

Title of the Paper: “Their” or “There”? Examining Some of the Commonly Occurring Errors in English Writings among University Students in Kenya

Name of Presenter: Njeru, Margaret W.

Institution: Riara School of Education,
Riara University, Nairobi, Kenya

Email address: mwnjeru@riarauniversity.ac.ke;
mwnjeru@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

A general concern with the quality of graduates leaving the university today has been expressed by employers at both national and international levels. It has been claimed that graduates have been found to lack in some of the key skills that are required at the work place. One such skill is communication; this in spite of the fact that communication skills have been rated as some of the most sought-after qualities by employers internationally. This paper focuses on the writing aspect of communication, specifically examining the nature of errors found in writings by university students in English and Communication courses at Kenyan universities. These could range from wrong spellings, to a wrong choice of words, to wrong punctuation among others. English being a second language to most students in Kenya also means that there is a high likelihood of first language influence and interference on their English language, which could interfere with their proficiency in writing. Based on the analysis of the errors collected, the author makes some recommendations that would be useful to both learners and teachers of language and communication skills courses at all levels of learning. The research entailed a document analysis of written assignments and final examination scripts of students in selected English and Communication Skills courses at one private university in Nairobi County. This research was considered a significant step towards understanding the nature of writing errors that university students in Kenya make. Subsequently, a set of recommendations were suggested.

Key words: English language errors; Communication Skills; University students; Kenya

Introduction: English Presence in Kenya

In almost all former colonial countries around the world, the colonial language became one of the strongest legacies that were left behind even after the colonial powers left. In Africa, for instance, Britain, France and Portugal, among others, left a strong mark of their presence on the African continent through their languages, namely English, French and Portuguese respectively. However, English and French emerged the dominant colonial languages spreading across and touching almost every corner of the continent, resulting in what is now referred to as the Anglophone and Francophone Africa respectively. The Anglophone includes countries like Kenya, Uganda, Nigeria, among others, whereas the Francophone includes countries like Burkina Faso, Burundi and Cameroon, among others. The presence of Portuguese is much more limited and is found in a few countries mainly in the southern parts of Africa, including countries like Angola and Mozambique (Lodhi, 1993). In all these countries, the former colonial language was accorded the official status, making it the de facto language for official communication in offices and in the judiciary among other official places. Of significance to this language policy was that the former colonial language was to be used as the medium of instruction in schools in these countries. About half a century since independence for many of these countries, the status quo remains, and the former colonial language continues to play the major role as the main medium of instruction from primary up to the university levels. Prah (1995) notes that while most African states have constitutionally created space for the African languages, little has been done to change what was handed down through colonialism.

The Kenyan language policy portrays this scenario quite well. English was declared the nation's official language immediately after independence while Kiswahili was declared a national language. The declaration of Kiswahili as a national language, however, remained a policy on paper, and little was done by the government to implement it. In schools, for instance, while English was taught and examined as a subject all the way from primary to secondary school, and was also used in teaching other subjects, Kiswahili remained more of an optional subject because it was never examined in the main national examinations. It was not until after the introduction of the 8.4.4 system in 1985, following the recommendations by the Mackay Commission of 1981 (GoK), that Kiswahili became a mandatory subject to be taught and examined at both the

primary and secondary levels. While Kiswahili has continued to grow in Kenya, however, English still holds the lion’s share throughout the education system. It is also worth noting, ironically, that while English remains the main medium of instruction in Kenyan schools, performance in the English language by learners in the major national examinations has been reported to be on the decline. While releasing the 2013 Kenya Certificate of Secondary Examinations (KCSE), for instance, the then Cabinet Secretary, Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, Professor Jacob Kaimenyi, observed that there was a serious decline in the performance in the English language and ordered for investigations to be done (March 4, 2014, NTV Kenya).

