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**An Analysis of Pupil and Student-teacher Language in the
Classroom during Teaching Practice in Secondary Schools in
Kericho West Sub-County, Kenya**

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to investigate the possible similarity between student-teacher language errors and learner interlanguage in Kericho West Sub-County of Kericho County, Kenya. The general objective of this study was to establish the possible similarity between student-teacher errors and the Interlanguage (IL) of the English Second Language Learners (ESLLs) in Kericho West Sub-County, Kericho. The objective of this study was to demonstrate the syntactic and grammatical errors made by student-teachers and English Second Language Learners at school. The study was guided by the Error Analysis theory while a descriptive research design was utilized to provide a description of the state of affairs. The target population was 50 teachers and 6000 learners. Purposive sampling technique was used to select the sample as the study focused on the student-teachers and the Form one and two learners they teach. The study chose eight student-teachers teaching either English or History/C.R.E, as these subjects involve much talking and writing. Sixty-four Forms one and two learners were also purposely selected from four purposely selected schools which usually get student-teachers. The study utilized observation and recordings in class and group discussions to collect data which was recorded for error analysis. Content validity of the research instruments was enhanced through a pilot study among learners and student-teachers who were not participants in the study. The data was analyzed using thematic analysis and a similarity was established between student-teacher language and the Interlanguage of the learners. The study established that student-teachers and their learners make many syntactic and grammatical errors. The study recommended that student-teachers language proficiency be emphasized, in-service courses be mandatory and Continuous Professional Development (CPD) be enhanced.

Keywords: Continuous professional development, English second language learners, error analysis, interlanguage, thematic analysis

Introduction

English is a global language which Crystal (2012), Jeraltin and Ramganes (2013) affirm is both a medium for global communication and a utility language. English plays a critical role in Kenya as it is the language of instruction and an examinable subject at all levels of the Kenyan educational system (Ojiambo et al., 2017) The Ministry of Education in Kenya has often expressed great concern over the continuing decline in the English language results posted by candidates regularly at the Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education (KCSE) examination (Daily Nation, 1st January, 2016). Ndungu (2016) reported that the mastery of literacy in English is poor both at primary school and secondary school. Madowo (2020) posited that the problem in Kenya is about the way teachers teach their learners as their pedagogical skills are inadequate while Malowa (2015)

affirmed that approximately 70 percent of the candidates score less than 25 percent in English at the KCSE examinations.

Table 1: Kericho West K.C.S.E Results - Performance in KCSE English 101

Year	Mean Score	Highest Possible Mean Score
2016	3.26	12
2017	3.54	12
2018	4.13	12
2019	4.73	12
2020	4.40	12
2021	2.21	12

Source: Kericho West Sub-County Education Office (2022)

Table 1 above ascertains the need to conduct a study on the poor and declining results in English in Kericho West Sub-County.

In Second Language Acquisition, the field of Error analysis (EA) was established by Corder (1971). EA is a study which investigates the errors made by L2 learners. He emphasizes that errors, if studied systematically, can provide significant insights into how a language is actually learned by a foreigner. The errors and mistakes are due to their lack of knowledge of the target language (TL), and the influence of their previously learnt language (Leacock et al 2011).

The government of Kenya and its Ministry of Education expect learners to have acquired sufficient command of the English language so that they are able to speak and write for proficient communication at the end of primary school. The current study was interested in the similarity between student-teacher syntactic and grammatical errors and the interlanguage (IL) of the secondary school ESLLs, as attested to by the poor English results at KCSE so as to determine methods of interventions which would result in better performance.

The objective was to demonstrate the possible similarity between syntactic and grammatical errors made by student-teachers and the IL of the secondary school ESLLs in Kericho West Sub-County. The study question was ‘What syntactic and grammatical errors do student-teachers and ESLLs make in class?’ The study was undertaken because of the core role English plays whereas its performance has been consistently poor in this Sub-County. There is need for further research to give deeper insight to the poor performance of pupils in English at KCSE. Therefore, this study aimed to fill in the existing gaps from an applied linguistics perspective.

Review of Related Literature

A number of studies in the Western and Eastern world have been conducted on Error Analysis (EA) whereas a few have been done in Africa (Uba, 2015). Kericho West Sub-County has not exhaustively been studied to establish the possible similarity between the syntactic and grammatical errors made by student-teachers and the ESLLs.

