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Students' Spelling Errors at the University Level: A Case Study in Bangladesh

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Abstract

This study aims to find out why students spell incorrectly at the university level in Bangladesh. To discover the causes this study has followed two research questions regarding the possible reasons behind making spelling errors and the learners' attitude towards spelling errors. A few previous pieces of research have already been done on this ground focusing on learners' spelling errors, but they have hardly been focused specifically on university students. This research paper uses a quantitative method. In this study, one hundred and forty-seven university students participated in questionnaire surveys. This paper reveals the spelling errors, which Bangladeshi students make, are due to a variety of factors, including the education system, the influence of modern technology on students' learning, and social media usage. It is suggested that Teacher's awareness and avoidance of modern tools would be a possible solution to the spelling problem.

Keywords: Auto-correction, Writing, Omission, Substitution, Insertion, Transposition

Introduction

Writing is an important part of any kind of language. Every language has four skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Spelling is a crucial part of writing. All English students or speakers have to learn the correct spelling to communicate using the writing language. A good writer has to be concerned while writing to not create any communication breakdown or any mistakes. As second language learners or students, every student or learner should put much effort to prevent spelling mistakes.

Even native citizens also face difficulties while writing because spelling is so irregular. English has many rules, restrictions, and exceptions that make spelling more difficult. Many English words are not pronounced as same as it is written making it more challenging for English language students. Moreover, some words are the same pronunciation with totally different meanings. In this case, it is called homophone, with the same pronunciation but has different spelling and also different meanings. For example, new / knew, accept / except, buy / by / bye, weak / week, right / write, mail / male and so on.

The English language is a written-based language that's why there are much dissimilarity between written and pronunciation. Second language learner students most of the time do these problems. In our country Bangladesh, most students make spelling mistakes because the Bengali language has no confusion between writing and pronunciation. They write what they pronounce. However, when students try to learn English as their second language they made lots of mistakes because of some English rules and restrictions.

Research Questions

The purpose of this study is to examine two research questions mentioned below.

1. What are the possible reasons behind spelling errors done by the university students?
2. What is the attitude of the university students towards spelling errors?

Literature Review

The study examines spelling errors made by English language learners at the university level. Many studies and surveys have been done on spelling mistakes, especially in universities.

In a study reported by Cook (1992), L2 users' knowledge of sound/letter rules and individual visual items was examined to determine to what extent they reflect their L1 systems of spelling and pronunciation. The study compared the spelling performance of adult L2 learners and adult and child native speakers. The researcher found that, on average, an adult L2 learner's spelling mistakes are as numerous as those of a fifteen-year-old native speaker. The researcher determined that spelling has such "social overtones" because of its importance of spelling.

In addition, another research by Hamed (2016) investigated and assessed the spelling mistakes made by Saudi students in English writing. Fifty words were chosen to be dictated to 26 Saudi university students and gathered data. The most common errors were vowels, diphthongs, and silent letters. In addition, learners applied their mother tongue knowledge to their English study endeavors. Although the greatest number of errors was substitution, the study revealed that learners applied their mother tongue knowledge.

In addition, Benyo (2014) studied the spelling errors made by students studying English at Dongola University in Sudan. A pretest and posttest on spelling were given to 200 EFL students in two faculties. The study revealed that English vowels and consonants were the most frequently misspelled.

AlBalawi (2017) researched spelling errors among first-year students at Saudi Arabia's University of Tabuk. The study concluded that there was an effect on the coherence of students' compositions, with errors categorised into three categories. Omission, addition, and substitution are examples of these classes. [ass.ccsenet.org](http://www.ass.ccsenet.org) Social Science in Asia

The study also found that the interference of the first language caused the students' spelling problems, due to the differing systems of the foreign language and mother tongue.

Alhaisoni, Al-Zuoud, and Gaudel (2015) investigated English spelling errors in composition on 122 EFL undergraduate students at the University of Ha'il in Saudi Arabia. The data were gathered through writing assignments completed by 53 males and 69 females in the preliminary year. The authors found that students tend to make the most spelling errors. There are several spelling errors, with the majority being incorrect usage of vowels and pronunciation. Although spelling mistakes occur as a result of problems in the L2 and L1, the authors discovered that there are anomalies in L2 and L1 interference.

