

The Effect of Using Error Analysis on Basic - Ninth Grade Students' English Writing Skills

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Abstract:

This study aimed at examining the effect of the error analysis on ninth grade students' writing skills. To achieve the aims of the study, a quasi-experimental research design was used in which the participants of the study consisted of 65 ninth-grade female students who were randomly assigned as one control group (n=30) and one experimental group (n=35) who were enrolled at Safia Bint Abd Al-Mutalib secondary school for girls, at Mafraq Directorate of Education, in the first semester of the academic year 2018-2019. To collect data, a pre- posttest was prepared. The researcher taught the experimental group, whereas the course teacher taught the control group. The results showed that there were statistically significant differences in the mean scores of the two groups in favor of the experimental group. The study recommended using the error analysis in analyzing the students written works.

Key Words: Error analysis, Ninth grade, Writing skill.

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أثر استخدام تحليل الأخطاء في مهارات الكتابة باللغة الإنجليزية لدى طالبات الصف التاسع الأساسي

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ملخص:

هدفت هذه الدراسة إلى الكشف عن أثر إستراتيجية تحليل الأخطاء في تحسين أداء طالبات الصف التاسع الأساسي في مهارة الكتابة باللغة الانجليزية. تبنت هذه الدراسة الحالية التصميم شبه التجريبي وقد تكونت عينة الدراسة من 65 طالبة من طالبات الصف التاسع الأساسي في مدرسة صفية بنت عبد المطلب الثانوية للبنات في محافظة المفرق في شعبتين تم توزيعها إلى مجموعتين: المجموعة الضابطة وعدد أفرادها 30 والمجموعة التجريبية وعددها 35. أجريت الدراسة خلال الفصل الأول من السنة الأكاديمية 2019/2018. ولتحقيق أهداف الدراسة، وظّفت أداة رئيسة وهي اختبار قبلي واختبار بعدي لمهارة الكتابة لقياس أداء الطلبة قبل التجربة وبعدها. ولقد درست الباحثة المجموعة التجريبية بينما تم تدريس المجموعة الضابطة من قبل معلمة المادة. وقد أظهرت النتائج وجود فروق ذات دلالة إحصائية في المتوسطات الحسابية للمجموعتين التجريبية والضابطة لصالح المجموعة التجريبية. وفي ضوء نتائج هذه الدراسة، أوصت الدراسة باستخدام إستراتيجية تحليل الأخطاء في تحليل الأعمال الكتابية لدى الطالبات.

الكلمات المفتاحية: تحليل الأخطاء، الصف التاسع، الكتابة.

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Introduction and Background of the Study

Writing has continuously been an important skill in English acquisition. This importance refers to the fact that it reinforces grammatical structures and vocabulary that educators try to show their students. It is the realm during which learners have to be offered adequate time to develop their writing skill. Thus more time should be dedicated to writing skill in lecture rooms containing ELL in order that they will be ready to effectively communicate in reality yet as educational situations (Ismail, 2011).

Despite the fact that writing is one of the most important skill in language learning, EFL students may suffer while learning writing. In this context, Tarawneh (2011) argued that EFL students face hard time while learning writing, this may be attributed to the gap between the students' linguistic knowledge and the communication origins of the target language.

Nowadays, writing is seen as the system, which reflects language in a visual form; this system needs a hard work to be mastered. It is the mirror that shows the student's knowledge about language (Chayaningati, 2012). Although it is necessary for everyone to be understood in spoken language, writing as such is at least as important as the ability to speak since these skills reinforce both communication and the process of conveying feelings and thoughts to others (Coleman, 2003).

For EFL students, there is a true need to learn certain writing features in order to master writing. Abu Seileek (2013) listed some of those features of good writing such as content, structural organization (sentence level, and text level), grammatical accuracy, punctuation, spelling, and vocabulary.

A review of the literature related to the theoretical background of the study revealed that the use of error analysis was beneficial to the writing skill. Sleinker (1993) presented five central types of errors which are similar to what was introduced by Richards (1978), first, language transfer, second, transfer of training, third, L2 learning strategy, fourth, L2 communication strategies, finally, overgeneralization of rules.

Likewise, Farook (1998) clarified managing students' errors. He explained that, a few instructors may recommend remedying them when they show up, another might underline disregarding them, and another would state to discover approaches to help students based on these errors. It seems improbable to help students in learning sentence structure in those nations that give extensive consideration to this risky part of language instructing.

According to Crystal (1999), error analysis in teaching and learning

language is studying the inappropriate types generated by someone studying a language, particularly a foreign language. According to James (2001), error analysis relates to "the research of language uncertainty, the inquiry of what individuals do not understand and how they try to deal with their ignorance".

According to Ferris & Roberts (2001), there are many errors in the foreign language writing such as punctuation, spelling, prepositions, apostrophe, capital letters, present and past continuous tenses, subject pronouns, vocabulary, and passive and active voice. Chan (2004) also stated that there are many errors such as using (be) as linking verbs; some languages use it to link between subjects while it can be omitted in English. Moreover, some learners misplace adverbs. For example, adverbs can occur either before or after verbs in English language. Moreover, they express the existential or preventative function, as the sentence sometimes does not need a subject. As a result, many EFL learners have problems with the use of "There be" structure.

