



Analyzing Spelling Errors Committed By English as a Second Language (ESL) Learners at Secondary School Level

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Abstract: Analyzing spelling errors committed by English as a second language (ESL) learners at the secondary school level was the major purpose of the present research. Deliberating which types of spelling errors English learners committed and what are the causes behind the committing spelling errors were the main purpose of the current research. It was a case study research design based on a cross-sectional survey design in nature by applying a qualitative research approach and was conducted in Govt. High school Kangan Pur, district Kasur. Data were collected from 45 students of the 10th class who were selected by applying a purposive sampling technique via a structured group interview protocol. Thematic analysis was done of the gathered information. Results show that the majority of the pupils committed omission, substitution, insertion, and transition spelling errors. The most committed type of spelling error is 'omission error'. They felt difficulty in writing correct spelling due to a lack of vocabulary, reading habits, self-concept, motivation, and spelling system. Moreover, the mother tongue, education system, untrained English teachers, poor reading and listening skill, and proofreading are the causes of committing spelling errors. The major cause of committing spelling error by learners at secondary school level was native language.

Introduction

The status of the English language in Pakistan cannot be weakened because of its imperial heritage. According to Rehman (2011), English not only functions as the government's official language but also gets societal prestige. He also observes that proficiency in the English language is regarded as a useful tool for obtaining admittance to a university. Valika (2017) notes a clear correlation between educational attainment and English language proficiency.

In the area of applied linguistics, analyzing errors is important, as well as in foreign and second language learning. As a first language learner, a child faces many morphological,

syntactic, and structural errors in his first language learning. Similarly, the same is the case of a second language learner though adult and fully conscious, faces the spelling problem and goes through errors. The common errors include morphological, phonological, syntactic, and context errors, problems in conveying meaning,, and the influence of the mother language on Foreign Language (L2) learning skillss (Hasnain, & Muhammad, 2022).

Waris (2014) emphasizes that English language proficiency is directly correlated with job prospects in Pakistan. Greater employment possibilities result from improved English

language abilities. The proper and improper use of English in this situation is crucial (Ahmad, Khan, & Ullah, (2021).

Due to the standards, their original language has for word pronunciation and spelling, learning English as a 2nd language (L2) can be difficult for beginners. When learning a second language, learners encounter difficulties because the structure of their mother tongue becomes ingrained in their linguistic sense and they are trying to utilize the second language (Nor and Rashid, 2018). The linguistic instinct of the student must be altered in various ways to suit the comprehension of the second language, which necessitates developmental phases and repeated exposure to the language (Ismail and Zuriyani, 2019; Kocatepe, 2017). During the learning process, the speaker hears noises that are distinct from the ones they intuitively recognize and must come up with theories about how they are used. In so far as they may be able to sound out or form a word in their 2nd language without being expressly aware of the specific norm they are using, second-language learners may have understood awareness about the orthographic grammar of the English language (Altamimim & Rashid, 2019).

To write words, spelling is remembered as critical. The possibility of typographical errors in writing could alter and complicate the meaning and comprehension of written content. Therefore, it is crucial to spell words correctly in order to communicate the content's precise meaning. According to Babayit and Stainthorp (2010), grammar and phonological abilities significantly influence writing success in this situation. Therefore, it can be said that spelling is a crucial component of a fundamental ability needed by pupils. Correct spelling allows authors to convey their ideas and thoughts within a consistent framework that is simple for readers to grasp. Spelling must be accurate in order for writing to be successful.

The most frequent mistake in paper spelling is one of the many challenges Arabic English

trainees encounter (Al-Bereik and Al-Mekhlafi, 2015). Even after graduating from high school, entering college, or beginning their careers, students who have not learned effectively continue to make the same writing mistakes, which can impede their growth and development. Therefore, writing mistakes can negatively impact pupils in a number of ways. Practice writing things aloud speeds up the process of acquiring their pronunciation (Claim Rosenthal and Ehrin, 2010). The current research proposes that a student can communicate his/her thoughts more clearly if he/she has a command of spelling and openly in writing. A bad impression of the students is made due to poor spelling, but it also stamps down his /her communication as the reader who has to problem with the message of the writer (Barcroft, 2017)

Literature Review

Concept of Spelling Errors

Spelling is the learner's ability to write a word correctly; if learners do not know about the spelling, they cannot write the sentence correctly which will make readers confused with their words or sentences. Before learning about the new language, we must be familiar with the alphabet, where the learners should write and spell the character. Not only that, the students must know many vocabularies in order to do the writing correctly. If students know about many vocabularies, the error will be less than a student that knows less vocabulary. Students do misspell because they are sure if the word that they write is right, but the reality, the word that they write is wrong or error (Mekhlafi, 2016).

