

**MORPHOLOGICAL ERRORS COMMITTED BY
MAITHILI SPEAKERS**

**A Thesis Submitted to the Department of English Education
In Partial Fulfillment for the Master's Degree in Education**

**Submitted by
Vijay Kumar Yadav**

**Faculty of Education
Tribhuvan University, Kirtipur
Kathmandu, Nepal**

2009

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare to the best of my knowledge that this thesis is original, no part of it was earlier submitted for the candidature of research degree to any university.

Date: 2066/02/05

Vijay Kumar Yadav

RECOMMENDATION FOR ACCEPTANCE

This is to certify that Vijay Kumar Yadav has prepared the thesis entitled “Morphological Errors Committed by Maithili Speakers” under my guidance and supervision.

I recommend the thesis for acceptance.

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DEDICATION

Dedicated
to my father who forever thought about my future

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I would like to express my sincere and hearty gratitude to my guru and thesis supervisor **Dr. Chandreshwar Mishra**, Head of the Department of English Language Education, who guided me throughout the study. His patience, enthusiasm, co-operation, suggestions and keen interest in this study are ever memorable.

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Vijay Kumar Yadav

ABSTRACT

The present thesis entitled 'Morphological Errors Committed by Maithili speakers' aims at identifying the errors committed by the Maithili learners of English, studying in grade nine at the public schools. The tests were developed to collect data from the sampled population of eighty students of grade nine of Shree Chandra Ma. Vi. Siraha. These tests were prepared on two levels: competence level focused and performance level focused test items. Competence oriented test items were used to see how they selected suitable verb forms and the performance oriented test items were administered to find out how they selected suitable verb form, to express their daily life situations. Both the test items were prepared to identify the errors at the morphological level. To make descriptive study of the morphological errors committed by Maithili speakers, their responses were taken as the data for further interpretation on the basis of which further pedagogical implications could be derived. Item-wise analysis was done to identify the errors and to compare their strengths and weaknesses in relation to one another. Holistic analysis was done to describe the quality of test items mainly in deriving the students commit errors in selecting verb forms. In totality, sixty percentage students committed errors in attempting performance oriented test items in comparison to competence oriented test item. Test item A was attempted more accurately in comparison to test item B. Twenty percentage students used S + is /am/are + going to +v to express their future plans. Forty percentage students used was / were +v-ed forms instead of using v-ed while narrating past event they had eye witnessed in person.

This thesis consists of four chapters. Chapter one is an introductory. One including general background, objectives of the study, review of the related literature and significance of the study. Chapter two includes the methodology adopted to carryout the research. Chapter three consists of the analysis and interpretation of data. Chapter four consists of the findings and recommendation of the study. The appendices have been put of the end of the research.

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CHAPTER-ONE

INTRODUCTION

The present research work is a descriptive study of morphological errors committed by second language learners of English. It attempts to deal with the reasons behind committing errors at morphological level by the learners speaking Maithili as the mother tongue and learn the English language in formal setting i.e. in classroom.

1.1 General Background

Language is one of the most powerful, convenient and permanent means and forms of communication. According to Lenneberg (1967), "it is species-specific means and possession of human beings" (p. 2). Language is the most unique gift that sets human beings apart from the rest of the living beings. Besides being a means of communication, and store house of knowledge it is an instrument of thinking as well as source of delight. Language dissipates superfluous nervous energy directed in motion in other. Both men and animals set matter in motion as in charms and incantations, transfer knowledge, from one person to another and from one generation to another. According to Crystal (2004), "Language is the concrete act of speaking, writing or signing in a given situation" (p. 255). Similarly, in the words of Sapir (1971), "Language is a primarily human and non-instinctive method of communicating ideas, emotions and desires by means of a system of voluntarily produced symbols" (p. 8) .

Language is a mysterious, miraculous, precious gift (given by nature) to humans. Human being is the supreme creature of the world. "No one yet aggress on when language was used by humans (or their ancestors). Estimates range from about two millions years ago, during the time of Homo habilis, to as recently as forty thousands years ago, during the time of Co-magnon Man" Language is said to be unique for human beings because no other species in the

world has got this property. As such, linguists use the term 'Language' for human beings and animal communication for animals. Language, thus, makes human beings distinct from other creatures. Language as a purely human and non-instinctive method of communicating ideas, emotions and desires by means of voluntarily produced symbols. This species-specific asset has been the greatest accomplishment to human civilization. In a nutshell, we can say that language is very essential from birth to death. Deprived of language we are animals.

1.1.1. Language Learning Process

The role of language in the educational process is a special aspect of the relation between language and social structure. Human beings can get mastery of language in two ways, through acquisition and learning. The ability to get mastery of a language without any rigorous training is endowed with every normal child. The way one gets mastery over the skills of his or her first language or mother language is referred to as acquisition. It is a subconscious and spontaneous process of picking up a language to develop an intrinsic linguistic system of the every language. On the other hand, learning a language is a conscious process of knowing the formal and explicit rules of a language usually in a formal setting.

It is plausible to argue that language is a mental phenomena as well as a socio-cultural phenomenon. The matter of learning a language is mostly related to second or foreign language. The goal of language learning from a socio-culture perspective is for learners to add alternative knowledge, skills and abilities for understanding and participating in a wide range of intellectual and practical activities to their already established repertoires of sense making knowledge and abilities.

