**THE MISUSE OF THE ENGLISH ARTICLES IN SELECTED NIGERIAN NEWSPAPER**

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# **ABSTRACT**

The English article system is a complex system that is nevertheless indispensable for users of English. The articles perform several important functions and aid greatly in the art of communication. Despite this indisputable importance of the English articles, Nigerian newspapers misuse them to a great degree. It is a fact that newspapers are extremely useful learning tools to students and the general public. However, Nigerian newspapers fail to live up to the high standard expected of them. In spite of this aberration, studies on the misuse of the English articles by Nigerian newspapers have been particularly rare. The aim of this is to assess the misuse of the English articles by Nigerian newspapers. The data were collected from Newspapers, Umuahia, which represents other media houses all over the country. Each of the above English articles was selected and surveyed on a daily basis for a period of three weeks and was finally used for the study. The data used were analysed using a simple percentage calculations, while a simple randomisation method was adopted in collecting the data. From the findings, it was believed that those grammatical errors were as a result of the low level of education of the media workers, especially the journalists and the incomplete mastery of the English language among the broadcasting corporation bodies like the news casters or reporters which has a negative impact on the readers because readers rely on word meanings of these news as absolutely correct. However, to remedy these ugly situations that have befallen the media houses here in Nigeria, the researcher recommended that broadcasting authorities should employ only well-qualified language experts that are highly proficient in the English language to serve as editors who will competently proofread the news lines before they are broadcast.

**CHAPTER ONE**

**INTRODUCTION**

**1.1 Background to the Study**

English is accepted as the official language, a second language (L2) as well as a restricted lingua franca in Nigeria. English in Nigeria is not acquired in a native speaker environment so learners undergo more difficulties than native speakers do in acquiring the language. Mother tongue interference alongside a learner’s socio-cultural background contributes immensely to the difficulties encountered in learning the language.

The English language is not a native Nigerian language. It is a legacy of British colonisation. The language was introduced by British administrators and missionaries. English was adopted as the official language of Nigeria during the period of colonisation. However, it must be noted that English existed in Nigeria in one form or the other even before Nigeria officially became a British colony. Activities like slave trade, coastal trade, and the abolition of slave trade led to the implantation of the English language in Nigeria. Freed slaves that had learnt the language to an extent served as interpreters, messengers and clerks and even introduced the language to members of their family. According to Dadzie and Awonusi, “some of these Nigerians, particularly the Yorubas locally known as Akus in Sierra Leone, returned to their villages where they were known as saros and Krios, and freely used the English language in their new settlements”(53).The English language is the only language that has been generally accepted officially in Nigeria today. It has really broken language barriers between interactants from various ethnic and linguistic groups. As the official language in Nigeria, the English language is the language of the media, education, politics, et cetera. It is the commonest used language in the Nigerian media i.e. both the print and electronic media and it has been naturalized and domesticated to suit our socio-cultural context.

Over the years, English has garnered a silent hostility by Nigerians because it was never freely adopted as the official language. The circumstances surrounding its imposition are well known. The long-term deleterious effects of this national attitude are only beginning to show on the linguistic horizon.

According to Ikkideh:

English is not taken half as seriously as it was twenty years ago…in vain, we blame poor teachers of English, lazy students, inadequate, textbooks and educated, the grammatical use of the language is today the exception rather than the rule. (qtd. in Unoh 16)

Because English is in most cases learnt rather than acquiredin Nigeria, there are instances of L1 interference in the English of the majority of Nigerians. For example, in written communication, even though certain wordscan be omitted from a sentence i.e. ellipsis, words that are necessary for the effective communication of clear meaningsare never omitted in Standard English. One such class of words that should never be omitted in Standard English is the article. The word “article” is derived from the Latin word “articulus” which means “joint”. Articles are classified as grammatical words and they refer to determiners which play the primary role of differentiating the uses of nouns. Articles belong to a small group of important little elements but they exert a great deal of influence in the contexts where they are used.As a matter of fact, the classification and syntactic function of a word or expression can change with the misuse of an article.Articles are placed before nouns, and they determine whether the nouns referred to are specific in nature or general, among other things.

Where an article is wrongly used, the resultant construction is inevitably erroneous. Second language learners of English in Nigeria demonstrate language transfer errors within the English language article system. This is especially evident where the native languages of these learners lack articles. According to Eyisi:

The major error in the use of determiners is mainly with the omission of the definite or indefinite article where it is obligatorily needed. This omission is, no doubt, a result of interference of our mother tongues since most Nigerian Languages do not possess any separate morpheme for the article. (2)

This misuse of the English article is manifest even in the pages of national newspapers in Nigeria. There are several instances of erroneous constructions in Nigerian newspapers that can be traced back to the misuse of articles.

**1.2 Statement of the Problem**

Newspapers are extremely useful learning tools to students and the general public. People that read newspapers have a better awareness of the world around them because they are better informed of the current issues happening around the world. Newspapers are continuous sources of information and education for those who read them, and so, their sentence structures have to be as lucid as possible. Unfortunately, this is not the case in Nigeria. The pages of many Nigerian newspapers are replete with various types of errors, prominent among which is the misuse of articles in sentence structures. Every newspaper needs to uphold a very high standard before their varied reading public, as newspapers and journalists are taken to be models of linguistic excellence. Newspapers in Nigeria use the English language in ways that suit them, not minding whether their language use contain structures that contravene grammaticality. If articles are wrongly used, the connection between the noun and the article which defines the meaning of the noun is lost. Generally, these deviations (omissions of English articles) affect comprehension of the whole text. This causes a considerable degree of confusion for speakers and second language learners of the English language.

There have been some studies that attempt to depict the poor standard of English in Nigerian newspapers. However, relatively few studies, if any, have fully focused on the misuse of the English articles in Nigerian newspapers. Also, little has been said about how these errors affect comprehension. These lacunae in knowledge inspired the researcher to carry out this research in order to supplement the knowledge currently available in this field.

**1.3 Purpose of the study**

Considering the huge importance of the English language both locally and internationally, an urgent need for attention to be paid to the misuse of the English articles in Nigerian newspaper arises. English is an asset in most facets of life and therefore, a functionally correct knowledge of the language is needed.

The aim of this research is to highlight the alarmingly increasing occurrence and frequency of the misuse of the English articles in our newspaper today.

* 1. **Research Questions**

The following research questions are put in place to guide the study:

1. To what extent do the kinds of errors committed by journalists who write the English articles reflet the mastery of the English language?
2. In which ways does the level of education of the reporters contribute to the occurrence of errors in the English articles?
3. To what extent do readers rely on word meanings of news as absolutely correct?

**1.5 The Scope and Limitations of the Study**

This study is delimited to the various forms in which the English articles are misused in Nigerian newspapers. Other forms of errors found in Nigerian newspapers are not investigated here. The scope of this study involves exploring the misuse of the English articles in selected Nigerian newspapers. For the purpose of this study, the research will focus on only three widely read newspapers – The Sun, The Vanguard and The Independent.

**1.6 Significance of the Study**

This research sets out to help users of the English language in various capacities to improve their performances in their use of articles, promote efficiency in the grammar of English, encourage a mastery of the use of English articles, and spring up a general improvement in the proper use of articles. This research makes explicit, those areas where newspaper practitioners deviate from acceptable usage of articles, gives reasons for the aberrations, and also suggests ways of avoiding the errors. This research work will benefit both newspaper readers and journalists by clearly laying out the problems of the wrong use of articles.

**1.7 Organization of the study**

The study is divided into five chapters. Chapter one deals with the study’s introduction and gives a background to the study. Chapter two reviews related and relevant literature. The chapter three gives the research methodology while the chapter four gives the study’s analysis and interpretation of data. The study concludes with chapter five which deals on the summary, conclusion and recommendation.

**CHAPTER TWO**

**REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE**

* 1. **Introduction**

This chapter reviews the opinions of experts on error analysis. However, researchers in Nigeria and beyond are worried about the English language problems among media practitioners and this has been the focus of scholarly research as they try to unravel the factors that could be responsible for these problems. This chapter, therefore, is one of such efforts aimed at helping English article producers to overcome these problems. Moreover, it is worthy to note that a good number of works have been done on error analysis both by Nigerian linguists and non-Nigerian linguists as regards the second language learners.

The differences among the views of these experts are recognised and considered to be so important in such a way that it will propel the researcher into another dimension of thorough research work since most of the materials to be reviewed have some important relevant aspects. By this fact, the views presented here show a selection of contributions by leading scholars in the area of error analysis and grammar. The total review of these studies arrived at discovering the lacuna in knowledge of errors which has inspired the researcher to carry out this research in order to supplement the knowledge currently available in this field.

