STRATEGIES TO REDUCE GRAMMATICAL OVERAGENERALIZATION IN ESL STUDENTS’ WRITTEN ENGLISH

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Abstract

Overgeneralization is an error commonly made by ESL students when making English sentences. It is frequently found in their writing, for example, “I sleeped because I was tired”, “She watches on TV”, etc. Such errors have no relation to the students’ first language, instead of the English itself (L2). English has a lot of exceptions in its rules. It is also used by both processes of thinking: Inductive and Deductive Reasoning. Many strategies are used by teachers to overcome such error. However, this phenomenon is often found in levels of students today. This paper, firstly, points out briefly about overgeneralization, students’ written English, learning strategies of overgeneralization, and two factors of overgeneralization. In addition, this paper explains strategies to reduce grammatical overgeneralization. In general, the strategies involve both students’ activities which involve correcting, working co-operatively, revising the edited work, submitting the work to the teacher, and teachers’ interference which involves asking the difficulty, discussing the item together, correcting and commenting, giving back the work to revise, submitting the new work to the teacher.

words: Overgeneralization, ESL Students’ Written English, Inductive and Deductive Reasoning

Introduction

Making English sentences in learning is not an easy thing for students, especially for those whose first language is not English. Besides the difference in language, the English itself often poses problems for them since English has its own special rules and constraints of similar needed to form sentences. One of the examples is the additional suffix “ed” of verbs, like cook-cooked, translate-translated, etc. However, not all verbs are attached by that suffix to indicate past actions, for example, go-went, buy-bought, etc. They are called ‘irregular verbs’.

When we teach the students of both schools and university, we often find that they frequently make errors related to the exception in English rules. For example, the student write “I slepted because I was tired” or “She watches on TV” (Yusuf, 2012: 46). In the former example, the student seems to fall into an assumption that to indicate past events, it needs to add the