

Analysis of Errors in the Essays of Senior Secondary School Students in Akoko South-West Local Government Area, Ondo State, Nigeria

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Abstract. This study examines the effectiveness of classroom activities in enhancing writing proficiency among senior secondary school students in Akoko, South-West Local Government Area, Ondo State, Nigeria. Recognising the importance of English proficiency for academic and professional success, this research analyses the types, frequency, and causes of errors in students' essays, offering insights into language learning challenges. Researchers used a descriptive research design to collect data from 100 students across five schools through an essay-writing task, followed by error analysis to categorise grammar, vocabulary, syntax, and cohesion issues. Results indicate that students frequently struggle with sentence structure, cohesion, and grammatical errors, with sentence and cohesion errors rated as the most severe. Key factors influencing these errors include limited vocabulary, insufficient proofreading, and inadequate command of English. Findings highlight the importance of targeted instructional strategies, including vocabulary enhancement, grammar-focused activities, and consistent feedback to address these challenges. By identifying prevalent errors and underlying causes, this study provides actionable recommendations for educators, emphasising the need for tailored interventions to improve students' writing proficiency and overall language competence. The implications extend to curriculum development, aiming to support students' success in language acquisition and communication skills.

Keywords: Error Analysis; Second Language Acquisition; English Writing Proficiency.

INTRODUCTION

Acquiring English language proficiency is paramount for individuals navigating a globalised world. Mastery of the English language is not only a tool for communication but also a gateway to academic and professional opportunities. How-

ever, language learners struggle with errors despite their significance, particularly in writing. This research analyses the errors present in the essays of senior secondary school students in Akoko South-west Local Government Area, Ondo State, Nigeria, to gain insights into the nature,

frequency, and implications of these errors for language learning and teaching.

English language education in Nigeria has deep historical roots that trace back to the colonial era. The introduction of English as a medium of instruction and its subsequent adoption as the official language of education and government established its prominence. Despite its widespread use today, challenges in language education persist, particularly evident in the frequent errors made by students in their written work. Understanding these errors is crucial for developing effective instructional strategies and curriculum interventions that address the specific needs of students [1].

Proficiency in the English language is critical for academic and professional success. Nevertheless, errors in language production are a common issue among learners. Such student essay errors can hinder effective communication, obscure intended meanings, and impede academic progress. Typical errors in students' writing include grammatical, lexical, syntactic, and semantic errors. These errors can stem from various sources, including interference from the student's first language, lack of adequate exposure to standard English usage, and insufficient practice in writing [2].

The challenges faced by Nigerian students in acquiring proficiency in English are multifaceted. One significant challenge is the quality of language instruction; many schools in Nigeria, particularly in rural areas like Akoko South-west, lack adequately trained teachers and resources to provide adequate language education. Consequently, students often do not receive the necessary guidance and practice to develop their writing skills proficiently. Furthermore, the educational system's emphasis on rote learning over critical thinking and creative expression can impede the development of practical writing skills [3].

Understanding the nature and sources of errors in students' essays is essential for improving English language teaching and learning. By identifying common error patterns, educators can tailor their instructional strategies to address specific areas of difficulty. For instance, targeted grammar instruction, increased opportunities for writing practice, and integration of language skills into content areas can help students develop excellent proficiency. Additionally, curriculum interventions emphasising critical thinking, crea-

tivity, and real-world communication can enhance students' writing ability [4].

The implications of this research extend beyond the classroom. Proficiency in English is a critical determinant of success in higher education and the job market. By addressing student writing errors, educators can help students achieve their full potential, contributing to academic and professional success. Furthermore, improving English language education in Nigeria can have broader societal benefits, including enhanced communication, increased access to global opportunities, and excellent national development [5].

In conclusion, studying errors in the essays of senior secondary school students in Akoko South-west Local Government Area, Ondo State, Nigeria, provides valuable insights into the challenges and opportunities in English language education. By understanding and addressing these errors, educators can develop more effective teaching methods and materials, ultimately enhancing students' language proficiency and academic success.

Research into errors at various proficiency levels has been the subject of many research activities and publications. Scholars have extensively examined errors produced by secondary school students in Nigeria and worldwide. Despite the significant emphasis placed on English language proficiency within the Nigerian education system, students, particularly at the senior secondary school level, continue to exhibit numerous errors in their written English. These persistent errors reflect individual linguistic challenges and broader systemic issues within language instruction methodologies and curriculum design.

Several studies have documented the types and frequency of errors in students' written work. For instance, authors [6] highlighted syntactic and grammatical errors among secondary school students in Nigeria. Still, they did not delve deeply into the underlying causes or contextual factors contributing to these errors. Similarly, authors [7] emphasised the need for tailored instructional strategies. Still, they did not comprehensively analyse how factors, such as language background, instructional methods, and learning environments contribute to error production.

This gap in the literature underscores the need for a more holistic and context-specific investigation. There is a lack of comprehensive studies

that not only categorise and quantify errors but also explore the multifaceted factors influencing these errors in Akoko South-west Local Government Area, Ondo State. Additionally, previous research has often overlooked the practical implications of these findings for educational practice and policy.

In Akoko South-west Local Government Area, Ondo State, there is a critical need to understand the specific errors senior secondary school students make in their essays. This understanding will help develop targeted remedial strategies that address these errors, thus enhancing students' overall language proficiency. Without such insights, efforts to improve English language teaching and learning may remain superficial and ineffective.

By conducting a detailed analysis of the types, frequency, and distribution of errors and exploring the underlying factors contributing to these errors, this study aims to fill the identified research gaps. The findings from this research will provide actionable recommendations for educators and policymakers, ultimately improving English language teaching and learning outcomes in this specific context.

The primary *aim of this study* is to analyse the errors in the essays of senior secondary school students in Akoko South-west Local Government Area, Ondo State, Nigeria, to understand better the nature, frequency, and implications of these errors for language learning and teaching. The primary objectives of this study are:

- a) To identify and categorise the types of errors prevalent in the essays of senior secondary school students in Akoko, South-west Local Government Area.
- b) To determine the frequency and distribution of these errors across various linguistic domains, including grammar, vocabulary, syntax spelling, incorrect syllabification, and omission or wrong punctuation marks.
- c) To explore the underlying factors contributing to errors, such as language background, instructional methods, and learning environments.
- d) To propose effective remedial strategies and recommendations for educators to address the identified errors and enhance students' language proficiency.

The researchers will guide the investigation by addressing the following research questions:

- 1) What errors are commonly observed in the essays written by senior secondary school students in Akoko South-west Local Government Area?
- 2) How frequently do these errors occur across different linguistic categories, such as grammar, vocabulary, and syntax?
- 3) What factors contribute to the occurrence of these errors, and how do they influence students' language proficiency levels?
- 4) What remedial measures can be recommended to address the identified errors and improve students' language learning outcomes?

This study focuses on senior secondary school students in Akoko South-west Local Government Area, Ondo State, Nigeria. The analysis will be limited to written essays produced as part of their academic coursework and will examine errors in various linguistic domains, including grammar, vocabulary, and syntax.

METHOD

This study employs a descriptive research design to systematically investigate and describe the types of errors prevalent in the essays of senior secondary school students. This design is appropriate as it allows for a detailed examination of the nature and frequency of errors and the factors contributing to their occurrence.

The population for this study comprises all senior secondary school students in Akoko South-West Local Government Area. To ensure the findings' representation and generalizability, the researchers will randomly select 100 students from five schools within the area. The selected schools are Oroke Community High School Akungba Akoko, Oyinle High School Oba-Akoko, Okeede Community High School Supare Akoko, Ayegunle High School Oka-Akoko, and Etioro Community High School Etioro Akoko. Each school will contribute 20 students, with 10 students from the SS1 class and 10 from the SS2 class.

