

Error Analysis in Oral Production of Turkish Learners of English^(*)

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Abstract: *In this study, the errors committed by Turkish Learners of English as a foreign language in oral production and the sources of these errors were studied. Corder's model (1971) was used to identify these errors. The procedures of error analysis were explained in detail. In order to find out whether the materials used in the experimental study need revision and improvement, a pilot study was performed. To see the effects of proficiency on the errors and whether extra input the subjects obtain outside the classroom affect their speech, subjects were given a multiple-choice test and questionnaire. Having identified the errors and investigated the sources of these errors made by Turkish Learners of English as a Foreign Language, some pedagogical implications were considered. Especially, error correction techniques during the classroom activities were presented.*

Key Words: *Error Analysis, speech production, Corder's Method (1971)*

İngilizceyi öğrenen Türk Öğrencilerinin Konuşmadaki Hata Analizleri

Özet: *Bu araştırmada, İngilizce'yi yabancı dil olarak öğrenen Türk öğrencilerinin İngilizce konuşmada yapmış oldukları hatalar ve bu hataların nedenleri incelenmiştir. Bu hatalar belirlenirken Corder'ın (1971) metodu kullanılmıştır. Hata analiz prosedürleri de ayrıntılı olarak incelendi. Araştırmada kullanılacak olan materyallerin değişmeye veya gelişmeye ihtiyaçları olup olmadıklarını belirlemek için bir ön çalışma yapıldı. Deneklerin seviyelerinin hatalar üzerine etkisi olup olmadığını görmek ve sınıf dışı etkenlerin öğrencilerin konuşmasını etkileyip etkilemediğini anlamak için de bir çoktan seçmeli test ve bir anket uygulandı. İngilizce'yi yabancı dil olarak öğrenen öğrencilerin yapmış oldukları hatalar belirlenip nedenleri saptandıktan sonra, bazı pedagojik tavsiyelerde bulunuldu. Özellikle ders etkinlikleri esnasındaki hata düzeltme teknikler sunuldu.*

Anahtar Kelimeler: *Hata analizi, konuşma, Corder Metod (1971)*

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Introduction

Every learning in human life is a process. In every process, human beings make mistakes, misjudgements, and errors; especially, while learning a novel attitude. Like in all processes, humans also commit errors in language learning: both in the Native Language Acquisition and Foreign Language Learning. These two processes differ from each other. The errors committed during native language acquisition are logical with regard to the linguistic system whereas the errors produced in the process of foreign language acquisition may originate from different sources such as overgeneralization, language transfer and so on.

The primary goal of all languages is to aid humans to communicate with each other, to convey their thoughts, to read and to write. These can be provided within written language or speaking language. For many of English language learners, speaking seems to be a great problem. Speaking differs from writing; for example, when speaking, learners can make modifications in their message they convey by repeating, rephrasing, hesitating, starting again, gesturing. On the other hand, while writing learners can think properly at least for a while before they write. An effective writing requires a good organization, and, additionally, the learner can turn back and correct or erase the items that he does not want to use. But in speech, this is not the case. The learner cannot turn back to correct his items. But he can improve his message by using body language. In writing, the learner does not have the same chance, so he has to write his opinions thoroughly.

Turkish learners of English have difficulties especially in speech since they have limited opportunities to make oral practice in the target language. They hardly get any extra input outside the classroom, which is the cause of learners' insufficiency in speech. This is of course proved within the questionnaire applied to the subjects in this study.

The ignorance of speech activities stems from some reasons. For instance, learners never feel obliged to use it outside the classroom. And, maybe the most crucial one, speech proficiency is ignored in most of language tests and exams. Only the learners' writing abilities are taken into account. Naturally, these lead learners to neglect speech.

Considering these facts, the present study has been carried out to identify the errors committed in oral production and also to investigate the sources of these errors. In view of the findings, the pedagogical implications will be considered.

