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Handling Communication Skills: The Holistic Approach

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Abstract
The three-year study interrogated classroom attitudes toward English and communication skills, using English language learners (ELL), teachers of communication skills and teachers of other subjects. Generally, the study, which highlighted the dominant role of English Language in global relations, was also a teacher's avenue to improve upon her classroom practice. The specific objective was to help learners develop critical perspectives to strive for effective communication skills, in and out of college, for excellence. The study was guided by two research questions: How could a communications skills instructor explore the most effective classroom approaches to address her students' needs? How does she balance teaching principles and gentle motivation of students hampered by severe communication handicaps? The study explored the principles of participatory action research to investigate the reasons behind poor communication skills of the participants. It emerged that students' English grasp was too low, thus, obstructing advanced learning. Participants were persuaded to revisit their position on the subject. It was recommended, among others, that the institution should admit into professional programmes learners who possess the required language proficiency. Additionally, communication skills should be taught throughout a professional programme to help consolidate the communicative skills of speaking, writing, reading, and listening among learners.
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1. Introduction

This paper sought the perspectives of English Language learners (ELLs) and instructors in exploring attitudes towards the communication Skills subject. Communities become interdependent by the day due to shared histories, global needs and situations (Davenport 2022). Such interdependence requires effective, empathetic and focused communication; it also compels learning institutions and instructors to design language and communication courses which can empower learners for assertive communication to engender social cohesion and professional excellence (Costa & Dewaele 2012; Dynamic Signal n. d). Among others, interdependence has been spurred by Information Communication Technology (ICT), the sophistication of which also impacts learning systems (Prescott 2011; von Konsky 2012). Language teaching/learning falls in the direct path of sophisticated ICT, enabling collaboration and innovative relationships across disciplines and professions (Chomsky 2013; Kaplan 2019; Language quest 2011; Oliver *et al*. 2009; Switzer Associates 2022).

However, both teacher and the taught must appreciate language for its communication and intellectual roles, socio-cultural as well, in general existence to value its importance in academic work. Chomsky (2013) has opined that the exact processes through which the brain produces language might not be known; yet, it is apparent that the human ability to express intelligible thought is an extremely complicated process (Chomsky 2006; Lacan 1949; Saussure 1916) There is also the assertion that human activity is hinged on language, which enables communication (Stark 1998). Thus, whether it serves as avenues of human communication or represents a culture that imposes itself on others', human language symbolizes ability and intelligence (Nichols 1989; Said 94; Viswanathan 1989; English Language Learners 2008; Academic Writing 2007).

Geopolitical situations have successfully categorised English Language users into communication groups, which grouping determines the spaces society allocates to speakers. Some have opined that English speakers operate from three global spaces: Native speakers (NS) such as the British inhabit the "Inner Circle". Non-native speakers (NNS) – former British colonies such as [Ghana] and India occupy the Outer Circle; the "Expanding Circle" houses people who learn English as a foreign language in a school setting – China (Kachru 1985 as cited in Kontra & Csizér 2011 p. 75). The latter definition is somewhat blurred because for performance (Saussure 1916; Thompson Learning n.d), the classroom becomes the converging space for all three groups for the exploration of formal, arbitrary rules of English. Yet, each label has overwhelming multiple implications for the occupiers, underscoring speakers' status as dominant or minority groups in global interactions.

Global dynamics necessitate intermingling of the groups; increasingly, communication occurs on NNS-NSS basis, sometimes the notion of correctness not necessarily a priority but rather understanding. A world that possesses colonial histories labels human languages as dominant or minor, though each is a legitimate channel of communication and worldview (Costa & Dewaele 2012; Ngugi 2000). In formal learning contexts, the labelling effectively determines which language is a core subject and which becomes elective. For a cross-section of

communicators, therefore, English is not a mere channel of communication. It is a space for socio-cultural engagement, a platform for dignified NNS expression of native intelligence through the NS's medium, making correctness a constant relevance. This paper dignifies *all* languages yet acknowledges the dominant communication status of the English Language in global relations (Kontra & Csizér 2011; Tulasiewicz & Adams 1998).

The study was guided by two research questions: How could a communications skills instructor explore the most effective classroom approaches to address her students' needs? How does she balance teaching principles and gentle motivation of students limited by severe communication handicaps? Whilst seeking to help students to appreciate effective communication skills in and out of school, the study specifically sought to help learners develop critical perspectives to determine whether or not the course was relevant to their programme.

1.1 Problem Statement

University admission is not a fluke; it is guided by qualification criteria for specific targeted teaching/learning objectives, with long-term implications for job markets (McKenna-Buchanan et al., 2020). Among other reasons, the regulations ensure that the applicant is equipped for the intended programme. Language proficiency is pivotal for reflective listening, decorous speech, critical reading, and analytical writing, hence, universities across the world make credit in language a prerequisite for admission. (Morreale et al. 2000; New Zealand Qualification 2014).

