

An analysis of Errors In The Use of Modal And Auxiliary Verbs Made by the Learners of Class 10th in Gonda, Uttar Pradesh

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Abstract

Second Language (L₂, hereafter) learning and teaching is an interesting field of research. During the past few decades, extensive researches have been conducted in this area in an effort to find out a universal model of language teaching and learning. In these substantial efforts, the learners' errors are put under the great consideration. Learners' errors are not the sign of inability of learners but are the evidences of learners' strategies of second language learning.

Keywords- Auxiliary, Linguistics, Vernacular, Assessment

The present study is an attempt to investigate the nature of learners' strategies in the use of modal and auxiliary in the written English. It makes an analysis of the errors in use of modal and auxiliary committed by vernacular medium (Uttar Pradesh Board) students of class 10th in Gonda (U.P) and identifies the nature of learners' errors and explains the possible sources. It also assesses the learners' understanding about the concept of modal and auxiliary and their use.

Objective of the study

Errors in verb phrase is significantly larger in number than other grammatical errors. Certain other researchers, working in the area of syntactic errors agree to it. As Blair's (1956) experiment conducted in Maryland School shows that the learners committed 77% of the syntactic errors in the use of verb phrase. Similarly, Cohen & Robins (1976) found that errors in the use of verbs are very much larger than the other areas. Each syntactic error has the same degree of importance in the process of language teaching and learning. But due to time constrain, the study concentrates on use of particular areas (modal and auxiliary) of verb

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phrase, which causes the greatest difficulties to the learners. The chief objectives of the present study are as follows:

- To identify the errors in selected areas of verb phrase, describe them in linguistics terms and provide possible explanation of their sources.
- To provide some important findings that can assist to improve the process of learning and teaching of English as a second language.

Hypothesis

The hypothesis of this study is:

- Use of modal is the most problematic area for the learners rather than the use of auxiliary.

Research Framework

This study used the framework of J. C. Richards (1974) and Dulay & Burt (1974), to describe and to explain the errors of the learners. This study viewed the collected data as both (I) a performance in which learners create bodies of knowledge from the second language and (II) a performance or process of utilizing first language knowledge in the performance. Thus, it is clear that this study examines the assumptions underlying Contrastive Analysis as well as Error Analysis at the same time.

Research Location and subjects

Gonda, an important district of Uttar Pradesh is research location of this study. The researcher was born and brought up in Gonda (UP) and received his secondary education in a vernacular- medium school in the city. The subjects for this study were randomly selected from the well-reputed private vernacular-medium schools of Gonda. Subjects are the native speakers of Hindi who are receiving formal education of English as a second language by non-native speakers. They belong to the age group of 14+. All of them are preparing for final UP board examination. The medium of teaching and instructions used in the classroom is Hindi. In the English classroom both students and teachers used Hindi. Their exposure to English was very limited as they speak Hindi at home, they do not get any reinforcement outside the classroom. They are well acquainted with the importance of English and try to learn it. Most of the students were taking private tuitions of English outside the classroom.

Data collection tool

For the collection of data, this study used written test as tool. It used clinical elicitation (Coder1973) method by asking learners to write a composition for the collection of data. It comprises a set of five unguided descriptive questions. These questions are context specific in nature and are prepared with special objectives. 120 scripts were collected from three schools. Out of these, only 30 scripts were taken for analysis. The selection of the

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questionnaire was based on two reasonable points – first, the completeness of the answers to the questions, and second to the readability of the responses. All the 30 students used the following number of sentences:

Sentences	Question-1	Question-2
Correct	112	167
Incorrect	68	54
Total	180	221

Analysis

Errors in the use of modal

In response to the first question, learners used modal in 3 out of 68 sentences, where the use of the modal was not required. The spreadsheet of the analysis of the samples of the first question (see appendix-2), shows that these sentences have error of the same nature. The deviations found in these sentences were due to the insertion of modal, for instance:

*I *will* ready. (for 'get')

*I *will* ready to go to school. (for 'get')

*I *will* take bath. (for 'take')

In first sentence, learner used modal 'will' unnecessarily along with adjective 'ready', without using the verb. This error can be considered as the result of 'false concept hypothesized' (Richards 1974:178). In the last two sentences, learners inserted modal 'will'. It can be taken as example of 'ignorance of target language rule restriction' (ibid.:174). In all the sentences learners extended the use of modal 'will' in an environment in which it did not require. Such errors are developmental in nature and outcome of the faulty rule learning of the target language.

