

Error Analysis Of Written English At Elementary Level Students In Bagh, AK

**Dr. Muhammad Mushtaq¹, Dr. Arshad Mehmood², Ms Mehfooza (M.Phil Scholar)³,
Dr. Shamim Ali⁴**

¹Dean Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, WUAJ&K, Bagh.

²Assistant Professor & Head of English Department, WUAJ&K, Bagh .

³Women university of AJ&K Bagh .

⁴Assistant Professor (Retired), Allama Iqbal Open University, Islamabad.

ABSTRACT

In the countries like Pakistan where English language is taught and learnt as second language, the students at elementary level commit errors due to large number of reasons. Keeping in view this regional and cultural context, the current study is evocative and was conducted to investigate and explain the errors, their causes and sources committed by the students of elementary level. In this regard, 300 teachers were selected randomly to collect the data by using close-ended questionnaire consisted of two sections developed on likert scale. Former section of the questionnaire was comprised of the questions related to errors in the use of main verb, helping verb, regular verb, irregular verb, simple preposition, compound preposition, complex preposition, definite article, indefinite article, transitive verb, intransitive verb, subject-verb agreement, adjective, positive adjective, comparative adjective and superlative adjective. Second section of the questionnaire was comprised of the questions related to trained English teachers, lack of confidence in teachers to speak English and hesitation of the students in speaking English in the classroom. Codor's (1967) framework was used for this study. As a result of the investigation, it was found that the students at elementary level in District Bagh Azad Kashmir commit errors due to the interference of their 1st language. Moreover, it was also found that defective teaching methods and faulty testing system are also responsible for the errors made by the students at elementary level. So, this study suggests and recommends changes in current teaching and testing methods to improve effective writing skills of the students.

Keyword: Error analysis, English as second language, Elementary level, District Bagh Azad Kashmir.

Introduction

English language is taught at broader level and has become international lingua franca (Crystal, 1987). However, in learning English language, there are various issues and hurdles which are faced by the students whose native language is other than English. With respect to Pakistani students especially of the Government sector and remote areas students, numerous issues are related to teaching methodologies and the incompetence of the English teachers. As this study has been conducted in a remote area of District Bagh Azad Kahsmir, errors in the writings of the students are related to the incompetence of the teachers, teaching methodologies and irrelevance of the subject teachers. To overcome these issues, the present study was conducted to identify the errors of the students, problems in teaching methods, and solutions to solve thee problems. According to Brown (2000), error analysis provides effective guidelines to settle the issues of errors in the writings of the students of elementary level with proper solutions. In this regard, following research objectives and research questions have been designed to find the required results and arrive at a suitable conclusion for further suggestions and recommendations.

Research Objectives

The objectives of this research are as below

1. To find the common errors that the students of District Bagh AJK do in writing English.
2. To categorize the causes of these errors.
3. To suggest the solutions to improve writing skills of the students

Research Questions

Following are the research questions of the current study:

1. What common errors are committed by the students of elementary level in their writing?
2. What are the causes of the errors?
3. How the categorized errors can be removed to develop effective and error free writing of the students?

Literature Review

Second language learners often make errors in their writing which need to be detected and their problem should be resolved by the concerned teachers. However, in the developing countries like Pakistan, the teachers of second language especially, English language themselves lack in training due to which the problem remains unresolved. Khan and Khan stated that English has got reputation of international language that is taught in most of the countries of the world. This is important to know about the father of error analysis. In this regard, Cordor (1967) highlighted this issue and suggested that it is necessary for learners to bring to their knowledge the errors and to make efforts to improve them. Moreover, Richard (1974) and Gass & Selinker (2008) and Richards, claimed the errors as ‘red flags’ emphasizing as powerful proof of the students’ written expressions. Cordor (1982) introduced two objectives of error analysis, first one is theoretical and other is applied one. The former would direct the learners to adopt the

appropriate way of learning English as second language and latter would improve their proficiency of second language with the help of knowledge of their native language. Cordor (1967) also introduced the idea of diagnostic and prognostic related to the investigation of errors. Diagnostic gives information related to the existing condition of the learner's language while prognostic would inform the students about language learning skills. In this way, they would better be able to overcome their errors in their written expressions.

