

Analyzing Linguistic Errors in English Essay Writing: A Case Study of ESL Learners at FG Secondary Schools in Okara, Pakistan

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Abstract

This study examined the various linguistic errors made by students in grades 6, 7, and 8 at three FG Secondary Schools in Okara, Pakistan, during the academic year 2023-24. The study included 45 male and 45 female students, selected from a purposive sample of 90 students, and ages ranging from 11 to 13 years. Students were required to write an essay of their own choosing on the topic My School. Experienced teachers reviewed these essays to categorize them based on key linguistic mistakes. Junko Otoshi's (2005) Linguistic Taxonomy of Grammatical Errors served as the analytical framework, focusing on five error categories: verb, noun, article, wrong, and construction mistakes. The study identified a total of 878 errors, with verb errors dominating wrong word errors, closely followed by sentence structure errors, noun ending errors, and article errors. Comparison of mistakes made in each grade indicated that 6th-grade students made the highest error percentage of 52%, 7th graders made 33%, while 8th-grade students made only 15% of the total mistakes. According to gender distribution, male students contributed 51% of errors while the female students contributed 49%. The results stress the importance of individual instructional interventions for error types to build up improved English and writing proficiency in ESL classrooms. The suggestions based on the results of this research contain useful information for enhancing the teaching of the English language in similar schools.

Keywords: error analysis, ESL, essay writing, Junko Otoshi, linguistic taxonomy, grammatical errors, verb, article, wrong word, sentence structure, FG school, Okara

Introduction

Error Analysis, a branch of Applied Linguistics, was founded to examine mistakes arising from learners learning a second or foreign language. This discipline developed because of the scholars like; Stephen Pit Corder, Larry Selinker, Heidi Dulay, Mrina Burt, Rod Ellis, and Jack Croft Richards. Corder is considered the pioneer of error analysis because he began working in this field in the 1960s and mainly dealt with written errors produced by second language learners. His research disputed errors as a mere mistake and introduced errors as a normal and meaningful process in the process of second language acquisition. In the seminal 1967 paper "The Significance of Learners' Errors," Corder argued the seminal point that errors

are not a result of learner's failure in terms of use of correct language forms but an evidence of the developmental phase of a learner (Corder, 1967). Thus, the standpoint of error enhanced error analysis as an important component of applied linguistics.

Conducting an error analysis can be viewed as a reaction stimulated by the method called contrastive analysis, which dominated in the 1950s and focused on comprehending the students' mistakes based on the comparison with their L1. Contrastive analysis which was dominant in 1940-50s attempted to predict the kind of errors that a learner is likely to make by pointing out the contrast between the two languages but it was later considered insufficient (Littlewood, 1984). Although contrastive analysis had been applied in the earlier period before the rigorous approach to error analysis was established in the 1960s and 1970s, it had some drawbacks. It could not elaborate on all the different nuances of the mistakes students were able to make in the writing process leading to the creation of error analysis as a more inclusive method of studying language learning mistakes.

Over the recent past, error analysis (EA) has emerged as a field of growing concern in the area of applied linguistics. Through it, students' mistakes emerging from various assignments are embraced, and so are the abilities to learn and acquire a second language perfected. EA is a kind of linguistic analysis that concentrates in the mistakes done by the second language learners and at the same time offers a way of looking at such misdeeds as positive behavioral pattern. Unlike other approaches that view mistakes as minimize that is also equally important hence, leading to improved motivation for learners. Pertaining to applied linguistics, EA refers to the analysis of practical language problems employing theoretical_ concepts_ and approaches. The second interesting finding highlighted in the error analysis is that most of the mistakes are as a result of student illusion concerning the rules of the target language. Moreover, the EA gives feedback to the student and lets them know what they did wrong and what beginners' rules have to be followed in the new language.

Studying on the second language learning has in recent past attracted more concerns where the students' mistakes have been of more concern since they are used to forecast the difficulties that are likely to be realized during the acquisition of the second language. The difference of Error analysis (EA) is due to the big part played by errors making by second language learners, the presence of which do not stem from the first language interference only. EA recommends respecting the error seafood as teachers should be able to point out other regular mistakes that a learner makes syntactic, lexical, or grammatical and these could be due to native language interference, insufficient instruction or inadequate second language knowledge. Also, with the help of EA, it is possible to identify the further progression of modified language abilities of students. Otoshi (2005) proposed a Linguistic Taxonomy of Grammatical Errors, which categorizes errors into five main types: verb mistakes, noun ending mistakes, article mistakes, wrong word mistakes, and for sentences constructions mistakes. This taxonomy has been used in research studies to identify errors in student written work especially from junior secondary School. One of these studies was conducted in FG Secondary Schools in Okara where Otoshi's taxonomy was adopted to assess the errors committed by male and female students in grade 6, 7 and 8. In the results highlighted all students irrespective of methods of instructions and types of learning environments committed severe mistakes in English essay writing. Additional interviews with the teachers also tried to draw more information about these mistakes and the way to avoid them in the future.

In the case of error analysis, errors committed by second language learners are regarded as natural, necessary, and inevitable. Not only do these errors suggest that students are not fully fluent speakers but feedback can also be gained from these mistakes which can show teachers exactly how effective their teaching methods have been, and where alterations could prove

useful. A part from being a source of progressive development of classroom practices, errors facilitate identification of deficiencies in the control of target language by teachers as a diagnostic tool. Stressing with the notion of error it encourages the students and thus improves their development in the second language continuously. Hence, error analysis can be beneficial in the second language acquisition process as a better view of what and how students struggle to avoid the mistakes and errors; as well as, learn in the second language class.

