
An Investigation of the Orthographic Errors in the Graded Discussion Board of Virtual University of Pakistan

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Abstract

The study explored the types of orthographic errors and their probable causes in the students' postings on the Graded Discussion Board (GDB) of Virtual University of Pakistan (VUP). The purpose of the GDB is to invite comments from students on a given topic; students place their comments within a given time limit and get graded accordingly. Misspelling is a natural and common phenomenon among the second language (L2) learners. However, due to the availability of spell check software options, misspellings should get minimized in online discussions. For the present study, the spelling mistakes committed by the graduate students of English Comprehension (ENG101) course were analyzed. The findings demonstrated many types of spelling mistakes including inconsistent rules, ambiguous words, vowel substitutions, consonant substitutions, space inaccuracy, inflectional endings, double consonants, consonant omissions, vowel omissions, tense mistakes and letter reversals. Some of the causes explored were quick and direct typing on the interface, keyboard adjacency and not using the spell check software. The results revealed that major spelling mistakes were due to the lack of inappropriate guidance, insufficient practice and lack of adequate awareness about inflectional morphology. Some recommendations to improve spelling mistakes either on students end or through teaching techniques have been suggested at the end.

Key words:

Orthographic, Errors, Misspelling, Graded Discussion Board, Inflectional morphology.

Introduction

Language learning is a delicate process of trial and errors. When a person begins learning a new language, s/he is prone to making errors while using the target language. Therefore, it is quite natural that most of the second language (L2) learners commit spelling errors when they put the language to use. Therefore, spelling errors can be seen as an integral part of the language learning process. As far as English language is concerned, the written form of spellings becomes a delicate matter as the pronunciation of many words is different from the written spellings. Spelling is important as one misspelling may change the sense which the author envisioned to express through the written text. Therefore, spelling is one of the several English writing complications that L2 learners encounter. It is also observed that amongst all the writing mistakes produced by Pakistani learners, misspelling is the most common mistake. Although, the spelling is vital for L2 learners to write with correctness, very limited research is available on this matter in Pakistani context. Undeniably, understanding the reasons of spelling inaccuracy can lead to improvement in Pakistani learners' spelling expertise.

The purpose of this study is to provide help regarding spelling mistakes to Pakistani online students in general and the students of Virtual University of Pakistan (VUP) in particular. The common grammatical and spelling problems have been focused to improve writing expressions of the L2 learners. For this purpose, students' short essays on Graded Discussion Board (GDB) from English Comprehension (ENG101) course of Virtual University of Pakistan were studied to identify and evaluate most commonly occurring spelling errors. Strategies for the virtual teachers as well as the students will be suggested to correct these errors to improve students' written expressions in the virtual mode of education.

Literature Review

The theoretical background of the study focuses on error analysis of the spelling committed by the second language learners. Researchers such as Fries (1945) and Lado (1957) argued that by investigating contrasts between native and target language, the problematic areas might be recognized. Corder (1967) detected that learners' errors are a window into the learner's linguistic competence and performance. Systematically analyzing errors produced by language learners makes it possible to determine areas that need reinforcement in teaching (Corder, 1974). Gass & Selinker (1994) identify six steps to be followed in conducting an error analysis: collecting data, identifying errors, classifying errors, quantifying errors, analyzing sources of errors, and remediation for errors.

For a long time, there was no principal approach on language teaching focusing on error analysis. In 1970s and 80s error analysis flourished to investigate L2 language acquisition. A number of error taxonomies were proposed later on, in relation to second language learning literature. Errors

provide significant evidence to teachers to give proper feedback to their students about corrections to be made. Spelling errors are a pervasive and belligerent feature of L2 learners' written practices. Spelling inaccuracy is universal because in spite of training and drilling in elementary schools, colleges and universities, spelling inaccuracies still seem in abundance in the writings made by the students. Spelling errors are belligerent hence, stimulating, so they disclose the evidence about the language learning development.

Corder (1967), a British linguist, redeployed his consideration on errors from the perspective of language processing and language acquisition. In his paper *'The Significance of Learners Errors'* (1967), he asserts that errors are not only inevitable but also very significant as without them improvement cannot be possible. Therefore, errors can be termed as developmental errors. He finds errors significant as they provide evidence of how language is learned and what strategies or procedures the learner employs in the discovery of the language (Corder, 1967). Corder considers language learning as some sort of cognitive data processing and hypothesis-forming activity (Corder, 1974). He suggests three steps of error analysis including data collection, description, and explanation while Ellis (1997) proposes a more detailed model of error analysis including selection of corpus of language, identification, classification and explanation of errors.

According to Selinker (1972), spelling errors reveal much about a learner's interlanguage. While interlanguage denotes the category of language formed by students, however, it also depicts the state of aptitude acquired in a second language at a specified time. Similarly, Dulay, Burt and Krashen (1982) recognize spelling errors as the defective side of learner's writing or speech, i.e. those parts of the composition or conversation that diverge from the selected norm of mature language practices.

Susan (2011) declares English spelling as a consistent inconsistency which means that the structure of English spelling is really intricate because sounds can be pronounced and spelt in numerous ways, letters can epitomize many sounds, and several spelling rules have diverse exceptions.

Cook (1999) examines spelling inaccuracies in the written form of the learners of English and categorizes them into four main types of errors: insertion/addition (including extra letters), transposition (reversing the position of letters), substitution (replacing letters with incorrect ones) and omission (leaving letters out).

Moats (1996) investigated the spelling mistakes in a free writing sample of adult learners with obstinate reading and spelling complications. The poor spellers produced equivalently more morphological and phonological errors. Therefore, on the basis of this outcome, Moats (1996)

determined that poor spellers might ultimately learn to spell but their spellings stay marked by tenacious phonological errors.

James (1998) presented spelling errors within the framework of error analysis distinguishing between misspellings and mechanical errors in writing. However, James classifies both mechanical inaccuracies and misspellings as substance errors as they are concerned with the medium employed by the language users. He further argues that mechanical errors and misspellings are caused when a learner produces an encoding mistake through writing. So, James classifies four types of mechanical errors i.e. confusable errors, typographical errors, dyslexic errors and punctuation errors.

