

Error Analysis of Errors Committed by Matric and Intermediate Students at Gujranwala, Pakistan

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Abstract

In Second language Acquisition, error analysis is an obligatory topic in the Linguistics Field. Errors are a common part of language learning because learners of a second language are not usually knowledgeable about the sentence structure and some basic rules of the English language. Basic purpose of Error analysis is how learners make mistakes and how researchers can help them by finding their mistakes. There are two main methods for studying learner mistakes: and error analysis. Contrastive error and Error Analysis. These both are branches of applied linguistics science. This paper study is conducted to investigate the errors or mistakes conducted by students of schools and colleges of Gujranwala, Pakistan. They were expected to compose an English essay. Forty participants participated in this study of which fifteen were males and twenty-five were females. The most frequent error was in the use of sentence structure because both Urdu and English languages have their distinct sort of Sentence structure and language use. There were also some common spelling errors. Finally, the researcher suggested performing a second study to look into further writing errors made by Pakistani English language learners.

Keywords: Error, Second Language Acquisition, Error Analysis, Error Correction, Contrastive Error

Introduction

Writing is a crucial ability to cultivate when learning a foreign language, but it is especially necessary when learning English because it has surpassed all others as the world's language. Being able to write correctly is critical in today's society for effective communication, as well as for business and production. For a range of audiences, people must be able to write in a number of styles, including those for everyday issues, business-related writing, economic proposals, and technical as well as professional communications.

For many years, several investigations on the processes of first-language acquisition and second-language learning have been done. Based on studies, it has been discovered that the process of learning a foreign language acts similarly to that of learning a first language. It is common for children learning their native language to make numerous mistakes. This is how people learn languages. As infants receive feedback from adults, they learn how to compose grammatically and semantically sound phrases in their language.

A child learning his first language and a foreign language learner work in very similar ways in the target language. Every student will inevitably make mistakes and break rules. Recognizing the flaws and correcting them following the recommendations provided, on the other hand, can stymie development. The stages that learners go through lead scholars and language teachers to believe that the process of language acquisition can be understood if language learners' flaws and blunders in developing a new linguistic system are extensively explored. As a result, the study of errors has evolved into a subfield of linguistics. Linguistics research assists the discipline of language training in various ways, including error analysis.

Problem Statement

English learning is a complicated task for foreign learners or second language learners. Many researchers have mentioned that learners may face complexities in their writing as well as in their speaking. It was widely believed up until the late 1960s that learning a second language was essentially a matter of developing a new set of linguistic habits. This theory was known as behaviourism. Errors were therefore regarded as the Outcome of current mother tongue tendencies continuing in the new language.

Research Objectives

The main objective of analysing these errors is to overcome the errors of the learners.

They may reduce these mistakes by following the same pattern.

A learner can enhance their writing skills after practice and following rules.

Research Questions

1. What Sort of Errors Submitted by Matric and Intermediate levels in Self-writing?
2. Do students at the college level and secondary level make different mistakes in self-writing?

Significance

The field of applied linguistics known as error analysis, or the study of learner errors, was established in the 1960s. It demonstrated that both the learner's native language and a variety of universal tactics contributed to their errors. This is a response to behaviouristic theory's Contrastive Analysis Theory, which highlights interference from one's original language as the main reason for mistakes in learning a second language. Applied error analysis, on the other hand, "concerns structuring remedial courses and generating acceptable materials and teaching methodologies based on the findings of theoretical error analysis" (Erdogan, 2005).

"The area of mistake analysis may be defined as dealing with disparities between the ways that people learning a language speak and the ways that adult native speakers of the language use the language," writes Richards (1971, p. 1).

The infinitive with to after the word must is commonly used to express the action of going to the store. Norrish (1983) argued that when a learner frequently commits a mistake despite not understanding the material, this is an error and should be referred to as such. Take it for granted that the learner is already familiar with the verbs want (+ to), require (+ to), and perhaps ought (+ to). Then, using an analogy, he creates must (+ to), which he will make use of in both spoken and written language until instructed otherwise or until he learns as native speakers don't employ this form (Norrish, *ibid*, p. 7).

