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SYNTACTIC ERRORS IN THE WRITTEN WORK OF STUDENT TEACHERS IN KERICHO TEACHERS' TRAINING COLLEGE KERICHO KENYA

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A Research Project submitted to the Graduate School in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts in English Language and Linguistics of Egerton University

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DECLARATION AND RECOMMENDATION

DECLARATION

This is my own original work and has not been presented for a degree in any other University.

Signed _____ **Date** 9/5/2014

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RECOMMENDATION

This M.A project has been submitted for examination with our recommendation as University Supervisors.

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DEDICATION

To my wife Mary Mong'ina.

To my children

Emma Kwamboka, Edwin Nyakundi,

Winfrida Nyanchoka and Lauryn Moraa.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am greatly indebted to Prof.J Mutiti for accepting to supervise my work after my previous supervisor had kept mum for three years, and for painstakingly going through the first and final draft. To Prof. C. Kitetu for offering constructive suggestions on how to structure the report and for continuously encouraging me to graduate.

I cannot forget my son Edwin, who went through the draft and encouraged me to complete the report in time. To my daughter Winfrida for typing the report, and above all, to my wife for creating an enabling environment for me to sit for many hours writing.

Lastly to my friends who encouraged me, despite my age, to pursue post graduate studies after staying out of a lecture theatre for 28 years.

ABSTRACT

This research investigated the syntactic errors in the written work of students in Kericho Teachers' Training College (TTC) in Kericho, Kenya. The research used Error Analysis procedure to investigate these errors. College students are supposed to be competent in English as a second language, since it is a language of instruction in school. The TTC students undergo residential training for 2 years and upon completion are posted to Kenyan Primary Schools to teach. The presence of errors in their written work reflects the quality of teachers being trained in these colleges. The objectives of this study were to identify the syntactic errors in the written work of the students, to code and describe these errors, to describe the source of the errors and to suggest how they can be avoided. The research looked at the theoretical literature and the studies on Second Language acquisition. The framework of this study was based on the Interlanguage theory. The respondents wrote a composition out of which the errors were analyzed. It was found that the main cause of these errors was overgeneralization. The other causes were ignorance of rule restriction, incomplete application of rules and false concepts hypothesized. This study recommends among other things, the redesigning of the curriculum. The curriculum planners should improve in the design of English as a subject. The current syllabus concentrates more on methodology than content. The presence of these errors gives a clue on how students cope up with the learning of other subjects in the curriculum. This will assist the lecturers in understanding the student's level of proficiency in English. Above all, this study will influence the admission policy so that performing well in English will be a pre-requisite for training.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CA	Contrastive Analysis
EA	Errors Analysis
KCSE	Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education
KICD	Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development
Knec	Kenya National Examinations Council
LA	Language Acquisition
LAD	Language Acquisition Device
LI	First Language
L2	Second Language
IL	Interlanguage
MT	Mother Tongue
NL	Native Language
NPA	New Primary Approach
PTA	Parents Teachers Association
PTE	Primary Teacher Education
SL	Second Language
SLA	Second Language Acquisition
TL	Target Language
TTC	Teachers Training College

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1. Background of the study

English is learnt as a Second Language in Kenyan Schools. The language Policy requires that Mother Tongue (MT) be taught in schools from Standard 1 to Standard 3. The argument is that children should in their years of introduction to formal learning be exposed to their culture which is transmitted mainly through language.

The argument is a reaction to the English Medium Project that was started by the colonial government in 1957. Oluoch (1984:87) notes that the main objective was to introduce English as a medium of instruction throughout the school system right from standard one, first in the Asian Schools and subsequently in African schools as well. The colonial government at the time felt that the Mother Tongues were unsuitable as Educational media.

The English Medium Project which changed to New Primary Approach (NPA), failed in its objectives and this led to its scrapping through the Ministry of Education Circular of March 1976. The circular stated that the MT was the most suitable language to use as medium of instruction in the vast majority of Lower Primary Schools. English in the Lower Primary is taught as a subject, the emphasis therefore, being on the language of the catchment area. It is only in a few schools that it is used as a language of instruction at this level. In the Upper Primary, English is used as a language of instruction except in the teaching of Kiswahili. A syllabus has been designed in sequences to accommodate all learners in progression from Lower to Upper Primary and to Secondary so that by the time the learner completes Form 4 one has the mastery of the English language.

In Kenya, government business is conducted in English. Though with the promulgation of the new constitution in 2010, Kiswahili was given equal prominence, the situation has not affected the use of English. Legal documents and all official documents are in English and even members of parliament have to pass an English proficiency test.

Abonyo (2005) argues that English is associated with power, prestige, progress, success and achievement and is rated highly. He further notes that English has been regarded by parents as a means of economic advancement. It is also viewed as the language of the elite in Kenya. But the teaching and learning of English has had its challenges. It requires well trained teachers, who can deliver in the classroom. To address the problem of well trained teachers, the Government has established 21 Primary Teachers Training Colleges (TTCs) and has encouraged churches and Private organizations to open extra centers of training, which follow the same curriculum.

Having made these observations, this study therefore focused on the Primary Teacher Education. It looked at the students who are training as teachers and their proficiency in written English, a language that is used for instruction in classroom teaching in Kenya.

The students are recruited from every Educational Zone in the country. But the quality of admissions to these colleges over the past years has raised eye-brows, as an applicant with Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education (KCSE) of mean Grade D+ (plus) has been recruited to train. For a candidate to achieve this grade, it means that even in English the score is below D (plain), yet this person is expected to effectively handle the language in the classroom. Up to the year 2001, the minimum entry requirement was a mean Grade of D+ (plus), but the admission policy changed to C (plain) and above in 2002, without laying emphasis on English.

The students undergo a two year intense residential pre-service training. They sit for a Primary Teachers Examination (PTE) administered by the Kenya National Examinations Council (Knec). However, the Knec (2005) guidelines governing Examination and Certification require that to be legible for the PTE Certificate Examination, a student must have scored a minimum grade of C (Plain) in the KCSE examination or its equivalent. It goes on to say that, one must also have obtained a minimum grade of D (plain) in Mathematics and C- (minus) in English. But Knec later waived the requirement that one must obtain C- (minus) in English, "After further consultation"(KNEC circular of 9th March2005). The

reality is that even an applicant who obtains Grade E in English at KCSE can be allowed to train so long as one has obtained the required Mean Grade of C (plain).It is a strong implication that such a student has not mastered the four language skills, namely: listening, speaking, reading and writing. The college English syllabus which emphasizes so much on methodology cannot afford a weak student an opportunity to build on one's competency. The methodology covers; specific methods in Lower and Upper primary, preparing to teach, evaluating pupils' work, speech work and language in general. In content it covers parts of speech and sentence elements. The teaching time allocated to English is 4 hours and 5 hours for 1st and 2nd years respectively. This is not adequate. A student who is well trained in the structure of English should have sound syntactic knowledge to be able to deal with learner errors, as errors are part and parcel of L2 learning. Low achievers at KCSE once admitted and go through the Course successfully, their competency in handling English in the classroom leaves a lot to be desired. This is the more reason why there is poor performance in English in Primary and Secondary schools in Kenya, consequently defeating one of the goals of Education as stated in the Education Information Handbook (1994:64) "To develop in the teacher the ability to communicate effectively."

1.1 Statement of the problem

The Kenya Primary Teachers College students are supposed to be competent in English as a Second language, since it is a language of instruction in School. Studies that have been done on errors have mainly concentrated on primary and secondary school learners. Other researchers have looked at the written errors of University students. This has raised a lot of concern particularly when considering that college students use English in the learning of other subjects and that they are being trained to teach in primary schools. Their level of competence as far as English language is concerned, needed to be investigated.

1.2 Objectives of the study

1. To identify and describe the syntactic errors in the written work of :

   (a) the First Year TTC students at the time of entry into the college.

   (b) the Second Year TTC students during the last term of the training.

2. To describe the causes of the syntactic errors in the written work of the students.

3. To make suggestions on how the syntactic errors in the written work of the students can be avoided.

1.3 Research questions

1. What are the syntactic errors found in the written work of:

   (a) the First Year TTC students at the time of entry into the college?

   (b) the Second Year TTC students during the last term of training.

2. What are the causes of the syntactic errors in the work of the students?

3. How can the syntactic errors in the written work of the students be avoided?

1.4 The significance of the study

It was significant to investigate the syntactic errors in the written work of the TTC students. The compositions had a lot of errors. The presence of these errors give a clue on how the students cope up with the learning of the other subjects in their training curriculum as English is the language of instruction. This study will assist the Kenya Curriculum planners to improve in the design of English as a subject. It brings to the attention of the lecturers, the

students' level of competence in English. It will also influence the admission policy so that there is emphasis on performing well in English at KCSE examination, as a requirement to train.

1.4 Scope and Limitations of the study

The research was conducted in Kericho TTC situated in Kericho County.The TTC trains students who upon graduation are posted to teach any subject offered in the Kenya primary school curriculum. Since at least every Educational Division in Kenya is represented in the college, it would have been a duplication of activities if the research was carried out in several colleges. There are several types of errors but the research was limited to syntactic errors because well formed sentences communicate the intended message effectively. The syntactic errors were limited to English because it is a service language in the Kenyan education system.

1.6 Definition of Terms

Acquisition-This refers to the internalization of rules and formulas which are used to communicate in the Second Language. The second language in this study is English. It is synonymous with the term " Learning"

Competence- Introduced by Chomsky (1965) as part of his generative grammar, it consists of knowledge of linguistic rules and how these rules are used to communicate meanings. In this research it is used interchangeably with proficiency.

Fossilization- A term Selinker (1972) describes as a stage where most second language learners fail to reach the target language competence. In other words, learners stop learning when their internalized rule system contains rules different from those of the English language. This describes errors made by TTC students.

Interlanguage- Coined by Selinker (1972) is a continuum between the first and target language along which all learners go through. It is a language that is systematic and independent of both the learner's first language and target language. In this study the learners have their first languages and English is their target language.

Mother Tongue- This is the first language of the learner. In this study, students come from different ethnic backgrounds and have their first languages.

Proficiency-This refers to the ability of the learner to perform in the second language, which in this study is English. It is synonymous with competence.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2. Introduction

This chapter discusses the theoretical literature which was relevant to this study. It also focuses on research studies in Second Language Acquisition in the Americas and Europe, Africa and Kenya. The last section is on the theoretical framework based on the interlanguage theory.

2.1. Theoretical Literature

Linguists have come up with many theories about language acquisition. In this section, we engage in the review of selected theories to enable us understand the general tenets of language acquisition, and, in particular, the relevant theory in Second Language acquisition.

2.1. 2. The Behaviorist Learning Theory

This is a theory of the 1960s which attempted to explain the process of language acquisition. The theory states that learning takes place when a particular stimulus produces a response from a learner. This process constitutes a habit which is observable. The habits are performed automatically without awareness and are difficult to eradicate, unless environmental changes lead to the extinction of the stimuli upon which they were built.

Skinner (1957) the main proponent of the theory, saw language as behavior shaped by a conditional response, learnt through imitation and reinforcement. In reinforcement the learner is rewarded or punished depending on whether it is appropriate or not. Learning through habit formation was applied to language learning in general. In First Language (L1) children learned their MT by imitating utterances made by parents and other adults. They were supposed to build up the grammar of their language, through patterns or habits. It was believed Second Language Acquisition (SLA) could take a similar way. Imitation and reinforcement were the means by which learners associated the habits that constituted L2. Tasks were systematically practised and mastered one at a time.

