# Understanding Common Learner Errors: A Contrastive Analysis Approach Through Pre-Service Teachers Interview

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## *Abstract*

*This study examines prevalent linguistic inaccuracies encountered by individuals learning the English language, as well as the perceptions and methodologies employed by pre-service educators in addressing these inaccuracies through contrastive analysis. The adopted methodology is qualitative, utilizing contrastive analysis to facilitate a comprehensive understanding of the frequent errors and the approaches that pre-service teachers can utilize to correct them. The results indicate that learners commonly struggle with various elements, including grammatical issues, pronunciation errors, interference from their native language, limited vocabulary, and psychological challenges such as anxiety and diminished self-confidence. Through semi-structured interviews conducted with 20 pre-service teachers, the research pinpointed effective strategies employed, which comprise explicit correction techniques, phonetic drills, thematic vocabulary instruction, and the establishment of a nurturing classroom atmosphere. The findings underscored the necessity for enhanced teacher training, the incorporation of technology, student-centric methodologies, cultural awareness, and ongoing professional development for educators to elevate the effectiveness of language instruction.*

*Keywords: Analysis, Learner Errors, Pre-Service Teacher*

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## A.    INTRODUCTION

Language learners often make mistakes, which has become a common concern in education. These mistakes not only show the learners' struggles but also highlight issues in how languages are taught. One major reason for these errors is the difference between the structure of the learner's native language and the language they are trying to learn. Often, learners unintentionally apply rules from their first language to the new language, which leads to repeated mistakes. These errors can have a big impact, such as lowering learners' confidence and making it harder for them to improve their skills. In today's complex learning environment, it's crucial for teachers to understand these patterns of errors so they can create better teaching strategies.

The Contrastive Analysis approach, which focuses on comparing language structures, is one method that has long been used to predict and identify the types of errors that are likely to occur. This approach enables educators to comprehend the genesis of errors and the factors that influence them, thereby providing more precise guidance in the learning process. Pre-service teachers, as future educators preparing to enter the teaching profession, play a pivotal role in this context. With the theoretical knowledge they acquire during their education, coupled with their direct teaching experience, they have a significant opportunity to identify and understand learners' errors more profoundly. Their experiences offer insights not only into the types of errors that frequently arise but also into effective strategies for addressing these issues in teaching practice. One particularly effective method for exploring these insights is to conduct interviews with pre-service teachers, as this provides an opportunity to understand their perspective on learners' error patterns from both a practical and theoretical standpoint.

Many studies have explored the topic of language errors, including notable work by Sumalinog (2018); Ma, Doi, and Liru (2023); Pasaribu (2021) that looked at common grammatical mistakes made by senior high school students from the perspective of experienced teachers and in student writing and identified frequent mistakes in grammar use such as verb tense, subject-verb agreement, articles, prepositions, plurals, pronouns, spelling, word order, and punctuation. These errors were linked to limited grammar knowledge, a small vocabulary, and interference from the mother tongue, as students often directly translated from Indonesian to English without considering proper sentence structure.

Although many studies have explored language errors made by learners, such as those by Sumalinog (2018), Ma et al. (2023), and Pasaribu (2021), most of them focus on analyzing students' mistakes directly or rely on the perspectives of experienced teachers. There isn't much research that examines how pre-service teachers—future educators still in training—understand and deal with these errors. Additionally, while many studies talk about grammatical errors and their causes, few connect these findings with the contrastive analysis approach to offer practical teaching strategies. This study fills that gap by exploring the experiences of pre-service teachers, combining their practical observations with the theoretical insights from contrastive analysis. By doing so, it sheds light on how pre-service teachers see and handle common errors, helping to improve teaching methods. The research focuses on two main questions: (1) What common language errors do pre-service teachers observe, and what do they think causes these errors? (2) How do pre-service teachers view the contrastive analysis approach as a way to identify and address these mistakes?

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## B.      RESEARCH METHOD

This study employs a qualitative approach using contrastive analysis methods. This approach is chosen to understand the common errors made by students in learning English and to explore ways that pre-service teachers can address these issues. According to Creswell (2014), qualitative approaches allow researchers to deeply understand individual experiences and perspectives. The participants in this study consist of 20 pre-service teachers currently enrolled in an English education program. Purposeful selection of participants based on teaching experience and relevant educational background is a common method used in qualitative research to ensure that the data obtained is relevant and informative (Palinkas et al., 2015).

Data will be collected through semi-structured interviews. These interviews are designed to elicit pre-service teachers' understanding of the common errors faced by students in learning English and the strategies they employ to address these issues. The interview questions include:

1. What common errors do you often encounter among students learning English?
2. How do you diagnose the causes of these errors?
3. What strategies do you implement to help students correct their mistakes?