Scope of the Study

This research investigates the nature of errors made by second language learners of English writing at FG Secondary Schools in Okara using Otoshi's(2005) Linguistic Taxonomy of Grammatical Errors. It focuses on categorizing errors in five key areas: sentence errors, of verb errors, noun ending errors, article errors, wrong word errors, sentence structure errors for students in grade 6 to 8, along sex differences. This work is to find out potential types of mistakes and to reveal the reasons for occurrences of these mistakes such as interference, inadequate knowledge, or the lack of explanation of grammatical rules. Questions to the teachers will help to reveal why such mistakes take place and how to overcome them. The results will enhance knowledge in the field of Second Language Acquisition, coupled with guidelines for enhancing the methodology of Teaching English as a Second Language.

Statement of Problem

The problem statement of this study has enumerated certain shortcomings in the research on linguistic errors in English essay writing by students at FG Secondary Schools in Okara. Although the study incorporates Otoshi's (2005) Linguistic Taxonomy of Grammatical Errors, it accepts that categorizing errors into five main groups tends to minimize the distinguishing features of individual learners. The approach could fails to consider cognitive, cultural, contextual interactions that is learning/teaching style, socio-linguistic features that interact to produce errors. Also, it is important to note that the written tasks is the only data source used in the study which reduces the extent of the findings, in as much as errors made when using the oral language may not be seen. Moreover the present study is limited due to its sampling of only one institution, which limits the possibility of transferability of the findings to other countries, other regions, or other types of educational organizations. This work also acknowledges that use of other variables and the expansion of the sample pool of learners might add depth as well as validity to the report.

Research Questions

- 1) What are the key factors contributing to linguistic errors in English essay writing among FG Secondary School students?
- 2) How do linguistic error patterns vary across different grade levels (6th to 8th) at FG Secondary School?
- 3) How do gender differences affect the types and frequency of errors in English essay writing among students at FG Secondary School?

Literature Review

Error analysis is one of the fundamental subdivisions of the field of applied linguistics and occupies a crucial position in the continuum of L2 acquisition. As a systematic approach, it lays its concern on tracking the mistakes which students make while learning a particular language. Thus, EA refutes the classical model that viewed error as entirely detrimental, while recognizing that any particular mistake is actually an important part of the learning process. Such errors give valuable information about the difficulties learners experience in achieving

their goals and objectives providing an understanding for teachers and linguists to transform the teaching techniques (Jobeen et al., 2015). As EA underscores, making errors plays a critical role in the second language acquisition process, as well as assists teachers in determining best practices for teaching through presenting information regarding the type of mistakes pupils make.

Theoretical Framework

This paper on the analysis of linguistic mistakes in English essays of ESL learners in secondary schools in Okara, Pakistan is mainly based on Junko Otoshi's Linguistic Taxonomy of Grammatical Errors employed in 2005. Otoshi's taxonomy offers an organizing principle to organize such a regularly occurring grammatical error in L2 writing. The framework classifies errors into five main categories: word substitutions, verb mistakes, noun coda mistakes, article mistakes, wrong nouns, and wrong construction mistakes. When utilized, these categories are helpful in identifying the main grammatical problems that learners having ESL experience going through thus making it easier to offer error analysis and adequately have a handle on the sheer process of dealing with L2 writing.

For systematic analysis we need a linguistic tool that is effective in presenting enunciative syntactic mistakes, Otoshi's Linguistic Taxonomy was chosen because of the effectiveness and clarity in differentiating the types of common grammatical mistakes. Two of the major and most frequently identified areas of breakdown that affect ESL learners most as they learn English syntactic and morphological patterns include verb errors and mistakes in sentence construction. Mistakes such as tense, aspect and subject-verb agreement are most challenging problems second language learners encounter (Otoshi, 2005).

They are typical of learners' problems in the acquisition of verb forms and their use in different situations. Noun coda errors are commonly characterized by parameter errors in plural form, possession, or other incorrect ending of the noun in which it is classified, which makes up basic grammar structure that can hamper the smooth flow of learners' English language communication (Otoshi, 2005). Incorporation of article errors is relevant to Otoshi's taxonomy because utilization of articles in English particularly 'a,' 'an,' 'the' poses difficulty among the ESL learner especially those from the no article languages (Master, 2002). Wrong word errors are mistakes where students use the correct words but in the wrong context, meaning or collocation common because students might not know the exact lexical availability in a certain context (Bley-Vroman, 1990). Finally, examples like improper use of word order, improper use of fragments or run-on sentences are important course areas because many ESL learners struggle in this area as they try to build proper grammatically correct sentences in English (Otoshi, 2005).

It also fits well for the context of the secondary school ESL learners in Pakistan because Students fail to understand these grammatical structures because English is comparatively trickier than their first Languages (Jabeen, 2013). The purpose of this research is to identify the particular grammatical errors that students make when writing English essays and to find out how the students perceive these error types. In light of the above, this study seeks to employ Otoshi's taxonomy to categorize and analyze the errors made with the hope of determining the main areas of difficulty as encountered by the students at FG Secondary Schools in Okara.

