

A STUDY OF ERRORS IN THE WRITTEN ESSAYS OF SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN KARU LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA, NASARAWA STATE

ABSTRACT

This study investigates grammatical errors in the written essays of senior secondary school students in North West Senatorial District, Nasarawa State Nigeria, with the aim of improving the spoken and written English of the study populace. The subjects who participated in the study were the randomly selected ten senior secondary schools within

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.70382/tijerls.v0i8.008>

INTRODUCTION

Language is a natural phenomenon that has been bestowed on man (Ojetunde, 2013). It is a means by which man expresses his ideas and gives meaning to his existence. Babatunde (2002) explicates that language is the expression of culture, the depository of culture and crucial mode of culture transmission. In a similar development Osisanwo, (2003) describes language as an instrument of communication among human beings. In any human society, language performs transactional, interactional and educational functions. Over the years after independence in Nigeria, the English language functions in various societal situations: it functions as language of official communication, language of official business, mass communication, a medium of transmitting knowledge in the field of technology, medicine, law and other professions. It is essentially the



the study area. The instrument used for this study was participants' written essays in English language. The method used for data analysis was simple percentage. The results of the findings revealed that, six hundred (600) grammatical errors were identified and classified into different categories. These errors are: punctuation, spelling, tense, word choice, syntax (sentence structure), number, prepositions, subject/verb agreement, articles, wrong splitting of words and wrong amalgamation of words. The findings also showed that, these errors committed by the subjects were due to Interlingua (mother tongue interference), intralingua transfer and Interlanguage (incomplete learning) phenomenon. Finally, the study curriculum planners and textbook writers should come up with suitable materials that will facilitate the teaching and learning of grammar among teachers and students in secondary schools in Karu Local Government Area, Nasarawa Area, Nasarawa State.

Keywords: grammar, Errors, Error Analysis & Writing.

language of education and instruction in Nigeria. These functions are aptly corroborated by Adeyanju (2002) who states that the English language in Nigeria has, for long championed the course of human cooperation by performing effectively all the above mentioned roles.

Fluency in a particular language variety such as grammar, involves the speaker internalizing the rules. According to O' Grandy, Doborovolsky & Katamba (1996), much internalization during the early childhood; learning a language later in life usually involves more than direct instruction. The formal study of grammar is an important part of children schooling from a young age through advanced learning, though the rules taught in schools are not a 'grammar in the sense that most linguist use, particularly as they as prescriptive in intent rather descriptive.

Grammar which encompasses word order (syntax) tenses (past present, future etc) and different word types (parts of speech). English grammar is the foundation of good communication, reading comprehension, writing and



story-telling. This why teaching grammar is so important to for young children. There are many different and interesting ways to teach grammar for beginners,, but communicative approach (i.e., getting children to use the basics firs before the build on the knowledge) to the teaching grammar is favored.

Prescriptive grammar is taught in primary and secondary school. Recently effort have been made improve grammar instruction in primary and secondary education. The main focus in grammar teaching has been to prevent the use outdated prescriptive rules in favor of setting norms based on the earlier descriptive research and to change perceptions about the relative correctness' of prescribed standard forms in comparison to nonstandard. It has been found that explicit teaching of grammatical parts of speech and syntax has little or no effect on the improvement of student writing quality in elementary school, middle school of high school; other methods of writing instruction had far greater positive effect, including strategy instruction, collaborative writing, summary writing process instruction, sentence combining and inquiry projects (Graham & Perin (2007). study investigates grammatical errors in the written essays of senior secondary school students in North West Senatorial District, Nasarawa State with the aim of improving the spoken and written English of the study populace.