Gass & Selinker (2008) introduced the term 'interlanguage' to explain comprehension of second language L2 which is independent of first language and target language. In addition, Jain (1974) introduced 'causes and sources of error analysis whereas Cordor (1967) called it as 'idiosyncratic dialect or transitional competence'. McDowell (2020) investigated that analysis of errors is made in the studies of second language acquisition. Darus (2009) conducted a study in Malaysia where the learners were from different linguistic backgrounds. The errors found were related to singular/plural form, verb tense; word choice, preposition, subject-verb agreement and word order (Spies et al., 2018; Devlin et al., 2015).

Kahani et al (2019) and Li, Liu, Yang, Peng, & Zhou (2021) introduced another technique of error analysis that is related to English grammar error correction algorithm which can be used to detect the grammatical errors from the written expressions of the students. They can also check these errors and overcome these errors by their personal efforts. Further, classification model which is based on certain rules and when written corpus is used to identify the mistakes of the students.

To improve the classification accuracy, and for the improvement of correction performance, the findings of the study of Summaira (2011) are of paramount importance. . Moreover, Zafar (2016) conducted a study on error analysis which facilitates teachers and students to comprehend the causes of failure in learning English language. In other words, teachers can design new methods of teaching English as second language. Similarly, Shamim & Rashid (2019) worked on identification of errors responsible for the incompetence of the learners of English language.

Research Methodology

This is post-modern descriptive and quantitative study which allows the researcher to collect the data by using more than one data collection and analysis tools. In this respect, data was collected from two relevant sources. In other words, the data was collected both from students and teachers of English language. 300 English teachers were selected to probe the issue in a tangible way. Sample was selected through simple random sampling technique. Close-ended questionnaire was used as data collection tool which was based on questions related to identification of grammatical errors of English language. Collected data from the teachers was analyzed with statistical tools and data collected from teachers was analyzed through Chi-Square test. Codor's (1982) model of error analysis was used as theoretical framework of the study that is a structure which holds a theory of research study and provides guideline to that research study as well. His framework is based on following four parameters:

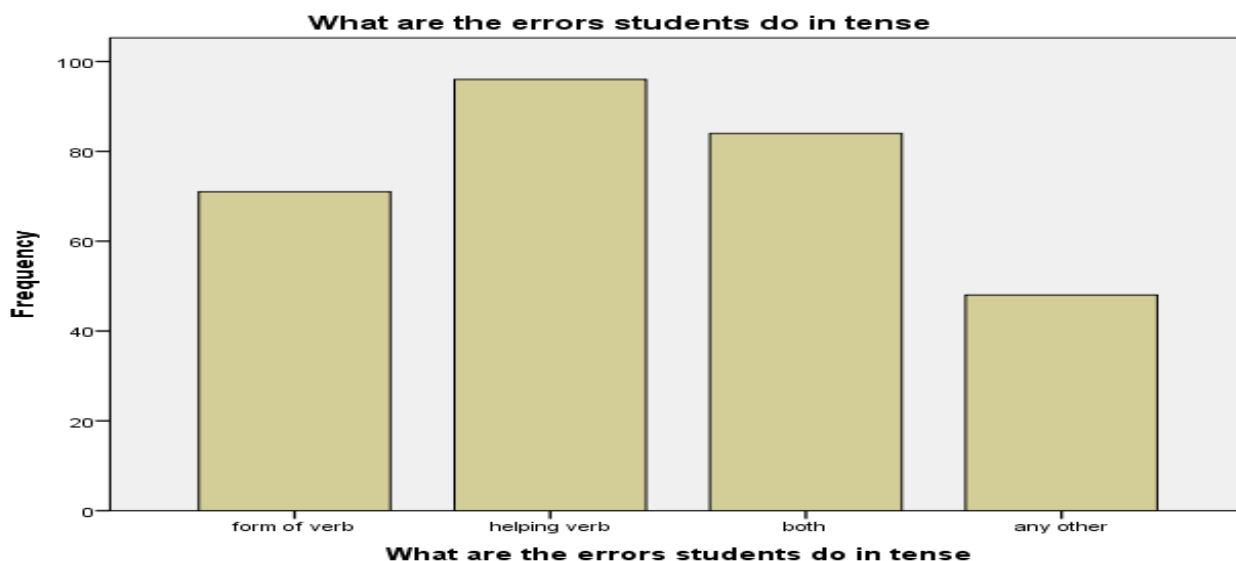
- To identify the errors
- To classify the errors
- To explain the errors
- To evaluate the errors

