EXPLORING ERRORS AND MISTAKES IN THE STRUCTURE OF GRAMMAR AT UNIVERSITY LEVEL IN KHAIRPUR MIR'S SINDH

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ABSTRACT

The main purpose of this research was to explore the errors and mistakes in grammar in English assignments of undergraduates in district Khairpur Mir's Sindh. The researchers used quantitative approach for the present research and from the population of the study was the ESL students of a private university in district Khairpur. The researchers randomly selected twenty assignments of these ESL undergraduates level students for the purpose of exploring errors and mistakes in grammar, and find eleven types of grammatical errors and mistakes in these assignments. The results show that the most common errors and mistakes were in punctuations, spellings, prepositions and tense. Besides, some students also committed errors and mistakes in the use of adverb, subject verb agreement, pluralization, pronoun, conjunction, articles and adjectives. The results were analyzed in numerical form and presented in figures and graphs. In the end researchers give some guiding principles for ESL instructors and learners in correcting grammatical errors and mistakes in their academic writings. Moreover, the researches also suggested some recommendations for future researchers of this field.

Key words: Second language acquisition, English as a second language, Errors and mistakes, Undergraduate students.

INTRODUCTION

Language is used as an instrument for the purpose to communicate with each other (Maitlo, Tumrani & Ali,2022). English language is considered as global language and is taught as major subject and given priority from primary level up to the higher secondary level. To learn English language students should get mastery on all four skills, most of the students face difficulties in learning English language especially in writing skill (Ahmad, Iqbal & Rao, 2023). The competency and proficiency of EFL (English as a Foreign Language) learners are mainly evaluated by their writing skills in board and competitive examinations. English is used in different fields of life and still its importance is increasing day by day in today's era of technology

and communication, and it has brought huge changes to bring ease to human life. English holds important in various important areas of day-to-day life like commerce, employment, education, policy, tourism, law, media and translation (Jeevan, Maitlo & Jalbani, 2023). By keeping these points in mind, English language is taught in formal education from primary education. Students from the very beginning of their educational career are given more priority to English language and thus it is taught as mandatory subject. The students are evaluated by assessing their writing skills especially the aspects of grammar. Students always face problems in writings, especially in grammar because grammar competency is ignored in teaching learning English. Human beings take

language as a very strong tool. Only humans have got such a complex and developed system of communication (Maitlo, Tumrani & Farhat, 2023). These peculiarities of established expression of thoughts differentiate us from all other living creatures. The world has managed to preserve, enrich, propagate and advance our civilization largely through this skill we possess in languages. Spoken language has great importance in such development already mentioned afore. Speaking comes before writing. Language learning is a sequential process. Language is a unique possession of man. It is a special gift from God to human being (Maitlo, Soomro & Lashari, 2023). Human civilization without language as we know it would have impossible. It is human ability to communicate through words that makes different from animal. Second language learning is a conscious process that involves learning a language other than language one. An effective ESL writer's text must be consistent, logical, clearly structured, interesting and properly organized with a wide range of vocabulary and mastery of mechanical conventions (Fareed & Ashraf, 2016).

Language learner face linguistic complications and meet various challenges in learning second language (Haq, Farhat & Iqbal, 2022). Learning to write a coherent and effective text is a challenging and prolonged realization of cognitive development which contrasts sharply with speech acquisition. At the age of five, the spoken language is normally highly developed with a functional vocabulary of thousands of words and a capacity to understand and produce grammatical phrases. Though, the specific contribution of a genetic predisposition to language learning is uncertain, it is evident that speech acquisition is a natural. Writing skills development is occurred in three various stages but intermediate stage more important as it is leading to higher educational level (Jalbani, Ahmad & Maitlo, 2023). Primary stage's process is to write what one knows. Secondary stage is the conveyance of knowledge regarding the author's perspective. And finally, the last stage is regarding the readers' benefit. The Initial two stages are done by higher school and college students through well-established research. The final stage is done by very mature students and this is why it rarely discussed. This stage is mostly done by those who want to be writers (Fareed & Ashraf, 2016). The

current research was conducted to find out the most common errors committed by the students at undergraduate level students in district Khairpur. There is dire need to investigate such issues in Pakistani context as students face many problems in writing skills especially in board and competitive examinations.

