

## **An Analysis of Interlingual Errors and Intralingual Errors Found in the Narrative Essay Written by Non-English Specialization Students of Meiktila University in the Academic Year (2019-20)**

Moe Moe Myint  
Lecturer, Department of English, Meiktila University

### *Abstract*

Error Analysis is a very important area of applied linguistics and that of second and foreign language learning. It is also a systematic method to analyse learners' errors. The present study tries to explore the errors in a corpus of 240 narrative essays written by first year to fourth year non- English Specialization students of Meiktila University in the academic year (2019-2020). It emphasizes on interlingual errors and intralingual errors. The data are analysed by using the taxonomy suggested by J.Richard et al (2002). The percentage of interlingual errors made by the first year students is 8.14% and by the second year students is 13.66% and by the third year students is 9.26% and by the fourth year students is 11.58%. The percentage of intralingual errors made by the first year students is 91.86 % and by the second year students is 86.34% and by the third year students is 90.74% and by the fourth year students is 88.42% .Findings show that the majority of students' errors is due to intralingual causes such as overgeneralization, simplification, developmental errors, and errors of avoidance whereas the errors caused by the mother tongue interference (interlingual errors) are less common.

**Key Words:** error analysis, interlingual errors, intralingual errors.

### **Introduction**

English is dominant in today's world. It is the language of science, technology, trade and commerce. Being good in English is a must for job seekers, most of the employers in the public and private sectors evaluate applicants according to their English skill and chances of promotion heavily depend upon the employees' abilities to communicate in English. In Myanmar, English becomes an essential part of the educational process in every university and is also prescribed as a compulsory subject in the school curriculum. Teaching English is being encouraged and conducted at all levels. Most of the students, however, have difficulties in what to write and how to start their writing even though they have a lot of wide-reading. When they write sentences in English, they have cognitive process in Myanmar and they usually translated directly from Myanmar to English. Thus their writing may not be perfect but rather may be full of grammatical errors. As Mahmoud (2011) says“ Nobody goes from Zero competence to full competence in one leap,” committing errors is a fact of life, so is learning from them. Error analysis is also an everlasting endeavor for the simple reason that first, second or foreign language learners, by definition, will continue to commit errors. Thus it can be said that committing errors is a general tendency for the second and foreign language learners and the proper analysis of errors can help the learners reduce errors in their writing. Therefore, errors and their analysis demand a keen concentration in the teaching of second and foreign language.

### **Aim and Objectives**

This research aims to analyse interlingual errors and intralingual errors made by the students.

Its objectives are:

- to identify errors interlingually and intralingually
- to explore which type of errors is mostly found in the narrative essays.

### **Literature Review**

Chomsky(1998) confirmed that errors are unavoidable and a necessary part of learning. They are visible proof that learning is taking place. Thus Corder (2000) proposed that not only language learners necessarily produce errors when communicating in a foreign language, but these errors, if studied systematically, can provide insight into how languages are learnt .Weireech (1991)also considered learners' errors to be of particular importance because making errors is a device the learners use in order to learn. According to him, error analysis is a valuable aid to identify and explain difficulties faced by learners. Interference, language transfer, and cross-linguistic interference are also known as interlingual errors. Corder (1981) stated that these kinds of error occur when the learner's habits(patterns, systems or rules) interfere or prevent him or her, to some extent, from acquiring the patterns and rules of the second language. Lado(1964)said that interference (negative transfer) is negative influence of the mother tongue (L1)on the performance of the target language (L2). Richard (1974) stated if the learners of a foreign language make mistakes in the target language by effect of his mother tongue that is called as interlingual.

In study conducted by Chelli (2013), it is found that the students' errors in the using of preposition and article can be identified into interlingual and intralingual errors. In a study, Solano(2014) found that the most common Spanish interference errors were misuse of verbs, omission of personal and object pronouns, misuse of prepositions and overuse of articles. This study aims to identify the errors committed by students interlingually and intralingually and analyse them according to the taxonomy suggested by J.Richard et al.(2002).

### Definition of Error

In linguistics, according to J. Richard et al (2002), an error is the use of a word, speech act or grammatical items in such a way that it seems imperfect and significant of an incomplete learning . Norrish (1987) considers error as a systematic deviation that happens when a learner has not learnt something and consistently gets it wrong.