1.1.2 The English Language

Actually speaking, appreciation of English is not just the result of the favour of tall-figured, white-skinned, blue-eyed and brown-haired people from the community where English is spoken as a native language. But rather it is the most widely used means of communication, and people of the world are deeply indebted to it for playing vital roles in the development of trade transport and communication in the world. "It falls under Indo-European family and is spoken by about 350 million people in the world" (Yule, 1996, p.214). It is one of the six official languages of the UN which is taught and learnt in over 100 countries such as Germany, China, Russia, Spain , Brazil, India, Nepal to name only a few. Nearly half of the world's books of science and technology are written in the English language. It has gone deep down into the international domains of political life, business, safety communication, entertainment, media and education. So, Nepal can not be the exception of it (Jaisawar, 2007, p.2).

English is the gate way to knowledge which has covered all affairs in human life. Bhattarai (1994) writes:

English has become indispensable vehicle to the transmission of modern civilization in the nation. It is a passport through which one can visit the whole world and one who knows English can enjoy the advantages of a world citizen. He is received and understood every where. Therefore, English is the only means of preventing our isolation from the world and we will act unwisely if we all ourselves to be involved in the folds of dark curtain of ignorance (p. 226).

Teaching of the English language in Nepal was started for the first time at Durbar High School in 1910 B.S. Presently, it has occupied an important place in the educational system of Nepal. In Nepal, it is taught as a compulsory subject right from class one upto the bachelor's level whereas the English medium schools have been teaching English right from the nursery level. The rapid growth of English medium schools and their impact on society prove the immense importance of English in Nepal.

The geographical spread of English is unique among the languages of the worlds, not only in our time but throughout its history. English is first language in twenty first century. It is an official language or a joint official language in about fifty countries, where it is used, in addition to the indigenous first languages, for a variety of public and personal functions. It is also used as a second language, though without official status, in countries such as Bangladesh and Malaysia. It has been estimated that over 150 million children are studying English as a foreign language in primary or secondary schools. Many millions of foreigners listen to the BBC broadcast in English, and many millions follow the BBC English lessons on radio and television. The role of English as an international language has gathered momentum since the end of the Second World War through the economic and military global dominance of the United States and the resources it deploys for scientific and technological progress (Greenbaum, 1996, p.3).

In developing countries, English is regarded as the language of modernization and technological advancement. Most of the world's scientific and technical journals are in English. It is commonly required for international trade and at international conferences, and is the official medium for communication at sea and in the air. So it has been taught as a foreign language in all schools of Nepal starting from grade one to grade twelve. It is taught as a core subject up to bachelor level in the different universities of the nation.

1.1.3 The Maithili Language

Maithili is an eastern Indo-Aryan language spoken by a huge number of people in the southern plains, known as the Terai of Nepal and eastern and northern regions of the Bihar state of India. In the past, Maithili was regarded either as a dialect of Bengali or dialect of eastern Hindi or as one of the three dialects of a spurious language called "Bihari" (Yadav, 1996, p.1) . Today however, it is recognized as a distinct language and taught at Tribhuvan University of Nepal and the Indian Universities of Calcutta, Bihar, Patna, Bhagalpur and Darbhanga. Demographically, Maithili is the second most widely spoken language of Nepal and the 16th largest language of India.

According to Grierson (1881), "Maithili was originally the language of the ancient Mithila, the kingdom of Janak, the father of Sita, which was bounded on the west by the river Gandak, on the north by the Himalayan mountains, on the east by the Koshi and the south by the Ganges" (as cited in Jha, 2001, p.2)

In Nepal, Maithili has been taught as a subject of study from school to university level of education. Maithili is also being taught as an optional subject in campus level. The Maithili language had got its own script called Tirhuta or Maithilakshar. But it does not have its own script as is used in Sanskrit, Nepali or Hindi language.

Genetic Classification

Comparative philology maintains that languages are related to one another. Two languages are linked with one another would mean they are sister languages bearing from the same mother language.

The diagrams drawn below show how languages are related to one another and where Maithili language originated from:

Figure: 1.1

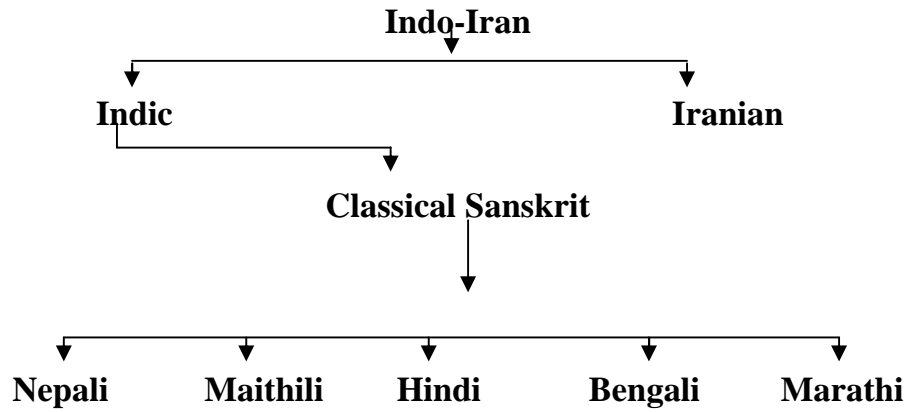


Figure 1.1 based on Roy's grammar (1995) states that the Maithili language originated from the same mother language 'Sanskrit' which is regarded as the branch of Indic subfamily of the Indo-Iran family. (As cited in Karna, 2004, p.2)

