

Analysis of Students' Academic Performance in Parts of Speech Among College Students

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Abstract

This was a descriptive survey study of students' academic performance in Parts of speech in General English I (GSE 111), during the 2015/2016 academic session in Kwara State College of Education (Tech.) Lafiagi, Nigeria. One hundred and thirty students were sampled for the study. Pro-forma was used to collect data. Frequency chart, frequency counts and percentage were used to analyse the data. It was discovered from the findings that apart from Adverb (as seen in Figure 2), students failed woefully in other topics such as; noun, pronoun, verb, adjective, preposition, and conjunction. To this effect, it was concluded that students' understanding of Parts of speech in English language was in crisis. It was recommended among others that for College students to have a grasp of Parts of speech, English language classes should not be over-crowded.

Keywords

Academic Performance, College Students, English Language, Parts of Speech and National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE)

1. Introduction

[11] defined performance as an observable or measurable behavior of a person or an animal in a particular situation usually experimental situation. This therefore means that performance measures the behaviors or an aspect of a feat that can be observed at a specific period. [1] stated that students' performance is very important because, it appears to be the major criterion by which the effectiveness and success of any educational institution could be judged.

[3] resonated that English grammar constituted the essential of the school curriculum in Nigeria's education system. Excellent in English was however, given a top priority. A common saying which was popular at that time, according to him, was 'fail English fail all'. This expression therefore gives credent to the importance attached to the essence of grammar in the country's educational curriculum till date and in all educational settings and levels.

Thus, a cardinal aspect of the English grammar is Parts of

speech. [12] averred that these are words classification of words which are developed by Greek grammarians on the basis of their similarities of form of function. Eight classes are traditionally recognized in English language and they are noun, pronoun, verb, adverb, adjective, preposition, conjunction and interjection. Yet, [2] expressed that academic performance of students both at secondary and post-secondary schools is worrisome in English grammar. Thus, if College student does not understand the nitty-gritty of English grammar in Parts of speech, how then could they manage English for basic interpersonal communicative skills, let alone for cognitive academic language proficiency?

More importantly, Parts of Speech in English language are basically used to construct sentence(s). It is believed that without parts of speech, learners may be unable to render a simple English structure for meaningful essence. Thus, just like a builder would make use of blocks or bricks to erect and construct buildings, learners of English would follow suit with Parts of Speech to make meaningful and correct sentences with the language. The below figure 1 illustrates this notion:

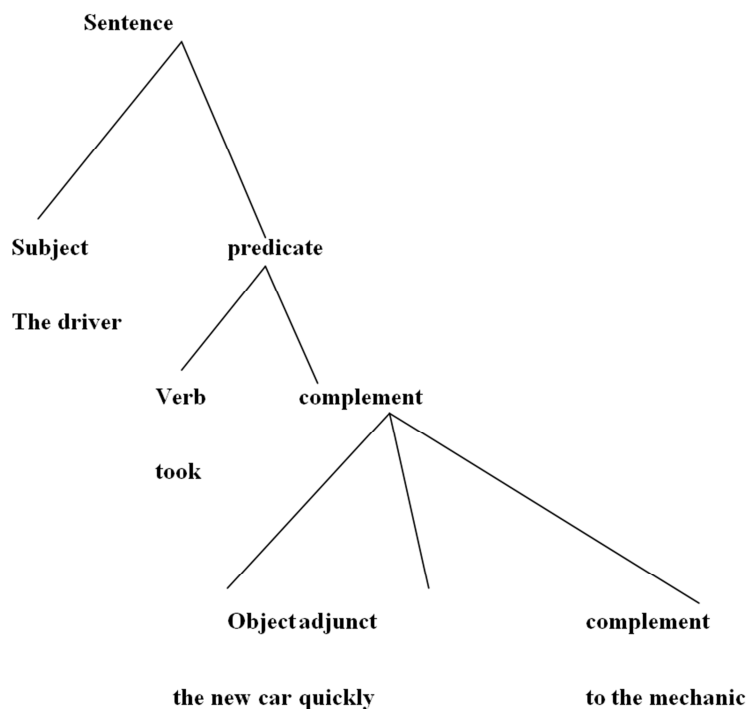


Figure 1. Illustrating Parts of Speech with a Sentence.

