

AN INVESTIGATION OF ADJUNCTS IN THE ENGLISH OF STUDENTS IN SELECTED TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS IN NIGERIA

Cecilia Folasade Ojetunde, PhD

Department of English, Michael Otedola College of Education, Epe, Lagos State, Nigeria

Bidemi Okanlawon, PhD

Department of English, Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Nigeria

Abstract:

The study investigated the acquisition of adjuncts by students in selected tertiary institutions in Southwestern, Nigeria with a view to examining the problems encountered by students in the usage of these structural components and its effects on their mastery of English. The data for the study were drawn from an essay writing assignment given to selected 675 first year students across nine tertiary institutions in Southwestern Nigeria. Stratified random sampling technique was adopted in selecting the participants. Seventy-five students were drawn from each institution using purposive random sampling procedure. The findings revealed that out of the 12,573 instances of adjuncts, process adjuncts accounted for 6,844 (54.43%), place adjuncts 4,066 (32.34%) and time adjuncts 1,663 (13.23%). In spite of the high frequency rate of process adjuncts, there were deviant usages such as inappropriate choice of process adjuncts, semantic and orthographic errors and some instances of the influence of Nigerian languages on their usage of place and time adjuncts. The study concluded that the students' poor mastery of adjuncts has a lot of influence on their communicative repertoire. The study is therefore, a focus for the teachers of English and curriculum designers of the use of English course in Nigerian tertiary institutions.

Keywords: Investigation, Adjuncts, Students, Tertiary institutions

Introduction:

It is observed that students' proficiency in English is partly determined by their level of the acquisition of English structural components such as adjuncts; as these grammatical

items are used to state the time, the place, process and other circumstantial details of an action or event. The study of this component of language structure is very crucial considering the semantic and syntactic functions of adjuncts in both written and spoken discourse.

Thus, the ideational meta function of Halliday (1985) is very significant to this work; the ideational meta function deals with the construction of experience through language (Bloor and Bloor 2004). This means that through language a speaker expresses his experience of his external world and his own world of consciousness. Adjuncts are the structural elements that express circumstantial details surrounding these experiences.

As adjuncts play a crucial role in language usage, this study is very significant to the overall performance of students in their academics and communicative competence.

Review of Related Studies

The English adverbials have been studied by several linguists such as Adejare and Adejare (1996); Aliyu (2001); Boadi, Grieve and Nwankwo (1968); Christopherson and Sandved (1980); Gleason (1965); Hinkel (2002). These studies have looked at various categories of adverbials in conjunction with other grammatical features and aspects, transformations, mobility and sequence of occurrence. However, many of these scholars dwelt on the descriptive studies of adverbials (Boadi, Grieve and Nwankwo 1968; Halliday and Fawcett 1987; Quirk and Greenbaum 1973; Quirk, Greenbaum, Leech and Svartvik 1985; Aremo 2004; Greenbaum and Quirk 2005) without applying these studies to texts while scholars such as Fabusuyi (1986); Ugray and Ujvarosi (2003); Hinkel (2002); Jacobson (1964, 1975, 1978); Michaels (1992); Ogura, Bond and Ikehara (1994); Olagoke (1975, 1979) carried out various research on English adverbials in diverse academic essays, media – newspapers/magazines, conversational discourse and other special areas such as adverbial functions in English verse and in machine translation. Each of these studies has its own specification and goals which make it distinct from others. We could observe that in the previous years analyses of large corpora of published written texts in English have allowed for new insights into meaning, uses, functions and position of adverbials of different types particularly in L1 and L2 environments (Crystal, 1966; Fabusuyi, 1986).

However, the focus of this present study is integrated adverbials (adjuncts) being the most commonly used in conversational discourse and written texts of all other classes of adverbials in English. Based on this, the following review of related studies will be basically on adjuncts.

Olagoke (1975) carried out an error analysis on the written English of selected students of the University of Lagos in order to describe their approximation to well-

formedness and find linguistic explanations for them. Two hundred essays of the selected students from various faculties were analysed under four headings; syntactical, lexical, morphological and graphonological. Under syntactic analysis, he found out that one major problem in the use of adverbials is their positional behaviour. Olagoke found out that the adverbials used by the students in their essays were placed indiscriminately. He was of the opinion that the best rule to follow in order to minimize this problem is that modifiers should be placed as near as possible to the words they modify. Olagoke (1975) then observed that failure to apply this rule could lead to errors of attraction or misrelated phrases.

