

Error Analysis of Written English Essays of Pakistani University Students in a Digital Contest in COVID-19

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Abstract. The purpose of this study was to identify and analyze the lexical and grammatical errors enacted by the University students of Pakistan in a digital contest in COVID-19. The study was also to describe and explain the identified errors and; to compare the error frequency of male students with female students. The gender has not been specified as both male and female students participated in the digital competition. The students from 21 Pakistani Universities participated in this digital competition. The sample comprised of 21 essays, 9 essays of male and 12 essays of female students were taken to analyze statistically through Coder's Model of Error Analysis. The findings show that there is a significant difference in committing of errors between male and female university students of Pakistani universities. The research concludes that female students are more erroneous while writing since they committed errors more frequently in comparison to male students. Based on the findings, it is recommended that global and sentential errors correction must be the priority during second language teaching and be figured out consistently. Moreover, the computer applications should be used as an aid to identify errors in the compositions which is helpful to avoid slips of pen specifically in COVID-19 pandemic eras. Reading the piece of writings in target language is also suggested to enhance creative ability while the basic tenets of the English Grammar can also be improved through comparative study of the grammatical concepts.

Key Words: Error Analysis, Error, Mistake, ESL learners, Digital Contest, COVID-19

Introduction

Language is basically a systematic and structural way of expressing thoughts. In English Language, there are four skills: Listening, Reading, Speaking and Writing. The first pair is considered to be receptive while the other is productive. In all kinds of productivity, errors are expected. The imperfect use of any word, speech act or grammatical item is surely an error (Richards & Schmidt, 2013). The teachers usually choose the illogical sequence of teaching grammatical concepts which puts a halt in learning language perfectly. According to Corder (1976), errors are done as a result of adopting an inappropriate teaching method. The errors trigger a child to learn a language as it indicates the child's level of understanding.

According to Schcolnik (2018), writing skill is identified as a trend in this digital world. People are creating blogs, posting information, tweeting and composing on daily basis. For the said purpose writing needs perfection and flawlessness as it deals with the transformation of ideas in a true sense. One error can lead to the drastic change in meaning and the aim is dead.

Writing skill is a need for the other needs too. It is considered as a basic requirement to get admission in Colleges and Universities. In all types of entry tests, Essay Writing is the part of a compulsory portion in question paper. In addition to this, writing skill is one of the prerequisites for any research work. University students try hard to produce a well-organized

and coherent piece of work. They are awash in text nowadays and communication skill is the most favoured skill to express and share content with others.

Research Objectives

1. To identify the most frequent errors in written English essays committed by the Pakistani University Students in COVID-19
2. To analyze the identified and enacted errors by the Pakistani University Students in COVID-19 in written essays
3. To compare the error frequency of male with female Pakistani University Students in COVID-19

Significance of the Study

This study is knocking the spots off to put up the expanded area of research in error analysis by identifying the frequent lexical and grammatical errors which EFL learners commit while writing and composing. Moreover, it can help teachers to bring changes in pedagogical practices. The results can provide the guidance for syllabus designers to outline the topics in a sequence which can minimize the error commitment. It can steer the teachers as well to impart knowledge. The findings can also be beneficial to suggest some solutions for the problems faced by the EFL learners in editing the compositions.

Literature Review

“Error” is an imperfection noticed in any sentence or a part of sentence. It is considered to be incorrect or wrong, or which should not have been do. Mistake’ is an unintentional wrong doing which is the result of insufficient knowledge or carelessness. Mistakes aren’t intended to do and as a result it produces undesirable results” (Dictionary, n.d.).

While learning a second language the learner usually identifies his mistakes and rectifies it as he knows the rules. In other words a mistake can be self-corrected while the error cannot even be identified by the learner. Another prominent thing is that computers and computational devices can’t commit mistakes; they make errors as they don’t have built in capacity of learning as humans have (Penuku, 2018).