* 1. **Review of Related Literature**

Uzochukwu Lucy carried out a research on “An Error Analysis of The first year students from five selected departments of the University of Nigeria, Nsukka”*.* The aim of the study is to get a feedback that will be of immense value for better performances of the students’ written English. Thus, the students supplied the data for this study through written essays. The errors identified after marking the essays were classified into error types and were systematically analyzed. The analysis includes the explanation of different types of errors made by the students as they relate to different sources. The population sample is the first-year students of University of Nigeria, Nsukka. The sample for the study is drawn from the students of five (5) selected departments of the school. In other words, a total of one hundred and fifty (150) students’ articles were randomly selected and used for the data. Considering the method of data collection, the students supplied the data for this study through their written works. The topic is “My First Week in the University.” After which, the essays were collected, marked and the errors found were analyzed (VI). The researcher finds out that inter-lingual as well as intra-lingual factors are responsible for errors in the second language learning, the researcher therefore, made some recommendations which if effected, will go a long way to remedy the problems of poor expressions in English.

The above study only focused on the writings of year one students of the University of Nigeria, Nsukka (UNN) but does not cover the writings of the English articles. Again, its aim was to get a feedback that will be of immense value for better performances of the students, thereby creating a gap for the current study to specificallylook into the grammatical aspect of the writings of the radio English articles which will be of immense value for the article writers and presenters like journalists and reporters. In this regard, the current study will cover errors that exist in the English articles such as concord errors, punctuation errors, prepositional errors, omission errors, tense errors, spelling errors and so on, using Newspapers, Umuahia as a case

study.

In the same vein, Ifeyinwa in her study entitled “An Analysis of Morpho-Syntactic

Errors in selected Nigerian Newspapers” based her research on the theoretical framework of Selinker’s Inter-language and Corder’s Error Analysis. She investigated the degree of morpho-syntactic errors in selected Nigerian newspapers using a total of six editions from two different newspapers. These are: *Vanguard*, March 15th and 16th 2014, *Punch*, July 30th, 2013, *Punch*, March 9th, 2014 and May 15th, 2014. Her aim is to expose morpho-syntactic errors in newspapers so that the second language learner does not see the newspaper as a standard model for learning the English language. The research showcases the magnitude of the errors, the typology of errors and their number of occurrences in selected Nigerian newspapers. Also, the research examines the concepts of morphology, syntax, morpho- syntax, and error analysis. Based on the data analyzed, a total number of forty-five (45) errors were identified, explained and corrected. Also the study finds out that error is more in the area of punctuation. The research was conducted in Awka, Anambra State. In conclusion, the study suggests that those who work in the media houses should be more diligent in their jobs in other that they do not make a mess of their profession (ix).

This work centered on the morpho-syntactic errors in selected Nigerian newspapers*,* but does not focus or cover the other aspects of grammaticality in English. Also, she equally focused on ‘Nigerian newspapers’. This foregrounds the need to examine the effect of grammatical error analysis that exists in Newspapers English articles. Therefore, the current study will specifically look into the radio English articles of a particular station in the country rather than Nigeria at large. Though, the former study has tried in its capacity, having carried out such a wonderful research but there is still a vacuum to fill which is to critically investigate the causes of these grammatical errors in English articles reportage, particularly in Newspapers, Umuahia, and to find out the remedies to this ugly situation which has been exposed to the media houses in order to reduce the incidence of such errors to the barest minimum. To achieve this, the station should reinvigorate the editorial department to make sure they are more responsive to the 21th century challenges of competence and diligence.

Ifeyinwa’s research work which is based on “An Error Analysis of the English Concord of Students in Onitsha Urban” investigates the degree of competence on concord in English attained by the senior secondary class three students in Onitsha North Local Government Area of Anambra State. The need for the work was underscored by the crucial role played by the English Language in Nigeria education. A simple survey research design was adopted for the study and the subject of the study comprised five hundred (500) students from five different secondary schools in Onitsha North Local Government Area of the state. One hundred (100) objective questions set on different types of concord were used as a test instrument. The subjects’ errors were classified and analyzed using a simple percentage calculation and arithmetic mean. The findings of the research revealed that the subjects have not mastered the rules guiding different types of concord. They were unable to dictate concord errors caused by shift in the construction of elements of sentences. The implications of the finding in the teaching and learning of English were discussed and suggestions for improvement made.

Though, the study is indeed a good one, having carried out a research to investigate the degree of competence of concord in English which is attained by the senior secondary class three students in Onitsha North Local Government Area of Anambra State, yet there is still need to redirect the study towards practitioners already in the field rather than students and more research into the factors that can help to reduce the occurrence of errors in the English articles reportage.Also, inasmuch as the study focuses on the concord of English and concord falls under the category of grammar, yet the study does not consider the fact that, such an error could as well occur in other professional bodies like the media press. Therefore, there is a proof that a vacuum has been left and there is every tendency for the new study to concentrate on the writings of the mass media instead of students, to find out the proper causes of these problems, the remedies to this ugly situation which has been exposed to the media houses and possibly suggestions canbe carried out to handle this situation.

In a similar study, Cosmas carried out a research on “The Misuse of the English Articles in Three Nigerian Newspapers” inNnamdiAzikiwe University, Awka. As regards the methodology, the study uses such factors as: research design, area of study, population, sample, data collection and method of data analysis. The researcher carried out an in-depth and integration of library research which is not based on experimental design in its analysis of selected newspapers. The area of the study involved all the Nigerian newspapers and out of this, the researcher selected a total of six different editions from three national newspapers as the sample: these include: The daily *Vanguard* of 21 February 2001, the *Sunday Vanguard* of 22 May 2011, the *Daily Independent* of 28 November 2011, the *Daily Independent* of 29 November 2011, the *Daily Sun* of 2 March 2011 and the *Saturday Sun* of 3 December 2011. The aim of the research was to identify the misuse of the English articles by Nigerian newspapers. The data analysis showed that these errors in the misuse of the English articles are prevalent in the Nigerian newspapers. Using the random sampling technique, a total number of sixty-two expressions having article errors were identified. The study reveals that there are lots of errors in the use of the English article by Nigeria newspapers and that these errors hamper effective communication. These findings suggest the necessity of employing better writers and editors on the part of the newspaper houses. The study concludes with suggestions that newspapers should not exploit journalese at the expense of good grammatical constructions because this affects the intended meaning. Also, news items should be properly edited before publication as this will go a long way in helping the reading public to become acquitted with the correct and acceptable forms of English.

This work is based on the misuse of the English articles in three Nigerian newspapers but does not concentrate on the grammatical errors in the radio English articles. The study critically looked into all that concerns the English articles such as: definite article, indefinite article, zero article, stylistic functions of the English articles, and the role of semantic features in the acquisition of the English articles and so on but does not put into consideration the grammatical aspects of the English articles in Nigeria. This creates a big gap in error analysis as a field of study and thereby foregrounds the need to examine the effects of grammatical errors that have been found in the radio English articles of the Nigeria mass media. The lacuna here propels the current researcher to carry out a research that will study not just an aspect of grammar (article) in the English language, but a study that will cover almost, if not all aspects of grammatical errors and to show how these errors emanated from the English articles, to dictate if it is caused by either the journalists who write the articles or perhaps the news anchors who read out the news lines to the entire public. Whence, the former researcher’s work deals on newspapers which is on visual, but the present will deal on English article which comprises both visual and audio-visual.

In relation to these, Teun A. Van Dijk carried out a study on the *News Analysis: Case Study of International and National News in The Press.* The research took place at the University of Amsterdam Hillsdale, New Jersey Hove, London. In his study, he presents a series of case studies that illustrate the structures of national and international news in the press. He first summarized the discourse analytical theory of the processes and structures of news reports as they have been developed in the last five years. In this study, the result of a longer report written for United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), hundreds (100) of news reports that appeared in more than two hundred and sixty (260) newspapers from hundred countries were analyzed and compared. This study is embedded in a more general analysis of possible differences in international news coverage among fifteen (15) First World and fifteen (15) Third World newspapers during three days in September 1982. The data from these studies are based on an analysis of the Dutch press, but the results and the discussion suggest that they provide a more general picture of the coverage of non-dominant groups in western societies. In this regard, journalists are considered part of a dominant, cultural elite who often contribute unwittingly to the expression and legitimation of the national and international power structures. He tried to show how the press, through subtle discursive means reproduces this power.

One of the methodological aims of this work was to stimulate a new, more explicit and systematic approach to the study of mass media discourse in general and to news reporting in particular. It allows inquiries into abstract formal structures of news reports as well as into their subtle underlying meanings, in a way usually ignored in content analysis. Yet, as long as computer programs cannot take over such precise microanalyses, this method is still limited to small amounts of data. Nevertheless, he hopes that theoretically, more adequate discourse analysis of news will stimulate a new more qualitative orientation in the study of mass communication.

The lacuna the former study creates indicates that since one of the methodological aims of the work is to stimulate a new, more explicit and systematic approach to the study of mass media discourse in general and to news reporting in particular, the current work will divert the study to fill the gap of stimulating a new, more explicit and grammatical approach to the study of media house in one of the stations within Nigeria. Again, most press studies in English deal with other areas of the errors in the media press. Even this one that deals with the international and national news, the analysis of the current study will focus on the local station in Nigeria and also intends to complement this earlier research with insights into the press of another erroneous forms but specifically on the aspect of grammar.

