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A COMPARITIVE STUDY OF ERRORS IN L2 WRITING AT MATRICULATION LEVEL IN PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SCHOOLS IN DISTRICT VEHARI-PAKISTAN

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Abstract

The objectives of this research paper were to analyze English writing skill of the students of Public and Private schools and compare their performance. For this purpose, we took a sample of 200 students, 100 each from eight different Public and Private Schools of District Vehari, Pakistan. An essay writing test was conducted to determine the students of which school systems commit more errors. The results of test show that students of Private Schools committed total 245 errors as compared to the students of Public Schools who committed 504 errors. Public Schools' learners committed 51 percent more errors than Private schools' learners. Thus, we can conclude that the performance of the students of Private Schools is far better than the students of Public Schools.

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1. Introduction

1.1 Background of study

Error analysis is a vast and broad field for research scholars in Linguistics perspective. Error analysis holds different topics in it, as it is a broader term. Errors in English language speaking and in writing, is an important issue in those countries where English is used as an official or second language. Countries like Pakistan, where English is enjoying a prestigious and a high status, the ratio of error is high in number. English is used as a second language in Pakistan but its learning demand is very high. People wants to learn English language to earn a good livelihood and for a handsome job. Another cause behind the learning of English is that people feel that if they speak English, it will become the symbol of prosperity and of honor for them. A person, who can speak and write, is considered as an intelligent and well mannered. This status of English increased its importance and maintains its rank as the most learning language in Pakistan. Being an International language English is a great source of information and means of success. All kinds of knowledge and information are available in this language. To get access to knowledge and required information, it is necessary to learn English language. As Shamim (2014) stated in her article 'Dreams and Realities', "English is considered by the donor agencies as the 'de facto' language for socio-economic development in developing countries." Pakistan is a developing country and command over English is considered a key to success in every field. He disclosed that English language teaching is confined to the 40-minute class that's why students or learners are not capable enough to speak and write English properly and correctly. English is taught as compulsory subject in Pakistan's schools from

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class KG to onward higher level but still efforts are fruitless. Learners are not skilled enough to produce a good piece of writing or a good fragment of speaking. Awan (1987 disclosed that two educational systems are working side by side in Pakistan since its inception. Private institute of teaching or schools run by different groups or communities and public schools and institutes of learning controlled and governed by the Government of Pakistan. Among these institutions there is further division of mediums- Urdu medium schools and English Medium Schools. English medium schools are mostly run by private sector and Urdu medium schools are run and organized by Government of Pakistan. The number of public sector schools are more than the number of private schools. There is a clear difference between the teaching methods and policies between these two systems. In Urdu medium schools, the medium of instruction is Urdu language while in English medium schools the language used for instruction is English. In this way, two different school systems are running side by side.

1.2 Main research problem

Poor English result of Public schools at matriculation level is a serious issue in Pakistan. It is generally assumed that private schools are flourishing in Pakistan because of good academic results. Their performance in English and in other subjects is very good. But the results of public schools in language are very poor. Most of the students left their education due to being failed in English subject, which is compulsory. The reason is that the students do not take interest in learning of English. Similarly, teachers at Public schools are not competent in teaching English language. Majority of the students of public sector schools are failed in Matric exams and could not get higher education. According to Brown (2000), 'for mastering English language, learners have to

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learn all four skills like native proficiency.' James (1998) stated that grammatical errors are the most common type of errors, committed by the L2 learners. Writing is a very difficult skill to learn and if it is in second or foreign language then it is more challenging one. Students make a lot of grammatical errors in English writing. Thus, it is proved that grammatical errors are serious issue and a major cause of students' dropout from the study in Pakistan. We have intended to explore the causes and effects of different types of errors in English wring through empirical data to be collected from Public and Private Schools of District Vehari-Pakistan, in this study.

1.3. Objectives of the study

The main objectives of this study are listed as under: -

● To investigate the causes and types of errors committed by the students of Public and Private schools in English writing.

● To sort out which school system provides better learning facilities for English learning.

● To diagnose grammar and other errors which students fail to learn at Matriculation level.