Setiyorini et al. (2020) established there were a variety of errors in the students’ work and the analysis showed that omission, addition, substitution, and permutation errors were pervasive. The study concluded it was crucial for lecturers to do Error Analysis (EA) to detect student errors in their essays as errors are useful for both learners and teachers (James, 2013). Setiyorini et al (2020) emphasized the crucial role of EA but did not investigate the errors found in the language of the students’ instructors and the current one sought to fill in that gap by utilizing EA and identifying any possible similarity.

Hikmah (2020) conducted research on the aspects of omission and addition errors in English texts made by the students of MAN 3 Bantul. The data was analyzed by identifying and checking the students' errors according to the theory of James (1998) which avers that errors inform the teacher of what needs to be taught. Data was categorized by entering them on the table based on the Linguistic Taxonomy and Surface Strategy Taxonomy. Hikmah (2020) established that the ESLs had omission and addition errors and concluded that the ESLs lack grammatical mastery. The current study has close similarity with Hikmah (2020) on the errors identified but the previous one did not investigate student-teacher language.

Khatter (2019) conducted a study to explore and analyze the most common essay writing errors among Saudi female learners at the departments of English, Majmaa'h University, Saudi Arabia. The aim was to identify the difficulties from an EA standpoint and identify the sources underlying them to achieve the study objectives. The tool for data analysis was EA, which falls within the *descriptive research method*. Corder (1967) established that errors are a visible proof of learning and are unavoidable. The findings established that the most frequent types of errors committed were; punctuation errors, spelling errors, preposition errors, article errors, wrong verb tense, and wrong word form. The study established that there was a gap between the student needs and the teachers' instructional methodology, inadequate teaching methods and strategies, and students were ignorant of grammar and punctuation rules. The current study has close relation in the themes identified but the current sampling was secondary school while the reviewed study did not investigate the errors committed by the instructors therefore the current one sought to bridge that gap.

Alahmadi (2019) investigated and classified grammatical errors with Subject Verb Agreement (SVA) errors in writing made by 25 female first year Saudi undergraduate students enrolled in an English language course at Tail bah University The study used EA to identify and classify the errors made by the participants and established that grammatical errors related to SVA fell into three main categories; SVA errors with singular subjects which were the majority, SVA errors with plural subjects, and SVA errors where the main verb or auxiliary verb is compounded with or separated from the subject which were the least. The study recommended that more emphasis be accorded to the SVA rules, learner errors should be traced, identified, analyzed and constructive activities and feedback given. The study by Alahmadi (2019) established that some errors are caused by the process of learning changes that an L2 undergoes when learning a new language. According to Corder (1967) errors provide insight into how languages are learnt. Alahmadi (2019) established that university students made errors while the current research sought to investigate whether the student-teacher errors had any influence on those of the ESLs they teach.

Hayati (2019) set out to investigate and analyse written papers of 28 students majoring in English so as to identify the areas of error and the error types in their work. Hayati (2019) employed the procedural analysis of Corder (1974) The findings established the existence of errors; namely, auxiliary, subject verb agreement, lexical, preposition, noun clause, possessive form, verb, noun phrase construction, article, and pluralisation errors which he averred were interlingual. Hayati (2019) recommended that teachers need to realize that student errors are a sign of learning while Corder (1967) posited that they are also a sign of inadequate teaching. Based on the reviewed literature the current study sought to investigate whether there was possible similarity between student-teacher syntactic errors and those of their learners.

Hasan and Munandar (2018) conducted an investigation which attempted to identify the grammatical errors produced by students of the English Department of UGM (Universitas Gadjah

Mada). The study classified the errors based on the Surface Strategy Taxonomy as proposed by Dulay et al. (1982). The reviewed study found the following errors; omission, misformation, misordering and addition errors as made by learners but did not investigate those made by their teachers and the current one sought to fill in that gap.

Chitondo (2021) conducted an investigation on the grammatical errors made by student-teachers in their written work at Rockview University, Ghana. The population comprised 50 second year students and 8 language lecturers who were purposely selected. He used student-teacher written assignments for data collection. The data was analyzed qualitatively with charts and graphs utilized. He also utilized a combination of software for analysis. The study established that student-teachers made SVA, singular and plural, spelling, punctuation, prepositional, omission of words, articles, and repetition errors. Chitondo (2021) established that learners made mistakes due to their ignorance. It was also found that L1 interference played a role. Even though both studies are related, Chitondo's focused on student-teachers whereas the current one also sought to investigate whether student-teacher errors were similar with those of the ESLs they taught.