Figure 1.2

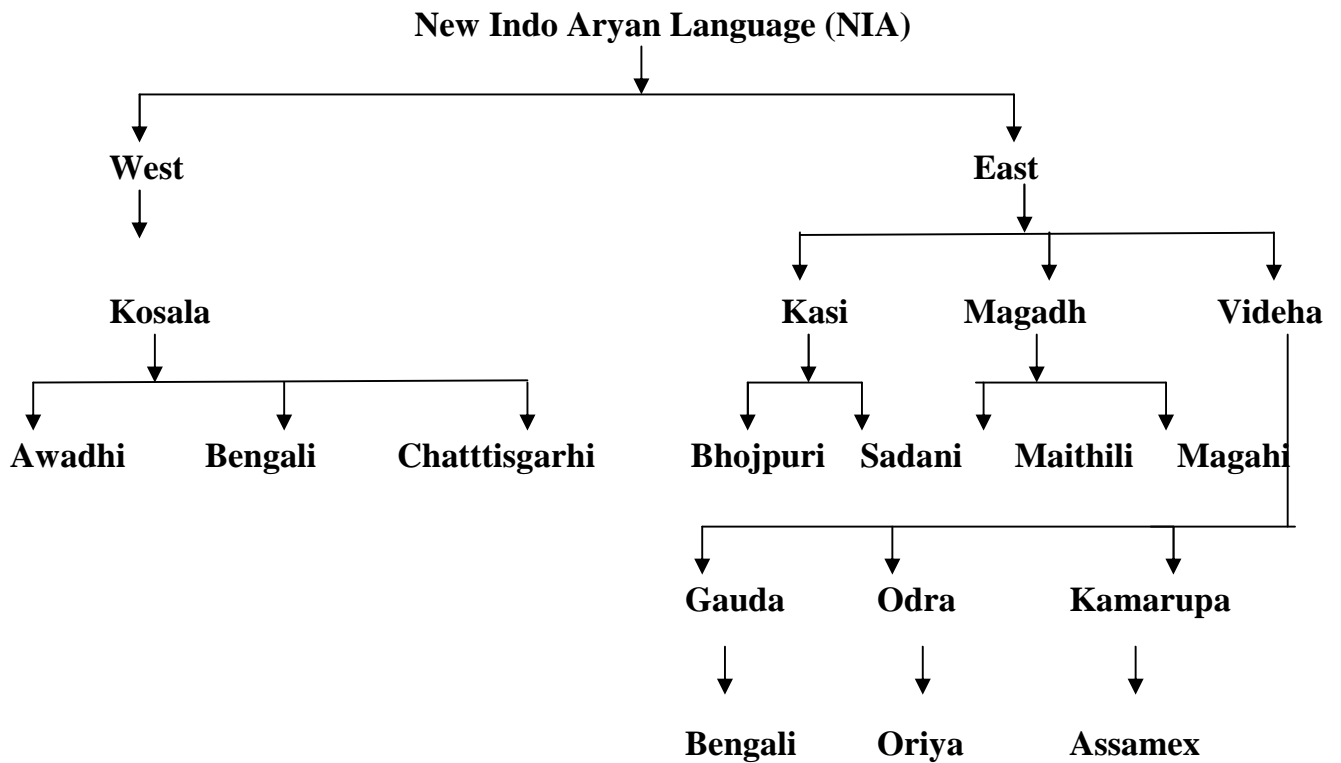


Figure 1.2 presents genetic relationship of Maithili with other new Indo-Aryan languages, based on Jha (1958, p.21).

1.1.4 Importance of Studying Learners' Errors

A systematic analysis of errors committed by the foreign language learners is of considerable importance. All the learners make mistakes. In the past, errors were considered as bad signs in learning and teaching process. But, nowadays, the situation has completely changed. Errors are no longer taken as bad signs in learning. It is believed that it is natural to make mistakes and if there are no mistakes then perhaps there is no learning. In fact, it is an unavoidable factor of learning process and developing competence.

The study of learner's errors has a great importance on language learning and teaching in the sense that error analysis is a stepwise procedure that is used to identify the errors, find out the sources of errors and provide remedies. In accordance with Corder (1973), there are two uses of studying second language learner's errors. They are: the practical use of error analysis and the theoretical use of error analysis (p. 265). Corder (1973), says that the practical use of studying learner's errors has the following two values (p.230).

1. the most obvious practical use of the error analysis to the teacher is to provide feedback, they tell the teacher something about the effectiveness of his teaching materials and his teaching techniques and show him what parts of the syllabus he has been following have been inadequately learned or taught and need further attention. They enable him to decide whether he can move into the next item of the syllabus or he must devote more time to the item he has been working on.
2. another value of studying learners' error isin terms of broader planning and with a new group of learners they provide the information or designing a remedial syllabus or a programmed of re-teaching.

According to Corder (1973), "..... the study of errors is a part of an experiment to conform or disprove the psycholinguistic theory of transfer." (p 266).

In this sense, error analysis can be used as an experimental method to find out the validity of the findings or predictions of contrastive analysis.

1.1.5 Error Analysis

Committing errors is a universal phenomenon in the process of second language learning. Errors are the deviated form of language which occur due to the lack of the knowledge of the underlying rules. We all make mistake even when we are speaking our mother tongue. Errors often cause a certain amount of merriment. It is a natural phenomenon, a learner commits errors in the process of second language learning. Errors which are consistent, regular and uncorrectable are made at the competence level. As a second language learner, everybody inevitably commits errors at all levels and in all the areas of language. It is an inherent feature of the process of foreign language learning. According to Crystal (2004), "error analysis is a technique for identifying, classifying and systematically interpreting the unacceptable forms produced by someone learning a foreign language, using any of the principles and procedures provided by linguistics" (p. 165). Similarly, Richards et.al. (1985), define error analysis as the study and analysis of the errors made by the second and foreign language learners (p. 121).

