

EXPLORATORY

STUDY IN STUDENTS ON MECHANICS OF WRITING

ESTUDIO EXPLORATORIO EN ESTUDIANTES SOBRE MECÁNICA DE LA ESCRITURA

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ABSTRACT

This study aimed to show the errors made by learners in male and female Kurdish EFL learners (English as a Foreign Language), as well as to examine the kind and frequency of frequent faults in Kurdish EFL learners while taking proper writing mechanics into consideration. In this sense, a composition test served as the study's instrument, and the participants' mistakes were examined. To further guarantee the validity of the tool and the outcomes, the inter-rater reliability was calculated. Names of writing skills was included in the checklist that the researchers created and utilized as a framework for fixing and evaluating the mistakes made by students to ensure the validity and reliability of the results. The study showed that capitalization (61%), punctuation (88%), and paragraphing (87%), in general, are the main areas of difficulty and the most common mistakes made by Kurdish pupils. Nonetheless, it was discovered that the female learners had performed better.

Keywords: Grammatical Errors, Curriculum designers, Error, Error analysis, EFL learners.

RESUMEN

Este estudio tuvo como objetivo mostrar los errores cometidos por los estudiantes de ambos sexos que aprenden inglés como lengua extranjera, así como examinar el tipo y la frecuencia de los errores frecuentes en los estudiantes de inglés como lengua extranjera, teniendo en cuenta la mecánica de la escritura adecuada. En este sentido, una prueba de composición sirvió como instrumento del estudio y se examinaron los errores de los participantes. Para garantizar aún más la validez de la herramienta y los resultados, se calculó la fiabilidad entre evaluadores. Los nombres de las habilidades de escritura se incluyeron en la lista de verificación que los investigadores crearon y utilizaron como marco para corregir y evaluar los errores cometidos por los estudiantes para garantizar la validez y fiabilidad de los resultados. El estudio mostró que el uso de mayúsculas (61 %), la puntuación (88 %) y la división en párrafos (87 %), en general, son las principales áreas de dificultad y los errores más comunes cometidos por los alumnos kurdos. No obstante, se descubrió que las estudiantes mujeres habían obtenido mejores resultados estudiantes.

Palabras clave: Errores gramaticales, Diseñadores de currículos, Error, Análisis de errores, Inglés como lengua extranjera.

INTRODUCTION

One of the talents that every educated person must acquire successfully is writing, which is one of the primary means of communication., which are primarily written form-based, might be negatively impacted if he fails to use this talent (Iftanti, 2016; Zabihi, 2028).

In this sense, writing— shows as a very difficult and problematic producing skill—finds its significance and function in both life and education. At different points in their life, people must write for a variety of reasons and according to the demands of communication in settings such as school, the workplace, friendship, or family. To create written texts that are suitable and error-free, learners should adhere to proper writing mechanics, utilize appropriate writing frameworks, and understand grammatical rules.

A thorough understanding of all the specific components of writing is also necessary to produce a well-written piece. Stated differently, grammatical forms and writing mechanics like capitalization, punctuation, and spelling are crucial (Kellogg & Raulerson, 2007).

Writing is often seen as a mediator and a crucial instrument for idea generation and transmission. In light of this, following proper writing mechanics is advantageous and helps in promoting communication. It makes it easier for the reader or readers to understand the content. There are several components that go into producing a flawless, along with having a suitable vocabulary. Understanding them is regarded as the foundation of writing. However, following the rules of writing as the essential components of a body of work is critical at the higher levels of writing skill development. Therefore, it is required of the students to grasp these.

Learning and, more specifically, acquiring writing abilities are not just the responsibility of the learners. Numerous different individuals and elements contribute to the learning process. Teachers, teacher educators, legislators, curriculum creators, curriculum developers, and institutional variables are all interconnected, much like a chain, as is the whole educational system. They play a part in setting up appropriate scenarios and putting into practice efficient techniques and tactics to assist pupils in writing efficiently and accurately.

Teachers often correct their students' writing assignments as a means of assisting foreign language learners with their written output. Therefore, it is highly helpful for foreign language learners to improve their writing abilities when the teacher corrects their mistakes (EC), explains them, and helps them apply the elements appropriately.

According to Brown & Hood (1989), writing mechanics are typically described as writing standards that are absent from spoken language. The phrase “the technical aspects of writing” refers to spelling, punctuation, and capitalization. Stated differently, writing mechanics refer to the accepted rules for the usage of words in one's documentation (Paltridge, 2001). Different academics, however, adopt somewhat different categories for this phrase while providing the same meanings.

Different academics have provided different explanations of writing mechanics. Yundayani et al. (2019) stated that syntax, sentence structure, and formatting are all components of writing mechanics. Gerunds, capitalization, numerals, pronouns, acronyms, units of measurement, contractions, punctuation, and abbreviations were among the mechanics mentioned by Barton & McCulloch (2018) examined abbreviations, manuscript form, syllabication, and numerals. Although they acknowledged that there are several other factors to take into account (Hyland, 2016), thought that punctuation and capitalization were the most crucial aspects of writing mechanics.