The current language policy in Kenya is a product of the British colonialism in the country, from the time they took over the territory towards the end of the 19th Century to the year 1963 when the new nation of Kenya was born (Nabea, 2009; King’ei, 2001). The authors argued that while there was no one single language policy that remained intact through the entire colonial period, the language decisions made during that period had a strong impact on the post-colonial language policy. By the time of independence, English was already entrenched as the privileged language as compared to Kiswahili and other vernacular languages. King’ei (2001) noted for instance that there was drastic expansion in the teaching of English across the country after independence. He observed that while there were only 8 English medium classes in 1962, this number jumped to 1,921 classes in 1965. As King’ei (2001, p. 39) observed, this increase signaled “the growing sense among Africans of the importance of English as the medium of education as well as an avenue for upward socio-economic mobility”. The place of English in the Kenyan school system was further endorsed by the Ominde Report of 1964 (Ominde, 1965). This was the first commission that was set up by the new government to review and make recommendations on the education system in Kenya, and in general, to “overhaul the colonial hang-over in the system”. Ironically, the recommendations made by the commission only elevated and strengthened the position of English in the country, especially in the education sector. The commission stated, for example, that English was to be adopted as the sole medium of instruction in schools, claiming further that among other benefits, learners learnt better in English than in their vernaculars. The English language has since then continued to hold a dominant position in terms of language status in Kenya, and academic and professional success

are closely associated with proficiency in the language. Kioko and Muthwii (2001, p.201) for instance noted that “English plays a key role in Kenya’s educational system, not only as an important subject but especially as the medium of instruction”. Further, the position of English as an official language is affirmed in Chapter two of the Constitution of Kenya (2010) which states that “The official languages of the Republic are Kiswahili and English”. However, while Kiswahili is recognized as one of the two official languages, close observation indicates that English remains dominant. For instance, most official documents, including those in government offices, remain in English.

English therefore plays a major role in Kenya, and its development, including challenges associated with it, cannot be ignored. This paper seeks to analyze some common errors that are observed in the writings by university students in Kenya. This is with cognizance of the fact that the employing industry globally has lately emphasized the importance of “employability skills” among which is the command of language. The UK Commission for Employment and Skills (UKCES) (2009, p. 10) defines employability skills as “the skills almost everyone needs to do almost any job. They are the skills that must be present to enable an individual to use the more specific knowledge and technical skills that their particular workplaces will require”. The report identified three main functional employability skills, among them “using language effectively – writing clearly and in a way appropriate to the context, ordering facts and concepts logically”. The employing industry in Kenya has also been vocal on the “employability skills” of Kenyan graduates, with claims that the Kenyan universities are producing “half baked” graduates. The Daily Business (August 19, 2013) reported that “graduates from Kenyan universities are less competitive in the job market due to gaps between their training and the skills employers want”. The Daily cited a report by the Washington-based Results for Development Institute (R4D) which said that “local tertiary institutions need to impart graduates with skills such as communication, leadership, decision making and critical thinking to stay ahead of the dynamic career race”.

It is due to this awareness, of the high value attached to language and communication among other skills, that this paper was considered important. University students must endeavor to graduate not only with their academic accolades but also with these other employability skills.

The author of this paper, who has taught English and Communication courses at the university for many years, notes that long-term close examination of the students’ written work reveals weaknesses that could hinder a student’s progression into the modern work place if not corrected. Specifically, this paper examines some commonly occurring grammatical errors that manifest themselves in students’ writings, for instance in essays, tests and final examinations. Some recommendations towards improving the writing and general language skills are also offered.

English as a Second Language in Kenya

Kenya is a multilingual society with over 40 ethnic languages (Nabea, 2009) and a majority of Kenyans are bilingual, speaking at least two languages. This bilingualism often includes the speaker’s native language, for instance the Gikuyu, Dholuo and Kamba languages spoken by the Kikuyu, Luo and Kamba people respectively, together with another language. Kiswahili, being a national language and which, as mentioned above, is now compulsory in both primary and secondary schools in the country is also spoken by many people as a second language, especially in the urban areas. Ironically, English, the official language, is spoken effectively only by a minority of about 25% of the population (Nabea, 2009). This small percentage represents the minority who has acquired it successfully through the schooling system. This interesting scenario, where an official language is spoken by a minority, is not unique to Kenya. Webb (1995) for instance reported that only about a third of the South African population understood English, one of the main official languages of the country. A worse scenario was reported for Namibia where English, declared in their constitution of 1990 as the only official language, was spoken and understood by less than 10% (Meshthrie, Swann, Deumert & Leap, 2000). This presents a complex linguistic situation that can only be adequately explored in a distinctly sociolinguistic and socio-economic context.

