Errors in the Use of English Grammar

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Abstract

By systematically studying the errors committed by learners one can get a lot of hints about the learning strategies and mechanisms which they are employing in learning their target languages. Such hints have provided insights to the teachers, textbook writers, curriculum designers and many applied linguists and enable them to contribute to their fields. This article seeks to present a comprehensive study of grammatical errors committed by the bachelor level university students of Nepal learning English which followed the established stages of error analysis. It was found that the bachelor level students in Nepal did commit all sorts of grammatical errors in the use of the English language. For them, the error prone grammatical units were Sentence and Clause and the error prone grammatical categories were Conditionals, Mood, V-Form, Tense/Aspect, Main Verb, Subject-Verb Agreement, Question Formation, Auxiliary/Modal, Miscellaneous forms, 'So' Form, Determiner, Verb+Participle, Word Order, and Noun.

Key words: correct forms, incorrect forms/mistakes, errors

Introduction

Errors are the defective forms of utterances which appear regularly in the learners' language. They are considered incorrect because they violate the norms of code. All the incorrect forms or the forms deviated from the norms are not errors. They can be called 'mistakes'. The deviations at the performance level only are performance mistakes. They appear in the performances occasionally. Hence, they are irregular in nature. Errors occur at the competence level, as the result of which they occur regularly and frequently in language learner's use of the target language. In order to refer to the erroneous features of the language, Selinker (1972) uses the term 'inter-language' which signifies the middle stages between the mother tongue and the target language structures in learners' language. Nemser (1971) describes them as products of 'approximative' system since the learner's system is transitional and goes on changing as the learner's competence increases. Corder (1973) calls them 'idiosyncratic dialects' (peculiar to individuals). Dulay and Burt (1974) termed them 'goofs' which indicates deviations from the language forms which native

adult speakers consider grammatically correct. George (1972) defines them as 'unwanted forms' particularly those forms which course designers or teachers do not like. James (1998) visualizes them as 'unsuccessful bits of language'.

Though errors are called 'unwanted forms' or 'unsuccessful bits', they are no longer seen as bits of crime. They are recognized as having their own underlying system which can be described in their own terms. The learners' errors carry a tremendous value particularly in the field of language teaching. That is why, now-a-days they are not treated as negative outcomes but the most apparent proofs that the learners are making necessary progress in developing their system of the language they are learning.

As an English language teacher, I have been confronting and dealing with language learners' errors for the last three decades which inspired me to conduct a systematic and comprehensive study of errors committed by the Nepali learners of English in all the major areas of English grammar. This study followed the conventional procedure of error analysis viz elicitation of data,

identification of errors, description/classification of errors, explanation of errors, and evaluation of errors. However, evaluation of error is not included in this article. This article is an attempt to shed lights on those errors and present an overall picture of competence the Nepali students have acquired in the use of the English grammar. The model of description and classification of the errors adopted for this study was that of structural grammar. Here, 'English' referred to the Standard British English and the grammatical categories used for the study were derived mainly from the reference English Grammars Quirk et al. (1985), Celce- Murcia and Larsen- Freeman (1983) and Thomson and Martinet (1986).

The terms used in the study were defined as:

Correct forms: the patterns according to the norms of code followed by the reference grammars mentioned above.

Incorrect forms/ Mistakes: the deviations from the norms of code

Errors: the mistakes that occur regularly in language learner's use of the language

The first part of the study explored the following questions:

Do university students of Nepal learning English commit grammatical errors even at the Bachelor level?

What sorts of grammatical errors do they commit in the use of the English language?

Why do they commit such errors?

What pedagogical implications can be drawn in order to improve the ELT situation in Nepal?