The essential goal is to investigate and identify the mechanics of writing, which Kurdish EFL students struggle with. Another objective of this study is to determine the frequency of mistakes produced by Kurdish students while taking into account each component of writing mechanics.

1. What are the most common mistakes Kurdish EFL students make when it comes to writing mechanics?
2. What opinions do Kurdish EFL teachers have on the mistakes that students make when it comes to writing mechanics?

MATERIALS AND METHODS

For this investigation, a qualitative research design was utilized. An examination of composition was used as the study tool to gather data. The findings were evaluated and expanded upon using frequency and descriptive analysis.

Students' written composition. Students from twenty Kurdish high schools in Erbil city were chosen by the researcher, and they were given forty minutes—a reasonable amount of time—to produce a piece on their holidays (the theme was “My holiday”) that was no more than five hundred words long. The researcher gathered all of the papers at the conclusion of the period. After the papers were collected, five compositions were randomly selected from each school. Consequently, we were given a total of 100 composition papers to review.

The most valuable and advantageous information that can be gathered to examine pupils' writing issues with relation

to grammar and writing mechanics is their own work. Since the compositions were students' sole written work, they were therefore an excellent source of data and the ideal research tool for gathering data. It highlights the biggest challenges that students face when putting their ideas and thoughts into writing. Errors occur and are identified there.

Checklist. The researcher developed a checklist to ensure that component used correctly. Setting a framework for the study, validating and enhancing correction, high reliability was also obtained using inter-rater reliability ($r > 0.85$)—and streamlining and standardizing the data analysis process were the goals of this action.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The three raters corrected the papers using a checklist whose reliability was previously evaluated in order to make it easier to analyze. The findings of the checklist were subjected to frequency analysis, The researchers used content and descriptive analysis to qualitatively analyze all of the data. It should be mentioned that the written outputs of the student participants were examined initially as a group. Then, according to the sex factor.

Following the three raters' evaluations of all the publications, the reliability of this research instrument was calculated 0.85.

All participants received assurances prior to the composition writing exam that the information they submitted would be kept private and confidential, Prior to beginning the writing test, pupils were instructed to write only their sex and not their names. It must be stated that, in accordance with Erbil legislation, authorization was obtained from the province administration for education and the ministry of education prior to the commencement of the data gathering procedure in Erbil's schools.

Findings and Discussions

In order to identify the frequency of students' writing errors and flaws, this study also looked at instructors' self-reflections on how they teach writing skills and how well they understand their students' writing problems. We also looked at their perspectives on the origins and causes of these mistakes, as well as how they fixed them and helped their students with their writing skills.

Kurdish EFL learners' most frequent mistakes in writing mechanics.

In order to address the initial research questions concerning the most common mistakes Kurdish students make in their writing, we need to consult table 1, which shows that the most common mistakes made were in the areas of capitalization, punctuation, paragraphing, and verb tenses, respectively. In summary, Table 1 identified these four components—capitalization, verb tense, punctuation, and paragraphing—as the most common mistakes committed by Kurdish learners overall.

Table 1. descriptive statistics to analyze how well each participant.

Proper implication of ...	Number	Percentage of not using	Remaining
Capitalization	100	60%	11%
Contractions	100	28%	25%
Punctuations	100	80%	9%
Spelling	100	21%	14%
Paragraphing	100	86%	6%
Gerunds and participles	100	8%	83%
Numbers and numerals	100	11%	58%

Verb tense	100	43%	26%
Word order	100	27%	5%
Determiners	100	41%	10%
Pronouns	100	22%	9%

Source: own elaboration.

According to Table 1, the majority of participants had poor skill in capitalization (61%), punctuation (88%), paragraphing (87%), and verb tenses (42%).

Given that the most of learners either avoided, or only used correctly in a small percentage of the instances in which they appeared in their compositions, it is impossible to determine whether or not they controlled using them.

One of the most important conclusions of this study is that, with very few exceptions, practically none of the participants used any punctuation, including the comma (,), colon (:), question mark (?), or semicolon (;). Participants only utilized the period (.) mark in a small number of instances. The other crucial fact is that most of the participants' essays had phrases that were unfinished, insufficient, and sometimes nonsensical. However, Mirahayuni (2002) identified and analyzed the learners' writing errors in their study on Malay EFL students, classifying them into categories based on their most common errors. Phakiti & Li (2011) separated writing errors. The most evident grammatical components employed the main focus of the study, along with a few grammatical aspects that seemed to be slightly connected to writing mechanics.

In other words, eleven categories—used to examine and categorize the students' written work in this study. With the exception of grammatical errors, which were among common kinds of mistakes, and other major errors, according to Riazi et al. (2018) the majority of participants' written productions contained grammatical errors, and the majority of student sentences were unintelligible and meaningless. In contrast to the results of our study, theirs also demonstrated the EFL learners' low vocabulary and inability to apply sentence construction norms. In general, participants utilized the proper spelling of the words and had adequate and high vocabulary knowledge, errors in finding were in component of writing punctuation, capitalization, paragraphing, and verb tenses. In contrast, Sasaki (2000) found that, prepositions, and lexicon were the popular kindss of errors made by participants in a different study on Kurdish students.