The error and the mistake are basically same and considered to be an imperfect act. An 'error' is a deviation from perfection while a 'mistake' is an error caused by a fault. The mistake is a performance error which can be done because of forgetfulness or wrong application of the acquired knowledge. On the other hand, the error is related to the competence and it is the fault which is done in a flow as the writer is not known to the rules (James, 2013).

Types of Errors

Generally the errors are broadly categorized into Pre-Systematic, Systematic and Non-Systematic errors:

Pre-Systematic Errors are committed when the learner is unaware about the rules and uses the incorrect structure or verb form. SL learner is unable to identify his own error as he isn’t aware of the correct usage.

Systematic Errors are intentional as the learner commits errors and considers it right even after the revision of written text. For instance, if the learner is using second form of verb with “did” and it is observed in the whole piece of work it would be a systematic error because the learner has learnt the wrong rule and applying the same. These errors are important in many ways:

Firstly, they highlight the learning stage as well as the progress of the learners.

Secondly, they help the learners to make a sketch what to learn first and for the teachers to make an outline what to teach at what level.

On the other hand, *Non-Systematic Error* is a kind of mistake which isn't repeated in any composition and mere a slip of pen or tongue. We can take the example of using 'he' for a female gender or 'her' for a male gender. Similarly, the wrong use of preposition once in the whole text can be a non-systematic error. It just gives a feeling that something is wrong but learner doesn't know the way to correct it. These types of errors normally occur when the text producer has some psychological or emotional issues, he may have lack of concentration or it can be done due to tiredness.

When we see it through Chomsky's mirror, systematic errors are competence-based while non-systematic errors are performance-based. Regarding correction one thing is important here to tell that systematic errors needs correction but non-systematic errors are considered as minor mistakes which are sometimes acceptable (The Free Dictionary, 2003).

In addition to this, SL learners' output plays the dominant role for both learners and educators since it is beneficial for the input given by the teachers. The commitment of errors is natural for all the learners but formal environment is necessary for them to grow. In case the learners' error isn't corrected by the teachers, a fossilization of errors will occur and the improvement is not expected that's why SL learner needs to contemplate while producing the material (Walsh, 2011).

According to Crystal (1987), error analysis is a technique to identify, classify and interpret the errors through the rules and principles postulated by the linguists.

Error analysis refers to analysis of errors done by the SL learners and to present these to the educators to get the benefit. It is the process to observe, analyze and classify the difference between the standard language and the use of language (Sermsook, Liamnimit, & Pochakorn, 2017).

As observed in various compositions, particularly in target language, nothing can be written flawless and error-free. Errors are natural and spontaneous, they aren't done by mistake otherwise it can be corrected on spot (Londoño Vásquez, 2008).

Grounds of Errors

Talking about the grounds of errors, mainly we have two sources; Inter-lingual and Intra-lingual (Wang, 2020). The interference of the mother language is obvious in second language learners which are Inter-lingual source of error. Fries (1945) reported that the influence of native language leaves the dark impact on second language learning. Intra-lingual is due to over-generalization and partial exposure of the target language. It doesn't reflect the structure of the native language.

Simplification

SL learners usually choose simple structures and avoid the complex. Using simple present tense instead of present perfect continuous is the general example of simplification.

Over-Generalization

SL learners often learn the rule for one construction and then apply it on the whole where there's no requirement. Conversion of the verb form using 'ed' is very common example of over-generalization.

Hyper-Correction

Stenson (1978) reported in that the 'Induced Errors' are the result of hyper-correction. It is done due to over-consciousness of the learners and the zeal of the teachers as well which induce the students to commit errors.

Faulty Teaching

It is inter-linked with Hyper-correction but here the teacher is at fault that makes his students to learn wrong rules.

Fossilization

The errors which occur after learning wrong concepts and rules ultimately become the habit.

Inadequate Learning

Ignorance of rules and incomplete learning creates errors. Sometimes we observe that the writer or speaker isn't using s/es with third person singular which is the example of inadequate learning as he has learnt to use first form of the verb but didn't learn to add s/es with the verb in case of third person singular noun or pronoun. In addition to this, learners usually think that 'is' makes present tense and 'was' makes past tense, so he uses it wrongly i-e He was climbed on the wall.

