

ERROR AS A CATALYST FOR EFFECTIVE TEACHING AND LEARNING OF ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE

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Abstract

Errors have played a key role in the study of language pedagogy in general and second language learning in particular. Error occurrence in language learning is not to be seen as a discouraging event rather, teachers and learners should study errors in order to identify the areas that pose difficulty, for caution and remedial measures. Error is referred to as a systematic deviation from a selected norm or a set of forms; or a form or structure that a native speaker deems unacceptable. It is an indication of learners' stage in their target language development, that is, their level of mastery of the language. In other words, it is a breach of the acceptable code; a deviation from what is regarded as the norm or standard. However, scholars have seen errors as part of the investigation of the process of language learning. This study therefore examines the concept of error from the psycholinguistic view point to determine how the language could be taught by employing the errors committed by learners as a result of the influence of their native language and poor linguistic background. Formal classroom works by 100 level students of English in Lagos State University of Education, Nigeria, on an essay writing assignment by 50 students and oral composition by 10 groups, an essay per group, were observed, examined and analyzed for occurrences of errors at different levels of language description. The error treatment options by Corder (1973) was adopted to classify the errors identified. The errors recorded were mostly grammar errors, particularly, concord and tense errors, errors of omission of functional words, wrong use of functional words, lexical errors, orthographical/spelling errors, overgeneralization of rules and pronunciation errors. Most of these errors feature prominently in the written composition because the assignment was carried out in the formal classroom setting with time duration, while the scripts for oral composition were prepared from home and presented orally in the class. As there has been a shift from preventing errors to learning from them, this trend has aroused the interest of scholars in identifying, analyzing and treating errors through various models of error analysis in order to create techniques for effective ESL learning. The study concludes that onus is now on teachers of English to ensure that learners are given enough encouragement for continued communication while using their errors as a means of effective teaching and learning of English. It is from this viewpoint that error is seen as a tool for better understanding of language structure and meaning.

Keywords: Error, Catalyst, Teaching, Learning, English, Second, Language

Introduction

Errors have played a key role in the study of language teaching and learning in general and in second language learning in particular. In linguistics, error occurrence in language learning should not be seen as a discouraging event rather learners and teachers should study errors in order to identify signposts for caution and remedial measures (Choon, 1992; Asiyanbola2003; Jibowo, Iteogu & Abayomi 2005). Scholars such as Corder (1967) and Nsakala(1990) see errors as an indication of learners' stage in their target language development, that is, their level of mastery of the language. Such scholars believe that the study of errors is for diagnostic and prognostic reasons. Klassen (1991) and Choon (1993) use the term 'error' to refer to a systematic deviation from a selected norm or set of forms, or a form or structure that a native speaker deems unacceptable.

Corder (1973) also sees errors as breaches of the code, and that errors deviate from what is regarded as the 'norm'. Jibowo, Iteogu & Abayomi (2005) note that even then, there is a problem in determining what the norm is because there exist several varieties of each language and of every language what is considered standard variety in a location may not enjoy the same status elsewhere. Also, it may be difficult to separate deviant form of a language by native speakers and errors by non-native speakers especially in the aspect of grammar. But Corder(1973) still considers such deviations by native speakers as errors because naturally they should speak standard form of the language, no matter their level of education.

Corder(1974) opines that the study of error is part of the investigation of the process of language learning. In this respect, it resembles methodologically the study of the acquisition of the mother tongue. It provides us with a picture of the linguistic development of a learner (Corder, 1967) and may give us indication as to the learning process.