● To analyze the problems faced by teachers in teaching English language in Pakistan.

● To compare the performance of the students of Public and Private Schools in English writing.

1.4. Research questions

The research questions of this study are given below: -

● What are the causes of failure of students in English writing in Public and Private Schools?

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● What types of errors the students commit and frequency of errors in English Essay writing?

● What are the performance of the students of Public and Private Schools in English Essay writing?

● What are the most common errors made by the students at Metric level in English writing?

● What are problems of teachers who are teaching English language in Public and Private Schools.

1.4 Distinction of this study

Most studies were conducted in Pakistan just to find out the errors or difficulties faced by Pakistani learners at higher secondary or at University levels. This study is different in nature because it is not just based on the findings showed how many errors have been done by the students, but it is a comparison between two school systems which are the two main sources of learning i.e. private schools and Government schools. Moreover, this may be very first study to be conducted in District Vehari related to error analysis in different school systems at Matric level. This makes this study distinct from other studies.

2. Literature review

Rahmat (2019). conducted the research on the topic of 'an error analysis of l2 writers at higher secondary level. His findings revealed that at higher secondary level where most of the students learning English almost from back ten years. He finds the errors of spellings, verbs, prepositions, punctuation, redundancy and almost all types of errors in his study. He concluded that faulty teaching, lack of facilities, lack of English language speaking, writing

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exposure are the main causes of the failure of learners in English writing. Awan and Ayesha (2018) conducted research on "Testing and Assessment of large classes in English Language" and found that there are a lot of flaws in testing and assessment system. They revealed that proper care is not taken in testing and assessment of the students which results in the failure and poor performance of students in the examinations. Awan, and Khaliq (2016). examine the causes of low achievement in English at Elementary level in District Vehari and found that the poor achievement of the students was the result of improper teaching of English by inexperienced teachers Awan and Mehvish (2016) analyzed Teaching methods of English language at Government Secondary School level in D.G.Khan City of Pakistan. They concluded that teaching methods at Public Schools are old and traditional because no training of teachers is carried out about last teaching methods and technology. The end results are that the performance of students of Public Schools is not encouraging. Saeed and Hussain (2015) has carried out their study on the title "prepositional errors in the writing of Pakistani ESL students' that the learners of English as a second language faced problem in the use of prepositions because of the difference between the ratio and number of preposition of Urdu and English. The ratio of errors in the use of preposition is highest among the students of both genders. i.e. male and female in Pakistan". Zia and Awan (2015). carried out a comparative analysis of Public and Private Educational Institutes in District Vehari of Pakistan. They revealed that the performance of private educational institutions is better than Public Institutions almost in all fields. Abushihab (2014) has said that twenty students who learns English as a foreign language in Gazi University of Turkey, who are the native speakers of Turkish language made errors at different levels like syntax,

grammatical and at morphological level. This study supported that error analysis is very important for teachers for the understanding of the learners learning conditions or progress in it. With the help of findings, the researcher becomes more convinced that error analysis is an important element which helps to solve those issues related to language which shows the weak areas of the learners. Andrabi et al. (2014) have stated that the government school students performed not well and scored lower than the private schools learners'. Language learning especially second language learning is a very difficult task. In this present scenario, English is not only the language of the native speakers. It is the language of the whole world. Although English is very famous language but the ratio of failure in English, in Pakistan at every level, is very high. Shamim (2014) has stated that English medium schools are privately owned and cater to the upper class as well as some sections of the middle class. In contrast, the Urdu medium schools are mainly public sector schools catering to the lower income groups. English medium schools are considered as the quality providers and on the other hand Urdu medium schools have little or no exposure to English outside the 35 to 40-minutes class, which held in school every day. Number of Pakistani parents are forced to pay heavy fees of private schools because they want their children well educated as well good English speakers or writers, so they will be able to clear high level exams with distinction and get handsome jobs after completion of education. Hassan,et al (2013).conducted a research to examine the error made by fifty undergraduates Pakistani students in written essays. He found the majority of errors done by the learners were the result of interlanguage process. And other caused by mother tongue interference. According to Tafzoli and Golshan, (2013), p.15), there are similarities between the types of