Error Detection and Correction

Corder (1974) suggests five steps to treat errors which are given below:

The first step according to the coder's model of error analysis is the collection of sample from the learners' language. In other words, the piece of work which is created by the SL learner is the specimen which can be analyzed. The samples can be of many types: massive, specific and incidental. Massive sample is the collection from large number of learners, specific is the sample collected from limited number of people and the incidental is a specimen from a single learner.

The next step of the thread is the identification of the produced errors. The errors are identified in the produced material. The incorrect sentence structure, wrong tense, wrong verb forms, subject-verb agreement and wrong punctuation is usually the part of identification. Moreover, the error can be overt which is easy to observe and covert which is hidden and unidentifiable unless any reference is given earlier.

The third step deals with description of errors. Errors can be global as well as local. The global errors are dangerous in comparison with the local since they are illogical in conveying the thought. Local errors are mild in nature and express the idea with minute changes so in some cases these are acceptable.

Fourthly, the explanation is the key step to explain the factors behind the errors. In more clear words, it tells the source of the error that why did it happen. There can be two possibilities in general, one is the social context and the other is psycholinguistic source (Al-Khreshneh, 2016).

The concluding step is to evaluate. The correction of errors is directly or indirectly related to the learning process. Seeing the bright side, it is necessary to correct global errors since it becomes the basics of learning second language. Opposing to the previous thought, it disrupts the process of learning and discourages SL learners to grow in the field of communication (Londoño Vásquez, 2008).

Methodology

In this study, the focus was on writing skills which is a challenging task for ESL learners. Writing is more formal when it is compared with another productive skill i.e. speaking. In this study, the university students are kept in observation through digital submission of their compositions. The creativity of male students is compared with female students and the frequency of committing the errors by male students is juxtaposed to the females' composed items. A written composition entitled "**Life in 2020**" specially edited for a Digital Contest in Covid-19 is analyzed through Corder's model of error analysis and an elicitation technique.

Data Analysis

The participants tried their best to apply all grammatical rules along with the impressive details as it was a digital *Essay Writing Competition*. They paid their heed on the content and the structure both. A deep analysis revealed some common errors in written compositions of both male and female University students.

Common Enacted Errors by University Students

1. Verb Errors

Wrong application of tense is observed in these compositions. The participants tried to use the correct form of verbs but in complex sentences they forgot to apply the correct tense. When the sentence was of two clauses, they used the correct form in first clause but not in the other as we can see the sentence 1 & 2 in the given table. These types of errors are mostly found in the compositions of female students. Male students did errors like omission of verbs and the wrong use of verb forms in the sentences rather this is observed in both genders. The examples with identification and correction can be seen in the table below:

Sr. #	Error identification	Error correction	Gender
1	Many people started online business and <u>earn</u> money out of it.	Many people started online business and <u>earned</u> money out of it.	Female
2	People who were busy in their own affairs and had no time for their families <u>get</u> a chance to connect with their families.	People who were busy in their own affairs and had no time for their families <u>got</u> a chance to connect with their families.	Female
3	COVID-19 <u>jams</u> the whole world and <u>affect</u> the life.	COVID-19 <u>jammed</u> the whole world and <u>affected</u> the life.	Male
4	who have <u>to made</u> their videos.	who have <u>to make</u> their videos.	Female
5	Life <u>become</u> at a halt.	Life <u>became</u> at a halt.	Male

2. Subject-Verb Agreement

Subject-Verb Agreement is when the subject agrees with its verb. There are frequent errors of this type committed by female students. Male students have less frequency, it means they learnt and consciously applied this rule in comparison to female students. The first two sentences below are self-explanatory; third person singular pronouns take first form with addition of s/es while first person pronouns take first form of verb without any addition of s/es. This is a common error committed by EFL learners as they consider that the addition of s/es is applicable for plural subjects (Hourani, 2008). Moreover, sentences 3 & 4 show another common error; singular subject takes singular verb and plural subject takes plural verb. According to the observation, the participants didn't take notice of it and applied it unconsciously. Similarly, in last sentence, the word "**World**" gives an impression of collection of people that's why the rule is violated.