The term 'mistake' and 'error' are taken as synonymous but technically speaking, all the mistakes are not errors. Mistakes are made at the performance level whereas errors are made at the competence level. If a learner cannot recognize and correct the ill-formed element in a sentence made by himself, such type of mistakes are called errors.

In the field of teaching and learning, errors are significant for both teachers and learners to improve their proficiency of learning. Thus, errors are vital for the teachers; to undertake a systematic analysis of errors, for the researcher to find out how language is learnt or acquired and to use the strategies or procedures the learner is implying in his discovery of language.

Contrastive analysis is the comparison of the linguistic system of two languages. It tries to find out the differences or similarities between the languages being compared. So, it is a systematic analysis of similarities and differences between languages. It is one of the branches of applied linguistics.

Contrastive analysis develops with the theory of comparison and it may be divided into two. The first is known as interlingual comparison in which the comparison may be between two languages. The other is known as intralingual comparison in which one can compare dialectal differences that occur within a language too.

James (1980) defines, CA as “a linguistic enterprise aimed at producing inverted (i.e. contrastive not comparative) two valued typologies (a CA is always concerned with a pair of language) and founded on the assumption that language can be compared” (p. 180). It can be inferred (reaching from facts and reasoning) from this that languages are comparable and CA is the comparison of two linguistic systems which can be of any level of language such as phonology, morphology and syntax or grammar.

Contrastive analysis hypothesis based on behaviouristic psychology can be summarized in the following way:

- i) difference between past and the present learning causes hinderance whereas, learning is facilitated by the similarity between past learning and present learning.

- ii) hinderance leads learning difficulty, but facilitation causes learning easy, and
- iii) learning difficulty creates errors in performance but facilitation makes learners errorless in performance.

1.1.5.1 Error Analysis and its Steps

Error analysis is the study and analysis of the errors made by second or foreign language learners.

Error analysis may be carried out in order to:

- i) find out how well someone knows a language.
- ii) find out how a person learns a language; and
- iii) obtain information on common difficulties in language learning, as an aid in teaching or in the preparation of teaching materials.

The steps of error analysis are as follows:

- i) collection of data,
- ii) identification or recognition of error,
- iii) description or classification of error,
- iv) explanation of error,
- v) evaluation of error, and
- vi) correction and remediation of error.

i) Collection of Data

Collection of data is the first step of error analysis. No one can describe anything until he/she is being aware of its extent. At first, we must have reliable data to identify, describe, classify, explain and evaluate the errors. Data collection means gathering information. Corder (1973), says that data may be oral or written but oral data is preferable because it embraces all kinds of errors, which are not found in written data (p. 126).

Depending upon the nature of collecting data, there are two types of tools: free and guided. If it is general, it will be free and if it is specific, it will be guided. Similarly, there are two processes of data collection viz conscious and unconscious processes. The best way to collect data is to collect them in a natural way, i.e. without making the learners aware of the fact that their works are analyzed as errors. On the basis of the quality, we can find two types of qualities of data viz as authentic as possible, and as comprehensive as possible. Ideal data should be both authentic as well as comprehensive.

ii) Identification of Errors

It is the second step of error analysis. Identification of errors is necessary in which errors are established. Generally, errors and mistakes are taken as synonymous, which is technically not true. Technically speaking, mistake is a cover term that includes both mistakes and errors. Therefore, all the mistakes are errors but all the errors are not mistakes. Corder (1973), points out the need to distinguish 'errors' (i.e. deviant sentences which are the result of lack of competence) from 'mistakes' and 'lapses' (i.e. deviant sentences which are the result of psychological or physiological reasons rather than linguistic ones (p. 257).

The term 'mistake' can be defined as any deviation from the standard norm. Mistakes are made at the performance level due to carelessness, fatigue and some other physical discomfort which can be corrected by the performer himself if he realizes that he has made a mistake. They are made by both native and non-native speakers due to non-linguistic reasons and occur irregularly and inconsistently.

Mistakes can be of two types-mistakes committed on the competence level and those committed on the performance level. Mistakes committed on the competence level are errors. On the other hand, mistakes at the performance level are considered as performance mistakes.

But the term 'error' can be defined as a systematic deviation from the norm of the code or a breach of the code in the second language learner's language due to inadequate knowledge of the code. Errors can not be corrected by the performer himself if he is told about the errors, rather there may be chances of committing other errors. Therefore, errors are made at competence level by the non-native speakers, due to linguistic reasons and occur regularly and consistently.

The first requirement for identification of error is to identify what an error is. A piece of language, which differs from normal standard usage/use, is erroneous.

Major performance mistakes are breach of code (rule) i.e. performance mistakes can be corrected. Major performance mistakes involve major breaking of the code. Minor performance mistakes are of two types: controllable and uncontrollable. There are three types of controllable mistakes: slips/lapses, false starts and syntactic blends.

There can be slip of tongue as well as slip of pen. There may be slip of ear, eye etc.

False starts means the speaker starts saying and changes in between and commits an error.

Syntactic blend refers to blending of two structures or mixing two structures. It is a minor controllable mistake.

iii) Description and Classification of Errors

The next step in error analysis is description or classification of errors in which the errors are classified into different categories and then labeled. Corder (1973) says, "A full description of the errors involved explaining it in terms of the linguistic processes or rules which are being followed by the speaker" (p. 277). The description of errors can be made at various degrees of depth. Following Corder (1993) the description of errors can be done in two levels. They are:

- (a) superficial level, and
- (b) deeper level.

