

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 General Background

The term “error” is said to have been derived from the Latin word “error”. The meaning of the Latin word “error” is “wandering” or “straying”. Generally, “error” refers to the use of deviated form of language or use of a linguistic item in a way, which a fluent or native speaker of the language regards as showing faulty or incomplete learning in a course of learning a second language.

In addition to this, Corder (1974, p.123) says that errors refer to a systematic deviation from a selected norm or set of norms. It is natural that a learner inevitably commits errors in the process of learning a foreign language. It is an inherent feature in the process of foreign language learning. He further says that the majority of learners’ errors are linguistically quite different from those made by native speakers of English. Second language learners commit errors at both levels of language while the first language acquirers commit mistake and that is also at the performance level, by both the native and non-native speakers.

Generally, error analysis refers to the systematic study and analysis of the errors made by second or foreign language learners. Error analysis is carried

out to find out how well someone knows a language and how a person learns a language as well and to obtain information on common difficulties in language learning. Moreover, error analysis plays a vital role to diagnose the learner's difficulties in learning a foreign language. Error analysis is useful in second language learning because this will reveal learning to teachers, syllabus designers and textbook writers. We could design remedial exercises and focus more attention on the trouble spots.

The study of errors is part of the investigation of the process of language learning. In this respect, it resembles methodologically the study of the acquisition of the mother tongue. It provides us with a picture of the linguistic development of a learner and may give us indications as to the learning process. (<http://www.google.com.np/wikipedia/error/>)

According to Corder, (1981, p.73) "The objective of error analysis is to describe the nature of the learner's interlanguage and to compare this with the target language. That is why; error analysis is a branch of comparative linguistic study"

Stevens (1969, as cited in Richards 1974,p.65), hypothesized:

errors should not be viewed as problems to be overcome, but rather as normal and inevitable features indicating the strategies that learners use. He was conjectured that if a regular pattern of errors could be observed in the performance of all learners in a given situation and if the learners were seen to progress through this pattern, their errors could be taken as evidence not of failure but of success and achievement in learning.

Similarly, George (1971, as cited in Richards 1974, p.66) found that one third of the deviant sentences from second language learners could be attributed to language transfer. From his findings, we can infer that errors are also caused due to L1- interference. To some extent, the first language also hinders in learning the second language. Hence, language transfer has also a certain amount of role in committing errors while learning the second language.

Richards (1974, p.68) found systematic intralingual errors to evoke overgeneralization, ignorance of rule restrictions, incomplete application of rules and semantic errors. He means to say that errors are caused due to the target language itself and sometimes due to the learners themselves. The learners generalize rules even in the exceptions and they commit errors. It is found that some learners learn few rules and apply those rules in all the contexts and they commit the errors. If the target language has a lot of exceptions, the learners of that language also commit great many errors.

Sampson (1971, p.6) suggests that varying situations evoke different kinds of errors unvarying qualities when children are trying to use the target language. If we analyze his statement we can infer that committing an error is an inevitable process. The learners commit many errors due to various reasons. So, there is not a sole factor which is responsible for committing the errors. He also means to say that errors are committed only by the second language learners. Jain (1969, p.13) states:

The realization that the second language learner's errors are potentially important for the understanding of the process of the second language acquisition, and consequently the planning of courses incorporating the psychology of second language learning is a current focus in the literature on modern language teaching.

He further says that arriving at principal means for accounting the source and cause of error is not clear. Hence, he implies that there are not readymade answers to source, cause and significance of errors.

In addition to this, Corder mentions:

From the study of his errors we are able to infer his (learner's) knowledge at that point in his learning career and discover what he still has to learn. By describing and classifying one's error in linguistic terms are building up a picture of the features of the

language, which are causing him/her learning problems (1973, p.266).

Thus, it is well-accepted that error analysis has to do with the investigation of the language of second language learners. Similarly, making of errors is an inevitable and indeed, necessary part of the learning process. A systematic analysis of errors made by foreign language learner is considerable importance. Error analysis is a technique for detecting, describing and interpreting the unacceptable forms produced by learners in learning process using linguistic principles.

1.1.1 Mistakes and Errors

In general sense, mistakes and errors are taken as synonyms. But they are different in the sense that not all mistakes are errors but all errors are mistakes. The term 'mistakes' can be taken as a general as well as specific term whereas error is a kind of mistakes that can be taken as a specific term only because it is committed by second language learners. Clarifying the differences between mistakes and errors,

Corder (1967, pp.10-11) states:

Mistakes are of no significance to the process of language learning. However, the problem of determining what a learner's mistake is and what a learner's error is one of some difficulty and involves a much more sophisticated study and analysis of

errors than is usually accorded them. Errors are significant in three different ways. First to the teacher, in that they tell him, if he undertakes a systematic analysis, how far towards the goal the learner has progressed and consequently, what remains for him to learn. Second, they provide to the researcher evidence of how language is learned or acquired, that strategies or procedures the learner is employing in his discovery of language. Thirdly, they are indispensable to the learner himself, because we can regard the making of errors as a device the learner uses in order to learn. It is the way the learner has of testing his hypotheses about the nature of the language he is learning.

In a layman's sense, mistakes and errors are taken as synonymous. But technically speaking, they are different in the sense that not all mistakes are errors but all errors are mistakes. The term mistake can be taken as a specific term only. In other words, mistakes can be classified into performance mistakes and errors. Performance mistakes refer to the mistakes committed at performance level which are caused by lack of attention, fatigue, carelessness or some other sort of physical defects, they are irregular and inconsistent. Whereas errors are committed at competence levels which are made due to linguistic regions i.e. the results from incomplete knowledge of

rules of language, they are regular and consistence (Corder 1974, pp.122-123).

There is a norm of any language and the deviation from the norm is called mistake in general. Mistakes or errors are determined by the cause of the production of the deviated form of language. If the learner produces derived form because of some non-linguistic reason then, the result is called a mistake. If the learner produces the deviated form of language due to the lack of linguistic knowledge, then, the deviated form is called an error.