In addition, after identification, classification, explanation and evaluation of errors, recommendations were given at the end.

Data Analysis

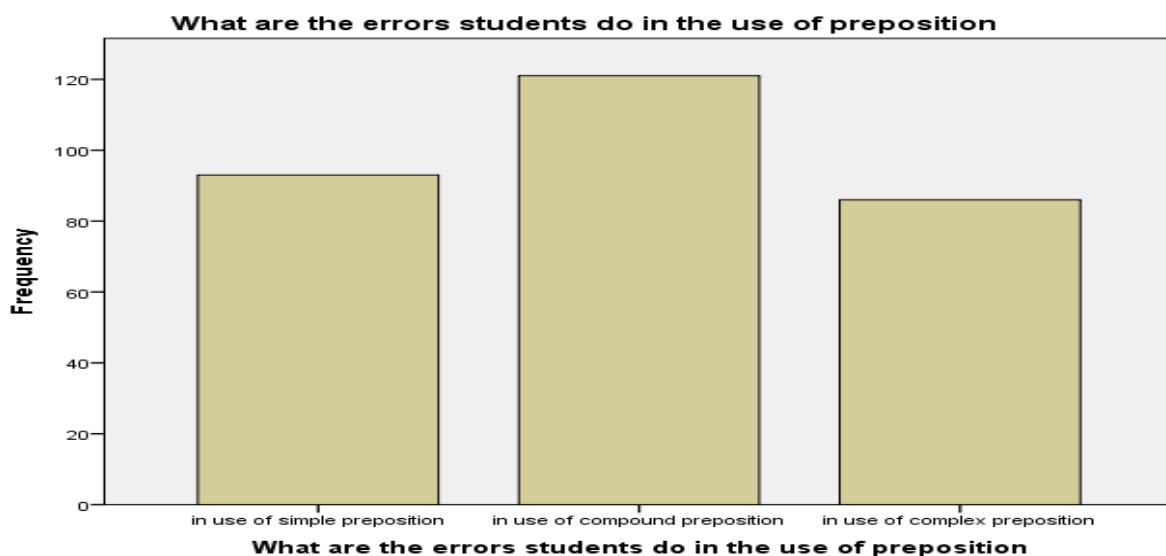
Data collected from the English teachers was presented and the results were found in graphical form. The questions asked from the teachers were based on errors related to selected parts of speech designed as a result of the pilot study. In this respect, errors of main verbs, helping verbs, errors related to both types, prepositions, simple prepositions, compound prepositions, complex prepositions, definite article, indefinite articles, regular verbs, irregular verbs, subject-verb agreement, transitive/intransitive verbs, adjectives, positive adjectives, comparative adjectives and superlative degrees. Received responses were tabulated and results were found in graphical representation.

