

¹ An Analysis of Preposition (Idiomatic Phrases, Prepositional
² Phrases and Zero Prepositions) Detection Errors in the Writing
³ of Graduate ESL Learners of Pakistan

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7 Abstract

8 In this paper we describe a methodology for detecting preposition errors in the writing of ESL
9 graduate learners. To investigate the nature of errors in the writing skill problems of graduate
10 learners, two fifty graduate male and female learners randomly selected from four colleges and
11 one university were asked to complete two writing skill tasks: Fifth word deletion and open
12 composition test. The study is related to the research question: Why ESL graduate learners
13 commit errors in their writing skills? (a) Prepositions, phrasal verbs and idiomatic phrases. It
14 is detected that preposition overuse and preposition omission are the common problems for
15 ESL. Besides, students deem prepositions quite tricky to use in their writing. So the findings
16 show the wrong use of prepositions specifically ?with, in, of? and unnecessary insertion of
17 prepositions. It is observed that errors are because of the interference of L1 in L2. Besides,
18 the final results of the two tests showed that Prepositions (prepositional verbs, prepositional
19 phrases, phrasal verbs, zero prepositions) are quite problematic for ESL learners. The learners
20 try to put prepositions on the same patterns of L1 which ultimately leads them towards errors.

22 **Index terms**— prepositions, idiomatic phrases, prepositional phrases, zero prepositions and interference of
23 L1 in L2

24 1.1. Introduction

he performance of the learners in writing skill performance-based assessment tasks such as the constructed-response in essay mode is often evaluated by the language experts. Most commonly used rubrics to assign a score to writing in performancebased assessments (PBAs) are analytic, holistic and primary traits rubrics (East & Young, 2007). But for the purpose of this study, the researcher has used analytic scoring technique because it can upgrade (Xi & Mollaun, 2006) reliability among measures. Each linguistic feature is assigned a separate score in analytic scoring technique. In a writing skill assessment task, it provides sufficient diagnostic information of the underlying ability of the learners. On the other hand, in holistic scoring technique only a single score is assigned to the overall performance of the learners in a writing task and this is what is practiced by the examiners in Pakistan. A probable threat posed by this technique is that it does not expose merits and demerits of the learners' writing skill (Weigle, 2002). The present study focuses on prepositions and grammatical accuracy to analyze the writing skill of ESL graduate learners. Keeping in view the nature and purpose of the study, it is important to explain what is meant by 'errors' and 'mistakes'. The words and sentences used by the learners during their writing task are checked by language instructors in the process of evaluating ESL learners' writings. They are commonly termed as errors, mistakes and slips. The presence of errors refers to the learners' inability to employ properly the semantic categories, structure of grammar and other linguistics units. The terms 'mistakes' and 'errors' are repeatedly confused and interchanged with each other with the notion of their being synonymous for each other. Actually they are not semantically synonymous; there is a lucid and clear line of difference between these two terms. There are a variety of definitions of 'errors' and 'mistakes' which seem quite relevant to this study and support to make a difference between these two terms. In an unequivocal way, Norrish (1983)

3 B) PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

44 drew a line between 'errors' and 'mistakes' by positing that errors refer to the deviation of the learners from the
45 systematic rules of language that they have not learnt; they use them in a wrong way again and again. Norrish
46 describes mistakes as a deviation that is inconsistent, it means that a learner is delivered an accurate form and
47 he tends to use only one form at times and skip the other form. So this inconsistency of the deviation of a correct
48 form is termed as a mistake. ??inkler (2008) is of the view that we can know from the mistakes of the learners
49 how far they understand the language than the correct things they say in their communication. Davidson (2007)
50 has made a difference between errors and mistakes, he analyzed that mistakes occur due to a momentary laps or
51 carelessness in thought, the correction of which is possible. At a deeper level, errors refer to the faulty expression.
52 It is something that has not been learnt as well as the correct version is not known by the learners. In this way,
53 the correction of errors is not as straightforward as is the case with mistakes. According to Brown (1980) mistakes
54 allude to the failure in order to use a system that is known by the learners in an approved manner. He further
55 precedes his argument that it is a performance error. Finally, we can infer from Brown's point of view that in
56 his native language, a native speaker can make a mistake but he cannot make an error which non-native learners
57 typically commit. To Edge (1989) an ESL learner can correct his mistakes by himself/herself but to correct
58 his errors, he definitely requires the supervision of some competent language instructor. From aforementioned
59 discussion, it is quite vivid that errors are the result of lack of knowledge with regard to the language rules.

60 A learner has to go through a complicated, hit and trial process to learn a second language. In Pakistani
61 education system, English language teaching has always occupied a superior status. Students are scarcely
62 conscious towards the process of English language writing skill in Pakistan because particularly at college level
63 there is not any systematic procedure and implementation of error analysis system. Besides, in this regard
64 teachers hardly make any committed effort. Consequently in English language writing skill, ESL learners go on
65 making errors and mistakes. Teachers do not rectify these errors and as a result they become a constant feature
66 of learners' writing skill in the long run. The linguist is seriously concerned with the errors of the learners in
67 modern languages pedagogy because the analysis of the errors of ESL learners provides useful information to
68 teachers about the problematic areas that require to be rectified. On students writing skill, an integral part
69 of second language instruction is the feedback. It supports in knowing how far the students have been able to
70 steer on the road of amelioration in their writing skill. Perhaps on the part of teachers, this is estimated to be
71 one of the most vital responsibilities. No doubt, the feedback given by the teacher affects of how ESL learners
72 should move toward the writing skill process and make revisions to their writing for improvement (Hedgcock
73 & Lefkowitz, 1994). In learning a language, error analysis gives an access to the learners' strategies that they
74 employ to point out the factors involved in learners' errors, to be familiar with the difficulties of learners to learn
75 a language (Richards, Plott & Platt, 1996).

76 For teachers, students and researchers, the analysis of the students' errors is greatly effective and valuable
77 ??Michaelides, 1990).

78 The response of the teacher towards students' errors attracts the researchers more than anything else. Ferris
79 (2002Ferris (, 2003)) and Goldstein (2001 ??oldstein (, 2005)) both give great importance to "judicious" and
80 "purposeful" error correction. On the techniques of error correction research, a lion's share of error correction
81 research has its fundamental focus on it. There are two major error correction techniques (1) direct and (2)
82 indirect error feedback. Hendrickson (1980) explained that the provision of correct structures is the direct error
83 feedback and overt correction. According to ??erris (2003, p. 52) in indirect error feedback, the teacher merely
84 identifies the students' errors and underlines them but reluctant to offer correct forms or structures. For students,
85 an indirect error feedback is beneficial. Ferris (2002Ferris (, 2003)) opines that in the beginning stages direct
86 feedback is appropriate for ESL learners because when the students are beginners; their errors are "untreatable".
87 In other words, the students do not have the competence to correct their errors such as the structural and
88 vocabulary errors.

2 a) Problem Statement

90 From school and college level, English language is taught as a compulsory subject. Conversely, in spite of its
91 being taught for so many years, the ESL learners at graduate level still have problems in their second language
92 especially in prepositions and grammatical accuracy. The learners have to face many difficulties of how to write
93 accurately in accordance with syntactic rules. They even cannot develop meaning between sentences. They
94 cannot write an essay accurately with the correct use of prepositions. In writing skill, linguistic features are of
95 great significance. In this feature, the lack of competence brings about a great detriment to their educational
96 performance. So this study was conducted to investigate this problem.

3 b) Purpose of the Study

97 The most important object of the study was to find out the problematic areas related to the area of prepositions
98 and grammatical accuracy in the writing skill of ESL graduate learners. To have an access to the most challenging
99 domains of the learners in their process of writing activity; each linguistic feature under analysis was evaluated
100 through repeated measures in two writing skill performance-based tasks.

102 4 II. Methodology

103 This section briefly discusses the methodology used in the present study: nature of study, research design,
104 population and sample and instrument used in data collection procedure.

