FORMAL CORRESPONDENCES STRIKING A BALANCE BETWEEN THE REQUIREMENTS OF LANGUAGE AND FORMAT

BY

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this thesis written by me is a record of my own original work. It has never been presented anywhere for the award of a Higher Degree.

All quotations and sources of information are acknowledged by means of references.

Signature _____ Date _____

CERTIFICATION

This thesis entitled: "FORMAL CORRESPONDENCE: STRIKING A BALANCE BETWEEN THE REQUIREMENTS OF LANGUAGE AND FORMAT" has been read and approved as satisfying the conditions for the award of the Master of Arts degree in English Language in the Department of English, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria.

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DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my husband, Mr Charles Ajalie, and my children: Uzochikwa, Nwannebuife, Chukwuemeka and Ifeanyinachukwu Ajalie for their understanding, encouragement and patience.

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I accept responsibility for all other inadequacies that may still remain in the study.

ABSTRACT

Formal correspondence now the bane of "business organisation has its specifics. Unfortunately, some of these specifics are either not fully known or are mixed up from time to time by many Nigerian writers.

This study attempted to assess how Nigerians perform in the area of formal correspondence writing. The study identified the features of formal correspondence as they are universally known and compared them with the features of formal correspondence as used by Nigerians in their write-ups.

Ninety-two letters which were randomly collected from three sets of institutions in Nigeria served as the data.

The study treated, reappraised critically:

(a) Informal versus formal correspondence

(b) Universally identifiable features of formal correspondence against the locally imposed ones and

(c) The format of formal correspondence versus the language used by Nigerians.

It was found out that many Nigerian writers of formal correspondence use these features of formality but are at times inconsistent in the usage., The letters failed to strike a balance between the requirements of language and format.

The investigator has recommended a systematic exposure of both Nigerian learners and the executives to the

requirements of formal correspondence. In addition further study needs to be done on the academic background of writers of such formal correspondence..

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CHAPTER 1

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study

Brandis (1970) defines communication as "the process of transmitting (or exchanging) abstractions, such as ideas or beliefs, through the use of symbols, usually (not necessarily, however) through language." It is, in other words, the sending of messages to people in a manner which stimulates response of one kind or another. Sometimes, that response will be direct to the sender (e.g where two people are discussing, or debating, the merits of a particular action), but at other times the response is indirect (as when the transfer of the information gives rise to an independent action on the part of the recipient).

Communication is a very important social event in human life. Language is a wonderfully rich vehicle for communication. Everybody spends a great deal of time in communicating with others either to achieve certain goals personal or organisational or to satisfy personal needs as in, for example, a reassurance of friendship or to improve or change a situation within a short period or to provide some feedback against a standard measurement, a norm or informal judgement.

1.1.1 Forms of Communication

Different forms of communication are used by members of any given society. It can be verbal or non-verbal. When it is non-verbal, facial expressions, gestures, bodily postures, and so on, form parts of communication. The oral or verbal communication is universally recognised as the most natural and most common form of communication since it is only when the individual is able to experience direct feedback from the individual or people to whom he is talking that it is really known what is being heard (or not heard). The complex nature and the advance made in business and technological areas have necessitated other forms of communication. Consequently, reading, writing, the telephone and the fax machines have all become integral parts of man's communicating systems.

When we are engaged in communicating with one another at the very personal level, we use what is described as the informal correspondence, that is when such communication is written. For some situations written communications are indispensable and they have the following advantages:

(a) they enable individuals to study the message at leisure (vital, if the content is lengthy and complex);

(b) they provide a permanent record.

White (1980) describes informal letter writing as 'conversation on paper." Informal letters are letters

which are written to friends or to people with whom the is well acquainted. It may be written by a friend to her own friend; it may be written by a child to her parent; it may also be written by a student to her favourite teacher.

1.1.2 Features of Different Correspondence Forms

The characteristics of informal correspondence include casual conversational style, the use of familiar names, the forms of salutation are intentionally intimate, intimate complimentary close and the tendency to include a net of items or issues. Here is an example of an informal letter:

P.O. Box 34,
Obior.

6th May, 1994.

Dear Rose,

It is only three weeks since you left the village but it seems like years. I was glad to start school last week because things were a bit lonely and I hadn't the heart to go swimming on my own.

Now that you have had time to settle down please write and tell me what life is like in the big city. Is your new school as good as ours in the village?

What sort of house do you live in? Has it got a big garden at the back like your house in the village? I am sure your father will be annoyed if it hasn't. Everyone used to say that he grew the best maize for miles around.

I suppose you do all kinds of exciting things now and have made new friends. So tell me all about them and

don't forget to tell me clearly how to get from the city bus station to your house. I'll definitely keep my promise and come to see you at half term. Goodbye for now and don't forget to write soon.

Your old friend,

Jane.

However, when the circumstances change, the individual may find it necessary to engage in writing a formal or semi-formal correspondence. A semi-formal style is used by people who know each other without being really close friends. It may be used even by people who know each other well if the subject of the letter is official or to do with business matters. A typical possibility is provided when an individual is given an official message in the absence of the would-be receiver, she may end up writing a semi-official letter or memo. Such a correspondence will have traces of formality especially in the following areas:

(a) Salutation

(b) Language

(c) Subject-matter.

An example of a semi-formal letter is reproduced below:

Federal Government College,
Zaria.

28th September, 1994.

Dear Sir,

Good day. I called this afternoon at about 1.50 p.m but did not meet anybody in the house or your office.

Our Principal, Mrs J.S. Robinson of F.G.G.C., Zaria, asked me to inform you that the workshop of 3rd October, 1994, will not be holding again. She will inform you of the new date.

Regards to the family.

Mrs Alawa.

One notable feature of the semi-formal letter is the accommodation of some points that cannot be rigidly declared as forming part of the central theme. Whatever the additional points are, such are usually not allowed to reduce the forcefulness of the main theme.

In style, too, the language is business-like with the writer usually particular about specifying the main message. This is why the writer is commonly fond of speaking on behalf of an organisation or institution. Formal correspondence cover a wide spectrum including business letters and official invitations, and application for employment, scholarships or entrance into educational institutions. Formal letters could be for different purposes. One could be a letter placing an order for goods, another a request for information or services, while others could be written to make a complaint or some recommendation of an individual or a new product. In terms of writer-addressee relationship formal letters may be in the following pattern:

	From	To
i.	an individual	a firm (organisation)

ii. a firm (organisation) an individual

iii. a firm (organisation) another firm (organisation)

With regard to the format, all formal letters have almost the same formal features. The rules and conventions of formal letter writing stipulate that an effective official letter should include the following:

i. The writer's address

ii. The addressee's address

iii. Reference number

iv. Formal salutation

v. Subject of the letter

vi. Non-intimate complimentary close

(Anasiudu, in Oluikpe 1981). Here is an example of a formal letter:

Lagos State University,
Department of Physical and
Health Education,
Badagry Express,
Ojo,
P.M.B. 1087,
Apapa-Lagos.

13th September, 1993.

The Editor,
Nigeria Educational Forum,
Languages and Publication Division,
Institute of Education,
Ahmadu Bello University,
Zaria.

Dear Sir,

Article for Publication

I refer to your letter of 3rd December, 1990, Ref. No. IE/LAN/5/NEF/A/12, in respect of my article titled:

'Protein-Energy Malnutrition in Children: its Implication for the New National Policy on Education."

I have made several attempts to hear from you in respect of this paper. Will you be kind enough to let me know your editorial decision as I intend to send the paper to another journal.

Thank you.

Yours faithfully,

[Signed]
Dr. A.P. Agbonjinmi.

1.2.1 Prevailing Assumptions about Correspondence

Formal correspondence has become the bane of business organisation. It is the medium through which corporate affairs are discussed and sorted out. It is the most efficient means of communication. This is because of the great advantages of letters over verbal message of any kind. It is capable of great precision. It can also be put on record. A carbon copy insures that the writer can refer back to the exact matters under discussion. Because of the special functions as a means of direct personal communication, a formal letter is subject to more explicit formalities. As earlier stated it has specifics. Unfortunately, however, some of these requirements are either not fully known or are mixed up from time to time. This is especially so in Nigeria where English is used as a second language. Many Nigerian users of English often

find it difficult to separate grammatical from non-grammatical forms or constructions. Such weaknesses spill over into their constructions when such users of English are involved in formal correspondence.

Very often, Nigerians are presented with a situation that calls for formal correspondence. How far they rise to that situation is sometimes determined by such factors like any of the following:

i. educational background or attainment
ii. professional experience
iii. social or economic status
iv. level of performance in English

Some observers insist that the level of professional training acquired by the Nigerian greatly influences his or her ability in performing tasks like reading, writing and reacting to formal letter. For such an observation to be taken seriously an investigation is necessary to uphold or reject prevailing assumptions.

1.2.2 Formal versus Informal Correspondence

As earlier mentioned, the formal correspondence has its own characteristics. In everyday experience the formal letters take different shapes and styles because of their different contents, origins and intentions. Formal letters can further be placed under different subgroups which include:

i. Confidential formal letters

ii. Semi-confidential letters

iii. Open formal letters

These are all similar in terms of degree of formality. The main differences reside in such areas as substance specificity, organisation of subject matter, the sensitivity of the issues raised language form and overall impression created.

The confidential formal letter has a very limited circulation. Some effort is made so that only the addressee receives the letter. A copy may be kept in the personal file which is usually under lock and key. Below is a sample of confidential formal letter:

Pelkham Group Nigeria Plc.,
24 Kakawa Street,
P.O. Box 8004,
Lagos.

18th May, 1993.

Mr Peter A. Uka,
295 Ojo Road,
Ajegunle,
Apapa.

Dear Sir,

With reference to your application for employment and the subsequent interview, we are happy to inform you that you have been offered a position as a Secretary/Assistant Personnel Officer with effect from 5th January, 1994, on an annual salary of ₦24,000.00 and a housing allowance of ₦920.00 per annum.

Attached is a copy of "Terms and Conditions of Service of Employees of Pelkham Group Nigeria, Plc."

Kindly sign and return the attached form if you accept our offer.

Yours faithfully,

(Signed)
General Manager.

The semi-confidential formal letters are virtually the same as the first category, especially in terms of the content, the language and the format. However, it is not as limited in circulation as the one marked strictly confidential. Some other individuals concerned might be copied or the same letter may be written to several persons simultaneously. Here is an example of a semi-confidential formal letter:

Division of Distance Education,
PMB 1062,
Zaria.

27th July, 1994.

Mallam M.S. Abdullahi,
Languages Division,
Institute of Education,
Ahmadu Bello University,
Zaria.

Dear Mallam Abdullahi,

You recommended 10 persons for payment for non-teaching duties. This number is unacceptable considering your total enrolment. In any case, you should get your Head of Division to consider the application.

I do not expect more than 3 persons to be recommended for payment.

Yours faithfully,

(Signed)
Gideon S. Tsoja
Chairman, F & LC

cc: The Director, Institute of Education.
cc: The Finance Officer, Institute of Education.
cc: Head, Languages Division, Institute of Education.

The open formal letters, very often, bear the characteristics of formality but differ from the first two in circulation, especially since they are often made available to the public. Again, here is an example of the open formal letter:

Academic Staff Union of Universities,
National Secretariat,
Flat 2,
Mellanby Hall,
P.O. Box 9021,
Ibadan.

30th December, 1994.

To: All Branch Chairmen,
Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU).

Summary of the Development Since Ilorin (NEC)

Please find enclosed a copy of the summary of developments of ASUU's on-going strike since the meeting of NEC at the University of Ilorin on October 22nd, 1994.

You are to:

a. make available to each member a copy of the summary.

ASHIM IBRAHIM MBA

b. call a congress between January 5 and January 7 1994 and,
c. on the basis of congress appreciation of the summary, congress should adopt one of the following options in form of a resolution.

Option 1. Congress is satisfied and the strike should be suspended.

Option 2. Congress is not satisfied and the strike should continue.

Option 3. Congress is not satisfied, nevertheless the strike should be suspended.

The resolution of the congress shall be brought in writing to NEC.

Dr. Assisi Asobie

(Signed)
National President.

Besides a letter may look informal in appearance but deeply formal in content. For example a Bank Manager writing to a prominent customer whose account is in the red.

Despite their subtle and significant differences, these letters are very much like one another. This is essentially because they share the mark of a stylistic uniformity which is borne out in specific ways. What these are and how the deviations from the ways can be identified constitute part of the rationale for this research.

1.3.1 Statement of the Problem

Many authors and analysts have commented on the use of English among Nigerians. Some have dwelt on the weaknesses demonstrated by Nigerians in selecting grammatical or appropriate forms of constructions (Odumu, 1981; Banjo, 1973).

In identifying some of the characteristics of English usage, Banjo (op cit) dwells on the features of language between the writer and the reader. He observed that a prospective employee is conscious when composing an application in which he/she seeks for employment. In his words:

> All the disadvantages, so to speak, are on the side of such a writer. He does not know whether the man he is addressing is a nice, pleasant man or a fastidious bully. So, to be on the safe side, he assumes that he is the latter. Moreover, the man is obviously higher in status than the writer, and therefore must be treated with some dererence ... A letter written in this kind of situation has every reason to be very formal.

Some other scholars have concentrated on the errors made by Nigerians in their use of English (Jowitt, 1990).

Dwelling specifically on errors, Jowitt (op cit) noted that many Nigerian users of English become conscious of certain errors only under certain circumstances. According to him when such circumstances like impending examination or peer censure are no longer present, the users lapse easily into such errors. In his words:

> Errors become permanent, and certain registers remain static, especially those connected with the emotional life and the domestic environment. Other areas of the vocabulary expand, however since the typical learner is an infant or an adolescent

> and is gradually being exposed to new forms of experience and their lexical correlates in technical or abstract registers.

So far to the best of the knowledge of this investigator, no specific study in Nigeria has addressed this problem of investigating formal correspondence. More specifically no investigator has researched into the degree of success or refinement with which Nigerians manipulate the constructions of formal correspondence.

A cursory look at samples of formal correspondence in Nigeria has revealed the occurrence of several levels of performance among Nigerians. This is especially so when some of the formal letters written by Nigerians are compared with similar letters originating from similar bodies from the native language environment.

The problem to be addressed by this research can therefore be stated in the following terms:

1. Whether the formal correspondence of some selected institutions in Nigeria fall within the expected level.
2. Whether the features of formality are compatible with those universally identifiable or known.

1.3.2 Objectives of the Study

This research aims at studying generally the following:

a. Identify what the features of formal letters as revealed within the Nigerian environment are.
b. Are the features gradable (that is, are some most vital, some averagely important and are some less important)?
c. How frequently are the features utilised and how frequently are they violated?
d. How much communication or content is transmitted through the language or grammatical construction?
e. How much is lost or missed as a result of the construction?

In addition to the above, the research will endeavour to isolate those letters that could be regarded as models for certain types of situation. Conversely, certain letters will also be identified on the basis of the degree to which they have deviated from what could be regarded as the norm.

1.3.3 Scope of the Study

This investigation will use correspondence from three different sources:

i. Educational institutions
ii. Banking institutions
iii. Federal parastatals

Selection of the letters will be based on random sampling. Where confidentiality is of utmost importance, the investigator will seek the prior consent of the appropriate officers. In some cases, some oral interviews will be done to get clarifications on what the expected force of some letters might have been.

1.3.4 Limitations

The study is not going to involve individuals per se. However, through the uses of organisation it will be possible to identify in general terms such individuals that are responsible for the production of the formal letters in the companies to be covered.

There will be a need to limit the samples to a particular period, approximately between the years 1993 and 1994. The time frame specified is expected to provide a better focus for the investigation.