The Concept of Errors

Error is a gross deviation from the norm or convention of the language and this could lead to a breakdown in communication (Njoku & Izuagba (2001) and Njoku & Izuagba (2001) explicate that:

Error that occurs at the pre-systematic stage is not known to the speaker and he does not even know he has made an error and so cannot correct himself even if it is identified. At the systematic stage, he may be aware that his sentence is erroneous. At the post-systematic stage he has gained control of the rules to a great extent and can correct himself and even explain why it is erroneous



It is often claimed that there is a danger in paying too much attention to learners' errors. However, the reduction of errors is an important criterion for increasing language proficiency since the ultimate goal of second language learning is the attainment of communicative competence in the language. Scholars like Brown (1987), Josephson (1989) have observed that there has been a shift from preventing errors to learning from them (errors). According to Choon (1993), assert that between 1950s and 1960s learning of language structures has moved from memorizing correct models through the acknowledgement of the influence of psychology on the theories of language acquisition to the application of the communicative approach to language learning. This trend has aroused the interest of scholars in identifying, analyzing and treating errors through error analysis in order to create techniques of effective ESL learning.

Talking about the important of errors, there is a kind of agreement that errors are significant in three different ways: first, they tell the teacher when he undertakes a systematic analysis how far toward the goals the learner have progressed and what remains for him to learn. Second, they give researchers evidences of how language is learned and what strategies and procedures the learners are employing in their discovery of the language. Third, they are unavoidable to the learner himself, because we can consider the process of making of errors as a devise the learner uses in order to learn. In other words, it is a way of testing the learners' hypotheses about the nature of the language they are learning. (Zawahreh, 2012). Error analysis (EA) became a preferred tool of studying second language analysis.

Grammar

Kennedy (2003) considers grammar as a linguist's description of language, usually expressed in terms of rules which deals with word forms (morphology) and word order or sentence structure (syntax). Kennedy (2003) defines grammar as "a set of cognitive rules or principles which combine words or parts of words to express certain notions and ideas".

Another definition is given by Crystal (2004) who defines grammar as "the foundation of our ability to express ourselves. The more we are aware of how



it works, the more we can monitor the meaning and effectiveness of the way we and others use language.” Crystal (2004) specifies that grammar can help foster precision, detect ambiguity. And exploit the richness of expression available in English.

Another meaning is given by Swan (2005) who defines grammar as being “a limited set of devices which are used for expressing a few kinds of necessary meaning that cannot be conveyed by referential vocabulary alone”. Swan (2005) concludes that grammar is concerned with how sentences and utterances are formed in order to convey meaning.

Error Analysis (EA)

Corder (1967) who is considered the father of EA contended that errors are “important in and of themselves”. Thus, it can be said that errors made by language learners make it possible to determine areas that need reinforcement in teaching. He added that EA has two objects: one theoretical and another applied. The theoretical object is to understand what and how a learner learns when he studies a second language (L2). The applied object is to enable the learner to learn more efficiently by using the knowledge of his dialect for pedagogical purposes. At the same time, the investigation of errors can serve two purposes, diagnostic (to in-point the problem) and prognostic (to make plans to solve a problem). In addition, he said that it is diagnostic because it can tell us the learners grasp of a language at any given point during the learning process. It is also prognostic because it can tell the teacher to modify learning material to meet the learners’ problems.

Error Analysis is one of the most influential theories of second language acquisition. According to James cited in Sawalmeh, (2013), sees Error Analysis as concerned with the analysis of the errors committed by L2 learners by comparing the learners’ acquired norms with the target language norms and explaining the identified errors. For Crystal (1999), Error Analysis in language teaching and learning is the study of the unacceptable forms produced by someone learning a language, especially a foreign language. According to Brown cited in Ridha, (2012), maintains that Error Analysis, is the process to



observe, analyze and classify the deviations of the rules of the second languages and then to reveal the systems operated by learner”.