Sr. #	Error identification	Error correction	Gender
1	It <u>teach</u> us how to stay alone.	It <u>teaches</u> us how to stay alone.	Female
2	We <u>belongs</u> to Allah.	We <u>belong</u> to Allah	Female
3	Lifestyles <u>is</u> ready now.	Lifestyles <u>are</u> ready now.	Male
4	The meaning of life <u>were</u>	The meaning of life <u>was</u>	Female
5	World <u>are</u> running.	World <u>is</u> running.	Male

3. Articles

Articles are of two types: definite & indefinite. Definite article “**The**” is used to specify the things and objects and it is also used before common nouns. Indefinite articles “**A – An**” are used with countable and uncountable nouns. The errors related to articles are observed in the writings of students. Shousha, Farrag, and Althaqafi (2020) also reported the presence of article errors in the writings of EFL students. Singular countable nouns take indefinite article “a” which is not given to the nouns in sentences 1, 4 & 5. Secondly, indefinite article “an” follows all the nouns that start with a vowel sound, like in the example 3 & 4. As for as the second sentence is concerned, the definite article ‘the’ should be used before superlative degree of adjectives and it is not provided to the adjective given in the sentence. Most of the learners committed these types of errors and the equal frequency of article errors is observed in both male and female students.

Sr. #	Error identification	Error correction	Gender
1	Life of <u>teacher</u> in 2020	Life of <u>a teacher</u> in 2020	Female
2	You’re <u>safest</u> with members of your family.	You’re <u>the safest</u> with members of your family.	Female
3	<u>A</u> ill person	<u>An</u> ill person	Female
4	Life is <u>a ache</u> .	Life is <u>an ache</u> .	Male
5	There is <u>chance</u> .	There is <u>a chance</u> .	Male

4. Punctuation

Punctuation means the use of specific marks which are essential to infer the meaning and correct sense of the sentence. These signs are directly concerned with written expression and mandatory to use in written compositions since they are necessary for the clarity. Full stop, capitalization, semi colon, colon, question mark, exclamation mark, hyphen, commas, inverted commas come under the umbrella term of Punctuation. First two instances are of omission of commas, second is of hyphen. The last three sentences contain the capitalization errors which need writer’s consciousness. Proper nouns always start with capital letters and so is the case with the use of pronoun “I”. Whenever it is in the sentence, whether at the start or in the middle, must be capital. Punctuation errors are of central importance in creative piece of writing and one of the most frequent errors committed by EFL learners.

Sr. #	Error identification	Error correction	Gender
1	In Pakistan it entered with the start.....	In Pakistan, it entered with the start.....	Female
2	Beyond this <u>in 2020</u> world also faced some tragedies.	Beyond this, <u>in 2020</u> , world also faced some tragedies.	Female
3	self actualization	Self-actualization	Female
4	<u>pakistani</u> <u>people</u>	<u>Pakistani</u> <u>People</u>	Male
5	and <u>i</u> hope ----- <u>i</u> feel	and <u>I</u> hope ----- <u>I</u> feel	Male
6	Suddenly the <u>covid 19</u>	Suddenly the <u>Covid-19</u>	Female

5. Preposition

Prepositions show a relationship of location, time or manner between nouns or pronouns and other words or phrases in a sentence. The use of various kinds of prepositions like **to, on, for, at, in, and of** is ambiguous. Each of the prepositions demonstrates different uses and meanings. “On” and “At” indicate location and time, when these two refers to time ‘on’ is to talk about dates and days and ‘at’ is specific for timings. In continuance of this,

when these two refer to location ‘on’ is for a position on any surface while ‘at’ is for the position or location as a point. So, in instance one and four, the prepositional error is of location and position. In sentence 5, there is an omission of preposition and in sentence 2, the learner has chosen wrong preposition which isn’t appropriate according to the explicit rules of using prepositions. The preposition ‘in’ is used for the time period and ‘inside’ is specified for location. So, the preposition ‘in’ is the appropriate choice for the given phrase.