1.3.5 Significance of the Study

Among other things, this study is significant in that it is expected to:

i. Identify and characterise the forms of formal letters written by Nigerians.

ii. reveal the degree of closeness or otherwise between formal letters written by Nigerians and those written by ideal native speakers.

iii. lead to a reappraisal of the existing findings and statement on users of English in Nigeria and their errors.

iv. identify whether a particular level of grammatical exposure is a pre-requisite for effective formal letter writing.

1.4 Summary

The typical Nigerian writer is faced with the situation of expressing both emotional and non-personal subject matter. This dilemma has been hinted at by several classroom teachers and authors (Banjo (op cit), Jowitt (op cit). When Nigerians operate in their use of English at personal level, their language level is hardly a matter of serious scrutiny. This is because in some cases when the intentions are not well understood, uncontrolled interest might be regarded as interference. However, at the institutional level, the performance of the students has drawn severe criticisms. Those worried about the level of oral and written expressions include parents, teachers, examining bodies and prospective employers. At this point, it is pertinent to note that business organisations and several government agencies, among others, have complained openly about the low expression levels in the applications written to them.

Closely related to the above is the high incidence of miscommunication that has been recorded among business organisations in Nigeria. Often the lack of communication is recorded in organisation-to-organisation correspondence or in organisation-to-public correspondence. In whatever case, the main cause of the problem is the language.

Altogether, most Nigerians are forced purely by circumstance to encounter the language of official correspondence. Those who have a passing knowledge of this form of communication soon allow it to fade away as a result of non-use. Consequently, even university graduates are hardly capable of producing the sample taken from Banjo (1973) and given below:

17 Onikoyi Avenue,
Apapa.

December 23, 1956.

The Manager,
New Nigerian Electronic Works,
Ilupeju Estate,
Ikeja.

Dear Sir,

I notice in the Daily Echo of December 22, 1956 that you have a vacancy for electronic engineer in your factory, and should be grateful if I could be considered the the post.

I am a Nigerian, 23 years old, and a graduate of the University of Lagos, where I took a Second Class Honours degree in Electrical Engineering (Upper Division) last June. As a prize for being the best student in my class, I have spent the last six months working with Marconi in England. I enclose my full curriculum vitae for your consideration.

I am particularly interested in the cassette tape recorders now being developed by your company. If given the opportunity, I would like to work with your company to develop cheaper and fully tropicalized sets.

Yours faithfully,

Ola Sarumi.

On the strength of the above points, it is considered necessary to look critically into the area of formal correspondence with a view to identifying the features of language and format or presentation. Such an investigation will, among other things, unearth the inherent characteristics of such form of writing. In the end the findings and descriptions should be of high academic and functional value.

CHAPTER 2

2.0 REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.1 Theoretical Framework

Several models of writing have been propounded especially within the last twenty years. Over fifty years ago, writers and their teachers concerned themselves essentially with the end-product of writing; that is, the composition or the essay. Under such preoccupation, attention was paid religiously to the features of grammar and punctuation that the writers were expected to observe. Some teachers, authors and critics went to the extent of identifying what should or should not be included in a good piece of writing.

Today, however, Pedagogists, critics and researchers have shifted attention to the process area of writing. Some have gone further to look at the different frameworks that can guide the writer. Such frames that had been tested or experimented with and found to be operationally scientific have emerged into the status of models (Collins and Gentner, 1980, Bereiter, 1980, Traugott, 1981, Shuy, 1981, Coles, 1974, Oluikpe, 1981, Omojuwa, 1981, Aliyu, 1992. The main theoretical frameworks considered pertinent to this study are reviewed in the following sections.

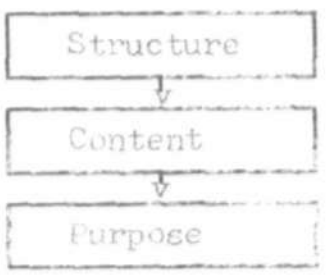
2.1.1 Cognitive Theory of Writing

It is the contention of the cognitive theorists of writing that a theory of writing should be concerned with "how writing ought to be done or how writing is done"; that is, a theory of writing should aim for a prescriptive theory as well as for the descriptive theory. According to Collins and Gentner (1980) "our prescriptive theory must be illuminated by our descriptive knowledge so that our views of how things ought to be done are compatible with human propensities."

In what follows Collins and Gentner, (op cit) tried to indicate the kinds of rules and processes they see as belonging to a theory of writing, they contend that:

> The kind of theory we envision views writing as a process of generating and editing text within a variety of constraints. The constraints come from three sources: structure (what are good sentence forms, paragraph forms and text forms), content (what ideas are to be expressed and how they are related), and purpose (what are the goals of the writer and what is his or her model of the reader?"

This can be represented in the following way:



They posited further that at the highest level, the writing process can be separated into producing ideas and producing text for those ideas, and these can be further separated into component subprocesses. In the words of Flower & Hayes (1977):

> Teaching people to separate the various tasks component allows them to learn how to use the most effective generation strategies for each subprocess, how to edit with respect to each subprocess, and how to ignore other constraints while working on a subprocess.

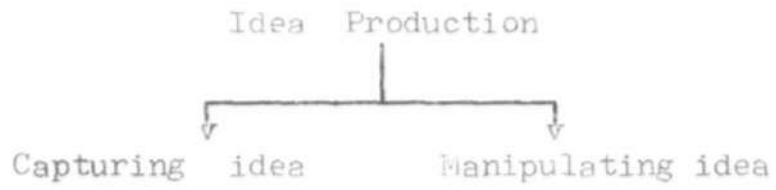
They also identify a theory of the text-structure constraints operating in fluent writing as equally an important element for a theory of writing. Such a theory to them, would be a theory of good structures as opposed to a theory of well-formed structures. They contend that most formal theories heretofore have concentrated on defining well-formed sentences (e.g., Chomsky, 1957).

They finally say "that a theory of writing should provide a description of where the major difficulties arise in the process. In particular, the theory should allow a fairly precise characterization of the problems most often experienced by beginning writers, as well as some techniques for surmounting these problems.

2.1.2 Preparing for the Writing Process

Collins and Gentner (op cit) recommended two major subprocesses in writing and these are idea Production and Manipulating ideas.

Idea production is one of the processes involved in producing text. It is expected to produce a linear sequence that satisfies certain grammatical level whether it operates on the word level, sentence level, the paragraph level or the text level. The result of process of idea production is a set of ideas with many internal connections, only a few of which may fit the linear model desirable for text.



(a) Capturing Idea

This involves only writing down all the ideas you have that are related to the topic. Other systematic strategies for finding ideas include:

i. Keeping a journal of interesting idea and events
ii. Brainstorming with a group
iii. Looking in books (source materials)
iv. Getting suggestions from somebody

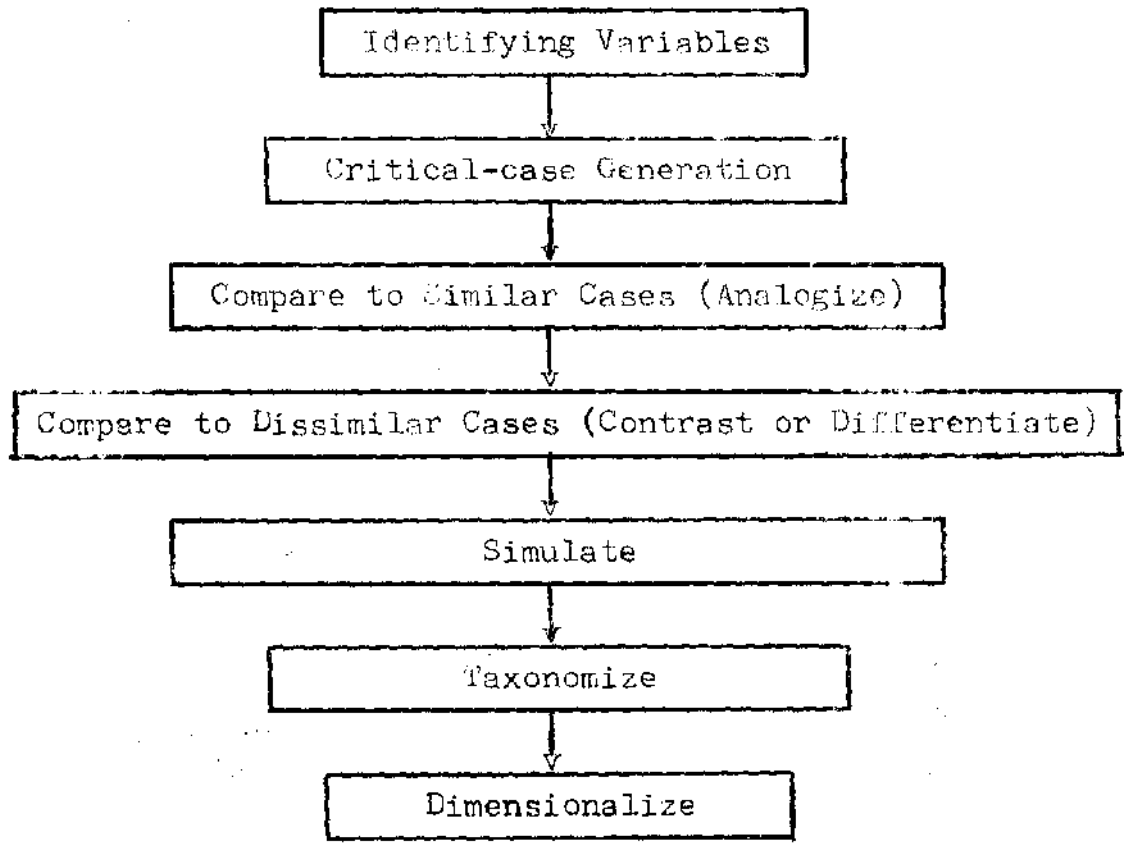
v. Trying to explain your ideas to somebody.

To them, the essential to all these strategies is getting the ideas down in tangible form so that they can be grouped, manipulated and altered.

(b) Manipulating Ideas

These are strategies of manipulating ideas that are often end up leading to new ideas. These are represented below:

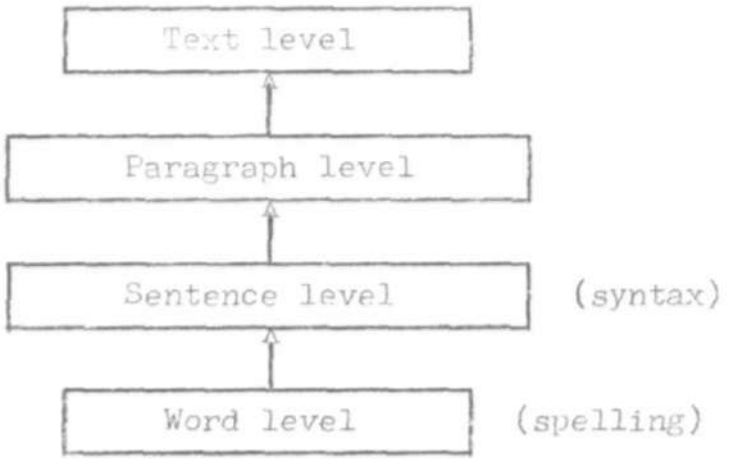
Strategies for Manipulating Ideas



They also noted that these strategies might be applied in producing a set of ideas for a text. The eventual goal of the theory is to describe these strategies more precisely.

2.1.3 Important Aspects of the Writing Structure

The next stage according to them is to impose text structures on the ideas. Text structure occur at different levels with longer texts having more levels however, for simplicity they assume that there are just four levels and these level are represented diagramatically, as below.



Collins and Gentner (op cit) also specify different objectives that text structures are designed to achieve. They are four principles that form tacit objectives in writing. These objectives are realized by different structures and devices at different levels of the text. These include:

(a) Making the Text Enticing

The writer must try to catch and hold the readers attention. He can do this by including interesting information. The use of suspense or humour, or using pictures can accomplish this.

(b) Making Text Comprehensible

The text should be as easy as possible for the reader to understand. Using short simple sentences, using examples to illustrate general principles can increase understandability.

(c) Making the Text Rememberable

The text should be structured so that the reader can hold its essential parts in memory. This can be achieved by using structures that are easy to recognise.

(d) Making the Text Persuasive

2.1.4 Content Devices in the Writing Process

At the level of content Collins and Gentner identify three elements of the underlying idea structure that have strong effects on comprehensibility and rememberability of text and these they refer to as the:

(a) Hierarchical Structure

The surface form of a text is a linear structure but

underlying the linear structure is a higher-level organisation of ideas.

(b) Tangibility

It involves the feeling of coherence unity and identifiability of an idea.

(c) Connectivity

An important aspect of writing is maintaining connective flow. The relationships between ideas must be made clear.

2.1.5 Editing During the Writing Process

Writers feel that editing is as crucial aspect of good writing as is initial text production. According to Collins and Gentner (op cit) "Editing operators exist at each level of text structure. They reflect the kind of errors writers typically make. These are some of the editing operators.

Some text-level operators are:

i. Delete extraneous materials
ii. Add heading and plan of text
iii. Move important ideas to front
iv. Qualify at beginning, not in each sentence

Some paragraph-level operators are:

i. Shorten long paragraphs
ii. Make list of table
iii. Put in connective phrases

iv. Add topic and concluding sentences.

Some sentence-level operators are:

i. Delete empty words and phrases

ii. Create parallel structures

iii. Break long sentences into shorter sentences

iv. Turn passive sentences into active sentences.

2.1.6 The Process of Producing a Text

i. Create a detailed outline of the text structure

ii. Apply text-level editing operators

iii. Create a semitext with all the ideas included in paragraphs, but not in finished sentences

iv. Apply paragraph-level editing operators

v. Create finished sentence-level texts

vi. Apply sentence-level operators.

2.1.7 Inter-locking Model of Writing

Aliyu (1992), defines writing as "putting one's ideas or feelings into words. These words are arranged in sentences and paragraphs." He posited that writing process involves two major processes and these are "preparing for the writing process" and "the actual writing process."