Mistakes are caused by lack of attention, fatigue, heavy drinking, carelessness or some other sort of physical defect whereas errors result from incomplete knowledge of rules of language.

Corder (1974, p.123) says that

native speakers of any language claim that errors are committed at competence level. Errors are committed due to linguistic reason i.e. lack of linguistic knowledge. Whereas mistakes are committed at performance level. It is also found that errors are regular and consistent. It means errors occur frequently since students cannot correct themselves.

Thus, it is well accepted by the linguists that errors are committed only by the second language learners.

1.1.2 Classification of Errors

Description of errors involves classification of errors. In this stage, according to Corder (1973, p.277) “An attempt is made to explain errors in terms of the linguistic processes or rules which are being followed by the speaker.”

Corder (1973, p.277) further says that classification of errors can be made at various degrees of depth, generality of abstraction. He talks about two levels of description:

1.1.2.1 Superficial Level

In this level, errors are described in terms of the physical difference between the learners’ deviant utterance and the reconstructed version. For example, the difference between the deviant may be classified into the following categories:

- a. Omission: Under omission, there is a dropping out of the necessary items, *e.g. ‘cow is a useful animal.’ (Omission of ‘the’ at the beginning)*
- b. Addition: Unnecessary elements are added in some sentences, *e.g. ‘They discussed about the issue.’ (Addition of ‘about’)*
- c. Substitution: It means using one element in place of the other, *e.g. ‘He is looking to me.’ (Use of ‘to’ instead of ‘at’)*
- d. Misordering: it means breaking of proper order *e.g. ‘The teacher asked me what was I doing.’ (_____ was I _____ misordered)*

1.1.2.2 Deeper Level

In this level, the superficial level is taken to a deeper description by assigning the items involved in the different linguistic levels namely orthographic, phonological, morphological, syntactic, pragmatic, etc. Errors can be classified in terms of whether the errors are committed by an individual or group of learners, receptive or productive aspect of language, levels of language and sources of errors. Individual errors are those errors which are committed by the individual learner. On the other hand, group errors refer to those which are committed by all the learners of a particular group. Language teacher should focus on group errors as they are committed by all the learners. Productive errors are committed while the learner is speaking and writing. Receptive errors are committed while the learner is listening and reading. Overt errors can be seen on the surface level of performance but covert errors are found only when the situation of the performance is analyzed. Intralingual errors are committed due to the exceptional rules of the same language. Phonological errors are committed while producing the sounds of a particular language. Graphological errors are caused due to the wrong spelling of language items.

Learners generally do wrong choice of lexicon or vocabulary. At that time, lexical errors are committed. Besides, the learners may not produce or write appropriate language items on the particular setting. Then, pragmatic or stylistic errors are committed. Hence, errors can be classified on the basis of number of learner, language skills, visibility of errors and sources of errors and levels of language.

1.1.3 Learners' Errors in Free Composition

Free composition is mainly characterized by the students' freedom in the selection of vocabulary and structure. Since there is student's own choice of words and organization to express their ideas, they may commit errors in spelling, punctuation, grammar, organization of ideas. They may choose wrong lexicon e.g. 'skin-shoes' instead of 'leather shoes.' Sometimes, they will write wrong spelling and that brings the omission of meaning. Students may have wrong spelling due to addition, omission or replacement of letters. In this way, students may commit graphological, grammatical, lexical, stylistic errors in their free composition.

1.1.4 Definition of Strategies

Generally, a strategy is a plan of action designed to achieve a particular goal. It is a scheme: an elaborate and systematic plan of action. Regarding learning strategies, there are several definitions.

Stern (1983 as cited in Rai 2003, p.92) says "in our view strategy is best reserved for general tendencies or overall characteristics of the approach employed by the language learner, leaving techniques as the term to refer to particular forms of observable learning behaviour."

Similarly, Chamot (1987 as cited in Rai 2003, p.92) says "Learning strategies are techniques, approaches or deliberate actions that students take in order to facilitate the learning, recall of both linguistic and content area information."

The given definition clarifies that strategies are used in an effort to learn something about the second language.

From the above definitions, we can also infer that some strategies are linguistic while others are non-linguistic, and that they refer to both general approaches and specific actions or techniques.

In a very broad sense learning strategies are divided into three types: production strategy, which refers to an attempt to use one's linguistic system efficiently and clearly, with a minimum of effort. Communicative strategies are those which are used to deal with the problems of communication, and language learning strategies refers to an attempt to develop linguistic and sociolinguistic competence in the target language.

Similarly, O'Malley and Chamot (1983, as cited in Ellis, 1994, p.165) discuss about three types of learning strategies that learners use to foster their acquisition and learning.

- i. Metacognitive: It includes attempts to regulate language learning by means of planning, monitoring and evaluating.
- ii. Cognitive: Cognitive strategies are more limited to specific learning tasks and involve more direct manipulation of the learning material itself.
- iii. Social affective: This involves the strategies the learners use to interact with the other learners and to native speakers. They mediate various socio-linguistic strategies. This includes working together, co-operating with each other, obtaining and giving feedback, asking for different activities in their own favor. The detail description of the above mentioned learning strategies is given below:

1.1.4.1 Metacognitive Strategies

Those strategies that involve planning for learning are known as metacognitive strategies. They are strategies about learning rather than learning strategies themselves. They are divided into eight types.

Advance organizers: Making a general but comprehensive preview of the concept or principle in an anticipated learning activity.

Directed attention: Deciding in advance to attend in general to a learning task and ignore irrelevant distracters.

Selective attention: Deciding in advance to attend to specific aspects of language input or situational details that will cue the relation of language input.

Self – management: Understanding the conditions that help one learn and arranging for the presence of those conditions.

Advance preparation: Planning, for and rehearsing linguistic components necessary to carry out an upcoming language task.

Self – monitoring: Correcting one’s speech for accuracy in pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary or for appropriateness related to the setting or to the people who are present

Delayed production: Consciously deciding to postpone speaking to learn initially through listening comprehension.

Self – evaluation: Checking the outcomes of one’s own language learning against an internal measures of completeness an accuracy.

