A Comparative Error Analysis: Iranian Monolingual and Bilingual Male and Female EFL Learners

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Abstract

Error analysis is considered as an invaluable pedagogical tool in teaching English as a foreign/second language (EFL/ESL). Despite abundant research, there are still lacunae in studies investigating the written grammatical errors among monolingual and bilingual male and female Persian and Turkmen EFL learners. To fill the gap, 158 Persian and Turkmen EFL learners from Golestan Province wrote two descriptive scripts that were examined for their most recurrent written grammatical errors. The errors were then analyzed and compared based on the framework of the study. Statistical analyses indicated significant relationships between Persian and Turkmens' written grammatical errors and their gender. These findings might interest EFL teachers, syllabus designers, and materials developers. Moreover, they could be a prerequisite to corrective feedback research while opening doors to further pertinent studies.

Keywords: bilingual Turkmens, error analysis, L1 interference, monolingual Persians, written grammatical errors

Introduction

Language as a means of communication plays a significant role in our daily lives to convey our thoughts to others (Dan, Artawa, Budiarsa, Suastra, & Septevany, 2021). Mastery of English as an international language in general and English writing, in particular, seems vital to surviving in the modern world (e.g., Belhiah & Elhami, 2015, Ghorbani, 2020). Language learning is an endeavor consisting of trial and error where learners are constantly making hypotheses about the target language, which will be verified, reviewed, or rejected. Adults go through the exact same process as children when learning a new language; they might try different routes and make countless errors to reach a good understanding of the language.

English comprises four skills, namely listening, reading, speaking, and writing. Apart from speaking, writing is another way of transferring ideas that should be backed up by an accurate grammatical understanding to stop misunderstanding. Writing is a product of sociolinguistic, strategic, and grammatical competencies (Canale & Swain, 1980), and its significance and also complications for EFL/ESL learners have been acknowledged by several researchers (e.g., Bitchener, 2012; Ferris, 2010; Richards & Renandya, 2002). However, gaining expertise in writing is not an easy endeavor for Iranian EFL learners who hardly use English in their daily activities. Committing different types of errors, especially grammatical ones is absolutely inevitable during the process of language learning. Some of these errors occur due to a lack of knowledge and others are caused by the learners' L1 interference (e.g., Dulay, Burt, & Kreshen, 1982; Corder, 1982).

Many language teachers complain about their learners' inability to use the target language structures after the teachers' instructions; thus, most teachers will ultimately be challenged to determine learners' real competence mainly in writing. Even though the learners might correctly do discrete grammatical activities, they may not be able to write a script accurately.

Several second language (L2) writing researchers have accentuated the importance of accuracy as the definitive goal of L2 writing instruction (e.g.,

Bitchener, 2017; Chen & Nassaji, 2018). Errors not only show the extent EFL learners have improved and inform the teachers about the upcoming lessons, but they also reveal the strategies learners employ to discover the rules of the foreign/target language. There has recently been an upsurge in studying focusing on identifying English as foreign language (EFL) learners' errors (e.g., Al-Hazzani & Altalhab, 2018; Bitchener, 2008). Errors in speaking can mostly be rectified since the interlocutors can help each other in understanding by asking for clarifications; however, the writers are not present to clarify their meaning when needed. Written errors might be befuddling and cause misinterpretation; therefore, they should not only be overlooked but also should be carefully analyzed. A number of researchers (e.g., Bahrpeyma & Ostad, 2018; Corder, 1967; Saville-Troike, 2012; Salmani Nodoushan, 2018) highlighted the value of error analysis (EA) in non-native speakers' production and that it is a requirement in L2 studies. Identifying the learners' errors could serve as the building block for future corrective feedback (CF) to help the learners alleviate their writing difficulties (Moazzeni Limoudehi, Mazandarani, Ghonsooly, & Naeini, 2020).

The unique EFL context of Iran makes the learners more predisposed to difficulties in language skills generally and writing skill specifically. Unluckily, writing is often overlooked because of some quiet, but dominant institutional guidelines (Seror, 2009). The private English language institutes may not be very different from public high schools in terms of inadequate attention to the writing skill and the learners' grammatical errors. The classes are mostly held twice a week. In this setting, speaking is frequently the primary skill EFL learners and teachers attend to. Nonetheless, L2 writing, both onerous to teach and study, demonstrates a side of learners' capabilities in communication due to the advances of the modern world and globalization (Ferris, 2010).

