

Dealing with the Students' English Writing Error by Using U-Shaped Learning and Chomsky's Generative Grammar

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Introduction

There are phenomena happening in learning a second or foreign language. The students sometimes or always make some errors as the process of learning. Two types of errors gained from a writing class of a seventh semester university students in this study are as the examples. This study tries to show the nature of the error from linguistic perspective of Krashen's Monitor Hypothesis and the Chomskyan framework. Besides, this study gives alternative solution by proposing Chomskyan's generative grammar and U-shaped learning in order that the learning language can be effective.

Naturally occurring classroom data in the form of learners' errors

There are two types of error: (1) Error in terms of Language Form, and (2) Error in transfer/inter-language errors.

1). Type of Error in Terms of LANGUAGE FORM

No	Type of Error	Examples
1	Omission	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> One of country [one of <u>the</u> country] Marijuana is danger [dangerous] If marijuana legalized... [If marijuana <u>is</u> legalized...] ...people will very easy.... [...people will be very easy....] It seem [It seems....] Football <i>not only</i> teaches student ..., it <i>also</i> helps [...not only..., <u>but</u> also]
2	Addition	
	a. simple addition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ... realize <u>about</u> that. Beside that, [Besides,]
	b. double marking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ...which can intoxicates people... [intoxicate] That's is very dangerous. [That is very dangerous] ...if the bar existed in <u>an one</u> area, [one]
	c. regularization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Marijuana have [Marijuana has] Many consumers does not.... (...do not]
3	double function (object	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ...marijuana and another things as like <i>its</i> [it]

	& possessive)	
4	Misordering	This is what makes marijuana in Indonesia always become a serious problem that never-ending → This is what makes marijuana always become a serious and never-ending problem in Indonesia

2) Type of Error in Transfer/Inter-Language Errors

The data found classified as type of error in transfer/inter-language errors are as follows:

- *Penggalang for student of junior high school*
- *...underground society. [...masyarakat bawah....]*
- *...make you suffering.... [...membuatmu menderita....]*
- *...as a stepping stone drug, leading to heroin....*
- *...effects of heavy marijuana use. [efek dari penggunaan ganja yang berat]*

The Nature of These Errors from a Linguistic Perspective.

1) Krashen's Monitor Hypothesis Perspective

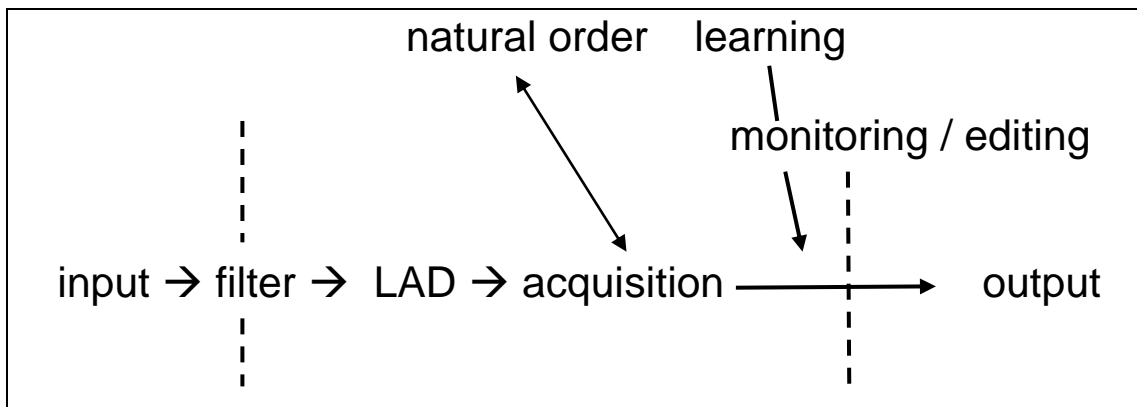


Figure 1. **Krashen's Monitor Theory**

The two types of errors above happen because of some key issues. Firstly, the set of key word of *acquisition* and *learning* in the early 1980s based on the work by Krashen (1980, 1982, 1985), a distinction was proposed between acquisition and learning. Basic to Krashen's approach is the assumption that in learning an L2, learners develop two independent L2 knowledge systems, one referred to as acquisition and the other as learning.