This study examines speech errors made by Turkish learners of English. The key term used in the study is defined differently, but a striking aspect of the definitions is the fact that errors are deviant forms of language use which are not produced by native speakers. The studies dealing with error analysis provide insights into foreign language learning. Brown (1987) defined error analysis as "The fact that learners do make errors and these errors can be observed, analysed and classified to reveal something of the system operating within the learner led to a surge of study of learners' errors, called 'error analysis'." Ellis (1997) identified five major sources of:

1. Overgeneralization
2. Omission
3. Misinformation
4. Misordering
5. Language Transfer

Dulay, Burt and Krashen (1982) have classified them as given and discussed below:

- 1- Linguistic Category
 - a) Phonology
 - b) Syntax and Morphology (grammar)
 - c) Semantics and Lexicon (meaning and vocabulary)
 - d) Discourse (style)
- 2- Surface Strategy Taxonomy
 - a) Omission
 - b) Addition
 - 1) Double Markings
 - 2) Regularization
 - 3) Simple Addition
 - c) Misinformation
 - 1) Regularization
 - 2) Archi-forms
 - 3) Alternating forms
 - d) Misordering
- 3- Comparative Taxonomy
 - a) Developmental Errors
 - b) Interlingual Errors
 - c) Ambiguous Errors
 - d) Other Errors
- 4- Communicative Effect Taxonomy
 - a) Global Errors
 - b) Local Errors

1. Materials and Methodology

A. The Design of the Study

Naturally, all foreign learners, learning the target language, tend to think in their own language and transfer rules of their mother tongue to this language. But, as languages differ from each other, their transfers, in most cases, are negative and cause difficulty

in speaking. And speaking is different from other. For example in performing these two skills, students hardly have difficulty since they are relaxed. As to speaking, they force themselves in order to be careful because they have no chance to turn back. They think and speak simultaneously. In writing, they have a chance to go back and correct the things they do not like as.

On the other hand, foreign language anxiety is another factor that discourages learners. Researchers and theorists have known that anxiety is often associated with language learning and it deeply affects students' performance. Therefore, a pilot study was carried out before the main study in order to test the impact of the data collection materials, that is cartoons which will be used in the main study and a multiple-choice test assessing learners' proficiency levels. In relation with cartoons, we wanted to see if students were able to talk about cartoons and also if we have good cartoons to collect sufficient data that will include samples of common errors committed by learners. Beside the cartoons and the multiple-choice test, a questionnaire was given to find the extra input they obtain from other sources.

Design of the Pilot Study

This pilot study based on a small corpus of spoken English produced by Turkish learners of English. It aimed to find out whether materials need revision and improvement. Three subjects took part in the pilot study: one subject attending the Department of English Language and Literature and one subject attending the Department of English Language Teaching at Atatürk University, and one subject who is a graduate student from the Department of English Language and Literature of Ege University. Their ages ranged from 20 to 24. One of them was male, the other two were female. One of the female subjects was a graduate and the other was a student. The brief summary of the subjects' features is given in Table 1.

Table 1. Subjects' Features

	AGE	SEX	SCHOOL	PROFICIENCY SCORE %
SUBJECT 1	20	MALE	UNIVERSITY	80
SUBJECT 2	24	FEMALE	UNIVERSITY	60
SUBJECT 3	23	FEMALE	GRADUATE	76,6

These students were first given the questionnaire to understand whether they have received some extra input from other sources apart from course instructions. The results of the questionnaire showed that Subject 2 hardly received extra input in English outside the classroom. She circled the negative options for almost all of the questions. She also produced few sentences and as a result of this, her corpus' size was small. The other two subjects circled some other options beside the negative option 'No'. Nevertheless, all the subjects answered the question 'Getting help from your relatives to improve your English.' negatively and this implied that they did not receive input from different sources.

Secondly, the multiple-choice test was given to the subjects. The aim of this test was to assess students' proficiency since students' language aptitude can vary from one to another. This test consisted of 30 questions relating grammar, vocabulary and reading comprehension. The analysis of the results revealed that students managed to answer some questions but not others.

Finally two pictures illustrating the effects of industrialism on the lives of human beings were shown to the subjects and they were asked to talk about the pictures. The sentences and utterances produced by them were recorded and transcribed. In the transcription, the suprasegmental aspects such as intonation, pause, stress, etc. were ignored as the aim of the study was to identify the common oral errors made by Turkish learners of English.

The manual analysis of the sentences produced by the subjects indicated that students had difficulty in using articles, prepositions and agreement in numbers. The results obtained from the pilot study are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Findings of the Pilot Study

	Number of Words in Corpus	Grammatical Errors Raw Score	Lexical Errors Raw Score	The Percentage Score of Grammatical Errors	The Percentage Score of Lexical Errors
SUBJECT 1	226	9	5	3,98	2,21
SUBJECT 2	110	10	4	9,09	3,63
SUBJECT 3	229	6	4	2,62	1,74

The results indicated that grammatical errors were more than the lexical ones. As can be seen from the results of proficiency test, there was not a huge difference between the subjects' proficiencies. The results in Table 2 indicated that subject 3 who was exposed to English much more than the others could utter more utterances and more complex sentences than the others. For example, Subject 2, who was less exposed to English than the other subjects uttered 110 words and had difficulties with speaking. She almost circled the answer 'no' for all the questions in the questionnaire. For example, Subject 2 committed the same error several times: "...the are pick up...". All the subjects made errors in the use of tenses and they do not know the correct forms of some verbs; in other words, they do not know whether it is used in passive or active voice. For example, one of the subjects uttered 'life is developed' and the other said '...things are not changed for them...'. Agreement in number was one of the common errors made by subjects. For instance, Subject 5 said 'I see women in these two pictures'.

