ERROR ANALYSIS OF THE ESSAYS OF APPLIED SCIENCE DIPLOMA STUDENTS KADUNA STATE POLYTECHNIC

BY

MOHAMMED, ZAINAB BARAU

AUGUST 2000

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THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL
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•DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
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AUGUST 2000

DECLARATION

I hereby declare the originality of this work carried out by me in the Department of Education, Faculty of Education. Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, under the supervision of Professor I.A. Olaofe and Dr (Mrs) C. Onyewotu. The work of other researchers is duly acknowledged. No part of this thesis has previously been submitted for a degree, anywhere else.

24/9/2000

Mohammed, Zainab Barau

CERTIFICATION

This thesis entitled: Error Analysis of the Essays of Applied Science Diploma Students, Kaduna State Polytechnic, by Zainab Barau Mohammed meets the regulation governing the award of degree of Master of Education (TESL) and is approved for its contribution to knowledge and literary appreciation.

Professor I.A. Olaofe
Chairman, Supervisory committee

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Date

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Member, Supervisory Committee

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Head of Department

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Dean, Post graduate school

17/06/02
Date

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DEDICATION

This project is dedicated to my beloved parents, Alhaji M.B. Zaria and Hajiya Amina Barau, who spent a lot of their resources in making me self-reliant and disciplined.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

Thanks be to Allah, most Gracious , most Merciful for giving me the opportunity to live till this time and for the strength, knowledge and understanding in making this work a success.

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to my sponsor, Kaduna State Polytechnic Zaria, for giving me the opportunity to carry out this work.

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I am also deeply indebted to my second supervisor Dr (Mrs) C. Onyewotu, who made a significant input into this work.

I owe a depth of gratitude to my husband, Mohammed Nazif, and other members of my family for their patience, cooperation, and prayers which enabled me to complete this study.

I also wish to thank my colleagues at the Languages Department, Kaduna State Polytechnic. I also acknowledge the help of Mr Ivo Forbin of the Maths and Statistics Department, Kaduna State Polytechnic, Zaria.

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to compare the errors of diploma students across three instructional levels to see if there was any difference in the frequency of errors and in the performance of the students in written English. The study also sought to determine sources of errors made by the diploma students and to provide teaching implications. Data were collected using written samples and questionnaires. Two statistical tests: ANOVA and T-tcst were used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance.

Hypothesis one which stated that there was no significant difference in the frequency of errors committed by diploma students at the beginning, middle and end of the ECS writing programme had five sub-sections which were all retained. Hypothesis two which had two sub-sections was also retained. It sought to find out the difference in performance in written English of Diploma students across the three stages. Hypothesis three which stated that there is no significant difference in the perception of teachers and students concerning the sources of errors committed by diploma students in written English was rejected.

From the findings it was discovered that there was no significant difference in the frequency of errors and in the performance of diploma students across the three instructional stages. It was also found that a significant difference exists between the perceptions of the teachers and the students concerning sources of errors.

Implications for the teachers, students and the schools are also provided.

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ABBREVIATIONS USED IN THE STUDY

CA	Contrastive Analysis
EA	Error Analysis
ECS	English and Communication skills
ESL	English as a Second language
GL	Goal Language
IL	Interlanguage
L1	First Language
L2	Second Language
LL	Language Learning
MT	Mother Tongue
NBTE	National Board for Technical Education
NL	Native language
NP	Nigerian Pidgin
NPE	National Policy on Education
NSBE	Near Standard British English
SBE	Standard British English
SL	Source language
SLA	Second Language Acquisition
SNE	Standard Nigerian English
TESL	Teaching English as a Second Language
QE	Qualifying English
TG	Traditional Grammar

OPERATIONAL DEFINITION OF TERMS

Error Analysis: This is also referred to as the study of the learners' language. According to Corder (1973:257), EA is the attempt to describe and classify the learner's errors in linguistic terms in order to find the features of the language which are causing learning problems.

Fossilization: This refers to a state where a learner has internalised and mastered the wrong forms so much so that no amount of correction can immediately overcome them.

Global errors: These are those errors found in the overall sentence organisation, such as word order, concord, etc (Olaofe, 1996:2) which lead to complete breakdown of communication.

Goal Language: This is the target language. It is "... a non-native language taught or learned for national communication" Lado, 1964: 216. In this study, GL refers to English.

Local errors: Refer to those errors in single elements such as inflection which may not interfere significantly with the coherence of a text (Olaofe, 1995 b: 2)

Performance: Refers to the way a person uses his knowledge of a language in producing and understanding sentences (Chomsky, 1965). Performance in this study is measured by the number of errors made by the students .

Source Language: This refers to the first language, native language or mother tongue. It may be the language first acquired by the child at home.

The pre-systematic stage: This is the stage when the learner is unaware of the existence of a particular rule in the TL. His errors are random.

The systematic stage: This is the stage when learner's errors are regular and consistent. The learner is unaware of the existence of the rules to follow

The post-systematic stage: This is when the learner produces the correct forms but inconsistently (Corder, 1974:131).

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

The National Policy on Education (NPE, 1977:50) gives the aim of technical education as the provision of trained manpower in the applied sciences, technology and commerce. The National Board for Technical Education (NBTE) which is the body charged with coordinating polytechnic education stated the aims of the English and Communications Skills course (ECS) as the improvement of students' knowledge of English and communication so as to enable them carry out educational tasks in their areas of specialization with greater efficiency. The present study is primarily focussed on the writing component of the ECS course in order to determine its adequacy.

Writing is a purposeful selection and organisation of thoughts, facts, opinions and ideas. It means that students' writing should be appropriate and effective (Peters, 1985, Murphy and Snell, 1991). A high level of language proficiency is required from polytechnic students in their writing tasks. The technical student should have a good command of the English language in order to fulfil the demands of his profession and the objectives of the National Policy on Education and the National Board for Technical Education. When speaking and writing (the expressive skills), the language user should strive hard to ensure that his intended message is conveyed to the audience in a way that can be easily understood (Obanya, 1981. 3). This is especially true of the technical student who needs the necessary competence and proficiency to enable him adapt to his professional environment. He needs to know the principles of correspondence, how to write reports, disseminate technical facts and concepts (Sridhar, 1982, Brumfit, 1995).

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As noted by Adetuyibi and Ogundalusi (1984: 133) polytechnics in Nigeria should aim at training middle level technicians who would make important contributions to the social and economic development of the country. The teaching of English as a service subject should be geared towards developing the skills of creativity and understanding of the techniques and process of production.

Of particular concern to this study are the unending complaints of teachers in the polytechnic of the inability of students to express themselves clearly, succinctly and intelligibly. Teachers of other subjects often complain about the errors learners make which impair communication. English teachers are themselves baffled by the type of compositions that are produced by the students as they sometimes cannot comprehend a single sentence that the students write. This phenomenon is prevalent in all higher institutions of learning; it is not restricted to Kaduna State Polytechnic alone. When going through ESC marked examination scripts, the external moderator is faced with the same problem of comprehending the students' written work. This can be deduced from the question marks and underlined words which litter the scripts. The students themselves sometimes complain to the teachers of their inability to write good essays. Their work shows better performance in multiple choice questions than essay and report writing. In textbooks, journals, conference and seminar papers, a lot of concern is expressed about the type of writing students produce. For instance, Boadi et al. (1968: 2) write that:

> ...there is a good deal of evidence to show that present standards of English teaching in our schools are not very high. It is disturbing therefore, to read in examiners' reports on the performance of candidates in public examination constant reference to such faults as 'weak handling of sentence structure', frequent misuse of tenses', 'errors of agreement', and unidiomatic use of prepositions'.

Other writers have variously labelled the performance of students in written composition as very poor, disappointing, incomprehensible and error packed (Odejide, 1980, Olaofe, 1987, Arua, 1988). Mohammed (1995: 133) gave the high rate of failure as measured by the West African Examinations Council (WAEC) as being in the region of 70-75%. This affects technical students because many of them bring the English language problems of the secondary school into the polytechnic.

It is not only linguists that are concerned about students' inability to write well, but also literary artists. Achebe observed that students do not read they have no mastery of the language of discourse nor of the material of discourse. They do not have the linguistic equipment which is very important even in science. (National Concord, January 20th, 1985, p.1). Although, the writer did not specifically mention the polytechnic the statement can be applied to students of Kaduna State Polytechnic as well. The students do not engage in extensive reading; this affects their performance in writing because they have poverty of ideas.

Research studies have also adduced evidence to back up the claim that students do poorly in their written compositions (Ghadessy, 1976, Opata, 1984, Olaofe, 1988). Ofuokwu (1984: 75) admits that the errors found in the English of our undergraduates "generate a disbelief in the effectiveness of our educational system". Teachers in institutions of higher learning are disturbed by the low level of performance of their students in English language. Thus, this study is carried out to find out the areas of strengths and weaknesses of the students. This is necessary for in determining the remediation that is needed to make the course more effective.

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1.2 NEED FOR THE STUDY

In schools, most subjects are tested through the written medium. There is then a need for absolute intelligibility in written communication by the students so as to enable them to perform well in their subject areas. An unintelligible text that is disjointed or distorted in terms of textual organisation and arrangement of ideas can lead to total communication breakdown (Olaofe, 1995b: 5).

When the written work produced by some of the polytechnic students is analysed, the truth of the above statement is ascertained. The following extract, which serves as an example, though probably an extreme case, is a formal letter of apology that a student wrote for coming late to class:

> Last week Tuesday I come journay late this lacture.
> My absent in the class last are because I leave at
> Zaria city are because I take long tracken before
> I come to the junction when I enter the motor then
> include I drop the 2 motor before I come to the school.
> Please I hope you are very sorry to this my important
> problem. (SIC)

As can be seen, students' errors often render their written compositions more or less meaningless. There is need, therefore, for a study like this to identify these errors.

The illiterate level at which the students communicate using the English medium should legitimately be the concern of a study like this. Thus, the present study is constrained to look for a way of minimising the language errors for better communicative-effectiveness. There is also the need to show the students the gravity of their errors and to encourage them to be good writers, irrespective of their field of academic specialization. ECS teachers in the polytechnic need the study for enhanced teaching effectiveness.

Teachers of other subjects fail to emphasize the writing of good essays. Although, sometimes, they comment on the language errors of their students, little or no effort is made to minimise these errors. The teachers claim not to be interested in the language but in the points that the students give. This neglect makes the students not to attach much importance to written performance in their academic subject areas. Some of them cannot see the reason why they should waste their time learning to write good essays as long as their fellow scientists are able to decipher what they have written. Thus, there is the need for a study like this that can make teachers aware of the errors and of the importance of their students having effective and proficient writing skills.

There was also the need for a study that would identify the origin and pattern of students' errors with the aim of finding out which writing errors were most persistent, which ones had been dropped or retained after the ECS writing course. The need to find solutions to errors identified was also paramount to this study.

The writing errors of year one and two diploma students were compared to see if there had been any significant improvement in their written work after the ESC writing course given. This comparative analysis was needed in order to determine whether or not the ECS writing course had been effective in reducing or totally eliminating the frequency, persistence and gravity of errors the students produced across the two educational levels. All these were possible with error analysis (EA).

1.3 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Many people, especially lecturers, have expressed concern about the low-level of written composition of diploma students. Ideally, the polytechnic student who has gone through the ECS writing course should be able to write comprehensible essays. Techniques of composition writing such as relevance and organisation of content,

expression and mechanical accuracy should have been mastered by the students. The writing component of the English Syllabus at the polytechnic which aims at developing in students the ability to express themselves and communicate effectively using the language needed to be put to test in this study to determine its effectiveness.

When students enter the polytechnic, they are faced with the need to extend their linguistic competence to the new demands imposed upon them by the field of science and technology. They need a new language style.; language for academic purposes. Students are expected to learn to use language for new functions (Tarone and Swain, 1995: 168). But in reality, if a look is taken at the work that is produced by diploma students, a lot of errors can be detected. These errors are so serious that they impair communication. There is doubt as to whether the ECS writing course has been effective in providing students with the necessary guidance on how to be skilled writers.

Thus, the present study was intended to compare students' errors at the two educational levels to see whether there was any clear pattern to the type(s) of errors. The study also aimed at finding out whether there was any significant difference between the errors which the students produced at the beginning, during and end of the ECS writing course. The study which was expected to serve as one possible to both teachers and students of English Second Language (ESL) in Kaduna State Polytechnic, was expected to provide answers to the following research questions.

1. What was the difference in the frequency of written errors produced by the diploma students at the beginning, middle and end of the ECS writing course?
2. Was there any difference between the performance in written English of diploma students at the beginning and end, middle and end of the ECS writing course?
3. Was there any difference in the perception of teachers and students regarding sources of errors found in the students' written work?

1.4 HYPOTHESES

1. a. There is no significant difference in the frequency of structural errors committed by diploma students at the beginning, middle and end of the ECS writing course.

   b. There is no significant difference in the frequency of lexical errors committed by diploma students at the beginning and end, middle and end of the ECS writing course.

   c. There is no significant difference in the frequency of discourse errors produced by diploma students at the beginning, middle and end of the ESC writing course.

   d. There is no significant difference in the frequency of mechanical errors produced by diploma students at the beginning, middle and end of the ECS writing course.

   e. There is no significant difference in the error frequency of diploma students at the beginning, middle and end of the ECS writing programme.

2. a. There is no significance difference between the performance in written English of diploma students at the beginning and end of the ECS writing course.

   b. There is no significant difference between the performance in written English of diploma students at the middle and end of the ECS writing course.

3. There is no significant difference in the perception of teachers and students concerning the sources of errors committed by the diploma students in written English.

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1.5 PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study was largely pedagogical. It set out to:

1. collect and describe the written errors of students at the beginning, middle and end of the ECS writing course;
2. compare the written errors of the students at the beginning, middle and end of the ECS writing course in order to find out the differences between the performance in written English of diploma students;
3. determine sources of errors utilising inputs from the researcher, students and their teachers;
4. compare the written errors of the students across the three levels to find out which errors have been eliminated and which ones have persisted with the students after the teaching of the writing component of the ECS writing course; and
5. draw valuable pedagogical implications from the findings so as to bring about a positive change in the teaching of the writing component of the ECS course at the polytechnic.

1.6 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This was expected to form part of the many research studies in error analysis which aimed at improving students' written composition in particular and language teaching in general.

The significance of the study lay in the fact that it sought to collect and identify students' writing errors at the beginning (year I), middle (end of year I) and end (end of year II) of the ECS course. This was done in order to be able to compare these errors for the purpose of finding out whether the writing component of the ECS course had any impact on the quality of the written work produced by the students. The study was also

significant because it was expected to reveal through empirical investigation what the students had learned, re-learned-or unlearned during the ECS writing programme.

The information gathered from this error analysis was expected to:

1. increase knowledge of language learning process and language teaching procedures and techniques;
2. tell students and teachers the progress that had been made, areas of teaching and learning difficulties related to the writing component of the ECS course;
3. suggest to the teachers ways to improve the techniques being used in teaching writing to students of science and technology; and
4. make the teacher an effective teacher of English and the student a successful language learner of English.

It was hoped that the study would be of great interest and use to the Kaduna State Polytechnic and other similar institutions in planning a workable and efficient method of teaching the writing component of the ECS course. It was also expected to suggest problem areas in writing, areas of teaching emphasis as well as how the writing course can be sequenced and graded based on frequency of occurrence of errors.

Another significance of the study lay in the expectation that the findings might lead to a review of the ECS writing syllabus currently in operation at the polytechnic level for enhanced teaching effectiveness. The review could be in areas of teaching-learning difficulties identified, areas where greater emphasis was needed and where efforts were being unnecessarily dissipated at the expenses of high priority writing and problematic areas. At the end of the study, suggestions were to be provided for strengthening the writing component of the NBTE English syllabus.

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1.7 BASIC ASSUMPTIONS

Generally, it is assumed that the learner of a second language (L2) will have difficulty in mastering the techniques of writing. The source language (SL) may or may not be the dominant reason for this learning difficulty. This study was thus based on the basic assumptions stated below:

1. A student's mother-tongue may intrude into his use of the L2, such as the written material he/she produces.
2. Errors of English are clear evidence that learning is taking place (Corder, 1981: 11 and 25). They tell the teacher what progress the students are making and the areas where help is needed so that remedial teaching can be provided.
3. Errors are indispensable to the students and are devices which they use to learn. They provide a learner with a means of testing his/her hypotheses about the nature of the language he/she is learning (Corder, 1981:11).
4. The frequency, persistence and gravity of errors are equal to the degree of learning difficulty. That is, the more difficult students find in learning English, the more errors they will make.
5. Error variations are perceptible across educational levels. That is, the errors students make in year I are expected to be different from the ones that will occur in year II.
6. A learner's attitude towards the English language has a part to play in the error making process. A positive attitude will facilitate learning, while a negative attitude will not (Williams, 1990: 343).

