

## Investigating Pakistani ESL Students' Writing Problems on Convention, Punctuation and Language Use at Territory Level

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### Abstract:

*This study aimed to investigate the three problematic areas of written language convention, punctuation, and language use at territory level from students and teacher experience. The data will be collected from students ESL and English teacher from the high rank and lower rank of territory school. There are tools for examining the problems questionnaire and essay. At the end finding revealed that Pakistani students have problems in writing especially unable to tackle the language use.*

**Key words:** Writing problem, Conventions, Punctuation, Language use

### Introduction:

Writing skills especially in education shows the cognitive power of the students. It shows their competency to perceive the

language or not. The expression proves their understanding. But students always do many mistakes. This case is especially with ESL students. Second languages for ESL like have some list of vocabulary and rules of strange language which have to understand or in other words cram it. Students make mistakes in writing skills when they lack in understanding of target language.

### **Literature Review:**

The problems in writing of an individual, there are many aspect of writing like convention, punctuation, spelling and most important use of language. According to Leki (1992) students complain about learning and focusing on the English word order or word form. According to Pak-TaoNg (2003) he asserted that the first idea come to mind when you are writing it is part of obligatory course work. Moreover Pak-TaoNg (2003) suggested that writing consist of writing activities which result in understanding. In Pakistani context major course work is depend on the writing abilities. So, there are many programs and approaches to decontextualize of writing to develop better writing skills. Lack in English language proficiency causes lots of problems in writing skill. The students are not native of particular language that's why students faced many difficulties culturally and linguistically.

It creates problem for teachers and students that how to cope with it. According to AL- khasawneh argued that international contacts regarding non native to non native communication and deals are carried out through English language including trade, policy , tourism , journalism etc. The writing task is very difficult because many ethical issues and responsibilities also included in it. Writing is not natural activity so explicit instructions are required for this skill. In Pakistan (Asia) English is a second language. According to Aronoff and Rees-Miller (2007) "writing is a system, of more or

less permanent marks used to present an utterance in such a way that it can be recovered exactly without intervention of the utterer”.

In 1996 according to Hughes “written expression is more effective in social cognitive instances of communication than oral expression. Unlike speaking, writing enables human beings to convey a message independent of time and space. As we know student faced problems linguistically and culturally. Paltridge (2004) said that fusion of textual and socio-cultural knowledge makes the identification of the exact knowledge of a difficult task. Language competence is a difficult phenomenon in which there are included many other aspects like literacy, speaking fluency, cognitive and cultural component, as in Pakistan.

In Pakistan, English is viewed mainly as the language for development at both the individual and national level.

Hedgcock (2005) has pointed out that the common perception that exists about teachers’ correction and script on writing has been considered by all experts as both error corrections.

### **Objectives of study:**

First of all to identify the problems of students which face by the students in writing activities that normally reflects in their understanding.

Second to know about the feedback of teachers on the remarks of their students.

Third to give possible ways to improve the writing system and writing abilities.

### **Research Question:**

- 1) How frequent do Pakistani students make mistake in convention, punctuation, and language use?

- 2) What are teacher feedbacks on the writing skills of students?
- 3) What are the most appropriate ways to improve the writing system?

### **Significance of study:**

Writing is very important skills and as writing area in education has many problems which faced by students. It is essential in learning and teaching second language. The aim of this study to find out the different style for teachers according to the students error that increased day by day. It's also helpful to offer some remedies for writing problems and define the suitable ways to overcome these problems.

### **Methodology:**

It consists of three sections: subject and material, procedure and data analysis.

**Subject:** The research designs examine the three major problems in writing and the teacher's feedback towards the Pakistani students' problem. The data will be collected randomly from 30 ESL students and 10 teachers by questionnaire and sample of essay writing.

**Material:** The material used in the study questionnaire and sample essay writing. The major purpose of questionnaires is to know teacher's perception about student common error in writing. The sample essay test is to know the major problematic areas of writing for them.

