



# A Study on Error Analysis in English Language Among Class 8 Students of Mon Town, Nagaland

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**Abstract:** Errors are an integral part of language learning; it is the result of linguistic incompetency or lack of knowledge. The present study aims to find the common grammatical errors and type of errors the students make in their writing. The study is qualitative in nature. The researcher adopted random sampling for the study. The sample of the study comprised of 80 students from class 8. The tool used for collecting data was a set of test items consisting of two test items for free writing, viz. Paragraph writing and essay writings. The data collected was analyzed and interpreted using descriptive method and frequency of errors using simple statistical tools like percentage. It was found that students committed 1271 errors in total. The findings also showed that students made frequent errors in the use of Tense, punctuation, preposition, number (singular/plural), verb, article, conjunction, pronoun, Spelling, capital letters, word choice and sentence construction.

**Index Terms** - Error Analysis, common grammatical errors, Frequency -.

## I. INTRODUCTION

English is a global lingua franca and a second language in many regions. In the 21st century, English has boomed its value as a medium of both social and official transaction in several platforms such as media, commerce, politics, entertainment, technology, education and internet. English as a convenient medium of international communication has made the world smaller and made access to several cultures across the globe. Therefore, English is known as a link language or a national library language for establishing inter-cultural, socio-economic, and political relations. English is primarily taught and learned as a second language in the Indian Education system. Perhaps, it is made as a compulsory subject in all levels in India. Second language can refer to any language that is learned besides our mother tongue for communicating with speakers of the target language, and various purposes. Thus, English being used as a lingua franca or as a second language also aids in suppressing communication disparity. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru rightly states, "A major window to the modern world through which we are able to see the development in the field of science, technology, agriculture, commercial and literary." Owing to Nehru's statement, it is important to state that the study of English as a second language in the school curriculum is of paramount importance especially in this cutting-edge for reasons of professionalism and achievements in various disciplines.

English language learning is a process where the four language skills, viz. Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing are learnt with regular practice based on real life instances. These four language skills are interdependent and therefore it is imperative to give equal importance in each skill for proficiency in the target language. In this research, the emphasis is laid on the analysis of learners' errors in writing skill and the measures in reducing errors and the role of the language skills. It is a prerequisite for a language instructor to understand that errors are an integral part of language learning. It is the result of linguistic

incompetency or the areas in which learners lack behind. Errors cannot be self-corrected as the learner requires a facilitator to master in the language and its rules.

Hence, there is absolutely no harm for a second language learner to commit mistakes in the process of acquisition and there are several reasons that account to why learners commit errors in the process of learning a second language for example, lack of knowledge on grammar rules, choice and use of appropriate words or sentences in writing and speaking, etc. It is inevitable to conceal the fact of how learning English as a second language is challenging in spite of its international popularity. It is challenging because unlike most other human languages, English is the most irregular. This is one of the general reasons why learners while trying to relate the lexical and syntactical meanings or translation equivalents, their structures and rules with that of their native language find learning English cumbersome.

## **II. NEED AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY:**

Nagaland is one of the few states in India that has English as its official language. The state consists of 17 major tribes; each tribe has their own dialects which is distinct and is mutually unintelligible between the members of the tribe. This made it impossible to promote any regional language as the official language of the state and thus paved the way for English as the official language of the state. English is used as the medium of instructions in all the schools in Nagaland. Despite learning English as a compulsory subject at all levels in their schools, there are many gaps and constraints that need to be addressed. The students understand English but still struggle to speak or write in a proper way as they use their dialect and Nagamese outside the classroom. The English language teaching in Nagaland is still in nascent stage, and there is much room for improvement.

The study of Error Analysis is significant as it aims to provide the knowledge about the different errors committed by the students and helps to highlight the possible cause or factors behind those errors. Error Analysis plays a vital role in providing intuition and language development and a structured or methodical way of identifying, explaining or describing student's errors. It is significant for the student to learn and proceed to the next level. It also helps the students in recognizing their weakness in writing skills. Error analysis is needed for the teachers as it helps them to analyze the progress of students at the same time evaluate their teaching and improve his/her techniques in teaching by adopting new methods and by preparing systematic materials.

Error analysis is necessary to provide insight and also understand the pattern of the learners. Error analysis is the best tool or instrument that is used for defining and explaining the errors conducted by the learners who have other languages as their Mother tongue.

