A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF GRAMMATICAL AND DISCOURSE ERRORS OF SENIOR SECONDARY THREE AND FIRST YEAR UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS

By

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this project has been written by me and that it is a record of my research work. It has not been presented by any previous work for a higher degree. All quotations are indicated by quotation marks and the source of information are acknowledged by means of references.

Theresa Onyaidu Adogwa.

CERTIFICATION

This project titled, " A Comparative Study of Grammatical and Discourse Errors of Senior Secondary Three and First Year Undergraduate Students", has been read and approved as meeting the requirements of the Postgraduate School of Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria for the award of degree of Master of Education in Teaching English as a Second Language (TESL).

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DEDICATION

To my beloved mother, Onyeche Abu,

To whom we, sisters and brothers

Owe our lives.

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I owe a debt of gratitude to my God, the Almighty Father, who saw me through the period of this study and to many people whose names cannot all be mentioned here. I wish to express my sincere gratitude to my major supervisor, Dr. I. A. Olaofe who patiently supervised this work from its rough beginning to the present stage. I also wish to acknowledge my appreciation to Dr. S. Stephen, (Second Supervisor) Dr. (Mrs.) C.E. Onyewotu, Dr. A. O. Adeyanju for their insightful suggestions and guidance.

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ABSTRACT

This is a comparative study of SS 3 and 100 level students' grammatical and discourse errors. It attempts to find out the similarity and the differences in the performances of these students at both grammatical and discourse levels, the possible sources of the errors and to suggest remedial programmes that could help to minimise them.

The data used were obtained from free essay writing and responses to a questionnaire by a randomly selected sample of two hundred and sixty-five senior secondary school three (SS 3) students in Kaduna State and one hundred and forty-one 100 L undergraduate students from Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria.

The findings revealed persistence of three broad categories of grammatical errors namely structural, lexical and mechanical in the study sample. Both groups of students were seen to produce similar grammatical errors. This implies that the one year of formal English instruction (Comskip) at the 100 level had not significantly improved the students' performance in grammar. For instance, tense errors, concord errors and wrong choice of words were seen to occur most frequently among the grammatical errors of these two groups.

At the level of discourse, the result showed a significant difference between their performance, suggesting that the one year of formal English instruction and further exposure to the use of English in the University had improved the students' discourse.

The result of the analysis of the students' responses to post-essay writing questionnaire revealed areas of weaknesses such as using of incorrect tenses, making an outline to an essay and logical presentation of ideas. These tallied with the ones revealed by the actual performance in the essay writing.

The study showed sources of errors such as overgeneralisation, faulty teaching, lack of awareness of the workings of the English sentence patterns and lack of self-editing ability. Others includ the students' inability to express themselves well in the standard English and. lack of essay writing practice.

To improve the students' performance in essay writing, teachers should cultivate the habit of extensive reading in the students incorporate grammatical structures into reading comprehension lesson, thereby covering a wider range of grammatical structures, students should also be provided more text-books on writing that will improve their writing ability and tape-recorders that could be used to minimise spelling errors, especially those due to faulty pronunciation.

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DEFINITION OF TERMS USED IN THE STUDY

1. Avoidence Phenomenon is based on the assumption that students tend to avoid any construction or structure they find difficult while getting their ideas across.

2. Coherence refers to the relationship which links the meanings of utterances in the discourse or of sentences in a text.

3. Cohesion is the grammatical or lexical relationship between different sentences or between different parts of a sentence.

4. Collocation refers to the restrictions on how words can be used together e.g which prepositions are used with particular verbs which verbs and nouns are used together.

5. Competence refers to a person's internalised grammar of a language.

6. Contrastive Analysis is the term used for the comparison of the linguistic systems of two languages, for example the sound system or grammatical system.

7. Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis refers to the underlying assumptions on which any contrastive linguistic analysis is based.

8. Discourse Analysis is used in its broad sense to refer to analysis of language patterns above sentence level (Pike, 1964).

9. Discourse Errors refer to errors within larger units of language such as paragraphs, conversations and interviews.

10. Educated Nigerian English is a variety of English spoken by educated Nigerians.

11. Error Analysis is the term used for the study and analysis of errors made by second language learners.

12. Fossilization is a process which sometimes occurs in which incorrect linguistic features become a permanent part of the way a person speaks or writes a language aspects of pronounciation, vocabulary usage and grammar may become fixed or fossilized in second or foreign language learning.

13. Interference is on those instances of deviation from the norms of either language which occurs in the speech of bilinguals as a result of their familiarity with more than one language.

14. Intra-lingual Errors are L2 errors that reflect native language structure regardless of the internal processes or external conditions that spawned them (Duley et al. 1982).

15. Interlanguage is a term used to refer to the type of language produced by second and foreign language learners who are in the process of learning a language. This language differs from both the mother-tongue and the target language.

16. Intralinguistic Error is an error which results from faulty or partial learning of the target language rather than from language transfer.

17. Overgeneralisation is a process common in both first and second language learning, in which a learner extends the use of a gramatical rule/linguistic item beyond its accepted use.

Chapter I

Introduction

1.1 Background to the study

The role English plays in the affairs of Nigeria cannot be underestimated. It has come to establish itself as the lingua franca. It is the language of commerce and technology. It is the passport to primary and university institutions, as well as prestigious employment. This explains why some parents are anxious for the schools to go straight for English nowadays as against mother-tongue or the language of the immediate society (National Policy on Education, Section 3, paragraph 14 (4). They feel the earlier their children start to learn English, the greater will be their chances of doing better in life (Ubahakwe, 1979:16).

At the secondary school level, English is one of the compulsory subjects for all the candidates. It is the subject that is taught more than any other in the school. It is assumed most times that it is the essential ingredient for a successful professional career. These and other reasons make English the most important subject on the school timetable.

But in spite of its importance the huge amount of money and time spent on its teaching, people still hear and read about poor performance in English language, especially at post-primary level. Oguntunse (National Concord, May, 19, 1986) observes:

> The mass failure in public examination which scandalised and embarrassed Nigeria in 1985 was particularly noticeable in English. The English result caused a

> hulking furore throughout the nation because most students recorded unprecedented failures.

Banjo, (1974) like many others, expressed the same disappointment when he said that in spite of the money and time spent on the teaching of English Language in Nigeria, its results have not been anything but poor. Nnadi (1985) reported that out of the 1,051,851 candidates who wrote the English Language (GCE) or (WASC) in 1982, 1983 and 1984, 683,474 failed. The percentage of the failure showed that in 1983, 65.75% failed, in 1984, 59.09% failed and in 1985, 84.49% failed - the worst at that time in the history of WASC/GCE results.

The English language is very crucial for the content subjects. Many students face serious problems in learning them because of their English Language. Their performance in these subjects depends, to a very large extent, on their mastery of English language. Therefore, when students are deficient in their use of English, their performance in these other subjects are likely to be poor. It is for this reason that other subjects area teachers join in this outcry over the students' poor performance in English language. The various comments of the Chief Examiners (WASC/GCE) in Physics and Shorthand as they relate to English as the source of students' persistent poor performance in their subject areas in writing support this claim:

> Inability to express themselves in clear and simple English was a great set-back for many candidates. Chief Examiner's Report (Physics) 1983. Grammar continued to be the most weak point. Little or no attention was paid to such things as using correct verbs with correct nouns (Chief Examiner's Report: Shorthand, 1982).

At the university level, the students are faced with the language challenges of higher education. The volume of reading to be done is enormous. A lot of writing, note-taking, writing assignments and examinations are done. All these cannot be adequately taken care of because almost all the students are inadequately prepared for the work at this level. According to Jegede (1987), some of the instructional problems perceived to be an impediment to students' effective learning of science subjects range from inability to read to lack of comprehension of the language used in texts.

Tiffen, (1969), through his contact with many undergraduate students, discovered that the students' study habits/techniques, writing skills and reading speed are often too inadequate to cope with the volume of work at this stage. He goes further to say that it has been found that a school certificate with a credit in English does not necessarily mean that the students have the linguistic equipment required for the work at this level.

The widespread concern among educationist and policy-makers over the fall in the level of English language proficiency of the Nigerian undergraduate students, especially on entry to the university, was one motivation into English Language Examining reported by Grieve in 1964. According to him, the universities are dissatisfied with the low level of English of many entrants who have scored reasonable marks in the examination but are handicapped in their university studies by their inability to read with understanding and write clearly (See also Adeyanju, 1989, Alonge 1979, Ubahakwe, 1979).

To remedy the situation, many Nigerian universities introduced the "Use of English" (U of E) programme to help the incoming students overcome any deficiencies in their English, as well as improve their communicative skills. The programme failed and gave way to equally higher feelings of disappointment because of the persistent poor performance and negative attitude of the students towards it. Again, in 1989, the Federal Government of Nigeria in association with the British Council/ODA and the National Universities Commission introduced the "Comskip" to help improve the students' proficiency in English language.

It has been observed that all criticisms of the fallen standard of English language and the introduction of the various language programmes have not helped much because they do not normally provide the solutions to the problems. And where these solutions are provided, it is discovered that they do not work because of one reason or another.

In view of the foregoing reasons, the researcher intended to carry out a descriptive survey of errors made by two groups of students from different educational levels - Senior Secondary three (SS 3) and First Year (100 level) undergraduate students. A study of errors of the students' written essays was expected to provide this kind of description. The students' essays were examined for grammatical and discourse errors. The findings from these two levels - (SS 3 and 100 level) were compared to see the similarities and differences between the errors made by the two groups of students.

This comparison would help to determine the effect of formal English instruction on the performance of the 100 level under-graduate students at the end of the 100 level, the researcher wanted to know whether the one year of formal instruction in English and communication skills had helped in anyway to improve these students performance in English language.

1.2 Purpose of the Study

As earlier stated (see 1.1), it is very glaring that students' performance in English Language has caused a lot of concern for many people. It is this growing concern that has motivated many teachers of English, especially the present researcher, to wish to find the cause(s) of the poor performance and suggest ways of improving the situation. The persistence of some grammatical errors across different proficiency levels, secondary and post-secondary motivated this study.

The study aims at the following:

(a) Identification (at sentence and discourse levels) and classification of errors made by SS 3 students and first year (100 level) undergraduate students by the end of the programmes.

(b) Comparison of the errors produced by these two groups of students.

(c) Finding out the possible reasons for occurrence and persistence of the errors at these levels.

Based on the findings, suggestions could be made to help improves the students' performance in English language.

1.3 Statement of the Problem

It is very obvious that the poor performance in English across the two levels (SS 3 and I00 Level) has caused a lot of concern for many people. This is reflected in the many researches in the area (see 2.5) and comments on the issue (see 1.1). It is the same concern that has motivated this present study.

The researcher, having taught English Language to some senior secondary students in Kaduna State (1983-1988) and having marked GCE and WAEC (1983-1992) discovered that these students could not express themselves adequately in English. This makes it more important to probe into the cause(s) of the students' low proficiency in English Language and to suggest solutions.

This is a comparative study of the written essays of SS 3 students from selected schools in Kaduna State and First Year (100 Level) undergraduate students of Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria. The study aims at finding answers to the following questions:

(a) What types of errors are produced in the written essays of SS 3 students from the selected schools in Kaduna State?

(b) What types of errors are produced in the written essays of the First Year (100 level) undergraduate students of Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria?

(c) What are the possible sources of these errors?

(d) Are the errors produced by the two groups of students similar to each other?

(e) What is the effect of formal English instruction offered at the 100 level on the language performance of the First year undergraduate students?

(f) What kind of remedial programme could be suggested based on these findings?

1.4 Hypotheses

In order to answer the stated questions, the following hypotheses were tested:

1. There is no significant difference between the errors produced by SS 3 and 100 level students.
2. The one year of English and Communication skills (Comskip) at the 100 level has not significantly improved the students performance in English language.

1.5 Significance of the Study

There are two justifications for the study of learner's errors - pedagogical justification, namely; that a good understanding of the nature of errors is necessary before a systematic means of eradicating them could be found, and the theoretical justification that a study of the learners' language is itself necessary for an understanding of the progress of second language acquisition (Corder 1981).

The study, unlike many others in the past (Akonobi, 1976; Olayemi, 1980; Ofuokwu, 1982; Ayoko, 1983), goes beyond error analysis at the sentence level to error analysis at the

discourse level. This is because a lot of work on error analysis has already been done at the sentence level. Secondly, there is a change of focus from the sentence as the basic unit of language teaching to the use of sentences in combination since the need to teach language as communication is being emphasised. Language is no longer thought of in terms of sentences only, the nature of discourse and how best to teach it must be considered. To the best of the researcher's knowledge, no comparative study of SS 3 students and First Year undergraduate students language has been done. These were what the study intended to do or investigate.

Nigeria is now operating a new system of education whereby the SS 3 and not the form five becomes the terminus from where these students move into the universities. It has, therefore, become a crucial point where the students' language problem areas need to be identified because some of the graduates of this new programme are expected to be absorbed into the universities.

It therefore becomes very urgent to suggest for these 'would-be' beneficiaries of the university education some programmes of activities that are both remedial and developmental in content so that they could go into the university fully prepared/equipped to face the language challenges at that level. The present error analysis will identify the underlying cause(s) of the fallen standard in written English of the two groups of students and highlight the weak areas where remedial training is most needed.

Some of the expected outcomes of the study are enumerated below:

1. The study could inform the teachers at both levels of the inventory of common errors of the groups of students.
2. It would help to pin-point the weak areas of written language programme at both SS 3 and 100 level that would need to be reinforced.
3. The findings could help the language teacher to predict from the outset the likely problematic areas of SS 3 and 100 level courses so that provision could be made to tackle them.
4. From the comparative study, curriculum planners could base their plan/design on the real needs of the students, thereby setting realistic goals for them. This would help the quality of teaching.
5. It is of theoretical interest because it shares the current enthusiasm for discourse world-wide (Stubbs, 1983, Brown & Yule, 1985, Sinclair and CoultLord, 1977 etc) and communicative language teaching.
6. Finally, it is hoped that when this type of work is done in all parts of the country, language specialists could make accurate statements as regards Nigerian students' communicative competence.