Olagoke's (1979) subsequent study on adverbials also examined the problems that learners encounter on the mobility of adverbials. Olagoke (1979) like other studies (i.e. Boadi et al 1968) has maintained that it is difficult to generalize about the position of adverbials since they may occur in a number of different positions in the sentence. This is contrary to the relatively fixed word-order status of other constituents e.g. verbal groups. For example in the sentences below:

The man has even broken the door

Even the man has broken the door

The man has broken even the door

It can be seen that the meaning of each of the sentences (changes with the movement of even (see Quirk and Greenbaum 1973:209).

In our opinion, Olagoke's (1975 and 1979) studies were majorly on the positional distribution of adverbials while little was done on the semantic categorization. We need to know that the understanding of the semantic classes of adverbials will help learners to attain the required level of proficiency in using adverbials meaningfully.

In Jacobson (1964) the syntactic properties and mobility of adverbs were also investigated to identify regularities and frequencies in adverb sentential position, specifically in relation to auxiliaries. Jacobson's research, based on a corpus of written British English (Jacobson 1964) and spoken American English (Jacobson 1975), resulted in a thorough syntactic classification of adverbials by the placement and capacity for movement within a sentence but without a great deal of attention devoted to their semantic or pragmatic taxonomy. On the other hand, Jacobson's (1978) subsequent investigation included semantic and pragmatic components that classified certain types of adverbials according to their meanings.

Hinkel (2002) however observed that Jacobson's semantic classification of adverbials was based on broad and somewhat indeterminate and subjective principle that group

adverbials into such categories as those of degree, frequency, quality etc and their prototypical pragmatic and often over-lapping functions. We need to state that this study favours such categorization as found in Jacobson (1978). This will help learners to be able to identify different types of adverbials and the use to which they can be put in different contexts. This is in support of Boadi's et al (1968) assertion that not much progress can be made in terms of systematizing our knowledge unless we can find suitable criteria by which to classify the individual phenomena we meet, putting like with like, which is fundamental to all learning.

On the study related to the acquisition of adverbials and tense relationship, Fabusuyi (1986) showed that the type of inadequacies found in learners' written English was perhaps a feature of the English used by the generality of Nigerians, whereby time relationships do not make reference to the adverbials involved. Fabusuyi therefore suggested that the practice of studying and teaching the different tense forms and correlating this with time as they stand in isolation from the rest of the sentence should be discouraged.

Several other studies have been carried out on one-word adverbials such as adverbial function of thus in English verse (Twose and McCully 2001) where it was argued that the use of the word thus in poetry saw a profound and significant expansion in the range and frequency of its uses in the 16th and 17th centuries. The study explored the full range of its possible uses in English prose and poetry:

- * as a focusing/process adjunct
 "Thinking thus she..."
- * as an intensifier ("Having sunk thus low...")
- * as a casual conjunct (Thus we can see that...")
- * as an appositional conjunct ("...some complicating factors, thus synchrony, diachrony...")

The study explored the links between the use of thus and the epic form in poetry thereby providing some confirmatory evidence of the relationship between style and function.

Other studies include those handling the meanings of specific adverbials such as even Berckmans (1993); still and already, Vander Avwera (1993). The indispensability of time and space adverbials was also shown in the works of Japanese scholars such as Ogura, Bond and Ikehara (1994); Ugray and Ujvarose (2003) who through their studies confirmed that the accurate processing of English adverbials is required for high quality machine translation. From the foregoing, we need to reinstate that there is the need for learners to improve their

proficiency in English through proper acquisition of the various components of the language structure, particularly integrated adverbials (adjuncts).

