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### A STUDY TO ANALYZE SPELLING MISTAKES COMMITTED BY ENGLISH LEARNERS AT HIGHER SECONDARY SCHOOL LEVEL

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#### **ABSTRACT**

The aim of the present study was to analyze spelling mistakes committed by English learners of higher secondary schools in Lahore district. It was descriptive research based on cross sectional survey design in nature. The major purpose of this research was to find out types of committed spelling mistakes and knowing about which types of spelling mistakes are committed by English learners the most at higher secondary school level. In this regards, data was gathered of 280 students who were studying in 12<sup>th</sup> class by applying systematic random sampling technique via collecting their last two administered English Language tests from 8 randomly selected higher secondary schools of Lahore district. Text analysis technique was used for listing and classifying spelling mistakes committed by the second year English learners. To find out demographic variables wise differences in the committing of mistakes, inferential and descriptive statistics was applied to analysis the data with help of SPSS (V.21) software. The result shows that majority of the English learners committed omission, substitution, and transposition spelling mistakes, and the most committing spelling mistakes at higher secondary school level are omission spelling mistakes. Statistically significant locality wise difference was found among English learners in committing spelling mistakes. It was also found that among the English learners, the majority boys of government higher

secondary schools of rural areas and majority girls of the government higher secondary schools of urban areas committed omission errors while majority girls of the government higher secondary schools of rural areas and majority boys of the government higher secondary schools of urban areas, committed transposition/ disordering types of spelling errors. It is recommended that at secondary school level, while teaching English in the classroom, English teaching should share the rules of writing English with students to avoid spelling mistakes. Moreover, education department should also arrange continuous professional development training for language teachers to improve their language skills.

## INTRODUCTION

Since the partition, Pakistan has benefited from a strong standing as a country where English is the language of instruction. Among many other disciplines on the curricula at the national educational institutions, English also has a position as a compulsory subject (Barcroft, 2017). Numerous attempts have been undertaken to give it a highly respectable position and appropriate place in Pakistani society as people deal with issues related to the new contemporary world. (Mansoor, 2003; Rahman, 2006). (Demircan, & Memon, 2017)

English also aids businessmen in expanding their trade and connections with the rest of the globe. Additionally, it is known and admitted that the globe has been ruled by the native speakers of this language. English has been the dominant language used by the English to rule the subcontinent (Kocatepe, 2017; Zuriyani and Ismail, 2019). They arrived on the subcontinent's beach as traders, but over time, after observing the favourable conditions, they dared to establish a solid grasp over its economy. Prior to partition, English as a language begins to take hold in this huge region of Muslims and Hindus on the subcontinent. (Altamimim & Rashid, 2020).

English is a language that helps them to overcome and remove all boundaries and obstacles of geographic and linguistics in our global community where many people are inhibited and speak various languages (Zahida, 2016: 76). Because English makes it easier for people to communicate with one another, they have transcended national and racial biases to become one global citizen. However, English continues to be used as a second and foreign language in other nations. As a result, even after India and Pakistan became independent states, English continues to be widely spoken in Pakistan. (Alsaawi, 2015)

According to Abbas (2012), English as a second language has become a hurdle and a barrier for its learners in their path to success in education in Pakistan. On the one hand, English has been thrust into the centre of our national life and it has become a matter of our survival. The students have encountered challenges and problems in learning English. Its integration into our culture has been fraught with difficulties (Cook, 2009: 90). These difficulties may be encountered in both its teaching and learning processes. Pakistani learners are facing phonological problems which effect spelling (Farrah, and Zaru, 2016: 123). Moreover, the learner of English as second language facing pronunciation problems while its learning which become the cause of spelling errors (Malik, and Kannan, 2016: 765). (Mansoor, & Rahman, 2017)