1.6 Assumptions of the study

1. The making of errors is the result of a strategy employed by children acquiring the mother tongue and those learning the second language (Corder 1971, 1983, Dulay and Burt,

1974). Thus, it assumes that the analysis of errors in students' written essay provides an insight into the common difficulties associated with language learning of these groups (Corder, 1981).

2. From the grammatical and discourse errors of the students, educators would be able to make accurate statements about students' English proficiency levels.

1.7 Scope of the study

The study is limited to SS 3 students from fourteen senior secondary schools in Kaduna State and first year (100 levels) undergraduate students of Ahmadu Bello University Zaria. It is limited to these two levels because firstly, the SS 3 is now the terminus of the secondary school education from where students move to the university. Secondly, at the university, it is only at the 100 level that English is taught as a compulsory subject. This is the last opportunity the students have to improve their English proficiency.

The focus of this study is only on the written exercise because, for an in depth study of this nature, the written component is more relevant and more useful than the other components at these levels. The students' performance are therefore best evaluated through the written medium.

Chapter II

Literature Review

2.1 Notion of Correctness.

One of the characteristics of language is its flexibility and this is what makes it unreasonable to search for absolute correctness. Warbury (1962) and Close (1962) opined that despite the mutability of language, there must be a standard to deviate from. To them, correct usage does not depend on any arbitrary standard laid down about the language but on its suitability for particular occasions (Warbury, 1962). Correctness and errors are both relative terms because it is ultimately a matter of what is acceptable in a particular society (Palmer, 1971:14).

To (Corder 1973) language is a set of rules for generating well formed sentences at the three levels - phonology, syntactic, and semantic and a breach of code either through the use of the right rule or a misuse of the right rule is a deviation from the acceptable or standard.

Though English is not one of the Nigerian languages, it has established itself as the lingua franca of the country. The analysis of errors in this study would consider deviations from the standard English taught in schools, represented in text-books, tested in Nigerian schools. We may call it neither British standard English nor Nigerian standard English. Some could call it British mingled with Nigerian.

2.1.1 What is standard English?

The need for a standard against which to detect deviation in language can hardly be disputed. Vallins (1973:50) defines standard English as a means within a linguistic framework which has been fashioned by custom in the past and has certain shape in the present - a shape, which in liberal terms is defined as modern usage. Standard English could be said to be the variety of English which is widely acceptable and utilized in formal and academic interaction. It is an established model of English, characteristic of educated/intellectual people in formal situations (Quirk, 1972). Therefore, error analysts are able to identify errors only by setting them against a correct form which is the accepted standard English.

There are some advantages for setting a standard for measuring correctness and errors in a language. One of such advantages is that, with a standard English, experts might be in a good position to check language change in the face of wide spread and often diverse differences in cultural background and level of proficiency in English usage in different parts of the world.

2.1.2 Nigerian English

Because English has been long with us, it has developed characteristics which are distinctively Nigerian (Odumuh, 1983). These varieties are termed indigenous, nativized or local compared to the British or American. There exists at the moment a single supra-ordinate variety of the standard English in Nigeria which presupposes the existence of other forms of

English usage in the Nigerian speech community. The distinctiveness of this local variety in relation to other varieties is quite evident from a close examination of the lexical, syntactic, semantic and phonological planes of English usage, written or spoken in Nigeria (See Ubahakwe, 1979, Bamgbose 1982, Adeyanju 1988, Banjo 1969, Odumuh 1983, etc).

The status of Nigerian English is still undeterminate (Odumuh, 1983). While many Nigerians believe that Nigerian English is sub-standard and inferior, others see it as a legitimate sociolinguistic term used in reference to a national standard comparable to other varieties such as British standard English and American standard English. They think it definable as educated Nigerian English.

But the fact still remains that "Nigerian English" and indeed, third world varieties are yet to establish their legitimacy. The basic problem now in the Nigerian context is to be able to distinguish between what is indigenous English and what is not. Because of the above reasons, the standard English represented in the Nigerian textbooks, examination papers, tested and taught in Nigeria will be regarded as the standard in which to detect deviations in this study. It could be called neither totally British nor totally Nigerian but near British standard.

2.2 The different theories about the learners' errors

2.2.1 Contrastive Analysis (CA)

Although, the theoretical foundation of contrastive analysis could be traced back to the work of Haugh and Weinreich on bilingualism in 1953, it was Lado who conceived the first methodological procedures for contrastive analysis in 'Linguistics Across Cultures' published in 1957. Contrastive Analysis is based on two main assumptions: that the native language interferes with the learning of the second languages and the greater the differences between the structures of native language and target language, the more difficult it is for the learner.

The contrastivists claim that on the basis of the comparison of the descriptions of the two languages in question, they offer the learner hypothesis concerning identification which he will make between his language and the target language, thereby providing predictions and explanation concerning his learning behaviour.

Some of the linguists believe that errors in second language learning could be avoided if comparisons between the learner's mother-tongue and the target language were made. Contrastive Analysis highlights the similarities and differences between the two languages and the sum of these differences constitute the probable areas of performance difficulties to the target language learners. These areas are, according to Hammerger (1974), footholds for the learner and the points of departure for the teacher who is more facilitated if he knows

the learners first language. Contrastive Analysis posits interference (Weinreich, 1953) and cross - language transfer (Jacobovits, 1968).

Contrastive Analysis has relied on transformational generative grammar for concepts such as language universals - the basis for comparability (Di Pietro, 1971), deep grammatical relations, that allows for translation across languages, (Bouton, 1976: 143) and mathematical models for linguistic descriptions for explicitness. This explicitness of TG makes it possible to explain superficial and physical manifestations of similarities and differences in terms of uniqueness in the surface manifestations of universals across languages. However, TG rules should not themselves be seen or looked upon as a linguistic book of formulae that provides all the answers (Newmark 1966, Lado 1969, Allen and Corder 1974).

2.2.2 Critics of Contrastive Analysis

However appealing CA might appear, it is heavily criticized and its very object - prediction of difficulty areas - put to questions. To Newmark (1966), proponent of the weak version of Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis, the native language does not really interfere with the learning as much as it provides an escape when the learner gets into a tight spot. He believes that the learner takes from his native language when he does not know how to say something in the target language. This is not really native language interference but simply not knowing something in the target language.

Oller (Jr.) and Ziahosseiny (1970), proponents of the moderate version of CAH have rejected both the strong and the weak versions of CAH because the strong version is too strong and the week version too weak. Their focus is on the nature of human learning and not on the contrast between the two language.

Wardhaugh (1970), Lee (1980), Nemser and Slama Cazacu (1970), in protest against the strong version of CAH, questioned the predicability of CA, most fatal blow on CA, while Ritchie (1967) rejected the strong hypothesis completely.

Another severe criticism was from Duley and Burt (1974). Their study delimited interference errors to only 4.7% of the errors made by second language learning subjects. This finding plays right into the favour of error analysis which believes that analysis of errors already made may give a better and more reliable result upon which to base pedagogical plans. In spite of this, Schachter (1974), proposes that CA should not be abandoned as a diagnostic tool because of its unique potential for accounting for the avoidance phenomena, the only theory capable of such power.

To the proponents of the middle position between the extremes, CA and EA are complementary and not conflicting (Duskova 1969, Johansson 1974). Because of the criticisms discussed above, this study will not adopt the CA approach to the study of errors.

2.2.3 Error Analysis (EA)

Error Analysis, a 20th century venture, stemmed from the weakness of the more restrictive CA. The movement was an attempt to account for learners' errors that cannot be explained or predicted by CA or behaviourist theory and to align EA with current linguistic theoretic trends. EA is based on assumption that the frequency of errors is proportional to the degree of the learning difficulties.

Language learning is characterised by series of trials and errors. The making of errors is seen as inevitable, indeed, a necessary part of the learning process. As Duley and Burt 1974 say, "You can't learn without goofing". Errors are, therefore, visible proof that learning is taking place. They are not to be regarded as problems to be overcome but as evidence of the learner's strategy and the route he follows when building up his competence in the target language (Corder, 1967; Strevens 1969).

A learner's errors are significant in three ways. First, they tell the teacher how far towards the goal the learner has progressed. Secondly, to the researcher, they provide evidence of how language is learned/acquired and the procedures the learner uses in the discovery of the language. Thirdly, the learner uses it to test his hypothesis about the nature of the language he is learning (Corder 1967:107). The making of errors, then, is as a result of strategy employed by both children acquiring their mother tongue and by those learning the second language. They are indispensable - they are used as evidence to know the nature of the learning processes, and to

alter the teaching techniques, to improve the learner's learning performance. This focus on errors has raised their status from undesirable elements to special research objects, curricular guide and learning signals. (Strevens, 1969). The implication of the study of errors to the present study is that learners' errors are manifestation of their knowledge of English to date.

2.2.4 Critics of Error Analysis (EA)

Error Analysis has been criticised by CA proponents that it is incapable of giving full explanation of learner's errors. The corpus of errors gathered by EA is usually too few to encompass all small but important errors (Lado 1957). EA focuses only on errors as if they are isolated or self-contained items, which means successful treatment of the target language is deliberately ignored.

Another weakness of EA is its failure to account for avoidance strategy (Duskova 1969, Schachter 1974, 207, Kleinmann, Schachter and Hart 1976:40-42). A learner who is unsure of target language items, avoids them and EA would assume he has no difficulty there. The absence of errors, therefore, does not necessarily reflect native like competence since the learner maybe avoiding difficult items in the language (Schachter, 1974).

Other weaknesses of EA include problem of classification, comment on statement of frequency of errors, identification of difficulty points, the description of systematic errors and biased nature of sampling procedures (Jacquely Schachter,

Mariane Celve 1977). These weaknesses led to false conclusions. In spite of its weaknesses, it is still a viable way of finding out the students' weaknesses in English. It also provides evidence of how language is learned/acquired and the procedures the learner uses in the discovery of the language. The learner too uses it to test his hypothesis. It is on these grounds that error analysis route is adapted in the study.

2.2.5 Errors and Mistakes

Corder (1973) makes a distinction between errors and mistakes. While errors are systematic, consistent deviations, characteristic of a learner's linguistic system at a given stage of learning, mistakes are random and can be corrected by the learner because they are due to performance factors such as emotional strain and memory limitations. Both native speakers and second language learners make mistakes. For this study, mistakes shall be disregarded while errors in Corder's (1975) fashion shall form the analyzable data.

2.2.6 Interlanguage

Selinker (1972) called the language of the learner `inter-language', Sampson and Richards (1973) called it `learner language system' while Corder and Nemser (1971) called it `approximative systems' and `idiosyncratic dialect' (for transitional competence) respectively. These are all different names for the same phenomenon: the type of dialect that is unique to the particular individual and has rules that are

peculiar to him alone. This dialect does not contain wilful or inadvertent breach of linguistic rules, which most of the time, are unknown. They posit that it is not all errors because only very few second language learners attain levels of second language competence indistinguishable from native speakers.

This theory, commonly tagged interlanguage, posits that a second language learner's language differs from native speaker's version because a separate linguistic system is involved which has elements of (a) underlying structures or production of native languages (b) knowledge of the target language at some level and (c) knowledge of some target language production norms.

Selinker (1972) explains the processes involved in inter-language utterances. They include (a) language transfer (b) transfer of training (c) strategies of second language learning (d) strategies of language communications (e) overgeneralisation of second language linguistic materials. All the above processes were taken into consideration when considering the errors in the students' essays.

However, in spite of the learner's progressive attempt to perform in the target language, he gets stock at some point and cannot improve his performance any further. Selinker (1972) called this fossilization and fossilizable items remain in the learner's interlanguage no matter his age or level of instruction. It is these fossilizable items that should form the focus of research. They should be related to the five processes given earlier because they force fossilizable material upon the surface of interlanguage utterances and can be

accounted for by these five processes. (Richards 1971, Selinker 1972, and Sridhar 1980).

Larsen-Freeman (1975) in his study of speakers of four languages - Arabic, Spanish, Persian and Japanese, discovered variations in the rules of individual and language groups. The variations are as a result of influence of the native language in the creation of an interlanguage when the learner is using it. Dickerson (1975) thus proposes that interlanguages, like real languages, should be seen as having variable rules: "Like native speakers, second language learners use a language system conisting of variable rules. The implication here is that ESL teachers should expect variability from learners and thus measure their attempt in terms of proportion of the target and native language variant in their performance in a given situation.

2.2.7 Critics of Interlanguage

One of the criticisms of interlanguage is the need to understand the difference between non-native speaker and native speaker performance since this leads to difficulty in determining what is an error. To Kachru (1966), the emergent of different varieties of English is a result of sociological, economical and cultural differences. Thus, Labov (1969) feels that it is unrealistic to judge all these varieties according to the norms of standard English. He goes further to ask a question that if these varieties of English happen to become languages of their own right, what, then, is an error ?

Hammerberg (1974) argues that what is an error in one approach may be a different or no error at all in another approach. To Richard (1972), deviations are as a result of sociological and cultural backgrounds while errors are signs of incomplete learning. He advised that different social settings be taken into consideration in explaining the learners's language.

It is in the light of the above reasons that this study considered deviations from the standard of English taught, tested and used' in textbooks in Nigerian schools as errors.