1. Preparing for the Writing Process

To him, this involves putting down ideas after thinking and planning. These ideas later form the content of the actual writing. He mentioned the

following preparatory steps:

a. class or group discussions

b. small-scale research

c. general survey

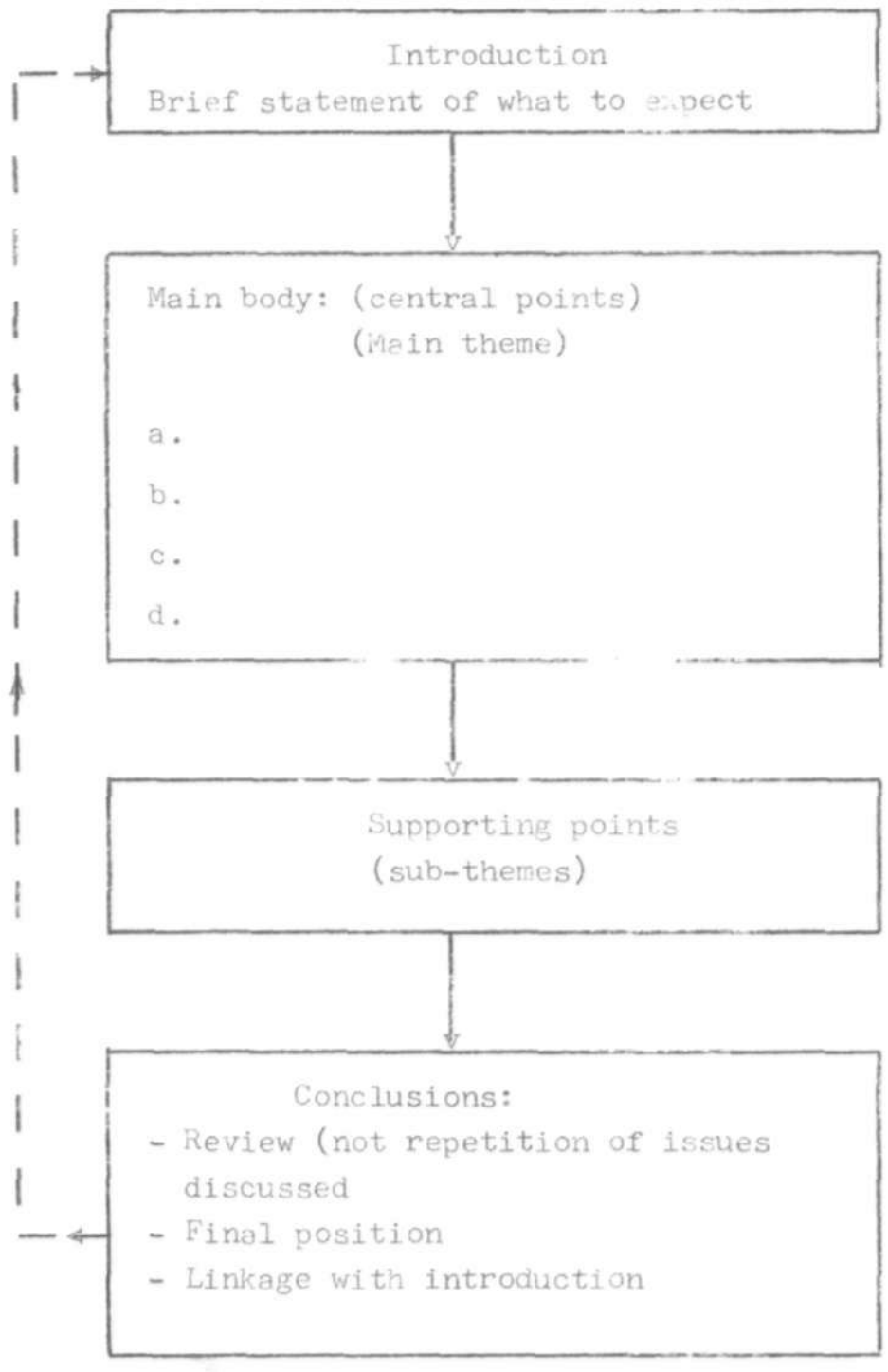
d. listening to discussion and watching or engaging in a debate.

2. The Actual Writing Process

According to him, this involves "stringing ideas in words, sentences and paragraphs to convey some messages to the readers. He contends that a writer is expected to select the words and style to suit the audience he has in mind. The writer therefore spends some of his time introducing the subject matter, focusing on it and drawing some kind of conclusion based on the statement put together.

Aliyu (op cit) proposed this model of writing which might be called interlocking model because of the relationship or the link from the top to the bottom and finally from the bottom to the top as represented below.

Figure 1.1 Inter-locking Model of Writing



2.2.0 Formal Correspondence

2.2.1 Distinguishing Features

An appreciable amount of work has been done on the area of formal writing. Some of these studies and investigations include those by White (1980); Davies and Widdowson (1974); Oluikpe (1981) Bamgbose (1970) Brook (1973); Crystal and Davy (1969); Quirk (1962); Ross (1969); Warner (1961) Trench (1988); Mathew (1973); Sheal and Omojuwa (1985); Waddel (1968); Bolinger (1973).

White (1980) refers to formal writing as "Business correspondence." According to him, much of the writing which most people do as part of their working lives fall into this category. Such writing as textbooks and business memoranda, instructions and regulations, reports and proposals are all examples of business writing which we have to deal with from time to time in our working day. White succeeds in telling us what business letters are but he does not give us an insight as to the format and features of business letters.

Davies and Widdowson (1974) in their discussion of writing and reading draw a distinction between what they call "institutional writing and personal writing." To them, institutional writing is the type of writing which we produce in our professional (or institutional) roles, such as that of school teacher, administrator, technician,

doctor and so on. They propose that "what distinguishes institutional roles from personal roles (such as that of a friend, son, uncle, parents etc) is that there are institutional conventions (or rules) as to how one behaves in relation to others who are part of the same institutional network. They cited this example, that if, for instance, one is writing a letter as a customer to a business firm, one has to follow the conventions about what to say and the way to say it. So long as one knows what these conventions are, one is unlikely to make any gross errors in one's communication with the firm. Similarly, the members of the company concerned will also play the rules, and the business will proceed smoothly, efficiently and impersonally. Davies and Widdowson's work has its strong point on the useful exposition of the distinction between institutional writing and personal writing. It also reveals to us the institutional conventions that distinguish institutional roles from personal roles. Looking at their work critically we can say that their definition of institutional writing is too broad to be generally accepted because this will mean that apart from love letters, every other type of writing is an institutional writing.

Oluikpe's (1981) work contains a section dealing with formal letter writing. In Oluikpe, Anasiudu writes extensively on official correspondence. He distinguishes formal correspondence from friendly letters by format and

style. A friendly letter, he says, contains "the writer's address, an intimate salutation, the body of the letter and intimate complimentary close on the one hand, while on the other hand, formal writing includes "the writer's address, the addressee's address, reference number, formal salutation, subject of the letter and complimentary close." According to him, style is the main distinction between the two kinds of writing. He also says that while only standard expression is permissible in formal letters, all forms of informal expressions such as "colloquialisms, slang, contractions, Americanisms" are accepted in friendly letters.

Writing on the features of formal correspondence, Anasiudu (op cit) points out that although all formal letters have several features in common, they can be classified by purpose, writer/addressee or format. On the basis of purpose, he identifies the writer's reasons for writing these formal letters and classifies them accordingly. For instance, it could be a letter placing an order for goods (business), a petition, a letter of complaint or anology, a letter of inquiry or a letter of recommendation. He goes on to say that an official letter may be from "an individual to a firm (organisation), a firm to an individual or from a firm to another firm." With regard to the format, he stresses that all formal letters should follow the rules and conventions stipulated in the writing of formal

letters. Anasiudu emphasises that every formal letter should be clear and to the point. Besides, it must be direct, simple, straightforward and polite. Anasiudu's work is considered to be very relevant for our present study because of the insights it gives concerning the purpose, format and the features of formal letter writing.

Along the same vein fall Fitzpatrick and Hand (1982). They seem to agree with Anasiudu on the features of formal writing. In their work, they focus their attention on the features and characteristics of a business letter. To them, clarity and brevity are the characteristics of a good business letter. They also point out that special attention should be paid to the following:

(a) The positioning of the addresses of the sender and the recipient.

(b) Punctuation.

(c) The form of the conclusion.

(d) The formal and respectful nature of the language used.

(e) The addressing of the envelope.

Lamb (1954) notes that all letters including business letters are basically just a form of "English composition" and that all general advice that applies to the writing of essays applies also to letter writing. He, however, says that two points make the letter different from other compositions. One is the formal setting out of the letter, and the second is the fact that a letter, unlike most

other types of composition, is normally addressed to a particular person on a particular occasion, and the effect the letter is going to have on the recipient is more immediately important than in less personal writing. He therefore advises that because of this psychological aspect of letter writing, we should be tactful in the presentation of our ideas when writing. He goes on to say that all letters should be written in good, clear English; they should be sensibly paragraphed; they should be correctly punctuated and there should be no spelling mistakes. Lamb's observations are along the same line as Fitzpatrick and Hand (op cit) and Onasiudu in Oluikpe (1981). However, some of these observations overlap, as in the areas of clarity and brevity in the use of language. Interestingly, Lamb fails to distinguish between business letters and friendly letters.

Mathew (1973) explains that business letters always have a "definite objective." The objective, she said, is to get the reader to take some kind of action. It may be to secure a new job, to get some information about a matter of importance, to make a reservation, or perhaps to act as a reminder on something. According to her, if the letter is well written and concise the reader will be more inclined to take the action desired. For that reason, she advises that it is important to make a business letter as brief as possible and to the point and that we should

eliminate unnecessary information, be courteous, avoiding contractions and writing in simple everyday English.

Sheal and Omojuwa (1985) say that "formality and informality are important concepts in letter writing. To them, when one writes a letter, one has to adopt one's language according to the following:

1. The relationship between oneself and the person one is writing to and

(2) The subject matter of the letter.

They stress that appropriateness in writing is very important but argued that letters cannot be clearly divided into formal and informal types. According to them, there are differing degrees of formality and informality in letter writing. They illustrate this through the table below which shows that instead of such clear division, there are differing degrees of formality and informality in letter writing.

Table 2.1 Features of different letter types

Highly formal	Less formal	Friendly
Business letters	Friendly letters to strangers	Letters to people of your age
Legal correspondence Letters of application Letters requesting information, goods and services	Letters to older relations or people you know	Letters to close friends and relatives

Sheal and Omojuwa's work has come with something significantly new from other previous works. It has pointed out the fact that letters cannot be clearly divided into formal and informal types. This, other works so far reviewed have not highlighted.

Waddel (1968) writes "Almost any society requires for its important personages and official academic and ceremonial purposes some sort of formal or special style of language usually several sizes larger than everyday speech."

It follows that what we say or write should match our thought and occasion.

Oladapo et al (1967) writing on English language register, emphasise the importance of the knowledge of register in writing generally. To them, "the term register is used to describe the more general vocabulary and range of language items which one frequently uses when talking or writing about a particular area of human activity." For instance, in the register of law and justice, we have the law court, chief justice, adjournment of a case, to serve a sentence, to plead a case and to rest one's case. They, however, observed that a word may occur in more than one register. For example, the word 'court' appears, in the register of law and justice eg 'the law court' and in 'Games' as in a lawn tennis court. They advise that a person writing in this context should learn to use the appropriate register since the meaning of words are

determined by the context in which they are used.

2.2.2 Special Language Forms and Formal Correspondence

Bamgbose (1970) in his article 'Register of English" sees register as, "a variety of language distinguished according to use." To him, the difference between registers may be seen in three dimensions. The first dimension is "What is the language activity presented?" The second dimension has to do with "How the language activity is presented" and the third dimension deals with "What is the relationship between the persons involved in the language activity?" He goes on to explain that language may be used in connection with a variety of subjects and the type of language involved in each case will be different. He also says that register may also be distinguished by the medium in which the language activity is presented whether it is spoken or written. He is also of the opinion that register may be distinguished according to the relationship between the participants in the language activity. He observes that in writing, the mode of address one uses in talking or writing to close friends and that used for persons who are not familiar will be different.

Furthermore, Bamgbose (op cit) is of the opinion that register involves the notion of appropriateness. This is because it is not every piece of language that is appropriate to every situation; while some registers are personal, others are impersonal. In official correspondence,

according to him, impersonal registers are used. He argues that the wrong use of register (usually the mixing of register) often leads to inappropriateness and incorrectness in official writing.

Brook (1973) like Bamgbose associates register to occasions rather than to individuals or groups. He, however, posits that the study of register may be regarded as "the examination of language in the context within which it is used. Writing on official language, he is of the opinion that official language of correspondence takes several different forms which fall into two broad divisions: "the ceremonial language which deliberately sets out to be different from the language of everyday life, and "the language used by civil servants in their communications with one another and with the public." This kind of English, he says, is not recognisable as a distinct variety but argued that since civil servants are open to special linguistic temptation if given way to, they develop their own variety of English.

He also states the fact that some official language often reveals a lack of courage. The writer, for instance, is afraid to make a plain statement that could be challenged or that could commit his superior to an action they might not be willing to take. Therefore, a frequent device in the utterances or even in their official correspondence is to use the conditional phrases to convey

decisions. He argued that the use of passive voice is often used in official language because there is some uncertainty about who is supposed to have taken decisions. He goes on to say that the conventions of anonymity and collective responsibility often demand that information should be concealed from the public.

Crystal and Davy (1969) propose in their work that there are appropriate linguistic manners for different types of situation in which language is used and that in order to reach social standard of acceptability, we should guide against using slangs for formal occasion. This proposal is in agreement with the suggestions of Anasiudu writing in Oluikpe (1981).

Bolinger (1975) in agreement with the observation made by Brook (1973) says that, "A register is a variety that is not typically identified with any particular speech community but is tied to the communicative occasion." For convenience, Bolinger divides the up and down continuum of formality and familiarity into levels and these are identified as follows:

1. Oratorical or frozen
2. Deliberate or formal
3. Consultative
4. Causal
5. Intimate

According to him, the oratorical register is used by professional speakers. It is a self-conscious form of public address. The deliberate register or formal register is aimed at any audience too large for effective interchange with the speaker. Both oratorical and deliberative tend to be monologues. Consultative, he explains, is typically dialogue at the level where words still have to be chosen with some care. Most business is transacted in this register. Casual implies the absence of any social barrier: the relationship for example between fellow students while intimate adds kinship or close friendship.

Crow (1988) writing on "Plain English for writing and speaking" states that "Plain English whether spoken or written indicates a desire to establish some common ground, to place high priority on removing impediments to connection between audience and writers or speakers. Using plain English according to him, suggests that the writer has little to hide, and that what he writes he wants the readers to know. He goes on to define plain English. It implies "appropriate behaviour for people laying claim to it. The term also suggests the appropriate context for its use to be common human transaction." To him, conciseness is an important quality of plain English. However, he argues that the firm can employ talented writers, train them in responsive style, permit a letter

format conclusive to plain language and still fail miserably at satisfying its customers. Before the writer succeeds, he says, 'the company's management needs a clear idea of what it wants to accomplish.

Crow (op cit) recommends plain English for customers service extending it to other kinds of business communications, reports, proposals, memoranda, letters of all sorts, presentations and telephone conversation. However, he says that with different communication, the format will change, but the central purpose of achieving understanding remains consistent. He argues that whatever circumstances militate against understanding also weighs against plain English. He advised therefore that 'as their primary task, business or official communicators who want to achieve plain English must work hard to ensure conditions for the possibility of understanding because the recipient of communication must have access to information necessary for understanding and the information must be in the language they can comprehend.

Foden (1974) says that business letters are sometimes treated as though there were something special. They are not. He argues that the only sound reason for writing a letter in business is that, in the circumstances, it is the most efficient means of communication. The great advantages of letters over verbal messages of any kind are that they are capable of great precision and that they can be put on record. He also says that a carbon copy insures

that they can refer back to the exact matters under discussion. A good filing system in which items referring to each transaction are filed in date order, with the latest letter at the top is essential for an efficient operation.

According to him, most of the conventions of layout in business letters are determined by the need to avoid confusion and waste of time, both in the office and in transit. He argues that because official correspondence must often pass through many hands before coming to rest in the appropriate file, addressing, references, headings, conclusion, whether regulated by "common practice or special 'house code' conventions" applying with a particular organisation or firm are practical matters not rituals to be learned because of tradition. He stresses the fact that because of the special function of official correspondence as a means of direct personal communication, letters and especially formal letters are subject to more explicit formalities than most other forms of writing communication. Most of the formalities apply to the heading and conclusion the superscription and subscription, the envelope or wrapping also need special treatment. He is of the opinion that the content of official and business letters are subject to the same conditions and requirements of all compositions but that particular consideration should be given to the suitability for the purpose intended. He

emphasises that "the essential principle of good composition should be followed in particular a letter should be clear, concise and courteous."

In line with others, Merill (1986) says that, 'A business letter is one you write to someone with whom you are doing business." Like a friendly letter, he says, a business letter contains a heading, greeting, body closing and signature. He points out that 'A business letter contains an inside address. It tells the name and address of the receiver of the letter. The inside address appears between the heading and greeting, even with the left margin. While the greeting of a friendly letter is followed by a comma, the greeting of a business letter is followed by a colon. He also says that when a business letter is type-written, the sender's signature appears twice - once in the sender's own hand-writing and once in the type-written form.