What is a spelling error?

The point when a student delivers a wrong bit of composing/sentence since he hasn't been educated right standards to compose it is called a spelling error. There are diverse sorts of mistakes; however, here just two classes are said:

1. Things the understudies have not yet learned in the second dialect.

2. Things that meddle with the principles of their L1 (sentence structure, articulation, language structure, social developments, and so forth) (Alta Mimi, 2019).

Errors vs. Mistake

The difference between a mistakes and errors must be explained clearly. Regarding how mistakes and errors vary, there are two widely held patterns of thought. The first contends that blunders are simply another word for errors, while the second makes the contrary assertion. A supporter of the latter viewpoint, Lee (1990), views "errors" from two distinct perspectives, namely psycholinguistics/or Native speaker speaking and Applied linguistics or English Language Teaching (ELT) (Bennui, 2018).

Error and Slip-up to Brown

Dark Colored (2005) separates mix-ups and errors. He portrays that when a student bombs in following the set guidelines and standards of dialect, which are instructed to him, he commits errors. Also, when he conflicts with the dialect controls accidentally, he makes mistakes. In reality, he doesn't know the exact principles of that dialect. He is compelled to make errors due to numerous sources. It might be the local speaker's mom's dialect meddles, or he sums up (Moats, 2021)

Difference of Errors and Mix-ups

Norrish (1983) stated that errors and mix-ups are unmistakably separated. He states errors are "methodical deviation when a student has not learned something and reliably misses the point." In addition, he says that when a blunder is made efficiently by a remote dialect student, it is a result of the absence of information on the right shape. He characterized botches as "conflicting deviation." At the point when a student has educated in a specific right frame, and he utilizes this conflictingly, this deviation is known as a misstep. As the aftereffect of this, the analyst has concentrated on understudies' errors,

not botches. A mistake, be that as it may, is viewed as more genuine (Perveen & Akram, 2017).

Type of Spelling Error

The candidates' misspellings have been categorized into general error groups that are linked. By gathering together comparable mistake patterns, categories were created. In keeping with the initial Aspects of Writing research, the collective term for the collection of studies created by Cambridge Assessment and its forerunner, UCLES, the "types" of mistake were kept as straightforward as possible. The following groups were created as a result:

- Rules-Based error: singling/doubling, text pronunciation;
- Phonetic error: wrong consonant, 'e' for 'y', homophones, error of vowel, error of morpheme.
- Omission: single or paired letters transposition and omission
- Writing error: end of word missing or spacing
- Multiple errors.

Where a misspelling could be classified under more than one category (for example, across, which is both a doubling mistake and the addition of a new letter), the most glaring/specific error type was chosen, in this instance, doubling) (Elliott, 2020).

Reasons for Spelling Error

According to Sekha Al Bareiki (2012), there are many different causes of pupils' writing mistakes. These included the English spelling system, phonology, inadequate spelling teaching in schools and universities, students lack of interest and earnestness, bad reading and hearing skills, and their lack of drive. (p. 272). So there are so many causes that can a students have in spelling. To make good spelling, One's has to master the cause of the spelling error, correspondence of English letters, English rules, poor spelling system, un-trained teachers, mother tongue, poor reading habits, proofreading, etc. (Bahloul, 2017.)

Statement of the Problem

Spelling is considered an essential component of written language. It has been seen for many years that students of Govt. The high school of Kangan Pur continuously faces spelling errors whenever the teachers conduct the assessments. They attempt to papers thoroughly and neatly, but they achieve a poor scores on English tests. The reason behind the poor performance is found that they make spelling error because, at any level of academic education, the student is to be able to communicate with teachers to represent their learning or learned thought by giving paper pencil test. The potential mistakes in written spelling reduce their marks because it may change the meaning and understanding of written answers, which makes them unclear. This force the researcher studies why students make a spelling error. To find out the answer to this question, the researcher selected the topic “Analyzing spelling errors committed by English as a Second Language (ESL) learners at the secondary school of Kangan Purr, district Kasur.”

Research Objectives

The research objectives of the present study are given below:

1. To identify the major types of spelling errors committed by English as a second language (ESL) learners at the secondary school level;
2. To explore the main causes of committing an error by English as a Second Language (ESL) learners.