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errors in the first language acquisition and errors in the second language learning". Mubarak (2012) described that 'intra-lingual types of error caused by the target language (TL) itself. Apart from the resource to L1 transfer, either they can set about learning the needed item, engaging their learning strategies, or they can try to fill the gap by resorting to communication strategies. Both type of strategies can be the source of error.' Intra-lingual deals with the correct and proper usage of grammar. These errors usually happened in acquired second language. Second language or target language itself caused these errors when it confused learners with its system or rules. In this category omission, addition, substitution, and overgeneralization included as main intra-lingual errors. Great work has been made in this field by researchers of different countries. In Pakistan this area of research is flourishing. Presently a few number of researchers of Pakistan have done their work in this field of error analysis. But a lot of work is done in error analysis around the world. In Arabian countries like Saudi Arabia people working in this field and produced a large number of research papers in this field. In Pakistan where the English is used as a lingua franca, the ratio of research studies on the topic of error analysis is not satisfactory. Farooq (2012) has maintained that writing in itself is a very tough job and writing in second language has many complexities as the system of languages is different. Writing involves a number of complex rhetorical and linguistics capabilities. The English language itself has a lot of irregularities and idiosyncrasies which creates a myriad of difficulties in writing especially for second language learners. Khansir (2012) made analysis on the systematic errors in English by Indian undergraduate students revealed that 'out of 1678 error made in the use of sentences, 648 (39%) were observed in tenses and 476(28%) were observed in voices. Heydari and S.Bageheri

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(2010) explains that how in recent years, error analysis flourished and gain popularity in Asian and African countries. Norish, (1983) did a lot of work on error analysis. In his book 'Language learners and their errors' he justified error in these words: "a systematic deviation when a learner has learnt something and consistently get it wrong". It shows that after learning the learner is not able to correct his or herself in second language it means he/ she makes errors. He further explained the difference between error and mistake. Usually error and mistake is taken as the same thing but inconsistent deviation When learner is able to correct this deviant form is known as mistake". Error analysis approach is reliable approach to the study of errors, which is directly concerned with students' performance. This approach does not limit itself to linguistic interference. Corder (1974) who is considered as pioneer of error analysis, argues that the main purpose of error analysis is to measure the progress of learners in L2 learning. He defined this objective of error analysis in these words. "The pedagogical justification, namely nature of error is necessary before a systematic means of eradicating them could be found, and the theoretical justification, which claims that a study of learners' error is part of the systematic study of the learners' language which is itself necessary for understanding of the process of second language acquisition. He pointed out three beneficiaries of error analysis. They are:

● The teacher

● The researcher and

● the learner

Errors (not mistakes) made in both second language learning and child language acquisition provides evidence that a learner uses a definite system of

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language at every point in his development. This system, or "built – in syllabus", may yield a more efficient sequence than the instructor – generated sequence because it is more meaningful to learner. By allowing the learners innate strategies to dictate the language syllabus, rather than imposing upon him preconceived notions of what he ought to learn, a more effective means of language instruction may be achieved. The nature of error is very different in first language and in second language. In L1 speaker is able to correct his/her self immediately but in L2 it is quite difficult for writer or speaker to correct his/her self in a way native speakers do. Learners move from one stage of learning to another, in these stages the nature of errors also changes. Error analysis is an invaluable source of information to teachers. It provides information on students, errors which in turns helps to correct students' error and also improves the effectiveness of their teaching.