Wairimu and Ngugi (2021) sought to investigate the prepositional errors in English usage of upper primary learners in Kieni East Sub-County, Nyeri County in Kenya. The study was to identify, categorize and describe prepositional errors in the written compositions based on Corder's EA (1971). They established that there were prepositional errors, errors of omission, addition, substitution and misordering. In contrast with the aforementioned study which focused on the prepositional errors by learners the current one sought to establish whether there was any similarity between the errors made by the teachers and their learners.

Katam (2016) conducted a study Eldoret West District in Uasin Gishu, Kenya, on common spelling errors made by speakers of Nandi as an L1 and use English as an L2. She argued that what exists in the L1 system is thereby shifted to the L2 and that the L1 influence led to misspelling and mis-articulation in the ESLs' language. These errors occur due to language transfer caused by fossilized linguistic items and rules as a result of L1 which is transferred to the L2 by the SLL (Hourani, 2008). Katam (2016) shows the extent to which she explored the errors made by learners but did not investigate the possible link between teacher and learner errors which the current one sought to bridge.

Kirigia and Ombati (2015) presented a paper at the Laikipia University International Conference which examined errors in the written work of Kenyan university students' written work in English. The study used a qualitative research design and was carried out over a period of two semesters in the 2013/2014 academic year. They established the gravity of the errors which ranged from interlingual, intralingual to ambiguous types involving erroneous, wrong spelling, and poor word choice. Their research has similarities with the current study as both examined errors made by students but they differ when it comes to the similarity between errors made by student-teacher and their learners.

Error Analysis as Theory and Method

In order to analyze errors, this study employed James' (2001) Error Analysis taxonomy developed from Corder's theoretical framework (Corder, 1967). Error Analysis (EA) as explained by Corder (1967) is a method used to document the errors that appear in a learner's language, to determine whether they are systematic and to possibly explain their causes. Sheng (2016) defines EA as the process of studying the appearance, nature, causes, and consequences of unsuccessful language. According to Corder (1967), there are five procedures in EA; namely, collection of ESL language

samples, identification and classification of errors, description of errors, explanation of errors, and evaluation of errors.

Corder (1967), Alharbi (2015) averred that mistakes are unsystematic errors while errors are systematic. Unsystematic errors or mistakes occur in one's native language while systematic ones occur in a second language. Corder (1982) categorizes errors into; omission, addition, misformation, mis-ordering and fossilized errors. Kusumawardhani (2017) defines Intralingual errors as those which reflect the general characteristics of rule learning, such as faulty generalization, incomplete application of rules and failure to learn the appropriate conditions for rule application, and the learner's attempt to build up hypotheses about English from their own limited experience of it.

James' (2001) Error Analysis taxonomy classifies errors into the following sub-sets; grammar (articles, prepositions, verb forms etc.), syntax (word order, phrase, and clause), phonology (pronunciation), semantics/lexicon (meaning, word choice) and orthography (capitalization, punctuation, and spelling). The current study utilized James' (2001) EA taxonomy.

Research Methodology

The study adopted the descriptive research design and was conducted on Form one and two pupils in Kericho West Sub-County secondary schools with a research population of 6000 pupils (Kericho West Sub-County Education Office, 2019). The pupils were selected as they are taught by student-teachers who were also subjects in this study. The study was conducted to assess the similarity between student-teacher language and the IL of the ESLs. The researcher used purposive sampling to select four schools from the 32 in Kericho West which usually engage student-teachers.

The study utilized observation and recordings in class and group discussions to access participants' speech. The researcher analyzed the responses for errors, classified the major topics covered, indicated the major themes, and developed a summary report of the major themes. The researcher used direct quotations to present the data (Kombo & Tromp, 2006). The study adopted the coding system drawn by Creswell (2009) and the following themes emerged; poor tenses, poor pronunciation, and syntactical errors. The errors as illustrated further down were coded thus TSG1a or LSG1a. T or L refers to teacher or learner, SG refers to Syntactic/Grammatical that is error type, '1' refers to error number while the letter 'a' refers to the school.

