The English Language Tenses Error Usage and its effect on Academic Performance among Selected Secondary School Students in Sokoto Metropolis

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ABSTRACT
This study investigated the wrong usage of tense form among the secondary school students in Sokoto metropolises. The study was guided by the following objectives; to examine the usage of present tense comprising spoken and writing among the secondary school students in, to determine the usage of past tense comprising spoken and writing among the secondary school students, to find out the usage of future tense comprising spoken and writing among the secondary school students all in Sokoto metropolises. A cross-sectional research design was used adopting both quantitative and qualitative research approaches in which test and questionnaire were used to collect data. The population was sample of 100 respondents was selected using simple sampling techniques. The data collected was analyzed using descriptive and percentage. Findings in this study indicate that there is positive usage of English tense form among the student. The study recommends that teachers should try to emphasize the teaching of English tenses and their forms to the students and the importance of the tenses on both spoken and written which can improve the student accuracy in the language.
Keywords: English language, Tenses, Hausa speakers and Academic Performance

INTRODUCTION
English language words are not generally marked for word class. It is not usually possible to tell from the form of a word which class it belongs to except to some extent, in the case of words with inflectional endings or derivational suffixes. On the other hand, some words belong to more than one word class. For example, *run* can serve as either a verb or a noun (these are regarded as two different lexemes). Lexemes may be inflected to express different grammatical categories. The lexeme *run* has the forms *runs*, *ran*, *runny*, *runner*, and *running*. Words in one class can sometimes be derived from those in another. This has the potential to give rise to new words. The noun *aerobics* has recently given rise to the adjective *aerobicized*. Words combine to form phrases. A phrase typically serves the same function as a word from some particular word class. For example, *my very good friend Peter* is a phrase that can be used in a sentence as if it were a noun, and is therefore called a noun phrase. Similarly, adjective phrases and adverb phrases function as if they were adjectives or adverbs, but with other types of phrases the terminology has different implications. For example, a verb phrase consists of a verb together with any objects and other dependents; a prepositional phrase consists of a preposition together with its complement (and is therefore usually a type of adverb phrase); and a determiner phrase is a type of noun phrase containing a determiner (Carter & McCarthy 2006).
Tense aspect in English refers to the duration of an event within a particular tense. In other words, the aspect of a tense allows us to describe or understand how an event unfolds over time. In English there are four aspects according to which the tenses can be conveniently sorted. It has four aspects: simple,

progressive , perfect , and perfect progressive. In English grammar, the word tense refers to the time period in which the verb of a sentence places an action. There are three tenses in English: present and past and future (*Pye, 2008*).

English aspect is a grammatical category that expresses how an action, event, or state, denoted by a verb, extends over time. Perfective aspect is used in referring to an event conceived as bounded and unitary, without reference to any flow of time during ("I helped him"). Imperfective aspect is used for situations conceived as existing continuously or repetitively as time flows ("I was helping him"; "I used to help people") (Henk 2006). Therefore in this research the researcher will focused on the usage of tense form comprising spoken and writing among selected secondary school students in Sokoto metropolis.

English Language

The English language has had a remarkable history. When we first catch sight of it in historical records, it is the speech of some none-too-civilized tribes on the continent of Europe along the North Sea. Of course, it had a still earlier history, going back perhaps to somewhere in Eastern Europe or western Asia, and long before that to origins we can only speculate about. From those murky and undistinguished beginnings, English has become the most widespread language in the world, used by more peoples for more purposes than any other language on Earth (John 2010).

The supremacy of English as a world language is a relic of the age when Great Britain was an important world power. The inhabitants of huge chunks of territory which in old atlases were coloured red enjoyed the benefits of learning English from explorers, travellers, missionaries and settlers. The development of English took place over a very long time, during which most of the people in Britain were quite content with the spoken language, based on the speech of the sixteen-century Anglo-Saxon invaders. Latin persisted, later invaders from Scandinavia brought much of their language, and the Norman Conquest of 1066 brought French. By the thirteen century three languages were in use, Latin for scholars, ecclesiastics, philosophers and lawyers, French for the aristocracy, and English for the rest (Metcalfe & Astle 1980).