Second Language Learning, Errors and Error Analysis

The complex language scenario discussed above is indicative of Second Language Acquisition (SLA) among the speakers in these countries. A second language is defined as any language that a speaker learns after he has already acquired his first (Ellis, 2015; Ortega, 2009). For instance,

many people in Kenya acquire their native languages in their childhood, but also acquire at least one more language through schooling as well as through their interactions with speakers of other languages. In essence, most Kenyans are bilingual, speaking two languages, or multilingual, speaking three or more languages.

Learning a second language is a complex process and several paradigms have been used by scholars over time to try to understand the second language learning process. Lado (1957) introduced the concept “contrastive analysis (CA)” within the context of SLA, claiming that a systematic comparison of a speaker’s first and second languages (L1 and L2 respectively), could reveal areas of potential difficulties for the learner. The claim was that while the areas that were similar in the two languages would pose little difficulty to the learner, areas that contrasted, or were different, would present difficulties. However, the CA was viewed as rather simplistic, reducing the learner problems to the similarities and differences that existed between the two languages. Critiques argued that the hypothesis could not adequately account for errors that learners of a second language made and that could not be linked to their L1. This led to the development of the Error Analysis (EA) studies which went beyond just the comparison of the two languages. In his seminal paper entitled “the significance of learners’ errors”, Corder (1967) made the claim that errors made in the process of learning the second language were a part of the learner’s contribution and progress into discovering the new language system. James (1998, p. 5) said of EA: (where IL stands for Interlanguage; TL stands for Target language; EA stands for Error Analysis and CA stands for Contrastive Analysis)

This paradigm involves first independently or ‘objectively’ describing the learners’ IL (that is, their version of the TL) and the TL itself, followed by a comparison of the two, so as to locate mismatches. The novelty of EA, distinguishing it from CA, was that the mother tongue was not supposed to enter the picture. The claim was made that errors could be fully described in terms of the TL, without the need to refer to the L1 of the learners.

Ellis and Barkhuizen (2005, p.51) further defined EA as “a set of procedures for identifying, describing and explaining learners’ errors”, implying the importance of not simply identifying the errors a learner made, but further examining and explaining them.

A term also found in the EA paradigm is ‘Interlanguage’ (IL), mentioned by James (1998) above. This term was introduced by Selinker (1972) and was used to suggest “the half-way position it holds between knowing and not knowing the TL” (James, 1998). The Interlanguage is viewed as a continuum stretching from when a learner has zero knowledge of the Target language (TL), to their highest level of achievement in that language. A learner’s language, the Interlanguage, is viewed as being independent of both the learner’s first language as well as their Target language. Selinker (1972) identified some five key processes which he claimed defined the interlanguage, namely: language transfer, which referred to features that the learner carried over from his first language to the Target language; transfer of training, which implicated poor teaching by the second language teacher; strategies of L2 learning, which referred to strategies used by the learner to simplify the new language system; strategies of L2 communication, referring to the learner’s strategies to achieve successful communication in spite of grammatical incorrectness and also the overgeneralization of L2 rules. This last process of overgeneralization entails the situation whereby a learned rule is extended even to areas where it is not correct. For instance, a learner who has learned and internalized the rule for regular past tense formation in English using the ‘-ed’ morpheme might extend it to irregular verbs and thereby end up with a wrong grammatical form, e.g. ‘*choosed’ instead of ‘chose’.

Justification of the study

This study was considered significant due to several reasons. First and as already noted, English plays a major role in Kenya as the official language and therefore its mastery is important for academic and professional development. Secondly and also mentioned earlier, employers have been complaining of graduates who lack basic employability skills including communicative skills. Notably, language and communication skills have been identified as some of the most sought-after skills by modern employers. It was therefore found necessary to investigate the nature of language problems that are exhibited by the university students in their writings and to offer possible solutions and recommendations.

Methodology

This research applied a documentary review method to collect data on errors found in university student writings. This method entails the investigation and analysis of texts for data that is significant for the research at hand (Bailey, 1994; Scott, 1990). According to these authors, a documentary review aims at analyzing, interpreting and finding patterns in data in order to come up with generalized answers to the research questions. In this research, the data, in the form of commonly occurring errors, was compiled over several semesters from a variety of student written works including tests, take-home assignments as well as final examination scripts. Commonly occurring errors were taken to refer to errors that recurred frequently in the written works of different students over time. In terms of analysis, the data collected was coded and sorted into various categories of possible error source and explanation.