The general objective of the study was to carry out a comprehensive analysis of the grammatical errors committed by the bachelor level first year students of Nepal in their use of the English language. The specific objectives of this study were:

- To collect a sample of learner English from different universities of Nepal;
- To identify various kinds of grammatical errors in their use of the language;
- To describe and classify the grammatical errors found;

- To find out the sources of these errors;
- To determine their frequency of occurrence; and
- To suggest pedagogical implications

Methodology

The population of this study consisted of the bachelor level first year university students of Nepal. The sample population consisted of 740 students from 32 colleges of five institutes and three faculties of all the universities of Nepal. The students represented five different universities: Tribhuvan University (TU), Kathmandu University (KU), Pokhara University (PoU), Purbanchal University (PuU), and Mahendra Sanskrit University (MSU); five different institutes: Institute of Science and Technology (S&T), Medicine (Med), Engineering (Engg), Agriculture and Animal Sciences (Agr), and Forestry (For); three different faculties: Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences (HSS), Management (Mgmt), and Education (Ed). They were from all over Nepal, from 25 districts of three geographical belts: mountains, hills, and plains, and five development regions: eastern development region (EDR), central development region (CDR), western development region (WDR), mid-western development region (MWDR) and far-western development region (FWDR).

Two types of tests- the subjective type and the objective type- were used to collect data for the study.

Objective Test

The objective test consisted of 435 multiple choice items through which 217 different structures or grammar points were tested. Each grammar point to be tested was included in two different sentences having the same basic pattern/structure. That was to say that each structure had a pair of sentences so that the regularity in the students' use of the particular grammatical item could be observed. For example, if one of the 435 items read 'Bob hasn't opened the present (yet) (still) (already)', another would read 'My sister hasn't seen the photo (still) (yet) (already)' and appear at some distance in the test items. If any participant chose (yet) in both items it would be considered as a correct answer. If he chose (still) in both items, it would be regarded as error No.1. Similarly, if (already) in both, it would be regarded as error No.2. But

if the student chose (yet) in one item and (still) or (already) in another, this would be considered as an incorrect answer/mistake but not an error. In the same way, if the student selected (still) in one and (already) in another, this would also be regarded as an incorrect answer/mistake but not an error, because the student was not consistent in the use of that item. In such a way, the correct forms, errors, and mistakes were identified and that inventories with their frequency counts (in percentage) were prepared. Altogether 396 errors were found from the objective tests which were classified into 217 different sub-groups. Finally, these sub-groups were divided into 28 grammatical categories and 5 grammatical units.

Subjective test

The subjective test was given to the participants in order to collect the samples of the errors committed by them in their written compositions. For this, a list of twelve topics was presented to the participants. Each of them had to select one topic of their interest from the list and write a paragraph of about 150 words on it. The twelve different topics were chosen from various fields considering the students' interests as well as different areas of their studies. After collecting the written compositions they were examined thoroughly. First the mistakes were underlined after that the errors were identified. The mistake was considered as an error if it occurred more than once in a participant's writing. Then the errors were numbered. It is to be noted that the errors numbered were error types, not error tokens.

Analysis

Identification of the Correct, Incorrect and Erroneous Forms

After collecting the data the next step was identification of errors. But before identifying errors the correct and incorrect forms were distinguished. Then from the incorrect forms the errors were identified. Then the errors were quantified, described, and classified under appropriate units and categories of grammar. The description of the errors was made at various levels. e g. omission of an element, addition of an unnecessary/incorrect element, choice of an incorrect element and mis-ordering of elements. The classification was done in two ways. At first, they were classified on the basis of their grammatical units. As such, there were word level, phrase level, clause level and sentence level errors. Then they were classified according to the grammatical categories they belong to or the grammatical domain they occur in, i.e. determiner, preposition, conjunction, voice or negation, reported speech, V-Form etc. The frequencies of those errors were also counted. The errors were also explained in terms of their possible causes.