Second, al-oudat (2017) in his 6 studies findings discovered that the English word writing machine turned into a component inside the emergence of error substitution, insertion, omission, and transposition in pupil writing. 1/3, of years of studies performed via Khalil and Yassin, harb (2018) also located mistakes inside the writing of fifty students majoring in English with one-of-a-kind probabilities of 38% omission mistakes, 22% substitution errors, 28% insertion errors, and 15% transposition blunders.

Furthermore, Ahmed (2017) considers spelling to be a linguistic approach that works with phonemic orthography. In other words, spelling is the process of capturing oral language by utilizing conventional, accepted individual letters according to the conventions of that specific language. Spelling, according to Johnson (2008), is the act of recognizing or imitating spoken or spoken words by the equivalent proper sequence of letters, taking phonological and alphabetical skills and knowledge into account.

In brief, the findings of some researchers have a correlation to the Researcher's purpose for studying the spelling blunders of words that in preceding Researchers' observation of the intensity of errors' life in word-writing has not Proven a lower in the percentage of errors in the spelling of the phrase furthermore Within the use of the commonplace word inside the English learning system, therefore, the error Can get up at any time. This research will

be conducted beneath an exceptional name, Attitude age and grade, and studies variable.

In conclusion, many investigations have been performed on spelling mistakes in different fields, such as in Canadian, Chinese, Singaporean, and Arab societies. Everyone has different types of spelling errors. Each country is conducting various studies to reduce the tendency of their students to misspell.

Methodology

This section explains the methodology of this research, which includes the research design, theoretical framework, research instrument, research protocols, data analysis procedure, and so on. This research paper is based on a quantitative method. Quantitative research is defined as the systematic collection of quantifiable data and the use of statistical, mathematical, or computational methods to study phenomena. The quantity being studied is defined by statistical structures and hypotheses in this process.

Research Design

In this study, the quantitative method was used at the same time as undertaking this dissertation. In keeping with Aliaga and Gunderson (2000), a quantitative evaluation approach is one which collects numerical records and is then analyzed the usage of mathematically based strategies (statistics) to interpret the findings. Records can be used to degree quantitative evidence. "Quantitative shape relies on accumulating numerical data and generalizing it throughout lessons of human beings," writes babbie (2010). Consistent with lim ho peng (1992), the quantitative approach, additionally referred to as the survey system, is a pleasant approach for a study with an extensive population of subjects. The objective of the quantitative approach is to derive generalized effects for the whole populace from information derived from a part of that populace.

Participants

The target participants of this study are Bangladeshi university-level students who are studying English at their undergraduate level. 147 participants took part in the questionnaire survey through random sampling. Out of 146 participants,

108 or 73.5% of those majored in English. Other department students such as BBA-13 or 8.8%, EEE-13 or 8.8%, and others such as CIVIL, ECE, and IT are included in the sample. English is a very important subject worldwide, including in Bangladesh. We were able to conduct research on them because of this sampling strategy.

Ethical Issues

Each player's privacy was modified into protected in this survey that consists of human topics. Thru oral explanation, the participants have instructed approximately the scope of the inquiry and after taking their consent, the technique turned into taken in advance. Their rights were professional within the route of records collection and evaluation. Identification confidentiality and the findings of this analysis had been carefully observed.

Instruments

The purpose of this study is to find out the reason behind the students' spelling mistakes and why students make a mistake while writing and another is the attitude toward spelling mistakes and how they react after finding mistakes in their papers. Here two types of scales are used (Often/Very often/Sometimes/Not at all) and (Yes/No/Maybe). The response was rated as Often-1, Very often-2, Sometimes-3, Not at all-4 and Yes-1, No-2, Maybe-3 as well as student's personal opinion. They gave their personal opinion on doing mistakes which will help to investigate the reasons and attitude towards spelling mistakes. This questionnaire has both open-ended and close-ended. It has 16 Items followed by a class work where students have to write the spelling of randomly selected 10 words.