As was already noted, a lot of the queries that linguists ask regarding language learning have a lot to do with what language teachers are attempting to discover about the process. Many educators are frustrated by the fact that students are unable to apply the linguistic concepts they have been taught. According to Lengo, the problem stems from the teacher's mistaken idea that the outcome must accurately reflect the input (1995). This presumption ignores how children internalise linguistic knowledge through intake, which is how intake works. The intake is likely different from how the student internally processes the teacher's lesson plan. By applying error analysis, teachers can pinpoint the root causes of mistakes and take pedagogical action to prevent them. As a result, it is essential to assess the learner's language to address certain challenges and provide solutions for specific issues. The function of error analysis in the linguistic and methodological facets of teaching English as a second language is examined in this study.

The CLT technique falls short in assisting students in developing good writing abilities, which is why this research underlines the primacy of particular grammar training while instructing English writing. Experienced SPM English Paper checkers claim that if there are multiple

errors in the essays, the students are only given a score of D (21–25 out of a possible 40 points for Continuing Writing).

The fundamental grammar principles should never be compromised, despite the current inclination to switch from the "product" approach, which emphasises grammar precision, to the "process" method, which promotes the flexibility of thoughts. This is particularly valid if both above-average and average pupils seek to improve their test results.

Literature Review

American linguist C. C. Fries began researching contrastive linguistics in 1945. Robert Lado's book "Linguistic across Cultures" (1957), which was released more than 10 years after he initially stated this claim, established the theoretical foundations of C.A. Supporters of CA upheld that the similarities and differences between many languages were sufficient to address the challenge of teaching different languages (Ghadessy 1980). The areas of the target language that are comparable to their native tongue will be easy for students whose desired language is a second language to master, but the distinct parts will be challenging for them to comprehend, according to Lado (1957). This study looks at the writing mistakes made by English-majoring colleges as well as School students who are studying English as a second language in their institutes. Both errors and mistakes are different and Corder (1967) and James (1998) both present a criterion, the self-correct ability criterion that aids in this process. An error cannot be corrected by oneself, but a mistake can. Errors are "systematic," which means they are more likely to happen again and go unnoticed by the learner. Therefore, the learner would not be able to locate them; only the teacher or researcher would (Gass and Selinker, 2001). The current study will concentrate on learner errors rather than student errors.

Theory of Selinker

Learner mistakes are not only mistakes; they are signs of behaviour that are guided by norms because second-language learners use a systematic language (Adjemian 1976; Corder 1976; Nemser 1971; Selinker 1972). This was supported by several studies conducted on the Second Language Students' Language is Systemic and Learners' Mistakes are Not Just Errors They Are Indicators of Rule-Guided Behaviour (Adjemian 1976; Corder 1976; Nemser 1971; Selinker 1972). After conducting multiple tests in the late 1960s and early 1970s, this conclusion was made. Studies on linguistic errors have been conducted in Applied Linguistics on speakers of both native and non-native languages.

Theory of Mackey

According to Mackey (1965), it is established as a precept of applied linguistics that a language learner's native language is to blame for all of his errors. This is wholly untrue. There are many errors that people genuinely make that have no equivalent in their native speech. He went on to say that mistakes can be made by even natural speakers of the same language. "The first language itself is not the only effect on second language learning," asserts Mackey (ibid., p. 4). According to Fries (1945, p. 9), the finest resources for teaching foreign languages are those that are established on a scientific explanation of the target language and are carefully compared with a similar account of the learner's aboriginal tongue.

It seems that the phrase "applied linguistics" originally emanated in the United States in the 1940s. The study of applied linguistics was founded in an endeavour to produce realistic applications for contemporary scientific linguistics (Mackey, 1965). It is well known that applied linguistics aims to deal with or resolve socioeconomic problems associated with language. Schmitt and Celce-Murcia (2002, p.1.) define "the application of what we know about (a) language, (b) how it is learned, and (c) how it is used to attain some goals or solve some issues in the real world." Contrastive analysis and error analysis are believed to be under the umbrella of applied linguistics science.

As was previously said, the main focus of theoretical error analysis is on how languages are learned and how those processes compare to acquiring a first language. It seeks to comprehend the thoughts of language learners, in other words. Thirdly, it looks to see if there is an internal curriculum for picking up a second language. Decoding learner methods like overgeneralization and simplification is the second objective. Comparing the native and target language systems has been a major focus of many C.A. researchers, whether in the context of transformational generative models or the context of language description structure models.