Punctuation errors absorb all commonly recognized errors in employing spacing in written texts punctuation marks. They consist of overuse and under-use of punctuation marks, for instance 'a boys club' or 'tomato's'; splits "such as 'to gether' or 'an other'; and fusions, for instance, 'takeaway' or cashpoint" (Carney, 1994). However, typographical errors are mainly due to mis-keyings made by typists and fluctuate from other spelling mistakes in that they are visible only in typed text or printed form. These 'typos' are sourced not by linguistic memory slips or ignorance, but rather by mechanical incompetence in operating a machine at speed. Therefore, James (1998) argues that majority of these errors are due to "a typist striking a key that is adjacent to the correct one on a QWERTY keyboard, e.g. 'tge' instead of 'the', and also include such common proofreader's banes as reversals ('adn' for 'and'), omissions ('lenth' for 'length') and anticipations ('extexted' instead of 'extended')". There are a lot of words which create confusion between word pairs mainly because of having similar-sounding phoneme or morpheme, such as 'divorce/devoice', 'discrete/discreet' 'course/coarse'. Carney (1994) considers the confusable errors as 'phonetic near-misses'.

Gerber (2009) describes that spelling problems are predominantly pertinent for learners as poor writing skills not only have propositions for functioning in day-to-day tasks but may also influence the marks they obtain on written reports, which frequently form the basis of students' performance assessments (Whitehurst & Lonigan, 1998).

Research Questions

The paper explores the frequency of different types of spelling errors made by the graduate students of Virtual University of Pakistan (VUP) and the basic reasons of spelling inaccuracies found in GDB comments. Following research questions would be investigated:

1. What is the ratio of orthographic mistakes in VU GDB?
2. What types of spelling errors were made by the graduate students of Virtual University?
3. What are the causes of misspelling?

Research Methodology

Graded Discussion Board (GDB) is used to grade short essays received from students based on a discussion oriented topic. Primary data of ninety samples out of 1000 posts in English Comprehension (ENG101) course in the semester Fall 2014 were selected for the analysis of spelling mistakes. Simple random sampling technique was used to select 90 samples.

GDB posts were reviewed carefully and spelling errors were highlighted through the use of tables, charts and bar graphs. Frequency of errors was calculated, the percentages were drawn in the form of tables and bar graphs showing high frequency and percentage of students committing different spelling errors. Furthermore, the total number of students committing each spelling error were also drawn with the help of total population and represented through a table. On the other side, table and bar graph were also drawn for the students committing a number of errors. The mean was calculated to evaluate the data. The mean of the data was also calculated through using SPSS 20 version, *t* test was applied to the data and the result was compared with the other mean. It was found that the average result was significant and there was difference among the variables.

Findings

Given below is each GDB post with the spelling mistakes pointed out:

Student's Message:

our preception will chang in the process at recognition or knowldge or ever more unfolding conciousness.Age may help us more critically capture or select the experience of age may make us to sort for more naturally adopt the style of the proverbial astute good old fox for hopful longer and better survive.Unless we are ther robots or slaves of some particular make us feel more mature and to more critically evalute watever there is and is promised in what we are perceiving our per cieving may be encompassing more the attitude of building up, or more ardently adding up to something more beautifull but also more logical for a future.

Excellent (100%)
 Very Good (75%)
 Good (50%)
 Satisfactory (25%)
 Poor (0%)

[Re-Mark](#)

Figure 1: GDB 1

Vowel Substation Errors:

pereception, chang, recognition, knowldge, ther, hopfull, evalute, watever, per cieving, buillding, somthing, beautifull, perceieving

Student's Message:

'share an experience that change your preception of the worlb arround'
 In my point of view experiance change our life beacuse we learnt from experiance.
 when i was young my thought about world of people that every person does cheat each other
 but its my own preception about world i saw wrld in my own eyes and in my own experiance i saw peoples are fight each other so i was understod all people are same
 but now i understand that every person are not same some people are good and some are bad.actually we are robots some particular habbits thats why we are misunderstand things.
 but cur preception the world dose change while living experiance and our survival.
 I think cur age is more helpful for understand 'what is bad' and 'what is good.our expriance could help us for living life our experiance will change in the process of reconization or knowledge.cur experiance make more understand meatureness.

Excellent (100%)
 Very Good (75%)
 Good (50%)
 Satisfactory (25%)
 Poor (0%)

[Re-Mark](#)

Figure 2: GDB 2

Inaccurate Double Consonants Errors

preception, worlb, arround, experiance, beacuse, understod, acctually, robbots, habbits, thats, reconization, meatureness

Student's Message:

As I was to take admission at Virtual University I decided to choose B.S Psychology as my bachelors course, It's not been very long since Im studying this particular subject in my course but it still helped me to understand people more accurately around me, I can figure out what person's state of mind is, what he/she is wishing for or what he/she is feeling like, it isn't only concernd with abnormal behaviour but also with ncrmal behavior that people mostly act on in normal life routine and thus is easy to observe. This course is helping me socially (by better understandind and better blending in social gatherings) as well as mentaly, by motivating me that I can control my negative behavior and offer positive character to the world.

