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RESEARCH PAPER

Investigating EFL Learners' Errors of Verbs: A Study Conducted at Intermediate Level in Rahim Yar Khan

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ABSTRACT

This research investigates the influence of structural abnormalities related to verbs on the development of proficient English writing skills, particularly among intermediate-level EFL learners. The study focused on the effects of verb-related errors on the writing capabilities of EFL students in Rahim Yar Khan, Pakistan, employing a quantitative research methodology. Data was collected from 300 randomly selected students through a standardized questionnaire and written samples. The findings provide reliable insights that underscore the importance of addressing verb-related errors in EFL instruction, utilizing descriptive statistics and correlation analysis. The research revealed that verb-related mistakes significantly affect the writing skills, self-expression, and language proficiency of EFL learners. It emphasizes the necessity for educators to implement targeted strategies aimed at reducing verb-related errors and enhancing students' language abilities. Furthermore, the results suggest that training and feedback focused on verb-related structures can substantially improve the writing accuracy and fluency of EFL students.

| **KEYWORDS** | EFL Students, Language Acquisition, Language Instruction Approaches, Techniques for Minimizing Errors, Verb-Related Mistakes, Writing Abilities |

Introduction

The foundation of effective communication, academic success, critical analysis, and professional growth is writing proficiency, which serves not only as a component but as a fundamental pillar of linguistic competence. For learners of English as a foreign language (EFL), particularly those at the intermediate level, mastering writing skills presents significant challenges (Akbar et al., 2023).

Moreover, EFL students may encounter additional obstacles stemming from cultural disparities and variations in writing conventions (Odena& Burgess, 2017). To meet the demands of diverse academic or professional environments, they may need to adapt their writing styles, which requires a deep understanding of the linguistic and cultural norms associated with English writing.

Writing skills are particularly vital for individuals learning English as a foreign language (EFL), as they constitute an essential aspect of language proficiency (Sun & Wang, 2020). Verbs play a crucial role in conveying meaning and ensuring coherence within sentences. However, intermediate EFL students in Pakistan often face challenges with verb usage, resulting in structural issues in their writing. Mostafa and Crossley (2020) emphasize that verbs are fundamental to sentence structure and coherence, as they denote actions or states of being and form the essence of a sentence. Consequently, intermediate EFL learners in Pakistan frequently struggle with the correct application of verbs, leading to further structural complications in their written work.

Literature Review

Verbs play a crucial role in constructing coherent sentences by expressing actions, states, and the relationships among various elements within a sentence. Nevertheless, EFL learners frequently encounter structural issues related to verb usage, leading to writing that is often inaccurate, awkward, and ambiguous. This review examines previous research to identify effective strategies for improving the verb usage skills of EFL learners and to understand the root causes of these challenges. It is essential for educators and curriculum developers to acknowledge the difficulties that EFL learners experience concerning verb usage (Barrot, 2019).

Understanding Structural Disorders in EFL Learners

Structural disorders refer to errors or challenges in the application of language structures, such as syntax and grammar, which impede effective communication among learners of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) (Damaiyanti, 2021). These difficulties can present in various forms, including improper verb usage, incorrect sentence construction, and inadequate word selection.

A significant factor contributing to structural disorders in EFL learners is the influence of their first language. Learners often make errors by transferring structures and conventions from their native language to English, a phenomenon known as language transfer.

Additionally, insufficient exposure to the target language plays a crucial role in the development of structural disorders. EFL learners may experience gaps in their language proficiency due to limited opportunities for interaction with native speakers or immersion in English-speaking environments.

Challenges with Verbs Faced by EFL Learners

Verb usage is a skill that many learning English as a foreign language (EFL) find challenging, especially when it comes to writing (McDonough & Crawford, 2020). Since they describe acts, states, and interactions inside sentences, verbs are essential to sentence construction. To effectively communicate in English, EFL learners must so understand verb usage.

It is difficult for learners to master English verbs since they contain multiple forms that convey tense, aspect, mood, and voice. The verb "to be" exemplifies the complexity of English, possessing eight distinct forms in the present tense (such as am, is, are), which can pose difficulties for beginners. Additionally, the impact of the learners' native language presents another challenge. Many languages feature verb structures and rules that diverge from those in English, leading learners to erroneously apply their native verb usage conventions to English. For instance, certain languages do not allow verbs to change form to express tense, which can result in errors among EFL learners when using tenses (Listia & Feriyanti, 2020).

Furthermore, a significant factor contributing to difficulties in verb usage among EFL learners is the limited exposure to authentic language contexts (Börjars&Burridge, 2019). Due to a lack of opportunities to engage with the language in real-life situations, learners may struggle with accuracy and fluency in their verb usage across various EFL environments.

