves the making of errors. The learners benefit from their errors by using them as feedback to test and modify their idea or hypothesis about the TL. So from the study of the learner’s errors (Error Analysis (EA)), we are able to get some information about the nature of his knowledge of the TL at a given point in his learning process and discover what he still has to learn.

According to keshavarz (1993:43) EA emerged as a reaction to the view that saw language transfer as the central process involved in second and foreign language learning. This view of transfer was linked to behavioral views of learning. EA tries to account for learners’

performance in terms of the cognitive processes learners make use of in reorganizing the input they receive from the TL. A primary focus of EA is on the evidence that learners' errors lead to an understanding of the underlying process of second language acquisition.

2.2. Significance of Errors

H.E. Palmer (as cited in Corder, 1981:7) maintains that we are all endowed by nature with the capacity for assimilating language and that this capacity remains available to us in a latent state after the acquisition of a primary language. The adult is seen to be as capable as the child of acquiring a foreign language. That is why we interpret the incorrect utterances in a learner's speech as an evidence that he is in the process of acquiring language. So, 'errors' provide the important evidence for those who attempt to describe the learner's knowledge of the language at any point in the process of acquiring that language.

Thus, errors are inevitable in 2nd and FL learning process and their significance has been emphasized by different scholars. Corder (ibid.: 10-11) says that errors are significant in three different ways:

1. They inform the teacher about the students' progress and what is necessary for them to learn beyond their current level of language.
2. They help many researchers to know the way in which a language is learnt or acquired as well as the strategies employed by the learner in his discovery of the language.
3. They help the language learner himself in "testing his hypotheses about the nature of the language he is learning" (ibid.: 11).

As for Richards (1971) (as cited in keshavarz 1993:45) errors are significant and of interest to:

4. Linguists, as Chomsky suggests, the study of human language is the most fruitful way of discovering what constitutes human intelligence.
5. Psycholinguists, because by looking at children's speech and comparing it with adult speech, they have been able to examine the nature of the mental processes that seem to be involved in language.
6. Teachers, because by analyzing learner's errors, they would be able to discover their difficulties and devise a method for comparing them.

2.3. Explanation of Errors

There are different explanations of errors, for example when the learner carries over the habits of his mother tongue into the TL. This is called interference and the explanation of this term can be that his mother tongue habits prevent him in some way from acquiring the habits of the

TL. This explanation is clearly related to the view of language as some sort of habit structure.

The other explanation is that language learning is some sort of data-processing and hypothesis-forming activity of a cognitive sort. According to this view, the learner's idiosyncratic sentences are sign of false hypotheses, which, when more data is available and processed, either by direct observation or by statements by the teacher, i.e. corrections and examples, enable the learner to reformulate a hypothesis more in accordance with the facts of the TL (Corder in Richards, 1971:169).

Interference from the learner's mother tongue and data-processing and hypothesis forming are not the only sources of errors. In fact, there are many factors that contribute a lot in making the errors. Now it is clear that different factors play an important role in second and foreign language learning. In this respect four basic factors are recognized as being the major factors behind errors (Corder, Ibid.) These are:

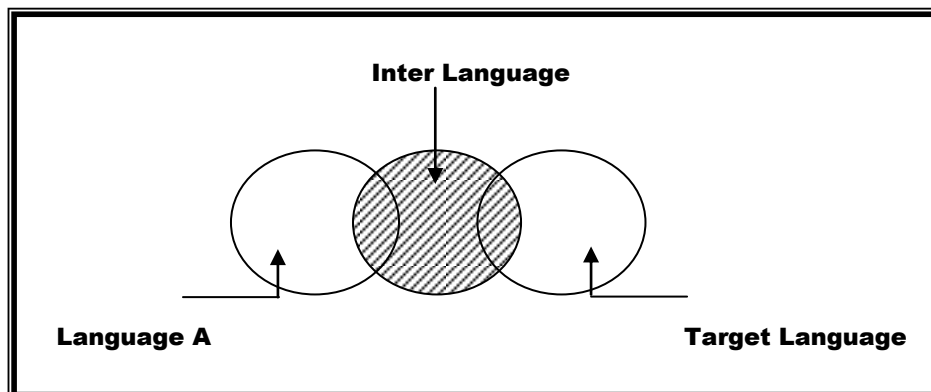
1. Interlingual Transfer.
2. Intralingual Transfer.
3. Communication Strategies.
4. Context of learning.