The results demonstrated that the main sources of the errors were learner's mother tongue and the incomplete knowledge of target language. As the two subjects are hardly exposed to English except the classroom activities, they have difficulties in using the

target language. They are under the influence of mother tongue or they are unable to perform what they know. Almost all the subjects made lexical errors which implied that they have incomplete knowledge. They also produced incorrect adjectives and nouns.

At the end of the pilot study, some modifications were made in view of the results. As mentioned before, the fourteenth question was replaced with another item and some new cartoons were added. The reason why they were added was that the subjects did not speak more than two or three sentences when they were shown just two cartoons. It was thought that subjects would produce more sentences when they had more cartoons in their hands.

Design of the Main Study

Participants

There were seventeen students in the main study whose level of English proficiency was intermediate. In fact, there were three more students but they were excluded from the study since the number of words they produced was fewer than even a hundred.

Six of the subjects were from various public schools in Erzurum and the rest of the subjects were the students attending the Department of English Language and Literature in the Faculty of Arts and Science at Atatürk University. The age range was between seventeen and eighteen for high school students and between twenty and twenty one for university students. In the main study, only three of the subjects were male and the others were female.

All of these subjects from high school and university were EFL learners who had attended a one-year preparatory course before their education. At the end of their course, they had been assessed with an examination and then they passed the course. However, being in the same class was not the right criterion of having the same proficiency level. Regarding this fact, the proficiency test used in the pilot study and slightly modified afterwards was administered to the subjects and their level of English proficiency was found. The scores obtained by the students were close to each other as can be seen in Table 3. In the light of these results, their proficiency level was identified as intermediate.

B. Materials and Procedure

According to Corder (1967, cited in Ellis 1994: 48) there are five steps in error analysis research:

1. Collection of a sample of learner language
2. Identification of errors
3. Description of errors
4. Explanation of errors
5. Evaluation of errors

In order to perform these procedures, the questionnaire focusing on the extra input the subjects might have obtained from other sources outside the classroom was given to the subjects. Extra input, especially in the form of listening and speaking, would help learners to improve their speaking ability and to reduce the number of incorrect items.

This questionnaire was designed to find out whether there was the impact of such an intervening factor. The questionnaire comprised ten questions. The first four questions were about the subjects' identity such as name, gender and the length of the period in which they had been learning English. The other six questions were related to different input sources and their availability to the subjects.

Table 3. Subjects' Features and Their Proficiency Levels

	AGE	SEX	SCHOOL	PROFICIENCY SCORE
SUBJECT 1	18	MALE	HIGH SCHOOL	76,6
SUBJECT 2	18	MALE	HIGH SCHOOL	76,6
SUBJECT 3	19	MALE	HIGH SCHOOL	86,6
SUBJECT 4	18	FEMALE	HIGH SCHOOL	76,6
SUBJECT 5	18	FEMALE	HIGH SCHOOL	80
SUBJECT 6	18	FEMALE	HIGH SCHOOL	80
SUBJECT 7	21	FEMALE	UNIVERSITY	86,6
SUBJECT 8	20	FEMALE	UNIVERSITY	86,6
SUBJECT 9	20	FEMALE	UNIVERSITY	86,6
SUBJECT 10	20	FEMALE	UNIVERSITY	80
SUBJECT 11	20	FEMALE	UNIVERSITY	80
SUBJECT 12	20	FEMALE	UNIVERSITY	80
SUBJECT 13	20	FEMALE	UNIVERSITY	80
SUBJECT 14	20	FEMALE	UNIVERSITY	76,6
SUBJECT 15	20	FEMALE	UNIVERSITY	80
SUBJECT 16	21	FEMALE	UNIVERSITY	80
SUBJECT 17	20	FEMALE	UNIVERSITY	86,6

After the questionnaire, some cartoons, either downloaded from the Internet or taken from some public newspapers, were shown to the subjects and asked to tell us what they see on each cartoon. To encourage the subjects to speak more in the target language some questions such as 'What do you see on this cartoon? What do the people do?' and 'What do you understand from the cartoon?' were asked. Their whole speeches were recorded and then transcribed by ignoring the phonological aspects of the data.