Graph 1



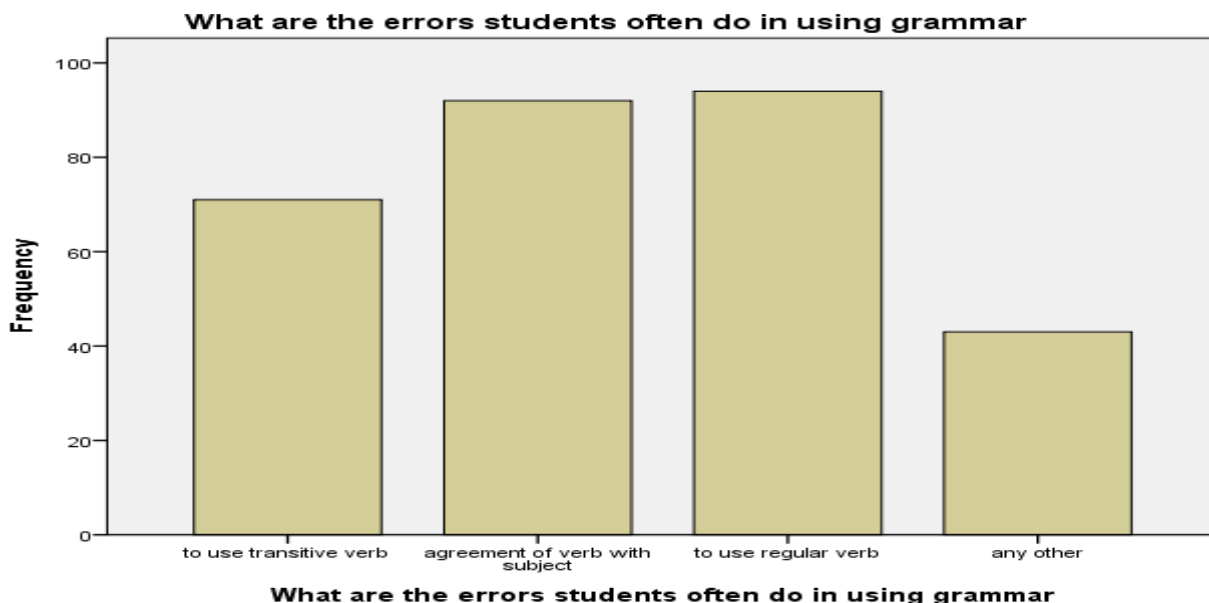
Graph 1 shows that 97 teachers responded that students make errors in tenses while using helping verbs, 84 teachers said that the students make errors in tense while using form of the main verb, 71 teachers said that the students make errors in tense both helping verbs and form of the verbs and 48 teachers said that students make errors in tense while using any other.

Graph 2



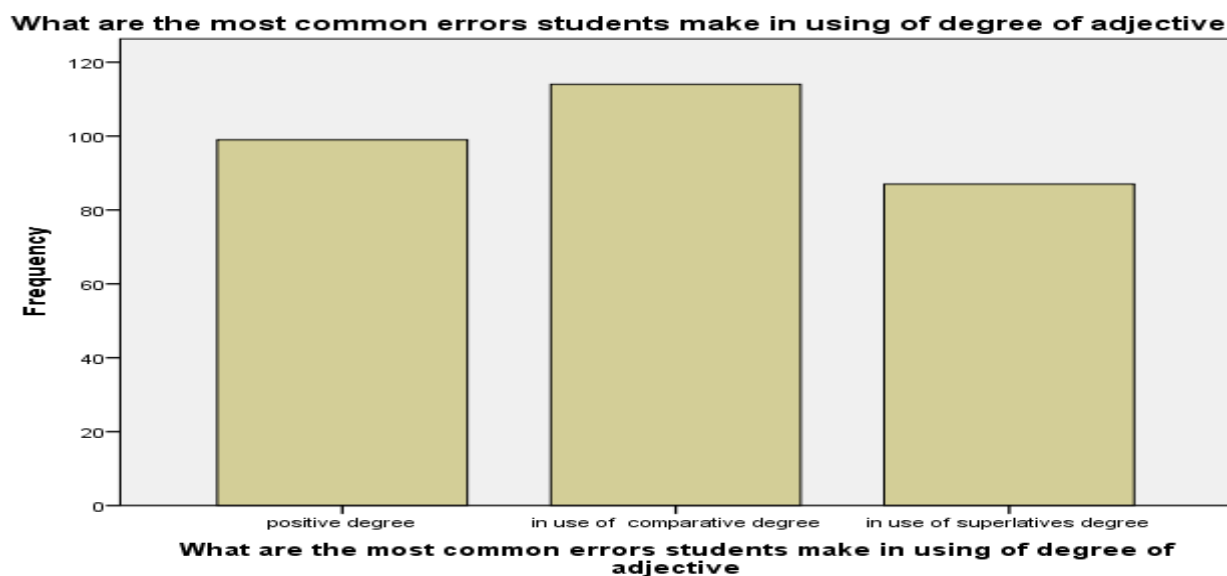
Graph No. 2 shows that 121 teachers responded that students make errors in the use of compound preposition, 93 teachers said that students make errors in the use of simple preposition while 86 teachers said that students make error in the use of complex preposition.