The theory provided an account of how the learners' L1 interfered with the process of SLA. The habit formation explained why the L2 learner made errors. The errors in L2 were as a result of interference from the L1. This happens where there is a shared meaning but expressed in different ways. To express it the learner transfers the L1 pattern to L2 thus making an error.

The theory was important to this study because English is learnt as a SL in the Kenyan schools and the L1 could have an influence on performance in the written work of the students.

2.1.2 The Mentalist Theory

This theory emerged after linguistic studies made on the works of the Behaviorists who saw Second Language acquisition through imitation and reinforcement. The Mentalist Theory is associated notably with Lenneberg (1967) and Chomsky (1965).

Lenneberg (1967) emphasized on the importance of the biological factors in the acquisition of language. He pointed out that the child's brain was specially adapted to the process of language acquisition. Only human beings are capable of learning. Chimpanzees which are next to human beings are not capable of mastering the creativity of language. Even the severely retarded human beings are able to develop the rudiment of language. The child's language builds up his knowledge of his mother tongue by means of hypothesis testing. At this stage one expects ill-formed sentences because he is testing his knowledge of the language. In the process of testing the child connects his innate knowledge of basic grammatical relations to the service structure in the language he is learning. Lenneberg did not see the ill-formed sentences as errors. But he provided a theoretical support for the concept of a built-in capacity for language as part of every human being's biological endowment. The TTCs students are capable of mastering the English language and errors are part of learning.

Noam Chomsky's (1957) *Syntactic Structures* brought about a theoretical revolution of Language Acquisition, thus upsetting the prevailing belief that language is learned by

imitating, memorizing and being rewarded for saying the correct things. Chomsky (1965:47) argued that the central force guiding language acquisition is a language specific which he called Mental Structure or Language Acquisition Device- LAD. According to Chomsky the innate organizational principles of the LAD govern all human languages and determine what possible form human language may take. This linguist also posits that the LAD mechanism permits children to acquire the vastly complicated system that comprises a human language in a relatively short time. Exposure to a language triggers the LAD and provides it with the details of the language to be acquired.

Smith (1999:28) analyzing the ideals of Chomsky points out that competence is in principle, independent of performance. He further notes that if someone gets an accident or a stroke and is rendered speechless, he appears to use his language faculty. He may subsequently recover and show no ill effects of his trauma, regaining his language competence while mute. He concludes that knowledge can be preserved in the absence of the ability to exercise that knowledge.

This theory has a lot of contribution to this study because every human being, be it a child or an adult, is biologically endowed with a language capacity. While learning, it is possible for TTC students to make errors because they are testing their knowledge of the language. Students use language creatively in their written work.

2.1.3. The Psycholinguistic Theory

This emanates from research done in the United States following Chomsky's (1975) 'Mental structure' in the acquisition of language. Chomsky in his syntactic structures argued that every human being has a language faculty responsible for language acquisition (LAD). The psycholinguistic theory is associated with Slobin (1971) and Brown (1973).They found striking evidence that some learning behaviors are common to all children no matter what language they are learning. Children learning their first language during early childhood use similar kinds of verbal constructions and make the same kinds of grammatical mistakes. They learn the basic word –order rules of the language.

The psycholinguists support the view that the human brain is more than just a receptacle that parents and teachers fill with phrases and sentences. The children have the capacity to learn and internalize the language they hear around them. Language acquisition is known to be an interaction between the child's innate mental structure and the language environment.

This approach has far –reaching implications on Second language learning. Researchers have discovered that L2 acquisition order is characteristic of both children and adults and which, for as yet unknown reasons, is similar for both speaking and writing. Students in TTCs are adults and learn English as a Second Language. Their acquisition of English Language is an interaction between their mental structure and exposure. This theory was used to explain the psycholinguistic causes of the student's errors.

2.1.4. The Inter-language Theory

This theory was relevant to this study as it was used to explain the student's errors. It addresses the L2, learner's competence in acquisition of language. .As learners go through the stages of LA, their lack of competence is seen in their deviant sentences. The theory has the following characteristics.

The L2 learners' Inter-language system is permeable. Rules that the learner knows at any one stage are not fixed; they are open to amendment.

The L2 learner's inter-language is constantly changing. But the learner does not jump from one stage to the next, but rather slowly by way of revision to accommodate the target language (TL) system.

The L2 learner's inter-language is systematic. He does not select haphazardly from his store of inter-language rules, but in a predictable way. If the performance is not satisfactory, the term error does not arise. Error can only arise with reference to the norms of the target language. The inter-language theory is associated with Selinker (1972) and Corder (1982).

Selinker (1972) the main proponent of this theory argues that the majority (95%) of L2 learners never achieve native like performance. He coined the term Inter-language, a systematic knowledge of language which is independent of both the learner's LI and the L2 system he is

trying to learn. The learner passes through stages on his way to L2 proficiency. In the stages of development factors such as the age of the learner, the context in which learning is taking place and the learner's background have no influence. He further points out that a learner can reach a stage where he stops learning when one's inter-language contains at least some rules different from those of the TL system. He refers this to **fossilization.** These are linguistic items, rules, and subsystems which speakers of a particular NL will tend to keep in the IL relative to a particular TL, no matter what the age of the learner or amount of explanation and instruction he receives in TL. Fossilized structures can be realized as errors or as correct target language forms; this occurs even when seemingly eradicated fossilized structures keep on emerging. They may not be persistent, for on other occasions the learner may succeed in producing the correct target language forms.

Selinker (1972), further notes that manifestations of these structures regularly re-appear in IL productive performance. They resurface under conditions of anxiety, shifting attention and second language performance, on subject matter which is new to the learners. He concludes that for a person to achieve success in the Target Language, the learner starts with the native language and continuously revises and extends rules until fluency in the L2 is attained. This theory was used to explain those errors that were persistent in the students' written work at the end of their Second year of training.

Corder (1982) in expounding this theory has seen Interlanguage as a dialect in which two languages share some rules of grammar. Errors that occur show the learner's transitional competence as one goes through the stages towards the target language. In the social context, he sees these stages as a linguistic system he refers to as an idiosyncratic dialect; a dialect that has got its own grammar. Deviant sentences are sometimes necessary depending on who and what the speaker intends. He therefore sees errors as necessary for learning.

2.2. Research Literature

2.2.1. Studies in the Americas and Europe

There is a distinct difference between an error, which is the concern of this study, and a mistake. An error is a deviation, which in essence is a clear reflection of the competence of the learner. This deviation is systematic implying that the learner has not yet mastered the rules of the target language and that the error may occur repeatedly. The learner cannot self correct the error because it is a product reflective of his or her current stage of L2 development. Selinker (1994) posits that it is only the teacher or the researcher who can locate an error.

Corder (1967, 1971) defines a mistake as a performance error that fails to utilize a known system correctly. He posits that mistakes are a manifest in slip of tongue, random ungrammaticalities and other performance lapses that are common to both native and second language speakers. A mistake can be self corrected, but an error cannot.

Burt, Dulay, and Krashen (1982;140) define errors as the flowed side of the learnt speech or writing and that they are those parts of conversation or composition that deviate from some selected norm of mature language performance. They consider errors an inevitable part of learning and that people cannot learn language without first systematically committing errors.

Several studies have been made to show how a learner acquires a second language. The studies have treated errors differently: some negatively and others positively. The earliest were the Behaviorists who viewed negatively the occurrence of errors and suggested that they should be avoided. Errors were not seen as evidence that the learner was progressing, rather as detractive features. Ellis (1994: 22) notes that in Behaviorists accounts of SLA, errors were considered undesirable and that they were evidence of non-learning. The Behaviorists suggested that there was a danger of errors becoming habits in their own right if they were tolerated.

According to Ellis, Brooks (1960) wrote that like sin, error is to be avoided and its influence overcome. This study found out that errors were necessary because they revealed the students' areas of weakness in learning English as a Second Language. Though the Behaviorists did not investigate to show how errors would become habits, by simply tolerating them, this was a starting point to pay attention to errors. Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis (CA) was a product of the Behaviorists. It was an approach of the 1960s, which was used as a procedure to predict potential errors and how these errors could be prevented.

The CA took the position that a learner's first language (LI) interferes with one's acquisition of a second language (L2), and that it therefore comprises the major obstacle to successful mastery of the new language. Dulay, Burt and Krashen (1982:97) note that the CA hypothesis held that where structures in the LI differed from those in the L2, errors that reflected the structure of the LI, would be produced. They further note that such errors were said to be due to the influence of the learner's LI habits on L2 production. In performance where structures in both languages LI and L2 are the same, the utterances are correct thus resulting into positive transfer. They thus concluded that following that reasoning, linguists thought a comparison of a learner's LI and L2 should reveal areas of difficulty for L2 students. Lado (1957:58) also shares the same views. He posits that from the observation of many cases, the grammatical structure of the native language tends to be transferred to the foreign language and concludes that those structures that are similar to the learner's native language will be simple for him, and those areas that are different will be difficult.

This study used language transfer as one of the 5 central processes responsible for the students' errors. Students who are training in college come from different language communities in Kenya. They are learning English as a Second language.

Politzer (1967:151) shares the same views and suggests that in the teaching of languages for which no considerable and systematic teaching experience is available Contrastive Analysis can highlight and predict the difficulties of pupils.

O'Grady (1993:408) posits that errors produced by the learners would occur at those points at which the two languages were dissimilar.

As observed, the goal of CA was the prevention of errors, but this approach had weaknesses as it would not account for all types of errors that children and adults make in their performance. The CA suggested that to overcome these errors, correction and drilling was necessary. College students are adults who have gone through several stages of learning English as a Second Language, following a designed curriculum. Over learning of pattern drill was the source of errors due to overgeneralization.

Error Analysis (EA) has made a tremendous attempt to analyze errors. The EA movement can be characterized as an attempt to account for errors that could not be explained or predicted by Contrastive Analysis or Behaviorist Theory. The study took this approach to investigate the errors made by TTC students in their written work in English Language.

Dulay, Burt and Krashen (1982:5) proponents of EA movement note that for several decades, linguists and teachers assumed that most second language learners' errors resulted from differences between the first and second languages They observe that researchers have learned that first language has a far smaller effect on second language syntax than previously thought. They have given figures in support of this argument. Only 5% of the grammatical errors children make and at most 20% of the ones that adults make can be traced to cross over from the LI. Therefore, learners' LI are no longer believed to interfere with their attempts to acquire L2 grammar. They note that correcting students' grammatical errors seems to produce little improvement. Teachers need not bring every error to the attention of the learner for fear that errors will become a habit.

However, they acknowledge the fact that making errors is an inevitable part of learning and that people cannot learn language without first systematically committing errors. Studying learners' errors serves to provide data from which inferences about the nature of the language learning process can be made. It also indicates to teachers and curriculum developers which

part of the target language students have most difficulty producing correctly and which error types detract most from a learner's ability to communicate effectively.

The study acknowledges that TTC students made errors in their written work. But this had to be investigated in order to categorize these errors for remedial action. People who learn a SL differ from children learning their L1 in a number of ways. But the most striking of these is that very few adult second language learners reach the same level of competence as native speakers of that language. Children learning a second language are more likely to achieve native like fluency than adults. But in general it is very rare for someone speaking L2 to pass completely for a native speaker.