Educational systems are expected to facilitate effective programmes for language learning, the formative years being crucial (Goldenberg 2008). An appreciable foundation in language acquisition ought to be laid at the primary level and consolidated at the secondary level. (English Language Learners 2008; Teaching Syllabus 2007). However, for learners to develop proficiency, teaching/learning must be rooted in an environment conducive for smooth exchange of information across all learning cycles (Principles of Language Learning 2017). A conducive learning environment might reduce learners' inhibitions and motivate enthusiasm for knowledge. Learner enthusiasm might facilitate smooth internalization of language principles for subsequent application of acquired language skills in effective communication across disciplines and endeavours (Gray and Klapper 2009).

However, systemic challenges impinge the smooth running of language and communication curricula (Goldenberg 2008; English Language Learners 2008). Despite well-designed curricula and structured syllabi for English Language instruction in Ghana, teaching and learning hiccups occur, leaving a cross-section of learners ill-equipped for advanced learning (Academic Writing 2007). Yet, such learners are enrolled in advanced Technical/Vocational Education and Training (TVET) programmes. In the communication skills classroom, such students display poor comprehension skills, which impact their ability to ably process information for academic and professional knowledge. Worst of all, academic departments are fixated on grades rather than ensuring that teaching/learning occurs.

Ideally, a strong foundation in a language should equip speakers for effective communication across discourses and professions (The World Economic Forum 2016). However, the learning hiccups which occur across learning levels create language gaps which culminate in serious communication handicaps for learners. Large class sizes also make it extremely challenging for the language instructor to provide necessary attention to struggling students.

1.1.1 Research Framework

This study explored classroom approaches that might help students to appreciate the concept of *transfer* through communication skills. The study was intended to counter attitude from a cross-section of Ghanaian TVET stakeholders advocating that candidate for TVET programmes do not need language proficiency, because the target is career creation, not language. Under that pretext, language is de-emphasised so that large numbers of applicants can be admitted into vocational programmes. That misguided stance influences attitude towards communication skills in the TVET classroom. Students who share the erroneous sentiment might not study or do so just to pass examination (Joughin 1999). Such attitude potentially renders teaching and learning examination-oriented rather than a framework for nurturing the intellectual prowess of learners (Principles of Language Learning 2017).

The United Kingdom has emphasised the crucial role of proficient English skills in TVET. It made language central when it redesigned its TVET system for effective skill acquisition. Whilst emphasising that applicants for vocational programmes must have a minimum of C in English, it also ruled that learners who were struggling in their respective programmes, should concentrate on English. Once their language proficiency improved, they could re-enrol in their vocational programmes (Wolf 2015). There is sound basis for prioritising language in professional programmes.

Tertiary education targets the analytical potential of learners (Brew 2006; World Economic Forum 2016). It ought to help beneficiaries to strengthen analytical reading skills, develop critical thinking for learning autonomy, adapt acquired knowledge to changing technology, to mention these (von Konsky & Olivier 2012; Rogers as

cited in Smith 2003). Such dynamism might elude students whose language grasp is poor and who study communication skills in isolation rather than transfer the skills other courses. Thus, the study was an avenue to sensitize the targeted TVET community that Technical/Vocational training is sustainably rewarding when anchored in effective speaking, writing, reading and listening skills.

2. Method

The study was designed on the principles of participatory action research (PAR) to explore reasons for the abysmal attitude towards English and Communication Skills courses in one tertiary institution in Ghana. PAR creates an avenue for collective investigation. It is firmly rooted in "collective, self-reflective inquiry that researchers and participants undertake" to understand and improve upon practice (An Overview, 2011). Additionally, it motivates investigators to revisit existing realities to strategize for radical changes (Baum, MacDougall and Smith, 2006). Above all, PAR offers a harmonious environment in which dissenting opinions can be voiced for a critical discussion. Openness was crucial for this classroom study. It was imperative that students expressed their legitimate anxieties, observations and shared critical perception of the teaching and learning process. A communicative space was necessary if students' reflections were to be voiced spontaneously.

2.1 Sampling

Participants of the study were 135 students the investigator handled in three academic years: Three Higher National Diploma (HND) groups – Textiles included – two Bachelor of Technology (B'TECH) classes and two groups from a certificate programme. The B'TECH groups were HND graduates, then full-time employees, who had already completed the communication skills course. The HND groups were secondary school graduates, but the certificate groups comprised both secondary and vocational-technical school graduates. The B'TECH programme was of two-year duration, but technical report writing was a semester course. The HND groups pursued a three-year diploma programme, but Communication Skills was offered in the first year only. The third group did English in a year's certificate programme. The largest class was 68 students; the others ranged between 7 and 24.

2.1.1 Data Collection

Class discussions and dialogues based on course reading materials created regular opportunities for the researcher to monitor participants' expressions and guide students to critique one another's utterances. Written tasks also yielded data. Class discussions sensitised students to the important role of effective English and communication skills in academic, socio-cultural and professional relationships. Additionally, the discussions targeted the comprehension and analytical skills of learners. In the third year, in addition to the formal assessment by the Academic Quality Assurance Unit, there was an in-house assessment. The HND Textiles group of fourteen students was asked to write two things they liked about the course and two things they did not like about the course. They were also asked to comment on the electronic communication activities. No names or student numbers were required on the assessment sheets. For spontaneity, the activity was performed in class. All responses became part of the data.

Participants' graded papers from other courses were also studied in order to track evaluation trends among teachers of other subjects. There were dialogues with teachers and heads of departments serviced by the researcher. Two officers from industry expressed opinions about the communication competencies of student interns and graduates. The targeted organisations regularly engaged students of the Institution – industrial attachment, full-time employment.