The schools began teaching English about 1300 and English was at last permissible in the law courts in 1362, then gradually the various languages mingled. English is thus a hotchpotch of other languages around the world, and gradual changes have divided its history into three chronological periods known as Old English, Middle English and Modern English. The Old English period is considered to have ended about 1150 and the Middle English has period about 1500, since when Modern English has been enriched by countless influences and additions from many other languages to become the English of today.

As the English-speaking world become more organised, as communication developed, as more people became educated, as trade intensified, as ability to read and write became essential, as competition grew, as people's outlook broadened, as travel became practicable, it became evident that discipline and consistency in the language were not only desirable but necessary (Metcalfe & Astle 1980).

English Grammar

English grammar is the way in which meanings are encoded into wordings in the English language. This includes the structure of words, phrases, clauses, and sentences, right up to the structure of whole texts. There are historical, social, cultural and regional variations of English. Divergences from the grammar described here occur in some dialects of English. This article describes a generalized present-day Standard English, the form of speech and writing found in types of public discourse including broadcasting, education, entertainment, government, and news including both formal and informal speech. There are differences in grammar between the standard forms of British, American, and Australian English, although these are minor compared with the differences in vocabulary and pronunciation.

Eight "word classes" or "parts of speech" are commonly distinguished in English: nouns, determiners, pronouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, prepositions, and conjunctions. (Determiners, traditionally classified along with adjectives, have not always been regarded as a separate part of speech.) Interjections are another word class, but these are not described here as they do not form part of the clause and sentence structure of the language (Carter & McCarthy 2006). Nouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs form open classes – word classes that readily accept new members, such as the noun

celebutante (a celebrity who frequents the fashion circles), similar relatively new words. The others are considered to be closed classes. For example, it is rare for a new pronoun to enter the language.

Tense Aspect in English
Aspect refers to the duration of an event within a particular tense. In other words, the aspect of a tense allows us to describe or understand how an event unfolds over time. In English there are four aspects according to which the tenses can be conveniently sorted. It has four aspects: simple, progressive , perfect , and perfect progressive. In English grammar, the word tense refers to the time period in which the verb of a sentence places an action. There are three tenses in English: present and past and future (*Pye, 2008*).

Different languages make different grammatical aspectual distinctions; some do not make any. The marking of aspect is often conflated with the marking of tense and mood. Aspectual distinctions may be restricted to certain tenses: in Latin and the Romance languages, for example, the perfective–imperfective distinction is marked in the past tense, by the division between preterites and imperfects. Explicit consideration of aspect as a category first arose out of study of the Slavic languages; here verbs often occur in the language in pairs, with two related verbs being used respectively for imperfective and perfective meanings (Henk 2006).

The concept of grammatical aspect should not be confused with perfect and imperfect *verb forms*; the meanings of the latter terms are somewhat different, and in some languages, the common names used for verb forms may not follow the actual aspects precisely.

Conclusively, tenses interact with the grammatical concept of aspect. Aspect defines how the flow of time is viewed in the sentence.

Types of Tense
According to Perfect English Grammar (2015) in the English language, tenses play an important role in sentence formation. The tense of a verb shows the time of an event or action. There are four types of tenses. Simple, Perfect, Continuous and Present Perfect Continuous and each of these has a present, past and future form.

Present Tense
The present tense is a grammatical tense whose principal function is to locate a situation or event in present time. The term present tense is usually used in descriptions of specific languages to refer to a particular grammatical form or set of forms; these may have a variety of uses, not all of which will necessarily refer to present time. For example, in the English sentence "My train leaves tomorrow morning", the verb form *leaves* is said to be in the present tense, even though in this particular context it refers to an event in future time. Similarly, in the historical present, the present tense is used to narrate events that occurred in the past (Comrie, 1985).