### Errors vs. Mistakes

Chomsky(1965) made a distinguishing explanation of competence and performance on which, later on, the identification of mistakes and errors will be possible. Chomsky (1965) stated that "We thus make a fundamental distinction between competence(the speaker-hear's knowledge of his language and performance(the actual use of language in concrete situations)". In other words, errors are thought of as indications of an incomplete learning, and that the speaker or hearer has not accumulated a satisfied language knowledge which can enable them to avoid linguistics misuse. Relating knowledge with competence was significant enough to represent that the competence of the speaker is judged by means of errors that concern the amount of linguistic data he or she has been exposed to, however, performance which is the actual use of language does not represent the language knowledge that the speaker has. According to J. Richard et al (2002), people may have competence to produce an infinitely long sentence but when they actually attempt to use this knowledge (to perform), there are many reasons why they restrict the number of adjectives, adverbs, and clauses in any sentence..

The actual state of the speaker somehow involves and influences the speaker's performance by either causing a good performance or mistakes. Thus, it is quite obvious that there is some kind of interrelationship between competence and performance; somehow, a speaker can perform well if he or she has had already satisfied linguistic knowledge.

### Types of Errors

Errors have been classified by J. Richard et al. (2002) into two categories: the Interlingual Error and the Intralingual Error. Those two elements refer respectively to the negative influence of both the speaker's native language, and the target language itself.

Interlingual error is caused by the interference of the native language L1(also known as interference, linguistic interference, and crosslinguistic influence), where by the learner tends to use their linguistic knowledge of L1 on some linguistic features in the target language, however, it often leads to making errors. Intralingual error is an error that takes place due to a particular misuse of a particular rule of the target language. It is, in fact, quite the opposite of interlingual error. It puts the target language into focus, the target language in this perspective is thought of as an error cause. Thus, the intralingual error is classified as follow:

### Overgeneralization

In linguistics, overgeneralization errors occur when the speaker applies a grammatical rule in cases where it doesn't apply. Richard et al, (2002) mentioned that they are caused by extension of target language rules to inappropriate context. This kind of errors has been committed while dealing with regular and irregular verbs, as well as the application of plural forms. E.g.(foot = foots rather than feet )and ( I come = I comed rather than came).

### Simplification

They result from learners' producing simpler linguistic forms than those found in the target language, in other words, learners attempt to be linguistically creative and produce their own poetic sentences/ utterances, they may actually be successful in doing it, but it is not necessary the case, Corder (as cited in Mahmoud 2014) mentioned that learners do not have the complex system which they could simplify. This kind of errors is committed through both of omission and addition of some linguistic elements at the level of either the spelling or grammar. A. Mahmoud (2014) provided examples based on a research conducted on written English of Arabic speaking second year University students:

- 1.Spelling: Omission of silent letters:  
com(=comb) onest(=honest)
- 2.Grammar:
  - 1.Omission:  
2.He listens ^music every night.  
She is ^outstanding girl in class.
  - 3.Addition:  
I am go to school.

### Developmental errors

This kind of errors is somehow part of the overgeneralizations. Developmental errors are results of normal pattern of development, such as (go=goed) and (make=maked). Developmental errors indicate that the learner has started developing their linguistic knowledge and fail to reproduce the rules they have lately been exposed to in target language learning.

### Induced errors

As known as transfer of training, errors caused by misleading teaching examples, teachers, sometimes, unconditionally, explain a rule without highlighting the exceptions or the intended message they would want to convey. J. Richard et al. (2002) provided an example that occurs at the level of teaching prepositions and particularly **at** where the teacher may hold up a book and say *I am looking at the book*, the students may understand that **at** means *under*. They may later utter *the cat is at the table* instead of *the cat is under the table*.

### Errors of avoidance

These errors occur when the learners fail to apply certain target language rules just because they are thought to be too difficult.

### Errors of overproduction

In the early stages of language learning, learners are supposed to have not yet acquired and accumulate satisfied linguistic knowledge which can enable them to use the finite rules of the target language in order to produce infinite structures. Most of the time, beginners overproduce in such a way that they frequently repeat a particular structure.

## Method and Procedure

### Participants

The instrument of the research is written output made by the students. The data are collected from the written output and analysed. The participants are 240 first year to fourth year non-English specialization students from different specializations in Meiktila University: 60 from the first year Physics specialization students, 60 from the second year Geology specialization students, 60 from the third year Mathematics specialization students and 60 from the fourth year Myanmar specialization students and the second year honours students Of Geography specialization .

### Data Collection

A specific sample is used in collecting data. A total of 240 students are separately asked to write the narrative essay on the spot within 40 minutes. The topic is 'What I Do Everyday' and they are given some prompts to be used in their writing. In this study, the data are directly taken from the students by using clinical elicitation technique as the method of data collection. The students' errors are classified into the level of interlingual and intralingual errors. The intralingual errors are categorized into the morphological level, syntactical level and lexical level based on comparative taxonomy and calculated in percentage.