Theoretical Framework

The research was informed by a broad Error Analysis framework that incorporates the various paradigms that were discussed above. Selinker’s (1972) Interlanguage concept and its five key processes was viewed as central to the analysis of the errors.

Findings

The table below presents a sample of some commonly occurring errors recorded and some examples of how they were used. The examples given, while they may not have been the exact sentences in which the error was found, reflect a situation similar to where they were used:

| Error | Example |
|-------------|--|
| This/ These | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • *This things happen all the time. • He said he does not like *these book. |
| There/their | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They went *there way. • They went *their for the trip. |

| | |
|---|---|
| Your/ You're | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • *Your leaving tonight? • *You're sister is waiting. |
| Noun/Verb disagreement | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • *The children goes to school every day. • *The students prefers to cook for themselves. |
| Lack of proper capitalization | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • *britain, english, bible, Koran, africa |
| Wrong use of verb 'be' 'am' instead of 'I'm' (I am) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • *Am leaving for school now |
| Wrong use of the Apostrophe (sometimes inserted where it is not required or omitted where it is required) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • *it's food (e.g. a dog's food), instead of 'its food'- no apostrophe required • We're (instead of 'were' and vice versa)- Absence or presence of the apostrophe in these two words creates a difference in meaning (we're= we are; were= past tense for 'was) • That is the *girls' book (with reference to one girl- apostrophe misplaced) • I saw the *girl's mum (with reference to more than one girl- apostrophe misplaced) |
| Use of 'example' without preposition 'for' | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • there are many languages in Africa, *example |
| Wrong use of prepositions | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Associate *to (instead of 'with') the rich people. |

| | |
|---|--|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Depend *with (instead of ‘on’) the parents. |
| Double subject marking in sentences/ Wrong syntactic construction | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • *Me I did not enjoy the trip. • *The children they told me they wanted to eat cake. • *The students when they are playing they like to scream. |
| Wrong placement of quotation marks | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • He told her, “I am leaving in the afternoon.” |
| Haphazard use of colon and semi colon | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • His three favorite foods are*; chapatti, irio and pilau. (instead of full colon pointing to a list of items) • Maria likes to travel: she has been to about ten different countries. (instead of a semi-colon to connecting the two clauses) |
| Random use of homophones (words that sound the same but might be spelt differently) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • * ‘fair’ instead of ‘fare’ and vice versa e.g. “the fair was very high”. • * ‘rear’ instead of ‘rare’ and vice versa e.g. “that was a rear animal”. • * ‘sight’ instead of ‘site’ and vice versa e.g. “the old woman’s site was poor”. |
| Use of abbreviated or shortened informal terms in formal contexts | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • * ‘Coz’ or ‘bcoz’ instead of ‘because’ (She left *coz it was late) |

| | |
|--|---|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• * ‘info’ instead of ‘information• * ‘kid’ instead of ‘child’ (the *kid was left crying.)• * ‘b4’ instead of ‘before’ (They arrived *b4 the meal was ready.• * ‘2morrow’ instead of ‘tomorrow’ (They will leave 2morrow)• * ‘@’ instead of ‘at’ (The exam starts @ 9.00 a.m. |
|--|---|

Results and Discussion

In accordance with EA, it is assumed that the errors noted above could be associated with a certain cause. In general, the analysis resulted in the following possible causal categories for the errors collected in this work:

Lack of a Proper Training Background

Souriyavongsa, Rany, Abidin and Mei (2013), in their case study on English learning among students at the University of Laos, found that lack of adequately-trained teachers was the leading cause for students’ poor performance in the English language. Gan’s (2012) study, while focusing on L2 speaking problems, also noted the need for a shift in the pedagogical practices, from one that was teacher-centered to one that focused more on how learners processed their language. Subsequently, they recommended a review of the existing teacher preparation programs. Among the students in Kenyan universities, many errors could be linked to a lack of a strong language training background that could be traced all the way back to primary school. Lack of properly-trained language teachers, teaching and learning materials remain major problems that affect many learners in Kenya. Errors that could be as a result of poor training might include the following:

1. Random use and confusion of the following pairs of words:

Were and we’re

There and their

This and these

Your and you’re

2. Failure to mark Noun-Verb agreement, e.g. ‘*the students prefers to cook for themselves’.
3. Wrong placement of the apostrophe, e.g. ‘the girl’s mum’ while referring to many girls, and the girls’ mum while referring to one girl.

