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# An Analysis of Errors in the Use of English Language by Polytechnic Students of Madhya Pradesh

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**ABSTRACT:** This research investigates the prevalent linguistic errors made by polytechnic students in Madhya Pradesh when using the English language. The study aims to categorize these errors, assess their frequency, and explore the underlying causes. Employing both qualitative and quantitative methodologies, the analysis includes written and spoken language samples from students across various polytechnic institutions in the region. Results indicate that errors frequently occur in grammar, syntax, vocabulary, and pronunciation. The paper concludes by offering suggestions to enhance language instruction and proficiency among polytechnic students.

**KEYWORDS:** Linguistic Error, Polytechnic Student, Madhya Pradesh

## I. INTRODUCTION

Proficiency in the English language is vital for students in polytechnic institutions, as it significantly influences their academic and professional growth. As a global lingua franca, English is essential for academic achievement, particularly in technical and vocational training, where it is the primary medium of instruction. Despite its importance, many students face challenges in mastering English, which is reflected in the frequent mistakes they make in both written and spoken forms. This study aims to analyze these errors, identify their root causes, and propose strategies for improvement.

### 1.1 THE IMPORTANCE OF ENGLISH PROFICIENCY IN POLYTECHNIC EDUCATION

For polytechnic students, English proficiency is crucial as they are expected to engage with complex technical materials, participate in discussions, and articulate their ideas effectively. Baugh (2000) underscores the importance of linguistic pride and the role of language in shaping academic identity, emphasizing the necessity of effective language use in technical fields. McCulloch (2019) also highlights that language skills are essential for both academic success and professional competence in a globalized context. Polytechnic colleges offer diploma and vocational programs aimed at enhancing students' employability. Most reference materials and notes are in English, and the technical terminology is predominantly in English. Consequently, students must be proficient in English to advance their careers.

### 1.2 COMMON ERRORS IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE USE

**Grammatical errors:** Grammatical errors were the most frequently observed issues among students. These included mistakes in subject-verb agreement, verb tense usage, and the incorrect application of articles and prepositions. For example, many students often confused past and present tenses, resulting in sentences like "He go to the market yesterday" instead of "He went to the market yesterday." Research by Fairclough (2001) suggests that such errors arise from a lack of understanding of English grammar rules, which are not sufficiently reinforced in the students' educational settings. Additionally, the influence of students' native languages, which may have different grammatical structures, contributes to these errors.

**Lexical Errors:** Vocabulary mistakes were also common, with students often using incorrect words or inappropriate synonyms that did not fit the context. For instance, using "big" instead of "significant" in academic writing undermined the precision of their communication. Crystal (2006) attributes these errors to limited vocabulary knowledge and insufficient practice with academic and technical language. The study found that students often resorted to informal or colloquial language, influenced by their interactions on social media and in everyday conversations, a trend supported by Danesi (2017).

**Phonological Errors:** Pronunciation errors were particularly evident in spoken language samples. Students struggled with certain English sounds that do not exist in their native languages, leading to miscommunication during oral presentations and discussions. For instance, the "z" sound in "was" was often pronounced as "waj," and the "v" sound in "very" as "bhery." These pronunciation challenges align with findings from Evans (2017), who notes that phonological differences between languages can hinder learners' ability to accurately produce certain English sounds, especially for those with limited exposure to native speakers.

**Syntactic Errors:** Syntactic errors involved mistakes in sentence structure, such as incorrect word order, fragmented sentences, and run-on sentences. These errors often made the students' writing difficult to understand and disrupted the flow of their ideas. For example, a common error was the incorrect placement of adverbs, leading to sentences like "She quickly can solve the problem" instead of "She can quickly solve the problem."

Syntactic errors are often linked to students' difficulty in mastering the complex rules of English syntax, which differ significantly from the structures of their first languages. Baron (2008) argues that these errors may also be exacerbated by the lack of emphasis on proper sentence construction in language instruction. Semantic Errors occur when a student uses a word in a context where its meaning is not appropriate. For instance, saying "I enjoy to eat" instead of "I enjoy eating" reflects a semantic and syntactic issue.