C. Analysis of the Data

As for the analysis of the errors committed by the subjects, as explained, the model developed by Corder (1971) was used. Both 'overt' and 'covert' errors were identified and possible and plausible correct forms were decided for the incorrect items and the difference was described as the type of error.

In the meantime, errors made by the learners were classified into two groups: grammatical and lexical errors. Grammatical errors included structure, articles, preposition, tense, etc. Lexical errors comprised incorrect lexical items and lexical choices. Finally, the numbers of grammatical and lexical errors were added to each other to find the total number of errors for each subject. Following this analysis, the results were converted into percentage scores.

Scoring

In the analysis of the results obtained from the multiple-choice test, each correct answer received 3.33 point. Incorrect answers and blank answers received 0 points but did not delete a correct answer. These scores were converted into percentage scores. The total score one could obtain was a hundred. The results of the multiple-choice test are given in the section of Results and Discussion.

The data was analysed by the researcher and another rater. The whole data set was given to the second rater and asked to identify the incorrect items as regards the grammatical and lexical correctness. The number of errors found by the second rater was counted and then the correlation was calculated to see whether the analysis and identification of errors were properly made. Pearson correlation for the two raters was 0.79 and it indicated a strong correlation when considering the fact that the second rater was not given any training.

2. Results and Discussion

The results of the analysis relating age, sex, school and proficiency scores are in Table 3. Considering the scores of the multiple-choice test, the proficiency level of the subjects was accepted as intermediate as the mean score was 80.5.

The calculation of the scores according to the school the subjects attended displayed that as regards proficiency the mean score of high school students was 80 and the mean score of university students was 82.3. Although the proficiency levels of the subjects were close to each other as can be seen from Table 3. showing the results of the grammatical and lexical errors for each subject and also the results of the error analysis conducted by two raters, the size of the corpus they produced differed from each other. This can be related to their ages and the period of learning English. University students were very relax at the time of data collection but high school students faced some problems while speaking. This was most probably connected to the language anxiety and education system putting pressure on learners in high schools. First of all, students were afraid of making errors but the university students knew that making errors is a part of language learning process.

In addition, high school students had another handicap which was connected with the education system. They attended preparatory class before starting their education in high school but English was just a course among fifteen other courses. However, it was important for English major university students. The problem of speaking in the target language was a big one for this group as well because they did not have enough opportunity to practice it in daily activities even in the school.

The results of the questionnaire filled by the subjects indicated that some subjects especially the university students, were exposed to English much more than the others. This influenced the data they uttered. To illustrate, Subject 9 usually watching movies, videos and television programmes produced more utterances than the other subjects whereas Subject 5 and Subject 6 and three of the subjects excluded from the study due to short sentences they produced circled the option ‘No’ for all questions. That is they did not listen, speak, write and read in the target language outside the classroom. They were all high school students and spent their time to prepare for the university exam by carrying out test activities.

The size of the corpus containing the data uttered by the university students was high when compared with the size of the corpus produced by the high school students. Therefore, the percentage scores were given according to the size of individual production of each student to have a clear picture of the data analysis.

After analyzing the data from learners’ corpora, the number of errors for each subject group, that is high school students and university students was found and the percentage scores were computed. The overall results of this calculation are in Table 4.

Table 4. The overall results of the corpora for different students’ groups

	Number of Words	Gr.	Lex.	Total	Percentage
High School	2167	116	27	143	6.59
University	5211	171	39	210	4.02

Taking the raw number of errors made by each student group into account, it seemed that university students produced more incorrect items than high school students. Yet the calculation of percentage scores with reference to the total number of words in each corpus altered the picture and revealed that the opposite was the case. In other words, high school students’ errors were more than university students’ as they produced fewer words than university students. It was the same when examining the data for grammatical and lexical errors. They produced more errors for both types.

The percentage scores found according to the size of individual corpus produced by each student showed that some learners made more errors than the others. For example, Subject 6 and Subject 1 from the high school students and Subject 15 and Subject 11 from the university students. The proficiency scores of three subjects were 80 but Subject 1’s proficiency score was 76.6. The subjects with the lowest error percentages were Subject 2 among the high school students and Subject 9 among the university students. The proficiency scores of these subjects were 76.6 and 86.6 respectively. Therefore, to attribute the success or failure to the proficiency in general English knowledge may be misleading when considering the individual scores.