105 5 a) Research Design

106 The study uses descriptive research design to describe the nature of the problems and difficulties of graduate
107 ESL learners' writing skill proficiency. So, this study describes an authentic and actual phenomenon without the
108 intervention of any experiment. The focus of the descriptive nature of the present study is to describe the errors
109 of ESL learners and provide practical measures to be taken to solve them.

110 6 b) Population and Sample

111 The population of the present study comprises the students doing their Bachelor studies in both public/ private
112 sectors college/university of Punjab, Pakistan. The sample comprised two hundred and fifty male and female
113 students from medical and non-medical both arts and science groups were selected for this paper. The researcher
114 follow quasi-random sampling technique.

115 7 c) Research Instruments

116 Two types of tests were used as instruments to collect data from the graduate ESL learners. The first test fifth
117 word deletion used to assess their overall grammatical accuracy and capability to fill blanks appropriately, the
118 second test was a controlled discussion question that was to be answered in an essay form entitled "Terrorism".
119 In fifth word deletion, they were asked to put apt prepositions in idiomatic and prepositional phrases. Besides,
120 they were asked to point out carefully zero prepositions.

121 8 III. Literature Review a) Interface of L1 in L2

122 Articles are involved in the interaction of linguistic and non-linguistic knowledge and a variety of discourse
123 processes. The article system is a reflection of an interface (Maratsos, 1974). The differences between Hindi and
124 Urdu are sociolinguistics, because at phonological and grammatical level they are closely related. ??Schmidt,
125 1999, p. xiv), and these languages are morphophonologically different (Bhatia, 1993). The expression of
126 definiteness is the same in these languages. Hindi, Urdu and Punjabi (Kachru, 2006), (Schmidt, 1999), (Bhatia,
127 1993) are articles languages. According to Hegarty, 2005, to the child universal set of features are accessible and
128 the child's acquisition selects only those features that are installed in his/her L1. These features are drags into
129 languagespecific lexical items. The children acquiring their L1 compose lexical items with a sequence; the sets of
130 features are accessible to them. In L2 acquisition, the process is different. The features that are not present in
131 the first language are obtainable to learners and acquirable, but on the other side, morphological differences in
132 how features are assembled in lexical items present a factual learning problem, even in the case of L1-L2 pairs
133 when both languages opt for the equivalent subset of related features. In this case, the acquisition problem entails
134 the learners' figuring out how the relevant features are remapped onto new languagespecific morphophonological
135 forms.

136 9 b) Interference of L1 in L2

137 Bertkua ??1974) declares that the interference of L1 is accountable for errors in L2. ??ryant (1984 P: 3) tried
138 to scrutinize the errors of articles by analyzing round about 200 English essays written over a three year period
139 by the University students of Japanese, and he evaluates the frequency of errors in articles encountered among
140 Slavic and Asian students which have no article system ??Bryant 1984, p. 3). Cohen recommended that errors
141 are due to the deep misconceptions of article system ??Cohen 1998, p. 156). Spontaneously, the usage of articles
142 depends upon the speakers and circumstances. A number of researchers are of the view that the article organism
143 is unlearnable, they consider it a natural exposure of language (Duly, Burt, & Krashen 1982). It is a fact that if
144 articles are learnt under fixed pattern where they are spoken by native speakers (Kimizuka 1968, p.79). Celce-
145 Murcia and Larsen-Freeman (1983) said that definite and indefinite articles fundamentally depend on discourse
146 context to determine them (Celce-Murcia-Freeman 1983, p. 172). Rutherford (1987) explains his argument that
147 it is quite obvious to say that the subjects of the sentences are essentially governed by discourse not syntax,
148 the interaction between grammar and discourse emerge from determiners ??Rutherford 1987, p. 59). Master
149 (1987 ??aster (& 1997)), Parrish (1987), all have studied the learning of articles. Most of the researchers revolve
150 around the English functional words which have a considerable focus on English article system (Chaudron &
151 Parker, 1990) seem to focus on two prevailing areas: the process of acquisition pedagogy and its effectiveness.
152 Master (1987) highlighted that articles are acquired differently and they depend on the fact whether they occur
153 in the native language of the learners. The definite article the precedes the indefinite article a ??Huebner, 1983).
154 Numerous studies have been conducted on the wrong use of the definite article the. The proficient learners can
155 improve their correct use of indefinite articles A viewed the over generalized of definite article the. Thomas (1989)
156 tends to say that across proficiency level, the zero article is generalized. ??aster, (1997), proposed that in early
157 stages of language learning for those learners who have articles languages (like polish Urdu Asian, Slavic etc)

11 D) ERROR ANALYSIS

158 seem to dominate in all environments. Parrish (1987) proceeds to point out an order of acquisition that zero,
159 definite and indefinite articles are consecutively acquired. Inter language is the process of L1 and L2 learning
160 which is solely related to an intermediate language as a stage between the native and non native language.
161 Lennon's analytically classified (Brown, 1994) which consists on prepositional errors regarding disordering 2%,
162 substitution 61%, omission 11% and addition 26% are drawn after data analysis in Leonon's study. The ultimate
163 results indicate that in domain of substitution i.e. 60% is the highest incorrect use of prepositional system of L1
164 (Urdu) and L2 as well as in the process of selecting proper and relevant prepositions in order to describe distinctive
165 relationships in linguistic elements. Primary category of errors is communication strategy-based ??James. 1998).
166 The occurrence of interlingual errors is fundamentally due to the interference of native language. On the other
167 hand, over co-occurrence restrictions of prepositions are viewed under the category of intralingual errors ??James
168 1998).

169 10 c) Language Transfer

170 Inter language consists of the features of native language and non native language. The mother tongue of the
171 learner largely influences the learning of their L2. Selinker ??1972) argues that language transfer refers to the
172 processes that produce fossilized competences that are central to the second language learning processes. There
173 are two types of transfer: negative transfer and positive transfer. Positive transfer from native to foreign language
174 occurs when the native language and foreign language have the same form and its similarity assists L2 acquisition.
175 Negative transfer occurs when native language pattern or rules bring about an inappropriate form in the target
176 language.