**Spelling and Punctuation Errors:** Mistakes in spelling are common, often due to the complex nature of English orthography. Punctuation errors, such as incorrect placement of commas or misuse of apostrophes, also contribute to misunderstanding in written communication.

## II. FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO LANGUAGE ERRORS

Several factors contribute to the errors made by polytechnic students in English. These include inadequate language instruction, limited exposure to proper English usage, and the influence of local languages. Squires (2010) notes that language errors often arise from the sociolinguistic environment in which students are immersed, where informal and non-standard language practices are common. Additionally, Fishman (1991) and Tagliamonte (2016) highlight that language errors can be influenced by age, educational background, and cultural factors.

Interference from a student's first language (L1) is a significant cause of errors. For example, students whose first languages do not differentiate between certain verb tenses may struggle with the complex tense system in English (L2). Furthermore, their native language structures may affect their use of prepositions or articles in English.

Polytechnic students, particularly in non-English speaking countries, may not encounter formal English regularly. Their exposure to the language may be limited to textbooks and occasional lectures, hindering their proficiency in both written and spoken forms. Many polytechnic students come from educational backgrounds where English was not the primary medium of instruction. Consequently, they may possess a weak foundation in the language, impacting their performance at the tertiary level.

## III. DISCUSSION

### 3.1 IMPLICATIONS OF ERRORS IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE USE

The errors identified in this study have significant implications for the academic and professional success of polytechnic students. Grammatical and syntactic errors can lead to misunderstandings in written communication, affecting students' grades and their ability to convey technical information clearly. Vocabulary errors, particularly the use of informal language, can undermine the credibility of students' work and limit their ability to engage with academic and professional discourse.

Pronunciation errors, on the other hand, can lead to miscommunication in oral presentations and interactions, potentially affecting students' performance in interviews and their ability to collaborate effectively in multicultural environments. As noted by McCulloch (2019), these errors can also contribute to negative perceptions of students' language abilities, which may impact their confidence and willingness to participate in discussions.



### 3.2 FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO THE PERSISTENCE OF ERRORS

The ongoing presence of errors among polytechnic students can be linked to several key factors. Firstly, the effectiveness of language instruction within polytechnic institutions may not adequately meet the specific requirements of students, particularly concerning grammar and vocabulary. As noted by Fairclough (2001), there is frequently a gap between the language taught in educational settings and the language necessary for success in academic and professional environments.

Secondly, the influence of regional languages and informal language usage significantly shapes students' English proficiency. This is particularly evident in the vocabulary and pronunciation errors identified in this research. The sociolinguistic context, as described by Squires (2010), fosters the adoption of non-standard English forms, which can be challenging for students to unlearn.

Lastly, the rise of digital communication and the prevalent use of informal language online cannot be overlooked. Danesi (2017) and Evans (2017) have highlighted that the proliferation of digital communication has led to the widespread acceptance of informal language, which may hinder students' ability to navigate different language registers effectively.

## IV. RECOMMENDATIONS

To tackle the issues identified in this study, several recommendations can be proposed. Firstly, polytechnic institutions should enhance their language instruction programs by integrating more focused grammar and vocabulary exercises that address the particular challenges students face. This could involve implementing language labs, peer tutoring, and writing workshops to provide additional support.

Secondly, there should be a stronger emphasis on the use of standard English in both written and spoken forms. Educators can facilitate this by offering more opportunities for students to engage in academic and technical writing, along with providing constructive feedback on their language usage in assignments and presentations.

Thirdly, institutions should increase students' exposure to native English speakers through initiatives such as exchange programs, guest lectures, and online language learning platforms. Such experiences would help students refine their pronunciation and build confidence in using English across various contexts.

Finally, it is essential to acknowledge the impact of digital communication on students' language practices. While it may be unrealistic to expect students to completely eliminate informal language usage, educators can assist them in developing strategies for effectively transitioning between different language registers and employing appropriate language in academic and professional situations.

## V. CONCLUSION

This study has highlighted the common errors made by polytechnic students in the use of the English language and explored the factors contributing to these mistakes. The findings suggest that while these errors are prevalent, they can be addressed through targeted language instruction and increased exposure to standard English. By improving their language proficiency, polytechnic students will be better equipped to succeed in their academic and professional endeavours.

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