

РІВНЕНСЬКИЙ ДЕРЖАВНИЙ ГУМАНІТАРНИЙ УНІВЕРСИТЕТ
ФАКУЛЬТЕТ ІНОЗЕМНОЇ ФІЛОЛОГІЇ
КАФЕДРА ПРАКТИКИ АНГЛІЙСЬКОЇ МОВИ



АКТУАЛЬНІ ПРОБЛЕМИ СУЧАСНОЇ ІНОЗЕМНОЇ ФІЛОЛОГІЇ

СТУДЕНТСЬКИЙ НАУКОВИЙ ВІСНИК

PHILOLOGY



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WAYS OF DEALING WITH ERRORS IN WRITING

Writing is a very important skill in our daily life. It helps in realizing communication among people in community. It also plays a significant role in language development, learning and teaching. Therefore, teaching such a skill is important particularly to learners of English as a foreign language. However, writing instruction involves different challenges that need to be taken into account. There may be so many problems in the writing of students. This paper aims to highlight the importance of writing in teaching English, to analyze main errors in writing, different techniques and approaches how to avoid these errors.

English learners' errors should be analyzed carefully because these errors show the process of learning a language. The learners' errors are very important providing "insight into how far a learner has progressed in acquiring a language and showing how much more the learner needs to learn" [8, 83]. Traditionally, writing is defined as the paper-based modality; however, many writings today happen through computer-based medium. Today's learners use computers as a tool to learning, and teachers have to adopt the use of technology to teach.

Error analysis is a type of approach to analyze a second/foreign language learners' speech or written performance. Several researchers already discussed error analysis from different perspectives. Corder and Brown both highlighted that language learners' errors are important to study because it shows the state of the learners' knowledge. Corder stated that error analysis are not just something to be eradicated, but rather can be important in and of themselves. Corder noted that students' errors should be not ignore because they are these errors are developing features for language learners [2]. As was pointed by some researchers, error analysis is highly significant for second language acquisition in the following aspects. From Corder's perspective, teachers can understand students' current level in learning. For researchers, they can understand how language is learned and structured [2]. For students, they can utilize these errors as a learning device to improve their language proficiency.

The issue of treatment of written errors has been widely discussed (Robb, Ross, & Shortreed, 1986; Truscott, 1996; Lee, 1997; Ferris & Robert, 2001; Chandler, 2003; Ferris, 2006, 2011; Hyland & Hyland, 2006; Sheen, 2007; Sachs & Polio, 2007; Guenette, 2007; Ellis, 2009; Evans, Hartshorn, McCollum, & Wolfersberger, 2010). One of the most recent, useful, and comprehensive publications for language teachers on this topic is Ferris who devoted 219 pages of her book to addressing fundamental issues in the treatment of error in second language student writing [4, 11].

English writing can be difficult if the writer does not make use of the many English language writing resources that are available to help them. Writers can use dictionaries, style guides, spell checks, and show their writing to friends, fellow students and, of course, their English language teachers [6, 28].

Students who wish to write well need help in understanding and avoiding mistakes in their writing. There are 4 main types of mistake in written language: spelling, punctuation, grammar and usage.

Spelling mistakes: English spelling is irregular and even many native-speaker adults have difficulties with it. Spelling mistakes do not usually prevent the reader from understanding what the writer is trying to say, but they can create a negative impression. For this reason it is advisable to try to remove them from important pieces of writing. Probably, the best way is to write on the computer and use a spell-check. Diligent use of a dictionary is a good alternative. For high stakes writing, e.g. job applications, the piece should be given to a teacher to check over. Extensive reading in English is a very good way in the longer term to learn English spelling patterns, so that mistakes are less likely [4].

Punctuation mistakes: students need to learn certain aspects of the English punctuation system, such as the way to punctuate direct speech. In general, however, the most serious of punctuation mistakes are made not only by ESL students, but by native speakers too. These mistakes are due to the lack of a clear understanding of what a sentence is, and they result in fragments (incomplete sentences) or run-ons ('sentences' that do not end when they should) [4].

Punctuation mistakes can often be spotted if the student reads the writing aloud. If a natural pause in the reading does not correspond with, say, a comma or a full-stop in the written text, then it is likely that the punctuation is faulty. Important writing should be given to a competent native-speaker to check.