Sr. #	Error identification	Error correction	Gender
1	<u>On a</u> national level	<u>At</u> national level	Female
2	but <u>inside the future</u>	but <u>in the future</u>	Male
3	like icing <u>at the cake</u>	like icing <u>on the cake</u>	Male
4	we <u>entered 2020</u>	we <u>entered in 2020</u>	Female

6. Sentence Structure

Besides all errors, sentence structure is of vital importance in any composition. It is sentential level error since it provides the sense and meaning to the whole. The sentence must have to follow the correct order i-e subject, verb and then object. However, the learners proved that they still have ambiguity in making correct and meaningful sentences, as also observed by Darus and Subramaniam (2009) in their study on written errors of secondary school students. The errors related to sentence structure are most common and misleading in EFL students’ writings (Sermsook, Liamnimitr & Pochakorn, 2017). Following simple construction errors were observed in simple and complex sentences. Sentence 1 has missing preposition, sentence 2 & 3 contains missing verbs, sentence 4 doesn’t have a subject.

Sr. #	Error identification	Error correction	Gender
1	The teaching and examination systems have been <u>shifted online.</u>	The teaching and examination systems have been <u>shifted to online.</u>	Female
2	The idea of Stephen Leacock “A man in asbestos” <u>becoming</u> true.	The idea of Stephen Leacock “A man in asbestos” <u>is becoming</u> true.	Male
3	<u>We looking</u> here and there.	We <u>are</u> looking here and there.	Male
4	<u>So should</u> not forget this lesson.	So <u>one</u> should not forget this lesson.	Female

7. Spelling Errors

Although spelling errors aren’t expected from University students but they occurred less frequently. Some complex words are wrongly written by the participants that are given below along with the correction. Few of them seem the slip of pens or typing errors. One of the examples has the difference of British and American spelling rules. The wrong spellings of ‘business’ gives the impression that learner has imitated the pronunciation of the word to spell out.

Sr. #	Error identification	Error correction	Gender
1	<i>strick</i> lockdown	<i>strict</i> lockdown	Female
2	<i>Fantasising</i>	<i>Fantasizing</i>	Female
3	<i>Bissness</i>	<i>Business</i>	Male
4	<i>Intlectullity</i>	<i>Intellectuality</i>	Male

8. Miscellaneous Errors

Miscellaneous errors don't fall under a particular category. For instance, sentence 1 has the wrong choice of pronoun. Subject "every single person lives" will agree to third person singular pronoun. In the continuance, sentence 2 has a **double auxiliary** that is grammatically incorrect. One auxiliary will be used in one idea. In addition to, sentence 3 contains the wrong adverb and sentence 4 demonstrates the contraction error.

Sr. #	Error identification	Error correction	Gender
1	Every single innocent person lives <i>their</i> life.	Every single innocent person lives <i>his</i> life	Female
2	<i>I'll must</i> discuss.	<i>I'll</i> discuss.	Female
3	Rousseau had <i>right</i> said that	Rousseau had <i>rightly</i> said that	Male
4	The idea of <i>ones</i> being unimportant	The idea of <i>one's</i> being unimportant	Male

Findings & Discussion

The results & findings are presented reflecting the two research questions which are proposed at the start. Total 180 errors were found in the data analysis and there are seven types of errors found, four are sentential level errors and three are lexical level errors. The sentential level contains: subject-verb agreement, punctuation, verb and sentence structure errors. The lexical level errors comprises: article, spelling and preposition errors. Following tables are demonstrating the types, frequency and percentage of these errors. Each table is preceded by the sample errors, explanation of rules and discussion.