2.1.2 Approach

At the beginning of each academic year, the instructor de-emphasised examination and psyched students for long-term learning by informing them that the course was meant to cater for their immediate and future communication needs. She stressed the need for learners to grasp the principles of usage. Students were repeatedly informed that if they understood the concepts of close reading and summary taught in the communication skills course, they could transfer such skills to their elective courses. If they internalised the principles of syntax and mechanics of writing, they would be effective writers. If they read and understood their elective courses, they would eventually develop expertise in their chosen careers. If they grasped fully the oral and non-verbal communication concepts explored through the course, they would become effective listeners and public speakers, which skills would maximise their professionalism and marketability for the 21st Century competitive job market (Goldenberg, 2008; von Konsky and Olivier, 2012; Wolf, 2015).

Thus, the focus fell simultaneously on speaking, writing, reading and listening (SWRL) during class interactions. Handouts on communication, technical report writing, and communication in the various professions were regularly e-mailed ahead of lectures so that the class could practise close reading on their own; the materials were used to practise public reading in class. The articles were discussed in class to test students' comprehension and analytical skills. The discussions were also meant to help students develop confidence for public speaking, so even the shyest students were included. Sometimes, students were asked to write their

thoughts and read to the entire class; subsequent peer evaluation helped the groups to correct recurring errors. Students critiqued one another's writing in class. To help participants to internalise correct expressions, they were often given erroneous sentences and paragraphs to correct. To counter the delinquent stance taken by the departments that technical students did not need the course, students were constantly asked if they considered the principles of SWRL applicable to their elective courses. In the third year, students' class presentations centred on the relevance of communication skills to their programmes.

2.1.3 Limitation

The study was constrained by time: Generally, the courses were offered in the first year; the B'TECH course lasted a semester only. A longer duration might have improved the outcomes.

3. Results

Some observations and themes emerged from data analysis:

3.1 Observation

Students had entered the programme with challenges across all aspects of English. Despite the constant exposure to the target language, progress was nominal:

- Students' vocabulary limitation was extreme, making composition an arduous task. About a third of the students had challenges in correct usage of the listed pairs of words: /lecture, lecturer/, /order, other/, /they, their, the, there/, /once, one's/, /course and coarse/ -- tertiary students offering textiles technology ought to fully understand coarse.
- Spelling posed a major challenge for about a third of the students. More than half of the participants wrote **writting* instead of writing; about the same number wrote **recieve* instead of receive. Such simple and common words ought not to pose spelling challenges for tertiary students, but the challenge persisted.
- Another major challenge was capitalisation. About a third began sentences with small letters. About half would write **english* when it occurred within sentences; they failed to capitalise their own Institution – *takoradi polytechnic[1].
- The written tasks revealed the enormity of students' challenges: poor tense formation, poor punctuation, limited vocabulary and poor diction marred participants' sentences. Paragraphing was equally problematic (see appendices 1, 2 and 3). About 90 % of the participants confused the plural |-*s*| with the possessive |'s|.
- Sampled graded papers from other subjects indicated that teachers from other courses ignored language errors when they marked students' scripts (see appendices 4a and 4b).

3.1.1 *Class Co-operation*

Once the rule was established that supplementary handouts would be e-mailed ahead of class, students regularly accessed their e-mail messages to download the materials. The instruction was that they should use the information to prepare, then bring to class for discussion. Generally, students co-operated. Those who did not have access to the internet would copy friends' printed materials. The class was advised to get individual copies so that they could file for future use. Those who did not have Smartphones were advised to access the Internet from the Institution's e-library, which operated a policy of one-hour Internet browsing per student per day.

3.1.2 Relevance of Communication Skills

Despite the language challenges, all the students admitted that the course was relevant to their programmes (see appendix 3). They were able to make the connection between the course and their elective subjects, especially research. They claimed that the course had helped them to improve upon SWRL. Most encouraging was their recommendation that the course should be offered throughout the programme, not just the first year.

3.1.3 On-line Communication

Generally, participants appreciated the electronic communication, though network problems and power outages proved a disincentive. One disadvantaged student complained: "My phone can't even send a mail or receive a mail". The table below summarises participants' views.

Participants' views regarding on-line Communication	Number
Materials helped me to prepare ahead of class.	8
Could access materials on mobile phones.	2
Phone not equipped for Internet access.	2
Network/power failure prevented access to the Internet.	2
Total	**14**

[1] Now Takoradi Technical University.

3.1.4 The Other Teacher

The other teachers' stance on language and communication skills was rather dubious. Though acknowledging that students were extremely challenged in language skills, departments focused on grades, not performance. About a third of the teachers simply desired marks. Comments and reactions of departmental heads regarding students' poor performance in communication skills indicated naivety regarding the crucial relevance of the course to students' learning and future performance.