From the above illustration, topics under Parts of speech constitute structures in English language. Thus, it is not expedient to make use of all the Parts of speech at a time in a given sentence or structure. Nevertheless, it is obvious that the simplest sentence in English language cannot be rendered without Parts of speech. Parts of speech are the basic ingredients and the back-bone of English grammar and structures. To this effect, [4] emphasised in its curriculum that all topics in Grammar under Parts of speech should be taught which are nouns, pronouns, verbs, adverbs, adjectives, prepositions, conjunctions and interjections.

2. Purpose of the Study

The general purpose of this study is to investigate and analyse students' academic performance in Parts of speech among the college students of Kwara State College of Education (Tech.), Lafiagi, Nigeria.

3. Procedures

This research work employed descriptive survey method where students' scores in General English I (GSE 111) were collected through pro-forma, during the 2013/2014 academic session and were analysed for students' academic performance in Parts of Speech. Random sampling was adopted for sampling and sampling technique. The sample population was one hundred and thirty students from the College of Education (Tech.) Lafiagi in Kwara State.

One major statistical tool found suitable for this research work was Frequency counts and percentage. This was used in order to find out information and to gather understanding of

the present situation in relation to students' academic performance in topics under Parts of speech. The research work investigated Parts of speech as explained by [4] alone.

4. Empirical Findings

Table 1. Noun.

Serial number	Question	% of correct answer
1	6	43
2	7	34
3	8	43
4	9	42
5	10	25

Table 2. Pronoun.

Serial number	Question	% of correct answer
6	11	28
7	12	43
8	13	34
9	14	41
10	15	17
11	16	37
12	17	24
13	18	15
14	19	20
15	20	23

Table 3. Adjective.

Serial number	Question	% of correct answer
16	21	26
17	22	40
18	23	28
19	24	42
20	25	33

Table 4. Adverb.

Serial number	Question	% of correct answer
21	26	43
22	27	30
23	28	53
24	29	40
25	30	34

Table 5. Verb.

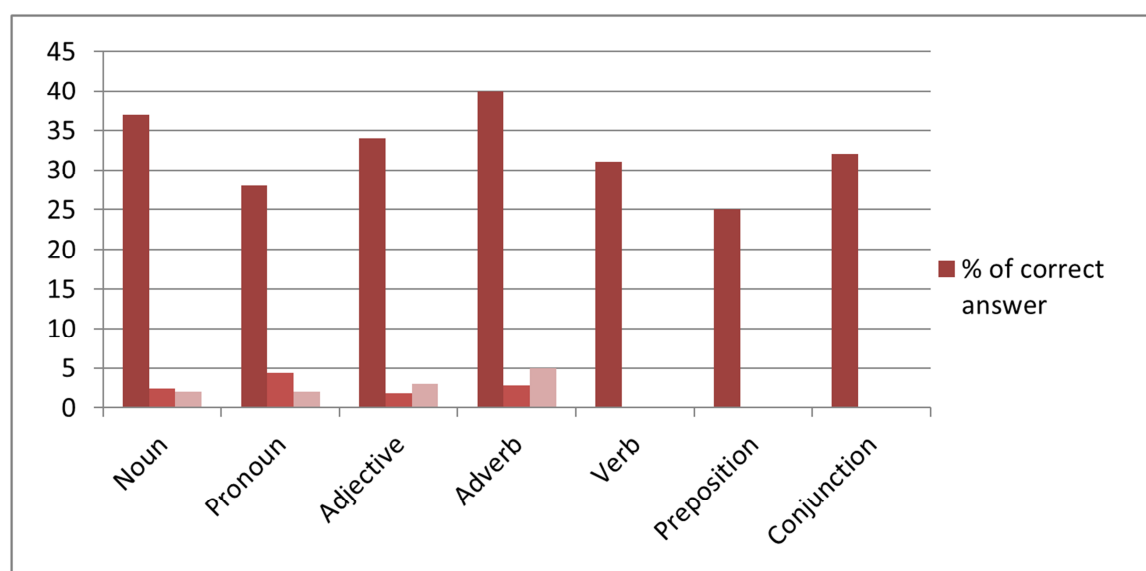
Serial number	Question	% of correct answer
26	31	17
27	32	29
28	33	30
29	34	22
30	35	18
31	36	23
32	37	40
33	38	49
34	39	35
35	40	43

Table 6. Preposition.