Sources of Errors

Brown (2000), states that there are two main sources of errors, namely; interlingual errors and intralingual errors. According to him, Interlingual (interference) errors are those errors that are traceable to first language interference. These errors are attributable to negative interlingual transfer. According to AbiSamra (2003), the term ‘interlingual’ was first-introduced by Selinker in 1972. He used this term to refer to the systematic knowledge of an L2 which is independent of both learner’s L1 and the target language. According to Kavaliauskiene (2009), puts that transfer of errors may occur because the learners lack the necessary information in the second language or the intentional capacity to activate the appropriate second language routine. Transfer is of two kinds: positive and negative. The transfer may prove to be justified because the structures of the two languages are similar- this case is called “positive transfer” or “facilitation”, or it may prove unjustified because the structures of the two languages are different- that case is called “negative transfer” or ‘interference’ (Wilkin, 1972). As far as the intralingual errors are concerned, they result from faulty or partial learning of the target language rather than language transfer (Keshavarz, 2003 & Fang and Jiang, 2007). The four types of intralingual errors, namely: (1) overgeneralization, (2) ignorance of rules restrictions, (3) incomplete application of rules, and (4) false concepts hypothesized. Later he identifies six sources of errors: (1) interference, (2) overgeneralization, (3) performance errors, (4) markers of transitional competence, (5) strategies of communication and assimilation, and (6) teacher-induced errors (Richards 1972). Hazaymeh (1996) made a study that aimed at investigating the second secondary students’ errors in learning English verb tenses. The sample was of 587 students from public schools and 172 students from private schools. The researcher attributed the errors made by the students to group of reasons such as (a) mother tongue interference (b) overgeneralization (c) the complexity of the structures of the English verb



tense, (d) a strategy of parallel structure and (e) the ignorance of grammatical rules.

Sarfraz (2011) examined the errors made by 50 undergraduate Pakistani students in written essays; he found that the majority of errors the students made resulted from learners' interlanguage process and mother tongue interference. Darus and Subramaniam (2009) examined errors in a corpus of 72 essays written by 72 Malay students. They found that students' errors were of six types, viz; in singular/plural form, verb tense, word choice, preposition, subject-verb agreement and word order.

AbiSamra (2003), in his article entitled "An analysis of errors in Arabic speakers' English writing", collected samples of written work from 10 students in 9th grade. He classified the errors into five categories, namely, grammatical (prepositions, articles, adjectives, etc); syntactic (coordination, sentence structure, word order, etc); lexical (word choice); semantic and substance (punctuation, capitalization, and spelling); and discourse errors. The results revealed that one third of the students' errors were transfer errors from the native language, and the highest numbers of errors were in the categories of semantics and vocabulary. The rest of the errors (64.1%) were errors of over-application of the target language, the highest numbers of errors being found in substance (mainly spelling), syntax and grammar.

In addition, Ridha (2012) examined English writing samples of 80 English as Foreign Language (EFL) college students and then categorized the errors according to the following taxonomy: grammatical, lexical/semantic, mechanics, and word order types of errors. The results showed that most of the students' errors can be due to L1 transfer. Furthermore, she found that most of the learners rely on their mother tongue in expressing their idea. She added that although the rating processes showed that the participants' essays included different types of errors, the grammatical errors and the mechanical errors were the most serious and frequent ones.

Stages/ Steps Involved in the Analysis of Errors

Corder cited in Oyedokun-Alli, 2014) identifies three stages involved in error analysis and they are logically dependent upon one another. These are:



recognition, description, and explanation. The process of recognizing and identifying errors is one of comparing original utterances with their plausible reconstruction and authoritative reconstruction (that is an interpretation/reconstruction of the utterance derived from the learner himself) and identifying the difference. Recognition of errors is thus crucially dependent upon correct interpretation of the learner's intention. Description only begins when recognition has taken place. In the same vein, explanation of error can be regarded as a linguistic activity, concerned with accounting for why and how errors come about (Uboh, 2004). It is thus from the explanation of errors that theories such as transfer, facilitation, interference, overgeneralization, conflict, ambiguity, equivocation, vagueness and misdirection emerge (Oyedokun-Alli, 2014).