Further, an emphasis on these error types is appropriate since many Pakistani ESL learners learn English in school context and often with an exclusive focus on small grammatical form dressed in formal education and very often devoid of communicative and contextual language use. Due to the failure by students to understand the application of grammatical rules in live realistic writing situations, they end up making lacunas that are categorized by Otoshi's

taxonomy. The Linguistic Taxonomy of Grammatical Errors developed by Otsoshi can be considered as comprehensive and highly validated instrument for reflecting on the most frequent mistakes in second language acquisition. Due to its clear and systematic separation of verb, noun, article, wrong word, and sentence construction errors the SOPI is suitable for this study because it simplifies the analysis of the grammatical problems of ESL learners in FG Secondary Schools. This framework will help to draw a list of the mistakes students often make while writing essays and further, enlightenment of the reasons behind these errors as far as language learning in Pakistan is concern shall also take place.

Historical Background

Traditionally, this theory developed in the 1960 s as a reaction to the contrastive analysis (CA) approach that identified errors in second language acquisition as being attributable to interference from the first language of the learner. Compared with CA, which emphasized the difference between languages by stressing on the interferences from the first language, error analysis enlarged this vision by pointing out that error was unavoidable and indispensable in the process of second language acquisition (SLA) (Jie, 2008). In support of the approaches made by Marzoughi and Ghanbari (2015), errors mean that when made, they can serve as learning processes; additionally, EA is used as instrument through which errors are identified and analyzed in relation to students' language development and the enhancement of the teaching–learning processes.

After the 1960s and 1970s, contrastive analysis was succeeded by what is now known as error analysis, which pays attention to comprehensible strategies in learning second language. According to McDowell (2020), although error analysis has gained acceptance in language teaching, it is not without difficulties in placing its concept into practice in classrooms. EA considers the cognitive processes that affect students learning through its explore about the impact of L1, in addition to identifying different approaches taken by learners to learn the second language (Erdogan, 2005). Moreover, EA has been discussed to improve not only students' outcomes but also teachers' professional growth because EA helps find out specific types of errors and offer effective applicable methods (Anefnaf, 2017).

In conclusion, error analysis has definitely held its position as an indispensable tool for second language teaching it supplied insights about the learning process, driven changes to be made in instructions, and provided a clearer picture of a learner's difficulties. It brings into view the contingency of a right method that defines language learning errors as learning that is desirable rather than a manner of going wrong.

The Global Application of Error Analysis in Language Education

Although, error analysis has been integrated with various aspects, more precisely in the system in which English is being taught as a foreign language such as in countries like Pakistan. Anbar and Samad (2022) argue that students make a variety of errors caused by the inter language when learning English. Despite all these errors are not failure indicators, but facilitate the identification of Linguistic Learning throughout Execution of small Learning Tasks in the classroom. Furthermore, Kushniruk (2021) has found that EA assists teachers in understanding which error types students encounter most frequently when writing and how these problems should be solved. Due to these challenges, EA is now widely applied in language education helping teachers and students eliminate common difficulties in writing and enhance their language skills.

The Role of Error Analysis in Second Language Learning

Error analysis has emerged as a significant sub-discipline of applied linguistics and second language acquisition. That is why it is interested in mistakes learners make while learning a second language with accent on written language and learning-writing process. Ellis and Barkhuizen (2005) have found that errors are not regarded as harmful, but as beneficial components of language learning. EA plays the role of aiding the enumeration identification, and descriptions and explanations of errors which is effective for learners as well as instructors. The systematic nature of errors tends to show how learners address the target language, which makes EA a valuable tool to enhance the learning approaches and the performance among students and teachers (Jobeen et al., 2015). Moreover, according to Tulldahl (2004), EA has gained significant relevance in the last decades studying second language learners' cognitive processes and acquisition. Consequently, mistakes are embraced as learning processes, and grasp indicates progress more than failure (Koka, 2017).

Error Analysis as a Tool for Teachers and Students

Error analysis is not only of advantage to the students but it is also useful in enhancing the teachers' delivery techniques. According to Alhaysony (2012), from recognizing the social networks of learners, a teacher can modify teaching methodology in order to avoid mistakes made by students. This make teaching and learning process more efficient and relevant. Also, it is less socially desirable because EA allows the students to recognize their mistakes and directs their attention to correction. This process over time results in learners developing a growth attitude and improves their performance production and self-regulation which reflects mastery in the target language. Yussef Koka (2017) and Ahmed Alhaysony (2012) both endorse the use of error analysis claiming that it provides information on teaching and learning altogether.

The Cognitive and Behavioral Aspects of Errors in Second Language Learning

Studying cognitive processes for error making is of paramount significance to error analysis. Chandra (2017) posited that interlingual interference and learning techniques employed by the students are major sources of errors in second language acquisition. But the second language learners' mistakes are different from those that are made by the first language users. Riri et al., (2018) have noted that native speaking often make casual errors and while these are easily identifiable, second language learners do not see them, making learning even harder. Mahmoud stated that error analysis helps the teachers to understand the aforementioned strategies to manage learning challenges or modifications.