The present indicative of most verbs in modern English has the same form as the infinitive, except for the third-person singular form, which takes the ending *-[e]s*. The verb *be* has the forms *am*, *is*, *are*. A number of multi-word constructions exist to express combinations of present tense with aspect. The basic form of the present tense is called the simple present; there are also constructions known as the present progressive (or present continuous) (e.g. *am writing*), the present perfect (e.g. *have written*), and the present perfect progressive (e.g. *have been writing*).

Use of the present tense does not always imply present time. In particular, the present tense is often used to refer to future events (*I am seeing James tomorrow*; *My train leaves at 3 o'clock this afternoon*). This is particularly the case in condition clauses and many other adverbial subordinate clauses: *If you see him... As soon as they arrive...* There is also the historical present, in which the present tense is used to narrate past events (Comrie & Bernad 1985).

Past Tense
The past tense is a grammatical tense whose principal function is to place an action or situation in past time. In languages which have a past tense, it thus provides a grammatical means of indicating that the event being referred to took place in the past. Examples of verbs in the past tense include the English verbs *sang*, *went* and *was* (Comrie, 1985).

In some languages, the grammatical expression of past tense is combined with the expression of other categories such as mood and aspect. Thus a language may have several types of past tense form, their use depending on what aspectual or other additional information is to be encoded. French, for

example, has a compound past *(*passé composé*)* for expressing completed events, an imperfect for expressing events which were on-going or repeated in the past, as well as several other past forms.

Some languages that grammaticalise for past tense do so by inflecting the verb, while others do so periphrastically using auxiliary verbs, also known as "verbal operators" (and some do both, as in the example of French given above). Not all languages grammaticalise verbs for past tense Mandarin Chinese, for example, mainly uses lexical means (words like "yesterday" or "last week") to indicate that something took place in the past, although use can also be made of the tense/aspect markers *le* and *guo* (Comrie & Bernad 1985).

Future Tense

In grammar, a future tense is a verb form that generally marks the event described by the verb as not having happened yet, but expected to happen in the future. An example of a future tense form is the French *aimera*, meaning "will love", derived from the verb *aimer* ("love"). English does not have a future tense formed by verb inflection in this way, although it has a number of ways to express the future, particularly the construction with the auxiliary verb *will* or *shall* or *is/am/are going to* and grammarians differ in whether they describe such constructions as representing a future tense in English (Comrie & Bernad 1985).

The "future" expressed by the future tense usually means the future relative to the moment of speaking, although in contexts where relative tense is used it may mean the future relative to some other point in time under consideration.

English grammar provides a number of ways to indicate the future nature of an occurrence. Some argue that English does not have a future tense that is, a grammatical form that always indicates futurity nor does it have a mandatory form for the expression of futurity. However, there are several generally accepted ways to indicate futurity in English, and some of them particularly those that use *will* or *shall* are frequently described as future tense.

Hausa Speaker

The Hausa speaking people can be said to form the majority of the people inhabiting Nigeria's most northern states with concentration in Kano, Kaduna and Sokoto States. It must, however, be noted that in common with other people of the Suden, it is difficult to trace the true origin of the Hausa people, even though many attempts by historians were made to explain through traditions, their origin. Whatever the case, it is certain that at the present location of Kano City, the capital of an Hausa city-state bearing the same name, there existed a flourishing sedentary community by about 635 A.D. This is further confirmed by the presence of an iron-working furnace from that community's civilisation. Be that as it may, most traditions have ascribed the origin of the Hausa states to the marriage of an old legendary hero, a certain Bayajidda Prince of Baghdad, to a certain pre-historic Queen of Daura and their offspring are said to have founded the authentic seven Hausa state (Hausa Bakwai).

Going by the various traditions especially of the above legend, the founders of the seven Hausa states were all direct descendants of Bayajidda. Biram, the son of Bayajidda by a certain princess of Borno, is said to have founded a ruling dynasty, while Bawo, the son from the cohabitation of Bayajidda and the famous Queen of Daura, is said to have resulted into fathering the founders of the remaining dynasties. By all means, our source of information on the origin of the said city state is limited as history can only talk much on few of the city states namely Gobin, Daura, Zazzau or Zaria, Katsina and Kano.