Theoretical Overview of Adjuncts

Following Quirk and Greenbaum (1973) and Adejare and Adejare's (1996) treatments of adjuncts, adjuncts are integrated adverbials that are grammatically embedded into the clause structure in which they function as a primary element of structure. For this reason, they are affected by the processes of negation and interrogation. A majority of English adverbials are integrated to some extent into the structure of the clause and the processes of negation and interrogation place restrictions on the mobility principle of adverbials. Thus, Greenbaum and Quirk (2005) recognize adjuncts and subjuncts as integrated adverbials in which case adjuncts are basically adverbials that modify material verbs while subjuncts modify attitudinal verbs, while Quirk et al (1973) and Adejare et al (1996) only recognize adverbials that modify material verbs as adjuncts. In Quirk et al (1973), eight 8 classes of adjuncts are accounted for. These are; view point, focusing, intensifier, process, subjects, place, time and others which can be termed contingency adjuncts. It should be noted that Halliday (1985) recognizes contingency adjuncts (i.e adjuncts of purpose, cause, reason, concession etc as process adjuncts. It should be noted however that process adjuncts are not broken down into various sub-types in our analysis of data in this study because of space and also to make the study explicit. Thus, only four sub-types of process adjuncts were treated under the description of the adjuncts used in the texts analysed. All these shall be discussed in details in the subsequent section of data analysis.

Methodology

The participants for this study were drawn from higher institutions in Southwestern zone in Nigeria. Stratified random sampling technique was employed in selecting study participants. Thus, nine tertiary institutions in three states (i.e. Lagos, Ogun and Oyo) were used for this study. The nine institutions were made up of three each from Universities (Lagos State University, Ojo (LASU), Olabisi Onabanjo University, Ago-Iwoye (OOU) and University of Ibadan (UI), Polytechnics (Lagos State Polytechnic, Ikorodu; (LAGOS POLY) Moshood Abiola Polytechnic, Abeokuta (MAPOLY) and The Polytechnic, Ibadan (IBADAN POLY) and Colleges of Education (Michael Otedola College of Primary Education, Epe (MOCPED); Tai Solarin College of Education, Ijagun (TASCE) and Emmanuel Alayande College of Education, Oyo (ALAYANDE COE).

Seventy five five year General Studies (GNS) students in each of the nine institutions, making a total of 675 students were selected using purposive random sampling. This was to

allow for adequate representation and useful responses from the students. The rationale for the choice of GNS students is that GNS as a course in tertiary institutions involves all first year students across disciplines and these students need to use adjuncts in their written tasks.

This study sought to examine the usage of adjuncts in productive language use and so the elicitation instrument was an essay writing assignment and the topic assigned was

“Discuss the importance of computer literacy for national development in Nigeria”.

The data used for the study were drawn from the essays written by the students on the topic given.

It should be noted that in keeping with the focus of this work, three semantic classes of adjuncts: process, place and time were examined. The data were analysed using descriptive statistics of simple percentages.

Data Analysis and Discussion

The analysis of the usage of adjuncts across the institutions as presented in Table 1 below shows that 12,573 occurrences of adjuncts were identified.

Table 1: Overall Usage of Integrated Adverbial (Adjuncts) by all Participants in Essay Writing

| Type | Institution | Adjuncts | Total |
|-----------------------|--------------------|-----------------|----------------|
| Universities | LASU | 1,511 (34.06%) | 4,436 (35.28%) |
| | OOU | 1,063 (23.96%) | |
| | U.I. | 1,862 (41.98%) | |
| Polytechnics | LAGOS POLY | 1,401 (33.84%) | 4,140 (32.93%) |
| | MAPOLY | 1,280 (30.92%) | |
| | IBADAN POLY | 1,459 (35.24%) | |
| Colleges of Education | MOCPED | 1,615 (40.41%) | 3,997 (31.79%) |
| | TASCE | 1,315 (32.90%) | |
| | ALAYANDE COE | 1,067 (26.69%) | |
| | | 12,573 | |

Further analysis revealed that U.I. had the highest frequency rate of occurrences i.e. 1,862 (41.98%) followed by MOCPED with 1,615 (40.41%); LASU 1,511 (34.06%); The Polytechnic Ibadan 1,459 (35.24%); LAGOS POLY 1,401 (33.84%); TASCE 1,315 (32.90%); MAPOLY 1,280 (30.92%); ALAYANDE College 1,067 (26.69%) and lastly OOU with 1,063 (23.96%).

This study found variation in the usage of the specified adjuncts by university, polytechnic and college of education students. Our findings are presented in Tables 2, 3 and 4 respectively.

