REVIEW ARTICLE

PATTERNS OF ERRONEOUS LEXICAL CHOICE IN ENGLISH: AN APPLIED LINGUISTIC STUDY ON TELUGU STUDENTS IN TELANGANA

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ABSTRACT

This study is based on my research on some students who have Telugu as their mother tongue. The methodological concept of error analysis is adopted for this applied linguistic study. It is evident that second or foreign-language students make errors while learning. Understanding the pattern of errors and the relevant cause is itself the remedial effort to correct the errors. Error analysis is an effective methodological tool for this kind of study. This paper explores some erroneous lexical choices in the English used by Telugu engineering students.

Keywords: Error analysis, Lexical errors, Applied Linguistics and Erroneous Lexical Choice.

1. Introduction

Before reaching the crux of the study, we need some observations about conceptual discussions relevant to the study as they provide an overall orientation in examining the erroneous data. Corder (1974) distinguished between 'errors' and 'mistakes.' Mistakes are unacceptable linguistic items at the performance level because mistakes are the errors that affect the performance rather than the competence of a speaker. In contrast, Errors are deviant linguistic items at the competence level rather than the speaker's performance. These deviations are due to imperfect knowledge of the rules of L2 and reflect the learner's current stage of L2 development or underlying competence.

2. Lexical Approach to Learning

As stated earlier, the present study focuses on lexical errors (i.e., erroneous choice of vocabulary) in English produced by Telugu students who are learners of English as a Second language. The lexical approach is considered an integrated view of grammar and vocabulary. Generally, language pedagogy treated grammar and vocabulary as separate entities; this division was also reflected in the language syllabus. However, recent studies in language and language learning have shown that grammar and vocabulary have invariable transparency into each other, so there is not always a clear distinction between them. It has also been shown that proficient language users have access to a vast stock of chunks of language rather than single words. Since this study is concerned with grammatical and lexical errors, a lexical approach that integrates both grammar and vocabulary would be more suitable for our purpose. This way, we can determine whether these two types of errors are related.

3. First Language and Second Language

According to various studies of second language acquisition, the L1 system interferes with the L2 system so that the resultant language will be erroneous. This kind of problem occurs both in spoken English and written English. The nature of errors can be different in collocation, synonym, etc. However, on observation of data, a researcher can identify the errors of mother tongue influence. Bakshi (1978) analyzed errors in the verbal group in English by Punjabi-speaking students. He addresses whether second language acquisition is identical to first language acquisition. The findings show that students tend to over-generalize their approximate knowledge of English. The findings in his research have also shown that L1 interference errors decrease with increasing mastery of the second language.

4. Methodology

Since the research is connected to a live stream subject, the data was collected from 60 graduate students studying in Telangana. The students are from a Telugu medium background with a mother tongue of Telugu. The students were given spoken and written tasks on general topics. The data was recorded for analysis. Afterward, the deviant expressions from genuine English were marked for linguistic examination through error analysis. Along with the theoretical notions mentioned in the previous section, the applied linguistic concept of *Error Analysis* serves as this study's theoretical approach.

5. Error Analysis

Error analysis is one of the branches of applied linguistics. It explains the failures of Contrastive Analysis. As per the idea of Pit Corders (1967), it is an alternative to contrastive analysis. It became an accepted part of Applied Linguistics. Error analysis is an important mechanism in writing skills. Several studies, including Kroll and Schafers (1978, P.242-248), reveal how Error Analysis can be used to develop writing skills. Therefore, the results of this study should assist as a direction to the teachers on how to deal with the learners to enhance their writing skills.

Corder (1974, P. 125) states that Error Analysis is helpful in second-language learning because it discloses the difficult areas to the teachers, textbook writers, and syllabus designers. Error Analysis assists the teachers in recognizing errors in an organized fashion about the particular language difficulties students have. Hence, they can focus with more dedication on these sorts of errors. Therefore, this study is important to tell educators and language material developers about the kind of errors that these graduates usually make. It additionally shows the regularity of errors. Suppose educators and material developers come forward to sense these difficult parts faced by specific learners. In that case, the learners will be in a better place at their English proficiency level. Hence error analysis of a second language is an appropriate study in order to look into a research angle. This approach is useful to judge how the learners are unaware of the grammatical and semantic rules of the target language.