It is by all means suggested that despite these rationalized traditions, the Hausa people seemed to have been the result of the arrival and gradual integration of waves of immigrants into an indigenous community or communities. It must be admitted that the rise in farming and other professional association led to the foundation of villages, which later on developed, into walled cities a prominent feature of most cities in the northern states. Whatever interpretation one might give the Hausa speaking people, they are and can be found all over the country practicing one profession or another and thereby spreading their language. Hausa is said to be the most widely spoken language in Africa (Language Study of Corps Members, 2015).

METHODOLOGY

Cross-sectional survey research design was adopted for this study, which involves gathering information on the entire population under the study at a single point in time. The researcher was interested in collecting information on groups of people with the same characteristics within the population, or on different issues (Ogundele, 2011). Both qualitative and quantitative approaches were used to obtain the information needed in this research. The design was chosen in order to find out the wrong usage of tense form among the secondary school students.

The population comprised the students from different secondary schools comprises Sultan Bello secondary school, Sani Dingyadi Unity secondary school and Hafsatu Ahmadu Bello all within the Sokoto metropolitan area. This population included a total number of 100 students, from the selected secondary schools from which the data necessary for the completion of this research was obtain.

Interview guide was used for the students, and it was structured interview where the researcher asked each interviewee the same set of standardized questions based on the subject of study. The researcher also used documentary analysis in which the research collected essay writing of the students to verify their writing aspect in term of their tense usage.

Study used the students' response. The Qualitative research method helps the researcher to gain an insight and understanding of the phenomena through intensive collection of narrative data. Data gathered from the interview response was coded and the related responses were grouped into themes.

RESULTS

The usage of simple Present tense among the secondary school students in Sokoto metropolises
Table 4.2: I _____ every week

	Frequency	Percent
Write	46	50.0
Writes	44	42.0
Written	10	8.0
Total	100	100.0

Source: Primary Data (2020)

The table 4.2 above shows that, 46 (50.0%) of the respondents used write to complete the sentence, 44 (42.0%) of the respondents used writes to complete the sentence, while 10 (8.0%) of the respondents used written to complete the sentence. This indicated that majority of the respondents which is 46 (50.0%) used the correct form of simple present tense which filled the blank (i.e. I write every week). Therefore this shows that majority of the students knows the correct form of present perfect continues tense to be use.

This is in line with Comrie, (1985) who asserted that the present indicative of most verbs in modern English has the same form as the infinitive, except for the third-person singular form, which takes the ending -[e]s.when students were consistently communicate with the right form of verb there is belief they have the potential to be able to succeed academically.

Table 4.3: It _____ every day

	Frequency	Percent
Raining	13	10.0
Rained	18	15.0
Rains	69	72.0
Total	100	100.0

Source: Primary Data (2020)

Table 4.3 above indicated that 69 (72.0%) of the respondents used rains to complete the sentence, 18 (15.0%) of the respondents used rained to complete the sentence, while 13 (10.0%) of the respondents used raining to complete the sentence. This shows that majority of the respondents which is 69 (72.0%) used the correct form of present tense which filled the blank (i.e. It rains every day). This shows that majority of the students know the correct form of present perfect continues tense to be use. This is in convergence with Comrie & Bernad (1985), who asserted that use of the present tense does not always imply present time. In particular, the present tense is often used to refer to future events, there is also the historical present, in which the present tense is used to narrate past events. Therefore, this is an indication that the students know the correct form of verb to be used to indicate present perfect continues tense.