2.1.1. Interlingual Transfer

The term 'interlanguage' was first introduced by Selinker in 1969 and elaborated in 1972. Selinker (as cited in Corder, 1981:87) defines the term as "separate linguistic system whose existence we are compelled to hypothesize, based upon the observed output which results from the (second language) learner's attempted production of a target language norm."

Keshavarz (1993:56) also defines the term as "a language which is between two languages (the source and the TL).

The following diagram, which is adopted from Corder (1981:17), will show the place of inter language:



Interlingual Transfer

In general, interlingual transfer means the use of elements from one language while speaking another. It results from the similarities and differences between the target language and any other language that has been previously acquired. In this study it specifically means those errors arising when the learner utilizes some of his mother tongue (or first language) features (in this case Arabic) rather than those of the target language (in this case English).

The most prominent features that distinguish the interlingual transfer are as follows:

1. While learning the target language, the learner produces utterances that are different in structure from the utterances of both the native and the TL.
2. The TL learner produces new utterances that do not contain complex words or structures as compared to the native language system.
3. Interlanguages are assumed to be systematically variable i.e., learners vary their performance systematically, though not in the sense of using stylistic variants like native speakers, but regressing at times to previous stages of learning in more formal situations.
4. The "fossilization" mechanism, that is, forms (phonological, morphological, and syntactic) in the linguistic performance of a second-language learner that do not conform to the TL norms even after years of instruction and exposure to the standard form of the TL. In other words, 'fossilizations' or 'fossilizable items' are the permanent characteristics of interlanguages.

2.1.2. Intralingual Transfer

Intralingual transfer is caused by "mutual interference of items in the TL, i.e. the influence of one target language item upon another" (Keshavarz, 1993:107).

Intralingual errors reflect the "learner's competence at a particular stage, and illustrate some of the general characteristics of language acquisition" (Richards, 1971:173). In other words, they result from the learner's attempt to build up concepts and hypotheses about the TL from his limited experience with it.

Intralingual errors are divided into subcategories; these are given below:

A. Overgeneralization

Jakobovits (as cited in Richards (ibid:174) defines this term as 'the use of previously available strategies in new situations... In second language learning ... some of these strategies will prove helpful in organizing the facts about the second language, but others, perhaps due to superficial similarities, will be misleading and inapplicable'.

Richards (ibid: 175) comments on this subject by saying that overgeneralization is associated with redundancy reduction. It may occur with items which are contrasted in the grammar of the language but which do not carry significant and obvious contrast for the learner.

Overgeneralization (also over extension, analogy) is “a process common in both first and second-language learning in which a learner extends the use of a grammatical rule or linguistic item beyond its accepted uses, generally by making words or structures follow a more regular pattern”. (Richards et al, 1985:203). For instance, the addition of the past ‘ed’ inflection to an irregular verb such as ‘teach’ and making it “taached”.

That is why overgeneralization is a form of negative transfer where the learner creates deviant structures in the TL. Such structures are related to the incorrect application of the previously learned material to a present foreign language context. In other words, overgeneralization errors refer to the deviant structures created by the learner on the basis of his limited exposure to other structures in the TL. (ibid.).

B. Ignorance of Rule Restriction

In this case, the learner fails to observe restrictions of target language structures, i.e., the application of rules to contexts where they do not apply. So, the error results from the learner’s ignorance of the restriction of and exception to general TL rules. (ibid.).

C. False Analogy

False Analogy refers to the use of certain elements in inappropriate contexts through analogy. When the learner masters certain elements of the TL he may attempt to use these elements in inappropriate contexts. False Analogy can be considered a sub-type of overgeneralization. (Keshavarz, 1993:109).

D. Hyperextension

Hyperextension refers to “the extension of a rule to areas where it is not applicable.” (ibid:109). In this case, the learner goes beyond what he knows of the TL. In other words, he talks about things for which he does not have correct words or grammatical patterns.

E. Hypercorrection

Hypercorrection occurs when a speaker of a non-standard variety attempts to use the standard variety and while he is doing that he goes too far, producing a version which does not appear in the standard variety. (Crystal, 1985:149).