Subsequent to the analysis of the overall results with reference to different subject groups, the data was analysed to figure out the distribution of grammatical and lexical

errors into sub-groups like article errors, preposition errors, and lexical choice errors. To clarify these sub-groups, two examples are given in the following:

After deciding to classify errors into two different groups as grammatical errors and lexical errors, some sub-groups related to grammar subjects were identified in the analysis of the data. In a sentence such as

- There is two women in the picture.

The error was classified as subject-verb agreement. In another sentence

- The women were collecting dust.

The word 'dust' was accepted as a lexical choice error since the right word is 'litter' or 'carbage'.

In addition to the raw scores of the grammatical and lexical errors, the percentage scores were found for different types of errors. These results are presented in Table 5.

Table 5. The Percentages and Total Numbers of the Errors

	High School		University	
	Total	Percentage	Total	Percentage
Articles	30	1.38	44	0.84
Prepositions	29	1.33	42	0.80
Sentence Structure	26	1.19	38	0.72
Agreement in Number	4	0.18	7	0.13
Tense	2	0.09	20	0.03
Subject + Verb Agreement	15	0.69	20	0.03
Language Transfer	9	0.41	0	0
Gerunds and Infinitives	1	0.04	0	0
Lexical Errors	27	1.24	39	0.74
Number of Words in Corpus	2167		5211	

The percentage scores indicated that Turkish learners of English encounter difficulties in the use of articles, prepositions, agreement in number and so on. The results also showed that the learners had difficulties in the use of lexical items.

The results revealed that the main sources of errors were learners' native language and the incomplete knowledge they acquired about the target language. For example, some learners committed errors of subject verb agreement due to the incomplete knowledge of the target language. Subject 5 uttered 'This picture are different.'

Articles do not exist in Turkish and hence they frequently forgot to use articles (e.g. First picture, they are collecting their...). In this example, the learner omitted the article and the preposition.

As to lexical errors, they had difficulties in using some words. They could not remember some words' English version and they preferred to use them with Turkish versions (e.g. one of them *taşıyor* the book).

On the other hand, why Turkish learners have difficulties in speaking can stem from language anxiety. There are some other sources of language anxiety for Turkish learners such as personal reasons, teachers' manner in the classroom, and teaching procedure (Öztürk, 2003). Teachers' manner and teaching procedure are not as common as personal reasons. Because they change from person to person, from time to time, from place to place and so on. But personal reasons are common sources of language anxiety. Personal reasons are identified in three categories (Öztürk, 2003: 31): low self-confidence, self comparison to others and learners' beliefs. In the study carried out by Öztürk (2003), the students made the following statements about low self confidence:

--- When I want to speak English in class, I feel anxious, because I am not successful in speaking. I cannot depend on my ability in speaking.

Students indicated that they thought they could not communicate effectively in a foreign language. This reduced their confidence and discouraged them to speak in English.

When it comes to self comparison to others, students often compare themselves to others and this negatively affects their performance. Because they are afraid of being less competent than the others in the classroom. So they cannot improve themselves. For instance, two of the subjects in the same study said:

--- Everyone was very successful in the presentation. This discourages me to see myself less competent. I was not very bad, but I was so anxious. I was trembling and I thought I should never finish the words.

As seen in the last statement, the good speaking learner actually gives up speaking and by doing this he cannot improve his speech.

As for learners' beliefs about learning English as a foreign language, they believe that it is too difficult to learn. They also express the view that the educational system and the school facilities are inadequate to learn a foreign language.

Finally, it can be said that Turkish learners mostly refuse to speak during the foreign language classes and they prefer to remain silent owing to the language anxiety.

After discussing the overall results for different subjects groups and error types, the detailed analysis concerning the problematic grammatical and lexical errors was made. The main findings of this analysis are presented with some examples in the following part. The results indicated that grammatical errors were more than lexical ones. Turkish learners encounter difficulties in the use of articles, prepositions, sentence structure, tense agreement, subject and verb agreement, agreement in number and so on. As for the lexical errors, the common errors committed by the subjects are lexical choice errors.

Articles: In English, articles are used to make nouns definite or indefinite. But in Turkish, there is no specific item indicating article so it is inevitable for Turkish learners to omit or misuse the articles. Here are some errors committed by the subjects:

1. In first pictures...
2. And the other picture, I see a people...
3. ...were pushed out of this society in second picture.