Extensive reading, especially of non-fiction, both in English and the mother tongue, will help students understand the concept of the sentence as the basis of good writing.

Grammar mistakes are the next type of error commonly made by students. For example, learners often do not choose the correct English verb tense for expressing an idea or do not use it in its correct form. They may fail to use the articles (a/the) correctly, or place words in the wrong order in a sentence.

Some grammar mistakes are easy for learners to correct themselves, particularly if they read their writing aloud. Other grammar mistakes are not easy to find, however, because the learner simply does not yet know the correct way to express an idea in English. Looking in a grammar book will not often help in such circumstances – the best thing to do is to ask a native speaker to check the writing.

In the long term most grammar mistakes will disappear by themselves, particularly if the learner does extensive reading in English [1].

Usage mistakes are the final type of error often seen in students' writing. A usage mistake does not break a grammar "rule", but is a word or string of words that a native speaker would never use to express the particular meaning that the student is trying to convey.

Usage mistakes can often be more of a problem to the reader than grammar mistakes. The student who writes "My mother don't speak English or Then I putted beaker on tripod will be understood." On the other hand, the student who writes in a journal My mother has an arrangement with her operator today will not be understood to mean that his mother has an appointment with her surgeon [9].

It is usage problems rather than grammar problems in extended pieces of writing that immediately identify even the most proficient of students as non-native speakers. Once again, the short-term solution to usage problems is to ask a native speaker to check the work; and the long term solution is to do lots of reading in English.

Learners should understand that the type of writing mistakes listed above are not the only problems to worry about. In fact, there are aspects of writing that are much more important than the presence of small mistakes of spelling, grammar or usage.

Every English writing teacher would like to imagine that their student takes their corrected paper home, pulls out a dictionary and grammar book and carefully goes over each correction. Unfortunately, most students only check to see how much "red" is on the paper and then file it away – never to be looked at again [7, 95]. Most of the teacher's careful written corrections are actually wasted. Error correcting takes lots of teacher time and energy and many students just do not want to see their writing after teacher corrections.

Beware of the student who forgot the homework and just before the homework is due dashes off a quick paper. He makes a lot of mistakes all made in haste. The problem is that the student wants his paper to be corrected and correcting it takes four times the effort to read the "mess with multiple errors". Your policy should be: if the student does not have time to try to write it well, then you do not have time to try to correct it. John Truscott and later Krashen have presented research indicating that grammar correction does not really help students at all [8, 43]. Except for typos and simple errors, self-correction is very difficult for English students because if they understood what was wrong they would not have written it in the first place. One to One peer correction is not fun and it is difficult for many students to fully trust their partner's language experience or writing ability.

One of many new methods is called Group writing. Group writing helps students to benefit from several peers, helps students to learn not only from their mistakes but from the mistakes of others and makes economical and efficient use of the students' and the teacher's time. The group writing tasks are everything from writing a paragraph to writing an essay. Each group can get a different topic to work on or sometimes it can be the same topic and they compete with the other groups. You can use the whiteboard, the large paper pads on an easel or overhead projector as long as there is one per group. One student writes while the rest of the team from one to three others offers suggestions and corrections during the writing process. Group writing gets the students to benefit from group assistance as a peer-learning experience with more resource value than one to one peer sharing. With the entire class looking on teacher examines each finished writing sample and she asks the class to offer corrections. The class really focuses on every group finished writing to see if it is correct or not, especially if there is challenge or competition at stake. Group writing seems to be an effective method of correcting English writing errors. Immediate feedback is quick within the groups and again when corrections are suggested in front of the entire class [12, 98].

For second language writing teachers to better assist their learners in their endeavour to write effectively in a second language, they need to be aware of common error types and available options in treating student written errors. Depending on their own knowledge of their students' preferences, language proficiency, learning goals and situations, they can employ the approaches that may work best for their students in their specific contexts. Classroom teachers have to make multiple decisions while grading student writing. Some questions might be: Should I focus on just some errors or should I give feedback for any errors I see? Is this a global error or is it a local error? Is this a treatable error or an untreatable error?

Should I provide direct feedback or indirect feedback? Can this student improve his/her writing based on my feedback? What kind of feedback does this student prefer to receive? [10, 69].