The data were analyzed on the bases of two different types of variables:

(i) Text-based variables

(a) grammatical units- morpheme, word, phrase, clause, and sentence, and

(b) grammatical categories- affixation (Aff), article (Art), determiner (non-article) (Det), preposition (Prep), conjunction (Conj), pronoun (Pron), auxiliary/modal (Aux/M), main verb (MV), adjective (Adj), adverb (Adv), noun, verb+particle (V+Part), v-form, anticipatory/non-referential it/there (It/Th), subject-verb agreement (S-V Ag), tense/aspect (T/As), conditionals (Cond), word class (WC), infinitive/participle (Inf/Part), voice, reported speech (RS), word order (WO), negation (Neg), imperative forms (Imp), mood, 'so' forms, question formation (QF), and miscellaneous constructions (Misc); and

(ii) learner-based variables

Sex: male-female

Age: young (≤19yrs) – middle (20-22yrs) – old (23yrs≥),

Language background: Indo-Aryan (IA) – Tibeto-Burman (TB)

Educational background: those who had completed Plus Two of Higher Secondary Education Board (HSEB)- Proficiency certificate level from the universities (PCL)

University: TU- KU- PoU- PuU- MSU

Institute/faculty, Med- Engg- S&T- Agr- For / HSS-Mgmt- Ed

Development region: EDR- CDR- WDR- MWDR-FWDR

Geographical belt: Mountain- Hill- Plain

Presentation of Overall Data obtained from Objective test

The presentation of overall data in terms of various groups of learners and texts are given below:

Text- based analysis

The correct forms of total answer (CT), incorrect forms of total answer (IT), errors (ET) of total answers as well as errors (EI) of incorrect answers were calculated and presented in their percentages.

Table 1: Grammatical Unit-based

Rank Order (Error (ET)	G. Units	CT	IT	ET	EI
1	Senten- ce Level	39.04	60.96	28.99	47.56
2	Clause Level	43.26	56.74	26.21	46.19
3	Phrase Level	44.16	55.84	22.38	40.08
4	Word Level	44.43	55.57	19.05	34.28

The table 1 exhibits that all the bachelor level Nepali learners of English yielded 39.04% correct forms, 60.96% incorrect forms/mistakes, 28.99% errors in total and 47.36% errors in incorrect answers at the sentence level, whereas at the word level they yielded 44.43% correct forms, 55.57% incorrect forms/mistakes, 19.05% errors and in total and 34.28% errors in incorrect answers.

All the bachelor level Nepali learners of English yielded 24.8% correct forms, 75.2% incorrect forms/mistakes, 32.16% errors in total and 42.77% errors in incorrect answers in the use of 'Mood', whereas they yielded 68.24% correct forms, 31.76% incorrect forms/mistakes, 16.42% errors in total and 51.70% errors in incorrect answers in the use of 'It/There'. For details, refer to the table 2 above.

Though the various groups of students yielded varying percentages of incorrect forms and errors, an attempt here was made to present the overall hierarchies of difficulty the category posed to the students on the basis of the rank of the category

Table 2: Grammatical Category-based (along with their hierarchies)

