



An Analysis of Written Grammatical Errors of Pre-Service Teachers in the Collegiate System in Kaduna State

¹Safiya Shehu Gani, ²Habiba Mohammed, ¹Goldface Cordelia Adanma

¹Department of Foundation Education,

²Department of General Studies,
Federal College of Education, Zaria.

ABSTRACT

This study aims at investigating the grammatical errors made by the pre-service teachers in college of Education in Kaduna State. The study is guided by two research questions which are: What are the written grammatical errors committed by pre-service teachers and what are the sources of these errors? To answer these questions, the study adopted a descriptive analysis research design. To collect data, the study directs students to talk about their best lecturers. The learners to do this works (60) are randomly selected from Federal, State and private Colleges of Education in the State. The findings reveal low abilities of learners in using the correct grammatical rules in their writing skills. It also reveals significant amount of interference from their first language to the target language. And how this and others types of errors leads to miscommunication. Based on these, the study concludes that, the errors discovered be used to help learners make fewer errors and write better in English. As a result of this, the paper recommends among others that, emphasis should be placed on teaching learners the principles of good writing so as for them to produce meaningful writing in English.

ARTICLE INFO

Article History

Received: September, 2023

Received in revised form: December, 2023

Accepted: March, 2024

Published online: June, 2024

KEYWORDS

Written English, Grammatical Errors, Pre-Service Teachers

INTRODUCTION

In the process of second language acquisition, making errors is common, especially grammatical errors as it is regarded as part of learning a second language. Togo, the relationship between errors and language development is symbiotic like that of bacteria and its host. That is why as Brocks (1970) in Kalu (2000) puts it, it is just as unrealistic to think of language learning without errors as thinking of existence without sins. Due to this, the logical conclusion is that, errors do occur and must occur in second language development.

Errors in second language developments can be studied from two perspectives. These are, first, errors analysis, this according to Brown (2000:2017) errors is a noticeable deviation from the adult grammar of native speaker reflecting the interlanguage competence of the learners. This implies that, an

errors is something that can be seen; it shows the learners ability. The second, concrete linguistic analysis according to Laed in Wawary (2013) is the systematic study of a pair of language with a view to identifying their structural differences and similarities in the target and first language. Based on the above, only errors analysis will be used in this study to anchor its activities.

Grammatical errors are developmental errors derive from faulty comprehension of distinction in the target. Richards, (1980:174) put it thus, "they illustrate the learners attempting to build up hypotheses about English language from this limited experience of it in the classroom or textbooks. Lado (1981) in Waway (2003) states that, the learners who come into contact with foreign language will find some of its features quite easy and others extremely difficult. Thus, the elements that are similar in the two languages may be easy for learners and the areas that are

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not similar to the native or first language may be difficult. Put simply, learners are very likely to make written grammatical errors probably because the language habits in their native or first language are slightly or absolutely different from English.

Grammatical errors to this paper occur as a result of the combinations of words into larger units, such as phrases, clauses, sentences and texts (in written language). Thusly, grammatical errors can also be defined as the errors of morphological and syntactical levels. According to James (1998: 154-156). grammatical errors are errors that involve failure to comply with norms in applying any part of word class: noun, verb, adverb, adjective and r than reposition while syntactical errors are " errors affect texts larger than words namely phrase ,clause, sentence, clause and sentence errors. To cap, language learning, the foundation of errors, is built on the language skills which allow learners to comprehend, produce, and use language for all forms of communication. Writing as an active or productive skill enable second language learners to produce language and it is in the process this production error occurs.

Conceptual Clarification

Writing Skill

Writing is a nature, a significant means which is used to communicate an intention of a writer to someone intended or readers. "writing is a primary device of recording speech, even though it must be acknowledged as a secondary medium of communication (Byare,1988.24). it is an action form people use to convey their thoughts and feelings then transform them to composition, in this manner, people use writing to create reading wholly contains entertainment, information or for other purposes. It is in this process of entertaining, informing, educating and so on errors occur

Error Analysis

Error analysis is a branch of Applied Linguistic with two functions the first function, is theoretical which has its place in methodology and describes LZ learners' knowledge of the target

language. It also helps researchers to find out relations between the knowledge and teaching the learner has been receiving(interlanguages).

According to James (1998) in Abdullahi (2014) error analysis is an activity to reveal errors in writing and speaking, by second language learners. He adds that, error analysis are carried out in order to

- a. Find out how well someone knows a language
- b. Find out how a person learns a language; and
- c. Obtain information on common difficulties in language learning, as an aid in teaching or in preparation of teaching materials

However, this work adopts the definitions given by Crystals (1987). He defines it as a technique for identifying, classifying and systematically interpreting the unacceptable forms produced (by someone learning a second language) using any of the principles and procedures provided by linguists. This will be used to unveil the written grammatical errors in learners' composition.