Furthermore, Scrivener (2005) explained that, if the amount of developmental process errors being low, this shows that they are doing not represent a significant reason for error production throughout translation categories.

The identical is same concerning the opposite varieties of errors indicated by our analysis; however, it is necessary to recollect that they are good proof that progress is being created. Error analysis is required in developing or increasing the ways in teaching English, it can also target the places during which most learners created error; teachers may value themselves whether or not they reach teaching or not; and eventually they will improve techniques in teaching by making ready systematic materials. Grammatical errors were analyzed based on the theories presented by the linguists. By this way, the teachers are expected to improve students' writing skill.

Khansir (2012) described error analysis as a major tool for learning the correct form of language and they concluded that the errors made during the language usage urge the students to communicate while focusing on the right form to convey their messages and this is the intended outcome.

Moreover, Presada & Badea (2014) examined that error analysis can be useful for students' writing skill improvement. Owing the fact that teaching, learning process focus on the development of students' translation, and writing aspects.

On the practical level, a great deal of research has been done on the effect of error analysis on writing performance.

Zawahreh (2012) categorized the written errors of English, which were committed by the tenth grade. The sample of the study is selected randomly. The students were asked to write a free essay in English language in the class. The findings showed that students' errors were: lack of agreement between subject and the main verb, errors of insertion of prepositions, errors of omission of the main verb, errors of using present instead of past.

In another study, Al-Khasawneh (2014) investigated the importance of error analysis analyzing on twenty-six English paragraphs of twenty-six students. The study was conducted at Ajloun National University in Jordan. The findings of the study revealed that the participants have done various errors in word order, and subject-verb agreement. Moreover, the results showed that the frequent error committed by the students was the wrong use of English articles.

Muhsen (2016) investigated the benefit of using error analysis on 17 students of eighth grade of Makassar High School. Data were collected from the students, analyzed the errors of grammar, classified the errors of using simple present tense in the students' writing activities to specify the frequency of errors. The results showed that the students' errors can be classified into four types of errors, errors of omission. The missed formation was the major kind of error made by the eighth grade students.

Al-Tamimi (2018) investigated the effect of error analysis through analyzing academic writing errors, which were done by Yemeni students. A total of 60 responses completed the questionnaire based on their beliefs towards the academic writing errors. The data were collected through using a questionnaire and an interview. The study was conducted in Hadhramout University. The findings of the study showed that students made many errors in spelling, sentence structure, punctuation, vocabulary, and expressing ideas, prepositions, use of articles and use of irregular verbs.

Most of the previous studies showed the importance of using Error Analysis in the teaching process, as well as the positive trends towards using it by teachers.

It is worth mentioning that, the observational review of the literature provided verifiable evidence that error analysis does significantly contribute to the improvement of EFL learners' writing performance.

Statement of the problem

During the researcher's work as an instructor of EFL in public schools in Jordan, it was noticed that EFL students face many challenges in English language, especially in writing skill. These challenges in writing maybe attributed to students' lack of some important factors such as coherence, cohesion, structure and organization of sentences.

Moreover, after reviewing the related literature, the researchers found that there were serious difficulties face EFL students while they were writing which does not enable them to write accurately (Al-Kataybeh & Al-Shourafa, 2011), or organize writing correctly (Al-Shourfa, 2011). Bani Hani, Al-Sobh & Abu Melhim, (2014) stated that most students in Jordan still face difficulties while writing essays, despite the efforts exerted by the Ministry of Education to develop students' writing skill, despite the fact that all efforts by educators, parents and school administrators have been made to help them develop their writing abilities. Therefore, this study based on introducing facilities for helping students developing their writing sub-skill.

Several studies are conducted in Jordan (e.g. Bataineh 1986; Bataineh & Salah, 2017; Al-Omari, 2014) relevant to writing difficulties that students face. These studies recommended the use of various strategies for teaching English in English language generally and in teaching writing skill particularly.

Purpose and Question of the Study

This study aimed to examine the effect of error analysis on ninth grade students' writing performance. The study also aimed at considering the students' writing level in deciding the effect of error analysis. The study attempted to answer the following question:

- Are there any statistically significant differences between the mean scores of the experimental and control groups' aspects of writing at ($\alpha=0.05$) due to the method of teaching (error analysis vs. conventional method)?

Significance of the Study

This study set the stage for further research on the teaching English writing for Jordanian EFL students using new strategies of teaching. It is potentially significant for the following reasons:

The findings of the study were useful for the Jordanian Ministry of Education as the study tried to check students' errors in writing.

Also, the findings of this study benefits curricula designers to develop new curricula and methods based on learner-centered classes using error analysis in checking and analyzing students' errors.

Furthermore, the findings of this study may help students to get beneficial feedback of their common errors from the teacher on their writing works. Moreover, students felt relaxed when they realized their errors. Therefore, the findings of this study may help them in reducing their shyness and anxiety when they make errors while writing, which may help them to be more self-confident and write better English.