It is clear from the literature review in the area of second language learning and teaching that the seemingly conflicting theories of contrastive analysis, error analysis and interlanguage complement each other (Duskova, Johannson, Nickel, Wagner). The three theories share some similarities in methodology, even as they emphasize some differences: contrastive analysis emphasizes the differences between the learner's language and target language, error analysis deals with the learner's performance in the target language and interlanguage deals contrastively with the learner's native language and his performance altogether. The three theories are, therefore, contributors to the understanding of the nature of foreign language learning and teaching and thus none should be totally rejected or uncritically accepted.

2.2.8 Why Error Analysis is used in the Study

The researcher chose error analysis over contrastive analysis because CA presupposes the researcher's knowledge of the native languages of the subjects. It also requires the

study of transitional equivalent in the given languages. But the researcher is not in a good position to meet these contrastive analysis' needs because she may have to deal with numerous Nigerian languages, many of which have not been reduced to writing.

On the other hand, EA is unidirectional and errors can be observed, analysed and classified to reveal their underlying system. In a multi-ethnic set-up like Nigeria where teachers handle learners from different of linguistic backgrounds, EA becomes the easier route as it reveals to the teacher how far towards the goal his students have progressed and what remains for them to learn (Etherton 1977). It could help in revealing the common and individual weaknesses that could call for special attention. It could show to the teacher the areas where his teaching has not been effective enough and provide data for teaching programmes. It does rely an existing facts rather than speculative materials, working on the known rather than hypothetical errors which may or may not occur in determining the main areas of differences in second language.

The study is designed along error analysis line in order to identify students errors and weaknesses in the process of learning the target language and to provide explanation for why these occurred and suggest activities that would avert the re-occurrence of such errors.

The focus of this study is to determine the level of the students' performance in English language and error analysis was used to achieve this. Contrastive Analysis Approach is not used here in the study because its objectives are not in line with

those of the study.

The students' essays provided the interlanguage because they are still in the process of mastering the target language. These were used as data that were analyzed.

2.3 Sources of Errors

Nickel (1973) observed that contrastive analysis' inability to account for many errors, for example, arising from second language learning and teaching has shown logical predictions of language difficulties to be false. Apart from the errors of interference (See Buteau 1970, Duskova 1969, Richards 1971, Selinker 1969 etc) Richards (1977) said that there were more sources of errors for example inadequate learning or faulty teaching. These, he said, were intra-lingual and they fell under four categories namely:

a. Over-generalisation

b. Ignorance of rule restriction

c. Incomplete application of rules

e. False concepts hypothesized.

The errors found in the students, essays were looked at and explained in connection with the above mentioned categories.

2.4 Methodologies of Error Analysis

According to Etherton (1975), there is no one ideal method of classifying errors. Traditional error analysis classified errors into categories such as errors of agreement, omission, to mention a few. Their method consisted of:

a. collection of data.

b. identification of errors.

c. classification of errors into types.

d. statement of relative frequency of errors.

e. identification of the areas of difficulties, in the target language; and

f. Remedial drills.

The traditional classification, according to Corder, (1972) is too superficial to explain some of the learning difficulties. It concentrates on those utterances that are overtly questionable and ungrammatical. According to Corder (op. cit), recognition of errors is crucially dependent upon correct interpretation of the learner's intention EA should involve interpretation in the context so that covertly erroneous sentences which are not appropriate in the context they occur are analysed too.

Corder (1981) on the basis of this argument, gives three stages of error analysis:

(a) Recognition of the idiosyncracy: According to him, every utterance is to be regarded as idiosyncratic until shown otherwise. Both internal and external idiosyncracy should be justified at this stage.

(b) Description of idiosyncracy: The data for this stage to be provided by stage (a) above.

(c) Explanation of the errors: This stage is the ultimate object of error analysis. It accounts for why the learner's idiosyncratic dialect is of the nature it is.

Olaofe (1982) combined both CA and EA in his study. He

used CA to make some predictions about the learning difficulties the Yoruba students were likely to have when learning English language and EA was used to validate these predictions. He grouped his subjects into three proficiency levels and gave different tests to each level. He, then, analysed errors made across these proficiency levels and compared the errors made in one proficiency level with the ones in another proficiency level. Through this, he was able to determine at what proficiency level the theoretical predictions he had made in his studies were most valid and to observe which errors tended to decrease with an increase in the number of years spent on learning English.

From the review of the methodologies of error analysis, it is obvious that the methodology chosen has to be in line with the objectives of error analysis. In the light of the above, the study adapted an eclectic approach based on the methodologies reviewed. For instance the study used an equivalent of the form five students used by Olaofe (1982) for selecting SS 3 and 100 level. The three stages given by Corder (1981) as well as the five stages given by Etherton (1975) were all adapted by this study. The present study used the following methods: collection of data, error identifications, error classifications, frequency count of errors, identification of difficult areas, sources and remedial drills.

2.5 Previous Error Analysis Studies

An investigation into the errors of two hundred and fifty undergraduate students in Chinese Medium School was carried out by Hoh Wah Kah (1973). It was to identify and classify errors made by these students. From the analysis, he arrived at seven classificatory headings namely: The verbs, numbers in nouns, lexical terms, function words (proportions and pronouns) sentence structure, the articles and spellings. The analysis showed that errors in the use of verbs ranked highest followed by numbers in nouns the lexical items. He suggested special remedial programme as a way of systematically tackling the problems.

Durojaiye (1970) analysed errors made by Grammar School students. It was aimed at finding out the frequency of occurrence of the different types of errors in the written composition of her selected population and to show the classroom teachers of English what they could do with their students' errors.

Fifty students were used and they were seventeen years of age. But the researcher did not tell us their year of study which is a weakness in the sampling technique. This omission makes it difficult to base any generalisation on her findings. Another weakness is her essay topic - What shall I do after leaving school - this limited the students to future tense only. Her findings showed that lexical errors occurred highest and attributed the occurrence of some of the errors to first language interference, failure to discriminate correctly between tense usage and ignorance or poor grasp of the aspect of time.

Akonobi (1976) carried out a study of errors of forty-eight sample form five students selected from eight schools in the then East Central State. She broadly categorised their errors into structural, lexical, mechanical and found that structural errors had the highest frequency of occurrence - 47.47%. Her explanation included first language interference, lack of knowledge of the function of the participle, sentencehood or in some cases, false analogy, faulty pronunciation suggested that special emphasis be given to the structure of the language through thorough explanation of the five distinctions between the simple future usage and the tenses, conditions - wish and probability. Olayemi (1980) carried out a study of errors of forty Advanced Teachers College Zaria Students' essays. Her findings showed that structural errors were most frequent in year one-constituting 47.2%, while mechanical errors ranked highest in years two and three. In the entire population put together, it was found that structural errors ranked highest followed by mechanical errors, lexical and miscellaneous errors. The causes of these errors were attributed to ignorance of the knowledge of sentence-hood, cultural influence from first language interference on pronunciation, wrong choice of lexical items and wrong analogy.

Akoh (1989) carried out a study of errors of ten N.C.E. Geography Teachers in six post primary schools in Zaria. At the grammatical level, error of word classes ranked highest - constituting 42.5% while the identified discourse errors include monotonous use of lexical and additive conjunctive ties, faulty definitions and lump ideas. She attributed the likely causes

grammatical errors to mother - tongue interference, faulty teaching, inadequate learning, over-generalisation of target language rules and fossilization of some of the subjects inter language while those of discourse errors could be as a result of influence of first language rhetorical pattern and subjects' incompetence at the grammatical level.

2.5.1 The Present Study Compared with Others

The study is similar to Kah (1973) Durojaiye (1970), Akonobi (1976), Olayemi (1980) and Akoh (1989) in a number of ways. Firstly, like their studies, the present study aims at finding out the weaknesses of its sample population in the use of English and thereby suggesting ways of improving their performance. Secondly, just as they explained theirs, sources of errors found in the students essays in this study were explained. Thirdly, all the remedial activities suggested were based on the findings. Fourthly, they all used post-primary students as sample population though, a few went ahead to use N.C.E. students and pre-degree students. But Akoh (1989) and this study, unlike the others mentioned, went beyond analysis of grammatical errors to that of discourse errors of their population.

This present study differs from those mentioned earlier in some ways. Firstly, it is a comparative study of SS 3 students and 100 level undergraduate students. Secondly, the researcher used the questionnaire technique in addition to the essay

written by these student to find out from them their problematic areas in essay writing.

2.6 Analysis of Errors at the Discourse Level

All the error analysis studies surveyed so far ignored errors at the supra-sentential level. This is because language teachers in the past had concentrated on the teaching of sentences as self-centred units, thereby making doubtful assumptions that once the basis of grammar is provided, the learner would have no difficulty in dealing with the actual use of language (Widdowson in Brumfit and Johnson (1979).

But studies have shown that in spite of the number of years of instruction in English, students still find it difficult to cope with language in its formal communicative use (Olaofe 1982, Ofuokwu 1982, Widdowson 1979.) With emphasis on communicative competence, communicative methodology should no longer be thought of in terms of sentences only - there is a need to transfer from grammatical competence: a knowledge of sentence: to what has been called communicative competence (Hymes 1971, Campbell and Wales 1970 cited in Widdowson 1979). To Hymes, grammatical competence remains in a perpetual state of potentiality unless it is realised in communication. There are rules of use without which the rules of grammar will be useless (Hymes 1971:14).

Discourse Analysis is the study of how sentences in spoken or written languages form larger units. In its broadest sense, it is used to refer to analysis of language, above sentence level. (Pike, 1964). To Richard *et al* (1985), discourse

analysis refers to a large unit of language such as paragraphs, conversations, interviews as against the term grammar which refers to the rules a language uses to form grammatical units such as sentence, clause, phrases. To Harris (1952: 327), discourse analysis is an investigation into the ways sentences are put into communicative use in performing social functions; discourse roughly defined as the use of sentences. Riley (1985) in Akoh (1989) says that discourse analysis has shifted emphasis from structure and grammar, assembling words to doing things with utterances, sentence in isolation to utterances in context. It shows that "knowing a language involves more than our ability to compose correctness sentences.

From the foregoing definitions it is obvious that discourse analysis attempts to study the organisation of language above sentence or the clause levels and therefore to study longer linguistic units such as conversation exchange or written texts. Its focus is on the ways in which sentences combine into larger units to form coherent text.

The discussion of discourse analysis is very important and relevant to this study because it provides additional facts that justify the study going beyond analysis of grammatical errors to that of discourse errors. It reveals the need and urgency of this type of study in our present society because it has been shown that in spite of the number of years of grammatical instruction in English, students still find it difficult to use language in its formal communication.

2.6.1. Cohesion

Cohesion attempts to describe the organisation of language above the sentence or the clause, and how longer utterances cohere and the kind of communicative function they perform. Stubbs (1983) states that connected discourse is not random but coherent and cohesion offers a linguistic level of analysis that accounts for this connectedness of a text. This gives us an idea of the extent to which different cohesive devices are used by SS 3 students and 100 level undergraduate students.

It is part of the system of a language with its potentials in the systematic resources of reference, ellipsis, substitution that are built into language itself. The realisation of cohesion in any given instance, however, depends not merely on the selections of some options within these resources but also on the presence of some other elements which resolve the presupposition that this sets in. Though, cohesion is not a sufficient condition for the creation of a text, it plays a special role in its creation by expressing the continuity that exists between one part of the text and another. This continuity consists in expressing at each stage in the discourse the point of contact with what has gone before.

Halliday and Hassan (1976) attempt to show the pattern of connectedness that exists in a text (i.e linguistic cohesion). They identify five categories of cohesive ties namely reference, ellipsis, conjunction and lexical cohesion - these are linguistic classifications.

The discussion of cohesion is of paramount importance to the present study because apart from identifying and classifying grammatical errors, the study is interested in the ways students' ideas are presented to form a coherent piece through the use of some or all the categories of cohesive ties.

The study considered the following aspects of discourse when analysing the students essays for discourse errors. They included tautology, lexical repetition within a paragraph incoherent and ill-formed sentences within paragraphs, lumped ideas - poor paragraph-sense, run-on sentences and poor use of cohesive devices within a paragraph.

2.7 Overall Benefits/Advantages from the Review of Related Literature

From the review of some previous studies, the present study has gained the following:

1. Error analysis is a viable way of finding out students' weaknesses in English.
2. Error analysis, contrastive analysis and inter-language though different theories, are all contributors to better understanding of second language learning.
3. It is more realistic to use the variety of English that is widely used and accepted as a standard to detect deviation in those language backgrounds where English is a second language.
4. Nigerian English and other third world varieties are yet to establish their legitimacy.

5. Error, for a in depth study, is better observed at both grammatical and discourse levels than just at the sentence level.

Chapter III

Research Designs and Procedures

3.1 Population

The population used in this study consists of senior secondary three (SS 3) students selected from fourteen senior secondary schools in Kaduna State and first year (100 level) undergraduate students of Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria.

In Kaduna State, there are one hundred and five state owned senior and junior secondary schools that is, seventy one senior secondary schools and thirty-four junior secondary schools. The study was limited to senior secondary schools three (SS 3).

The secondary schools are zoned into four namely: Anchau, Zaria, Kaduna and Zonkwa. The breakdown is as follows, Anchau has fourteen, Zaria has fourteen, Kaduna has seventeen while Zonkwa has twenty six. These were the schools that registered for the Senior Secondary Certificate Examination in August 1991 (WAEC report, 1991).

In Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, the first year (100 level) undergraduate students were grouped according to their courses. There were ten groups with a total student population of 1,415 for the 90/91 session.

3.1.1 Sample

Given the large nature of the senior secondary schools, a representative sample of twenty percent of the total population was used for the study. This percentage amounts to fourteen

senior secondary schools out of 71 senior secondary schools in Kaduna State. At the 100 level, a representative sample was taken from all the courses. No sample was taken from education because only very few students were admitted directly from SS 3 there.