Similarly, Ifecheobi in a study entitled *Language Use and the Nigeria Mass Media: A Focus on Selected Nigerian Newspapers,* highlights some deviant constructions in some selected Nigerian newspapers so that the second language learners should be cautious of and not be misled by them. Using textual analysis method of research, Ifecheobi examines a total number of fifteen (15) errors in selected Nigerian newspapers. The errors range from spelling error, tense error, and error of incomplete utterances, to wrong use of words. The newspapers used for the study were *The Nation, Daily Sun, Daily Independence, The Guardian, and Champion.* The study observed that Nigerian newspapers deviate so much from the accepted language form, which is standard English and this does not help the second language learner to acquire good English for effective communication” (55).Ifecheobi further stressed that:

It is of utmost importance that the print media as influential users of language should have a good command of the English language. The reality that mass media disseminated information is directed at a widely dispersed audience who interpret the message to derive meaningful information should spur them into simplicity and succinctness of language… Nigerian newspaper should try as much as possible to adhere strictly to the rules of Standard English usage and good grammar. Close attention should be given to correct choice of words and expressions to achieve international intelligibility (61-62).

Based on this study, the insight is on the Language use in the Nigeria mass media; focusing on the selected Nigerian newspaper. The lacuna which the previous study left for the current study is the ability to identify the language that is used in the Nigeria mass media which is the English language and to check the errors found in this language among the English articles producers, precisely Newspapers, in Umuahia. The researcher believes that to work on the errors that exist in the English articles of the above radio station will be an ideal.

Omojuwa examined errors in a corpus of seventy-two (72) essays written by seventytwo (72) participants. The participants comprise four Malay students who were studying in a secondary school at Malaysia; thirty-seven (37) males and thirty-five (35) females. They had experienced approximately the same number of years of education through primary and secondary education in Malaysia. All of the participants come from non-English speaking background and hardly communicate in English outside the school. The instruments used for this study was participants’ written essay and Marking software. All of the errors in the essay were identified and classified into various categorization. The results of the study showed that six most common errors committed by the participants were singular/plural form, verb tense, word choice, preposition, subject-verb agreement and word order. These aspects of writing in English pose the most difficult problems to participants. This study has shared light on the manner in which students internalize the rules of the target language, which is English.

The focus is on the academic students but the current work deems it fit to consider professionals in the field of media particularly those in the business of producing radio and television English articles.

Also, Uyo in an article entitled, “Analysis of Writing Error in Nigerian

Mass”observed that “majority of the writers in the Nigerian media have a shaky grasp of the English language and conventional way of writing it”. The purpose of the article is to draw the attention of professional media writers to writing errors so that they can take note of them, and strive to avoid them. Uyo documents and dissects sixteen (16) common errors from the word level to sentence level, and punctuation marks in various Nigerian newspapers. The typology of error he detects includes subject-verb disagreement, dangling modifiers, sentence fragment tautology, faulty case of pronouns, faulty diction, and incomplete apposition. In his findings, he states that “journalists should put proper words in proper places: have or find the right words to express what they want to say, and then arrange the right words properly to form a right sentence.” Any sentence that falls short of or either of these demands imperils writing and distracts from good writing” (16). A English article must be written in a lucid and communicative language. The language in use must conform to the rules that govern it. The rules must be adhered to in order to avoid language errors and falsification of the message being conveyed but unfortunately errors litter the pages of most Nigerian English articles, thereby making English articles perpetuators of errors and of bad English in society.

In this study, a lot has been said concerning ‘error’. Well, a few of these errors have been mentioned earlier but those are not all that should be treated. So, the current study will still identify other errors other than those mentioned above, their causes and suggests solutions that, if applied, will be made to prevent further errors and make the language of English articles an avenue for correct English.

Lawal (36) quoted in Ifeyinwa conducted a study on *thecomparative syntactic patterns employed by newspapers in Nigeria.* His aim is to determine whether newspaper language is the grammatical model for the English language in Nigeria or not. The result of the findings shows that English article language influences general language use. The differences in styles employed by each newspaper studied was too significant but each under the language of English article uses language incorrectly and does not take into cognisance what is not grammatically acceptable.

Ikegwu, in his article on “The Use of Nigerian Languages in The Mass Media” identified language as a major problem to effective communication in the media. He asserted that the English language dominates every other language in Nigeria media houses. Since language is the barrier and since English is the major language, the implication then is that incompetence in the knowledge and use of the language is the greatest cause of barrier in communication in the media.

Pandey, an Indian student in Nigeria, conducted a research on *The Lexico-Semantic and Syntactic Analysis of Errors in Selected Nigerian Newspapers.* This study covered a period of twelve months. She used questionnaires and interview methods. The linguistic factors she identified were interference, over-generalization and learner’s inter-language. These factors led to the errors made by editors. The current finding is based on the fact that a second language learner can as a result of mother-tongue interference transfer aspects of his first language into the target language. This process causes a big misuse of the target language. The researcher’s opinion here is that, the second language learner should learn the proper use of the target language.

Emmanuel Taiwo in his article, classifies newspapers in Nigeria into two broad groups based on frequency of publication. According to him, the first group consists of daily newspapers such as *The Guardian, The Punch, The Nigerian Tribune,* and so on. Within this first group there are some titles that aredevoted to weekends, evenings or early mornings. Such titles include;*The Sunday Punch, The Sunday Guardian, AM* and *PM News*. The second broad group comprises magazines, which are published weekly, bi-weekly or monthly (Babalola 406). He goes on to further divide this second group into two: thus, those that are devoted to serious or investigative journalism like *Tell, TheNews, Newswatch*, and those that are called soft-sell magazines, which are essentially devoted to entertainment, celebrities, gossips and the like. Notable among these are *Ovation, National Encomiums, Hints, Hearts*, and so on. In his words, “the main difference between these two broad groups is that while daily newspapers report news on a daily or day-to-day basis, the weekly or monthly magazines report news on weekly or monthly basis, base on which is applicable” (406). The first group claims that they tell the news as it breaks, while the second group claims that they put flesh and meat through their in-depth analysis and investigative activities.

In conclusion, English articles are generally recognized as instruments for improving and encouraging mass literacy. As a matter of fact, some experts have argued in favour of supporting the idea of “using English articles to teach reading and writing in formal situations”. According to Njoku (34) quoted in Babalola (408), English articles can be, and actually are, useful learning tools. Unfortunately, Nigerian English articles have the tendency to misuse the English language, and this poses problems to those who may look up to the English article for linguistic enhancement.

As writing is considered the zenith of language skills, and the yardstick of linguistic excellence, so also English articles are considered to be the beacon of formal writing. English article language influences general language use. This is why the researcher has chosen English articles in Newspapers as the population of this study. Therefore, in reviewing all these relevant views of scholars related to this work, it has been firmly established that the English articles need to be properly used for the intended message(s) to be clearly conveyed and understood.

**2.3Summary**

These studies presented here show a selection of contributions by leading scholars in the areas of English grammar and errors. However, these findings suggest the necessity of employing better writers and editorson the part of media houses.While as, the present study will concentrate on the grammatical errors in the selected English articles of Newspapers also, suggests that the education levels of these persons mentioned above should increase.Nevertheless, a good scrutiny of the above studies and many others not recorded here reveals that some research have been carried out in the aspect of error analysis on newspapers but none has attempted categorizing these errors so much as this present study intends to do. Hence, the present study is to further enrich the body of discourse available in the explanation of errors in selected Nigerian English articles particularly grammatical errors in the radio English articles while updating the previous study. However, by way of summary, Newspapers English articles deviate so much from correctness as regards to the English language use. These deviations which are termed ‘errors’ have a negative impact on the news readers. That is why the current researcher wants to focus on the grammatical types of those errors, their causes and effects on the language user in particular and the country in general. Furthermore, this literature review shows the opinions of different linguists on error analysis andgrammar. Also,it gives views on English articles which equally engenders the occurrence of grammatical errors by Newspapers producers. The authors reviewed were emphatic that errors do not appeal to them as well. However, they have averred that some of the errors are made intentionally in order to capture public attention. Finally, the present study will concentrate on the grammatical errors of selected English articles of Newspapers, Umuahia. Although, the present review did not exhaust all theresearch done in related field as the result of logistic constraints which include time, availability of materials, and finances, the researcher hopes that the little work done so far is sufficient to give the readers as well as further researchers an insight into the area which is still flawed.

**CHAPTER THREE**

**THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

**3.1 Theoretical Framework**

This chapter is sub-divided into two broad headings; the first one is the theoretical framework which bears the theory of this study. Then, the second part is the research methodology. Under research methodology, we have area and population of the study, method of data collection, method of data analysis, and method of data presentation.