According to Evans, Hartshorn, McCollum, & Wolfersberger (2010), learner, situational, and methodological variables are known as contextual variables affecting the types of EFL learners' errors. Learner variables consist of learners' first language(s) and gender; the elements that shape the learning context are recognized as situational variables, and anything related to the content of teaching is considered a methodological variable. Up to the

present time, not a lot of attention has been given to the EFL learners' written grammatical errors with reference to their first language(s) and gender, which might barricade teachers' efforts (Ferris, 2011).

Turkmen speakers mostly settle in Eurasia and Central Asia. Approximately seven million Turkmen native speakers and a million who speak Turkmen as their second language lives in countries such as Turkmenistan, Afghanistan, Iran, and Turkey with the maximum population in Turkmenistan, Iran, and Afghanistan (Hoey, 2013). Although the language has been influenced by some languages such as Persian, Arabic, and Russian, it is a discrete language linguistically. In the northeast of Iran, Iranian Turkmen inhabit who speak Turkmen, a branch of Turkish language, as their L1 making Persian their L2. By the time bilingual Turkmens attend English classes; they actually learn English as their L3. As Turkmen EFL learners already have two other language systems, they might commit different grammatical errors in their speaking and writing, the latter is the focus of the present research.

Shedding light on the written grammatical errors of Persian and Turkmen male and female EFL learners might be the answer to some questions in language learning as well as teaching. In spite of the number of error analysis studies, the body of literature does not disclose ample research on monolingual and bilingual male and female EFL learners' written grammatical errors. To fill the gap and provide more empirical evidence in the field, the present research was conducted, investigated, and compared the written grammatical errors of monolingual Persian and bilingual Turkmen male and female EFL learners. The obtained findings served as the base for providing corrective feedback in two other studies (Moazzeni Limoudehi et al., 2020; Moazzeni Limoudehi, Mazandarani, Ghonsooly, & Naeini, 2021).

Behaviorism and cognitivism are the two well-known schools of thought regarding the learners' errors. While the behaviorists believed that language learning was habit formation, and errors should have been avoided at all cost (Brown, 2014), the emergence of the generative transformational theory and cognitive movement led to some changes toward errors. The cognitivists (Chomsky, 1959) viewed errors as signs of learners' progress in

language learning and raised the issue of error analysis to deal with language learners' difficulties. Contrastive analysis (CA) grounded on the behavioristic ideas was prevalent in the 1950s-1960s and believed that areas of difficulty of the target language could be predicted by comparing the two languages systematically (e.g., Ellis & Barkhuizen, 2005; Schachter & Celce-Murcia, 1977). Learners' first language was considered a major cause of the learners' errors in this viewpoint. The influence of CA started to weaken in the 1970s as it failed to fulfill its expectations.

Therefore, Corder established error analysis and proposed these stages as accumulating learners' spoken/written examples, recognizing and classifying errors based on their sources, and estimating their significance (Corder, 1967). Theoretical and applied are the subdivisions of error analysis; the theoretical branch focuses more on the procedure of foreign/second language learning while the applied one is more educational. Error analysis assumes that errors are indivisible and inevitable parts of language learning. Errors cover numerous significant features and learners' first language is not the only cause of their errors (Keshavarz, 2012). However, learners' errors were mostly rooted in misunderstanding the rules of the foreign/second language analysis which systematically was true of utmost importance. Error analysis served as a pedagogical tool without the limitations of contrastive analysis, and it was based on evidence, not hypotheses (Keshavarz, 2012). There has been a focus on studying learners' errors in recent years. Overall, language researchers, teachers, and learners are the beneficiaries of the practice of error analysis the results of which can lead to more effective teaching and learning (Corder, 1967). Some scholars acknowledged the value of error analysis in language teaching (e.g., Darus & Subramaniam, 2009; Ellis, 2003; Keshavarz, 2012). Error analysis as an instrument for research in second/foreign language acquisition is significant to classroom teachers, syllabus designers, and test makers (Keshavarz, 2012).