S No	Hierarchy of Incorrect Answers		Hierarchy of Errors with Reference to Total Answers		Hierarchy of Errors with Reference to Incorrect Answers	
	IT %	Category	ET %	Category	EI %	Category
1	76.32	Cond	32.16	Mood	57.34	S–V.
2	75.2	Mood	32.16	S–V.	56.11	Voice
3	69.46	Misc	32.13	M V	52.06	Noun
4	65.37	V–Fo	31.76	V–Fo	51.99	Imp
5	64.39	'So'	28.55	Voice	51.7	It/Th
6	63.56	Det	28.34	Cond	51.55	MV
7	62.93	T/As	27.6	Det	48.58	V–Fo
8	62.33	MV	26.76	'So'	43.42	Det
9	61.55	Aux/M	26.59	Noun	42.77	Mood
10	60.78	V+part	26.18	Aux/M	42.53	Aux/M
11	60.31	Q F	25.47	Imp	42.43	Neg
12	57.9	WO	23.57	V+part	41.98	Adj
13	57.72	Pron	23.56	T/As	41.91	Affi
14	56.09	S–V.	23.2	Misc	41.75	Adv
15	55.15	Art	22.49	Neg	41.56	'So'
16	54.73	Prep	22.14	Pron	41.23	Conj
17	54.7	Inf/Part	21.81	QF	38.88	WC
18	53.89	RS	21.43	WO	38.78	V+part
19	53	Neg	21.38	Conj	38.44	Prep
20	51.86	Conj	21.3	Aff	38.43	RS
21	51.08	Noun	21.04	Prep	38.36	Pron
22	50.88	Voice	20.99	Adj	37.44	T/As
23	50.82	Aff	20.71	RS	37.13	Cond
24	50	Adj	20.02	Adv	37.01	WO
25	48.99	Imp	19.97	Inf/Part	36.51	Inf/Part
26	47.95	Adv	19.73	Art	36.16	QF
27	43.49	WC	16.91	WC	35.78	Art
28	31.76	It/Th	16.42	It/Th	33.4	Misc

Source: Giri, 2007

within the group. The categories at the upper half of the hierarchies were more difficult for the whole group than those at the lower half. The hierarchies (IT) and (ET) showed the difficulty the grammatical category poses to the students in a decreasing order. The hierarchy (EI) showed the students' increasing inconsistency in the use of the grammatical categories. The category 'It/There' was the least difficult and 'Cond' and 'Mood' were the most difficult for all according to the incorrect % hierarchy. From error point of view (ET) the categories 'Mood and S-V Ag.' were the most difficult ones.

The 25% categories from the upper part of the hierarchy were considered to be the most difficult categories and the 25% categories from the bottom of the hierarchy were considered to be least difficult for the group. The EI column displayed the error % of the incorrect answers. The EI % of the category in this hierarchy showed how consistent/inconsistent the group was in using the incorrect forms. The higher the EI percentage the more consistent the students were in the use of incorrect forms and the lower the EI percentage the less consistent the students were in the use of the incorrect forms of the category in question.

Learner-based analysis

The data were also analyzed on the basis of 8 different characteristics of the learners/participants.

Table 3.: Learner-based analysis

Variables	Students	Correct % of Total Answers (CT)	Incorrect% of Total Answers (IT)	Error % of Total Answers (ET)	Error % of Incorrect Answers (EI)
Sex	Male	42.69	57.31	24.20	42.23
	Female	43.92	56.08	23.88	42.58
Age	19 & Below	45.70	54.30	22.97	42.31
	20-22	41.25	58.75	24.69	42.02
	23 & Above	43.60	56.40	24.70	43.80
Education	HSEB	45.39	54.61	22.93	41.99
	PCL	40.64	59.36	25.36	42.72
Language	IA	43.26	56.74	24.00	42.30
	TB	42.22	57.78	24.72	42.78
University	Po U	57.65	42.36	18.30	43.20
	Pu U	53.53	46.47	20.25	43.58
	K U	45.96	54.04	21.72	40.19
	T U	42.15	57.85	24.34	42.07
	MS U	17.32	82.68	40.40	48.86
Institute /Faculty	Medc	69.58	30.42	15.82	52.01
	Engn	55.00	45.00	19.68	43.73
	Agri	53.45	46.55	20.60	44.25
	Forst	56.73	43.27	21.94	50.70
	S&T	45.06	54.94	23.83	43.37
	Ins (total)	55.96	44.04	20.37	46.81
	Mgmt	36.98	63.02	25.34	40.21
	Ed	34.94	65.06	26.04	40.02
	HSS	36.06	63.94	26.72	41.79
	Fac(total)	35.99	64.01	26.03	40.67
Development region	EDR	37.85	62.15	24.29	39.08
	CDR	46.65	52.62	23.30	44.28
	WDR	43.85	56.15	24.29	43.26
	MWDR	40.07	59.93	25.10	41.88
	FWDR	35.72	64.28	25.59	39.81
Geographical belt	Mountain	28.61	71.39	27.77	38.90
	Hill	44.45	55.57	23.91	43.04
	Plain	43.66	56.34	23.61	41.91