Corder (1973) provides a model for identifying erroneous utterances/expressions in a second language. According to Corder's model, any sentence uttered and subsequently transcribed can be analyzed for error. Corder (1973) makes a major distinction between 'overt' and 'covert' errors. Overt erroneous expressions are unquestionably ungrammatical at the sentence level. Covert erroneous utterances/expressions are grammatically well-formed at the sentence level but are not interpretable within the context of communication. Covert errors, in other words, are not really covert at all if the surrounding discourse before and after the utterance is attended to. For example, "I have been around since morning" is grammatically correct at the sentence level but as a response to: When did you come? It is obviously an error (Oyetunde, 2013).

A simpler and more straightforward set of items than would be sentence level and discourse level errors rather than overt and covert errors. On a local level, errors can be described as errors of addition, omission, substitution and ordering. Jibowo, Iteogu, Odizua & Abayomi (2005) suggest that the teacher should conduct diagnostic error analysis during the initial contact of a given semester/term in order to find out which items of the language have not been fully learnt and remedy them first.

Brown (2000) states that cognitive feedback in error correction must be minimal in order to be effective. Too much of cognitive feedback e.g. barrage



of interruptions, errors underlined/over corrections and overt attention to malformation, often lead to learners" shutting off their attempt at communication. Choon (1993) submitting to this view, says:

Teachers also should not mark every error just because it is expected of them or because they believe it is an indication of dedication. This is because over-correction can be a very tedious experience for the teacher (resulting in a demoralizing experience for the students).

It should however be noted that too much positive cognitive feedback (willingness of the teacher to let error go uncorrected) serves to reinforce the errors of the learner. The result is persistence and perhaps, the eventual fossilization, of such errors. The task of the teachers of English could, therefore be to ensure that learners are given enough encouragement for continued communication but not so many that crucial errors go unnoticed and they should not be discouraged for attempting to use the language. It is, from this point of view, that the present study sees errors.

Methodology

The research design employed in this paper is a survey typed. The data for this study consisted of essays written by forty senior secondary school students in North West Senatorial District, Nasarawa State with the aim of improving the spoken and written English of the study populace. Nasarawa State. The data were selected using a simple random sampling method. The senior secondary schools were chosen because they are still at the primary stage of the second language learning. Thus, analyzing the errors made by these students will help their English language teachers to pay their attention on the errors made by the students while teaching Grammar to their students. . The participants were asked to write an essay on any of the following topics:

1. My School
2. How I Spent My Last Vacation
3. How to Prepare My Favorite Dish



Fourteen students (35%) each wrote on “My school” and “How I spent my last vacation” while the remaining twelve (30%) wrote on How to prepare my favorite dish.

Data Analysis

The data was analyzed using simple percentage as the researcher identifies and classifies the types of errors made by the students. The identified errors were counted based on their frequencies. The errors were tabulated and classified into the following categories: punctuation, spellings, tense, word choice, syntax (sentence structure), number (singular/plural), prepositions, subject/verb agreement, articles, wrong syllabification/ splitting of words and wrong amalgamation of words.

Presentation of Results

The researcher presents the findings of the study. The errors made by the students are identified, classified and finally, these errors made by the learners are corrected. Tables are used for easy interpretation of results. Table 1 shows the types/classification, frequency and percentage of errors committed by the participants in their written work.

Table 1 showing the types/classification, frequency and percentage of errors committed by the participants in their written work.

