



SPELLING ERRORS IN STUDENTS OF THE ENGLISH MAJOR AT TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY OF COTOPAXI

ERRORES ORTOGRÁFICOS EN ESTUDIANTES DE LA CARRERA DE INGLÉS DE LA UNIVERSIDAD TÉCNICA DE COTOPAXI

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Abstract

Error analysis is a method used to identify the most common spelling errors that second language learners make when writing in English. Therefore, the objective of this research is to analyze spelling errors in fourth level students of the English major in October 2023 - February 2024 academic term. In this study was used a method mixed in University Technical of Cotopaxi [UTC] - Pujili campus. The participants of this study included 30 students English-Major at [UTC]. This students have problems when writing a writing test because they find many spelling mistakes and this is one of the most common problems found in English writing. The research instrument was used a writing test, in which spelling errors were analyzed based on the Cook's classification (1999) omission, substitution, insertion and transposition (OSIT) and the data obtained were tabulated with the help of a formula. The analysis of errors established that errors most common was of omission reported (46,2 %) and less common was the transposition spelling errors (6,7 %). The spelling error most committed was omission with the word "carrer".



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Keywords: spelling error; omission; substitution; addition; transportation.

Resumen

El análisis de errores es un método utilizado para identificar los errores ortográficos más comunes que cometen los estudiantes de una L2 al escribir en inglés. Por lo tanto, el objetivo de esta investigación es analizar los errores ortográficos en estudiantes de cuarto nivel de la carrera de inglés en el periodo académico octubre 2023 - febrero 2024. En este estudio se utilizó un método mixto en la Universidad Técnica de Cotopaxi [UTC]. - campus Pujilí. Los participantes de este estudio fueron 30 estudiantes de la carrera de inglés de la [UTC]. Estos estudiantes tienen problemas cuando escriben una prueba de redacción porque cometen muchas faltas de ortografía y este es uno de los problemas más comunes que se encuentran en la redacción en inglés. El instrumento de investigación fue una prueba de redacción, la cual se analizaron los errores ortográficos basados con la clasificación de Cook (1999) omisión, sustitución, inserción y transposición (OSIT) y los datos obtenidos fueron tabulados con una fórmula. El análisis de los errores determinó que el error más cometido fue de omisión (46,2 %) y el menos cometido fue de transposición (6,7 %). El error ortográfico más cometido fue la omisión con la palabra «carrer».

Palabras clave: error ortográfico; omisión; sustitución; adición; transporte.

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Introduction

The writing is a method that transfers the spoken language, as also spelling error is the main error in EFL English writing. Whereas with this research of students' spelling errors gives us the opportunity to understand students' spelling errors. The spelling is a set of rules where students' performance is in spelling words correctly. For Zahida, Farrah, & Zaru (2016) writing is an essential skill for EFL learners because it is a means through which they develop their critical thinking and enhance their creativity. Specifically, it is crucial for university students as it helps them to excel in their academic courses due to its interdisciplinary nature (p.334). According to Kusnadi (2018):

Spelling is the learner's ability to write a word correctly, if learners do not know about the spelling, they cannot write the sentence correctly and will make readers confused with their word or sentences. Before learning a new language we must familiarize ourselves with the alphabet where the learner should write and spell the character. Not only that, students must know a lot of vocabulary in order to write correctly. If a student knows a lot of vocabulary, the error will be less than a student that knows less vocabulary. Students are misspelled because they are sure if the word that they write is right, but in reality, the word that they write is wrong or error. Sometimes, native speakers also write some words with errors. Even less, students or people that live not using English, they live or study English as their second language, it is so



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hard to know or remember the word unless we are already familiar or remember with the word.
In writing, student often do an error. (p.8)

If the words are not written correctly, the message will not be clear and will have a different meaning. The reader is harmed because there are confusion in the interpretation of the message. Therefore, this study is focus on identifying the spelling errors so that students can contribute to the correct spelling in the English language, so that it is important to have a correct spelling to be able to do written work such as essays, research reports and even homework. So, that the use of the correct spelling has been damaged in the native language and in the acquisition of a second language. In such a way that, when acquiring a second language and especially in EFL students will have a greater confusion when writing. One more reason why this research focus on the most common spelling errors that learners have which have been classified according to the author Cook (1999) are omission of words (omitting words), substitution of words (replacing letters with incorrect letters), insertion of words (adding letters) and transposition of words (changing the order of letters).