Self – reinforcement: Arranging rewards for oneself when a language learning activity has been accomplished successfully (as cited in Brown 1980, p.116)

1.1.4.2 Cognitive Strategies

Cognitive strategies are more limited to specific learning tasks and involve more direct manipulation of the learning material itself. They operate directly on incoming information; manipulating it in ways that enhance learning. They are divided into fourteen types.

Repetition: Imitating a language model, including overt practice and silent rehearsal.

Resourcing: Using target language reference materials.

Directed physical response: Relating new information to physical actions, as well with directives.

Translation: Using the first language as a base for understanding and/ or producing the second language.

Grouping: Reordering or reclassifying and perhaps labeling the materials to be learned based on common attributes.

Note – taking: Writing down the main idea. Important points out line or in writing.

Deduction: Consciously applying rules to produce or understand the second language.

Recombination: constructing a meaningful sentence or larger language sequence by combining known elements in a new way.

Imagery: Relating new information to visual concepts in memory via familiar, easily retrievable, visualization, phrases or locations.

Auditory representation: Retention of the sound or similar sound for a word, phrase or longer language sequence.

Key word: Remembering a new word in the second language by (i) identifying a familiar word in the first language that sounds like or otherwise

resembles the new word, and (2) generating easily recalled images of some relationship between the new words.

Contextualization: Placing a word or phrase in a meaningful language sequence.

Elaboration: Relating new information to other concepts in memory.

Transfer: Using previously acquired linguistic and/or conceptual knowledge to facilitate a new language learning task.

Inferencing: Using available information to guess meanings of new items predict outcomes or fill in missing information (as cited in Brown 1980a, pp.116-117).

1.1.4.3 Social Affective Strategies

Socioaffective strategies deals with mediating activity and transacting with others. The following strategies can be grouped under this heading:

Cooperation: working with one or more peers to obtain feedback, pool information, or model a language activity.

Question for classification: Asking a teacher or other native speaker for repetition paraphrasing explanation and / or examples are adopted (as cited in Brown 1980a, p.117).

1.1.5 Strategies Adopted by the Learners to Tackle the Errors

Regarding the strategies, Brown (1980a, p.114) says that strategies are those specific “attacks” that we make on a given problem. They are moment by moment techniques that we employ to solve “problems” posed by second language input and output. Similarly, Rubin and Stern (1975 as cited in

Brown ibid) focus to describe good language learners in terms of personal characteristics, styles and strategies they further summarize that good language learners:

-) find their own way, taking charge of their learning,
-) organize information about language,
-) are creative, developing a “feel” for the language by experimenting with its grammar and words,
-) make their own opportunities for practice in using the language inside and outside the classroom,
-) learn to live with uncertainty by not getting flustered and by continuing to talk or listen without understanding every word,
-) use mnemonics' and other memory strategies to recall what has been learned,
-) make errors work for them and not against them,
-) use linguistic knowledge, including knowledge of their first language, in learning a second language,
-) use contextual cues to help them in comprehension,
-) learn to make intelligent guesses,
-) learn chunks of language as wholes and formalized routines to help them perform “beyond their competence,”
-) learn certain tricks that help to keep conversations going,
-) learn certain production strategies to fill in gaps in their own competence,
-) learn different styles of speech and writing and learn to vary their language according to the formality of the situation.

As my research work is limited to the 'strategies adopted by the learners to tackle their errors,' I have to find out the strategies used in tackling the errors. As cited in Sthapit (1978, pp37-40), there are two strategies in the domain of contrastive linguistics and error analyses that are adopted by the learners of second/foreign language. In addition to this, Sthapit(ibid) further says that if something is extremely difficult there is no errors in learning at all because the learners adopt different strategies to tackle the difficulties. They are:

- i. Avoidance Strategy
- ii. Caution Strategy

i. Avoidance Strategy

According to this strategy, Sthapit (1978, pp 37-40) says that the learner simply avoids the difficult areas and consequently there is no question of making errors. He further says that when speaking or writing a second/foreign language, a speaker will often try to avoid using a difficult word or structure, and will use a simpler word or structure instead. For example, a student who is not sure of the use of the relative clause in English may avoid using it and use two simpler sentences instead e.g. 'That's my building. I live there.' Instead of 'that's the building where I live.' Laufer and Eliasson(1993, retrieved from <http://www.google.com.np/wikipedia>) says that avoidance behaviour represents a communicative strategy of a learner of a second language by which the learner prefers using a simpler form instead of the target linguistic element for the reason of difficulty on the part of the target feature. Consequently, avoidance behaviour serves as a

manifestation of learning problems, and its results should be definitely considered when compiling language syllabi and tests.

Similarly, Brown (1980, p.118) says that avoidance is a common communication strategy that can be broken down in to several subcategories and thus distinguished from other types of strategies. The most common type of avoidance strategy is syntactic or lexical avoidance within a semantic category.

For example,

L : I lost my road.

NS: You lost your road?

L : Uh,...I lost. I lost. I got lost.

He further says that the learners avoid the lexical item road entirely, not being able to come up with the word way at that point. A French learner who wishes to avoid the use of the subjunctive in the sentence “Il nous faut partir,” or, not being sure of the use of en in the sentence “J’en ai trios,” the learner might simply say “J’ai trios pommes.” Phonological avoidance is also common, as in the case of a Japanese tennis partner of mine who avoids using the word “rally” (because of phonological difficulty) and instead opts to say, simply, “hit the ball.”

Regarding avoidance strategy, Tarron (1981, p.286 as cited in Brown 1980, p.119) classifies in the following way:

- a. Topic Avoidance: In this type of strategy the learner simply tries not to talk about concepts for which the TL item or structure is not known.

- b. Message Abandonment: This strategy deals that the learners begin to talk about a concept but is unable to continue and stop as in mid-utterance.