The Future of Error Analysis in Language Teaching

Error analysis is nowadays still a rapidly developing branch of study in second language acquisition with the purpose of explaining the process of how students acquire second languages and how the teachers can enhance their approaches to teaching. According to Mahmoud (2011), EA craves persistence because students will always commit mistakes. It is a very useful feature for learners and teachers because it gives an important feedback on further strategies to be applied in teaching and learning processes. Thus, one can implement the achieved understanding of language learners via EA approach and learner-centered methodology, which might help educators to face the difficulties of second language acquisition more effectively.

The Importance of English Writing in Pakistan

The error analysis (EA) fill a significant role in identifying the difficulties that the students experience when learning English as second language learners especially in writing skills. The students attending the English medium schools in Pakistan where English is utilized as a medium of both national and global communication neglect some of the sociolinguistic principles concerning vital facets of spelling, use of vocabulary, grammatical interrelations, and syntactic structure which is pointed out by Farooq et al. (2012). This research also revealed that problems experienced by female students are generally more than those of male students with special reference to difficulties in English writing. These bush errors do not only suggest the issues of L1 and L2 interference but also explain how acquiring second language affects academic performance (Hasnain, 2022). Due to the results of the error analysis these issues are revealed, which in turn allows to judge the general level of grammatical knowledge of the students, as well as help the teachers and learners realize what aspects need to be focused on. In this regard, as Parameswari et al. (2024) suggest, EA enriches the teaching-learning process by identifying recurring errors that in turn help to improve students' awareness of rules governing the use of given language. But the problem is that EA has its pros and cons: it neglects cognitive and sociocultural aspects of a problem. However, error analysis has not lost its significance in the development of second language acquisition and fine tuning of the practices that are followed in this regard.

There are few gaps that have been left unaddressed regarding EA in the relevant literature, especially in the context of the Pakistani EFL students. Although earlier scholars like Farooq et al (2012) and Hasnain (2022) have assessed and analyzed the syntactic and semantic mistakes that students use in their writings in English, there is a dearth of literature that address the problems of secondary school students in region particularly those involving English essay writing. However, while the study by Farooq et al. cited above showed differences between the gender of the subjects and the errors in the language used, there is a dearth of literature in the Pakistani context that looked at how such errors change with grade level, especially at grade 6, 7 and 8. Moreover, EA has been useful in pointing out the syntactical/Orthographic features that hinder students' linguistic performance, while at the same time neglecting socio-cultural factors and cognitive and teaching learning processes that might also be a root cause of the difficulties faced by students when using language. Moreover, despite the fact that EA is an efficient instrument to facilitate the modification of the teaching strategies (Parameswari et al., 2024), there is insignificant research on its implementation to improve writing in English essays in the secondary school context in Pakistan. Consequently, this study aims at addressing these gaps by examining linguistic errors in English essay writing made by FG Secondary School students in District Okara, Pakistan by taking into consideration the gender differences as well as the grades and analyzing how error analysis can be effectively used for enhancing students' writing performance in the environment in question.

Methodology

This research will adopt a quantitative approach in order to provide detailed understanding about the linguistic mistakes in English essays in secondary schools of District Okara, Pakistan. The use of this approach gives a comprehensive view of the types of errors, how often they occur, what leads to them and the effect of gender and grade on students' writing ability.

Research Design

The quantitative research design for this research will focus on determining the frequency and kinds of the linguistic mistakes that students tend to make in the English essay. The study utilizes Otoshi's Linguistic Taxonomy of Grammatical Errors (2005).

Population and Sampling

The population of the study comprises 90 respondents selected from students in the 6th, 7th, and 8th grades of three selected FG Secondary Schools in Okara. These schools were chosen for providing a fairly representative sample of students. For participant selection, purposive sampling technique was used, which balance the students gender and grade levels, three-grading level students. This procedure of sample development ensures equal representation of writing errors over the genders and successful classification of the errors by grade level.

Data Collection

The data collection process involved essay writing task. This study required to write an English essay on the topic "My School" and it was expected that should only take them at most 40 minutes of their time. These essays were written independently in order to minimize the effects of group work or team biases and influential factors and these essays were written under controlled classroom environment. All essays were subsequently reviewed to determine the type and number of error in each using Otoshi's error taxonomy.

Data Analysis Technique

The data of students' essays were gathered and sorted in a structured manner to allow their analysis. Both authors and essays were randomly assigned and participants had an equal distribution of high and low levels of the grammatical complexity measure ensuring that errors were consistently identifiable and categorizable by two well-trained English teachers. The identified errors were analyzed based on Otoshi's Linguistic Taxonomy of Grammatical Errors. The study presented specific error categories and the specific number of occurrences that resulted from the analysis by gender and grade.

Results and Discussion

This research examined various grammatical mistakes in English essays completed by ninety students in the 6th, 7th, and 8th grades in three Federal Government Secondary Schools in Okara, Pakistan. Using Otoshi's Linguistic Taxonomy of Grammatical Errors (2005), the study focused on five categories of errors: symbol errors, verb mistake, noun mistake, article mistake, wrong word mistake, and sentence construction mistake. The participants consisted of only the male and the female students, and purposive sampling was used. It included error pattern differences based on genders and grades and the potential reasons for the errors, based on interviews of 10 English teachers. The findings give understanding of issues that writers face often, where areas of instructional focus should be identified and possible solutions to the problem. It is hoped that the study will help teachers and curriculum designers to respond to these challenges and improve students' results in the English writing skills.