Graph 3



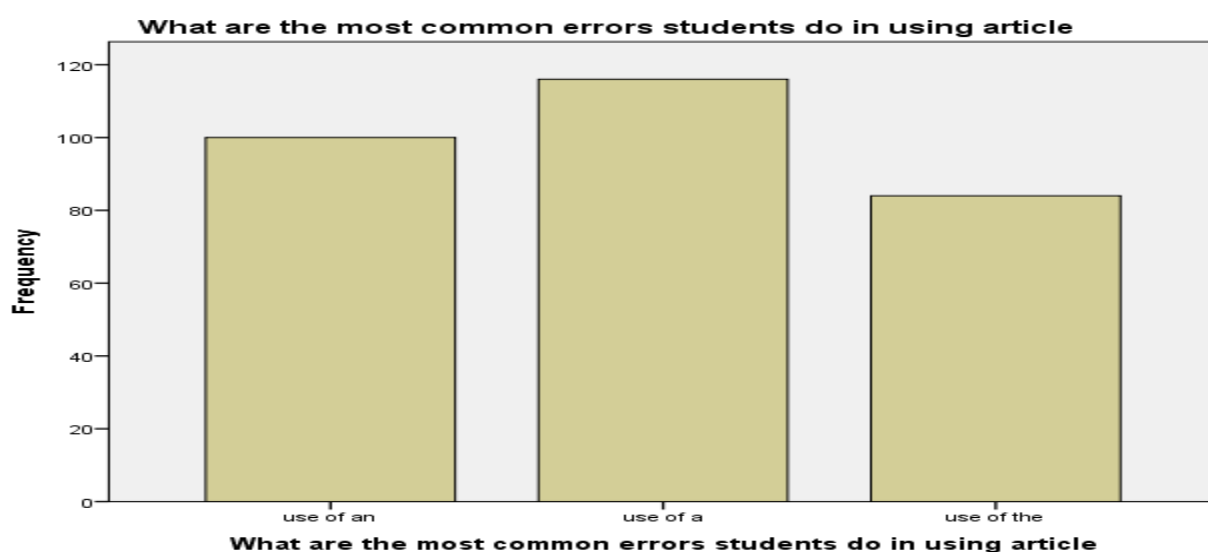
Graph No.3 shows that 94 teachers said that student soften made errors in use of regular verb/irregular verb in using grammar, 92 teachers said that students often made errors in agreement of verb with subject in using grammar, 71 teachers said that students often made error in use of transitive /intransitive verb in using grammar and 43 teachers said that students made any other errors in using of grammar.

Graph 4



Graph No 4 shows that 114 teachers said that students made errors in use of comparative degree, 99 teachers said that students made errors in use of positive degree and 87 teachers said that students made errors in use of superlative degree.

Graph 5



Graph no 5 shows that 116 teachers said that students made errors of a in using article, 110 teachers said that students made errors of an in using article and 84 teachers said that students made error of the in using the.