4. Wrong placement of the quotation marks, e.g. * He told her, “I am leaving in the afternoon.” whereby the full stop is placed inside the quotation marks instead of outside, as it marks the end of the entire sentence.

Such errors could be argued to be a lack of strong foundation, and could also be transferred from the teachers who make the errors themselves.

Language transfer

Language transfer refers to a learner’s second language errors that are associated with their first language as noted by the EA above. It is also worth noting that the influence of a learner’s L1 has been recognized by many other scholars as a common phenomenon among learners of a second language. Miller (2005, p. 80) for instance observed the following of SLA learners:

The English article system presents many problems for non-native speakers of English, particularly when they do not have an equivalent structure in their first language... In almost any piece of writing submitted by a non-native speaker of English, three things will often indicate that the writer is working in a second language: the choice of tense and aspect, the subject and verb agreements, and the use of articles (*the, a, an*).

Miller’s research was focused mainly on the writings of English as a Second Language (ESL) students of Chinese origin at an Australian university. In a similar study, Bryant (1984), in a study focusing on ESL students of Japanese background at an American university, admitted a close association between the errors made by the learners in their ESL learning and their L1, in their case, Japanese. Bryant (1984, p. 2) noted as follows:

While it may be true that the majority- or, at least, many- of the errors committed by ESL learners are L2 errors... it is nevertheless also true that it is usually the L1 errors which do the most to hinder comprehension and clear communication, and which most confuse the native Anglophone listener.

Whether articles or other features, both Miller’s (2005) and Bryant’s (1984) among other research findings demonstrate that the effects of a learner’s L1 in their SLA process cannot be ignored.

Some errors made by university students in Kenya could be due to the influence of their L1. As noted earlier, most learners in Kenya acquire English as a second language when they have already acquired their first language or languages. Influence from these first languages is therefore bound to be a factor in many learners language output. Some common examples include the following:

1. **Me I* did not enjoy the trip.
2. **The children they* told me they wanted to eat cake.

In the above examples, there is a double subject-marking, i.e. use of the objective and subjective pronouns ‘me’ and ‘I’ together in the first sentence, and ‘the children’ and ‘they’ in the second. While this double subject-marking is linguistically incorrect in English, it is a phenomenon that is quite acceptable in many Bantu languages. For instance, it is normal for one to say in Kiswahili ‘*Mimi ninaenda*’ (literally ‘Me I am going’), where both ‘*mimi*’ (me) and prefix ‘*ni*’ (pronoun ‘I’) in ‘*ninaenda*’ both stand in the subject position. This grammatical knowledge in Kiswahili could be ‘fossilized’ (Selinker, 1972) to the point where the learner transfers the same knowledge to the second language that they are learning.

Other aspects of transfer that are often observed are of phonetic nature, having to do with pronunciation. For instance, speakers of the Kikuyu language often fail to distinguish between the laterals /l/ and /r/ which are not distinctly marked in their native language, leading to random pronunciation of words like ‘fry’ /fraɪ/ and ‘fly’ /flaɪ/. Likewise, speakers of Dholuo may have challenges with the pronunciation of the sound /ʃ/, described as a palatal fricative, and produce an alveolar /s/ instead, hence pronounce words like ‘shoe’ /ʃu:/ as ‘sue’ /su:/. This is associated with the lack of the palatal fricative /ʃ/ in their first language. However, while these pronunciation errors tend to be pronounced verbally, the speakers do not necessarily exhibit them in writing and so they have not been included among the errors analyzed in this work. For instance, one may correctly write the word ‘fly’ but read it out wrongly as ‘fry’.

