ORTHOGRAPHIC ERRORS OF PRIMARY LEVEL INDIAN PUPILS STUDYING IN RIYADH, KINGDOM OF SAUDI ARABIA

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Abstract: The study on orthographic errors provides an opportunity to understand and facilitate in the learners orthographic difficulties. This will fetch good results for the improvement of learners' writing and it will also contribute to transforming learners into good writers. Orthographic errors attribute to major errors in writing English. Cook (1999) investigated four major types of spelling errors in the written work of learners of English. These errors were categorized broadly into four major errors: omission (leaving letters out), substitution (replacing letters with incorrect ones), transposition (reversing the position of letters), and insertion/addition (including extra letters) in addition to Cook's classification this study has included invented spellings (overgeneralization of orthographic errors) and errors related to captilisation. This study occupies a significant position in terms of identifying and analysing the most frequent occurring errors in students' writing.

Key words: Orthography, spelling, errors, primary school, pupils, strategies

Introduction: Keshavarz (2012:168) asserts that Error Analysis is "a procedure used by both researchers and teachers which involves collecting samples of learner language, identifying errors, classifying them according to their nature and causes, and evaluating their seriousness". Traditional language teaching methods emphasize written language over spoken language. Spelling, which is the focus of this study, is seen as one of the important aspects of writing proficiency. "What makes the spelling development complex is that English has an orthographic system with a complex relationship between graphemes and phonemes." (Nassaji, 2007). Oxford English dictionary defines English Orthography as "The study of spelling and how letters combine to represent sounds and form words." It originated from late Middle English: via Old French and Latin from Greek "orthographia" from "orthos" from orthos 'correct' graphia 'writing'. Orthography is the methodology of writing a language. It includes rules of "spelling, hyphenation, capitalization, word breaks, emphasis, and punctuation" (Wikipedia, 2015). Marilyn vos Savant, an American magazine columnist, author, lecturer, and playwright says: "When our spelling is perfect, it's invisible. But when it's flawed, it prompts strong negative associations". The medium of instruction for the Indian Schools in Riyadh is English, as pupils' community have different mother tongue they are constrained to fulfill

academic needs at the international context only in English so it becomes necessary that reading and writing skills are acquired to the best advantage. There is existence of functional efficiency in inter-personal communication between teachers and pupils and among peers in international ambience. It is essential to understand the educational sector and its process in Saudi Arabia because in Riyadh, KSA it is mandatory to follow the norms set by the Ministry of Education and this is periodically audited by the authorities.

Educational process in Saudi Arabia

World Data on Education (2011) elaborates the function of The Ministry of Education, in charge of general education (elementary, intermediate and secondary); special education; adult education and literacy. In this study only pre-school education and primary education are focused.

Pre-School education

Kindergartens cater to children aged 3-5 years and are not part of the official education ladder, since attendance is not a prerequisite for enrolment in grade 1 of elementary education. Some private institutions have established nurseries with technical and functional aid from the Government.

Primary education

Children enter primary education or elementary education at the age of 6; the duration of studies is six years, especially for those who have followed the pre-elementary stage. All elementary schools are day schools. Schools are not co-educational. Pupils who pass the examination at the end of grade 6 receive the elementary education certificate, qualifying them for study in the intermediate school.

Purpose of the Study: The aim of this study is to trace an emergent typology of orthographic errors of grade 1 to 5 Indian pupils studying in Riyadh Schools aged between six and twelve. When it comes to English spelling difficulty, Indian learners are no exceptions. There are, of course, specific reasons for this matter. First, English spelling is highly irregular which makes it hard to learn. Second, there are significant differences between Indian language and English writing systems. These differences also make English spelling hard to learn for the learners. Finally, there is limited body of research in the acquisition of spelling skills and in spelling errors produced by Language learners. To fill this gap, this study aims to shed light upon orthographic errors among English language learners, and to investigate their sources.