Analyzing error is an important area of English as foreign language learning. As a native language learner, learners face many morphological, syntactic and structural errors in his first language learning (Nor and Rashid, 2018). Similarly, the same is the case of a second language learner though adult and fully conscious faces the spelling problem and goes through the errors. The common errors include morphological, phonological, syntactic, context errors, problems in conveying meaning and influence of First language (L1) on second Language (L2) learning skill. (Hasnain & Muhammad, 2022)

Spelling is seen as being important for language written down. The possibility for spelling errors in writing might alter and complicate the meaning and comprehension of written content. Therefore, it is crucial to spell words correctly in order to express the content's true meaning. According to Babayit and Stainthorp (2010), grammatical and phonological abilities significantly influence spelling performance in this situation. Thereby can be said that spelling is a crucial component of being a fundamental ability needed by kids. Correct spelling assists 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. (Farrah, & Zahida, 2020)

AlBereik and AlMekhlafi (2015) list a number of challenges at higher secondary school pupils in Pakistan experience when learning English. Even after graduating from high school, entering college, or beginning their careers, students who have not learned effectively continue to make the same spelling mistakes, which might impede their growth and development. Therefore, spelling mistakes can negatively impact pupils in a number of ways. Spelling out words aloud speeds up the process of acquiring their pronunciation, claim Rosenthal and Her in 2010. Therefore, the present research was designed to analyzing spelling mistake committed by English learners at higher secondary school level in Lahore, Punjab. (Ozkayran, & Yilmaz, 2022)

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### ***Concept of Spelling Errors***

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

### ***What is spelling Mistake?***

Each student's response is given a unique grade. Any term that does not entirely or partially match the target word is identified as a misspelling. A word contains errors if it contains any incorrect words or incorrect graphemes

(single vowel, single consonant, vowel, digraphs, consonant digraphs, phonogram, suffix, or prefix). Any additional, deleted, replaced, or inverted graphemes are considered spelling errors. (Jarf, & Mohsin, 2018)

### ***Difference between Grammar Mistake and Spelling Mistake***

A lot of words in the dictionary actually sound the same as each other. Some words are frequently spelt differently than they sound. Spelling errors can also result from silent letters, such as There, Their, and They're. A spelling error occurs when a word is spelt correctly but is used wrongly, such as in the statement "there are two boys in the class," where "there" is used in place of "their." Thus, it is known as a spelling error.

When a person spells a word incorrectly and uses a different one despite intending to use a particular term, or parts of a text that do not follow standard grammar rules is called grammar mistake, e.g., 'I goes to school', in this sentence, there is grammatical mistake which is 'goes', here should be 'go' because no proper rules are being followed in this sentence. (Erlam, & Loewen, 2018)

### ***Types of Misspellings***

The candidates' misspellings have been categorised into general mistake types that are connected. By gathering together comparable mistake patterns, categories were created. In keeping with the original Aspects of Writing research the collective term for the collection of papers published by Cambridge Assessment and its forerunner, UCLES the "types" of mistake were kept as straightforward as feasible. The following categories were created as a result:

- Rules based error: Text-speech, singling or doubling.
- Sound-based error: morpheme error, homophones, e for y, incorrect consonant, vowel sound error.
- Omission: commission and transposition: transposed or omitted, single or paired letters added,
- Writing error: end of word missing, word spacing.
- Multiple errors: Where a typo might be classified under more than one category (for example, across, which is both a doubling error and the addition of a new letter), the most glaring/clearest error type was chosen, in this case, doubling). (Elliott, 2020)

### ***Statement of the Problem***

It has been seen since the last three decades that majority of the students at intermediate level fail in English subject or performed poorly in the examination of board of intermediate and secondary education (BISE) in Lahore, Punjab. There are lots of reasons of their failure in English, one of them is spelling mistake. The reason behind the poor performance, found that students make spelling mistake because at any levels of academic education, student is to be able to communicate with teachers, to represent their learning or learning thought via written form. Due to lots of reasons, they make

spelling mistake while writing. The potential mistakes in written spellings reduce their marks because the wrong spelling make the wrong sense which change the meaning and understanding of written answers which make it unclear. To study that which types of students committed spelling errors, the researcher selected the topic as ‘A Study to Analyze Spelling Mistake Committed By English Learners at Higher Secondary School Level in Lahore’. Objectives of the Study

1. To detect spelling mistakes committed by English learners at higher secondary school level;
2. To find out types of committed spelling mistakes by English learners at higher secondary school level;

Research Questions

1. Which type of spelling mistakes are the most committed by English learners at higher secondary school level?
2. Is there any demographic variable (gender and locality) wise difference in the committing of spelling mistakes by English learners at higher secondary school level?