1.8 SCOPE AND DELIMITATION OF THE STUDY

It was not the concern of this study to contrast the systems of English with those of the learner's native languages. The study was concerned with the classification and

explanation of errors found in the written compositions of a selected sample of students in Kaduna State Polytechnic. This was because the teacher in the polytechnic could benefit more from an explanation of the errors than from a mere contrast and prediction of likely problem areas, which he might never have observed.

For an effective investigation, the study is limited to the School of Applied Science, Kaduna State Polytechnic, Zaria, which was considered representative of the population because its students have the same entry qualification with other students and also use the same syllabus. If the scope of the research had not been limited it would have been difficult to do a thorough analysis as the data would be too much to be handled efficiently within the time at the researcher's disposal.

The research focussed only on the written component because writing virtually encompasses the four skills of reading, speaking, listening and writing. Reading is related to writing because reading extensively aids students in their written work by increasing their vocabulary. Listening and speaking are also related to writing because they are part of the communication skills which could aid in developing efficient writing skills.

Since the writing syllabus was the same in all the schools of Kaduna State Polytechnic, it was hoped that the findings of this study would open new avenues of improvement in the teaching of the writing component of the ECS course there and elsewhere since all polytechnics use the same NBTE writing syllabus.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.0 INTRODUCTION

This chapter reviewed the related literature in the areas of the concept of error analysis, errors and mistakes, error analysis and inter language. Language learning and teaching, contrastive analysis, sources of errors and models of error analysis were also looked at. The review included the effect of extensive reading on writing, standard norm and studies of errors in written English.

2.1 THE CONCEPT OF ERROR ANALYSIS

Errors are an inevitable part of the language learning process. An error is described as the flawed side of learner speech or writing and as a specific deviation from a described English feature (Halliday et. al., 1964: 19, Dulay et. al., 1982: 138). Broughton et. al., (1978: 138) are of the opinion that a learner must make errors as an unavoidable and necessary part of the learning process. This position is shared by Burt and Dulay (1974: 135), Brown (1980: 164) and Opata (1984: 72). Errors in language learning are no longer regarded as negative and unwanted signs, but rather as a positive source of information regarding the state of the learner's target language. Corder (1973: 257) believes that from a study of a learner's errors:

> We are able to infer the nature of his knowledge at that point in his learning career and discover what he still has to learn. By describing and classifying his errors in linguistic terms, we build up a picture of the features of the language which are causing him learning problems.

Previously, errors were considered as unnecessary and undesirable. However, in recent decades, specifically since Selinker (1972), researchers have shown that a learner

may produce errors while stretching himself to explore new areas and test fresh hypotheses. A learner who does not make errors might be confining himself to areas already mastered (Corder, 1974: 125, 1981: 11 and Noth, 1979: 62). Okamura (1995: 29) agrees that researchers have come to judge the occurrence of learners' errors as a stage of language learning process rather than an unacceptable behaviour to be corrected as soon as possible. But some errors are so embarrassing that they should be corrected on the spot.

From aposteriori or weak hypothesis contrastive analysis point of view (Prajapati, 1985: 95, - Headbloom, 1979: 27), error analysis is concerned with the errors that students make while trying to produce utterances in the target language. It is this language that Selinker (1972) referred to as interlanguage, Corder (1973) as transitional competence or idiosyncratic dialect and Nemser (1974) and Athialy (1980) as an approximative system. A learner's interlanguage may change as he progresses further in the target language. This assertion is sometimes not true because some learners may make the same errors or even new ones as they advance further in the L2. Research has shown that, in some cases, students who have undergone courses in ESL still make the same errors as they did before the course (Ahmed, 1988).

Some people claim that EA presupposes a similarity between first language (L1) acquisition process and L2 learning. An analysis of errors is concerned with, among other things, "discovering the degree to which the learner expresses his message by means of the categories and rules which the native speaker of the target language uses" (Corder, 1981: 30). This point is of relevance to this study because it seeks to investigate the written errors of students at a polytechnic who are learning ESL, to find out the deviation between the standard norm and the students' interlanguage (IL). The study desires to establish the system of language which the students use and at what stage of the language learning process they are. While the study acknowledges the above claim of similarity

of acquisition between L1 and L2, it does not wholly agree with it. This is because, sometimes, L1 acquisition is not similar with L2 learning due to differences in environment, motivation and strategies of acquisition.

2.2 ERRORS AND MISTAKES

It is important at this stage to distinguish between errors and mistakes. Both native speakers and learners of language make mistakes. A mistake which can be identified and corrected by the speaker is random and unsystematic; it may be as a result of memory lapse, brain fatigue, emotional upset, slip of the pen, carelessness, false start or stress (Corder, 1974: 123, Omojuwa, 1979: 176). Errors, on the other hand, arise from lack of linguistic competence in the target language. They are a noticeable deviation from the adult grammar, lexis and discourse patterns of a native language, reflecting the interlanguage competence of the learner (Brown, 1980: 165). Errors, unlike mistakes, occur systematically and consistently when a learner is trying to use the target language. According to Corder (1981: 67), errors may originate from little or no effort on the part of the learner at the mastery of the target language or inadequate explanation of the target language forms and insufficient practice activities. They may also be as a result of interference from the source language. Learners who make errors are usually unable to correct them and more often than not make more errors in an attempt to correct previous ones. Errors, therefore, have to do with insufficient or complete lack of the knowledge or partial mastery of the language system which involves syntax, phonology, morphology and discourse.

This study looked at only student errors because mistakes are random. Errors can be differentiated from mistakes because the data consist of cumulative written samples collected from the students which were written in a relaxed not fatigued situation.

Samples from such cumulative stock are able to weed out the mistakes from the errors. The errors tend to persist while the mistakes generally diminish.

2.3 ERROR ANALYSIS AND INTERLANGUAGE

Errors or "breaches of the code" are evidence of a system, not the system of the target language but of some other language (Corder, 1973: 268) which is the learner's inter-language (IL). Not all deviations of the target language are errors. IL deviations are acceptable if they follow the rules of the norm. When the deviations flout the rules and are perceptible in the students' IL and communication is impaired, they become errors.

Once a learner feels that he has a sufficient command of the target language that he needs to communicate with, he normally ceases to develop his IL grammar (Selinker and Lamendella, 1978, Major, 1988). This is especially true of the polytechnic student. As has been observed by lecturers and external moderators, the students keep on making errors year in year out. Hence the need for this study, which aims at looking at those errors to determine their sources and the way they can be minimised for better communication. The learner's IL then depends on the knowledge of the language he has already mastered. It is, therefore , the IL of the students that provides the material for the error analysis being presented in the study.

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2.4 THE SIGNIFICANCE OF LEARNERS' ERRORS

Error analysis is significant in three ways. For the learners, it is psychologically important to put forward to them their errors, not as a sign of failure but as a positive source of improvement. This is so because errors are a device which the learner uses to learn. They provide him with a means of testing his hypothesis about the nature of the

language he is learning. This is a strategy adopted by both children learning their MT and by those acquiring L1 (Corder, 1981: 11). The errors that the students make in their written work are evidence that they are extending previous knowledge to form new utterances. In this study, topics were given to the students without guidelines. This was to ensure that errors which the essays produced are evidence that they were constructing rules of their own.

EA shows a teacher areas where his teaching may not have been effective. It serves to evaluate and provide feedback on the quality of teaching techniques and materials (Etherton, 1977: 69). A good EA will tell the teacher the state of the learners' IL, that is, whether pre-systematic, systematic or post-systematic and areas where help or remedial teaching is needed. Thus, with the feedback received from EA, a classroom teacher can either go ahead or revise his work
(Aborisade, 1993: 138). He can plan appropriate teaching strategies to combat the errors identified and make way for meaningful academic pursuits through an enhanced written English.

Thus, by analysing the errors of diploma students this study hoped to provide useful suggestions to the ECS teacher. And by identifying the types, frequency and sources of the students' errors, the study was expected to throw open areas where students were having the greatest problems and where help was most needed. The study was also expected to be seen as a way of providing an evaluation of the effectiveness of teaching materials and techniques.

Errors are significant to the researcher. They are used to either confirm or disprove the notion of transfer that has been put across by earlier studies (Corder, 1973: 226). The researcher can use the errors made by the students to identify their sources. EA may also help the researcher to verify language acquisition and language learning theories. This is so because some people claim that EA presupposes a similarity between

L1 acquisition process and L2 learning. While the above claim might be true, it should be acknowledged that there may be a dissimilarity interms of motivation and sequencing between L1 acquisition and L2 learning. The study, by looking at sources of errors, is expected to verify or disprove the notion of transfer as being an important criterion for the occurrence of errors.

2.5 CONTRASTIVE LINGUISTIC ANALYSIS (CLA) AND ERROR ANALYSIS

CLA is based upon the audio-lingual theory of language acquisition which perceives errors as arising from the negative transfer of the source language to the goal language (Di Pietro, 1976: 15). CLA presupposes a universality for all languages and tries to predict by comparing the system and forms of the two languages involved, the likely errors that the leaners might make and possible problem areas that they will encounter. A contrastive analysis (CA) shows a learner the similarities and differences between his L1 and the target language and helps the teacher in planning his lessons and selecting the best teaching materials and methods.

Lado (1957:2) assumed that a student will find elements of the target language that are similar to his native language simple and those that are different will be difficult. This influenced the arrangement of instructional materials in hierarchies of difficulty with the features that are different is the most difficult, while the features that are similar less problematic. Stockwell and Bowen (1965) suggested eight levels based upon this notion. The most difficult from the learner's point of view being the situation in which the target language has an obligatory choice, and there is null in the native language, while the least difficult, the situation of obligatory choices in both languages. (Stockwell and Bowen, 1965: 10).

Error analysis arose out of the limitations of CLA. Proponents of EA protest

against the predictive ability of CLA. They do not believe that the majority of L2 learners' errors can be attributed to MT interference and ascribe not much importance to the comparison of the systems of the native language (NL) and the target language (TL). They would rather see the learner as possessing his own language with its own distinctive system. Ghadessy (1976) stated that EA "is an important criterion in the preparation of teaching materials". And Etherton (1977:68) said EA is "the only practical way a conscientious teacher can find out which words or usages confuse his students". Advocates of EA, including this researcher, believe that it is the most effective method that can point out sources of errors. Thus, this study is using EA to identify students' errors and their sources.

The extreme view point held by proponents of CLA and EA have led to a great controversy as to which of them is more beneficial to language teachers and course designers. Advocates of CA claim that EA is artificial and misleading and are sceptical about the assumptions, methodology and reliability of EA (Olaofe, 1982:16). There is also the fear that the teacher will focus more on error identification to the detriment of recognising the correct utterances produced by the learners. Sometimes, absence of errors in a student's composition is no cause for rejoicing because it might be that the student is avoiding those structures that he is not quite familiar with. EA fails to account for these error avoidance strategies of the L2 learner. There is the overstressing of production data (like writing) to the detriment of comprehension data, this is because production lends itself to analysis (Brown, 1980: 166). Critics of EA also point out that there is the problem of determining underlying causes of errors. One cannot say with precision the root causes of errors due to the limited interaction between the analyst and the students when these errors are made.

Proponents of EA claim that CA takes too long to conduct and yields poor results; that it predicts problems that are not likely to arise in the classroom situation and that

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the differences pointed out by CA are based mainly on similar surface structures. And that how the same structures can have two different realisations has not been dealt with by CA (Oller, 1972: 95., Headbloom, 1979: 28, Ghadessy, 1980: 98) CLA also, only looks *for errors which can be attributed to the MT of the speakers* (Tarone, *1988: 18*). They ignored other likely sources of errors such as the structure of the target language itself, the teacher, the teaching strategies and method induced errors. Also as Corder (1973: 230) points out "...there is evidence that something totally new or different may prove easier to master than something which is slightly different". He gave an example of where a very similar sound exists in two languages but in different phonetic environments. This may cause a greater learning problem than in the case of a totally new sound.

However, this controversy between CA and EA can be easily resolved by recognising the role each plays in practical application of the learner's errors. Although different, they are similar in that both are concerned with the process of learning a L2. The main difference is that while CA deals with points of contrast between the MT and the TL, EA deals with errors in general (James, 1980: 87).

The strong hypothesis of CLA is not pertinent to this research. This is because the classroom teacher has no use for the predictions that emerge as a result of contrasting two linguistic systems. While the identified areas of occurrence of errors may assist the teacher in planning his lessons, he is more concerned with the errors (that is, how to correct and eradicate them). Since this research is aimed at providing pedagogical implications, it would be more beneficial to use EA. The sample population have got different MTs and thus it is desirable to do an EA without a recourse to the learners' first languages, except where the MT is found to have influenced the production of the errors. EA concentrates on the whole learner's system instead of just areas of interference. This is the reason why despite its apparent shortcomings, EA is being used

in this study. It is important to consider other sources of errors besides the MT. With an identification of sources of errors, error correction strategies can be created by the teacher. EA is also more realistic; the L2 teacher can conduct it. It is a classroom procedure which could easily be used to detect learners' problematic areas. As a pedagogical tool, EA provides the teachers and the learners with immediate feedback on how much learning has taken place and areas where concentration is needed. When EA is conducted across different proficiency levels, as will be done in this study, it may identify errors that are peculiar to a particular level, possibly show which errors have been dropped or retained and also show the effectiveness of the instruction given to the learner at that level.

2.6 SOURCES OF ERRORS

Errors may occur due to a number of reasons. The major ones include interlingual transfer (or interference), intra lingual transfer, developmental, learning stage, teacher, learner and method-induced errors. Evidence from EA has shown that a learner of a L2 displays certain traits or characteristics of his MT and any other language he possesses however imperfectly mastered (Corder, 1981: 85). Interlingual errors are attributed to negative transfer and may occur when the L2 learner imports elements of his L1, of which he has a better command into his attempt to produce acceptable utterances in the language and may be caused by over generalisation, faulty application of rules and failure by the learner to learn conditions under which rules apply (Richards, 1971).

Development errors occur when the learner is trying to formulate hypotheses about the language he is learning from his limited experience or exposure to the TL. The teacher by not presenting his lesson well or by not giving learners enough explanation

may cause them to make errors, while learners themselves by inattention, careless, partial or wrong application of rules may cause errors. Selecting the wrong method or approach to Language teaching can be a source of errors. Teachers themselves may indiscriminately distribute errors to students through their incompetence in the language. What Corder (1981: 103) calls "strategies of communication" can also cause errors. This is a certain class of errors made by a learner as a result of his attempts to express himself in spontaneous speech with an inadequate grasp of the TL system.

The determination of sources of errors has not been an easy task. The little or limited interaction between the producer of the errors and the researcher at the point of error production makes the reading of the mind (of the student) difficult. Thus, sources often recorded by analysts are largely conjectural. The list of sources of errors reviewed is not exhaustive. There may be sources of errors peculiar to a particular group of students.

In this study, the students and teachers are involved in determining the sources of errors because it is the researcher's belief that students should be allowed to have an input, no matter how rudimentary or incomplete, in designing error correction strategies and planning or changing the course (Hutchinson and Waters, 1984: 11 and Celce-Murcia, 1985). Studies have shown that learners should be seen as joint partners in search of knowledge and in the preparation of materials (Olaofe, 1984: 3, 1988: 29 and Williams, 1990: 288).

A lot of people shy away from this approach because they believe that the identification of sources of errors is too difficult a task for the L2 learner who may have difficulty comprehending the technical terms involved. In the present study, these terms have been simplified and the sources of errors identified by the students are compared

with those of the lecturers. This is not a fool proof method nor is there a right or wrong answer it is just supposed to give an estimate of the sources (of errors) students feel are responsible for the errors they make.

2.7 ERROR ANALYSIS, LANGUAGE LEARNING AND TEACHING

Error analysis attempts to shed light on the process of language learning (LL). It has been agreed that learners of a given language tend to make similar errors and that L2 learning is similar to L1 acquisition (Burt and Dulay, 1974: 130, Corder, 1979:79, 1980:8). But although the similarity exists in the strategies of acquisition, the circumstances or sequence may be different. Krashen (1981) and Krashen and Terrel (1983) feel that while L1 acquisition is done spontaneously in a free environment, L2 learning takes place in the classroom or any other formal instructional situation. It has, therefore, been suggested by error analysts that ESL programmes should be more closely related to the natural process of L1 acquisition.