Types of common errors among students' essay writing

Grammatical errors are deviations from the standard rules of language, encompassing types as verb errors, noun ending errors, article errors, wrong word errors and sentence structure errors, according to Otoshi's Linguistic Taxonomy.

Table 1

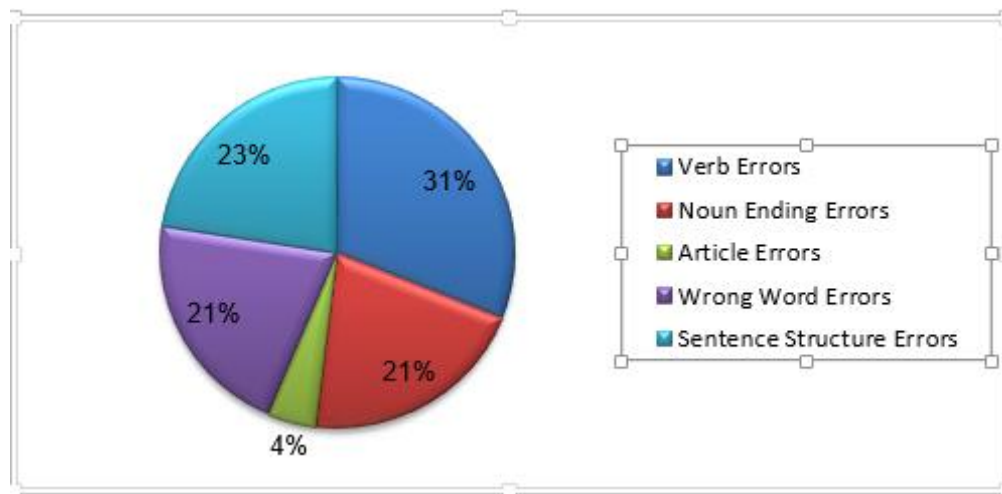
Types of common errors in Students' essay writings

Types of Errors	Number of Errors
Verb Errors	273
Noun Ending Errors	183
Article Errors	39
Wrong Word Errors	185
Sentence Structure Errors	198
Total	878

Table presents the dissemination of total 878 grammatical errors committed by students in their English essay writing of grade 6th to 8th at FG Secondary Schools Okara. These errors were categorized into five distinct types as verb errors, noun ending errors, article errors, wrong word errors and sentence structure errors. The distribution of errors highlights several critical areas for instructional concentration.

Figure 4.1

Types and frequency of common errors in Students' essay writing



This figure gives the percentage occurrences of the grammatical errors in the English essays of the students from FG Secondary Schools categorized into different classes. Out of all the different kinds of errors the most numerous were the verb errors comprising 273 out of a total of 878 translation mistakes, which disrupted the logical connections in the students' texts and violated their grammar. Noun ending errors with 183 instances were the second most common error and commonly produced an ambiguity in possession and quantity because of misuse of plurals and possessives with wrong prepositions. Article errors were the least in number; there were only 39 errors, but they influenced the specificity and definiteness of the students' work. Wrong word errors, 185 in all, caused changes in the meaning of words and fragmentation of sentences. Last, sentence structure errors with 198 times interrupted organization of a sentence and thereby making the writing complicated to read. From the above error patterns, it is evident that the main weaknesses that students' experience in their English essay writing include.

Table 2

Sentence structure errors in students' essay writing

Sentence Structure Errors	Number of Errors
Word Order Error	27
Omitted Words or Phrases	57
Unnecessary Words or Phrases	41
Unidiomatic Sentence Construction	73
Total Errors	198

Table reveals that sentence structure errors occur frequently in students' essay writing which includes a wide range of issues that impede the coherence, clarity, and correctness of grammatical rules. Students commit these errors in the composition and construction within a sentence which result in misunderstanding or improper communication. By the analysis of students' essay writing, sentence structure errors encompass total 198 grammatical errors and consist of further four categories, such as word order errors, omitted words and phrases, unidiomatic sentence construction and unidiomatic sentence construction.

Errors in essay writing among students of different grades

Grammatical errors occur among students when rules of grammar in the sentences are not followed appropriately. Analysis of grammatical errors illustrates that students of grade 6th to 8th at FG Secondary Schools Okara commit a range of errors with noticeable improvement in their performance as they proceed through different grades.

Table 3

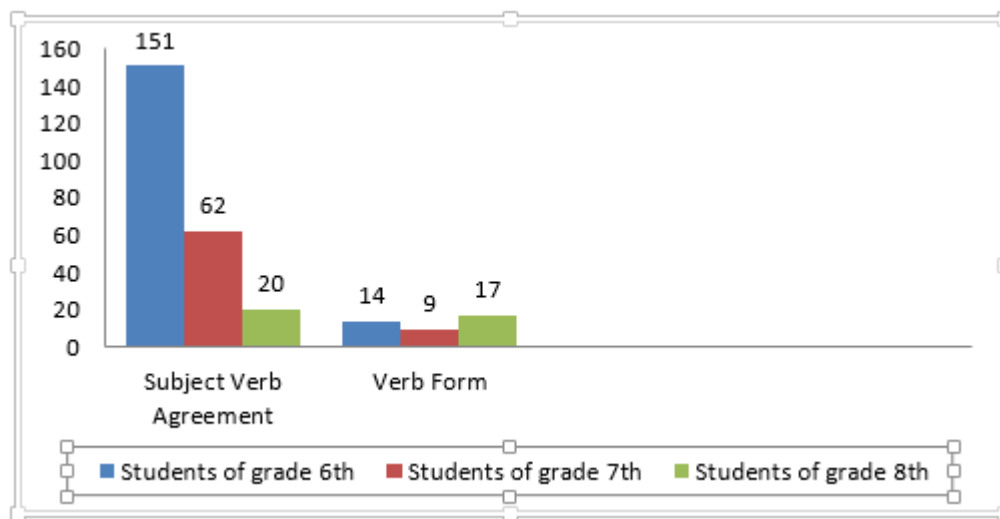
Errors among students of grade 6th to grade 8th