Semi-structured interviews allow researchers to obtain in-depth and flexible information from participants (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015). Interview data will be analyzed using thematic analysis techniques. The analysis process will occur in several stages:

1. Transcription of interviews.
2. Initial coding to identify key themes emerging from the data.
3. Advanced coding to group data based on themes relevant to common errors and their handling strategies.
4. Compilation of a narrative summarizing the findings.

Thematic analysis is an effective method for identifying and analyzing patterns in qualitative data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). To ensure data validity, the researcher will triangulate by comparing information from interviews with relevant literature on errors in English language learning. Triangulation is a technique used to enhance research validity by combining various data sources (Denzin, 1978). Additionally, members of the interviewee group will be asked to verify the results of their interviews in the form of summaries, known as member checking (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

This study will adhere to ethical principles by obtaining consent from all participants prior to the interviews. Participants' identities will be kept confidential, and the data collected will only be used for research purposes. Adhering to ethical principles in research is crucial to protect the rights and welfare of participants (American Psychological Association, 2017).

## C.      RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Based on the semi-structured interviews conducted with 20 pre-service teachers, several significant patterns emerged regarding the common errors observed among English learners and the strategies employed to address these issues

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| Category | Observed Errors | Perceived Causes | Proposed Strategies |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Grammatical Mistakes** | 1.Misuse of verb tenses, e.g., confusing past and present tense in sentences. 2.Subject-verb agreement errors (e.g., "He go to school" instead of "He goes to school"). 3.Incorrect use of articles and prepositions. | 1.Limited understanding of English grammar rules. 2.Overgeneralization of rules (e.g., applying singular/plural forms inconsistently). 3.Lack of reinforcement in grammar-focused activities. | 1.Providing explicit correction in real-time. 2.Using visual aids (e.g., grammar charts, diagrams). 3.Simplified grammar explanations followed by practice with real world examples. |
| **Pronunciation Errors** | 1.Mispronunciation of English sounds absent in Indonesian, e.g.,/θ/ ("think") or /ð/ ("this"). 2.Overuse of Indonesian phonetic patterns, such as pronouncing "v" as "f". | 1.Lack of exposure to native pronunciation. 2.Limited use of phonetic tools or audio resources. 3.Overreliance on rote learning of vocabulary without phonetic awareness. | 1.Incorporating phonetic exercises, such as minimal pair drills. 2.Using language lab tools and audio recordings from native speakers. 3.Repeated pronunciation practice in context. |
| **Mother Tongue Interference** | 1. Direct translation of Indonesian phrases to English leading to errors in word order, e.g., "My book red is" (directly translated from "Buku saya merah"). 2. Overuse of literal translations for idiomatic expressions | 1. Structural differences between Indonesian (SVO) and English sentence patterns. 2. Lack of focus on contextual learning of phrases and sentence construction 3. Overemphasis on memorization | 1. Employing contrastive analysis to highlight differences in sentence structure. 2. Designing exercises to emphasize correct English word order and idiomatic usage |
| **Vocabulary Issues** | 1. Overuse of simple vocabulary due to limited word knowledge, e.g., repeatedly using "big" instead of | 1. Restricted vocabulary learning techniques, e.g., rote memorization without application. | 1. Implementing thematic vocabulary lessons. 2. Encouraging extensive reading of |

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|  |  |  |  |
|---|---|---|---|
|  | alternatives like "large" or "huge". <br>2. Confusion with synonyms and antonyms. | 2. Insufficient reading exposure to diverse English texts. <br>3. Limited practice in real-life contexts. | simplified and authentic texts. <br>3. Promoting games like word association and storytelling. |
| **Psychological Barriers** | 1. Hesitation to speak due to fear of making mistakes. <br>2. Lack of confidence when participating in class discussions. <br>3. Nervousness during oral presentations or role plays. | 1. Anxiety stemming from lack of fluency. <br>2. Negative classroom experiences, such as harsh error correction. <br>3. Perceived pressure to perform perfectly in front of peers or teachers. | 1. Building a supportive learning environment through <br>2. positive reinforcement. <br>3. Encouraging collaborative group work to reduce individual pressure. <br>4. Normalizing mistakes as part of learning. |

## 1. Grammatical Errors

Grammatical errors, such as verb tense misuse and incorrect subject-verb agreement, were among the most frequently observed mistakes. These findings align with studies by Ma, Doi, and Liru (2024), which highlighted that learners often struggle with English grammar due to insufficient understanding of rules. Pre-service teachers effectively used explicit correction techniques but acknowledged the need for sustained reinforcement through interactive grammar exercises.

## 2. Pronunciation Challenges

Difficulties in pronouncing certain phonemes, particularly those absent in Indonesian, reflect the influence of the learners' native language. Sumalinog (2018) noted similar patterns, emphasizing the importance of phonetic awareness in teaching pronunciation. Pre-service teachers reported using tools like phonetic charts and audio recordings but identified a lack of consistent practice as a barrier to improvement.