Errors are "non-standard/faulty structures of the target language reflecting learners' incompetence; they are systematic and rule-governed which learners commit over and over again" (Brown, 2014, p. 249). Learners' errors fall into different taxonomies (e.g., Chen, 2006; Keshavarz, 2012). Some researchers such as Nayernia (2011) and Sadeghi (2009) examined

sources of EFL learners' errors; others such as Kirkgoz (2010) and Taşçı and Aksu Ataç (2018) concentrated on the first language interference with learners' foreign/second language writing. In the meantime, scholars (e.g., Al-Hazzani & Altalhab, 2018; Bitchener, 2008; Ferris, 2010; Moazzeni Limoudehi et al., 2020) focused on the stage following error analysis, corrective feedback.

Language scholars categorized errors into different types some of which are mentioned here: "receptive/productive", "overt/covert", "global/local", and "interlingual and intralingual" errors. Interlingual and intralingual errors are briefly defined to serve the purpose of the research. Errors that occur because of the overgeneralization of certain rules are called interlingual, or interference errors mostly caused by the learners' first language, but intralingual errors occur as a result of the learners' faulty or marginal knowledge of the target language and are often caused by the target language system (Corder, 1974).

Sadeghi (2009) studied the causes of the errors and found out that they were mostly interlingual. Rahmani and Bagherzadeh Kasmani (2012) found out that Kurdish students' first language was the main source of their errors. Similarly, Abbasi and Karimnia (2011) and Khoshsima and Banaruee (2017) recognized the first language interference in Iranian English as a foreign language learners' problem. Chan (2004) showed interference of Chinese English aa s second language (ESL) learners' first language in their English writing. Alike, Cetin Koroglu (2014) and Kirkgoz (2010) showed that the first language of Turkish students, who were learning English as a foreign language, played role in their errors. Moreover, Abushihab (2014) Taşçı and Aksu Ataç (2018) indicated that Turkish learners had difficulties in English "verb tenses", "prepositions", "articles", "passive/active voice", "verb", and "article" which all were traced back to the interference of their first language. Similarly, Alhaysony (2012) and Ridha (2012) stated that Arab learners' first language interfered with their English writing. Also, Khan (2011) and Younes and Salamh Albalawi (2015) stated that Saudi learners' difficulties were in "doubling of subjects", "prepositions", "language interference", "articles", and "verb tenses", and "subject/verb agreement". Later, Al Mubarak (2017) found "grammatical inaccuracies",

"use of prepositions", and "irregular verbs" to be the problematic part of Sudanese writing. According to Lin (2014), "sentence structures" and "incorrect verb forms" are the most common errors of Taiwanese who learn English as a foreign language.

On the other hand, other researchers indicated that the majority of the learners' written errors might be due to foreign/second language systems (e.g., Bagheri, & Sadighi, 2017; Beheshti, 2015; Nayernia, 2011; Pouladian,; Sabzalipour, 2012; Zare, Ganji, Jalaei, & Mirshah Jafari, 2018). Some studies found the sources of learners' errors to be both interlingual and intralingual (e.g., Solati, 2016; Yousefi, 2018). Sadeghi (2009) stated that 83.75% of the EFL learners' errors were interlingual while 16.25% of their errors were intralingual. Likewise, Sabzalipour (2012) found 31% and 63% of grammatical errors to be interlingual and intralingual respectively.

All in all, the controversial results indicate that language educators have not gotten to a common agreement so far that shows the requirement for further research in the area of error analysis taking into account various variables. An extensive literature review revealed very little documented research on bilingual Turkmen EFL learners' written grammatical errors. Besides, no comparative studies were found comparing the grammatical errors of monolingual Persian and bilingual Turkmen male and female EFL learners exploring the possible role of the learners' gender on the grammatical errors they commit. Therefore, the present study was conducted to enhance the body of literature. The following research question was formulated based on the purpose of the study:

RQ: Do the learners' first language and gender play significant roles in the types of written grammatical errors of the Iranian monolingual Persian and bilingual Turkmen intermediate EFL learners?