Categorizing of Errors

1- Errors Related to tenses

- i) Errors in tenses when helping verbs are used
- ii) Errors in tense while using form of the main verb
- iii) Errors in tense while using both the helping verbs and form of the

2- Errors Related to Prepositions

- i) Highest ratio errors in the use of compound prepositions
- ii) Lower ratio errors in the use of simple prepositions
- iii) Lowest ratio errors in the use of complex prepositions

3- Errors Related to the Use of Main Verbs

- i) Highest ratio errors in the use of regular and irregular verbs
- ii) Second highest ratio in the use of subject-verb agreement
- iii) Lowest ratio errors in the use of transitive and intransitive verbs

4- Errors Related to Degrees of Adjective

- i) Highest ratio in the use of comparative degree
- ii) Moderate ratio of errors in the use of positive degree
- iii) Lowest ratio of errors in the use of superlative degree

5- Errors Related to the Use of Articles

- i) Highest ratio of errors in the use of indefinite article 'a'
- ii) Second highest ratio of errors in the use of indefinite article 'an'

- iii) Third highest level ratio of errors in the use of definite article ‘the’

Data Analysis and Interpretation of Causes of Errors in Written English

Data was collected from the teachers related to the training of English teachers; use of direct method in English language classes; teachers’ confidence to communicate in English language; students’ hesitation to speak English. This form of data was analyzed by using Chi-Square test which is as under:

Table 1 One cause of errors is English teachers are not well trained

	Observed N	Expected N	Residual	Chi-square	Sig.	DF
Strongly Agree	70	60.0	10.0	49.676	.000	4
Agree	92	60.0	32.0			
Undecided	67	60.0	7.0			
Disagree	53	60.0	-7.0			
Strongly Disagree	18	60.0	-42.0			
Total	300					

The results of the above statement reveal that most of the teachers (162) agreed and strongly agreed with the statement that English teachers were not trained to teach English. 71 respondents disagreed with the statement “One cause of errors is English teachers are not well trained”.67 respondents were undecided about the statement whereas only 18 respondents were strongly disagreed about the statement. The chi- square suggested that there is significant but weak association ($\chi^2=49.767$, p-value=.000) found in the results of the question related to the training of the teachers. However, majority of the respondents agreed that the single most cause of errors is related to the training of English teachers which means that they are not well trained.

Table 2 Teaches do not use direct method while teaching

	Observed N	Expected N	Residual	Chi-Square	Sig.	DF
strongly agree	102	60.0	42.0	139.167	.000	4
Agree	115	60.0	55.0			
Undecided	43	60.0	-17.0			
Disagree	26	60.0	-34.0			
strongly disagree	14	60.0	-46.0			
Total	300					

The analysis of the above statement reveals that most of the teachers, for example 102 strongly agreed and 115 agreed with the statement which collectively make 217 respondents who are in farceur of the statement which means that majority of English teachers uses direct method of teaching English language. 43 respondents remained undecided regarding the statement

whereas only 14 respondents disagreed and 26 respondents strongly disagreed. So, the interpretation arrives at conclusion that the probed errors of elementary level of students can be reduced or overcome if direct method of teaching or another method besides direct method of teaching is used in English language teaching classes. This has been observed that teachers in Pakistan teach their students with the help of Grammar Translation Method which is no doubt easy to understand but it is unable to cater the language issues of the students and there is greater influence of mother tongue on the second language learners, so it should be revised or hanged. The chi- square suggested that there is significant ($\chi^2=139.167$, $p\text{-value}=.000$). DF.4 Majority of respondent agreed that teachers do not use direct method while teaching.