Brown(1987) makes a distinction of significance between what he calls systematic and unsystematic errors. In explaining unsystematic errors, he points out that in normal adult speech in a native language we continually commit errors of one sort or another which may be due to memory lapses, physical state such as tiredness and psychological conditions. All these are adventitious artefacts of linguistic performance and do not reflect in the knowledge of language. They are quite noticeable when they occur. In second language learning, learners also exhibit slips of tongue or pen. They are subject to similar external or internal conditions when performing in the first or second language. There is therefore a clear distinction between errors that are products of such circumstances as mentioned earlier and those which reveal the underlying knowledge of the language. Errors of performance are referred to as 'mistakes' while the term 'error' refers to systematic errors of the learner which deviate from grammatical rules due to the learner's still developing knowledge of the rules of the language. This study is therefore concerned with how errors could be employed by teachers as a functional method for effective teaching and learning of English as a second language. The specific objectives of the study are:

- (1) to identify and analyze errors in the spoken and written English of the selected students,
- (2) to determine which of the two forms the students committed more errors and why
- (3) to find out the influence of their mother tongue that results in errors,
- (4) to proffer technique /methods of how errors can be used for effective teaching and learning of English, and
- (5) to recommend on the basis of findings, measures that could be taken by teachers of English as a Second Language in helping to minimize students' errors in order to enhance their proficiency in English.

Error Analysis (EA) and Error Correction (EC)

Error analysis is the process of identifying, describing and explaining errors in the use of language by second and foreign language users and learners. In other word, it is the process to observe, analyze, and classify deviations of the rules of the second language and then to reveal the

systems operated by learners (Brown, 1980) while correction of errors is an attempt by the teacher or mature language user to offer improvement in the learner's use of language. The aim of error analysis is basically to describe language items which pose problems to learners, determine the causes of the problem in the learner's language use and correct appropriately. It is often claimed that there is a danger in paying too much attention to learners' errors. However, the reduction of errors is an important criterion for increasing language proficiency since the ultimate goal of second language learning is the attainment of communicative competence. It is not surprising that error analysis and correction of errors have formed an integral part of language teaching/learning process and have indeed gained ground in improving learners' communicative competence in recent times because errors corrected may not be repeated.

Scholars such as Josephson (1989) and Choon (1993) observe that there has been a shift from preventing errors to learning from them. Error is seen as a process of learning, as failure is seen as a process of success. According to Choon, learning of language structure has shifted from memorizing correct models as favored by psycholinguistic theories of language acquisition, to the application of the communicative approach to language learning which presents learning materials in a natural discourse with authentic language examples that promote active engagement in the language learning process through the use of dialogues between the teacher and learners and among learners. This trend has aroused the interest of scholars in creating awareness that language learning is far beyond identifying, analyzing and treating errors through error analysis but rather employing errors as techniques for effective ESL teaching. In analyzing errors, Corder (1973) presents three stages, namely: recognition/identification of errors, description of errors and application of errors.

Identification of Errors

The first step in the process of analysis of errors is the identification of errors. Corder provides a model for identifying erroneous utterances/expressions in a second language. According to him, any sentence uttered and subsequently transcribed can be analyzed for error. He further makes a distinction between 'overt' and 'covert' errors. Overt erroneous expressions are unquestionably ungrammatical at the sentence level. Covert erroneous utterances/expressions are grammatically well formed at the sentence level but not interpretable within the context of communication. Covert errors, in other words, are not really covert at all if the surrounding discourses before and after the utterances are attended to. For example,

I will be travelling next week

Is grammatically correct at the sentence level but as a response to

Where are you?

It is obviously an error.

A simpler and more straight forward set of items than would be sentence and discourse level errors rather than overt and covert errors. In other words, the covertly erroneous sentences are correct superficially, but they are not appropriate in the context in which they occur (Tanaka 1967). Thus, correct interpretation of the learner's intended meaning in the context of use is very important in identifying erroneous expressions.

Description of Errors

This stage involves a comparative process between the original erroneous utterance and the restructured utterance. It is therefore not enough to carry out an abstract or superficial description on a local level as errors of addition, omission, substitution and ordering following the mathematical categories. For example, error of substitution:

She lived there *since* eight years

Instead of

She lived there *for* eight years.

As good as this description is, it is of no practical use to the teacher or learner, however, it offers a certain linguistic explanation. e.g.

Description of errors can be carried out at various degrees of depth, generally or in abstraction by assigning the items involved to the different linguistic levels; orthographic/phonological, syntactic and lexical-semantic as in the following examples:

I have a reading *korner* in my apartment

Grammatically, the sentence is well structured and the words are semantically correct but the word in italics is wrongly spelt. This error is at the orthographical level which could be borne out of the fact that the learner might not have enough knowledge of the phonological rule of how the English phoneme /k/ is spelt k;c;ch;qu,etc.