Hypercorrection also occurs in second language learning and refers to forms which are thought to be correct but in fact they are used erroneously. For example, an Arabic learner of English, who uses (hapit) instead of (habit) in a mistaken attempt to avoid ‘b/p’ substitution, is clearly making a hypercorrection error.

F. Faulty Categorization

What happens in faulty categorization is that a learner classifies items of the TL incorrectly. These errors are also derived from faulty comprehension of distinction in the TL. These are sometimes due to poor gradation of teaching items (ibid.).

‘Categorization’ is putting items into groups (categories) according to their nature and use. For example, nouns may be categorized into animate and inanimate nouns. (Richards, 1985:36).

2.1.3. Communication Strategies

Communication strategies are devices used or exploited to overcome problems related to interlanguage deficiencies such as approximation, word coinage, avoidance, guessing, etc. (See Corder 1981:103-6 for detailed information).

These strategies are used when the learner is obliged to express himself by using the limited linguistic resources available to him. By using these strategies of communication the learner tries to bridge the gap between his limited linguistic knowledge of the TL and his communicative needs by using elements which are not linguistically appropriate for the context. In trying to communicate, a learner may have to compensate for a lack of knowledge of grammar or vocabulary by paraphrasing using gesture and mime, or even borrowing words from his mother language; as Richards (1974: 177) says that “motivation to achieve communication may exceed motivation to produce grammatically correct sentences”.

According to Ellis (1994: 646) these strategies are closely related to overgeneralization which can be seen as one way of circumlocuting the lack of the requisite linguistic knowledge.

2.1.4. Context of learning

According to Brown (1987: 179), this factor is related to three interrelated variables: the teacher, the material, and the situation of learning.

Concerning the first two variables, errors come as a result of course design or teaching techniques. A teacher may mislead his students by the way he defines a lexical item or by the order in which he presents teaching materials. Certain teaching techniques may lead to erroneous sentences by the learner. For example, many pattern drills and transformation exercises are made up of utterances that can interfere with each other and produce erroneous 'structure' (see Keshavarz, 1993:112-13 for examples).

Concerning the third variable, different settings for language use result in different degrees and types of language learning. These may be distinguished in terms of the effects of the socio-cultural setting on the

learner's language and in terms of the relationship between the learner and the TL community and the respective linguistic markers of these relations and identities. The focus on the relationship between the opportunities for learning and the learner's developing system is a useful one, since it leads to such distinctions as to whether the learning opportunities are limited to those provided by the school course (English as a FL), or are mainly outside the school program (English as second language) and to a consideration of the effects of these differences on the learner's language.

2.4. Functions of Error Analysis

EA has two functions: theoretical and practical. On its theoretical aspect, error analysis is part of the methodology of investigating the process of language learning. To find out the nature of these psychological processes, a means of describing the learner's knowledge of the TL at any particular moment in his learning career should be available so as to relate this knowledge to the teaching he has been receiving (Corder, 1981:45).

From a theoretical point of view EA seeks to shed light on the nature of language learning in general, i.e. what is going on in the mind when people learn languages. EA in this case is used to infer that language learners use strategies in dealing with the second or foreign language, e.g. overgeneralization and simplification strategies.

On its practical aspect, EA functions as a guide of the action that must be taken to correct an unsatisfactory state of affairs for learner or teacher (Ibid).

According to keshavarz (1993:47) the objective of practical (he calls it applied) EA is purely pragmatic and pedagogical such as organizing remedial courses and devising appropriate materials and strategies of teaching based on the findings of EA. That is why EA is an important additional source of information for the selection of items to be incorporated into the syllabus.

2.5. Errors vs. Mistakes

According to keshavarz (ibid:49), errors are "rule-governed and systematic in nature, and as such indicative of the learner's linguistic system at a given stage of language learning." Systematic errors provide us with evidence about the way a learner acquires the second language.

Jain (1974) (as cited in keshavarz, ibid:50) defines systematic errors as those which show a consistent system and fall into definable patterns; they are internally principled and free from arbitrariness. They are regarded as rule-governed since they follow the rules of the learner's interlanguage. For instance, a Persian-speaking learner of English who makes frequent use of subject-verb inversion in indirect questions (e.g. I don't know where does he live) does, in fact, follow the grammar of his

interlanguage which allows the use of such structures at that particular stage of second-language learning (ibid).