3. Research Methodology

3.1 Research Design

The purpose of this research paper is to analyze the errors in L2 and comparing public and private schools' learners' performance. For this purpose, quantitative method was used in this study. Four Public and four private schools were selected for the collection of data. Written test was conducted by the researcher to analyze learner's errors. A short questionnaire was prepared for teachers and distributed among them. The selected private schools were The Educators, The Public School, The Grammar School and The Country School. The public school include: Danewal Government School for Girls, Model School for boys Vehari, MC high school for Girls and Islamia High School for Boys. Permission was granted by the Heads of the schools

and students were informed about the purpose of taking test. Test was taken in the third period to their classrooms. First the students were acknowledged and introduced with the purpose and reasons of taking their written test. Mixed response was noted from the students of private and government schools. Some students showed positive attitude and some showed submissive. Public School students were bit confused while writing an essay while private school students were very happy and enthusiastic to write an essay. Sixty minutes were given for the completion of test. Essay's topic was "My favorite personality". Most of the students wrote essays on 'Holy Prophet (MPBUH) Quaid-e-Azam, Allama Iqbal, My Mother and My Father. After taking tests from the students a questionnaire was given to each English teacher containing different questions to collect information about their qualification and experience. Response from teachers was also satisfactory and cooperative. After getting the required data in the form of essays and questionnaires, data was analyzed.

3.2 Model of the study

We opted following model of errors analysis developed by Corder (1974) This model is based on five stages: -

- Selection of corpus of language
- Identifications of errors
- Classification of errors
- Explanation of the causes and factors of the errors
- Evaluation of errors

Primary data was collected, classified, explained and evaluated according this model and results presented in the form of percentage. Besides analysis data we also compare the results of Public and Private Schools.

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3.3 Sample of study

Total 200 students were taken as a sample from private and public schools of District Vehari of Pakistan. Total eight schools, four from public sector and four from private sector were selected while 14 teachers, who were teaching English subject to the students of 9th and 10th class, were also selected. All filled questionnaires were included into analysis. The categories of errors are also large in number. To restrict the category, only six types of errors were selected. These include: Errors of pronouns, errors of prepositions, errors of verb, errors of capitalization, errors of spellings and errors of articles (omission, addition).

4. Empirical analysis

The results of total errors of private schools' learners are given in Table 1.

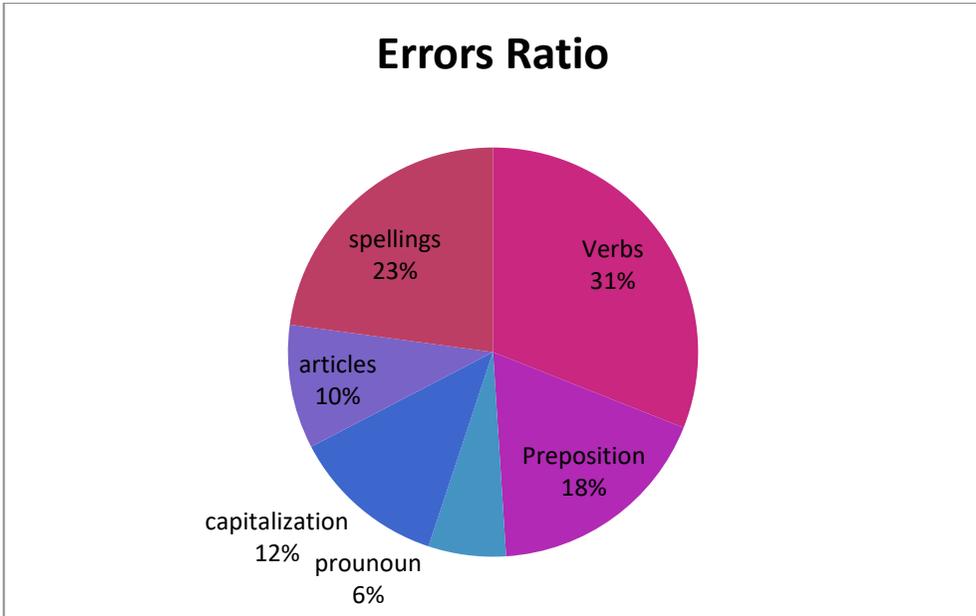Table 1: Total errors of private schools' learners

Sr. No	Error's category	Total Errors
1	Capitalization	30
2	Pronoun	15
3	Preposition	44
4	Articles	24
5	Verb	76
6	Spelling	56
7	Net Total	245

Total 245 errors were found in the essays of private schools' learners. The researcher found 76 errors of verb among the sample of private schools' students' written compositions with an average error rate of 31% among other categories. Total errors of spelling were 56 with an average rate of 23%. Errors of prepositions were also found. Wrong use of prepositions was very common in Pakistan. Usually learner misplaced the prepositions or used one instead of another. Our study reveals the sly and polysemous nature of preposition and explain learners' failure to grasp these tiny words- prepositions. Total 44 prepositional errors were found with an average rate of 18% of total errors. The Errors of capitalization were 30, with an average rate of 12%. The first letter of proper noun was written in small letters. Omission and addition of

articles were also diagnosed. 10% errors were related to this category. Few errors of prepositions were found.