In response to the second question, 7 sentences out of 54 had modals. The spreadsheet of the analysis of the samples of the second question (see appendix-2) shows that only one sentence (sentence no. 37) out of 7 had the correct use of the modal. Remaining 6 sentences deviated from acceptable use of modal. The highest number of errors was found due to the deletion of the modal. 5 out of 6 were the result of it, as:

**Five van in school and two play ground in my school.*

(for 'My school has five vans and two play grounds.')

*My school *is* 27 teacher and a very big beautiful garden. (for 'has')

*My school *is* two bus. (for 'has')

The first sentence has a unique sentence construction without the use of the verb and the subject. Errors of such kind do not have the L1 structure and are not the structure of L2. This

kind of error might come under the category of ‘unique goofs’ (Dulay & Burt 1974:115). In last two sentences auxiliary ‘is’ has been used in place of the modal ‘has’. In both the sentences learners violated the limitation of the use of auxiliary ‘is’. Errors of such kind came under the category of ‘ignorance of rule restriction’ (Richards 1971:175). In the last two sentences, learners inserted modal ‘will’ unnecessarily.

Incorrect use of modal was the cause of last erroneous sentence. 1 out of 6 was the outcome of it, as:

*My college *have* a library. (for ‘has’)

In this sentence, learner used incorrect modal ‘have’ in place of ‘has’. Such error might be seen as an example of ‘overgeneralization of target language rule’ (ibid.:174). Learner created such deviant structure in the target language based on his/her experiences of other structures in target language.

The nature of errors

The analysis of errors in the use of modal shows different nature of errors in use of modal which can be categorized into the following types (the number listed on the right hand side indicated the number of question):

A- modal + verb stem *for* verb stem only

*I *will* take bath. (1) (for ‘take’)

B- Use of modal *for* verb stem

*I *will* ready to *going* school. (1) (for ‘get’ & ‘go to’)

Statistical representation of errors in use of modals

Question number	No. of erroneous sentences	No. of modals used	Correct use of modals	Incorrect use of modals	Deletion of modals	Insertion of modals
Q.1	68	3	0	0	0	3
Q.2	54	7	1	1	5	0
Total	122	10	1	1	5	3

In the set of questions used for data collection, 30 students (all students) used modal in 10 sentences out of 122 sentences. 1 out of 10 used modal correctly. Remaining 9 sentences were found the deviant use of modal. The highest number of errors was found due to deletion of modal, where the use of modal was required. 5 out of 9 were the result of it. The second highest number of errors was the outcome of the insertion use of modal in the places where the use of modal was not required. 3 out of 9 were the result of it. The least number of errors occurred due to the incorrect use modal. 1 out of 9 were the result of it.

Errors in use of auxiliary

In reply to the first question, learners used auxiliary only in 30 sentences out of 68. In rest of the sentences, learners avoided the use of auxiliaries. It happened because the answer to the

first question required only the use of simple present tense. The spreadsheet of the analysis of the samples of the first question (see appendix-2) shows that 1 out of 29 sentences had the use of correct auxiliary. Rest of the 29 sentences were found erroneous in nature. The highest number of erroneous structures was found due to the insertion of the auxiliary. 27 out of 29 were the result of it:

- *I **am** 2 o'clock eating in the afternoon. (for 'eat at 2 o'clock')
- *I **am** learn and read there. (for 'learn')
- *I **am** eat food. (for 'eat')
- *I **am** rise 6 o'clock. (for 'arise')
- *I **am** respect elders. (for 'respect')
- *I **am** eat food 2 o'clock. (for 'eat')
- *I **am** awake 4 o'clock early in the morning. (for 'awake')
- *I **am** go to school daily. (for 'go')

In all these sentences learner extended the use of auxiliary 'am' in an environment where it was not required. Learners used auxiliary 'am' as a marker of present tense. Such errors can be taken as the best example of 'false concept hypothesized' (Richards 1974:178). Such interlingual errors refer to the developmental errors. Learners made such mistakes because of faulty comprehension of distinctions in the target language rules. Rest of 2 sentences had erroneous structure due to the incorrect use of auxiliary as:

- *I **am** not stay in *our* home. (for 'do' & 'my')
- *I **am** not take breakfast in the morning. (for 'do')

In both the sentences, learners used 'am' in place of auxiliary 'do'. Such interlingual errors referred to the application of target language rule to context where they did not apply. These errors can be considered as example of 'the ignorance of rule restriction' (ibid.:175).