Types of Errors	Grade 6 th	Grade 7 th	Grade 8 th	Number of Errors
Verb Errors	165	71	37	273
Noun Ending Errors	74	75	34	183
Article Errors	21	10	8	39
Wrong Word Errors	82	81	22	185
Sentence Structure Errors	114	51	33	198
Total	456	288	134	878

Table clarifies that analysis of grammatical errors among students of grade 6th to 8th at FG Secondary Schools Okara, in their English essay writing revealed a discernible tendency in the prevalence of errors in several categories such as, verb errors, noun ending errors, article errors, wrong word errors and sentence structure errors.

Figure 2

Types and distinction of verb errors among students of grade 6th to 8th



The figure gives a clear distinction of verb mistakes in English essay writing by the students of 6th to 8th grades in FG Secondary Schools Okara, Pakistan with regards to subject-verb agreement mistakes and wrong verb forms. Year 6 students who were still learning basic grammar committed the most verb error with 151 subject-verb agreement and 14 verb form errors out of 273 verb errors recorded. In grade 7 the number of verb errors also declined to 62 subject-verb agreement errors and 9 verb form errors, which shows use of simple grammar rules. Students continued to improve through grade 8, making only 20 subject-verb agreement and 17 verb form errors, showing better and more careful control over verb use and more complicated syntactic patterns.

Errors in essay writing differ between male and female students

The discussion presents a thorough investigation about the frequency of grammatical errors between male and female students. This detailed discussion aims to analyze the grammatical errors as well as demonstrate the difference of these errors in English essay writing between male and female students at FG Secondary Schools Okara.

Table 4

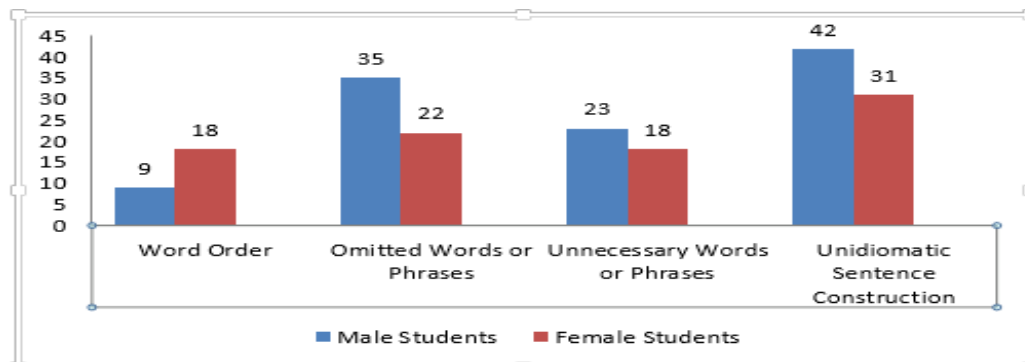
Errors between male and female students in their essay writing

Types of Errors	Male	Female	Number of Errors
Verb Errors	126	147	273
Noun Ending Errors	96	87	183
Article Errors	23	16	39
Wrong Word Errors	92	93	185
Sentence Structure Errors	109	89	198
Total	446	432	878

Table elaborates that by the analysis of grammatical errors; both male and female students commit grammatical errors by comprising of 878 total errors in their English essay writing. By analyzing essay writing of students at FG Secondary Schools Okara, various categories of errors were included such as; verb errors, noun ending errors, article errors, wrong word errors and sentence structure errors. Grammatical errors occur while implementing the rules governing the formation and composition of sentences in a language.

Figure 3

Types and distinction of sentence structure errors between male and female students



The above figure show categorization of sentence structure misuse in the students' English essay writing involving word order errors, omitted optative phrase, inserted, non-id Homo phrased and unidiomatic sentence construction errors. Every type of error has an impact on the context in which it occurs and impairs interactive communication as well as quality of writing. Phrasing errors that interfere with coherence as a result of violating grammatical expectations comprise the fifth type of error observed in these students' work, where female students produced 18 such errors relative to 9 made by the male's students. Omission error, where key words are left out and includes omitted words and phrases also revealed a gender differentiation with male students making 35 errors and female students making 22. More specifically, male students tend to use so called 'empty words' which do not add any meaning to the sentences and make it sense when there are other more simple words to convey the same meaning; 23 errors of this type were noted whereas female students made 18. Finally, there is a significantly higher use of unidiomatic constructions, which means that the constructions used do not conform to Standard English patterns; male students make 42 errors, female students 31. All these errors cumulatively writing directly on the comprehensibility, as well as the structural cohesiveness of the students' written work.