Theory of Nickel

"The description of practical grammar, which is composed of the total of differences between the grammar of the source language and that of the target language" (Nickel, 1971, p. 9) is the contribution of contrastive examination to second language learning. Many C.A. researchers have focused heavily on comparing the resident and target language methods, whether in the context of transformational generative models or the context of language description structure models.

"The description of practical grammar, which is composed of the total of differences between the grammar of the source language and that of the target language" (Nickel, 1971, p. 9) is the assistance of contrastive investigation to second language learning. Error investigation, on the other hand, examines how well learners do in terms of the mental operations they employ to identify or declare input in the specific language. Error analysis therefore pays close attention to the data that learner errors supply to comprehend the fundamentals of second language acquisition.

He went on to suggest that a teacher can set up remedial education after marking up his students' written assignments and identifying all of their common errors. According to Ferguson (1965), interference caused by structural differences between the learner's native language and the target language is one of the major challenges in learning a second language. According to this point of view, a thorough contrastive study of the two languages offers a solid foundation for the development of teaching resources, course organisation, and actual classroom procedures (Ferguson, *ibid*, p. 4).

On the other hand, applied error analysis focuses on creating corrective programs and creating useful resources and instruction techniques based on the results of theoretical error examination. Contrastive study has grown in significance to apprehend learner errors since two languages were systematically contrasted in the field of second language learning throughout the 1940s and 1950s.

Up until the late 1960s, behaviourism which claimed that learning a second language mostly included developing new linguistic habits was the preeminent theory on the issue. As a result, mistakes were attributed to mother tongue traits continuing in the new language. This idea prompted applied linguistics scholars to concentrate on comparing the native and target languages to predict outcomes and provide explanations for errors. However, errors that were not supported in this way were given less credit. As a result, all flaws were fixed utilising the same method of further drilling and practice, regardless of where they came from.

According to Keshavarz (1997), there are two subfields of error analysis at the moment: theoretical and applied. The main concerns of theoretical research on errors are, as previously indicated, the technique and tactics of language learning as well as its similarities to first language acquisition. In other words, it aims to eavesdrop on language learners' ideas.

Theovan Els et al. (1984:38) list the goals as follows: a) Outlining the similarities and contrasts across languages; b) spotting and foreseeing difficulties with second language acquisition; and c) creating course materials for language instruction. The interference of a student's parent

language, which Bose (2005) defines as both positive and negative transfer between a native and the target language, is one of the causes of mistakes made by pupils.

A negative transfer occurs when the learner's mother tongue's forms diverge from the target language, whereas a positive transfer happens when they are comparable.

Research Methodology

Data Collection

The qualitative technique was used in this study to collect empirical data from the writings of respondents and analyse the grammatical mistakes they made. Nouns, pronouns, adjectives, articles, verbs, prepositions and prepositions were the eight primary grammatical faults chosen for this study. Of course, the majority of non-native English speakers make many of these mistakes frequently.

Population

The Total Population of this study consisted of almost forty to fifty students from a national-style Pakistani secondary school in Markaz E Mustafa, which made up the study's population. From this, Matric and Inter levels responders were chosen in the public examination scores, respectively. Every respondent had to write about "myself" in a one-hour writing test. For more precise and reliable results, participants were asked to write their essays at a rate of 150–200 words per hour. Participants were told to compose their essays on their own, without contacting any teachers, researchers, or friends they may have at the time.

Procedure

This was done to make sure the data that was collected for analysis was accurate. Even though a total of fifteen essays penned by the selected respondents served as the basis for data collection, only six respondents' writings, or the compositions with the fewest and most errors among College and Matric students, were specifically assessed for errors. This came about as a result of the complexity and time restrictions of the error analysis. The notion of triangulation also influenced this decision. In order to account for "in-betweens" and "average" errors of participants', the investigators chose the essays from each group that had the fewest and most errors.

In other words, without having to examine every inaccuracy made by the 30 respondents, the researchers were able to generate a more generalised data set. Additionally, only comprehensible and incomprehensible errors were examined because these demonstrated the respondents' poor grammar skills. Following the detection of mistakes, the likely sources of such deviation were looked into. Error Analysis (EA) was used in this study to illuminate the causes of errors.

