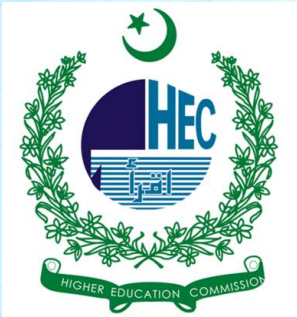


Liberal Journal of Language & Literature Review

Print ISSN: 3006-5887

Online ISSN: 3006-5895

**Error Analysis: An Analysis of Subject–Verb Agreement Errors of Esl
Undergraduate Students**



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Liberal Journal of Language & Literature Review

Print ISSN: 3006-5887

Online ISSN: 3006-5895

Abstract

Grammatical errors remain one of the most persistent challenges for second language learners, particularly in English as a Second Language (ESL) contexts. Among these errors, subject–verb agreement (SVA) errors are especially frequent and significantly affect the accuracy and clarity of written communication. This study is a quantitative investigation aimed at analyzing the frequency and types of subject–verb agreement errors among ESL undergraduate students at the University of Lahore (UOL), Gujrat Campus. The sample consists of 50 students, including 25 male and 25 female participants. The study adopts Corder’s (1967) Error Analysis model to identify, classify, and interpret learners’ grammatical errors. Findings reveal notable gender-based variation in error patterns: male students most frequently commit errors related to the incorrect use of auxiliary “have,” while female students predominantly struggle with the addition or omission of “-s/-es” in present tense verb forms. The study highlights the linguistic and pedagogical implications of these errors and suggests corrective instructional strategies to improve grammatical accuracy in ESL writing. In addition, the research emphasizes that most errors are systematic rather than random, indicating developmental stages in interlanguage formation among learners. It also suggests that limited exposure to authentic English usage and reliance on rote learning contribute significantly to these grammatical issues. Furthermore, the study recommends integrating error-focused writing activities and communicative grammar teaching to reduce subject–verb agreement errors in academic writing contexts. The findings contribute to understanding learner difficulties and provide insights for improving English language teaching practices at the undergraduate level.

Keywords: subject–verb agreement, error analysis, ESL learners, grammatical errors, quantitative study.

Liberal Journal of Language & Literature Review

Print ISSN: 3006-5887

Online ISSN: 3006-5895

Introduction

English is now the universal language of communication, education and professional development and is therefore indispensable for individuals who do not speak English as their native language. English is a second language and medium of instruction in higher education in countries such as Pakistan. Despite years of formal study, however, many ESL learners continue to have difficulty with grammatical accuracy, especially in writing.

Writing is one of the most complex of language skills, as it involves the use of vocabulary, syntax and grammar. In terms of grammar structures, one of the commonest errors made by ESL learners is subject–verb agreement (SVA). A well-formed sentence is one that has correct subject–verb agreement in terms of number and person (Ellis 2008). For instance, singular subjects use singular verbs and plural subjects use plural verbs. This rule may sound simple but it is not always applied by the learners in writing.

The errors of subject–verb agreement are common in academic writing in the Pakistani ESL environment. Incomplete knowledge of English grammatical rules is often seen in students' sentences, for example, “She go to university every day” and “They goes to school regularly.” Such mistakes disrupt the grammatical accuracy as well as dull the communication and clarity.

Corder (1967) states that errors are not random but systematic evidence of language development. This point changes the focus for error correction to error analysis, which focuses on the learning errors made by learners and why. Likewise, Selinker (1972) proposed the notion that learners create a transitional linguistic system which is a blend of their L1 and L2 systems.

Verb agreement rules vary a lot between Urdu, regional languages and English in Pakistan. This difference in structure tends to cause negative language transfer that may produce subject–verb agreement errors. For example, unlike English, Urdu does not make strict verb agreement and this might cause confusion for learners to apply the rules of English verb agreement when learning Urdu.

The current study concentrates on the subject–verb agreement errors that the ESL undergraduate students of University of Lahore Gujrat campus make while writing. The current research examines the errors of subject-verb agreement made by the ESL undergraduate students of University of Lahore Gujrat Campus in writing. It is designed to pinpoint the nature and incidence of errors and to investigate the differences between errors produced by males and females. The study is important as it will enable teachers of English to design better grammar teaching strategies and enhance students' academic writing skills as they become aware of the errors that learners make in their academic writing.