There are internal and external factors which can result in students' mistakes and incorrect information in the essay. Other internal factors include fear of making mistakes due to low confidence in the language, the pressure to deliver good results making students to limit their language use to safe mean simple language. Another internal factor is probably a poor grammatical knowledge leading to conjugation errors, to use of improper verbs, rendering writing morbidly unclear. Other aspects are quite obvious and are connected with the lack of English language use in situations other than learning, for example, restricted vocabulary and poor grammar due to the absence of foreign language practice during the day, and the lack of practice in writing as a major part of the process that hinders students 'development. Another consideration is the impact of the first language as resources affect Student because they have a tendency to transfer features from the first language to English. The main causes are the low quality of sentence construction, weak vocabulary acquisition, low parental participation, overcrowded classes, and overloading teachers' work schedules that offer little time for providing clients with more individual attention. Also, physical development tasks, health

matters, mental stress, and factors in the class also influence writing skills among students. Approach and solve these challenges on a holistic basis and there are higher chances of students' imperfections in their essays to be corrected.

To tackle the problem of the low quality of English essay writing among the students of FG Secondary Schools in Okara, the following solutions have been preferred as informed by the views of experienced teachers of many genders and grades. These solutions cover the most frequent writing mistakes detected in students of the grades 6-8. Some of the key strategies include making sure the students read and comprehend the meaning of the essay question, encouraging them to do idea generation such as brainstorming, make use of essay framework that will help the students in coming up with the best frame work to use in writing the essay. Further amplifying the goals of writing sound paragraph development, the solutions incorporate the elements of the successive development of ideas, proper use of transitions, and parity of sentence structures. Moreover, they pay attention to the choice of the verbs to make them strong and varied, and looking for feedback on what is written. Organization of time is also essential, and good planning so that essays that are due can be done within the required time without decreasing on quality. When all of these strategies are applied, the errors decrease and all together with enhanced clarity and cohesiveness students are produced and better essay writers are produced.

The corrective measures suggested for enhancing the quality of essay writings in termed with students at FG Secondary Schools Okara are directed towards enhancing the quality of writings and avoiding the recurrent mistakes. Teachers avoid wasting time and always stick to the word limit through avoiding unnecessary information and foremost informing the receiver. It explains about the fact that one should take a break in between the revisions to have a clear vision of thoughts in mind. Recommended to encourage the students and offer an accurate pattern of the advancement, and the setting of realistic goals is advised. Teachers also speak against fallacious methods of balancing and pushing for argumentation that has adequate supporting perspectives and strengthening referred arguments while ensuring their logic flow. Illustrating and concluding messages are focused on for making initial and final points, because they are critical for making impressions and reminding readers of main points. In unison, these interventions in conjunction with the practice and feedback that follow are envisaged to cultivate effective and strong writing skills and thus improve academic language profile in students.

Many areas were found out in the course of this study to be the major learning difficulties encountered by the students in FG Secondary Schools Okara with regard to the common linguistic mistakes in English essay writings. These are generalized linguistic faults that student frequently make, which include grammar faults that encompass matters like subject-verb disagreements, tense problems and wrong use of punctuation. Other types of mistakes observed include incorrect formation of sentences, whereby there were cases of too many ideas flowing in one sentence and vice versa, there were segmented ideas crowning different sentences. Another serious problem was improper choice of the words with students using such terms and references which were informal or whimsical to the topic of the academic writing. Other causes of these mistakes included vagueness in the manner of speaking and impreciseness of ideas during presentation. Linguistic errors suppressed the production of coherent and uninterrupted writings that interfere with the communication intention of the students.

The study identified that error patterns common to students in the English essays reduced from Grades 6 to 8 with the kind and extent of errors increasing in sophistication. In grade 6, common mistakes were less specific topic-related but more syntactic and involve

simple failures to follow grammar rules. Regarding the improvement of the semantics, it can be stated that the overall essays' grammar of students seemed to improve when reaching grade 7 and 8, but the general organization of the essays including their coherence, as well as their mastery of more advanced vocabulary was a problem area. Although, the overall amount of the basic grammatical mistakes discovered seems to be substantially smaller, Grade 8 students failed on such aspects as the lack of the unity of the paragraph and general logic in the narrative flow as well as a certain number of the syntactical problems that may be qualified as quite complex. There has been a transition as far as the type of errors committed in grade 6 to those of the grade 8, which showed that as the curriculum complexity increased, there were problems of the cohesiveness of the text indicating that when it comes to writing, there is much more than learning of grammatical rules and how to write correct syntax that needs practice.

As for gender differences, the research has established that masculine and feminine students make different mistakes in their English essays. The author concluded that female students were somewhat more accurate with regard to grammar and punctuation than male students, yet less effective in generating coherent and complex text structure. They also preferred to write more descriptive essays that are sometimes ambiguous and involving unclear language choice. On the other hand the male students had more grammatical mistakes in their writing than the female students including the mistakes in subject-verb agreements, tense agreements and use of simple and complex sentences. Nonetheless, male participants were found to be more organized in terms of documenting their ideas, and more concerned with structuring the arguments and using paragraphs and sub-topics supported by various forms of reasoning to make their points. However, the study reveals that both boys and girls have difficulty with clarity, coherence, and level of expression; a realization that a gender-sensitive approach might be useful in capacity building aimed at enhancing the quality of written expression among learners and students.