The theoretical framework on which this research is based is S. Pit Corder’s Error Analysis. According to Corder:

Error analysis is the study of deviations from second language norms in the course of second language learning especially in terms of learner’s developing inter-language (167). It studies the types and causes of language errors. A key finding of error analysis has been that many learner errors are produced by learners making faulty inferences about the rules of the new language, relying heavily upon the rules in their native languages. As Corder puts it:

“A learner’s error is significant in that they provide to the researcher evidence of how language is learned and acquired, what strategies or procedures the learner is employing in the discovering of the language (167).” However, error analysis is a type of linguistic analysis that focuses on the errors learners make. According to Richards and Sampson, “at the level of pragmatic classroom experience, error analysis will continue to provide one means by which the teacher assesses learning and teaching and determines priorities for future effort” (quoted in Richards, 15). Error analysis is quite useful in the process of language learning. AsCorder reiterates that:

The study of error is part of the investigation of the process of language learning. In this respect it resembles methodologically the study of the acquisition of the mother tongue. It provides us with a picture of the linguistic development of a learner and may give us indications as to the learning process (125).

Corder further states that:

Error analysis has two functions. The first is theoretical and the second a practical one. The theoretical aspect of error analysis is part of the methodology of investigating the language learning process. In order to find out the nature of these psychological processes, we have to have a means of describing the learner’s knowledge of the target language at any particular moment in his learning career in order to relate this knowledge to the teaching he has been receiving.

According to UzomaNwachukwu(147-171), researchers and teachers have come more to understand that second language learning is a creative process of constructing a system in which the learner is consciously or unconsciously testing hypothesis about the target language from a number of possible sources or knowledge: limited knowledge of the target language itself, knowledge about the native language, knowledge about language in general, and knowledge about life, human beings, and the universe. Through the study of learner’s errors, researchers and teachers of second language have to realise that a thorough analysis of the errors may lead to the understanding of the process of second language acquisition.

It is usually difficult to analyse the linguistic system of both first and second language learners because such system cannot be directly observed, and are in a constant state of flux as new information flows in and causes existing structures to be revised. Error analysis is a performance analysis, which is inferred by means of analysing production and

comprehension data. Three major steps are taken in the process of error analysis. These are:

1. Identifying or recognizing the errors
2. Describing the errors
3. Explaining the sources of the errors.

**Identifying or Recognizing the Errors**

The process of error analysis starts with identifying the errors or idiosyncratic utterances in a second language. Corder (71) makes a distinction between overt and covert errors. Utterances that are overtly erroneous are those that are clearly ungrammatical while covertly erroneous utterances are grammatically correct but not interpretable within the normal contexts of communication. In both cases a possible interpretation can be made of the utterances followed by a reconstruction of the utterances in the target language. Then the reconstruction and the original erroneous utterance should be compared after which the differences can now be described. If the mother-tongue of the learner is known, a translation from it could be used in order to find out if mother-tongue interference is the source of error.

**Sources of Error**

The final stage in the analysis of errors is that of determining the source of the errors. It is necessary to find out why certain errors are made, and what cognitive strategies and styles or even personality variables underlie certain errors. By trying to identify sources, according to Brown (1980) as quoted in Uzoma (140), we can begin to arrive at an understanding of how the learner’s cognitive and affective self relates to the linguistic system, and to formulate an integrated understanding of the process of second- language acquisition.

Some of the major causes of errors and strategies of learning include: Interlingual transfer, Context of learning, Communication strategies, Avoidance, Prefabricated patterns, Language switch and so on.

However, this theory of error analysis by Pit Corderwill be quite adequate for this study because it will help the researcher to understand the fact that, this work is mostly concerned with errors that impair communication significantly. This means that, for adequate analysis to be carried out and to achieve a desired result, the researcher will use Uzoma’s theory which is narrowed down to Pit Corder’s error analysis theory to carefully identify the errors, classified them according to their frequency occurrences and highlight the importance of grammar in the development of communicative competence, particularly grammatically competence.

**3.2 Research Methodology**

Preferably, the research will be basically qualitative. This is because it will involve the researcher going through the pages of Newspapers English articles, to identify, analyze instances of grammatical errors and critically read the English articles which will be utilized as data for the study. It will be based on non-experimental research that will be designed based on the linguistic method in its analysis of selected English articles. The aim of the researcher will be to identify and collect factual errors from these articles and give answers to the research questions.

## **3.2.1 Area of the Study**

The study will focus on Newspapers English articles as the research data. This study will concentrate on the incidence ofgrammatical errors evident in the articles from the same

station.

## **3.2.2 Population of the Study**

The population will comprise the presenters who read the news out to the entire public. The researcher will, therefore, interview them with a view to finding out why these errors occur in their productions.

## **3.2.3 Method of Data Collection**

Here, the researcher will explore a simple randomization method in collecting the data. This is because she will have to select from a whole population that is available. World News, News at FM, News in Brief, News Headlines, News Package, News Segment, and News Digest and so on, will be selected from the news room in the station. Thus, three hundred (300) English articles dated from January 2013 to October, 2015 will be selected from a list of all the articles in Vanguard, The Sun and the Independent, Umuahia, to identify the errors therein and, thereafter, provide a unique and broad data.

## **3.2.4 Method of Data Analysis**

The data that will be collected for this study is analysed using the simple percentage calculations. The simple percentages will be used to determine the frequency of these errors. Thereafter, the errors analysed are classified under the following headings according to their frequencies –wrong pluralization, poor grammatical constructions, omissions, wrong punctuation, wrong tense, concord errors, and the use of wrong prepositions.

**CHAPTER FOUR**

**ANALYSIS OF GRAMMATICAL ERRORS IN THE ENGLISH ARTICLES**

**4.1 Introduction**

This chapter is aimed at presenting the analysis of the data collected from English articles by the researcher. The data were primarily written errors of wrong pluralization and grammar in the English articles dated from the years 2013 to October, 2015 as a reflection of similar errors in similar items in other parts of the country. The language in which the investigation was based is the English language. The errors identified were grouped into five categories, thus: punctuation, concord, omission, pluralization, and the wrong use of prepositions. On the whole, two hundred and sixty (260) errors were identified and written out with their total numbers (frequency) and percentages. Thereafter, the analysis was carried out.

**4.2. Presentation of Findings**

The data collected from the English articles by the researcher are presented in a tabular format. The table contains a list of errors in the available English articles along with the page numbers and dates in which the given expressions are culled from.

**4.3.Grammatical Errors in the Articles Studied**

The major concern of this study is the identification and analysis of grammatical errors that were found in the Newspapers English articles. The data dealt with the actual errors, that is, errors as collected by the researcher from the English articles. In this section, the observed errors were divided into categories and the categories were discussed. A total of three hundred (300) copies of English articles were collected from the Newspapers room. From the three hundred copies, two hundred and sixty (260) errors were identified.

These errors were grouped here into the following five categories for easy analysis as:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Punctuation | PN |
| Concord | CD |
| Preposition | PP |
| Omission | OM |
| Pluralization | PL |

The errors are written down below according to their frequencies. Apart from being written outbelow with theirfrequencies, their percentageswere worked out. The percentages were obtained through the Number of Error Types. For example, (N) Over Total Number of errors and (T)multiplied by 100 over 1, that is,

N100

─ X ─

T 1

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Errors** | **Frequency** | **Percentage** |
| Punctuation | 116 | 44.61% |
| Concord | 39 | 15% |
| Preposition | 25 | 9.61% |
| Omission | 56 | 21.53% |
| Pluralization | 24 | 9.23% |
| **Total** | 260 | 100% |

Thetable abovedisplays the frequency occurrence of the errors in different categories. Also, it is pertinent to note that the texts analysed in this work are contained from pages sixty-one to ninety-one (61-91) of the appendix.