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

It was descriptive research based on cross-sectional survey design in nature. At the time when researcher conducted present research, according to School Information System (SIS), there were 32 higher secondary school in Lahore district. Among them, 18 were boys and 14 were Girls higher secondary school. There were 17563 students who were enrolled in these schools. Among them 10,000 were boys and 7563 were girls students who were enrolled in these higher secondary schools in the academic year of 2020-22. So, for present study population comprised all (32) higher secondary schools which were situated in Lahore city and all (17563) students who were enrolled in these secondary schools in the academic year of 2020-23. Data were gathered of 280 students who were studying 2<sup>nd</sup> year (12<sup>th</sup> Class) by applying systematic random sampling technique via collecting their last two administered English Language tests from 8 randomly selected higher secondary schools from Lahore district. Therefore, the researcher collected answer sheets of the 280 students’ of the last two administered English test by their teachers of the selected higher secondary schools by applying systematic random sampling technique. Text analysis technique was used for listing and classifying spelling mistakes committed by the second year English learners. In this procedure, text analysis was done to analyze the data for the recognition of spelling mistake and than description of mistakes which students make in administered test. The detected spelling mistakes were classified into relevant groups e.g. substitution, omission, and transposition/disordering mistakes. Codes were assigned to the detected types of spelling mistake to find out demographic variables wise differences in the committing of mistakes. So, codes were entered into computer for analysis. Inferential and descriptive analysis was done with help of SPSS (V.21) software. The results are shown in the following tables:

## RESULTS AND FINDINGS

After the collection of answers sheets of the 12<sup>th</sup> class students which their English teachers were checked. These checked answer sheets were analyzed and circled the wrong items. The detected spelling mistakes with their classification from the answer sheets are shown in the following table:

**Table 1:** Analysis of the variance (ANOVA) for the analysis to find locality wise gender difference in committing spelling errors:

	SS	df	MS	F	Sig.
Between Groups	3.391	3	1.130	11.564	.019
Within Groups	199.434	276	.723		
Total	202.825	279			

Above table 1 bring out that computed F is > than table (5.56) at 3(279) *fd*, and computed sig < than P=.05. Therefore, significant locality wise gender difference in the types of committed spelling mistakes was found. To know gender of the which locality commit which types of spelling errors, chi-square test was applied in.

**Table 2.1:** Chi-square analysis for the analysis to find out locality wise gender differences in the frequency and percentage of students committed Mistakes

Locality wise Gender	Count	Types of Mistakes			Total
		Omission	Substitution	Transposition/Dis ordering	
Rural Boys	Count	<b>25</b>	18	22	65
	% within Gender	<b>38.5%</b>	27.7%	33.8%	100.0%
Rural Girls	Count	16	11	<b>18</b>	45
	% within Gender	35.6%	24.4%	<b>40.0%</b>	100.0%
Urban Boys	Count	23	24	<b>33</b>	80
	% within Gender	28.8%	30.0%	<b>41.3%</b>	100.0%
Urban Girls	Count	<b>40</b>	24	26	90
	% within Gender	<b>44.4%</b>	26.7%	28.9%	100.0%
Total	Count	104	77	99	280
	% within Gender	37.1%	27.5%	35.4%	100.0%

Chi-square=15.143, df=3, sig=.052

Above table 2.1 bring out that the computed chi-square is > than table (7.815) at 3 *df* and computed sig is < than P=.05. Therefore, significant locality wise

gender difference in the types of committed spelling mistakes was found. The majority boys of government higher secondary schools of rural areas and majority girls of the government higher secondary schools of urban areas committed omission errors while majority girls of the government higher secondary schools of rural areas and majority boys of the government higher secondary schools of urban areas, committed transposition/disordering types of spelling errors. Minority of the gender students of all areas committed substitution errors. It is concluded that majority students of the higher secondary schools committed omission and transposition/ disordering types of spelling mistakes.