**Table 1: The Comparison of Interlingual Errors and Intralingual Errors Made by First Year, Second Year, Third Year and Fourth Year Students in Meiktila University.**

		Types of Errors										
		Interlingual Errors	Intralingual Errors									
			1.The Use of L1 Structure	1.Use of Verb Tense	2.Use of Verb Form	3.Spelling	4.Addition of bound morphemes	5.Selection of Pronoun	6.Use of Prepositions	7.Use of Articles	8.Omission of Subject	9.Omission of Verb
First Year	Frequency (%)	18 (8.14%)	46 (20.81%)	27 (12.22%)	31 (14.03%)	1 (0.45%)		56 (25.34%)	23 (10.41%)	4 (1.81%)	15 (6.79%)	<b>221</b> (100%)
Second Year	Frequency (%)	25 (13.66%)	40 (21.86%)	22 (12.02%)	27 (14.75%)	7 (3.83%)	1 (0.55%)	26 (14.21%)	19 (10.38%)	8 (4.37%)	8 (4.37%)	183 (100%)
Third Year	Frequency (%)	15 (9.26%)	50 (30.86%)	23 (14.20%)	23 (14.20%)	3 (1.85%)		37 (22.84%)	5 (3.09%)		6 (3.70%)	162 (100%)
Fourth Year	Frequency (%)	30 (11.58%)	53 (20.46%)	51 (19.69%)	47 (18.15%)	4 (1.54%)	1 (0.39%)	51 (19.69%)	14 (5.41%)	2 (0.77%)	6 (2.32%)	259 (100%)

As shown in table (1), it is found that the first year students do not make errors of pronoun . Moreover, it is explored that the third year students do not totally make both errors of pronoun and that of subject omission.

In the intralingual errors made by the first year students, the percentage of the most common errors is found in the order of use of prepositions (25.34%)> use of verb tense (20.81%)> spelling (14.03%)>use of verb form (12.22%)> use of articles (10.41%)> Omission of verb(6.79%)> Omission of subject(1.81%)>addition of bound morpheme-s(0.45%). The case as the selection of pronoun is not found in their writing task. In the intralingual errors made by the second year students, the percentage of the most common errors is found in the order of use of verb tense (21.86%)> spelling (14.75%)> use of prepositions (14.21%)>use of verb form(12.02%)> use of articles (10.38%)> omission of subject and omission of verb(4.37%)>addition of bound morpheme –s(3.83%)>the selection of pronoun(0.55%). In the intralingual errors made by the third year students, the percentage of the most common errors is found in the order of use of verb tense> use of prepositions > use of verb form and spelling> omission of verb> use of articles> addition of bound morpheme-s showing 30.86%>22.84%>14.20%>3.70%>3.09%>1.85%. The cases as the selection of pronoun and omission of subject are not found in their works. In the intralingual errors made by the fourth year students, the percentage of the most common errors is found in the order of use of verb tense>use of verb form and use of prepositions> spelling> use of articles> omission of verb> addition of bound morpheme –s> omission of subject>the selection of pronoun having 20.46%> 19.69%> 18.15%> 5.41%> 2.32%> 1.54%> 0.77%> 0.39%.

**Data Analysis**

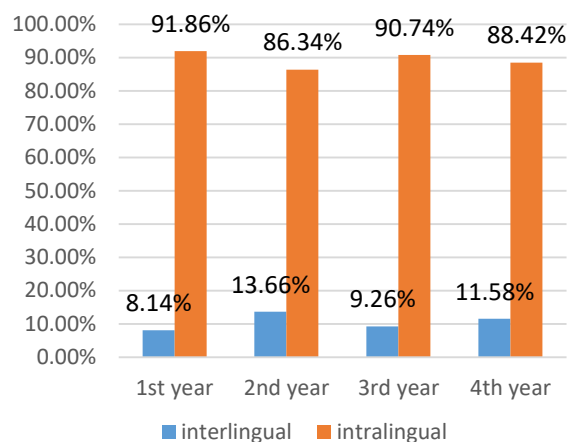
The data made by the students are analyzed into interlingual errors and intralingual errors. The following table shows interlingual errors and intralingual errors made by the students.

**Table 2: Interlingual Errors and Intralingual Errors Made by the Students.**

	Interlingual Errors	Intralingual Errors
1 <sup>st</sup> Year	8.14%	91.86%
2 <sup>nd</sup> Year	13.66%	86.34%
3 <sup>rd</sup> Year	9.26%	90.74%
4 <sup>th</sup> Year	11.58%	88.42%

Table 2 shows that the most frequent interlingual errors are made by the second year students and the least frequent errors are committed by the first year students. The most frequent intralingual errors are made by the first year students and the least errors are made by the second year students.