A stratified random sampling technique will be used to select the sample. Within each stratum, students will be chosen randomly. This method ensures that the sample is representative of the diverse student population in the area and accounts for variations in educational environments.

Data collection will involve an essay writing task where randomly selected students will be asked to write essays on predetermined topics. The researchers will choose topics to elicit a wide range of language use and avoid any bias resulting from topic familiarity. Students will be given clear instructions and sufficient time to complete their essays in a controlled environment to ensure the authenticity and reliability of the data collected. The essays will be collected, and each student's demographic information, such as age, gender, and language background, will be recorded to explore potential correlations with error types and frequencies. Teachers will be briefed on the objectives and procedures of the study to ensure consistent administration of the essay task across all selected schools. Essays will be anonymised to maintain student identities' confidentiality and encourage honest and uninhibited responses.

The researchers will systematically analyse the collected essays to identify and categorise errors; this will involve reading each essay multiple times to ensure a thorough and accurate identification of mistakes. Errors will be categorised into various linguistic domains, including grammar, vocabulary, and syntax. Each error type will be clearly defined and classified based on established linguistic criteria. The researchers will calculate the frequency and distribution of every error to determine which errors are most prevalent. This quantitative analysis will involve counting the occurrences of each error type and analysing their distribution across the sample. Statistical tools such as frequency counts and percentages will present the data clearly and concisely.

The researchers will explore the underlying factors contributing to errors using qualitative and quantitative methods, including analysing correlations between error types and students' demographic information, language backgrounds, instructional strategies, and learning environments. The researchers may also use qualitative data from teacher interviews or student surveys to gain insights into the instructional methods and learning environments that may influence error occurrence.

The researchers will propose effective remedial strategies and recommendations based on the findings. These strategies will be informed by the types and frequencies of errors identified and the underlying factors contributing to these errors. Recommendations will be aimed at educators, curriculum developers, and policymakers to help

address the identified errors and enhance students' language proficiency levels.

Significance of the Study. The findings of this research have the potential to inform language teaching practices and curriculum development initiatives tailored to the needs of students in the Akoko South-West Local Government Area. By identifying common errors and their underlying causes, educators can design targeted interventions to support students' language development and enhance their academic achievement.

Brief Historical Background of English in Nigeria. English in Nigeria traces its roots back to the colonial era when British imperialism brought the language to the region in the 19th century. The British colonisation of Nigeria profoundly impacted the country's linguistic landscape, leading to the widespread adoption of English as a language of administration, education, and commerce [1]. The introduction of English served as a tool of domination and a means of communication between the colonial administration and local populations. Missionaries and colonial officials established English-medium schools and institutions to spread Western education and Christian values, further cementing the language's influence in Nigerian society [8].

The role of English in education was particularly significant, as it became the medium of instruction in schools across the country; this led to the emergence of an educated elite fluent in English who occupied positions of influence in government, business, and academia. However, access to English education was initially limited to urban centres and privileged individuals, exacerbating social inequalities. This disparity created a linguistic divide favouring English proficiency, leaving rural populations and lower socioeconomic classes disadvantaged [9].

Following Nigeria's independence from British rule in 1960, English retained its prominent position as a governance, education, and national communication language. In the post-independence era, efforts were made to promote linguistic diversity and inclusivity, with English being recognised alongside indigenous languages as an official language of the country [10]. English became the lingua franca of Nigeria, bridging linguistic divides and facilitating communication between different ethnic groups and regions. It played a crucial role in fostering national unity and identity in a country characterised by ethnic and cultural diversity.

Despite its widespread use and official status, English in Nigeria has faced challenges and controversies. Critics argue that the dominance of English has marginalised indigenous languages and cultures, contributing to the erosion of linguistic diversity. There are also concerns about the quality of English education in Nigeria, with issues such as inadequate resources, teacher training, and curriculum development hindering effective language learning and teaching [11].

Efforts to address these challenges and promote multilingualism are underway, with initiatives to preserve indigenous languages and improve English language education. The Nigerian government has implemented policies to encourage the teaching and learning of indigenous languages in schools, alongside English, to ensure that students maintain their linguistic heritage while acquiring proficiency in English. These policies aim to create a balanced linguistic environment where English and indigenous languages can thrive, thus preserving cultural identity and promoting national cohesion.

The future of English in Nigeria will likely be shaped by ongoing debates over language policy, education reform, and socio-economic development. While English will continue to play a vital role in Nigerian society, efforts to promote linguistic diversity and inclusivity are expected to gain momentum, reflecting a commitment to preserving Nigeria's rich cultural heritage while embracing the opportunities offered by the English language. This dynamic interplay between English and indigenous languages will be critical in shaping Nigeria's educational and sociocultural landscape, ensuring that language remains a bridge rather than a barrier in the nation's development.

In conclusion, the historical background of English in Nigeria highlights its dual role as a tool of colonial influence and a medium for national integration and development. Understanding this history is essential for addressing contemporary language education and policy challenges, ensuring that English and indigenous languages coexist and complement each other in Nigeria's multilingual society.

Written Essays. As previously noted, writing is often considered the most challenging aspect of learning English. However, academic writing is essential across all disciplines, requiring students to produce various genres such as assignments, essays, case studies, research papers, and written

examinations. Many students struggle with articulating their thoughts in writing due to the rule-based nature of the English language, necessitating a conscious effort to reflect, comprehend, compose, and construct grammatically correct sentences [12]. This process can be daunting for learners. According to the author [13], "In writing, any idea that you advance must be supported with specific reasons or details," underscoring the need for clarity, a systematic approach, and comprehensibility in written work.

Essays are written compositions focused on specific topics, often blending facts and opinions. They are typically organised logically and employ appropriate strategies for expression, including idea development, correct grammar and precise language. Therefore, essay writing offers numerous benefits by indirectly enhancing skills in analysis, critical thinking, and effective communication [14], all crucial for future professional roles in the workplace. Educators introduce essay writing early in students' education, starting from elementary school, and help them recognise these advantages. Through essays, educators can assess students' language competencies in comprehension, coherence, and grammatical accuracy.

Moreover, essays are crucial for evaluating students' ability to formulate and articulate their ideas coherently. They demand that students engage in critical thinking, organising their thoughts logically while adhering to the rules of grammar and syntax. This process reinforces their understanding of the language and analytical skills, which are invaluable in academic and professional contexts [12].

The significance of essay writing extends beyond mere language proficiency. It helps students develop a structured approach to problem-solving and the ability to present arguments effectively. These skills are essential in various fields, where clear and persuasive communication is a key to success. Hence, writing essays plays a fundamental role in preparing students for the demands of the modern workplace, where the ability to communicate ideas clearly and effectively is highly valued [15].

Given the importance of essay writing in education, this study focuses on analysing the written essays of senior secondary school students. Essays provide a familiar and structured format to examine students' language proficiency, offering insights into their ability to use English effective-

ly in a regular classroom setting. By evaluating the nature and frequency of errors in these essays, the study aims to identify specific areas where students struggle, thereby informing strategies to enhance English language teaching and learning [12].

In summary, essay writing is a critical component of education that significantly contributes to developing essential academic and professional skills. Through analysing student essays, educators can gain a deeper understanding of students' language abilities and implement targeted interventions to improve language proficiency, ultimately preparing students for future endeavours [12].

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

This study focuses on error analysis in second language acquisition, particularly investigating the systematic linguistic errors made by learners of English. The research explores how errors, as deviations from standard language norms, provide insights into learners' cognitive and linguistic processes while acquiring a new language. By examining written and spoken samples, this study identifies common error patterns, classifies them, and investigates their underlying causes.

