

# **ERROR ANALYSIS OF TENSES USAGE IN ENGLISH BY FIRST YEAR ENGINEERING MARATHI MEDIUM STUDENTS: A REVIEW**

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## **ABSTRACT**

Proficiency in English is very essential for students of Engineering and other professional courses as it is the means of instruction in higher academics apart from basic academic and technical qualifications. The purpose of this study is to focus on the types of errors, causes of errors in using tenses made by First Year Engineering Marathi medium students and suggestions and recommendations to improve second language learning. The findings show that the reasons for these errors mostly derive from mother tongue hindrance, incorrect practice of English, lack of practice of it in our routine life and lack of adequate exposure and practice in the case of second language learning. The student's mistakes have been pointed out. The study focuses on the problems that students generally face.

**KEYWORDS:** Proficiency, Error Analysis, Tenses, Mother Tongue, Hindrance.

## **INTRODUCTION**

English language has become an international means of communication for people. The mastery of good English can bring several advantages in many ways. Errors are a fundamental part of language learning. Error analysis is rather a new method used in the study of second language learning. It has proven to be a helpful tool for finding out the types of errors done by second language learners and checking the causes of these errors. Today, errors constitute a vital part of data in the study of language achievement and creation of language by learners both in the spoken and written types of language. The usage of tense plays a decisive role in the case

of a second language learner. The diligence and correctness of the tense usage reflects both in the written and the spoken English.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

Behaviorist learning theory believes that old habits add to the way of learning new habits.[1] In the context of learning a second language, the grammar planned into the mind as the first language will hinder with the smooth grasping of the second language. The hindrance happens as the result of what is called as proactive shyness where the way in which previous knowledge hinders the learning of new habits.

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In second language acquisition, the first and second language share a meaning but state it in unusual ways, an error is likely to occur in the second language as the learner will transfer the realization device from his first language into the second.[1]

Grammar is the organization of rules leading to the conservative arrangement and connection of words in a sentence.[2] Grammar is not merely a collection of forms but rather involves the three dimensions of what linguists refer to as morph syntax, semantics and pragmatics.[3] Grammatical structure does not only have a morph syntax form and it deals with questions of how is it formed (Correctness), It is also used to express meaning (semantics) to answer question of what does it mean (Meaningfulness), and in context-proper use to answer questions of when/ why is it used, for correctness (Pragmatics). These three aspects are often called as: form, meaning and use. They are interconnected where a change in one will entail a change in another. Thus, the author carried out a literature survey on the error analysis on tenses usage in English by First year Engineering Marathi medium students and found that most students entering Marathi medium school have limited revelation to English language. Error analysis helps the learner make sure how far he has improved and what remains to be learned. It is an essential tool for the learner to learn.

### **HOW IS TENSE DEFINED?**

The term "tense" originates from the Latin translation of the Greek word for "time" (Lyons, 1968: 304).[4] The etymological meaning is not much different from the definitions found in many dictionaries. Generally, most lexicographers and grammarians give definition of tense as the verb-form indicating time. From the common definition, it can be clearly stated through a sequence of sentences as given below:

- She sends an e-mail every month.
- She sent an e-mail to her father yesterday.
- She will send an e-mail to her father every other month.
- She will send an e-mail tomorrow.
- She will be sending an e-mail at the moment.
- She will be sending an e-mail when her father calls him.

All of these sentences show the same actions; though, they are different in terms of point of time and situation. For example, the first sentence, as the verb-form and time adverbial, reveals that she sends an e-mail to her father regularly (every other week) up to now. It differs from the second sentence in which past form has been used. The second sentence implies that she used to send regularly (every other week). Now, she doesn't send e-mails regularly anymore.

### **DEFINITION OF ERROR**

- According to Crystal (1987), 'error' is a term used in psycholinguistics referring to mistakes in natural speaking or writing attributable to malfunctioning new muscular command from brain.[5]

From the above definition of error, the writer concludes that error is the recurrent use of language system elements. The error occurs if the learner has not yet learnt a thing although this thing has been covered in class. For instance, a teacher has taught to the students the use of simple past tense, but the learner still gets it wrong when he/ she writes a sentence in the simple past. This problem might have occurred because of the way the teacher teaches. All these can result in the learner not learning, as he/ she is not encouraged by the lesson, in other words, the learner is there in the class but does not learn.

## **ERRORS COMMITTED BY STUDENTS**

### **ERRORS MADE BY STUDENTS IN PRESENT TENSE**

Usually, students from Marathi medium are not able to differentiate between present tense and present continuous. For instance: "My father is going to the office every day". This sentence is thought to be correct by many, but grammatically the sentence is wrong. Therefore it needs correction, the correct form being "My father goes to the office every day". Similar mistakes occur very often in the case of First year engineering students, like when they say, "Where are you playing in the evenings?" The sentence has to be changed to "Where do you play in the evenings?" as it is a habitual action. The second language learner has not understood the basic difference between the present tense and the present continuous tense.[6]

### **ERROR IN PRESENT PERFECT AND PAST TENSE**

The mistake committed by the second language learner with reference to present perfect and past tense can be explained as follows:

- He has visited the historical places long ago.
- He has visited the historical places a long time.

The Marathi medium students consider the first sentence as error free as it follows the example of the second sentence. It takes time to find out the dissimilarity between the two actions. The present perfect tense used in the first sentence is wrong as it denotes a past action. So the sentence is corrected as "He visited the historical places long ago".

### **ERROR IN USING PRESENT CONTINUOUS AND PRESENT PERFECT CONTINUOUS TENSE**

As far as present perfect continuous tense is

concerned, the period of action is longer than present continuous action. The second language learner commits the following error:

- I am ill for the last two months.
- It is ten years since I met my brother.
- I am teaching 1 year engineering students for the last 15 years.

The above sentences are grammatically wrong but usually used by many and are considered correct by them. It takes time for the second language learner to realize the errors and correct them subsequently as:

- I have been ill for last two months.
- It has been ten years since I met my brother.
- I have been teaching 1 year engineering students for the last 15 years.

### **ERRORS IN THE USE OF FUTURE TENSE**

Generally speaking, the Marathi medium students do not find the usage of future tense problematic except for future perfect tense which is very rarely used.

"The past is the chronicle of facts, and future is a tale untold, a mirage of events that are not fulfilled". In future tense what is going to take place is expressed; it also states the feelings, mood, certainty and uncertainty as well. 'Will' with first person denotes 'decision' or 'determination' while 'will' with second person indicates simple future.

Students are likely to make mistakes for this usage is not present in the mother tongue. For him "His friend will surely help him financially" is correct, whereas the correct usage is "His friend shall definitely help him". To state in other words, for the L2 learner there is not a lot of difference between the usage of 'shall' and 'will'. Constant practice and drilling is essential to pick up the correct grammatical usage.

## **SUGGESTIONS**

To enhance learner's proficiency and to avoid errors, L2 learner should read newspapers and listen to the T.V. channel regularly. As a result, he will unconsciously learn how to translate his thoughts into language. While making sentences in English language, tense plays a major role. Without tense, there cannot be any sentence. One can completely understand tenses through presentation based on situations. According to H.G. Widdowson, "Language items are used in situations in the class room to ensure that their meaning is clear and then practiced as formal structures through exercises and drilling." [6] As a result the learner's proficiency will be enhanced.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

This study therefore explores the common errors in usage of tenses in English made by the First Year engineering Marathi medium students. The reasons for committing errors are pointed out. Proficiency in English is very essential for Engineers and other professionals. The suggestions have been given to enhance

proficiency of the second Language learner. The study is beneficial and advantageous for the L2 learner.

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