Serial number	Question	% of correct answer
36	51	34
37	52	23
38	53	27
39	54	20
40	55	46
41	56	16
42	57	9
43	58	14
44	59	14
45	60	52

Table 7. Conjunction.

Serial number	Question	% of correct answer
46	47	30
47	48	27
48	49	30
49	50	24

*Figure 2. Summary of students' academic performance based on overall percentage.*

As seen from the above frequency bar chart; students only manage to have a low passed mark in Adverb (40marks), while they failed woefully in other topics.

5. Discussion of Findings and Results

From the table 1 above, students could not perform well in noun. Students only passed three questions out of five questions. From the frequency chart in figure 2, they have 37% which was an indication of their poor performance in the topic.

Also, in pronoun, their academic performance was even worse off than in noun. As seen from table 2, students only had a low passed in two questions while they failed the remaining questions woefully. This shameful outcome was represented in figure 2, where the woeful summary for the percentage of their performance is 27%. This revealed that students in the college cannot recognise the basic functions

of pronouns and its usage.

Five questions were set under adjectives, out of the five; students had a low passed mark in two questions. This ridiculous performance was further buttressed in figure 2, where the summary of the students' performance based on their overall percentage was 34%. Also, in adverb, students passed three questions out of five. But, in the summary chart, in figure 2, they manage to have 40%, a passed mark. Again, such passed mark was never good enough for college students.

Students' performance in one of the most important Parts of Speech; verb, which according to [8] is the back-bone of English sentences, was also poor. Students only passed three questions out of ten questions set for them as seen in table 4. In the summary analysis of students' academic performance in verb as seen in figure 2, they scored 31%. One could then infer that bad grammar may not be too far fetch from these

college students since their understanding of verb and verb-tenses was zero.

The last two are preposition and conjunction. It was embarrassing to note that the sampled students could not even possessed a passed mark in any of the questions set for them under conjunction as seen in table 6. For preposition, they struggled to have a passed mark in two questions alone out of ten questions. Hence, students' understanding of conjunction and preposition in English was also poor.

Pathetically, we observed that students' performance in Parts of speech was shameful and discouraging among college students. [10] has earlier revealed that students' performance in English generally has been persistently poor for more than three decades. [9] therefore resonated that the inability of students to think critically has led to a falling standard in our educational system. No wonder, the National Policy on Education [6] section 4 (e) of the document averred that schools should raise a generation of people who can think for themselves, and who will be apparently creative after school.

6. Conclusions and Recommendations

A critical overview of the above analysis suggested that students' academic performance in topics under Parts of speech was abysmally low and shameful despite the fact that English language as a whole is the life blood of the country's educational system [7]. While some students have lackadaisical attitude towards English language, others have poor background which has now become the bedrock of their linguistic deficiency in pursuing higher education. On the whole, English teachers should endeavor to emphasise on Parts of Speech and its essence in the interface of this globalise and digitalise literacy community where the probability of one's academic performance in a topic could invariably be liable for better feat in the entire subject (for instance, in English language) or otherwise in other subjects. The following recommendations are suggested based on the findings:

1. English classes should not be crowded with students. One English teacher should be assigned to only 25 students as prescribed by the National Commission for Colleges of Education [5]
2. Students must attend Communicative English Programm (CEP) in order to boost their Basic Interpersonal Communicative Skills (BICS) and Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP).
3. All topics under Parts of Speech should be included in

the NCCE curriculum and taught by English teachers since students' understanding of simple English sentences could only be grasped through Parts of Speech.

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Biography



Olanipekun Shola Sunday obtained his B.A in English (Literature) from Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria and Master of Arts in Literature-in-English from Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Nigeria. Presently, he teaches General English at Kwara State College of Education (Tech.), Lafiagi, Nigeria.



Noel James attended Federal College of Education, Yola before proceeding to Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria where he studied English language. He is presently a lecturer in the Department of English Language, Federal College of Education, Yola, Adamawa State, Nigeria.