Research Questions

1. Which types of spelling errors do English as a second language (ESL) learners commit at the secondary school level;
2. What are the main causes of committing an error by English as a Second Language (ESL) learners?

Research Methodology

For the present study, the researcher adopted a case study research design based on a cross-

sectional survey design in nature by applying a qualitative research approach. The population for the present study comprised all students of the 10th class of the Govt. High school Kangan Pur was situated in the district Kasur. Data were collected from 45 students of the 10th class who were selected by applying a purposive sampling technique via a structured group interview protocol. The interview protocol was pilot tested by different English teaching experts. On the bases of their instruction, the interview protocol was modified for the final application. While conducting the interview, the researcher divided students into three groups. The researcher conducted interviews with each group separately in the same space at a single point in time. The gathered data was arranged, coded, and analyze manually. Thematic analysis was done.

Results and Findings

It was found in the continuous diagnostic test of English at different times by the English teachers while teaching English that students make spelling errors. These mistakes occurred due to imperfect written parts of a word, e.g., defective syllables at the start, central and last positions; inaccurate written prefixes and suffixes; imperfect written digraphs such as oo, ea, ch, ou, sh, oa, ck, ie, ph, ee, ei, and faulty consonant and vowel letters. This type of mistake occurs when a student does not hear or mishear a written vowel, consonant, a syllable in the beginning, middle, and final positions of a suffix or a prefix correctly. So, spelling mistakes show that students do not know how to spell English words. Teachers see students' spelling ability by his/her writing ability. If he/she commits lots of spelling errors it shows student has poor writing ability. In this regard, students were interviewed to know about their comments regarding committing spelling errors. It was found from the assessment results, which were periodically conducted by English teachers, that students commit the following types of spelling errors due to phonological and orthographic problems:

It has been found that the majority of students in 10th class commit spelling errors due to phonological problems. This types of error occur due to pathetic speech or slipping of the tongue. The most common spelling errors which students commit are omission, substitution, distortion, and additions.

Omission Error

After administering the paper pencil test and observing the spelling errors which were committed by 10th-class students, their errors were categorized into four types, as mentioned above. One of them is omission error. While committing this type of error, students mistakenly delete a letter from the written word. Some examples of omission error found in students' tests are:

Some letter has different Sound: It had seen in the paper pencil test that students commit spelling mistake when they write the 'words' in; which some letter has different sound when it placed after or before the 'vowel', e.g. 'g' flag and garage. In these words, 'g' has different sound. So, while writing the word 'garage', they commit the error as 'garaj'

Silence Letter: It was found that in students' paper pencil test in High School Kangan Pur that majority of the students also commit spelling errors of the words in which letter is 'silence' e.g. the word 'form' and Knife'. in these words, 'r' and 'k' are silent. In writing, they commit spelling mistake as 'fom' and 'nife'. Moreover, majority of them commit this type of mistake while writing the word 'palm' as 'pam' because 'l' is silent.

Double Consonant Error: It was found by the English teachers that the majority of the students committing spelling error for words which has two double consonants because they do not know the use of double consonant, e.g., 'commit', 'recommendation', 'accept', . While writing these words, they wrote them as 'commit', and 'recomendation'. in these have they omitted 'm' and 'c'. Moreover, they alos committed error of

the more words which has double consonants such as; 'ee', 'dd', 'ff', 'gg', 'tt', 'ss', etc.

Homophonic Words: It was found in the test that majority of the students committed spelling error of the words which have same sound and different meaning, e.g. they wrote 'be' as 'bee', and 'rest' as 'wrest'. Mistakenly, while writing such type of words they commit error.

Substitution Error

It was also observed in the test that the majority of the students committed substitution error while writing in English test. While writing they commit this error as 'mistrust' as 'mestrust', 'destroy' as 'distry' due to not clearly hearing the word being a native speaker. In these words, they 'i' into 'e' in the first word and 'e' into 'i' in the second word. While committing this type of error, students make the following mistakes:

Substitution of Vowel: It was seen in most of the student's papers that while writing the word, they replaced the vowel as 'girl' 'garl', 'bear' as 'beer'. While committing this type of error in these words, they replaced 'a' instead of 'i' and 'e' instead of 'a'.

Substitution of Consonants: It was observed that students of 10th class commit this type of error due to resembling in sound of the consonants e.g. they write 'abuse' as 'abuz', 'accurate' as 'akurate'. in these words, they replace 'cc' into 'k'. Moreover, they replace 's' into 'z'.