Data Analysis

The analysis of the data is based on statistical analysis and manually classifying students' answers. This statistical analysis measured the mean, median, percentage, and standard deviation. It is also discussed about the students' physical activity which includes omission, substitution, insertion, and transposition.

Findings

This section discloses the findings of the study and analysis spelling mistakes made by 147 students. This discussion is divided into two parts. This research analyzed data both way statistical and manually through physical activities. The statistical analysis provided error-free results that can show

how perfectly done this research. The statistical analysis discussed the questions which are collected from the participants and another part is the physical activities that students worked on. This analysis is based on OSIT (Omission, Substitution, insertion, transposition). It manually classifies the students' class work.

Table 1 Students Acknowledgement

	Often	Very Often	Sometimes	Not at all	Mean	Std. Deviation
Do you make a spelling mistake	15.0%	20.4%	59.2%	5.4%	2.5510	.81243
Do you make more spelling mistake than before	.7%	24.5%	21.8%	53.1%	1.9864	.70211
Are you aware of spelling mistake while writing	24.5%	27.2%	39.5%	8.8%	2.3265	.94480
Do you feel disappointed when you find a spelling error	34.7%	28.6%	33.3%	3.4%	2.0544	.90495

This table shows the mean and standard deviation which are valid. The mean is 2.5 which means it's between very often and sometimes. Students very often make spelling mistakes and std. Deviation has proved it. Here is Students' true acknowledgment of their mistakes. It clearly says that every student makes a spelling mistake. It is a fact that most students make spelling errors while studying English as a

foreign language (EFL). Second language learners (SLCs) in particular make a lot of spelling errors. While studying English as a second language (E2), students generally make a lot of mistakes. They are aware of the fact that they make many errors while writing. We can see from the data that all students make errors, but this is much less the higher the level of schooling.

Table 2 Memorizing

	Often	Very often	Sometime	Not at all	Mean	Std. Deviation
Do you memorize spelling	31.3%	19.7%	46.3%	2.7%	2.2041	.92113
Auto correction tools discourage you to memorize spelling	28.6%	25.2%	33.3%	12.9%	2.3061	1.02444
Do you use auto-correction tools	21.8%	25.2%	41.5%	11.6%	2.4286	.95802
Do you often forget spelling while writing	15.0%	15.0%	64.6%	5.4%	2.6054	.80714

This table discloses students' memorizing tendencies. The mean Indicates most of the time students try to memorize the spelling. But with modern technology life has become easier. One of the most effective tools is auto-correction. While writing something on a device every student uses auto-correction tools. The result shows that students

very often use auto-correction tools. Because of this tool students no longer need to memorize spelling auto-correction does this for them. That's why students are not interested in memorizing it. Due to this reason, students forget easy and simple spelling while writing on paper.

Table 3 Social Media Effect

	Often	Very often	Sometime	Not at all	Mean	Std. Deviation
Is there any social media effect for spelling mistake	.7	43.5%	28.6%	27.2%	1.8639	.85720
Do you make a spelling mistake while chatting	10.2%	11.6%	57.8%	20.4%	2.8844	.84818
Do you use a shortcut form while chatting	20.4%	30.6%	27.2%	21.8%	2.5034	1.04929

Table 3 reveals the social media effect on spelling mistakes. The std. deviation of the result is valid. In this research, students were asked if they make spelling mistakes while chatting and do they use a shortcut form while chatting. The mean come out is 2.8 and 2.5 and the standard deviation is also valid.

There is also a huge effect of social media for making spelling mistake. Among the 28.6% students think sometimes, 43.5% students think that very often social media has an effect on spelling mistake. 11.6% Students very often make spelling mistakes while writing or chatting and one of the reasons is auto-correction. They make mistakes and then make

it write with auto-correction. Another reason is the shortcut form of a word.

In this generation, most of the students very often use shortcut forms and others are sometimes. Shortcut forms of words like you=u, good=gd, welcome=wlc, thanks= tnx, right=r8, 30.6% students very often, 20.4% often, and 27.2% students sometime use shortcut form. People use this shortcut to reduce time and also because of laziness. Some words are usually used frequently and because of this, there is a tendency to use short-cut forms. Because of this tendency students sometimes write this short-cut form on their exam papers.