O Grady (1993: 409) notes that each L2 learner's interlanguage is unique. As learners progress towards native like proficiency in the second language, their interlanguage is characterized by fewer and fewer errors. The college students are expected in their interlanguage to be near proficiency in English as adults.

Musyken and Appel (1990:92) argue that the ideal for many second-language learners is to achieve native-like proficiency in the target language and many learners especially older ones or those who remain isolated from the target-language community, never reach this goal. They never reach this goal due to fossilization.

However, Gardner and Lambert (1972:93) argue that only through the process of assimilation can one achieve proficiency in a TL. They posit that a learner can only become proficient in a second language if he or she wants to adapt to the cultural values of the target language community. In a series of articles Corder (1982:10) argues that errors are necessary in learning a second language. Errors will show how far the language has been learned. Even to adults in the native language, in normal adult speech they are continually committing errors of one sort or another. Such errors, he continues, are due to memory lapse, physical state such as tiredness, and psychological conditions such as strong emotion. But this does not reflect a defect in the knowledge of the language and one would be quite unreasonable to

expect the learner of a second language not to exhibit such slips of the tongue (or pen), since he is subject to similar external and internal conditions when performing in his first or second language.

Corder(1982) argues that we must make a distinction between those errors which are the product of such chance circumstances (mistakes) and those which reveal the learner's underlying knowledge of the language to date(transitional competence). He observes that mistakes are of no significance to the process of language learning .He further sees a learner's errors as evidence of the system he is using at a particular point in the course. Errors are seen as a strategy the learner is employing to reach the TL. It is also a way the learner has of testing his hypothesis about the nature of the language he is learning. This study used the strategy of Second Language Learning as a theoretical framework to find out the source of students' errors in their written work.

Nemser (1971:55) argues that the system the learner employs when trying to reach the TL is linguistically deviant. He refers this as approximative systems which vary in character, in accordance with proficiency level, learning experience, communication function and personal learning characteristics. The approximative system develops in stages from the first attempt to use the target language to the most advanced. But this requires a certain amount of exposure. However his arguments are not different from other interlanguage linguists such as Corder.

Krashen (1974:21) did extensive research with others and came up with the Input Hypothesis suggesting that SLA is driven solely by comprehensible input, a language that learners can understand. On adult studies they suggested that adults acquire a language in a similar way as children and that the sequences are the same. In the classroom situation, Krashen (1981:201) has observed that teachers have noticed that no matter how much they drill or correct certain errors, students keep on making them. This argument still leads to the idea that correctness depends so much on the input. If the TTC students did not get comprehensive input in their early years of learning in their primary schools, achieving competence in their written work remains a challenge.

Pieneman (1980) studying the works of Krashen researched on immigrant children on how they acquire second language. He posited that errors produced by L2 learners have no relationship to their native language. There is the existence of universal mental mechanisms involved in learning L2.

Norrish (1983) argues that errors are a systematic deviation when a learner has not learnt something and consistently gets it wrong. He adds that when a learner of English as a second or foreign language makes an error systematically, it is because one has not learnt the correct form.

Strevens (1969) hypothesized that errors should not be viewed as problems to be overcome but rather as normal and inevitable features indicating the strategies that learners use. He further argued that if a regular pattern of error could be observed in a given situation and if a learner was seen to progress through this pattern, his error could be taken as evidence not of failure but of success and achievement in learning. This is the view this study undertook.

It is worth noting that the purpose of Error Analysis was to assist in classroom teaching. EA provided information which could be used to sequence items for teaching or for remedial lessons. However EA does not present a complete picture of SLA, because it focuses on only part of the language L2 learners produce. It is not helpful when it comes to understanding the learners' developmental sequence. The EA studies do not acknowledge the creative process learners use in building the new language. Alexander (1979) argues that the EA studies focus on only a small part of the production data rather than all the learner language produced. Some errors would not appear to be errors because they seem to be well- formed, although they may not be correct from the pragmatic point of view.

Alexander(1979) further argues that learners may avoid some of the TL constructions because they do not know how to produce them, or because certain structures are perceived as difficult and more likely to induce error. These views are central to this study and in the theoretical

framework, strategies of Second language communication show that students are not able to use the appropriate words leading to malformed structures.

But the most important contribution of EA, as Ellis (1994:53) notes, is its success in elevating the status of error from undesirability to that of the inner workings of the language process.

2. 2.2. Studies on Acquisition of English as a Second Language in Africa

Available works in Anglo-phone Africa deal with policies about the teaching of English as a second language. The works approach the language from the Socio-economic standpoint.

The Researchers lament that the teaching of English has had several problems. In West Africa and Nigeria in particular, what is experienced is the same as in Kenya.

Oladejo (1991:195) observes that the major threat comes from, lack of professionalism in ESL teaching. He stresses that the infectiveness of ESL teaching and learning activities results from chronic teacher related factors such as shortage of well trained teachers, use of unqualified teachers in the language classroom, and lack of in-service training opportunities. This shows that unless students are well trained in college, there will be no improvement in the teaching of English in schools. TTC students who are competent in English Language can deliver well in the classroom upon graduation.

In South Africa, a multi-lingual country, Nzama(2011:84) in a research done in Isizulu speaking learners of English in selected schools found out that there were many errors in the written work of learners of grades ten, eleven and twelve. The study concluded that the mother tongue had influence in the making of errors. Some sentences showed direct translation from mother tongue. There was a lot of overgeneralization on the rule of plural.

With regard to the teachers of English, the findings were that the teachers were not competent in handling the language in the classroom as 75% of them were not trained on the structure of English. The conclusion was that they did not have syntactic knowledge to deal with learner errors. Seventy five percent of the teachers investigated showed a preference to teach Poetry or Literature instead of Grammar. The findings also revealed that rural school learners, on account of the lack of exposure to English, committed more and similar errors. The errors made in all

grades did not differ so much, so as to distinguish grade twelve from grade ten, although they had spent more years in school than the other grades. There was an element of fossilization which is unavoidable for SL learners. This study investigated the element of fossilization in the students' written work with a view of eradicating their persistent occurrence.

2.2.3 Studies on Acquisition of English as a Second Language in Kenya

In Kenya, proficiency in English is a persistent problem. Whiteley (1974:465) observes that in the rural areas, teachers have little, if any, opportunity to improving command of English, or indeed, for maintaining at the level they attained by the time they finished their training. Most of them do speak with their fellow teachers during school hours, at least part of the time but since they are all pretty much on the same levels of competence this is not likely to lead to improvement. In urban areas the situation is usually much better.

The situation up to today has not changed as Barasa (2005:2) has also observed that the poor performance in English Language has become a matter of concern to the Government, but also because English occupies a unique and significant role in the country. He further observes that these concerns have been expressed in various forums at policy level, in the Knec and school management Boards such as PTA. The same sentiments have been expressed in the past by the Minister for Education lamenting that performance in English has deteriorated when announcing the KCSE results for the year 1994(Daily Nation, March 1, 1995). These are the same sentiments expressed every year when releasing the KCSE results. This study sought to investigate whether those students who have qualified and have been selected to train in colleges have challenges in English Language.

In its Annual Report for 1991 and 1992, Knec stated to teachers that the performance in English remained unsatisfactory. It went on to say that many areas of the syllabus had been ignored completely and the candidates had a very poor mastery of the syllabus. The entire syllabus had not been covered adequately. It must be noted that not much has changed in the current reports.

In the most recent study by Kenyan researchers, there is concern on how the standards of English as a SL have drastically fallen. They have emphasized on how to impart the four basic skills of learning English – listening, speaking, reading and writing in the classroom.

In Groenewegen (2008:63) Kenyan researchers have come up with the English Literacy norms, with the aim of helping Primary School Teachers to interpret, teach, practice, consolidate and assess the mastery of the four basic skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing as well as grammar and vocabulary at different levels.

The same research has come up with the Norms Hypothesis which looks at the desired English language skills that learners should acquire. This involves highlighting and specifying language standards that learners are expected to attain with the aim of achieving both linguistic and communicative competencies, a concern of this study.

Muriungi (2010) researched in primary schools in Nembure Division of Embu County on the errors pupils make in their written English. She found out that pupils make many errors in the area of spelling and phonetics. She concluded that this could be explained by the fact that the learners lack adequate exposure to the spoken and written English Language. She recommends that English language teachers isolate errors from the learners' work and give individualized attention to those learners with unique problems and that teachers give spelling exercises to the learners frequently. But the teachers should be competent in order to assist the learners who make errors in their written work. Proper training starts from the colleges where the teachers are trained.

2.3. Theoretical Framework

This research was informed by Selinker's (1972) Interlanguage theory. This theory has the following components.

1. Language transfer- This process operates at two levels. The first level is a positive transfer which helps in the learning of a second language. The second level is a negative transfer that hinders the learning of a second language. Here errors do occur largely due to mother tongue influence. Where there are similarities between the L1 and L2 old habits in the L1 are transferred

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to the new learning habits. This involves pronunciation, word order and grammars, semantic transfer, transfer in writing and pragmatic transfer.

2. Transfer of training. A rule enters the learner's system as a result of instruction. This occurs during the first years of learning a second language. Incorrect instructions are given by the teacher who lacks competence in the language. As the learner progresses, the incorrect input becomes difficult to eradicate as it keeps on recurring in one's written work.

3. Strategy of second language learning. This is an identifiable approach the learner applies using the linguistic data available. The learner reorganizes the data in his own way by reducing the TL to a simpler system.

4. Strategies of second language communication. This is an attempt by the learner to communicate with the native speakers. The learner does not use the appropriate and correct forms.

5. Overgeneralization of Target Language (TL) rules. These are instances where the learner creates a deviant structure on the basis of his experience of other structures in the Target Language. **Examples.**

(a) He come from

(b) He can sings

(c) It is occurs

(d) Yesterday I go to the university and I meet my new professor.

The reason for such structures is attributed to the learner trying to reduce his linguistic burden. It is a tendency on the part of the learner to reduce TL to a simpler system. Selinker (1972) suggests that all the five processes are important in relation to the acquisition of second language.

The study used this theoretical framework to identify and describe the types of errors in the students' written compositions in English Language. The errors were categorized as:

1. Concord errors. Concord means agreement. In linguistic structures, there should be a concordial relationship in all grammatical categories. A structure should agree in number, person, gender and case.

2. Tense errors. English Grammar has two tenses: the past and present. Tenses are verbs and express about states, actions and processes in an utterance. When rules governing the use of Tenses are not followed, errors occur.

3. Omission errors. These are errors which occur in the absence of a morpheme that must appear in a well formed sentence. There are two types of morphemes: content and grammatical.

4. Transformational errors. Transformations derive surface structures from deep structures. In English to change a structure from active to passive, requires transformations. Active speech is referred to as direct speech and passive as indirect speech. A breach of transformational rules leads to errors.

5. Malformed structures. These are structures which are not complete and meaningful. They do not follow the rules of grammar and are unacceptable

6. Additional errors.

a) Double marking. These errors occur in a construction where two items rather than one are marked for the same feature.

b)Regularization. These errors occur when learners apply rules which are used to produce regular forms to those that are regular.

C) Simple Additions. These are errors which are neither double marking nor regularization. They are closely related to other Additional Errors.

CHAPTER THREE
METHODOLOGY

3. Introduction

This research investigated syntactic errors in the written work of student teachers in Kericho TTC, Kenya. The Research was necessitated by the fact that for pupils to have a strong foundation in English Language at the Primary school level, the teachers must be competent in the language. This starts from students who are admitted in TTCs to train as teachers. These students are supposed to be competent in English as a second language. Their training takes 2 years.