In the first and the third examples, learners omitted the article 'the'. And in the second example, the learner misused the article 'a'.

Agreement in number: In most of the languages spoken on the earth, nouns have plural and singular forms but there are, of course, some differences between languages. For instance, in some languages, such as Arabic, some words have double meanings: The word 'mother' can be altered into a different meaning, which means 'parents', with an inflection.

In English, nouns are divided into two groups: countable and uncountable. Uncountable nouns cannot be pluralized. In Turkish, this rule 'countable and uncountable distinction' does not exist and, additionally, all nouns may have plural forms. For example, it is very normal for a Turkish learner to produce the following sentences:

- Waters are dirty.
- Weathers are cold.
- I have a lot of works to do.
- I need some informations about the education abroad.

There is another difference between Turkish and English. In Turkish, a singular noun can be used with a plural modifier, such as 'many person', 'several student', 'three picture', or a singular adjective can precede a plural noun such as 'that houses', 'this boys' and so on whereas English requires a plural ending when the preceding adjective is plural: 'many people', 'three pictures', 'these boys'. Here are some errors disregarding this difference between Turkish and English:

1. I see a people... (Subject 1)
2. Now I see two picture... (Subject 2)
3. I see women in these two picture. (Subject 5)
4. There are three women at this pictures. (Subject 6)
5. I understand from this pictures that ... (Subject 9)
6. They are not farmer... (Subject 9)
7. ..because there are animal, big animal.... (Subject 10)
8. In both picture,... (Subject 13)
9. ...we should be near the near our friend who are in trouble. (Subject 14)
10. ...there are two person. (Subject 17)

Thirdly, such errors can also be made due to the lack of enough knowledge about the target language. In Turkish, the words are pluralized by adding -ler,-lar plural suffixes, which change according to vowel harmony, and the Turkish learners of English overgeneralize this rule to English. Yet in English, some words cannot be pluralized with -e, -es, ies as they are irregular plural items. For instance, the word ‘man’ cannot be pluralized as ‘mans’. The correct plural form is ‘men’. Finally, it can be said that Turkish learners tend to make errors as irregular pluralization does not exist in Turkish.

Prepositions: Prepositions do not mean anything when they are used alone. Some prepositions have meanings alone but they, in order to be understood, have to be used with other words or word groups. The main difference between Turkish and English prepositions is the place where they are used. In English, it precedes the word or word group whose location, time and manner it describes whereas in Turkish it comes after the word or word group and even case markers can be used in this function.

I will go to Ankara.

Ankara`ya + gideceğim.

Ankara- buffer- Dat. Case Marker +go- FUT.Tense- 1st Sing. Pro.

Some incorrect items used by the subjects are given below:

1. because they earn freedom with working... (Subject 3)
2. I will say something these pictures. (Subject 4)
3. And forth picture, there is... (Subject 5)
4. ...First picture, they are collecting their... (Subject 6)
5. A man is shouting the child. (Subject 7)

It is clear from these examples that Turkish learners either omit prepositions or misuse them. For instance, in Examples 2,3, 4, 5 students did not use the prepositions about, on and at. And in the first sentence, Subject 3 used ‘with’ instead of ‘by’.

Sentence structure: The subjects produced incorrect sentences which do not obey the rules of sentence construction in English. The following examples make this point clear:

1. People same but places different. (Subject 1)
2. Another one only holding... (Subject 2)
3. ...the bird is knowing the meaning. (Subject 3)
4. They are they may be borried them them (Subject 4)
5. Neither do anybody. (Subject 7)
6. They are happy, became free... (Subject 8)
7. ...and they are pick up cash... (Subject 11)
8. I see place dirty city. (Subject 12)
9. In the second, people are ten people. (Subject 13)
10. The man hold on the tree, hold on the tree. (Subject 14)
11. They are fully wear whose... (Subject 17)

In Examples 1, 2, 7 and 11 students did not use the auxiliary verb (to be) or did not attach the –ing suffix to the main verb. They did not also add –es to the main verb in Example 5. Example 3 disregarded the rule concerning the verbs which do not have continuous form. That is, the stative verbs like have, know, think and the verbs related to senses such as smell, taste, etc. are not used in the continuous aspect.

Subject - verb agreement: The number of subject and verb should be in agreement. In English if there is a singular subject, the verb is to be singular. Similarly, the plural subject requires a plural verb. The number of some structures such as ‘there is/are’ is determined according to the following noun occurring in the sentence. The plural noun is used with a plural form and the singular noun is used with a singular form.