At the end of the seminar, we *exchanged* notes
Instead of

At the end of the seminar, we *compared* notes

The sentence above is also well formed grammatically but the choice of the word *exchanged* instead of *compared* shows the level of the learner's vocabulary development and his linguistic background.

Explanation of Errors

Explanation of errors is the stage that gives reasons for learners' errors or what could have accounted for the occurrence of errors in learners' spoken or written discourse. There is really no line of demarcation between 'description' and 'explanation'. However, Corder (1974) states that description of errors is largely a linguistic activity while explanation of errors belongs to the field of psycholinguistics. Looking at it from psycholinguistic point of view, there are different types of errors ranging from those caused by the interference of the learner's mother tongue where the features of the native language and those of the target language overlap resulting in errors, then the errors reflecting the learner's level of linguistic competence at a particular stage and those featuring the general characteristics of language acquisition.

As far as analysis and correction of errors in the process of language learning, it should be noted that too much positive cognitive feedback (willingness of the teacher/hearer to let errors go uncorrected) serves to reinforce the errors of the learner. The result is persistent and possibly, the eventual fossilization of errors. The task of teachers of English could be to ensure that learners are given enough encouragement for continued communication but not so much that crucial errors go unnoticed/ uncorrected and they should be encouraged for attempting to use the language. It is from this point of view that the present study sees errors. Error is, therefore seen as a tool for better understanding of language structure and meaning.

Review of Literature

As posited by Amiantun & Ikip (2018) the realization by teachers and learners that errors always happen in learning a language is very important to understand the process of the second language acquisition. Error analysis is used to determine the progress of language acquisition and learning. Richards et al (1985) are of the view that error analysis may be carried out in order to (a) find out how well someone knows a language, (b) how a person learns a language, and (c) obtain information on common difficulties in language learning, as an aid in teaching or in the preparation of teaching materials.

There have been many studies on errors and error analysis, particularly, those that focused on improving the quality of English learning process in non-native English speaking environments such as Elhamia & Fayez's (2009) study on the errors committed by Saudi students in their production and recognition of grammatical structures in English, Fageeh (2004) on spelling, vocabulary grammatical and errors in Arab students' writing, also on grammatical errors

are studies by Abushihab, El-Omari&Tobat (2011), studies on error analysis and EFL classroom teaching by Xieang Jiang (2007) and Sarfraz (2011) which examined the errors in the written essays of Pakistani students.

The following are a number of studies that have touched on the use of errors as an effective tool for the teaching and learning of English as a second or foreign language. Sunardi (2002) discusses the importance of error analysis in the teaching of English as a foreign language, though he sees error as bad in learning English he notes that error analysis is advantageous to learners and teachers. For learners, it is needed to show what aspect of the language is difficult to grasp and for teachers, to evaluate the success or failure of their teaching outcomes. Mantasiah, Yusri&Jufri (2018) are also of the view that the effectiveness of error analysis approach in foreign language teaching has been proven important in teaching the second language since students' weaknesses can be employed by teacher in teaching the aspects that pose difficulty to learners. Thus, Mantasiah et al posit that materials in teaching English should be composed based on the students' weaknesses.

Tanaka (1967) in his study, however, notes that mere error analysis or correction of errors has little value to learners. It is better and more resourceful to simply provide a correct restructured form of the learner's erroneous utterance and better still it might be useful to carry out a comparison of the restructured form with its translation equivalent in the mother tongue of the learner. According to him, a teacher is basically required to provide the learner with the evidence he needs to discover the correct concept or rule of the language by himself. Thus, "to provide the learner with mere correction of errors means to supply with the sort of negative evidence which is necessary to discover the correct system". p.229.