Research Questions

This work will be guided by the following research questions.

1. What are the written grammatical errors committed by pre-service teachers in the collegiate system in kaduna?
2. What are the sources of the writer grammatical errors committed by pre-service teachers in kaduna state?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Authorial Review

This section offers a survey of a selected studies conducted on error analysis. The focus of most, if not all these studies is on the use of error analysis to pinpoint the errors committed by EFL and ESL learners of English. In this light, Alfagori (2018) conducted a study to explore the writing difficulties and challenges of Saudi Arabian English as a second learners experience at different levels of proficiency. The participants of

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the study consisted of 114 students between the ages of 15 and 36 (53 female -61 male) . the research questions not only focused on understanding the challenges presented to the students but also the metacognitive strategies to solve the challenges. The findings showed the participants lacked experienced grammatical challenges.

Darus and Subrameniam (2009) conducted a research to explore the types of errors made by tertiary institution students in Malaysia so as to determine their most common errors in writing. The Copus 72 essays written by 72 participants (37 male and 35 female). All the participants came from non-English speaking background with approximately the same number of years in primary and secondary education in Malaysia. All the errors identified were classified into various categories. The findings of the study the six most common errors as singular plural form, verb tense, word choice, preposition subject verb agreement and word orders.

Abushiba, El-Omriand Tobat(2011) investigated and classified the grammatical errors in the writing of 62 students of the Department of English Literature and Translation at Alzaytoonats private university of Jordan. The students enrolled in marigraph writing course in the semester of the academic year 2007/2010. The errors identified were classified under six major categories and then further divided into subcategories. It was established that, the most problematic category was preposition with 26 percent of the total errors. The following according to the findings are the major problematic areas: morphological errors, articles, verbs, active and passive as well as tenses.

Darus and Ching (2009) investigates the most common errors in the essays written in English by 70 form one Chinese students in a public school, Perak in Malaysia. Chinese is the L1 of all of the participants. Using an error classification scheme and Markin 3-1 software, 70 essays were analyzed and categorized into 18 types of errors. The findings showed that the errors most common were mechanics, tenses, preposition and subject-verb-agreement. Added to these, the interlingual errors due to L1

interference were clear. Similarly, intralingual transfer of Maley and developmental errors were also evident in the writings. Thus, the study recommends among others that, the teachers' concepts are handled in English, Melay and Chinese for learners to be aware of their structural differences.

Einvula (2020) investigated the common English grammatical errors among Namibian Grade 7 learners. the study examined common grammatical writing errors ina corpus of 300 essays collected from three different schools in the Walvis Bay Circuit. Trango Region, Namibia. The participant came from non-English speaking background. The class collected was analyzed using the error Analysis Theory (EA) to identify the common grammatical errors of the learners in their essays. The findings indicated that, there were errors in different categories: tenses, articles, prepositions, singular/plural, subject verb agreement and words choice. Based on these, the study recommended among other teachers to use different approaches among others in teaching and use error correction appropriately.

METHODOLOGY

The subject of the study are 60 NCE students from three colleges of Education in Kaduna State learning English as a second Language in Federal State and private Colleges of Education. As per the demand of NCE minimum standard, every NCE two English students should offer Eng221 know as composition. Based on this, the subjects have gone through the necessary training in essay writing. The students who were in the second year of the 2020/2023 were asked about their best lecturer since joining their respective colleges. They were given 50 minutes to write an essay on the given topic in 200-250 words. Emphasis was laid, before the writing, on students taking into consideration elements of good writing.

Find below the distribution sample of students to investigate the grammatical errors made by the selected subjects in their written work, the descriptive analysis method is adopted.

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The data is collected through 60 essays written by 60 learners

Table 1: The participants

Name of college	No
Federal College of Education, Zaria	20
College of Education GidanWaya,kafanchan	20
ZIIT,Zaria	20
Total	60

The participant wrote:

Incorrect: when I was in his class, I always listen to him attentively.
 Correct: when I was in his class, I always listen to him attentively
 Incorrect: He has three bedrooms, three bathrooms
 Correct: He has three bedrooms and three bathrooms

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The result obtained through the analysis of the students' test is as follows. The summary of the error discovered so as to answer the research question one which states are written. The summary of errors is as follows

Table 1.1: What are the written grammatical errors committed by pre-service teacher in the collegiate system in kaduna state?