The present study aims to find the common grammatical errors and type of errors the students make in their writing. The study will find the frequency of errors committed by the students of private and government schools and suggest measures to reduce errors committed by students.

## **III. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

English has always been the medium of instruction in all levels in Nagaland since the inception of education system. However, in spite of the function of English as the medium of instruction and being taught and learnt from a pre-primary level, students often face challenges in the application of English as a second language even to the time they get to higher levels. In language learning, students generally have problems on areas such as sentence making, vocabulary, grammar etc. which consequently lead to constant committing of errors in their academic performance. The research carried out is centered on the topic of learners' error analysis, the frequency of the errors in their writing, and the possible measures to curb the committing of excessive errors. The target groups of learners are those belonging to the Konyak community in Nagaland. This research has been conducted on the prospect of how a paradigm shift can be undertaken by language instructors in handling learners' errors. The geographical location in which the research was conducted was Mon Town, Nagaland. It is the inhabitant of the Konyak Nagas whose language is also known as Konyak. However, a konyak native speaker is distinguished by the dialect in which he/she speaks. There is a huge number of dialectal variations among the Konyaks depending on the village one belongs to, which is why it is difficult to communicate between two Konyak speakers hailing from different villages. Due to this dialectal constraint, Nagamese, the lingua franca in Nagaland comes into function for communication. It is interesting to see how Konyaks handle their medium of communication in twofold. However, as students they often fail to avoid the linguistic structures of their dialects and Nagamese, especially in their English language writing skill. While writing in English, they

often tend to express their views and the concepts in their mother tongue structure which causes them to commit errors in return.

Therefore, having mentioned the above issue, the following discussion gives an account on the attempts to identify the common errors made by class 8 (eight) students in Mon Town and frequency of the errors in their writing in English. Thus, in this research the above-mentioned problems are further expounded entitled, “A Study on Error Analysis in English Language among Class 8 Students of Mon Town, Nagaland.”

## 2. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Parida (1985) conducted a study on error analysis of written English of class viii students in Orissa with special reference to urban centres and found the total of 8738 errors and students made maximum number of errors in tense and verbs and revealed that spellings also constitute the greatest problem for the learners followed by punctuation. Patel (2002) conducted research on Error analysis in written English of students of standard xii of Auragabad district and found the maximum errors with use of simple present tense, less errors in present perfect continuous. The research also found that the student's poor economic background, illiterate parents and no proper environment are the main causes for their poor English. Dhakal (2009) conducted a study on Error analysis of eight grade students in the areas of agreement, prepositions, articles, capitalizations, cohesion and coherence in writing free composition and the results shows that the students committed the highest number of errors in essay writing and the lowest in paragraph writing where students commit highest errors in subject-verb agreement with 77.81 percentage. Hourani (2008) carried out a research on analysis of the common Grammatical Errors in the English Writing made by 3rd secondary Male students in UAE and identified 1130 interlingual and intralingual grammar errors in free composition written by Emirati secondary male students. The errors were tabulated according to the times of frequency and percentage. The result showed that the errors committed by the students were due to both interlingual and intralingual factors. Bustomi (2009) in his studies on error analysis on students' descriptive writing and found that most students committed errors in articles, word choice, capitalization, omit word, spelling, singular plural and verb tense. Sirkka (2010) performed an investigation on the writing of ESL Namibian learners and recorded the total of 1874 errors where the student committed highest error in spellings, second in tenses, third in preposition and fourth in article. Mishra (2015) conducted a case study on analysis of common errors in writing- a tool for better teaching learning of ESL, Amity University Madhya Pradesh and found the most common errors committed by students were the misuse of verb tenses and aspects. Al- Khasawneh (2014) also conducted a case study on Error analysis of written English paragraphs by Jordanian undergraduate students and found the most frequent errors committed by students were in the wrong use of articles and least errors in the use of irregular verbs. Khan and Abbasi (2017) carried out research on Error analysis of English paragraphs by Pakistani undergraduates and found that the most common type of errors made by students during writing was punctuation.

## 3. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:

1. To identify the common errors made by class 8 students in writing
2. To classify the types of Errors the students do in their writing
3. To analyze the Errors made by class 8 students of private and government schools
4. To identify the frequency of errors performed by class 8 students in writing.

## 4. RESEARCH QUESTIONS:

- What type of common errors the students commit in writing English composition?
- How frequent do Errors occur in Student's Writings?