Theoretical Background

Indian pupils studying in Riyadh Schools are generally found to manifest better and faster improvements with oral and aural proficiency than with English orthography. The difficulty with writing skills arises partly due to difficulties with word recognition and spelling. The present paper is an attempt to explore the difficulties faced by ESL learners with spelling competence. The study in

particular flashes light on orthographic errors, in an attempt to identify the classifications of orthographic errors that can help explain the difficulties they face with English spelling.

Statement of the problem

Indian pupils studying in Riyadh Schools have access to internet so they browse to know things, watch English movies and so on. Spoken communication is not a problem for these pupils as they are exposed to a classroom atmosphere where they have to speak in English to communicate with their fellow classmates who come from a different region. The problem in writing arouse when they copy write their lessons from the black board on to their note books. The corpus consists of Grade 1 to 5 pupils' English, Math, Environment Studies and Social Science note books. Most of the parents of these pupils are Engineers, Doctors and Teachers so; parents expose their children to communicative English and basic writing before they could admit them to a school. Mary Ashworth and Patricia Wakefield (2005) say, "at home children develop both their physical and conversational skills in unstructured circumstances". The academic year begins from April to March, unlike in India June to April. Pupils have summer vacation from July to August.

Research Question

1. Are orthographic errors idly a problem to be studied?

2. What are the most frequent errors that pupils commit in their notebook?

Orthographic errors are idly a problem to be studied because in Riyadh children are exposed to English language learning much before they get admitted to preschool and also it is prevalent that Children attend preschool where their initial composition consists of scribbling, drawings, dictating, and experimenting with symbols and forms. Peter Hannon & Cathy Nutbrown (1997) say: "Two aspects of literacy education have changed radically in recent years: first, recognition of the importance of the early stages of children's literacy development, particularly in the pre-school years; and second, acknowledgement of the value of parental involvement. Both have implications for the professional development". Aladrović (2007) reinforces the point and elaborates that pupils "learn to write (trace) shapes on paper (practice for initial writing), and even to write a letter or two (their own name)", learn nursery rhymes, clay modeling, drawing (Arts) thus "preparing for a systematic institutional learning of language which occurs in schools". "It is important for a child to acquire language in order to establish communication with other members of the language community and society as a whole". This is the relationship between "child and environment". (Aladrović, 2007).

Literature Review

In order to classify orthographic errors of Indian pupils in Riyadh, this study has benefited from the classification utilized by Babiker and et al. Thandiswa Mpiti,

Khalid Al-Zuoud and Mohammad Kabilan because these classifications are an excellent account of orthographic errors within the context of Error Analysis. Apart from that, according to James et al. (1993), this classification seems to facilitate a plausible description of types of spelling errors and also suggest that it could be used for raising teachers' as well as learners' awareness of the kinds of options and decisions that are made in real time during the act of composition.

Methodology: A central concern of the initial years of education is to ensure that children become competent readers and writers (Hannon, 1995).   The errors examined in this study are collected from grade 1 to 5 learners' daily writing activities (note books) at various schools like International Indian School Riyadh (IISR), International Indian Public School (IIPS), Modern Middle East International School (MMEIS), New Middle East International School, Yara International School, Yasmin International School, Riyadh, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. These schools are located in various parts of Riyadh – Rowdha, Sulamaniyah, Naseem, Jabrah.

Findings:

Notebooks of English, Mathematics, Environmental Studies and Social Science collected were totally 21 in that there were 174 errors committed by pupils. These orthographic errors were classified as **follow**:

1. Errors of Omission
2. Errors of addition
3. Error of Substitution
4. Errors of transposition
5. Invented Spellings

1. **Errors of mission:**When the learner has left out a letter for example, "_xplode" for Explode (E – missing "initially"), "hundrd" for hundred (e – missing   "medially"),   "hous_   for   house
 (e – missing "finally").

