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EVALUATING LANGUAGE USE AMONG SCIENCE LABORATORY TECHNOLOGY AND PHARMACEUTICAL STUDENTS AT FEDERAL POLYTECHNIC MUBI

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This paper assesses the language use of science and laboratory technology and pharmaceutical students of federal polytechnic, mubi Adamawa State. The theoretical framework underpinning the research is error analysis (EA), a theory of second language acquisition (SLA) which is concerned with the identification, description, and explanation of language learner's error in either the spoken or written form. 4 randomly selected ND II students from each of the two departments during the 2021/2022 academic session wrote SIWES report on their industrial training (IT) programme. The technical reports were marked for error identification. The identified error were marked as thus: Verb, Spelling, wrongs words, Nouns, Punctuation/Capitalization, Pronouns, articles, abbreviation/Coinages and prepositions. Descriptive/Statistics involving of measure of central tendency (percentage and means scores) were use to analyze the data collected. Based on Ellis and Barkhurzen's (2005) surface structure taxonomy of error categorization, most of the errors can be categorized into those of omission, addition, misformation, and misordering. Following form the underlying assumption of (EA) as it relates to error in second language learning, the identified error can be said to have been the result of overgeneralization of rules, interference from the mother tongue, extra lingual factors such as textbooks and inadequate learning. Its recommended that giving an enabling environment, functional teaching of English should be encouraged to improve the communicative competence of the learners.

Key words: Linguistics, Pharmaceutical, Veins, Deviant, Cognisance, etc.

Introduction

This paper intends to examine the language of students in tertiary education in Nigeria, with particular focus on the use of language by students of Science Laboratory Technology and Pharmaceutical, at the Federal Polytechnic, Mubi. The research seeks to identify the peculiar Linguistics problems of this category of students

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with a view to identifying them as a means of improving English language teaching and learning in tertiary institutions in Nigeria.

Statement of the Problem

Linguists and educators have frequently bemoaned the mass failure of students in the English language in communication situations and as a qualifying subject in Nigeria. Studies of secondary education in different parts of the country indicate that the performance of students in the Senior School Certificate Examination (SSCE) is poor in virtually every subject on the school curriculum. At tertiary institutions, students are observed to perform poorly in English, which plays a prominent role as the medium of instruction. This poor background in the English language adversely affects students who want to read new courses like Science Laboratory Technology, and Pharmaceutical. Akere (1995) expounds that, what is responsible for the low level of performance by post-secondary school students is the inadequate Linguistics and communicative skills that characterise the learning of the English language at the secondary school level. At the Federal Polytechnic, Mubi, the situation is not different. Linguists and teachers have attempted to offer solutions to the problems of students' poor performance in English.

Aim and objectives:

The aim of this paper is to assess the language use of science laboratory technology and pharmaceutical students of federal polytechnic, mubi. This can be achieved through the following objectives:

- i. To identify and examine the Linguistics features that characterise the language use of the Science Laboratory Technology and Pharmaceutical students;
- ii. To identify and examine the factors that constrain the use of English by this category of students, and
- iii. To offer some suggestions that would be useful in redesigning the Communication in English courses to make them more relevant to the needs of the students in their future work places.

It's significance.

Considering the demands on the English language at all levels of educational institutions, especially polytechnics, the study will be significant to all those that are associated with the teaching and learning of the language at the tertiary level. Those that are expected to benefit from the outcome of this paper, include language teachers, students, curriculum developers, and ESP practitioners.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework underpinning this research is an approach from Error Analysis (E.A.). Error analysis is a type of Linguistics analysis that is concerned with the identification, description, and explanation of language learners' errors in either the spoken or written form (Lennon, 1991).

Scope of the research.

This research is limited in its coverage to only the Science and Laboratory Technology and Pharmaceutical students at the Federal Polytechnic, Mubi, Adamawa State, Nigeria. It focuses on analysing some parts of the "Technical reports" of ND 2 students of the institution, during the 2021–2022 academic session with a view to identifying and accounting for some deviant uses of language, using principles and procedures provided by Error Analysis (E.A.) As a theory of Second Language Acquisition (SLA).