Micherner (1986) has this to say about official correspondence, "A business letter is a formal letter written to communicate information or request." He contrasted between a business letter and a telephone conversation. According to him, "a letter is often far more effective than a telephone conversation because it gives you an opportunity to organise your thoughts and to state them in specific and unmistakeable terms. He also says that a letter also provides a dated written record that

you can use for further references or occasionally, for legal proof of your communication. For this reason, he advises that you should always keep a copy of each business letter you write, at least until the matter under consideration has been resolved or concluded.

2.2.3 Inter-Relationship between Format, Language, Purpose and Context

Writing on appearance and format of business letters, he seems to be in agreement with Oluikpe (op cit) that every business letter follows certain conventions of format and style. Generally, business letters should be neat, clear, courteous, brief and easy to read. This, also, is in line with the observation of Lamb (op cit) and also of Foden (op cit). Focusing on a standard business letter, he identifies six basic parts which include:

The heading

The inside address

The salutation

The body

The closing

The signature

Finally, he gives reasons for writing business letters. Among them are:

1. to request for information or services
2. to place an order
3. to make a complaint or ask for an

adjustment and
4. to apply for a job, to a school, to a club, or to another organisation.

Quirk (1962) contains a section on standard English in which he says that "Standard English covers not only the grammar that is common to all kinds of English but also the grammar used in speech and writing." Furtherstill, he advises that we should exclude grammar which is peculiar to dialectal or uneducated use. For this point of view, we can assume that standard English is that educated usage that has widest acceptability and should be the hallmark of formal writing.

However, William quoted in Quirk (op cit) reminds us that "there are standards not a standard." He goes on to say that in grammar, as with vocabulary and transmission, the image of standard varies to some degree along with the limits of the wider communities. He succeeded in telling us that what may be acceptable as having the status of standard English in America may not be acceptable in Britain.

Lawrence (1973) writing along the same line defines standard language as 'normal' English that is, that kind of English which draws least attention to itself over the widest area and through the widest range of usage. Lawrence's work has its strong point as useful exposition of one important factor in the notion of a standard. It is particularly associated with English in written form (and

especially the printed) than upon English that is spoken. It also shows that standard English is basically an ideal mode of expression that we seek when we wish to communicate beyond our immediate community with members of the wider community of the nation as a whole, or with members of the still wider community of English speakers as a whole.

Ross's (1969) work is on style. He says that "people often say that they can tell how some feel by the way that a person speaks or writes." To him, the way "you write, the words you choose, the rhythm and pattern of sentences, the length of your paragraphs, the location of your topic sentence, all these things reveal the real you to your readers." This is what Ross means by style, that is the way one reveals himself in writing or in speech. Besides this, he observes that the most obvious ways to show oneself to one's readers as a practical and useful writer is to make your writing both direct and concise. In other words, one should make his writing as much to the point as possible even more so in official writing because a useful and practical writer should primarily be concerned with communicating his point effectively.

Warner (1961) in his book A Short Guide to English Style writes that, "Style is a way of writing, a manner of expressing one's thought and feelings in words."

According to him, the way in which something is said inevitably affects what is said. In trying to state his facts, shaping his ideas in words, every writer is expressing himself in a certain style though it may not have any very marked features. In the words of Cardinal Newman quoted in Warner (op cit) "Matter and expression are parts of one; style is a thinking out of language." Two more recent writers, Brook and Warren (1973), in an excellent book Fundamental of Good Writing, have compared style to the grain of wood. They say:

> The style of a work is not a sort of Veneer glued over the outside. On the contrary, it is like the patterns that go all the way through: a manifestation of the growth and development of the structure of the tree itself.

They went on to say that

> ... as a man thinks and feels, so will he write. If his thoughts are clear and sharp, his writing will be clear and sharp.

A man's style, wrote Emerson (1986)"is his mind's voice." And he added "wooden minds" "wooden voices."

From this work, it is clear that since style is something ingrained in writing and not stuck on top like a veneer, it follows that a man's way of writing will be

an expression of his personality and his ways of looking at life. These come through in correspondence.

Trench (1988) in his writing points out that one of the factors that influences our style "is an awareness of our audience or reader, and of the occasion that has called us to use our pens." He specifies that a telegrem, a letter to a firm, a letter to a friend will clearly demand different styles. He stresses the fact that one of the marks of good English style is appropriateness or suitability. The words should match the thoughts and occasion. Trench expresses this point in his book on the study of words more clearly by saying:

> It is the first characteristic of a well-dressed man that his clothes fit him: they are not too small and shrunken here, too large and loose there. Now it is precisely such a prime characteristic of a good style that the words fit close to the thoughts: they will not be too big here hanging like a giant's robe on the limbs of a dwarf; nor too small there, as a boy's garment into the man has with difficulty and ridiculously thrust himself. You do not feel in one place that the writer means more than he has succeeded in saying, in another that he has said more than he means or in a third, something besides what his intention was and all these form a lack of dexterity in employing the instrument of language, of precision in knowing what words would be the exactest correspondents and fittest exponent of thoughts.

Williams (1984) points out that the question of standard is linked with the issue of acceptability of Nigerian English

for academic purpose. He tries to find answers to the following questions:

1. How can we distinguish between what is acceptable for academic purpose and what is unacceptable?
2. What is judged as a mistake, as deviant speech, grammar and vocabulary? and
3. If a particular usage is deemed acceptable for academic purposes, what are the criteria for acceptability and who decides?

Essentially, he concentrated his study on how well students are taught to use the English language for study purpose and how well they can use it for formal communication both within and outside Nigeria. The idea of acceptability, he says, is related to appropriateness to the situation in which language is used.

A study was carried out in search of answers to the above questions. Findings revealed that a spoken or written variety of language may be intelligible without being acceptable in a particular locality or social context. The situational aspect is seen as an important criterion of acceptability. Williams's study is significant because there is the need for guidance on specific usage. Where there is inconsistency in usage, one would definitely insist on the conventionally correct usage. His study also revealed that those who are the best judges of what is correct and acceptable as an educational standard are those

higher up the educational ladder.

In this chapter, we have attempted a review of relevant literature on formal correspondence. This has enabled us to locate our study relative to earlier research works in the area of formal correspondence.

2.3 Conclusion

The preceding review has highlighted the important elements considered pertinent to correspondence in general and to formal correspondence in particular. Some of the important contentions include the fact that formal letters exhibit varying degrees of formality, while semi-formal letters may incorporate a significant proportion of formal features.

In the case of the non-formal letters, the most prominent features are inclined to be personal depending on the subject matter and the individual who is doing the writing. In the case of formal and semi-formal letters or correspondence the traditional conventions are more strictly adhered to.

Probably the most outstanding features of the highly formal letters can be identified as falling into three categories which include the following:

(a) format or layout;

(b) language use in terms of sentence structure and vocabulary selection;

(c) content and overall style of presentation.

In addition to all the above points, the review has revealed two important realities about formal correspondence in Nigeria. One important reality is the rather high incidence of unintended errors in formal correspondence. Another prominent reality is the relevance of context in the interpretation of content involving formal correspondence in Nigeria.

In the next chapter, the procedures used for data collection will be fully described.

CHAPTER 3

3.0 METHODOLOGY

3.1 Basic Methodological Considerations

In chapter two, we tried to locate our object of study relative to previous studies. We considered some of the main theoretical frameworks appropriate for the analysis of formal correspondence. In the current chapter, we intend to consider the research methods with a view to arriving at our own model to suit the peculiar demands of the study being undertaken. We have favoured Ashley's framework of analysis of formal correspondence (Ashley, 1984) and Anasiudu theoretical framework of analysis of formal correspondence in Oluikpe 1981. However, only areas of the two models which are relevant and have meaningful application to our data will be considered. We intend to consider in further detail the selected model subsequently. We shall also consider the procedure used for data collection, the location for the study, the test instrument as well as the ethical basis of the research.

3.2 Field Work Method Procedure

Locations:

The investigation used correspondence from three different sources:

(a) Educational institutions

(b) Banking institutions

(c) Federal parastatals

The choice of these places was borne out of some considerations, namely:

(a) Availability of relevant data.

(b) Accessibility to the sources and the data.

(c) Nature and range of activities covered in the correspondence.

(d) Cost and time of obtaining the data.

3.3.1 Data Collection Procedure

Three complementary research instruments have been employed for the collection of data. These were used to give precision to our data. The research instruments were:

(a) Type-written formal correspondence

Specifically formal letters were randomly collected from the three sources: educational institutions, banking institutions and federal parastatals and letters written by native speakers to editors of newspapers and individuals. The handwritten documents were critical in that they enabled us to examine critically formal letter writing.

(b) Anecdotal notes

A cassette and a tape recorder were used by the researcher to record oral interviews carried out in order to get clarifications on what the intended force

of some letters were supposed to be.

(c) The written records of such interviews were also kept. They were used by the researcher to clarify any inaudible or unclear parts of the tape recorded data.

3.3.2 Transcription of Data

Data tape recorded in the course of the field work were carefully played over and over again in order to obtain accurate information and adequate transcription. Since our research is basically inclined towards the total understanding and clarification of the overall structure and presentation of formal correspondence and specifically on the style of language used, the handwritten materials came in handy in providing fillers for instances in which our tape recording was not very audible. The type written materials proved very useful in taking note of features of formal writing and this enabled us to re-appraise such writings on our framework of analysis in order to ascertain whether such formal writings fall within the expected level and whether the features of formality are compatible with those universally identifiable or known.

3.3.3 Ethical Issues in Field Research

This refers to the right steps taken by the researcher and the wrong steps avoided in the data gathering process. The researcher ensured that the authorities of institutions

correspondence with a printed letter-head. It is also usually printed on the right-hand side of the page or centrally positioned on the page.and the month of the date should not be written in figures as they can be confusing in case of international correspondence. For example, 11.1.85 means "11th January 1985" in Nigeria but November 1st 1985 in the United States of America. Ashley says that many firms leave out abbreviation "th" after the date,for example "24 October" instead of 24th October." Other firms transpose the date and the month, for example 'October 24' instead of "24 October." These, he says, are matters of preferences but that one should be consistent throughout one's correspondence whichever one chooses. The following is an example of sender's address:

NEPA District Office,
P.M.B 1003,
Zaria.

13th July, 1994.

Inside (or receiver's) address

This, Ashley (op cit) and Anasiudu (op cit) say, is written below the Sender's address and on the opposite side of the page. The following points are to be taken into consideration when writing the inside address:

(a) Surname known

If we know the surname of the person we are writing to, we write this on the first line of the address,

preceded by a courtesy title and either the person's initial(s) or his/her first given name. For example, "Mr O.S. Obong" or "Mr Odili Obong" and not "Mr Obong."

(b) "Mr, Mrs, Miss, Ms, Messrs" may be used with or without full stop. Special titles which should be included in addresses are many: Reverend (Rev.), Doctor (Dr), Professor (Prof.), Mister (Mr.), Madam (Ma) and so on. Esq (with or without a full stop) abbreviation for Esquire is seldom used now. If used, it can only be used instead of 'Mr' and is placed after the name. We should not use "Esq" and "Mr" at the same time. For example, "Bruce Fadayi Esq" and not "Mr Bruce Fadayi Esq."

If we do not know the name of the person we are writing to, we may know or be able to assume his/her title or position in the company or in the institution. For example, (The Sales Manager, The Finance Director) in which case we can use it in the address. After the name of the person and or company receiving the letter, the order of the style of address is thus:

Name of house or building
Number of building and name of street or road
Name of town or city
Name of country.

The following is an illustration of inside address:

Mr Charles Akabukwu,
Arewa House,
22 Balewa Road,
P.O. Box 1455,
Zaria,
Kaduna State,
Nigeria.

3.4.3 Style and Punctuation of Address

Both the addresses according to Ashley and Anasiudu may be 'blocked' (ie each line is vertically aligned with the one above as the previously cited illustration or 'indented' as below.

Arewa House,
22 Balewa Road,
Zaria,
Kaduna State,
Nigeria

According to them, there are no rules stating that one style or the other must be used, though blocking is more common. They advised that in any case, we must be consistent. That is we should not block the sender's address and then indent the inside address. And if punctuation is used, each line of the address is followed by a comma, except the last line, but they observed that majority of firms and institutions now use open punctuation, that is, without any comma.

3.4.4 Salutation

Writing on salutation, they say that "Dear Sir," opens a letter written to a man whose name we do not know. "Dear Sirs" is used to address a company. "Dear Madam" is used to address a woman whether single or married whose name we do not know.

"Dear Sir or Madam" is used to address a person of whom we know neither the name nor the sex. When we know the name of the person we are writing to, the salutation takes the form of "Dear ..." followed by a courtesy title and the person's surname. They observe that initials or first names are not generally used in salutations when writing formal letters. They also observe that comma after the salutation is optional. It could be Dear Sir, or Dear Sir.

3.4.5 The Body of the Letter

This may be indented or blocked. This again, according to them, is optional. It is a matter of choice. Some firms feel it wastes the Secretary's time to indent. We must again be consistent whichever style we use and use that style all through the letter. It is usual to leave a line space between paragraphs in the body of the letter. If the blocked style is used this is essential.

3.4.6 Complimentary Closes

If the letter begins with "Dear Sir, Dear Sirs, Dear Madam or Dear Sir or Madam," it will close with "Yours

faithfully." If the letter begins with a personal name - "Dear Mr Eke, Dear Mrs Robinson, Dear Ms Jones" - it will close with "Yours sincerely." They advise that we should stop closing with old-fashioned phrases such as "We remain yours faithfully" or Respectfully yours" and so on. The position of the complimentary close on the left or right or in the centre of the page is a matter of choice. It depends on style of the letter (blocked letters tend to put the close on the left, indented letters tend to put them in the centre). Generally, much depends on the firm's preference.

3.4.7 Signatures

We should always type our names after our handwritten signature. It is a matter of choice whether we sign with our initial(s) for example "O Obong" or the given name "Odili Obong" and whether we include a courtesy title (Mr, Mrs, Miss, Ms) in our signature or not. But Ashley advises that it is better and safest to sign with our given name and to include our title so that our correspondent will be able to identify our gender and so does not give the wrong title when he/she replies.

3.4.8 Length of the Letter

The length of the letter should be whatever is considered substantially necessary. To some extent, the

length will depend on the context within which the subject of the letter is written. It may be a simple subject for example thanking a customer for a cheque or complicated for example explaining how a machine works. It will also depend on how much information one wants to give. Getting our letter the right length is generally a question of including just the right amount of information.

3.4.9 Order and Sequence

As well as containing the right amount of information, our letter should also make all necessary points in a logical sequence, with each idea or piece of information linking up with the previous one in a pattern that can be followed.

3.5.1 Style and Language

Ashley (op cited) advises that we should write in a simple and clear style. However, our style should not be so simple that it becomes discourteous." He also advised that we should use stylistic devices that will make our writing more polite and employ complex sentences joined by conjunctions rather than short sentences, passive rather active, full forms rather than abbreviated forms. Anasiudu (op cit) points out that every formal letter should be clear and to the point. Besides, every formal letter must be direct, simple and straightforward. To attain this standard,

he suggests that we should try to get the right tone in our letter. This means we should aim for a neutral tone avoiding the use of pompous language on one hand and informal or colloquial language on the other hand. Our correspondent, he says, must be able to understand what we have written. We should only use abbreviations that are both known to us and our addresses.

In our proposed model, which is a modified version of Ashley's and Anasiudu's models, we wish to hold that for a correspondence to be regarded as formal correspondence, the rules and conventions of letter writing stipulate that it should include the following formal features:

(a) The writer's address
(b) The addressee's address
(c) Reference number
(d) Formal salutation
(e) Subject of the letter
(f) Non-intimate complimentary close
(g) Standard expression in all cases

These conditions have been expanded above to provide us with the instrument to characterize the different features of formality of formal letters as written by Nigerians from our sources of data. The following are the data collected from our primary resources.