Material and Methods

A quantitative research approach is employed to investigate structural issues related to verbs in the writing of EFL learners.

Research Instrument

This study employed quantitative research methodologies. Data was collected through written samples from EFL students, focusing on the examination of structural issues related to verbs. Furthermore, quantitative data regarding participants' perceptions of verb-related errors, the factors contributing to these errors, and potential solutions is being gathered via Likert scale questionnaires.

Population and Sampling

The participants in this study consist of intermediate-level English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students enrolled in government colleges located in District Rahim Yar Khan. To ensure that the sample accurately reflects the population, a purposive sampling method has been employed. The total sample size includes 300 students at the intermediate level, with an equal distribution of 150 males and 150 females, thereby achieving a balanced gender representation for optimal results.

Data Collection

The data collection procedure for this study involved two main methods:

Collecting written samples of EFL learners' writing and administering surveys. For the written samples, researchers collected texts produced by EFL learners at the intermediate level in District Rahim Yar Khan Colleges. These texts are being analyzed for verb-related structural disorders, such as errors in tense, agreement, usage, or syntax.

A coding scheme is being developed to assess and classify these errors, providing a standardized method for analysis.

Data Analysis

After data collection, the researcher proceeded with the analysis of the quantitative data. The first step involved manually coding the written samples of EFL learners' writing to identify and categorize verb-related structural disorders. A coding scheme is being developed to classify types of errors, such as tense errors, subject-verb agreement errors, and verb form errors.

Ethics

Informed consent is required for this research, and participants are provided with complete information about the goal, nature, and benefits of participating. They are assured of confidentiality and anonymity, and it is clearly explained how their data is utilized. Participation in this research is completely voluntary. Participants are assured that their unique answers are used solely for research purposes and are not connected to their identities.

Results and Discussion

Table 1
I _____ to school every day.

Sr.	Gender	Options selected by the respondents			Accuracy Percentage by the Respondents		
		Go	Goes	Going	Right	Wrong	Difference

No		F	%	F	%	F	%	Answers F	Answers %	Answers F	Answers %	F	%
1	Male	30-150	20%	75-150	50%	45-150	30%	30	20%	120	80%	90	60%
2	Female	55-150	36.6%	60-150	40%	35-150	23.3%	55	36.6%	95	63.3%	40	26.7%
3	Total	85-300	28.3%	135-300	45%	80-300	26.6%	85	28.3%	215	71.6%	130	43.3%

Table 1 shows that Out of the total 300 students selected for data analysis for this statement, 150 were male and 150 were female.

Among the male students, 20% used "Go," 50% used "Goes," and 30% used "Going." Among them, only 20% of male respondents chose the correct answer "Go," while 80% selected incorrect options.

Among the female students, 36.6% used "Go," 40% used "Goes," and 23.3% used "Going." Among them, only 36.6% of female respondents correctly identified "Go," while 63.3% selected incorrect options.

Table No.02
She _____ breakfast every morning.

Sr. No	Gender	Options selected by the respondents						Accuracy Percentage by the Respondents					
		Eat		Eats		Eating		Right Answers		Wrong Answers		Difference	
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
1	Male	35-150	23.3%	75-150	50%	40-150	26.6%	75	50%	75	50%	0	0%
2	Female	50-150	33.3%	45-150	30%	55-150	36.6%	45	30%	105	70%	60	40%
3	Total	85-300	28.3%	120-300	40%	95-300	31.6%	120	40%	180	60%	60	20%

Table 2 shows that out of the total 300 students selected for data analysis for this statement, 150 were male and 150 were female.

Among the male students, 23.3% used "Eat," 50% used "Eats," and 26.6% used "Eating." Among them, 50% of male respondents chose the correct answer "Eats," while 50% selected incorrect options.

Among the female students, 33.3% used "Eat," 30% used "Eats," and 36.6% used "Eating." Among them, only 30% of female respondents chose the correct answer

"Eats," while 70% selected incorrect options.

Table 3
They _____ for the exam.

Sr.	Gender	Options selected by the respondents						Accuracy Percentage by the Respondents					
		Study		Studies		Studying		Right Answers		Wrong Answers		Difference	
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
1	Male	35-150	23.3%	55-150	36.6%	60-150	40%	35	23.3%	115	76.6%	80	53.3%
2	Female	40-150	26.6%	65-150	43.3%	45-150	30%	40	26.6%	110	73.3%	70	46.7%
3	Total	75-300	25%	120-300	40%	105-300	35%	75	25%	225	75%	150	50%

Table 3 shows that out of the total 300 students selected for data analysis for this statement, 150 were male and 150 were female.