Method

Participants

This correlational research was conducted at two private English language institutes in Gorgan and Simin Shahr, Golestan Province, Iran. Almost all the residents are Turkmen in Simin Shahr and speak Turkmen as their first language, Persian as their second language, and learn English as their third language. To begin with, 116 intermediate Persian EFL learners were

available at the language institute in Gorgan. However, 79 intermediate Turkmen EFL learners were accessible at the language institute in SiminShahr; to have equal numbers, 79 Persians' scripts were randomly selected for further analyses. Therefore, the total number of 158 EFL learners aged between 13 and 18 who were selected based on a convenient non-random sampling method. A number of 42 learners were males and 37 learners were females in Persians as well as Turkmens. The learners' other exposures were bounded to their high school and institute English classes.

Instruments and Materials

To make sure of the homogeneity of the participant, they sat the first version of the Oxford Quick Placement Test (2001). The test includes 60 multiple-choice questions and is employed to determine participants' level of proficiency and homogeneity. The given time to take the test was 30 minutes. Also, the reliability of the test turned out to be 0.84 using the KR-20 formula. Besides, the participants completed forms germane to their background.

Procedures

As mentioned earlier, a number of 158 monolingual Persian and bilingual Turkmen intermediate EFL learners took part in the present research. The participants wrote 150-200-word scripts on the subsequent topics: describe your teacher (s), and describe the last movie you watched in consecutive sessions to reveal their most frequent grammatical errors. The participants were given an hour to write since studies of this kind (Bitchener et al, 2005) allocated 45 minutes for a 250-word scripts. A total number of 316 samples were collected and marked by the researcher and two EFL teachers to assure inter-rater reliability the result of which was 97%. Also, the scoring framework of Bitchener et al. (2005) that originally consisted of 27 error categories was adapted to 28 grammatical error categories. The original framework included "article" as a category, but the researchers divided this error category into "definite" and "indefinite" articles to examine and find the type of articles caused the most difficulties for the Iranian EFL learners.
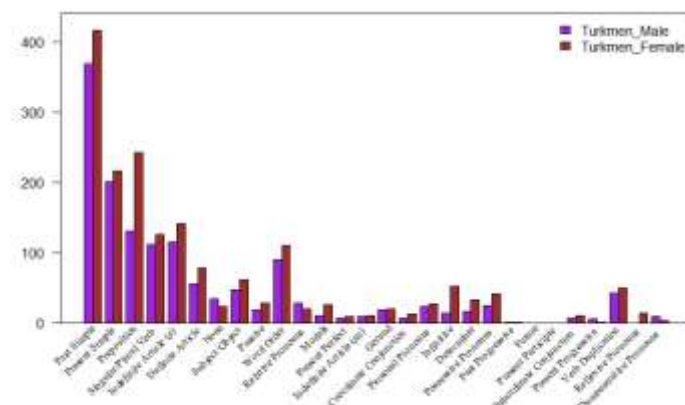
Results

Number of errors was first calculated based on the study's framework 28 grammatical categories following the eight most frequent ones. Data examination using visual QQplot combined with Shapiro-Wilks tests in R software rejected normality assumption. Hence, Chi Square tests were employed for statistical examination of the likely relationships between the learners' first language and error categories on the one hand and gender and error categories on the other hand between monolingual Persians and bilingual Turkmens and also between male and female EFL learners.

Figure1 compares Persian males and females grammatical performance in all 28 grammatical categories.

Figure1: Comparison of Grammatical Errors of Monolingual Male and Female EFL Learners

Figure 2 compares Turkmen males and females' grammatical performance in all 28 grammatical categories.

Figure 2: Comparison of Grammatical Errors of Bilingual Turkmen Male and Female EFL Learners

Table 1 depicts errors committed by both Persian and Turkmen males and female. Visual analysis of Table 1 reveals that Persian and Turkmen females committed more errors than Persian and Turkmen males.

Table 1

Number and Percentage of Error Types of Male and Female Persians (PM& PF) and Turkmens (TM &TF)

Error Categories	PM	PF	TM	TF	PM (%)	PF (%)	TM (%)	TF (%)
Past Simple	229	329	369	417	12.05	17.32	11.60	13.11
Present Simple	137	133	201	216	7.21	7.00	6.32	6.79
Preposition	102	113	131	243	5.37	5.95	4.12	7.64
Singular/Plural Verb	92	90	112	126	4.84	4.74	3.52	3.96
Indefinite Article (a)	81	77	115	142	4.26	4.05	3.62	4.47
Definite Article	57	50	56	78	3.00	2.63	1.76	2.45
Noun	43	9	34	24	2.26	0.47	1.07	0.75
Subject/Object	33	26	48	62	1.74	1.37	1.51	1.95
Passive	27	22	19	29	1.42	1.16	0.60	0.91
Word Order	25	39	90	111	1.32	2.05	2.83	3.49

