

# Pedagogical Implications on Error Analysis in the High school

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**Abstract:** In senior high school English teaching, students make various errors in the process of learning English, and these errors are a way for learners to test their assumptions about the nature of the language they have learnt. Therefore, by analyzing students' errors through error analysis, we can get feedback, effectively understand students' learning condition, check the teaching effect, effectively improve the teaching method, and then reduce or avoid students making mistakes in English, so as to effectively improve the English writing level of Chinese high school students.

**Keywords:** Error Analysis; High School; Implication

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## 1. Introduction

In the process of learning language, it is avoidable to make errors. But when we analyze the errors, recognize the mistakes, and find out the reasons why learners make these errors, we can provide some implications to pedagogy according to language learners' psychology. The previous research mainly focused on the study of errors in writing, and less on other types, so this paper in the perspective of error analysis, based on grammar cloze provides some implications to pedagogy. The error analysis method in this paper mainly refers to the method which analyzes errors formed in the process of learning second language. The application of error analysis can enhance the learners' understanding of a language, which can be of great help to English teaching.

## 2. The view of the error analysis method and its significance

In 1967, S. Pit Corder, the British applied linguist, inspired by errors in native language learning, then Corder published his article "The Significance of Learner's Errors", which calls on applied linguists to focus on second language(L2) learner's errors not as "bad habits" to be eradicated, but as sources of insight into the learning processes. Corder claimed that the making of errors is significant because it is the part of the learning process itself: "a way the learner has of testing his hypothesis about the nature of the language he is learning."<sup>[1]</sup> This includes testing whether aspects of existing first language knowledge can be used in the L2. Errors are thus a sign that the learner is (perhaps unconsciously) exploring the new system rather than just experiencing "interference" from old habits.

Corder(1971) divided "errors" into "competence errors" and "performance errors". According to "competence errors", he subdivided them into "intralingual errors" and "interlingual errors". On the one hand, as far as Corder was concerned, "intralingual errors" were also called "developmental errors". At this stage, learners have known some grammatical rules of the second language, but they overgeneralized them, which was not influenced by the native language but by the learning process of the new language due to incomplete mastery of it. On the other hand, "interlingual errors" were "transfer errors". When the second language learners' native language was close to the target language, positive transfer would have a great influence on the output of the target language. However, if the learners' native lan-

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doi: 10.18686/mmfv5i1.3297

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guage was far from the target language, negative transfer would happen and which would hinder the production of second language<sup>[2]</sup>.

### **3. A study of error analysis on grammar cloze**

#### **3.1 Interlingual errors**

Jaszczolt (1995) and Taylor (1997) found that at the original period of second language acquisition, interlingual transfer is a major reason in errors for L2 learners. Target language interference, also known as interlingual transfer, is an error that learners make false assumptions based on the input of target language. Interlingual errors are caused by the influence of the regular characteristics of mother tongue language, which is caused by the transfer of mother tongue to the target language. This can be divided into positive transfer and negative transfer. The positive transfer of the mother tongue makes the learning of the target language continue to improve, but the negative transfer of the mother tongue interferes with the learning of the target language. As a large number of English grammar learning stage in the high school, negative transfer of mother tongue is the main reason for students to make errors. Negative transfer is the transfer of linguistic features between languages in the speech repertoire of a bilingual or multilingual individual, whether from first (“L1”) to second (“L2”), second to first or many other relationships. It is most commonly discussed in the context of English language learning and teaching, but in any case, when someone does not have a native language command, such as when translated into a second language, it can happen. For example, “There climate last week warm.” “There climate” is a direct translation of mother tongue which would be used in this context.

#### **3.2 Intralingual errors**

Interlingual errors are considered development errors and often represent incomplete learning of second language rules or overgeneralization of them. On the one hand, applicable generalization can promote English learning. On the other hand, students often create many wrong sentences through their understanding of English structure. When learning English, learners employ overgeneralization to deal with new problems. Students are prone to employ the language rules they have acquired in a new circumstance or a greater scale, without considering other possible exceptions. Therefore, overgeneralization in English learning strategies has become a major cause of errors. For example, “The weather is been very hot in the Washington D.C.” In this sentence, (1) use of “is” instead of “has” with “been” (intralingual/ development error). This is evidence that the speaker/ writer is learning the English auxiliary verb system, but hasn’t yet mastered the distinction between forms of “be” and “have”, which doesn’t exist in Chinese. (2) Use of “the” with a place name (intralingual/ development error). This is evidence that the speaker/ writer is learning to use articles in front of nouns (sometimes articles are used in Chinese) but hasn’t yet learned that they don’t occur before most place names.