In non-technical language, acquisition is the unconscious “picking up” of a language whereas learning refers to conscious knowledge of an L2 (i.e., knowing the rules, being aware of them, and being able to talk about them). The unconscious “picking up” here can be caused of the low filter. This can be seen from the example of error below:

- ...underground. [...bawah....]
- ...stepping stone, [...batu loncatan....]
- ... heavy marijuana use. [...penggunaan ganja yang berat.]

Secondly, we refer to the basic concept of SLA of “interlanguage”. The assumption underlying this concept is that learners *create a language system*, known as an interlanguage. The learners impose structure on the available linguistic data and formulate and internalize a linguistic system.

- *Beside that, [Besides,]*
- *People will very easy [People will be very easy]*
- *Football not only teaches student ..., it also helps*
→ [...not only..., but also]
- *Penggalang for student of junior high school*
→ *Penggalang is for junior high school student*
- ...underground society [...masyarakat bawah]
- ...make you suffering....[...membuatmu menderita....]
- ...as a stepping stone drug, leading to heroin.... [sebagai batu loncatan yang mengarah pada penggunaan heroin]

It appears that the learner has created a system (unlike the system of either Indonesian or English) where the infinitive (*be*) after auxiliary (*will*) is missing. Implied in the concept of interlanguage is the *centrality of the learner* (as opposed to the teacher, textbook, materials, etc.) in the learning.

How do learners “create” interlanguages? One of the most important contributing factors is *input*. This refers to the TL (target language) that is “available” to learners. It comes from a variety of sources including the language that the learner hears, reads, or sees-in the case of signed language.

In other words, the input is not a sufficient condition for language learning. The fact of its presence must be noticed in some way. As a prerequisite to noticing some feature of the input, learners must focus their

attention on and isolate some portion of the input. Once the input is noticed, learners have to determine what patterns are present. And, to do this, they first have to segment a stream of speech (a written text, the task is easier because spaces usually exist between words) into meaningful units (probably words). Then they have to organize the words into syntactic units and come up with hypothesis about what the grammar *might* be like. If the grammar taken is incorrect, the results are shown in the example of error in omission, addition, double-function, and misordering above.

Within the framework that L2 learning was based on a behaviorist view of language in the 1960s and 1970s, the major driving force of language learning was the language to which learners were exposed (*the input*). Input had major importance because it was believed that learning a language involved imitation as its primary mechanism. But then, the subsequent research made it clear that L2 speakers do not merely imitate; they create a system that allows them to produce novel utterances.

2. Chomskyan Framework

Language acquisition research in the Chomskyan framework proposes certain assumptions “came with the territory”. (Sheldon, 1977)

First, a learner constructs a grammar. According to this conception of language acquisition, the grammar plus the psychological operation that we use to produce and understand sentences together form our linguistic and psychological competencies as a kind of “central intelligence agency.”

Second, a learner acquires a *transformational grammar*.

Third, the kind of grammar that learners construct, that is an actual speaker grammar or a mental grammar, is the same grammar that the linguist constructs. In other words, the linguist’s grammar is psychologically real. It has selected from among the many possible generalizations that might be made about the sentences of a language certain ones that are linguistically significant and that correspond to the generalizations that a child hearing such utterances would actually arrive at in constructing her grammar.

Fourth, the learner constructs the simplest, optimal grammar capable of generating the set of possible utterances in the language. Thus, the learner should be constructing the maximally general rule possible.

Fifth, the formal, *linguistic* simplicity criteria that a linguist uses to arrive at a descriptively adequate linguistic grammar will be the same *psychological* criteria that learners use in constructing their mental grammar.

Sixth, a transformational grammar that is written for a child and one that is written for an adult are equivalent even though the grammar writers use different evidence of knowledge. The adult grammar is based on speaker's intuitions of grammaticality, of sentence relatedness, and of ambiguity. No such evidence is ordinarily used for the child, because it is exceedingly difficult to get, for young children at least.