Statement of the Problem

English language is not used frequently in communication in Pakistan but it's upsurging rapidly which shows that future none-native will left behind native-speakers (Farhat, 2019). But now a days ESL students secure least grades English subject in exams, and they face problems in their creative writing and in competitive exams, so there was a need to conduct research on such issues related to second language learners writing. Making errors and mistakes in writings is very common phenomenon yet it is very important to investigate the most common errors and mistakes committed by the second language learners and why students keep on committing errors repeatedly in academic writing skills. Error analysis is very effective process to investigate the grammatical problems in academic writings.

Objectives of the Research

Research work grows the level of intelligence of scholars and enables them to contemplate in a reformed viewpoint (Rao, Jeevan & Ahmad, 2023). The objectives of this research study are as the first objective of this research study is to investigate the most common grammatical errors in writing of English committed by the undergraduates' level ESL students of district Khairpur. The second objective of this research study is to identify the types of errors in English writings committed by the undergraduates' level students of district Khairpur Sindh.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The present research pursues the responses the following research questions.

Explore the common errors and mistakes in academic writings of undergraduate level ESL students of district Khairpur?

Which categories of errors and mistakes committed by these undergraduates in English assignment writings?

Limitation of the Study

Firstly, the research is limited to district level of Sindh province, it can be increased to the other districts, divisions, provinces on national level. While on it also can be expanded to continental level or international level. Secondly, the research is limited to one university disregarding other educational institutes, same way it is also conducted on ESL students of undergraduate level sidestepping other departments and faculties. Lastly, Population and sampling is also limited but instead of these limitations the study is significance in itself.

Significance of the Study

The purpose of this research is to explore errors and mistakes in grammar committed by ESL undergraduates while writing assignments. The study is significance in providing guidance and awareness to both teachers and students about the common errors and mistakes committed by students in assignment writings. It is expected through this study that it will shed a new light to ESL teachers regarding the teaching of writing skills, and they will employ the accurate usage of grammar that helps to improve students' academic writing skills.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The key purpose of review of literature is to know about the history (Ahmad, Maitlo, & Rao, 2022) from this statement enough for its significant (Ahmad, Maitlo & Jeevan, 2023). This part of the article comprises second language acquisition, writing in second language, error analysis followed by some previous related studies to the present study which will prove helpful for the present research study.

Acquiring and Writing Second Language

Second Language Acquisition (SLA) refers both the study of individuals and groups who are learning a language subsequent to learning their first one as young child, and to the process of learning that language. The additional language is called a second language (L2), even though it may actually be the third, fourth, or tenth to be acquired.it is also commonly called as target language (Saville & Barto, 2017). Second language acquisition is the study of knowing the ability of learning a language in any stage of life, which occurs most commonly in the young ages and sometimes in the very earlier and later stage of life but the target language, which he will be learning must be a language other than his first language. it is an emerging field which inquires to study a verity of competencies while learning a language other than first language as we know that society and language is considered as the two sides of the same coins, so SLA deals with the study of problems while interacting between society and language which is the subfield of applied linguistics. A huge distinction exists between the writing of native writers and non-native writers. ESL learners confront lot of issues with respect to the implications and structure of the language, whereas analyzing and classifying the languages, since they experience more than one language. The difference between L1 and L2 is considered inadequate, which results the misconception of the L2 perspectives in regards of writings, and minimizing the skills of L2 writers. In the space of L2 writing, one reliable and striking characteristic, which is in a general sense particular from L1 composing forms, is that L2 writers, it is code switching in writings, in order to work on a specific problem, either "skilled" or "unskilled". As several studies have detailed, L2 journalists utilize their L1 to arrange their writing for content era, exchange their L1 information to L2 writing settings (Darus, & Ching, 2009).

ERROR ANALYSIS

Error is viewed as important in the ESL and it is the source for instructor to perceive student skill (Ahmad, Shahid & Farhat, 2023). Error analysis is improving the teaching method of teachers and correcting the mistakes of the students. It assists the teachers to judge more precisely what corrective compositions would be required for ESL learners and it pays attention to errors made by learners. Errors are flaws that needed to be wiped out completely but errors on behalf of learners is important for their learning process, because errors made can be seen as a device that learners use to learn a language (Mohammed & Hourani, 2008). Learner cannot escape from errors because without them a person cannot improve. The four errors which the learners commit usually as some components are omitted, some components are added, sometime some unnecessary features are added and some elements

are disordered. Errors are systematic because they are the flaws in the learners' competence (Abbasi & Karmina, 2011).