3.1.2 Sampling Procedures

The schools in Kaduna State are zoned and to maximise homogeneity of the sampling units involved in the study, each of the four zones (Anchau, Kaduna, Zaria and Zonkwa) constitutes a stratum. For each stratum, a stratified random sampling technique was used. The following senior secondary schools were selected from Anchau zone: Government Secondary School, Makarfi, Government College Saminaka, Government Girls' College, Saminaka. In Kaduna zone, the schools selected were Rimi College, Kaduna, Government Girls' Secondary School, Kawo, Government Secondary School Kufana. In Zaria zone, the schools were Ahuda-huda College Zaria, Government Secondary School Giwa, Government Day Secondary School,Samaru. In Zonkwa Zone, the Schools were Government Girls' Secondary School, Zonkwa, Government Secondary School Kafanchan, Government Secondary School, Zango Kataf, Government Secondary School, Manchok, Government Secondary School, Ungwan-Rimi-Kaje. Table 3.1 shows the number of schools chosen from each zone.

3.1.3 Description of Sample Size

From the selected senior secondary schools in Kaduna State a representative sample of ten percent of the students in each

school population was used. The same representative sample of ten percent of 100 level undergraduate students was also used. The total number of students selected from each school and zone in Kaduna State is shown on Table 3.2 below while the number of students selected from each course at 100 level in Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria is shown on Table 3.3. For the 100 level students, a representative of ten percent from each course was used for the study.

Table 3.1

Number of SSS chosen from each zone.

Zones	Total No. of Schools	Names of the Schools chosen from each Zone.
Anchau	14	G.S.S. Makarfi G.G.S.S. Saminaka G.C. Saminaka
Kaduna	17	Rimi College Kaduna G.G.S.S. Kawo G.S.S. Kufena
Zaria	14	Alhuda-huda Zaria G.G.S.S. Samaru G.S.S. Giwa
Zonkwa	26	G.S.S. Kafanchan G.G.S.S. Zonkwa G.S.S. Zango-Kataf G.S.S. Ungwa-Rimi-Kaje G.S.S. Manchok
Total	71	14

Table 3.2

Total Number of Students Selected from each School and Zone in Kaduna State.

Zones	Schools	No. of students in each school	No. of student selected from each school
Anchau	G.S.S. Makarfi	45	5
	G.G.S.S. Saminaka	36	4
	Govt. College Saminka	136	14
Kaduna	Rimi College Kaduna G.G.S.S.	446	45
	G.G.S.S Kaduna	164	16
	G.S.S. Kufana	75	8
Zaria	Alhuda-huda Zaria	424	42
	G.G.S.S. Samaru	126	13
	G.S.S. Giwa	47	5
Zonkwa	G.S.S Kafanchan	377	38
	G.G.S.S. Zonkwa	277	28
	G.S.S. Zango-Kataf	226	23
	G.S.S. Ungwa-Rimi Kaje	177	18
	G.S.S. Manchok	97	10
	Total	2,653	269

The students selected to write the essay were grouped into categories of high performance, average performance and low performance - according to their school work. The samples selected from each school reflected the above criteria. This is to ensure fair representation of all the ability groups in the population. On the whole, 132 students, that is, ten percent of students, were selected from 100 level and 265 (ten percent) from SS 3. Thus, a total number of 397 students were used.

Table 3.3

Number of Students Selected from each Course at 100 Level

Courses	Total No. of students in each course	No. of students selected from each course
Engineering	263	26
Veterinary and Human Medicine	261	26
Social Sciences	102	10
Natural/Physical Sciences	186	19
Pharmacy	124	12
Public and Business Administration	110	11
Environmental Design	99	10
Agriculture	86	9
Accounting	52	5
Law	42	4
Total	1,325	132

3.2 Instruments

The researcher used essay writing and questionnaire as the instruments. The post-essay writing questionnaire was used to find out from the students themselves those areas of essay writing they found difficult. In designing the questionnaire, the different components of essay writing were considered. They include making an outline to the essay, using punctuation mark, spelling words correctly and constructing compound and simple

sentences (see pg. 74 for detals) and students rated these areas as they applied to them.

The essay topics given are:

A. As a likely Secretary-General candidate of the students' union in your school, you are requested by the electoral committee to write a full report of your life, which includes:

i) your past life and experiences
ii) daily activities and
iii) your future plans

OR

A. Nigeria of yesterday, today and tomorrow.

For Nigeria of yesterday, you may discuss the traditional set up, colonialism, independence. For Nigeria today, you may discuss the current political, social and economic happenings, and for Nigeria of tomorrow, you may discuss the political, social and economic changes that are likely to take place.

In choosing the essay topics, the following criteria were used. First of all, the topics chosen were such that would involve the students using all the tenses - past, present and future. Secondly, they encouraged them to use various structures in English (free expression). Since this is a comparative study, the same essay topics were given to the two groups of students to choose one. They were given one and half hours to write two pages of a foolscap and fill in the post - essay writing questionnaire. The students were told the purpose of their writing the essay and were advised to discuss their chosen topic with one another. They were allowed to write out the outline from their discussion. After these, they settled down to develop their points individually. They were also

advised to draft and redraft and thoroughly-proof read the final draft to correct slips and mistakes. They, then, rated the items in the questionnaire.

3.3 Analytical Procedures

The study analysed the essays for both grammatical and discourse errors.

3.3.1 Rating the Essay Scripts

For identification of errors, the researcher relied on her judgement and those of two other co-raters who are graduates of English. To enhance objectivity, the essays were marked by the researcher and all the identified errors were labelled using some specific codes. These were vetted by the second and third co-raters respectively to further identify those errors that were not seen by the first and second raters. It was to ensure uniformity on the identified errors. The identified errors were then classified into five broad categories as seen in section 3.3.2.

3.3.2 Error classification

The identified errors were classified as follows:

1. Structural Errors

   (a) Phrasal Verbs

   e.g The government set <u>out</u> a committee to look into the matter.

   (b) Wrong preposition

   e.g It was deposited <u>in</u> the river bank.

(c) Omission of preposition

e.g. He refers Λ them as cowards.

(d) Wrong determiners

e.g. Even a electricity can be generated with hydro-power.

(e) Omission of determiners

e.g I was Λ best student in my secondary school.

(f) Direct translation from first language to second language

e.g The taxi driver carried me from Samaru to Sabon Gari instead of The taxi-driver took me from Samaru to Sabon Gari.

(g) Concord

Subject - verb.

e.g The activities I do every day is very many that I could hardly do it well.

Noun-determiner

e.g These different region make up the country.

(h) Wrong tense

e.g. The British over-power the traditional rulers when they came.

(i) Omission of auxillary verbs.

e.g. The Ibos Λ misled and lost the war.

2. Lexical Errors

(a) Errors of collocation

e.g. They wanted us to proceed further

(b) Wrong word

e.g. I came from a polygamy home.

(c) Omission of word(s)

e.g. My parent are Λ by profession.

(d) Use of redundancy

e.g. The government (she) is to take care of her citizens.

3. Errors of Mechanics

(a) Wrong spellings due to

i) illogical relationship between the sounds and spellings of English words e.g realy, havesting, becouse

ii) Lack of familiarity with the words e.g. Carreer, hopeing, engineerer, fullfill.

iii) Faulty pronunciation

e.g. Propession - professor
collase - collapse
sorfer - suffer

(b) Capitalization

i) inconsistency in title, e.g dept. of Building.

ii) non-use of capitals where necessary. e.g. I did my may/june SSCE two years ago.

iii) misuse of capitals

e.g. I used My Free time to learn Trading.

(c) The comma

i) misuse of the comma

e.g. What one would be, would depend largely on one's destiny.

ii) Omission of comma

e.g. On getting there Λ I saw the woman.

(d) The full stop.

i) misuse of the full-stop

The chief of my village had to go on exit. but his family were allowed to stay back in the village.

ii) Omission of the full-stop

The Europeans however brought some development to us.

(e) Discourse Errors

i) Tautology

e.g. That's correct, that's what we are trying to explain, that is in the olden days, the Europeans or British in pre-colonial period set [sic] out to look for cheap labours for their use.

ii) Lexical repetition

e.g. The family which is made up of six people which you can call monogamous family is really a [sic] happy and united family.

iii) Run- on - sentences e.g.

Our people were so wicked in the sense that they used to spoil our family with some poisons because of the hatred they had for my parents and these includes one of the difficult life of [sic] our family in general.

iv) Incoherent sentences e.g.

In fact the situation we are as of now due to the population density, the present occupation will be difficult for the candidate to be employ because the population is too high more than the [sic] birth rate.

v) Poor paragraphing: e.g.

The British brought about good and stable government. This is important because there must be good and stable government before industries can be established. One must be sure that one have a good backing from the government and also this good and stable government encourages investors to establish industries when they are sure their industries will be [sic] safe for a long time.

3.3.3 Error Count

The errors identified were counted using frequency scores and percentages of both categories and sub-categories. The

errors from the two groups were compared to see the similarities and differences between them.

3.4 Pilot Study

Six first year (100 level) undergraduate students were used for the study. The researcher told them the purpose of her study and solicited their co-operation. She gave them instructions as regards what she wanted them to do.

This was carried out to assess the suitability of the test instruments used in the actual study. Secondly, it was a way of searching for the best analytical procedures. Thirdly, it informed the researcher of the likely problems to come up in the actual study and lastly, it provided suggestions for the improvement of the real study.

3.5 Observations from the pilot study

The try-out exercise proved successful. The researcher found out that the two essay topics were quite suitable for these students. They lend themselves to treatment such as narrative, descriptive expository or imaginative type of writing. They used as many verb forms as possible. The post-essay writing questionnaire were quite suitable. The time given to them was enough - they had one hour and thirty minutes to cover the two assignments (essay and post essay writing questionnaire)

The test papers were corrected by the researcher and two other co-raters in order to make the inventory of errors as exhaustive as possible. The errors identified by the three co-raters were classified into error types (see 3.3.3).

The result of the pilot study showed that lexical errors occurred most frequently. They constituted 38% of all the errors made. Errors in mechanics came second with 37% of all the errors made, then structural errors with 24%. The most frequent of the structural errors were errors of incorrect/wrong tense.

Under discourse errors, it was found that lexical repetition occurred more frequently than the others. Their use of transitional devices especially inter-paragraph linkers was very poor. There was no natural flow from one paragraph to the other in some of the scripts. Most of them used descriptive technique in their essay writing.

From the analysis of the students' responses to the questionnaire, it was discovered that choosing of appropriate words was the area they found most difficult. This tallies with the result of the error frequency count. One of the reasons responsible for this, according to the students was lack of essay writing practice.

The advantage of carrying out a pilot study is that it provides the researcher with a fore-knowledge of the sampling procedures, ways of identifying the errors, counting them and using the appropriate mode of classification.

Chapter IV

Analysis and Interpretation of Results

In this chapter, the results of the analysis and their interpretations are presented as follows: firstly, the frequency of occurrence of all the error categories and their mean scores, secondly, the raw scores and percentages of error frequency of each category and sub-category and finally, the analysis of students' responses in the post essay writing questionaire.

4.1 Summary of all the Errors Produced by SS 3 and 100 level Students

This sub-section presents the summary of the raw scores and percentages of the frequency of occurrence of all the errors produced by the students as well as their mean scores.

Table 4.1

The Frequency of Errors in All Categories put Together

	Categories of Errors	SS 3		100 L	
		Frequency of Occurrence	% within Category	Frequecy of Occurrence	% within Category
A	Structural Errors	2,566	36.3	996	42.1
B	Mechanical Errors	2,124	30.0	714	30.2
C	Lexical Errors	1,524	21.5	472	19.9
D	Discourse Errors	712	10.1	138	5.8
E	Miscellaneous Errors	150	2.0	45	1.9
	Total	7,076	99.9	2,365	99.9

Table 4.1 shows that structural errors occurred most frequently at SS 3 and 100 levels constituting 36.3% (SS 3) and 42.1% (100 L) of all the errors, followed by mechanical errors, 30%, for SS 3 and 30.2% for 100 levels. See the table for details.

Table 4.2

Mean scores of All Errors Categories Put Together

	Categories of Errors	Mean Scores	
		SS 3	100 L
A	Structural Errors	11.30	10.37
B	Mechanical Errors	9.35	7.43
C	Lexical Errors	6.71	4.91
D	Discourse Errors	3.13	1.43
E	Miscellaneous Errors	0.66	0.46
	Total	31.15	24.60

4.1.2 The Frequency of Occurrence of Stuctural Errors at SS 3 and 100 levels

The frequency of occurrence of the structural errors in each year of study is presented in the sub-section 4.1.2 while the total errors are given in Table 4.3.

Table 4.3 shows tense errors as occurring most frequently with 46.3% (SS 3) and 45.1% (100 L). These are followed by concord errors with 29.9% (SS 3) and 29.1% (100 L). Others, in order of occurrence, see Table 4.3 for details.

Table 4.3

The Frequency of Occurrence of Structural Errors at SS 3 and 100 Level

S/No	Types of Errors	SS 3		100 L	
		Frequency of Occurrence	% within Category	Frequency of Occurrence	% within Category
1.	Phrasal verbs	63	2.8	21	2.4
2.	Wrong Prepositions	131	5.8	58	6.5
3.	Omission of prepositions	59	2.6	23	2.6
4.	Wrong determiners	50	2.2	23	2.6
5.	Omission of determiners	111	4.9	44	5.0
6.	Concord	679	29.9	258	29.1
7.	Direct translation from L1 to L2	82	3.6	40	4.5
8.	Wrong tense	1,051	46.3	400	45.1
9.	Omission of verbs	40	1.4	19	2.1
	Total	2,266	99.5	886	99.9

Most of the tense errors found among these two levels of students were jumbled tenses and verbless sentences. The students switched from one tense to the other.