In addition, this study will encourage other researchers to investigate the same field with different variables to unravel some obstacles in English writing teaching.

Design, Participants and Instrument of the Study

The research adopted a quasi-experimental design through which error analysis strategy is used to supplement traditional writing instruction among Jordanian ninth grade students. Two intact sections, comprising 35 female students, were purposefully selected from Safia Bint Abd Al-Mutalib Secondary School at Mafraq Directorate of Education in the first semester of the scholastic year 2018-2019.

To achieve the aims of the study, the researchers prepared a pre-post writing test. The test was administered before the experiment to decide the actual level of both groups in writing before starting the experiment. It included three questions covering the writing aspects; spelling, grammar, punctuation and capitalization. After two months, a post-test was administered to see if error analysis had an effect on students' writing skill.

The writing test was developed. Its validity and reliability were also assured. The procedures were used to analyze the data obtained from the students' handwritings. First, the students' papers were all checked and read. The incorrect sentences were given check marks by using red pen. Then, the students' errors were classified into specific types. The test contained questions on each aspect of writing.

Validation of the Instrument

The validity of the test was assured. To ensure validity of the test, it was given to arbitrators of seventeen specialists who are well-known for their long experience in the field of teaching EFL. Their recommendations were taken into consideration.

Reliability of the Instrument

To obtain the reliability of the internal consistency of the test, a pilot study was tested. Reliability of the test was assured through giving the test to the pilot study cohort two weeks after the pre test application according to the test procedures. The correlation coefficient between the first and the second application was calculated. The readability coefficient was found to be 0.87, which is appropriate for the purposes of this study.

Results of the Study

To review, the question was *"Are there any statistically significant differences between the mean scores of the experimental and control groups' sub-skill of writing at ($\alpha = 0.05$) due to the method of teaching (error analysis vs. conventional method)?"*

To answer this question, a timed pre-test and a post-test of writing were administrated. The mean scores and standard deviations of the students' scores on the pre-post test were calculated, along with estimates of mean scores and standard errors of the post-test scores based on the differences between the error analysis teaching and conventional method, as shown in this table.

Table 1: Means, Standard Deviation of the Post-Test

Test	Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	t	df	Sig.
Post-test	Control	30	52.68	12.78	-2.69	42	0.00
	Experimental	35	71.22	15.29			

Table1 showed that there was a statistically significant difference between the performance of the experimental group and the control group in the post-test. In addition to the results presented that the score of the experimental group in the post-test was higher than the control group.

Discussion of the Results

According to the results, the scores of the experimental group were statistically higher than those of the control group, and the performance of the experimental group in writing has improved after practicing writing via error analysis over eight weeks, while there was a little improvement in the performance of the control group in writing.

The results showed that error analysis helped students in understanding interpretations of how language works, as well as to adapt teaching strategies and practices into the classroom, to favor the correct acquisition of the L2.

The researcher think it does contribute positively to both teaching and learning processes, since students became more aware about how to express

something (oral or written) and teachers get to know somehow the causes of their errors so they can plan suitable activities to facilitate correction.

These results are similar to those by some other studies (e.g., Zawahreh, 2012; Al-khasawneh, 2014; Al-Tamimi, 2018; and Muhsen, 2012).

Error analysis was effective in developing and analyzing students' writing performance. There was a statistically significant difference between the performances of the experimental group on the post-test. In other words, the mean scores of the experimental group in the post-test was higher than the control group. The differences in these findings are related to the teaching method, indicating that students who were taught by error analysis performed better than those who were taught conventionally.

The results indicated that the groups were homogenous and had the same level in writing before the treatment. Henceforth, the improvement of the students' writing performance in the posttest might be due to error analysis.

Another possible explanation of the participants' more favorable attitudes were their confidence in writing; they became more confident in writing different topics.

There is no doubt that errors are points of reference to see how our students are advancing, improving or increasing their level of English. Through error analysis, teachers can revise and redirect their teaching practices permanently. Likewise, this allows teachers to identify weak points in the learning process and tackle them in a more effective way. Thus, many students made some types of errors in different kind of activities and exercise inside the class; we can profit the chance to provide them the right input for them to overcome those errors.

Conclusion:

All the findings of this study demonstrate the positive effects of error analysis, and their combination on ninth grade students' writing performance. The reasons behind the results are owing to the fact that error analysis provided students opportunities to come up with well-organized paragraphs. It enabled learners to write a correct language, improve the overall writing aspects, to help students write in different topics correctly. The students had a big chance to get the feedback in and outside the classroom, which pushed them to write creatively. Finally, teaching through error analysis activated the writing aspects of spelling, punctuation,

capitalization and vocabulary.

Recommendations:

In light of the study results, the following recommendations are proposed:

- A. The researchers recommend other researchers to adopt similar study with longer periods using different variables, a large number of population, and different techniques for teaching writing through error analysis to other stages, and bigger samples of students in universities and public schools in order to make the results widely applicable.
- B. Encouraging the teachers to use error analysis in teaching English through offering enhancements and upgrades.

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