Error analysis enables students to learn from their mistakes, identify misunderstood concepts and develop strategies to overcome specific difficulties. Professionally, fostering an environment that values error analysis promotes innovation and growth, as organizations can identify areas for improvement and refine processes to achieve higher levels of efficiency and excellence. Overall, correcting spelling errors and encouraging error analysis are essential practices for driving quality and effectiveness in written communication and in personal and professional development.

In short, the correction of spelling errors plays a fundamental role in written communication, since accurate spelling is essential to ensure the clear and effective understanding of a message. Spelling errors can distort meanings, generate confusion and negatively affect the author's credibility. Therefore, encouraging error analysis goes beyond surface correction; it involves thoroughly examining the errors made to understand their underlying causes and addressing them effectively. This approach has a significant impact on continuous improvement, as it provides valuable information about areas of weakness and recurring patterns that may need attention.

Likewise, in order to justify these problems in spelling errors, 4 previous studies were analyzed, which deal with the same problem of spelling errors where the information within the studies coincide with the research that was carried out, so that the following is a small summary of the 4 studies investigated.

Shah & Tarique, (2021) conducted this research, the mixed method was adopted and the data was collected from 100 students of Shaheed Benazir Bhutto University Sanghar Campus. Students were requested to write an essay of 200 words on their favorite topic and a dictation test was conducted later spelling errors were detected and differentiated into the types of spelling errors. Moreover, Five English language teachers were interviewed to know the effective strategies to overcome spelling errors. The quantitative data was analyzed by Cook's classification and the qualitative data was analyzed by thematic process.

Fitria,(2020) conducted a descriptive qualitative approach to find out the type of spelling errors and the most dominant error in the essays written by SITE AAS Surakarta students. They collected 24 written compositions from STIE AAS Surakarta. Data was analyzed by using the documentation method.



Alenazi et.al.(2021) conducted a quantitative approach and Error analysis method. To examine at a Saudi University the spelling errors in the translations of english. They collected 105 corpus translated texts from 105 male students at a public university in Saudi Arabia of English translation program with from range 18 to 25 years. The data were analyzed in eleven categories with the Spelling Errors Taxonomy and using descriptive statistics, frequencies and percentages.

Almurashi & Yousif (2023) conducted a quantitative approach and Error analysis. To investigate in The World Islamic Sciences and Education University (WISE) the spelling mistakes to students of english in Jordan.They collected 80 written tasks, from English-Major students with ages (17-20) years in the 2016/2017. Data was analyzed using the type of spelling errors and classified according to Cook's classifications spelling errors: substitution, omission, insertion, transposition, and using frequencies and percentages with the help of the JASP software

The researchers identified, analyzed and classified spelling errors with Cook's classification of omission, substitution, insertion and transposition, this research contributed to the use of the "OSIT"(Omission, Substitution, Insertion, Transposition) application and how to use it with the help of a formula to analyzed each error and its data individually so that the researcher(s) can collect data accurately and tabulate the data more quickly.

After analyzing different papers and articles the researchers consider that writing is very essential when learning a second language as it is part of written communication, so the researchers must take into account and know or investigate certain classifications that writing can provide us the same that would facilitate us in the educational environment to students to carry certain parameters within education.

Research objective: To analyze spelling errors in fourth level students of english major in October-February 2024 academic term.

Questions of the research

- What are the most common types of spelling errors in English major students at UTC?
- What are the reasons for the most common spelling errors of English major students at UTC?