Excellent (100%) Vary Good (75%) Good (50%) Satisfactory (25%) Poor (0%)

[Re-Mark](#)

Figure 3: GDB 3

Keyboard adjacency errors

Concernd, understandind

Student's Message:

I want the share an experiance that changed my perception of the world around. Two years back , one day i went to a river for having a bath with my friends. we took some fruit with us. i was not familiar with the fun of diving. i was trying to dive but suddenly i gone into the deep river. that was too deep that i felt that it was my last moment of this life . My mind was viewing my whole life in few seconds. My good and bad ceeds were in front of mine. I recited Kalma . But Allaha saved me. it was a new life for me. Then i thought that this life is too short. Every person should be reacy everytime for the end of this life. This experiance changed my prcpeption of the world around

Excellent (100%) Vary Good (75%) Good (50%) Satisfactory (25%) Poor (0%)

[Re-Mark](#)

Figure 4: GDB 4

Space Inaccuracy Errors

everytime, experiance

Student's Message:

When i was visited first time in my village,i feel very adorable in my life.Everywhere when i saw a beautifull and huge mountains,jakes and greenland i found, Everyone ,whoever you known or not gived respect and i feel the villagers are very respectfull,honest and helpfull.I don't want to come back in my city because i am very impressed the environment of village life fresh water,fresh fruits,vegetables etc.In the village life i feel the very comfortable in my life and when i am compared the citizen life to village the vilage life is much better to the city.

Excellent (100%) Vary Good (75%) Good (50%) Satisfactory (25%) Poor (0%)

[Re-Mark](#)

Figure 5: GDB 5

Space Problem Errors

Beautifull village,i life.Everywhere greenland ,respectfull honest, helpfull.I water,fresh fruits,vegetables etc.In

Student's Message:

an experiance of my life was teach many good achievement that life is not permanantly and it is a short term of our life and the real life is "akhrat".a man was proud of his wealth,power and his oppurtunity.when a man is ded he was went from this world and he reached a new world where we are go in any condition.my grandfather ,my uncle and many of my relatives are went from this world.but when my uncle was went from this world i was shoked and my life is comletly disturb .i lost my uncle but my life is comletly disturb and this incident is change my life and my life is so bored

Excellant (100%)
 Vary Good (75%)
 Good (50%)
 Satisfactory (25%)
 Poor (0%)

Re-Mark

Figure 6: GDB 6**Vowel Omission Errors**

experiance, permanently, wealth,power, oppurtunity.when, condition.my, shoked, comletly

Student's Message:

The computer techrology. Computers have made it easier for us to access a wealth of irformation. They have also made it easier and cheaper to advertise our business anywhere we wish and do business with anyone anywhere in the world. it has minimized the number of problems. And make our life much easier. On the downside however, computers have also made it easier for sexual predators to find victims, for crimirals to steal our hard-earned money, and to even steal our identity, something nearly unheard of just a few decades ago. Also, children are more likely to sit in front of a computer and chat when they could just as easily speak with their friends on a telephone or go outside and play like children used to before the "computer revolution". The computer is the most commant thing now a days. And it has become an isantial part of our daily life.we can do many tasks at a same time witch is tme saving for us. As with any new technology, there are good and bad points, but in the end the general public through their actions will determine whether or not computers have actually improved our lives. and with the invention of computer and web service the world had become a globe villege.

Excellant (100%)
 Vary Good (75%)
 Good (50%)
 Satisfactory (25%)
 Poor (0%)

Re-Mark

Figure 7: GDB 7**Vowel Omission Errors**

Isantial, life.we, globe, villege

Student's Message:

When i came to practical field, i thought that if i am sincere to anyone, then he or she will also be sincere to me. This perception went horribly wrong. I lost confidence from all of my collegues. It imposed very bad effects on my thinking.

I had a private job of lecturer.It was near to my house. My job was running smoothy. I had no real problems. one day my very close collegue told me that a post is vacant in another college which is out of city but they are giving great benefits. Accomodation was free. Also the transport is available and free of cost. Payment will be great and much more.

I believed him and applied for that post. All of benefits were true. I selected and joined that college. After a couple of weeks, the problems started. Their environment of teaching was very bad. Also they were black listed. And if any teacher does not cooperate on their terms, they will torture him physically and mentally. Very bad news was that the collegue which told me about that college had all the information as he had service in that particular college. He just wanted to resign from that post so that he can join his brother on that post. so, always be alert from all of your collegues.

Excellent (100%)
 Very Good (75%)
 Good (50%)
 Satisfactory (25%)
 Poor (0%)

Re-Mark

Figure 8: GDB 8**Vowel Omission & Space Problem Errors**

thought, collegues, lecturer.It, Acomodation

Student's Message:

In ancient time life was not much easy as compare to this modern world.Modern science has changed the life of a common man forinstance,computers have totally changed the way of living.
Specially internet ,we can get any information about any person place or thing through it.We can easily access any information through internet.Forexample;if we want to get infomation about Oxford University we can get it through internet easily no matter we are living at the othar end or not.
Nowadays every peson is using internet at homes,schools,offices,hospitals etc.We can also contact with one another through internet, it is very helpful fo us in many ways and it has changed my thoughts as i also use internet .

Excellent (100%) Very Good (75%) Good (50%) Satisfactory (25%) Poor (0%)

Re-Mark

Figure 9: GDB 9

Space Problem Errors

world.Modern, forinstance,computers, ththrough it.We, internet.Forexample;if, information peson, homes,schools,offices,hospitals etc.We,fo

Student's Message:

An incident happend in my life which changed my perspective of saeing this world...i had a thought in my mind...that all the rich people in the world are not knnd hearted...last month i went on my vacation to my city...i was going to see my primary school on the way i came acroos my favorite restaurant...i decided to do my lunch there...i went inside...and ordered my lunch...but then i saw a table surrounced by 6-7 kids who seem to be poor...they looked very happy...and were giving order individually to the waiter...i called the same waiter and asked what was going on...he told me these are orphans brought from a small orphanage...the manager of this restaurant lets every week 6-7 orphans to have a lunch of their choice...i was let into tears but seening the smile or the faces of the kids... That was the pint i realized all of the rich people are not harsh...Some good people still exist in this world.