3.6.1 Specification and Spread of Features

In the following sections, the general and specific spread of the formal letters and their distinguishing characteristics are presented. To facilitate a cross sectional comparising, some of the data are presented in tabular form while others are re-produced in their original sentence or construction forms.

Table 3.1 Distribution of Formal Letters

Sources	No	Percentage
Educational institutions	40	43.5%
Banking institutions	28	30.5%
Federal parastatals	24	26%
Total	92	100%

The specific findings on the main features of formal letters regarding number of addresses have been summarised below:

Table 3.2: Addresses in the formal letters surveyed

No of Addresses	Frequency of occurrence	Rate %
One address	10	10.9%
Two addresses	78	84.8%
More than two addresses	4	4.3%
Total	92	100%

When letters were examined to establish those with references and formal salutation, the results revealed the summary presented in the table below:

Table 3.3: Reference Numbers (Ref. No)

Reference Number	Frequency of Occurrence	Rate %
With reference number and formal salutation	59	64.1%
Without reference number and formal salutation	33	35.9%
Total	92	100%

Formal correspondence were examined for those with or without subject head and the situation looked like the summary below:

Table 3.4: Subject-head

Subjecthead	Occurrence	Rate %
With subjecthead	88	95.7%
Without subjecthead	4	4.3%
Total	92	100%

The manner of complimentary close was carefully studied and the pattern revealed is stated below:

Table 3.5 Complimentary Close (CC) and Signature or Subscription

Subscriptions	Frequency of Occurrence	Rate
CC with signature	57	62%
Signatures less CC	35	38%
Total	92	100%

Different aspects of presentation formats have been captured through the three tables below:

Table 3.6 Formal letters with letter headings

Letter heads	Frequency of Occurrence	Rate
With letterheads	62	67.4%
Without letterheads	30	32.6%
Total	92	100%

Table 3.7 Presentation of Addresses

Forms	Frequency of Occurrence	Rate
Blocked form	77	83.7%
Indented form	12	13%
Inconsistence	3	3.3%
Total	92	100%

Table 3.8 Presentation Type of the Body of the Letters

Form	Frequency of Occurrence	Rate
Blocked	55	59.8%
Indented	37	40.2%
Inconsistent	-	0
Total	92	100

3.6.2 Spread of Language Features

Language features used in the formal correspondence included:

Function words

the, on, and, I, we, to, am, is, if, our, with, shall and so on.

Content words, examples included:

inform, appear, interview, reference, receipt, communicate, customer, consider, promises letter, account, settlement, advise, regional, shortage, comply, ceremony, representatives, directed, discussed, reasonable, claim, control, staff, quest, despatched, efforts, commence.

Specialized vocabularies, examples were:

patient, mandibular swelling, histological, lesion diagnosed, odontogenic, cyst, tumour, autogenous anaesthesia, premolar, squamous odontogenic tumour.

Simple Sentences

(a) Please see attached copy of his letter.

(b) We look forward to your usual cooperation in the urgent settlement of the bill as usual. (sic)

Complex Sentences

(a) We sincerely sympathise with the management however, you are advised to contact Messrs Stirling Civil Engineering (Nig) Limited.

(b) I am to add that it is mandatory that you involve representatives of the community who claim that representations had earlier been made on subject to the station chief.

(c) Since the implementation of the new salaries none of the staff had been paid the new rate but the old rate. (sic).

Compound Sentences

(a) Please, find attached are copies of previous correspondences on addition qualification obtained and redesignation of grade. (sic)

(b) Our records indicate that you have refused and/or neglected to pay this long outstanding debt despite repeated demands so to do by the Bank (sic)

Passive Constructions

i. A full and formal report will be made to the Senate in due course.

ii. It would be highly appreciated if your response would reach the undersigned on or before 20/10/93.

iii. Two circulars have been issued regarding the

submission of marks for these courses.

iv. It was discovered that Dr Oyebanji's very nephew ...

v. It will therefore be appreciated if you can please forward a written report on this staff.

vi. All payments will be affected by the date of departure.

vii. You are requested to forward your request through your employer as the ministry do not evaluate for individuals (sic)

viii. An invitation to the ceremony will be sent to you in due course.

ix. It should be noted that the period of probation is twelve months.

x. On successful completion of the probation, they will be eligible for consideration for promotion as Technical Officers (Track) by this office.

xi. Owing to changed circumstances, especially the vastly increased current hotel and transportation tariff, it has been decided to discontinue the use of the rate of touring advance ceilings stipulated in the corporate policies ...

xii. It has been observed that the constant acute shortage of the PMS and AGO in the Zaria area which falls within our area of responsibility has prolonged enough and make operations difficult.

xiii. You are strongly advised to note that failure on your

part to comply within the stipulated time will lead the board to order a special tax audit on your establishment.

xiv. You are hereby called upon to take immediate steps to liquidate this debt.

xv. Be informed that any cost incurred in the process by you assuring you of our best banking services, at all times. (sic)

xvi. Please be informed that on receipt of their fees for the services, we shall pass same to your account.

xvii. On receipt of this letter grateful proceed with litigation against the above debtor as earlier directed by our regional legal Manager.

xviii. All legal charges incurred by the Bank in the course of perfecting the securities in relation to this ending shall be borne by you and debited to your account without prior recourse.

ix. Failure to comply will lapse the waiver and the full amount of ... debit becomes payable.

Active Constructions

i. We hope you will not make this course of action necessary.

ii. We shall be glad if the circumstances which gave rise to this under estimation are avoided.

iii. You should take out a write of summons against him without further reference to us.

iv. You may review the case and recommend what you deem fit please.

v. I shall seize the opportunity to copy this letter to all members of council and senate for information in advance. (sic)

vi. In view of the above, I am writing to strongly warn you to desist from further actions which could tarnish your good image on your job.

vii. I would be grateful if you could let me know the current status of our article: "The level of achievement on ecology concepts ..."

Use of Modals

i. We would like to be retained on your subscription list for issues of Nigerian Educational Forum.

ii. May I therefore request for a proforma invoice to enable me take a two year subscription.

iii. You should get your head of Division to consider the application.

iv. You will be reimbursed mileage expenses at the rate of ₦1.00 per km.

v. I shall seize the opportunity to copy this letter to all members of council and senate for information in advance.

vi. Any change in address must be notified immediately otherwise payment of transport fare from the new address may be refused.

vii. I would be grateful if you could let me know the current status of our article: "The level of achievement on ecology concepts ..."

viii. This could be verified from your staff in Zaria.

ix. Please be informed that we shall carry out the pumping test exercise on the above hole from Monday 2nd November, 1992.

x. You may review the case and recommend what you deem fit please.

xi. You will report to the station Chief, Sarkin Pawa who will assign you duties as appropriate (sic).

xii. We like you to do all the necessary arrangement for the above mentioned payment as soon as possible.

xiii. You should take out a writ of summons against him without further reference to us.

xiv. We shall be glad if the circumstances which gave rise to this underestimation are avoided.

xv. We hope you will not make this course of action necessary.

xvi. We therefore look forward to seeing more of your staff on our programmes which you have tested and would no doubt wish others to benefit from too.

The Use of Pronouns

Plural Pronoun: Inclusive "We"

i. We look forward to your usual cooperation in the urgent settlement of the bill as usual.

ii. We look forward to have your representatives on the site as discussed.

iii. We suprised that since November 1992 when you guest left and the bills was immediately dispatch to you for payment, all efforts to give the payment proved abortive (sic).

iv. We are in receipt of your letter dated 15th December, 1994.

v. We are still following up for total liquidation of the outstanding debt.

vi. We wish to advise that your request to ₦80,000 as full and final settlement of your debt has been declined.

vii. We cannot allow the debt to remain unpaid indefinitely.

viii. We paid the publication fee in 1992 and since then we have not heard from you.

ix. We discovered, nobody to relief you. We are appealing to you once more to exercise more patience until our two typists presently on leave return (sic).

x. We have received a photocopy of your civil service exams.

xi. This is to inform you that we have made reasonable investigation and we are satisfied that the husband of the above-named is not receiving the rent

allowance elsewhere.

xii. We count very much on your valuable imput for the success of the workshop.

xiii. Please we request you to send to us a comprehensive report of the 1992/93 typewritten report soonest.

xv. We recognise that you work under immense pressure.

xvi. We also welcome cartoons, teaching/learning crosswords etc.

xvii. We would like to be retained on your subscription list.

The Use of Personal Pronouns Representative 'I'

i. I am directed to acknowledge the receipt of your letter dated 24th Sept. 1993 on the subject-matter above.

ii. I have been directed to invite you as a Resource Person to the above named 3-day textbook Evaluation Exercise scheduled for 11th-16th October 1992.

iii. Please I am directed to bring to your notice that the 29th Establishment Committee has been scheduled for Tuesday 18th June, 1991 in the College Staff Room at 10.00pm.

iv. I have therefore been directed to remind you that the committee will be meeting on Tuesday, the 19th of August, 1994 at 2p.m. in the Deputy Director's office.

v. I am directed to inform you that you should appear

here for interview on 20th July 1991.

vi. Please be informed that I have being directed to return your cheque of ₦50,333.84 due to under value of cost of the material.(sic)

The Use of Non-Personal or Neutral Pronoun

i. It will therefore be appreciated if you can please forward a written report on this staff.

ii. It will be appreciated if your response is received on or before Wednesday 30th September 1992.

iii. It would be highly appreciated if your response would reach the undersigned on or before 20/10/93.

The Use of Intra-textual Connectors

i. I therefore recommend that she be paid her monthly allowance for the month of June 1993.

ii. Also it has been observed that on Wednesday 29th December 1992 you left the office at about 10.00 a.m.

iii. however, conflicting reports confirmed that you were at the Sick-bay while others says you reported going to the bank. (sic)

iv. and again I have found no solid ground in your application for me to grant the leave.

v. You are therefore advised to make concrete efforts towards liquidating the balance standing against you in our books.

vi. No doubt you will as usual first send him a letter of demand and in default of response, you should take out a writ of summons against him without further reference to us if however he should give a reply to your letter then you should forward same to us for our consideration.

vii. We therefore expect that within 21 days from the date of this letter ..., otherwise we shall be compelled to institute legal action against you.

viii. The need to keep such expenditure within the limits of reasonable necessity, however very much remains. Staff and management are therefore, hereby strongly advised to maintain the controls through greater use of the allowances.

ix. We sincerely sympathise with the management however you are advised to contact Messrs Stirling Civil Engineering (Nig) Ltd.,

x. Furthermore, you are required to observe regulations governing ...

The Use of Inter-textual Connectors

i. I am to add that it is mandatory that you involve representatives of the community who claim that representations had earlier been made on subject to ...

ii. In view of the above, the regiment has been authorized to procure on regular basis ...

iii. Other additional information are hereby attached for your perusal and necessary action please.

iv. Repetition of pronoun 'We' on each paragraph.

v. Meanwhile, the customer has so far lodge ₦3400.00 in reduction of the debt.

vi. In the meantime accomodation has been reserved for your nominee.

vii. Meanwhile, it was discovered that Dr Oyebanji is very close nephew Dr Sunday Oyebanji who travelled ...

viii. Further details about the examination including the time table and your duties as an External Examiner will later be sent to you.

Specific Errors Detected

Wordiness: using more words than necessary

i. Upon closer observations, it has been observed that you have not been willing to live up to the required standard expected of you on your job.

ii. I am directed to request you to fill the enclosed form and come along with all the photocopies of your credentials early to this office.

iii. I hereby inform you that I sat and passed the Civil Service Examination Typist II Cadre conducted by Kaduna Polytechnic.

iv. Please be informed that I have being directed to return your cheque of ₦50,333.84 due to under value

of cost of the materials needed (sic)

v. We look forward to your usual co-operation in the urgent settlement of the bill as usual.

Sentence Fragments

i. Reference to your application for employment dated 4th July, 1981.

ii. With reference to the concluded teaching practice exercise.

iii. With reference to your discussion with the Nitel Area Manager Zaria on provision of Telephone Service at the pumping station Zaria.

Wrong Inflections

i. Staff and Managements are therefore hereby strongly advised to maintain the controls through greater use of the allowances in lieu of hotel ...

ii. Since the implementation of the new salaries non of the staff had been paid the new rate but the old rate (sic)

iii. The undersigned visited this customer and had a discussions on the need ...

Wrong Use of the -ing form of the verb 'to be'

i. The site visited on Friday afternoon with pumping station chief.

ii. Thereby bring your total billing for the month to ₦84,376.00.

iii. Please be informed that I have being directed to return your cheque due to under value of cost of the materials needed.

iv. We are in receipt of your letter dated 12th January, 1995 on the above and wish to state that the customer who is sole proprietor of Triumph Printers (also in account relationship with us) has being pursued by Messrs Anamah Nwobia for the clearance of the debt.

Tautology

i. You will resume back for duty for duty immediately after the new year's public holiday.

ii. Furthermore to advice that re-occourence of such acts by your in future could attract serious punishment against you.

Wrong Choice of Words

i. None of the above has any reason or explanations which could exculpate you from punishment.

ii. Sometimes when you reported you oftenly choose to malinger around instead of staying put on your duties.

iii. You are requested to forward your request through your employer.

iv. Your reasons for ill-health on the 23rd December, 1982 could not be tenable enough to warrant your total absence from work.

v. I am directed to inform you that you should appear

here for an interview.

vi. We are still appealing to you once more to exercise more patience.

vii. I am directed to request you to fill the enclosed form.

viii. I have found no solid ground in your application for me to grant the leave.

ix. The management felt it will be wrong to shift the dates of convocation forward.

Omissions of Articles

i. After given much consideration, we discovered /nobody to relief you (sic)

ii. On Wednesday 29th December, 1 saw you left / office at about 10.00 pm.

iii. I refer to / radio message No NL279/ZA027 of 24th Nov 1992 on subject.

iv. This is to convey / management's decision to transfer you to Sarkin Pawal Pump Station.

v. The fresh estimate that is for the underground cable is the sum of N496,433 vide copy of / estimate attached.

Omission of Prepositions

i. I am directed to request you to fill the enclosed form and / come along with all the photocopies of your credentials early to this office.

ii. Kindly use your good offices to see that the new rates are paid / us with effect from 1st / March 1994.

Omission of Important Words such as Pronouns etc

i. I warned you to be serious with your job and change / attitute towards discharging same in future, you inturn promised to do so.

ii. The estimate of under / cable shall be forwarded to you soonest.

iii. Please find attached are copies of previous correspondence on addition / qualification.

iv. We suprised that since November 1992 when your guest left ...

Incorrect use of Demonstrative Pronoun

i. The undersigned visited this customer and had a discussions on the need to clear this long outstanding amount.

Wrong word order

Our records indicate that you have refused and/or, neglected to pay this long outstanding debt despite repeated demands so to do by the bank.