Mistakes, on the other hand, are “random deviations, unrelated to any system, and instead representing the same types of performance mistakes that might occur in the speech or writing of native speakers, such as slips of the tongue or pen, false starts, lack of subject-verb agreement in a long complicated sentence, and the like.” Keshavarz (ibid).

Certain mistakes are committed by the language learner due to fatigue, strong emotions, memory limitations, or lack of concentration are not important as the language learner is capable of correcting them as long as he restores his attention.

Chapter Three

The data: types and explanation

2.6. The sample of the study

The sample of the study is a selection of fifteen theses written by postgraduate Iraqi students who belong to scientific branches. These branches are (Architecture, Civil Engineering, Science, Astrology, Biology, Chemistry and Physics). The choice of these theses has been made on the basis of the following criteria:

G. Scientific studies students are better than humanities students in using English. This is due to their continual practice in English; which is proved by the results of the Proficiency test of Postgraduate Iraqi students. The percentage of success among scientific studies students is much more than that among humanities students.

H. These theses are submitted to the researchers without corrections from an external supervisor. Thus, they represent the actual production of the students.

The errors which were found in the chosen theses were as follows:

2.7. Grammatical Errors

2.3.1. Setting off a sentence fragment as a sentence

A. Subordinate Clause

e.g. Although these gases are rare. At least two of them have uses in the field of electrical lighting.

R (Revised) rare at least...

B. Phrase

5. Noun phrase

e.g. Estimation of adsorption capabilities of propanil and paraquat on soil.

R ...soil is ...

6. Verbal phrase

e.g. recently prices have started *decreased*.

R... to decrease

C. Infinitive

e.g. The derrick is used. To lift sections of pipe, which are lowered into the hole made by the drill.

R ... used to ...

D. Present participle

e.g. The test tube containing the solution. It was examined.

R ... solution was examined.

E. Past participle

e.g. The temperatures shown on the graph. They are given in degrees centigrade.

R ... graph are given ...

7. Prepositional phrase

e.g. Gravity has no effect. Under these circumstances.

R ... effect under ...

8. Appositive

e.g. Air is composed of many gases. Nitrogen, Oxygen, Argon and five other gases.

R ... gases, Nitrogen, ...

2.3.2. Replacement

Present participle instead of past participle or vice versa:

e.g. Building in 1966 by the Aerojet General Corporation of Azusa, California, this plant produces over 220,000 litres of fresh water per day.

R Built....

9. Modal auxiliary +P.P. (instead of a base):

e.g. This device will made it possible to move easily.

R ... will make ...

10. Fixed prepositions after certain adjectives or verbs:

e.g. Certain plastic materials, such as cellulose acetate which is *used to* photographic film, are called thermoplastic materials.

R ... used for ...

e.g. Now anew material has been developed, made of aluminum which is covered by a layer of polyster.

R ...covered with ...

2.3.3. Omission

The main verb of the sentence, a crystal error in run-on sentences:

e.g. An improved process for the electro-deposition of copper from an aqueous acidic copper plating bath by making possible the use of higher bath temperatures without causing excessive dulling of the plate.

R ... bath is by ...

11. The relative pronoun:

e.g. Cleaning is the removal of unwanted material may be rust on oxide films.

R ... material which may ...

12. The definite and indefinite articles, especially with the superlative degree of comparison:

e.g. Pre-treatment processes can be classified under following headings.

R ... under the following ...

e.g. Nitrogen is easily most common element in the atmosphere.

R ... the most ...

13. 'than' in comparative degree of comparison:

e.g. Hydrochloric acid is more dangerous citric acid.

R ... than citric acid ...

14. Preposition

e.g. In addition the above mentioned group ...

R ... to the ...

15. The 'v-ing' after prepositions such as 'for', 'by':

e.g. Bauxite is used for produce Aluminum.

R ... for producing ...

e.g. A solution of sodium hydroxide can be neutralized by use an acid.

R ... by using ...

16. One of two main verbs in a sentence; a very common error:

e.g. The distinction between ecological and ecotoxicological recovery that ecological recovery is usually measured by the time it takes.

R ... is that ...

2.3.4. Addition

Articles (especially with a general reference and uncountable nouns).

Modal auxiliary + be + base.

e.g. For centuries the people have known that the food lasts longer if it is kept cool or frozen.

17. Modal auxiliary + be + base.

e.g. The flats would be all face inwards, and would be made of concrete and glass.