From this study, it is evident that the factors that led to wrong use of English in essays among the students of FG Secondary School are low word mastery, incorrect phrasing, and poor grammatical comprehension. There are frequently mistakes in subject-verb agreement, tense choice, and misuse of punctuation, resulting in dealing with vague statements in the pieces created by the students. Besides, to specify, it also impedes reading comprehending and makes students have no proper ways of creating, for example, outlines and brainstorming. Students also are struggling with the ability to build logically coherent arguments and as an effect some students have issues with the coherence of their essays. Moreover, organizational and study related challenges like more instances of haste work resulting from ineffective time management lead to the commission of these errors.

The linguistic error patterns found in FG Secondary School embrace clear differences in different grades. At this grade, the students were observed to make general mistakes, which include syntactic and semantic errors. Such mistakes are caused by restricted lexicon, and new experiences with other syntactic structures in particular on different levels. Tense by tense, error patterns shift from grade six to grade seven, and students start to develop their own perfect complex sentence as they experiment with punctuation rather than focusing on subject-verb agreement.

While these mistakes are still made by the end of grade 8 but there is a higher rate of the concerns with regard to coherence and cohesion particularly with paragraph unity and transition. The overall writing skills of students in grade 8 have improved as shown by their improved writing skills to make the writing more professional but they still lack some basic aspects in writing such as use of strong verbs and other forms of writing. Sex differences in English essay writing in favor of male students are evident, though in moderate intensity at FG

Secondary School. What's more, female students are likely to make fewer mistakes in grammatical or punctuation aspects compared to the male students. They also show considerably appropriate command of the order and cohesiveness of the arguments and ideas depicted in the essays. This is probably because there is more focused concentration and a greater commitment in the writing process. In contrast, mistakes that male students commit are generally more frequent in the area of grammar and/or vocabulary. Sometimes their writing fails to have a clear structure; transitions from idea to idea are not smooth or are not powered by simple logical connections. Although both sexes make of the same principal writing mistakes, female students are more likely to spend considerable time editing their papers and hence make fewer mistakes.

Some of the findings arising from this study of English essay writing errors by students at FG Secondary School in District Okara are informative and corroborate past research studies on ESL writing difficulties. In line with Brown's (2007) study and Liu's (2009) findings, the study established that several syntax errors including subject-verb agreement, tense usage and sentence construction appeared frequently in all the selected ESL students' writing regardless of the grade level. The study also supports the work of Bitchener and Knipe (2008, p 639), and affirmed that students tend to make more cohesion and logical progression errors as their progress through the grades due to the composing of the complicated writing activity. The study also established differences in gender as pointed out Hinkel (2004) and Fitzpatrick (2008) whereby the female student yielded fewer errors in grammar and were better organized compared to male students as this study found out. However, although the research substantiates differential patterns of boy and girl students in writing, it also appears that such differences may not be caused by gender differences in abilities but may rather be resulted from individuality in the practices related to writing. The results of this study partly support the need for grade-level and gender-specific effective instruction as well as writing tuition to attend to the writing difficulties realized. Therefore, this study extends the literature and supports the understanding that language support should be provided within context to improve ESL writing performance.

These results correspond with the theoretical framework considered in this study as SLA and error analysis wherein Corder's (1967) interlanguage theory emphasizes on the progressiveness of language acquisition and the stability of errors that learners impose when they proceed from one stage to another. Here, the definition of common errors including agreement errors, tense usage errors and most importantly the errors relating to sentence construction provide with Selinker's (1972) fossilization theory that errors made by a writer become part of his and her habits regardless of attitudes and new instructions provided. The kind of errors made by the learners in the high and intermediate grades disagreeing with the low grade learners confirms Krashen's (1982) input hypothesis which postulated that a learner needs input material that is only slightly beyond him in terms of complexity. The amount and type of writing work increases in sophistication with the students' grade levels, therefore, putting more pressure on learners' linguistic skills, hence, requiring a more specific intervention program addressing the complexities of errors. In addition, the gender differences in the error occurrence and selection are related to socio-cultural factors of learning in SLA as Vygotsky (1978) pointed to the fact that the learner's contextual behaviors such as gender based learning patterns have an impact on the learning of an L2. Therefore, the results support the presented framework by focusing on the internal and external factors influencing ESL learners' writing outcomes.

Conclusion

This research serves to fill the gap by identifies both the frequency of linguistic errors and the specific difficulties faced by students in grades 6 to 8 of the FG Secondary Schools in Okara, Pakistan while writing English essays. The research shows that there is a high rate in grammatical errors such as verb errors, wrongly constructed sentences, word usage mistakes, etc. all manner of students make these mistakes but students in the 6th grade make more mistakes in this area. The error patterns also show that the students' writing is progressing over the academic year; low error frequency is observed in the grade 8 students which suggest a higher level of grammatical awareness. Moreover, there is a gender difference: male students have made slightly more mistakes than female students; female students are more concerned with accuracy and the rules. The study also focuses on the value of error analysis as a means of developing the teaching strategies in second language. In talking with other teachers, more effective and visually get attraction teaching methods that stimulate critical mind and creativity is essential to develop and use in an effort to solve those grammatical issues. In sum, it showcases the importance of the investigation of these generic mistakes in the ESL setting and the findings of the current study contributes to the ESL contexts for both teachers or more, and students when it comes to writing skills enhancement.

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