Previous Related Works

Hourani, T. M. Y. (2008) in his research focused on the most common grammatical errors committed by students Emirati Secondary level. The students of the Eastern Coast School were the subject of the study in UAE. Students were given easy topics to write essays on it. The findings of the study show that the students committed different grammatical errors in their writing, which were majorly due to the interference of their mother tongue Arabic language. Abbasi and Karimna, (2011) investigated grammatical errors committed by Iranian students in t Azad and Pyaym-e-Noor University. The finding of the study showed that 98 percent of the students committed grammatical errors, and the majority of the errors generated by the students were interlingual errors, indicating the influence of the mother tongue. Tse & Yau in (2014) studied the grammar mistakes occurred by the students of language department of a private sector Malaysian university and exposed seven hundred ninety-seven mistakes made by these students. Phuket and Othman, (2015) conducted research to find the grammatical mistakes of university level students in Thailand. The results of the study showed that most frequently occurred errors were word choice, tenses, prepositions, and comma. Khumpee, (2017) investigated the common type of grammatical errors of 83 intermediate level students of Nakhon Ratchasima Rajabhat University to find out the main grammatical errors in English easy writing, The findings of the study showed that students committed large number of grammatical errors in punctuation, nouns, prepositions, verbs, and articles. Alasfour, (2018) in his dissertation investigated grammatical errors of Arabic ESL students and find various type of grammar mistakes in their fifty written papers. Saher and Saleem, (2019) investigated the misuse of English prepositions by Pakistani undergraduate ESL students to determine whether male learners made more prepositional mistakes than female learners. Thirty government college students from Faisalabad University (fifteen participants of each gender) were randomly selected for new quantitative research. The study also emphasizes the types of prepositional

errors. The study identified several types of pre-positional errors in both types of tests as a result ESL female learners had a higher error ratio than male ESL learners. Magsi et al, (2023) in their research investigated several kinds of mistakes in the assignments of fifteen post-graduate level students in the context of district Khairpur and exposed three sorts of errors frequently committed by ESL students. These errors were in articles, sentence structure, capitalizations.

Although some researchers conducted their researches in their contexts, but there is no single research which is conducted in the district Khairpur Sindh on grammatical errors and mistakes. For the purpose of exploring these errors and mistakes researchers used following methodologies and materials.

Material and Methods

The methodology used in this research comprises on research design, research population and sample, research instrument and procedure of data collection and data analysis. The whole procedures employed by the researchers in the study is called research design (Ahmad, Farhat, & Choudhary, 2022). The present research was qualitative in nature and the method of data analysis was error analysis The present study is exploring the errors and mistakes in English assignments of undergraduates. The population of the study were ESL undergraduates of a well-known university of district Khairpur Sindh for ethical consideration university name was not mentioned. The researchers gathered twenty assignments of from randomly selected ESL undergraduate level students and explored the grammatical errors and mistakes in these assignments. The collected data was analyzed in numerical form and presented in figures and graphs.

Results and Findings

The results of the present research aimed to explore the undergraduates' grammatical errors and mistakes in the written assignments. demographic information and results are presented in the figures blew.

Demographic Information

Demographic information comprises the gender and location of the research participants, which is presented in the following figure number one.

Figure: 01
Gender and Locality of the Participants.
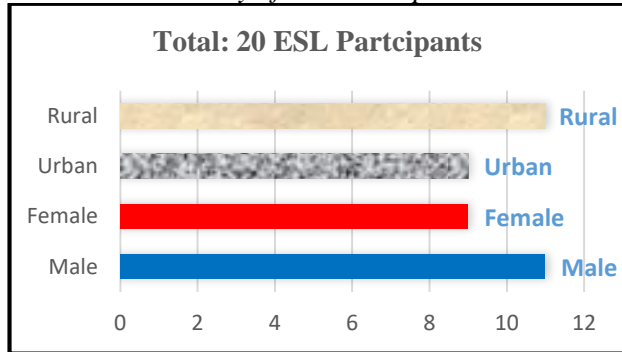
The above figure is showing the gender and location of the research participants as there were total twenty students contributed this research. The eleven students were male and nine female and eleven belongs to rural and nine belongs to urban areas of district Khairpur Sindh Pakistan.