**4.3.1. Punctuation Errors**

Some instances of punctuation errors observed include the following as shown in the table below:

Table 1: Punctuation Errors from *World News - News Digest* in the years 2013 -2015.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **S/N** | **DATE** | **FREQUENCY EXPRESSION** | **PG/NO** |
| 1    2    3    4      5    6      7    8 | 21/2/13    24/10/13    21/10/13    20/10/13      01/10/13    11/9/13      21/10/13    14/09/15 | According to report**()** Christians make…. = According to report**,** Christians make…  The Governor**()** Chief T.A. Orji… =The Governor**,**Chief T.A.  Orji…  … with BCA reporter**()**ChukwuemekaEmele… = …with BCA reporter**,**ChukwuemekaEmele…  The president of the association**()**Mazi Sam who made…= The president of the association**,**Mazi Sam who made…  In June**()** General Amos asked… = In June**,** General Amos asked…  A release says **11:30a.m to 12:30pm, from 2:30pm to 4pm**…  = A release says 11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. from 2:30 p.m. to  4:00 p.m. …  Meanwhile**()** the Governor… = … Meanwhile**,** the Governor…  …travelling bag containing**()** electrical parts**()** eye glasses**()** UBTC Bank cheque, etc.= … travelling bag containing the  following: electrical parts**,** eye glasses**,** UBTC Bank cheque,etc.  Aba summit with the theme **“Abia development(:)** = Aba | 12lines bull:  11    10    14      11    5lines bull:    14    7 |
| 9    10    11    12      13      14        15 | 2/11/15    28/9/13    09/11/13    11/9/13      11/9/ 13      11/9/13        11/09/13 | summit with the theme **“**Abia development**”**  The young**doctor** office…= The young doctor**’s** office...  … please take note, its urgent. … =… please take note, it’s urgent  … a greater result in(**;)** providing security in… = … a greater result in providing security in… **(intrusive punctuation error of a semi-colon)**  According to the release() the intending… = According to the release**,** the intending…    A release by the Acting**(.)** State Secretary… = …A release by the Acting State Secretary… **(intrusive punctuation error of a full stop)**    …2013 **mothers day** celebration of… = …2013 mothers’ day celebration of… | 12    6    18    2      16      12        8 |

## Interpretation of the Errors in Table 1

From the above table, the researcher observed that in the first expression, there should be a comma immediately after ‘report.’ Therefore, the correct version should be; **(According to report, Christians make…)**. Also, in the second expression, there should equally be a comma immediately after ‘the Governor’ example, **(The Governor, Chief T.A. Orji…)**. The same is applicable in the third number, there should be a comma after ‘BCA reporters.’ For example, **(…with BCA reporters,ChukwuemekaEmele…)**. Also, there should be a comma in the fourth expression after ‘association,’ like, **(The president of the association,Mazi Sam who made…)**. Again, there should be a comma in the fifth expression immediately after ‘June,’ like, **(In June, General Amos asked…)**. In the sixth expression, there should be a dot in-between the ‘pm.’ For instance, **(1:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. from 2:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.)**. The seventh expression shows grammatical and punctuation errors; the correct version should be **(The State Secretary, John Kerry has said…)**. In the next expression, there should be a comma after ‘meanwhile,’ for example, **(Meanwhile, the Governor…)**. In the next number, there should be an indication of comma after each listed item, such as, **(… travelling bag containing the following: electrical parts, eye glasses, UBTC Bank cheque, etc.).** The number ten expression shows a very wrong punctuation usage. Instead of ‘Aba summit with the theme **“Abia development:**’ the correct punctuation should be **(“Abia development”).**

In the next expression, apostrophe –s should be attached to the ‘doctor’ before ‘office.’ Example, **(The youngdoctor’s office…)**. Number twelve bears an intrusive punctuation error of a semi-colon. The presence of that semi-colon in-between ‘in and providing’ is not grammatically accepted and thereby, needs to be removed. The same is applicable in number fourteen, where an intrusive punctuation error of a full stop occurred in-between ‘Acting’ and ‘State’. The correct version of those sentences should be; **(… a greater result in providing security in…) and (…A release by the Acting State Secretary…)**, respectively. Finally, in the last expression, the word ‘mother’ should bear an apostrophe’s. For instance, **(…2013 mothers’ day celebration of…).**

## Analysis of Table 1

Some of the errorsobserved by the researcher defied the rules governingthe correctuse of grammar. Following the above table, it is obvious that punctuation errors were more frequent than other errors in the Newspapers English articles. However, punctuation errors are also the proof of the incomplete mastery of the English language rules, even though some of these punctuation errors occurred out of carelessness on the part of the printers or publishers and perhaps the editors who may have had an oversight of them.

However, from the illustrations observed in several English articles from different dates and pages, **one hundred and sixteen(116)** frequency expressions of punctuation errors,representing **(44.61%)** of punctuations found in these particular editions of*WorldNews* – *News Digest,* have been identified by the researcher. Meanwhile, this category of error is committed in the articles attached.

**4.3.2. Concord Errors**

Some instances of concord errors observed include the following as shown in the table below:

Table 2: Concord Errors from *World News - News Digest* in the years 2013 -2015.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **S/N** | **DATE** | **FREQUENCY EXPRESSION** | **PG/NO** |
| 1        2        3      4 | 26/06/13        14/09/15        13/09/15      25/06/13 | The wife of the Governor, Lady Mercy Odochi Orji **have** urged  Abians… = … The wife of the Governor, Lady Mercy Odochi Orji **has** urged Abians…    … only men who put God first and carry out their assignments in line with biblical dictates **receives** their deserved blessings. =… in line with biblical dictates **receive** their deserved blessings    A 3 **Days**Conference at Okpara’s Square… = … A 3  **day**Conference at Okpara Square…. **(this is an error of wrong usage)** | 12lines bull:      7COV        10      11 |
| 5      6      7      8      9    10 | 21/10/13      01/10/15      15/09/13      01/10/13      02/07/13    01/10/15 | They **was**very neat… = …They **were**very neat…    They **creates**from the source…= …They **create**from the source…    Abia students and pupils **has** called on government at all levels… = … Abia students and pupils **have**called on  government at all levels …  One of the Abia state **student** went for… = One of the Abia State **students** went for …    Chief Nwagboso**explain** that out of this… = Chief  Nwagboso**explains**that out of this …    Aba noted **(t)**hat the role of mothers **are**… = Aba noted that the role of mothers **is**…  As the nation marks her 55th year anniversary today**, across** section of Abia students and pupils… = As the nation marks her 55th year anniversary today**, across** section of Abia students and pupils… | 3      5      9      11      Digest    BIA |

## Interpretation of the Errors in Table 2

In number one of the above table, the researcher discovered a disagreement between the subject (the wife of the Governor) and the verb that precedes it (have). In this case, a singular subject was used with a plural verb which is absolutely wrong. The correct verb should be (**has).** Therefore, the correct version of that sentence should be **(… The wife of the Governor, Lady Mercy Odochi Orji has urged Abians…)**. The second expression shows a confirmed concord error in the sense that, the subject of the sentence is in the plural form and the rule says it should take a singular verb. Therefore, the correct version of that sentence should read; **(…only men who put God first and carry out their assignments in line with biblical dictates receive their deserved blessings).** The next one is error of wrong usage of grammar that occurred in the Newspapers English article. That is, the article (a) does not agree with the morpheme‘s’ in the word ‘Day’. It is supposed to be written as; **(A 3day conference at Okpara Square…)**. In respect to the fourth expression, the ‘Crystal Palace’ did not agree with the verb ‘come.’ Therefore, the correct version should be **(…as Crystal Palace comes up against Man City)**. In the next expression, the verb ‘was’ did not agree with the subject ‘they’ in that statement. It should be; **(they were very neat).** Also, the statement ‘They creates from the source…’ is not grammatically correct because of the subject- verb disagreement. The correct version should be; **(They create from the source…)**. The sentence in number seven which stated, ‘Sir Offor maintained that no traders in the…’ is wrong, the correct sentence should be;**(Sir Offor maintained that no trader in the…)**. In number eight, the pluralization of ‘students’ and ‘pupils’ and the conjunction (and) showed that the subject of that sentence is in plural form. Therefore, it should take a plural verb. For instance, it is correct to write it as; (**Abia state students and pupils have called on government at all levels…).** The word ‘judiciously’ in the context of number nine is an adverb that modifies the verb ‘utilise.’ Again, the verb ‘are’ is wrongly used there. Therefore, it is supposed to be in past tense form like; **(Governor Ikpeazu ensures that the bailout fund is judiciously utilised)**. Again, number ten gives another incorrect use of concord in that sentence which state; ‘A fashion that is uniquely you....’ It is better said, **(A fashion that is uniquely yours…)**. In the eleventh number, the word ‘not’ is not grammatically accepted in that context, rather, it should be;**(…Igbo language fluently and has no tribal marks…)**. Number twelve reminds us of the consciousness of adding‘s’ whenever one thing is taking out of many. So, the correct version of that sentence should be;**(One of the Abia state students went for…).** Next is Chief Nwagboso’s ‘explanation’ which should correctly be in present continuous tense as for third- person singular of the word ‘explain’ but was written in third- person plural ‘explain’. On this note, it is supposed to be;**(Chief Nwagboso explains that out of this…)**. In number fourteen, there is a wrong intrusive of ‘its’ in that sentence. Number sixteen exposes the journalist’s inexperience of correct use of concord. For example, the word ‘team’ stands as one body (that is a singular subject) and should take a singular verb **(is)**. Again, the correct word to be used in number seventeen should be **(is),** not ‘are’ because, the word ‘role’ should determine the verb it agrees with and not ‘mothers.’ The correct version should be; **(Aba noted that the role of mothers is…)**. Finally, in number eighteen, there is a wrong expression of the word ‘across’ it is supposed to be in separate form. That is to say that, ‘a’ should be separated from ‘cross’ in order to have a meaningful sentence. It should be written in this form; **(As the nation marks her 55th year anniversary today, a cross section of Abia students and pupils…)**

## Analysis of Table 2

Sometimes, agreement is determined by the notion the speaker or writer has about the noun or nouns governing the verb of the sentence. A singular subject may be used with a plural verb while a compound subject may be used with a singular verb. Instances of the violation of the rules of concord errors were identified from the articles where a plural subject was used with a singular verb. Even non-count nouns were made plurals, which is absolutely ungrammatical.