1. Introduction

1.1 Context / Background

English has emerged as a language of communication, education and business around the world and its mastery is necessary for people who do not speak English as their first language. English is taught as a second language in Pakistan and it is used as a medium of instruction in higher education in the country. Many ESL learners experience continuing problems with accurate grammar use, especially in writing, as

Liberal Journal of Language & Literature Review

Print ISSN: 3006-5887

Online ISSN: 3006-5895

it is the most challenging language skill which involves the application of syntactic rules and precision (Ellis 2008).

One of the most common types of errors in ESL learners' writing is the subject–verb agreement (SVA). Subject–verb agreement is a grammatical rule which requires that the verb should agree with its subject in number and person (James 1998). Singular subjects take singular verbs and plural subjects take plural verbs for example. This is the most basic rule, but learners often make mistakes using it, for example in real writing situations, they might write “He go to college” or “They goes to school”.

Their errors would be common for an ESL learner in Pakistan where there are differences between English and Urdu, like the structural differences in verb agreement. This language gap is a major culprit in the problems learners may experience in applying English grammars in writing (Richards 1974).

1.2 Research Gap

There are many studies available in the field of grammatical errors that are studied in ESL writing but so far there is no specific study that has been conducted in the context of Gujrat to understand and analyze the errors in subject–verb agreement in undergraduate students' writing in ESL context. The majority of the previous studies either investigate grammatical errors in general or school level learners but not university level learners.

Moreover, there have been scant studies that investigated gender difference in the patterns of errors that occur in subject–verb agreement in Pakistani ESL learners. In addition, there is not enough attention paid to systematically categorizing the types of errors in this particular educational context, as outlined in Corder's (1967) Error Analysis model. A need arises therefore to make the analysis in a structured and localized way to understand these persistent grammatical problems.

1.3 Research Objectives / Questions

Based on these, the following objectives were set for the present study:

1. To determine the rate of errors in subject–verb agreement among ESL undergraduate students.
2. To categorize the types of subject – verb agreement errors made by students.
3. To look at gender differences in patterns of error in subject–verb agreement.
4. To investigate potential language sources for these writing mistakes.

Research Questions:

1. How often do errors with subject–verb agreement occur in the writing of ESL undergraduate students?
2. What kind of errors are most frequently made regarding agreement of subjects and verbs?
3. Is there any gender difference in error pattern?
4. What are the linguistic factors that account for these errors?

1.4 Scope and Significance of the Study

This study is limited to ESL undergraduate students of University of Lahore, Gujrat Campus. It deals specifically with errors which involve subject–verb agreement in written English compositions, and not with errors in spoken language or in any other grammatical category. The importance of this study is its theory and practical contribution. In theory, it is suitable for the Error Analysis model developed by Corder (1967) as it offers empirical data on the errors made by the learners in a

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Print ISSN: 3006-5887

Online ISSN: 3006-5895

Pakistani ESL context. In terms of practice, the findings can assist EFL teachers to recognize the frequently occurring problematic points and plan more effective grammar teaching strategies. It also offers information for writers of ESL writing classes to stress the subject–verb agreement problems, which are common with learners of English.

In general, this research is designed to increase the awareness of grammatical difficulties of ESL learners and to help improve the teaching of English grammar in higher learning institutions.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Introduction to Error Analysis

Error Analysis (EA) has been one of the most important methodologies used in the field of second language acquisition research. The theory of CLT emerged as a response to the Contrastive Analysis which mainly blamed the learner's problems on differences between L1 and L2. Corder (1967) disagreed and claimed that errors made by learners are not interference problems but are instead a sign of active learning and testing of hypotheses. Corder (1967) added two more points: that errors are significant in three ways; that they are evidence of language learning strategies; and that they indicate the state of the learner's knowledge. This theoretical change paved the way for the systematic and meaningful study of learner language.