The first describes errors in terms of the physical differences between the learner's deviant utterances and the reconstructed versions. The differences between the deviant utterances and the reconstructed versions can be classified into the following four categories:

- (i) Omission: eg The Sun rises in the east*
 - Omission 'the' at the beginning
- (ii) Addition: eg. My brother married with her. *
 - Unnecessary addition of 'with'
- (iii) Subtraction: eg. It is easy to please john.*
 - John is easy to please.

(iv) Disordering: eg.

- He asked me where was I going,*
- Disordering of where I was going.

In the second 'deeper 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, lexical, semantic, stylistic, pragmatic etc.

Errors are classified according to the levels of language (phonological, lexical, syntactical, graphological, grammatical), things beyond sentence level (discourse and stylistic), number of learners (individual and group), language skills (expressive and receptive), clarity (overt and covert), ways of interpreting (local and global) and the things that are not parts of language but play an important role in communication (pragmatic and paralinguistic). According to Corder (1973), every learner, in course of his learning a language, processes through three stages of making errors (p. 13). They are pre-systematic, systematic and post-systematic. In the first stage, the learner is unaware of the existence of particular system or rule in the target language. His errors, therefore, are quite random and the learner cannot correct and explain himself. Errors in this stage are not regular.

In the systematic stage, the learner's errors become regular. He has discovered the rule of some sorts of the wrong ones. He cannot correct his errors but he can explain some coherent account of the rules. In the third stage, he can not tell what sort of rules he has been following but can correct and explain his errors.

Although, several classifications have been made on error analysis, but no separate research as yet has been done to analyze the errors in lexical and grammatical levels.

Grammatical error refers to the errors where there is breaking of grammatical system. Grammatical errors may be morphological or syntactic. The following utterances illustrate the grammatical errors:

- (a) Who is the taller student in the class? (Morphological error)
- (b) Mary has finished reading the novel, isn't she? (Syntactic error)

Semantic error refers to the error in understanding or conveying meaning. Semantic error is also referred to as lexical errors. The following errors illustrate semantic/lexical errors:

- (a) 'Skin Shoes' in place of 'Leather Shoes'
- (b) 'He throw a coconut at his friend' instead of 'He threw a coconut to his friend.'

iv) Explanation of Errors

This stage of error analysis tries to find out the different sources of errors committed by the learners. Errors are committed either due to interlinguistic or intra-linguistic interference. Interlinguistic interference is popularly known as mother tongue or L1 interference. It refers to the fact that one's mother tongue interference with his learning of second language that a learner transfers the habit of his mother tongue into foreign language. Nepali learner of English commits a lot of errors in pronunciation due to the influence of his/her mother tongue.

Intralinguistic interference refers to the fact that some errors are made within the language itself, not due to the structure of the mother tongue. Intralinguistic errors can be categorized as follows:

(a) Overgeneralization

It is true that a learner tends to simplify learning load in course of his learning period. He does this by formulating the rules. But due to the limited exposure to the language being learnt, he may overgeneralize the rules beyond the limitation and fail to take the exceptions into account.

According to Littlewood (1984), "the majority of intralingual errors are instances of the same process of overgeneralization that has been observed in the first language acquisition" (p.23). It means wrong prediction about the language system. The learner tries to derive the rules behind the data to which a learner has been exposed to and may develop hypothesis that is related neither to the mother tongue nor to the target language.

eg.

- h: [h]-halt
- h: [h]-house
- h: [h]-hot
- h: [h]-honest

Association of 'h' letter is pronounced as [h]. Symbol and sound are associated in generalization and 'honest' is pronounced as/honest/by Nepali learners of English due to the overgeneralization of pronunciation rules.

(b) Analogical Creation

Another source of errors is analogical creation. It is the error that is committed due to generalization of the whole system in the same way, such types of errors can often be found in exceptional cases. In fact, it is not mistake of the learners but it is the mistake of language itself due to irregularity patterns that presents.

Analogical creation

Hand + S	hands
Book + S	books
Man + S	mans*

(c) **Hyper-Correction**

Errors may be committed due to hyper correction which implies that the learner at first learns the correct form, but due to false analogical creation, he turns it into an erroneous form. For example, when an English language learner is learning English number, he learns-one, two, three..... eleven, twelve.....twenty, twenty one..... etc.

Here, first he learns one-one-eleven, one-two-twelve and so on, he learns to one-twenty one, two-two- twenty two... etc. In this case, the latter rule may confuse him to correct the previous rule as onety one, onety two....etc.

(d) **Inherent Difficulties within the Target Language itself**

It has been proved that some features of the target language are inherently difficult and this difficulty leads the learners towards erroneous expressions. Both learners and native speakers find these aspects of the language difficult to master. When we can not explain the nature of errors and those are not committed due to overgeneralization, hypercorrection, analogical creation and L1 interference, then it will be inherent difficulties with in the target language itself.

For example, English articles and prepositions are taken as inherently difficult areas for both the second language learners and the native speakers of the English language.

V) Evaluation of Errors

Evaluation of errors is a recent branch of error analysis. The term 'error gravity' refers to the seriousness of errors. Different scholars determine the same error differently.

Evaluation of errors can be done in different ways:

- (a) The ranking Vs rating and
- (b) Subjective Vs objective

vi) Correction and Remediation of Errors

The main purpose of doing error analysis is to facilitate learning. Correction is one part of remediation. Correction takes care of how errors of learners should be corrected whereas remediation is concerned with providing some kinds of remedial teaching. There are mainly two opposing views regarding the technique of remediation of errors. The first view suggests that immediate correction should be used as the most reliable technique to treat errors. The other view suggests that errors should not be corrected. If they are corrected, it may hamper their ability to learn language naturally.

