The most common ESL error types

1. http://www.englishclub.com/grammar/adjectives-determiners-the-a-an.htm

2. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Article_(grammar)#Definite_article

3. http://grammar.ccc.commnet.edu/grammar/determiners/determiners.htm

4. http://college.cengage.com/devenglish/fawcett/evergreen/7e/students/esl_errors.html

5. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Determiner_(linguistics)

6. http://ezinearticles.com/?Common-Errors-With-Prepositions&id=1081907

7. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_English_prepositions

8. http://ezinearticles.com/?Common-ESL-Errors&id=1809651

9. http://www.ego4u.com/en/cram-up/grammar/tenses

10. http://www.yourdictionary.com/grammar-rules/5-most-common.html

11. http://www.englishpage.com/gerunds/gerund_list.htm

12. http://www.englishpage.com/gerunds/infinitive_list.htm

13. http://www.ling.ohio-state.edu/icall/calico08/gamon-et-al.pdf

1. Noun Related Errors

Incorrect or Missing Determiners

An article error should be identified when:

a) an incorrect article is used (*a/an* instead of *the* or vice versa);

b) an article is missing, but it is required;

c) an unnecessary article appears.

Quick review: Articles *a* and *an* are used in front of nonspecific, singular count nouns (*a movie, a cat*). An article *the* is used in front of specific singular and plural nouns (*the movie, the cats*). Many uncountable nouns require no article at all *honesty, news etc.*

a) Incorrect article

In Europe, the First World War started coming to *an/the end after a huge destruction.

Blogs are considered as *the/a direct way to participate in politics.

b) Missing article

*Command line scripting: PHP script can run without */a server.*

*There were no instances of NTR faltering in front of */the camera.*

*Hardware errors are one type of errors in */the kernel.*

c) Unnecessary article

*All *the warring nations commenced deliberations.*

*However, *the specific defects are not known.*

*Many interactive multimedia encyclopedias written by *the people existed before Wikipedia.*

They could not attain a victory.

Other determiners including *this/that, these/those, each/every, either/neither, some/any, much/many/few/little/several/most, enough etc.* should be corrected if they used incorrectly.

Quick review of other determiners in English [3], [5]:

- Demonstratives:
  this/that is used with singular count nouns (*this dog*), non-count nouns (*that coffee*); *these/those* is used with plural count nouns (*these dogs, those people*).

- Distributive determiners:
  each/every is used with single count nouns (*each bottle, every person*).

- Disjunctive determiners:
  either/neither is used with singular count nouns (*either hat is fine*).

- Existential determiners:
  some/any is used with singular and plural count nouns, noncount nouns (*some car, any new houses*).

- Degree determiners:
  e.g., much is used with noncount nouns (*much wine, much furniture*);
  e.g., enough is used with plural count nouns (*enough troubles*), noncount nouns (*enough furniture*).

*Sariyat is *that/a complete policy which is based on Islamic law traditions.*

Noun Numbers

Errors involving plural/singular confusion of a noun should be identified as shown in example sentences below:

*In terms of population, India is one of the *worlds/world leaders.*

Noun of Noun/Word Order

Errors involving incorrect word order in noun phrases must be identified as shown in example sentences below:

*Similarly to other big *cities of India/India cities, Hyderabad Police has one IPS Officer.*

*The largest financial *services companies/service companies in the world are in Japan.*

Pronoun Errors

Pronouns must agree in number with the noun (the antecedent) to which they refer *e.g., I - me/my, you - yours, he - him/his, she - her, we - our/us, they - their/them.*
    America, Britain and Japan landed *its/their armies in Vladovostik.