Some examples of jumbled tenses from SS 3 and 100 level students are shown below:

1. The Nigerian Civil War last for three years (SSS 3)
2. Infact, the coming Λ the missionary did not only contribute to our religion but brings out civilization (100L)

In example one, the student used a present tense instead of a past tense to refer to a past event. In the second example, the tenses were mixed up. The student started with a past tense (did not) and ended up with a present tense (brings).

Examples of omission of auxiliary verbs from SSS 3 and 100 level students are given below:

3. The time of civil war Λ very tough for both sides, I mean Nigerian soldiers and Biafran soldiers (SS 3)

4. My daily activities Λ cleaning the house, cooking and washing clothes (100 L).

In both sentences (3 and 4) the auxiliary verbs <u>was</u> and <u>were</u> were omitted.

Two types of concord errors were found in this study: Subject-verb disagreemtent and noun-determiner disagreement. Some examples of subject - verb disagreement from SS 3 and 100 level are:

5. <u>One</u> of my father's main jobs in the office <u>are</u> training of new officers (SS 3).

6. Nigeria <u>have</u> come along way to become what she is today (100 level).

In example (5) the subject of the sentence is singular and therefore, should take a singular verb '<u>is</u>' instead of <u>are</u> as given. In example (6) the subject is also singular but took a plural verb as against a singular one - 'is'.

Some examples of noun-determiner disagreement are presented below:

7. <u>This religion and education are</u> brought to us by the whitemen (SS 3)

8. <u>Different method</u> of ruling the Africans were adopted by the British (100L).

In example (7) this is singular and should not have been followed by plural items while in example (8) Different which implies more than one item should have taken a plural noun as against the singular one- methods instead of method.

The above examples show the difficulties the student had with matching the correct subject with the correct verb or correct determiner with the correct noun.

There were also errors of preposition and phrasal verbs. These were characterised by wrong use of preposition and its omissions. Examples of these from SS 3 and 100 level are given below:

9. I have to give away my ambition of becoming a doctor because I found physics and other science subjects difficult (SS 3).

10. My father works with the student affairs section in Kaduna Polytechnic (100 L).

Phrasal very (away) in example (9) and preposition (with) in (10) were wrongly used so they cannot co-occur with the verbs - give in (9) and work in (10).

Examples of omissions of prepositions are presented below:

11. And Λ our future plans, my father hopes to retire to he village (SS 3).

12. The present government must learn Λ the past ones in order to avoid making the same mistakes (100 L).

The prepositions 'for' and 'from' were omitted in the two examples given above.

The errors of direct translation from some first languages to English language were also prominent in this category. Some examples of these are:

13. I have my cousin sister in the School (SS 3).

14. Before the coming of the British, the Africans were already fighting themselves over land (100 L).

In example (13) in most Nigerian languages all female relatives could be called sisters whereas in English a cousin and a sister are two entirely different relations. In example (14) fighting themselves' was used to mean fighting each other. This is directly translated from first language to English.

4.1.3 The Frequency of Occurrence of Mechanical Errors at SS 3 and 100 Levels

The frequency of occurrence of mechanical errors in each year of study is presented in raw scores and in percentages, the total was also given as seen on Table 4.4.

The summary of all the categories of errors showed that mechanical errors had the second highest frequency of occurrence. In presenting the breakdown of the mechanical errors; the percentages of all the sub-categories within the main categories were presented as one. For instance, the spelling errors due to illogical relationship between the sounds and spellings, lack of familiarity with the words and faulty pronunication occurred most frequently of the mechanical errors with 55.6% for SSS 3 and 42.0% for 100 level. Some examples of wrongly spelt words due to lack of illogical relationship between the sounds and spellings are given below:

15. addmission for admission
    comodities for commodities
    furture for future (SS 3).

Table 4.4

The Frequency of Occurrence of Mechanical Errors at the SS 3 and 100 Levels.

	Types of Errors	SS 3		100 L	
		Freq. of Occurrence	% within Category	Freq. of Occurrence	% within Category
(a)	**Wrong Spellings due to**				
i	illogical relationship between the sounds and spellings of English	155	7.3	80	11.2
ii	Lack of familiarity with the words	887	41.8	140	19.6
iii	Faulty pronunciation	138	6.5	80	11.2
(b)	**Capitalization**				
i	inconsistency in titles	40	1.9	16	2.2
ii	non-use of capitals where necessary	239	11.2	87	12.2
iii	misuse of the capitals	150	7.1	26	3.6
(c)	**The Comma**				
i	misuse of the comma	134	6.3	90	12.6
ii	omission of the comma	266	12.5	160	22.4
(d)	**The fullstop**				
i	misue of the fullstop	45	2.1	10	1.4
ii	omission of the fullstop	70	3.3	25	3.5
		2,124	100.0	714	99.9

16. rulling for ruling
    welfear for welfare
    alfraid for afraid
    triballstric for tribalistic (100L)

Examples of wrong spellings due to lack of familiarisation with the English words are:

17. futher for further
    surviv for survive
    borne for born (SS 3)

18. pitty for pity
    worshiping for worshipping
    clasic for classic (100L)

Examples of wrong spellings due to faulty pronunication :

19. Nigaria for Nigeria
    loyers for lawyers
    sorport for support
    jeniours for juniors
    intruduction for introduction (SS 3)

20. intresting for interesting
    cominity for community
    dangerious for dangerous
    disperately for desperately (100L)

The errors of capitalization, that is, all the sub-categories added together, had the second highest frequency of occurrence with 20.2% for SS 3 and 17.9% for 100 level. The breakdown of the errors is shown on Table 4.4. Examples of omission of capitals are presented as follows:

21. with the coming of the british, lagos was made the capital of nigeria (SS 3)

22. I hail from asaba in warri local government area (100L).

In examples (21) and (22), the underlined letters show that small letters were used instead of the capital ones to begin a sentence, a name of a town, country or race.

Some examples of misuse of capital letters are seen below:

23. My Father and Mother are Doctors in Kafanchan (SS 3).

24. My Dad was a Civil Servant when I was in Primary School (100L).

In the above examples, the underlined letters are capitalized even though they are not proper nouns.

The third sub-category of errors of capitalization was those of inconsistency in titles. These accounted for 1.9% (SS 3) and 2.2% (100L). Examples of these are:

25. I am a student of government Secondary School manchok (SS 3)

26. Department of public Administration (100L)

The underlined letters in the above examples show some cases of inconsistency in the use of titles.

The errors of commas, that is, the total percentage of both misuse and omission accounted for 18.8% for SS 3 and 35% for 100 level of the mechanical errors. The breakdown of the errors is shown on Table 4.4. Examples of omissions of commas are seen below:

27. I, the most senior, was very fortunate to have been given the scholarship (SS 3).

28. However, with the coming of the whiteman alot of changes have taken place over the years (100L).

In example (27), there was an omission of comma to mark of the appositive phrase from the subject and the predicate, 'the most senior' while in example 28, the comma after the adverb however was omitted.

The errors of misuse of commas accounted for 6.3% for SS 3 and 12.6% for 100 level. Examples of these are presented below:

29. My father is a railway worker, and the principal of Railway technical school Zaria (SS 3).

30. This is because, the British totally and wickedly took away all our wealth (100L).

In the examples given the commas are used in addition to the conjunction 'and' in example (29) and 'because' in example (30).

The errors of misuse and omission of fullstops occurred least in this category, constituting 8.4% for SS 3 and 4.9% for 100 level of the total mechanical errors. See Table 4.4 for the breakdown of the errors. Examples of omission of fullstops are shown below:

31. My best subjects are maths; literature; English and Shorthand (SS 3)

32. The same condition applies to economic and social changes in Nigerian (100 level).

Errors of misuse of fullstops constituted 2.1% (SS 3) and 1.4% (100L) of the total errors of fullstops. Some examples of these are given below:

33. None of us has finished our studies talkless of helping the jenior ones (SS 3)

34. My people realising the importance of education. they sent me to a very good school (100 L).

In example (33) a fullstop was used to join the main clause to a subordinate one while in example (34) it was used to join a subordinate clause to the main clause.

These errors of fullstops revealed the students' incomplete understanding of a sentence.

4.1.4 The Frequency of Occurrence of Lexical Errors at SS 3 and 100 Levels

The frequency of occurrence of lexical errors in each year of study is presented in raw scores and in percentages. The overall total of the errors was also given.

On Table 4.5, wrong choice of words occurred most frequently with 72.9% (SS 3) and 71.7% (100 L). Some examples of these are shown below:

35. Lugard could be called a nationalism (SS 3)

36. We arranged plays and dances to welcome our visitors.

Table 4.5

The Frequency of Occurrence of lexical Errors at SS 3 and 100 levels

	Types of Errors	SS 3		100 L	
		Freq. of Occurrence	% within Category	Freq. of Occurrence	% within Category
a	Collocation	88	5.1	37	6.6
b	Wrong Word	1,253	72.9	403	71.7
c	Omission of words	179	10.4	32	5.7
d	Use of redundant lexical items	199	11.6	90	16.0
	Total	1,719	100.0	562	100.0

In example (35), a wrong form of the word was used while in example (36) a wrong word was used.

Errors in use of redundancy occurred second to the highest with 11.6% (SS 3) and 16% (100 L). Some examples of these are given below:

37. And my family (they) do not find things difficult (SS 3).

38. I am a student whose (his) daily activities are as follows: (100L).

In examples (37) and (38) they and his are redundant because the subject pronoun is immediately after subject noun. They do not add any additional meaning to the sentences nor make them forceful.

Errors of omission of word(s) come third with 10.4% (SS 3) and 5.7% (100L). Some examples of these are seen below:

39. My father is a civil Λ but my mother is a house Λ (SS 3).

40. I attended my secondary school as a Λ student (100L).

In example (39) and (40) some words - servant, day, and wife were omitted from the sentences.

4.1.5 Frequency of Occurrence of Discourse Errors at SS 3 and 100 levels

Section 4.1.5 gives us the frequency occurrence of discourse errors in each year of study in raw scores and percentages.

The discussion of discourse errors of these two levels was done separately because unlike the other categories of errors, the findings here revealed different areas of weaknesses.

For the SS 3 students, discourse errors of tautology occurred most frequently with 21.5% of the total errors. An example of this is shown below.

41. I am bored by my mother whose name is Tata and who lives in our town Zonkwa. I am a student of Government Girls' Secondary School and I am presently studying in the [sic] above school.

Table 4.6

The Frequency of Occurrence of Discourse Errors at SS 3 and 100 levels

	Types of Errors	SS 3		100 L	
		Freq. of Occurrence	% within Category	Freq. of Occurrence	% within Category
1	Tautology	153	21.5	10	7.3
2	Lexical repetition within a paragraph	65	9.1	12	8.7
3	Non-use of cohesive devices	83	11.7	30	21.8
4	Run-on sentences	117	16.4	26	13.7
5	Incoherent sentences	152	21.4	20	16.0
6	Poor paragraphing	142	19.9	40	28.0
	Total	712	100.0	138	98.3

The student in example (41) was saying the same thing in different ways without necessarily making the meanings clearer or more forceful. We need not be told that he was born by his mother - as read in the paragraph.

The error of construction of incoherent sentences had the second highest frequency of occurrence. An example is given below:

> 42. Firstly, I will undergoes some of the problems that will make my future to be brilliant in the presence standard. The condition is a very serious issues. If you child for. But if you become relalent things will be impossible for you in your [sic] future plan.

The errors in the above example range from those of concord as seen in 'same problem' "a very serious issues" to those of muddled tenses as in "you must suffer to achieved', I will undergoes" and use of wrong form of words as in 'presence standard'. There is no single correct sentence. In fact, there is a breakdown of communication toward the end of the paragraph.

Errors of poor paragraphing occurred third in this category with 19.9%. An illustration of this is given below:

> 43. My future plan is to become a medicine doctor so that I will take care of the patients in the hospital because every day I go to the hospital and see sick people, I will always feel as if I am the one filling the pains. In many hospitals, doctors earn more salary and I will use this to help my parents to solve their problems and take [sic] care of them.

In example (43) two different issues or ideas as against one were discussed in one paragraph - "he wants to become a doctor to take care of the sick and to earn a good salary".

The fourth sub-category of errors were those of run-on sentences with 16.4%. An example of this is given below:

> 44. In a nutshell, Africans, especially, West Africans after the struggle for independence for a long time of persuading the colonial masters, they infact gave up and they started making some moves towards the independence of Nigeria as a whole [sic] which materialised 8in 1960, October.

The example (44) above is just one sentence. The ideas were put down as they came to thought without any attempt to use appropriate punctuation marks to mark off different constructions. The least of these errors were those of non-use

of cohesive devices and lexical repetition within a paragraph. An example of this is presented in example (45).

45. In 1960 Nigeria got her independence from the colonialist people. Nigeria got her freedom and become divided into north Nigeria and south Nigeria. Gradually, Nigeria developed socially. Schools and hospitals were build for social aspects Nigeria's social and Nigeria economic happenings today is [sic] achieved through education and health.

The example above shows non-use of cohesive devices such as references, ellipsis to ensure or achieve a link between the propositions they express and this leads monotonous use of a particular lexical items.

For the 100 level students' discourse, errors of poor paragraphing occurred most frequently with 28% of all the errors in this category. An example of this is shown below:

46. Today we can all see that our social life has changed completely due to how the westerners have taught us their own way of life and mode of dressing and living. We have lost some of our culture due to what we call the modern world of today. We have alot of debts to pay and we still keep on borrowing from the bank. In the year 1992, the military do hope to hand-over the power of leadership to the civilians and right [sic] now we have two party system.

