

**A CASE STUDY ON WRITING ERRORS AT SENTENCE-LEVEL
COMMITTED BY 21 FRESHMEN OF C62C, F.O.E, HNUE**

Doan Thuy Linh

LSD Division

I. LIERATURE REVIEW

1. Definition

1.1. Errors

In a traditional SL/FL teaching situation relying on Behaviorism, errors are regarded as “the linguistic phenomena deviant from the language rules and standard usages, reflecting learner’s deficiency in language competence and acquisition device”.

(Jie, 2008 cited in Adi Putra, 2010).

1.2. Error Analysis

Discussing the issue of EA, Brown (1987:24) defines it as follows: “the fact that learners do make errors and these errors can be observed, analyzed and classified to reveal something of the system, operating within the learner led to a surge of study of learners’ errors, called ‘error analysis’”.

Remarkably, the definition of Corder (1974), the forerunner of EA, seems to be most widely agreed, which identifies:

EA is the study of errors as 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 and may give us indications as to the learning process.

(Corder, 1974:125)

2. Aims of EA

First of all, the analysis of errors is crucial in the second language acquisition field because it allows the observation of actual learner output and *give SLA researchers the possibility to explain how learning progresses.*

Another reason that justified the analysis of errors is *language teaching*. In the evolution of language teaching methods, by analyzing errors, important suggestions for *language method design* can be made, this involves all the areas of the pedagogical design, from syllabus to materials.

Last but not least, another aim of EA is to *suggest suitable and effective teaching-learning strategies and remedial measures necessary* in the target language.

3. Sources of Errors

Selinker (1972) reports five sources of errors:

- *Language transfer*: involves pronunciation, word order and grammars, semantic transfer, transfer in writing, pragmatic transfer and culture transfer.
- *Transfer of training*: is the influence of prior learning on performance in a new situation.
- *Strategies of L2 learning*. This is an attempt to develop linguistic and sociolinguistic competence in TL.
- *Strategies of L2 communication*: consists of attempts to deal with problems of communication that have arisen in interaction.
- *Overgeneralization* of the TL linguistic material: happens when a L2 learner applies a grammatical rule across all members of a grammatical class without making the appropriate exception.

4. Procedure of EA

4.1. Identification of Errors

Once a corpus of learner language has been collected, the errors have to be identified.

4.2. Description of Errors

This study applies linguistic categories which are associated with a traditional EA undertaken for pedagogic purposes.

4.3. Explanation of Errors

Further, the raters or researchers would try to explain why students commit those errors by basing on five sources mentioned above namely:

- Language transfer: which then comprises of interlingual and intralingual transfer
- Transfer of training
- Strategies of L2 learning
- Strategies of L2 communication
- Overgeneralization

4.4. Solutions

After a procedure of identifying, describing and explaining errors, researchers would try to find out the solutions or suggestions to improve the situations, which aim at more effective teaching and learning.

II. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The study is carried out to investigate the sentence-level errors of 21 freshmen of C62C, faculty of English, Hanoi National University of Education. Specifically, the present study aims at providing answers to the following research questions:

1. What are errors at sentence-level committed by 21 freshmen of C62C, F.O.E, HNUE in their 63 home-taken writings?
2. Why do the students commit those errors?
3. What are the teaching solutions to remedy students' errors?