2. Preposition Related Errors

Prepositions like [7] *about, at, by, down, for, from, in, into, of, off, on, onto, out, over, to, up, upon, with, within, etc.* are difficult ESL writers as can be seen from example sentences below. In this step you should correct any prepositions that are used incorrectly.
    This is fast */in speed, independent, reliable and diversified platform.
    *For it does not require any compilation.
    As a result of its support *for/in the war.
    He should add Vishakapatnam N.T.D code 0891 *for/to this phone number.
Quick review of prepositions in English [6]:

- *by, with*

    by is used to refer to the doer of an action *e.g., He was killed by his servant*;
    with is used to refer to the instrument with which the action is done *e.g., He was killed with an axe.*

- *beside vs. besides*

    beside means "by the side of" *e.g., The house was beside the river*;
    besides means "in addition to" *e.g., He plays tennis besides basketball and football.*

- *since, for*

    since refers to the starting point of an action and means "from a particular point of time in the past" *e.g, He has been absent since last Monday*;
    for is used to talk about duration and refers to a period of time *e.g., I have been waiting here for two hours.*

- *between vs. among*

    between is used to say that somebody or something is between two or more clearly separate objects *e.g., You have to choose between these two options*;
    among is used with more than two people or things *e.g., The British were able to conquer India because the Indian princes quarreled among themselves.*

- *at, in*

    in is generally used to refer to large places - countries, districts, large cities *etc. e.g., My brother lives at Mumbai*;
    at is generally used to refer to small and unimportant places like villages, small towns *etc. e.g., We shall meet them at the club this evening.*

- *on, in, at and by (time)*

  while speaking about time at indicates an exact point of time, on a more general point of time and in a period of time *e.g., We set out at dawn. I was born on May 26. The postman brought this letter in the morning.*

  by is used to show the latest time at which an action will be finished *e.g., I shall be leaving by 6 o' clock.*

- *on, upon*

  on is generally used to talk about things at rest *e.g., He sat on a chair*; *upon* to talk about things in motion *e.g., He jumped upon his horse.*

- *in, within (time)*

  in means at the end of a certain period *e.g., The spacecraft will reach the moon in three days*;

  within means before the end of a certain period *e.g., The spacecraft will reach the moon within three days.*

3. Verb Related Errors

Subject-Verb Agreement

Every sentence must have subjects and verbs that agree in number. If the subject is singular, the verb must be singular. If the subject is plural, the verb must be plural as well.

Australia *have/has participated in every Summer Olympics.
Diabetes mellitus *are/is classified separately due to a known defect.

Wrong Verb Tense

Verbs must reflect the correct tense such as:

- Present Simple: S + V/Vs, Do/Does S + V? Signal words: every day, usually, never, at first, then, after, in the morning, evening, often.

- Present Continuous: to be + Ving, are + we/you/they + Ving?, is + he/she/it + Ving? am + I + Ving? Signal words: now, at the moment.

- Present Perfect: S + have/has + Ved/3, Have + S + Ved/3? Signal words: twice, several times, lately, recently, yet, already, never, just, ever.

- Present Perfect Continuous: I/we/you/they + have been + Ving, He/she/it + has been + Ving Signal words: since, for.

- Past Simple: S + Ved/2, did + S + V1? Signal words: yesterday, last year/month/week.

- Past Continuous: S + was/were + Ving, was/were + S + Ving? Signal words: at, when, while, at 2 oclock.

- Past Perfect: S + had + Ved/3, had + S + Ved/3? Signal words: by, before.

- Past Perfect Continuous: S + had been + Ving.

- Future Simple: S+will+V, will +S+V? Signal words: tomorrow, next week, next month, often , every day, soon.

- Future Continuous: S + will be + Ving, will + S + be + Ving? Signal words: at, when, while, tomorrow.

- Future Perfect: S + will have + Ved/3, Will + S + have + Ved/3? Signal words: by, before, tomorrow.

- Future Perfect Continuous: S + will have been + Ving, He/she/it + has been + Ving.

