INVESTIGATING UNDERGRADUATES' ESSAY WRITING ERRORS OF ASPECTS IN SUDAN UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

Nasr El Deen Hammad Ahmed Nasr El Deen [1] **& Dr. Ahmed Mukhtar El mardi Osman** [2] Sudan University of Science and Technology-College of Graduate Studies and Scientific Research, **Sudan** (Email : nasreddin1975@gmail.com) (Tel: +2449994363438)
 Sudan University of Science and Technology _ College of Language, Sudan

ABSTRCT

        This present paper aimed at investigating the major errors and mistakes that face 4th year students at college of languages, Sudan University of Science and Technology in using grammatical aspect in academic essay-writing. To identify the role of syllabus to solve these problems, the descriptive and analytical method was adopted in this paper. The data of this study was collected by the use of a test. The respondents of this article were 56 students at fourth year at college of languages who had a test to diagnose the errors of aspect. The findings of the study showed that the students have no background information about knowledge of error analysis, techniques and strategies of error correction. The results also showed that lots of students commit numerous errors in aspect. Lastly, the study recommended that the syllabus designed at previous stage should be altered by a current English syllabus which has a variety of exercises, drills and tasks as well as error correction methods and techniques. Above all, teachers' notions and views ought to be taken into consideration while designing English syllabus. All these will surely contribute to help and develop students to write a good essay without numerous errors in aspect or minimize them as far as possible.

Key words: aspect, academic essay, error analysis

المستخلص:

تهدف هذه الورقة الي تقصي أخطاء الوجهة النحوية التي تواجه طلاب السنة الرابعة في كلية اللغات قسم اللغة الانجليزية بجامعة السودان للعلوم والتكنولوجيا ، ولتحديد دور المنهج فى معالجة تلك الاخطاء استخدمت الدراسة الطريقة الوصفية التحليلية لجمع البيانات باختيار ستة وخمسين طالبا من طلاب السنة الرابعة في كلية اللغات لإجراء إختبار لتشخيص تلك الأخطاء ، وقد توصلت هذه الدراسة إلي ان الطلاب لا يملكون خلفية عن أساليب وإستراتيجيات تصويب الأخطاء النحوية ، وايضا توصلت الدراسة الي أن عدد كبير من الطلاب يرتكبون أخطاء عديدة في الوجهة النحوية ،واخيرا أوصت الدراسة بتصميم مرحلة سابقة تنتهج منهج حديث يحتوي على تدريبات متنوعة ،إضافة إلى أساليب إستراتيجيات تصويب الأخطاء ، وفوق كل ذلك أخذ تصورات المعلمين عند تصميم المنهج ، وكل ذلك حتما يساهم لمساعدة وتطوير الطالب في كتابة المقال الأكاديمي بدون أخطاء الوجهة أو تقليلها بقدر الإمكان .

Introduction

The term aspect is a grammatical category which deals with how the event described by a verb is viewed such as whether it is in progress , habitual, repeated, momentary, etc. and English language has two aspects: progressive and perfect.

157

SUST Journal of Linguistic and Literary Studies (2022)   **Vol.22.No. 4 Sptember (2021)**
ISSN (text): 1858 -828x   **e -ISSN (online): 1858-8565**

e.g.

*We are eating lunch. (progressive aspect)

*We have eaten lunch.(perfect aspect)

According to Comrie (1976) the notion of **aspect** refers to "the different ways of viewing the internal temporal constituency of a situation." Aspect is not concerned with relating the time of the situation to any other time-point, but rather with the internal temporal constituency of one situation.

Jacobs (1995:199) defines aspect as the general name given to signify certain ways in which an event is viewed or experienced. An event can be seen as a completed whole, as in progress or as being repeated intermittedly.

The Encyclopedia (2019) confirmed that aspect is the grammatical category expressed in verb forms that refers to a way of looking at the time of a situation:

For example, its duration, repetition, completion.