18. Modal auxiliary + base + 3rd person singular 's'.

e.g. Concrete should contains at least 12% cement.

19. Modal auxiliary + P.P.

e.g. Unless a certain critical temperature is reached the structure of the steel will not changed.

20. Verb to be + main verb (the commonest error).

e.g. The statements which follow are describe the two stages of the cycle.

21. 'ed' to noun.

e.g. Regarding the used of herbicides it is noticed that...

22. 'ed' to infinitive.

e.g. A chronometer is a device used to measured radiation.

R ... its ...

23. Unnecessary pronoun.

e.g. The techniques used in oil refining they are complicated.

** The underlined word or morpheme should be omitted.*

2.3.5. Subject-verb disagreement

e.g. Herbicides when used for weed control in aquatic system causes directly toxic effects on aquatic biota.

R ... cause ...

e.g. One of the first applications have been the electro-forming of printing plates.

R ... has ...

Note: The more separate the subject and the verb are the more errors are made, and this is typical in run-on sentences.

2.3.6. Pronoun-antecedent disagreement

e.g. Canada is claiming a communications satellite of their own to provide direct links, including live television.

R ... its ...

2.3.7. Passive voice

24. Dropping out the helping verb e.g certain plastic materials, such as cellulose acetate called thermoplastic materials.

R ... are called ...

25. Dropping out 'be', 'been', 'being'

e.g. such artificial hands have widely used as they are the nearest development so far to natural hands.

R ... have been widely used ...

26. Replacing the (p.p.) by a present simple or past simple

e.g. this can be express as a curve.

R ... expressed ...

27. Misusing of passive voice

e.g. medicine has been made great progress in the last twenty years.

R ... has made ...

2.3.8. Misuse of Tense

28. Main verb

e.g. most kinds of stainless steel had a small percentage of chrome.

R ... have ...

29. If clause e.g. if a certain impurity, such as arsenic, is introduced into poor conductors of electricity they became semiconductors.

R ... become ...

2.3.9. Word Order

e.g. the number of found elements was 4

R ... elements found ...

e.g. A more much important method is by distillation

R a much more ...

2.3.10. **Plurality (especially after certain pronouns like ‘other’ and quantity words such as ‘many’):**

2.3.11. **e.g. other factor should be taken into account first, ...**

R ... factors ...

e.g. a millimeter a year may not sound much, but a rising sea level ought to worry so many *Dutchman* and others who live near low-lying coasts.

R ... Dutchmen ...

2.3.12. **Imparallel constructions**

Clause/ phrase

e.g. The flow of traffic was being measured, and with experiments in controlling it.

R ... and there were experiments ...

e.g. such artificial hands can be used for quite delicate work, such as picking up pins or cut flowers.

R ... cutting ...

Note: this item is clear when numerating conclusions, giving instructions and so on.

e.g. Instructions:

Readings are taken each two-hours.

Plotting the results obtained on a graph.

R... The obtained results are plotted on a graph.

Tense shift

e.g. At first, towns were fairly small, but some of them become important trading centers.

R ... became ...

2.3.13. **Run-on sentence (affecting the intended meaning, especially with false reference)**

e.g. Transistors have many advantages over the old-fashioned vacuum tube valves lighter, much smaller, last longer, and are more efficient because of the use of less power which can be used in devices for which vacuum-tube valves were unsuitable.

R.. Transistors have many advantages over the old-fashioned vacuum tube valves. They are lighter, much smaller, last longer, and are more efficient because they use less power. They can be used in devices for which vacuum-tube valves were unsuitable.

2.3.14. **Punctuation**

30. **Omission of semi-colon before a minor sentence:**

e.g. Herbicides of their group are non-selective contact herbicides among them are paraquat and diquat.

R ... ; ...

31. **Misuse of full-stop:**

e.g. Behavioral change in fish was noticed. When exposed to sublethal concentrations.

R ... noticed when ...