A seventh assumption is that all learners have the same language acquisition device, so that individual variation in actual speakers' grammars will only be due to environmental differences in input, not to different intellectual abilities, or to different learning strategies or styles. The environmental differences in input are influenced by the *extreme* differences in IQ as in the case of mentally retarded individual like Genie who suffered severe environmental deprivation (Curtis, 1974 in Sheldon). The second, environment is influenced by the interaction of the child and parent. And the third is the influence of training procedures. The latter may help the learner enable to practice and memorize linguistic forms, and thus to construct certain generalizations and perhaps ignore others. Therefore, the failure in memorizing some linguistic forms results in the error produced by the students in type of language form.

Linguistic Principle Proposed to Solve the Problem

1. Chomsky's Generative (Transformational) Grammar

By means of tree structure which is based on the structure of American English. (W. Nelson Francis, 1958), there are four syntactic structures:

1. Structure of modification deals with phrases: NP, VP, AdjP, AdvP, PrepP
2. Structure of predication consists of a Subject and a Predicate
3. Structure of complementation consists of a Verb and a Complement
4. Structure of coordination deals with coordination, such as: and, but, etc.

2. U-Shaped Learning

This is the case that language learning cannot be described in a step-by-step fashion. U-shape behavior (Kellerman, 1985 in Gass, 2000) refers to stages of linguistic use. In the earliest stage, a learner produces some linguistic form that appears to conform to TL norms (i.e. error free). Then, at a subsequent stage the learner appears to lose what she or he knew at stage 1; the linguistic behavior at Stage 2 now deviates from TL norms. Stage 3 looks just like Stage 1 in that there is again correct TL usage. This is a phenomenon of language learning.

Therefore, the linguistic principle proposed to solve the problem is using U-shape learning. The students are encouraged to have peer-correction or they have to refer to the theory of language form. By doing so, the students can recall their memory about the language form. The type of error in language form can be solved by doing u-shape learning.

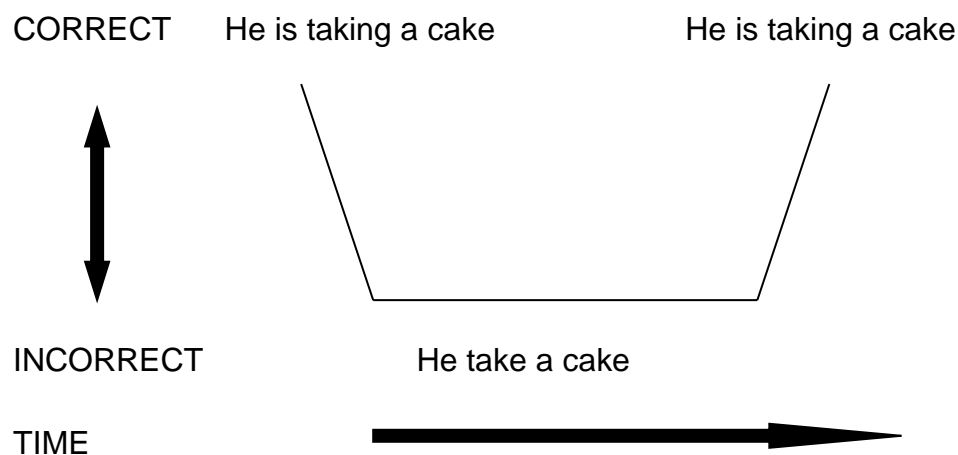


Figure 2. U-Shaped Curve

Conclusion

By reading through the example of the learner's created language result (the error), the conclusion that can be drawn are: first, it is inevitable that not all learners organize their L2 grammars in exactly the same way. Therefore, it is reasonable to assume that although teachers can teach (i.e. organize the language for students), learners may or may not learn precisely what teachers

believe they are teaching. Secondly, language learning is a long process; results are not instantaneous. Learners must take the input and have the opportunity to “work” with it by using it in an interactive setting. Thirdly, language learning is not easy. We, as teachers, need to have realistic expectations of our students’ successes as well as their lack of success. It is through an understanding of processes of language learning, we can come to appreciate the students’ task in language classrooms.