There are various techniques of correction like teacher correction, peer correction, and self correction and so on. But no single technique is sufficient and we should apply each or all the techniques at a time according to the situation and the nature of errors. Generally, there are two ways of correcting errors. They are as follows:

- (a) Explicit technique: In this technique, the learner points out the areas of committing errors and supplies the correct one by writing symbols. For example:

-When I counted I found that one of the boys is missing.

(Grammatical error)

- (b) Implicit Technique: In this technique, Hints are given and errors are not pointed out the errors on the spot that helps the learners to correct errors. Learners should be taught how to discover and correct the errors. So that they proceed towards self-correction.

In comparison, implicit technique is better than explicit technique. But we have to proceed from explicit to implicit gradually.

1.1.6 Morphology

According to Katamba (1993), morphology is the study of word structure (p. 19). The claim that words have structure might come as a surprise because normally speakers think of words as indivisible units of meaning.

It is obvious that, in addition to indicating the meaning of words and morphemes, the lexicon must also store other kinds of information relevant to the application of syntactic and phonological rules. Syntax needs to have access to morphosyntactic properties i.e. properties that are partly morphological and partly syntactic such as whether a noun is countable like spades or uncountable like equipment.

The term morpheme is used to refer to the smallest, indivisible units of semantic content or grammatical function which words are made up of. By definition, a morpheme cannot be decomposed into smaller units which are either meaningful by themselves or mark a grammatical function like singular or plural number in the noun. If we divide the word fee [fi:] (which contains just one morpheme) into, say, [f] and [i:], it would be impossible to say what each of the sounds [f] and [i:] means by itself since as the sounds in themselves do not have meaning.

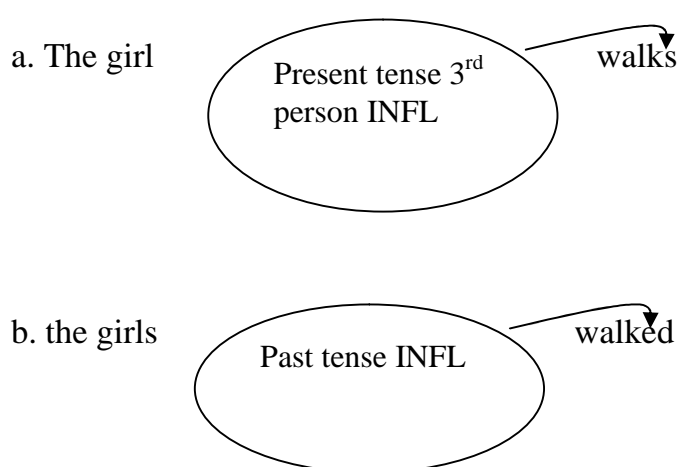
Central to lexical morphology is the principle that morphological component of a grammar is organized in a series of hierarchical strata. English affixes (both prefixes and suffixes) can be grasped into two broad classes on the basis of their phonological behaviour. One type is neutral and the other is non-neutral. Neutral affixes have no phonological effect on the base to which they are attached. But non-neutral ones affect in some way the consonant or vowel segments or the location of stress in the base to which they are attached.

In addition to being neutral or non neutral in their phonological effects, English primary and secondary affixes display contrasting phonotactic behaviour, whereas secondary affixation can produce segment sequences that are disallowed within a single morpheme in lexical representations, primary affixation cannot give segment sequences that deviate from those allowed in single morphemes in the lexicon.

Morphology is of two types: inflectional morphology and derivational morphology. Verbal morphology refers to a part of morphology which deals with the production of the verbs using appropriate affixes at the end of their root which is generated due to the influence of tense realization implied by the context. It is originally a part of inflectional morphology which maintains class but brings differences in time realization.

Verbal morphology refers to the morphology of verb. That means how morphological process takes place in verb and in this category basically the inflection categories of verbs are described. In most languages, the verb shows greater complexity than any other word class like noun, adjective, adverb etc. To talk about verbal morphology one has to describe the inherent properties of verbs. Verbal inflection contains tense, aspect, mood and conjugation. These categories all add further specification to the event, state, process or action, which we will refer to as predication, indicated by the verb.

Normally, tense indicates the time of the predication in relation to some particular moment. This moment shows the moment of speaking or writing for example, tense indicates whether the event happened prior to the moment of speaking (past tense) or subsequent to it (future tense). The examples illustrated below show that how the inflection takes place in determining the dichotomy relation between past and present tense eg.



Here the affix-s shows relation with the present tense 3rd person INFL, and affix-ed (past markers) relation with the past tense, 3rd person, INFL thus, the above illustration determines tense as an inherent property of the verb.

In Maithili, the verb may agree with more than one argument at a time. Further, it may also agree with non-arguments such as possessors of arguments. All the various possibilities are explored and a very complete hitherto unavailable, picture of Maithili agreement appears.

The structure of the Maithili verb may be characterized as follows:

Finite verb = stem+ tense+ mood + person/ honorificity agreement verb phrase
 = [verb phrase...verb stem+ Aspect] [finite auxiliary verb]

The above characterization shows that there is constituent break between a main verb and its auxiliary. It also shows that the finite verb is the one that is marked for tense etc- the finite verb being the main verb in a non-auxiliary construction and the auxiliary verb in an auxiliary construction.

An attempt is also made to isolate morphemes and to show as far as possible their relationship with the syntax and semantics of the Maithili verb system. Maithili verb is not always possible to distinctly analyze and isolate each and every morpheme. Upon closer scrutiny, one discovers that a single morpheme may represent more than one grammatical function and may in fact function as marker of person, tense, mood and honorificity all at once. The difficulty in isolating morphemes is further exacerbated when the question of 'verb-object agreement' as 'secondary verb agreement' is brought to the fore.