3.1. Location of study

The study was conducted in Kericho T.T.C and was representative of the other 21 Public Teachers Training colleges. The college, like other colleges, draws students from every education Division in the republic of Kenya. This is through the Ministry of Education quota admission policy in which all opportunities for training should be shared equally among the regions of Kenya.

3.2. Population

.Kericho TTC has a population of 1020 students. Through affirmative action, the number of men is equal to that of women. This was a cross sectional study as opposed to a longitudinal one because the researcher was working on a restricted time frame. The First and Second year students participated in this research. Out of a population of 1020 students, 100 were respondents. Their ages ranged between 20 and 30 years.

3.3. Sampling procedure

The study sampled 100 out of the 1020 students. 1st years were 50 and the same number of 2nd years, were selected through simple random sampling. This procedure in Mugenda and Mugenda (1999:44) is a representative sample in which a sampling frame is made. This frame contains a register of all the students in the class. There are 10 classes in 1st Year and 14 classes in 2nd Year. To select the participants involved placing labels YES and NO cards in a container. The students blindly picked the cards. Those who picked YES participated in the study. The number of male and females was equal.

3.4. Data collection

This Research was to identify and describe the syntactic errors in the written work of First Year students at the time of entry into the college and the Second Year students during the last term of training. It was further to investigate the causes of these errors and to suggest how these errors can be avoided. A Composition on a selected topic was given to the 1st years at the beginning of the Term immediately after Admission. The same composition was given to the 2nd years during the last term of their training. It read: write a composition of about 500 words on: the most outstanding experience in my life. They were given 1 ½ hrs to write the composition.

3.5. Data Analysis and Interpretation

The study went through every script analyzing every sentence. All the syntactic errors were extracted using Selinker's Interlanguage theoretical frame work. The errors were categorized as follows:

1. Concord errors
2. Tense errors
3. Omission errors
4. Transformational errors

5. Malformed structures

6. Additional errors

    (a)Double marking

    (b)Regularization

    (c)Simple additions

The study applied Descriptive statistical methods. Bell (1992:103) posits that the methods most likely to be useful in analyzing information gained from investigations of a limited nature are those of descriptive statistics.

The research followed the error analysis approach to analyze the data. The approach comprises six steps namely: collecting data, identifying the errors, classifying the errors, analyzing the source of the errors and taking remedial measures.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF THE RESULTS

4. Introduction

This chapter makes a presentation of the research findings on the syntactic errors made by students of Primary Teachers Training Colleges. The findings have been divided into: the description of the errors identified in the students' written work, the discussion of their findings and the causes of these errors.

4.1 Data presentation

Table1 below shows the number of respondents and the distribution of errors. The students were enthusiastic to write the composition and all completed before the 1 ½ hours allocated. Everybody responded as they had been explained clearly the purpose of writing the composition. The students' written work had many errors.

Table 1: Year 1 and 2 respondents and the total number of errors

CLASS	No. Of Respondents	No. Of Errors
1st Year	45	595
2nd Year	55	959
TOTALS	100	1554

The errors were classified according to their grammatical category followed by examples with detailed descriptions as shown on Tense errors on page 27,Concord errors on page 30, Omission errors on page 34,Malformed structure errors on page 36, Transformational errors on page 43 and Double marking errors on page 44. The errors described are those which were observable from the students' compositions. The source of every error was explained.

An error had more than one source showing that it was due to a combination of several processes.

4.1.1 Tense Errors

The English language has two tenses: the past and present. There is no future tense. Tenses are verbs that express about states, actions and processes in an utterance. There were tense errors in the written work of the students, occurring 345 times, representing 32% of the total errors made by both 1st and 2nd year students.

The students had difficulty in tense inflections. When referring to time in the past with the inflection –ed, there were errors as in the following:

1. **I have experience a lot of challenges.**

2. **Kibe encourage me to drink.**

3. **I stood on my own and trust in God.**

The above sentences are erroneous. In sentence 1 which denotes an action, the present perfect lacks an inflection'd' to read 'experienced'. In sentence 2 the situation in which it was uttered was in the simple past. It lacked an inflection morpheme'd' to read 'encouraged'. The students did not understand that 'encourage' and 'experience' are regular verbs that take the inflection past tense marker'd'. In sentence 3 the verb 'trust' lacks the 'ed' inflection tense marker to read 'trusted'.

4. **The head teacher did not allowed me to enter the school.**

5. **We had not fulfil what the teacher required.**

6. **I did not realized that I was on the wrong.**

In sentence 4 and 6 the morpheme "d" in verbs "allow" and "realize" is wrongly placed as the utterance , though a negation, the auxiliary 'did' which is in the past determines the tense the antecedent verb takes. In this case the verb should take the present tense. In sentence 5 the auxiliary 'had' which is in the past perfect determines the immediate verb, hence the inflection 'ed'.

The students wrote incorrect tenses showing that in their early stages of learning English they had learnt about tense formation but did not distinguish between regular and irregular verbs. They generalized every tense as regular. Examples:

7. **He had cutted all the firewood.**

8. **All sort of song were sunged.**

9. **The leader sayed that they reported the issue.**

10. **He payed the school fees.**

In the 4 sentences above past tense inflection for irregular verbs was erroneously inflected. "Cutted", "sunged", "sayed", and "payed" show that the student had learnt about tense formation but generalized that the past tense 'ed' inflection marker applies to all tenses.

The students had made errors in the formation of tense which take the morpheme –en and –n in the irregular verbs. Examples:

11. **The gangsters managed to broken our door.**

12. **I was registered and showed where to go.**

13. **My uncles had hid my father's death certificate.**

14. **I was waked up by labour pains.**

In sentence 11 the correct usage is "break" as the preceding verb "managed" is in the past. The grammatical rules require that the antecedent verb should be in the present tense .In sentence 12 the antecedent 'showed' should have been in the present tense as the preceding verb 'registered' is in the past tense.In sentence 13 the auxiliary "had" which is in the past determines the antecedent verb which should be in the past perfect thus 'hidden'.In sentence 14 the auxiliary "was" which is in the past determines the following verb. "waked" is incorrect as "woken" should have been used.

15. I begun to curse as I walked out.

16. The bell for lunch rung as usual.

In the 2 sentences the constructions denoted a past action. The irregular verb 'begin' in its past tense formation changes to 'began' ,but the students did not know the difference between 'begun' and 'rung' which are in the past perfect and 'began' and 'rang' which are in the simple past.

The students made errors in the use of modals. Modals are operators such as *can, may, will, shall, must, used to, dare, need*, etc. These are auxiliaries which help the verb in its functions. Students had errors particularly in the use of *will* and *can* when referring to the past and future. There is no future tense in English, but futurity is indicated by means of *will.*

17. The principal announced that all the students will start their evening runs.

18. We were instructed that the exercise will take two weeks.

19. He told me that he had a cousin who can assist.

In sentence 17 and 18 the students referred the action to the past and the correct tense is 'would'. In sentence 19 the verb "had" which is in the past tense would require an antecedent auxiliary indicating the past hence 'could'.

In a grammatical construction the verb should agree with the noun in plural and singular. There were errors in regard to this rule.

20. Different experiences generates an intellectual concern.

21. The children takes instructions.

22. English sometimes seem to be difficult.

In sentence 20 and 21 the nouns 'experiences' and 'children' are plural forms and the antecedent verbs should not take the morpheme 's'. The verbs are in the present tense. The morpheme 's' would denote the subject as being singular which is erroneous. In sentence 22 the student treated "English" as a plural noun and avoided the morpheme's' to denote singular.

4.1.2 Concord Errors

Concord means agreement or harmony. In linguistic structures there should be a concordial relationship in all grammatical categories. In other words a construction should agree in number, person, gender and case. In English language there is concord of for example, number between noun (subject) and verb (predicate).

The following two sentences illustrate this phenomenon;

23. The door is closed(sing +sing)

24. The doors are closed(plural + plural)

In sentence 23 the "door" which is a noun singular agrees with the verb "is" which is in singular. In sentence 24 "doors" and "are" are in plural. In the sentence the noun and the verb have a concordial relationship. The inflection "s" is a plural marker.

Concordial relationship also applies to clausal and an adverbial subject in constructions with ***is/was*** that follow the pseudo-subject ***there.***

There were many concord errors in the written work of the students. The total occurrence was 360 times representing 23% of the total errors, concentrated mainly on number and case with a few on gender and person.

In their early stages students had difficulty in grasping the noun plural and the antecedent verb as in:

25. Things was not good for me.

The noun "things" which is regular inflected by a plural marker 's' does not agree with a singular verb "was". The sentence should have been written:

Things were not good for me.

26. Teaching is the best of all profession.

27. This were the daily events in my life.

28. Several of them was killed instantly while others was injured.

In sentence 26 there is no concordial relationship between "all" and "profession". The prepositional phrase "of all profession" denotes plural and lacks an inflection marker's' to complete the structure correctly. The plural marker's' is preceded by a determiner "all". One

grammatical rule in constructions with "all" is that it is used with plural nouns. In this construction the correct sentence is:

Teaching is the best of all professions.

In sentence 27 "this" was an error repeated several times. The students had not grasped its use as a determiner, pronoun and adverb and as a plural. The singular "this" is not in concordial relationship with the whole verb phrase. Its correct construction is:

These were the daily events in my life.

In sentence 28 the noun phrase "several of them" is in plural and the antecedent verb "was" which appears twice in this complex sentence is not concordial as it is in singular. Its correct construction is:

Several of them were killed instantly while others were injured.

The students made errors in collective nouns as in the following:

29. One of the army officer called me.

The students generalized that since the number is "one" then what follows must be in singular. They did not see "army" as a group of persons, therefore plural. Its correct construction is:

One of the army officers called me.

The students made errors in constructions with Case. English nouns have two cases;
the common and the genitive cases. The genitive case is marked by an apostrophe (') and s.
In constructions the inflection of nouns is realized in the singular by '-s' and in the plural the apostrophe is put at the end. Students had difficulty in this as in the following:

30. It was the best thing to occur in ones life.

31. I hate people who hate other peoples rights.

32. My parents never missed visiting during parents day.

33. We were staying at our grandmother home.

In sentence 30 the pronoun "one" is in singular the possessive case is put immediately after "one" to read:

It was the best thing to occur in one's life.

In sentence 31 the plural noun "people" is irregular but does not affect the position of the apostrophe. It should read:

I hate people who hate other people's rights.

In sentence 32 the plural noun is regular and the apostrophe is put at the end to read:

My parents never missed visiting during parents' day.

In sentence 33 the genitive case is lacking after the noun grandmother. The correct form is:
We were staying at our grandmother's home.

Students applied a possessive case where it was not required as in the following:

34. It's the question that I keep on asking.

35. Let's not adore politics.

In the two sentences above the apostrophe is erroneously placed. The students were writing simply by contracting words. The correct constructions are:

It is the question that I keep on asking.

Let us not adore politics.

In gender there were a few errors and it is observed that students were careful about this. An example:

36. Mummy had left to his work place to present his resignation letter.

Mummy is a female by any means in the context the construction was made. The student could not differentiate between male and female. Its correct form is:

Mummy had left her work place to present her resignation letter.

37. He carried the baby and asked me who it was and I told him that he was a boy.

The infant posed a difficulty to the student as to which gender. The correct form is:

He carried the baby and asked me who it was and I told him that it was a boy.