Long (1983) feels that instructed learners learn more rapidly and achieve higher levels of proficiency than uninstructed learners. Thus, the ESL teacher can use EA which is a classroom procedure to find out the effects of the instruction provided to the students and prove the success of the language learning process.

The language teacher should build upon the L2 learner's existing knowledge, which is the system of his L1, by using L1 processes in determining the sort of transition that the learner makes. It has been proved (Graves, 1985: 57) that children who write extensively in a L1, will have a much easier time writing in a L2.

Motivation and feedback are important in LI, especially at the tertiary level where there is what Long (1983: 158) refers to as one way interaction. Here, there is little feedback from the students to help the teachers tune their in-puts. EA will serve as a

feedback to the teachers. More motivation is provided to the learners by the polytechnic teacher by updating and revising his teaching techniques and by better planning and execution of language learning activities.

For L2 learning to be effective and meaningful, the teacher must recognise learners' errors and be able to put them right. It may not be possible to eradicate all errors, especially those that have been fossilized, yet a lot can be done to improve performance. Thus, the significance of this study, which seeks to point out multi variant tertiary level students' errors, their sources, frequency of occurrence and implications for the teaching of the writing component of the ECS course at the polytechnic.

2.8 MODELS OF ERROR ANALYSIS

Error analysis is basically a comparative process. It involves comparing what the learner has produced with what obtains in the TL. There are many descriptive and analytical models that can be used in EA.

2.8.1 DESCRIPTIVE MODELS

The grammatical descriptive models which can be used in EA include: traditional grammar, structural, IC analysis transformational generative, sector analysis and pedagogic grammar among others. In traditional grammar, words and sentences were defined semantically (in terms of their meaning) rather than structurally (in terms of their forms). Traditional grammarians prescribed rules based upon standards of absolute correctness and eight parts of speech were identified. Primacy was given to writing rather than speech, and learners were given little or no practice of pronunciation (Williams, 1990: 31 and Woods 1995: 7).

Critics of this model claim that while some of the traditional definitions and rules are true or at least partly true, most of them are misleading and false (Allen, 1972: 2). In setting standards of correctness, they overlooked the fact that what was correct in one context or situation may not be correct in another. These grammarians also did not give a description of language as it was actually used, rather they relied more on written literary works as models of language use. Traditional grammar succeeded in providing a broad grammatical system which is still used in most books and has aided the learning of MTs and English. This grammatical model was not used in this study. Although, written samples were used it is due to the fact that most of the work the subjects in this study do is expressed and tested through the written medium.

The weaknesses inherent in traditional grammar led to the development of new techniques for analysing languages which stated that language should be described objectively and scientifically on the basis of its structure. This included a classification of the different kinds of words and constructions and also a classification of the smallest unit of sound - the phoneme (Allen, 1972: 70). The spoken word was considered to be more important than the written one. Structuralists such as Fries (1952) and Trager and Smith (1951) rejected traditional grammarians suggestions of the existence of grammatical universals and proposed that all use of meaning which cannot be objectively tested be excluded from linguistic analysis. A shortcoming of the early structuralists is that they were more interested in words than constructions. Due to the primacy accorded speech by the structuralists, they offer very little for any satisfactory analysis of written English. This is why this model was not used in this study.

The Immediate Constituent analysis (IC) (Francis, 1958) was also part of the structuralist model. It was based upon the discovery of the ultimate constituent of a

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sentence and how some morphemes(which form a sentence) become attached to other morphemes in a sentence. It assumed that all English constructions can be divided into two (binary) units or constituents that operate on the same layer of structure as part of the next larger unit (Allen, 1972: 101). IC analysis did not only prescribe, define and label items but also showed the relationship of sentences as being constructions rather than isolated things. This analysis can be used to remove the ambiguity in a construction. IC analysis was not used in this study because it does not go beyond the sentence layer. There are also arbitrary rules for cutting constructions which may lead to cross-cutting as not all English constructions are binary. This may cause a problem in using IC analysis in EA.

Tagmemic grammar, (Pike, 1958, Cook, 1969) was also an off-shoot of the structuralist model. It was of the view that the basic unit of grammar was the correlation of a grammatical function or slot with the list of mutually substitutable items that fill that slot (Allen, 1972: 124). For instance, a sentence might contain two noun phrases, where one is the subject and the other the object of the verb. They have the same form but different functions. It would be insufficient to analyse either unit interms of it form and ignore the function. Tagmemic analysis was also designed to provide an analyst with discovery procedures for identifying grammatical units in previously unknown languages (Allen, 1972 : 131). The tagmemists made no allowance for positions that are vacant by not realising that there are obligatory and optional tagmemes and that the ones that are optional may not be used in a construction. This approach is also good for teaching reading rather than writing.

Transformational generative grammar (Chomsky, 1965) looked at syntax, phonology and semantics. Generative grammar was concerned with the universal

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characteristics of all languages and looked at the surface and deep structures of languages. Transformational rules were developed to look at meaning that is embedded in sentences. A limitation of this model is that word boundaries were not given and their was no rationale for choosing constituent boundaries (Allen, 1972 :120). Also only good writers can make use of transformed sentences. A poor writer (like the subjects of this study) would find it difficult to use these sentences.

Sector analysis went beyond the sentence layer to the paragraph and other higher layers. It was essentially tagmemic in approach. Primary emphasis was placed upon the different kinds of positions that are to be found in sentences on different layers and upon the different kinds of units that may occupy one or another of those positions (Allen 1972: 164). It used a reductive approach (from paragraph down to the morphological level) which can be used in a classroom because it starts from the known to the unknown. In sector analysis, emphasis was placed on constructions rather than single words. It is therefore, good for teaching writing and helps in the overall planning of essays.

A limitation of sector analysis is that the meaning potential inherent in language has not been considered. Meaningless sentences can be analysed using this model. This is the reason why it was not used in this study. Since sector analysis can analyse student's erroneous sentences as well as the correct ones, it is more appropriate to use this grammatical model in CA rather than EA. This study was not aimed at finding which positions are filled or unfilled in writing but sought to find out the students' errors and their sources.

Functional systemic grammar aims to make clear the interaction between syntax, semantics and pragmatics (Halliday, 1985: 30). It looked at the syntactic- semantic relationship in a sentence. Halliday's grammatical model focused more on discourse at

the expense of grammar.

A descriptive model for discourse analysis was provided by Halliday and Hasan (1976). In discourse analysis, it was believed that there are many phenomena in language which cannot be accurately described without reference to context. It considers anything that goes beyond the sentence as discourse. Halliday and Hasan (1976) defined cohesive relations in discourse as relations between two or more elements in a text that are independent of the structure. Five kinds of cohesive relations were given that can exist in a text. These are reference, substitution, ellipses, lexical cohesion and conjunctions. By providing a model for the analysis of cohesion, Halliday and Hasan (1976) have gone beyond form to function which is what the present study also strived at. For ESL writer, it is more important that discourse strategies be mastered as this will enable him/her to see writing as a process.

A communicative model for assessing L2 performance was developed by Olaofe (1992) to account for why L2 learners who have a good command of the structure of a language cannot communicate effectively; while others are able to communicate but do not understand the structure of the language. In order to have an accurate assessment of a L2 learner's performance emphasis must not only be on linguistic competence but also on communicative competence. He provided some parameters for assessing communicative competence at various hierarchical layers and gave two types of rating scales for measuring the performance of the learners. This makes it possible for the researcher or teacher to gain an overall impression of the performance of one student in relation to the other (Olaofe, 1992: 125). This model provides for an analysis that goes beyond the sentence. Olaofe (1992) will not be used in this study because it looked at both speech and writing. The present study is using only written samples.

The grammatical model used in this study was pedagogic grammar, which is a

collection of materials extracted from one or more scientific grammars such as structural and transformational grammar. Pedagogic grammar was used as a basis for language teaching and provided a comparatively informal framework of definitions, exercise and rules that may help a learner to acquire knowledge of a language and fluency in its use (Allen 1974: 60). It lends itself to easy pedagogic use. The grammatical model used in the study was one that could be applied successfully by the classroom teacher. A University Grammar of English, Quirk and Greenbaum (1976) has used pedagogic grammar to describe the grammatical structure of English. The book discussed elements of grammar such as the verb, and verb phrase, nouns and noun phrase, adjectives, adverbs, prepositions, prepositional phrase, adjuncts, disjunct and conjuncts among others. Quirk and Greenbaum (1976) have moved beyond mere labelling of words as either nouns, verbs or adjectives. They have noun phrases, verb phrases to take care of those words that are much more than just a noun or a verb. The terms used by Quirk and Greenbaum (1976) were adopted in this study. But the present study went beyond grammar to discourse using Halliday and Hasan's (1976) model.

2.8.2 ANALYTICAL MODELS

Various researchers have adopted models for error analysis. Notable among these was Corder (1974;126) who gave three stages for the analysis of errors. The first stage is what he refers to as recognition. This is where the analyst tries to make an accurate or correct interpretation of the learner's intended meaning in the context with the ultimate aim of arriving at an authoritative interpretation. Where the learner can not be consulted, it is then left for the analyst to attempt a plausible interpretation and reconstruction of the message that the writer intended to convey. Corders' second stage is that of the linguistic description of errors. It is here that the original sentence is compared with the reconstructed version. The last stage is the explanation of error. This

stage enters into the realm of psycholinguistics. It gives the why and how of errors. These three stages were noted but were not used in detail in this study. This is due to the fact that in a in a situation where the learners have different MTs (like the one in this study), authoritative reinterpretation of the learners' utterances as suggested by Corder (1974) is not possible. Corder's last two stages were however incorporated into the synthetic model used. Etherton (1977: 73) also gave two steps to guide the classroom teacher in making an EA. The first was copying the errors exactly as the learners made them in an exercise book or on cards. The next step is to identify the errors and classify them using appropriate headings and descriptive-linguistic model.

The method provided by Omojuwa (1979: 77) is similar to that of Corder (1974). First, the errors were identified by marking the students' written work and underling the erroneous items. The next stage is error classification. This is done either linguistically (what area of language does the error belong: tense, concord, spelling etc..) or psycholinguistically (in terms of at what stage in the process of language learning the error has occurred). The last step according to Omojuwa (1979) is explanation i.e. their causes and finally, the writer provided strategies for error elimination (P:180).

A note of caution is sounded by Abbot (1980: 118) that whatever procedure is adopted for the EA, its result should be "verifiable" by other scholars using the same method. A good error analysis should be objective and make provision for the inevitable cases of doubt.

A synthetic model used in this study was developed by the researcher from the models reviewed. The model had three steps:

1. Identification: The errors were identified and copied in an exercise book.
2. Classification: The errors were classified according to types using the selected descriptive model.

3. Explanation: An explanation of the errors identified was given.

2.9 WRITING COMPONENT OF ENGLISH

Writing is an integral part of any language and plays a crucial role in the educational system. It is very important to the human race because people use writing to communicate. It is a powerful mode for language learning (Obanya, 1981: 48 and Raimes, 1987: 36). The polytechnic student has to be proficient in writing because he needs to be able to explain procedures, processes and write technical reports (Adedeji, 1984: 187, Olaofe, 1994: 39). It is because of the importance of writing that a uniform syllabus was provided for the ECS writing course (NBTE, 1990).

The writing skills to be taught in the first semester of ND I are note taking and making, paragraph and essay writing. The syllabus has been broken into smaller units which include:

1. the concept, steps and techniques of summary writing and note-taking;
2. identification of Kernel or topic sentences in a given paragraph;
3. identifying the main features of an essay;
4. identifying different types of essays; and
5. writing meaningful and coherent essays on given topics.

In the second semester, the students are to be taught:

1. the essential elements of correspondence;
2. writing good letters (formal and informal);
3. business correspondence; and
4. different types of reports (NBTE, 1990: 6 - 9).

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In ND II, advanced essay writing and summary are taught. The students are expected to:

1. write good essays based on a comprehensive outline;
2. write within a specified length, a good summary of a given passage in science and/or technology;
3. use various styles in report and letter writing; and
4. write articles on current and topical issues for publication in newspapers and magazines (NBTE 1990: 10-13).

The syllabus has not provided for the specific needs of the technical students. Also, there is a lot of repetition. What was done in ND I is repeated in ND II. This study carried out an EA of students' written work which was based on the NBTE syllabus. From the findings it would be ascertained whether the syllabus was yielding the desired result or not and therefore, it needed to be reviewed.

2.10 PROCESS-PRODUCT APPROACH TO WRITING

It is the current trend to see writing as a process rather than a product kind of activity. The concern is with the stages a writer passes through when writing rather than the written product (Applebee, 1986:96 and Olaofe, 2000:5).

Proponents of this approach advocate a workshop like environment for the ESL writing class where writing is seen as a creative process. The teacher serves as a guide by helping the students find topics, generate ideas, plan, structure, draft, re-draft and edit composition (Silva, 1990:5). The students are encouraged to write several drafts before the final one. They guide their own creative process (Johns, 1990:26).

Creativity is central to the process-product approach. It is believed that a system

which has not prepared students for creativity has not taught them how to write. Researchers (Diaz, 1986 and Urzua, 1987) have proved that from a process oriented teaching, students acquire a sense of audience, voice and a sense of power in language.

Other variables in writing apart from the approach include the skill of the students and time spent on composing the paper. The more skilled a writer and the more time spent on composition-both in and outside the classroom, the better the finished product.

In an ESL situation , like the one in this study, the process approach would be useful in teaching writing. A limitation of using this approach is that the students have an insufficient command of the English language and the time provided for teaching English is too small for any meaningful learning to take place. Also the process-product approach is not feasible with large groups such as is found in the polytechnic. The study is concerned that the teaching of writing in the polytechnic is product oriented. A process approach might have produced less errors. This research is concerned with the psychological process involving error production, (generalisation, fossilisation etc.) rather than the process of writing.

2.11 EFFECT OF EXTENSIVE READING ON WRITING

Reading is a preparation for writing and it involves the deciphering of written symbols. Extensive reading consists mainly of reading supplementary readers, novels, magazines, journals and newspapers (Davies and Widdowson, 1974: 182, Durojaiye, 1978: 14 and Obanya, 1981: 43).

Reading extensively exposes students to a wide range of current and topical issues which would aid them in their written compositions. According to Olaofe (1995b; 24)

extensive reading helps students to posses " a good storage of lexical items, prope mastery of the various syntactic forms of English, sentence and discourse organisation systematic thought patterns, punctuation, spelling and handwriting". These skills ar very important in making students' writing to be comprehensible.

A lot of studies have been carried out on reading problems and poor readin habits of tertiary level students. Some of these include Majasan and Bakare (1974), Unol (1975) and James (1980). It has been proved that these students do not read extensivel do not consult journals and research extracts where current information can b obtained (Olaofe, 1989). Because of this deficiency most of them are "shallow thinkers half-baked intellectuals, partially or completely uninformed individuals who cannot writ well" (Olaofe, 1988, 26). The writing of students in the polytechnic will be greatl enhanced if they engage in extensive reading. It will help them to learn new words an expressions which will increase the quality of the essays they write.

2.12 STANDARD NORM

Language is about communication, incorrect language hampers that proces Palmer (1971: 14) sees correctness in language use as being a question of what is accepte in society. Standard English is associated with the ideal of the language as produced b the proficient and educated users of English. It relates specifically to the vocabular phonology and grammatical forms of the language (Wikinson, 1995: 33). For the speake of ESL, standard implies conformity with a model based upon widespread use of th language in formal education and the mass media. The genesis for such a model aros from pedagogical, attitudinal and societal reasons (Kachru, 1986: 84). All departur from such a given standard model are ultimately errors.

The issue of what model of English to be used to determine correctness is a recurrent question in ELT. A number of scholars (Akere, 1982, Odumuh, 1984, Adekunle, 1995, Banjo, 1995) have advocated using Standard Nigerian English (SNE) as a model. The present model will not accept SNE as a yardstick for determining errors because there is no accepted SNE (only proposals) and some aspects of Nigerian English are substandard. For example "go-slow", for traffic jam) and 'I' m coming' (in response to a call, when the speaker is going somewhere else). There is also the problem of mutual intelligibility both nationally and internationally. As Bamgbose (1995: 26) puts it, there is a reluctance to accept SNE in teaching and examinations. Also there is lack of a standard reference work to turn to for what constitutes correct usage and what does not.

Nigerian pidgin (NP) has its advocates who feel that it is ethnically neutral, a national language and in some areas has acquired the status of a MT (Elugbe, 1995: 291; Jibril, 1995: 234). Although, the present research recognises these varieties of English, it will not use them as the norm because they do not conform with international intelligibility rules. NP is also insufficiently developed; its vocabulary is limited and it has low prestige level and negative connotations (Jowitt, 1995: 42). In any case, it is largely a spoken medium rather than the written one with which this study was concerned.