Response	N/percentage	Rank	Total
Punctuation	778 (33.6%)	1	2,108(100%)
Conjunction	478 (23.1%)	2	2,108(100%)
Tenses	374 (17.2%)	3	2,108 (100%)
Preposition	242 (11.99%)	4	2,108 (100%)
Passive voice	236 (11.19)	5	2,108(100%)

Table 1.1 the error gravity table shows the frequent-errors committed by students in the written test the highest ranked Punctuation having 33.6 percent; Conjunction second with 23.10%; Tenses third with 17.2%; Preposition

fourth with 11.9%and Passive voice fifth with 11.9%. This means punctuation and conjunction constitute the major errors

Table 2.1: Punctuation Errors

Response	Frequency	Rank	Total out of
Punctuation	778(33.6%)	1	2,108(100%)

The table above shows that punctuation errors are the most common to the learners. the data analyzed reveals that majority of learners at the collegiate system find it difficult on how to use comma, pull stop, as well as colon and semi-colon. Above all, the problem of paragraphing is the most demand. As a consequence, the punction errors are ranked first 778 occurrences

pegged at 33.6percent. there is evidence of using 'it's' and 'its'. using of dashes and hyphen interchangeably, using semicolons and commas as well. This implies punctuation errors conjunction errors constitutes a hinderance to the composition writing of learners

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Table 2.2: Conjunctions

Response	N/Frequency	Rank	Total out of
Conjunction	478 (23.1%)	2	2108(100%)

Conjunction are link words that connect ideas and opinions. The analysis reveals that one of the most common problem here is comma splices: that is commas are used to join two independent clauses. Include overusing conjunctions for instance a sentence reads

Incorrect: He studied and reads and watches videos and practiced with educational video regularly.

Correct: He studies, reads, watches and practices with education videos regularly. This is an example used by a learner to describe his favorite lecturer

There are three main verb tenses (past, present, and future) and four grammatical aspects simple tense, perfect tenses, continuous tense and perfect continuous tense

Table 2.3: Tense Errors

Response	N/frequency	Rank	Total error
Tenses	374 (17.2%)	3	2108(100%)

The table above shows that, tense errors is ranked third on the error gravity table with 374 responses reordered and having 17.12 percent. The most common errors are as a result of, in most cases failure to differentiate tenses and their aspects and also have difficulties with the tenses themselves.

For instance, a participant wrote
Incorrect: Students enjoyed his lectures
Correct: Students enjoy his lecturers

Another participant also wrote:

Incorrect: If students are/ were giving another lecturer, they would be unhappy
Yet another participant wrote
incorrect: If students is /are giving another lecturer, they will be unhappy
correct: if students are given another lecturer for the course, they will be unhappy.
Incorrect: She speak politely (subject verb-agreement)
Correct: She speaks politely.

Table 2.4: preposition Errors

Response	N/Frequency	Rank	Total Error
Preposition	242(11.99%)	4	2108(100%)

A preposition is a word or group of words used before a noun, pronoun, or noun phrase to show direction, time, place, location, speak relationships or to introduce an object. Thus, table 2.4 depicts that this error is ranked fourth having 11.99 percent. The findings here indicate that most of the participants failed to differentiate between different types (direction, location, time and so on). For instance, a participant wrote.

Incorrect: The lecturer came into the classroom before the lesson
Correct: The lecturer came into the classroom during the lesson.
Another wrote that:
Incorrect: The class captain sat writing for the lecturer before the front door of his office
Correct: The class captain sat waiting for the lecturer by the front door of his office.

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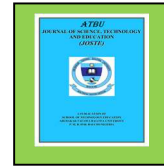


Table 2.5: Passive Voice Errors

Response	N/Frequency	Rank	Total
Passive Voice	236(11.19%)	5	2108

Passive voice is when the subject of a sentence is acted on by the verb or when the subject suffers the action of the verb. The findings indicate that passive voice ranked fourth having 11.19 percent. The findings here indicate that most of the students find it difficult to use passive voice appropriately. This implies that students do not understand when to or not to use passive voice.

A participant wrote:
 Incorrect: Street counselling was introduced by Teacher Ango (unknown actor).
 Correct: Teacher Ango introduced street counselling: Teacher Ango was his best lecturer as such the actor is known to the student.

Table 2.6: The summary of the survey of errors in the composition writing of students at the collegiate levels

Resource	N/percentage	Rank	Total
Interlingual	705(33.44%)	1	2108(100%)
Intralingual	670 (31.7%)	2	2108 (100%)
Developmental	560 (26.56%)	3	2108 (100%)
Ambiguity	173 (8.2%)	4	2108 (100%)

This constitutes the summary of the survey of errors in the composition writing of students at the collegiate levels

What are the sources of the written grammatical errors committed by pre-service teachers in Kaduna state?