**Data Interpretation**



**Figure : The Interlingual Errors and the Intralingual Errors Made by First Year to Fourth Year Students.**

According to the figure, the percentage of the interlingual errors made by the second year students stands at the highest level. The second and third highest percentage of the interlingual errors is found in the writing works of the fourth year students and third year students. The percentage of interlingual errors made by the first year students is found to stand at the lowest level. The percentage of the intralingual errors made by the first year students stands at the highest level. The second and third highest percentage of the intralingual errors is found in he writing works of the third year students and fourth year students. The percentage of intralingual errors made by the second year students is found to stand at the lowest level.

**Findings and Discussion**

Findings show that in the interlingual errors, the errors in the use of L1 (first language) structure are found whereas other categories are not found in respective years. The percentage of errors in the use of L1 structure made by the first year students is 8.14% and by the second year students is 13.66% and by the third year students is 9.26% and by the fourth year students is 11.58% respectively.

Findings show that a total of 825 sentences indicate errors. For the students, verb tenses are the most difficult part of English grammar. They are not able to use appropriate tenses in accordance with the context in their writing. The topic they are asked to write demands verb Simple Present Tense but some of them use verb Simple Past and Present Continuous. For example, ' I am going -----' instead of 'I go -----'. So they need to improve their learning in this area of English grammar. The use of prepositions is often a big problem for them. The most frequent errors in prepositions deal with

omission of preposition 'to'. For example, 'I listen^music' instead of 'I listen to music'. Probably they do not exactly know the usage of prepositions. Thus, they should try to master it. Most of the students also make a lot of spelling errors. For example, 'bad room' instead of 'bed room', 'leature' instead of 'lecture', 'metritation' instead of 'meditation'. But these spelling errors are not the top problem for them and there may be students' carelessness. The use of verb form confuses the students very often. Some of the students do not seem to distinguish between some confusing items such as 'teach','learn','keep' and 'make'. For example, 'I teach---' instead of 'I learn----'. Some do not respect the rule 'sub-verb agreement'. For example, 'I studies----' 'Everybody have-----' instead of 'I study---', 'Everybody has-----'. Errors in the use of articles are typical for the students whose mother tongue does not contain article. They should try to gain a thorough understanding of the use of articles. Errors in the use of plural nouns are also found in their writing works. For example, 'I brush my teeth', 'I brush my tooth' instead of 'I brush my teeth'. The first type of error is Double marking. Students add morpheme-s incorrectly to the noun 'teeth' which is used only in plural. The second type of error is called Regularization error. Students use a wrong form of plural. The noun 'tooth' is in singular and its plural form is 'teeth'. This term of plural is called Mutation plural. There are a lot of nouns in English whose plural is formed in this way. Thus, they need to learn thoroughly the forms of plural because their first language does not contain them.

These above findings can contribute some information and ideas for remedial work. Students lack grammatical competence and they do not also apply grammar rules they have learnt in their works. In other words, they fail to grasp the vocabulary, and grammar rules as well as spelling of the target language when they write sentences. They should realize that skillfulness of grammar is the key to mastering of writing in English and they should try to master English grammar rules and apply them in their writing task. Only then, can they become confident enough to write English composition in an accurate, appropriate and well-organized way. From the point of view of teachers, through realizing the students' errors and their possible causes, teachers can plan some teaching strategies that would encourage the students to think in English so that the students can produce effective pieces of writing without mother tongue interference and they can plan suitable lessons or gain teaching techniques to help their students learn how to produce complete and grammatically correct sentences of English language. Therefore, error analysis is becoming far more important with the speed up endeavors in teaching learning process.

### Conclusion

The findings of this research show that the sources of errors are mother tongue interference (interlingual errors) and intralingual errors caused by the target

language itself. The errors most commonly made by the students are intralingual errors caused by overgeneralization, simplification, developmental errors, and errors of avoidance. Interlingual errors caused by the result of the first language interference habits to the learning of target language are less common. Some specific rules in the target language may be rather confusing and may have some exceptions in which students need to improve their grammatical competence, vocabulary and practice in order to acquire them. These common difficulties in language learning can point out some aspects for language teachers. Errors are crucial parts and aspects in the process of learning a language and error analysis is a systematic method to analyse these errors. And error analysis greatly helps teachers develop certain teaching techniques and strategies in the process of second and foreign language learning. Thus, the role of error analysis is very important in teaching learning process. Therefore, it is a great pleasure for the researcher if this research on error analysis can be hoped to be of great help, to some extent, not only for the students wishing to be proficient in writing in English but also for the teachers who are trying their best to improve their teaching efficiency.

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