S/N	Types of Errors	Frequency Errors	of Percentage
1	Punctuation	196	33.3%
2	Spellings	112	19.0%
3	Tense	68	11.5%
4	Word choice	54	9.1%
5	Syntax (sentence Structure)	33	5.6%
6	Number (singular/ plural)	29	4.9%
7	Prepositions	27	4.5%
8	Subject/ Verb Agreement	23	3.9%



9	Articles	19	3.2%
10	Wrong syllabification/ splitting of words	19	3.2%
11	Wrong amalgamation of words	7	1.2%
	TOTAL	587	100%

The table above shows the different types of grammatical errors made by the students and their percentages. The most committed errors are punctuation errors which have the frequency of 196 (33.3%), followed by spelling errors (19.0%), errors of tenses (11.5%), errors of word choice (9.1%), syntax (sentence structure) (5.6%), number (singular and plural (4.9%), misused of preposition (4.5%), subject/ verb agreement (3.9%), wrong use of articles (3.2%), wrong syllabification/ splitting of words (3.2%) and the wrong amalgamation of words (1.2%).

Based on this findings teachers teaching grammar in secondary schools in North West Senatorial District, Nasarawa State should pay more attention on punctuation errors, spelling errors and errors regarding tenses. This will help the students to minimize the errors made regarding to these most committed errors.

Table 2 Punctuation Errors

S/N	ERROR IDENTIFICATION	ERROR CORRECTION
1	There are many Teachers in my School	There are many teachers in my school.
2	Will you come to my house!	Will you come to my house?
3	Mary bought books; pen; and a shirt	Mary bought books, pen, and a shirt.
4	My best food is rice and stew	My best food is rice and stew.
6	Rice gives me energy and also make also makes me strong.	Rice gives me energy and also makes also makes me Strong.
7	My fathers' house.	My father's house.



An examination of the punctuation errors made in the above table shows that students in secondary schools in North West Senatorial District, Nasarawa State do have difficulties in using punctuation marks such as full stop (.), exclamation mark (!), apostrophe ('), comma (,) and question mark (?). Teachers of English should drill the students on the proper use of punctuation marks so as to eliminate ambiguity in the writings.

Table 3: Spelling Errors

S/N	Error Identification	Error Correction
1	I also thank the principle of our school.	I also thank the principal of our school.
2	They house was so beautiful....	The house was so beautiful....
3	I also got to meet some of my cousines .	I also got to meet some of my cousins
4	We will live it to boil for some minits .	We will leave it to boil for some minutes .
5	So when we rich to Abuja, I will ...	So when we reach to Abuja, I will ...
6	Fried rice was easy to prepper .	Fried rice was easy to prepare .

The results from the table above shows that spelling is another area where students made significant errors. The complex nature of the English spelling system poses difficult to some secondary school students in North West Senatorial District, Nasarawa State. There is one on one relationship between spelling and pronunciation as it is in most of our indigenous languages. The causes of these errors range from mother tongue interference, complex nature of English spelling system, students' carelessness, etc. For instance, the letter 'p' is present while spelling the word '**psychology**' and '**pneumonia**' but it is silent when pronouncing these words. Thus, lack of awareness of spelling rules and irregular spelling patterns strongly contribute to spelling errors in the participants' essays.

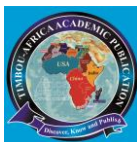


Table 4: Errors of Tense

S/N	Error Identification	Error Correction
1	Our school was establish in the year 1995	Our school was established in the year 1995
2	I went to Lafia to spent my Easter holidays	I went to Lafia to spend my Easter holidays
3	He went to Jos to saw his brother.	He went to Jos to see his brother.
4	When I enter the room I meet ...	When I entered the I met ...
5	He live there up to one month before we return.	He lived there up to one month before we returned .
6	She clean the cooker which will be use for cooking.	I washed the pot which would be used for cooking.

The above table shows that the participants use present instead of past tense and past instead of present tense. These errors show incomplete knowledge of the rules, regarding English tenses. Most of the errors committed Inter-Language phenomenon of the learners aiming the target language (English). The teacher should drill the students on the correct use of tenses using concrete or practical examples in the class.