The research emphasises the distinction between errors and mistakes, where errors reflect gaps in a learner's knowledge of the language, and mistakes are occasional lapses in performance. This study applies the theoretical frameworks of Interlanguage and Sociocultural theories to explain how learners develop an evolving linguistic system influenced by their native language and cultural environment. Interlanguage theory, in particular, highlights that errors are natural stages in language learning, offering valuable insights into learners' developmental progress.

Additionally, the study considers how error analysis can improve language instruction by providing feedback that targets specific linguistic challenges. The findings aim to contribute to understanding language learning strategies and developing more effective teaching approaches.

Error versus Mistake. In second language acquisition, distinguishing between an error and a mistake is crucial for understanding the nature of language learning challenges. Authors [16] provide a fundamental definition, stating that an error is "the use of a language item in a way that is perceived by fluent or native speakers of a lan-

guage as defective or incomplete learning." This definition underscores errors as systematic deviations when a learner has not fully mastered a language feature and consistently misuses it. Errors reflect gaps in a learner's underlying linguistic competence and are not readily self-corrected, as learners are typically unaware of them.

In contrast, mistakes are occasional lapses in performance. They can occur due to carelessness, inattention, fatigue, or lack of motivation. Mistakes are random deviations and can often be self-corrected when learners' attention is drawn to them. Author [17] further clarifies this distinction, noting that an error is "a failure to use a known system correctly" and reflects the learner's competence. In other words, errors indicate a lack of knowledge, while mistakes are errors in performance rather than competence.

The author [18] succinctly summarises the distinction by emphasising the criterion of self-correctability. Errors, he explains, are systematic and tend to recur without the learner's awareness, whereas mistakes can be detected and corrected by the learner upon reflection. This self-correctability is a key factor in differentiating between the two, as it highlights the learner's ability to recognise and amend mistakes but not errors.

Scholars have long studied the implications of errors and mistakes in language learning. Author [19] was one of the pioneering figures in this area, proposing that errors are a natural part of the language learning process and can provide valuable insights into learners' interlanguage systems. Interlanguage refers to the evolving linguistic system that learners construct, influenced by their native and target languages. Author [19] argued that errors indicate the stages learners go through as they acquire new linguistic structures.

Similarly, the author [20] introduced the "fossilisation" concept, where specific errors become permanent features of a learner's interlanguage. Fossilisation occurs despite extensive exposure to the target language and corrective feedback. This phenomenon underscores the persistence of mistakes and their challenges to language learners.

In conclusion, distinguishing between errors and mistakes is fundamental in language learning and teaching. Errors are systematic deviations that reflect gaps in linguistic competence, while mistakes are performance-based lapses that learners

can self-correct. Recognising this distinction allows educators to provide more effective instruction and feedback, ultimately supporting learners in achieving more excellent language proficiency.

The Theoretical Framework: Error Analysis. There are various definitions of error analysis, such as a standard to know the students' errors. It is essential to explain the mistake. Authors [16] said that error analysis is a systematic description and explanation of the error made by language learners or users in their oral and written production in the target language; this means that the error analysis can be seen from the mistakes made by language users in the written output of their subject (degree of comparison).

Error analysis differs from constructive analysis by examining errors attributable to all possible sources, not just those resulting from the negative transfer of the native language. According to the author [17], error analysis is a reaction to the view of second language learning proposed by constructive analysis theory, which assumes language transfer as the central process of second and foreign language learning.

The theoretical aspect of error analysis is a part of the methods used in investigating the language learning process. The practical element of error analysis guides the action we must take to correct a non-satisfactory state of affairs for students or teachers.

Sometimes, someone does or writes something which he does not know anything about what he has done. Of course, he got it wrong.

Sometimes, someone does something he knows, but because of his carelessness or forgetfulness, he must go wrong, too. In short, doing something we do not know or experience is an error. When we do something, we know it, but we get it wrong because of carelessness or forgetfulness, it is classified as a mistake.

Error analysis is a method used to document the systematic errors that appear in the learner's language. Language teachers who listen to their students' speech are probably the first to notice the mistakes. But the truth is that everyone makes errors in speaking, even native speakers and language teachers. For example, most native speakers don't always follow the rules in the grammar books we use to teach learners. Speakers may use those 'book' rules only in formal contexts but not in informal discourse, or they may find that the rules do not apply to speakers from

all geographic regions where the language is spoken [21].

While native speakers occasionally produce unsystematic 'performance' errors (like slips of the tongue) or shift from formal to informal grammatical patterns in informal contexts, second language learners systematically violate the linguistic patterns they have encountered, making errors that no native speaker ever makes. An error analysis and teacher corrections should ignore unsystematic performance slips (mistakes) and focus on errors, which are systematic violations of the rules to which the learners have been exposed; these tell us something about the learner's current knowledge of the laws of the language being learned [22].

As for error analysis (EA), corpus linguistics could have a 'vindicating' role. EA has been criticised mainly for both methodological and theoretical reasons. The former reason stands, in general, for the weaknesses in error evaluation judgments, lack of precision in defining the point of view under which an utterance is considered erroneous, difficulty in finding the interlingua or intralingua source of error, classification and interpretation of errors [23]. The latter reason involves comprehending EA techniques to infer the process of learning a second language. According to this position, EA does not provide a complete idea of the learners' competence and performance. For EA to be efficient, erroneous and non-erroneous forms must be studied.

Sociocultural Theory of Error Analysis. Authors [24] developed sociocultural theory, which posits that language learning is deeply embedded in social and cultural contexts. According to this theory, cognitive development, including language acquisition, is a socially mediated process that occurs through interaction with more knowledgeable others within a cultural context. This perspective suggests that errors in language learning are not just cognitive deficiencies but are influenced by the learner's social and cultural environment. This understanding has significant implications for teaching practices and error analysis in language learning.

Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory emphasises the importance of social interaction in learning. He introduced the concept of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), which is the difference between what a learner can do independently and what they can achieve with guidance and support from a more knowledgeable other [24]. In the

context of language learning, teachers should create learning environments that facilitate meaningful social interactions and authentic communicative activities.

Group work, peer review sessions, and interactive discussions are practical strategies for students to practice language use in socially relevant contexts. Research has shown that collaborative tasks, such as group discussions and peer feedback sessions, can help learners internalise new language forms and reduce errors over time [25]. Through interaction, learners can negotiate meaning, receive immediate feedback, and refine their linguistic output, which supports their language development.

Integrating culturally familiar content into teaching materials and methods is crucial for effective language learning. Learners who relate to the content are likelier to engage with the material and find it meaningful. Culturally relevant pedagogy involves texts, examples, and activities reflecting students' cultural backgrounds and experiences. This approach enhances comprehension and interest, validates students' identities, and promotes inclusivity in the classroom [26].

A study by the author [27] demonstrated that students performed better and were more motivated when the curriculum was culturally responsive; this means that language educators should strive to incorporate culturally diverse materials that resonate with their students' lived experiences. Doing so can create a more inclusive and engaging learning environment that supports language acquisition.

A classroom culture that values linguistic diversity and encourages students to draw on their cultural experiences can significantly enhance language learning. Recognising and respecting the linguistic backgrounds of students can help them feel more comfortable and confident in using the target language. This approach aligns with the principles of Sociocultural Theory, which views learning as a socially situated process.

Teachers can encourage students to use their first language as a resource in learning the target language. Bilingual education programs effectively support language development and academic achievement [28]. Allowing students to draw on their linguistic knowledge can help them connect their native and target languages, facilitating more profound understanding and reducing errors.

