FACING THE PROBLEM OF COMMON ERRORS BY LEARNERS

Khurramova Feruza

English language teacher

Jizzakh, Uzbekistan

Abstract. Error analysis came as an alternative approach and took the place of dominant approach contrastive analysis. This article deals with the issues on the common problems faced by language learners and their probable solutions.

Keywords. Error, common errors, error analysis, alternative approach, dominant approach, remedial actions.

Error analysis came as an alternative approach and took the place of dominant approach contrastive analysis. Error analysis is a type of linguistic analysis that emphasizes on errors made by learners. Basically, it is a process based on analysis of learners errors with one clear objective: finding a proper and effective teaching methods and remedial actions. It is multidimensional and multifaceted process which comprises much than simply analyzing errors of the learners.

Error analysis by itself is an investigation tool of those errors committed by students while producing second language in oral and written form. Corder, the most contributor in error analysis, states that" the study of the error is a part of the investigation of the process of language learning. It has similarities with methods used in the acquisition of the mother tongue language. It provides us with a picture of the linguistic development of a learner and may give us an indication as to the learning process".

Error analysis made a distinction between error and mistake. The first attempt to distinguish error from mistake was done by Corder (1973). He pointed out that errors reflect gaps in the learner's target language. Corder (1974:24) states "errors of performance (mistakes) will be characteristically unsystematic and errors of competence, systematic". As a result, the learner is unable to correct it by

himself (self-correction). While mistakes are usually slips and lapses in performance. The learner knows the right form, but he commits mistakes because of nervousness, tiredness or fatigue. So, the learner is able to correct the mistake by himself.

According to Brown (1980:p.165) a mistake is performance error, "that is either a random guess or a slip in that. It is a failure to utilize a known system correctly." This means that mistake is common between learner of second language and the native speaker, but an error is   not a problem would appear for a native speaker. A native speaker has an ability to recognize his mistakes.

Dulay el al (1982. P.138) defined error as "the flowed side of learner speech or writing. They are those parts of conversation or compositions that deviate from some selected norm of mature language performance". Corder (1981) said that there are two kinds of errors, which are systematic and non- systematic errors. Non-systematic errors are errors related to performance due to memory, physical or psychological conditions such as tiredness or fatigue. Even native speakers commit errors as a result of memory failure or tongue's slips. On the contrary, systematic errors are errors that reflect the lack or defects in language competency, and they " provide evidence of the system of the language that the learner is using at a particular point on the course"(Corder,1981,p.10).

James (1998) shows that there is a discrepancy between errors and mistakes. Regarding to (Corder 1981) are learner self-correcting. James classified mistakes into two kinds. The first kind is a mistake that is self-correctable. While the second one is   Errors. They cannot be self – corrected since they need more learning. Therefore, teachers must deliver the learner with relevant input to correct his or her errors.

Errors happen when a learner doesn't have sufficient knowledge of the language. This could occur when they have never been exposed the language and make an error because they have no prior knowledge to refer to. These are known as attempts. Or errors could come from the language having been acquired

incorrectly and as far as they are concerned they are correct. These are fossilized errors.

Slips are the opposite end of the error spectrum. Slips happen when a learner knows the language but due to the speed of conversation or other factors, they say or write something incorrect. These are often self-corrected or ignored. They even happen to native speakers when we mispronounce a word or mix up words in an idiom that we've used a million times. One interesting thing to note is that even at the highest bands of C2 level, Cambridge writing scales say that inaccuracies that occur as slips are perfectly acceptable. They are not something to be punished.

Personally, I think there a bit of a gap here. We need something to fill in the middle ground. That is what I refer to as mistakes. Mistakes happen when a learner forgets the language that they have already acquired. It's not that they don't have the language, it's that they haven't accessed it correctly. Typical mistakes would come from L1 influence and often involve the use of false cognates or word order. The over-application of L1 rules in L2 frequently causes mistakes. This could happen to native speakers too, especially children. The typical example is when they conjugate an irregular past verb incorrectly (e.g. teached) because they have learnt a new rule and they start applying it too much.

Errors are the most difficult to correct, because not only are you providing a correction, you are also providing the knowledge necessary to fill the student's gap in understanding. Errors should always be corrected, however, you need to be very careful about when and how to correct them.

We've all been in the situation where we try to correct an error quickly, only to get pulled down a rabbit hole where before we know it the board is covered in example sentences, phonemes and an explanation of the present perfect continuous. So correction of errors has to be structured and formulated in a way that allows students to recognise how to form the correct language, but without breaking the flow of the class.

Overall, mistakes should be dealt with completely differently. Mistakes are not due to lack of knowledge. Therefore, if you delay correction, the student will

look at the error and instantly know what the problem is. They will think something along the lines of "Oh yeah, I knew that". So what have we achieved as a teacher at that point? We haven't helped to fill any gaps in knowledge. That's why mistakes should be corrected the moment they are made, even during a fluency activity. If you correctly identified the problem as a mistake, not an error, the correction should be quick and easy. Mistakes should be dealt with completely differently. Mistakes are not due to lack of knowledge. Therefore, if you delay correction, the student will look at the error and instantly know what the problem is. They will think something along the lines of "Oh yeah, I knew that". So what have we achieved as a teacher at that point? We haven't helped to fill any gaps in knowledge. That's why mistakes should be corrected the moment they are made, even during a fluency activity. If you correctly identified the problem as a mistake, not an error, the correction should be quick and easy.

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