2.0 The statement of the problem

The problems which the study attempts to investigate those students at university have difficulties in using aspect. Indeed analysis of errors plays a fundamental part of applied linguistics in the field of second language acquisition (SLA) and L2 learners' errors have long been interested for second and foreign scholars. Thus a lot of research has already conducted and this article is going state errors of aspect in L2 learners' essays at university.

Through observation students' performance in written work, many English language teachers have noticed that aspect's errors are always done by L2 learners ,for example, majority of students at university write the progressive aspect mistakenly (It has rained for two hours.(incorrect) and it is correctly they write (It has been raining …) ; this phenomenon has just enforced the researcher to carry out an investigation about these errors in context of academic essay-writing that faced university undergraduates and shed lights upon the sources and causes of these errors to suggest and recommend the best methods of solving or minimizing them.

2.1 The key objectives of the study

The paper aims to:

i) pinpoint the errors of aspect faced by EFL learners in context of academic essay-writing.

ii) recommend techniques that can help EFL learners in correcting and minimizing their aspect errors.

iii) clarify the major factors that make L2 learners commit aspects' errors in essays.

2.2 The questions of the study

This paper will answer the following questions:

i) To what extent do university undergraduates have errors of using aspect in academic essay-writing?

ii) What are techniques to correct and minimize the university undergraduates' errors in aspect?

iii) What are the main factors that make L2 learners commit aspect's errors in essays?

2.3 The hypotheses of the study

i) The university undergraduates have errors in using aspect in academic essay-writing.

ii)There are possible techniques to correct and minimize the university undergraduates' errors in aspect.

iii) There are specific factors that make L2 learners commit aspect's errors in

    essays.

158

SUST Journal of Linguistic and Literary Studies (2022) **Vol.22.No. 4 Sptember (2021)**
ISSN (text): 1858 -828x **e -ISSN (online): 1858-8565**

2.4 The significance of the study

This paper is surely significant to the students, because it helps them to overcome their difficulties in aspect. Furthermore, the students' errors have always been of interest and significance to teachers, syllabus designers and test developers" Keshavarz (1994:124).

Corder (1967) points out those errors are of great significance for several reasons. First to the teachers, they explain to them how far the learners have progressed and what remains to them to learn. Second, they provide researchers with the evidence of how language is learned and what strategies or procedures learners use in learning the language. Third, errors are indispensable to learners as a tool that the learners use so as to learn. Thus the making of errors is a strategy employed by the learners.

Lastly, this paper is so essential for educationalists in order to be aware about the role of understanding aspect in enhancing essay-writing at tertiary education. So this paper is concerned with the students of Sudan University of Science and Technology, college of languages who have problems in using grammatical aspect in their essays.

2.5 The method of the study

To fulfill the objectives of this article, the descriptive, analytical, qualitative and experimental methods were used beside the test for the university undergraduates as a tool for the study.

2.6 Limitations of the study

The scope of this study is limited to errors of aspect in essays among university undergraduates and it is confined to English language students at Sudan University of Science and Technology, college of languages. The findings of this study can, therefore, not be applicable to other EFL learners elsewhere for any different environmental or cultural reasons.

3. Review of the Previous Studies

The interpretation of aspect becomes so clear once a situation is said to be ongoing or completed (Cf. Smith (1991), Sasse (1990), and Brinton (1968).

Ranamane T. David (2009) ''Discourse Functions of Tenses and Aspect in Setswana Narration Text.'': Linguistics Ph.D., University of South Africa. The main purpose of this thesis was to explore in detail the discourse functions of tense and aspect in selected Setswana narrative texts by D.P.S. Monyaise, a famous Setswana author from Soweto, Johannesburg. These discourse functions are arrived by examining:

(i) The uses and significance of the various tenses and aspects with respect to foreground and background.

(ii) The uses and significances of overt and covert past tense marker and

(iii) The uses and significances of tenses and aspects that the author uses to manipulate the sympathy of the reader(s) The researcher made the claim that proper analysis of the functions of tense and aspect was the domain of discourse. In researching this topic along these lines, the researcher adopted Reinchenbach's (1947) division of the time line in terms of the time (S), the time of the event (E), and the reference (R).Furthermore, he interpreted the differences between tense and aspect in terms of deixis, interpreting tense as deictic and aspect as non-deictic in nature.