Verb Tense Errors

Serial no.	Error identification	Error correction	Discussion type	School
TSG6a	*She teach at that school.	She teaches at that school.	Group	A

In this case, a teacher has made a syntactic/grammatical error which is error number six.

Results and Discussion

In this section, the researcher presents and discusses the findings of the study in light of its objective. The errors made by the participants are classified; the common errors are identified with illustrative examples; and finally, these errors are corrected by examples. Table 2 shows the types, numbers and percentages of errors made by the participants in their spoken English.

Table 2: Analysis of Errors made by Kericho West Student-Teachers and Pupils

Type of Error	Frequency of Error	Percentage (%)
Verb tense	60	20
Concord	55	18
Double marking	30	10
Preposition	72	23
Omission	20	7
Mis-ordering	25	8
L1 influence	40	13
Total	302	100%

Source: Analysis of Errors made by Kericho West Student-Teachers and Pupils (2022)

The researcher thereafter presented the seven types of errors the participants made in their spoken English.

Verb Tense Errors

Syaprizza and Ramadona (2018) posit that verb tense is the verb used to indicate the time at which the action or statement occurred.

Table 3: Verb Tense Errors

S/N	Error Identification	Error Correction	Discussion Type	School
TSG6a	*She teach at that school.	She teaches at that school.	Group	A
LSG6b	*Yego call me and told me we should not go.	Yego called me and told me we should not go.	Group	B

The findings in table 3 established that verb tense errors were made by both the teacher-students and ESLLs as argued by Hayati (2019) who claimed errors in grammar and syntax established that students had not mastered the rules of English grammar. He reiterated that tense errors were found among students as they lacked sentence construction skills. Katam (2016) established that verb tense errors and deletion of –ed past tense marker errors were most likely interlingual as L1 influence led to mis-articulation. The study findings revealed that the participants were unaware of the verb tense rules and were bound to make errors.

Errors Relating to Concord/Subject-Verb Agreement

Concord refers to grammatical agreement (Kirigia & Ombati, 2015). Alahmadi (2019) reported that the main rule of agreement is that singular subjects are used with singular verb phrases while plural subjects are used with plural verb phrases.

Table 4: Concord Errors

S/N	Error Identification	Error Correction	Discussion	School
TSG1c	*We are created in God image.	We are created in God's image.	C.R.E class	C
TSG1d	*These are pronouns that ascertains the person.	These are pronouns that ascertain who the person is.	English class	D
TSG1d	*These are pronouns that refers to people.	These are pronouns that refer to people.	English class	D

The sentences in table 4 showed that the participants had not mastered the basic SVA rules. Alahmadi (2019) argued that SVA was a challenge to ESLs which was most likely due to misapplication of rules. He also noted that in English, the mastery of grammar rules is crucial. The current study established that the SVA rules were an area of difficulty for learners even though they had been taught in class while Setiyorini et al. (2020) argued that teachers were not fully specialized in their teaching of English. They placed blame on the teachers for the ESLs misapplication of grammar rules.

Double Marking of Linguistic Elements

Double marking is when a construction has an unnecessarily repeated item which is basically an addition error.

Table 5: Double Marking

S/N	Error Identification	Error Correction	Discussion	School
LSG2b	*He is growing more younger.	He is growing younger.	English class	B
LSG2b	*I cannot be able to help you.	I cannot help you	English lesson	B

The words 'more' and the suffix -er (younger) are elements of comparison and the student-teacher failed to observe the English rules of marking degree of comparison in sentences.

The participants had errors of double marking which also indicated a failure to understand or master the grammar rules. The study findings as shown in table 5 are similar to those of Khatter (2019) who argued that students were ignorant of grammatical rules and there seemed to be a gap between the students' needs and the teachers' instructional methodology. He also proved that the teachers' methods and strategies were inadequate.

Errors Related to Prepositions

According to Setyaningrum and Fatmawaty (2020), a preposition is a part of grammar that is useful in connecting one word to another.