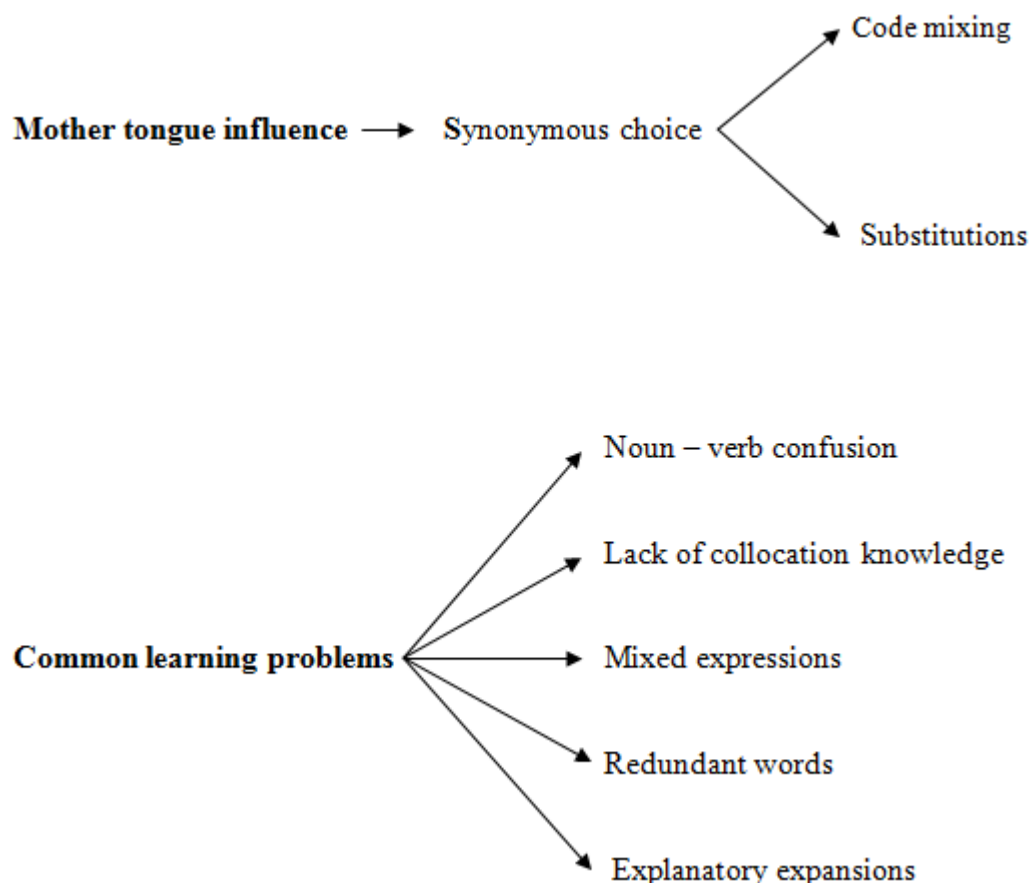### 6. Patterns of Erroneous Lexical Choice in English

In order to identify the patterns of erroneous lexical choices followed by the students, the data has been filtered for errors. These errors are divided in accordance with the choice of common patterns. The following tabular format shows the correction and possible cause of the erroneous expressions.

Erroneous lexical expressions from the data	Correction	Explanation of cause
Nobody will **care** him if he is trouble	**take care of**	Mother tongue influence: Code-mixing effect
In cities we see that **a man besides his house** is facing a problem.	**neighbour**	Unknown/ unacquainted word
Students are **back in** communication skills.	**lag behind**	Mother tongue influence: Synonymous choice
Companies are **seeing** for smart workers not hard workers.	**searching**	Mother tongue influence: Synonymous choice