Materials and methods

In this research the researchers used a mixed method. According to Dornyei, Z. (2007) he defined it as “some sort of a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods within a single research project.”(p.44). Quantitative research is the systematic study of phenomena by collecting quantifiable data and applying statistical, mathematical, or computational methods. Quantitative research uses sampling techniques and collects information from existing and prospective customers (Fleetwood, 2023).Which this allowed us to obtain a complete and deep understanding of the topic we studied. That's why the qualitative method allowed us to explore the reasons why the people involved make spelling errors, which helped us to understand the context and the reasons behind certain behaviors and certain behaviors or phenomena. On the other hand, the quantitative method provided numerical and statistical data on the most common errors made by the participants, which allowed us to measure and analyze them. Both methods were combined and we were able to obtain a more complete perspective of the object of study.



The method used is error analysis, as it is a method used to identify the most common spelling errors made by second language learners when writing in English "... error analysis is an activity to identify, classify and interpret or describe errors made by someone in speaking or writing and is carried out to obtain information about common difficulties faced by someone in speaking or writing English sentences" (Hasym, 2002). This method was appropriate to use in this research because it helped identify the errors that students made when writing in a second language, which could classify and interpret those errors quantitatively and qualitatively.

The institution where the data was collected was the Technical University of Cotopaxi (UTC) at the Pujilí Extension. The students who were selected to participate in the collection were "Fourth Semester". With an age range of "19- 22" and the students are both male and female. Belonging to the career of Pedagogy of National and Foreign Languages (PINE). Prior to the data collection, a consent form was given to the students in order to have the authorization to use their data in the research. In such a way that the students of "Fourth Semester" of the English career were chosen since these students are in the university, acquiring in a better way the English language. By applying the research, they obtained more real data on spelling mistakes. It was also decided to choose the same cycle because in a previous research the data collected as a pilot study helped and that served as a guide for this research. Explain that you will get informed consents.

Data collection procedure

The instrument used for data collection was a written test. In which students were asked to write 200-250 words in 30 min, in which they presented their ideas, experiences and opinions on the question "Why do you study English?" That is, the instrument used was a written test, since the participants did not have the opportunity to use the telephone and the dictionary.

So, after reviewing the book "Assessing Writing for Cambridge English Qualifications A guide for teachers", the following rubric obtained from the same book of "Cambridge Assessment English" was taken as a reference. For the validation of the instrument, an activity from the same book was adapted with the help of a UTC teacher, and in order to apply the instrument. Also a letter was presented to the career director explaining the purpose of the research.

As a first step, the purpose of the research was explained to the students. Then, the permission of the director of the Pedagogy of National and Foreign Languages (PINE) career was shared with them so that the data collection instrument could be applied. As a next step, they were given the consent report to apply the instrument to these participants and to be able to use these data in the research. Finally, the instrument was applied and the instructions for the students to take the written test in 30 minutes were explained.

Data analysis process

The data analysis method used was Coding, because the results could be analyzed and a system of use of letter symbols indicated, which represented specific information about a particular word. According to Locke et.al (2022) "Coding entails the work of scrutinizing, pondering, and organizing collected observations and relating them to theoretically relevant abstract features, possible relationships, and research questions. Coding is used in both deductive and inductive research." (p.264). The results of this research were analyzed, through the cook's classification table, which contains four components: omission, substitution, insertion and transposition. After classifying the errors, a frequency formula was applied to obtain the results in percentages.



The mathematical formula for the ranking was:

$$P = F/N \times 100\%$$

Where:

P: Percentage

F: Frequency of spelling errors

N: Total number of spelling errors

Results and discussion

Based on the investigation of 30 English-major students writing test at Technical University of Cotopaxi, Table 1 clearly shows that out of 89 errors found in total, the errors of omission present the highest figure with a percentage of 46.2% (41 errors), followed by errors of substitution with a percentage of 31.4% (28 errors). Followed by errors of insertion with a percentage of 15.7% (14 errors), followed by errors of transposition with a percentage of 6.7% (6 errors). In this study, errors of insertion and transposition, however, occurred less frequently than the first two of errors, with a percentage of 15.7% (14) and 6.7% (6), respectively.