177 11 d) Error Analysis

178 Since 1950s, the error analysis (EA) in both languages Second as well as Foreign language (L1/FL) learners is
179 playing its leading role in L2/L1 pedagogy. To develop linguistic system, EA tries to investigate learner's inter
180 language which can emerge between the L2/FL (Selinker 1972). A British linguist, Pit Corder (1967) refocused
181 his concentration on errors from the language acquisition and language processing perspective. He mentioned in
182 his paper: 'The significance of learner Errors' that errors are quite important because improvement is not possible
183 without errors. In this way, they are termed as developmental errors. Richard noted that error analysis shows
184 straight roads to deal with differences between the way adult native speakers of the language use and the way
185 people learning a language speaking (Richard, 1971, pp. 0.1). EA has adopted several ways to contribute in the
186 teaching of languages. Firstly, it provides to language developers and teachers the identification, description and
187 classification of errors which offer an informed knowledge of language which are deemed somehow problematic
188 for learners at large. Moreover, it makes strategies and policies to improve the learning and teaching process
189 regarding error correction and remedial teaching (Richard 1980). Secondly, the errors of learners give a certain
190 account of the competence and linguistic knowledge (Gass & Selinker 2001) offers valid information to teachers
191 that students are still required to learn. EA attempts to explain those errors which are because of psycholinguistic
192 strategies and mechanism ??Dulay, Burt & Krashen 1982). Belhaj (1997) conducted a research on his student's
193 errors which they committed mostly in their translation papers. The end results showed that students had
194 verb formed tense errors and errors in the domain of relative clause, prepositions, articles, noun, adjective and
195 miscellaneous. Radwan (1988) highlighted lexical and grammatical errors of the learners. The result pointed
196 out that students committed most of errors in the area of articles. Dessouky (1990) also seemed to investigate
197 the similar problematic area regarding second language learners, but the difference laid on the occurrence of
198 these errors. Kao (1999) examined the errors in the writing skill of Taiwanese students. Kao (1999) studied one
199 hundred and sixty nine compositions which were written by 53 Taiwanese college students. In this study, 928
200 errors were identified. The greatest frequency among these errors occurred with regard to grammatical errors was
201 66%, lexical errors were 18%. Lin scrutinized 26 essays of Taiwanese college students and the outcomes showed
202 that in sentence structure, the error frequency was 30.43%, wrong use of verb form was 21.01%, and wrong use
203 of words and sentences fragments were 15.94%. Chen observed that the most frequently occurred grammatical
204 errors were the misuse of English articles in the compositions. Han et al. (2006) have offered a maximum entropy
205 classifier in order to identify the errors in articles; it has achieved 83% accuracy. Chodorow et al (2007) analyzed
206 the identification of errors in preposition and he has drawn a consequent report regarding 80% precision and 30%
207 recall of these errors. Ultimately, Gamon et al (2008) utilized an intricate system which contained a language
208 model and a decision for both articles and prepositions errors. On the other hand, Yi et al (2008) suggested a
209 web account organism in order to correct determiners/ articles errors (P 62%). ??urner and Charniak (2007)
210 reported the best results on articles. Additionally, errors are deemed positive and systematic which are generally
211 meant rule-governed and internally consistent. In tune with tendencies in researchers of L2 and social linguistics,
212 Ellis (1985) argued about the existence of systematic variation of L2 learning regarding production. In advance,
213 this variation can be predicted as well as explained. It has two types of variability: variability of linguistic
214 context or situational context and variability of individual learner factors. Some researchers have elaborated that
215 in order to explain the frequency of errors, it is the high degree of polysemy and the number of preposition has
216 nearly made the task of systemization impossible. Accordingly, this confusion is reflected in grammars, books
217 as well as in textbooks. Specifically in the latter, care is not taken to make emphasis on vital areas because a

218 given preposition has more than one meaning. It is dependent on the content because and some verbs require an
219 obligatory preposition. Farnandez (1994, p .52) argued that students tend to learn verb without learning and they
220 are required to follow the specific preposition. Correa and Gonzalez (1992) analyzed four prepositions of location
221 in English; such as: in, on, at and over. Both of these researchers have concluded that we find learner's common
222 errors which occur primarily due to the interference of mother tongue (L1) into the second language (L2). The
223 most exciting premise underlying this hypothesis is that similarities can facilitate learning and differences can
224 hinder it between the two languages and ultimately as a result, the frequent errors occur in second language (L2).
225 In second language writing, two main errors are valuable: (1) interlingual (2) intralingual errors. At the outset, it
226 was the widespread conviction about language errors which are occurred by the transformation from one language
227 to another, some considerable studies have been conducted by ??ichard (1971) in the sphere of learner's errors.
228 Richard was the pioneer to break new grounds in this framework who robustly refuted this certainty that L1
229 interference is accountable for learner's errors. His study includes learners of Japanese, Chinese, French, and West
230 African backgrounds. A many errors have been put forward, for instance, prepositions, articles, distribution and
231 production of verb groups and the use of questions. He is of the view that a number of learner's errors generated
232 in the process of language acquisition and the mutual interference of the target language.

233 **12 e) English prepositions**

234 English has 60 to 70 prepositions that is a higher number (Koffi, 2010, p. 29). Furthermore, over 90 percent of
235 prepositions usage is estimated to involve nine most frequently used prepositions: (with, to, from, at, in, of, by,
236 for and on). However, on the basis of their functions, prepositions can be categorized such as preposition of time,
237 instrument, direction and agent. Prepositions occupy a huge multiplicity of meaning which is context dependent.
238 A specific preposition can change the actual meaning. Generally, prepositional errors can be found in both speech
239 and writing of nonnative learners. In the process of discovering the language, a learner's errors are considered
240 crucial as they can give an enough evidence of learning and unfolds many procedures and strategies which are
241 employed by the learner ??Corder, 1981). Different prepositions are used to indicate many relationships because
242 one preposition can have various translations. When students try to speak or write anything; they consciously
243 make an endeavor to find similar structures to Urdu in English. So learners cannot forget their prepositional
244 knowledge of L1 (Lam, 2009. P .3).

245 Prepositions are called group of words or merely words which become apparent either before (noun phrase or
246 indicate syntactic associations (Methew, 1997). Agoi (2003) verified that prepositions are used to explain the
247 link of noun or noun equivalents which it governs. Hamadallah and Tushyh (1988) pointed out that prepositions
248 are basically measured as functional words which establish a link between phrases, clauses or words in sentences.
249 EFL and ESL learners, have to face problems to use prepositions exactly. As far as a phenomenon known as
250 language transfer is concerned, a few rules are applied from L1 to L2. It happens during the learning of new
251 language. For second language learners, it seems to create problems because every language has its own rules and
252 we cannot make unnecessary changes in it. Thahir (1987) described that prepositions create problems for Arabic
253 learners of English because Arabic prepositions are a few in number. According to Abbas (1961) only twenty
254 (20) prepositions are in Arabic. To Hayden (1956) English language has fifty seven (57) prepositions. There are
255 three problems are common for ESL regarding prepositions: (1) deleting the necessary prepositions (2) usage of
256 incorrect preposition (3) using unnecessary prepositions.

257 According to Arab researchers, Arab EFL learners and, Jordanian EFL learners have to face tough time in
258 the usage of English prepositions. (Al- Marrani, 2009) reported that the learning of English prepositions is a
259 permanent problem for EFL. Hamadallah and Tushey (1988) mentioned that (EFL) as both Arabic and English
260 language belong to two different languages so Arab learners of English language have to face problems in learning
261 process of English. Thahir, (1987) analyzed that as a second language, students find many problems when they
262 make an actual usage of prepositions.

263 **13 f) Phrasal verbs, Idiomatic phrases and prepositional 264 phrases**

265 McArthur (1992) interprets that Samuel Johnson was the pioneer to introduce phrasal verbs in 1755, calling them
266 a composition, but Walker (1655.P 1) calls them as some particles as words which could be included as part of
267 the signification of the foregoing verb. It shows the verb-particle combination semantically. Phrasal verbs are
268 used in speech and in an informal writing. They also occur with growing frequency and in more formal writing.
269 A change in form and construction are accompanied by a transform in meaning ??Goldberg, 1995, pp. 8-9). The
270 particle may be put after the verb's object, separate from the verb to which it is connected. This alternation
271 occurs in transitive sentences. There are also some phrasal verbs which consist on this construction and they
272 are ungrammatical ??Curzan & Adams, 2006, p. 148). A preposition is the first word of a phrase that contains
273 a noun or a pronoun. In sentences, prepositions show a relationship between its object. So most of sentences
274 must have preposition in English. They can show relationships in time and they can show relationships between
275 objects in space. So, in English, prepositions have entirely different functions and meaning in sentences. In
276 speaking and writing, we use prepositions. The learners remain conscious of how to use it because it is very
277 useful both in speaking and writing. It is very essential because it expresses the meaning expressed by adjective

278 and adverbs: when, where, how and what kind. Prepositions which begin grammatical structures often called
279 prepositional phrases which always begin with a preposition and end with a noun or a pronoun which is the
280 preposition's object. For instance: They take a rest after the singing competition.