Wrong Spellings

i. Furthermore, to advice that re-occourance of such acts by you in future could attract serious punishment against you.

ii. After given much consideration, we discovered nobody to relief you.

iii. However, complicting reports confirmed that you were at sick bay ...

iv. I seriously warned you to be serious with your job and change attitute towards discharging same in future.

v. I shall seize the opportunity to copy this letter to all members of council and senate for information in advance.

vi. We count very much on your valuable input for the success of the workhop.

vii. As a matter of urgency, all the evaluated scores should be collectively submitted to Mrs Deborah Zamani at Room 111 latest Wednesday 27th July, 1994 wich will be collected from her same date to be submitted for moderation.

viii. You will report to the station chief Sarkin Pawal who will assign you duties as appropriate.

ix. The estimate was based on Aerial cable while our headquarters review that aerial cable shall not be save.

x. We would like you to do all the necessary arrengements for the above mentioned payment as soon as possible.

xi. The above work is to be completed within four (4) weeks from the date of acceptance of all donations specified in the letter of award.

xii. Prior to your commencement of owrk you will be required to produce a schedule of work which will detail the work programme.

xiii. During the auditing period, the Board may invoke its power by oedering the sealing of all your operational bases within the state.

xiv. We refer to previous correspondence in respect of our above named customer's indebtendess and wish to advise that our management declined customer's repayment proposal.

xv. The facts remain that the Ministry had fulfiled its obligation of settling in full cost relocation of N.N.P.C facilities that were affected by the construction works on the road.

xvi. The chase of underground cable due to frequent Nitel cable theft in Zaria and its environs.

xvii. Hausing for staff

xviii. ... and neccessary action

Punctuation Mistakes

i. With reference to your discussion with the Nitel Area Manager, Zaria on provision of Telephone services at the pumping station Zaria.

ii. The estimate was based on Aerial cable, while our headquarters review that aerial cable shall not be save.

iii. It is mandatory that you involve representatives of

the community who claim that representations had earlier been made on subject to the station Chief in the inspection exercise.

iv. Having gone through your records / I found that you were early this session granted causal leave, and again / I have found no solid ground in your application for me to grant the leave.

v. Be informed that any cost incurred in the process, will be borne by you / assuring you of our best banking services at all times.

vi. Meanwhile / the customer has so far lodged ₦2,400.00 in reduction of the debt.

vii. On receipt of this letter / grateful proceed with litigation against the above debtor as earlier directed by our regional legal Manager.

viii. We shall be glad if the circumstances which gave rise to this under estimation are avoided / moreso / that your staff have neither complained nor reported any case or cases of inaccessibility to our premises for the period covered by the bill.

ix. We also remind you that we are ever ready to cater for your training needs especially in the areas of management development and customer relations skills.

x. Grace Nwabueze (Miss),
c/o Pedro Metal Construction
No 5 Kings Road,
Sabon-Gari,
Zaria.

xi. A.A. Manta, Esq.,
Principal Solicitor,
Manta & Company
9A Junction Road (2nd Floor)
P.O. Box 10104
Kaduna

xii. The Head,
NNPC - PPMC,
Area Office,
Kachia Road,
Kaduna,

xiii. On the question of the damaged water pipeline and the fire incident / we sincerely sympathise with the management.

xiv. May I therefore request for a proforma invoice to enable me take a two year subscription?

xv. With reference to the concluded teaching practice exercise.

CHAPTER 4

4.0 ANALYSIS OF DATA

4.1 Introduction

In chapter three, we discussed the model for the analysis of our data. We also presented the data. In this chapter, we intend to apply this analytical model to the data presented in chapter three. We are going to report our findings objectively. Firstly, we are going to analyse the main features of formal correspondence. These features are the ones we expect to see in any formal correspondence no matter where the correspondence is from. The features are universally known and identifiable. Secondly, we are going to look at the nuances of language features employed in writing the formal letters analysed. Thereafter, we shall describe the errors observable in the use of language.

4.2 General Features of Formal Letters

In terms of style of address and overall layout, formal letters demonstrate some unique characteristics. Such features are among the elements that distinguish formal letters from non-formal ones. The formal features which are more like designed features are not identical with the language features. However, in the strictly formal correspondence the two sets of features tend to compliment

each other. The table below captures the main features of formal correspondence.

Table 4.1: Main Features of Formal Letters

Features	Total No of Letters	Occur-rence	Rate in Percen-tage
Addresses	92		
One address		10	18.69%
Two addresses		61	77%
More than two addresses		4	4.3%
Reference Number	92		
With reference number		59	63
Without reference number		33	37
Formal Salutation	92		
With formal salutation		59	63
Without formal salutation		33	37
Subject-head	92		
With subject-head		88	95.7
Without subject-head		4	4.3
Subscription	92		
Complimentary close and signature		57	68.8
Signature less complimentary close		35	31.2

From the above table, our findings reveal that letters with two addresses on them rank highest with 77% of the number of addresses in the letters analysed. This is in line with what is universally known. Every formal letter is expected to have the 'sender's address' and the "inside" (or receiver's) address. However, there are exceptions. The letters with one address are next with 18.69%. These letters are mostly memoranda. Memoranda are written as internal communication to advise or inform employees of policies and procedures that their company or institution has decided to adopt. In addition, memorandum may contain two addresses when it is from one branch of a company to another.

Letters with more than two addresses claim only 4.3%. These type of letters are highly formal. They are the kind of letter written by a junior staff to his Director. The letter may have to pass through many levels or "hands" before getting to the specific person it is addressed to. For example, the junior staff may write through his immediate supervisor to the Director.

Our findings in the use of reference numbers reveal that letters with reference number are in majority. They rate 63%, while those without reference number rate 37%. We observe in our analysis that the letters with reference numbers are mainly from institution to institution or to individuals. The letters without reference numbers are

from individuals to institutions. However, there are cases of some letters from institutions without reference numbers. The writer of those letters might have carelessly omitted it, or are ignorant of the importance of this feature in formal correspondence. Reference numbers facilitate filing and ensure that the letters reach the right people in the institution or organisation.

Our analysis confirms the fact that 'formal salutation is another important feature of formal correspondence. The rate of use ranks highest with 63%. The letters without this feature claim 37% of the total number of the letters analysed. Formal salutation represents the expression of greeting in words or sentences. Expressions such as 'Dear Sir" and "Dear Madam" show that the letter is highly formal while Dear Miss Jones shows that it is a semi-formal letter. Formal salutations always occur at the beginning of a letter.

Another important feature of a formal letter is the subject-head. Our findings reveal that majority of the formal letters have subject-heads. The banking institutions rank highest in the use of subject heads. Federal parastatals follow and educational institutions came last. Although, the letters with subject head claim 95.9% while those without subject head are very few and these claim 4.1% of the total number of letters analysed for the study.

The importance of subject head as a feature of formal letter cannot be exhaustively discussed. When a formal letter is opened with a subject-head, it provides further reference and saves introducing the subject in the first paragraph. It immediately draws attention to the topic of the letter and allows the writer to refer to it throughout the letter. The letters without subject-heads are very few. This shows that subject-heading is an important feature of formal correspondence.

From a close assessment of the above table, our findings reveal that the use of complimentary close rank highest with 68.8% while formal letters with signature less complimentary close claim 31.2%. The difference between the two is not too great. We discover in our analysis that there are cases of inconsistency in the usage: that is, there are situations where letters with formal salutations do not have complimentary closes. In some of the letters, both the formal salutations and the complimentary closes are omitted completely. In spite of these inconsistencies, those features of salutation and complimentary close are very important in formal correspondence because they are used to show the degree of familiarity between the writer and the addressee. And they remain so whether the letter is so formal as to require 'Dear Sir' as a formal salutation and close with "Yours faithfully" or that which is semi-formal, when the form used is "Dear Miss Ross" to close

with 'Yours sincerely.'

At this point, we are going to analyse the language features used. But before this, we are going to state the principles that underlie standard formal letters. To start with, every formal letters should be clear and to the point. To be clear, we need to avoid bombastic expressions. Similarly, keep within the point, we need to modify certain expressions which are frequently used. Besides, every formal letter must be direct, simple and straightforward. Furthermore, formal letters are expected to be polite. These principles underlie good letter writing (Ashley, 1984).

4.3 Specific Language Features

Some specific language features stand out when the formal letters are closely examined. Irrespective of what the theme or subject matter is, these specific language features have risen to the level of canons within the domain of formal correspondence. The major specific language features discovered in the sampled letters have been summarized through the table below.

Table 4.2 Specific Language Features Observed

Language Features	Total No of Words/ Sentences	Frequency of Occurrence	Rate
Function words	150	45	30%
Content words	150	105	70%
Specialized vocabularies	156	30	9.2%
Familiar words	156	126	91.8%
Simple sentences	35	10	28.6%
Complex sentences	35	15	42.9%
Compound sentences	35	10	28.6%
Passive constructions	30	10	33.3%
Active constructions	30	20	66.7%
Modal	50	5	10%
Pronouns	58	4	6.9%
Inter-textual connectors	162	4	2.5%
Intra-textual connectors	162	10	6.2%

In our analysis we discover that the use of content words rank highest with 70% of the total number of words used. Content words belong to the open-class items. Items belong to a class in that they have the same grammatical properties and structural possibilities as other members of the class. The class is open in the sense that it is indefinitely extendable. New items are constantly created and are added to it. Content words are all nouns, verbs, adjectives and adverbs. From this lexicon we construct meaning of sentences.

Function words, by contrast, constitute 30%. Function words belong to the closed system items. The sets of items

are closed in the sense that they cannot normally be extended by re-creation of additional members. The items are said to be reciprocally exclusive. The decision to use one item in a given structure excludes the possibility of using any other. Function words are said also to be reciprocally defining because it is less easy to state the meaning of any individual item than to define it in relation to the rest of the system. Function words include all conjunctions, prepositions, articles, auxiliary verbs and most pronouns.

In some of the formal letters analysed we discover that specialized vocabularies are used. However, the specialised vocabulary claims only 9.2% of the total number of words used in one of the letters analysed. A set of lexical items habitually used for handling a particular subject is termed specialized words. Our findings also reveal that though many words are remarkably flexible, and may be used in many different ways, there are limits to the type of use which any word can accept.

The chance of familiar words ranked highest in majority of the letters. It claimed 91.8%. Familiar words are preferable in writing because more people understand the usage and since the purpose of language is to communicate and not to impress, the choice of familiar words becomes more important.

Our findings also reveal that different types of sentences are used in the writing of the formal letters.

The sentences range from simple sentences to complex and compound sentences.

Compound sentences rank highest with 42.9%, complex sentences follow with 28.6% while simple sentences claim 28.6% of the total number of sentences in some of the letters analysed.

A simple sentence contains only one verb. For example "Miss Moronfaye lost her father on May 9, 1989." A complex sentence is a sentence having a main clause, followed by one or more subordinate clauses. The following is an example of a complex sentence.

> Please note that although this facility is granted for a stated period, the bank in accordance with the general banking practice reserves the right to cancel or reverse the facility at any time, should we consider that circumstances have risen which make such step necessary.

Compound sentences are either two or more simple sentences joined together by co-ordinating conjunction (and. for, yet, but, nor, or) correlative conjunctions (both, and, either or, neither nor, not only but also, so as, whether or) conjunctions accordingly, consequently, however, indeed, nevertheless, only besides also. These type of sentences are used to give the letters varying length.

In the use of passive constructions, our findings reveal that passive constructions are used to give focus to

areas of importance. In passive constructions, the normal object, direct or indirect becomes the subject. We also discover that the passive voice is often used in formal letters because there is some secrecy or a deliberate masking regarding who is supposed to have taken a decision. The conventions of anonymity and collective responsibility often demand that this information be concealed. Example of passive construction where certain information is withheld.

"Two circulars have been issued regarding the submission of marks for these courses." One may ask, "Who issued the circulars?" This information is hidden. In some of the letters analysed the passive constructions are used indiscriminately making some of the sentences wordy and clumsly. Passive constructions constitute 33.3% of the total sentences analysed while active sentences claimed 66.7%.

Furthermore, our findings reveal that modal auxiliary constitute 10% of the words used in a letter. Modals are used to show politeness, willingness, obligation or compulsion. They are used adequately. For instance 'should' in the sentence below shows <u>obligation</u>.

'As earlier advised, you should pay N125,404.74 as full and final settlement of your account between now and 28th February, 1995."

Besides, in some of the formal letters, a frequent device employed is the modal to convey decisions.

"The manager would scarcely agree to your suggestions."

Personal or impersonal pronouns are used in the writing of the formal letters analysed. It is impersonal when the writer refers to himself in the third person. In an organisation, a policy maker can refer to himself in the first person singular 'I'. For example,

> I am writing to draw your attention to the fact that you are now undergoing your probationary periods which by regulation could be extended to a period of not more than 3 years.

We also discover that a staff or member of an organisation or institution seldom refers to himself in the first person plural pronoun 'we.' When this happens the staff is simply associating himself with the policy makers who take important decisions in the organisation. The use of personal pronoun representative 'I' shows that the writer is writing on behalf of his/her institution hence such phrases as 'I have been directed ...' are sometimes used in formal letter writing.

Other language features that are used include the intertextual connectors and intratextual connectors. These are structural clues that are used to achieve unity and coherence between paragraphs and sentences. They are used to indicate relationships at various levels: That is, to convey certain specific relations or meaning in the

sentences in which they are used. Some of these special connectors like (however, meanwhile, also, and, yet etc) are identified and analysed. Some of the connectors are used to illustrate, add contrast, intensify, negate or more and to organise information the writers pass to the addressees.

> We intend communicating this balance to the customer, but we wish to know if any consideration can be given in form of interest waiver. This is because the customer has been granted same two times without meeting its obligation.

In our analysis, our findings reveal that the body of the letters is organised into paragraphs and these paragraphs vary in length. Some contain one or two sentences, others contain more than two sentences. A paragraph may be defined as the largest single unit of an essay. It develops one single main idea by means of supporting facts. The first paragraph as we identified in the letters always set the tone of the letter.

In spite of the language features used in the writing of the formal letters analysed, we identified some errors ranging from the lexical, the structural to the mechanical errors. These errors in one way or the other have made the sentences wordy or clumsy.

4.4 Observed Errors

A close look at the sampled letters revealed a wide range of errors. The most frequent were those unintentional errors arising from wrong spelling, repetition of the same words, and the non-observation of some punctuation marks. Significantly however, some serious errors which cannot be called mistakes were also detected. Since such errors called for close scrutiny they have been isolated and presented in the sections that follow.

These errors are hereby presented in a table.

Table 4.3: Distribution of errors according to Types

Error Type	Number of words [w] or sentences [s]	Frequency of occurrence	Rate %
Wordiness	125 [s]	70	60%
Choice of words	60 [w]	15	25%
Sentence fragments	15 [s]	3	20%
Inflections	45 [w]	15	33.3%
Concord	85 [s]	30	33.2%
Tense	100 [s]	35	35%
Tautology	50 [s]	5	10%
Omission of prepositions	30 [s]	4	13.3%
Articles etc	30 [s]	2	6.7%

Wordiness ranks highest in the total number of errors identified. As conceived in this study, wordiness simply means using more words than necessary. It is the existence in

a sentence of words which cannot be seen to be serving any useful purpose. Wordiness as identified in our findings tend to give rise to long sentences. For example, this sentence below is wordy:

> Upon closer observations, it has been observed that you have not been willing to live up to the required standard expected of your job.

The whole sequence of 'Upon closer observation' has made the sentence wordy. It is not relevant as such to the sentence. The sentence simply could be shortened to "It has been observed that you are not performing your job as required.' We are however, not saying that short sentences cannot be wordy. Two factors, our findings reveal, may have accounted for this error. The first is writing to impress instead of writing to communicate. The second is the inability to control the flow of ideas.

The next major group of error types is the set of errors known as mechanics. Here we are concerned with full stop and comma because they are the most frequently used. Punctuation errors occur more frequently claiming 52% of the total errors of mechanics. Punctuation consists of a series of marks inserted to mark off words one from another either to show their grammatical relationship or to give emphasis to them. Marks such as the full stop and comma merely indicate the length of a pause. Our findings reveal

that in some sentences punctuations are entirely omitted or where a full stop should be, a comma is inserted, and where a comma should be a full stop is inserted resulting in sentence fragments. For instance, here is an example of a sentence without a comma:

> Upon closer observations/it has been observed that you have not been willing to live up to the required standard expected of you on your job.

There should have been a comma after 'Upon closer observations' to indicate the paust instead the comma was omitted. Below is another example where a full stop is required but a comma is inserted.