The flaws were then looked at with relation to overgeneralization, disregard for rule limits, inaccurate rule application, and, where appropriate, faulty concept hypotheses. It should be mentioned that all of the respondents had their basic education at local institutions where Urdu was taught as a second subject and functioned as the instruction language. According to an unofficial survey, each participant was raised in a home where the most prevalent Urdu dialect was spoken. Most responders came from socioeconomic groups with low socioeconomic status (SES). Most of the parents were either blue-collar employees or roadside vendors.

It then makes an effort to understand the learners' tactics, such as overgeneralization and simplification, before deciding on the underlying principles of language learning and whether or not there is an internal curriculum for learning a second language. Applying the results of theoretical error analysis to develop corrective programs, suitable lesson plans, and effective teaching techniques is the aim of applied error analysis.

Results and Findings

Major Findings

The respondents frequently contained several mistakes in one statement. Or, to put it another way, a single category of errors may contain multiple instances of the same word or phrase. However, only undecipherable and understandable flaws were considered for study. Spelling mistakes are explored in the debate that follows, along with mistakes affecting in different parts of speech such as noun pronoun etc.

Errors in the Nouns Usage

A term which can be employed to any name anything, being, concept, state, or characteristic, is known as Noun, according to Russell (1993).

The following are some of the noun misuses this investigation has discovered:

Errors when the (s) is missing from countable nouns

As an illustration, (i) 20 minutes

There are numerous buses.

Some academics, like Jain (1974) and Tan (1978), contend that learners' oversimplification and simplifying methods are to blame for morphological errors like the one above. This suggests that to make things easier, learners commonly subcategorize some countable nouns as uncountable nouns etc.

(a) Errors with single, s-containing countable and uncountable nouns

Buy a piece of paper, for instance, or buy something from the canteen, like food.

Although some poll participants prefer the s morpheme to be included in both singular countable and uncountable nouns, others prefer to omit it from plural countable nouns. The pupils may be urged to enter the s morpheme when they should not and are unable to do so due to repeated corrections to indicate their plural nouns, which may be the cause of these errors.

Errors in the Pronouns Usage

An expression that normally refers to a noun phrase, Noun, or anything associated with anyone. He continues by stating that when compared to sentences containing nouns, pronoun-based phrases frequently indicate a less precise meaning. Jarvie (1993).

Pronoun mistakes in this study include the following:

Lack of pronouns.

For instance, (i) I observed my little brother sobbing when I got home.

(ii) The discipline teacher's punishment made me angry.

(I was angry with the discipline teacher because she had punished me.)

This kind of mistake may be caused by oversimplification and overgeneralization. Respondents to this survey oversimplified the use of pronouns and felt it necessary to eliminate some of them to prevent claims of repetition or redundancy because the pronoun "I" has previously been used numerous times.

Errors in the Usage of Adjectives

Words which show details or describe any quality on nouns or any pronouns are known as adjectives.

Adjectives are typically simple to spot in a phrase because they typically describe or change the size, shape, colour, or quantity of an object (Jarvie, 1993).

Adjective use mistakes in this study include:

Comparative and superlative form mistakes

For instance, in (i) she grew angrier. (angrier) (ii)... the toughest instructor... (fiercest)

Ignorance of the constraints imposed by the rules may contribute to blunders in this class. The students' mistakes might have been caused by some (irregular) adjectives they learnt in

comparative and superlative forms that must be expressed with "more" and "most" instead of being inflected to reflect the degree or scope of a noun description.

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Errors in the Usage of Article

Basically, Articles are of two types.

The first one is definite article which is (the) and the second is indefinite which are (a, or and if a word with a vowel comes after it).

This analysis includes articles with flaws like:

(a) Article insertion

As in (i) God appeared to be quite dejected.

(ii). It was time for a break

(iii) I want to get some bread.

Pakistani speakers learning English lack a framework for understanding articles because they don't exist in the Pakistani linguistic system. As a result, while utilising English articles, they inadvertently make mistakes due to the lack of articles in Urdu. This study's findings of article usage mistakes may be the result of a lack of understanding of the rules' limitations. Different Pakistani pupils are either unaware of or ignorant of the different circumstances in which certain articles and the 0 article are used in English. For instance, "God" and "time" are considered to be universal concepts; hence, in the context of the mistakes or errors revealed in this research, i and ii, there is no definite article is needed before the two nouns.