Errors of pronoun were occurred due to L1 interference because Urdu has small number of pronouns. Students mixed the meanings of prepositions as in Pakistani school prepositions are taught with meanings. Errors of pronoun are not common but in some cases learners do these errors in short intervals because they try to translate Urdu into English. For example, in the essay written by the students on the topic of Allama Iqbal as their favorite hero they wrote their' instead of 'his'. Learner used 'their' in the perspective of respect as it is used in Urdu. This is called the over generalization of the rule from L1 towards L2. The percentage of private schools' learners' errors are shown in Figure 1 for clear reflection of results.

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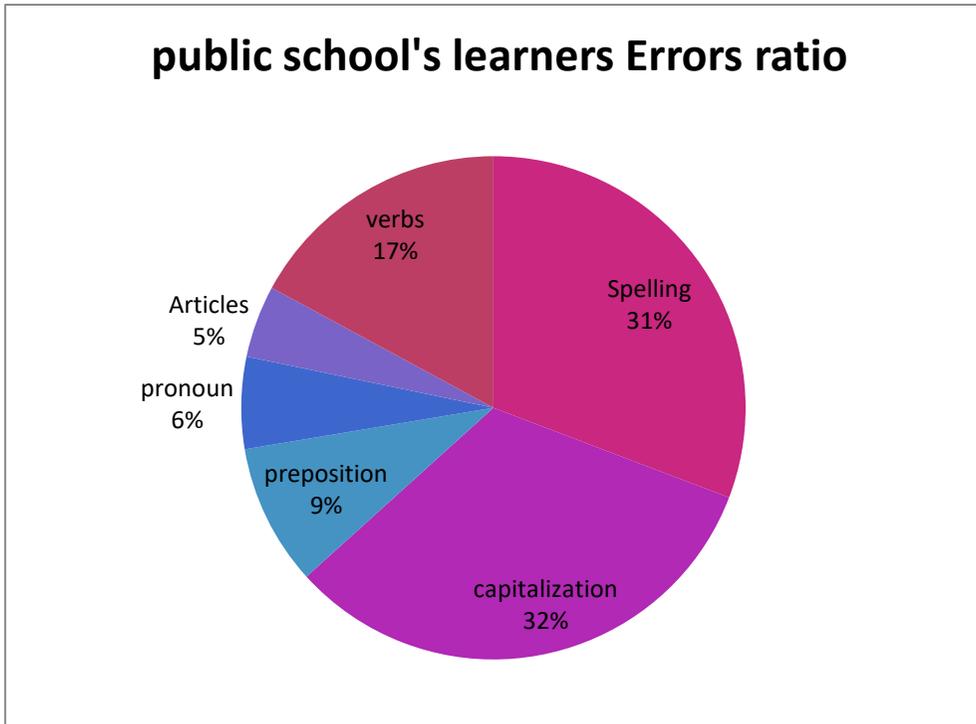Figure .1: Percentage of private schools' learners' errors

Now we will discuss the errors committed by the students of Public Schools. These result are shown in Table 2:

Table 2: Total errors of the Public schools' learners

Sr.no	Error category	Total errors
1	Spellings	146
2	Capitalization	154
3	Verbs	81
4	Prepositions	43
5	Articles	22
6	Pronoun	28
	Total	504