Excellent (100%) Very Good (75%) Good (50%) Satisfactory (25%) Poor (0%)

Re Mark

Figure 10: GDB 10

Inflectional Endings Error

happened, acroos,,Seining, having

The statistical results show that the spelling errors vary at different scales. Some spelling errors have the same result i.e. typing quickly, keyboard adjacency, consonant substitutions, vowel substitutions, double consonants, inflectional endings, vowel omission, consonant omission and letter reversals. On the other hand, some spelling errors did not have the same results and were considered highly significant i.e. inconsistent rules, ambiguous words, space inaccuracy and tense mistakes

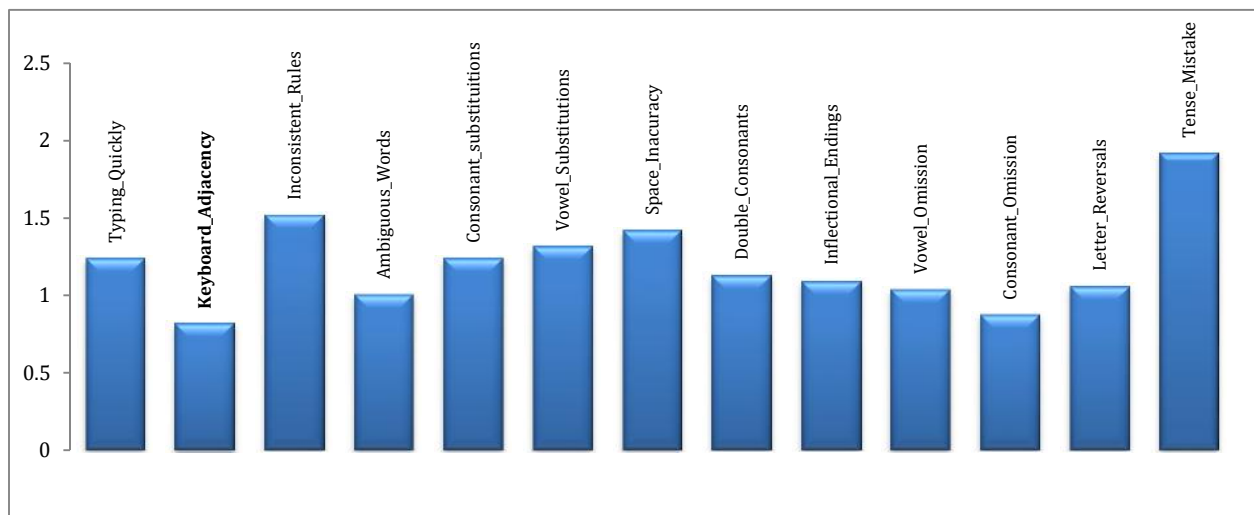


Figure 11: Average Response of Spelling Errors

Table 1:
Summary of Types of Errors and Corrections

Sr.	Types	Misspell	Correction
1	Consonant substitutions	watever, reconization,	Whatever, Recognition
2	Vowel substitutions	Preception, knowldge, ther, permanently, villege	Perception, Knowledge, There, Permanently, Village
3	Space inaccuracy	water,fresh fruits, etc. In life.Everywhere, ,honest everytime village, I .world.Modern forinstance,computers it.We internet.Forexample;if wealth,power .when condition.my life.we lecturer.It per cieving	
4	Inaccurate double consonants	Beautifull, hopfull, building, habbits, acctually, acroos, respectfull, helpfull	Beautiful, Hopeful, Building, Habits, Actually, Across, Respectful, Helpful,
5	Inflectional endings	seeing, haveing	Seen, having
6	Letter reversals	Perception, percieving	Perception, Perceiving
7	Vowel omission	chang, knowldge, hopfull, something, experience,completely,collegues, understod	Change, Knowledge, Hopeful, Something, Experience, Completely, Colleagues, Understood
8	Consonant omission	becaus, Acomodation, infomation, peson, concered	Because, Accommodation, Information, Person, Concerned
9	Tense Mistake	thoght, happend, shoked	Thought, Happened, Shocked
10	Typing quickly	Worlb, ther, recognition.	World, There, Recognition
11	Keyboard adjacency	understandind	Understanding
12	Inconsistent rules	Perceieving	Perceiving
13	Ambiguous word breaking	per cieving	Perceiving

Orthographic Errors in the Graded Discussion Board (Asif, 2016)

Table 2:
Statistical Data Analysis

Variables	Test Value = 1						Decision
	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference		
					Lower	Upper	
Typing Quickly	1.630	89	.107	.233	-.05	.52	Accept
Keyboard Adjacency	-1.869	89	.065	-.189	-.39	.01	Accept
Inconsistent Rules	2.666	89	.009	.511	.13	.89	Reject
Ambiguous Words	-10.045	89	.000	-.700	-.84	-.56	Reject
Consonant substitutions	1.693	89	.094	.233	-.04	.51	Accept
Vowel Substitutions	1.716	89	.090	.311	-.05	.67	Accept
Space Inaccuracy	3.090	89	.003	.411	.15	.68	Reject
Double Consonants	1.196	89	.235	.122	-.08	.33	Accept
Inflectional Endings	.747	89	.457	.089	-.15	.33	Accept
Vowel Omission	.303	89	.763	.033	-.19	.25	Accept
Consonant Omission	-1.191	89	.237	-.133	-.36	.09	Accept
Letter Reversals	.547	89	.586	.056	-.15	.26	Accept
Tense Mistake	6.812	89	.000	.911	.65	1.18	Reject

Description of Spelling Errors by Bar Graphs

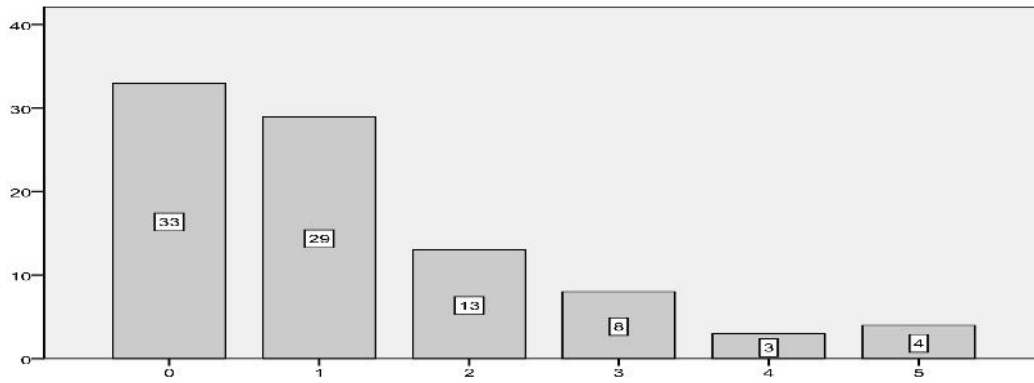


Figure 12: Responses of Spelling Error of Typing Quickly

Out of a sample of 90, 33 students committed no spelling mistakes in typing quickly while 29 respondents committed just once in their GDB and 13 students committed twice.