## 5. METHOD OF THE STUDY

The present study is qualitative in nature and the researcher adopted the descriptive method for the study.

### 5.1 POPULATION OF THE STUDY

The target population of the study was class 8 students. There are total 27 schools in Mon Town, 16 private and 11 Government schools out of which the researcher randomly selected 4 schools of Mon town, 2 private schools and 2 Government schools where the medium of instructions is English in all the four schools.

## 5.2 SAMPLE OF THE STUDY

The researcher adopted random sampling for the study. The sample of the study comprises of 80 students from class 8. Out of 80 students, 40 students are from private schools and 40 from Government schools. The researcher randomly selected 20 answer sheets from each school consisting of equal number of boys and girls (10 boys and 10 girls) for data analysis.

## 5.3 TOOLS AND TECHNIQUES USED FOR DATA ANALYSIS

The tool used for collecting data was a set of test items consisting of two test items for free writing, viz. Paragraph writing (write a short paragraph on the topic My Best friend) and essay writings (write an Essay on the topic My hobby). The data collected was analyzed and interpreted using descriptive method and frequency of errors was found using simple statistical tools like percentage. The formula of the percentage is presented below:

$$\text{Percentage (\%)} = \frac{\text{No. of Each Error}}{\text{Total no. of Errors}} \times 100$$

## 6. DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

**Table 1. Types of Errors and their Frequency of occurrence.**

No.	Types of Errors	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1	Spelling	267	21.01
2	Tense	170	13.38
3	Punctuation	149	11.72
4	Preposition	106	8.34
5	Sentence Construction	95	7.47
6	Number(singular/plural)	87	6.85
7	Verb	80	6.29
8	Article	75	5.90
9	Conjunction	75	5.90
10	Word Choice	66	5.19
11	Capital Letters	60	4.72
12	Pronoun	41	3.23
<b>Total no. of Errors</b>		<b>1271</b>	<b>100</b>

The above table presents the types of errors committed by students, their frequency and numbers of percentage of errors. The researcher has identified different types of errors committed by students. The common errors include: spelling, use of capital letters, word choice, sentence construction and grammatical errors such as Tense, Punctuation, Preposition, Number (singular/plural), Verb, Article, Conjunction and Pronoun. In total the students have committed 1271 errors.

The table presents the total errors of students of all the four schools. The errors are arranged according to the frequency of occurrence from highest to lowest. The students committed 267, 170, 149, 106, 95, 87, 80, 75, 75, 66, 60 and 41 errors in spelling, tense, punctuation, preposition, sentence construction, number (singular/plural), verb, article, conjunction, word choice, capital letters and pronoun respectively. The percentages of those errors were 21.01%, 13.38%, 11.72%, 8.34%, 7.47%, 6.85%, 6.29%, 5.90%, 5.90%, 5.19%, 4.72%, and 3.23% respectively. The students committed highest errors in spelling and lowest in Pronoun.

**Table 1.1. Errors committed by Private and Government schools**

Private Schools			Government Schools	
Types of Errors	Total no. Of Errors	%	Total no. Of Errors	%
Preposition	49	9.01	57	7.84
Article	37	6.80	38	5.23
Number(singular/plural)	38	6.99	49	6.74
Punctuation	67	12.32	82	11.28
Tense	74	13.60	96	13.20
Spelling	104	19.12	163	22.43
Capital letters	27	4.96	33	4.54
Verb	33	6.07	47	6.46
Word choice	30	5.51	36	4.95
Pronoun	17	3.12	24	3.30
Sentence construction	36	6.62	59	8.12
Conjunction	32	5.88	43	5.91
Total no. of Errors	544	100	727	100

	Private Schools	Government Schools	total
<b>Total errors</b>	544	727	1271
<b>Percentage %</b>	42.80	57.20	100

The above table showed the errors committed by private and Government Schools. The total errors committed by both the schools is 1271 out of which 544 errors is committed by private schools and 727 by Government schools. Both committed highest errors in spellings and lowest errors in Pronoun.