In the illustrationsobserved above, **thirty nine (39)** frequency expressionsof concorderrors,representing **(15%)**found in this particular editions of *World News – News Digest,* have been identified as concord errors by the researcher. Meanwhile, this category of error is committed in the articles attached.

**4.3.3 Prepositional Errors**

The table below shows some instances of the prepositional errors observed by the researcher.

Table 3: Prepositional Errors from *World News - News Digest* in the years 2013 -2015.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **S/N** | | **DATE** | | **FREQUENCY EXPRESSION** | **PG/NO** | |
| 1      2    3      4    5      6      7 | | 14/09/15      01/10/13    Kennedy      2/07/13    02/07/13      17/10/13      21/10/13 | | …mandate entrepreneur contribute positively **on** the economy … = … mandate entrepreneur contribute positively**to** the economy.  …to destroy a country’s chemical arms **during** a year. … = … to destroy a country’s chemical arms **within** a year.  … sentenced to 20 years **to** life in prison … = … sentenced to 20 years life imprisonment    …puts the venue at the inspection of **at** the premises of... =… puts the venue at the inspection of the premises of…  … illegal migrants lost **at** sea **(prepositional and word omission errors occurred here)**… = … illegal migrants lost **inthe** sea  …work has resumed throughout thecountry today **for** a two day holiday… = … **after** a two day holiday…    …a brown wallet containing **and** ID card bearing… = … a brown wallet containing **an** ID card bearing... | 2 skills      8    BBC      7    3Digest      8      14 | |
| 8    9      10      11        12    13    14    15      16 | 01/10/15    01/10/13      21/10/13      01/10/13        17/10/13    7/10//13    21/10/13    26/6/13      01/10/13 | | …so as to be **to** self-reliant. … = … so as to be self-reliant.    … that will better **thelost** of children and youths … = … better lots of children and youths.    … Abians to ensure **that** they troop to Enyimba… = …Abians to ensure they troop to Enyimba…    …it is expelling three US Diplomats, whom **is** accuses of plotting to… = … it is expelling three US Diplomats, whom **it** accuses of plotting to …  …hundred amputees were taken off **ofin** the first phase…  =…hundred amputees were taken off **from** the first phase…  Theresa **M**ay told **the** reporters that it would focused on organised … = Theresa told reporters that…  He also vowed that **it** would not succeed in sowing … = He also vowed that **the attack** would not =  … to come out **enmasse** and avail themselves… = … to come out **in mass** and avail themselves…  … will do everything necessary to **enzyme** that people live in the country without fear. = … will do everything necessary to **ensure** that people live in the country without fear  … the Abia State Government in check **making** the activities of | | | 17lines    15      14      10        Digest    6lines    6    NCC      10lines |
| 17      18 | 21/10/13      14/9/15 | | expatriates as well as… = … the Abia State Government in check **mating** the activities of expatriates as well as…  Correspondent IfeanyiOgbonna who captured the **ever** in some of the churches … = Correspondent IfeanyiOgbonna who captured the **event** in some of the churches … | | | 9      COV |

## Interpretation of the Errors in Table 3

From the above table, the researcher observed the following prepositional errors as we can see from number one expression, where the journalist’s inability to use the English preposition properly was evidently noticed. Thus, ‘on’ is a wrong choice of preposition to that sentence, therefore, the correct preposition should be ‘to’. To buttress my point, the correct version should be; **(…mandate entrepreneur contribute to the economy…)**. Number two expression states ‘…to destroy a country’s chemical arms during a year…’ Thisstatement is wrong, it is better said;**(…to destroy a country’s chemical arms within a year…)**. In number three, the preposition ‘to’ do not match in terms of ‘life in prison’ the correct sentence should be;**(…sentenced to 20 years life imprisonment)**. Number four shows an intrusive prepositional error of ‘at’, it is correct to say **(… puts the venue at the inspection of the premises of…)**. In number five, prepositional and word omission errors have been identified. The correct version should be **(…illegal migrants lost in the sea).**More so, the correct preposition in the next expression should be;**(after)**instead of ‘for.’ Example, **(work has resumed throughout the country today after a two day holiday…)**. Come next is a sentence like; ‘…a brown wallet containing ‘and’ ID card bearing…’ is not grammatically correct, it should be;**(…a brown wallet containing an ID card bearing…).**In the next number,‘…so as to be **to** self-reliant…’ is another wrong use of prepositionbecause of the presence of ‘to’ it is better said; (… so as to be self-reliant.). The correct version of this sentence ‘…that will better **the lost** of children and youths’ should be **(…that will better lots of children and youths)**. In number ten ‘that’ should be removed from the sentence, it is better written **(…Abians to ensure they troop to Enyimba…).** In number eleven, **(it)** is best used instead of ‘is’. The existence of these prepositions ‘of’ and ‘in’ in number twelve makes the sentence grammatically incorrect. The correct version should be **(…hundred amputees were taken off from the first phase…)**. Number thirteen should be better said; (**Theresa told reporters that…)** instead of ‘Theresa **May** told **the** reporters that.’ In number fourteen, **(He also vowed that the attack would not succeed in sowing…)** would have been better used than, ‘He also vowed that it would not succeed in sowing…’ Also, ‘…to come out **en masse** and avail themselves…’ is a wrong preposition to be used in that context but, **(…to come out in mass and avail themselves…)** should be better used.Talking about the next number, ‘**enzyme**’ as it appears there, I believe is not an English word. I think what the journalist meant there is ‘ensure.’ The appropriate sentence should be; **(… will do everything necessary to ensure that people live in the country without fear).** This sentence; **(… the Abia State Government in check mating the activities of expatriates as well as…)** supposed to be the correct version of number seventeen. Finally, number eighteen shows another prepositional error by bearing the word ‘ever’ instead of, event. However, it is correct to write it as; **(Correspondent IfeanyiOgbonna who captured the event in some of the churches …).**

## Analysis of Table 3

According to UzomaNwachukwu, “prepositions pose a lot of problems, not only for second language learners of English but also native speakers as well as the language teachers” (166). One of the most difficult aspects of the English language to master is the idiomatic use of prepositions. Native speakers are not always sure of it, and it is even more troublesome to the foreign students.

However, the table above displays some common errors of preposition found in the Newspapers English articles and the possible correct version of them are also given. From the above findings, **twenty five (25)** frequency expressions of prepositional errors,representing **(9.61%)**found in these particular editions of *WordNews – News Digest,* have been identified as wrong use of prepositions by the researcher. Meanwhile, this category of error is committed in the articles attached.

**4.3.4. Omission Errors**

Some instances of omission errors observed include the following as shown in the table below: Table 4: Omission Errors from *World News - News Digest* in the years 2013 -2015.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **S/N** | **DATE** | **FREQUENCY EXPRESSION** | **PG/NO** |
| 1      2    3      4      5 | 11/09/13      02/07/13    15/09/15      01/10/15      11/09/13 | ... power bestowed upon ( ) over issues of life. …= … ... power bestowed upon (**him)** over issues of life …    Aba noted **()hat** the role of mothers are… = Aba noted **(t)hat**    **()** wife of **()** President makes case for… = … (**The)** wife of**(the)**President makes case for …    The Abia House of Assembly yesterday passed a resolution **()** calling on the … = …passed a resolution **(of)** calling on the …    …completed the centres, **()** will train… = … completed the | 15      Digest    ICA      7      22 |

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 6      7    8      9      10    11      12    13      14 | 01/10/13      25/06/13    01/10/13      01/11/13      01/10/15    01/10/15      01/10/15    14/9/15      14/09/15 | centres, (**he)** will train…    The Republican Led House **()** called for… = … The  Republican Led House (**has)** called for…    Meanwhile, the hanging of doors () plastering of shops…= **(and)**    … administration is focused **()** refurbishing the…=…  administration is focused (**on)** refurbishing the …    Over three hundred Youths in IsialaNgwa North and South **()** trained in =…IsialaNgwa North and South(**were)** trained in    He reiterated **()is** desire to… =… He reiterated **(his)** desire… to  …  Governor Ikpeazu described one hundred **()** twenty days he has… =hundred **and** twenty    Abia children ( ) urged to emulate… =… (**were)** urged to…    …mandateentrepreneurs () contribute positively to… =  …mandate entrepreneurs (**to**) contribute positively to…  … appreciated the State Government for () initiative. = … | 11      10COV    20      11      18    8      9CPN    2PR      2PR |