Relative Pronouns	19	15	28	20	1.00	0.79	0.88	0.63
Modals	18	15	10	26	0.95	0.79	0.31	0.82
Present Perfect	8	8	7	9	0.42	0.42	0.22	0.28
Indefinite Article (an)	7	6	9	10	0.37	0.32	0.28	0.31
Gerund	6	9	19	20	0.32	0.47	0.60	0.63
Coordinate Conjunction	5	9	7	13	0.26	0.47	0.22	0.41
Personal Pronouns	4	9	24	27	0.21	0.47	0.75	0.85
Infinitive	3	15	14	52	0.16	0.79	0.44	1.64
Determiner	3	4	16	33	0.16	0.21	0.50	1.04
Possessive Pronouns	2	2	25	42	0.11	0.11	0.79	1.32
Subordinate Conjunction	1	3	7	11	0.05	0.16	0.22	0.35
Past Progressive	1	9	1	1	0.05	0.47	0.03	0.03
Future	1	2	0	0	0.05	0.11	0.00	0.00
Present Participle	1	0	0	0	0.05	0.00	0.00	0.00
Verb Duplication	0	0	43	50	0.00	0.00	1.35	1.57
Reflexive Pronouns	0	0	0	14	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.44
Demonstrative Pronouns	0	0	9	3	0.00	0.00	0.28	0.09
Present Progressive	0	1	6	1	0.00	0.05	0.19	0.03
SUM	905	995	1400	1780	47.63	52.37	44.03	55.97

A QQplot in R software showed the non-normal distribution of the data (Figure 3). This was combined with a Shapiro-Wilks test which rejected the normality of data (W = 0.60, p-value = 0.00). To investigate the likely relationships between the learners' first language and gender and their committed grammatical errors, Chi-Square tests were run for the eight most frequent error categories.
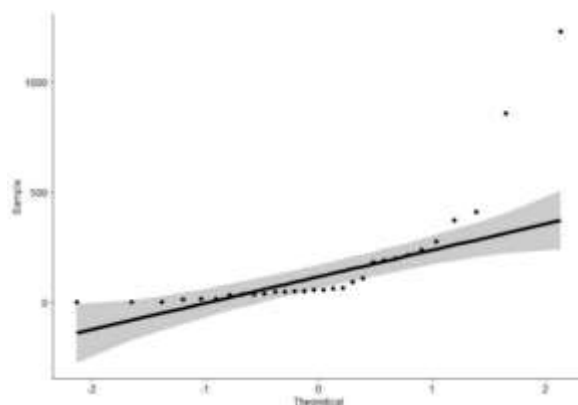
Figure 3: QQplot Showing Deviation from Normality

The Chi Square test results on Persians and Turkmens for their eight most recurring errors are shown in Table 2 indicating a significant relationship between the learners' first language and the type of their grammatical errors ($p = 0.00$).

Table 2
Raw Counts of Data and Chi-Square Results for Persians and Turkmens

Error Categories	Past Simple	Present Simple	Preposition	Singular / Plural Verb	Indefinite Article (a)	Definite Article	Word Order	Subject/Object
Persian	558	270	215	182	158	107	64	59
Turkmen	786	417	374	238	257	134	201	110
Pearson Chi Squared = 37.29				df				p-value
				7				0.00

The result of the Chi-Square test shows a significant relationship between monolingual Persian EFL learners' eight most frequent written grammatical errors and their gender ($p = 0.01$) (Table 3).

Table 3

Raw Counts of Data and Chi-Square Results for Male and Female Monolingual Persians

Error Categories	Past simple	Present simple	Preposition	Indefinite article (a)	Singular/plural verb	Word Order	Definite Article	Subject/Object
Persian Male	229	137	102	81	92	25	57	33
Persian Female	329	133	113	77	90	39	50	26
Pearson Chi Squared = 16.75			df 7					p-value 0.01

Chi-Square test was also run for Turkmens and indicated a significant relationship between Turkmen EFL learners' gender and their grammatical errors ($p = 0.00$). As can be seen from Table 4, Turkmen females committed more errors in all the eight most frequent grammatical categories.