**Participants:** Data collected from 30 ESL students and 10 ESL teachers.

**Procedure:** The teacher and students were selected from the University of FSD. The teachers were nominated for this questionnaire. First of all a researcher conducted meeting with principal and he/she gave the list of ESL teachers. Teachers had 15 minutes to fill this question. Sample essay writing test took from 30 students of language class. They had 30minutes to write down the particular topic.

## **Results:**

This section addresses the answers and result that found in the research through two basic tools questionnaire and essay writing.

### **Analysis of research questionnaire:**

The following table represents the teacher's thoughts about their student writing and problems in it. In other words, students' writings are not always clear. In addition, the majority of participated teachers believed that students have problems in proper use of lines in the paper, beginning of the sentences, writing complete sentences, and their writing length.

### **Teachers' feedbacks on students' convention, punctuation, language use.**

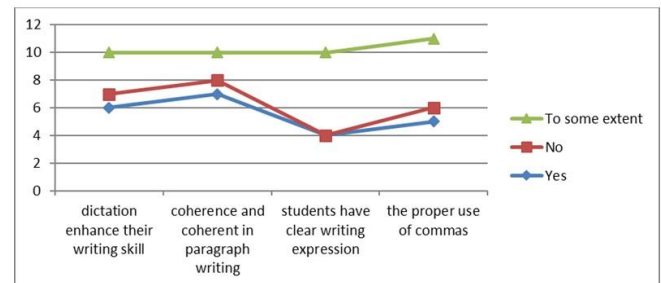
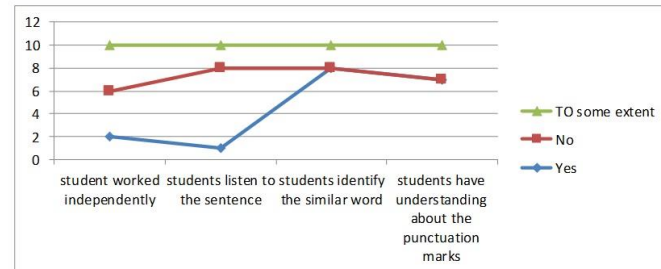
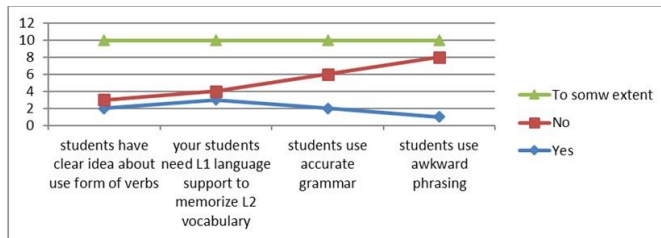
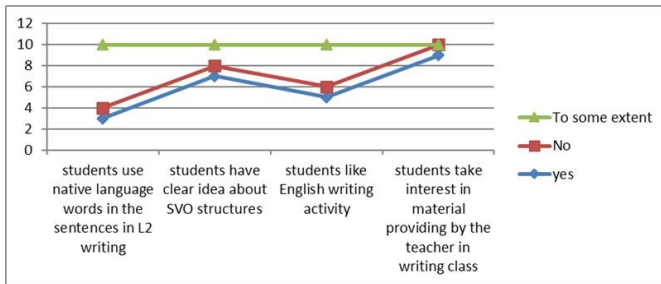
ITEMS	YES	NO	TO SOME EXTENT
Do your students use native language words in the sentences in L2 writing?	3	1	6
Do your students have clear idea about SVO structures?	7	1	2
Do your students like English writing activity?	5	1	4
Do your students take interest in material providing by the teacher in writing class?	9	1	0
Do your students need L1 language support to memorize L2 vocabulary?	6	1	3