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Related literature review

This paper reviewed literature related to subject matter; the subjects under review are as follows:

- i. The Study of General English in Tertiary Institutions in Nigeria
- ii. English for Specific Purpose (ESP) meaning and historical development
- iii. Communicative Language Teaching and the ESP Approach;
- iv. Needs assessment and analysis English for Specific Purposes (ESP)
- v. Technology and English teaching English for Specific Purposes (ESP)
- vi. The language of science
- vii. Empirical studies in English as a Second Language (ESL) or English as a Foreign Language (EFL) settings.
- viii. The Concept of Error Analysis (EA) in an ESL/EFL Setting.

Methodology.

This present and discuss the procedures that was used in carrying out the research. It's therefore focuses on the methods of data collection and analysis that was used for the research. This can be seen in the following heading:

Research design

This paper assesses the English language use of the students of Science Laboratory Technology and Pharmaceutical at the Federal Polytechnic, Mubi. In order to do this, it's adopt the descriptive survey type of research design. According to Ifidon and Ifidon (2007), the descriptive research method generally documents events in their natural setting and does not involve manipulating any variables. In other words, the descriptive research design involves collecting data in order to answer questions concerning conditions or relationships that exist. The descriptive research is judged to be suitable for the present research because observation has shown that, the performance of the students in the English language is generally poor. This is an existing problem that needs some solutions, which the research seeks to do.

Instrument for data collection:

The main instrument that was used for collecting the data for this paper research is the student's technical report writing. The report which was written during their industrial training (IT) intended to examine the peculiar uses of language by the category of students under research.

Method of data analysis

The data collected for research i.e. the students technical report were marked by the researcher paying attention to erroneous or deviant sentence and/or part of sentences. In this process some pages were discarded because in the affected pages, the learners could not write meaningfully either because they were incompetent or they did not understand the task assigned.

Data presentation and analysis

The data for this research paper were taken from the written technical report of four (4) students, each randomly selected from the department of science and laboratory technology and pharmaceutical, federal polytechnic, mubi. The report were carefully marked for error identification. The identified error were described in terms of linguistics component affected. These error categories are classified for each two departments selected for the research. Each error category is exemplified by one erroneous expression and its corrected version.

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Error Category: Science Laboratory Technology Department.

Verbs

1(a) This is because it moves the laboratory backwards

(b) This is because it moves the laboratory backwards

Spellings

1 (a) For these reason he might have a problem in the veins.

(b) For these reason he might have a problem in the veins.

Wrong Words

1 (a) The third factors that need to be taken in to cognizant is where to obtained the lab materials.

(a) The third factors that need to be taken in to cognizance is where to obtained the lab materials.

Error Categories:- Pharmaceutical Department. Verbs

1(a) This have lead a lot of youth into drugs abuse.

(a) This has led a lot of youth into drugs abuse.

Spelling Error

1(a) This is usual phenomenum that is parading the Nigerian pharmacist. (a) This is usual phenomenon that is parading the Nigerian pharmacist.

Wrong Word

1(a) The prize of drugs in the private hospitals are always fluctuation. (a) The cost of drugs in the private hospitals are always fluctuating.

Conclusion

This research paper was carried out with the aim of assessing the language use of the students of science and laboratory technology and pharmaceutical, Departments of federal polytechnic, mubi in order to determine the communicative competence of the learners in their respective content areas. This research also sought to offer some suggestion aimed at redesigning the “communication in English course” to make it relevant to the needs of the students. Based on the analysis of the data collected, it was concluded that the students made different grammatical error in the areas of verbs, spellings, word usage. Similarly, the students could not write meaningfully on tasks in their content areas. Furthermore, the research revealed that the pattern of error made by the learners appeared to be uniform across the two departments. Resorting to the theoretical underpinnings of errors analysis (EA), the identified error were assumed to have been caused by over generalization of rules, interference from the mother tongue, extra-lingual factors and inadequate learning.

Recommendation

In view of the findings of this research paper, the following recommendation are made as means of improving the teaching and learning of English in Nigeria.

- i- Teachers of English should try as much as possible to engage in functional teaching of the language so as to improve the communicative competence of the learners.
- ii- Pronunciation, spelling and syntactic functions of different classes of words should be effectively taught by teachers of English so as to avoid confusion in usage.
- iii- More teachers should be trained and employed in the educational system particularly, at the secondary school level.

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