4.1.3 Omission Errors

The most common feature about omission errors is the absence of a morpheme that must appear in a well formed sentence. There are two types of morphemes: content and grammatical morphemes. Content morphemes carry most of the intended meaning and once omitted the sentence is not well formed. Nouns, verbs, adjective and adverbs fall under content morphemes.

Grammatical morphemes such as *is*, *the*, and *of* though appearing as little words, play a role in conveying the meaning of a sentence. The omission errors occurred 227 times representing 15% of the total errors. The students omitted grammatical morphemes much more than content morphemes. They also had difficulty in noun and verb inflections as in the following:

38. Rumours started spread that our school was not licensed.

39. Most of my classmate were unable to communicate in English.

In sentence 38 the verb "spread" is not inflected with a progressive –ing to show an action going on in the past to read "spreading" as:

Rumors started spreading that our school was not licensed.

In sentence 39 the noun "classmate" should take a plural by affixing's' to read: classmates, thus:

Most of my classmates were unable to communicate in English.

The following three sentences have omitted grammatical morphemes:

40. I decided to look for job.

41. I was doing a lot work.

42. He persuaded me to involved.

In sentence 40 the indefinite article "a" is omitted so as to read:

I decided to look for a job.

In sentence 41 the preposition "of" is omitted whereas in sentence 42 the auxiliary "be" is omitted. The correct sentences are:

I was doing a lot of work.

He persuaded me to be involved.

The students made errors in punctuation marks. Punctuation marks such as commas were omitted and are key to communicative competence.

43. After completing my form four examination I stayed home with my parents

The sentence above lacks capitals on "form four", a comma (,) and a fulstop at the end of the sentence. But the sentence has omitted a preposition "at" after "stayed". The correct version is:

After completing my Form Four examination, I stayed at home with my parents.

The omission of an apostrophe has been discussed in concord errors, but it is worth mentioning that this posed difficulty to students. An example:

44. I followed him to the nurses room.

In the sentence nurse takes a possessive to read:

I followed him to the nurses' room.

4.1.4 Malformed Structure Errors

A sentence is a structure which is complete and meaningful. In the construction of sentences, the grammar of a language is rule bound. A competent student should be able to distinguish a well-formed sentence from an ill-formed one. The student should also construct acceptable sentences because a sentence can be grammatical but not acceptable.

In their written work the students had a tendency of writing long ill-formed sentences. The malformed structures occurred 595 times comprising 38% of the total errors.

45. I can remember one time that I can't forget, up to now a can still see the image of my mother jumping out of the window, and the way she was fat I can't imagine that scenery, and she was really running as if she was going to got a gold medal.

The above sentence is too long and has many errors. The student was not able to distinguish the words "remember" and "forget" as they mean the same thing. The indefinite article "a" comes as a result of mispronunciation but the intended morpheme was the pronoun "I". The last bit of the sentence has a progressive "going" which its antecedent should have been in the present tense 'get' not 'got'. This shows the student had some knowledge of tenses, but did not understand the use of irregular verbs. The student had difficulty in the use of appropriate words. Contraction of words e.g. "can't" is common in their writing, but it is a mistake that can be self-corrected. It can be written as:

I cannot forget the image of my mother jumping out of the window. She was fat. She was running as if she was going for a gold medal.

46. When I look around the entire circumference that my medulla oblongata can allow me to reach, I have found that besides human beings who are living on the planet earth there are also other things which just like men and women are struggling to make the ends meet.

The students had a tendency of using bombastic words which when analyzed do not make meaning. "Medulla oblongata" refers to the "brain" which is inappropriate here. The student did not know the use of ''beside'' and ''besides'' to mean ''apart from'' and ''in addition to'' respectively. In ''struggling to make the ends meet'', the article ''the'' does not apply in this expression. It should read: ''to make ends meet''.
The sentence can be written:

When I look around, besides human beings, there are other creatures that are struggling to survive.

The students wrote Run-on sentences thus leading to errors. Run-on sentences are two sentences written as if they are one sentence. Examples:

47. I had made friendship with some of the gentlemen around who were working in building construction, so I decided to join them and who took in their job.

48. I **took my breakfast and got off to the bus stop which had already arrived earlier.**

49. I was released from the hospital and I was taken home by my uncle.

Sentence 47 is ill-formed as the words ''friendship'' and ''building'' are not correctly used. The clause, ''so I decided to join them and who took me in their job'' is malformed. The sentence should have been spilt into two:

a). I had made friends with construction workers.

b). I decided to join them.

Sentence 48 does not bring out the subject in the 2nd clause. The student was trying to say that the bus had already arrived, but the meaning did not come out well. The sentence should have been split into two:

a). I took my breakfast and set off to the bus stop.

b) The bus had already arrived.

Sentence 49 has two sentences:

a) I was released from the hospital.

b) I was taken home by my uncle.

The students used incorrect function words like prepositions. Prepositions in a sentence normally precede their complements and have the following characteristics.

a) They express relations of size, space and position e.g. *at, in, on, with,* etc.

b) They show no inflectional contrasts.
c) They are independent of noun phrases, as they occupy the central functions of subject and object.
d) They usually take a noun phrase complement.

The students did not observe the above rules and wrote erroneous sentences as:

50. My lecturer will be angry at me.

51. I have never gone at Nairobi.

52. We reached at the college safely.

53. I was walking with my old pairs of shoes.

In sentence 50 ''with'' is correct, not ''at''. In sentence 51 the correct preposition is ''to'' not ''at'' in sentence 52 the preposition ''at'' is not obligatory. It should be avoided altogether. In sentence 53 ''with'' is replaced by ''in''.

There were cases in which non-existing words in English were used. This can be attributed to the student trying to look for the correct word and since one is not successful, forms one's own due to over generalization. Examples:

54. With my sorrowness I answered her pitifully that I had selected Kenyatta University.

55. I was tired as a result of the intoxination by the famous kill me quick.

56. Joining college for example to me, was a relief in my scuffle and shuffle for livelihood for six years down the line.

57. It was very melacholinic to see my mother again.

58. Kibe was caffoling and humorous he persuaded me to involve drinking and other activities.

In sentence 54, the words ''sorrowness'' and ''pitifully'' do not exist. The student had learnt about adjectives and adverb formation but made generalization resulting into non –existing formation. The correct form of the sentence is:

I answered her sadly that I had selected Kenyatta University.

In sentence 55 the word "intoxination: does not exist. The correct word is ''intoxication''. The wrong word is as a result of mispronunciation. The whole sentence is erroneous as the words were inappropriately used. ''the famous kill me quick'' is a kind of intoxicant the student meant, but it would not make one ''tired'', but " drunk".

In sentence 56 the word ''scuffle'' does not exist. The whole sentence apart from being erroneous does not even carry any meaning. It can be reconstructed within its context:

Joining college was a relief after staying out for six years.

In sentence 57 ''melacholic'' does not exist. The student was excited when the mother who had been away and thought to be dead, came back. The correct structure is:

It was exciting to see my mother again.

In sentence 58 ''caffoling'' does not exist. This could be a mispronunciation problem. The student meant "cajoling". This is a run-on sentence which can be split into the following:

Kibe was cajoling and humorous. He lured me into drinking and other activities.

The students made misordering errors. These errors are characterized by the incorrect placement of a morpheme or a group of morphemes in a sentence. There were several sentences such as the following:

59. No sooner we had arrived than the awaited visitor was announced to be some few kilometers to the college by the master of ceremony.

In this sentence groups of morphemes are shifted from their position in order to make sense. The correct construction is:

No sooner had we arrived than it was announced by the master of ceremony that the visitor was a few kilometers away.

60. Later on after that is two months my father died.

The sentence does not convey a complete meaning as it describes the period when death occurred. It is thus to be written:

My father died two months later.

61. After my pending duration of two days were over, I went back to the office.

The phrase "after my pending duration..." does not make sense and only when groups of words are correctly placed, can the meaning be clear:

I went back to the office after waiting for two days.

62. **In my class I got a teacher who knows how to teach since he had a lot of tactics on ways of approaching hence made me accept and love English so much.**

The sentence is too long with lack of punctuation and correct use of words. In teaching, ''tactics'' are not used; we use "methodology". The correct structure is:

I loved English because of my class teacher's good methodology.

The students' written work had a lot of repetition. The repetition came as a result of trying to look for appropriate vocabulary or feeling that the meaning was not well expressed as in the following:

63. The syllabus is too congested; too wind, with a lot of unnecessary things which need not to be there.

The sentence is erroneous as only "congested" was enough to bring out the meaning. The adverb "too" is not used correctly as " wind" is a noun/verb. The correct form of the sentence is:

The syllabus is congested with unnecessary things.

64. It was when I came to realize of life because I had never seen many dead bodies of people.

Though the sentence is erroneous ''bodies'' and ''people'' mean the same. The sentence can be re-written in two ways.

a) It was then I came to realize about life because I had never seen dead bodies.

b) I came to realize about life when I saw many corpses.

65. In form three I was performing poorly but I change suddenly and at the end I saw a great change and a positive results in form.

This sentence has punctuation, tense and concord errors. There is repetition of "change" which mars the meaning. The student meant that he/she had improved within a short period thus:

I was performing poorly in Form 3, but I improved suddenly.

4.1.5 Transformational Errors

Surface structures are derived from deep structures through transformations. The surface structures represent the superficial syntactic structure of sentences. In English to change a structure from active to passive, requires transformations. Active speech is sometimes referred to as direct speech, the actual words of the speaker. Passive refers to the reported speech, the indirect speech of the speaker.

There were a few transformational errors in the written work of the students. The frequency was 16 times representing 1% of the total errors. These errors were not significant though the students did not understand that passive structures have the following characteristics:

1. The subject moves to the far right of the sentence.

2. The object moves to the left of the sentence, taking the subject position.

3. An element of "by" and an auxiliary "be" are introduced.

The following are erroneous sentences written by the students:

66. She shouted to me and said you are already a teacher, why don't you respond.

67. In my confusing I responded I am fine but they bursted into laughter and I was really disappointed.

68. The president shook my hand and told me well done.

Sentence 66 lacks punctuation marks such as commas, quotations and question marks to show the actual words uttered by the speaker. The preposition "to" is not appropriate here. The construction should have read:

She shouted at me and said, "You are already a teacher. Why don't you respond?"

In sentence 67 the clause ''in my confusing'' is incorrect and does not convey any meaning because "confusing" in this case is used as an adjective instead of " confusion" as a noun. The preposition "in" is also erroneously used. The verb "burst" does not take the inflection past tense marker –ed. The sentence lacks punctuation marks and it is a run-on sentence which should have been written:

With confusion I responded, "I'm fine." They burst into laughter. I was really disappointed.

Sentence 68 is in indirect speech in which the president congratulated the student. The student should have quoted the speech or could have reported it. It should have read:

The president shook my hand and congratulated me to have done well.

4.1.6 Double Marking Errors

Double marking occurs in a construction where two items rather than one are marked for the same feature. Example:

69. I had to know where my friend had went.

''had went'' denotes the past with an error in the irregular tense ''go''. It should have taken the past perfect "gone" to read:

I had to know where my friend had gone.

When double marking errors occur, it shows that the students do not understand the rule for tense formation. The rule requires placing the tense marker on the first verb. In a simple affirmation sentence, the main verb is the only verb which takes the tense. But in a sentence where an auxiliary is required in addition to the main verb, the auxiliary takes the tense.