References

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Appendix:

ERROR FOUND IN A WRITING CLASS

I. Types of Error in Terms of LANGUAGE FORM

No	Type of Error	Examples
1	Omission	<p>In spelling We will get lung <u>diseas</u>, [disease] ...feel stress and socks, [feel under stress and shock]</p> <p>In structure One of country [one of <u>the</u> country] Marijuana is danger [dangerous] If marijuana legalized... [If marijuana <u>is</u> legalized...] ...people will very easy.... [...people will be very easy....] It seem [It seems....] Football <i>not only</i> teaches student ..., it <i>also</i> helps [...not only..., <u>but</u> also]</p>
2	Addition	
	a. simple addition	... realize <u>about</u> that. Beside that, [Besides,]
	b. double marking	...which can intoxicates people... [intoxicate] That's is very dangerous. [That is very dangerous] ...if the bar existed in <u>an one</u> area, [one]
	c. regularization	Marijuana have [Marijuana has] Many consumers does not.... (...do not]
3	double function (subject & object)	...marijuana and another things as like <i>its</i> [it]
4	alternation (in gender)	
5	Misordering	<p>This is what makes marijuana in Indonesia always become a serious problem that never-ending → This is what makes marijuana always become a serious and never-ending problem in Indonesia</p>

They consume marijuana as their friendship [friend] → double function

...marijuana and another things as like its [another things → other things]
[as like → like]

Because the activities in the bar will influenced the people around it.

Marijuana is make the users addicted.

II. Types of Errors with Reference to L1 & L2

1. The errors are probably due to the influence of L1 on L2. They belong to the so-called **TRANSFER/INTER-LANGUAGE ERRORS**
Naturally occurring errors in the classroom:

Penggalang untuk murid SMP

→ *Penggalang for student of junior high school*

Alam, hewan, dan tumbuh-tumbuhan tidak dapat juga bertahan dalam kondisi itu.

→ *The nature, animals, and plants cannot also survive in that condition*

Ini dibuktikan dengan tidak ada negara di dunia ini yang melegalkan ganja.

→ *It is proved with there is no one country in this world that legalizes marijuana.*

Merokok ganja membuat mulut dan tenggorokan panas dan batuk berat

→ *Smoking marijuana can get burning and stinging of the mouth and throat, and get heavy coughing*

Uranium sendiri bukan sumber yang melimpah di negeri ini.

→ *Uranium itself is not overflow resources in this country*

Jika ganja dilegalkan berarti pembuat hukum negara mendukung perdagangan ganja.

→ *If marijuana legalized means the lawmaker of state support the marijuana trade.*

Mereka hanya ingin bagaimana membuat mereka bahagia.

→ *They just want how to make themselves happy.*

...underground society.

→ *masyarakat bawah*

...countless street terms for marijuana...

→ *istilah yang dapat dihitung banyaknya sepanjang jalan ...*

...effects of heavy marijuana use

→ *efek dari penggunaan ganja yang berat*

Gateway drug ("gateway drug" leading to the eventual use of more destructive and addictive drugs such as heroin and cocaine.

→ *obat pembuka*

...has caught the attention of Mass Media

→ *... telah mendapat perhatian media massa*

...whether do it or not.

→ *...apakah melakukan atau tidak.*

...it can also to refresh your mind, ...

...you put your future to the darkness.

...make you suffering....

...as a stepping stone drug, leading to heroin....

...to improve skills and compactness.

III. INTRA-LANGUAGE ERRORS / errors caused by over-learning

Marijuana ... contains of narcotics substance in it's seed
[Marijuana ... contains of narcotics substance in *its* seed]

So the question is should marijuana legalized or not.
[So, the question is whether or not marijuana should be legalized]

IV. DEVELOPMENTAL ERRORS occurring due to the “natural development” of learning L2.

Many people might think that boost student morale
→ Many people might think that boosting students' morale

Most people say that marijuana makes the violence in society.
→ Most people say that marijuana is one of the causes of violence happens in the society

For instance, get trouble with our body,
→ For instance, getting trouble with our body,

The first reason is coming from social view....
→ The first reason comes from social view..../The first reason deals with the social aspect....

Indonesia's climate supports marijuana plants to grow fertilely.
Potencial → potential