From the table 3, it is obvious that the female students did better than their male counterparts. Age-wise, the young group (≤19) did the best of all. The middle group (20-22) performed the worst and was the most inconsistent group of all. However, their performances proved the 'the younger the learner the less errors in performance, the older the learner the more errors in performance'. The HSEB students were better than their PCL counterparts in grammatical competence. Though the HSEB group did better in overall performance, they were found to be relatively more inconsistent than their PCL counterparts in the use of incorrect forms. The IA students were better than their TB counterparts in grammatical competence. Though the IA group did better in overall performance, they were found to be relatively more inconsistent than their TB counterparts in the use of incorrect forms.

University-wise, the PoU students did the best of all. The students from PuU, KU, TU and MSU were at the second, third, fourth and the last positions respectively. Though the students of MSU did worst and showed a very poor performance, they were the least inconsistent and the students of KU were the most inconsistent in the use of the incorrect forms. The TU, PoU, and PuU students were in the second, third and fourth positions in the rank order.

The students from the institutes did far better and were more consistent than their faculty counterparts in the use of grammatical forms. Among the institutes, the students of Medicine did the best, those of Forestry, Engineering, Agriculture and Science & Technology were at the second, third, fourth and the last positions respectively. Nevertheless regarding committing errors, the students of Engineering, Agriculture, Forestry and Science & Technology are at the second, third, fourth and the last positions respectively. Among the faculties the students of Management did the best, those of Humanities and Education were at the second and the last positions respectively. However, Humanities students committed errors the most consistently and Education students the least consistently.

Development region-wise, the students of CDR did the best of all. Those of WDR, MWDR, EDR and FWDR were at the second, third, fourth and the last positions respectively. Though the students of FWDR did the worst they were less inconsistent than their EDR counterparts in the use of the incorrect forms.

Geographical belt-wise the students from the hill did the best of all. The students from the mountain performed the worst and were most inconsistent of all.

Frequency and Percentage of Errors Obtained from Subjective Test:

Text- based analysis

Table 4: Grammatical Unit-based

Types of Errors	No of Errors	Percentage of Errors
Word Level Errors	117	4.85
Phrase Level Errors	1280	53.05
Clause Level Errors	922	38.20
Sentence Level Errors	94	3.90
Total	2413	100

Source: Giri, 2007

All the bachelor level Nepali learners of English committed 117, 1280, 922, and 94 Word, Phrase, Clause and Sentence level errors respectively. The highest numbers of errors were committed at the Phrase level and the lowest numbers of errors were committed at the Sentence level.

Table 5: Grammatical Category-based

Category	Frequency	Percentage of Errors
Affix	140	5.8
Art	810	33.57
Det	16	0.66
Prep	350	14.5
Conj	39	1.62
Pron	62	2.57
It/Th	5	0.21
Aux/M	190	7.87
Noun	7	0.29
Adj/Adv	23	0.95
MV/V-Form	237	9.82
WC	87	3.61
Agreement	213	9.75
Inf/Part	22	0.91
Tense/As	63	2.61
Cond	63	2.61
Voice	6	0.25
QF/Neg	9	0.37
WO	71	2.94
Total	2413	100

Source: Giri, 2007

All the bachelor level Nepali learners of English committed 2413 grammatical errors in their written compositions. They committed 140 errors in the use of affixations, 815 errors in the use of articles and so on. Unlike the interpretation in the objective test, in the subjective test the lower frequency of an error does not necessarily mean that the particular grammar area and the rule pertaining to that area were less difficult. It might mean that the students rarely used that pattern in their writings and that structure was used by a few not all the students. High frequency may indicate that the item has to be used more frequently than other items. However, the more frequent the error, the more urgent attention it deserves. The highest number of errors was committed in the use of Art and the lowest numbers of errors was committed in the use of Voice. In this section of the study the most erroneous categories were Art, Prep, Aux/M, V-Form, S-V Ag, Aff, and WC.