RAJENDER PONDRA

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It is **talk that there is a** unemployment in the software industry.	**an assumption that there is**	Mother tongue influence: Synonymous choice
Engineering education is **use for the faran** country.	useful to go to a foreign country	Noun – adjective merge
Many companies are coming forward to **give** jobs.	offer	Mother tongue influence: collocation choice
In cities there are so many big factories because of these factories, sound, air, water pollution **take place.**	**takes place**	Mother tongue influence: no verbal concord
The use of social **networking site is** very high. We can use **there** in a very good manner.	**networking is ...them**	Redundant words and substitutions
in **a** recent news in **the** newspaper	**For example, in recent news in a newspaper**	Lack of perfection in using articles
According to me, **I suggest or think that they should take up some rules.**	**According to me, they should follow some rules.**	Mixed elements in the information
They **said** to wear Apron, Shoes to protect our body.	**told**	Lack of proper lexical information regarding usage
Sir is very slowly and explain very clear that we will understand easily.	**Sir explains slowly and clearly so that we can understand easily.**	Insufficient knowledge of adverbs
She can help **their** family also.	**her family**	Mother tongue influence: Synonymous choice: substitution
Now-a-days women are not getting much freedom and they are **said** restrictions.	**imposed restrictions**	Mother tongue influence: synonymous choice: substitution Lack of proper lexical information regarding usage
Social networking systems are having a few **uses.**	**advantages**	Wrong collocation choice
It was my first experience to **do dance on dias**.	**dance on the stage**	Lack of specific details about some synonymous words
They are **seeing** our speaking skills	**testing**	Mother tongue influence: synonymous choice: substitution
First I **power on the current**	**switch on the power**	Mother tongue influence: code-mixing
Government is launching many programs to **safety** the **...**	**save**	Noun – verb confusion
In festival time, all the people in the village will get together to celebrate.	**During festival times**	Mother tongue influence: synonymous choice: substitution

Food is **over**[1]	**Food is ready** **(cooking food is over)**	Mother tongue influence: synonymous choice
Now-a-days even **a** LKG student **can able to speak** English.	**Can speak / is able to**	Mixed expression: lack of clarity
Now-a-days there is very much **using the** facebook	**usage of**	Lack of sufficient information about some words: synonymous choice
in this **man dominated** society,	**male-dominated**	Lack of knowledge about collocations
We **celebration** womens' Day on 8th, March every year.	**celebrate**	Noun – verb confusion
it is available **in** the net.	**on**	Mother tongue influence: synonymous choice
We connect all the wires according to their **requirability**.	**requirement**	The error indicates that, in the learning process, the student applied analogy but wrongly

Observing and analyzing the data, the patterns of erroneous choices can be identified under mother tongue influence and common learning problems. The erroneous choices of students can be observed in the picture below.

Under mother tongue influence, two types of synonymous choice are identified in this research, i.e., code-mixing and substitutions. In code mixing[2] conversation of Telugu, the spoken word 'care' means 'take care of.' In the

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[1] In Telugu, 'food is over' can ambiguously indicate cooking food is over. The meaning is context dependent.
[2] Code mixing with English.

same way, 'power on' is used for the verbal meaning of 'switch on.' As habituated in their mother tongue usage, the students use English expressions. Regarding the choice of substitution, Telugu colloquial words such as 'saying' and 'seeing' are used for several meanings according to context. Hence the words *say* for *impose*, *see* for *test* and *their*[3] for *her.*

Under common learning problems, five erroneous choices are identified in this study.

- Noun – verb confusion …………… ex: *safety* for *save*

- Lack of collocation knowledge …… ex: *man dominated*[4] for *male-dominated*

- Mixed expressions …………………ex: *can be able to* for *can/ be able to*

- Redundant words………………… ex: *networking site* for *networking*

- Explanatory expansions ……………ex: *the person besides my house* for *my neighbor*

As identified in this study, these areas of erroneous lexical choice are to be mainly focused on teaching and learning tasks.

7. Conclusion

In the data collected for this study, 716 erroneous expressions were found; 152 errors belonged to lexical errors. It is evident from the data that many students failed to use appropriate words in the context. The above-explained examples undoubtedly indicate that the students seemed to have been affected by their mother tongue (First language) interference. They are also facing some common learning problems. It is assumed that this study will improve the English language standards in teaching and learning areas. The study is done by recognizing the motives behind the poor accomplishment of English by Telugu students. The researcher believes that it is imperative to detect the learners' level of success in their English.

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[3] In Telugu, it is very common to use plural possessive for singular possessive at various situations, because singular possessive sometimes indicates disrespect.

[4] According to the context in the data, the topic was about male vs female concept. *Man dominated* indicates *human dominated.*