Creating a supportive learning environment is essential for effective language learning; this involves providing opportunities for social interaction and cultural relevance and fostering a classroom culture that values effort and growth. Teachers should adopt a positive attitude toward errors, viewing them as natural and valuable parts of the learning process. This perspective can help create a safe space where students feel comfortable taking risks and experimenting with the language.

According to the author [29], a supportive learning environment that emphasises encouragement and positive reinforcement can enhance students' motivation and willingness to engage in communicative activities; this, in turn, can lead to more frequent language use and ultimately improve proficiency.

Teachers can employ several strategies to address errors consistent with Sociocultural Theory. These strategies include scaffolding, formative assessment, and collaborative learning.

Scaffolding involves providing temporary support to learners as they develop new skills. This support can take various forms, such as modelling, prompts, and feedback. As learners become more proficient, the scaffolding is gradually removed, allowing them to perform independently. This approach helps learners progress through their ZPD and reduces the likelihood of persistent errors [30].

Formative assessment is another critical strategy. It involves ongoing assessment of learners' progress and providing feedback that helps them understand and correct their errors. Formative assessment practices, such as quizzes, peer reviews, and self-assessments, can provide valuable insights into learners' understanding and guide instructional adjustments [31]. This continuous feedback loop supports learners in refining their language skills and addressing errors constructively.

Collaborative learning encourages students to work together on language tasks, which can enhance their understanding and correct usage of the target language. Research by author [32] highlights the benefits of collaborative dialogue, where learners co-construct knowledge and negotiate meaning. This process helps learners internalise language rules and reduce errors through peer interaction and feedback.

Sociocultural theory provides a comprehensive framework for understanding and addressing errors in language learning. By emphasising the social and cultural contexts of learning, this theory highlights the importance of meaningful interactions, cultural relevance, and supportive learning environments. Educators can employ strategies such as explicit instruction, contextualised practice, error analysis, metalinguistic feedback, peer collaboration, and scaffolded learning to address interlanguage errors effectively. Recognising errors as natural and valuable elements of the learning process, teachers can create a positive and inclusive classroom environment that supports learners' language development and fosters their overall proficiency.

Interlanguage Theory in Error Analysis. Interlanguage Theory, introduced by the author [20], is a critical concept in second language acquisition (SLA). It posits that language learners develop a unique, evolving linguistic system that combines elements from their native language (L1) and the target language (L2). This intermediary system, known as interlanguage, is neither fully L1 nor L2 but rather a dynamic construct that changes as learners progress toward proficiency. Understanding and leveraging Interlanguage Theory is crucial for educators as it provides insights into the nature of errors and informs effective teaching strategies [20].

One of the fundamental principles of Interlanguage Theory is that errors are a natural and inevitable part of the language-learning process. These errors are not random but systematic, reflecting the learners' current stage of linguistic development. According to the author [20], errors represent transitional stages in the learner's journey toward mastering the target language. This perspective shifts the focus from viewing errors as failures to seeing them as indicators of learning progress. For example, a Spanish-speaking learner of English might initially produce sentences like "She ate the cake," reflecting the over-generalisation of the regular past tense rule to an irregular verb. This error indicates that the learner has internalised the past tense rule but has not yet mastered the exceptions. Over time, with exposure and practice, the learner's interlanguage will evolve to include the correct irregular forms [17].

Educators should adopt a positive attitude toward the value of errors in language learning. Instead of penalising students for making mis-

takes, teachers should view errors as opportunities for growth and learning. This approach creates a supportive learning environment where students feel comfortable experimenting with the language without fear of judgment or failure. A positive attitude towards errors encourages learners to take risks for language development. Author [33] argues that a low-anxiety environment is conducive to language acquisition, allowing learners to focus on communication rather than avoiding mistakes. Students not afraid of making errors are likelier to engage in meaningful interactions and practice new language forms.

To effectively address interlanguage errors, teachers can use diagnostic assessments to identify common patterns and tailor their instruction accordingly. Diagnostic assessments provide valuable data on the areas where learners struggle, enabling educators to design targeted interventions. For instance, if diagnostic assessments reveal that students frequently misuse verb tenses, teachers can implement targeted grammar exercises and contextual practice to help students internalise the correct usage. Activities such as sentence correction exercises, verb conjugation drills, and contextualised practice in writing and speaking can reinforce the proper forms.

Feedback is a crucial component of the language learning process, and its effectiveness depends on how it is delivered. The authors [34] categorise corrective feedback into different types: explicit correction, recasts, clarification requests, metalinguistic feedback, and elicitation. Every kind of feedback serves a different purpose and can be used strategically to address interlanguage errors. Focusing on error patterns rather than isolated mistakes helps students systematically recognise and correct their interlanguage. For example, suppose a learner consistently omits the third-person singular "s" in present tense verbs (e.g., "He walk to school"). The teacher can provide feedback highlighting this specific error pattern in that case. Instead of correcting individual instances, the teacher can explain the rule and provide practice opportunities to reinforce it.

Types of Errors. Interlanguage errors can manifest in various linguistic domains, including syntax, morphology, phonology, and semantics. Understanding these error types and their underlying causes can help educators address them more effectively.

a) **Syntax Errors.** Syntax errors occur when learners apply incorrect word order or sentence structure rules. For example, a Japanese learner of English might produce sentences like "I to the store go" instead of "I go to the store." This error reflects the influence of the Japanese word order, which typically places the verb at the end of the sentence. Teachers can provide explicit instruction and practice in English sentence structure to address this.

b) **Morphology Errors.** Morphology errors involve incorrect grammatical morphemes, such as verb tenses, plurals, or possessives. As previously mentioned, a standard mistake among learners of English is the over-generalisation of regular past tense rules to irregular verbs (e.g., "ate" instead of "ate"). Teachers can use focused exercises and contextual practice to help students internalise the correct forms.

c) **Phonology Errors.** Phonology errors pertain to the incorrect pronunciation of sounds. For instance, Spanish-speaking learners might struggle with the distinction between /b/ and /v/ sounds, as these are not distinct phonemes in Spanish. Teachers can incorporate pronunciation practice and phonetic training to help learners distinguish and produce these sounds accurately.

d) **Semantic Errors.** Semantic errors involve misusing words or phrases due to an incorrect understanding of their meanings. For example, a learner might say "I am boring" instead of "I am bored," reflecting confusion between the adjective forms. Teachers can provide explicit vocabulary instruction and contextual practice to clarify these distinctions.

Sources of Errors. Author [17] states that second-language (L2) learning errors can originate from two primary sources: Interlingua and Interlingua. Interlingua errors stem from the learner's first language (L1) and are referred to as "negative transfer," as they reflect the influence of the native language on the target language (L2). The concept of Interlingua was introduced by the author [20], who described it as the systematic knowledge of an L2 learner, independent of both the L1 and the L2. Errors occur when learners lack sufficient understanding of L2 rules or systems, resulting in random and incorrect usage. These transfers can be classified into positive and negative transfers: positive transfer occurs when similarities between the two languages support the learning process. In contrast, negative trans-

fer arises from structural differences, leading to errors [20].

For example, a Nigerian learner whose first language is Yoruba might produce the sentence, "I will go to market tomorrow," but mistakenly say, "I will go market tomorrow," omitting the preposition *to*. This error arises from Yoruba syntax, where prepositions are sometimes omitted or used differently than in English [12]. Similarly, a learner from a Hausa-speaking background might incorrectly say, "She is stronger than him," due to the influence of Hausa, which does not use comparatives in the same way as English. The correct form in English would be, "She is stronger than him." These examples highlight how the structures of the learner's L1 interfere with their L2 production, resulting in errors in English.