Table 1. Types, frequency and percentage of the errors identified in the compositions of Male University Students

Types of Errors	Frequency	Percentage
Sentence Structure Errors	17	26.15
Article Errors	11	16.92
Punctuation Errors	10	15.38
Verb Errors	09	13.84
Preposition Errors	09	13.84
Spelling Errors	05	7.69
Subject Verb Agreement Errors	04	6.15
Miscellaneous Errors	11	16.92
Grand Total	65	116.89

The above findings show that the type of sentence structure errors (26.15%) is most frequently done by the male University students. These are more in number since the syntactical arrangement is totally different from our mother tongue. The learners tried to convert the idea in the target language but they followed the wrong pattern as they are habitual of using the structure of their mother tongue that differs from the target. The other

frequent errors are of Articles (16.92%); when it comes to the articles ESL learners usually ignore the importance and specifications of its use. They categorize the nouns i-e countable and uncountable, proper and common and so on. Punctuation errors' (15.38%), frequency is less than the sentential level errors, however, these are unavoidable. Male students paid attention to the lexical components rather than the symbols and punctuation signs. The correct use of prepositions is directly related to the quality of the information; these errors are of (13.84%) of the whole. Students committed Verb errors (13.84%) as well as the subject-verb agreement errors (6.15%), they used wrong verb forms and tenses. Most of the time, the learners didn't agree the verb with the subject. Moreover, they tried to use correct form in the first half of the sentence but later they forgot to apply the same rule. It is the most common error done by the ESL learners in general. It may be done unconsciously. Spelling errors (7.69%) though unexpected however were done with a less frequency. Miscellaneous errors (16.92%) contain the wrong use of adverb, adjective, pronoun agreement with its antecedent and the use of double auxiliaries in a sentence. Adverb placement is important to consider that is not done appropriately by the learners. In addition to this, the superlative degree of the adjective is always to be followed by the article 'the'. Similarly, the Standard English does not allow double auxiliaries in a single sentence.

Table 2. Types, frequency and percentage of the errors identified in the compositions of Female University Students

Types of Errors	Frequency	Percentage
Punctuation Errors	36	31.30
Subject Verb Agreement Errors	20	17.39
Verb Errors	19	16.52
Sentence Structure Errors	14	12.17
Article Errors	11	9.56
Spelling Errors	08	6.95
Preposition Errors	07	6.08
Miscellaneous Errors	09	7.82
Grand Total	115	107.79

The above findings show that the highest frequency of punctuation errors are observed in the compositions of female university students. The frequency of punctuation errors is (31.30%) of the whole. The other frequent errors are of Subject-verb agreement (17.39%) and Verb errors (16.52%), the female students also need mastery over tenses specifically of the use of simple present and simple past tense. They used the present tense for the past occurrences. Sentence structure errors (12.17%) are less as compared to the punctuation and verb errors. Syntactic arrangement is of the core importance which is lacking in the compositions produced by female students. Article errors (9.56%), are of the same quantity in both genders' creativities. The sentences are structured grammatically but mostly the articles are omitted. The type of spelling errors is also enacted by the female students with the frequency of (6.95%). The percentage for preposition errors is (6.08%) which is almost the same like in the findings of male students. Sometimes the prepositions are omitted and sometimes chosen wrong. Miscellaneous errors frequency is (7.82%). It contains wrong choice of auxiliary verbs, inability to identify the contraction and pronouns i-e its and it's and an inappropriate degree of adjective. Females students though very conscious but they carried out numerous errors of the various types.