281 14 g) Challenges towards Prepositions

282 Prepositions are problematic for the ELL as each language has a set of rules which are responsible for the clash
283 points. ??James, 2007). One of these clash points, prepositions are at the heart. According to Celce-Murica
284 and Larsen-Freeman (1999), prepositions are typically completed by the use of inflections. But in each language,
285 prepositions do not behave in the same manner. A mismatch problem can be detected between English and
286 other languages. A second language learner will elucidate an English word from its native equivalent; but this
287 method seems inadequate for function word but it works for content words. There is a diversity of opinions
288 along with a mismatch problem between languages. Preposition is called a word which shows the location of one
289 object in relation to another. It seems multifarious for English language learners (ELL) to learn the nuance of
290 all the English prepositions, how to bring into play them and how to comprehend them. In the contemporary
291 teaching strategy, despite these challenges, prepositions are scarcely addressed. Prepositions are not only hard
292 to recognize but also inflexible for teachers to teach. In the definition, one is incapable to explicate a preposition
293 without using one or two more prepositions. So, the teacher would have to elaborate those new prepositions. In
294 this way, the teacher and the student are trapped in a spiraling whirlwind of prepositions. Without using an
295 alternative preposition, a teacher cannot define a preposition. The meaning and the definition are often fuzzy
296 and have not an unambiguous understanding for the students. Several teachers and the textbooks do not teach
297 prepositions and that's why student remain in constant trouble.

298 To Noam Chomsky (1981), UG is an exact system of rules. In this way, universal grammar explores two
299 deep-seated aspects: First, the theoretical framework of prepositions secondly, an interaction of UG with SLA.
300 It is that in order to explain the frequency of errors is the high degree of polysemy and the sheer numbers of
301 prepositions have nearly made the task of systemization impossible. This confusion is reflected in textbooks and
302 grammars. So a due care is not taken on the important areas because a given preposition has more than one
303 meaning. It is dependent on the content that there are verbs followed by prepositions. Farnandoz (1994, p .52)
304 argued that students tend to learn verb without learning and they are required to follow the specific preposition.
305 He has analyzed four prepositions of location in English; such as: in, on, at and over. Both of these researchers
306 have concluded that we find learner's common errors due to the interference of mother tongue. Similarities can
307 facilitate learning and differences can hinder it between the two languages and ultimately the frequent errors
308 occur in second language (L2).

309 15 h) Contrastive Analysis of Prepositional Errors

310 To Lado, in foreign language learning, the comparison between native and foreign language lays the key towards
311 ease or complexity. The elements which are different will be difficult and those that are similar will actually be less
312 difficult for the learners (Lado, 1957, pp .1-2). In sixties, CAH (contrastive analysis hypotheses) developed during
313 the domination of behavioral psychology and structural linguistics. Brown states in his book "Language learning
314 and teaching" that the heaviest barrier towards L2 acquisition is the first language interference. However, a
315 structural and scientific analysis of both languages in question would yield taxonomy of linguistic contrasts
316 between them which enable the linguistic to predict the complexities a learner have to encounter in turn
317 ??Brown, 2000, p. 208). A linguistic model of CAH was expounded by Bloomfield ??1933). Further, this
318 model was elaborated by Lado (1957). James (1985) pointed out that the psychological fundamentals of CAH
319 are 'Associationism'. The assumption regarding CAH is that in L2 utterances, the second language learners use
320 to transfer certain features of native language. (Lado, 1957, p.2). The meaning of 'transfer' in this context is
321 that to carry on the habits of L1 into L2 (Corder, 1971, p. 158).

322 Three versions regarding CAH are classified: Weak, Strong and Moderate. Strong version is highly impractical
323 and unrealistic version ??Brown, 2000). ??Wardhaugh (1970) viewed that this version expects primarily of linguists
324 to have a set of linguistic universals ??Brown, 2000). Moreover, it must be formulated within a comprehensive
325 linguistics theory which properly deals with phonology, syntax and semantics at the very least. An observational
326 use of CA is termed by Wardhaugh in the weak version of CA ??Brown 2000). Wardhaugh (1970, p. 125) is of
327 the view that teachers and students have successfully employed this weak version of CA regarding the unique
328 linguistic knowledge to observe the difficulty in the L2 learning (1970. P. 126). Oller and Ziahooss (1970. P. 186)
329 proposed a moderate version of CA. According to their perceived differences or similarities, the categorization of
330 abstract and concrete patterns is the basis of learning. So, when patterns are distinct in form and meaning then
331 confusions can be created in it.

332 16 i) Error frequency Rate in prepositional System

333 In a corpus of one million English words, one in ten words is a preposition (Fang, 2000). For theories of syntax,
334 prepositions are problematic. Prepositions are held to be one of the four main lexical categories along with nouns,
335 verbs and adjectives, and are contrasted with the functional categories (FC) like determiners, inflection and case.
336 In generative theory of syntax, the distinction between lexical and functional categories has played a central role.

337 The scheme that the functional element Infl(ection) heads the sentence (Huang, 1982) ultimately led to a parallel
338 re-analysis of Noun Phrases as Determiner Phrases (Abney, 1987). Since Pollock's (1989) Split-Infl hypothesis,
339 the questions about functional categories have largely concentrated on the nature of the formation of functional
340 projections, rather than the verity of their existence (Belletti (1994) for a firstrate depiction of the development
341 of agreement projections in Generative Grammar). However even the categorization of prepositions as a closed
342 class is awkward. and their membership is taken to range from 50 -60 members, as it is found in traditional
343 grammars of English (Warriner & Griffith, 1977), to 248, as found in a corpus study of prepositions (Fang, 2000).
344 It is accepted that innovative prepositions can be put into the class ??Kortmann & Konig, 1992) even though at
345 a very slow rate.

346 **17 j) Acquisition of English prepositions in English**

347 Primarily, prepositions are taken to be a closed class, a characteristic of functional categories and not lexical ones.
348 Prepositions put a semantic content in sentences, as demonstrated through their theta-role assignment, but a few
349 exceptional prepositions are argued to be empty Case assigners which are unable to assign any theta-roles and
350 the so-called Dummy Case Assigners. Prepositions are taken by most fields of language research to be a single,
351 homogeneous category despite these fundamental contradictory characteristics. In modern syntactic research,
352 the inconsistencies are pointed out in the category of prepositions (Tremblay, 1996). As these accounts differ
353 in their details, they all pointed out a theoretical division between prepositions which are lexical in nature and
354 those which are syntactic and functional in nature. The largest parts of prepositions express semantic relations,
355 as realized in their assignment of theta roles. But a few, like of and (arguably) the dative to seem to be syntactic
356 because they are required for Case assignment, but do not include any thematic properties to the structure. The
357 majorities of prepositions assign Case as do verbs while the syntactic ones assign Case inherently in a parallel
358 observation (Ura, (2001)).