Authors [35] also emphasise that errors caused by L1 interference are a common source of linguistic mistakes in L2 learning. Positive transfer occurs when learners' first languages share structural similarities with the target language. However, negative transfer occurs if the languages differ significantly, as seen in the examples above, leading to word usage, sentence structure, and grammar mistakes.

In addition to interlingua errors, the author [36] identifies them as a result of learners' insufficient understanding of the target language's rules. These errors also arise during language learning and are called developmental errors. Author [36] further categorises Intralingua errors into four types: over-generalisation, ignorance of rule restrictions, incomplete application of rules, and false concepts hypothesised.

Overgeneralisation occurs when a learner incorrectly applies a rule from the target language across various contexts. For instance, "Diana can read" is an example of overgeneralisation, where the learner incorrectly applies the -s marker in the verb "reads" after "can," which should be "read." Similarly, ignorance of rule restrictions can lead to phrases such as "She made me go rest," where the learner fails to recognise that "made" does not require the infinitive. Incomplete application of rules can be seen in sentences like "you like to dance," which should be a question: "Do you like to dance?" Finally, false concepts hypothesised occur when learners misunderstand a distinction in the target language, such as using "was" incorrectly as a past tense marker in "One day it happened."

These types of errors demonstrate how learners' misunderstandings of their L1 and L2 can lead to common mistakes in second language acquisition, whether due to negative transfer or insufficient knowledge of the target language's rules [12].

A Review of Relevant Scholarly Works. The study of lexical semantics within the Error Analysis (EA) framework has attracted increasing scholarly attention, particularly in the context of second language acquisition (SLA). Lexico-semantic errors involving incorrect word choice or meaning reveal deeper cognitive and linguistic processes in the learner's developing interlanguage system [20]. This review draws upon various continental and intercontinental scholarly works to examine key trends, theories, and findings in the field. It highlights both the challenges and opportunities posed by lexical errors in language learning and outlines the implications for pedagogy.

Scholars such as authors [33] provide a foundational taxonomy for understanding language errors, including lexical ones. In their surface strategy taxonomy, errors are classified based on structural deviations, which include omissions, additions, misformations, and misorderings. Lexico-semantic errors often fall under misformations, where incorrect or inappropriate word forms lead to communication breakdowns. For instance, using "economic" instead of "economical" can result in a grammatically correct but semantically incorrect sentence. This classification system is instrumental in identifying where and how lexical errors occur, forming the basis for much of the current research on EA.

In Africa, the author [37] examined lexical errors in the written English of Nigerian students, identifying issues related to L1 interference. His study found that students often transfer the semantic structures of their native languages (L1) into English (L2), leading to incorrect word choices and collocational errors. For instance, a standard error involves direct translations from Yoruba to English, where phrases such as "hard water" are used instead of "strong drink," reflecting the lexical patterns of the native language. Adegbite's findings align with the author's [18], who posited that comparative analysis highlights the influence of L1 on the lexical choices made in L2. This line of research underscores the importance of understanding language transfer in analysing lexico-semantic errors.

Author [20] concept of interlanguage remains a cornerstone in studying lexico-semantic errors. Interlanguage refers to the transitional linguistic system developed by L2 learners as they progress toward full language proficiency. This evolving system often incorporates features from the learner's L1 and the target language, leading to lexical errors as learners attempt to map unfamiliar vocabulary onto their existing linguistic framework. Selinker's research has been expanded by recent scholars such as the author [23], who noted that interlanguage is particularly prone to lexical errors because vocabulary acquisition requires extensive exposure and practice more than grammatical structures. Author [23] work suggests that lexico-semantic errors are a natural part of the learning process and reflect the ongoing cognitive development of learners.

Research on lexico-semantic errors in African contexts provides additional insights. Author [38] analysed the lexical choices of Nigerian university students and found that sociocultural factors primarily influenced their lexico-semantic errors. Using culturally specific terms in English writing often leads to misunderstandings or incorrect word usage. For instance, terms like "chewing stick," used in Nigerian English to describe a traditional method of dental care, might confuse native English speakers unfamiliar with the concept. Adeyanju's findings highlight the need to contextualise lexico-semantic errors within the broader cultural and societal norms of L2 learners.

In conclusion, studying lexico-semantic errors within the context of second language acquisition offers valuable insights into the complexities of learning a new language. These errors, encompassing wrong word selection, collocational errors, and over-generalisation, highlight learners' cognitive and linguistic challenges as they navigate the intricacies of English vocabulary. Empirical research has shown that these errors are often rooted in the learners' interlanguage and are influenced by factors such as language transfer, the structure of the learners' L1, and their exposure to authentic language use.

From a pedagogical perspective, understanding these errors underscores the importance of targeted vocabulary instruction, corrective feedback, and rich language exposure. Educators are encouraged to focus on teaching collocations, idiomatic expressions, and the nuances of word meanings, as these areas are critical for achieving

fluency and accuracy in a second language. Additionally, providing learners with opportunities to engage in meaningful communication and receive constructive feedback can significantly reduce the incidence of lexico-semantic errors and enhance overall language proficiency.

As the field of second language acquisition continues to evolve, ongoing research into lexico-semantic errors will remain essential for developing effective teaching strategies and supporting learners in their journey toward mastering a new language. By addressing the root causes of these errors and implementing evidence-based instructional practices, educators can help learners overcome the challenges of lexico-semantics and achieve tremendous success in their language learning endeavours.

Error Analysis in Other Genres of Language Use: Newspaper Publication in Nigeria. Error Analysis (EA) in newspaper publications, particularly in Nigerian media, offers a unique perspective on language use. While errors in learner language often stem from a developing understanding of linguistic structures, errors in professional contexts like journalism are more complex. They can result from several factors, including lapses in proofreading, the pressure of meeting tight deadlines, or the informal influence of colloquial speech. Though seemingly minor, such errors have broader implications for the information's credibility and reliability.

A standard error found in Nigerian newspaper publications is the misuse of homophones, words that sound alike but have different meanings and spellings. For instance, a standard mistake in Nigerian newspapers is the incorrect use of "their" instead of "there" or "principal" instead of "principle." While understandable in casual conversation, such mistakes can significantly detract from the professional tone expected in journalistic writing. An article in the Vanguard newspaper incorrectly used "stationary" instead of "stationery" on June 10, 2023. This type of error is particularly problematic in newspapers, where the expectation of accuracy is high, and such mistakes can lead to reader confusion and a decrease in the perceived reliability of the publication.

In addition to homophone errors, Nigerian newspaper publications frequently exhibit errors in using prepositions. Prepositional errors are often subtle but can significantly alter the meaning of a sentence. For instance, an article in The Guardian on July 20, 2023, mistakenly used "in"

instead of "on" in the phrase "on the table" versus "in the table," leading to a confusing description of a scene. These errors often arise from direct translation from Nigerian Pidgin or indigenous languages, where prepositional usage may differ from Standard English. According to [40], such errors reflect deeper linguistic interferences common in a multilingual society like Nigeria, where the influence of native languages on English usage is pervasive.

Faulty parallelism is another error frequently encountered in Nigerian newspapers; this occurs when elements of a sentence that are supposed to be parallel in the structure are not, leading to awkward or confusing sentences. An example can be seen in the Punch newspaper on May 15, 2023, where a sentence read: "The minister visited the site, inspecting the damage, and was meeting with the victims," instead of maintaining a parallel structure such as "The minister visited the site, inspected the damage, and met with the victims." This kind of error can disrupt the flow of information, making it difficult for readers to follow the narrative. Studies like those by the author [39] emphasise that such mistakes not only affect the readability of the text but also undermine the credibility of the news source, as they suggest a lack of attention to detail.