> During the meeting, this subject was tabled and discussed, and the Director-General, who incidentally was the chairman of the occasion was mandated to set in motion the machinery to have the pipe relayed,/ The power cable ...

Besides, there are also inconsistencies in the use of punctuation for addresses.

> The Head,
> N.N.P.C-PPHC,
> Area Office,
> Kachia Road,
> Kaduna,

Lack of punctuation could interfere with the structure of sentences and quite often they interfere with the meaning

of the sentences.

Spelling errors came next claiming 25% of the error of mechanics. This error could be quite serious for they could cause confusion in interpreting the meaning of sentences.

> The above work is to be completed within four weeks from the date of acceptance of all contract donitions specifiid in the letter of award (sic).

The word underlined above is 'conditions' but because of the spelling mistake, one may not easily understand what the word is and its meaning; all these show that spelling mistakes and wrong punctuation could interefere with intelligibility.

Another area of problem identified was in the case of the relationship of tense and time. By tense we understand the correspondence between the form of verb and our concept of time. Tenses are jumbled in some sentences and verbs hardly correspond to the time concept embodied.

> We are in receipt of your letter dated 12th January 1995 on the above and wish to state that the customer who is the sole proprietor of Triumph Printers (also in account relationship with us) has being pursued of by Messrs Anamah Nwobia for the clearance of the debt.

> Since the implementation of the new salaries none of the staff had been paid the new rate ...

The verb phrase has being pursued' would have been 'is being pursued'; 'had been paid' would have been has been paid."

Another problematic area is that of concord. Concord means agreement as it involves number, person, gender, tense and voice. Concord is essential in producing standard English sentences. There are some inconsistency in agreement between subjects and verbs. The first rule of concord states that a verb must agree in number with its subject. The rule means that a singular subject must be followed by a singular verb while a plural subject is followed by a plural verb.

> ... complicting reports confirmed that you were at the Sick Bay Others says that you reported going to the Bank (sic)

The correct thing to say following the rule of concord is "Others say."

Our findings also reveal that fragmentation occurs as a result of poor punctuation. Fragment occurs when we punctuate an incomplete sentence as if it were a complete sentence, resulting in fragmentation. It is quite simple to recognise fragmentation in writing because it lacks one or more of the basic element of sentence. Example of a sentence that is fragmented.

> With reference to your discussion with the Nitel Area Manager Zaria on provision of telephone service at the Pumping Station Zaria.

To recognise fragmentation, we should know that any construction introduce by after, although, as if, if, in order to, unless, even though cannot stand alone.

Another problematic area was error of omission of important words, articles, and prepositions. Omission of articles constituted 6.7% of the error identified. The error of misuse are very few and consisted of using an article where they should be none. Articles are determiners. They are very necessary in English to specify either quantity or to indicate whether the nouns they determine are known or unknown to the reader. The following is an example of a misuse of an article.

> The undersigned visited this customer and a discussions on the need to clear this long outstanding debt and the customer reacted by wanting to ...

The article 'a' should have been omitted completely or it should have been a discussion but not a discussions. Omission of articles could interfere with the specificity of the nouns they refer to.

The omission of prepositions posed the greatest problem. Omission occurs greatly with phrasal verbs. The writers of

some of the formal letters were not always sure of which preposition should pattern with the nouns/noun phrases or verbs. They seem to be conscious that the choice of the preposition should depend on the noun or verb it modifies. Often, they choose the preposition from what they imagine in their thought. Omissions of words are not many and therefore did not pose a serious problem.

Collocational errors also occur. The lexical error of collocation occurs when the words in a linguistic environment do not fit each other. These words are possible words but they do not fit or agree properly with the other.

> After *given* much consideration, we discover, nobody to relief you. We are still appealing to you to exercise more patience until our two typists presently on leave return.

The word 'more' agrees with 'patience' mainly in colloquial usage. In formal correspondence the preferred expression is "some patience."

Wrong choice of word to fit a linguistic environment is another problem our findings reveal. It is the wrong usage of words; the use of inappropriate words as distinct from the patterns of combination of words to form sentence.

> I am directed to inform you that you should appear here for an interview on 20th July, 1991.

The word 'appear' does not fit the linguistic environment above. 'Come' could have been a more proper word to use.

Word order has to do with the position items should occupy in a given construction. It does not effect the overall meaning, instead it makes the sentences clumsy. A little re-arrangement can render it more acceptable.

> Our records indicate that you have refused and/or neglected to pay this long outstanding debt despite repeated demands so to do by the Bank.

When rearranged it should be 'to do so.'

Tautology is another error type our findings reveal. It constituted 10% of the total number of errors analysed. Tautology is an unnecessary and usually unconscious repetition of words or ideas in the same sentence. This error may be due to lack of concentration in trying to make oneself clear or it could be due to sheer ignorance of sense relation. The example below reflects a typical construction encountered among both students and teachers in Nigeria.

"You will resume back for duty immediately after the new year's public holiday."

CHAPTER 5

5.0 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

5.1 SUMMARY

In this chapter, we summarise the major findings obtained in the research and provide conclusion to the study. We shall also state the limitations of the study and put forward recommendations for further research.

In this study, we have looked at the problem of the present research work. And these problems are:

(a) Whether the features of formality are compatible with those universally identifiable or known.

(b) Whether the formal correspondence of some selected institutions in Nigeria measure up to the expected level?

Our research has been informed by the need to throw light on features of formal letters and the language use in the writing of formal letters.

We have used an appropriate analytical model. The documentary data forming the analytical basis of this study were obtained from three sources: educational institutions, federal parastatals and banking institutions. Ninety-two letters were randomly selected from these institutions and analysed.

In chapter one, we postulated that writing is an integral part of man's communicating systems and that writing could be formal or informal. We identified the characteristics of both formal and informal letters. We also contend that formal letters have become the bane of business organisations and probably the most efficient means of communication through which corporate affairs are discussed and sorted out. As a result of the special functions performed by formal letters we contended that there is the need to know how Nigerians, when presented with situations that call for formal correspondence, rise to that challenge. We also identified the objectives of the study, the scope and the significance of the study.

In chapter two, we reviewed the literature relevant to formal correspondence, especially formal letters. This helped us to locate our research relative to these studies. Each item reviewed was described, critiqued and related to the problem. It is, however, our contention that only few investigations have been done in this area and even these works do not have the close focus which the present work has.

In chapter three, we describe the methodology employed in the study. We proposed a theoretical framework based on Ashley's theory and Anaisudu in Oluikpe (1981) for the analysis of our data. The two models were integrated into one analytical model and used in this study to gain insight into some of the key questions inherent in our present

research regarding the features of formal letters. We also identified the fieldwork procedure, the data collection procedure and transcript of the data.

Chapter four titled "Analysis of Data and Interpretation of findings" occupies a central position in the research. We analysed the data gathered using the relevant statistical methods to answer the research question raised in chapter one. Our analysis presented the most important features and characteristics of formal correspondence. It also presented the features of language use and identified errors made in the letters analysed.

Our analysis has revealed that formal letters with two addresses ranked highest with 81.3%, followed by the one with one address 13.3% and letters with more than two addresses which claimed 5.3% of the total number of letters analysed.

It was also found that 63% of the formal letters had reference number on them while 37.9% did not have any reference number. Our findings also revealed that formal salutation is an important feature of formal correspondence. Letters with formal salutation claimed 63% while those without this feature claimed 37%.

Subject head, another important feature of formal letter, claimed 95.1% while those without subject head claimed 45%. It was also found that letters that had subscription ranked highest with 63% while those without

subscription claimed 37%. We noted that there were a lot of inconsistencies in the use of formal salutation and subscriptions and that in some instances those features are completely omitted.

We also noted the specific language features that were used in the analysis. Our findings revealed that the use of familiar words ranked highest with 91.8%, followed by content words with 70%. Functional words come next with 30%. Specialized vocabulary claimed 9.2%, model claimed 10%, pronouns accounted for 6.9%. In addition, intra-textual connectors claimed 28.6% while inter textual connectors claimed 15%.

In the use sentences compound sentences were more frequently used. This came first with 42.9% followed by complex sentences with 30.6% and lastly simple sentences claimed 28.6% of the total sentences used. Directly connected to the above are the sentence constructions used. Passive sentences claimed 66.7% while active constructions of 6 letters analysed.

The following errors were identified and analysed. The errors ranged from lexical, structural to mechanical errors. It is obvious that the greatest area of problem was in the area of structure. Under this broad category, the errors of wordiness ranked highest claiming 60% of all the structural errors. Concord error came next with 35.2%. Tense error followed with 35% while sentence fragments

claimed 20%. It was also found that the error of wrong inflections claimed 33%.of all the structural errors.

In lexical errors, the greatest area of problem was that of wrong choice of words and this claimed 25%, omissions of article came next with 20%. While prepositional errors claimed 15% the error of collocation claimed only 10% of the total lexical error. The error of tautology claimed 5.5%.

In the case of the error of mechanics, spelling errors occurred more frequently, claiming 57.5% and punctuation errors came next, claiming 42.5% of all mechanical errors.

There are, however, certain aspects of our findings that we have not isolated sufficiently to dwell upon. For example, majority of the letters were written by highly placed men in these institutions as their signatures indicated. That such men should make such errors as identified in this study should be a case for further research. We also observed that some of these letters were signed for and on behalf of the appropriate person that would have signed it. Consequently, we observed that such letters are not edited for errors. Consequently, some of these letters had embarrassing typographical errors on them.

5.2 CONCLUSION

Our research has attempted to looked at the features of formal correspondence because formal correspondence has

its specifics which differentiate it from other forms of writing. Based on the findings obtained in this study, it can be said that it is possible to combine insights from different models for the analysis of a particular kind of writing by either improving on them or picking out relevant areas of the models and applying them to the data. The features of formal letters used by Nigerians cover the three areas that perhaps constitute the substance of such correspondence.

These three areas include the following:

i. The layout which encompasses the two addresses, the opening-salutation, the subject title and the subscription.

ii. The organisation of the content especially the manner of specifying the main theme and linking this up with the sub-themes.

iii. The language of presentation which involves the careful and conscious selection of the correct structural and semantic forms considered appropriate for the content.

While it is true that the advent of the computer and the word-processor has influenced the format or the layout of letters, the use of letter headed paper has added its own dimension to the total appearance of the content page of formal correspondence. These recent changes have added to the aesthetic quality of formal correspondence.

It is no exaggeration to state that a formal letter readily enjoys some aura of respectability. As earlier hinted, this circumstance has been brought about by a combination of factors. Historically, letters from the colonial administrators could never be treated with levity. This was because such letters were usually harbingers of crucial messages since such content could make or mar a family, the formal letters have therefore historically been accorded some special position of deference.

In more recent times, formal letters have been made prominent by business organisations. These used formal letters as their tools for both intra- and inter-corporation correspondence. The letters also serve as the means through which such organisations get in touch with numerous individuals who may be part of their customers or mere enquirers.

The above points will tend to suggest that formal correspondence writing has reached a level of note in Nigeria. One of the significant discoveries of the present investigator was the low rate of attention so far given formal correspondence by Nigerian researchers. The initiatives of authors like Oluikpe (op cit), Banjo (op cit), and Omojuwa (op cit) have not been sufficiently complemented by the efforts of researchers and field workers. The depressing results recorded by Senior Secondary School candidates in the section of letter writing do not seem to

have succeeded in tilting the scale of balance.

The spread of newspapers and magazines, the expanding use of the notice-board and the increasing influence of formal correspondence among both religious and social organisations have all tended to activate the sensibilities or attention of the average Nigerian to formal letters. Most educated Nigerians are naturally more at ease in recognising the features of formal correspondence than in producing such features themselves.

A standard formal letter is expected to have critical features spread over the three areas earlier identified. For the purpose of clarity, a live sample is given below.

NIGERIAN NATIONAL PETROLEUM CORPORATION
Pipelines and Products Marketing Company
Area Office, Kachia Road
P.M.B. 2293
KADUNA

Cablegram NAPLTCOR
Telephone: 603100 (30 LINES)
Telex 21609-NG
21643 NG

Ref. PPMC/KAD/4A.
Date. 7th August, 1990

The Chief Resident Engineer,
Federal Ministry of Works,
Kaduna - Kano Road Project,
KADUNA.

Dear Sir,

DAMAGED NNPC WATER LINE, ELECTRICAL POWER AND TELEPHONE CABLES TO ZARIA PUMP STATION

Personal contacts have been made between NNPC personnel, yourself and your representatives, and letters have been

written on subject.

The last contact being on 15th March, 1990, during the Road Dualization Committee meeting held at the State House, Kawo.

During the meeting, this subject was tabled and discussed, and the Director General, who incidentally was the Chairman of the occasion, was mandated to set in motion the machinery to have the pipe relayed, The power cable to the submersible pump replaced, as well as the repair to damaged telephone line to the Station.

Till date no move has been made on the part of your Ministry to our knowledge to carry out the above works for the restoration of water supply from our bore hole to the Station, to ensure the safe operation of the Zaria Pump Station.

In view of lack of adequate water supply to the Station for operations as a result of the damage to the water pipeline by your Construction Contractors, which you pledged to repair, you are invited to note that:

(1) On April 8th 1989, there was a fire incident at the Zaria Pump Station, which could not be effectively contained on time by our fire fighting personnel as a result of lack of water. The Corporation suffered a loss of over ₦2,000,000.00 (Two million Naira as a result of the damage caused by the fire to our operations equipment.

    This has been brought to the knowledge of our Board of Directors.

(2) NNPC has been purchasing water for its operations.

(3) We are operating under very high percentage risk without water and telephone communication.

From the foregoing, it is evident that urgent action need be taken now, as was decided during the March meeting over four months ago. We will appreciate if this subject is handled promptly.

Alternatively, we suggest that NNPC carry out the relaying of the damaged water pipeline and cables contrary to the agreement reached with you, and we shall forward the Bills including all the Costs incurred by NNPC as enumerated above for settlement by your Ministry.

Your urgent response to the above is kindly requested to minimise the risk involved in operating our Zaria Pump

Station for supply of petroleum products to Kano, Katsina and Sokoto States.

Yours faithfully,
for: NIGERIAN NATIONAL PETROLEUM CORPORATION,
PIPELINES AND PRODUCTS MARKETING COMPANY LIMITED,

(Signed)
ALHAJI H.Z. MOHAMMED
Head, PPMC - Kaduna.

Perhaps the most noticeable point in the sample is the clear desire in the writer to maintain a high degree of balance of all the primary requirements of formality. From this writer's point of view, the effective writer of formal letter is an adroit composer. To succeed in ensuring a good blend of format or layout, organisation and language are no mean feat. This is probably the hallmark of formal correspondence.

5.3 CONSTRAINTS INHERENT IN THE RESEARCH

However, some Nigerian writers sometimes omit completely some of the important formulaic and organisational features of formal letters. There are cases of inconsistencies in the use of these features. Also, the use of language poses problem to some Nigerians because of poor language background and this problem reflects in their formal correspondence. It shows that as second language users, there is still a lot to learn in other to correct these errors.

The first limitation of this research relates to the scope of the study. It is only the data collected from three sources that were used as basis for analysis. This raises the difficulty that our analysis may not be sufficiently broad enough to allow for categorical generelization to be made on formal letter writing.

Another of the limitations of this research was that it was not possible to study all the letters in these three institutions but rather samples of the letters were randomly collected and used for the analysis.

Still another limitation was in the area of the period covered by the researcher. The study covered the formal letters written from 1990-1995 and so findings of the study cannot or should not be generalized to the period before or after that.