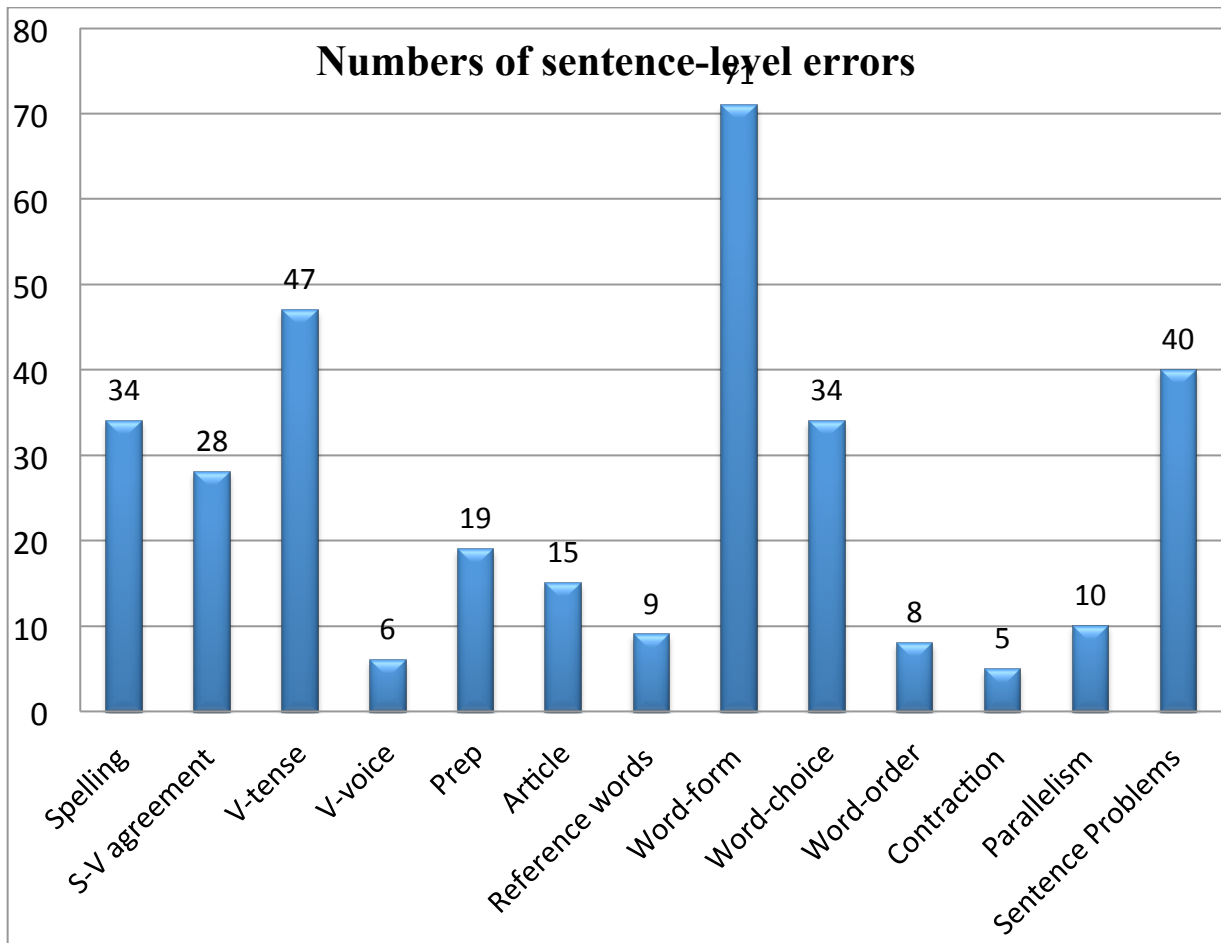
III. METHODOLOGY

This study applies quantitative method do deal with descriptive data.

Error Analysis would be the leading guild for implementing this study.

IV. FINDINGS

The findings of this study are illustrated in the bar chart



Research question 1

The answer for research question 1 “What are errors at sentence level committed by 21 freshmen of C62C, F.O.E, HNUE in their 63 home-taken writings” is displayed through the table above. To be clearer, the participants’ errors are classified into spelling, word-form, Subject-verb agreement, Verb tense, verb voice, article, reference words, preposition, word choice, word-order, contraction, parallelism, and sentence problems. It is important to state that the participants, generally, commit almost all of the errors mentioned in the checklist except for “Choppy sentence”.

The total number of errors made by the twenty-one subjects in sixty-three home-taken writings is 338. This includes all 20 types of errors, of which error of word forms contributes the highest number with 55 occurrences corresponding to 87%. Additionally, error of verb tense, followed by spelling error (34 occurrences:

54%), stands on the second position with 47 occurrences accounting for 75%. Moreover, error of Subject – Verb agreement accounts for 44% over 63 examined works. Students, in general, commit most of lexico-grammar errors, especially grammar ones.

Research questions 2 and 3

The answers for research question 2 and 3 will be well expressed in discussion and conclusion of this study.

V. DISCUSSION and CONCLUSION

Those errors can be explained due to the difference between English and Vietnamese in terms of grammatical rules. In other words, L1 intervention is the reason why students commit those errors of word form and verb-tense, for Vietnamese is an isolated language while English belongs to inflectional one featured by changings of word-forms. In general the errors were made due to the mother tongue interference, overgeneralization of language rules as in singular - plural and verb in past tense. Though the participants were taught grammatical rules of English (target language) previously, but lack of practice and positive feedback hindered the development of their proficiency in the TL. The errors prove the fact that students themselves lack of knowledge on rules of English academic writing. Thus, teachers must work as the instructor to provide students with more knowledge on the subject.

Some of the errors indicated participants' carelessness in their writing (spelling errors) which shows lack of motivation for TL. The results of this study have raised a demand of providing students with more knowledge on grammar which would effectively facilitate their writings. Provided that students practice grammar through exercise of TOEFL paper-based form, they are expected to improve their current situation. In terms of teaching and learning strategies, improving self-studying coordinated with peer's correction and teacher's corrections is considered as one suggestion to ameliorate the case.

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