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TYPICAL MISTAKES MADE BY STUDENTS IN LEARNING A FOREIGN LANGUAGE AND METHODS OF THEIR CORRECTION

Learning a foreign language is a complex process requiring the simultaneous development of grammatical, lexical, phonetic, and communicative skills. Despite modern teaching methodologies, students frequently make errors that hinder effective communication. These errors are not random; they often reflect cognitive and linguistic challenges, as well as interference from the learners' native language. Identifying and correcting these errors is crucial for improving the efficiency of language instruction. This study aims to analyze common mistakes made by students in foreign language learning and to examine strategies for their correction. The objectives include classifying errors, understanding their causes, and evaluating effective methods for their remediation.

In the field of second language acquisition, learner errors are considered a natural and necessary stage of language development rather than merely signs of failure. According to Corder, learner errors provide valuable evidence of the learning process and demonstrate how students construct their developing linguistic system. Researchers in applied linguistics have also emphasized that errors can reveal the strategies learners use while attempting to communicate in a foreign language. Therefore, the analysis of student mistakes has both theoretical and practical significance for language pedagogy. The process of mastering a foreign language is influenced not only by linguistic competence but also by psychological, social, and educational factors. Students often experience difficulties because they are required to think in a language system different from their native one. In many cases, learners unconsciously transfer grammatical structures, pronunciation habits, and lexical patterns from their first language into the target language. Such interference becomes especially noticeable in speaking and writing activities where students attempt to produce language spontaneously. Consequently, understanding the origin of these mistakes enables teachers to design more effective instructional strategies and classroom activities. The qualitative method was selected because it allows a deeper examination of the nature of learner errors and the contexts in which they occur. Rather than focusing only on statistical frequency, this approach makes it possible to interpret the reasons behind mistakes and to observe patterns of language behavior among learners. Classroom observation also provided additional insight into students' reactions to corrective feedback and their ability to self-correct after receiving guidance from instructors. Another significant observation was that many students demonstrated better receptive skills than productive skills. Although learners could often recognize correct grammatical forms while reading or listening, they struggled to apply these forms accurately during speaking and writing tasks. This discrepancy indicates that passive knowledge of a language does not automatically lead to active communicative competence. In addition, students frequently avoided complex

grammatical structures and substituted unfamiliar vocabulary with simpler expressions, which limited the richness and precision of their communication. The analysis also showed that repeated exposure to authentic language materials contributed positively to reducing certain categories of mistakes. Students who regularly engaged with English-language videos, articles, and conversations demonstrated greater awareness of natural collocations and pronunciation patterns. This finding supports the idea that meaningful language input plays an essential role in developing communicative accuracy and fluency. Furthermore, peer interaction activities encouraged learners to notice their own errors and compare their language use with that of other students, promoting collaborative learning. The discussion of corrective methods demonstrates that no single strategy can eliminate learner errors. Instead, successful language instruction depends on balancing accuracy-oriented and communication-oriented approaches. Excessive correction may discourage learners and reduce their willingness to participate in classroom interaction, while insufficient correction can lead to the fossilization of incorrect forms. Therefore, teachers must consider the learners' proficiency level, emotional state, and communicative goals when selecting correction techniques. Contemporary educational technologies also play an increasingly important role in foreign language instruction. Grammar-checking applications, pronunciation software, and AI-supported educational platforms provide immediate feedback and individualized practice opportunities. These tools encourage autonomous learning by allowing students to monitor their own progress outside the classroom environment. However, digital technologies should complement rather than replace teacher guidance, since human interaction remains essential for developing pragmatic and sociocultural aspects of communication. The study confirms that learner mistakes should not be viewed solely as negative outcomes but as indicators of linguistic development and cognitive processing. Through systematic error analysis, educators can better understand the specific difficulties students encounter and adapt instructional practices accordingly. Effective correction requires patience, consistency, and supportive interaction between teachers and learners. Future research may further investigate the role of technology-assisted feedback, intercultural communication factors, and individualized learning strategies in reducing language errors and improving overall communicative competence.

This study employed a qualitative approach, analyzing students' errors in learning English as a foreign language. Data were collected from classroom exercises, written assignments, and oral interactions of undergraduate students at a language institute. Errors were categorized into three types: grammatical, lexical, and phonetic. Grammatical errors included incorrect verb forms, tense misuse, and sentence structure mistakes. Lexical errors involved inappropriate word choice, collocation mistakes, and translation issues from the native language. Phonetic errors focused on mispronunciations and incorrect stress patterns. For each error type, examples were selected to illustrate the underlying cause. Additionally, traditional and modern corrective strategies were examined, including teacher-led explicit correction, drills, interactive exercises, and digital tools such as grammar checkers and AI-based learning platforms.

Analysis revealed that grammatical errors were the most frequent, particularly subject-verb agreement mistakes, incorrect tense usage, and misapplication of auxiliary verbs. For example, students wrote “He go to school every day” instead of “He goes to school every day,” and “I am agree with you” instead of “I agree with you.” Lexical errors included incorrect collocations and direct translations from the native language, such as “I very like this book” instead of “I really like this book,” and “She made a photo” instead of “She took a photo.” Phonetic errors were primarily related to sounds not present in the learners’ first language, including mispronunciations of /θ/ and /ð/ sounds, e.g., “think” pronounced as “sink,” and incorrect stress in words like “comFORTable” instead of “COMfortable.” The causes of these mistakes were largely attributed to mother tongue interference, insufficient practice, overgeneralization of rules, and psychological factors such as low confidence and fear of making errors.

The findings indicate that student errors are systematic and can be categorized for targeted correction. Grammatical errors often result from overgeneralization and incomplete understanding of rules, while lexical errors reflect the influence of the native language and gaps in vocabulary knowledge. Phonetic errors demonstrate the impact of differences in the phonological system between the target and native languages. Corrective strategies must therefore be multifaceted. Traditional methods, including explicit teacher correction, repetition, and drills, remain effective for reinforcing accuracy. Modern approaches, such as interactive classroom activities, digital learning platforms, and AI-based tools, enhance engagement and allow students to self-correct errors. Combining these approaches, along with promoting a low-anxiety environment, helps learners internalize correct forms and develop communicative competence. The study underscores the importance of using real examples to illustrate errors and correction methods, as this enhances understanding and retention.

Errors are an integral part of foreign language learning and provide insight into learners’ developmental stages. This study classified common mistakes into grammatical, lexical, and phonetic types, identified causes including mother tongue interference and lack of practice, and examined effective methods for correction. A combined approach, integrating traditional and modern strategies, allows educators to address both accuracy and fluency, improving language proficiency and communicative competence. Encouraging students to engage actively, reflect on their errors, and utilize digital tools and AI-based resources promotes autonomous learning and reduces anxiety associated with language mistakes. Ultimately, understanding the nature of student errors and applying appropriate corrective methods is essential for achieving successful language acquisition outcomes.

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