

THE EFFECTS OF CONTINUOUS ASSESSMENT ON STUDENTS' ERRORS AND MISTAKES

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Abstract: Language barriers and learning difficulties impact ESL students anywhere in the world. These challenges and errors take many forms and have many different causes, affecting many linguistic and cognitive domains. Our study focuses on the sorts of grammatical errors made by English Language and Literature Department students at the State University of Tetova's dispersed studies in Kumanova. The study concentrated on parts of the pupils' grammatical understanding that appeared to be difficult. The study examined the results of five grammar examinations given as part of continuing assessments by 100 graduate students enrolled in a two-semester English Morphology course from 2011 to 2017. The findings revealed that students frequently commit grammatical errors.

Keywords: Continuous assessment, errors, analysis, language acquisition, Kumanova, dispersed studies, etc.

1. INTRODUCTION

In recent years, there has been growing interest in understanding the effects of continuous assessment on students' errors and mistakes. By providing students with timely and specific feedback on their work, continuous assessment aims to create a feedback loop that encourages self-reflection, improvement, and a deeper understanding of the subject matter. This proactive approach to assessment acknowledges that errors and mistakes are valuable learning opportunities rather than mere indicators of failure. Referring to errors in language learning, Brooks (2010) believed that “Like sin, error is to be avoided and its influence overcome...” (p.105). Whereas Corder (1981) as cited in Ellis & Barkhuizen, 2008, he associates errors with gaps in the knowledge of learners, while mistakes are the result of the learner having difficulties processing the systems of the second language due to the fact that they have not been fully automated. Mistakes are sometimes called slips of tongue and their main feature that distinguishes them from errors is the fact that the learner is able to correct the mistake by himself or herself. When the incorrect form is consistently supplied by the learner without switching between the correct and incorrect, there is clearly a knowledge gap.

Our research is noteworthy because it tackles the potential benefits and limitations of applying continuous evaluation procedures in educational contexts. We can get insights into how this assessment technique can lead to improved learning outcomes, improved error recognition, and increased student engagement by investigating the effects of continuous assessment on students' errors and mistakes.

In this study, we looked at how continuous assessment affected students' grammatical knowledge, learning process, academic performance, and overall educational experience. We delved into the advantages and disadvantages of continuous assessment, analyzed the strategies used to address errors and mistakes, and examined the role of teachers and students in this assessment paradigm.

We tested how continuous evaluation affects students' grammatical knowledge, learning process, academic achievement, and overall educational experience in this study. We observed the benefits and drawbacks of continuous assessment, explored strategies used to correct errors and mistakes, and focused on the roles of teachers and students in this assessment paradigm.

2. SOME OF THE DIFFICULTIES WHILE LEARNING ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE

English as a second or foreign language has become the worldwide lingua franca, making it crucial for academic, professional, and personal purposes. Learners' performance is often characterized by three terms – accuracy, fluency, and complexity (Housen & Kuiken, 2009). In regard to the interaction of fluency, complexity, and accuracy, SLA research points out an important phenomenon which is the mutual influence of these three components. For example, when a learner concentrates on fluency of his performance, the aspect of accuracy may be negatively affected. Similarly, accuracy may suffer in a learner's plight to deliver a complex L2 performance

(Skehan, 1998). However, acquiring English proficiency is not without difficulties, as learners encounter a range of hurdles along the way. According to Rintaningrum & Azhari as regards this issue, they state that “students understand and memorize various grammatical formulas that have been taught by teachers at school.” (2021, p.3)

Our students of the English Department dispersed in Kumanova encountered a multitude of difficulties, both linguistic and non-linguistic. Differences in grammar structures, vocabulary usage, pronunciation, and idiomatic expressions caused linguistic difficulties, whereas motivation levels, learning preferences, and educational backgrounds caused non-linguistic ones. As a result, our students struggled to understand and communicate in English effectively, leading to mistakes, misunderstandings, and frustration.

This study intends to give useful insights and advice for educators, students, and stakeholders involved in English language education by throwing light on the nature of English language learning issues.

3. METHODOLOGY ON CONTINUOUS ERROR ANALYSIS

Understanding and correcting errors and mistakes made by students during the learning process can be accomplished through the use of continuous error analysis. Since our study was conducted over a six-year period allows for a more comprehensive understanding and a broader perspective of the subject matter. Once we implemented a systematic methodology, then as educators we could effectively identify, analyze, and respond to student errors on an ongoing basis. Following is our methodology that helped us conduct continuous error analysis: identification of errors, error categorization and error coding, error analysis, error feedback and progress monitoring.