A head of department was myopic about the course: *They are not going to use the grammar; they only need to pass Communication Skills.* Three heads of department demonstrated misplaced kindness: L*et us help the students.* In all instances, the heads meant that the final marks of non-performing students should be topped to avoid failure. Heads got upset when such requests were not granted. An instructor's comment raised the researcher's apprehension: "Students are getting smart; they have realised that if they concentrated and got A in their elective subjects, it would compensate for a D or F in Computer Literacy or Communication Skills". The researcher countered that the students were not smart; rather, their "thinking was twisted". Such attitude from instructors does not motivate learners to language and Communication Skills courses. It also does not engender responsibility among learners (Principles of Language Learning, 2017).

3.1.5 Participatory Environment

Generally, Students' participation in class activities was commendable. Operating the principle of SWRL created diverse opportunities for dialogue, so all students were effectively engaged. Participants had no inhibition in expressing opinions. The researcher appreciated the freedom of expression, particularly, from the in-house assessment. Since students did not disclose their identity, they were candid. One wrote: "I find it very difficult to understand. Sometimes, it's very boring". Another wrote: "Communication embarrasses a person when he/she is poor in the English language". Another student commented on grading: "Two things I don't like about this course are: i. the way they mark. ii, the way they set the questions". Four students advised the instructor to send materials on time to enable students to get ample time for reading. Receiving students' sincere opinion fulfilled a key expectation of the investigation – hearing students' voices about the course and instructor.

3.16 Views from Industry

Participants from industry complained about communication challenges of staff. Both harped on the failings of interns and newly engaged staff from the targeted institution. One officer had major issues with staff inability to observe subject-verb agreement. Consequently, he had resorted to giving written tasks to help such staff improve upon language skills. Both officers asserted that poor communication skills reflected poorly on staff performance.

4. Discussion

The World Economic Forum Report (2016), alongside others such as the National Council of Teachers (2008) and the Wolf Report (2015), has underscored the crucial role of language and Communication skills in tertiary education, as it underpins the teaching and learning experience. The different approaches adopted by the researcher paved the way for open communication in the classroom; utilising SWRL created opportunities for diverse communication activities. Despite the language challenges, students developed enthusiasm and some analytical perspectives. The study thus corroborated Kontra & Csizér's (2011) assertion that communication occurs even when communicators cannot apply language rules.

4.1. Language Proficiency

Yet, teaching and learning would have been more rewarding if students had come into the programme with good language skills. Consolidation of English language principles would have been unhindered; then the instructor could have focused on academic and business writing, the main objective. Instead, usage was a challenge through the year. The study thus validated the UK's (Wolf 2015) and New Zealand's (2014) insistence on proficient English language skills for university entrants. Other researchers' have also upheld the fundamental role of communication in relationships (Cross-Cultural Communication 1998; Tannen 1985). However, if the course was offered for two or three years, the first year could be used to consolidate language principles; whatever time is left could be used for academic writing and business communication. Students' analytical skills might also be strengthened. Strong communication skills would equip learners for the 21st Century workforce (Switzer Associates 2022; The World Economic Forum 2016).

4.1.1. Standards

Helping students did not imply compromising classroom and communication principles. Students were constantly challenged to strive for improvement (Principles of Language Learning 2017), since oral as well written errors distorted communication across all four channels. Students did not appreciate grading, because errors reduced their marks. Sometimes, it was surprising that students committed primary errors or failed to detect such (see appendix 3). Hence. the study validated the concerns raised by Goldenberg (2008) and National Council of Teachers of English (2008) about the rippling effects of poor handling of English at the basic and secondary levels.

Apparently, a cross-section of tertiary teachers had also missed the central role of language and communication skills in learning (Stark 1998; The World Economic Forum 2016).). Further, they failed to appreciate the fact that poor English language skills have implications for graduates' performance and eventual effectiveness on the job, in a country which uses English as official language (Teaching Syllabus, 2007; Judging by the overall communication handicaps of the students, especially, the TVET graduates, Goldenberg's (2008) assertion that poor language skills lead to underachievement is legitimate, which assertion should motivate teachers in TVET to be more sensitive to language and communication issues. Ignoring language errors raised questions about the other teachers' language competence, since they ought to be role models of good language skills for learners.

When tertiary students are handicapped across all the communicative avenues, as evidenced in this study, it could be inferred that they would underperform in their chosen areas, as hypothesised by Goldenberg (2008) and evidenced by the industrial view. Ghana, a nation striving to strengthen manufacturing base, within a global language economy (The World Economic Forum 2016), ought to pay close attention to language teaching/learning, for half-baked professionals will serve neither industry nor country competently (Amankwah 2011; English Language learners 2008; Switzer Associates 2022). Students' poor performance also imply that language studies at the basic and secondary levels need revisiting and proper monitoring by the tertiary community.

The on-line activity was a departure from the traditional syllabus, but it lent some autonomy to students' learning, as they were motivated to access information on their own. In the given context, activities were not as sophisticated as those practiced elsewhere (von Konsky 2012; Olivier *et al.* 2012). Yet, it was a modest start, novel as well, for the students who had hitherto never utilised on-line learning resources, especially, for research.

4.1.2 Class Size

Goldenberg (2008) has argued that even students who have severe challenges may receive necessary help, if class sizes are as small as 15. The Textiles group which comprised 14 students received a lot of attention. It was easy getting to know the students, their strengths and challenges. One-on-one interaction was regular; motivated ones sought extra help from the instructor and progressed. That small class sizes can enhance the overall teaching/learning effectiveness was amply evidenced by the study.