Thus, a more direct type of avoidance is topic avoidance, in which a whole topic of conversation (says, talking about what happened yesterday if the past tense is unfamiliar) might be avoidance: changing the subject, pretending not to understand (a classical means for avoiding answering a question), simply not responding at all, or noticeably abandoning a message when a thought becomes too difficult to continue expressing.

ii. Caution Strategy

The very term caution strategy is used for the first time by Sthapit in 1978 in the literature of contrastive analysis although he derived the idea from different scholars. In this connection, in 1927 (as cited in Sthapit 1978, pp.37-40) two psychologists 'Skaggs and Robinson' had made the following remarks on which Osgood's 'similarly paradox' are based on:

-) Facilitation is greatest when the successive tasks are identical (i.e. 100% similarity between the tasks, maximum the facilitation)
-) Interference is maximum and difficulty is the greatest when there is a certain degree of similarity i.e. 1-49% or 51-99% similarity between the tasks, maximum the interference
-) There is moderate ease of learning when the tasks have neutral resemblance (i.e. 50% similarity, moderate ease)

Similar expression is made by Corder (1974, p.128), he mentions:

the second language that we may be least likely to master satisfactorily are those which are either the closest to or the most distant from our mother tongue. The first because we really never need to make journey at all and the second because the journey is too long even to complete.

Similarly, Corder (1974, p.128) has focused his attention that when the structures in L1 and L2 are very similar (and hence L2 structures are easier for the learners), the learners may not give value to practicing such structure and may use them carelessly as a result such negligence towards the use of so called easy structure may give birth to more numbers of errors in performance. This strategy means that the learners take extra caution to handle the difficulty and as a result there is no error.

Sthapit (1978, pp 37-40) says “some learners follow the caution strategy which means that they take extra caution to handle the difficulty and as a result there is no error.” He further gives the example of fact that we heard the news of road accidents more on the easy road than on the difficult one. In addition to this, the learners may also develop caution strategy against the difficult item or structure in the target language (TL).Sthapit (ibid) further reveals that the learner will be more conscious of, hence practice rigorously, difficult structure of target language, the less instances of the error will be there.

Thus, in caution strategy the learner becomes more conscious so that they are unlikely to commit errors. Sthapit (1978, pp.37-40) focuses on the learner’s awareness while learning second/foreign language.

1.2 Review of Related Literature

Several researches have been carried out on 'Error Analysis' in the Department of English Education. Some closely related to my research area are reviewed below.

Shrestha (1980) carried out a research on errors in the use of prepositions made by Nepali and Newari speaking students of grade 10. His major finding was that learners commit errors in both areas: 'the differences' and 'the similarities.'

Bebout (1985) has attempted to analyze the misspelling made by the learners of English as a first and second language. His study pointed out that the English speakers commit more errors into two categories, those involving schwa /z/ and /e/. Spanish speakers made proportionally more consonant doubling errors. Other consonant and vowel errors were not significantly different from the overall ratio.

Gautam (1990) has carried out a research on errors in the written English of humanities and social science PCL first year students of Kathmandu valley. His major finding was that mother tongue plays the major role for committing errors in learning second language.

Awasthi (1995) has carried out a research on a linguistic analysis of errors committed by Nepali learners of English. He found that the Nepali learners of English commit errors due to both interlingual and intralingual influences. It was also found that the native English teachers are more lenient in evaluating learners' errors compared to their non-native counterparts.

Singh (1997) has analyzed the errors on the topic an analysis of errors committed by students of first year proficiency certificate level in the use of articles and preposition. Her finding was that students committed errors in the use of articles more frequently than in the use of prepositions.

Nepal (1998) conducted a research on a study of errors in the use of English irregular verbs made (committed) by the grade seven students. It was found that more errors were found in the past participle than in the past tense form of the irregular verbs due to overgeneralization.

Adhikari (1999) has conducted a study on errors committed by grade nine students in the use of causative verbs and he found that students committed more errors in 'have' type of causative verbs than in the 'make' and 'get' types.

Thapa (2000) carried out a research entitled errors committed by the students of grade seven in the use of comparative and superlative degrees of adjectives. It was found that on comparing the students' errors in the use of comparative and superlative degree of adjective s, more errors were found in the use of superlative degree than in the use of comparative degree of adjective.

Barakoti (2001) has carried out the research on errors committed by PCL second year students in writing free composition. He has found that students committed highest number of errors in tenses and lowest in prepositions.

Karki (2002) has carried out a research on a study on the evaluation of grammatical errors. His findings showed that the most frequent errors were

in articles, preposition, passivization, subject-verb-agreement, gerund, infinitives and conditionals.

Nepal (2003) has carried out a research on a study of errors on the use of English irregular verbs made by the grade seven students. He found that the learners commit the errors on the use of irregular verbs due the effect of overgeneralization of the rules of past form and past participle.

Dangol (2006) carried out a research on errors committed by tenth graders in writing guided composition. He found that students were found better in using conjunction than in the use of tense.

Ghimire (2006) has carried out the research on errors committed by twelfth graders tenth graders in writing free composition. He has found that students committed the highest number of errors in agreement and lowest number of errors in tense.

Although a number of attempts have been made in order to find out the ‘errors’ committed by the learners in writing free composition, grammar and spelling, none of the research studies deals with the ‘strategies adopted by the learners to tackle errors’ so far. Therefore, I carried out this research to find out the ‘strategies adopted by the learners to tackle errors.’

1.3 Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study were as follows:

1. to find out different types of errors committed by nine graders in free composition,
2. to describe and classify those errors,
3. to explore different strategies adopted by the learners to tackle errors,

4. to list some pedagogical implications.

1.4 Significance of the Study

Any research work is done to have some influence on related fields. It is expected that the present study will have great significance to the teachers and students especially involved in secondary level (class 9) in teaching and learning English as a foreign language in Nepal. Similarly, this research will be a guideline for those researchers who want to do further research in learning strategies deeply. In addition to it, this research will be helpful for language investigators and other people who are directly or indirectly involved in English language teaching and learning activities.

CHAPTER TWO

METHODOLOGY

The chapter on methodology is an important phase in any kind of study. In the absence of it, the research remains incomplete. So, this chapter deals with the methodology adopted during the study. The study had the following study design:

2.1 Sources of Data

I used both primary and secondary sources for data collection. The primary sources were used for collecting data and the secondary sources were used to facilitate the study.