In view of the data gathered from the students, they were not aware of this basic rule in the target language and produced the following sentences:

1. ...the women is cropping... (Subject 1)
2. ...but one of them are in the first... (Subject 2)
3. He listen, he listen the other one. (Subject 3)
4. ...the other bird want to ... (Subject 4)
5. The picture are different... (Subject 5)

In the first example, Subject 1 used ‘is’ instead of ‘are’. In the second example, the learner was unaware of the use of the phrase ‘one of them’. The verb should be related to the word ‘one’, not ‘them’. The learner uttered ‘are’ instead of ‘is’. In Examples 3 and 4, learners did not produce the verbs with –s in the Simple Present Tense. As it is known, in this tense third person singular pronoun requires a verb with –s or –es.

Time sequence: In the production of compound and complex sentences learners should be careful, the sentences produced should be in line with the time they use. They are not allowed to combine a sentence which expresses a past event with another sentence which explains an event taking place just now. The sentences produced by the subjects, however, disregard this rule as can be seen in the following examples:

1. ...he *understand* the false thing they *made*. (Subject 3)
2. They *looked* each other but they *don't see* any... (Subject 9)
3. One of them *took* their *took* his head from his body and he *is* shouting... (Subject 10)
4. ...I also *saw* two birds and they *are*...(Subject 11)

Lexical Errors

Two reasons are put forward to account for lexical errors made by learners. First, Turkish students easily think in Turkish and naturally find the English equivalents and this process causes interference. Second, it originates from the lack of enough vocabulary competence. The data analysed in this study provided supporting evidence both of these explains, as can be seen in the following example:

1. ...at their holiday ay1(Subject 1)
2. ... and the weather is autumn. (Subject 4)

3. ...who taşıyor in her stomach are very... (Subject 4)
4. ... because they are making their occupation. (Subject 6)
5. ... that three women are putting crops from... (Subject 7)
6. I think they are trying to rescue from their thoughts... (Subject 8)
7. The bird tries to escape his friend from... (Subject 9)
8. ...he intermits the strong wind to hard times... (Subject 12)
9. In the third paper, ... (Subject 13)
10. ...or to get rich. (Subject 14)
11. ... and a man who try to rescue from this wind and try to use his, try to use... (Subject 16)
12. There is a man who catch his head. (Subject 17)

Students confuse some words that are similar to each other: 'escape' with 'rescue', 'catch' with 'hold'. In the tenth example, Subject 14 used the verb 'get' instead of 'become'. The first and the third sentences are good examples for showing the influence of native language on the target language. Learners used Turkish versions of the words when they did not know their English correspondence or could not remember English equivalent.

Limitations of the Study

In the study, the corpora including utterances and sentences produced by the high school and university students comprised nearly 8 000 words. As regards the issue under investigation, the size of the corpora should be bigger than this; however, the whole processes of finding enough subjects as volunteers and make them talk about the data collection materials and then the most tiresome part, transcribing the utterances were so difficult. Especially, transcription took a long time and it was necessary to listen to the recordings again and again.

Another study dealing with the same topic should take this limit into consideration and attempt to solve this problem. In relation with transcription of the data, the limitation concerning the transcription of the phonological features also appeared. Since it required a special training ignoring the prominence of these features was compulsory.

Pedagogical Implications

In the light of the results obtained from the analysis of the data, some tentative suggestions can be made. First of all, teachers should be aware of the language anxiety students experience during spontaneous speech in English. As mentioned before, language anxiety has vital importance for learners in the process of language learning. Thus, teachers should encourage students to speak in the activities and thus to overcome their anxiety. As emphasised before, speaking activity is neglected in Turkish education system. Students prefer listening, writing and reading to speaking; therefore, they are not able to improve their speech though they are good at other activities. Teachers should include more speaking activities in classroom language teaching. They can even design

their own activities giving opportunities to students to speak and express themselves in the target language. At the beginning of speaking activities, some fixed phrases and colloquial expressions can be introduced to the students. Then they may have more time to plan the rest of the sentences they want to produce.

Some other forms of anxiety also affects students' performance of English in high school. Though they have preparatory class before education at high school, in the next years, they think that it is useless and it is a waste of time. Hence, some precautions should be taken to arrange this system. Otherwise, ignoring the importance of English is inevitable and natural. Teachers should draw students' attention to the importance of English.

Regarding the data obtained from the questionnaires filled by the subjects, learners should spend more time on the target language. They should watch videos, television programmes, listen to radio programmes and music in English, and read books, magazines and journals in the target language on their own to improve their knowledge. Since it is the era of technology, students should also make use of its products such as internet, e-mail, etc. But almost all the subjects hardly obtain any extra input from other sources. It should not be forgotten that language learning is a complex process.