5. Conclusion

The study was an avenue for a teacher to explore the most effective ways to help struggling students. It was also to help her strive for balance between motivating students and upholding language and classroom standards. Identifying students' needs aided the teacher to provide the necessary help, individually and collectively. The individual focus helped the teacher to establish a rapport with the students. Collectively, learners had to be firmly sensitised to the fact that they had language issues which must be rectified; therefore, their errors could not be glossed.

The participants were demotivated by the low Grades, but the teacher also used such occasions to harp the need for students to work very hard to overcome their challenges, if they would become effective communicators at college and transfer such skills to their workplaces. Candid assessment of academic work was a constant sore point for students and their respective departments because *their* priority was marks. The researcher's uncompromising position in upholding language and communication standards engendered learners', departmental, even faculty antipathy.

For the Textiles group, online activity was beneficial even though two were constrained by changing technology. The twelve possessing Smartphones autonomously explored the Internet for learning materials; they were also able to identify information sources for their elective courses. Going beyond the traditional syllabus spiced students' learning enthusiasm for communication skills. Their appreciation for research, language challenges notwithstanding, was a major achievement for the researcher.

The course objective of helping students to become effective communicators, especially, in academic writing, business communication and technical report writing, was not met, but students' appreciation for the course improved considerably. Learners' shortcomings revealed that they had been admitted into tertiary programmes when they did not possess the requisite English language skills. When students with very poor language skills are admitted into professional programmes, teaching becomes an arduous task. Learning probably becomes a chore for such poor communicators, despite teachers' good efforts. Strong literacy skills can facilitate effective reading and critical processing of information, as well as mastery of professional knowledge and skills.

In effect, a holistic approach to handling Communication Skill implies that the institution must refrain from its current fixation on marks. It must uphold the language admission policy. That would ensure that only applicants with appreciable language competence enter professional programmes. It would be less challenging to target good performance. Course objectives might be met; teaching/learning would be rewarding because students would earn desirable marks and grades. Best of all, they would be competently equipped for industry.

6. Recommendations

The following recommendations may improve the teaching/learning environment of Communication Skills:

- The Institution should emulate exemplary practice elsewhere and admit into professional programmes only applicants who have credit in English Language.
- In view of the contemporary ELLs' challenges, Communication Skills should be taught for the entire duration of professional programmes.
- Language and Communication Skills instructors should tailor the teaching syllabus to professional programmes.
- They should strategize for effective electronic learning activities.
- In such contexts, an instructor must be mindful of students who may not possess sophisticated phones or gadgets and provide practical help to pre-empt learners being deprived of electronic learning opportunities.
- Practical help implies that instructors must explore alternative accessible avenues for learners who may not have access to the Internet for on-line engagement.

6.1. Recommendation for Future Studies

It might be expedient to track graduates' performance on the job, using effective communication skills across all four channels. Employers' responses might guide the institution in reviewing language policy and communication courses for industrial competence.

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Appendix 1: Sampled assignment from the B'TECH group; students were tasked to edit text to improve its effectiveness.
Instruction: You have drafted the speech below for a class presentation. Edit to correct all errors before the delivery.
There is a real distinction between merely hearing the words and realy listening for the mesage. When we listen effectively we understands what the person is thinking and/or feeling from the other persons own perspective. It is as if we were standing in the other persons shoes seeing through his/her eyes and listening through the persons ears. Our own viewpoint may be different and we may not necessarily agree with the person, but as we listen, we understand from the other's perspective to listen effectively we must be actively involve in the communication process, and not just listening passively we all act and respond on the basis of our understanding and too often there is a misunderstanding that neither of us are aware of. With active listening, if a misunderstanding has occur, it will be know immediately, and the communication can be clarify before any further misunderstanding occur

Sampled scripts from B'TECH students; omission signs in red indicate errors students failed to detect.

i. **1st Sampled script**

There is a real distinction between merely hearing the words and really listening to the message.

When we listen effectively, we understand what the person is thinking and / or feeling from the other person's own perspective.

It's as if we are standing in the other person's shoes^ seeing through his / her eyes and listening through the person's ears. Our own viewpoint may be different^ and we may not necessarily agree with the person. But as we listen, we understand from the other person's perspective^ to listen effectively. We must be actively involved in the communication process and not just listen passively.

We all act and respond on the basis of our understanding^ and too often there is a misunderstanding that neither of us are^ aware of. With active listening^ if a misunderstanding occurs, it will be known immediately^ and the communication can be clarified before any further misunderstanding occurs.