Among the male students, 23.3% used "Study," 36.6% used "Studies," and 40% used "Studying." Among them, only 23.3% of male respondents chose the correct answer "Study," while 76.6% selected incorrect options.

Among the female students, 26.6% used "Study," 43.3% used "Studies," and 30% used "Studying." Among them, only 26.6% of female respondents correctly identified "Study," while 73.3% selected incorrect options.

Table 4
He _____ to the park yesterday.

Sr.	Gender	Options selected by the respondents						Accuracy Percentage by the Respondents					
		Walk		Walks		Walked		Right Answers		Wrong Answers		Difference	
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
1	Male	30-150	20%	70-150	46.6%	50-150	33.3%	50	33.3%	100	66.6%	50	33.3%
2	Female	60-150	40%	30-150	20%	60-150	40%	60	40%	90	60%	30	20%
3	Total	90-300	30%	100-300	33.3%	110-300	36.6%	110	36.6%	190	63.3%	80	26.7%

Table 4 shows that out of the total 300 students selected for data analysis for this statement, 150 were male and 150 were female.

Among the male students, 20% used "Walk," 46.6% used "Walks," and 33.3% used "Walked." Among them, 33.3% of male respondents chose the correct answer "Walked," while 66.6% selected incorrect options.

Among the female students, 40% used "Walk," 20% used "Walks," and 40% used "Walked." Among them, only 40% of female respondents chose the correct answer "Walked," while 60% selected incorrect options.

Table 5
We _____ a letter to our friends.

Sr	Gender	Options selected by the respondents						Accuracy Percentage by the Respondents					
		Write		Writes		Writing		Right Answers		Wrong Answers		Difference	
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
1	Male	55-150	36.6%	60-150	40%	35-150	23.3%	55	36.6%	95	63.3%	40	26.7%
2	Female	40-150	26.6%	30-150	20%	80-150	53.3%	40	26.6%	110	73.3%	70	46.7%
3	Total	95-300	31.6%	90-300	30%	115-300	38.3%	95	31.6%	205	68.3%	110	36.7%

Table 5 shows that out of the total 300 students selected for data analysis for this statement, 150 were male and 150 were female.

Among the male students, 36.6% used "Write," 40% used "Writes," and 23.3% used "Writing." Among them, 36.6% of male respondents chose the correct answer "Write," while 63.3% selected incorrect options.

Among the female students, 26.6% used "Write," 20% used "Writes," and 53.3% used "Writing." Among them, only 26.6% of female respondents chose the correct answer "Write," while 73.3% selected incorrect options.

Table 6
They _____ TV every night.

Sr.	Gender	Options selected by the respondents						Accuracy Percentage by the Respondents					
		Watch		Watches		Watching		Right Answers		Wrong Answers		Difference	
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%

Sr. No.	Gender							Right Answers		Wrong Answers		Difference	
1	Male	50-150	33.3%	48-150	32%	52-150	34.6%	50	33.3%	100	66.6%	50	33.3%
2	Female	77-150	51.3%	40-150	26.6%	33-150	22%	77	51.3%	73	48.6%	4	2.67%
3	Total	127-300	42.3%	88-300	29.3%	85-300	28.3%	127	42.3%	173	57.6%	46	15.3%

Table 6 shows that out of the total 300 students selected for data analysis for this statement, 150 were male and 150 were female.

Among the male students, 33.3% used "Watch," 32% used "Watches," and 34.6% used "Watching." Among them, 33.3% of male respondents chose the correct answer "Watch," while 66.6% selected incorrect options.

Among the female students, 51.3% used "Watch," 26.6% used "Watches," and 22% used "Watching." Among them, only 51.3% of female respondents chose the correct answer "Watch," while 48.6% selected incorrect options.

Table 7
She _____ her homework already.

Sr. No.	Gender	Options selected by the respondents						Accuracy Percentage by the Respondents					
		Finish		Finishes		Finished		Right Answers		Wrong Answers		Difference	
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
1	Male	60-150	40%	55-150	36.6%	35-150	23.3%	35	23.3%	115	76.6%	80	53.3%
2	Female	30-150	20%	40-150	26.6%	80-150	53.3%	80	53.3%	70	46.6%	10	6.67%
3	Total	90-300	30%	95-300	31.6%	115-300	38.3%	115	38.3%	185	61.6%	70	23.3%

Table 7 shows that out of the total 300 students selected for data analysis for this statement, 150 were male and 150 were female.

Among the male students, 40% used "Finish," 36.6% used "Finishes," and 23.3% used "Finished." Among them, 23.3% of male respondents chose the correct answer "Finished," while 76.6% selected incorrect options.