Poor Editing Skills

Observation also shows that many students do not revise their written work after they have written their drafts. This could be explained by the fact that a student may make an error in one instance, for example by using the word ‘there’ instead of ‘their’, but use the same form correctly in the same piece of work. Such errors are also observed in otherwise good writers who however make such errors due to lack of editing. Some students have actually admitted that they rarely go through their assignments before submitting them. Also, many students procrastinate on the completion of their assignments to the last minute, ending up with a hurriedly completed piece of work and little time for editing. Cases of poor punctuation including omission of full stops, wrong spellings and lack of capitalization of essential items, e.g. names, languages and countries, as well as use of a wrong homophone, could be avoided if the students took time to edit their work carefully.

Impact of Social Media Language

Murray (2000) explored the characteristics of language used via computer communication, referred to as Computer-Mediated Communication (CMC). The term CMC was first used by Hiltz and Turoff (1978) to refer to electronic communication. Murray (2000) restricted the use to CMC to include “only text-based modes” (p. 399). She observed that some of the unique strategies observed in CMC include the use of abbreviations, simplified syntax, the acceptance of surface errors, the use of symbols to express emotional meaning, and formulaic phrases (p. 402). Because many of the Kenyan youth are using social media extensively, e.g. in the form of Facebook, WhatsApp, Twitter, etc., it is possible that some of the errors being observed in formal writing are a manifestation of the influence of social media in the formal writing space. Use of the following abbreviations are common-place in social media and could easily be taken as normal when writing formally:

1. * ‘@’ instead of ‘at’ in sentences;
2. * ‘Coz’ or ‘bcoz’ instead of ‘because’;
3. * ‘2morrow’ instead of ‘tomorrow’.

Conclusion

That English, being the main official language and the medium of instruction in schools in Kenya, plays an important part in a Kenyan’s life, is indisputable. To succeed in the formal sector, one needs to have good mastery of the language. However, it has also emerged that many students, even at the university level, still portray many grammatical errors that are worrying even to the employers who have claimed that graduates are lacking in some major employability skills and are therefore not viewed to be ready for the job market. At the same time, it has been globally acknowledged that language and communication skills are some of the most sought-after skills in the employment industry, and there is need to ensure that university students acquire such skills before they get into the job market.

This paper has reported and discussed some of the common errors that are found in students’ writings at the university. The paper has argued that one of the major causes of the problems found in many students’ works could be linked back to lack of proper training and instructions at the earlier levels, starting all the way from pre-primary and primary school. Other possible causes have also been discussed.

Recommendations

Based on the conclusion above, several recommendations are suggested below in a way to ensure that students acquire the right language and communication skills before graduating from university and school in general:

- i. The government, and specifically the ministry of education, must pay special attention to how the English language is taught at all levels, starting from pre-school to the secondary schools. This further calls for a critical examination and evaluation of the nature and quality of training that language teachers receive themselves, and which they end up transferring to their learners. Highly qualified language teachers are a major requirement if the learners are to graduate from the lower levels and transit into tertiary education as competent users English. Modern day language teaching must include a pedagogical shift from the traditional teacher-centered to the modern learner-centered learning. This will enable the learners to participate in their own individual learning and development of writing and other communication skills.
- ii. Closely associated with the above recommendation is the need to provide necessary teaching resources. Apart from ensuring the availability of qualified teachers, the ministry of education and other stake holders, for instance the private sector, must provide other necessary resources needed for teaching and learning English, e.g. books as well as technologically-supported language learning materials like videos. As the Kenyan government works towards a technology-rich education system, these are some of the areas to consider in the language department.
- iii. Teachers need to encourage students to become active in editing their work. The students must reach a point where they value the work they write and submit to their teachers. With encouragement and motivation, students can put more value to editing their work in order to submit a good piece of writing.
- iv. Students need to be encouraged to adopt a strong reading and writing culture. Reading and writing are two sides of the same coin, and the more one reads, the better a writer they become. Learners need to be encouraged from a tender age to take an interest in

reading a variety of material, not just academic writings. This also helps learners to become creative writers who can explore writing beyond the classroom.

- v. The teacher should offer opportunities for different types of writings, e.g. essays, poems, stories and so on. This will capture the different interests among the learners and encourage them to keep writing, and with time getting rid of their common errors.
- vi. Students must be sensitized on the importance of differentiating between formal and the informal writing, and the need to separate the use of CMC from their formal writing. This aspect ties closely to the need for editing their work. During editing, the student will discover where they may have used a term that is acceptable on social media but not in formal writing.