Table 4 Teacher’s Awareness

	Yes	No	Maybe	Mean	Std. Deviation
Do the teachers cut the mark for spelling mistakes	27.9%	2.7%	69.4%	2.4150	.89782
Do you get less mark for your spelling error	66.0%	10.2%	23.8%	1.5782	.85147
Learning spelling should be part of your grammar course	93.9%	6.1%	00.0%	1.0612	.24056

This statistical analysis shows that students are not sure that their teachers cut the mark for their spelling mistakes. Among the students 27.9% yes and 2.7% is not, and 69.4% students not sure about it. They are in dilemma that whether teachers cut marks or not. But after checking their papers 66.0% assume that they got less mark because of spelling mistakes, 10.2% of students don’t think like that and 23.8% of students don’t know why they get less marks on the exam papers. 6.1% of students are not interested in spelling mistakes but To avoid this mistake 93.9% of students want to have spelling errors as a part of the grammar course.

Moreover, There is a contradictory situation in most of the students don’t know or are not sure whether their teachers cut the mark for spelling mistakes or not but students assume that they get less mark because of spelling mistakes. There is a communication gap between teachers and students.

This chart discloses the attitude towards students’ spelling mistake. This figure shows that 49.7% students are scared of their spelling errors, and 28.6 % of students think that spelling mistake is a normal thing. The thing that while learning the second language spelling mistake is a minor thing. They think it’s normal. 17.7% of students don’t care about their spelling mistakes.. How long have they

been aware of spelling mistakes students don’t think much about it on the other hand 4.1% of students are okay with that. At the last, all the students were asked to give an opinion that why they make spelling mistakes. They said lack of practice of writing, poor vocabulary, inattentive while reading or writing are the common reasons of their mistake.

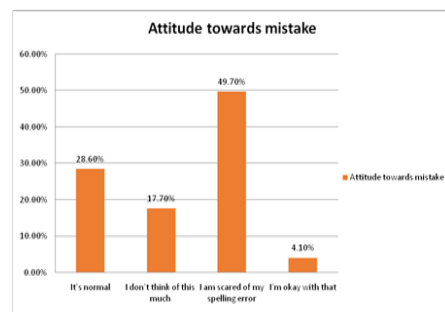


Figure 1 Attitude towards mistake

Findings pt.2

Here comes the second part which analyzed students’ class work that they worked on 10 words. Here students were asked to write 10 words. Students write 10 words by themselves. Here in this section how many students made a mistake while writing? This analysis is ranking on cook (1999) OSIT (Omission, substitution, insertion, and transposition).

Table 5 Students' Spelling Mistakes

Frequency	Percentages	Mistakes
96	66%	1-4 words
37	24.7%	5-7 words
11	7.3%	none
3	2%	skip
Total= 147	100%	

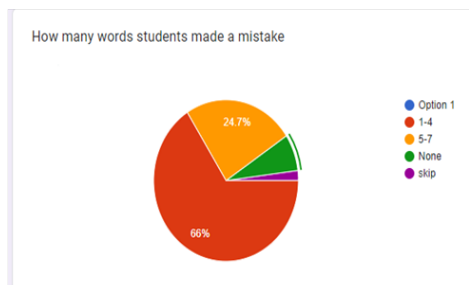


Figure 2 Spelling mistake chart

Here table 6 reveals how many students made spelling mistakes. 147 students Among the 10 words most of the students made a mistake. 66% of students made a mistake in between 1 to 4 words. 24.7% of students make 5 to 7 words, 7.3% word didn't make any mistake and at last 2% were people who didn't write the spelling. they skip the words.

Here come the OSTI parts. Here we analyzed what type of mistakes students did in their papers.

Omission Error

Most of the students tend to skip the letter while writing. When a word has a double vowel or consonant they skip one. For example: in committee word, 90% of students skip the letters m,t, and e from each double letter. the reason is that when we pronounce a letter so it didn't affect if it's a double letter or not. A most common phoneme is (e) at the last of the word. Like the committee, before as befor, Shakespeare as shakespeare.