In the above example, three different issues were discussed in just one paragraph. This makes it difficult for the reader to follow the trend of events or thought of the writer.

Non-use of cohesive devices to achieve inter-connectedness within the paragraph had the second highest frequency of occurrence. The example (47) is used to illustrate these errors as well as those of lexical repetition within the paragraph.

47. I had been thinking of reading medicine since I was in form three. I came out with the best result from my secondary school in 1988. I represented my school in many activities like debate, quiz and others which I won many prizes for the school. I wrote JAMB in 1989 for the first time and I [sic] didnot perform very well.

Example (47) clearly shows lack of cohesive devices such as ellipsis, references to logically link up the sentences in the paragraph and this leads to monotonous use of a particular lexical item throughout the paragraph.

The errors of run-on sentences had the fourth highest frequency of occurence with 18.8% of the errors in this category. An example of this is illustrated below:

48. My future plan is to become an engineer so as to help my parents and so I will like to go to the university or any of the Polytechnics to read the course of my choice and after that I will help in different angles, he my junior will attend good secondary school and my father will be [sic] well cared for.

It could be seen in example (48) that the whole paragraph is just one sentence. The ideas were written down as they come to thought. No punctuation mark was used to mark off one sentence or construction from the other.

Errors of construction of incoherent sentence occurred fifth in this category with 13.7% of the toal errors. Below is illustration of these errors in example 49.

49. Our country Nigeria today politically it has developed in all corners and nooks for betterment of life. But thingsare not yet easy in the presence Nigeria. Our present activities and functions are being overhaul by religious and tribal segregations and [sic] economic stability is tending zero.

The errors in the paragraph range from those of redundant lexical item as 'it' to wrong choice of words as "corners and nooks." "betterment of life" and 'presence' There is a breakdown in communication.

The least errors here were those of tautology which accounted for 7.3% of the total errors within this category. An example of this is given below:

> 50. Nigeria was under the colonialists master and was ruled by the colanial masters. During the colonial period of yesterday in the era of colonialism, the British took over all the natural resources of this [sic] country.

The above example illustrates or shows repetition of the same idea that neither make the meaning clearer nor more forceful.

4.1.6 Miscellaneous Errors

The errors here are those that defy classification into any category of errors. They accounted for 2% for SS 3 and 1.9% for 100 level of the total errors.

Some examples of these are shown below:

> 51. Nigeria in the older yesterday and that with in tomorrow you may discuss into two Nigeria is today. you can land this which is of form into liely are on yesterday [sic] and tomorrow (SS 3)
>
> 52. I am planning now and ready to give my efficient energy for efficient and construction function of our schools. The [sic] totality Nigeria and my school is for better today and tomorrow (100 L).

The above examples (51 and 52) illustrate global errors that result in total breakdown in communication.

4.2 Differences between the Errors of SS 3 and 100 level students

The analysis in this chapter has provided the inventory of both grammatical and discourse errors made by these students. The result showed that these two groups of students produced similar errors. However, to accept or reject the hypotheses, the data were further subjected to statistical analysis, using the T-test technique.

Hypothesis I

This states that there is no significant difference between the errors produced by SS 3 and 100 level students.

4.2.1 The Mean Scores of Structural Errors of SS 3 and 100 level students

The mean scores of structural errors of the two levels are given in Table 4.7 while the T-test is in Table 4.8.

For T-value to be significant at 0.05, it should be equal to or more than the P-value (0.90). The analysis in Table 4.8 shows the value of T at 0.12 which is less than that of P at 0.90. It then means that the difference between these errors made by the two groups of students is not significant. The hypothesis is therefore upheld or accepted.

4.2.2 The mean scores of mechanical Errors at SS 3 and 100 levels

In this sub-section, the mean scores of mechanical errors of the two groups of students are presented on the Table 4.9.

Table 4.7

The Mean Scores of Structural Errors at SS 3 and 100 Levels.

S/No.	Types of Errors	Mean Scores	
		SS 3	100 L
1	Phrasal verbs	0.28	0.22
2	Wrong preposition	0.58	0.60
3	Omission of preposition	0.26	0.24
4	Wrong determiners	0.22	0.24
5	Omission of determiners	0.49	0.46
6	Concord	3.00	2.69
7	Direct translation from L1 to L2	0.36	0.41
8	Wrong tense	4.63	4.17
9	Omission of verbs	0.18	0.19
	Total	10.00	9.22

Sample: C1 Mean score of the total (10) = 1.11
C2 mean score of the total (9.22) = 1.02

Table 4.8

7-test of stuctural Errors of SS 3 and 100 level student.

Sample	N	Mean	St.Dev	SE Mean	T-Value
C1	9	1.11	1.59	0.53	0.12
C2	9	1.02	1.42	0.47	

P - value = 0.90

Table 4.9

The Mean Scores of Mechanical Errors at SS 3 and 100 levels

Types of errors		Mean Scores	
		SS 3	100 L
a.	Wrong Spelling due to;		
i	illogical relationship between the sound and spelling of English words	0.68	0.83
ii	lack of familiarity with the words	3.91	1.46
iii	faulty pronunciation	0.61	0.83
b.	Capitalization:		
i	incensistency in titles	0.18	0.16
ii	omission of the capital	1.05	0.91
iii	misuse of capitals	0.66	0.27
c.	The comma:		
i	misuse of the comma	0.59	0.94
ii	omission of the comma	1.17	1.67
d.	Fullstop:		
i	misuse of the fullstop	0.19	0.10
ii	omission of the fullstop	0.31	0.26
	Total	9.35	7.43

Sample: C1 Mean score of the total (9.35) = 0.94
C2 Mean score of the total (7.43) = 0.74

Table 4.10

T-test of Mechanical Errors of SS 3 and 100 level students.

Sample	N	Mean	St.Dev	SE Mean	T-Value
C1	10	0.94	1.09	0.35	0.50
C2	10	0.74	0.54	0.17	

P - value = 0.63

The analysis shows T-value at 0.50, and for it to be significant, it should be equal to or more than the P- value at 0.63. This means that the T-value is less than that of P. This implies that the difference between the errors made by these groups of students is not significant. The hypothesis is therefore accepted.

4.2.3 The Mean Scores of Lexical Errors at SS 3 and 100 levels

The mean scores of lexical errors of the two levels are given on the Table 4. 11.

Table 4.11

The Mean Scores of Lexical Errors at SS 3 and 100 Levels

	Types of Errors	SS 3	100 L
1.	Wrong word	5.52	4.19
2.	Use of redundant lexical items	1.26	1.32
3.	Omission of word(s)	0.78	0.33
	Total	7.56	5.84

Sample: C1 Mean score of the total (7.56) = 2.52
C2 Mean score of the total (5.84) = 1.95

Table 4.12

T-test of Lexical Errors of SS 3 and 100 Level Students

Sample	N	Mean	St.Dev	SE Mean	T-Value
C1	3	2.52	2.61	1.5	0.30
C2	3	1.95	2.00	1.2	

P - value = 0.78

The analysis above shows T-value at 0.30 and P-at 0.78. It is clear that the value of T is less that that of P. This means that the difference in the errors made by these two groups is not significant, so the hypothesis is accepted.

4.2.4 The Mean Scores of Discourse Errors at SS 3 and 100 levels

The mean scores of discourse errors of these two levels of students are fiven on the Table 4.13 - T-test on Table 4.14.

For the T-value to be significant at 0.05, it should be equal to or more than the P-value at 0.007. The T-test result on Table 4.14 shows that the value of T at 0.34 is greater than that of P. This means that there is a significant difference between the discourse errors made by these levels of students, therefore the hypothesis (1) is rejected.

Hypothesis 2

This states that the year of study does not significantly affect the students' performance in English language. In the first hypothesis, the means of the raw scores of all the error categories and their difference were found, using the T-test statistical analysis.

Table 4.13

The Mean Scores of Discourse Errors at SS 3 and 100 Levels

S/No.	Types of Errors	Mean Scores	
		SS 3	100 L
1	Tautology	0.67	0.10
2	Lexical repetition within a para.	0.29	0.13
3	Non-use of cohesive devices	0.37	0.31
4	Run-on sentences	0.52	0.27
5	Incoherent Sentences	0.67	0.21
6	Poor paragraphing	0.63	0.42
	Total	3.15	1.44

Sample: C1 Mean score of the total (3.15) = 0.54
C2 mean score of the total (1.44) = 0.24

Table 4:14

The Mean scores of Discuourse Errors at SS 3 and 100 levels

Sample	N	Mean	St.Dev	SE Mean	T-Value
C1	6	0.54	0.163	0.66	0.34
C2	6	0.24	0.119	0.49	

P - value = 0.007

The result revealed no significant differences between the structural, mechanical and lexical errors made by these two levels of students, therefore the hypothesis that states that there is no significant difference in the errors produced by SS 3 and 100 level students is accepted. If this is the case, it

could be said that the one year of formal English instruction at the 100 level has not significantly improved these students' performance in grammar, therefore the second hypothesis is also accepted.

For the discourse errors, the result showed a significant difference between the performances of the two groups, this means that the first hypothesis is rejected. It could be said then, that the one year of formal English instruction at 100 level has improved these students' discourse at that level.

4.3 The Analysis of students' Responses in the Post-Essay Writing Questionnaire

This section gives the analyses of students' the responses to the difficult areas in the essay writing as revealed by the questionnaire. This also revealed students' reasons for having problems in the essay writing and their suggested ways of improving them.

4.3.1 SS 3 students' Rating of Some Components of Essay Writing

The students' rating of the various components of essay writing is presented on Table 4.15.

The students' responses were further merged, using a two-point scale 'difficult and not difficult', that is, all the items labelled as difficult and very difficult are grouped under one scale 'difficult' while 'fair' and not 'difficult' are grouped as "not difficult".

Table 4.15

SS 3 Students' Rating of Some component of Essay Writing Using a Four-Point Scale

	Components of Essay Writing	Very Diff %	Diff %	Fair %	Not diff %
1	Making an outline to the essay	8.50	31	30	31
2	using punctuation correctly fullstops, commas, etc	9.8	18.5	49.3	22.3
3	spelling words correctly	3.3	11.4	28.9	55.9
4	constructing simple correct sentences	2.8	20	25.6	50.2
5	constructing compound and complex sentences	7.1	21.9	34.5	26.5
6	choosing appropriate words	10.9	19	30.3	37.9
7	using phrases and clauses correctly	15.4	25.1	29.2	30.3
8	using main and subordinate clauses correctly	14.7	29.4	29.4	25.1
9	using correct tenses	25.8	14.2	34.1	25.9
10	forming plurals of words correctly	4	8.5	19.4	65.9
11	writing different types of paragraph constructions	4.7	13.3	33.2	48.5
12	flow of ideas	6.2	20.9	38.9	34.5
13	logical presentation of ideas	11.8	30.2	44.5	34.1

The result shows that SS 3 students had problems with using main and subordinate clauses - 44%, using correct tenses -40%, constructing compound and complex sentences (39%), making an outline (39%), logical presentation of ideas (39%) and using phrases and clauses correctly (38%).

It was discovered that the findings agreed, to some extent, with the students' performance in the essay writing at the two levels. For instance, at the discourse level, poor paragraphing had the second highest frequency of occurrence and this was characterised by lumping together unrelated ideas and illogical presentation of ideas in the essay. It could be said, based on their rating, that these errors occurred because of their inability to make an outline to the essay.

Their difficulties in constructing compound and complex sentences, using main and subordinate clauses, accounted for the errors of run-on sentences and tense errors at the grammatical level. They constructed lengthy sentences which they could not control and thus switched from one tense to another in the process. Also at the grammatical level, errors of wrong choice of words occurred most frequently within the lexical category because of their inability to use appropriate words to express their ideas.

However, there were some contradictions between what the researcher discovered to be these students' areas of weaknesses and what they indicated. For instance, areas such as spellings of words, forming of plural forms were discovered to be some of their weaknesses but they were said to be easy for them.

4.3.2 100 Level Students' Rating of Some Components of Essay Writing.

In this section, the 100 level students' rating of some of the components of essay writing is given on Table 4.16.

These students' rating of the components were further merged using a two-point scale - "difficult and not difficult." That is, all items under "difficult" and "very difficult" were grouped as difficult while "fair" and "not difficult" were grouped - "not difficult".

These findings agreed with the students' actual performance in the essay writing to some extent. For instance, at the discourse level, the error of poor paragraphing which occurred most frequently may not be unconnected with the fact that these students had difficulties in presenting their ideas logically. Also, their difficulties in constructing compound and complex sentences and using main and subordinate clauses resulted in the run-on sentence errors that had the second highest occurrence. The result of these difficulties was also seen in the construction of lengthy and uncontrollable sentences that accounted for the tense errors.

Table 4.16

100 level Students, Rating of Some Components of Essay Writing Using a Four-Point Scale

	Components of Essay Writing	Very Diff.	Diff.	Fair	Not Diff
1	Making an outline to the essay	3.1	16.3	51	29.6
2	Using punctuation correctly-fullstops, commas	3.1	10.2	43.4	43.4
3	Spelling words correctly	-	6.1	39.4	53.1
4	Constructing compound and complex sentences	1	4.1	44.9	51.0
5	Constructing compound and complex sentences	7.5	31.6	42.9	20.2
6	Choosing appropriate words.	3.2	20.4	47.8	28.6
7	Using phrases and clauses correctly	6.1	15.3	37.8	40.8
8	Using main and subordinate, clauses correctly	9.2	34.7	33.7	19.4
9	Using correct tenses	1.0	11.1	37.8	48.0
10	Forming plural forms correctly	-	4.1	22.4	72.4
11	Writing different types of paragraph construction	2	20.4	44.9	33.7
12	Flow of ideas	3.1	18.4	40.8	38.7
13	Logical presentation of ideas	18.4	24	23.1	24.5

The result showed that the 100 level students had difficulties in using main and subordinate clauses, 43.9%, presenting ideas logically - 42.4% and constructing complex sentences - 39.1%.