Private schools committed 49 (9.01%), 37 (6.80%), 38 (6.99%), 67 (12.32%), 74 (13.60%), 104 (19.12%), 27 (4.96%), 33 (6.07%), 30(5.51%), 17(3.12%), 36 (6.62%) and 32 (5.88%) errors in preposition, article, number (singular/plural), punctuation, tense, spelling, capital letters, verb, word choice, pronoun, sentence construction and conjunction, respectively whereas Government schools committed 57 (7.84%), 38 (5.23%), 49 (6.74%), 82 (11.28%), 96 (13.20%), 163 (22.43%), 33 (4.54%), 47 (6.46%), 36 (4.95%), 24 (3.30%), 59 (8.12%) and 43 (5.91%) errors in preposition, article, number (singular/plural), punctuation, tense, spelling, capital letters, verb, word choice, pronoun, sentence construction and conjunction respectively.

**Table 1.2. Most frequent Errors with Examples of Errors**

<b>Error</b>	<b>Error identification</b>
1. Spelling Errors	*True-through *lern-learn *listening-listening *Participets- participate
2. Preposition	*play together--- 2019 to 2020 (omission of preposition 'from') *we were friends <u>from</u> since childhood (addition of preposition 'from') *stand up <u>over</u> the stage (use of 'over' instead of 'on') *play footfall <u>with</u> money (use of 'with' instead of 'for')
3.Tense/Verb Tense	* I <u>feels</u> like it was destined (felt) *I <u>dream</u> of me playing...(dreamt) *when I <u>got</u> time (get) *It <u>make</u> (makes) *I <u>was</u> problem with...(have) *She <u>know</u> how to cook (knows) *we <u>having</u> programme (had)
4.Number(singular/plural)	*My <u>hobby</u> is playing football, fishing and many more (hobbies are) * <u>This</u> are my <u>hobby</u> (these, hobbies) *My <u>best friends</u> is...(best friend) *I have many <u>friend</u> (friends) *This <u>girls</u> is very smart (girl) * <u>This</u> are the things (these) * To become a football <u>players</u> (player)
5.Punctuation/Capital Letters	*whom we love (,) trust and hope...(omission of coma) *S, <u>i</u> was scolded (I) *We sit together in the same bench (.) <u>we</u> play football ...(omission of full stop and capital letter We)
6. Article	* My hobby is to play <u>a</u> badminton (addition of indefinite article) * She is <u>a</u> honest girl (an) *My hobbies are <u>a</u> playing (addition of 'a') *Most of people (omission of 'The') We used to sing <u>the</u> songs together (addition of 'the')

## 7. FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

From the analysis and interpretation of the errors made by class 8 students in free writing, the researcher highlights the following findings.

- It was found that the students have committed several types of errors in free writing. The researcher has identified 12 common errors, they are: spelling, use of capital letters, word choice, sentence construction and grammatical errors such as Tense, Punctuation, Preposition, Number (singular/plural), Verb, Article, Conjunction and Pronoun.

- It was found that the students committed errors in a most frequent way. The student's committed 1271 errors in total. The results showed that spelling mistakes, use of verb tense, punctuation, use of preposition, sentence construction, use of singular and plural form, article were among the most frequent errors committed by students. It was found that the students committed highest errors in spelling and least in Pronoun.

- The students committed 267 (21.01%), 170 (13.38%), 149 (11.72%), 106 (8.34%), 95 (7.47%), 87 (6.85%), 80 (6.29%), 75 (5.90%), 75 (5.90%), 66 (5.19%), 60 (4.72%) and 41 (3.23%) errors in spelling, tense, punctuation, preposition, sentence construction, number(singular/plural), verb, article, conjunction, word choice, capital letters and pronoun, respectively.

• The study found that private schools committed 544 (42.80%) errors in total whereas Government schools committed 727 (57.20%) errors. Private schools committed 49 (9.01%), 37 (6.80%), 38 (6.99%), 67 (12.32%), 74 (13.60%), 104 (19.12%), 27 (4.96%), 33 (6.07%), 30(5.51%), 17(3.12%), 36 (6.62%) and 32 (5.88%) where as Government schools committed 57 (7.84), 38 (5.23%), 49 (6.74%), 82 (11.28%), 96 (13.20%), 163 (22.43%), 33 (4.54%), 47 (6.46%), 36 (4.95%), 24 (3.30%), 59 (8.12%) and 43 (5.91%) errors in preposition, article, number (singular/plural), punctuation, tense, spelling, capital letters, verb, word choice, pronoun, sentence construction and conjunction respectively.

Both Private schools and government schools committed highest error in spellings and lowest in Pronoun. It was found that government schools committed more errors as compared to private schools.