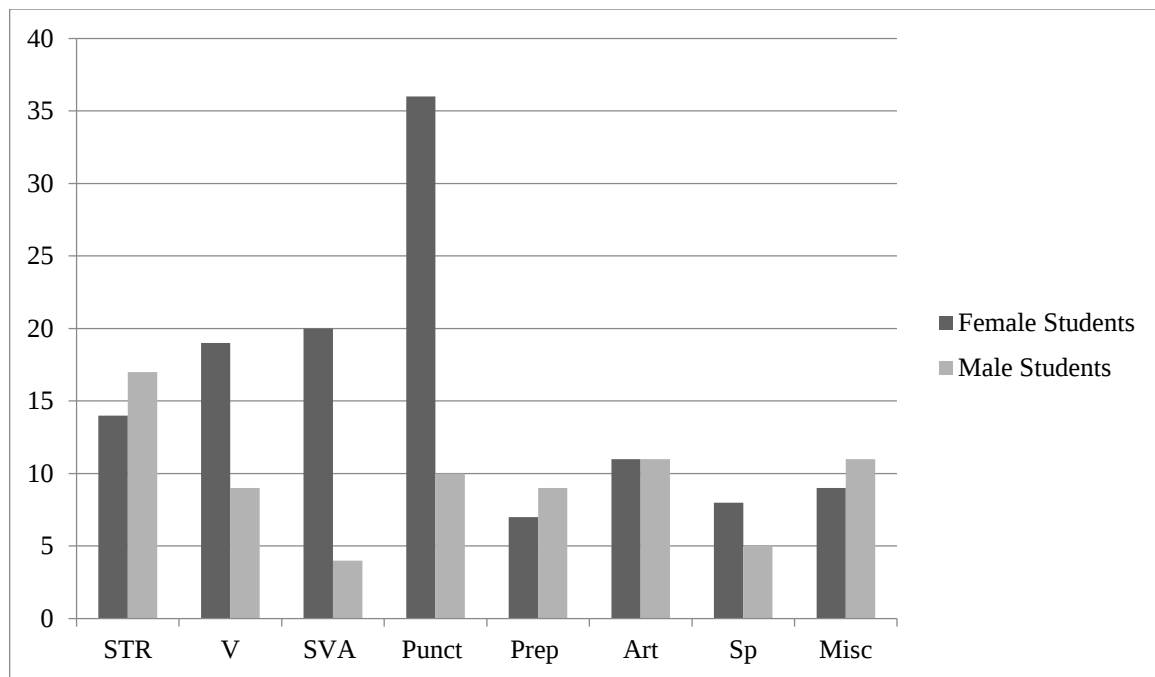


Figure 1. Comparison of Male & Female University Students

Note: *STR* = Sentence Structure Errors; *V* = Verb Errors; *SVA* = Subject Verb Agreement Errors; *Punct* = Punctuation Errors; *Prep* = Preposition Errors; *Art* = Article Errors; *Sp* = Spellings Errors; *Misc* = Miscellaneous Errors

1. The first bar in the above graph demonstrates that *STR* errors are committed at the same level by both genders. It shows clearly that both the students obtained same frequency of errors in using the wrong sentence order.
2. The difference in verb errors frequency is of 50% which proves that male students are conscious in choosing the right verb form.
3. The third and fourth bar shows the contradiction in the findings of *SVA* and *Punctuation* errors. We can say that female students need to practice more in creative writing as they chose the verb forms which do not agree with the subject behind it.
4. Article errors are of the equal frequency which proves that pedagogical practices aren't up to the mark since the students' performance is same irrespective of the gender difference.
5. The last two bars represent the spellings and other miscellaneous errors. The findings show that both male and female graduates are inefficient to commit such errors.

The findings are un-paralleled to the results analyzed by Dr Abdul Malik Abbasi. According to Abbasi (2017), no major gender difference between kinds of errors is found after the data analysis of both male and female errors. For instance, the frequency of errors in essays of males was congruent to the essays written by females. It is also contradictory to the study conducted by Nair (2008) which showed that male students commit more errors as compared to female students.

The present study disclosed that female performance is poor as compared to the male university students. Total 180 errors are found, 115 errors were committed by females and 65 errors were committed by males. Although the students are of the same age, however, we can't say that their comprehension level is same. Females' highest frequency is of punctuation errors while male students remained on peak in commitment of syntactical errors.

Conclusion

In essence, the study revealed that the errors enacted by the university students were grammatical in nature and incomprehensible. The errors frequency in female students is more as compared to the male students. Hence, we can conclude that although female graduates are more conscious in learning and writing even then they commit errors more frequently in comparison to male students. More cautious work can also produce errors. Female students are more into emotions so while writing they are more expressive and forget to apply rules of grammar or they may learn the rules for the sake of learning only. When it comes to the application of rules, male students are more conscious and dynamic in choosing the vocabulary.