Both Sunardi (2002) and Tanaka (1967) affirm that a close examination of the learners' errors may lead the teacher to reconsider his teaching materials and techniques and learn to adapt to the needs of learners rather than impose upon them his own preconceptions of how they ought to learn, what to learn and when to learn, as this will make the whole exercise worthwhile and resourceful. This submission is in tandem with Aqsa, Bahram & Muhammed's (2015) study on error analysis. The study reveals that errors throw light on the problems that learners face during second and foreign language learning and also help the teachers in giving wash back effects to the learners in making their teaching most effective by designing different remedies for supporting the learners. The present study is a bit wider in scope in that it analyses both the spoken and written language in order to determine in which of the two forms students commit errors more and proffer measures that could improve learners' communicative skills.

Research Methodology

Data collection techniques in this study consisted of oral and written compositions by 50 randomly selected 100 level students of English in Lagos State University of Education, Oto/Ijanikin, Lagos, Nigeria. An essay writing assignment was given to the 50 students on a topic- "*The Most Exciting Day in my Life*" while 10 of them, one (1) representing a group of 5 students, presented an oral composition titled- "*Peer Group Pressure among Nigerian Youths*" For the written composition, the assignments were collected from the students after a week. The scripts were analyzed for the occurrences of errors using the three stages of recognition, description and explanation in the process of analysis. The oral presentations were observed during a 2-hour lecture period for two days; each of the participants was given 20 minutes. The presentations were recorded, later transcribed and analyzed for errors using the three stages. The differences, in the features of the two forms of presentations (spoken and written) that could account for errors, were observed. The errors recorded at different levels of language description such grammatical, semantic, pronunciation errors will be used as part of the course materials to teach tense, concord, functional words such as prepositions, articles, determiners, order of adjectives in the nominal group, punctuation, pronunciation, etc, especially in their tutorial classes.

Data Analysis and Discussion

From the 50 essays analyzed to determine the proficiency level of the students in the use of English in essay writing, it was found out that most of the students are deficient in different aspects of the language. As this study is not concerned with the quantitative analysis of errors recorded, a good number of errors, common to virtually all the students, are identified in their essays. This will give teachers of English insights into the aspects of English that pose challenges to students and how these could help them in reconsidering their teaching materials and methods. The following are some of the excerpts of errors from the texts analyzed basically at the grammatical, lexical, orthographical, and pronunciation levels.

Grammatical Errors

1. Concord Errors

Concord is very important in language structure because it has to with correct combination of words to form intelligible and acceptable expressions in that language. Concord errors in sentences occur as a result of ignoring the rules of grammatical agreement, overgeneralization of rules, wrong use of tenses, etc. which eventually lead to wrong interpretation and distortion of meaning. The following are some of the errors that are common in the texts analyzed.

Ext.1. Violence is the most common *causes* of morbidities and mortalities among the youths. (cause)- (Subject/Complement Concord).

Ext.2. Everyone *have* the most exciting day in their lives. (has)- (Subject/ Verb concord).

Ext.3.going to the Principal's office always *sound* as if I have committed an offence.(Non-finite clause in the subject position agrees with a singular verb.

In Ext.1. The subject of the sentence(*violence*) is singular and has to agree with a singular complement (*cause*). Thus, in the excerpt, the singular subject and verb do not agree with the complement. In Ext 2, the indefinite pronoun (*everyone*) is singular. It suggests the sense of no exception and should agree with the singular verb- *has* instead of *-have*.Ext.3 reveals the writer's inadequate knowledge of the English clause structure. The non-finite clause in the subject position functions as a noun or noun phrase in that position and takes a singular verb. These errors could be attributed to poor linguistic background of the learners or the fact that there are differences in the rules of concord in their native languages and the English language. For instance, In the Yoruba Language of the Southwest Nigeria, the verb is not required to agree with the subject in a sentence. The least possibility for the occurrence of this type of error could be the fact that the essays were written in the formal classroom setting with time duration, which might not give them the opportunity to proofread their essays.

2. Tense Errors

In English grammar, there are three main tenses, and they are each further classified into four different forms, which sum up to twelve tenses in total, each of which has different functions. Most of the errors identified in the students' essays are borne out of linguistic incompetence occasioned by their poor linguistic background.

