

# Errors, features of new varieties of Englishes and corrective feedback

**Obaid Hamid**

Email: [m.hamid@uq.edu.au](mailto:m.hamid@uq.edu.au)

**School of Education**

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# Aims

- Developing an understanding of L2 errors from an evolutionary perspective
  - Problematising errors, error identification and correction
  - Reflecting on our roles as gatekeepers of linguistic “accuracy” and linguistic creativity
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# Presentation material

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- Hamid, M. O. (2007). Identifying second language errors: How plausible are plausible reconstructions? *ELT Journal*, 61(2), 107-116.
  - Hamid, M. O., & Doan, L. D. (2014). The problematic of second language errors. *Australian Review of Applied Linguistics*, 37(2), 123-144.
  - Hamid, M. O., & Baldauf, R. B. J. (2013). Second language errors and features of world Englishes. *World Englishes*, 32(4), 476-494.
  - Hamid, M. O., Zhu, L., & Baldauf, R. B. J. (2014). Norms and varieties of English and TESOL teacher agency. *Australian Journal of Teacher Education*, 39(10), 77-95.
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# Why errors?

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- Understanding the process of language learning
  - Helping students in their learning journey by providing feedback
  - Understanding language, language use and communication
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# Dominant views of errors

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Many error analyses treat the errors like botanical specimens. They are plucked and preserved, counted, classified, and then described and displayed for classroom instruction. (Taylor, 1986, p. 151)

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# A typical example

## Short Biography

Jack Friedhamm was born <sup>acc</sup> to New York <sup>acc</sup> in October 25, 1965. He began school at the age of six and continued until he was 18 years <sup>acc</sup> old. He then went to New York University to learn Medicine. He decided on Medicine because he liked biology when he was at school. While he was <sup>prep</sup> at University <sup>P</sup> he met his wife Cindy. Cindy was a beautiful woman with <sup>WO</sup> hair long black. They went along <sup>prep</sup> for <sup>WO</sup> years before they decided getting married. Jack began <sup>sp</sup> to work like a doctor as soon as <sup>GF</sup> he graduated to Medical School. They <sup>prep</sup> had  <sup>tense</sup> two children named Jackie and Peter, and have lived in Queens since  <sup>tense</sup> the past two years. Jack <sup>prep</sup> is very interested painting and likes to paint portraits of his sun Peter. <sup>WO</sup>

# A different example

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Children who are brought up in families that do not have large amounts of money are better prepared to deal with many problems in life than children brought up by wealthy parents.

*To what extent do you agree or disagree with this statement?*

Some people are rich and some people are poor. Children are born in both poor and rich families. They grow up to be adult. They have challenges. Parents should do their best to help their children so they grow up well. They need to have education. I have two brothers and three sisters. All of us have good education in life.

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# Another example

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## An editorial

The year 2014 is almost end and 2015 is knocking the door with new hopes. We may did something wrong during this year or still making mistakes, that's mean we are making new things, trying new things, learning, living, pushing ourselves, changing ourselves, changing our world. We're doing things that we never done before, and more importantly, we are Doing Something.

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# Questions

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- What is an error?
  - How are errors identified?
  - What is the role of interpretation, if any, in error identification?
  - How correctly can we interpret intentions?
  - How correctly can we reconstruct intentions?
  - Can we take error identification for granted?
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# Investigation

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Hamid, M. O. (2007). Identifying second language errors: How plausible are plausible reconstructions? *ELT Journal* 61(2), 107-116.

**Writing task:** Introducing Bangladesh to foreigners

15 problematic sentences identified from 10 students' writings

- Authoritative reconstructions (by students)
- Plausible reconstructions (by teachers)

11 = Bangla-Background English Teachers

5 = English-Background English Teachers

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# Authoritative reconstructions

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## Erroneous sentences

- 1 Then family make a enjoyable momment that tim time.
- 2 Because our village are very beautiful to the natural scenery.
- 3 Our rules is right.
- 4 But in one side, though we are rich in numbers, but it is the major problem of our country, that is population.
- 5 There are many mouth to eat but there is not enough rice to feed.
- 6 You will know in the future that our capital city is a nice, not very nice, but nicest city in our country.

## Authoritative reconstructions

- = Then there is a moment of joy in the family.
- = Our villages are very beautiful in terms of natural scenery.
- = Our policy is unquestionable.
- = Though we are rich in one sense, that is population, population is actually one of our main problems.
- = We don't have sufficient food for all our people because food is not equally distributed.
- = In the future you will see that our capital city is very nice, not just nice, the nicest city in the whole country.