Spellings errors were less expected as it was composed material and so was the case. However, few errors are detected even in typed texts; this shows the incompetency at learners' end. The article errors are the result of a weak grasp over the basics of English Grammar in which both male and female students are equally unequipped. The comparison chart demonstrates the highest frequency of punctuation errors done by the female students. It means that they have to go a long way to write error-free compositions.

L1 transfer is the major reason of committing the errors. The Inter-lingual transfer errors are prominent in the analysis portion. The ESL learners mostly commit errors while transformation of one language structure into another. Subject Verb Agreement and sentence structure errors are the evidence of this argument. Learners followed the structure of their native language; they tried to convey the thought without noticing the sentence order. The choice of words and the vocabulary is the prime requirement for the expression of thought. Wrong word choice is also found in both creativities. Pronoun helps to be concise and to avoid repetition in expression, but they must agree to the antecedent provided in the sentence.

Additionally, all the students are of the equal level and have been taught the same content but the way of grasping the knowledge may be different. The teaching methodology can also be discrete. Consequently, the reception of information is poles apart. Another factor behind this huge difference is that, the environment matters a lot as learning and acquiring a language needs a competent environment. The study focuses on various universities of Pakistan so every institute has different learning environment which influence their students. But the results can be generalized as both genders belong to all Pakistani Universities.

Recommendations

Following suggestions and recommendations are brought into light for the teachers of EFL learners:

First of all, teachers of EFL learners are suggested to pay heed on correcting *global level errors* as the wrong sense is conveyed while committing these kinds of errors. Local level errors provide a clue to guess the meaning; moreover they can be considered the slip of pen. On the other hand, global level errors are the definite errors which should be identified and corrected immediately to avoid strengthening of wrong concepts.

Secondly, comparative study helps to strengthen the multiple concepts in a single lesson. Teachers should teach the grammatical concepts through comparisons i-e *Emphatic and Reflexive pronouns* are same but the differences are of the function and its use, so is the case with *Relative and Interrogative Pronouns*. Similarly, the preposition '*on-at*', '*in-inside*' and '*among-between*' have the similar translation in Urdu but comparative study can minimize the errors of these pronouns. In this way, the similarities and differences should be discussed in language classrooms.

Thirdly, *computer applications* like MS word are an aid for error correction. As the compositions are taken from a digital contest and students submitted their essays in composed form, so the frequency of error should not be high. The number of errors can be

reduced as we can do a spelling and grammar check after composing. Although, this function doesn't offer the complete structure but at least one can reconsider the sentence. This is particular for the errors which are unconsciously done.

Fourthly, a suggestion for a *pedagogical practice* is more emphatic. Teachers should ensure the concept clarity first and then correction of errors for that particular topic. Supposedly, the concept of preposition is the central focus then the error correction must be relevant to avoid distraction. This would keep the learners on track and they would be adept in one particular concept.

Fifthly, teachers must guide learners to minimize the high frequency errors i.e. *sentential level* errors in comparison to the lexical level errors. Subject verb agreement & sentence structure creates ambiguity which is completely unavoidable for EFL learners. The basic components must be in a logical flow.

Another suggestion is also practicable, which is the *Predictability*. As the university students are already equipped with the vocabulary items and the structure rules, they must be given a chance to proof read their own write ups. Due to the prediction technique, they can minimize their errors. Moreover, this will enhance their cognitive ability to comprehend the concept. But the condition is that this activity should be the part of classroom teaching where the learners are given the on spot feedback by the teacher.

Moreover, there should be a *uniform exam pattern*. Subjective questions of synthesis level should be included that would be helpful in improving the writing skills of the students. Although MCQ based questions revamp the learners' ability to read efficiently but it suppresses their productive skill of drafting and editing the write-ups.

Lastly, writing skills needs practice. One cannot be adept in generating the correct structures and producing the meaningful creativities until they practice it. *Reading skills* is also tied up to the writing since it enhances the cognitive ability to generate the veracious and flawless structures. Brain reads and then applies the same while writing. So, mere learning of the grammar rules aren't sufficient. It requires hands on skills that can only be done through a guided practice.

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