In reply to the second question, learners used auxiliary only in 33 sentences out of 54. In rest of the sentences, learners avoided the use of auxiliaries. The spreadsheet of the analysis of the samples of the second question (see appendix-2), shows that 11 sentences out of 33 used correct auxiliary. Left over 22 sentences found erroneous in nature. The highest number of deviation was found due to the insertion of the auxiliary. 13 out of 22 were the result of it:

- *My school *is* two bus. (for 'has')
- *She *is* come in school before the bell of prayer. (for 'comes')
- *He *is* also helped during in all moment of life. (for 'helps')
- *He *is* daily take the classroom. (for 'He attends classes daily')

In the first sentence, learner inserted auxiliary 'is' in a restricted environment where modal 'has' was required. This sentence can be perceived as an outcome of 'the ignorance of rule restriction of target language rules' (ibid.:175). In rest of three erroneous sentences, learners omitted the use of third person -s/-es in present tense and used auxiliary 'is' as a marker of

present time. Such examples can be taken as the outcome of ‘overgeneralization of the target language rules’ (ibid.:174).

The second highest number of errors was found due to the deletion of auxiliary. 5 out of 22 were the result of it, as:

*My best friend # Marayam. (for ‘is’)

*His many habits # like me. (for ‘are’)

In both the sentences learners omitted the auxiliaries ‘is’ and ‘are’. Such interesting sentence structures did not find in the learners first language acquisition data also. Learners used a unique kind of sentence structure without verb and concrete sense. Such example can be considered as an example of ‘ambiguous goof’ (Dulay & Burt 1974:115) because such sentences cannot be categorized as either L1 interference or developmental error.

Rest of 4 sentences had erroneous structure due to the incorrect use of auxiliary as:

*School teachers is teaching good. (for ‘are’)

*Indian farmers *was* developing today. (for ‘were’)

In both the sentences, learners used singular form of auxiliary ‘is’ and ‘was’. Such sentences can be observed as ‘overgeneralization of target language rules’ (Richards 1974:174). Learners made such a deviation based on his/her experiences of other structures in the target language.

Statistical representation of errors in use of auxiliary

Questi on no.	No. of erroneous sentences	No. of auxiliary used	Correct use of auxiliary	Incorrect use of auxiliary	Deletion of auxiliary	Insertion of auxiliary
Q.1	68	30	1	2	0	27
Q.2	54	33	11	4	5	13
Total	122	63	12	6	5	40

In the set of questions used for data collection, 30 students (all students) used auxiliaries in 63 sentences out of 122 sentences. 12 out of 63 sentences used correct auxiliary. Remaining 51 sentences were deviated from proper use of auxiliary. The highest number of errors was found due to insertion of auxiliaries in the places where the use of auxiliaries were not required. 40 out of 51 sentences were the result of it. The second highest number of errors was the outcome of the incorrect use of auxiliaries. 6 out of 51 sentences were the result of it. The least number of errors occurred due to the deletion of auxiliaries. 5 out of 51 sentences were the result of it.

The nature of errors

K- Use zero auxiliary(#) *for* auxiliary

*Two buildings of my school # in Gonda. (2) (for ‘are’)

L- Use of is/am/are *for* has/have/had

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- *My school *is* three floors. (2) (for 'has')
- *My school *is* two dress. (2) (for 'has')
- M- Use of is/am/are *for* do/does
- *She *is* not tell a lie. (2) (for 'does')
- *I *am* not stay in our home. (1) (for 'do')
- N- Use of is/am/are + verb stem *for* verb stem + -s/-es (conditional)
- *I am eat food. (1) (for 'eat')
- *I am go to school daily. (1) (for 'go')
- *He *is* daily *take* classroom. (2) (for 'takes')
- *I *amrespect* elders. (1) (for 'respect')
- *He *is live* in Ram Nagar colony. (2) (for 'lives')
- *She *is come* in the school before the bell of prayer. (2) (for 'comes')
- O- Use of 'does' *for* 'do'
- *We *does* prayer daily. (1) (for 'do')