# Plausible reconstructions

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**E**= Our rules is right

**AR**= Our policy is unquestionable

**PR**= Our system of government is good.

**E**= Nature of this country look like a paint.

**AR**= The nature of this country looks like a painting

**PR**= The natural beauty of this country can look like a painting

**E**= There are many mouth to eat but there is not enough rice to feed

**A**= We don't have sufficient food for all our people because food is not equally distributed.

**PR**= There is not enough rice to feed the many mouths

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# Categorizing reconstructions

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Total reconstructions= 247

RIM (Reconstruction with Intended Meaning) = 37%

RMM (Reconstruction with Minimal Modification) = 23%

RCD (Reconstruction with Considerable Deviation) = 12%

RMD (Reconstruction with Maximal Deviation) = 28%

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# Findings and implications

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- A significantly large number of teacher reconstructions of learner sentences deviated from original intentions
  - There does not seem to be much difference between the reconstructions by local and non-local teachers
  
  - Teachers' ability to reconstruct errors (or intentions) may not be taken for granted
  - Teacher feedback has the potential to impose their own intentions on learner intentions
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# Follow-up

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Hamid, M. O. & Doan, L. D. (2014). The problematic of second language errors. *Australian Review of Applied Linguistics* 37(2), 123-144.

- explore L2 teachers' ability to interpret students' meanings intended in erroneous constructions; and
  - shed light on factors that teachers perceive to facilitate the process of plausible reconstructions.
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# Participants

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VBET (Vietnamese-Background English Teachers)	= 30
EBET (English-Background English Teachers)	= 06
ESLT (English as a Second Language teachers)	= 13
EFLT (English as a Foreign Language Teachers)	= 13
	Total= 62

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# Findings

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RMD	RCD	RMM	RIM	Total
63	51	207	411	732

RIM= 56%

Findings and implications in Hamid (2007) are validated

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**A new challenge to the already problematic  
task of error identification**

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# Errors and varieties

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- Errors are judged against norms
  - Something is incorrect because we know the correct form
  - What if we accept that there are multiple correct forms? Which one to apply?
  - What happens to errors when we talk about world Englishes?
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# An example

“Various **researches** have been conducted to establish the importance of grasping the proficiency of the language of the host society”.

= Various **research studies** have been conducted to establish the importance of grasping the proficiency of the language of the host society.

- Moreover, several **researches** show that even one rater can give different results in different contexts..(Vietnam)
- Recently I also read a lot of **researches** on investigating the use of collaborative activities... (China)
- Moreover, previous **researches** on technology implementation and language learning...(Saudi Arabia)

# Questions

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- Is “**researches**” an error?
- Is it a feature of a new variety of English?
- How do teachers judge acceptability?
- What implications do teacher judgments have for teaching and assessment?

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# Errors and varieties

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## Research questions:

1. What kinds of judgments do English teachers have on features of L2 English in terms of acceptability?
  2. How do they categorise those features of L2 English in terms of standards, varieties and learner English?
  3. What insights can be derived from a comparison of their judgment and categorisation of L2 Englishes?
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# Participants and methods

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- 25 teachers of English working in the tertiary setting in Bangladesh
- 16 examples of local usage of English in a locally published volume

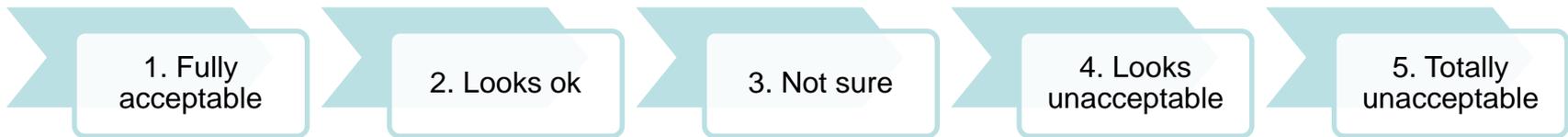
## Examples:

- ...42-day delivery leave.
  - This war of choice between...
  - Mobile phone-holding teenagers...
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# Tasks for participants

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Task 1: To what extent are the items acceptable?



Task 2: Describe each item using the following categories

- a) Standard English
  - b) Bangladeshi English with global intelligibility
  - c) Bangladesh English with local intelligibility
  - d) Errors/other
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# Findings

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- Variations in teacher judgments and lack of teacher consensus
  - Educational and socio-cultural implications
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# Another challenge?

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What can we do to achieve teacher consensus in their judgments of new features of English?

- Educate teachers about world Englishes (WE)
  - Criteria for distinguishing between errors and varietal features
  
  - Teacher agency and practice-driven criteria
  - Collaborative teacher workshops
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# Teacher agency

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- What criteria do teachers use in their judgments?
  - What can we do for teacher consensus in our understanding and judgement?
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# Participants and task

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## **Participants:**

TESOL class at UQ

## **Individual task:**

Evaluate the acceptability of L2 items

## **Group tasks:**

- 1) Develop group criteria to evaluate L2 items
  - 2) Decide on the acceptability of L2 items as a group
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# Findings and implications

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- Teachers were able to articulate criteria
  - Group evaluation has the potential to reach consensus overruling individual judgment
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# Summary and conclusions

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- Errors are important theoretical and pedagogical resources
  - Teachers' ability to identify errors may not be taken as a given
  - Errors have become more problematic given the growing recognition of new varieties of Englishes
  - This is a desirable development as we consider learners as language learning agents and creators of languages
  - While developing our knowledge of new developments, we need to deal with errors and varietal features in our own contexts
  - We need to correct errors; we also need to nurture linguistic creativity.
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# References

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Taylor, G. (1986). Errors and explanations. *Applied Linguistics*, 7(2), 144-166.

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THANK YOU

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