Table 6. Learner-based Distribution of Errors

Variables	Students	No. of Students	No. of Errors	No of Errors per person
Sex	Male	473	1572	3.32
	Female	267	841	3.15
Age	19yrs & below (young)	262	782	2.98
	20-22yrs(Mid)	380	1266	3.33
	23yrs & above(Old)	98	365	3.72
Education	HSEB	389	1184	3.04
	PCL	351	1229	3.5
Language	IA	652	2028	3.11
	TB	88	385	4.38
University	TU	600	1967	3.28
	KU	40	107	2.68
	PuU	40	120	3.0
	PoU	40	116	2.9
	MSU	20	103	5.15
Institute/Faculty	S & T	100	310	3.1
	Engg	80	200	2.5
	Med	40	66	1.65
	Agr	40	112	2.8
	For	40	99	2.48
	Institute total	300	787	2.62
	Mgmt	150	494	3.29
	HSS	130	508	3.91
	Ed	160	624	3.90
	Faculty total	440	1626	3.7
Development region	FWDR	90	374	4.16
	MWDR	70	271	3.87
	WDR	130	462	3.55
	CDR	360	970	2.69
	EDR	90	336	3.73
Geographical belt	Mountain	50	292	5.84
	Hill	470	1394	2.97
	Plain	220	727	3.3
All		740	2413	3.26

The male students committed 1572 errors i.e. 3.32 errors per person where as their female counterparts committed 841 errors, that is 3.15 errors per person. The male students committed more errors than their female counterparts.

The young group did the best and the old group did the worst. The younger the learners the less errors they committed, the older the learners the more errors they committed.

The PCL students committed more errors than their HSEB counterparts.

The TB students committed more errors than their IA counterparts.

The highest number of errors was committed by the students from MSU and the lowest by the students from KU. KU, PoU, PuU, TU and MSU were at the first, second, third, fourth, and the last positions respectively.

The faculty students committed more errors than their institute counterparts. Among the students from institutes the highest number of errors was committed by the students from S&T and the lowest number of errors was committed by those from Med; Institute of Med, For, Engg, Agr, and S&T are at the first, second, third, fourth, and fifth positions respectively. Among the students from Faculties the highest number of errors was committed by the students from of HSS and the lowest by those from Mgmt. Faculty of Ed is between them, however, there is not much difference between the performances of the students of Ed and HSS.

The highest number of errors was committed by the students from FWDR and the lowest number of errors was committed by the students from CDR. The students of CDR, WDR, EDR, MWDR, and FWDR were at the first, second, third, fourth, and last positions respectively. The students from Hill and the students from Mountain committed the lowest and highest number of errors respectively.

Sources of errors

Table 7: Major sources of errors

Total no. of errrors	Interlingual errors	Intralingual errors
2413	845 (35%)	1568 (65%)

An attempt was also made to find out the sources or causes of the errors. At first, it was determined whether the error was the result of the Nepali interference (interlingual) or the causes lied in the target language itself (intralingual). Then the next attempt was made to further explore the possible reasons behind the interlingual and intralingual errors. (For detailed information refer to Giri, 2007)

Conclusions

The major conclusions drawn from the study were as follows:

The bachelor level students in Nepal did commit all sorts of grammatical errors in the use of the English language.

