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The Types of Errors in Second Language Writing

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Abstract

The article gives information about teaching writing skills in second language study. It shows some problems that second language writers encounter while creating text in a second language. It also recommends some possible solutions to overcome these issues during the writing process.

Keywords: writing, punctuation, spelling, lexical errors, style.

Introduction

Writing in second language learning is the ability to express a learner's opinions in the written language without any predicaments. Sometimes some learners consider that they are not required to study this skill. Because some learners believe that acquiring speaking and acquisitions is enough to communicate with each other, it is highly recommended to learn writing skills for some reasons. It is impossible to communicate with each other without speaking and listening skills. Because one of the communicators may be disabled to speak or listen, this case justifies that foreign language learners must learn how to write in foreign languages accompanied by the two skills mentioned above. This article explains what kinds of mistakes they make and how to avoid some mistakes during the writing process to write well in a second language.

Literature Review

Writing is the ability to express opinions, ideas, and feelings in written language. Many scholars have different and identical views on it. Jack Richards thought that writing ability mainly involved developing linguistic and lexical knowledge and familiarity with the syntactic patterns and cohesive devices that allow for sentence combining and form the building blocks of texts [1]. Charlene Polio considered that writing could be something through which one communicates information to a broad audience, a tool through which one accomplishes real-life tasks or a modality in which teachers construct pedagogical activities to help students learn the

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language [2]. Ann Raimes stated that writing helped the students learn by reinforcing the grammatical structures, idioms, and vocabulary teachers taught their students [3]. That is why many scholars try to create innovative ways of teaching writing to second language learners. J.J.Jalolov, G.T.Makhamova and Sh.S. Ashurov said that teaching writing proposes mastering the text format as a typical text layout as congratulation and condolences, telegrams, etc. [4]. However, all foreign language learners have not managed to master writing. Wilga.M. Rivers many writing weaknesses in advanced classes can be traced back to a lack of systematic practice during the earlier stages of the language course [5]. There are some types of errors for the learners during the writing process. They are frustrating for learners—the reason why is that they decrease the quality of their written work.

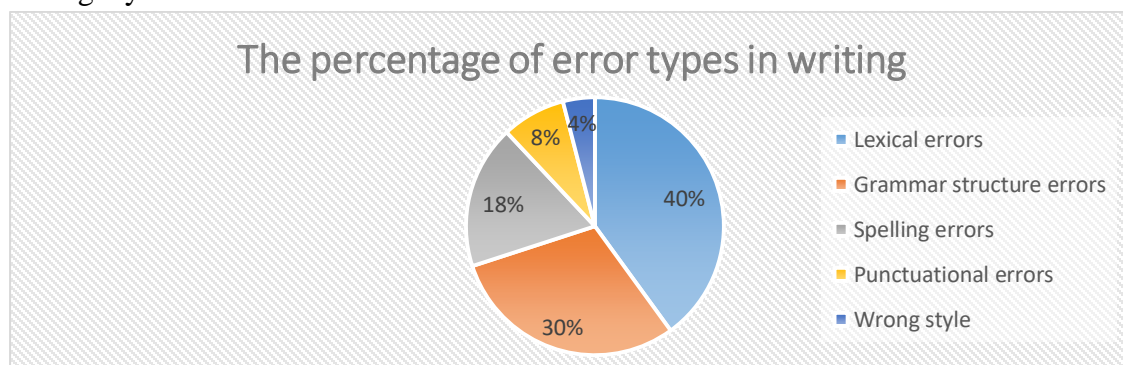
Methods And Data Collection

To conduct this research, 100 students were selected, and they were interviewed about writing and the types of writing errors. The process of interviewing lasted about 25 minutes on average for each interviewer. In total, it took eight days to finish the interviews. They answered the questions related to frequent writing types of errors according to their own experience in writing. Their answers were recorded in a voice recorder during interviews. Then the interviews are made a note to come to conclusions about the research generally. After having done it, the results of the research were pointed out.