2.2 Learner errors classification

More detailed classification of errors was given by Richards (1974) who classified the errors into interlingual errors, intralingual errors and developmental errors. Interlingual errors are the result of negative transfer from the mother tongue and intralingual errors are due to overgeneralization, lack of knowledge of restrictions on rules, or inadequate application of rules. Intralingual overgeneralization may be, for instance, in the rules of the auxiliary verb, with learners saying, say, 'He doesn't has a book'. James (1998) modified this model, which in his view encompasses both global and local errors. James (1998) extended this model to include global and local errors, in which global errors involve sentence meaning and local errors are limited to specific items like verb agreement.

In English Grammar, you will learn about 2.3 Subject–Verb Agreement. In English Grammar, you will study 2.3 Subject–Verb Agreement. In English grammar, the agreement of the subject and verb in the tense and number is a basic rule; that is, they must agree on number and person. Mastery of SVA is crucial to creating correct sentences and to clarity in communication, Ellis 2008. The form of the verb varies according to the type of the subject for ESL learners, making English a difficult language to learn. For instance:

Singular: Letter is written by him.

Plural: They write letters.

Learners may, however, create errors in form, e.g. like:

- He write a letter
- They writes letters

Such errors reflect an inability to consistently use the morphological rules as needed in the writing process, particularly when it is time-constrained.

2.4 Empirical Studies on Subject–Verb Agreement Errors

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Print ISSN: 3006-5887

Online ISSN: 3006-5895

A number of empirical studies have verified that the problem areas of ESL learners are among the most problematic areas of grammar, which is namely subject–verb agreement. In this study, Mahmood (2012) revealed that the third person singular “-s” is often missing in Pakistani undergraduates' writing even though they are not aware of the grammar rules and they do not have adequate practice in using the structure.

In the same way Khan (2015) noted that students make mistakes in the use of auxiliary verbs like “has” and “have”, which also result in wrong structures of sentences. In the case of students, they wrote “She have a car”, instead of “She has a car”.

In addition, a study conducted by Ahmad and Rao (2017) showed that students' focus in learning is on meaning rather than form and this causes many grammatical errors in the learning activity of writing. Overall, these results indicate that the errors in the control of subject-verb agreement are deep-rooted and persistent in the learners' interlanguage system.

The role of interlanguage and cognitive factors is considered

Selinker's (1972) interlanguage theory offers a good explanation of the persisting grammatical errors. Interlanguage is a changeset that is constantly developing as the language learner becomes a second language learner. It is related to L1 transfer, learning strategies, and overgeneralization.

In the case of Pakistani ESL learners, Urdu sentence structure does not demand strict subject–verb agreement and this results in the transfer error in the writing of English sentences. For example:

The Urdu influence on the structure is put in the following ways:

Another factor mentioned by Ellis (2008) is cognitive overload. If learners do not have time to pay attention to grammar, they may make SVA errors. These errors are likely to occur even more in writing because of limited working memory.

2.6 Instructional Influence on SVA Errors

Other factors that contribute to the occurrence of the errors of subject–verb agreement in teaching are also important. Traditional grammar-translation teaching methods tend to focus on memorization. This means that while learners can comprehend rules in theory, they are not able to apply these rules to actual writing contexts.

Errors may also be fossilized due to a lack of corrective feedback, according to James (1998). If students keep making the same mistakes over and over without corrections, the mistakes can be a permanent part of their interlanguage.

The other approaches that are known as communicative language teaching (CLT) on the other hand focus on meaningful use of language, and thus lower the number of grammatical errors that students make, because more time is given to students to listen to authentic sources.

2.7 Gender Differences in Language Learning

Differences between men and women in language learning have been much discussed, but with mixed results. According to Zafar (2013), it can be assumed that females may show some greater accuracy in grammatical tasks which may be attributed to their attention to detail and language rules. Male learners, on the other hand, may be more concerned about fluency than accuracy, and thus may make more errors in some situations.

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Other studies, however, dispute this difference being biologically set and claim that it is due to social, educational and motivational reasons. There is limited research in Pakistani ESL classrooms that has systematically studied the effect of gender on the errors of subject–verb agreement. This is an area that requires further study.

2.8 Summary of Literature Review

Errors of subject–verb agreement are clearly reported as a common problem in ESL learning in the literature. There are several factors that can contribute to the occurrence of these errors such as interlingual transfer, intralingual processes, cognitive restrictions and instruction. These errors are analyzed by the theories of Corder (1967), Richards (1974), Selinker (1972) and Ellis (2008).

