

Points to Remember About Errors

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- Spelling errors are troublesome for beginners and intermediate learners. Advanced learners may make spelling errors as well, but they are much less frequent.
- Beginners make more errors at the word level than at the sentence or discourse levels. They are focused on getting the words or meaning in. They use more formulaic chunks of language that appear more advanced but are not analyzed by the learner.
- Intermediate learners make errors spanning word, sentence, and discourse levels, but they make a majority of their errors at the word and sentence level.
- Advanced learners make more sentence and discourse errors, with a majority of their errors falling in the range of complex sentences and sentence relationships.
- Related words are a problem for learners. These words share the same root or word family origins, but have different meanings. Often advanced learners use the right word, but the wrong form of the word (institution/institute; insulation/insulator; emotion/emotionalism). Beginners are more likely to use a word in the wrong part of speech (kind/kindly; easy/easily; to grow/growing).
- The number of errors decrease as proficiency increases.
- More errors are likely when languages are more closely related (Spanish-English) in comparison to more distantly related languages (Japanese-English).

Sources:

Teemant, A., (2000). Analyzing Student Work. Unpublished manuscript, Brigham Young University, Provo, UT.

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Annela Teemant is Professor of Second Language Education (Ph.D., Ohio State University, 1997) at Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis. Her scholarship focuses on developing, implementing, and researching applications of critical sociocultural theory and practices to the preparation of K-12 teachers of English Language Learners. Specifically, she has collaboratively developed and researched the Six Standards Instructional Coaching Model and pedagogy. She has been awarded five U.S. Department of Education grants focused on ESL teacher quality. She has authored more than 30 multimedia teacher education curricula and video ethnographies of practice and published in *Teaching and Teacher Education*, *Urban Education*, *Teachers College Record*, and *Language Teaching Research*. Her work describes how to use pedagogical coaching to radically improve the conditions of learning needed for multilingual learners. She has also taught adult intensive English in the United States, Finland, and Hungary.



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