Maithili verbs conjugate for three tenses-past, present and future. The tense marker is listed below:

Past - l-

Future - b- First and second persons elsewhere

- t-

Present- o-

When there are no aspect markers or auxiliaries occurring immediately after the verb stem, then the tense markers are added directly to the verb stem itself.

Otherwise, these occur after the auxiliary, which is preceded by the aspect marker. All this is really just a consequence of the fact that the finite verb is the one that is marker for tense. No overt tense marker is used in the present tense.

For example,

1. r mes bhoj n k e-l- inh

Ramesh food do - PST – (3 I)

'Ramesh ate'.

2. ha □ kailh jae-b

you (II) tomorrow go- FUT- (2II)

'you will go tomorrow'.

3. to□ ja-it ch - e □ □

you (NII) go- IMPERF AUX-PRES- (2II)

'you go'.

1.2 Review of the Related Literature

To this date, a number of research works have been carried out on comparative study of language in the Department of English as well as the Department of English Language Education, Tribhuvan University, Kirtipur, Kathmandu.

However, the researches carried out so far are not directly related to the proposed topic. A very few researcher have been carried out in this respect no research has yet been carried out on morphological errors committed by Maithili learners of English. The related literature to the present study is presented below:

Katamba (1991) identifies the English affixes in formulaic way. He groups the English affixes into two broad categories viz. neutral and non-neutral on the basis of their phonological behaviour (p.89). He also illustrates how the

different types of affixes and the affixes of the same type in the base are ordered as well as many affixes can be added to a base.

Sah (2000) carried out a research on "A comparative study of S-V Agreement in Maithili and English language." He found that S-V agreement systems between these languages are utterly different except in the case of gender. Unlike English, honorific forms are used in Maithili.

Mukhiya (2001) carried out a research on "A comparative study of passivization in English and Maithili". He discovered that passivization system of English distinctly differs from that of Maithili in almost all grammatical aspects though there are some areas, which are somehow similar in both languages.

Thakur (2005) carried out a research on "Relativization in English and Maithili: A comparative study". The objective of this study was to find out similarities and differences between English and Maithili relativization systems. The researcher found that in the Maithili language there is honorific, non-honorific distinction in using relativizer, whereas in English there is no such distinction.

Dealing with comparative study of morphology of Maithili and English languages, **Khanal (2005)** conducted a research on "Affixation in Maithili and English: a comparative study". The main objective of the research is to find out affixation rules of the English and Maithili languages. The researcher found that both the English and Maithili languages have prefixes and suffixes but not infix. The researcher also found that English has more prefixes than that of Maithili, whereas, Maithili is richer than English in terms of number of suffixes. But the researcher does not study about the verbal inflection of both the languages.

Chaudhary (2008) conducted a research on "Verbal affixation in Tharu and English: A comparative study." The objective of the study is to identify the verbal affixes and the rules of verbal affixation in Tharu language. The researcher found that Saptari dialect of Tharu has gender marker. Suffixes are used for both masculine and feminine. The researcher also found that /n i/ indicates negative marker which is always used before the verb stems and Tharu language has three tense markers i.e. present, past and future tense marker suffixes, whereas English has only two viz. past and non-past tense markers.

So far no descriptive study has been carried out to identify and describe the identified errors in verbal morphology committed by Maithili learners of English. Therefore, it is the first attempt to find out errors committed by Maithili learners of English. The study also aims at identifying the errors committed by Maithili learners of English.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

The main objectives of the present study are as follows:

1. to identify the errors in verbal morphology committed by Maithili learners of English.
2. to describe the identified errors.
3. to suggest pedagogical implications on the basis of the findings of the study.

1.4 Significance of the Study

This research study will be beneficial to English language teacher, curriculum designer, text book writer and all those who are involved directly or indirectly in teaching English as a foreign language in the context of Nepal, where people are multilingual and foreign language learning happens to be influenced by the learners mother tongue both on competence and performance levels mainly while producing sentences in the target language and while working on the process of identifying morphological errors present in the sentences given to them, which are realized to be used by them speaking and writing utterances in the language they are learning in the classroom environment.

CHAPTER-TWO

METHODOLOGY

The following methodology was adopted to fulfil the objectives of the present study:

2.1 Sources of Data

The research was based on the following sources of data:

2.1.1 Primary Source of Data

The primary sources of data were the responses of the grade nine students studying at Shree Chandra Ma. Vi. Siraha.

2.1.2 Secondary Source of Data

The researcher studied books, theses and journals under taken some of the prominent ones are listed below:

Nida (1946), Yadav (1984), Katamba (1993), Sah (2000), Khanal (2005), Chaudhary (2008)

2.2 Sampling Procedure

Judgmental non-random sampling procedure was adopted to select a public school of Siraha district. Fishbowl sampling procedure was used to select eighty students studying at grade nine of Shree Chandra Ma. Vi. Siraha.

2.3 Process of Data Collection

1. The test items based on the morphological errors were prepared for the Maithili learners of English studying at grade nine. Test items were

piloted on 10 learners of similar educational and linguistic levels to judge the validity of questions.

2. The test items findings were given to the selected eighty students of grade nine.
3. The errors committed by the Maithili learners of English were identified and described to attain the objectives.

2.4 Limitation of the Study

This study was limited to the following ways:

1. The study was confined to the verbal morphology used by Maithili learners of English.
2. The study was confined to the inflectional morphology related to the verbs only.
3. The data collected were entirely based on a public school of Siraha district.
4. The findings was derived for the responses of only eighty students of grade nine.