Yet, however, there is still an absence of local research which has been done focusing on undergraduate ESL learners in Pakistan with specialized error classification in comparison with gender of the learners. This study aims to remedy these problems by systematically analysing the errors of subject–verb agreement in an academic context.

3. Research Methodology

3.1 Research Design

For the present study, a quantitative research design is used for analyzing the errors in the topic–verb agreement of ESL undergraduate students. The quantitative research method is suitable for the present study because the present study adopts a quantitative approach which provides a systematic and numerical approach to measuring the frequency and types of errors (Creswell 2014). The study adopts an error-based analytical model based on Corder (1967) Error Analysis model that focuses on identifying, classification and explanation of learner errors.

3.2 Research Setting

The study was carried out at the University of Lahore (UOL), Gujrat Campus in which English is a compulsory subject, taught at the undergraduate level. The participants are from a variety of academic backgrounds, which is appropriate for their analysis of grammatical errors in academic writing because their native language is not English.

3.3 Population and Sample

The students of ESL in UOL Gujrat Campus are the population in the study. It was decided to use simple random sampling to get 50 students for the sample so that the sampling would be equally representational. The sample includes:

- 25 male students
- 25 female students

Random sampling minimizes bias and provides an equal chance of sampling to each person, which makes the results more reliable (Best & Khan, 2016).

3.4 Data Collection Instrument

The main tool of data collection was a written composition task. Students were invited to write an essay about any general academic subject, e.g. “The Importance of Education” or “My University Life.” One method employed in error analysis studies is the written task as it generates natural data that reflect the real language output of learners (Ellis 2008).

The collected essays were then inspected for the errors in subject–verb agreement.

3.5 Data Collection Procedure

Data collection was done in the following steps:

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Print ISSN: 3006-5887

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- The students were provided with a controlled writing task in a classroom.
- They were provided with ample time to write their essays independently.
- Essays were collected and numbered for analysis.
- Errors in subject–verb agreement were manually checked in each essay.
- Errors were underlined and classified and then tabulated in a frequency table.
- This systematic process allowed data collection and analysis to be systematic.

3.6 Framework of Analysis

The study is based on Corder (1967) 's Error Analysis model comprising of five steps:
The gathering of learner information. The process of collecting learner information.

2. Identification of errors
3. Description of errors
4. Explanation of errors
5. Evaluation of significance

This framework can not only detect mistakes, but also explain the linguistic and cognitive root of them as well.

3.7 Categorization of Errors

Errors in subject–verb agreement were divided into the following types:

- Incorrect use of auxiliary verbs (has/have)
- Omitting the third person singular “-s”
- Introducing unrequired “-s” in plural forms
- Complex sentences with an incorrect subject–verb agreement.

James (1998) argues that the study of error classification is necessary to help determine the pattern of errors made by the learners and to pinpoint the learners' difficulties.

3.8 Data Analysis Technique

Descriptive statistical methods such as frequency counts and percentage calculation were used to analyze the data. This way, the distribution of errors can be presented clearly in numbers (Creswell 2014). Gender-based comparison was further performed to see whether there are differences amongst male and female students with respect to error patterns.

3.9 Reliability and Validity

All essays were analysed with the same criteria for identifying errors to provide reliability. Only subject–verb agreement errors were taken into account, excluding other grammatical categories, which was done to prevent the influence of validity. The consistency in the way data is analyzed deepens the credibility of quantitative research results (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2018).

3.10 Ethical Considerations

Ethical standards were observed by keeping the students anonymous and keeping their information confidential. No personal information was requested from the participants and no participants' details were shared anywhere in the research. Consent was obtained before collecting written samples.

3.11 Summary of Methodology

The study has described the research design, sampling techniques, data collection instruments, data collection procedures and analysis of the study. The methodology is based on Corder's (1967) Error Analysis approach and supported by quantitative

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descriptive analysis to guarantee systematic analysis of the errors made by ESL learners in the field of subject–verb agreement.