Among the female students, 20% used "Finish," 26.6% used "Finishes," and 53.3% used "Finished." Among them, only 53.3% of female respondents chose the correct answer "Finished," while 46.6% selected incorrect options.

Table 8
He _____ a book before he went to bed.

Sr. No.	Gender	Options selected by the respondents						Accuracy Percentage by the Respondents					
		Read		Reads		Reading		Right Answers		Wrong Answers			
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
1	Male	60-150	40%	35-150	23.3%	55-150	36.6%	60	40%	90	59.9%	30	19.9%
2	Female	45-150	30%	60-150	40%	45-150	30%	45	30%	105	70%	60	40%
3	Total	105-300	35%	95-300	31.6%	100-300	33.3%	105	35%	195	64.9%	90	29.9%

Table 8 shows that out of the total 300 students selected for data analysis for this statement, 150 were male and 150 were female.

Among the male students, 40% used "Read," 23.3% used "Reads," and 36.6% used "Reading." Among them, 40% of male respondents chose the correct answer "Read," while 59.9% selected incorrect options.

Among the female students, 30% used "Read," 40% used "Reads," and 30% used "Reading." Among them, only 30% of female respondents chose the correct answer "Read," while 70% selected incorrect options.

Table 9
They _____ the meeting tomorrow.

Sr. No.	Gender	Options selected by the respondents						Accuracy Percentage by the Respondents					
		Attend		Attends		Attending		Right Answers		Wrong Answers		Difference	
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
1	Male	48-150	32%	48-150	32%	54-150	36%	48	32%	102	68%	54	36%
2	Female	42-150	28%	38-150	25.3%	70-150	46.6%	42	28%	108	71.9%	66	43.9%
3	Total	90-300	30%	86-300	28.6%	124-300	41.3%	90	30%	210	69.9%	120	39.9%

Table 9 shows that out of the total 300 students selected for data analysis for this statement, 150 were male and 150 were female.

Among the male students, 32% used "Attend," 32% used "Attends," and 36% used "Attending." Among them, 32% of male respondents chose the correct answer "Attend," while 68% selected incorrect options.

Among the female students, 28% used "Attend," 25.3% used "Attends," and 46.6% used "Attending." Among them, only 28% of female respondents chose the correct answer "Attend," while 71.9% selected incorrect options.

Table 10
She _____ English for three years.

Sr. No.	Gender	Options selected by the respondents						Accuracy Percentage by the Respondents					
		Study		Studies		Studied		Right Answers		Wrong Answers		Difference	
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
1	Male	30-150	20%	60-150	40%	60-150	40%	60	40%	90	60%	30	20%
2	Female	70-150	46.6%	35-150	23.3%	45-150	30%	45	30%	105	69.9%	60	39.9%
3	Total	100-300	33.3%	95-300	31.6%	105-300	35%	105	35%	195	64.9%	90	29.9%

Table 10 shows that out of the total 300 students selected for data analysis for this statement, 150 were male and 150 were female.

Among the male students, 20% used "Study," 40% used "Studies," and 40% used "Studied." Among them, 40% of male respondents chose the correct answer "Studied," while 60% selected incorrect options.

Among the female students, 46.6% used "Study," 23.3% used "Studies," and 30% used "Studied." Among them, only 30% of female respondents chose the correct answer "Studied," while 69.9% selected incorrect options.

The findings of this research enhance our understanding of the complex dynamics associated with structural disorders in verb usage and their implications for language acquisition. Additionally, they underscore the importance of targeted interventions aimed at supporting EFL learners in enhancing their writing skills. The comprehensive analysis by gender illustrates the critical need for personalized instruction to address structural irregularities, highlighting the importance of focused practice to improve the accuracy of verb usage and foster a conducive learning environment.

Conclusion

In summary, the results of the study reveal that structural abnormalities in verb usage are prevalent among EFL students, with a considerable number facing challenges in verb identification, incorrect verb forms, and irregular verb tenses. Additionally, it has been observed that these structural discrepancies adversely affect students' writing skills,

their ability to express themselves effectively, and their overall language proficiency. The study emphasizes the necessity for educators to implement targeted strategies, such as practice exercises, explicit teaching, and corrective feedback, to address these structural issues in verb usage.

Recommendations

Here are some recommendations to address structural issues in verb usage among English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners:

- **Foster a Supportive Learning Environment** : Create an atmosphere where learners feel encouraged and comfortable to practice and develop their language skills.
- **Enhance Language and Writing Abilities**: Implement targeted activities and exercises designed to improve both written and spoken English proficiency.
- **Apply Specific Techniques**: Introduce strategies and methods that directly address common challenges in verb usage, ensuring they align with the learners' needs.

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