Table 2: Overall Usage of Adjuncts by the Selected University Students

| Institutions | Process | Place | Time | Total No. of Occurrences |
|---|--------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------|---------------------------------|
| LASU | 801 (53.01%) | 532 (35.21%) | 178 (11.78%) | 1,511 |
| OOU | 543 (51.08%) | 376 (35.37%) | 144 (13.55%) | 1,063 |
| U.I. | 1,138 (61.12%) | 469 (25.19%) | 255 (13.69%) | 1,862 |
| Total No. of Occurrences of Adjunct Types Used | 2,482 (55.95) | 1,377 (31.04%) | 577 (13.01%) | 4,436 |

Table 2 above shows that a total of 4,436 instances of adjuncts were used by the students in the three selected universities. Out of these adjuncts, process adjuncts accounted for 2,482 (55.95%), place adjuncts 1,377 (31.04%) and for time adjuncts 577 (13.01%) instances were recorded.

Analysis across the universities revealed that the selected students of LASU had 1,511 total occurrences of adjuncts, out of these, process adjuncts accounted for 801 (53.01%), place adjuncts 532 (35.21%) while time adjuncts had 178 (11.78%) instances.

The selected students of Olabisi Onabanjo University had 1,063 occurrences of adjuncts out of which process adjuncts had 543 (51.08%); place adjuncts 376 (35.37%); and time adjuncts 144 (13.55%). For the selected students in the University of Ibadan, 1,862 instances of adjuncts were recorded. Out of these, process adjuncts had 1,138 (61.12%); place adjuncts 469 (25.19%) and time adjuncts 255 (13.69%).

It is evident from these analyses that process adjuncts 2,482 (55.95%) were most frequently used by the selected university students followed by place adjuncts 1,377 (31.04%) and lastly time adjuncts 577 (13.01%). The reason for this is that process adjuncts cover a wide range of information in relation to the predication expressed by the verb and are used to give circumstantial details about the action expressed by the verb.

Table 3: Overall Usage of Adjuncts by Selected Polytechnic Students

| Institutions | Process | Place | Time | Total No. of Occurrences |
|---------------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|---------------------------------|
| LAGOS POLY | 685 (48.89%) | 532 (37.97%) | 184 (13.13%) | 1,401 |
| MAPOLY | 612 (47.81%) | 449 (35.08%) | 219 (17.11%) | 1,280 |
| IBADAN | 771 | 491 | 197 | 1,459 |

| | | | | |
|---|-----------------------|-----------------------|---------------------|--------------|
| POLY | (52.84%) | (33.65%) | (13.50%) | |
| Total No. of Occurrences of Adjunct Types Used | 2,068 (49.95%) | 1,472 (35.56%) | 600 (14.49%) | 4,140 |

Table 3 presents that 4,140 instances of adjuncts were recorded. Out of these, process adjuncts amounted to 2,068 (49.95%), place adjuncts 1,472 (35.56%) and time adjuncts had 600 (14.49%) instances.

Analysis across the three polytechnics showed that the selected students in LAGOS POLY had 1,401 instances of adjuncts, of which 685 (48.89%) were process adjuncts, 532 (37.97%) place adjuncts while 184 (13.13%) instances were time adjuncts.

For Moshood Abiola Polytechnic, the selected students had 1,280 instances of adjuncts. From these, 612 (47.81%) were process adjuncts, 449 (35.08%) place adjuncts while 219 (17.11%) instances were time adjuncts.

For the students used in the Polytechnic Ibadan, 1,459 instances were identified; out of which 771 (52.84%) were process adjuncts, 491 (33.65%) place adjuncts while 197 (13.50%) were recorded for time adjuncts. The analysis above also revealed that process adjuncts had the highest frequency rate of occurrences followed by place adjuncts and lastly time adjuncts. This gives us the impression that the students were more familiar with process adjuncts and have acquired spontaneous usage of the adjuncts.