Additionally, Pakistani English learners frequently mistake uncountable nouns for countable nouns because some uncountable nouns in English can be counted. As a result, it is more usual to say "I want to buy a car..." as opposed to "I want to buy a car..." because there is no requirement for an article before the noun. Although English grammar frequently considers bread to be uncountable, bread that has been cut into slices or loaves is countable. So, the options are "I want to buy bread" or "I want to buy a loaf or slice of bread." Not understanding this rule could be the cause of this error.

(a) Neglecting/omit of definite articles

For instance, (i) after putting down my name, he led me to the master room of discipline. (He took note of my name and took me to the quarters of the discipline master.) purchasing food from a canteen (ii)...

Although Pakistani learners often add definite or indefinite articles to certain structures, they occasionally remove definite articles (in this study) when they are needed. In situations like the one above, failure to use "the" before a word could occur from improper application of the rules. There is only one punishment room and one canteen in the school, thus it's probable that Pakistani learners assume the definite article is not required since there is only one of each of these contexts in each sentence.

Errors in the Usage of Verbs

Russell (1993) defined a verb as a word that signifies an activity or a mental or physical state. We refer to auxiliary or "helping" verbs like be, have, and do as "verbs" in this study. Another name for verbs (such as run, leap, walk, stand, or shake) is "doing words" or "action words." Modal auxiliary verbs (such as will, can, may, shall, would, could, could, should, and must) are not included in this list, but they will be covered separately in a later section. The study also examined the verb concord or agreement. Concord (also known as agreement) is a norm that ensures that different grammatical units are harmonised, according to Jarvie (1993).

Number concord, which ensures that a singular subject is always followed by a single verb or a plural verb with a plural subject, is the most important type of concord in English.

In this study, common verb form errors include:

Concord errors

E.g. (i) ... Our biology teacher, Mrs. Ayesha, teaches

She rejects my request for a cup of tea(ii). (refuses)

Pakistani language learners typically make concord mistakes because they have a tendency to generalize and simplify in order to ease the weight of the language. A generalization is made when the third person is left out because it does not call for concord and saves the pupil a ton of work. Since all third-person singulars in the present tense (in English) have the same zero verbal ending, the absence of the -s in the third person singular may be explained by the presence of the -s in all other ending forms. It is conceivable to draw the conclusion from the findings of the present study that Pakistani learners' incapacity to mark third-person singular subject verbs is a result of the way they store English linguistic components for later learning. Concord errors are frequently made by Pakistani language learners because they have a propensity to generalize and simplify in order to lighten the burden of the language. When the third person is omitted, a generalization is made because it does not require concord and spares the student a ton of work. The absence of the -s in the third person singular may be explained by the inclusion of the -s in all other ending forms since all third-person singulars in the present tense (in English) have the same zero verbal ending. The results of this study suggest that Pakistani students' inability to mark third-person singular subject verbs is a function of the way they store English linguistic information. The use of English auxiliary verbs by the learners therefore revealed perplexity rather than "It was already 7.30 p.m." and "...but mother did not prepare my lunch..." It's conceivable that Pakistani students' mistakes are caused by the absence of auxiliary verbs like be, have, and do in Urdu as they lack context for those words.

(c) Including "be"

For instance, (i) Mr. Ali gave him a cane when I first arrived at school.

Errors in Spellings

In the 1995 version of the Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English, the act or process of correctly putting words together from their constituent letters is referred to as spelling.

Among the spelling errors found in this study were:

(a) Omitted letters

For example,

(Valueable) instead of Valuable

Pakistani learners typically spell their words in the same manner they speak them since communication comes before writing. As a result, kids are using a sound system that they practise and can articulate to simplify the spelling of the words. The foregoing errors may have occurred as a result of rules not being applied completely, which is a likely reason. The respondent who came up with the first phrase (i) was aware that the y in "untidy" must be deleted in order to produce the adverb "untidily," but his comprehension of how the rule applies to the suffix "ily" is inadequate. As a result, he used "ely" incorrectly in his article to generate "untidily," as opposed to the proper "ily."

The word "fortunately," which usually omits the letter i, is one such common spelling mistake made by Chinese language learners. The pronunciation of "luckily"'s [i] sound is thought to be the likely cause of the mistake because it is not particularly distinct. As a result, students commonly forget the letter "i".