Instructor's comment: *You must watch your paragraph development skills; pay attention also to your punctuation skills.*

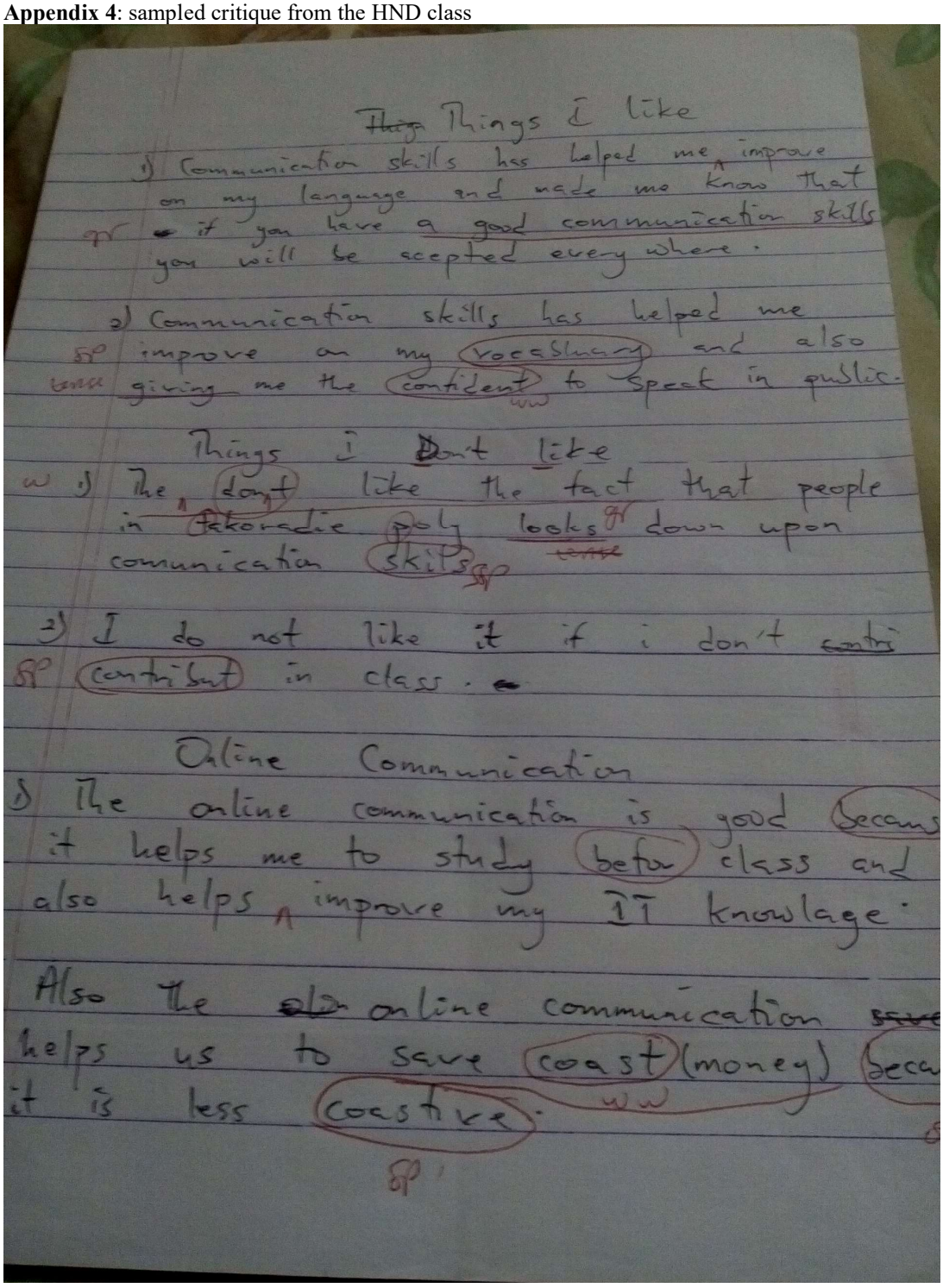
ii. 2nd sampled script

There is a real distinction between merely hearing the words and really listening ^ the message. when we listen effectively, we understand what the person is thinking and or feeling from the other person^ own perspective. It is as if, we were standing in the other person's shoes, seeing through the person's ears. Our own viewpoint may be different, and we may not necessarily agree with the person, but as we listen^ we understand from the other^ perspective. ^to listen effectively, we must ^ actively involve^ in the communication process, and not just listening^ passively. We all act and respond on the basis of our understanding^ and too often, there is a misunderstanding that neither of us are^ aware of. With active listening, ^If a misunderstanding ^ it will be known immediately, and the misunderstanding can be clarified before any ^^harm occurs.

