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:

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