Table 4

Raw Counts of Data and Chi-Square Results for Bilingual Male and Female Turkmens

Error Categories	Past simple	Present simple	Preposition	Indefinite article (a)	Singular/plural verb	Word order	Definite article	Subject/object
Turkmen Male	369	201	131	115	112	90	56	48
Turkmen Female	417	216	243	142	126	111	78	62
Pearson Chi Squared = 18.87			df 7					p-value 0.00

Discussion

Among language skills, writing is one of the most intricate ones to acquire for learners of English as a foreign/second language (Richards & Renandya, 2002). The present research analyzed Iranian monolingual Persian and bilingual Turkmen intermediate EFL learners' grammatical errors and investigated the relationship between their first language and gender and their written grammatical errors. The researchers focused on the learners' eight most recurrent grammatical errors as follows: "past simple", "present simple", "preposition", "indefinite article (a)", "singular/plural verb", "word

order", "definite article", and "subject/object". In general, the findings were compatible with those of other studies (e.g., Bani Younes & Salamh Albalawi, 2015; Khan, 2011; Salehi & Bahrami, 2018).

"Singular/plural verb", "prepositions", "indefinite article (a)", "word order", and "subject/object" were among the Persians' and Turkmens' eight most recurrent errors, which might have been caused by a result of the interference of their first languages. Some researchers recognized errors in "singular/plural verb" and "preposition" as interlingual. (e.g., Bahrpeyma & Ostad, 2018; Derakhshan & Karimi, 2015; Derakhshan & Karimian Shirejini, 2020; Khoshsima & Banaruee, 2017; Mehranpour & Forutan, 2015; Moazzeni Limoudehi & Mazandarani, 2019). "Indefinite article (a)" found to be an intralingual error which was problematic for Persians (e.g., Bahrpeyma & Ostad, 2018; Yousefi, 2018). It is probable that Turkmens' errors might have happened because of confusion among the three language systems, namely Turkmen, Persian, and English. Turkmens committed fewer errors with regard to "singular/plural verb" compared to Persians, but this might have happened because of the interference of their first language, as they tend to omit some parts of verbs in Turkmen language. Another interlingual error took place regarding the personal pronoun "you"; the learners confused it with the singular form in Persian and Turkmen and used the verb accordingly.

It seems that errors in "past simple" are intralingual occurring because of the learners' incomplete English knowledge and also the English language system. Persians and Turkmens mostly overgeneralized the rules about regular verbs to irregular verbs causing them to commit this type of error. Errors in the "present simple" might be like a double-edged sword, both intralingual and interlingual. Though Persians and Turkmens conjugated the verbs in present simple tense too, they frequently dropped "*s*" for the third person singular, which made it an intralingual error. Also, both groups of learners committed errors in "definite article", which might have happened due to the overgeneralization of the rules of the English language system since neither Persian nor Turkmen has rules regarding this article.

Concerning other error categories, errors in "verb duplication" were distinctive as there were not any instances of this type in Persians' scripts

whereas 93 instances were seen in Turkmens' writing, which is 1.83% of the total. It might be concluded that Turkmens' first language interfered with their English writing. Although Persians and Turkmens both committed the same grammatical errors, the order and frequency varied in some categories. With regard to the eight most frequent errors, Turkmens committed more errors compared to Persians showing possible interference of their first language with their English writing.

The sentence structure of Persian and Turkmen is different from that of English which might be the cause of some of the learners' problems. Opposite to Persian and Turkmen, the subject is followed by a verb in English, so Persians and Turkmen appear to transfer their first language structure to English writing. Unlike Persian, the order of nouns and adjectives is the same in English and Turkmen, which is a facilitative factor for Turkmen EFL learners. There is evidence that both monolingual Persian (Khoshsima & Banaruee, 2017) and bilingual Turkish transferred their knowledge of L1 when learning English (Taşçı & Aksu Ataç, 2018). In addition, the findings of the present study indicated both the learners' first language and also English language system were the cause of Persian and Turkmens' grammatical errors that were in line with some other studies (e.g., Kirmizi & Karci, 2017; Zare et al., 2018). Simply put, Persians and Turkmens committed both interlingual and intralingual errors.