Table 5: Errors of Word Choice

S/N	Error Identification	Error Correction
1	Our school has <i>good classes</i> .	Our school has <i>conducive classrooms</i> .
2	We have the junior block and the senior block	We have the junior and the senior sections.
3	Our school has one principal governing the both sections.	We have two principals <i>heading</i> both sections.
4	I <i>washed</i> the room yesterday	I <i>scrubbed</i> the room yesterday.
5	It is a <i>mixed school</i> of boys and girls.	It is a co-educational school.
6	It <i>brushes</i> me up and made me to see many things.	. It also <i>exposed</i> me to see many things.



The errors of choice of words show the students' lack of proper words, but these did not appear to cause problems with comprehension. The errors of word choice are attributed to mother tongue interference (in the sense that, the participants engage in literal translation of Igbo expressions to English language) and intralingual factor, that is, incomplete mastery of the target language by the students.

Table 6: Errors of Syntax (Sentence Structure)

S/N	Error Identification	Errors Correction
1	If you see our students on the road that will show you the sign of students from Government secondary school Karu.	If you see our students on the road, their comportment will show you that they are from Government secondary school Karu.
2	Our school was renovated last term and is still renovating.	The government started renovating my school buildings last term and renovation work is still going on.
3	You should add the washed smoked fish and stock it to the pot of boiling meats and stock it for 10 minutes.	You should Add the washed smoked fish to the pot of boiling meats and allow it to boil for 10 minutes.
4	It is a school were different language were their.	It is a school where people speaking different languages.
5	My school teaches fifteen subjects.	We study fifteen subjects in my school.
6	In my school all the class, both junior and senior are functioning with two fans each	In my school there are two ceiling fans in every class, for both junior and senior sections

Going by the errors of syntax committed by the students in the table above, they can be attributed to interference and intralingua factors. The students are



yet to internalize the rules guiding sentence construction (syntax).in attempt to speak or write in English they students often transfer those elements or features of the L1 to the target language. This resulted to ambiguous constructions that end up distorted the message being communicated. Every language has its own systems and structures. No one should transfer the features of the structure of one language to another.

Table 7: Errors of Number (Singular/Plural Agreement)

S/N	Error Identification	Error Correction
1	I visited many <i>place</i> in Abuja.	I visited many <i>places</i> in Abuja.
2	Nigerian Flour Mill <i>happen</i> to be one of the biggest <i>company</i> in Africa.	The Nigerian Flour Mill <i>happens</i> to be one of the biggest <i>companies</i> in Africa.
3	We have about two thousand student in my school.	We have about two thousand students in my school.
4	Our school has so many flower.	Our school has so many flowers.
5	I bought some provision in the market	I bought some provisions in the market.
6	My school is divided into two section.	My school is divided into two sections.

From the results of the findings on the table above, one could observe that errors of number (plural and singular) affect the English of most students in North West Senatorial District, of Nasarawa State. The inflections which are used to mark numbers (plurals) in English are grossly absent in most of our Nigerian languages. This pose problems to L2 learners of English in attempting to indicate singular and plural of some English words. Errors made here comprise of Interlingua and intralingua errors.

Table 4.1.8: Errors of Misused of Prepositions

S/N	Error Identification	Error Correction
1	I commenced my long vacation on April and ended it on July.	I commenced my long vacation in April and ended it in July.
2	I put my pot in the fire.	I put my pot on the cooker.



3	My school comprises of junior secondary and senior secondary	My school comprises junior and senior secondary.
4	My school has been renovated by the government of my state into a very beautiful school.	My school has been renovated by the government of my state to a very beautiful school.
5	Our school is located at along Keffi/Abuja express way.	Our school is located along Keffi/Abuja express way
6	I stayed there three day...	I stayed there for three days...

The errors of preposition arise mostly from the confusion of the selection of appropriate preposition and the irregularity of uses. This category comprised the omission, insertion and the wrong choice of prepositions. The errors are dominated by the wrong selection of preposition. These errors are attributed to mother tongue interference and inadequate mastering of the target language rules.