Discussions

To summarise, the eight grammatically correct items chosen to serve as some of the major writing-related challenges that the majority of pupils at the school being studied encounter.

Based on the eight grammatical items that were chosen, the errors were graded according to frequency of occurrence.

It is given that 10 out of the fifteen respondents made 10 or more mistakes, this appears to be a considerably challenging topic for all the participants and their weakest site. Prepositions were the second grammar issue that the respondents had. There were 66 mistakes in all. The third area of difficulty was spelling, where 59 mistakes were made in total. Adjectives had the fewest mistakes (a total of only 6 mistakes were made).

With a total of 420 occurrences, understandable errors topped the list, whereas incomprehensible errors only happened three times throughout the entire study. This demonstrates how poorly the respondents in this survey understood the grammatical component. However, 99.9% of the mistakes made may still be understood and fixed. Comparatively, all participants in Group A, with the anomaly of one, committed fewer than 23 mistakes. These respondents showed that, like the other groups, they had trouble employing prepositions and verbs, particularly modal verbs. They have poor spelling skills and frequently produce careless and unneeded blunders. When it came to the other four grammatical components (nouns, pronouns, adjectives, and articles), the respondents in this group made incredibly few errors.

Some responders handled the four tasks reasonably well, making no more than one or two mistakes for each of the four items.

The majority of Group B respondents displayed poor mastery of verb and preposition usage. Additionally, their writings demonstrated a lack of expertise in the use of articles, nouns, and modal verbs. In comparison to responders in Group A, they committed greater negligence and misspelt words. However, it should be highlighted that both groups made understandable mistakes. That is to say, despite the numerous faults in their writings, the subject-predicate or the subject-verb-object structure remained still obvious. However, their writing was comprehensible and always made its point.

Last but not least, Group C respondents as a whole showed problems with spelling, prepositions, verbs (including modal verbs), and prepositional phrases. Their inadequate mastery of verb tenses was clear given that three of the participants in that specific category and all three perplexing errors identified in this study were linked to this grammatical issue. Because they didn't know how to use verbs correctly, their essays were filled with ambiguity and confusion. Additionally, most respondents (two respondents made exceptions) made fewer errors when utilising nouns, pronouns, and adjectives.

Except for one, all of the participants in this batch set aside two or three errors while using articles. This batch executed the most mistakes overall, totalling 191, as opposed to Group B's 160 and Group A's 102. When evaluating the two "error-prone" grammatical commodities, verbs and prepositions, it became apparent that participants tended to create greater deviation in particular kinds of mistakes in a given grammatical entity as opposed to others.

Respondents in Group A, for instance, tended to make more mistakes when using the simple, continuous, and perfect tenses, verbs followed by "-ing" forms, and verbs followed by an infinitive without "to" than when using the terms be, have, and do when it came to verb tenses. Respondents in Groups B and C, in contrast, frequently moved between the present tense and the past tense, demonstrating a lack of confidence and a weak understanding of the grammatical principles behind the temporal aspect. Additionally, both sets of respondents made several errors with the introduction of the verb be as well as the simple, continuous, and perfect tenses.

Conclusion

Therefore, it may be concluded that respondents still need to improve before they can produce quality compositions in English. The pattern in which they organised their writing pieces

reveals their inadequate understanding of the actual precepts of English grammar. It might be time to focus more on explicitly grammar education in the classroom, as was performed in the past years, as the Communicative Approach currently being used does not come close to producing the desired results. If formal, in-depth instruction in grammar (or some of the trickier, more difficult components, like tenses and prepositions) is provided in upper secondary education, one might be able to reduce students' grammatical faults in essay writing and increase their self-confidence in their ability to write. As the Communicative Approach is now being employed, this is so that learners of second or foreign languages can become accurate and fluent, which is facilitated by grammatical or linguistic competency. Concluding, it may be said that responders still need to improve before they can produce quality essays in English.

It is pointless to keep placing the blame for pupils' poor language skills on the curriculum requirements, which prioritise communicative competency above grammatical competence. For teachers to be proactive and concerned, it is imperative to identify the grammatical components of English writing that pupils continue to struggle with. Lesson plans tailored to our students' requirements can only be made after that.

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