Although, their performance showed areas such as using of correct tenses, concord, spellings and choosing appropriate words as being difficult, these were not indicated by these students as being so.

4.3.3 SS 3 Students' Reasons for the Problems they had in Writing the essay

The rating of the possible reasons for the problems they had in writing the essay is shown on Table 4.17. These include inability to express themselves well in the standard English - 60%; they constructed sentences the way they speak their first language - 42%; their teachers did not teach them essay writing 42.2%; the confusion caused in them by the varieties of English spoken outside the school 37.8% and the fact that they do not like English subject 38%.

This result has given us some additional reasons and has helped to confirm the earlier given ones as to why these students had those difficulties in the essay writing. For instance, their inability to express themselves well in the standard English could be responsible for their construction of incoherent sentences and the interference of their first languages with the English they learn could be responsible for the direct transfer of first language to English language as revealed by their performance.

Table 4.17

SS 3 Students' Rating of Possible Reasons for their Problems Using a two-point scale

	Possible Reasons	Responses	
		Agreed	Disagreed
1.	My teachers did not teach me essay writing	42.2	57.8
2.	I am not properly corrected whenever I write an essay	17.8	82.2
3.	I do not like English subject	38	62.0
4.	The essay topic was difficult	7.6	92.4
5.	I could not transfer my ideas into English	29.1	70.9
6.	I lack essay writing practice	26.6	73.4
7.	I could not express myself well in the standard English	60.0	40.1
8.	I construct English sentences the way I speak my first language	42.2	57.8
9.	I do not know the variety of English to use when writing an essay	32.1	67.9
10.	I am confused by the varieties of English I hear outside my school	37.8	62.2
11.	I am not motivated enough to learn English	24.1	75.9
12.	I had fatigue problem (e.g sickness, tiredness or bad weather).	16.1	84

4.3.4 100 level Students' Reasons for the Problems they had in Writing the Essay

100 level Students' possible reasons for the problems they had in writing the essay are presented on Table 4.18.

Most of the major reasons responsible for the difficulties these students had as revealed by the table were lack of essay writing practice (44.5%) and their inability to express themseleves well in the standard English (26.3%). These reasons justify their errors of incoherent sentences and miscellaneous to some extent.

In summary, it could be said to a very large extent that the reasons given by the students actually justified their performances in the essay writing.

4.3.5 SS 3 Students Suggested Ways of Improving their Essay Writing

The responses of the students to the ways their essays writing could be improved were analysed using a two point scale (See Table 4.18).

From the Table 4.18, majority of the students feel that their performance could be improved through improved teaching techniques, provision of text-books and giving interesting topics that are within their level to write on.

4.3.6 100 Level Students' Suggested Ways of Improving their Essay Writing

This section presents the analysis of students' suggested ways of improving their essay writing (See Table 4.19).

Table 4.18

100 level Students' Rating of Possible Reasons for their Problems Using the Two-Point Scale

	Possible Reasons	Responses	
		Agreed	Disagreed
1.	My teachers did not teach me essay writing	8.1	92.0
2.	I am not properly corrected whenever I write an essay	20.2	79.8
3.	I do not like English subject	12.1	87.9
4.	The essay topic was difficult	11.1	88.9
5.	I could not transfer my ideas to English	15.2	84.9
6.	I lack essay writing practice	44.5	55.6
7.	I could not express myself well in the standard English	26.3	73.7
8.	I construct English sentences the way I speak my first language	9.1	90.9
9.	I do not know the variety of English to use when writing an essay	22.2	77.8
10.	I am confused by the varieties of English I hear outside my school	11.1	88.9
11.	I am not motivated enough to learn English	17.18	82.8
12.	I had fatigue problem (e.g sickness, tiredness or bad weather)	18.2	81.8

Table 4.19

SS 3 Students' Rating of Suggested Ways to Improve their Essay Writing Using a Two-Point Scale

	Suggested ways of improving Essay Writing are	Responses	
		Agreed	Disagreed
1.	Improving teaching techniques	75.1	24.9
2.	Providing text books for practice	74.1	25.3
3.	Giving essay topics that are within my level	70.1	29.9
4.	Giving me interesteing topics to write on	72.2	27.8

Table 20

100 Level Students' Rating of Suggested Ways of Improving Essay Writing

	Suggested ways of improving Essay Writing are	Responses	
		Agreed	Disagreed
1.	Improving teaching techniques	50.5	49.4
2.	Providing text books for practice	62.6	37.4
3.	Giving essay topics that are within my level	46.5	53.5
4.	Giving me interesting topics to write on	78.8	21.2

Table 4.20, shows that most of the students believe that their performance could be improved by giving them interesting topics to write on; providing of text-books for practice, improving teaching techniques and giving of interesting essay topics that are within their level.

In conclusion, the results on the two tables have given us more ways that could help improve these students poor performance.

4.4 Discussion of the overall findings

The analysis of SS 3 and 100 level students' essays showed that structural errors occurred most frequently of all the categories of errors, followed by mechanical errors, lexical and miscellaneous errors.

Within the category of structural errors, those of tense occurred most frequently. Some of the reasons for these errors could be that these students wrote lengthy sentences which were difficult to control so they switched from one tense to another. They could be due to these students' ignorance of the workings of the English verbs. These tenses were written down as the actions occurred irrespective of the fact that they might have started off with a particular tense.

Errors of concord which had the second highest frequency of occurrence revealed these students' inability to match the correct subject with the correct verb and correct determiner with the correct noun. It also revealed their inability to determine the subject of a complex sentence. The confusion here may not be unconnected with the fact that most of their languages do not make the same tense agreement with their nouns as does the English language (Akoh, 1989).

There were errors of wrong use and omission of prepositions and those of phrasal verbs, which occurred because most Nigerian languages use a fewer number of prepositions than English language for a varieties of purposes, so the students do not

bother to learn them properly (Olayemi 1980). It could also be as a result of poor learning on account of poor teaching.

The students were also known to either omit prepositions or use them wrongly in some cases. This could be that the use of prepositions was not properly taught, hence the confusion noticed in their essays.

Errors of direct translation from first language to the English were observed in these students' essays. The errors could be due to the influence of the students' first languages on the English they learnt.

The errors of wrong spelling occurred highest within the category of mechanical errors. Some of the reasons for these could be that the students were unfamiliar with the English words or could be due to faulty pronunication of these words and illogical relationship between the sounds and spellings of English words.

Capitalization errors had the second highest frequency of occurrence within the category of mechanical errors. One of the reasons could be that the students do not know when to use them. It could also be linked to handwriting habits which result in their undiscriminate use.

The comma errors - misuse and omission came third within the sub-category of mechanical errors. These were due to the students' inability to use them to mark off clauses, prepositional phrases, inclusion that are not necessary to the understanding of the sentence.

Errors of misuse and omission of fullstop had the least frequency of occurrence. Most of these errors here could be due

to the students' incomplete understanding of a sentence as a result of poor learning and their carelessness when writing.

In the category of lexical errors, those of wrong choice had the highest frequency of occurrence and this revealed the students' ignorance of the plain sense or dictionary meanings of the words. They could be due to misprounciation of some of these words. The problem of direct translation from L1 to English could be also responsible for these errors because of the difficulties of arriving at the equivalence in English.

The use of redundant items had the second highest frequencyof occurrence. The students simply try to impress their readers by being tautological or are uncertain as to what is correct or wrong. It is a kind of trial and error thing, leaving the readers to choose whichever is correct. The influence of some first languages, especially, Hausa users of English language could be responsible for these errors. Within this category, also, were the errors of omission of word(s) which occurred mostly as a result of carelessness of the students.

The errors of discourse had the fourth highest frequency of occurrence of all the error categories. Within the category, the errors of poor paragraphing had the highest frequency of occurrence as a result of lack of paragraph sense, that is, structural unit comprising of a topic sentence and related sentences. This, often, leads students to lump unrelated ideas together thereby misleading and confusing the readers.

For the tautological errors, the students were seen to be saying the same thing in different ways. They could be due to

transfer of the rhetorical manner of most Nigerian languages to English. It could also be due to lack of knowledge of the English language.

The errors of construction of incoherent sentences of the students were characterised by sentence constructions that observed no rules of the English language. This could be as a result of poor knowledge of English which may not be unconnected with poor learning on account of poor teaching.

Lack of cohesive devices to logically link up one sentence or idea to the other was prominent among the errors here. The students' inability to use devices such as ellipsis, reference and substitutions led to monotonous use of a particular item within the paragraph. The errors could be due to poor learning. Error of run-on sentences which were revealed by lengthy and uncontrollable sentences were observed in this category. This could be that the students were ignorant of sentence limits and thus wrote down all their ideas in a sentence.

The least errors here were those of lexical repetition which were characterised by over-use of a particular lexical item. Apart from the students' inability to use cohesive devices, the errors here could be due to students' limited vocabulary on account of inadequate learning and their attempt to present facts in a very simple language.

Miscellaneous errors were the least of all the errors found in the essays of these two groups of students. They defy classification into any of the categories of errors and their sources could be due to the students' limited knowledge of the English language.

Other reasons for the persistence of the grammatical errors across these levels could be traced to fossilization problems. It was discovered during the data collection period that many of the secondary schools visited had no qualified English teachers to help eliminate some of the sub-standard varieties of English brought in by the pupils, who were mostly from public schools. These pupils were left to grow up with these varieties and the errors became fossilized and are carried over to 100 level. At this level, there is little or nothing that could be done to eliminate them.

From the foregoing discussions, it is clear that attempts have been made by the researcher to provide or give possible reasons responsible for the errors of these two levels of students.

There was also the need to determine the differences and similarity between the errors of these two levels. The T-test statistical technique was, therefore, used to validate the hypotheses. The result showed no significant difference between the performances of these two groups at the grammatical level. This implied that the one year of formal English instruction at the 100 level had not improved their performance at that level.

But at the discourse level, the T-test result revealed a significant difference in the performances of these two groups of students. The implication here is that the one year of formal English instruction at the 100 level had improved their performance in discourse.

The analysis of the SS 3 students' questionnaire showed their areas of weaknessess as follows, using main and

subordinate clauses, using correct tenses, constructing compound and complex sentences, presenting ideas logically and using phrases and clauses correctly. These findings agreed to some extent with the result of their actual performance in the essay writing. They have helped to shed more light as to why they performed poorly in those areas.

For the 100 level students, using main and subordinate clauses, constructing compound and complex sentences and presenting ideas logically were revealed to be difficult by the analysis and these tally with their actual performance in the essay writing.

Some of the ways suggested by these two groups of students for improving their performance included improving teaching techique, providing text-books for practice and giving interesting topics to write on.

The teaching implications of the above findings are discussed under section 5.3 of the study.

Chapter V

Summary, Recommendations and Conclusions

5.1 Summary

This is a comparative study of SS 3 and 100 level students' grammatical and discourse errors. The analysis at these two levels aims at finding answers to the following questions:

1. What are some of the grammatical and discourse errors produced by SS 3 students from selected schools in Kaduna State and 100 level undergraduate students in Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria?
2. What are the possible sources of these errors?
3. Are the errors produced by the two groups of students similar?
4. What improvement has the formal English instruction offered at the 100 level made on the English language of the 100 level students?
5. What kind of remedial programme could be suggested based of the findings ?
6. These questions led to the formation of the following hypotheses which were tested to provide answers for them.

Hypotheses

1. There is no significant difference between the errors produced by SS 3 and 100 level students.
2. The one year of formal English language instruction offered at 100 level has not significantly improved these students' performance.

To provide answers to these questions and to test these hypotheses, two essay questions were given to the two levels to write on one. To enhance objectivity the essays were marked by the researcher and two other co-raters. In addition, four hundred and five post-essay writing questionnaire - two hundred and sixty-nine for SS 3 and one hundred and forty for 100 level students were analysed to identify their problematic areas of essay writing and to suggest ways of getting over them.

The statistical procedures adopted in the analysis of the data included frequency count, percentages of all the error categories and their sub-categories and T-test which was used to find out the differences between these two groups of students.

5.2 Findings of the Study

1. Four broad categories of errors namely; structural, lexical, mechanical and miscellaneous were revealed to persist at these two levels.
2. Both SS 3 and 100 level students produced similiar grammatical errors and this means that there is no significant difference between the grammatical errors produced by these groups of students.
3. This, also, means that the one year of formal English instruction at the 100 level had not significantly improved these students' performance at the grammatical and lexical levels. For instance, tense errors, wrong choice of words and concord errors occurred most frequently in the grammatical errors of these students.

4. In the area of discourse, the result showed a significant difference between their performances and this implies that the one year of formal English instruction at the 100 level had improved these students' discourse.
5. The result of the analysis of the students' post-essay writing questionaire revealed, to some extent, some areas of weaknesses such as using correct tenses, making an outline to an essay, logical presentation of ideas, and these tally with their actual performance in the essay writing.
6. Sources of errors could include faulty teaching often leading to the errors of prepositions and phrasal verbs. for instance, indiscriminate use of preposition, tense errors such as in bring - bringed, lack of awareness of the workings of English sentence pattern incoherent sentence constructions and lack of self editing ability.
7. One reason given by the SS 3 students as responsible for their poor performance at these levels - grammatical and discourse - was their inability to express themselves well in the standard English while that of 100 level students was lack of essay writing practice.
8. Majority of the students - SS 3 and 100 levels - believe that their performance could be improved through improved teaching techniques, provision of text-books on writing and giving of interesting essay topics to write on.