2.1.1 Primary Sources of Data

The primary sources of data of the study were elicited from the students of grade nine studying at Pushpasadan Boarding High school of Kathmandu district.

2.1.2 Secondary Sources

Various books, especially Corder (1973), Allen and Corder (1974/ 81), Brown, (1980) Ellis (1985), Richards and Rodgers (2001), Crystal (2003), journals, articles and theses of the department related to the topic were used as secondary sources of data.

2.2 Sample Population of the Study and Sampling Procedure

I purposively selected Puspa Sadan Secondary Boarding School, Kirtipur, Kathmandu as a research area of my study. Similarly, I selected 40 students of grade nine through simple random sampling procedure.

2.3 Tools of Data Collection

- i. Initially, I prepared a test item on free composition.

- ii. Then, I administered the test items to the students of grade 9 studying at Puspa Sadan Secondary Boarding School.
- iii. After that I identified the errors made by the students.
- iv. Then, I prepared the questionnaire to individual student on the basis of the errors they made in the test items.
- v. After that I decided for which types of errors focus group discussion was appropriate and for which individual interview was required.
- vi. Finally, I contacted my informants again and take their opinion.

2.4 Process of Data Collection

I met the students of Grade 9 of Puspa Sadan Secondary Boarding School. Then, I administered the test in free writing. After the test was over, the test papers were collected and checked to identify the errors. Then, the questionnaire was prepared regarding the strategies adopted by the learners to tackle the identified errors. Then, I gathered the information from the students with the set of questionnaire.

2.5 Limitations of the Study

The study had the following limitations:

- i. This study was limited to the Puspa Sadan Secondary Boarding School of Kathmandu district.
- ii. Data collection was limited within forty students. Among them, twenty were boys and twenty were girls.

- iii. The primary data was collected only from class 9 students.
- iv. The sample population was selected on the basis of simple random sampling.
- v. The study was limited only to the errors committed in free composition by the ninth grade students and the learning strategies adopted by them to tackle those errors.

CHAPTER THREE

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

This chapter presents the analysis and interpretation of the data which the researcher gathered from one private school of Kathmandu district i.e. Pushpasadan Boarding High School. Analysis and interpretation is the focal

part of the study; it deals with the presentation, analysis and interpretation of the data. The present study deals with the strategies adopted by the learners to tackle their errors. For the purpose, of the study, I had to find out the different types of errors committed by the nine graders in free composition and also to describe and classify those errors. With the help of those errors I had to explore different strategies adopted by the learners to tackle their errors. And also to find out the pedagogical implication of this kind of study. The analysis and interpretation of the data has been carried out by description and simple statistical tools of percentage.

On the basis of the errors in students' answers, I have described those errors and finally found out different types of strategies adopted by the learners to tackle their errors. I have divided this chapter into five units namely, recognition of errors, description of the errors, explanation of the errors and different strategies adopted by the learners to tackle their errors.

3.2 Recognition of Errors

I administered the test items and collected the answer sheets of 40 students studying in grade nine of Pushpasadan Boarding High School. Then I examined each answer sheets by circling the deviated form. After identifying the deviated form, I attempted to divide those deviated forms into mistakes, lapses and errors. I found some deviated forms which were irregular and corrected by students themselves. I categorized those deviated form under mistakes. Then I found some minor mistakes (*i.e. sucessed, difficult, everying*) which were committed due to pen slips. I categorized them under lapses. Finally, I categorized the remaining deviated forms into errors, which

were regular and not corrected by the students in each repetition. Generally, the grade nine students committed lapses in some spelling.

3.2.1 Lapses

The students have committed the following sorts of lapses. It was found that those lapses are especially in spelling.

Table No. 1

Lapses Committed by the Students

Incorrect form	Correct form
Hopa	Hope
Very	Vary
Sucessed	Succeed
Mad	Made
Countrys	Country
Dificult	Difficult
Everying	Everything
Thinkyou	thank you
Childrens	Children
Months	month
Acquite	acquire
Comin	coming
Fiend	friend
Village	village
Then	than

Today's	today's
Syudies	study
Hopa	hope
Foud	fond

3.2.2 Mistakes

The students have committed the following sorts of mistakes. They have made the mistakes especially in the use of articles, preposition, subject verb agreement and incorrect selection of vocabulary.

Table No. 2

Mistakes Committed by the Students

Incorrect forms	Correct forms
at the morning	in the morning
a students	a student
a people	a person
did not went	did not go
in yesterday	Yesterday
full opportunities	full of opportunities
in ten days	for ten days
a particular things	particular things
other people's created	other people created
Sitting	Living
many people sitting	many people are sitting

on the village	in the village
in first day	on first day
at conclusion	in conclusion

3.3 Description of Errors

I evaluated the answer sheet of students. Then, the test item wise errors committed by the students have been described in terms of errors in tense, articles, prepositions, spelling and agreement. The item wise errors in free composition of nine graders are presented below.

Table No. 3

Item Wise Analysis of the Errors

Test item	Errors in articles		Errors in spelling		Errors in preposition		Errors in tenses		Errors in agreement		total
	no of errors	%	no of errors	%	no of errors	%	no of errors	%	no of errors	%	
I	45	20	57	25.33	48	21.33	32	14.22	43	19.11	225
II	52	21.13	46	18.69	41	16.66	49	19.91	58	23.57	246
III	54	24.43	32	14.47	60	27.14	28	12.66	47	21.26	221
IV	35	16.58	40	18.95	36	17.06	44	20.85	56	26.54	211
total and %	186	20.59	175	19.37	185	20.48	153	16.94	204	22.59	903

The above table exhibits that the test item wise errors in the use of articles, spelling, preposition, tense and agreement committed by the students of grade nine. Under the first item, students committed 45 (i.e. 20%), 57 (i.e. 25.33%), 48 (i.e. 21.33%), 32 (i.e. 14.22%), 43 (i.e. 19.11%) errors in the use of articles, spelling, prepositions, tenses and agreement respectively. The

students committed the highest number of errors in spelling and the lowest number of errors in tense under the first item.