Table 4: Overall Usage of Adjuncts by the Selected College of Education Students

| Institutions | Process | Place | Time | Total No. of Occurrences |
|---|-----------------------|-----------------------|---------------------|---------------------------------|
| MOCPED | 922 (57.09%) | 475 (29.41%) | 218 (13.50%) | 1,615 |
| TASCE | 774 (58.86%) | 426 (32.40%) | 115 (08.74%) | 1,315 |
| ALAYANDE COE | 598 (56.04%) | 316 (29.62%) | 153 (14.34%) | 1,067 |
| Total No. of Occurrences of Adjunct Types Used | 2,294 (57.39%) | 1,217 (30.45%) | 486 (12.16%) | 3,997 |

Table 4 shows that a total of 3,997 occurrences of adjuncts was used by the students selected in the three Colleges of Education used. Out of these 2,294 (57.39%) occurrences were recorded for process adjuncts followed by 1,217 (30.45%) for place adjuncts and 486 (12.16%) for time adjuncts.

The selected students in MOCPED had 1,615 instances of adjuncts recorded, of which 922 (57.09%) were process adjuncts, 475 (29.41%) place adjuncts and 218 (13.50%) time adjuncts.

In TASCE, the students had 1,315 instances of adjuncts in their texts. From these, 774 (58.86%) instances were process adjuncts, 426 (32.40%) place adjuncts while we had 115 (08.74%) for time adjuncts.

The students in Alayande College of Education had a total of 1,067 instances of adjuncts. Process adjuncts accounted for 598 (56.04%), place adjuncts 316 (29.62%) and time adjuncts 153 (14.34%).

As adjuncts are indispensable in sentence constructions and meanings, it is not surprising to see the high rate of occurrences of process adjuncts in the texts analysed. What we are particularly interested in in this study is the grammaticality and correctness of the adjuncts used in the texts as this will determine the students' level of acquisition of adjuncts and ultimately their proficiency in English.

Distribution of Errors Across the Three Semantic Classes of Adjuncts Examined

Table 5 below shows the distribution of errors across the three semantic classes of adjuncts examined. It should be noted that no matter how minute the occurrences of errors in a text they may make the text in which they appear confusing, and therefore, obscure communication as we have in the texts analysed.

TABLE 5

| Classes of Adjuncts | Total No of occurrences of Adjuncts | Correctly Used Adjuncts | Incorrectly Used Adjuncts |
|----------------------------|--|--------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Process | 6,844 (54.43%) | 6, 316 (92.29%) | 528 (7.71%) |
| Place | 4, 066 (32.34%) | 3, 629 (89.25%) | 437 (10.75%) |
| Time | 1, 663 (13.23%) | 1, 566 (94.29%) | 95 (5.71%) |
| | 12, 573 | 11, 513 | 1, 060 |

The analysis revealed that out of 12, 573 instances of adjuncts in the texts analysed, 11, 513 (91.57%) were correctly used; as many of the adjuncts were repeatedly used, while 1, 060 (8.43%) were instances of errors. Analysis across the three semantic classes of adjuncts showed that process adjuncts accounted for 6, 844 (54.43%) out of which 6, 316 (92.29%) were correctly used while 528 (7.71%) were incorrectly used. Place adjuncts had 4, 066 (32.34%) of which 3, 629 (89.25%) were correctly used while 437 (10.75%) were instances of errors. For time adjuncts, 1,663 (13.23%) instances were recorded; 1, 563 (94.29%) instances were correctly used while 95 (5.71%) were instances of errors.

Syntactic and Semantic Features of Adjuncts in the Text Analysed

The data analysed in this study revealed that the adjuncts used by the students exhibit some characteristic features both in terms of structure and meaning. Below are the detailed descriptions of adjuncts as used by the students.

Adjuncts of Place

Place adjuncts establish the locational frame of a text or narrative and can be employed as a cohesive localizer (Hinkel, 2002). While Francis (1994:83) asserts that place adjuncts are common in written discourse, Biber, Johansson, Leech (1991:561) however, distinguish between semantically and lexically simple place adverbs and more complex constructions. Both studies affirm that such lexically simple place adverbs and more complex constructions. Both studies affirm that such lexically simple markers as here, there and away are rare in academic prose while more syntactically advanced adjuncts of place occur more frequently.