Kurdish EFL female pupils' writing mechanics errors.

According to Table 2, the majority of students score poorly when it comes to paragraphing (78%), capitalization (62%), and punctuation (92%). the majority of the female participants either avoided using or only used correctly once or twice in their papers, making it impossible to assess their level of writing mechanics proficiency. The table does, however, demonstrate that most participants employed components of writing appropriately.

Table 2. Analyzing the performance of the female participants in using writing mechanics using descriptive statistics.

Proper implication of ...	Number	Percentage of not using	Remaining
Capitalization	50	61%	11%
Contractions	50	21%	31%
Punctuations	50	91%	7%
Spelling	50	11%	11%
Paragraphing	50	79%	9%
Gerunds and participles	50	3%	91%
Numbers and numerals	50	21%	47%
tenses	50	27%	37%

Word order	50	25%	7%
Determiners	50	31%	13%
Pronouns	50	11%	9%

Source: own elaboration.

In research done, Rostami & Boroomand (2015) found that female learners make more errors in process of writing. Conversely, the results of this study take into account the majority of the writing mechanics components examined in the compositions of Kurdish students. The performance of female students was comparatively better than that of male students. In line with the results of this study, they also came to the conclusion that the types of mistakes that box gender of learners made in the process of writing were comparable. Students of both genders exhibited essentially the same set of mistakes. Additionally, the frequency of their mistakes varied depending on each component of writing mechanics.

Kurdish EFL male students' mistakes in writing mechanics.

When it came to capitalization, punctuation, verb tenses, and paragraphing, male students made the most mistakes. The results demonstrated that, in contrast to male students, female learners did not perceive verb tense to be one of the primary errors they committed, but rather as a justification for doing so. Found faults made by both gender in process of writing, I can presume that both male and female students likely struggle to recognize when and how to employ any of the verb tenses in phrases. Interestingly, whereas the frequency of the errors varied. In general, taking into account Table 3. The common errors committed by Kurdish students as tenses, capitalization, punctuation and paragraphing. Unexpectedly, the majority of Kurdish students used no punctuation at all in their writings, with the exception of a handful that utilized the period. This indicates that the students did not understand the significance of punctuation, its many forms, or the contexts in which it should be used. In a similar vein, the majority of participants were ignorant about paragraphing. Since most of them lacked paragraphing, they frequently produced work that lacked consistency and cohesiveness by using lengthy, unrelated paragraphs.

Likewise, regarding when they should and shouldn't capitalize words, the majority of pupils shown a lack of understanding. The fact that few students capitalized nouns and shows that they only partially understood capitalization, or that they may have done so accidentally without understanding the rules.

When it came to determiners, a lot of mistakes were discovered because the article "the" was used incorrectly. This indicates that the participants were not familiar with how to use "the" in the right contexts.

Table 3. Analyzing the male learners' performance.

Proper implication of ...	Number	Percentage of not using	Remaining
Capitalization	50	63%	9%
Contractions	50	34%	15%
Punctuations	50	82%	12%
Spelling	50	33%	17%
Paragraphing	50	93%	4%
Gerunds and Participles	50	120%	70%

Source: own elaboration.

As Table 3 demonstrates, there was a noticeable lack of understanding and focus on the proper usage of Component of mechanics of writing. Numerous errors found writings, indicating they did not learn these concepts or been instructed to take them into consideration when writing.

It is impossible to determine whether or not they have mastered these writing mechanics. While some participants utilized gerunds and participles appropriately in their writings, the table shows that the majority employed correctly.

CONCLUSION

According to the survey, Kurdish students have a very hard time using proper writing mechanics, particularly when it comes to capitalization, punctuation, paragraphing, and verb tenses. The most common mistakes made by students were in those writing mechanics components. In contrast to male students, female students often performed better in their writing. Perhaps ineffective knowledge of these writing mechanics rules—indicate that Kurdish students urgently need to learn and practice these mechanics while also working on their grammar in order to become better writers.

Implications

It is true that teachers play crucial roles in helping their pupils improve their proficiency in the target language. Therefore, instructors are the primary people responsible for Kurdish students' extreme difficulties in writing correctly and without errors utilizing the proper writing mechanics and associated language.

Nonetheless, the prevalence of student errors enables Kurdish instructors to better understand their students' writing challenges, concentrate on the areas that cause errors, and work to assist students in resolving those issues. This study also assists Kurdish instructors in identifying the inefficient approaches they employ while instructing writing skills and the necessity of using efficient teaching techniques in order to improve student outcomes. They should think about instructing their pupils on writing mechanics and motivating them to employ them appropriately in their writing. In order for their pupils to understand how to properly apply writing mechanics in their assignments, Kurdish teachers must employ efficient instructional techniques.

Training ineffective teachers is the responsibility of teacher educators, mentors, and supervisors of teacher education programs. It is predicted that the significance of teaching writing mechanics to teacher candidates would be taken into account by teacher educators and teacher education programs.

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