Table 6: Preposition Errors

S/N	Error Identification	Error Correction	Discussion	School
LSG3a	*At least the uniforms will be on use so they do not just disappear	At least the uniforms will be in use and will not just disappear	Group	A
TSG3c	*Now from what you have heard in the radio.	Now from what you have heard over the radio	Group	C

The findings in table6 established that the participants had preposition errors due to their failure to understand the correct usage of prepositions. Khatter (2019) established that preposition errors were frequent among the participants while teaching methods and strategies were inadequate. He claimed that there was a gap between student needs and teachers' instructional methodology.

Errors of Omission

Errors of omission are types of errors where the learner lacks the form of grammar that is expected to be in the sentence and omits or deletes it. Hikmah (2020) argues it is the missing of some elements which should exist in a well-formed sentence construction.

Table 7: Omission Errors

S/N	Error Identification	Error Correction	Discussion Type	School
TSG4a	*I haven't seen you quite some time now.	I have not seen you for quite some time.	C.R.E class	A
TSG4c	*Bible is the sacred book.	The Bible is the sacred book.	C.R.E class	A

The study established that the participants had omission errors. Wairimu and Ngugi (2021) argue that such errors are lexical and affect the meaning of the entire sentence. They also established that omission errors among English as Foreign Language Learners (EFLs) were common because they had neither learnt nor understood the Target Language (TL). Setiyorini et al. (2020) claimed that for learners to eliminate such errors, they needed feedback from their lecturers.

Mis-ordering Errors

Misordering errors occur when the speaker or writer puts an item in the incorrect place in a construction (Hikmah, 2020).

Table 8: Mis-Ordering Errors

S/N	Error Identification	Error Correction	Discussion Type	School
LSG5a	*We were brought for by our principal.	Our principal brought us these things.	Group	A
TSG5a	*I urge all students that let us stay calm; avoid throwing stones and hard words to various individuals.	I urge all to stay calm, avoid throwing stones and hard words at various individuals.	C.R.E class	A
TSG5d	*Why can you support that Vincent is right?	Why do you support Vincent's answer?	English class	D

Hasan and Munandar (2018) reported that misordering errors were found in the work of English department students and claimed that students who had a poor understanding of the grammar system have a difficulty in constructing correct sentences. Wairimu and Ngugi (2021) reported that errors were caused by the following; student attitude towards the TL, interlingual causes, developmental interference or teacher incompetence. They established that despite students being taught much English, they still made many grammatical errors. These errors were quite common in the work of the students and suggested that the participants had a poor understanding of grammar rules.

Katam (2016) argued that L1 influence occurs when a learners' TL is interfered with by their L1 thus causing an incorrect sentence construction.

Table 9: L1 Interference

S/N	Error Identification	Error Correction	Discussion Type	School
LSG7a	*I hope staying at home for a week took you well?	I hope staying at home for a week was good for you?	Group	A
LSG7d	*Can you put it properly?	Can you explain it properly?	Group	D

The identified errors in table 9 were most likely due to negative interlingual transfer as posited by Brown (2000). The current findings were similar to those of Calderon and Plaza (2021) who reasoned that many errors by ESLLs were interlingual as they are caused by L1 influence.

Conclusions

This study has given an account of the main errors made by pupils and student-teachers in their spoken English. The study findings based on the discussion and the illustrative examples given showed that the participants committed seven syntactic/grammatical errors namely; subject-verb agreement, double marking, preposition, omission, verb tense, misformation, misordering, and L1 influence. Wairimu and Ngugi (2021) argued that some errors were due to poor ESLL attitude, interlingual causes, teacher incompetence, and developmental causes. Some errors were as a result of L1 interference while others were due to the media the learners are exposed to. One way of emphasizing the influence of the L1 and student-teachers language on the ESLLs' learning of

English is to collect such and ask the learners to analyze them to see whether they are able to correct them. The similarity between the syntactic errors made by student-teachers and the IL of the ESLs was quite telling as the ESLs look up to the student teachers. Therefore, there is a relationship between the syntactic errors committed by teachers and those of the ESLs. The current study was limited as it only investigated Form one and two pupils, and their student-teachers without venturing into other classes therefore it is not representative of the whole. The study investigated syntactic and grammatical errors made by student-teachers who are at these schools for only a school term and some might argue that this is too short to correctly gauge their impact.

A number of recommendations for further research are given. It is recommended that further research be taken to investigate the causes of the errors made by education undergraduates at their institutions. Lastly, further research should be undertaken on whether regular teachers also make syntactic and grammatical errors.

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