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In Public schools' ratio or frequency of errors is high. Total 504 errors were noted in tests. Error of spellings were146 and error of capitalization were 154. These two types of errors were high in numbers. Error of verbs are 81, prepositional error was 43. Errors of pronoun and articles were less in numbers. Errors of capitalization were large. Total 154, 32% of errors of capitalization were found in written texts. 146 errors were found as spelling errors. Which were 31% as a whole. Verb errors were 81 and of 17%, 43 Errors of prepositions were found which were 9% of the whole errors. Errors of article were 5% and errors of pronoun were 6% as a whole. Teachers related questionnaire results showed that both in Public and Private schools teachers were almost equally qualified. In some cases, Public Schools t teachers were more experienced but they lacked required facilities and proper trainings regarding English language teaching. It was noted that teachers would have to teach more than 50 students in each class in public school, which is a difficult task for teacher to pay full attention to each student This factor badly affects the overall performance of students. The ratio of errors of Public Schools' learners are shown in Figure 2.

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Figure 2: Ratio of Public School's learners' errors

public school's learners Errors ratio

- Spelling 31%
- capitalization 32%
- preposition 9%
- pronoun 6%
- Articles 5%
- verbs 17%

The results in Figure 2 are visible and easily understandable. We can see major errors are capitalization (32%) and spelling mistakes are 31%. Verbs errors are 17% while proposition errors were 9%. After discussing individual results of Public and Private schools' learners now we have intended to compare the performance of Public and Private Schools. The comparison is given in table 3.

Table 3: Comparison of Private and Public Schools

Sr No.	Error Category	Private Schools	Public Schools
1	Capitalization	30	154
2	Spelling	56	146
3	Verbs	76	81
4	Prepositions	44	43
5	Article	24	22
6	Pronoun	15	28
Total		245	504

The numerical comparison given in table 3 shows that the students of private schools made about 51 percent less errors in the test while the performance of Public Schools' students was very poor. It reflects how public schools are delivering and performing and their teachers are not realizing their sense of responsibility to improve knowledge and skill of their students. Most of the students are failed in the Matriculation Examination due to poor writing skilling of English language and abandon their further education because English is a compulsory subject and the students having failed in this subject could not get admission in higher classes. Figure 3 shows the bleak picture of public schools' performance because their students committed high percentage of errors in the test.

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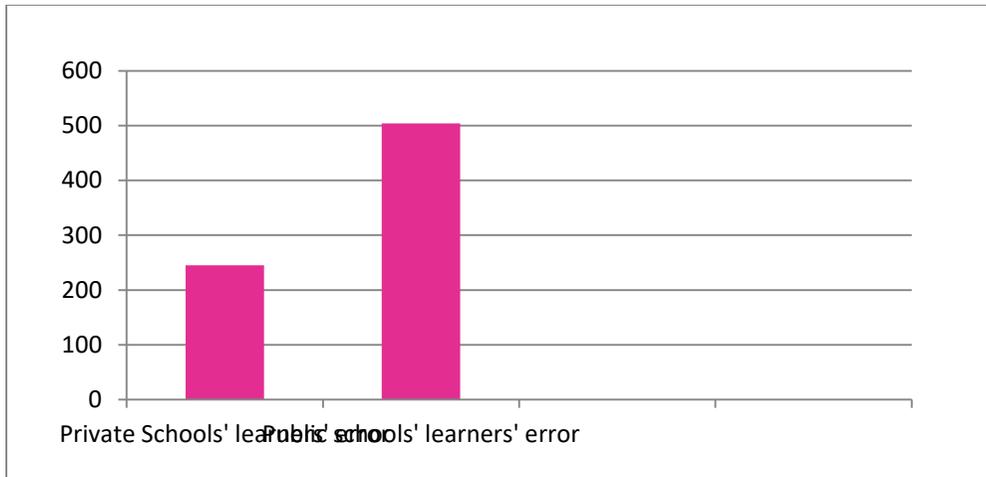Figure 3: Comparison of Private and Public Schools

Table 3 shows total number of errors committed by students during test. The data shows that the students of Private Schools committed 245 different types of errors while student of Public Schools made 504 errors, which is more than 51 percent. It reflects the facts that the students of Public Schools are poor in learning English language or their teachers have poor skill of teaching. In other words, the performance of teachers and students of Private Schools are fare better from the students of Public Schools. This is the reason that parents having financial resources prefer to get admit their children in the private school to brighten their future while parents having low income are forced to send their children to Public Schools.