Added to that the deictic feature is necessary in the interpretation of tense as situation-external and aspect-situation internal (Cf. Comrie (1985), Smith (1991).In this thesis it has been proved that the semantics of tense and aspect serves as a point of departure for their narrative and non-narrative functions. The discourse function of aspect such as grounding and interpersonal functions were subjected to thorough evaluations.

In another study Sawalmeh M.M. (2013) claims that aspect's errors is one of the common errors that Arabic speakers encountered. In his research ''Error Analysis of Written English Essays'' explores the kinds of errors made by a group of Saudi made EFL learners at University level in their written work and that is one of main objectives of the study. The current findings of this thesis have gone some way towards enhancing the understanding of categorizing and diagnosing the errors in English essays writing of the EFL Saudi university students. Lastly, Farahat S. H. (1994) suggests that especial emphasis should be laid on the perfect aspect. The main findings of his study "A Study of Written Performance of University of Khartoum" were to identify and analyze the common and frequent grammatical errors of students and the result considered tense and aspect errors as the most common among them.

5. Data Analysis

Statement: Misuse of correct form of progressive aspect is a common error.

Table (1)   **Pre-test**

Control- group

Section	Percent		
	Correct answer	Incorrect answer	Total
	28.1%	71.9%	100%

4.The Methodology of the Study

Method and Material

To fulfill the objective of the article, the descriptive, analytical, the qualitative and the experimental methods were used. The article design was structured and particularly prepared to explore an investigation into students' errors of aspect in academic essays.

The subject of the current article are (56) students. It is worth mentioning that the investigation also intends to meet several requirements such as reliability and validity, as argued by Bachrnan and Cohen (1998) who states that "any measuring test must meet requirement like reliability and validity.

This study adopts a qualitative approach that explains the phenomena based on a numerical data.

A test was design to diagnose the fundamental problems that face EFL students in aspect's errors in their essays.

The test was used as a data collection tools. Particular procedures and steps were flowed in collecting the data. To check the content validity of the test, the researcher ran a pilot study, where statements of the test were distributed to some experts; according to their comments, the numbers of the statements were reduced. Also, some of the statements were modified.

	1.7%	98.2%	100%
	29.8%	70.2%	100%
	45.6%	54.4%	100%
	24.67%	75.4%	100%

Table (2)   **Post-test**

Experimental Group

Section	Percent		
	Correct answer	**Incorrect answer**	**Total**
	92.9%	7.1%	100%
	78.6%	21.4%	100%
	60.7%	39.3%	100%
	60.7%	39.3%	100%
	83.9%	16.1%	100%

Statement:

Misuse of correct form of perfect aspect is a common error.

Pre-test

Control Group

Table (3)

Section	No	Mean	Std.Deviation
	56	6.1	2.23
	56	0.7	1.63
	56	3.6	2.97
	56	5.2	3.48
	56	7.0	3.00

Post-test (Experimental Group)

Table (4)

Section	No	Mean	Std.Deviation
	56	7.7	1.62
	56	6.1	3.03
	56	5.4	2.50
	56	5.8	3.05
	56	7.2	2.77

6. Results and Discussion

The above tables showed a comparison between the pre-test and post-test of the experimental group. The experimental group was taught aspect implicitly and control group was inspected aspect explicitly. The former one achieved better results in the post-test than the pre-test. The main target of making these tables is to show the different results between correct answers and incorrect ones of the pre-test and post-test.

The responses showed that the total average of learners correct answer of the pre-test was (71.9%) while (28.1%) for incorrect answers. Added to that the responses showed that the total average of learners answers of the post-test was (92%) while (7.1%) for incorrect answers of the same group. Small differences were found between the two tests results. The results of the previous tables displayed the fact that in all cases the experimental group achieved progress in forming correct aspect in written work. The experimental group learns aspect through (ample exercises, drills, tasks and variety of correction techniques and strategies) faced fewer difficulties and was able to write more fluently and accurately than the control group. The discussion showed that the results provided by various activities and thus there was a quick development. As the result of that the experimental group was able to advantage from the circumstances provided by enough practice such as exercises, drills, tasks, correction techniques, group discussion and pair work. All these factors involved together to solve students' errors of aspect in essay-writing.