Findings

In the previous chapter, an analysis in the areas of the verb phrase in the performance of second language learners has been attempted to find out the possible nature of errors. This study leads the researcher to the following findings:

- Modal is the most problematic area in these five selected areas. The highest number of errors (26%) was found in use of modal. Learners are unable to distinguish between modal and auxiliary, modals and regular verb. They are unable to determine "which model will be used where?" They make most of the mistakes due to the omission of modal.
- The present study investigation presents a reliable account of the students' interlanguage. The students are able to communicate their ideas fairly but not perfectly. Some of the reasons responsible for it may be poor motivation, unavailability of facilities, lack of opportunities of learning good English, and incompetence of their teachers.
- We cannot ignore the role of context. Learners' utterances are context specific. It is found that some sentences that are correct in isolation but erroneous in context. Context plays an important role in the description of errors.
- Learners made 77% intralingual error, 20% unique error and 3% interlingual error and it supports the hypothesis that learners make interlingual errors more than intralingual errors.

This research had to be delimited in several ways to the non-availability of time. Errors in some areas of English syntax have been investigated; there may be certain other areas of

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equal importance which should be considered, in order to make the study complete. An in-depth analysis of the data would be significant to English language Teaching, psycholinguistics and sociolinguistics as it could highlight the correlation between second language learning and socio-economic background, learners’ attitude and error. A remedial grammar course, specially suited for the vernacular medium students of Uttar Pradesh board, could be constructed on the basis of this analysis.

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Appendix-1

Test Paper

Name: _____ Class: _____

School/College: _____

1. Write a short note of about fifty words on your daily routine.

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2. Write a short note on one of the following topics.

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I- My School II- My Best Friend III- Indian farmer

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: Thank you.

Appendix: 2

DATA ALONG WITH SPREAD SHEET

Question.1. Write a short note of about fifty words on your daily routine.

1. I am 4 o'clock early in the morning
2. I am eat the food 2 o'clock to 4 o'clock.
3. We does prayer daily.
4. We goes college at 8.30 p.m.
5. I am some fruit daily.
6. I am go to school daily.
7. I am eat food.
8. I am rise 6 o'clock.
9. I am respect elders.
10. I am eat food 2 o'clock.
11. I awake at five o'clock morning after that his parents talk good morning.
12. I am come in school read and learn.
13. After my freshening, I have learn my important notes of physics, chemistry and biology.
14. I starts my preparation for the college.
15. To reaches of my home I am starting my coaching preparation.
16. I woke up at 4 o'clock and read the book at two hour.
17. I eating breakfast.
18. I am 4 o'clock early in the morning.
19. I am come to school for 7 o'clock and go back from 1 o'clock.
20. I was reading the tuition for one hour.
21. I brushed our teeth.
22. I am not stay in our home.
23. When I went my house I see the T.V.

24. I am 7o'clock in the morning.
25. I am dress ready.
26. I began study for my school.
27. I doing the breakfast and going to my school.
28. I am return my home at 3 o'clock.
29. I wearing in my home dress.
30. I doing study.
31. I will ready for school.
32. I early in the morning at 4 o'clock.
33. Then I wishes good morning to the teachers and all friends.
34. We got the success.
35. I dinner at night.
36. I early in the morning at 6 o'clock.
37. I will take bath.
38. I will ready to going school.
39. I going to science tuitions.
40. I am sleeping at 10 p.m.
41. I back to school and rest.
42. I watching TV and study.
43. I am 4 am wake up the morning.
44. I am 4 o'clock early in the morning.
45. School come after go to coaching.
46. At 6o'clock I ready the school and 7.15 am out the home.
47. At evening 7 pm I work the school and coatching homework.
48. At 12.00 pm I say to good night all the family member.
49. I read one hour any book and write in our copies.
50. After bathing, comb our hair.
51. I am return to our home.
52. When the school was closed I go for tuition and go to my house.
53. I am dress ready.
54. I am 2 o'clock eating in the afternoon.
55. I am fifteen minute rest.
56. I complete the school home work.
57. I awake at five o'clock morning after that his parents talk good morning.
58. School come after go to coaching.
59. I brushed our teeth.
60. I read one hour any book and write in our copies.
61. After bathing, comb our hair.