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 15    16        17      18      19        20          21 | 02/07/13    01/10/15        Royal      01/10/15      28/9/13        11/09/13          11/09/13 | appreciated the State Government for (**the**) initiative  …pray for illegal migrants lost **at () Sea**… = pray for illegal migrants lost **in (the)** sea  Sir EmenikeOnuoha said the council assured **()** that … = **(him)**… ensure all outstanding salaries and pension payment () before 30th… = and pension payment **(are made)**before 30th ..  …survived by her husband Mr Friday Iroh, five children **other()()** brothers, sisters and host of other relations. =…  **(others include;)**  …Umudike,Amawom, Umugbalu, Okwe, Isiala**()**Oboro… = … Okwe**,**Isiala, **(and)**Oboro    …the duty of Corps Officers to keep watch around the pipelines **( )** promised **( )** work… = …the duty of Corps  Officers to keep watch around the pipelines **(and)** promised **(to)** work…    …when completed the centres**()( )**will train many Abia Youths in various skills and make them **youths self** reliant and productive. =…when completed the centres**(,)(he)**will train many Abia Youths in various skills and make them self-reliant and productive.    High level of unemployment in **()**state attributed to… =High level of unemployment in **(the)**state attributed to … | Digest    6        CPN      11lines      8lines        18          22 |

## Interpretation of the Errors in Table 4

From the table above, the researcher observed the first incidence of omission thereas the omission of **(him)** which will have made the sentence more meaningful if written as;**(…power bestowed upon him over issues of life…)**. Considering the second number, there is an omission of letter ‘t’ to form the word ‘that’ which will have given the sentence a meaningful structure. Therefore, the correct version should be; **(Aba noted that the role of mothers is…)**. In number three, the researcher discovered the omission of **(the)** between ‘wife of’ and ‘president.’ To insert the omitted words will give us a correct sentence like; **(The wife of the president makes case for…)**. In the next number, the researcher also discovered that, ‘of’ is omitted in the sentence, but to correct it, we will have; **(The Abia House of Assembly yesterday passed a resolution of calling on the…)**. In number five, there is an omission of ‘he’ in that sentence, to correct it, we will have **(…completed the centres, he will train…).** There is an omission of ‘has’ in number six, it should be; **(The Republican Led House has called for…).** Again,‘and’ is omitted in the next number. Therefore, ‘and’ should be added to have a correct and meaningful sentence there. **(…administration is focused refurbishing of shops…)** the insertion of ‘on’ should give the correct version of the sentence in number eight. In number nine, **(were)** should be inserted inbetween ‘South’ and ‘trained’ to give us a correct sentence like; **(Over three hundred Youths in IsialaNgwa North and South were trained in…)**. In number ten, letter ‘h’ is omitted, but if added, we will have the word (his) to give us a correct sentence like; **(He reiterated his desire to…)**. Number eleven has an outstanding omission of the word ‘and’ in the sentence. It is supposed to be written as; **(Governor Ikpeazu described one hundred and twenty days he has…)**. **(Abia children were urged to emulate…)** should be the correct sentence of number twelve but the word ‘were’ was omitted. Number thirteen should be **(…mandate entrepreneurs to contribute positively to…)** but ‘to’ was omitted. There is an omission of the word ‘the’ in number fourteen. But to add it, we will have;**(…pray for illegal migrants lost at the sea)**. ‘The Medical Director ( ) Abia Diagnostic…’ in this sentence, something is missing in-between ‘Director’ and ‘Abia’and that is the word ‘of.’ Therefore, when that is added, it will give us such correct sentence as;**(The Medical Director of Abia Diagnostic…).** The expression in number sixteen should be written as; **(Sir EmenikeOnuoha said the council assured him that…)**. In the next expression, ‘are made’ should be inserted in-between ‘payment’ and ‘before’ to give a complete and meaningful sentence like; **(…ensure all outstanding salaries and pension payment are made before 30th…)**. The letter ‘s’ and the word ‘include’ are missing from the sentence in the next number but if added, we will have; **(…survived by her husband, Mr Friday Iroh, five children, others include: brothers, sisters and host of other relations…)**. In the next number, the researcher observed the omission of a comma in-between ‘Isiala’ and ‘Oboro.’ The next line shows the omission of two different words, which are: ‘and’ and ‘to.’ The correct version should be; **(…the duty of Corps Officers to keep watch around the pipelines and promised to work…)**. In the next number, the researcher discovered omission of ‘a comma,’ in-between centres and ‘will’ also, ‘he’ before ‘will.’ Again, the sentence is still incorrect because of the presence of ‘youth’ in-between ‘them’ and ‘self-reliant.’ Therefore, to get it corrected, we ought to have a sentence like; **(…when completed the centres, he will train many Abia Youths in various skills and make them self-reliant and productive)**. Finally, the sentence in number twenty-two would have been more correct if the omitted word ‘the’ was added. Such like, **(High level of unemployment in the state attributed to…)**.

## Analysis of Table 4

The next error under study is the omission errors which refers to the absence of some words, letters or punctuation marks in a given sentence or sentences. Most of the omitted words or letters discovered from these articles are mainly verbs, prepositions, definite articles, punctuation marksand few cases,conjunctions.

Thus, from this particular finding, **fifty six (56)**frequency expressionsof omitted words, letters or punctuation marks,representing **(21.53%)** found in these particular editions of *WorldNews – News Digest,*have been identified as omission errors by the researcher.

Meanwhile, this category of error is committed in the articles attached.

**4.3.5. Pluralization Errors**

Some instances of pluralization errors observed by the researcher include the following as shown in the table below:

Table 5:Pluralization Errors from *News at FM – News in Brief* in the years 2013 -2015.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **S/N** | **DATE** | **FREQUENCY EXPRESSION** | **PG/NO** |
| 1        2    3      4      5        6 | 21/10/13        11/09/13    16/10/15      9/19/13      14/09/15        01/10/15 | … disclosed that the new workers secretariatwith an elevator is first of its **kinds** in the whole… = …disclosed that the new workers secretariatwith an elevator is first of its **kind**in the whole …  … the secretary of the **legionaries**… = … the secretary of the **legion**…  …the medical team **are** poised to… = … the medical team **is**poised to …    Some traders have **gotten** shops in the… = Some traders have **got** shops in the…**(British English)**    Speaking at the Stakeholders’ meeting with **industries** and… = … Speaking at the Stakeholders’ meeting with**industrialists** and  Mr Friday Iroh, five children, **other** include:… = Mr Friday  Iroh, five children, **others** include:… | 10        20    COV      7      2PR        11lines |

## Interpretation of the Errors in Table 5

The various examples displayed above have shown a good indication of the instances of pluralization errors found in the Newspapers English articles by the researcher. For instance, the first expression has a wrong pluralization, in the sense that, the appearance of the morpheme‘s’ to the root word ‘kind’ makes the sentence incorrect. Therefore, it is supposed to be; **(…disclosed that the new workers secretariat with an elevator is first of its kind in the…)**.The word ‘legionaries’ is wrongly used in the context of the next sentence. The idea was meant to be a particular legion which should be written as; **(…the secretary of the legion…).** Again, the plural form of verb ‘are’ used in number three of the above table do not correspond with the context of the sentence because, ‘the medical team is seen as one body which needs to take a singular verb ‘is.’ However, the correct version of that sentence should be;**(…the medical team is poised to…)**. Considering the number four expression of the table above, it is believed that, the modern British English is most preferred to the American English for a correct use of standard grammar. Therefore, ‘got’ is preferably used instead of ‘gotten.’ So, that sentence should be;**(Some traders have got shops in the…)**. ‘Speaking at the Stakeholders’ meeting with **industries** and…’ is a wrong sentence, the correct version should be;**(Speaking at the Stakeholders’ meeting with industrialists and…)**.Finally, number six has a pluralization error of the morpheme (s). ‘s’ should be added to ‘other’ in order to have a correct sentence. Example, **(Mr Friday Iroh, five children, others include:…)**.

## Analysis of Table 5

Some pluralization errors were discovered in the course of analysing the data. Pluralization errors on the other hand, focus on the mistakes that are often made when using the wrong terms in English. As is often the case, some language users in some cases use unnecessary pluralization of a noun as an adjective, meaning that, ‘s’ or ‘es’ is unnecessarily added to the end of a noun. Thus, it is worthy to note that, from the table above, **twenty four**

**(24)**frequency expressions,representing **(9.23%)**found in these editions of *News at FM – News in Brief,*have been identified as pluralisation errors by the researcher. Meanwhile, this category of error is committed in the articles attached.