The information gained from the text result indicates that, there major sources of errors as follows:

Interlingual Errors

The first as in many languages teaching and learning contexts is the interlingual error. These errors refer to errors in L2 that emanate from the source language (Hausa, Igbo, Yoruba, Nupe and so on). Thus, elements from their L1 to L2 affects the learning process. These occurs in 705 equivalent to 33.44% out of the 2108 errors. Here, errors occurred as a result of lack of consistency or irregularity of the past tense formation (for instance learners find confused by (walk-walked, go-went, cut-cut, shake-shook). They find it difficult to understand comparative and superlative adjectives (hot -hotter, hottest, bad,

worse-work, handsome-more handsome-handsome or handsomer

The second, this implies that this error is huge and needs immediate attention. Intralingual errors, these are errors that occur as a result of the complexities of English language itself. This is as a result of overgeneralization of rules. This is in many ways similar to interlingual errors. These errors occurred 670 times equivalent to 31.70%. thus, there are several cases of ignorance of rule. Participant wrote:

Incorrect: He made me to go rest

Correct: He asked /wanted me to go and rest

Another participant wrote

Incorrect: one it was happened

Correct: month it happened.

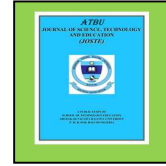
This means the intralingual errors, as a result of the complexities of English language is a force to be reckoned with. In second language learning context

Developmental Errors

This type of error derives from faulty comprehension of distinctions in the target language. This may affect a child learning acquiring a language or and adjust learning a second language. These error occurred 60 times

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equivalent to 26.56percent out of 2108 (100%). This implies that, participants attempted to build up hypotheses about composing from their limited experience in the classroom or text book.

Developmental Errors

Incorrect: He live in the college sence two years (overgeneralization)

Correct: He lives in the college for two years

Incorrect; She no like chocolate.

Correct: She does not like chocolate.

Ambiguity Errors

A word phrase, clause, sentence is said to be ambiguous when it signals more than one meaning. Some of the ambiguous sentences found affected communication significantly. These occurred 173 times equivalent to 8.2 percent out of 2108(100%). Some of the areas covered include unclear pronoun refence, misplaced modification, redundancy and so on. A participant wrote

Incorrect: when Afinike took the female lecturer dog Tani to the vet, she said she was dizzy

Correct: when Afinike took the female lecturer 's dog Tani to the veterinarian, she said (Tani was busy.

The question here is, who is dizzy (Afinike, Tani, the female lecturer or the vet). This denotes that, depending on the gravity of the error, communication will be significantly distorted. There are traces of other types of errors such as induced and unique errors. Since they are not significant, they are, not given due attention.

Pedagogical Implication

The findings from this study reveals some pedagogical implications. First errors made by learners is an indication that learning has taken place, that is, they are valuable indication of their language learning progress. This implies that the identified real learners' problem in writing performance. Second, it is also apparent that, the learners' first language in (punctuation, tenses, conjunction, preposition and passive voice) either positively or negatively influence their writing behaviors. Thus, this point out to teachers and learners the areas of convergence or divergence

between (learners) L1 and L2 should be taken into consideration. This is buttressed by the fact that majority of errors in this paper are the interlingual ones. Additionally, the findings imply that the knowledge of grammar of the target language is needed for comprehensive writings. Based on these obstacles to the studies effectiveness in writing. this , to this paper, should be addressed in English writing classes

CONCLUSION

This paper analyzed written errors committed by pre-service teachers in kqduna stat. the findings showed that participants make different types of errors in areas of grammar such as function, preposition, conjunction, tenses, and passive voice errors. other forms of errors such as spellings, active, voice articles, word order and so on have been discovered. However, since these are not significant ones. From these findings, the major source of errors are interlingual, developmental as well as ambiguity errors. These, if not given the proper attention, it deserves, could cause written miscommunication. The focus of this paper remains that, errors in EGL context are not discouraged but should be used to here learners make fewer errors and write better in English.

RECOMMENDATIONS

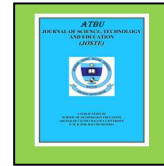
Considering the pedagogical implications outlined by this paper, it propose the following recommendations when dealing with errors related issues in composition

1. From the extracts of participants academic English writing, majority of the students seem to have problems of grammar. As a consequence, instead of devoting the entire time in teaching composition, emphasis writing so as for them to produce meaningful writing in English
2. Teachers should provide sufficient room for practice in and outside the classroom through different media. This is, they should expose learners to different types of writing in different fields and styles.

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3. Learners should be encouraged to read more as this will expose them to good writing in English as well as enable them to write better by adopting the style of experts in the field.
4. Teachers should encourage learners to self-correct or to adopt peer correction strategy. That is, they should be encouraged to focus on techniques tailored for peer correction.

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