Ext.1. When I could not *bare* the pains I *head* to the hospital where the Nurses took me to a ward and *ask* me to *lay* down.

In this excerpt, the simple past forms of *head -headed* and *ask-asked* should be used. However, *bare* in this expression is a wrong choice or misspelt, as it implies to endure an ordeal or difficulty and *lay* could not be said *to* be in resting position rather *bear* and *lie* are the appropriate words respectively.

Ext.2. We were all happy because it *is* a memorable day.

Ext.3. We *tooked* anuber and we headed to *onini* beach at Lekki.

The use of *tooked* in the excerpt above is overgeneralization of rule of tense for the regular and irregular verbs. Overgeneralization, in this case, involves the creation of two different structures to replicate the past form, by giving the verb *take* two different past forms in the same form.

Ext.4. My parents *are* amused at my excitement but they all kept quiet and *was* just looking at me. (*were*)

Ext.5 I was so excited that it all *look* like a dream came true. (*looked*)

Ext.6. I proceeded in buying their form and *do* all the necessary things required to be done. (*did*)

Ext.7. That day and its events *were* still fresh in my memory.

(the use of *stillfresh* indicates— the present tense (habitual), since there is no adverbial of time to indicate the actual duration of remembrance though the event took place in the past, the memory still lingers, hence the need to use the present form of the verb - *are*).

Ext.8. I took my bath, *dress* up and *head* to school as a junior secondary school student. (*dressed, headed*)

Ext. 9. I was about eating when a student came to me and said the Principal *is calling* me. (*was calling* or *needed my attention*)

Ext. 10. I ventured into teaching in a primary school and I was being paid some amount which I *have* to save in order to process my admission. (*had*)

Ext.11. The day was *a magical sight, sounds and flavors* that left *an indelible feeling* in my heart. (The day was filled with magical sights, sounds and flavors that left indelible feelings in my heart).

3. Wrong Use of Functional Words

The functional words such as prepositions, auxiliary verbs and pronoun in the following excerpts are wrongly used. The deviation is a wide spread phenomenon among Nigerian users of English both in the written and spoken forms and is not limited to the low-level speakers of English but also found among users of English at the tertiary level. The source of this type of deviation is interference of the features of Nigerian native languages with the English language. For instance, in the Yoruba language the preposition *niis* is usually used to replace *in*, thus, the preposition *in* is used where the preposition *to* is required as can be seen in excerpt 1. Likewise, in 2, there is a deviant use of preposition *to* instead of *out of*.

Ext.1. I have a goal and I am also dedicated *in* achieving that goal. (*to*)

Ext.2. It was getting late and we decided to lodge *to* a hotel. (*in*)

Ext.3. My heart almost jumped *to* my mouth on hearing what the girl said. (*out of*)

Ext.4. A memorable is a day you get to know all things you *are ought to* know double auxiliary verbs.

Are or ought to could only be used in helping the lexical verb in a sentence. Here, the two are wrongly used before the lexical verb.

Ext.5. *I* and *my friend* already decided on what to wear. (the second person should be mentioned first-*my friend and I*).

4. Omission of Functional words

Ext.1. I still remember that wonderful feeling I had as soon as I saw the gift my father bought (*for*) me.

Ext.2. At last, I was considered (*for*) admission after two years of staying at home.

The omission of the preposition *for* could be due to the rate at which the writer was writing because the preposition cannot be omitted in Nigerian native language expressions, especially Yoruba, there must be a preposition expressing purpose i.e. *fun mi/for me; fun igbaniwole/for admission*.

B. Lexical Errors

Ext.1. I wrote jamb last year 2022; I didn't know it could even be possible for me to gain admission into any university because most times people write *jamband still yet* couldn't gain admission.

The acronym (JAMB) should be written in full as Joint Matriculation Examination Board, if first mentioned in-text, and subsequently in capital letters, put in parenthesis for the reader to know the meaning.

Ext.2. *Songs were played*. So, everyone did a special dance. *Songs* and *played* do not collocate. Here, there is a wrong choice of word.

The word *music* could have been more appropriate in this context.