**Table 3:** Descriptive analysis to find out types of mistake wise frequency and percentage

Types of Committed Mistakes	<i>f</i>	%
Omission Mistakes	105	37.5
Substitution Mistakes	77	27.5
Transposition/Disordering Mistakes	98	35.0
Total	280	100.0

Above table bring out that 37.5%(105) of the students committed omission type of spelling mistake, 27.5%(77) committed substitution, and 35.0%(98) of the students committed transposition/disordering spelling mistakes. It is concluded that majority of the students of government higher secondary schools committed omission type of spelling mistakes.

**Table 4:** Descriptive analysis for the analysis to find frequency and percentage of the detected spelling mistakes; n=280

Sr.#	Spelling Mistakes	<i>f</i> (out of 280)	%
01	Students: Wrote 'travil' for 'travel'	84	30.0%
02	Wrote 'Well' for 'Will'	110	39.2%
03	Wrote 'Hestory' for 'history'	92	32.9%
04	Wrote 'Vant' for 'Want'	115	41.0%
05	Wrote 'bitter' for 'better'	104	37.3%
06	Wrote 'Gourney' for 'Journey'	102	36.4%
07	Wrote 'Purce' for 'Purse'	106	38.0%
08	Wrote 'Skool' for 'School'	112	40.0%
09	Wrote 'garl', for 'girl'	94	33.7%
10	Wrote 'bear' for 'beer'	104	37.0%
11	Wrote 'garaj' for 'garage'	85	30.5%
12	Wrote 'Vovel' for 'Vowel'	101	36.0%

13	Wrote 'mestrust' for 'mistrust'	98	35.1%
14	Wrote 'distroy' for 'destroy'	112	40.0%
15	Wrote 'contry' for 'country'	98	35.0%
16	Wrote 'becase' for 'because'	152	54.2%
17	Wrote 'nife' for 'Knife'	154	55.1%
18	Wrote 'pam' for 'palm'	120	43.0%
19	Wrote 'recomend' for 'recommend'	139	49.7%
20	Wrote 'sucess' for 'success'	109	39.0%
21	Wrote 'rest' for 'wrist'	140	50.0%
22	Wrote 'comit' for 'commit'	129	45.9%
23	Wrote 'be' for 'bee'	107	38.2%
24	Wrote 'complet' for 'complete'	151	54.0%
25	Wrote 'nek' for 'neck'	123	43.8%
26	Wrote 'hart' for 'heart'	146	52.0%
27	Wrote 'fingr' for 'finger'	138	49.2%
28	Wrote 'fur' for 'four'	154	55.0%
29	Wrote 'Weid' for 'wide'	70	25.0%
30	Wrote 'freind' for 'friend'	92	33.0%
31	Wrote 'Poeple' for 'people'	82	29.4%
32	Wrote 'ronud' for 'round'	93	33.1%
33	Wrote 'duoble' for 'double'	72	25.6%
34	Wrote 'nuetral' for 'neutral'	78	28.0%
35	Wrote 'fuor' for 'four'	37	12.0%
36	Wrote 'Fluor' for 'Flour'	58	20.8%
37	Wrote 'knwo' for 'know'	68	24.3%
38	Wrote 'trian' for 'train'	85	30.4%
39	Wrote 'tiolet' for 'toilet'	48	17.0%
40	Wrote 'flaeg' for 'flage'	83	29.5%
41	Wrote 'dialy' for 'daily'	26	9.2%
42	Wrote 'nihgt' for 'night'	76	27.1%
43	Wrote 'rian' for 'rain'	112	40.0%