The data analysed revealed that the selected students employed syntactically advanced adjuncts more frequently in their written texts than lexically simple markers of place adjuncts. We found out that prepositional phrases were more commonly used as adjuncts of place than any other structures or grammatical units expressing this function. This is exemplified in the following extracts:

Computer can be used in the communication industry *for transmitting information from one place to another.*

Prepositional phrases expressing place were also used in metaphorical sense; e.g.

Computer is very important *in all aspects of life.*

We found out that throughout the texts only few one-word adjuncts of place were identified. e.g.

A computer literate is admired *everywhere* he/she goes and he/she is also recognised.

It is noticed that “the principle of economy” as pointed out by Sells (1998:501) in Hinkel (2002) does not operate in English of the participants. This may be the reason why one-word adjuncts of place were sparingly used in the texts. Nigerian learners/users of English always like to state in details the exact locations of events or action being described and that explains the reason why the place deixis were sparingly used.

Adjuncts of Time

Time adjuncts identify temporal, sequential proceeding, successive and other relationships between actions and events that range from the phrase to the sentence and to the whole narrative. In written texts, time adjuncts determine contextually appropriate tenses and mark the temporality of objective and narrative events, that is, time adjuncts represent “the

construal of time” (Hinkel: 2002:1055). In English, with its developed system of inflectional and morphological tenses, time adjuncts frame discourse and, in this way, necessitates tense shifts (Hinkel op. cit).

In the texts analysed, time adjuncts used by the students were expressed in one word adverbials, prepositional phrases, noun phrases and finite clauses. It should be noted that the selected Nigerian students employed place/time adjuncts and process adjuncts more frequently probably with the purpose of re-establishing in the discourse place/time frame and also based on the fact that in English, time and place adjuncts have relatively unambiguous deictic functions. These are exemplified in the following extracts:

One-word adjuncts of time; e.g.

The world *now* is a global village where each country *now* uses computer to communicate.

Noun phrases of Time Adjuncts:

Expressions such as *one day, last year, next week* clearly exhibit the structure of a noun phrase; therefore, it is a natural decision to encode them as such even though this implies the problem of how to allow an NP to function as an adverbial adjunct. However, in systemic linguistics the structure determines the meaning. Here is an example from the data:

One day when I was coming to school, I saw some boys with some harmful objects like guns, axes, cutlass etc.,

In the above extract, the finite clause (when I was coming to school) is a rank shifted adjectival clause as it is used in the expression and it qualifies the headword day in the Mhq structure of the noun phrase.

Prepositional Phrases as Time Adjuncts

It seems an obvious observation that it is the lexical properties of the prepositional phrases noun head that determines whether the prepositional phrase will function as an adjunct of time.

For instance, at the garage is interpreted as an adjunct of place because of the lexical property of its noun head, “garage” while *in the recent year* is an adjunct of time because of the property of the noun head year. Here are some of the instances in the texts analysed:

Computer literacy will enable man to solve problems and will bring efficiency and fast jobs will be done *within a short period of time*.

In the recent years, Nigeria has been tagged and included among the developing nations of the world.

Finite Clauses as Time Adjuncts

Similar to one-word adverbials and adverbial phrases, adverbial clauses have various meaning and contextual functions and most are overtly marked by means of subordinating conjunctions such as when, since, before, until as in the case of adverbial clauses of time. e.g.

Before one has access to save and withdraw from a bank, he / she must have had an account with the bank.

Non – Finite Clauses as Time Adjuncts

The extract below is a non-finite adverbial clause of time because of its structure (i.e. non-finite clause in which the verb is and participle). e.g.

Computer has helped in proper documentation in which past record can easily be referred to, amend or make use of *when needed*.

From the analyses, we found out that one-word adverbials and prepositional phrases were mostly used to express time adjuncts functions.

Process Adjuncts

This set of adjuncts modifies verbs. – Process adjuncts include manner (means, instrument, and agency), role, matter, respect, quality, accompaniment, behalf (Holliday 1985: 151, Quirk et al 1973: 220). However, for the purpose of clarity in this study, the adjuncts expressing different process functions will be taken together as process adjuncts; but use shall describe how some of them (i.e. manner, contingency, concession, and conditional adjuncts of process) were used in the texts analysed.