The students did not make many errors as when grouped together with Regularization and Simple additions appeared 11 times constituting 1% of the errors. The student wrote the following erroneous sentences:

70. I had refused because it had not came to my experience.

In the sentence the subordinate clause has an auxiliary" had" which is in the past; and therefore the past tense "came" is marked double, making it erroneous.
It should be:

I had refused because it had not come to my experience.

4.1.7 Regularization Errors

Regularization errors occur when learners apply rules which are used to produce regular forms to those that are irregular. This rule operates in the main verbs or a class of nouns as in the following:

71. I waked up in the morning.

72. They beated them in the game.

73. The fishes filled the basket.

74. The sheeps jumped over the fence.

In sentence 71 and 72 the tenses are irregular and do not take inflection –ed. The students over generalized the past tense formation from their previous knowledge. The correct tense is "woke" and "beat". In sentences 73 and 74, the students over generalized the plural of "fish" and "sheep" respectively. These are collective nouns and this class does not take the plural marker's'.

4.1.8 Simple Addition Errors

These errors are closely related to other Additional errors. An error which is neither a double marking nor a regularization is described as a simple addition. They are characterized by the use of an item which should not appear in a well-formed sentence as in the following:

75. He was supposed to stayed there for more days.

76. These students they do not want to study.

In sentence 75 "stayed" which is in the past tense should not appear because it is an antecedent of "supposed" which is in the past tense. In sentence 76 the noun "students" is the same as the pronoun ''they''. Pronouns take the place of nouns and therefore cannot follow one another immediately in a construction.

4.2. A Discussion and Interpretation of the Results

4.2.1 Introduction

This research investigated syntactic errors in the written work of students in Kericho Teachers College. 1st and 2nd year were respondents. They wrote a composition of about 500 words on a topic thought to be of interest, which read:

Write a composition of about 500 words on: The most outstanding experience in my life.

The research followed the error analysis procedures. The procedures comprise six steps namely: collecting data, identifying the errors, classifying the errors, quantifying the errors, analyzing the source of the errors and remediating for the errors. This is the model that Selinker (1972) identified.

The research found that there were syntactic errors in the written work of the students. The errors were identified and categorized as concord, tense, omission, transformational, mal-formed and additional errors. The errors have been described and several examples have been given for illustration. The errors have been analyzed using frequency tables.

The cause of the errors as shown on the Frequency Table on page 49 was a combination of several processes, but the central ones are overgeneralization and strategies of second language communication. The research found it difficult to isolate errors due to strategies of communication from those due to the learner's strategy of second language learning.

The causes of the syntactic errors can be explained exhaustively by grouping them into two: those due to linguistics and those due to psycholinguistics.

4.2.2 **Syntactic Errors due to Linguistics**

In any given language, there are linguistic universals. These universals require that a language should have its own grammar. A grammar of a language has a set of rules or principles which specify how to form, pronounce and interpret sentences. English language has its grammar and a learner who defies the rules will have committed an error. A grammar of a language spells how the sentences should be constructed. The sentences must not only be well-formed, but should also be acceptable. English has grammatical categories which follow particular sets of rules governing the nouns, verbs, adjectives and adverbs.

This research found that college students violated grammatical rules in their written work.

1. Nouns. The students had problems with the use of nouns and pronouns. They did not understand that a noun cannot be used at the same time with a pronoun. There were many errors of this type. Plural noun inflection with the marker 's' was not well understood as regards to irregular nouns such as ***fish, sheep*** and ***cattle***. Linguistically the noun plural should agree with the verb. This rule was broken and it shows that the students had not internalized the noun + verb agreement rule. They also introduced a singular verb element in constructions where there were plural nouns e.g.

77. **They doesn't go to the library.**

Ignorance of these rules was reflected in the concord and omission errors. Table 2 below shows the error category frequency and the corresponding error percentages.

Table 2: Error Categories and Frequencies of written English-Year 1 and 2 students.

NO	Syntactic error category	Error category frequency	Error percentages
1.	Concord errors	360	23%
2.	Tense errors	345	22%
3.	Omission errors	227	15%
4.	Transformational errors	16	1%
5.	Malformed structures	595	38%
6.	Additional errors a) Double marking b) Regularization c) Simple additions	11	1%
	Total no. of errors identified	1554	100%

There were 360 concord errors representing 23% of the total errors. The concordial errors include number, person and possessive case. In omission errors there were 227 errors representing 15% of the total errors. Most of the omission errors ignored the apostrophe's' in possessives and at times introduced it where it was not required. Some constructions omitted prepositions and could not therefore make sense.

2. Pronouns. There were errors on reflexive pronouns. A reflexive pronoun functions as a complement in a verb phrase or prepositional phrase construction and it is quite distinct from personal pronouns.

The following is a construction in which a reflexive pronoun was not required.

78. One of the nurses came and prepared myself for the operation.

The place of 'myself' should have been taken by a personal pronoun 'me'.

3. Adjectives. The students had difficulty in Adjectives.
They were ignorant of the adjectival rules that:

a) Adjectives linguistically carry inflections such as case, gender and number by agreement.

b) They modify noun phrases.

c) They denote states relating to size, shape, colour, age, evaluation (e.g.good,bad,) etc

The students made erroneous constructions such as;

79. In Nairobi things became more tougher.

80. I was given the fattest bits of flesh.

81. The more worst came when they took my brother.

These are adjectives with degrees of comparison where ''more'' is applicable in irregular Adjectives that do not take the '-er' inflection marker. Superlatives such as 'fattest' and 'worst' do not take a comparative marker 'more' at the same time.

4. Verbs. Linguistically a verb is basic because it denotes actions, processes, states or events and it is the head of the predicate. It carries inflections of tense, aspect and mood, but the students were ignorant of these properties. They over generalized the use of '-en', '-ed' and the gerund '-ing 'when forming tenses. They could not differentiate between the regular and the irregular tenses when referring to a past action or state thus constructing erroneous sentences. The present tense marker's' for singular verbs does not take plural nouns, but there were many erroneous sentences.

4.2.3. Syntactic Errors due to Psycholinguistics

In psycholinguistics language is seen as a product of thought. Before an utterance is made, it goes through several processes in the brain, but this is not observable. The only observable aspect is language performance, which will show how far the learner has reached in language acquisition. In other words the principal concerns of psycholinguistics in language are performance and language acquisition. Language development is a continuum as it goes through stages. Language is not acquired abruptly, but in transitional steps.

Learning English as a second language for most learners in Kenyan schools starts at a later stage when language performance in the mother tongue has already become established and when other physical and mental processes of maturation are complete or are nearly complete. For a learner to achieve competence in English, one must go through a process Selinker (1972) refers to as inter language. In interlanguage, a learner goes through stages towards the target language. These stages are marked by mistakes and errors. Mistakes can be self-corrected, but to avoid errors, one must learn. That means errors are necessary in learning, because once corrected the learner makes positive steps towards proficiency in the TL. In the processes of acquisition, the learner may reach a plateau where no more learning takes place. This is a stage where a learner forms one's own rules and cannot absorb any more in his inter language. Selinker (1972) refers to this stage as fossilization, a stage in which the learner constructs deviant sentences and this is a critical stage in the learner's language development.

Fossilization is a stage in which a learner of a SL fails to attain full language competence. It is a state of incompleteness. A learner stops learning particular linguistics items, rules and sub systems of the TL, no matter the amount of explanation and instruction given. The learner will never take in new rules since s/he has reached a point of non-learning. Another feature about fossilization is that in the learner's interlanguage productive performance, certain linguistic structures which are thought to have been eradicated keep on re-emerging. Krashen (1985) attributes the presence of fossilized structures to the amount and nature of input. He posits that SLA is driven solely by comprehensible input, a language that learners

can understand. Correctness depends so much on the input. It is possible, according to Krashen that fossilization can be eradicated if communicative demands are emphasized and the learner focuses on grammatical accuracy. The learner can achieve this if the teachers are well trained and can deliver.

The presence of syntactic errors in the students' written work is due to a combination of 5 central processes as Selinker (1972) posits.

1. Language transfer

Language transfer affects SLA when there is negative transfer. Learners fall back on the mother tongue when they have not acquired enough of SL. Where they are similarities between L1 and L2 habits in the L1 are transferred to the new learning habits. This research did not find a significant number of errors resulting from language transfer as there was very little data on pronunciation and semantic transfer. There was no data on word order and grammar. Therefore the syntactic errors found in the students' written work were not due to language transfer.

2. Transfer of training

A rule enters a learners system as a result of instruction. Learning a second language starts with easily understood data, and then builds up to more difficult items. Errors become persistent when the learner does not take the correct instructions. This research did not find transfer of training as a significant contribution towards the syntactic errors in the students' written work. The little data gathered was on gender where instead of referring a female to "she", "he" was preferred. Pronouns such as "who" "whom" "me" and "myself" posed difficulty to a few students.

3. Strategies of second language learning

It is a tendency in which a leaner attempts to reduce the TL data available into a simpler system. The learner re organizes the data in his own way by omitting meaningful elements such as auxiliaries and prepositions in a construction. This approach results into misordering and omission errors. The error frequency was 81 times representing 11% of the total errors.

However it was difficult to isolate strategies of second language learning from strategies of second language communication as they appeared synonymous. The erroneous sentences were at times as a result of the two.

4. **Strategies of second language communication**

This is an attempt by the learner to communicate to native speakers. These strategies are problem oriented as the learner lacks linguistic resources required to express an intended meaning. The learner is not able to use appropriate and correct linguistic forms and resorts to alternative means resulting into errors. The research found that the students attempted to express the meaning but abandoned it due to linguistic inadequacy. This resulted into writing what was not intended as the students tried to ''negotiate meaning''. Malformed structures were therefore due to strategies of communication. These strategies as earlier indicated are not much different from strategies of second language learning.

In Appendix 1, the student could not effectively communicate the intended meaning due to lack of correct and appropriate words. This is a 2nd year student who was about to graduate. He could not express oneself freely, therefore lacking communicative competence.

Strategies of second language communication account for 32% of the total errors as they occur 228 times.

The following sentences illustrate the fact that the students lacked correct and appropriate expressions in Strategies of second language communication.

82. I was very glad when my chance for picking my form came and I was given the form with no compromise or alternatives.

83. It was an opportunity to let the insight and the true residence of my mental jaggon to take charge of my+self.

84.I had already started destructing the cascades I had built in the air of good life and happy moments in life.

In sentence 82 there is an expression of happiness as there were no conditions attached to the collection of the letter. It lacked linguistic adequacy and should have been stated:

I was very glad to pick the form unconditionally.

In sentence 83 the intended meaning was that it was time to look back to the past, as ''mental jaggon'' and ''myself '' make no meaning. This is a clear example of semantic avoidance, but the message is still there. The correct form:

It was an opportunity for me to reflect on my life.

In sentence 84 it is all about unfulfilled dreams and words such as ''destructing'' and ''cascades'' do not add value to the meaning of the sentence. The correct form is:

I had already given up building castles in the air.

5. **Overgeneralization of target language rules**

These are instances where the learner uses existing L2 knowledge by extending it to new interlanguage forms. In other words, the learner relies on prior knowledge to facilitate new learning. The reason for doing this is to reduce his linguistic burden. This leads to errors

because some linguistic forms have their rules that cannot be interfered with as will be discussed later.

Table 3 shows frequencies of the error causes based on the 5 central processes in the written work of year 1 and 2 students.