Insertion Error

It was also seen in the students' English paper answer sheet that majority of the students use excess of letter in the words due to not having appropriate knowledge. Students commit this type of error in the word . They wrote the word 'exam' as 'exaam', and 'why' as 'whay', 'primary' as 'primaray'. In these words majority of the students use 'a' extra letters. Majority of the students committed the following types of insertion errors:

Consonants Doubling: In the students paper pencil test, it was seemed that majority of the students committed vowel doubling insertion errors while writing words, e.g., 'ff', 'ss', 'll', 'ss', 'gg' respectively.

Transposition Error

Minority of the students found in the 10th class of secondary school Kangan Pur who commit this of type of error in paper pencil test of English Language. They committed this type of errors while writing the word as they change the actual place or mis-ordering the letters in words unconsciously, e.g. 'bycicle' instead of 'bicycle', 'shoes' as 'shose', 'friend' as 'freind', 'people' as 'pepoel', 'election' as 'electoin' etc.

Views of the Students

Q 1: *When students were asked that are errors were part and parcel of the language learning process?*

After detecting the types of spelling errors from their test which were conducting in different period of time by English teachers, to find the causes of committing these errors, students were interviewed. On the response majority of the students said that error is basic and necessary in learning process because whenever one's commit mistake, actual it is the first step towards the success of learning. In the same way, spelling is seems as an compulsory element of writing any language. The correct spelling of the language convey the sensible message to the reader and text with wrong spelling create the ambiguity for the reader.

Q 2: *When they were asked to the students that what do you perceive, what "English as Language" is?*

In the response, the majority of them said that English as Language is a very difficult language for us because, being a native, we face lots of challenges to learn it as language because we little know about its rules of selling and pronouncing the words. Moreover, English has different patterns understanding as compare to our mother to tongue.

Q 3: *Which types of difficulties do you feel to learn English as a subject?*

To respond this questionnaire, majority of the students said that before we learn about English as second language we should came to know about the rules of the letters to write and spell the character correctly. Along with that, we must have lots of English words vocabulary in order to make the writing correctly which is difficult for us because while teaching English neither teaches us English with rules of the letters nor we effort to learn English to increase vocabulary.

Secondly, majority of them said that they have no reading habit to be expert in spell the words which lead incorrectly spell the English words. If a learner who has good reading habit always spell as word accurately. Due to lack of this practice, they spell wrongly the words. The wrongly spelt words confused them to understand the information given by the book writers. Therefore, to create good connection between author and readers, it is important to understand and use the correct spelling of the words. To know how to spell English words correctly is compulsory for learner to avoid spelling errors.

Thirdly, according to majority of them that they read English as subject. While learning English in the class, whatever teacher teaches them, their self-concept do not clear about the lesson. The development of self- concept boost esteem of the learner to spell accurately. Majority of them said that they have no interest to learn English. So they not bother to develop their self- concept in the class which lead them to be expert in good spelling.

Fourthly, according to majority of them, major hurdle in path of learning English as second language is motivation. In out school, majority of them asserted that they hat reading English. No one has interest to learn English due to its hardness. According to them they are all demotivated to learn English. They study English just examination perspective not for life skills. Due to lack of motivation, majority of them do

not pay attention to learn English. Resultantly, poor performance in English in the form spelling errors.

Lastly, according to majority of students said that spelling system is best way to learn English accurately. In our school teacher little know about the spelling system and they teach us English via conventional method of teaching which become the hurdle on the way to learn English. In addition to, linguistics do allow to alter the system of spelling. If they give permission to the modern linguist to bring spelling reform according to modern era, spelling errors might be minimize by the students.

Q 4: According to your point of view, what are the causes of spelling errors?

To respond this question, majority of the students said that there are lots of causes of spelling errors which are under below:

Education System: Majority of the students said that they are facing spelling problem due to poor education system in Pakistan. They said, they lean their mother tongue since the day when they open the eyes in their home but education system force them to learn English when they start to go in the school. At this stage it is very difficult for them to learn English as foreign language. According to majority of them, their educational system do not support them to trained them in English at very beginning level at school by providing trained English teachers.

English Teachers: Majority of them said that their own English teachers became the cause of committing spelling errors. They are not trained in teaching English. They do not know how to teach English. They teach them English by old conventional method of teaching. While teaching English, they just read the lesson, they order the students to solve the exercise given at the end of every lesson. Their teachers do not tell them the rules of reading, writing, speaking, and listening skill of English language. Due to deficiency of teachers' guidance, lack of proper spelling

instruction at schools, they do not know how to produce a word correctly for appropriate spelling.