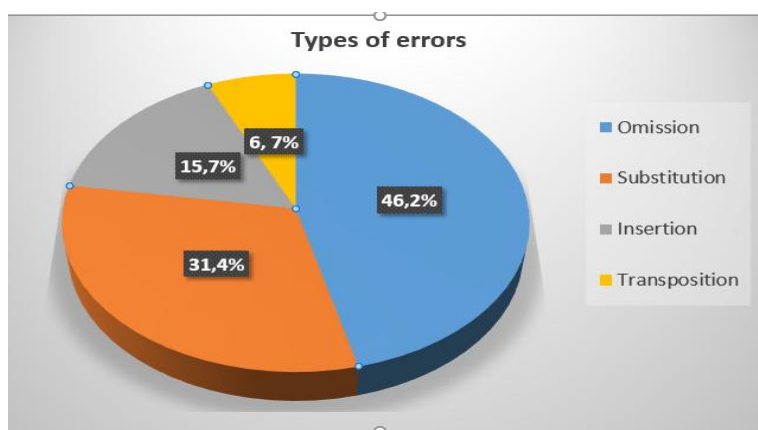


Figure 1. Types of errors.

Tabla 1. Frequency of Errors based on OSIT/English Major Students – UTC

Type of Errors	Frequency	Percentage
Omission	41	46.2
Substitution	28	31.4
Insertion	14	15.7
Transposition	6	6.7
Total	89	100





Tabla 2. Examples of some spelling words of English- major student at UTC.

Types of Errors	The Mispelt Words	The Actual Words
Omission	importan	important
	oportunities	opportunities
	whe	when
	wit	with
	actitu	actitud
	oportunities	opportunities
	comunicate	communicate
	acces	access
	profetion	profession
	apropied	appropried
	tecniques	techniques
	Englis	English
	hel	help
	importan	important
	begginig	beginning
	transmitntructuons	transmit
	undertand	instructions
	reating	understand
	an	rerating
	comunicate	and
	peope	communicate
	childre	people
	comunication	children
	fou	communication
	carer	four
	whoover	career
	patiens	whoever
	purpos	patients
	permit	purpose
	diferents	permits
	turis	differents
	turis	tourist
	a	tourist
	lear	an
	hability	learn
	o	ability
	o	or
	o	or
	diferent	or
	entertarment	different
		entertainment
Substitution	Famyly	family
	carrer	career





Spelling errors in students of the English Major at Technical University of Cotopaxi

	inmediathy	inmediata
	opcion	option
	importand	important
	traducidas	translate
	lowe	lowe
	communicating	communicate
	forthermore	furthermore
	intructuons	instructions
	realized	realised
	realized	realised
	denefics	benefits
	chance	chans
	avilities	abilities
	stady	study
	idias	ideas
	allous	allow
	internction	interaction
	fiand	found
	carrer	career
	carrer	career
	carrer	career
	carrer	career
	carrer	career
	costombers	costum
	couse	cause
	postutate	postulate
Insertion	Tourist	turist
	touristics	turistics
	teatcher	teacher
	expansión	expansion
	begginig	begining
	costomberss	costumbers
	peoples	people
	countrieis	countries
	travell	travel
	whoevers	whoever
	carreer	career
	gramarrar	grammar
	linterested	interested
	tradicionl	tradition.
Transposition	Whit	with
	wordl	world
	enterntainment	entertainment
	foreing	foreign



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chanllege	challenge
porlife	prolife

Displays the investigation of the common type of spelling errors committed by Technical University of Cotopaxi English-major students writing test was 'Omission' (46.2%) such as <importan> for <important> or <oportunities> instead of opportunities) followed by 'substitution' (31.4%), such as <famyly> for <family> or <carrer> for <career>. In third position was 'insertion' (15.7%) such as <tourist> for <turist> or <teatcher> instead of <teacher>. Tranposition was the least type of spelling error found in the examples of Technical University of Cotopaxi English-major students' writing test which was (6.7%) the most frequent example of this type in this study was <whit> for <with>.