Standard British English (SBE) possesses a comprehensive codification of its features and so serves as the principal model for other varieties (Kujore, 1995: 369). The existence of this model makes it possible to plan courses of instruction in ESL (Boadi et al. 1968: 44). However, as Quirk (1968: 99) puts it, the image of a standard varies to some degree along with the limits of the wider community in SBE. This model is restricted to educated users and is standard in writing rather than in speech. No ESL speaker can attain SBE.

Since there is no agreement as to the most ideal standard in an ESL environment, this study will adopt the Near Standard British English model. Morphological and

Burt and Dulay (1974) who used spoken utterances.

In 1976, a pilot study was carried out by Ghadessy (1976) on the writing errors of Iranian Freshman students learning English. He collected twenty-five written assignments from a population of three hundred and seventy students. The errors were divided into local and global. Ghadessy (1976) found out that developmental errors constituted a large majority of the errors recorded and concluded from the findings that EA is an important criterion for the preparation of teaching materials. Just as done in the present study, the sample was drawn from students who had different MTs, same entry qualification and were learning ESL. Ghadessy's sample is too small when compared to the population.

A study was carried out in The Cameroons by Tenjoh - Okwen (1980) on the negative influence of some French writing habits on the acquisition of English. He sought to find out the types of graphical interference (if any) and to verify Lado's (1957) claim of similar structures being easy to learn and different ones difficult. One hundred and forty written compositions were collected from first cycle secondary students and sixty from the second. Forty-four percent of the errors were due to interference, thereby giving credence to the interference theory and that a rigorous CA would have predicted some of the errors. He opined that Lado's claim ought to have included the fact that partial similarity was both problematic and a source of interference. The present study differs from Tenjoh - Okwen's in terms of the subjects. He had used secondary school students while this was based on polytechnic students. Also, the present study sought to find out various sources of errors, not only focussing on MT interference. Lado's claim was also not investigated in this study.

EA is done not only by teachers of ESL but also by those of other languages. Azevedo (1980) carried out an EA of the IL of post graduate advanced learners of Spanish at American Universities. He took sixty one papers written by fourteen first year

graduate students who were all native speakers of American English and had majored in Spanish. The results showed that the students made several errors particularly in the areas of morphology and syntactical constructions. This led him to conclude that error making is not restricted to elementary and intermediate learners. This discovery is relevant to the present study because just like Azevedo (1980), the aim is to find out the writing errors of advanced students learning ESL.

2.14. EA STUDIES IN NIGERIA

In Nigeria, much has been done in the area of written English of Nigerian students. Some of these studies include Durojaiye (1970), Adesanoye (1976), Adeyanju (1978, 1985), Odejide (1979) and Anasiudu (1983).

An EA of forty-eight students' essays in selected secondary schools of East Central State conducted by Akonobi (1976) was aimed at finding the types of errors that pre-university students make, why and where the errors occur. The findings revealed that 47.46% of the errors which were structural occurred more frequently than lexical and mechanical errors. She attributed the occurrence of some of the errors to L1 interference.

This study differs from Akonobi (1976) in the sense that the population is not the same educationally. Her population was secondary school students, while those of the present research are at the tertiary level. It may be assumed then that the errors made by the students might differ. Another area of difference is that the respondents in this study did not have the same MT. Thirdly, this study unlike the previous one was comparative, the former used only form five students while this study comprises of diploma I and II students. Akonobi (1976) did not look at the discourse errors of the students and used traditional grammar as a descriptive model, while the present study used pedagogical grammar and Halliday and Hasan (1976) to analyse the discourse errors

composition. The present study went a step further by ascertaining the possible sources of errors that the students made. The sample population of the two sets of students differ in the sense that Ofuokwu (1984) used pre-degree and degree students of a university, while this study is focussed on diploma I and II students in a polytechnic.

In 1988, Ahmed studied the errors of Usman Danfodiyo University students and discovered that, despite the one year spent going through Qualifying English (QE), the students' written performance showed a lack of proficiency in English. The number of grammatical errors identified questioned the effectiveness of QE as a remedial course. The findings showed that structural errors had the highest frequency. The researcher attributed the occurrence of the errors to the syllabus, the teacher, and the neglect of discourse.

A limitation of this study lay in the fact that the writer was unable to compare the performance at the beginning of the course and at the end to perceive significant difference. She could not, therefore be sure that the errors made before were different from, lower or higher than the ones made at the end. The researcher also mentioned the phonology component of the course, but in the findings there was no reference to it. No effort was made to investigate or identify the phonological errors of the students. This renders the validity of the findings suspect.

A research was carried out by Olaofe (1986) on the effect of proficiency levels on error production in English verb structures. The aim of the study was to describe error production in English verb structures across three proficiency levels. Level one comprised form I students, level two, form IV and level III, Advanced Teachers College students and students of School of Basic Studies (Yoruba speakers). The researcher sought to compare the errors produced in one proficiency level with those produced in other levels, using T test and ANOVA. The findings showed that in most cases, the proficiency levels of the students did not significantly affect the frequency of errors produced, but a slight difference was indicated between the error frequencies of levels one and three. The researcher recommended intensive teaching of English verb forms

at all levels. These finding was similar to Ofuokwu's (1984) who found no significant difference between the errors of pre-degree and final year students in a university. The research findings have a direct bearing on this study. Both studies were comparative, although at different levels. Similar theoretical models were used but in the present study the students did not have the same MT. Olaofe (1986) used only Yoruba speakers. This research study focussed on the same students from ND 1 through ND II of the School of Applied Sciences irrespective of their MTs.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The review covered the theoretical basis of EA and identified areas of strengths and weaknesses of the previous studies on the writing errors of students across all levels of education to determine which aspects are of relevance to the study. From the review the following have been established.

1. In spite of its shortcomings, EA is indeed a necessary aid to L2 learning. The analysis of errors is important to teachers, learners and syllabus designers.
2. The sources of errors are varied
3. EA can reveal the students' stage of language development.
4. Although any of the descriptive grammatical models can be used in EA, predominantly pedagogic grammar is used. This is due to the fact that it is synthetic or an amalgamation of almost all other descriptive models.
5. The EA analytical models used in the studies are also eclectic; they are a combination or selection from known analytic models.
6. Near Standard British English has been used as a standard for the EA in most of the studies reviewed.
7. There is a preoccupation with form over function, that is to say, most of the previous research studies in the area of EA did not venture into the area of discourse.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.0 INTRODUCTION

This chapter described the research methods and instruments used for data collection and analysis. Data are collected in order to draw valuable pedagogical implications from the findings that will aid in positively improving the quality of the written essays, reports and projects of the students. The chapter looked at descriptive and analytical models, categories of errors, population, sampling and analytical procedures. The pilot test, research instruments and administration of the instruments were also discussed.

3.1.1 DESCRIPTIVE MODELS

The two models used here were Quirk and Greenbaum's (1976) pedagogical grammar as outlined in the book A University Grammar of English. This is because the pedagogic grammar:

a. lends itself to easy classroom use; it can be applied successfully by the classroom teacher

b. is synthetic because it incorporates many models; and

c. provides definitions, exercise and rules that help a learner to acquire the knowledge and fluency in a language.

The descriptive model of Halliday and Hasan (1976) was used to analyse the discourse errors of the students because it:

a. provides for an analysis that goes beyond the sentence;

b. analyses written texts (text linguistics); and

c. has a linguistic approach for the analysis of cohesion which is easily applicable.

3.1.2 ANALYTICAL MODEL

A synthetic model developed from other models (Corder, 1974; Etherton, 1977; Omojuwa , 1979) was used in the study. This is because:

a. it was a model that does not seek for a reinterpretation of the learners' utterances as suggested by some analysts; and

b. it was an appropriate model to use in an ESL classroom where the students had different MTs.

The standard norm used in the study was Near Standard British English model used in textbooks and official broadcast (NSBE) because:

a. it makes room for culture bound words such as pepper-soup, draw-soup, motor park, which have no equivalent in English;

b. it does not flout the international rules of mutual intelligibility; and

c. at the morphological and syntactic levels, near standard British English does not differ from Standard British English.

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3.2 CATEGORIES OF ERRORS

From the descriptive models used Quirk and Greenbaum (1976) and Halliday and Hasan (1976) four broad categories of errors were arrived at:

A. Structural Errors: These included:

1. Errors in the Use of the verb and Verb Phrase

a. Regular lexical verb errors: Regular lexical verbs have five forms. Sometimes errors occur when students use the wrong form. For example:

i. Modernisation has been taken place .....(Modernization has being taking place....)

ii. The work the technician is undertaken is very scientific (is undertaking)

b. Irregular lexical verb errors: Students made errors when trying to use the different forms of these verbs. For example.

i. .... help in reducing the fear, in the minds of our students, of computers. Because anybody who has never see computer before ... (has never seen)

ii. ...the need to start earlier has came because as the student in the secondary school gets the idea of computer ...(has come)

c. Errors in the use of the verb phrase Errors occurred when students used the wrong form or when rules of concord are ignored. For example:

i. The computer are not been properly maintained.(is not being)

ii. Computer Science course should be well taught in the secondary schools so as to equipped the students ...(to equip)

d. Errors in the use of the auxiliaries: Errors occured when students used the wrong form of the auxiliary or when it was omitted completely. For example:

i. Computer Science course — supposed...(is)

ii. So if this course are introduced to them at there early stage it will do good for them ...(is, the, be).

e. Concord Errors: There are many types of concord errors, but some of the ones found in the study were:

1. Noun - pronoun concord

i. The student will have a knowledge of computer for their use. (his/her)

II. Subject - verb concord

i. Computer help... (helps)

f. Tense errors: Quirk and Greenbaum (1976: 40) recognise three tenses; past, present and future. Past tense errors were the most commonly observed. For example.

i. ... it will help in the country to be advance ...(to be advanced)

ii. If these course are introduce to them ... (are introduced)

2. Errors in the use of nouns, pronouns and the noun phrase

a. Determiner/article errors: For example,

i. ... as an computer can ... (as a computer)

b. Wrong pluralisation: For example:

i. One can find a lot of datas for the computer.(data)

3. Errors in the use of adjectives and adverbs

a. Errors in comparison of adjectives

i. In secondary schools, the level of understanding is not as wider as that of higher level.(wide)

ii. ... the computer science course which I know are more harder than the normal secondary subjects.(harder)

b. Errors in the use of adverbs:

I. Adjunct errors: Adjuncts are adverbials which may be integrated into the structure of the clause (Quirk and Greenbaum, 1976: 208). The students made errors when they placed the adjunct wrongly. For example:

i. they are our own tomorrow's leaders. (leaders of tomorrow)

II. Disjunct errors: Disjuncts are adverbs that convey a speaker's comment in the form or style of what he is saying (Quirk and

Greenbaum, 1976: 205) Errors were made in wrong placement of disjuncts,

i. Once computer science courses ... are introduced actually, the students will understand the course. (actually introduced)

III. Conjunct errors: Conjuncts normally have a primarily connective function in a sentence. Sometimes an error was made when the students extended the meaning of a word normally used as a conjunct. For example.

i. Conclusively, I am writing through your media ... (in conclusion).

4. Errors in the use of the preposition These were errors of omission, inclusion or wrong forms of prepositions. For example,

i. ... the students will have a knowledge about the computer.(of)

B. Lexical errors: These occur in the choice of lexical items used: They include:

a. Errors caused by inappropriate or wrong choice of lexical items: for example:

i. Due to the rapid need of computer specialists in this country ...(increasing need for)

ii. Computers are used to minimise unaccuracy.(inaccuracy)

b Lexical Cohesion Errors: these included errors of collocation, registers and synonyms etc. For example:

i. ... or power failure occurs during the processing process (during processing).

c. Errors caused by wrong splitting of a compound word

i. Further more fraud in the banking sector... (furthermore).

C. Discourse Errors: These are errors which hamper the overall coherence or intelligibility of a text included here were:

a. Substitution errors - these occurred when students used two words that virtually served the same purpose or when they substituted one item with another that did not have the same function. For example:

i. The laboratories need a lot of technicians which can carry out test on people. (technicians who).

b. Reference errors - Errors occurred when students used words (pronouns, determiners and so on) that had no referents. For example.

i. ... as we all know that computer studies is good ... and it save time. When this computer is studied in secondary schools ...

c. Ellipses errors - these occurred when students failed to omit some irrelevant material or unnecessary repetition of some words that could be omitted. For example:

i. .. It works at faster rate than what human being can do at a limited period, it calculates accurately and it can calculate a larger number of figure ... it preserves information.

d. Errors in the use of connectives: Errors occurred when students used the wrong connectives in joining ideas, or sentences. For example:

i. ... I feel at a tender age the level of understanding or memorising what the teacher teaches is better than when one approaches old age. Despite that in secondary schools the level of understanding is very high. (as a result).

D. Mechanical errors - these included spelling and punctuation errors.

I. Spelling errors - for example,

Seince (Science)

Mechine (machine)

Technics (techniques)

Costedian (custodian)

II. Punctuation errors - For example,

Wrong capitalization

... while he or she is still at a tender age, the better Because

I feel (because)

ii Omission of comma

But however - the world is now ... (however,)

iii Wrong use of the full stop

Introduction of computer science in secondary schools.

3.3 POPULATION

There were two groups of subjects from which elicitation was obtained in this study:

1. The first set comprised the fifteen English lecturers in the department of Languages, Kaduna State Polytechnic.
2. The second set of respondents were diploma students, School of Applied Sciences, Kaduna State Polytechnic.

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Table 3.1 shows the number of subjects and their departments.

Table 3.1 Subjects and their Departments

courses	number of students
Science Laboratory Technology	51
Computer Science	21
Mathematics and Statistics	31
Total	103

3.4 SAMPLING PROCEDURE

No sampling was required for the first set of respondents. To ensure a comprehensive representation, all the fifteen lecturers of ECS were used.

Purposive sampling can be used to select a sample size from a population. It involves selecting subjects on the basis of specific characteristics (Wimmer and Dominic, 1978: 46). This method was used in choosing the sample size. Where no fixed rule was used, the circumstances of the study situation determined the number. So, for the second set of respondents 50% of the population was used. A high sample rate was chosen because of the restricted population. The entire population could not be used because data had to be taken at three stages. The study aimed at being in-depth, using too many scripts will be detrimental to the efficiency of the analysis. The sample is representative because all the students have the same entry qualification and the study also used students of high, moderate and low English language performance levels, which was based on their performance in the ESL examination.

Table 3.2 shows the number of sampled students.

Table 3.2 Number of Sampled Students

courses	population of students	number sampled
Science Laboratory Technology	51	26
Computer Science	21	11
Mathematics and Statistics	31	16
Total	103	53

Table 3.3 below shows the number of sampled students according to their levels of performance in English.

Table 3.3 Number of Sampled Students and their Language Performance Levels

course	high	medium	low	total
Science Laboratory Technology	9	9	8	26
Computer Science	3	4	4	11
Mathematics and Statistics	5	5	6	16
Total	17	18	18	53

3.5 RESEARCH INSTRUMENTS

Two instruments were used in this study. The first was the cumulative writing sample of the students collected in three stages:

i Before the ECS writing course

ii. At the end of year one

iii. Essays written by the same students at the end of year two.

Each respondent wrote an essay, a letter and a report. The topics given were:

i. before the ECS writing course:

a. Science Laboratory Technology (SLT)

A youth club has invited you to give a talk on the importance of the SLT course you are offering. Write your speech.

b. Mathematics and Statistics (MAS)

A youth club has invited you to give a talk on the importance of the MAS course you are offering. Write your speech.

c. Computer Science

A youth club has invited you to give a talk on the importance of the computer science course you are offering. Write your speech.

ii. at the end of year one:

a. Science Laboratory Technology

Write a letter to the editor of a national newspaper on the need to introduce SLT courses in secondary schools in your country.

b. Mathematics and Statistics

Write a letter to the editor of a national newspaper on the need to introduce MAS course in secondary schools in your country.

c. Computer Science

Write a letter to the editor of a national newspaper on the need to introduce computer science courses in secondary schools in your country.

iii. At the end of year two

a. Science Laboratory Technology

You have been instructed by the rector to prepare a report on a newly invented portable appliance for converting salt water to drinking water, its potential use and commercial possibilities. Write the report.

b. Mathematics and Statistics

You have been asked by the rector to investigate the uses and importance of the MAS course offered by the polytechnic and make recommendations on how the teaching of the course can be improved. Write the report.

c. Computer Science

A new computer machine has been introduced into the market, as a student of the department of Computer Science, Kaduna State Polytechnic, write a report to the rector on how the computer works and the relative merits and demerits of the machine. Advice him on the usefulness of buying the machine for the school.