Maybe the most important of all is the approach of teachers to the language teaching. Teachers should give importance to grammatical competence and lexical competence. So the learners can master the structures such as determiners, prepositions, agreement in number, etc. Teachers should provide interesting and stimulating materials for the learners. They can give students some exercises to direct their attention to the problematic structures. At the end of all activities, teachers must check whether the topic is comprehended. If the topic is not comprehended thoroughly, the teacher should support the topic with different activities such as giving more exercises and role-play activities.

Textbook designers should pay more attention to the areas where learners have difficulties and if necessary they should integrate more exercises related to these areas into the textbook series. Another point is that the method the textbook follows does not matter; teachers should change the method when necessary. In other words, teachers can add something to the topic or can omit something from the topic. They can design more activities. So, it can be said that the teacher is the most important guide for language teaching.

Error correction in face-to-face communication is really important in language teaching. It seems difficult for even an experienced teacher to deal with errors. Right type of feedback given to learners might help them acquire the target language early and correctly. On the other hand, the teacher should also abstain from over-correction since it sometimes prevents the learner from concentration on the subject. This also may cause learners to be silent for fear that they could commit errors. So, sometimes they should be let for self-correction.

Apart from the teachers' priorities, there are some other points to consider. A list made by Bartram and Walton (1999: 34) presents these points as follows:

1. Does the error affect communication?
2. Are we concentrating on accuracy at the moment?
3. Is it really wrong? Or is it my imagination?
4. Why did the student make this error?
5. Is it the first time the student has spoken for a long time?
6. Could the student react badly to my correction?
7. Have they met this language point in the current lesson?
8. Is it something the students are making?
9. Is this an error that several students are making?
10. Would the error irritate somebody?
11. What time is it?
12. What day is it?
13. What is the weather like?

It has vital importance because every reaction made by the teacher may have a negative or positive effect on the learner. Klassen (1991, cited in Gök. Ş, 1996: 142) has stated that the teacher should focus on the gravity of errors, that is, to what extent errors hinder communication. It can be said that teachers, therefore, must deal with global errors rather than local ones.

Conclusions

This study discussed the view that errors committed by the Turkish learners of English should be taken into consideration to develop better and effective teaching strategies. This study focused not only the errors but also the question of whether students obtain any extra input from outside the classroom.

In the light of the results, it can be said that learners have some difficulties while speaking the target language. Learners do not know the target language properly or they have incomplete knowledge about certain topics and hence they can be affected by their mother tongue when constructing sentences. As it was discussed before, some of the errors committed by the learners originated from the native language interference.

In order to prevent learners from transferring the features of their mother tongue into the target one they learn, teachers should be very careful and they should be sure that the topic they teach in the class is comprehended well. They should check at the end of the lectures or in the next one whether the learners absorb the rules, structures and lexical items of the target language. Teachers should also understand whether learners avoid constructing the structures they do not know thoroughly or not.

Speech anxiety is a problem students encounter in the use of the target language. Teachers should try to help the learners reduce their speech anxiety by offering different activities. They should enlarge the topic or diminish the sections in the textbooks where necessary. Teachers should concentrate on the target topic rather than the textbook.

Turkish National Education Ministry should make some arrangements as well. The importance given in the prep class should also be given in the next years and some arrangements should be carried out for the university exam. Due to the negative effects of the university entrance exam, high schools students do not improve their foreign language knowledge after prep class; they hardly participate in speech activities. As for the university students, as they have just entered the university exam, they naturally have difficulties in English within the first few months.

Learners should also be exposed to the target language more. They themselves can read magazines and journals, have an e-mail friend and watch TV in the target language to enhance their knowledge in the foreign language. Learners' parents should also contribute to their developments in the target language.

Suggestions for Further Studies

As indicated before, there were several weaknesses that should be noted with respect to this study. The first one is the lack of equal number of students for each gender to assess whether there is a difference between genders. There were only three male subjects in this study. That is why, the errors could not be evaluated in accordance with gender. This issue can be investigated in another study.

Another point that should be considered in a future research project is the size of data. It was very difficult to make the subjects speak. Upon the limited data collected in the pilot study, the number of the cartoons was increased but this was not enough. The size of the data can be enlarged in the new studies. This can be done in two ways: first, the researcher can find more subjects, and second, some mind provoking questions can be asked.

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