7.0 Conclusion

7.1 Findings

According to the description and analytical methods, quantitative and qualitative approaches as well as the test as the tool of the study, the researcher has had the following findings:

1. University undergraduates are unable to use aspect properly in academic essays.

2. Undergraduates are unaware of techniques of pinpointing and correcting their mistakes and errors of aspects in essays.

3. The knowledge of error analysis plays a fundamental role in removing or minimizing the errors of aspect in essay-writing.

4. Aspect is one of the most troublesome areas of English language that can encounter L2 learners.

5. Students lack techniques in order to avoid errors of aspects in essays' writing.

6. It isn't possible to compose an impressive and understandable essay without avoiding errors in aspect.

7. The majority of students' errors in writing essays are due to the lack of the knowledge of error analysis.

8. It is clear that the students of 4th year in SUST, college of languages have shortages of exercises and drills in aspect.

9. It is obvious that some teachers of English language don't pay attention to provide their students ample practice in aspect.

10. Students don't possess enough practice in writing essays.

7.2 Recommendations

Recommendations of this study are based on the findings. Therefore, the researcher has recommended the following:

1. Teachers and students should have adequate methods and techniques for dealing with errors of aspects in essay-writing; they have to put in mind that making errors regarded as a device the learner uses to learn.

2. Teachers should pay attention to the role of aspect in enhancing L2 learners' essays.

3. Students should have sufficient drills and exercises about aspect as well as having some

4.model pieces of essays; these activities can improve their written work.

5.Both teachers and learners ought to pay attention about importance of error correction techniques in developing writing skill. Some of these techniques are self-correction, peer correction, group correction, teacher correction etc…

6. Essays cannot be learned without learning aspects. So, teachers should give students adequate practice about them because practice makes them writing perfectly.

7.It is a good strategy that the teacher should be so kind and patient in the way he/she corrects. Always the teacher should encourage the students to keep trying new language they have learned and assure them that making errors isn't bothering; it is Ok and natural in the process of learning languages. So the learners have to require teachers' support and encouragement.

8.The ideal teacher ought to have variety of strategies to facilitate the process of learning, for example, giving the learners an opportunity to self-correct, or applying peer –correction in the classroom. Some students learn better when they are corrected by their classmates instead of teachers.

9.Teachers shouldn't correct every single error and mistake. He/ She ought to keep error correction relevant and make sure that the students benefit and learn from it.

REFERENCES

"**Aspect**". Concise Oxford Companion to the English Language. Encyclopedia. com. 2019

Bachman Lyle F & Cohen Andrew D. "**Interfaces between Second Language Acquisition and Language Testing Research**": Cambridge University Press.

Corder, S. P. **(**1967**). "The Significance of Learner's Errors'':** IRAL5, 4: 147-170.

Comrie , B. (1976) "**Aspect**": Cambridge University Press .

Comrie,Bernard(1985) "**Tense**": Cambridge University Press.

Farahat, S. H. (1994) "**A Study of Written Performance of University of Khartoum**": Ph.D. dissertation, University of Khartoum.

Jacobs, R. A. (1995) "**English Syntax**" :Oxford University Press.

Keshavars, M.H.(1994) "**Contrastive Analysis and Error Analysis**": Rahnama Publication.

Ranamane, T. D.(2009) **"Discourse Functions of Tenses and Aspect in Setswana Narration Text"** : Linguistics Ph.D., University of South Africa.

Sawalmeh M. M. (2013) "Error **Analysis of Written English Essays**": The case of students of the Preparatory Year Program, University of Hail, Saudi Arabia

Smith, V. & Tsimpli, I. A. (1991) "**Linguistics Modularity**": A case study of Savant,Linguist ,84,351_5.