Syntactic Errors Made When Learning English as a Second Language With Special Reference to Linguistics Students in University of Kelaniya

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Error analysis is a type of linguistic analysis that focuses on the errors that the learner's make. The aim of error analysis is to understand the 'inter language' and assist learners to improve their internalized language system. Error analysis is the best tool for describing and explaining errors made by speakers of other languages in order to know the sources of these errors and the reasons behind their continued occurrence. A mistake can be self-corrected, but an error cannot. Errors are 'systematic,' likely to occur repeatedly and not recognized by the learner. Hence, only the teacher or researcher would locate them, the learner would not. Since it is found that, many undergraduates find difficulties in using proper grammar and as they make grammatical mistakes in their academic writing this area was taken to study. Hence, error analysis appeared to be the best tool for describing and explaining errors made by speakers of other languages. This study therefore aims on the syntactic errors made by the Linguistics students of University of Kelaniya when learning English as a second language. The required data was collected by a questionnaire survey containing eight questions from 40 participants, which includes a paragraph to correct grammar mistakes and some sentences to be written in English.

Keywords: error- analysis, inter- language; syntactic- errors; undergraduates