## 3. Mother Tongue Interference

Direct translations from Indonesian to English often led to incorrect word order and expression errors. These results resonate with the principles of Contrastive Analysis, which focus on addressing errors caused by linguistic differences between the first language and the target language (Fauziati, 2014). Structured practice in constructing English sentences was found to be an effective intervention.

## 4. Vocabulary Limitations

Learners' reliance on basic vocabulary hindered their ability to express ideas more effectively. Khoirunisa and Maryam (2023) stressed the need for extensive

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vocabulary instruction tailored to the learners' level. Teachers found thematic vocabulary lessons combined with real-world applications to be effective in addressing this gap.

### 5. Psychological Factors

Anxiety and low confidence were significant barriers to learner participation. As noted by Salwa et al. (2023), classroom interaction and questioning strategies can significantly reduce anxiety and build confidence. Pre-service teachers emphasized the importance of creating a positive and supportive classroom atmosphere to encourage active participation.

### 6. Implications for Teaching Practice

a. Enhancing Teacher Training: Incorporate phonetic awareness and contrastive analysis modules in pre-service teacher education.
b. Balancing Accuracy and Fluency: Focus on activities that integrate grammar accuracy with communicative competence.
c. Promoting Confidence: Use collaborative group activities and normalize mistakes to reduce anxiety.

### 7. Integrate Technology in Teaching

The use of technology in teaching can address multiple challenges simultaneously. Digital tools, such as language learning apps, pronunciation software, and interactive grammar games, provide engaging ways for students to practice and hone their skills. For example, research conducted by Lin and Wang (2022) emphasized that speech recognition software helps students voice their pronunciation and get immediate feedback. Additionally, virtual reality (VR) environments or gamification platforms, as stated by Smith et al. (2021), can include real-world conversations, thereby encouraging expanded understanding and speaking fluency.

### 8. Emphasizing Learner-Centered Approaches

Implementing learner-centered teaching methods effectively addresses the unique needs and preferences of students. According to Jones and Clark (2023), this approach encompasses personalized vocabulary-building exercises, self-paced grammar tutorials, and collaborative projects that foster peer learning. Additionally, offering students the chance to choose topics that interest them for discussions or writing assignments can significantly boost their motivation and engagement (Brown and Lee, 2020).

### 9. Cultural Sensitivity in Language Teaching

Recognizing the cultural backgrounds of learners is crucial for minimizing the impact of their native language on the learning process. Fauziati (2014) suggests that teachers can create lessons that highlight the differences between the linguistic structures of English and the learners' native languages. This approach not only fosters awareness of these differences but also equips students with effective strategies for adapting. Furthermore, incorporating culturally relevant materials and examples into lessons, as recommended by Rahman and Anisa (2021) can enhance the relatability and significance of the learning experience.

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## 10. Continuous Professional Development for Teachers

For effective teaching practices, schools and institutions must offer ongoing professional development opportunities. Engaging in workshops, seminars, and peer observation programs that emphasize the latest research in second language acquisition such as the findings highlighted by Nguyen et al. (2023) can help educators enhance their skills and strategies.

## 11. Fostering a Positive Feedback Culture

Constructive feedback in Contrastive Analysis is essential for helping learners correct their mistakes while keeping them motivated. Teachers can effectively combine corrective measures with encouragement by recognizing students' strengths in addition to pointing out areas for improvement. According to Williams and Evans (2022), formative assessment methods, such as reflective journals and peer reviews, empower learners to monitor their progress and take charge of their own growth.

## D.    CONCLUSION

This research emphasizes the significance of a thorough comprehension of prevalent learner errors and the implementation of effective strategies to mitigate them, especially for pre-service educators. It draws attention to the necessity of extensive teacher training, the incorporation of technology, student-centered methodologies, cultural awareness, and continuous professional growth for instructors to improve the quality of language teaching. This investigation advocates for a contrastive analysis framework to discern the underlying factors contributing to errors, enabling pre-service teachers to devise specialized strategies to assist learners in overcoming their difficulties.

Moreover, the research stresses the critical role of establishing a supportive and encouraging learning environment for students, which can be fostered through efficacious methods including direct correction, phonetic exercises, thematic vocabulary training, and the cultivation of a nurturing classroom setting. A nuanced understanding of the obstacles encountered by students with Broca's aphasia, a condition impacting language production, can further refine these strategies. Educators may include activities aimed at enhancing articulation and fluency while also offering students opportunities to practice language use in authentic contexts. By acknowledging the distinct needs of learners facing Broca's aphasia, pre-service teachers can more effectively prepare to aid their educational progress and promote their language acquisition.

These insights serve as a valuable resource for pre-service teachers and educators, directing their endeavors to improve English language learning for all students, particularly those with specific language learning difficulties such as Broca's aphasia

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