Poor Reading and Listening Skill: According to majority of the students, they committed spelling errors due poor reading and listening skill. Majority of them said that they accepted that they little know how to pronounced the word correctly for suitable spelling. Majority of them asserted that they little know processes of syllable pronounced the word into its speech sound part because their teacher do no teach them the basic instructions for spelling a particular word during teaching. So, they are not able to employ a basic rule to spell a particular word. Consequently, due to lack of the reading and listening skill, they committing spelling error.

Proofreading: According to majority of the students, in our school, or in Pakistani examination system, given time is not accordance with our ability. According to them, they are slow writer and allocated time for solving paper in too short. They said, in allocated time they just hardly manage to solve all question which are in the question paper. They could not spare time for proofreading. Due to not practicing proofreading, spelling mistake remains in the paper and resultantly, examiner observed spelling errors.

Mother Tongue: According to majority of the student's mother tongue is the major cause of spelling error or learning English because according to them there, there is wast difference between mother tongue system and English language system. So, in view of majority of the students, native language is the second big cause of committing spelling errors.

Being a native language speaker, our mother had influence on us. Our mother tongue has its own letter based script of writing but English Language has its own characters based script and orthographically, being learners of English as second language facing spelling problems in words especially who had different sound of the same letters.

Majority of them said that when they read word of English Language they could not get a word is meant to be and remained misinformed which become the cause in failure to speak clearly. As a result, the sound from the vocalization remained unclear. To be the master spelling, it is necessary the vocalization should be good which is the key to write down what the speakers says correctly.

Conclusion and Discussion

Analyzing spelling errors committed by English as a second language (ESL) learners at the secondary school level was the major purpose of the present research. The main objective of the present research was deliberately the which types of spelling errors do the English learners committed and what are the causes behind the committing spelling errors. In this regard, a conclusion was drawn from the finding which arrived from results. It is concluded that students of the 10th class who were observed in the high school of Kangan pur committed four types of spelling errors which are omission, substitution, insertion, and transition error. While committing omission errors, majority of them omitted the letters which has different sound when it placed with vowel. The most committed error of this type is 'silence letters' and the words which has the same sound. The students who committed substitution error, majority of them replace vowel and consonants. Moreover, majority of the students who committed insertion errors, inserted both consonants and vowel but very less students committed transition errors. Moreover, the most committed spelling errors by English as a second language (ESL) learners at secondary school level was omission errors. When it was explored the causes behind these errors, majority of the students said that they were facing difficulties in learning English in their school. Moats, (2021) asserted that majority of the students committed transition errors. Perveen and Uzma, (2014) found in their research that majority of the student committed spelling errors due to mispronunciation or wrong pronunciation.

They were lacking in vocabulary because neither their teachers teach them English with rules of the letters nor they make effort to learn English to their increase vocabulary. Ahmed, (2017) stated that 55% of the students made spelling errors due to ignorance of rules restriction of English Language. Present research also found that due to lacking vocabulary, they could not develop the sense of whatever their English teachers teach them in the class of English subject. In addition to, spelling system is best way to learn English accurately but in school, their teacher little knows about the spelling system and they teach them English via conventional method of teaching which become the hurdle for them on the way to learn English.

So far as the concern of the causes of committing spelling errors, the major cause of this action is poor education system which do not support and train them in English at very beginning level at school by providing trained English teachers. Merriam, (2018) found in her research that learning environment is the leading cause of spelling errors because due poor education system. It was found in present research that teachers are not trained in teaching English. They fail to develop English skill in students. So, due to their poor reading and listening skill, they commit spelling errors. In hand research it was also found that mother language in another major cause of committing spelling errors. Rass (2015) also asserted that mother tongue also effect learning English. Another cause of committing spelling error is proofreading. In Pakistani examination system, given time is not accordance with students' ability. They are slow witter and allocated time for solving paper in too short. Therefore, in allocated time they just hardly manage to solve all question which are in the question paper. They could not spare time for proofreading. Due to shortage of time, they could not practice proofreading. Resultantly, spelling mistake remains in the answer sheet and the examiner observed spelling errors. Therefore, on the bases of research finding it is recommended that policy

maker may to find the way to teach English that mother tongue not effect students to learn English. Moreover, Education department, organize training programme to trained English teachers, so that they can teach English by following English rules. The English linguist also change spelling system according to modern era. Teacher may also motive their students by telling them the importance of learning English language before teaching them.

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