These errors, while common, reflect more profound issues in the editorial processes of Nigerian newspapers. Unlike learner language, where errors may be forgiven as part of the learning process, errors in professional journalism are seen as lapses in maintaining high editorial standards. According to a study by authors [40] in the International Journal of Language and Linguistics, such errors in newspapers can erode public trust, especially in a country like Nigeria, where media is a key source of information. Readers rely on newspapers to provide explicit, accurate, and well-edited content. When errors are frequent, it can lead to a loss of confidence in the publication's reliability.

Moreover, the pressure of tight deadlines in the fast-paced environment of newsrooms can contribute to these errors. Journalists and editors might prioritise speed over accuracy, leading to oversights that result in errors. As the author [41] noted in the African Journal of Media and Communication Studies, the competitive nature of news reporting in Nigeria, where breaking news is highly valued, often leads to rushed publications without thorough proofreading. This

tendency is evident in instances like the Daily Trust article dated November 20, 2021, where multiple errors, including misused prepositions and incorrect verb tenses, were present, likely due to the haste in publishing the story.

In conclusion, while errors in learner language are part of the acquisition process, errors in newspaper publications, particularly in Nigerian media, indicate lapses in professional standards. These errors, ranging from homophone confusion to faulty parallelism, can undermine the clarity and credibility of the information presented. As newspapers serve as a primary source of information for many, editors must strengthen editorial practices to minimise these errors and maintain the readership's trust.

Data presentation and analysis

This chapter presents the data analysis conducted to examine the errors commonly observed in the English essays of senior secondary school students in Akoko South-West Local Government Area of Ondo State. The chapter also explores the frequency of these errors across various linguistic categories, including grammar, vocabulary, and syntax, as well as the factors contributing to these errors and their impact on students' language proficiency.

We analysed the data using descriptive and inferential statistical tools, with table results. We used frequency and percentage distributions to explore demographic characteristics. At the same time, the Friedman Chi-Square test and mean ranking were employed to assess the severity and frequency of different error types. The analysis also investigated how factors such as limited vocabulary, poor command of English, and neglect of teacher feedback contribute to recurring errors in students' essays.

Overall, this chapter aims to highlight the patterns of error occurrence, offering insights into how these errors hinder students' writing proficiency. The findings form the basis for further recommendations on addressing these errors and improving language teaching and learning strategies in Nigerian secondary schools.

The research data were analysed in this section using descriptive statistics. Frequency and percentage distributions were adopted to test the demographic characteristics. We tested the formulated research questions using frequency and percentage reporting, and we used mean ranking

and the Friedman chi-square summary where necessary. All the results are summarised in tables.

Table 1 – Frequency and Percentage Distribution showing Respondents' Personal Information

Factors	Options	Frequency	%
School Name	Etioro Community High School	22	22.0
	Oyinle High School	21	21.0
	Okeede High School000	19	19.0
	Oroke High School	20	20.0
	Aiyegunle High School	18	18.0
	Total	100	100.0
College Class	SS One	29	29.0
	SS Two	71	71.0
	Total	100	100.0

Table 1 shows the distribution of the respondent's personal information. Information relating to the respondent's school indicated that 22% of them were students of the Etioro Grammar School, a similar percentage of them (21%) were from the Oyinle High School, 19% were students of Okeede High School, 20% of them were from the Oroke High School, while 18% of them were from the Aiyegunle High School. The class of the respondents in the college was the last presented personal information; this was such that 29% of them were SS1 students, while the majority of them (71%) were SS2 students.

Research Question 1: What errors do Senior Secondary School students in Akoko South-west Local Government Area commonly make in their essays?

Table 2 – Friedman Test on statement regarding the types of errors commonly observed in essays written by Senior Secondary School Students in Akoko South-west Local Government Area

Items	Response						Mean Ranking
		VH	H	L	VL	Total	
Grammatical Error	F	3	80	13	4	100	3.64
	%	3.0	80.0	13.0	4.0	100.0	
Lexical Error	F	10	76	9	5	100	3.95
	%	10.0	76.0	9.0	5.0	100.0	
Spelling Error	F	13	69	12	6	100	3.99
	%	13.0	69.0	12.0	6.0	100.0	
Punctuation Error	F	15	66	16	3	100	4.01
	%	15.0	66.0	16.0	3.0	100.0	
Sentence Error	F	12	78	6	4	100	4.25
	%	12.0	78.0	6.0	4.0	100.0	
Cohesion Error	F	14	75	4	7	100	4.17
	%	14.0	75.0	4.0	7.0	100.0	

Items	Response						
		VH	H	L	VL	Total	Mean Ranking
Syntactic Error	F	5	87	4	4	100	4.02
	%	5.0	87.0	4.0	4.0	100.0	
Average Summary	F	10	76	9	5	100	
	%	10.0	76.0	9.0	5.0	100.0	
Friedman Chi-Square	X ²	13.263					
	Df	6					
	P	<.05					

Notes: VH – Very High; H – High; L – Low; VL – Very Low.

Table 2 presents the test on errors commonly observed in essays written by Senior Secondary School Students in Akoko, South-west Local Government Area. The conducted Friedman test revealed that the reported mean ranking was valid to explain the severity of the identified lexical English errors based on the respondents' perception ($X^2 = 13.263$, $df = 6$, $p < .05$).

Based on the ranking, the sentence error was the highest-rated existing type of error ($M = 4.25$). It was reported by 12% of the respondents that the existence of this type of error in English essay writing is at a very high level; the majority of them (78%) affirmed its occurrence at a high level, and 6% consented its occurrence at a low level, while 4% of them agreed this error occurrence is at a very low level. The next rated type of error was the cohesion error ($M = 4.17$). Researchers observed that 14% of the respondents confirmed the existence of this type of error in essay writing among secondary students at a very high level, 75% affirmed it at a high level, 4% consented to its occurrence at a low level, and 7% agreed that this error existed in students' essay writing at a very low level.

The researchers placed the mean value of 4.02 next when rating the existence of syntactic errors. It was the impression of 5% of the respondents that this error occurs in students' essay writing at a very high level, 87% felt it happens at a high level, and 4% thought it occurs at a low level. In comparison, a similar percentage (4%) agreed that it happens at a very low level.

Researchers followed the punctuation error in ranking with the mean value of 4.01. About details, 15% of the respondents affirmed that this error exists in students' essay writing at a very high level, and 66% of them affirmed it occurs at a high level. However, 16% opined that this error

exists at a low level, while 3% envisaged that it exists at a very low level.

Spelling errors were another identified surfacing error in students writing essays, and they were placed next in rating with a mean value of 3.99. There was an indication that 13% of the respondents indicated that this error exists in students' essay writing at a very high level, and 69% experienced it at a high level. However, 12% experienced it at a low level, while 6% agreed that this error exists at a very low level.

The possible error identified in students' essay writing and rated before the least was a lexical error ($M = 3.95$). The distribution indicated that 10% of the respondents experienced it at a very high level, and 76% experienced it at a high level, even when 9% had such an error in essay writing at a low level. In comparison, 5% had this error at a very low level. The least reported error in students' essay writing was the grammatical error ($M = 3.64$). Researchers observed that 3% of the respondents affirmed that they experienced this error at a very high level, 80% experienced it at a high level, and 13% experienced it at a low level. In comparison, 4% of them experienced it at a very low level.

The average summary reported that 10% of the respondents experienced the identified errors in students' essay writing at a very high level, and 76% had experienced them at a high level. However, 9% indicated that these errors exist in students writing essays at a low level, while 5% reported that these errors exist at a very low level. Considering the difference in frequencies, it could be inferred that this result was valid for further clarification. Considering the frequency difference, we could assume this result was valid for further clarification. We concluded that the errors above were commonly observed in essays written by senior secondary school students in Akoko, a south-west local government area.

