

Spotting the Error and Sentence Correction

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Abstract: English is one of the richest languages in the world. It has a very large dictionary. It is equally important that language is a means of thinking. Human thinking relies on the means of language, and the results of mental activity are formed in the form of certain units of speech - filled with the meaning of statements and whole texts. Language is a form of national culture, an expression of the spirit of a nation. In ancient proverbs and sayings, songs and tales, with archaic words, the language speaks of the past life of the people. The largest works of literature are written in English. The ability to build your speech competently and effectively is a prerequisite for training highly qualified professionals in any field. Mastering the culture of speech allows one to avoid interfering with communication when one focuses on an illiterate, language-related form rather than the content of the speech. Knowing the rules of style will help you communicate not only competently but also purposefully. Familiarity with the basics of rhetoric helps to develop the ability to quickly understand speech in all types of words, create monologues, conduct dialogue, and manage. The word is the most important unit of language, the most diverse and voluminous. This word not only names an object or event, but also performs an emotional-expressive function. And when choosing words, we must pay attention to their meaning, stylistic color, convenience, compatibility with other words. Violation of at least one of these criteria can lead to speech error. The aim of the work is to study the types and causes of language errors and communication disorders. In addition to this, correction is more confusing than writing. In this article, we shall learn how to ace error spotting in the English Language section of bank exams. Aspirants who are willing to apply for the various Government exams apart from the bank exams must also go through these concepts of spotting the error carefully, as English language is a vital part of the syllabus for most of these exams.

Keywords— spot an error, sentence correction, spelling and punctuation, mistakes, formal words

Introduction

How to Spot an Error ? Words, phrases and sentences are the bases of any language. An error in their use may shake the very foundation of the language and make an expression meaningless or ambiguous in a context. Therefore, an MBA aspirant has to clear those barriers before they begin their voluminous studies; and so sentence correction is one of the verbal problems in MBA entrance examinations. Knowing the common structures and the nuances of the language is crucial to understand the written text and to express accurately and precisely. We are discussing the problems related to sentence in this chapter whereas the word and phrase are being discussed in later chapters. Finding an error in a sentence is a step-by-step process. Checking errors randomly is always so confusing that you can never go close to accuracy. Therefore, we have adopted an EIGHT-POINT STRATEGY to probe a sentence for an error and pin-point it with accuracy. You have to ask these eight questions while solving a sentence correction problem : 1. "Is the verb in accordance with the subject?" 2. "Is the tense of the verb correct?" 3. "Is the subject or doer close to the participle?" 4. "Are the nouns and verbs in their proper forms confirming the parallelism?" 5. "Are the articles, determiners and adjectives correctly used?" 6. "Are the forms of pro noun correct and do they agree with the related nouns and other pronouns?" 7. "Are the prepositions correctly used?" 8. "Are the spelling and punctuation in place?" Before you should be able to ask these questions meaningfully, you will have to understand these different grammar usages one by one and do some exercises on each. At the end of the chapter, you

will find mixed exercises in the manner they usually appear in the entrance examinations. These assorted exercises are the test of your understanding the chapter. While doing them you are supposed to identify the kinds of problem you find difficult and go back to the relevant part of the chapter for revision. A few more problems related to grammar and usages are discussed in some other chapters as the questions related to them are usually other than the sentence correction questions. (Modals, Jumbled sentences, Idioms) Type 1 : Error of Subject-Verb Agreement The very first thing that we need to check in a sentence correction exercise is the verb.

Consider the following sentences :

Set I

Taking her basket she goes to the sea shore to collect shells. She is happy with what she earns.

Set II

Taking their baskets the women go to the sea shore to collect shells. They are happy with what they earn.

Did you notice how the verbs change with the change in subject in the two sets? If we change the subject 'she' into 'the women' or 'she' into 'they' the verbs lose their 's' and 'es'. She goes but they go, she is but they are and she earns but they earn.

Notice what happens when we change these verbs into past : Taking her basket she went to the sea shore to collect shells. They were happy with what they earned.

While 'go' changes into 'went', 'are' into 'were' and 'earn' into 'earned', 'taking' and 'to collect' remain unchanged. We need to change these main or finite verbs (go, are, earn) to make the sentence present, past or future while the non-finites (taking, to collect) remain unchanged. Therefore, we

need to check the main verbs in a sentence correction exercise. You must have noticed that the singular verbs—goes, plays, is, was, has—end with an ‘s’. Therefore, the first ever question in a sentence correction exercise to be asked is: “Is the verb in accordance with the subject?” Target Exercise 1 Directions Make a choice of the correct verb for the subject in the following sentences. 1. It is so rainy in this region that it rain/rains very frequently even in winters. 2. Whenever he meet/meets me he talk/talks about his illness. 3. In a mature democracy like India, the voters know/knows whom to vote. 4. A good teacher not only teach/teaches, but he is/are also a good guide.