Text based conclusions

In the objective test, the students were found to commit all sorts of grammatical errors in the use of grammatical units: morphemes, word, phrase, clause and sentence; and grammatical categories: 28 different categories mentioned above. It was found that higher the grammatical unit the more the incorrect forms and errors i e more the difficulty. Relatively speaking the error prone grammatical units were sentence and clause and the error prone grammatical categories were Cond, Mood, V-Form, T/As, MV, S-V Ag, QF, Aux/M, Misc, 'So' Form, Det, V+Part, WO, and Noun. However, in the subjective test grammatical unit wise the highest numbers of errors was committed at the phrase level and the lowest numbers of errors was committed at the sentence level; and grammatical category wise the highest numbers of errors was committed in the use of Art and the lowest numbers of errors was committed in the use of Voice. According to the subjective test the most erroneous categories were Art, Prep, Aux/M, V-Form, S-V Ag, Aff, and WC.

Two major sources: (i) inter-lingual interference and (ii) intra-lingual interference were found as major sources of errors. It was found that when there were divergences in English structures from the point of view of Nepali the inter-lingual errors occurred. The intra-lingual errors occurred due to lack of knowledge of (i) the basic rule itself and (ii) the exceptional rules.

Learner-based conclusions

The female students were better than their male

counterparts in grammatical competence. It was found that 'the younger the learner the less errors in performances, the older learner the more errors in performances. The HSEB students did better than their PCL counterparts. Similarly, IA students were better than their TB counterparts. In the objective test the students from PoU did the best of all. Those from PuU, KU, TU and MSU were at the second, third, fourth and last positions respectively. However, according to the subjective test KU was at the first position and PoU, PuU, TU and MSU were at the second, third, fourth, and last positions respectively. The highest number of errors was committed by the students from MSU and the lowest number of errors was committed by the students from KU. The students from the institutes did far better than their faculty counterparts. Among the institutes the students of Med did the best, those of For, Engg, Agr and S&T were at the second, third, fourth and last positions respectively. Among the faculties the students of Mgmt did the best, those from Ed did the worst. Nevertheless, in subjective test the highest number of errors was committed by the students from HSS and the lowest number of errors was committed by those from Mgmt. The students of CDR did the best of all. The students of WDR, MWDR, EDR and FWDR were at the second, third, fourth and last positions respectively. However, according to the subjective test CDR, WDR, EDR, MWDR, and FWDR were at the first, second, third, fourth, and last positions respectively. Geographical belt wise the students from the hill did the best and the students from the mountain performed the worst (see Giri, 2007).

Pedagogical Implications

On the bases of the findings, the following points are suggested for the improvement of teaching and learning of English in Nepal.

The frequency counts of the errors provide an insight into a relative significance of those errors in the total context of the performances. A detailed account on the frequency of errors in total answers and incorrect answers will enable the concerned people to emphasize those areas where error frequency is higher and also to determine the areas of preferences for different remedial exercises.

The selection and gradation of the language items can be guided by the hierarchies of the grammatical units and categories derived from the study.

The findings regarding different groups of students involved can be used in preparing group-wise teaching materials. The greater percentage of errors at the sentence level shows the amount of difficulty associated with the construction of correct sentences. There is a need for practice in complex sentence constructions.

The insight derived from this study can be useful in testing and evaluation of the students concerned, particularly in constructing tests to find out the students' ability in different grammatical units and categories. The English structures where divergences are found from the point of view of Nepali should be focused and practiced more.

More contrastive analyses between English and Nepali structures are recommended in order to find out more areas of divergences in English structures from the point of view of Nepali structures. The more common errors should get priority over the less common ones while correcting the errors. The writing abilities of the students varied considerably. Some of them have achieved much control of the sentence patterns. They could write fairly well constructing grammatically correct and contextually appropriate sentences. However, the most of them committed many errors. This wide range of proficiency must be realized by the concerned authority and remedial programmes should be designed before the gap between capable and incapable students get wider.

It seemed that the students were not taught how to write properly. The result signified that there was a lack of practice in free writing, among the majority of the students. Therefore, a lot of practice should be given in guided and free writings (see Giri, 2007).

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