From the collected last three English tests of the students, the researcher find out spelling mistakes, from the detected spelling mistakes while committing



substitution type of error, 30%(84) of the students wrote 'travel' as 'travil' and substitute 'e' into 'i' on their answer sheet, 39.2%(110) wrote 'Will' as 'Well' and they repeated the same mistake. 32.9%(92) wrote 'history' as 'Hestory' and replaced 'i' into 'e', 41.0%(115) wrote 'Want' as 'Vant' and replaced 'w' into 'v'. 37.3%(104) wrote 'better' as 'bitter' and replaced 'i' into 'e'. 36.4%(102) wrote 'Journey' as 'gourney', and they substituted 'g' instead of 'j'. 38.0%(106) wrote 'Purse' as 'Purce' and they replaced 's' into 'c'. 40.0%(112) wrote 'School' as 'Skool' and replaced 'ch' into 'k'. 33.7%(94) wrote 'girl' as 'garl', and replaced 'i' into 'a'. 37.0%(104) wrote 'beer' as 'bear' and replaced 'e' into 'a'. 30.5%(85) wrote 'garage' as 'garaj' and replaced 'ge' into 'j'. 36.0%(101) wrote 'Vowel' as 'Vovel' and replaced 'w' into 'v'. 35.1%(98) wrote 'mistrust' as 'mestrust' replaced 'i' into 'e'. 40.0%(112) wrote 'destroy' as 'distroy' replaced 'e' into 'i'.

While committing omission type of mistake, 35.0%(98) of the students wrote 'country' as 'contry' and omitted 'u' in this word. 54.2%(152) wrote 'because' as 'becase' and omitted 'u', 55.1%(154) wrote 'Knife' as 'nife' and omitted silent letter 'k', 43.0%(120) wrote 'palm' as 'pam' and omitted the silent letter 'l', 49.7%(139) wrote 'recommend' as 'recomend' and omitted consonant 'm', 39.0%(109) wrote 'success' as 'sucess' and omitted consonant 'c', 50.0%(140) wrote 'wrist' as 'rest' and omitted consonant 'w', 45.9%(129) wrote 'commit' as 'comit' and omitted consonant 'm', 38.2%(107) wrote 'bee' as 'be' 54.0%(151) wrote 'complete' as 'complet' and omitted 'e', 43.8%(123) wrote 'neck' as 'nek' and omitted silent consonant 'c', 52.0%(146) wrote 'heart' as 'hart' and omitted sound vowel 'e', 49.2%(138) wrote 'finger' as 'fingr' and omitted vowel 'e', 55.0%(154) wrote 'four' as 'fur' and omitted vowel 'o',

While committing transposition/disordering type of mistake, 25.0%(70) of the students disordered 'i' and 'e' while writing the word 'wide', 33.0%(92) disordered 'friend' as 'freind', 29.4%(82) disordered 'o' and 'e' from the word 'people' while writing the word 'poeple', 33.1%(43) of the students disordered 'o' and 'u' for writing 'round' as 'ronud', 25.6%(72) disordered the word 'double' as 'duoble' during writing, 28.0%(78) disordered the words 'neutral' as 'nuetral', 12.0%(37) transposed the word 'four' as 'fuor', 20.8%(58) of the students transposed the word 'Flour' as 'Fluor', disordered 'o' and 'u' while writing 'flour', 24.3%(68) wrote 'know' as 'knwo' and disordered 'w' and 'o', 30.4%(85) disordered the word 'train' as 'trian', 17.0%(48) disordered the word 'toilet' as 'tiolet', 29.5%(83) transposed the word 'flage' as 'flaeg', 9.2%(26) of the students wrote 'daily' as 'dialy' while committing transposition error, 27.1%(76) disordered the 'night' as 'nihgt', and 44.0%(112) of the students committed transposition mistake by writing the word 'rain' as 'rian'.

## CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

The aim of the present research was analysis of spelling mistakes committed by English learners at higher secondary school level. The major objective was find out types of committed spelling mistakes by 12<sup>th</sup> class English learners. Therefore, data were collected and analyzed. So, it is concluded that English learners of 12<sup>th</sup> class committing substitution, omission, and

transposition/disordering spelling mistakes. Ahmad, (2018) found that English learners at under graduation level committed insertion, omission, transposition, and substitution errors. The present research also revealed that male and female English learners at higher secondary schools level of different locality committed spelling mistakes differently. Majority boys of government higher secondary schools of rural areas and majority girls of the government higher secondary schools of urban areas committed omission errors while majority girls of the government higher secondary schools of rural areas and majority boys of the government higher secondary schools of urban areas, committed transposition/ disordering types of spelling errors. Khider, (2021) found that gender wise no significant deference was found because according to him male and female students committed same types of spelling mistakes. They committed transposition, omission, insertion spelling mistakes. It was found in the present research that 37.5%(105) of the students committed omission type of spelling mistake, 27.5%(77) committed substitution, and 35.0%(98) of the students committed transposition/disordering spelling mistakes but the most occurring types of spelling mistake is omission because majority of the students of government higher secondary schools committed omission type of spelling mistakes. Faiha, (2022) stated that the most committing type of spelling mistake is 'insertion error' because majority students of secondary schools level committing most frequently this type of error.

So for as the concern is how English learner make omission error while writing, the present research found that majority of the English learners, omitted silent letter of the words e.g., they write 'Knife' as 'nife' and omitted silent letter 'k', they write 'palm' as 'pam' and omitted the silent letter 'l'. Moreover, they omit the one consonant where there are double consonants are required to write correct spelling of the word as students wrote 'comit' for 'commit' as and omitted consonant 'm', they wrote 'be' for 'bee'. while committing this type of error, learners sound related mistake e.g., students wrote 'contry' for 'country' as and omitted 'u' in this word. They wrote 'becase' for 'because' and omitted 'u' in this word. Dahal, (2019) found his research that while committing this type of error, students of class 11 write many words by omitting the necessary letter(s). He found in his research that students wrote 'cast' for 'caste', they wrote 'languge' for 'language'. In both words, they omitted the necessary letter(s) 'e' from the first word and 'a' from the second word.

The present research found that while committing substitution type of error, English learners of class 12<sup>th</sup> write many words by replacing necessary letters as majority of the learners wrote 'travil' for 'travel', 'Hestory' for 'history', 'Gourney' for 'Journey' etc. In the above three words learners wrote substitute the letter 'i' while the correct one is 'e' for first word, they used substitute the letter 'e' while the correct one is 'i' for second word, and the letter 'j' is correct letter for the third word. Kamal, (2022) found in his research that students of higher secondary classes write many words by writing the substitute of the necessary letter(s) as they wrote 'temple' as 'tample', they replaced letter 'e' with 'a' in this word.

The present research found that English learners also commit transposition type of spelling errors. While committing transposition type of error, English learners of class 12<sup>th</sup> write many words by in jumble form. Majorit of the learners wrote ‘friend’ as ‘freind’ and they disordered ‘i’ and ‘e’ while writing. Moreover, they disordered the words ‘neutral’ as ‘nuetral’ by disodering ‘u’ and ‘e’. The same was found by Bahadur, (2021) in his research. He found that students of English as second language learners, while committing this type of spelling error, they disordered some letter of the word. He found that the students wrote ‘colleague’ as ‘collaegue’. While writing this word students of class 10<sup>th</sup> disordered ‘a’ and ‘e’. Therefore, on the basis of research finding, it is recommended that at secondary school level, while teaching English in the classroom, English teachers should share the rules of writing English with students to avoid spelling mistakes. Moreover, education department should also arrange continuous professional development trainings for language teachers to improve their language skills.

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