The topics were chosen because:

i. they were relevant to the students' areas of specialization;

ii. the level of difficulty was controlled;

iii. the variation in the types of essays would elicit different errors; and

iv. the topics were current.

The second instrument used was a questionnaire for the students of the three departments used in the study and for the ECS teachers. The questionnaires were constructed based upon the sources of errors obtained from the students' essays during the pilot test and from the literature on the field. They were given twenty erroneous sentences and their correct versions and nine sources of errors. The respondents were asked to tick those that they thought were primary sources of the errors of the students identified. A column was provided for other sources which the respondents thought were responsible for errors and were not listed. They were also asked to say what could be done to eliminate or minimise these errors. The sources of errors obtained from the pilot study were:

i. poor teaching at the present level;

ii lack of extensive reading;

iii. error from the mother tongue;

iv. error from the complexity of English itself, such as inconsistency or irregularity in the rules;

v. difficulty in writing essays on the topics;

vi. lack of materials;

v. lack of practice;

viii. inadequate exposure to the language in and out of the classroom; and

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ix. poor teaching at primary and secondary schools.

The face validity of the instruments was tested by giving a pilot to see if they were:

a. properly structured; and

b. unambiguous, and could not be misinterpreted.

The content validity was also tested to see if the instruments

a. were relevant to the students areas of specialization;

b. would bring out error types and sources; and

c. encompass the different components of the writing course.

3.6 ADMINISTRATION OF THE INSTRUMENTS

The two instruments used in the study were administered as follows:

3.6.1 CUMULATIVE WRITING SAMPLES

1. The topics were designed and given to the students during class.
2. The students were given time to correct all slips and mistakes.
3. The essays were collected.
4. The errors were identified by the researcher and three inter-raters to ensure that the errors were properly identified and classified.
5. Errors found in the students' essays were classified using Quirk and Greenbaum's (1976) pedagogic grammar. The model developed by Halliday and Hasan (1976) was used for the discourse errors.
6. The errors of the students were analysed using a synthetic model developed by the researcher.

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3.6.2 QUESTIONNAIRE

1. The sources of errors were listed.
2. The respondents were given twenty erroneous sentences and their correct versions.
3. The questionnaires were circulated to the students and teachers and they were asked to tick as many sources of errors as possible.
4. The questionnaires were collected and analysed using the appropriate statistical procedure.

3.7 ANALYTICAL PROCEDURES

In order to test the hypotheses of this study, two different statistical tests were used. Statistical T-test was used to test hypotheses two, and three at 0.05 level of confidence. This test is valuable in deciding how far two means differ. Two-way ANOVA which analyses the variance of two groups was used to determine the significant difference between the frequency of written errors produced by the students at the beginning, middle and end of the ECS writing course.

3.8 PILOT TEST

A pilot test was given in order to

1. validate the instruments and error classifications that emerged;
2. find errors which are typical of the group (error types);
3. get possible sources of errors made by students; and
4. see if the topics given would produce the types of errors expected.

Ten students from the department of computer science whose essays were not used in the error analysis were given the topic 'The Need to Introduce Computer Science Courses in Secondary Schools in Nigeria' to write on. The essays were corrected and

returned to the students with the errors identified. The students were then asked to give reasons why they thought the errors were made. The errors found in the student's compositions were classified according to error types in an exercise book by the researcher and three inter-raters to ensure the reliability of the topics in producing the types and classifications of errors expected. The result of the inter-raters reliability test showed a strong positive correlation between the researcher's scores and those of the inter-raters. The values of r for the three inter-raters were 0.9995, 0.99947 and 0.99971 respectively.

The error types found in the pilot test, although typical of the group, may not have been exhaustive . More error types emerged as a result of the error analysis .

From the pilot test :

1. errors which were typical of the group emerged;
2. error classifications were validated;
3. the topics produced error types expected; and
4. it has been established that the involvement of students in identification of sources of errors is possible. The technical terms in the teachers' questionnaire were simplified and the students were able to identify sources of errors from the list provided.

CHAPTER FOUR

ANALYSIS OF DATA AND INTERPRETATION OF FINDINGS

4.0 INTRODUCTION:

This chapter analysed the data gathered for the study and interpreted the findings obtained. The frequency distribution of each type of error was given at the three stages and the errors were interpreted on the basis of frequency, persistence and gravity. The frequency of occurrence of sources of errors as perceived by the students and their teachers was also discussed.

4.1 STRUCTURAL ERRORS:

Table 4.1(a) is a summary of the total number of structural errors made by the sample population from the beginning to the end of the ECS writing course.

TABLE 4.1 (a): Total number of Structural Errors Committed by Diploma Students

Type of Structural Error	frequency	Percentage
verb and verb phrases		
Concord	647	29.13
Tenses	377	16.97
Auxiliaries	212	9.55
Verb Phrases	84	3.78
Lexical Verb	61	2.75
Nouns and noun phrases		
Determiners	227	10.22
Pronouns	98	4.41
Nouns	57	2.57
Prepositions	381	17.15
Adjectives	52	2.34
Adverbs	14	0.63
Adjuncts	10	0.45
Conjuncts	01	0.05
Disjuncts	-	-
Total	2221	100.00

Table 4.1(a) above shows that concord was the category with the highest frequency of occurrence(29.13%) followed by preposition errors (17.15%). The least frequent in the category was conjunct errors (0.05%) followed by disjunct errors which did not occur at all.

HYPOTHESIS 1(a)

There is no significant difference in the frequency of structural errors committed by diploma students at the beginning, middle and end of the ECS writing course.

Table 4.1(b) specifies the distribution of structural errors made by diploma students at the beginning (stage I), middle(stage II), and end (stage III) of the ECS writing course.

Table 4.1(b) Distribution of Structural Errors made by Diploma Students Across Three Stages

Type of Structural Error	Stage I Frequency	%	Stage II Frequency	%	Stage III Frequency	%
Verbs and verb phrases						
Concord	266	35.99	200	27.36	181	24.1
Tenses	111	15.03	122	16.69	144	19.18
Auxiliaries	64	8.66	62	8.49	86	11.45
Verb Phrases	28	3.79	27	3.69	29	3.86
Lexical Verbs	12	1.63	32	4.38	17	2.27
Nouns and Phrases						
Determiners	69	9.34	72	9.85	86	11.45
Pronouns	42	5.69	20	2.74	36	4.80
Nouns	18	2.44	15	2.05	24	3.20
Prepositions	103	13.92	148	20.24	130	11.3 1
Adjectives	14	1.90	27	3.69	11	1.47
Adverbs	07	0.95	04	0.55	03	0.40
Adjuncts	04	0.54	02	0.27	04	0.53
Conjuncts	01	0.14	-	-	-	-
Disjuncts	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	739	100.00	731	100.00	751	100.00

From the table, the most frequent of the structural errors at all stages was concord (35.99%, 27.36%, 24.16%) and the least frequent at stage one was conjunct errors (0.14%). At stage two, the least frequent error - adjunct occurred 02 times (0.27%) while at stage III the least frequent were adverbs (0.40%). From table 4.1 (b) above, it can be seen that some of the error types likes concord (35.99%, 27.36%, 24.1%) and adverbs (0.95%, 0.55%, 0.40%) decreased according to proficiency level. Some of the error types

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like pronouns (5.69%, 2.74%, 4.8%), finite and non finite phrases (3.76%, 3.69%, 3.86%) decreased at stage II and increased at stage III. Regular and irregular lexical verbs (1.63%, 4.38%, 2.27%), prepositions (13.92%, 20.24%, 17.3%) and adjective errors (1.9%, 3.69%, 1.47%) increased at stage II and decreased at stage III. Errors in the use of conjuncts occurred only once at stage I and did not occur at stages II and III. Tense errors were the only category of errors that showed an increase in frequency from stage I to III (15.03%, 16.69%, 19.18%). Most of the error types can be seen to have persisted with the students from the beginning to the end of the ECS writing course. Only one type (conjunct) was dropped at stages II and III. The hypothesis that the structural errors did not significantly decrease across the three proficiency levels is confirmed by the ANOVA test statistics shown in table 4.1 (c).

Table 4.1 (c) ANOVA Table showing variations in Structural Errors made by Diploma students at stage I, II, III

source	ss	df	ms	f-ratio	decision
Between	14.676	2	7.238	0.002	not significant
Within	165637.929	39	4247.126		
Total	165652.405	41			

At 0.05 level of significance, the ANOVA performed showed no significant difference in error frequency across the three stages. The calculated F value of 0.002 is less than the critical value of 3.15 (degree of freedom = 2/84). The null hypothesis is therefore retained. This means that there is no significant difference in the frequency of structural errors in the written English of diploma students at the beginning, middle, and end of the ECS writing programme. The sample of errors as briefly analysed below demonstrates the persistence of error types with more or less the same gravity across the

three instructional levels.

All the deviant forms listed under examples of are presumed asterisked (* *).

LEXICAL VERBS

1. The importance of this very course that I am now undertaken cannot be overlooked. (Stage I , regular lexical verb).
2. Furthermore, the introduction of computers in our industries has go in a long way in reducing the work of a labourer. (Stage II, irregular lexical verbs).
3. It has showed that the efficiency of the machine has increased by 100%. (Stage III, irregular lexical verb).

The students at all three stages had not displayed any proper knowledge of the use of both regular and irregular verb forms. This error type persisted with the student but was more frequent in stage II than in the other stages (1.63%, 4.38%, 2.27%).

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VERB PHRASES

4. The students have not came to known the importance of maths and statistics (Stage I, finite verb Phrase).
5. The students will be taught how to developed some programming languages and how to used computers and how to processed data (Stage II, non-finite verb phrase).
6. For several years, investigations were been make on how to convert salt water into drinking water (Stage II, finite verb phrase)

This error type persisted with the students across the stages (with an increase in frequency at stage III, 3.79%, 3.69%, 3.86%) as their essays were replete with sentences like those given above.

AUXILIARIES

7. The human body has a lot of parts and should any of them seizes to function there should be paralysis or death. (Stage I, modal auxiliary).
8. Nowadays computers are been used to process admissions in schools. (Stage II).
9. . . . While the heat is been applied to the salt water, . . . (Stage III).

This error type showed an increase in frequency at stage three (8.66%, 8.49%, 11.45%). At all levels, the students displayed an inability to choose the right type of auxiliary in relation to the subject. They omitted or used the wrong forms of both the modal auxiliaries and other forms of auxiliaries (do, have , be).

CONCORD

10. The student will know how to operate the computer, they will also know how to interpret data. (Stage I, Noun-Pronoun concord).
11. They all needs maths in their subject areas. (Subject-verb concord, Stage II)
12. Actually, i has been hear about the courses that is Science Laboratory Technology. (Stage III, Noun-Complement Concord).

This category of errors showed a systematic decrease in frequency across the three stages (35.99%, 27.36%, 24.1%). The trend might be due to the students' increased awareness of the rules of concord. Despite this positive trend, the errors have persisted with the students across the proficiency levels. In terms of quality, the errors at the end were not different from those at the beginning. Subject - verb concord error occurred more frequently (45.90%) than noun-determiner (39.72%), noun - pronoun (7.73%) or noun-complement concord (6.65%).

TENSES

13. Descriptive statistics dealing with method of collecting and analysing data (Stage I).
14. I hope by the time I finished my speech, you will agree with me that maths should be introduced at schools(Stage II)
15. Even the water works company can used the method for the production of drinking water. (Stage III).

These examples show that the students used the tenses indiscriminately across the three stages.. There was a steady increase in frequency from stage I to III (15.03%, 16.69%, 19.18%). This negative trend might be because the students were unable to - or were still in the processes of grasping the workings of the English verb. Most of the errors were those involving the use of the past tense (78.77%) than the present (19.10%) or future tense (2.12%).

DETERMINERS

16. Computer Science is ^ wide field of study which should be introduced to the students right from the secondary school. (Stage I)
17. Science Laboratory Technology enlighten them in various subjects like the Chemistry, Physics and Biology. (Stage II)
18. I wish to conclude that maths is ^ indispensable tool in Science and Technology. (Stage III).

This error type persisted with the students with increasing frequency across the three instructional levels (9.34%, 9.85%, 11.45%). The errors were those of wrongful inclusion or out right omission of the determiner.

PRONOUNS

19. I want to tell you that you need maths even if it are studying French. (Stage I)

20. From the previous Scientists which discovered that water comprises of H2O which can make water to be salty. (Stage II).

21. My recommendations are based on the findings, that is the information I got it from the students and lecturers. (Stage III).

This error type persisted with the students across the three stages and the errors were either those of wrongful omission inclusion or using the wrong pronoun. Although there was a decrease in frequency at stage II (5.69%, 2.74%, 4.8%), the quality of errors was not different at the three stages.

NOUNS

22. Just as a reservoir without - is useless so is a school without Science Laboratory technology. (Stage I)

23. Computer can be used to collect and analyse datas. (Stage II)

24. This disease is caused by bacterias that are present in water. (Stage III).

At all three levels, the noun or noun phrase was omitted by the students, they also showed an inability to differentiate between countable and uncountable nouns. The error type occurred less frequently at stage II than at III (2.44%, 2.05%, 3.20%).

ADJECTIVES

25. The course I am offering has greatest advantage than the other course. (Stage I)

26. It is among the simplest science courses ^than biology. (Stage II)

27. Many students see maths as the most toughest subject. (Stage II)

At all stages, students made errors when trying to use both the

comparative or superlative form. Sometimes, the adjective was either omitted or wrongly included. More errors were committed at stage II than stages III and I (1.9%, 3.69%, 1.47%).

ADVERBS

28. Maths makes students to have very much confidence in themselves. (Stage I)
29. Kitchen utensils such^ gas coker, pots and pans. (Stage II)
30. The computer performs many functions such^word processing and data analysis (stage III)

This error type persisted with the students across the three instructional levels, but with reduced frequency (0.95%, 0.55%, 0.40%). The errors were those of wrongful inclusion or omission of the adverbs.

ADJUNCTS

31. It is also applied majorly in the laboratory. (Stage I)
32. Especially maths is the study of figures. (Stage II)
33. This days, most schools are now running the course in the world, simply graduand are needed in various organisation. (Stage III)

Errors in the use of adjuncts were observed at all stages, but were less frequent at stage II (0.54%, 0.27%, 0.53%).

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DISJUNCTS

This error type was not observed at any of the three stages. This could be because the students avoided using disjuncts either because they were not aware of them or did

not know how to use them.

CONJUNCTS

34. Conclusively, I want to finally let you understand why maths should be introduced in our secondary schools (Stage I)

This error type did not persist with the students across the three stages. It was observed only in stage I (0.14%).

PREPOSITIONS

35. I observed that 75% ^ the students do not like maths. (Stage I)

36. It is machines like these that can turn the world of upside down. (Stage II)

37. It was observed that on the course of conversion the water evaporates and leaves the salt. (Stage III).

Errors in this category were either of wrong choice, omission or wrongful inclusion of prepositions. This error type persisted with the students across the three levels and was more frequent in stage II than in stages I and III (13.92%, 20.24%, 17.31%).

4.2 LEXICAL ERRORS

Table 4.2 (a) is a summary of the total number of lexical errors made by the diploma students at the beginning, middle and end of the ECS writing course.

TABLE 4.2 (A) The Lexical Errors of Diploma Students at Stage I, II And III

type of lexical error	frequency	%
Inappropriate choice of lexical items	504	46.15
Lexical cohesion	483	44.23
Wrong splitting of compound words	105	9.62
Total	1092	100.00

From the table, inappropriate choice of lexical items had the highest frequency of occurrence (46.15%) followed by lexical cohesion errors (44.23%). The category with the least frequency of occurrence is errors caused by wrong splitting of compound words.

Hypothesis 1 (b)

There is no significant difference in the frequency of lexical errors committed by diploma students at the beginning, middle and end of the ECS writing course.

Table 4.2 (b) is a summary of the lexical errors made by the diploma students across the three levels.