5.2.1 Recommendations for Language Teachers

(a) This study familiarizes exposes the English language teachers at these two levels to the language needs of their students which are mainly structural, lexical and mechanical components/the English language. They should, therefore, familiarise themselves with these problematic areas and highlight them appropriately on their teaching to minimise carry-over errors to the next level.

(b) In the area of vocabulary, many English words are used to mean different things in different contexts, all of which cannot be mentioned in a formal English teaching situation. The teacher should cultivate the habit of reading widely in these students, thereby exposing them to unfamiliar words as well as varieties of English sentence patterns.

(c) It has been established (WAEC Chief Examiners' Report, 1983) that the students' poor performance in English language has a lot of bearing on their other subjects, it, therefore, becomes worthwhile for both the English and content teachers to work together for a complementary input to the teaching of English. For instance, the content teacher can point out to the English language teacher any area of difficulty requiring his input or vice versa.

(d) Since these errors - structural, lexical and mechanical persist at these two levels, they may not be easily eliminated, the teachers at these two levels could incorporate some grammatical structures into their comprehension lesson thereby covering a wider range of

grammatical structures. For instance, passages featuring words that are associated with some specific fields could be used to teach both vocabulary as well as reading.

5.2.2 Recommendations for Curriculum Planners

(a) Since the study has revealed to some extent, the language needs of these students, curriculum planners could base their programme on them (these needs). For instance, in the English language syllabus for SS 3, it is discovered that there is more emphase on reading comprehension than an the other components of English. Some grammatical items such as sequence of tenses (tense patterns) could be extended from SS 1 to SS 3, in addition to what they have to cover. And for the 100 level, though the goal is to enhance communication, it is worthwhile to incorporate grammer teaching directly or indirectly into the existing Comskip to enhance the ability to use English in the academic setting.

(b) The study could be used by the teacher-trainers to inform their trainees of the students' language problems so that they could make adequate provision to tackle them ahead of time.

(c) The teachers' input and students' performance could be improved if they are provided with text-books on writing that will improve the students' weak areas such as paragraph writing use of cohesive devices and tape - recorders that could help them over-come some spelling errors especially those due to faulty pronounication.

5.2.3 Recommendations for Teaching at SS 3 and 100 levels

(a) Based on the findings, the following remedial programmes are suggested. To teach tenses, the following procedures could be used. The students should be given a reference list of tenses to familiarize them with the various aspects of it (tense). Exercises that would enable the students work on their own should be given to enhance better understanding. This would be followed by another list of regular and irregular verbs. This aspect should be revised thoroughly using structured passages that feature these errors be followed by error correction exercise for the students.

(b) Comprehension passage containing commonly mispelt words could be used to minimise errors of spellings. In such an instance, constant drilling of frequently misspelt words such as occasion, across, grateful, fulfil, separate, privilage. Exercises such as, "correct the misspelt words," should be given as classwork or home assignment for practice. Also, after reading a passage, they could be asked to recall some frequently misspelt words in the passage.

(c) The students should be encouraged to use their dictionaries to minimise spelling errors. The teacher should encourage them to read widely to enable them build a wide range of vocabulary items and idioms.

(d) Conscious teaching of punctuation forms in English could minimize the punctuation errors. Teaching should be

followed by some unpunctuated passages which could be given to the students to punctuate. These attempts are expected to help them to understand the appropriate use of punctuation for these marks.

(e) Discourse errors such as lexical repetition within a paragraph, poor paragraphing, poor or non-use of cohesive devices, run-on sentences could be minimised through the use of model passages that feature these discourse forms. The exercise is after the students have been taught paragraph writing featuring aspects such as topic sentences, cohesive devices and supporting sentences. The students may later on be made to go through model passages to bring out the problematic discourse errors.

(f) To minimise errors of count and non-count; concord and determiners at the SS 3 and 100 levels, the structural forms could be taught using appropriate error-correction strategies.

5.2.4 Limitations of the study

This study is not without some limitations. Firstly, the use of students from post-primary schools in one state and undergraduate students from one university limits it to one geographical region and makes it impossible for the results or the findings to be generalised.

Secondly, the error analysis undertaken in this study was based on the written form because the researcher feels that lumping together of written and spoken forms would be too broad on scope for an indepth study of this nature. So another

researcher could work on the spoken form of these two groups and subject them to the same analysis as this.

5.2.5 Other Areas of Research

These may include:

1. A comparative study of students' grammatical and discourse errors at secondary and tertiary levels.
2. A comparative study of errors in the spoken form of SS 3 and 100 level.

5.3 Conclusion

In view of the high percentage of structural, lexical, mechanical and discourse errors, it could be concluded that these students cannot write effectively in English. Based on the findings, it could also be concluded that they students had inadequate exposure to language in use and extensive reading.

Through the analysis and the suggested remedial programmes that would help to eliminate the students' language problems; It is hoped that this study has contributed to the theoretical issues related to language teaching and has provided results that could be used to produce useful teaching materials at these levels.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 'A'

1A Structural Errors

(a) Phrasal verbs, e. g

i) Before Nigeria was ruled <u>under</u> British (ss 3).

ii) He was busy helping his father <u>in</u> the farm (100 level).

(b) Wrong preposition

i) <u>At</u> the past when I was young, I had no pair of shoes (ss 3).

ii) I work <u>with</u> account department of WAEC (100 L)

(c) Omission of Preposition

i) Presently, I am a student ^ the above school (ss 3).

ii) We have to start from where our forefathers started ^ (100 L)

(d) Wrong determiners

i) But now I am <u>a</u> engineer to be (ss 3)

ii) In the world of today a British and <u>a</u> American are brothers (100L)

(e) Omission of determiners

i) This is because ^ Government did not acknowledge them (ss 3)

ii) Both the north and ^ south were separate entity when British came (100L)

(f) Concord

a) Subject - Verb

i) <u>one of the teachers give</u> him gift regularly because of his behaviour (ss 3)

ii) Her oil though have undergone some considerable depreciation in the price she still serve some countries of the World (100L).

Noun - determiner

i) All the thing were provided by the white government (ss 3)

ii) These separate part ofNigeria have differnt languages (100 L)

Direct translation from L1 to L2

i) I used to take my bath every day and I used to go to the house to prepare food (ss 3)

ii) In those days when 10k was 10k, there was alot to drink and eat (100 L)

h) Wrong tense.

i) We went to places that we have never visit before (ss 3).

ii) I cried alot because the situation is never suitable for a child (100 L).

i) Use of redundant Lexical items.

i) Although, this is very high compared to the past but there is still more to be done (ss 3).

ii) He is married to a wife (100 L).

II Mechanical Errors.

Wrong spellings due to illogical relationship between the sounds and the spellings.

i) inocent, posession, civillions (ss 3)

ii) belive knolege, transmition (100 L)

III Lack of familiarity with the words, e.g

i) acheive, acomodate, (ss 3)

ii) occassion dirthy (100 L)

IV Faulty Pronounciation

i) Perport, becouse intriduction (ss 3)

ii) Comportable, dicide, patnership that siperate (100 L)

b) Capitalization

I. Inconsistency title

i) Zonkwa Local Government, Kaduna State (ss 3)

ii) Department of Civil engineering Ahmadu bello university Zaria (100 L)

II. Non - use of Capitals where necessary

i) jos teaching Hospital (ss 3)

ii) My father lives in awanga in Plateau State (ss 3)

iii) The asian society organised some plays (100 L)

a british woman gave our country the name Nigeria (100 L)

III. Misuse of the Capitals, e.g

i) I will be a Student in the College of education Next Year (ss 3).

ii) My Principal is now the Manager in Peoples' Bank Zaria (100 L).

c. I. Misuse of commas

i) They are always angry with me, because I am always the last to submit my work (ss 3)

ii) My future plans are, to do a master degree and get a good job. (100 L).

II. omission of commas, e.g

i) I clearly won the election ^ giving my rival a wide gap (ss 3).

ii) Therefore we should endeavour to reject and wipe out colonialism (100 L).

d. Misuse of the Fullstops

i) I can speak it quite alright. but only I cannot it (ss 3).

ii) with all these. Nigeria will certainly be one of the richest countries of the world (100 L).

II. Omission of the fullstops, e.g

i) We are ten in number my father, mother etc (ss 3)

ii) The issue of election rigging should not be overruled (100 L)

(c) Lexical Errors

a. Collocation e.g

i) My parents have no any problem (ss 3).

ii) Different chiefs become monarchial dictatoriial in governance (100 L).

b. Wrong word

i) Economically, Nigeria became one of the huge Countries in the organisation of ECOWAS (ss 3).

ii) My father and my grand - mother cried profusely during the death of my brother (100 L)

c. omission of words

i) My sister is in A.B.U. Zaria while my brother is in government College ^ ss ii (ss 3).

ii) I had seven ^ in my GCE before I was admitted to read Medcine.

d. Discourse Errors e.g tautological errors:

i) Every tribe had its traditional religion. The major religion was traditional religion. but the coming of the missionary and the white man's [sic] religion to Africa has made many black people to turn away from their own traditional religion (ss 3).

ii) Before independence Nigeria was fully ruled and governed by the British. The Nigerians had not progressed much. different chiefs had become [sic] monerchial and dictictorial in governance (100L).

b. Run - on sentences/incoherent sentences, e.g

i) After working for some years and if I got property that I can call mine, i will settle down and marry the man of my choice which i know will already be around before that time and have my own family and I have plan to give my children motheerly care and sent them to the best secondary and the best education from. I will love my children and give them the best education I can afford (ss 3). [sic]

ii) And the rate of inflation is very high to the extend that structural adjustment programme was introduced by the presence President, Ibrahim badamosi Babagidas, the 101, 010, 100 etc formular was introduced because of the population citizen [sic] (100 L).

c. Errors of lexical repetition and non - use of cohesive devices.

i) In future I hope to join a bus:iness so as to enable our family establish a company and I will be the accountant of the company. With effective management, we hope to develop our company into a viable companythat will stand against any company in the whole country (100 L). [sic]

ii) Socially Nigerians have become aware of the need for social happenings in the country, especially in the southern part of the country where you hear of different happenings almost everyday. Nigerians now throw parties when naming a baby on their birthdays, on their weddings etc. This was not the case in the past. Economically, Nigeria has not developed much, even with the implementation of SAP conditions [sic] (100 L).

e. Incoherent sentences, e.g

i) Nigeria yesteday was facing alot of problem were eletrate was heading Nigeria traditional set up was practically examited where people did not know economic and social political as it come to [sic] knowledge of colonial people (ss 3).

(ii) However, in conclusion upon all the crucial life and what experiences I will use my studentship to make or plan good for my people if given mandate (100 L). [sic]

APPENDIX 'B'

ESSAY TOPICS

INSTRUCTIONS:

Choose any of the topics below and write an essay of two pages on it. You are allowed to discuss the topic of your choice with your mate before you start writing.

Time allowed: One hour.

---

1. As a likely Secretary General candidate of 'your club' in your school, you are requested by the electoral commmittee to write a full report of your life and that of your family -

   (a) This includes you and your family past life and experiences.

   (b) daily activities

   (c) Future Plans.

OR

2. Write on the topic, Nigeria yesterday, today and tomorrow. For Nigeria of yesterday, you may discuss the traditional set up, colonialism and independence, for Nigeria today, you can discuss the present social, economic and political happenings and for the future, you can discuss the social, economic and political changes that are likely to take place.

APPENDIX ' C '

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QUESTIONNAIRE FOR STUDENTS

Dear Student,

The researcher will want to know the problems you had when you were writing the essay so that she can plan for better teaching and learning. You are therefore required to give a very honest answer that will help her plan a better programme for you.

Mrs. Adogwa

Section A. Personal Information.

1. Name of the School: _____

Tick ☐ as applicable to you

2. Year of Study

100L ☐
SS III ☐

3. Sex: Male ☐ Female ☐

4. Age in years

14 - 15 ☐
16 - 18 ☐
19 - 21 ☐
22 and above ☐

5. How often do you write essays?

very frequently ☐
frequently ☐
occassionally ☐
Never ☐

6. Do you like writing essays? Yes ☐
NO ☐

7. Give reasons for your answer to question No 6

SECTION B. CONTENT

I had problems in the following areas when I was writing my essay. (Rate these problematic areas as many as are applicable to you.)

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	Very difficult	Difficult	fair	Not difficult
a. making an outline to the essay				
b. using punctuation correctly				
i. spelling words correctly				
ii. punctuation marks eg comma, fullstop semin-colon etc.				
c. constructing simple correct sentences				
d. constructing compound and complex sentences				
e. choosing appropriate words				
f. using phrases and clauses correctly eg "in the room," "because he is lazy"				
g. using main and subordinate clauses correctly				
h. correct use of tenses				
i. forming plural of words correctly				
j. writing different types paragraph constructions				
k. flow of ideas				
l. logical presentation of ideas				
m. writing a good coherent paragraph				

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9. I had the above problems because:

a. My teacher did not each me essay writing ☐
b. I am not properly corrected whenever I write as essay ☐
c. I do not like English Subject ☐
d. The essay topic was very difficult ☐
e. I could not transfer my ideas into English ☐
f. Lack of essay writing practice ☐
g. I could not express myself well in the standard English ☐
h. I construct English sentences the way I speak my first language ☐
i I did not know the variety of English to use in writing my essay. ☐
I am confused by the varieties of English.I hear outside my school ☐
j. I am not motivated enough to learn ☐
k. I had fatigue problem (eg sickness, tiredness or bad weather). ☐

10. Some of the ways through which your performance in essay writing can be improved include:

a. Improving teaching techniques ☐
b. Providing text-books that can be used for practice ☐
c. giving essay topics that are within my level ☐
d. motivating me by giving me interesting topics to write on ☐
f. Any other ☐

Thank you for your co-operation.