Discussion

The results obtained are as follows Fitria (2020) He analysis of errors in students' written samples revealed that while students made a considerable number of errors, omission errors were the most frequent, while transpositions were the least frequent. In this case, the results obtained indicate that the most frequent type of error is omission, since this means that students tend to omit certain letters in different words. The research concludes that students make this type of error due to lack of vocabulary knowledge. Therefore, students forget to spell certain words correctly. This means that they do not know certain writing rules, such as omission of certain letters, insertion, transposition and substitution.

The results obtained are as follows Alenazi et.al.(2021) they analyzed of errors in students' written samples revealed that while students made a considerable number of errors, omission errors were the most frequent. In this case, the results obtained indicate that the most frequent type of error is omission, since this means that students tend to omit certain letters in different words. The research concludes that interlingual and intralingual factors were the main reason behind the occurrence of spelling errors and recommends that students focus on English spelling and its relationship to pronunciation. This means that they do not know certain writing rules, such as omission of certain letters, insertion, transposition and substitution, because they write just as they hear the words in English.

Shah, & Tarique (2021).In a study after knowing and categorizing the English spelling errors in dictation test, the amount of English spelling errors committed was 986 spelling errors out of 2000 words demonstrated some similarities with own study having omission with the most highed error committed with 440 errors and Substitution errors in dictation test were 359 errors. In this study, the researchers used a writing test to recollect the data and calcify the errors in a table counting each one and used a formula to tabulate it.

Almurashi & Yousif (2023).In a study after knowing and Cook's classification of errors, which categorized errors into four categories: substitution, insertion, omission, and transposition. In this study, 89 female students of English language teachers were taken as a sample. By means of a writing task. The omission errors constitute the highest proportion of errors with (41.55%), while spelling substitution errors are the least frequent with (24.65%) followed by insertion errors with (19.72%).

Error analysis

- Analyses the spelling error in a detailed form with classifications.





- Had a variety of techniques to identify the students' errors.
- Help students see when they have chosen incorrect strategies, improving their procedural knowledge.

Interlanguage

- It focuses on how a second language is acquired and its development processes with the mistakes that learners make when learning a second language, so this theory gave way to error analysis where the mistakes that learners make when acquiring a second language are analyzed.
- From this point of view, the acquisition of a foreign language is hindered by interference (L1) or negative transfer of structures from the mother tongue.
- They do not capture all the information they learn from the second language, so they include it and relate it to the mother tongue, thus creating a unique linguistic system that progresses as they acquire the L2.

In the pedagogical context it can be said that the lack of understanding on the part of the students affects their second language development, in the context of error analysis the researchers could analyze, classify and represent the errors that affect the students and the researchers can suggest the use of more pedagogical tools that help the students to acquire new vocabulary which will be of great help in the future.

Conclusion

The researchers concluded that the most common types of spelling errors in English major students at UTC are omission with the highest percent of errors committed the researchers think to that happens by the students had problems in their vocabulary or they had a low vocabulary knowledge, whatever the researchers can improve that practicing or asking help to their English teacher.

On the other hand, the reasons for the most common spelling mistakes of English students at UTC in their English writing are consonants having problems in writing or creating words with these most of the student mistakes made is the use of consonants in words, the researchers classify this mistake in omission because students omit consonants at the time of writing.

At the end the researchers analyzed the most frequently committed spelling errors in English major students at UTC which is "CAREER" that error are the most error committed with the amount to 8 times and are classified in omission errors because are omitted one "r" also are classified in substitution because are replacing the letter "e" instead of "r".

Whatever the researchers analyze all that variable and the researchers concluded that errors occurs because the students hasn't are prepared and talking in a pedagogical form the researchers think the students can improve, learning from their mistakes and ask to help to the teacher and doing daily activities thinking in English.

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