### **4. Implication**

#### **4.1 Learning differences between two languages**

English and Chinese belong to two different language systems, because English belongs to the Indo-European language family while Chinese belongs to the Sino-Tibetan language family. There are great differences in the structure of tones, shapes and sentences between the two languages. English sentences emphasize hypotaxis while Chinese sentences emphasize parataxis. The two languages are very different, and if there is no contrast, students can easily make mistakes because of interlingual errors. In addition, since the environment in which students grow up is the mother tongue, the influence of the mother tongue is deeply rooted, which makes it more difficult for students to learn English. In the classroom, teachers can use comparative analysis to summarize the differences between English and Chinese in the sentence structure, trying to find a solution to the negative transfer of mother tongue, so that students can master English more easily. If this is to be done, teachers should actively study grammar, chapter structure, thinking style and other aspects, not only to make students know the cause of their errors, but also to enable them to know how to correct

errors. What's more, as English teachers, In order to cope with the educational reform, teachers can arrange a subject each semester for students to study, because the active input enhances degree of internalization. Therefore, the research topic can not only enable students to master the subject more comprehensive knowledge, but also exercise students' ability to summarize, think, collaborate and write. For example, the English-Chinese differences can be one of the subjects.

## **4.2 Emphasis on discourse teaching**

Intralingual errors are general characteristic errors that reflect learning rules, such as generalizations of errors, incomplete application of rules, and conditions that fail to learn the rule to apply. Development errors show that learners try to establish assumptions about their limited experience in the class or textbooks. Overgeneralization covers examples created by learners based on its experience with other structures in the target language and wrong structures. In the curriculum reform, more and more emphasis on the importance of the discourse as a whole, in the college entrance examination are mainly to the discourse as the point of study. Therefore, the teaching should emphasize the discourse. In teaching, teachers should pay attention to leading students to understand the emotional attitude of discourse, and teach students to understand the use of grammar under this premise. In addition, understanding discourse requires not only understanding the differences between Chinese and English, but also a large number of inputs as a stepping stone. Therefore, teachers can arrange after-school essay appreciation, one or two lessons a week to allow students to share with each other. In this way, teachers can pay attention to the students' discourse grasp in real time, and can observe the difficulties of students' understanding of discourse from the students' perspective and adjust the whole teaching progress.

## **4.3 Improving learners' strategy**

Teachers should improve students' learning strategies. As fresh English learners, junior middle school students rarely adopt effective learning strategies. They tend to learn a foreign language in regard to native language, or entirely rely on teachers to correct their errors. Therefore, teachers should supply appropriate strategies for students in accordance with textbooks and students' characteristics. Therefore, teachers should provide students with measurable strategies on the basis of textbooks and students' characteristics. What's more, teachers should also adopt the diverse learning strategies on different learners.

## **4.4 Strengthening teachers' skills**

Teachers should strengthen their abilities. Another source of students' errors directly comes from teachers, such as teachers' false pronunciations and misinterpretations that can exercise a negative impact on English learners. Furthermore, it is often difficult to change error. Nevertheless, teachers should continually improve their abilities and promote their qualities.

## **4.5 Viewing errors positively**

Teachers should keep a positive attitude toward students' mistakes. The making of errors is significant because it is the part of the learning process itself: "a way the learner has of testing his hypothesis about the nature of the language he has learned". Therefore, teachers could make full use of the learners' feedback. In the teaching process, teachers should actively adopt effective measures to minimize the occurrence of errors, and take appropriate equivalent strategies. How can we effectively improve the teaching strategies and avoid or reduce learner errors? The author argues three levels: learners, learning content and teachers.

(1) Teachers must have a comprehensive understanding of students. On this basis, teachers can create an active atmosphere and teaching input which could bring benefits to learners. Teachers also need to master certain psychological knowledge and second language acquisition theory to understand how learners conduct language learning, and how to use the previous knowledge to promote the new knowledge.

(2) Teachers must grasp the content of learning, and be able to understand which learning content will be the ob-

stacle for learners, so as to take active measures, such as where to strengthen exercises.

(3) Teachers must also understand which external factors (such as teaching methods and reference books) can cause in difficulties for learners.

## 5. Conclusion

Error analysis method is an effective way to master students' learning condition, and also a way for teachers to examine teaching. Teachers can grasp students' learning status and adjust teaching progress timely after in depth study of students' errors. The study of students' errors is not only conducive to the improvement of students' English performance and English application ability, but also can temper the teaching ability of English teachers. Through a long-term of empirical research, educators have found that error analysis method is an important way to further improve foreign language learning and it has a positive effect on current students' English learning. Therefore, English teachers should actively and correctly face students' errors and analyze the actual condition of students' English learning and the lack of teachers themselves in teaching activities through the study of students' errors.

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