Table 9: Subject/ Verb Agreement

S/N	Error Identification	Error Correction
1	. In my school the student are always neat in appearance.	In my school the students are always neat.
2	The girls wears blue gown.	The girls wear blue gown.
3	Our teachers teaches us well.	Our teachers teach us well.
4	I doesn't like to travel.	I do not like to travel.
5	Rice and beans contain carbohydrate protein.	Rice and beans contains carbohydrate and protein.
6	My school have pipe borne water.	My school has pipe borne water.

The subject-verb agreement errors were not caused by L1 interference. For those who made this type of error, it may be possible to explain the errors as a result of carelessness or that the learners have not yet mastered the rules of subject/ verb agreement in English language.



Table 4.1.10: Articles (Omission and Wrong Use)

S/N	Error Identification	Error Correction
1	On 1st of August 2023, I went with...	On the 2 nd of August 2014, I went with....
2	I made a cake.	I made/baked cake.
3	We saw elephant...	We saw a elephant...
4	I also went to swimming pool.	I also went to the swimming pool.
5	My favorite food does not have a rival	My favorite food does not have rival.
6you put empty pot on the fire.	...you put an empty pot on the cooker/stove.

The use of article pose problem to most secondary school students in North West Senatorial District, Nasarawa State. This is due to the fact that most of the Nigerians languages do not have articles (definite and indefinite). The errors on articles are classified into the errors arising from the omission of articles when needed and insertion of articles where they are not needed. From the results of the data on the table above, it is found that the omission of articles dominate the errors in this category.

Table 4.1.11: Wrong Syllabification/Splitting and Amalgamation of Words

S/N	Error Identification	Error Correction
1	Compr-ehensive	comprehensive (com-pre-hen-sive)
2	cond- iment	condiment (con-di-ment)
3	tea- chers	teachers (teach-er-s)
4	Riceisagoodsource....	Rice is a good source....
5	Infact	in fact
6	Theplantainand....	The plantain and....

The error of wrong syllabification/splitting and amalgamation of words are the least committed errors by the participants. These errors could be attributed to the carelessness of the learners while typing and proofreading or inability to



fully master the rules of word formation of the English language. Morphological-related topics are not taught in the junior secondary and couple with the fact that most textbooks that are being used deemphasize the teaching of English morphology.

Conclusion

This study has given an account of the grammatical errors made by secondary school students in North West Senatorial District. Based on the discussion of the findings and the examples given, it could be concluded that the participants committed eleven common errors, viz., punctuation, spellings, tense, word choice, number, prepositions, subject/verb agreement, articles, wrong syllabification and wrong amalgamation of words. It goes without saying that most of the participants' errors are due to L1 transfer, intralingual factor and the carelessness of the students.

The findings of this study have gone some way towards enhancing the understanding of categorizing and diagnosing of errors made by secondary school students. The present study, like all studies, has a number of limitations that need to be considered. First, the participants of this study were secondary school students in North West Senatorial District, Nasarawa State. Thus, the results in this investigation may not be generalized to other ESL learners in other local governments and states.

Recommendations

Given the results of this study, the researcher recommends that:

1. The curriculum planners should review the curriculum and work hand in hand with the teachers who teach English Studies to know the challenges faced by the students with regard to the teaching and learning of grammar and English language as a whole.
2. English Studies should be taught by qualified teachers, who are capable of doing the job effectively. Apart from having a minimum of Bachelor's degree in English or in a related discipline, they should always be made, with the assistance of the government, to attend seminars or conferences on the teaching of English Language. It is



through this that they can improve in their teaching. Moreover, teachers should be equipped with discovering new ways of creative teaching and designing interesting grammar games to make students familiar with the rules subconsciously in the primary stage of second language learning.

3. Teachers should pay attention to the occurrence of those errors in order to provide relevant remedies as attempts to prevent the students from fossilizing the wrong concepts of language usage. Further, to enable students to write more accurately, they need more practice on reading and thinking in English.

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