Figure: 02
Overall, Errors and Mistakes in Assignments.
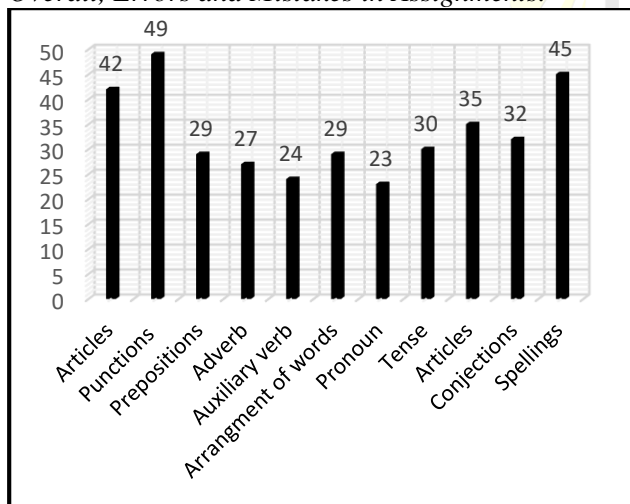
The above figure number two showing that the students committed total 365 errors and mistakes of eleven types in grammar in their assignments. Articles 42, punctions 49, prepositions 29, adverb 27, auxiliary verb 24, arrangement words 29, pronoun 23, tense 30, connections 32, spellings 45 errors and mistakes.

DISCUSSION

The findings of the research indicate that students do not have the idea of using punctuation in a proper manner. Most of the time students miss, using comma after any phrase, clause or after nouns or any other entities coming after each other. Most of the students have not used full stop at the end of any sentence. Some of the students did not use capital letter, occurring at the beginning of the sentence. Question marks are missing in some sentences. Some of the students used capital letters in the middle of sentences. Sometime students used comma instead of full stop. Other most committed mistakes in the essays of the students were spelling mistakes. The spelling mistakes come under the type of miss formation. The spellings mistakes miss formation of letters in the words. The misuse of prepositions was also seen in the assignments of the ESL students. Prepositions were used in a place where there was no need of prepositions. Conjunctions were not used where they supposed to use. Adverbs were used incorrectly in the assignments and were extra added in the sentence, where there was no use of adverb. The errors in subject verb agreement were also found in the assignments. One of the study's findings shows that pronouns were not used properly in the assignments. Another error found in the study was the mistakes of tenses as tenses were miss formed like; present tense was used instead of past tense. Articles errors were also found in the study. article was used in wrong place where it was not supposed to be used. The last finding of the study was the adjectives errors. Adjective was added, where there was no need of it.

CONCLUSION
This study aims to investigate the most common errors in essay writing English by the undergraduate level ESL students in district Khairpur. The main problem of the students was writing skill, especially in grammar using an error classification scheme and surface taxonomy data was analyzed and categorized into eleven types of errors and mistakes. The researchers observed these assignments and find that one of the major findings of the study is that the most common errors in grammar were punctuation and spellings errors and mistakes. Besides, students also committed errors and mistakes in the use of prepositions, adverb, subject verb agreement, pronoun, tense, conjunction, articles and adjectives.

The findings tell us that errors from the element of misinformation due to regularizations are the most frequently made errors by these ESL undergraduates. They have not learned grammar properly, particularly in terms of punctuations, spellings, prepositions, affixations, adverbs, subject verb agreements, pronouns, tenses, conjunctions, articles and adjectives.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- By understanding the errors and mistakes instructors can be well equipped to help students to overcome their problems. In addition, language instructors can find possible solutions to common errors and mistakes of ESL students.
- The current study also contributes to ESL research in Pakistani context and the knowledge of language pedagogy. The researchers can extend their research by analyzing other aspects of grammar. Future researches could be possible in field of coherence and cohesion in grammar.
- The learning process of grammar should be taught constantly and teachers should have a strong knowledge in grammar rules. The students should be involved in more English program such as an English workshop to provide more familiar connection with the language. Variety should be introduced by the instructor like self-correction without indication of mistakes, peer correction, underlining mistakes, mistakes underlined and coded and search and correct technique.
  - Teachers should tell their students about the rules of exceptions in grammar about vocabulary and pronunciation usage as it is best way through which the students can make maximum correction of their mistakes by themselves. This is also a gate way for better understanding of the pedagogical and psychological factors that contribute to the grammatical errors.

Grammar cannot be ignored regarding the creative writing of students. Students need to focus on the grammar in order to give better writing materials. Grammar vales a text and it should be mastered before you go for writing. it is necessary for the students to have their own strategy for further mastering themselves up in English language skills. Such skills can be obtained from regular reading of English texts like novels, articles, short stories etc.

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