

COMMON LINGUISTIC ERRORS OF L1 LEARNERS IN LEARNING L2 AMONG THE STUDENTS OF ENGINEERING UNDER JNTU-H: A STUDY

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ABSTRACT

The primary aim for most students to learn English as a second language (L2) is to be efficient users of the language. This research study has focused on identifying common linguistic errors of L1 learners in learning L2 among students of Engineering under JNTU-H. In this regard, the study focused on the identification of linguistic errors. The research used a random sampling research design to collect and analyze the data among 60 participants from the institution of higher learning. The participants were subjected to common tests to establish the types of errors that they could demonstrate. They were asked to write a short paragraph about their institution to establish the linguistic errors from the students. The total number of errors identified was mainly three, with each having sub-categories. The errors totaled 180 errors spread across the three error categories. The research established the common linguistic errors like spelling, grammar, and punctuation, registering 33, 56, and 91 errors in that order. Thus, the most common linguistic error identified is punctuation, followed by grammar, and lastly, spelling.

Keywords: Linguistic error, punctuation, grammar, spelling, writing

Introduction

Background of the Study

One of the aims of learning English as a second language (L2) in higher learning institutions is for the students to obtain both productive and receptive usage of it. The expectation from the learners is that they should acquire both practical and theoretical command of the language (He, Chang & Chen, 2011; Sifakis, 2019). Thus, they should develop listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills in the language. The writing and speaking skills are termed productive processes, while the reading and listening skills are the receptive processes. However, there are linguistic errors that the students usually make while under the learning process. According to Napitupulu (2017), linguistic error in applied linguistics refers to an error that occurs unintentionally deviating from the rules of a language and is made by a second language learner. The errors occur in different forms, and L2 learners also make them invariably, especially when they are new to the language.

Statement of the Problem

The current digital era has many students accessing word processing software tools that can detect errors at punctuation, grammatical and orthographical levels (Jamal & Sandhya n.d.). Consequently, it is argued a decline, mainly in written standards, which comes with over-reliance on the software that helps write the English language. Many studies have explored the error frequency made by college-level students, especially by L2 speakers of English, and the categorization of errors by the students (Lastres-López & Manalastas 2017). This research study focuses on investigating the common linguistic errors made by L1 learners in learning L2 among engineering students under the Jawaharlal Nehru Technological University (JNTU-H).

Aims and Objectives of the study

The research aims to identify the most common linguistic errors of L1 learners in learning L2.

Research Objectives

1. To establish punctuation, orthographical, and grammatical errors in writing do engineering students under JNTU-H make.
2. To establish the most common errors from the three categories.
3. To establish differences between L1 and L2 English speakers

Research Questions

1. What kind of punctuation, orthographical, and grammatical errors in writing do engineering students under JNTU-H make?
2. Which one from the three categories is more common among the engineering students under JNTU-H?
3. Do differences exist between L1 and L2 English speakers?

Significance of the study

This research paper will contribute to an extensive effort in promoting skills and strategies to students to help them improve their skills in the learning of L2 in terms of reading, listening, speaking, and writing.

Methodology

Research Design

The research design used in the collection of data was random sampling. Using this research design, each individual in the total population has an equal probability or chance of getting selected (Rahi, 2017). Furthermore, this research design allows for the calculation of sampling error, which further reduces selection bias. The benefit of this method is that it is one of the simplest as it is straightforward as far as probability sampling is concerned (Etikan & Bala 2017; and Bakker 2018). However, one of its disadvantages is that there is also a possibility of not selecting enough samples with the characteristics of interest, which is linguistic errors to be studied. Another disadvantage is that it may prove challenging to define a comprehensive frame and be inconvenient in contacting them (Sharma 2017). The situation leading to such is a need for varied forms of contact such as phone, email, or by post with the sample unites scattered over a geographical region (Young et al. 2018). However, contacting the participant was not a problem for this research because they were university students found at a center.

Sampling Procedure

In this research, the total number of students intended to be studied was 207 at Jawaharlal Nehru Technological University (JNTU-H). The representative sample selected was 60 from the larger population. The first step involved identifying the institution and focusing on the Engineering students at JNTU-H. The sample selection involved using the random number method by assigning individuals with random numbers, followed by picking up the population subset through a random number generator.

Data Collection Procedures

First and foremost, the identified sample was offered a consent form to read through and sign before participating in the research (Latpate et al., 2021; and Schreier 2018). Those who needed assistance with interpretation were assisted, and they agreed to have understood the reason for the research. Next, the sample identified were subjected to tests to determine their proficiency in terms of reading, writing, speaking, and listening.