Ext.3. I was so excited to hear my name. I *wept tears* of joy and I couldn't stop expressing how grateful I was. (*wept* and *tears* do not collocate rather *shed tears of joy* is the appropriate expression)

Ext.4. As the plane *touched down* at NnamdiAzikweAirport, my heart raced with exhilaration stepping into the State. (*landed*)

The acronyms used in the essays, such as *lasued, waec, neco, utme, unilag*, etc should be written in capital letters and full meanings expressed .e.g. Lagos State University of Education, West Africa Examination Council, National Examination Council, Unified Tertiary Matriculation Examination, University of Lagos, respectively.

C. Orthographic / Spelling Errors

The English Language has many irregular spellings and it can be challenging to remember which letters to use in a word; such words as *believe, receipt, receive*, etc. are often misspelt in an attempt to know which letter comes first “e” and “I” in thesecond syllable. Borrowed words from other foreign languages can be challenging to spell correctly, such as can be seen in Ext.1. Words such as *surprise, curiosity, though, definitely, echoed, experiences* and *genuine* could be possibly misspelt as a result of their poor linguistic background as can be seen in the following excerpts.

Ext.1. Many people were present at the *occassion*, as there no seats for most guests. (occasion)

Ext.2. The journey began on the 18th of *march* as I boarded a plane to Abuja.

(months of the year are proper nouns and should start with capital letter-*March*)

Ext.3. I was *fortune* to come to Epe. (The writer could mean – I was fortunate Or I was opportune)

Ext.4. I was going to be a *suprice*. (*surprise*)

Ext.5. They didn't*beleive* me at first until I went to freshen up and started looking for a beautiful outfit. (*believe*)

Ext.6. I couldn't forget the anxiety and *curosimy* that took over me that day. (*curiosity*)

Ext.7. *Tho*, it was very stressful and wasn't easy at all but I was so happy that I was given an admission.

(*though*) Apart from the wrong spelling of *though*, admission is offered but not given.

Ext.8. It was certainly a day that I keep hoping will *definetelyre*-occur in my life. (definitely)

Ext.9. Till today, the day holds a special day in my life and it would forever be *echod* in my memory. (*echoed*)

Ext.10. The serenity of the moment was a perfect contrast to the bustling city, allowing me to reflect on the experiences of the day. (experiences)

Ext.11. I wandered through the bustling market, engaging in conversations with the local people who shared with the local people who shared stories, traditions and their *genuine* hospitality. (*genuine*)

Punctuation Errors

The students are grossly deficient in applying punctuations. There are instances of indiscriminate use of capital letters in starting words that are not proper nouns, writing the initial letters of proper nouns in small letters, non-indentation of paragraphs, and missing or indiscriminate use of comma and full stop. The students are accustomed to freestyle of writing in their mother tongues, which is common among the Yoruba users of English as it usually reflects in their inability to apply tone marks on their words for ease of pronunciation and comprehension. This feature is carried over to the English language as evident in the following excerpts:

Ext.1. The day before my father's birthday, *All* my candies, biscuits and drinks that would distribute in the classroom were ready. (all)

Ext.2. When I could not bear the pain I head to the hospital where the *Nurses* took me to a ward and ask me to lay down. (nurses)

Ext.3. The most exciting day of my life was the day my *Daddy* was sponsored to *mecca*. (a common noun *daddy* is written with initial capital while *Mecca* a proper has initial letter in the lower case.)

For the oral composition, presentations on the topic titled 'The Effect of the Peer Group Pressure on Nigerian Youths' were analyzed for the occurrences of errors. It should be noted that descriptive quantitative analysis was employed. Here are the errors identified in the students' oral compositions.

Concord Errors

Subject /Verb Concord

In excerpts 1,2,4,5&6, the plural subjects are made to agree with singular verbs while in excerpt 3 a singular subject is made to agree with a plural verb. These types of errors could be occasioned by the students lack of knowledge of the rules of concord or possibly they can state the rules but do not know how to apply them.