359 **18 k) Empirical Evidence of Prepositional Errors**

360 The researchers have tried to conduct a survey on acquisition of preposition of time by English undergraduates
361 at Jordanian university or at Balqa University. ??ughoul (1979) highlighted in learning preposition that Arab
362 EFL learners face extraordinary problems. (a) Grammar translation problem which is a traditional method of
363 teaching motivates students to translate in their minds, (b) the interference from their native language, Arabic
364 (c) by a preposition; the English preposition is not expressed in Arabic. In addition, its equivalent is expected to
365 be different part of speech in this domain. Scott and Tucker (1974) expressed that to Arabic prepositions, English
366 rarely correspond to it. The concept of substitution in preposition stemmed from both English and Arabic forms.
367 Hashim (1996) made a meticulous inspection and concluded that the main cause of errors for EFL learners is
368 because of the influence of mother tongue. Kharma and Hajjaj (1997) have examined that prepositions are the
369 most troublesome aspect of syntax. Moreover, is called an eternal problem for EFL learners. Hamadallah and
370 Tushyeh ??1988) reported that in a contrastive analysis of both English and Arabic prepositions, it is found that
371 to a non-native speaker of English, preposition constitute a learning difficulty for them. Onike (2007) conducted
372 a study in which he examined that under second language learning situation, the learners typically misuse
373 prepositions. Furthermore, the conclusion indicates that the problem of usage is because of interference factor.
374 Catalan, R.M.J (1996) observed variability as well as frequency in errors regarding the specific use of English
375 prepositions. In this study, the sample was consisted on 290 essays. These essays were written by third year
376 students of English by three Spanish secondary school students in Madrid Spain. In the list of participants, there
377 were 172 females and 118 males approximately. The test draws conclusion that for the students, prepositions are
378 certainly difficult for foreign language learners. She made an emphasis that most frequent errors are commonly
379 substitution than addition and omission errors. She further precedes her argument that for Spanish learners
380 of English, prepositions are deemed somewhat tricky area to comprehend. Fion (2005) observed ESL Chinese
381 learner's acquisition of English spatial preposition (in, on, at). The consequences expose three focal problems of
382 ESL learners regarding preposition: (a) the overlook of the preposition (at) (b) the interpretation of the function
383 of spatial preposition (c) idiomatic difficulties. The preposition "at" is used more fewer times than the other two
384 because they regard it more abstract. ESL learners have absolutely found out that the acquisition of idiomatic
385 is the worst and most difficult to learn for them because it is abstract in nature. Sudhakaran (2008) noticed
386 prepositional errors Malay students of ESL from International Islamic University Malaysia; he analyzed the
387 procedure of preposition in both writing and speaking process. Besides, he draws conclusion that students have
388 omitted necessary prepositions. In the same writing task, some learners did their best in preposition (to, of, an)
389 in speaking as well (for, in, about). Boquist (2009) analyzed a study which is primarily based on L2 acquisition
390 of English preposition. In this study, he endeavors to commence the newfangled approaches towards teaching
391 prepositions for second language learners. The end result of this study fundamentally indicates the fact that
392 for several reasons, prepositions are relatively complicated to grasp especially for second language learners. The
393 reason is that there are certain clash points which are imposed by prepositions. There are numerous errors which
394 are committed by Iranian students in their translation. Moreover, the researchers made a comparison between
395 the errors of senior and junior students in order to identify the errors. In this manner, these errors have been
396 corrected at the university during their study. In this study, 40 senior and 40 junior student's errors have been

397 examined at Azad and Payan-e-Noor University in Iran 2009/2010. The errors are categorized into two categories.
398 The top findings showed that in English grammar, there are considerable shortfalls and 98% of the respondents
399 have grammatical errors which are because of intra-lingual influence. It is indicated by (Scott and Tucker, 1974)
400 the negative impression of mother tongue in interference in learning English prepositions is the root-cause. In
401 addition, the errors of EFL/ESL learners their use of English preposition are demonstrated by ??Hamadallah
402 Tushyeh, 1988). In English prepositions, the positivity of mother tongue interference is highlighted by (Scott &
403 Tucker, 1974).

404 19 1) Defining writing skill and its significance

405 Writing is considered a formal interpretation which contains a logical and succinct model. Furthermore, within
406 a minimum amount of space, it has the inclusion of information. It is peculiar to human species because it
407 is observable recording of language. It offers us the flexibility in order to transmit our ideas independent of
408 space and time. Through the usage of a set of signs, it illustrates language in a textual medium. It has been
409 explained and interpreted from a numerous ways and this indicates how complicate the writing process is. In
410 order to display the graphical and grammatical system, we make use of the visual medium in writing (Widdowson,
411 1979). In broader term, writing is not just to write down language into symbols rather it is a product and process
412 dexterity that requires purpose, instruction, coherence, feelings, knowledge, organization, experience and purpose
413 to communicate. It has various forms regarding formal and informal academic texts. At the level of grammar,
414 each type of writing marks manifold feature which are largely observable within the sentence. As far as the level of
415 text structure and the level of grammar are concerned, it is observable beyond the sentence (Nunan, 1999). Taken
416 as a whole, there are three important objects of writing namely "entertainment", it includes novels, newspaper
417 features and comic strips, "action", it has product labels and public signs, "information", it includes magazines
418 and newspaper (Nunan, 1999). Irmscher (1979) made an inspection that writing skill is extremely important
419 because it is considered essential for concentration and personal development. Likewise, in a graphic form,
420 discipline and focus are obligatory for the representation of thoughts. Byrne (1979) stated that in a syntactic
421 order, writing is a production of a sequence of sentence arrangements that made a link to form a coherent
422 whole. In the commencement of writing, words are formed by the use of symbols and letters and afterwards
423 arranged in a sequential order by applying syntactic rules in order to form clauses and sentences. Murray (1985)
424 argued that as far as the creative activity of the writing is concerned, it is steeped discovery because the writer's
425 exclusive objective is to discover, construct and shape meaning especially when he moves his pen across the page.
426 Writing is fundamentally a private activity which tends to involve four stages: editing, drafting, revising and
427 planning. A recursive on-line approach is, however, used by many good writers regarding the writing of a draft.
428 It is interrupted by revision leading to reformulation and planning. Graham and Harris (1993) stated that in
429 learning, writing has occupied the central position because it performs an active role in the development of the
430 learners as well as his ultimate success in educational career. Above and beyond, the teachers need to become
431 competent writers in order to assist the learners in their efforts. Lannen (1989) scrutinized that writing is a
432 process which transforms the absolute material that is discovered by trial or errors and research inspiration to
433 transmit a lucid and obvious message. In addition, it is a process that is extraordinarily supportive in order
434 to reflect deliberate decision. Writing boasts up the potential of the learners to enhance language learning. In
435 this way, they make multiple experiments with vocabulary, sentences and words which they learn in the class
436 domain to make an effective communication. Berdan (2006) pointed out that learn the writing skill is the basic
437 component of education and this imperative quality is regarded as the greatest asset for learners in their entire
438 life.

439 20 m) Linguistic Difficulties

440 Principally, there are numerous native and non native speakers and users of English in English speaking world.
441 Approximately, it is spoken by 1000 million people ??Deterding & Kircptrick, 2006). In Pakistan, English bears
442 an upper rank as it is deemed an effective medium of communication as well as in colleges and universities; it
443 is a medium of instruction. At school level, it is taught as a compulsory subject; but ESL learners are still
444 incompetent in writing skill. Even though they are admitted to college yet they have several grey areas in it.
445 Akhtar (1997) affirmed that English is not taught as a language but as a subject in Pakistan. On the other hand,
446 teachers stimulate the students to memorize a few selected essays, questions and grammatical rules. Resultantly,
447 the students reproduce the crammed data in order to get through tests and exams instinctively. In this way,
448 less concentration is directed towards the creative aptitude of the students. In addition, teachers encourage
449 students to ponder over the literature based syllabi. They make an emphasis on the genres of literature instead
450 of the language proficiency which can make them creative writers. Mahbob and Talat (2008) experienced that
451 in Pakistan, English language learning seems to be requisite. Broadly speaking, they are of the view that in
452 English language writing skills, no serious measures have yet been taken in Pakistan regarding amelioration of
453 ESL learner's performance. Harris (1993) viewed that language is not considered an innate natural ability rather
454 it is a cognitive ability which can be achieved by years of training. Saddiqui (2007) pointed out the participation
455 of the learners regarding writing skill activities. It is not enough for the learners to confer instructions and
456 guideline or teaching steps to put in order flawless content. Unfortunately, sheer verbal instructions are focused

457 and their genuine contribution is meticulously neglected in writing procedure. It is the innermost root cause
458 of their anxieties because in order to get through the examination, they have a preference to memorize notes
459 from the standard guides and help books. Correspondingly, the learners have no selfreliance for what they
460 have written. The reason is that the feedback and response from the teacher convey a gesture of trepidation
461 for them which enormously blemish their inventive faculty and potential. Saddiqui further pointed out the
462 defective evaluation criteria which hinder their creative competence. Typically, in the main stream of colleges,
463 examinations are conducted in order to estimate and calculate the memory not the creativity of the learners.
464 The literary genres are the object of focal point for lecturers and teachers and non-literary genres are not under
465 inspection which leads toward the production of ESL learners in Pakistan. Chowdhury (2003) pointed out that in
466 Pakistan the existing trends and circumstances are altering because now people are progressively alert about the
467 education. Pathetically, there are still lots of teachers who have the same cold, authoritative and unproductive
468 pedagogical techniques. Nunan (1999) acknowledged that the most important source of linguistic problems is
469 written discourse because it consists on clauses which are internally complex. A majority of learners do not
470 have the aptitude to produce more complex language in written expressions. ??eshavarz (2008) said that the
471 analysis of errors in identifying the linguistic difficulties can assist the ESL learners. Yule (1996) observed that
472 the discourse structure focus on the main elements that play a vital part to form a well-stretched text. Schiffrin
473 (1994) opined that the linguistic product of discourse is related to TEXT and as a linguistic role its study is
474 impossible without reference to contextual elements. Moreover, it is not the interferences that are available to
475 the hearer and reader but the linguistic contents, for instance, expressions meaning of words and sentence.