Insertion Error

This is the type of mistake where students add extra letters to a word. This misspell happens because of a lack of knowledge of English. In our research, there were some words like technician and scholarship. In these words, students write (technichin) and (scholarship) instead of (technician) and (scholarship). Students put an extra

letter on it because this spelling is much matched with pronunciation same goes for taking instead of (taking) (haveing) instead of (having), (writing) instead of (writing)

Substitution Error

This type of mistake occurs when two words have the same pronunciation. For example, male/mail. During the test respondents spelled scholarship as the word school because it sounded almost the same when pronounced such as (scholarship – school) Some others say that substitution error has a high rate for making spelling mistakes. The reason for this mistake is the same pronunciation but different spelling. There is some vowel substitution error like his/has, went/want, basic/bacic, and so on.

Transposition Error

This sort of mistake consists of errors made because of disordering the sounds of English. Transposition mistake is all about how many students make mistakes. This research reveals that students make mistakes because of the difference between Bengali and English language. In Bangladesh, Bengali uses regular rules which arematch with pronunciation. But English has lots of words which words have some exceptional letters which have not necessary in the word. That is why students who are learning English make spelling mistakes.

Here is the list of the 10 words that students worked on. These words were randomly selected for this research to analyze how many students make spelling mistakes and what type of mistakes they have made.

Table 6 Sample of Spelling Errors

Words	Types of mistakes
Hobby	Hoby
Accounting	Acounting
Restaurant	Resturant/restudent
Committee	Comity/commity
Approximately	Aproximatly
College	Collage
Immediately	Imidiatly/ emmiatly
Forgetful	Firgatfull/forgetfull
Technician	Technichian/ tecqnisian
Scholarship	Schoolarship

Discussion

The study came to the following conclusions after verifying the findings listed above. Our primary objective in this research is to ascertain the reasons why the spelling mistake occurred.

English is the official language of Bangladesh, so students study English to complete their compulsory schooling in addition to their native language. English must be taken as a compulsory subject at school to allow Bengali speakers to learn other languages through 3 or 6-month courses, but still can't speak English fluently after studying their whole educational life. They have to study English as a second language in this third-world nation, where English is the country's second language.

After analyzing the findings it came out that there are several reasons behind students' spelling mistakes. Nowadays, students frequently use auto-correction tools. Because of these tools sometimes 33.3% of students, 28.6% of students often and 25.2% of students very often feel discouraged to memorize spelling.

Students use auto-correction to prevent them from attempting to remember the spelling of English. As a result of using these tools, 64.6% of students sometimes forgets the spelling, 31.3% of students memorize, and the rest sometimes don't remember the spelling.

Nowadays social media is a very popular phenomenon. It is impossible to imagine life without using social media. Through social media, we can communicate with each other. We chat with each other. In this communication, understanding is more important than anything. So people didn't give much attention to spelling whether they are making mistakes or not. 43.5% of students think there is an effect of social media on the spelling error.

The marking scheme is unusual in class, and students are unsure whether they should be concerned. It is best to check the students' exams prior to class starting to ensure that there are no spelling errors. Students believe that they received a lower exam grade as a result of spelling mistakes, with 10.2% of students maintaining that no consequences ensued. Approximately 69.4% of students do not know whether their teachers will cut their spelling test scores, and 23.8% of students are

unsure why they receive lower grades. The majority of students (93.9%) want to include spelling courses in their grammar classes.

This is a confusing situation where 69.4% of students do not know or are not sure about their teachers' marking policy for spelling errors, but a majority of students (66.0%) think that they get less mark on their tests because of those mistakes. In most cases, students are unsure about whether or not their teachers will deduct points for spelling mistakes. Students are not keen on spelling errors because of the potential for grammar errors. There is a communication barrier between students and teachers.

However, after producing the written work, students took a lower interest in their errors. According to the students, 49.70% of them were nervous about their work and also concerned about their mistakes, 28.60% thought that making mistakes was acceptable, and 17.70% thought that it was not necessary to pay attention to them. This kind of mentality keeps them away from learning to spell properly.