Ext.1. If this fear of rejection is too strong it may lead to a point where *the individuals* gives up all his values and beliefs just to confirm with the attitudes and value system of the group. (give)

Ext.2. *Online platforms* provide space for comparison and competition (provides)

Ext.3. *Someone who* usually have good grades suddenly relents on his academics. (has)

Ext.4. Social media *platforms* plays a significant role in shaping perception of what is considered desirable or acceptable. (play)

Ext.5. *Parents* also needs to play their roles in the society to minimize the negative effects of the peer group. (need)

Ext.6. Peer group pressure refers to the feelings that develop amongst people of the same age or people who share the similar *interests* which *compels* them to behave in a certain way. ((compel)

Modifier/Head Concord

Ext.1. In Nigeria today, there are *numerous cause* of peer pressure.
(causes)

Ext.2. However, there are *several effect* occasioned by the peer group activities among Nigerian youths. (effects).

In the excerpts above, the plural modifiers are not in agreement with their headwords, hence, the expressions are ungrammatical.

Ext.3. Positive peer group pressure brings *many benefit* to the youth in some ways which usually help them to be useful and become better persons. (benefits)

Tense Errors

The excerpts below clearly indicate that the students lack the knowledge of tense and aspect in English and how different tense forms are formed, particularly, the present perfect tense. It, in fact, shows that they have no basic knowledge of how auxiliary verbs are combined with lexical verbs to form the present perfect or past perfect tense as evident in the following excerpts:

Ext.1. People who *haven,t develop* a strong character yet are also often victims of bullying activities. (haven't developed)

Ext.2. Many Nigerian youths *have becomes* victims of negative peer group pressure because they mostly joined so as not to experience being bullied by their peers. (have become)

Pronunciation Errors

The phonological errors identified are caused by the interference of the learners' mother tongue with the target language. The phonic features of the Nigerian languages, particularly, those of Yoruba, are transferred into those of English. For instance, lack of sounds such as the voiced labio-dental/v/ and the voiced dental fricative/ ð / which are present in English but absent in Yoruba makes it difficult for Yoruba English bilingual to acquire the English sounds. What they do is to use the available sounds in their language.

The following are some of the words mispronounced:

1. working	(wcking)	=	/w??k? ɲ/
2. peer	(pia)	=	/p??/
3. victim	(fiktim)	=	/viktim/
4. thing	(tiin)	=	/θ? ɲ/
5. research	(risash)	=	/ri?s??t?/ /
6. pressure	(preshur)	=	/'pr???
7. share	(sia)	=	/?e?(r) /
8. become	(bikom)	=	/b?'k?m/
9. youth	(yut)	=	/ju?θ/
10. refers	(rifas)	=	/r?'f??(r)/

It is observed from the analysis of the students' errors in the essay and oral composition that students committed errors more in the written composition than oral. An explanation for that is that the writing task was carried out in the formal classroom setting while oral composition might have been rehearsed before presenting it in the class. Errors of concord and tense occurred more frequently than other types of error. This could be due to their poor linguistic background. The errors relating to composition generally include topic/ title, main ideas, coherence, grammar, lexis, orthography, pronunciation and many more which this present study cannot cover. Thus, through new data presented by the teacher, the learner will be able to discover the right system and possibly internalize it.

Using Errors for Effective Teaching and Learning of English as a Second Language

The study of errors by scholars makes it possible for teachers to recognize the stage learners are in learning the language, describe the types of errors as could be found in their daily classroom assignments which may likely inhibit the acquisition of the language and design the techniques of teaching what they still have to learn based on the errors earlier recorded, in juxtaposition with their course curriculum. It has been observed that mere correction of errors and ending it there cannot in any way motivate learners or improve their proficiency but rather demoralize them as they tend to avoid any occasion of expressing themselves in English.