CHAPTER-THREE

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

This chapter deals with the analysis and interpretation of data. In accordance with the objectives of research, the responses of the students were marked systematically and their proficiency as well as the errors committed by them were tabulated. In order to make the study more objective, the analysis was done descriptively and statistically by using the tools of average. The chapter consists of the following parts.

3.1 Holistic Analysis

S.N.	School	Total Sample	Item	Total Errors	Average Errors
1	Shree Chandra Ma. Vi. Siraha	80	A	249	3.11
2	Shree Chandra Ma. Vi. Siraha	80	B	257	3.21
3	Shree Chandra Ma. Vi. Siraha	80	C	282	3.53
4	Shree Chandra Ma. Vi. Siraha	80	D	273	3.41
5	Shree Chandra Ma. Vi. Siraha	80	E	294	3.68

The table above takes into account the errors committed by Maithili learners of English. It shows that the average error of the students of shree Chandra Ma. Vi. Siraha is 3.11 in item A, 3.21 in item B, 3.53 in item C, 3.41 in item D and 3.68 in item E.

However, the less average error of the students of Shree Chandra Ma. Vi, Siraha, is 3.11 in item A and the most average errors of the students of Shree Chandra Ma. Vi. Siraha, is 3.68.

3.2 Item Wise Analysis

3.2.1 Errors Committed by the Students in Item 'A'

Table-1

Total Sample	Total Errors	Average Errors
80	249	3.11

The table above indicates that the students committed around three errors in average. That is to say, out of 10 marks, they secured around 70% while attempting the multiple choice test item. Regarding item 'A' the students were found to have committed errors ranging from one to ten. Out of ten marks carried by this test item, twenty eight students committed two errors while attempting this test item. One student failed to get any positive response of this test item.

3.2.2 Errors Committed by the Students in Item 'B'

Table-2

Total Sample	Total Errors	Average errors
80	257	3.21

The table above indicates that the students committed 3.21 errors in average. Regarding item 'B' the students were found to have committed errors ranging from one to ten. Out of ten marks carried by this test item, thirty students' committed two errors and one student failed to get any mark.

3.2.3 Errors Committed by the Students in Item 'C'

Total sample	Total errors	Average errors
80	282	3.53

The table above indicates that the students committed 3.53 average errors. Regarding item 'C' the students were found to have committed errors ranging from one to ten. Out of ten marks carried by this test item, twenty-nine students committed three errors and one student committed six errors.

3.2.4 Errors Committed by the Students in Item 'D'

Total Sample	Total Errors	Average Errors
80	273	3.41

The table above indicates that how item 'D' was responded in test. Regarding item 'D' the students were found to have committed errors ranging from one to eight. Out of ten marks carried by this test item, thirty-five students committed three errors and one student committed eight errors. Average error committed by the students was 3.41.

3.2.5 Errors Committed by the Students in Item 'E'

Total Sample	Total Errors	Average Errors
80	294	3.68

The table above indicates how item 'E' was responded in test. Regarding item 'E' the students were found to have committed errors ranging from one to eight. Out of ten marks carried by this test item, thirty students committed three errors and two students committed eight errors. Average error committed by the students was 3.68.

CHAPTER-FOUR

FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 Findings

The present study was conducted to identify and describe the errors in verbal morphology committed by Maithili learners of English. In order to fulfil the objectives, descriptive research design was adopted to find out the errors committed by the Maithili-learners of English. The students were given test items to supply appropriate answers to them. On the basis of their responses, the number of errors committed by the students studying in class nine was determined. On the basis of the description of the data, the following findings have been derived:

1. In totality, sixty percentage students committed errors in attempting performance oriented test items in comparison to competence oriented test items.
2. Fifty percentage students committed erroneous structure while attempting test item B which is focused on selection of grammatically acceptable verb form.
3. While attempting test item, forty percentage used was/were +v-ed form instead of using v-ed while narrating the past event they had eye-witnessed in person. Such type of erroneous structure production can be supposed to have occurred as a result of mother tongue transfer.
4. Test item 'E' focusing on the use of future time reference to describe future plan was attempted poorly. Only twenty percentages of them were found to have used S+is/am/are+ ging to +v, S+V-es/v to express their future plans.

5. Multiple choice item selection based test item i.e. test item A was attempted more accurately in comparison to test item 'B'.

4.2 Recommendations

On the basis of the findings from the analysis, the researcher has put following recommendations for pedagogical implications and for further researchers.

4.2.1 Recommendations for Pedagogical Implications

1. Language teachers should give equal emphasis on both competence-level based and performance- level based language practice.
2. Language teacher should provide home assignments regarding the exercises based on verbal morphology along with communication-oriented tasks.
3. Classroom practice should be extended to daily life activities. That is to say, verbal form use based assignment should be based on activities they do in their real life situations.
4. The use of language learner's mother tongue should be avoided in the English language classrooms. At least, medium of instruction should be the target language. But, structural difference should be presented before them so that they can understand how their mother-tongue structure differs from English structures.

4.2.2 Recommendation for Further Researches

The following pieces of suggestions are given to the interested researcher for the topic in question:

1. The study can be broadened by taking a detailed account of factors responsible for committing such errors.
2. This study was limited to only one school of Siraha district, and only the 9th graders of this school were tested. It is advisable to carryout further researches taking large number of population in verbal/ nominal morphology as well.
3. It is advisable to analyze the errors committed by language learners to find the reason behind committing such mistakes.

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