References

- Bailey, K.D. (1994, 4th ed.). *Methods of Social Research*. New York: Free Press.
- Bryant, W. H. (1984). Typical Errors in English Made by Japanese ESL Students. *Japan Association for Language Teaching Journal*, 6, 1-18.
- Business Daily (August 19, 2013). *Local graduates lack key skills for job market*.
- Corder, S.P. (1967). The Significance of Learner’s Errors. *International Review of Applied Linguistics in Language Teaching*, 4, 161-170.
- Ellis, R. (2015, 2nd Revised Edition). *Understanding Second Language Acquisition*. London, Oxford University Press.
- Ellis, R. & Barkhuizen, G. (2005). *Analysing Learner Language*. London: Oxford University Press.
- Gan, Z. (2012). Understanding L2 Speaking Problems: Implications for ESL Curriculum Development in a Teacher Training Institution in Hong kong. *Australian Journal of Teacher Education*, 37 (1), 43-59.
- Hiltz, S.R. & Turoff, M. (1978). *The Network Nation: Human Communication via Computer*. Norwood, NJ: Ablex.
- James, C. (1998). *Errors in Language Learning and Use: Exploring Error Analysis*. London: Routledge
- Kaimenyi, J. (March 4, 2014, NTV Kenya). Kenya: 'Sheng' and Electronic Communication Devices to Blame for Poor Performance in English, Says Kaimenyi
- King’ei, G.K. (2001). Pitfalls in Kenya’s Postcolonial Language Policy: Ambivalence in Choice and Development. *Per Lunguam*, 17 (1): 36-47.
- Kioko, A. & Muthwii, M. (2001). The demands of a changing society: English in education in Kenya today. *Language, Culture and Curriculum*, 14(3), 201-213.

- Lado, R. (1957). *Linguistics across Cultures*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.
- Lodhi, A.Y. (1993). The Language Situation in Africa Today. *Nordic Journal of African Studies*, 2(1), 79-86.
- Mackay Commission (1981). *Second University in Kenya: Report of the Presidential Working Party*. Nairobi: Government Printer.
- Meshthrie, R., Swann, J., Deumert, A., & Leap, W.L. (2000). *Introducing Sociolinguistics*. Philadelphia; John Benjamins Publishing Company.
- Miller, J.(2005). Most of ESL Students have Trouble with the Articles. *International Education Journal*, 5(5), 80-88.
- Murray, D. (2000). Protean Communication: The Language of Computer-Mediated Communication. *TESOL Quarterly*, 34 (3), 397-421.
- Nabea, W. (2009). Language Policy in Kenya: Negotiation with Hegemony. *The Journal of Pan African Studies*, 3(1), 121-138.
- Ominde, S. (1965). *Commission of Inquiry*. Nairobi: Government Printer.
- Ortega, Lourdes (2009). *Understanding Second Language Acquisition*. NY: Routledge
- Prah, K.K. (2000). *Mother Tongue for Scientific and Technological Development in Africa*. Cape Town: Centre for Advanced Studies of African Society (CASAS).
- Scott, J. (1990). A Matter of Record: *Documentary sources in Social Research*. Cambridge, UK: Polity Press.
- Selinker, L. (1972), Interlanguage. *International Review of Applied Linguistics*, 10, 209–241.
- Souriyavongsa, T., Rany, S., Abidin, M.J.Z.& Mei, L.L. (2013). Factors Causes Students Low English Language Learning: A Case Study in the National University of Laos. *International Journal of English Language Education*, 1 (1), 179-192.
- The Constitution of Kenya (2010). Nairobi: The National Council for Law Reporting.

UK Commission for Employment and Skills (UKCES). (2009). *The Employability Challenge: Full Report*. Retrieved on March 30 from:

<http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/+http://www.ukces.org.uk/upload/pdf/EmployabilityChallengeFullReport.pdf>

Webb, V. N. (1995). A sociolinguistic profile of South Africa: a brief overview, in Webb (ed.), *Language in South Africa: An Input into Language Planning for a Post-apartheid South Africa*. Pretoria: University of Pretoria, pp. 15-40.