5.4 SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY

Our research has focused predominantly on the formal features and the language use in formal correspondence. We believe that a study of the educational standard of the writers of these letters and the opportunity they had had in school in the learning of English would have thrown more light on the standard of the formal letters. The present study therefore suggests that another research should be carried out on where we have stopped and make use of these materials already collected and relate them to the standard

of education acquired by the writers of these formal letters with a view to making further discoveries.

Despite the above, the researcher does feel that her findings would be useful to the business students, teachers, secretaries and business-men because correspondence is essential in establishing and confirming transactions in business. A working knowledge of formal writing in the modern context is vital to success.

5.5 Recommendations

One way of utilizing the findings from this study is incorporating the suggestions in a language programme to which business executives and secretaries are invited.

Another way is that a summarized version of this study could be made available for remedial school programmes.

Finally, seminar presentations could also be organised with the theme of this thesis forming the focus of concentration for participants.

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(HEAD OFFICE: 3/5, TAFAWA BALEWA SQUARE LAGOS, NIGERIA)

Tel: 635010
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Telex: 11001 Netad NG.

Please reply to: The Area Manager,
Nitel - Zaria.

Our Ref: AMZA/E.5/Vol.I
Your Ref: .....
Date: 8th April, 192

The Station Chief,
N.N.P.C.,
Zaria.

Dear Sir,

RETURN OF CHEQUE VALUE
N50,333.84K NO.310090

Please be informed that I have being directed to Return your cheque of N50,333.84 due to under value of cost of the materials needed. The estimate was based on Aerial Cable, while our Headquarters Review that Aerial cable shall not be save. It will be subjected to cable theft being in the Remote part of the town. The under ground cable is the ideal.

The estimate of under cable shall be forwarded to soonest. Please bear with us.

Yours Faithfully,

S. Ayinla,
Area Manager,
Nitel - Zaria.
8/4/92

NIGERIAN TELECOMMUNICATIONS LTD.
(HEAD OFFICE: 3/5, TAFAWA BALEWA SQUARE LAGOS, NIGERIA)

Tel: 635010
Telegram Necom Lagos
Telex: 11001 Netel NG.

Please reply to: TERRITORIAL MANAGER
NITEL TERRITORIAL HEADQUARTERS
KADUNA TERRITORY

Our Ref: PMD/KD/E.5/VOL.VI/52

Your Ref:

Date 6TH MAY, 1992

The Manager,
NNPC Pumping Station,
ZARIA.

Dear Sir,

PROVISION OF TELEPHONE SERVICE AT NNPC PUMPING STATION, ZARIA

With reference to your discussion with the NITEL Area Manager, Zaria on Provision of Telephone Service at the Pumping Station, Zaria.

NITEL has proposed a 10 pair Underground Cable from the nearest Cabinet 28 (DP 24) into your premises to take care of your telephone requirements.

The choise of Underground Cable is due to frequent NITEL cable theft in Zaria and its environs, especially open places along the Bye-pass.

You are therefore required to pay the sum of N496,433.00 (Four Hundred and Ninety-six Thousand, Four Hundred and Thirty-three Naira) only towards the project at our NITEL Office in Zaria. This will enable NITEL execute the project immediately.

Yours truly,
NIGERIAN TELECOMMUNICATIONS LIMITED

G.O. JORAIAH,
For: Territorial Manager,
Kaduna - Territory.

DIRECTORS: Alhaji M.D. Dodo Mustapha (Chairman); Engr. A.U. Otiji (Managing); Engr. I.A. Mohammed (Executive); Alhaji S.S. Allabamulafiya (Executive), Lt. Col. Ochefu (Rtd); Engr.(Mrs) Mayen Adetiba; Chief E. Oke; Barrister A. Aloniran, Dr. V.K.I. Albert-Osaghae.

NNPC

INTERNAL MEMORANDUM

To: Area Manager - Kaduna
From: Station Chief - Zaria
Ref:
Date: 28th May, 1992.

PROVISION OF TELEPHONE SERVICE AT THE EXCHANGE STATION ZARIA

As per previous discussions on how to solve the communication problem of the station through the use of NITEL Direct external telephone line, recent developments are as follows:-

1. PPMC Cheque No.310990D and value of N50,333.84 Issued to NITEL on the 11/3/92 was returned for reasons stated in their letter (copy attached).
2. The fresh estimate that is for the underground cable is the sum of N406,433.00 vide copy of estimate attached.
3. In view of the cost, I hereby return the Cheque already written in their name as per the first estimate. CBN cheque No. 310990D is also attached.

   You may review the case and recommend what you deem fit please.

S. G. Mshelia

CC: Operation Supt. - Kaduna.

CONSTRUCTION & ENG. CO. LTD.

Branch Office
1, HANWA ROAD,
P. O. BOX 1042,
ZARIA
KADUNA STATE
☎ (069) 50402, 34482

Head Office in Lagos.
40, BURMA ROAD,
P. O. BOX 924,
APAPA, LAGOS
TEL. 872722, 871218, 877306

Our Ref: HYDRO/ZA/52

Date: 23rd August, 1993

The Station Chief,
Zaria Pumping Station NHPC,
Zaria.

Dear Sir,

RE: RE-ESTABLISHMENT OF WATER SUPPLY AT ZARIA PUMPING STATION NHPC ZARIA.

Reference to your inquiry to visit the water supply system that has been vandalized by unknown persons, we took the first priority to check and do all the necessary work.

The site we visited on Friday afternoon together with pumping station Chief, we have gone through what has been vandalized and carried out the under written Job immediately in order to keep the level of the water at its normal level.

(a) Pull out the pump and check if it is in good order or not.
(b) Rethreading of the rising mains.
(c) Supply and install the missing 4mm three phase cable.
(d) Connecting the cable and testing of the system.
(e) Installation of pump and testing.
(f) Welding of security locks.

Cost of the above mentioned work is ₦9,870.00 (Nine thousand, eight Hundred And seventy Naira Only).

We would like you to do all the necessary arrangements for the above mentioned payment as soon as possible.

Thanking you.

Yours faithfully,
Hydro Const. & Eng. Co. Ltd.,

(ABUBA TULLU)
PROJECT MANAGER

cc: THE AREA MANAGER
P.P.H.C, N.H.P.C OFFICE KADUNA.

file

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PIPELINES AND PRODUCTS MARKETING COMPANY LTD.

(A SUBSIDIARY OF NNPC)

AREA OFFICE, KACHIA ROAD,
P.M.B. 2001, KADUNA

Cablegram (NAPETCOR)
Telephone: 603106 (30 LINES)
Telex 21609 — NG
21643 — NG

Ref: AD/PER.C.10677

Date: 5th June, 1990

ufs Station Chief
PPMC Pumpstation
Zaria

Mr. C.A. Ajalie
PPMC Pumpstation
Zaria

Sir

PERMANENT TRANSFER TO SARKIN PAWA PUMPSTATION

This is to convey Management's decision to transfer you to Sarkin Pawa Pumpstation to replace Mr. M.I. Ude who is being moved out. The transfer is with immediate effect, and you are to please hand-over your present duties to your immediate supervisor and report to your new location.

You will report to the Station Chief, Sarkin Pawa who will assign you duties as approprite.

The Area Accountant, Kaduna is being advised by a copy of this letter to transfer your pay-point to Sarkin Pawa and pay you one month's basic salary as Disturbanace Allowance.

Please contact the Admin Department for the transportation of your-self, family and personal effect.

Yours faithfully
PIPELINES AND PRODUCTS MARKETING CO. LTD

H.Z. MOHAMMED
Head, PPMCL, Kaduna

Mr C. A. Ajalie reports to the pumpstation HQ on the 23/06/90 to replace Mr. M.I. Ude

RIVERINA MURRAY INSTITUTE OF HIGHER EDUCATION

School of Education

JC:CS

20 October 1988

Dr J C Aliyu
Institute of Education
Ahmadu Bello University
Zaria, Nigeria

Dear Dr Aliyu

I am pleased to report that the reviewers have recommended that the manuscript which you co-authored with Mr Adeloye be published, provided that you agree to some editorial changes and modification to the title. Enclosed is a copy of the article as it would appear in the July, 1989, issue of the IJE. Please examine the copy and let me know at your earliest convenience whether you agree to the editorial changes. Also, please proof read the copy for errors, inaccuracies or omissions. Please write to me at your earliest convenience to advise me of your decision as to whether the editorial changes are acceptable and whether you wish to proceed with publication.

I wish to take this opportunity to thank you for your fine contribution to the IJE.

With kind regards

Dr J F Christensen

The Institution of Industrial Managers

Our Ref: EAH

Charlie A. Ajalie,
N.N.P. (Oil),
P O Box 1455,
Zaria,
Kaduna - State,
Nigeria.

Dear Mr Ajalie,

Thank you for your recent letter regarding the possibility of studying our course in your country.

Unfortunately, The Rapid Results College no longer provides correspondence courses for our programme in your area, but we enclose a leaflet for the Cornwall College of Further and Higher Education who offer distance learning studies.

Should this approach be of interest to you, we suggest you contact Mr M. Wills or Mr J. Newman at Cornwall direct.

I trust this information will be of assistance.

Yours sincerely

E A HERRING (Miss)
Administration Assistant

Enc

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UBA UNITED BANK FOR AFRICA PLC.

ZARIA (KADUNA ROAD) BRANCH
KADUNA ROAD, P.O.BOX 443 ZARIA
SABON GARI, KADUNA STATE
TEL:069/32925,069/32644.

RC. 2457

OUR REF: ZARM.029/94

7th January, 1994.

Dear Sir,

RE: BANKING FACILITIES

We are pleased to inform you that we have agreed to grant you the undermentioned banking facilities on the following terms and conditions untill November,

1. (a) Overdraft facility - N3 Million
2. (b) Revolving Bankers Acceptance(90 days) - N1 Million

2. Interest rate: U.B.A. Prime plus 4% presently 34%

3. C.O.T. - 0.3%

4. Security: Mortgage debenture over all the floating and fixed Assets of the company professionally valued at N N50.067 Million in March, 1992 shared on pari-passu basis with other co-londers. Our share being N3.9 Million to be upstamped to N5.2 Million.

5. All legal charges incurred by the bank in the course of perfecting the securities in relation to this lending shall be borne by you and debited to your account without prior recourse.

6. Disbursement of additional funds is subject to perfection of our securities.

Please note that although this facility is granted for a stated period, the bank in accordance with the general banking practice reserves the right to cancel or reverse the facility, at any time, should we consider that circumstances have arisen which make such a step necessary.

Please kindly signify your acceptance to the foregoing terms and condition by signing and returning to us the duplicate copy of this letter plus your company's board resolution accepting the facility and creating the security.

Yours faithfully,
for pro. UNITED BANK FOR AFRICA PLC

BOARD OF DIRECTORS
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COMMITMENT OFFICER

LAGOS STATE GOVERNMENT

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P.M.B. 21005
Telephone: 900520-2
Telegrams:
All letters to be addressed to the
Chief Consultant in Charge
Our Ref. No:.....

General Hospital
Oba Akinjobi Street
Ikeja

9th March, 1994

Department of Remedial Studies,
Ahmadu Bello University,
Zaria.

Dear Sir,

MEDICAL REPORT
RE: [illegible] 31 YRS

The above-named patient was seen in the Dental Department of the 31st of January, 1994 complaining of a Mandibular swelling of Six months duration.

On examination and histological investigation, the lesion which extends Right Second molar to the left first premolar was diagnosed as an odontogenic cyst.

The tumour was resected following intra operative findings and an acrylic implant inserted under general anaesthesia on the 21st February, 1994.

The Post-Operative histological Diagnosis of the tumour was Squamous Odontogenic Tumour. He has shown signs of effective recovery hence the discharge from hospital.

He would however require a Second operation for the insertion of an autogenous bone graft later in the year.

I hope the above explains his long absence from School and I look forward to further co-operation in the near future.

I remain.

Yours faithfully,

.....

DR. O. V. OGUNBANJO (FWACS)
CONSULTANT MAXILLOFACIAL SURGEON.

Lagos State University

Badagry Expressway, Ojo
P.M.B. 1087, Apapa
Tel: 884218, 884216, 884064
Cables: LASU

Our Ref:.....

Your Ref:.....

Date: 13th September, 1993

Department of Physical and Health Education

Vice Chancellor Professor (Mrs) J O Akande, LL B LL M, Ph D (Lond)
Registrar Mrs J A Olusoga B Sc (Hons) Lagos, M Ed (Toronto)

The Editor,
Nigeria Educational Forum,
Languages and Publications Division,
Institute of Education,
Ahmadu Bello University,
Zaria.

Dear Sir,

Article for Publication

I refer to your letter of 3rd December, 1990, Ref. No. IE/LAN/5/ NEF/A/12, in respect of my article titled: ""Protein-Energy Malnutrition in Children: Its Implications for the New National Policy on Education".

I have made several attempts to hear from you in respect of this paper. You will be kind enough to let me know your editorial decision as I intend to send the paper to another Journal.

Thanks.

Sincerely yours,

Dr. A. P. Agbonjinmi

National Reading Conference
11 E. Hubbard, Suite 200, Chicago, IL 60611 (312)329-2512 Fax (312)329-9131

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October 27, 1992

Dear Colleague:

By virtue of being a presenter at the 1992 NRC conference in San Antonio, you are a member of the 1993 Conference Program Committee and are eligible to be a potential reviewer of proposals for the 1993 conference. The purpose of this letter is to determine your willingness to review 1993 proposals.

The proposal review process has been modified this year. Nine areas of the program have been identified: 1) Basic Literacy Processes, 2) Learning from Text, 3) Emergent Literacy, 4) Special Populations, 5) Instruction: Theory and Practice, 6) Teacher Development, 7) Literacy and Language Diversity, 8) Policy Issues, and 9) Assessment. If you are willing to review proposals, indicate the area you prefer on the enclosed form. **Do not choose more than one program area.** You must also indicate which proposal topics you prefer within that program area. There is no limit on the number of topics you can select. Whether you ultimately receive proposals to review will depend on the number and type of proposals submitted. You may receive a set of proposals to review (a maximum of 8) shortly after April 20, 1993. The completed reviews must be sent back no later than May 20th.

If you are willing to serve, please complete the attached form and return it to NRC headquarters before the San Antonio conference.

Sincerely,

James Flood
Chair, Program Committee
enclosure: reviewer response form

AHMADU BELLO UNIVERSITY, ZARIA
(Office of the Registrar)

R/GEN/146 5th Oct. 1994

Engr Sani Tanko Kontagora.
The Pro-Chancellor and Chairman of Council.
Ahmadu Bello University.
Zaria.

Dear Sir.

DEFERMENT OF DATES OF CONVOCATION

You will recall that during the 93rd meeting held on 24/8/94. Council was formally informed that the University Senate has tentatively fixed Friday 21st and Saturday 22nd October, 1994 for the forthcoming Combined Convocation ceremonies. In fact, a Committee was working out modalities for this major event while the Vice Chancellor has been making efforts to obtain the necessary clearances from the Government.

The University Management Committee met on 27/9/94 and among other matters reviewed the general situation in the University with particular regard to developments usually involved towards Convocation. Senate is not likely to meet soon and with the deadline fast approaching, the Management felt it will be necessary to shift the dates of Convocation forward. A full and formal report will be made to the Senate in due course but before then, I shall seize the opportunity to copy this letter to all members of Council and Senate for information in advance. I wish to assure you, Sir, that all appropriate actions already initiated will be sustained and pursued with vigour to ensure a hitch-free and successful Convocation ceremony.

Thank you.

Yours faithfully.

ABDULLAHI MUSA
Registrar

CC. Vice Chancellor
CC. Members of the Governing Council
CC. Members of the Senate
CC. Deputy Vice Chancellor (Admin)
CC. Deputy Vice Chancellor (Acad)
CC. Bursar
CC. University Librarian
CC. Deputy Registrars/Secretaries
CC. Information & Protocol Officer