Table 3 Teachers have lack of confidence

	Observed N	Expected N	Residual	Chi- Square	Sig.	DF
strongly agree	79	60.0	19.0	88.167	.000	4
Agree	96	60.0	36.0			
Undecided	80	60.0	20.0			
Disagree	37	60.0	-23.0			
strongly disagree	8	60.0	-52.0			
Total	300					

The interpretation of the above statement reveals that 79 teachers were in favor of the statement related to the lack of confidence in teachers, 96 respondents ‘agreed’ with the statement which collectively make 175 that is almost above 50% of the total sample. Moreover, 80 respondents were undecided about the statement. On the other hand, 37 respondents strongly disagreed and only 08 respondents strongly disagreed with the statement. This trend shows that the teachers who teach English in elementary schools of Bagh Azad Kashmir were not confident in using English language in the classrooms. The chi- square Suggested that there is significant ($\chi^2=88.167$, $p\text{-value}=.000$). DF. 4 Majority of respondent agreed that teachers have lack of confidence

Table 4 Students feel hesitation while speaking in English

	Observed N	Expected N	Residual	Chi- Square	Sig.	DF
strongly agree	67	60.0	7.0	57.367	.000	4
Agree	88	60.0	28.0			
Undecided	77	60.0	17.0			
Disagree	56	60.0	-4.0			
strongly disagree	12	60.0	-48.0			

The interpretation of the above statement shows that 67 respondents strongly agreed with the statement, and 88 respondents agreed with the given statement which collectively make 155 respondents who believe that students feel hesitation to speak English in classroom which attracts our attention to motivate the students to speak English because effective and correct language speaking is directly related to practice which is not provided to the students of elementary level in District Bagh Azad Kashmir. Moreover, 77 respondents remained undecided regarding the statement. On the other hand, 56 respondents disagreed and only 12 respondents strongly disagreed with the statement which shows that still there are the teachers who encourage their students to speak English in the classroom which is a positive sign towards reducing or removing the errors in the writing of the students because writing and speaking are both productive skills and are closely related to each other. The chi-square suggested that there is significant ($\chi^2=57.367$, $p\text{-value}=0.000$). DF. 4 Majority of respondent agreed that students feel hesitation while speaking in English.

Results

Following are the results of the study after investigation:

- First category found as a result of analysis is related to tenses. The students of elementary level make errors in helping verbs at highest level whereas they moderately make errors in main verbs during the use of tenses.
- Second category of errors was the errors related to prepositions. The students make highest level of errors in compound prepositions whereas second highest ratio of errors was found in simple prepositions and lowest ratio of errors was found in complex prepositions.
- Third category of errors was errors related to adjectives. Highest level of errors was found in the use of comparative degree of adjective while second highest ratio of the errors was found in simple adjectives and lowest ratio of errors was found in superlative degree of adjectives.
- Fourth category of errors made by students was errors related to main verb. In this regard, highest ratio of errors was found in the use of regular and irregular verbs. Second highest level of errors was found in the use of subject-verb agreement. The lowest ratio of errors was found in the use of transitive and intransitive verbs.
- Fifth category of errors made by students was related to the use of articles. Highest ratio of errors was found in indefinite article 'a' whereas second highest ratio of errors was found in the use of 'an'. However, the lowest level of errors was found in the use of definite article 'the'.
- Moreover, it was found as a result of the analysis that the teachers teaching English language to the students of elementary level in Bagh Azad Kashmir are untrained particularly in teaching of English language.

- It was also found that the teachers do not use direct method to improve the students' listening comprehension which is a natural way of learning a language which is a cause of errors in the writing of elementary students in the writing in English language,
- Further, it was found that the teachers avoid speaking in English language which is another cause of errors in the writing of students of elementary level.
- Finally, the students feel hesitation to speak English in the classrooms which is evidence that the students are not motivated to communicate in the target language.

Conclusion

The study concludes that the students of elementary level make errors related to different types of verbs, prepositions, articles and adjectives. Moreover, it has also been concluded that teachers who are teaching English in different elementary schools of District Bagh Azad Kashmir have lack of training. Moreover, traditional teaching methodologies are not working properly and need to be changed with effective teaching methodologies. For the students of elementary level Bagh, it is suggested that the syllabus should be designed on the basis of the results of the current study and settle their issue of errors in written English. In addition, new teaching methodology should be used to improve the written English of the students of the selected level.

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