We initially started by gathering information on student errors from multiple sources, including assignments, quizzes, examinations, and classroom interactions, where we were confident that errors are accurately and completely reported. Then, after gathering information on student errors, we systematically classified them and assigned codes based on their type and character. Grammar errors, vocabulary errors, spelling mistakes, punctuation errors, and developmental errors were only a few of these frequent types. After this stage was complete, we looked at the errors that had been found to learn more about their patterns, frequency, and seriousness. We considered both the quantitative and qualitative aspects of error analysis. Furthermore, we kept a record of their errors and ran analysis findings for each student. Details such as the type of error, examples of errors produced, important contextual information, and any notes on the reasons or potential solutions for the problems were included in this documentation.

Corder (1981) as cited in Londoño Vásquez, D. A. (2008) suggests that “many of the researchers who carried out error analyses in the 1970s continued to be concerned with language teaching”. After recording their errors, a prompt, specific feedback was given to our students based on an analysis of their errors. We were able to inform and provide explicit explanations, corrective feedback, and opportunity for the errors to be corrected using the findings from the error analysis. We then regularly tracked our students’ progress in regard to the inaccuracies discovered, as well as their improvements over time as a result of our interventions. This was accomplished by providing them with extra assessments and observations, as well as constantly reflecting on the error analysis process and its outcomes.

We obtained significant insights into our students’ errors by applying continuous assessment methodology, addressed misconceptions and weaknesses, and gave focused support to improve their learning. Continuous error analysis thus encourages a proactive attitude to error rectification and helps to create a teaching and learning environment that is more successful.

4. L1 (FIRST LANGUAGE) INTERFERENCE ERRORS

According to Johansson (2008) “The contrastive analysis which is the systematic comparison of two or more languages aims to point out differences and similarities. When the two languages are not similar, learners will employ the patterns in their mother tongue to enable them to do tasks in learning L2.”

The concept of L1 (first language) interference refers to how a learner's first language influences their capacity to pick up and use a second language, such as English. Learners frequently transfer the linguistic structures, vocabulary, pronunciation patterns, and cultural norms of their original language into their second language when learning a new language, resulting in L1 interference errors.

According to Ellis, 1997; Richard & Schmidt, 2002, they state that “L2 learners use the structures that they know in their mother tongue and a high amount of errors are expected to happen”.

In a study by Kırkgöz (2010, cited in Kazazoğlu 2020: 1177), it is found that EFL learners have more interlingual errors than intralingual errors.

For educators and language learners, understanding and evaluating L1 interference errors is essential because it sheds light on the particular difficulties that students confront and enables more specialized training and support. Consider the following important factors while evaluating L1 interference errors: vocabulary (be able to identify instances where learners utilize words or phrases from their native language that do not have direct equivalents in

the target language), linguistic structures (such as word order, verb tense, articles, and prepositions), and grammar. Idiomatic expressions (e.g., literal translations or cultural differences may cause learners to misinterpret or abuse idioms) and pronunciation (e.g., sounds that do not exist in the learner's L1 or sounds that are similar but somewhat different might result in pronunciation problems). All of these factors may contribute to communication errors.

5. DEVELOPMENTAL OR INTRALINGUAL ERRORS

Two major types of errors can be distinguished – interlingual and intralingual (Richards, 1974). Moreover, he states that “Intralingual errors often occur when students do not know the target language (TL) well enough. The students then form generalizations of rules and make utterances that reflect only partial exposure of the TL.” (Ibid, 1974). Learners frequently make developmental errors during the language acquisition process that are seen as a normal component of their linguistic growth. These errors occur as learners go through the phases of language learning and reflect their increasing grasp and mastery of the target language. Understanding and evaluating developmental errors can provide important insights into the underlying cognitive processes and phases of language acquisition. Remember the following when looking into developmental errors: phonological, grammar, vocabulary, and pragmatic errors are all instances of language development stages.

Teachers can foster a welcoming and inclusive learning environment by offering targeted instruction, constructive criticism, and plenty of practice opportunities once they are aware that developmental errors are a normal part of language learning. This will allow students to move through the stages of language development and eventually improve their proficiency and accuracy in the target language.

6. PARTICIPANTS

When doing a study on error analysis, it is necessary to make sure that the selection procedure is in line with the research objectives and upholds ethical standards. It is also very important to find and choose the right participants who can provide useful information and insights. Researchers can collect useful data and add to the body of knowledge on language learning and error analysis by carefully taking these elements into account.

Our participants were students from the University of Tetova, English Department dispersed in Kumanova who were actively learning the target language. To finish our longitudinal study on error analysis with the selected participants, we evaluated the following factors: their language competency, age and background, subject, sample size, data collection and analysis.

7. PROCEDURE

When implementing error correction in a language learning environment, it's crucial to provide a structured and encouraging process that aids learners in identifying and effectively correcting their errors. A suggested process for fixing errors is as follows: Establish a positive learning environment, identify and prioritize errors, time corrections, use selective correction techniques, explain errors, reinforce learning, practice corrections, monitor errors and self-correct, and provide ongoing support and feedback. Remember that fixing errors should not be viewed as a cause of embarrassment or discouragement, but rather as a tool for learning and progress. Error correction can help students improve their language accuracy and fluency by putting in place a methodical process and creating a supportive learning environment.

8. DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS ON ERRORS

Data collection and analysis on errors involve gathering language learner data and systematically analyzing the errors made to gain insights into the patterns, causes, and implications of those errors. Here is a step-by-step process for data collection and analysis on our learners' errors: Data Sampling, Data Collection, Data Recording and Transcription (If working with spoken language data), Error Identification, Error Categorization, Data Analysis, Error Interpretation, Error Feedback and Intervention, and Reporting and Presentation.

The process of acquiring information about language learners' errors and rigorously examining those errors allows researchers to better understand their patterns, causes, and effects. Here is a step-by-step procedure for gathering information about our students' errors and analyzing it: Data sampling, data collection, data recording and transcription (if using spoken language data), error identification, error categorization, data analysis, error interpretation, error feedback and intervention, reporting, and presentation are the steps involved in data analysis.

We took care of preserving the confidentiality and privacy of our participants throughout the data collecting and analysis on our students' errors, and we complied with rules governing study ethics.

This methodical technique enables academics to get important insights on linguistic errors and inform instructional approaches to support language development and accuracy in learners.

9. TEACHING IMPLICATIONS

Teachers can gain important insights about their students' language learning issues and create successful instructional strategies by analyzing error samples of students. Following are some conclusions that can be made about teaching by studying error samples: Targeted Instruction (identify patterns of frequent errors and areas of students' language production where they need improvement). Error Awareness (Assist students in becoming aware of their own errors by giving them feedback and having them participate in activities involving error analysis). Individualized Support (Accept that each kid may have a unique error profile and set of educational demands). Teach students efficient error-correction tools, such as proofreading methods, self-editing abilities, or the use of linguistic resources. Engage students in communicative activities, role-playing exercises, or genuine writing assignments that call for the appropriate use of the target language. Provide feedback that is specifically directed towards the errors found during the analysis.

Discussions on error analysis (Lead discussions in groups or in class about error analysis; foster a supportive, non-judgmental environment that encourages learning from errors). Monitoring errors and measuring progress (Use formative evaluations to spot persistent error patterns and modify education as necessary). Integration of problem Analysis into the Curriculum (Design courses or activities that specifically address common problem areas and give students lots of practice applying the corrected language forms). Error Awareness in Content Instruction (Aid students in developing language correctness in certain academic fields by correcting grammatical, lexical, and writing errors related to discipline-specific terminology, structures, and conventions).

Keep in mind that error analysis should not only be concerned with locating and fixing errors, but also with fostering an environment where students feel safe taking risks and learning from their failures.

10. CONCLUSION

Error analysis in ESL enriches instructional techniques in a variety of ways and offers insightful information about the language acquisition process. Educators can better understand the difficulties students face and design their instruction to solve those difficulties by examining the errors made by ESL students.

First, error analysis aids in identifying ESL students' typical error patterns and areas of difficulty. Using this information, teachers can create specialized lessons that concentrate on particular errors and offer clear instructions and practice in those areas. It enables teachers to tailor their assistance to the specific needs of each student. Second, error analysis reveals the part that L1 interference plays in the errors made by ESL students. Teachers are better able to foresee and deal with particular issues when they are aware of how the pupils' original language affects their language production. Teachers can create activities and interventions that encourage precise target language usage by studying the patterns of L1 interference. Error analysis also highlights the dynamic character of language learning. Errors can be considered as a normal component of the language development process that students go through at various levels. Differentiating between developmental errors that are temporary and those that call for specialized education can aid teachers. In ESL students, error analysis also promotes error awareness and self-correction. Teachers support metacognitive awareness and active learning by giving feedback and having students participate in error analysis exercises. Autonomous language acquisition is encouraged when students become more aware of their own mistakes and learn techniques for self-monitoring and self-correction. Error analysis also guides the creation of valuable practice exercises. Teachers can design assignments that give students genuine opportunities to use corrected language forms and structures in true situations by recognizing common errors. This method fosters proper usage of the target language and encourages the integration of language skills.

Last but not least, error analysis helps with constant evaluation and monitoring of development. Teachers can monitor students' progress over time and assess the success of instructional initiatives by routinely evaluating errors. This information enables the prompt modification of instructional techniques and the delivery of focused feedback. Error analysis in ESL is a valuable tool for understanding the language learning process and guiding instructional practices. It helps teachers identify common error patterns, address L1 interference, promote error awareness and self-correction, design meaningful practice activities, and monitor students' progress. By utilizing error analysis effectively, educators can support ESL students in achieving greater accuracy and proficiency in their language use.

In conclusion, error analysis in ESL is a useful tool for comprehending the process of learning a language and directing teaching strategies. Common error patterns are identified, L1 interference is addressed, error awareness and self-correction are encouraged, relevant practice tasks are designed, and student progress is tracked with the use of this tool. Educators can help ESL students develop higher accuracy and competency in their language use by properly applying error analysis.

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