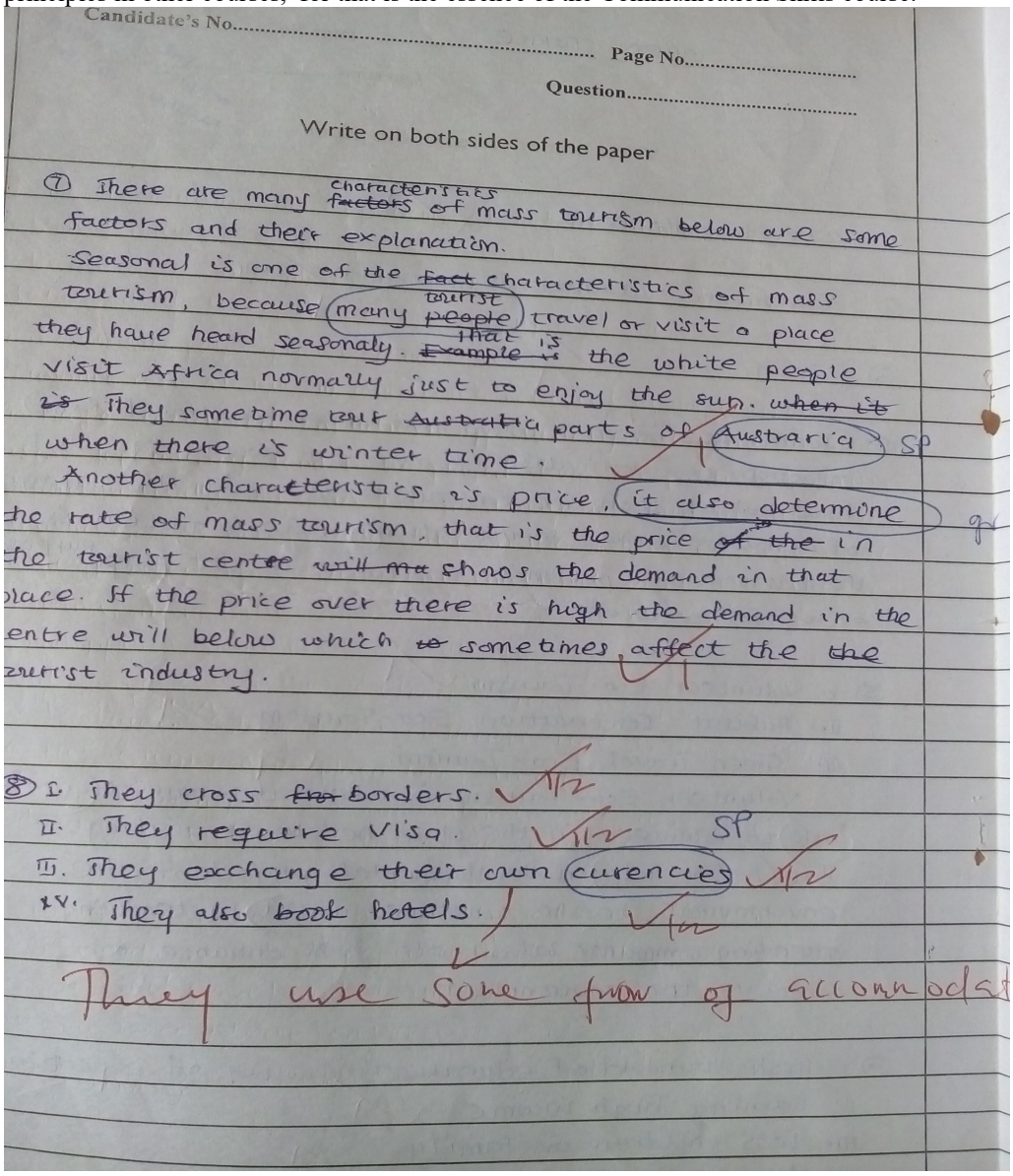
Appendix 2: The original excerpt
There is a real distinction between merely hearing the words and **really** listening for the **message.** When we listen effectively**,** we **understand** what the person is thinking and/or feeling from the other person**'**s own perspective. It is as if we were standing in the other person**'**s shoes**,** seeing through his/her eyes and listening through the person**'**s ears. Our own viewpoint may be different**,** and we may not necessarily agree with the person, but as we listen, we understand from the other's perspective**. To** listen effectively**,** we must be actively **involved** in the communication process, and not just **listen** passively. **We** all act and respond on the basis of our understanding**,** and too often**,** there is a misunderstanding that neither of us **is** aware of. With active listening, if a misunderstanding has **occurred**, it will be **known** immediately, and the communication can be **clarified** before any further misunderstanding **occurs.**

Appendix 3:
A B'TECH student's reaction to the instructor's allegation that he had copied from another student:
"Madam, sorry you assumed we copied each other. It was assignment given to solve which I
did what you asked of me. It is my own work please. Thank you".
Instructor's Comment: Students' constant errors distorted the meaning of their sentences, effectively undermining communication. The students had completed HND, which means that they had already gone through the Communication Skills course. Apparently, the impact of the course on learners' language and writing skills was minimal. Such porous skills would not make them an effective communicator on the job, which lapse, depending on their position, might spiral to the overall communication of their sections.

Appendix 4: sampled critique from the HND class



Appendix 4a: Sampled script from another course. The blue circles indicate spelling and concord errors in an examination script. Ignoring such implies that candidates were not penalized by the course instructor. If students' errors are not pointed out to them, how would they be sensitized enough to improve upon weaknesses for effective writing? Besides, other instructors ought to insist on the application of communication and language principles in other courses, for that is the essence of the Communication Skills course.



Candidate's No..... Page No.....

Question.....

Write on both sides of the paper

(7) There are many ~~factors~~ characteristics of mass tourism below are some factors and their explanation.

Seasonal is one of the ~~fact~~ characteristics of mass tourism, because many ~~people~~ tourist travel or visit a place they have heard seasonaly. ~~Example is~~ that is the white people visit Africa normally just to enjoy the sun. ~~when it is~~ They sometime tour ~~Australia~~ parts of Australia SP when there is winter time.

Another charactenstics is price, it also determine the rate of mass tourism, that is the price ~~of the~~ in the tourist centre ~~will ma~~ shows the demand in that place. If the price over there is high the demand in the centre will below which ~~to~~ sometimes affect the ~~the~~ tourist industry.

(8) I. They cross ~~fro~~ borders.