5. The Rajdhani Express usually run/runs on time; and is/are one of the fastest trains in India.

Answers 1. rains 2. meets, talks 3. know 4. teaches, is 5. runs, is Sometimes the nouns used as subject might be confusing. It may be difficult to decide whether they are singular or plural. Therefore, identifying such nouns is important before deciding whether the verb is in accordance with the subject.

Cattle is a plural noun which can neither be written as ‘cattles’ nor used as singular. eg, Cattle are grazing beside the lake.

Other such nouns, that are always used as plural without any change in them, are : People, police, poultry, gentry, peasantry Scissors, binoculars, spectacles, pincers, pliers, trousers, jeans, oats, out skirts, premises, quarters, stairs, spirits, surroundings, thanks are used as plural. eg, Where are my spectacles? I can’t see without them. Some nouns are used both ways without any change in them, such as : A sheep, many sheep, a deer, many deer, a fish, many fish, also many fishes meaning groups or species of fishes, a space craft, many space craft, an air craft, many air craft. These are used singular as well as plural without any change in them.

All uncountable nouns like milk, furniture, bread, food, ice, salt, butter, grass, hair, wheat, rubbish, coffee, chalk, pa per, sugar, dust, choc o late, soap are always used as singular. All abstract nouns like applause, home work, ad vice, wealth, happiness, research, money, evidence, hospitality, music, pollution, trash, waste, statistics, AIDS, disease, measles, information, knowledge, refuge, rubbish are always used as singular. You must also be aware of some agencies such as jury, committee, government which are used both ways.

A jury or a committee or a government is consisted of some members and these members sometimes take a unanimous decision and act like one agency; but at times the members are divided in their opinion and act separately and not as one agency. In the first case, a jury will be treated as singular while in the second case, it will be plural. eg, (i) The committee have been consulting among themselves and are now ready to take their seats. (ii) A committee has been constituted to look into the matter.

In sentence,

(i) ‘the committee’ refers to the members and not the organization as one entity.

(ii) ‘one agency’—committee is referred and not a divided committee or its members.

Other such nouns are: Association, audience, board, commission, company, council, crew, department, government, jury, party, public, staff, family.

Words with ‘ware’ suffix are singular : Software, hardware, silverware, streetware, chinaware, brassware, glassware, middleware, embeddedware.

The following, although appear plural, are used as singular : Mathematics, economics, measles, apparatus, wages, species, politics.

Target Exercise 2 Directions Identify the subjects in the following and choose the correct – singular or plural – verb.

1. The committee is/are seriously considering the matter. 2. During recession, not even the Mumbai public has/have enough money to meet its needs. 3. The public is/are dispersing away from the monotonous show. 4. The majority wins/win what the minority loses /lose. 5. The government has/have fallen after the trust vote.

Answers 1. are—the members and not the agency 2. has—one entity—its need 3. are— different\members of public in different directions 4. wins, loses—one entity 5. has—the en tire one

The most common areas in the sentence correction section which are required to be polished include: sentence structure errors, subject-verb agreement errors, verb tense errors, preposition errors, pronoun errors and idiomatic errors.

Sentence Correction Tips First look carefully at the given sentence. Check for subject - verb agreement, if the subject is singular verb should be singular and if the subject is plural verb must satisfy it.

Example: A bouquet of roses lend colour and fragrance to the room. (Incorrect) A bouquet of roses lends colour and fragrance to the room. (Correct)

My dog always growl at the postman. (Incorrect) My dog always growls at the postman. (Correct) Either Grandpa or my sisters is going to the park. (Incorrect)

Conclusion Everyone can make mistakes. Speakers often use important and formal words regardless of their semantics. Often there are such things in the media. Examples of these could be from the category “several thousand people died due to the flood”. The preface that begins with this phrase should be used only when we mean what we want to say, not what we want to spoil. The nature of this error lies in the semantic distraction of the word from the verb that led to its occurrence.

Mistakes in speech are inevitable in any field of activity. Life examples are often associated with the choice of word concepts that have different grounds for division. That is, we are talking about combining explicit and abstract phrases in a single context. Thus, there are often phrases such as “we provide a complete cure for drugs and other illnesses”. If we are talking about a disease, then we should use its name, but not about people who suffer from this disease. In such a situation, it would be correct to use the word “addiction”.

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