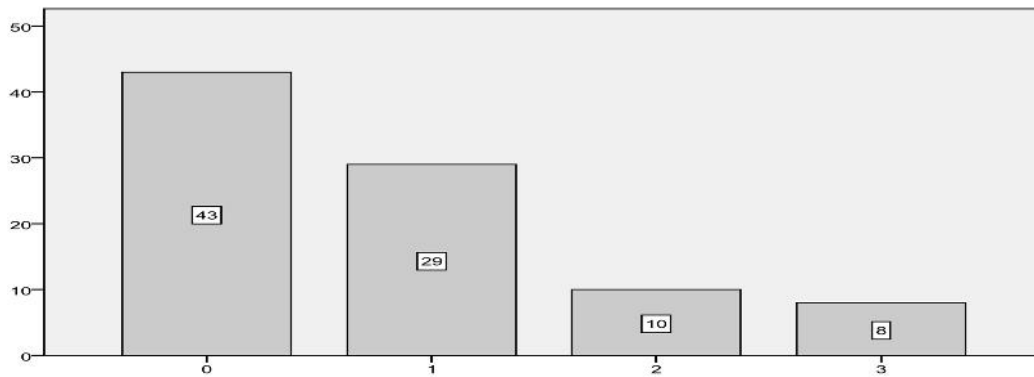


Figure 13: Responses of Spelling Error of Keyboard Adjacency

Out of a sample of 90, 43 students committed no spelling mistakes in keyboard adjacency while 29 respondents did just once in their GDB and 10 students committed twice.

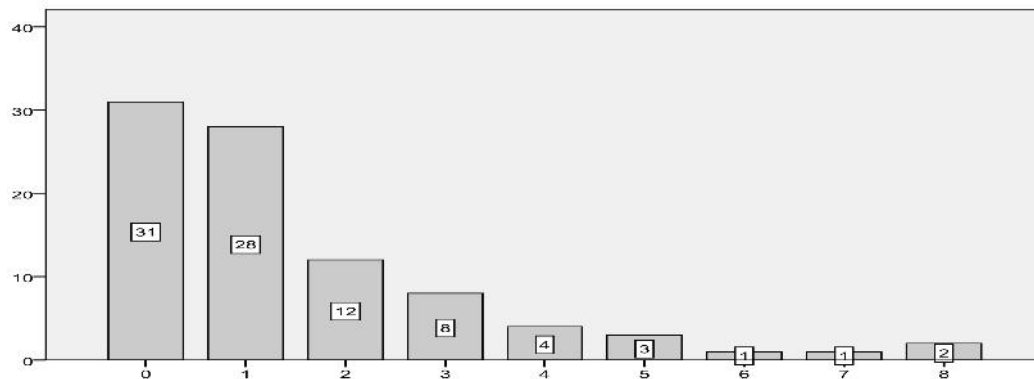


Figure 14: Responses of Spelling Error of Inconsistent Rules

Out of a sample of 90, 31 students committed no spelling mistakes in inconsistent rules while 28 respondents did just once in their GDB and 28 students committed twice.

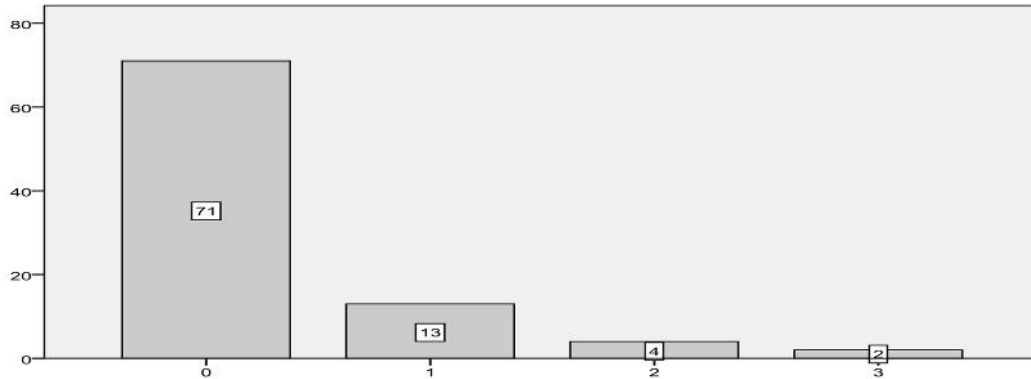


Figure 15: Responses of spelling error of ambiguous words

Out of a sample of 90, 71 students committed no spelling mistakes in ambiguous words while 13 respondents did just once in their GDB and 4 students committed twice.