Manner Adjuncts

Manner adjuncts are common in written texts and conversational discourse. Out of all the process adjuncts, manners adjuncts can be highly mobile within the clause structure. Most Nigerian learners/users of English often provide lexically simple modification prevalent in the conversational and written discourse most especially in the use of manner adjuncts. Examples are found in the use of manner adjuncts. Examples are found in the use of drastically and gradually in the following extracts:

Armed robbery attacks on banking premises in Nigeria have reduced drastically due to on line banking system.

Many companies nowadays cannot employ graduates without computer knowledge because the era of manner recording is fading away gradually.

Process – Adjuncts of Contingency

Most of the contingency adjuncts used by the students were basically prepositional phrases and finite clause introduced by subordinators such as *since, because, due to, in order to* etc., as can be seen in the following extracts:

He worked hard *in order to buy the computer*.

Being a computer literate is a great advantage *because you cannot be fooled in anyway*.

Process Adjuncts of Concession

Concession clauses introduced by although even, though, while, whereas, in spite of etc., have the meanings and functions that are somewhat more sophisticated than cause/reason clauses largely because of the complexity of the concept of concession in written text and text cohesion. Only few instances of concession clauses were identified in the texts analysed. This might be because English concession clauses are syntactically and semantically advanced subordinate constructions, hence, its complexity accounts for its scarcity in Nigerian learners' texts. Here are examples from the texts:

Though there are attendant evils with the advent of computer, Nigeria image has been greatly improved and the citizens are the beneficiaries.

Although they have improved the online banking, credit card, ATM card but there can still be better improvement which can make the nation great.

In the second extract above, the complexity that characterizes the structures of concession clauses is revealed in this deviant structure where 'although' and 'but' co-occur. The information in the subordinate clause establishes the fact that there are certain improvements which the propositional content of the main clause is an agitation for more improvements.

Process Adjuncts of Condition

Conditional clause introduced by (if, whether, unless etc.,) express an direct action or events on which action, event or proposition in the main clause is contingent in both spoken and written expressions, conditional adverbial clauses are employed to specify the conditions that are to be met for the propositions or claims to hold true. Constructions that express conditionality were sparingly used by the selected students. It is important to note, however, in this study that the overt market of conditionals – if – was conditional clauses that could be identified in the texts. e.g.

If you have basic computer knowledge along with a specific job skill employers will consider you more trainable.

Other explicit markers of conditional clauses (e.g. whether, unless, provided etc.,) were not used by the students.

Some of the Deviant Usages of Adjuncts in the Texts

In spite of the fact that the participants used in this study have been exposed to the English Language right from their primary schools and the type of adjuncts examined are

those that are commonly used in conversational discourse to state the circumstantial details of events such as giving information about place, process and time of events, there were still instances of incorrect usages of different types of adjuncts as analysed in their texts. Here are some of the instances:

Inappropriate choice of process adjuncts.

- (i) Nigerians can now connect, chat with people easily and even *see* them in their homes *comfortably*.
- (ii) No Nigerian can say that he or she has not visited a doctor and these doctors have been able to *save* lives *automatically*.
- (iii) The importance of computer literacy for national development has *solemnly* improved Nigerian development.

In the extract above, the process adjuncts used do not collocate with the verbs. Instead *clearly* and *greatly* will be more appropriate for extracts (i) and (iii) respectively while the verb *save* in extract (ii) may not be modified at all.

Redundant use of time-relater adjuncts.

- (iv) In addition, computer literacy in higher institutions will *still yet* open students to global collaboration and exchange programmes.

The structure identified above could be as a result of intralingual interference which could result in deviant sentences and does not reflect the mother tongue of the learner. Thus, it could be due to partial exposure to the target language. This type of structure reflects the ignorance of rule restriction, semantic error and poor linguistic background of learners.

Misordering of adjuncts as can be seen in the following extract:

- (v) In most cases, *in a very big company nowadays, in every office* there will be computer because it makes works easy for them.

This can be restructured as follows:

In most cases, nowadays, every office in big companies has a computer set because it makes work easy for them.

Another structure identified is the addition of preposition where it is not required and omission of preposition where it is required as in Extracts (vi a – e) below:

- (vi) (a) Computer is very important *in everywhere*.
- (b) In other words, it is not all the time that Nigerians will be going *to overseas* for medical check-up.
- (c) The result of the election was released *in second day* and *21 of_April* the election to the House of Representatives was conducted.