5. Findings of study

The findings are based on test taken from the students of   9th and 10th classes. The participants of test committed almost all kinds of errors but this study was restricted to six types of errors, namely: use of prepositions, articles, pronoun, spellings, capitalization and verbs. Both kind of students i.e. public

schools' learners or private schools' learners, made errors in the test but the results show that the Public schools learners made large number of errors of capitalization and spellings. It pinpoints the area which is weak and need new techniques of memorization of spellings. The main cause behind wrong spellings is similarity of vowel sounds. The errors of capitalization are also large in number and the private schools' learners also made a lot of errors of capitalization. The reason behind is that most of the teachers do not bother about these kinds of mistakes and not properly guide the students about the rules related to capitalization. The students even do not know proper nouns' that first letter should be capital. With regard to the use of spellings, all students had the tendency of omitting or misspelling the words. Concerning about the error of capitalization our results revealed that learners were not sure about the rule of capitalization. This was seen in their essays when they wrote proper noun in small letter. With regard to the pronoun, the issue of mother tongue interference is involved because in Urdu the pronoun which are used, are small in numbers. Secondly, Students tried word to word translation in their essays so they committed errors of pronoun. A part from the above causes of errors, there are a lot of other reasons that lead the learners towards errors. In Pakistan and especially in the Public schools the learners have little or no exposure to the written text of the target language. That is why their writing skill remained imperfect of L2 writers. Moreover, faulty teaching techniques especially in the controlled classrooms are some of the causes of errors among the Pakistani learners. The learners continued to make error in the exams and get low grade due to improper marking of teachers. In other words, the

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students become victim of teachers' wrong assessments. There must a check on teachers' negligence.

6. Conclusions

In Pakistan, testing system is old and cannot base on new methodology of testing especially in the case of L2 writing. In Pakistan, English is taken as a subject, not as a language. So teachers especially in the government schools rely on rote teaching. They try to memorize the language rules and literature to students, so they can be able to get higher grades in the examinations. Dictating letters, summaries, and essays makes the writing skill poor. By doing so, the learner is not able to think independently in a second language. It is very pathetic that an average Pakistani learner hardly get a chance of free writing to improve his or her writing skills. In a nut shell, all these factors which were discussed earlier, indicates that these areas are the weak area of students in L2 writing in District Vehari, Pakistan and must be focused to improve them.

7. Policy Recommendations

In the light of above results we would like to make the following recommendations:

● Teachers teacher L2 must be trained with latest teaching techniques and their skill of using latest technology in teaching must be developed through rigorous training programs. For this purpose, workshops, symposium and seminars may be organized with certain intervals.

● Motivation level of teachers in Public Schools is very and necessary policy measures should be taken to improve their motivation level so that they will be able to motivate the students to learn L2.

● It is necessary that teachers must teach correct grammar to the students in order strengthen their foundation of writing. Correct grammar instruction, especially for adult learners, improve students' ability to learn English more effectively. So, for teachers it is necessary to teach them appropriate grammar. Because it leads teaching for EFL towards effective learning at Matric Level.

● Mostly traditional methods are used particularly in Public Schools for teaching English language. Most of the students commit errors due to L1 or mother tongue interference. The teachers must be forced to use new teaching techniques and methods for teaching English language.

● Teachers must be trained in comparing foreign and native languages to reduce L1 interference. They should clearly teach grammatical rules of both English and Urdu (Native) clearly. It will improve L2 writing.

8. Limitations of study

This study is restricted to specific category of errors of English and target population. In a sense of area restriction, this study is limited to city of Vehari only. As the district holds large population and a number of Government and Private schools, it was difficult to approach all of them, so the research was restricted only to Vehari City. Further, only urban schools were selected to fulfill the requirement of study. This study is also limited only to 9th and 10th classes' students and teachers from private and government schools. Error analysis is a vast field and new researchers can expand this study by including more schools, other districts and sampling population as well as by including higher classes in their studies.

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