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TABLE 4.2 (B) Distribution of Lexical Errors Committed by Diploma Students Across the Three Stages

type of lexical error	stage I		stage II		stage III	
	frequency	%	frequency	%	frequency	%
Wrong choice of lexical items	170	48.43	169	43.11	165	36.75
Lexical cohesion	147	31.88	176	44.90	160	35.63
Wrong splitting of compound words	34	9.69	47	11.99	24	27.61
TOTAL	351	100.00	392	100.00	349	100.00

From the table, the most frequent of the lexical errors at stages I and II was the

inappropriate choice of lexical items. The least frequent at all stages were errors caused by wrong splitting of compound words. Inappropriate choice of lexical items was found to have decreased according to proficiency level (48.43%, 43.11%, 36.75%), while lexical cohesion errors increased at stage II and decreased at stage III (41.88%, 44.90%, 36.63%). Errors caused by splitting of compound words increased according to proficiency level (9.69%, 11.99%, 27.61%). All error types persisted with the students across the three instructional stages. This is further confirmed by the ANOVA test statistics shown in table 4.2 (c).

TABLE 4.2 (C) Anova Table Showing Variations in Lexical Errors Made by Diploma Students at Stage I, II and III

source	ss	df	ms	f - ratio	decision
Between	392.667	2	196.333	0.035	not significant
Within	33923.33	6	5653.889		
Total	34316.000	8			

The ANOVA performed showed no significant difference, at 0.05 level of confidence, in the lexical errors committed by the students at the beginning, middle and end of the ECS writing course. The calculated f value (0.035) is less than the critical value (5.1432). Since the null hypothesis is retained, it means that there is no significant difference in the frequency of lexical errors across the three instructional stages.

The samples of lexical errors cited below were used to buttress the fact that the errors related to lexical forms were not anything better across the three instructional stages.

INAPPROPRIATE CHOICE OF LEXICAL ITEMS

38. Students have to know the harzardness they are likely to face in the society. (Stage I)

39. I would like to point out that nothing is in possible in science. (Stage II).

40. Salt water can also shortage the life span of living organisms. (Stage III).

This category of error persisted with the students across the three proficiency levels less errors were made at the beginning than at the middle and end (51.83%, 53.49%, 59.63%).

LEXICAL COHESION

41. Although salt water is rich in minerals and contains a wealthy deposit of calcium it is not good for drinking. (Stage I)
42. But if these same course is been introduced into the secondary schools in this country, when there is any emergency, the junior level of learning students will be able to handle such problems with maturity in action. (Stage II)
43. Some students who didn't make their papers fine in their first sitting, instead of them staying at home doing nothing... (Stage III)

This error type occurred more frequently at the middle (end of year I) than either at the beginning (of year I) or end (of year two) of the ECS course (41.88%, 44.90%, 35.63%). Students made errors in the use of synonyms, superordinates, collocation and registers.

WRONG SPLITTING OF COMPOUND WORDS

44. Ladies and gentle men, I wish to welcome you to this occassion. (Stage I)
45. I stand here to day to speak on the subject ... (stage II)
46. Further more I wish to state that... (Stage III)

This error type has persisted with the students in number and quality from the beginning to the end of the ECS writing course.

4.3 DISCOURSE ERRORS

TABLE 4.3 (a) is a summary of the total number of discourse errors made by the diploma students at the beginning, middle and end of the ECS writing programme.

TABLE 4.3 Discourse Errors of Diploma Students Across the Three Stages

type of discourse error	frequency	%
Substitution	344	4.17
Ellipses	185	24.83
Connectives	127	17.05
Reference	89	11.95
Total	745	100.00

From the table, substitution errors occurred more frequently (46.17%), while reference errors were the least (11.95%).

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HYPOTHESIS 1(C)

There is significant difference in the frequency of discourse errors committed by diploma students at the beginning, middle and end of the ECS writing course.

Table 4.3 (b) is summary of the discourse errors committed by diploma students at the beginning, middle and end of ECS writing programme.

Table 4.3 (b) Distribution of Discourse Errors Made by Diploma Students Across the Three Stages

type of discourse error	stage I		stage II		stage III	
	frequency	%	frequency	%	frequency	%
Substitution	115	43.89	109	46.38	120	48.39
Ellipses	64	24.43	60	25.53	61	24.60
Connectives	51	19.47	39	16.60	37	14.92
Reference	32	12.21	27	11.49	30	12.10
Total	262	100.00	235	100.00	248	100.00

As seen from the table, the sub-category of discourse errors with the highest frequency of occurrence at the three levels was that of substitution (43.89%, 46.38%), 48.39%), while the least was reference errors (12.21%, 11.49%, 12.10%). Most of the errors were found to have decreased of stage II and increased at stage III . Connectives errors were found to have decreased according to proficiency level (19.47%, 16.60%, 14.92%). All the error types persisted with the students across the three stages. This is further confirmed by the ANOVA test statistics shown in table 4.3 (c).

TABLE 4.3(C) ANOVA Table Showing Variations in Discourse Errors made by Diploma Students Across the Three Stages

source	ss	df	ms	f-ratio	decision
Between	91.167	2	45.583	0.032	not significant..
Within	12723.750	9	1413.750		473819
Total	12814.917	11			

The ANOVA performed showed no significant difference in frequency of the discourse errors made by the diploma students at the beginning, middle and end of the ECS writing hours. The calculated F value (0.032) is less than the critical value (3.885), and thus the null hypothesis is retained.

Although discourse errors were found to have decreased at stage II (35.17%, 31.54%, 33.29%), there was no perceptible increase in the quality of the errors produced by the students across the three stages as can be seen from the examples below.

REFERENCE

44. In the study of the subject biology one comes to know the genetic function of man, <u>their</u> functions and the effect of any deficiency or absent of any organ. (Stage I)
45. As it is said and avidly believed by the year 2000 everything would have turned

computerised. It should be taken with caution. Let us now took at the various ways they are of use to us. (Stage II)

46. The newly invented machine is good for the treatment of H20. This is done in order to achieve clarity of their drinking water and free it from bacteria. (Stage III)

Reference errors persisted with the students across the three stages and were less frequent at stage II than stage I and III (12.21%, 11.49%, 12.10%).

CONNECTIVES

47. Though Science Laboratory Technology is one of the backbone of this country Nigeria, However I am strongly in support on the need to introduce the subject in all secondary schools.
(Stage I)

48. I am here to talk about the importance of computer science, inspite of this the course should be introduced in all secondary schools in Nigeria. (Stage II)

49. Everybody must be conversant with Maths and that does not withstand, however it is very important in science and technology (Stage III)

Although this category persisted with the students across the three levels, the frequency was reducing at each level (19.47%, 16.60%, 14.92%).

SUBSTITUTION

50. Nobody knows more about the computer machine than the computer analyst have. (Stage I)

51. Nowadays the society is filled with so many sick and disabled ones which need the doctors attention (stage II)

52. People recommend that the machine could be used in the north since they can be used to purify water (stage III)

Substitution errors persisted across the three instructional levels with increasing frequency (43.89%, 46.38%, 48.39%).

ELLIPSES

53. The science laboratory technologist is useful in many places such as hospital Laboratory, production company Laboratory food Laboratory, water Laboratory and chemical Laboratory (Stage I)

54. In many school they use computer to process admission, they also use computer in the library, they also use computers to prepare pay slips, they also use computer in the registry. (stage II)

55. Therefore the course maths since maths is a limited course should be introduced so that the students of maths should be able to pass maths, maths help our country a lot. (Stage III)

This error type persisted with the students from the beginning to the end of the ECS writing programme.

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4.4 MECHANICAL ERRORS

Table 4.4 (a) is a summary of the total number of mechanical errors produced by the diploma students at the beginning, middle and end of the ECS writing course.

TABLE 4.4 (A) Mechanical Errors of Diploma Students Across the Three Stages

type of mechanical error	frequency	%
Spelling	571	48.15
Capitalization	289	24.37
Comma	157	10.71
Full stop	127	3.54
Apostrophe	42	13.24
Total	1186	100.00

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The table shows that spelling errors had the highest frequency of occurrence (48.15%) while the least were errors in the use of the apostrophe (3.54%).

HYPOTHESIS I (d)

There is no significant difference in the frequency of mechanical errors committed by diploma students at the beginning, middle and end of the ECS writing course.

Table 4.4 (b) shows the distribution of mechanical errors made by the diploma students across the three instructional levels.

TABLE 4.4 (B) Distribution of Mechanical Errors Across Stage I, II, III

type of mechanical error	stage I		stage II		stage III	
	frequency	%	frequency	%	frequency	%
Spelling	216	55.10	183	50.00	172	40.19
Capitalization	69	17.60	80	21.86	140	32.71
Full stop	35	8.93	40	21.86	52	12.15
Apostrophe	12	3.06	16	21.86	14	3.29
Comma	72	2.00	47	12.84	50	11.68
Total	392	100.00	366	100	428	100.00

From the table, spelling errors had the highest frequency of occurrence at all stages (55.10%, 50%, 40.19%). The least frequent was errors in the use of the apostrophe (3.06%, 4.37%, 3.29%). Spelling and comma errors showed a decrease in frequency from

the beginning to the end of the ECS course. Capitalization and Full stop errors increased according to proficiency level.

The hypothesis that mechanical errors did not significantly decrease according to instructional levels is confirmed by the ANOVA test statistics presented in table 4.4 (c).

TABLE 4.4 (C) ANOVA Table Showing Variations in Mechanical Errors Made by Diploma Students At Stage I, II, III.

source	ss	df	ms	f-ratio	decision
Between	390.933	2	195.467	0.039	not significant
Within	60436.800	12	5036.400		
Total	60827.733	14			

At 0.05 level of significance, the ANOVA performed showed no significant difference across the three instructional stages. The calculated value (F=0.039) is less than the critical value (F=4.256), the null hypothesis is therefore retained. This means that there is no significant difference in the frequency of mechanical errors committed by the students at the beginning, middle and end of the ECS writing course.

At the three instructional stages, mechanical errors persisted with the students in quantity and quality. This can be seen from the sample of mechanical errors of the diploma students as given below.

SPELLING

56. applance (Appliance)
    priviledge (Privilege)
    (Stage I)

57. Privillege (Privilege)
    Convienced (Convinced)
    (Stage II)

58. Genu (Genuine)

gargets (Gadgets)

(Stage III)

This error category persisted with the students across the three stages. And although there was a decrease in frequency across the three instructional levels (55.10%, 50%, 40.19%), the decrease had not been proved to be statistically significant as shown by the ANOVA statistics.

CAPITALIZATION

59. I am very happy to have been given This privilege to...(Stage I)
60. Science Laboratory technology courses are mainly useful in hospitals. (Stage II)
61. For this computer to be Marketable the manufacturer...(stage III)

This error type occurred with increasing frequency across the three stages (17.60%, 21.86%, 32.71%). The students indiscriminately used capitals in the middle of the sentence. They also did not use capital letters where they should be used.

FULL STOP

62. The analysis is carried out in laboratories , in order to find the measurement. (Stage I)
63. Department of , maths and statistics (Stage II)
64. THE IMPORTANCE OF THE SLT COURSE. AM OFFERING , (Stage III)

Errors in the use of the full stop occurred with increasing frequency across the three stages (8.93%, 10.93%, 12.15%).

APOSTROPHE

65. The computer can be used to monitor students activities (stage I)
66. The school should increase lecturers salaries. (Stage II

67. Computers can be used to process customers data... (stage III)

At all three proficiency levels, students omitted the apostrophe sign when they were supposed to used them. The errors were more frequent at stage II than stages I and III (3.06%, 4.37%, 3.29%).

COMMA

68. The computer can be used in building roads ^ bridges ^ companies and schools. (Stage I).

69. This course SLT on its own is, a very useful course. (Stage II).

70. Furthermore ^ it helps in... (Stage III).

This error type persisted with the students across three levels but with decreasing frequency (15.31%, 12.34%,11.68%). Th errors were either of omission or wrongful inclusion of the comma.

4.5 OVERALL ERROR PROFILE

Table 4.5 (a) is a summary of the total number of errors committed by the students at the three stages.

Table 4.5(a) Total Number of Errors made by Diploma Students Across the Three Stages

type of error	frequency	%
Structural	2221	42.35
Mechanical	1186	22.62
Lexical	1092	20.82
Discourse	745	12.21
Total	5244	100.00

From table 4.5 (a) above, structural errors had the highest frequency of occurrence (42.35%), then mechanical (22.62) followed by lexical (20.82%). The category

with the least frequency of occurrence was discourse errors (14.21%)

Hypothesis 1 (e)

There is no significant difference in the error frequency of diploma students at the beginning, middle and end of the ECS writing course.

Table 4.5 (b) shows the distribution of errors made by the sample across the three instructional levels.

TABLE 4.5 (b) Distribution of Errors Made by Diploma Students Across the Three Stages

type of error	stage I		stage II		stage III		total
	frequency	%	frequency	%	frequency	%	
Structural	739	42.37	731	42.40	751	42.29	22 21
Mechanical	392	22.48	366	21.23	428	24.10	1186
Lexical	351	20.13	392	22.74	349	19.65	1092
Discourse	262	15.02	235	13.63	248	13.96	745
Total	1744	100.00	1724	100.00	1776	100.00	5244

At all stages, structural errors had the highest frequency of occurrence (42.37%, 42.40%, 42.29%) and the least frequent at all stages was discourse errors (15.02, 13.63%, 13.96%).

The students made more errors at the end (33.87%) than at the beginning (33.26%) or middle (32.88%) of the ECS writing programme. This means that the students performed better at the end of year one that at the end of year two, although this difference was not statistically significant as shown below in table 4.5 (c).

Table 4.5 (c)Is the ANOVA table showing the variations in error frequency of the students at the three stages.

TABLE 4.5 (C) Anova Table Showing Variations in Error Frequency of Diploma Students At Stage I, II and III

source	ss	df	ms	f-ratio	decision
Between	22.923	2	11.461	0.003	not significant
Within	311261.538	75	4150.154		
Total	311314.416	77			

The ANOVA performed showed no significant difference in the error frequencies across the three stages, at 0.05 level of significance (the computed F value = 0.003, while the critical F value = 3.071 and df = 2/120). The calculated value is less than the critical value and the null hypothesis is therefore retained.

All of the types persisted with the students across the three levels and there was no discernable difference in the gravity of errors produced by the students. Some of the errors were not those that one would expect from polytechnic students and they stigmatise them. To illustrate this point are two examples taken from the essays of two ND II students.

71. Indeed, if such a course can be introduce in secondary school, it will be a great privilige for our youth to be more hardworking and have interest in going for this professions and also had intelligent to bold enough for this course.
72. The machine was successfully convey to the school and has been kept in the chemistry laboratory, very portable and easily to operate. The maintenance is very limited. If the machine had got spoil its spare parts is not hard to get.

4.6 STUDENTS' PERFORMANCE IN WRITTEN ENGLISH

The students' performance in written English was looked at in the beginning and end, middle and end of the ECS writing course.

4.6.1 STUDENTS' PERFORMANCE IN WRITTEN ENGLISH AT THE BEGINNING AND END OF THE ECS WRITING COURSE

Hypothesis 2 (a)

There is no significant difference between the performance in written English of diploma students at the beginning and end of the ECS writing course.

Table 4.6(a) shows the number of errors committed by the students at the beginning (stage I) and end (stage III) of the ECS writing course.

TABLE 4.6(A) Number of Errors Made by Diploma Students at Stage I and III

type of error	stage I		stage III	
	frequency	%	frequency	%
Structural	739	42.37	751	42.29
mechanical	392	22.48	428	24.10
Lexical	351	20.13	349	19.65
Discourse	262	15.02	248	13.96
Total	1744	100.00	1776	100.00

From table 4.6(a), the students made more errors at stage III (50.45%) than at stage I (49.55%). The above data was used to test the hypothesis.

Table 4.6 (b) shows the difference in the number of errors committed by diploma students at stage I and III.

TABLE 4.6 (B) T-test Showing Variations in Number of Errors Made by Students At Stage I and III

variable	n	mean	sd	df	t-value	p	decision
STAGE I	4	105	209	6	-4.17	0.025	not significant
STAGE III	4	109	218				

The T-test performed showed no significant difference in the performance of the students across the two proficiency levels. The computed t-value is -4.17, while the

probability that there is no difference is equal to 0.025 , the null hypothesis is therefore retained. This means that no significant difference exists in the performance of diploma students at the beginning and end of the ECS course.

4.6.2 STUDENTS' PERFORMANCE IN WRITTEN ENGLISH AT THE MIDDLE AND END OF THE ECS WRITING COURSE

HYPOTHESIS 2(b)

There is no significant difference between the performance in written English of diploma students at the middle and end of the ECS writing course.

Table 4.6 © shows the of errors made by diploma students at the middle (stage II) and end (stage III) of the ECS writing programme.