- 62. I am 2 o'clock eating in the afternoon.
- 63. I am learn and read there.
- 64. I change my school cloths and wearing in my home dress.
- 65. I brush and go to your room.
- 66. After wake up doing the tooth brush and bath.
- 67. After bath eating the food and ready to came school.
- 68. I am not take breakfast in the morning.

Sen. No	Auxiliary	Modal
	1- Correct	1- Correct
	2- Incorrect	2- Incorrect
	3- Deletion	3- Deletion
	4- Insertion	4- Insertion
1	4	
2	4	
5	4	
6	4	
7	4	
8	4	
9	4	
10	4	
12	4	
13	4	
15	4	
18	4	
19	4	
20	4	
22	2	
24	4	
25	4	
28	4	
31		4
37		4
38		4
40	4	
43	4	
44	4	

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51	4	
52	1	
53	4	
54	4	
55	4	
62	4	
63	4	
68	2	

Question.2. Write a short note on one of the following topics.

I- My School II- My Best Friend III- Indian farmer

1. My best friend Maryam.
2. School teachers is good teaching.
3. My school give me a very lessons.
4. I proud of my school.
5. Two building of my school in Gonda.
6. My school is two bus.
7. My school is three floors.
8. My school is two dress.
9. My college have a library.
10. He is woke up early in the morning and take exercise daily.
11. His many habits like me.
12. She is not tell a lie.
13. She help the poor students.
14. She is come in the school before the bell of prayer.
15. She success in all subjects.
16. He is early in the morning and went to away the morning walk.
17. He is live in the Ram Nager colony.
18. I am went go to school.
19. She comes not late at she says every students don't come late on the school.
20. His mother and father was a good person.
21. My school is good teaching.
22. She comes not late.
23. He come daily school by cycle.
24. She live in my house near.
25. She obey an other.
26. I love is manners.
27. I love him (Sneha, a girl) very much.

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- 28. He is also helped during in all moment of life.
- 29. He is daily take the classroom.
- 30. Five van and two play ground in my school.
- 31. My school is 27 teacher and a very big beautifull garden.
- 32. My school in all teacher talented.
- 33. He gets up early in the morning and went to away the morning walk.
- 34. Indian farmers was developing today.
- 35. He wake up early in the morning and work hard in the fild.
- 36. I am proud of my friend.
- 37. I will go to school daily.
- 38. There are many programme in 15 Aug, 26 Jun, 2 Oct etc.
- 39. My friend father a poor man but is very honestful man.
- 40. My always class first position.
- 41. He is monitor his my class.
- 42. There are twenty teacher in my school.
- 43. Vikas Niliam High school, my school name is.
- 44. I like his very much.
- 45. The teachers are very good behavior by students.
- 46. My school is 24 classrooms.
- 47. He(my school) is a famous school.
- 48. All teacher love him and every boy should try to make a him.
- 49. (My best friend is Subnam.) Her color was so fair.
- 50. I prey God that she gain good success in his life.
- 51. The teachers are very good behaviour by students.
- 52. She and I stands first in our class every year.
- 53. I am reading to Vikas Niliam School.
- 54. My school is famous in dress.

Sen. No	Auxiliary	Modal
	1- Correct	1- Correct
	2- Incorrect	2- Incorrect
	3- Deletion	3- Deletion
	4- Insertion	4- Insertion
1	3	
2	2	
3		
4		
5		

6	4	3
7	4	3
8	4	3
9		2
10	4	
11	3	
12	2	
13		
14	4	
15		
16	4	
17	4	
18	4	
19		
20	1	
21	1	
22		
23		
24		
25		
26	4	
27		
28	4	
29	4	
30		3
31	4	3
32	3	
33		
34	2	
35		
36	3	
37		1
38	1	
39	3	
40		
41	1	
42	1	

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43	1	
44		
45	1	
46	4	3
47	1	
48		
49	2	
50		
51	1	
52		
53	1	
54	1	