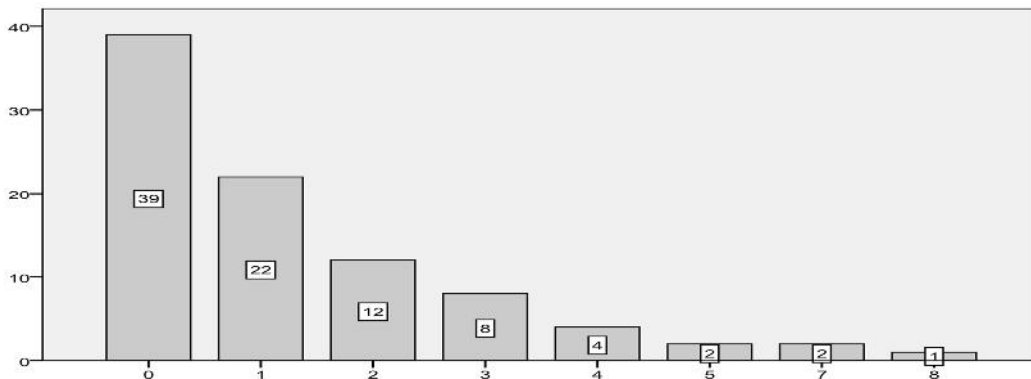


Figure 16: Responses of spelling error of consonant substitutions

Out of a sample of 90, 26 students committed no spelling mistakes in consonant substitutions while 41 respondents did just once in their GDB and 11 students committed twice.

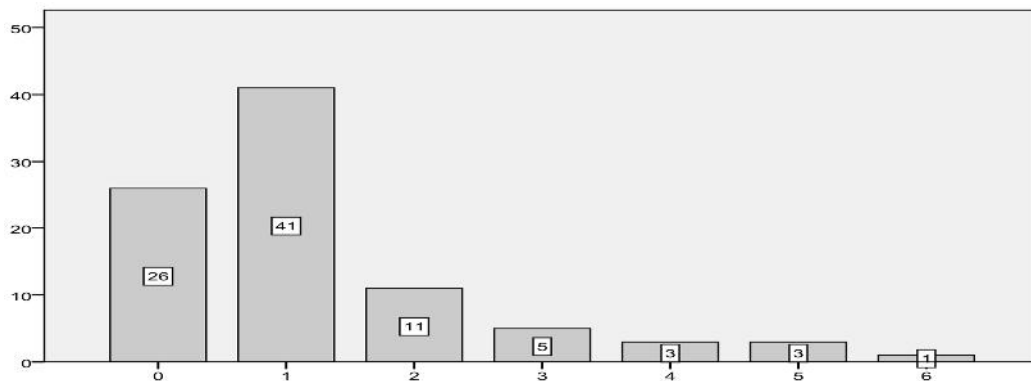


Figure 17: Responses of spelling error of vowel substitutions

Out of a sample of 90, 39 students committed no spelling mistakes in vowel substitutions while 22 respondents did just once in their GDB and 12 students committed twice.

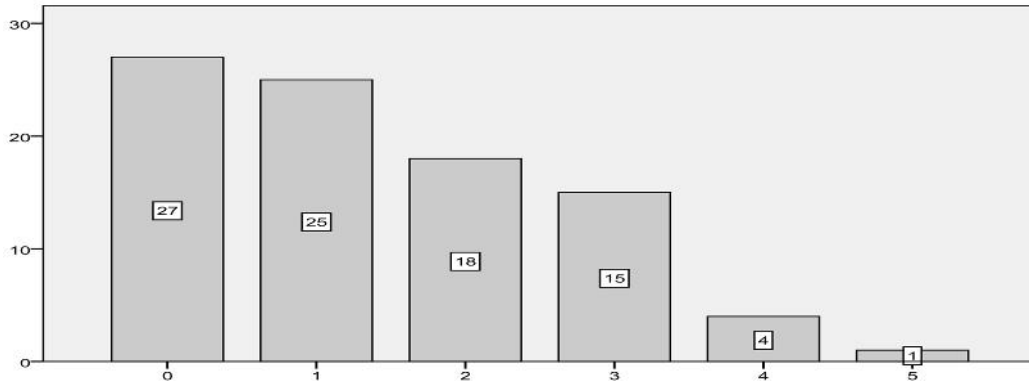


Figure 18: Responses of spelling error of Space Inaccuracy

Out of a sample of 90, 27 students committed no spelling mistakes in space inaccuracy while 25 respondents did just once in their GDB and 16 students committed twice.

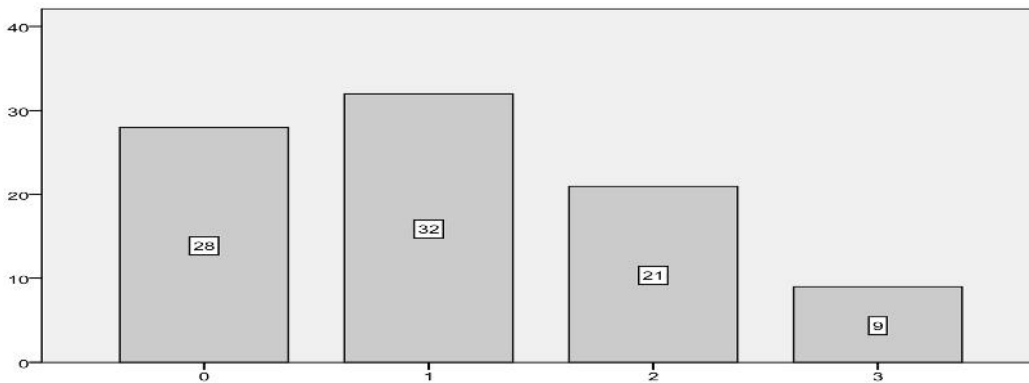


Figure 19: Responses of spelling error of double consonants

Out of a sample of 90, 25 students committed no spelling mistakes in double consonants while 32 respondents did just once in their GDB and 21 students committed twice.