In using errors committed by students to effectively teach English, the teacher can reconstruct his teaching materials to align with the errors and adopt functional methods of teaching to remediate the error. By doing this, the teacher will be able to determine if learning has taken place in order to move on to the next stage or possibly go back to the previous stage if learning has not sufficiently taken place. In the data analyzed, most of the errors committed are caused by poor linguistic background of the students and interference phenomenon. For instance, to teach errors caused by linguistic background of learners, the teacher needs to present the system of the English at the level of the error committed, probably grammar, to the students in juxtaposition with errors and make them see the differences. For example, in the text analyzed, the expression,

We tooked an uber and we headed to onini beach

Students can be made to understand that the verb *take* is an irregular verb and does not take -ed- suffix to form the past tense or past participle. The fact is that it is termed irregular because its formation does not follow the regular pattern of adding -ed- suffix to the base. The teacher must inform students of the irregularities and exceptions to the rules as regards grammar, pronunciation and spelling and instill in them that there is no short cut other than internalizing the rules. Likewise, in the following excerpt, students could be taught how to make correct grammatical expressions using the errors earlier committed. For example, concord can be taught using this expression:

Parents also *needs* to play their roles in the society to minimize the negative effects of the peer group pressure

In the excerpt, the plural subject '*parents*' does not agree with the singular verb '*need*'. They should be made to know that concord is expressed in terms of the way in which the subject of a sentence agrees in number and person with the verb. Every verb in English, except BE, has two present tense forms:

(a) a base form (the same as the dictionary form) e.g. *need*, dance, play, come, get, etc.

(b) an-s form (formed by adding an-s suffix to the base form): need +s=needs, s+

dance=dances, play +s=plays, etc. An appropriate selection

An appropriate selection must be made from the two present tense forms when the verb required is in the present tense. Thus, the rule of the subject-verb concord states that a singular subject agrees with a singular verb and a plural subject with a plural verb. The teacher needs to emphasize it that -s suffix in the verb '*needs*' does not indicate plurality and does not agree in number and person with the subject-*parents*. A plural verb is in the base form; thus, the verb *need* is the appropriate verb form to be used. Thus, the expression is ungrammatical. The singular version of the expression could be:

The parent *needs* to play their roles in the society... ('*their*' is used for gender sensitivity)

Pronunciation errors are mostly caused by interference. Nigerian users and learners of English often find it difficult to articulate certain consonant and vowel sounds. This is because of the differences between the sound patterns of the mother tongue of Nigerian English bilingual and those of the English language. For instance, for the teacher to teach voiced and voiceless labio-

dental fricatives, he must draw the attention of the students to the differences (retroactive interference) in the patterns of the two languages, if he himself has the same native language as the students, probably the similarities (proactive interference). In the excerpts, certain words were wrongly pronounced; such words could be taught through the use of minimal pairs.

/v/ and /f/: van /fan, vine/fine, vast/ fast,fat/vat

/b/ and /r/: bat /rat, bent/rent,bot/rot,bet/ret,

/th/and/t/: think/tink, thank/tank, thing/tin

/p/ and /b/: peer/pear,beer/bear/bare

Learners could be asked to distinguish between a pair of sentences such as:

He slipped on the floor.

He slept on the floor.

And then asked which of the sentences they heard as heread them aloud.

Recommendations

For effective treatment of errors in the spoken and written English of learners, it is therefore recommended that:

- Teachers should not see errors as a mark of failure on the part of learners but rather encourage them to develop confidence in expressing themselves freely without any fear of committing errors.
- Errors should be seen by teachers as resourceful teaching materials that could be employed to teach language systems and concepts as identified in their students' written or spoken texts.
- Correction of errors should be reduced to the barest minimum; however, teachers should take caution and strike the balance between correction and overlooking of errors so that grievous errors will not be left uncorrected and at the same time learners 'confidence and self-esteem willnot be eroded due to over correction of errors.
- Teachers themselves should become competent teachers of English; as most teachers are non-native speakers, there is the need go for language development trainings and workshops where new trends in language theories are discussed in order to update and upgrade their knowledge.

Conclusion

Error analysis is an interesting aspect of language study. Through error analysis, a sensitive teacher can easily diagnose language areas that pose challenges to students, and offer remedies. More importantly, errors should be seen as a process towards achieving competency in English but not as aberrations. Errors identified could be good sources of materials for curriculum design. Thus, this study sees errors as catalysts for effective teaching and learning of English as a Second Language.

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