TABLE 4.6(C) Number of Errors Made by Students at Stages II and III

type of error	stage II		stage III	
	frequency	%	frequency	%
Structural	731	42.40	751	42.29
Mechanical	366	21.23	428	24.10
Lexical	392	22.74	349	19.65
Discourse	235	13.63	248	13.96
Total	1724	100.00	1776	100.00

At the middle (end of year one)of the ECS writing course, the students made less errors (49.26%) than at the end (of year two). When the data presented in the table above were used to test the hypothesis, the findings in table 4.6 (d) resulted.

TABLE 4.6 (D) T-test Showing Variation in Number of Errors Committed by Diploma Students at Stages II and III

variable	n	mean	sd	df	t-value	p	decision
STAGE I	4	431	211	6	-4.08	0.027	not significant
STAGE II	4	442	220				

The t-test performed showed no significant difference at 0.05 level of significance. T calculated = -4.08 while the probability there is a difference between stage II and III is 0.027. There is therefore no significant difference between the performance of the students in written English at the end of year I and end of year II. The null hypothesis is retained.

From the result, it is clear that the students did not perform better in terms of error production at the end of the course than they did before and after receiving instruction during the ECS course.

4.7 SOURCES OF ERRORS

This section dealt with the sources of errors as identified by the students and their teachers.

HYPOTHESIS 3

There is no significant difference in the perception of teachers and students concerning the sources of errors committed by diploma students in written English.

Tables 4.7 (a) and (b) show the students' and teachers' perceived sources of errors in students' essays.

TABLE 4.7 (A) Students Perceived Sources of Errors in Writing n= 53

sources of errors	frequency	%
Lack of extensive reading	375	18.05
Inconsistency in the rules of English	304	14.64
Lack of practice	296	14.25
Inadequate exposure to the English language in and out of the classroom	259	12.43
Poor teaching at primary and secondary schools	213	10.26
Interference from the MT	212	10.21
Difficulty in writing essays on the topics	175	8.43
Lack of teaching/learning materials	143	6.88
Poor teaching at the polytechnic	100	4.81
Total	2077	100.00

TABLE 4.7 (B) Teachers Perceived Sources of Errors in Writing n = 15

sources of errors	frequency	%
Inconsistency in the rules of English	203	18.17
Lack of extensive reading	171	15.31
Inadequate exposure to the English language in and out of the classroom	128	11.46
Interference from the MT	117	10.47
Poor teaching at primary/secondary schools	112	10.03
Difficulty in writing essays on the topics	105	9.40
Lack of teaching/learning materials	100	8.95
Lack of practice	100	8.95
Poor teaching at the polytechnic	81	4.81
Total	1117	100.00

From table 4.7 (a), lack of extensive reading was seen by the students as the most frequent source of the errors they made in writing (18.05%). Inconsistency in the rules of English (14.64%) and lack of practice (14.25%) were also seen as potent sources of errors. Most of the students did not feel that poor teaching at the polytechnic (4.81%)

was a serious source of errors of writing. The teachers (see table 4.7 (b)) felt that inconsistency in the rules of English (18.17%) accounted for majority of the writing errors of the students. Lack of extensive reading (15.31%) was also seen by them as a major source of errors. The teachers felt that poor teaching at the polytechnic (7.25%) was not a major cause of errors.

Table 4.7 (c) shows the difference in sources of errors as perceived by the students and teachers.

TABLE 4.7(C) T-test, Teachers' and Students' Perception of Sources of Errors

variable	n	mean	sd	df	t-value	t-critical	decision
Teachers	9	124.1	38.76	16	-3.40	1.86	significant
Students	9	231.4	86.32				

The T-test performed showed a significant difference in the students' and teachers' perception of sources of errors at 0.05 level of significance (computed T - value = -3.40, while t critical = 1.86). This means that there is significant difference between the teachers' perception of sources of errors and that of the students. The null hypothesis is therefore rejected as the calculated T -value falls in the rejection region of the T distribution.

Despite the significant difference between the perception of teachers and students concerning sources of errors, to some extent, there were areas where the teachers responses corresponded to those of the students. Both sets of respondents agreed that lack of extensive reading (15.31%, 18.05%) and inconsistency in the rules of English (18.17%, 14.64%) were potent sources of errors. They also agreed that poor teaching at the polytechnic (7.25%, 4.81%) and MT interference (10.47%, 10.21%) were not very serious sources of errors. This agreement between the respondents showed that, students

can be involved in determining sources of errors they made. An area of marked disparity in their perceptions was that the students felt that lack of practice was an important source of error (14.25%), while the teachers did not think it was (8.95%). The teachers might have mistakenly assumed that having exposed students to the ECS writing course, the students practised what was taught on their own, while the students felt they did not. Even in areas of disagreement, the students' views cannot be overlooked or dismissed because although the students are not doing the teaching, they are the ones making the errors.

When the respondents were asked to give any other sources of errors not listed but found to be real and to suggest what could be done to eradicate or minimise the errors, they both agreed that lack of exposure to the English language at an early age and carelessness on the part of the students were realistic sources of errors. The two sets of respondents also felt that the errors could be minimised by the provision of more books in the library, reading extensively, using computers in education and improving the teaching of English at the primary schools.

4.8 DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS

This section interpreted the findings obtained from the study.

4.8.1 STRUCTURAL ERRORS

The findings reported under structural errors have shown that in most cases, students failed to produce qualitatively, more structurally correct sentences as they progressively moved to a higher proficiency level. This finding is consistent with the result of the hypothesis testing which showed no significant difference between the error frequency of structural errors produced by the students across the three instructional levels. This trend could be attributed to fossilization of the wrong patterns caused by lack

of significant input from the teachers and the syllabus. Some of the error types such as tenses and determiners (see table 4.2 (b)) were found to have increased according to proficiency level. The reason for this could be due to lack of emphasis on the use of determiners/tenses in the ND syllabus or due to MT interference. Other categories such as nouns, adjuncts, auxiliaries, verb phrases decreased at stage II and increased at stage III (table 4.1 (b)). This increase (at stage III) could be attributed to the fact that the students at this proficiency level had either unlearned the rules governing the use of these items due to lack of emphasis by the teachers or they had never learnt them at all. The communication demands might also have induced more of these errors at the later stage.

Lexical verb, preposition and adjective errors were more frequent at the end of year I than at the end of year II. This might be due to the students' increased awareness on the use of the items. It could also be due to their level of maturity in the target language or to the lack of the teaching of these items in proficiency level II

A few of the error type (adverbs, concord) decreased according to proficiency level. This might be due to the students' increased mastery of the use of the items or due to error avoidance strategies employed by them.

The students from all indications, have failed to develop their inter language grammar as they made more errors at stage III (33.8%) than at stage II (32.91% or even stage I (33.27%). This finding is similar to Olaofe's 91986) who found no significant difference in terms of frequency of errors produced by students across three proficiency levels. The pedagogical implication of this finding is that there is the need for an intensive teaching of the structural aspect of the syllabus at all three stages.

4.8.2 LEXICAL ERRORS

The results in respect of lexical errors showed that the students made less errors

at stage III (31.96%) than at stages I (32.14) or II (35.90) although the difference was not statistically significant. This study agrees with Olayemi (1980) that students at whatever level generally find the choice of lexical items a difficulty. The reduction in error frequency at stage III was not reflected in the quality of errors produced by the students. The decrease in frequency of lexical errors at the end of the ECS writing course may not necessarily imply mastery of lexical items. It may be due to some error avoidance strategies employed by the students. The error type that was found to have decreased in frequency was wrong choice of lexical items. (See table 4.2 (b)). Errors caused by wrong splitting of compound words increased in frequency across the three instructional levels. This might be due to fossilization of the wrong patterns or that the topics given were error provoking. Lexical cohesion errors were more frequent at stage II than III, although at all stages, students showed a lack of the knowledge needed to enable them achieve the cohesive effect necessary in writing which is gotten by the proper selection of vocabulary.

The implication of this finding is that students need to be taught how to use the dictionary, how to choose the correct lexical item that will express their intention, read extensively, use synonyms, antonyms etc. The students also need to learn collocation of words.

4.8.3 DISCOURSE ERRORS

The result in respect of discourse errors showed no significant difference in the frequency of errors produced by the diploma students at the three stages. Although there was a reduction in frequency at stage II (35.17%, 31.54%, 33.29%), there was some unlearning at stage III. Some of the error types decreased at stage II, while one of the categories decreased according to proficiency level (see table 4.3 (b)). The decrease in

number of errors cannot be attributed to the students' increased awareness of discourse patterns. If anything they showed a consistent lack of knowledge of discourse elements and organisation throughout the ECS writing course, judging from the quality of the discourse errors. They lacked the ability to manipulate cohesive items in their writings.

This trend could be attributed to the limited vocabulary which the students possess and to the neglect of discourse they also were not able to perceive writing as communication in the NBTE syllabus. The implication here is that there is a need for a syllabus which incorporates discourse so that students will develop skills necessary for effective communication.

4.8.4 MECHANICAL ERRORS

The findings reported under mechanical errors have shown that more errors were made by the students at the end of ECS writing course (36.09) than either at the beginning (33.05%) or middle (30.86%) although the difference was not statistically significant. Some of the error types like spelling and comma (see table 4.4 (b)) decreased according to proficiency level. Others like capitalization and full stop errors increased according to proficiency level. At all levels, the students showed a lack of knowledge of when to use punctuation marks. This might be due to the lack of emphasis on punctuation by the NBTE syllabus and fossilization of the wrong patterns. This finding agrees with Olaofe (1995b) who felt that students' inability to effectively manipulate punctuation markes: (and spelling) led to communication breakdown. This means that more emphasis should be placed on mechanical accuracy by the teachers and in the NBTE syllabus.

4.8.5 OVERALL ERROR PROFILE

For all the error types, the findings showed that there was no significant difference in the frequency of errors made by diploma students at the beginning, middle and end of the ECS writing course, although the errors made at the end (33.87%) were greater than those made at the beginning (33.25%) or middle (32.88). This finding is similar to that of Olaofe (1986) who discovered that there was no significant difference in the frequency of errors produced by tertiary, form IV and form I students.

It was disturbing to find out that the students made fewer errors at the end of year I than at the end of year II despite the additional one year spent going through the ECS course. One wonders whether the extra year had much positive impact on the students. The students at stage III had either un learnt what they were taught at stage II, or had not learned at all, or employed error avoidance strategies. Fossilization of the wrong patterns might also account for the trend. The teachers might have also contributed to the negative trend by not be trained to teach ESL and by not laying much effort on the writing course. It could also be due to lack of emphasis from the syllabus. The reason could also be due to the fact that no special treatment was given to the respondents. If a different approach had been used, the result might had differed.

This finding calls for a review of the NBTE syllabus, teaching method and materials. The teachers also need to be more emphatic in teaching the current syllabus and teach English from different perspectives.

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4.8.6 STUDENTS' PERFORMANCE IN WRITTEN ENGLISH

The result showed no significant difference in the performance of the students at the beginning and end and also at the middle and end of the ECS writing course. This means that the students did no better at the end of year II than they did at the beginning and end of year I. A reason for this could be the research design used. A different statistical too might had yielded significant different.

On the whole, the impression obtained from the error analysis was that the two years of the ECS writing course at the polytechnic had failed in very many ways in preparing the diploma students for the writing tasks in the field of science and technology. This finding is similar to what was obtained in other studies such as Olayemi (1980), Ofuokwu (1984), Olaofe (1988) and Ahmed (1988). It has been established, however, in this study that students can be used to determine the sources of errors they make, and that discourse is an important aspect of communication that cannot and should not be ignored in any ECS syllabus. It is a fact the EA that errors existed in the written composition of the students at the beginning of the ECS writing course and do not disappear either at the middle or end of the programme.

4.8.7 SOURCES OF ERRORS

The sources of errors found in the students written can largely be said to be intralingual, interlingual and developmental. Although a significant difference was found between the perception of the teacher and students concerning sources of errors, there are areas where they agreed. They both agreed that lack of extensive reading, inconsistency in the rules of English and inadequate exposure to the language in and out of the classroom are potent sources of errors. This agreement between the teachers and students lends credence to the view of this researcher and other researchers (Celce-Marcia, 1986, Olaofe, 1984) that students can be involved in identifying their language needs, identifying sources of errors and in the development of materials and methods. Students should therefore be seen as active partners in the search for knowledge and not as passive listeners whose only input in the language learning process is to provide the errors for EA.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

5.0 INTRODUCTION

This chapter summarised the findings, concluded and provided teaching implications of the findings.

5.1 SUMMARY

The study was undertaken in order to find out the written errors of diploma students in the school of Applied Sciences, Kaduna State Polytechnic, Zaria. The study sought to find answers to the following research questions.

1. What is the difference in the frequency of errors produced by students across the three stages?
2. Is there any difference between the performance in written English or diploma students at the beginning and end, middle and end of the ECS writing course?
3. Is there any difference in the perception of teachers and students regarding sources of errors found in the students' written work?

To answer these question, fifty three students were selected from one hundred and three students of the three departments in the School of Applied Sciences. The students who were of high, moderate and low proficiency levels were given three topics in their areas of specialization to write an essay, letter and report. The large size of the sample, and the wide range of the topics given to the students were intended to increase the probability that the errors found (in the essays) were typical of the diploma students.

Using the category of errors derived from Quirk and Greenbaum (1976) and

Halliday and Hasan (1976), the students' written compositions at the three stages were analysed according to types (structural, lexical, discourse and mechanical). The analysis involved the use of two statistical tests (T-test and ANOVA). The findings of the study are summarised as follows:

1. For all the error types, there was no significant difference in the frequency of errors produced by students at the beginning, middle and end of the ECS writing course.
2. There was no difference between the average performance in written English of diploma students at the beginning and end, middle and end of the ECS course.
3. There was a difference in the perception of the teachers and students concerning the sources of errors committed by students in their written work.
4. All the four broad categories of errors persisted with the students from the beginning to the end of the ECS writing programme.
5. From the total sum of errors, structural had the highest frequency of occurrence (42.35%) and were more frequent at the end (33.81%)than at the beginning (33.27%) or middle (33.91%) of the ECS writing course. The students were at the post- systematic stage of errors where they sometimes produce the correct forms but they are not consistent. The students might have unlearned at the end what they had learnt at the middle or that they had never learnt at all. All sub categories of structural errors persisted with the students across the three levels, only conjunct errors were dropped at stages II and III (see table 4.1 (b)).

6. Mechanical errors were next in frequency to structural errors (22.62%) and were more frequent at stage III (36.09) than at stage I (33.05) or II (30.86). This implies that there was some learning and unlearning by the students. All subcategories also persisted with the students across the three stages (see table 4.4 (b)).

7. Lexical errors also occurred quite frequently (20.82%) and showed a decrease in frequency at stage III (32.14%, 35.90%, 31.96), although all sub categories persisted with the students across the three stages (see table 4.2 (b)). This could imply that the ECS course might have had a positive impact on the number of lexical errors produced by the students, or that the learners were employing error avoidance strategies. From the sample of errors given (see 4.2), it can be said that error gravity in terms of quality of errors did not reduce across the three instructional levels. This could be due to the fact that fossilization had already taken place. The students have assimilated the wrong forms such that no amount of teaching or learning can minimise the errors.

8. Discourse errors were the least in number among all four categories (13.96%) and were less frequent at stage II (31.54%) than at stage I (35.17%) or stage III (33.29%). This reduction in frequency at the middle does not necessarily imply that there was a conscious effort aimed at reducing this error type since discourse does not form part of the course content. All sub categories of discourse errors persisted with the students across the three stages (see table 4.3 (b)).

9. Sources of errors are varied and go beyond MT interference. Going by in-puts from the students, teachers and the researcher, sources of

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students' errors could be said to be:

a. Lack of extensive reading

b. Inconsistency in the rules of English

c. Lack of practice

d. Inadequate exposure to the English language in and out of the classroom

e. Poor teaching at primary/secondary schools

f. Interference from the MT

g. Difficulty in writing essays on the topics

h. Poor teaching at the polytechnic

i. Lack of exposure to English at an early stage

j. Carelessness on the part of the students

The students' ability to identify sources of errors has shown that contrary to what some people think, students (and their teachers) can be used to determine sources of errors.

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5.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

The recommendations made in light of the observations from the data of this study are aimed at the elimination or reduction of errors discovered. The implications are discussed in relation to the students, the school and to teachers of English and teachers of other subjects.

5.2.1. IMPLICATIONS FOR THE STUDENTS

1. The students should know that one learns a language not only by watching or hearing others speak or by having the language explained, but by also practising and transferring language use to situations outside the classroom.