Thus, the errors the students commit might be sketched in the following tables:

Table (1): Grammatical Errors

OMISSION			
Omission of	Frequency of Occurrence	Omission of	Frequency of Occurrence
1. is	46.6%	9. Preposition	13.39
2. (ing) after (by)	6.6%	10. ing	6.6%
3. (the) from phrases	6.67	11. (ing) after (for)	13.3%
4. (the) after a name that became definite	6.6%	12. (a) from singular	26.6%
5. (s) from the plural	66.6%	13. The verb from comparison	6.6%
6. P.P.	6.6%	14. The verb	20%
7. Of	20%		
8. (as) from such as wrong uses of (ed)	6.6%		

Table (2) Punctuation Errors

PUNCTUATION			
The Errors	Frequency of occurrence	The Errors	Frequency of occurrence
The absence of semicolon (;) before a minor sentence	20%	Using a comma in a wrong place	53.3%
32. Separating the sub-clause by a fullstop	6.6%	7. The absence of a fullstop at the end of a sentence	33.3%
33. Replacing the capital letter by a small one and vice versa	66.6%		
34. The absence of a comma or a semicolon after transitional devices	6.6%		
35. Putting a comma at the beginning of a line	13.3%		

Table (3) Other Errors

The Errors	Frequency of Occurrence	The Errors	Frequency of Occurrence
Subject-verb disagreement	80%	8. May + P.P	6.6%
36. Starting a sentence with (and) or (so that)	6.6%	9. May + main verb + S	6.6%

37. Using a fragment instead of a sentence	20%	10. Using (s) with a base after (to)	13.3%
38. Imparallel structures	26.6%	11. Using inappropriate prepositions	6.6%
39. Passive voice	66.6%	12. Mixing verb to be with the main verb	6.6%
40. run on sentence	80%	13. Verb to be + base	
41. The absence of a noun after (of)	6.6%	14. Using two past verbs together	6.6%

Chapter Four

Interpretation of Errors and suggestions

4.1 Interpretation of Errors

Having analyzed the data, the following conclusions are inferred:

The errors that appeared in points (3.2.1, 3.2.2, 3.2.7, 3.2.11, and 3.2.12) are pedagogical errors. That is to say, they are errors that are attributed to the teacher, or to the course designer.

The errors that appeared in point (3.2.3) are interlingual errors, i.e., the effect of the mother tongue or the native language on the TL. The sentence in Arabic is a verbal one while in English it is a nominal one. That is why the learner (or the student) forgets the verb. In other words, if a learner translates literally from his mother tongue to the TL., such errors will appear.

The errors appeared in points (3.2.4, 3.2.9) are due to the interference of the mother tongue. In addition to this, the students had also reflected intralingual errors like overgeneralization and ignorance of rule restriction... etc.

Concerning point (3.2.5), the problem of subject-verb disagreement increased when the phrase or the clause that constitutes the verb becomes longer. This leads the learner to lose his attention and pay no attention to the idea of subject-verb agreement.

Concerning point (3.2.6), pronoun-antecedent disagreement is one of the teaching induced errors due to early weak teaching of English.

Errors of point (3.2.8) related to misuse of tense can be attributed to the target language itself or to a pedagogical reason. The same applies to errors mentioned in point (3.2.10) concerning plurality.

4.2 Suggestions

English should be taught for the four stages by teachers of English and not by teachers who are members of scientific departments, and who are not linguistically qualified to such a task.

Teaching English for postgraduate studies in all departments should be exclusively restricted to teachers specialized in linguistics. In this respect, Ewer (1975: 44) emphasizes the teachers' role in EST by pointing out that "the EFL/ ESL teacher who turns to the teaching of EST finds that his difficulties fall broadly into five categories: attitudinal, conceptual,

linguistic, methodological, and organizational”. Our concern, of course, is the last three categories which affect the process of teaching, and lead to pedagogical errors.

A new procedure should be adopted concerning the proficiency test for postgraduate students in which the applicants join a three month course at state centers and then sit for a proficiency certificate. A comprehensive course in the basics of English grammar is recommended.

Teachers should avoid paying excessive attention to points of difference at the expense of realistic English because the course that concentrates too much on the main trouble points, without due attention to the structure of the FL as whole, will leave the learner with unfruitful work, partial generalizations, and so on.

Most supervisors of theses have seemed to be in need for a continual practice in English. Supervisors insist on the correctness of their errors in spite of the fact that their English is not good.

Some published theses on studies in the field of ESP should be made use of; especially their suggestions for better ways of mastering English.

A gathering of teachers who have taught ESP seem inevitable to discuss the difficulties facing them and their students. Their views are important to design a comprehensive ESP course for postgraduate studies.

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