476 **21 n) Non-linguistic Difficulties Psycho-cognitive**

477 Writing is an activity of ESL learners which do not involve audience or the consultation with the reader during
478 the process. It is quite opposite as compare to speaking process. The psycho-cognitive problems of ESL learners
479 decide and finalize the information of their readers and locate the reasonable way to express. Because of this, it
480 made the learners confused to decide that what type of style in writing should be adopted. Cognitive difficulty
481 lies in the fact of how the learners can organize their concepts and ideas on the paper. Essentially, in certain
482 conditions, it seems somewhat problematic when an assignment is given to the learners as an essay. Likewise,
483 the object of it is not obvious and for any personal reasons, the piece of writing is not being composed. Among
484 ESL learners, this sort of problem is quite prominent because the content is already available in the textbooks
485 which are exclusively designed for exams. This is the reason for why students pay less concentration on their
486 assignments as they are well familiar that they will simply cram the textbooks and achieved good score in exams.
487 Consequently, for Pakistani student writers, it is difficult to invoke audience and the teacher is the one and only
488 audience in the writing task. The learners are well recognizable for the demand of the examiner which is the
489 reproduction of the crammed content from the text books which is chiefly the deep-seated cause to cripple the
490 inventiveness and resourcefulness of the learners. As far as the English language writing skills are concerned,
491 apprehension and emotion are possibly the most analyzed psychological complications and variables. Betancourt
492 and Phinney (1988) asserted that L2 less skilled writers remain in constant apprehension regarding the course
493 of action in writing. But different writers have different source of apprehension. In all probability, it relies
494 on the proficiency level and the degree of experience of L2 learners. On the other side, when the bilingual
495 writing experience increases the percentage of apprehension mechanically decreases. The learners who possess
496 the lower quality of writing have to face a high degree of apprehension. Lee (2005) pointed out that in writing
497 skills; Lee's free reading on the part of ESL learners causes in less apprehension. On the other hand, in second
498 language writing, free reading facilitates in reducing the apprehension of the writer. Clachar (1999) highlighted
499 that emotions can influence the strategies of the writing utilized by ESL learners. On two diverse topics, ESL
500 learners were delegated regarding writing activity: first one is an unemotional procedure and the second one is an
501 emotional text that was designed for the elicitation. It is indicated that more time is devoted to syntactic issues,
502 lexical and morphological; the sheer intention behind this is to underline the intended meaning regarding fidelity.
503 Furthermore, as far as the particular linguistic structures are concerned, they tend to articulate the semantic
504 connotation at large. On opposite side, it is omitted in the non-emotional text writing. Cognitive models are
505 exceedingly ready to lend a hand in solving writing problems ??McChutchen, Tesk & Bankston, 2008). At
506 this juncture, the term problem solving leads towards the conceptualization regarding information process. To
507 ??alkins & Daiute, 1986), the presence of audience can increase the length and quality regarding the output
508 of the students. Argumentation, the writer must construct his argument in the process of writing with solid
509 evidence and reason. These evidences and objections must be finalized according to the prejudices, viewpoints
510 and objections of the audience. This is not necessarily the matter that given concentration which is delivered to
511 the audience is irrelevant to narration. In the learning of the students, writing skill performs a distinctive part to
512 construct an environment. In addition, it develops organizational and cognitive strategies which are appropriate
513 in linking outline information, new concepts, strengthen their conceptual framework and organize knowledge
514 (Bangert-Drowns, Hurly & Wilkinson, 2004). By and large, self-monitoring, concept building and planning are
515 attached to the activity of writing in order to promote the establishment in the sphere of knowledge (Bankert-
516 Drowns et al, 2004). Moreover, to write well is the prevailing challenge as it is a test of language proficiency,
517 thinking ability and memory simultaneously. As far as the topic form-term memory is concerned, it requires swift

23 C) POPULATION AND SAMPLE

518 revitalization of domain-specific knowledge (Kellogg, 2001). About significance knowledge, writing competence
519 has its dependency regarding the capability to probe unequivocally (Nickerson, Perkins & Smith, 1985).

520 At the outset, it was observed that the greatest reason of second language errors is that when the learners
521 transfer from L1 in L2. They automatically commit errors. The learners of native language have to face certain
522 challenges in order to make a grip on L2 features. The influence of native language is just a little bit L2 learners
523 because it influences 3-25 % of errors. (Sattayatham & Honsa, 2007). ??ichards (1971) challenges this conviction
524 and argued in his research that the learner's errors are owing to the strategies which are used in language
525 acquisition. Error analysis supports teachers to find out proper methods in second language classroom to select
526 material and develop curriculum which can smooth the progress of the learning process (p. 208). Bataineh (2005;
527 ??56). He highlighted that the error of indefinite articles committed by first, second, third and fourth year EFL
528 students; use of indefinite article with adjectives, uncountable nouns, marked/unmarked plural, misuse of the
529 indefinite article, put indefinite article a as part of the noun/adjective. This whole detail shows that it is because
530 of the learner's native language ??Sattayatham & Honsa, 2007).

531 A number of ESL/EFL practitioners, specifically writing teachers, become conscious that the article system
532 (i.e. a, the, an and null) is a trouble for ESL learn them correctly. The English article system fundamentally
533 consists of three main classes: a, an, the and null the zero articles. The principal function of the three articles is
534 to demonstrate that the conception may or may not be marked off or indicate the object because it is thought of
535 within certain imaginary and physical limits.

536 The article system is an interesting domain of inquiry as its three members appear so often in the field of second
537 language. However, in English language a and the constitute two of the ten words which are most frequently
538 used. So it seems quite complex task to locate written or spoken sentences which don't have one of the three
539 articles at least. In many ESL teachers, researchers, textbooks and syllabuses, the articles are occupied short shift
540 despite this frequency. Thus, the prevailing view of the teachers and textbooks standpoint is that in the process
541 of acquisition, the articles will simply get learned. As far as the research standpoint is concerned, to the noun
542 phrase (NP), articles are mere appendages which are often not considered essential to spoken communication.
543 Normally, a native speaker of English acquires the article system by the age of three. The majority of native
544 speakers are unable to formulate rudimentary rules for the usage of article because it is quite automatic system for
545 native speaker. The errors of non-native speakers in the article system are somewhat easy to identify. Therefore,
546 repeatedly misuse of the system from the non-ESL oriented native speaker leads towards endless irritation. If
547 the misuse of the article system can lead towards negative disposition for the listener or reader, this seems rather
548 natural for nonnative speakers of English, specifically university students who often express themselves in written
549 mode. Conversely, in the written mode, article errors are most glaring. Understandably, students want to familiar
550 about how to improve their usage of article; because this leads towards numerous pedagogical approaches to teach
551 the article system. A material builder and developer should know how the article system works, how it is acquired
552 and how it is used by native speaker; for it is indeed to build a truly efficacious pedagogical method in order to
553 teach the article system.