The usage of simple Past tense among the secondary school students in Sokoto metropolises
Table 4.6: They _____ the money

	Frequency	Percent
Collect	18	21.0
Collects	8	9.0
Collected	74	70.0
Total	100	100.0

Source: Primary Data (2020)

The table 4.6 above indicates that 74 (70.0%) of the respondents used collected to complete the sentence, 18 (21.0%) of the respondents used collect to complete the sentence, while 8 (9.0%) of the respondents selects to complete the sentence. This shows that majority of the respondents which is 74 (70.0%) used the correct form of past tense which filled the blank (i.e. They collected the money). Thus, it is an indication that majority of the respondents knows the correct usage of the past tense form.
This is in line with the Henk (2006) who stated that in English, the past tense is one of the inflected forms of a verb. The past tense of regular verbs is made by adding *-d* or *-ed* to the base form of the verb, while those of irregular verbs are formed in various ways (such as *see→saw*, *go→went*, *be→was/were*). This indicates that those students had actually known the correct usage of the past tense form in of English language.

Table 4.7: I _____ for her

	Frequency	Percent
Waits	11	8.0
Wait	30	32.0
Waited	59	60.0
Total	100	100.0

Source: Primary Data (2020)

The table 4.7 above indicates that 59 (60.0%) of the respondents used waited to complete the sentence, 30 (32.0%) of the respondents used wait to complete the sentence, while 11 (8.0%) of the respondents used waits to complete the sentence. This shows that majority of the respondents which is 59 (60.0%) used the correct form of past tense which filled the blank (i.e. I waited for her). This is an indication that majority of the students know the correct usage of the past tense form.

According to perfect English grammar (2015) the simple past is used for describing single occurrences or habitual occurrences in the past, and sometimes for states existing in the past. In this regard it can be clearly seen in this aspect that the respondents exactly use the correct past tense form to indicate the occurrence of the action which shows that they know the usage of this tense form in English.

Usage of simple Future tense among the secondary school students in Sokoto metropolises
Table 4.11: They _____ play the game.

	Frequency	Percent
Will	13	12.0
Shall	74	76.0
Have	13	12.0
Total	100	100.0

Source: Primary Data (2020)

This table 4.11 above indicates that 74 (76.0%) of the respondents used shall to complete the sentence, 13 (12.0%) of the respondents used will to complete the sentence, while another 13 (12.0%) of the respondents used have to complete the sentence. This is an indication that majority of the respondents which is 74 (76.0%) used the correct form of future tense which filled the blank (i.e. they shall play the game). Therefor it is also an indication that majority of the students know the correct usage of the future tense form.
This is in accordance with the New Oxford Dictionary of English (1999) who stated that form of the *will/shall* future is frequently called the *simple future* (or *future simple*). Therefore, by all indication from the analysis above shows that the respondents have the knowledge about the usage of the future tense.

Table 4.12: I _____ write the letter.

	Frequency	Percent
Will	40	38.0
Shall	50	57.0
Has	10	5.0
Total	100	100.0

Source: Primary Data (2020)

The table 4.12 above shows that 50 (57.0%) of the respondents used shall to complete the sentence, 40 (38.0%) of the respondents used will to complete the sentence, while 10 (5.0%) of the respondents used has to complete the sentence. This shows that majority of the respondents 50 (57.0%) used the correct form of future tense which filled the blank (i.e. I shall write the letter). This also indicated that majority of the students know the correct usage of the future tense form.
This is in line with Comrie & Bernad (1985) who stated that English does not have a future tense formed by verb inflection in this way, although it has a number of ways to express the future, particularly the construction with the auxiliary verb *will* or *shall* or *is/am/are going to* and grammarians differ in whether they describe such constructions as representing a future tense in English. Considering this fact it is clearly an indication from the analysis that the students have the knowledge on the usage of the future tense form.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The study concluded that the usage of tenses is a process in which one indicates during his speech the time an event took place, this study have indicated that there is a positive usage of the English tense among the secondary school students. It was indicated in the research that the students use the correct present tense, past tense and future tense form. This is contrary to the expectation of the different views on the poor academic performance of students due to lack of experience on the usage of English tenses.

It was recommended that many teachers may neglect the importance of the usage of the English tense among the students especially on their academic performance. It is recommended that, teachers should try to emphasize the teaching of English tenses and their forms to the students and the importance of the tenses on both spoken and written which can improve their accuracy in the language. They should also encourage them to fully concentrate during their lesson the function of the English tenses; this will help the children to become more active in both writing and spoken English.

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