Moreover, Persian and Turkmen males and females' eight most frequent grammatical errors were investigated. The sequence of errors was the same in Persian males and females; however, the frequency was different. Compared to Turkmen males, females committed more errors. The present research indicated that there is a significant relationship between learners' gender and the types of grammatical errors. The outcomes of the current research were consistent with researchers such as Bitchener and Basturkmen (2006) that recommended the effect of numerous variables such as learners' first language on the foreign/second language writing.

Investigating monolingual and bilingual EFL learners' written grammatical errors is not a uni-dimensional matter. Khan (2011) recognized multiple sources such as language syllabus, settings, and unsuitable methodology for the writing difficulties learners might encounter. Additionally, some teachers might give a lower profile to the writing skill in

class due to the insufficient time and also complications related to the skill. Last, but not least, most EFL learners do not have the opportunity to rehearse what they have learned.

The results of the present research indicated significant relationships between learners' first languages and their grammatical errors. Likewise, the relationship between the written grammatical errors and gender for Persian and Turkmen learners was found to be significant. The frequency of errors committed by monolingual Persians was significantly lower than that of bilingual Turkmens. The following could be considered as some of the pedagogical aspects of the present research. Monolingual and bilingual EFL learners' errors could guide both teachers and learners in their future direction. Moreover, these errors could be informative sources for language scholars in general and those who design syllabi and prepare materials in particular indicating that there is no single prescription that could be wrapped for all EFL learners (Bitchener & Ferris, 2012). Educational materials and syllabi should be prepared, designed, and adjusted based on the learners' exigencies. Having this knowledge, teachers could make their materials ready in advance and use the class time efficiently. The parameter of particularity proposed by Kumaravadivelu (2006) appears to be practical highlighting that any language teaching program should be tailored to the learners' specific needs and wants.

In addition, such studies are prerequisites to research in the field of corrective feedback and open opportunities for further investigations since EFL teachers should be cognizant of the learners' difficulties to be able to provide them with appropriate treatment. In line with Schmidt's (1990, 2001) "noticing hypothesis", studies of this kind assist learners to focus on their writing weaknesses making them more observant of what they write.

Overgeneralization of the results ought to be conducted with caution since the present research was carried out at two institutes with a specific number of monolingual and bilingual intermediate participants. The role of EFL learners' first language(s) and gender should not be overlooked, and as Cook (2001) puts it, EFL teachers could even benefit from EFL learners' first language. Additionally, some of the EFL learners' errors might have their roots in the English language system. The results of the present

research once again indicated the importance of grammatical knowledge to produce an intelligible piece of writing. In the Iranian context, similar comparative studies should be conducted among bilinguals to explore the possible role of their first language and gender on their writing skill as well as other language skills when learning English as their third language the results of which can feed ethnic groups' specific materials development.

As this study was conducted at an intermediate level focusing on the first language and gender, further research is recommended on other levels of language proficiency considering other variables and their possible relationship with the type of grammatical errors learners commit. Also, future research is encouraged to encompass other language skills and components.

Although attempts have been made to localize teaching English in the Iranian context (e.g., Aghagolzadeh & Davari, 2017; Moazzeni Limoudehi et al., 2020), the endeavor is yet to be developed (Hayati & Mashhadi, 2010), therefore, dearth of evidence shows its application. The results of studies in the field of error analysis as an integral part of the language learning (Khansir & Pakdel, 2019) in general and the findings of the present research, in particular, could guide EFL teachers and writing instructors to focus on learning and teaching strategies to assist the learners to alleviate their writing difficulties. Error analysis as a preliminary stage of this research helped to identify monolingual Persians' and bilingual Turkmens' grammatical errors. The primary source data were later employed for the subsequent corrective feedback strategies (Moazzeni Limoudehi et al., 2020; 2021) as one of the most appropriate ways that EFL teachers could use to reduce learners' grammatical problems and improve their competence (Khansir & Pakdel, 2018).

All in all, the motto "think globally, but act locally" appears to be the requirement of education in the modern world. It is recommended that language teaching and learning move towards localization accommodating exigencies of particular groups of EFL learners and minorities.

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