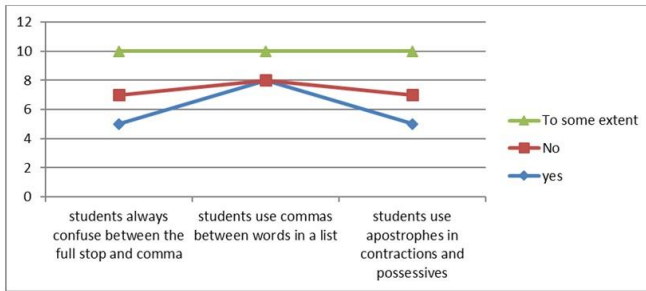
Anum Shahzadie, Sabahat Mushtaq, Arifa Khan- **Investigating Pakistani ESL Students' Writing Problems on Convention, Punctuation and Language Use at Territory Level**

Do your students use accurate grammar?	2	1	7
Do your students use awkward phrasing?	3	1	6
When your student worked independently, he/she worked extremely slowly?	2	4	4
When your students listen to the sentence, he/she was able to write answer?	1	7	2
Do your students identify the similar word which they write a lot?	8	0	2
Do your students have understanding about the punctuation marks in the sentences and at the end of it?	7	0	3
Do you think dictation enhance their writing skill?	6	0	3
Do your students have coherence and coherent in paragraph writing?	7	1	2
Do your students have clear writing expression?	4	0	6
Do your students know the proper use of commas?	5	1	4
Do your students always confuse between the full stop and comma?	5	2	3
Do your students use commas between words in a list?	8	0	2
Do your students use apostrophes in contractions and possessives?	3	6	1

There is complete list of teachers feedback about the writing of students. Students at many stages are not clear about the use of verbs and even not make sure about the proper use of punctuation. But many teachers are also agree students have coherence and cohesion in their paragraph. At this stage probably some students have S+V+O problem but mostly they can cope with it. Students mostly use L1 to memorize the L2. There are two terms conscious and unconscious.

**Graphs:**



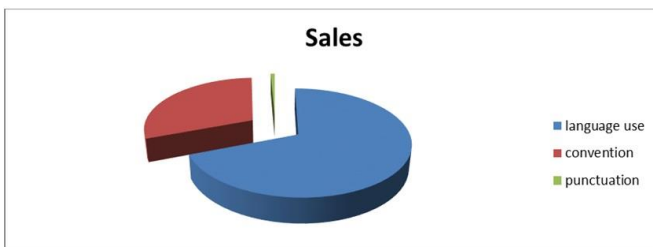


### Analysis of students writing:

Researcher were analyzed the students writing and find out the mJOR problematic area in their writing. As teachers' feedback about their students' writng, students are not too much convient about their writing. Table no.2 is showing the figure of students' error.

**Table 2. Writing Errors of Students on Conventions, Punctuation, and Language use.**

Items	Number of errors
punctuation	50
convention	61
language use	140



That were considered to analyze students' essays, it is represented that the students have problems in conventions, punctuation, and more specifically in language use. As it can be observed, with an approximate calculation, the highest error



which is done by students in essay writing is language use, second on convention and then last punctuation.

### **Conclusion:**

Taking into account the writing complications and coming up with applicable solutions to writing problems can undoubtedly influence ESL writing proficiency and bring desirable improvements. This study is conducted based on several researches carried out regarding students' writing skill and writing problems in ESL context. The focus of this study has been Pakistani territory level students' writing errors and teachers' feedbacks on such errors. The writing error items studied in this research were Language use, conventions, and punctuation. The findings of this study confirmed the previous research (Maros, Hua, and Khazriyati, 2007; Musa, Lie, & Azman, 2012) reporting ESL students' writing problems in different areas, particularly in language use. It can be concluded from the findings that ESL students need more improvement on English language proficiency and language use. Then, they require training on punctuation and writing conventions respectively. Additionally, teacher training should also be taken seriously into account in order to improve and develop ESL students' language proficiency in general and writing skill in particular

### **Suggestion:**

Providing more exercises to enhance writing skill.

Teacher should provide the background knowledge of target language rules.

Teacher should introduce the grammar rules.

Student should rewrite the newspaper articles in their own words.

Every institute should provide the place to students where they can flourish their writing skill.

Different workshop should held for their betterment.

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