Table 3: Frequencies of the error causes based on the 5 central processes in written English-year 1 and 2 students

NO	Syntactic error Causes	Error frequency	Error percentage
1	Language Transfer	82	4%
2	Transfer of Training	34	2%
3	Strategies of second Language Learning	228	12%
4	Strategies of second Language Communication	603	31%
5	Overgeneralization of Target Language(TL) rules	978	51%
	Total no. of errors Identified	1925	100%

Overgeneralization was the major cause of errors with error frequency of 978 times representing 51% of the total errors.

4.2.4. Intralingual and Developmental errors

The 5 central processes can be incorporated into other psycholinguistic causes to further explain the presence of errors in the written work of the TTC students. Richards (1971)

identifies two types of psycholinguistic errors: intralingual and developmental errors. Intralingual errors are characterized by faulty generalization, incomplete application of rules and failure to learn how rules are applied. The developmental errors show how far the learner attempts to build up hypotheses about the English language using his limited experience.

This research will conveniently discuss in detail the intralingual and developmental errors under the following terms.

1. Over generalization

2. Ignorance of rule restrictions

3. Incomplete application of rules

4. False concept hypothesized

1. Overgeneralization

This is a situation where a learner creates a deviant structure on the basis of his experience of other structures in the target language. It could be as a result of reducing his linguistic burden. The learner creates interim rules which he finds easier to construct on the basis of existing knowledge by way of simplification. These interim rules are not correct forms, but can be amended with remedial action in order to arrive at the correct forms.

This was the major cause of the syntactic errors in the students' written work. In Appendix 2, work written by a year 1 student, shows that concord and tense errors were due to overgeneralization.

For example if a learner has adopted the strategy that regular verbs in their past tense formation are inflected by the tense marker 'ed' he will further apply this interim rule to all irregular verbs.

The students had difficulty in concords as they over-generalized the use of the inflection marker 's' for plurals and third person singular. In cases where the marker's' was required, it was omitted.

The teaching techniques may lead into over-generalized structures. When teachers drill learners on particular patterns, too much of this over-learning may result into the learner applying the same patterns in new situations which are not correct forms.

This research will illustrate with examples how over-generalization leads to syntactic errors in the students' written work. Examples:

85. I met one of his classmate.

86. She came with a lot of present.

87. In the evening all the school expected had arrived.

In sentence 85 the plural marker's' is omitted because the student generalized that since ''one'' which is a cardinal numerical and has an interpretation of singular appears first in the structure, it should also precede a singular noun. This error could be due to poor classroom techniques.

In sentence 86 the article ''a'' may have influenced the student to think that what follows is a singular noun. This shows the student had not understood the use of definite and indefinite articles in a sentence.

In sentence 87 the students had an activity that involved many schools. The student took ''all'' to mean all students from one school, which is erroneous. It should have read:

In the evening all the schools expected had arrived.

There was no concordial relationship between a plural noun and the verb. Example:

88. All the villagers was not aware of what was happening.

89. Once a persons is born they are exposed to many things in life.

90. There was five men and three ladies in the room.

91. He had to confirm whether the fees were ready for our admission.

In sentence 88 ''villagers'' is a plural which determines the verb that immediately follows. The verb should be in plural. The error shows that the student had learnt the use of auxiliary verbs but generalized that they are all singulars as evidenced in sentences 89 and 90. The reason could be that he was reducing his linguistic burden. But sentence 89 has another error about the use of the indefinite article 'a' which is used in singular nouns. ''a persons'' is erroneous as the article does not have a concordial relationship with the plural noun.

Sentence 90 is a case of countable nouns treated as one entity and do not take a singular auxiliary. In sentence 91 ''fees'' is treated as plural. These are manifestations of fossilized structures since there is a plural marker 's' the student over generalized that it would take the plural auxiliary ''were''. The correct form is;

He had to confirm whether the fees was ready for our admission.

The students had difficulty in the use of third person singular, as evidenced in the use of the inflection marker 's' in the sentence:

92. He go to town on Thursday.

The subject is singular and it determines the immediate verb. The verb should also be in singular. This error could be as a result of over learning in the class room. The correct form is:

He goes to town on Thursday.

The formation of adjectives out of nouns produced over generalized structures such as:

93. An experience is a passage in life that one undergoes from younghood to adulthood.

There is no ''younghood'' in English, showing that the student had an idea about ''adults'' hence ''adulthood'' and generalized that the noun ''young'' can also take ''hood'' to make it a compound adjective. Though the statement does not make much sense, instead of ''younghood'', ''childhood'' is the appropriate word.

The students had difficulty in the use of count and mass nouns. Example:

94). I tried to ask whether those money were part of the fees.

The determiner ''those'' gives an interpretation of plural. ''Money'' being a class of mass nouns does not take a plural determiner. This also affects the auxiliary ''be'' which the student was referring to as a past tense plural ''were''.

The correct form is:

I tried to ask whether that money was part of my fees.

In verbs the inflection past tense marker –ed- was over-generalized. Examples:

95. He overcomed the challenges

96. The notice was sticked on the wall.

97. I was being wakened early to go to school

98. My father hided under the bed.

99. I had sitted behind the policeman.

The above sentences show that the student had learnt about verbs generally, but had difficulty with irregular verbs not taking the past tense inflection 'ed'. The reason could be that in being drilled in the classroom on the use of '-ed', past tense marker, the same pattern was applied to any verb disregarding the tense formation rules. In other words there was over-learning of this pattern drill.

The correct forms are:

a) He overcame the challenges.
b) The notice was stuck on the wall.
c) I was being woken early to go to school.
d) My father hid under the bed.
e) I had sat behind the policeman.

2. Ignorance of rule restrictions

A grammar of a language is rule restricted and anything different is regarded as being deviant. The research found that the students failed to apply categorical rules in their work.

Certain contexts need particular rules. It is not that at this stage the students have no knowledge of the grammatical rules.

In their interlanguage, the students make use of the rules they have previously acquired in new situations by generalization or transfer, resulting into errors. Some of the errors may be as a result of rote learning. In rote learning, there is minimal understanding on how an item can be applied in a different or particular context. When given exercises on pattern drills, there is a danger that this may appear to encourage incorrect rules when tackling a different exercise.

Consider this construction by a student.

100. I understand my home backgrounds.

In the sentence, ''background'' does not take a plural marker's' and the student is ignorant about non countable nouns. Non-countable nouns do not take the 's' inflection in their plurals. This is a regularization error in which the student applied regular rules to those that are irregular.

The correct form is:

I understand my home background.

Other examples:

101 My mother knew what this meant and started packing the luggages.

102 She was impregnated by the man and was chase out of homestead.

103. I jumped out like an hero

In sentence 101 , there are two errors- the use of indirect speech and the plural non – countable nouns. The student is ignorant of the functioning of direct and indirect speech in a sentence as ''this'' changes to ''that''. ''luggage'' is irregular as it does not take a plural inflection marker's'. It is in a class of non-countable nouns. This is also a regularization error.

In sentence 102 the definite article 'the' is omitted before homestead. This is an omission error in which the student did not know the use of definite and indefinite articles in sentence construction.

In sentence 103 article ''an'' is incorrectly used. The student had not learnt about voiced and silent consonants. Silent consonants at the beginning of a word take the indefinite article ''an'' but in this case it is voiced and takes article ''a'' to produce ''a hero''.

This also shows that the students failed to observe rules restricting the usage of articles. They were influenced by their previous experience which was deviant .Examples:

104. I used walking stick.

105. On other hand my employer was very good.

106.I gathered the little strength and took on my heels.

107.I finally left after the short stay.

In sentence 104 article ''a'' is omitted after the verb ''used''. The article does not refer to a particular walking stick. In sentence 105 article ''the'' which comes after the preposition ''on'' is omitted but in sentence 106 article ''the'' is replaced by the indefinite article ''a''. In sentence 107 ''short stay'' does not take article ''the'' but takes indefinite article ''a''.

Students did not use correct prepositions as in the following:

108. He entered into the room.

109. I was not sure on getting the chance.

110. I am talking to these two incidences.

111. I was at this dangerous situation.

These errors could be as a result of teachers giving pattern exercises that encourage incorrect rules through analogy.

In sentence 108 the preposition ''into'' is not required in a construction with the verb ''entered'' In sentence 109 the verb ''sure'' does not accept the preposition ''on''. The correct preposition is ''of''. In sentence 110 the verb ''talking'' takes the preposition ''of'' as what is referred to are non-humans, though ''incidences'' should have been "incidents".

In sentence 111 the correct preposition in place of ''at'' is ''in''

A good number of students had prepositional errors. In appendix 3, the 1st year student had difficulty in the correct use of prepositions showing that these are fossilized structures which were learnt at some stage, but kept on recurring.

3. Incomplete applications of rules

A few students could not apply the rules completely. They made errors in the use of interrogatives and this could be as a result of not taking instructions from the teacher. In appendix 4, the 2nd year student failed to apply transformational rules correctly. Correct punctuation marks such as question marks, comas and inverted quotation marks were not used. A statement was turned into a question. Example:

112. If you were me which one you would have preferred?

This sentence to become an interrogative "you" has to inter change positions with the modal "would" to read:

If you were me, which one would you have preferred?

Let us consider another sentence.

113. I had wished to have gone till higher levels of education but I could I have?

This is an erroneous sentence. It is a statement which the student intended to turn into a question but got confused as he completely failed to apply transformational rules. A possible question would have been:

Could I have completed all levels of education as I had wished?

The research found that a few students had difficulty in the use of transformational rules and this led to transformational errors

The research also found that the cause of malformed structures was as a result of incomplete application of rules.

Example

114. Live there was so hard, restriction condition was more than that of a prisoner in presion.

In this sentence, the student could not differentiate between "life" and "live". The noun "restriction" does not contribute to the meaning as we have already been told life was hard.

The word ''presion'' does not exist, but this error is due to mispronunciation resulting from MT.

4. False concepts hypothesized

In interlanguage the learner tries to learn new concepts by way of hypothesizing. This depends on the stages of language development. A syllabus has been designed in such a way that a learner goes through several levels with progressive content. The content takes care of the age of the learner and by the time a student is admitted in college, one must have gone through the Primary and Secondary school syllabus and should be able to write and communicate competently. Tense errors, for example, emanating later in learning are manifestations of fossilized forms which would be due to faulty comprehension, poor organization and presentation of the teaching items in a classroom situation. Such tense errors are found in narratives or story telling in which there is no consistence in the use of tenses. Sometimes there is confusion in the use of ''is'' and ''was'' in a situation which requires the use of a simple past.

In the composition the students wrote, it required the use of past tense, to explain their experience, but narrated using the simple present, which was erroneous. This is as a result of poor teaching.

A few students had difficulty in the use of ''so'', ''too'' and ''very''.

The following erroneous sentences were written by the students.

115. I was very tired that I could not walk.

116. So every human can decided on the destination he/she want to go.

In the sentence 115 "very" is inappropriate because there is ''that'' which comes later and takes the adverb ''so'' to read.

I was so tired that I could not walk.

Sentence 116 has many errors. ''so'' does not add value to the meaning of the sentence and ''decided'' is an incorrect tense as the situation refers to the simple present tense. The student did not understand the meaning of ''destination'' the end point of arrival and ''destiny'' the end of life or one's fate – which is repeated in the clause ''want to go''. The correct construction is:

Every human being decides on one's own destiny.

These errors could be as a result of too much pattern drills in the classroom.