4. Theoretical Analysis

4.1 Introduction to Theoretical Framework

Theoretical basis of this study is based on Error Analysis theory which was developed by Corder (1967) and Interlanguage Theory proposed by Selinker (1972) and principles of SLA developed by Ellis (2008). The frameworks as a whole are able to describe why and how subject–verb agreement errors occur in the writing of ESL learners.

The idea of error analysis is that learner errors are not a fault, but part of the language development process. Errors give evidences of the internal language system of the learners and evidence of progress in language acquisition as Corder (1967) states. Thus, the study of the errors of the subject – verb agreement may assist in understanding the developmental stages of the ESL learners.

4.2 Error Analysis Theory

Corder (1967) states that errors are systematic deviation that shows lack of grammatical competence of the learners. He differentiates errors from mistakes (systematic vs. rule-based and performance vs. accidental). Errors in this study are considered subject–verb agreement errors since they are repeated consistently and are patterned.

A further point that needs to be made is that error analysis has three main aims as indicated by Corder:

1. It assists teachers to know about the learning problems of the learners.
2. It offers insights into the language learning processes.
3. It helps to plan the teaching practices effectively

Therefore, the errors in the agreement of the subject with the verb are not random but can be interpreted as learners' knowledge of the English structure rules.

4.3 Interlanguage Theory

Selinker's theory of Interlanguage (1972) is one of the theories that is central in the explanation of learner errors. Interlanguage is a linguistic system that occurs between the learner's first language (L1) and second language (L2). This system is dynamic and constantly changing with the learners' increased exposure to the target language. Urdu and regional language play an important role in the development of interlanguage in the case of Pakistani ESL learners. Urdu does not have any strict requirement of inflection of verbs for subject agreement and learners tend to transfer such structures into English and make errors like:

She goes to college daily.

Regular attendance at school.

Selinker (1972) has identified five processes that affect the evolution of interlanguage – among these are language transfer and overgeneralization. These processes are closely related to the errors in subject–verb agreement found in this study.

4.4 Second Language Acquisition and Cognitive Factors

Both cognitive and linguistic factors affect second language acquisition (SLT), as explained by Ellis (2008). Limited working memory capacity is one of major cognitive factors that impedes the learners to understand grammatical rule in their writing. Learners tend to be more concerned with meaning than form when they are

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Print ISSN: 3006-5887

Online ISSN: 3006-5895

working on generating ideas, which may result in grammatical errors. This is the reason why errors in the subject–verb agreement are common in spontaneous writing activities.

Also, SLA theory implies that grammatical rules are learnt gradually rather than all at once. In real communication situations, learners may have a subconscious knowledge of the rules but may not be able to apply them consistently (Ellis 2008).

4.5 Linguistic Transfer from First Language

Negative transfer from L1 is one of the contributing factors of the errors in subject–verb agreement. According to Richards (1974), interlingual errors are errors that are made by the learner when he uses L1 (first language) structures to L2 (second language) contexts.

The agreement of verbs is not as strict as in English in Urdu. For instance, with verbs, forms may not vary in number or person. This creates confusion when students try to apply the English rules and make errors in their work like:

He play football not He plays football.

The difference in structure of L1 and L2 is another factor that can explain the recurring errors that are made in grammar.

Students often generalize rules and make misapplications. Students tend to overgeneralize rules and make rule misapplications.

Overgeneralization is cited as one of the most common sources of intralingual errors by James (1998). Overgeneralization is when learners use a grammatical rule in generalizing, but not thinking about exceptions.

For instance, learners might think that verbs in the present tense always need to have an “-s” on the end and consequently write sentences like:

They go to school • “He goes to school”

This shows that there is some lack of awareness of the rules governing subject–verb agreement and that the rules are at developmental stages.

The input and instructions are reviewed and adjusted as needed with 4.7.

Along with the quality of language input and classroom instruction, the quality of language input and classroom instruction is also important in error formation. Krashen (1985) has called his theory the Input Hypothesis. In this hypothesis, he posits that if learners are exposed to input that is slightly above their level of competence, they will learn more easily.

But, in many ESL classrooms, students are learning grammar without real contexts. This restricts the flexibility of students to be able to use the rules in authentic writing contexts and leads to a continued subject–verb agreement problem.