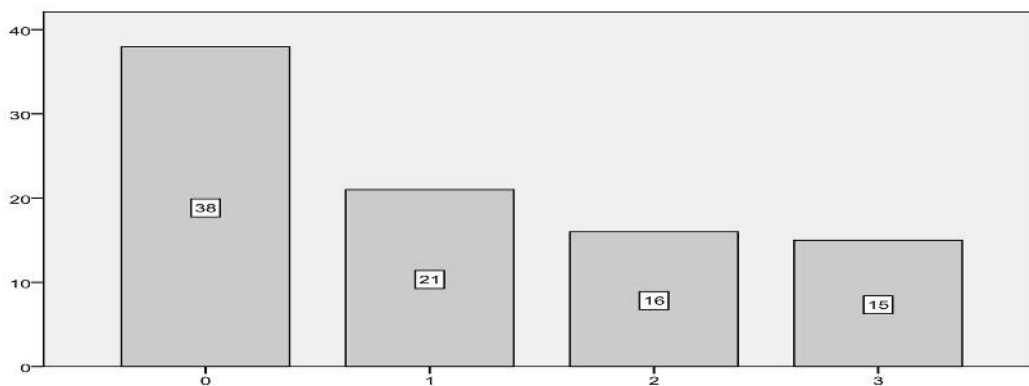


Figure 20: Responses of spelling error of inflectional endings

Out of a sample of 90, 39 students committed no spelling mistakes in inflectional endings while 21 respondents did just once in their GDB and 16 students committed twice.

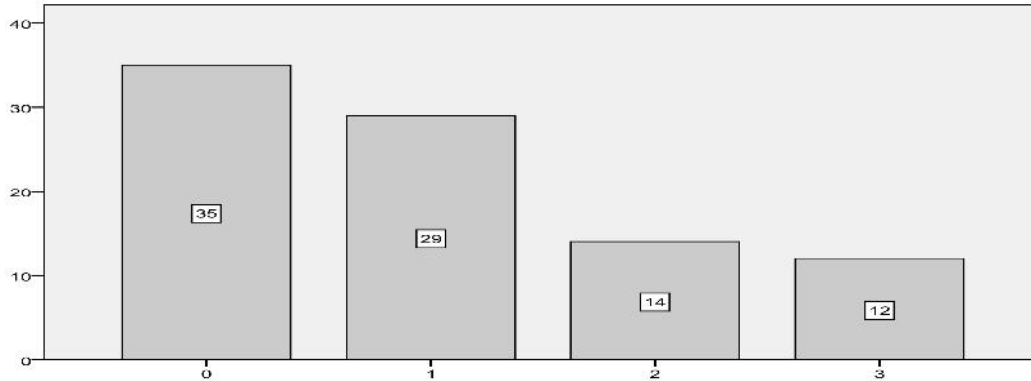


Figure 21: Responses of spelling error of vowel omission

Out of a sample of 90, 26 students committed no spelling mistakes in vowel omission while 20 respondents did just once in their GDB and 4 students committed twice.

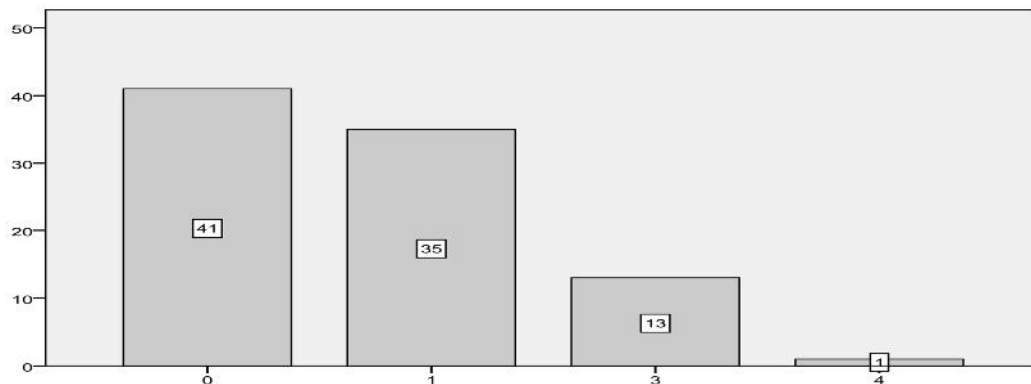


Figure 22: Responses of spelling error of consonant omission

Out of a sample of 90, 41 students committed no spelling mistakes in consonant omission while 35 respondents did just once in their GDB and 13 students committed twice.

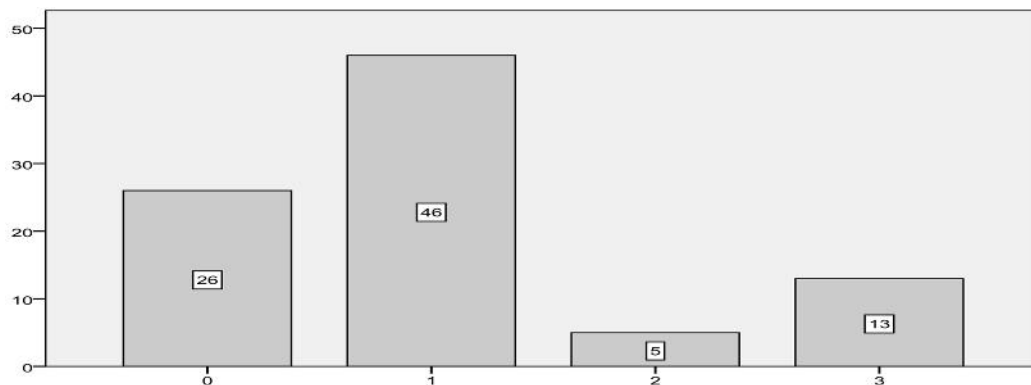


Figure 23: Responses of spelling error of letter reversals

Out of a sample of 90, 26 students committed no spelling mistakes in letter reversal while 46 respondents did just once in their GDB and 5 students committed twice.

Discussion

Although language learning is a complex process but language competency can be developed through practice and proper guidance. However, one of the significant components of language is writing skill which plays a vital role in academia, business and other fields. Spelling accuracy reflects the true image of good writings. Many students commit spelling errors that can distort the meaning of the sentences. The students fail to express their concepts clearly because they cannot spell words accurately.

Certainly, understanding the major causes of spelling errors is one of the skills to develop Pakistani students' spelling expertise. Though, it may not be easy to find the causes that make learners of Virtual University of Pakistan commit spelling errors as there are a lot of options of auto spell checking i.e. MS Word and online spell checking software etc. Mostly students commit spelling errors by typing directly in GDB Interface as there is no spell checking option provided on GDB Interface.