Under the second item the students committed 52 (i.e. 21.13%), 46 (i.e. 18.69%), 41 (i.e. 16.66%), 49 (i.e. 19.91%) 58 (i.e. 23.57) errors in the use of articles, spelling, prepositions, tenses and agreement respectively. The students committed the highest number of errors in agreement and the lowest number of errors in prepositions. Under the third item, the students committed 54 (i.e. 24.43%), 32 (i.e. 14.47%), 60 (i.e. 27.14%), 28 (i.e. 12.66%), 47 (i.e. 21.26) errors in the use of articles, spelling, preposition, tense and agreement respectively. They committed the highest number of errors in prepositions and the lowest number of errors in tenses.

Under the fourth test item, the students of grade nine committed 35 (i.e. 16.58%), 40 (i.e. 18.95%), 36 (i.e. 17.06%), 44 (i.e. 20.85%), 56 (i.e. 26.54%) errors in the use of articles, spelling, prepositions, tenses and agreement respectively. They committed the highest number of errors in agreement and the lowest number of errors in articles.

In total the students committed 186 (i.e. 20.59%), 175 (i.e. 19.37%), 185 (20.48%), 153 (i.e.16.94%), 204 (i.e. 22.59%) errors in the use of articles, spelling, prepositions, tenses and agreement respectively. As a whole students committed the highest number of errors in agreement and the lowest number of errors in tenses.

3.4 Classification of Errors

As the aim of my study, I had to describe and classify the errors committed by nine graders in free composition. The students of grade nine have

committed the errors especially in graphology, morphology, syntactic and lexical categories. For that purpose, the examples of the errors committed by the students in each area are tabulated below.

a. Morphological Errors

The following morphological errors are committed due to the incorrect form of the words and wrong use of 'suffixes and prefixes.'

Table No. 4

Morphological Errors Committed by the Students

Incorrect form	Correct form
Required	Require
Months	Month
Studies	Study
topic,	Topics
Your	Yours
Field	Fields
Give	Gives
Advantage	Advantages
Reduced	Reduce
Leaved	Left
Needs	Need
Step	Steps
Peoples	People
Today's	today's

Countrys	Country
Field	Fields
Use	Used
Person	Persons
Childrens	Children

b. Graphological Errors

The following errors are listed under the graphological errors due to the incorrect form and spelling.

Table No. 5

Graphological Errors Committed by the Students

Incorect form	Correct form
Sucsed	succeed
Foud	Fond
Plin	Plan
Teample	Temple
Devealop	develop
Contry	country
Thir	There
Difficulties	difficulties
Firend	Friend
Oneeducated	Uneducated
Century	century

c. Lexical Errors

The lexical errors committed by the students are as follows:

Table No. 6

Lexical Errors Committed by the Students

Incorrect form	Correct form
Handed	Received
For	to get
It	There
Sitting	Living

- *your that I handed in last week.*
- *This life is very important for education.*
- *It is a temple, Gorkha.*
- *Many people are sitting on the village.*

d. Syntactic Errors

The following errors are categorized under syntactic errors which include incomplete sentences lack of subject-verb-agreement, wrong sentence construction and wrong selection of prepositions and articles.

- *Thank you very much for your last letter which I receive yesterday.*
- *We did enjoy a lot.*

- *We did not have to carry.*
- *All the citizen has got some ideas.*
- *Nowadays everyone is getting educated.*
- *I have received your letter two days ago*
- *It not only makes the people educated.*
- *So my aim as well as my father will be happy on me.*
- *Our country Nepal's name to the top.*
- *In simply we can define education.....*
- *Nend day again we become fresh and we went to visit different places.*
- *I can teach my life as my wish.*

3.5 Explanation of Errors

From the analysis of above mentioned errors it can be interpreted that most of the errors are committed due to the source language itself. Only a few errors are committed due to the influence of students' first language. In some cases it was found that some errors have been made due to learners' analogical process. It is also speculated that some errors are committed due to teacher's faulty teaching. It is so because even the use of comma, apostrophe, wrong selection of vocabulary have led the students to commit the errors. Homophonous words have greatly influenced them to commit errors. Hence, I have found that most of the errors are interlingual errors. I have found that the following sorts of errors are committed due to the source language itself.

- i) Making the plural form of child as *childs* man as *manes*.
- ii) Use of preposition where it is not necessary i.e. in yesterday.
- iii) Writing the spelling of 'every where' as '*evry where*.'

iv) Using sitting instead of received.

I also have found that the homophonous words have the significant role to influence the learners to commit the errors. The following sorts of graphological errors are caused due to homophonous words:

'there' instead of *'their'*

'wear' instead of *'were'*

'week' instead of *'week'*

'found' instead of *'fond'*

The following sorts of errors are found in maximum quantity committed by the students to the analogical process.

- Writing the plural form of sheep as *sheeps*.
- Writing the plural form of country as *countryes*.
- Writing the past tense of the verb spend as *spended*, take as *taked*.

In this matter, I have just interpreted that some errors are caused due to erroneous input of the teacher. It is so because even the use of comma, apostrophe and the punctuation marks have led the students to commit the errors.

To sum up, it can be said that the students had committed the errors due to the source language, influence of their first language, their analogical process and to some extent erroneous input of the teacher. Besides, homophonous words also caused graphological errors in free writing.

3.6 Analysis of the Strategies Adopted by the Learners to Tackle their Errors

This section is mainly concerned with the analysis of different sorts of strategies adopted by the learners to tackle their errors. Errors committed by the students in free composition are already identified and classified. Here, I wanted to find out what sort of strategies they adopted after committing errors. Regarding this matter I undoubtedly supported Sthapit (1978,p.37) who says that 'if something is extremely difficult there is no errors in learning at all because the learner adopt different strategies to tackle the difficulties.' In case of my current study, I found that students adopted two types of strategy to tackle their errors. They are 'avoidance and caution strategies.' I conducted a research with those 40 students. After finding out the errors from free composition, I set out the opinionnaire of the students to find out what sort of strategies they adopted to handle those errors that were committed in free composition. There were altogether 25 close ended questions with four alternative choices to find out what strategies they adopt to handle the errors. While analyzing the opinionnaire of those students, the following strategies were found out as adopted by the learners to tackle their errors. The strategies have been analyzed and interpreted in the following table.