Corrective feedback is another important aspect highlighted by James (1998). Errors can become entrenched if they are not corrected, that is, if they remain permanent in the memory of the learners, and then become part of their interlanguage.

The theoretical analysis is summarized below:

Based on theoretical analysis, errors in subject–verb agreement happen due to several interactive factors such as interlanguage development, first language transfer, cognitive limitations, and instructional practices. The methodological framework is based on Corder's (1967) Error Analysis framework, and the developmental nature of errors is explained by Selinker's (1972) Interlanguage theory.

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In addition, Ellis (2008) emphasises the cognitive difficulties in learning grammar, especially when writing in real-time. These theories describe why for years ESL learners have been having difficulties with subject–verb agreement. This theory is used as a foundation to discuss empirical findings in the next chapter of discussion.

5. Discussion / Analysis

The purpose of this chapter is to provide a detailed analysis of the subject–verb agreement errors that ESL undergraduate students made in their written compositions. Data were gathered from 50 participants and analyzed in the light of Corder's (1967) Error Analysis approach, interlanguage theory (Selinker 1972), and the second language acquisition (L2) approach (Ellis 2008). In addition to detecting error patterns, the analysis also examines more fundamental linguistic, cognitive, and teaching causes of these common grammatical problems.

5.2 Overall Frequency and Pattern of Errors

The analysis reveals that the errors in the area of subject–verb agreement are ubiquitous in the data, which means that students have not mastered this structure well. The errors occur both in simple and complex sentences, showing that it does not only happen in simple sentences but also in higher levels of sentence constructions.

Corder (1967) suggests that errors made in a systematic manner do not occur by accident but as a result of a lack in language proficiency. Likewise, Ellis (2008) states that such longstanding grammatical problems are likely to be a sign of imperfect automatization of grammatical rules in second language learners.

5.3 More kinds of errors, with linguistic explanation

5.3.1 Third-Person Singular Omission

The error type most prevalent is still the omission of “-s” in third person singular present tense verbs. Pupils often created phrases like:

- He go to university daily
- She write a letter

This error is related to the insufficient acquisition of morphological rules. Richards (1974) regards this as an intralingual mistake due to partial rule application.

5.3.2 Confusion of Auxiliary Verbs (has/have)

Learners frequently mixed up singular and plural of auxiliary verbs:

- She have a car
- He have two books

Errors such as these arise from the over generalisation of the baseform “have”, which is used by learners in all subjects, according to James (1998).

Students demonstrate an overgeneralization of the “-s” Rule. Students show overgeneralization of the “-s” Rule.

Some learners used the rule to pluralize subjects incorrectly, for example if the subject was plural, they used the third-person singular form.

- They goes to school
- Students writes exams

This is one of the characteristics that Selinker (1972) has recognized as being inherent in the process of interlanguage development—where the learner has to apply new rules before learning them correctly.

5.3.4 Structural Agreement Errors in Complex Sentences

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There were also errors in sentences that contained embedded and/or collective subjects:

- The team of players are winning
- Each of the students have submitted assignments

It has been found that learners do not know the real subject of the sentence, particularly in complex noun phrases, causing agreement mismatches (Ellis, 2008).

5.4 Deepened Gender-Based Analysis

There are very slight but detectable differences in errors between male and female learners.

The trend is that female learners make more errors that relate to auxiliary verbs; this indicates that female learners are less concerned with morphological accuracy. In contrast, female students make more mistakes with verb inflection patterns, especially with the third-person singular.

The differences, suggests Zafar (2013), may be related to learning styles and not to ability. Female learners tend to use strategies that focus more on accuracy, whereas male learners tend to focus more on fluency and written tasks may result in more grammatical errors.

The differences however are not statistically significant enough to be generalized to the wide diversity of ESL students, suggesting that the individual student's background is more important than gender differences.

5.5 Cognitive and Linguistic Causes of Errors

There are several reasons for subject–verb agreement mistakes:

5.5.1 Cognitive Overload

As students write, they also have to control the generation of ideas, choice of vocabulary and grammatical accuracy (2008:157). This cognitive load can result in the neglect of rules for subject–verb agreement.

5.5.2 Fossilization of Errors

James (1998) emphasizes that errors may be fossilized or become entrenched in the learner's set of forms, if they are not corrected after repeated exposure to the wrong forms.