In the testing, the British English spelling, grammar, and punctuation were regarded as the standard (Sifakis & Tsantil 2019). It is worth noting that the prescriptivist approach was not given consideration, and the variations from varieties of different national languages were not given as mistakes. For instance, AmE' colour' / BrE' colour.' Each subject student was requested to produce a short piece of writing in 15 minutes. The experiences they had in the university were selected as the topic to be written about. Students were allowed to write about anything they could about their university as long as it was within 15 minutes. For instance, they could write about their likes and dislikes, the university /the college they study at, and what is needed to be implemented to improve their conditions in the institution.

With the simplicity and open-ended topic for the student participants, it was anticipated that, in combination with the proficiency in the participants' language, there would be committing of few to no errors at the lexical level.

Data Analysis and Interpretations

Upon collecting the written scripts, a database was created to help with manual analysis of the errors while classifying them into three categories: punctuation, spelling, and grammar. Each class had further sub-categories that had a detailed analysis of the texts, for instance, naming the type of grammatical errors. Subsequent identification and classification of the linguistic errors were made in the round of study. Further analysis was then carried out to generate a more in-depth category of errors in the sub-categories.

Ethical considerations

Before engaging the 60 participants in the study, they were requested to read through and sign consent forms. Secondly, the identity of the participants was kept secret during the analysis of the results, which ensured that no data could be traced back to an individual student participant.

Results and Discussion

Total errors identified from the manual analysis of 61 writing samples was 180 leading to an average of three errors per student participant in a 112-word text average. From the total number of errors, 33 were for spelling, 56 for grammar, and 91 for punctuation, as summarized in the table below.

Table 1: Category and number of errors frequency

Error Category	N	%
Spelling	33	17.4%
Grammar	56	31.1%
Punctuation	91	50.5%
Total	180	100%

The table indicates an unequal distribution of errors in the writing of this university's students across the three categories. Slightly over half this number is punctuation exclusively. The least observed error is in spelling, scoring 17.4%. The grammatical error came second with 31.1%.

The results further showed that over 92% of the participants made one mistake in the short text they were requested to write.

The table below is a detailed presentation of the errors and the number of participants.

Table 2: Relationship between number of participants and the number of errors

Number of Errors	Number of Participants			
	Spelling	Grammar	Punctuation	Total
0	3	13	6	22
1	7	11	26	44
2	10	12	23	45
3	8	10	21	39
4	3	9	12	24
5 or more	2	1	3	6
Total	60			

Some of the identified grammatical errors from the research include incorrect verb inflection and missing or wrong words such as nouns, prepositions, and conjunction. Types of spelling errors identified from the analysis had incorrect grapheme choices such as incorrect vowels and errors related to phonology such as minimal pair. The punctuation errors were the most and were of various forms. Some of the punctuation errors identified included incorrect capitalization, incorrect comma use, missing apostrophe, and inappropriate period use. The research study and the analyzed results sufficiently answered the research questions. It established, like other research studies that the types of spelling, grammar, and punctuation errors (Al-Oudat, 2017; Lei 2020; and Mahmood et al. 2020). It also established that punctuation errors were the most in terms of categories committed by the university students under research.

Solutions for the identified problems

Learning a language, especially with a grown-up, is a matter of time, effort, and exposure. Thus, to solve the linguistic problems identified in the research study among engineering students, it will take the three factors with the right strategy. The following are the strategies that the students can use to address the linguistic problems.

The identified issues were punctuation, grammar, and spelling. The learner should consistently read, write, review, and repeat the process as frequently as possible to address these linguistic errors. The process might look simple, but it requires tenacity at all stages, especially when it comes to repetition. First, the students will have to immerse themselves in reading a lot of English materials to accustom their brains to the language. Concurrently it can be done with writing and reviewing what one has learned about the language from one identified error to another (spelling, grammar, and spelling). The aspect of repeating requires that the process of reading, writing, and reviewing starts all over again to ensure different understanding ways of dealing with the errors.

Finally, interacting with the native speakers of the language can be very important in addition to consuming relevant media in the language. Doing so helps to have first-hand experience with native speakers, and it contributes to building efforts to evade the errors while using the language.

Conclusion

The research paper has focused on investigating the linguistic errors of L1 learners in learning L2 among engineering students at JNTU-H. The research study used a simple random sampling research design to collect

and analyze data. The study revealed various errors in terms of mistake types committed. The three categories of errors found in order of few to most include spelling, grammar, and punctuation, respectively. Concerning grammar, the highest identified types of errors included incorrect or missing determiners and verbs. The high frequency of punctuation errors can be a result of sometimes being difficult to establish punctuation rules.

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