554 22 IV. Objectives

555 ? The present study focuses on the investigation of errors in Prepositions of graduate ESL learners. ?
556 Prepositions, phrasal verbs and idiomatic phrases are examined. The present study opts for quantitative analysis
557 for two sets of data in order to investigate the frequency and type of errors found in prepositions of Pakistani
558 graduate ESL learners. For this study, the quantitative approach is opted purposely as it can statistically be
559 reliable. This study not only allows the outcomes to be analyzed, but also makes a clear comparison with
560 other parallel studies. In the first set of data, the researcher analyzed the errors in prepositions and grammatical
561 accuracy of ESL learners respectively through fifth word deletion. This test marked out the errors in these domains
562 and counted correct answers. In the second test of data, topic-based analysis of prepositions and grammatical
563 accuracy was mainly focused. In these two sets of data, the necessary prepositions, zero prepositions as well as
564 an apt use of idiomatic and prepositional phrases were assessed and calculated afterwards.

565 Analytic and deductive approaches are related to the research design of this study. An analytic approach
566 centers around a single or multiple specific aspects of language proficiency. What we actually mean analytical
567 approach is that the phenomenon of second language is largely analyzed in its constituent parts as well as one
568 or more of these certain constituent parts are brought under analysis in detail.

569 One significant linguistics feature is examined in this study namely prepositions in the English language
570 writing skill of ESL graduate/masters learners. A descriptive research design is used which enumerates existing
571 phenomenon without any manipulation of the subjects. Hence, the researcher makes a measurement of things as
572 they are without the intervention of any experiment.

573 23 c) Population and Sample

574 In order to check the frequency of errors in the writing skill, the researcher selected fifty participants from each
575 institution. The total four colleges and one university id focused to conduct this research. In this study, the
576 researcher followed the sample size with a minimum number of 250 for the generalizability of her findings.

577 Fundamentally, the participants of this study belonged both to the rural as well as urban backgrounds. As
578 far as the age of these learners is concerned, they ranged from nineteen to twenty one years. Moreover, they
579 were from Urdu medium background who had from school level studied English as a compulsory subject. In
580 English language writing skills, it was dominantly expected that they had acquired necessary knowledge required
581 for creative competence in order to communicate ideas. It is important to mention here that in public sector
582 colleges, the majority of graduates have faced problems in their writing skills in Pakistan.

583 **24 d) Research Instruments**

584 Two types of tests were used as instruments to collect data from the ESL learners in order to investigate
585 prepositional errors and grammatical difficulties of ESL learners. To analyze L2 writing proficiency, two tests
586 were used by the researcher, because for gathering the required data, test is considered the most reliable and
587 authentic tool.

588 In the first test, every fifth word is deleted with intent. The students were asked to supply the missing word
589 appropriately and grammatical features. In the second test, there was a composition to make a discussion in an
590 essay mode on "Terrorism" comprising 250-300 words approximately in order to assess their errors in prepositions
591 and their overall grammatical ability. The topic given to the students was selected keeping in view their language
592 proficiency so that they can display their creativity.

593 **25 e) Data Collection Procedure**

594 The researcher collected data from two hundred and fifty graduate ESL learners to make an investigation into the
595 English language compositional problems. Side by side, the participants were provided precise instructions how
596 to attempt each test. During this process, the researcher didn't put them under any time pressure to complete
597 this task. However, the researcher calculated the completion time of each test to view how far the participants
598 were quick in response. As far as the topic based activity is concerned, the learners were not only given an
599 outline of the topic but also some key points were discussed for twenty minutes before the actual commencement
600 of the writing proceeding so that the participants might have sufficient grasp of the topic. The topic of the essay
601 "Terrorism" was intentionally selected by the researcher as it didn't support the learner's crammed knowledge.

602 **26 f) Data Analysis**

603 The data from two hundred and fifty graduate ESL learners from four colleges and one Universities were read,
604 analyzed and classified carefully into various error categories. Descriptive statistics analysis method was used,
605 which primarily focused on the error frequency of the learners. The data were carefully analyzed and presented
606 in tables and frequency bar graphs by using Microsoft Excel.

607 **27 g) Validity and Reliability**

608 It is essential that the usefulness must be maximized for the validity and reliability of an instrument. For a
609 particular population under investigation, it should be developed keeping in view a specific object in order to
610 make an instrument useful. For this study, the vital thing in the development of the instruments designing was the
611 identification of errors regarding prepositions and grammatical accuracy. I measured the ESL learner's writing
612 skill competence through these two instruments. The usefulness of an instrument solely depends upon reliability
613 to provide the required information about the ability which is to be measured (Bachman, 1990; Bachman and
614 Palmer).

615 **28 h) Data Analysis**

616 The data were analyzed following analytic scoring rubrics technique. The major focus was functional category
617 such as Prepositions and grammatical accuracy. In the present study, the statistical procedure was descriptive
618 statistics which intentionally made a focus on frequency count of the ESL learner's errors and presented them into
619 tables. In frequency bar graphs, the same data were also presented by using Microsoft Excel. Side by side, in
620 order to draw frequencies Antconc software has been used in this research study. In statistical studies, graphical
621 presentation of the information is of enormous significance which seems to perform two functions: (1) presents
622 the gathered information (2) and the way learners perform in each grammatical category. Moreover, frequency
623 classifies which type of error occurs how many times and shows how many learners committed the same type
624 of errors. The table 01 is related to the performance of ESL learners in the performance based test, fifth word
625 deletion. The column 01 is related to the errors of the learners in phrasal verbs and prepositional phrases. The
626 column 02 is related to the error frequency of the learners in this test. The error frequency in phrasal verbs is
627 (N=450), in prepositional phrases it is (N=718). The table 04 is related to the performance of ESL learners
628 in the performance based test, an open composition. The column 01 is related to the errors of the learners in
629 definite, indefinite, zero article, prepositions, tense, auxiliary and conjunction. The column 02 is related to the
630 error frequency of the learners in this test. The error frequency in definite article is (N=150), in indefinite article
631 it is (N=120), in zero article it is (N=152), in prepositions it is (N=182), in tenses it is (N=116), in auxiliary it
632 is (N=172) and in conjunctions it is (N=105).

31 VI. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

633 The above analysis shows that in this test if we accumulate the definite, indefinite and zero article errors
634 ($N=150+N=120+N=152$) they are ($N=422$) in total. In this way, the learners have committed more errors in
635 the domain of articles. The second most frequently committed errors are in the domain of prepositions ($N=182$).
636 The third most frequently committed errors are in the domain of auxiliaries ($N=172$). The forth most frequently
637 committed errors are in the domain of tenses ($N=116$). The fifth most frequently committed errors are in the
638 domain of conjunctions ($N=105$). The same information has been presented in the figure ??7 given below.

639 Figure 03 Figure 04

640 29 Composition Test

641 30 Obtained Marks Total Marks Percentage

642 Year 2017

643 V. Findings

644 In order to address research question, the researcher gathered data by two performance based tests: (1) Fifth
645 word deletion (2) Composition.

646 There were frequent errors of Tenses ($N=116$), conjunction ($N=105$) and prepositions ($N=182$). The learners
647 used unnecessary prepositions in their use of phrasal verbs and idiomatic phrases; they also used prepositions
648 with non prepositional verbs.

649 ? In fifth word deletion, the learners committed more errors in prepositions ($N=1145$), especially in inserting
650 the following prepositions: with, in, by, on, and of. There were also errors in the area of definite articles ($N=500$).

651 ? The learners committed frequent errors in the use of prepositional phrases ($N=718$), and less errors in the zero
652 articles ($N=450$) and in phrasal verbs ($N=450$). Side by side multiple errors were observed. For example, the
653 learners have problems in verb forms, subject -verb agreement, definite article, prepositional verbs.