Research Question 2: How frequently do these errors occur across different linguistic categories, such as grammar, vocabulary, and syntax?

Table 3 shows the error occurrence rate across different linguistic categories, such as grammar, vocabulary, and syntax. The researchers reported that a reasonable number of the respondents (63%) indicated a high grammatical error among the students writing English essays.

Table 3 – Mean, Standard Deviation, Frequency and Percentage Showing the Rate of error occurrence across different linguistic categories, such as grammar, vocabulary, and syntax

Errors in English Essay	N	M	SD	Options	F	%
Grammatical Error	100	18.42	6.43	Low	37	37.0
				High	63	63.0
Lexical Error	100	8.18	3.08	Low	31	31.0
				High	69	69.0
Spelling Error	100	4.37	2.11	Low	31	31.0
				High	69	69.0
Punctuation Error	100	6.82	2.77	Low	43	43.0
				High	57	57.0
Sentence Error	100	6.50	2.77	Low	53	53.0
				High	47	47.0
Cohesion Error	100	5.82	1.91	Low	36	36.0
				High	64	64.0
Syntactical Error	100	6.08	2.41	Low	41	41.0
				High	59	59.0

Meanwhile, 37% had low reports of grammatical errors; this implies that many students make grammatical errors while writing English essays. Similarly, based on the mean distribution, researchers observed that 69% of the respondents indicated high lexical errors in English essay writing, while 31% measured low lexical errors; this shows that a reasonable number of students were less likely to commit such errors while writing English essays.

In the aspect of spelling errors, it revealed that a high percentage of the respondents (69%) had a high disposition towards the occurrence of this error when students were writing essays. However, 31% reported low occurrence; this shows that the larger category of students was likely to engage in spelling errors when tasked to write essays in English. A good number of the respondents (57%) consented to students' possible high occurrence of punctuation errors when writing English essays, although 43% reported it was a low occurrence.

Furthermore, it is reported in this result that 47% of the respondents felt a high occurrence of sentence error among college students while writing essays in English. However, 53% indicate low sentence errors in students' essay writing. Concerning the rate at which coherence or cohesion error occurs, a reasonable number of the respondents (64%) complied with its high occurrence during college students' engagement in essay writing. Meanwhile, 36% of them reported that there is a likelihood of a low occurrence of

cohesion errors among students when writing essays. Lastly, 59% of the respondents believed that there is certainty of students committing syntactic mistakes at a high level. Meanwhile, 41% of them report that students committing this error are at a low level.

In summary, grammatical and lexical errors seem most likely to be committed to frequently occurring across different linguistic categories. In contrast, spelling errors were the least likely to occur in students' English essay writing.

Research Question 3: What are the factors contributing to the occurrence of these errors, and how do they influence students' language proficiency levels?

Table 4 – Friedman Test on a statement regarding the factors contributing to the occurrence of these errors and how they influence students' language proficiency level

Items	Responses						Mean Ranking
	F	SA	A	D	SD	Total	
When students don't comprehend the subject matter, they tend to write incorrect information	F	76	10	9	5	100	3.06
	%	76.0	10.0	9.0	5.0	100.0	
Poor command of English leads to mistakes in spelling, grammar, and syntax	F	69	13	12	6	100	2.92
	%	69.0	13.0	12.0	6.0	100.0	
Errors result when students do not carefully proofread their written essays.	F	66	15	16	3	100	2.87
	%	66.0	15.0	16.0	3.0	100.0	
Limited vocabulary restricts students' ability to express complex ideas	F	78	12	6	4	100	3.15
	%	78.0	12.0	6.0	4.0	100.0	
Ignoring the teacher's feedback leads to repeated mistakes	F	75	14	4	7	100	3.02
	%	75.0	14.0	4.0	7.0	100.0	
Averaged Total	F	73	13	9	5	100	
	%	73.0	13.0	9.0	5.0	100.0	
Friedman Chi-Square	X ²	5.159					
	df	4					
	P	>.05					

The researchers presented the test on the factors contributing to errors in English essay writing and how they influence students' language proficiency levels in Table 4. The Friedman test revealed that there were no variances in the identified factors contributing to the occurrence of errors ($X^2 = 5.159$, $df = 4$, $p > .05$). This indicated that the mean ranking did not indicate any preference among the identified factors contributing to the occurrence of errors, and adopting each of among other equally exerts an impact on students' language level of proficiency.

It indicates that a higher percentage of the respondents (86%) believe that students tend to write incorrect information when they don't comprehend the subject matter (i.e., lack of understanding). Meanwhile, 14% were of a contrary view. The respondents in their more significant percentage (72%) were of the impression that poor command of English (i.e. inadequacy in language proficiency) leads to spelling, grammar, and syntax mistakes. However, 18% of them refuted it.

In a similar trend, 81% of the respondents thought that students not proofreading their written essays carefully (i.e. inattention to details) results in errors in English essays; however, 19% of them were of the contrary opinion. Nearly all the respondents (90%) complied that limited vocabulary (i.e. limited use of vocabulary) restricts students' ability to express complex ideas. Meanwhile, 10% of them refuted it. Lastly, 89% of the respondents thought that ignoring teachers' feedback (i.e. feedback neglect) leads to repeated mistakes in essay writing among college students; however, 11% felt differently.

It reported in the average summary that most of the respondents (86%), consenting to these statements, had affirmed that those above were the possible factors contributing to these errors, which had greatly influenced and impeded students' language proficiency level; this was such that 73% of them strongly agreed on these statements, and 13% agreed, though 9% disagreed, while 7% strongly disagreed. Considering the frequency difference, we could infer that this result is valid for further justification. On a conclusive note, it is justified that those above were the possible factors contributing to the occurrence of different errors in students' essay writing, which incredibly negatively influenced and impeded students' language proficiency.

Types of Errors Observed in Student Essays. The data analysis highlights several error types common in the English essays of senior secondary school students. These include grammatical, lexical, spelling, punctuation, sentence, cohesion, and syntactic errors. Among these, sentence errors ranked the highest in occurrence, with a mean value of 4.25; this suggests that students struggle significantly with sentence construction, resulting in improper sentence formation, which hinders the clarity and flow of their writing. Errors related to sentence structure can lead to confusion in meaning and disrupt the overall coherence of the essay.

Cohesion errors were the next most prevalent, with a mean value of 4.17; this shows that students often have difficulty maintaining a logical flow of ideas, leading to disjointed writing. Cohesion errors impact the connectivity of thoughts and ideas, reducing the quality of the essays. Syntactic errors, ranked third, indicate challenges with arranging words and phrases to create well-formed sentences. This type of error reflects deeper issues with mastering syntax rules in English, often resulting in grammatically incorrect structures.

At the lower end of the spectrum, grammatical errors had the lowest mean value ($M = 3.64$). While these errors were less frequent than sentence and cohesion errors, they still significantly affected the overall quality of the essays; this suggests that while students are somewhat familiar with grammar rules, they still face challenges, particularly in tense usage and subject-verb agreement.

Frequency of Errors Across Linguistic Categories. The study reveals that grammatical errors (63% high occurrence) and lexical errors (69% high occurrence) are among the most frequent mistakes. This finding indicates that students often struggle with word choice and grammar, which are crucial for expressing ideas effectively. Grammatical errors, such as misuse of verb tenses and incorrect sentence structures, affect the clarity of the essays. The high occurrence of lexical errors demonstrates that students face challenges with vocabulary usage, often leading to inaccurate or inappropriate word choices in their writing; this suggests a lack of familiarity with more nuanced aspects of English vocabulary.

Spelling errors were also a significant challenge, with a 69% high occurrence. Spelling mistakes disrupt the flow of the essay and detract from the

professional quality of the writing. The findings suggest that these errors are pervasive among the students, indicating the need for more focus on spelling in language instruction.