In the discussion and interpretation of the results, the students'Interlanguage had syntactic errors showing that these students are not competent in the English language; upon graduation they cannot deliver in the classroom. The syntactic errors were mainly due to overgeneralisation and as Richards (1971) points out, they are Intralingual and developmental. The students have gone through several stages in their Interlanguage development, following a designed English syllabus. The presence of syntactic errors in their written work implies that their Interlanguage has fossilized and this permanent cessation hinders their language competency.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5. Summary

This chapter deals with summary, conclusions and recommendations.

This research was informed by Selinker's (1972) Interlanguage theory. English as a second language poses difficulty to students of Teachers' Training Colleges in Kenya. It has been observed that the students lack competency in English as there were many syntactic errors in their written work. 1st and 2nd years were given a composition on a topic within their experience. Their written work was analyzed using the Error Analysis procedure. The research found that indeed, their work had many syntactic errors.

The Research used Frequency tables to explain the presence of the errors. The causes of the errors were explained linguistically and psycho linguistically.

5.1. Conclusions

There were syntactic errors in the written work of the 1st year students. These were mainly in concord, tense and malformed structures. The 2nd years despite having gone through the course for nearly 2 years, were not competent in English. They also had difficulty just like the 1st years, in plural concord and inflectional tenses.

There is a popular belief that L1 influences the acquisition of SL learning and that the L1 interferes with the learning of the L2 by transferring the features of L1 to L2. When the transfer is negative, errors do occur. Kericho TTC students are drawn from all Educational Divisions in the country and belong to various ethnic groups with differing L1s. The 4% data available does not suggest that the errors in the students' compositions were as a result of Mother Tongue, as this is not a significant percentage.

The other causes of errors were ignorance of rule restrictions, incomplete application of rules and false concepts hypothesized.

Strategies of learning and communication were other psycholinguistic causes whereby the students generated a grammar in which many elements were omitted. The inflected forms were replaced by uninflected forms particularly in plurals and past tense forms. Prepositions and auxiliaries appeared to be simplified as simplification was easier to use.

5.2. Recommendations

1. A remedial program which is error based should be availed to those students with difficulty. The Research revealed that all the participants had syntactic errors in their written work. These are students who have gone through pre-primary, primary and secondary and at college level, should be competent in English language. The lessons will remedy the concord, tense, omission and malformed structure errors.

2. A change of admission policy in which performance of English at KCSE is given more emphasis. The obtaining situation is that anybody even with grade E in English is allowed to train. However there were attempts through a KNEC circular of February 2005 which required that for one to train one must have C- and above in English. There was strong opposition from politicians which led to a waiver of this requirement in a March 2005 circular. The circular of April 2013 once again revisited the requirements, but the June 24th 2013 circular quickly rescinded that. Anybody with grade E is still eligible to train. Therefore there is strong need to raise the grade to C (plain) and above in order to train competent teachers.

3. Re-designing the English syllabus. The Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development (KICD) should do so. The current position is that the PTE syllabus concentrates more

on methodology than content. Emphasis should equally be laid on content to cover all the grammatical categories and more teaching time be allocated to English from the current 4 hours for 1st years and 5 hours for 2nd years to 8 hours for both years.

4. English being a language of instruction in all learning institutions in Kenya, lecturers handling the other subjects in the curriculum beside Kiswahili should be encouraged to emphasize to the students the need to write communicative English.

5. Workshops should be availed to English lecturers to enable them to re examine and modify their teaching techniques. When teaching, they should see errors positively because this provides a clue on what is required to be taught.

6. College students should be encouraged to use English as a medium of communication in and out of the classroom in order to build on their competencies. In situations where there is no language policy, students resort to Mother Tongue which does not give them room to interact with others who are drawn from all parts of Kenya. Therefore there is need in every college to have a clear language policy.

7. The materials for teaching and learning should be improved. Currently there is a manual for teaching English that was drafted in 1976 and revised in 1986. English Lecturers should come up with text books that will cover a re-designed syllabus.

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APPENDIX 1

YEAR 2 MALE STUDENT

THE MOST OUTSTANDING EXPERIENCE IN MY LIFE:

You could here a needle drop, That chilly sound made me to shivered for a moment. My dad was away when gangsters came and make away with our cows. I tried UPs and downs to ensure that this could not happened but all in vain.

Every where was full of bullet from all the four cardinal point. I was made or forced to help them since I had no objection of resuting or else I was promised not to see my next days.

All the villagers was not aware of what was happening. Some was ignoring My wailing as this was usual in our village. After a little while they came to realized that there was something amiss after several succession of bullet engulfing the air. It did take a minute before reaching the place of scene.

Though, the gangsters was well armed to the teeth with lethal weapons, they had to ambushed them. Several of them was killed instantly while others was injured. From them I get a chance of acquiring some guns from their possession and gave some to my neighbouring villagers. After we overwhelmed them they had to elude, leavers our cows. We had no otherwise, but to returned them home.

Luckily enough, My dad was arriving from the journey which had taken him two days. He was supposed to stayed there for or More days. If not for this tragic incidence. My well wishers villagers had telephoned him and informed him of the incidence.

On recognising that all our cows was there,

he had to give a promise thanks to our Almighty fa. in heaven. He also thank our villegers for taking and immediate action. To show his affection on them he had to slaughter one of our bull as a celebration of the victory. The whole village celebrate throughout the day.

After all this instances, My father had to summoned me. In order to get the whole story of what was going on. On recieving the news, he had to congratulate me for the much I did to save the sitvation. He further promised me that he would gave me a calf. After somedays, he had to summoned all our family Members and blessed them for coming to that meeting. In front of them he had to denounced his reward to me and all the family Members also considered it as a noble thing that I deserved to be given. All the same, When things fall apart, never gave up since life is not a length of time but a depth of time.

APPENDIX 2

YEAR 1 MALE STUDENT

THE MOST OUTSTANDING EXPERIENCE IN MY LIFE.

The most mysterious things that I did not understand in my life was water running every day down the stream, the bird flying in the sky, snake that used to be on a rock, and eagles that used to scare hens and the reason why I was to look after cattle every day.

I was ten years old, when I was disturbed and being persuade by my friends the need to go to school, which to me, going to school was a wasted time and money, the benefit of going to school to was not in my vocabulary, it was at this time when my uncle came and took me to one of school near our home.

In school my life there change, as I was to wake up early in the morning and go to school to live there was so hard, restriction was more than a prisioner in prision, they way of dressing was changed as I had to be in form language to be used was another one different from mine, in a class, a teacher was always with whip which was so scaring and the worst was exercise which was give to as was difficult for me to answer and this made my life difficult and I did not understand the reason why I had to be in school.

It is true to said that patient pays and endurarance teach to success, the English language and kiswahili was not easy for some one like me to meet in the first time, I had to remain silent through out the day and weeks whenever I am in school and the only thing that I knew was to say 'YES' or "NO" that was the word I used

standards one and two.

During evening there was roll taken to show how many spoken mother tounge and those how had be given the born (dish) were to bring females to weed maize, to dug a rubbish bid at about 6 fits and the girls were to bring water for the teachers'.

The most thing was that when I become absent and the following day I go to school I did'nt believe myself has I was beaten about forty strokes by the class teacher where I had to lie on the table and accidentaily I fall on the table I was injured on my head and the blood flooded every where in stream.

This was only mistake that made me to have a scars in head because of missing school only in one day, though I was counsell to not appreciated the way it had happen I some time shed tears when I remember that teacher has this was only to understand the reason of going to school was for me to have a scars in my hade. Though I had to left school because of this, my uncle tries much to persuade me to continued going to school I accept it and continued with my education. The

The root of education is bitter the fruits are sweet.

APPENDIX 3

YEAR 1 FEMALE STUDENT

THE MOST OUTSTANDING EXPERIENCE IN MY LIFE

If I was to say how life is, I can say life is simple and hard. Through my experience. As am writing know I have many experiences in my life both good and bad. ~~but am going~~

In my life, I have experience a lot of challenges in different levels. To start with my primary life was ~~not~~ was very hard. Since our family was very poor in terms of finance it was very difficult for me to concentrate with my studies in school. So because of that reason I had ~~was very~~ to look for assistance from other people to help me in my self studies. ~~for~~ I managed to get the assistance from many people and I continoued with my School studies.

After my primary school Examination, I ~~passed~~ results came out and ~~Pass~~ I did well. For me to join the Secondary Secondary school was also a big challenge to me because I did/have money to Pay ~~pay~~ School fees. Since I wanted to continue ~~on~~ with my studies, I could not stay at home doing nothing ~~and~~ waiting for money to come and go to school. So had to look where I can get money from.

I decided to go and look for a job somewhere to get the money for the school fees. Before I went to look for the job, I thought there were so many jobs available, But for my suprice, there were no jobs especial for young people who have not been trained. I went around all over, but I did not succeed. I went back home empty handed after a knowing that it is not easy for me to get any job or money.

When I reached at home, I did not give up. I decided to look assistance from the government offices. I tried my best, it was as if there was no hope for me to go to

on with my ~~studies~~ ~~sind~~ in the secondary level. As I was tired, ~~knowing~~ knowing that there was no otherwise than staying at home, ~~doing~~ I came across a person who was ready to help me. From there I learnt that God ~~do~~ care for his people. That person promised me to help me in my ~~scho~~ secondary school and ~~for~~ to further studies from there.

I continioned with my studies very very ~~from~~ without ~~the~~ any ~~problem~~ financial problem and now my life is going well. And to say the truth I will not forget that person for the rest of life.

APPENDIX 4

YEAR 2 FEMALE STUDENT

THE MOST OUTSTANDING EXPERIENCE IN MY LIFE.

Finally the day had reached for me to join my primary Teacher Education (PTE) course. I walk up early in the morning prepared my self and started my journey to Kericho.

In the way I was very happy to see alot of tea plantation that had not seen in my life time. We arrived at kericho at exactly three oclock in the evening. So we did not know the direction of the school but some people directed us.

Immediately we arrived at the gate we were welcome by the security guard and he directed us to the admission room. before they had even greeted us One lady greeted me as 'madam' but I did not realised I was the one greeted. so she shouted to me and she said you are already a teacher, why dont you respond.

Before we started the process I was told that I wont be admited to the school while having my trouser so I was told to go and remove it.

So, I continued with the process, I was allocated a dorm, class and given admission number. so I was assisted and taken to the dorm, but immediately I arrived at the entrance of the dorm, I had some student I guess they were second years shouting 'Fuso' as arrived, but I was innocent I did not know what they were saying, In my confusing I responded I am fine but they bursted into laughter and I was really disappointed.

At evening I slept hungry because nobody showed me where the dining hall was, so I cried the whole night and I imagine to go back home the next day, but the Dean of student announced

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to us that First years you are most welcome and these will be your home For the next coming two years I did believe these because the place was like a small hell on earth.

During lunch time I followed some of the second years and we went For lunch, but reaching there I saw some men teachers pushing themselves and I wondered what was happening, In the Dinning hall most second years were shouting 'Faso's, These made me feel shy and Immediately when I was served, my plate felt down and all the students were shouting 'Fasoooo'.

I was shy and about to collapse but one teacher came to me and told me dont fear this is normal at Kericho, she served food for me and I sat down slowly and ate my food.

So the life continued that way and I came to realised that the name 'Faso' meant First years, so I adopted the school life and within some short time I enjoyed life at Kericho. After all these I came to realised that teaching is the most and admirable course to be because it exposes us to so many challenges in life but you must persever to obtain or to achieve the goal.

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