Table No. 7

Strategies Adopted by the Learners to Tackle their Errors

S.N.	Strategies	No of Students	Percentage	Selected Alternatives	Selected %
1	Avoidance	12	30%	300	30%

2	Caution	28	70%	700	70%
Total		40	100%	1000	100%

The above table exhibits that the research was conducted with in 40 students. While observing the above table, it is clear that out of forty, 12 (i.e. 30%) students adopted avoidance strategy to tackle their errors. They selected 300 options (i.e. 30%) out of 1000 alternatives. Similarly, 28 (i.e. 70%) adopted caution strategy to tackle their errors. They selected 700 options (i.e. 70%) out of 1000 alternatives. Thus, it indicates that generally students adopt two types of strategies namely avoidance and caution to tackle their errors. While comparing the result between avoidance and caution strategies it was found that the majority of the students were in favour of caution strategy.

CHAPTER - FOUR

FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 Findings

The present study was conducted to find out 'the strategies adopted by the learners to tackle their errors.' In a course of analyzing data, mainly two types of strategies have been adopted by the students to handle the errors

committed in free composition. After carrying out the research it was found that the learners generally adopted avoidance and caution strategies.

This chapter deals with the major findings of the research. It also deals with some constructive suggestions, recommendations and pedagogical implication of the errors committed by the ninth graders of Pushpasadan Boarding High School the following findings have been derived.

4.1.1 Findings of Error Analysis

While observing the errors committed by the students in free composition the following findings have been made:

- i The total errors committed by the students were 903. The students committed 186 (i.e. 20.59) errors in articles, 175 (i.e. 19.37) errors in spelling, 185 (i.e. 20.48) errors in preposition, 153 (i.e. 16.94) errors in tenses and 204 (i.e. 22.59) errors in agreement. It was found that the students committed the highest number of errors in agreements and the lowest number of errors in tenses
- ii The students were found comparatively better in the use of tense, spelling, and preposition than in article and agreement.
- iii It was found that the students committed the second highest number of errors in articles.
- iv It was found that most of the errors were found interlingual errors as they were caused due to the source language.
- v Incomplete sentences were highly used by the students.
- vi Regarding the tense the simple present tense was highly used instead of simple past tense.

4.1.2 Findings on Different Strategies Adopted by the Learners to Tackle Their Errors

While observing the strategies adopted by the learners to tackle the errors committed by the students in free composition, the following findings have been derived:

- i) Generally, it was found that the students adopted two types of strategies namely avoidance and caution strategies to tackle their errors.
- ii) Out of 40 students, it was found that 12 students adopted avoidance strategy and 28 students adopted caution strategy.

4.2 Recommendations

On the basis of the findings of the present study the following recommendations for pedagogical implication have been derived.

- i) To avoid the errors of agreement, special attention should be given to subject-verb agreement. The students should be given adequate knowledge of singular and plural forms of the verbs. The S-V agreement should be taught by relating verbs with subjects.
- ii) The students should be taught the rule of omission of preposition moreover, it is better to teach prepositions in combination with nouns rather than teaching in isolation.
- iii) It is better to give the students more exercise on spelling.
- iv) The teacher should provide the students with sufficient exposure regarding the use of articles and prepositions.

- v) The teacher should encourage the students to write the correct graphology.
- vi) Free writing activities should be provided to the students with regular correction (i.e. self correction, peer correction and teacher correction).
- vii) The teacher should teach the students the different types of strategies that can be used to tackle the errors.
- viii) The students should be informed by the teachers to handle the caution strategy after committing errors in writing composition.
- ix) The teacher should taught the students about the avoidance strategy that in which situation the committed errors should be avoided.
- x) Writing should be taught with appropriate structure and situation.

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Appendix: I

Strategies Adopted by the Learners to Tackle their Errors

S.N.	Name of the students	Avoidance Strategy	Caution Strategy
1	Pradip Luitel		

2	Nimesh Adhikari		
3	Nabin Updhaya		
4	Sudip Acharya		
5	Ritu Nepal		
6	Sony Maharjan		
7	Prajwol Joshi		
8	Arpan Adhikari		
9	Kiran B. Maharjan		
10	Shreejala Maharjan		
11	Subodh Luitel		
12	Rohish Maharjan		
13	Shiva gautam		
14	Janak B. Shah		
15	Sagar Dahal		
16	Kiran Thapa		
17	Raman Ghimire		
18	Mahendra Kumar Shahi		
19	Amrit Khanal		
20	Anurag Bhandari		
21	Ujjwal Updhyay		
22	Gyaoan Shrestha		
23	Megha Shrestha		
24	Anuka Danol		
25	James Khatri		
26	Dipesh Maherjan		
27	Rumit Man Tandukarel		

28	Sliesh Maharjan		
29	Neelam Bohara		
30	Rajan Kumar Mandal		
31	Jasmin Maharjan		
32	Deep Shrestha		
33	Prashant K.C.		
34	Janjew K. Yadav		
35	Enosh Shrestha		
36	Shrawak Shrestha		
37	Srijana Basnet		
38	Pijush Shrestha		
39	Susen Maharjan		
40	Sushma Dangol		
Total		12	28

Appendix: II

Test Item

Name:

F.M: 50

Class:

P.M: 20

School:

Time: 1.30 hrs

Q.N.1. Write an essay on ‘Importance of Education’ about 150 words. (20)

Q.N.2. Write a letter to your friend telling him about an excursion which you have recently been. (10)

Q.N.3. Write about your future plan after completing S.L.C. in about 100 words. (10)

Q.N.4. Write a paragraph describing the impact of computer technology in the modern Education. (10)

BEST OF LUCK !