654 31 VI. Discussion and Conclusion

655 If we analyze the overall performance of the learners in the linguistic feature under investigation, it is quite
656 understandable that in their writing skills, the graduate/master learners had more problems in prepositions
657 domains. One reason is that because a large number of students more or less belong to different backgrounds.
658 Since this study is closely related to the falling standards of academic writing skill of ESL graduate learners.
659 Without making an investigation into it, it seemed not possible to predetermine anything. The researcher gathered
660 data by using two performance based tests (fifth word deletion test and composition) in order to address the
661 first research question: What is the frequency of functional errors of ESL graduate learners in their writing skill?
662 In the analysis of grammatical accuracy, it was pointed out that the learners committed more errors in article,
663 preposition and in tense/verb than other areas of grammar. During the research it was noted that most of the
664 learners in composition were unable to contextualize the topic. Because according to Eggins (2004), in order to
665 derive meaning, contextualization refers to the capability of addressing the topic. But for contextual knowledge,
666 we can never decide the exact meaning because context lies in the text (Eggins, 2004). As Myles (2002, p. 10)
667 argued that it depends on proficiency level, if the text is creative and rich in contents, there is greater possibility
668 for errors at morphosyntactic level. The researcher also noticed the use of various tenses in a single sentence
669 and the wrong use of verb forms which consequently violated accuracy. The learner's concepts about gerund
670 and progressive tense were not clear; they were unable to make a difference between them. They use past tense
671 instead of present tense; even they were totally unfamiliar about the use of modal auxiliaries in accordance of
672 their specific function. It was noticed that the students have serious problem towards vocabulary and because of
673 this they cannot write properly. It seems necessary to accelerate ESL learners' vocabulary knowledge to write
674 well. For the learners, it is essential to have sound and deep knowledge of words that refers to a word's literal
675 and metaphorical meaning, syntacticmorphological forms, semantic relations with other words such as synonyms,
676 antonyms and collocations (Gass & Selinker, 2008; Kieffer & Lesaux, 2007). The researcher stresses that the
677 learners' inaccurate and limited knowledge of words is due to the lack of research in the area of vocabulary
678 especially in Pakistani context. Learners' vocabulary knowledge can be developed by using variety of ways:
679 learners' direct instructions by creating a words sharing atmosphere in the class, memorization of words and
680 by developing the habit of dictionary usage (Yopp & Yopp, 2007) However, for accurate writing, grammatical
681 proficiency is the first step of the journey. ??Valette, 1991). The outcome of the present study seems in complete
682 harmony with the outcomes of the study which conducted by ??El-Sayed, 1982; ??im, 1987 ??im, , 1988; Kao,
683 1999). As far as error analysis is concerned, El-sayed (1982) observed that the participants committed (1140)
684 total errors and among these errors (159) were found in the use of pronouns, (640) in verbs, (143) in the use
685 of articles and the rest of in the adjectives, prepositions and nouns. In order to analyze the errors of Korean
686 learners, Kim (1988) conducted a research study. In this study, the participants were 120 intermediate Korean
687 ESL learners and for these learners, the task was the translation of forty two Korean sentences into English. The
688 learners committed (720) errors related to tenses, (930) errors related to the moods of verbs and (885) related to
689 voice. Kao (1999) conducted a study on what type of errors are largely committed by Taiwanese college students
690 in their writing skill. So, 169 compositions were collected from 53 Taiwanese college students for this purpose.
691 The total errors of the learners were (928) and the frequent errors were pointed out in the domain of grammar.

692 The learners committed 18% errors in semantics 66% in grammar and 16% errors in lexical items. On the other
693 hand, prepositions create problems for ESL learners. As compare to other languages, English prepositions have
694 been commonly used in English and they are 70 in total. (Koffi, 2010, p. 297). According to Grubic (2004),
695 a foreign language speaker has to face three problems regarding prepositions: (1) deleting the obligatory and
696 required prepositions (2) usage of erroneous preposition (3) using additional prepositions.

697 In main practical conclusion, it was noticed that overall grammatical accuracy appeared to be problematic
698 to the learners in their writing skill. Cutting it short, the performance of the learners gives an idea that they
699 stumbled upon all the features under analysis.

700 The study gives a few points through which a line of action can be practiced to improve the existing standard
701 of the learners' writing skill. The pace of changing the learners to improve their writing skill seems to be slow
702 in the current conditions. In this regard, it requires committed approach not only on the part of teachers but
703 students and government as well. Bringing changes in the curriculum to reserve more space to the writing skill
704 components, the training of teachers and making them aware of the L2 learning processes, theoretical perspectives
705 and previous empirical studies in connection with second language writing, specific and idea-based feedback of
706 teachers to the learners' writing and bringing changes in the pedagogical methods can assist to a great extent in
707 order to make the learners competent as well as creative L2 writers.

708 **32 Future Study**

709 The researcher proposes that there needs an exhaustive research in the field of L2 writing particularly in Pakistani
710 context. It is eagerly required because this area has not captured as much consideration and thoughtfulness of
711 the researchers as the other language domains have done. Hence, in second language writing, there is need to
712 broaden the scope of research and the focus should be laid both on the linguistic knowledge (grammatical, lexical,
713 orthographic) of the learners and prepositions. The present study focal point is only on the graduate/master
714 male and female students' compositional problems selected from Public/private Sector College/university with
715 reference to prepositions, idiomatic phrases and prepositional phrases and zero prepositions and grammatical
716 accuracy. The upcoming studies can be conducted on female graduates or on both male and female at
717 undergraduate level in order to assess whether gender differences affect the outcomes in the occurrence of errors.
718 Furthermore in Pakistani context, it is also suggested for the forthcoming studies to investigate writing strategies
719 of L2 learners that they make use in their first and second language such as translation activity.

720 In the future study what seems to be of vital significance is collecting more oral data (e.g. via recordings,
spontaneous speech during conversation classes) because this can surely be more fruitful regarding L2 learning.

01

Category	Error Frequency
Phrasal Verbs	450
Prepositional phrases and Prepositions	718

Figure 1: Table 01 :

02

Category	Error Frequency
Definite article	150
Indefinite Articles	120
Zero Articles	152
Preposition	182
Tense	116
Auxiliary	172
Conjunction	105

Figure 2: Table 02 :

723 .1 Appendix A

724 Fifth Word Deletion 1. In July 2010, following ?? monsoon rains, the Indus ?? rose above its banks ?.. flooded
725 the surrounding area. ?? the rains continuing for ?? further two months, large ?? of Pakistan were affected ??
726 various degrees. As of ?? August, the heaviest flooding ?? moved southward along the ?? River from already
727 severely ?? Northern districts in Khyber ?? of heavily populated areas ?.. Western Punjab and the ?? province of
728 Sindh. In ?? recovery phase, there will ?.. a need to assure ?? balance between two strategies : ?? action, where
729 still needed, ?? at protecting lives and ?? disease, malnutrition and disabilities ?? the vulnerable populations in
730 ?.. affected areas, and to ?.. the foundations for the ?? actions designed to strengthen ?.. institutional capacity
731 to pursue ?.. terms health developmental goals ?.. a context of good ?? , to assure human security ?? extend
732 social protection in ?.. . 2. Early recovery includes efforts ?? be activated in all ?? from the initial phase ?..
733 relief so that the ?? foundations for fully fledged ?.. work are laid. Early ?? continues during the prolonged ??
734 of extended emergencies and ?? long transition that follow ?.. the aftermath of natural ?? and the post conflict
735 ?? . There is no clear-cut ?? but rather a contiguum ?? the relief and recovery ?? . It is important to ?? that
736 the disaster management ?? is an unbroken chain ?? human actions whose phases ?? . The health cluster and
737 ?? want to thank all ?? health partners for their ?? and interest in the ?? recovery process. It only ?? that due
738 to time ?? the consultation process had ?? be limited. As this ?? a dynamic document which ?? have to be
739 adopted ?.. the changing reality over ?? next months. The goal ?? the health recovery plan ?? in this document
740 is ?? support the reactivation of ?? health care system in ?? affected by the floods ?? special emphasis on
741 maximizing ?? . The aim of this ?? is to describe the ?.. actions to be undertaken ?.. the health sector from ??
742 2011 on, to facilitate ?? recovery activities and as ?? follow up to the ?? interventions currently underway. On
743 ?? other hand, the institutional ?? with the district and ?? health authorities is insufficiently ?? .

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