The first spelling mistake observed on GDB was consonant substitutions. Inaccuracies in consonant substitution spelling errors occur due to the lack of knowledge about consonants. The data also reveals the basic cause of spelling errors in consonant substitutions among e- learners owing to the ignorance of the rules. The second spelling error was caused by vowel substitutions. Majority of the learners commit this kind of spelling error due to insufficient awareness about vowels and their usage.

Third important category of online spelling error frequently observed on GDB was space inaccuracy. This kind of spelling error was caused due to negligence and lack of practice. Spaces are employed only to isolate words, phrases and sentences. The space error mixes the words into other words and changes the sense of the sentence. The fourth category of spelling errors was detected to be inaccurate double consonants. Most of the e-learners were unfamiliar about the use of accurate double consonants. Nevertheless, double consonants illustrate that aforementioned vowels are either short or long. Obviously, this kind of spelling errors reveals the fact that the learners are unacquainted about the rules and appropriate usage.

The fifth kind of spelling errors noted was inflectional endings. In reality, the lack of proper consciousness of phonology and the deficiency of information about inflectional morphology are the basic grounds of their mistakes. The sixth type of spelling mistake was letter reversals.

The seventh type of spelling mistake was vowel omission. The basic reason behind this mistake was the limited knowledge of vowels. On the other hand, eighth spelling mistake i.e. consonant omission is also related to an orthographic error. However, this category of mistake,

consonant omission may be due to their negligence as in *'becaus* and *information,*' or by their misperception of a double consonant as in *'disapointed.'*

The ninth type of spelling mistake was tense mistake. Mostly students committed this mistake because of their lack of command of grammatical rules regarding tenses e.g. -s third person present simple tense, -ed past tense and plural nouns as well. The tenth category of spelling mistakes was typing quickly. This cause of mistakes revealed that the learners add and drop letters unintentionally.

The eleventh mistake was keyboard adjacency i.e. hitting accidentally and adjacency keyboard also named as fat-finger syndrome. There are some other reasons of this mistake, i.e. laziness, shortage of time and workload pressure. The twelfth category of the spelling errors was the inconsistent rules which were commonly displayed by e-learners. The last category of the spelling mistake was ambiguous word breaking as the learners generalize the spelling into ambiguous form e.g. per cieving.

The typographical errors are big challenge for e-learners and it requires practice to come up with accuracy. Moreover, learners should be given proper instructions in spelling learning because it is a neglected aspect in English courses at school, college and university level.

With reference to the data obtained from the learners' spelling errors, some major reasons were observed. It is fascinating that most English phonemes match with Urdu alphabetic consonants, yet their orthographies are dissimilar. Additionally, it is noted that dissimilarities between Urdu (L1) and English (L2) orthographies may cause difficulty for Pakistani learners.

The findings further exposed some errors when omitting spaces as in *'forinstance'*. However, in Urdu, certain words are transcribed with no separation except when the writers would like to separate sentences. Therefore, students may inaccurately put *'for'* and *'instance'* together as one word or just write them unconsciously and continuously without a space as if they were composed in Urdu. So, it is likely to conclude that the resemblances in the two languages can stimulate learning at a positive level and dissimilarities can lead to problems.

Numerous spelling errors occur as a consequence of phonological issues. Nevertheless, this form of spelling error is considered as interference error or articulation error which occurs as an outcome of spellers' usage of specific pronunciation (Carney, 1994). Major discrepancy of correspondence between sounds and letters is problematic.

It is also identified that mistakes on inflectional endings are characterized as morphological spelling mistakes as suffixes -s, -ing and -ed are significant as they provide dissimilar meanings to words. However, it is difficult to enhance those inflected words correctly without grammatical

knowledge or linguistic competence. Thus, the reason why students make this type of mistakes is because of their lack of knowledge of morphological rules. Concerning to the data attained, learners made inaccuracies adding incorrect inflectional endings of the plural nouns, progressive verbs (verbs + ing) and third person singular verb form.

While tracing all the causes behind spelling mistakes in writing English as a second language, the most obvious point remains students' careless attitude in not using spell checks provided in Microsoft Word. Spell checks may not make hundred percent corrections but can reasonably improve the overall orthographic mistakes. Why students do not make use of it remains questionable. Although this option of spell check is not available on GDB to check students' original English spelling, however they do have the facility to copy from MS Word file and paste it in GDB interface. However, many of them do not use this facility and the number of orthographic mistakes is quite large which should not be the case in an online interface.

Conclusion

Spelling is an essential element for ESL students to write with precision. However, English spelling is more complicated than many other languages of the world. The current study explored the major and basic causes of spelling errors by the learners at university level particularly in an online mode. Although, it is a fact that the students of online mode are less likely to commit spelling errors due to auto spell check options but they often ignore the correct use of spelling in their academic writings. The main causes of spelling errors were the lack of adequate guidance and phonological and morphological knowledge. Although there is no spell check facility on GDB to monitor student's original spellings, the students did not turn their spell checks on while writing on Microsoft Word for copy pasting in the interface. The spelling errors show a casual attitude towards improving performance in L2.

Recommendations

The researchers recommend some important points that may support e- moderators to assist their students to be good at spelling:

- Clarify English orthographic rules to learners
- Monitor stages of spelling development
- Drill on spelling
- Use of mnemonics to learn spellings
- Make learners explore sounds by developing phonemic awareness
- Making students learn sound by segmenting each sound
- Reinforcing strategies based on morphemic and phonemic connection visualization

- Use of dictionary for the improvement of spellings
- Use of analogy to spell unknown words by recalling familiar words
- Proper teaching of phonics to students even at university level
- Develop language courses consisting of integrated four skills by focusing spelling errors particularly
- Develop the habit of extensive reading among learners so that they may know how different words are spelt in diverse contexts
- Ask learners to develop vocabulary
- Disable the option of copy pasting on GDB.

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