Finally, it can be said that English as a second language students might have trouble with spelling. Therefore, focusing on how students spell words and pronounce them might be the most effective strategy for second language acquisition.

Limitations

Various problems were faced while doing this research. This research was extremely time-consuming. At the same time, during the survey, many students submitted without completing the work properly, so they had to be excluded while analyzing the data, and while writing the test, students submitted without writing all the 10 words, so the survey had to be completed by checking. After collecting the data, the biggest problem to be faced was the analysis data with SPSS software. Having no prior knowledge about SPSS software I had to learn it from the beginning. so It was the most challenging while doing the research. Moreover, this research is done in by quantitative method; if it was done in mixed with qualitative method then the psychological aspects of the students spelling error could also be highlighted.

Conclusion

The goal of this research is to discover the typical mistakes made by students. By identifying and correcting these mistakes, we can more effectively assist students in attaining their wordings. This study aims to know what mistakes students typically make, as well as how to assist them to make them less costly to make. English is a foreign language as it is for Bangladesh. It came about as a mandatory language in Bangladesh, because the languages are so different. The two languages are different in many ways, but for someone to create a perfectly crafted piece of writing, they must know their spelling. Students must be taught to recognize their spelling mistakes, so that they are aware of them when they learn to write.

Recommendation

The writer provides some suggestions for the students as well as the teachers. Students need to pay more attention to English spelling systems because they are difficult to understand. They need to spend more time getting acquainted with English spelling systems by reading them thoroughly and memorizing them before speaking them. Teachers should also be aware of spelling mistakes, especially in English words. They should also give more time to spelling drills to make sure they don't get any errors on their papers. If they misspell, they will get lower grades, so students will be more attentive to not misspelling. They will be warned about it.

Recommendation for Further Research

This paper provides some ideas for further research. This research has been done on university students but this research suggests that the next researcher should do this research on school, and college students are more valid information will be found. Another recommendation is to have students psychologically tested. Finding out how their psychology works for spelling mistakes. Their response must be investigated after finding a spelling mistake in the led

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- Not at all
 - 4. Do you think auto-correction tools discourage you to memorize spelling?
 - Often
 - Very often
 - Sometimes
 - Not at all
 - 5. Do the teachers cut the mark for spelling mistakes?
 - Yes
 - No
 - Maybe
 - 6. Do you get less mark for your spelling error?
 - Yes
 - No
 - Maybe
 - 7. Do you memorize spelling?
 - Often
 - Very often
 - Sometimes
 - Not at all
 - 8. Do you use auto-correction tools (system of correcting spelling errors used on mobile phones, computers, etc)?
 - Often
 - Very often
 - Sometimes
 - Not at all
 - 9. Do you think there is any social media effect for spelling mistakes?
 - Yes
 - No
 - Maybe
 - 10. Do you make a spelling mistake while chatting?
 - Often
 - Very often
 - Sometimes
 - Not at all
 - 11. Do you use a shortcut form while chatting? (For example: u, wlc, tnx, r8, Gd)
 - Often
 - Very often
 - Sometimes

Appendix A Questionnaire

A predetermined questionnaire has been used for the survey purpose. The questions are related to the central research questions.

Level of your study (Semester)

Department

1. Do you make spelling mistake?

- Often
- Very often
- Sometimes
- Not at all

2. Do you make more spelling mistakes now comparatively than you would do in school or college?

- Yes
- No
- maybe

3. Are you aware of spelling mistakes while writing?

- Often
- Very often
- Sometimes

Not at all

12. Do you often forget spelling while writing?

Often

Very often

Sometimes

Not at all

13. Do you feel disappointed when you find spelling errors in your paper?

Often

Very often

Sometimes

Not at all

14. Do you think learning spelling should be part of your grammar course?

Yes

No

15. What do you think of your spelling error?

It's normal

I don't think of this much

I'm scared of my spelling error

I'm okay with that

16. Write at least one or two causes behind spelling error.

I.

II.

Here students were asked to write down 10 randomly selected words to identify their misspellings.

Batch:

Department:

1.

6.

2.

7.

3.

8.

4.

9.

5.

10.

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