## 8. EDUCATIONAL IMPLICATION AND SUGGESTION

Error is an integral part of learning and it is absolutely normal for a learner to commit errors while learning a new language. It enhances learner's knowledge of the rules of the language and enables learners to write without committing errors. Identifying and correcting errors in the teaching and learning of writing skill in the proper approach promotes positive impacts in the process of teaching and learning. By proper approach, we mean implementing different ways of helping a learner identify and accept his/her errors. Very often it is difficult to point out mistakes regularly and correct them. Therefore, administering various types and levels of activities ranging from group to pair to individual is a shining master plan. The activities will be of course on the objective of cross-checking answers and peer corrections which will fulfill the teacher's goal on developing writing skill. This kind of an approach will also render to the development of learners' vocabulary which is an important factor for a good and professional writing.

Understanding the theory of error analysis is very essential for teachers in developing learners' language skill. It guides the teacher not only to identify the problems faced by students but also to prepare remedial programs and effective materials to help students overcome or avoid committing errors.

### **The following are some suggestions to be adopted to reduce errors committed by students in the present study:**

Fore mostly, the language teacher must be well trained and qualified to teach English language.

It is important to change the mode of classroom interaction since it is noticed that less opportunity is given to the learners. The teacher should adopt practical-oriented approaches depending on the needs of the students. Adopting the traditional system of teaching is only making learners become robots.

Students should be given continuous practice on rules of writing skill, and writing exercises in the class should be conducted regularly that learners find writing as a good habit.

The learners should be taught the rules, format and structure for paragraph writing, essay writing and many other writings. They should be given ample time for practices, and corrections on the previous exercise should be done before proceeding to the next level.

The teacher should build on the exercises given in the textbook and design more tasks and activities keeping in mind the learners' interests, needs and surroundings.

The teacher should encourage learners to work in pairs and groups by assigning them the task. The close association allows the learners to help each other in mending each other's loopholes in accord. It is responsible for the teacher to change to change their pairs or group on every activity or assignment. This will broaden the learner' horizon on peer correction and prompt them not to be afraid to make errors while learning.

The teacher should keep a track of the learners that they develop the habit of reading and writing by engaging with different media such as books, internet, media etc. This enables the learners to learn correct spelling, and enrich their vocabulary.

Teacher should project dedication and professionalism in his/her teaching in order to grab the attention of the learners. It is the responsibility of the teacher to monitor learner's performance throughout every activity. The teacher should list down the items that the students most committed errors in writing and arrange remedial classes.

For the development of writing skills, the teacher should use illustrations, pictures and drawings or make chart for grammar rules and display them in the classroom. In this way learners subconsciously absorb the information in their mental lexicon.

The teacher should encourage students to write creative composition in the classroom and encourage peer and self-corrections. Based on their problematic areas, the students should be provided more exercises for improving their writing skill.

## CONCLUSION

The present research study on errors committed by class 8 students of private and government schools in Mon town shows how learners of English as a second language commit a number of errors in writing ranging from spelling, use of capital letters, sentence construction, choice of appropriate words/expressions, to grammatical errors such as Tense, Punctuation, Preposition, Number (singular/plural), Verb, Article, Conjunction and Pronoun. The performance of the students shows that the students still have a long way to go in giving satisfactory answers. Their writing clearly shows their weak grasp of basic rules of English grammar, insufficient vocabulary as many sentences were incomprehensible. The study shed importance of Error analysis as it helps to identify errors committed by students. Errors are an integral part of language learning; it is the result of linguistic incompetency or lack of knowledge. Students' errors cannot be ignored as it helps them to recognize their weaknesses in particular areas and help teachers to analyze the progress of students at the same time evaluate their teaching and improve his/her techniques in teaching by adopting new methods by preparing systematic materials. According to the findings, most of the errors found in students' writing skill are due to a lack of general knowledge in English grammar, limited exposure to vocabulary, mother tongue influence, overgeneralization of rules, ignorance or carelessness about the syntactical structure, etc. These findings prompt to suggest that regular practice on writing is the way forward to develop one's writing skill. At the same time, teachers should reflect on their ways of teaching and implement appropriate methods of teaching for a substantial outcome. Nevertheless, facilitating learners in the classroom will enable students in developing their competency in writing. Therefore, the discussed effective measures for developing writing skill should be undertaken as tools for reducing learners' errors to establish a successful teaching-learning process.

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