- (d) Now, *in nowadays*, it is good for people to know about computer.
- (e) If a person is trained in computer he/she will know how to make business with those *in outside the country*.

These types of structure may be instances of the influence of Nigerian languages on English. In Yoruba, for instance, prepositions, like verbs select their objects. In Yoruba, the prepositions *si*, *ni* always occur with nouns denoting location, manner or time adjuncts. This is why we can say:

| | | | |
|------|------|----------|------------|
| Ade | de | ni | ana |
| Noun | come | particle | yesterday |
| (Ade | came | in | yesterday) |

Ade arrived yesterday.

| | | | |
|-------|----|----------|----------|
| Bola | lo | ni | kiakia |
| Noun | go | particle | quickly |
| (Bola | go | - | quickly) |

Bola went quickly.

| | | | |
|---------|----|----------|--------|
| O | lo | si | ibe |
| Pronoun | go | particle | there |
| (He/she | go | to | there) |

He/she went there.

| | | | |
|---------|----|----------|---------|
| O | lo | si | Ibadan |
| Pronoun | go | particle | Ibadan |
| (He/she | go | to | Ibadan) |

He/she went to Ibadan.

‘Yesterday’ and ‘there’ in the above sentences are adverbs in English but not nouns. Therefore, they do not require prepositions as we have in Yoruba. “Ibadan” can be object of the preposition *si/to* because it is a noun. This may be why some students often use prepositions with some adverbials that appear as nouns e.g. *overseas*, *downstairs*, *abroad* etc., as we have in Extracts (vi)(a, b, c, and e).

In (vi)(c), the error can be as a result of the fact that in Yoruba the preposition *ni* is used to mean both *in* and *on* in English. This may account for the indiscriminate use of *in* by Yoruba learners in English.

Compare: ni ojo keji
 particleday second
 On the second day.
 ni ile wa
 particlehouse our
 In our house.

Also “ojo keji” is not pre-modified in Yoruba that is why this same structure is used in (vi)(c) above.

Semantic errors as in the following extracts:

(viiia) Besides this point, nationally the census has also been made a lot easier and faster through the help of computer.

Nationally in the extract above appears like a viewpoint subject judging by the position but it does not express the meaning intended by the writer. The writer seemed to say that through the help of computer the census has been easier and faster throughout the nation or nationwide compared to when the counting was being done manually. In other words, *nationwide* or *throughout the nation* – place adjunct could have been more appropriate in the extract above.

(viiib) *Prior to the rate of civilization in the world*, the whole world has now turned to global village. This was through the proliferation of technology.

In extract (viiib), the use of the adverbial phrase of time – *Prior to (the rate of) civilization in the world* is inappropriate. Semantically, it has nothing to do with the rest part of the expression and indeed, the phrase is ungrammatical.

There are orthographical errors which also affect learners’ performance in the usage of adjuncts. Some of the frequently mis-spelt adjuncts in the data analysed are presented below:

| | | |
|---------------------|------------|-------------------|
| their | instead of | there |
| in this olding days | | in the olden days |
| at ones | | at once |
| compitently | | competently |
| now are days | | nowadays |
| withing a second | | within a second |
| noun | | now |

Thus, these structures as identified above obscure meaning and consequently affect communication.

Conclusion

The findings showed that the students employed a variety of adjuncts in the essay writing. Among the three types of adjuncts examined, process adjuncts were more frequently used, followed by place adjuncts and time adjuncts. In addition to the frequency rate of occurrences and percentage of adjuncts used, the study also revealed that the students used had several problems with the usage of adjuncts; some of these problems are: inappropriate choice of process adjuncts; redundant use of time – relater adjuncts, misordering of adjuncts; addition of preposition where it is not required / omission of preposition where it is required and semantic and spelling errors. It is quite evident from this study that ESL students in Nigerian tertiary institutions have some deficiencies in the usage of adjuncts. There is therefore, the need for teachers of English at the tertiary level of education to focus on the structural components of English that seem to pose problems to learners particularly in second language situation as Nigeria with the ultimate aim of improving learners' communicative competence.

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