**4.4. Summary of Findings**

Above are the findings that emerged from the research. It was discovered from the analysis that the utterances used in English articles are mainly assertive and quite discouraging. Altogether, the researcher discovered a total number of two hundred and sixty errors from Newspapers English articles and this proved that most of these errors that occurred were written by the journalists and anchored by the news casters. Illiteracy and ignorance of Nigerian journalists are seen in their malapropism of words. For instance, the wrong use of the preposition ‘‘during” shows the journalist’s inability to identify prepositions that are used for specific time distinction. The incessant occurrence of these errors in different English articles and almost on every page showed the poor level of the journalists’ academic standard and the system that produced them. The non-agreement of noun and verb in the sentence, ‘The wife of the Governor, Lady Mercy Odochi Orji **have** urged Abians’makes one wonder if our journalists were ever taught anything on concord while in school. A sentence must have a subject and a predicate, whose vital element is the verb. The corresponding rule is that there must be an agreement between the subject and the verb. Specifically, the verb in a sentence must agree with the subject in number. That is to say, if the subject is singular, the verb must be plural form and if the subject is plural,the verb must be singular form. Also, past form must agree with past form and present form must agree with present form. The poor academic standard of journalists and news anchors and the poor academic standard of the system that produced them are displayed in the journalists’ inability to adhere to this simple grammatical rules of concord.Furthermore, the media houses have not provided adequate training for journalists. It is incompetence to find the word ‘titled’ appearing five times on the same page in the same English articles considering the British tradition which we use in Nigeria. ‘Entitled’ is the appropriate word but the writer as well as the editor is not adequately educated to know this. All these show the poor academic standard of the journalists who ignore the facts that error in English articles is detrimental to journalism.

As a result, there is need for more attention during edition and it is recommendable also to properly edit works that the public can easily gain access to and avoid such errors. The errors in each of the expression presented in the above tables are analysed bellow in each of the table, and the correct version of each expression is given. The analysis is done table-bytable, and in each case, the correct expression is boldly written in a bracket while a short note is given in respect to the wrong expression.

Finally, the summary of these findings shows among other things, that punctuation errors covering about 44.61% of the total number of errors are the most frequent types of errors which occur in the Newspapers English articles editions of *World News* – *News Digest,* dated from 2013-2015. More so, the researcher equally discovered that most of these errors are as a result of incompetence in the mastery of the English language. This is because, in terms of qualification, the journalists and news casters interviewed were quite educated but due to the fact that they are second language users of the English language and are not the original language speakers, they are bound to commit some grammatical errors.

The researcher again, discovered that most of these errors are caused by the level of education of the newscasters or reporters. This is true because, referring to Mr Eto’s comment, a first degree holder with at least second class lower who has not yet gone higher in education can become a newscaster. Furthermore, some members of the Newspapers staff interviewed, supported the view that some of these errors were also used to capture the readers’ interests. This is to say that, indeed readers do not rely wholly on word meanings of these news as absolutely correct. In as much as some of these erroneous forms are intentionally used to capture the interest of readers, yet there are some linguistically substandard or semantically ill-formed expressions knowing fully well that all claims by these staff may not be accepted as reality.

**CHAPTER FIVE**

**SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY**

**5.1 Summary of the Major Findings**

The importance of the English grammar cannot be over emphasised. The grammar plays a very vital role in writing. Unfortunately, it has been discovered that there are a lot of errors in the use of the English grammar in Nigerian English articles. This errors come about for different reasons but they all result in hampering effective communication.

The English grammar is constantly misused in Nigerian English articles. This means that, the misuse of grammar could mislead or falsely inform a user of English. The grammatical error in English articles creates confusion and hampers effective communication. According to Hoffman, “what is worse is that the writer can never know if the reader is confused or has misunderstood something so cannot add more in case of a confused reader, nor can the reader ask a question” (253). A reporter must maintain clarity so that hearers can discover what the broadcaster thinks or wants them to know. The effectiveness of communication is measured by the clarity of a message hence; dissemination of a lucid idea is believed to be the ultimate goal of communication. In a global language such as English, intelligibility and comprehensibility are worth any price. The correct use of language is of utmost importance to both the broadcaster and the audience because that is only when effective communication takes place and the reader effortlessly decodes the intended meaning of the news lines.

It is also important to note that the print media, as influential users of the language, are (or should be) beacons of linguistic excellence. The fact that their products are widely spread should make them adopt a better principle of communication because communication becomes successful only when the audience or readers correctly decode what the journalist intends. The English article is generally known to be a medium of communication to the listening public which comprises both the elite and the layman. Since many consider English articles to be infallible in the area of English grammar and usage, many fail to recognise deviant structures in news as the errors which they are, and assume all what they hear to be of the desired standard. The linguistic position of English article writers is so sensitive that they ought to keep abreast of the correct and current use of the language with which they communicate information to the public. The world is now a global village, the internet and social networks give English articles wider coverage. Suffice it to say that this all-important language should be carefully written and should not involve anything less than the standard use of the target language.

The English grammar is very useful in writing, individualizing and giving definiteness or indefiniteness to nouns they precede. Any inappropriate use of grammar automatically disrupts meaning and makes effective communication fail. This is the reason the knowledge of the grammar of every written language is a prerequisite to writers of such a language. Poor knowledge of grammar of the English language among writers is the reason for a massive misuse of the English grammars in many of the Nigerian media houses.

**5.2 Conclusion**

Having carried out this study, the researcher concludes by stating a result which proved that grammatical errors in English articles have negative effects on the mass communication such that it occurs in all the parts of the country and so could be considered as a national problem which also sends wrong signals, creating a bad and poor image for the country and making the development Nigeria envisages from education illusive since English articles ought to be a medium of enforcing literacy, education and enlightenment.Meanwhile, it is quite understandable that these errors are fast becoming imperceptible in the English language in the whole country.The importance of the English grammar cannot be over emphasised. The English grammar plays a very important role in writing and reading of news lines. Unfortunately, it has been found that there are a lot of errors in the use of the English grammar in Newspapers English articles which ought to be corrected.

**5.3 Recommendations**

Consequent upon the research findings is that, the researcher is of the view that those who work in the media houses should be more committed to their jobs and carefullydischarge their duties. One person should not be left to do the jobs of three persons.

The media houses should become more sensitive to the public opinion about their use of the English language and improve their standard.

Secondly, during employment, preference should be given to those who have knowledge of journalism and are competent in their use of English. In turn, such workers should develop the attitude of taking their work seriously so as to curb the errors which occur from impatience, carelessness and lack of supervision.

Furthermore, seminars, refresher courses and workshops, particularly on language use and errors have to be arranged regularly for journalists and news casters by their employers. Also, monitoring bodies like the National Broadcasting Commission (NBC) should be more proactive and functional to ensure that journalists are abreast of the rules and new development in their field.

Again, it is expedient that Nigerian academic system be improved and persons going into the field of journalism should be exposed to material written in Standard English for the proper mastery of the language. Questions about the level or standard of our educational system, especially, when they occur in English articles which circulate beyond the boundaries of Nigeria should stipulate the correct and acceptable use of the grammar.

Nevertheless, it is believed that no study is perfect and at the same time conclusive on its own; improvements on this study are still possible in any of the following approaches:

1. The current study focused on the grammatical error analysis of selected English articles of the broadcasting corporation of Abia state, (BCA) Radio, Umuahia. Repeating the study with another level of linguistics or aspect of the English language will be quite helpful.
2. Repeating the study using any other television or radio station within the country as a case study should also be carried out.
3. A comparative study of the similar topic with thesame methodology but with a different sample size could be analysed using Nigeria English articles and British English articles.

However, based on the findings and implications of this study, the researcher is of the view that the following recommendations could be implemented.

* The Nigerian government should ensure a prompt improvement of language learning facilities in schools in order to improve the mastery and effectiveness of the

English language of her citizens.

* Readers should be enlightened to the grammatical shortcomings of the news lines which they hear. Many readers take all they hear in news as absolutely correct, and do not believe that errors can be tracedfrom the news items they listen to on daily bases.
* English articles should not exploit journalese inadequacy at the expense of good grammatical constructions because this affects the meaning of what is meant to be conveyed. Therefore, news items should be properly edited before being published or read out to the entire public; because this will go a long way in helping the general public to become acquainted with the correct and acceptable forms of the English language.
* There should be a stipulated level of education to be attained by all intended broadcasting workers before going into “the business” proper. A minimum of first degree or at least, O’ level of education in the appropriate discipline is strongly recommended.
* Language teachers on their own part should work harder and be more creative in teaching the English grammar in the early formal education. They should encourage the use of the dictionary early enough in school life. They should use whatever method that has been found by experts to be most appropriate to teach English grammar.

Since the research has shown sample evidence of the negative effects on concord and grammar, there is need for all teachers of English at all levels to be familiar with error and contrastive analysis and the application of their findings in the classroom so as to reduce the incidence of grammatical errors by the products of our educational system.

* To round it off, broadcasting authorities should adhere to employing only well-qualified language experts that are highly proficient in the English language to serve as editors that will competently proofread grammatical aspects of the news lines before they are broadcast. If these recommendations are carried out by the media houses, they will become pacesetters in the effective use of the English language which they ought to be. English articles, through this, will enhance maximum comprehensibility of conveyed messages and at the same time promote the standard use of the English language.

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