2. The students should be aware of the relationship between listening, speaking and writing and should endeavour more to use English as a medium of communication both in and outside the classroom. This can be done by listening to the radio, television and by speaking English to their friends and colleagues.
3. There is a strong positive relationship between reading and writing. Students should try to read extensively-both fiction and non-fiction texts. It has been proved (Olaofe 1995 b, 1998) that extensive reading aids students in their written work.
4. Students should be aware of the constant need for revision, learning and re-learning throughout the ECS course.
5. The students should be able to project themselves into the roles of both encoders and decoders. This will enable them to edit their written work by providing immediate feedback on what has been written.

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5.2.2 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE TEACHERS

1. From the errors observed in the EA, it is recommended that the ECS teacher should use an integrative approach in the teaching of writing. Communicative activities such as listening, speaking, reading and testing should be integrated into the teaching of writing to make it more effective and meaningful. This, the teachers can do, by asking the learners to dramatize dialogues, formulate and answer questions, listen to pre-recorded tapes, engage in debates, and write reports, essays and letters on what they have learnt from these activities
2. The ECS teacher should have a good knowledge of textbook evaluation in order to be able to adapt existing English textbooks to suit the specific needs(s) of the students.
3. From the students' responses to the topics provided, there should be a shift in

emphasis from writing only narrative or argumentative essays on general topics to writing that is appropriate to the students' communicative goals in areas of specialization. The teacher needs to be innovative and imaginative in presenting writing lessons and encourage the learners to see the aim of writing as that of trying to establish a link with the audience.

4. Teachers should see and teach writing as a process. The creativity element in writing should be taught to the students they should be taught the skills of pre-writing, outlining, drafting, re-drafting, editing and proof-reading.
5. Due to the persistent nature of structural errors, there is the need for intensive teaching and re-teaching of the English verbs forms, rules of concord, determiners and prepositions, most especially. The teacher can do this by flooding the students with materials (like dialogues, crossword puzzles, story-telling) that will enable them to see the language items in action.
6. To reduce lexical errors the teacher can engage in the deliberate teaching of vocabulary. Students should be taught how to use the dictionary and be provided with copious reading materials which can enable them to have a good storage of lexical items. The students should be encouraged or made to compile a reading diary which consists of new words learned.
7. To minimise the errors of mechanics, rules of punctuation and the uses of the different punctuation mark should be taught through out the ECS course and not just in year one as is done now. The teacher can compile frequently misspelt words and give students to learn. Dictation, un punctuated passages or sentences, jumbling different punctuation marks for rearranging can be used by the teacher to develop mechanical skills in the students.
8. The teacher should provide encouragement and motivation to the students. This can be done by using teaching aids such as language laboratories, filmstrips-if possible. Where these cannot be found, the innovative teacher can use charts,

pictures, diagrams, puzzles and tables to enable the students become better writers. But these aids should not be seen as ends in themselves but tools which if judiciously used, may help the polytechnic students acquire the necessary writing skills.

9. The teacher should endeavour to organised teaching based upon perceived problem areas. Areas that are seen to be easy for the students should be treated first, while highly problematic and difficult writing areas should be taught last.
10. Errors analysis should be carried out from time to time by the ECS teacher and relevant error correction strategies, which are appropriate to the situation, should be devised.
11. Academic subject teachers should also be involved in the language learning process. This they can do by giving the students tasks that involve creative, innovative and communicative use of language. They should also emphasize to the students the need to be proficient language users (irrespective of field of specialization) by serving as good role models.
12. If possible, the ECS teachers and teachers of other subjects should come together to plan the ECS course, implement the plan and to jointly evaluate the plan (Olaofe, 1993).

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5.2.3 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE SCHOOL

1. The school should employ more teachers to teach the ECS course as the present number of teachers cannot effectively handle the large number of students. The teachers to be employed should be those specially trained to teach English as a second language. The school should also look into the possibility of providing more contact hours for the teaching of English. The present time of two to three hours a week is too limited for any meaningful learning to take place. Where the

above are not feasible (even if they are) the school should endeavour to provide materials which could aid both the learning/teaching process. These could be in form of textbooks, computers and other relevant teaching materials.

2. Due to the relationship between listening and writing the school could also look into the possibility of building a language laboratory to aid in the teaching of the ECS course in the polytechnic. The students can listen to pre-recorded tapes and then write essays or dialogues based on what was listened to.
3. The school should undertake a review of the ECS syllabus. The present syllabus needs to be expanded and enriched to incorporate other things like discourse strategies to enable the students (who should be seen as joint partners in syllabus design) achieve communicative competence. The present bias of the syllabus towards form over function should be redressed.
4. A remedial programme which could run concurrently with the ECS writing course is suggested, based on the errors found in the written composition of the sample to minimise written errors of the students. The programme is expected to cover the four semesters of the ND programme. As a starting point, a pre-test can be administered to the students to see their performance before the remedial course. For evaluation, an essays, letter or report could be written every other week with a particular category of error as the focus of attention. A post-test can be given at the end of the 4th semester to evaluate the attainment or otherwise of the objectives. It is hoped that since the remedial programme is based on frequency of occurrence of the error types, it will cater for the different categories of students at this level.

   These include

   a. those who have not mastered very many areas of the ECS writing course;
   b. those who have fossilized the wrong structure; and

c. those students who did not have a proper background from the primary and secondary schools.

The remedial programme was based on the error types found in these study. In preparing this programme, the problem(s) of implementation was acknowledged but it is hoped that with little adjustment in teaching strategies and points of emphasis, the proposed programme could be effectively incorporated into the existing ECS syllabus. A list of books which could be used by the teachers and students in running the proposed programme of study is provided.

SCHEME OF WORK FOR A FOUR SEMESTER REMEDIAL PROGRAMME

Semester	Aims	Structure	Lexis	Discourse	Mechanics	Evaluation
1st	To enable the students identify and use: 1. Verbs, verb phrases, nouns noun phrases 2. Capital letters ful stop, Apostrophe. 3. Use the dictionary to find meanings 4. Know discourse analysis and identify cohesive devices	i Regular lexical verbs Irregular lexical verbs iii. Finite, non-finite verb phrases iv. Auxiliaries v. Nouns: countable, uncountable vi. Pronouns Method 1. Teacher illustrates concepts in context using concrete situations. 2. Students are given sentences to identify the concepts 3. students make sentences of their own. 4. A passage is given with certain words deleted, students are asked to supply the words.	1 Finding the appropriate registers to use in discussing topics related to the students' fields 2. Use the dictionary to check meaning, spelling and pronunciation Method 1. Teacher illustrates use of dictionary 2. Students are engaged in using the dictionary to find the above 3. Teacher reads a passage, students listen and write down new words 4. Students use the dictionary to check the meaning of the new words	1. Discourse and cohesive devices a. Substitution b. Reference c. Ellipse d. Lexical cohesion e. Connectives Method 1. Teacher illustrates concepts in context 2. Students are given a passage with some of the cohesive devices missing, and they are asked to provide the correct one 3. Students write a short paragraph using the devices	i. Capital letters ii. Apostrophe iii. Full stop iv. Write titles Method 1. Contextual examples on the use of the marks are given 2. Students are given a passage with jumbled punctuation marks to reorganise	writing short essays on topics related to students'areas of specialization using the skills learnt in the semester

2nd	To enable students identify and use 1. Adjectives, adverbs adjuncts, disjuncts, conjuncts, determiners 2. Compound words, prefixation suffixaton 3. The comma for separation 4. Cohesive devices	i. Adjectives ii Adverbs iii. Adjuncts iv. Disjuncts v. Conjuncts vi. Determiners Method 1. Teacher gives situational examples on the use of the terms 2. Students identify terms used in sentences 3. A passage is read to the students and they are asked to write down the terms learnt above	i. Forming compounds ii. Prefix iii. Suffix Method 1. Teacher illustrates concepts using concrete objects and contrived situations 2. Students are given the bases of the words to complete 3. Students are given a coherent passage to correct errors in the use of the terms	i. cohesive devices in detail ii. textual cohesion Method 1. Teacher illustrates how cohesive devices affect coherence in a text. 2. Students act out dialogues using the devices 3. Students write out their impression of the dialogue using the terms above. They draft, re-draft, and edit their written work.	I. Comma -separation of clauses and phrases Method 1.Teacher illustrates concept 2. Students are given a passage and told to use the comma to separate the clauses and phrases in the passage	Write letters either expository or descriptive to show mastery of items taught

3rd	To enable students identify and use 1. Tenses, prepositions 2. Other punctuation marks 3. Synonyms, homonyms, homographs 4. How to organise thought patterns	i. Tenses a. Shall, will b. inflection: regular and irregular verbs c. use of auxiliaries as tense carriers d. tense sequence- present, past future. ii. Prepositions Method 1. Teacher tells students a story to get them to see the items in action 2. The teacher reads a short passage with some of the above items omitted, and students are asked to provide the missing words.	I. develop new vocabulary a) synonyms b) antonyms c) homonyms d) homographs Method 1. Teacher illustrates concepts in situations 2. Students are given a crossword puzzle to complete using the terms learnt	1. Organise though pattern a) sequential order of thought b) over generalization c) circumlocution d) run-on thought pattern etc. Method 1. Teacher illustrates concepts using contrived situations 2. Students are given a passage to summarise to see if they follow the author's thought pattern	i. Question mark ii. Exclamation mark iii. Hyphen iv. Bracket Method 1. Teacher illustrates the use of the marks 2. Teacher gives students a Passage with jumbled punctuation marks to rearrange 3. Teacher dictates a passage and students put the punctuation marks	Give students essays to write on topics that are related to their fields. Compile a list of frequently misspelt words and give students to learn

4th	To enable the students know 1. Concord 2. All punctuation marks 3. Identify, spell and use new words in sentences 4. Write coherent passages	I. Concord (a) rules (b) types Noun-Pronoun Noun-determiner Noun-complement Subject-verb Method 1. Teacher illustrates concepts in context 2. Students are given a passage containing a number of concord errors to identify and correct	i. Identify new words ii. Used new words in context Method 1. Provide students with extensive reading texts-both fiction and non fiction 2. Get students to form a reading diary made up of new words found in the books 3. Engage students in writing sentences using the words in their diaries	i. Cohesive devices ii. Organise thought pattern Method 1. Students are encouraged to organise debates, 2. The students write long passages based on no I above	All punctuation marks taught earlier Method 1. Teacher briefly illustrates concept 2. Students are given long passages to punctuate	Students are asked to write reports or letters on particular topics.

SUGGESTED LIST OF BOOKS TO BE USED IN RUNNING THE PROPOSED PROGRAMME

1. Amadihe, E.M. (Ed) (1995). Use of English 1 for Nigerian Polytechnics. Enugu, IMT.

2. Hornby, A.S. (1975).Guide to Patterns and Usage. London, Oxford University Press.

3. Olaofe, I.A. (1991).English and Communication skills for Academic Purposes . Zaria, Tamaza

4. Olaofe, I.A. (1993). Communicate English . Zaria, Tamaza Publishers.

5. Unogu, A.M. (1994). Use of English in communication. Jos, Caril Communications Ltd.

5.3 SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

1. This study aimed at finding solutions to errors committed by a selected sample of students in Kaduna State Polytechnic, Zaria. There are many more students not covered by the study. There is a need for a study that will cover a larger sample size.

2. Students population changes every year. This calls for EA of students written composition to be done regularly so that the curriculum will constantly be revised and improved to meet the needs of the students.

5.4 CONCLUSION

That errors predominate in the writings of diploma students in an undisputable fact. That the errors can be minimised is also not in doubt. The study aimed at changing the orientation of the polytechnic students, teachers and syllabus towards

language learning. The findings of this study have shown that students' errors are no different in diploma I and II. The NBTE syllabus is certainly not yielding the desired result(s). The need for a review of the syllabus cannot be overemphasised, hence the remedial programme being proposed in this study.

ERRONEOUS SENTENCE	REASONS FOR THE ERRORS								
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1. Computers are used to minimise unaccuracy. Instead of Computers are used to minimize inaccuracy.									
2. Computer ... mechine very fast accerate ... instead of ... computer ... machine very fast, accurate ...									
3. Computer is applicable to every field bee it Hospital ... instead of ... Computer is applicable in every field be it hospital ...									
4. I wish to seize this opportunity to say one or two reasons... instead of ... I wish to seize this opportunity to give one or two reasons.									
5. ... because even our grand-great parents ... instead of ... because even our great grand parents ...									
6. Mathematics should be make a compulsory subject ... instead of ... mathematics should be made a compulsory subject ...									

7.	In accordance to your advertisement ... instead of ... with reference to your advertisement ...									
8.	Newspaper to brief the importancy of Maths. Please... . Instead of ... newspapers to write on the importance of Maths.									
9.	In your widely readed newspaper ... instead of in your widely read newspaper...									
10.	... You ask us to make investigation ... instead of ... you asked us to investigate.									
11.	Maths is make composry instead of ... maths should be made compulsory.									
12.	I am please to ... national newspaper... being that your newspaper is the most widely read newspaper ... instead of ... I am pleased to write in your widely read newspaper.									
13.	... trader, carpenter, ... they all needs maths. ... Instead of ... traders, carpenters... they all need maths...									

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14.	... System of adopting people of high calibrate ... instead of ... system of employing people of high calibre...									
15.	Computer is used in our homes. Banks, Hospitals. Market places... instead of ... Computer is used in our homes, banks, hospitals, market places...									
16.	Shielding more light on ... instead of ...shed more light on...									
17.	Conclusively, I am writing ... instead of ... In conclusion, I am writing.									
18.	Due to the rapid need of computer specialists. Instead of ... due to the increasing need for computer specialists...									
19.	Computer help in making work quickly... instead of ... Computer helps in making work quicker.									

20.	The student will also know how to write... they will not have any difficulty... instead of ... the students will also know how to write... they will not have any difficulty.									

Give any other sources of errors which were not listed.

What do you think can be done to minimize or eradicate these errors?

APPENDIX II

Questionnaire for students

Twenty incorrect sentence and their correct versions have been provided. You are *required to tick the reason(s) for the occurrence of the incorrect sentences from the list* provided. (Tick as many as possible).

Reasons for the Errors

1. **I have not been taught at the polytechnic**
2. **I have not read widely enough**
3. **I do not have this structure in my language.**
4. **English is too confusing and complex.**
5. **I found the topics too difficult.**
6. **There are no English textbooks available for me to read.**
7. **I do not have enough practice.**
8. **I was not taught at the primary and second schools.**
9. **I am not exposed to English in and out of the classroom**

ERRONEOUS SENTENCE		REASONS FOR THE ERRORS								
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1.	Computers are used to minimise unaccuracy. Instead of Computers are used to minimize inaccuracy.									
2.	Computer ... mechine very fast accurete ... instead of ... computer ... machine very fast, accurate ...									
3.	Computer is applicable to every field bec it Hospital ... instead of ... Computer is applicable in every field be it hospital ...									
4.	I wish to seize this opportunity to say one or two reasons... instead of ... I wish to seize this opportunity to give one or two reasons.									
5.	... because even our grand-great parents ... instead of ... because even our great grand parents ...									
6.	Mathematics should be make a compulsory subject ... instead of ... mathematics should be made a compulsory subject ...									
7.	In accordance to your advertisement ... instead of ... with reference to your advertisement ...									
8.	Newspaper to brief the importancy of Maths. Please... . Instead of ... newspapers to write on the importance of Maths.									
9.	In your widely readed newspaper ... instead of in your widely read newspaper...									
10.	... You ask us to make investigation ... instead of ... you asked us to investigate.									
11.	Maths is make composry instead of ... maths should be made compulsory.									

12.	I am please to ... national newspaper... being that your newspaper is the most widely read newspaper ... instead of ... I am pleased to write in your widely read newspaper.									
13.	... trader, carpenter, ... they all needs maths. ... Instead of ... traders, carpenters... they all need maths...									
14.	... System of adopting people of high calibrate ... instead of ... system of employing people of high calibre...									
15.	Computer is used in our homes. Banks, Hospitals. Market places... instead of ... Computer is used in our homes, banks, hospitals, market places...									
16.	Shielding more light on ... instead of ...shed more light on...									
17.	Conclusively, I am writing ... instead of ... In conclusion, I am writing.									
18.	Due to the rapid need of computer specialists. Instead of ... due to the increasing need for computer specialists...									
19.	Computer help in making work quickly... instead of ... Computer helps in making work quicker.									
20.	The student will also know how to write... they will not have any difficulty... instead of ... the students will also know how to write... they will not have any difficulty.									

Give any other sources of Errors which were not listed.

What do you think can be done to eradicate or minimize these errors?

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