Appendix: III

Questionnaire for the students

I am conducting a research entitled ‘Strategies Adopted by the Students to Tackle Their Errors’ as a part of my study under the guidance of **Dr. Anjana Bhattarai**, reader, Department of English Education, T.U. I would be grateful to you if you could fill in the following questionnaire with true

information. I would likely assure you that the information provided by you will be used for the research purpose only and your identity will be deserved highly confidential.

Name:

Class: 9

School: Pushpasadan Boarding High School

Q.No.1. In primary level, when your teacher said you had committed errors, how did you solve the problems?

- a. I asked the teacher
- b. I asked my friends
- c. I consulted books
- d. I left that kind of sentence

Q.No.2. In lower secondary level, when your teacher said you had committed errors in indirect sentences, how did you solve the problem?

- a. I asked the teacher
- b. I asked my friends
- c. I consulted grammar books
- d. I did not use such kind of sentences

Q.No.3. Nowadays, when your teachers say you has committed errors on relative clauses, how do you solve the problem?

- a. I ask the teacher
- b. I ask my friends
- c. I usually ignore to use that kind of sentences
- d. I write it in simple way

Q.No.4. 'I have received your letter two days ago.' This sentence is not correct. How do you write it correctly?

- a. I ask my teacher
- b. I consult the grammar books
- c. I write it in another way
- d. I ask my friends

Q.No.5. 'At morning we all the student leave the Kathmandu by bus.' This sentence is not correct grammatically. How do you solve this problem?

- a. I ask my teacher
- b. I consult the grammar books
- c. I write it in another way
- d. I avoid this type of sentence

Q.No.6. Your teacher said that the sentence "we were found of swimming in the river" is not correct and ask you to write it correctly. How do you write it correctly?

- a. I consult the dictionary
- b. I write in simple way
- c. I ask my friends
- d. I use synonymous word

Q.No7. 'Education plays an vital role in our day to day life' your teacher said to write it correctly. How do you write it correctly?

- a. I ask my teacher
- b. I consult the grammar books
- .c. I write in simple way
- d. I ask my friends

Q.No.8. 'In the place there was various rooms for kings' your teacher showed it as an incorrect sentence. How do you solve this problem?

- a. I ask my teacher
- b. I write it using other words
- c. I write it in simple sentences
- d. I consult the dictionary

Q.No.9. 'I will be sitted their for few day' your teacher told you that this sentence is incorrect grammatically. How do you solve this problem?

- a. I consult the grammar books
- b. I write it in another way
- c. I usually ignore such type of sentence
- d. I ask my friends

Q.No.10. 'We all leaved our school in 5 o'clock.' This sentence is grammatically incorrect. How do you solve this problem?

- a. I ask my teacher
- b. I consult the books

c. I avoid this type of sentence d. I write it in simple way

Q.No.11. 'Let hopa everything are ok.' This sentence is not correct in appropriate grammatical form. How do you write correctly?

a. I ask my teacher b. I consult the book
c. I write it in another way d. I write it in simple way

Q.No.12. 'People has lots of interest in watching scenery area.' This sentence is not correct grammatically. How do you write correctly?

a. I ask my teacher b. I usually avoid to use this type of sentence
c. I consult grammar book d. I write in another way

Q.No.13. 'We saw a elephant which were roaming in the forest.' This sentence is grammatically inappropriate. How do you solve this problem?

a. I neglect to use that kind of sentence b. I ask my friends
c. I consult the grammatical books d. I write it in another way

Q.No.14. 'I have a plain after my S.L.C exam.' This sentence is not correct. How do you write it correctly?

a. I ask my teacher b. I consult a grammar book
c. I write it in another way d. I usually ignore to write such type of sentence

Q.No.15. your teacher said that the sentence "computer is used as a effective mean of learning" is not correct and you to write correctly. How do you solve your problem?

a. I consult the dictionary b. I write it in simple way
c. I ask my friend d. I consult the books

Q.No.16. 'Many people are sitting on the village.' This sentence is not correct. How do you write it correctly?

- a. I ask my teacher
- b. I write it in another way
- c. I consult the dictionary
- d. I ignore this type of sentence

Q.No.17. 'Which is must essential need of people.' This sentence is not correct. How do you write it correctly?

- a. I ask to my teacher
- b. I consult the books
- c. I write it in another way
- d. I write it in simple way

Q.No.18. 'Persons without a education is likely an owl in dark cave.' This sentence is incorrect grammatically. How do you solve this problem?

- a. I ask my teacher
- b. I consult the grammar book
- c. I write it in another way
- d. I neglect to write such type of sentence

Q.No.19. 'It has also helped to reduced the tension of students.' The sentence is not correct. How do you solve this problem?

- a. I ask my teacher
- b. I write it in another way
- c. I neglect such type of sentence
- d. I consult the dictionary

Q.No.20. 'For a sick person a doctor need for the treatment.' This sentence is not correct. How do you solve this problem?

- a. I ask my teacher
- b. I write it in another way
- c. I neglect such type of sentence
- d. I consult the dictionary

Q.No.21. 'It has an very adverse impact in the modern Education.' The sentence is not correct grammatically. How do you solve this problem?

- a. I ask my teacher.
- b. I write it in another way
- c. I consult grammar books
- d. I neglect this type of sentence

Q.No.22. 'By the morning bus we arrived here at afternoon. The sentence is not correct grammatically. How do you solve this problem?

- a. I ask my teacher b. I write it in another way
c. I consult grammar books d. I neglect this type of sentence

Q.No.23. 'All the citizen has got some idea about health.' This sentence is not correct grammatically. How do you solve this problem?

- a. I ask my teacher b. I consult the grammar books
c. I write in another way d. I neglect such type of sentence

Q.No.24. 'Computer give the accurate answer. This sentence is not correct grammatically. How do you solve this problem?

- a. I ask my teacher b. I consult the grammar books
c. I write in another way d. I neglect such type of sentence

Q.No.25. 'By the morning bus we here at afternoon.' This sentence is not correct. How do you solve this problem?

- a. I ask my teacher b. I consult the dictionary
c. I write it in another way d. I left that kind of structure

Thank you for your kind co-operation

Researcher

Gokul Kandel