Results

The results showed that students have the following types of errors:

- Lexical errors
- Grammar structure errors
- Spelling errors
- Punctuational errors
- Wrong style



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40% of second language learners complained that they made lexical errors while writing a text or message. They admitted that when those readers told about their misunderstanding in the writers' texts, they realized them. They said that they did not acquire enough knowledge of lexicology and semantics during interviews. As a result, they had the issues like that 30% of the interview participants said that they had grammar structure errors. Two reasons for it were identified:

1. Too much rapidity of writing speed;
2. Lack of grammatical knowledge

Using the first reason, the human brain may not control following the grammatical knowledge in memory under overpressure. As a result, foreign language learners may unconsciously make those errors, and they may not realize them if they revise the written work. For the second reason, they did not gain grammar acquisition attentively, or they did not learn at all according to their answers to the questions in the interview.

Nearly one of the fifth of the participants stated that they had spelling errors. They complained that they could not remember the correct forms of some complicated or too long words. That is why they made those types of errors unintentionally.

Only 8% of the learners made mistakes related to punctuation. They admitted that they did not get enough knowledge about how to put punctuation marks in proper places. They said they tried not to employ them frequently due to their lack of information about their usage. In addition to this, they could only manage to put full-stop, and question marks inappropriate places. That is why nearly all of them did not use the other ones.

Very few, that is to say, 4 percent of the participants stated that they had problems with the writing style. They said that they knew about the writing styles, but they were not aware of the usage of proper structures which must be used or must not be used in one style.

Discussion

Spelling errors:

Spelling errors are common mistakes which most learners come across. Sometimes some learners complain about facing up to spelling errors in writing complex and long words owing to lack of memory. According to Penny Ur, spelling was not difficult as learners thought because the majority of English words were spelled phonetically [6].

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Punctuational errors: There exists punctuational errors which result from non-usage of punctuation marks or the usage of improper punctuation marks in improper places of the sentence. It may lead to misunderstanding of readers of the written text. Diah Safitri said “one of the things that make it easy for readers to understand the context and the meaning of writing is the use of punctuation correctly” [7]. Some foreign language learners indicated that punctuational errors were not serious errors. Because they thought that they were not important to effect context meaning of the written work.

Grammar structure errors. Since some learners have shortage of information about grammar and sentence structure, they can not manage to use proper structure in setting the sentences. There is an example for this problem.

No sooner teacher got out the room when the bell had rung. And the students were in a hurry having lunch before the next lesson began.

Actually, grammar structures in the first sentence (namely, verb tenses) were exchanged as opposed to grammar structure rules. The gerund verb having must be “to have " in the second language.

Lexical errors:

Lexical errors are related to the usage of inappropriate words in inappropriate places. It results from lack of information about lexicology and semantics. There is an example for it.

When her brother broke her hair pin suddenly, Lucy smiled at him in angry.

Here, actually, there must be the word mourn (it means to look at somebody/something angrily). Because the word smile has positive meaning. But the sentence has negative meaning in general. Foreign language learners face up to this kind of problem while creating a written text. Wrong style. Although some learners don't have above mentioned errors, they may be mistaken in this type. This can be seen a wrong choice of writing style, or lack of information about proper writing structures of writing styles.

Here, an sample is given below in the example of letter.

Dear Mr Johnson,

How are you? I'm writing to request you a delay about my job application interview because on that day my uncle's wedding day. That's why, I have to be with him there.

He may be frustrated at me if I don't participate.

I hope you will take my request into consideration.

Thanks in advance.

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With lots of love,

Lucy

This letter style is formal but it is written in informal format. Because the writer used various abbreviative versions of words and informal letter expressions (how are you?/ with lots of love).

In general, there exist above mentioned errors in writing when the second language writer create a text or message.

Conclusion

To sum up, writing is not an easy task or process in second language study. It is possible to face up to some problems related to it, like above-mentioned ones for second language learners. So they may discourage students and teachers in the writing process. However, there are some recommended optional solutions to overcome them.

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