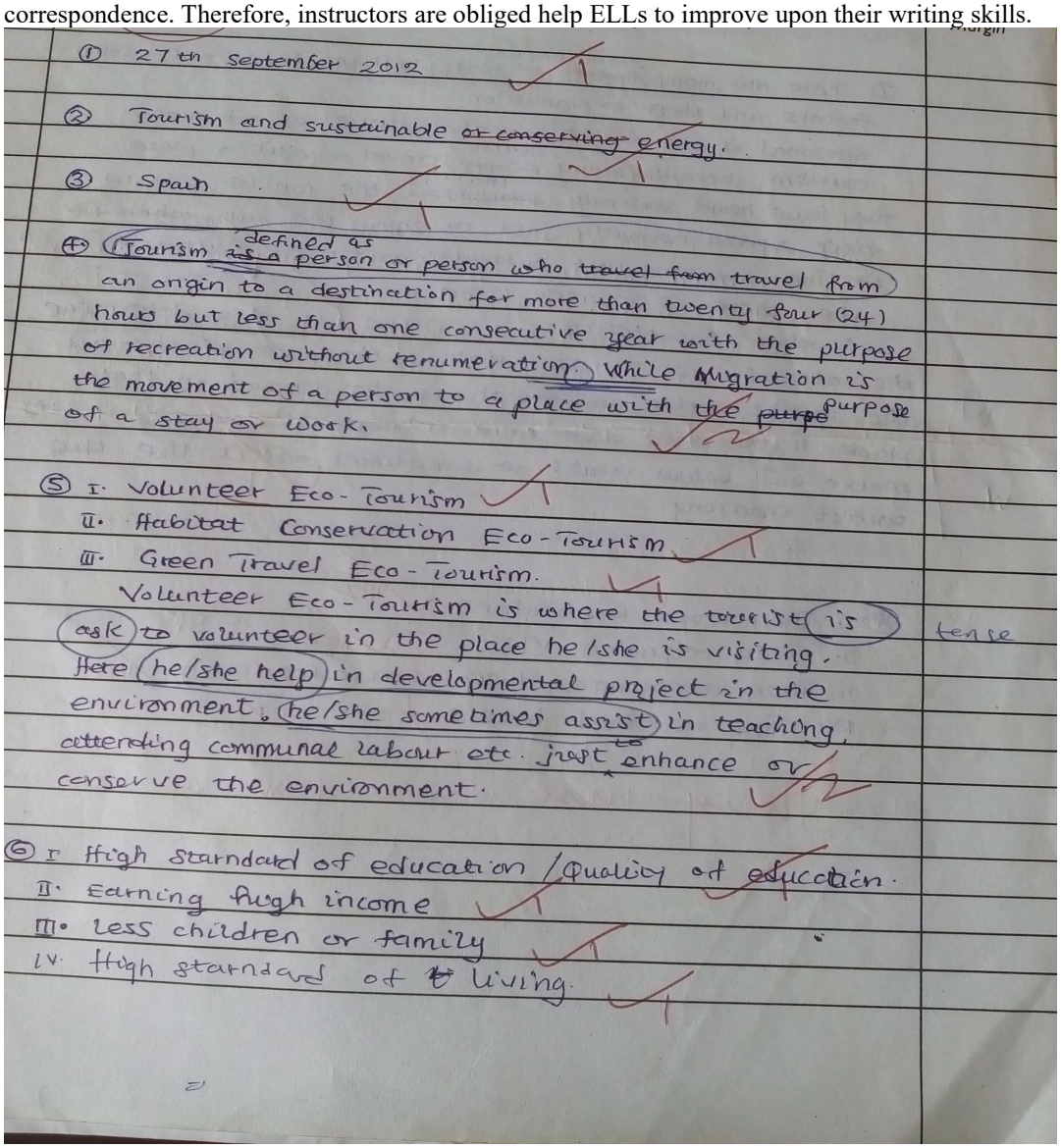
II. They require visa. SP

III. They exchange their own curencies

IV. They also ~~book~~ hotels.

They use some from of accomodat

Appendix 4b. Wrong tenses, poor punctuation, capitalization and concord errors – circled in blue by the researcher – were not highlighted by the instructor to prompt the student to work to improve poor skills. Yet, such errors would not be glossed in academic writing; neither would such be accepted in business correspondence. Therefore, instructors are obliged help ELLs to improve upon their writing skills.


① 27th September 2012

② Tourism and sustainable ~~or conserving~~ energy.

③ Spain

④ Tourism defined as ~~is a~~ person or person who ~~travel from~~ travel from an origin to a destination for more than twenty four (24) hours but less than one consecutive year with the purpose of recreation without renumeration. While Migration is the movement of a person to a place with the ~~purpo~~ purpose of a stay or work.

⑤ I. Volunteer Eco-Tourism
II. Habitat Conservation Eco-Tourism
III. Green Travel Eco-Tourism.
Volunteer Eco-Tourism is where the tourist is ask to volunteer in the place he/she is visiting. Here he/she help in developmental project in the environment. he/she sometimes assist in teaching, attending communal labour etc. just to enhance or conserve the environment.

tense

⑥ I High standard of education / Quality of education.
II. Earning high income
III. less children or family
IV. High standard of living.