Example sentences where tense error should be corrected:
All warring nations are commencing deliberations now.
*Since 2000, Australia *is/has been among the top five medal winer countries.*
*By the end of 5th century their empire *collapsed/had collapsed.*

Wrong Verb Form

Wrong verb form error should be identified and corrected when an incorrect verb form is used *e.g.,* -ed ending added to irregular verb, an incorrect verb form is used for the particular tense as shown in example sentences below:
*They grew up together and *remain/remained friends forever.*

There is a list of verbs that must be followed by infinitive [11] or gerund [12]. The infinitive/gerund confusion error should be corrected if an incorrect form of verb is used as shown in example sentences below:
*They started *interfering/to interfere into disputes between local kings.*
*Baiju Baavera's songs helped Rafi *establish/to establish himself as a mainstream singer.*
*They have started *allowing/to allow Rafi *to sing/singing for them.*
*India started *carving/to carve its own place in the world economy.*

Other Errors

Wrong Word Form

If an incorrect form of the word is used *e.g.,* noun form is used instead of adjectival form, noun form is used instead of verb form, adjectival form is used instead of adverbial form *etc.* then it should be corrected as shown in example sentences below:
*The important *uses/usage of PHP.*
*Narayini explanations in Bagavath Gita is very *help/helpful for people.*

Adjective Related Errors

If you are using more than one adjective, they usually follow a specific order: 1) article, 2) judgment, 3) size, 4) shape, 5) age, 6) color, 7) nationality, and 8) material.

He bought a *white new/new white bike.

Sentence Fragment

A sentence fragment lacks a subject, a verb, or both. It cannot stand alone as a sentence.

*Very simple in use/It is very simple in use and very powerful.
*Was born/He was born in the city of Mecca on April 20th.
Blogs *are considered as a part of an open source politics.

Awkward Sentences in English

This error involves insertion, deletion, or replacement of a single word or a phrase which is more appropriate. Also, sentence may be two wordy or the information in the sentence may be repetitive.

It does not *need/require any compilation.
Japan sent *personnel/people in order to gain the further involvement.
Britain and USA became suspicious *that/due to the fact that Japan could construct permanent bases there.

Corpora

- The List of Learner Corpora - http://www.uclouvain.be/en-cecl-lcWorld.html

- English Taiwan Learner Corpus- http://www.iwillnow.org/

  – contains 1.5 million words of writings by Thai learners of English;

  – all materials were taken from university entrance exams at the Institute for English Language Education (IELE, Assumption University) as well as from writings by undergraduate students at various stages of their EFL course.

- Cambridge Learner Corpus -www.cambridge.org/elt/corpus/learner_corpus2.htm

- Chinese Learners of English Corpus (CLEC)

- Chinese Learners of English in Hong Kong (HKUST)

  – contains 25 million words of essays and exam scripts of upper-secondary and tertiary-level Chinese learners of English in Hong Kong (Cantonese speakers);

  – is partly tagged for part of speech and learner errors.

- The International Corpus of Learner English (ICLE) - http://www.uclouvain.be/en-cecl.html

– contains argumentative essays written by advanced learners of English, i.e. university students of English as a foreign language (EFL) in their 3rd or 4th year of study.

- Japanese EFL Learner Corpus (JEFLL) - `http://www.corpora.jp/~scn/information.html?page=top`

- Standard Speaking Test Corpus (SST) - `www.alc.co.jp/edusys/refecorpus.htm`

- Thai English Learner Corpus (TELC) - `http://iele.au.edu/corpus/`

- The Uppsala Student English Corpus (USE)

- The Polish Learner English Corpus

- Janus Pannonius University Learner Corpus (JPU)

Software

- Pearson - `http://www.pearsonkt.com/prodWTL.shtml`

- Daedalus Integrated Writing Environment - `www.daedalus.com/downloads.asp`

- Internet Writing Resource for the Innovative Teaching of English (iWRITE) - `http://iwrite.engl.iastate.edu` (need to write an email to obtain the link, volkerh@iastate.edu)

- CrossCheck - a grammar checker for second language writers of Swedish - `http://www.csc.kth.se/tcs/projects/xcheck/index-en.html`

- Ginger - `http://www.gingersoftware.com/solutions/english_writing.html`

- **ETS Tools:**
  Writing in English - `http://store.ets.org/store/ets/en_US/pd/productID.202264000/categoryId.11281300`
  ProofWriter - `https://proofwriter.ets.org/`

- FreeText - `http://129.194.19.89:8001/`

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