Punctuation errors (57% high occurrence) and sentence errors (47% high occurrence) also indicate that students face challenges with writing mechanics. Improper punctuation can lead to unclear or confusing sentences, while sentence errors reflect a lack of proper structure in constructing coherent sentences. These findings indicate a need for more focused instruction on writing mechanics, essential for clear communication.

Factors Contributing to Errors. Researchers identified several key factors contributing to the high frequency of errors. The most prominent factor, agreed upon by 90% of respondents, is limited vocabulary; this restricts students' ability to express complex ideas effectively, leading to lexical and cohesion errors. A limited vocabulary often forces students to use simpler words and phrases that may not accurately convey the intended meaning, thus affecting the overall quality of their essays.

Another significant factor is a poor command of English, which leads to spelling, grammar, and syntax mistakes. The majority of respondents (72%) agreed that insufficient proficiency in the language causes a range of errors, including those related to sentence structure and cohesion; this points to a fundamental language acquisition and mastery issue, suggesting that students need more support in developing their core language skills.

An overwhelming 86% of respondents identified a lack of comprehension of the subject matter as a major contributor to errors. When students do not fully understand the content they are writing about, they are more likely to make grammatical and lexical mistakes. Additionally, students' failure to proofread their work leads to recurring errors, with 81% of respondents indicating that careless writing contributes to the mistakes found in essays.

Finally, neglect of teacher feedback was identified as a factor that leads to repeated mistakes. Many students overlook the corrections and feedback provided by their teachers, resulting in persistent errors in their writing; this suggests a need for more active engagement with input in

the classroom to help students address their mistakes and improve their writing skills.

Impact of Errors on Language Proficiency. The frequent occurrence of these errors significantly negatively impacts students' overall language proficiency. Repeated grammar, syntax, and vocabulary mistakes suggest that students are not fully internalising the language rules and are struggling to apply them correctly in their writing; this affects their ability to produce coherent and grammatically correct essays and limits their ability to communicate effectively.

The findings indicate that poor writing skills and frequent errors can hinder academic performance and limit students' future opportunities, as writing is a key skill in both academic and professional settings. Addressing these errors through targeted instruction and active feedback could significantly enhance students' language proficiency and writing competence.

Analysing error types in English essays written by senior secondary school students in Akoko South-West Local Government Area reveals significant challenges across various linguistic categories. Sentence, cohesion, and syntactic errors were the most prevalent, indicating fundamental issues with constructing coherent and grammatically correct sentences. Grammatical and lexical errors were also frequent, pointing to difficulties in mastering grammar rules and selecting appropriate vocabulary. The occurrence of these errors not only hinders the clarity and effectiveness of students' writing but also reflects gaps in their overall language proficiency.

Key factors contributing to these errors include limited vocabulary, poor command of English, and neglect of teacher feedback. These challenges highlight the need for more targeted and comprehensive language instruction, particularly in sentence construction, vocabulary development, and error correction. The findings suggest that improving students' engagement with teacher feedback and encouraging active proofreading can help reduce the recurrence of these mistakes.

In conclusion, addressing the root causes of these errors through improved teaching strategies, including focused feedback and vocabulary enhancement, will be essential in raising students' language proficiency. Such efforts are crucial to improving the quality of students' writing and overall academic success.

CONCLUSIONS

This research focuses on error analysis in the English essays of senior secondary school students in Akoko South-West Local Government Area of Ondo State. Chapter One introduced the background of the study, highlighting the importance of English language proficiency for academic success and the persistent challenges Nigerian students face, particularly in writing. The chapter also outlined the study's research problem, objectives, and significance.

Chapter Two reviewed relevant second-language acquisition literature, focusing on error analysis, the difference between errors and mistakes, and the theoretical framework of Interlanguage and Sociocultural theories. It examined previous studies on error patterns and their implications for language instruction, emphasising the need for targeted error correction in language teaching.

Chapter Three presented the data analysis, which involved identifying the standard errors in students' essays, such as grammatical, lexical, cohesion, and punctuation. Researchers used descriptive statistics to analyse these errors' frequency and distribution while exploring the factors contributing to their occurrence. This chapter also highlighted how these errors impede students' language proficiency and communication skills.

Finally, Chapter Four concludes the study by summarising the findings and offering recommendations for improving English language teaching and learning in Nigerian secondary schools.

The study revealed several key findings:

- 1) Sentence and cohesion errors were the most common, with sentence errors having a mean ranking of 4.25. These errors reflect students' struggle with constructing grammatically sound and coherent sentences.
- 2) Grammatical errors were still prevalent, while not as frequent as sentence or cohesion errors, with a mean score of 3.64. These errors highlight the students' poor understanding of grammar rules.
- 3) Punctuation and lexical errors also contributed significantly to students' challenges in essay writing, showing that students need more support correctly using punctuation marks and vocabulary.

4) The analysis showed that students often made errors due to limited vocabulary, poor command of English, and failure to proofread their work.

5) The study underscores the need for targeted interventions in teaching English writing skills, focusing on error correction, feedback, and practical exercises.

CONCLUSIONS

This study sheds light on the common errors that hinder senior secondary school students in Akoko South-West Local Government Area from achieving English language proficiency. The most prevalent issues, such as sentence construction errors, cohesion lapses, and punctuation mistakes, highlight the need for targeted and effective language instruction. The findings indicate that these errors are not only linguistic but are also influenced by external factors such as students' limited vocabulary, inadequate teacher feedback, and lack of proper proofreading practices.

Addressing these errors is crucial to improving students' communication ability, positively impacting their academic performance and future professional prospects. Teachers play a pivotal role in this process. Providing detailed feedback, correcting common mistakes, and actively encouraging students to engage with language through regular writing exercises will reduce the recurrence of these errors. Teaching grammar and vocabulary through real-life examples and interactive exercises will make learning more relatable and compelling.

In conclusion, improving English language proficiency requires a holistic approach that involves both the students and the teachers. Language instruction should be more practical, feedback-oriented, and focused on students' unique challenges. By adopting these strategies, schools can help students develop strong writing skills that will serve them in academia and beyond. It is essential to view errors not as failures but as learning opportunities, providing the guidance students need to reach their full potential in English language mastery.

Recommendations

- 1) **Strengthen Grammar Instruction:** Schools should allocate more time to teaching grammar, emphasising sentence construction and syntax through practical exercises.

2) Enhance Vocabulary Development: Teachers should implement vocabulary-building activities to help students expand their word bank and improve lexical choices in writing.

3) Provide Regular Feedback: Teachers must give detailed and constructive feedback on essays, focusing on common errors and providing correction strategies.

4) Promote Proofreading Practices: Students should be trained in effective proofreading techniques to help identify and correct mistakes before submission.

5) Introduce Writing Workshops: Schools should organise writing workshops focusing on error-prone areas such as cohesion, grammar, and sentence structure.

6) Use Real-Life Examples: Teachers should incorporate real-life examples and relatable con-

tent to teach grammar, punctuation, and vocabulary, making lessons more engaging.

7) Increase Writing Practice: Regular writing assignments should be given, allowing students to practice essay writing more frequently, with a focus on grammatical and syntactical accuracy.

8) Incorporate Peer Review Sessions: Schools should encourage peer review sessions where students can critique and learn from each other's writing, promoting collaborative learning.

9) Provide Teacher Training: Teachers should undergo periodic training in language teaching methods and error analysis techniques to better support students in reducing errors.

10) Adopt Technology-Aided Learning: Schools should incorporate language learning technologies, such as grammar-checking software and educational apps, to enhance students' learning experiences and reduce common writing errors.

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