In sum, writing is a very important skill and it is very difficult to teach students how to write. It is almost impossible for second language students to produce language that is accurate, clear, and complex. However, it is possible for most second language students to write correctly and clearly by regular and ample practice if they try to keep their language simple enough. The more complex language they try to use, the more likely it is for them to produce erroneous language. When students have had a mastery of the basic syntax and lexicon of the target language, they may then experiment on using more complex language structures. Most teachers may feel bad if they are not able to read all students' writings, and as a result, they assign fewer writing assignments, which actually impedes learners' language development due to lack of ample writing practice. Regardless of how many papers a teacher can read and comment on, students need to write copiously and regularly if they wish to make progress in their writing ability. Just as athletes have to practice thousands of hours intensively to perform well, second language writers are no exception. The more they write, the better they can write [5, 43]. Written feedback may be a facilitating factor in the success of student writing, but it has never been considered the only factor contributing to learners' success in writing. If teachers cannot help their students to write better faster, they can at least make them write more so they can improve on their own. As suggested by Sokolik (2003), one of the principles of teaching writing is providing students with many opportunities to write [11, 87]. For a second language writing class to be successful, both parties, the teacher and learners, need to actively participate in the learning and teaching process by fulfilling their responsibilities. Learners have to produce writing so that the teachers can help. The teacher needs to offer students with optimal learning conditions by scaffolding the writing process with doable steps to enable students to produce plenty of written language, and when students have managed to create written language, they then are in need of constructive feedback to write more accurately and clearly. In order for second language writing classroom practitioners to give their students efficacious feedback on their written language, they may find it useful to be cognizant of key considerations in providing written error feedback [3, 97]. Knowing students' types of errors and their level of language proficiency as well as their preferences in receiving feedback can help the teacher to utilize effective methods for offering feedback. There is clearly no best feedback type, but it is beneficial for the teacher to be aware of the range of options from which to choose.

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THE USE OF AUTHENTIC SOUND (AUDIAL) MATERIALS FOR BEGINNERS

The research is dedicated to the usage of authentic sound materials in elementary school. To reach this aim we have to define the main notions connected with the topic.

Nowadays, a common feature in the listening lessons at primary school is that the majority of teachers follow the same pattern: the schoolteacher played the textbook assigned audiotape and all students tried their best to listen for the information they needed in order to answer the questions in their workbooks. In most cases, the audio from the tape was with the British accent, and it usually involved two individuals speaking to one another. The speakers took careful turns, meaning that the first speaker said all s/he had to say in full before the next speaker spoke. There were no elisions or assimilations and instead every word was carefully articulated. This careful articulation in school was not only unnatural but also unlikely to occur in a conversation outside of the classroom, as the great mismatch exists between listening in English classes and listening in the “real world”.

Listening is a psychological phenomenon, which takes place on a cognitive level inside people’s heads, and a social phenomenon, which develops interactively between people and the environment surrounding them. It considers listening as a complex process, which needs to be understood in order to teach it, and subsequently, evaluate it before integrating it with phonological aspects and with the skill of speaking.

Listening is probably the least explicit of the four language skills, making it the most difficult one to learn. It is evident that children listen and respond to language before they learn to talk. When it is time for children to learn to read, they still have to listen so that they gain knowledge and information to follow directions. In the classroom, students have to listen carefully and attentively to lectures and class discussions in order to understand and to retain the information for later recall. Teaching listening can be hard for teachers and students both. Students who are good at speaking at their own pace and reading may have trouble listening to a recording that is a regular-speed conversation. Listening is often confusing for an English learner.

Rost explains the importance of listening in language classroom as follows:

1. Listening is vital in the language classroom because it provides input for the learner. Without understanding input at the right level, any learning simply cannot begin.
2. Spoken language provides a means of interaction for the learner. Because learners must interact to achieve understanding. Access to speakers of the language is essential. Moreover, learners’ failure to understand the language they hear is an impetus, not an obstacle, to interaction and learning.
3. Authentic spoken language presents a challenge for the learner to understand language as native speakers actually use it.
4. Listening exercises provide teachers with a means for drawing learners’ attention to new forms (vocabulary, grammar, new interaction patterns) in the language [6, 141-142].

It is uncontroversial that language learning materials differ from authentic language with regard to vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation. When and how to bring in authentic materials, however, is

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