5.5.3 First Language Interference

Richards (1974) points out that the differences in structures between L1 and L2 play a significant role in errors. The agreement of the verb form in Urdu is not as marked as in English, and hence transfer errors occur in agreement, e.g.

- He go to school

5.5.4 Lack of Input and Practice

The Input Hypothesis, by Krashen (1985), indicates that language can be learned if sufficient comprehensible input is given. The less the learners are exposed to the correct English structures, the less they can internalize subject–verb agreement rules.

5.6 Instructional Effect on Error Persistence

Subject–verb agreement errors are also indicative of instructional limitations. Traditional teaching of grammar tends to focus on memorizing the rules without linking it to the context. Without constructive feedback, Corder (1967) says that students will make the same mistakes.

Furthermore, classroom situations which focus on written tests rather than communicative activities might limit students' opportunities to use grammar in

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authentic situations. This leads to some theoretical knowledge which is not completely realized in writing.

5.7 Theoretical Integration of Findings

The results are closely related to the findings of Error Analysis theory (Corder 1967), which shows that errors occur in a consistent manner and can point out the gaps in the competence that the learner has. In terms of learner grammar, the interlanguage theory (Selinker 1972) accounts for the transitional nature of the learner grammar, which results in inconsistent performance in the acquisition of the rules.

Further, the cognitive SLA model by Ellis (2008) posits that limited processing capacity and automatization deficiencies are responsible for grammatical errors, which are largely highlighted in this study. Moreover, Ellis' (2008) cognitive SLA model also explains that LPC and lack of automatization are responsible for grammatical errors, which was well emphasized in this study. These theories together can give a complete explanation for why the problem with the agreement of the subject and the verb in ESL continues to be a problem.

5.8 Summary of Extended Analysis

The long analysis is confirmed by the extended analysis of errors in subject–verb agreement, which are a part of the linguistic and cognitive processes. Interlanguage development, first language transfer, rule overgeneralization and instructional constraints are all factors that affect these errors.

There are differences between boys and girls, but these are relatively small in comparison with the differences between learners. The results indicate the importance of grammar pedagogy that relies on the learner's practice, feedback and the context instead of memorisation.

6. Conclusion

6.1 Summary of Findings

This study examined the errors made by the ESL undergraduates in terms of Corder's (1967) Error Analysis framework. The results show that students often have difficulties with the third person singular “-s,” with auxiliary verbs, overgeneralization and the mismatch between the subject and verb in complex sentences. Errors are not random but are systematic and a reflection of underlying linguistic development.

Minor differences between the genders were also detected, with male students making more errors with auxiliary verbs and female students making more errors with the inflections. But these differences are not substantial enough to indicate linguistic variation between genders.

Based on the results of the study, the researcher concludes that errors in subject–verb agreement are a recurring problem in ESL writing as a result of interlanguage development, first language interference and cognitive processing limitations. Despite being formally taught, learners still find it difficult to provide grammatical rules in writing activity.

The errors made by the learners can be explained by the theoretical models proposed by Corder (1967), Selinker (1972) and Ellis (2008) which support the idea that the learner's language is a dynamic and evolving system.

6.2 Pedagogical Implications

The results indicated some implications for language teaching:

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- Explicit instruction in subject–verb agreement rules should be provided by teachers.
- Corrective feedback should be given regularly and consistently to learners.
- It is desirable to have communicative writing activities.
- The grammar should not be taught in isolation.

James (1998) points out that feedback that is meaningful contributes to the avoidance of errors becoming fossilized and fosters LTD.

6.3 Recommendations for Future Research.

Future studies should:

- Use a larger number of institutions for a larger sample size
- Identify errors in subject–verb agreement between spoken and written language
- Examine how digital learning tools can be used to acquire grammar skills.
- Discuss the development of Interlanguage of ESL learners throughout the years

6.4 Final Remark

Overall, this study emphasises that learner errors are part and parcel of language development. Errors in subject – verb agreement are not just errors; they are used to pinpoint the gradual process by which ESL learners develop English grammatical competence.

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Liberal Journal of Language & Literature Review

Print ISSN: 3006-5887

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