2. **Errors of addition:** When the learner has added letters which are unnecessary e.g. "aabout" for about (a – addition "initally"), "flasshes" for flashes (s - addition "medially"), "frome" for from (e - addition "finally").

3   **Error of Substitution:** When the learner substitutes letter. For instance, "realed" for sealed (r for s, initially), "roaled" for rolled (a for l, midially) "polece" for police (e for i, medially), "deprevation" (e for i, medially) deprivation, "impartent" (a for o, medially) important, "shaps" for shape (s for e, finally).

4. **Errors of Transposition:**When a learner writes "tyep" for type (ep for pe, medially), "miuntes" for minutes (un for nu medially), "recieve" for receive (ie for ei, medially), "Loin" for Lion (oi for io medially), "diseaes" for disease (es for se finally), "eclipes" for eclipse (es for se, finally).

5. **Invented spellings:** The invented spelling includes overgeneralization of orthographic rules. To cite examples "sevsenty" for seventy, "twoars" for towards, "contory" for country, "throy" for through, "nutrachnel" for nutritional.   The percentage and frequency of orthographic error classifications are as follows:

Classification of Errors	Frequency	Percentage
Errors of Omission	83	47.70%
Errors of Addition	25	14.36%
Errors of Substitution	34	19.54%
Errors of Transposition	17	9.77%
Invented Spellings	15	8.62%
Total	174	99.99%

The results prove that Indian primary school pupils studying in Riyadh, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia make more orthographic errors of omission and substitution. Errors on addition, transposition and invented spellings are comparatively less in frequency of occurrence.

The Table shows Errors of Omission is frequent with 83 out of 174 errors, Errors of Substitution is 34 out of 174, Errors of Addition occupies third in frequency with 25 out of 174, fourth is Error of Transposition with 17 out of 174 and Invented Spellings occupies the final position with 15 out of 174. Pupils also make errors related to captilisation under two sub-categories:

Errors related to capitalisation:

These are of two types: Unnecessary capitalisation and Lack of capitalisation

a. Unnecessary capitalisation

LAnd ,ConJunctions, SeQuence, one hundred Forty one.

b. Lack of capitalisation

she is very rich, sara ran fast, delhi, south Africa, she worked hard, my mother's name is sadaf, un (UN), swadeshi Movement, pacific ocean, pamama canal, english east india company, tuesday, thursday, Friday.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Pupils' exposure to environmental print, alphabet charts, picture dictionaries, theme charts and high frequency word displays would help reach correct word spellings for their writing at the initial stage. Within an integrated language learning environment, where learning to spell is closely linked to learning to talk, listen, read and write, students should be taught in a systematic and explicit way about the types of spelling knowledge that are appropriate to their writing purposes and stage of spelling development. Systematic instruction has three dimensions: first, it involves the teacher having a clear understanding of what knowledge and skills need to be taught and a clear perception of when it is appropriate to teach particular skills. Second, it requires the teacher to monitor

systematically the need for certain skills to be taught. Third, the explicit and systematic teaching of spelling means that teachers need to provide, within an integrated language learning environment the following points would be beneficial: A. daily focus on spelling skills and strategies. B. lessons where the purpose and value of the spelling instruction are made explicit to pupils. C. Focus on explicit teaching of phonological, visual, morphemic and etymological spelling knowledge to benefit the pupils' community. D. frequently exposing and experimenting with spelling activities in the context of talking, listening, reading and writing would be affirmative. E. by providing opportunities for students to demonstrate and reflect on their understandings about spelling would develop interest in learning. F. explicit teaching of dictionary skills would fetch good results. (Keates (2000) said that "Fine ingredients and state-of-the-art kitchens do not in themselves result in good cooking. The master chef knows, understands and uses experience and skills to produce well-cooked food; so does a good writer." (Corder, 1974) says "systematically analyzing errors made by language learners makes it possible to determine areas that need reinforcement in teaching".

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